

Quincy Bog Notes

Conserving Land, Connecting People with Nature

Winter 2024-2025

Volume 32 Number 2

Conserving Land – A Multigenerational Gift

Peter Fauver

I spent my childhood years on a farm abutting Quincy Bog, decades before it was protected by Rumney Ecological Systems. My brothers and I skated on the Bog in winter, marveling at the beaver dams and learning other natural features of the area. My father mentioned how lucky we were to have the Bog nearby and how he hoped it would remain in its natural state to be enjoyed by all. While his comments predated the conservation movement, the message from him was clear to our family – that conserved lands benefit those who live nearby as well as visitors.

When our family moved to an old, remote farmhouse on a dirt road in Plymouth, the solitude of the place and its visual simplicity impacted our future land decisions. As we all know, construction and development in towns has reduced the amount of visually appealing open space over the years. We were fortunate to obtain nearby properties with conservation as the main objective, intentionally aiming to limit future development so that the lands forever remain as scenic open spaces. For us, besides the conservation of these lands – particularly the open fields along rural roads in the area – for scenic enjoyment by the general public, we seek to protect the rich agricultural soils. Another specific goal is to protect the quality and availability of groundwater and surface water on, under, and adjacent to the property. Among our family's easements, the right to limited building in several areas is preserved to the extent it would not interfere with these conservation objectives.



What is it like to live on or next to conservation lands? Over the years I've become the owner of three of our family parcels, one of which is in conservation easement and the others in current use. My property is almost entirely surrounded by conservation lands, something I think benefits me, personally, as well as my abutters. As I drive the designated Scenic Road past my land, under the shade of its mature tree canopy, it heartens me to know that the views I am enjoying from the road will remain. From my porch, I look out over 30 acres of protected field and forest, thankful for those who had the foresight to encourage conservation. I regularly spot deer, bears, foxes and birds that would not commonly be seen but for the natural habitat offered by traditional New Hampshire farmlands. My neighbors often walk and ride horses over these fields, and some use them to grow sunflowers and hold beehives. In the years ahead, there may be other crops grown and perhaps livestock. It is comfort-

ing to know that there will never be additional residences or commercial structures on the land in my view and that its uses will be natural or agricultural. While much of the land around me is open field, other protected areas nearby are wooded, never to be built upon and subject to forestry restrictions to keep them in a natural state.



My parents granted conservation easements on hundreds of acres in Plymouth. These are held by a few different entities. The non-profit group that holds easements on properties immediately adjacent to my land is Rumney Ecological Systems, also known as Pemi-Baker Land Trust. They also hold a conservation easement on a parcel I own, in direct view from my house. Over that open land, I can see the hills in the distance and appreciate knowing that nothing will impede that view in the years ahead, including when I'm no longer the landowner. We are fortunate that, throughout the state, there are many regional organizations such as the Pemi-Baker Land Trust to hold conservation easements and assist landowners to put them into effect. Another group is the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, which presently holds conservation easements on more than 135,000 acres in the state.

As with any grant of a conservation easement there is a monetary cost in surrendering the right to build, but this can be partially offset through tax breaks. There is also a one-time conservation fee. For me, the financial sacrifices of an easement are not comparable to the benefit of preserving the scenic natural environment and the habitat it provides for birds and other animals. My choice, and that of my parents, was to maintain the visual and natural integrity of the area for the benefit of others and the environment. I am grateful for that and look forward to enjoying the fruits of the conservation tree in the years ahead.

Peter Fauver, retired, is presently the Vice Chair of the Board of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.



President's Perspective

Marguerite St. Laurent-Crowell



For several months now, the Board of Directors has discussed the philosophy of land acknowledgment, including statements that recognize the history, culture, and rights of Indigenous peoples in relation to the Quincy Bog Natural Area. Land acknowledgment is more than a token gesture; it reflects an authentic understanding of historical and ongoing relationships between Indigenous communities and the land. One board member provided insight into the complexity of this task, having recently completed this process with the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest.

As part of our exploration of this topic, and concerned about misrepresentation or incomplete acknowledgment, we reached out to a few Abenaki groups. It seems not enough to say, "We acknowledge the traditional lands of the X nation" since we also ask ourselves, "Are we supporting this community with a long-term commitment to change?" While some of the groups we contacted didn't respond, one group said they were overwhelmed with requests. A representative from this group suggested we create a bioinventory of the land, something we've been doing since the 1970s.

Besides questions about land acknowledgement, another challenge we face is that the name of part of our organization is the Pemi-Baker Land Trust. Thomas Baker was a colonial settler known for his violent actions toward Native Americans in the area around Plymouth during the late 17th century. Wayne King's book, *Asquamchumaukee - Place of Mountain Waters*, explores this activity in depth.

We quickly learned that an acknowledgement is a complex process that goes beyond writing a statement. We became aware that NH has no state or federally recognized tribes. In April this year, at the United Nations in New York City during the 23rd session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the chief of the Abenakis of Odanak in Canada denounced the Abenakis of Vermont as frauds. He stated, "We strongly denounce the theft of our culture, our identity, and our traditions by self-proclaimed groups from Vermont. This fraud jeopardizes our sovereignty over our ancestral territory, Ndakina, directly affecting our ability to occupy and use it for our traditional activities."

Creating a land acknowledgment can be a powerful way to honor Indigenous peoples and their histories, but it comes with unique challenges. Indigenous peoples were historically moved, displaced, or had their boundaries redefined through colonial practices. Figuring out the exact land relationships today, versus historic ones, is complex, especially in the presence of multiple Indigenous nations with competing historical claims. Our Board will continue these meaningful discussions in hopes of fostering understanding and respect for Indigenous communities, and their relationship to the land, and to raise awareness about Indigenous histories, the ongoing impacts of colonization, and potential for reconciliation.

Marguerite St. Laurent-Crowell continues to help advance our mission of conserving land and connecting people with nature.

Be a Bog Host at Quincy Bog!

Diane Devine and Betty Jo Taffe

Do you like connecting with nature? Would you like to help other people do the same? If you answered "yes," you might enjoy serving as a Bog Host at the Quincy Bog Natural Area.

What is a Bog Host? They are volunteers who act as the "face" of the Bog, staffing the Nature Center and engaging with the public. It's a great way to spend time enjoying the outdoors and helping introduce others to the wonders of the area.

What do Bog Hosts do? Hosts spend most of their time in and around the Nature Center, but many also walk the trail during part of their shift. Bog Hosts welcome visitors and answer any questions they might have. They share information about upcoming events, such as our Wednesday evening programs and weekend nature walks, and they point out interpretative materials (trail guides, checklists, and library books). They explain our Junior Naturalist program to prospective children and their mentors, distribute activity books to those who wish to participate, and award badges to children who complete the program. You don't have to be an "expert" to serve as a Bog Host; learning more about the Bog and its flora and fauna is part of the fun!

How much time does a Bog Host commit to the Bog? As a group, Bog Hosts attend a May Orientation Program and a September Wrap-up Session to discuss their experiences, ask questions, and offer suggestions. Hosts sign up for weekly morning or afternoon shifts from June to Labor Day, with additional opportunities on spring, fall, or even winter weekends. These hours and days are flexible. While most Hosts volunteer from 9 AM to noon or noon to 3 PM, earlier or later times are possible. If you're not able to commit to a regular shift, consider becoming a substitute host to fill in when our regular hosts are unavailable.

To find out more about serving as a Bog Host, please email Bog Host Coordinator Diane Devine at boghosts@quincybog.org

Diane Devine has been a Bog Host since 2018 and has served as Bog Host Coordinator since 2019. She enjoys connecting people with nature at Quincy Bog.

Betty Jo Taffe has served on the Quincy Bog Board of Directors since 1994 and has been the Board Liaison with the Bog Host Program since the early 2000s.



A big thank you to our Bog Host team! From left to right: Steve Daniels, Diane Devine, Nancy LePage, Betty Jo Taffe, Ivan Bass, Bryon Middlekauff, Mimi Chandler, Steve Anglea, and Diane Arsenault. Not pictured, but also hosting in 2024: Christine Bird, Ann Knowles, Gary Litton, Suzanne Silvestre, & Paula Woodward.

Junior Naturalist Corner

Sarah Dunham-Miliotis

What is a Conservation Easement?

Hey Junior Naturalists! At some point, you may have gone hiking on land protected by a *conservation easement*, but what does that mean?

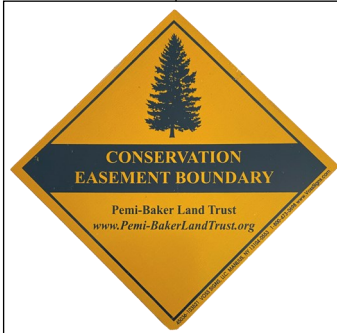
What's an easement?

In general, an *easement* is a special set of instructions or rules for a piece of property that allows use by someone other than the landowner. For example, a utility company might have an easement to allow them to have power lines crossing someone's property, or someone might have an easement allowing their neighbor's driveway to cross part of their land.

What's special about a conservation easement?

A *conservation easement* is an agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization or sometimes the government (called the 'easement holder') that protects the land in various ways for the wildlife, plants and other natural resources found there. A conservation

easement usually protects against any future building on the land. It might also allow (or not allow!) specific activities like logging, hunting, or public access for hiking and snowmobiling, for example — whatever best suits their goals for the property.



The Pemi-Baker Land Trust holds several conservation easements in the Baker Valley area. The boundaries of their protected spaces are marked off with these metal tags on the trees.

The landowner still owns the conserved property but they agree to follow the rules of the easement, and the easement holder is responsible for enforcing those rules. A conservation easement is also PERMANENT—even after the land is sold, the easement is still active and enforced with the new owners. It's a great way for people to forever protect the land they love and for conservation organizations to protect land without the expense of buying it themselves.

Did you know?

In New Hampshire almost 350,000 acres of land are protected by conservation easements!

* landtrustalliance.org/land-trusts/gaining-ground/new-hampshire

Sarah Dunham-Miliotis is the School Programs Coordinator for Quincy Bog. She is an environmental educator, fiber artist, homeschooling mom and nature-nerd!

Changing Climate, Changing Winters

Kerry Yurewicz

The signs of climate change are hard to miss. Globally, 2023 had been the hottest summer on record, in a data set that stretches back to 1880. That record was surpassed again, in 2024, with daily temperatures reaching unprecedented highs in several locations across the country, like Palm Springs, California (124°F), Medicine Lodge, Kansas (115°F), and even Deadhorse, Alaska (89°F). Closer to home, both New Hampshire and Maine also experienced their hottest summers on record, and Concord, NH made headlines with a heatwave of twelve consecutive days above 90°F.

But climate change is not just about summer, and it's not just about temperatures. In the northeast, winter average temperatures have risen even faster than those in other seasons, bringing distinctive changes in the timing, extent, and duration of snow cover, and lake and river ice. While weather conditions fluctuate on short time scales, climate is the long-term condition. Decades of data are crucial for detecting patterns in climate variation. For example, when scientists analyzed a 56-year-long data set of weekly snow measurements from three sites at the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest in central NH, they found clear decreases in both the maximum snowpack size and the number of days with snowpack (due to earlier melt off). This work was just published in December 2024. As snow cover shrinks, tree roots and overwintering animals lose a key layer of insulation, creating consequences for the ecology of our local forest ecosystems.

What will these kinds of changes mean to people? Has your experience of winter in New England changed over time? If you're interested in learning more and joining the conversation, the Museum of the White Mountains in



Plymouth, NH has an upcoming exhibition focused on "*Silent Shifts: Evolving Winters in the White Mountains*" (January 21 – March 29, 2025). In addition to the art exhibition, monthly talks in their *Mountain Voices* series align with this theme. All events are free to the public. Talks are typically offered in hybrid format; for those who wish to attend via Zoom, registration links are available through the Museum's website. For more information about these events, visit plymouth.edu/mwm/events/

Kerry Yurewicz, co-editor of *Bog Notes*, is a professor at Plymouth State University. Her teaching and research are focused on ecology and biological diversity.

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Quincy Bog Notes is a twice-yearly newsletter of information, announcements, and news about the Quincy Bog Natural Area and Pemi-Baker Land Trust.

Quincy Bog Natural Area, 131 Quincy Bog Road, Rumney, NH, 03266, www.quincybog.org

Quincy Bog Notes

Save the Date: Spring Bird Walk



What: Our annual Spring Bird Walk is a chance to observe birds in differing habitats at Quincy Bog, learning identification by sight and sound.

When & Where: May 3rd, starting at 7 a.m. from the Quincy Bog Nature Center. We'll walk the trail around the Bog, returning to the Nature Center by around 9:30 a.m.

Who: We hope you'll join us! Our guide will be Iain MacLeod, Executive Director of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center. Iain has been studying birds for fifty years. He is on the editorial board of and is a frequent contributor to NH Bird Records, and in 2019 he was recognized by NH Audubon with the Goodhue-Elkins Award for contributions to ornithology in New Hampshire.



Why: A huge variety of birds fill our woods, meadows, and wetlands — getting to know them will enhance your experience in the outdoors.

During the 2024 Bird Walk, we detected 41 species, including woodpeckers, vireos, flycatchers, nuthatches, and warblers. (You can see the complete list here: ebird.org/checklist/S178860090). Every year is different, so come see what's new for 2025!

Are You a Friend of the Bog?

Each winter we invite your donation to support Rumney Ecological Systems, the legal name that encompasses both the Quincy Bog Natural Area and the Pemi-Baker Land Trust. Your generosity helps fund publication and distribution costs of this biannual newsletter, our trail guides and checklists, the summertime and Junior Naturalist programs, trail repairs, building maintenance, and other routine expenses of the Bog and the Land Trust. We have no paid employees so your entire donation goes directly toward our mission of Conserving Land, Connecting People with Nature.

Many people show their support through our online PayPal link accessed through our website (quincybog.org). For your convenience, the QR code shown here will take you right there. If you prefer to send a check made payable to Rumney Ecological Systems, we've enclosed a pre-addressed envelope. We thank you!

