

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Categories

- ☐ \$1000 and above
“The Glenn and Betty Wildes Circle”
- ☐ \$500 Conservator
☐ \$250 Guardian
☐ \$100 Steward
- ☐ \$50 Sponsor
☐ \$30 Supporter
☐ \$20 Member

- ☐ New Member
- ☐ Renewal

Please make checks payable to:

Three Rivers Land Trust

and mail them to:

P.O. Box 295, Alfred, ME 04002 Phone: 207-324-3733

Join or renew online today at 3rlt.org/BecomeaMember.cfm

info@3rlt.org / www.3rlt.org

Memberships and contributions are tax deductible. ☐ Yes! Please add me to 3RLT’s email list

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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

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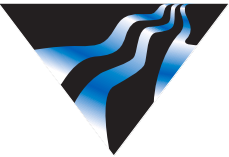
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Printed on Recycled Paper.
Printed by: Edison Press

Three Rivers
Land Trust



Established 2000

HORIZONS

Building stronger, healthier communities through land conservation

Three Rivers Land Trust (3RLT) • P.O. Box 295 • Alfred, Maine 04002 • www.3rlt.org



2018 Spring Newsletter

WINTER FUN AT CHARLIE’S HOUSE



Winter Great Maine Outdoor Weekend was a great success! This annual event is often plagued by snow storms or frigid temperatures, but the sunny and mild weather brought together over 40 people on February 17 to enjoy the trails at Charles Grubers’ property in Shapleigh. Charles, a longtime board member of the trust, left his property to us when he

passed away in 2016, and we have been discussing the best way to honor his legacy. We enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies in the beautifully restored barn, and enjoyed the trails through the woods and along the Mousam River. An additional bonus to the day was a visit from Scott Lindsay, Regional Wildlife Biologist from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and

Wildlife. Scott talked to the group about the many animal tracks one can find in our area, how to identify them, and then led us on a walk through the woods for a great afternoon of tracking. Thank you, Scott, and all who joined us – it was a really wonderful day!

LEBANON SUMMER CAMP KIDS
LEARN ABOUT INVASIVE PLANTS

Three Rivers Land Trust, the Lebanon Conservation Commission, and Melissa Brandt, District Manager at York County Soil and Water Conservation District, joined forces to teach summer camp kids in Lebanon about invasive plant species. Pictured here, Three Rivers board member Amy Titcomb leads a group in some hands-on exploration. This is our fourth year working with the summer camp, and we look forward to teaching them more about their natural world again this summer.



Three Rivers Land Trust
P.O. Box 295
Alfred, ME 04002





PRESIDENT'S REFLECTIONS

Coast Heritage Trust, Great East Lake Improvement Association, Wilson Pond Association, Square Pond Improvement Association, and all of the other grantors and individual donors for being such great partners!

Special thanks go to Carl Davis for his amazing volunteer time commitment to this project, and to Lee Burnett and Jerry Bley, our consultants, for their most valuable knowledge, advice, and negotiation skills.

When the former owners of Romac Orchards decided to sell, many of the local residents worried that the property, with its expansive views, would be subdivided for residential development. Goat Hill is one of the highest elevations in Acton, and offers stunning 360-degree views of nearby lakes, the Presidential Range and Mt. Washington to the west, and to the ocean to the east. 3RLT, MFT and Acton worked together to ensure that the property would remain in agriculture and become an important scenic site for everyone to enjoy. The protection

of the orchard parcel was dependent on the town, in collaboration with Three Rivers Land Trust, acquiring the summit of Goat Hill.

The eastern part of the orchard, purchased by a father and son who have worked at Romac and other Acton orchards over the years, was open again for its first season of picking last fall, and the western portion will be managed to produce apples for an existing hard cider operation (www.farfromthetreecider.com in Salem, MA – check them out!). Both farm parcels are now protected

by conservation easements, which will ensure this productive land remains available for farming and forestry in the future. The two easements involved the purchase of the development rights on the farmland and was funded by Three Rivers, MFT, and the 1772 Foundation. This purchase made the farmland affordable for the farmers.

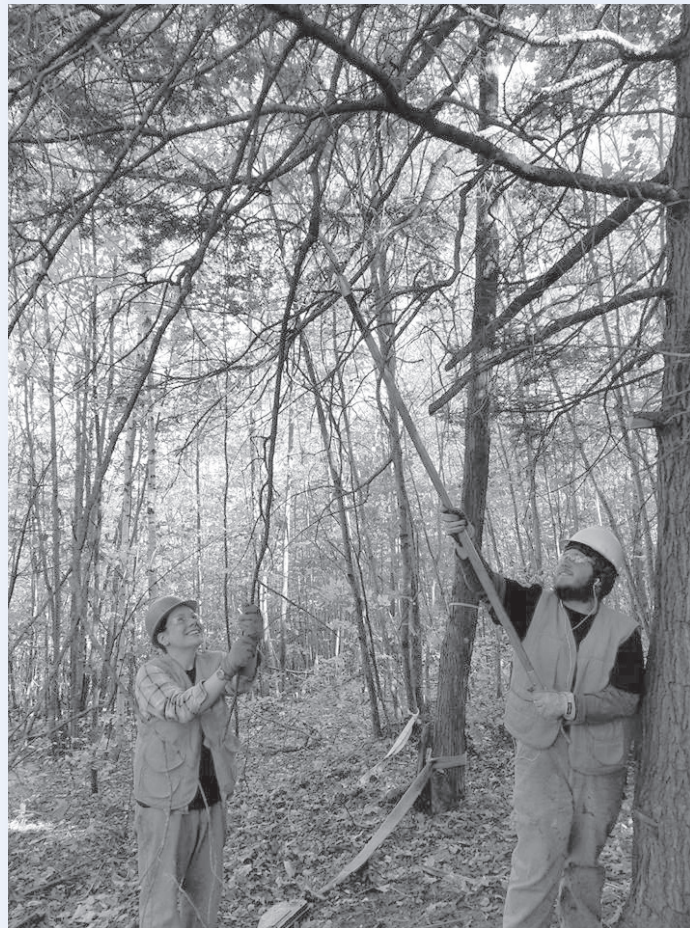
The successful purchase of the scenic summit parcel of 25 acres, now a town park, was made possible in large part by the town of Acton (pop. 6,000) passing its first-ever bond issue for conservation, and contributing \$25,000 from earnings of the town forest. Many generous donations from local and seasonal residents supported the land trust's contribution.

In addition, Acton received a federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to assist with the purchase and construction of a parking area and the beginning of a universally accessible trail to the hilltop. The Maine Conservation Corps and volunteers helped rough out the new trail to the top of Goat Hill in October. A 10-spot parking lot was also constructed. It's a ¼ of a mile up H Road from the old trail and entrance, which are now owned by the orchard.

In order to finish the trail and make it ADA-compliant for universal access, we have applied for several grants. We hope much of the work will be provided "in kind" by the MapleStone School in Acton. This non-profit school engages at-risk youth in York County in experiential learning and life skills. Through a grant, the students will be working on a wider network of trails on Three Rivers properties in Acton, Shapleigh, and other towns.

We will need to raise an additional \$30,000 to complete the trail. ADA compliance comes at a worthwhile price! We will keep you informed on the progress of the Goat Hill trail.

-Jean Noon, President



Maine Conservation Corps Volunteers work on new Goat Hill trail

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Thank you to all of you who have renewed your memberships for 2018! I feel such a great sense of joy and purpose when the replies to our year end appeals start flooding in, because this is the first indication that Three Rivers is going to have another great year. If you haven't yet sent in your renewal for the year, I hope this newsletter will remind you to do so now. **Every member counts** – whether you can contribute \$20 or \$1000 a year, it makes a difference. The grants we apply for to help fund our land conservation projects often require matching grants or a demonstration of community support, and membership is how we achieve both of these things.

I hope you will join us for some events this year. On May 9 we will hold our **annual meeting**. A brief business meeting will be followed by a discussion of next steps for our regional conservation plan. Many of you joined us on that snowy

night in February 2016 to discuss what is most important to you when it comes to land conservation and **your vision for our future**, and we hope you will join us again to see where we are two years later. We hope that members of our local conservation commissions, planning boards, select boards, and legislators will also join us.

Sunday, July 22 is Open Farm Day. Once again we will be serving a **locally-sourced and homemade breakfast** to kick off the **Springvale Farm Walk**. We are so thrilled to be a part of this amazing day and we hope you will join us. Breakfast starts at 8 AM at McDougal Orchards and goes until 9:30.

Other events are still in the planning stages, so please join us on Facebook or our e-news list to stay in the loop!

-Ruth Gutman

HANSEN POND - A NEW CONSERVATION PROJECT

This 270-acre parcel in Acton sits in the middle of several thousand acres of unbroken forest – a complex of wetlands, eskers and prime white pine timberlands. The jewel of the property is Hansen Pond, a shallow 30-acre pond accessible by paddling several miles upstream on the Little Ossipee River. A Maine Natural Areas Program ecologist spent one day on the property and documented abundant

birds as well as evidence of white tailed deer, moose, bear, musk turtle, raccoon, beaver, coyote, wood frog, pickerel frog, and green frog. "Overall, wildlife tracks, trails, beds, and markings were abundant across this property. Frogs of several species were particularly numerous," according to the ecologist's report. We look forward to sharing more about this property with you soon!



We appreciate our members, volunteers, sponsors, and grant funders! Thank you for helping us grow our membership – the backbone of our organization.

NEW MEMBERS & DONORS:

Ernie & Susi Alvino

David I Anderson

Jennifer Craig

Anna Desmond and Fred McLeod

Harland Eastman

Eric Ganeles & Marla Platt

Gail Geisenhainer

Jess Greer

Gus Hedden

Dale & Karin Johnson

Joyce Krahling

Susan Lajoie

Thomas Ledue

Kathleen MacLean

Patricia and Charles McIntire

Karen McManus

Barbara Minges

Alayna Morin and Steven

Marchessault

Janice Murray

Laurel Muse

Mark & Kathy Parenti

Gerri Pattison and Greg Byrer

Marcy & Jon Polletta

Daniel Puopolo

Garet & Glenna Richardson

Bill & Marji Kilgus

Stephen White

Square Pond Improvement Association

BUSINESS SPONSOR:

ReVision Energy

WHY DOES THE TURTLE CROSS THE ROAD?

Well to get to the other side of course! So many animal-lovers have gotten frustrated asking this question... we move turtles to ponds, away from the road, to locations that seem much better to our eyes – why do they keep returning and crossing the road again?! Turtles are in fact trying to get somewhere, not just out for a casual stroll. If a turtle is crossing the road, it's because she (and it is most often an egg-laden female) has a destination in mind, one that has served her ancestors well, since long before humans built roads interrupting turtle pathways. She's armed with a strong homing instinct – not well understood by scientists – that gives her a sense of direction superior to that of birds. Some turtles will travel many miles to return to their home habitat if moved.

In May and June, mama turtles move away from water, seeking dry ground in which to lay her eggs. Many hatchlings emerge in September, while others hatch in the fall, hibernate in the nest, and don't emerge until the following spring. Either way, the babies, quarter-sized but armed with the genetic data that has kept their species around since the Triassic Period, already know where they are going and - like their moms - cannot be deterred.

It is illegal to take a turtle for a pet or to relocate them from their habitat, but you are welcome to assist them across a dangerous

road. But ALWAYS move a turtle to the side of the road for which she was heading: if you force her to backtrack she'll turn around and cross again! Small, short-tailed turtles in Maine are most commonly painted turtles, and can be carried across the road. Large, pre-historic-looking turtles with long tails are snappers... exercise caution and distract that mouth with a stick while you encourage her across, or better yet, very gently scoop her up with a shovel to carefully bring her across.

Cars pose one of the biggest threats to

these ancient and fascinating animals. Please slow down and watch the roads for them, and help them to safely reach their time-honored destinations!

You can help Maine Audubon protect turtles! If you'd like to volunteer to survey roads near you for turtle hit by cars, contact Annica McGuirk at amcguirk@maineaudubon.org or (207) 781-2330, ext 219.

-Amy Titcomb



TURTLE FAST FACTS

Help us Cross the Road!

- Safely pull over and move turtles in the direction they are heading
- All turtles can bite and have sharp claws, especially snapping turtles
- Do NOT pick them up by the tail – carry them by the rear of the shell or in a container
- Don't take turtles home or move them to another area – it is illegal and bad for them!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks goes to Brian Valle for all his volunteer electrical work, and to neighbor Ned Daly for lawn maintenance at our office.

We'd also like to thank everyone who helped out at our Open Farm Day breakfast last year. We could not pull this event off without the contributions of our board members, our member-volunteers, the farmers who donated or discounted produce and meat, and in particular, Ellen Tarbox of Night Owl Bakery for all her planning, organizing, cooking, and alas, dishwashing. Thank you all!

Three Rivers Land Trust



"Our mission is to build stronger, healthier communities through the conservation of wild and working landscapes."

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

Would you be interested in serving as a board member or volunteering?

Please get in touch!



LAND TRUSTS AND PROPERTY TAXES

Both the Maine legislature and the Governor have recently shown interest in whether land trusts pay property taxes. We want our members to know that Three Rivers Land Trust makes payments on all the properties we own, often in the form of a PILOT, or payment in lieu of taxes. Property conserved with a conservation easement remains in private hands, and the owner pays the assessed value on the parcel just as any landowner would do.

more than \$330 million in property taxes. In fact, the \$18 billion and \$330 million figures he references include all tax exempt real estate in Maine (land and buildings) owned by the Federal Government, the State of Maine, municipalities, quasi-municipal organizations, churches, and other nonprofits. The land trust community estimates the land trust assets are valued at less than 1% of that total.

Just as we value the land we protect, we

Land trust contributions to Maine communities include providing the public with:

- 1,260 miles of hiking trails
- 570 miles of snowmobile trails
- 200 boat launch sites
- 2.3 million acres of land open to hunters
- 2.1 million acres of working forestlands
- 36,000 acres of productive farmlands
- 65 access sites for marine fishermen

Our Governor states that land trusts do not pay taxes, and he fails to give land trusts credit for their contributions to the economy and quality of life in Maine. These public benefits are highlighted in a report for the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Legislative Committee – "Land Trusts Work for Maine".

Governor LePage blames land trusts for taking more than \$18 billion of land off the municipal tax rolls, resulting in a loss of

value the communities where we live and want them to thrive. Three Rivers Land Trust is a tax-exempt organization, but we pay property taxes or make a payment "in lieu of" taxes on all our properties. We have always done this.

Please get in touch with us if you have any questions about how your land trust benefits our communities!

-Madge Baker



ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF LAND CONSERVATION

• **Tourism:** Designated areas for game, migrating birds and other wildlife offer marvelous economic opportunities because they attract nature lovers of all kinds – hunters, trappers and ecotourists, who spend billions of dollars annually to watch, hunt and otherwise enjoy wildlife. Hunting is an important part of the Maine economy and tradition, and depends upon open space for healthy game populations. More than a dozen recent studies of birding ecotourism and birding economics have demonstrated that wildlife refuges, parks, sanctuaries, preserves, and other forms of open space attract millions of tourists and their dollars each year.

• **Farming and forestry** are proud parts of Maine's economic tradition; protection of working farms and forests ensures that land will be available for these industries to thrive in future generations.

• **Maintenance of property values:** The National Association of Home Builders estimates that parks and recreation areas can increase the value of nearby building sites by 15-20%.

• **Property tax stability:** Open-space conservation helps to control taxes, as open space requires fewer services than developed land.

• **Groundwater recharge and pollution protection:** Open space prevents both infrastructure and service costs associated with water and sewage problems. Natural habitats act as giant sponges, allowing rainwater to percolate into the ground without being polluted, and to recharge aquifers with clean water, resulting in taxpayer savings.