



BY Anne Richter Arnold

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HANOVER CONSERVANCY



HANOVER CONSERVANCY

*Protecting land & water
in our community*

A TRADITION OF STEWARDSHIP

If you like the way Hanover looks, with its rural feel and easy access to public green space, then you can thank the Hanover Conservancy. As the oldest local land trust in New Hampshire, founded in 1961, it has a long history of stewardship that remains strong, creating the Hanover we see today.

For the past 57 years, the Hanover Conservancy's (HC) mission has been twofold: to protect land and water in the Hanover community and to nurture a love for the natural world. Since its beginning, it has influenced the future of more than 2,000 acres of land in the Upper Valley, including in Lyme, Norwich, Plainfield, and Grafton, focusing on Hanover for the last quarter century. HC currently owns and manages five major natural areas in Hanover and holds protective conservation easements on over 550 more acres owned by others.

From left: Hiking the historic Wolfeboro Road in the Trescott Water Supply Lands. Hanover Conservancy Program Coordinator Courtney Dragiff documents wetland plants at the conserved Shumway Forest. Dramatic log bridge links trails at the Mink Brook Nature Preserve.

Kristine McDevitt, president of the board, says, “When they think of the Conservancy, many people think of land protection, but we’ve also been hard at work introducing people to the various open spaces in Hanover.”

BEGINNINGS AND A VISION

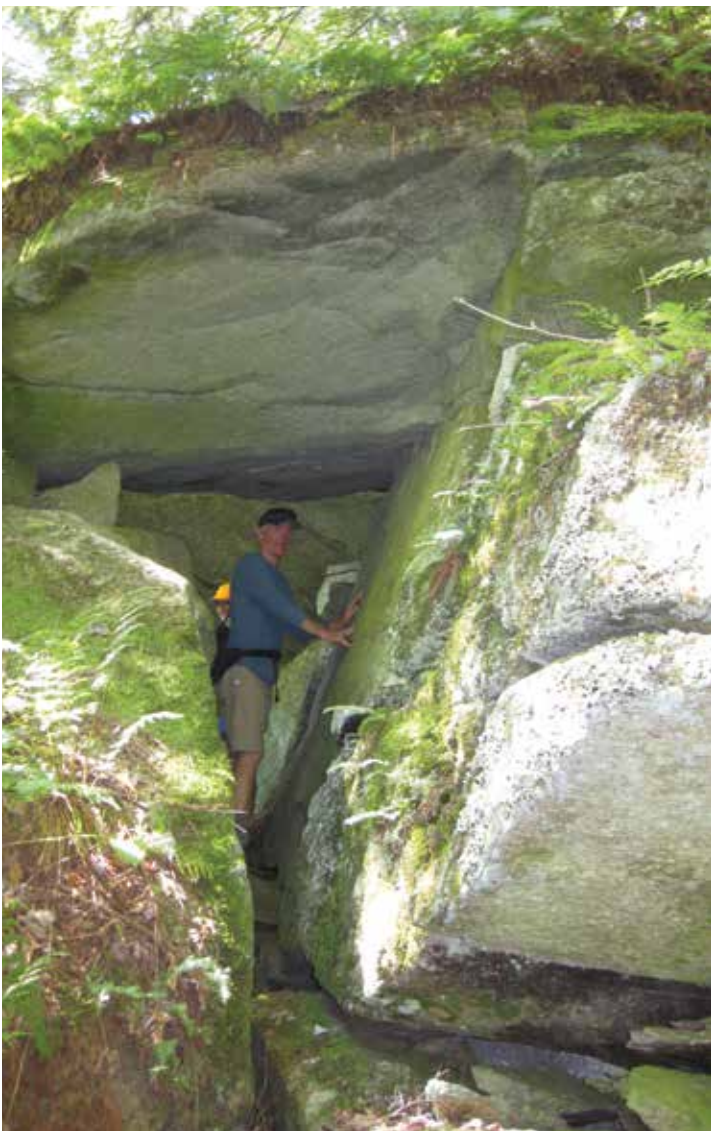
Back in 1961, the Conservancy was started (as the Hanover Conservation Council) by five dedicated souls who wanted to make sure that Hanover was a beautiful and healthy place to live for generations to come. Executive Director Adair Mulligan explains, “Our founders realized that Hanover wouldn’t look like a place we would want to live in the future if they didn’t do something then. Because of their early

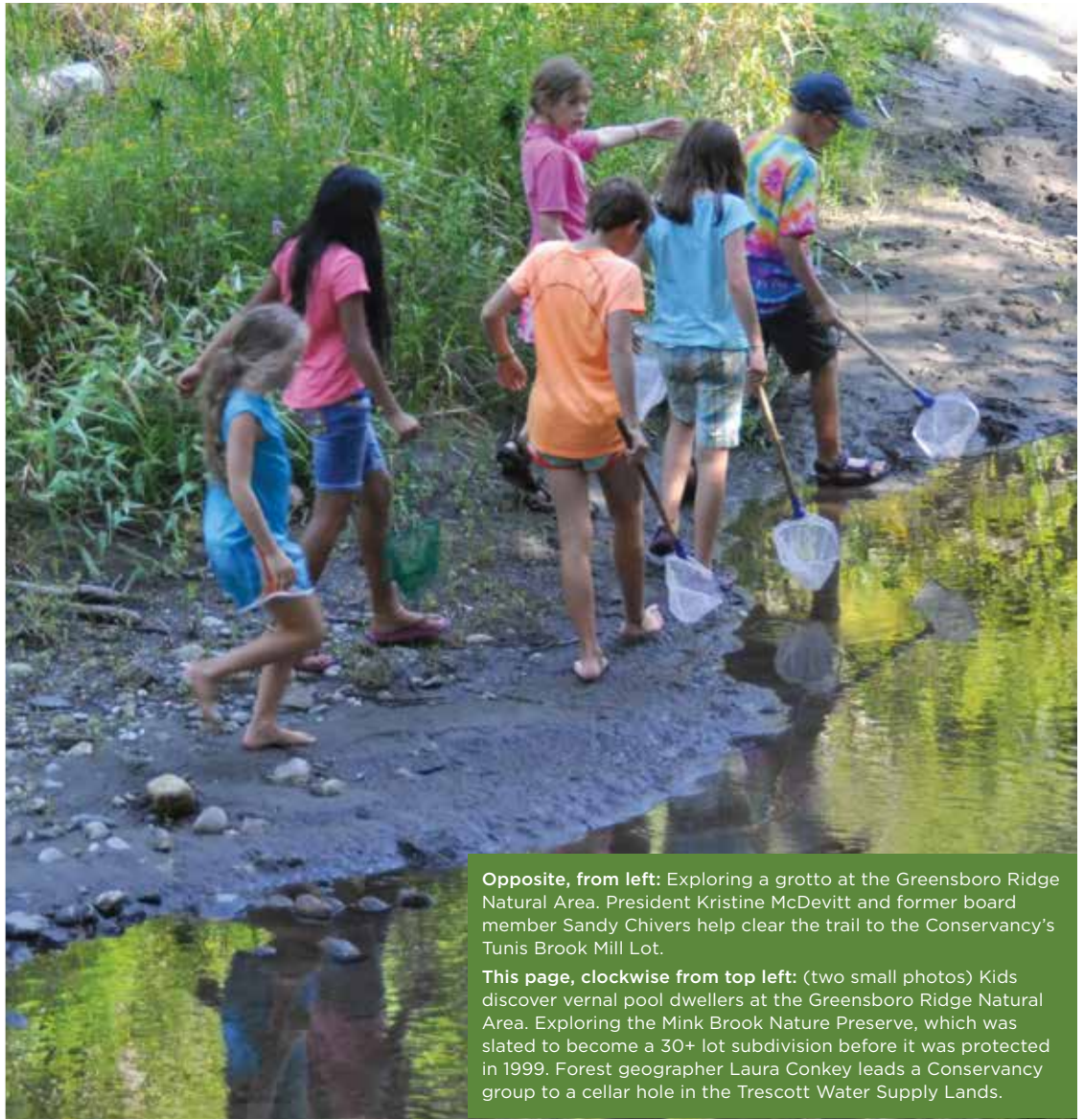
efforts, we have a healthier community today. That’s our job going forward—to help ensure Hanover remains a great place to live now and in the future.”

The Hanover Conservancy is an independent, non-profit membership organization, not affiliated with the town of Hanover or The Nature Conservancy. Since its inception, however, the group has often partnered with the town to ensure that many special places (Tanzi Tract, South Esker, and parts of Balch Hill among others) are now town-owned.

Science, particularly climate change, is key as the organization looks forward with its Vision 2020 strategic plan, explains Adair. The Conservancy’s active land conservation program follows a detailed focus for each part of town since it varies in character

“We work to protect wildlife habitat connections and water quality, as well as to mitigate the harm that can occur, for example, from flooding and erosion.”





Opposite, from left: Exploring a grotto at the Greensboro Ridge Natural Area. President Kristine McDevitt and former board member Sandy Chivers help clear the trail to the Conservancy's Tunis Brook Mill Lot.

This page, clockwise from top left: (two small photos) Kids discover vernal pool dwellers at the Greensboro Ridge Natural Area. Exploring the Mink Brook Nature Preserve, which was slated to become a 30+ lot subdivision before it was protected in 1999. Forest geographer Laura Conkey leads a Conservancy group to a cellar hole in the Trescott Water Supply Lands.





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Celebrating protection of the Mill Pond Forest on Moose Mountain are (from left) owners Kay and Peter Shumway, former HC president Nancy Collier, Executive Director Adair Mulligan, and owners Elisha and Anne Huggins. Inset: Trailhead sign.



from the Connecticut River to Moose Mountain.

“Our goal is to strengthen resilience to the many effects of climate change, and that drives our conservation work,” she explains. “We work to protect wildlife habitat connections and water quality, as well as to mitigate the harm that can occur, for example, from flooding and erosion.”

The quiet yet essential role that Dartmouth College has played in conservation over the years can't be overlooked. All five founders were associated with the college, and it was the major donor behind protecting the 112-acre Mink Brook Nature Preserve.

“The second focus of our mission,” says Kristine, “is getting people outside and understanding the possibilities that conservation lands offer. Whether it is a 15-minute trail walk or a multiday camping trip, exploring

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these lands sparks an appreciation of their importance.” To this end, the Conservancy and its volunteers devote much effort to caring for trails and, when needed, restoring natural habitat on its lands.

CONSERVED LAND: A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Bringing people to natural places drives HC’s extensive public programming. Program Coordinator Courtney Dragiff explains, “You can’t love what you don’t know, so our events, trips, and school programs are aimed at introducing everyone we can to the incredible trails, streams, and wildlife in Hanover. Conserved land is a community resource, and Hanover’s beautiful landscapes, fresh air, and clean water are likely part of the reason you choose to live here.”

Adair adds, “The heritage of our town is rich, and I want people to

An advertisement for 'little Istanbul TURKISH GIFTS & SPICES'. The background is a vibrant, patterned Turkish rug. At the top, the logo features a colorful star-like geometric design next to the text 'little Istanbul' in a stylized font, with 'TURKISH GIFTS & SPICES' below it. Two black boxes with white text read 'Made in Turkey' and 'Sold in Vermont'. Below this, a yellow-bordered box contains the text 'One of a Kind' and 'Handmade' separated by the same geometric logo. The main body of the ad is a collage of images: a pair of black shoes with colorful floral patterns, a collection of colorful Turkish bags, a stack of flatbread, a pair of brown leather boots with geometric patterns, and a hanging lantern with multiple colorful glass shades. Text labels 'Accessories', 'Home Goods', 'Exotic Spices', and 'Turkish Sweets' are placed over the collage. At the bottom, the 'tuckerbox' logo is shown with the tagline 'TURKISH & MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE'. To the right, the address '27 N. Main St, White River Junction, Vermont' and the website 'www.littleistanbulgifts.com' are listed.

An advertisement for 'CLEARCHOICEMD URGENT CARE'. The left side features a close-up of a clock face showing the time as approximately 1:50. On the right, there is a red circle with a white cross, the ClearChoiceMD logo. Below the logo, the text 'CLEARCHOICEMD URGENT CARE' is displayed. Further down, the slogan 'Your time is valuable. Don't waste it sitting in a waiting room.' is written in a serif font. At the bottom, an orange banner contains the address '410 Miracle Mile | Lebanon, NH' and the phone number '603.276.3260'.

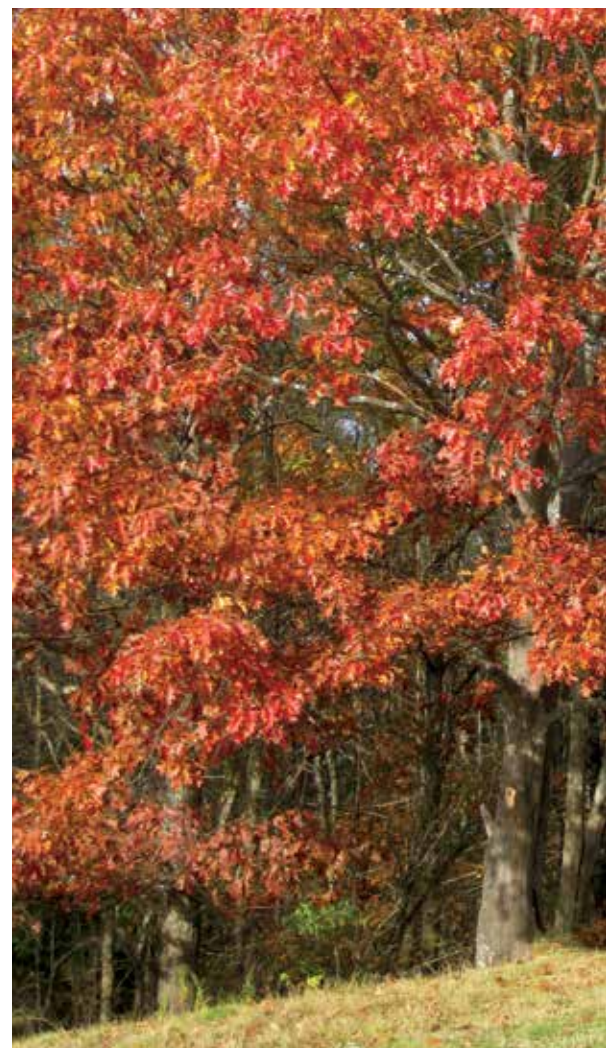
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Volunteers consult a plant survey at the summit of Balch Hill.



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understand the connection between the natural resources we have and the human history that has evolved as a result. As a matter of fact, the reason Dartmouth is here in Hanover today is because Rev. Eleazar Wheelock was offered land around Mink Brook with a mill privilege if he would site his college in this town. This area supported native tribes with its healthy forests and pristine waters before becoming a rural farming community. We offer cellar-hole tours to illustrate how land was managed in the past and why it looks the way it does today.

"We are very science focused and are fortunate to have several Dartmouth science faculty members who lead field trips for us, such as vernal pool visits and geology tours; these make wildlife and the environment more accessible to non-



scientists. Others conduct research on our land.” Events and outdoor trips are planned year-round by the volunteer Community Engagement Committee. These are free and open to the public.

For busy people who can’t make a guided trip, the group offers downloadable “Hanover Hikes of the Month” with detailed directions allowing hikers to choose their own adventure on their own time. The annual Hanover Trails Challenge, a summer trail treasure hunt organized together with the town Parks and Rec Department and sponsored by local businesses, is a great option for families. New in the last year is Wednesday Wanders, an experiential outdoor after-school program for third to fifth graders. Upcoming fall trips in the works are a guided mindfulness walk

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along Mink Brook, a leisurely paddle trip on the Connecticut, AT Family Hiking Day with Hanover Parks & Rec, and a celebration of the 10th anniversary of Greensboro Ridge Natural Area's conservation.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

People make the HC, says Kristine. "We have wonderfully active board members who care about the Upper Valley, not just Hanover. Our volunteers include nearly 100 people from all walks of life. We are not part of town government, nor do we have a line item in their budget that supports our work, so we rely on membership, donations, and grants to accomplish our mission. We couldn't do it without great community support."

Other organizations make HC's mission possible as well. "The Town's Conservation Commission has been a great longtime partner. Its trails committee has worked with us to clear and maintain trails and add footbridges so people can easily access them. Our success is due to partnerships with other entities that care about the area, including the Upper Valley Trails Alliance, the Upper Valley Land Trust, and Dartmouth College."

"We are proud of our long tradition of stewardship," says Adair. "We are here for our community for the long term. As a one-town land trust, we know it deeply and well. We know the neighbors, how the land and waters behave in storms, what wildlife thrives here. We hope that the community knows us as well, supports us, and, most importantly, gets to know and enjoy these lands that we protect for future generations." **H**

ONLINE EXTRA

Find local statistics and a timeline of important dates in the Conservancy's history at www.hereinhanover.com.