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HORIZONS

2014 Summer Newsletter

FOCUSING ON THE CONSERVATION OF OPEN SPACE

Three Rivers Land Trust (3RLT) • Post Office Box 906 • Acton, Maine 04001-0906

www.3rlt.org

A WALK AT WILLIAMS TOWN PARK



One of the gravel roads on the property



Park entrance where maps are available

Another 3RLT First Friday Foray was held on June 5, 2014. A walk at the Williams Town Park in Shapleigh was attended by a number of people. The 300-acre Park was given to the Town in 2011 and has been open to the public ever since.

It is an ideal place for family outings. The trails are gravel roads. If you venture off the gravel roads, there are benches along the way, short side trails through woods, healthy blueberry bushes at the top of the ridge, ponds to examine for frogs,

a productive vernal pool, and splendid views of distant mountains and the coast.

It is not difficult to find. If you have a new 3RLT Quiet Places map (it is #13), you take County Road off Back Road/Stanley Road and turn left onto the property after the pavement ends. There are maps available at the Park entrance. (If you do not have a Quiet Places map, visit our website and you will find it on our Conservation Map.)

The Park is also wonderful in the winter when non-motorized activities

are encouraged. On snowshoes, you will find a myriad of animal tracks unseen in milder weather. The Town hopes to plow a parking area this coming winter to facilitate the Park’s use.

Because of the abundant wildlife, the Park is visited often. Be sure to wear blaze orange if you visit during hunting season. Overnight use is not allowed except by special permission from the Selectmen.

The most important thing is to enjoy this amazing gift to the Town of Shapleigh, and to all of us.

MARC MOTORS “COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT” HIGHLIGHTS THREE RIVERS LAND TRUST FOR THE MONTH OF JULY

Each month, Marc Motors highlights a non-profit organization and donates \$5 for every oil change it completes that month. July was assigned to Three Rivers Land Trust and Marc Motors donated \$805 to our organization.

Thanks go out to Marc Motors and all who participated in the program.

Pictured here is Phil Royer, Service Manager, presenting the check to Fred Frodyma, Vice-President of Three Rivers Land Trust. Also shown are: Shaugn McCormack, General Manager, and Sue Lontine, Program Manager.



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



PRESIDENT'S REPORT SUMMER 2014

Dear Land Appreciators:

This year has certainly started out with exciting achievements for Three Rivers Land Trust.

The board has decided to hire its first employee, Ruth Gutman, to serve as our membership and out-reach coordinator. Ruth brings computer savvy, dedication, and a great ability to engage people to this part-time job.

We have two land acquisition projects on the front burners:

The first is to try to expand the Walnut Hill II property in Alfred to include some road frontage and the ability to have a few parking spaces off road.

The second is to begin the process of trying to conserve a large block of up to 2200 acres of land in Acton and Shapleigh from Goat Hill to Shapleigh Pond. We are hoping that the greater community will chip in with support for this important and beautiful block of land. We are dreaming large!

The Sanford Trails Committee (sanfordtrails.org) sponsored an incredible Farm to Farm walk in conjunction with Maine's Open Farm Day on July 27. Nine Farms were visited along a trail of 3.9 miles across fields and through the woods. Many hearty souls completed the circuit on foot despite a torrential downpour of almost an inch of rain around 12 noon. Loads of folks also drove the Farm 2 Farm route. Many thanks go out to Lee Burnet who did the lion's share of the organizing. We hope this event will be bigger and better under sunny skies next year. Check out the website to see pictures! www.3rlt.org

Work continues with Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative toward our accreditation to be completed with the Land Trust Alliance (lta.org) in the fall of 2015! This is an exhaustive organizational challenge to meet twelve policy and operational standards.

Hobb's Farm Trails have made great

progress thanks to Larissa Crockett's leadership of a shifting troupe of volunteers. We are hoping to have a great event during "The Great Maine Outdoor Weekend" September 26-28. Check out the website for updates on that event.

We will have our display again at the Acton Fair in the 4H building, so be sure to stop by!

As you can see, there is a lot going on. We have a terrific, gifted, and active crew of Directors who all volunteer to keep this organization rolling. Special thanks go out to the Frodymas for everything they do, and especially the work they do to get this newsletter out!

Best Wishes,

Jean Noon, President
(207)324-3733 noon@metrocast.net

THREE RIVERS MAKES A HIT AT THE ALFRED FESTIVAL

Three Rivers Land Trust teamed with the Alfred Conservation Commission to sponsor a booth at the 2014 Alfred Festival on July 19th. Often, adults and children don't pay much attention to conservation related booths at these events, choosing instead to favor food vendors, crafters, kiddie rides and amusements. This year was different, thanks to a plywood photo cut-out of a Moose, a Bear, and a Squirrel where folks could poke their heads through the display and have their faces implanted in one of these animal figures. George Main, carpenter and barn builder, was kind enough to fabricate this display and set it up at the festival. Needless to say, both adults and children found it exciting to have their picture taken.

This attraction allowed us to show the importance of preserving the land so kids from all over could learn the need to provide a habitat for these animals so future generations could have the chance to see these creatures in the wild one day. It also allowed our volunteers to have a discussion with the parents about the

role Three Rivers Land Trust plays in preserving the land. We found many families from outside the immediate area who were happy to learn of our land trust and walked away a little more knowledgeable and, hopefully, with a plan to become active members of our land trust.

REVISED THREE RIVER MAP

A new revised version of Three Rivers map "Quiet Places" has been printed. This new version identifies all of the key "Focus Areas" that have been identified by the state as areas of ecological significance. Each of the walking, hiking, and canoeing trails are identified on the map side and described on the back side of the map. These maps will be sold in various shops and other places of businesses in our area. Members can also request maps directly through the land trust.

This map is one of our primary fundraising items and helps us support our mission.

We wish to thank the sponsors who generously gave to help pay for the creation of the map:

**DEAD RIVER OIL
GENEST CONCRETE
MAPES OIL
MARC MOTORS
PATCO**

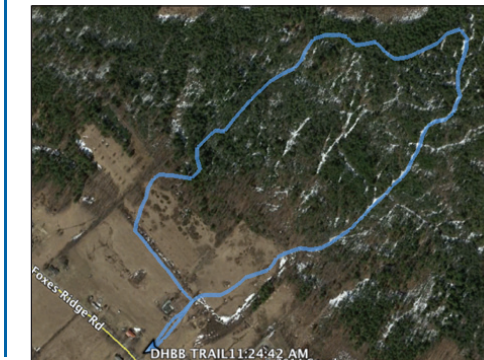


Abigail, Emily, and Tim Theobald

TRAIL WORK AT HOBBS FARM PROPERTY

This spring and summer a group of volunteers has been pulling up trees, clearing branches, cutting back vines and creating the first loop trail on the Hobb's Farm property. We have partnered with the LDS missionaries staying in Sanford and Wells on this long-term project. LDS Missionaries are expected to provide community service as part of their mission and 3RLT is fortunate to be part of these community service hours. Twice a month from 11:00-3:30 this often-changing team of young men and women meet with Carl Davis and Larissa Crockett to lop, chop, clear and chart the course of the trail. The trail starts at the top of the field and follows an existing logging road into the woods. Currently hikers can follow the trail to the spectacular wetland, return to a fork and follow the loop trail to return to the field through a different section of woods. Along the way hikers will enjoy wild flowers, mushrooms,

moss-covered rocks, gentle streams, a frog pond, an old and giant pine tree and quiet beauty in each turn. The five-year plan for this property includes at least two more loop trails, an outhouse, picnic tables by the pond and benches along the trail to enjoy especially pleasant views. Please join us on September 28, 2014 from 10:00 – 2:00 as part of The Maine Great Outdoor Weekend. The trail will be opened for a sneak peak at what Hobb's Farm will have to offer.



THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURE

Henry David Thoreau came to Maine in 1838. He characterized Maine as "one beautiful country". The Maine woods are New England's last true wilderness. Expansion of housing developments and changing patterns of land ownership threaten the very existence of this wilderness. Thoreau grumbled about the army of loggers who had even by 1857 invaded the North Woods. Clear cutting still occurs in regions of Southern Maine but is now being managed more carefully. Although urbanization and logging is a greater threat to the Southern regions of Maine, there still remain magnificent expanses of forests waiting to be hiked, fished and hunted. Thoreau loved the deep forests of Maine enough to want to keep them wild. He proposed the idea that the area should be protected as a national park. He wrote, "Not only for strength, but for beauty, the poet must, from time to time, travel the logger's path and the Indian's trail, to drink at some new and more bracing fountain of the muses, far in the recesses of the wilderness".

Until recently, the history of the region seemed to suggest that there had been a substantial amount of "poaching" in the Maine wilderness in the form of excessive timbering. Conservation efforts through Land Trusts and Conservation Commissions have had some success in controlling this practice. The Land for Maine's

Future, The Nature Conservancy, the Forest Legacy Program, including Three Rivers Land Trust and other non-profit agencies have conserved several hundred thousand acres of forest land, hundreds of miles of rivers and numerous farms. Yet, the region's future is still unclear.

Thoreau gave us some guidance here. He was the first American writer to voice the idea that we humans have a deep-seated need to connect with nature, and that nature is therapeutic. It can heal us.

And so not only do we need the wilderness of nature, the wilderness of nature needs us. We are the only ones who can protect it. We need the forests, farms, and waters of Maine, and those natural lands need our care and commitment. Please help.

A Land Trust survives, and thrives on memberships and donations. We are thankful for your support in Three Rivers Land Trust and hope you continue your membership in our organization. This year we ask one additional favor, tell your neighbor, friend or acquaintance about Three Rivers and ask them to join. It's easy, simply go to our web page, 3RLT.org and sign up.

Passages in this article were taken by permission from "wildness discovered - henry david thoreau in northern maine" by Tom Slayton.

3RLT was founded in 2000 and serves the towns of **Acton, Alfred, Lebanon, Sanford/ Springvale, Shapleigh**. Covering an area of 215.4 square miles, or about 137,856 acres, this area is the last region of York County to establish an organization that is committed to providing assistance to citizens interested in preserving their property and holding and maintaining easements forever.

Its Mission is *"To maintain, support and enhance the working landscape of farms and forest and such valued natural resources as lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, historic sites, scenic places, and wildlife habitat, in the inland municipalities of York County, Maine, by acquiring property in fee and conservation easements, and by garnering community support."*

3RLT has successfully conserved over 1,800 acres which includes easements from 10 landowners. Currently, there are several more easements in the works.

For more information visit the web site www.3rlt.org or call 324-3733.

**Three Rivers
Land Trust**

Please Save this Date
3RLT ANNUAL DINNER

**Friday, October 3 from 5:30 to 8:00pm
at the North Parish Congregational Church
893 Main Street, Sanford**

Members, Families, and Friends are welcome

The home-cooked dinner will be sourced from local farms. There will be a presentation on our recently acquired 200+ acre parcel, the Sousa Family Preserve, located in Alfred, ME.

THREE RIVERS WORKS TOWARDS ACCREDITATION

In December of last year, Three Rivers Land Trust received a grant from the “Maine Excellence Program” to pursue the process of achieving accreditation. This is a long term effort to show the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) that Three Rivers meets all of the high



Excellence · Trust · Permanence

standards set forth for land trusts. In Maine there are 98 individual land trusts, of those only 11 achieved accreditation. So what does accreditation mean? Taken from the Land Trust Alliance it means: “The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation. It recognizes organizations for meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring that conservation efforts are permanent.” Land trusts help conserve land that is essential to our health and well-being. When land trusts agree to protect land for the benefit of the public, in most cases they do so by promising that the protection is forever. The accreditation program verifies that the land trust has the policies and programs in place to keep this promise, either by caring for the land itself or transferring the land to an entity that can.

The process is not a simple one. Many land trusts have enough support to hire staff who work for the land trust in processing all of the data and paperwork that is necessary to maintain even the basics of land conservation. In our case, all of the work is being handled by our Board of

Directors who are all volunteers. The LTA has established a set of “Standards and Practices” that all land trusts *should* follow. Accreditation ensures that these Standards and Practices are diligently followed.

Three Rivers has submitted its application and has been accepted to register for accreditation. The process now involves assembling all of our records, updating all of our policies and procedures, categorizing and filing all of the paperwork associated with the four properties we own and the sixteen properties we hold easements on. If you remember how much paperwork is associated with closing on a property, then you know the magnitude of trying to maintain those documents for sixteen different properties. Our final application will be submitted in October 2015. Once our application is submitted, the Alliance will pour over the mounds of data and then visit our organization and investigate in depth our documentation on one or two properties we own. It is a monumental task, one we think worthy of pursuing.

Accreditation provides public recognition of land trusts that are engaged in the long-term protection of the land in the public interest. It increases public awareness of, and confidence in, land trusts and land conservation. Last year the Forest Society of Maine received its accreditation and this is what their executive director said about their success: “The Forest

THANK YOU! NEW MEMBERS:

Roger & Denise Allaire
Joe & Sue Barbarino
Jane Carmichael
Dave Carpenter & Jessica Gooch
Cathy Conley
Laurence & Veronica Dansereau
George Donovan
Carol & Rick Forbess
Patti Mitchem
Cynthia Reilly
Todd Schuerman and
Nancy Grace Lowenburg
Karen Smith
John Sylvester

GRANTS:

York County Working Forest
Protection Project
The Nature Conservancy
Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Society of Maine (FSM) is a stronger and more focused organization as a result of our participation in the accreditation program. The seal of accreditation provides people with a strengthened confidence in FSM and in the land trust community overall.” Alan Hutchinson, Executive Director.

TWO TOAD FARMERS SPREAD THEIR WINGS *At Red Wing Farm in Lebanon*

A big part of the Three Rivers mission is preserving working farms, so when sisters Bea Lord and Marjorie Lord Blood approached the Land Trust about protecting their 124-acre family farm in Lebanon, we were excited to work with them to preserve their family’s farming legacy. A conservation easement seemed a perfect fit for the family’s goals: the easement states that the property will be preserved as farmland in perpetuity, while allowing the family to live in the farmhouse and continue to use the property as they always have, owning the land, passing it on to heirs, and selling it if they ever choose to. The easement allows for timber harvesting, and the land can be farmed by the family or leased or sold to other farmers; it cannot be developed.



The easement was completed in December 2007, permanently protecting this picturesque and agriculturally rich landscape in a region where farmland is steadily dwindling in the face of development. In a letter to Three Rivers in 2008, Marjorie and Bea wrote:

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.

The Farm

Red Wing Farm was established circa 1820 and has remained in the family for the centuries since. It has primarily been a chicken farm, and was a major hatchery in the region until around 1986. Since then, much of the land has been leased for haying. Sisters Marjorie and Bea happily lived out their retirement years on the farm, enjoying the wildlife, the landscape and the family home where they both grew up. The sisters both passed away in 2013 – Marjorie in April at age 86, and Bea in October at 98 – leaving the farm to the next generation. The heirs faced the common dilemma of how to proceed with the old family farm in a way that was practical – none of them being farmers themselves – yet

honoring of the family legacy. Once again, the family reached out to Three Rivers, though this time it was the next generation making the call, asking for guidance as they move forward. Board President Jean Noon, a farmer herself, listened to the desires and concerns of the family and suggested the possibility of leasing the farmland while keeping the house for the family’s use. She put them in touch with local organic farmer Jordan Pike, and a new generation of farming dreams took root.

The Farmers

Jordan Pike, a Lebanon native, left a lucrative job to found Two Toad Farm in 2008 “because I recognized the need for more farmers and more local food production.” In the years since, he and partner Marybeth Stocking have grown certified organic vegetables on several different properties, leasing land that their growing operation quickly outgrew, or land where the infrastructure or public access proved inadequate. In 2013, frustrated with the constant moving and renegotiating of leases, they shrunk the farm down to ¼ acre on land they owned. “We swore we’d never lease again,” says Jordan, “...unless we could lease Red Wing Farm.”

He had been dreaming about farming that land since 2008, so when Jean Noon let him know that the Blood family would consider a lease, he and Marybeth tried not to get too excited. Last winter, Jordan told friends “Something great might be happening, but I’m afraid to even talk about it because it seems too good to be true.”

The Farming

But sometimes people really do meet their perfect match, and the same is true of farmers and farmland. In late winter, Two Toad Farm and Marjorie’s children – Penny Briant, Jane Bastey, and Leon Blood –signed a five-year lease with options for renewal. In February, with the fertile soil still buried under a thick layer of snow, Jordan and Marybeth started cleaning out the barns and chicken houses. They spent hours on Google Earth, mapping out the fields. They scoured seed catalogs and placed their seed orders, dreaming of the springtime thaw with perhaps even more anticipation than the rest of us.

When the weather finally warmed, the farmers seeded their greenhouse and began the long process of repairing the

old barns. With the help of one of the farm owners, surveyor Leon Blood, they laid out the fields. The seeds in the greenhouse sprouted. They ordered chicks – laying hens and heritage meat birds – to begin to repopulate the long-unused chicken houses. They meticulously vacuumed out the barns, every rafter and underneath every floorboard, as rigorous organic standards require that food animals and vegetables be protected from exposure to any old chemical residue from historic construction or cleaning. The sprouts in the greenhouse grew into small plants. They moved their equipment to the farm and purchased a new planter. They plowed the first field. The plants in the greenhouse made the trip across town, and were placed in the soil of Red Wing Farm, where their roots spread in the old farming soil and their leaves reached for the springtime sun.

The Food

Two Toad Farm now supports a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) that feeds 23 families, including the children of Marjorie Blood. Seth LaFlamme of Great Works Chiropractic and Wellness has been a Two Toad CSA member for the last three years; he “love[s] that they have held onto their vision to be good stewards of the land and to produce good food through so many moves and challenges.” He loves the food they grow, and enjoys his weekly produce pickup at beautiful Red Wing. You can buy a share next year at <http://www.twotoadfarm.com/>.

Two Toad’s bounty can also be found at three local Farmer’s Markets:

Sanford on Saturdays from 8am-12pm at Downtown Central Park

Springvale on Wednesdays from 1-5pm at RiteAid

Portsmouth on Saturdays from 8am-1pm at City Hall, 1 Junkins Ave

And keep an eye out at Red Wing Farm on Upper Cross Road in Lebanon, where they will soon be opening a roadside farmstand.

The Legacy

In early August, the Lord/ Blood Family held their annual family reunion at Red Wing Farm, where it has been held every year since 1976. Just prior to that, Two Toad had moved their first chickens, a flock of organic laying hens, to the newly cleaned chicken house. Though Two Toad is primarily a vegetable farm,

(continued on page 4)

TOAD FARMERS *Continued*

Marybeth has incorporated laying and meat birds into the farm as well. “I love raising chickens,” she says, “and now with our expanded flock at Red Wing, we have enough eggs to sell at the Sanford and Springvale markets.” In the future, Two Toad hopes to grow grain for the chickens to make the operation more sustainable. They also aspire to clean out the old incubators and breed some chicks... a nod to the farm’s hatching history.

Family members at the reunion were so pleased to see the farm revitalized: “Every family member I talked to was misty-eyed to see chickens here again,” recounts Jordan, his own eyes shining with pride as he shows off their abundant fields below a majestic rainbow; “We could potentially farm here for the rest of our lives.” We all hope this is the future Marjorie and Bea envisioned when they wrote “We now feel that our home’s destiny is secure, and we thank Three Rivers Land Trust for their part in it.”

Support our work supporting working farms and forests: donate online at www.3rllt.org, or mail a check to Three Rivers Land Trust, PO Box 906, Acton, ME 04001

CAMP TEACHES ABOUT TREES & WILDLIFE

While Mother Nature didn’t exactly cooperate, about 38 Lebanon kids between the ages of 6 and 12 spent a somewhat wet July morning learning about our native trees and wildlife. The Trust is a camp sponsor this year, and the event was a collaborative effort between John Bozak from Three Rivers Land Trust and Lebanon Conservation Commission, Melissa Brandt from York County Soil and Water Conservation District, and forester Erik Groves from Southern Maine Forestry Services. Groves spoke about being a forester and introduced some common tools such as a clinometer and calipers. Brandt had a box full of pelts and skulls that fascinated the kids, and Bozak and volunteer George Main, a local carpenter and portable sawmill operator, worked on some tree identification. Main also had some samples of yellow birch available and everybody sampled the wintergreen flavor. While a woods walk on the nature trail behind the Lebanon Elementary School was interrupted by a downpour, when the weather cleared we all got to enjoy a rousing game of “Hawks and Squirrels”, a tag game based on some predator-prey role-playing, to round out the day.