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Clarity of Purpose

Conserving the Landry property in Barrington protects the waters of Nippo Lake – and memories that have been created for generations

The driveway to Jim and Joan Landry's home is a winding ascent, the sort of climb that makes one appreciate the horsepower required to plow it during the winter. But any flatlanders prone to casting aspersions on way-above-sea-level-living would catch their breath upon seeing the Landrys' view: a sprawling panorama that encompasses Mount Misery in the foreground, and acres of unspoiled terrain that unspool to the horizon.

Yeah, this is worth the driveway.

Not seen in this epic view, but arguably the most important natural feature that anchors it, is Nippo Lake, a true hidden gem of Barrington (and, frankly, all of New Hampshire). It is a place that holds significant sentimental value for the many people that grew up on its shores. Jim Landry, a Barrington life-long resident, is one of those people.

"This is a land that is very important to our family," Jim says. "For the past fifty years, we've hiked and explored this place. My children played all around Mount Misery. We camped overnight all the time."

These memories have been hewn throughout the 163 acres of the Landry's property, and are the driving force behind their decision to work with SELT and the Nippo Lake Association to conserve their property and protect it for all time.

"You're never going to stop building because the population will grow," Jim says. "That's why it's important to protect this kind of land. The town is growing so fast you won't find many pieces like this. I don't think there are many properties like this, especially on a lake like this, that are very important to conservation."

For all of its scenic – and emotional – significance, the Landry property's natural resource ledger is over-stuffed: critical watershed protection for Nippo Lake, diverse wildlife habitat, and a vast network of high-ecological-value wetlands.

Above: Nippo Lake in Barrington.

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This (New) Old House

The John Prescott Chase Farmhouse, Restored and Ready for a New Generation of Residents

Drew Bedard is hunched over with a small tool, carving away at a thin piece of wood. He is surrounded by sawdust, sawhorses, and, well, saws. He and his colleagues from Bedard Preservation & Restoration are wrapping up the final details of the historic rehabilitation of the John Prescott Chase Farmhouse project, a labor of love that took more than 18 months.

This iconic 18th century construction has been transformed into a modern/historic hybrid house, a residential dwelling that is now a home to two workforce housing apartments. This approach honored the historic relationship of the farmhouse to this farmland and, as a workforce housing rental unit, provides a revenue stream to support the long-term maintenance and upkeep of the building while providing two families with a home at a rate they can afford.

When SELT ultimately decided to construct a new building for its headquarters at Burley Farms, the organization was faced with what to do with the vacant and deteriorating, but historically significant farmhouse. The proposed solution: rehabilitate it to create two units of workforce housing, honor its historic features, and make it a comfortable, energy efficient building capable of being heated and cooled by air-source heat pumps.

The first-floor kitchen is emblematic of this, a mosaic of different eras with original 18th century wood planking and brickwork giving way to cutting-edge, high-efficiency air source heat pumps from Mitsubishi Electric. The kitchen encapsulates the painstaking work the Bedard crew went through to both preserve the historic character – and, indeed, virtually all the features! – while introducing the modern-day conventions that will make these apartments efficient and comfortable.



The exterior of the John P. Chase Farmhouse. SELT STAFF

A project like this is filled with clues that, when unraveled, paint a fuller picture of life when the house was first built. Case in point: a straight line on the floor that cuts kitty-corner on the southeast side.

“You can see the physical evidence of what was originally here,” Drew says. “As preservationists, this is what we look for: the evidence. For example, in the parlor, you can see the traces of the location of a corner cupboard, which were popular in homes like this. That’s the kind of stuff that excites us.”

It’s like that from room to room. There are original board walls, original mantles, original brickwork, and original windows; the house’s 18th century DNA remains to this day, and can be found throughout the entire house.

“In terms of craftsmanship, they were very talented back then,” Drew says. “They’re using all hand tools and today we have machinery and you can do twice as much, three times as much work than what they could accomplish back then.”

“The windows are very impressive,” he continues. “You buy a window today and it’s guaranteed for 20 to 30 years. These windows are over 200 years old. The mounting profile is great. The glass is great. They’re in fantastic shape, considering they face south and they’re original and this house was lived in all that time.”



The first floor dining area with the original hearth. SELT STAFF

Speaking of, it’s impossible not to notice the view out of the east-facing window. There, you can see the Nan and George Mathey Center for People and Nature across the driveway. The juxtaposition between buildings – one a historic, 18th century dwelling filled with handiwork from the pre-Revolutionary War era, the other a cutting-edge, eco-friendly, solar-powered 21st century tech marvel – is provocative.

But, as Drew notes, they are more alike than you may initially think.

“The biggest takeaway that I got from the project was seeing the new, modern technology being incorporated into the restoration,” he says. “I have never seen this done before, so it’s very exciting. The Mathey Center is high-performance. It’s like a Tesla, engineered to be state-of-the-art. The farmhouse is like a restored 1967 Mustang that’s been updated and modernized with new tires, a new engine, new suspension, new paint job, and the original glass.”

This craftsmanship and approach earned the project and its partners a 2023 Preservation Achievement Award from the NH Preservation Alliance. Honored at a May ceremony were SELT, and our partners Bedard Preservation and Restoration, Michael Bruss of Bruss Project Management, Mae Williams of Unlocking History, and Sheldon Pennoyer Architects.

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A Mosaic of Creativity and Conservation

There is a buzz of activity emanating from Sarah Boudreau's Art room, audible from the halls of Epping Elementary School. Upon entering the room, it immediately becomes apparent what the source of the excitement is: spread out on a sprawling table are three gigantic canvases, thick and heavy and made of wood. Glued to the canvases is an array of multi-colored glass tiles, and students hover around excitedly.

The children take turns at the murals, choosing tiles and affixing them to open canvas spaces. Each tile features an etched picture of a different animal and plant, and the children select the ones that appeal to them. Then, like assembling a puzzle, they slot the tile into an opening on one of the canvases. Stepping back, the concept comes into view: three separate canvases that showcase their own tiled landscapes, but, when aligned next to each other, present a large, contiguous picture.

Guiding the placement of the tiles is Robert Rossel, the vision-caster and Epping-based ceramics artist. Robert is no stranger to school-based tile projects; his student-powered work can be found within both Epping Elementary School and Epping Middle High School.

"We're trying to represent New Hampshire ecosystems," Robert says. "With this mural we're dealing with layers of landscape, featuring animals, fields of flowers, trees, and more. But it's not just imagery. We're using different color types to make the mural cohesive as a whole."

This project is a culmination of months of brainstorming and the final product is nearly complete. Its destination? The Nan and George Mathey Center for People and Nature at Burley Farms. Generously funded by the Eppes – Jefferson Foundation, Inc., the project fits within SELT's diversity, equity, and inclusion work and ATLAS (All Terrain learning Adventures) educational programming.

"Our focus on nature-based education is always to include as many children as possible in these experiences,"

says Bev Shadley, SELT's Deputy Director. "Since we are such close partners with Epping Elementary through existing programming with White Pine Programs, we wanted to give the students the opportunity to share their love of nature and their creative spirit with future visitors to The Mathey Center."

The completed mural has been installed – be sure to stop by The Mathey Center to check it out!



Artist Robert Rossel guides Epping Elementary School students through the mural-making process. SELT STAFF



This (New) Old House continued from page 2

"All the way back in the fall of 2019, I began to work as part of a team on an Historic Building Assessment for SELT," said Mae Williams. "I was lucky enough to team up with architect Sheldon Pennoyer and preservation contractor Stephen Bedard to develop the plans to adhere with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation while also adhering to SELT's mission of moving towards a sustainable future and making the building as close to "net zero" as possible. Three and a half years later, I am so proud of how this project turned out."

What is the next chapter of the farmhouse? Tenants! SELT expects to welcome new residents for each unit starting this summer and hopefully a farm family in the future. They will carry on the legacy of those who called the John P. Chase Farmhouse home for the last two-and-half centuries.

And for whoever moves into the second-floor apartment, they

will find a unique reminder of the legacy they are now part of: the signature of John Prescott Chase and his future son-in-law, scribed onto the second floor bedroom wall, adjacent to the window that looks out to the Mathey Center and the growing Burley Farms campus – a view from the past, into the future.

Funding for the rehabilitation of the John Prescott Chase Farmhouse was provided by the NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, the NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), and many private donors. As part of its commitment to the NH CDFa, SELT agreed to rent the apartments at workforce housing rates, as established by the NH Housing Finance Authority. To learn more about the farmhouse, visit seltnh.org/farmhouse.



Above: An aerial view of the Landry forest and Nippo Lake. © JERRY MONKMAN, ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, LLC
Below: Jim and Joan Landry. SELT STAFF

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Water quality is of particular importance, as Nippo Lake – once a pristine water body that you could see through straight to the bottom – has been menaced by a large amount of phosphorus. In 2010, this resulted in a cyanobacteria bloom which fed on the abundance of nutrients present in the water. The bloom would become an annual recurrence over the ten years to follow, jarring the residents who lived on the lake.

In the years since the first appearance of the cyanobacteria bloom, a team of Nippo Lake Association volunteers, outside experts, and New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) professionals worked together to develop strategies to combat this bacterial fouling of the once-flawless waters.

“In our childhood memories, this was a pristine little pond,” says Kevin Fitzgerald, a former Board member of the Nippo Lake Association, whose family has lived on the lake for over 50 years. Kevin helped spear-head much of the research and awareness of the lake’s ecological challenges. “The Lake Association is dedicated to the single purpose of the stewardship, care, and protection of Nippo Lake and its watershed. We are hoping to reverse some of



the effects of the development. Over the passing of time, Nippo Lake has taken a pounding from man and nature.”

The conservation of the Landry property instantly becomes a critical arrow in the region’s conservation quiver.

The land contains nearly 2,300 feet of frontage on Nippo Lake and the property, as a whole, makes up a whopping 25 percent of the lake’s watershed! Nippo Lake drains to the Isinglass River, which is a Designated River under the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program (recognized for its outstanding natural and cultural resources) and the largest undammed tributary to Great Bay. Also of note, the property is part of a NHDES designated Outstanding Resource Watershed.

“You’re looking at a single piece of property that represents a quarter of the watershed that affects Nippo Lake and feeds it with water,” Kevin says. “The parcel is unique because it is so large, and influential because of its elevation, topography, and length of its connection to the lake.”

Watershed protection is far from the only conservation box the Landry property checks; it is packed with ecological and water resource diversity, including critical upland wetland

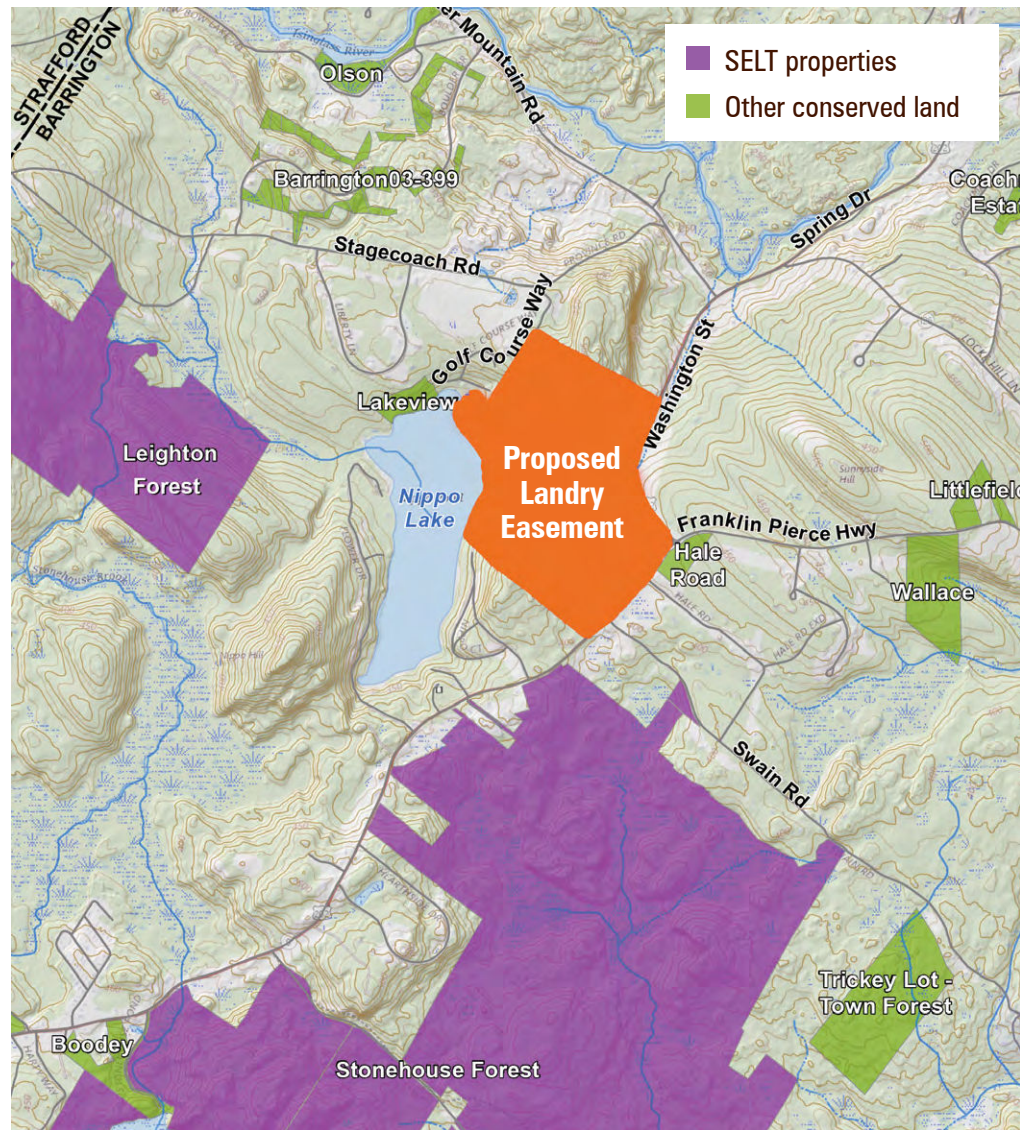
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habitats, a threatened forest system, three vernal pools, and two rare peatland communities (surface systems that are rich with peat soil and are major-league climate defenders, able to store twice as much carbon as forests).

On the wildlife side of things, thanks to its lengthy, undisturbed shoreline, the Landry property is a valuable habitat for threatened common loons and bald eagles. Over 10 percent of the property is designated as Highest Ranked Habitat in New Hampshire and 132 acres (81%) is ranked as supporting landscape by the State of NH's Wildlife Action Plan.

"The Landry forest is a critical piece of the mosaic of wildlands in Barrington," said Doug Bogen, Chair of the Barrington Conservation Commission. "Its conservation will protect much of the shore of the fragile Nippo Lake as well as historic and diverse open space in a relatively untouched portion of our town."

"It's a unique little place," Kevin says. "Most people have heard of Lake Winnepesaukee or Squam Lake. But when you talk about that quintessential New England lake, the kind that appears on the cover of an LL Bean catalog, it's Nippo. It is this magical bowl that sits between the rolling hills and small mountains of Barrington."



Nippo Lake area map showing the Landry property. MAP: SELT STAFF

Help Conserve the Landry Forest at Nippo Lake!

The Landry family love this land and Nippo Lake too – and have agreed to sell this conservation easement generously below its appraised value. The total cost to conserve the Landry Forest, which includes the easement purchase price, transaction costs (survey, legal, etc), and long-term stewardship funds, is \$1.135 million. The conservation easement will allow public access for hiking and other types of low-impact recreation, helping share the beauty of Nippo with the community.

SELT and the Nippo Lake Association have leveraged multiple public funding sources, including LCHIP (NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program), NHDES Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund, and EPA 319 Program funding. However, the partners still need to raise

\$140,000 in private gifts to complete this special project. Make a special gift to help conserve the Landry Forest using the enclosed envelope or by visiting seltnh.org/landry.

Every gift made to SELT for the project will be matched 1:1 by generous Nippo Lake Association Donors!



You can also give through Donor Advised Funds (DAF). Donors are generally eligible to take an immediate tax deduction when contributing cash, securities or other assets to a DAF and a distribution from the DAF for the Landry Project can be arranged.

In addition, you can support the project through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), which is a transfer of funds from your IRA to SELT. This distribution can be counted toward satisfying your required

minimum Individual Retirement

Account distributions for the year.

A QCD excludes the amount you donate from taxable income, which will reduce your overall tax burden.

Lastly, many donors prefer to make gifts of appreciated stocks, bonds, mutual funds, or exchange traded funds. The Nippo Lake Association is able to receive such gifts via its partnership with SELT. Please contact SELT Deputy Director Beverly Shadley (beverly@seltnh.org) for more information.

Merrymeeting Clean, Forever

Agreements reached to conserve more than 1,000 acres

As the summer season of lake life begins across the state, SELT reached agreements to acquire two more ridges overlooking Merrymeeting Lake, one of the state's cleanest lakes. The two properties represent keystone parcels in a larger vision of connecting protected parcels around the entire lake – securing the permanent conservation of the forested ridges and helping sustain the high water quality of the lake.

The tracts include 376-acres on the flanks and top of Mount Bet. This property abuts SELT's Collins Family Forest at Mount Molly; together the properties would total more than 800 acres with a network of public trails on the north shore of Merrymeeting. At the east end of the lake, SELT has the opportunity to acquire ownership of 617-acres and a conservation easement of 27 acres on Mount Jesse. These lands abut the 2,600 acre Birch Ridge Community Forest and offer the opportunity to link to a block of conserved forestland of 5,400 acres centered on the Moose Mountains. Both Mount Jesse and Mount Bet offer all of the benefits of conservation – including scenic views of the lake as well as the Presidential range, varied wildlife habitat important for common and rare species, and recreational benefits including trails for hiking and biking, and portions of Corridor 22, an important state snowmobile trail.

Since 2018, remarkable progress has been made in this community-driven conservation effort. Back then,

just 4% of the watershed was conserved; today 35% is forever protected thanks to the partnership of SELT, the Merrymeeting Lake Association, and Moose Mountains Regional Greenways. This significant progress began with SELT's purchase of the Birch Ridge Community Forest in 2018, its expansion in 2021, and the gifting of the Collins Family Forest at Mount Molly to SELT in late 2020.

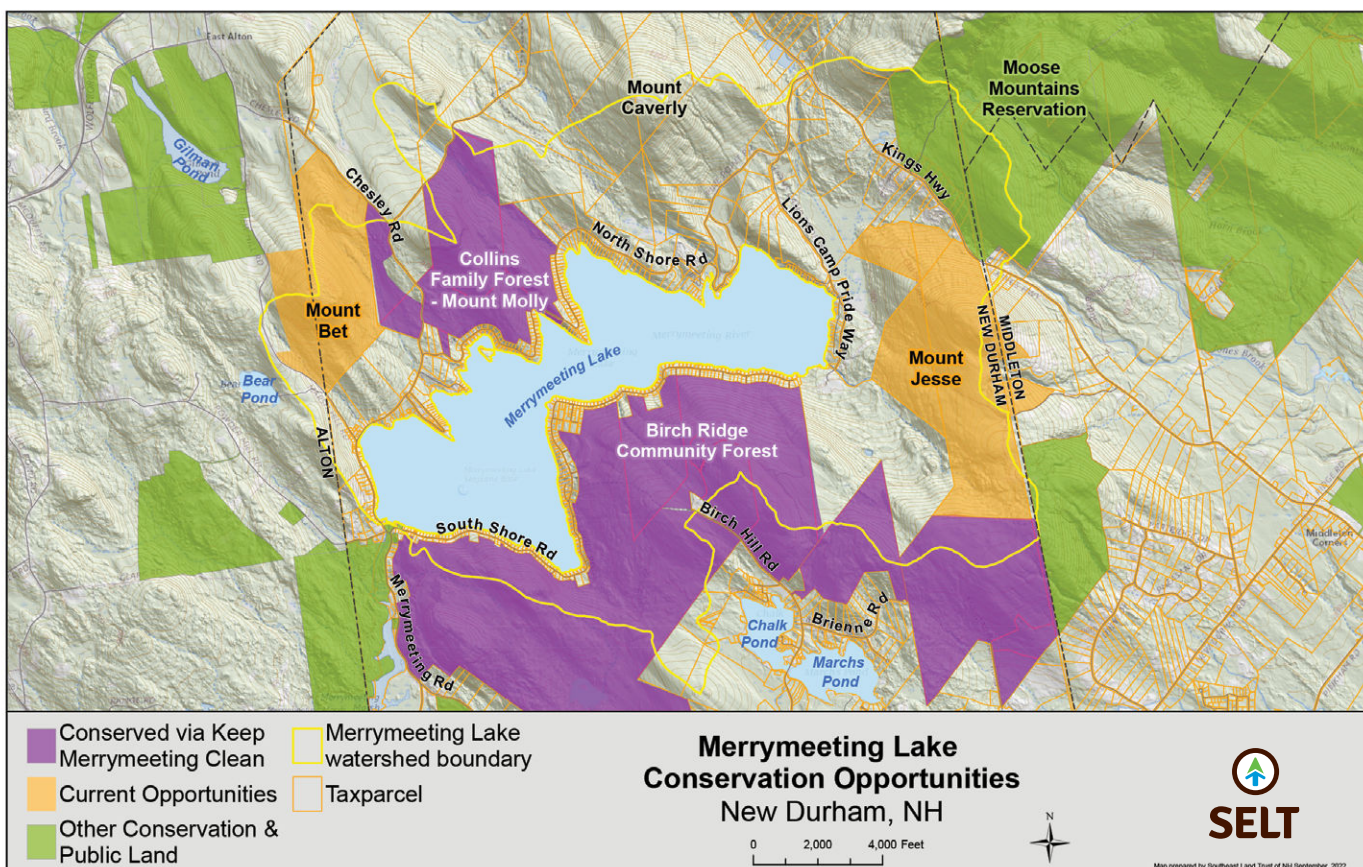
If Mount Bet and Mount Jesse are successfully acquired, the protected acreage of the watershed would increase to 49%. The acquisition of both mountains would be an incredible success story for the community given the humble beginnings just six years ago. Like prior efforts, Merrymeeting Clean Forever will only be successful through a combination of public and private commitments, including both of the landowners who have agreed to sell their properties for significantly below the fair market value.

Over the course of the next two years, SELT will engage with those who care deeply about Merrymeeting, exploring further land acquisition and recreation priorities and opportunities around the watershed, seeking advice and candid feedback about what is most important, and building awareness and support for the protection and stewardship of Mount Bet, Mount Jesse, and more.

Stay tuned for more exciting news on these emerging opportunities!



Aerial view of Mount Bet. © JERRY MONKMAN, ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, LLC



New Faces at SELT

"I am super excited to be getting back into outdoor/conservation work. I have always loved spending time in the outdoors surrounded by nature. That's why I'm very excited for this new role. I can already tell SELT is a wonderful organization and community that truly cares for wildlife and its surrounding environment. I am very excited to learn more about land conservation work and excited for the opportunities this experience will bring me."



—Katie Bates,
Seasonal Land Steward

"I love walking in the woods, gardening, and technology. These things bring me a sense of wonder, spark my curiosity, and remind me that everything is connected. At SELT, I get to put my skills and expertise in information technology to use, helping to protect natural places where I want to spend my free time, local farmlands where I want to get my food, and connecting with people who share my passion for New Hampshire."



—Jean Dill,
Database and Gift Entry Manager

"I'm excited that SELT prioritizes ecological values like wildlife habitat, forest health and diversity, and water quality and understands how and why to employ active land management techniques to enhance those values. I'm also excited about working in this area – it's been a long, winding journey to arrive back in New Hampshire!"



—Chad Fierros,
Forest and Wildlife Habitat Manager

"My passion is connecting people, especially youth, with the outdoors. My soul lights up when I see the look in a child's eye seeing frog eggs up close, watching children running and hollering down a trail together, hearing from teachers who have seen their students grow through the ATLAS program, and introducing individuals to SELT for the first time through an outreach event."



—Lizzy Franceschini,
Outreach and Education Specialist

"When I started working at SELT, I felt like I was coming home, like I had known these people forever. Everyone was so welcoming, and our shared purpose of ensuring widespread access to natural spaces has created a sense of belonging I'm not sure I've ever felt before."



—Amy Shellenberger,
Office Manager and Executive Assistant

"I am SO charged up to start pursuing critical conservation work in the Great Bay watershed. Even more thrilling to me is joining the passionate, extremely skilled and caring people at SELT and focusing my knowledge and experience to protect water quality, threatened species, and coastal habitats. I plan to bring my expertise from years of wetland management work where I was surrounded by dedicated colleagues, to target efforts to protect diverse and resilient landscapes that will have a lasting impact on the health of people and nature in New Hampshire!"



—Lori Sommer,
Coastal Watershed Land Conservation Manager

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Questions, Comments, Concerns?

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

247 North River Road, Epping, NH 03042
Website: seltnh.org

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Get Outside!

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Get Outside! Summer 2023 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.

Powwow River Canoe Trip

July 11 • 5–8 PM • Powwow River Woodlands, South Hampton

The Powwow River Woodlands in South Hampton offer a scenic paddle with chances to see many local wildlife species. This canoe trip is open to all, and we will bring canoes and life jackets that you may borrow for this trip.



Watershed Walk At Leighton Forest

August 9 • 4–6 PM • Leighton Forest, Barrington

Join us at Leighton Forest in Barrington where SELT Board Member and Barrington conservationist John Wallace will offer a guided walk through the woods and down to the river. This field trip is part of the “Wednesday Watershed Walks” series organized by the Great Bay Piscataqua Waterkeeper and featuring several local conservation groups.



Save the Date for TrailFest!

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