

SOCIETY FOR THE
PROTECTION OF
NEW HAMPSHIRE
FORESTS



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Monitor

CONSERVATION EASEMENT STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2014

Greetings Landowners!

The Easement Stewardship Department is excited to announce that the Forest Society has been officially recognized as an accredited land trust! After years of planning and countless hours of hard work, we are now one of 238 organizations nationwide that have been awarded the distinctive honor by the Land Trust Alliance. The accreditation program is voluntary, and is established to recognize land conservation organizations that “meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.”

What does accreditation mean for you as a landowner? We will continue to monitor each property annually using aerial imagery, but will be increasing the frequency of our ground monitoring visits to at least once every 2-3 years. We’ll be working more closely with each of you to answer questions, prevent any potential violations, and resolve issues as soon as they are discovered. We’ll also be updating our older baseline reports to meet the new standards set by the Accreditation Commission. For those of you with older easements or deed restrictions, you can expect a comprehensive site visit over the next few years as we complete a Current Conditions Report for your review. These reports will include new photos, maps, and a summary of changes in management since your property was first protected.

The accreditation process has already improved our Easement Stewardship Department and our organization as a whole. We hope it can also strengthen our relationship with each of you as we continue to work together to protect special places throughout the state.

We hope you find this newsletter and update on the Forest Society’s Easement Stewardship Program to be informative. Please feel free to call us directly if you have any questions.

Yours in good stewardship,

Director of Easement Stewardship

WELCOME TO OUR NEW EASEMENT LANDOWNERS!

In 2013, the Forest Society completed 19 new conservation easements totaling over 3,443 new protected acres! In addition to planning routine ground monitoring visits with each of you, we’ll also be working with our aerial imagery contractor to fly over and take aerial images of each new easement this month. When you add in our existing easements and deed restrictions, that’s nearly 700 properties!

We look forward to working with each of you for many years to come. Thanks to all of you for helping to protect and steward the land that makes New Hampshire special!

MANAGING LAND AROUND WETLANDS

Identifying a wetland: Is there water at or near the surface? Is the soil saturated for at least part of the growing season? Does the area support vegetation adapted to wet conditions? If you answer yes to any of these, you might have a wetland on your property.

How does this change how you manage your land? Wetlands are ecologically important and should be given special consideration when planning any land management activity.

Forestry: Are you planning a timber harvest near a wetland? Your forester will be well versed in NH Timber Harvesting Law, but also talk to them about the best management practices (BMPs) for the sites, soils, and terrain of the property. While BMPs aren't law they do dictate how timber harvesting can be done on most of our conservation easements and deed restrictions. Some things to consider when doing a timber harvest around a wetland:

- Do you need any special permits?
- Where will roads and water crossings be located to reduce impact on water quality, rutting and erosion?
- Do you need buffers around your wetlands to reduce impact to highly erodible soils, known threatened or endangered species habitat, or rare plants and exemplary natural communities?
- Can you leave the area closest to the wetland unharvested to provide increased protection to sensitive aquatic habitats?

Further information can be found in *Good Forestry in the Granite State: Recommended Voluntary Forest Management Practices for New Hampshire*.

Agriculture: Are you planning agricultural activities near your wetlands? Take a look at recommendations in the *Manual of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Agriculture in New Hampshire*. These include:

- Controlling access of livestock to water bodies.
- Controlling runoff from barnyards and feedlots.
- Minimizing soil erosion.
- Maintaining filter strips next to surface waters receiving runoff from crop fields where manure is applied.

Wetlands are among the most critical parts of any forest ecosystem. A little planning can help reduce negative impacts on these sensitive ecosystems, helping to protect the valuable assets of your property.

WHAT MAKES A FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN?

For most Forest Society easements, a forest management plan is required before any commercial timber harvesting can occur. The plan must be written by a licensed forester within the last 10 years, and should include landowner objectives, a forest type map, a soils map, prescriptions for each stand, and an explanation of how wetlands or other sensitive areas will be protected during the harvest.

Your conservation easement deed will outline the specific information you need for a forest management plan. Keep in mind that Forest Society requirements may be above and beyond what your town requires for Current Use purposes. Please contact your steward if you have any questions about your easement requirements.



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TIPS FOR BOUNDARY LINE MAINTENANCE

Boundary line maintenance can seem like a perpetual chore. However, it is an important part of protecting your property. We recommend that you walk your property and easement boundaries annually. This will help you, and your neighbors, know where the limitations of the easement are and might prevent accidental encroachments or other prohibited activities in the easement area.

Here are some tips on boundary line maintenance:

- Walk property lines regularly to remain familiar with their location and observe potential issues with abutter activities.
- Periodically clear small brush that obscures the line or monuments.
- Repaint existing blazes and replace worn flagging along lines or corners.
- Do not blaze or paint trees which have not already been blazed by a surveyor.
- Do not cut trees of any significant size near the line unless you are absolutely certain they are on your property.
- You may need to hire a licensed surveyor or forester to help identify or blaze your boundary lines.

If you need assistance locating part of your boundary, we may be able to help you during a monitoring visit. We can also provide conservation easement signs or boundary tags to help designate the easement area. Feel free to ask your steward to bring a few to your next monitoring visit.

EXCERPTS
FROM

“MENDING WALL”

*Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.*

*I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.*

*Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
He is all pine and I am apple-orchard.*

He only says, “Good fences make good neighbors.”

*Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.*

*I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.*

*He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well*

He says again, “Good fences make good neighbors.”

-Robert Frost

STEWARDSHIP FACTS

- **292** properties were visited by stewards in 2013
- Easement stewards conducted the field work and wrote Baselines or Current Conditions Reports for **35** properties in 2013
- Over **150** species of birds were tallied on Forest Society easements in 2013
- As of Jan 1, 2014 there were **848** properties monitored by the easement stewardship staff
- Approximately **126,645** acres will be flown and aerial photographed to aid in monitoring for 2014.

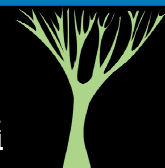


Have you seen this bug?

Visit www.nhbugs.org for more information on the Emerald Ash Borer that recently arrived in New Hampshire.

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The Monitor is a publication of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests' easement stewardship program, and is written for owners of land under conservation easement or deed restriction with the Forest Society.



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WHAT IS EASEMENT STEWARDSHIP?

The primary role of an easement stewardship program is to ensure that the conservation values of protected properties are preserved. This is achieved through careful monitoring and record keeping, and fostering a mutually beneficial relationship with each and every landowner. The cycle of land protection is not finished when the deed is recorded; the hard work comes in our ability and commitment to steward, or defend, the identified conservation values in perpetuity.

The Forest Society is legally obligated to ensure that all the terms of the conservation easement are met. Our conservation easement stewardship staff carries out this important commitment through annual monitoring, building relationships with landowners, providing educational resources, maintaining permanent records, and working with natural resource professionals.

As a landowner, you will work directly with an easement steward assigned to your property. We consider a conservation easement or deed restriction to be a partnership and opportunity to work together with landowners to protect the special conservation features of the property. Please contact us if you have any questions about your easement or deed restrictions, management activities, or are planning to sell your property.



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