



Walking on the Wild Side with NORTHEAST WILDERNESS TRUST

Working to preserve and restore forever-wild landscapes for wildlife and people.

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Split Rock Wildway, New York



From left to right, Jamie Phillips, Peter Snoad, NWT Board Member Tim Burke, and John Davis at Hemlock Rock Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Split Rock Wildway is an ambitious effort led by local citizens and a group of conservation organizations to protect wildlife habitat linking the publicly owned Split Rock Wild Forest along Lake Champlain with the foothills and High Peaks of the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. While roughly half of the Adirondack Park is public land protected as forever-wild, the ecologically rich lowlands of the Champlain Valley are the least protected in the Park. Northeast Wilderness Trust recently preserved two key parcels in the Split Rock Wildway: Hemlock Rock and Beaver Falls (see page 4).

Hemlock Rock Wildlife Sanctuary

In December 2003, John Davis donated a conservation easement to the Northeast Wilderness Trust on his property known as Hemlock Rock Wildlife Sanctuary, which is located in the Split Rock Wildway. "John Davis is one of those truly iconoclastic Americans, cut from the philosophical cloth of Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Rachel Carson and David Brower—devoted to the wild and its preservation by a nearly spiritual compulsion," writes Dan Imhoff in the book *Farming with the Wild*. John is a writer, editor and avid outdoorsman who conceived of and has been instrumental in the protection of the Split Rock Wildway.

John has always had a strong connection to the Adirondacks because of the landscape, its model for forever-wild conservation, and its great recovery over the past century. In the book *Wilderness Comes Home: Rewilding the Northeast*, John wrote "The Adirondacks offer perhaps this country's greatest examples of land severely damaged by nineteenth-century logging but now has restored to wilderness condition. Full recovery takes centuries, if not millennia...but if we let it be, land will heal."

Hemlock Rock Wildlife Sanctuary, a 54 acre forested parcel, is contiguous with and near several other protected natural areas including the Nature Conservancy's Coon Mountain Preserve. The land contains ponds, streams, wetlands, fens, a rare orchid, and forested swamps. John shares his land with otter, mink, fisher, beaver, bear, migratory song birds, reptiles, and amphibians.

Ecologist Marc Lapin noted in an ecological assessment of Hemlock Rock that "the conservation of forests, like those on Hemlock Rock, that are allowed to function per a natural dynamics regime is rare in the Champlain Valley and providing spaces for the expression of variations in natural communities has and will continue to be a challenge in the Champlain Valley."

Thank you John!

*"To save every cog and wheel
is the first precaution of
intelligent tinkering."*

– Aldo Leopold, *Round River*, 1953

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Northeast Wilderness Trust
is a 501(c)3, membership
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Northeast Wilderness Trust
is a regional land trust
working to preserve and
restore forever-wild
landscapes for wildlife and
people in New York,
Vermont, New Hampshire,
Maine, Massachusetts and
Connecticut. Please contact
us to learn how you can
preserve your land or
become a member today.



Summer 2004

From the President & Executive Director

It is hard to believe that only three years ago some land trust practitioners and wilderness advocates first met to discuss the idea of creating a land trust to focus primarily on wilderness preservation. Today, Northeast Wilderness Trust is led by an energetic and diverse board of directors, staffed by an experienced full-time executive director, guided by solid policies and strategic plans, and known region-wide.



*Rick Van de Poll on top of
Wapack Ridge, NH.*

As founders, our first step was to explore whether there is a niche for a wilderness land trust. Today, based on the response from a variety of conservation organizations and land owners, the answer is clear—absolutely. Northeast Wilderness Trust is providing land owners with the option of preserving their land as forever-wild and what we are finding is that many landowners have been looking for this option.

This past year has been tremendous for Northeast Wilderness Trust. We preserved land in Vermont and New York and are currently working on saving other wild areas in these states and in Maine and New Hampshire. We truly enjoyed our celebratory party with some of our members and Bill McKibben, author and Northeast Wilderness Trust advisor, in Newton, Massachusetts in May 2004 and look forward to seeing members at future Northeast Wilderness Trust events, such as our annual meeting and hike in the Split Rock Wildway in New York on October 23.

Thank you to our members and donors for your strong support of our efforts to restore and preserve forever-wild landscapes for wildlife and people. Your participation enables us to translate our vision of a wild Northeast into reality.

Across this diverse and magnificent region, plants, animals and humans need wild places to thrive and enjoy. If you know of a special place you want to help preserve, please contact our office directly. We look forward to hearing from you and continuing to work with you towards leaving a wild legacy for future generations of all species.

Thank you,

Rick Van de Poll, President

Kathleen H. Fitzgerald, Director

Celebrating Success

Northeast Wilderness Trust celebrated its conservation successes with members and Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*, *Hope, Human and Wild*, and *Enough*, in Newton, MA in May. McKibben read from his forthcoming book and talked about wilderness recovery in the Northeast. Thank you to Bill (center), and hosts Carolyn Fine Friedman (left), friend of NWT, and Merloyd Ludington (right), NWT board member.



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Conservation Success

Vermont Land Preserved for Scientific Study

“To the men of science, the dwindling wilderness is an irreplaceable reservoir of information on natural conditions.”

– E.L. Sumner, 1942

Lester and Monique Anderson have lived and worked all over the world, but Vermont is their home. In the early 1960's the Andersons purchased three parcels of land containing approximately 700 acres at the foothills of the Green Mountains. Their land includes forest, streams, wetlands, and fields.

In December 2003, the Northeast Wilderness Trust accepted a conservation easement on one of the Andersons' properties, which contains a diversity of natural communities, including ridge-top northern hardwood-spruce forest and low-elevation northern hardwood forest. The property's rocky ledges and rich soils support a great diversity of herbaceous plants including silvery spleenwort, blue cohosh, jack-in-the-pulpit, and more. The property provides habitat for moose, deer, bear, fisher, songbirds and other wild creatures. The other two properties will be preserved as forever-wild with Northeast Wilderness Trust in the future.

The protection of land as forever-wild has long been recognized for its scientific value. As early as the 1920's

ecologists called for the protection of wilderness to ensure a baseline for scientific study.

The Andersons have long been committed to the ecological understanding of forever-wild landscapes and protecting their land for scientific study. Since 1998, a team of ecologists led by Marc Lapin has conducted annual studies on the property of mammals, birds, insects, flora, amphibians and reptiles. These studies will provide invaluable information about low elevation, forever-wild landscapes.

Notably, the Andersons' property is low-elevation. While most of Vermont's biodiversity is located in low-elevation areas, only 13% of the state's conserved land is between 600-2,000 feet.

Ecologist Marc Lapin suggests that “Typical low-elevation landscapes—those where people work and live—until recently have not been seen as priorities for conservation, nor, because of their largely disturbed nature, have they been viewed as

fertile ground for studying ecosystems and their characteristics. These low and mid elevation lands, however, are the essence of the Vermont landscape; they are the most abundant and they are, thus, the most characteristic of the region. Few areas of similar elevation in Vermont are conserved as ‘forever wild’ lands.”

Thank you Lester & Monique!



Lester Anderson

Welcome Rachel Hanish



Rachel joins Northeast Wilderness Trust as an intern for the summer. Rachel grew up in Readfield, Maine where she spends her free time hiking, kayaking, and trail riding her horses. She is a junior Natural Resources major with a concentration in Conservation Planning at the University of Vermont, participated in the Earthwatch Institute's Student Challenge Award Program, and previously interned with the Natural Resources Council of Maine. She is currently a Program Director for UVM's Living/Learning

Center “WILD” (Wilderness Is Land Defended) student program. Northeast Wilderness Trust is pleased to have Rachel's talents and skills!

Save the Date!

October 23, 2004
for
**Northeast Wilderness
Trust's Annual
Meeting & Hike.**

Come explore the
Split Rock Wildway
with the Northeast
Wilderness Trust Board
and staff.



Beaver Falls

Split Rock Wildway

The Split Rock Wildway would be but a vision without the work of Jamie Phillips. Jamie left the wilds of New York City four years ago when he fell in love with the eastern Adirondacks. Jamie is a professional photographer, but he spends all of his time now as the Director of the Eddy Foundation working to preserve wild forests, reinvigorate organic and local farms, and inspire wildlands philanthropy. Northeast Wilderness Trust is thrilled to have Jamie as a partner in the Split Rock Wildway.

© JAMIE PHILLIPS

*Beaver Falls*

In March 2004, the Northeast Wilderness Trust accepted a conservation easement on Beaver Falls, a 60 acre property owned by the Eddy Foundation and located in the Split Rock Wildway. Money from Buy Back the Dacks, a fund of the Wildlands Project, was used to support the Beaver Falls project.

Beaver Falls contains upland forest, rocky ledges, wetlands, and two tributaries that join to form Beaver Brook. Some of its hemlock trees are over 100 years old and when hiking the property you feel like you are in a truly wild place. Trails made by wildlife are abundant on the property and it is a treat to see Beaver Falls with high water in the spring.

According to ecologist Marc Lapin, "Beaver Falls' natural community diversity is a fine example of small-scale ecological diversity in the Champlain Valley. The juxtaposition of clayplain, rocky hill and wetland is very characteristic of the valley; not only do all of those occur on the parcel, there are also fine examples of forest and open wetland natural communities. Mosaics of wetland, upland, riparian area and aquatic ecosystems are known to be important for numerous animal species, and the fact that much of the forest at Beaver Falls is ecologically intact suggests that numerous species of small mammals,

birds, invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles would find the site to have appropriate breeding and non-breeding habitat. The sedge meadow is a classic beaver meadow and as such is characteristic of the natural openings in the Champlain Valley landscape."

Lapin also notes, "Small streams in the Champlain Valley are among the most highly modified ecosystems, since most have been cleared of forest to their edges, ditched, straightened and chemically altered due to the preponderance of agricultural land use. Conservation of a Champlain Valley 'natural' stream of this size that is not fully

bordered by open lands is significant in its own right."

Thank you to **Sweet Water Trust** and **Wildlife Forever** for supporting the ecological assessments on Beaver Falls and Hemlock Rock. Thank you Jamie!

Become a Member Today!

Please join Northeast Wilderness Trust's work to preserve wild Nature in the Northeast by becoming a member.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Preserver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporter | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Protector |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Guardian | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Benefactor |

Send your name, address & tax-deductible donation to:

NORTHEAST WILDERNESS TRUST
P.O. Box 406, Montpelier, VT 05602

Please make checks payable to
Northeast Wilderness Trust.



Thank you for your support!

Give the Gift that Keeps on Giving

Looking for the perfect birthday gift or anniversary present? Look no further—make a donation to the Northeast Wilderness Trust's Wildlands Philanthropy Fund. This Fund is used exclusively for land protection and is a superb way to recognize a friend, colleague, or family member. Contact us for more information at 802-253-7970

Northeast Wilderness Trust is a proud sponsor of the 6th Eastern Old Growth Forest Conference, September 2004, NH.
www.oldgrowthconference.org

In the News...

The following article, written by Kathleen Fitzgerald, appeared in the April 2004 issue of "Broadsides," the newsletter for Great Old Broads for Wilderness.

Preserving Wilderness in the East

Nancy Smith has worked in Boston for the past 15 years as a tireless advocate for wilderness preservation. She is the Executive Director of Sweet Water Trust, a foundation dedicated to protecting wild landscapes in the Northern Appalachian region. Annie Faulkner is a busy mom with two small children. In her "spare time" she is an advocate for population stabilization, woman's rights, and low-impact living. She lives in rural New Hampshire.

Merloyd Ludington is a publisher who has produced books such as *Living Down Stream* and *The Wildest Place on Earth*. Merloyd's desk is in Boston, but her heart is in the wilds of the Northeast. Kathleen Fitzgerald loves to backcountry ski, rock climb and hike. She is a naturalist by training, but you find her most often in meetings and behind computer screens strategizing on wilderness preservation.

What do these four women have in common? They are Great Old Broads, have a passion for wilderness preservation, and were instrumental in founding and crafting the Northeast Wilderness Trust (NWT), the only regional land trust focused exclusively on the protection and restoration of wilderness in the Northeast.

The northeastern states reflect an incredible story of recovery. For more than a century, this region has

been regaining wildness. Where land had been cleared, forests are returning and wildlife is rebounding. Yet, this remarkable recovery is far from complete and the Northeast's natural heritage is increasingly threatened.

There have been tremendous conservation achievements in the Northeast; however, less than three percent is protected as forever-wild. The Northeast Wilderness Trust was founded on the core belief that wilderness must become a bigger part of the conservation landscape so that wild Nature will endure in this corner of America.

"NWT's sharp focus on lands to be kept forever-wild and its activity in a distinct and precious region of the country stand out among the many groups with other missions and agendas," said Merloyd.

When asked about Wilderness, most people think of public land that is designated under the federal 1964 Wilderness Act as Wilderness. This legislation enables Wilderness designation on public lands through an act of Congress. However, because a majority of the Northeast is privately owned and cannot be deemed as Wilderness by Congress, other solutions are necessary to protect additional

wilderness. Northeast Wilderness Trust is focused on preserving private land as wilderness through conservation easements, land acquisition, and other tools.

"So few groups are doing forever-wild protection," said Annie. "NWT is going 'where few have gone before' and it's fun and interesting to be part of the team."

Wilderness is the cradle of evolution and a long-time refuge and inspiration for Americans. Please join us in our efforts to leave a wild legacy in the Northeast by becoming a member and/or contacting us about preserving your land as wild.



© RICK VAN DE POEL

Left to right: Merloyd Ludington, NWT board member; Virginia Hardnden NWT member; Kathleen Fitzgerald, NWT Executive Director, and Annie Faulkner, NWT Board member on a hike on land in New Hampshire Northeast Wilderness Trust is working to preserve.

Thank You HL Turner Group

The Northeast Wilderness Trust Board of Directors meets quarterly in Concord, New Hampshire at the HL Turner Group Office. The HL Turner Group is a professional team of architects, engineers, building scientists, and construction managers. They are nationally recognized for environmental building designs, and as an industry leader in promoting healthy buildings, sustainable design, and enhanced learning environments. Thank you HL Turner Group for hosting our meetings.



Current Initiatives

Quebec to Vermont Corridor

Northeast Wilderness Trust is working with Canadian and American partners to preserve a wildlife and recreational linkage from Quebec to Vermont. Appalachian Corridor Appalachiien (ACA), a conservation organization dedicated to protecting one of the last wilderness regions in southernmost Quebec, is a lead partner in Canada (www.apcor.ca). The ACA corridor follows the extension of the Appalachian range, encompasses the northern Green Mountains, Sutton Mountains massif, and extends north to Mount Orford. This natural corridor includes diverse forests and vegetation, and provides habitat for deep woods species such as lynx and black bears, and a rich diversity of birds.

Vermont Bear Habitat

Northeast Wilderness Trust is working to preserve black bear breeding habitat, feeding areas, and travel corridors in Vermont. One such project aims to save a critical property called Babysitter Swamp in Jericho, VT and part of the Chittenden County Uplands. Why is it critical you ask?

For nearly 28 years, tracker Susan Morse has conducted a four season track count, monitoring wildlife uses of habitat on Babysitter Swamp and the surrounding area. On this remarkable property, Susan discovered that mother bears use the old-growth trees for a safe haven for their cubs while they feed in the wetlands. These sows, with their infant cubs, return to the same old-growth trees, called “baby sitter trees,” every other year.



© SUSAN MORSE

“It is like having a supermarket—the wetlands—next to a secure and comfortable daycare center—the old-growth trees. It is perfect for them,” Susan said.

The combination of old-growth trees and rich wetlands make this property ecologically significant and it is the only place in the Chittenden County Uplands where Susan’s research has revealed bears consistently bringing their cubs for safety and spring feeding.

Northeast Wilderness Trust is working to preserve Babysitter Swamp by purchasing a conservation easement that will protect this land as forever-wild. **If you are interested in adopting an acre for \$500, please contact our office.**

Northeast Wilderness Trust is also working on other wilderness projects in **Maine, New York, Vermont and New Hampshire**. We look forward to keeping you updated at www.newildernesstrust.org and through our newsletter.

If you have a special place you want to help preserve, please contact the Northeast Wilderness Trust office directly.



© KATHLEEN FITZGERALD

Peter Miller standing by a 500 year old black gum tree in Meredith, NH.



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