



The Newsletter of the Francestown Land Trust, Inc.

Spring 2021

Water is Life

Protecting the land that protects the water is our highest priority.

Whenever the Francestown Land Trust evaluates a parcel of land for protecting, the first category in our selection criteria is “Water Quality and Quantity.” Water is the basis for life on earth—for every plant and every animal, and that includes us. So protecting the land that protects the water is our highest priority.

No one questions the need for clean drinking water. But it wasn’t until 1974 that the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was passed to oversee the quality of our nation’s drinking water. The SDWA, which has since been revised twice, first in 1986 and again in 1996, defines what constitutes a Public Water System (PWS) and directs all state regulatory activity for protecting them.

A PWS is defined as a water system that provides water for human consumption through a system of pipes to 15 or more service connections—or to an average of at least 25 persons each day for at least 60 days each year. Human consumption is defined to include not just drinking water, but also any water used for food preparation, cooking, hand washing, and bathing. All PWS are subject to state regulation, but regulations, such as frequency of testing required, vary. PWS are divided into two categories: community water systems, such as the Francestown Village Water Company, which serve year-round residences, and non-community water systems. Non-community water systems are further divided into two types, transient and non-transient. The water system for the Francestown Elementary School, would be classified as a non-transient system, because it serves a consistent group of people for more than six months per year. While the Inn at Crooked Mountain would be classified as a transient system, because it serves different people every day. At present there



The Francestown Village Water Company’s public hand pump in the center of town.

are a total of five PWS in Francestown, all relying on groundwater as their water source, as do most private wells.

Statewide, some 60 percent of New Hampshire residents rely on groundwater for their drinking water supply. Most of this groundwater is from unconfined or water table aquifers. The amount of water an aquifer can hold depends upon the porosity of material in the aquifer. In general, cracks in bedrock hold less water than the spaces between particles in “overburden,” or the subsoils and soils covering bedrock.

The permeability of any water-bearing material determines how fast water can move through the material. Whenever water is pumped from a well, it creates a current of water flowing radially toward the well and forms a cone of depression around the well. This hydrology explains why large extractions of water from a

Water *Continued on page 7*

A Walk in the Woods: Rose Mountain from Driscoll Hill Road

On social media, I notice that there are quite a few new people in Town—and that, newcomers and longtime residents alike, are interested in exploring new hikes in the area.

Over the past few years, this column has described some of the trails on our conserved land. In the Fall 2019 issue of the FLT Newsletter, I mentioned extending a Rand Brook Forest hike into a longer excursion and here I'd like to elaborate on with a few options—from a short hike to a day-long event.

A few years back, my brother lived with us while receiving cancer treatments in Boston. He filled his good days with local hikes and became intrigued with the Lyndeborough



Mount Monadnock as seen from Rose Mountain.

Mountain ridgeline, as seen from the Second NH Turnpike South and started exploring ways to access it. His favorite was a hike up Rose Mountain from Driscoll Hill Road.

Driscoll Hill Road is a Class 6 road off of Birdsall Road that crosses Brennan Brook, then climbs to the top of the hill, where a mowed field opens a view of the mountains ahead. There's a climb-able boulder for enjoying the view or having a picnic, which can serve as a destination for a short hike—and a fun outing for children.

In bygone days, Driscoll Hill Road was one of the main routes to Lyndeborough and there are a number of cellar holes along the way, including the Draper Farm and the foundation for the old schoolhouse #9 on the descent to Rand Brook.

At the brook itself, you'll find impressive stone bridge abutments, but no bridge! Depending upon the season and recent precipitation, Rand Brook may be easily crossed (or not) by wading, rock hopping, or spanning a downed tree.

Once across, the trail ascends until it intersects Russell Station Road (an alternate starting point, depending upon your appetite for adventure and time constraints).

Across Russell Station Road, the trail climbs for about two miles to the Rose Mountain summit, continuing as a double track most of the way. The first leg is about a 3/4 mile gentle climb along French Road. Turn right at the marked intersection and traverse the north side of the mountain through a recent timber harvest for 1/2 mile or so. Continue for a short climb past what we call Bed Frame Corner to another traverse, and then on to the final pitch. At this point, motorized wheel traffic has eroded the original trail and a new path to the summit leads off to your left.

The summit and some of the surrounding land are owned by the Piscataquog Land Conservancy. By wandering around on the summit you can get great views in all directions. One of the special features of the summit, among the wild blueberry bushes, is an evolving collection of stone cairns, one memorializing my brother, which people have constructed over the years.

Decision time, folks. How's your energy and water supply? The quickest route back is the way you came, but there are options to extend your hike.

The Pinnacle summit is about 1-5/8 miles away along the trail leading south from the summit, and from there to the Mountain Road trailhead in Lyndeborough is another 5/8 mile.

If you ran a shuttle, parking a car on Mountain Road, your hike is at an end. Or, you could create a loop back to Russell Station Road and Driscoll Hill by heading north on Mountain Road about 3/8 of a mile to French Road, then north on French Road about 1-3/4 miles, back to Russell Station Road.

This map from PLC might help: <https://plcnh.org/rose-mountain-preserve-trails/> The trail they call Northern Trail is the ascent I have described.

Larry Ames

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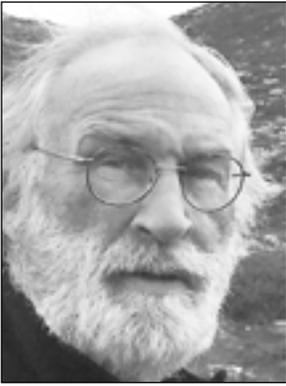
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Founded in 1986

A Letter from the Chair



April 17, 2021

Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Francestown Land Trust,

The mission of FLT is “to help preserve natural land areas significant to Francestown and provide conservation opportunities and education for area residents.” It’s a mission that we remind ourselves of regularly and that we accomplish in two ways: by holding fee ownership of land parcels and purchasing conservation easements on

land owned by others. Whenever we acquire a property or easement, we set aside a sum of money for that property’s ongoing stewardship to protect the conservation values of the property going forward.

Wikipedia defines stewardship as “an ethic that embodies the responsible planning and management of resources.” Stewardship of conserved land can take a number of forms. Primarily, it means taking on the responsibility of protecting the property from easement violations and other activity that compromises those values. Sometimes it also means restoration; for example, when some past use of a property or an invasive species has compromised wildlife habitat or other resources associated with the land.

Whenever we acquire land or an easement, we create a Baseline Documentation Report that describes existing conditions and guides our stewardship of the property. Recently, we commissioned a Forest Management Plan for Rand Brook Forest with the goal of

improving the wildlife habitat there. In completing site work for the plan, the team noted several invasive species. So, for a few weeks, volunteers, donning protective gear and armed with weed wrenches and other tools, attacked patches of barberry, bittersweet and multiflora rose. The next step will be replanting native plants in the stripped areas. This kind of habitat restoration, along with trail maintenance, bridge building, and dealing with trees that don’t respect boundaries when they fall, are all part of ongoing FLT stewardship—as is the annual monitoring of all parcels.

An essential resource that we always strive to protect is water quality, both in surface waters and aquifers. When evaluating properties, preserving water quality is our first selection guideline. Elsewhere in this newsletter, we look at the intersection of Public Water Systems, regulated by the EPA, through the State of New Hampshire, and land conservation.

Since COVID-19 (another invasive species?) continues to have high levels of community spread, we are once again adapting our schedule of Spring activities. Notably, the Joan Hanchett Lecture Series presentation has been postponed and FLT’s Annual Meeting will once again be held remotely.

Perhaps we could think of vaccination as a way to steward the health of our nation? As stewardship is now generally understood to involve taking responsibility to shepherd and safeguard things of value, it makes sense to me.

We hope you are staying healthy and finding ways to get out and enjoy our open spaces.

Thank you for your stewardship in helping to conserve vital resources.

Larry Ames, Chair of the Francestown Land Trust

Removing Invasive Species, a Team Effort

Over several work days, volunteers and Board members pulled invasive plants in Rand Brook Forest.

Right: Directors Hannah Proctor and Larry Ames remove barberry along the bank.

Bottom left: l-r Directors Hannah Proctor, Ben Haubrich, Betsy Hardwick, and volunteer Pam Avery take a short break.

Bottom right: Chair Larry Ames makes use of fallen trees to cross the brook.



FOREST BATHING Have you tried it?

To “get out of the house and keep our bodies moving” during this long year, we’ve all been hitting the trails — old-time favorites and new-found treasures, those close to home and some far afield. Our walks and hikes have provided a change of scenery, much-needed exercise, and a bit of social-distanced socializing.

Great! Don’t stop! Good for you! Keep it up!

But... if you’re consistently on the fast track, whether working on cardio or chatting away with a friend, you might want to try another way to enjoy those same trails—one that takes time to savor nature, at a deliberately slower pace.

It’s called forest bathing and it focuses on simply spending time outdoors, under trees. The point is to live in the present moment and immerse oneself in the forest; to relax and soak in the forest atmosphere through your senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch; to bask in the energy and clean air of the woods. To feel the forest deep within your soul.

In Japanese, “shinrin” means forest and “yoku” means bath. The practice was established in 1982 by Tomohide Akiyama, who as Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, thought that the people of Japan were in need of healing through nature. The idea was also part of a campaign to protect the forests: if people were encouraged to visit forests for their health, they would be more likely to want to protect and look after them. The Japanese government has remained fully vested in shinrin-yoku as a way to improve health and protect forests ever since.

How does it work?

The concept of nature therapy has ancient Asian roots, and has been integrated in many Asian healthcare practices over time as a way to reduce stress and fight chronic illness. Urban green space and having a green canopy to walk under have been linked to increasing longevity in the elderly. Plant therapy, such as the relaxing effects that the sight and smell of flowering foliage has on the body, has been shown in research to have a positive effect on health.

Dr. Qing Li, M.D., chair of the Japanese Society for Forest Medicine, and author of *Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You*

Find Health and Happiness, has researched questions, such as: Why do we feel less stressed and have more energy after “just being” in nature? What secret power do trees have that makes us healthier and happier? His work confirms what intuition and common sense have long told us: Nature is the ultimate “stress-buster.”



Dr. Li found that spending time in nature is more than a relaxing interlude for those of us who are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or fatigued, it has measurable positive effects on sleep, energy levels, immune function, and cardiovascular and metabolic health. Because stress has been shown to compromise immune function, Li speculated that forest bathing would have a beneficial effect on immune function. He looked at the effects of walking in forests and, specifically, the effects that phytoncides—the scents that trees give off—have on immune cells, stress hor-

mones, blood pressure and heart rate. He compared the mortality rates from cancer between people who live in areas with high versus low forest coverage. And he compared the effects that walking in forests versus walking on treeless city streets have on mood and mental state.

Dr. Li found that forest bathing reduces stress hormones and, consequently, blood pressure and heart rate. It increases the activity of immune cells that play an important role in defending the body against invaders. It increases the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps the body rest and recover, while reducing the activity of the sympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for the fight-or-flight response. And it reduces symptoms of anxiety, depression and fatigue. Dr. Li feels that the greatest effect comes from the phytoncides, or scents, given off by trees. These natural oils that are part of a tree’s defense system against bacteria, insects, and fungi have been shown to decrease stress hormones and help lift depression and anxiety.

Dr. Philip Barr, M.D., a physician who specializes in integrative medicine at Duke University says that forest bathing might well be considered a form of medicine; especially since the “benefits of nature can be accessed so simply.”

How do I do it?

For starters, leave your tech items (your cellphone, camera, anything distracting) behind. You can go alone or with others, but if the latter, ask that all forest bathing be done in silence, with all sharing done at the end.

Once you enter the forest, take several deep breaths and spend a few moments just observing your surroundings. You could sit quietly or walk at a leisurely pace and without a specific destination in mind. Let your mind wander and use your senses. Remember that shinrin-yoku is like a bridge; by opening your senses it closes the gap between yourself and the natural world. The goal of forest bathing is to relax and detach; the practice shouldn’t feel like a chore, it should be something you thoroughly enjoy.

To quote Dr. Li: “We all know how good being in nature can make us feel. We have known it for centuries. The sounds of the

Forest Bathing Continued on page 6

Thank you to all our previous year's Donors

The Francestown Land Trust is dependent upon, and deeply appreciative of, community support. Whether you are a Francestown resident, a neighbor in the region, or you just have a special place in your heart for our town and its wild places, we would like to express our gratitude to all who have supported us during this past year:

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* In Memory of Raymond G. Wallace

** In Memory of
Constance Clark Varnum

*** In Honor of Bob & Linda Lindgren

**** In Honor of the
Brown/Zivic Family

***** In Memory of George Cilley

Forest Bathing *Continued from page 4*

forest, the scent of the trees, the sunlight playing through the leaves, the fresh, clean air; these things give us a sense of comfort. They ease our stress and worry, help us to relax and to think more clearly. Being in nature can restore our mood, give us back our energy and vitality, refresh and rejuvenate us. Forest bathing is not an exercise, or hiking, or jogging. It is simply being in nature, connecting with it through our senses. Let your body be your guide. Listen to where it wants to take you. Follow your nose. And take your time. It doesn't matter if you don't get anywhere. You are not going anywhere. You are savoring the sounds, smells, and sights of nature and letting the forest in."

"The key to unlocking the power of the forest is in the five senses. Let nature enter through your ears, eyes, nose, mouth, hands and feet. Listen to the birds singing and the breeze rustling in the leaves of the trees. Look at the different greens of the trees and the sunlight filtering through the branches. Smell the fragrance of the forest and breathe in the natural aromatherapy of phytoncides. Taste the freshness of the air as you take deep breaths. Place your hands on the trunk of a tree. Dip your fingers or toes in a stream. Lie on the ground. Drink



in the flavor of the forest and release your sense of joy and calm. This is your sixth sense, a state of mind. Now you have connected with nature. You have crossed the bridge to happiness."

"When it comes to finding calm and relaxation, there is no one-size-fits-all solution – it differs from person to person. It is important to find a place that suits you. If you love the smell of damp soil, you will be

most relaxed where the natural landscape provides it. Then the effects of the forest will be more powerful. Maybe you have a place in the countryside that reminds you of your childhood or of happy times in the past. These places will be special to you and your connection with them will be strong."

Imagine seeing the world for the very first time.

With the popularity of forest bathing growing in the United States, the Association of Nature & Forest Therapy now certifies Guides. Melanie Choukas-Bradley, a certified Therapy Guide, reminds us that the goal is to slowwwww down and become immersed in the natural environment. Her advice is to "close your eyes and just breathe, just breathe. You'll find it takes a few minutes to clear out the clutter in your brain and tune into the natural world. When you open your eyes, imagine you're seeing the world for the very first time."

Those of us living in the greater Monadnock area are so lucky to have access to many wonderful local forests and trails just beyond the borders of our own backyards. With ample trees to walk under, if you haven't already, why not give forest bathing a try? You might find it transforming!

Hannah Proctor

Francestown Land Trust Holdings (as of 5/1/2021)

Properties owned

21 acquisitions totaling **1,209** acres

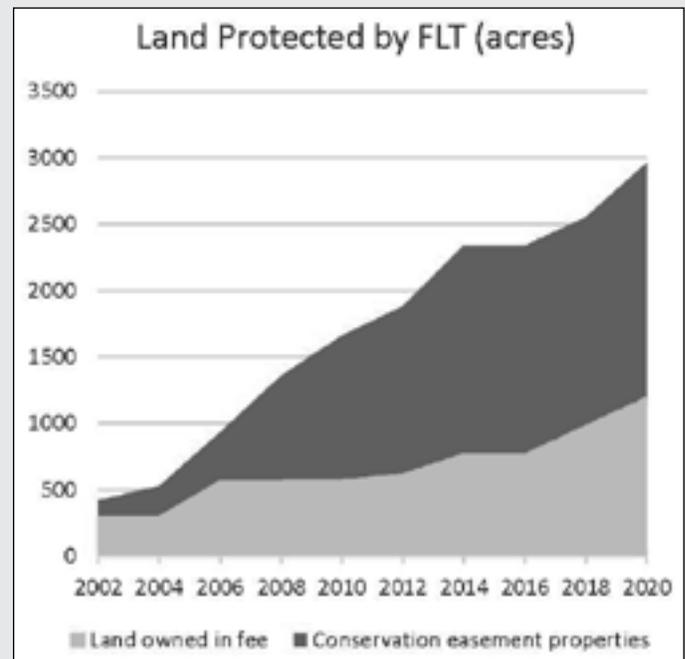
Conservation Easements

34 easements totaling **1,749** acres

Executory Interests (back-up easements)

1 executory easement of **25** acres

Currently, FLT owns properties totaling 1,209.45 acres, including the Rand Brook Forest and Schott Brennan Falls Reserve. All land owned by FLT is open for public use. In addition, FLT holds conservation easements on 34 privately owned properties, helping to protect an additional 1,748.53 acres. With one Executory Interest, FLT helps to protect a total area of 2,983.25 acres.



Water *Continued from page 1*

well can affect the water table level in the surrounding area, as well as augment the speed at which contaminants move through an aquifer. Zoning regulations, such as those defining how far away a septic system must be from a well, are designed to protect the drinking water from harmful bacteria.

Public Water Systems have similar regulations to prevent the influx of bacteria and other contaminants. The list of regulated contaminants is constantly evolving. Primary contaminants are those that can adversely affect a person's health and are the major target of the SDWA. Secondary contaminants are those that are deemed as harmless, but that can affect the taste, odor, or color of water.

Primary contaminants can be naturally occurring, such as radon and arsenic, or they may be related to human activities and land uses. The most important water quality monitoring looks for disease-causing bacteria and other microbes. The testing looks for indicator organisms that are easy to identify and always present in contaminated water. Coliform bacteria, a group of soil-based bacteria that are also found in human and animal fecal matter, are the most useful indicator of the possible presence of pathogenic (disease causing) bacteria. Typically, these bacteria enter drinking water due to improper well construction or proximity of the water source to waste water systems. Other classes of contaminants with adverse effects on human health include:

- Inorganic chemicals (IOCs), which are mostly minerals leached from rock and sediment in the aquifer, but may also be introduced through industrial waste or plumbing materials, such as lead & copper
- Nitrates/Nitrites are inorganic chemicals formed in manure piles, septic systems, and fertilized soil and are particularly dangerous for infants
- Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOCs), are solvents, degreasers, plastics, gasoline, paints, etc., that are derived or manufactured from oil
- Synthetic Organic Chemicals (SOCs) are chemicals synthesized from organic compounds and found in pesticides and herbicides. They affect the nervous system and internal organs and some

are suspected carcinogens

- Radionuclides are mostly naturally occurring and are classified as carcinogens
- Emerging Contaminants of Concern are contaminants under study by the EPA, is also responsible for setting Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) for them. A good example is PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), human-made chemicals used in a wide range of consumer and industrial products and increasingly suspected of being human carcinogens, even at very low levels. Only recently has it become possible to detect PFAS in drinking water thanks to advances in analytical methods

It is much, much less expensive and much, much better for human health to prevent contamination in the first place, than to try to treat contaminated water after the fact.

Public Water Systems are required to test for contaminants on a schedule that depends upon their classification and the number of people served. The more water that is extracted from a point source increases the radius from which the water is drawn and the probability of introducing contaminants into the system. The area immediately surrounding a well is the Sanitary Protective Radius; the larger area surrounding a well is the Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA). Keeping contaminants out of these areas is vital to preserving water quality.

That's why zoning excludes incompatible uses from WHPAs and aquifers. Creating an inventory of Potential Contamination Sources (PCSs) within WHPAs and educating the public about the importance of protecting their drinking water are also important. To assist municipalities and water companies in protecting public water supplies New Hampshire created the Groundwater Protection Act of 1991,

which establishes classes of groundwater and enables water suppliers and town boards to play a role in actively managing activities that could potentially affect groundwater quality. New Hampshire's Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) also defines model zoning and planning ordinances to protect source water and provides towns and businesses with resources for Best Management Programs for storing, containing, and transferring harmful substances. Locally, our hazardous waste day helps get rid of harmful substances that might otherwise find their way into our groundwater.

An ounce of prevention...

One of the most important lessons and principles of protecting water quality is this: It is much, much less expensive and much, much better for human health to prevent contamination in the first place, than to try to treat contaminated water after the fact.

And that's where the FLT—and your support of our efforts—come in. Much of our work to protect local source water has been focused on protecting the Piscataquog River watershed. We've done this by purchasing land or easements along the river and its tributaries. This land protection not only protects water quality and habitat in the immediate area, but the quality of water for those downstream that depend upon surface water for their drinking water.

If your water comes from a private well, you are not required to test it on a regular basis, but it's not a bad idea. Understanding the source of your water, what possible sources of contamination may be, and how to treat or otherwise deal with a contaminated water supply should be a priority for every homeowner.

I hope this has piqued your interest in a precious resource that our lives literally depend on and that we too often take for granted. If you're interested in helping to protect local water quality, the Francetown Planning Board is working on updating the Water Resources section of the Master Plan and is seeking public input. At this point, there is no end date for the questionnaire. You can find more information at: <https://www.francetownnh.org/master-plan-update-water-resources-chapter>.

Larry Ames



**FRANCESTOWN
LAND TRUST**

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Remembering George Cilley, Sr.

In February we lost one of Francestown's finest, when George C.

Cilley, Sr., 79, passed away at Monadnock Community Hospital in Peterborough.

George lived in Francestown for most of his life.

He was born September 20, 1941 in Peterborough

to Carl E. and Mary D. (Bailey) Cilley. He was

predeceased by his son Jerry Cilley; daughter Mary Cilley; three brothers:

Richard, Roger and Clyde Cilley; and three sisters: Ida Hobbs, Betty Jones, and Violet Riendeau.

After attending school at the Red School on Main Street and then New Boston High School, George worked on Sunny Prairie Farm in Milford, owned by the Trombly family. He worked afterwards for Hitchiner Manufacturing, also in Milford. Later he worked for the company that built the



Photo: © Britain Hill

Tory Pines condominiums and also did greens and building maintenance for the Tory Pines Golf Course (now called The

Crotched Mountain Resort).

He built and remodeled several homes and camps

in town and built his own house. What he is perhaps

best known and loved for, at least in Francestown, is

that he was an attendant at the Francestown Transfer

Station for 28 years, up until the time of his death.

George loved the outdoors

and was an avid brook fisherman. Many folks have mentioned how much they

enjoyed talking to George about fishing, when they saw him at the Transfer Station.

George and his family have always been strong supporters of efforts to protect and

conserve Francestown's open spaces for multiple uses, including hunting, fishing,

and hiking. FLT has been honored to receive donations in his memory.

FLT Annual Meeting



**FRANCESTOWN
LAND TRUST**

The Francestown Land Trust's board of directors has decided to conduct its 2021

Annual Meeting virtually via Zoom due to continuing community spread of

COVID-19. The meeting will take place at 6:00PM on Thursday June 10, 2021. Mem-

bers will be sent an email invitation so that they may participate.

If you are a member (i.e., donated in the past year) and want to participate, but are

not sure that we have your email on file, contact us at info@francestownlandtrust.org

and we'll get you on the list. This will be a business

meeting only, to report to our members and elect a slate of directors. This process typi-

cally takes 20-30 minutes.