

WHITECAP MOUNTAIN COMMITTEE STORIES

Bob and Lida Iles of Andover

The fundraising campaign to purchase land on Rumford Whitecap Mountain was a partnership among local residents, visitors, businesses, foundations, and the Mahoosuc Land Trust (MLT). At the center of that was another partnership between Bob and Lida Iles, the East Andover couple who led the effort. “She’s the pusher, and I’m the plodder,” Bob says. “She gets the great ideas, and I try to carry them out.”

The idea of preserving Rumford Whitecap, however, did not originate with the Ileses but with neighbors, lifelong residents, who alerted them that the land was coming on the market and asked what could be done. When Bob and Lida lived in central Florida before moving to Maine in 1991, they watched with horror the rapid development of once-pristine natural sites. They still remember crying as they canoed on the Peach River among the stumps of formerly large cypress trees that had been felled to make way for development. They had thought “it can’t happen here” in Florida, and then they watched it happen. Lida says they are still “grieving over lost areas we loved,” and they were determined that this time “it *won’t* happen here.”

A member of The MLT board of directors, Bob brought the prospect of purchasing land on Rumford Whitecap to MLT, and the board enthusiastically endorsed it. The Ileses set to work with a committee to raise the funds. “One of the best parts,” Bob says, “was getting to know so many wonderful people we wouldn’t have met otherwise.” “And such generous people,” Lida adds. “They dug deeper than they thought they could to make this happen.”

And now that it’s done, what do the Ileses think will happen? Lida summarizes their joint “vision” for Rumford Whitecap: “Nothing should change but the name on the deed.” If the mountain provides for their grandchildren’s grandchildren what it has provided to residents for so many generations, Bob and Lida Iles will consider their partnership in preservation a success.

Jolan Ippolito of Rumford

The view from Jolan Ippolito’s kitchen table includes Whitecap Mountain. She took on the project because she wants the place to remain a part of the collective history for people in the area. She describes Whitecap simply as a quiet fact of western Maine, a place for calm recreation. She feels that people supporting the project have an emotional stake in preserving their access. Because it is important to them, they have been willing to lend their financial support to our efforts.

Leon Akers of Andover

Leon is an outdoor person. Cross-country skiing is a way of life for him. He also enjoys hiking, working on trails, and just taking in nature whenever and wherever he can.

Rumford Whitecap has always been a special place for Leon. In recent years he has hiked it several times each summer, sometimes for the blueberries, other times for the hike and the view. Its summit offers 360 degrees of exceptional scenery.

When MLT agreed to try to preserve at least part of the summit for future generations to enjoy, he jumped at the chance to help.

Leon’s hope is that in the years to come people will find Whitecap as inspiring as have those of us who have worked to protect it.

Vicki Fimiani of Hanover

When Vicki Fimiani and her husband moved to the area 14 years ago, everyone told them about Whitecap Mountain. It was the first place they hiked. It has sentimental value for her.

Recently, she has begun to notice development happening all around her. More and more lights appear on the mountains as more and more homes are built. While she does not think all development is bad and knows that Maine needs to encourage businesses, she feels it is important that certain places should be conserved for future generations.

An active community leader, on the boards of the Rumford and Hanover libraries and of the Bethel Outing Club, she agreed to serve on the Whitecap Committee because she feels it is important that public access to this unique place be preserved so that the public can continue using this special mountain.

Bill French of Rumford Point

Bill is a retired attorney, born in Rumford, raised in Connecticut, and now living in Rumford Center, Maine. He joined the Mahoosuc Land Trust to become part of the effort to preserve Whitecap.

For many years he spent his summers here climbing Whitecap as have many others in the Rumford area who have always enjoyed what this mountain has to offer. “Back then we all considered it to be our own private mountain.” says Bill.

Bill joined the Whitecap Committee in the hope that we all could continue to climb Whitecap with our children and our children’s children for years to come. It is important to him that the mountain remain available to all who appreciate it.

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Although she knew it was an enormous task, once she took on the project she was sure it would not fail. The variety of skills and strengths of committee members meshed and clicked so that they complemented each other. The committee and MLT, along with Jolan's marketing and organizational skills and community contacts, have all pulled together to produce a successful campaign.

Jolene Lovejoy of Rumford

Extended family and the people who live in Rumford are home to Jolene Lovejoy. She grew up here, lived in other places, but returned to Rumford as a single parent because she wanted her children to have the same secure atmosphere she had experienced.

Jolene has expended time and effort on behalf of the people in Rumford as a selectman and a board member for Tri-County Mental Health, Western Maine Transportation and Black Mountain. It is this loyalty for what she believes will benefit the people of her community that led her to work for the Whitecap Mountain project.

Jolene believes the town should take advantage of its assets. The developing of Black Mountain, the refurbishing of an unused, downtown mill building, and working to assure that Whitecap Mountain will continue to be available for future generations to hike, pick blueberries, or enjoy winter recreation are reasons important enough for her to put in the time and effort it takes to make such projects successful.

Linda Macgregor of Rumford Point

Linda Macgregor lives in Rumford Point with her husband Jim Kimball Macgregor. Jim was born in Rumford; his

parents both descend from the earliest settlers there. Soon after their marriage they spent beautiful times in Maine and knew they wanted to live here in retirement. Ten years ago they realized their dream.

Linda feels that to be a part of Jim Macgregor's family is to experience and love Whitecap Mountain. When she first heard that Bay Root was selling off the former Mead-Westvaco properties, she brought it up at MLT and joined with others to form the Whitecap Committee.

Linda's expectations for the Whitecap project are that we care for this precious place, its trails, and its rare vegetation. She believes that MLT has learned much from the Whitecap project, especially about fund-raising and public relations.

Marcel Polak of Woodstock

Marcel Polak's passion has been conservation since he came to Maine. His introduction to Whitecap Mountain was during his first winter when he hiked the mountain with a group of friends. The experience was remarkable and has stayed with him for years.

During the many times he has hiked the mountain, he has come to appreciate its importance to the community. This importance meant to him that public ownership would become a top priority if and when it was placed on the market. A strong believer in property rights, he did not want to leave it to chance that public access to this gem of a mountain would be conserved. He joined the Whitecap Committee to contribute to the land trust effort to save Whitecap. He feels that MLT's task now to is to respect the needs of the property, while continuing to allow traditional uses of it for future public enjoyment.

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Cost of Land	\$560,000	Distribution of Gifts:	
Campaign Expenses	\$46,112	\$50,000 or more	2
Closing Expenses	\$18,611	\$25,000 to \$50,000	3
Stewardship Endowment	\$58,000	\$15,000 to \$25,000	4
Total Campaign Costs	\$682,723	\$10,000 to \$15,000*	4
Individuals and Business Gifts	\$396,235	\$5,000 to \$10,000	6
Land for Maine's Future Grant	\$243,000	\$2,500 to \$5,000	11
Number of Individuals and Business Donors	594	\$1,500 to \$2,500	7
Number of Foundation Grants	5	\$1,000 to \$1,500	33
Total Amount of Foundation Grants	\$82,500		