

MLTN News & Updates

The Maine Land Trust Network builds and sustains the quality and effectiveness of Maine land trusts, as well as other organizations engaged in land conservation, drawing upon our collective expertise and resources to ensure responsible and successful conservation. Established in 1995, MLTN strengthens the land conservation community by serving as a central hub of information. It brings conservationists together to facilitate information exchange and collaboration. Additionally, the Network provides a broad array of programs, services, and resources that build the capacity and sustainability of land conservation organizations throughout the state.

Here are some updates about our programing and grants for 2024.

LL Bean Maine Land Trust Grants

Applications due Friday, September 27.

L.L.Bean has been a key partner of Maine land trusts for years, both as a Leading Conference Sponsor making this event possible, but also helping Maine Coast Heritage Trust create and continue the L.L.Bean Maine Land Trust Grant Program. Last year, L.L.Bean stepped up with a major increase in funding for the program that allowed us to more than double the program's support for stewardship, preserve management, and programming at local land conservation organizations across the state. Please join us in thanking L.L.Bean for matching that support again in 2024! We are so grateful for this funding, which Maine land trusts have come to rely on year after year. Visit the MLTN website for more information. MLTN.org/resources/funding

Newly Expanded MCHT Land Trust Merger Assistance Fund

Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) has established a fund to assist land trusts seeking stronger organizational health and effectiveness through advanced collaboration, structural realignment, or merger with other organizations.

We are thrilled to announce that we recently received funding to significantly expand this program and will be able to offer up to \$25,000 for the exploration phase, an additional \$25,000 for the implementation phase, and up \$25,000 per year for the first two years after merger to assist with increased costs related to integrating the organizations post-merger. Applications will be accepted and evaluated on a rolling basis. Visit our website for more information and contact Angela Twitchell (atwitchell@mcht.org) with questions. MLTN.org/resources/funding

Maine Land Trust Census Coming This Fall!

Every five years, the Maine Land Trust Network (MLTN) conducts a census to help us gain comprehensive information about the current state of Maine's land trusts. We periodically undertake this effort to understand more about the operations, impact, and trends that are relevant to the land trust movement. We will use this data to provide valuable information back to you and others in the conservation community, to help guide the work of MLTN, and to support advocacy for beneficial public policy and land conservation funding. Look for more information on this year's census survey coming to you this fall, and thank you in advance for your participation!

MLTN News & Updates

Public Policy

Over the past couple of years in Augusta, MCHT has been advocating for a variety of public policy initiatives to enhance land conservation activities around the state. Working closely with partners in 2023, we were successful in passing legislation to strengthen Land for Maine's Future (LMF) by ensuring the program's investment income remains available for additional land conservation. This change has already generated more than \$750,000 in seven months. Last year, we also amended the state's subdivision law so that it no longer inadvertently discourages land conservation. This year, MCHT and partners have been busy working on bills to improve the Open Space Tax Law, to exempt land trusts and other nonprofits from the state's sales tax, to update the mining excise tax law by directing 75% of its revenues toward land conservation, and to send a \$30 million trails bond to Maine voters. As the current legislature approaches the end of its two-year term, MCHT is already looking ahead to 2025, especially on the need to secure future funding for LMF. You can contact MCHT Public Policy Manager Jeff Romano throughout the year with your policy-related questions (jromano@mcht.org).

Resources and Help

Through various channels, MLTN provides help, resources, and networking opportunities, as well as news and information on issues and activities relevant to land conservation, data and contacts for Maine's local land trusts, and land trust job postings. MLTN.org also provides sample policies and documents, consultant lists, videos, links to related partner organizations, funding sources, land conservation publications, and a member forum to "converse" with peers on land trust issues.

Publications and Documents: On our Publications and Documents page, you can find sample policies and documents currently in use by other land conservation organizations, as well as helpful links to other sources and our own publications, such as the Land Trusts Work for Maine report. [MLTN.org/resources/publications](https://mltn.org/resources/publications)

Infoline: Our bi-monthly electronic newsletter keeps you abreast of meetings, trainings, funding opportunities, policy updates, and resources that can help you achieve your conservation goals. [MLTN.org/about/newsletter](https://mltn.org/about/newsletter)

MLTN Member Forum: We host an online forum where members can post questions, raise issues, and float ideas with their peers who work and volunteer protecting and caring for Maine's special places. Sign up at [MLTN.org/about/forum](https://mltn.org/about/forum).

Call us! MCHT Land Trust Program is here to help. If you have a sticky issue or burning question that you'd like to talk to someone about, give us a call at 207-729-7366. We'll do our best to help and if we don't have the answer, we'll help you find someone who does.