

The Kennebec Land Trust News

No. 7

Winter 1994

Preserving the Walter and Alice Wyman Memorial Forest

The Kennebec Land Trust has accepted ownership of a 40-acre parcel on Monks Hill in Readfield. The land, a forested site with a mixture of hardwoods and softwoods, has been donated to the land trust by the heirs of Walter S. and Alice B. Wyman.

We are excited to receive ownership of this land. The lot is highly visible from Route 17 and is a key piece in the Shed Pond watershed. The Kennebec Land Trust was able to assist the owners of the Monks Hill property because they had a strong desire to work with our nonprofit organization to preserve the land's natural values.

Shed Pond, a small, undeveloped lake on the Manchester-Readfield boundary, is a headwater source for Cobbossee Lake. The New

England Forestry Foundation, a separate organization devoted to careful use of forestlands, already manages much of the land within the watershed. About ten other families own property in the Shed Pond watershed as well. The Monks Hill parcel is KLT's first project in the Shed Pond watershed, and is a critical part of the forest ecosystem. Significant plants and natural communities have been identified in the vicinity of the parcel protected.

The Kennebec Land Trust would like to work with other landowners to protect wildlife habitat, water quality and sensitive natural sites in the Shed Pond watershed. Increasingly, we recognize the need to more comprehensively protect important areas within our fragile watersheds.

The Wyman Heirs have been extremely thoughtful in their dealings about this area. They wanted to protect the land from inappropriate development as a memorial to the long-standing love of this area by many members of the family. Not only have they been willing to donate the land, they are also contributing funds so that the land trust will be able to properly manage the property.

We will prepare a stewardship plan for the parcel that recognizes the natural, scenic, and recreational values of the site. The area is available for passive public use. A trail through the parcel is suitable for hiking and skiing.

The property will be known as the Walter S. and Alice B. Wyman Memorial Forest.

Thank You

From time to time the Kennebec Land Trust receives memorial gifts. The Kennebec Land Trust wishes to express its appreciation to the family and friends of James F. Butler, Jr. of Augusta for the generous donations made recently in his memory. These gifts have been added to the KLT stewardship fund.



Monks Hill and Shed Pond -- Jym St.Pierre Photo

"Cheaper By The Doesn't"

For many landowners who live along the lake, and for many visiting recreationists, the defining quality of the Cobbossee area is the diversity of landscape. Perhaps more than any other feature of the landscape, the islands define the character of the lake.

Because of their rarity, scenic beauty, and ecological and recreational importance, the Kennebec Land Trust has identified protection of lake islands as a top priority.

Late in 1989, Perry Island (then informally known as Sheep Island) in Cobbossee Lake came on the real estate market with an unusual sales pitch.

"This island can be all yours, all six acres of it stretching to water in every direction... The island is nicely wooded with groves of beech and maple and spruce and cedar and is as quiet as the lake that surrounds it," read the advertisement.

Not so unusual, you might think. Islands in Maine, coastal and inland, have been attracting buyers at premium prices for the past twenty-five years. But this offer was not typical. The owners were offering the island for sale but they wanted to sell it with a conservation easement that allowed at most one cottage to be built.

Along with the ad was a photo with a clever caption: *"The price tag on this six-acre island is lower if you don't build on it. You might say it's 'cheaper by the doesn't.'"*

So here was a special island in the middle of a spectacular lake in the heart of the land trust's area of interest. And the owners, who were unusually

conservation-minded, preferred to sell the property with a protective easement that would retain the natural qualities of the island, even if it meant receiving a much lower price.

At first KLT had no interest in purchasing the property. Instead, we worked with the landowner and a potential buyer, with the idea that the land trust might hold an easement on the property. Ultimately, that possibility faded.

By the autumn of 1990 the island was back on the market. In November, the KLT board of directors, now faced with a new challenge, made a decision to see if the trust could raise enough money to buy the island. Rather than watch as this special place was developed, we decided the public interest would be best served if the trust owned and held the island as a nature preserve.

This was the first capital campaign KLT had undertaken. It was ambitious. We realized that the State did not have the funds for this kind of project. Our local towns did not have the money. We believed those who live in and visit our region appreciate the values that undeveloped islands represent and that a private fundraising campaign could succeed. We were correct. But the going was not easy.

Through 1991 and into 1992 the land trust quietly approached a number of people we believed would be interested in the long term protection of the island. As support built pledges accumulated.

By the summer of 1992 we had commitments from individuals for half the money needed despite a serious economic recession. The owners

agreed to a purchase option agreement in August. At the end of that month we launched a broad campaign to raise the remaining money. Articles in local newspapers brought the project wide publicity.

By December we had over three-quarters of the funding required, but our purchase option on the island would run out at the end of the month.

As the deadline loomed, good things began to happen. We received contributions from several local businesses. A local bank, to mark the opening of a new branch, announced that people could stop in and vote to have donations made to local nonprofit organizations. Dozens of KLT supporters voted for the land trust.

Most importantly, a major donation was received as a family memorial. The James William Welch family contributed to the island campaign in the memory of Gertrude Perry, a family member who had a special affection for the area and who had spent every summer on Cobbossee Lake for almost a century.

With full funding in hand, in early 1993 the land trust was able to exercise its option to purchase the island. Enough money had been raised to also establish a stewardship fund for care of the island.

In late July, on a brilliant Maine summer afternoon, many land trust members boated out to the island for a visit. Later that evening, at our 1993 annual meeting, the land trust celebrated the permanent protection of the island. It was announced that the trust would rename the island "Perry Island", *continued on page 3--*

*"Cheaper By the Doesn't",
from page 2--*

in honor of the Welch family donation in behalf of Gertrude Perry.

There are many heros in this story, including the thoughtful sellers, Mason and Ina Phelps, hundreds of generous and committed contributors to the fundraising campaign, and the many KLT volunteers and board members. Perhaps the most important hero here is the island itself.

The Kennebec River and Lakes region is a puzzle of land and water fit together to form natural ecosystems as important and scenery as beautiful as any in Maine. Many things have changed the landscape of the region in recent decades. Wild lands have become increasingly scarce. However, this area has always represented a geography both physical and spiritual, of the earth and of the heart. Places like Perry Island, kept wild, are important not only as open space, but too, as symbols of hope that we can learn to live better with nature.

These islands of hope are not only "cheaper by the doesn't". They are priceless.

Additional Island Preservation Campaign Contributors

*Howard & Gladys Campbell
Cobbooseecontee Lake
Association
Lincoln & Gloria Ladd
Ralph & Gloria Powers*

*Other Contributors are listed
in KLT News No.6*

Thank You!

A Peek at Perry

Archaeological digs suggest that Native Americans camped on Cobbooseecontee 5,000 to 7,000 years ago. They ate trout, loons, turtles, muskrats and probably salmon. The lake looked different then. For one thing, the water level was lower so the islands would have had a different configuration.

In the early twentieth century the lake was raised about eight feet when a dam was built on the

outlet stream. What we now call Perry Island was originally part of the northwest leg of Horseshoe Island. When the water was raised Perry became a separate island. A shoal, familiar to local boaters, still connects the two islands underwater.

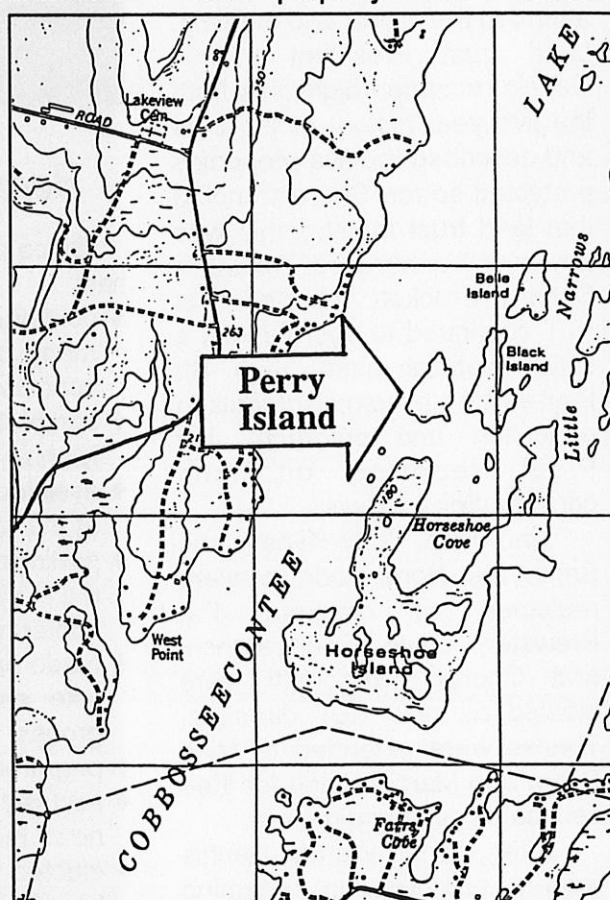
Over the years Cobboosee Lake has become quite developed, yet a survey by the State a few years ago found it still to be one of only a handful of outstanding Maine lakes.

Of the more than two dozen islands in Cobboosee today, nearly all of any size have some development. It is extraordinary to find an island of substantial size in the lakes of the Cobboosee watershed still in a natural condition.

Perry Island is completely forested, with softwoods bordering the shore and hardwoods predominating in the interior. Cedar, white pine,

beech, birch, oak, maple, and some impressive old-growth hemlocks and pines all grow on the island. At the south end are wetland areas which serve as important wildlife habitat. The rest of the shore is rocky.

According to a report prepared by the KLT Lands Committee, the view of and from the island is one of its greatest attributes. Recreational use of the property has included



picnicking and hiking. There are no clear trails but walking through the woods is not difficult.

KLT will prepare a stewardship plan for the island that addresses management and use issues. Fires and camping are not appropriate but day visitors are welcome. Those who want to step ashore on the island to appreciate its natural qualities are encouraged.

Annual Meeting

The fifth annual membership meeting of the Kennebec Land Trust was held on July 18, 1993, at the Augusta Country Club in Manchester. Prior to the meeting there was an afternoon reception at the Cobbossee Yacht Club on Cobbosseecontee Lake. KLT members and friends gathered to share food and stories and to take a boat trip to Perry Island.

In the evening over eighty KLT members and guests attended the dinner and meeting. Land trust President Wendy Dennis recapped highlights from the five year history of the trust and described the five properties protected so far. She also noted that land trust membership was now over four hundred. Treasurer Sandra Crockett reported that KLT continued to operate with a solid financial base. Jym St. Pierre listed accomplishments in education and outreach. Jeff Pidot reported on land conservation projects.

Ann Judd, Judy Kane, Jane Smith, and Norm Rodrigue were reelected as directors. Pat Brewster, Dave Courtemanch, and George Dragonetti were elected as new KLT directors. Thanks were extended to Mike Byron and Marcia Haigh for their service as retiring directors.

After dinner Wendy Dennis read a proclamation renaming Perry Island. She thanked the more than two-hundred donors who contributed to the Perry Island project. Mementos were presented to Jeff Pidot and Bob Mohlar for their leadership efforts in the campaign.

Finally, Jym St. Pierre presented a special token of appreciation to Wendy Dennis as outgoing president for her hard work and dedication to KLT.



Perry Island Boat Ride -- Jym St. Pierre Photo

Board Activities

Since the last newsletter, KLT has:

- ◆ continued discussions with many landowners concerning conservation options;
- ◆ completed an inventory of lake islands in our region;
- ◆ assisted with trail maintenance at the Vaughan Woods;
- ◆ participated in statewide and national land trust conferences;
- ◆ made presentations to several lake associations and other groups;
- ◆ prepared a new KLT display;
- ◆ secured coverage in local news media;
- ◆ elected a number of new board members and a new slate of officers;
- ◆ supported an important state legislative proposal on conservation funding.

Help Wanted:

A volunteer to serve as KLT Membership Secretary. Contact Deb Clark, 547-3560, for details.

Board of Directors

President	
Howard Lake	Readfield
First Vice President	
Jane Smith	Manchester
Second Vice President	
Jeffrey Pidot	Hallowell
Secretary	
Norm Rodrigue	Manchester
Treasurer	
Sandra Crockett	Winthrop
John Archard	Vienna
Pat Brewster	Manchester
Deborah Clark	Sidney
James Connors	Monmouth
Dave Courtemanch	Mt. Vernon
Wendy Dennis	Winthrop
George Dragonetti	Wayne
Cheryl Harrington	Winthrop
Ann Judd	Fayette
Judy Kane	Hallowell
Robert Mohlar	Readfield
Kenneth Spalding	Wayne
James St. Pierre	Readfield
Paula Thomson	Fayette

President's Message

The Monks Hill/Shed Pond area is a special place. Nearly 700 feet in elevation, Monks Hill rises over the undeveloped shores of Shed Pond. Rocky ledge outcrops, red pine, hemlock, and abundant wildlife prevail. A muddy old woods road near the pond has been rutted and churned by moose. Duck and beaver inhabit the pond. From the top of Monks Hill looking east you can see the Augusta airport and Civic Center, yet by the pond you can imagine yourself deep in the Maine woods.

As explained in the lead article of this newsletter, the Kennebec Land Trust has received a generous gift of 40 acres atop Monks Hill. This acquisition will protect a significant portion of the Shed Pond watershed, an area

few people know, yet one critical to wildlife and water quality. Within a few minutes walk of Route 17, it is miles away in spirit.

One can think of other special areas in our region: the Vaughan Woods, the Cobbossee Lake Islands, Mount Pisgah, and Cobbossee Stream. Since it is our mission to protect and preserve these special places, what have we done?

We have conserved six properties through various techniques of land conservation. We have inventoried the lake islands in our region to determine their resource values and ownerships. Most of our successes have been in reaction to specific donors rather than in response to a region-wide plan. Unfortunately we are, like any small organization, limited by our

funds and human resources. Our vision is to seek out these special places and work with landowners for conservation on a voluntary basis.

In the months ahead we will need the support of our members to protect these special places. We ask for you to:

- ◇ Identify areas that are important to you in our communities.
- ◇ Contribute your time and money to enable us to accomplish our goals.
- ◇ Talk to your friends and neighbors about the land trust and solicit membership.
- ◇ Introduce us to the owners of the important natural lands in our region.

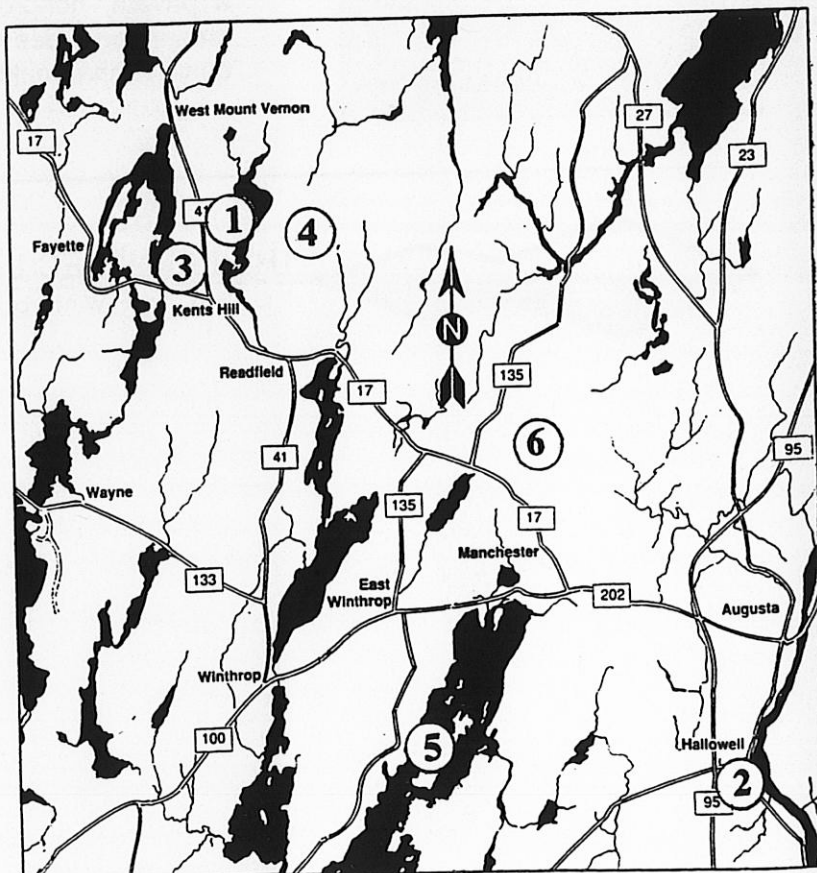
Together we can conserve our special places for future generations.

Howard Lake

Lands Now Protected by KLT

The Kennebec Land Trust has used a variety of methods to protect special places in our region during the past few years. Landowners, donors, and all of our members can be proud of our efforts to date.

1. Torsey Pond Tract, Mt. Vernon
2. Vaughn Woods, Hallowell
3. Echo Lake Tract, Readfield
4. Fogg Farm Conservation Area, Readfield
5. Perry Island, Winthrop
6. Wyman Memorial Forest, Readfield



Membership in the

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

Student	\$5.00
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

March 3: Birds of the Pine Tree State Arboretum. Call the Arboretum, 626-0031.

March 26-27: 1994 New England Environmental Conference, Medford, Massachusetts. Call Tufts University 617-627-3451.

April 4: A Look at Bird Nests and Niches, Lewiston. Call Stanton Bird Club, 782-5238.

April 14: Eagles in Maine, with Maine IF&W Commissioner Bucky Owen, Augusta. Call Pine Tree Arboretum, 626-0031.

May 14: Seventh Annual Environmental Exchange, Wiscasset. Call Lisa Silverman-Gent, 799-9739.

June 4: National Trails Day. Watch for local events.

July 23: Congress of Lake Associations Annual Meeting. Call Joan Irish, 846-4271.

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 qualities that make our region a special place to live and visit.



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THE KENNEBEC LAND TRUST

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