



SELTeverlasting

NEWS FOR OWNERS OF LAND PROTECTED BY A CONSERVATION EASEMENT

While all of you are tied together in that you own land that is protected by a conservation easement held by SELT, what brought you all to be the current steward of your specific property is unique to each of you. The land may be a Town Forest, a woodlot to harvest firewood to heat your home, a place for your grandchildren to explore, land to farm, or to provide a place for wildlife. Depending on your reasons for owning the land, management activities can range from doing absolutely nothing to maintaining a narrow footpath to access your favorite spot to sit by a stream, mowing a field once a year to maintain it in an open condition, or working with a consulting forester to sustainably harvest wood. While you may know what your management objectives are, you might need a little help getting started. We are fortunate that there are many people and tools, one of which is highlighted in this newsletter, to help you successfully achieve your management goals.

Why do you own your land and what tools do you need to be successful to care for your land? Let us know and we'll be happy to point you toward the resources to get you started!

Best wishes,

*Deborah Goard
Stewardship Director*

Connecting With People and Places

By Hannah Epstein, Seasonal Land Steward

This past June through August, I worked for SELT as one of their Seasonal Land Stewards. Over the course of the summer, I monitored 40 conservation easements and 15 SELT-owned Reservations. I walked through all different kinds of landscapes, including forests, swamps, salt marshes, and farms. Additionally, I helped with land management projects on many SELT properties, which included trail maintenance, invasive species removal, and boundary marking. Every day at work was different, whether it was visiting a new property, learning to use a nail gun to build a bridge, navigating through forested wetlands and dense understory, or adapting to changing weather conditions. Having grown up in the Seacoast area of New Hampshire, it was wonderful to return here after college and explore new lands and trails.

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Seasonal Land Stewards, Hannah Epstein (left) and Myrilla Hartkopf (right), pictured during invasive species removal at Burley Farms this summer. PHOTO: SELT STAFF

Trails for People and Wildlife

Reprinted with permission from the NH Fish and Game Department, following an introduction by Deborah Goard, Stewardship Director.

As current caretakers of land in southeastern NH, we understand there are often competing uses for the fields, waters, and forests that we are fortunate to have in our part of the state. As SELT determines how our own lands will be managed, one thing we consider is the impact our activities have on wildlife that rely on the land for their survival. And much of our land management activities include wildlife habitat enhancement as a primary objective. But, we also recognize it's important to get people out on our lands to spend time reenergizing and reconnecting with nature. One of the ways we do that is through the creation of formal trail networks.

To help landowners determine the impact of trails on wildlife, the NH Fish and Game Department has created the Trails for People and Wildlife mapping tool that helps analyze how existing and/or new trails affect wildlife and how trails can be laid out to be more wildlife-friendly. SELT is currently using this tool to help us determine the trail system at Stonehouse Forest in Barrington. By looking at the impact to wildlife by the existing trail locations, we are using the information from the tool to guide our decisions about which trails should be closed or left open and how to best locate any new trails in a way that will have a lesser impact to wildlife.

This tool is available for anyone to use by downloading the data from GRANIT and using it with GIS software such as ArcGIS. The tool is also available to everyone through the GranitView mapping website at granitview.unh.edu. If you have existing trails or if you are planning to create new trails, this is a great tool to help guide you through your planning process. Keep reading for an explanation of how the mapping tool works.

Hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, horseback riding, snowmobiling – these are just some of the ways we get outside to enjoy nature and unwind from our day-to-day activities. However, even these seeming innocuous activities can have impacts on wildlife including reduced abundance, reproduction, and survival. Thoughtful trail location allows us to get outside to enjoy nature and also minimize disturbance to wildlife.

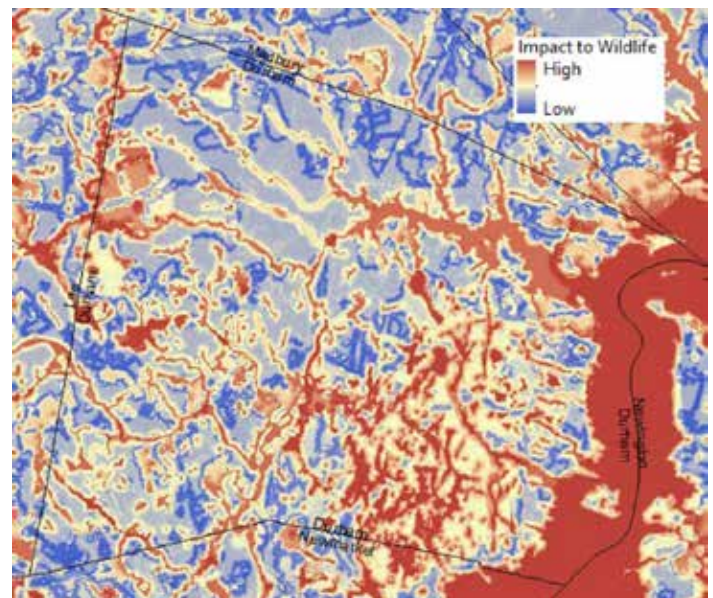
Funded by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department developed a state-wide tool that can be used to assess existing trails and site new trails in the most wildlife-friendly way. This mapping tool highlights areas particularly important for wildlife and areas that would be more suitable for trail development. Accompanying documents will explain how to use the tool, and provide some real-world examples of how conservation organizations have used it to make their trail planning efforts most effective.

Using the most relevant scientific research for New Hampshire, a map was created to highlight areas particularly important for wildlife that, if avoided, would help to minimize trail disturbance to wildlife. This tool works based on the following principles:

- Keep unfragmented trail-free areas as large as possible
- Avoid small patches of high quality or special habitats
- Avoid riparian areas, permanent features in the landscape that serve as important wildlife corridors
- Avoid locations of rare wildlife

Evaluating Existing Trails

Wildlife hears and sees you coming and can be impacted even though they may be quite a distance from a trail. You can evaluate how much habitat is being impacted by existing trails or a new draft trail layout by looking at the alert and flight distances of wildlife.



Blue and gray spots are best locales for recreational trails to minimize impacts on wildlife. Red areas are particularly important to wildlife so are best to avoid.

PHOTO: NH FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT.

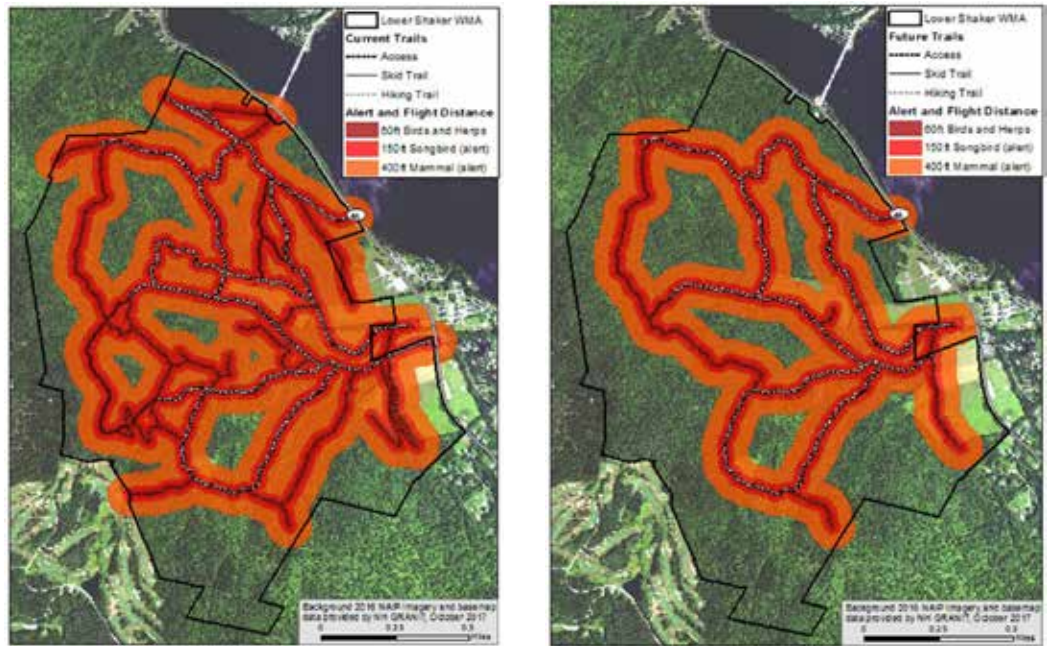
The example on the next page illustrates what portion of the Lower Shaker Wildlife Management Area in Enfield is being impacted by recreational trails (orange-red shading).

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There were 10 miles of trails on this 1,056 acre property with 73% of the property being impacted (“before” image on left). After Fish and Game decommissioned some of the trails, that impact diminished by 21% while still providing plenty of recreational access and reducing conflict between different recreational activities (“after” image on right).

To learn more about how this tool is used to site new trails, evaluate existing ones, for town-based impact assessments of existing trails, visit wildnh.com/trails.

Excerpted from the NH Fish and Game Department website on October 2, 2018 from <https://wildlife.state.nh.us/trails>.



Lower Shaker Wildlife Management Area in Enfield. Orange-red shading shows impacts to wildlife by recreation. Image on left shows impacts before trail closures and reroutes. Image on right shows reduced impacts after trail work.

PHOTO: NH FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT.

Connecting With People and Places continued from page 1

One of the highlights of my summer with SELT was meeting and walking with the landowners of the conservation easements I visited. These walks took me to all different landscapes that have been managed for a variety of purposes including agriculture, New England cottontail habitat, public recreation, and forestry. I enjoyed hearing about the history of the properties and people’s connection to their land. It was inspiring to see so many people take an active role in the stewardship and conservation of their land, especially with the rapid development happening in this area of the state. Several properties I walked were with Conservation Commission members on land owned by local towns. It was great to learn about what Commission members are doing to conserve land and get community members involved with land conservation. It was a great experience to walk these lands with fellow observers of nature and I learned a lot from people about the tree species we saw and songbirds we heard, as well as forest and wildlife habitat management.

I also spent time this summer with SELT’s Land Manager, Phil Auger. On my first day with Phil and his regular crew of volunteers, we spent the afternoon hauling lumber for two large bog bridges into the woods at Howard Swain

Memorial Forest in Deerfield. I quickly realized this would be a summer filled with a lot of heavy lifting. We spent many days doing trail work at the beautiful Burley Farms property in Epping in preparation for TrailFest in September. This included creating new trails for the race course and installing a few bridges, which we did in part with the help of a group of volunteers from Vapotherm. Another main project I worked on with Phil was building three bridges for a newly rerouted snowmobile and walking trail at Stonehouse Pond in Barrington. Again, we had a slew of volunteers helping to build these bridges including the UNH interns from Nature Groupie and a group from NEMO Equipment. It was rewarding to see all of our hard work from throughout the summer come together in the form of completed bridges and new trails for visitors to enjoy.

I had a fantastic experience working at SELT this summer. I had the privilege of meeting so many wonderful people who are committed to stewardship and land conservation, and got to see all kinds of interesting flora and fauna throughout the region. It has been incredibly rewarding to have contributed to the stewardship of SELT’s lands and conservation easements!

Questions, Comments, Concerns?

To contact the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire, please call **603-778-6088** or email info@seltnh.org.
PO Box 675, Exeter, NH 03833 • Website: www.seltnh.org

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Upcoming Events

View the full calendar and sign up at seltnh.org. Suggested donation is \$5/person or \$10/family. All donations benefit our public outreach programs. Registration closes at Noon the day before the event.

Birch Ridge Series: Timber Harvest 101

December 1 · 9–11am · Birch Ridge Community Forest, New Durham

What is timber harvesting? Andy Fast, UNH Cooperative Extension County Forester, and Emma Tutein, UNH Cooperative Extension Wildlife Biologist, will lead a tour of cut areas and teach us about the process of timber harvests. Why are they important for forest health? What state regulations are in place? How is the land responding now and how will it respond over time? We'll also talk about SELT's future plans for the property, and how we plan to manage it to benefit the forest and wildlife that call it home!

Birch Ridge Series: Winter Snowshoe

February 2 · Time TBD · Birch Ridge Community Forest, New Durham

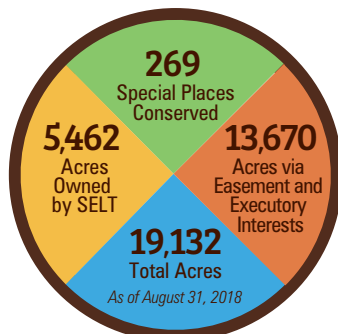
Save the date for an opportunity to explore the proposed Birch Ridge Community Forest this winter. If snowfall permits, bring your snowshoes! Look for more details at seltnh.org as we draw closer to winter.



JERRY MONKMAN, ECOPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Land Conservation by the Numbers

Thanks for doing your part to ensure these lands are permanently protected!



Thinking of **SELLING YOUR LAND?**

SELT can help make your sale smoother by working with your realtor to properly inform buyers about your conservation easement and answer questions from potential buyers. Please have your realtor contact us! Once you've scheduled a closing, please remember to give us the required notification of transfer of title in accordance with the terms of the easement.