



SPRING 2018

Western Foothills Land Trust

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Nurturing A Healthy Community

We are living in a time when the average child is outside for 7 minutes per day while logging in over 7 hours of screen time. Much has been written about nature deprivation syndrome and its effects upon healthy bodies and minds. Alongside other Maine land trusts, WFLT is working to provide outdoor programming and access to recreational assets that benefit our whole community. Even during the trickiest of winters, we all benefit from buttoning up and unplugging.

This winter thanks to multiple factors (grants, sponsors, donors, and volunteers) the Trust was able to ramp up the scope of its winter programs and events. A generous grant from the Maine Community Foundation's Community Building Grant program funded custom Nordic racing bibs designed by ZiZi Vlaun. The bibs look great, will last for decades, will help to promote Roberts Farm, and are much easier to use in cold temperatures.

The grant also supported transportation costs for ski and snowshoe programs for every fifth grade class, and some 4th grade classes, in SAD17. Thanks to many dedicated and talented volunteer ski instructors and our loyal grooming volunteers who kept the varied conditions under control, we were able to introduce Nordic skiing and snowshoeing to over 300 students.

Funds also supported transportation for our Guy E Rowe after school ski program which boasted 23 young skiers! The evolution of their skills and stamina from the first session in January to the last session in March was inspiring. Parents and athletes should be very proud.

This winter we also enjoyed local sponsorships from several main street businesses who are also dedicated to healthy outdoor recreation. Thank you Café Nomad, Carter's X-C Ski, Fiber & Vine, Green Machine, Norway Brewing Company, Pleasant Hill Properties, and True North Adventureware.

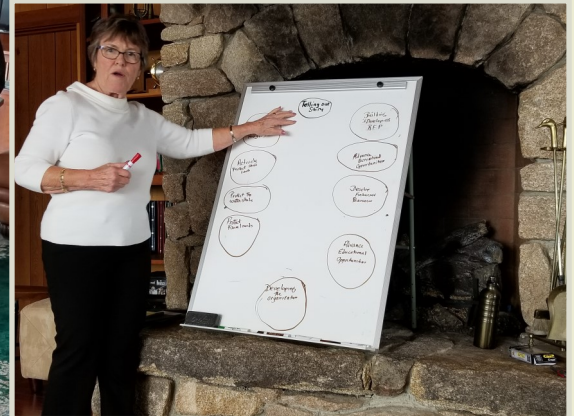


The Western Foothills Land Trust is dedicated to the conservation and protection of native ecosystems, farm and forestlands, watersheds, and scenic landscapes for the benefit of wild and human communities in Western Maine.



Western Foothills Land Trust

Board Committee begins Strategic Planning for 2019-2024



The committee's first meeting was held at Granite Ridge Estate (thank you Tony) and was facilitated by volunteer Callie Zilinsky .

Member and Friends Survey– we welcome your input-

We sent out a member & friends survey digitally this winter in preparation for our planning process. If you missed it and would like to respond, we would welcome your feedback via email, phone, or pen and paper. .

• Strengths: what do we do well?

Please write down three or more things about Western Foothills Land Trusts' accomplishments, structure, people involved, etc.---that you're most proud of as a member or friend:

• Weaknesses: what we need to improve:

Please write down three or more areas of improvement you think WFLT should work on in the near future.

• Opportunities:

What makes our land trust unique?

What do we have or do that no one else has or does?

What opportunities are we overlooking?

• Challenges:

What do you see as our community's most pressing challenges/threats.

How do those challenges influence the Trust's success?

Given WFLT's mission, should the Trust address those challenges via programming or collaboration?

Draft WFLT Goals 2019-2024

- Develop Organizational Capacity
- Advance Roberts Farm Preserve Campus
- Continue Conservation of Farmland, Watersheds, and Forestlands
- Telling Our Story-Community Outreach
- Advance Recreational and Educational Programming



staff@wflmaine.org

207 739-2124

PO Box 107 Norway ME 04268

SEBAGO CLEAN WATERS

Protecting the Brewshed

With twenty of Maine's ninety breweries relying upon the excellent water quality of the Sebago Lake reservoir, we have begun to refer to the Sebago Lake Watershed as the "Brewshed".



Portland Water District Receives Award

The Portland Water District (PWD) received the Jay Espy Award at the Maine Coast Heritage Trust's 2018 Land Conference this March. The award recognizes an individual, organization, agency or coalition for making outstanding contributions to land conservation in Maine while inspiring others. With the award comes a \$5000 donation to the conservation organization of the recipient's choice; the Loon Echo Land Trust and Western

Foothills Land Trust were selected by PWD to continue to advance land protection in the Sebago watershed. Pictured above at the conference are Sebago Clean Waters partners: Betsy Cook (Trust for Public Land), Tamara Lee Pinard (The Nature Conservancy), Paul Hunt (PWD), Spencer Meyer (Highstead Foundation), Laurel Jackson (PWD), Jennifer Melville (Open Space Institute), Lee Dassler (WFLT), and Thom Perkins (Loon Echo Land Trust). **Congratulations PWD!**



Sebago Clean Waters Receives Boost to Protect Forests and Water

Clean drinking water and forest conservation in the Sebago Lake watershed received a boost with a \$350,000 grant from the Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program. The grant will help launch a partnership effort to conserve land that feeds and filters Maine's largest drinking water supply. The Sebago Lake Watershed provides recreational opportunities, supports local economies, and conserves fish and wildlife habitat and working lands. Called **Sebago Clean Waters**, the partnership includes Loon Echo Land Trust, Western Foothills Land Trust, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, Portland Water District, Open Space Institute, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, and the Highstead Foundation.

Sebago Lake provides drinking water to 200,000+ users in the Greater Portland area. The region's forests filter water to produce clean drinking water, support local wood products businesses, and offer wide-ranging recreational opportunities like swimming, hiking and fishing. Much of the forest is privately owned and is experiencing creeping development pressure.

Abundant forests and cold-water lakes and streams in the Sebago Lake watershed provide myriad benefits to Mainers and visitors alike. With only 10% of the 282,000-acre region conserved, the U.S. Forest Service identified the Sebago watershed as the most vulnerable watershed in the Northeast for drinking water. "Naturally clean water flows downhill from the forested watershed to customers' taps," said Paul Hunt, environmental manager for the Portland Water District. "We want to create a way for downstream water users to contribute to the conservation of those critical upstream forests." The primary goal of the Sebago Clean Waters initiative is to create a "water fund" so businesses, consumers, and others can help private landowners who are interested in conserving their land.

The grant will enable Sebago Clean Waters to hire a coordinator to engage with communities on their conservation priorities, launch a water fund that will enable downstream water users to invest in upstream land conservation, and work with land trusts to identify landowners interested in conservation.



Western Foothills Land Trust Programs



WINTER 2018: Fat bikes ♦ Bill Koch League ♦ Snowshoe Festival ♦ Biathlon ♦ Skijor



NORWAY TRI's new Race Director, Kate Bonawitz



After 10 years of volunteering his time and skills to the Norway Triathlon, Race Director Mark White is passing the baton to Kate Bonawitz, 6th grade teacher at the Guy E Rowe School. Mark will continue to be the head of the swim at the Tri and has provided great support during the transition.

Born in Rochester, N.Y., Kate studied developmental biology at USM and undertook research on Multiple Myeloma at MMCRI before settling down to teach in Norway.

Aside from professional skills managing a classroom of rowdy 6th graders, Kate has an impressive personal history as a competitive athlete. She started running at 12 and fell in love with cycling at 18. She has competed in full and half ironman triathlons, and has done several Olympic distance triathlons.

Kate is currently training with 9 teammates for the 842-mile Wow Cyclothon bike race around Iceland to be held this June. The Norway Tri is July 14th.

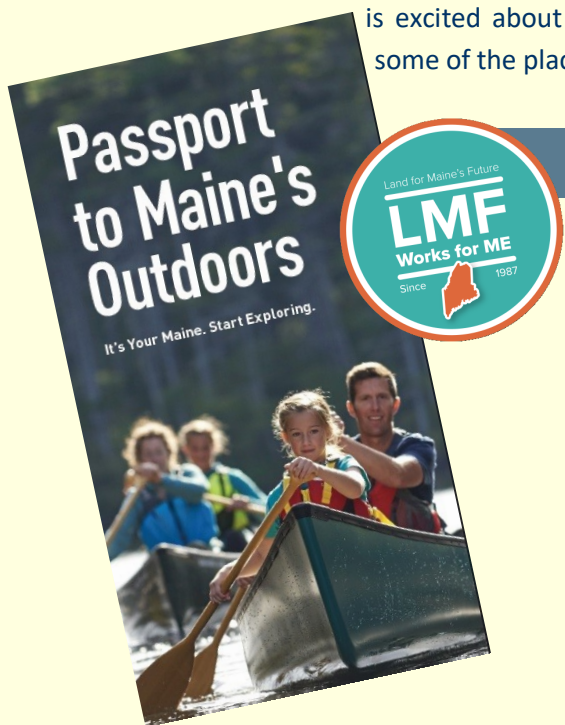


Harry Ricker, Marilyn, and

Matt Markot— Sebago Clean Waters Project Support

Thanks to funding from an anonymous foundation, Sebago Clean Waters has hired Matt Markot of Denmark as part time support staff. For conservation projects within the Sebago Lake Watershed, Matt will be helping both Western Foothills and Loon Echo Land Trusts with the gritty due diligence aspects of projects: mapping, ESA1, management plans, and baseline data reports.

Matt most recently worked as a land steward in The Nature Conservancy in northern Maine and as an AmeriCorps volunteer with the Maine Natural Areas Program. He has lived in the lake region since graduating from Trinity College in Hartford, CT in 2012 and is excited about the opportunity to play a role in conserving some of the places he skis, bikes, and paddles!



Roberts Farm selected for LMF Passport Program

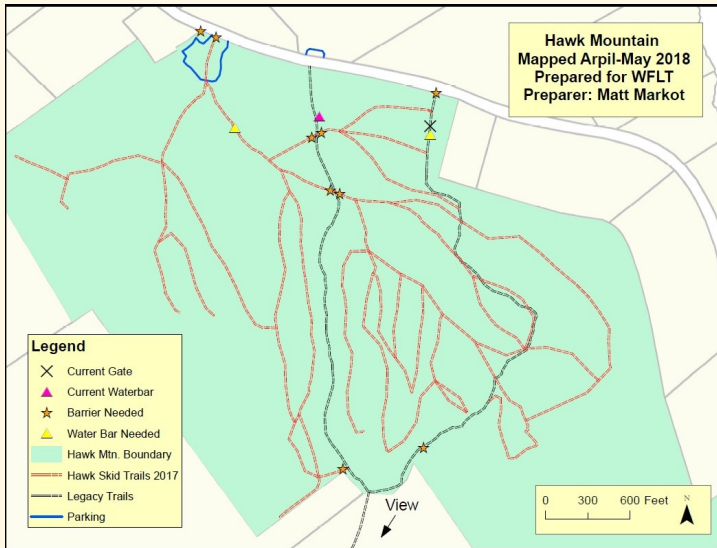
The Land For Maine's Future Coalition, a coalition comprised of land trusts, sportsmen's groups, businesses, health organizations, recreation associations, municipalities and others who support the Land for Maine's Future program, has initiated a Passport program to highlight LMF projects throughout the state of Maine.

This year, Roberts Farm Preserve (LMF 2008) has been selected as one of the passport locations. Like other featured LMF sites, Roberts Farm continues to provide community and economic benefits for the residents of the Oxford Hills and for the people of Maine. For information on the passport program: www.landformainesfuture.org.



Western Foothills Land Trust Projects

Hatch Preserve at Hawk Mountain update



This past winter the Trust conducted a selective harvest of wood on the Hatch Preserve at Hawk Mountain in Waterford. There were several reasons for this harvest. First, the Trust derives up to 40% of its operating income from the sale of forest products. Second, responsible forest management is an economic driver for our rural Maine community, providing jobs for the local forest industry. Third, the harvest will provide stewardship monies for the Preserve, so that trails, a parking lot, and kiosk can be developed and maintained. The most opportune time to have such a harvest is before such amenities are developed and the funds generated are readily available.

The accompanying map depicts the location of twitch trails, some of which will be developed as trails to the town's popular overlook parcel. The new trails will replace the existing, eroded, trail, will be more than triple that trail in length, and open up new views in all directions. Erosion control and seeding will be part of the development of this system. Trails will be mowed in the summer and dragged in the winter. The Trust looks forward to working with the Waterford Recreation Committee and is confident the resulting trail system will become an exciting addition to Waterford's recreational infrastructure.

Finally, these new trails and other openings create a new edge habitat that many species of birds and mammals find advantageous. For example, warblers and thrushes depend on a mosaic of forest habitat, including new and mature woodlands, in which to feed and raise their young.

Admittedly, the preserve appears a little "wounded" at the moment; but the Trust is going to be diligent in its efforts to soften the hard edges and create a resource that benefits both the wild and human communities that will utilize it.

Noyes Mountain Preserve and Harvard Mine update



Thanks to an anonymous donation, the Trust secured the Harvard Mine in January! We are continuing to work towards paying off our bridge loan and establishing a stewardship fund for the Noyes Mountain Preserve.

To payoff the original bridge loan and establish a \$25,000 stewardship fund (for maintenance, taxes, insurance etc.) we need to raise \$37,000. Not bad for a project totaling \$548,000.

If you would like to help us reach that goal, contact the office, make a donation by post or online.

The Trust is also in the process of obtaining an adjacent 69-acre parcel which will increase the Preserve to 364 acres.

A Message from the President

Several years ago, the Western Foothills Land Trust obtained much of the land surrounding Hawk Mountain in Waterford. I thought it would be worthwhile to use this forum to explain our intentions toward the site.

As some of you have already noticed, we have completed a selective harvest on the property. Since almost 40% of the Trust's income is derived from the sale of forest products, a harvest on this property was always part of our plans. That being said, at the moment, the site looks a little "raw". But we intend to utilize the openings left by the harvest to develop a system of trails, views, and open areas. All but a few of the skidder roads will be transformed into seeded trails with erosion controls in place. These prospective trails will afford several routes to the Town of Waterford's summit parcel. The map on the previous page gives you a general idea of the flow of the proposed system. As with our Roberts Farm Preserve, all of the trails will be mowed periodically to prevent the incursion of woody vegetation. Any skidder roads not developed into trails will be seeded and allowed to grow back. Finally, the former wood yard will be transformed into the Preserve's parking area and trailhead which will provide a turn around for the town's plow trucks in winter. The historic trail to the summit, which has eroded down to bedrock, will be closed.

These new trails and open areas will be available to a number of recreational constituencies, some of whom cannot currently enjoy the site. Back country skiing, hiking, snowmobiling, and mountain biking are all under consideration. Vehicular use, which has caused so much erosion, will eventually be prohibited.

We are seriously and profoundly dedicated to developing our land on Hawk Mountain into an inviting and cared for resource that benefits the health and happiness of those who utilize it. I realize that right now it does not resemble such a place; but we pledge to you that, in time, it surely will.



Robert Van Nest, President

NOYES MOUNTAIN CAMPAIGN

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Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

☐ Check made out to: Western Foothills Land Trust-

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Western Foothills Land Trust PO Box 107, Norway, ME 04268 207.739.2124 www.wflmaine.org



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SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER

A pair of cranes in Witt Swamp, September 2016, photo by Sherri Otterson

Sandhill Crane Puppets Join Norway's Earth Day Parade

During the past 5 years, majestic sandhill cranes have been spotted in Norway, in both the Pennessewassee Stream wetlands and in Witt Swamp. Last fall pairs were seen in the northern field of Shepard's Farm Preserve! Cornell University's e-Bird data records several sandhill crane spottings in the Oxford Hills in recent years. To honor these huge birds, WFLT volunteers and staff made 5 sandhill crane puppets for Norway's April 22nd Earth Day Parade. We look forward to hearing and seeing the real cranes when they return this season.

