

# INTO THE WOODS

NEW ENGLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION | SUMMER 2018



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## Dear Members and Friends,

Last weekend I saw the largest white oak I've ever come across. It wasn't that tall or exceptionally large at the trunk but I estimated the spread of its limbs to be just short of 100 feet. Some of its lower branches bent down and ran across the ground before lifting back up and extending far, far from the trunk. This kind of spreading oak can be found across Martha's Vineyard; this exceptional one was on the Peaked Hill Reserve.

As I admired the tree, I thought about what a great setting this would be to pose an extended family for a picture, and I then immediately pictured the extended family of land conservationists that NEFF is a part of.

I would put the folks involved in creating the Wildlands and Woodlands Vision right on the trunk of the tree. They see the entire region and have a long-term vision for its protection. The spreading branches reaching and stretching in the air symbolize the amazing network of 500 land trusts that reach into every corner of New England. This newsletter's lead article touches on how two of those land trusts recently joined NEFF and other partners to protect nearly 18,000 acres of Maine coastal forests.

On the thick lower branches that touch the ground and make contact with the soil I place the state-based forestry organizations like the Forest Society of Maine and professional forestry organizations like the Forest Stewards Guild. A little farther up are the Regional Conservation Partnerships, the collaborative partnerships of groups of land trusts that work beyond individual land-trust boundaries to protect entire watersheds or regions. On page 9, you can learn about a powerful landowner outreach program we conduct with one of these groups, the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership.

On the highest branches I'll seat the regional and national conservation organizations that have a perspective that goes beyond the local and attempt to integrate our beloved region with what is happening elsewhere in the country. Trust for Public Land is a valued NEFF partner in our work in the western Maine Mountains of the Dawn, and The Nature Conservancy is currently participating in our innovative Pooled Timber Income Fund (see page 11).

Then there are the local, state, regional and federal public agencies that bring funding and policy direction. They should be sprinkled around the branches in appropriate places next to our private conservation colleagues. And wait, I can't forget the Downeast Salmon Federation—another group that's helping us protect Maine forests—and other allied conservation groups like Trout Unlimited and the American Chestnut Foundation. They each have specific interests connected to our work, so I will place them selectively in the spreading branches and foliage.

On the ground, on the roots and soil that bring forth this wonderful interwoven conservation organism, I place you—our supporters, our source from which all things grow.

That's an impressive visual display, one that compares to the amazing tree it sits upon. We are fortunate to have this unique interconnected community, and during the many meetings I participate in with these various individuals and organizations, I often offer this reminder to myself: "You are fortunate to do this work and very lucky to have a chance to be around such good people."

Let's make a pact. We will grow this tree, we will stay together and work together until the job is finished—until we can pass the landscape of New England along intact and integral and healthy to all future generations.

Robert Perschel  
Executive Director

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The white oak that inspired Executive Director Bob Perschel's letter (opposite page), photo by Anne Perschel





# DOWNEAST WOODS AND WILDLIFE

NEFF'S NEW CONSERVATION PROJECT AIMS TO PURCHASE AND PROTECT FORESTLAND IN DOWNEAST MAINE

WRITING BY Tinsley Hundsorfer

This summer, the New England Forestry Foundation will permanently protect 3,200 acres of ecologically important forestland in the wilds of Downeast Maine, the state's farthest coastal region. What wildlife species stands to benefit most from this forest conservation? Surprisingly enough, the Atlantic Salmon.

According to Dwayne Shaw of the Downeast Salmon Federation, "salmon are a forest species." Strange though it may seem, this aquatic species does indeed depend on trees. Young Atlantic Salmon need cool, clean rivers to thrive, and forests help purify and filter river water as well as provide shade that keeps water temperatures down.

The properties included in NEFF's Downeast Woods and Wildlife project are located along the Dennys River, and while a variety of factors make them a conservation priority, wildlife habitat is where they truly shine. Downeast Maine's deep forests and interlaced network of clear waterways provide ideal habitat for cold water fish including the Atlantic Salmon, which is listed as federally endangered in the Gulf of Maine.

The Downeast properties will be among the largest land parcels owned by NEFF, and their purchase also reflects an exciting shift in NEFF's conservation strategy. Over the next few years, NEFF will pursue large and select projects, mostly in the region's northern forests.

Purchasing larger forestlands will allow NEFF to both address New England's ongoing loss of forest cover and show just what Exemplary Forestry—our expert approach to sustainable forest management—can do when practiced at scale. This will open up new avenues to advance Exemplary Forestry and promote it to private landowners.

NEFF is ready to take this next step in its land conservation work, and Downeast Maine is the perfect place to start.



## Land Protection With an Outsize Impact

The impact of NEFF's protection of 3,200 Downeast acres will carry far beyond property lines. The Dennys parcels connect to other conserved land—including the 335,000 acres protected by NEFF through the Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership—and add to the largest conserved landscape in Maine and New Brunswick, with more than 1 million total acres protected. The Downeast Woods and Wildlife project is also essential to the conservation of one of four landscapes identified as the Northeast's most resilient, according to analyses by The Nature Conservancy and Doris Duke Foundation.

With the addition of this new acreage, fully 20 percent of the 84,000-acre Dennys River watershed will be protected, with NEFF responsible for more than 6,400 acres of that conserved land.

There's good news for the Dennys River in particular, too. With the addition of this new acreage, fully 20 percent of the 84,000-acre Dennys River watershed will be protected, with NEFF responsible for more than 6,400 acres of that conserved land. NEFF protected half of these acres via easement in 2005, and will protect the rest through our current project.

These connections to larger protected landscapes will directly influence how NEFF manages the Dennys properties. Our forestry plans are tailored to specific properties and their surroundings, so while NEFF would directly control about 3,200 acres at Dennys River, our management efforts would support and interact with the larger conserved landscape. When developing strategies for protecting and improving wildlife habitat, we would similarly take adjacent forests and the larger landscape's ecosystems into account.

## The Downeast Conservation Community

NEFF's Downeast Woods and Wildlife project has benefited greatly from strong partnerships with other organizations at work in the region. The Downeast Salmon Federation has helped with several aspects of the project, as they are one of the go-to habitat experts for the Dennys watershed, while a unique collaboration has led to NEFF's acquisition of a particular Dennys property called Venture Brook.

This May, The Conservation Fund purchased Venture Brook and two other Downeast forest parcels—totaling 18,000 acres—with the intention of eventually conveying them to local land conservation organizations. NEFF, The Nature Conservancy, and

Blue Hill Heritage Trust have each committed to a parcel, and without the participation of all these partners the project could not have moved forward.

The Conservation Fund's temporary ownership is providing the organizations with time and opportunity to secure funding for their respective properties. This collaborative conservation process has also brought together a partnership committed to protecting Maine coastal forests that includes the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Downeast Salmon Federation in addition to the groups that are purchasing property.

NEFF will carry this collaborative spirit into the management of Venture Brook by working with the local community to balance recreational opportunities—the property has an established and popular snowmobile trail, among other things—with the activities of a sustainable working forest and the habitat needs of local wildlife. In addition to possessing habitat that supports salmon and other fish species, Venture Brook is also home to vital White-tailed Deer wintering habitat.



## Investing in New England Land Protection

NEFF will obtain the funds to purchase the Downeast properties through private fundraising. NEFF's ownership of these lands will mean the revenues from their natural capital, i.e. timber, will cycle back into conservation. Every acre NEFF can bring into its ownership drives more of the region's natural revenue back into protecting the region itself.

This cycle, or Conservation Flywheel, is a compounding investment in protecting New England that spins off more land protection, year after year, decade after decade. 🌿

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If you would like to speak with NEFF staff about our Downeast Woods and Wildlife land protection effort and how you can help achieve these conservation goals, please contact Penny Flynn at [pflynn@newenglandforestry.org](mailto:pflynn@newenglandforestry.org) or 978-952-6856 x101.



## Downeast Salmon Federation at Work in Dennys River

The Downeast Salmon Federation's team of biologists engages in a wide range of activities to ensure endangered Atlantic Salmon and other native fisheries are recovered in eastern Maine rivers. In the Dennys River watershed, they are currently assessing the health and function of several waterways in order to design habitat restoration projects and conduct baseline studies in partnership with government agencies, other scientists, and organizations like NEFF.

DSF operates two innovative salmon conservation hatcheries on the nearby East Machias and Pleasant Rivers, and is designing a streamside conservation hatchery for the Dennys River watershed. These hatcheries raise river-specific juvenile Atlantic Salmon to help restore populations, which means salmon from the proposed Dennys hatchery may one day make use of riparian habitat along NEFF's properties.

The Downeast Salmon Federation was formed in 1982 by the Dennys River Sportsman's Club and other angling and conservation organizations to help conserve and restore Atlantic salmon in the rivers of eastern Maine. DSF is now recognized as a leader in New England in sea-run fisheries co-management, and has a broad focus on habitat protection and restoration of sea-run fisheries.

FEATURED COMMUNITY FOREST

# ROCKY POND COMMUNITY F

WRITING BY Hazel Stark

## LOCATION

Boylston, MA 

## SIZE

201 acres 

## AMENITIES

Trails 

Water Access 

Feature of Interest 

Located along the border of Boylston and Northborough, Mass., Rocky Pond Community Forest offers a trail through a forest of white pine, mixed oak and other hardwoods and along the shore of Rocky Pond that is just over a mile and a half long, with parking lots on either side. This makes the location an ideal spot for a short hike that includes water and forest views and an interesting diversity of rocks, big and small.

These waterbirds are commonly spotted on ponds and lakes in eastern and central Massachusetts:



Canada Goose



Wood Duck



# OREST

Carson Hauck

New England Forestry Foundation acquired parcels for this property over the course of 21 years, starting in 1980 with a 161.2-acre donation from Gertrude E. Falby. Over the course of the following two decades, NEFF's Rocky Pond property grew to 201 acres. This acquisition of multiple parcels was part of an important goal of NEFF's to offer an accessible and attractive property to the public.

Large rocks left behind by the glaciers, called glacial erratics, are one of the prime points of interest at Rocky Pond. Covered in a diversity of lichens such as the large leaf-like rock tripe, these massive rocks scattered in the forest, on the shore, and in Rocky Pond itself suggest a variety of ideal spots for a picnic, a solitary wildlife-viewing station, or simply a photo-opp. In addition to these glacial erratics, there is an appealing boulder field and several classic New England stone walls scattered throughout the forest. Visitors with an appreciation for rocks, water, or forests are sure to find something captivating at Rocky Pond Community Forest.

About once every ten to fifteen years, NEFF facilitates a harvest on a portion of Rocky Pond Community Forest. The 2018 harvest will demonstrate NEFF's exemplary forestry practices by promoting regeneration of native species well-

Large rocks left behind by the glaciers, called glacial erratics, are one of the prime points of interest at Rocky Pond.

suited to the site and providing wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities while also growing high quality timber resources. The harvest itself will focus primarily on thinning low quality hardwoods, salvaging timber damaged in recent ice storms, and selecting for mature sawtimber. Given that very little young forest habitat currently exists at Rocky Pond, this harvest will not only demonstrate the commercial value of sustainable forestry management without damaging the character of Rocky Pond, but also enhance wildlife habitat diversity.

Historically, this rural region of Massachusetts has been focused on farming and forestry practices. As housing developments have increased, however, Rocky Pond Community Forest has continued to offer an important and welcoming year-round retreat for outdoor enthusiasts that will maintain the historical use and natural wonders of this particular spot for generations to come. 🌿

## VISIT ROCKY POND

Visiting NEFF Community Forests like Rocky Pond has never been easier. With our online Forest Finder Tool, you can navigate right to the trailhead using your mobile device. Go to [newenglandforestry.org/explore/explore-our-forests](http://newenglandforestry.org/explore/explore-our-forests), click on the forest you want to explore, and click "Get Directions." See you on the trail!



Hooded Merganser

Gadwall

Mallard

# KEEPING CLIMATE IN MIND

WRITING BY Lisa Hayden



NEFF is helping local landowners prepare their woods for climate change.

Walking in their Woodstock, Conn., woods on a balmy January afternoon, Bet Zimmerman Smith and her husband Patrick were talking with a forester about the wildlife that visits their land—everything from bobcats to bluebirds—and how to create habitats for them. Looking up to the maple branches arcing above their heads, consulting forester Eric Hansen pointed out the tree was already putting forth red buds, and yet winter was far from over.

“It was a fantastic experience. We learned so much,” said Bet of the free, two-hour forester visit they received in 2016 through the MassConn Woods partnership. “Eric offered useful tips on how to prepare for the changing climate, and how to best attract wildlife.”

Thanks to a new USDA Forest Service grant, New England Forestry Foundation and partners will continue to offer science-based forestry advice to private woodland owners. The Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS) will train professional foresters to work with landowners to assess climate change vulnerability and incorporate climate-informed practices into their forest management.

Early bud break is just one of the many changes landowners and managers are noticing in our New

England woods, and temperature and rainfall patterns are another. For example, annual precipitation has increased 3-6 inches in southern New England, causing more frequent flooding and erosion as streams overflow their banks and overwhelm culverts. Average annual temperatures are projected to increase 5 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century, and with a longer growing season, more extremely hot days and variable summer rain, droughts may also become more frequent.

Following their visit, the Smiths were left with a “Considerations for Your Woodlot” Checklist of suggested practices for their unique site—a 30-acre property they affectionately dubbed “The Fen.” They are applying for federal “cost-share” to control invasive plants, many of which do



Lisa Hayden

Bet Smith & Eric Hansen Forester visit Woodstock, CT.

well with warmer temperatures. When trees are already stressed by bugs or disease, changing climate conditions such as drought can gang up on them and make it harder for them to recover.

“One of our biggest challenges is managing invasive plants, since the property had been untouched for four decades,” said Bet. She also mentioned that in addition to winged euonymus (burning bush), multiflora rose, and “the dreaded tick-infested Japanese barberry,” Eric also spotted some other invasives that she and her husband hadn’t: Japanese stiltgrass and glossy buckthorn.

While many states and cities are working on climate change adaptation to reduce costly damages from extreme weather and storms, the NEFF grant-funded outreach focuses at the hyper-local, privately owned parcel level.

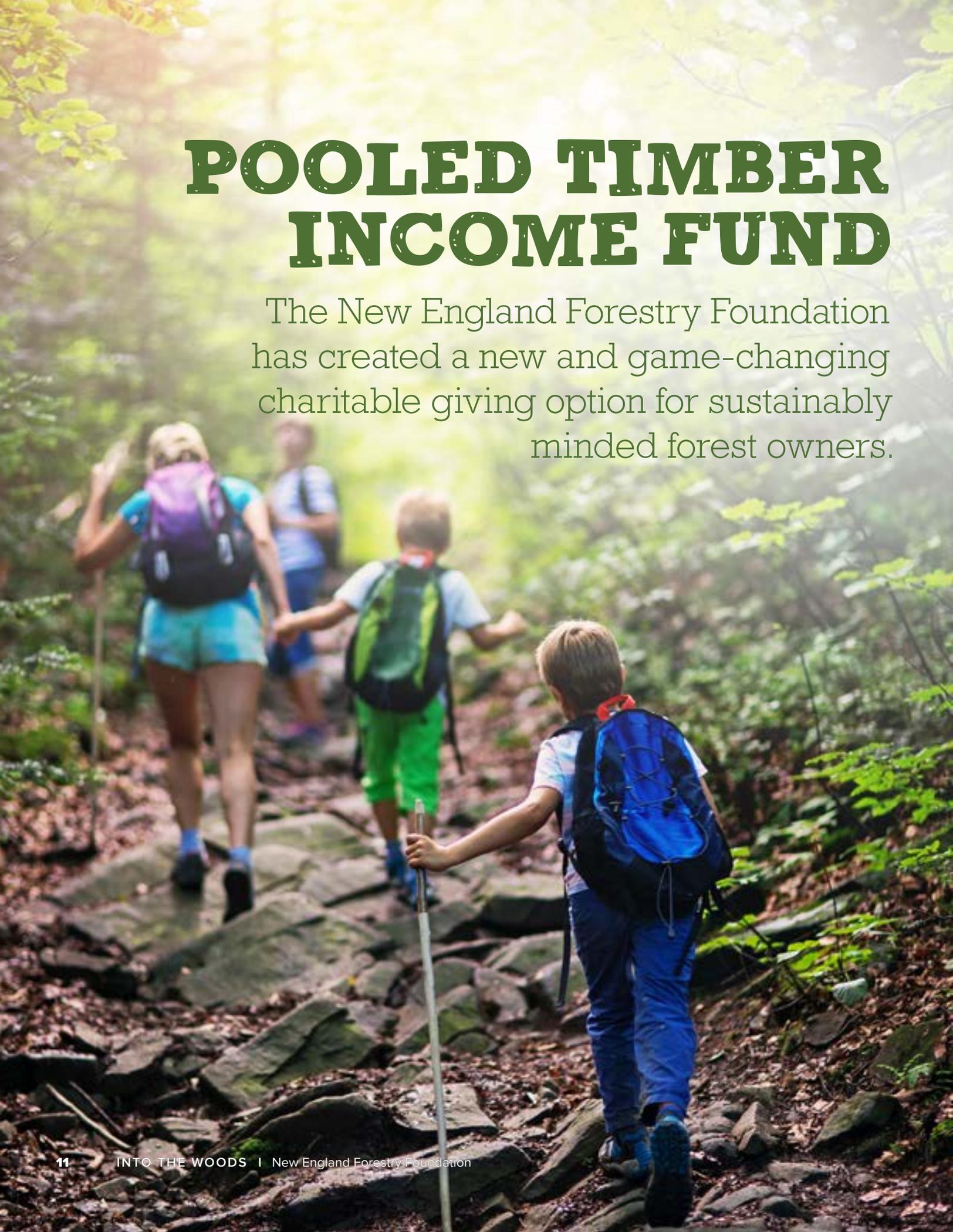
While many states and cities are working on climate change adaptation to reduce costly damages from extreme weather and storms, the NEFF grant-funded outreach focuses at the hyper-local, privately owned parcel level.

“It was so straightforward and simple,” said Chris Kueffner, who had a free Checklist visit to his wooded property in Mansfield, Conn., where he proceeded to work with the forester on a management plan. “I did not need to fill out elaborate numbered forms with

unfathomable questions or vocabulary. It was simply, ‘Here’s my little patch of forest, how can we best enhance it?’”

The climate-adaptation assessment is also appropriate for already conserved lands. Opacum Land Trust took advantage of the free forester climate consultation for its 140-acre former farm in Southbridge and Dudley, Mass.

One recommendation was to reduce the number of hemlocks, which suffer from the woolly adelgid insects, and to promote a diversity of trees. With changing conditions, it’s best to have a variety of native tree species present, so eventual “winners” can adapt and thrive. Opacum has completed invasive plant treatment on patches of 12 acres, as well as a 40-acre timber harvest to diversify both the ages and types of tree species at the site. 🌿

A group of four hikers, including a woman and three children, are seen from behind as they hike on a rocky trail through a lush forest. They are wearing backpacks and using trekking poles. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a bright, dappled light effect.

# POOLED TIMBER INCOME FUND

The New England Forestry Foundation has created a new and game-changing charitable giving option for sustainably minded forest owners.

Called the Pooled Timber Income Fund (PTIF), it not only offers landowners the opportunity to permanently protect their forests while receiving lifetime income and tax benefits, but also expands the use of exemplary forestry practices and opens up more forests for the public to enjoy.

After years of research, brainstorming and meticulous planning, we're excited to fully unveil the Pooled Timber Income Fund and provide an in-depth look at a giving tool that will ultimately help maintain New England's forested heritage.

According to Harvard Forest, New England has lost an average of 35 acres of forest to development every day since 1985. This has led to a decline in forests across all six New England states and has reduced carbon sequestration in New England forests by 90 percent compared to pre-1980 levels. These severe losses have led to a race to find solutions that help protect our forests, and the New England Forestry Foundation is helping to lead the charge.

These concerning statistics have motivated NEFF to not only conserve larger parcels of forestland (see page 3), but to also come up with additional options for private landowners who are considering permanent protection for their land. The Pooled Timber Income Fund, our most recent concept, is modeled on the traditional pooled income fund, which allows donors to contribute cash or other assets to a charity. The charity then invests the assets, and the income after expenses is distributed to the donors until their death, at which point the assets belong to the charity.

Donors receive both a charitable tax deduction at the time of the initial donation and lifetime income.

Surprisingly, no other land trusts or conservation organizations have created a pooled income fund tailored to landowners, and so NEFF has taken on the challenge by applying the concept to land and timber rather than cash or other traditional assets.

## How It Works

For a Pooled Timber Income Fund, landowners donate their land to NEFF, and the timber on that land to a pooled income fund set up and run by NEFF. Landowners receive shares in the fund proportional to the value of their timber donation. The fund manages the timber in accordance with NEFF's green-certified, exemplary forestry practices. This type of forestry balances income generation with the long-term health of forests. As with the traditional pooled income fund, donors receive both an initial charitable tax deduction and lifetime income.



After expenses, the timber income is paid out to the beneficiaries—in most cases the land donors or their children—on an annual basis proportional to the shares held. Shares cannot be sold or transferred other than to successor beneficiaries named at the time of the donation.

Because timber is harvested in most years from one or more of the pooled properties, each member of the fund receives a more even stream of funding than they would if they managed their own land. There is also a reduced risk of loss from weather, insects, or other hazards, and reduced risk regarding timber prices due to the greater diversity of timber types and stand ages likely to be present in the fund.

On the death of the landowner's beneficiaries, the landowner's shares are transferred to NEFF. Over time, NEFF may extinguish shares to move timber rights out of the fund. The associated lands at that time would merge back with the woodlands in NEFF's portfolio of Community Forests, the more than 140 properties across New England that NEFF owns and manages for the benefit of all New Englanders.

PTIF participants' gift of forestlands carries far into the future: These permanently protected Community Forests will provide things like wildlife habitat and sustainably harvested wood for centuries to come, and because they are also free and open to the public, local residents of all ages can visit them to enjoy and explore the natural world.

## A PTIF Partnership

At the launch of the PTIF, both the New England Forestry Foundation and The Nature Conservancy are leasing timber to the fund. The Nature Conservancy's leased timber comes from two properties in Massachusetts, the Bartholomew Farm and McElwain-Olsen Preserves, that include almost 300 acres of forestland. The Nature Conservancy will exclusively use its PTIF income

to further the organization's land conservation and stewardship work.

The New England Forestry Foundation forest management on Bartholomew and McElwain-Olsen is an opportunity to demonstrate how conservation and good forestry can work hand in hand. Both preserves were conserved by The Nature Conservancy for their ecological values, including limestone ledges and an important cold-water stream. On pre-

harvest preserve walks, conservation staff will show how exemplary forestry will consider these and other ecological values, including forest carbon.

"We have more landowners in New England interested in conserving their forests than we have funding and tools to help them do it," said Laura Marx, Forest Ecologist for The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts. "We are excited to



Shawn P. Carey (Migration Productions)

## McElwain-Olsen Preserve

📍 Arthur Pease Road, Middlefield, MA

🌳 62 acres

📄 Open to the public; no trails

Perched on an east-facing slope in the southeastern corner of the Berkshire Mountains, this striking preserve features a picturesque hemlock ravine, diverse forest ecosystems, and a portion of Glendale Brook.

The preserve was once farmed and pastured like much of western Massachusetts, and supports a diverse community of plants and animals including deer, Barred Owl, Ruffed Grouse, and American Black Bear. It is home to a beech forest studded with white pine and hemlock trees; a red maple swamp; and mixed deciduous forest. The ravine that descends into Glendale Brook is covered in mature hemlock forest and is made quite scenic by the mosses, ferns, and wildflowers that paint the preserve in color. NEFF's forestry will promote the growth of some of the healthiest trees on the preserve, and jump-start missing features including larger-diameter trees and downed wood.

work with the New England Forestry Foundation as they launch this new tool and to inspire others by demonstrating how it works.” 

To learn more about participating in the Pooled Timber Income Fund, contact Sophie Traficonte at **978-952-6856 x122** or visit [newenglandforestry.org/support/ptif](http://newenglandforestry.org/support/ptif).

## Bartholomew Farm Preserve

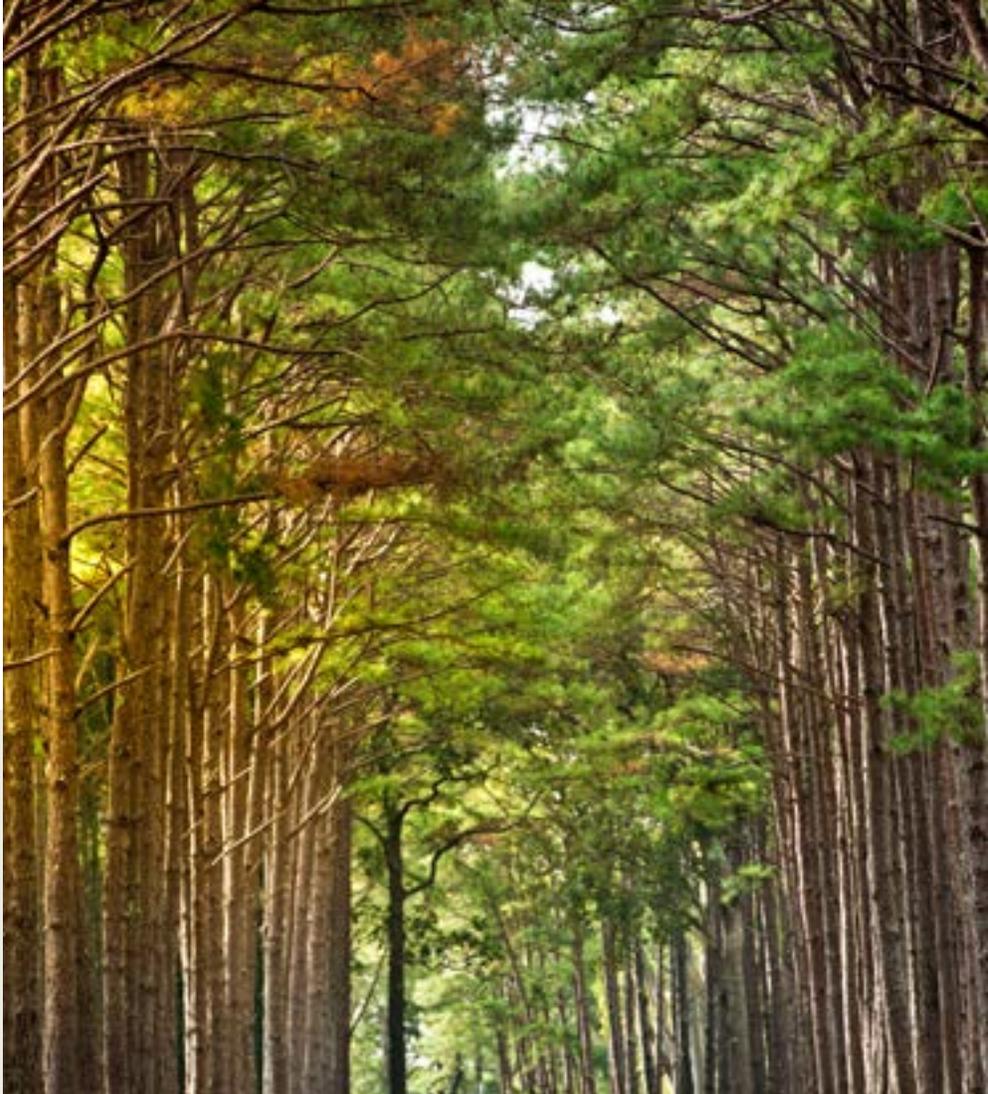
 Sheffield, MA, on both the east and west sides of Route 41

 424 acres

 Open to the public; passive recreation and hunting encouraged

Bartholomew Farm Preserve is part of a larger network of Nature Conservancy lands called the Schenob Brook Preserve that protects a calcareous wetland in Sheffield. This type of wetland is extremely rare for Massachusetts, and the preserve has long been recognized as an important ecological site due to its concentration of rare species.

The Bartholomew Farm Preserve includes hayfields, hundreds of acres of northern hardwood forest, and a stunning calcareous cliff ledge along its informal trail network. NEFF will do a careful timber harvest on the forested portion of the Preserve, leaving an area to the west as untouched forest reserve. Both areas may be measured over time to better understand the ways forest reserves and carefully managed forests can continue to store increasing amounts of forest carbon.



## Thank You!

Generous support from individuals and organizations has allowed NEFF to continue and expand its efforts to conserve the forested New England landscape and the environmental, social, and economic benefits it provides.

Your contributions are greatly appreciated and are vital to our ongoing success. Visit [newenglandforestry.org](http://newenglandforestry.org) and click the donate button, or return the enclosed envelope to make a donation today.

Every gift is important to us and helps us fulfill our mission. Thank you for your help in conserving New England's forests for future generations.



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Photo by Charlie Reinertsen.