



Notes

Winter 2010/2011 Volume 19 No. 1

Conserving special places for all

CONCORD RIVER CONSERVATION EASEMENT

In June 2010, the Mahoosuc Land Trust accepted its largest conservation easement to date, the 4,632-acre Concord River Parcel in Rumford, Woodstock, and Milton Township. The Nature Conservancy recently sold the property to Concord River Holdings, LLC for sustainable timber harvesting, placing the easement on the property prior to the sale. The original donor's wishes to "keep these lands open and undeveloped and part of the local forest products economy," will be honored by the easement.

Much of the land is along the east side of Concord Pond Road and to the west of Concord Pond between Abbot Mill in Milton Township, and Mount Zircon in Rumford, with a large section on Spruce Mountain in Woodstock, and two smaller parcels on Chamberlain Mountain in Milton. It has a small amount of frontage along Concord Pond in Woodstock, and 10,000 feet of frontage along the Concord River.

Acceptance of this large conservation easement has necessitated the use of an additional property monitoring tool to include monitoring the easement by helicopter. Jim Mitchell flew the property this fall and prepared the first monitoring report "from the air".

Having The Nature Conservancy ask the Mahoosuc Land Trust to hold the conservation easement for the Concord River parcel is a signal that the Land Trust is highly thought of as a viable and effective conservation organization in the Mahoosuc region. The founding and volunteer efforts and financial support of donors through the past 21 years are affecting significant outcomes in accordance with the organization's vision and mission. Everyone should be proud of this milestone.

LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE

The Mahoosuc Land Trust is very pleased that the voters of Maine approved the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) bond in the November election. The bond issue passed with 59% of the vote.

For more than two decades the Land for Maine's Future program has helped fund conservation projects including working farms, working forests, waterfronts for commercial fishing opportunities, and recreation sites all across Maine. At the same time it has preserved wildlife habitat, guaranteed access to lakes, rivers, and the ocean, and provided places for Maine people to hike, hunt, fish, camp and paddle.

The Mahoosuc Region and the Mahoosuc Land Trust has benefited from the program. The Land for Maine's Future program helped fund the purchase of the Trust's Rumford Whitecap Mountain Preserve, Moran's Landing and Frenchman's Hole, all Mahoosuc Land Trust projects. LMF also helped fund the Grafton Forest Project, in Grafton Township and the Stowe Mountain Conservation easement. These two projects of more than 3,400 acres each were collaborative projects of the Trust for Public Land and the Mahoosuc Land Trust.

ALDER RIVER CROSSING COMPLETED

The Alder River Crossing Pathway, linking the Bethel and Gateway Pathways, was completed in November and a formal ribbon cutting was held on November 28th. The Mahoosuc Land Trust Trails Committee worked over three years on the project to secure planning and construction grants for the projects. The National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program and Maine Recreational Trails provided substantial funding. Barb Russell provided guidance and leg work for the grant proposals.

The Gateway Pathway project was directed by the Town of Bethel, spearheaded by Town Manager, Jim Doar. The Mahoosuc Land Trust oversaw the Alder River Crossing Pathway with Jim Mitchell, Executive Director of the land trust, being the point person.

Individual donations for the Alder River Crossing Pathway are still being accepted at the Mahoosuc Land Trust.



President's Message

As I write for the first time as the seventh president of the Board of MLT, I am awed by the responsibility I have taken on. My six predecessors have brought our organization from a small kitchen table group to a multi-faceted, highly respected organization. Siegel, Angevine, Bohr, Laban, Fake, Wight — each has overseen major projects and growth in this organization. I have been a devoted member of the Board for 19 years, usually as secretary, and I am honored now to take my turn in the lead.

However, as with a team of sled dogs, the lead dog is really no more important than the rest of the dogs. Our MLT Board is a strong team, and every dog in harness keeps his or her line taut. No slackers here! Each of us has a role to play, and, when we are all working together, there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

So much is happening as I step into harness! A goal of major importance to me is the accreditation process of the Land Trust Alliance. Our Board, staff, and committees have been working for two years to prepare to apply for national accreditation. Simply getting our policies and procedures ready for the application process has strengthened the organization in many ways. At present, fewer than 200 of the 1700 land trusts in the US have earned accreditation, and we hope to complete this rigorous process by the end of 2011.

Another goal is to celebrate and enjoy the completion of several trail projects in Bethel. The two recently completed segments of the Bethel Pathway have brought pleasure and healthy exercise to many. Also, our advocacy for a sidewalk

on Chapman Street has resulted in a safer, more walking-friendly village. As the need and opportunity for more trails and trail systems in our area continues to grow even larger, MLT now plans to encourage and nurture a new trails organization in western Maine. This organization will focus entirely on trails of all sorts. You will be hearing more about this effort in the coming months, and be assured that it has MLT's enthusiastic support.

MLT is currently working with a group of citizens in Berlin, NH, to develop a trail on Mt. Jasper. This project, our first in Berlin, will be a strong model for the kinds of in-town projects which can bring pleasure to large numbers of people and can be a source of pride for the city.

We at MLT are also collaborating both with the State of Maine and with other non-profits in long term planning efforts to prioritize all of our land protection goals. This is a dynamic time of transition in Maine as lands change hands, some to meet needs for housing and development while others meet needs for wildlife protection, habitat, farmland, forestry and outdoor recreation. Bringing some clarity and logic to the process can only help us.

It is an exciting time to be a part of the Mahoosuc Land Trust. I hope that many of you will contribute time and/or money to continue to strengthen this organization. It is important work we all do as we look to the future of our western Maine mountains and watersheds. So, as the mushers say when it is time for the dogs in harness to move on, "Tighten up. Let's go!"

Bonnie Pooley, President

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

When a land trust agrees to hold a conservation easement or to acquire a parcel of land, it accepts the responsibility for and commits itself to take care of its land. A rational, solid and active stewardship program will ensure that the land trust maintains its public credibility and will enhance the conservation values of its land. Credibility is particularly important when the time comes for a land trust to ask for community support to protect another parcel of land.

A conservation easement is a legal written agreement which guides the future uses of property regardless of ownership. A landowner usually donates a conservation easement to a land trust while retaining title to his or her property. The land trust agrees to ensure that the conditions of the easement are met over time. The land owner can continue to use, live on, sell or pass on his property to his heirs.

A land trust which accepts a conservation easement also accepts responsibility for defending the easement if necessary and monitoring it on a periodic basis to ensure that the conditions of the easement are satisfied. Detailed reports and records are maintained to establish baseline information about the conservation values of the property.

When a land trust monitors a conservation easement, all of the relevant information in the file is reviewed. The volunteer monitor contacts the landowner and arranges to walk the property with the landowner. The monitor checks the boundaries, monitors any natural changes or possible violations of the easement, takes field notes and photos of the visit. Routine

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Noteworthy

LAST MINUTE GIFT IDEAS

A membership to the Mahoosuc Land Trust makes a lasting gift for the holidays, birthdays, anniversaries or any special occasion. A gift announcement will be sent out in your name, with a photograph of a special place the land trust has conserved. Use the enclosed envelope or give us a call at 207-824-3806 to place an order. A gift to the Mahoosuc Land Trust will last into the future.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT MONITORING WORKSHOP

As part of a grant from the Maine Community Foundation, the Mahoosuc Land Trust is offering an easement monitoring workshop on Saturday, May 12th. The purpose of the workshop is to improve the quality of conservation easement monitoring. If you are interested in participating, please contact the Land Trust to enroll in the workshop. Presenters at the workshop will be from the Forest Society of Maine, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Mahoosuc Initiative Partners.

SUNDAY RIVER REGION CHARITABLE FUND

Once again this fall, the Mahoosuc Land Trust was the recipient of a generous grant from the Sunday River Region Charitable Fund to continue conservation easement education among land owners and developers, expand local knowledge presentations to more of the area's communities and involve young families in a hiking program. The support of these programs is very valuable to the Mahoosuc Region. Thank you, Sunday River Charitable Fund.

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

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monitoring improves communication and the relationship with the landowner.

When a land trust owns a parcel of land, it is responsible for monitoring its land, and developing land management plans for each parcel. A good land management plan includes an identification of the property, site information, management objectives, and work plan for the parcel, if needed. A plan also includes natural resource inventories, land use histories, public use information and detailed resource plans. The land trust periodically visits and checks the boundaries of all of its properties to ensure that there are no encroachments onto the property.

To meet its stewardship responsibilities, land trusts create stewardship funds. The stewardship fund is a permanent fund for land management and enforcement of the conditions of the easement. The fund is separated from the land trust's operating budget and provides funds for monitoring, insurance, improvement and maintenance of the land.

PHONE-A-THON

The 2010 Annual Appeal Phone-a-thon took place the first week in December. Thank you for taking our calls and messages and for the overwhelming response of gifts. The Board of Directors enjoyed talking with you and are grateful for the time you spent taking the calls.

MESSAGES FROM DONORS

During the ongoing 2010 Annual Appeal, many donors have taken the time to write a quick note on their gift. Among two of our most recent notes are: "We are happy to help preserve this land" and "Love what you guys are doing." Please send us a quip or quote to use in our next newsletter. Let us know why you support the Mahoosuc Land Trust.

MAINE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

OXFORD COUNTY COMMITTEE

Work is continuing on projects funded by a grant from the Oxford County Committee of the Maine Community Foundation. One of three kiosks has been built and installed at the trail head of the Rumford Whitecap Preserve. Pocket trail maps are nearing completion and program plans to encourage use of Mahoosuc Land Trust properties are nearly complete.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Mahoosuc Land Trust Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, October 24, at Ordway Hall, Gould Academy. New officers, elected for the coming year, are Bonnie Pooley, President; Jim Reuter, Vice-President; William Andrews, Treasurer; and Jane Chandler, Secretary.

Following the election of officers, outgoing President, Steve Wight, was awarded the Bruce and Becky Bailey Conservation Award. Steve has served on the Mahoosuc Land Trust Board since 1995 and was President since 2005. The Award recognizes Steve's conservation efforts that have inspired others, benefited the public and conserved traditional land uses.

Elected to serve a three year term were Ginger Lawson, Shelburne, NH; Bonnie Pooley, Bethel; Jim Reuter, Bethel; Steve Wight, Newry; and Dick Stratton, Hanover. Dick will be serving his first term as a Board member.


Among those in attendance were Mahoosuc Land Trust members Larry Stifler and Mary McFadden, who are the generous donors of a \$50,000 Challenge Grant to expand Land Trust membership and support. The Challenge matches all new donations as well as increased giving by current members over their 2009 gifts.

Guest speaker at the meeting was Bob Duchesne, author of *The Maine Birding Trail*, a guide to more than 260 accessible birding sites across Maine. Bob has long been aware that Maine has the assets and the infrastructure to make a birding trail and similar eco-tourism projects a success. His insights, along with fabulous photography, made for a fascinating presentation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS	James Mitchell
PRESIDENT	Bonnie Pooley
VICE PRESIDENT	Jim Reuter
TREASURER	William Andrews
SECRETARY	Ginger Lawson
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Jane Chandler
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	Jeffrey Newsom
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STEVE WIGHT'S PRESIDENCY

At the 21st Annual Land Trust Meeting, Steve Wight completed five years as President of the Board of Directors. Following are some of the highlights of Land Trust milestones under Steve's tenure.



July 1, 1996 – Merger with Friends of the Androscoggin. The Mahoosuc Land Trust completes a merger with the Friends of the Androscoggin. Steve Wight, joins the Board, as former president of the Friends.

October 3, 2005 - Steve Wight becomes the sixth president of the Mahoosuc Land Trust.

March 13, 2006 - Goodnow Island in the Androscoggin River at West Bethel is donated by Patty Dooen.

March 31, 2007 - The Rumford Whitecap Mountain Preserve is purchased after a successful fundraising campaign.

June 14, 2007 - Grafton Loop Trail Parking Area on Route 26 in Newry is donated by Bob Stewart of Cumberland.

October, 2007 - Bethel Pathway Extension crossing the Androscoggin River on a new pedestrian bridge, following the river to North Road.

December 26, 2007 - Chandler Family Woodlot 212 acre woodlot conservation easement donated by John and Martha Chandler of Laconia, NH, and Henry Chandler of Wolfeboro, NH.

September, 2008 - The Twenty Five / Twenty Five Endowment Challenge Grant from the Maine Community Foundation. Challenge is met and total of \$50,000 raised by **September, 2009.**

September 2008 - Land Trust Excellence Grant to prepare for accreditation by the National Land Trust Accreditation Commission and make application in 2011.

March 2009 - Bethel Pathway Extension to the Intervale Gateway receives a major grant from the Maine Recreational Trails Program to extend the Bethel Pathway.

July 15, 2009 - First Mountain Easement donated by Jennifer Lawson and Larry Ely of Falmouth on 130 acres of scenic First Mountain in Shelburne, NH, the first NH project for the Land Trust.

June 18, 2010 - Concord River Easement from The Nature Conservancy on a 4600+ acre parcel of woodland located in Rumford, Milton Township and Woodstock, the largest easement that the Land Trust holds.

*Thank you Steve for your guidance and
stewardship of these important projects
during your Presidency.*