



Arn Sturtevant

For the first time ever, the Kennebec Land Trust has used an easement to conserve the scenic value of a property. The 22 1/2 -acre Sturtevant Farm Conservation Area in Fayette, which has been in the same family for eight generations, offers a spectacular view of the Presidential Mountain Range in New Hampshire.

A Call For Essays—Maine Voices Project

Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance, The Wilderness Society, Milkweed Editions, and Maine Coast Heritage Trust, collaborating with teachers from more than 160 schools and more than 50 organizations representing Maine’s literary, cultural, educational, faith, and conservation communities, announce a statewide call for essays.

The Maine Voices Project invites Mainers from all walks of life and writing levels to submit an essay describing the places in Maine that they cherish and how these places have shaped them, taught them, nurtured them, or provided joy or solitude. The Project also hopes to encourage the state’s seniors to write about how the land has changed in their lifetime and the legacy they would like to leave to future generations.

“We believe that everyone has a place they consider special, a place near and dear to them, whether it be a childhood backyard, a city park, or Baxter State Park,” says Jeremy Sheaffer, project coordinator. “The goal of the Maine Voices Project is simple: we want to encourage and help as many Maine residents as possible to produce an essay on a special outdoor place or experience. We hope to hear from people of all ages, from all sectors of Maine. On a deeper level, of course, the overall goal is to help foster a broader appreciation of the importance of the natural world in everyone’s lives.”

In addition to soliciting essays from children and adults, the Maine Voices Project will hold readings of selected essays at events to be held around the state. Milkweed Editions, as part of their Literature for a Land

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Committee to Examine State Land Stewardship Needs and Work for Solutions

The Land for Maine’s Future Program has recently reconstituted a long standing but dormant committee to discuss and find solutions to the problems related to stewardship of the State-held conservation easements. The bulk of these easements (about 90) are held by either the Department of Conservation’s Bureau of Parks and Lands or the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Many are fairly old, dating back to the 1970’s. Over the past

few years, baseline data has been gathered for most of them, but there is currently very limited funding or staffing for stewardship for the majority of them. The recently convened committee includes representatives from Department of Agriculture, LMF, BPL, MDIFW, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Forest Society of Maine, The Nature Conservancy, and New England Forestry Foundation. The group will be identifying needs and looking for solutions.



Christina Espenson

The **Androscoggin Land Trust** recently acquired 67.5 acres of Hooper Pond and Hooper Brook property through purchase and a donation, giving a significant boost to the trust's capital campaign. The land protected includes exemplary wetlands and scenic forested uplands. Hooper Pond is one of only four remaining undeveloped ponds of 25 acres or more in Androscoggin County.

The Boothbay Harbor Region Chamber of Commerce awarded its coveted Community Improvement Award to the **Boothbay Region Land Trust** at the Chamber's annual meeting. Peter Gardner, Chamber president, commended the land trust for its protection of 922 acres of land and 20 miles of trails providing water access and hiking for both residents and visitors.

The **Chewonki Foundation** purchased the 7-acre Bowline Head Island in a bargain sale and the **Great Auk Land Trust** will hold an easement on the property. Chewonki developed a single, rustic campsite on the island and is managing use to avoid the breeding season of the resident bald eagle.

Two undeveloped islands in Jones Cove are now under permanent protection thanks to the donation of forever wild conservation easements granted to the **Damariscotta River Association**. The islands are located at the head of Jones Cove and are visible from the Damariscotta River and from the nearby hiking trail at the Tracy Shores Preserve owned by the Town of South Bristol.

The **Downeast Rivers Land Trust** spearheaded a successful effort to acquire and protect 14 acres of land, including 3,000 feet of frontage on the Pleasant River in Columbia. The scenic Saco Falls land will soon become a town park, providing public access while helping to protect endangered Atlantic salmon and other important fish and wildlife habitats.

The **Francis Small Heritage Trust** is pleased to announce the purchase of 72 acres of land on Veazie Mountain, adding to their Sawyer Mountain Highlands

project. The Highlands are part of nearly 11,000 contiguous acres, the largest undeveloped (and highly threatened) habitat in Southern Maine.

To meet the growing need of land conservation in the towns surrounding Newburgh, the **Newburgh Area Heritage Trust** is actively working to expand its area of operation. Their first steps of developing a more representative Board of Directors is well underway and a change in the organization's name is pending.

Volunteers with the **Phippsburg Land Trust** have constructed a new 4.8 mile perimeter trail around its 253-acre Center Pond Preserve, including two miles along the pond shore. The trail includes several natural barriers to discourage ATV use, which had severely damaged old logging roads formerly used as walking trails.

Recently, the **Western Foothills Land Trust** accepted a conservation easement on 50 acres of land in Norway. A prime piece of land situated in a potentially high-growth area, the easement protects fields, pastures, two forested areas and some shoreline.

The **York Land Trust** is helping to lead a major land protection effort called The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative. This ambitious project combines conservation efforts around Mt. Agamenticus with the preservation of the largely undeveloped pristine coastal and saltmarsh areas along the York River, in Brave Boat Harbor Estuary and Gerrish Island into a single effort that aims to conserve an additional 9,000 acres. Coalition partners include: **Great Works Regional Land Trust, Kittery Land Trust, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, US Fish and Wildlife Service/Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve and the York Rivers Association.**



Maine Audubon

Maine Audubon received a \$25,500 grant from the Maine Recreational Trails program for improving the Summit Trail at Borestone Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary. As a result, Maine Audubon hired the Maine Conservation Corp to construct 157 new stone steps and seven new waterbars in the most eroded areas of the trail.

We are working on a conservation easement with a landowner who wants to prohibit hunting on the parcel. Can this be done through an easement?

Easements are highly flexible tools for achieving the desired future condition of land, and can be utilized to combine and balance sometimes conflicting goals, such as public access and protection of fragile resources. Easements and easement holders, however, do have limits.

The first question a land trust must ask itself, when being offered a restriction of this sort, is: Does that restriction serve an important conservation goal that our donors will support and that we are willing to devote time and money to? Sometimes owners have a personal vision that, though entirely valid, is not consistent with the land trust's overarching community goals. In the case of hunting, for instance, it may be the land trust's goal to increase public access in their community, including the availability of land for hunting. On the other hand, there are some properties where hunting might well be inadvisable, detrimental to other important conservation values, or even dangerous.

If this is the case, the land trust must consider whether a conservation easement is the right tool to achieve this limitation. Often the vision of the landowner or the special character of the place can only be achieved with daily on-site management. Easements do not provide this. If a conservation goal requires continuing management, it might be best suited as a preserve owned in fee or managed under a long term lease by the land trust. Of course, landowners who offer conservation easements on their land may already have determined that their goal is to keep the land in private ownership and control future owners, so acquisition of the fee title by the land trust may not be an option.

In this situation, land trusts must be disciplined to acknowledge the limits of the tool. Conservation

easements are most effective and practical for preventing activities that have enduring and obvious impacts, like building development, roads, alteration of wetlands, and poor farm and forest practices. A landowner's desire to make their land a wildlife sanctuary, or a safe year-round hiking preserve, or a residential property that is off limits to hunters, requires daily monitoring to prevent hunting. If a land trust took on the task of stewarding an easement that prohibited hunting, it would be in the difficult position of enforcing something without obvious impact on the land. Any random trespass by a hunter would violate the easement, and require the land trust to initiate a costly response. A future owner might not cooperate in a trespass charge against the hunter, or the evidence of hunting (as opposed to timber trespass) might be hard to prove.

Rather than prohibiting uses that cannot be detected without constant monitoring, a conservation easement can require the owner to implement land management activities that discourage the offensive use. For instance, if the land trust agrees that access by hunters or recreational vehicles would be seriously detrimental to other conservation goals, the easement could simply require the owner to post the property, or to gate woodsroads, or to design and limit the width of footpaths to prevent vehicular access. But even these requirements should only be imposed where there is indeed a true conservation reason to prevent this activity IN PERPETUITY. It should not be a matter of "taste." If the goal doesn't meet this standard, the owner should simply be encouraged to exercise their considerable ownership rights and post against any use they wish to prevent, and to take advantage of the laws that protect them and their land against trespass.

Maine Voices Project *(continued from page 1)*

Ethic publishing program, will publish selected essays from different regions of the state in book form.

All entries must be postmarked, faxed, or emailed by April 22nd. Essays of 500 words or less can be submitted by email to mainevoices@tws.org, or by fax (617) 426-3213. Essays may be mailed to the Maine Voices Project, c/o Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance, 14 Maine Street, Suite 416, Brunswick, Maine 04011. Please include your name, address, county, telephone number, email address, school/organization and age. For more information about the Maine Voices Project please contact Project Coordinator Jeremy Sheaffer at mainevoices@tws.org; (617) 350-8866 x3.

Steering Committee Meeting Schedule

The Maine Land Trust Network Steering Committee consists of representatives of land trusts from across Maine. This group meets four times a year to discuss current issues and to help guide the programs of the Maine Land Trust Network. Meetings will held on June 12, September 18, and December 3, 2003. Land Trust members are encouraged to attend. For more information please contact the Network Coordinator, Megan Shore, at (207) 729-7366 or mshore@mcht.org.

Maine Land Conservation Conference Scheduled for May 2 & 3

Over 30 Workshops and Events Offered!

Every year Maine Coast Heritage Trust presents the Maine Land Conservation Conference, providing land conservationists, landowners and others a forum in which to learn and share knowledge and ideas about protecting Maine's special places.

Conference events will begin on Friday, May 2 with a workshop entitled "Integrating Conservation and Community." This workshop will focus on land trusts working with their townspeople and local government for the conservation of important areas. Informative and fun field trips will also be offered on Friday afternoon, allowing participants to enjoy the early spring weather while learning about conservation projects undertaken by the Freeport Conservation Trust and Harpswell Heritage Trust. Following these events a welcoming reception will be held at the Stone House Conference Center in Freeport, featuring fine (and plentiful) hors d'oeuvres, good company, and a slide show of impressive images taken by Dennis Shultz



Christina Epperson

along the Ducktrap River in Mid-coast Maine with a narrative by Scott Dickerson, one of the key players in the protection of the river.

On Saturday, May 3 over 300 land conservationists will converge on the Brunswick High School for a full day offering a wide array of workshops suitable for people of all experience levels. Keynote presenter Naomi Schalit of Maine Public Radio, will start the day off with a provocative and humorous look at some of the issues facing land trusts in her presentation "Stories You Don't Want to Hear on Me Do." Throughout the day participants will have the opportunity to visit and talk with exhibitors at the Land Fair. The lunch break will offer ample time for networking and, for those interested, regional discussion groups will be available.

Brochures will be mailed in late March. For more information please contact Megan Shore at (207) 709-7366.

MLTN Membership Renewals Due

Now that the new year is well underway, it is time for land trusts to renew their membership in the Maine Land Trust Network. We value your support and input into the programs of MLTN and we hope that if your organization hasn't renewed for 2003 it will do so now. Thanks to the many of you who have already renewed!

And don't forget: as a member of a MLTN member organization you are entitled to discounts at MLTN sponsored events, and with the Maine Land Conservation Conference coming right up you'll want to renew soon. Member trusts also have access to Maine Coast Heritage Trust's revolving loan fund and receive a free membership in the Maine Association of Non-Profits, entitling you to further discounts on workshops.

Land Trust News is published four times a year for the directors, officers, and staff of the 75 subscribing members of the Maine Land Trust Network (MLTN). The MLTN is a program of Maine Coast Heritage Trust that seeks to promote voluntary land conservation by building the quality and effectiveness of land trusts and the Maine conservation community through communication, coordination and education. For more information or if you would like to submit an article or news item for publication in *Land Trust News* please contact Megan Shore at 729-7366 or mshore@mcht.org.

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