Thank you for your support.

Three Rivers Land Trust
Focus on the Preservation of Open Space
Three Rivers Land Trust (TRLT) • Post Office Box 906 • Acton, Maine 04001-0906

Important Conservation Tax Benefits
Extended for Landowners
(reproduced and adapted from Maine Coast Heritage Trust)

Recent federal legislation temporarily extends tax benefits to Maine landowners considering voluntary land conservation agreements such as conservation easements.

- Raising of the income tax deduction a donor can take for the easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income in any year to 50%
- Extension of the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions from 5 to 15 years
- Allowing qualified farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners to deduct up to 100% of their income each year
- Under the previous law, a landowner with an adjusted gross income of $50,000 a year who donated a conservation easement valued at $500,000 could take a $15,000 deduction for the year of the donation (30% of AGI) and an additional five years - a total of $75,000 in tax deductions.

The extended law allows that same landowner to deduct $25,000 for the year of the donation (50% of AGI) and for an additional 15 years - a total of $400,000 in deductions. If the landowner qualifies as a farmer or rancher, he could deduct up to 100% of his income and pay no federal income tax for ten years.

These tax benefits are the most sweeping changes to conservation tax law in two decades, and offer an unprecedented opportunity to conserve wild places and working landscapes that are such an integral part of Maine’s quality of life. The provisions allow modest income landowners to deduct much more than they could previously, bringing farms to the tax code.

Voluntary conservation agreements, or conservation easements, have been a popular tool in Maine for decades, allowing families to conserve the land they love for public benefit, while keeping the land in private ownership.

To learn more about these or other conservation options, please contact us or visit our website at www.lta.org. For more detail on the tax incentives for landowners, please visit the Land Trust Alliance website at www.lta.org.
Three Rivers Land Trust Annual Auction

The Three Rivers Land Trust Annual Auction will be held on Saturday, Sept. 13 and Sunday, Sept. 14, at McDougall Orchards on Hanson’s Ridge Rd. in Sanford.

Please come and enjoy a hot supper on Saturday and a brunch on Sunday, provided by the York County Farmers Network. The Network is a group of farmers and friends dedicated to supporting local agriculture. Serving times for a homemade supper on Saturday the 13th are from 5 pm to 7 pm, at $10 per person, and Sunday brunch will be served from 11 am to 1 pm.

The local Blue Stream Band will entertain you with two sets of music on each day of the auction. This group, that draws its roots from jazz, early rock, fusion, and funk, placed well in this Spring’s Maine high school band competition.

The auction will contain many items, old and new, generously donated by our friends, members, and area businesses. Items will be sold either by silent auction or direct purchase. Local artisans will be on site demonstrating their crafts.

Your entry fee of $5 (good for both days) helps us to support your local musicians and provide you free desserts, including homemade pies, cakes, and cookies, as well as coffee and ice cream. Kids can pick apples, go on a hayride through the orchard and fields, or practice for Halloween with a disguise by our local make-up artist.

With your support of the auction this year, you will be helping to provide the Trust with the resources to fulfill our mission: “To preserve and protect forever such valued natural resources as lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, agricultural lands, historic sites, scenic places, and wildlife habitat in the inland communities of York County, Maine.” With the help of the community, we have worked with towns and individual landowners to conserve over 1000 acres of field and forest lands in the future. We thank you for your continued support and hope to see you on Saturday, Sept. 13, from 1 to 7 pm, and Sunday, Sept. 14, from 11 am to 4 pm.

If you would like to donate an item for the auction, please call Carl Davis at 636-1714.

Work With Local Lake Associations

At our formation as a nonprofit in 2000, the Three Rivers Land Trust (3RLT) board members recognized the importance of the local lake associations’ efforts to safeguard lake water quality.

Over the years, the Trust has been a supporting member of the Mousam Riverkeeper, Square Pond, Great East, and Wilson Lake Associations. We are there to help at town meetings when there are lake water quality initiatives needing support.

Our annual message to the lake associations has always included our readiness to help in any projects involving conservation of lands in the lake watersheds.

Protected watersheds, either in the form of undeveloped forest or properly designed development, with performance standards in place to alleviate erosion and sedimentation issues (particularly on roads and driveways) are key to assuring good water quality for the future.

The Land Trust often advocates for conservation measures in this vein.

To our friends in the lake community, we thank you again for your support and willingness to work together. Please contact us anytime with questions or comments by contacting a local board member (names and addresses are on the last page).

Madge Baker Receives Conservation Award at Acton Fair

In 1999, after years of research and writing, Madge Baker published her history of York County agriculture, entitled Woven Together. In the spring of 2008, Madge had the opportunity to put her desire to conserve agricultural land into action and became a founding member and recording secretary of the Three Rivers Land Trust.

Three Rivers is the land trust active in Acton, Shapleigh, Lebanon, Alfred, and Sanford/Springvale. Its mission is to preserve and protect forest and farm land by ensuring that there will always be undeveloped, productive land in these communities.

Three Rivers Land Trust partners with crop, livestock, and tree farmers who believe in its mission. The Trust works together with these landowners to draft a conservation easement document which carefully lays out how the owner wishes the land to be protected and how the Trust will maintain the land in the future.

Completed projects today include the Jones Farm, an over 500 acre plot in Acton and Lebanon owned by Roger and Karen Ridley, and the almost 500 acre Shapleigh Town Forest that is actively managed to improve the woodlands and generate revenue for the Town of Shapleigh.

Because of her tireless work on these and other conservation projects in the region, Madge was one of the four women presented with the Outstanding Achievement in Agriculture and Conservation Award on Saturday, August 23rd at the Acton Fair. The award was presented by Sen. Richard Nuss and Rep. Joan Nuss on behalf of the York County Agricultural Association. Lister Staples of Shapleigh, Rebba Tibbetts of Berwick, and Ruth Dunn of South Berwick were recognized for their contributions toward keeping the agricultural tradition alive and well in York County.

Conservation Easement on Shapleigh Town Forest

On March 11, 2008, Shapleigh Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved a warrant article calling for the donation of a conservation easement on the 485 acres of the Town Forest to Three Rivers Land Trust. The principal reason for donating the easement was to add a layer of protection to the Town Forest. The Forest is currently zoned Resource Protection and cannot be developed for private commercial and residential uses. However, the zoning can be changed at any time by Town vote. This conservation easement prevents Town Meeting from ever removing the easement restrictions on future development.

Reasons for wanting to limit future development of the Forest are multiple. Several prominent ones, as stated in the recorded easement, are:

- The Town Beach will always be open to the Townpeople;
- The Town Forest will always provide a renewable resource which generates income for the Town in addition to offering a variety of recreation opportunities;
- The Town Forest, located in the watersheds of both major lakes in the Town, will always assist in protecting water quality in these heavily used and exceedingly valuable watersheds;
- The Town Forest will always abut Maine’s Vernon Walker Wildlife Refuge, a conservation area of 3,950 acres, surrounded by Newfield, thus keeping open a large block of land for wildlife habitat and public recreation.

Three Rivers Land Trust thanks the Selectmen and Town Forest Trustees for their outstanding leadership and remarkable foresight. Without their steadfast support, the Forest would have remained vulnerable to piecemeal sale for cash.