



IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Building a Vision
- 2 Close the Gap for Scruton's Dairy Farm!
- 2 What's Next for Birch Ridge
- 2 Growing the Greenway
- 3 Stonehouse Forest, No Longer A Secret
- 4 All in a Day at Burley Farms
- 6 Nurturing the Next Generation of Land Lovers
- 7 Passing the Torch
- 7 A Parker for Our Preserves
- 8 Get Outside

Above: The proposed Center for People and Nature at Burley Farms with the historic farmhouse on the right.

COURTESY SHELDON PENNOYER ARCHITECTS.

Building a Vision

The Center for People and Nature at Burley Farms

Brian Hart, Executive Director

When SELT acquired the 237-acre Burley Farms and circa 1790 John Prescott Chase Farmhouse in 2015, we envisioned it as our future home: a place to inspire the public about conservation and a chance to revitalize a working farm. Since that time, our vision evolved through careful deliberation, planning, and study by SELT's Board of Directors and staff. Input from community leaders, historic preservation advocates, the Burley family, and SELTies bolstered and strengthened our vision. Recent land protection along the Lamprey River only affirmed Burley Farms is the right place for SELT (see page 2).

Burley Farms is at the geographic center of our service area, providing convenient access across our region. We envision it serving as SELT's hub for community-based conservation with:

- Indoor and outdoor space to support nature-based engagement programming,
- Year-round events led by SELT and other community groups,
- A working farm growing fresh food, and
- Public trails sharing nearly 1,000 acres along the Lamprey River.

This vision is rooted in SELT's belief that personal connections to conserved land will be critical to inspiring future generations to forever

safeguard the lands that SELT has protected as a result of your generous support.

Finally, as our 40th year anniversary arrives in 2020, we've outgrown our third office space in Exeter; at Burley Farms, we have the chance to build for the next 40+ years. SELT's headquarters will feature super energy-efficient construction (designed by Sheldon Pennoyer Architects) as well as enough on-site solar production to power, heat, and cool the full campus.

VISION IN ACTION

With its focus on engaging people with nature, the envisioned campus is named the Center for People and Nature at Burley Farms. This issue of *SELT Views* shares this vision and its impact in greater detail. Join me in imagining one day at Burley Farms (see pages 4-5) or learn about the budding partnerships and work already underway (see "Vision in Action" on pages 2 and 6). Over the course of the next year, SELT will finalize the design, seek the remaining funds, and invite your support to make it possible. We look forward to sharing more and building this vision with you.



Close the Gap for Scruton's Dairy Farm!

Dairy farms are struggling to stay afloat due to low milk prices set at the national level. Scruton's Dairy, a fifth-generation farm in Farmington, is no exception, and they've survived by hard work, careful planning, and attention to herd health. At an LCHIP award ceremony last year, Jason Scruton shared, "Each generation, starting with my great grandfather and now my son, has planted and harvested on this ground. I feel that connection back through the generations, and now with this conservation easement, I also feel that connection move up through our future generations as well. It makes me feel good to know that our farm will remain long after I'm gone." A conservation easement will ensure their land is protected for farming forever – and it will help Scruton's Dairy continue during these lean times. It's a win-win. But, even with funding from LCHIP and other funders, there remains a small shortfall of \$15,000 as we went to press. Learn more or make a donation to help protect Scruton's Dairy Farm at seltnh.org/scrutons.

You can help!

What's Next for Birch Ridge

With the excitement around the newly created Birch Ridge Community Forest (BRCF), we've understandably gotten a lot of eager questions about trails, parking, maps, and more. By the end of this winter, SELT and the Birch Ridge Community Forest Steering Committee hope to have a management plan completed, outlining the near-term plan for public trails and forest/wildlife management. This plan will be the culmination of a year of discussions, property visits, and consultations with resource experts and the community. BRCF was heavily impacted by the prior owner's aggressive timber harvest resulting in an extensive logging road system that has a high risk of immediate and ongoing erosion.

"With many years of restoration work ahead of us, we ask the public to be patient," notes Brian Hart, Executive Director. "Good planning and implementation take time, but the outcome will be worth it."

In addition to the planning that's underway, SELT is working with the Powdermill Snowmobile Club to continue winter access to Corridor 22, a main east-west snowmobile trail that bisects the BRCF. Already preliminary archaeological investigations have been completed, clearing the way for temporary repairs to the trail. In 2020, SELT anticipates beginning repairs and restoration of Corridor 22 to meet best practices and ensure that it lasts with routine maintenance.

For those of you who are eager to explore Birch Ridge Community Forest, we encourage you to sign up for a SELT field trip (see the back cover). You can also stay up to date by signing up to receive our monthly e-news or visiting seltnh.org/birchridge. Updates will be posted as new information is available.

VISION IN ACTION

Growing Greenways

How do you grow a conservation area from tens of acres to hundreds and hopefully more than a thousand acres? One parcel at a time. With a lot of patience, perseverance, and support from you and partners like the Lamprey River Advisory Committee, SELT is working to build a large interconnected block of conservation land from Pawtuckaway State Park to Great Bay. Within that broad swath, SELT has focused along the Wild and Scenic Lamprey River near the Burley Farms in Epping. The newest piece of this conservation block is the 75-acre Thayer Tract that was purchased by SELT this summer – in part due to the generosity of SELTies – thank you! Nearly a half-mile of remote meandering river frontage, important floodplain systems, and upland habitat are key features of this tract. And perhaps even more important, the Thayer Tract expands the potential for community engagement at the proposed Center for People and Nature.

As the bird flies, the Thayer Tract is a short distance from the Piscassic Greenway, another core block of land in the Pawtuckaway to Great Bay Greenway. This summer SELT completed a 320-foot long boardwalk (pictured below) to create a loop trail at this popular property. Looking years out, SELT hopes that these and other trails will connect the Piscassic Greenway to the Burley Farms and beyond – all the way to Pawtuckaway. Imagine that!



PHOTO: JIM NAVICKAS



Join us for our
Grand Opening!
Celebrate New Trails at Stonehouse Forest

PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, LLC.

Stonehouse Forest, No Longer A Secret

Grand Opening To Celebrate New Trails

Natural ponds, wetlands, wildlife, glacial erratics, small cliffs, and human history all abound at Stonehouse Forest. Exploring this beautiful land was the motivation for many to donate to SELT for its purchase in 2017. We are thrilled to announce that just shy of two years and hundreds of emails, phone calls, draft plans, and hours of physical work later, Stonehouse Forest will be opening to the public on October 19, 2019.

Staff and volunteers are busy raking out and blazing new trails, closing others to protect habitats, improving the woods road, and making parking lots. To many, it might seem like this is a simple process. But, it's a complex plan to balance our desires to explore and the need to protect water quality and wildlife habitat. We worked with a team of specialists including archaeologists, biologists, and foresters to build trails that work for people and nature.

According to Deborah Goard, Stewardship Director, "It's important to get people out on our lands to spend time reenergizing and reconnecting with nature. In fact, visitors to Stonehouse Forest can spend hours walking the trail network without repeating a trail."

Saturday, October 19 • 9:00 AM–Noon

Ribbon-cutting 9:00 AM *Field Trips* 9:30 AM

Join us for a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Stonehouse Bakery donuts, and three guided hikes.

RSVP at tinyurl.com/StonehouseForestOpening

At the Grand Opening, guests can be some of the first to explore these new trails. Three guided hikes rated from easy to difficult will be offered.

Archaeology of Stonehouse Forest – easy

Join Jake Tumelaire, local archaeologist, and learn about the fascinating history of Pre-Contact Stonehouse Forest in Barrington. Jake will teach us about the natural resources of the area and what likely drew Pre-Contact Native Americans to this beautiful but rugged landscape. We will also visit and learn about the Marison Farmstead. The walk will stick to the trails and is rated as easy.

Explore the New Trails – moderate

Come see what we've been up to at the Stonehouse Forest! Join Duane Hyde (our Land Conservation Director) and John Wallace (Barrington Conservation Commission Chair) on a hike to explore the new trail systems! The walk will stick to the trails and is rated as moderate.

Black Gum Swamp and Stonehouse Pond Ledge Hike – difficult

Join Phil Auger and Parker Schuerman (our Land Managers) for a hardy walk to the Black Gum Swamp. There you'll learn about the black gum tree (also called black tupelo) – these trees are some of the oldest living hardwoods and a rarity in New Hampshire! After that, hike up to the ledge at Stonehouse Pond and soak in the iconic view and fall colors. This walk will include some bushwhacking and is rated as difficult.

We hope you can join us, but if you can't, check out seltnh.org for a downloadable map and trail guide. (Coming soon!)

All in a Day at Burley Farms

The Center for People and Nature will have a profound impact on SELT's work and reach. To better illustrate its effect, let's imagine a day at the Center for People and Nature.

1 It's a late September, Friday morning at the farm. The sun is just peeking over the horizon; morning fog is slowly burning off. Sitting on the farmhouse porch, the farmer smiles at the fruits of her labor. She's thinking about what to pick, preparing for the busy farmer's market and her weekly CSA pick-up later this afternoon.

2 As she walks out to her fields, a hunter ablaze in orange steps from the edge of the woods. He's weary from dragging the bounty of his dawn hunt, an eight-point white-tailed deer. He hunts to feed his family, a tradition passed down by generations. The farmer waves in appreciation, seeing the connection. She knows his hunt will help her crops survive and thrive.

3 The sun reflects off the solar panels on the roof of the Center, providing 100% of the SELT's annual power needs. The traffic on Route 125 is a quiet murmur as the sun rises, and the first of the SELT staff arrive for the day.

4 By 9am the offices are humming with many guests coming for many reasons. A seasoned landowner considering conservation options for her family's land arrives for a late morning meeting. The staff holds the meeting in the conference room overlooking the fields, hoping to inspire her with the view of successfully conserved land. By the end of the meeting, she leaves resolved in her decision to protect her family's land and legacy forever.

5 A committee of Seacoast Eat Local meets next, planning for the coming season of winter farmer's markets, and discussing a potential permanent market. They are just one of many community organizations who use the Center for meetings, offices, and events.

6 At noon, a bus chortles in the parking lot, kids emptying from its yellow hull. The quiet whisper of the farm is replaced with the giggles, shouts, and chatter of 50 children from a local school. Can you see them, full of life and energy as they gather in the field? After a program and lunch, they hike to the beaver pond and search for frogs and turtles with leaders from the White Pine Programs, SELT's partner in nature engagement.

7 Back in the fields, the farmer and her small crew pack up red peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, and carrots, loading a pick-up truck that rambles back to the barn. They wash and pack up the produce, just in time for the first of 20 CSA families arriving for a weekly pick-up.





2

9

Tent and Gathering Space

5

4

Center for People and Nature (new construction)

3

6

10

10 Another car pulls into the trailhead and a middle-aged man steps out. His clothing suggests a long trail run and off he goes. As he runs the trails, the week's worries disappear from his face. The furrows on his forehead soften. Beads of sweat form, and a smile slowly arrives as his heart races in the beauty of the trails.

1

John Prescott Chase Farmhouse, circa 1790

8

Existing Barn, circa 1970

9 Late in the day, the sound of clanging metal can be heard, as a sledge hammer drives a metal stake into the ground, holding up the stays on a taut white tent. The tent is for SELT's TrailFest, now in its 5th year and drawing more than 1,000 people for trail running and time together.

7

All in a day

8 Cars from CSA customers begin arriving. Doors slam shut, with young kids trailing moms and dads into the barn. One child squeals at a hornworm that hitchhiked on a tomato in their share.

Now imagine 365 days of engagement at Burley Farms. How many thousands of people could be connected to SELT's vision and work through this place? How many generations can be connected to each other and to this land through their experiences? How many could be inspired to save, steward, and share the lands they love?

Over the coming year, SELT will be completing the design process, seeking the remaining funds, and inviting your support to make this vision possible. To discuss how you can support this vision, please contact Deputy Director Beverly Shadley at 603-778-6088 or bshadley@selt.nh.org. Read more about the Center for People and Nature at selt.nh.org/burleyfarms.

Nurturing the Next Generation of Land Lovers

Just how do you instill a love of land that lasts a lifetime? This question was one that SELT explored this past year as part of a study regarding nature-based programming in southeastern New Hampshire and Burley Farms.

“It’s a fundamental question for us and for all conservation organizations,” explains Beverly Shadley, SELT’s Deputy Director. “Who will care about the lands we have worked so hard to protect?”

The wide-ranging study included interviews with more than 20 nature-based education leaders, a review of relevant research, a full-day meeting with guest experts, and extensive discussions. Key findings include:

- Partner when possible
- Engage youth now
- Provide repeated experiences
- Focus on wild play
- Build intentionally and steadily

“What’s great is that this study is not sitting on the shelf – we’ve put its recommendations into action through new and emerging partnerships,” explains Beverly. “We’re not yet experts in this area, but we can partner with those who are.”

This fall, at Burley Farms and beyond, those partnerships are in full view. The newest is with White Pine Programs out of York, Maine. White Pine Programs brings nature into people’s lives through repeated immersion in nature with mindful, skilled mentors. For one Saturday a month between October and May, they will offer a day-long program called Fire + Water. This outdoor, all weather program is designed specifically for youth ages 7-14 years old. Learn more or sign up at whitepineprograms.org/programs/firewater.

“Kids can look forward to fun and challenging times in wild places with fire-making, wild edibles, shelter building, navigation, games, and more,” explains Matt Entwistle, Program Director at White Pine Programs. In this case, SELT is providing a varied landscape – with wetlands, fields, forests, and more at the Burley Farms. White Pine Programs provides caring, skilled female and male mentors who empower the youth with compassion, respect, self-awareness, and community.

And the youth? They get the chance to be independent, to be outdoors all day long, and to explore, create, learn, and collaborate.

For even younger kids, exploration and curiosity are always present – they only need to be nurtured. SELT’s continued collaboration with Hike It Baby Seacoast does just that. Hike it Baby, a non-profit organization, builds communities that support getting outside with children from birth to school age. What began as a one-time Earth Day hike with SELT has blossomed into a series of field trips spanning the entire year. (See upcoming dates on the back page of the newsletter.)

The field trips are led in part by SELT’s Get Outside Adventure Team (GOAT) volunteer Kim Cote. Kim is a licensed

educator with a desire to help young children connect with the physical world and the environment. “With their curiosity, the field trips don’t always go as planned ... we might discover something even better,” comments Kim.

Things don’t always go to plan with kids and nature, as evidenced by a recent summer hike. The plan: find turtles. The reality: none were to be seen. That didn’t deter the kids. What really motivated them? Acorns.

According to Kim, their questions nearly outnumbered their



Children discovering the wonders of acorns with Hike it Baby Seacoast and SELT.
PHOTO: LIZZY FRANCESCHINI

collection of acorns: Where do they come from? Do we need to save them for the squirrels? How do squirrel families work? Why weren’t these here before?

This self-driven inquiry is critical for the learning process, deepens the connection to place, and is much appreciated by the caregivers involved.

Lizzy Franceschini, SELT member and Hike it Baby Seacoast leader agrees, “Kim is so talented in leading these young children in their discoveries. She might point out something for them to observe, but she doesn’t direct them to a preconceived conclusion. She encourages them to explore and inquire.”

Kim sums up the motivation for volunteerism, saying “I hope that I’m helping these families plant seeds to help them become attached to our land in a way that makes them want to protect and care for it for years to come.”

And that’s exactly what SELT hopes too!

“These partnerships represent the promise of what is possible at the Center at Burley Farms,” Beverly explains. “Imagine all that we could do by having the indoor spaces of the Center available to support partners in the use and exploration of the woods, wetlands, and fields of the Burley Farms!”

Passing the Torch

As the season changes, we're honoring another transition here at SELT. Our long-time Land Manager, Phil Auger, will be retiring from SELT this October after working through the busy summer season and familiarizing our new Land Manager, Parker Schuerman, with properties and volunteers.

Many of you know Phil from a field trip or a volunteer opportunity on a SELT property. He's been involved with the land trust since before SELT was even created. In the beginning, Phil was a member of the Rockingham Land Trust Board of Directors and continued in that role as the organization merged with Seacoast Land Trust to form the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire – now SELT. As the organization grew, Phil retired from UNH Cooperative Extension, just as a need arose for SELT to have a Land Manager. With SELT's growing portfolio of fee ownerships, what started as a part-time gig is now a full-time responsibility.

Looking back on his time with the organization, Phil shared, "I have nothing but positive things to say. I've been really happy with the mergers; they worked well. And the growth in conservation has been extremely positive for the region."

"Phil is being humble, one of his many traits," comments Brian Hart, Executive Director. "I've worked with Phil since 2002, and his contributions to SELT and to conservation in this region are immeasurable. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of landowners and the history of land, a no nonsense get-it-done approach to his work, and a deep passion for our region's lands."

This year one of Phil's priorities has been the Piscassic Greenway. He explains, "The Greenway was a rich piece of property from the start. But we've made it even better." With the completion of a 320-foot bridge this summer, the winter-only Byrne Spur Trail is now passable year-round, something envisioned when the property was first bought in 2006. The bridge offers a viewing platform from which visitors can view the wetland habitat and abundant wildlife.

What's next for Phil? Well, if his first retirement gives any indication: more work. He's got lots of projects on his mind and we're grateful he plans to continue volunteering with SELT.



Phil at the Mast Road Natural Area Grand Opening.

PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, LLC.

A Parker for Our Preserves

After departing the US Marine Corps in the nineties, Parker began working in conservation and has remained in the field for nearly 30 years. Parker brings with him easy-going enthusiasm and experience as a land steward and fire ecologist (he's a "fire boss" too!) for organizations such as the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, The Nature Conservancy, and The Nantucket Land Bank. In alignment with this conservation work, Parker loves teaching others about the natural world.

As SELT's new Land Manager, Parker will be responsible for property management, volunteer work days, guiding field trips, and more.

About his new position with SELT, Parker shared, "It's really exciting to be a part of SELT's work to steward and care for land to benefit people and nature. I'm looking forward to documenting the land and watching species thrive there over time – it's what I want for my future grandkid's generation to be able to see. Let's get outside together!"



Board Members

Samuel Reid President, Dover
Ann Welsh Vice President, Durham
Rob Wofchuck Treasurer, Brentwood
Joan Pratt Secretary, Exeter

Terry Coyle Portsmouth
Bill Campbell Exeter
Thomas Chamberlin New Castle
Dan Clapp Madbury
Bruce Goodwin Kingston
Pam Hall Portsmouth
Scott Marion Rye
Linda McGivern Rollinsford
Brent Merriam Epping
Robin Najjar Portsmouth
Laurie Smith Dover
VJ Strehl New Castle
Dan Wyand Portsmouth

Staff

Zoe Aldag Outreach & Volunteer Manager
Dani Almeida Conservation Easement Steward
Phil Auger Land Manager (*retiring October 2019*)
Allison Bolia Development Specialist
Shaun Dillon Conservation Coordinator
Deborah Goard Stewardship Director
Brian Hart Executive Director
Duane Hyde Land Conservation Director
Jeremy Lougee Conservation Project Manager
Kylee Noga Executive & Operations Assistant
Jennifer Pribble Communications Manager
Parker Schuerman Land Manager
Bev Shadley Deputy Director
Rue Teel Seasonal Land Steward

Questions, Comments, Concerns?

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

6 Center St., PO Box 675, Exeter, NH 03833
 Website: seltnh.org

SELT VIEWS is published periodically and is the newsletter of the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire. Edited by Jennifer Pribble and Brian Hart.

Printed on recycled paper.

The Internal Revenue Service continues to recognize the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, Tax ID number 02-0355374. Contributions are tax-deductible.

A Mark of Distinction

The accreditation seal **AFFIRMS** national quality standards are met.



- ✓ SOUND FINANCES
- ✓ ETHICAL CONDUCT
- ✓ RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE
- ✓ LASTING STEWARDSHIP

www.landtrustaccreditation.org

VISION *IN ACTION*

Building a Vision—The Center for People and Nature at Burley Farms



see page 1

Stonehouse Forest Grand Opening

see page 3

Get Outside

Come get outside with us! Check out the events below and sign up at seltnh.org/events-page. Suggested donation is \$5/person or \$10/family. Please register early; our events fill quickly. Registration closes at Noon the day before the event.

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | LOCATION |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Get Outside with the Adventure Team | Learn about tree identification, water quality, and invasive plants at the Greenway. | Piscassic Greenway, Newfields | October 11 10:00 AM-Noon |
| GRAND OPENING | Be one of the first to explore the new trails at Stonehouse Forest! | Stonehouse Forest, Barrington | October 19 9:00 AM-Noon |
| Book Club | Fall Pick: <i>The Overstory</i> by Richard Powers. Purchase a copy at Water Street Bookstore. | SELT Office, Exeter | October 24 5:30 PM-7:00 PM |
| Hike It Baby | This field trip is geared to children (birth to age 5) and their caregivers. | Stonehouse Forest, Barrington | November 5 10:15 AM-Noon |
| Hike It Baby | This field trip is geared to children (birth to age 5) and their caregivers. | Charles E. Rand Memorial Forest, Rye | December 4 10:15 AM-Noon |
| Hike/Snowshoe | Hike the expansive Birch Ridge Community Forest and take a breath of fresh air before holiday hustle. | Birch Ridge Community Forest, New Durham | December 7 9:00 AM-11:30 AM |

Generous support from the Center for Assessment makes these field trips possible. Learn more about our Get Outside sponsor at nciea.org.