



Mahoosuc Land Trust News



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Conserving the Mahoosuc Region since 1989

Fall 2021



The Annual Meeting and Monarch Festival—A Great Combination

On a picture perfect day, over 400 people came to Valentine Farm to celebrate Mahoosuc Land Trust and monarch butterflies.

At the annual meeting, MLT staff spoke about the need to take our passion for conservation to the next step by taking action both as individuals and as an organization. Outgoing board members were recognized and two new members were welcomed onto the team. Thanks to all of you, MLT has grown into a respected regional leader. We are excited about playing a significant role in conserving critical lands and habitats now and for the future.

By all accounts, the monarch festival was a success. People streamed onto the farm to enjoy the fun, family atmosphere. Kids had a great time painting the pollinator table, doing the scavenger hunt, tagging butterflies, and getting their faces painted. Adults could learn about the Habitat For All effort at Valentine Farm by going on the Woodpeckers at Valentine Farm bird walk, roaming the garden to learn about the plants and pollinators or discovering why we tag monarch butterflies. To round out the event, there were local vendors selling high quality art and crafts, a very popular raffle, and, of course, food. Thanks to everyone who helped to make the day fun for all.

Landscape Conservation: Otter's Eye View

Kirk Siegel, Executive Director

Crossing a stream that runs along part of the 15,000-acre Chadbourne Tree Farm in early May, I slowed the car down hoping for this year's first sighting of the suckers (a small fish) that run up from Songo Pond to spawn on the gravelly bottom in the shallows. At first the white riffles of water over rock looked like the only action, but I jumped out of the car when I saw vigorous splashing and saw an otter leap out of the stream wrestling a good sized sucker along the bank for a meal.

The otter's eye view of the Chadbourne lands is not a bad place to start to comprehend what we have set out to do with our partners, the Conservation Fund, Inland Woods + Trails, and Western Foothills Land Trust. As MLT Land Steward, Spenser Williams, describes in his article on page 4, understanding the science behind habitat connectivity in the face of habitat fragmentation and climate change is key to being smart about what land we try to conserve. For the otter, it's basic: extensive acreage adjacent to this stream will not become house lots. As long as the suckers and other food sources remain available, this habitat will be viable.

The sucker's eye view from this tributary just upstream from Songo Pond highlights another dimension of our deepening relationship with conservation partners that is necessary to make our conservation meaningful on a landscape scale. Songo Pond is the source of the Crooked River, headwaters of the 234,000-acre Sebago Lake watershed.

MLT has joined the Sebago Clean Waters collaborative to protect 25 percent of the watershed in the next 15 years for drinking water, recreation, and indigenous landlocked salmon—and a myriad of other species like the sucker.

These partnerships are vital, leveraging the various strengths of each group, and each partnership brings a different lens and set of tools to work at a landscape level. Another collaboration is with Maine Mountain Collaborative,

whose national and regional groups focus on innovative financing to accelerate the pace and scale of conservation in Maine's "Mountains of the Dawn." This 5 million acres in one of the world's most intact temperate forests supports suckers and otters—not to mention marten, lynx, loon, moose, and the last remaining U.S. stronghold for wild brook trout and other cold water species.

All of the above efforts will thrive only if people and our human communities do. MLT is part of yet another group with an impressive regional reach. Maine West is a partnership of local and regional organizations dedicated to addressing systemic rural challenges and enhancing community well-being in western Maine through increased collaboration across the economic, education, health, and conservation sectors.

Thank you to all members and supporters who make these partnerships possible.



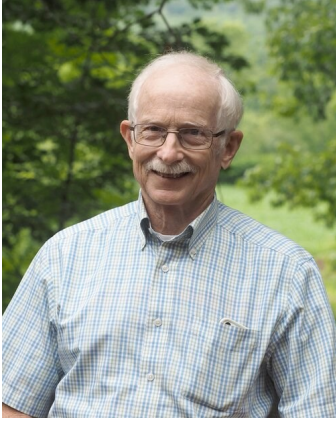
Tumbledown Dick Mountain is the ecologically-rich Chadbourne Tree Farm tract that MLT seeks to acquire in a partnership to conserve 15,000 acres of forestland. Photo: EcoPhotography.



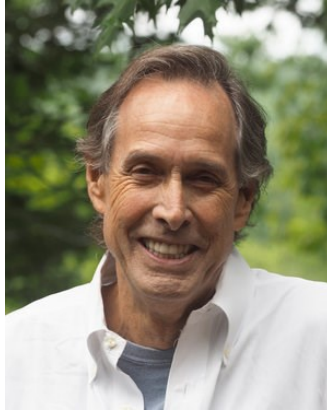
Sebago Clean Waters hosts a walk in January with diverse organizations on potential conservation land in the watershed. Photo: Sebago Clean Waters

Board Members Comings and Goings

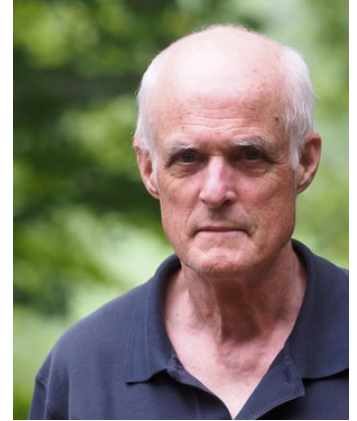
It is always with a touch of melancholy that we bid a fond farewell to outgoing board members...



Since 2012, when he joined the Board, Mac Davis has participated in many roles at MLT. As a Maine Guide, Mac has offered outdoor recreation insights to the Stewardship and Valentine Farm committees and participated in the necessary behind-the-scenes work of the Executive and Governance committees. Mac will stay involved in these committees and will continue to mow properties and boat launches.



During his tenure on the board, Mike Hyman was on the Finance and Lands committees. His involvement in large-scale development communities and his work with the planning and development departments in his home town of West Palm Beach, FL, brought unique insight into planning for a sustainable organization and skills in land acquisition and valuation. Mike will continue to serve on the Finance Committee.



Bob O'Brien's involvement with MLT dates back to 2011 and includes donating an 180-acre easement on his Flint Farm. Bob has worn many hats at MLT since joining the Board. He has been the President, Chair of the Education and Lands committees and is a member of the Valentine Farm committee. Bob will continue to serve on the Lands and Valentine Farm committee and is taking the lead on the national reaccreditation effort.

...and gratefully welcome new board members

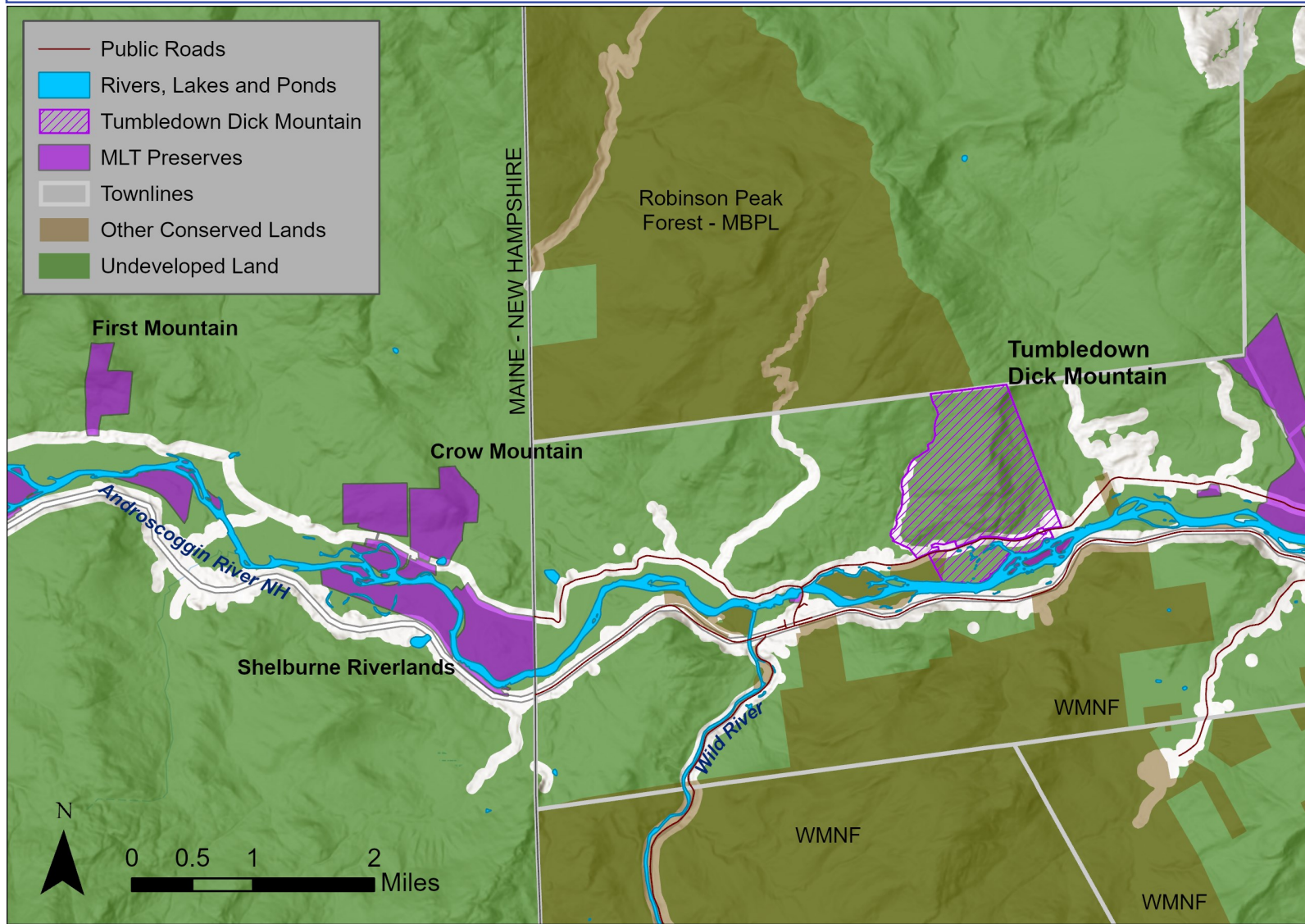


Bill White is a man of many talents and interests. He is a Gould Academy graduate and has lived in Oxford County for over 30 years. Bill has enjoyed a varied career in hospitality, banking and industry. He recently started a new position with Healthy Oxford Hills as a Nutrition Educator. Bill loves cooking, yoga, skiing, biking, hiking, swimming, and teaching skiing to kids at Sunday River. Bill has a strong interest in land stewardship and finance.



Art Marshall started his career in the hospitality industry including 10 years at Sunday River Ski Resort. Recently, he retired after 20 years with BerryDunn, a regional accounting firm based in Portland, Maine. Art is an active member of the West Parish Congregational Church, currently serving as Chair of the Trustees. Art and his wife Ellen have lived in the Bethel area for 30 years and enjoy many forms of outdoor activities in all seasons. Art serves on the Finance Committee and Audit Subcommittee.

30 X 30: The American



The Biden Administration has recently announced its support of the 30 X 30 (“30 By 30”) campaign, a goal long held by conservationists the world over. Behind the catchy title is a simple and well-reasoned target to fight the intertwined crises of Climate Change and Species Extinction: conserve 30% of native habitats and undeveloped land in the United States by the year 2030.

Accomplishing this goal requires the identification and conservation of an additional 440 million acres; that’s 2 Texas, 4 Californias or 20 Maines. This goal cannot, nor should it be, accomplished through a handful of new mega-Parks and Monuments. Political differences aside, in our current national conservation paradigm, alpine areas of snow, ice, and rock already are disproportionately represented, as so many National Parks and Monuments were created to preserve striking mountain beauty. And while these fast-changing ecosystems are indeed critical habitat to endangered species, the overall diversity of at-risk species and shrinking ecosystems is too great to be captured within the boundaries of a few simple, albeit very large polygons. If 30 X 30 is to be successful, the result should be a patchwork of core, edge, and transitional habitats stitched together with navigable wild-life corridors. For the Mahoosuc Land Trust, 30 X 30 coincides with our existing goals and confirms many of the objectives of our 5-year strategic plan. And if this is starting to sound familiar, it's because it is another iteration of Think Globally and Act Locally. Yes, it really does work!

an Conservation Pie



The North Road Corridor has been identified as an Area of Focus for MLT. The potential Tumbledown Dick Mountain preserve sits in an important intersection connecting riverfront riparian habitats with forested uplands and linking existing conservation lands across a North-South gradient in the process.

Where to Start?

As much as I'd like to picture a blindfolded Joe Biden dizzily navigating the Oval Office with two Texas boundaries to pin on a map of the US, this is not how 30 X 30 will go down. So in the ultimate game of 52-card pickup, how do we re-assemble the 100, 1000, and 5000 acre bits and pieces back into a 440 million acre pie? And how does the Mahoosuc Land Trust know our place in that effort? From this author's perspective, the answer is GIS.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a computer program that deals with the What and the Where. At the fundamental level, this mapping software draws true-to-scale shapes and keeps track of data that describe those shapes. In practice, GIS creates a map by assembling layers, and layers can represent real objects on the ground, such as roads or structures. Or, layers can be more intangible areas like political boundaries, speed limits, or areas subject to less light pollution. Additionally, GIS can derive new data from existing data. Any area greater than 5 miles from a paved road? Check. Forested areas? Check. Northern Long-eared Bat habitat? Check. The intersection of these three? Done. (Continued on next page)



How Does MLT Fit In?

Mahoosuc Land Trust can use existing GIS layers to assist our targeted conservation planning. The Nature Conservancy's Resilient and Connected Landscapes (maps.tnc.org/resilientland/) offers a nationwide survey of landscape diversity, identified biodiversity, and habitat connectedness. Taken together, this data seeks to answer the questions: Where is species diversity clustered now? Where will species diversity migrate in a changing climate? What is more, TNC's dataset splits the United States into ecoregions, like states, but with boundaries determined by dominant ecosystems. On a national level, this gives the Biden Administration a full-color palette, with the idea that our future will be painted with a little from each ecosystem. For the curious among you, our region sits on the border between the Northern Appalachian/Acadian ecoregion and Lower New England/Northern Piedmont, and much of the land around us is **both** "resilient" and "connected."

For a nationwide dataset, TNC's Resilient and Connected Landscapes has impressive resolution. At its finest detail, it can differentiate down to 30 square meters or about a 1/4 acre. For projects or questions working on an even smaller scale, the State of Maine offers a number of layers built from data recorded by state biologists. The Beginning with Habitat Map Viewer offers users map layers identifying deer wintering areas, inland wading bird habitat, rare plant and animal habitat, stream-road intersections, as well as existing conserved lands and undeveloped blocks (think roadless areas). Combine these datasets with the Resilient and Connected Landscapes data, and you can imagine how we can identify priority conservation areas or assess a proposed conservation property, and begin to identify critical pieces in our area for the larger conservation pie. And for landowners, you can also identify the conservation value of your property, and the Mahoosuc Land Trust can help you.

To zero in on the important conservation work in our eco-regions, the U.S. Forest Service, ranked the former Chadbourne timberlands as the 8th most important federal Forest Legacy conservation project in the entire United States. In response to The Conservation Fund's purchase of the Chadbourne family timberlands, a workshop was held with the MLT Board of Directors. Using TNC's datasets, the intended purpose of the workshop was to identify areas, within the thousands of acres of forested land, that carried the greatest conservation value and the biggest bang for our buck. The result was Tumbledown Dick Mountain, which MLT is hard at work seeking funds to acquire.

Situated on the north side of the Androscoggin River, downstream of the new Shelburne Riverlands and upstream of McCoy-Chapman Forest, the 978 acres of the Tumbledown Dick property would serve as a central anchor in the conservation of the Upper Androscoggin Corridor. The Tumbledown Dick property includes over one mile of Androscoggin River frontage and also abuts Maine Public Lands to the north. On a landscape scale, this property creates a critical linkage between White Mountain National Forest and the extensive Northern Acadian Forests north to the Quebec border. Furthermore, the rugged topography of Tumbledown Dick makes it a more climate resilient area in itself and one offering exceptional scenic and recreational value.

- Spenser Williams, Land Steward

In Memory of Two Beloved Members

Walter Hatch

Walter Hatch, a beloved community member passed away on May 27th. Walt's contributions to the community are too numerous to capture in words.

Walt and his wife, Carol began vacationing in the area in the 1970's and moved here in 1987. They came because of their love for the beautiful natural surroundings and the small town feel. With Carol or one of their five daughters, Walt could often be found paddling the river, hiking the trails, or, with Carol, going to Frenchman's Hole each week during the summer months for monitoring and cleanup work.

Walt joined Mahoosuc Land Trust in the early days, became a member in 1997 and Treasurer in 2000. Later, he did quarterly reviews and internal audits for MLT. His meticulous attention to finances, philanthropic philosophy, stewardship work, and mentorship played a large role in making MLT the reliable and credible land trust it is today. He and Carol were also the first members to create a Charitable Gift Annuity with MLT as the benefactor.

When asked why he donated his time and money so generously, Walter replied that he wanted to see the beauty of the area conserved and resources such as clean water and wildlife protected.



Martha Chandler

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Martha Chandler. Martha was a loyal supporter and advocate for MLT.

She and her husband, John, and his brother, Henry, donated a conservation easement for the Chandler Family Woodlot in Andover. Martha dearly loved their property in Andover and eagerly accepted any invitation to visit there. Martha dearly loved their property in Andover and eagerly accepted all invitations to visit there. A large patch of lilac bushes marks the remnants of a pioneer homestead, and one of her last outings was to see those lilac bushes in full bloom—the best ever, she told us.

Anyone who spent time with Martha quickly learned of her keen advocacy for outdoor learning opportunities for children. She believed unfettered, hands-on exploration of nature was the way to build a love of the land. Martha generously provided funding for Environment Day and Nature Play to provide just such opportunities.

Martha lived life to the fullest. Hiking, skiing, learning, and advocating for conservation up to the end. She will be greatly missed.

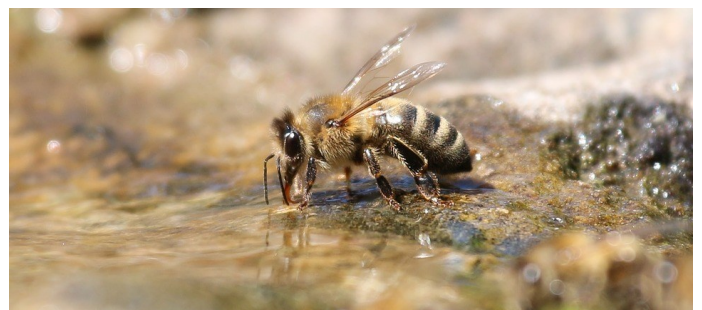


Real Estate Gifts for Conservation Program

MLT's Real Estate Gifts for Conservation Program provides for the acceptance of gifts of homes, undeveloped house lots, and commercial properties. With the donor's permission, these properties are then re-sold at fair market value. There are numerous potential benefits, including: a charitable income tax deduction; alleviation of capital gains taxes on the sale of property; reduction of the taxpayer's assets for inheritance taxes; elimination of carrying costs such as property taxes, insurance premiums, utilities, and maintenance expenses; and avoiding broker's fees on the sale of the property.

In 2020, William and Margaret McMorrow made an offer to MLT to receive a house in Andover, Maine. The net proceeds of the sale will go towards conserving more land, taking care of our current holdings, and advancing other key MLT programs.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Kirk Siegel, Executive Director ; kirk@mahoosuc.org; 207-824-3806



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