## Flora and Fauna

Horseshoe Island's varied habitats - the wetlands, the shoreline, and the interior forest - support a diversity of plant and wildlife species. If you hike the loop trail counterclockwise from the cove, you will walk through an open understory and a mature forest stand dominated by red oaks, white pines and eastern hemlocks.

One uncommon, interesting shrub found on Horseshoe—wicopy (*Dirca palustris*), blooms very early in the spring and prefers calcium-rich environments.

wicopy flowers ( *Jane Davis*)
leaves (*Theresa Kerchner*)

### A partial list of Hodgdon Island Birds

American crow
American goldfinch
American robin
bald eagle
Baltimore oriole
barred owl
belted kingfisher
black-and-white warbler
black-capped chickadee
black-throated green warbler
blue jay
cedar waxwing
common grackle
common loon
downy woodpecker
eastern kingbird
eastern phoebe
eastern wood-pewee
gray catbird
great blue heron
great-crested flycatcher
herring gull
mourning dove
northern flicker
red-eyed vireo
ruby-throated hummingbird
song sparrow
Swainson's thrush
turkey vulture
veery
white-breasted nuthatch
wood duck
yellow warbler

## Forest and Conservation History

In the 18th and 19th centuries, farmers on Cobbossee Lake used the lake islands as woodlots and sometimes as pastures. In the late 1700s and 1800s, island trees were harvested for lumber and fuel wood. Following this era, the forest regenerated into the stand you see today, with some of the white pines and red oaks now over 100 years old. Today, natural forces, including wind, climate change, insects and diseases, continue to change this forest stand.

When agriculture declined in central Maine in the mid-19th century, newcomers, some of whom were relatives of early residents, came to Cobbossee Lake to enjoy the quiet, beauty, and outdoor opportunities the lake provides.

Today, Kennebec Land Trust volunteers maintain trails and monitor these island properties so that they will be available to the public year-around for generations to come.

**Allowable Public Uses:** hiking, swimming, picnicking, skiing, nature observation, hunting.

*Sandy Fidler*

## About Kennebec Land Trust

The mission of the Kennebec Land Trust is to work with landowners and communities to protect the natural features and working landscapes of the Kennebec River and Lakes Region of Maine. KLT is dedicated to conserving the natural resources that make our region a great place to live, work, and visit.

Protected properties include Vaughan Woods in Hallowell, Curtis Homestead in Leeds, Mount Pisgah in Winthrop, Parker Pond Headland in Fayette, Davidson Nature Preserve in Vassalboro, and Webber-Rogers Farmstead in Litchfield. Most KLT conservation lands offer public access in all seasons for hiking, paddling, bird watching, skiing, and hunting.

A full listing of Kennebec Land Trust properties, their recreational uses, and an interactive map with directions, can be found at our website: **www.tklt.org.**

**Please join us!**

**KLT~PO BOX 261; 331 Main Street; Winthrop, Maine 04364 ~ 207-377-2848**

*Jym St. Pierre*

*Thanks to those who contributed expertise and time toward this brochure: Jon Lund, Erik Lund, Wendy Dennis, Steve Brooke, Nathalie Woolworth, Nick Lund, Robert Marvinney and Jym St. Pierre. ~ Text : October, 2010*

# Horseshoe Island Preserve Cobbossee Lake Winthrop

*Jym St. Pierre*

*The **Kennebec Land Trust** works cooperatively with landowners and local communities to protect natural areas and working landscapes by preserving their natural, educational, and recreational values.*

## KENNEBEC LAND TRUST
## HORSESHOE ISLAND PRESERVE

Welcome to KLT's 23.5-acre Horseshoe Island Preserve! The island's beautiful interior forest, and undeveloped shoreline and wetlands, provide a quiet place to walk, ski, and observe wildlife.

Horseshoe Island has also been known as "Allen Island", and Cobbossee Lake is variously referred to as Lake Cobbosseeconte, Winthrop Pond, or Cobbosseconte Great Pond. Although both the shape and the names of Horseshoe Island and Cobbossee Lake have changed over time, the natural resources - wildlife, wetlands, waters, and forests - have been valued by people, both resident and migratory, for thousands of years.

## PREHISTORY, HISTORY, COBBOSSEE WATER LEVELS

Archeological evidence suggests that as early as 7,500 years ago, during the Middle Archaic period, people fished and hunted on Cobbossee Lake the same way that residents and visitors do today. The name Cobbosseconte is said to mean *place of the sturgeon*. This Native American name probably referred to the confluence of Cobbossee Stream and the Kennebec River, as it is unlikely that sturgeon have ever been in Cobbossee Lake.

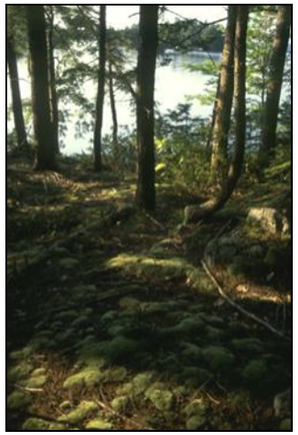
*Wendy Dennis*

Two hundred years ago, before dams were built at the Cobbossee outlet, the lake shoreline and KLT's islands looked very different from what we see today.

A photograph take from the south end of the lake shows the "Dismal Swamp" as it might have looked hundreds of years ago when water levels were much lower.

The first dam on Cobbossee, constructed in the late 1830s, was only two feet high. Today's dam, at nine feet, was built in 1917. Before the lake was dammed, KLT's lands on the northwest arm of Horseshoe were connected at low water to KLT's Sheep/Perry Island. When the lake level was nine feet lower, it would have been possible for farmers to herd animals to Sheep Island from the shore of Cobbossee Lake just east of Horseshoe Island. This is likely how Sheep Island got its name.

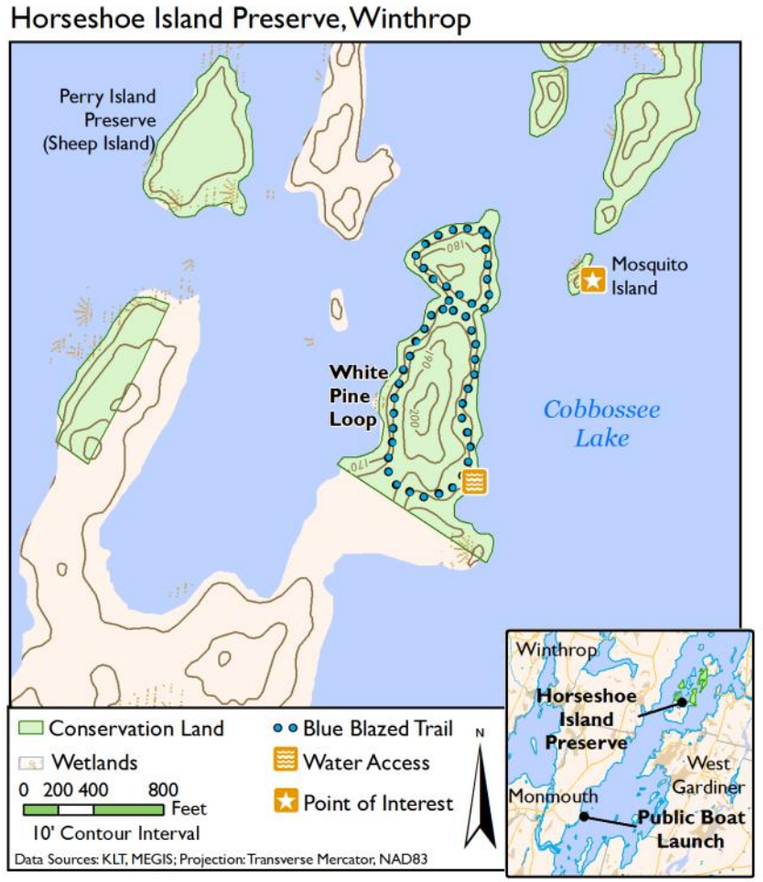
## HORSESHOE ISLAND GEOLOGY



*Jym St. Pierre*

If you arrived at KLT's Horseshoe Island trailhead by boat or skis, you are standing on metamorphic rocks that are roughly 420 million years old. All the islands of the northern part of Cobbossee Lake are underlain with a fascinating collection of geological units (including thinly bedded marble, thinly bedded schist, rusty units, and granite pegmatite) that are well exposed along the shores of the islands. The metamorphic rocks (marble and schist) are Silurian in age, meaning that the original sediments that formed these rocks were deposited around 416 to 443 million years ago.

As marble weathers, it releases calcium and other minerals into the soil, a process that often creates botanically rich environments.




**Access** to KLT's Cobbossee Island properties is by watercraft in the summer. In the winter, hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing provide access when the lake is frozen. There is a public boat launch on the Southwest shore in Monmouth, and an access point at the intersection of Pond Road and Collins Mills Road (Cobbossee Outlet) in Manchester.

**Horseshoe Island Preserve** KLT owns 23.5 acres on Horseshoe Island: 18.5-acres on the eastern arm, and 5 acres on the west arm. A KLT sign on the northwest shore of the eastern arm marks the start of a 0.8 mile loop trail that follows the perimeter of the island through a beautiful mixed conifer-hardwood forest. A bridge connects the northern tip of the arm to the southern trail loop.

**Hodgdon Island Preserve** KLT's 17-acre property on the southern part of Hodgdon Island begins at a sand beach at the trailhead on the western shore. A KLT sign and registration box marks the beginning of a 1 mile loop trail that features old growth red oaks, a northern white cedar stand, and marble outcrops.

**Sheep/Perry Island Preserve** This 6-acre island, the largest undeveloped island on the lake, is maintained as a nature preserve, no trails. A KLT sign is on the west shore at the "landing."