

Conservation Matters

A monthly column focused on conservation education, as the result of collaboration among several area conservation commissions and organizations. If your town's commission or conservation organization would like to contribute articles, please contact Jessica Tabolt Halm jesshalm78@gmail.com

Title: *Choose Your Future, Part VI (Conclusion)*

Submitted by: Newfound Lake Region Association



Snow Angel on Goose Pond, New Year's Day 2018

“Newfound Lake is known for water so clear you can see fish swimming thirty feet below you, hills and ridges cloaked in expansive forests and capped by rocky summits that frame the moods of the sky, and a laid-back pace reminiscent of years past”. These words opened our *Choose Your Future* series in February 2017, followed over the year by articles about protecting the clean water, healthy forests and small-town feel that define Newfound Lake and its watershed.

The Newfound watershed is roughly 65,000 acres (100 square miles) of New Hampshire's finest landscape, with Newfound Lake as its crown jewel. Newfound's famously clear and clean water comes from over 125 miles of streams that start high on forested ridges and hills and flow unimpeded to the Lake. Land elevations from below 600 feet at the Lake to above 3,000 feet on Mt. Cardigan create diverse habitats where rare plants and animals, from Silver Maple floodplain forests, to loons, Bald Eagles and Peregrine falcons, thrive. Generations of visitors and residents have cherished Newfound for its peace and beauty.

The watershed also contains abundant, clean drinking water beneath the Fowler and Cockermouth River valleys, has some of the State's most productive farm soils in those same valleys, and generates roughly \$500 per acre, per year, in forest products and recreation. The Lake and its land are the region's “economic engine”, as well as food for the soul.

In spite of our natural bounty, fewer people are connecting to the outside world. Work and family pressures and an abundance of electronic devices distract us from the benefits of a walk, a paddle or simply sitting quietly. It is easy to forget how Nature provides for us, and as fewer children experience the outdoors, more grow to adulthood without a sense of its role in our wellbeing. It seems many have forgotten what our grandparents knew; how to care for each other, and our land, with a committed and active community.

Our message of hope, and call to action, is that a little time spent outdoors will reward you with sounds, sights and smells often buried in memory. Whether gazing at the stars from your deck on a cold night, or hiking the

Elwell Trail from Newfound to Cardigan, being open to Nature is always an awakening. To preserve what we love – Newfound’s beauty and value – the solution is simple: care for your own land, shape town policies that balance low-impact development with preservation, and help conserve wildlands.

“In a time when every last piece of the Newfound watershed means more each day, rejoice in the power that we have to choose the future. *Together. Now*”. Our work continues to make a real, positive, and lasting difference. Please join us, your friends and neighbors as an active participant in the outside world, and as a steward of the Lake and its land – wherever your watershed may be.



Young hiker on Little Sugarloaf, New Year’s Day 2018

The NLRA was founded in 1971 to protect and preserve the Newfound Lake watershed. Learn more on our [website](#), our [Facebook page](#), or contact us at info@NewfoundLake.org or 603-744-8689.