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Memories in the Wild

The Killams love their land, a site where so many memorable experiences took place over the years. And now through a conservation easement with SELT, they have enshrined the tales of those memories forever.

When Dean Killam was a child, he built a fully functional hot shower in his backyard using spare parts. Not much of a surprise, as he would go on to have a successful career as an engineer. But beyond those early moments of rustic fabrication, it was the venue where this tinkering took place that left a more indelible mark.

Because the word “backyard” does a disservice to where Dean gallivanted during his formative years. Acres of beautiful Atkinson woodlands, hugging the bank of the Hog Hill Brook – this is where Dean called home as a kid. After four years at UNH, followed by a stretch of post-graduate independent living that was leading him to Vermont to live with friends, he was beckoned back home.

He was made an offer by his family he couldn't refuse: a slice of property, complete with a ramshackle cottage, he could call his own. Hard to say no to that when you're a young, independent guy who grew up playing in that dirt and creating stories to tell into the future.

Like that time he was camping out, deep in the woods behind the house. He was roused in the middle of the night by a strange presence near his sleeping bag. As Dean rummaged about the tent, he found some mysterious animal had dug underneath his tent and began chowing down on whatever junk food Dean had with him. He didn't come face to whiskers with the critter, but it certainly left an imprint on him.

As it turns out, it's not just the allure of potato chips in a child's tent that attracts the critters, it's the resource-rich geography that makes up the Killam property – and why it ultimately earned the attention of SELT's land conservation efforts.

On October 13, 2022, Dean Killam's precious place, filled with natural resource wonder and evergreen memories, was protected forever.



Above: The sun peeks through the woods on the Killam property.

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TrailFest 2022: A Fun-Filled Celebration of Nature

On October 15, Burley Farms was all the buzz as nearly 1,000 people showed up on a gorgeous fall morning to enjoy fun, food, and frolicking in the great outdoors. A beloved family-friendly event, TrailFest surpassed our wildest expectations with a record-breaking turnout. It was truly a joy to see so many people – and so many kids! – enjoying the wonders of nature.

Huge thanks to our exhibitors, vendors, and volunteers who made this possible. Also, a big hat-tip to our team of dedicated Trailblazers, who fundraised on behalf of SELT (Team No Pain, No Pain retains the fundraising championship belt).



Finally, thanks to our TrailFest sponsors:

- NEMO Equipment
- Chinburg Builders
- Colliers
- Mainly Grass
- Mighty Roots
- Normandeau Associates
- North Country Cider
- Piscataqua Landscaping
- Ransmeier & Spellman

PHOTOS: SELT STAFF

Coming Soon to a Community Near You!



Mathes Tract – Growing Burley Farms, Epping

With nearly 1 mile on the Lamprey River, the Mathes Tract will link SELT’s Lamprey River Wildlife Preserve to Burley Farms – expanding SELT’s ownership to 525-acres. The Mathes Tract extends the land available for all of the amazing opportunities made possible at The Mathey Center – recreation,

education, and engagement while preserving critical wildlife habitat in rapidly developing Epping. As the year comes to a close, SELT has less than \$30,000 remaining to be raised to protect the 129-acre Mathes Tract. All gifts will be matched by an anonymous donor – doubling the impact of your gift. **Please consider a special gift above and beyond your annual support!**

Nippo Lake Watershed Initiative, Barrington

The Nippo Lake Association (NLA) and SELT are partnering on a strategic conservation initiative to help ensure the long-term water quality and scenic beauty of Nippo Lake. The Landry family has agreed to sell a conservation easement on their 163 acres of forestland abutting Nippo Lake. Under the sales agreement, SELT will acquire a conservation easement on the entire Landry Forest which will prohibit further subdivision or development while allowing for public access for hiking and other types of low-impact recreation.



Meadow’s Mirth Farm Easement, Brentwood

We’re excited to see this unique and entrepreneurial veggie farm in Brentwood be conserved. Meadow’s Mirth owner and operator, Josh Jennings, is a well-known figure in the local farm scene and has pioneered many innovative agriculture approaches as well as new ways to get fresh food directly to the community.

Pike Easement, Durham

This 37-acre property borders 1,230 feet of the Wild & Scenic Lamprey River and sits within the UNH/Durham Water System Water Supply Intake Protection Area. Adjoining Durham’s Thompson Forest (protected with SELT), the Pike property features a diverse landscape including horse pastures, forest, intermittent streams, and eight potential vernal pools. If this land were to be developed, it would undoubtedly impact the property’s wildlife habitat and aquatic features – which is why conservation is a must.



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A snapshot of selected projects

Mount Bet, New Durham

SELT's strategic work protecting the watershed of Merrymeeting Lake continues with the exciting new opportunity to conserve the 376-acre Mount Bet. The Freese family, owners of the Mount Bet property, has agreed to a generous sale price that is nearly half the property's appraised value. SELT will be working next year to raise the funds to conserve and steward this companion to SELT's Collins Family Forest at Mount Molly.



Barkley Easement, Hampton

SELT is working closely with our good friends at the Hampton Conservation Commission to conserve this stunning 22-acre property, which includes a large portion of Hampton's beloved Grist Mill Pond. The property is rich in natural resources and wildlife habitat, and it supports a clean drinking water supply as part of the Town's Aquifer Protection Zone. Special thanks to landowner Anne Barkley, who generously agreed to conserve this land for a fraction of its market value – making an incredibly generous gift to the community.



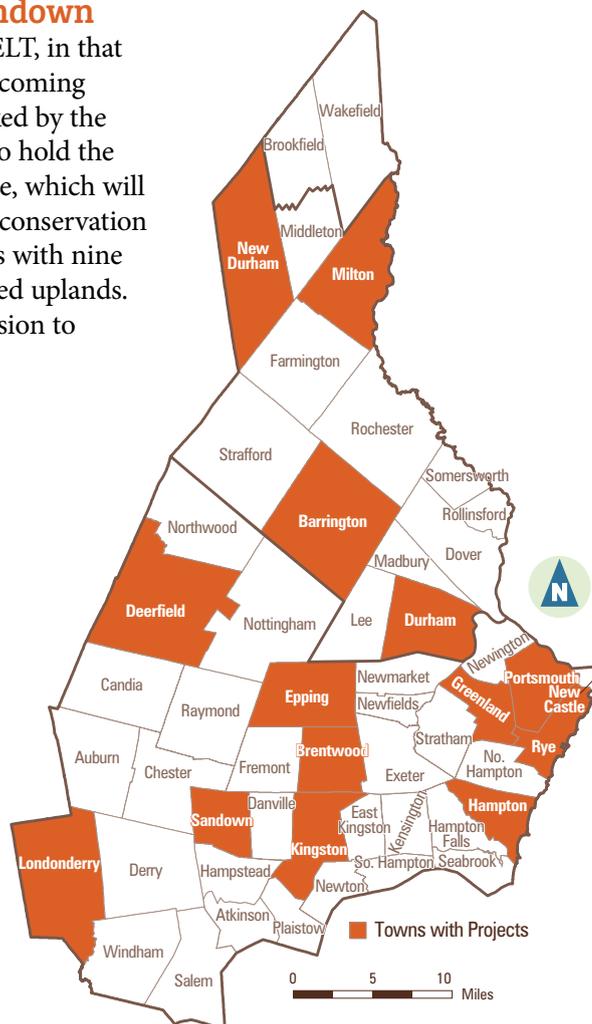
Ferguson Lane Easement, Sandown

This is a slightly unusual project for SELT, in that it is open space associated with a forthcoming residential development. SELT was asked by the Sandown Conservation Commission to hold the easement on the 35-acres of open space, which will be owned by the Town. The proposed conservation area has very good conservation values with nine documented vernal pools and associated uplands. SELT hopes to work with the Commission to protect adjacent land in the future.



SELT STAFF

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Get Outside! Winter 2022 Events Sampler

Check out these events and more at seltnh.org/events. Please register early; our events fill quickly. Registration closes at noon the day before the event. Suggested donation is \$5 per person or \$10 per family.

Winter Wildlife Tracking For Youth

January 17, 2023 • 9 am–12 pm • Burley Farms, Epping

Join nature-based educator Kim Cote to walk and explore at Burley Farms. We will look for signs of wildlife, which may include tracks, scat, shrub grazes, pellets, sleeping patches, and rubs. Pack lunch if you'd like to enjoy a winter picnic. This field trip is intended for families with older children, ages 8–14. Children should be accompanied by an adult.



ROSS TERBEEK

Photographing Winter Nature Scenes

February 4, 2023 • 9–11:30 am • Stonehouse Forest, Barrington

Join SELT GOAT Volunteer Heather Wheeler and photographers Barb Petersen and Helen Marie Collins for a photography field trip at Stonehouse Forest. While in the forest, your trip leaders will help you find the best winter nature scenes to capture with your camera, and give you tips and tricks for taking great nature photographs during the winter season.



Teneriffe Mountain Forest: The Power of Collaboration

Conservation is never a one-person operation. Protecting a special place always demands a total team effort, be it staffers, funders, private donors, and, of course, landowners. And sometimes, when a place is just that special, it takes a few more hands to pull off a conservation heavy lift. The Teneriffe Mountain Forest is a prime example.

SELT is teaming up with Moose Mountains Regional Greenways (MMRG), a land trust that serves ten communities in New Hampshire, including Milton, home to Teneriffe Mountain. The mountain anchors the proposed Teneriffe Mountain Forest project, a 240+ acre property that boasts a wealth of natural resources, provides contiguous open space adjacent to surrounding conserved areas, and features many outdoor recreational opportunities, including a route to an overlook on Mt. Teneriffe with an eyeful of views. Upon completion of the project – targeted for 2023 – MMRG will own the land and SELT will hold the conservation easement.

“This is a really special project,” says Jill Eldredge, Executive Director of MMRG. “Within the region, Teneriffe Mountain is the highest point in Milton and is really part of the local culture.”

The Teneriffe Mountain Forest was owned by a local development company that at one time had planned a 78-lot residential development with an interior road system. This scope and scale of development on a property with such

rich resource values would have severely degraded the sensitive habitats and scenic views. With a rising real estate and housing market, the landowner offered SELT a final opportunity to purchase the property, or development would be pursued again.

In discussing a shared goal of seeing this land conserved, MMRG and SELT agreed to partner on its protection and executed a sales agreement with the developer, with a July 2022 closing date. As the contract’s closing date approached, it became evident that the final approvals from funding partners would not be ready, requiring creative thinking and a third-party partner to step in and purchase the land. Fortunately, the Carl Siemon Family Charitable Trust, a long-time conservation leader in northern Strafford County, was such a partner.

Thus the interim acquisition gave SELT and MMRG additional time to raise the funds to permanently conserve the land. In addition to private contributions from generous community members, public funding partners include the Milton Conservation Commission, the NH Aquatic Resource Mitigation Program, the Moose Plate program, and the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

RCPP funds were allocated to the Teneriffe Mountain Forest project from another partnership effort, the New Hampshire Source Water Protection Partnership, who



received a \$6.8 million award to execute multi-faceted projects ranging from land conservation to habitat restoration in at least 25 targeted watersheds. The Merrimack River Watershed Council serves as the lead organization of the NH Partnership, joined by SELT, the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Trout Unlimited, Connecticut River Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire.

In fact, the Teneriffe Mountain Forest may be the first conservation project completed in the United States under this newly implemented program.

“It has some neat and diverse natural resource features,” Jill says. “You can find plenty of valuable habitat, which is the focus of a restoration project for wild brook trout.”

This opportunity attracted an additional partner, Trout Unlimited, who already had an active project to replace a culvert in Lyman Brook as it passes under Sam Plummer Road. The protection of the Teneriffe Mountain Tract allows Trout Unlimited to extend the impact of its work by removing additional obstacles to fish passage – all to improve this treasured angling species’ habitat in Lyman Brook.

What makes this property even more interesting are the rare plant communities that can be found as you explore the forest. The property hosts what may be the most northerly known chestnut oak forest community, which is ranked critically imperiled in New Hampshire with most

occurrences found in far southern New Hampshire. With many seedlings amongst the mature forest canopy this system appears to be healthy and in great condition. At the top of a ridge on Mt. Teneriffe is another critically imperiled forest system, a pitch pine rocky ridge that occurs in the dry tough environs of exposed bedrock ledge whipped by winter winds and the hot sun of the summer. Amongst the pitch pines are low bush blueberry, bearberry, and lichens.

In reflecting on the four partnerships enabling the conservation of Teneriffe Mountain, Jill notes that “Collaboration within the regional conservation field is absolutely essential. We are lucky to have a regional ‘landscape’ where camaraderie and collaboration are prized. We learn from each other, work together, and share projects for the best possible conservation outcomes. Only the result matters: that valuable resources and special places are protected forever.”

And when the sky is clear and the sun is shining, there are few local places as peaceful and restorative as the natural clearings near the peak of the mountain.

As for the future of Teneriffe Mountain? Jill pauses, and notes: “I always feel happy imagining future visitors to the property, picnicking with friends and family and enjoying the scenery.”

Learn more about Teneriffe Mountain Forest at our partner's website, mmrgnh.org.

Memories in the Wild continued from page 1

The Killam property first hit SELT's radar when Sue Killam reached out in late 2019 about their interest in donating a conservation easement on a portion of their land. This inquiry immediately resonated, due in no small part to its location in Atkinson. One of southern New Hampshire's many communities facing high development pressures, Atkinson is a desirable town with proximity to the Seacoast as well as the Massachusetts border.

"This was such a generous offer considering the Killams could possibly receive a generous payout from a developer," says Duane Hyde, SELT's Land Conservation Director. "But development pressures alone don't make a good conservation project, there are so many good natural resource values to the property and the forest is in remarkably good condition thanks to the sound management practices by the Killams."

But what really intrigued SELT the most initially? The Killam property lies within a "Connect the Coast" wildlife connectivity corridor. "Connect the Coast," a study and report that resulted from the collaboration of wildlife biologists, ecologists, and land trusts and was spearheaded by The Nature Conservancy provides the data to guide strategic land conservation efforts to continue to provide for wildlife movement between large blocks of habitat. These contiguous corridors are critical to sustain a diverse Seacoast wildlife population. All the wildlife corridors identified in "Connect the Coast" are regionally significant, but those in highly developed communities or communities facing high development pressures, are particularly important given the opportunity can be fleeting to conserve these important places.

"The Killams' property is extremely important for wildlife corridor protection," says Duane. "The Connect the Coast priorities are important for the sustainability of our at-risk wildlife and the fact that Dean and Sue Killam were so generous to donate an easement on this land represents one of those too-good-to-be-true projects."

The project almost didn't come true. Following a challenging family situation in the '90s, the property's future was in flux. There wasn't much agreement among different family members on what to do with it and things grew tense. It wasn't until a tragic near-fatal accident that left Dean hospitalized that things changed. From this near tragedy grew family discussion and agreement on the future of the land.

"I was sitting in a waiting room on the fifth floor of Beth Israel Hospital, and I was thinking he was not going to make it through the night," Sue says. "So, I started calling his family and they came down and, literally, this horrible situation glued them back together."

And thus, healing thereby manifested in two ways: 1) the Killam family was able to find some restoration and reunification and 2) Dean began a long, arduous road to recovery. Even today, the aftereffects of the head injury still linger as Dean's short-term memory recall is a challenge.

But those memories of decades past are still vivid, and Dean is quick with the anecdotes of that magic he made happen in that glorious, wooded playground. Those memories are now hewn into the land, inscribed when pen was put to paper on October 13 and the conservation easement to SELT was officially signed and sealed.

"If I sat on my deck on my property and looked across that pond and saw houses being built there, it would drive me nuts," Dean says. "Now I know it will stay open, long after I'm gone."

Dean and Sue are content to know that their special place is conserved forever – the place where they were married, the place where they have spent countless evenings on the deck, watching all manner of wild creatures move through the woods beyond.

Special thanks to the Atkinson Conservation Commission for their support of the project as well as the New Hampshire Moose Plate program, and to Dean and Sue Killam for their generous gift of the conservation easement.



Dean and Sue Killam with SELT's Duane Hyde at the closing of their conservation easement.
SELT STAFF

Volunteer Land Stewards... Assemble!

As SELT's portfolio of owned, conserved lands continues to expand, the land management responsibilities follow with it. With Yohann Hanley recently joining the Stewardship team as the Trails and Community Engagement Manager, one of his objectives has been to jumpstart SELT's Volunteer Land Steward program to support SELT's land management efforts.

"SELT has always relied on the skills of our dedicated group of volunteers to steward our properties," Yohann says. "The implementation of our Volunteer Land Steward program will ensure that our volunteers will be matched with the opportunities that make the most sense for their interests and expertise."

Scheduled to launch next March, the program will feature four levels of targeted engagement for the program, with each respective group slotting into the best fit volunteer opportunity. They include: Land Stewards, Crew Leaders, Crew Members, and One-Time Volunteers.



A volunteer readies for action.
SELT STAFF

Land Stewards

The Land Stewards are attached to a specific property and will have a long-term commitment to their respective land. As such, Land Stewards will need to possess a broad base of skills and will be responsible for basic maintenance, boundary monitoring, invasive monitoring/mitigation, and public engagement (education about the property and management practices).

Crew Leaders

These experienced volunteers will possess specific skills focused on stewardship pillars like trails, invasive plant mitigation, and education. Crew Leaders will essentially be "property floaters," dispatched to SELT lands as needed. They will also be the go-to teachers and mentors for new volunteers, and lead events.

Crew Members

Crew Members are the bread and butter of SELT's volunteer steward team, providing a long-term commitment to SELT and working within one or more crews based on their skills or interests.

One-Time Volunteers

For those dedicated defenders of nature who are looking for a one-off memorable stewardship opportunity, SELT will find a project that suits their interests, either a one-time task or something incorporated into a long-term project. Not only are these great outings for corporate partners, organizations, schools, and clubs, but for SELT, this represents a good pool to find long-term volunteers.

If you are interested in learning more about the Volunteer Land Steward program, please contact Yohann Hanley at yohann@seltnh.org or visit seltvolunteer.org to choose an opportunity!

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Questions, Comments, Concerns?

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

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'Tis the Season

TO SAVE OUR SPECIAL PLACES

Please Renew Your Support Today!

As the year comes to a close, we want to thank you for all you have done to help save, share, and steward the lands we all love!

If you have yet to renew your SELT membership, now is the perfect time, just before 2022 wraps up. SELT relies on donors like you to bring our mission to life as, together, we work to conserve land for drinking water protection, local farming, wildlife habitat, scenic beauty, and outdoor recreation and education! We understand the economic turbulence of the current times so we would just ask that you give what you can. Thank you for your committed support to protect the natural world!

Please use the enclosed remittance envelope or give securely online at seltnh.org/donate.

PS: For the holiday season (or your office Yankee Swap!), why not give the gift of a SELT membership? Or, perhaps, a nifty piece of SELT gear, which you can purchase directly from our website at seltnh.org/store.

