

The Fells: How Partnerships Preserved a Garden

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A project of the Garden Conservancy from 1993-1997, The Fells is an example of how a partnership transformed the gardens, lands, and buildings of a private estate into a public garden and center for horticultural and conservation education. This case study examines the partnerships and strategies that preserved The Fells at John Hay National Wildlife Refuge in Newbury, New Hampshire. Nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and committed individuals rallied around the property and succeeded in both preserving a significant landscape and creating an important educational resource for the state and region.

Overlooking Lake Sunapee in south central New Hampshire, The Fells was the summer home of the John Hay family from 1888-1987. The land was once a series of New Hampshire sheep pastures, but three generations of the Hay family transformed more than a thousand acres into a country estate with gardens, forest, and Colonial-Revival structures.

In 1987, the 163-acre site became the John Hay National Wildlife Refuge. Since that time, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has worked with local, state, and national organizations to manage the site and open it for public visitation. Management has evolved in a way that illustrates the potential for successful partnerships between public agencies and nonprofit organizations. This case study focuses on the efforts to develop a management and operational strategy that preserves gardens at a programmatically and organizationally complex site.

The Gardens

The Fells is significant not only for its association with a prominent figure in American political history but also as a fine example of the type of summer estate built by wealthy families throughout New England during the mid-twentieth century. Once the summer place of Secretary of State John Hay (1838-1905), it was his son Clarence (1884-1969) and his wife Alice Hay

(1894-1987) who developed the large colonial revival cottage and 15 acres of formal lawns and gardens surrounded by woodland.

The visitor approaches the house and gardens along a quarter-mile-long entrance drive that winds through beech, oak, and maple hardwood forest. At the end of the road, the forest opens to reveal gardens and grounds arranged like outdoor sanctuaries around the main house. Each garden is compatible with the natural surroundings that dominate the estate. Along the entry drive, the visitor becomes familiar with the refuge and its residents—a woodpecker hammering at a hollow maple tree and deer grazing along the edge of a field.

The main house is a rambling cottage of 35 rooms. A formal entry court welcomes the visitor with roses and honeysuckle growing against granite walls. A large *Enkianthus campanulatus* flanks a set of steps. On the other side of the house, the visitor steps off the front porch onto a wide grass terrace and down broad stone steps to a hundred-foot-long perennial border planted with hardy perennials blooming in pinks, blues, and whites. Beyond another tall yew hedge is a view toward the lake to an open meadow and the woods beyond.

On the lawn north of the house, a set of steps ascends to a grassy terrace where masses of rhododendrons screen one of the most intimate gardens at The Fells. The Old Garden is an axially arranged formal garden with stone walls and is planted with vines and shrubs under towering native trees. Paths meander out from the garden into the woods. A once-walled perennial garden is now a romantic ruin garden.

On the south side of the house a high stone wall with a central fountain borders the rose garden. An urn spills water diverted from a brook into a basin. The lawn once had long beds of hybrid tea roses. The water caught in the basin is piped underground and emerges at the top of a large rock garden. The water trickles down the middle of the garden and is captured and released in a series of small pools. Bordering this entirely natural appearing, but manmade stream are beds of alpine plants, ferns, and azaleas. The water eventually trickles off into the woods, continuing its natural path to Lake Sunapee. Two vistas cut through the woods lead the eye away from the

gardens and toward the mountain ridges beyond. All around, subtly arranged trees and shrubs frame openings to woodland trails and views to the lake, obscuring where the cultivated ends and the wild begins.

Over a period of many years, the Hays developed the gardens, which reached their prime in the 1930s. By the 1940s, the house and garden became difficult to maintain. The Hays sold forty acres with its stone dairy barn and struggled to keep up with maintaining the gardens and holding back the encroaching forest.

Site History and Conservation Planning

Three generations of the Hay family have been ardent conservationists with a passion for the natural world. Clarence Hay, the second generation, was steward of The Fells for 63 years. In planning for the future of their lands, Clarence and Alice Hay contacted a number of federal agencies and conservation organizations, hoping to interest one of them in preserving their property intact. They eventually made a gift of their land to two separate conservation organizations. In 1960, the couple donated 675 acres to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (Forest Society). In 1972, the family promised the remaining 163 acres to the USFWS, and Alice Hay reserved a lifetime tenure. Upon her death in 1987, titled passed to the USFWS.

Alice and Clarence Hay's children, John Hay and Adele Hay Fath, ensured that the property was preserved. Their conviction that The Fells would make an ideal educational center helped shape the policies that have guided its protection and management. Writing in 1989, John Hay noted "more than a monument to the past, the key to The Fells lies in its ability to use all the elements available to see what the land can tolerate, and where its original variety lies—as much in a partridgeberry, a bunchberry, or a fern as in a rose. The garden moves into the forest just as the forest might eventually overcome the garden."

Since the 1960 property gift, the Forest Society has managed its 675 acres as productive forest land. It developed hiking trails, established hunting and

timbering policies, and instituted a year-round series of public programs. In 1990, John Hay provided funds to establish a conservation education program under the direction of David Anderson.

The John Hay National Wildlife Refuge—with its gardens, natural lands, and structures—has had a more complicated preservation history. According to a 1988 USFWS station management plan, the USFWS determined that it did not have endangered species or significant wildlife management objectives for the property, thus it gave the refuge low priority for development, staffing, or funding. Although it had willingly accepted the gift of land and buildings in the 1970s, it was not prepared to commit any funding by the late 1980s.

The USFWS was prepared to remove the house to minimize safety and funding requirements. The Hay Refuge became one of several sub-stations managed out of Great Meadows NWR in Sudbury, Massachusetts, approximately two hours away. The station management plan advised the USFWS to seek other management partners for the refuge. While early management plans were being discussed, however, USFWS continued to pay the estate gardener and his assistant to care for the gardens and grounds on an interim basis.

Establishing a Friends Organization and Determining a Management Strategy

Faced with such underutilization of the site, John Hay urged the Forest Society to establish a friends group that could work with the USFWS to save the historic buildings and develop the site for its educational value. The USFWS was receptive to this idea, hoping to find a nonprofit or other public agency to manage the historic resources at the refuge.

The property was widely recognized for its special qualities, not just for its association with the Hay family, but for the integrity of the house, gardens, and the larger landscape with its mile of protected lakeshore frontage and managed woodlands. Because of its history and beauty, The Fells inspired all who saw it.

From 1989 to 1992, the Friends of the John Hay Wildlife Refuge served as an advocacy organization under the Forest Society's umbrella. The Forest Society was not prepared to take on the management of the gardens and structures on the refuge. The Friends recruited a number of preservationists, state and local government officials, and interested citizens who investigated a number of options for saving the buildings and developing the site for educational purposes. They proposed that the site be managed as a land study center, uniting the disparate elements of the site into one mission with a primary focus on education. Describing the rationale for the Hay Land Study Center, established in 1990, John Hay wrote:

My family roots in American history, coupled with the diverse interests of its members in such fields as literature, natural history, archaeology, and horticulture, provide a powerful incentive for a unified educational program, under one roof, with a single commitment... The Land Studies Center will be experimental in nature, exploring time-honored ways of coexistence with the land, as well as new ideas for the future. The forests, fields, gardens and lakeshore offer insights into the exchange between human experience and perception.

Though the concept of a land study center was compelling, the preservation of the buildings and grounds was a priority. Between 1987 and 1992, the Friends appointed two subcommittees: the Education Committee and the Historic Preservation Committee. Both became advocates for the interpretation and preservation of the site's resources.

To assist the State of New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources in understanding the history and significance of the designed landscape, the Friends initiated the preparation of a historic structures report and a cultural landscape assessment. The assessment recognized the importance of the property as one of only a handful of extant New Hampshire summer estates with landscape features remaining intact. The report encouraged the state to explore options for its preservation.

In June 1990, the Friends made a presentation to the Garden Conservancy, hoping to gain its support for the site. A 1991 visit by the Garden Conservancy Screening Committee assessed the condition of the gardens and recommended that the site become a project of the Garden Conservancy.

The Friends and its subcommittees worked closely with the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources. Because The Fells is a federal property, the State Division of Historic Resources was required to comment on any federal plans for the property, and any effects on historic resources. Staff from both the Division of Historic Resources and USFWS joined these efforts, becoming members of the Historic Preservation Committee. With the advocacy thus created, Congress appropriated \$500,000, administered through USFWS, to structurally stabilize the house and prepare it for public visitation.

Formation of the Historic Landscape Committee

In 1991, the Historic Preservation Committee formed a separate Historic Landscape Committee (HLC). The increased attention to the designed landscape—the gardens and grounds—resulted in this separate committee for the landscape. Interaction between the two committees remained strong, and some members sat on both committees for the first year.

The HLC began to shape a vision and a program for the landscape and to raise awareness and support for it. The committee started an annual plant sale, gave informal tours of the gardens to potential supporters, and advised the estate's gardeners on setting maintenance priorities. At first the committee did not have officers, bylaws, or funding. After a year or so, the committee decided it needed more structure and elected a chair, vice chair, and secretary. As it developed a management solution for the site, the committee increased its activities, organizing volunteer work parties, holding special events, and working with the Garden Conservancy. The group formed working groups to accomplish these many projects.

Members of the Historic Landscape Committee included a representative from the Division of Historic Resources, the wife of the governor of New Hampshire, the county extension agent, the president of a local garden club, a member of the Garden Conservancy Screening Committee, the author of the cultural

landscape assessment, the gardener at nearby Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, a Hay family relative, and several others with an interest in gardens.

Committee members had an impressive range of expertise and dedication. The combination of professionals and volunteer activists helped the committee succeed. Sue Clough, a farmer and local business owner, provided an entrée into the local community: she recruited Gusta Teach, president of the New London Garden Club, who steered the formation of a garden volunteer corps. Gusta always knew the right person to recruit for a job. She later became chairman of the Historic Landscape Committee and eventually president of the board of the Friends. Kathy Gregg, wife of the governor, helped focus the state's attention on the property. Kris Fenderson, the Garden Conservancy representative, provided a communications link between the HLC and the Conservancy. He promoted educational programs and exceptional standards for the treatment of the landscape, and recruited supporters. Nancy (Muller) Dutton, the state historic preservation officer, guided planning work, kept minutes, and provided much needed organizational skills. Lucinda Brockway, who wrote the cultural landscape assessment, provided preservation advice and assistance, and helped to draft policies. She also served as the first chairman of the Historic Landscape Committee and was responsible for making initial contact with the Conservancy. She negotiated management agreements with the various agencies and organizations involved at the site. Bill Noble, gardener at the nearby Saint-Gaudens NHS, eventually became the director of landscapes at The Fells.

Public–Private Partnerships Emerge

In 1992, after three years of advocacy and planning, the Friends agreed on a course of action for The Fells: for the State of New Hampshire/Department of Resources and Economic Development, Department of Parks and Recreation (DRED or State Parks) to manage The Fells as a state historic site. The state and the USFWS signed a five-year memorandum of agreement, authorizing the state to manage the property “for the purposes of providing historic structure interpretation and cultural history programs and training to the public and public school educators and to provide all maintenance and protection for all

buildings, grounds, and gardens located on approximately a 62-acre portion of the John Hay National Wildlife Refuge.”

The Friends felt that State Parks would be a good manager for The Fells because it managed a dozen state historic sites. State Parks had limited financial and staff resources, but the director was an advocate for public/private nonprofit partnerships. State Parks entered into three memoranda of understanding with nonprofit organizations that could assist in managing various aspects of the site. In 1992, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests agreed to conduct conservation education programs at the refuge and the Lake Sunapee Protective Association agreed to share office space and offer educational programs at The Fells.

In 1993, State Parks asked the Garden Conservancy to provide preservation planning and maintenance for the designed landscape. The state agreed to pay the Garden Conservancy \$35,000 per year for landscape maintenance. The Conservancy, in turn, agreed to contribute \$9,000 per year and assumed full responsibility for budgeting, staffing, and managing the landscape program.

The USFWS supported this sharing of responsibilities and the Friends of the John Hay Wildlife Refuge agreed to dissolve, feeling it had attained its goal. The governor appointed the John Hay Commission to advise on policy and programming at the refuge. As the partner directly responsible to USFWS, State Parks served as the primary manager of the property, and the John Hay Commission served as its de facto board of directors. The former Friends' committees became standing committees of the John Hay Commission. The John Hay Commission became a nonprofit corporation so it could raise money and accept donations.

Staffing

State Parks operated the site between Memorial Day and Columbus Day, opening the house for tours and providing basic non-landscape maintenance. They also renovated the gatehouse and installed restroom facilities. They had a bare-bones staff: a part-time superintendent, seasonal housekeeper, part-time interpreter, and contractors for winter plowing and security. During the

first season of operation, Al Kathan and his assistant, James "Chuck" Chartier, the last Hay family gardeners, provided landscape maintenance.

The Garden Conservancy began landscape management in 1993 and immediately hired Chuck Chartier. The HLC and the Conservancy identified the need for an individual with horticultural and managerial skills to assume the position of director of landscapes. They conducted a national search and hired William Noble for this part-time horticultural and administrative position on June 1, 1993.

The director of landscapes was the only year-round employee. Working three days a week, he supervised Chartier and two part-time seasonal gardeners and functioned as the ad hoc executive director for the property. In this part of New Hampshire, the gardening season lasts from April to late November, so the site could get by with mostly seasonal employees.

The Public–Private Partnership in Action

The model of sharing management and programming responsibilities among a number of partners is one that State Parks had pioneered at its historic sites. This "divide and conquer" strategy was an experiment in site administration. All of the partnership agreements written in 1992 and 1993 would expire in 1997. The five-year agreement allowed everyone the opportunity to work together, to understand one another's strengths and weaknesses, and to have the opportunity to revise the partnership agreements before extending the agreements. State Parks felt handicapped by the short-term nature of the agreement, feeling it did not allow adequate time for return on its investment.

This model may succeed with sites that have on-site staff and active commissioners. Because State Parks had such limited resources, both financial and staff, it had to rely on partnerships. The John Hay Commission (JHC) advised the state but had no staff of its own to implement suggestions and did not acquire fundraising expertise. It served primarily as a body to hear concerns from the various partners. It was intended that public officials on the commission might be able to attract additional state resources. Its chair soon moved to Washington, DC, and the vice-chair acted in her absence. State

Parks was not comfortable with its inability to implement suggestions from other organizations with ambitious agendas for the site. Problems with accountability, follow-through, and leadership plagued the new partnership.

The Garden Conservancy, having staff on site, a growing corps of volunteers and the Historic Landscape Committee, as well as its own plans for the revitalization of the gardens, worked hard to promote the site and raise money. In 1992, the HLC raised \$2,000 from its first plant sale. By 1995, the HLC and the Garden Conservancy, working as a team, raised an additional \$40,000 through the plant sale and other special events, an annual appeal, educational programs, and grant requests to garden clubs and local foundations. The Garden Conservancy gathered names and addresses of visitors, program participants, and potential supporters into a database. This ability to raise funds and build support eventually formed the basis of a membership program.

In addition to the programs offered by the Garden Conservancy, the Forest Society presented a full schedule of conservation education programs. Having sufficient funding for its programs provided by John Hay, SPNHF concentrated on building an audience for its programs. Its program manager shared office space in the gatehouse. The Lake Sunapee Protective Association used the site for a summer camp and offered occasional education programs. Both organizations contributed funding toward the renovation of the gatehouse and used it as their base for operations at the site. They soon realized the limitations of the building and the lack of year-round educational space at the site.

This partnership arrangement worked well for those partners who had adequate funding and staffing. However, it was not conducive to building a public identity for the new site, nor was it effective in developing the site's physical requirements such as parking and renovation of the gatehouse for educational space. Imbalances in the levels of funding, fundraising, public relations programs, and overall communication between partners caused disparities. Partners that had to raise significant amounts of money for their programs were sometimes seen by others as promoting their own programs

and not the entire site. Partners who functioned with little or no staff sometimes could not communicate well with the other partners. There were tensions between State Parks and the nonprofit partners who looked to the state for better leadership. There were also the inevitable frictions in applying regulations and procedures from the state park system to a new site. To be fully effective, a partnership such as this required exceptional communication between all parties and leadership and follow-through for matters that crossed over organizational responsibilities.

Successful Early Planning: Cultural Landscape Policies and Philosophies

The Garden Conservancy and HLC prepared materials to explain to the partners its plans for the landscape. They developed the *Cultural Landscape Policies and Philosophies Statement* so that the management and preservation approach could be understood and endorsed by USFWS, State Parks, and the John Hay Commission. The statement outlined the proposed management, treatment, and interpretation of the cultural landscape for The Fells. (A cultural landscape is defined as one that reflects history and the relationship between people and the environment. It can range from a large rural tract, to an estate with formal gardens, to an urban park.) The plan developed over the course of many months, beginning with two daylong planning workshops lead by a facilitator. Lucinda Brockway volunteered to prepare the document along with the director of landscapes.

The *Cultural Landscape Policies and Philosophies Statement* was useful for three main reasons: (1) It articulated a mission for the site that was understood and accepted by all. It incorporated the impact of three generations of the Hay family with themes in history, horticulture, and the environment; (2) It established types and levels of documentation that needed to be completed for various parts of the landscape before treatment or significant alterations were made; (3) It organized the landscape into management zones and developed priorities for each. This approach was practical because there was little time or money available for planning—and progress had to be shown to garner public support. The document also

provided the director of landscapes with authority to proceed with work in the gardens and could be referred to if others tried to change the priorities.

Written primarily to establish an overall approach to the revitalization of the landscape, especially by establishing priorities for work by garden area, the report did not address planning or building needs such as might be found in a master plan. The report was endorsed by the Hay Commission, State Parks, and the USFWS in 1993. Given the fragmentation of site management, the director of landscapes encountered very little second-guessing about work in the gardens from other organizational partners. The plan served well for the duration of the Conservancy's involvement on the site.

Success of the Volunteer Program

A volunteer gardener program was one of the HLC and Garden Conservancy's most significant accomplishments at The Fells. The program formed because of the need to augment staff, to demonstrate progress in the gardens, and to generate public support and funds for the project. In July of 1993, the director of landscapes and Gusta Teach began recruiting volunteer gardeners. As past president of a local garden club, Gusta knew whom to recruit and her persuasiveness was convincing. Gusta and the director of landscapes both oversaw volunteers; she convinced volunteers to get involved and the director provided supervision and encouragement on the site.

Beginning with the renovation of overgrown shrub borders and the entrance drive, this handful of volunteers worked one morning a week weeding and pruning. Although this work was important, it was not highly visible to the community and the visiting public. Therefore, in 1994, volunteers revitalized a hundred-foot-long perennial border to make a dramatic statement to volunteers, site visitors, and prospective supporters.

By 1995, about 35 volunteers had signed up and organized into five groups, each with responsibilities for specific garden areas. Volunteers helped recruit other volunteers and many helped with special events and fundraising. In the first year, volunteers logged more than 500 hours in the gardens. Today,

approximately 120 volunteers spend more than 7,000 hours per year in the gardens and house, and on special events.

The role of volunteers in the success of the site cannot be overestimated. Volunteer gardeners became community advocates for the site and their camaraderie and commitment generated enthusiasm for The Fells. The improvements in the gardens demonstrated to visitors and neighbors alike that The Fells' garden was not only being revitalized but the site was becoming a focal point for the community.

A good volunteer program requires not only effective recruiting, clear goals, and supervision, but some sort of volunteer recognition as well. The staff and volunteer coordinators sponsored mid-summer field trips to nurseries and private gardens as a way of thanking the volunteers and educating them about plants and gardens. The Fells also held an end-of-year potluck supper for the volunteers.

Staff and volunteers developed an educational program, in part to recruit and train volunteers. Although designed primarily to promote the mission of the site, it also aimed at educating volunteers and potential volunteers. This program reached participants at various levels of experience and succeeded in attracting a wider audience of gardeners to The Fells, many of whom eventually became active supporters. Presentations were related to work performed on the site, such as the renovation of older gardens, perennial gardening, pruning, and organic lawn care.

The rapid growth of the volunteer program presented certain challenges. The director of landscapes managed up to five separate groups of gardeners two mornings a week. To free up his time, the Fells hired a part-time gardener for both the rock garden and nursery. These gardeners managed volunteers and developed the gardens. Sometimes the volunteers criticized the way the other partners and the gardeners managed the site. Staff would patiently explain the appropriateness of decisions and actions and ask for patience while management issues were resolved.

Recognizing Limitations and Planning for Change

As the five-year term of the 1992 agreements approached, the partners began thinking about renegotiating the agreements. After four years of managing the site and changes at the top levels of its administration, State Parks decided against renewing its agreement with USFWS. State Parks began to discuss management alternatives with the nonprofit partners, hoping it could convince one of them to take its place as the primary site manager. Beginning in 1996, representatives of all the partners met monthly to discuss the long-term management options for the site.

The Forest Society and the Lake Sunapee Protection Association were not interested in full-scale management of the property, but wished to continue as partners in programming. The Garden Conservancy also declined a leadership role. The Conservancy's long-term plan was to foster the financial, organizational, and philosophical wellbeing of a local group to which it could turn over management of the landscape. Conservancy staff realized that a single entity managing the site was in the best interests of both the gardens and the entire refuge.

The John Hay Commission also considered filling State Park's role but the commission's structure made this difficult. The commission was comprised of many public officials, who could not raise money on behalf of the site. Though the commission functioned as an effective link to potential state and federal dollars, it was not an ideal entity to assume overall site management. USFWS maintained its position that it could not provide funding or management for the site.

Reorganization and the New Friends of the John Hay National Wildlife Refuge

After careful consideration of the available options, all parties agreed to create a new organization to serve as the sole manager and programming coordinator at The Fells. The Friends of the John Hay National Wildlife Refuge (The Friends) took approximately 1.5 years to organize before it could accept management responsibilities from the USFWS. The group had to develop its own mission

statement, incorporate, gain tax-exempt status, and establish short- and long-term operating plans. USFWS worked closely with the representatives to have everything in place by the time the existing agreements expired.

The new friends group became directly responsible for all aspects of site management, including the landscape program and building maintenance, public visitation and interpretation, education, fundraising, and staffing. The leadership capabilities demonstrated by the Historic Landscape Committee and the Garden Conservancy were essential in organizing the new friends group. Many of the volunteers they had recruited became Friends leaders and financial supporters. The new group made a concerted effort to bring in representatives of all the participating organizations for the 23-member board, as well as to recruit new leadership from the community.

The Friends gained the support of all of the existing partners, and State Parks agreed to provide financial support for the group, at decreasing levels, over a three-year period to help ease the transition from state to nonprofit management. The John Hay Commission remained as an advisory body and helped secure federal funding to stabilize the main house. All the partners agreed that the state's involvement had been necessary and although only an interim solution, it had paved the way for a better management structure.

In 1997, the USFWS signed a memorandum of understanding with the Friends of the John Hay National Wildlife Refuge. The Friends signed subsequent partnership agreements with the Forest Society and the Lake Sunapee Protective Association. The Garden Conservancy transferred all bookkeeping and other management responsibilities to the Friends. The Conservancy also pledged an additional three years of financial support to the new organization.

The Garden Conservancy staff on site became employees of the Friends; all other seasonal house and interpretive staff, formerly State Parks employees, joined the Friends staff. The Friends hired a part-time executive director in 1997 to consolidate staffing and spearhead the Friends management. Instead of programs and management subdivided by management partners, the new Friends group was united in its mission. Its purpose was to:

...foster the preservation and management of the Hay family legacy of lands, buildings, and gardens in Newbury, New Hampshire. To further the Hay family vision for the Refuge as a center for the study of the interaction between man and nature through educational and interpretive programs in conservation, preservation, history and horticulture.

The Public–Private Partnership Today

The Friends faced a number of challenges in its first year—to create a united staff and board, build confidence among membership, and raise more money than it had previously. It began a membership campaign with ambitious goals for new members and increased levels of support. It began to focus on raising money from events and finding a way to collect admission fees from a public used to entering the site for free. Projects that had stalled under State Parks management, such as the construction of a year-round parking area, finally began, adding significant responsibilities for the part-time staff and volunteer board members. The new board established committees to work on critical items such as a planning committee for site improvements and a finance committee for managing funds.

In 1999, Gusta Teach, then chairman of the Friends, announced an ambitious plan to raise \$150,000 toward the renovation of the garage at the gatehouse for a multipurpose education and event space. This project was an opportunity to demonstrate that the Friends could successfully initiate, manage, and complete a project. It dedicated the John Hay Room in spring of 2000.

Today the Friends budget is approximately \$200,000 per year, with revenues from the membership program, donations and annual appeals, grants, admissions, gift shop and plant sales, and special events. Staff is primarily responsible for the membership program, annual appeal, and grants. Volunteers organize fundraising events, such as the annual plant sale, auction, and garden tours.

Garden staff focus their efforts on the rock garden, development of nursery facilities, and continued pruning and renovation of overgrown and mature shrubs and trees, especially surrounding the Old Garden and along the entry drive. The garden staff consists of long-time gardener Chuck Chartier, a part-time landscape manager, a nursery manager, and rock gardener. A Garden Conservancy fellow developed a treatment plan for reopening vistas toward the lake and mountain ridges.

In 1999, the Friends organized a landscape advisory council chaired by Lucinda Brockway. Its role is to advise staff and support the commitment to interdisciplinary landscape study, and high-quality planning and management of the designed landscape and its interface with the natural landscape. Meeting twice a year, the council reviews the staff's projects and landscape management issues, and explores the broader concepts of managing a cultural landscape of historic formal and naturalistic gardens within a wildlife refuge and land study center.

As an advisory body, the council does not function as a subcommittee of the board or have decision-making power. Council members are professionals with diverse areas of expertise in the fields of horticulture, cultural landscape management, forestry, wildlife management, natural sciences, and conservation. Staff call upon members for individual consultations and invite them to the semi-annual council meetings.

Some believe that the beauty of The Fells is in its edges. Others note that the "true delight of this landscape is the opportunity to experience nature while walking down a carefully designed woodland road, or to appreciate the frogs and birds while standing in a historic alpine garden." It is the incidental interaction of these disparate elements that one remembers most at The Fells. It is the mission of the Friends of the John Hay National Wildlife Refuge to keep the balance of the designed and natural landscapes.

Through its growth and transitions, The Fells has evolved as a model for public-private partnerships, with its friends groups, volunteers, and partnerships dedicated to the revitalization of a significant American landscape.

Timeline for Partnership Management The Fells, John Hay National Wildlife Refuge

- 1888-1987 Hay family develops and occupies its summer estate in Newbury, NH.
- 1960 Clarence and Alice Hay deed 675 acres to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.
- 1971 Alice Hay deeds 163 acres to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
- 1988 USFWS presents its station management plan for JHNWR, which calls for no maintenance of the buildings and designed landscape at The Fells.
- 1988 A historic structures report is prepared for the buildings and a cultural landscape assessment is prepared for the landscape.
- 1989 Friends of the John Hay Wildlife Refuge forms as an advisory committee of SPNHF to advocate for preservation of the buildings and grounds for educational purposes.
- 1990 SPNHF hires an education program coordinator.
- 1990 Congress appropriates \$491,000 for stabilization of main house.
- 1991 Historic Preservation Committee forms the Historic Landscape Committee.
- 1991 Garden Conservancy Screening Committee visits The Fells and recommends that it become a project of the Garden Conservancy. MOU signed between SPNHF and USFWS for educational use of JHNWR.
- 1992 Five-year MOU (with an optional 20-year extension) signed between USFWS and the State of New Hampshire/Department of Resources and Economic Development for buildings and grounds management, and preservation and interpretive programming.
- 1992 John Hay Commission established by New Hampshire Governor's Order.
- 1992 Five-year MOA signed between the State of New Hampshire and the Lake Sunapee Protection Association for use of the gatehouse for administrative offices and public programming.

- 1993 Four-year MOA signed between the State of New Hampshire and the Garden Conservancy for landscape management and programming.
- 1993 Director of landscapes hired and contracts negotiated with former gardeners.
- 1993 *Cultural Landscape Policies and Philosophies Statement* written and approved.
- 1996 State of New Hampshire decides against renewing its MOU with USFWS, and seeks other management options. All partners meet monthly to assess alternatives and to develop a new management proposal.
- 1997 Management agreements expire.
- 1997 The Friends of the John Hay National Wildlife Refuge incorporates and seeks tax-exempt status. Friends sign MOU with USFWS for 20 years (expires 2017).
- 1997-1998 MOAs signed between Friends and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the Lake Sunapee Protection Association, and the Garden Conservancy. Garden Conservancy turns over staff and administration to the Friends. Friends hire executive director and begins to manage the site.
- 1998 Federal government appropriates \$1 million for stabilization of buildings and outbuildings.
- 2000 Gatehouse expanded to include multipurpose classroom.