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## Joyful Work

**W**hen Walt Roy retired and moved to Kingston, he quickly got back to work: volunteering. With a great appreciation for wilderness and spending time outside, Walt quickly became involved with Friends of Kingston Open Space (FOKOS). Prior to SELT acquiring the Tucker and French Family Forest, Walt and others from FOKOS helped remove dumped trash from the forest. Then, after SELT acquired the land in 2011, he became very involved in the trail building work. That was Walt's first experience with SELT.

Reflecting about volunteering, Walt shared, "I want to help out in a small way. There are staff members who really know how to get conservation done – I think that's the big stuff. But, I can help out in a small way to help rebuild habitats and keep trails open for passive recreation."

That's not small stuff! In fact, according to Debbie Goard, Stewardship Director, "That's the stuff of action and without our volunteers this work wouldn't get done."

Walt is a member of the volunteer team that took on the task of building SELT's longest bridge span of 320 feet. In fact, Walt installed the golden (final) screw on October 25! This was just one of the many land management tasks that Walt helped with for the last five months while contributing 120 hours of his time.



Walt Roy, SELT's 2019 Volunteer of the Year.

CREDIT: PAULA SINGER

Above: This 320-foot boardwalk provides year-round access to the Bryne Spur Trail at the Piscassic Greenway.

PHOTO: JIM NAVICKAS

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## Finding Joyful Work

Once the land management and stewardship activities are put to bed for the winter, we'll be getting ready to host the next volunteer training session.

Here are just a few ways to get involved:



### GOAT (Get Outside Adventure Team)

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! 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.



### Vital Administrative Work

Do you enjoy helping in an office setting? Is organizing your passion? We need help throughout the year.

Tell us about your volunteer interests at [tinyurl.com/seltvolunteer](https://tinyurl.com/seltvolunteer). We'll let you know about ways to get involved and upcoming training days.



## Volunteer Program continued from page 1

Walt's the kind of guy who enjoys giving back and he keeps busy doing it. Since we started tracking hours in 2016, he's clocked more than 600 volunteer hours with SELT. In addition to SELT, he volunteers for the Kingston Conservation Commission, the Kingston Heritage Commission, the Kingston museum, and serves lunch to seniors on Mondays.

Habitat restoration and recreation are the two biggest reasons that Walt volunteers for SELT. He's been actively involved in restorations of two gravel pits for turtles (see page 3 about the DeYoung-Fralic Conservation Area) and habitat creation for the species that thrive in dense, shrubby young forest.

Walt shared that he volunteers for SELT because, "It suits me and I know I'm doing it for a good cause. I'm spending time out in the woods, doing physical work, giving each other a hard time ... it's joyful effort! And, I really like working with the younger seasonal staff in the summers. It's clear to me that this environmental work attracts hardworking and caring people. I love knowing that these young people are going to be carrying on the work far into the future!"

Because of his hard work, dedication, and giving spirit, SELT is recognizing Walt as the 2019 Volunteer of the Year and presented the award at the Volunteer Appreciation Party this November.

"Walt is a huge asset for our organization, and we are so grateful for his time," began Zoe Aldag, Outreach and Volunteer Manager. She continued, "Without the support of our volunteers, our small staff would not be able to maintain trail networks, offer field trips, attend community events, and so much more."

Walt is just one person in a small army of volunteers that helps SELT get the work done. In fact, thanks to an expanded volunteer program, that army nearly doubled from 130 to 212 in one year.

According to Beverly Shadley, Deputy Director, "With Zoe now dedicated to outreach events and volunteers, we are positioned to better support our current volunteers and expand opportunities to help them share their time and talents in ways that they find fulfilling."

"Volunteers are," Zoe shared, "SELT's best asset. And, working with these kind, spirited, and motivated people who want to give back to a cause they hold dear is wonderful. I am so grateful to each and every one of you who are involved."

If you are reading this and you want to get involved, SELT has created an online form so that we can match your interests and availability with SELT's needs. Visit [tinyurl.com/seltvolunteer](https://tinyurl.com/seltvolunteer) and complete the form to get started on *your* joyful work.

*The expansion of the volunteer program is made possible with support from Timberland, Revision Energy, Kennebunk Savings, Normandeau Associates, and Vapotherm.*



Longtime land management volunteer Walt Roy, center, directs work-day volunteers on their bridge building tasks. PHOTO: COURTESY.

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**"It's clear to me that this environmental work attracts hardworking and caring people. I love knowing that these young people are going to be carrying on the work far into the future!"**

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# More than an Eyesore

Old gravel pits are not known for their aesthetic appeal. At first glance, they might even be considered ugly. Perhaps ugly is useful.

Mike Marchand, Certified Wildlife Biologist with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department agrees, “There’s more to sand and gravel pits than a wasteland... there’s more than the scars. The pits represent a unique habitat for wildlife, especially when near ponds, streams, and wetlands.”

A recent report from The Wildlife Society, titled “Managing Reclaimed Sand and Gravel Mines” affirms Mike’s observations. The report found that “[Gravel pits] also contain areas with brushy edges, bare and dry ground, relatively high ground temperatures, flowering annuals and perennials, limited tall trees, boulder piles and rocky outcrops that are important to many species.” These species may include turtles, snakes, shrubland birds like warblers and sparrows, as well as bees and other pollinators.

Through the reclamation of a gravel pit, critical habitats can be created or maintained. State and local reclamation guidelines address safety, erosion, water quality, and aesthetics. Some reclaimed pits are developed into housing lots, some are turned into grassy town parks, and some are designed to primarily benefit wildlife.

Reclamation for wildlife habitat doesn’t always look pretty. Shrubland and young forests are hard to come by in southern New Hampshire, but they play an important role for many species as does the barren sandy, gravelly, sun-exposed land.

In the spring, SELT embarked on a plan to reclaim the retired gravel pit at the DeYoung-Fralic Conservation Area. Situated on the Exeter River in Brentwood, this property offered a chance to create habitat for rare or at-risk species. Guided by a plan developed by the US Natural Resources Conservation Service and with restoration funding from its Wetlands Reserve Program, the final plan balanced town needs and the concerns of our wildlife biologist consultants. One need was to reduce the slopes of the pit for public safety.

Once the slopes were reduced, and wetland was created, the land was seeded with two plants: oats (an annual) and little blue-stem grass (a native perennial). The oats provided help with more immediate erosion control so that the native grass could take hold. Little blue-stem is a grass that bunches. It is a natural fit for the sandy habitat, but it will not ever create a swath of lush green grass.

It might also seem messy to leave cut trees and branches from the work lying throughout, but they, too, serves a purpose for native creatures who need cover to protect them from predators or the sun in the height of the summer.

So, keep in mind, that not all conservation is pretty, but it does serve a purpose.

## During

Reducing the slope: April 2, 2019

PHOTO: JENNIFER PRIBBLE



## After

Slopes reduced, wetland created: May 31, 2019

PHOTO: PHIL AUGER

# New Trails

More than 150 people helped celebrate the opening of new trails at Stonehouse Forest on October 19, 2019 by participating in guided hikes and comradery. You, too, can get outside and explore this 1,700-acre forest, which now includes Stonehouse Pond. A map of the trails is available online at [seltnh.org/trails-a-maps](http://seltnh.org/trails-a-maps).

Stonehouse Forest, Barrington, NH

CREDIT: KATE WILCOX



# Land Conservation

## Lasting Legacy Made

**R**olling fields give way to a forested expanse that sits within a 1,240 unfragmented forest block. This peaceful 55-acre property in Barrington is busy serving people and nature, and thanks to the Belleville family, it will be conserved in perpetuity.

Ernie and Nancy Belleville have lived on this land for 50 years. Maples are tapped by a local maple syrup producer in the spring. The fields, loved by pollinators, are mowed once a year to knock down the invasive plants like multiflora rose and to maintain field habitat. In addition to the forest and rolling hills, the land includes a small pond and significant wetland system that create a well-balanced ecosystem for a variety of animals that seem to be in constant motion.

Ernie shared, “We love all the animals here. At one time, we had beef cattle and horses. I’ve always hunted here. We have deer, birds, bears, wild turkeys, turtles, snakes, otters, and more.”

It was this love of wildlife that inspired them to protect the



The Belleville’s (Nancy and Ernie, inset photo) generously donated a conservation on their land pictured here. PHOTO: COURTESY



land by generously donating a conservation easement on the land to SELT. He continued, “We knew we didn’t want to see the land developed. Our grandson will inherit the property. We talked it through with him and he agreed it was a good idea – we spent a lot of his younger years exploring the woods roads together.” His grandson is connected to this

place, too, and wants it to be protected forever.

Land Conservation Director, Duane Hyde, shared that, “We’re so appreciative of their humble generosity.

This gift extends

their legacy of loving the land and everything on it. With this easement donation, the rural character of the region will be maintained along with the resources for people and nature.”

*This project was made possible with support from Barrington Conservation Commission Conservation Fund and the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership.*

## Protecting the Source for Safe & Plentiful Water

**C**ities around the country are looking for solutions to ensure their drinking water is safe and plentiful. Part of the solution in the Granite State is to partner with land trusts like SELT to keep clean water clean by protecting water supply lands. Thanks to the leadership of the City of Rochester, this year SELT will accept a conservation easement donated on 95 acres of the City’s reservoir lands in Farmington. This easement represents the final of a three-project partnership that already conserved an additional 220 acres through the Bullwinkle conservation easement and SELT’s Berry Brook Forest. All together, these projects protect a chunk of the watershed and immediate shoreline of Rochester’s drinking water reservoirs that serve more than 30,000 area residents. Additionally, wildlife habitats will be preserved and a 16,000-acre unfragmented block of forest will be maintained without the pressure of development.

*This project was made possible with support from the New Hampshire Drinking Water & Groundwater Trust Fund, the City of Rochester, Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership, and Mooseplate.*



Clean drinking water is now protected for residents of Rochester.

PHOTO: JEREMY LOUGEE

## Farmland to Sustain us All

Once slated for development, Kinney Hill Farm – located in South Hampton along the border of Massachusetts – is now protected. Atop the drumlin (a rolling geological feature), one can enjoy sweeping views of adjoining farmland and a distant ocean view.

Aside from its beauty, Kinney Hill Farm plays an important role for local agriculture in the Seacoast with 13 acres leased to Heron Pond Farm for vegetable production. “We started leasing to Heron Pond Farm 20 years ago on a smaller scale,” explains owner Jocelyn Van Bokkelen. “The conservation easement was written with them in mind – specifically to keep the land available for farming. We will never not need farms.” The property also includes livestock, an equestrian boarding and riding facility, and hay fields. Wildlife abound throughout the year, with geese and Great Blue Heron using the irrigation pond as a stopover, hawks diving for rodents, and deer, turkeys, skunks and more wandering the woods and fields.

In reflecting on protecting the farm, Jocelyn shares, “I am thrilled that we are able to preserve this land both for future generations of humans who will need to eat, and for the wildlife that is dependent upon it for survival. Living here among this diversity of life is a privilege that I cherish, and it brings me great joy to know that I can preserve it for future generations.” Thank you, Jocelyn, for partnering with SELT to create that future!

*The conservation of Kinney Hill Farm was made possible with a generous bargain easement sale to SELT.*



PHOTOS: JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, LLC.

## Goodwill Grows

Working with the Town of Barrington, SELT will soon add 135 acres to the existing 156-acre conservation easement on the Goodwill Conservation Area. This Town-owned land features an established trail system (including the Winnie the Pooh trail), Richardson Pond, brooks, and more than 16 acres of wetlands within an unbroken block of forest. Plus, the entire property is within the source water protection area for waterways that provide drinking water for the City of Portsmouth. Find a trail map at [barringtonconcom.org](http://barringtonconcom.org).

*This project was made possible with funding from the Mooseplate Program, the City of Portsmouth, the Fields Pond Foundation, the Barrington Conservation Fund, and the New Hampshire Drinking Water & Groundwater Trust Fund.*



Wetlands at the Goodwill Conservation Area. PHOTO: DUANE HYDE

# The Season of Giving

## TAX SMART OPTIONS DURING RETIREMENT

**A**ge has its benefits, or so the saying goes. Donors who are at least 70.5 years old have additional motivation to support their favorite charities like SELT while reducing their tax liability: a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from their Individual Retirement Account (IRA).

“We appreciated the opportunity to give via a charitable distribution from our IRA,” said Mary Avery who, along with her husband Paul, is a committed SELTie. “SELT is very important to me and Paul, and the ability to use this tool allows us to support something we care about deeply while providing us with helpful tax benefits.” Another Exeter family, who recently made their most generous gift to date from their IRA, explained “it was a win-win for everyone.” What makes it a win-win for you and SELT? Much!

Your gift counts toward your required minimum distribution – often referred to as the RMD – meaning that you can reduce your tax liability and increase your support for a charity of choice.

Here are some of the benefits and qualifications:

- Donors can transfer up to \$100,000 per year to charitable organizations.
- Such charitable distributions count toward required minimum distributions but are excluded from your adjusted gross income (AGI).
- You must be at least 70.5 or older at the time of the gift.
- Transfers must be made directly to SELT from a traditional IRA by your IRA administrator. Call your IRA administrator and ask how you can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution.

Be tax smart and joyful in your giving – by contributing to SELT through your Individual Retirement Account. To learn more, contact Beverly Shadley, Deputy Director, at 603-658-9752 or [bshadley@seltnh.org](mailto:bshadley@seltnh.org).

*Please note that charitable distributions from an IRA are not eligible for a charitable tax deduction, since they are exempt from income tax. Please contact your tax advisor to confirm how you would benefit from this giving tool.*



If SELT brings you joy, consider gifting a membership to a family member or friend.

You can also give a gift to honor or remember a loved one.

### WAYS TO GIVE

 603-778-6088

 [seltnh.org/donate](https://seltnh.org/donate)

 6 Center Street  
Exeter, NH 03833

 PO Box 675  
Exeter, NH 03833



## Gifts to Show You Care

SELT GEAR IS FOR SALE IN OUR EXETER OFFICE!



### PINT GLASS

**Drink it. Save it.**

Clean water is vital to all living creatures. And, crafting local beer. \$10

### ENAMEL MUG Campfire style



This cheerful enamel mug is light enough to pack on all your outdoor adventures. Or, to enjoy a warm drink while curled up with your favorite book. \$10

### KNIT BEANIES

**Now in 2 colors.**

Don't let the cold keep you inside. Grab a knit cap in hunter orange or black! \$13



### TRUCKER HATS

Structured and breathable with a mesh panel at the back, this hat is a popular go-to! \$16



## DOUBLE YOUR GIFT WITH THE PATAGONIA MATCH

**J**ust prior to press time, SELT learned that **Patagonia is matching gifts to SELT, up to \$10,000 per gift, through December 31st, until they've reached a maximum match of \$10,000,000.**

To be counted, gifts to SELT must be made through **Patagonia Action Works**. Don't worry – there's no account or login. Gifts will be processed by the Network for Good and then distributed to SELT. And, Patagonia is covering all processing fees!

**This is a dollar-for-dollar match of gifts from \$1 to \$10,000.** If you haven't yet made your 2019 gift to SELT, now is the time! If you've already made a gift, thank you very much! Just in case you're in a position to give again, this is a great time to do it, with Patagonia doubling your gift.

Learn more and double your donation at [www.patagonia.com/actionworks/grantees/southeast-land-trust-of-nh](http://www.patagonia.com/actionworks/grantees/southeast-land-trust-of-nh)



**Patagonia  
Action  
Works**

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### Questions, Comments, Concerns?

To contact SELT, please call **603-778-6088** or email [info@seltnh.org](mailto:info@seltnh.org).

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**Joyful Work**  
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**The Season of Giving**  
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## Get Outside

Come get outside with us! Check out the events below and sign up at [seltnh.org/events-page](http://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	LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION		
<b>Book Club</b>		We're reading "Oil on Water" by Helon Habila. Grab a copy from Water Street Books (20% of proceeds go back to SELT), then join us for a discussion over food, drink, and good cheer.	SELT Offices, Exeter	1/23/2020	5:30–7 PM
<b>Winter Bonfire</b>		Come hang out with fellow SELTies, On the Wing, and some of their fine feathered friends at our annual bonfire. We'll have s'mores and hot cocoa to share!	Burley Farms, Epping, NH	2/1/2020	3–6 PM
<b>Tree ID Walk</b>		Forester Fred and Phil Auger are at it again! Learn to identify trees in the winter – you're bound to have a few good laughs too!	Tucker & French Family Forest, Kingston	2/8/2020	9AM–12PM
<b>A Garden for Wildlife: Natural Landscaping for a Better Backyard</b>		In partnership with the Durham Public Library, NH Natural Resources Steward and Speaking for Wildlife volunteer Vicki J. Brown will help you plan easy adjustments to your landscaping and gardening practices that will attract backyard pollinators.	Durham Public Library, Durham	2/27/2019	5:30–7 PM
<b>Stonehouse Forest Snowshoe</b>		Bring your own snowshoes for a winter walk in Stonehouse Forest with our GOAT volunteers.	Stonehouse Forest, Barrington	3/7/2020	9:00–11:30 AM

 EASY  MODERATE  DIFFICULT

Generous support from the Center for Assessment makes these field trips possible. Learn more about our Get Outside sponsor at [nceia.org](http://nceia.org).