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 tom turkey all puffed up with fanned-out tails come springtime. We are also seeing 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 its 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 compatriots 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 closest 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.

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. These 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 received a lot of help and encouragement along the way from both Madge Baker and Carl Davis. They made us many visits until we finally came to an agreement about all the ifs, ands, and buts 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 feel that our home’s destiny is secure, and we thank Three Rivers Land Trust for their part in it.

Bea and Marjorie Lord

Three Rivers Land Trust

January 12, 2008
Three Rivers Land Trust Annual Report

2007 is here! Another year has brought us the task of reviewing our progress as a land trust. 2007 was an incredible year for growth and 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. Gran Ron 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 at least 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 attendance and a very interesting presentation by Steve Clark, local artist 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 and the role of our By-laws, and started the process of assessing the land trust using the Land Trust Accreditation (LTA) Standards and Practices. Our first efforts involved a Board evaluation form and discussion of our policies and procedures. Assessing our By-laws, and conflict of interest policies guided all of our discussions and came to a consensus that our By-laws were not meeting the expectations of our landowners and need to be revised. We began with basic maintenance such as removing fallen branches or minor maintenance of the farm, it is one of Ron’s priorities.

Deb Chapman from MLTN is our circuit rider and 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 Americancorps volunteers on some trail work in Alfred’s Shaker Woods and at Acton’s Mary Grant Preserve. In December we had a sold out presentation by 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 values:

Thank you to all our 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 Passed 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 have been working in partnership with 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 Shaw
Director of Public Policy & Trust Alliance

The Square Pond bald eagles have given us one more compelling reason to conserve the roughly 500 acres managed by 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. The Town Meeting would like to raise additional revenue. Faced with this reality, the development of the Shapleigh Town Forest by 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 the Town Forest and Town Beach by means of a conservation easement?

It is proposed, as proposed, does not change the ownership or operation of the Town Forest and Town Beach. The easement will 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 additional uses. Finally, it would permit the Town to make appropriate changes to the Town Beach to enhance its public use.

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

The maintenance of the agricultural and rural heritage and the improvement of the scenic and wildlife corridor are of great importance to Ron and his family, 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 and fitting gift from Shapleigh’s artist in residence. Thank you, Ron.

Shapleigh Town Meeting to Consider Conserving Town Forest

The 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 Coastal Estuaries Planning Program and the Protection priority list for non-point source pollution due to contamination or as sources of water quality. A desire to incorporate water quality and habitat protection into its planning and decision-making is motivating Sanford to examine its existing and potential resources, conditions, options, opportunities, comprehensive planning priorities. This planning project will be a community planning process that uses 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 forums 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 future for the town and its community. It is vital to build public support so that Sanford can meet its responsibilities to its resources.

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, inform, and motivate our local residents and its governing bodies in the importance of protection of our local natural resources.