



WESTERN FOOTHILLS LAND TRUST

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2025



Coming Home

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Photo: Cait Bourgault

Rooted in Place, Looking Ahead

A Note from our Director

Coming Home

I grew up on a dirt road in Greenwood, where my siblings and I spent our days climbing tall trees, casting lines into cold streams, and following deer tracks through the snow. Those early experiences sparked my love for the Maine woods and shaped my sense of place and purpose.

After nearly two decades away, I'm returning home with my wife, Amanda, and our two-year-old son. We're deeply grateful to be raising him close to family and close to the forests, fields, and waterways that meant so much to me growing up.

I'm honored to serve as Executive Director of Western Foothills Land Trust. I feel fortunate to work alongside such a passionate staff and committed board, who care fiercely about this land and the communities that depend on it.

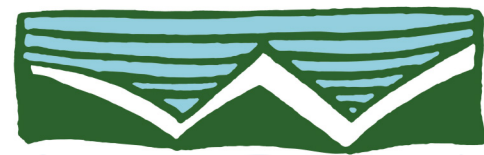
As we begin a new strategic planning process, I'm eager to listen and learn. Your stories, hopes, and ideas will shape our vision and guide us as we protect what matters most.

With gratitude,

Korey Morgan
Executive Director



GIVING BACK



Planning For the Future - With You



Big things are happening at Western Foothills Land Trust.

We're excited to start a new planning process. It's a chance to reflect on our past, understand where we are, and chart a path forward. This effort focuses on the basics: protecting the lands that define our region, caring for the ecosystems we all rely on, and growing programs that connect people to the outdoors and to one another.

Planning may seem like a behind-the-scenes task, but it's far from boring. It's an opportunity to ask big questions:

- **How can we make the greatest impact?**
- **What does our community need from us now and in the future?**
- **How can we strengthen the bond between people and place?**

With new energy and recent staffing changes, this is the perfect time to reflect and refocus. The plan will guide how we use our resources, set priorities, deepen our relationship with the land — and with those who care about it.

Most importantly, we won't do this alone.

We believe this process works best when it includes the voices of the community we serve. Over the coming months, we'll be reaching out to volunteers, partners, neighbors, and friends to help shape the future of WFLT.

Your ideas, perspectives, and experiences will help us create a plan that's grounded, inclusive, and inspiring

Stay tuned for ways to get involved. We can't wait to hear from you.

Give Today



Join our Heartwood Program — a community of monthly donors who help keep the Land Trust strong, steady, and rooted in Maine.

Support Conservation in Your Community

Your gift makes a real difference. This year, we have:

- Protected **1,300 acres** in the Crooked River watershed
- Maintained **35+ miles** of trails
- Engaged more than **200 volunteers**
- Reached **hundreds of students** through outdoor learning
- Served **thousands of residents and visitors** each year

New Conservation Protects the Heart of the Crooked River

This spring, Western Foothills Land Trust permanently protected 1,298 acres of forest and wetlands along Mill Hill Road in Waterford.

The property is located directly across the river from the Trust's Twin Bridges Preserve, creating a connected area of over 2,375 protected acres in the Crooked River watershed. This land is crucial for the health of the Crooked River. It serves as one of the most important spawning sites for land-locked salmon in Sebago Lake and is a key water source for southern Maine.

It has two miles of cold-water stream habitat for wild brook trout, nearly 240 acres designated as a deer wintering area, and over 65 acres of wetlands that support a variety of birds, amphibians, and other wildlife. The conserved land will also improve outdoor recreation opportunities in western Maine.

Western Foothills Land Trust plans to create a trail network in the coming years to support hiking, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, and fly fishing.

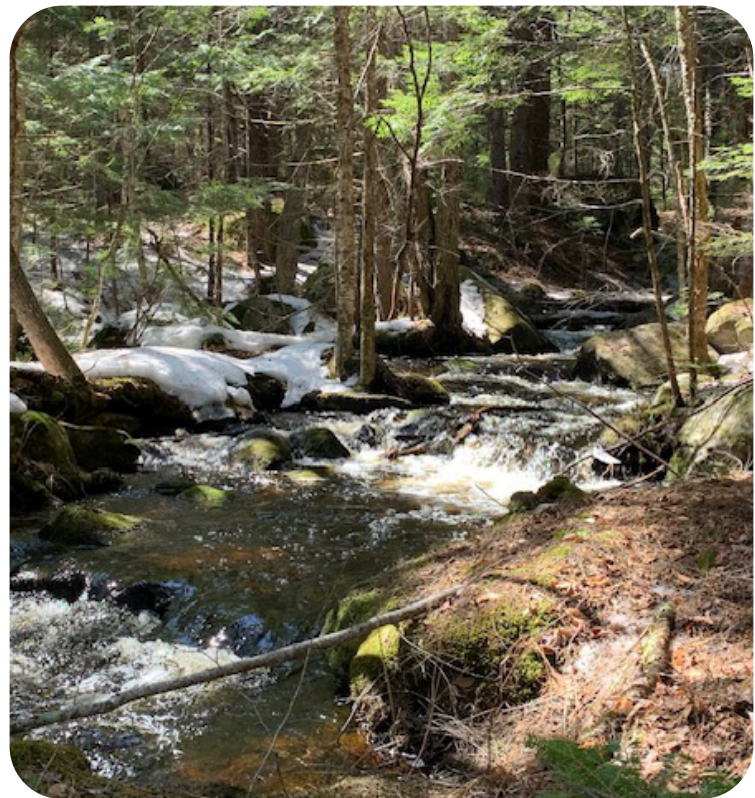
This land will remain open to hunting and trapping, which are essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems and are important to the local culture and economy.

This acquisition is part of a larger regional conservation effort led by Sebago Clean Waters, a partnership of 11 organizations aiming to speed up forest conservation to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and community benefits throughout the Sebago Lake watershed.

Acquiring this property continues a long history of stewardship, as the land has been managed as a working forest by a local family.

Its permanent protection ensures these areas will keep providing clean water, important wildlife habitats, and public access for future generations.

Funding and support for the project came from the Land for Maine's Future Program, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Portland Water District, Open Space Institute, Sebago Clean Waters, and several private foundations and donors. The Land Trust is currently working to name the new preserve and will start trail planning and stewardship efforts this year.



Follow us on Instagram @wflmaine
for trail updates and more!



Photo: Andy Gagne

Take A Journey Down the Crooked River

Documentary explores how forests, rivers, and communities are connected

Follow the Water: A Source to Sea Adventure is a new 17-minute documentary that takes viewers into the heart of the Crooked River watershed. This powerful short film shows how forests, rivers, wildlife, and people are all connected and how these connections influence the health of our communities and drinking water.

Produced by Maine Mountain Media with Portland Water District, the film combines stunning visuals with compelling storytelling. It highlights the many ways individuals and organizations are joining forces to protect this vital water source for future generations.

At Western Foothills Land Trust, we're proud to care for conserved lands throughout the Crooked River watershed. These protected areas help maintain cold water flow, support thriving habitats, and keep communities connected.

Stronger Together: Reflections on a Regional Merger Exploration

Insights from a year of community-building

Over the past year, Western Foothills Land Trust has engaged in thoughtful conversations with several neighboring land trusts to explore the possibility of merging. Although this effort did not result in a formal merger, it was a highly valuable process. It helped us grow as an organization and rethink our mission.

Through open and honest discussions, we clarified our priorities, looked at new ways of working, and reinforced our vision for the future. Most importantly, this process built strong, collaborative relationships with fellow land trusts in the region. These partnerships will benefit us all for years to come. We are thankful for the chance to explore this path, and we look forward to working closely with our conservation partners as we protect the lands and communities we all care about.

Meet Our Summer Interns!



Sam Graves

Sam is coming from Norton, Massachusetts, and will join the WFLT team this summer as an intern. She moved to Maine to study Botany and Sustainability at the University of Maine - Orono.

From a young age, Sam discovered her love for nature while growing up in a forested area of Massachusetts. She brings this passion to her daily life and studies, often spending time outdoors hiking when the New England weather permits.. When she's not outside, you can find her using her creative skills—drawing, painting, journaling, collaging, and photographing.

Sam is very excited to be part of the team this summer. She looks forward to supporting the work of Western Foothills Land Trust and helping out in any way she can.

Nathaniel Liu



Meet Nathaniel, an environmental policy student by day, folk cellist on weekends, and a longtime friend of the Western Foothills Land Trust. A Waterford native, Nathaniel has been on the board of the Western Foothills Land Trust for four years. He also served as secretary on the Executive Committee.

When he's not focused on policy coursework at Oberlin College, you might see him trail running through one of our preserves with a camera in hand or jotting down notes in a field notebook, though rarely all three at once. If you visit a local farmer's market or church on the right day, listen for the sounds of Celtic, Québécois, or old-time folk music. That's Nathaniel on the cello, keeping the tradition alive with a Maine twist.

We're lucky to have his sharp mind, creative spirit, and strong love for this landscape on our team.



Transitions, Renewal, and a Warm Welcome

This spring has brought a season of renewal at Western Foothills Land Trust—not just in the woods, but within our team. We extend heartfelt thanks to Kacy Bailey, our former Executive Director, and Kelli Shedd, who served as both Community Engagement Director and Interim Executive Director. Their dedication helped carry the Land Trust through important work and transitions, and we're grateful for their leadership.

We're also thrilled to share that Korey Morgan has now joined us as our new Executive Director. Korey grew up in Greenwood and North Norway, and brings both deep local roots and a strong background in conservation communications. We're excited for the energy and perspective he brings to this role—and to the future of WFLT.

Please join us in welcoming Korey (and his family!) back to the Western Foothills.

With Gratitude,

Carl Costanzi
Board President



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