

great places in the granite state

lasting action for

fall mountain

Rarely in conservation do you get a chance to protect an entire watershed. Rarer still when the watershed is in excellent condition, has abundant wildlife habitat and holds a globally rare plant.

That's why The Nature Conservancy is excited about a remarkable conservation opportunity at Fall Mountain. Rising sharply from the Connecticut River in North Walpole, Fall Mountain has a long, shallow bowl near its 1,056-foot summit. Within the bowl is a series of beaver flowages, including ponds and wetlands that harbor a federally endangered plant, Northeastern bulrush (*scirpus ancistrochaetus*).

Long identified as a conservation priority by the Conservancy, efforts to protect Fall Mountain are taking a giant step forward. The Conservancy is finalizing an agreement with New England Power Company (NEPCO) to purchase 950 acres on Fall Mountain, including the entire watershed of the mountaintop and three populations of Northeastern bulrush. The Conservancy is raising funds to purchase the property,

and hopes to close the deal before the end of this year.

Meanwhile, the Conservancy has preliminary agreement with state officials to transfer the property — once protected — to the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands as a new state forest. Under this scenario, the Conservancy would hold a conservation easement that would ensure sound forest management practices to protect the Northeastern bulrush and other sensitive ecological features.

"This is a terrific opportunity to achieve multiple conservation goals," says Daryl Burtnett, state director of The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire. "We've got a remarkable chance to protect three populations of a federally endangered plant and their entire watershed. We've also got the opportunity to work with the N.H. Division of Forests and Lands in establishing a state forest, where the project's primary goal is to protect biodiversity."

George Bald, Commissioner of the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), has supported the project

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earning the trust

The Nature Conservancy and the broader land trust community are founded on the premise that our work is for, and deserves the trust of the general public. Recently, that trust has been called into question. Whether we agree with the intimations and characterizations or not, the questions have prompted unprecedented scrutiny of our work, and prompted reasonable and responsible action by the Conservancy. We intend to do our jobs even better, and we hope that the lessons learned and practices established will benefit other conservation groups as well.

At TNC the fuel that drives us is the urgency and rightness of our mission. To have our integrity questioned has been hard on staff, trustees and supporters. We knew that our motives were good and our results unparalleled, but the accusations had real impact nonetheless.

At a recent meeting I listened to an outside speaker characterize the Conservancy's dealing with these issues as a "zero tolerance crisis." Our track record has been so successful and so reliable that even the appearance of conflict, or the hint of questionable motives is seen as unacceptable. TNC is a large organization that operates in a vast variety of landscapes. Our talented staff and volunteers strive to innovate in pursuit of a singular mission, yet we

reflect a broad spectrum of local values. To navigate the opportunities and challenges of conservation in landscapes as different as a New Hampshire estuary and Montana's grasslands, all within a zero tolerance culture, is a complex endeavor. The speaker emphasized that we "earned this crisis," and that we owe it to ourselves and others to rise to the opportunities it creates.

We've learned the importance of establishing the most robust processes possible, and must invite scrutiny from within and without. An outstanding independent panel assembled by the Conservancy's Board of Governors has issued far-reaching recommendations on governance, risk management, transparency and accountability. The Conservancy is already implementing the panel's recommendations and the results will benefit not only TNC, but potentially nonprofits of all kinds. For more information on the Governance Advisory Panel, visit www.nature.org.

Meanwhile, we're still striving to preserve nature using every ounce of our creativity.

Daryl Burtnett, State Director



people make it happen: a sweet gift for conservation

Cy and Bobbie Sweet have never been to the Galapagos Islands or to Mexico's Maya Forest. But they know the impact that a leveraged gift can have on conservation, and were recently motivated by one called "The Wilson Challenge."

Cy Sweet is a New Hampshire Chapter trustee, retired Air Force colonel, and, with his wife Bobbie, a longtime resident of New Castle. They've been generous supporters of the Conservancy's efforts in New Hampshire, particularly Great Bay, where they recently aimed a significant pledge.

At TNC's annual meeting in Costa Rica, the Sweets were impressed by TNC's emphasis on protecting irreplaceable places abroad, while still working on critical projects at home. They were also intrigued by Robert Wilson's challenge.

In 1998, TNC member Robert Wilson of New York established a challenge fund to stimulate cross-boundary fundraising efforts in the U.S. and



Cy and Bobbie Sweet. *Daryl Burtnett photo © TNC*

abroad. The Wilson Challenge promotes efforts by one TNC program to raise money for another. Qualifying gifts are matched 1:1 or 1:2. Matching funds go to the donor's home state.

After hearing and meeting Wilson in Costa Rica, NH State Director Daryl Burtnett asked the Sweets if they'd consider redirecting their Great Bay pledge toward TNC's international efforts, with the resulting Wilson Challenge funds designated to the

chapter's work at Great Bay. The Sweets indicated they would, ultimately supporting TNC's conservation of the Galapagos Archipelago and Mexico's Maya Forest.

"We were inspired by Bob Wilson's enthusiasm and passion for giving in his lifetime, inspiring others to do likewise and seeing the results of his work," Cy said.

You too can be a leader for conservation. Contact Tiffany McKenna, director of philanthropy, 603/224-5853, ext. 15, or tmckenna@tnc.org.



Debbie Callahan is the Chapter's new associate director of philanthropy.

new perspectives

Welcome to Debbie Callahan, the New Hampshire Chapter's new associate director of philanthropy. Debbie worked for Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston for six years, the last four of which was as director of the medical school's \$1.6 million annual fund. While there, Debbie received her certificate in Environmental Community Studies from Tufts University. It's been a dream of hers to live in New Hampshire and work for a conservation organization. Since early February, Debbie has gotten off to a great start by getting to know the people, terrain and scope of our conservation work here. She looks forward to helping raise funds for the Conservancy's conservation efforts at Fall Mountain.

with gratitude ...

To the **Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation** for a grant to help the Conservancy provide public access, recreation and education at the Lubberland Creek Preserve in Newmarket. The Foundation is a regional division of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. To learn more about the Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation, call 603/430-9182.

To the **Anna B. Stearns Charitable Foundation's** generous grant to support our protection, stewardship, education and outreach efforts in the Mount Washington Valley and Northern Forest.

And to **Sandra and Brian Parker of Nottingham**, for answering the "wish list" call in our last newsletter and donating two sea kayaks for the Great Bay Program.

with your support

Working together, we can ensure the diversity of life on Earth and enrich the quality of life in New Hampshire now and for future generations!

You can make a significant impact by helping us preserve and steward land now, which will improve the quality of life on earth for you, your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren by considering ...

- A life-income gift that provides you and/or your loved ones with a stream of income-generating funds for your retirement of helping to meet your current financial needs.
- Putting The Nature Conservancy in your will.
- Gifts of Stock or Mutual Funds.
- A gift of land.
- Volunteering.
- Introducing us to others.

And a gift of cash is always greatly appreciated.

For more information, contact Tiffany McKenna, director of philanthropy, at 603/224-5853, ext 15.

In nature, there are
neither rewards or
punishments— there are
consequences.

Robert G. Ingersoll



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the connecticut river: TNC's new 4-state effort

While The Nature Conservancy for many years has protected critical places along the Connecticut River, now there's a new emphasis on conservation strategies along the whole river and its vast watershed.

The Conservancy has launched a Connecticut River Conservation Program and has hired Kim Lutz, a veteran TNC river conservation planner, to head the effort.

"There are some really big challenges ahead," Lutz said. "We'll be busy completing a conservation plan that will identify those challenges, along with strategies for meeting them."

Lutz, who started as Connecticut River Program director in December, has worked for the Conservancy since 1989 when she helped protect land in Texas. In Georgia in the 1990s, she organized coastal conservation initiatives and later

directed TNC's effort to protect the Savannah River Basin. While there, Lutz forged an innovative partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and 21 other federal, state and local organizations to develop sustainable flows for the river. Lutz now directs TNC's Connecticut



The Connecticut River (seen here from Walpole) is now a special initiative of the Conservancy. *Eric Aldrich photo © TNC.*

River program from Northampton, Mass.

"I really believe in the Conservancy's conservation process," she said. "We've already launched that conservation planning process here for the Connecticut River." Lutz is referring to TNC's 5 S process: identifying ecological **Systems**; the **Stresses** and their **Sources**; **Strategies** to reduce stresses; and developing measures of **Success**.

So far, much of that has involved listening to experts from many organizations and agencies in the watershed. Those partners have been crucial to the Connecticut River's conservation success to date and will help advance the Conservancy's goals in the future.

She'll also help existing TNC projects, such as efforts with the Army Corps to manage water flows on Vermont's West River and New Hampshire's Ashuelot River.

"We've recognized the critical importance that landscapes and nature tell us in how to organize our work," said Daryl Burtnett, TNC's state director in New Hampshire. "This initiative involves crossing state boundaries to do great land and water conservation."

Making the program possible are generous grants from Northeast Utilities and other private donors.

retiring roads, restoring forests at vickie bunnell preserve

The Conservancy is starting the second phase of a project to restore forests and streams along former logging roads on its Vickie Bunnell Preserve in Columbia and Stratford. The roads were built in the 1990s by the former landowner for timber operations.

"What we'll be doing here over the next year or so is removing bridges and culverts, preventing erosion, and restoring vegetation and water courses to a more natural state like the areas around these roads," said Peter Benson, manager of the Conservancy's Northern New Hampshire Program. "Retiring roads will accomplish TNC's goal of providing a natural and less fragmented landscape on large preserves like the Vickie Bunnell tract."

The first phase began in November, when contractors removed two bridges and three culverts from the Gore Brook watershed. They also stabilized stream-banks and improved stream flow.



Removing bridges at TNC's Vickie Bunnell Preserve. *Peter Benson photo © TNC.*

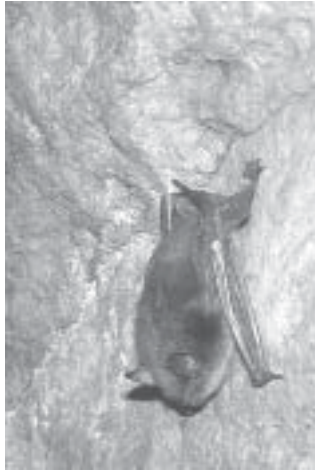
This year the Conservancy will focus on retiring roads in other parts of the 11,000-acre preserve. Some of these roads are very steep, climb to high elevations, and have little erosion control. They threaten to degrade water quality from silt and sediment and have numerous safety hazards.

The project is supported in part by a grant from Sweet Water Trust, which is also supporting TNC's road retirement projects in Maine and Vermont

The Connecticut River has:

- TNC preserves at both ends (Fourth Connecticut Lake in New Hampshire and Griswold Point, where the river meets Long Island Sound in Connecticut). Other preserves in between.
- 410 miles of mainstem river flow through towns, cities, farms and forests.
- 38 major tributaries, totaling more than 20,000 miles of streams in the watershed.
- An amazing diversity of species in its watershed, including 59 species of mammals, 250 birds, 22 reptiles, 23 amphibians, 142 fish, 1,500 invertebrates, and 3,000 plants.
- A watershed that covers 11,000 square miles, New England's largest river basin.

checking on new hampshire's largest bat hibernaculum



Little brown bat

It's dark, treacherous and full of bats — the perfect place for TNC Stewardship Ecologist Jeff Lougee. The avid rock climber was key in this winter's mission to check bats at Mascot Mine in Gorham.

Working with Fish and Game, Lougee helped coordinate the complicated task of gathering experts and monitoring the old lead mine's wintering bat population. The last comprehensive inspection was in 1993. This winter they counted 1,579 bats, nearly the same number as last time, and likely some of the same individual bats.



The bat team in Mascot Mine: (L-R) Scott Reynolds of Northeast Ecological Services, Maury McKinney of International Mountain Climbing School, Jeff Lougee of The Nature Conservancy.

Photos by Maury McKinney.

The gated mine is owned by the N.H. Fish and Game Department, with a conservation easement held by TNC. "For bats in New Hampshire, this is *the* site," Lougee said. "And this is a good one because it's protected and there's little disturbance during the winter, a time when any disturbance can exhaust their energy and raise the risk of mortality."



Part of the central Powwow River's extensive complexes Atlantic White cedar are now protected by the Conservancy. *Eric Aldrich photo © TNC.*

Field Trip:

GREAT BAY'S GREAT BIRDS

Monday, May 17

Join Conservancy staff and bird expert Steve Mirick for a birding tour of Great Bay. This is a good chance to see some of Great Bay's remarkable birds — from raptors to waterfowl — and learn why TNC and partners are protecting their habitats. For details, call 603/224-5853.

powwow river ecosystem gets additional protection

The Conservancy has recently protected an additional 77 acres along the Powwow River in Kingston, including a large basin of globally rare Atlantic white cedar and some of New Hampshire's best streamside wetland ecosystems.

The success came in two recent deals. In one, the Conservancy purchased 50 acres from Peter and Marilyn Coon, including more than 3,000 feet of Powwow River

frontage, exemplary streamside wetlands and nearly all of a large Atlantic white cedar basin swamp. In the other, Ken and Carol Briggs donated a conservation easement to an adjoining 27 acres.

Last January, the Conservancy, the town of Kingston, N.H. Fish and Game Department and Friends of Kingston Open Space combined efforts to protect 123 acres of uplands that had once been eyed by

developers. That piece, owned by the town of Kingston with the Conservancy holding a conservation easement, is across the river from the newly protected lands.

The Conservancy still needs to raise an additional \$212,200 to complete this effort. To find out how you can help, contact Tiffany McKenna, director of philanthropy in New Hampshire: 603/224-5853, ext. 15, or tmckenna@tnc.org.

Fall Mountain, continued from page 1

from the start. “We are very pleased that a nonprofit conservation organization would come to the state and offer us the property,” Bald said. “The Nature Conservancy is clearly comfortable with our ability to manage this property well.”

“This property is a perfect opportunity to apply the stewardship standards we apply to all of our state lands: protecting biological diversity, production of timber, outdoor recreation, and the protection of scenic and cultural resources,” said Philip Bryce, director of the N.H. Division of Forests and Lands in DRED. “This project will protect a unique piece of land for the benefit of the state and local communities”

a power facility?

The property, which straddles the towns of Charlestown and Langdon, was at one time eyed as a possible power generation facility. NEPCO, owned by National Grid USA, bought the property in the 1960s and '70s for a possible pumped storage hydroelectric generation facility.

(Northeast Utilities owns such a facility along the Connecticut River in Northfield, Mass.). Although the power facility later proved economically unfeasible, NEPCO kept the land and managed it for forestry. Had the plans ever materialized, significant changes in the basin's natural hydrological regime would have damaged or wiped out the Northeastern bulrush populations.

After Fall Mountain had emerged as a conservation priority by TNC, Conservancy staff contacted NEPCO about the possibility of protecting the tract. At the time, NEPCO wasn't interested.

Things changed when electric deregulation came along in the 1990s. Under deregulation, NEPCO was required to sell its non-power-generating assets at fair market value and return the value to ratepayers. In April 2002, NEPCO officials contacted the Conservancy about selling the property.

Although the process was slow — two years in the works — the outcome looks good.

a special set of conditions

One person who knows Fall Mountain well is Susi von Oettingen. She's a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has monitored Northeastern bulrush on Fall Mountain for many years.

The wetlands at Fall Mountain support three of New

Hampshire's eight known populations of Northeastern bulrush. The Fall Mountain tract includes the largest and best-ranked occurrence in the state.

“What's really important about this project is that it's an opportunity to protect this plant in a whole watershed,” von Oettingen said. “And it's the plant's only site in New Hampshire that would be fully protected.”

Because Northeastern bulrush “requires such a special set of conditions” for it to thrive, protection of its habitat is an important part of its recovery, she said.

If the Fall Mountain tract is not protected, several scenarios potentially threaten its special natural resources, such as land conversion, residential development, liquidation timber harvesting and changes in the wetland ecosystem's natural hydrology.

continued public access

The project will ensure continued public access for traditional low-impact uses on the property, including hiking, hunting, fishing, nature observation and snowmobiling on existing trails. In addition, students from nearby Fall Mountain Regional High School will be able to continue using the land for athletic training, natural science projects and maple syrup production.

“As conservation professionals and natural resource managers, we need to continue to explore how biodiversity conservation can interface with recreational activities and the working landscape,” said Mark Zankel, director of conservation for The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire. “Our Fall Mountain partnership with the state offers a great chance to advance these issues, while conserving one of the state's real gems.”

Over the past year, the Conservancy has

helped assemble the multi-agency Fall Mountain Technical Committee, which has developed sustainable forest management guidelines designed to balance the property's ecological and economic values.

The Nature Conservancy, which is leading fundraising efforts to protect Fall Mountain, has so far secured three grants: two \$175,000 grants from the N.H. Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, and one \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Conservancy seeks to raise an additional \$444,400 to complete the project.

At a glance: Northeastern bulrush

Scientific name: *Scirpus ancistrochaetus*

Taxonomic group: sedge

Discovered as a species: 1962 by A.E. Schuyler

Status: Globally rare, federally endangered

Occurrences: About 100 populations from Virginia to New Hampshire and Vermont

Protection status: Most populations on private lands. The Fall Mountain populations are New Hampshire's best in condition and would be the first in the state on protected land.



Eric Aldrich photo © TNC

- THIRTEENTH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING -

CONSERVING THE CONNECTICUT RIVER: *Rich Past, Bright Future*

SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 2004

On the banks of the mighty Connecticut River at the Student Conservation Association, North Charlestown, N.H.

OPTIONAL FIELD TRIPS

I. CANOE/KAYAK THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Join New Hampshire State Director Daryl Burnett and TNC's Connecticut River Program Director Kim Lutz for a brief tour of the river. You'll get a unique perspective of New England's longest river and learn about some of the many conservation initiatives happening in four states. Bring your own canoe or kayak and (mandatory) life jackets. Departs from the boat ramp at the Student Conservation Association. We'll help load/unload your boat.

II. FALL MOUNTAIN, LANGDON

1:30 - 4:30 p.m. or shorter trip, 1:30 to 3 p.m. Join Conservancy staffers Eric Aldrich, Peter Benson and Mark Zankel for a tour of the New Hampshire chapter's new and exciting conservation effort: protecting 950 acres on Fall Mountain in Charlestown and Langdon, including habitat for federally endangered Northeastern bulrush. Hike starts near Fall Mountain Regional High School, 10 minutes from annual meeting

site at SCA. First part of hike ascends dirt road to North Pond; optional second part involves some off-trail hiking.

III. ASHUELOT RIVER, MARLOW TO SURRY

1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Director of Conservation Science Doug Bechtel leads this driving and easy walking tour of the upper Ashuelot River, outlining conservation initiatives by TNC and its partners. Stops include a dam site and gorge in Marlow, a beautiful stretch of river and bird habitat in Surry, and the Army Corps of Engineers dam in Surry.

IV. TNC'S WARWICK PRESERVE, WESTMORELAND

1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Preserve Steward Krista Helmboldt leads this hiking tour of the Conservancy's Warwick Preserve in Westmoreland, 20 minutes from the annual meeting site at SCA. Many wildflowers, high rock outcrops, uneven terrain.



SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

RESERVATION FORM - NH CHAPTER 2004 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Reservation Deadline: May 14, 2004

Cost: \$25 per person. Price includes meeting, lunch and field trip.

Number of people attending: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Daytime phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

\$25 per person. Children 10 and under free.

Amount enclosed \$ _____

(please make check payable to *The Nature Conservancy*)

FIELD TRIP CHOICE:

- I. Canoe/Kayak Connecticut River
- II. Fall Mountain Hike
- III. Ashuelot River Drive/Walk Tour
- IV. Warwick Preserve Hike
- Will not attend a field trip on June 5th

- I cannot attend the meeting, but here is my gift of \$ _____.

Please return to **The Nature Conservancy, 22 Bridge Street, 4th Floor, Concord, NH 03301**

Pre-registration is required for all.

Directions and confirmation will be mailed upon receipt of your registration.

For additional information call 603/224-5853.

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The Nature Conservancy is a global, non-profit conservation organization. The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

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Please join us for The Nature Conservancy's 13th Annual Meeting

CONSERVING THE
CONNECTICUT RIVER:

*rich past,
bright future*

SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 2004

Lora Gerard photo © The Nature Conservancy

ON THE BANKS OF THE MIGHTY CONNECTICUT RIVER AT
THE STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
NORTH CHARLESTOWN, N.H.

AGENDA:

9:30 a.m.
Registration

10 a.m.
Meeting begins
Election of Trustees
State Director's Report

11:15 a.m.
Keynote Speaker: Walter Wetherell, editor
of *This American River* and author of
The River Trilogy (*Vermont River*,
Upland Stream, and *One River More*)

12:00 p.m.
Lunch

1:30 p.m.
Field trips begin
(see page 7 for optional field trips)