

# Walking with Nature

GREAT PLACES IN  
THE GRANITE STATE

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**NEWSLETTER**  
NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER  
FALL/WINTER 2015

# Walking with Nature

WOODS, WETLANDS AND CONNECTING WITH THE WORLD AROUND US



**Little Adventurers**  
Two budding biologists inspect horseshoe crabs at Lubberland Creek.

## Inspiring Connections: YOU Make It Happen

Supporting conservation and strengthening the connection between people and nature helps ensure a world in which both can thrive.

**YOU COULD HEAR IT IF YOU WERE** quiet: insects chirping from the tall grass; frogs croaking from unseen ponds; the wind rustling through the trees, whispering an evening song. You could see it if you were watching: the sun setting over the salty marsh, casting an orange glow on the pine trees; birds overhead silhouetted against the sky; and eager budding naturalists congregating at Lubberland Creek Preserve in Newmarket

The group of more than 40 people — including many smiling, curious children — had gathered for *Night of the Living Herps*, a field trip hosted by The Nature Conservancy. The night promised interaction with creatures of all kinds, specifically invertebrates and amphibians.

After dirty hands and inquisitive minds identified a variety of wriggling critters found in tubs of marsh water, the biologists-in-training made their way into the darkening woods, where nightlife was beginning to stir, all in hot pursuit of the croaking frogs heard earlier.

**HAILING FROM ATLANTA, GEORGIA,** Haley Pope was enjoying her first experience with nature in the Granite State. Pope, a summer intern with the

Conservancy, found the evening both educational and inspiring.

“Watching kids with flashlights hunt for frogs on a warm summer night was so much fun. They really reminded me of when I was young, using my hands to learn about the world around me,” remarked Pope. “Being able to share this experience with members of an organization that share a deep connection with the land they helped protect was deeply moving.”

**PROVIDING A VENUE TO INSPIRE** connections like these is one of the things we do best. “Protecting nature isn’t about putting up fences and keeping people out,” says Dr. David Patrick, director of conservation in New Hampshire. “We’re really aiming to help connect people with the nature around them. We are conserving important habitat and natural areas for nature to thrive and future generations to explore, study and enjoy.”

**AS 2015 DRAWS TO A CLOSE,** we are humbled by and grateful for the generous support from members like you that makes it possible to protect and steward this suite of conserved lands and waters which provide the opportunity for people

“We’re really aiming to help connect people with the nature around them.” — DR. DAVID PATRICK

to make the natural connections that enrich our lives.

**BACK AT LUBBERLAND CREEK,** that orange sun was setting over the salt marsh. Little voices could be heard giggling as equally little hands attempted to catch some of the fabled croaking frogs. Just as excited were the parents of those little voices, watching the next generation of biologists-in-training form connections with the land and wildlife that would surely stay with them long beyond that moment by the pond. John Muir once said, “In every walk with Nature, one receives far more than he seeks.” Thanks to you, our woods, our wetlands — our connections — will continue to remain beautiful and bountiful, waiting to be explored. We’ll help you find your way.



## Nature Close to You: An Urban Oasis

Organized field trips are great ways to get hands-on with nature and hang out with experts. Conservancy naturalists enjoy sharing their knowledge of and passion for the plants, wildlife and habitats that make New Hampshire's woods and wetlands unique through a variety of interactive trips.

**ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO VISIT ON YOUR OWN OR ON A FIELD TRIP** might surprise you, since New Hampshire's largest city isn't where most of us think of going to explore nature. But nature abounds at Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve, the largest conservation area in the city.

» **ON THE WEB:** Get to know Manchester Cedar Swamp, and download the map & guide at [nature.org/explorenh](http://nature.org/explorenh).

"Many don't realize that there is an urban oasis just minutes from downtown," notes Jeff Lougee, director of stewardship. "With 40 more acres recently donated by the city of Manchester, the preserve is now a full square mile of protected land close to home. It's a great retreat for folks looking for a peaceful escape; an outdoor classroom for parents and teachers to take kids for a walk in the woods; a living lab for research students; and a central location for our volunteers to engage with our science and stewardship staff on a variety of hands-on projects."

**WITH 1.8 MILES OF TRAILS, IT'S EASY TO EXPLORE THE PRESERVE.** Lougee has a few pointers: "Look for shady hemlock groves, giant rhododendron patches, stands of Atlantic white cedar, wetland birds like great blue heron, and ancient black gum trees. Even if you only have an hour, there's plenty to see!"

"Many don't realize that there is an urban oasis just minutes from downtown." — JEFF LOUGEE

**LEAF Lessons**  
LEAF interns find a red eft at Manchester Cedar Swamp.

**A grand view**  
Bekah Herndon takes in dramatic views of the White Mountains near the summit of Black Cap Mountain in the Green Hills Preserve.

## A NATURALIST IN YOUR POCKET

Thanks to your generosity, the Conservancy has helped protect more than 290,000 acres since 1961 and manages 29 preserves across New Hampshire, providing incredible opportunities to hike globally rare habitats, paddle picturesque rivers and streams, and soak in incredible views from mountain tops.

"Our staff and volunteers work very hard to ensure our preserves are inviting places for people to visit, whether it is for a quick walk at lunch or full-on day trip. We even produced *Discover and Explore New Hampshire's Natural Wonders*, a field guide to the lands our members have helped to conserve that's free to all who'd like a copy. It's the perfect companion; a bit like a naturalist in your pocket," says State Director Mark Zankel.

"Our hope is that, by encouraging everyone to get outside and experience some of our state's richest and most interesting ecosystems, we can help strengthen their connection with the world we live in. The stronger that relationship, the more people and nature can thrive together."

» **ON THE WEB:**  
**HAVE A SMARTPHONE OR TABLET?** Skip the book and go digital! You can find all of our preserves online. Plan your trip, download a map and guide, and leave us a comment about your experience.

To learn more about our preserves, and to order your own field guide, please visit [nature.org/newhampshire](http://nature.org/newhampshire) and go to *Places and Preserves*.

# It's a (Camera) Trap!

A familiar device helps find new ways to connect landscapes for communities of wildlife

Imagine you're a red fox, complete with bushy tail and pointed ears. You're standing on one side of Route 3 in Groveton, hoping to cross the road in search of ripe berries, tasty crickets and delectable mice for your kits back in their den. It's a virtual smorgasbord — if you can get to it safely. Crossing the road becomes a real-life game of Frogger.

Groveton is in the heart of New Hampshire's Great North Woods — part of the vast Northern Appalachians — which is a special place for wildlife on the move. It's largely unfragmented, providing excellent habitat for wide-ranging mammals like bobcat and black bear. But with increasing development and busier roads, how can we help keep these lands connected and give these creatures room to roam in search of food, mates and more?

## Bridging the Gaps

Through sophisticated mapping and modeling as part of the Staying Connected Initiative, we've already identified the connecting habitats that best bridge the gaps between large swaths of protected lands to maintain opportunities for wildlife to move. In northern New Hampshire, these gaps tend to consist of river valleys with transportation corridors. The Connecticut River Valley and US Route 3 corridor are the most prominent. With all the potential spots for wildlife to cross, how do we prioritize where to concentrate our efforts and resources to maintain and enhance wildlife movement pathways? Where are animals really crossing?

## Say "Cheese" for Research

Enter a device so common you probably have one in your home (or even on your phone): the camera.

With your support, we have deployed more than 30 motion-sensing cameras along stretches of Route 3 where we think wildlife is most likely to cross the road and some where we are not so sure. These camera "traps" snap a photo (or, in some cases, video) when a critter passes by. The data collected from these cameras will help us to assess:

- Where wildlife are approaching and crossing Route 3, and in what concentrations;
- What species are moving through particular areas and habitat types;
- What measures can be deployed at the busiest wildlife crossing areas to help facilitate safe crossings — for both motorists and wildlife.

These cameras capture thousands of images a month — images ranging from giant moose to the occasional wandering house cat. So while the process isn't foolproof, the cameras provide verifying data to support or dispute our modeling assumptions and will ultimately help us to prioritize the best possible opportunities to protect some of the last remaining undeveloped road-front areas that wildlife rely upon to approach and cross roads. The study will also inform where we might work together with partners like the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to improve crossing conditions at hot spots, minimize animal-vehicle collisions, and enhance landscape connections, benefiting both people and wildlife.

On the right are just a few of our favorite images from the cameras!

### SPECIAL THANKS:

This project is supported by funds from the sale of the Conservation License Plate (Moose Plate) through the NH State Conservation Committee grant program.



» **ON THE WEB:**  
Check out more camera trap images in our slideshow: [nature.org/explorenh](http://nature.org/explorenh)

» **ON THE WEB:**  
Learn more about the Staying Connected Initiative: [stayingconnectedinitiative.org](http://stayingconnectedinitiative.org)

### NEWSLETTER DESIGN

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Connecticut River



# #Fieldnotes

Because of you, we're able to accomplish great things across the Granite State! Here are just a few of the exciting things that are going on here in New Hampshire.

» **ON THE WEB:**  
Learn more  
at [nature.org/](http://nature.org/)  
[explorenh.org/](http://explorenh.org/)

## GREAT PLACES IN THE GRANITE STATE

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## ACCOLADES FOR THE OYSTER CONSERVATIONIST PROGRAM

The **OYSTER CONSERVATIONIST VOLUNTEER PROGRAM** was recently awarded the Gulf of Maine Council (GOMC) on the Marine Environment's 2015 Visionary Award for New Hampshire. This honor, presented annually to an individual or organization, celebrates innovation, creativity, commitment to marine protection, and making a difference in the health of the Gulf of Maine. The GOMC recognized the OC Program for its outstanding contributions.

**With gratitude**  
(Left to right)  
Ru Morrison, NH  
Councillor for GOMC;  
TNC's David Patrick  
and Ray Konisky, and  
Rene Pelletier,  
Assistant Director of  
NHDES and  
NHCouncillor for  
GOMC.



## BIG CATS IN CONCORD

We recently teamed up with **RED RIVER THEATRES** in Concord for a screening of the new documentary **Tiger Tiger**, directed and produced by New Hampshire-based filmmaker George Butler, acclaimed for his film *The Endurance*. **Tiger Tiger**, set in the Sundarbans (between India and Bangladesh), follows Dr. Alan Rabinowitz, one of the top big cat conservation biologists in the world, as he travels through the one tiger habitat he has never before seen. Post-film, the sold out crowd enjoyed a captivating panel discussion which included Butler himself.

**Tiger Tiger**  
(Left to right)  
Filmmaker George  
Butler, film writer  
Caroline  
Alexander, and  
NH State Director  
Mark Zankel.



## OUT OF AFRICA

**DAVID BANKS**, director of the Conservancy's Africa Program, recently attended our Legacy Club Luncheon to update staff and supporters about our innovative work with traditional communities to sustain Africa's wild lands, waters and wildlife. In Northern Tanzania, we're helping hunter-gatherers protect their homelands. In Tuungane, we're working together to create a healthy future for people and the natural resources they depend on. And we're partnering on developing creative solutions to help ensure that there will always be plenty of wild elephants in Africa.

**In good hands**  
David Banks leads  
The Nature  
Conservancy's  
Africa program.

**ON THE WEB:**  
To learn more,  
visit [nature.org/Africa](http://nature.org/Africa).



## WELCOME NEW TRUSTEES!

We are pleased to welcome three new trustees to our board: **ELEANOR BRIGGS** of Hancock is an accomplished photographer and founder of the Harris Center for Conservation Education. **DAVID PREND** of Exeter is a Managing General Partner and co-founder of RockPort Capital Partners, a Boston and San Francisco-based venture capital firm. **DON WARE** of Hopkinton is a lawyer with Foley Hoag in Boston and is chair of the firm's Intellectual Property Department. Also, congratulations to **TOM HANNA** of Keene for being named our new chair in New Hampshire! Each brings valuable strengths, skills and talents to The Nature Conservancy, as well as a personal passion for the natural world to help us provide lasting conservation solutions in the Granite State and beyond.

**A warm welcome**  
(Clockwise from  
left) Eleanor  
Briggs and "Lisa,"  
David Prend,  
and Don Ware.





## Use Your Outside Voice!

Every day, elected officials make decisions that affect the health of our land, the water we drink and the air we breathe. There are important decisions being made at the local, state and national levels that need your attention.

» **ON THE WEB:** Sign the pledge to use your "outside voice" for nature! [nature.org/nhvoice](http://nature.org/nhvoice)

Join a network of people who are taking action across New Hampshire and across the country for conservation!

We'll keep you informed of new policy developments in the state house and in

Washington, and provide you with opportunities to connect with decision makers to support actions that will result in a better New Hampshire.



## Masters of Camouflage

Can you see it? Look closer. See it now? While hiking at the Green Hills Preserve this summer, New Hampshire Audubon's Phil Brown stumbled upon an incredible find: a female common nighthawk defending her chicks! Respectfully, he snapped this shot from a safe distance before continuing up the trail.

This state-endangered breeding bird is a bit of a non-traditionalist: Making no nest, the nighthawk opts instead for open ground, gravel or rocky areas, and forest clearings. Their unique plumage allows them to blend in with their surroundings so well, they nearly vanish instantly.

At the time of the sighting, this was the first-known natural nesting attempt of the year (as opposed to nesting on rooftops). With its exposed rocky ridges and bald peaks, the Green Hills provide excellent (and protected!) habitat for these fascinating birds, the males of which are known for their dramatic mating display flights and dives. The preserve also provides an ample supply of insects, the nighthawk's preferred choice in cuisine. If you listen closely, you can hear their tell-tale *peent* as they hunt during the dawn and dusk hours.

» **GET INVOLVED:** New Hampshire Audubon's Project Nighthawk monitors birds at the Green Hills Preserve, along with many other sites across the state. To become a Project Nighthawk volunteer, contact Rebecca Suomala at [rsuomala@nhaudubon.org](mailto:rsuomala@nhaudubon.org).

We're proud to promote getting outdoors with our partners at New Hampshire Public Television!

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**WINDOWS to the WILD**

Will Lange's hiking, paddling & exploring New England.  
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**Winter Wonderland**

Snowshoeing near the  
Ashuelot River.



PHOTO: © ERCALDRICH / COVER PHOTO: © HALEYPOPE

» **ON THE WEB:**  
For more  
information and  
registration,  
visit [nature.org/nhevents](http://nature.org/nhevents)

# GET OUTSIDE WITH US!

Join us this winter and spring for a variety of engaging field trips that are sure to spark the senses and connect you to the places you've helped protect. **For more information and registration, visit [nature.org/nhevents](http://nature.org/nhevents).**

**02.13 LIFE IN THE DEEP FREEZE**  
LOVERENS MILL PRESERVE, ANTRIM  
10 a.m. - noon

Winter might seem quiet, but really it's teeming with life. Strap on your snowshoes and explore how animals and plants survive the winter with Dr. David Patrick.

**05.07 11TH ANNUAL GREAT BAY BIRD WALK**  
LUBBERLAND CREEK PRESERVE, NEWMARKET  
7:45 a.m. - noon

Coastal bird expert Steve Mirick once again educates us on the migrating and nesting birds that call Great Bay home.

**05.19 SPRING IN THE SALT MARSH**  
LUBBERLAND CREEK PRESERVE, NEWMARKET  
4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Ecologist Joanne Glode hunts for horseshoe crabs, anadromous fish, and other critters and plants that inhabit the saltmarsh habitat in and around Lubberland Creek. Great for kids!