



Western Foothills Land Trust

Fall / Winter Newsletter 2021



Roberts Farm Receives Funding

5th grade students from SAD 17 enjoy monthly school days at Roberts Farm. Photo by Sarah Kearsley

If you stop by the future site of the Roberts Farm & Ecology Center in Norway you may be greeted by SAD17's first full time Roberts Farm STEM educator, Sarah Kearsley, as well as the smiles and laughter of fifth grade students from all corners of the Oxford Hills. Sarah is teaching alongside Healthy Oxford Hill's Emily Eastman, who provides programming promoting physical activity and healthy eating habits funded by the New Balance Foundation. Over 200 fifth graders have made Roberts Farm monthly visits this fall.

In August, WFLT received news that Governor Mills and the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) awarded the Trust \$89,842 via the State Economic & Infrastructure Development (SEID) grant program. With the funding provided we will demolish the old Roberts farmhouse, rehabilitate the surface and drainage of the warming hut parking area, and install the new entrance and parking at the future ecology center. Planning, survey, and engineering work is underway now, demolition will be undertaken during the winter, and the work on parking and circulation will be scheduled for summer of 2022. Thank you NBRC!



Rendering of the future facilities at the Roberts Farm Homestead site.

Seasonal Outdoor Learning Workshop Series for Educators

Learn how to take your curriculum outdoors at Robert Farm Preserve!

Join CEBE's Education & Programming Coordinator, Seal Rosignol, WFLT's Community Outreach Director, Kelli Shedd, and Experiential STEM Teacher Sarah Kearsley for this outdoor series.

Contact Hours/ Certificates of Participation will be available.



Winter, Saturday, January 15th 11-2
Spring, Saturday, May 14th 11-2



Photo: Kelli Shedd

Educators enjoy the fall conditions at the first workshop session in October.



Newly Protected Land Totals 494 Acres in Oxford

This October the Trust purchased the first of four former Chadbourne Tree Farm tracts planned to be acquired in the next few years from White Pine LLC, a subsidiary of The Conservation Fund (TCF). The tract, known historically as Ann Thurlow, is comprised of three parcels totaling 494 acres in the town of Oxford. Funding for the purchase and long-term stewardship of the Oxford tract was provided by the Maine Community Foundation's Land Protection Grant program and The Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program. The latter is a grant program that awards funds collected through the state's In-Lieu-Fee Compensation Program due to the tract's extensive wetlands and other natural resource values (2,814 feet of the Webber Brook and 4 miles of Little Androscoggin River frontage). WFLT is currently working on the management plan for the parcel and anticipates an opening next summer.

Part of a Regional Conservation Effort

The purchase is part of an extraordinary regional conservation partnership that coalesced in 2019 when over 15,000 acres of the Chadbourne Tree Farm forestlands were listed for sale. The size, connectivity, and quality of these iconic working forests drew the interest of TFC, a national non-profit which works with public agencies and local land trust partners to conserve significant conservation lands. Since 1985, TCF has protected more than eight million acres of land across America, including 450,000 acres of working forests, coastal landscapes, and aquatic habitats in Maine.



Tamaracks on the Ann Thurlow property in Oxford, November 2020

Working with WFLT, Inland Woods+Trails (IW+T), Mahoosuc Land Trust (MLT), the U.S. Forest Service, and the Maine Bureau of Public Lands, The Fund purchased the Chadbourne Tree Farm properties in 2020. Of the 15,406 acres purchased, nearly 11,000 acres are anticipated to be conserved with a working forest conservation easement funded by the U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy Program. Other key tracts will be added to Bethel's Community Forest and the IW+T system. Other lands are to be permanently conserved by MLT and the White Mountain National Forest. In addition to Ann Thurlow, the Trust will be acquiring the Edward Mills Tract in Norway/Harrison and Otisfield, and the Staples tract in Oxford: 1,292 acres in total. WFLT anticipates completing the acquisitions via grants and private funds in the next two years.

The Trust is currently working on a preserve management plan for the tract, including a forest management plan for a small of the property that can be commercially harvested in the future. Given the extent of wetlands and other natural resources to be protected, the bulk of the land will be managed for the health of the forest and wildlife, not for timber revenue. Logging roads, including a discontinued public road, will transition to non-motorized recreational trails. The two recognized snowmobile trails through the tracts that are maintained by the Rock-o-Dundee Snowmobile Club will be continued. ATVs will not be allowed. WFLT is also looking to name the preserve.



Sarah Carter, Photo: Andy Gagne

Thank you Sarah Carter

Last fall Sara Carter joined WFLT's staff as Program Coordinator. No stranger to the Trust, Sarah managed our first year of covid-safe ski rentals and lessons, along with hut staff and volunteers. This fall she accepted a position with Maine Health allowing her to promote health and nutrition to kids statewide. As a long time WFLT volunteer, Sarah will stay involved with our program committee and Nordic ski programs. Thank you, Sarah for your dedication!

In Memorandum

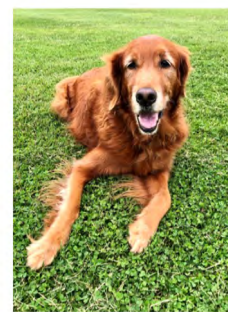
Jeffrey R. Parsons, professor emeritus of anthropology and curator and former director of the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology, died March 19, 2021, at age 81. He was the descendant of farmers long established in the state of Maine. He was born on October 9, 1939, in Washington, DC, where his father worked at the Department of Agriculture. In 2011, Jeff and his siblings donated a conservation easement to the Trust on their 230-acre historic farm in South Paris. Through his family's land, protected in perpetuity, his memory will live on.



Jeff Parsons

Belle

Many children who attended Paris Elementary School will remember Belle as a visiting reading therapy dog. In her career she made more than 400 school visits. She also raised money for the Cancer Resource Center and enjoyed visiting with anyone who needed comfort. Belle loved Shepard's Farm Preserve and became our only 4-legged donor some years ago. She passed away quickly this fall from a tick-borne illness, and her owner made a generous donation to the Trust in appreciation for our preserves, and in memory of all their shared walks.



New Board Member

Nathaniel Liu, Washington D.C. / Waterford

After volunteering as an intern for WFLT the past two summers, Nathaniel Liu officially joined the Trust's board of directors in September. Spending his summers with family in Waterford, Nathaniel has a life long familiarity and appreciation for the Trust. From trail work to social media and most recently event photography, Nathaniel's many talents are an asset to the WFLT community. Thank you for your contributions to WFLT, and welcome Nathaniel.



Nathaniel Liu



Photo by Andy Gagne

Winter Programs 2022

MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System

JANUARY

- 1/8 Kids Winter Nature Journaling 11-1
- 1/15 Ski Clinic Roberts Farm Preserve 11-1
- 1/16 Full Moon Snowshoe Hawk Mtn Preserve, 5-7
- 1/17 MLK Family Fun Ski Day Roberts Farm Preserve 10-2
- 1/22 Ski Clinic Roberts Farm Preserve 11-1
- 1/23 Skijor Roberts Farm Preserve 11-1
- 1/30 Biathlon Roberts Farm Preserve 9-1

FEBRUARY

- 2/6 Biathlon Roberts Farm Preserve 9-1
- 2/12 Ski Clinic Roberts Farm Preserve 11-1
- 2/13 Skijor Roberts Farm Preserve 11-1
- 2/19 Snowshoe Festival Roberts Farm Preserve 10-2
- 2/20 Fat Bike Races Winter Fest 11-1
- 2/21 Family Ski Scavenger Hunt Roberts Farm 10-12
- 2/22 Family Fun Sledding Shepard's Farm Preserve 12-2
- 2/25 Snowshoe Hawk Mtn Preserve, Waterford 10-12
- 2/26 Endurance x-c ski Roberts Farm Preserve 11-4

MARCH

- 3/5 Ski Clinic Roberts Farm Preserve 10-12
- 3/6 Biathlon Roberts Farm Preserve 9-1
- 3/12 Snowshoe Noyes Mtn Preserve 10-12
- 3/13 Skijor Roberts Farm Preserve 11-1
- 3/19 Kids Winter Nature Journaling 11-1

This past summer the Motus Wildlife Tracking Network installed an automatic receiver station at the preserve as a part of an international collaborative network. This receiver station will provide migration data to help wildlife managers



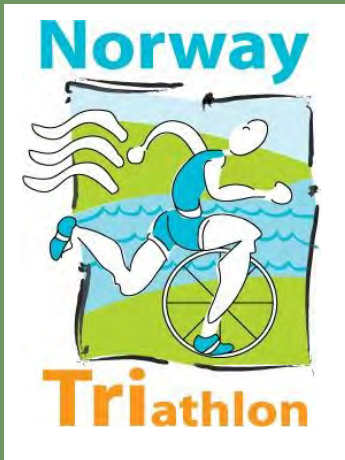
across North America better conserve a range of wildlife species, from woodcock to bats and songbirds to monarch butterflies. To learn more about the species that have been detected at Roberts Farm Preserve, visit

www.motus.org. To learn more about the project, visit northeastmotus.com.



Pisten Bully Campaign on Track

Thanks to the stalwart efforts of Bob Van Nest and the generosity of our committed Nordic skiing community, we have raised our \$20,000 lease payment for the coming season. This means over half of the purchase price of our Piston Bully groomer has been raised to date. We are on track to fully own the Bully by 2024. The Bully is pricey, but anyone who skied at Roberts Farm last season after the trails were groomed understands the importance of using grooming equipment designed to maximize snow conditions for enjoyment and safety.



THANK YOU TO THE 2021 NORWAY TRIATHLON ATHLETES, SPONSORS & VOLUNTEERS

Following Maine CDC guidelines, the 2021 Norway Triathlon was held in person this year at Pennessseewassee Park. A limited field of seventy individuals and teams competed in the USAT sanctioned sprint tri held on a perfect July day. We anticipate running the 2022 Norway Tri at full capacity again, registrations will begin in early 2022. Many thanks to our loyal event volunteers who make this race day possible. And of course thank you to all our athletes, and to our 2021 sponsors; your support on this one big day allows us to maintain our many miles of trails the rest of the year.



Photos by: Carl Costanzi & Nathaniel Liu





Open views on the Perham Trail. Photo: Rick Meagher

Noyes Mountain Preserve

For any Noyes Mountain hikers who have ever lost the steep winding Perham Trail en route to or from the viewpoint, WFLT volunteer extraordinaire, Eric Rathbun, has your back, or your boots. Eric, a life-long hiker and trail builder, has been refining the twist and turns of the Perham trail with massive yet discrete rises of stone steps. Volunteering on Sundays or after work at Western Maine Health, Eric has single handedly built over 300 steps to date. With the exception of one day when scouts and

families of the Oxford Boy Scout Troop 196 helped out, Eric has accomplished this herculean feat on his own. Our thanks to Eric for opening up new views and creating a safe experience for the rest of us.

Twin Bridges Preserve

We'd like to recognize Matthew Hatch of South Paris for his service project to WFLT's Twin Bridges Preserve to benefit the hiking community. A member of Boy Scout Troop 130, Hatch's design and leadership was a part of his Eagle Scout project completed this past May. He worked closely with the Trust and Twin Bridges volunteer preserve adopter, Rich Sousa, to execute the construction. Thank you to Matthew and our trail volunteers for helping to improve hiking access and care for the trails at the preserve.



Phot: Lee Dassler



Hikers enjoy the view at Hawk Mt. Photo: Lee Dassler

Hawk Mountain Preserve

In thanks to Maine Community Foundation's donor advised fund program, the Trust has received \$5,000 towards improvements at Hawk Mountain Preserve. The project will include installing two new informational panels at the preserve kiosk and the much needed trail work and bush hogging to create a safe and enjoyable hiking experience for all. We anticipate holding volunteer trail work party days at the preserve in the spring of 2022.



Photos: Nathaniel Liu

WFLT's Annual Meeting held August 12th at Roberts Farm Preserve

Make a Gift to WFLT's Year End Campaign

Name(s) : _____
(as you would like to appear on our list of donors)

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

- ☐ Check Included (payable to Western Foothills Land Trust)
- ☐ Credit Card (Visa/MC/Amex/Discover): _____
Exp. Date: _____ CVC Code: _____
- ☐ I would like to be enrolled in WFLT's Monthly Giving Program
in the amount of \$ _____ per Month

Secure donations may also be made online at www.wflmaine.org



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The Clothesline Project

WFLT's second iteration of the Clothesline Project reflected on the Covid-19 pandemic and how it has inspired connection to the natural landscapes and art in our everyday lives. Artists Mary Delano, Nikki Millonzi, Virginia Valdes, and Kimberly Hamlin installed their artwork on the 40-foot clothesline this past summer and fall. Braving the elements, their art provided a creative experience for visitors to Shepard's Farm Preserve. The 2021 Clothesline Project was made possible through the generous support of The David Nichols Charitable Trust.

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