**Why the Great Blue Heron?**

*Molly Whitcomb*

During the summer of 2009, one of my duties as an SLCS Board member was to ferry artists to Hoag Island where they worked to create paintings for our celebratory Conservation Through Art initiative. During these trips I often saw Great Blue Herons skimming across the water or standing silently on the shore. Up until then, herons had not been frequent visitors to my ‘Squam’ experience and I began to wonder why this magnificent bird graced our logo.

Over the ensuing years filled with heron shirts, bandanas, fliers, 5-foot wooden replicas and even a birthday-hat-wearing heron logo for our 50th Celebration, the question remained, “Why the heron?” This winter as I worked with SLCS to freshen the logo and create promotional publications I decided to find the answer.

SLCS lore has it that a marketing consultant made a quick scribble of a heron on scrap paper and just as quickly crumpled it up. This pencil sketched heron resonated with the Board members present who rescued that drawing and made it our SLCS logo. But I wanted this union between SLCS and the great blue heron to go beyond a ‘quick scribble.’ My search took me to the works of Henry David Thoreau who wrote in his journal:

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**How the Squam Lake Islands Got their Names**

*Nancy Grady*

I spent forty summers living in an old camp on a tiny Island on Squam Lake. In the fall of 2011, I was invited to share memories of the early days on the Island with students at Holderness Central School. I was prepared for a small group who were planning a celebration for the town’s bicentennial. Much to my amazement, nearly eighty eager students spilled into the cafeteria and their teacher confidently announced I was to tell them “How the Islands on Squam Lake got their names!”

Needless to say I was speechless! I had no idea how the islands were named other than by accident or association. It was a tense moment and using an old teacher’s trick, I turned the question back to the children who had all sorts of ideas and really saved the day. Fortunately the students put on a fabulous production with the aid of five artists in

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The Great Blue Heron continued from page 1

You have not seen our weedy river, you do not know the significance of its weedy bars, until you have seen the blue heron wading and pluming itself on it. I see that it was made for these shallows, and they for it.

Now the heron is gone from the weedy shoal, the scene appears incomplete. Of course, the heron has sounded the depth of every bar of the river that is fordable to it. The water is not so many feet deep, but so many heron's tibiae. Instead of a foot rule you should use a heron’s leg for measure . . .

How long we may have gazed on a particular scenery and think that we have seen and known it, when at length, some bird or quadruped comes and takes possession of it before our eyes, and imparts to it a wholly new character! The heron uses these shallows as I cannot. I give them up to him.

And so, I found my answer. The heron, like all wild creatures, teaches us more thoroughly the connection between land and life. Without them the “scene appears incomplete.” Without the conservation efforts of SLCS, Squam would be incomplete. I wish you all many herons in your Squam summer so that you, too, can learn more about the land.

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**Terrafirma: Insuring Squam’s Future**

For years SLCS and other conservation organizations have not had a means to properly insure land in our care should the legal terms of a conservation easement be threatened. Insurance coverage required to defend our conservation easements properly has not been available from commercial or nonprofit insurance carriers. The number of land conservation groups was deemed too small to generate enough income to satisfy traditional types of insurance, and often insurance companies don’t understand the litigation risks facing land trusts.

Today SLCS’s search for appropriate liability insurance for the lands we are responsible for in the Squam Watershed is over. The Land Trust Alliance, with input from conservation organizations around the country, has created a one-of-a-kind liability insurance company called Terrafirma Risk Retention Group LLC to provide legal defense for conservation easements.

Terrafirma insures its land trust members against the liability of litigation. Thus Terrafirma protects conserved lands from threats such as non-allowed activities, encroachment by others or failure to protect the easement. Terrafirma covers all legal-related fees for both enforcement and defense and includes mediation, negotiation and court fees.

With a viable insurance solution now available from Terrafirma, SLCS has set aside $150,000 to endow the cost of the annual premium for insurance covering the properties for which it is responsible. According to Tom Kelsey, SLCS Board Member and insurance advisor, “SLCS is not only ensuring that it will have the capability and money to legally defend our conservation easements, but the best defense is sometimes having the other side know it has the resources and commitment to take a legal battle to its conclusion.”

*Details at terrafirma.org*

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**State Budget Restores Funding for Conservation**

The NH State budget just passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Hassan is very good news for conservation. The 2013 budget restores 100% of the dedicated funds, estimated to be $8.45 million over the biennium, to the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP).

LCHIP awards grants to help conserve open land and preserve historic buildings across the state. Funding for the program comes from two main sources: the sale of conservation license plates and certain types of real estate transfer fees. But in recent years the state has diverted the fee revenue to the State’s general fund.

Full funding of LCHIP is wonderful news for New Hampshire communities and our environment.

For more details on the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program visit lchip.org.
Kelshore Expanded

Tom and Liz Kelsey strike once again! In 2002, Tom and Liz donated a conservation easement protecting two acres of shoreland in Sturtevant Bay on Big Squam Lake in Center Harbor. Late in 2012, they tripled the acreage of their permanently protected property by donating another conservation easement prior to conveying their property to their three children, Margen, Suzanne, and William. “We probably should have included the entire area in 2002 when we did the first conservation easement, but we’re glad to complete the task now before turning over the property to our children. It just feels right to strike the balance between what remains for nature’s forces and that part we actively use.”

The newly conserved property consists of over 500 feet of shoreline and forested shoreland with some wetland pockets not far from shore. The wetland located on the northern portion of the parcel is home to a variety of plant and animal species. South of this wetland area the property is forested with numerous small wetlands and vernal pools. Forest species include hardwoods and softwoods typical of this part of the Squam watershed including white and red oak, beech, maple, hemlock, white pine and spruce.

Watch Rock Transferred to SLCS

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) has conveyed a shoreline conservation easement to SLCS. In 1988, Ellen G. Barry, placed the family camp and 21 acres, including 600 feet of shoreline, under conservation easement with SPNHF. The rustic camp dates back to 1926 and has only recently been retrofitted with electricity. While the camp sits very close to the shore, it is mostly concealed by the native vegetation and careful landscaping.

Rick Fabian, son of Ellen Barry, is the current owner and has been concerned about the future use of the camp and land if ever it is transferred out of his family. A future owner could tear down the camp and build a much larger structure that is not in keeping with a traditional Squam Lake camp. Rick and his wife Georgene, approached SPNHF and SLCS about a potential amendment to limit the size and use of the camp. SPNHF decided that it was best not to tamper with the existing conservation easement. SLCS decided that holding a Campstead Easement on a building while not holding an easement to protect the surrounding land is not tenable. Voila, the two organizations agreed to transfer SPNHF’s conservation easement to SLCS who will then execute a Campstead Easement to protect the old camp. The icing on the cake is that Watch Rock Camp is being nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, the first Squam property to have the trifecta of a conservation easement, Campstead Easement, and a listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Connecting with our Landowners

In June we held our first outing in a series of Landowner Adventures on SLCS conserved lands. On a sunny Sunday afternoon a small group gathered in Holderness for a hike up Mt. Prospect and a tour of the Stark Farm on Mt. Prospect Road.

The trail through the 148-acre Pulsifer Hill property, conserved in 1998 by Archie and Eleanor Stark, is the old carriage road built in the late 1800s for the Pemigewasset Hotel in Plymouth. After a gentle 1.5 mile ascent, the group reached the ledges near the peak of the 2,064 Mt. Prospect. From this vantage point our group had a commanding view of the Squam Range, Squam Lakes, White Oak Pond and Lake Winnipesaukee.

Following the hike, Steve and Karen Stark shared stories of the Stark family farm. Set in an idyllic field above the Pemigewasset Valley and nestled on the flank of Mt. Prospect, this 19th century farm consists of a home, barn, milking shed, and corn crib. Just as interesting, Steve explained how the rock-lined ‘swimming hole’ was made and was kept full of clear, cool water all summer long. As we listened to Steve’s story we all longed to jump in, but the 10 foot deep pool has been out of use for many years. Perhaps the next landowner excursion, scheduled for September 7th to Hoag Island, will afford the opportunity for a dip. If you are a landowner of conserved land, you are invited to join us!
SLCS Work Days
This spring volunteers focused on SLCS properties.

Levi Smith Conservation Area is a 124 acre parcel acquired from the Welch family in 2007. It is the site of a former farm and has historic stone walls, cellar holes and a cemetery. The property is primarily mixed forest and has been managed for timber over the past several decades resulting in the creation of many hiking trails that were once logging roads. The road that leads into the property from the Sandwich Transfer station has several waterbars that help direct run-off to avoid road erosion. The SLCS crew moved rocks and dug soil to restore and enhance these waterbars. Volunteers built a gate at the entrance to the property (from the transfer station) and rebuilt the broken gate at the cemetery.

Mill Brook is a 1.3 acre parcel donated to SLCS in 1995 by Donald Latulippe. It features an extensive wetland on the shoreline of Squam Lake and a diverse hardwood forest. It is also home to four aggressive and damaging non-native plant species: Japanese Barberry, Japanese Honeysuckle, Oriental bittersweet and Multiflora rose. These plants replace native plant species and do not offer the same food and ecosystem services as the native plants that have adapted to live in the Squam Watershed. As a result, invasive plants hurt the natural plant and wildlife communities of Squam (see Squam Watershed Invasive Species Collaborative). SLCS has a stewardship commitment to remove these invasive species from SLCS-owned properties and made Mill Brook a demonstration site for this work.

Squam Watershed Invasive Species Collaborative
SLCS, Squam Lakes Association, Squam Lakes Natural Science Center and Lakes Region Conservation Trust have all struggled with the question of how to deal with terrestrial invasive species. Therefore, it only makes sense to address the issue collaboratively. The work on the Mill Brook property is one part of a series of goals that the Collaborative will focus on over the next several years. Please contact Joan at SLCS (joan@squamlakes.com) or Rebecca at SLA (rebeccahanson@squamlakes.org) to become part of this worthwhile initiative.

New Monitoring Manual
SLCS has over 60 certified property monitors who serve as the “eyes and ears” of Squam Lakes Conservation Society on its protected lands. Volunteer monitors form a collaborative team with landowners and staff who ensure that the conservation values of every property are preserved. This is accomplished by cultivating positive relationships with landowners of protected property, completing a thorough on-the-ground inspection of land easement and updating monitoring records. They also act as ambassadors for Squam Lakes Conservation Society throughout the greater community.

To help improve this process and to meet accreditation standards, SLCS has created a new manual, Monitoring Conservation Land and implemented an easy certification process. If you are interested in becoming a monitor or a landowner interested in reviewing the Manual, please contact Joan Turley at: joan@squamlakes.com
More than Just “Debris”

When the SLCS crew first arrived at a large clearing at Levi Smith Conservation Area, it appeared to be surrounded by piles of debris. However, a little research enlightened the group to the value of brush piles as wildlife shelter. Read the excerpt below from the Humane Society to learn what they learned...

Before you pile those leaves, tree limbs, and garden debris by the curb, consider the year-round needs of your wild neighbors. You can help restore and preserve wildlife habitat in your community by creating a simple brush pile shelter for wild animals.

Waste Not, Want Not

Throughout the year, wild animals need dense cover in which to hide from predators, rest, nest, and seek shelter from severe weather. When trees and shrubs lose their foliage in autumn, permanent sources of cover become even more important. Creating a brush pile is a cheap and easy way to provide critical shelter and cover for ground-nesting birds, reptiles and amphibians, chipmunks, rabbits, and other small mammals.

A little organization in your construction will pay off; wildlife will make use of a haphazard pile of limbs, leaves, and twigs, but a carefully constructed brush pile will provide a much more useful habitat. The idea is to create ground-level pathways into the brush pile with internal spaces where creatures can find a protected corner or perch safely off the ground.

Tips for Building a Better Brush Pile

• Isolated piles are less likely to be used. Choose an area with good drainage; near a forest edge, along a stream, or at the edge or back corner of a property; and close to existing food sources and shrubs.

• Ideal piles are 4 to 8 feet tall and from 10 to 20 feet in diameter.

• Brush piles are flammable; keep them away from buildings.

• On larger properties with little natural cover, create three or four brush piles per acre.

• Where aesthetics are important, plant native vines such as wild grape, honeysuckle, and trumpet creeper as an attractive cover for the brush pile, or plant a border of wildflowers.

Rot and decay are a normal process of brush piles. As they rot, they attract more insects, providing additional food for birds. The piles should be inspected yearly, though, to see if the state of decay is such that a new brush pile should be constructed.

Create a Sanctuary

Enjoy the company of your wild neighbors in your yard. Every day, more and more wildlife habitat is lost to the spread of development. But you can help wild animals in urban and suburban areas by offering them sanctuary in your own backyard (or front yard, roof-top garden, or deck), no matter how small. Learn how make your green space an Urban Wildlife Sanctuary.
residence. Subsequently I did some research on the subject and found little available information. There seemed to be interest in the naming of islands on Squam as I gave a brief talk on the subject at The Holderness Library with The Historical Society when, much to my surprise, it was standing room only. This then is an attempt to fill in some gaps for those who are curious. When I went in search of information on Squam Islands, the earliest map I discovered was from 1829 owned by Daphne Mowatt from Sandwich, which referred to Yard Islands as “Runaway Islands.” Chocorua Island was known as “Holderness” and High Haith was called “Squam Heights.”

The first mention of lakeside camps was found in records from 1879 when Henry Closson, Charles Hough and two other Dartmouth classmates built a shack at the foot of Shepard Hill on the shores of Squam and called it Nirvana. They became friends with Ernest Balch and together decided that “boys of privileged families” spent “wasted summers” and therefore should learn the important basics of a life residing close to nature. Thus evolved the plan to start a summer boys’ camp on an island on Squam. Finding a suitable site was no easy task since maps were woefully inadequate and they were using one from 1877 with many unnamed parcels of land.

Finally they settled on an island near Cox’s Beach (now Paugus) which had no swamp, little underbrush, and a fine beach. It was known as “Burnt Island” and was purchased from Miriam Willoughby for the sum of forty dollars. Material for the first building came from The Shepherd’s Mill and was piled in a cove beyond Dawson’s camp to be piled into a raft and towed by a homemade sailboat called “Lotus” to the beach on the newly named Chocorua Island (for the view, of course). The first boys arrived in the summer of 1881 with six campers and two staff. It is believed to have been the first summer camp established in the United States. Meanwhile, an elderly retired army captain, William Rice Carnes, who lived on a tiny island in a nearby cove, helped outfit the camp and cut ice in the winter for his Camp Laurie as well as Camp Chocorua. A former aide-de-camp for Zachary Taylor in the Mexican War, Carnes was known for tossing logs at suitors who came calling on his daughters and for filling his rowboat with earth and rocks to enlarge the size of his island. We have pictures of him cleaning fish on a boulder behind the house wearing a silk top hat. As an avid fisherman, he made the acquaintance of my great grandfather, Frank G. Webster, a fellow fishing enthusiast and Boston stockbroker who stayed at the Asquam House on Shepard Hill. Captain Carnes invited Frank to spend the night at Carnes Island with his two boys, Edwin and Laurence, in 1881. A memorable experience for the lads aged ten and twelve. When Carnes died, Webster acquired the island, tore down the original camp and replaced it with the Camp Carnes which remains in use today. The first guests recorded their visits in the summer and fall of 1894.

In the 1880’s Kimball Island was known as Kelsea’s Small Island and what we now know as Long Island was Kelsea’s Large Island. Great Island was called Drakes Island, so named for the owners of the time. Since the island lay within two townships, the family petitioned to annex the Holderness portion to Center Harbor thereby granting a tax break. Alas, the petition was denied.
In the News . . .

Squam Summit

A meeting of local organizations called the Squam Summit was held on April 18th to discuss the many ways we can work together to the benefit of the Squam Community. Representatives from the Lakes Region Conservation Trust, Loon Preservation Committee, Squam Lakes Association, Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, Plymouth State University, Rockywold-Deephaven Camps, National Register of Historic Places Steering Committee, and the Squam Lakes Conservation Society were on hand to network and discuss programs, upcoming initiatives, and challenges. It was agreed to make this gathering an annual event.

National Register of Historic Places

Since 2009, more than 150 individuals have worked with the Squam Lakes Conservation Society to sponsor the compilation of a National Register multiple property nomination of cultural properties within the watershed of Squam Lake, one of the most cherished of New Hampshire’s large lakes. The primary purpose of this project is to identify and document Squam’s historical resources, thus raising awareness of the interconnectivity of the built and natural landscapes and encouraging their preservation. The project has received wide community support and has united land conservationists and historic preservationists in one common goal. The project area includes some 40,000 acres in five separate towns and three counties, making it the largest undertaking of its kind in New Hampshire.

Beginning in the 1880s, Squam was the site of the earliest organized summer camps in the United States, establishing a template for such camps throughout New England. The lake is also the site of innumerable private camps and cottages, many of them deliberately rustic and evocative of the era before electrification, automobile travel and powerful motor boats. Founders of the organized camps and well-to-do private owners often chose the simplest and most basic means of communing with nature, giving Squam an ethos that remains strong today. Their camps and cottages and the summertime activities they sheltered were often a complete antithesis to the home life of their builders, among whom were some of the most successful entrepreneurs and most distinguished teachers, clergy, writers and scientists in the Northeast.

Five initial National Register nomination forms accompanied the multiple property documentation, the first of many nominations that are expected to follow. The initial nominations illustrate principle themes in Squam’s evolution, highlight key property types, and demonstrate how Squam’s natural and built environments seamlessly intertwine.

The Squam Lake National Register research is providing a growing record of a lakeside life that once characterized many summer colonies, but is rapidly vanishing. Fortunately, as shown by the work of so many on the Squam Lake project, there are havens where nature and the traditions of the past have been respected and preserved by generations of dedicated stewards. In recognition of this stewardship, the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance presented the Squam National Register of Historic Places Committee with a Preservation Achievement Award at a state-wide event on May 7, 2013.

This article was written by James L. Garvin and Nancy C. Dutton, on behalf of the State Historical Resources Council, which reviews all National Register nominations for the State of New Hampshire.
The Society’s mission is to preserve the unique quality and character of the Squam watershed by protecting lands for present and future generations.

SLCS Annual Meeting
August 24, 2013, 10:00 am
Camp Deerwood
Rte 3, Holderness, NH
Refreshments at 9:30 am

R.S.V.P. appreciated 968-7900 or alicia@squamlakes.com

Members will vote on by-law changes and the slate of Directors.
See squamlakes.com for details

Coffee Cup Challenge Continues…
Make your Saturday morning coffee count! Bring your SLCS silver coffee cup to the Annual meeting and four SLCS sponsors will donate $10.00/cup!! Last year, with only two sponsors, you raised $1,200 for SLCS - just by drinking coffee!!

Let’s set a new record in 2013!!