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New Member Renewal

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Three Rivers Land Trust

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Thank you for your support.

Three Rivers Land Trust
PO Box 906
Acton, Maine 04001-0906



HORIZONS

2008 Winter Newsletter
FOCUSING ON THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE
Three Rivers Land Trust (TRLT) • Post Office Box 906 • Acton, Maine 04001-0906



A Letter from Red Wing Farm

Our farm, Red Wing Farm, has been in our family for several generations and for over two hundred years, as noted by the National Bicentennial sign on the front of our barn. We, Bea and Marjorie, both grew up here and went to local schools. I, Marjorie, have lived here most of my life, and I, Bea, returned to my home place when I retired after working many years in the Boston area.

We have enjoyed living on the farm; hiking on old wood roads; snowshoeing a half mile up into the woods with our cat following us, where we would see a deer yard; seeing a little spotted fawn with its mother; maybe sighting an occasional moose or pileated woodpecker. It has become not uncommon to see flocks of turkeys roaming the fields as well as taking advantage of the bird feeders, and to see tom turkeys all puffed up with fanned-out tails come springtime. We are also seeing mysterious, unidentifiable tracks in the snow, maybe raccoon, maybe fox, possibly bear or moose. Our land connects with a large 450-acre piece under a conservation easement, so the animals have free run for several miles. We feel that encourages the wildlife.

We have enjoyed gardening, bird feeding, and bird watching, especially the woodcock with its unique courting habit in the springtime. Come dusk he spirals upward and circles the circumference of



our thirty-acre field in hopes of attracting his prospective mate. He flies full circle and then lands exactly at the point he started from, making his buzzy mating call as he descends.

Another wildlife treat that we have found exciting is the "piebald" deer who grazes in our field along with other deer, seemingly unaware that he is so odd looking with his black and white patches, nor do his companions appear to notice that he is quite spectacular. They all munch together complacently.

These activities have made this place home to us, and when we thought about it as we got older we sometimes wondered what would happen to this place, the home of our ancestors.

Our father, Walter Lord, came close to mortgaging the place in 1939, which was next thing to a death-knell in those days, when he lost thousands of young chickens on range in Connecticut during the 1938 hurricane. He had run up a big grain bill on credit with the intention of paying it off when the chickens matured. With the loss of the chickens his only sizable asset was his property and the timber on it, which he sold. He was about to mortgage the land when a family member offered him a loan. He accepted the loan and spent many years thereafter paying it back. This was a close call, but the farm was saved.

Stephen Lord, Walter's father, worked with physical limitations all his life, suffering with sciatica from a bullet wound he received in his leg during the Civil War. He managed to keep the farm going, become a house painter, and raise a family even though he lost his wife at a young age.

John Lord, Stephen's father, was raised an orphan, and managed to buy piecemeal the parcels of land making up this from his brother-in-law. He also bought the homestead of Daniel Downs,

the original settler of the farm in the 1780's. He paid him a sum of money and agreed to take care of him and his wife for the rest of their days. John Lord married four times, having the misfortune of losing three of his wives.

Another early grandfather whose family suffered loss was Stephen Downs, Daniel's son. He died at the young age of thirty-six, leaving a wife and seven children. Three of the children were sisters who became John Lord's wives, thereby making the Lord-Downs family connection. At the time of Stephen's death he owned all the parcels of land that make up the farm today, and John Lord was able to acquire them later.

As we reflected on these family histories, and the trials and tribulations that the grandfathers endured, we felt a certain obligation and responsibility to keep the farm intact; we didn't want to see it go the way of so many old farms today. Our appreciation for the perseverance and persistence of our forefathers led us to search for a way that would secure the future.

We learned about Three Rivers Land Trust from a newspaper item and contacted them about a conservation easement. We wrote many letters back and forth, mostly with Madge Baker, asking many questions -- would this be agreeable? would that be permissible? We received lots of help and encouragement along the way from both Madge and Carl Davis. They made us many visits until we finally came to an agreement about all the ifs, ands, and buts over a period of more than four years. We now feel that our home's destiny is secure, and we thank Three Rivers Land Trust for their part in it.

Marjorie Lord Blood
Beatrice Lord
January 12, 2008



Three Rivers Land Trust Annual Report

2008 is here! Another year has brought us the task of reviewing our progress as a land trust. 2007 was an incredible year for growth, not only in the number of landowners we were able to help but also in organizational strength.

Easement activity: We began in 2007 with the satisfaction of helping Ruth Boothby place a conservation easement on her farm, Grand View Acres in Shapleigh. Through the year we have managed to increase the number of conservation easements we hold on behalf of area landowners from five to eleven. Plus, the Shapleigh Town Forest easement is written and waiting for the Town's voters to approve. There are an additional ten or eleven projects that are making progress on our agenda as well.

In January of last year we began the process of reviewing and updating our By-laws. Our annual meeting was snowed out on Valentine's Day, but rescheduled with a good turnout and a very interesting presentation by Steve Clark, local author and long time member and past president of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. During March, April, and May we began to think about our fund raising auction, continued to work on By-laws, and started the process of assessing the land trust using the Land Trust Alliance's (LTA) Standards and Practices. Our first efforts involved a Board evaluation form and discussion of our policies on ethics and conflict of interest. The consensus was reached that our By-laws and conflict of interest policy guidelines comply with the LTA Standards and Practices.

In June we had a special members meeting with an excellent presentation by Attorney Bonnie Lounsbury and Adrian Wadsworth. They raised the core question of what are we REALLY trying to protect? A lively discussion was followed by adoption of the amendments to the By-laws by a quorum of the membership.

During July we began our involvement with the Maine Land Trust Network's (MLTN) Circuit Rider Program. For this program each director received the LTA workbook,

Assessing Your Organization Using Land Trust Standards and Practices. Each of us went through the book and answered the questions as well as we could. Deb Chapman from MLTN is our circuit rider and she took the books, compiled our answers, and came up with an outline of our organizational strengths and weaknesses. From this report, we are developing a strategic plan for the next three to five years. This is going to be an important tool as we progress into 2008.

August and September were consumed by our planning and hosting of the annual silent auction at McDougal Orchards. We also held a walk on a lovely parcel on the Salmon Falls River in Lebanon and had the good fortune of collaborating with a terrific group of Americorps volunteers on some trail work in Alfred's Shaker Woods and at Acton's Mary Grant Preserve.

October, November, and December saw more work on the strategic plan and an urgent push to complete the easements on the Prevoir and Lord-Blood properties. We also completed stewardship visits and walked a beautiful property in Shapleigh. In December we had special guests, Zack Steele and Tin Smith from Wells Estuarine Reserve who made a great presentation on their project, "Sanford Land Conservation Plan". We look forward to collaborating with them in the future.

As you can see it has been a busy and active year. We are now proud to have completed eleven easements on 900 acres. We also realize that we need to find more people who are interested in our vision and willing to volunteer- let us know your interests.:

Board Member
Writer
Trail Builder
Trail Monitor
Trail Maintenance
Stewardship
Advertising
Fundraising
Outreach
Party Planner
Outing Organizer
Membership
Grant Writing
Research

Senate Passes Tax Incentive

December 14, 2007

Dear Three Rivers Land Trust Members,

This afternoon the Senate passed a Farm Bill that includes a provision making the new tax incentive for conservation donations permanent. This is a great step forward in our campaign for the new incentive.

We are very grateful for the leadership of Senators Max Baucus and Charles Grassley for having moved this forward. This victory was only possible because of the many land trust leaders across the country who weighed in with their Senators on behalf of this conservation milestone.

This is not the end of the process. A final bill will require a House-Senate conference in January of next year. If the conference approves the Senate provision, it will be made retroactive to January 1 of 2008.

Russell Shay
Director of Public Policy
Land Trust Alliance

Thank You to All Business Donors for our 2007 Auction

Giles Farm
Fall's Agway
Conant Realty
Wolf Pine Farm
Ridley Farm Store
Acton Trading Post
Tom Otis Masonry
Flour House Bakery
Shapleigh Corner Store
Oak Hill Alpaca Farm
Springvale Nurseries
Corner Post Surveying
Pendexter Frame Shop
Seaglass Performing Arts
Great Brook Animal Care
Springvale Hardware Co.
Hazen Carpenter Tree Farm

Shapleigh Farm Conserved

Shapleigh Knoll Farm on Newfield Road in Shapleigh was purchased by Ron Prevoir in the early 1960's. He was attracted to what was the old Joseph Beal homestead by its special character created by the stream on the property and the scenic and agricultural value of the land. Today, resulting from Ron's patient care and maintenance of the farm, it is one of the last remaining lots in the area with over 1,200 feet of road frontage.

Early on, Ron began to restore the buildings, which dated from the 1830's. Over the years, he has created a homestead that is worthy of conserving as a tribute to its original owner. Since purchasing the land, Ron has maintained a working farm, raising many award-winning Border Cheviot sheep. Along with the domestic animals, Ron developed a compassion for wildlife, attracting many winged and four-legged creatures to his doorstep.

Not long ago, Ron purchased an adjacent forested parcel of 35 acres abutting the 6 acre home lot. This additional land adds to the reasons for conserving the property, since it helps to complete a wildlife corridor between the Vern Walker Game Reserve and the Waterboro Barrens land managed by the Nature Conservancy.

The maintenance of the agricultural value of the homestead and the improvement of the scenic and wildlife corridor are of great importance to Ron. For these concerns and because of his love for the field and forest in his care, Ron has chosen to place conservation easements on Shapleigh Knoll Farm and Shapleigh Knoll Forest to assure the land is maintained for future generations in accordance with his wishes.

With this gift, Ron helps to paint a picture of his community's future, a fitting gift from Shapleigh's artist in residence. Thank you, Ron.

Shapleigh Town Meeting to Consider Conserving Town Forest

The Square Pond bald eagles have given us one more compelling reason to conserve the roughly 500 acres making up the Shapleigh Town Forest. The eagles use the Town Forest as a preferred place to eat and rest.

At the present time, the Town Forest and Town Beach could be sold off in bits and pieces whenever Town Meeting would like to raise additional revenue. Faced with this reality, the Shapleigh Town Forest Trustees, the Selectmen, the Conservation Commission, the Three Rivers Land Trust, and others who cherish these places are asking the Town Meeting in March 2008 this question: does the Town want to keep intact forever the Town Forest and Town Beach by means of a conservation easement?

The conservation easement, as proposed, does not change the ownership or operation of the Town Forest and Town Beach in any respect. The easement would permit the Town to harvest trees when and where the Trustees deem suitable. It would permit the Town to use suitable Town Forest property for gravel extraction and water extraction, and to relocate town roads through the property. Additionally, it would permit the Town to make appropriate changes to the Town Beach lot to enhance its public use. What the easement prohibits is selling off any acreage in the Town Forest and Town Beach for private commercial and residential development.

We believe the Shapleigh Town Forest is a precious place that, thanks to thoughtful management, brings in revenue while simultaneously protecting a remarkable variety of valued resources, not the least of which are the bald eagles and water quality in our lake watersheds. Therefore, we hope the voters of Shapleigh will support this Town initiative in March.

Volunteer Opportunity: Trail Stewards for Acton and Alfred

The Three Rivers Land Trust would like to find local people to help us visit two trails which are under easements and report any needs or problems. One trail is on the Shaker Woods Reserve in Alfred and the other is on the Mary Grant Nature Preserve in Acton. Stewards can adopt the trails, visiting alone, in pairs, or in small groups. The volunteer stewards walk the trails a few times each year and let us know if they need attention using a simple form. Stewards may also help with basic maintenance such as removing fallen branches or minor cutting back of side growth. When

heavy work is needed, the trust can plan a volunteer event to get it done.

Other volunteer activities: Do you like meeting others interested in conservation? Would you like to learn more about the Trust? We sponsor public tables/events at the Acton Fair, Open Farm Day, and the Alfred Festival Day. Come learn about the Trust and help staff these tables; get a chance to meet and discuss conservation issues in our area.

If you think you might be interested in volunteering, give us a call.

Sanford Notes

Tin Smith and Zack Steele were special guests to present a Wells Estuarine Reserve project called Sanford Land Conservation Plan. The goal is to get the town of Sanford-Springvale involved in conservation of the five estuarine watersheds and two public water supplies that have headwaters passing through town. Four of the five rivers are on the Maine Department of Environmental Protection priority list for non-point source pollution due to contamination or vulnerability as source water.

A desire to incorporate water quality and habitat protection into its economic development strategies is motivating Sanford to examine its existing resource conditions, ordinances, and comprehensive planning priorities. This planning project will be a community planning process that will use maps and 3-D visuals to help in evaluating and prioritizing land conservation.

This two year project was conceived as a result of the public forum that Three Rivers Land Trust and Mousam Way Land Trust held in the fall of 2005. The idea is to design a conservation plan that satisfies the needs of the town government and community. It is vital to build public support so that Sanford can meet its resource stewardship obligations.

This proposal is funded by Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Technology, which is a partnership between the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and the University of New Hampshire.

This project is a necessary step forward in our progress to educate, interest, and motivate the public and its governing bodies in the importance of protection of our local natural resources.