

[Press Release]

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HIGHSTEAD HIRES NEW CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

Emily M. Bateson Assumes Leadership Role

REDDING, CONNECTICUT (January 10) – Highstead is pleased to announce that Emily M. Bateson has joined the staff as Conservation Director. Bateson will take a leadership role in the strategic effort by Highstead to advance the Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative goal of doubling the pace of forestland conservation in New England.
(www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org)

According to Dr. David Foster, Principal Investigator at the Harvard Forest, Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative lead author, and Chair of Highstead:

“New England forests cover 80% of our landscape and are invaluable for our regional economy and our quality of life. But today our forests are at a turning point: Following a 200-year resurgence, forests are starting to decline in every New England state. The culprits include subdivision, fragmentation and development, as well as an onslaught of multiple ecological stresses including acid rain, invasive species, and climate change.

“The Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative calls for a doubling of forestlands conservation to conserve the region’s ecology and economy before it is too late in this populated region where land pressures are so high. Hiring Emily Bateson as Highstead’s Conservation Director and Wildlands and Woodlands Coordinator is a significant strategic milestone in our goal of successful conservation of the region’s forestlands while we still have this spectacular chance.”

Bateson has extensive leadership experience in the field of regional forestland conservation. She was the long-time Land Project Director of the New England-based legal advocacy organization, the Conservation Law Foundation; a founding Steering Committee member of the Northern Forest Alliance; a founding Board Member of the science-based Hubbard Brook Research Foundation; the Associate Director of the regional land conservation funder Sweet Water Trust; and the Co-Founder and first Executive Director of the cross-border Northern Appalachian conservation initiative, Two Countries, One Forest. Said Bateson:

“There is no conservation issue more important or timely in New England than protection of the wildlands and woodlands that clean our air and water, safeguard our wildlife and natural

diversity, and provide myriad economic and recreational benefits to people across the region. I welcome this opportunity to be part of the impressive team at Highstead implementing the Wildlands and Woodlands vision.”

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***Highstead** is a nonprofit organization that works to conserve the forested landscape of New England through science, sound stewardship, and collaboration with regional partners. Since its formation in 1982 by Mr. and Mrs. James Dudley, Highstead has developed as a sanctuary for the study and appreciation of woodland plants and habitats. In 2005, the Highstead Board made a decision to build on Highstead's success by initiating a new effort to engage in conservation of woodlands and natural landscapes at local, regional and national scales through a leadership role in the Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative. <http://highsteadarboretum.org/>*

***Wildlands and Woodlands:** The Wildlands and Woodlands vision calls for a 50-year conservation effort to retain at least 70 percent of New England in forestland, permanently free from development:*

- 90% of forests would be “Woodlands,” conserved by willing landowners and sustainably managed for multiple uses, from recreation to wood products.
- 10% of forests would be “Wildland” reserves, identified by local communities and shaped only by the natural environment.

Achieving the vision will require a doubling of current rates of conservation. This cannot be accomplished by sweeping public acquisition or regulatory fiat. It will require working with thousands of willing private landowners who are interested in securing the future of their land through conservation easements and other approaches. www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org/

For more information, or to schedule an interview with Ms. Bateson, please call Talbot Eckweiler at 203-938-8809 (9 am to 5 pm) or email Talbot at teckweiler@highstead.net.