



Quincy Bog Notes



Mid-Winter 1998

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Purchase Of Final Property To Complete Protection of the Bog

The "big news" for Quincy Bog, as we begin 1998, is the intended purchase of the final properties that border on the Bog. For several years, Mr. and Mrs. Warren Steckmest, owners of the property along the west shore of Quincy Bog, have indicated that if they were to move from their homestead, they would like to sell the property to Quincy Bog. The Board of Directors of the Bog always assured Mr. and Mrs. Steckmest that the Bog Association was very interested in acquiring the property.

Last fall, the Steckmests decided they should move to a home better facilitated to their current needs and began concrete discussions with the Bog Directors. The Steckmests offered the Bog the lot with their house and three additional lots as a single package at "fair market price." Based on the sales of similar properties in the this neighborhood, a price was agreed upon and a purchase and sales agreement signed. The closing will take place at the convenience of the Steckmests.

The Board of Directors are extremely grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Steckmest for giving them the opportunity to purchase these properties. All of the lands bordering Quincy Bog will now be owned by Rumney Ecological Systems, Inc. (the incorporated title of Quincy Bog Natural Area) and the Bog will be fully protected.

Ownership of all bordering lands will also allow the completion of the Nature Trail so that visitors can walk a complete loop beginning and ending at the Nature Center.

The Directors plan to adjust the boundary lines of the Steckmest property to create a clear "house lot" and merge a substantial section of the property between the house and the Bog with the Bog property itself. The house and lot will then be resold with conservation restrictions on the use of the property. This will help finance the project while giving the Bog both full ownership of all bordering lands and conservation protection on adjacent properties. The Directors are currently negotiating with local banks for temporary financing and are planning the long-range financing for the portion of the properties being merged with the Bog.

The Bog Directors owe many thanks to Al Ports, past President of the Board of Directors, for his many hours of work on this project. His leadership has made this long held hope a reality.

Mr. Stanley Shmiskiss, the original owner of the Bog (see the "Notes from the Chair" by Faith Mattison) has offered to lead the Directors in a capital fund campaign to raise the money needed to purchase the property. The Directors will approach various charitable and environmental foundations as well as supporters and friends of Quincy Bog as this campaign gets underway in the Spring.

The purchase of the final bordering property allows us to preserve and protect Quincy Bog for our children and grandchildren. It is the biggest event that has happened to Quincy Bog in this decade.

Notes from the Chair by Faith Mattison

For those Friends of Quincy Bog who are recent discoverers of the magic of this piece of Rumney's glacial heritage, I thought it might be interesting to review some of the events that have coalesced to create our Nature Preserve.

For many years prior to 1970, bird and plant lovers frequently visited what was then called Cranberry Bog for the unusual bird sightings and rare plant species found in the Bog and surroundings. In 1970, Stanley Shmiskiss, a Rumney summer resident and land developer, purchased a 60 acre parcel adjacent to the Quincy Road in Rumney, with 20 acres of sandy river terrace and 40 acres of bog, swamp and associated wooded margin. When a road began to invade the wetland area, George (Joe) Kent, an avid naturalist, Bob Gregoire of the Rumney Planning Board and Larry Cushman of the Rumney Conservation Commission became concerned and took core samples in the bog which showed 20 foot deep peat deposits overlying blue clay (marl) and white granite sands. This indicated the Bog to be of glacial origin and about 6000 years old. The Planning Board and Conservation Commission agreed that the 40 acre bog area should not be developed and, with no money, but with high hopes, a voluntary non-profit organization, Rumney Ecological Systems, was born with the purpose to preserve the (renamed) "Quincy Bog" as a natural area, and to make it a center for environmental education.

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Board of Directors
Rumney Ecological Systems, Inc.
Quincy Bog Nature Center
(with year of joining Board)
(italics indicate members of original Board)

Chair

Faith Mattison - 1989
Rumney, NH

Deputy Chair

Northam Parr - 1984
Rumney, NH

Secretary

Patricia Barker - 1981
Campton, NH

Treasurer

Ann Kent - 1976
Rumney, NH

Directors

John Alger - 1989 - Rumney, NH
Mary Barnes - 1997 - Rumney, NH
Robert Berti - 1996 - Rumney, NH
Thomas W. Cowie, Esq. - 1995
Rumney, NH
Mary M. Ford - 1993 - Rumney, NH
Jennifer Kent - 1990 - Rumney, NH
Michael P. Long - 1995 - Plymouth, NH
Dr. Sidney Paley, M.D. - 1976
Marblehead, MA

George "Al" Ports - 1990 - Wentworth, NH
Tudor Richards - 1976 - Hopkinton, NH
Tom Smith - 1994 - Waterville Valley, NH
Betty Jo Taffe - 1994 - Rumney, NH
William J. Taffe, Ph.D. - 1994
Rumney, NH
Leslie Van Gelder - 1993
Washington Crossing, PA
Jody Young - 1997 - Rumney, NH

Honorary Directors

Nicolas Clinch - 1976
Palo Alto, CA
Robert Gregoire - 1976
Rumney, NH
Elizabeth Horner, Ph.D. - 1976
Northampton, MA
Allan Keith - 1976
Duxbury, MA
Dorcas MacClintock - 1986
Hamden, CT
Stanley Shmishkiss - 1976
Lynn, MA

**Quincy Bog
Notes**

Bill Taffe, Editor

A twice-yearly newsletter of information, announcements and news about the Quincy Bog Natural Area and related concerns. Editorial submissions are welcome. Please send to: Editor, Quincy Bog Notes, P.O. Box 90, Rumney, NH 03266.

Notes from the Chair

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Joe Kent made numerous contacts with Mr. Shmishkiss, who under Joe's influence, became very interested in the natural aspects of the parcel he'd purchased. Eventually the owner agreed to sell his recently purchased parcel - for a modest price with no down payment and a long-term, low interest mortgage. After the deed was passed in September 1974, Stanley called Joe asking what bird books he should buy because he had just bought a pair of binoculars. Joe felt this was a heck of a way to sell binoculars!

During 1975 the Board of Directors enlarged to include a number of people prominent in science and conservation fields including Tudor Richards and Hobart Van Deusen a former president of the Explorers Club, who had retired to Wentworth after a distinguished career as Curator of Mammals at the American Museum of Natural History in New York . Also joining was Mr. Shmishkiss - a loyal member to this day. The Board was most interested in pursuing the educational promise of the area. A nature trail was established along which Joe led frequent bird and plant walks. The first issue of "Quincy Bog Notes" was published in January 1976 and later that year two lots were purchased from Eugene Whitcher with the aid of a loan from the Nature Conservancy via the Society of the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

The desire for a Nature Center, as a research base and for educational programs, became a reality when the Directors received a matching grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Fund. During 1977 the Plymouth Jaycees started construction of the Nature Center which was completed and dedicated to the memory of Mr. Van Dusen in 1978. Thus the Nature Center is about to celebrate its 20th anniversary. In the next issue of Bog Notes, I shall try to chronicle some of the highlights of the Bog and Nature Center events in these past 20 years.

New Trail Guide

Last Spring and Summer, Bog Volunteer Betty Jo Taffe updated the Trail Guide to the Joe Kent Ecological Trail at Quincy Bog. Beginning with the Guidebook originally written by Tudor Richards, and with Tudor's advice and assistance, Betty Jo expanded the guide, adding information in several new categories. She also renumbered the trail stations and put new, more visible markers along the trail. Sarah Schwaegler assisted in the identification of wildflowers and non-flowering plants and Northam Parr offered suggestions about trees and shrubs. Bog Summer Naturalist Jodhie Grieve added general information about all aspects of the Bog.

The twenty-four page Guide now includes a map of the Bog on its back cover and is stored on computer so that future editions can easily be changed and updated. In addition, for visitors with more limited time, Betty Jo created a three-panel fold-out single sheet which covers the first sixteen of the thirty-nine stations along the Nature Trail.

Bog Visitors have found the guide extremely helpful, leaving comments in the logbook such as "Information in Guidebook excellent" and "The Guide is especially well written." As the Nature Trail Loop is completed in the coming summers, Betty Jo intends to keep the Trail Guide current and up-to-date. The Bog owes her a big "thanks" for many hours of work on this project.



New Hampshire Coverts Project Workshop by Al Ports

Earlier this fall, I had the good fortune of being selected to attend the third annual New Hampshire Coverts Project Workshop which was held September 11 through 14 at the 4-H camp at Bear Brook State Park in Allenstown, New Hampshire. What is a covert? (pronounced "cover" with a "t") A covert is simply a thicket that provides shelter for wildlife.

The Coverts Project has been established largely in the Northeast. New Hampshire's program was established in 1995 sponsored by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, The Ruffed Grouse Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Coverts Project is a special volunteer education and outreach program in which individuals learn how sound forestry management practices enhance wildlife habitat. Its goal is to increase the amount of New Hampshire private and public lands managed with good stewardship practices. Participants become part of a state-wide volunteer network connected through newsletters, field trips and workshops.

During the four days we were at camp, there were lectures and field trips to view various timber management (and mismanagement!) practices. Lecturers and leaders of the field trips included representatives from New Hampshire Fish and Game, County Foresters, and others. Among the various topics that were introduced were the concepts of biodiversity, forest and wildlife ecology, forest and wildlife management planning, estate planning and land protection.

Although I don't own any significant amount of land now, as a director of the Quincy Bog Natural Area, a Trustee of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, and a real estate broker, I have many opportunities to discuss, encourage, and hopefully educate others in the art of managing New Hampshire's woodlands with good stewardship practices.

As a new Coverts Project Cooperator what do I have to do? Specifically Cooperators agree to:

1. Develop a sound forest and wildlife management plan for their own land or for a woodland they are involved in managing.
2. Maintain, for at least one year, an up-to-date set

of reference materials (provided by the Coverts Project) and be available to answer questions others may have.

3. Volunteer 40 hours to outreach activities that motivate others in their community.

Would you be interested in being a Coverts Cooperator? Anyone interested in wildlife conservation is encouraged to apply for one of the 25 slots available in the annual fall training workshop. Landowners, teachers, business people, conservation commissioners, land trust staff, conservation group officers, resource professionals and others are encouraged to apply. Of course you have to be willing to sleep in unheated cabins on bunk beds that have seen better days, but the food is good, there is always a warm fire in the dining hall fireplace and there is no charge for attending. It is an extremely worthwhile experience and I encourage anyone who has interest to apply. I have applications and would be glad to send one to you.

A Note from Summer Naturalist Stacy Luke

As I write this note, I am in Pecos, Texas watching the sun come up through the plate glass windows of the local McDonald's. I am traveling across the country with a cynical Irishman who has nothing but complaints about America. But, as I watch the sun rise over the Southwestern chaparral, I can't help but think of the treasures America has. As a clarifying note, I am talking about the environment, not about McDonald's!

I have now spent three summers at the Quincy Bog Natural Area and as you undoubtedly know, it is one of the most precious of all places. Maybe this fact is taken for granted for us who have already experienced it. Being at the Bog this past summer, I was able to observe something many of us so-called "Bog People" might have forgotten. As bored spouses of Gordon Research Conference attendees came straggling into the Nature Center, as young adventurers came looking for one more hike to add to their list of accomplishments, and as even younger boys from the Wreath School were forced to come to the Bog by their teachers, I was able to see people fall in love with the beauty and tranquillity of the place. I was able to see the excitement in their eyes as they absorbed all that was around them. I was able to see the Quincy Bog become one of those places that stays within you for life. I am honored that I had a part of that.

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Note from Summer Naturalist Stacy Luke

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Well, breakfast is over. The sun has risen and the McDonald's employees still look perplexed at why this incredibly pale girl is sitting near the window looking like she has never seen the sun rise before. I am about to travel from this quaint Texas town to Tucson. Today I will see some of the America's treasured desert land. But I will still keep the magnificence of one Northeastern wetland in mind. I am not alone in doing so. As for my ever-so criticizing travel buddy, hopefully we will drop his guard for just a little while. If he decides to look, maybe he will see all the beauty that surrounds him. I do.

Thanks Thanks Thanks

To everyone who volunteered their time and efforts at the Quincy Bog during 1997, we want to express a big boggy **THANKS!** Thanks to the volunteers who staffed the Nature Center during the summer; to everyone who worked on trails, relocating portions that have become too worn, putting "cookies" in wet spots, strengthening bridges, and cutting tree falls; to the walk leaders who shared their knowledge of trees, shrubs, ferns and flowers, birds and general ecology; to the summer naturalists who helped us learn more about the Bog and share it with all interested visitors; to the volunteer writers, editors and proof-readers of the various Quincy Bog publications; to Directors who gave hours of time in the always necessary administrative work of the organization. Your names are too numerous to list but please accept a big "Thank You" for the generosity of your time.

Winter at Quincy Bog

Visitors sometimes ask, "Is the Bog open in the Winter?" Well, of course it is - it's kind of hard to close a bog! The Nature Center is closed, but the trails are open and are used frequently during the winter months. Many visitors snowshoe the trails or the pond itself (once it freezes solid), and once the snow has gotten packed, other folks walk.

Quincy Bog is a "different place" in winter. The peaceful quiet of a Sunday afternoon walk, enjoying the sunshine while passing by the ledges warms the soul as well as the body. Walking through the pines and hemlocks after a fresh snowfall is truly other-worldly.

The Great Blue Herons have gone south for the winter (to return in mid-April) but several resident and a few visiting bird species are often found. Small flocks of Black-capped Chickadees usually scold winter visitors while Red and White-breasted Nuthatches sound their nasally "yank yank yank". Blue Jays generally call and Hairy Woodpeckers (or an occasional

Downy or Pileated) drum on their trees. Visiting Cedar Waxwings or White-winged Crossbills will occasionally put in an appearance.

Yes, "the Bog is Open." Please stop by for a visit.

Please Be A Friend of Quincy Bog

The work of preserving Quincy Bog Natural Area depends on you. The Bog depends on Volunteers and Friends. The summer programs, summer naturalists, materials for trail maintenance, printing of the Trail Guide, other interpretative literature and the twice-yearly Quincy Bog Notes newsletter, electricity and telephone at the Nature Center and research to learn more about Quincy Bog are all funded by contributions from Friends of the Quincy Bog. Inside this newsletter is a flyer asking you to continue your friendship with the Bog. Please respond with whatever contribution you can afford. Preservation of the Quincy Bog Natural Area depends on each of us.

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