

SQUAM LOOKOUT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SQUAM LAKES CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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“Squam’s Land Trust”

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The Medium is the Message



Photo by Andy Thompson www.wildlightimages.com

“Repeat after me, the medium *is* the message.” Susan Morse, a renowned wildlife expert and animal tracker, was explaining the gash in the bark of red pine made by a bear. As we gathered around this and many other signs of wildlife during a winter tracking excursion of Webster Land Corporation lands on the Squam Range, many questions arose. When were these done? And for what purpose?

The subtleties of these messages remain a mystery, but once you know what to look for, these marks and sign are found throughout our woods, even directly on the hiking trails. There is a complex web of life in our midst that is thriving, adaptive, and resilient.

The re-establishment of bear, moose, beaver, American marten, turkey, and the American Bald Eagle locally reveals a profound story. In 1950, it is estimated that there were 500 moose and an equal number of bear in the entire State of New Hampshire. Now, throughout NH and especially in this region, bear and moose are common, and so are turkey. Even bald eagles are no longer rare (see conservation of Little Loon on page 2). Bobcat and beaver are also more abundant, and there’s local evidence of the endangered pine marten once again. Lynx have returned, and there’s mounting, but controversial, evidence in New England and locally for wolf and mountain lion. What made this possible?

There’s little doubt we’ve made great progress in cleaning up the environmental transgressions of our colonial and industrial past. It’s easy to forget that Sandwich once had twice as many people as today, or that virtually the entire Squam Range

was cleared of its forest. Our rivers and lakes are cleaner today than a century ago. And the wildlife that once dominated this area is returning. Someday soon, we’ll have a complete inventory (see Bioblitz announcement on page 4).

The proliferation of land trusts parallels this renewal. Across this nation, land trusts have tripled the amount of permanently protected land during the last ten years. At Squam, that number has increased fourfold. With the addition of seven recently completed conservation projects, 21% of land in the Squam watershed is now permanently protected, providing habitat for wildlife and recreation for us. It’s our great ambition that a third of Squam’s land will be permanently protected.

Just as a bear scrapes softwood to leave a message, our collective efforts to conserve Squam leaves a powerful message to those who will follow in our footsteps.

Roge



Wildlife trackers on the Squam range. Susan Morse is in the foreground with snowshoes.

Forever Squam.....

Eastman Brook I & II. The bargain-sale purchase of a conservation easement on 90 acres in Sandwich conserves a key portion of the lower Squam Range, and represents our 74th and 75th protected properties. The Eastman Brook easements protect an important stream flowing into Squam Lake and offers the possibility of building a connector trail linking the Col Trail with the Doublehead Trail. This property falls within the area considered *Highest Ranked Wildlife Habitat* in the 2007 Wildlife Action Plan released by NH Fish and Game Dept. Thanks to all the donors who made this bargain-sale purchase possible, and we congratulate Leo Dwyer for his vision, dedication to conservation, and for playing such an important role in our community.

Little Loon Island. We are very pleased to announce the conservation of one of Squam's best known wildlife refuges, Little Loon Island, the site of a bald eagle's nest since 2003. Webster Land Corporation, Squam's largest land owner, has sold their development rights to the SLCS in the form of a conservation easement that will ensure the highest protection possible for this half-acre island in Moultonborough. We are grateful to the Squam Lakes Association for funding the stewardship of this property. This has been one of our highest priority lands for conservation, and we are thankful for the opportunity to work with the Webster Land Corporation.



Photo by Randy Roos

Returning home... Squam's eagles are nesting once again on Little Loon Island

DW Emerson Preserve I and II. An area of land formerly owned by the late Denley Emerson in North Sandwich, this property is bordered or crossed by Mill Brook and Tewksbury Brook, and contains some well-defined glacial eskers. The logging roads make for excellent cross-country ski and hiking trails, with several viewpoints of the Sandwich and Ossipee Mountain Ranges. The new land owners, Roger and Sue Sorlien and John Doherty, will maintain the network of publicly accessed trails. Thanks to George Bates for funding the purchase of the conservation easement from the Emerson estate, Green Mountain Group for getting this off the ground, and to Ken Cargill for his able assistance.

Damon Family Conservation Area. We thank the Damon family for their gift of this lovely property on Dog Cove in Center Harbor. This 10-acre property contains a seasonal stream, 5-acre ponds and a network of historic stone walls. This property is adjacent to Belknap Woods, and thus expands the conserved lands.

SAVE THE DATE

Bird Walks	June 4th June 15th June TBA August 20th
BioBlitz	June 6th - June 7th
Monitoring Workshop	July 12th

.recently completed



Coolidge/Beede Forest. Our deepest thanks go to Nat Coolidge for his donation of a conservation easement protecting a remarkable portion of the Squam watershed. The 302-acre property, the second largest conserved property in the Squam watershed, includes vast shoreline on Barville Pond, a beaver marsh, and open fields that provide an important habitat for wildlife. The remainder of the property is forested and includes a very old and intact black gum-red maple basin swamp. This is a central property in the furthering of a wildlife corridor linking the conserved lands of Red Hill with the Squam Range.

Brown Point Conservation Area. This donated easement on 2.25 acres in Moultonborough has 200 feet of shoreline on Big Squam Lake and preserves open space for the scenic enjoyment of the general public. The shoreline of this property drops into a marsh area which provides a unique habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Protection of this property from development is of great environmental and visual benefit to the public. We are grateful to Allan and Judy Fulkerson for their foresight, generosity and abiding conservation ethic

Second Star Island. This 1,000 square foot island is a testament to the old saying, “Great things come in small packages”. Made up primarily of large boulders with a mix of white birch, white pine, cherry and alder, the fee donation of Second Star Island protects valuable loon-nesting habitat. We thank Sandy and Louise McGinnes for their generosity and for helping to protect another critical wildlife feature in the Squam watershed.

Damon Family for the donation of a conservation easement highlighted by 150 feet of shoreline on Big Squam Lake, acres of wetland including ecologically important vernal pools. The property is adjacent to the Chamberlain Reynolds Forest and is in the southern portion of the Squam basin.

MEETING DATES

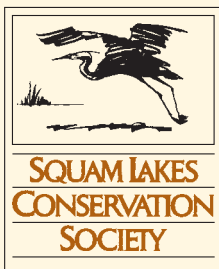
Landowners Workshop	May 23rd June 13th July 11th
Swim for Squam	August 7th
Annual Meeting	August 16th

SLCS Intern

We are pleased to welcome Madeline McElaney to our team as our new intern. This six month long internship is the result of the partnership between SLCS and the Plymouth State University’s Center for the Environment. Madeline will work 20 hours a week assisting SLCS in all aspects of our daily operations both in the office and in the field. Her experience with SLCS will earn her college credits toward her graduate degree in Environmental Science and Policy.



In addition to being a graduate student, Madeline works part time as Education and Membership Coordinator for the Plymouth Area Renewable Energy Initiative. Madeline, an avid rock climber and hiker, lives in Plymouth with her husband, Patrick, and cat, Zeus.



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Squam
BIOBLITZ
June 6-7, 2008



Friday, June 6th – Saturday, June 7th
3:00 pm – 3:00 pm

New this year, we are joining forces with the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center and the Squam Lakes Association to launch a 24-hour bio-inventory of the Squam Range to begin June 6 at 3:00 PM. Interested parties are invited to become 'citizen scientists' and work side-by-side with experts to identify as many different living things as possible in a 24-hour period. This event is designed to increase the public's awareness of the diversity of life in our own neighborhood. The event, headquartered at the Science Center in Holderness, will start Friday evening with teams counting through the night recording owls, bats, moths, amphibians, crickets, etc. At dawn on Saturday there will be songbird surveys and later teams will continue looking for trees, plants, mammals, and many other forms of life (down to microscopic molds and fungus). At the end of the day there will be a wrap-up event to share stories and make a provisional tally of the biodiversity of Squam. Go to www.nhnature.org for details.