

Deb Kimball, Cheryl Smith, Susan Mooney, and Paul Miliotis met at the Sweetser property on Ledge Farm Road for a conservation easement site walk. We were greeted by David Viale of SELT and soon joined by David Sweetser, a trustee of the Sweetser family trust. The portion of the 205-acre property that is being protected with a NRCS ALE grant is about 30 acres, half of which are open fields with agricultural soils. There is additional open acreage that is used for farming but the soils are not prime agricultural soils. A few acres of supporting wooded upland, and an approximately one acre open pond surrounded by trees and other vegetation are included in the CE.

We saw five (at least) Little Green heron fly up from the pond. We also saw a yellow-throated vireo and a red start, identified by Miliotis. The pond system supported some interesting plants including Swamp Candles, Lysimachia terrestris. It was thought at first that this plant might be fringe loosestrife or maybe even the "state threatened" tufted loosestrife. If so, the pond system would be classified as a S-2 community by the National Heritage Bureau.

We walked around the pond to the east and curved up to walk along a woods road to the west. A scarlet tanager was heard in the canopy. Sweetser and Viale showed us a woodland sedge community, a S-2 community, occurring here at the lowest elevation known of 400 feet. The trees were predominately hop hornbeam and the forest floor was blanketed with sedge grass. According to Peter Bowman, a wildlife biologist at NH Natural Heritage Bureau, this 15-acre site is called a "Red oak, ironwood, Pennsylvania sedge Woodland". This area is not located in the ALE portion but rather in the NRCS wetland CE portion.

The walk was completed at 6:30.

Submitted by Susan P. Mooney

Edited 7-29-15