



Together, protecting forever
the land we love

Newsletter

FALL/WINTER 2019



Conserving Community

**Celebrating 30 years,
and making connections
for the future**

An anniversary is often a time to reflect on the past, but with the Monadnock Conservancy's thirtieth, we're focusing at least as much on the future, too. And one of the questions we keep coming back to is, how can a land conservation organization remain relevant in a rapidly changing world?

The obvious answer, of course, is to change with the world, and the Conservancy is doing that, to be sure. We've expanded our geographic service area and our budget. We've taken on new projects and programs to protect and manage different types of land. We've changed the way we talk about what we do and why it matters.

Nature & Music

On Saturday, September 14, nearly 120 friends and colleagues of the Conservancy gathered at Keene State College to celebrate three decades of service.

Board President Steve Larmon kicked off the event by recognizing the hard work of all trustees, volunteers, and staff. “Most of all I really want to thank all of you in the community,” Steve said.

The celebration featured music by Elise Kuder and Mike Kelley, violinist and violist with the Apple Hill String Quartet. The two explored, with words and live music, how nature inspires musicians, what it’s like to be a musician in rural America, and how music captures and celebrates the natural world.

Executive Director Ryan Owens highlighted projects in the works and shared the stories behind the properties the Conservancy protected — in partnership with families and towns — this past year.

Did you miss the event or enjoy it so much you wish you could experience it again? View the videos: youtube.com/MonadnockConservancy



The Apple Hill duo debuted “Hermit Thrush,” an original composition by Harrisville resident Miriam Sharrock.

Conserving Community, *continued*

Change and evolution are healthy, but so too is holding true to certain core values.

When the word “connection” is used in the conservation world, very often it is referring to geographic connection. The most basic principle of landscape conservation is keeping natural systems functionally intact — in other words, connected. We speak of protecting large blocks of land to prevent fragmentation, which is simply another word for disconnecting natural systems by breaking them up into smaller units. We speak of linking wildlife corridors by stitching together patches of conserved land across the landscape. This kind of connection is especially important as the climate changes, and ecosystems need to move, often northward or uphill, to follow the ideal conditions to which they’ve adapted over the millennia.

Ecological connection is, to borrow a scientific term, wicked important, and it’s a high priority of ours when selecting conservation projects. But it’s human connection that we feel an increasing need to focus on, because without healthy, whole connections between people and land and people and one another, conservation doesn’t work, and it doesn’t last.

Ever since our founding, 30 years ago, our priority has been conserving the places to which families, neighborhoods, and communities are most deeply connected. With respect and humility, we appreciate that people may relate to land in different ways. Some may do it with binoculars around their necks, and others with a fishing rod or gun over their shoulders. Some in their hiking boots, and some astride a machine. Some go to nature to marvel at wildness, and some go to harvest crops or timber for their livelihood. What matters is that they all care, even if their story is different.

How will we remain relevant in a rapidly changing world? We’ll adapt, certainly, but, we’ll do it by honoring, as we always have, the unique and beautiful and ever-changing ways in which individuals and communities connect to land, and by fostering opportunities for people to establish new and deeper connections.

– Ryan Owens



Katrina Farmer



Jennifer Zaso



Emily Hague

A Dream That Will Last Forever

Landowner establishes a nature preserve in the shadow of Monadnock

Land is so important to our community character, to our well-being, to our region's history, and to the critters who live here, too. The Devan Preserve in Marlborough, a 400-acre property the Conservancy owns, was established through gifts of land by Cia Devan. Now, it has been expanded to 523 acres, thanks to her continued generosity.

After living out of state for some time, Cia wanted to do something with the land she still owned in New Hampshire. She worked closely with our land protection director, Anne McBride, to make her dream come true.

“My interest and commitment to land conservation began with Meetinghouse Pond in the early

1970s. Later I became aware of the opportunity and vision of bringing conservation lands in Marlborough closer to the Monadnock Reservation. Contributing to this in some way was important to me, and over the years I appreciated the support and interest of others in the community,” Cia said.

The property is within one mile of the Monadnock Reservation, and it connects New Hampshire Audubon's Kensan Devan and Frechette sanctuaries with two conservation properties owned by the New England Forestry Foundation and the Town of Dublin, respectively.

“The Devan Preserve is part of a block of more than 10,000 acres of interconnected conservation land. This connectivity is critical for wildlife,



Emily Hague

and it increases the chance for animals to fare better in the face of a changing climate,” said Anne.

Weasels, porcupines, otters, deer, coyotes, and even a bobcat have been spotted on this land. Whether the critters call the place home or are just passing through, the Preserve offers a haven for local wildlife — now and in the future.



Loving the Land for the Long Haul

One property, two landowners, and a span of 15-plus years

Cold Comfort Farm, Peterborough

Ned Eldredge's kitchen windows face acres of thinned woods. He was a kid on this land, and the third generation of his family to live here. Still, he feels that his hold on his 60 ancestral acres may be slipping. "I got the easement to protect

myself," he says, for the day when his income as a logger couldn't stretch to meet the tax bill and he might be tempted to sell off house lots.

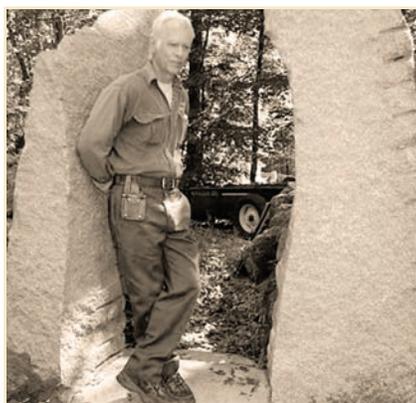
Ned is emphatic that timber harvesting is essential to his vision for the land. "Forestry activities," the easement reads, "shall be conducted with the specific objective of promoting regeneration and survival of ecologically and commercially valuable tree species." Keeping conservation goals are the first priority, and silvicultural practices are encouraged.

"Any time you extract a resource, whether it's timber or water or

minerals, there are impacts, no question. But those resources are going to be extracted somehow. Isn't it better to have them done on protected land where it can be thoughtfully managed?"

For Ned, these woods still form the center from which knowledge expands outward. His work as a conservationist is inspired by this bond. "I know every inch of my land," Ned says. "I know every tree on 60 acres. I know most every coyote den. I know where to see deer in the winter. I know where the thrushes hang out. I have a very intimate relationship with this land."

Excerpted from a story originally published in 2004



Conservationist Ned Eldredge wanted to ensure that his carefully managed land would provide forest products for generations to come.

Ned Therrien (3)



carries forward a shared vision

Roaming Badger Farm, Peterborough

Ned Eldredge’s kitchen windows are now Swift and Beth Corwin’s windows. The Corwins came to New Hampshire from Wisconsin, raised their kids here, and imagined their home on Pine Street in Peterborough as their retirement residence, too ... until a few years ago, when Beth spoke up that she was ready for a change. When they pulled in the driveway to the Eldredge property, even before getting out of the car, Beth said, “I could live here.”

“We had real excitement about the land that came with it,” said Swift, who, as a forester and former Conservancy

board member, had familiarity with conservation easements. “We looked at the easement and visualized what we could do. Like the careful construction of the house, Ned had taken beautiful care of the woods.”

Beth and Swift now manage the land, which they call Roaming Badger Farm (the neighboring farm shares the name Cold Comfort Farm, so the Corwins chose a new name honoring their Wisconsin roots). They make maple syrup, do periodic timber harvests, and through seasonal mowing maintain a 5-acre field for wildlife habitat.

“We have done some logging, and it’s fun to see what is coming back in the pockets of light. It was logs we cut from which we made the sugarhouse,” Swift shared.

For now, the Corwins enjoy life here and learn new lessons each season. Best of all, they know that “when it’s that time, other people can tend [the land]. They will be guided by the conservation easement. They, too, will figure out that it’s a bit of learning and a lot of fun.”

Rebecca DiGirolomo



Today, landowners Beth and Swift Corwin enjoy the view of Mount Monadnock and care for the land by mowing the field and keeping the forests healthy.

Decades of Leadership

Award recognizes longtime advisor Paul Kotila

When it comes to challenging work, Paul Kotila of Fitzwilliam has never been one to shy away.

“Paul often refers to problems that might make others run for the hills as ‘fun’ and ‘interesting.’ He has always been ready and willing to roll up his sleeves and work with staff to find solutions to problems that are aligned with the highest standards,” said Stewardship Manager Rebecca DiGirolomo, in presenting him with the Founders’ Award at our 30th Annual Celebration in mid-September.

Between 1997 and 2019, Paul served a total of 14 years on the Conservancy’s Board of Trustees. Today, he continues his leadership on our stewardship committee. It is because of this dedication that Paul was recognized. Given in recognition of the vision and dedication of the founding trustees, the Founders’ Award honors a deserving individual who has contributed substantially to the Conservancy over a sustained period. It has been awarded only five times since 1989.

“It has been a pleasure over the period of 20-plus years that I’ve been working with all these folks,” Paul said. “I greatly appreciate this surprise; it was something I never expected.”



Paul Kotila holds his award, a framed photo of a beech tree in Fitzwilliam’s Widow Gage Town Forest.

Katrina Farmer

Always Giving Back

A reason to honor Dee Robbins

Dee Robbins of Keene is known for a sparkle in her eye and enthusiasm in her heart. Her passion is what made her more than deserving of this year’s Volunteer of the Year Award. Over the past 10 years, Dee has volunteered as a land steward and at countless events, including weekly at the Conservancy’s Kids Connect! program this summer.

“If you ask Dee about her volunteering, she doesn’t talk in terms of how much she has given, she talks in terms of how much she has received, the memories she has gained, the relationships she has forged,” said Rebecca DiGirolomo, stewardship manager.

Dee came to New Hampshire from Massachusetts as an environmental studies student in 2004, and she has served the region’s environment ever since, working at several conservation organizations and inspiring students in the Keene School District.

“I get to try new things and meet new people. Selfishly, it’s always a pleasure and feels good to contribute,” Dee said. “Land conservation in particular is a goal of mine for the region, so I like to know that I’m helping that happen. I’m very honored by this award.”



Dee Robbins is a volunteer who wears many hats, including trail crew at Page Mountain Meadow in Marlborough.

Emily Hague

Welcome New Supporters!

Your caring and generosity are key to preserving land

It would not be possible to protect open spaces in our region without dedicated support from our friends. We are so grateful to everyone who has contributed to the Monadnock Conservancy — **thank you!** — and especially delighted to welcome the people listed below, who made their first donation to the Conservancy in the past year.

Anonymous (8)	Karen Esposito	Keene Disc Golf Club	Nancy Ranson
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Would you like to save more land in our region?

If you'd like to contribute to this year's annual fundraising campaign, please contact Lindsay Taflas, development director, at Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org or 603-357-0600, ext. 113. Or, you can use the enclosed reply envelope or donate online at MonadnockConservancy.org. Thank you!





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Founded in 1989, the Monadnock Conservancy is a nonprofit conservation land trust working with you and your neighbors in 39 towns throughout the Monadnock region of southwestern New Hampshire.



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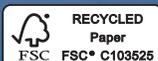
*“ I am grateful to all who work to protect the
lands of our beautiful Monadnock region
so that there will always be trails, streams,
fields, and forests
unspoiled for generations to come. ”*

*– Betsey Harris, founding member of the Conservancy,
Peterborough*



Cover: Emily Hague, Shauna Sousa, Tig Tillinghast, Katrina Farmer, and Stephen H. Gehlbach

Shauna Sousa



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Devan Preserve, Marlborough