



the *Loon Flyer*



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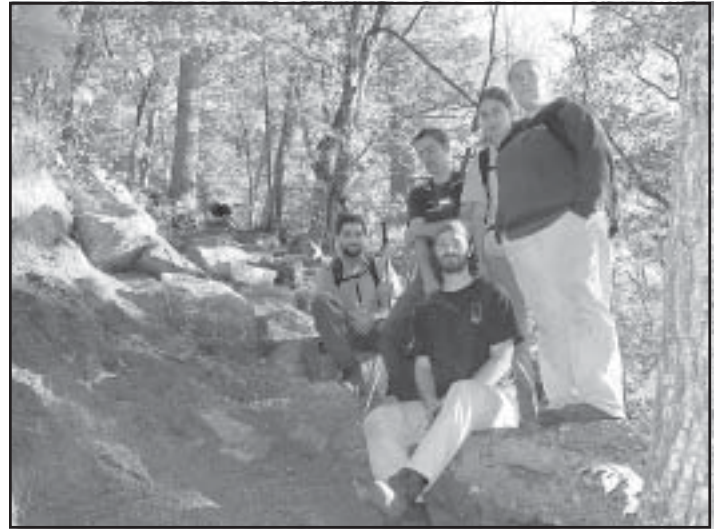
Fall 2004

SLA TRAIL CREW IMPROVES MEAD AND EAGLE CLIFF TRAILS

By Eric Morse, Conservation & Communication Director

The SLA Trail Crew has completed trail construction projects on Eagle Cliff Trail to Red Hill and Mead Trail to Mt. Israel. The trail crew consists of Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns: Caitlin Brooking, Lindsey Keser, John Kahle, and John Hiller, and SLA Trail Crew Leader Jeff Boudreau. The trail crew worked from mid August to early November and lived at Mead Conservation Center in Sandwich Notch. The SCA interns joined the SLA Trail Crew to learn about trail construction, help protect the natural world, and explore careers in the environmental field.

The Eagle Cliff Trail project was funded by a \$13,972 grant from the NH Recreational Trails Program, which is administered through the NH Trails Bureau. A new trail was constructed on the Merriman Forest, which is owned by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, to avoid the steep cliff trail. A 50-step rock staircase was constructed to stabilize the new section of trail. Those who prefer the steep scramble up the cliff trail can still follow the old trail, but the new trail provides a safer alternative, much like the Mt. Morgan and Mt. Percival Trails.



The SLA Trail Crew proudly displays the new 50 step rock staircase around Eagle Cliff. Pictured from left to right are: Jeff Boudreau, John Hiller, John Kahle, Lindsey Keser, and Caitlin Brooking. Photo by Eric Morse.



John Kahle and John Hiller set a staircase rock on the new trail around Eagle Cliff. Photo by Eric Morse.

The staircase rocks are moved on a skyline, which consists of a 150-foot wire rope which is secured to mast trees and anchor

MERCURY IN OUR LAKES

by Joe Kabat, SLA Wildlife Committee

If you bought a New Hampshire fishing license you probably received a little blue booklet with the rules and regulations on fishing in New Hampshire. On page 7 it suggests that “pregnant and nursing women, and women who may get pregnant” should not eat more than 8 ounces of freshwater fish a month. It goes on to suggest that children under seven eat only 3 ounces of freshwater fish a month, and children over seven and all other adults not eat more than four 8 ounce meals of freshwater fish a month.

Robert Kennedy Jr. spoke at a college in New Hampshire recently and said that he has always eaten a lot of fish. He discovered that his body contains three times the safe amount of mercury and that if he were a woman he should not become pregnant because his children could have brain damage.

Forty-three other states have similar warnings about eating fish. We do not know how this is affecting humans around the Squam Watershed, but we do have some information on

Continued on Page 4.

Continued on Page 6.

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 area. 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, forests, open spaces and wildlife of the Squam Lakes region.

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Do you recognize anyone in this photo? This was the first JSLA group to camp on Moon Island in 1986. The 50th anniversary of JSLA is 2005 and the Youth Committee is planning a celebration for the summer of 2005. Look for more details in the next Loon Flyer.

JSLA CELEBRATES 50 YEARS IN 2005

Reunion date to be announced!

We are creating a timeline too, so please send your stories by email to: jslastories@mac.com

SLA'S FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

All of our best wishes go with our Visitors' Assistant, Jessie Wallner, for an exciting, rewarding year. Jessie has recently been awarded a 2004-2005 Fulbright Grant to study in Nepal

where she will spend the academic year studying and recording the music of Tibetan Buddhist refugees in the Kathmandu Valley. After returning from Nepal, Jessie will attend Indiana University, Bloomington in the fall of 2005 where she will work on her PhD in Ethnomusicology and Tibetan Studies.

THANKS TO HOLDERNESS SCHOOL

Twelve Holderness School students and two teachers helped clean up the SLA Resource Center grounds and the Harrison property on November 3rd.

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REFLECTIONS OF PAST PRESIDENTS

By Monique Devine

As we reflect upon the history of the Squam Lakes Association, it is clear that each President has had a different agenda or important task to accomplish; yet the grander issues of water quality and conservation remain a steady focus for the organization. The leadership of the SLA has been impressive and we take this time to share their moments in SLA history with our membership.

JOHN LAVERACK 1985 – 1987

It was through his marriage to Janet Sabine that John Laverack was brought to the Squam Lakes. His father-in-law, Stephen Webb Sabine, a turn of the century naturalist, began visiting the area in the 1900's and passed his passion for nature on to his daughter, Janet, who was an avid hiker with a keen knowledge of the local flora and fauna.

As a resident of the Squam Lakes area, John became an active member of the Squam Lakes Association and was an elected officer and ex-officio director for a total of 14 years. Over that period of time the SLA functioned under three principle restraints that were not written policy but more a question of attitude.

First, the SLA was viewed as purely a summertime organization with the board being active from June through September and then going into hibernation until the following June. Second, there was a fear on the part of the environmentalist founders that any physical presence of the SLA on the Squam Lakes was to be avoided. They did not want the organization to become a summer resort club and lose focus on the importance of conservation. Finally, despite the member's financial means, the motto was "money was to be saved not spent".

During John's tenure, there was no central filing system and the President

was responsible for storage and maintenance. It was just prior to John's term as President that the organization hired its first year-round Executive Director, Phil Preston. This precipitated the need for more office space and the SLA moved from Plymouth to Holderness, bringing them closer to the lakes. It was after Phil's hiring that the SLA took the bold step to raise \$700,000 in 3-months to purchase Moon Island. John remembers this as one of the remarkable moments in his life, when the organization was short more than \$200,000 and a "Squam Angel" called him offering to accept all the carrying charges of any loan so it wouldn't affect the SLA's operating budget.

Looking to the future of the organization and the area, John sees the greatest issues facing the lakes are the same as when the organization was founded: water quality and access to the lake. In closing, John views the organization today as having made great progress from the filing system to political inroads and stated, "The founding fathers would be satisfied with how it has worked out."


JOHN THOMPSON 1996 – 1999

When John Thompson served as SLA President, the organization had some challenges to overcome. Internally, the longtime Executive Director, Phil Preston was leaving and externally, a public image as elitist and exclusive plagued the organization's relationships in Concord and elsewhere. The first order of business was to address the departure of Phil Preston and search for a new Executive Director. After hiring Sylvia Bates and learning after a short time that the job did not suit her the board hired Chris Devine.

Once the new director was in place, public access and the SLA's public image was the next item on the agenda.

First, the boat ramp in Holderness, which had been the access to the lake for the public for many years, was closing due to the death of Dr. Crane. The SLA raised the money to buy the ramp from Mrs. Crane then, several years later offered it to the State of NH to establish the public access site. This successful transaction solved the access issue and an expansion of outreach programs provided the community involvement the SLA had desired.

When asked what the greatest issues facing the SLA today are, John's response is finding compelling ways to use science to conserve the watershed. He believes it isn't enough to conserve for the sake of the people who like it the way it is and the SLA has very wisely based its strategies for conservation on science (e.g. ecological monitoring programs) and must continue to do that. John would also like to find a way to communicate with the newcomers who knock down old camps and build mansions and invite them to join in the mission of the SLA.

Although he regrets that personal watercraft are still in use on Squam, he is pleased to see all of the Squam area non-profit organizations actively collaborating. Reflecting upon the SLA's greatest strength, its influence in the community and in the state, John states, "It sets an example for how a community-based organization can actively look after its own interests while advancing conservation statewide." Though he further believes it is critical to bring together the five towns in the watershed for the common purpose of "looking after Squam", he continues, "The SLA has evolved from a social association with a few people taking water samples to a resource center for the watershed providing community services and representation for all those who seek to protect Squam." 

SLA TRAIL CREW CONTINUED

trees with heavy webbing and block pulleys. The rocks are wrapped in webbing and attached to the wire rope with a block pulley. A GripHoist winch is used to tighten the wire rope, which lifts the rocks off the ground. The rocks are then moved to the work site and placed in the ground, while making contact with the previous stair. The trail crew moved 80 large rocks for the staircase, using the extras rocks in two waterbars and for scree on the sides of the staircase. The scree keeps hikers on the staircase and stabilizes the erosive soil.

Thirty-four rock waterbars were constructed on Eagle Cliff Trail to provide drainage for water runoff. Fifty-six rock check steps (single stairs with scree) were installed to slow down runoff and to catch sediment. A trail relocation with a long switchback was constructed on Lakes Region Conservation Trust's (LRCT) Wiggan Parcel to avoid a steep section where the trail was eroding.



The SLA Trail Crew operates a skyline on Eagle Cliff Trail. Photo by Eric Morse.

The SLA Trail Crew also competed trail improvements to Mead Trail on the north side of Mt. Israel, which was funded by a Challenge Cost Share agreement from the US Forest Service for \$6,226. Two bog bridges were constructed on the lower section of trail, one on NH Trails Day and the other

during Squam Conservation Corps. The bog bridges are made from spruce trees which are cut into stringers and sills and the bark is peeled to minimize rotting. Notches are cut in the bottom of the stringers to secure it to the sills and the top is flattened with a chainsaw and an adz. New waterbars and check steps were constructed on Mead Trail and a 15 step rock staircase was built on a steep section.

The SLA Trail Crew completed the Mead and Eagle Cliff Trail projects much faster than expected, and many thanks goes to Jeff and the interns for their hard work! The trail crew finished the season by installing waterbars and check steps on Doublehead Trail, the northern section of the Crawford-Ridgepole Trail, and some of the other Rattlesnakes trails: Pasture Trail, Ridge Trail, East Rattlesnake Trail, and Col Trail. These trails receive less hikers than Mt. Morgan Trail, Mt. Percival Trail or Old Bridle Path, but the new trail work will prevent erosion for years to come. 🏔️



Carl MacNall, Scott Wallace, Bev LaFoley, Mark Levine, Chuck Braxton, Sarah Sherrill, Devon Griswold, Rick Fabian, and Nancy Heyward volunteer on Mead Trail to Mt. Israel during New Hampshire Trails Day on July 17th. Photo by Eric Morse.

SLA WINTER EVENTS 2005

The **8th Annual Squam Winterfest** will be held on Saturday, January 15th from 12:00 to 3:00 PM and is sponsored by the Squam Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. Last year about 300 people enjoyed the fun winter activities for all ages. Winterfest activities include: skating (plowed oval and hockey type rinks), Winter Golf on the lake, snowshoe demos, Nordic Skate demos, and NH Fish and Game demonstration.

The **Chili Competition** features chili from the following restaurants: Common Man, Walter's Basin, Golden Pond Country Store, The Corner House, Sandwich General Store, Yankee Trail Motel, and Lakeside Deli. There will be a nominal fee for a commemorative mug to sample all the delicious chili.

Winterfest is free for all and registration is not required.

The **Squam Skating Tour** will be led by Jamie Hess of the Montshire Skating Club and the Nordic Skater. The date and location will be determined in late December. The Nordic Skater provides clip on skates that fit cross-country ski boots, as well as ice safety equipment. The skating tour is free to SLA members.

Catered Snowshoe Tours to West Rattlesnake will be offered on Saturday, January 8th and February 5th from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. We will follow the Old Bridle Path and will enjoy cheese fondue, hot chocolate and hot spiced wine at the summit. Fee per person: Non members: \$30, SLA members: \$25, includes rental snowshoes.

A **Cross-Country Ski Tour** will be offered on Saturday, January 22nd from 1:00 - 3:00 pm at Chamberlain-Reynolds Memorial Forest (NEFFA). The tour is for intermediate and




Squam Winterfest 2004... Skating Anyone? Winter Events photos by Eric Morse.



Winterfest Chili Competition

advanced cross country skiers and is free to SLA Members.

The **Bowman Island Cross-Country Ski Tour** will be held on the weekend of February 12th and 13th. This popular ski tour includes lodging at the rustic Bowman Island cabin as well as dinner, breakfast and tour guides. While the cabin is not insulated, it does have an efficient wood stove and is comfortable despite cold weather. During the day we will tour Squam, including stops at: Chamberlain-Reynolds Memorial Forest, Five Finger Point, and Church Island. Fee per person: Non members: \$80, SLA Members: \$70. Maximum capacity = 8 people.

For more information, or to sign up for any of the winter events, please contact Eric Morse at SLA: (603) 968-7336 email: ericmorse@squamlakes.org. 



Winterfest Golf



Catered Snowshoe Tours to West Rattlesnake: cheese fondue, mulled wine!



Bowman Island XC Ski Tour visits Church Island for some inspiration.

MERCURY IN OUR LAKES CONTINUED

piscivorous birds. Those are birds like loons, bald eagles and osprey whose diet is primarily fish.

Naturalists in Maine and New Hampshire have estimated that 20 percent of the loon population is at risk. Loons with high levels of methylmercury (MeHg) in their blood fledge 40 percent fewer young. Observations have shown that adult loons with high MeHg have left eggs unattended. Instead of sitting on their eggs they patrol the nest in an erratic pattern – acting “loony.” There is anecdotal evidence that loons with high MeHg swim in strange circles near motor boats and do not avoid or dive when boats approach.

Sixty percent of abandoned loon eggs in Maine and New Hampshire have shown concentrations of 0.5 parts per million (PPM) or greater of MeHg. Parent loons will often abandon eggs after the incubation period or 48 hours after a successful hatch of another egg.

Studies in the Great Lakes, Canada and other New England states have shown similar behavior patterns with loons with high MeHg levels in their blood.

We have often read that New England is “at the wrong end of the tailpipe.” Studies across North America of loons show this is true.

Here are blood concentrations of MeHg in parts per million in loons across the United States from west to east:

Alaska (0.5) Northwest (1.0) Great Lakes (1.5) New Hampshire (2.0) Maine (2.1) Massachusetts (2.5)

So where does this mercury come from in our lakes and what can be done? Coal burning power plants and incinerators appear to be the worst offenders. There



Loon and chick from Evans Cove on Little Squam Lake. Photo by Joe Kabat.

are provisions in the Clean Air Act to prevent this but they are complex. We cannot blame the Midwest power plants entirely. Emissions from power plants and incinerators in New Hampshire create local hot spots. In addition, many consumer products such as thermometers, thermostats, and florescent bulbs contain mercury and they are not always properly disposed of.

This Squam Lakes resident feels we should strongly communicate with both our state and federal legislators about our concerns of environmental emissions of mercury. Our loons are wonderful and loved living symbols of the Squam Lakes but they may also be the canaries in the coalmines. 🐦

Donations Wanted

Used snowmobile(s) to maintain cross country ski trails

Used Suburban or similar vehicle for JSLA and trail crews

BOWMAN ISLAND LOG BOOK - 2004

July 7,

It is nice to know that one is able to escape from all the business, craziness, and thousands of people who flock to the Lakes Region this time of year. SLA - thank you for creating such a wonderful spot to spend an afternoon or a few nights. I will be back - next time with my camping gear.

- Tigerlily

July 11

What a wonderful island!! Thanks to the SLA and Squam Sisters for a perfect place to enjoy Squam!

- Missy & Dave

October 10 - Columbus Day

Warm morning gave way to cool & breezy afternoon. Enjoyed the lee of Moon Island. Kids first camping experience. They don't know how good they have it!

- M. Trowbridge

SQUAM CONSERVATION CORPS SUCCESSFUL IN FIRST SEASON

by Eric Morse

The first season of Squam Conservation Corps (SCC) was successful, as eight participants learned about SLA trail maintenance, ecological monitoring, and backcountry recreation. SCC participants are high school students and the program is a week long conservation internship.

Matt LePage, Alex Edelman and Andy Chalmers participated in the first session in late June, while Pier Pennoyer, J.D. Willets, Jimmy Elcock, Tucker Elcock and Billy Elcock participated in the second session in mid-August.

SCC session one members worked with the SLA Trail Crew clearing brush, and constructing rock waterbars and steps on Eagle Cliff Trail and Crawford-Ridgepole Trail from Old Mountain Road to Mt. Morgan. SCC session two worked three days on Mead Trail and



The first session of Squam Conservation Corps and the SLA summer Trail Crew takes a break on Eagle Cliff. Pictured from left to right are: Melinda Sergi, Kort Knauss, Andy Chalmers, Meredith Cummings, Matt LePage, Jeff Boudreau, and Alex Edelman. Photo by Eric Morse.

constructed a bog bridge from native timber and built rock waterbars and check steps.

The SCC participants spent a total of

48 hours monitoring and collecting invasive milfoil at Riveredge Marina and around Squam Lake, which was supervised by Brett Durham and Maggie Mumford.

The reward for their efforts was an overnight kayak camping trip to Moon Island, where they learned about kayaking, Leave No Trace and backcountry management with Eric Morse, Conservation and Communications Director. The second session camped at Bowman Island Cabin with Richard Hodges, JSLA Counselor.

At this point we are planning to continue SCC for two one-week sessions in 2005, however we may add a week if there is demand. Please contact Eric Morse at SLA if you are interested in Squam Conservation Corps - phone: (603) 968-7336 ext. 12 or email: ericmorse@squamlakes.org.



Jimmy Elcock and Pier Pennoyer peel bark from a spruce tree to construct a bog bridge on Mead Trail during session two of Squam Conservation Corps. Photo by Eric Morse.



THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING SLA VOLUNTEERS!

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Alisoun Hodges
Amy Morse
Ben Farmer
Betsy & Bruce Whitmore
Bob Shultz
Bryant Tolles
Camp Deerwood
Charlie Seymour
Chas Rand
Chuck Braxton
Dave Eastman
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Frank Aguilar
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Jim Colthart
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