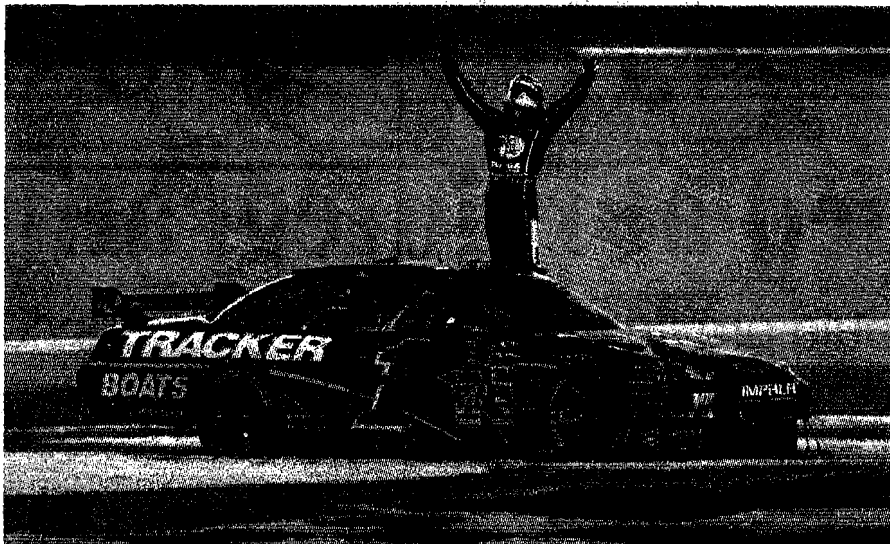


SPORTS / PAGE 9

FEEL GOOD FINISH

Jamie McMurray wins the Daytona 500 in a wild, two-lap sprint to the finish of NASCAR's version of the Super Bowl.



PAGE 13

ENVIRONMENT

Conservation easements more flexible to manage than one might think.

PAGE 8

NATION

Rhetoric on the rise over 39 percent insurance hike for some in California.



The Keene Sentinel

75 cents

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2010

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ENVIRONMENT

THE KEENE SENTINEL MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2010 PAGE 13

BRIEFS REGION

Medic saves cash going green

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. — A
Bellevue Falls-based medical
equipment manufacturer has
cut its energy costs by about
\$100 per year by upgrading its
lighting system.

Medic, Inc., which makes
diagnostic monitoring and diag-
nostic electrodes, worked with
the Vermont Public Service
Board, to cut back on the
company's energy use.

The company installed 21
motion detectors on its lights,
replaced 32-watt bulbs with
10-watt energy-saving bulbs
and eliminated unnecessary
wires, according to a news
release.

Company officials estimate
the changes will pay for them-
selves in three years, reduce the
company's carbon footprint by
10 tons over the next 14 years
and save about 47,000 kilowatt
hours of electricity.

More land at Billard conserved

FRANKLIN — New Hamp-
shire Audubon bought a
100-acre section of land this
week that stretches about
10 miles north of the way around
Billard Pond, adding to its
wildlife sanctuary.

Land easements easily arranged — very flexible

By CASEY FARRAR
Sentinel Staff

Pat Haley of Spofford learned
about conservation easements
almost two decades ago from a
forester who was working on a
forest management plan for her
land in Spofford.

She and her late husband,
Edward Sullivan, discussed putting
an easement on their 29-acre
forested property over the years,
but it wasn't until late last year
that Haley took the leap.

"I thought it would be a fitting
memorial to my husband because
he did love (the land) so much,"
Haley said.

Haley was one of nearly two
dozen landowners in the Monad-
nock Region who put conservation
easements on their land last year
with Keene's Monadnock
Conservancy.

An easement is an agreement
between a landowner and a conser-
vation organization or municipality
that restricts development and other
intensive uses such as mining on
a property. When an easement is
placed on land, the owner retains
ownership of it, but a "land trust"
— a conservation organization, mu-
nicipality or the state — oversees

**"THERE ARE A LOT OF COMMON MISCONCEP-
TIONS OUT THERE THAT, IN A LOT OF WAYS,
PREVENT A LANDOWNER FROM CONSIDERING
A CONSERVATION EASEMENT."**

**— RYAN M. OWENS,
DIRECTOR OF THE MONADNOCK CONSERVANCY**

the easement and enforces it. The
scope of the restrictions is negotiat-
ed between the landowner and the
organization.

Conservation easements have be-
come an increasingly popular way
to protect land and preserve open
spaces over the last three decades
in the Monadnock Region and
across the state.

But as property changes hands
through sale or inheritance the
easements remain on the land, and
new owners are often unfamiliar
with them and what they mean for
the landowner, according to Eric
Aldrich, communications and devel-
opment specialist for the Hancock-
based Harris Center for Conserva-
tion Education.

Which is why two of the region's
largest conservation organizations
— the Harris Center and the Mon-

adnock Conservancy — have part-
nered with the University of New
Hampshire Cooperative Extension
office in Keene for an upcoming
presentation about easements.

The session, which is free and
open to the public, will be held Thurs-
day from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Harris
Center, 83 King's Highway in Han-
cock. It is geared toward landowners
of conserved property and people
interested in learning more.

The Harris Center manages
about 65 easements going back to
the 1980s that cover approximately
5,400 acres, Aldrich said.

It also holds executory interest
for about 2,600 acres, meaning if
the primary organization overseeing
the easement were to close, the
Harris Center would take over the
supervision.

The Monadnock Conservancy

oversees 167 easements dating back
to the early 1990s and owns six
pieces of land, according to Katrina
Farmer, communications associate
for the group. In all, it oversees
conservation of more than 14,000
acres in 25 towns.

Conservation easements are a
common way to protect land be-
cause they don't require landowners
to sell or donate property outright
to conservation groups, said
Ryan M. Owens, executive director
of the conservancy.

Instead, if a landowner wants an
easement, he or she contacts an orga-
nization or the conservation commis-
sion in a town to begin the process.
Organizations also sometimes
contact owners of land.

Anne R. McBride is a project
manager for the conservancy who
works with landowners through the
process of getting an easement,
which involves having the land
surveyed, completing legal steps
and negotiating the terms of the
easement.

Often landowners will request
that a portion of the protected prop-
erty be set aside to allow a build-
ing, such as a home, McBride said.

Other rights landowners com-

Conservation easements more flexible than you might think

(Continued from Page 13)

monly want to retain include allowing public access, such as snowmobile or hiking trails — so long as they don't disturb valuable wildlife habitat — and permission to harvest timber on the land, which requires a forest management plan, McBride said.

Many landowners are surprised about the degree of flexibility conservation easements allow, Owens said.

"Some things do change, but many things are still allowed," Owens said. "There are a lot of common misconceptions out there that, in a lot of ways, prevent a landowner from considering a conservation easement."

Hiking trails running through Haley's 29 acres of conserved land, which includes the house she's lived in since the 1960s.

She wanted to see the land conserved even after she's gone so future generations can enjoy it as much as she has.

"I grew up in the city and concrete and tall buildings, but I just treasure this land," she said. "We're losing touch too fast."

Ellen N. Chase and her sister Margaret Perry decided to conserve about 135 acres of their family's land in Alstead last year for similar reasons, Chase said.

"We grew up with a feeling that the land was sacred and we were stewards," she said. "It was always assumed that the land would be open

and undeveloped."

The easement on Chase and Perry's land, which is overseen by the conservancy, allows for timber harvesting, but they didn't set aside any lots for buildings, Chase said.

Once an easement is complete, the conservancy sends either a staff member or volunteer for yearly visits to monitor the property, Owens said.

The group also checks in with landowners throughout the year.

If a landowner sells land with a conservation easement, information about the easement is available to buyers with the deed, Owens said.

Conservancy officials have never run across a new landowner who didn't know his or her property was conserved, Owens said.

"We haven't experienced that yet, but other organizations certainly have," he said. "It can be difficult and it can result in litigation, or at least bad feelings."

But even new landowners who know about easements can be confused about the ins and outs, and officials hope to clear up any confusion at this week's session, Owens said:

"This is a way to establish a good relationship."

► Anyone interested in participating in Thursday's program should register by calling Cheshire County Forester Steve Roberge at 354-4550 or e-mailing steven.roberge@unh.edu.