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Please make checks payable to:
Three Rivers Land Trust
P.O. Box 295, Alfred, ME 04002

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Please join or renew today. Thank you for your support.

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HORIZONS

2019 Summer Newsletter

Building stronger, healthier communities through land conservation

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



INTO THE WOODS WITH ALFRED 5TH GRADERS



“I had no idea this would be so fun!”

*“This is the best hike
I’ve ever been on!”*

*“Put your phone away, you’re
missing so much beauty!”*

*“Are we really allowed
to play in the grass?”*

... exclamations overheard from fifth-graders in Mr. Marines’ and Ms. Brock’s classes, during their field trip to Shaker Woods last fall. This field trip was part of a partnership between Three Rivers Land Trust, Farm-to-School, and Alfred Elementary School, which was so successful we followed it up with a spring visit, too! This program introduces local public lands while teaching the students about local ecology and the joys of the woods!

Two days before the fall field trip, Farm-to-School Coordinator Alayna Marchessault and Three Rivers board member Amy

Titcomb visited the classroom to share a presentation about our local biome and wildlife, public lands, agriculture and how it’s all connected. We then played a game where students used their new knowledge, scientific inquiry, and a lot of trial-and-error to test which styles of bird beak are best adapted to capture which type of food. After much experimenting, we decided that the comb-like edges of a “mallard bill” (kitchen strainer) are best for sifting “duckweed” (puffed rice) from the water; tiny, sharp “warbler beaks” (tweezers) are best for picking “bugs” (rice grains) from cracks in a log; and long, skinny “woodcock beaks” (chopsticks) are best for digging through the mud for earthworms (yep, real earthworms!). Laughter and learning ensued.

The spring visit to the classroom focused on the water cycle and watersheds – helping students identify where they are in their watershed, how human activity impacts our drinking water, and how we can protect our local water by partnering with nature. An outdoor game in which

students took on the role of a drop of water making its way through the water cycle was a fun way to round out the day.

Both the fall and spring classroom visits were followed up with a field trip to the woods - Shaker Woods! This 35-acre gem sits on Stone Road in Alfred, stretching between Hay Brook and the Middle Branch Mousam River. This public property is owned by the Town of Alfred and protected by a Three Rivers conservation easement. Students hiked the 2-mile trail and enjoyed a scavenger hunt to identify some native plants and trees and evidence of animal activity. We ended the trek with a picnic lunch and some good old-fashioned running, jumping and rolling in the grass!

We hope to make this program an annual tradition for Alfred fifth-graders, and maybe even expand it to other schools in our region. Want to be part of this fun project? Please get in touch, we’re looking for volunteers!

-Amy Titcomb



PRESIDENT’S REFLECTIONS



“In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous.”
~ Aristotle

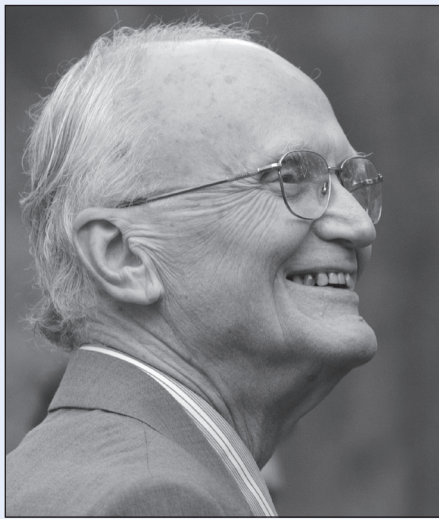
Every year I am filled with gratitude for the generosity of all our donors, members, and hard-working board members, but 2018 was an exceptional year for our land trust.

As you will see in these pages, we have grown and are flourishing.
In March, we completed the sale of Charlie Gruber’s house in Shapleigh to a lovely, local young couple. Charlie was a former and founding Three Rivers board member who left his house and a generous donation to the land trust through his estate. While it was not practical for us to keep his historic home, we have retained much of his land, which has beautiful trails along the Mousam River and to an active beaver pond. The sale of his house has allowed us to hire our first executive director, Cheri Brunault, who introduces herself below.

If you are not yet a member, I hope 2019 is the year you will decide to join us, and if you are, please help spread the word about our work. Thank you!

Jean Noon

- Jean Noon, Board President



Charles Gruber – We miss you, Charlie

“When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”
~ Aldo Leopold

HELLO MEMBERS & FRIENDS!



Cheri Brunault at Goat Hill

I am thrilled to have been selected as Three Rivers’ first executive director, and I’m eagerly learning this important role with the help of the land trust’s fantastic board and staff.

I’m a Mainer at heart, though not originally from here. I grew up in eastern MA, and our summer trips to rural Maine sparked an early interest in nature

and environmental causes. I eventually went to Unity College to study ecology, an experience that solidified my love for this state and deepened my desire to protect the character of wild and rural landscapes. After earning my master’s degree at the University of Illinois and spending over five years with the New York City Parks Department, I knew it was time to get back to Maine.

I then took what might be considered the long route, walking from Georgia to Maine on the Appalachian Trail a mere month after leaving NYC. Mountain by mountain, I hiked my way nearly 2,200 miles back to the state I wanted to live in, eventually summiting Mt. Katahdin on a crystal-clear day in September 2013. The experience of hiking ‘thru’ made me even more determined to live in Maine, and I set my career path to match.

For most of the past five years I have worked for the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust in Bath. In that time, serving as their Stewardship Coordinator, I experienced most facets of the vibrant land trust community in Maine, and

learned about the standards that help responsibly conserve land for our communities and our future. Through my work, I’ve done a little of everything; from assessing natural communities and controlling invasive plants, to building trails and leading volunteers, to applying for grants and re-writing policies. I am looking forward to learning yet more in this new role as executive director, and I am excited to bring my enthusiasm and background to help serve the Three Rivers mission. I’ll be digging in to assist the board with new land conservation projects, helping Development Director Ruth Gutman with our goal of welcoming many new members, and working on our inspiring and ambitious projects – particularly Hansen Pond and the ADA compliant Goat Hill Trail in Acton. I am excited to meet our members in these first months, so please say hello if you see me at events!

With Gratitude,
Cheri Brunault

NATIVE ORCHIDS OF MAINE

North American Orchid Conservation Center (NAOCC) is a program doing research on our native orchid species. Many native orchid species here in Maine are quite small, unlike the more colorful tropical orchids; but they are beautiful in their own unique ways. Our local species range from the large pink lady’s slipper to the tiny white flowers of the slender ladies’ tresses.

The volunteers in this program are making collections within each ecological region to gather more detailed information about these plants. Root samples are collected to find which mycorrhizae — a beneficial type of fungus that helps growth — are needed for that species’ germination. Those samples are shipped to the Orchid Recovery Program at Illinois College. Next, volunteers collect leaf material to analyze the DNA. These are shipped

to SERC (Smithsonian Environmental Research Center) in Maryland. Lastly, volunteers collect a limited portion of the seeds to be added to regional seed banks.

Currently, the collections in Maine are limited to the native orchids that are not on either state or federal lists of threatened or endangered species. To accomplish this, volunteers need the permission of landowners to do the collecting on their properties. Three Rivers Land Trust is a generous partner in this research by permitting a volunteer to search for and make these research collections on its protected properties.

-Patricia Smith
(Pat is a former Three Rivers board member who lives in Alfred. We are grateful to her for the time she puts into this work!)



Slender Ladies’ Tresses & Pink Lady Slipper

NEW MEMBERS & DONORS

We appreciate our members, volunteers, sponsors, and grant funders! Thank you for helping us grow.

Avril Kate Belisle

David & Gail Boisvert

Tom & Sara Costello

Martha Evarts

Lesley Finneran

Michael Foust

Thomas Gilmore

Jason Lansberry

Mark Lowell

Kelcy & Read McNamara

Donna Patterson

Gavine Pitner

Jo-Ellen S. Wood

Al & Denise Snape

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Donna Worthington

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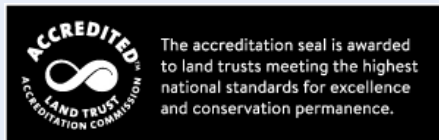
Davis Conservation Foundation

Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund

Fields Pond Foundation



*Would you be interested in serving
as a board member or volunteering?
Please get in touch!*



IN MEMORY

We are mourning the loss of Patricia (Pat) Hutchins, a founding member of the land trust along with her husband, Bill, who passed away in 2017. Pat and Bill owned a farm in Shapleigh, now conserved by a Three Rivers easement and known as The Hutchins Forest, where they improved and maintained gardens and a large tree farm that also served as important mushroom and wildlife habitat. They were both an important part of our community and cared deeply for the land. Pat's family has asked that contributions be made to the land trust in lieu of flowers, and we are grateful for their consideration.



Pat and Bill Hutchins, maple syrup tapping at the Hutchins Forest, 2008

GOAT HILL NEWS & MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Goat Hill Trail in Acton is open for foot traffic! After some intensive fundraising this spring, including a week-long Facebook fundraiser that brought in donations from as close as H Road near the trail and as far away as Oregon (we raised over \$1,855), the second phase of the trail is complete. You will find a smooth, wide, well-packed dirt path to the top of the hill. There are portions of the trail that still need additional grading before we reach ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance. To achieve that goal, we will raise another \$20,000 to be matched by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and then bring in a partner to professionally finish the trail. This is exciting news! We are so grateful to everyone who has made a donation, and if you have not yet done so, will you please help us make the spectacular views from the top of Goat Hill available to everyone in our community? Thank you!

In addition to thanking everyone who has donated to the trail, I'd also like to thank all who have renewed their memberships for 2019. We have about 200 annual members, but would like to reach 300 annual members, a number that will help sustain our work for the long term. If you renew your own membership and convince a friend to become a new member, we could reach our goal very quickly! Perhaps consider purchasing a gift membership for a friend who loves the outdoors – we will send them a nice letter for their birthday or for a holiday acknowledging your gift in their honor.

Thank you for your support throughout the year. Our friends, donors, members and volunteers make our work possible, and I know our communities are stronger and healthier because of it!

-Ruth Gutman



Ruth & Del, 2 years 8 months old, at Salmon Falls Reserve in Lebanon

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Sunday, July 28 from 8 AM to 9:30 AM: Farm Breakfast before the Springvale Farm Walk at McDougal Orchards (201 Hanson Ridge Rd., Springvale) \$8/person – children under 5 eat free

Saturday, September 14 from 11 AM to 2 PM: Kite Day at Romac Orchard (1149 H Road, Acton)

Join Three Rivers and the Nor'easters Kite Club from South Portland for some thrilling kite flying. Bring your own kite, or we have plenty to share!

CONSERVATION INITIATIVES: THE GOOD NEWS COLUMN!

In February, a remarkably large public lands bill was endorsed by 92 out of 100 U.S. Senators. The bill combined 100 smaller initiatives, and, most important for us in Maine, it reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The bill combined 100 smaller initiatives, and, most important for us in Maine, it reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) that provided funding for the purchase and creation of the Goat Hill Town Park in Acton. Following the House of Representatives approval of the reauthorization and advocacy by Maine Senators King and Collins, President Trump signed permanent reauthorization of LWCF into law, a cause for great celebration.

At the state level, we are celebrating the introduction of a bill to authorize issuance of a bond of up to \$95 million for the enormously popular Land for Maine's Future (LMF) program. According to the Natural Resources Council of Maine: "This action is not only exciting, but also incredibly critical to the future of conservation projects in Maine." LMF has provided funding for land conservation all over Maine for more than 25 years; conservation projects have saved working waterfront for fishermen, working forestland for loggers, and working



Lamb at Noon Family Sheep Farm

farmland for farmers. For example, LMF funds paid part of the cost of the state's purchase of Noon Family Sheep Farm's development rights to help foster the success of the farm. Noon Family Sheep Farm is in Springvale and the conservation easement is held by the land trust.

Please consider contacting your legislators if you support new funding for Land for Maine's Future. For more information contact us, or follow the bill on the Maine Coast Heritage Trust or the Natural Resources Council of Maine websites.

-Madge Baker

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Three Rivers Land Trust has completed its first comprehensive plan! The plan combines strategic planning for the organization and conservation planning for our region. It will serve as a guide to achieving goals that further our mission of building stronger, healthier communities through the conservation of wild and working landscapes.

The extensive process of creating the plan was made possible by financial support from the Jesse B. Cox Foundation and guidance from the Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative.

Highlights of the plan include: an overview of our five-town region; the conservation challenges it faces; descriptions of our focus areas; detailed maps of climate resilience, farmland, forest, recreational resources, and wetlands; and specific goals and strategies for the organization. Some of you may

recall a public workshop meeting we held on a snowy night in February 2016 where we compiled lists of concerns and priorities for the region. Many of those ideas, such as increasing trail connectivity in the region and more educational programming for kids, were incorporated into the comprehensive plan.

We're already putting our plan into action: We now have an executive director and can check that off the list of goals!

Copies of our completed plan will be available in our region's town and city halls and libraries, as well as through our website. This is a living document, which we plan to update every three years. We hope you will take some time to read it and let us know your thoughts for future revisions.

- Martha DoByns

BIG PLANS FOR HANSEN POND

Three Rivers Land Trust will begin building a trail and creating boat access to Hansen Pond in Acton this year, thanks to a grant of \$9,600 from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant and a \$3,000 private donation.

The half-mile trail will include a gravel parking area off H Road, gates, bridges, and other trail features, and a canoe/kayak storage rack at the pond. The trail will provide a pleasant route to the 30-acre Hansen Pond, a popular paddling and angling destination due to its pristine character.

Students at the MapleStone School in Acton and the Mousam Valley Snowmobile Club will assist with the upcoming trail construction, including relocation of an existing snowmobile trail. We are lucky to have some great community partners!

Three Rivers acquired the 272 acres of woods and wetlands surrounding Hansen Pond in 2018, thanks to a \$407,000 grant from Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program (MNRCP). Three Rivers also received \$7,500 from the Davis Conservation Foundation for essential wetlands restoration on the property, and \$7,000 from Fields Pond Foundation for building trails, restoring wetlands, and caring for the property in the long term.

Hansen Pond is part of "Goat Hill to Shapleigh Pond", a 2,000-acre conservation project. Please visit our website to view the map and learn more!

-Cheri Brunault



A First Step: Unightly A-Frame Removed by MapleStone Students