



WESTERN FOOTHILLS LAND TRUST

NEWSLETTER
Fall 2009

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

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ROBERTS FARM PRESERVE TRAIL WORK BEGINS

Due to record rainfall throughout summer and fall, 2009 has proven itself to be a difficult year to start and complete a trail system- even one meticulously designed and engineered by Mike Cooper of Caribou Recreation.

The initial trail work was begun on schedule in May by contractor Todd Sawyer of Waterford. When Bob Van Nest met Todd on site at the beginning of June, he thought that his crew would easily finish the 12 k system before the end of June. Then the rains began and work was halted for 2 months.

When our 6 person Maine Conservation Corp crew arrived in August they were working along rough trails, knee deep in mud. Much to their credit, and to the credit of the MCC program, they worked without complaint and accomplished a great deal. Thanks to the generosity of the town, the college-aged crew, hailing from Illinois, Kansas, Vermont, and Maine, was housed in Norway's red schoolhouse during their 3-week stay: luxurious for a crew normally camped out in Maine's back country.

Working under the guidance of trail designer Mike Cooper, Burnham Martin of the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program, and WFLT Board members, the

MCC crew completed much of the hard hand-work required to open up trail corridors and vistas.

Subsequent fall rains have been periodic but saturating, prohibiting additional mechanized trail work. Instead, we have worked with volunteers on the trails hand trimming and cutting, and creating the hiking/snowshoe trail.

The current revised plan is for Todd to complete the intermediate trails this winter as soon as the ground freezes so that we have a 5k ski loop ready for recreation and potential competition. Todd will be transporting and setting the system's 3 bridges as well when the conditions allow. A portion of the beginners trails will be ready for this winter, as well as the snowshoe /hiking trail which has been cut by volunteer crews this fall.

All in all we planned to open approximately 10k of the overall 12k system this winter. The Trust intends to host an opening event on Feb 6 & 7.

Completion of the beginner's trail loop, including the universally accessible trail (which will be surfaced), and the seeding of the remaining trails will be postponed until spring 2010.

Western Foothills Land Trust Fall 2009



Kyle Ingram, Diana Archdipone, Scott Berk, Lida Gordon, Judy Florenz, Phoenix McLaughlin, and Jill Gabrielsen.



Our muddy-but-mighty Maine Conservation Corp crew

Thanks to our hard working trail builders!



Dyk Eusden, Bob Van Nest, Pam and Dave Baker, and a new sign post



Contractor Todd Sawyer



Bob Van Nest and Mike Cooper



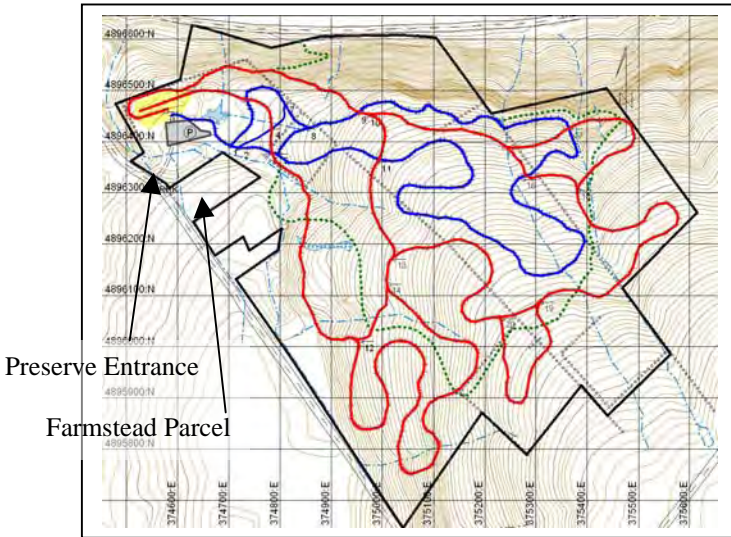
Burnham Martin, NPS



OHCHS Outing Club members helping the Maine Conservation Corp



The Roberts Farmstead Parcel



GRANT RECEIVED The Davis Conservation Foundation has granted \$10,000 to the Western Foothills Land Trust for its planned purchase of the 5-acre Roberts Farmhouse parcel in Norway. The Davis Conservation Foundation, located in Falmouth, generously supports conservation efforts in Maine; Davis was amongst the foundations providing support in 2007 for the Trust's purchase of the 150-acre Roberts Farm parcel from the Tech Park Development Corporation. Trust Directors and staff are heading up the current \$40,000 fund raising effort for the farmstead parcel.

In early June (before the rains began and when trail construction was going full bore) one of the Trust Directors looked at the abandoned Roberts Farmhouse and advised that the parcel was strategically important for WFLT to control, regardless of what we would decide to do with the historic 1823 structure.

Ironically it is the original 4-four room Federal period structure which has survived all later additions and outbuildings. Granite foundations of the ell and barns alone depict an active farm landscape. The historic structure and its 5-acre lot is immediate to the Preserve's entrance and parking area, and is of course intrinsically linked to the cultural history of the farmland.

The realization that we would need to consider purchasing a 3rd Roberts farm parcel triggered Board action, a conversation with the current owner, a structural and architectural assessment, a real estate appraisal, and a Purchase and Sale agreement. At their November 5th meeting, the board voted to proceed towards purchase of the farmstead parcel which is being offered to WFLT under favorable conditions.

To secure the structure before winter, the Trust will purchase the parcel in December and provide some basic restoration of the home's exterior envelope. Over the winter we will form a committee to assess what we should do with the farmstead lot and farmhouse so that future activities and use of the site remain consistent with our mission and in line with the needs of our community. If you would like to serve on this committee, please contact Lee at 739-2124.



Pikes-Roberts House, 1823

"The Roberts Farm is a valuable local and regional resource - properly interpreted - awaiting re-discovery by the conservation and preservation communities, the outdoor recreating and visiting public, along with the local school-age population.

With its historic, Federal-period dwelling house, immediate related site features, oldfields patterns, and the larger network of trail systems now under construction, Roberts Farm has the potential to serve as the rosetta stone for invoking - and enhancing - a broader understanding of historical development of Norway and other upland hill towns in the Western Foothills region over a 250-year spectrum of settlement."

Chris Closs, Maine Preservation



Roberts Farm Cowbells

3"high, green with purple lettering, on a woven strap. \$15

On sale at Café Nomad, Norway
wflt@megalink.net
 207.739.2124



2009 Norway Triathlon

Raises \$8,000 for Roberts Farm Preserve

Our thanks to all the competitors and volunteers.

Special thanks to the Tri committee : Scott Berk, Deb Partridge, Peter Roy, Mark White, Matt Woods



The Heidi Schellenger Award

Heidi and her husband Jim moved to Norway this spring from Montana, and wasted no time getting involved in the community. Challenging herself to compete in her first triathlon, and with considerable experience in development and fund raising, Heidi introduced herself to all the home owners along her training route, explained the purpose of the tri and of WFLT, and asked for a \$25 contribution. Shortly before the tri she quietly presented the Trust with over \$500. So we are proud to inaugurate the Heidi Schellenger Award which will be given annually at the Tri to the participant who demonstrates the highest level of commitment to the mission of the Trust.



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:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 | Benefactor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | Supporter |
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Name (s) *(as you would like to appear on our list of donors)* _____

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Conservation Forestry Field Day



Learning about Carbon Markets in the Northern Forests

56 land owners, forest and watershed resource managers, and conservationists met at Bart and Mary Ann Hague’s in Waterford on June 27th, under rare blue skies. Speakers and attendees discussed management challenges relating to privately owned forest lands in an age of climate change.

The day was sponsored by the American Forest Foundation with local support from Manomet Center for Conservation Services, The Portland Water District, and the Western Foothills Land Trust. These partners are collaborating on an ecosystems services grant for the Crooked River watershed and will be working together during the next three years. Additional partners lending support and expertise to the field day were the Greater Lovell Land Trust, Loon Echo Land Trust, Small Woodlot Owners of Maine, Natural Resources Council of Maine, the Maine Forest Service, and the Natural Resource Conservation Services.

In 2007, the Hague’s donated a conservation easement on 350 acres of forest land and riparian habitat, an easement that protects 1.5 miles of both shores of the Crooked River. The protected property served as an inspiring and appropriate venue given the day’s focus. Throughout the day speakers addressed the attendees in different locations on the land, beginning at the high fields overlooking a magnificent view that has not changed significantly since David McWain established his 18th century homestead on the site, and ending near McDaniel’s Rips on the river.

Discussion topics included the relationship between land use and water quality, the need for conserving private forest lands particularly near to riparian corridors and rivers, federal and state programs currently available to land owners, and the evolving potential for ecosystems services remuneration for conservation practices.

Northern Forest Watershed Services Project Receives Major USDA Grant

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) and four partners are the recipients of a \$500,000 grant to support a \$1 million project to restore, enhance, and protect aquatic resources in two critical watersheds in the Northern Forest region: the Upper Connecticut River watershed in Vermont and New Hampshire, and the Crooked River watershed in Maine.

AFF will partner with the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences (Brunswick, Maine), Hubbard Brook Research Foundation (Hanover, New Hampshire), Western Foothills Land Trust (Norway, Maine), and the White River Partnership (South Royalton, Vermont) to implement the project over the next three years.

Sustainably managed forests play a critical role in protecting ecosystem services such as water quality, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity protection. Todd Gartner, conservation incentives manager and project lead for AFF, explained the reason for the project. “The watershed values of forests have historically been undervalued, especially by downstream users. But that is beginning to change, as more communities experience the loss or degradation of forests—along with the loss of important ecosystem services that they previously took for granted. We have a chance to make sure that doesn’t happen in these two watersheds, while also developing lessons and models that can work for the whole nation.”

The goal is to establish a new market-based framework that will “broker” the sale of ecosystem services by private landowners to buyers such as municipalities, government agencies, land trusts, nonprofit organizations, and corporations. For example, conserving the water filtration functions of a healthy forest may prove cheaper than constructing a new water filtration plant. According to Stuart V. Smith, Jr., chair of the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation, “This project will explore new approaches to protect and enhance valuable resources in the upper Connecticut River region. By combining ecosystem science with innovative payment techniques to private landowners, HBRF will test new market-based models that will conserve essential ecosystem services provided by our forested watersheds, including water purification, flood abatement, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities.”

The Crooked River is part of the larger Sebago Lake and Presumpscot River Basin and supplies water to more than 200,000 people in the Portland area. The Portland Water District is responsible for delivering high quality water to customers from what has been identified as the most vulnerable public drinking water reservoir watershed in the northeast. “We have a tremendous opportunity to bring some innovative thinking to the protection of the Crooked River watershed,” says John Gunn, senior program leader at the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. “We will work with the Portland Water District and the Western Foothills Land Trust to create cost-efficient and effective ways motivate private landowners to protect water quality,” Gunn continued. AFF will coordinate parallel pilot projects while Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and Hubbard Brook Research Foundation will provide the technical expertise in the Crooked River watershed and Upper Connecticut River watershed respectively. The Western Foothills Land Trust will serve as the liaison to landowners in Maine, while the White River Partnership will work with landowners in the Connecticut River watershed.



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Prime birding habitat along the Buckfield railroad bed at South Pond.

South Pond, Buckfield

The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund has awarded the Trust a grant of \$3,500 for trail work at South Pond. The grant includes funds for hiking trail design and restoration of existing trails which have been damaged by unauthorized vehicular use. The grant will initiate a series of trail improvement projects at South Pond including signage, culvert restoration, waterbars, and placement of vehicular barriers. Currently the large 1250-acre fee owned parcel includes historic 19th century roads, more recent logging roads, and a limited number of snowmobile trails. Unauthorized vehicles have caused considerable erosion, compaction and rutting on portions of the historic road.

2.5 miles of the former Buckfield railroad bed, now the multi-use ITS 89 trail, runs north-south through the parcel allowing access for ATVs, snowmobiles, horses and runners. As the land also embraces significant wildlife resources of interest to birders and naturalists, the Trust aims to carefully design and construct hiking trails into some of the currently non accessible areas.

Witt Swamp, Norway

LLBean Maine Land Trust Grant Program and Maine Coast Heritage Trust have granted \$2,000 towards the installation of a trail head and board walk at the Western Foothills Land Trust's Witt Swamp property in Norway. The 141 acre parcel, located along the northeastern shore of the eastern section of Lake Penneesseewassee, is comprised primarily of lowland cedar swamp with excellent fen and bog habitat, and pine and hemlock uplands. The course of the nature trail was flagged two summers ago and has been quietly awaiting funds for an entry and parking area off of Pleasant Street. In addition, the Trust will need to construct approximately 110' of cedar boardwalk across a boggy area connecting the trail head to the uplands. Work on the trail head and board walk will be scheduled for summer 2010.

A valuable educational asset to the community, the Witt Swamp trail will add to the variety of the foot trails planned by the Oxford Hills Trails Committee and Norway Downtown.