

# MONADNOCK CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2009

NUMBER 42

## *Another Four Easements, Another 255 Acres Protected*



This working farm in Swanzev was protected thanks to the joint efforts of passionate landowners, dedicated town leadership, and a supportive community.



### *Ridgehill Farm, Swanzev, 92.6 Acres*

The acceptance of this conservation easement in September is a testament to community and sense of place. Ridgehill Farm, owned by the Johnson family, is iconic in Swanzev. Volunteers from around town help farmer Mike Johnson with the harvest, and neighborhood children grew up pitching in when needed throughout the year. Most residents know that Johnson is owner of oxen Buck and Ike, "Swanzev's Biggest Rural Characters," as well as the wintertime caretaker of the Friendly Farm animals from Dublin.

These community connections and the potential to inspire others to protect land as well as to stave off any possible residential development were reasons that the Swanzev Open Space Committee (OSC) identified the farm as a high priority. The farm also has 2,500 feet of frontage on the South Branch of the Ashuelot River, overlies a groundwater aquifer, and is a high priority of the NH Wildlife Action Plan.

The Johnsons have worked the land for generations. Mike Johnson, who is now in charge after having lived and worked here his entire life, is the son of Suzie (age 95) and Henry (now deceased). Henry ran the farm primarily as a commercial dairy and deeply wished that it continue as a farm beyond his lifetime.

But the pressing question was "how to pay for it?" Initially, the town of Swanzev approved \$33,000 toward the project. Later, the town and the NH Department of Environmental Services directed an additional \$50,000 to the project from a wetlands mitigation payment resulting from local industrial development, at which

point the town raised its amount to match that payment. After three years of collaboration between the Johnsons, the town of Swanzev and its OSC, and the Conservancy, everyone is happy that this farm has successfully been conserved as a model of rural character.



### *Brook Farm, Sharon, 88.9 Acres*

This largely forested property, which abuts more than 1,200 acres of previously conserved land, has been in the Matthews family for generations. In the early 1990s, Ralph Matthews of Sharon first approached the Conservancy about protecting his land with an easement. Ralph Matthews has since passed away, but his son, Bruce Matthews, took up where his father had left off. This June, Bruce Matthews and his siblings were able to fulfill their father's wish to preserve the property for water and wildlife protection, sustainable timber management, and public pedestrian use. *continued on page 2*

## Protected Lands 2009

continued from page 1

### Potter Easement, Nussdorfer Nature Area, New Ipswich, 60.5 Acres

The Bronson Potter property is a key holding of the Nussdorfer Nature Area on Hoar Pond in New Ipswich. Our acceptance of this conserva-




tion easement in September ensures that the pond's shoreline and adjacent forest remain undeveloped. Hoar Pond is a popular site for nature walks. A well-established, blazed trail wends through oak, beech, poplar, hemlock, and mountain laurel to a scenic viewpoint overlooking the pond. Although the property was not immediately threatened, the town of New Ipswich wanted to avert future development, as it had done with other town-owned lands.



### McAdoo Easement, Temple, 12.7 Acres

Dick and Mary McAdoo protected their lovely property with a conservation easement in July. It is one of our smaller easements yet it's part of a larger priority area of the town of Temple. The mostly wooded parcel features two streams, which feed the town of Greenville's public water supply. This fact, along with good conservation prospects on abutting properties, provides great potential for public benefit. It is the Temple Conservation Commission's long-term hope that the McAdoo land will be part of a green corridor that runs north-south through town.

*These four closings brought our total number of protected properties to 158. As we go to press, seven more land protection agreements have been finalized and we anticipate another nine by year-end. Look for our winter newsletter for more information on our continuing work.* 



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## *First Successes as Outreach Continues*

A milestone was reached in early November when the town of Gilsum adopted its land conservation plan, which was developed with the help of the Monadnock Community Conservation Partnership (MCCP). The plan successfully went through a public hearing and planning board vote on November 3. MCCP Project Director Pete Throop expressed excitement at providing “ongoing support to pilot towns as we begin the process of implementing actions in their plans.”

We anticipate that the MCCP pilot towns of Westmoreland and Alstead will soon adopt their plans. The plans are completed and public hearings are being scheduled, with possible votes by the planning boards before year-end. Work is already underway on several new conservation easement projects in Alstead, each the direct result of early MCCP activities.

Dublin, Fitzwilliam, and Jaffrey are the next towns with which the MCCP is slated to work. Each town has already completed a natural resource inventory. Throop and Rick Brackett,

MCCP assistant, recently gave presentations to the communities to introduce them to the program and how we can help with identifying conservation priorities and where to focus growth.

Throop also gave a presentation in September that’s worth noting. He was invited to speak at the Selectperson Institute at the Local Government Center in Concord. Thirty to forty selectmen and women from around the state gathered to hear his one-hour presentation titled “Balancing Development and Conservation to Support Community Quality of Life.” In an effort to educate town officers on the benefits of having a land-use plan in place, Throop gave an overview of the effects of fragmentation, possible innovative land-use planning techniques, and the what and how of land conservation. He also talked about the basics of how to create a land conservation plan and where to find help.

For more information about any of the MCCP programs or activities, please contact Throop at: [Pete@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Pete@MonadnockConservancy.org) or (603) 357-0600. 🍁

## STEWARDSHIP

### *Conservation Celebration: Feeding Families on Conserved Land*



On a sunny Sunday afternoon in early October, more than thirty conservation easement landowners gathered at Tracie’s Community Farm in Fitzwilliam for an afternoon of cider and cookies, and a look at recent conservation efforts in Fitzwilliam. Since 2008, Tracie Smith has farmed

three acres of land here. The produce from her Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm feeds more than 250 families in the Monadnock Region. Smith led a farm tour, which was followed by a short hike through the woodlands on the adjacent Elephant Rock Farm.

Protected by a conservation easement in 2008, Tracie’s Community Farm is part of a multiphase project undertaken by Fitzwilliam Green, LLC. Fitzwilliam Green owns Elephant Rock Farm, a historic property and woodland, as well as acreage across the street currently planned as a residential subdivision. At the celebration, Fitzwilliam Green partners talked about their dream of building affordable housing on a common block of protected land adjacent to a working farm, connected by walking trails. They shared how the first part of this dream came true when they found Smith, an organic farmer looking for land, and sold her the conserved property.

The Conservancy held this event as an opportunity for conservation landowners to get together, to talk with prospective easement grantors, to see first-hand and learn about a piece of Conservancy-protected land, and to meet our staff and board members. Stay tuned for future celebrations. 🍁

## 20th Anniversary Annual Meeting Features Photographer Alex MacLean



This year's Annual Meeting was held at the Rindge campus of Franklin Pierce University on Saturday, August 22. One hundred forty-five people gathered for the informational and fun event, which included a continental breakfast reception.

It was as much a celebration as a business gathering. As a nod to our history, the event site was the same as our 1st Annual Meeting. Conservancy members and staff talked about the past and shared hopes for the future, emphasizing that the combination of volunteer energy and professional skill is vital to the success of the Monadnock Conservancy.

Renowned Massachusetts-based pilot and aerial photographer Alex S. MacLean was the keynote speaker. He presented a compelling and entertaining slideshow as he spoke about transitional trends concerning development and transportation across our nation. MacLean, who was trained as an architect, uses his photographs as a way to document changes in the landscape.

Jeffrey Timmons (posthumously) and Monica Lehner jointly received the Abe Wolfe Land Protection Award for their work "Keeping the Green in Greenfield." They organized local residents to convey conservation easements and took the lead by being the first families to do so. The Abe Wolfe Land Protection Award, named for one of the Conservancy founders, is presented to an individual, group, or organization that has shown outstanding leadership in land protection in the Monadnock Region. Daughter Jesseca Timmons accepted the award on behalf of Jeffrey Timmons.

Diane Schott, Ryan Owens, Paul Kotila, and Peter Lehner reflected on where we've come from and where we hope to go next. Schott talked about the organization's willingness to grow and respond to big challenges by taking risks such as hiring professional staff. Owens highlighted the value of volunteers. Kotila spoke on how scientifically trained staff offer skills that help with identifying and prioritizing conservation efforts. And, 15-year-old Lehner, the eldest son of conservation easement grantors Michael and Monica Lehner, described the ongoing importance of land conservation from the perspective of his generation.

The business portion of the meeting included reviewing the 2008 financial report; recognizing retiring trustee Jennie Norman, who co-chaired the Monadnock Tomorrow campaign and was board treasurer; introducing new trustees Nancy "Pooky" Hayden of Marlborough and Ken Stewart of Keene; and announcing board officers for 2009–2010: President Carol Thompson, Vice President Suzanne Whittemore, Secretary Sheldon Pennoyer, Treasurer Mike Krinsky, and Immediate Past President John Kieley.

In the afternoon, about fifty people went on one of four field trips: a tour of the New England Wood Pellet facility in Jaffrey, a stroll along Franklin Pierce's interpretive Place Trail, a hike at Conservancy easement Converse Meadow in Rindge, or a walk around Mountain Brook Reservoir (also one of our easements) in Jaffrey. 🍁

Annual Meeting highlights included, from left to right, keynote speaker Alex MacLean; a bountiful breakfast; field trips to New England Wood Pellet and Mountain Brook Reservoir; and a warm welcome by John Kieley.

### *Pete Throop Presents at Rally 2009*

Staff members Rebecca (McGuire) DiGirolomo, Emily Hague, and Pete Throop attended the annual National Land Conservation Conference aka “Rally” hosted by the Land Trust Alliance in Portland, Oregon, this October. Throop also was selected as a workshop presenter for one of the concurrent sessions. Even though he was slotted in the last time on the last day, he was pleased with a strong turnout of twenty-five people. His presentation, titled “Community Conservation Partnerships: A Model for Leveraging Community Capacity and Limited Land Trust Resources,” provided an overview for why we as a land trust started the Monadnock Community Conservation Partnership (MCCP). Throop hopes other land trusts will be inspired by our work to do the same. Throop is the first MC staff member to lead a workshop at this event.

### *Comings and Goings*

AmeriCorps Campus Compact member Rick Brackett joined us in July. He is working full-time as our MCCP and stewardship assistant in a one-year position through the NH Recovery Corps Program. Brackett is assisting with easement monitoring, volunteer training, baseline documentation, record-keeping, and supporting MCCP efforts in newly participating towns.

Our first-ever communications associate position was filled in late October with the hiring of Katrina Farmer. Farmer has been based in the area for nearly ten years, working on staff at *Yankee* magazine and as a freelance writer and editor. As a part-time employee, she will support efforts to communicate effectively with members, donors, trustees, partners, and the community at-large as well as increase public awareness of the organization in the region and at a state level. Farmer will also be responsible for producing and editing content for our newsletters, annual reports, and Web site.

We are thankful for the 300 hours of help that intern Lila Joa provided us from June to September. She assisted with baseline documentation, monitoring visits, committee work, and record-keeping. Joa’s most significant achievement was the creation of more than 100 monitoring maps for use by volunteer land stewards in the field. We wish her well as she finishes her master’s degree at Antioch University New England.

### *Anne McBride Participates on Panel at Mount Holyoke College*

MC conservation project manager Anne McBride spoke on a panel titled “What Can I Do with My Major?” at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, this October. The event provided environmental studies majors the chance to learn more about career choices and options they might have post-graduation. McBride talked generally about land conservation work and then the specific tasks of her job at the Conservancy.

### *A Model for Success: Swanzey OSC-Sponsored Film*

“Swanzey Rural Character,” a 62-minute documentary directed by 18-year-old Evan Barlow, has already been viewed by more than 1,000 Swanzey residents. The film is a result of the Swanzey Open Space Committee’s desire to sponsor a project that celebrates the town’s history, people, and places. The film features interviews with residents who have protected their land with conservation easements as well as folks who have lived in the community for generations or have just moved to town. The film recently won two awards at film festivals. A DVD copy is available for \$5 in Swanzey at Gomarlo’s Food and Circus, Town Hall, and the Swanzey Diner.

### *Monadnock Forever: Give Your Annual Gift Now and in the Future*

If you would like to provide continuing support to our organization, consider a planned or deferred gift (a rule of thumb: make a bequest of twenty times your annual contribution). Such a gift can help ensure that the land we protect today will be secure tomorrow and forever. Bequests, charitable gift annuities, and other tools may be simpler to set up than you think, and all can be tailored to fit your specific areas of interest. Donors who establish a planned gift or name the Monadnock Conservancy in their estate plans are honored as members of our legacy society, Monadnock Forever. We encourage you to seek the advice of your attorney, estate planner, or tax specialist about this win-win option. For more information or to discuss a gift, please contact Ryan Owens, executive director, at [Ryan@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Ryan@MonadnockConservancy.org) or (603) 357-0600.



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### Door Prize Drawing Winners

In honor of our 20th anniversary, we offered a free drawing at our Annual Meeting for all attendees (see related story on page 4). A lucky few went home with prizes:

**1ST PRIZE** a seat on the next aerial monitoring flight: Caleb Lehner, Greenfield

**2ND PRIZE** an autographed copy of Alex MacLean's book *Over: The American Landscape at the Tipping Point*: Charlie Koch, Jaffrey

**3RD PRIZE** an engraved Monadnock Conservancy walking stick: Gina Goff, Sharon

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*To donate online, visit [MonadnockConservancy.org](http://MonadnockConservancy.org).*



### \$20 Gift Memberships Now Available

Through the end of the year, current members can give a gift membership for only \$20, discounted from \$35. This is a one-time-only offer, in honor of our 20th anniversary year. Each membership includes benefits such as our newsletters, invitations to hikes and special events (e.g., our Annual Meeting), updates on land conservation efforts, and a Conservancy window decal. Help us reach our goal of a 20 percent increase in membership in 2009; fill out the online membership form at [MonadnockConservancy.org](http://MonadnockConservancy.org) (link from "Join Us") or call us at (603) 357-0600.

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