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UNH's Woodland Classroom Receives Support

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DURHAM, N.H. – For four decades, while he was teaching forest biometrics and management, Prof. James Barrett regularly visited the University of New Hampshire's College Woods. He started his day there with morning walks, and he brought students from his classes to learn about forest ecology. He found College Woods to be an endlessly enriching living laboratory. And now College Woods has found a generous benefactor in Barrett.

The UNH Foundation has received a gift from Barrett, professor emeritus, and his wife, Juddie Barrett, to establish the College Woods Scholarship Fund. The scholarship provides financial help to a student in natural resources and recognizes the value of College Woods, East Foss Farm and other UNH woodlands, all of which play a critical role in the education of UNH students.

The scholarship also is an expression of thanks for woodland walks and many rewarding days teaching students about forestry and natural resources.

Barrett's gift encourages the university to protect and treasure the woods. "College Woods is a living library for education and research that did not cost a penny to build," he says. "It's a protected water supply; a place to walk, jog and cross-country ski; and a quiet place of beauty for reflective thinking. This is the only campus I know of where you can take a five-to 10-minute walk to such a wonderful natural resource."

It just makes common sense that learning about the natural world is essential to a meaningful education, Barrett says. "Our woodlands are nearby classrooms and should be protected. College Woods offers opportunities for both a liberal and a scientific education."

Located on the west side of campus, College Woods comprises approximately 250 acres of woods, streams, and small fields. It is the oldest and most intensively used university property for outdoor activities. Some 60 acres within the main woods area was designated as a Natural Area, in a preservation status, in 1961. The original land was donated by Benjamin Thompson Jr. to New Hampshire College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (as the university was then called) via his will in 1891.

"First it was pasture and then white pine," Barrett says. "Then the 1938 hurricane took down a lot of trees. That happened again with a hurricane in 1956. There's a silty clay soil that's really the best for the original trees—birch, beech and maple—and College Woods is going back to that type of forest now, the forest it was before the Europeans came here."

For more information about the College Woods Scholarship, contact the UNH Foundation at

(603) 862-2570.