



# 2016 Annual Report

*The SLA is dedicated to conserving for public benefit the natural beauty, peaceful character and resources of the watershed since 1904.*



*The Squam Lakes Association is dedicated to conserving for the public benefit the natural beauty, peaceful character and unique resource values of the lakes and surrounding watershed. In cooperation with local and state authorities and other conservation organizations, the Association promotes the protection, careful use and shared enjoyment of the lakes, mountains, open spaces and wildlife of the Squam Lakes region.*

## **Board of Directors**

Eve Porter-Zuckerman, *President*  
Bob Lucic, *1st Vice President*  
Barry Gaw, *2nd Vice President*  
Scott Littlejohn, *Treasurer*  
Peter Walcott, *Secretary*

## **Directors:**

Annalee Abelson	PJ Blankenhorn
Joe Boyer	John Coolidge
James Elcock	Sandy Harris
Charlotte Kingham	Sandra Lehner
Cindy O'Leary	Sue Smith
Carolyn Tolles	

## **President Emeritus**

Tim O. Fisher

## **Committees**

Conservation  
Education & Outreach  
Development  
Finance & Asset Management  
Nominating

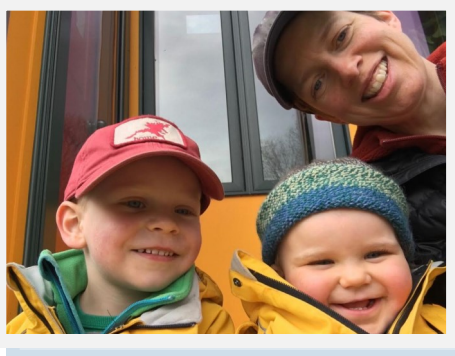
## **From Board President, Eve Porter-Zuckerman**

2016 brought to life one of the great strengths of the Squam Lakes Association—community—in building and planning our strategic plan for these next five years. The board dove into the work, ably guided by consultant Alan Cantor, and wove together input from the membership and partner organizations; creative ideas, expertise and perspective from the staff, our committees, and full board discussion to produce the plan outlined in the letter from EB James on the next page.

The new plan addresses two key themes: grounding our work in science, and building capacity to make the SLA a year-round force for science-based conservation, educating and supporting watershed stewards of all types. With solid goals and a flexible approach, the plan is both ambitious and realistic. The full board's unanimous vote for the plan reflected our confidence in the strength and potential of the organization.

As you'll see in this report, 2016 was an active year, with a range of conservation and engagement work by our Squam Conservation Interns, progress on the watershed plan, an increased level of activity by volunteers and outdoor enthusiasts across the many resources we maintain, and people of all ages learning through our variety of programs. This report also has something new – an early look at 2017, woven in throughout.

I'd like to thank this wonderful community, our dedicated board, our growing network of volunteers, EB and the full SLA team for the privilege of serving as board president these last few years, and more importantly for actively helping the SLA fulfil its mission to conserve this glorious place.



Sincerely,

Eve Porter-Zuckerman

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The 2016 SLA Annual Report produced by SLA staff, July 2017. Photos by SLA staff unless otherwise credited.  
Design and edits by Melissa Leszek.

## **SLA Senior Staff**

E.B. James, *Executive Director*  
 Priscilla Bartholomew, *Office Manager*  
 Brett Durham, *Director of Operations*  
 Rebecca Hanson, *Director of Conservation*  
 Brian Gagnon, *Volunteer Coordinator*  
 Torey Lee, *Interim Director of Education*  
 Melissa Leszek, *Development Associate & Communications Coordinator*  
 Jennifer Walker, *Director of Education*



## **2017 JSLA/CYSP Staff**

JSLA: Kyle Salmons (*JSLA Camp Director*), Savannah Bailey, Kelly Thomsen, Margaret Grant, Nadia Minart, Michael Czerwinski, Jonathan Morris  
 CYSP: Emily Conaton (*Lead Instructor*), Jack Conaton (*Assistant Instructor*), & Claire Gormley (*Junior Instructor*)

## **2017 Squam Conservation Interns**

Katri Gurney (*SCI Manager*), Elizabeth Wolf, Jonathan Brock, Dominique Tarr, Alice Goldstein-Plessner, Tamara Few, Stephen Ramage, Eric Glover, Rebecca Cohler, Riley Harris, & Nathaniel Dulaney

## **2017 Resource Center Staff**

Margaret Gaiero, Clayton Smith, & Stephen Raymond III

## **2016 JSLA/CYSP Staff**

JSLA: Torey Lee (*Assistant JSLA Director*), Sophia Czerwinski, Savannah Bailey, Clark Macomber, Michael Czerwinski, Margaret Grant, Jacob Clark  
 CYSP: Parker Caswell, Claire Gormley, Julianne Mozzer, & Emily Conaton

## **2016 Squam Conservation Interns**

Connor Piechota (*SCI Manager*), Margaret Gaireo, Katri Gurney, Jordan Jones, Margaret Kelly, Stephen Raymond III, Olivia Roberts, Giovanni Senes, Erin Shilling, & Kyle Zollo-Venecek

## **2016 Resource Center Staff**

Beth Derr, Pete Saunders, Jamie King, & Ryan Mahar



## From Executive Director, E.B. James

2016 was a very big year for the Squam Lakes Association. It was a year where we assessed where we have been, took a look at where we wanted to go, and started making some big plans. We worked our way through the development of the Squam Lakes Watershed Plan. This plan is a guidepost to what should be done to ensure that the high quality/high value resource we have today remains into the distant future.

The plan, almost completed, we will be working on the specific bio-physical standards into 2017. This plan is key to engaging State and Federal partnerships on projects like storm water management controls. In 2016 we created a new strategic plan. We successfully completed the last plan, focused on establishing systems and capacity and strengthening the core work we do. This new plan focuses on four areas to drive the mission forward. Each of these areas includes enhancing and building on our partnerships with other organizations and businesses to protect Squam.

Finally, 2016 marks the end of Eve Porter-Zuckerman's three year term as president. Under her leadership our conservation work has increased and the organization is ready for, and has planned, the next capacity move forward. It has been a pleasure to work with such an enthusiastic and strategic leader. Thank you Eve!



### 1. **Monitor and maintain water quality year-round, with active, responsive efforts**

Maintain and build on existing water quality monitoring efforts; Address emerging areas of concern/threats to water quality and wildlife; Actively address established invasive species and prevent new invasives; Build more active partnerships with similar and complementary organizations to put our challenges in a broader context, and to take effective action.

### 2. **Revitalize the SLA's trail system**

Secure legal trail protections to ensure the existence of the trail system in the future; Construct, upgrade, and expand trails to provide ample opportunity for different experiences and to distribute use; Develop a management system that will protect the most heavily used trails; Inspire and build a trail community to provide grassroots support and guidance.

### 3. **Improve the SLA campus to effectively convey and support watershed conservation**

Integrate green building goals and native plantings in a completed master plan; Improve the barn area as a meeting and activity space; Improve the main building area to better interpret the watershed and the SLA's work; Build an accessible, educational path to and along the waterfront, allowing people of all abilities the opportunity to explore and learn about Squam.

### 4. **Expand education and communications to ensure a sustainable community of watershed stewards**

Update and execute a communications plan that provides consistent and effective conservation messaging; Establish the SLA's website as a one-stop access point for members and the public for Squam information and science-based conservation resources; Review and revise our volunteer programs to broaden opportunities, clarify standards and guidance, and strengthen the volunteer community; Explore expanding our programs to include more opportunities for teenagers to provide learning experiences at all stages and ages; Expand education programming through partnerships with other organizations to effectively create and reach a broadening constituency.

To achieve these goals we are going to expand our seasonal staff into a year round presence. In 2017 we have been experimenting with a larger than usual internship. In the fall of 2017 and through 2018 we will partner with Volunteer NH and AmeriCorps to expand our work force through the fall and winter. We have been able to drive back and contain milfoil in our short summer season. Now it's time to expand the effort and take on terrestrial invasives, stay on the trails deep into the winter, and provide meaningful learning experiences for kids, adults, and families across the calendar. We look forward to this growing effort.



# Treasurer's Report & Financial Summary

## Squam Lakes Association 2016 Financial Summary

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	
<b>Operating Revenue</b>			
Program fees	\$ 242,655	\$ 236,095	2.8%
Contributions	178,226	150,127	18.7%
Dues	141,200	155,645	-9.3%
Transfers from Squam Lakes Fund	89,952	87,713	2.6%
Grants	42,534	37,962	12.0%
Other	40,295	40,382	NM
Total	\$ 734,862	\$ 707,924	3.8%
<b>Operating Expenses</b>			
<i>Program Services</i>			
Outreach and recreation	\$ 115,415	\$ 110,220	4.7%
Conservation and education	105,513	101,067	4.4%
Natural areas	326,399	316,291	3.2%
Total Program Services	547,327	527,578	NM
General operations	97,954	93,834	4.4%
Fundraising	3,691	3,555	3.8%
Total	\$ 648,972	\$ 624,967	3.8%
<b>Net Revenues from Operations</b>	\$ 85,890	\$ 82,957	3.5%
Depreciation expense	\$ (59,292)	\$ (57,859)	
Change in unrealized investment gains	(447,713)	(9,465)	
Interest and dividends	37,746	40,271	
Realized investment gains (losses)	634,536	(61,423)	
<i>Transfer from Squam Lakes Fund</i>	(89,952)	(87,713)	
Increase in net assets for the year	\$ 161,215	\$ (93,232)	
<b>Total Net Assets</b>			
Tangible assets	\$ 8,851,176	\$ 8,524,536	
LESS: Accumulated Depreciation	(917,048)	(857,755)	
Total assets	\$ 7,934,128	\$ 7,666,781	
LESS: Liabilities	(111,901)	(117,670)	
Total Net Assets	\$ 7,822,227	\$ 7,549,111	

# Treasurer's Report & Financial Summary

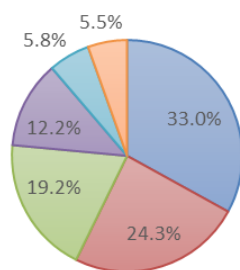
The fiscal year ended December 31, 2016, and net revenues from operations totaled \$85,890, relatively unchanged from the prior year. Compared to the prior year, total operating revenues increased approximately \$27,000 (4%) while total operating expenses increased by approximately \$25,000 (4%). Operating revenues exclude any realized capital gains, or changes to the unrealized gain account for our investment portfolio, which totaled \$634,534 and (\$447,713), respectively, for the fiscal year 2016. To fund its annual operating expenses, the SLA sources most of its operating revenues from member support (43%), program fees (33%) and grants (6%). For 2016, \$89,952 (12%) of total operating revenue was derived via funds systematically transferred on a quarterly basis from our Squam Lakes Fund investment account.

The SLA's net assets at December 31, 2016 were \$7,822,227, an increase of 3.6% compared with the prior year end balance. Our largest asset class is real estate (land and buildings), with a recorded value of \$5.1 million at year end 2016. Also included in our net assets are highly liquid and marketable investment securities of \$3.3 million (relatively unchanged from the prior year), which are managed to provide recurring income for operations and to fund projects of the organization, while maintaining a risk profile that minimizes the probability for the loss of principal. Our investment portfolio is primarily comprised of mutual funds and low cost passive funds linked to market indices for public equity and fixed income securities. All of our investment securities have public valuations that are readily available, and are stated at fair market value. Our investment results continue to track broad market indices, weighted relative to our portfolio allocation by asset class.

Our financial statements are audited by Rowley & Associates, P.C. and are prepared based on generally accepted accounting principles for non-profit organizations. We are pleased to report that the SLA has received a clean audit opinion for our financial statements for the fiscal year 2016. The SLA audited financial statements and footnotes are available on our website.

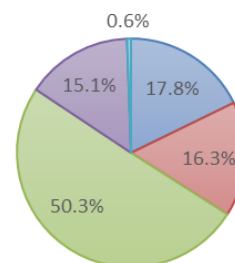
Respectfully Submitted,  
 Scott Littlejohn  
 Treasurer

Operating Revenue



- Program fees
- Dues
- Grants
- Contributions
- Transfers from Squam Lakes Fund
- Other

Operating Expenses



- Outreach and recreation
- Natural areas
- Fundraising
- Conservation and education
- General operations

## REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The goal of the SLA Development Committee for the past few years has been to support the SLA's capacity for fundraising by engaging major donors in our strategic planning and annual goals, increasing the success of our Annual Appeal, and increasing the connection between our donors with SLA leaders and board members.

This past year, the Development Committee took the lead to guide the creation of our new strategic plan for the next 3-5 years. The board spent the summer and fall of 2016 completing the new plan, creating the budget scenarios and outlining the major goals. One key result of the plan is that the SLA needs to increase its annual operating budget and therefore its fundraising capacity. It was decided by the board that it was time to hire a Director of Development, who will be instrumental in implementing the new strategic plan.

Respectfully Submitted,

PJ Blankenhorn  
Carolyn Tolles  
Co-Chairs



Above: Laurence J. Webster, the first President and founder of the Squam Lakes Association in 1904.



## SLA's 1904 Planned Giving Society An interview with Tim O. Fisher

By Melissa Leszek, Development Associate



The Squam Lakes Association's 1904 Society honors those contributors who have helped protect the future of the Squam watershed through a planned gift. Since its establishment in 1904 by Laurence J. Webster, the Squam Lakes Association has worked to safeguard the unique resources of the lakes and surrounding watershed for the public benefit. A founding member of the 1904 Society is former director and President Emeritus, Tim Fisher (pictured here). Tim and his family have supported conservation of the Squam watershed his entire life.

"Protecting this resource is part of my soul and being," said Tim. "The conservation culture is deeply embedded in the Webster Family. Some of my happiest memories have been on Squam."

The Squam Lakes Association was the leading conservation non-profit organization on Squam very early on, and the second oldest lakes association in the country. Today, those who visit Squam go to enjoy its pristine, natural beauty that is hard to find anywhere else, but it wasn't always this way. At the turn of the century, the surrounding mountains were cleared by logging, sawdust several feet thick had settled in many of the coves, driftwood made navigation hazardous, and waste, including tires, mattresses, and other human-caused rubbish had been dumped in the lakes.

"For over a century, a highly supportive conservation community has helped develop the SLA into what it is today, keeping Squam healthy," said Tim, "but it is a continuous effort."

Today, the SLA has a unique mission governing the use and management of the watershed through education, research, and low-impact recreation programs. However, Squam is facing modern threats the community could not have anticipated 100 years ago. Invasive species, road salt impacts, rising temperatures, and chemical impacts to water quality are all realities that need to be addressed. Through this lens, we look to the future. What do we want the Squam watershed to look like in ten years, or in twenty years? How do we see our future generations enjoying this rich resource?

"A planned gift is just one way to broaden the efforts of the SLA's mission," said Tim. "It truly feels good to be a part of the protection of Squam for generations to come."

*Bequests to the SLA support SLA's mission to conserve for public benefit the natural beauty, peaceful character and resources of the watershed not provided for in the annual operating budget. For more information about the SLA's 1904 Society call SLA at (603) 968-7336 or Email: [info@squamlakes.org](mailto:info@squamlakes.org).*





# Access & Trails Report

By Brett Durham, Director of Operations



We worked hard in 2016 getting people out and about in the Squam watershed through camping, hiking, paddling, sailing, and running. The Squam Conservation Internship (SCI) was in its fifth year making 2016 the biggest class yet! A total of nine interns, along with volunteers and other staff, rebuilt three tent platforms to help facilitate the 996 camping nights reserved. We had over 1,141 people out on rental boats, some of which were converted to adaptive vessels capable of safely enabling people with a wide range of physical and/or intellectual disabilities access to paddling on Squam.

The trails have seen some of the love as well with over 50 people putting in more than 380 hours of trail work for the year. Whitten Woods is the newest addition to our trail system, up and running with blazes and signs leading people to two small peaks that overlook the Squam Lakes and the surrounding watershed. Whitten Woods is a great partnership with SLCS, NEFF, and LCHIP. You may also have noticed the new trail markers popping up on our trail system. We have started to phase out the only yellow trail system in favor of a more navigation friendly color-coded system. This new system should help people navigate our trails with ease. The Old Bridle Path up to the top of West Rattlesnake, our most popular hike, was home to our first full summer of Trail Hosting. SLA staff counted 12,975 people hiking the Old Bridle Path. Those 12,975 people were all counted in only 40 days of trailhead staffing. This averages to 52 hikers per hour, with a one day average of 122 hikers per hour.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Squam Ridge Race was also a success, raising approximately \$23,000 in cash and in-kind donations from 141 registered runners and 72 businesses. It was a cool rainy stormy day that still brought out 113 participants & 73 volunteers to the event. The Squam Ridge Race was even featured on NHPR by reporter Sean Hurley: (<http://nhpr.org/post/12-mile-run-through-nh-mountains-squam-ridge-race>). A very special thank you to the Webster Family, Webster Land Corp, and Burleigh Land Limited Partnership for providing the trails, access, and venue for this race.

**Top photo:** 2016 Squam Conservation Interns do trail work in the Squam Range.

**Middle photo:** The SLA joins Eastern Adaptive Sports for a day of hiking at Whitten Woods.

**Bottom photo:** Runners at the 2016 Squam Ridge Race awards ceremony.

## Looking ahead into 2017

We are excited to have even more interns as we gain one more, bringing us to ten SCI interns in 2017. This growth in our internship was inspired by an AmeriCorps grant opportunity that will grow and change the internship program even more, morphing into an AmeriCorps Lakes Region Conservation Corps. In 2017 we will renew our focus on trails using the expanded capacity of our internship to bring one new trail online, and performing some much needed trailway hardening on the Old Bridle Path along with the help of the UNH Office of Woodlands and Natural Areas Land Coordinator, Steve Eisenhauer. We will also be involving the community around Rattlesnake to host “Friends of Rattlesnake” meetings, and will finish our new blazing system on the Rattlesnakes and several other high use areas.

New memories will be made by people paddling, camping, and hiking the trails around Squam. We have several adaptive hiking programs planned with our friends over at Eastern Adaptive Sports. These programs will help people explore the watershed in ways many never thought possible. Our camping and boat rentals programs will continue giving people quiet recreational opportunities on Squam. For those looking for a little more intensity and competition the Squam Ridge Race will be returning for its fifth year on Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Already, many of the runners and volunteers say that they are looking forward to this event. Squam’s watershed will be alive with nature and people out exploring and enjoying the lake, shoreline, woods, hills and mountains around Squam.

## REPORT OF THE EDUCATION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Education Committee continues to work with SLA Administration and Staff to support and expand education programming to ensure a sustainable community of watershed stewards. As outlined in the Strategic Plan, in addition to offering summer programs for youth, adults and families, the SLA has been expanding its year-round education activities.

Throughout the year, the SLA offered to the public family programs and well-received monthly lectures on a variety of topics. We continue to explore opportunities to broaden our engagement with residents of our watershed communities, including partnerships with local schools, colleges and other organizations.

Our Committee would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to the SLA's departing Director of Education, Jenne Walker. Under Jenne's dedicated leadership, the SLA enriched and expanded existing education programs and offered new experiences to our community's youth and adults. Jenne's passion for environmental education, organizational skills, and creativity enriched our organization, and we thank Jenne for her 9 years of leadership.

Finally, our Committee is deeply saddened by the death of long-standing and beloved Committee member Tom Beal. In his decades of service as a member of the Education and other SLA Committees, Tom's dedication, intelligence and insight immeasurably enriched our organization and inspired generations of environmental stewards. We are privileged to have served with Tom, whose legacy lives on in the SLA's programs.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Charlotte Kingham  
Chair



## Education Program Report

By Torey Lee, Interim Director of Education

From our JSLA programs to our Canoe Classic Bass Fishing Tournament series, the Squam Lakes Association's education program continues to grow and find success in many ways. Led by Education Director, Jenne Walker, and Director of Youth Programs, Torey Lee (pictured here), our education program is a huge part of our conservation mission.



The Junior Squam Lakes Association brought adventure, exploration, and environmental stewardship to 3rd to 9th graders. In a typical week, campers learn about Leave No Trace practices, forest composition, water ecology, paddling techniques and rescues, and much more!

This summer saw an increased focus on ecological and nature programming, and environmental and educational resources were developed in order to assist the six Environmental Leaders in guiding campers to discover their connection with nature. The new leadership in the Community Youth Sailing Program rose to the challenge to provide meaningful and instructional experiences to young sailors. Both the Optimist and Club Junior programs were well attended, with several campers returning for multiple weeks.

In addition to our Youth Programs, the SLA offered monthly speaker series, weekly Adventure Ecology outings given by the Squam Conservation Interns throughout the summer, and three Bass Fishing Tournaments. Wednesday Night Drop-In Sailing, led by our CYSP instructors, offered adults the opportunity to sail our JY, Capri, and Lightning sailboats. In order to capture and foster a broader age range of future environmental stewards, the SLA hopes to offer a teen-oriented summer camp in 2018, including a multi-night expedition in the White Mountains for 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders.



*We are grateful to Jenne Walker for her 9 years of directing the SLA's education programming. One of her many accomplishments was implementing a 9-year rotation for JSLA camp so that campers experience different aspects of the watershed each year! The SLA will continue to build on Jenne's successes—a very special thank you, Jenne!*





## Education Highlights of 2016:

### Speaker Series:

The SLA hosted monthly speakers to educate the public on and rally behind relevant environmental topics in the northeast. Programs included “Ice Age Geology of the Squam Lakes and Mountains” with Woody Thompson and the Maine Geological Survey, “Bee Keeping” with the Pemi-Baker Bee Keepers Association, and “What is Your Water Worth” with the New Hampshire Lakes Association.

### Squam Canoe Classic: Bass Fishing Tournament Series:

The SLA in conjunction with Eastern Adaptive Sports hosted a three-part bass fishing tournament with a total of 30 angler participants. The tournaments were family oriented and helped spread awareness of New Hampshire’s 2016 Lead Tackle ban.

### Adventure Ecology:

Each Friday of the summer, Squam Conservation Interns led educational outings open to the public to showcase some of the many talents of SLA staff. Programs included “Backcountry Cooking: More Than Just Granola Bars and Trail Mix” and “Canoeing and Chemistry: How the Water Cycle Works.”

### Junior Squam Lakes Association:

The JSLA Summer Camp served 163 participants in 2016. Camper favorites were paddling the Pemi-Baker river, camping on Hoag Island (thank you, Coolidge family!), and competing in the Squam Olympics!

### Community Youth Sailing Program:

Total participation in the CYSP Summer Camp increased from 51 participants in 2015 to 67 participants in 2016. In 2017 we will



**The Squam Lakes Association** offers a variety of educational programs for all ages. We strive to provide information, activities and experiences that enable people of all ages to discover the world around them. Through many different program opportunities we hope to instill and encourage everyone to care for all flora and fauna in the world locally and globally by letting people feel, smell and hear aspects of nature and culture here in the Squam Lakes watershed. Through these experiences here on Squam we hope that everyone will be able to make informed choices to act in a more sustainable way and thereby support the conservation of nature and natural resources as a whole.



## REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

*Congratulations!* to Rebecca Hanson (pictured below), SLA Director of Conservation, on her completion of her Master's Degree in Environmental Science & Policy from Plymouth State University. The committee would like to thank her and Brett Durham for their support to the committee, along with the many water quality monitors, weed watchers, and trail adopters.



The SLA Conservation Committee advises the Board of Directors about existing or recommended policies and programs relative to human interactions in the following areas:

- Ecological monitoring
- Water quality
- Invasive species control
- Lake use
- Land conservation
- Trail, recreational facilities, and natural areas management, and
- Conserving the natural beauty of the watershed.

The committee works collaboratively with other SLA committees and external institutions and agencies to identify and implement research to promote the conservation of the Squam Lakes Watershed. The committee supports the new strategic plan and the broadening of our efforts of increasing the scientific study of water monitoring, invasive species and the prevention of new invasives.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Coolidge  
Chair

*The SLA's conservation work, along with the work of our partners, is summarized in the 2017 Squam Watershed Report.*



## Growing SLA's Mission with an AmeriCorps Program

*By Katri Gurney, Intern Manager*

The Squam Conservation Interns (SCI) worked tirelessly to continue the SLA's conservation initiatives over the summer of 2016. The nine interns spent the summer removing variable milfoil, overseeing campsites, maintaining trails, educating the public, monitoring water quality, and helping with the SLA's day-to-day mission. Every weekday, June through August, our intern dive crew worked to remove variable milfoil from the Squam waterbodies. Collectively, they removed a total of 3,717 gallons of variable milfoil with most of their efforts concentrated in the Squam River. Every night a pair of interns spent the evening appreciating the serenity of Squam while acting as hosts and maintenance crews for our island campsites. Every weekend an intern worked as a trail host at Old Bridle Path, where they met and spoke with the hundreds of people drawn to the region to hike West Rattlesnake. One intern commented that her interactions with the hikers allowed her to truly understand the unique and special quality of the Squam region. The impact of the SCI program is undeniable; milfoil growth is reduced, the trails are better maintained, water quality monitoring has increased, and the SLA continues to expand its capacity to fulfill its mission.



During the strategic and watershed planning process the SLA was determined to take greater action towards the protection of the Squam watershed. In June of 2017, the SLA received funding from AmeriCorps for a regional conservation program. The grant will enable us to run a 10 person AmeriCorps crew from May through October, and a five person crew in the winter months. Imagine the significant impact of a year-round crew on our mission!

Boaters will spot Millie, the SLA's milfoil removal boat, cruising the Squam waterbodies with a four person AmeriCorps dive crew removing variable milfoil from May through September. AmeriCorps members will not only take weekly water quality samples in the summer, but will also trek out onto the ice in the winter months in order to collect more comprehensive data on the health of Squam. Our educational capacity will increase, with AmeriCorps members leading adventure ecology programs in every season, transforming our headquarters into an education center, and spearheading independent research projects on the Squam watershed. The expansion of the SCI program into an AmeriCorps program will significantly increase SLA's impact in the region and allow SLA to continue to grow.



## 2017 Squam Watershed Report

*the Annual Report of Conservation Work in the Squam Watershed  
compiled and published by the Squam Lakes Association*























# 2017 Squam Watershed Report

*the SLA's annual report of conservation work in the Squam Watershed*

Since 1904, the Squam Lakes Association (SLA) has been committed to protecting and improving the Squam Lakes and Watershed. While each season brings a new set of challenges, our continued progress and success ensuring the health of the lakes are apparent. This year, we piloted the ten person Squam Conservation Internship (SCI) and have plans to transform the program to a year-round conservation team that will drive our mission forward. This group will tackle terrestrial and aquatic invasive species removal, build new hiking trails, improve the existing trail network, monitor more water quality sites around the shore and tributaries, and support the completion of the Squam Watershed Plan. This new program enhances our understanding of water quality dynamics, develops conservation leaders, and protects this special place from lake to summit to sky.

For the SLA and our conservation partners, 2016 marked another successful year in our mission to conserve the Squam Watershed. We continued our 37-year-old water quality program with the support of private donors and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation by incorporating three new water quality meters. Our success in variable milfoil removal in Big Squam enabled us to concentrate efforts in the Squam River, pulling a greater volume of milfoil than we did in the previous year. To support land conservation in the watershed, we continued the steady attack on terrestrial invasive species, actively maintained existing trails, and developed a network of SLA trails throughout the Squam Range. This past year we engaged the local community in updating the Squam Watershed Plan through multiple public involvement opportunities including meetings, surveys, and visioning sessions. In partnership with Plymouth State University, SLA hosted two Master's thesis research projects.

This fifth annual report is primarily composed of data gathered in 2016. The successes outlined here serve as a launching pad for the Squam Watershed Plan as we build and strengthen our conservation programs into the future and continue to protect the Squam Watershed for generations to come.

Parameter	Current State
Water Quality 	 healthy
Milfoil-Squam Lake 	 fair, improving
Milfoil-Little Squam Lake 	 fair, improving
Milfoil-Squam River 	 impaired, improving
Loons 	 impaired
Land Conservation and Trails	 healthy, improving
Fishery-Coldwater 	 fair, improving
Fishery-Warmwater 	 healthy
Boating  	 fair
Terrestrial Invasives 	 fair, improving

## Get Involved!

**Participate.** Protect the Squam Lakes Watershed for present and future generations.

**Volunteer.** Help monitor the watershed for the proactive protection of lake resources.

**Support.** Be a champion of the SLA's mission by donating.





The Squam Lakes continued to display excellent water quality in 2016. Main indicators include water transparency, measured with Secchi disks, chlorophyll levels, and total phosphorus. These data points allow us to track the aging of Squam. As lakes transform over thousands of years—from clear, glacial lakes to nutrient enriched, plant and algae-filled eutrophic lakes—water transparency decreases and chlorophyll and phosphorous levels increase. We monitor these parameters across the lake to understand if human activities are accelerating Squam’s aging process. We are happy to report that all monitoring sites on the lake fall within New Hampshire’s healthy water standards.

In addition to the regular water quality monitoring, the SLA collaborates with researchers at Plymouth State University (PSU) who focus on water quality in the Squam Watershed. PSU graduate student Anju Shrestha recently completed her Master’s thesis on phosphorous concentrations in Squam tributaries during storm events. Her research suggests phosphorous concentrations vary during storm events, and levels are at their highest during peak flow. This research will have meaningful implications for the Squam Watershed Plan to help identify areas and inform design plans for phosphorous reduction.

PSU’s professor Lisa Doner has implemented a series of temperature sensors in Squam’s deepest point, near Deephaven Reef. These sensors record the temperature at every meter in 15 minute intervals; the frequency of data collection provides insight into how weather conditions impact lake conditions. The February 2014 through May 2017 temperature profile is displayed below.

Year-round monitoring of Deephaven Reef is complemented by ice-in and ice-out monitoring by a camera on the summit of West Rattlesnake. We will also install weather stations near Deephaven Reef and at SLA headquarters to further understand temperature dynamics in Squam. Data gathered from this collaborative project will help us understand the impacts of a changing climate and variable weather patterns on Squam.

	transparency (meters)	chlorophyll (ppb)	Phosphorus (ppb)
Sandwich Bay	8.7	1.8	6.1
Kent Island	9.5	1.4	7.2
Moultonboro Bay	8.3	1.6	6.7
Sturtevant Bay	7.8	1.6	6.4
Dog Cove	6.7	1.8	6.8
Piper Cove	7.2	1.9	7.3
Cotton Cove	5.7	1.8	7.9
Livermore Cove	7.3	2.1	6.2
Rattlesnake Cove	7.7	2.2	5.0
Deephaven	9.9	2.1	5.1
Loon Reef	10.5	1.5	4.1
Little Squam West	7.8	1.9	6.7
Little Squam East	7.8	1.9	5.6

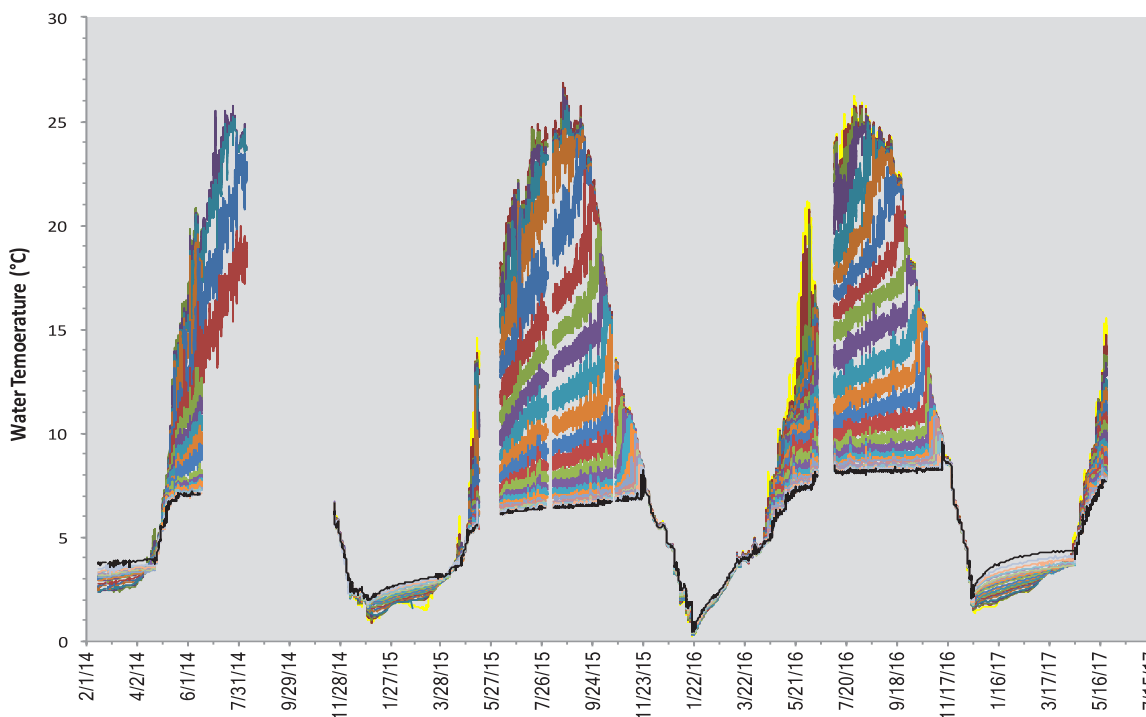
NH DES  
healthy waters limit

deeper than 4 meters

less than 3 parts per billion

less than 8 parts per billion

Squam Lake Deephaven Water Temperatures 2014-2017



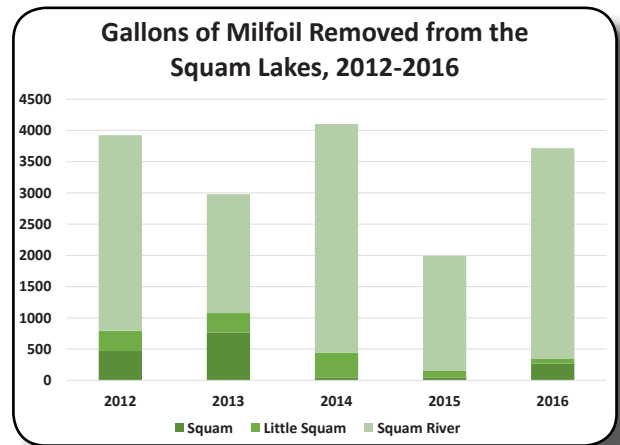
26m  
 25m  
 24m  
 23m  
 22m  
 21m  
 20m  
 19m  
 18m  
 17m  
 16m  
 15m  
 14m  
 13m  
 12m  
 11m  
 10m  
 9m  
 8m  
 7m  
 6m  
 5m  
 4m  
 3m  
 2m  
 1m

Values are in meters above anchor: 1 m is nearest the bottom (black line), 26 m is nearest the water surface (yellow line)  
 Water depth varied from 27-29 m. The uppermost sensor was usually within 3 m of the water surface.  
 In 2015-15, buoy placement water depth precluded the 26 m sensor. Temps are at 15 minute intervals

# Variable Milfoil Management

data collected by the SLA

The warm winter months and early ice-out of 2016 resulted in a high volume of grow back of variable milfoil across the Squam Lakes waterbodies. The 3,717 gallons removed in 2016 reflects the intense regrowth as well as the increased effort in the thick milfoil areas in the Squam River. Milfoil growth continues to remain low and controlled in Big and Little Squam – the DASH (Diver Assisted Suction Harvester) is now primarily used in Squam River. Areas of the River remain dominated in by milfoil, but in 2016 we dedicated 76% of removal time to this portion of the Squam waterbodies. We hope that in years to come our efforts continue to push milfoil downstream and work toward eradication from all Squam waterbodies.



# Common Loons

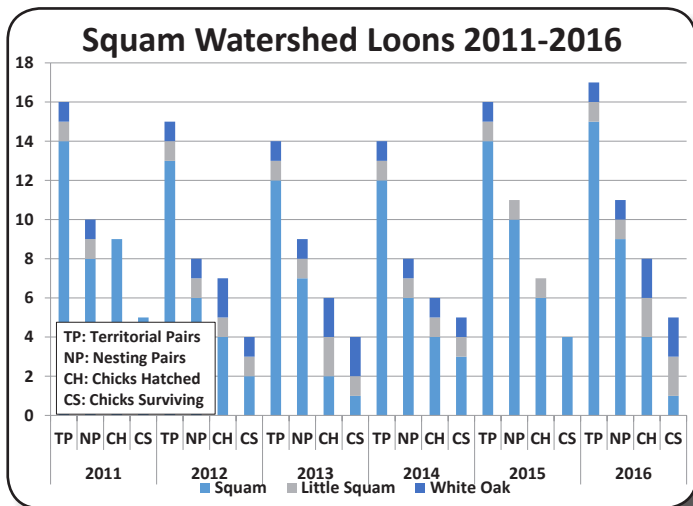


data collected by the Loon Preservation Committee

There were 17 nesting pairs of loons in the Squam Watershed in 2016. Loons on Big Squam produced just one viable chick in 2016. However, two loon chicks survived in both Little Squam Lake and White Oak Pond. In 2016 New Hampshire legally restricted the sale and freshwater use of lead fishing sinkers and jigs weighing one ounce or less. As lead poisoning from ingested lead fishing tackle is the leading known cause of adult loon mortality in New Hampshire, this new law will help reduce loon mortality on Squam.



Photo: Kittie Wilson



Support Squam Loons! Use only non-lead fishing tackle, stay at least 150 feet away from loons, respect signed and roped nesting areas, and boat slowly through areas that have loon chicks. Please report any sick, injured, or dead loons to the Loon Preservation Committee at (603) 476-5666 and visit [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org) for more information.

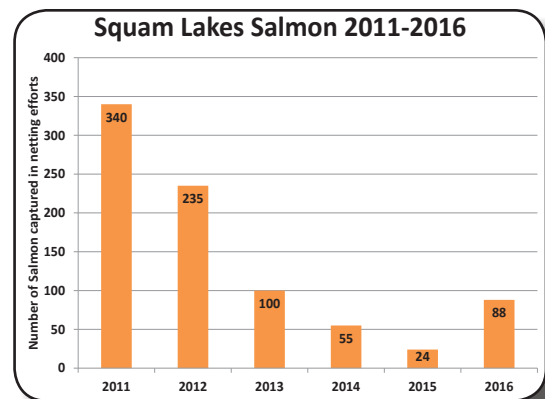
# Squam Fisheries



data collected by NH Fish and Game Department

**Coldwater fishery** (smelt, salmon, trout)  
 Fall 2016 marked the first season of salmon netting since the experimental stocking of larger age class salmon. New Hampshire Fish and Game (NH F&G) noted initial success from this experimental stocking program, which has stocked Squam with much larger yearling hatchery product (about 10 inches) since the fall of 2015. NH F&G followed the same stocking regime in fall 2016, and will evaluate both cohorts again in fall 2017 netting operations. 2016 saw the best documented overall numbers and individual survival in at least five years. The restocking program is providing encouraging data indicating salmon populations will rebound from the decline witnessed in the past five years.

**Warmwater fishery** (large- and smallmouth bass)  
 The annual young-of-the-year report from NH F&G indicates small- and largemouth bass populations remain healthy in the Squam Lakes. In 2014, the SLA partnered with the NH F&G in a three-year study funded by NH Bass Nation to investigate if bass migrate back to Squam Lake after being released in Little Squam. Thirty-five percent of bass released in Little Squam reached the Channel in 2016. Results from this study indicate bass will return to Squam Lake after release in Little Squam.



## Land Conservation and Trails

data collected by SLA and the Squam Lakes Conservation Society

Together, the Squam Lakes Conservation Society (SLCS), the Lakes Region Conservation Trust, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and other organizations protect more than a quarter of the land in the Squam Watershed through conservation easements and outright ownership. The Squam Lakes Conservation Society protected 192 acres in the Squam Watershed across five properties. Additionally, SLA staff, interns and volunteers hiked and maintained the SLA's 50-mile trail network. We also focused year-round effort at the newly conserved Whitten Woods property in Ashland. This project was the result of a partnerships with the SLA, the SLCS, New England Forestry Foundation, and the NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP).

## Terrestrial Invasive Species



The SLA continues to work with our conservation partners to support invasive species removal throughout the Squam Watershed. In 2016 we continued to focus efforts at the Rattlesnake Trailhead and our headquarters area in Holderness. The Squam Lakes Natural Science Center hosted invasive pull work days along their trail network, and the Squam Lakes Conservation Society continued work in the Mill Brook area.

## Boating

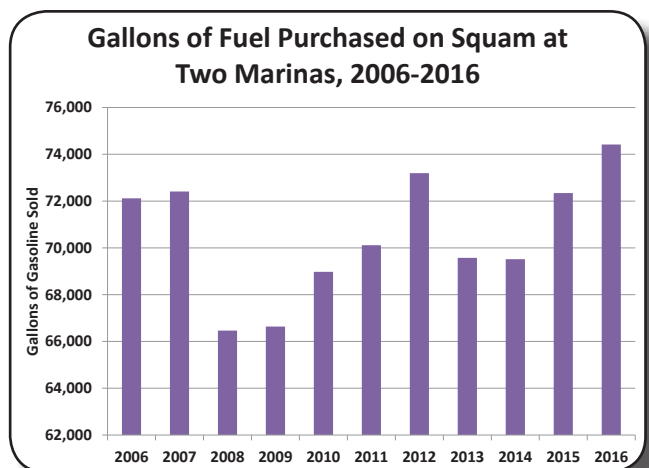


data collected by the SLA, Riveredge Marina, and Squam Boat Livery

The SLA conducted the 2016 Squam Lakes aerial boating survey on August 21, 2016 with aerial support from LightHawk, a nonprofit organization that links volunteer pilots with conservation organizations. The boat count in 2016, with 154 boats counted, is lower than previous years potentially due to the survey period's early start time and late date in the summer season. In 2016 we continued to observe high boating traffic on Little Squam and the western region of Squam. This pattern could be attributed to the density of motorized boat marinas and rentals on Little Squam and the Squam River, the minimized risk of hitting rocky reefs or ledges, and the proximity of boat launches in both areas. With the exception of Rattlesnake Cove, the northeastern region of Squam experienced the least boating traffic. All boat census and aerial photo survey data are available on the SLA website.

The volume of gasoline purchased at Squam marinas also

provides information on boat use on the Lakes. Gasoline consumption data collected in 2016 indicates a high amount of boat traffic, corroborating reports of a record breaking tourist season in the Lakes Region.



## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following for contributing data, analysis, and expertise to this report:

Loon Preservation Committee  
IAN Image Library  
LightHawk  
NH Fish and Game  
NH Lakes  
Plymouth State University's Center for the Environment (Lisa Doner, Anju Shrestha)  
Riveredge Marina  
Squam Boat Livery  
Squam Lakes Conservation Society  
SLA Staff, Volunteers, and Members  
University of New Hampshire Lakes Lay Monitoring Program

## Conservation through Education

The SLA's education programs provide another avenue for the successful implementation of our conservation mission. Through youth programs, and the many education opportunities for youth and adults about conservation and Squam, we are actively developing our community of Squam conservationists. For more information about our education programs, including JSLA, CYSP, Adventure Ecology, and Speaker Series, visit our website.



The Squam Lakes Association is dedicated to conserving for the public benefit the natural beauty, peaceful character and unique resource values of the lakes and surrounding watershed. In cooperation with local and state authorities and other conservation organizations, the Association promotes the protection, careful use and shared enjoyment of the lakes, mountains, open spaces and wildlife of the Squam Lakes region.



534 US Route 3, PO Box 204, Holderness, NH 03245; [squamlakes.org](http://squamlakes.org), 603-968-7336

*The Squam Watershed Report is compiled, designed, and edited by SLA Director of Conservation Rebecca Hanson*



# Volunteer Report

## The People Behind Successful Conservation

By Brian Gagnon, Volunteer Coordinator

There is nothing more inspiring than engaging with a community of folks who believe so much in the mission of the SLA that they take time out of their lives to better the Squam Lakes watershed. There is something special about a person who will hike a pair of loppers and a rogue hoe into the forest and become part of a century old tradition of maintaining hiking trails. The same can be said for the water quality monitors going on their 37<sup>th</sup> year of sampling and recording conditions in the lake, or the high schoolers who dedicated 65 hours towards eradicating terrestrial invasive plants from the SLA campus.



Volunteers are the people behind the story of the SLA's success in conserving the Squam Watershed for so many years. The SLA began with a small and dedicated crew of volunteers who saw the value in protecting this special place and turned that passion into action. Today volunteers play a key role in maintaining Squam's natural beauty and peaceful character. Whether they are participating in the new winter water quality monitoring program, or signing up for their first shift as a Loon Chick Watcher, more and more people are engaging in a growing number of opportunities to give back to Squam.

In 2016, 385 volunteers gave 5,979 hours of service to the Squam Lakes Watershed. This is an increase of 79 additional volunteers, and an overall contribution of 832 more hours than in 2015. Water Quality Monitors volunteered 230 hours collecting water samples, running tests and recording conditions on the lakes. Thirty-eight trail adopters picked up tools and took to the trails contributing over 329 hours to maintaining and growing a network of sustainable trails. Twenty-seven loon chick watchers spent 82 hours accompanying loon families, protecting nest sites, and distributing information to the public. Seventy-three volunteers signed up to support the Ridge Race and contributed 263 hours to the event which provided the funding to maintain a fall conservation staff. 28 volunteers worked during the SLA's Annual Autumn Work Day and spent a collective 190 hours cleaning up and preparing the SLA's backcountry facilities for the winter.

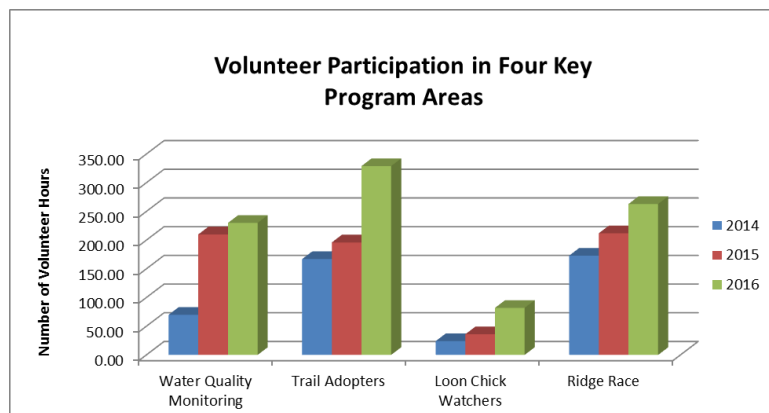
Last year volunteers helped complete Bowman Cabin for use. Trails on the newly conserved Whitten Woods property were constructed, rerouted to be more sustainable, blazed, and properly signed at junctions and kiosks. Volunteers sampled the lake with biologists from UNH, helped with mailings, and special events.



### Get Involved!

#### Volunteer with the SLA

- Trail Adopters
- Water Quality Monitors
- Weed Watchers
- Loon Chick Watchers
- Special Events
- Resource Center Projects
- Program Support
- And More!



# 2016 Contributors to the SLA

## Thank you to all of our supporters!

*The Squam Lakes Association appreciates the many supporters that keep our programs and operations running successfully. The following individuals have supported SLA activities in 2016. Planned giving contributions are not included in these categories.*

*Apologies to those who were inadvertently omitted, and please let us know so we can update our records!*

### ~Supporting the SLA 10 Years and more~

William Abbott, Mark & Annalee Abelson, Wallace & Ethel Ackley, Jonathan Adams, Fletcher Adams, Van & Betsy Adriance, Gillian Aguilar, Millie Allen, W. Gordon & Mary Allen, Priscilla Alvord, Brenton Anderson, Colin & Melody Anderson, Peter Anderson, Zoe & Dan Anderson, Hugh Antrim, Gary Apfel, Mary Pratt Ardant, Thomas & Rachel Armstrong, Lisa, Bill & Thomas Aulet, Amey Bailey, John & Tina Baker, Marian Baker, Marc & Carol Bard, Claudia Barleon, John Barnaby, Charles Barnaby, Jonathan Barnes, Kevin & Nancy Barrett, C. 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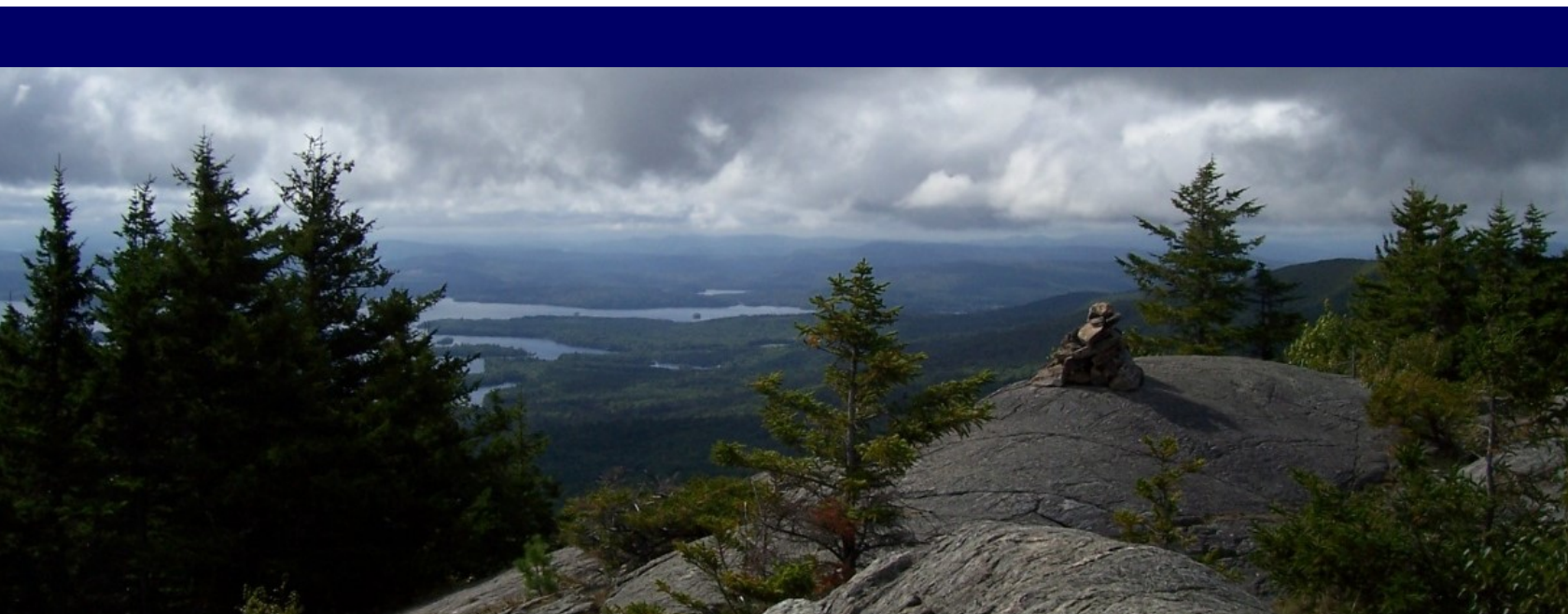
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Gifts in memory of Barbara A. Assad & Conrad Page have been made by: the Staff at Hampshire Hills Physical Therapy, and David & Elizabeth Page.

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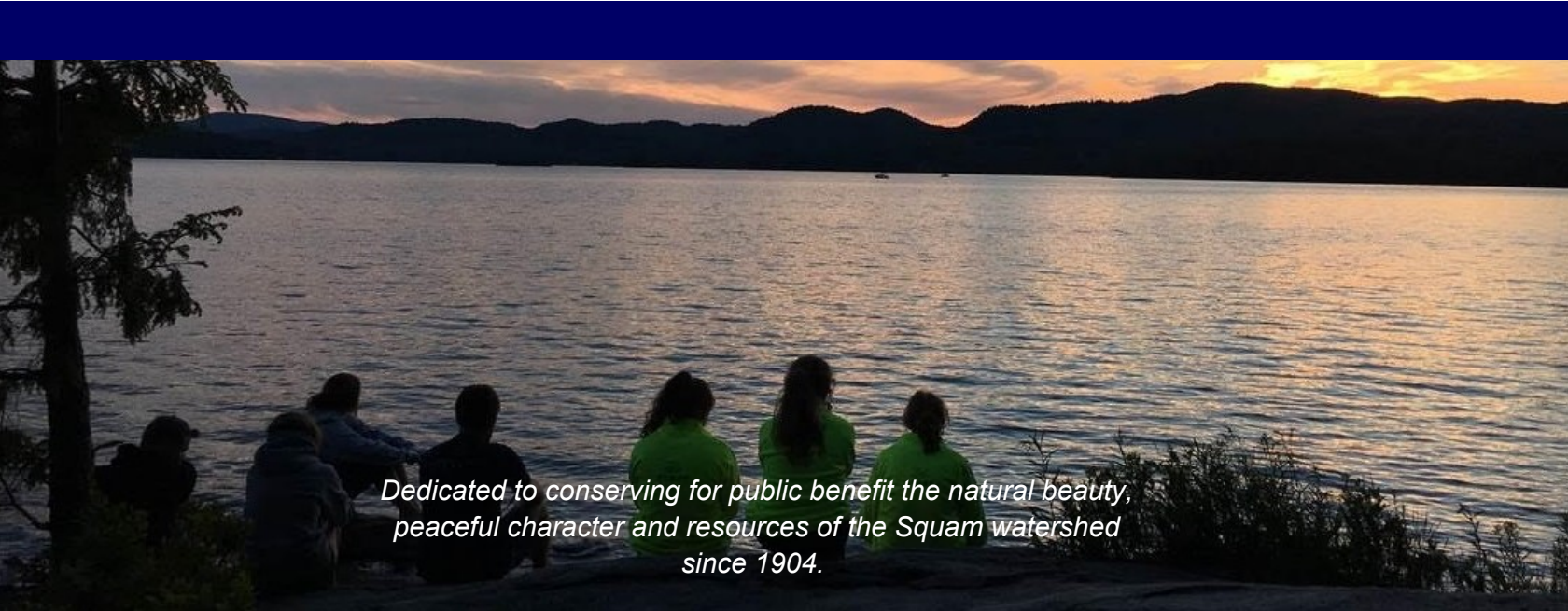


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