A Forest Tapestry

Sitting from a perch on Webster Lookout looking out at the vastness of the forest covering the Squam Range, I am humbled by the diversity and scale of our forested land. Mid-May is called the “other foliage season.” From dark to spring green, this tapestry bridges our long winter to the verdant summer.

Being in the heart of the largest broadleaf temperate forest left on earth makes our little corner of the world all the more special. Our forested lands should not be taken for granted. They are literally at the root of this special place.

The health of our forests is as important as the quality of the water in the lake. While naturally related, one does come before the other. When the Squam lakes were literally trashed at the turn of the twentieth century, an even bigger problem was sedimentation as a result of massive erosion from clear-cutting the land. Today, our lakes and rivers are vastly improved as a result of the re-establishment of our forests. Recognizing the intrinsic value of our forests with the goal of permanently protecting them is a driver behind our Squam Uplands Initiative.

The target zone of the Squam Uplands is the land lying above 900’ elevation. This zone is almost completely forested and without houses or other structures. The protection of the Squam Uplands will ensure more than Squam’s clean water. It secures the essence of Squam’s character by also protecting its scenic landscape, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities, while supporting our working forests.

The first leg of the Squam Uplands is being wrapped up this year with the completion of the 6,372-acre Beebe River conservation easement and the completion of Whitten Woods, Burleigh Owl Brook, Doublehead Preserve, Eastman Brook Preserve, and the latest addition, the Mick Stanley Preserve (see page 3). We are now preparing for the next phase of the Squam Uplands Initiative. This is our opportunity to ensure that our forests remain part of Squam’s tapestry.

Good News!

On February 28, 2018, SLCS learned that we have achieved reaccreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. Accredited land trusts must renew every five years, confirming compliance with national quality standards and providing continued assurance to donors and landowners of a commitment to forever steward our land and conservation easements.

Accredited land trusts (398) have steadily grown and now steward 80% of conservation lands held by all land trusts, totaling 20 million acres of farms, forests and natural areas vital to healthy communities. Accreditation has increased the public’s trust in land conservation, which has helped win support for federal, state and local conservation funding measures.

“It is exciting to recognize SLCS with this distinction,” said Tammara Van Ryn, executive director of the Commission. “Accredited land trusts are united behind strong ethical standards ensuring the places people love will be conserved forever. You have demonstrated sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship.”

A complete list of accredited land trusts and more information about the process and benefits are detailed at www.landtrustaccreditation.org.
My Squam roots date back to 1919, when my grandfather, Theodore Brown, came from Philadelphia to visit his two daughters who were spending the summer at Camp Asquam. He loved the area so much that he promptly purchased Cotton Farm, a working farm with about 150 acres on the edge of Squam Lake. He proceeded to spend every summer of his life there, in the bungalow higher up on the hill. Arthur Brown (no relation) continued to live in the farm house and tend to the animals. Grandpap built a couple of guest cottages down by the lake for his friends.

As a result of my grandfather’s love for Squam, I have also had the good fortune to spend every summer of my life here. As a child, my brother, sister, cousins and many friends had our own built-in “summer camp.” Our days were filled with endless canoeing, swimming competitions, camping on an island or climbing in the White Mountains. The evenings were filled with kick the can, capture the flag, and hide-and-seek until, exhausted, we wended our way home. Because of our special summers, Squam became “part of our blood” and the place that remained in our hearts forever.

In 1986 I was living in Taos, New Mexico and felt that it was time to live closer to my family in the Boston area. I chose to live in our drafty, cold, summer bungalow year round. People thought that I was crazy. I lived in that house for 12 winters with little heat, even losing water completely for one winter. But I loved being there; it was home! And the views of Squam Lake at any season never ceased to amaze me. I got involved with the community and in real estate and ultimately built my own house on the property with the fabulous views. Today, my children and grandchildren love Squam as I do.

It is definitely thanks to the groups like SLCS that we can still appreciate the beauty that drew my grandfather here nearly a century ago. To look out and still see pristine mountains surrounding a quiet lake is incredibly special. It takes a “forever” effort to keep Squam as it has been for years, but it is so worthwhile for all of us and for the generations to come. That is why I decided years ago to become a member of the Heron Society.

The Heron Society

A legacy of Squam Lake, its surrounds and uplands, protected in perpetuity - could there be a better way to make a difference? Ensuring that conservation of Squam continues after our lifetime is the goal of Heron Society members.

In 2010 a group of ten “founding members” established the Heron Society planned giving program to help ensure that the Squam Lakes Conservation Society can fulfill its perpetual obligation to steward the of land in its care. Today the Heron Society has grown to over fifty members.

If you are interested in learning more on how you can include SLCS in your estate plan, we would be glad to discuss options with you. Rest assured that all Planned Giving information is strictly confidential. For more information and to discuss further, please contact Roger Larochelle at 603-968-7900 or roger@foreversquam.org.
The land between Barville Pond to Squaw Cove, also known as the “Sandwich Wildlife Corridor,” is possibly the richest ecological region in the Squam watershed, and the most protected. It’s home to pine marten, otter and ancient Tupelo trees. For several years, we’ve been working closely with the Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT) on a comprehensive conservation plan to permanently protect this area. To that end, LRCT has recently granted to SLCS three conservation easements.

The Intervale Pond Conservation Area is a lovely five-acre lot with 700 feet of frontage on pristine Intervale Pond and 370 feet on Intervale Pond Brook, which drains directly into Big Squam and supports native brook trout and landlocked salmon. Other features include exemplary stands of lowland mixed and coniferous forest with 200-year-old hemlocks and red oak trees, and a forested swamp area.

The Welch addition to the Isaacs Conservation Area adds 10 acres to the existing 180-acre Isaacs Conservation Easement. The property features 587 feet of frontage on Intervale Pond and 450 feet of frontage on Thompson Brook. Historically, the Welch addition was pasture, and is now mixed forest with some very large red oak trees.

The largest of the group, known as the L & H Coolidge Preserve after Laurence and Harold Coolidge, former owners of the land and ardent conservationists, comprises 226 acres of wetland and woodland with extensive frontage on Kusumpe Pond, and extending north to Route 113.

These tracts, together with other conserved lands, collectively protect approximately 1,000 acres of ponds, woodland and wetland supporting the ecological health and water quality of the Squam watershed. Thank you to our partner the Lakes Region Conservation Trust for working so closely with us and ensuring these lands are permanently protected.

Mick Stanley Preserve
Smith’s Brook, Holderness NH

Smith’s Brook is the largest tributary feeding into Big Squam Lake. Its conservation value cannot be overestimated, with native brook trout, salmon fry, and extensive wetlands. In 1964, Edward and Marion Stanley bought a 20-acre parcel bisected by Smith’s Brook and built a small rustic cabin affectionately known as “Fo’mast.” Located on the south side of Route 113 with a small bridge spanning the perennial stream, this land served as a mecca for a quiet and special getaway for them and their four children for many years.

With the goal of protecting Smith’s Brook with its wetlands, and a quarter mile on scenic Route 113, the SLCS has purchased the 20-acre Mick Stanley Preserve for $75,000. The property is near the Allen Preserve, Eastman Brook Preserve, Armstrong Natural Area, Smith’s Brook Conservation Area, and across from Burleigh’s Squam Range conservation area.

Linda, Ed and Judy Stanley
All Things Stewardship

At the Root of it All . . . or . . . Rooted to the Land

Roots. We’ve been chatting about them a lot lately around the lunch table. Roots come in all shapes and sizes. There are big roots, old roots, little roots, new roots. They are the underpinning of our forests, holding ground for the greater good. Roots provide the sustained growth to the quiet, diverse and beautiful hillsides to which we have all become accustomed. How lucky we are to live in a place with such resiliency of the forests . . . all because of roots!

Well, it’s not all about tree roots. You see, SLCS, as Squam’s land conservation organization, has a bunch of roots, too. And, yes, they come in all shapes and sizes, and some are old and some are new. The SLCS roots are the members and volunteers that contribute their time, effort, and yes, money (cause we all know, it doesn’t grow on trees!), to care for conserved land in the watershed.

I’d argue that even non-members are part of the SLCS roots if they enjoy being out in the woods and on the water, but being involved is what really spreads and deepens the connection to this place. When I think about the folks that give of their time to help the greater good, I can’t help but see a symbiotic relationship. They are clearly helping build SLCS into a stronger, more resilient organization, but they are also building roots of their own by investing personal time. Some volunteer monitors go back to the same conserved property year after year, and they connect with the land on many levels. One family has three generations actively helping care for the land we all enjoy and appreciate. Talk about deep! And they all do this work quietly, on their own.

So, the next time a root trips you up when you are out walking, try to turn the cry of pain into a call of joy for all of the roots in the world, both for trees and people. Appreciate them all, especially the vast majority that do the work unseen . . . they are the guardians of the greater good.

2018 Activities

Working Wednesdays
Getting it Done at Mill Brook Preserve
Every Wednesday June 6th – August 8th
9 am to 10:30 am
Bring work gloves, sturdy boots and a set of loppers if you have them.

Volunteer Monitor Training Session
August TBD, 9 am to 12:30 pm
Contact pete@foreversquam.org for more details.

Volunteers Full Moon BYO Dinner at Doublehead Preserve
Monday, September 24th, 5:00 pm
Bring your own blanket/chair and flashlight!
Hosting AmeriCorps Volunteers

We are thrilled to announce that Emily Landry and Maddy Mutch have joined the SLCS team as AmeriCorps volunteers. They will be here from mid-May through mid-October as part of the Lakes Region Conservation Corps along with other AmeriCorps volunteers with the Squam Lakes Association and the Lakes Region Conservation Trust.

Maddy and Emily will work on a variety of projects including managing SLCS preserves, monitoring conservation easements, removing invasive species, assisting landowners with their land management goals. They will also work on developing educational curriculum to encourage students and educators to utilize SLCS preserves as an outdoor classroom. Please welcome them when you see them!

Emily Landry

My name is Emily and I graduated this May from the University of New Hampshire with a degree in Wildlife and Conservation Biology. I grew up in Berlin, NH, where my passion for the outdoors began. A lot of my free time is spent kayaking, hiking, fishing, and just being outside. I loved nature so much I decided to dedicate my career path to help conserve it and everything it has to offer and to educate others on why conservation is important. A perfect way to begin this is working with Squam Lake Conservation Society. I’m looking forward to seeing all the aspects of land conservation and I’m especially excited to work on creating educational support for local schools. I’m very happy to begin my career path with the SLCS in my beautiful home state of NH.

Maddy Mutch

Hello! My name is Maddy and I graduated from Ohio State University in May with a B.S. in Environmental Science. I grew up in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio on the shores of Lake Erie, and love spending time kayaking on the lake and being outdoors. Seeing first-hand the pollution that a body of water like Lake Erie is exposed to, I was motivated to study ways to conserve and protect our natural resources. Working alongside others to help them understand how they can play a part in environmental stewardship is something I hope to achieve, both this summer and in my future career. Being outdoors while doing that is a perk I will take advantage of! I will have the wonderful opportunity to work with the Squam Lake Conservation Society, and I hope to learn more about land conservation practices, as well as getting to know people in the community around Squam. I am fortunate to call the beautiful area around Squam my home for the next six months!
The Camp Hale Family
Vicky West

“Going to the woods is going home” John Muir

Every year since 1900, one of Squam’s longtime summer “families” makes their annual trek from Boston to Sandwich Bay. Most area residents recognize the name, but few appreciate the remarkable family created by Camp Hale.

Squam is a place where these campers shed the pressures of hectic city life and connect with nature. For most Camp Hale (CH) campers, this is often their first time away from home and their only opportunity to hike, canoe, shoot an arrow, or sit by the shores of a quiet lake and reflect. It’s easy to imagine their awe the first time they summit Rattlesnake, Morgan or even Washington.

Jerrell Cox arrived on Squam as a CH camper in 1994 and has returned every summer since - currently as Camp Director. “My first summer at camp was beyond life changing. The view from the top of Mt. Moosilauke and the moon and stars reflecting off Squam are visions I will never forget! It felt like living in a postcard. Time on Squam exposes youth to the value of conserving our natural world and to new opportunities. Through our parent organization United South End Settlements (USES), campers and their families receive year-round support back in Boston.”

Campers develop confidence and individual skills through sports, crafts, canoeing, archery and other activities. The weekly camping trips, scavenger hunts and hikes give campers a chance to lead and make “essential” decisions after obtaining their cabin’s approval. Campfire talks, talent shows and other camp-wide events create a sense of belonging to a group far away from home. And CH’s ongoing relationship with the town of Sandwich - including cookouts and friendly competitions - foster a broader sense of community.

While it sounds like a traditional summer camp, hear the campers’ stories and you begin to appreciate CH’s impact on their lives.

“I started (CH) at the age of nine and returned every summer until I turned 14. There is so much about camp that has impacted the man I am today that it sometimes surprises even me. I come from a single parent household like so many others who attend the camp. I was an only child growing up so this was one of my earliest memories of male camaraderie. At camp, I conquered the six peaks, received my boating, archery and canoeing licenses, and completed the two-mile swim. These are things I can say with full confidence that I would have otherwise never experienced let alone been able to do by myself. I learned the meaning of hard work and discipline at CH and, in many ways, I came into my manhood at camp. Arriving at my first session, I was a chubby little mama’s boy. When I left second session of my last summer I was a lean, athletic, young man (how I managed to do this with Ms. D’s cooking is still a mystery),” wrote a former camper.

Art Gajarsa: Lifelong Squam Enthusiast

Born in Italy and immigrating with his family to Boston’s South End in the 1940s, Squam resident Hon. Art Gajarsa first landed on Squam as a camper in 1950 at age nine. “It took us six hours to get from Boston to camp – a train from North Station to Meredith, a bus to Ashland, and then a boat ride across Big and Little Squam to Sandwich Bay. When I arrived at Camp I thought, ‘What did I do to make my parents send me away to this foreign country?’ Soon after, I came down with the measles and was quarantined in a cabin with the shades down. Not a great start. But then I caught my first sunfish!”

And the Judge was hooked….

From camper to counselor, Judge Gajarsa returned to camp for another 11 years. “Most of us Camp Halers ‘grew up’ at camp and not in the city. Like today, the Camp Hale director connected with us year-round in Boston – my camp director Joe Collins instilled a sense of camaraderie, confidence, hard work, and a love for camp, the mountains and Squam.”

After Judge Gajarsa “graduated” from Camp Hale, he often returned to Squam. He and his wife Melanie camped at Squam on their honeymoon. They brought their five children to Rockywold in the summers. And, before becoming a judge on the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, they built a home on the lake. “Our daughters were married on Church Island. All our family reunions occur here. We raised our family in D.C., but Squam is our spiritual home.”
“We intentionally recruit campers to create an environment where strong, authentic friendships form across demographic differences. Over 70% of our campers receive support,” says USES President and CEO Maicharia Weir Lytle. “We are so grateful to our donors - many from Squam – who help us provide this unique experience for youth. USES is committed to keeping Camp Hale going for another 100 years, and after years of band-aid maintenance, we’re embarking on a capital campaign to restore and improve camp.”

“Camp Hale is a big family that lives here on Squam Lake in the summer and has a great time every single day. We have a strong bond here,” said a current female camper. That strong bond to family and to Squam is an attitude likely shared by everyone reading this newsletter.

The Fourth on Mount Prospect

The celebration by the people of Plymouth, Campton and Holderness, on the 4th, as announced in the papers, came off with great eclat. The number in attendance was over 2,000 by actual count. The Plymouth procession, under the escort of the Plymouth Cornet Band, was between one and two miles long, consisting of one, two, four and six horse vehicles, all of which ascended without difficulty to the summit of the mountain. The Campton procession under the escort of the Campton Village Cornet Band, was nearly as long as the Plymouth. At 11-2 o’clock, the vast concourse of people was called to order by the Chief Marshal of the day, C. J. F. Stone, Esq., of Plymouth, who introduced Hon. N. S. Berry of Hebron, as President of the day. Judge Berry upon taking the chair made a few brief remarks, and then introduced Henry W. Blair, Esq., of Plymouth, who read the Declaration of Independence, in a clear, distinct, and appropriate manner.

“Mount Prospect” – Six thousand years old and yet without a name. On our nation’s birthday, let it now be christened, and may it never change its maiden name. Responded to by Rev. Mr. Chase, of Plymouth, in a good speech, which, if it had been shorter by half, would have been better. These sentiments and speeches were interspersed with music by the Bands, and the Campton Glee Club, conducted by J. C. Blair, Esq. The exercises on the mountain were closed by the singing of Old Hundred by the whole assemblage, and at 4 P.M. the procession moved down the hill – not a single accident occurring during the whole excursion.

On the whole, this was the best Fourth of July celebration it has ever been our good fortune to attend. Mt. Prospect is consecrated to glory and to fame. More magnificent scenery can nowhere be found than is presented by the view from this mountain, on such a lovely day as was the 4th. The view of the lake and its various inlets and bays, rivals in splendor and grandeur that from Red Hill, or Mt. Belknap. Then there is the valley of the Pemigewasset, the romantic and intoxicating beauty of which surpasses everything of the kind we have ever seen. The mountain scenery too, what pen can describe it, or what artist paint it? The highest point of land in every county in the State can be seen from the summit of Mt. Prospect on a clear day. But this unrivalled panorama of our State must be seen to be appreciated, and therefore we advise all our friends and the “rest of mankind” to take a trip to Mt. Prospect.
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Squam’s Land Trust

Passing it on . . . Generational Property Transfer
Thursday, August 9, 2018
9:00 to 11:30 am
SLA Fisher Family Barn
US Route 3, Holderness

A detailed and thoughtful discussion for property owners seeking to ensure the land they love will become part of a family legacy that will be enjoyed for generations to come. Four property owners discuss their challenges, limitations, and triumphs in dealing with this important issue.

Sponsored by:
Squam Lakes Conservation Society,
Squam Lakes Association,
Lakes Region Conservation Trust and
NH Preservation Alliance.
Details at foreversquam.org

Save the date…
Annual Meeting
August 18, 2018, 10:00 a.m.
Camp Hale
93 Millbridge Road
Center Sandwich

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

Squam Lookout is printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper manufactured from sustainable raw materials and free of chlorine chemistry.