

2024 Maine Land Trust Census



Pondicherry Park, Bridgton, photo by Stacey Cramp

Maine Coast Heritage Trust thanks Elizabeth Hall of Hall Collaborations and Gary Stern of Stern Consulting International for their support in survey design, analysis and reporting.

2024 Maine Land Trust Network Census Report

The Maine Land Trust Network distributed its survey to 90 potential respondent groups; 74 land trusts responded, 73 of whom completed the survey in its entirety. A summary of response data is presented below, generally organized in the order presented in the survey. In some instances, questions have been reordered to better group by topic, though all questions retain their original numbering. Since the census relies on voluntary responses from land trusts, numbers should be taken as representative rather than exact, though every effort has been made to be as comprehensive as possible.

In the course of the census the Maine Land Trust Network collected four key statistics on land trust holdings: the number of owned properties, acres owned, the number of properties under easement, and acres held under easement. These statistics are presented below in sum, as well as subdivided by region.¹ In total, Maine land trusts own or hold easements on **2,936,365** acres, which are made up of 1,794 owned parcels and 2,087 held in easement.

The data below was derived from reported numbers by 2024 Maine Land Trust Census participants, as well as related information from additional sources. N = 78 Land Trusts

	FEE LANDS OWNED	FEE LANDS ACRES	EASEMENTS HELD	EASEMENT ACRES
Region 1 – Southern Maine	363	18,773	238	11,922
Region 2 – Casco Bay	89	2,993	170	4,458
Region 3 – Midcoast	385	21,690	337	18,662
Region 4 – Penobscot Bay	156	26,325	244	14,189
Region 5 – Downeast	145	80,907	70	12,154
Region 6 – Western Mountains	181	45,685	185	72,878
Region 7 – Inland	91	10,079	72	7,205
Region 8 – Statewide	384	512,011	771	2,076,434
Total (All Regions)	1,794 ²	718,463	2,087	2,217,902

¹ View list of trusts by regional designation in [Appendix A](#)

Definitions

Throughout this report, the following terms are frequently used.

AVERAGE a number expressing the central or typical value in a set of data, in particular the mean, which is calculated by dividing the sum of the values in the set by the number of individual values.

Example data set: 3, 5, 7, and 19

$$3 + 5 + 7 + 19 = 34 \qquad 34 \div 4 = \mathbf{8.5} \text{ is the average}$$

MEDIAN denoting or relating to a value or quantity lying at the midpoint of a frequency distribution of observed values or quantities, such that there is an equal probability of falling above or below it.

Example data set: 2, 3, 11, 13, 17, 27, 34, and 47

The median is the average of the two numbers in the middle $(13 + 17) \div 2 = \mathbf{15}$

UPPER & LOWER QUARTILE Lower quartile is calculated as the median of the bottom 50%; upper quartile is calculated as the median of the top 50%.

² The 2024 survey clarified the meaning of “number of fee lands,” stating, “If you conserved multiple parcels to make up one preserve or tract of conserved land, please count that as one.” This resulted in a decreased *number* of fee lands reported in 2024 from 2019—from 16 reporting Trusts, 12 of whom reported increased total fee land acres, and four reported decreased or static number of fee land acres.

Organizational Highlights

Question 3 – Organizational Highlights

3. Before asking questions about your organization, its activities and practices, we are interested in hearing a highlight about your organization from the last three years: i.e. a recent land protection effort, noteworthy stewardship, program, or community engagement success, and/or other ways you are making a difference. Please provide a short description of an accomplishment your organization is particularly proud of; please include a link to more information if available. (N = 72)

Responding land trusts shared highlights of their activities over the last few years – accomplishments they are particularly proud of. Themes include:

- Major Conservation Achievements, including:
 - Large-Scale Land Protection
 - Urban and Community Forests
 - Waterfront and Marine Conservation
- Strategic Fundraising & Financial Growth
- Stewardship & Habitat Restoration, including:
 - Stewardship Expansion
 - Habitat Restoration & Management
- Education & Community Engagement, including:
 - Outdoor & Conservation Education
 - Community Trail & Accessibility Projects
 - Equity & Inclusion in Conservation
- Innovations & Unique Conservation Approaches, examples including:
 - Green Burial & Sustainable Cemeteries
 - Climate-Smart Forestry & Carbon Sequestration
 - Collaborative & Regional Planning
- Public Health Collaborations

If you would like more information about this, contact the Maine Land Trust Network.

Board, Volunteers, & Staff

Question 4 – Size of Boards

3. How many people currently serve on your Board of Directors? (N = 73)

Average number of board members:	13.34
Fewest:	6
Most:	30

Question 5 - Age of Board Members

4. Please estimate how many of your Board members are: 39 years old or younger; 40-64 years old; 65 or older. (N = 73)

Avg. % of board members 39 or younger:	10.60%
Avg. % of board members 40-64:	39.90%
Avg. % of board members 65 or older:	48.42%

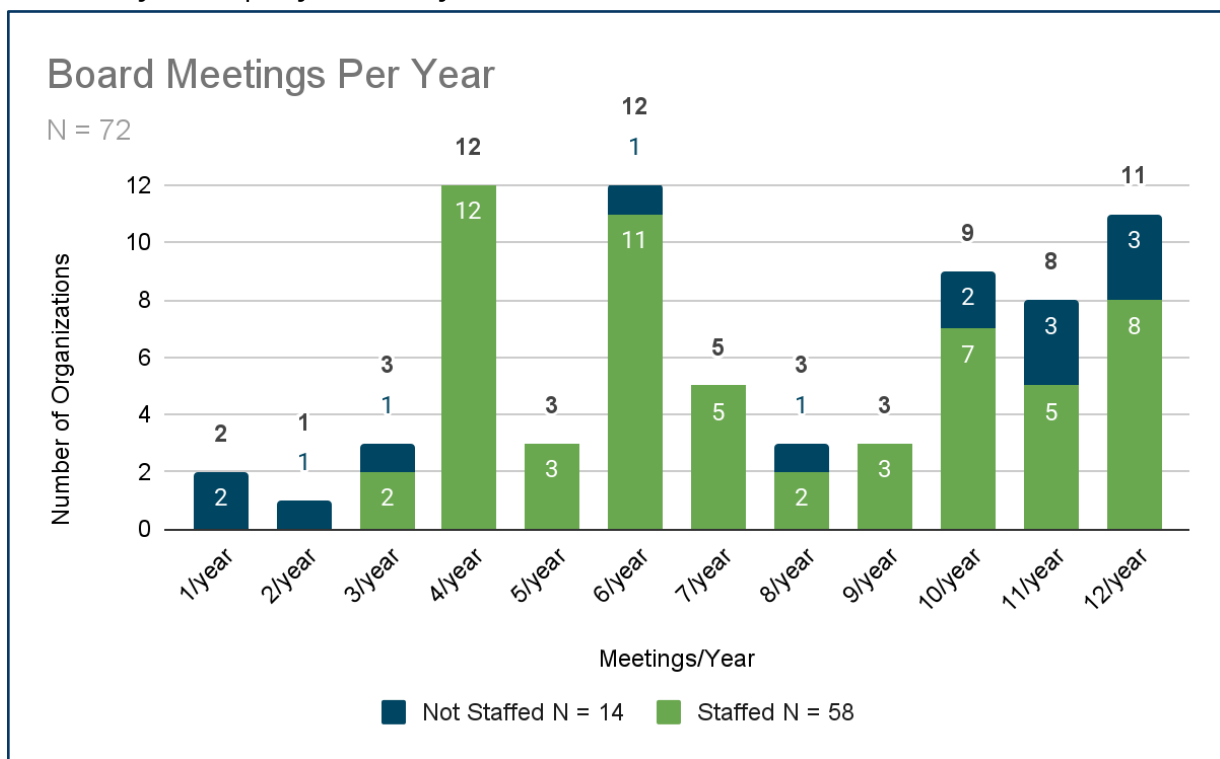
48 out of 74 organizations have at least one board member 39 or younger.

70 out of 74 organizations have at least one board member 40-64.

71 out of 74 organizations have at least one board member 65 or older.

Question 6 - Number of Board Meetings

5. How many times per year does your full Board meet? (N = 72)



71% of **all** boards meet **6 times or more** per year.

39% of **all** boards meet **10 times or more** per year.

71% of **staffed** organizations' boards meet **6 times or more** per year.

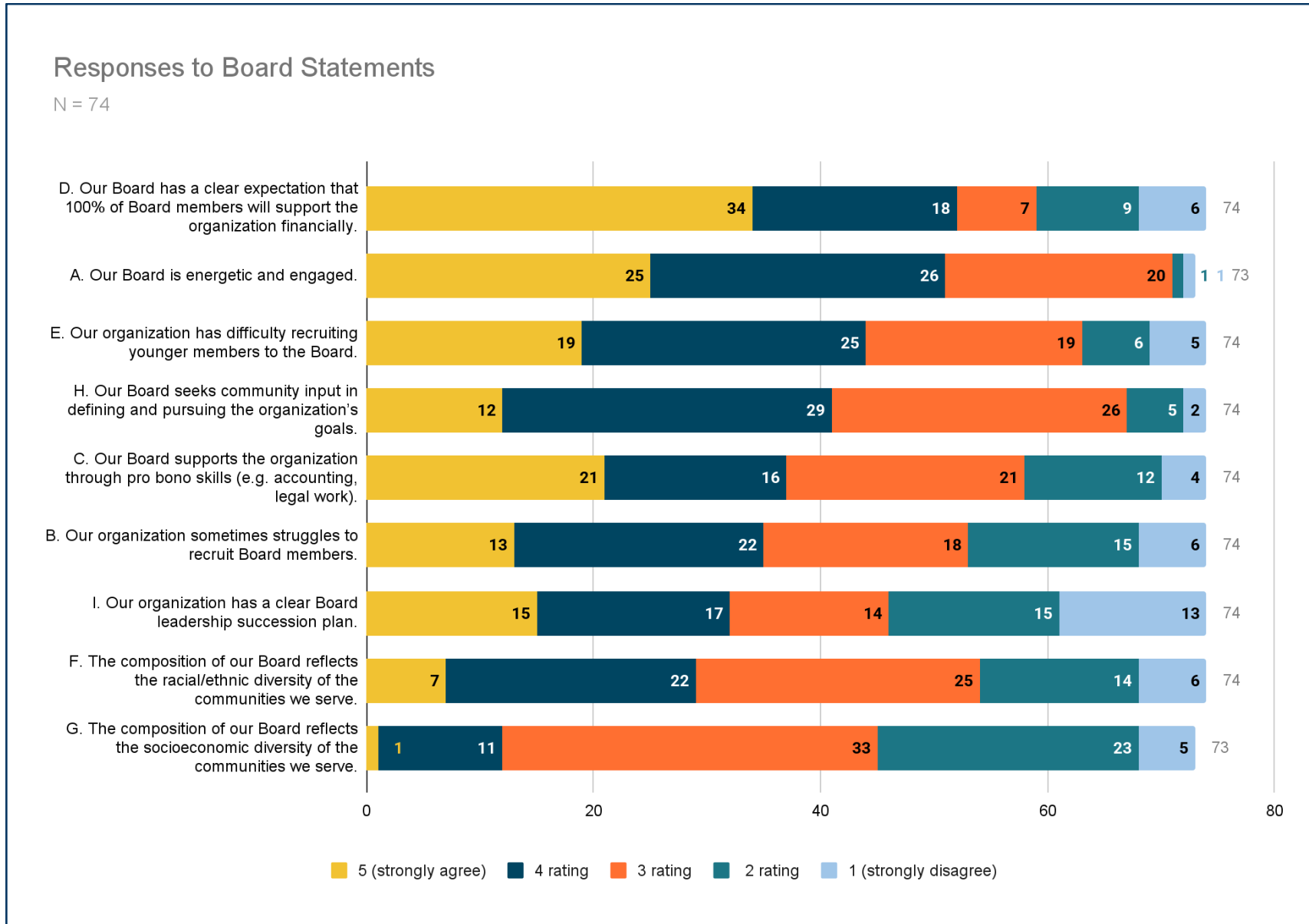
71% of **non-staffed** organizations' boards meet **6 times or more** per year.

34% of **staffed** organizations' boards meet **10 times or more** per year.

57% of **non-staffed** organizations' boards meet **10 times or more** per year.

Question 7 – Feedback on Boards

6. We'd like to know a bit more about your Board. For the following statements, please select 1-5, where 1 indicates that you strongly disagree with the statement and 5 indicates that you strongly agree. (N = 74)



Question 8 – Board Diversity Aspirations

7. In what ways does your board aspire to become more diverse in the coming 5 years? (N = 69)

Respondents noted that their boards aspire to become more diverse in the following ways:

- Age Diversity, Younger Members (20 mentions)
- Racial/Ethnic Diversity (15)
- Geographic/Community Representation (13)
- Gender Diversity (11)
- Socioeconomic Diversity (10)
- Through Active Recruitment Methods (10)
- Specific Skill Sets/Expertise (8)

“We have an ongoing goal of diversifying our advisory board of trustees with a focus on geographic representation, ethnic and racial diversity, and bringing younger generations onto the board.”

“Creating programs that are inclusive, welcoming and reach a diverse audience such that we broaden our exposure across socioeconomic as well as racial/ethnic groups.”

Question 9 – Organization Committees

8. Which of the following are active committees of your organization? (N = 74)

COMMITTEE TYPE	RESPONDENTS W/ ACTIVE COMMITTEES	
Finance/Investment	78.38%	58
Lands	77.03%	57
Stewardship/Trails	72.97%	54
Development/Fundraising	66.22%	49
Governance/Nominating	64.86%	48
Programs & Events	40.54%	30
Other (please specify)	37.84%	28
Outreach/Communications	36.49%	27
Education	31.08%	23
Public Policy/Advocacy	8.11%	6
No Committees	5.41%	4

Additional committees noted include:

- Building & Grounds or Facilities (4)
- DEIJ or Equity (3)
- Accreditation
- Advocacy
- Agriculture
- Climate Action Team
- Community Garden
- Ecology
- Environmental Film Festival
- IT Committee
- Membership
- Trail Day
- Wabanaki Land Access & Return
- Water Quality Monitoring and Invasive Aquatic Plant
- Youth and Community Engagement

Question 10 – Non-Board Member Committee Volunteers

9. Do non-board member volunteers serve on committees? (N = 74)

84% of organizations stated that non-board member volunteers serve on committees.

16% of respondents stated that **no** non-board member volunteers serve on committees.

Question 11 – Board Strengths

10. What is your Board's greatest strength? (N = 73)

Responding organizations reported board strengths within the following themes:

- Commitment and Dedication to Mission (25 mentions)
- Knowledge, Skills, & Expertise (16)
- Community Connections & Representation (11)
- Active engagement of the working board (10)
- Collaboration and decision-making (9)
- Institutional knowledge and wisdom (6)
- Positive working relationship with staff (5)
- Financial support and governance (5)

“The volunteer initiative from the board is truly impressive. Many board members devote hundreds of hours of time per year to make the land trust work.”

“Members bring a diversity of professional backgrounds and offer powerful collective wisdom in decision-making.”

“Our board often has differences of opinion but they are always resolved through productive discussion and mutual respect.”

Question 12 – Board Concerns

11. What is the biggest concern regarding your Board? (N = 73)

Respondents noted a range of concerns within the following themes regarding their Boards of Directors:

- Recruitment Challenges (15 mentions)
- Financial and Fundraising Concerns (15)
- Board/Volunteer Engagement and Workload Distribution (14)
- Board-to-Staff Transition Growing Pains (11)
- Aging Board (7)
- Leadership Succession Planning (6)
- Strategic Direction and Mission Alignment (6)

“It is always the issue of getting new, younger board members and especially getting officers to serve.”

“My biggest concern is the low number of board members who are actively involved. A big majority of the work is done by a small group. Additionally, two board members function as unpaid staff - our attorney and our Treasurer. We need to prepare for the days ahead when those roles are not filled by volunteers.”

“Fundraising in resource-limited areas can be daunting, especially when competing needs overshadow the mission of organizations... While community support is invaluable, it often falls short against pressing local demands. This makes it essential to strategize fundraising efforts effectively, perhaps by leveraging partnerships, seeking grants, or increasing visibility to appeal to broader donor bases. Additionally, with limited staff some of the workload is assigned to the board with a lot of responsibility on key board members.”

Question 13 – Active Volunteers

12. Not including board members, how many active volunteers did your land trust have during the past year? (N = 72)

RANGE	# OF ORGS	MEDIAN WITHIN RANGE
0-25 volunteers	22	9
26-50 volunteers	18	43
51-100 volunteers	16	72
101-250 volunteers	12	150
251+ volunteers	4	1,027

Maine land trusts had a median of 50 volunteers in 2024. Approximately 13,538 people volunteered their time to Maine land trusts in 2024. Excluding one very large statewide organization, 6,538 people volunteered their time. Just over 77% of respondents had 100 or fewer volunteers in 2024.

Question 14 – Paid Staff

13. Not including periodic consultants, does your organization have paid staff? (N = 74)

Yes	60	81.08 %
No	14	19.92 %

Question 15 – Number of People Employed

14. How many **people** do you employ as paid staff? (N = 59)

	TOTAL - ALL ORGS	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	RESPONSE COUNT
Number of full-time/year round staff:	433	4	8.02	54
Number of part-time/year round staff:	95	1	2.07	46
Number of seasonal staff:	203	3	5.64	36

Organizations reported employing **731 individuals** in various capacities.

Question 16 – Distribution of FTEs

15. How many year-round **full-time equivalent (FTE)** employees does your organization have?
(N = 58)

NUMBER OF FTEs	NUMBER OF ORGS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Less than 1 FTE	2	3.45%
1-1.99 FTEs	10	17.24%
2-2.99 FTEs	4	6.90%
3-3.99 FTEs	6	10.34
4-4.99 FTEs	9	15.52%
5-5.99 FTEs	5	8.62%
6-10 FTEs	12	20.69%
More than 10 FTEs	10	17.24%

Median = 4.8 FTEs

Total = 511 FTEs

Question 17 – Seasonal Staff Rate of Pay

16. What is the average hourly rate that you pay seasonal staff? (N = 40)

LOWEST HOURLY COMPENSATION	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	HIGHEST HOURLY COMPENSATION
\$14	\$17.82	\$18.97	\$40 (second highest \$26)

Question 18 - Executive Director

17. Does your organization have a solo Executive Director/Leader or Co-Executive Directors/Leaders? (N = 59)

	NUMBER OF ORGS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Solo Executive Director/Leader	52	88%
Co-Executive Directors/Leaders	3	5%
No Executive Director or Co-Executive Directors/Leaders	4	7%

Question 19 - Executive Director Hours

18. Please provide the following information about the Executive Director/Leader position(s), including whether the position is part-time or full-time, and **if part-time**, an estimated number of hours per week. (N = 55)

Full-time: 50 91%
 Part-time: 5 9%

Of the organizations reporting having a part-time executive director, 1 worked 31-35 hours/week, 2 worked 21-30 hours/week, and 1 worked less than 20 hours/week. The one organization with part-time co-executive leadership reported they each work less than 20 hours/week.

Question 20 - Executive Director Salaries

19. What is the Executive Director/Leader's Annual Salary?

Full Time Executive Director Salary Median, Average, Range

(N = 49 organizations, including 2 organizations with co-executive leadership)

REGION	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	RANGE
Region 1 - Southern Maine (7)	\$85,000	\$90,862	\$75,534 - \$125,000
Region 2 - Casco Bay (4)	\$86,500	\$79,667	\$60,000 - \$92,500
Region 3 - Midcoast (7)	\$85,000	\$93,189	\$80,000 - \$137,713
Region 4 - Penobscot Bay (7)	\$80,000	\$83,829	\$60,000 - \$120,000
Region 5 - Downeast (3)	\$90,000	\$95,733	\$85,700 - \$111,500

Region 6 – Western Mountains (10)	\$84,000	\$87,406	\$62,400 - \$115,000
Region 7 – Inland (2)	\$65,518	65,518	\$55,000 - \$76,035
Region 8 – Statewide (9)	\$185,000	\$185,228	\$150,000 - \$220,500

Full Time Executive Director Salary Ranges & Operating Budget Ranges

REGION	SALARY RANGE	OPERATING BUDGET RANGE
Region 1 – Southern Maine (7)	\$75,534 - \$125,000	\$138,178 – \$700,000
Region 2 – Casco Bay (4)	\$60,000 - \$92,500	\$240,000 – \$850,000
Region 3 – Midcoast (7)	\$80,000 - \$137,713	\$487,607 – \$2,017,614
Region 4 – Penobscot Bay (7)	\$60,000 - \$120,000	\$202,777 – \$1,269,413
Region 5 – Downeast (3)	\$85,700 - \$111,500	\$195,000 – \$1,058,000
Region 6 – Western Mountains (10)	\$62,400 - \$115,000	\$143,174 – \$2,200,000
Region 7 – Inland (2)	\$55,000 - \$76,035	\$120,000 – \$417,556
Region 8 – Statewide (9)	\$150,000 - \$220,500	\$300,000 – \$15 million

Part-Time Executive Director Hourly Compensation, Statewide

(N = 5 organizations, including 1 organization with co-executive leadership)

Highest Hourly Compensation: \$42.11

Lowest Hourly Compensation: \$22.44

Statewide Nonprofit Wages

The following table from [Maine Association of Nonprofit's 2024 Report on Nonprofit Wages + Benefits](#), which includes data from all sectors of nonprofit organizations in Maine, is provided for comparison.

	Under \$250K	\$250K-\$500K	\$500K-\$1M	\$1M-\$5M	\$5M-\$10M	Over \$10M
Executive Director	\$72,800	\$77,230	\$90,563	\$122,138	\$172,536	\$210,829
Development Director	*	*	\$66,310	\$79,082	\$96,928	\$112,778
Program/Division Director	*	\$61,485	\$64,750	\$78,083	\$84,531	\$96,034
Program/Project Manager	\$48,963	\$50,502	\$55,162	\$63,419	\$74,589	\$67,142
Administrative Coordinator	*	*	\$46,571	\$51,272	\$47,507	\$48,214

**Fewer than four responses.*

Questions 21 & 22: Stewardship Staff

20. **Year-Round Stewardship Staff:** If your organization has **year-round Stewardship Staff**, please complete the following for the top 3 earning positions: title, full/part-time position, and, if part-time, the number of hours per week. (N = 42)
21. **Year-Round Stewardship Staff Salaries:** For the Stewardship Staff positions reported please enter the correlating annual salary for each staff position. (N = 41)

Full Time Stewardship Salaries, Statewide

STEWARDSHIP POSITION	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	RANGE
Director (22)	\$62,000	\$66,858	\$42,786 - \$144,000
Assistant/Associate Director (4)	\$82,043	\$80,866	\$55,000 - \$104,378
Manager/Coordinator (22)	\$53,895	\$56,556	\$45,000 - \$77,644
Land Steward (17)	\$53,000	\$53,493	\$41,000 - \$65,000
Other (3)	\$51,833	\$51,833	\$47,000 - \$60,000

Part-Time Stewardship Compensation, Statewide (N = 9)

LOWEST HOURLY COMPENSATION	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	HIGHEST HOURLY COMPENSATION
\$9.47	\$21.00	\$20.00	\$27

Questions 23 & 24: Development Staff

22. **Development Staff:** If your organization has **Development Staff**, please complete the following for the top 3 earning positions: : title, full/part-time position, and, if part-time, the number of hours per week. (N = 33)
23. **Development Staff Salaries:** For the year-round Development Staff positions reported above, please enter the correlating annual salary for each staff position. (N = 32)

Full Time Development Salaries, Statewide

DEVELOPMENT POSITION	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	RANGE
Director (22)	\$75,000	\$86,416	\$50,000 - \$173,059
Manager/Coordinator (16)	\$58,113	\$64,344	\$44,000 - \$110,000
Admin/Assistant (6)	\$49,000	\$46,926	\$37,000 - \$53,500
Other (5)	\$100,624	\$105,819	\$90,000 - \$125,000

Part-Time Development Compensation, Statewide (N = 6)

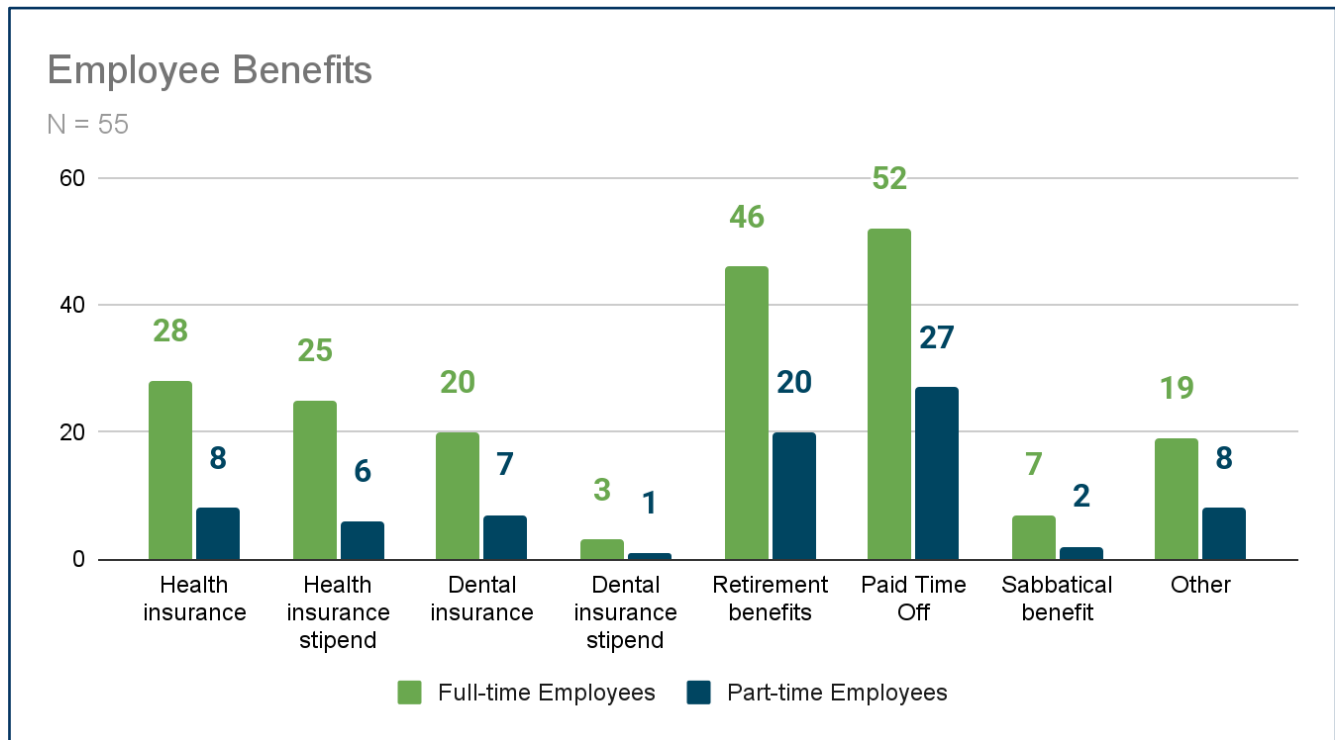
LOWEST HOURLY COMPENSATION	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	HIGHEST HOURLY COMPENSATION
\$12.00	\$23.00	\$22.00	\$33.00

Average Development Compensation by Operating Budget Size

FULL TIME DEVELOPMENT POSITION	OPERATING BUDGET			
	\$50,001-100k	\$250,001-500k	\$500,001-1MIL	>\$1MIL
Director	\$62,400 (1)	\$67,000 (3)	\$69,300 (5)	\$100,403 (12)
Manager/Coordinator	-	\$50,200 (3)	\$63,267 (2)	\$68,397 (11)
Admin/Assistant	-	\$53,053 (1)	\$37,000 (1)	\$47,875 (4)

Question 25 – Employee Benefits

24. Please indicate whether your organization offers employee benefits, either through a plan or by providing a stipend. (N = 55 of the 60 staffed land trusts)



If you indicated above that you offer **other benefits**, what are they?

Respondents noted that additional benefits their organizations provide include:

- Other types of insurance, including life, long-term and short-term disability, vision, and AD&D (accidental death and disability) insurance
- Additional compensation, reimbursements or support, such as living stipends, bonuses, parking/mileage reimbursement
- Parental/family and bereavement leave, additional PTO after milestone employment
- Health Savings Account (HSA) or similar plans

If you indicated above that you offer a **sabbatical benefit**, please note the qualifying duration of employment and what the benefit is.

Six respondents reported having a sabbatical benefit that employees can receive after 7-10 years employment with varying parameters of duration and frequency.

Question 26 – Staff Attracting/Retention Challenges

25. What are your organization's greatest challenges in attracting and retaining qualified staff? (N = 58)

Respondents shared a variety of challenges in recruiting and retaining staff that align with the following themes:

- Funding Competitive Salaries (26 mentions)
- Housing Availability/Cost and Cost of Living (20)
- Ability to Offer Benefits (16)
- Geographic/Location Challenges (10)
- Upward Advancement & Organizational Growth (6)
- Work Environment and Culture Challenges (5)
- Candidate Skillsets/Qualifications/Attributes (4)

“The rapidly increasing costs associated with living within commuting distance of [our trust] juxtaposed against median state salaries for land conservation professionals pose a significant challenge.”

“We have started to see our ability to attract and retain staff based on the salaries and expense of health benefits we can provide as an issue of concern. Specifically competitive health benefits for staff with families.”

“Biggest retention challenge: most common reason staff leave is to take a position with more responsibility or seniority.”

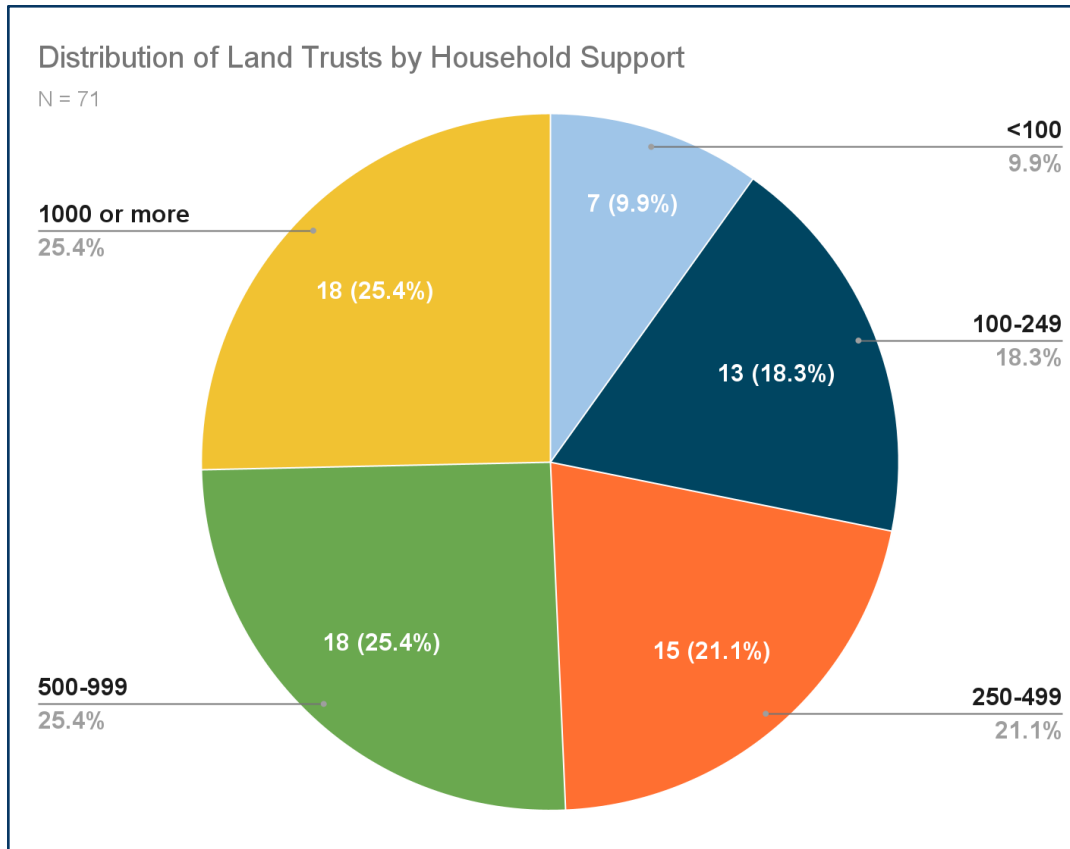
Finance & Fundraising

Question 27 – Household Support

26. Land trusts define community support in different ways. For the purposes of this survey, please tell us the total number of households that support your organization as members and/or donors. (N = 71)

Median number of households: **500**

62,148 total households across all respondents.

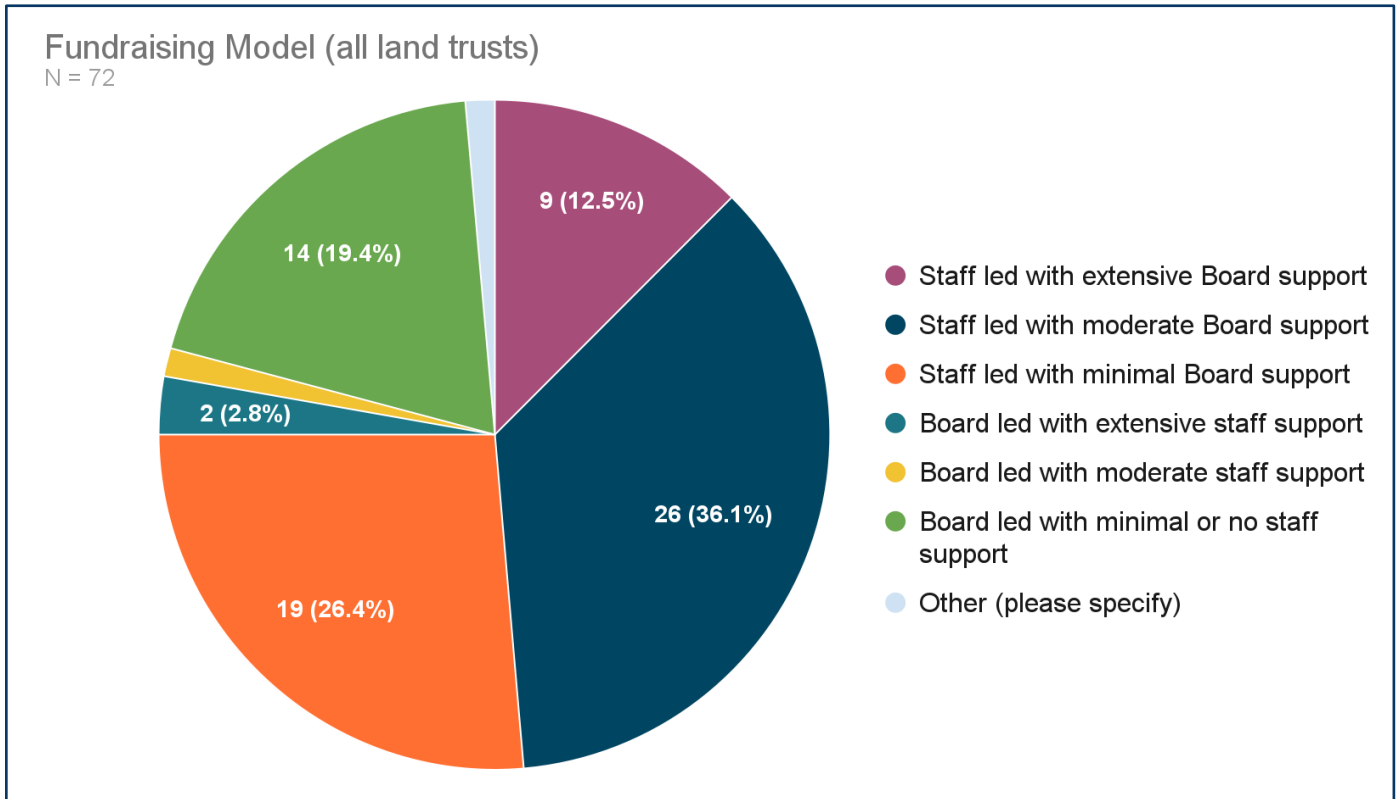


REGION	MEDIAN	RANGE
Region 1 – Southern Maine	370	25 – 1,200 households
Region 2 – Casco Bay	430	120 – 800 households
Region 3 – Midcoast	925	200 – 1,800 households
Region 4 – Penobscot Bay	500	130 – 1,700 households
Region 5 – Downeast	300	140 – 1,160 households
Region 6 – Western Mountains	494	200 – 1,203 households

Region 7 - Inland	80	12 - 1,100 households
Region 8 - Statewide	2121	466 - 10,000 households

Question 28 - Fundraising Model

27. Which best describes your fundraising model? (N = 72)



Question 29 - Annual Operating Budget

RANGE	# OF ORGS
\$0-50,000	8
\$50,001-100k	7
\$100,001-250k	14
\$250,001-500k	14

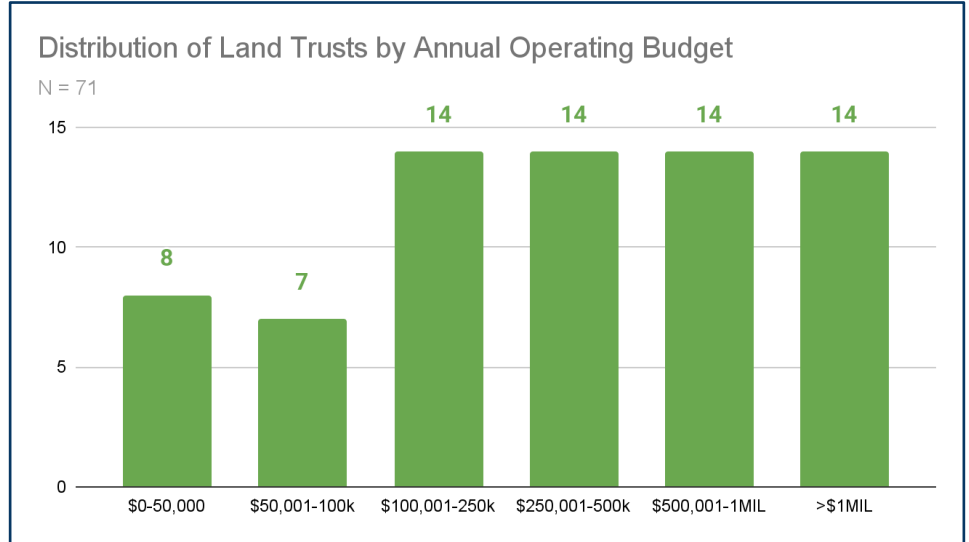
\$500,001-1MIL	14
>\$1MIL	14

28. We are going to ask about two types of funding. This question is concerned with **Annual Operating Budget**, which includes all ongoing costs for staff and the total operation of the land trust. The next question addresses Capital, which

includes funds specifically raised and spent for land protection, both fee lands and conservation easements.

For your most recent fiscal year, how much was the **Annual Operating Budget** of your land trust? (N = 71)

Operating Budget Median & Range by Region



REGION	MEDIAN	RANGE
Region 1 – Southern Maine (13)	\$140,000	\$22,760 – \$700,000
Region 2 – Casco Bay (7)	\$275,000	\$26,000 – \$850,000
Region 3 – Midcoast (9)	\$665,273	\$60,200 – \$2,017,614
Region 4 – Penobscot Bay (9)	\$380,000	\$200 – \$1,269,413
Region 5 – Downeast (7)	\$195,000	\$15,000 – \$1,058,000
Region 6 – Western Mountains (13)	\$416,000	\$5,500 – \$2,200,000
Region 7 – Inland (5)	\$178,755	\$100 – \$417,556
Region 8 – Statewide (9)	\$2,440,550	\$300,000 – \$15 million

2019 & 2024 Operating Budget Comparison

OPERATIONS BUDGET RANGE	# OF ORGS 2024	# OF ORGS 2019
\$0-50,000	8	11

\$50,001-100k	7	12
\$100,001-250k	14	17
\$250,001-500k	14	13
\$500,001-1MIL	14	8
>\$1MIL	14	7

Question 30 – Capital Raised

29. In answering this question, please include **Capital** funds your organization raised and spent (including related costs) to buy fee lands and/or conservation easements, as well as instances where your organization facilitated a transfer of funds to a landowner from another funding source. Over the past five years, what is the total amount of **Capital** your organization has raised for land protection? (N = 67)

Of the 56 organizations reporting raising capital funds:

MEDIAN RAISED: \$1,270,804
LOWER QUARTILE: \$ 685,500
UPPER QUARTILE: \$3,117,633

Total **Capital** funds raised over the past 5 years by Maine land trusts: **\$286,998,676**

Distribution of Organizations by Amount Raised

AMOUNT RAISED	# OF ORGS
\$0	12
\$1,000 - \$100,000	4
\$100,001 - \$500,000	8
\$500,001 - \$1MIL	12
\$1MIL - \$5MIL	22
MORE THAN \$5MIL	9

Question 31 – Specific Funds

30. Land trusts often set aside funds designated for certain uses. These funds may be called endowments, dedicated funding, reserves, or other similar names. For each of the following purposes, as of the end of your organization’s last fiscal year, please share whether your fund was at the desired level, as well as the approximate amount your land trust had in designated funding for that purpose. When responding to this question, please do not consider Terrafirma membership. (N = 65)

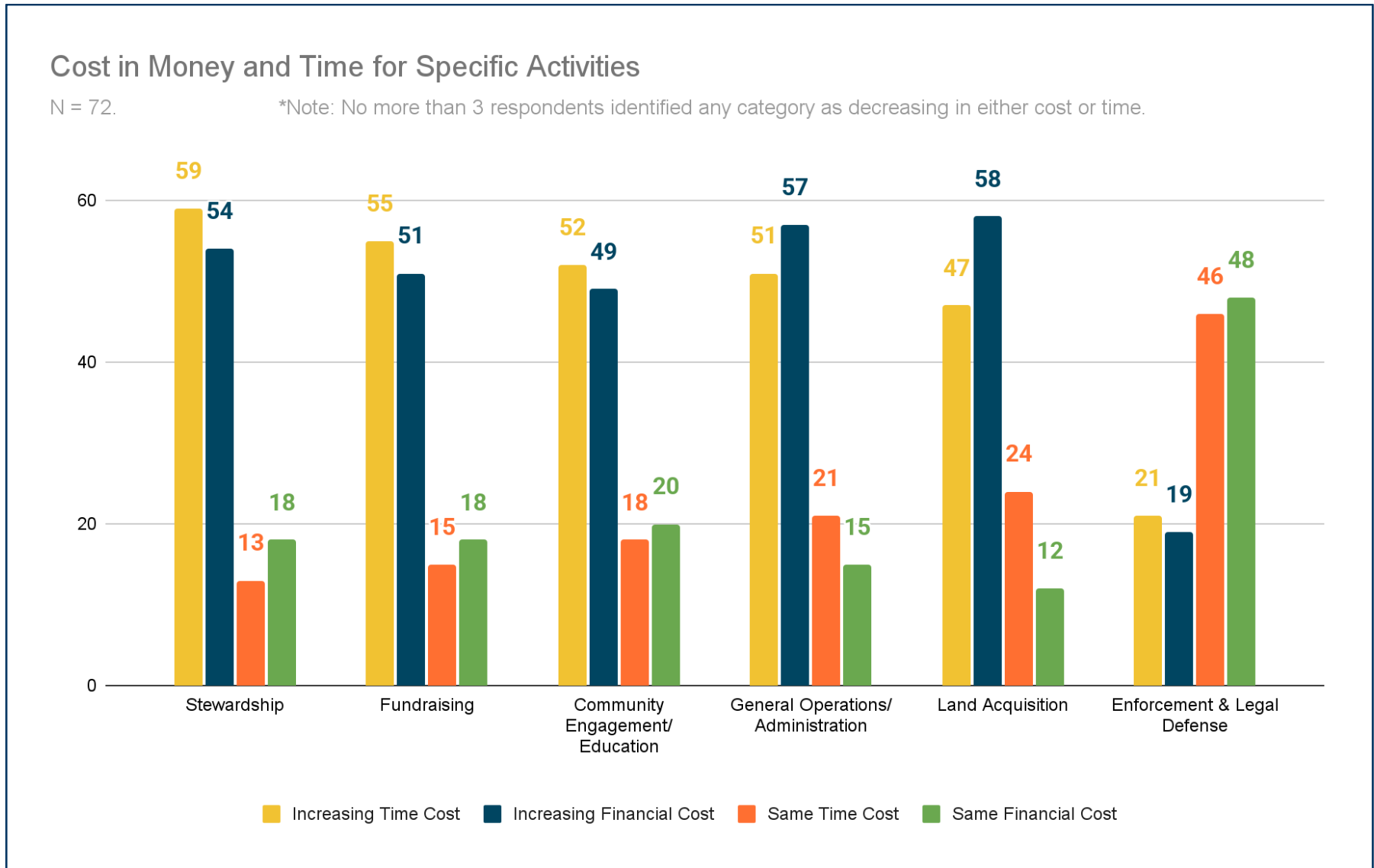
FUND	AT DESIRED LEVEL	BELOW DESIRED LEVEL	WE DO NOT HAVE THIS FUND	RESPONSE COUNT
Monitoring and stewardship only	21	15	19	55
Legal defense only	14	6	32	52
COMBINED account for monitoring, stewardship, and legal defense	9	14	30	53
Land protection (fee or conservation easement)	9	20	26	55
Operating reserve	25	16	9	50
Other	11	12	12	35

FUND	MEDIAN AMOUNT	LOWER QUARTILE	UPPER QUARTILE
Monitoring and stewardship only (31)	\$812,031	\$171,689	\$2,500,000
Legal defense only (19)	\$115,000	\$46,000	\$250,000
COMBINED account for monitoring, stewardship, and legal defense (25)	\$681,705	\$240,000	\$1,920,500
Land protection (fee or conservation easement) (28)	\$257,751	\$140,054	\$921,624
Operating reserve (51)	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$568,500
Other (25)	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$1,048,172

“Other” funds reported by respondents include **restricted funds for specific properties or projects** (13 mentions), **undesignated/general funds** (6), **general endowment or investment funds** (6), and funds dedicated to **education and programming** (3).

Question 32 - Cost in Money and Time for Various Activities

31. Please consider the following organizational functions and estimate how each is changing in financial cost and also in amount of employee/Board time being spent. (N = 72)



Questions 33-36 – Conservation Holdings & Easements

- 32. What is the total number of conservation easements your organization holds? (N = 72)
- 33. What is the total number of acres covered by conservation easements your organization holds? (N = 72)
- 34. What is the total number of fee lands your organization owns? (N = 73)
- 35. What is the total number of acres in fee lands your organization owns? (N = 73)

N = 78 (Data is derived from reported numbers by 2024 Maine Land Trust Census participants, as well as related information from additional sources.)

	FEE LANDS OWNED	FEE LANDS ACRES	EASEMENTS HELD	EASEMENT ACRES
Region 1 – Southern Maine	363	18,773	238	11,922
Region 2 – Casco Bay	89	2,993	170	4,458
Region 3 – Midcoast	385	21,690	337	18,662
Region 4 – Penobscot Bay	156	26,325	244	14,189
Region 5 – Downeast	145	80,907	70	12,154
Region 6 – Western Mountains	181	45,685	185	72,878
Region 7 – Inland	91	10,079	72	7,205
Region 8 – Statewide	384	512,011	771	2,076,434
Total (All Regions)	1,794 ³	718,463	2,087	2,217,902

³ The 2024 survey clarified the meaning of “number of fee lands,” stating, “If you conserved multiple parcels to make up one preserve or tract of conserved land, please count that as one.” This resulted in a decreased *number* of fee lands reported in 2024 from 2019 from 16 reporting Trusts, 12 of whom reported increased overall acreage of their fee lands, and four reported decreased or static number of fee land acres.

Question 37 – Tax Options

36. This question pertains to practices regarding taxes. For the most recent tax year, please indicate whether your organization has used any of the tax options below for fee lands. If so, please indicate the number of acres under each practice. Check all that apply.
(N = 78 - Data is derived from reported numbers by 2024 Maine Land Trust Census participants, as well as related information from additional sources.)

TAX OPTION	# OF TRUSTS	ACRES
Receive property tax exemption and do not make payments in lieu of taxes	49	64,452
Enroll in the Tree Growth current use tax program	26	425,848
Receive property tax exemption and make payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT)	24	153,582
Enroll in the Open Space current use tax program	22	65,458
Make full tax payments	20	8,675
Enroll in the Farmland current use tax program	5	453

58 trusts reported paying taxes of some form for some or all of their lands, with a total of **\$1,532,210.64** in tax or PILOT payments made in 2024.

92.6% of land trust-conserved land (fee lands and conservation easement lands) are on the tax rolls – either owners of private lands with conservation easements or the land trusts are paying, and **97.8%** of land trust-conserved lands are either on the tax rolls or making payments in lieu of taxes.

Organizations can make use of any and all of these approaches. Just over half of respondents reported using one single tax option (40/77) while 48% of land trusts (37/77) use more than one tax option. The full distribution is as follows:

	# OF TRUSTS
1 tax option	40
2 tax options	19
3 tax options	9
4 tax options	5
5 tax options	3

6 tax options	1
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Question 38 - Tax Payments

37. If your organization makes any tax payments or payments in lieu of taxes, what is the total amount of money your organization paid in the most recent tax year? (N = 78 - Data is derived from reported numbers by 2024 Maine Land Trust Census participants, as well as related information from additional sources.)

PAYMENT RANGE	# OF TRUSTS	MEDIAN PAYMENT
\$0 - \$5,000	20	\$1,837
\$5,001 - \$10,000	12	\$7,872
\$10,001 - \$20,000	5	\$12,000
\$20,001 - \$75,000	7	\$33,118
More than \$75,000	5	\$132,189

Lowest total tax payment in previous tax year: \$84
 Highest total tax payment in previous tax year: \$575,278
 Lower Quartile: \$2,117
 Upper Quartile: \$13,528

Land Protection & Conservation Permanence

Question 39 – Land Protection Priorities

38. Please help us gain a sense of your organization’s land protection priorities by ranking the importance of each of the following reasons for protecting land, where a 1 indicates that the reason is not at all important to your organization, and a 5 indicates that it is an extremely important priority. For reasons that do not apply or about which you are uncertain, please indicate DK (don’t know). (N = 73)



Question 40 – Climate Change Effects

39. Please describe one or more ways climate change is affecting your organization's plans or activities. (N = 71)

Respondents shared the areas of their work impacted by climate change, and the efforts their organizations are making as a result. Responses included topics within the following themes:

- Severe Weather Resulting in Increased Stewardship Costs & Time (19 mentions)
- Strategic Conservation Planning (17)
- Coastal & Wetland Impacts (14)
- Invasive Species Management (9)
- Forest Management & Carbon Initiatives (9)
- Climate Resilience Programs (8)
- Water Quality & Watershed Impacts (7)
- Agricultural Impacts (3)
- Education & Community Engagement (3)
- Recreational Impacts (3)

“Winter rain storms are intensifying and increased stream flow events are damaging bridges and trails, thereby increasing costs and making stewarding trails more complicated and expensive.”

“It is now part of our strategic planning process, and prospective conservation easements/ fee lands are looked at from a climate change perspective - will conserving/restoring wetlands help prevent/mitigate flooding, what are the carbon storage prospects?”

“We are concerned about the erosion of our islands and waterfront properties, the rise in sea level and storm surge, the rising water temperature and the effects they will have on our lighthouse and beach.”

“A central focus of our land stewardship efforts is invasive species management. Invasives are spreading due to shorter winters, higher rains, and climate change.”

“Climate change is affecting our infrastructure investments, forest management plans, wildlife management plans, and our recreational access.”

“Climate change resilience and community engagement is guiding restoration priorities and encouraging land protection surrounding these projects. Top projects are salt marsh restoration and enhancing fish passage (dam removals, improvement or removal of road crossings).”

Question 41 – Joint Land Protection Projects

40. To what extent are you working with neighboring land trusts or other groups on joint land protection goals? (N = 73)

	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Ongoing shared projects	45.21%	33
One or more projects each year	16.44%	12
A project every few years	26.03%	19
Rarely if ever	12.33%	9

Question 42 – Expectations for Future Action

41. As you look ahead to the next 5-10 years, do you expect the scale (by which we mean a combination of number of transactions and/or acres conserved) of your land protection to: (N = 73)

	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Increase a lot	35.62%	26
Increase a little	32.88%	24
Stay about the same	21.92%	16
Decrease a little	6.85%	5
Decrease a lot	2.74%	2

Question 43 – Easement Violations

42. Have you experienced any conservation easement violations in the last 5 years? (N = 73)

	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Yes	41.10%	30
No	58.90%	43

Question 44 – Easement Violations and Resolutions

43. If you have experienced an easement violation in the past five years, with whom did the issue arise and how was the dispute resolved? (N = 30 respondents reporting 61 total incidents)

The party causing the violation was:

	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
The original donor	13.11%	8
A new owner	42.62%	26
Abutter or third party	44.26%	27
	Total:	61

The method of dispute resolution was:

	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Negotiation: CE not amended	55.74%	34
Negotiation: CE amended	13.11%	8
Issue is unresolved	31.15%	19
Resolved through legal proceedings	0%	0
	Total:	61

Question 45 – Easement Amendments

44. How many conservation easements have you amended in the past year? In the past five years? (N = 25)

Land trusts with at least one amendment in past year: 14
 Land trusts with at least one amendment in past FIVE years: 25

 Highest number of amendments made by ONE land trust in past year: 3
 Highest number of amendments made by ONE land trust in past five years: 17

Question 46 - Reasons for Amendments

45. If you made any amendments, what reasons led to them? (N = 28)

	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Technical language oversight	32.14%	9
To deal with a violation	21.43%	6
To tighten a conservation easement	35.71%	10
Other	67.86%	19

Other reported reasons for amendments included:

- To add acreage (10 mentions)
- For IRS compliance and updated Safe Harbor language (5)
- Updates of building envelope or building usage terms (4)
- Adapting language for conservation best practices or public access (3)

Stewardship

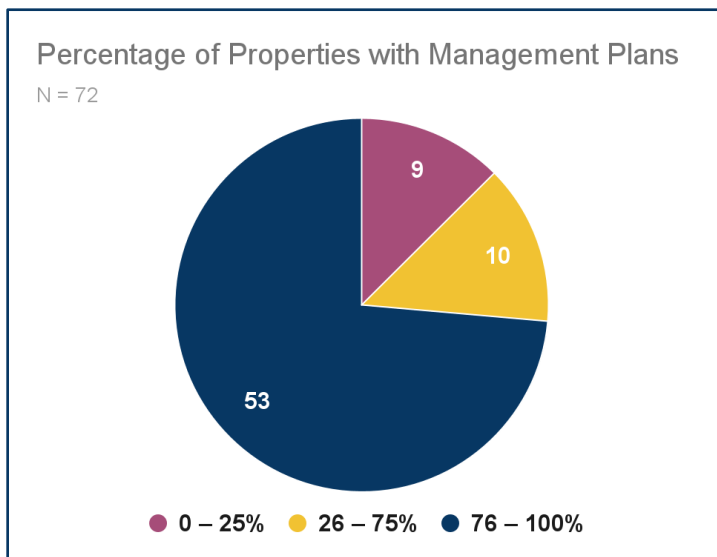
Question 47 – Management Plans

46. Approximately what percentage of your organization's fee properties have management plans?
(N = 72)

The vast majority (53/72) of responding land trusts have management plans for the most of their properties.

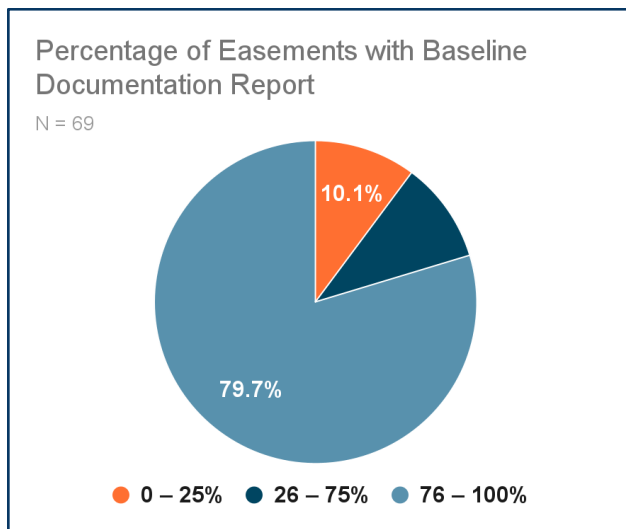
DETAILED VIEW

	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
0%	9.72%	7
1 – 25%	2.78%	2
26 – 50%	4.17%	3
51 – 75%	9.72%	7
76 – 99%	26.39%	19
100	47.22%	34



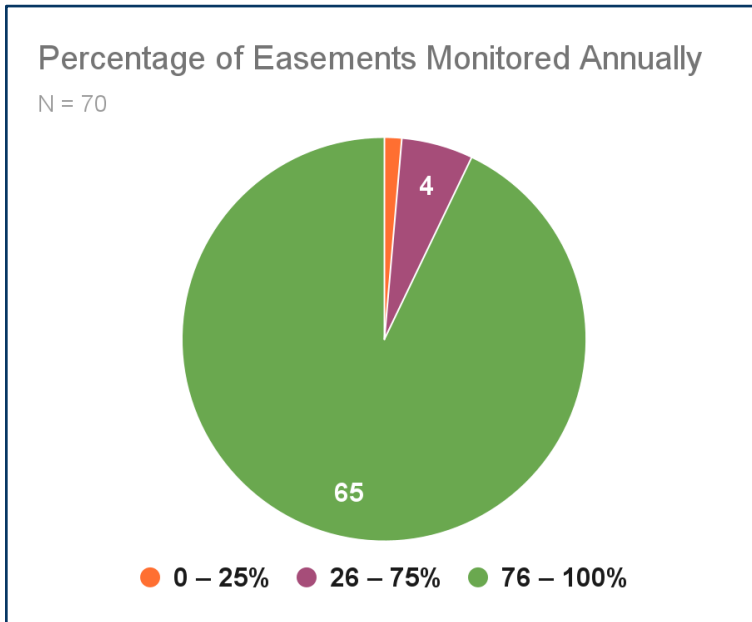
Question 48 – Baseline Documentation

47. Approximately what percentage of your land trust's conservation easements have a baseline documentation report? (N = 69)



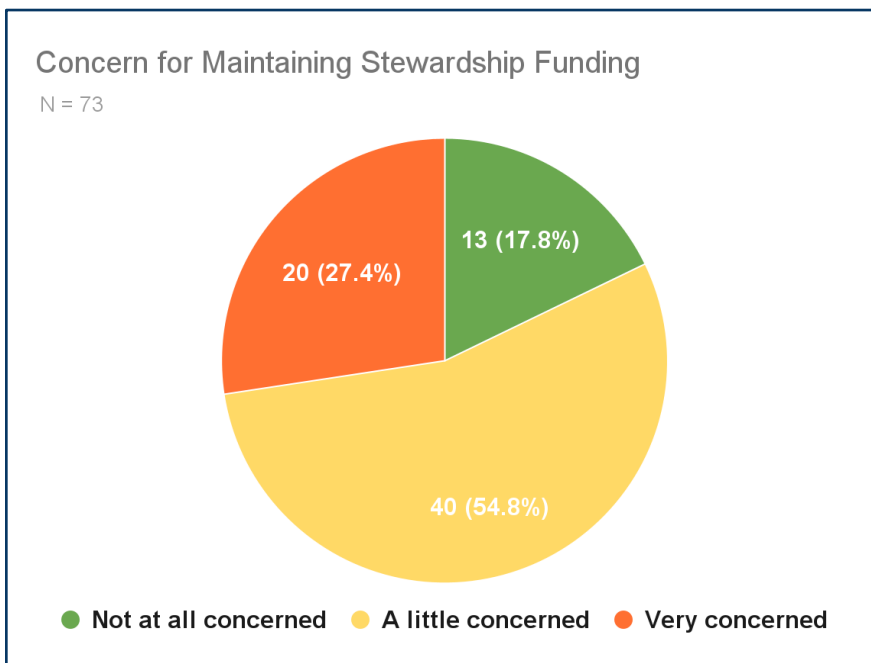
Question 49 – Easement Monitoring

48. During the past year, approximately what percentage of your land trust’s conservation easements was monitored at least one time? (N = 70)



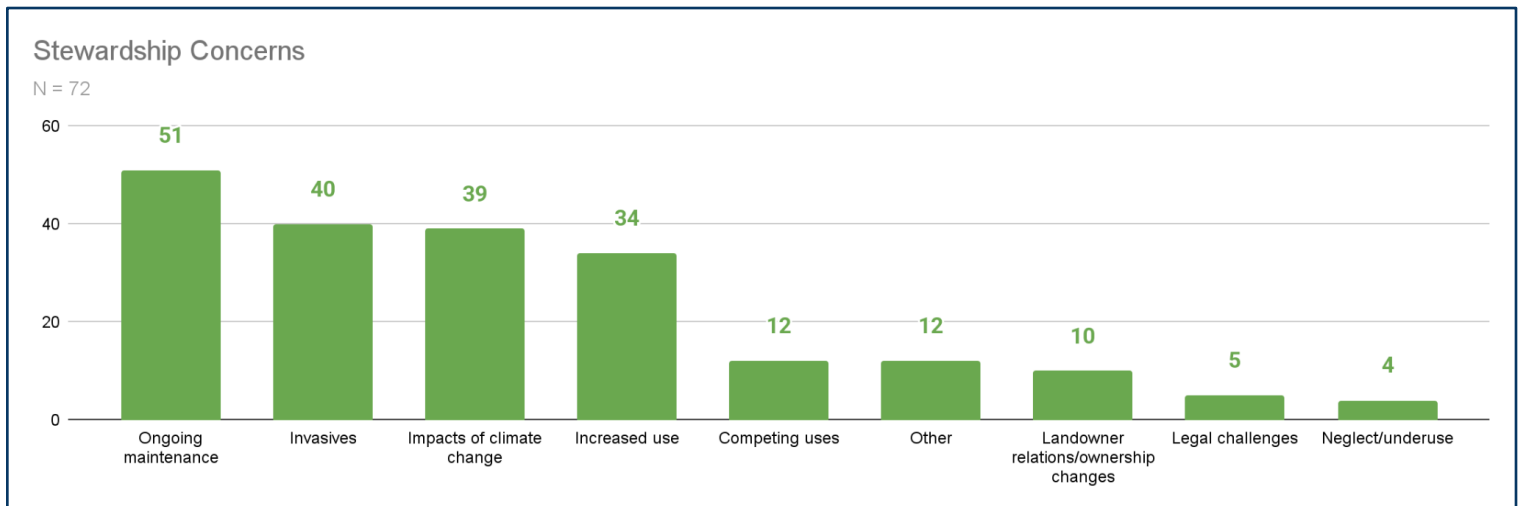
Question 50 – Maintaining Stewardship Funding

49. How concerned are you about your organization’s ability to maintain adequate funding for stewardship? (N = 73)



Question 51 – Stewardship Concerns

50. What are your organization’s THREE biggest challenges or concerns in terms of **fee property** stewardship? Please explain or elaborate on your challenges and/or concerns in terms of **fee property** stewardship. (N = 72)



Please explain or elaborate on your challenges and/or concerns in terms of fee property stewardship.

51 respondents elaborated on their reported concerns. Themes from their comments include:

- Invasive Species Management (17 mentions)
- Limited Staff & Volunteer Capacity (15)
- Trail & Infrastructure Maintenance (14)
- Climate Change Impacts (Non-Invasive Species Related) (12)
- Access & Land Management Planning (11)
- Increased Use of Trails, Properties (10)
- Unauthorized & Prohibited Use (10)
- Limited Funding, Resources (7)
- Competing Use Conflicts (6)
- Monitoring & Boundary Encroachment (5)

“The primary challenge that is an umbrella to all other fee property challenges is having enough capacity—staff, volunteer, and financial—to manage all the conservation land.”

“Managing and responding to disallowed activities such as unauthorized motorized vehicle use, installation of unapproved hunting structures, trash dumping, vandalism, etc.”

“A licensed forester has documented that some of our forests are no longer regenerating due to overwhelming infestations of invasive plants. We have almost no resources to address this issue at scale.”

"We are seeing a great deal more use of our trails and lands and work to create a proper balance so that use doesn't become abuse. We are seeing a lot more dogs on our properties and want to make sure that that remains a positive thing."

Question 52 - Conservation Easement Stewardship

51. What are your organization's challenges or concerns, if any, in terms of **conservation easement** stewardship? (N = 54)

Respondents reported challenges or concerns in terms of conservation easement stewardship within the following themes:

- Landowner Changes/Relationships (25 mentions)
- Monitoring and Enforcement Capacity/Constraints (14)
- Problematic Easement Documents/Terms (9)
- Easement Violations, Encroachments (7)
- Trespassing, Unauthorized Use, Compliance with Use Policies (3)
- Climate Change Impacts (Non-Invasive Species Related) (3)

"Ownership changes pose a huge stewardship burden as new landowners need to be educated about their easement, and oftentimes still end up violating it or requesting to amend it because they did not understand it at the time of acquiring the property."

"Monitoring of large easements may be exceeding the capacity of even our well-trained volunteer monitors--they are doing a good job for sure but it will be interesting to see how sustainable this is."

"Interpretation of easements can be subjective and complicated, and this lack of understanding can lead to a disconnect between the legal stipulations outlined in the easement document and the owner's perception of permissible actions."

Question 53 & 54 – Trails

52. Please estimate the **total miles** of publicly accessible trails on your conserved properties.

53. Please **estimate** the number of miles of trails on which the following activities are permitted.

Note: the sum of trail mileage for all activities will likely exceed the total mileage figure due to multi-use trails. (N = 70)

97% of responding land trusts (70/73) have publicly accessible trails.

Maine land trusts reported providing approximately **3,450 miles** of publicly accessible trails

Average number of miles (estimated): 50.2 miles

Median number of miles: 25 miles

TOTAL trail miles by activity:

Walking/Hiking:	2,159
Biking:	1,211
ATV	685
Snowmobile	1,087

Question 55 – Land Uses

54. If the following activities are allowed on any of your conserved lands (fee and conservation easement), please **estimate** the number of acres on which they are permitted. (N = 67)

	# TRUSTS REPORTING	# ACRES PERMITTED
Farming/Agriculture	38	40,703
Forestry	49	2,531,005
Hunting	65	2,761,522
Wabanaki Cultural Access	41	371,747

Question 56 - Water Access Points

55. Please indicate the number of water access points on your conserved lands per category below. Do not include water access points on conservation easements held on property owned by other conservation organizations.

N = 67

	# TRUSTS REPORTING AT LEAST 1 ACCESS POINT	TOTAL ACCESS POINTS REPORTED
Beaches/swimming areas	37	239
Recreational boat launch sites	45	232
Working waterfront sites	5	10
Access sites for commercial fishing (clamming, worming, etc.)	16	48

Community Engagement and Collaborations

Question 57 – Community Program Participation

56. Approximately how many people participated in your organization’s community programs and events in the last year?

N = 73

Total community program participants reported:	91,783
Median number of community program participants per trust:	425
Average number of community program participants per trust:	1,293

Question 58 – Community Partner Collaborations

57. *Optional:* If you’re not too tired at this point in the survey, please take a moment to brag about one of your organization’s recent successful **collaborations with community partners** and/or provide a link to more information if available. (N = 46)

Trusts are collaborating with community partners in a variety of ways, notably in the following areas:

- Education and Youth Engagement (14 mentions)
- Community Environmental Education and Events (12)
- Conservation Partnerships Land Protection, and Habitat Restoration (9)
- Trail Development and Accessibility (7)
- Community Gardens and Food Security (5)
- Wabanaki Partnerships and Cultural Heritage (5)
- Affordable Housing and Community Infrastructure (3)
- Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives (2)
- Shared Staffing (1)
- PFAS and Environmental Health Initiatives (1)

“Since 2020, [we have] donated over 25,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce from our Giving Garden. Our small land trust supports seven organizations addressing food insecurity issues.”

“[We are] part of a new collaborative, Triple Win, which is exploring the evolving role of land trusts in their communities, specifically how land trusts are incorporating workforce housing considerations into their land evaluation strategies. The Triple Win collaborative also advocates for Local Wood Works' vision of sustainable housing development using New England wood. The Triple Win team, made up of seven state and regionally focused for profit and nonprofit organizations, expects to produce a white paper in 2025.”

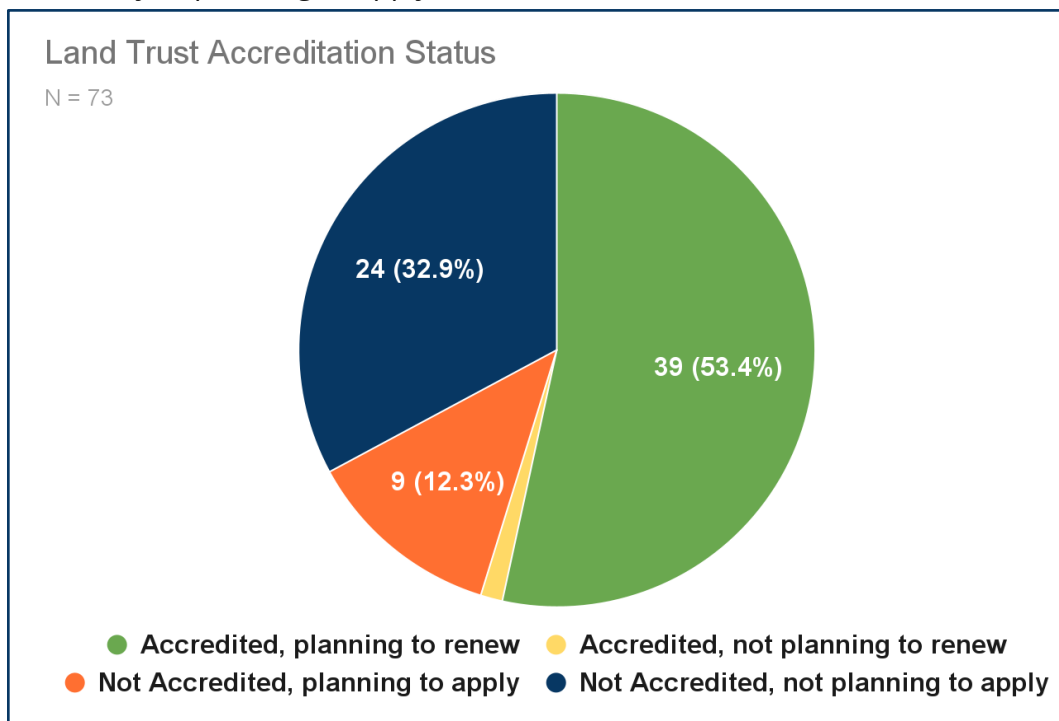
Accreditation

Question 59 – Accreditation Status

58. Are you currently accredited? (N = 73)

59. If yes, are you planning to renew your accreditation? (N = 39)

If no, are you planning to apply for accreditation? (N = 32)



Please share why you plan/don't plan to renew your accreditation.

If you are not planning to apply for accreditation, please share why.

Respondents shared the reasons why they plan or do not plan to renew their trust's accreditation. Themes that emerged from these reasons included:

- Uncertain About Cost/Benefit (5 mentions)
- Leadership, Credibility, Accountability (4)
- Benefit to Staff, Operations (2)
- Setting High Standards (2)
- Funding Opportunities, or Lack Thereof (2)

Respondents not planning to apply for accreditation shared reasons within the following themes:

- Limited Capacity, Time, Resources (12 mentions)
- Questionable Cost/Benefit (5)
- Not Organization's Purpose (4)
- Not a Priority (4)

Question 61 – Other Issues/Topics of Concern

60. Please note any topics of interest or issues that may be important for Maine's land conservation community to learn more about or address.

Respondents noted topics and issues of interest pertaining to the following themes:

- Climate Change & Environmental Impacts (6 mentions)
- Invasive Species (5)
- Wabanaki Relations & Cultural Access (5)
- Funding & Resources (5)
- Land Management, Usage, & Forestry (4)
- Housing & Development Balance (4)
- Community Engagement & Leadership Development (4)
- Cost of Land (3)
- Land Access & Traditional Use (3)
- Economic & Social Equity (3)
- Conservation Easements (2)
- Health Insurance for Staff (2)
- Accreditation Expense (1)

Appendix A: Land Trust Regions

The following is a division of Maine land trusts and related organizations into eight regions for the purposes of census data analysis. Please note that some classifications may have changed since the 2019 census to account for external circumstances like the merging of previously separate organizations.

Arundel Conservation Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Biddeford Pool Land Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Blandings Park Wildlife Sanctuary	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Francis Small Heritage Trust, Inc.	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Great Works Regional Land Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Kennebunk Land Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Kennebunkport Conservation Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Kittery Land Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Presumpscot Regional Land Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Saco Valley Land Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Sanford-Springvale Mousam Way Land Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Scarborough Land Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Three Rivers Land Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve & Laudholm Trust	Region 1 – Southern Maine
York Land Trust, Inc.	Region 1 – Southern Maine
Cape Elizabeth Land Trust	Region 2 – Casco Bay
Chebeague and Cumberland Land Trust	Region 2 – Casco Bay
Falmouth Land Trust	Region 2 – Casco Bay
Freeport Conservation Trust	Region 2 – Casco Bay
Great Diamond Island Land Preserve	Region 2 – Casco Bay
Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay	Region 2 – Casco Bay
Peaks Island Land Preserve	Region 2 – Casco Bay
Portland Trails	Region 2 – Casco Bay
Royal River Conservation Trust	Region 2 – Casco Bay
South Portland Land Trust	Region 2 – Casco Bay

Boothbay Region Land Trust	Region 3 – Midcoast
Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust	Region 3 – Midcoast
Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	Region 3 – Midcoast
Friends of Merrymeeting Bay	Region 3 – Midcoast
Georges River Land Trust	Region 3 – Midcoast
Harpwell Heritage Land Trust	Region 3 – Midcoast
Kennebec Estuary Land Trust	Region 3 – Midcoast
Midcoast Conservancy	Region 3 – Midcoast
Monhegan Associates	Region 3 – Midcoast
Phippsburg Land Trust	Region 3 – Midcoast
Bangor Land Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Blue Hill Heritage Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Brewer Land Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Coastal Mountains Land Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Holden Land Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Island Heritage Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Islesboro Islands Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
North Haven Conservation Partners	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Orono Land Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Vinalhaven Land Trust	Region 4 – Penobscot Bay
Crabtree Neck Land Trust	Region 5 – Downeast
Downeast Coastal Conservancy	Region 5 – Downeast
Downeast Lakes Land Trust	Region 5 – Downeast
Downeast Salmon Federation	Region 5 – Downeast
Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Region 5 – Downeast
Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation	Region 5 – Downeast
Woodie Wheaton Land Trust	Region 5 – Downeast
7 Lakes Alliance	Region 6 – Western Mountains

Foothills Land Conservancy	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Greater Lovell Land Trust	Region 6 – Western Mountains
High Peaks Alliance	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Inland Woods & Trails	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Loon Echo Land Trust	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Mahoosuc Land Trust	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Maine Huts and Trails	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Pierce Pond Watershed Trust (formerly Maine Wilderness Watershed Trust)	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Somerset Woods Trustees	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Upper Saco Valley Land Trust	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Western Foothills Land Trust	Region 6 – Western Mountains
Androscoggin Land Trust	Region 7 – Inland
Friends of Wilson Pond Area, Inc.	Region 7 – Inland
Kennebec Land Trust	Region 7 – Inland
Sebasticook Regional Land Trust	Region 7 – Inland
Upper St. John Land Trust	Region 7 – Inland
Appalachian Mountain Club - Maine Woods Initiative	Region 8 – Statewide
Forest Society of Maine	Region 8 – Statewide
Maine Audubon	Region 8 – Statewide
Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Region 8 – Statewide
Maine Farmland Trust	Region 8 – Statewide
Maine Woodland Owners (formerly Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine)	Region 8 – Statewide
New England Forestry Foundation, Inc.	Region 8 – Statewide
Northeast Wilderness Trust	Region 8 – Statewide
The Conservation Fund	Region 8 – Statewide
The Nature Conservancy in Maine	Region 8 – Statewide

Appendix B: Open-Ended Responses By Question

Question 8 – Board Diversity Aspirations

8. In what ways does your board aspire to become more diverse in the coming 5 years? (N = 69 responses)

Age Diversity, Younger Members (20 mentions)

1. We are actively seeking younger board members and board members that better represent socio-economic diversity of our service area
2. Age diversity (younger members).
3. age and gender diversity
4. To engage younger directors
5. The Board has made an effort to recruit younger people, and our newest Board member is young.
6. Our board wants to attract younger members
7. Add diversity and younger members
8. [Our] charter specifies 24 board seats. We presently have 16 board members. Age: Increase representation of board members 25-35 years old.
9. The board has set engaging younger generations with our conservation work as a priority with a goal of having 1 – 2 board members under 40 in the next five years.
10. ... particularly focused on age and gender diversification at this time.
11. Recruiting more youth, at least one BIPOC person
12. Reaching out to possible younger board members
13. The board aspires to grow in numbers, which will add a diversity to the interests of the members, and hopes to engage younger members.
14. Increasing our numbers of young and rural members. Seeking people of color.
15. We have an ongoing goal of diversifying our advisory board of trustees with a focus on geographic representation, ethnic and racial diversity, and bringing younger generations onto the board.
16. We seek to add younger members (39 or younger), and increase board membership by racial/ethnic minorities
17. Our board has expressed a desire to recruit younger board members and those with more applicable skills.
18. The Board wishes to recruit for a more balanced representation of ages. There are developing conversations around community representation beyond age, e.g. racial/ethnic diversity, socioeconomic diversity.
19. The main issue we face is recruiting younger members and members of the full time community that lives there. The nature of [our] community is that the people who have time and energy to serve are often older, retired with time to spend on our efforts.

20. By recruiting younger members

21. Look for more female younger board members in the island communities

Racial/Ethnic Diversity (15)

1. [We aim] to recruit board members who represent underserved or marginalized farming communities, plus provide additional training on racial equity for our board. Increasingly, our programs and projects serve non-white farmers – yet perspectives from BIPOC farmers are not currently represented on our board.
2. We are actively recruiting people of color, women and those representing LGBTQ+ populations as well as other underserved communities such as public housing, low-income, immigrant communities, and others.
3. The reality is that the "community" we serve are the people who visit Pierce Pond which is an extremely undiverse group with regards to racial diversity and to a lesser extent, socio-economic diversity.
4. A member of Penobscot Tribal Council is on our board, and the board is eager to increase Wabanaki participation.
5. We have started to communicate with and offer programs to new Mainers in our region and hope to continue to build those relationships - which we hope will lead to board representation from the new Mainer communities.
6. Creating programs that are inclusive, welcoming and reach a diverse audience such that we broaden our exposure across socioeconomic as well as racial/ethnic groups.
7. This is an important and ongoing goal for the organization. Our town is 98% white with a median age of 50. So our board does represent what the snapshot of our community is; however, we are looking to actively diversify it.
8. Recruiting more youth, at least one BIPOC person
9. Both racially and economically as we work to better integrate ourselves into the communities we serve
10. Increasing our numbers of young and rural members. Seeking people of color.
11. We have an ongoing goal of diversifying our advisory board of trustees with a focus on geographic representation, ethnic and racial diversity, and bringing younger generations onto the board. We look forward to welcoming our first trustee advisor from an Indigenous community later this year.
12. We seek to add younger members (39 or younger), and increase board membership by racial/ethnic minorities
13. Recruiting people of color to the board.
14. [Our service area] has grown more racially/ethnically diverse; we would like our board to follow suit.
15. Our board's diversity had been mainly focused on age and skill set. We would like to grow the board's diversity with more members that represent the town and our preserve users, which would include income diversity, age, interest/knowledge base, race/ethnicity, and physical ability.

Geographic/Community Representation (13)

1. We are working to bring on board members who represent working woodlands and farm communities to add that expertise.
2. We actively recruit folks in our service communities.
3. Representation for more of the towns we serve.
4. Geography, where board members live, is heavily around the Portland/SoME area. Increasing local Franklin and Somerset Counties representation is important.
5. The board aspires to bring on more members that are native to our town and have been living in the community we serve for most of their lives.
6. Maintaining/ensuring a mix of long time (multi-generational) residents and new residents involved in the land trust.
7. More year round community members.
8. Recruit more year-round island residents.
9. Members of the full time community that lives there.
10. As a land trust in a college town we are working on ways to engage the University of Maine community to seek their input on land trust goals as well as their volunteer support.
11. The main issue we face is recruiting younger members and members of the full time community that lives there.
12. Diversity, new skill sets, younger board members, 2 representatives for each of the six towns within our service area.
13. Look for more female younger board members in the island communities

Gender Diversity (11)

1. We now have three female board members.
2. There is no plan to increase diversity...however, there is sentiment on the board that it needs more female members.
3. We are actively recruiting people of color, women and those representing LGBTQ+ populations as well as other underserved communities.
4. [Our] charter specifies 24 board seats. We presently have 16 board members. Gender: Current board is about 60% male. Recruiting women is a priority.
5. Right now we have only two women on the board. At times in the past, the gender diversity has been near 50/50. We are recruiting new members as I write this and one of our goals is to add more women.
6. Through our committees, we are seeking a younger, more gender balanced representation.
7. ... particularly focused on age and gender diversification at this time.
8. Adding more women to the board in the short-term and continuing to cultivate more engagement with more diverse groups to lead to more authentic board diversity in the long-term
9. Diversity is a challenge in this area. Our executive board is all female.

10. age and gender diversity

11. Look for more female younger board members in the island communities

Socioeconomic Diversity (10)

1. We are actively seeking younger board members and board members that better represent socio-economic diversity of our service area
2. We are actively recruiting people of color, women and those representing LGBTQ+ populations as well as other underserved communities such as public housing, low-income, immigrant communities, and others.
3. Diversity in our region can be more about socio-economic than anything else.
4. The diversity on our board largely relates to age and socio-economic diversity where we have made efforts to be inclusive.
5. Creating programs that are inclusive, welcoming and reach a diverse audience such that we broaden our exposure across socioeconomic as well as racial/ethnic groups.
6. This is an important and ongoing goal for the organization. Our town is 98% white with a median age of 50. So our board does represent what the snapshot of our community is; however, we are looking to actively diversify it so different views are represented and so we are inviting more groups into this work. We are looking to diversify the Board in not just race, but also economic status, age, sex, and location.
7. Both racially and economically as we work to better integrate ourselves into the communities we serve
8. The Board wishes to recruit for a more balanced representation of ages. There are developing conversations around community representation beyond age, e.g. racial/ethnic diversity, socioeconomic diversity.
9. Socio-economically. The board has long tried to recruit younger board members, too, but the demographics are not in our favor.
10. Age and social-economic

Active Recruitment Methods (10)

1. [We continue] to attend community events to share information on the organization and land conservation/uses. It is hopeful that more people will become engaged.
2. In 2022, the BOD established a Nominating Committee to help dig into and guide the process of BOD and committee recruitment and onboarding. This committee made up of BOD members works to identify, engage, and recruit folks with skills, experiences, perspectives, demographics, etc. that are desirable and will support our mission.
3. We are actively recruiting all the time, for areas in which we have diversity gaps. We have hired a national recruiter to help.
4. For many years, [we] relied upon a small, primarily self-nominated volunteer cohort... During the past several years, the Trust has sought to expand and diversify its volunteer base in intentional ways. [We are] developing formal board recruitment and succession protocols while building a robust pipeline of candidates for membership on its Board of Directors.

5. Board is currently evaluating board composition and recruitment options.
6. Our nominating process includes the identification of areas where we are lacking diversity and seeks to bring balance to those areas.
7. Through our committees, we are seeking a younger, more gender balanced representation; we hope some of these committee members to then transition to full board members
8. To effectively expand the diversity of your board and engage with organizations that represent underserved communities, consider reaching out to local nonprofits, advocacy groups, and community organizations focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Collaborating with these entities can help identify potential board candidates and provide insights into the needs of these communities.
9. Ongoing discussions about equity and diversity, and in 2024 updating our values to make diversity a priority.
10. The board's Governance Committee has an active subcommittee/taskforce focused on diversifying the board. This group just formed earlier in 2024.

Specific Skill Sets/Expertise (8)

1. We are working to bring on board members who represent working woodlands and farm communities to add that expertise.
2. As we work to better serve traditional harvesters, our board wants to recruit harvesters, fishermen or others involved in local aquaculture.
3. The board is committed to maintaining a good balance of board members with background reflecting all parts of our mission—forestry, ecology, outdoor recreation, and cultural/historic connections to Maine's forestland.
4. We look to fill needs-real estate, land management, marketing and communications, legal and if anyone emerges as interested then we will work with anyone.
5. Our board has expressed a desire to recruit younger board members and those with more applicable skills.
6. Our board is increasingly looking to recruit members with a diversity of lived experiences, skill sets and financial capacity to help us meet the challenges we are now facing.
7. Our board's diversity had been mainly focused on age and skill set.
8. Diversity, new skill sets, younger board members, 2 representatives for each of the six towns within our service area.

No Plans or Limited Plans (8)

1. no plans
2. 2023 Strategic Plan Goal to "build board capacity and diversity to strategically lead" but specific methods not identified.
3. It is fairly diverse right now, considering the demographics of our community. We have no plans to become more diverse, although we would, of course, welcome events that might lead to such an outcome.

4. We aspire - but so far we do not have a plan.
5. We've discussed increasing diversity, but no action plan developed.
6. Frankly, none. Our area demographics don't lend themselves to that.
7. We have not planned for that. Also, our pool of potential board members is extremely white.
8. We are currently going through the strategic planning process. We do not operate in a racially diverse area.

Question 11 – Board Strengths

11. What is your Board's greatest strength? (N = 73 responses)

Commitment & Dedication to Mission (25 mentions)

1. Shared commitment to the organization and deep knowledge of our service area towns
2. Time, talent, and dedication.
3. Dedication. [We are] small in volunteers but continue to attend educational events and try to make projects happen.
4. Dedicated to the mission of the organization.
5. Shared passion for the mission
6. Passion for direct land conservation
7. Passion for the mission and community connections
8. Interest in and passion for the land trust and [our] community.
9. Commitment to place and a willingness to take risks when opportunities present themselves.
10. Dedication
11. Dedication to our mission and goals
12. The board's greatest strength is their shared commitment to seeing us succeed.
13. Their commitment to our mission that ensures we are laser focused.
14. Unwavering commitment and passion for the mission.
15. Dedication and commitment to our mission.
16. They love the organization and want to see it succeed. They are honest and dedicated.
17. Passion and ability to successfully complete land conservation and stewardship tasks
18. Their commitment to the work and level of engagement.
19. They take the work of the Trust seriously
20. Dedication to the mission
21. The Board works together well. They know their community and want to do what they can to make it better.
22. Their passion for the organization
23. Strong commitment to the organization's health, and mission of land conservation
24. Commitment to the organization
25. Commitment to the mission.

Knowledge, Skills, & Expertise (16)

1. Our board is well versed in traditional conservation practices.
2. they are intelligent, well informed and give excellent advice when asked
3. Due to the diverse backgrounds of our board members, they bring a wide array of knowledge.
4. Long history of engagement with land conservation and watershed work.
5. The experience, expertise, and background of its members
6. Age. The wisdom and experience of an older board is an incredible asset.
7. Members bring a diversity of professional backgrounds and offer powerful collective wisdom in decision-making.
8. Our board consists of a variety of people from different places and with different experiences and areas of expertise.
9. Expertise
10. Land conservation strategies
11. Knowledge of island environments
12. Creative financing of conservation
13. Strategic thinking
14. Skill diversity. We have a retired CPA, two foresters, an artist, a member who works as a FT steward at another land trust, a CEO, and a science journalist, among a couple others folks.
15. ALT's board demonstrates a strong commitment to its mission through active engagement in programs, leveraging the diverse backgrounds and extensive experience of its members to drive impactful initiatives and foster a collaborative environment. This diversity enriches discussions and decision-making, ensuring a well-rounded approach to fulfilling the organization's goals.
16. Diversity of skills and appreciation for both habitat conservation and people-oriented access to Nature.

Community Connections & Representation (11)

1. Representation: all members own or manage woodlands and represent a broad geographic range.
2. They are well connected to the summer community and many have served on the Board for a long time, providing good perspective on where the organization has grown from.
3. Community connections
4. Connections to the local community
5. We also have recruited several younger board members and have at least 3 members who live in Hancock year round.
6. We are a regional organization and have actively built a regional Board of Directors to keep us plugged in to funding opportunities, partnerships, and programming in different states.
7. Most members of the board are well-connected within their respective watershed communities and are able to provide insight and exert influence within their communities.

8. Its devotion to supporting the island community as a whole - year-round residents and seasonal residents alike.
9. Institutional knowledge of the organization and community ties.
10. Our Board primarily sees their role as supporting our professional staff and serving as ambassadors for our work in the communities we serve.
11. They are experts on the local geography and values of outdoor access.

Active Engagement, Working Board (10)

1. Regular attendance at board meetings and the annual meeting, and persistence when [we were] all volunteer. We have four members who are consistently active in land stewardship.
2. It is also a working board and emphasizes communication with staff, centered around mutual trust and respect.
3. Ours is very much a working board, and everyone is eager to share their skills and help within their respective time and professional capacities.
4. As a volunteer led board, we are a "hands-on group." From trail building to marketing to finance, we do it all and enjoy working with each other.
5. The volunteer initiative from the board is truly impressive. Many board members devote hundreds of hours of time per year to make the land trust work.
6. Willingness to get involved.
7. Our board's greatest strength is its commitment to open communication. It is a working board where people participate actively in the structure and workload of the committees. Board members work directly with staff on committee work and are very engaged in discussion.
8. Empathetic leadership and engagement! They show up for activities, meetings, and conversations in an open fashion - willing to talk through issues and celebrate successes.
9. It's energy and engagement.
10. Full engagement in our work

Collaboration & Decision-Making (9)

1. Interpreting data and making swift decisions.
2. Bring views on topics from many vantage points and everyone appreciates hearing these and is respectful of each others' thoughts.
3. Our board often has differences of opinion but they are always resolved through productive discussion and mutual respect.
4. The ability to work collaboratively and thoughtfully to make decisions that are in the best interest of the organization as a whole.
5. The manner in which they approach working with each other - deep transparency and kindness
6. Board members are thoughtful and considerate when making decisions and discussion is encouraged and engaging.
7. willing to talk through issues and celebrate successes.

8. The ability to work together and listen to each other to reach consensus on ideas and policies.
9. Everyone cooperates when asked, and offers wise counsel.

Institutional Knowledge/Wisdom (6)

1. Institutional wisdom as many founding members remain active on the board.
2. Their knowledge of the history of the organization
3. Their institutional knowledge is also amazing.
4. Institutional knowledge of the organization and community ties.
5. institutional knowledge
6. Institutional knowledge and commitment to the organization

Staff Relations (5)

1. The board provides leadership but not day-to-day management of the organization that is left to the staff.
2. They are supportive of staff and do what they can to assist them.
3. Tremendous supporters of the staff
4. Our Board primarily sees their role as supporting our professional staff and serving as ambassadors for our work in the communities we serve.
5. Our board does a great job of being a governance board. Members are there when we need them but leave day-to-day operations to staff.

Financial Support & Governance (5)

1. Financial capacity
2. Commitment to governance and financial sustainability.
3. Our advisory board of trustees has a significant commitment to personally funding and also fundraising for the organization.
4. They are also incredibly generous.
5. Creative financing of conservation

Positive Attitude (1)

Question 12 - Board Concerns

12. What is the biggest concern regarding your Board? (N = 73 responses)

Recruitment Challenges (15 mentions)

1. Recruitment of younger / more diverse members
2. Bringing new, younger, and more diverse members on Board.
3. Finding younger members

4. Lack of diversity, particularly in age. Attracting the new generation of Board members has been challenging.
5. Our board members are struggling to reach outside of their personal networks to recruit new board members. This makes it difficult to recruit potential board members who are under 40, or of different socioeconomic groups.
6. Recruitment of new board members that can/will become board leaders. We would also like to recruit long time residents.
7. Recruitment
8. attracting a few good board members or volunteers under 50!
9. Barriers to recruiting younger members.
10. It is always the issue of getting new, younger board members and especially getting officers to serve.
11. Finding new potential leaders, particularly in the President role
12. Replacing, at some point, a few of our most financially generous members.
13. The Board doesn't yet reflect the diversity of our community.
14. not enough women.
15. [Our] board is small, with just 11 members. We are actively recruiting new participants and have a development plan for growth.

Financial and Fundraising Concerns (15)

1. Ability to conduct a comprehensive campaign
2. financial/fundraising responsibility
3. Staying financially stable
4. Lack of volunteers and funding.
5. Lack of major donors among them
6. Lack of true fundraising network
7. the need for an active fundraising group.
8. ability to raise money
9. Development and unrestricted funding
10. Development potential
11. Need more people to share the load, especially fundraising
12. One of the main challenges we face is fundraising. Fundraising in resource-limited areas can be daunting, especially when competing needs overshadow the mission of organizations... While community support is invaluable, it often falls short against pressing local demands. This makes it essential to strategize fundraising efforts effectively, perhaps by leveraging partnerships, seeking grants, or increasing visibility to appeal to broader donor bases. Additionally, with limited staff some of the workload is assigned to the board with a lot of responsibility on key board members.
13. Lack of confidence with fundraising and development.
14. -Fundraising -Lack of community connections

15. Not always utilizing their networks for fundraising/outreach.

Board/Volunteer Engagement and Workload Distribution (14)

1. Lack of commitment in terms of time, energy, giving and leadership.
2. Investment of time
3. Lack of participation from many
4. Too much work done by a smaller portion of the board
5. Too much work falls to just a couple of the officers.
6. Overworked. We currently don't have an Executive Director
7. My biggest concern is the low number of board members who are actively involved. A big majority of the work is done by a small group. Additionally, two board members function as unpaid staff - our attorney and our Treasurer. We need to prepare for the days ahead when those roles are not filled by volunteers.
8. Double edge of being too big and burning out.
9. A perceived lack of time, from the point of view of Board members, to devote to the organization.
10. Because we have managed to secure many board members who are still working, it can be difficult to find a board member with enough free time to serve in a leadership role.
11. Board is made of very busy volunteers who can't always commit the time they would like or need to. Not always forward thinking or able to be comfortable with change.
12. Not all board members are as involved as they need to be in the day to day operation.
13. We would like to have more volunteer engagement from members outside of the board.
14. Lack of volunteers and funding.

Board-to-Staff Transition Growing Pains (11)

1. Transition from a founding board to a governing board can be challenging.
2. We need to plan better for succession and to have a more robust strategy going forward as we are at a turning point where we need more hired support, which we then will need to fundraise for. Our needs as we have grown are outstripping what the board alone can provide. This is a source of both opportunity and anxiety.
3. The transition from reliance on board members for work to a more staff led organization with board focusing on policy and governance.
4. Board leadership, and understanding the role of board members and how they can effectively engage in activities through committees.
5. The Board does not have term limits, so there are a number of members with decades of service. While this historical and institutional knowledge is an asset, it can also be a challenge to navigating the substantial changes associated with maturing from a volunteer- to staff-led organization that is undertaking more strategic conservation activity and working to more meaningfully serve the community

6. It can also be difficult to balance the many roles the trustees can play; some are our largest philanthropic supporters, some have specific conservation or science expertise, and some help advise us on community engagement and support.
7. As [we have] evolved and professionalized over time, the board as a unit has not yet fully realized its role as the body responsible for determining the Trust's mission and strategic direction and evaluating the performance of its executive director and staff. Going forward, thoroughly delineating the role of the board and the role of professional staff will represent an organizational priority and area of growth.
8. The greatest challenge is always to maintain a proper balance. We want enthusiastic board members that are engaged, thoughtful and helpful. Sometimes we would like a little more effort in some and sometimes we'd like a director to scale it back a little and not outpace the staff or Board goals. Younger members sometimes don't have a lot of extra time to give. On occasion, some retired Board members have a little too much time to spend at the office.
9. Shifting towards largely governance, fundraising, and fiduciary responsibilities.
10. Ensuring we have the appropriate systems to onboard them and keep the board engaged, while making sure we have the skill sets we need to support the board and staff.
11. They are quite hands off and leave a lot of the decision-making to the executive director.

Aging Board (7)

1. Aging out cohort of board members who will leave with valuable institutional knowledge.
2. Longstanding members may resign and the need to attract new Board members
3. Aging directors
4. Age. Board members' declining health make it difficult to be as active as they would like to be and/or once were.
5. Aging and engagement.
6. We are pleased to have a very active and involved group of board members. The only issue of slight concern is that with the aging of many of our long-time board and past board members, we want to find a way to maintain a base of historical knowledge.
7. Our treasurer, a retired CPA, is 83 years old and has been indispensable in all financial matters since the beginning. We need to find someone who can competently take on the role in the upcoming years.

Leadership Succession Planning (6)

1. Leadership changes
2. Planned succession
3. The Board needs a plan for succession of leadership, as the long acting President would like to step back from that role.
4. Leadership succession, and tension over financial commitments (fee for service) with [the trust].

5. We need to plan better for succession
6. Succession planning for board leadership. The chair has been in the role for a long time; both the chair and board are eager to see a path to new board leadership.

Strategic Direction and Mission Alignment (6)

1. Lack of consensus on what level of investment in land acquisition is appropriate.
2. The organization needs to reorient itself to current needs in our community.
3. Disconnection between the board and staff.
4. They don't realize the scale of action commensurate with the mission.
5. Willingness to adapt, transform, learn, and change.
6. A challenge is keeping the trustee advisors up to date on learnings and engagements, especially related to equitable conservation.

Other (1)

1. Climate change / sea level rise

No Concerns (3)

Question 25 – Employee Benefits

25. Please indicate whether your organization offers employee benefits, either through a plan or by providing a stipend.

Open-Ended Comments: If you indicated above that you offer **other benefits**, what are they?

If you indicated above that you offer a **sabbatical benefit**, please note the qualifying duration of employment and what the benefit is. (N = 28 comments)

Other Insurance (24 mentions)

1. Life Insurance (6)
2. Long-Term Disability Insurance (7)
3. Short-Term Disability Insurance (4)
4. Vision insurance (5)
5. AD&D Insurance (2)

Other Compensation/Reimbursements/Support (8)

1. Living stipend of \$500/month
2. Bonus
3. mileage reimbursement
4. Parking
5. Professional development stipends
6. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

7. Simple IRA Plan
8. ED receives a \$2k stipend to use as she wishes - could be health insurance or retirement or other(is included in the salary).

Other Leave/PTO (7)

1. 4 weeks new parent leave
2. After 7 years an additional 4 weeks of consecutive paid leave.
3. 4 weeks paid plus 8 weeks unpaid family leave for FT/PT
4. Family/ Sick leave
5. Personal, sick, bereavement PTO
6. Each staff member, regardless of their staff role, is encouraged to spend time outdoors in nature. To facilitate this, staff get two "outdoor days" per year and are encouraged (but not required) to join other staff for a hike, paddle, swim, etc on conservation lands in Maine.
7. Flexible hours

Health Savings Account (HSA) or Similar (6)

1. HSA (2)
2. FSA (2)
3. Pre-tax Health Savings Account
4. HRA is available for health or dental costs

Sabbatical Programs (6)

1. Sabbatical after 10 years, and after 20 years
2. 10 years
3. Sabbatical benefit: 7 years of FT employment
4. Sabbatical: 10 year longevity bonus vacation, extra 4 weeks paid vacation.
5. Sabbatical - After 10 years, request can be made for an up to 3 month paid/unpaid sabbatical with work-related plan; thereafter can request again after 5 years; no more than one staff person on sabbatical at any one time.
6. Employees may request a sabbatical, if the following conditions are met: 1. The employee has been with [the organization] for at least seven (7) years; 2. The request must be made in writing and specify the proposed dates, the plan of activities to be undertaken, an explanation of how the leave taken will benefit the employee and [organization] and how work will be handled in his or her absence. The employee may receive up to twelve (12) months of sabbatical leave. Payment of salary and/or benefits during the term of the sabbatical is at the sole discretion of the Executive Director upon review and receipt of input from the Board of Directors. If the employee does not return on the date scheduled for the termination of the sabbatical, he or she may be considered to have voluntarily quit employment and must

reimburse [the organization] for the cost of any salary and/or benefits paid during the sabbatical.

Question 26 - Staff Attracting/Retention Challenges

26. What are your organization's greatest challenges in attracting and retaining qualified staff?
(N = 58 responses)

Funding Competitive Salaries (26 mentions)

1. Funding of positions (2)
2. Compensation (2)
3. Pay rates (2)
4. Having the funds for competitive salaries.
5. Salary - wish we could pay everyone more!
6. salary may not be enough to draw forest professionals
7. Budget to pay salaries (2)
8. raising unrestricted funds to increase staff salaries
9. Keeping up with salary needs.
10. Raising funds for the salary.
11. low salary and high cost of living
12. Salary and benefits especially given price of housing locally
13. Maintaining competitive salaries is challenging.
14. Ability to pay competitive salaries
15. We do okay attracting staff, but retaining them is a bigger challenge. Not being able to offer much of a benefits package is a challenge, but it is not uncommon in the Franklin and Somerset county areas
16. Solid pay and benefits along with work life balance
17. Being able to offer competitive compensation, cost of health benefits
18. We have started to see our ability to attract and retain staff based on the salaries and expense of health benefits we can provide as an issue of concern. Specifically competitive health benefits for staff with families.
19. Relatively lower pay and benefits, compared to other jobs, in a high-cost area
20. Offering compensation and benefits that allow for a living wage in an expensive area of the state.
21. Financial constraints, lack of benefits.
22. One of our biggest challenges is funding. Securing funding for [our] services in economically disadvantaged areas of Maine poses a significant challenge, particularly as we focus on urban regions with declining industries and rural communities facing high poverty rates. Unlike areas with seasonal economic boosts or coastline attractions that

draw public interest, our efforts are concentrated on [an area that] has historically struggled.

Housing Availability/Cost and Cost of Living (20)

1. Housing (5)
2. Affordable housing in the area.
3. Salary and benefits especially given price of housing locally
4. on-island housing
5. housing (for a subset of staff) in the locations where we serve
6. available year-round housing in our area.
7. Housing and cost of living in Southern Maine
8. Cost of living in our service area is very high.
9. Being able to offer a competitive salary, limited housing availability
10. Cost of living in our service area is very high. Maintaining competitive salaries is challenging.
11. Housing is one of the largest challenges especially for short term staff
12. compensation, housing, health insurance
13. The rapidly increasing costs associated with living within commuting distance of [the trust] juxtaposed against median state salaries for land conservation professionals pose a significant challenge.
14. cost of housing or rental.
15. Affordable local housing, competitive benefits, upward advancement.
16. Cost of housing in [our area].

Ability to Offer Benefits (16)

1. Benefits are poor
2. benefits package
3. Not being able to offer much of a benefits package is a challenge
4. No medical benefits
5. health insurance
6. lack of health care benefits
7. providing adequate health insurance
8. Healthcare and Retirement benefits
9. Pay, benefits, and housing
10. Until recently, failing to provide family health care. Also, we currently don't have a retirement plan in place, but the Board recently voted to approve it, so we will have a 3% matching Simple IRA plan in place by year's end.
11. Solid pay and benefits along with work life balance
12. Financial constraints, lack of benefits.
13. Being able to offer competitive compensation, cost of health benefits

14. We have started to see our ability to attract and retain staff based on the salaries and expense of health benefits we can provide as an issue of concern. Specifically competitive health benefits for staff with families.
15. Relatively lower pay and benefits, compared to other jobs, in a high-cost area
16. Offering compensation and benefits that allow for a living wage in an expensive area of the state.

Geographic/Location Challenges (10)

1. Rural area, the scope of the job is enormous.
2. rural nature of location
3. rural area and difficulty for spouses to find work
4. finding people who want to work in our more remote areas.
5. Limited local workpool, housing challenges
6. Geography. Hard to attract to [our county].
7. We are an island community accessible only by ferry. This makes hiring off-island candidates challenging and limits the pool of applicants considerably.
8. Our remote location!
9. The pool of qualified applicants is very small. Our region is not affordable for cost of living.

Upward Advancement & Organizational Growth (6)

1. Budgeting in the positions and knowing when to grow the organization and to what level.
2. Upward movement is limited in some programmatic areas
3. Biggest retention challenge: most common reason staff leave is to take a position with more responsibility or seniority
4. With a staff of just 4.0 FTE, opportunities for career advancement within the organization are extremely limited. Most staff members must leave [our organization] in order to move to their next-level professional assignment.
5. opportunities for career growth
6. Upward advancement.

Work Environment and Culture Challenges (5)

1. Honestly this is a hard one to answer. Has anyone actually figured this out completely? Please share! We've made a lot of changes to be a more supportive, inclusive and positive work environment where staff feel respected, engaged, and able to grow. We'd like to think these changes are helping in this regard.
2. Employee recognition and wellbeing and stronger relationships with co-workers as we're mostly remote.
3. Work life balance
4. Diversified mission (land trust, hatcheries, restoration, etc) complicates staff communication and management.

5. turn-over within the organization

Candidate Skillsets/Qualifications/Attributes (4)

1. We have also found challenges with recruiting a more diverse workforce representative of all the communities we serve.
2. Finding a candidate with a background and skillset that allows them to do the many and varied tasks we require in the office. For example, finding someone who can contribute to education/program development but also run Quickbooks.
3. Biggest hiring challenge: lack of qualified candidates.
4. finding people who are committed enough to stay long-term

Organizations Without Challenges (8)

1. None (2)
2. We haven't had any challenges so far.
3. We are very lucky in that category.
4. At this time, [we are] not having trouble with this issue.
5. Have not had issues to date attracting and retaining qualified staff. We have generous WFH policies, which seem to be a comparative strength
6. We do not currently face this challenge. We offer competitive salaries, benefits, and quality of life aspects to attract top employees.
7. We only have one part time staff (~5 years), so recruitment has not been an issue.

Question 31 – Specific Funds

Land trusts often set aside funds designated for certain uses. These funds may be called endowments, dedicated funding, reserves, or other similar names. For each of the following purposes, as of the end of your organization's last fiscal year, please share whether your fund was at the desired level, as well as the approximate amount your land trust had in designated funding for that purpose. When responding to this question, please do not consider TerraFirma membership. If you indicated "Other" above, please describe the purpose of the fund. (N = 30 comments)

Restricted Funds: Property- or Project-Specific (13 mentions)

1. Property-restricted stewardship (4)
2. Other preserve specific reserves
3. The "other" funds are primarily capital reserve funds for the long-term maintenance of buildings and facilities.
4. Capital Replacement
5. special projects/HQ reno
6. \$160k for community garden initiatives

7. Donor restricted – 268,024 ([special project] (68,462) +Specific property stewardship (93,606)+ Internship reserve (99,455)+ Other grants (6,501))
8. most of our properties, fee or easement have individual endowments that are used to support stewardship and legal defense.
9. Contributions to other [community] outdoors and/or conservation related project (\$11,423).
10. Restricted for a variety of land conservation uses

Undesignated/General Funds (6)

1. General operating fund
2. It is simply reserve funds that are unallocated and can be used to make up budget shortfalls or for special projects.
3. We consider everything left over to be operating but it does not have a designated fund
4. Undesignated
5. unallocated unrestricted earnings, and unrestricted BOD designated semi-endowment.
6. A board designated fund, which probably could be considered more operating reserve, but is considered to be a bit less restricted than the operating endowment fund listed under operating reserve above. The Board has drawn principal from this fund in the past as needed, but the intent is to eventually be in a position where this could truly be considered operating reserve.

General Endowment or Investment Funds (6)

1. Endowment (2)
2. Permanent operating endowment plus appreciation
3. Operating Endowment Fund
4. Unrestricted endowment (\$290,000); Funds held at Maine Community Foundation with [the trust] as beneficiary of annual spin-off (\$6,500,000)
5. We have 1.6 mil in a "Forever" fund, an additional \$810k in endowment, and
6. investment

Education and Programming (3)

1. Education
2. restricted funds for education program
3. Education program \$4382

Land Conservation (2)

1. Land acquisition
2. Land Conservation

Other (2)

1. Sustainability Fund

2. Initial Project Due Diligence & Staff Time

Question 40 - Climate Change Effects

40. Please describe one or more ways climate change is affecting your organization's plans or activities. (N = 71 Responses)

Severe Weather Resulting in Increased Stewardship Costs & Time (19 mentions)

1. Spending more time and more money on stewardship due to impacts of severe weather.
2. Storm damage to trails and boundaries has increased need for volunteers, and erosion of parking lots has increased maintenance costs.
3. The storms in December 2023 caused a lot of damage to our lands. This has set us back in being able to conserve more land.
4. Significant impact on trail maintenance and infrastructure. Increasing costs to manage storm damage and rebuild infrastructure.
5. Increased costs of trail maintenance on major trails
6. Winter rain storms are intensifying and increased stream flow events are damaging bridges and trails, thereby increasing costs and making stewarding trails more complicated and expensive.
7. Historic rainstorms are causing more erosion on trails and more blowdowns, making them harder to manage.
8. Cost to maintain trails.
9. Walking path... along the coast has required rebuilding twice in last year due to abnormal high tides.
10. Increased stewardship costs
11. More culvert, ditching, etc. roadwork.
12. More severe weather events are causing flooding and damage not only to our shorelines, but also to our structures like floats/piers and buildings. Stewardship costs have increased dramatically and we need to plan for greater impact moving forward.
13. Over the last two years [we have] faced many challenges with severe storms. We have had to rebuild or relocate many trails.
14. As a result of climate change, we're experiencing an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms and flooding events. Last April, a late-season snowstorm hit Maine and caused thousands of power outages and unprecedented damage to our trails. Stewardship staff and volunteers spent weeks clearing downed trees and storm damage on our trails.
15. The recent winter storms side-railed stewardship efforts and required us to quickly reallocate funds, time, and resources to address.
16. Climate change affects our land trust especially regarding heightened severe storms and invasive plants. This past January 2024, there was an intense rainstorm that traditionally

would have been a blizzard. A fishing boat shipwrecked on a small privately owned parcel on which we hold a conservation easement.

17. Challenging to schedule timber harvests due to lack of frozen ground/rain events- access roads and trails are impacted by rain events

Strategic Conservation Planning (17)

1. Evaluate all potential land projects using climate considerations
2. More resources spent and more collaboration on long-term conservation planning.
3. Forest is changing and we spend more time trying to plan.
4. Climate change will be considered in the development designs of any future projects.
5. Increasing the pace of conservation.
6. We are seeking to increase our capacity to support land use planning across our service area
7. Climate resilience is an avatar of many conservation and community values so it figures very high in land protection.
8. Climate change is a primary concern for both acquisition and stewardship.
9. We are looking at climate resilience and connectivity when selecting projects.
10. It is now part of our strategic planning process, and prospective conservation easements/ fee lands are looked at from a climate change perspective - will conserving/restoring wetlands help prevent/mitigate flooding, what are the carbon storage prospects?
11. We are actively engaging in climate action with a Board Climate Action Team subcommittee.
12. Utilizing climate resiliency metrics to help prioritize land conservation projects.
13. Have added climate resiliency data info to our land evaluation criteria
14. We have integrated it as a key priority in our conservation planning within and beyond service area using a tool created in partnership with four other western Maine Land Trusts
15. Our focus has been refined to meet this challenge... We are in the business of conservation, creating innovative solutions that drive nature-based action for climate protection, sustainable economies and vibrant communities.
16. Assessing future inundation maps, looking to provide buffers. Trying to anticipate costs of damaging weather events.
17. Increase in stewardship needs and associated costs. Provides more weight to strategic conservation design. Our service area towns are adopting climate action plans with defined roles for our LT.

Coastal & Wetland Impacts (14)

1. More focused on marshes in land protection, to allow for wetland migration. This may include prioritizing certain parcels for protection and/or expanding our focus areas (moving further inland).
2. Not making changes to our plans but rising tides are changing the shorefront and changing the marshes
3. We are simply working harder and faster to secure wildlands across our region.
4. Consideration of marsh migration opportunities when evaluating land acquisition.

5. Looking to conserve resilient lands, and salt marsh migration areas
6. Considering impact of sea level rise on lands that we purchase
7. Sea level rise impacting tidal marshes
8. Climate change is impacting several of our protected properties on the shoreline with erosion.
9. Coastal erosion and sea-level rise is decreasing our land holdings.
10. We are concerned about the erosion of our islands and waterfront properties, the rise in sea level and storm surge, the rising water temperature and the effects they will have on our lighthouse and beach.
11. Winter storms and sea-rise causing erosion of dunes and flooding of fresh water ponds with salt water.
12. Many of our preserves are coastal, and we are beginning to take sea level rise into account, especially with regards to trail stewardship. For land protection, we are increasingly focused on salt marsh protection and migration opportunities.
13. We are partnering with other conservation groups to look at wetland migration conservation and conserving drinking water sources.
14. Sea level rise
15. Our properties are all waterfront. Flood risk directly affects these properties.

Invasive Species Management (9)

1. The amount of time spent on invasive species mitigation continues to increase each year in part due to climate change.
2. A central focus of our land stewardship efforts is invasive species management. Invasives are spreading due to shorter winters, higher rains, and climate change.
3. More time and money spent on remediating invasive species infestations and spread on fee properties.
4. Invasive plants on some easements are proving difficult to manage.
5. We are becoming more diligent in aquatic invasive plant prevention programs
6. Terrestrial and aquatic invasive species pressure is increasing, in part due to rising temperatures, which increases stewardship work to monitor for and manage invasive species.
7. Increasing quantity of non-native pests and plants are strongly impacting our land stewardship practices.
8. Invasive species and pests are an increasing issue with a warmer climate.
9. We are offering far more educational programs on native plants and salt marsh protection. How to battle invasives, all to make our lands more resilient.

Forest Management & Carbon Initiatives (9)

1. Weather plays a role in whether lands can be logged, [we are] enacting forest management practices that increase carbon sequestration.
2. CC is the reason for our Forest Carbon Project. Hotter, drier summers are negatively affecting our conserved properties.

3. Carbon and climate impacts are central to [our] land conservation and forest management. We are focusing land protection efforts in areas with high climate change resiliency.
4. Moving toward climate-informed forest management
5. Implementing climate-informed landscape conservation across the region with collaborating partners
6. Climate change is affecting our infrastructure investments, forest management plans, wildlife management plans, and our recreational access.
7. Need for sustainable trails, Forest Mgt
8. We were just awarded a \$10M NRCS RCP in partnership with several NH conservation organizations to implement climate resilient forest management on fee and easement properties, and we are having forest stands evaluated by the Family Forest Carbon Program for enrollment.
9. We are also participating in some carbon programs on forested lands and are having to rethink programming that depends on snow cover.

Climate Resilience Programs (8)

1. [We have] been increasingly hearing from farmers about the need to strengthen their climate resilience – while growing profitability, improving soil & water quality, sequestering carbon, and supporting the overall ecosystem. Over the past year, [we] worked with staff and partners to define and develop a Climate Resilience Program.
2. [We are] building infrastructure to handle increased storm intensity and sea level rise. Our education efforts include programs on climate change and community resilience efforts. [We're] engaged in local climate change and community resilience efforts.
3. [We have collaborated with other area land trusts] to host a climate simulator discussion for our communities. We have not yet set any specific plans to address climate.
4. We have a focus on stewarding for climate resilience and educating about climate change.
5. We are planning for higher water flows on trails when designing trails.
6. [We're] actively addressing the challenges posed by severe storms and climate change by focusing on creating climate-resilient landscapes, which includes restoring native vegetation and employing strategic land use planning that anticipates future climate scenarios.
7. More requests from communities to assist with climate resiliency projects, e.g. road/culvert replacements, resiliency planning, planning for vulnerable communities.
8. Our stewardship is changing dramatically - new bridges are built higher, and replacing older bridges susceptible to flooding. We are bracing for flooding and storm damage, and increasing our budgets to reflect those needs.

Water Quality & Watershed Impacts (7)

1. Climate change resilience and community engagement is guiding restoration priorities and encouraging land protection surrounding these projects. Top projects are salt marsh

restoration and enhancing fish passage (dam removals, improvement or removal of road crossings).

2. We have begun a water quality monitoring and fisheries research program to get a handle on how climate change is impacting Pierce Pond.
3. Extreme flood events are impacting water quality, making our work more important than ever before.
4. Increased temperatures and runoff from changing weather patterns increase cyanobacteria bloom frequency.
5. Historic rainstorms also lead to greater max flows in rivers which impact fish passage projects that are designed to accommodate historic average rainfall.
6. Given dire predictions about the resilience of wild, native brook trout habitat we are doing, and planning to do, extensive river restoration work across our region in the next 20+years
7. Many of our properties are along the Androscoggin River or protect shoreline within the watershed and have been impacted by storm damage.

Agricultural Impacts (3)

1. Weather uncertainty has changed agricultural field viability, i.e. fields are often too wet to mow.
2. Extending the mowing and haying seasons, and complicating them. Nesting is affected as is animal habitat.
3. [We have] been increasingly hearing from farmers about the need to strengthen their climate resilience – while growing profitability, improving soil & water quality, sequestering carbon, and supporting the overall ecosystem.

Education & Community Engagement (3)

1. We have started one class to address issues each year and engage the community. This is how we started the Climate Initiative
2. We are also working with a middle school teacher in our service area on climate change education in her classrooms.
3. More requests for educational content spanning climate change topics for people of all ages, e.g. invasives workshops, school programming

Recreational Impacts (3)

1. [We provide] backcountry experiences in western Maine, and the winter season is a central part of the experiences we create. Snow cover is arriving later in the fall/early winter and thawing earlier, which translates to a shorter winter revenue season and a shorter time frame to provide our experience.
2. Less snowfall impacting winter recreation and programs
3. It determines what type of recreation is available

Question 46 – Reasons for CE Amendments

46. If you made any amendments, what reasons led to them? (N = 19 “Other” Comments)

Added Acreage (10 mentions)

1. One was to add conservation acres
2. To add acreage to a protected property
3. Violation resulted in amendment that modified CE with the net result being increased conservation.
4. Add land to a conservation easement
5. regulatory process, to add land only
6. Add more land.
7. Added more land into conservation
8. To add acreage to an existing easement.
9. add additional acreage to original CE
10. A combination of adding acres to the easement and to resolve a violation.

IRS Compliance (5)

1. To comply with IRS regulations
2. the other four were to accommodate the updated IRS Safe Harbor language.
3. To add IRS Safe Harbor language
4. Amended to address IRS concerns
5. The safe haven IRS

Update Building Envelope/Usage Terms (4)

1. To relocate a building envelope to better serve farm's needs and increase protections in ag areas
2. Easement owner waived their right to preserve a building envelope on property.
3. Specifying location of building envelope.
4. Property was being sold; existing CE had a provision specifically related to the current owner (allowing storage), that didn't need to be transferred to the next owner. Nothing related to the conservation values of the easement

Adapt Language for Best Practices/Protections/Access (3)

1. To deal with a landowner request, while also increasing legal public access
2. We anticipate an upcoming minor easement modification of a 1980s easement to ensure Board has ability to approve appropriate forest management practices (climate change... hemlock wooly adelgid... dead trees along trails... need to allow some cutting in an otherwise restricted area to improve conservation and recreation values).
3. Landowner wished to enable subdivision to sell the house and keep the oceanfront land. Original easement prohibited subdivision, and we came up with a revised easement with

stricter environmental protections and a new educational access allowance, thus allowing this one-time parcel division.

Correct Language: To correct deed description (1)

Question 51 – Fee Property Stewardship Concerns

51. What are your organization's THREE biggest challenges or concerns in terms of **fee property** stewardship? Please explain or elaborate on your challenges and/or concerns in terms of **fee property** stewardship. Comment: Please explain or elaborate on your challenges and/or concerns in terms of fee property stewardship. (N = 51 comments)

Invasive Species Management (17 mentions)

1. impacts of climate change includes increase in invasive plants and pests
2. Hemlock woolly adelgid is being very destructive.
3. Effects of climate change are already being seen on our properties through increased invasive plants, shift in tree species.
4. Managing for invasive species (primarily plant, but possibly insect as well)
5. By invasives, we include insects and organisms, not just plant species.
6. Managing the threat of introduced/aggressive plant species is a growing focus of non-commercial forest management.
7. Climate change impacts include more trail maintenance to deal with erosion, flooding, and down trees, as well as increased invasive species pressure due to warmer temperatures.
8. Increasing presence of new invasives and concerns about tree health
9. New invasives and managing invasives is a huge amount of work.
10. The biggest climate-change-related-concern is invasive plants. New patches are being continually discovered, and we are working to tackle them and prevent spread, as we can. Our efforts include both contractor work (mechanical and chemical treatments) and manual removal with volunteers.
11. Increasing levels of invasives are a significant part of this impact.
12. Invasives are becoming more prevalent
13. A licensed forester has documented that some of our forests are no longer regenerating due to overwhelming infestations of invasive plants. We have almost no resources to address this issue at scale.
14. Invasives unfortunately are here to stay, and management can be very costly.
15. We're spending much more staff time and funds on invasive mitigation and removal - so much so that we invested in having a staff member complete training for a pesticide application license.
16. The impacts of climate change, particularly their interaction with invasive plants and forest pests, are the most significant threat going forward.

17. Managing the invasives is the most challenging.

Limited Staff & Volunteer Capacity (15)

1. Staff capacity
2. Capacity - Relatively small staff spread across a wide area makes keeping up with ongoing property maintenance a challenge.
3. The primary challenge that is an umbrella to all other fee property challenges is having enough capacity—staff, volunteer, and financial—to manage all the conservation land. As [we add] more properties (both fee and easement) staff capacity and financial capacity must be increased. An increase in volunteer capacity can also be helpful, but coordinating a larger group of volunteers itself requires more staff capacity.
4. Is it extremely difficult to keep all fee-property boundaries clearly blazed and marked with the amount of stewardship staff we have. This leads to numerous issues, including boundary challenges, being able to discern violations, etc.
5. We don't really have the capacity right now to manage for the encroaching invasive species on our properties and are struggling to keep up with trail work.
6. We hired a stewardship assistant this year at 20 hours a week, and this has helped tremendously with maintenance, especially after the damaging snow in April 2024 and the high winds in fall 2023.
7. limited staffing resources, large acreage
8. Another challenge is the geographic range of our properties throughout Maine as well as the large acreage of ownership which adds to the strain on our stewardship capacity.
9. We have a backlog of stewardship activity and poorly maintained trails - problems compounded by an increase in trail use in last 2 years.
10. As [we increase] our fee property ownership, the amount of maintenance is immense. We are struggling with how to best handle this between balancing staff time, bringing on seasonal staff, engaging volunteers more effectively, etc.
11. Increased use of the recreational resources are welcome but require more staff to management, as well as greater investments to maintain and develop in infrastructure to support public access.
12. Need for additional volunteers will be ongoing.
13. We continue to want to improve trails and habitat but struggle finding volunteers.
14. reduced volunteers, increased expenses
15. Our volunteer base is insufficient to cover gaps in staff capacity.

Trail & Infrastructure Maintenance (14)

1. Maintaining the trail corridor along the [river].
2. Maintaining and constructing trails and associated infrastructure to enable safe, enjoyable, and ecologically sound public use.
3. Climate change impacts includes more trail maintenance to deal with erosion, flooding, and down trees.

4. We continue to want to improve trails and habitat but struggle finding volunteers.
5. Two of our most popular preserves face heavy use by the mountain biking community which sometimes poses challenges for maintaining trail conditions, preserving wildlife habitat, and use by others.
6. Ongoing maintenance concerns include aging bridge structures and bog bridging.
7. Otherwise, trail maintenance seems to be a constant project: new boardwalks, repairing old boardwalks, using dirt to fill ditches or cover roots for protection, and updating trail signs.
8. Climate impacts including sea level rise, storm intensity and high water events can negatively impact roads and trails and other infrastructure at our preserves.
9. In [our area], there is a strong interest in trails and trail use, especially for hiking and mountain biking.
10. With the 2023 flooding, we have had to replace, update, and enlarge over 12 wooden bridges that rotted ahead of their time.
11. We have a backlog of stewardship activity and poorly maintained trails - problems compounded by an increase in trail use in last 2 years.
12. Older trails have design issues, confounded by an increase in use and weather changes.
13. Our trailheads are insufficient.
14. We added and focused on the places that are most used and loved in our region. These places are already loved to death so we will definitely have to invest in these access areas.

Climate Change Impacts (Non-Invasive Species Related) (12)

1. Climate change affects roads and trails on our properties, as does increased use.
2. Taking proactive and reactive measures to address and redress impacts from storm events (high winds, large rainfalls) of increasing severity.
3. Climate change impacts include more trail maintenance to deal with erosion, flooding, and down trees, as well as increased invasive species pressure due to warmer temperatures.
4. We are concerned about erosion on our islands and the protection of our lighthouse from more frequent wash overs of the island.
5. Impacts of climate change affect how we manage ecology and infrastructure on preserved lands. Climate impacts including sea level rise, storm intensity and high water events can negatively impact roads and trails and other infrastructure at our preserves.
6. Climate change weather impacts on older legacy trails, particularly those installed on old roads and ATV paths is another big challenge.
7. Impacts of climate change as stated before we have had damage to trails and property due to storm damage.
8. Our few fee properties are mostly wetlands, so climate change would be the principal concern.
9. Increased stewardship costs coupled with greater climate impacts are causing ongoing budget challenges.
10. Older trails have design issues, confounded by an increase in use and weather changes.

11. The impacts of climate change, particularly their interaction with invasive plants and forest pests, are the most significant threat going forward.
12. Difficult to predict what next winter will bring in terms of storms and beach erosion.

Access & Land Management Planning (11)

1. Our fee land ownership is minimal, consisting primarily of very small parcels associated with easement projects. When we own larger properties, our goal is to protect the land with a CE and sell the fee interest to a farmer who will use the land. During our ownership, we need to ensure that we keep properties maintained so that they retain value for an incoming farmer.
2. Even within the Board, there can be significant disagreements about how various fee properties are managed. These disagreements are stressful and tend to paralyze us into inaction.
3. We have several preserves with limited access points (can only reach them at present through another preserve). We'd like to obtain/negotiate access points to these preserves with abutting property owners.
4. [We have] two fee lands... The primary stewardship concern is maintaining the trail corridor along the [river].
5. Maintaining field habitat
6. Maintaining viewsheds
7. Initiating land management plans for our properties. And then, pursuing these plans for enhanced stewardship
8. We have a few properties that we either can't access or have difficulty accessing for monitoring or maintenance, and not accessible by the public.
9. Forest management
10. Fee ownership is new to us so we are learning about the proper use of this new land and in the process of planning usages in keeping with our mission and goals.
11. increasing accessibility for visitors

Increased Use of Trails, Properties (10)

1. Increased use of the recreational resources are welcome but require more staff to management, as well as greater investments to maintain and develop in infrastructure to support public access.
2. increased use leads to more compacted and widened trails
3. increasing accessibility for visitors
4. There is pressure for unsustainable recreational development.
5. Intense recreation use, and future demands for intense recreation use, requires expensive infrastructure
6. rain event intensity + increased use are increasing cost
7. Because that is such a small part of our portfolio, direct concerns about fee property are low at this time, but they are seeing more use which takes time that we aren't necessarily ready for.

8. Climate change affects roads and trails on our properties, as does increased use.
9. We have a backlog of stewardship activity and poorly maintained trails - problems compounded by an increase in trail use in last 2 years.
10. We are seeing a great deal more use of our trails and lands and work to create a proper balance so that use doesn't become abuse. We are seeing a lot more dogs on our properties and want to make sure that that remains a positive thing.

Unauthorized & Prohibited Use (10)

1. People like to use the property but they don't always take care of it.
2. Standard concerns or challenges: misuse of property including dumping of trash or debris, access with ATV/UTV without permission, unhoused, and removing property such as picnic tables.
3. Managing and responding to disallowed activities such as unauthorized motorized vehicle use, installation of unapproved hunting structures, trash dumping, vandalism, etc.
4. Vandalism and prohibited uses.
5. Additionally, we are finding more hunting equipment left on our properties that we don't allow.
6. Unhoused encampments
7. Controlling unauthorized uses such as ATVs.
8. On our newest fee property in Sanford prohibited ATV use is damaging trails.
9. Third party trespass, in particular motorized vehicles
10. Third-party violations/encroachments/trespass

Limited Funding, Resources (7)

1. Funding for forest management
2. Increased stewardship costs coupled with greater climate impacts are causing ongoing budget challenges.
3. Increased amount of stewardship needs and associated costs
4. reduced volunteers, increased expenses
5. Most of our fee properties have been relatively small until now. We are adding some larger parcels that will require more funds and attention.
6. Our stewardship funding is inadequate, given the amount of responsibility the Board has amassed over time (LTA accreditation, THIRTY miles of trails, etc...)
7. Increased use of the recreational resources are welcome but require more staff to management, as well as greater investments to maintain and develop in infrastructure to support public access.

Competing Use Conflicts (6)

1. Managing user group conflicts (e.g. hunters, hikers, snowmobilers, birders, etc.).
2. Two of our most popular preserves face heavy use by the mountain biking community which sometimes poses challenges for maintaining trail conditions, preserving wildlife

habitat, and use by others. Other competing uses include dog walkers who predominate on some preserves, making it a less welcoming place for non-dog walkers.

3. Competing use has also provided concerns, particularly regarding mountain bikes versus dog-walkers, dogs (and people) that need leash rules versus owners who let their dogs run free, and striving to enforce leash hours on certain trails.
4. Conflict with hunters and those who don't want hunting allowed on conserved lands.
5. Increased deer hunting activity is becoming a major drain on staff time. We are seeing an increase in posting of private land in our communities, driving more hunters to our open lands). This increase in hunting activity is accompanied by an increase in use conflicts, conflicts among hunters, law enforcement presence, community relations concerns.
6. Since 2020, the number of recreationalists using fee properties has grown significantly and with that unfortunate competition and sometimes conflict between users, e.g. mountain bikes, ATVs, hunters, and hikers. We're trying to navigate these issues between user groups with additional help from contract specialists to engage all the different user groups to create trail-system-wide plans and agreements.

Monitoring & Boundary Encroachment (5)

1. Monitoring is increasingly difficult
2. We have a few properties that we either can't access or have difficulty accessing for monitoring or maintenance, and not accessible by the public.
3. With increased monitoring of fee properties, we are identifying and responding to more minor third party issues, largely along boundaries with residential abutters.
4. Land selling or changing use that abuts us has also been a huge issue that has resulted in boundary infringements.
5. Encroachment by an abutting business took up a lot of Board time and costs for a survey, fencing.

Question 52 – Conservation Easement Stewardship

52. What are your organization's challenges or concerns, if any, in terms of **conservation easement** stewardship? (N = 54 responses)

Landowner Changes/Relationships (25 mentions)

1. ownership changes/new owners/ (5)
2. as property changes ownership, developing a relationship with easement owners and ensuring they understand the terms of the easement.
3. Potential for ownership changes to new owners who don't understand conservation easements.
4. We are also concerned about second generation ownership not valuing or understanding conservation.

5. One of the biggest challenges we have faced is the changing of easement property ownership.
6. New owner misunderstandings
7. The major challenge with easement properties is ensuring easement compliance, especially when there is a change in property ownership.
8. Ownership changes pose a huge stewardship burden as new landowners need to be educated about their easement, and oftentimes still end up violating it or requesting to amend it because they did not understand it at the time of acquiring the property.
9. Maine is experiencing a generational landowner change, new landowners have different goals/interests/conservation values
10. Changing landowners and people sub-dividing their land so there are more neighbors/borders to defend.
11. Getting new owners to understand and accept the terms of the easements. Younger generation family members who are new owners getting older and wanting the land to pay for itself and/or not having the same feelings about land conservation as the original donors.
12. Landowner relations with both original and new owners can be challenging
13. Second generation landowners without the same conservation ethic
14. The lack of awareness regarding easement restrictions among property owners often stems from realtors' limited experience in conservation efforts
15. Organization did not maintain relationships with easement grantors as properties changed hands, so we are having to build trust and rapport in addition to educating about easement terms.
16. moving from first to second generation easement owners
17. We're experiencing more new landownership challenges as many of our older easements are changing hands to new property owners, either the next generation of a family or folks new to the area.
18. The biggest challenge is ownership turnover, the pace of which seems to be increasing.
19. Many changes in ownership, and a lack of understanding of allowances within those easements by the new buyers.
20. Landowner relations.
21. Negotiating among various parties.

Monitoring and Enforcement Capacity/Constraints (14)

1. Staff capacity to monitor, enforce, and uphold landowner relations.
2. Increased damage along trails due to storms, and having volunteer capacity to help with monitoring.
3. Maintaining trained volunteers for easement monitoring.
4. Monitoring
5. Monitoring conservation easements are a burden on our staff and volunteers.
6. Capacity to monitor on an annual basis.
7. Our greatest concern would be monitoring.

8. capacity to monitor, enforce, and uphold landowner relations.
9. Capacity - Relatively small staff spread across a wide area and a huge number of acres to oversee in ME. We have solid systems in place to monitor [our] acres, but they could be improved to be more cost-effective and efficient.
10. Government entities not recognizing our rights as real estate rights in notice and permit situations affecting lands we hold an interest in. This is a growing concern, as an example - just because someone files a permit to build something, and they own the land or have a lease, doesn't mean that the requested building meets the terms of the CE but the permitting entities are not great at reaching out.
11. Monitoring of large easements may be exceeding the capacity of even our well-trained volunteer monitors--they are doing a good job for sure but it will be interesting to see how sustainable this is.
12. Limited stewardship staff capacity to thoroughly monitor every easement, write baseline documentation reports, maintain boundary markers, and resolve potential violations.
13. Overcoming a culture of non-enforcement within the organization and with long-standing landowners.
14. minor enforcement of our policies.

Problematic Easement Documents/Terms (9)

1. Unclear boundaries is also a huge issue on easements that has not historically been enforced, especially on very old easements.
2. Unclear language on older easements also poses a huge issue for interpretation.
3. Poorly written, old easement with no land survey
4. the poor quality of easement language from many decades ago.
5. Two words: stupid easements. They were taken on by volunteer boards decades ago. Example - we have an easement on a tiny strip of urban back-yards that literally goes up to the foundations of houses. There is no conservation value to it and yet we are stuck enforcing it in perpetuity.
6. Also the immutable nature of some of our older easements are starting to become problems for some landowners.
7. Interpretation of easements can be subjective and complicated, and this lack of understanding can lead to a disconnect between the legal stipulations outlined in the easement document and the owner's perception of permissible actions.
8. Our old easements lack baselines; we will have current condition reports completed for all by August 2025. Older easements are not well written.
9. Many previous CE projects were completed, but do not have enough conservation value to have originally warranted an easement.

Easement Violations, Encroachments (7)

1. One property with conservation easements has a house on it that is rented out. Depending on the renter there have been issues primarily around aesthetics, dogs and public access.
2. [We have] two conservation easement parcels... The parcel is almost entirely upland forest and there are no recreation trails on the property. One primary risk is some form of harvesting, perhaps for firewood, by someone local.
3. Easement encroachments by a subdivision landowner and maintaining good communication with the association members are [our] primary concerns for the Great Brook Preserve easement.
4. As for CE stewardship, we continue to be affected by third-party issues (abutters not knowing or understanding where the lines are)
5. Our biggest challenge with conservation easement stewardship is encroachments.
6. It seems as if the occurrences of easement violations are increasing. I know that many of our easement landowners are "pushing the limits" when it comes to exercising reserved rights.
7. compliance, landowner relations

Trespassing, Unauthorized Use, Compliance with Use Policies (3)

1. Third party trespass
2. Use of land bordering the town and abuse of privilege by visitors.
3. One concern: Usage of our rustic campsites by campers and visitors who do not honor the carry in carry out policy.

Invasive Species (3)

1. Invasive species have also been a challenge with conservation easements. The spread of thorny, dense shrubbery such as multiflora rose and barberry makes monitoring a physical and at times, athletic challenge for staff, volunteers, and interns.
2. Invasives killing good trees is a big challenge, and raising the funds to maintain trail facilities is a major challenge.
3. Owners' ability and desire to steward the land held under easement. That is mostly an issue with invasive plants.

Climate Change Impacts (Non-Invasive Species Related) (3)

1. Access impacts due to storms
2. We are concerned about climate-related disasters and subsequent landowner responses in the face of these disasters.
3. Increased damage along trails due to storms, and having volunteer capacity to help with monitoring.

No/Few Challenges (4)

1. we have a small number of conservation easements

2. We don't monitor any easements.
3. We only have 3 so they are not onerous to take care of.
4. We are looking to divest our easements and do more trail work versus land stewardship.

Question 58 - Community Partner Collaborations

58. *Optional:* If you're not too tired at this point in the survey, please take a moment to brag about one of your organization's recent successful **collaborations with community partners** and/or provide a link to more information if available. (N = 46)

Education and Youth Engagement (14 mentions)

1. Our partnership with the [elementary school] to support and maintain their outdoor classroom, as well as fund environmental education opportunities at the school is what we are most proud of. [We have] provided: A volunteer developed tree-centered curriculum for the 3rd grade that has been integrated into the school's overall learning goals; financial support for field trips and outdoor activities and for Chewonki to provide in-class experiences for each grade; development and maintenance of the school's outdoor classroom, again integrated into the [school's] curriculum; and maintenance of trails and a stream on 20 acres behind the school used by the outdoor program.
2. [We collaborate] with Maine Outdoor School and [area] public schools to offer outdoor education.
3. [Our garden] is also home to a six week farm-to-school program for every sixth grade student in our community. The project has blossomed into a robust community building initiative.
4. We continue to have a strong partnership with [area community services], with maximum attendance in the last two seasons for our 3rd and 4th grade after school Hike Club.
5. We continue to work closely with the Alt Education program at [our local high school], our education program provides weekly field trips during the school year for all grades, and we continue to collaborate with the [adjacent land trusts].
6. We have hosted several groups from Hurricane Island Center for Science United People Global
7. Building capacity for young people of diverse backgrounds to explore conservation careers via the Changemakers partnership with MEEA.
8. This fall, [local] 8th graders volunteered with [our] Habitat Heroes Program... Students first spent a few science classes learning about invasive plant species, their negative impacts on local ecosystems, and various ways to manage them before joining [our] staff for a field trip [on one of our properties]. Over the course of two days, all 140 8th grade students visited the property and helped remove mounds of invasive plants such as barberry and bittersweet. Students also planted native species such as ferns, blueberries, and viburnum to improve the health of the forest. The 100 native plants installed were all generously donated by longtime supporters, [a local greenhouse]. Now the local caterpillars and birds will have more to eat because of this habitat restoration project - thank you [to all involved]!

9. We successfully finished our 2nd year partnership with Maine Youth Action Network. Providing young people in the [our] area paid work-based learning initiatives that explore conservation efforts.
10. In partnership with [our area high school] and Cooperative Extension, we have established a horticultural apprenticeship program at the school through which students are propagating native plants in their school greenhouse, planting and caring for them on [one of our preserves], and earning course credit and a micro-credential for their high school transcripts.
11. [We've] had a longstanding partnership with the local school district - providing in-classroom and outdoor nature-based education programs for K - 12th grades. This school year due to budget cuts and scheduling constraints, all funding for outdoor education for middle school students was cut. A teacher reached out to [us] to help fill this gap. [We] ignited a new partnership with the Shortridge Coastal Center in Phippsburg (an 80-acre campus on Meeting House Pond and adjoining Bates-Morse Mtn Conservation Area). So earlier this month, we piloted a day-long program to get the 8th grade students outside for the day.
12. Sponsor [local] seniors on their senior project. The seniors work with [our] volunteers to build boardwalks and bridges on our trails.
13. We have worked with various schools for trail work projects
14. [We] worked with LearningWorks, an organization centered on alternative education based in Portland, Maine, to construct a new 3-sided shed on a parcel.

Community Environmental Education and Events (12)

1. [We continue] to hold a booth at [a local] festival each June. Many people attend this event where several non-profits can provide education on their organization and what they do.
2. We're proud to have collaborated to host a public roundtable on coexisting with beavers. Kathy Pollard led the project and arranged for the participation of various stakeholders from the Wabanaki community, universities, other conservation orgs, governmental agencies, and more to speak on issues surrounding beavers, their ecology and conservation, and how they and humans have interacted with one another over vast time horizons. This brought the community in contact with many different voices on this important issue.
3. We have also strengthened our partnership with [our local library]. We hosted several lectures with them last year, and were invited to have a table at their first annual Fairy Festival this fall.
4. Partnered with the Conservation Commission and [local library] on a three-part climate change program.
5. We run an annual program with Acadia Senior College.
6. In April 2024, we held a climate change educational event for the public, in collaboration with the three area land trusts. It was the third year in a row the three land trusts held an Earth Day event together

7. [Our] 4th Annual... Festival attracted over 800 participants, and kicked off with a presentation at the local theatre by acclaimed nature writer, Sy Montgomery, author of "Of Time and Turtles, Mending the World, Shell by Shattered Shell." At the festival on the following day, staff from the Turtle Rescue League wowed visitors with live turtle ambassadors who had been rescued and recovered, raising awareness of the power of individuals to conserve important species.
8. We collaborated with [the parks department] on a set of four nature hikes.
9. We collaborate with [another area trust] to jointly offer "Get Out! Nature Walks." Get Out! Nature Walks are monthly, no-cost, volunteer-led trips with trained master naturalists. Our nature walks are at preserves in [7 area towns] or anywhere else we decide to roam. The program covers topics such as vernal pools, birds, mushrooms, monarchs & wildflowers, horseshoe crabs, signs of spring, winter adaptations, and more.
10. We collaborated with the [local library, sustainability committee, and climate action team] to host a 9 part series on local climate change topics. It was well attended and interesting.
11. Celebration of Kelp - This is an upcoming program from our Climate Resiliency series funded by the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership. A great collaborative effort!
12. We held our 1st Brew Fest/ecofest with [the local] Rec Committee. We were able to bring together community partners to celebrate conservation efforts.

Conservation Partnerships Land Protection, and Habitat Restoration (9)

1. We received a Quimby Family Foundation grant in support of regional conservation planning in the watershed, and held our first convening in November with 12 different land trusts and state agencies participating.
2. Additionally, [we have] worked closely with many land trusts across the state on farmland protection partners.
3. We are very proud of a current collaboration with a Wabanaki-led nonprofit to secure land with [two statewide trusts] as partners.
4. Through a partnership with [a statewide trust], who now holds an agricultural easement on the blueberry lands, and with the support of other conservation groups like Hog Island Audubon and many individual generous donors, [we were] able to permanently protect 263 acres of [a property] in 2023. Through the tireless commitment of multiple conservation organizations working to place conservation easements on neighboring parcels combined with community funded acquisitions and donations of additional land, a total of 740 contiguous acres is now protected.
5. For the second time in a row, [two statewide trusts] have partnered to conserve a large forestland parcel in northern Maine. [This] project will permanently conserve 28,800 acres through fee ownership and a land return to Penobscot Nation. In addition, this will reopen this property to public access for the first time in 20 years.
6. [One of our] restoration projects is a collaboration among many partners.
7. Nearly 29,000 acres purchased in Maine's North Woods.

8. Great public fundraising success with many partners to support implementation of river restoration work - one example is supporting the work of [a local river restoration trust] in building capacity.
9. [We are] also partnering with Bates College to explore the impact changing landscapes have on the geothermal temperatures and hydrological cycle.

Trail Development and Accessibility (7)

1. We are looking to formally transform to a trails trust versus a land trust. Our 2025-2030 impact strategies are focused on regional trail development and connections as well as healthy communities and partnership. We are very interested in developing greater relationships with surrounding land trusts.
2. [We partner] with many municipal and local nonprofit partners] to support a community riverwalk trail and an urban tree nursery.
3. I was very happy with our work and training opportunity with the Maine Conservation Corps. During our work together 8.26 acres of invasive species were treated, 153 trees planted, 7.9 miles of trail maintained and 56 blowdowns cut. As important as the work was the amount of community support the crew received while on island with people bringing warm brownies, fresh eggs, and venison steak. The increased support of the year round community has been our organization's biggest success in the last few years.
4. Work with many local partners and Wabanaki partners on [an] all persons accessible trail currently underway.
5. We are currently most excited about a partnership with Maine Health through our local hospital to add a mile to our handicapped accessible trail. The hospital donated a small but essential parcel of land they owned for the trail in support of movement and community health.
6. [A community forest project] has allowed us to connect much more closely with the other land trust in our area and one of the local direct support organizations. Both groups have volunteered to plant native plants with us, manage invasive species, and clear the route for the new accessible trail. These promise to be long-term, fruitful partnerships that we will celebrate early next year at a thank you event at a local brewery and make our community forest a true community effort.
7. With this we are building a community trail corridor that connects conservation land with the local school district to community property.

Community Gardens and Food Security (5)

1. Since 2020, [we have] donated over 25,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce from our Giving Garden. Our small land trust supports seven organizations addressing food insecurity issues.
2. We partner with Maine Master Gardeners who care for our garden and help donate the produce to local food pantries. We also run monthly programming in the garden during

the growing season and partner with various individuals and businesses in the community to run the free public programming.

3. Work with [a local bank] to expand our community garden with an ADA accessible planting area.
4. We have granted farming rights on a small piece of land for a community garden.
5. We are currently lending some mild stewardship support to a new community garden project, with future plans for a trail to connect to [another property]. Healthy Acadia has partnered with the Washington County Commissioners to build a community garden, specifically to supply food to the WaCo Jail and other food banks.

Wabanaki Partnerships and Cultural Heritage (5)

1. We are very proud of a current collaboration with a Wabanaki-led nonprofit to secure land.
2. Collaboration with Wabanaki Commission and First Light in many ways - but specifically financially supporting the capacity of the Tribal Land Recovery Manager to work towards increasing access to land and water for Wabanaki people.
3. Work with many local partners and Wabanaki partners on [an] all persons accessible trail currently underway.
4. Prescribed fire on the ground with new partnerships and capacity support for representatives of Wabanaki communities.
5. For the second time in a row, [two statewide trusts] have partnered to conserve a large forestland parcel in northern Maine. [This] project will permanently conserve 28,800 acres through fee ownership and a land return to Penobscot Nation. In addition, this will reopen this property to public access for the first time in 20 years.

Affordable Housing and Community Infrastructure (3)

1. [We are] part of a new collaborative, Triple Win, which is exploring the evolving role of land trusts in their communities, specifically how land trusts are incorporating workforce housing considerations into their land evaluation strategies. The Triple Win collaborative also advocates for Local Wood Works' vision of sustainable housing development using New England wood. The Triple Win team, made up of seven state and regionally focused for profit and nonprofit organizations, expects to produce a white paper in 2025." The Triple Win team, made up of seven state and regionally focused for profit and nonprofit organizations, expects to produce a white paper in 2025.
2. We work hard to collaborate with the [local] town community because we are so restricted to each other. We are working to look into releasing some land for affordable housing for the community along the community border.
3. Last year we created an easement to allow municipal wells to be drilled on our land for the municipal water supply that is threatened by salt water intrusion from climate change and the installation of a new communications tower to bring broadband to the island. We recently instituted a policy allowing us to trim wildlands that come within 50 feet of any

town buildings to help prevent a fire jump in either direction. We are very proud of our collaboration with the community.

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives (2)

1. Our partnership with Queerly Maine to conduct "trail mixers" has been extremely successful resulting in walks for more than 60 people at a time representing younger generations and wider diversity than typically reflected in other offerings.
2. Building capacity for young people of diverse backgrounds to explore conservation careers via the Changemakers partnership with MEEA.

Shared Staffing (1)

1. We have partnered with [another local conservation group] to jointly hire a year-round Stewardship Coordinator as well as interns. It's proved greatly beneficial to both organizations.

PFAS and Environmental Health Initiatives (1)

1. [We have] been working closely with the state and many other partners to increase testing, research, and support for Maine farmers who may be impacted by potential per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in Maine, and to advocate for robust state and federal support. Any farm dealing with PFAS contamination can apply to the PFAS Emergency Relief Fund to help cover the cost of testing, income replacement, infrastructure adaptations, and wellness/mental health support. This fund is meant to serve as a safety net for farms, providing interim support from initial PFAS testing to when they can access DACF's longer-term PFAS support programs.

Question 60 – Accreditation Renewal/Application

60. If yes, are you planning to renew your accreditation?

If no, are you planning to apply for accreditation?

Comments: Please share why you plan/don't plan to renew your accreditation. (N = 15)

Uncertain About Cost/Benefit (5 mentions)

1. Although this is becoming increasingly burdensome and articulating the benefits is becoming increasingly challenging. The process and requirements do not mesh with Maine goals of increasing the pace of conservation.
2. the cost and time does not outweigh the benefits
3. I don't know if we will renew for a 3rd time. The main reason is the time commitment from staff requires a full year of work and we only have 1 full-time employee. Accreditation work takes away from actual acquisition projects. Plus, the fee is ridiculously high.
4. We were shocked by the cost of past renewal - \$12,000

5. We just renewed in 2023, but are currently discussing the long-term benefits and drawbacks to maintaining accreditation when our term is up in 2028.

Leadership, Credibility, Accountability (4)

1. [As] a statewide leader, and we hold ourselves accountable for being role models for other land trusts. This also enhances our professional status. And we are always striving to be our best!
2. We view ourselves as a leader in this space and we are modeling the importance of it.
3. Credibility
4. We primarily seek reaccreditation so that the public can feel confident in our reputation and so that we maximize accountability in keeping all our affairs in order.

Benefit to Staff, Operations (2)

1. Additionally we have several new staff and the process is very helpful in bringing people up to speed on how we accomplish what we do.
2. Ensures that we have good systems in place - key for staffing and board transitions, sound operations.

Setting High Standards (2)

1. Accreditation is the ONLY way to create a truly sustainable land trust, and for Board members to adequately fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities.
2. It signifies that a land trust meets high standards for land conservation, demonstrating strong organizational practices, financial accountability, and effective stewardship of conserved lands, thereby building public trust and increasing confidence in the organization's ability to protect natural areas.

Funding Opportunities, or Lack Thereof (2)

1. As we receive grants from larger foundations and from government sources we feel we need to maintain accreditation.
2. The purported benefit of having access to funding opportunities that are only available to accredited organizations has not been realized for us.

Renewing (2)

1. Currently in the process of re-accreditation
2. We are currently in the process of our second renewal.

Comments: If you are not planning to apply for accreditation, please share why. (N = 24)

Limited Capacity, Time, Resources (12 mentions)

1. We don't have the capacity. The process was begun by a past ED prior to 2018 but they opted not to complete submission of the application at that time.

2. Too time consuming without staff
3. As an all-volunteer and small community land trust, it hasn't been a Board priority up to this time. There is simply not enough time to pull off the extraordinary effort of becoming accredited. I think we will probably apply at some point in the future, but it is not a top priority. We partner closely with an accredited land trust which provides fee for service support for administrative and stewardship work. They have been very valuable in helping us maintain Land Trust Standards and Practices, which we hope will serve us well in the future should we apply for accreditation.
4. We just do not have the resources to undertake this at this time.
5. We follow best practices as best we can with a small organization and must use our limited time on more immediate needs.
6. We are such a lean and mean organization with no full-time staff, just part-time contract positions.
7. Limited bandwidth
8. We don't have the bandwidth at this time.
9. We do not have the extra time or resources to devote to accreditation right now. We strive to be in compliance with LTA standards.
10. We were accredited, and we continue to follow the standards and practices (and review them annually), but the audit requirement and other related expenses were simply too much for us to take on considering our limited funding for operating expenses and part time staff.
11. We are taking our time to apply as we see some benefits in non-accreditation at this time, due to limited bandwidth and resources
12. Expense.

Questionable Cost/Benefit (5)

1. Not enough benefit for the commitment of time and money.
2. Regrettably, it's a huge burden for a small land trust given our bandwidth and the benefits don't seem worth it for us at this time. However, we do aim for best practices as best we can!
3. It would be too time/staff intensive for very little benefit.
4. The workload involved, and not sure what benefit we will receive. We would benefit however, from looking at the requirements and seeing how far off or not we are to the best practices, and try to change some of our internal process to be more in line, even without being fully accredited.
5. The Land Trust alliance accreditation returns less value to the organization than it costs.

Not Organization's Purpose (4)

1. We are transitioning to a trails trust and were never really focused on land acquisition activities.
2. The easements and fee lands [we] acquired between 2004 and 2007 were for the purpose of creating the recreation trail corridor. We are simply monitoring and stewarding the

eased and fee acres we have today. [Two] easements serve no functional mission purpose for [us] presently - or in the near term. There is no current plan to expand our conservation ownership. That's not to say circumstances might not change in the future.

3. Not consistent with our current program and purpose.
4. [We are] not a land trust and does not hold conservation easements. We are a conservation non-profit whose lands are held under easement by other NGOs or state or federal agencies. We adhere to LTA accreditation principles even though we are not accredited ourselves.

Not a Priority (4)

1. Organization's focus is quite limited and so accreditation is not a priority.
2. Have not broached it as an organization.
3. At the present time we are doing Strategic Planning and focusing upon preventing volunteer burnout by outsourcing media management, some accounting functions, and identifying properties for conservation.
4. Don't know what accreditation means.

Question 61 – Other Issues/Topics of Concern

61. Please note any topics of interest or issues that may be important for Maine's land conservation community to learn more about or address. (N = 30 responses)

Climate Change & Environmental Impacts (6 mentions)

1. We are concerned about the effects of rising tides and stronger storm surges and need to find practical ways to address all such issues.
2. Climate change and its impacts on Maine communities
3. I attended a presentation last spring by Janet McMahon entitled "When Conservation is NOT Conservation." I think everyone should be aware of this issue. We are planning to have Janet speak in the Moosehead area in the late spring.
4. Land management for resiliency to fire, climate change invasive plants and insects, storm damage, and sea level rise
5. The scope of impact of trails on wildlife.
6. Spruce budworm epidemic and beech leaf disease and their impacts on carbon sequestration and climate impacts.

Invasive Species (5)

1. Invasives
2. Globally, 60% of recent species extinction were caused in whole or in part by invasive species. [We're on our] way to eventually hosting more biodiversity of Eurasian origin than of Maine origin. The rest of Maine would do well to stop their unchecked spread into the rest of the state.

3. Spruce budworm epidemic and beech leaf disease and their impacts on carbon sequestration and climate impacts.
4. Invasive species awareness and how to control or prevent infestations on conserved land and in your backyard (emerald ash borer, hemlock wooly adelgid, and invasive species on landowner properties that they may not know are invasive (burning bush, autumn olive, multiflora rose, shrubby honeysuckle, etc.))
5. Land management for resiliency to fire, climate change invasive plants and insects, storm damage, and sea level rise

Wabanaki Relations & Cultural Access (5)

1. The land trust community has made great strides in pursuing justice as it relates to the Wabanaki people. This important work must continue.
2. Wabanaki relations - education, land return, cultural use access, events, etc.
3. Wabanaki cultural access on conserved land
4. Relationship opportunities with the Wabanaki Nation.
5. In connection with Wabanaki cultural activities, I am certain we would absolutely support such traditional uses. Our resident (mostly Anglo) community also depends on traditional gathering activities (clamming, etc.) from common natural resource areas.

Funding & Resources (5)

1. Additional mechanisms for land conservation funding are increasingly important if we are going to come anywhere close to meeting Maine Won't Wait goals
2. How a small, urban land trust could have access to funds used in the state's wetland mitigation in-lieu fee program.
3. Funding conservation projects is very challenging and raising money for operations.
4. [We have] worked with many generous supporters that would like to donate their land but do not have the resources to support the stewardship needs of the property. The challenge of managing land donations due to the lack of resources for stewardship is significant for land trusts, as existing funding primarily targets land purchases rather than the ongoing costs associated with maintaining donated properties. Collaborating with funders to create financial mechanisms that support the stewardship and management of donated lands would greatly enhance the viability and sustainability of conservation efforts, ensuring that generous land donors can contribute without the burden of ongoing financial responsibilities.
5. Finding unrestricted funding is our biggest challenge

Land Management, Usage, & Forestry (4)

1. Managing conservation land for wildlife, timber products, forest health.
2. Exemplary Forestry - how land trust can manage their working forest lands to benefit wildlife, communities and climate.

3. As an older land trust (most of our conservation easements are from the 1980s and early 1990s), we have found that restrictive language in easements is also limiting the Land Trust's actions (ability to approve) land use activities (i.e. a selective harvest). Ensuring we update the easement language without losing any of the protected conservation values of the land is a challenge.
4. Land management for resiliency to fire, climate change invasive plants and insects, storm damage, and sea level rise

Housing & Development Balance (4)

1. Land trust / community housing trust partnerships
2. As populations shift due to climate change and demand for affordable housing increases, Maine's land conservation community would be wise to engage in discussions about housing and land use planning so that people's housing needs can be met in ways that are informed by conservation values, meeting the growing need for housing while minimizing environmental impacts and helping rural communities to thrive.
3. How we become better partners in addressing Maine's housing crisis
4. How can we work together across service areas on conservation and community planning - partner more effectively with GrowSmart Maine and COGS, planning boards.

Community Engagement & Leadership Development (4)

1. How to get more people involved with the land trust and perhaps be on the Board.
2. We are challenged that children don't spend as much time in nature as they once did. Who will be the leaders and supporters of the organization in the future? We see a turnover in the population so that fewer and fewer people know about the town they are moving into. Will their level of support be the same as those who had lived on the land for generations?
3. Providing additional learning opportunities for leadership development.
4. A stronger focus on community conservation projects, and those with local economic benefit, is desperately needed in more regions. For [us], the shift to this is difficult with the large portion of older donors being more focused on solely land protection, and not supporting communities.

Cost of Land (3)

1. We see rapidly increasing prices (although we've said that most years) and properties going on the market at a far faster pace. Many of the lands that are on our wish list are currently in play. We are concerned in some cases that there is less concern about public rights to property and a greater emphasis on private property.
2. Rising cost of land, and competing interests for other important land uses - housing, solar/energy production, farming, etc.) How can those interests work together? How can land trust work with developers? Can [groups] develop easily digestible language for land owners and developers to see the benefits of conservation working with LTs, and even just

knowing what LTs are? I don't a lot of developers even know what easements are or how land donations can benefit them

3. Two thoughts: Land prices: Land trusts rely on supporting documentation when it comes to land acquisitions and appraisals are a big part of that. There seem to be a discrepancy of value from one appraiser to the next. Discrepancies in property appraisals can complicate land acquisitions for land trusts and varying appraised values may hinder the project. This may be in part to the lack of awareness or understanding of conservation efforts. Training and resources would be beneficial.

Land Access & Traditional Use (3)

1. I'd be interested to know how land trusts manage harvesting/collection of (renewable) natural resources on their lands (mushrooms, berries, for example). We have taken a hands off approach, but it periodically comes up as a concern. In connection with Wabanaki cultural activities, I am certain we would absolutely support such traditional uses. Our resident (mostly Anglo) community also depends on traditional gathering activities (clamming, etc.) from common natural resource areas.
2. Preserving public access to private lands in Maine is critical to our lifestyle, and increasingly under threat.
3. We are concerned in some cases that there is less concern about public rights to property and a greater emphasis on private property.

Economic & Social Equity (3)

1. One area of diversity that I think is lacking is that of economic/class. A very high percentage of the people who are heavily involved with land trusts, especially donors, seem to be the very wealthy. This is rarely more evident than in the many fancy dinners and galas that are common in the land trust world.
2. The financialization of the conservation industry. This has led to small communities being externalized and more land being conserved not considering local effects.
3. A stronger focus on community conservation projects, and those with local economic benefit, is desperately needed in more regions. For [us], the shift to this is difficult with the large portion of older donors being more focused on solely land protection, and not supporting communities.

Conservation Easements (2)

1. Real Estate professionals' awareness of conservation easements, Lenders awareness of conservation easements
2. Conservation easements need to move the needle consistently towards riparian protection, eased trails, and affirmative river restoration rights.

Health Insurance for Staff (2)

1. Health Insurance pricing and plans are an issue for those of us in the small workplace environment. We have no bargaining power and therefore our employees are at a disadvantage.
2. We should have a healthcare network for all Maine Land Trusts

Accreditation Expense (1)

1. Expense of financial auditing to become and remain accredited for an all-volunteer organization.

Question 63 - Additional Comments

63. Please share any additional comments.

Ideas for MLTN Initiatives, Resource Sharing (3 mentions)

1. Any chance of building out more ED focused meetings during the year? I enjoy the ED meeting around the MLTN conference and the regional meetings. I'd find it beneficial to connect with other EDs, especially around the tricky topics of personnel, hiring, management, etc.
2. As [we work] on our long term planning and strategic plan, it would be great to have a larger framework to tap into, just as a "Maine Land Trust Strategic Plan" so we can all be working in concert towards similar goals (wetland migration conservation, watershed conservation, prioritizing farmland easements or contiguous parcels, as examples). This would benefit our work directly and help us prioritize our goals and know we are supporting the larger effort of effective land conservation.
3. We love MLTN - we just wish you had more money to do more to advance the efficacy of land trusts state-wide. I was glad to be asked to donate to support the Maine Trails Bond effort. If you could articulate what a new MLTN development staff person could achieve for the 80+ land trusts, you might be able to quadruple the dues and help pay for part of the position.

Thanks & Appreciation (13)

1. Thank you for administering this survey. (3)
2. Huge thank you to MLTN and specifically Angela and Donna for gathering and sharing this important information and for supporting the land conservation community in Maine. It matters so much and you do it well! We are so appreciative.
3. Thank you for all the work you do! (4)
4. Thank you for all your work to build the land trust community in Maine.
5. Thank you for always being there to help a small land trust. We are grateful!
6. Thank you for everything you do for all land trusts and the land and people in our communities.

7. Thank you to MLTN for all the services you provide for the many land trusts in Maine.
8. We appreciate the new energy and opportunities at MLTN.

For more information, contact Angela Twitchell or Donna Bissett:
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