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Fred Holt, Treasurer alfhtreasurer@roadrunner.com		<b>Waterboro</b> Melissa Brandt 247-5167 lmdaig@yahoo.com

Website: [www.3rlt.org](http://www.3rlt.org)

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*Join or Renew Today. We need your help. Thank you for your support.*

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



Established 2000

# HORIZONS

2014 Winter Newsletter

## FOCUSING ON THE CONSERVATION OF OPEN SPACE

[www.3rlt.org](http://www.3rlt.org)

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

### WALNUT HILL PROPERTY ACQUISITION

On January 13, 2014 Three Rivers Land Trust closed the deal to acquire 214 acres of pristine forest land in the Walnut Hill Focus Area located in Alfred, Maine. This acquisition came after a successful proposal was submitted by the Forest Works! team through the Wetland Mitigation program run for the State of Maine by Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program (MNRCP) and administered by The Nature Conservancy.

The late Albert Sousa had always wanted to conserve the 214 acre parcel he owned because he and his family

pocket swamps and vernal pools create a landscape with a wide diversity of plant and animal habitats.

Most notably, the numerous wetlands serve as important habitat for the rare Blanding’s turtle.

The scattered stone walls and other stone assemblages indicate that at some point the area was at least partially cleared, probably for pasture. Larger pine trees in the area bear “catface”

scars, evidence that the trees were damaged but survived the Great Fire of 1947, which consumed thousands of acres in northern York County. (Local historians say Guinea Road on the southern edge of the property was used to build a fire break that prevented the fire from spreading further south.) Since the fire, the land has been reclaimed by forest. Little if any logging has been done since then. A field survey of the property was conducted August 22, 2012 by Maine Natural Areas Program ecologist

Kristen Puryear and field assistant Claire Ellwanger.

Their report characterizes the riparian area as dominated by red maple and hemlock, although green ash, black ash, yellow birch, black birch, elm, and black gum are also present to a variable degree. One black gum tree was core sampled and estimated to have been growing for 330 years or more, which dates it to at least 1682.



*Walking the Old Guinea Road on the Walnut Hill Property*

#### Future Plans

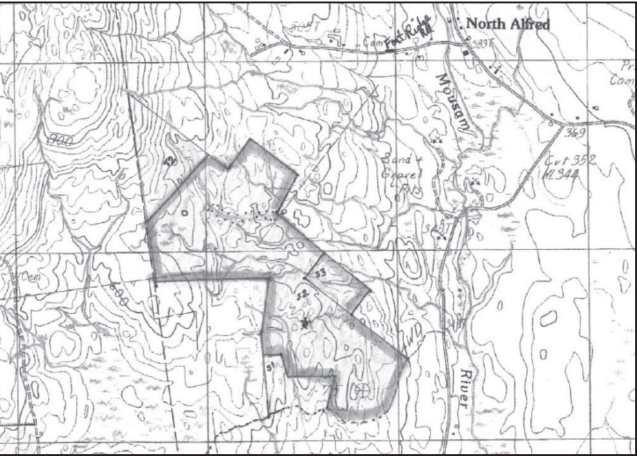
The agreement with The Nature Conservancy restricted the land trust from doing any logging on the property with the exception of maintenance from blowdowns and damage from storms. A management plan will be written that defines the condition of the property and outlines steps the land trust will take to ensure that the property is protected. As part of the land trust stewardship program, annual monitoring will be performed to assure that the property is not being used in a way that conflicts with the management plan for the property. Three Rivers is planning to establish a trail system on the property. The trails will be open to the public and rules established to govern the way the trails are used. In recognition to the conservation demonstrated by the Sousa family, a sign will be placed at the head of the trail paying tribute to the preservation of this valuable property by Albert Sousa.



*Finalizing the purchase of Walnut Hill property from the Sousa Estate. Pictured are Fred Frodyma, Vice president 3RLT, Ruth Johnson, daughter of the late Albert Sousa, and Jean Noon, President 3RLT*

loved to hike and hunt on that property and took many a Sunday afternoon hike in the forest throughout the years. Upon Mr. Sousa’s passing, his family attended several workshops conducted by the Alfred Conservation Commission and the Three Rivers Land Trust. During those meetings, the topic of conservation evolved to the point of an agreed upon purchase price for the land. A proposal was submitted and successfully approved.

This rugged, rocky, densely forested area has seen very little human disturbance over the centuries. The high density of stream drainages, several large wetland mosaics, numerous





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Land Appreciators:

It is hard to believe that Three Rivers Land Trust is beginning its 14th year! Oh what a ride it's been! 2013 was quite an important year for progress with some disappointments to keep us grounded. Thank you so much for being a part of Three Rivers Land Trust. We have accomplished a lot since our last newsletter, and it's all thanks to your support.

One successful project of note was the finalization of the Hutchins Forest Easement. Congratulations to Bill and Pat Hutchins and their family for protecting 125 acres of beautifully managed and exceptional forest in Shapleigh. Owners Bill and Pat Hutchins have worked continuously to preserve and enhance the un-fragmented forest, and they have earned income from the sales of wood and maple syrup. And thanks to Madge Baker for her persistence, expertise, and efforts to help.

Improvements were made to the 170-acre Hobbs Farm in Acton by Nils Pearson of Maplestone Farms, who has a five-year lease on 35 acres. Nils hays the fields to feed his farm animals, and in return has cleared and reseeded fields for future generations of farmers. He also created a parking

area to allow public access to the land, and made progress on the removal of invasive species like bittersweet. We are sponsoring an ice-skating and winter sports day on the property in mid-February to celebrate Great Maine Outdoor Weekend.

Walnut Hill II actually slipped into early 2014 to close, but most of the effort was in 2013. This property is 213.47 acres in the Walnut Hill Focus area, pretty close to our other property. The efforts of Fred Frodyma, Lee Burnet (Forest Works!), Carl Davis, and others successfully secured a grant from The Nature Conservancy and The Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program. This grant program is very competitive and we were very fortunate to be chosen.

During our 2013 annual meeting several new board members joined the trust bringing new energy and enthusiasm to our meetings and activities. Thank you Larissa Crockett, Helen Naylor, and Paula Frodyma.

Forest Works! has been an incredible achievement thanks to the efforts of Lee Burnet, Ruth Gutman, Marcel Pollock, and Fred Holt. Unfortunately the grant that funded it in the beginning is ending, and we are waiting to see if further funding will be awarded.

Looking ahead to 2014, we will

be holding an easement/succession workshop in March for landowners who are interested in learning more about the process. We will also continue with our "First Friday Forays" in which we complete a trail walk on one of our easement properties.

I hope you will join us. It is really fun to meet members!

Which reminds me of the lovely members dinner, masterminded by Madge Baker, and orchestrated by many other board members and volunteers. Thank you all for coming!

This summer we also plan to work with some of our local summer camps, getting kids out on the land and helping them learn about our rural traditions and heritage.

So it has been a super year, and we are eager to see what comes up in 2014! Thanks again for helping us to achieve our goals. Please keep in touch via Facebook and our e-newsletter, and we look forward to your continuing support!

Best Wishes,



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

## FIRST FRIDAY FORAY

Recently, the Board has decided to lead walks on Land Trust easement properties. This was the result of several of the newer directors wondering where our properties are, and some of the other information about them. The Board decided that our members and others might also enjoy seeing these great properties. The first

foray was to Lebanon and was held December 6, 2013. On that foray, we visited The Jones Farm in Lebanon and happened to meet up with Roger Ridley who owns and

operates the farm. He gave us an interesting update on the operations and their future plans. We next travelled to the Hobbs Farm, and viewed the pond as an exciting location for the great outdoors weekend skating party which will be held on Feb. 15th. Finally we went over to the Salmon Falls Reserve, which is owned by 3RLT and walked the trail and saw high water and the beautiful surroundings.

Our second foray was postponed due to the storm on the first Friday, and was actually held Jan. 17th.. This hike was a very pleasant winter walk in the Shaker Woods Reserve, which is owned by the town of Alfred and located off Stone Road. Along the way, we saw evidence of beaver activity in trees that were partially gnawed in an attempt to

fortify beaver houses that can be seen on Lake Estes in the summer months. Apparently, lightning had struck a very large pine tree as you can see from the picture. This was another memorable foray enjoyed by the children, dogs, and folks who love to get out to explore some new terrain.

Sign up for our e-news to keep posted on these walks at info@3rlt.org



## LOW IMPACT LOGGING SYSTEMS



Draft horses and industrial-size tree harvesters don't often work side by side, but they did last month in Limington in an unusual demonstration of low-impact logging systems. The demo was aimed at educating landowners about timber harvesting systems that leave light environmental footprints. About 55-60 people attended the morning-long show hosted by Francis Small Heritage Trust and assisted by Three Rivers Land Trust.

Horse loggers, John Plowden of Stow and Peter Hagerty of Porter, showcased a traditional system in which trees are cut with chainsaw, chained, and dragged by horses to a nearby landing. Their rapport with the horses and their nimbleness in snaking logs out of tight quarters without damaging standing trees was impressive.

Nearby, Brad Sanborn of Parsonsfield - sitting in a climate-controlled cab and manipulating levers like a video gamer - showcased the brute strength of a cut-to-length harvester. The machine handled trees like they were toothpicks, plucking them from stands, twirling them, stripping them of branches, chopping them into logs and stacking them neatly. In spite of its size, the cut-to-length harvester also leaves a light footprint because the logs aren't dragged out, but carried out in the bunk of a four-wheeled forwarder.

Forester Charlie Moreno was a tour guide extraordinaire and gave passionate explanations of the silviculture (controlling the growth, composition, and health and quality of forests) goals of the harvest.

Everybody got a chance to ask questions. Folks expressed admiration for the skill of the operators as well as appreciation for the education they received. Some of their comments are below:

-- "[We] were very impressed with the logging demonstrations. The organization was great--for the visitor, simply but clearly done--and most informative. Charlie was a good group leader and explained things well. That cut to length machine was amazing. Praise for all the groups that did the organizing."

-- "Today was a great opportunity to learn about these options for logging. We appreciate all the work that went into it."

-- "[We] found the small woodlot harvest event very interesting. Sadly, the horse harvest method is still economically impractical. Perhaps if the value of wood goes up ... The "star wars" (our term) machine that fells, limbs, cuts to length, and stacks in one fell swoop is amazing!"



## WALNUT HILL FOCUS AREA (Continued from page 3)

increased mortality. Racers have been killed by people and pets when they appear in yards. As a state-listed species, they are strictly protected from killing or collection as pets.

"The state rare **ebony bog haunter dragonfly** has also been documented from wetlands within this focus area. These dragonflies use small peaty wetlands to complete their life cycles. Reproductive sites

are typically small, acidic pocket swamps where patches of "Sphagnum soup" are interspersed with sedges, ferns, or shrubs. Although portions of these wetlands tend to dry up during summer months, some permanent open water generally persists. Adult dragonflies typically frequent upland forested areas up to several hundred feet from their natural wetland to bask and forage before returning to breed."

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](http://www.3rlt.org) or call 324-3733.

## COMING SOON:

A **FORESTWORKS!**

Destinations Map connecting you to the woods of western York County. The on-line map will identify outdoor places to visit as well as local woods-related businesses.





## THREE RIVERS LAND TRUST ANNUAL DINNER

Nothing brings out our membership like our home-cooked, turkey dinner. So Friday evening, September 27, we hosted just such an event. Although we are still learning just how much turkey dinner with all the trimmings 80 folks can eat, we hope we have that figured out. Therefore, we promise a full plate for the last person to arrive for this year's dinner.

We also think we mastered the task of running the dishwasher. This was our first dinner at the No. Parish Congregational Church in Sanford. Each Church dishwasher has its own peculiarities. Fortunately, Dr. Barbara McCall volunteered to give us technical and moral support. Her assistance was definitely needed and greatly appreciated.

Talks were given by Carl Davis describing the Hobbs Farm which was donated to the land trust, Pat Smith spoke about the Walnut Hill property in Shapleigh and John Bozak described the Berry Best farm in Lebanon. The event was filmed by Channel 5 in Portland and can be viewed on line.

We asked several businesses to make donations to the event, and they

graciously responded. The giant fall Mum plants from Springvale Nurseries were a spectacular addition. Winners of the mums went home with full arms and very big smiles. Pies from Night Owl Bakery donated by our favorite baker, Ellen Tarbox, were also given away to very lucky winners. Ice cream was donated by Shaker Pond Ice Cream and the Cider was donated by Gile's Family Farm. There were several donations we auctioned off, including a \$100 gift certificate to Springvale Hardware, a lovely basket made by Martha Chessie, lamb chops from Noon Family Sheep Farm, and a \$25 gift certificate to Berry Best Farm in Lebanon.

Other businesses made financial contributions, including SIS, Kennebunk Savings, Batchelder Bros. Insurance, and the law offices of Charles Nickerson. Their donations, plus the donations of food, and all the volunteer hours of planners, cooks, and cleanup crews resulted in our depositing about \$1500 into our stewardship fund.

Many, many thanks to all who participated in this enjoyable and successful event.



## 3RLT'S ANNUAL RAFFLE KICKS OFF THIS SPRING

We are pleased to announce that a donation of a popular Kindle has been given to 3RLT again this year. The Kindle is the small, reading device which allows a person to download books and store them on the Kindle for reading pleasure. 2013 was our first year of the Kindle raffle and with lots of volunteers selling raffle tickets, we raised money for 3RLT. This

year we hope to sell more raffle tickets. We need volunteers in Acton, Alfred, Lebanon, Sanford/Springvale, and Shapleigh to sell raffle tickets this summer and fall season. Please contact: Paula Frodyma PHONE #475-8142 or info@3rlt.org

**VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED**

## FARMER LIST

**Buy Local & Support  
Local Growers to keep  
farm lands viable!**

**Annette's Gardens, Perennials**  
Springvale 324-0331

**Applegate Deer Farm**  
Shapleigh 793-8677

**Berry Best Farm**  
Lebanon 457-1435

**Black Kettle Farm**  
Lyman 499-1093

**Blueberry Hill Farm**  
Acton 457-1151

**Carpenter's Christmas Tree Farm**  
Springvale 324-6869

**Gile's Family Farm**  
Alfred 324-2944

**Kelly Orchard Inc**  
Acton 636-1752

**Late Light Farm**  
Acton 477-2946

**Lavigne Strawberry Farm**  
Sanford 324-5497

**McDougal Orchards LLC**  
Springvale 324-5054

**Notre Dame Institute**  
Alfred 324-6612

**Oakhill Alpaca Ranch**  
Shapleigh 793-3414

**Ridley's Farm Store**  
Shapleigh 636-1068

**Rivard's Blueberry Farm**  
Springvale 324-5566

**Sanford Farmers Market**  
Central Park  
Saturday 8-12:00

**Shapleigh Knoll Farm**  
Shapleigh 247-6948

**Springvale Nurseries**  
Sanford 490-5543

**The Noon Family Sheep Farm**  
Springvale 324-3733

**Two Toad Farm**  
252-1103  
www.twotoadfarm.com

**Wolf Pine Farm CSA**  
Alfred 324-2357

## WALNUT HILL FOCUS AREA

Thanks to grants of state funds dedicated to preserving valuable wetlands and vernal pools, Three Rivers Land Trust now owns two large parcels in the state designated Walnut Hill Focus Area, Walnut Hill Preserve in Shapleigh and Sousa Preserve in Alfred. What follows is a description of this Focus Area published by the Maine Natural Areas Program. It tells us why the State would like to see some of the Focus Area remain undeveloped.

"The Walnut Hill Focus Area is a densely forested expanse of rolling uplands interspersed with a high density of stream drainages and several large wetland mosaics. Vernal pools and small pocket swamps are also numerous. All together the various upland forest types and the variety of wetlands create a landscape with a wide diversity of plant and animal habitats. Concentrations of pocket swamps and vernal pools in undeveloped landscapes are becoming increasingly rare in Maine. . . .

"Vernal pools are ephemeral wetlands that typically fill with water from snow melt and spring run-off and often dry out over the course of the summer. They offer critical breeding habitat for some species of amphibians and invertebrates such as wood frogs, spotted and blue spotted salamanders, and fairy shrimp. The seasonal nature of the temporary pools maintains a fishless environment conducive to the successful breeding of these animals. Vernal pools are also used as feeding and breeding habitat by many other animals such as spring peepers, grey tree frogs, and other common amphibians, as well as by several rare species including Blandings turtle (endangered), spotted turtles (threatened), and ringed bog haunter dragonflies (endangered). The amphibians and aquatic invertebrates that are dependent on these ponds for survival are an important food resource for other forest dwellers such as turtles, snakes, birds, and small mammals. . . .

"Populations of three rare animal species have been documented from the area:

"The wetlands and uplands in this focus area support the state endangered **Blandings turtle**. Blandings turtles are generally found only in the southern most part of the state where increasing development contributes to loss of habitat, habitat fragmentation, and loss of individuals at road crossings. Blandings turtles are most frequently associated with complexes of small, acidic wetlands and vernal pools in large, intact forested landscapes. They also use small

streams, shrub swamps, and wet meadows. Although these turtles spend most of their time in the water, they readily travel overland between wetlands during the spring and summer months. Upland habitats are critical for basking, aestivating (a period of late summer inactivity), nesting, and as travel corridors between wetlands.

"Blandings turtles have evolved relatively long adult life spans to offset the long time it takes to reach reproductive maturity and to offset high levels of nest mortality. Because of this unusual life history, Blandings turtle populations are at low densities, and thus populations are extremely vulnerable to any human sources of adult mortality. Road mortality and collecting for pets, for example, can be deleterious as the attrition of just a few individuals every year can lead to the long-term decline and extinction of a local population. The secondary effects of human development – increased predator populations, pollution, filling of small wetlands, and blocking upland travel corridors – also limit populations. Blandings turtles are strictly protected from take (collecting, killing or in possession) by the Maine Endangered Species Act.

"The **black racer** (state endangered) is the largest snake in Maine and may attain lengths of 6 feet. Maine is the northern extent of their range in the East. Although they were common as far north as Cobboseecontee Lake in the 1930's, they are now rare and their range is limited to York, Cumberland and southern Oxford counties. The black racer occurs in a variety of moist and dry habitats, including deciduous and coniferous forests; fields; woodlands interspersed with fields; and swamps or marshes. In southern Maine, open grasslands, power line rights of ways, orchards, old buildings, rocky ridges and the edges between forests and fields seem to be preferred habitats. Nesting sites include mammal burrows, rotting logs and stumps, and sawdust piles, and winter hibernation sites include mammal burrows, caves, rock crevices, gravel banks, and rotting logs and stumps. At the northern edge of their range, cold temperatures may contribute to hatchability of eggs and overwinter survival of adults. This species' numbers and range have declined drastically as agricultural land has reverted to forestland or has been developed. Habitat fragmentation results in increasingly small patches that can no longer support viable populations of the snakes. Increased road density may result in

(continued on page 5)

## THANK YOU!

**Our very special thanks to the following foundations which have awarded us grant monies so that we may continue our conservation efforts:**

Fields Pond Foundation

Emma B. Sewall Foundation

Main Natural Areas Program

Davis Foundation

Southern Maine Conservation

Collaborative

Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Land Trust Alliance

## NEW MEMBERS:

Frederick & Barbara Boyle

Penny Briant

Corinna Cole

Mike Fortier

Sean and Rachael Frodyma

Sandra & Roy Hutchinson

Luis Jimenez

Kennebunk Savings

Tom Plummer & Calista Kiley

Linda Lyman

Pete & Maria Marchant

Andrew McIntyre

Aleida Merrfield

Sanford Institution for Savings

Harvey Wallingford

Sally Webb

*Special mention goes to our youngest member, 1 year old Alice Terry, and her parents Carter & Emily Terry, who all enjoy visiting the Salmon Falls Reserve in Lebanon. Thank you!*