

The Gateway Perennial Garden

This will be the sixth growing season for the Gateway Perennial Garden, which lies at the corner of Route 26 and the Intervale Road. Land Trust members might be interested in its origins. Sally Taylor and a handful of assistants established the garden in the spring of 1997. Their first task was to determine the shape, size, and orientation of the space. The group agreed that the garden should be a manageable size, and that it should be easily observed as one travels down Route 26. The plot was then staked out, and the true labor began. The rocky, debris-laden soil needed to be loosened, sifted for rocks, and liberally amended with manure. Next, the group began planting the space with donations of perennials from those who could spare extras from their own gardens.

Over the years, some of those original plants have proven themselves to be equal to the challenges of the site and have thrived. Others have not fared so well. The site, with its exposure to sun, wind, freezing, and the lack of available water, favors hardy plants that require little fuss. To help the plants overcome these challenges, a layer of straw is regularly applied as mulch. Plants that have particularly enjoyed their new home are yarrow, chives, perennial bachelor's button, daylilies, iris, artemisia, and the John Davis roses. This year, the goals continue to be to keep the garden reasonably weed-free, to divide clumps that have become too large, and to balance the plants with regard to color and time of bloom. In addition, some reliable plants may be added to improve the vigor of the garden. Those who have suggestions or who would like to donate some time to the garden can contact Martha Siegel at 824-3436.



Visit the MLT website:
www.mahoosuc.org

Mahoosuc Land Trust Jumps In and Saves Frenchman's Hole

The Bethel/Newry community treasures the 385-acre Frenchman's Hole property in Riley Township. If we were fairly sure of this before starting the fundraising campaign in November, we are now absolutely positive that it is the truth! Over 120 people have made gifts, large and small, to help secure the future of Frenchman's Hole. Not only have people donated money, but more than 15 volunteers have put in over 50 hours toward the fundraising effort. Such generosity speaks to the connection people clearly have with the lovely pools, waterfalls, stands of mixed forest, trails, rugged terrain, and mountain shadows that make up this magnificent patch of the Mahoosucs in the headwaters of the Sunday River watershed.

As the coordinator of this fundraising effort, I have the pleasure of working with an excellent committee. Steve Wight, Susan Herlihy, Marcel Polak, and George Driscoll have the positive spirit and the know-how that we need to successfully complete the campaign. Our goal is to raise a total of \$42,000. As of March 23rd, we have raised \$25,000 in gifts and in pledges. We hope to reach our goal by May 1st. While we submitted one grant proposal to augment our efforts, we continue to focus on reaching community members who have a direct relationship with this land. If you swim in Frenchman's Hole, hike Wright Trail, cross country ski on the logging roads, or care about the creatures living in, on, or near the water, please, consider making a gift! Your contributions today mean that the Frenchman's Hole property will be open for public enjoyment for years to come, and that the plants and wildlife will continue to thrive in this lovely place.

-- Amy Scott



To make a gift, please send a check to Mahoosuc Land Trust, P.O. Box 981, Bethel, ME 04217. Be sure to write "Frenchman's Hole" on your check. Or log onto our website: www.mahoosuc.org, and follow the Frenchman's Hole link to make an on-line donation. Thank you!



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Notes

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“SPRING AHEAD”

GENERAL ALGER FARM PROTECTED

Ms. Connie Greaves of Portland and Addison, Maine recently protected the 18th century Cole/Alger farm in Woodstock, Maine by donating a conservation easement on 130 of the 140 acres to the Mahoosuc Land Trust.

The 1786 farmhouse located on Rte. 232 is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, farms in the town of Woodstock. Through the previous owners of this modest rural farmhouse, we have connections to three major American wars in two different centuries. The original owner and builder of the farm was Captain Jonathan Cole who served in the war of 1812.

The farm stayed in the Cole Family until it was purchased by General James Alger in 1942. General Alger graduated from Gould Academy in 1930 and West Point in 1935. He commanded the Second Battalion of the First Armored Division in combat in North Africa during WW II. He also served as Chief of Staff of the Korean Military Advisory Group during the Korean War. He became a three-star general heading the Southern Command Forces as his last post.

Ms. Connie Greaves inherited the farm from her cousin, General Alger, in the 1980's and used the farm as a summer home. She recently decided that she no longer wanted to keep and maintain the home, but she had strong feelings about protecting the historical and conservation qualities of the property. Ms. Greaves made a decision to benefit two non-profit organizations. She donated a conservation easement on 130 acres of the property to the Mahoosuc Land Trust and placed deed restrictions on 10 acres that surrounded the house and barn. Then she donated the entire property to the Maine Sea Coast Mission in Bar Harbor.

The Maine Sea Coast Mission, a 99-year-old non-profit organization, was permitted by the terms of her gift to sell the property to benefit one of their educational programs. The property was then sold to a private buyer subject to the terms of the conservation easement and the deed restrictions.

The property is located on both sides of Rte. 232. According to the terms of the conservation easement, no industrial, commercial, residential or other business development is allowed on the 130 acre protected property, while agriculture and personal/commercial forest management are permitted. Mahoosuc Land Trust, as the conservation easement holder, will monitor the property in cooperation with the new property owners to ensure compliance with the easement.

The 10 acres surrounding the residence and barn has deed covenants that may be enforced by the Mahoosuc Land Trust. This 10 acre property may be used for residential and agricultural uses only and may not be subdivided.

This recent conservation project is a perfect example of how multiple landowner objectives can be satisfied. Ms. Greaves permanently protected the property, made a significant donation to two non-profits, and facilitated the transfer to another private landowner who will continue to pay local real estate taxes. Her contributions of land and conservation easements are tax deductible as charitable donations. And the public benefits because the property will remain in open space and wildlife habitat.

--Marcel Polak



The General Alger farmhouse

Photo by Marcel Polak

President's Message

Some of the high points for MLT during this changeable winter: We are a growing organization; our membership is up significantly over last year. We also have several new board members who are bringing new energy and enthusiasm. We have raised half our goal of \$42,000 for the local share of the purchase of the 380 acre Frenchman's parcel. We had over 250 people at the last Local Knowledge Series- on the coldest night of the year. We are in the process of hiring a part-time office support person to help Jim with keeping up member lists, mail, and the phone. We have some major projects in the works: we are working with the owner of Puzzle Mountain (it's that big one with the prominent landslide scars north of town, dominating the skyline view from Main Street) to secure a conservation easement; we are hoping to work with the prospective new owner of the Ladd farm on various conservation options; we are negotiating an agreement with the state to monitor Frenchman's; we are working to secure a new Androscoggin Canoe Trail access point in Gilead.

Perhaps the most significant work this year is creating a plan which collects information from local citizens and geographical data to identify the farms, working forests, and other open spaces that are important to preserve and to protect the character of the greater Bethel and upper Androscoggin River valley areas.

As development in these areas increases, it creates both challenges and opportunities for us "...to balance development with conservation" as stated in our mission. As always, we rely on your support to keep us going. Thank you.

Landon Fake
President

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WHERE WERE YOU ON THE COLDEST NIGHT OF THE WINTER?

Probably you were one of the 275 people who turned out to hear Bernd Heinrich on January 14. We had a sign-in at the door where people could record the temperature at home. The record was -30, with some close seconds in the -25 to -27 range.

The attendance at this second Local Knowledge program showed that the Land Trust's constituency is indeed as tough as Heinrich although most of us don't sit and watch ravens in the snow for hours. Professor Heinrich's program fascinated us all as much because of his style of "doing science" as the actual information. This was the most successful event in the program series since it began three years ago. Thank you all for your support!

The March and April presentations -The Chewonki Foundation's on birds of prey and photographer Jennifer Loomis on wildlife photography - should draw excellent crowds as well. (Both will probably be over by the time you read this.)

The success of the Local Knowledge program is a direct result of the hard work of the Membership Committee, whose members plan, organize, and host each lecture. Committee members are: Beth Brough, Ginger Kelly, Becky Kendall, Lucia Owen, Jan Stowell, and Frank Vogt. Thanks are also due to Gould Academy for providing two such first-class venues.

If you have any suggestions for future programs, please don't hesitate to make your ideas known!
--Lucia Owen

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Coming Events

Last spring and fall the Membership Committee tried out several events to see if the community would respond to them, and to the Land Trust's role in the community beyond just land protection. The response was so good that we have plunged in again with events that we hope will draw even more people. You will receive more detailed information via e-mails, postcards, and the Bethel Citizen.

The tentative list is as follows:

June 12 - Leslie Rouse, District Biologist, WMNF, will conduct a BIRDING MORNING AT THE DEER HILL BOG on the Deer Hill Road in Stowe (We think that's the town it's in!) Numbers are limited. Details and map available soon.

June 20 - "THE SCIENCE OF THE SOLSTICE" - Jack Nordahl will present a discussion of the movements of the earth and sun as part of Bethel's Midsummer Festival. 10 - 11 a.m., McLaughlin Science Center, Gould Academy.

July 12 - SOURCE TO THE SEA CANOE TREK - MLT plans to host lunch at Moran's Landing, and hopes again for the good offices of Bruce and Shirley Powell.

July 25 - THE SECOND ANNUAL MLT GARDEN TOUR will take place in Upton with the focus on the garden of Joy Yarnell, as well as other gardens to visit.

September 11 - The Fourth Annual BETHEL OUTING CLUB/MLT FAMILY HIKE. Venue as yet undecided.

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