# The Kennebec Land Trust News

No. 6 Late Winter 1993

#### Good News!

We have three new conservation projects announce in this issue of The KLT News. The protection of these lands -fee interest in 1,200 feet of undeveloped shoreland on Echo Lake, an easement on the 15 acre Fogg Farm Conservation Area Readfield, and the 'bargain' purchase of Sheep Island in Cobbossee Lake, mark a successful end to KLT's fourth year.

To continue our efforts, we need your help. Renew your membership, get a friend to join, or volunteer for one of our committees.

# Preserving A Piece of Echo Lake

The Kennebec Land Trust recently accepted from generous donors full fee ownership of 1,200 feet of unspoiled shoreland on Echo Lake in Readfield, which will be kept free of development and open to simple public use. The story of this land and the people who have cared for it reveals encouraging lessons. Heeding the lessons of history, both natural and human, will help us to be sensitive stewards of this land in order to preserve its natural features as they evolve.

After the great glaciers of the last Ice Age melted from this part of the planet more than a hundred centuries ago, the lakes and forests of our region evolved over millennia into a network of

wet and dry lands that have been perfect habitat for a succession of species, including our own. Early on humans came, living off land for generations, migrating along the waterways. Native Americans lived lightly on the land making no major alterations. So, after thousands of years of human occupation, barely two centuries ago when the first settlers moved into this region they found a damp, forested wilderness punctuated by streams and lakes in every low spot.

During the late 18th century, after the Revolutionary War, pioneer families located on the ridge we know today as Kents Hill and in continued on page 2 --

# Island Preservation Fundraising Campaign Successful

True to its commitment to place lake islands at the top of its list for protection, the Kennebec Land Trust has reached its goal of raising \$42,000 to purchase and preserve forever an island in Cobbossee Lake!

Known to some as Sheep Island, but unnamed on topographic maps, the island lies just above the northwest tip of Horseshoe Island in Winthrop and is the largest undeveloped island in Cobbossee Lake. (Another Sheep Island, found in the southern end of Cobbossee Lake in Monmouth, was not included in this campaign.) The island is approximately six acres and is covered by a mixture of hardwoods and softwoods. Lying

on the outer perimeter of the central cluster of Cobbossee Lake islands, it is highly visible from both the lake and the mainland.

Mason and Ina Phelps of Massachusetts owned Sheep Island and have a strong desire to conserve the island's natural values. They offered the island for sale to the Kennebec Land Trust at a reduced price in order to permanently protect its natural beauty and resources. For the land trust, the campaign to acquire the island "symbolizes our belief that undeveloped islands and shoreland constitute one of the most important features of our region", said Wendy Dennis, KLT President.

This was an ambitious project for the four year old KLT, and its first capital campaign. Fundraising began quietly over a year ago when several Board members tested the waters by seeking pledges from shoreland property owners on Cobbossee interested other Lake and the By the time donors. campaign went public August, \$21,000, half of the \$42,000 goal, had been pledged.

The public phase of the campaign kicked off with feature articles in the Kennebec Journal and the Community Advertiser. The Sheep Island Campaign Committee (Wendy Dennis, Marcia Haigh, Judy Kane, Bob Mohlar, continued on page 3 --

Echo Lake, from page 1 --

the nearby valley to the west where flowing waters could be tapped. Construction during the decade 1793-1802 of the Coos Trail, a market road carved through the wildlands, from Hallowell over Kents Hill through western Maine and beyond, provided essential access to the Kennebec River for trade by inland settlers.

On the ridge, Kents Hill in Readfield soon grew into an important settlement widely noted for its school. In the valley, near Fayette Mills the waters of Crotched Pond (Echo Lake) were deepened and widened by damming the outlet. Downstream the outflow of the lake was harnessed to power lumber, grist and woolen mills, as well as for tool manufacturing and tanneries. The town boundary drawn between Readfield and Favette left the southeasternmost part of Echo Lake within Readfield. But this area on the lake has always been associated with both of the villages of Kents Hill and Fayette Mills.

The local pioneers did not settle directly on the lakes, except where waterpower could be used at the outlets. For a century after the first settlers moved to the area, houses were clustered around churches on the hilltops and around mills in the valleys. The 1879 cadastral maps of Kennebec County communities show no houses on Echo Lake in Fayette or Readfield. However, soon after that recreation became an important activity on our lakes. Around the turn of the century, a number of camps were built on Echo.

One camp, on the Readfield portion of the lake, was a small cabin with communal kitchen shared by two families. The camp, which came to be known

as the "green house", and about 50 acres on the lake, were eventually purchased by Rev. Robert Kirkwood in 1913-29 as a retreat and a wildlife refuge. Some things have changed on the Kirkwood land since then, but much has stayed the same.

Some things have changed, too, since 1935 when, as young girls, Mary Ellen and Jane Avery first came with their parents to Echo Lake for relief from the economic depression and urban heat of Moorestown, New Jersey. After two long days of driving that summer, William and Mary Avery and their daughters finally reached the village of Kents Hill. The road down to Fayette Mills was still rough and unpaved, but

Giving this land to the Kennebec Land Trust has already enhanced our enjoyment of the lake -- we know the land will not have to be sold, it will be well cared for forever, and we have made new friends working with the land trust.

-- Dr. Mary Ellen Avery

their attention was on the lake they had traveled so far to visit where evergreens and hardwoods elbowed each other for a spot on the shore.

The time the Averys spent that summer on the west branch of Echo Lake in a camp owned by family friends, the Henry Stockwell's Moorestown, of changed their lives. They discovered the cry of loon songs, shivery fire of August northern lights, the pure joy of swimming with the perch and bass in crystal waters. Above all they discovered the peaceful feeling of listening to the immense, echoing quiet of an

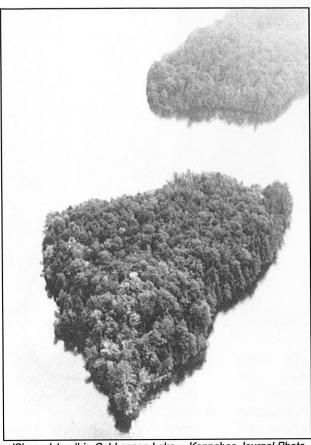
unspoiled Maine lake.

The Averys returned to the Stockwell camp for seven more summers. By the early 1940's war interrupted their visits. However, in 1944 news reached William and Mary Avery from Maine that the Kirkwood property on the east leg of Echo Lake was for sale. Reverend Kirkwood had died and his daughter, Elizabeth, wanted to sell his camp and land. The war prevented the Averys from visiting, but they trusted their feelings for the lake. They bought the property sight unseen for a few thousand dollars in October 1944.

The following summer the Avery family arrived by train from Philadelphia. Chester Hewett of Fayette met them at Readfield Depot and drove them to their new place on Echo. Their "new" place was comprised of an old camp and 50 acres. The camp, the old "green house", was in disappointing condition, but the land was all they could have wanted -- over 4,000 feet of wild frontage on their beloved Echo Lake.

The Averys kept the camp's exterior but fixed it up inside. Years later they added to their property an adjacent strip of land that might have been turned into an access road for development that could have overburdened the lake. In 1973 the property was given to Jane and Mary Ellen by their parents. After the deaths of William and Mary Avery and Jane Avery Smith, in 1981 Mary Ellen Avery and Carl Smith. Jane's widower, deeded the property to the three Smith children, Jennifer, Suzanne and William.

By the late 1980's the Avery-Smith family knew they wanted to honor the long tradition of keeping most of the land undeveloped *continued on page 7* --



'Sheep Island' in Cobbossee Lake -- Kennebec Journal Photo

Island Campaign, from page 1 --

Norm Rodrigue, Jane Smith, and St. Pierre) Jym diligently worked for several months to reach potential donors. (Mike Byron, Jeff Pidot, Howard Lake, and John Bastey also lended a hand in soliciting donations.) addition to seeking contributions from 400 KLT over members, many of whom gave generously, some 700 Cobbossee Lake dwellers were contacted and solicited by phone and mail. Board

members Deborah Clark and Ann Judd joined the effort and invited over 300 corporate members of the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce to support and attend campaign informational meeting in mid-November.

As the December 31st option deadline loomed agreement nearer, a final call was issued to KLT members and friends. KLT was also the beneficiary of a community charitable donation sponsored by program Gardiner Savings Institution in December. Thankfully, at year's end, the Trust was able to notify the island's owners of its success and readiness to finalize the purchase process. KLT attorneys have recently completed the necessary legal work. Contributions are still being а long-term accepted for stewardship fund for the island.

# Fogg Farm Conservation Area Easement

The Kennebec Land Trust recently accepted the transfer of a conservation easement on the Fogg Farm Conservation Area situated on the Fogg Road in Readfield. This easement assures that fifteen acres and nearly 1,800 feet of road frontage will remain undeveloped for open space and recreation.

The Conservation Area is a lovely wooded parcel bisected by Tingley Brook, a tributary of Maranacook Lake. This parcel represents the last undeveloped portion of land which was farmed for over two centuries by the Fogg family. It is located in a fast growing area of Readfield and is near the Maranacook School property. Within a half mile of the Conservation Area there are some four dozen homes and buildable lots for

whom this area will be valuable open space.

KLT will work in partnership with the Town of Readfield, which now holds title to the parcel, to manage the property. Readfield Conservation The Commission is preparing a management plan for recreation and other uses of the property.

A group of KLT members organized support for acceptance by the Town at the 1992 annual Town Meeting and solicited funds necessary for the KLT acceptance of the easement.

Contributions to the KLT stewardship fund from twenty-two families and individuals totalling \$1,000.00 have been received to help cover costs of management and monitoring. Thank you to all who contributed time and money to make this project a success.

#### Fogg Farm Stewardship Fund Contributors

Jerry Bley Fred & Beth Craigie Jack Comart & Lisa Christ Donald Hague Steve & Judy Hayes Hope Hilton Rick & Genne Johnston Howard & Brenda Lake John McPhedran Dan Meyer & Wendy Flaschner Bob & Joan Mohlar Debbie & Rob Peale Les & Betsv Priest David & Claudia Sait David Solmitz Mayno Sorenson Jym St. Pierre & Wendy Shaw Andy & Susan Tolman Allan & Kathy Toubman Amy & David Trunnell Romaine Turyn & Al Prysunka Milt Wright

Thank You!

### Annual Meeting

The fourth annual membership dinner and meeting of the Kennebec Land Trust was held on July 26, 1992 at Kents Hill School. The meeting was held after an afternoon reception at Dr. Mary Ellen Avery's cottage on Echo Lake. Dozens of KLT members and friends gathered to share food and stories and to have a chance to see the property the Avery-Smith family donated to KLT.

In the evening more than 50 KLT members and guests viewed a video on land trusts then ate in a dining room overlooking the valley and hills of the Echo Lake and Lovejoy Pond area and the sunset. Land Trust President Wendy Dennis offered a warm welcome. Deborah Clark reported that membership remained stable for the year. Treasurer Sandra Crockett gave a positive financial message that showed the trust continued to operate in the black. Jym St.Pierre listed accomplishments in education and outreach. Ken Spalding reported on land conservation efforts.

Special guest Rupert Neily, Community Lands Coordinator for the Maine Coast Heritage Trust shared kind words praising the work of the Kennebec Land Trust as a leader among conservation land trusts in Maine.

Norm Rodrigue presented the report of the Nominating Committee and new directors and officers were elected.



Avery-Smith Family with artist Florence Daly at KLT annual meeting -- Jym St. Pierre Photo

To cap the day, Dr. Mary Ellen Avery, Bill Smith, and Jennifer Smith spoke eloquently of their love for the land on Echo Lake and their appreciation for the land trust's efforts to achieve perpetual protection for their family's property.

#### **Board Activities**

Since the last newsletter, KLT has:

- continued to expand discussions with many landowners concerning conservation of important lands;
- initiated an inventory of lake islands in our region;
- made presentations and displayed our information to several groups;
- helped in trail clean-up and repair at the Vaughan Woods;

- hosted a business-after-hours session for members of the KV Chamber of Commerce;
- co-sponsored a discussion on environmental issues with local legislative candidates;
- spoken on important state legislative proposals;
- participated in statewide discussions about the future of land trust programs in Maine;
- helped organize an informational meeting for landowners in the Jaimies Pond watershed;
- started to establish a new Stewardship Committee;
- participated in a legal seminar on "Preserving Family Lands";
- advised Mainewatch Institute on the preparation of a h a n d b o o k o n I a n d conservation through limited development.

## Kennebec Land Trust Board of Directors

Wendy Dennis, *Pres.*, Winthrop Norm Rodrigue, *VP*, Manchester Kenneth Spalding, *VP*, Wayne Howard Lake, *Sec.*, Readfield Sandra Crockett, *Treas.*, Winthrop John Archard, Vienna Michael Byron, Manchester Deborah Clark, Sidney Jim Connors, Monmouth Marcia Haigh, Belgrade Cheryl Harrington, Winthrop Ann Judd, Fayette Judy Kane, Hallowell Robert Mohlar, Readfield Jeffrey Pidot, Hallowell Jane Smith, Manchester Jym St. Pierre, Readfield Paula Thomson, Fayette

## President's Message

involved of us All fundraising for Winthrop's "Sheep Island" found it difficult to ask for money during these uncertain economic times. It therefore, extremely was. rewarding to receive the financial support to achieve our goal, as reported in the island fundraising article in this newsletter. Equally rewarding, however, was the affirmation of KLT's island preservation ideal expressed through personal comments as well as contributions.

Islands have long regarded been special features of the landscape and places of the heart. Islands are held in esteem as havens for the human spirit, viewed as jewels of the landscape, and valued as waterfowl Historically. refuges. their physical isolation has saved islands from many of the human impacts on other lands. In recent years this has not been enough to islands from protect development. modern Indeed Maine's own

land trust movement began with the preservation of coastal islands.

Islands evoke strong feelings in people. Some donors to our recalled campaign island memories of past years spent on the lake as an integral part of family history. personal or Several people gave in memory of friends and loved ones. Some donated with hope for their Others future. children's contributed from a belief in the value of island preservation,

regardless of whether or not they have known or will ever see Winthrop Sheep Island. And some who could not give donations offered their encouragement and thanks for our work.

I'd like to share part of one letter I received from a contributor:

"I applaud your efforts to protect this beautiful island on Cobboseecontee Lake. My primary reason for purchasing property on the lake was so that

I applaud your efforts to protect this beautiful island on Cobbosseecontee Lake. My primary reason for purchasing property on the lake was so that my two daughters could enjoy its beauty for years to come. Although times are as tough as they've been in years (financially), I do recognize this as a unique opportunity to better realize this dream for my children. Please accept my ... donation...and don't give up until you reach your goal to purchase this island.

-- Letter from a Sheep Island Campaign Donor

my two daughters could enjoy its beauty for many years to come. Although times are as tough as they've been in years (financially), I do recognize this as a unique opportunity to better realize this dream for my children. Please accept my ... donation ... and don't give up until you reach your goal to purchase this island."

On behalf of the Sheep Island Campaign Committee, and the entire Board of Directors of the Kennebec Land Trust, I would

like to sincerely thank all donors for their contributions. Thank you to KLT members for many donations, (some multiple), and for making the effort to attend the opening of Gardiner Savings Institution in Winthrop to vote for a contribution to the campaign. Thank you to the early donors who got us started and who have been waiting for a long time to hear the good news. Thank you to local businesses who funded our project among requests from many

community groups. Fleet Bank, Community Telephone Service Gardiner Company, Savings Institution, J.S. McCarthy Printers, The Accessory Shop -- we welcome your support. Thank you to friends, to Lake Cobbossee dwellers, and to people who had never heard of the Kennebec Land Trust before but were help willing to preserve this island.

Our fundraising program is over, but the responsibility of caring for this land is only

about to begin. The campaign goal included funds for ongoing stewardship of the island, and any additional monies that come in for Winthrop Sheep Island will be added to that fund. Successful stewardship will be the ultimate testament to our conviction that islands and other natural resources immeasurably enrich our lives.

Wendy Dennis

# Island Preservation Campaign Contributors

John Appleton John Archard Peggy Ayotte Brian & Lee Baggott Walter F. Bailey Dexter Baker Thomas & Kathryn Baker Edward & Elinor Bangs Rodney Barker Carl Barnes Stasia Baron George Bass Joseph Bauer & Mary Brown Parlee Severin Beliveau Frederick & Lisa Best John Blouin C. Peter & Mary Blouin Carol & Cal Boston Charles & Gloria Brittain Dr. M. David Bryant John Burleigh Steve & Marlene Buswell J.F. & Hazel Butler Michael G. Byron William Van Carhart Dr. Julius Ciembroniewicz Barbara Clark Deborah Clark Marie E. Clark Ruth Clement Peter Clifford Judy & Perry Cogburn Community Service Telephone Co. Dana & Patricia Connors James Connors Frances Coughlin Sandra Crockett Barbara Crowley & Calvin Dame Dr. Brinton & Alice Darlington Leland & Bettina Davis Dr. Russell DeJong Wendy Dennis Richard Diamond Holly Dominie Don Douglas Harold & Phyllis Dow Ruth Dow

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John Laughlin

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Echo Lake, from page 2 --

to preserve its natural beauty and to prevent disturbances to wildlife. Theirs was the largest remaining stretch of natural land left on the east shore of Echo Lake. They were afraid that rapidly rising taxes on the property would force them to sell some of the land for development. Since the 1940's the value of the property had increased nearly ten-fold every twenty years.

During the autumn of 1990 Mary Ellen Avery contacted the Kennebec Land Trust to find out about conservation options for their Echo Lake land. Over the next year the members of the Avery-Smith family, their legal and financial advisors, and KLT worked out an arrangement that the landowners felt was most comfortable. Seven acres with about 1,200 feet of lake frontage were split off from the part of the land with the cottages. A gift of this new parcel to the land trust allowed the donors to take an income tax deduction, to receive a reduction in their property taxes, and to lower the value of their net worth to lessen estate tax worries. To provide a stewardship fund to help KLT cover the expenses of owning and protecting the land in perpetuity, the donors agreed to give their property tax savings to KLT for five years. Most important, providing for permanent conservation of the land has given them a deep sense of satisfaction.

At the 1992 KLT annual meeting we celebrated the farsighted protection by the Avery-Smith family of this remarkable piece of land. Much has changed for Mary Ellen Avery since she first came to Echo Lake in 1935. Today she is Professor of Pediatrics at

Harvard Medical School and Physician-in-Chief Emeritus of Children's Hospital in Boston. As the author of medical textbooks used around the world, she is in high demand as a lecturer both in this country and abroad.

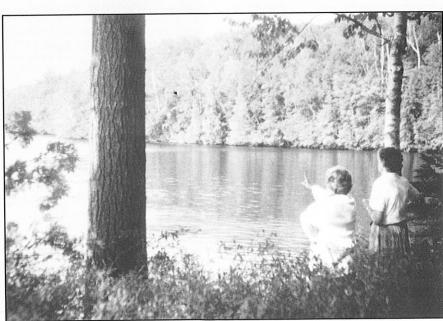
Carl Smith is a Presbyterian minister in Indianapolis. Jennifer Smith is a costume designer and businesswoman in Indianapolis. Suzanne Smith is a social worker who works with mentallly ill homeless people in New York City. Bill Smith is a lawyer with the Environmental Protection Agency in Philadelphia. All of the Avery-Smith family members, along with spouses, children, and friends, still spend as much time each year as possible in the "green house" and two other small cottages on Echo Lake. It is more than a place to escape to; it is part of their lives. As Dr. Mary Ellen Avery says, "Giving this land to the Kennebec Land Trust has already enhanced our enjoyment of the lake -- we know the land will not have to be sold. it will be well cared for forever, and we have made new friends by working with the land trust."

Howard Lake, who

represented KLT throughout the discussions with the family, agrees. He says the voluntary conservation and tax planning accomplished by the Avery-Smith family has created wonderful results both for the family and for the land. The family hopes that others with important lands on the lake will also consider conservation options.

The parcel that KLT now owns encompasses a mix of topography and forest types. Cedar, pine, and birch share the shore with wildflowers. From an ice berm long ago built up along the lake edge the land dips then slopes upland where softwoods and hardwoods mingle with ferns. The preserve is accessible to the public for day use from the lake. A rough walking trail runs along the shoreland berm.

So, some things have changed around Echo Lake over the years -- much of the lake is ringed with camps, the road from Kents Hill is now paved, and taxes have spiraled -- but the loons still sing, the northern lights still shine, the lake still sparkles, and now a quarter mile of the shore will remain wild.



Dr. Mary Ellen Avery points out land donated to KLT -- Jym St. Pierre Photo

Membership in the Kennebec Land Trust, which includes a subscription to this newsletter, is available at the following suggested annual dues levels:

Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$25.00
Supporting	\$50.00
Sustaining	\$100.00
Sponsoring	\$250.00

Occasionally, the Kennebec Land Trust makes its membership list available for mailings by others. Members who do not want their names exchanged should send written notice to KLT.

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#### Calendar

April 24: Earth Day Lobbying Workshop. Call NRCM, 622-3101.

May 1: Maine Land Trust Conference, University of Southern Maine, Portland. Call MCHT, 729-7366.

**May 1**: Maine Environmental Education Association Conference on Connecting Communities, Dexter. Call Lisa Silverman-Gent, 883-4139.

July 17-25: Lake Week '93. Call DEP, 287-3901.

July 18: 1993 Kennebec Land Trust Annual Membership Meeting. Call Wendy Dennis, 395-4295.

**July 24**: Congress of Lake Associations Annual Meeting. Call Joan Irish, 846-4261.

#### Our Mission

The Kennebec Land Trust was formed in 1988 by local citizens who want to work with landowners and communities to protect the natural features, working landscapes, and fragile ecosystems of the Kennebec River and Lakes Region. KLT is a private, nonprofit, membership organization dedicated to preserving these treasures so that we do not spoil the very things that make our region a special place to live and visit.





THE KENNEBEC LAND TRUST

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