



Membership Renewal Form

Membership Categories

Individual	\$15
Supporting	\$50
Business	\$75
Other	\$ _____

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Three Rivers Land Trust
and mail them to:
PO Box 906, Acton, ME 04001.

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Printed by:  Lincoln Press Corp.

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Thank you for your continued support.

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



HORIZONS

2007 Winter Newsletter
FOCUSING ON THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE
Three Rivers Land Trust (TRLT) • Post Office Box 906 • Acton, Maine 04001-0906

Grand View Acres Farm to be conserved



Several years ago, when working on our strategic plan, the land trust invited the public to attend a goal setting meeting. What came right to the foreground at that meeting was how much people treasure scenic, rural views -- views of fields, lakes, and mountains. Fortunately, the landowners of most of these special views also cherish them. Indeed, that is why the views are still present. Private landowners have maintained them for generations.

One such view is on the Owl's Nest Road in Shapleigh, when traveling north, just beyond Ridley's Farm Store. Almost twenty acres of hay fields lie in the foreground with house and barn at the road's edge. On days when the sky is deep blue, the unmistakable outline of Mount Washington rises in the distance. Thanks to the remarkable generosity of Ruth P. Boothby and her children this very special vista will never be obstructed by buildings, and the agricultural fields will always remain ready for planting.

The farm, which had belonged to Joseph Hasty in the 1800s, was purchased by Ruth's grandfather, Albert M. Mann, in 1885. The farm was passed down from him to Ruth's parents. She grew up there. More recently, Ruth's family has made their home there. But before that could happen, Ruth's husband, E. Harry Boothby, worked as a teacher and administrator in the Massachusetts public school system. For many years, therefore, the

family could only spend summers on their farm. Eventually, Harry retired, and the family became year-round Shapleigh residents. In fact, he did not retire but continued for a number of years to teach and fill in as a school administrator in Sanford and Acton. He also became an active community volunteer. His most visible role was as Town Meeting Moderator.

In recent years, the fields have been cared for and mowed by Shapleigh residents, Mike and Elsa Cook. The wood lot of almost 100 acres has been carefully managed in a sustainable manner by forester Peter Klachany, also a Shapleigh resident.

With the acceptance of a conservation easement, a land trust takes on the responsibility of carrying out the owner's wishes forever. In this case, Ruth wants to preserve the fields, trees, and view more than the buildings. Therefore, the easement allows considerable alterations to the existing structures, but no degradation of the fields and forest.

To carry out our responsibilities as described in the easement with Ruth Boothby (and any easement we accept), it is standard practice that we set aside funds into our Stewardship Fund to provide the money needed to meet our long-term costs and obligations.

This money will provide assistance in maintaining and managing the property. The funds may also be used for monitor-

ing on an annual basis and to provide for a legal defense fund if the terms of the easement were to be challenged. We have determined that we must add \$2000 to that fund to assure protection of this property in the future. We ask our friends to consider that contributions to this fund are tax-deductible and we welcome your support.

Three Rivers Land Trust Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held on February 14, at 6:45 pm, at Springvale Library, on Main St., Springvale, with a snow date of Feb. 28. It will be open to the public and we encourage anyone interested to attend.

This year's speaker, Steve Clark, is a retired teacher, a past president of Maine Appalachian Trail Club, a current instructor at Senior College, and author of several books, including *Following Their Footsteps*, a *Travel Guide and History of the Expedition to Quebec*. He lives with his wife in Shapleigh.

He will talk about recreational trails and their benefits for organizations working to protect open space, as well as the value of volunteers to nonprofit groups such as the Land Trust.

Notes from the President

During November, Bill and I went over to North Berwick and walked up the Bauneg Beg Mountain Conservation Area trail. This reserve is owned by Great Works Regional Land Trust. A clear day afforded us great long views from south of Mount Hope. The trail was a bit wet at the bottom from all our fall rains and then has a good long steep grade. Near the peak there is a fork with an easy ascent to the left and a more challenging one to the right. I strongly recommend the hike.

It is hard to believe that the land trust began working on our by-laws seven years ago. Now as we review them it is good to realize how far we have come, how much we have learned and how much we have achieved.

On December 29th we signed an easement with Ruth Boothby to conserve her farm of approximately 115 acres "Grand View Acres" on Owls Nest Road in Shapleigh. After the signing at Shapleigh Town Hall, I went by the farm on my way to an errand in Waterboro. It was a crystal clear cold day and there across Ruth's fields, I was delighted to see the stunning, majestic view of snow covered Mt. Washington and the Presidential Range. It is certainly a grand view! We wish to thank Ruth Boothby for her clear vision towards a better community, and her generous spirit which has brought it into being, with the donation of this conservation easement to the Three Rivers Land Trust.

So now we end the year with easements on six properties with a total of 737 acres conserved in our five towns. Looking forward to 2007, we are grateful as we work with several of our friends on conservation easements to assist them in fulfilling their wishes concerning how their land will be cared for in the future.

A special thanks goes out to Madge Baker, whose persistence, talent, and skill have held a vital role in all of our easements and the other doings of the land trust.

Jean Noon

"Every morning I awake torn between a desire to save the world and an inclination to savor it. This makes it hard to plan the day." -- E. B. White

Expanded Tax Incentives for Conservation Easements

In 2006, Congress approved expanded federal income tax deductions for conservation easements donated in 2006 and 2007. Individual taxpayers donating an easement can claim a charitable deduction of up to 50 percent of their adjusted gross income (up from 30 percent) with the remainder eligible to be carried forward for up to 15 years (increased from 5 previously). Easement donors who before could not have deducted the full value of their gifts will now be able to deduct more of that value over a longer time period, and will not lose these benefits simply because their income level is modest. For example, someone with an annual adjusted gross income of \$50,000 who donates a conservation easement worth \$200,000 could deduct up to \$25,000 initially and an additional \$25,000 in each of the ensuing seven years, at which time their deductions would equal the appraised value of the easement. The benefits are even greater for farmers, who can deduct up to 100 percent of their adjusted gross income (assuming that 50 percent or more of their gross income comes from farming). The best source for more information is the Land Trust Alliance web site at www.lta.org, but you are welcome to contact us with any questions.

Book Corner : The Brookings Report

A Maine based citizens group, GrowSmart Maine, was formed three years ago to create alternatives to suburban sprawl. The organization grew in strength and recently announced the release of a study entitled: "Charting Maine's Future." Developed with the input of many Maine citizens in the public and private sector and with the guidance of the Brookings Institute, a Washington based research firm, the work has been recognized for its insights into Maine's economy and government.

Our members who are familiar with the Brookings Report (as it has been named in the press) feel there are findings and recommendations especially relevant to the work of land trusts located here in York County, where rapid growth has occurred in the past decade.

The Report notes three trends: a growing population, a more diverse service based economy, and a loss of rural areas with a corresponding increase in suburban growth. The combination of these trends is fueling sprawl in our region. The authors note, "unplanned haphazard suburban development" is degrading Maine's special essence -- its pristine coastline and forests and its authentic towns."

The Report has a lot of statistics to support its findings. For example, in Maine, a

land area approximately the size of Rhode Island has been converted from open space to house-lots since 1980. Since 1990 roughly 650,000 acres have become developed with 65,000 housing units. Only two states in the U.S. have higher rates of land consumption per dwelling unit. It is no wonder our farm, forest, water, hunting, fishing, and open space resources are disappearing. Chapter II of the Report concludes: "In sum, the spread of anonymous suburban development threatens to gradually (or not so gradually) degrade Maine's quality of place at a time when quality of place means more and more" for the state's economic future.

One of the fiscal means proposed is the issuance of a 10 year, \$190 million revenue bond, entitled The Maine Quality of Places Fund, in order "to protect and enhance Maine's vivid townscapes, top-notch scenery, traditional uses of land, and tourism industry." The Fund "should be viewed as a base commitment to a sustained strategy of making sure Maine holds onto the beauty and small-town community that sets it apart."

It is the Report's emphasis on preservation of authentic Maine towns, open space, and "unforgettable places" that is of special interest to Three Rivers Land Trust. These are the very quality of life resources our

mission compels us to protect by assisting landowners who share our goals. If you are a conservation-minded landowner, please get in touch. If you want to read the entire report you can find it on line at www.growsmartmaine.org. Copies are available for circulation at both Springvale and Sanford town libraries.

*Remember to check
our website at
www.3rlt.org*

REMINDER!

**RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP**

**Please use the form on the
back of this newsletter**

Town News and Announcements

Acton

In early December a small group of Land Trust Board members along with selectmen Nancy Ruma from Acton and Ruth Ham from Shapleigh met with Senator Richard Nass to discuss legislative initiatives to support land conservation. At a follow up meeting on December 13th with the full Board in attendance, Richard led off the discussion.

He explained that he wants to introduce a bill calling for a percentage of the real estate transfer tax to be dedicated to

land and easement acquisition under the Land for Maine's Future program in the next Legislative session. He thinks there are too many other competing proposals for bond money. He admits he has no idea if his proposal will fly. The land trust board members were unwilling to vote to support this legislation. Their biggest concern was their normal allies, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust in particular, want a bond, because a bond seems the only way to set aside a significant enough amount of money to be able to protect larger parcels of land.

The Board of Directors was unwilling at this time to take up Senator Nass' proposal and thereby deflect some support from the bond initiative.

Richard agreed to sponsor a proposal to seek State conformity with the new piece of Federal Tax Code which calls for expanded tax incentives for conservation easements (see the article in this newsletter). He agreed to consider within the context of this bill, if it is deemed economically sound, that his provision becomes a permanent part of the State Tax Code.

Preserving Farmland

Eight ways you can help keep Maine farms growing:

- ☞ Support your local farmers by shopping at farmers' markets and farm stands and pick your own fresh produce.
- ☞ Ask your grocer or specialty market to stock locally-grown foods.
- ☞ Feature local produce at community meals and events.
- ☞ Encourage school lunch programs to purchase local foods.
- ☞ Support statewide, town and local land trusts.
- ☞ Vote for town ordinances that support agriculture and preserve farmland.
- ☞ Visit a farm - every July on Open Farm Day - to celebrate Maine's farming heritage.
- ☞ Start your own garden.