



WESTERN FOOTHILLS LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

Committed to the conservation and preservation of native ecosystems, watersheds, farm and forest lands, and scenic landscapes in Western Maine



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HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PROTECTED

The Board of the Paris Hill Country Club donated a conservation easement, protecting 27 acres of open space on Paris Hill, to the Western Foothills Land Trust on November 8th. The easement protects the open nature of the historic golf course and restricts the size and location of any future structures or additions to the current Country Club buildings.

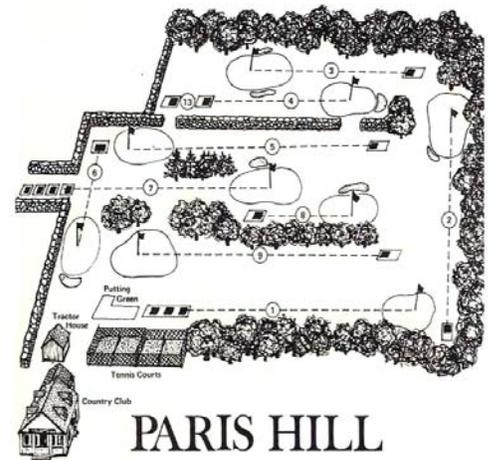
The historic nature of the 9-hole golf course, the views protected to and from the landscape, and the Club's role in the overall village history, were important components of the Land Trust's acceptance of the easement. Martha McNamara, Director of New England Arts and Architecture at Wellesley College commented that "the Paris Hill Country Club and the historic golf course it stewards, plays a significant role in protecting the open and rural landscape of this historic Maine village".

The Paris Hill Country Club was formed in 1899, with golf initially enjoyed near Holt Spruces on Beech Hill. Few other golf clubs or golf courses were established in Maine at that time. In the 1890s, Poland Spring House and Kebo Valley in Bar Harbor were popular resorts; while Portland and Paris Hill Country Clubs were member-owned corporations.

The Country Club purchased its Paris Hill Road location from Ella Clark in 1913. The Clark farm was previously owned by Henry Howe who purchased the unimproved acreage from Isaac Butterfield in the 1840s. It was a part of the old Lemuel Jackson farm. The current Greek Revival clubhouse was built by Henry Howe in 1850.

In addition to its historic nature, and of important consideration to the Land Trust, the golf course is contiguous with the 147-acre Cornwall Preserve which is contiguous with a 35-acre conservation easement-protected parcel owned by Dr. and Mrs. Whitney. With the protection of the golf course, there is now a conservation corridor for wildlife habitat and protection exceeding 200 acres. The Country Club management endeavors to be as eco-friendly as possible, and while the 9-hole course is a highly managed landscape, the open tree-lined fairways and historic stone walls provide habitat for many bird species in particular.

The Paris Hill Country Club Easement evolved through efforts of the Trust, Country Club Directors and members, neighbors of the Club, and David Dow. Former Club President Bob Moorehead, and current President Roberta Bickford, are to be thanked in particular for their foresight.



PARIS HILL COUNTRY CLUB

Established in 1899
 Paris Hill, Maine 04271

Western Foothills Land Trust
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 Norway, ME 04268
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www.wfltmaine.org



Pixie Williams addressing the group at the Hancock bridge on the Crooked River

**3 Conservation Committees
& 2 Land Trusts
Explore the Jugtown Plains
Pitch Pine Barrens in Casco
and Otisfield**

On Saturday, May 22, botanist Pixie Williams led a walk into a portion of the 269-acre pitch pine heath barren owned by Hancock Lumber Company and protected with a conservation easement held by Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. Representatives from Loon Echo and Western Foothills Land Trusts, and the conservation committees of Casco, Otisfield and Naples attended; all interested in observing the rare pitch pine heath forest community. The nearest similar community is 300 miles to the west in Clintonville, NY.

The Jugtown Plains core is considered not only the state’s most important example of this pitch pine heath barren community, but an outstanding example in an ecoregion stretching from southern Maine to northern Maryland. Pitch pine forests of all types, once nearly unbroken as they swept down the eastern coastline, are under siege everywhere by development.

The Jugtown Plain pitch pine heath is one of 140 focus areas identified by the Maine Natural Areas Program for its rare and endangered habitat and species. Including acreage in both Casco and Otisfield, the pitch pine habitat of the Jugtown Plains is home to several rare species of moths and dragonflies.

**“From the Detert Family...”
Donation of Land on Crockett
Ridge Road in Process**

Bill Detert moved to Norway in 1956 with his wife and young family to start Maine Machine Products with Roland Sutton. Introduced to the area as summer residents, the Detert family became integral to the fabric of the local business, school, and lake communities. Now widowed, retired, and living in Florida; Bill returns to Norway each summer and regrettably heads south in the autumn.

This spring Bill called to discuss a possible donation to the community via the land trust. He wanted to give a parcel off Crockett Ridge Road in Norway to the Trust; a parcel that offers gentle recreational opportunities for the community as the land is well positioned for kite flying, sledding, and picnicking.

The 20 acre-parcel, which was owned in the early years of Norway by Benjamin Witt, is adjacent to the Trust’s 141-acre Witt Swamp Preserve. In winter, the connected parcels could provide a hard-earned snow shoe arch across the frozen Witt Swamp wetlands from Crockett Ridge to Pleasant Street. The land itself is partially rolling open hillocks, former pasture land of the Freeman-Shepards farm, and partially carefully managed mature woodlands with lovely stone walls to be followed and enjoyed.

In addition to its kite-flying and sledding attributes, the land offers important meadow habitat; the Trust has agreed to mow the meadows annually after August 1st to accommodate ground nesting birds.

Bill has agreed that the Trust will be able to sell an acre lot from the overall parcel to support a management fund for the Preserve. Eventually there will be an entrance and a modest parking area off Crockett Ridge Road. Bill has asked that the land be called the Shepards Farm Family Preserve and that there be a small sign indicating that the preserve was a gift “from the Detert family in thanks for many wonderful years in Norway”.

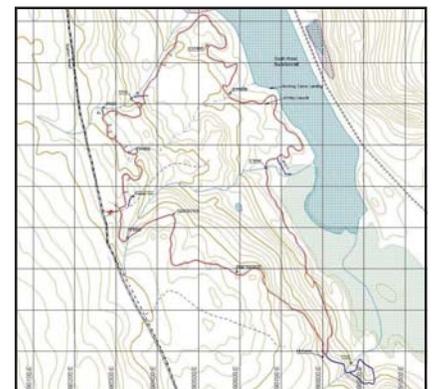
**Hiking Trails Proposed West of
South Pond, Buckfield**

Thanks to a grant from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund and Land For Maine’s Future, the Trust has asked Mike Cooper, designer of the Roberts Farm trails, to design a hiking trail for the western portion of the expansive Virgil Parris Preserve in Buckfield.

The proposed trail will support year round activities such as hiking, running, snowshoeing, mountain biking, and wildlife observation while respecting the ecological and biological resources of the Preserve. The trail loop rests within approximately 150 acres of the 1,236-acre property, and uses a forested area situated along and above the western shore of South Pond. The route is punctuated by innumerable scenic features including views of the pond, several marshes, and North Hill; as well as a dozen or so significant glacial erratics and small waterfalls along two prominent streams. The trail network offers five short side trails to various scenic points including an historic family cemetery.

Once completed, the trailhead and parking area would be located off the Sodom Road in Buckfield. The two mile loop trail will have a mechanically prepared tread surface with a width of about four feet, which allows two people to walk abreast. The overall grades of the trail are kept to a minimum, offering gently rolling hills that are suitable for the very young as well as the elderly.

The Trust has begun to submit grants to support the estimated \$25,000 construction costs.



Proposed preserve hiking trail

Roberts Farm Preserve: Entire Stephens Trail and Accessible Portion of Libby Trail Completed

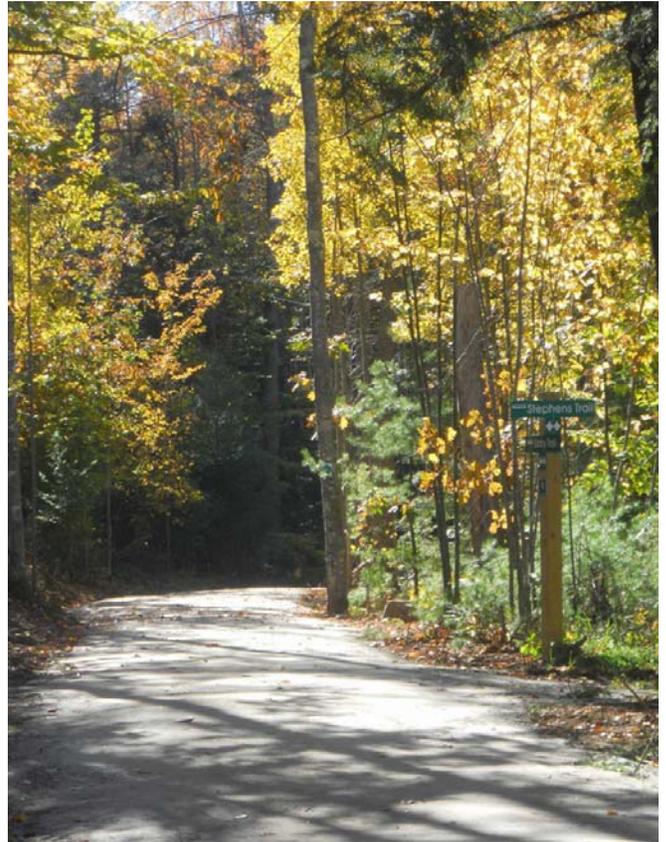
With financial support from the Land For Maine's Future program, The Maine Recreational Trails Program, the Maine Community Foundation, the L.L. Bean Maine Land Trust Grant Program, and private donors; the universally accessible trail has been completed at the Roberts Farm Preserve in Norway.

Trail system contractor Todd Sawyer and crew completed grading and surfacing the 1.1K (½ mile approximately) before the October 15th Nor'easter. The trail, part of the Western Foothills Land Trust's 12K trail system designed by Mike Cooper of Bethel, complies with American Disabilities Act grade limitations and surface guidelines and will provide physically challenged and fully-abled visitors comfortable and pleasant access to the site's outstanding viewpoint of Lake Penesseewassee and the Mahoosuc range.

Waterford resident, father of three, and former member of the Nordic ski team at OHCHS; Todd Sawyer has shown a personal commitment to this trails project from the start. For the past two years, Todd has successfully worked with Mike Cooper and the trails committee, and has translated Mike's plans on paper into reality at the site. The universally accessible trail is a prime example of his commitment to the project and to the community.

A year ago, K&K Excavation and Norway Savings Bank donated several tons of cut granite blocks that were part of an historic culvert along 117 to the Roberts Farm Preserve trails project. Norway Downtown negotiated the donation of additional granite blocks for the project from Norway Savings Bank and SAD17. Todd used some of the granite at the Preserve parking lot trail head this summer, but more recently accessed his inner artist to build a grouping of granite benches at the universally accessible trail's terminus and viewpoint. The benches create a destination as they provide practical seating for visitors enjoying one of the seminal views in the Oxford Hills.

While the Shavey Noyes hiking trail is open, and the Minnie Libby universally accessible trail is now completed; work continues on the remaining non-motorized multi-use trails in the system. Additional water bars will be installed as well as decking and railings for the 3 bridges on site. Visitors will find a blend of gentle-use open grassed trails and closed sections that have been recently seeded and mulched. The Land Trust asks that visitors respect cordoned-off sections this fall. With snow cover, the entire 14 foot- wide C.A. Stephens trail and related cut-offs will be ready for skiing.



Universally accessible section of the Libby Trail completed this autumn



Stephens Trail awaiting snow

Roberts Farm Trails 4 Season Pass in time for the holidays

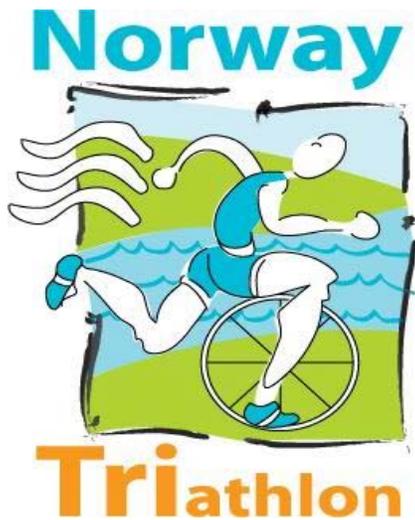
While there is no charge for using the trails at Roberts Farm, the Trust will encourage donations from trail users to support trail maintenance, grooming, and facilities via an onsite donation box, secure online giving, and via a voluntary trail pass.

Roberts Farm Preserve 4 Season Trail Pass

A 2011 trail pass will receive a window decal and a laminated trail map and jacket clip. Four season passes are \$30 for individuals and \$50 for families.

A portion of each donation is tax deductible.

To order: www.wflmaine.org/roberts/trailpass



The 2010 Triathlon attracted athletes from 12 states, and raised \$14,000 for Roberts Farm Preserve! 183 competed for the cherished Norway Tri cowbell awards this year. While the sanctioned event attracted top triathletes, it also included a diverse range of competitors. Forty competitors were over 50, and twelve were over 60. We presented an award to a local relay team whose members are 67, 68 and 69 years young!

The event was well organized thanks to our devoted triathlon committee: Mark White, Scott Berk, Doug Van Durme, Deb Partridge, Peter Roy, Matt Woods, and Ben Tucker. Andrew Merrill did an outstanding job with the food, and Matt Delamater was a terrific master of ceremonies. Sponsors for this year's event were New Balance and Toyota, Portland Water District, Hannaford Bros. Co., Café Nomad, Norway Savings Bank, the Weary Club, Bancroft Fencing, Fare Share Market, The Lake Store, XTERRA Wetsuits, and Sweatvac. Bar-Barianz, Bolsters, Carrabassett Coffee, Celebration Barn Theatre, the Oxford Hills Chamber, and Creative Media donated items. A cadre of 50 volunteers and numerous spectators, braving the morning's brief but efficient downpour, completed the generosity of spirit shown by supporters.

This annual event will continue to be a boost for the Norway community, promoting healthy competition, lifelong recreation, and introducing visitors to the Oxford Hills. Next year's Triathlon will again be held in sync with the Norway Arts Festival on July 9th.

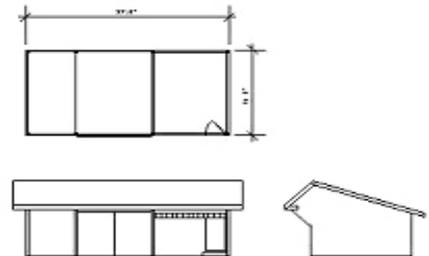


A Shed for Equipment and a Hut for Warm Toes...

To provide a safe, athletic, and educational outdoors experience for children and adults using the non-motorized trails at Roberts Farm Preserve, the Trust has been submitting proposals for a 3-bay timber framed warming hut/shed near the Akers start/finish field.

The planned shed would be used for ski and grooming equipment storage, the warming hut would be used for post-event competitor warm up, boot storage, waxing skis, and educational programs. The proposed 16' x 36' shed/hut was designed by SKCraftsman of Otisfield and can be built in stages blending professional and volunteered help.

Framing and sheathing materials have been donated and milled locally. Anyone interested in donating construction funds, additional building materials, skills, or volunteer time, please contact lee at 739-2124.



Shed plan and elevation by Shawn Kane

Vivian Akers Photos from Pikes Hill, 1925

Sid Gordon of North Norway has recently donated prints of Vivian Akers' photos taken from Pikes Hills in the spring and summer of 1925, to the WFLT. The Pike's Hill farmlands captured in the foreground of the images show well maintained stone walls, fences, hay fields and established pastures. One summertime image managed to record a farmer on a hay rake behind his draft horse.



President’s Look Back on 2010

After a somewhat subdued 2009, presumably due to the recession; the Trust has again become very engaged in its role as a protector of the existing rural landscape of Western Maine. Projects continue to be developed both on lands we own and on parcels where the Trust holds easements.

A great deal of time, money and energy has been spent on developing the trails on the Roberts Farm Preserve in Norway. Approximately 80% of the trails are complete and seeded; all of the trails have signs; bridges have been installed; a field has been created and seeded; the parking lot has been enlarged; a kiosk has been erected; and gates have been installed. Work will continue next year finishing the beginners trail and building a storage shed/warming hut on site. A year ago, the Trust purchased the historic Roberts farmhouse adjacent to the Preserve. Even as we are engaged in discussions with the community about possible uses for the parcel; SAD17 is developing a farm-to-school program on a portion of that farmland.

Funding has been obtained to construct a small parking area for our Witt Swamp property as well as trail design for the South Pond in Buckfield: diverse trails that will provide additional and unique links between people and the land.

Last December the Trust accepted an easement forever protecting over 2000 feet of shoreline on Little Moose Pond in Waterford. And this year we continued work on 2 significant local easements and completed an easement protecting the historic landscape of the Paris Hill Country Club. With the completion of these projects, the Trust will hold well over 3000 acres in fee ownership or conservation easements, making it a significant force for conservation in our area.

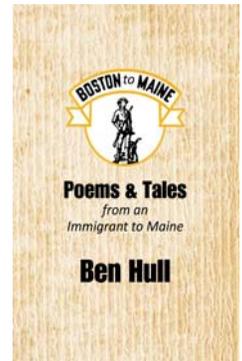
In other areas, the Trust continues to work with other regional conservation groups to help implement a U.S.D.A. grant aimed at protecting the Crooked River Watershed; we have supported conservation defense insurance through the Land Trust Alliance; we have completed yearly monitoring of our easements; and have taken part in the statewide efforts to plan for climate change adaptation. While the Norway Triathlon continues to be the Trust’s major fund raiser, and grants have helped enormously in our projects; we are actively pursuing other avenues for funding. Finally, Chris Del Cuore of Norway has joined the Board of Directors, initially assisting with monitoring.

The need to protect the significant natural beauty of our area will probably never end. For nearly a quarter of a century your land trust has played a pivotal role in that cause. I hope this report gives you a sense of pride and ownership in that role.

Robert Van Nest, President

**Boston to Maine:
Poems & Tales
from an
Immigrant to Maine**

By Ben Hull



Review by Lisa Moore

Like a fine scotch, *Boston to Maine: Poems & Tales from an Immigrant to Maine* is good sipping. Like all fine poetry, it offers experience distilled to its essence, a place where moments are both personal and universal.

The collection offers four short personal essays, one for each season, beginning with spring. Following each essay are 8-9 poems, written as early as 1966 and as recently as 2008. As the collection moves forward, the reader rocks back-and-forth from prose to poetry, from past to present, from human to beast, and from concrete imagery to abstract ideas.

For poetry lovers, the 35 sensual poems are piercingly true. Like his name, Hull both contains and moves, with a knack for the subtle, the gentle, and the pure. I hesitate to call the images of *Boston to Maine* “commonplace,” although they are: birdfeeders, the ocean’s perfume, red berries and kitty litter. Their commonness is illuminated by a keen observer who shines a quiet light on their profound meanings. My favorites are “Boston Symphony Hall—Tuning Up,” “The Aging Man and the Nymph,” and “Things That Take Time,” three perfectly rendered poems.

For bird lovers, there is much music to be heard. The species sing separately and in chorus—sparrows, warblers, mockingbirds, bluebirds, woodpeckers, veeries, tanagers, vireos, seagulls, titmice, buntings, wrens and eiderducks. Hull shares intimate relationships with each, to the point where, as Fred in the last poem remarks, “you don’t care finally Where you begin Or where they end.”

And for those who look for unifying themes, there is integration: “the black girl who works at the counter,” “the Gypsy children,” Ana from the Philippines, Yasha from Turkey, the new cat, and Hull himself from Cape Ann. People, animals, and birds move from place to place and carve new homes, but, more significantly, they shift from personal to communal, from body to spirit, and from fragmentation to wholeness.

At its heart, *Boston to Maine* is a travel log, richly rewarding for those who are patient with its geography. Its poems paint a journey from south to north, into the wild. Like a fine scotch on a cold night, the journey is both medicinal and provocative.

Ben is generously donating proceeds from the sales of *From Boston to Maine...* to the Trust.



WESTERN FOOTHILLS
LAND TRUST

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NORWAY, ME
PERMIT No.12



ski Roberts Farm Preserve



Nordic Ski Day
Roberts Farm Preserve
Norway

2011 WINTER EVENTS

January 10-14

Maine Winter Sport Center Healthy Hometown Ski Trailer at Roberts Farm. A great opportunity for adults and kids to learn how to cross country ski!
www.mainewsc.org/about_healthy

January 15

Roberts Farm Snow shoe races:
Adult and children's sprints, 5k and 10k

February 5

Annual Land Trust Nordic Ski Day
Roberts Farm Preserve, 10-2

March 9

Best Loop Hikes: New Hampshire's White Mountains to the Maine Coast. Maine Coast Heritage Trust employee and author Jeff Romano will speak about his latest hiking book. Norway Library, 7pm.

Please check out our website for event updates and additions:
www.wfltmaine.org