

# Notes

Fall 2008 Volume 17 No. 2

*“Conserving special places for all”*



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## *Two Mahoosuc Land Trust Projects Funded by the Land for Maine's Future Board*

In July the Land for Maine's Future Board (LMF) voted to fund two project applications submitted by the Mahoosuc Land Trust.

**BUCK'S LEDGES** are the prominent, scenic rock faces visible across North Pond from Route 26 traveling south from Locke Mills. The Ledges are part of a 655 acres parcel that also includes the summit of Moody Mountain and Lapham's Ledge. LMF allocated \$251,000 for the project.

Jane Chandler and Marcel Polak have led lots of trips up Lapham's and Buck's Ledges to promote awareness of the unique features of the property. Monica Mann painted a fundraising sign by the trailhead on Route 26 and Pete Seaman built the supports. Members of the Buck's Ledges Committee will meet with any group to discuss the land and share progress on its acquisition.

**MIDDLE INTERVALE FARM** is a seventh-generation dairy farm in Bethel, Maine. It has an abundance of highly productive agricultural soils and a herd of over 200 Holstein cows. The farm augments its income by growing and selling vegetables. It is an important part of the community providing open space, fresh produce, and scenic views of pastoral landscapes.

Mahoosuc Land Trust secured LMF funding to purchase an agricultural easement on the farm. Federal farmland protection funds will supplement the state funds to purchase the easement. Public funding is contingent on a comprehensive real estate appraisal supporting the sales price. MLT is working with both landowners to determine a sales price that is fair to the land trust, meets the needs of the owners, and is backed up by an appraisal.

## **THE LAND TRUST ENTERS ITS 20TH YEAR**

In 1989 a few dedicated citizens gathered around kitchen tables to discuss the need for a land trust in the Bethel area. The idea of land protection was new and un-tested in the region and created some concern in the community. It was the generosity and vision of two local citizens, Eva Schools and Becky Kendall, which gave MLT the boost it needed when they donated the first MLT conservation easements on their properties along the Androscoggin River (the Schools Property and Kendall Island). The founders of the land trust could see early on that the Androscoggin River would provide tremendous ecological, recreational and economic benefits in the future and worked with the Friends of the Androscoggin and others to ensure long term access and protection for the river.

In these 20 years, MLT has become an integral part of this community. Through the donation of thousands of volunteer hours, the generosity of our members and the care and concern of land owners, MLT has had a significant impact on the future of this beautiful area. Next year will be a banner year for us, and we're planning several special events. In the spring newsletter we plan to delve deeper into the story of the early days of the land trust. If you have any personal anecdotes of those days, or would be willing to share your story, please contact the land trust. We'd love to talk to you as we prepare for the next twenty years!

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Do we have a current email address for you? If you would like to receive our electronic communications, please send your email address to [mlt@mahoosuc.org](mailto:mlt@mahoosuc.org). Unless instructed otherwise, we will still keep you on our newsletter mailing list, but we are using emails more frequently to communicate with our donors.

## *W.J. Wheeler Challenges Annual Appeal Gifts*

For the third year in a row, W.J. Wheeler is matching dollar-for-dollar increases in 2008 annual appeal gifts from land trust donors up to \$2,500. The Mahoosuc Land Trust is very grateful for this generous challenge. Every additional dollar you can contribute will actually mean two dollars to MLT.

W. J. Wheeler is an insurance agency serving Western Maine. They return 1% of their revenues each year to the community in the form of charitable contributions. MLT is one of their particular beneficiaries because "we feel the work MLT does is making an important contribution to the area's future at a time of great need. We feel good about doing our bit to help," Jeffrey Newsom, explains.

## **25/25 CHALLENGE GRANT FROM MAINE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

The Mahoosuc Land Trust was awarded one of the Maine Community Foundation's 25/25 Endowment Challenge grants. The grant is one of the ways the foundation is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. A one-to-one matching opportunity, the land trust will receive a match of \$25,000 after it raises \$25,000 in new endowment funds over the next 18 months. The foundation is providing technical assistance to help develop a case for support for the endowment-building campaign and to explore new advancement opportunities such as bequests and other planned gifts. "The foundation believes in strong nonprofits and we feel that an endowment fund can help an organization work toward securing long-term financial sustainability," said Henry Schmelzer, Maine CF President.

"The timing of this grant coincides with the planning efforts of the Mahoosuc Land Trust's Development Committee to launch a planned-giving program for the organization," says Committee Chair Ginger Lawson. "We couldn't be more delighted than to have such a generous challenge to begin our endowment campaign," adds MLT President Steve Wight. Please look for more information in future communications from the land trust.

### **ANNUAL MEETING**

Over 50 members and guests attended the Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 26, that was held at the Sunday River Inn and Cross Country Ski Center. In addition to the formal election of board members and officers, the guest speaker was Aldro French. Aldro is the current owner of Forest Lodge, the former home of Louise Dickinson Rich, author of *We Took to the Woods*. A born story-teller, French in his inimitable style of mixing history and humor, regaled his audience with tales of Forest Lodge and the magical environs of the Rapid River. Following his presentation French had copies of the book for sale and signing to benefit Friends of Forest Lodge.

## **THE GIFT OF LEGACY**

Most of us who love the outdoors have a special place to sit and contemplate the natural world. Mine is called Joe's Ledges on our land in Shelburne, NH. Last fall, on a glorious day, I sat on my favorite rock wondering what the view would look like in 100 years and whether I had done enough to ensure that future generations would have the same experience as I. At times, conservation work seems to move at a glacial pace while the need for conservation is so urgent. As the MLT Board of Directors contemplates the future, we have realized that in order to build on the significant achievements of the land trust, we need to ensure that the organization will be endowed for the future.

The gift of legacy, leaving a bequest to MLT, is one that will continue to provide for these special places long after we are gone. Generosity is one of the hallmarks of American conservationists. As we build our Planned Giving program at MLT, we hope you will consider leaving your own legacy through a bequest. Please feel free to contact me, Ginger Lawson 207-878-1231 or [ginlawson@aol.com](mailto:ginlawson@aol.com), for more information.



*Annual meeting attendees enjoy presentation on Forest Lodge by Aldro French and Friends of Forest Lodge.*

# President's Message

What a wonderful summer we have had at MLT! In this newsletter you will read of grants received, projects completed, closings imminent, celebrations attended, staff changes and volunteer hours (and backs!) donated to the cause of conservation and sustainable economies. Jim and I attended the Land Trust Alliance Rally in Pittsburgh in September and learned a great deal about our upcoming challenge of Land Trust Accreditation. While in Pittsburgh with 2000 representatives of land trusts across the country, we also learned that we in the Mahoosuc Region are highly admired by others. Thanks go to all of you for working together to accomplish so much.



Steve Wight, MLT President, Mary McFadden, MLT Member and Jim Mitchell, MLT Executive Director, enjoy a photo opportunity at Land Trust Alliance Rally in Pittsburgh.

To continue to do all that we do, of course, requires funding. Our grant makers are pleased with our work, but grants can provide us with only a part of our financial needs. Led by our Development Committee chair, Ginger Lawson, and our staff development associate, Jolan Ippolito, we are kicking off our Annual Appeal with this newsletter. The board members have all made their commitments to the campaign, and in total they add to a 25% increase over last year. Retiring Treasurer Walt Hatch tells us that we need to raise \$35,000 in unrestricted giving before year end to meet budget. I hope that you will each consider what you can do to follow the board's lead to give us the capacity to close our books in the black and continue our good work in the year ahead. Remember the W.J. Wheeler Challenge to match dollar for dollar your increased 2008 gift.

Thanks for all you do,  
Steve Wight, President

## Noteworthy

### LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The series kicks off on January 14 with a presentation by Ken Hotopp. David Brown will present an animal tracking program on Friday, February 13, followed by a field workshop the next morning, February 14. On Wednesday, March 18, Paul Cormier will present a program at the Shelburne Town Hall on climbing in Bolivia. John Bunker will talk about apples of Maine on Wednesday, April 15.

### NEW BOARD MEMBER

Jane Chandler of Woodstock has been elected to serve on the MLT Board of Directors, replacing retiring director Jennifer Casey of Upton. Jane is a registered nurse and lives on the shore of North Pond with her husband Jim, an environmental educator. She serves on the Woodstock Conservation Commission and is the chair of the MLT Buck's Ledges Committee. Jim and Jane have a son, Jeff, who works at the US Treasury in Washington, DC, and a daughter, Becky, who is an international social worker in the refugee camps in Darfur, Africa. We are extremely pleased to welcome Jane to the board. Her enthusiasm, expertise and perspective will greatly benefit the work of the trust.

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering for the Mahoosuc Land Trust provides the opportunity to become involved in the land trust's conservation efforts to build healthy and livable communities by sharing your existing skills. We have out-of-doors as well as inside projects that require volunteer efforts. See [www.mahoosuc.org](http://www.mahoosuc.org) or call us at 207-824-3806 to learn more. Email us at [mlt@mahoosuc.org](mailto:mlt@mahoosuc.org) to let us know if you would like to be alerted to volunteer opportunities.

### MEMBERS WANTED

Enclosed in the Fall Newsletter is a membership envelope. If your membership is current, please pass the envelope on to someone that you think would like to be a member of an actively engaging land trust with a bright future ahead, "Conserving special places for all".

### CHAIRLIFT RAFFLE

Sunday River has donated a triple chair from the South Ridge Triple to the Trails Committee for a raffle. Volunteers have converted it into a yard swing. Raffle tickets are on sale for \$5 each or 3 for \$10. The drawing will be January 18, 2009. If you would like to purchase or sell raffle tickets, please call the Mahoosuc Land Trust at 207-824-3806.

### TRAILS

The Trails Committee is completing the grant application for the Rivers and Trails Program. Barb Russell has spearheaded this effort with support from Burnham Martin, a technical advisor from the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program. Currently, we are collecting letters of support from all Bethel constituencies who might have an interest in this effort. We hope that the grant will help with the cost of the next phase of the Bethel Pathway, a half mile extension over the MLT Gateway property.

### JENNIFER CASEY LEAVES BOARD

Jennifer Casey, who has completed two terms as a Mahoosuc Land Trust Board Director, has stepped down. A wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jennifer, who lives in Upton, needs to devote more time to her young, growing family and to her job. Her experience evaluating wild life habitats and her access to maps have been beneficial to us. Thank you and we will miss you, Jennifer

### LAND TRUST EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

The Mahoosuc Land Trust is very pleased to have been chosen to participate in the Maine Land Trust Excellence Program. The new program goal is to increase the operational quality and sustainability of Maine land trusts as measured by implementation of *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and certification through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The program is supported by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Land Trust Alliance. It is the first program of its kind nationally and is made possible through a generous contribution from the Pew Charitable Trusts and private donors.

The first benefit of the grant will be an organizational assessment conducted by an outside independent facilitator. The Program will then fund an array of services that will prepare the Mahoosuc Land Trust for accreditation and build its overall capacity to conserve and steward land.

The value of the grant depending on the services provided is up to \$18,000.

### STAFF CHANGES AT THE MAHOOSUC LAND TRUST

The Mahoosuc Land Trust thanks Helen Dolloff and Ginger Kelly for their years of service to the organization. Ginger Kelly began work for the MLT as Volunteer Coordinator in August, 2005. Helen began work as bookkeeper in August, 2004. The organization welcomes Cynthia Handlen, who began work in mid-October in the newly created position of Administrative and Program Assistant.

# Member Profile: Ken Bohr

When Ken and Gwyneth Bohr retired to Bethel from Washington, DC, 22 years ago, they thought they were going to settle into an easier, quieter life. After all, 32 years with the World Bank, and for Gwyneth training and ordination as an Episcopal priest, the raising of three daughters, four years of living as a family in India, all of this preceded by military stints for both during World War II .... it seemed as if they deserved to rest. They bought the stately home at the top of Chapman Street and settled in to begin to take life easy.

Not so. It seems neither one of them is very good at "taking it easy," and they were quickly engulfed in the dreams of our small Bethel community. In fact, early on, they found themselves at one of our Community Visioning Conferences, the one held in 1988, out of which came a number of infant organizations. Ken decided to align himself with the newly created Mahoosuc Land Trust, throwing himself with gusto into the raising of this toddler organization. Better yet, he brought to this young group all the organizational experience of a World Bank economist. I can remember thinking, in one of our early board meetings, as Ken laid out another one of his charts and explained in detail just how we might structure ourselves, How lucky can we get? Here is a man who has time and energy to sit at home and apply all of his vast experience to our fledgling group. When Ken spoke, you'd better believe we all listened.

Early on, Ken and Gwyneth let me know that they loved paddling canoes and wanted to take one of my weeklong canoe trips. Along with Ken's younger brother Dick and his wife Georgette, we went north to Lobster Lake and the West Branch. It turned out that this was the same trip that Ken and Dick had taken 50 years before, and we re-traced the journey that they had made as young men before they were off to college and service in World War II. Ken even brought with him the detailed journal he had kept during their adventure. During that trip I learned of Ken's deep love of the natural world. A skilled paddler, he took great joy in heading into the winds and waves of Chesuncook Lake.

While on that trip and a subsequent one, I learned many things about Ken that surprised me. For instance, he had worked with horses as a quartermaster during World War II and found sanity amidst the war in his opportunities to ride. In moments of free time he would enjoy a canter on his favorite horse. Later, while his family was in India, he again found occasions to ride, and a highlight of his time in India was



the afternoon he actually rode in a polo match. He says it's harder than it looks! Another facet of Ken is his love of literature and of writing. He brings to great literature a healthy scepticism and down-to-earth critical eye. Around the evening campfire we were treated to some of Ken's most entertaining and hilarious versifying. I particularly recall some lilted stanzas incorporating the rhythms of Alaskan place names.

As the Mahoosuc Land Trust grew and acquired properties, coping with the unique problems each new property brought with it, Ken served as the president of the board for a stint and then stepped aside and guided those who followed him. In addition, when our town realized that we needed to develop a Comprehensive Plan along with all other Maine towns, Ken was asked to chair the Comprehensive Plan Committee. He worked on this effort for several years, producing the document that still serves as Bethel's Comprehensive Plan. In this project, too, his clear thinking and breadth of experience served the town well.

Currently, Ken's passionate pursuit is the memoir of his life which he has been writing and revising for the past four years. In the process, lifelong learner that he is, Ken has looked back on the many chapters of a rich life well-lived and has learned much about his younger self. When Ken talks about his memoir project, his eyes sparkle and his voice strengthens. Once again, he shows the energy he gives to every challenge in a long, productive, and generous life. *- Bonnie Pooley*

## SUMMIT SOCIETY

Since its introduction in June, the Summit Society has grown to 16 charter memberships. The Summit Society recognizes our generous donors whose unrestricted gifts during the year total \$1000 or more to support our organization and its conservation work. Unrestricted gifts include membership, annual appeal giving, or other funds for operations.

The Summit Society events this year included a boat tour of Umbagog Lake in Upton, hosted by board member Jennifer Casey and the Umbagog Preserve Manager, Paul Casey. The eagles, loons, herons and floating islands were plentiful and spectacular. The Leger family hosted our tour of the Philbrick Farm Inn in Shelburne, NH, followed by a hike to First Mountain hosted by board member Ginger Lawson and husband Larry Ely. On October 18, Bob Stewart, donor of the Stewart Family Preserve, hosted us for a hearty BBQ with a 180-degree panoramic view from Sunday River to East Bald Pate in Grafton Notch.

We look forward to adding to our Summit Society membership and hope more of our supporters will consider joining. Please contact the office if you would like more information.

## Bruce and Becky Bailey Conservation Award

Kenneth A. Bohr was unanimously voted as recipient of this year's Bruce and Becky Bailey Conservation Award. The award honors our local icons in recognition of their passion for rural life, community involvement and generosity to the Mahoosuc Land Trust and to other conservation efforts.

The inscription on the award plaque reads in part ... "His efforts have inspired others, benefited the public and conserved traditional land uses..." Ken Bohr is a most appropriate recipient of this recognition.