



# 2025 Maine Land Conservation Conference

Presented by Maine Coast Heritage Trust

## WEDNESDAY WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

**Land Fair Exhibits and Breakfast in the Auditorium 7:30 – 8:30 am, 10 – 10:30 am**

**Plenary Session in Augusta/Capitol/Pine 8:30 – 10 am**

**Hannah Pingree, Director of the Governor’s Office on Policy, Innovation, and the Future**, will share an overview of the updated Maine Won’t Wait climate action plan. Then, Ms. Pingree will lead a panel discussion with experts in energy policy, conservation planning, building thriving communities, and our state’s economy about what it will take for Maine to reach the ambitious goals laid out in the plan.

Panelists: **Dan Burgess**, Director of the Governor’s Energy Office; **Jeremy Gabrielson**, Associate Director of Planning, Maine Coast Heritage Trust; **Samantha Horn**, Director of the Maine Office of Community Affairs; and **Amanda Rector**, Maine State Economist

The winner of the 2025 Espy Land Heritage Award will also be announced.

**Workshop Session A 10:30 am – 12 pm**

### **A1: 2024 Maine Land Trust Census: What Can it Tell Us About the Future of Land Conservation in Maine?**

In late 2024, the Maine Land Trust Network (MLTN) fielded the third in a series of every-five-year Maine Land Trust Census with the help of consultants Elizabeth Hall and Gary Stern. The resulting data reveal trends over a 15-year period, highlight areas of success, and point out opportunities for improvement. Hear about the growth of land trusts’ conservation results, staffing, and impact, as well as common concerns and challenges. Get inspired by what the collective land trust movement has accomplished over the past years and what new perspectives and areas of endeavor are emerging. Learn what the census analysis can tell us about our work today and help identify strategies MLTN can act on for the future.

Presenters: Elizabeth Hall, Hall Collaborations; and Gary Stern, Stern Consulting International

## **A2: Tributary Land Return: Working Together to Return Land to Wabanaki Care**

Wabanaki land care has persisted through millennia of climate, ecological and social changes. In this time of accelerating change, Wabanaki land care and its focus on relationship offer a critical pathway forward. In this workshop, they will share the work underway to expand Wabanaki land return and access so these long histories, lifeways, and relationships with land can thrive.

Presenters: Betsy Cook, Trust for Public Land; Shannon Hill, Mi'kmaq Nation, Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship; Nancy Kennedy, Chewonki Foundation; Chuck Loring, Penobscot Indian Nation; Otto Muller, First Light; and Adam Pereira, Maine Coast Heritage Trust

## **A3: Alternative Land Acquisition Strategies to Achieve Community and Conservation Outcomes**

Fundamental to achieving conservation and community outcomes is the ability to buy land in competitive markets. Land trusts are frequently having to engage new partners to serve as interim buyers, provide financing, and other types of capital to achieve success and secure priority projects at the pace and scale required by the market. Come hear from a panel about how they and their organizations are supporting land trusts and community organizations with funding and acquisition tools that might help you get your organization's deal done on time.

Presenters: Kelsie Bouchard, Coastal Enterprises Inc; Reggie Hall, LegacyWorks Group; and Ciona Ulbrich, Maine Coast Heritage Trust and CLD, LLC

## **A4: Toward a Maine Landscape Conservation Blueprint: Lessons Learned from Conservation Planning across Maine**

Maine Won't Wait notes that "interconnected ecosystems sustain our state" and establishes a goal to increase the total acreage of conserved natural and working lands in the state to 30 percent by 2030. The Beginning with Habitat program is working with partners across Maine to develop new mapping tools, assist with conservation planning, and track our collective progress toward that goal. Justin Schlawin, Program Coordinator for Beginning with Habitat, will moderate a panel with participants from across Maine sharing examples of how organizations working at different scales are working to incorporating landscape connectivity into their conservation goals.

Panelists: Jason Latham, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust; Matt Markot, Loon Echo Land Trust; Christine Parrish, New England Forestry Foundation; Kristen Puryear, Maine Natural Areas Program; and Justin Schlawin, Beginning with Habitat

## **A5: The Conundrum of Invasive Species and Climate Change – How One Fuels the Other and Vice Versa**

This presentation will help land managers understand which invasive species (IS) are already on their lands, how those species could impact carbon sequestration and storage, how climate change is exacerbating the range expansion of IS already on your land and the establishment of

new IS from states to your south and west. A discussion will follow to answer questions like: How do we prevent new invasive species from establishing in Maine? How do we prioritize which species to manage? How do we fund that management? And more.

Presenter: Gary Fish, State Horticulturist, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

#### **A6: Assessing Coastal Flood Risk with Communities**

Join Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Gulf of Maine Research Institute for an interactive session – including presentation, small group activity, and discussion – where workshop participants will learn about the Coastal Flood Community Science project, how this work has supported coastal resilience in Machias, be trained on the data collection protocol, and explore how this project - which engaged residents in witnessing current coastal climate impacts - and community science more broadly, can support land trust goals with respect to near term preparedness and long term planning.

Presenters: Gayle Bowness, Gulf of Maine Research Institute; Meggie Harvey, Gulf of Maine Research Institute; Cathy Lookabaugh, Maine Coast Heritage Trust; and Kyle Winslow, Maine Coast Heritage Trust

#### **A7: A Blueprint for Better Boards: Three Strategies for Board Recruitment**

Board recruitment is essential for the sustainability of any organization. In this session, we'll cover effective strategies to build the board you need, including identifying gaps on your board, drafting clear roles and expectations for new board members, and establishing an onboarding process. This workshop will introduce these critical concepts and provide practical tools you can bring home.

Presenters: Karen Grey, Wildlands Trust, and Jennifer Plowden, Land Trust Alliance

### **Lunch in the Auditorium, Explore the Land Fair 12 – 1:30 pm**

#### **Workshop Session B 1:30 – 3 pm**

#### **B1: Hope for Healthy Planet: MIT ENROADS Climate Solutions Simulator**

This workshop will explore a wide variety of potential climate change solutions via an interactive session that leverages the MIT ENROADS Climate Solutions Simulator. The ENROADS simulator is a powerful educational tool, that allows workshop participants to explore and discover for themselves the likely impact of climate actions on temperature rise and dozens of other outcomes, such as decreased crop yield from warming, fire threat, species loss, ocean acidification, etc. The goal of the interactive workshop will be to construct a scenario that will meet the Paris Accord goals of keeping warming below +2.0oC and ideally no higher than +1.5oC by 2100. The model will illustrate the important role that land conservation and land use practices will have on achieving this healthy vision of the future. Participants will see that there is hope for a healthy planet!

Presenters: Peter Dugas, ENROADS Ambassador and Northeast Regional Director, Citizen's Climate Lobby; and Laurie Manos, Citizen's Climate Lobby

### **B2: Listening as Land Conservation**

This presentation by the Island Soundscape Project will share out the results of their current research project undertaken with the partnership of Maine Coast Heritage Trust. By providing examples of soundscape conservation initiatives throughout the U.S. and globally, as well as coastal Maine data gathered over the course of this project, we will impart baseline information that can be adapted to various environments and organizations. This will include suggestions and examples, including from our research, for incorporating best practices for utilizing concepts of the soundscape in the contexts of land acquisition, stewardship, outreach, and education. These practices can provide a valuable metric for evaluating the local impacts of climate change over time, and innovative ways to improve access for diverse audiences to connect with conserved lands.

Presenters: Gamma Bellenoit, UMaine Orono; Karen Beeftink, University of Maine Machias; and Steve Norton, Island Soundscape Project

### **B3: Scoping, Siting, and Funding Resiliency and Restoration Projects**

It can be daunting to understand how to best locate and scope appropriate projects and access the available funding. Using facilitated small group roundtables combined with larger group reviews and discussion, this workshop seeks to help participants gain an understanding of what makes projects successful, starting with site selection and initial project management. This workshop will be geared to those who do not have a background in project identification for grant funding and will include discussing topics related to project management and budgeting challenges, balancing schedules, what makes a good restoration/resiliency project, site selection tips, understanding when and what to outsource, monitoring and adaptive management, potential collaborations, balancing stakeholders wishes with project goals and budget, and discussion on the level of outreach participation. A sample project will be provided, but participants are encouraged to bring ideas from their community or group and workshop through a relevant project to have a more tangible takeaway.

Presenters: Laura Hatmaker, Claudia Mendoza, and Susie Salois, SWCA Environmental Consultants

### **B4: Long-Term Thinking in a Short-Term World: Implementing Lessons from Long-Term Conservation Easement Stewardship to Improve Land Transactions**

We will address common stewardship dilemmas that can be prevented with careful planning in advance of conveying a conservation easement. Presenters include stewardship and land transaction staff at Maine Farmland Trust and attorneys from Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Drummond Woodsum, who provide counsel on stewardship dilemmas, enforcement issues, and land transactions. The presenters will discuss several common stewardship issues, using examples derived from MFT's and MCHT's experience managing conservation easements across the State, including over working lands. The presenters will provide

methods of addressing these common issues in real time, along with recommendations for how certain stewardship issues may be prevented by careful drafting of the transaction documents, upfront conversations with landowners and their counsel, and other preventative measures during the easement conveyance process.

The panel format will allow for input from stewardship and acquisition staff at a land trust as well as stewardship and acquisition counsel. We expect to discuss hands-on examples and legal solutions to smooth over dilemmas before easement acquisition and after-the-fact.

Presenters: Stacey Caulk, Drummond Woodsum; Hannah Chamberlain, Maine Farmland Trust; Laura Hartz, Drummond Woodsum; Karin Marchetti, Maine Coast Heritage Trust; and Amanda Wheeler, Maine Farmland Trust

### **B5: Actively Managing Forests for Climate Resilience**

In this roundtable discussion, we will share examples of land trusts and other conservation-minded landowners that are actively managing forests in the face of changing climate conditions. Changing climate is bringing a rapid expansion of multiple forest pests and pathogens, challenges for existing tree species composition, and other system stressors. Active management can enhance resilience and create adaptation pathways for the future. After a brief introduction to Climate Smart Forestry, you will learn the where, why, and what each group is doing in forests across Maine and eastern New Hampshire. There will be lots of time for Q&A to dig into any details of the groups' projects that interest you. We will wrap up with a conversation about resources available for the planning and implementation of these kinds of forest treatments.

Panelists: Nancy Olmstead (facilitator), The Nature Conservancy Maine; Rose Gellman, University of Maine; Jw Harriman, Blue Hill Heritage Trust; Malcolm Richardson, Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust; Nicole Rodgers, Maine Forest Service; Erika Rowland, Greater Lovell Land Trust; Carolyn Ziegler, Appalachian Mountain Club

### **B6: Restoration: Land Trusts Leading Projects that Increase Community and Habitat Resilience**

Restoration projects are a great opportunity for land trusts to take stewardship to the next level, supporting habitats and people in their communities. Learn about projects that small land trusts around the state are undertaking in partnership with local communities. These projects increase flood resilience of infrastructure, while improving health and habitats for fish and wetlands. They provide the opportunity to bring in grant funding that supports the work of land trust staff as well as local contractors and engineers. Land trusts have the ability to play key roles in restoration projects both on and off their properties, bridging conversations between federal and state agencies and local communities.

Presenters: Cheryl Daigle, Sebasticook Regional Land Trust; Aaron Dority, Frenchman Bay Conservancy; Ruth Indrick, Kennebec Estuary Land Trust; and Jason Latham, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust

### **B7: Building a Resilient Financial Future to Conserve More Land**

All too often, land trusts may not be prepared to address economic recessions, adapt to volatility in federal or state funding programs, or they may simply be under-capitalized to pursue their priority projects all because of a weak balance sheet. This session will explore steps a land trust can take to improve their bottom line while simultaneously enhancing their resilience and ultimately their ability to conserve more land. We'll leave the jargon behind as we explore the fundamentals of financial health and identify ways to enhance organizational resilience and improve functionality. We'll highlight innovative tools that land trusts around the country are using to leverage their financial and social capital assets. Come learn how to engage your organization's supporters and partners in new ways so that they can become key allies.

Presenters: Reggie Hall and James Corbett, LegacyWorks Group

### **Afternoon Break 3 – 3:30 pm**

### **Closing Session in Augusta/Capitol/Pine 3:30 – 4:30 pm**

#### **Youth Climate Action: Voices of Today to Inform Tomorrow with introduction by Kate Dempsey**

This session highlights young people who are committed to mitigating climate change and driven to take action. They will share their transformative work, personal experiences, and visions for a brighter future. By fostering the exchange of knowledge and perspectives across generations and cultures, we enhance our understanding of one another and empower ourselves to take meaningful, collective action and build lasting relationships.

Panelists include:

- Sulwan Ahmed, Maine Environmental Education Association
- Ray Mills, Maine Environmental Education Association and The Nature Conservancy
- Kaethe Rice, senior at Waterville High School and co-lead of MYCJ's High School Support Cohort
- Edge Venuti, undergraduate student at the University of Maine

Facilitated by: Nolan Altvater, Special Projects Cultural Coordinator for Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Passamaquoddy Cultural Heritage Museum

### **Adjourn 4:30 pm**