

Watershed News

THE PISCATAQUOG WATERSHED ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



PWA EASEMENT Protects PISCATAQUOG NORTH BRANCH TREASURE IN WEARE

by Margaret Watkins

The farm on Paige Hill Road in Weare has stories to tell – through its stone walls and rock piles that speak to an agricultural past, through the black locust trees introduced by early settlers seeking rot-resistant wood, and in a rich, now productive wetland that was once managed for marsh hay. The property is known locally for its scenic agricultural setting.

Carole and Murray Wigsten live in an old house on the property. It's not the same house they fell in love with when they bought the property in 1968, but it has a furnace and heat, unlike the big, twin-chimney Federal house next door built in 1770 by the property's first owner, Samuel Caldwell.

"We loved the big house, and everything about the place," recalls Carole. "Murray was raised on a farm, and we wanted the children to grow up in a rural town."

When they purchased the buildings and 90 of the 1000 acres amassed by the prior owners, the Wigstens became the property's fourth owners. Maintaining that farming history and "living a bit off the land," they raised chickens, sheep, cows, and pigs at various times while their children, Samantha and Jeff, were growing up.

Today, they raise lambs and hay – about 2500 bales annually from a 20-acre field.

The property includes 400 feet of frontage on the North Branch of the Piscataquog River. "The field, the woods, the river down below, the lake [Horace Lake] next door – it's just lovely," says Carole. That love is what inspired her to keep after Murray about what would happen to the land in the long run.

"When we came here, there was nothing on Craney Hill," Carole recalls. "Now, there are a lot of homes. I knew if we didn't do something before we died, a developer would buy it and put up 20, 30, 40 homes."

"So, we called Gordon Russell," says Murray. "When I was on the planning board, Gordon would come to meetings and tell us about the wildlife and important wetlands on a property. We've known him for years."

Gordon came right over and talked with the Wigstens about conservation options. They decided a conservation easement with the PWA that protected most of the land and the river frontage and prevented further subdivision would do what they wanted. Carol Hall of the Russell Foundation worked closely with the Wigstens and PWA to make protection of this scenic farmland possible.

In a recent letter sent from Seattle to the Wigstens, Jessica Ludders, daughter of long-time PWA members Ann and Dick Ludders, expressed her profound appreciation for the Wigstens' decision to protect the land where she spent many hours as a child and young adult. The land holds memories, "all very dear to me. SUCH A GIFT," Jessica wrote, "....And [it] is a gift to the generations who will live near that land in years to come."

Indeed, this property's protection is a gift not only to neighbors, but to the town, as a lasting symbol of Weare's agricultural history and to the wildlife that rely on its open fields, woodlands, wetlands, and the river.

Above: Carole and Murray Wigsten and their dog, Fly, enjoy the open space on their farm, which they have protected forever. (Photo: Margaret Watkins)



TO CONSERVE

the natural and scenic environment of the Piscataquog River Watershed communities:
Deering ~ Dunbarton ~ Frankestown ~ Goffstown ~ Greenfield ~ Henniker
Lyndeborough ~ Manchester ~ Mont Vernon ~ New Boston ~ Weare

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

by Margaret Watkins

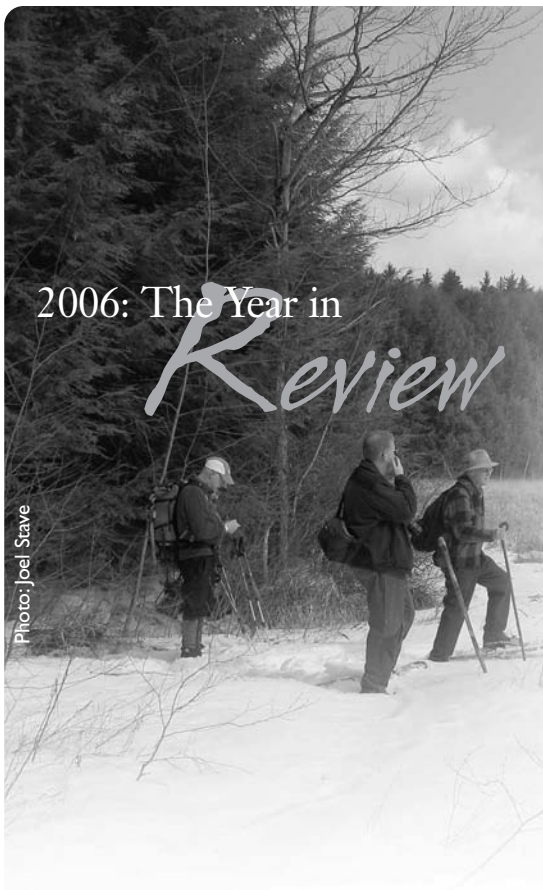
"Think Globally, Act Locally." I've always felt that PWA does just that in attempting to protect clean water, land, and habitat in our small corner of the globe. I recently attended a conference on the role of working forests in slowing climate

change, co-sponsored by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests and Clean Air-Cool Planet. The experience stretched my mind and helped explain why both the polar bear and NH's beech-birch-maple forests are threatened by global warming – one with extinction, the other with migration.

I also now look at trees in an entirely new way – as massive carbon sinks. Stated simply, trees remove carbon in the form of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the air and store it. CO₂ is a greenhouse gas that factors importantly in climate change. Because trees function as CO₂ reservoirs, they help offset the impact of other CO₂-emitting activities. Climate change policies in California have already implemented permanent protection for large forest reserves using conservation easements, and the opportunities for growth in this area are significant.

Capturing carbon is one side of the equation. Eliminating greenhouse gases is the other. Another key message from the conference was the absolute importance of decisions we make today for generations to come – whether at state, regional, and national levels or as individuals. Our personal decisions can be as simple as buying only Energy Star appliances, converting to compact fluorescent light bulbs, keeping cars tuned, tires properly inflated, speeds to 55 mph or less, and carpooling or reducing the miles we drive. See www.climatestar.org to calculate household emissions and learn how to further reduce emissions.

In February, PWA's Board of Directors voted unanimous support for the Carbon Coalition's town meeting article promoting federal and local actions to address climate change. The article passed in all 8 of the watershed towns that had it on the warrant. A great message! We are pleased to have Ken Colburn speaking on how climate change impacts NH at this year's David Hardy Memorial Lecture on April 18 (see details in a separate flyer). And, the next time you look at a tree, think about its role in protecting our planet – and PWA's work in protecting the trees.



LAND PROTECTION

2006 was a record-breaking year for land protection, with PWA completing 10 projects: 6 conservation easements and 4 fee acquisitions! (See summary on page 3.) PWA also collaborated on Headwaters Project-I in an ongoing landscape-level protection project. Protecting land is one piece of our conservation work. The other essential piece is our land stewardship program to ensure that easement properties are maintained as permanent open space. Several new monitors joined committed veterans at the spring Easement Monitors' Training. These 24 PWA ambassadors walk each of our easements annually and prepare written and photographic reports documenting natural and permitted changes to the properties. Property monitors have also been designated for PWA-owned properties. Many passers-by have noticed the new PWA property identification signs that were installed at ten PWA properties by our able volunteers, with financial support for the signs from the Robin Colson Memorial Foundation. PWA volunteers also established new trails on three of our properties, helping visitors responsibly explore these important open spaces.

2006 LAND CONSERVATION SUMMARY

LANDOWNER	ACREAGE	CONSERVATION EASEMENT (CE) OR ACQUISITION	TOWNS
Constance Bicknell	118 acres	Acquisition	Francestown/Lyndeborough/Greenfield
Brooks Family	4 acres	CE addition	New Boston
Thomas & Joan Burke	59 acres	Acquisition	Deering
Martha Colburn	12 acres	Acquisition	New Boston
Francestown Land Trust	77 acres	CE	Francestown/Lyndeborough
Thomas & Pamela Grossman	270 acres	CE	Lyndeborough
Roger Hall	48 acres	CE*	Francestown
Eleanor Porritt	147 acres	CE	Goffstown
Rice Family	16 acres	Acquisition	Lyndeborough
Aasta Schneider & James Robb	20 acres	CE*	Greenfield
Total acres protected in 2006	771 acres		

* Fundraising is ongoing.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

At age 36, PWA got a facelift: a new logo, masthead, and stationery. The popular "Walk in the Woods!" series of outdoor events continued, with an enthusiastic response from members and nonmembers alike. The David Hardy Memorial Lecture series provided a chance to see and learn about some of our spectacular raptors up close and personally, Chris Hague of Weare won our first ever essay contest, and PWA volunteers manned booths at public fairs, farmers markets, and other events in local towns. Also in 2006 PWA volunteers conducted a successful membership drive with financial support from The McNinch Foundation, Granite State Telephone, John & Anne McCausland, and Jerry & Carolynne Shinn. Ian Peach, a Middlebury College student, completed a Piscataquog River Watershed Trail Guide last summer, and the guide will be published in 2007.

INVASIVE SPECIES
AWARENESS

Building on the 2005 guide to invasive plants, the Invasive Species Awareness Committee concluded a series of articles in local papers providing mug-shots and descriptions of the most damaging invasive plants found in the watershed; prepared and presented an invasive plants slideshow for community groups; and teamed with students from Crotched Mountain to create an educational display board (with help from a grant from Northeast Utilities).

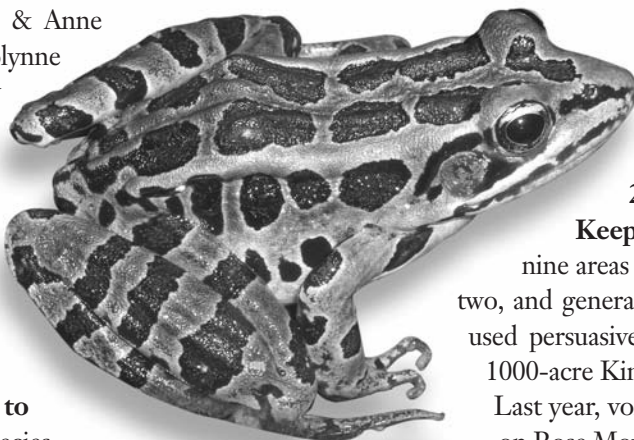


Photo: Joel Stave

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

PWA volunteers collected monthly surface water field measurements for specific conductivity, pH, water and air temperature, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity at 12 permanent monitoring stations between June and September. Volunteers also conducted supplemental surface water sampling for Escherichia coli (*E. coli*) bacteria at six locations. Our goal is to document current water quality conditions, any problems, and long-term trends. Sampling confirmed that problems identified in 2004 and 2005 have been corrected. The State is investigating at least two other PWA *E. coli* sampling sites to determine the sources of *E. coli* contamination. This work was supported in part by Northeast Utilities and by the NH Dept. of Environmental Services.

WILDLIFE TRACKING

2007 marks the 10th anniversary of PWA's Keeping Track program. During those years, nine areas have been monitored over a period of at least two, and generally three or more years. The data have been used persuasively in protecting key properties such as the 1000-acre Kimball Pond Conservation Area in Dunbarton. Last year, volunteers logged many miles tracking wildlife on Rose Mountain, Scataquog and Rand brooks, and New Boston's Great Meadow. All but the Rose Mountain transect were "retired" at the end of 2006, and new transects in Francestown, Goffstown, and New Boston have been initiated.

More than 100 PWA volunteers dedicated significant time and talent to all our PWA programs. Their contributions inform and support our conservation work. To these volunteers we owe deep thanks. New volunteers are always welcome – no prior experience necessary!

Thanks to Our Many Supporters!

The 2006 Annual Fund campaign raised a record \$65,000 in support of PWA's conservation work. Thanks to our contributors, we met both Annual Fund challenges and earned an additional \$14,000. Our deep gratitude goes to the following contributors for their support:

\$10,000 and above

Anonymous
Gordon & Barbara Russell

\$3000 and above

Jed Callen & Carol Hess
Conservation Biology Research Fund*
John & Anne McCausland
Jerry & Carolynne Shinn
** A fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation*

\$1000 and above

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H. Randall & Gail C. Parker
Arthur & Roberta Walmsley
George H. Watkins
Margaret Watkins
Joshua & Hollis Young
** A fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation*

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Jonathan Dowst & Judith Lamont
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Craig & Terry Knowles
Dave Nieman
Jason Sachs
Ellery & Robin Sedgwick
Cindy & Joel Stave

\$250 and above

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Ben & Kate Taylor

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Phyllis & Will Townsend
Stephen Walker & Family
James & Sandra White
Barbara Wolman***
Carolyn Woodbury
Robert & Barbara Woodland
Beverly Yeaple

*** In honor of John Magee's work for the PWA*

**** In honor of Pat Nelson's dedication and contributions*

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David R. Craig, Attorney at Law
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Community Grants
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Russell Piscataquog River
Watershed Foundation

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Keeping Track volunteer, Carol Hall, looks on as Barbara Thomson and Gordon Russell measure telltale animal sign.
(Photo: Joel Stave)



Water Quality Monitoring volunteers John Magee and Amy Doherty identify sites in the watershed for additional water quality testing.
(Photo: Margaret Watkins)



Vernal pools teeming with life are fascinating places, as these Walk in the Woods! participants discover.
(Photo: Paula Bellemore)

Thanks to All Our

Volunteers!

We are grateful to the more than 100 dedicated volunteers listed on this page and in the sidebar on page 2 who help the PWA in so many ways. Thank you!

Land Protection

Len Allen
Jamie Bodwell
Jon Brooks
Kim DiPietro
Barbara Gannon
Emily Hague
Ben Haubrich
Ray James
Addie Ann Lambarth
Mike Lennon
Bob Lindgren
Linda Lindgren
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Pat Myers
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Randy Parker
Harry Parker
Graham Pendlebury
Jason Reimers
Gordon Russell
Donna Seidel
Agnes Shellmer
Joel Stave
Pia Sunderland
Larry Sunderland
Barbara Thomson
Susan Weiss

Invasive Species Awareness

Lyn Lombard
Hannah Proctor
Jim Orr & students at the
Crotched Mountain Center

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Brenda Bhatti
Carol Hall
Ben Haubrich
Robin Haubrich
Julie Kirklin
Ken Lombard
David Moffat
Graham Pendlebury
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Brian Rohde
Gordon Russell
Aasta Schneider
Jim Scott
Daniel Kirklin Scott
Lou Springer
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Sue Bonitatibus
Amy Doherty
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Tom Noel
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Pat Myers
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David Nieman
Janet Nixon
Michael Palmer
Bob Rogers
Jason Sachs
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Lori Sommer
Jennifer Smith
Cindy Stave
Joel Stave
Paul Susca
Barbara Thomson
Alicia Walker
Cynthia West

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Cheryl Christner
Dona Fairbairn
Gerry Fairbairn
Chris Hague
Paul Hague
Ben Haubrich
Robin Haubrich
Carol Hess
Ken Lombard
Lyn Lombard
Pat Myers
Jim Orr
Alex Pendlebury
Graham Pendlebury
Hannah Proctor
Gordon Russell
Carolynne Shinn
Jerry Shinn
Joel Stave
Cindy Stave
Barbara Thomson
Janet White

General Support

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Kanta Connie Bousquet
Max Ferro
Emily Hague
Carol Hess
Pat Jennings
Ellen Kambol
Addie Ann Lambarth
Lyn Lombard
Bill Morrissey
Cathy Morrissey
Pat Nelson
Randy Parker
Graham Pendlebury
Gordon Russell
Pam Ryan
Agnes Shellmer
Holly Stark
Cindy Stave
Barbara Thomson
Will Townsend
Phyllis Townsend
Janie Young
Janet White & Family

Lake Horace Marsh Project

Chris Hague
Paul Hague
John Magee
Pat Myers
Karen Roy
Gordon Russell

We do our best to maintain accurate records of the volunteers who help PWA throughout the year. If we have missed anyone, please let us know and accept our apologies.

Protecting NH's future at Local & State Levels

LCHIP Funding Needs Your Support

LCHIP, the state's popular but perennially underfunded **Land and Community Heritage Investment Program**, is again in the spotlight. Legislators have offered various plans to fund the program outside of the annual budgeting process, from which LCHIP funds consistently have been whittled away.

All LCHIP funds go directly into land conservation and historic preservation projects; administrative costs are covered by Moose Plate income and the LCHIP Trust Fund. LCHIP projects on average require only 20% of their funding from LCHIP. Since its inception in 2000, LCHIP funds have leveraged protection for more than 200,000 acres statewide, including projects in watershed towns, and have preserved or revitalized 87 historic structures. The program has received more than 600 applications requesting more than \$111 million.

ACTION ITEM: Let your NH state representatives and senators know today that you support a dedicated funding source for this important program!

Town Meetings Vote Green

Locally, voters at town meetings repeatedly voiced their support for conservation. The amount of funding from the land use change tax that goes directly to town conservation funds was increased in **Goffstown** to 100% and in **Lyndeborough** to 50%. **Greenfield** laid the groundwork for a second attempt next year. **Goffstown** voters appropriated \$245,000 for land conservation in 2007. Voters in **Mont Vernon** appropriated \$30,000 to the Conservation Fund, and **Dunbarton** voters said "yes" to acquiring 145 acres with money from their Conservation Fund. **Weare** voters agreed to allocate \$80,000 from the Town Forest Fund towards the purchase of land on Tiffany Hill Road. Funds for milfoil control were appropriated in **Francestown**. Lands were granted "town forest" designations in **Weare**, **Francestown**, and **Mont Vernon**. **Weare** voters also authorized any town forest or conservation land to be put into permanent conservation by act of the conservation commission and selectmen. And climate change action articles passed in all 8 watershed towns that had it on the warrant. Overall, this signals a greening season!

PWA thanks the following members for their support!

Welcome to Our New Members! (as of March 1st)

FRANCESTOWN

Gerri Bernstein*

GOFFSTOWN

Kelly Teevan & Ann Norton*

LYNDEBOROUGH

Cindy R. Ginn

WEARE

Bob Boucher

Karen & Randy Dixon

Sandra & Robert Dupuis

Jane Elwood

Frances Leitgels & Justin Gurksnis

Paul Marsh & Alice Morris

Eugene & Betsy Propper

Kevin & Judith Rautenberg

Jeff Spring

Nancy Stehno

Member Renewals (as of March 1st)

DEERING

Phil Bryce

Keith Robinson & Lauren Warner

George & Holly Sanderson**

Lawrence & Pia Sunderland

DUNBARTON

Donna M. & Andrew D. Dunn

Lucy Gobin*

Mike & Patty Shearin**

Margaret Watkins

FRANCESTOWN

Judy Badot & Ron Cheney**

Matilda Boyle

Herb & Rosa Bromberg*

Tiffany & Dennis Calcutt

Donna Chase

Heidi Dawidoff

Sirkka & Taisto Holm

Priscilla Kunhardt & Family

GOFFSTOWN

Catherine C. D'Agostino

George Dawson*

Margaret & William Dolbow

Susan & Bill Tucker*

GREENFIELD

Bruce Dennis

Manchester

Scot Heath*

Robert Marville & Mary Lizie

NEW BOSTON

Scott & Laura Arvin**

Jim Barnett & Shirley Sullivan

Bill & Polly Brendle*

John & Meredith Bunting

Jed Callen & Carol Hess***

Don & Sarah Chapman

Frederick Daggett

Debra & James Davis*

Michele Desmond & Kathy Conroy*

Kim DiPietro

Gerald & Dona Fairbairn

Erik Fey & Kathleen Ruty-Fey

Yvonne Gomes*

Pattie & Don Grosso

Mary Koon & Floyd Guyette

J. Marcel LaFlamme & Carol Swiech

Mike Lennon

Ken & Lyn Lombard*

Jim & Tracy Machakos

Denise, Harry & Jillian McCalvey

John & Heidi Palmer*

Deanna & Mike Powell

Janet Nixon*

Jim Smith

Joseph Trimbur

Beth, Marty & Hope Widmayer

WEARE

Montague & Meeta Brown

Rosemary & Christopher Conroy

Jean Heinemann

Ruth Jones*

Ellen Musinsky & Diane Padilla*

Michael & Karen Roy

Jess & Palma Smith

Oscar & Elizabeth Straw

OTHER NH TOWNS

David & Laurette Carroll, Warner

Ray James, Hudson

Herbert & Deborah Little, Concord

Ellie Weiss & George Carvill, Milford

OTHER STATES

Donald Buck, Hadlyme, CT

John & Norma Japp, Carlisle, MA

Charles & Joanne Lantz, Saugerties, NY

Holly MacAdam, York, ME

Judith Morse, Cambridge, MA

Ruth & Roland Pendlebury, Westford, MA

Charles H. Townes, Berkeley, CA

GIFT IN MEMORY OF KEN MARVELL

Jed Callen & Carol Hess

GRANTS

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation Community Spirit 9/11 Mini-Grant of \$500 for use toward publication of the PWA Trail Guide, due out this year. This gift sponsored by PWA Member and Harvard Pilgrim Health employee Maureen Levin. Thanks, Maureen!

Trout Unlimited, Basil W. Woods, Jr. Chapter Grant for PWA water quality monitoring program and St. Anselm College macro invertebrate study on Rand Brook.

* Contributing Member (\$50)

** Supporting Member (\$100)

*** Guardian Member (\$250+)

Help protect the places you cherish. Renew or make a gift at www.pwa-nh.org.

ALERT: Two Tax Breaks \$\$\$\$ for 2006-2007 Only

IRAs as Charitable Gifts

Congress created Individual Retirement Accounts to permit pre-tax contributions to retirement accounts that grow, tax free, until tapped at retirement. IRAs have mandatory withdrawal provisions beginning at age 70½. Any money remaining in an IRA at the holder's death is subject to both estate taxes, if applicable, and income taxes payable at the heir's rate. Because of these tax consequences, many people designate the residual in IRAs or other retirement plans to charities – a simple act of naming the charity as a remainder beneficiary. Several PWA Legacy Society members have done just this.

For 2006 and 2007 only, people over 70½ can make gifts directly from an IRA to a charitable organization. For those required to take mandatory withdrawals larger than they need, this provision, long a priority for charitable groups, allows for tax-free contributions of up to \$100,000 and creates a way to give from an IRA during one's lifetime.

Expanded Deductions for Donated Conservation Easements

Last year Congress also approved an expanded income tax deduction for conservation easements donated in 2006 and 2007. Individuals can claim a charitable deduction of up to 50% (instead of the usual 30%) of their gross adjusted income in the year the easement is given. Any unused deduction can be carried forward for up to 15 additional years.

Congress will consider legislation to make these easement provisions permanent this year. Please urge your representative and Senators Gregg and Smith to cosponsor this legislation.

And, if you have been thinking about ways to protect your land or to help the PWA financially, this could be a good year to act.

Three Additional Plants Now Banned in NH Nurseries

As of January 1, 2007, the NH Department of Agriculture has now prohibited the "collection, importation, transportation, sale, propagation, transplantation or cultivation" of the following plants, which are included on its list of 35 invasive species:

Burning Bush - *Euonymus alatus* (*Euonymus fortunei* is okay.)

Spreads rapidly and displaces native species.

Norway Maple - *Acer platanoides* (*Acer palmatum*, *rubrum*, and *saccharum* are okay.)

Roots appear to excrete a chemical that inhibits the growth of other species under its canopy.

Japanese Barberry - *Berberis thunbergii* (*Berberis koreana* and *thunbergii* are okay.)

Displaces native species that wildlife depend upon. Its sharp spines also create a barrier that impedes wildlife movement.

The 35 invasive plants (and 16 insect species) are deemed to "present an immediate danger to the health of native species, to the environment, to commercial agricultural or forest crop production, or to human health." For more information about invasive species in NH, refer to the following websites:

www.pwa-nh.org (Click on Invasive Species Information in sidebar)

www.nh.gov/agric/divisions/plant_industry/plants_insects.htm

Even if you have not seen these plants spread in your yard, each one produces multitudes of seeds that can be spread by birds, winds, animals, machines, and water to land that has been disturbed (new house lots and gardens, roadsides, etc.) and rich forested lands. Their seeds are often nutritionally worthless to animal life compared with seeds of native species; once the plant grows to a moderate size, it can crowd out native nesting areas.

In place of your burning bush and barberries, try high bush and low bush blueberry, maple leaf viburnum, spicebush, or enkianthus, all of which turn red in the fall. The native ever-red and beautiful ninebark will add much all year interest to your landscape.

The next issue of *Watershed News* will address how to rid your property of invasive plants. If you need information sooner, call Lyn Lombard at 487-5114 or Hannah Proctor at 547-2816.



Best known for its red fall foliage, in winter you can identify **Burning Bush** by its squarish, ridged stem. Stems and leaves are opposite. Tiny white flowers. Red fruit.



If you break the stem of a **Norway Maple** leaf, it oozes a milky sap.



Barberry has arching, spine-bearing branches with ovate leaves, yellow flowers, and red berries.



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PAID

GOFFSTOWN, NH
PERMIT NO.10

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, April 14 ~ 8am ~ Birding, Deering

Saturday, April 14 ~ 10am-Noon ~ Water Quality Monitors Training, Weare

Wednesday, April 18 ~ 7pm ~ Ken Colburn: Global/Local Climate Change, Weare

Sunday, April 22 ~ 3-5pm ~ Water Quality Monitors Training, New Boston

Saturday, May 5 ~ 9:30am ~ Senter's Falls Walk, Lyndeborough

Saturday, May 19 ~ 8am ~ Rand Brook Forest Walk, Franconia

Details on all events are published in a separate flyer.

March / April 2007 Volume 19, No.2

Watershed News

THE PISCATAQUOG WATERSHED ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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2006 Annual Report



Open Space Committee members David Nieman and Pat Myers evaluate a potential gift of land during a site walk.
(Photo: Margaret Watkins)

2006 was a record-setting year for PWA –
**771 new acres of land protected,
and \$65,000 donated
to Annual Fund.**

(Read all about it inside)

Thank you to all our supporters!