Taking Action

As we move into yet another season, it’s not just weather that’s changing. The public’s attitude and response to climate change has shifted. Climate change is now front and center in the news, politics, around the kitchen table, and at the recent national Land Trust Alliance Rally.

It occurs to me that the balloon we’ve been inflating with our environmental impacts is near full...we run the risk of bursting it if we don’t adapt, innovate, sacrifice, and conserve. As a land trust, what role should we play in the growing debate and response?

One thing we can do is advance the dialogue and learning. We’ve ramped up the discussion by co-hosting two Climate Change Forums and several Science Pubs with our local conservation partners (see back page). Stay tuned, we have much to learn from each other. Another is to measure the impacts of changes on a forest (see page 5).

The most direct way we can mitigate climate change is to protect our forest lands. How fortunate we are to live in a place with over 90% tree cover. The protection of these forest lands, and the reason for protecting them, has taken on new meaning and priority. With the help of a donor, we’ve created a “Squam Forest Fund” to fund these types of projects. This fund is helping us acquire 150 acres of forest at the western end of the Squam Range. Meanwhile, we’ve helped add 39 more acres of conservation land to Belknap Woods (see page 3), and the completion of the 6,500-acre Beebe River Uplands project along the north flank of the Squam Range is in the home stretch.

Our parents worked hard to leave us better off than they were. But the promise of a better tomorrow is being questioned by our children and grandchildren. Hope stems from action. We are entering a time in human history where every decision matters and it has cumulative effect.

It’s time to let some air out of the balloon by prioritizing natural climate solutions such as forest protection and make the kind of personal sacrifices that lower environmental impacts. We all play a role in lowering carbon emissions and plastic proliferation.

SLCS is looking far into the future -- all the way to forever. It’s what a land trust does. Thanks for supporting our mission to conserve and for taking action. It provides hope for our community, little planet, and future.

Onward...
Ridgely Preserve

Squam is renowned for its scenic beauty, sense of wildness, and quiet places. Lily Cove, located in Sandwich along the north side of the Rattlesnake Cove, is one of those very special wild and quiet places. In 1978, Bev and Barbara Ridgely donated a conservation easement on a 14-acre parcel adjacent to their summer camp (“Le Marais”). Bev, the author of “Birds of the Squam Lakes Region” spent countless hours watching birds in this unique and special marsh.

A provision of the conservation easement included the right to build an additional home and garage near the intersection of Cove and Metcalf Roads, with a dock along the shore. Neighbors contacted the Conservation Society to see what could be done to prevent this property from ever being developed. Those neighbors marshalled the resources so that in August the Ridgely family sold the property to us.

The property will now be known as the Ridgely Preserve.

We also took the opportunity to rename the abutting 15-acre Lily Cove III property in name of its donor, Daphne Mowatt. Its new name is the “Daphne Preserve.” Daphne was on hand with her daughter Twig Mowatt and Stan Yarborough for the celebration. Combined, SLCS now owns and manages a 117-acre block of pristine land on the flank of East Rattlesnake.

Belknap Woods Addition

This fall, Squam received a remarkable gift from Lee and Randy Mattson of Center Harbor. They donated 39 acres of their land abutting Belknap Woods to the Squam Lakes Association (SLA), who in turn donated a conservation easement to us with executory interest to the Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT). Thus, Belknap Woods increased from 90 to 129 acres.

About half of this property is a designated prime wetlands by the Town of Center Harbor. The forest is predominantly hemlock trees, with occasional stands of maple, birch, and beech. The wetlands contain two beaver dams and countless large boulders. The Town of Center Harbor contributed the stewardship funding. This project is a great example of conservation partners working closely together, and the generosity of landowners in the Squam community. Thanks Lee and Randy for your gift and dedication to conservation.
**Bennett Brook**

On September 23, 2019, Tom Howe donated a conservation easement on nearly 20 acres of exceptional wildlife habitat with one-half mile of clear-running trout streams including the second-order Bennett Brook that flows directly into Squam Lake a short distance away. The streams contain cold-water species such as brook trout, blacknose dace, and the rare banded killifish. Bennett Brook is also an important smelt-spawning stream critical for supporting landlocked salmon and lake trout.

In addition, the property contains several acres of former beaver impoundment that will likely return to open water habitat areas, three acres of unusual boulder field forest with high quality, regenerating oak, and over two acres of maintained field that currently supports local farming operations. As many will know, Tom is a land conservation expert and comes from a long line of conservationists. We are deeply grateful to Tom and his wife Sarah Thorne for their thoughtful and generous contributions to the conservation of Squam.

**Cast Iron Cook-Off**

There were only two rules for the first ever Squam Lake Dutch Oven Cook-Off this past July: 1) you must create a dish using a dutch oven, and 2) you must have fun!

The work began midafternoon at White Oak Pond Farm as the “Cast Iron Cooks” started their fires and prepared their pots for slow cooking a meal over hot coals.

Nearly thirty guests arrived to learn more about the process, socialize and feast on spicy paella, lamb stew, roasted vegetables, kettle bread and apple cobbler.

Guest Judges Peter Francesco and Diane Downing took their duties very seriously, tasting all entries multiple times. In the end Amy Miller’s spicy paella won first place!

We thank the Brown Family for inviting us to stage this event at their beautiful farm. Special thanks to Jess Saba for all her help planning the event and opening up new possibilities for future events.

You may borrow the Dutch ovens from us anytime. Bringing people together to share food and good times on conserved land elevates the tangible aspects of land conservation.
What’s Up at Doublehead Preserve?

If you’ve been to Doublehead Preserve recently, you’ll notice some blue flags around the picnic area. If you’ve ventured on the trail, you may have seen some small PVC pipes scattered about. What may appear to be random is not. At least not in this instance!

Earlier this fall, the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation, the Conservation Society, and some intrepid volunteers teamed up to establish three plots at different elevations in the forest of Doublehead Preserve. What does it mean to “establish a plot?” Well, in this instance, for each plot we selected and marked the plot center, measured a 25-meter diameter circle around the center, and placed numbered aluminum tags on every tree greater than 10cm in diameter (about 3.9 inches). Interestingly, in each of the three plots, this amounted to 35 trees! We also installed three soil respiration rings at each plot which will be used to measure carbon content and change in the forest. Air temperature probes have been installed and a phenology site created to help study seasonal variations and the response of species to changes in climate over time. It has been a great learning experience for all of us! But wait . . . there’s more!!

We have a bunch more work to do next spring and beyond. We’ll have a soil test pit workshop to learn how the soils influence what grows and what doesn’t. We need volunteers to use soil probes, download data, measure tree diameters, look for pesky invasive insects, measure soil respiration, and collect stream water data such as pH, temperature and stream flow.

There is a lot going on up in them thar hills! And can’t you just imagine getting a science class or two involved in collecting data over time? It has the potential to be a great outdoor laboratory for people of all ages.

We are looking for volunteers who would like to help as we continue to learn more about the woods in the Squam Range and beyond. If you are interested, send me an email at pete@foreversquam.org and I’ll get you on the list for next spring and summer!

Huge thanks to Betsy Whitmore, Judith Saum, George and Susan Gurney, Henry Damon, Jules Stanley, Dane Doorman, Sarah Thorne, and Amey Bailey for their invaluable help and enthusiasm! And huge thanks also to our partners Burleigh Land Limited Partnership, ES Webster Foundation, and Hubbard Brook Research Foundation, without whose support this work would not be possible!
“Only YOU Can Prevent Forest Fires”

Over 75 years have gone by since Smokey Bear uttered his saying, “Only YOU can prevent forest fires.” Well, it seems we haven’t all received the message.

The pictures below are from a recent fire on Center Harbor Neck where a couple of careless people didn’t fully put out a fire this fall. The fire was inappropriately built on the duff (the forest floor to most of us). The duff is made up of branches, leaves, needles, bark, etc., in various stages of decomposition. When it is very dry, this material can burn slowly and often burn down several feet.

Once a fire in the duff starts, it is very difficult to put it out. In fact, when SLCS went out to investigate after learning the fire was purported to be on SLCS land, and that the fire was reported and extinguished four days earlier, it was still smoldering, even after an evening of rain!

Please, please, please, ensure that you, your kids, your friends, etc., fully extinguish any fire before leaving it unattended. And if you must build one, ensure that you have the landowner’s permission and that it is built on mineral soils and not on the forest floor!

Conserving Your Land

Conserving Your Land is a guide for landowners, conservation commissions, citizens, and others interested in learning about land conservation options and techniques. Originally written in 2005, this guide has been revised and updated. A limited number are available in the SLCS office or can be found on the NH Land Trust Coalition website:

https://nhltc.org/conserving-your-land
Despite the gray and misty weather, over 160 SLCS Members were in attendance at our 2019 Annual Meeting held on the Beij Farm in East Holderness. Karin Beij welcomed everyone and described the deep connection her family has to the land and why conserving 378 acres of this hillside farm was so important to her parents and continues to be important to the whole family.

Board President Win Brown presided over the business of committee reports and election of officers and directors. Welcome to new Director Martin Carmichael (see below) and congratulations to our slate of officers and directors. We are also pleased to announce the election of former Board President David Sinkler as an honorary trustee.

As always, the highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the 2019 Davenport Award to an individual or individuals who have shown exceptional commitment and service to the Squam community as a steward of our protected properties. The Stewardship Committee recognized retiring Director John Thompson. (see page 7)

Guest speaker and 2018 SLCS Americorp Member, Emily Landry, reflected on her time at Squam, “The Squam region is such an exemplary example of land conservation. But the cool thing about land conservation is, by conserving the land, you’re conserving the water, the views, the history, the wildlife, the memories, and more. Just think of your favorite memory on Squam. Would it be the same without land conservation? Would the mountains still be forest? Would the water be clean? I don’t know about you, but I don’t want to find out!”

And, of course we want to thank John Moulton of Moulton Farm for once again providing hot coffee, cider donuts and fruit; and Bonnie Hunt for her amazing blueberry muffins and scones.

**New Director**

**Martin Carmichael** and his family have been coming to Squam Lake for the past 30 years, first as campers at RDC and then to their home on Diamond Ledge Road in Center Sandwich. He and his wife Lisa love hiking, biking, skiing and swimming in the beautiful surroundings of Squam.

Martin was a partner in the Boston office of Goodwin Procter, where he practiced corporate law until his retirement in 2018; he continues to be of counsel to the firm. His practice included work on behalf of universities and other not-for-profit organizations. He is a graduate of Williams College and Stanford Law School. Martin also serves as member of the board of directors and secretary of The Sandwich Home Industries, which operates the League of NH Craftsmen Fine Craft Gallery in Center Sandwich.
What Being a Member Means

We sometimes get asked how to become a member, what it means, and what the benefits are. The first part is easy. You become a member by making a financial contribution, whether it’s for operations, projects, or investments. Most individuals and families become members by making a gift to operations. In doing so, members support the day-to-day work of the organization. This means we can pay our staff, support our board, train volunteer monitors, stay connected through our newsletter, and provide expert advice to landowners at no charge. It also helps us to employ best practices to maintain our accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance. Some members donate to projects, which means adding to our growing portfolio of lands. Other members donate to investments, meaning we will have the financial base to fulfill our perpetual stewardship responsibilities.

Finally, what are the benefits to being a member? Beyond electing our directors and officers, our members don’t receive discounts, chotskies, or free tickets. The most important member benefits are frankly less tangible but more important. We offer the majesty of Squam’s forested landscape, the splendor of a starry night, a place for wildlife to thrive, and the opportunity to create something bigger than anyone of us. In short, a member becomes a part of the team that is conserving Squam’s land today for future generations. The greatest benefit of SLCS membership is the privilege to steward and forge the future of Squam. Thank you for your contributions, faith, and foresight.

2019 Davenport Award Winner

John Thompson

By Ken Evans, Stewardship Chairman

This year, the choice for the Davenport Award was obvious. But in describing John Thompson’s impact on our Squam community, I was forced to look for definitions that best describe him. I started with puppeteer, one who manipulates puppets or marionettes usually behind the curtain. But that was not completely accurate. Manipulates is a little too strong. I then moved to ambassador, a person who acts as representative or promotor of a specified activity. That was closer. A mediator, a person who attempts to make people involved in a conflict come to an agreement. That certainly describes John’s skills. But my favorite is behind the scenes, which means without receiving credit or fame, out of public view. John Thompson has worked behind the scenes in so many ways for so many years to preserve this wonderful place for us.

John has been a volunteer land monitor for over twenty years on several properties including one of our largest (461 acres) and most challenging easements, the Koenig Preserve. He was instrumental in our work with the Conservation Fund and in spearheading our Squam Upland initiative. He is a conservation easement landowner and has contributed his sound judgement and wonderful wit to our SLCS Board. To restate the obvious, John has been involved with all happenings and all organizations at Squam since he and Carol arrived here decades ago, working behind the scenes to give us the Squam we have today. And, John would be the first to say that others are more deserving.

Planned Giving: The Heron Society

Leaving a legacy of Squam protected in perpetuity -- could there be a better way to make a difference? If you are interested in supporting SLCS through your estate plan, please contact us. If you have already named SLCS in your will or IRA, we thank you and ask you to please let us know so that we can honor your wishes. Your estate gift is legacy for future generations to enjoy.

Tax Tip: Donating from Your IRA

Are you receiving a required minimum distribution (RMD) from your IRA? If so, you can use your RMD to make a charitable donation to SLCS and avoid taxes. You’ll satisfy your distribution requirement and you won’t have to pay income taxes on that money. This is a great strategy for anyone who doesn’t need his or her full RMD. In many cases, it’s more advantageous than taking the withdrawal and then donating it, because cash donations now have deductibility limits. And it’s easy to do: call your IRA manager and ask them to issue a check payable to SLCS and they will mail it to you. Then you mail it to the organization. Ask your IRA manager for more information on this option. https://investor.vanguard.com/taxes/required-minimum-distributions
Science Pubs - 2nd Season!
Community Conversations on Climate Change will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month beginning in November at 6:00 pm
Walter’s Basin in Holderness

Join us in the lounge for engaging evenings discussing climate change solutions over drinks and appetizers. Climate change is affecting our planet in many ways. We will focus on solutions to the global problem. Different scientists and organizations will speak for about 30 minutes with a lively discussion to follow. Bring your questions and plan to contribute to this community conversation on climate change. A schedule of speakers will be posted at: foreversquam.org.

Sponsored by the Squam Lakes Conservation Society, Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, and Squam Lakes Association.

Cost: No charge to attend. Order and pay for food and drinks individually. Seating is lounge style. For dining with traditional seating, arrive early to eat in the dining room prior to the 6:30 pm presentation start time in the lounge.

This Holiday Season Give the Gift of Conservation
by making a membership donation in the name of a friend or family member

Membership at Squam Lakes Conservation is the perfect gift for all those special occasions. Give the gift that lasts all year. www.foreversquam.org

Forever SQUAM
by Robert J. Kozlow

Pick up a copy at the SLCS office, $30.00
When purchased at SLCS all proceeds go to land conservation

Dr. Kozlow has a special gift for capturing the timeless spirit of Squam and its community. His images in this book transcend time and reach across everyday experiences to inspire us and connect us to the awe and majesty of Squam’s land, lake, and people.

The Society’s mission is to preserve the unique quality and character of the Squam watershed by protecting lands for present and future generations.