Driving south on Route 3 from Holderness to Ashland one can see a beautiful yellow farmhouse surrounded by fields on the hillside above the southwest end of Little Squam Lake. SLCS is very fortunate that the owners of this spectacular farm, Frank and Liz Stevens, have offered to host our 2014 Annual meeting on August 23, 2014.

Lake View Farm was built in 1837 by Horatio Nelson Smythe, grandson of Andrew Smythe, one of the first settlers of Holderness. The farm was part of Holderness until the new town of Ashland was ‘set off’ in 1868. Smith Sanborn purchased the property from the Smythe heirs in 1884 and it remained in his family for a century. During the decades spanning the two World Wars, Roxey Heath operated a boardinghouse at the farm offering out-of-state visitors an opportunity to escape the heat of the city and enjoy the country setting. In 1984, Sanborn’s daughter Julia Griffin (who lived to be 104 years old) sold the farm to Frank. In 2013, Frank and Liz donated a conservation easement on the 59-acre parcel surrounding the barn to the Squam Lakes Conservation Society.

This past May, in preparation for our Annual Meeting, the SLCS Communications Committee visited these fields and surrounding woods. Every time one thinks Squam cannot get any better, it does. The view of the Squam Range and beyond from Lake View Farm is extraordinary. Instead of looking at the mountains side by side as one does from Big Squam, one sees them all lined up beginning with Mt. Fayal behind the Science Center and ending with Doublehead. Plymouth Mountain, Mount Prospect and Mount Chocorua fan out from either side to complete the view. In her book Squam, Rachel Carley describes the value of the amazing view from this side of Little Squam. “The vistas from that elevation were so stunning that in 1891 citizens agitated for a road to circumnavigate the whole of Little Squam. Their hope – never fulfilled – was to improve the value of real estate by opening up scenery hitherto almost unknown to the tourist.”

As our committee walked the property Frank described how his relationship with Squam began during childhood visits to his grandfather’s home on land just up the hill from Lake View Farm. Behind the house is a wonderful foundation where cousins would test themselves to see who had grown enough to jump from the sides of the foundation to what may have been the chimney foundation in the middle. A day long activity loved by all was to pack a lunch and travel down the hill to the lake. Children would travel the woods path and the adults would travel by car. Our morning on Leavitt Hill was magical and I hope many will join us here in August for a meeting full of information about land conservation in the Squam Watershed and great views of the lands we so love.
What is summer? We know it as the warmest of our four seasons, and that it begins on the longest day of the year and extends until the September equinox. But, summer is so much more.

Summer is when we enjoy fresh local produce, and read from a lounge chair. Ever hear of a spring, fall, or winter novel? Summer is when we swim, and sit on the porch witnessing a thunderstorm sweeping across the lake or field. Summer is spending time outdoors and witnessing wildlife in high gear collecting calories and nursing the next generation. While insects may not be our favorite part of summer, they attract the colorful birdlife that paints our landscape.

Summer is the time of year when we visibly see the diversity and splendor of our remarkable forests that contribute so much to our clean water and air. We are thrilled that our conservation partner, The Conservation Fund, has acquired and is stewarding the 5,435 acre Beebe River tract on the north side of the Squam Range.

Summer is a time for picnics, family reunions, weddings, and attending chapel on Church Island. It’s when we have our Annual Meeting, which this year will be hosted at an extraordinary property owned by Frank and Liz Stevens, who donated a 58-acre conservation easement on their Lake View Farm. Summer is a season for bell ringings, such as the one we will have at another Little Squam property, the very recently conserved Sanford Forest (see opposite page), and with members of the Speers family (for the second time) to protect the land surrounding their historic Sandwich property. Summer is peak season for many other celebrations, like the one hosted by Bill and Pam Simonds on June 27th to thank our dedicated land monitors (see page 4).

Summer can also be a time of change. A major change at SLCS is saying farewell to Joan Turley, our Stewardship Coordinator for over seven years (see page 4). Joan professionalized our Stewardship Program and made all those wonderful maps you have come to associate with SLCS. We say hello to Doug Hill, who has graduated from being an attorney to become SLCS’s part-time Land Protection Specialist.

Summer is undoubtedly the time of year when Squam is most enjoyed, as the local population more than doubles. People come to Squam from far and wide to spend time with family and friends, many returning year after year. Some never return, but only because they never leave.

Lastly, summer is when we lay in a field at night to witness the Milky Way and hear tree frogs sharing the message that we are all so very fortunate to live in such a beautiful place.

Following His Passion
Doug Hill, long time legal counsel to SLCS, has joined the staff as part-time Land Protection Specialist. Doug recently took “inactive retired” status with the New Hampshire Bar and closed his Meredith, NH private practice. He will now apply his past experience as a land surveyor and real estate lawyer to his passion for land conservation. Roger is already unloading his desk drawers and stacking the folders on Doug’s desk, wherever it is. Doug has assumed responsibility for several active conservation projects and is a tremendous addition to our staff. Contact Doug at the SLCS office, or at dporterhill@gmail.com.
**Forever Squam... Spanning 101 Parcels**

**Speers Strike Again...**

Sue Speers is no stranger to SLCS; she is a longtime member of SLCS and faithful advocate for land conservation. Furthermore, Sue and her late husband, the Reverend Guthrie Speers, were the inspiration for their four children, Will, Tom, Sam, and Elizabeth, to donate one of the first campstead easements to SLCS in 2009.

Now Sue is the donor of conservation land, in fact two conservation easements under separate ownership but both surrounding her 1803 farmstead on Taylor Road in Sandwich. The Guthrie Speers conservation area is 8.4 acres of wooded land with over 1,300 of road frontage on Route 113 and nearly as much on Taylor Road. The Susan Speers conservation area is 4.7 acres of mostly pasture surrounding the farmhouse where Sue resides.

“Putting this property under easement occurred to me because I wanted to preserve in perpetuity the lovely vista over the open fields to Red Hill, a view which gives peace to the soul and contentment to my spirit. Guthrie’s parents bought this property in the early 1930’s; it’s where he spent his childhood summers. There was no question this was where he wanted to move on retirement; I am so very conscious of his presence here in a house and property he loved.” Sue Speers

**Sanford-Doyle Forest**

We are pleased to announce the completion of our second conservation project on Little Squam, courtesy of a donation of a conservation easement from Jim Sanford and Jean Doyle. The 10.4 acre Sanford-Doyle Forest protects forestland along the southerly portion of Perkins Lane, helping to ensure that the steep southerly slope of Little Squam Lake remains undeveloped and part of our scenic landscape. It is our 113th protected property.

“We have been trying to take seriously the idea of stewardship, especially where the forest has been bruised or stressed. By promoting diversity and encouraging animal habitat, our aim is to leave the forest healthier than we found it.” Jim Sanford

**Sturtevant Bay I**

Richard Starbuck has donated an “Additional Conservation Easement” adding 10,670 sq. ft. to the existing Sturtevant Bay conservation area, clarifying the exact location of the northerly boundary of the conservation land which was donated to SLCS in 1985 by Ginny Welles and Dwight Gertz, just our 7th conservation easement and 12th protected property.

**2014 Annual Meeting**

Lawrence (Larry) Selzer, president and CEO of The Conservation Fund (TCF) will be a featured speaker at the 2014 SLCS Annual Meeting on August 23 at 10 AM.

TCF is a prominent and respected national organization that has protected more than 7 million acres of land and water in all 50 states, including several very large tracts in NH. TCF recently purchased the 5,435 acre Beebe River Tract on the north-side of the Squam Range and are working in partnership with SLCS to prioritize the conservation of working-forests in a 24,000 acre area known as the Squam Uplands.

The SLCS Annual Meeting this summer will be held at Lake View Farm on Leavitt Hill Road in Ashland, courtesy of Frank and Liz Stevens (see page 1 for more about Lake View Farm). Annual Meeting materials, including nominations of Officers and Directors, can be found on the SLCS website (squamlakes.com). Remember to bring your coffee mugs!
A Thank-you . . . and a Goodbye

In early spring the SLCS Stewardship Committee decided to create an evening for all who volunteer to monitor the lands in our care each year. This gathering, at the home of Pam and Bill Simonds, was designed to thank each of our very special monitors for their extraordinary work. When this event was planned no one was prepared for the fact that this special night would ultimately coincide with our Stewardship Director, Joan Turley’s, last day at SLCS. Joan decided in early June to move on to new opportunities, spend time with her 93 year-old father, and pursue new adventures.

Amongst lots of spectacular food and drink one often heard the question ‘which piece of land do you monitor?’ On the dock was a map and one could guess how many conserved properties were visible from the dock. Special hugs and laughter were plentiful as Joan made her rounds. Roger Larochelle, executive director, explained, “Joan has made it explicitly clear she does not want this party to be about her. It is really about you and her opportunity to thank you. Joan, this is really your ‘flock’ and your people.” Over the years, one item on Joan’s ‘to-do list’ as been to recruit and train monitors. This evening she revealed:

“Never in seven years have I recruited a monitor because this is the club everyone wants to be in. You guys have inadvertently created this club. You guys are the ones seeing the land. You know the stonewalls, you know the crickets, you know the ticks, the muck, the snow and the rain. Thank you from SLCS, Roger, Alicia, the unseen stakeholders in the watershed, the deer, the salamanders and from me. Thank you for your incredible friendship.”

Joan joined SLCS seven years ago and has been an integral part of adding more than 60 new properties to our portfolio. The acres in our care have tripled and fundamentally the whole stewardship program has professionalized and taken huge leaps forward in support of our monitors. Board President, Tim Vaill, reminded us that in the early days of SLCS monitoring there were no written records. Today all notes taken by monitors in the field are meticulously saved in the lands database and, if needed, follow-up action is also documented. Joan stressed the importance of monitor training. Today each monitor receives a Monitoring Handbook and must be certified before they are allowed to monitor a property on their own. As Joan moves forward from SLCS, she leaves a well-established stewardship program ready to continue and grow into the future.

Bev LaFoley summed up our evening well. “It was such a joy and great pleasure to bring everyone together and let them know how important their work is... and how important their friendship is! It felt so good to give Joan a proper send-off in this intimate setting.”
Keeping an Eye on Things

Often a monitor’s relationship goes well beyond the yearly monitoring visit. Such is the case for Lisa Wardlaw and Kodi who often revisit the trails on Unsworth Preserve.

Hi Joan and Molly,

Yesterday I decided to make my first spring visit to the Unsworth Preserve, along with Kodi (of course)! Although chilly, it was a lovely day to be there. There were still traces of the snowfall from the night before, and the swamp had open water all around the edges, with ice floes in the middle. Little tufts of vegetation were sticking up in the midst of it all, glistening from the new snowfall. It was gorgeous. Of course I didn’t have my camera . . .

There were many fallen limbs and branches and smaller twigs. I picked up a number of them, but finally decided much of it could also wait for another visit, with more helping hands. No sign of beavers chewing on trees, but some dead trees had indeed fallen across the path. Much of the path was virtually under water from all the thaw and ground melt. In places we had to go around on higher ground, especially on the path that leads back to the Harvard Camp Road. We walked out on the small peninsula where the bench dedicated to Virginia Unsworth is located. Suddenly a blue heron flew overhead and landed at the far end of the swamp from where we were standing. How gorgeous was that!

Kodi and I did the whole loop, starting with the long red trail and circling back on the shorter yellow trail to the car. It was a great spring outing and I encourage others to enjoy it as well!!

Lisa Wardlaw

Teaching Conservation: Inspiring Kids

May is a special time for 5th grade students at Holderness Central School because they go to ‘camp’ at Camp Deerwood and learn what makes Squam so special. They take a lake cruise with the Science Center. The Loon Preservation Center does a presentation. Our executive director Roger Larochelle and board member Molly Whitcomb take a walk with them and explore the natural environment around Deerwood. While walking, we discuss the impact these children can and will have on the Squam watershed and other places depending on the choices they make. The school provides many additional learning experiences. At the end of the week all have a greater appreciation for Squam and ‘camp’ memories they will cherish forever.

Molly Whitcomb
It is entirely appropriate that the Society is meeting in Ashland. For this town of 2,061 people, at the geographical center of New Hampshire, has long played a critical role in the destiny of the Squam Lakes. When Holderness was chartered in 1761 it included many lands which are today part of Ashland. The first land divided was not on the shores of Big Squam but between the Squam River and the Pemigewasset in an area called the Intervale. George Hodges tells us in his book *Holderness* “the first land to be divided was the intervale. Afterwards, in 1765, they drew for places in the first division of hundred-acre lots, between Little Squam and the river. Finally, in 1774, they drew for the hundred-acre lots in the second division, around Big Squam, north and south.” Samuel Shepard became the clerk of the new landowners and continued in this office for 40 years. When Holderness was settled he chose “the west side of the Owl Brook, where three roads meet, one to the mill at Ashland, one to Plymouth, one to Squam Bridge. There he kept an inn. The inn was the social and political and commercial centre of the colonial town.”

In the beginning, the landowners provided for roads and in 1767 they created a committee to let out mill privileges on the Squam River. “The committee offered a grant of land to whomsoever should ‘arect’ a sawmill and gristmill. Thompson, a Durham man accepted this offer, and built these mills and settled beside them. These industries were begun in 1770 or 1771. Before that, corn was taken to be ground in Canterbury.”

Rachel Carley tells us in her book *Squam* that “road clearing was only one of the many expenses in improving a settlement. Among other taxes town proprietors imposed on shareholders was a levy for mill construction. Grist and sawmills were so fundamental to survival that proprietors reserved land for a mill before drawing for their own lots, and offered land and cash incentives for millwrights to settle.”

The Squam River has played an important role throughout the towns history and held the very destiny of the lakes in its hands. According to Carley “the Squam River was an extremely important power source, falling 112 feet over the southwesterly course of its three-mile length from Little Squam Lake to the Pemigewasset River. Local industry kept pace. By early 1900 no fewer than 7 dams on the Squam River controlled the power to an array of Ashland mills and factories that burned, went bankrupt, and changed hands and water rights with remarkable frequency.” In fact, today it continues as the source of the “Squam Lake Reservoir,” the artificially-flowed lake level.

Rail travel arrived in 1849 and with it steamboat transportation across the waters. These new modes of transportation allowed people to reach their summer homes by means other than canoe or rowboat and the “tourist” industry began to flourish. Summer residents traveled by train to the Ashland Depot, 106 miles north of Boston. From the depot travelers were transported to riverside docks and brought by steamer up the lakes with full baggage and sometimes domestic help in tow.

Freight, lumber, concrete, groceries, and mail came as well. In 1901 it was proposed to construct an electric railway from Ashland all the way to Sandwich, a very bright but overly ambitious prospect that never got off the ground. Think of how this might have changed the look of Route 113 today! As recently as the late 1960s the Rockywold-Deephaven Camps kept Ashland as their mail address as a result of those early steamboat days. Or how about the RFD #1 Ashland mail route along Route 3 so many can still recall?

In 1868 Ashland split off from Holderness over differences of who should be taxed for such village improvements as sidewalks and fire protection. Ashland (named after the Kentucky estate of Senator and Secretary of State Henry Clay) became a tiny town geographically, just 11 square miles, with shoreline on “the little lake” extending to the Black Horse Motel on the north side, across Leavitt Hill on the back side.

In an attempt to establish Squam Lakes’ water level parameters that would serve both summer residents...
and keep the mills downstream running, the Nichols v. State court case was decided. There followed, through the efforts of the Squam Lakes Association, purchase of the former Ashland mill dam from those still holding Squam’s flowage rights. Then the structure, which badly needed work, was sold to the state for a dollar bringing the setting of lake levels into the public domain. In the 1970s a run-of-the-river hydro project was proposed and constructed on that same site bringing Gov. Gallen to the ribbon cutting.

Perhaps the most noteworthy event in Ashland since the arrival of the Boston, Concord and Montreal Railroad, was the construction of the lattice/truss covered bridge at the far end of Little Squam. It stands as a landmark today having spanned 61 feet and replacing a crumbing concrete and steel structure condemned by the state. With the 1988 Ashland town meeting “raising and appropriating” $30,000, the remainder of the $200,000 cost came from over 500 contributors, many of them Squam Lakers. And who else to build such a structure? The Ashland family of Milton Graton, world-renown covered bridge builders and restorers. It was dedicated on July first, 1990 as oxen were used to power a windlass winch drawing the entire structure across the old granite abutments. This historic event, among the many in Ashland, even made Boston TV!

The Anatomy of an Old Barn

Frank Stevens

The Lake View Farm barn is a typical example of barns built in the 1830s in central New Hampshire. It was built to house cattle and to store hay and grain. The frame is constructed entirely of hand-hewn timbers with mortise & tenon joinery, secured by wooden pegs, according to the ‘scribe rule’ in which each timber is custom-cut to fit into its assigned location. It has a gable-front, meaning the main door is on the gable end, and is a bank barn, built into the hillside and accessible on two levels. The central drive is off center, providing enough room to stable cattle on the warmer southeast side, with a wider haymow on the northwest for hay storage, which also insulates against the prevailing winter winds.

The barn was formerly connected to a series of sheds and a brooder house for chickens arranged around a sheltered barnyard. After 1950 the farm went into decline, the fields became overgrown, and the buildings deteriorated. Although many of the structures were beyond repair, the barn itself was restored in 1991, the foundation rebuilt, the siding replaced, and windows installed. A new steel roof was added in 2005. Every attempt has been made to employ traditional construction techniques and maintain the appearance of the barn in keeping with its original design. At nearly 180 years of age, this barn is the last of its kind on Leavitt Hill.
The Coffee Cup Challenge is On!
Don’t forget your SLCS coffee cup when you head out to this year’s Annual Meeting. For the third year in a row a group of sponsors are pledging $10 to SLCS for every returning cup. Last year a record 75 returning cups raised $3,000. The challenge is on...to set a new record!!

Reuse, Recycle and Raise Money

Local Businesses Supporting Conservation
Get a free cup of coffee when you bring your SLCS coffee cup into any of these businesses on Saturday, August 23rd:
Ashland - Dot’s Bread ‘n’ Butter, The Common Man;
Holderness - The Squam Lake Market Place; Sandwich - The Barking Dog.

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

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