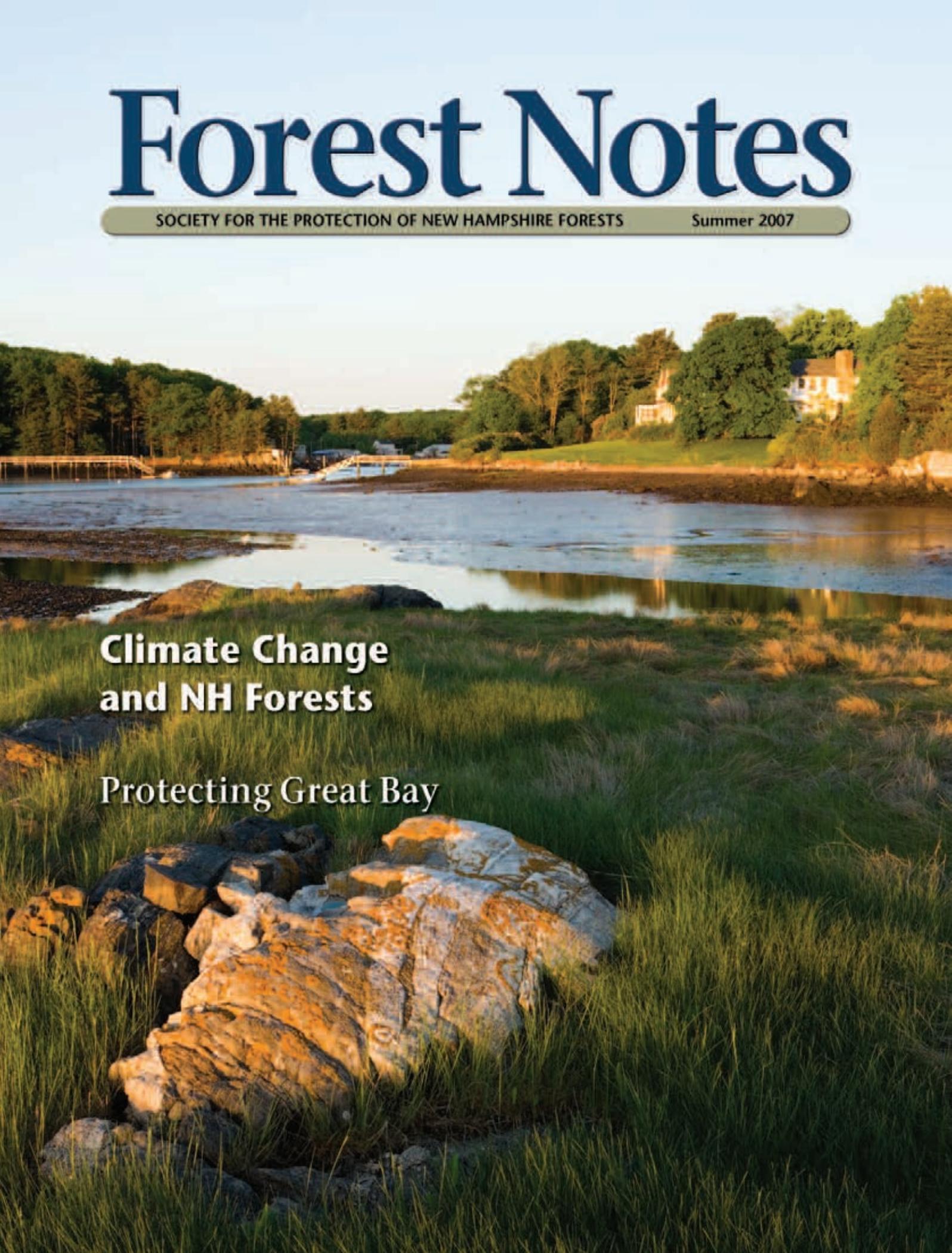


Forest Notes

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS

Summer 2007



Climate Change and NH Forests

Protecting Great Bay

Queen City Conserves a Crown Jewel

*Manchester Water Works and the Forest Society
set the course for protecting the city's clean water supply.*



Forests are nature's water filter, which is among the reasons that Lake Massabesic watershed lands in Auburn, Candia, Hooksett, and Manchester have been a top conservation priority in the state. Manchester Water Works (MWW), which uses Massabesic to provide drinking water for more than 160,000 people, owns approximately 8,000 acres that protect that public water supply.

But there's no guarantee those lands will remain forever protected from potential development. While many people assume that land owned by a municipal water district is already protected by virtue of ownership, the truth is that water companies can and do sell off lands when they are no longer viewed as necessary to protecting the water supply. However, thanks to a unique agreement between MWW and the Forest Society completed this spring, a conservation easement has been put on one 460-acre parcel featuring approximately four miles of frontage of Lake Massabesic in Auburn, including Battery Point, the 'crown jewel' of the shorefront.



THE 460 ACRES NOW UNDER EASEMENT INCLUDE FOUR MILES OF FRONTAGE ON LAKE MASSABESIC, AND ABUT MASSABESIC AUDUBON CENTER.

"Manchester Water Works has been the primary steward of the watershed for over 130 years and we are extremely pleased to have the Forest Society as a partner to more formally protect this wonderful natural resource," said Waterworks Director Tom Bowen. "The conservation easement is a clear indicator to our customers and the environmental community of our commitment to providing the highest level of protection of the water quality of the Lake Massabesic. We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship with the Forest Society."

The easement guarantees public access for the thousands who hike, bike, ski and snowmobile and otherwise enjoy the trails on the 460-acre property. While no swimming is allowed in the lake, MWW manages a public boat launch and parking area on the property. MWW also permits, with conditions, organized recreational uses including bicycling events, foot races, and horseback rides.

It is anticipated that the easement will reduce the assessed value of the land for property tax purposes, an important consideration for the City of



Manchester, which must pay full-assessment property taxes on lands it owns in Auburn and other towns. (Land owned by a municipality in another municipality does not qualify for Current Use taxation.) Both the Forest Society and MWW anticipate that MWW may wish to place additional parcels of its Lake Massabesic properties under easement in coming years, ideally in a way that will not place untimely stress on the tax base in the Town of Auburn.

As with all Forest Society conservation easements, the easement on the Battery Point parcel is perpetual. However, the easement includes a provision that allows MWW to withdraw some or all of the land from the easement upon giving 30 years' advance notice to the Forest Society. If MWW exercises this right, the Forest Society has the option near the end of the 30-year period to purchase the withdrawn land at its appraised value. In addition, the Forest Society received an option to purchase any of MWW's approximately 8,000 acres of watershed land, should MWW declare any of that ownership surplus to its needs.

"We're pleased to be able to work with the Manchester Water Works to make the permanent protection of the watershed possible," said Paul Doscher, vice-president for land conservation at the Forest Society. "The forested landscape that protects the public water supply for the greater Manchester area represents one of the largest blocks of unprotected land left in southern New Hampshire. It also includes critical habitat for loons, osprey, bald eagles and other wildlife that depend on the undeveloped shorefront of the lake, as well as working forest and traditional recreational uses.

The 460-acre parcel surrounds the Massabesic Audubon Center, which sits on 139 protected acres owned by NH Audubon. NH Audubon will continue to work with MWW to use the land under easement for its educational programs at the Center.

"We're pleased to have the land under conservation easement," said Rick Minard, president of NH Audubon. "We're looking forward to continuing our role in using the shoreland as an outdoor classroom to help the public understand the importance of the wildlife and its habitat."

For more information about the watershed lands owned by Manchester Water Works check out www.manchesternh.gov/CityGov/WTR/wtrshd. Photo below and on page 29 by G.C. Sluder.

