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## Growing the Greenway

### *Urgent September 1 deadline to add 32 acres to Piscassic Greenway*

**T**here's a remarkable conservation puzzle coming into shape in Newmarket and Newfields and once it's completed, the final picture will add to a jewel of local land conservation.

Thanks to some lightning-in-a-bottle timing (as well as a little bit of luck), SELT now has the opportunity to purchase the Gaziano Tract, a parcel of nearly 32 acres abutting the Piscassic Greenway.

Since the early 2000s, area residents and conservation organizations have sought to conserve this amazing property because of its critical drinking water protection value, rich farm soils, and extraordinary wildlife habitat. The Gaziano Tract is well loved for its sweeping scenery along the dirt section of Neal Mill Road; for those who've walked or biked along this section, you can speak to the astounding views of the sweeping hayfields.

Now, time is of the essence. SELT must purchase the Gaziano property by September 1!

"I'm thrilled to know we have this chance to protect the Gaziano property," says Ellen Snyder, member of the Newmarket Conservation Commission. "Conserving this property – bounded by the last undeveloped Class VI road in Newmarket, the Piscassic River, and other conserved land – will secure exceptional public values. These include a large network of wetlands along the river that contribute to the recharge of a nearby municipal well, a popular recreational trailhead and corridor along an historic and scenic route, and a unique and unfragmented landscape that harbors diverse wildlife and offers solitude for nature and people."

Previous efforts had always fallen short with no viable route to conservation. In fact, last December all was thought lost when the property was under contract for development in this red hot real estate market.

But then in mid-June, the deal stalled, the land was back on the market, and the briefest of windows was cracked open. And that's when SELT entered into a time-sensitive agreement to acquire the Gaziano Tract, with a **closing deadline of September 1, 2021!**

**Time is  
Tight—help  
us meet our  
goal!**

Above: The scenic views of the Gaziano property.

© JERRY MONKMAN,  
ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, LLC

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# The Comeback of the Century

## SELT Helps Find a Home for a Line of Lonely American Chestnuts

It is May 1, 2021 and a group of volunteers are gathered at a SELT property. They are listening to a rundown of their day's duties, prepared to take their marching orders on behalf of one of the most unique rescue missions in conservation history.

Today, they will be planting a series of American chestnut saplings in a small parcel of land that was carefully selected due to its soil makeup and sun and shade mix. This endeavor represents a small cog in a nationwide effort by the American Chestnut Foundation to generate a series of observable micro-forests. The purpose: to gather data on ideal planting locations, which will then be used for bold, future attempts to breed a new generation of chestnuts.

Because here's the thing: American chestnuts, once dominant in North America and widely considered the finest chestnuts in the world, are few and far between.

A large deciduous tree and part of the beech family, the American chestnut was obliterated by chestnut blight, a fungus that was introduced from East Asia in the early 20th century.



Volunteers prepare for a day's worth of planting. CREDIT: SELT STAFF

Some estimates put the American chestnut mortality rate in the first five decades since the blight between three and four billion.

To answer this existential threat, the American Chestnut Foundation was founded in 1983 to work on a path towards American chestnut rebirth and resilience. In 2005, the Foundation harvested its first potentially blight-resistant chestnuts and is currently undergoing observation, testing, and planting trials.

And that's what led a small group of volunteers to this small field, shovels at the ready, poised to take part in a grand experiment to save the American chestnut.

The site was identified because it contained specific characteristics: there was well-drained soil with good sun exposure. The specificity of the terrain allows the Foundation to compare the chestnuts' success in different landscapes, giving them data to identify suitable growing conditions for future tree lines.

On the SELT side, Land Manager Parker Schuerman transported the trees in the SELT work truck and served as point person, helping coordinate the event.

"For us, management of SELT's lands goes beyond what would be considered typical forestry and wildlife habitat management," says Deborah Goard, SELT's Stewardship Director. "Welcoming volunteers and groups like the American Chestnut Foundation to our properties is incredibly rewarding."

Among the volunteers was a cadre of seven students from Dover High School and St. Thomas Aquinas School. Tim Elliott, a Dover High School math teacher and member of the American Chestnut Foundation, liaised with local teachers to bring the students to Two Rivers and pitch in.

"The American Chestnut Foundation likes to support events with young people," he says. "I think the students enjoyed the planting and some have already asked me if we're going to do it again."

For now, it is time to wait and watch – and see if a small line of American chestnuts planted in Epping by a group of passionate volunteers will play a role in the conservation comeback of the century.





An American chestnut gets ready for its new home.

CREDIT: SELT STAFF

# Get Outside! Summer 2021 Outreach Events

Come get outside with us! Check out the events below and sign up at [seltnh.org/events](http://seltnh.org/events). Suggested donation is \$5 per person or \$10 per family. Please register early; our events fill quickly. Registration closes at noon the day before the event. Group sizes for field trips may be limited due to COVID-19. You can read our COVID-19 Safety Policy here: [seltnh.org/covid19](http://seltnh.org/covid19).

EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	 
<b>AUGUST</b>			
<b>Heron Pond Farm Tour</b>	Visit Kinney Hill Farm and Heron Pond Farm! Check out the Children's Garden and Pick Your Own area and learn about cover cropping, intercropping, irrigation, and much more! Registration is required: <a href="http://www.tinyurl.com/seltoutreach">www.tinyurl.com/seltoutreach</a>	South Hampton, NH	Sunday, August 15 9–11 AM 
<b>Hosted by White Pine Programs – Guided Naturalist Walk</b> This event is in partnership with our friends at White Pine Programs	Join White Pine Programs Educator and Naturalist Ryan Busby for an exploration of Charles E. Rand memorial Forest as he shares techniques for awakening your senses to the living landscape. This event is for adults and children 10+ years of age. Email Ryan Busby with your questions at: <a href="mailto:ryan@whitepineprograms.org">ryan@whitepineprograms.org</a> Registration is required: <a href="http://www.meetup.com/Seacoast-Nature-Connection/events/276403693/">www.meetup.com/Seacoast-Nature-Connection/events/276403693/</a>	North Hampton & Rye, NH	Saturday, August 21 10 AM – Noon 
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
<b>Paddle with SELT &amp; Seven Rivers Paddling</b>	Join SELT and our friends at Seven Rivers Paddling as we take to the waters. Bring your own kayak or stand up paddle board or rent one from Seven Rivers Paddling (SELT doesn't have any extras so be sure to organize your vessel in advance!) Registration is required: <a href="http://www.tinyurl.com/seltoutreach">www.tinyurl.com/seltoutreach</a>	Location TBD	Saturday, September 11 Time TBD  to  
<b>Hosted by White Pine Programs – Guided Naturalist Walk</b> This event is in partnership with our friends at White Pine Programs	Join White Pine Programs Educator and Naturalist Ryan Busby for an exploration of Tucker & French Family Forest as he shares techniques for awakening your senses to the living landscape. This event is for adults and children 10+ years of age. Email Ryan Busby with your questions at: <a href="mailto:ryan@whitepineprograms.org">ryan@whitepineprograms.org</a> Registration is required: <a href="http://www.meetup.com/Seacoast-Nature-Connection/events/276404502/">www.meetup.com/Seacoast-Nature-Connection/events/276404502/</a>	Kingston, NH	Saturday, September 18 10 AM–Noon 
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
<b>Fall Foliage Hike</b>	Join SELT Land Manager, T. Parker Schuerman, on a hike in SELT's Birch Ridge Community Forest in New Durham, NH. The group will hike up and over Rattlesnake Mountain (approximately 2.5 miles). Be sure to come prepared with plenty of snacks and water while you enjoy the views of the fall foliage. Registration is required: <a href="http://www.tinyurl.com/seltoutreach">www.tinyurl.com/seltoutreach</a>	New Durham, NH	Saturday, October 16 1–4 PM   

 EASY   MODERATE    STRENUOUS  TICKET REQUIRED



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

*Growing the Greenway continued from page 1*

“There are a handful of properties I can think of that have been a long-time conservation priority for so many conservation organizations in our region, and this is one of them,” says Duane Hyde, SELT’s Land Conservation Director. “Typically our contracts have fundraising contingencies that give us ample time to secure public and private funds. But in this case, we have just over two months to close from when we signed the sales agreement.”

The Piscassic Greenway was first conserved in 2006 in partnership with Newfields and Newmarket and has been through three additional transactions for expansion over the past 15 years to its present 445-acres. Itself a part of an enormous 4,800+ acre block of linked, conserved lands, the Piscassic Greenway provides valuable drinking water protection, wildlife habitat preservation, and miles of outdoor recreation trails, used by hikers, bikers, skiers, and snowmobilers.

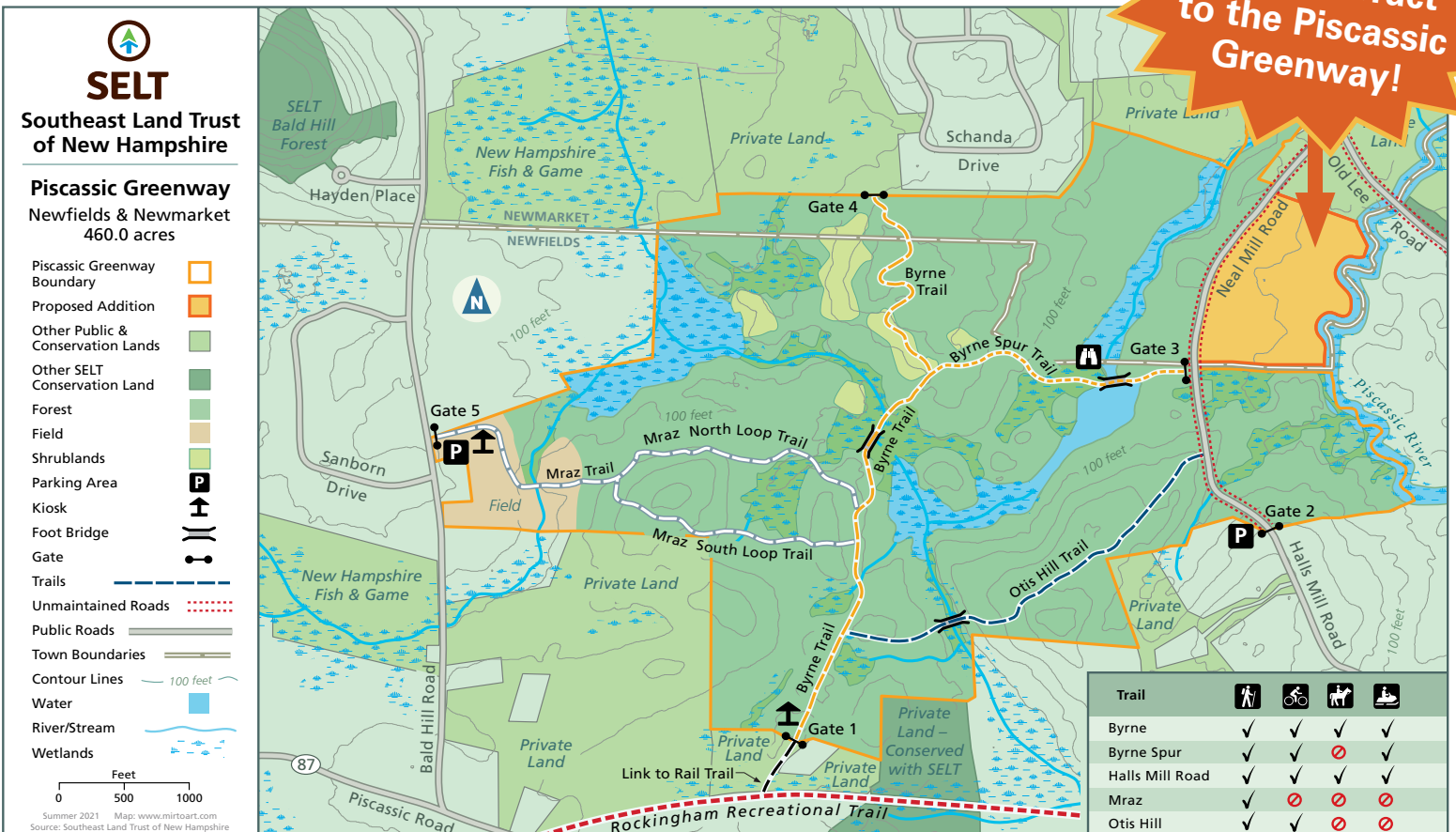
The Gaziano Tract represents the last unprotected, undeveloped land along Neal Mill Road, and a passing glance at its lush farm soils and green space reveals why it was an in-demand destination for development – and why SELT needed to strike when the iron was hot.

The timing worked out that SELT submitted several grant applications prior to their programmatic deadlines. But grant funding is competitive and uncertain, and even if these come through, SELT expects to need at least \$75,000 in private gifts. The total project cost is \$450,000, which includes the purchase price, transaction costs, and long-term stewardship costs.



You can help protect this land for the generations to come.  
COURTESY PHOTO

**Piscassic Greenway Map Showing the Gaziano Tract Proposed Addition**



SELT is taking a big risk – committing to purchase this land before the necessary funds are raised and committed. To do so, SELT will borrow funds and take a big leap of faith that you and others will generously give. Protecting the Gaziano Tract is that important.

“Just like when the Piscassic Greenway was conserved back in 2006, this will take a robust response from private and public partners,” says Brian Hart, SELT’s Executive Director. “I am hopeful that this incredible opportunity will resonate with so many of our friends and neighbors and ask for your support to save this special place.”

How special are we talking about? Every corner of this property is packed with premium resource value, including protection for local drinking water supplies and the Coastal Watershed, rich habitat for wildlife and high-quality farm soils. In addition, the Gaziano Tract offers sweeping, scenic vistas for all who use the Greenway for recreation.

“This is a missing piece of the Piscassic Greenway jigsaw puzzle,” says Steve Shope, Newfields resident and past Chair of the Newfields Conservation Commission. “Its conservation is going to protect the tranquility of the area. I love getting out there in my four-wheel-drive wheelchair and the development of that parcel would have changed the whole experience.”

In fact, so excited about this opportunity, Steve and his family business, Exeter Environmental Associates, donated their professional services to complete the required environmental assessment of the Gaziano Tract. Join Steve and others in contributing today!

**Visit [seltnh.org/growingthegreenway](http://seltnh.org/growingthegreenway) to learn more and give today!**



## **Time is Tight! Give a Gift to Grow the Greenway!**

**Scenic views! Precious wildlife habitat!  
Critical drinking water protection!**

This is the opportunity of a lifetime, but time is tight! Help us protect the Gaziano Tract, the missing piece of a pristine conservation puzzle and a key part of the Piscassic Greenway.

**SELT must purchase the Gaziano Tract  
by September 1st! Please contribute today  
to have the biggest impact!**

Visit [seltnh.org/growingthegreenway](http://seltnh.org/growingthegreenway) and give today!

## Conservation Update

### Ownerships

#### **Stell and Young – Conserved April 28, 2021**

This second phase of the Keep Merrymeeting Clean initiative brings nearly 550 acres of watershed, habitat, and recreational trails to Birch Ridge Community Forest.

#### **Snow Project – Conserved April 30, 2021**

A beautiful 71-acre tract of land in Epping that represents a key parcel of the Pawtuckaway to Great Bay Greenway vision, which is designed to preserve wildlife habitat, protect water quality, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities for the public.

#### **Leighton Forest – Conserved June 29, 2021**

SELT’s newest ownership is a sprawling, beautiful 400+ acre forest straddling Strafford and Barrington, filled with centuries’ old black gum trees, pristine watershed, and critical wildlife habitat.

### Conservation Easements

#### **Short Creek Farm – Conserved February 16, 2021**

Following the late Carl Wallman’s dream of having his property owned by the next generation of farmers, this rich farmland was sold to Short Creek Farm (makers of gourmet pork products in Northwood, NH), subject to a conservation easement held by SELT.

#### **Adams Homestead – Conserved May 13, 2021**

This picturesque, history-filled property, located in the center of Newington, was the 18th century home of Reverend Joseph Adams – uncle to President John Adams.

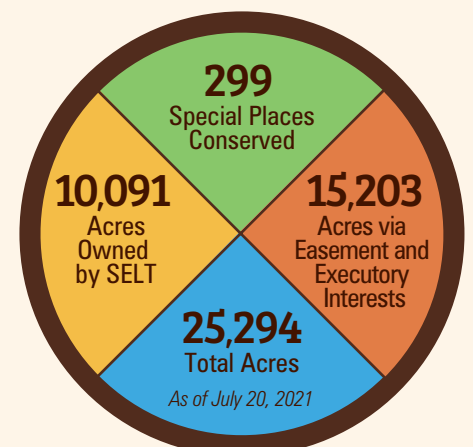
#### **Carlson Farm – Conserved March 23, 2021**

Located in Farmington, this family farm was conserved with an agricultural easement and is now owned by two young farmers and operated as Clyde Farm. Check them out for delicious broilers and fresh flowers!

#### **Clarke Farm – Conserved May 3, 2021**

This iconic livestock farm with sweeping views along Campground Road in Epping and Newmarket has been preserved for all time with an agricultural easement – ensuring that it will live on as a working farm.

### Land Conservation by the numbers



# Celebrating New Faces and Long-time SELTies

The 2021 Annual Meeting and Conservation Celebration allowed us to reflect on and celebrate long-time SELTies and welcome new faces to the organization. As we do every year, we honored three special individuals for their immense contributions to the world of conservation. Conservation icon and former SELT Land Manager Phil Auger received the Jack Heath Award for Conservation.



Phil Auger  
Winner: Jack Heath Award for Conservation

“Phil has served in many capacities with many organizations, and all possible roles with SELT, as a Board member, staff member, volunteer, all along a donor as well,” says Brian Hart, Executive Director of SELT. “But beyond his engagement with SELT, through his life’s work, he has educated thousands about open space, conservation, and much more.” Phil’s on the ground conservation impact is in tens of thousands of acres and there is no doubt that, as Jack Savage, President of the Forest Society stated, “New Hampshire is a better place, and will be a better place in perpetuity, because of Phil Auger’s work.”



Ellen Snyder  
Winner: Ashton Hallett Award

Ellen Snyder was honored with the Ashton Hallett Award, named after the founder of the Strafford Rivers Conservancy and given to a person or organization that has made significant contributions to the exemplary stewardship of land. Ellen’s contributions can be enjoyed on many area conservation lands through her work as a stewardship volunteer and past Land Stewardship Committee member of SELT, and former Land Stewardship Coordinator for Durham, where she led initiatives for invasives control and trail construction.

“Ellen is someone who has so much respect from the conservation community,” says Malin Clyde, SELT Board member. “She cares not only about land being conserved, but that we become long-term stewards of it.”

Finally, Sue Mayotte was recognized as the 2020 Volunteer of the Year (presented at the Volunteer Appreciation Party this past November). Sue serves as a GOAT (Get Outside Adventure Team) member, playing a key role in creating memorable field trip experiences.

New Board members Haley Andreozzi of Deerfield and John Wallace of Barrington both bring their passion for conservation and perspectives to SELT.

“I really believe in the work the organization does to conserve important wildlife habitat, farmland and other natural resources in the southeast part of the state,” says Haley. “SELT has a unique opportunity to connect more people to nature, to engage more people with our



Sue Mayotte  
Winner: Volunteer of the Year Award  
CREDIT: SELT STAFF

natural resources, and I’m really looking forward to being a part of that.”

John offers his deep experience in Barrington conservation work and as a past employee of the Strafford Rivers Conservancy. Past Board member Don Briselden of Exeter re-joined for a one-year term, motivated to help see The Mathey Center to completion. Re-elected for another three-year term were Pam Hall of Portsmouth, Scott Marion of Rye, and Brent Merriam of Epping.

We also bid farewell to three departing members: Bill Campbell, Terry Coyle, and Dan Wyand, who were all celebrated through personalized videos from fellow Board members.

Thank you for all you have done on behalf of SELT and the land conservation community!

## A Groundbreaking Day for People and Nature!

On June 16, a small group of SELT staff, board, and committee members gathered together at Burley Farms in Epping for a special groundbreaking ceremony, officially commemorating the start of construction on The Mathey Center for People and Nature.



The shovels go in the dirt at the Mathey Center groundbreaking ceremony.

CREDIT: SELT STAFF

“After all the inevitable ups and downs of the design and construction process, today, this groundbreaking ceremony represents another step in our journey,” said Sam Reid, President of the SELT Board of Directors. “It is a journey that will soon realize the vision of Burley Farms serving as a hub for SELT’s expanding work of connecting people to nature.”

Currently, construction is in full swing at Burley Farms, as the Mathey Center begins to take shape. We are on track to move into our new home in April of 2022.

Thank you to all who generously gave to the Mathey Center Matching Challenge. To date, you have contributed over \$130,000 toward the \$165,000 Matching Challenge to help put the final touches on this incredible project. There is still time – and matching funds – remaining to put the finishing touches on this exciting vision.

Learn more at [seltnh.org/matheycenter](http://seltnh.org/matheycenter).



The Mathey Center foundation is in! CREDIT: SELT STAFF



### Board Members

- Sam Reid**, President, Dover
- Pam Hall**, Vice President, Portsmouth
- VJ Strehl**, Treasurer, New Castle
- Brent Merriam**, Secretary, Epping
- Haley Andreozzi** Deerfield
- Don Briselden** Exeter
- Tom Chamberlin** New Castle
- Dan Clapp** Madbury
- Malin Clyde** Durham
- Bruce Goodwin** Portsmouth
- Reggie Hall** Hampton
- Scott Marion** Rye
- Laurie Smith** Dover
- John Wallace** Barrington
- Rob Wofchuck** Brentwood

### Staff

- Brian Hart** Executive Director
- Beverly Shadley** Deputy Director
- Duane Hyde** Land Conservation Director
- Deborah Goard** Stewardship Director
- Kathleen Babin-johnson** Development Specialist
- Allison Bolia** Donor Relations Specialist
- Shaun Dillon** Conservation Coordinator
- Zoe Graves** Outreach and Volunteer Manager
- Amanda Hollenbeck** Easement Stewardship Manager
- David Johnson** Senior Communications Advisor
- Jeremy Lougee** Conservation Project Manager and Farmland Coordinator
- Kylee Noga** Executive and Operations Assistant
- Kassandra Pearl** Stewardship and Outreach Specialist
- T. Parker Schuerman** Land Manager
- Megan Woods** Seasonal Land Steward

### Questions, Comments, Concerns?

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

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## Growing the Greenway—Help us meet our goal!

see page 1

## The Comeback of the Century

see page 2

## Trailfest is Coming!

see below



# TRAILFEST

*Power up your passion for the great outdoors!*



**J**oin forces with your friends for TrailFest 2021, a celebration of community and nature! This year, it's all about coming together, raising money for SELT, and drawing others into our shared mission of saving, sharing, and stewarding the lands we all love. Are you ready to get primed for some transformational impact?

Turbocharge SELT's reach by engaging your friends, family, and co-workers to support your TrailFest run or walk! Your champions can join your team, sponsor your walk or run, or form their own team with three or more people. Go head-to-head with other TrailFest teams to see who can come out on top as Fundraiser Extraordinaire – and walk away with some out-of-this-world swag and once-in-a-lifetime experiences!

Create your team today and start

building buzz for your epic outdoors adventure. Find everything you need at [seltnh.org/trailfest](http://seltnh.org/trailfest). Happy trails!

### Sponsorships available!

Looking for a powerful way to associate your brand with something everyone loves? Connect with SELT's work to conserve lands, protect drinking water,

and provide recreation trails to the public and consider a TrailFest sponsorship. We offer different sponsorship levels and terrific benefits that will get your name out to SELT's audience of members, donors, followers, and advocates.

To learn more about sponsorships please contact Allison Bolia at [allison@seltnh.org](mailto:allison@seltnh.org).

