

INTO THE WOODS

NEW ENGLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION | WINTER 2016

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Dear Members and Friends,

Over the last two years, I've been traveling throughout western Maine with Alec Giffen, NEFF's Senior Advisor and former Maine State Forester. We never miss the chance to drive Route 17, so we can stop and enjoy the viewing area at the Height of Land. From there, we look north over a vast landscape of big sparkling lakes and high mountain peaks retreating into the distance, and Alec reminds me, once again, the reason behind the trips: "This is a world-class ecosystem. It's comparable to other great American mountain regions and a globally important bird habitat, and yet people just don't know that this is up here. We have to tell them and ask them to help us protect it."

Now, thanks to your support, we have the chance.

Working with local communities and conservation partners, we have launched a landscape-scale effort to protect the Mountains of the Dawn, a region named in honor of the People of the Dawn, the Abenaki people of the northeast. We've worked with four other conservation organizations, The Trust for Public Land, Forest Society of Maine, the Appalachian Mountain Club, and the High Peaks Alliance to articulate the values of the region and its global and local importance, as described in a new brochure and an in-depth ecological report. Now we have an opportunity to conserve three mountain parcels totaling 10,000 acres, including forest adjacent to the economic driver of the Rangeley Lakes region—Saddleback Mountain Ski Area.

Saddleback did not open in 2015, which meant hundreds of jobs were lost. As of November 21st, when this newsletter is going to press, the owners of Saddleback want to sell the resort and the surrounding forestland. If conservation groups purchase and protect the 3,249 acres of forestland, it could provide a spark that might help re-open Saddleback Mountain. In partnership with The Trust for Public Land, NEFF is working to conserve this forestland while demonstrating how land conservation and forestry can act as a catalyst to revitalize a local economy.

During a press conference in Portland, Maine in October, we announced our readiness and ability to help shape this project. The conference generated excitement and buzz around the conservation opportunity and the potential reopening of the ski area, with news outlets throughout New England covering the story, including Maine Public Radio, the Portland Press Herald, and the Boston Globe.

It is your continued support that gives us confidence that we can raise the funding needed to make this project, and others like it, a success. For updates regarding this and other land conservation efforts, please visit our website, newenglandforestry.org.

This newsletter includes stories that provide windows into different aspects of our work—views from the Mountains of the Dawn region; a look at how and why NEFF manages forestland; and a glance into days in the field with NEFF's Land Protection Manager, Betsy Cook. We hope these stories inspire you to learn more, so that we can continue to show you how we are using exemplary forestry and conservation to support the many benefits of working forests and the communities that rely on them.

Robert Perschel
Executive Director

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Thank you for your continued support!

We hope you will consider NEFF in your year-end giving. Every donation is important to New England's forests.



NEFF's headquarters on Prouty Woods in Littleton, MA. Winter 2015.

MOUNTAINS OF THE DAWN

WRITING BY Charlie Reinertsen

The first rays of sunlight creep over dark fir tree silhouettes, burning off the morning mist and illuminating surrounding mountain peaks and scree fields in a rosy alpine glow. A tense group huddles together on the edge of a clearing, watching, waiting, and trying to stay still. It is a silent morning, and the rustling grass is as loud and jarring as a stampede.



Jerry Monkman

A haunting sound—something between a gut-wrenching cry and an eerie moan—escapes from the group and cuts through the woods. Even after the wail stops, the sound reverberates and hangs in the air. Roger Lambert, guide and moose caller extraordinaire, lowers his hands and listens. In the distance, a bull moose approaches, grunting with every step.

This is not a scene from the Rocky Mountains—it is from Maine, in the heart of the Mountains of the Dawn—the largest unfragmented forestland east of the Mississippi. Stretching 160 miles and covering five million acres from the Mahoosuc Range to the summit of Katahdin in Baxter State Park, this globally significant region supports a diversity of wildlife as well as a vital

tourism and hunting industry that many Mainers, including Roger Lambert, love and depend on in order to make a living.

When it comes to guiding, Lambert has a soft spot for the 1,000 pound, gangly swamp donkeys. Home to an estimated 76,000 moose, Maine supports the highest moose population in the lower 48 states. During the fall, Lambert guides photo tours and hunting excursions in the heart of the Mountains of the Dawn region, using his expertly crafted cow moose call to attract bulls. Over the years, he has collected many awe-inspiring stories that highlight the unique characteristics of this region.

On one of his many trips, Lambert stumbled upon an event that has only been documented a handful of times:

a moose supercell. The term, recently coined by ecologists studying the phenomenon, is a massive gathering of moose. While moose often congregate in small groups, a supercell is a gathering of over 15 individuals. Lambert and his group estimated that during this trip, they were in the presence of 60 moose, all within sight or hearing. While the reason behind these gatherings is currently unknown, the requirements are clear: a sprawling, robust habitat, and a healthy moose population.

Moose prefer diverse topography; large, connected areas; and a wide array of forest types—all of which define the Mountains of the Dawn. These same landscape features make the region crucially important for more than just moose. The Mountains of the Dawn is



We were in the presence of 60 moose at the same time, at the same place.
I've never heard of that happening anywhere in the lower 48 states!
—ROGER LAMBERT, MASTER MAINE GUIDE

Charlie Reinertsen



Charlie Reinertsen

In a time of change and instability in the Mountains of the Dawn, there is also opportunity. New England Forestry Foundation is working with local communities and conservation organizations to ensure that the Mountains of the Dawn landscape remains productive and connected for generations to come.

home to 139 rare plants and animals, providing core habitat for iconic wildlife like lynx, moose, loon, marten, and brook trout. The region has also been identified as critical habitat for 34 songbird species, and will become increasingly important as a wildlife corridor in the face of climate change.

Without careful stewardship and exemplary forestry practices, shifting land ownership and economic drivers could result in the loss of productive, forested habitat throughout this region.

These changes have the potential to impact landscape use, wildlife habitat, forestry practices, and public access on private lands—all of which will determine the benefits of the landscape for Mainers and visitors alike.

In a time of uncertainty and change for this region, there is also opportunity. New England Forestry Foundation is working with local communities and conservation organizations to pursue land conservation projects totaling 10,000 acres in the Mountains of the

Dawn that will help educate landowners about their land management options. These forestlands will provide opportunities to demonstrate exemplary forestry and help to ensure that this landscape remains forested, productive and connected for generations to come, defined by unique moments like a supercell, or the wail of a moose call. 🌿

To learn more about this initiative, visit newenglandforestry.org/learn/initiatives/mountains-of-the-dawn/



Every conservation project starts with a story. Conservation efforts are ignited by stories of experiences, wildlife encounters, and day-to-day accounts of what it is like to live or exist in a particular place. At the heart of these stories are meaningful connections between people and places. Sharing these stories invites people to develop their own connection to a place.

Dick Matthews' essay *River Watchers* provides a window into life on the edge of the Sandy River, a 73-mile tributary of the Kennebec River. Its headwaters are nestled in the heart of the Mountains of the Dawn (see page 3). We hope you enjoy Matthews' essay and connection to a place that he and his wife call home.

RIVER WATCHERS

WRITING BY Richard Matthews

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Charlie Reinertsen

Here in Phillips, the Sandy River runs through the center of town, and since September when we moved into a house just above its banks, Pam and I have become river watchers. Almost the first thing we do each morning is look out our windows to check the state of the rapids that boil along in back of our house. Over time, the river has become part of our morning routine: we build up the fire in the woodstove, pour ourselves coffee, and sit by the big windows in what we call our river room to watch the Sandy tumble by. When finally we turn to the day's tasks, we check the river less faithfully, but we seldom pass by a window without giving it a glance, and if it changes, we're the first in the neighborhood to know.

As Maine rivers go, ours bears a rather bland name. In a state with waterways given monikers such as Kennebeck,

Sebasticook, Mattawamkeag, and Androscoggin, the Sandy was undistinguished in its christening. But what it lacks in exotic syllables, it makes up for in character and mood.

When during heavy rains its waters rise, the Sandy rushes along with force enough to click stones together and it's always fun to visit its banks after levels drop a bit and discover newly built bars of pebbles or sand. A tree trunk blocking a channel between dump truck-size boulders (kayakers call these obstacles "strainers") will stick around a day or two, then—with the next rise of water—disappear to snag up again on another rocky reach downstream.

Normally a well-behaved river, the Sandy can get its back up pretty quickly and we've seen it try to invade our back yard. We're high enough above the

river that it doesn't threaten the house, though from the noise the stream makes at night it's easy to imagine it coming through the windows. It changes color, too, reflecting the hue of the sky: a cloudy day gives the river a sinister tinge, while a blue sky lends it gaiety, its rapids becoming a tumbling white froth. Mornings are often best, though: then, in the early light with the mist rising from its gray surface, the silvered river seems like some dim memory of another time, an ancient course of water streaming through another age, another life.

Now I don't want to make too much of this. While there is something elemental about a river and ours does have a certain lively animus, it is, after all, just a river. It's not too much to say, however, that the Sandy's moods play a part in shaping ours. At Pittsfield in Massachusetts where Melville lived for a time, the view outside his study window at Arrowhead of looming Mount Graylock is said (if only by the docents conducting the tours) to resemble a profile of his famous white whale. Rearing up on our river bank below the house is a huge boulder shaped vaguely like a leviathan that I've dubbed Moby Rock. This is no mere literary conceit. Something there is about the river that makes me want to connect it with a fundamental force, a force similar to what I feel when Melville tells me of brooding oceans and Ahab's smoldering fury.

But there I go again. My principle relationship with Moby Rock is much more mundane than mystical. I go down to the water and sit upon it, checking out the rapids and rocks and listening to the Sandy's restless music. Being a high perch, the top of Moby Rock allows me to study the benchmarks my mind has picked out to tell me the mood of the river—or at least its level—and I can set a watch for the mink I've seen along the water's edge, so far

glimpsed only from the windows of the river room. Or I wander downstream along the Sandy's banks looking for flotsam, checking out the quieter pools, or testing the briskness of the water with my bare feet—an experiment entirely suspended when the nighttime temperatures began dropping.

As I'm apt to do with objects in nature, both animate and inanimate, I've begun

forming a personal relationship with the river. To date, Pam and I have only lived on the Sandy's banks for three months, so we're barely past the early stages of awkward acquaintance, yet I feel we and the stream are already edging toward friendship. And though I don't know for sure what the river makes of my daily proximity to its busy purposes and noisy progress, I've enjoyed the companionability it's so far extended. 🌿



Richard Matthews writes from his home on the Sandy River in Phillips, Maine. A freelance journalist, he is the author of *Notes from an Innkeeper's Journal*, and co-author of *Hell is So Green*.

ANATOMY OF A TIMB

NEFF owns 141 Community Forests with over 26,000 acres across New England, practicing sustainable forestry and demonstrating current silvicultural techniques. Our Community Forests serve as hands-on classrooms where other forest landowners can learn tools and techniques to practice sustainable forestry on their own lands. Winter is the ideal season for logging, when frozen ground resists erosion and tire ruts. This is NEFF's busiest harvest season. We've created this birds-eye-view of a typical NEFF timber harvest in an effort to share our forest activities with you.

As always, if you have questions about NEFF's forestry practices or would like a tour of one of NEFF's current or recent harvests near you, please contact our Director of Forest Stewardship, Chris Pryor: 978.952.6856 ext. 107 cpryor@newenglandforestry.org

Management Plan

NEFF provides overarching forest management goals and objectives to a local consulting forester, who uses them to write a management plan including silvicultural recommendations if appropriate.

NEFF uses the **harvesting method** best suited to the terrain, products being harvested, and silvicultural prescription on each individual site.

Harvest

Using the management plan, the forester selects trees to be harvested and supervises the logger throughout the operation.

Slash, the tops and limbs left behind after a harvest, plays a critical role by returning nutrients to the soil and providing habitat to insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and small mammals.

Loggers use **harvesters** to harvest trees, remove limbs, and cut trees into specific lengths depending on the quality of the tree and the desired product.

Buffer Strips, undisturbed or lightly harvested areas, slow down and filter surface water runoff.

Forwarders carry logs, and **Skidders** drag logs to the landing via **Skid Trails**. Using a forwarder can result in less damage to the soil and remaining trees.

Stream Crossings maintain water flow while allowing forwarders to cross streams, and are removed after the harvest is complete.

ER HARVEST

Wildlife Trees are left unharvested due to their high value as wildlife habitat. They could include: trees with obvious nests, woodpecker holes, cavities for hibernation, significant decay, or large old trees.



Proceeds

NEFF's proceeds from timber sales return to New England's forests, helping support our mission to conserve forests for future generations.



Products

Forest products contribute sustainable materials to New England homes and businesses, creating local jobs along the way.



Mills

Different species and parts of trees are sent to the appropriate mill for processing. NEFF strives to use as much of the tree as possible.

Landing

Trees are sorted into stacks by species and/or product and transported to mills using log trucks.



BENEFITS OF FORESTRY



Well-managed forests provide habitat for a wide variety of native wildlife. Some wildlife species depend on older, undisturbed forests, while others require young forests.



Forests slow surface runoff, reduce soil erosion, mitigate flooding, and capture water in above and underground reserves.



New England's forest products industry contributes over 30 thousand jobs and roughly four billion dollars to the region's economy.



Forest products are sustainable alternatives to steel and concrete. Tall wood buildings provide climate benefits. Learn more at builditwithwood.org.



All of NEFF's Community Forests are open to the public. After harvests, landings often become parking areas and skid trails can be adapted to hiking trails.

RAMBLINGS FROM THE WOODS

WRITING BY Betsy Cook

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Betsy Cook and Carson Hauck

I often find it hard to answer the simple question, “So, what do you do?” I can answer with my job title or with NEFF's mission, but a part of the story is still missing. So much of what I do and so much of what motivates me at NEFF comes from small moments with forest landowners. So, in an effort to really answer the question, I offer you a few excerpts from my days with landowners in the woods.





Beaver lodge. Shirley, MA



Smokey House Center, Danby, VT



Shirley, MA

It's sunny and a bit warm for January. As I walk towards the old farmhouse, a big Bernese Mountain Dog runs up to me with the eagerness of someone who knows it's time for an adventure. "That's Baxter", greets the landowner, "he's ready to go!" As we head inside to fuel up on coffee, we discuss the conservation easement the landowner's family donated to NEFF on 175 acres of woodland just beyond the farmhouse. The land has been in the family for almost 100 years, and the donated easement protects the property forever while still allowing the family to own and manage the land.

As we strap on our boots to head out into the snow, the conversation is full of stories of the landowner's childhood growing up on the trails that we're walking. We pass a barn built using wood from the property—wood that the landowner and his family milled right here on site. We ramble on, Baxter in the lead, toward a beaver dam and talk about how much, and then how little, the property has changed over the landowner's lifetime. Tales about the land and Baxter's wandering nose weave us back to the farmhouse. I say goodbye until next year, and as I climb back into my car, I feel grateful that this is what I do.



Smokey House Center, VT

"We're too early for strawberries", I lament to my co-workers as we watch the sunrise over Dorset Peak. As it turns out, there would be little more to complain about on our trip to the Smokey House Center, a non-profit in Vermont committed to maintaining a working landscape that promotes sustainable agricultural and forestry practices. It's a quintessential Vermont day as we make our way around the 4,000 acres of conserved farm and forestland. We buy some raw milk from the dairy farm on the property and then head over to a recent timber harvest. We spend half of our day deep in the woods and the other half trekking around freshly planted fields.

As the day wraps up, we find ourselves caught behind a school bus picking up students after a full day of educational programs on the property. The kids, complete with a healthy amount of dirt on their clothes, are all smiles. Their connection to this land is just budding today and will clearly continue to grow.

How could the next day compete with such a perfect one? Lucky for us, it did its best by bringing a litter of ten small piglets, Vermont maple syrup from a conserved sugar bush, and the most delicious Maple Creemee I've ever tasted. Every day is an adventure.



Bethlehem, NH

As I stand at the end of the trail looking out towards Franconia Ridge, I realize I am back where it all started. Almost ten years ago, I spent my summers working up on that ridge and developing a deep connection to those mountains, to that place. Those summers are the reason that I do what I do at NEFF, and they are the reason that I work not only to protect land, but to protect people's connections to the land.

Now, I find myself standing next to landowners who have a deep connection to their own place. They have thoughtfully managed and stewarded the forest for decades. They have made countless batches of homemade cider from these apple trees. They have hiked these trails with their children, and then their grandchildren; and they have shared their passion for the land with so many people.

I feel honored to have the chance to play a small role in ensuring that this land, and their relationship to it, is protected forever. As I stand there, looking up towards Franconia Ridge, I feel that I've come full circle. 🌿

Betsy Cook works with landowners interested in conserving their land, managing all stages of land protection projects alongside Whitney Beals, NEFF's Director of Land Protection. She also oversees the stewardship of NEFF's existing conservation easements.

OUR DONORS

MAY 1, 2016 – OCTOBER 31, 2016

Generous support from the individuals and organizations listed below has allowed us to continue and expand our efforts to conserve the forest landscape and the environmental, social, and economic benefits it supports. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and are vital to our success. While we have listed gifts of \$100 or more, we want you to know that every gift is important to us and helps us fulfill our mission.

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Your support has helped NEFF to conserve 1.2 million acres of forestland and to continue its innovative work to advance conservation and exemplary forestry throughout New England. NEFF supporters include people who have given every year for more than 50 years. Legacy giving can allow your support to extend even farther, while providing tax or other benefits to you or your loved ones. There are many giving options available and NEFF staff can help you identify the option that will best assist you in meeting your financial goals while helping to conserve forestland for future generations.

Over the last 24 months, NEFF has developed a new conservation option for landowners interested in legacy giving, the Pooled Timber Income Fund (PTIF). The PTIF enables New England landowners to conserve their woodland while receiving lifetime income, as well as tax benefits. Participation in the PTIF would guarantee that a donor's woodlands would be protected and managed to NEFF's exemplary forestry standards. Not only will the forests be protected, but so too are the multiple benefits of clean water, clean air, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and wood product manufacturing.

NEFF's staff is happy to talk through your options for planned giving and land management and answer any questions. Contact us today to start the discussion and create a legacy. Please call Penny Flynn for more information:

978.952.6856 ext. 101
pflynn@newenglandforestry.org





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