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Tract by Tract, Growing a Preserve

Looking back now, the beginnings of SELT's work on the Lamprey River were humble with the proposed purchase of a 27-acre tract of land in 2003.

To get to this property that would become the Lamprey River Wildlife Preserve – the first property ever owned by SELT – you drove as far you as dared down Epping's unmaintained Dimond Hill Road and then hoofed it to a tract of land. Upon arriving, you might have wondered, "we are buying that?"

The land was a spent gravel pit, scarred by a burned-out mobile home, a car, a broken back hoe, and evidence of late-night campfires by underage drinkers. We knew this sand pit had something special and that those surficial wounds would heal over time.

In his writings about the proposed Lamprey River Wildlife Preserve, turtle expert David M. Carroll described then what he saw: "This land is one of the most significant complexes I have seen over the course of my fieldwork on behalf of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee... We are all aware of the necessity for and unfortunate

great difficulty in preserving large unfragmented blocks of wildlife habitat. The loss of this riverine floodplain habitat would leave a gaping hole in the vital, yet sensitive ecological fabric of the Lamprey River."

What Carroll knew from his decades of tracing the hidden lives of turtles was this: these sandy soils cradling the banks of the Lamprey River at its confluence with Rum Brook made the land critical for turtles – and a priority for conservation.

In 2003, with that purchase, we began a long and productive partnership with the Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC). Established by the state legislature, this committee of local residents continues to be charged with guiding the protection of the federally designated Wild & Scenic Lamprey River.

Working together again, we hope to expand the Lamprey River Wildlife Preserve with the purchase of an adjacent 73-acre tract that was listed for sale in November 2018.

"Being on the open market gave us a small window to respond," explained Duane Hyde,

A floodplain forest grows along the Lamprey River.

© JERRY MONKMAN, ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, LLC

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A Metamorphosis

Did you know that you too could make a future gift to SELT today? “Planned” gifts like Phil Primack’s (see adjoining article) are committed to now, but not realized by the charity like SELT until the death of the donor.

Homes, whether a primary residence or a vacation home, are often a person’s most valuable asset. For many people, such a gift also represents another milestone – their biggest charitable gift ever. And they may offer you the following benefits:

- Immediate income tax deduction in the year of the gift and up to five more years
- Reduction in value of estate for inheritance/estate tax purposes
- Simplification of future decisions for heirs
- Peace of mind knowing now the impact of your giving

When given to a charity, homes are usually sold. The proceeds are then used to advance the mission of the charity or a specific purpose designated by the donor.

“For SELT, such gifts strengthen our solid financial foundation and provide the Board with the ability to think big, knowing such gifts are coming in the future,” explains Brian Hart, Executive Director. “Whether you imagine your home becoming habitat, or your house stewarding your special place, these gifts are transformative.”

Simply put, there’s power in knowing that your most generous act will have a lasting impact.

If you are interested in learning more or discussing options that may meet your goals and circumstances, please call Brian Hart, Executive Director at 603-778-6088 for a confidential conversation.

Tomorrow’s Gift, Made Today

By Phil Primack

For more than 40 years, I’ve walked this wooded path to the Pawtuckaway River, often pointing out this or that feature of “my land.” Now this 100+ acre parcel in West Epping is no longer “my” land – it belongs to SELT. Except I can still walk its trails, simultaneously admire and curse the beavers who come and go, even log the forest when the time is right (assuming my forester, Charlie Moreno, is available). And I still use the house overlooking the creek that I built in 1981 from trees cut from the property. I also continue to pay the taxes, insurance, and necessary upkeep.

This is because last December 21, SELT and I signed papers granting what is called a “retained life estate” to SELT. In essence, this legal arrangement means that while SELT now formally holds future ownership, I keep using the property as my own until I am gone or unable or unwilling to care for it. And I no longer have to wonder and worry about its eventual fate.

I had already granted a conservation easement on most of the land to what was then the Rockingham Land Trust in 1998, giving what is now SELT the first piece of what would become the 603-acre Pawtuckaway River Reservation. A life estate goes much further – rather than just controlling the development

rights, SELT gains full ownership of the property, including the house and the 10 or so acres around it that are not part of the conservation easement. (And don’t worry – the land remains conserved as SELT assigned the conservation easement to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests prior to my granting of the life estate gift).

While I am giving away decades of proud ownership, not to mention a financial asset, a retained life estate also offers some immediate and longer-term benefits.

The biggest, of course, is that I continue to use the property as I always have. But the gift also makes me eligible for a sizable charitable deduction from federal taxes, a benefit not available by leaving land to SELT as part of a will. The property is also removed from any taxable estate, meaning no one will have to deal with probate or question my true intentions once I’m gone, giving me peace of mind about the fate of these woods.

I did this because I know that SELT will protect this land and keep it open to all (except, I hope, ATVs or other motorized vehicles). I also hope SELT will find a way to use the house for staff or maybe as a retreat. With no internet. Now that could be a real gift.

Phil Primack, the author, pictured on the land he recently donated to SELT.

PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER PRIBBLE



EVERY DROP

Small Changes. Big Difference.



PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY PERKINS

Every Drop Matters

We are proud to be a part of a new clean water movement: Every Drop. In collaboration with other local nonprofits and organizations that are invested in the health of Great Bay and seacoast estuaries, we are working to help you enjoy the world around us and protect clean water. Besides that, we are your neighbors and friends. We know that you love living and playing here in southeastern New Hampshire – we do, too. So, we’re asking you to join forces with us to spread the word about Every Drop because we believe that small changes can make a big difference.

Every Drop meets you where you are with resources to help you enjoy our region and then work to protect one of our most valuable resources: clean water. Are you a local foodie? You’ll find stories about oyster farming and our awesome local beer scene. Like hunting and fishing? We’re compiling stories and resources for you, too.

On the Every Drop website (stateofourestuaries.org/everydrop), you’ll even find resources for dog-friendly activities, hiking trails, water-focused summer camps, and so much more. We’re bringing the best of our partner content to you – in one place. Because when we work together, we make a big difference.

Check out Every Drop at stateofourestuaries.org/everydrop. If you like what you see (and we think you will), follow Every Drop on [Facebook.com/everydropnh](https://www.facebook.com/everydropnh) and [Instagram/everydropnh](https://www.instagram.com/everydropnh). Tell your friends, coworkers, and neighbors. Share stories online and in person. Tag SELT and Every Drop in your stories or use the hashtags #everydropnh and #everydropmatters. When you help spread the word, you are helping engage more people in the protection of our clean water.

Here are four easy steps to protect Great Bay and our estuaries:

1. Be part of the **POOP PATROL** by committing to pick up your dog’s waste.
2. Be a **HOME HERO** and learn from experts about rain collection, soil care, and more.
3. Protect **WIDE OPEN SPACES** by joining your local land trust: Hey, that’s US!
4. **PITCH IN** with a local organization! At SELT, we’re expanding our volunteer opportunities this year. (Look for more on that this summer.) And, our Every Drop partners offer a lot of wonderful opportunities, too. Check out naturegroupie.org or visit our partners directly to learn more.

Conservation Updates

LCHIP Supports Scruton’s Dairy

In December, the NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) awarded SELT funding to conserve the working family farm, Scruton’s Dairy, in Farmington, leaving just \$20,000 remaining to be raised from private contributions. If conserving dairy farms is the “cream of the crop” for your conservation dollars, **please consider making special gift to protect this family farm.**

Fundraising for Birch Ridge Community Forest Complete

A second LCHIP award as well as a grant from the NH Department of Environmental Service’s Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund capped off the fundraising for the Birch Ridge Community Forest in New Durham. SELT, the Merrymeeting Lake Association, and Moose Mountains Regional Greenways are now focused on acquiring these 2,000 acres by the end of June!

More Funds for LCHIP?

Speaking of LCHIP, historic preservation and conservation champion Senator Martha Fuller Clark of Portsmouth introduced SB 74, which proposes to increase the recording fee that provides annual funding to LCHIP. If passed, the fee for recording certain deeds will increase from the current \$25 to \$35. State officials estimate this will raise an additional \$1.6 million per year to support land conservation and historic preservation projects. With LCHIP a huge reason for SELT’s success in protecting signature lands – like Birch Ridge, the Stonehouse Forest, Harveys’ Kennard Hill Forest, and working farms – we’ll be advocating for this bill’s passage. To find out who your State Senator or State Representative is, visit nh.gov where there is an easy search feature. Then – reach out and communicate your support for increased funding for LCHIP. The next project it supports could be in your town!

For more updates on projects and SELT activities, visit seltnh.org or sign up for our once-a-month E-newsletter: *SELT Scoop!*

Tract by Tract *continued from page 1*

SELT's Land Conservation Director. "Our purchase terms with the landowner require us to close this spring. That doesn't give us time for our typical fundraising plans."

Though LRAC generously committed \$50,000 (or 1/3 of the project costs), we still need \$100,000 in private gifts and grants to grow the Lamprey River Wildlife Preserve.

With this purchase, the Lamprey River Wildlife Preserve will grow to 158 acres, expanding that protected unfragmented wildlife habitat referred to by Carroll. But, we need your support. Please consider making a special contribution online or using the enclosed envelope – just mark "LRWP" in the memo. Gifts will be used solely to acquire, conserve, and manage this property for its wildlife and water quality benefits.

"What's really amazing here," continues Hyde, "is to see the continued support of our members and the community to complete this jigsaw puzzle over time. We're able to add bit by bit to create a viable area for wildlife along the lifeblood of our region – the Lamprey."

The 'bit by bit' took further shape in 2005. The LRAC-SELT partnership collaborated to purchase another retired gravel pit to the north (now the Two Rivers Wildlife Preserve) and to conserve Flag Hill Winery & Distillery located across the river. These conservation "bookends" form the foundation to conserve an undeveloped stretch of the river.

Since then, more pieces were added, protecting an additional 413 acres near and along the Lamprey. This includes the 2015 addition of the Limperis Tract to the original Lamprey River Wildlife Preserve.

As Carroll noted back in 2003, large, unfragmented blocks of land like this – at more than 1,600 acres of forestland – are exceedingly rare in southeastern New Hampshire, adding to the ecological importance of this land.

LRAC has long sought to understand the most important Lamprey properties for wildlife. At different times, LRAC hired both Carroll and wildlife biologist George W. Gavutis Jr. to tromp through floodplains, oxbows, and swamps along the river noting what they saw, heard, and tracked.

Moose, northern water thrush, and kingfisher were among the more interesting species observed, highlighting the area's value for wildlife.

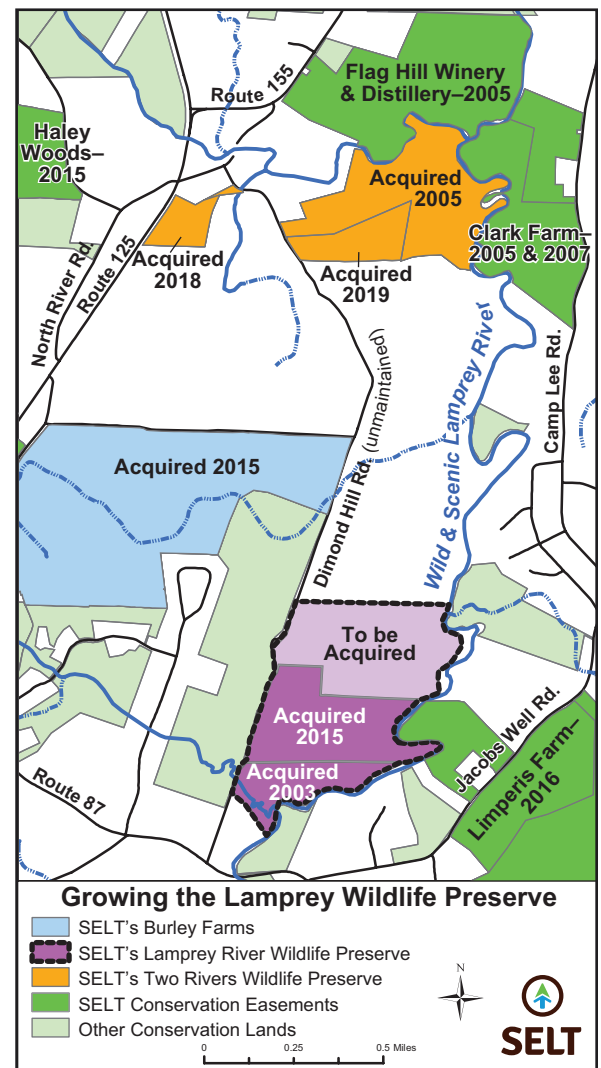
With your gift, the next trip by a biologist or ecologist to the expanded Lamprey River Wildlife Preserve may once again document a moose, or rare turtles, and in doing so, confirm the continued vital significance of these lands and this river.

Learn more or make a gift at seltnh.org/LRWP.

Help Grow the Lamprey River Wildlife Preserve

- Expands preserve to 158 acres
- Vital wildlife habitat
- Clean drinking water
- \$100,000 remains to be raised

Gifts will be used solely to acquire, conserve, and manage this land for its wildlife and water quality benefits.



Scenic Gateway to Durham and Newmarket Protected Forever

This February, SELT and its partner The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire (TNC) completed the conservation of the Bedard Farm on Route 108 in Durham. Thank you to the more than 140 individuals who contributed to SELT and TNC to match public grants from state and federal partners to conserve this beloved land.

L-R: Mandy Merrill, representing LCHIP; Dea Brickner-Wood, Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership; Megan Latour, TNC; and Jeremy Lougee, SELT.

PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER PRIBBLE



A Hunt Lost, an Antler Found, and a Connection Made

Like a birder obsessed with a rare sighting or a hiker motivated to reach the next peak, hunters can be driven crazy by elusive prey. Last fall, Nottingham resident Jeremy Berthiaume spent most of bow season chasing a very elusive white-tailed buck on SELT land along the Lamprey River. “Every time I got a sight, the deer was too far, or it was a bad angle,” explained Jeremy. “It happened so frequently that I started to think that he was messing with me. The only time I caught him was on the trail camera. Then, he was gone.”

With bow season behind him, Jeremy focused in a different area on the property for muzzleloader season. Days passed without sight of the buck. Just as he was giving up, the buck reappeared in full view. Jeremy got off one on-target shot. While reloading, the buck got up, waded into the Lamprey, and jumped to the shore – onto adjacent land posted against hunting.

Jeremy knew the deer was mortally wounded. After a series of frantic phone calls to continue the hunt with landowner permission, he followed in pursuit – wading through the cold river. He was able to track the deer, but not before nightfall. As a conscientious hunter, Jeremy even reached out to a NH Fish and Game Department Conservation Officer to continue the hunt. To no avail and due to hunting regulations (no firearm discharges after dark), Jeremy was unable to claim the deer.

“I returned at first light only to discover that the deer was gone and likely taken by coyotes,” lamented Jeremy. “My friends and I continued to search in a grid but were unable to recover him. I absolutely hate seeing a deer go to waste.” Jeremy left the woods that day empty handed – the deer lost.

Early this winter, rumors swirled in a tight knit circle of hunting friends that SELT’s Land Manager, Phil Auger, had recently come across a large antler rack while visiting a prospective SELT property.

As with most rumors, that was only slightly true. In fact, it was Phil’s German Shepherd, Java, who sniffed out the rack. “Finding an intact rack is unusual because mice and other forest creatures typically chew them and drag them in pieces,” explained Phil. Jeremy emailed Phil with his tale of the lost deer – and after a quick exchange, knew it was the buck that got away.

Shortly thereafter Jeremy visited the SELT offices to examine the rack and swap stories with Phil. On seeing the skull and antlers, Jeremy said, “I’m glad that you found him but also a part of me had really hoped that he somehow had survived.”

In appreciation for SELT’s work and for keeping land open for



Jeremy Berthiaume recently visited SELT’s offices to swap stories with Land Manager Phil Auger and examine the lost and found antler rack. PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER PRIBBLE

all, Jeremy became a member that day. “I’m really grateful that SELT keeps the land open for us all – including hunters like me. I believe that hunters really are great conservationists. We want the land to be open and protected.”

Like many family traditions, Jeremy’s love of hunting began young. By age 12, he bagged his first white-tailed deer and was hooked. With his own family, he’s carried on the tradition with his two daughters (ages 17 and 23). Each fall he delights in their return to the woods. For him, time in the tree stand yields a freezer full of local “free range” lean venison and offers peace in a busy world.

Jeremy often travels along hiking paths to the point of entry closest to where he plans to hunt. From there, he bushwhacks – often a mile or more away from the trails and into the quiet.

“When you walk through the woods, the little creatures all scatter. The red squirrels start yakking at you to leave. But, once you sit and remain quiet, the forest returns to its undisturbed state. It comes alive with birds and squirrels. A half-hour later, it’s back to the way it was – like you aren’t there at all.”

Most days hunters like Jeremy don’t bag anything – except a sense of wonder. And that’s enough to keep them going back season after season. That’s what keeps us all going back.

Hunting & Fishing SELT Lands

SELT operates with broad goals and objectives for land management and use. Hunting and fishing are allowed on most SELT lands in accordance with the state law. Temporary tree stands must have owner identification and be removed after each hunting season. Bolted tree stands are prohibited.

We welcome hunting on all SELT properties **except** the Franklin-McElheny Preserve, Burley Forest, Kimball Reserve,

or Powwow River Woodlands due to the limited size, proximity to homes, or the direction of the original donor.

Trapping, baiting, and target shooting are not allowed on any SELT property.

Want to learn more about hunting and fishing? The NH Fish and Game Department website is a wonderful resource: huntnh.com



Hike It Baby Seacoast members are eager to share the joy of nature with a new generation.

PHOTO CREDIT: HIKE IT BABY SEACOAST

Upcoming Events

View the full calendar and sign up at seltnh.org. Suggested donation is \$5/person or \$10/family. Please register early; our events fill quickly. Registration closes at Noon the day before the event.

Wild & Scenic Film Festival

April 12 · 7 PM · The Music Hall, Portsmouth

Don't miss this sell-out show of short but mighty movies that celebrate our wild and scenic earth. General admission tickets are \$20. Available at the SELT office, The Music Hall box office, and TheMusicHall.org.

Earth Day with Hike It Baby

April 22 · 10:15 AM - Noon · Stonehouse Forest, Barrington

This walk is hosted by Hike It Baby Seacoast, a friendly, all-inclusive community that is raising a generation to love the outdoors. Bring your little ones and explore Stonehouse Forest on a woodland creature walk!

Birding the Piscassic Greenway

May 18 · 6 AM - 10 AM · Newfields

Join Roger Stephenson and SELT's own birding enthusiast Kylee Noga bright and early for SELT's annual spring bird walk at the Piscassic Greenway. This trip, scheduled to coincide with the spring migration, is geared for the beginner but birders of all levels are welcome. We'll explore six different bird habitats – be sure to bring binoculars!

National Trails Day Hike

June 1 · 10 AM - Noon · Salem

Come explore the 350-acre Salem Town Forest, conserved by SELT in partnership with the Town of Salem. Glen Edwards from the Salem Conservation Commission will lead this hike along

the well-maintained trail system and highlight some unique aspects of this hidden jewel that many people may not even know exists.

Kinney Hill and Heron Pond Farm Tour

June 15 · 9 AM - 11 AM · South Hampton

Visit Kinney Hill Farm, home of the local favorite: Heron Pond Farm. We'll learn about their year-round CSA, check out the Children's Garden and Pick Your Own areas, and drive down the road to one of the fields being conserved by SELT and see the cover cropping and intercropping, some forage, an irrigation pond, and much more!

Save the Date!

Volunteer Mixer & Info Session

May 2 – Save the Date!

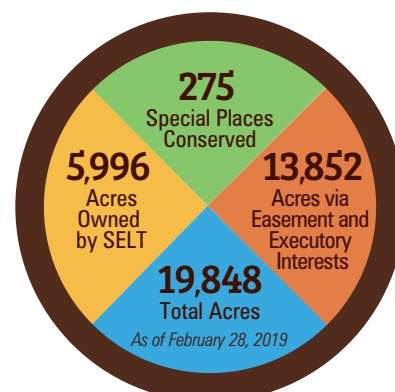
Time and location coming soon!

Come and learn more about our expanding volunteer program. Get the details on page 7.



PHOTO CREDIT: EMILY LORD

Land Conservation by the Numbers



Many Hands Make Light(er) Work

We are so fortunate to get many enthusiastic requests to volunteer each year. In fact, we were concerned that we were not able to accommodate the requests in a meaningful way. So, we took a good hard look at our volunteer program and realized that we were falling short!

With recent changes to our staffing, Zoe Aldag is tackling our volunteer program. “Compared to similar size land trusts, we aren’t yet providing the opportunities for people to lend a hand and help SELT by donating their time,” shared Zoe, Outreach and Volunteer Manager for SELT.

Zoe is in the process of researching how other nonprofits work with volunteers and learning more about how volunteers want to be engaged with SELT. Turns out, many of you want to get outside!

While we will continue to offer volunteer opportunities in our office space for vital administrative support, we are expanding the ways volunteers can help us carry out our work outside the office.

GOAT (Get Outside Adventure Team)

These volunteers are an active part of outreach to help others get excited about SELT and our work. GOATs support field trip leaders by helping with parking, checking in participants, collecting donations, and managing the group.

Soon, we hope to have GOATs out leading casual walks at SELT properties. And, as we build our team of volunteers, the program will expand to tap into GOAT expertise by discovering special interests and talents that can be shared with SELTies for field trips and other educational outreach.

Do you love to talk with people and share your love of the outdoors? Do you know plant, wildlife, or geology identification like the back of your hand? Do you have oral histories about local properties to share? If so, the GOAT program is for you!

Land Steward

Have you ever been on a work day with SELT? That’s land stewardship – helping us care for our special places! In addition to work days on SELT land, there will be expanding opportunities with our volunteer Stewardship program.

According to Stewardship Director, Deborah Goard, “We’re looking for volunteers who want to focus on a property and really get connected to the land and commit to supporting its ongoing care and maintenance.”

The Stewardship Department is working closely with Land Stewardship Committee members to determine the best approach. It is likely that Volunteer Land Stewards will have tiered opportunities with varied responsibilities and commitments so that individuals can find the right level of engagement for their lifestyle. The tasks may include visiting the property to share information to visitors, walking a property for litter pick up, or performing more demanding land management work (such as removal of invasive plants).

We know you want to jump right in, so save the date for our Volunteer Mixer & Info Session on May 2 (time and location to be determined soon).

There, you’ll be able to talk with current volunteers and staff about the organization and learn more about each of the volunteer opportunities.

According to Zoe, “We’re working hard to build a program to keep our volunteers engaged and committed to helping SELT save, share, and steward special places in New Hampshire.”

Do you want a reminder email about the Volunteer Mixer & Info Session? Fill out our volunteer inquiry form at seltnh.org/volunteer-opportunities.



Volunteers Steve Farrington and Walt Roy overseeing post installation at the Piscassic Greenway this past fall.

PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER PRIBBLE



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Phil Auger Land Manager
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Questions, Comments, Concerns?

To contact SELT, please call **603-778-6088** or email info@seltnh.org.

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DRINK IT. SAVE IT.

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