

SOCIETY FOR THE
PROTECTION OF
NEW HAMPSHIRE
FORESTS

SINCE
1901

54 Portsmouth Street
Concord, NH 03301

Tel. 603.224.9945

Fax 603.228.0423

info@forestsociety.org

www.forestsociety.org

2014 Stewardship Facts:

Properties visited by
stewards
347

Acres of aerial
monitoring
128,686

Bees that stung
Lauren
3

Bears seen by Paul
6

Ticks removed after
one season of hiking
the forests and fields
of NH
Innumerable

Monitor

CONSERVATION EASEMENT STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2015

Greetings Landowners,

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Monitor Conservation Easement Stewardship Newsletter, which the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests sends annually to landowners with property protected by a Forest Society easement or deed restriction.

In 1996, the Forest Society's easement stewardship team consisted of one person responsible for monitoring approximately 360 easements and deed restrictions covering 57,000 acres. In 2015, the Easement Stewardship Department is a team of five who monitor approximately 700 easements and deed restrictions covering over 125,000 acres. How times have changed. We are proud to work with you to fulfill the Forest Society's obligation to steward its easements and deed restrictions in perpetuity.



Reagan Bissonnette, Ext. 350
rbissonnette@forestsociety.org

In this issue, we have some new staff to introduce, myself included. In addition, you'll find information about how to help prevent a neighbor's encroachment from turning into adverse possession, the Easement Stewardship photo contest, and more. We enjoy hearing from you, so please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Looking forward to 20 more years of good stewardship,

Reagan Bissonnette
Director of Easement Stewardship

Welcome All New Easement Landowners!

Thank you to new landowners who helped ensure the everlasting scenic beauty of New Hampshire this year by donating a conservation easement on their land. In 2014, you helped us add 8 new conservation easements, totaling 1,402 acres. We hope to meet you this summer and get introduced to your property. Either by aerial monitoring photos taken in the spring or visits to your land, we support you in the stewardship of your property each year. Please feel to reach out to your land steward at any time! We are excited to hear your story.

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

Visit the NEW website forestsociety.org for more information.

What is Adverse Possession?

It is not unusual for the easement stewardship team to find encroachments along easement boundaries. In some cases, an encroachment by an abutter is also a third party violation of the easement. More often, the abutter's encroachment is an activity permitted by the easement, such as a garden or foot path. For encroachments that are not easement violations, correcting the encroachment is a matter for the landowner and abutter to resolve. However, if the encroachment is not addressed, it may ripen into adverse possession.

Adverse possession is a common law that allows a person to acquire title to real property without mutual agreement by the parties. Adverse possession is confusing, complicated, and can often be very emotional. While it is relatively rare, our team frequently gets asked questions about it. A full Q & A handout on adverse possession is available on the Forest Society's new website, which recently launched in January 2015. Other answers to many common questions are now easily accessible on the "Frequently Asked Questions" page at www.forestsociety.org/faq/easement-stewardship.

If you have questions about adverse possession and how it relates to your conservation easement, contact Reagan Bissonnette, Director of Easement Stewardship.



Lauren Kras, Ext. 374
lkas@forestsociety.org



Leah Hart, Ext. 364
lhart@forestsociety.org



Paul Gagnon, Ext. 338
pgagnon@forestsociety.org



Joslin Bennett, Ext. 332
jbennett@forestsociety.org



Welcome, Baby Boy Bennett!

Joslin Bennett and her husband Ross welcomed their second child (left), William McIntosh Bennett, on February 10th (one day before sister Maggie's 3rd birthday). Will was 8 pounds, 2 ounces and 21 inches long. Joslin plans to return to the office in May to continue working as a part-time easement steward.

Expanding the Stewardship Family

Reagan Bissonnette joined the Forest Society as Director of Easement Stewardship in July 2014 as Ryan Young, former Director, moved back into a land protection role. Prior to joining the Forest Society, Reagan practiced law as a corporate attorney at a large New England law firm. Reagan received her law degree from Boston College Law School and a degree in Biology from Washington University in St. Louis. Reagan serves as a board member and Vice President of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of NH and as a member of the Energy Committee and the Trails Committee for the Town of Henniker. Reagan lives in Henniker, NH with her husband, dog, chickens, composting worms, and organic edible garden.

Leah Hart started as a Conservation Easement Steward with the Forest Society in the winter of 2015. She grew up in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire and after receiving her bachelor's degree in Conservation Biology from St. Lawrence University in New York state in 2012 returned to her home state. Most recently, Leah served as The Nature Conservancy's Seasonal Land Steward in northern New Hampshire.

Feature your easement land in our 2015 PHOTO CONTEST



*Take a picture on your property
Send your photo by July 1, 2015 to lhart@forestsociety.org
All entries will be posted on the Easement Stewardship webpage
The winner will be chosen by the Easement Stewardship staff and awarded a free logo
wear item from the Forest Society gift shop!*

Ten Tips to Perfect Landscape Photography

Explore! Wandering outside leads to a better sense of place. It takes time to develop a sense of your surroundings and how they evolve through the season and time of day.

Hold the camera steady: Tripods or rocks can help you keep the camera level and steady.

Shoot level and straight: Help keep the observer focused on the image, especially when the horizon is in view.

Use natural lines: Lead the observer to your focus by using natural lines (railroads, branches, or a fence).

Shoot the sky at its best: Adjust the amount of space designated to sky: with a dramatic or showy sky, let it take up more of the photo; when the sky is dull, focus on the foreground.

Follow general photography rules: Use the rule of thirds. Divide the image into thirds both horizontally and vertically, then align your subject(s) at the intersection of these lines.

... **And ignore the rules:** Don't be afraid to experiment.

Time it right: Generally, the most vibrant photos can be taken around sunrise and sunset. But don't shy away from of unusual weather – a stormy sky can lead to the most interesting scenes.

Make adjustments depending on your subject: If shooting a broad landscape, try a lower aperture. If capturing the movement of a stream, go for a slower shutter speed.

Always carry your camera: A mental image, though stunning, also is fleeting.

Conservation Easement Boundary Signs Available

Did you know that over half of the easement violations we encounter are encroachments or dumping by third parties onto easement property? In most cases, well-marked boundaries may have prevented the problem in the first place. We encourage easement landowners to maintain well-marked boundaries to help prevent these types of problems. To assist in that effort, we have small (3 3/4" x 5 5/8") boundary signs available for free for landowners. If you would like signs for your property, your easement steward would be happy to install some at your direction during your next monitoring visit.

