

The Kennebec Land Trust News

No. 10

Spring 1995

Torsey Shores Property Donated

The Kennebec Land Trust has received a donation of a small parcel of land at Torsey Shores on Torsey Pond in Readfield. The donors are Ronald Murdock and Robert Marsh, who purchased the land in 1974 when they were stationed at Brunswick Naval Air Station. Their families spent many memorable days at the property camping and swimming. Having now moved from the state and with their children grown, they sought to donate the property to the land trust so that we could sell the parcel and use the proceeds for acquisition of other land or another KLT purpose. Longtime member Gary Keilty was instrumental in encouraging Mr. Murdock to consider the gift.

This donation is our first "trade land" (i.e., land that can be traded or sold to assist in acquiring conservation land). In addition to being of great benefit to the land trust, the donation of land (or stocks and bonds) which have increased in value over the years can yield a charitable deduction to the donor equal to the current fair market value.

KLT President Howard Lake, who worked with the donors said, "The small parcel located in a built up area, although not appropriate for long term conservation, will help us protect other land that is. We intend to sell the land with appropriate environmental restrictions. We hope to have the opportunity to receive other such trade lands."

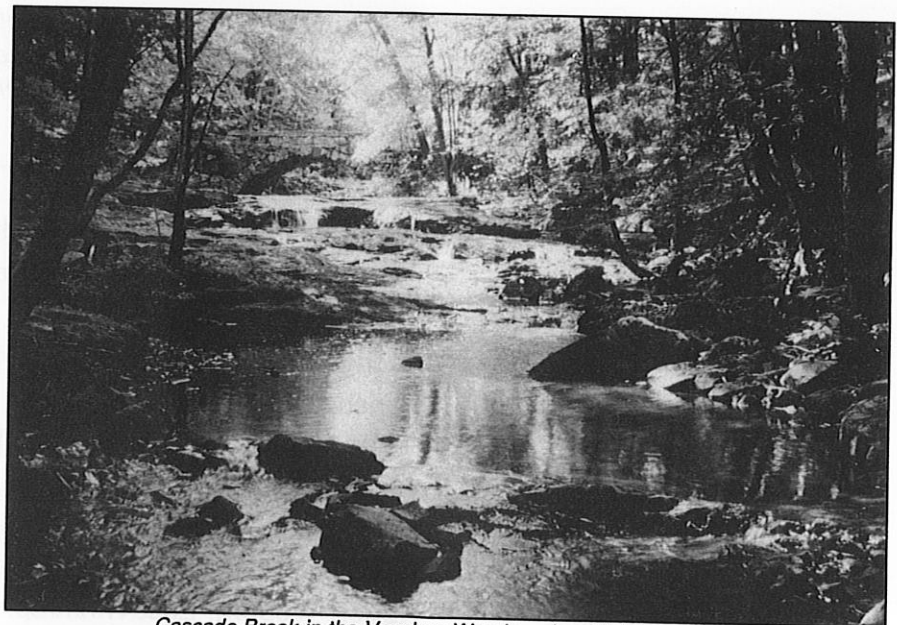
KLT Receives Vaughan Woods Addition

Margaret Vaughan and her four children have granted a conservation easement to the Kennebec Land Trust on a five acre parcel of land in Hallowell abutting the Vaughan Woods, a 150 acre tract on which the land trust already holds a conservation easement.

In December 1990, Diana Gibson, a direct descendent of the Vaughans who helped settle Hallowell two centuries ago, gave a conservation easement to KLT to protect the Vaughan Woods, which has a wonderful series of hiking trails and streams open for walking and nature appreciation. The new property recently protected by the Margaret Vaughan family includes a portion of Cascade Pond and will help buffer the walking trails in the Vaughan Woods.

KLT Vice President Jeff Pidot helped with this project. He said, "It's a wonderful act of conservation-mindedness. Thanks to these thoughtful landowners the Vaughan Woods, one of the most beautiful and cherished areas in our region, will be forever protected from incompatible development and available for quiet recreation."

Because public use of the hiking trails at the Vaughan Woods does take its toll on these resources, the land trust assists with the annual clean-up "party" that provides for trail maintenance. That festivity is held on a weekend day in the fall. If you have an interest in participating or if you would enjoy a guided tour of the Vaughan Woods, call Jeff Pidot at 622-8583.



Cascade Brook in the Vaughan Woods -- Jym St. Pierre Photo

President's Message

I have often said that there is nothing like a drive to Boston to make me appreciate what a great place Maine is to live. Having recently returned from a vacation to Williamsburg, Virginia and Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, I am once again counting my blessings. We all expect to see the sprawl of the I-95 corridor from Portland to Washington. Each exit is surrounded by chain motels, gas stations, and fast food joints. You begin to wonder if anybody cares at all about their environment.

So even with such low expectations, I was shocked to see the development which has hit the Outer Banks of North Carolina in the dozen years since we were last there. The image of the windswept dunes of Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills is now paved over. The Wright Brothers Memorial is surrounded, not by the Atlantic Ocean and Abermarle Sound, but by a sea of fast food joints and T-shirt shops. You can choose from

Wal-Mart and K-Mart now on the Outer Banks of North Carolina!!

While trying to make the most of our last few days of vacation, I noticed a small Nature Conservancy sign pointing to a sideroad just across from McDonald's on the strip. Making the turn, we drove through a new subdivision, around several corners and arrived at The Conservancy's Nags Head Nature Center. In a small attractive Visitor's Center nestled in the pines, we spoke with a volunteer staffer, who told us of the rapid pace of development over the last ten years and the urgency with which the Nature Conservancy and a few dedicated local residents fought to protect 1,100 acres of back dune area from the onslaught of development. As we walked one of the short nature trail loops through sun splattered woods and along the pond, for the first time we could smell the forest, hear the birds and for a short

while escape the crowds and traffic of the strip.

I hope that we don't need to drive 700 miles to realize the human necessity for open space, quiet and solitude. I know that we can find that now very close to home, but we must act now to protect the trails, ponds and woods of Kennebec County. As I end my term as President of the land trust, I look back with satisfaction to see that we have permanently protected several of the special places in our region. I know also that we have planted many seeds which will later bear fruit. With the support and assistance of our members and our board, the work will continue so that our children and grandchildren too can look forward to crossing the Kittery Bridge and a few hours later arrive at their homes here in Maine, knowing that they live in a place where people know the limits of growth and development.

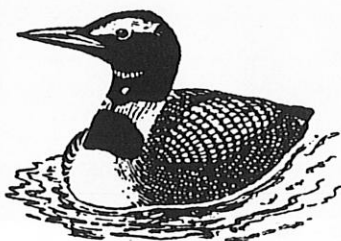
Howard Lake

Annual Meeting

Reserve Sunday, July 23, for the Annual KLT Membership Meeting and Dinner. This year's event will be held at the Augusta Country Club. Field trips to KLT properties will precede the meeting.

If you have suggestions for new KLT Board members please call Pat Brewster, who is chairing the Nominating Committee this year, at 622-5234.

Kennebec Land Trust Board of Directors 1994-1995



President - Howard Lake, Readfield; **First Vice President - Jeffrey Pidot**, Hallowell; **Second Vice President - Robert Mohlar**, Readfield; **Treasurer - Sandra Crockett**, Winthrop; **Secretary - Normand Rodrigue**, Manchester; **John Archard**, Vienna; **Seward Brewster**, Manchester; **James Connors**, Monmouth; **David Courtemanch**, Mount Vernon; **Wendy Dennis**, East Winthrop; **George Dragonetti**, Wayne; **Ann Judd**, Fayette; **Judy Kane**, Hallowell; **Jane Smith**, Manchester; **Kenneth Spalding**, Wayne; **James St.Pierre**, Readfield; **Paula Thomson**, Fayette; **Benjamin Townsend**, Chelsea; **Robert Weston**, East Winthrop.

Land and Taxes - Part Two

The Positive Economics of Conservation

One of the questions often heard at the time that land is proposed for protection through a conservation easement or land trust ownership is "How much will the town lose in property tax revenue?" A quick answer sometimes is, "Well, the parcel is now paying about \$600 in property tax and after conservation would pay around \$100." Unfortunately the quick answer is also the incorrect answer because it fails to consider the cost of development.

Study after study has shown that rather than generating income, residential development results in increased town services, increased educational costs and a net increase in taxes. A recent study was done in Bowdoinham which compared the economic impact of development of a 300 acre parcel into 150 single family homes having a value of \$150,000 each. At first glance this would appear to be just the type of development that a town would want; however, taking into consideration the additional solid waste disposal and educational costs, and even ignoring increases for fire, police protection and road maintenance, the study concluded that it would cost the town roughly \$2,000 per unit per year and create a 3.3 mil increase for the taxpayer. As a result, Bowdoinham favored protection by the State of Maine of a working farm and scenic open space area.

A two year tax study done by the City of South Portland and South Portland Chamber of Commerce concluded that both commercial and residential

development actually raised taxes. The study showed that for every 77¢ of revenue, \$1.00 of services was required for the residential properties.

Some studies have shown certain recreational and retirement community development can more than pay for itself. In our area, we have certainly seen the advantages of taxing seasonal properties at full value, yet not having to bear the costs of winter road maintenance or of educating the out-of-state owners' children. However, the increasing conversion to year round use of our lakefront properties has lead to a greater demand for services.

In addition to the immediate tax impact, there are other advantages to protecting open space. The cost of acquisition of undeveloped land today will undoubtedly be less than tomorrow and we avoid future costs of industrial clean up and restoration. We also generate tangible economic reward through the maintenance and increase of tourism. Then there are the intangible benefits of open space and of maintenance of the quality of life. How much is it worth to us to see the view of Torsey Lake from Kents Hill, to hike up Mount Pisgah or to walk in the Vaughan Woods? How much more relaxing to see a few open fields and unrestricted views of water along Route 202 on the drive home from work. If those sights are worth at least a dollar per week to the thousands who commute to Augusta each day, there is no question that the economics of open space are nothing but positive.

In Memorium

In our last newsletter, we reported the donation to KLT of a major portion of Hodgdon Island by Elliott Farr. We were sad to learn that Mr. Farr passed away this past winter. His island gift will live on as a memorial to his lifelong love of Cobbossee Lake.

Membership

In recent weeks KLT has mailed renewal letters to everyone whose membership is due or has lapsed. If you received a letter and have not yet responded, please take a moment to send in your membership dues. Members are the lifeblood of our organization. Thank you to all our members for your continuing support!

Board Activities

Since the last newsletter, KLT has:

- ◆ continued discussions with landowners on a variety of exciting conservation projects;
- ◆ presented a workshop for local conservation commission members from across Maine on open space preservation;
- ◆ held informational sessions for people in our area interested in learning more about KLT;
- ◆ worked with the Cobbossee Watershed District to follow up on last year's Lake Conference to expand public participation in improving lake water quality;
- ◆ hosted an informational booth at Winthrop's meeting on local comprehensive planning;
- ◆ began planning mailings for new member recruitment and an annual fund appeal.

Calendar

June 3: National Trails Day. Contact Paul Johnson, (207) 933-4381.

June 23-July 5: Whatever Festival '95, including the Great Kennebec Whatever Race. Call (207) 623-4557.

July 22: COLA Maine Lake Conference at Colby College. Call Yvonne Danborg, (207) 622-4709.

July 23: Kennebec Land Trust Annual Meeting at the Augusta Country Club. Call KLT, (207) 377-2848.

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.

A Special Thanks

A special thank you goes to the Abnaki Outing club for a generous \$500 donation to KLT from the proceeds of their annual winter equipment sale.

Calling KLT

Remember, if you need to contact the Kennebec Land Trust for materials or other information, you can call our Winthrop phone number: (207) 377-2848.

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.



printed on recycled paper

The Kennebec Land Trust News is published periodically by the Kennebec Land Trust. Unless otherwise indicated, articles may be reproduced providing appropriate credit is given and a copy of the reproduced text is sent to the Kennebec Land Trust. Send correspondence to: Editor, KLT News, RR 1 Box 1339, Kents Hill, ME 04349.

©1995 The Kennebec Land Trust



THE KENNEBEC LAND TRUST

P.O. Box 261, Winthrop, Maine 04364

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

PERMIT #66

WINTHROP, MAINE