



Crooked River Initiative

In December, WFLT received a generous \$5050 grant from the Maine Community Foundation's Fund for Maine Land Conservation for a collaborative project with Loon Echo Land Trust (LELT) and the Portland Water District aimed at protecting the water quality and habitat resources of the Crooked River Watershed.

Both WFLT and LELT are members of the Upland Headwaters Alliance, a regional alliance of five land trusts in western Maine and eastern NH including Greater Lovell, Loon Echo, Mahoosuc, Saco River Valley, and Western Foothills Land Trusts. Prompted by the Crooked River's statewide significance, the Alliance chose to focus its 2008-2009 efforts on the Crooked River watershed with LELT and WFLT leading the way.

The Western Foothills Land Trust submitted this grant application on behalf of the collaboration to support focused community outreach and a series of community meetings about the watershed. Potential meeting topics include the relationship between land use and water quality, the watershed's geologic and cultural history, the river's fisheries, recreational opportunities within the watershed, and conservation options for land owners within the corridor.

Working with the Portland Water District, the trusts organized an initial successful community meeting about the watershed in October. The meeting was held at the Crooked River Lodge in Bolsters Mills with 60 attending. Smaller meetings in watershed towns will be scheduled throughout 2009.

The Alliance would like to thank the Maine Community Foundation Fund For Maine Land Conservation for recognizing the importance of the Crooked River, the "crown jewel" of southern Maine.

Demonstration Field Day May 27th, Waterford

As part of a larger Crooked River collaboration project, The American Forestry Foundation and WFLT are co-sponsoring a forest management demonstration field day, at Bart and Mary Ann Hague's 350-acre easement-protected property at the height of McWain Hill, Waterford. The event is scheduled rain or shine for Saturday May 27th from 9am-1:30. Speakers will talk about best management practices for biodiversity and wildlife especially within river corridors. Dress for walking, info: wflt@megalink.net.

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Fine style shown by 3 generations of Greenleafs!

2009 X-C Ski Event, Best Ever:

Thanks to the diligent trail grooming of Bob Van Nest and help from volunteers, the Western Foothills Land Trust's x-c ski event held on Valentines Day at the Van Nest farm, was a great success. A glorious, albeit windy, sunny day, beautiful trail conditions, and available equipment made for a perfect day.

This year Dr. Jill Gabrielsen arranged for the skis, poles, and boots acquired for the Paris and Rowe schools to be available for kids to use on site. In addition, 3 volunteers from the Viking's varsity ski team, Justin and Adena St. John and Eli Gabrielsen helped out with equipment, trail maps, and ski techniques. There were drawings for 2 prizes: Sheila Morse won a season pass to Carters X-C Ski Center donated by Peg Nation, and Dyk Eusden won a collection of wintery books donated by the Maine Bookhouse. This year's event raised over \$500 to benefit Roberts Farm Preserve. The Trust would also like to thank Healthy Oxford Hills for their pivotal sponsorship of the event.

WFLT maintains seat on Maine Land Trust Network Steering Committee

For several years, WLFT benefited from volunteer Board Director John Gunn's presence on the MLTN Steering Committee. Due to his new position with Manomet Center for Conservation Services, John retired from the WFLT board and the steering committee in 2008. Thankful for the opportunity, Lee Dassler has been accepted to take John's place on the committee. www.mltn.org.

Monitoring Committee Update:

Reflecting new IRS regulations, the Land Trust Alliance policies are now requiring yearly monitoring of easement properties. Previously we were required to monitor properties every 3 years. WFLT's monitoring committee, Mary Van Nest, Jeff Chase, Bill Newcomb and Joanna Reese have risen to the challenge and are preparing to monitor our 15 easement protected properties annually.



Mike Copper, Bob Van Nest, Don Murphy, Jasper and Scott Vlaun

Vernal Pool Biologist asked to study old farm pond on Roberts Farm Preserve

Wetlands scientist Don Murphy of Bethel has been contracted by the Western Foothills Land Trust to determine if the old farm pond on Roberts Farm Preserve in Norway has the recognized attributes of a vernal pool. Don was invited to walk around the pond with trail designer Mike Cooper and Trust trail committee members on April 7th. At that time activity was limited to a pair of mallard ducks as 98% of the pond surface was still frozen. As the farm pond does not have an inlet, Don thinks that there is a good chance that he will find the indicator species for vernal pools as the season progresses: wood frogs, Blue-spotted Salamanders, Spotted Salamanders, and Fairy Shrimp.

A brief visit by members of the trails committee one week later, on April 15, provided an open pond and easily identifiable wood frogs. Salamanders should be migrating to vernal pools in this area starting with this week's predicted rains.

Don will be monitoring the site for the Trust throughout May. In order to stay well clear of the pond, the trails committee has decided to shift the start location of the Preserve's universally accessible trail and to adjust a short section of the intermediate trail. Incorporating suggestions from Don, the committee is discussing adding a short universally accessible trail to a viewing point near the pond.

WORKSHOP: Don has offered to present a Vernal Pool Basics program for the community at the farm pond on Roberts Farm Preserve, Thursday May 21st, 5-6:30 pm, rain or shine. Parking available off Roberts Road. There are no trails yet, so dress for a woodlands walk. Additional information: wflt@megalink.net.

2009 Spring-Summer Events

Wednesday May 13, 7PM

SIGNIFICANT WILDLIFE HABITAT

Supported by a Maine Outdoor Heritage Grant, Maine Audubon will be addressing protection for significant wildlife habitats: vulnerable habitats for wading birds, shorebirds, waterfowl and vernal pools. Sponsored by: Casco and Otisfield Conservation Committees, Loon Echo Land Trust, and the Western Foothills Land Trust. Otisfield Town Hall, Route 121

Saturday May 16, 7-9:30AM

BIRD WALK AT SOUTH POND

Our annual bird walk at a new location! We'll meet at the Buckfield town garage off John Ellingwood Drive at 7AM. Dress for walking (and bugs.) Bring binoculars.

Thursday May 21, 5-6:30PM

VERNAL POOL BASICS

AT ROBERTS FARM PRESERVE

Wetlands Scientist Don Murphy will present an on-site talk about how and when to recognize vernal pools and how to protect and nurture them. Rain or Shine. Parking available off Roberts Road, Norway. Dress for a woodlands walk.

Monday June 22, 7PM

GLACIAL ORIGINS OF THE CROOKED RIVER WATERSHED

Part of the Crooked River Initiative Series, Woody Thompson of the Maine Geological Survey will talk about the glacial origins of the Crooked River Watershed. Held at the Norway Library.

Saturday, June 27, 9-1:30

FOREST STEWARDSHIP

DEMONSTRATION FIELD DAY

We'll walk through Bart and Mary Ann Hague's 350 acre easement on the Crooked River with a variety of experts who will address managing lands for landscape values, water quality, biodiversity, wildlife, cost-share opportunities, and ecosystem services marketplaces. Registration requested, lunch provided.

Saturday, July 11, 8:30AM

2009 NORWAY TRIATHLON

The second annual Norway Tri to benefit Roberts Farm Preserve. USAT-sanctioned event. Compete solo or in a team of 3. Afterward enjoy a deserved relaxing afternoon at the Norway Arts Festival.

Pre-registration required:

www.norwaytri.com.

Or download a registration form:

www.wflmaine.org.

Saturday July 18, 2-4PM

JUGTOWN PLAINS WALK

WITH JOHN GUNN AND PIXIE WILLIAMS

The Jugtown Plains in Casco, Harrison, Naples and Otisfield, are designated as a focus area by the Maine Natural Areas program. The pitch pine/heath barrens at Jugtown Plains is the northernmost example of this natural community type. Sponsored by the Casco and Otisfield Conservation Committees and by Loon Echo and Western Foothills Land Trusts. Meet at the Casco Fire House, dress for walking.

Thursday July 30, 7PM

ANNUAL MEETING

The Crooked River Initiative: the relationship between land management and our water resources. Western Maine University & Community College Center

Thursday, August 6th, 7PM

FROM FOREST TO FAUCET: Paul Barton

The relationship between forests and water quality. Director of the USFS/UMass project, Paul Barton has completed a study of watershed reservoirs in the northeast. Findings are significant for the Crooked and Presumpscot River watersheds including Portland residents.

www.wetpartnership.org. Location TBA.



A MAINE CONSERVATION CORP CREW

TRAIL VOLUNTEER DAYS 2009

- **June 6-** (National Trails Day)- South Pond, Buckfield ;8AM-Noon, we'll be posting signs, and picking up debris. Meet at town garage, Buckfield.
- **July 25-** Witt Swamp, Norway; 8-Noon, GPS marked trails
- **August 25-September 12-** Roberts Farm Preserve, Tuesday-Saturday, 9-3.
A crew from the Maine Conservation Corps will be joining us on Roberts Farm Preserve for 3 weeks. WFLT will match the MCC crew with volunteers. If you would like to volunteer for a morning or an afternoon with this exciting crew, let us know. wflt@megalink.net.





Roberts Farm Preserve Campaign Reaches The Cap!

Roberts Farm Preserve farm pond

When the Western Foothills Land Trust began its fund raising campaign for Roberts Farm Preserve in July, 2007, Bob and Mary Van Nest brought an old milk bottle painted with *Roberts Farm Norway, Maine*, to the office. Founders of WFLT, Bob and Mary used to keep dairy cows and often filled the old bottle with milk for their own use. WFLT chose to use the bottle for fund raising; its photo has been on the land trust's website since 2007 and has been filling with metaphoric funds ever since. In April, the cream rose to the head of the bottle as the Trust successfully paid off its loan on the initial \$310,000 purchase. The Trust would like to thank everyone in our local, Maine, and New England community who helped with the effort to purchase and protect the former dairy farm parcel overlooking Lake Penneesseewassee.

The trails committee has been working throughout the winter with trail designer Mike Cooper and National Park Service technical supervisor Burnham Martin on policies, construction details, site issues, permit requirements, community goals, and volunteer needs. The Forest Management Plan for the site has been completed and reviewed by Oxford County District Forester Merle Ring, and Peter Marcinuk of the Natural Resource Conservation Services. A local contractor, Todd Sawyer of Waterford, has been selected for trail construction, and a Maine Conservation Corp crew is scheduled in August-September for hands-on trail work.

By next winter, the proposed trails on site will be ready for x-c skiing and snowshoeing! The Trust plans to have an opening winter ceremony to celebrate this outstanding community accomplishment.

Fund Raising Continues for Adjacent 10.5 Acres

In less than two years, WFLT has succeeded to raise \$310,000 for the initial Roberts Farm land acquisition as well as \$56,000 for trail design and construction. Remaining to be raised is the \$40,000 due in June for the adjoining 10.5 acre parcel that the Technical Park Development Corporation held back from the initial purchase. Acquiring the parcel will reunite the farm parcel, protect contiguous woodland habitat, provide additional acres for non-motorized recreational trails, as well as an important egress onto Pikes Hills Road. Proceeds from the sale will be turned over to the 5 towns that invested in the original technical park project. The Trust is actively working on raising those funds via grants and contributions.

WFLT Awarded Recreational Trails Program Grant for Roberts Farm Preserve Trail Construction

The Maine Trails Advisory Committee and the Maine Bureau of Parks and Recreation approved a \$30,000 grant to WFLT for trail construction on the 160 acre Roberts Farm Preserve. This grant, in combination with a Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant and grants from the Stephens Healthcare Foundation, the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, the Maine Community Foundation, and Western Maine Health brings the Trust to its \$56,000 goal for trail design and construction.

Trail work has been scheduled for this summer. The 12+km trail system will be constructed by former OHCHS graduate and Nordic skier, Todd Sawyer of Waterford, between May and August depending upon ground conditions. A Maine Conservation Corp crew and local volunteers will finish the trail work prior to fall. Trails will be seeded, hayed, and closed until snowfall to allow the grass to take root.

Mike Cooper, who designed and manages the Bethel Inn's x-c ski program, designed the Roberts Farm Preserve trail system with the community in mind. The multi-use trails will be able to accommodate a range of activities: x-c skiing and snowshoeing in the winter to running, biking, riding and hiking in the summer. Dog walkers will be allowed on select trails in the summer and on snowshoe trails in the winter. Equestrians will be allowed on the trails in the summer. The design includes a universally-accessible loop to the site's best viewpoint across the lake, and a hiking trail up from the Lake Penneesseewassee Rest Area.



Trust Awarded NPS Grant

Last October, WFLT was awarded a National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program grant. The grant provides invaluable technical assistance from one of the program's Maine coordinators, Burnham Martin. A Harvard-educated geologist with Appalachian Mountain Club experience, followed by years of NPS work assisting non-profits with successful trail initiatives throughout Maine, Burnham has helped us organize and drive the work of our trails committee.

Roberts Farm Preserve



Contributors- A Community Working Together

Bolster's Decorating
Brooks Foundation
Cricket Foundation
Davis Conservation Foundation
Fields Pond Foundation
Grover Gundrilling
Hannaford Bros. Co
Land For Maine's Future
LL Bean Maine Land Trust Grant
Maine Community Foundation
Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund
Moosepond Arts & Ecology
Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust
New Balance
New England Grassroots Environ. Fund
Norway Downtown
Norway Saving Bank
Norway Triathlon Committee
Recreational Trails Program
Stephens Healthcare Foundation
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Yes! I want to invest in protecting wildlife habitat, creating non-motorized recreational trails and preserving the scenic gateway to Norway by supporting the Roberts Farm Preserve project.

Please accept my tax-deductible donation of:

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Western Foothills Land Trust Spring 2009



The Trust urges its members, supporters, and area elected representatives to support Land for Maine's Future fund as it is being deliberated this spring, and when it hopefully returns for bond consideration in the fall. LMF funds allows communities and nonprofits to partner on significant conservation projects that preserve lands inherently important to Maine's quality of life. LMF has provided partial funding for 2 key WFLT projects: Roberts Farm in Norway and South Pond in Buckfield.

As the Natural Resource Council of Maine states: LMF is imperative to fund since it has conserved lands in each of Maine's 16 counties; completed more than 200 land protection projects; guaranteed public access to hundreds of thousands of acres; established access to dozens of water bodies; secured mountain summits, salt marshes, rivers, lakes, ponds, and coastal shorelines; and has provided an economic boost by conserving working farms and forestlands. LMF has addressed the diverse interests of Maine citizens – those who fish, hike, farm, raft, bike, boat, hunt, snowmobile, camp – in short, all who value the rich natural heritage that is Maine. For additional information about LMF: www.maine.gov/spo/lmf.

Norway

Triathlon

SATURDAY, JULY 11th, 2009
Lake Penesseewassee Park

1k swim, 15k bike course, 5k foot race
www.norwaytri.com
www.wflmaine.org

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
739-2124 wflt@megalink.net



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Remnants of an apple orchard on Roberts Farm Preserve