



# MONADNOCK CONSERVANCY

## NEWSLETTER

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## Protecting Lands, Protecting Wildlife

### Grant allows MCCP to expand services



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Skip Hagstrom of Fitzwilliam points to a place on the map where wildlife are commonly seen in town.

Did you know that wintering deer revisit the same areas generation after generation? That is, as long as the quality of the habitat is maintained. These gathering areas, or deer yards, can range in size from a few acres to hundreds of acres. Knowledge such as this helps us identify which lands, if protected, will thereby ensure a healthy local wildlife population.

Deer are just one example. Conserving wildlife habitat benefits many species and protects the land and water resources they need to live. This is a primary goal of the NH Wildlife Action Plan, a federally mandated outline of steps the state will take to guard against wildlife population declines.

The Monadnock Community Conservation Partnership offers assistance to towns throughout the region in using the NHWAP as a conservation planning tool, among other resources. Through community meetings and training sessions, the MCCP is teaching town volunteers and residents about different habitat types found in the region and the various species that rely on those habitats for their survival.

“We are now able to bring detailed info from the state’s Wildlife Action Plan to the planning process,” said Pete Throop, MCCP project director. “We review the data provided by the WAP model with town participants and then ask them to contribute their local knowledge and experience of the landscape.”

This process enhances the conservation planning approaches developed during the MCCP pilot program. The implementation of the NHWAP through the MCCP’s work is largely possible thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Wildlife Conservation Society that was awarded in late fall 2010.

Though an important and powerful tool, the NHWAP is not the sole focus of the MCCP’s planning work. “The beauty of the MCCP is


that it allows communities to draw upon diverse natural and cultural information to develop their own unique values and priorities,” said Conservancy executive director Ryan Owens. “Wildlife is often among the top goals, but even a focus on farmland or working forests can provide significant incidental benefits to wildlife, such as the many grassland bird species that depend on open fields for breeding habitat.” The key to a successful town conservation plan is the community’s choice of priorities and ownership of the planning process, he added.

The MCCP has begun to integrate the state wildlife plan information in the conservation assistance it is currently providing in the towns of Sharon and Fitzwilliam.

At the Fitzwilliam meeting in early January, MCCP partners Lindsay Webb of NH Fish and Game and Amanda Stone from UNH Cooperative Extension joined the discussion. Lindsay and Amanda talked about the characteristics of different wildlife habitats and about the species that would be associated with the respective habitats. Their presentation generated discussion about basic wildlife biology and led to a better understanding of why protecting a diversity of habitat is important.

Attendees were then asked to identify places in town where they observe wildlife and where animals are known to move along pathways or corridors. The next step is to mark maps with this information. Combining anecdotal and first hand evidence with scientific data is unique in the MCCP’s approach.

“It allows us to bring statewide data and make it useful for that local community,” said Rick Brackett, MCCP assistant.

Once it is known where wildlife such as deer go for food and shelter, conservation planners can “strengthen or adjust priority areas in the community,” he said. 

## For a Cause Close to Her Heart



Facing a milestone birthday, Jeanne M. Thieme had a problem. She had no idea what gifts she wanted from her friends and family. "I was turning sixty. I just don't need anything anymore," she explained.

Rather than buy her more "stuff," the Swanzey artist asked her loved ones to redirect their generosity to land conservation, a cause close to her heart, by making an honorary gift to the Monadnock Conservancy. More than twenty individuals and families have recognized Jeanne's birthday by donating to the Conservancy.

Their gifts not only celebrate a special occasion but also further our work protecting local lands in perpetuity. For Jeanne, land conservation in this region is key to maintaining rural character and sense of place, both of which she loves.

Her active role in Swanzey land-use issues, serving on both the planning board and the open space committee over the past few years, allows her to view the land from multiple angles.

"As a planning board member, I can help direct new development to the most appropriate sites, because I know that we need new housing and economic development. But there are also some places that we simply can't develop, because once they're gone, they're gone forever," she said.

That's where her work with the open space committee comes in:

"In all the projects the committee has done with the Conservancy, I've realized that we're not just helping the land, we're also helping people. It's not everyone who can afford to protect their property, yet so many people want to leave a legacy," said Jeanne. "With the help of the Conservancy, we've found ways to make it possible for nearly everyone."

Jeanne believes in raising town and private funds to facilitate conservation easement donations, or to buy easements for those who cannot afford to donate. She is trusted by many for her judgment and has helped many landowners with their decisions regarding conservation options.

One project Jeanne supported is particularly important to her: Ridgehill Farm in East Swanzey. She is a close friend of the Johnson family. Her daughters grew up working and playing at the farm under the loving eyes of farmer Mike Johnson; their experiences were key to their personal development. When one daughter started a family of her own, she chose to move next door to the farm so her child, Jeanne's grandson, could experience the farm as she did (Mike Johnson has already chosen a horse for his young "nephew").

So for her birthday, Jeanne received not only the acknowledgment of her friends, but the assurance that the Monadnock Conservancy will continue to protect and honor her town's rural character in a way that benefits all.

She couldn't think of a better gift than knowing she'll get to see her first grandson grow up swimming in the river and tending the animals, just as his parents did. 🍁

Want to make an honorary gift in Jeanne M. Thieme's name or for someone else you love? Please call Pat Payne at (603) 357-0600 or e-mail [Pat@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Pat@MonadnockConservancy.org).



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# Conservation Project Success: 2010 and Early 2011

## Working toward 15,000 acres

Three properties were officially added to our list of protected lands in 2010, bringing our overall total of conserved lands to 14,715 acres.

With the acceptance of two more conservation easements slated for early 2011 (see box below), we'll reach our goal of 15,000 protected acres. There are also several more projects in the pipeline, including the Shattuck Farm in Jaffrey which has already received good press in the *Monadnock Ledger-Transcript* and the *Keene Sentinel*.



### Comstock Farm-West

Walpole • 51.5 acres  
Rolling open meadows, stone walls, maple trees for sugaring . . . it's a quintessential New England scene

above Walpole's Christian Hollow neighborhood. Those same aesthetic values also hold conservation values (prime agricultural soils and productive forests), and will now be protected in perpetuity thanks in part to landowners Paul and Dorothy Galloway and the Walpole Conservation Commission, which for the first time has covered all transaction costs on a donated conservation easement project.

### Babine-Wheeler-Lowe

Peterborough • 140.7 acres

This remote property, with no road access or right-of-way, was acquired by the Town of Peterborough through tax default. The town has now established the lands as a forest reserve, particularly to expand wildlife habitat that complements the diverse habitats of the surrounding Otter Brook Farm property, protected in part by the Conservancy in 2009. A natural resource inventory found a rich diversity of wildlife species on the property including deer, moose, porcupine, ermine, coyote, red squirrel, fisher, moose, and red fox.



### Neff

Peterborough • 35.9 acres

Patricia & Tom Neff purchased this historic property with the primary goal of preventing any undesirable development that might compromise the protection and tranquility of the woodlot. Eastern hemlock, white pine, and red oak are the most common trees here. Now, instead of being cleared once to build more houses, the timber can indefinitely provide a sustainable supply of lumber and firewood.



### Land Conservation Deals Soon to Be Completed

Two of our most anticipated projects—Tippin Rock Farm in Swanzey and Cooper Hill in Marlborough—are scheduled to close early this year. Tippin Rock Farm is well-loved for the sweet corn that grows there as well as for access to Hewes Hill and its ledges. The Cooper Hill project will protect its namesake hill, a scenic roadside field, and hundreds of forested acres. Stay tuned for announcements celebrating the conservation of these lands.

### Shattuck Farm Project: A Few Steps Closer

At the end of last year, we received promises of funding from New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, the State Conservation Committee Conservation Grant "Moose Plate" Program, the Bean Family Foundation, and the Monadnock Conservation Assistance Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Shattuck Farm in Jaffrey. The 126-acre historic farm, currently owned by husband-and-wife Daniel and Travis Shattuck, includes forest, wetlands (pictured at right), and five hayfields. We will be seeking another grant from the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program in the spring for additional funds to cover the remaining purchase price of the easement. We will also be doing local fundraising in conjunction with the Jaffrey Conservation Commission to raise funds for transaction costs, such as survey work, title work, and legal fees.



## Taking Care of Our Protected Lands: Enforcement Q & A



In October 2010, trustee Tom Duston (at left) and stewardship assistant Rick Bracket voluntarily cleaned up two truckloads of trash that had been illegally dumped on one of our conservation easements in Chesterfield.

The Monadnock Conservancy accepts the responsibility to uphold in perpetuity the terms and conditions of each conservation easement acquired. Our commitment does not end when the papers are signed—in fact, it just begins.

Our stewardship program monitors each protected property, and we are proactive about enforcing the terms of each easement deed. To help us meet our stewardship obligations in a consistent manner, our stewardship committee approved a new enforcement policy last year. The policy articulates our philosophy on stewardship and enforcement, outlines means of preventing potential violations, and includes guidelines for how to respond to violations.

### How are conservation easements enforced?

Our volunteer land stewards and staff annually monitor each property and maintain records of all communications, land use activities, conveyances, and site inspections. Staff regularly makes time for such enforcement activities as marking boundaries, meeting with landowners, consulting natural resource professionals, seeking legal advice, keeping records, and sometimes even requiring changes on the ground when easements are violated.

### What happens when there is a violation?

When a violation is discovered, we gather information and review the easement terms. If necessary, staff will visit the property in question to document conditions on the ground. Next, we notify the property owner and begin an informal dialogue to reach a resolution. If a


resolution is not reached, then more formal proceedings such as mediation, arbitration, or injunction are pursued. Once a resolution is reached, a solution is implemented on the ground, records are updated, and normal monitoring is resumed.

Experience has shown that involving the easement landowner in the resolution has positive relationship-building results; this is now part of Conservancy policy. Nonetheless, when informal dialogue is not likely to result in a satisfactory resolution, we can and will resort to formal legal action.

### What kinds of violations are common?

There have been only about fifteen easement violations in the Conservancy's history, ranging in severity from minor (such as procedural violations, minor encroachments, dumping, or motor vehicle trespass) to major (such as unauthorized structures or disturbances). Fortunately, there has been only one major violation thus far—the construction of a building in an area that was not approved. Many of the violations we have dealt with resulted from activities of third parties and were discovered by neighbors, town officials, or other community members. Assistance from community members is key in identifying and resolving violations.

### How is enforcement paid for?

The greatest enforcement costs are staff time and legal advising costs. These costs are either covered by the offending party or by our Enforcement Fund. 

**Conservation Tax Incentive Extended**

An income tax incentive for private landowners—especially working family farmers—to protect their land was renewed in mid-December after having expired in 2009. Landowners can once again take advantage of an enhanced federal income tax deduction when they voluntarily donate a conservation easement by December 31, 2011 (the incentive is also retroactive to January 1, 2010). To learn more, go to: [www.landtrustalliance.org/easementincentive](http://www.landtrustalliance.org/easementincentive)

**Beetles Released as Natural Pest Control: Another HWA Update**

In early December, hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA, an aphid-like insect that kills hemlock trees) was found on our Potter easement in New Ipswich, part of the town's Nussdorfer Nature Area. The infestation is relatively small, but large enough to warrant management. The NH Division of Forests and Lands has since released a control beetle (*Laricobius nigrinus*) to feed on the adelgid and eventually eradicate it. The cost of the beetles is federally subsidized, so landowners don't have to pay for them. Five hundred beetles were released at the New Ipswich site. This is the first release of beetles on a conservation property in New Hampshire, and the state is grateful to have a property where the ownership and management will be continuous as that allows for better long-term monitoring.

**Intern Helps with New Trail**

Reeve Gutsell, a graduate student at Antioch University New England, worked with us as an intern throughout fall 2010. We thank her for flagging two new sections of the California Brook Trail, organizing volunteer trail-building work days, designing signs for junctions and information kiosks, writing trail summaries for local hiking guides, and revising trail maps.

**Conservancy Receives \$20,000 Grant from NHCF**

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation awarded us a community impact grant for 2011. We feel this grant is a strong vote of confidence in our leadership, the strength of our board, and in our organization overall. The funding provides unrestricted operating support, which will go toward land protection projects, stewardship programming, and MCCC activities that assist towns as they work to conserve more lands. The grant is made from the Annette and George William Cottrell Jr. Fund, which is managed by the Foundation.

**Why We Love this Region**

Throughout fall 2010, we asked you and our other friends, "What are *your* most special Monadnock Region places?" The most popular response was Mount Monadnock itself. Dublin Lake, Willard Pond, and Pitcher Mountain were oft mentioned, and many said your cherished place is your own home or neighborhood. In addition to specific locations, places with views, wildlife (although, interestingly, no specific species were noted), and access to recreation ranked high. Agriculture and water quality were two other themes of import. Perhaps the most creative response was from Ike the ox as told to his assistant Victoria Reck Barlow of Swanzy. To read about Ike's most special place, go to: [www.MonadnockConservancy.org/html/what\\_news.html](http://www.MonadnockConservancy.org/html/what_news.html)

**A Goal Realized**

The Swanzy Open Space Committee's ten-foot-high corn-o-meter (pictured at right), which stood in front of the Swanzy Town Hall, shows how much money was privately raised to help with the purchase of a conservation easement on Tippin Rock Farm. The farm is located in the south central part of town.



**In Memoriam**

**Pioneer Consulting Forester Passes Away**

The region lost a powerful voice for responsible forestry and land conservation when John Calhoun Jr. of Peterborough, formerly of Gilsum, died in early November. He was a leading consulting forester in New England, promoting the job as a profession and advocating for more controlled, selective harvests. An avid supporter of the Conservancy and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, he donated an easement to SPNHF on over 400 acres of working forest land in Gilsum. "He was always a promoter of conservation easements as he knew that was the best way the forest land base could be protected," said Swift Corwin, John's partner in Calhoun & Corwin Forestry.

**Eliza Adams Gorge Benefactor Dies**

Rep. Peter Allen of Harrisville died in November. He was a forester and served for thirteen years in the state legislature, supporting conservation issues. We are forever grateful that his legacy includes the Eliza Adams Gorge area. His donation of a 32-acre conservation easement on land abutting Howe Reservoir provides access to the Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway, and encourages public use such as hiking, snowshoeing, fishing, and bird watching.

If you'd like to make a memorial gift to honor either of these men, or someone else you know, please e-mail [Pat@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Pat@MonadnockConservancy.org) or call (603) 357-0600.



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# MONADNOCK CONSERVANCY

### About the Monadnock Conservancy

Founded in 1989, the Monadnock Conservancy is the only land trust dedicated exclusively to the thirty-five towns of the Monadnock Region in southwestern New Hampshire. Our mission is to identify, promote, and actively seek protection of significant natural, aesthetic, and historic resources in the area; and to monitor and enforce the protection of lands in the trust. Based in Keene, the Conservancy has protected nearly 15,000 acres of forest, farmland, shoreline, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and public recreation trails in the region.

## Upcoming Events

### Snowshoe Hike to Chapman Pond

Sunday, February 13, 10 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Join Conservancy members Roger and Ann Sweet on one of their favorite local rambles. We'll start on trail and then head into moderately strenuous terrain to reach the pond. Co-sponsored by the Harris Center.

### New Ipswich Hike: Two Places, Two Goals

Saturday, February 19, 10 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Explore the Town of New Ipswich's Nussdorfer Nature Area, most of which is protected by a Conservancy easement. We will visit a stand of hemlocks where we can see signs of the woolly adelgid insect, an invasive threat to one of our most common trees. Then we'll hike (or snowshoe) to scenic Hoar Pond to enjoy the view and our snacks/lunches. Co-sponsored by the Harris Center.

### Beech Hill Hike

Saturday, April 30, 9 a.m.–noon

A moderate hike that follows a loop on newly established trails atop



Dublin's Beech Hill, featuring broad views of the Wapack Range. We'll be joined by Meade Cadot of the Harris Center and Steve Roberge, UNH forestry educator, to talk about forest response to ice storm damage and its relationship to habitat for woodpeckers and other snag and cavity dependent wildlife species.

Register for any of these events by contacting Emily Hague, stewardship manager, at (603) 357-0600 or e-mail [Emily@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Emily@MonadnockConservancy.org). Get more info online: [www.MonadnockConservancy.org/html/events.html](http://www.MonadnockConservancy.org/html/events.html)