



SPRING 2016

Western Foothills Land Trust



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McKeen Wildlife Refuge

“to permanently assure protection of the Refuge’s flora and fauna, ecological and scenic features and values as a forever wild landscape, and to provide the opportunity for low impact outdoor recreation by the public for uses appropriate to protecting those features and values”.

Last December, long time land trust supporters, Dyk and Lydia Eusden donated a beloved 78 acre parcel in Oxford to the trust. The McKeen Wildlife Refuge will be managed as a forever wild parcel to protect the site’s exemplary natural habitats which include wetlands, a trout stream and a variety of woodland communities. The name McKeen Wildlife Refuge honors Civil War era homesteader Henry Hyde McKeen who escorted an ill Union soldier named Edmund Thayer back to Maine after his release from the Confederate Libbey prison in Richmond, Virginia.

Dyk teaches geology at Bates College, Lydia teaches at the Hebron Station School. As devoted educators, parents, and naturalists, Dyk and Lydia recognized this land as a whole system, worthy of protection for all the wild species that flourish there. Being generous academics they even compiled the baseline data and the management plan for the Refuge.

The Trust looks forward to stewarding and quietly observing this parcel. Our thanks to the Eusdens whose affection for this land has led to meaningful conservation.

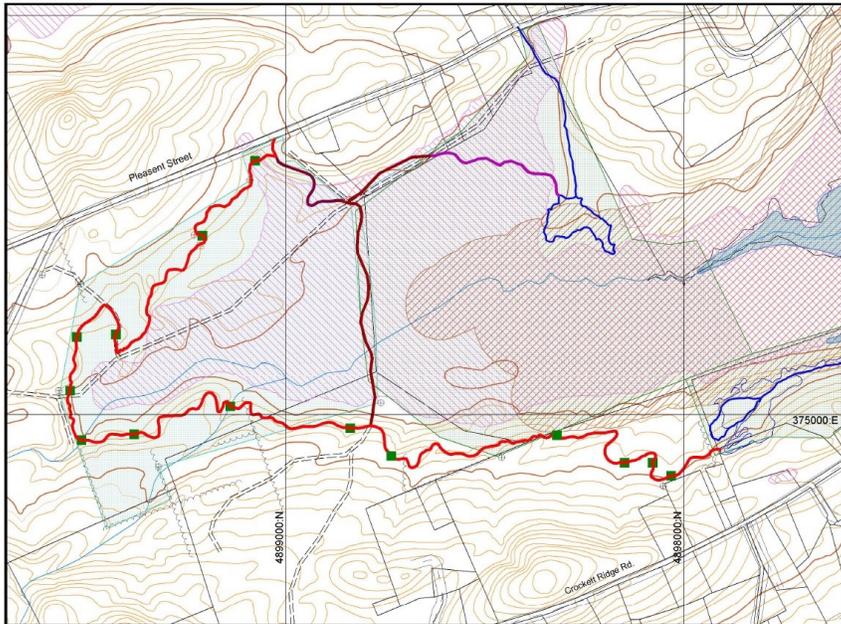


The Western Foothills Land Trust is dedicated to the conservation and protection of native ecosystems, farm and forestlands, watersheds, and scenic landscapes for the benefit of wild and human communities in Western Maine.



Western Foothills Land Trust

Witt Swamp Connector Trail: construction work to begin this spring



The Recreational Trail Program, administered by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, has awarded WFLT \$35,000 to build the first phase of a non-motorized recreational trail which will link the existing hiking/mtn biking trail system at Shepard’s Farm Preserve off Crockett Ridge Road to the hiking trail at Witt Swamp Preserve on Pleasant St. (both shown in blue). Trail design and construction budgets have been completed by Mike Cooper of Caribou Recreation LLC in Bethel. Mike has worked with the Trust on many projects including the Nordic trail system at Roberts Farm Preserve and the Packard Trail in Buckfield.

The Witt Swamp Connector Trail is designed to meet the needs of an active population of walkers, runners and bicyclists in and around Norway. Phase I (shown in red) includes 2.33 miles of trail from Shepard’s Preserve to Pleasant St.. Phase II (mauve) will complete the loop for mountain bikers back to Shepard’s Farm by resurrecting the old Witt Swamp

Cart Road as a short recreational trail and a bridge. Phase III (purple) is the most ambitious aspect of the plan which includes an extensive pedestrian board walk to the Witt Swamp trail.

Trail work will begin in May and should be completed by mid summer, conditions permitting. In order to maximize limited funding, the Trust will do as much work as is safe and feasible with volunteers prior to mobilizing equipment. Pete Toohy and the SAD17 mtn bike group will be meeting every Tuesday 5-7 at Shepard’s Farm Preserve, 121 Crockett Ridge Rd. Norway starting on May 3. The Trust will post additional volunteer opportunities for individuals, service organizations, or school groups. Anyone wishing to help out call 739-2124, email lee@wflmaine.org.

New hiking trail takes shape at Virgil Parris Forest



Board Director Carl Costanzi and his loyal yellow lab Dakota and their spotted friend Moose have spent many weekend hours opening a hiking trail on the east side of South Pond in the Virgil Parris Forest, Buckfield. When completed the trail will provide another 2 mile loop for hikers, snowshoers, dog walkers and runners. The route climbs to dramatic views south and west amidst a high canopy of mixed forests. Given the terrain, this trail will not be handicap accessible.

If you would like to help with the trail, please contact the Trust at 739-2124 or lee@wflmaine.org.

Dakota and Moose enjoying one of the water features along the new trail

Crooked River Forests Project: LMF funds received, loans paid off

\$400,000 in Land for Maine's Future-funding awarded to the Crooked River Forests project in 2014 was finally received on March 18th, allowing both land trusts involved to pay off combined bridge loans of \$400,000.

A collaborative project by Loon Echo and Western Foothills Land Trusts, the project protects 780 acres of working forestlands in the Crooked River and Sebago Lake watersheds. The 5 parcels include 3.5 miles of Crooked River frontage, miles of trails, and potential community forests for Harrison and Otisfield. Loon Echo now owns two parcels in Harrison, while WFLT owns three in Otisfield: two remote working forests off Oak Hill Rd. and the Twin Bridges parcel at Rte. 117. WFLT plans to undertake a harvest on Twin Bridges in 2017 and to develop recreational trails afterwards.

The Western Foothills Land Trust would like to thank Carrie Walia of Loon Echo Land Trust for her calm leadership and vision; Sam Morris, LMF staff, for his perseverance; and Maine's conservation advocates who never gave up on the project.



Sam Morris, LMF; Representative Skip Herrick; Carrie Walla, LELT; LaShanda Hill, Norway Saving Bank; Bob Van Nest and Joe Zilinsky, WFLT

NOYES MOUNTAIN CAMPAIGN ONLINE

In the midst of the holidays and a raucous national political season, WFLT launched its first-ever crowd sourcing campaign on Indiegogo—a campaign to protect Noyes Mountain. Norway's home grown filmmaker Jack Gentempo filmed and edited a 4 minute video for the site which included views to and from the Mountain as well as a mélange of audio bites. The Indiegogo campaign raised another \$20,000 towards the purchase of the 295 acre summit parcel.

We have made great progress but just like the hike up the mountain, progress is step by step. We need to raise \$325,000 to cover the purchase and due diligence costs. To date we have raised \$55,000 from individual donors. Contributions have ranged from \$10 to \$4,000.

Grants continue to be submitted. Additional fund raising activities will follow this summer. Anyone interested in making a contribution or pledge towards Noyes Mountain, please call 739-2124 or email lee@wflmaine.org.



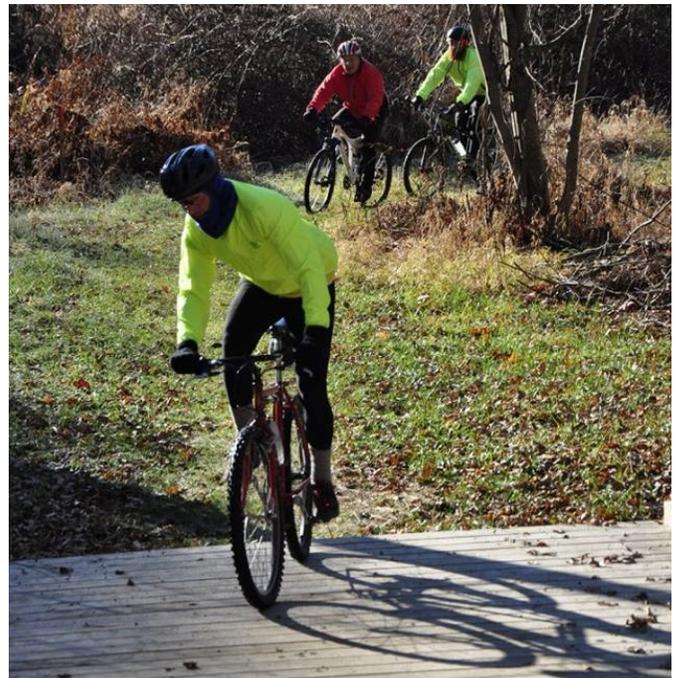
Fall colors, Pennesseewassee Lake from the Harvard Mine



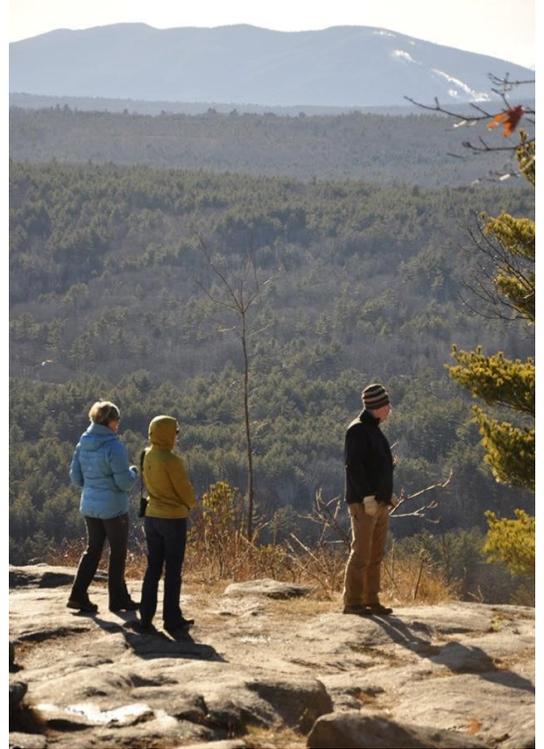
Western Foothills Land Trust



Photograph by Brenda Melhus



Programs





WFLT Monitoring Committee



A Good Walk Redefined

As a land trust we are obligated to monitor any conservation easements we hold at least once every three years. The WFLT Board and volunteer Monitoring Committee have chosen to set a higher standard: our easements are monitored annually. Monitoring involves a site visit and often a visit with the landowner. It is a great way to be out of doors on some of our area's most special places: farms, forests, and shorelands. Now holding 30 easements, protecting 3,700 acres of lands, the Trust relies heavily upon the dedication of our monitoring committee and is always interested in new volunteers.

Pictured are three of our four monitors, Mary Van Nest, Jeff Chase, and Cris DelCuore. Alice Goodwin was not available for the photo. This is a dedicated committee, very organized, with their own patterns of work. Cris and Mary tend to work in a pair to achieve additional social goals, Jeff and Alice work singularly. We cannot thank them enough for the mornings and miles that have been quietly given to this work of protecting significant lands and resources.

In these days when the physical and emotional significance of a good long walk are being promoted by our health care providers, monitoring beautiful protected properties is an efficient way of appeasing your doctor while volunteering for the Trust. If you would like to see what monitoring involves, please contact Mary at 743-8104.

A Message From The President

The poet and essayist, Wendell Berry, a man who lives lightly upon his land, once said that conservation turns on affection. Certainly, at the most basic level, this is self-evident. I have to believe, that in the nearly thirty years the Trust has been in existence, the lands it has protected have given rise to all types of positive reactions; be they excitement, pride, relief, respect, or, most especially, love. Conservation has ignited this love, this affection, for the farms, forests, streams, lakeshores, and mountains in our portfolio.

But it's worth giving Berry's words a more figurative interpretation as well. He is, after all, a poet. When he says conservation turns on affection, he could well mean that affection is the axis around which conservation turns. Conservation is static, even theoretical, without an affection to which it relates. For example, the Trust is partnering with the Maine Farmland Trust in one of their programs which will enable us to purchase conservation easements on farms in our area that contain prime or locally significant soils. Our hope is that through this process numerous farms will be protected. In so doing, an affection will come into play. For it is in negotiating easements with potential donors that the Trust aligns the easement's static principles with the ridges, swales, and eddies of the donors' interior landscape. And it is in the geography of such a landscape that affection resides. When an alignment of the donors' interior landscape and the principles of an easement occurs, a movement begins. Conservation on that parcel is no longer theoretical. It orbits the protected land around the feelings the owners possess.

So, yes, conservation turns on affection. It brings to life a love of our terrain. But it is also true that conservation cannot stand alone. It needs the focus that occurs when an interior survey, a taking into account of our emotional whereabouts, is projected onto lands we own, or lands on which we recreate, or lands we simply view. For, obviously, we don't all need to donate an easement to draw Trust lands within the focus of our love. That's because we all possess our own particular arrangement of affections, and we can use them as a template upon protected lands. We can enliven the landscape by drawing it up against the ridgelines and the valleys of our interior landscapes. So at Roberts Farm a curve in the ski tracks invites us in with the promise of the perfect run; at South Pond the mist rises and infuses with our dreams; Noyes Mountain allows the wild to reach into Pennessewassee; and along the Crooked River a rod casts out a fly, and where it lands it animates the surface and everything below. And in those tracks, the mist, that cast, and a thousand other ways, a Wendell Berry may well recognize us. For we are poets too, poets upon the land.



Bob Van Nest, President

Western Foothills Land Trust 2016 Membership

Membership Levels

Individual	\$35
Family	\$50
Steward	\$100
Corporate	\$250

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Check made out to: Western Foothills Land Trust

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Your contribution is tax-deductible as a charitable contribution

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Featuring the photography of Carl Costanzi

Noyes Mountain Campaign inside p3

