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# estern Foothills Land Trust

FALL 2017

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AFTER

## Trout and Salmon Habitat Re-opened

Because Mainers showed up to vote in 2014, Crooked River landlocked salmon and brook trout have another mile of spawning habitat available to them. In November, 2014, Maine voters passed the "Clean Water for Maine" bond. As a result, \$5,400,000 in funds was earmarked for vital improvement projects including stream crossing and culvert upgrades. The DEP received 69 complete applications and issued \$800,000 in grant money through this first round of applications."

WFLT was amongst the recipients of that first round of grants. We had just purchased the 252-acre Twin Bridges parcel in Otisfield which included a mile of frontage on the river and a section of a significant tributary stream. Approximately 1/10 mile from the river, a logging trail crosses the stream. The crossing had two repurposed-pipe culverts, which were undersized and hanging, and had gouged out a pool at the downstream side. For decades, the hanging culverts had blocked upstream passage

for all aquatic species. Erosion and sedimentation also presented water quality issues with this undersized, scoured-out crossing.

The stream was surveyed by MDIFW in 2014 and was found to support landlocked salmon, brook trout and pike. Tributary temperatures were found to be cool and supportive of fisheries benefits if the stream crossing were replaced.

Work was completed this fall. In two days the hanging culverts were removed and replaced with a steel and concrete bridge. Our October storms which added 8" of rain in two events tested the new crossing, which passed with flying colors. The broad span of the new bridge easily accommodated the torrents.

The Western Foothills Land Trust and conservation partners continue to work towards increase the pace of forest conservation within the Sebago Lake Watershed.



BEFORE

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

## 74 Acres Purchased on the Crooked River in Otisfield

WFLT recently purchased a 74-acre forested parcel in Otisfield on the Crooked River with funding provided by conservation partners working to protect water quality in Sebago Lake.

Sebago Lake is the drinking water reservoir for the Portland Water District, providing clean drinking water to 22 communities and over 200,000 Maine residents. The Crooked River is the primary tributary into the lake, supplying 39% of Sebago Lake's surface water. As the Portland Water District's environmental director Paul Hunt often says, "as goes the Crooked River, so goes Sebago Lake".

The Fogg lot includes 1,515' of frontage on the river, over 11 acres of wetlands, and 661' of stream habitat. The parcel also links 2 separate forested parcels owned by the Trust, creating a protected landscape of 271 acres with 1.5 miles of contiguous shoreline. The three lots, protected from development and division in perpetuity, will be managed as they have been since settlement as working forest lands. The Trust will continue to pay tree growth taxes to the Town of Otisfield.

WFLT now protects 1,457 acres via conservation easements and owns 790 acres in the Crooked River Watershed.



The Fogg Lot

## 16 Acres Donated Adjacent to Hawk Mountain, Waterford

Hawk Mtn LLC parcel to be donated



Hawk Mountain LLC Parcel from Crystal Lake, Harrison

A sixteen acre parcel that was at one time destined to be developed as six view lots on the east side of Hawk Mountain was donated to the Trust in October by the owners of Hawk Mountain LLC. The parcel is adjacent to the 147-acre Hatch Preserve owned by the Trust and to the view parcel owned by the Town of Waterford.

The Trust will work with NRCS programs to restore the parcel's habitat over time. Benefits of this generous donation are improved water quality for the Crystal Lake watershed, additional wildlife habitat, and the protection of views from the Hawk Mountain lookout and from Crystal Lake in Harrison.



# Projects

FALL 2017

## Ed Meadows Grant Provides Kiosks, Trail Signs

WFLT received a \$3,910 grant from the Ed Meadows Conservation Fund of the Maine Community Foundation to renew outdated information panels at the original kiosk at Roberts Farm Preserve, and to build and install a new matching kiosk with 3 panels at the near to the start of the walking trail, newly renamed the Walker Trail, after Norway farmer, journalist, and artist, Harry Walker.



Volunteers from Tru Strength

Black Dog Timberworks of Norway built the kiosk, as well as an identical one at our new Noyes Mountain Preserve. Zizi Vlaun is preparing the graphic panels.

The new kiosk at Roberts will accommodate natural resource information, trail conditions and messages, a QR code for mobile trail maps, a new trail map, membership information, and a donation box. Significant trail work was accomplished this summer at Roberts Farm Preserve thanks to Bob Van Nest, David Greenleaf, Bob Story, and other volunteers. Numerous blow downs were removed, trail signs were renewed, and the Stephen's Extension trail was widened and smoothed.

Thanks to Carl Costanzi's trail blazing skills, the efforts of the WFLT Trail Committee, and volunteers from Tru Strength Gym in Norway, we now have a parking area, a kiosk, and the beginning of a well marked trail system at Noyes Mountain.



Blackdog Timberworks installing the new east gate kiosk

WFLT is part of the Maine West regional conservation partnership. Maine West recently launched a new hiking challenge designed to encourage healthy outdoor recreational activity for all ages and abilities.

The Second Nature Adventure Challenge promotes nine different walks and hikes in the Oxford Hills, River Valley, and Bethel areas via a website that rewards participants with digital badges. The program includes a combination of easy,

moderate, and strenuous hikes in each region, such as WFLT's Libby Trail at Roberts, Farm, the Packard Trail in Buckfield, and the Noyes Mountain Trail in Greenwood. For more information about Second Nature and Maine West be sure to visit [secondnaturemaine.com](http://secondnaturemaine.com) and [mainewest.org](http://mainewest.org) to sign up.

## Second Nature Adventure Challenge





## Celebrating Thirty Years: 1987-2017

Thirty years ago in response to local farmland conversion, a group of concerned citizens gathered around a farmhouse table and created the Norway Paris Heritage Trust. Their goal was to provide options for local land conservation

Thirty years later, now known as the Western Foothills Land Trust, it has a wider geographic reach and protects almost 8,000 acres via easements and fee lands. It has an office, staff, and has become an essential element of the Oxford Hills Community.

Thousands of people have taken advantage of the Trust's educational and recreational programs and facilities. It has allowed the community to become involved in conservation in ways that didn't exist prior its founding.

As mentioned in the Trust's mission statement, our preserved lands, and the activities on them, "benefit the wild and human communities in western Maine". Thirty years from now that will certainly still be the case.

## Ann Siekman leaves the Board, will remain involved

Ann Siekman has been an excellent Board Director since 2014. Her passion for conservation, knowledge of the local community, and experience with board governance within the non-profit world has been pivotal. Ann will continue to help with membership and related projects. She will be missed. Thank you Ann.

SNEAK PEEK

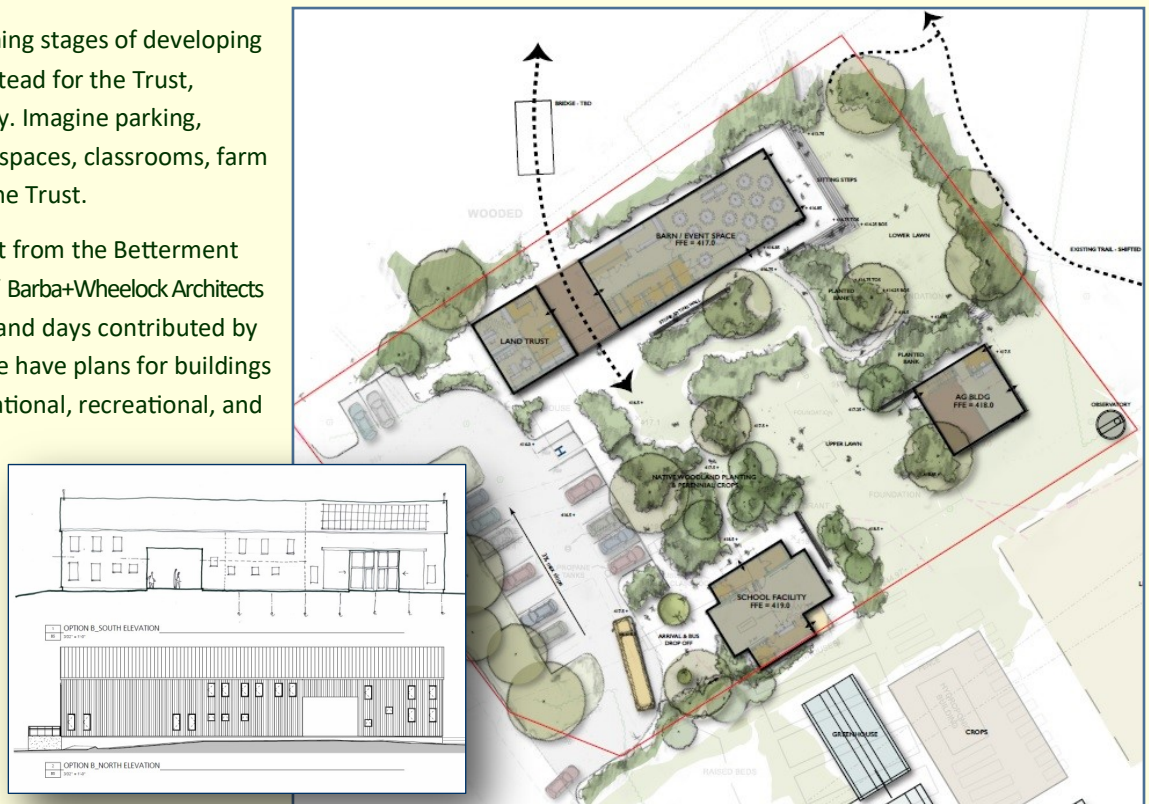
## Plans for the Future of Roberts Farmstead

WFLT is in the planning stages of developing facilities at Roberts Farmstead for the Trust, SAD17, and our community. Imagine parking, toilets, a kitchen, meeting spaces, classrooms, farm buildings, and offices for the Trust.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Betterment Fund, the design talents of Barba+Wheelock Architects and Richardson & Associates, and days contributed by our stakeholders group, we have plans for buildings that will address the educational, recreational, and conservation needs of the Trust and our community into the future.

The 1.2 acre site plan and elevations for the multi-use barn are to the right.

More to come in 2018....





# and People

FALL 2017

## Kelly Hodgkins, our first Program Coordinator

The Western Foothills Land Trust has been working for a decade on protecting forest and farmlands within the Crooked River Watershed. To support that work, the Trust has received funding for a part-time program coordinator in order to allow the Trust's Executive Director more time to focus on land protection in the watershed.

Kelly Hodgkins of Greenwood has been selected from a field of skilled, qualified, and personable applicants. Kelly has been a dedicated volunteer for the land trust for years, helping out in the warming hut at Roberts Farm several days a week, assisting with hikes and canoeing expeditions, volunteering for trail building, and acting as a link with the local homeschooling community. A mother of eight home-schooled children, Kelly often comes with extra helping hands.

A Ph.D candidate at UNH in environmental microbiology, with an undergraduate degree in biology from Loyola College, Kelly was drawn to the rigorous Maine Naturalist Program, which she just completed alongside several other Oxford Hills naturalists. Outdoors and on trails in any weather, Kelly says that the Maine Naturalist Program has illuminated for her the wonders of woods and waters, and that she looks forward to sharing that knowledge.

"As a kid, I loved being outside, watching the water spiders and wandering the woods with the maple surging lines as my guide. I am so blessed that my children are growing up in a similar way, supported by a community that places a value on preserving the land for generations to come. As program coordinator for Western Foothills Land Trust, I get to play a role in sharing this outdoors experience with others, exposing them to the wonders that nature holds."

Kelly has worked beautifully with the staff and the Board to fulfill the outreach/communications and program needs of Trust. Her capacity to plan and implement nature-based programming can already be felt and measured by increased program participation, membership, and community partners. Fluent in social media, tech, and networking, she has enabled the Trust to be more responsive on social media platforms. If you haven't met Kelly yet, come hike or ski with her this winter. It will be your treat.



## Grant to Support Winter Programming Received.



**wfltmaine.org**  
WESTERN FOOTHILLS LAND TRUST

Thanks to a grant from the Maine Community Foundation, WFLT has received funding to replace or repair broken or damaged ski equipment, and to purchase bibs to be used at all competitive winter events.

The Trust also received support for ski/snowshoe trip funding for 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes in SAD17.

The Trust will offer 10 snowshoe walks/ ski clinics or programs for the community during 2018. Funding was also provided to promote the 2018 Snowshoe Festival.

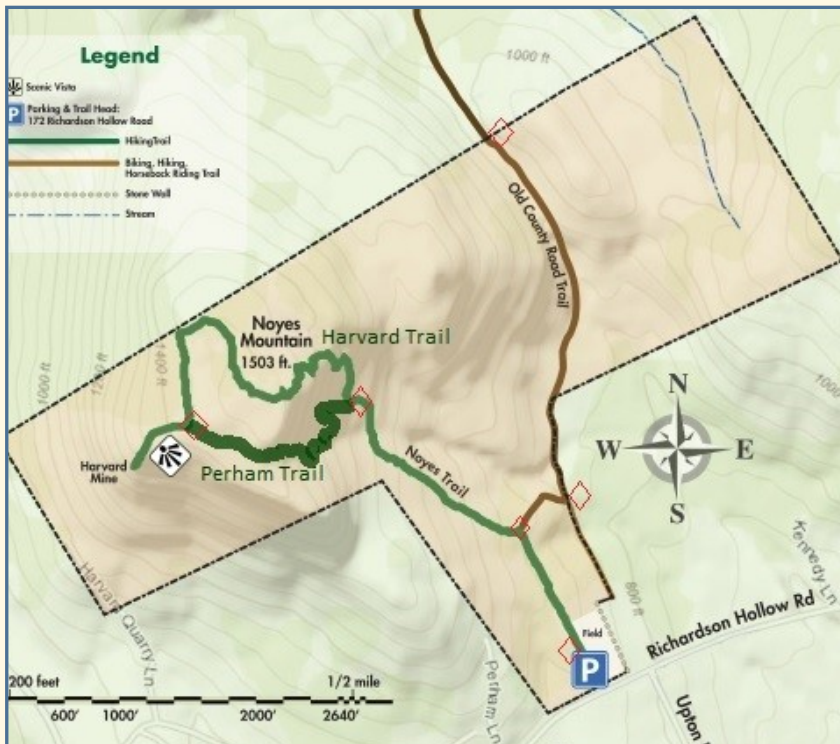


# Western Foothills Land Trust Projects

## Project Update: Noyes Mountain and the Harvard Mine



Thanks to a generous challenge grant and to many generous private donors, the Trust just met its \$25,000 challenge match for Noyes Mountain! Thank you all!



This Spring WFLT received \$50,000 for the Noyes purchase from the Friends of Maine Mountains. Recently we received news of increased support from the Open Space Institute in recognition of the site's inherent climate change resiliency.

The Trust has signed an option on the Harvard Mine, a 1-acre inholding with deeded right-of-ways, and has until the end of the year to complete the purchase or secure a bridge loan.

To purchase the Harvard Mine and payoff the original bridge loan, we need to raise \$37,000. Not bad for a project totaling \$548,000.



## A Message from the President

When a donor grants an easement, donates or sells a property to our trust, it represents the culmination of a profoundly personal decision. Donors care deeply about their lands and employ the trust to perpetuate that care into the future. We become care takers. We receive their gifts with the promise to do no harm. Beyond the span of years allowed to them, they know their lands will endure whole, as working lands, recreational lands, or forever wild.

But even though these donations are deeply personal, they bring significant benefits to the communities that contain them. They are gifts to the communities as well. Consider the following:

- WFLT owns or holds easements on 50 parcels totaling 7289 acres.
- Taxes or payments-in-lieu-of-taxes are paid on 75% of those acres.
- On six of the seven tax exempt properties owned by WFLT, the Trust has invested \$400,000 developing and managing recreational trails and cultural assets for public use.
- Hunting, snowmobiling, and other current uses are allowed on 95% of easement and preserve lands.
- Thirteen of the nineteen parcels owned by the Trust are managed as working forestlands supporting the local economy while providing revenue.
- Conserved lands demand minimal municipal services. Open spaces simply cost towns less than developed lands.

It is vitally important to understand the practical, tangible assets of conservation lands. It places them firmly within the context of current trends and developments. Besides their iconic beauty, protected lands have measurable ecological and health benefits, providing wildlife habitat, water quality, and recreational access that our municipalities cannot afford to provide. Conservation lands are salutary both from an emotional and rational point of view for the communities they benefit. Those benefits can be measured in terms of water quality, forestry jobs retained, increased tourism, and improved health metrics obtained.

In an era when the role of land trusts in Maine is being questioned, their value is overwhelmingly clear.



Bob Van Nest, President

## NOYES MOUNTAIN CAMPAIGN

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check made out to: Western Foothills Land Trust-

☐ visa/mc# \_\_\_\_\_ exp \_\_\_\_\_ sec. code \_\_\_\_\_

*Your contribution is tax-deductible as a charitable contribution*

Western Foothills Land Trust PO Box 107, Norway, ME 04268 207.739.2124 [www.wfltmaine.org](http://www.wfltmaine.org)



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# FALL 2017 NEWSLETTER

## A Noyes Mountain Hike to Remember

We have had so many great hikes on Noyes Mountain since our campaign began in 2014. Some have been in the fog, others have taken place under a full moon on snowshoes, and others have been races. This August 21st we risked scheduling a solar-eclipse hike, and the skies cooperated. What a memorable experience! Mark your calendars for 2024!

