

WAGNER FAMILY DONATES 68 ACRES OF LAND IN MANCHESTER

Theresa Kerchner, Executive Director



Mom and Dad spent the better part of six decades maintaining the fields and woods around their home in Manchester. It was a labor of love. They always hoped to be able to save the land from development. Many thanks to KLT for giving Mom and Dad the opportunity to make that dream a reality. We are all thrilled that the land will remain undeveloped, preserving its varied habitats, helping to protect the water quality of Lake Umbagog, and leaving it as open space for future generations to enjoy.

~ MJ Wagner Dedon and Scott Wagner

As a part of our 35th anniversary celebration and annual meeting, we were honored to recognize long-time Manchester resident Dick Wagner for his August 2023 donation of the Wagner Woods Conservation Area. The Wagner Woods Conservation Area is contiguous with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's 1,140-acre Jamie's Pond Wildlife Management Area and the 228-acre Town of Manchester conservation lands. Taken together, these 1,436 acres comprise an ecologically significant conservation landscape.

KLT's newest conservation property protects valuable woodland, wetland, and field habitats and features beautiful stone ledges and walls, as well as views of Manchester Bog and Umbagog Lake.

KLT Lands Committee member Norm Rodrigue recently stated: *Donations like this where the larger community gains water quality benefits and open space are uncommon in areas with high development pressure.*

The Wagner Woods Conservation Area opens the door for possible future trail connectivity through lands owned by the Town of Manchester. Access to the property will be over frozen ground in the winter across lands owned by the Town of Manchester and MDIFW's Jamie's Pond Wildlife Management Area. For more information including a map of the property, please visit www.tkltr.org.



Howard Lake with Dick Wagner, MJ Wagner Dedon & Scott Wagner



Manchester Bog from Wagner Woods Conservation Area

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President's Message: Looking Toward the Future

"If you keep chopping wood, pretty soon there will be a pile." – Harold Alfond

If you're reading this letter closely, as I'm told by Theresa that many of our members do, you'll notice a new writer (and photo) this month. A Mainer with multi-generational ties to Kennebec County, I live with my family at the base of Howard Hill (or "Hiking Hill" as our five-year old pronounces it). It was that successful project that got me involved with KLT.

On a more serious note, as I take office as KLT president I am awestruck by all the accomplishments of our Trust over the past thirty-five years, and I'm particularly grateful to past president Janet Sawyer for her two years of thoughtful leadership alongside Theresa Kerchner and KLT's staff. Their steadfast dedication to the work and stewardship required to maintain the 7,690 acres of land and construct more than 58 miles of trails is what makes this role an honor to take on for the next two years.

Looking toward the future, we are seeking guidance from the membership via a survey available here (<https://bit.ly/kltsurvey>), and we're also intending to hold a strategic planning board retreat this winter, our first in five years. We'll begin with a review of KLT's accomplishments, then look at the work required to maintain the standards we set for ourselves in relation to our mission, which includes conservation, stewardship, educational programs, and working with partners in support of agriculture and forestland conservation.

We will continue to work on the answers to critical questions like these:

- "How big is big enough?"
- "How do we meet new requests from landowners and take on additional projects and relationships?"
- "How do we fund the exemplary work that KLT staff provides in future years?"

The answers to these questions are not simple, nor are the problems they imply easily solved (and many additional questions will guide KLT in its decisions over the next five years).

As members, donors, volunteers, and land stewards, you make our work possible. I hope you'll give us your candid, thoughtful views on where we should be going and help us chip away at answering these important questions.

Be in touch, whether by survey, email, phone, or popping into our Winthrop office, as a few of us are known to do now and then. Until then, we'll keep chopping away.

Sincerely,



Matt Mullen, President

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KLT Interns: Future Conservation Leaders

After an impressive season of field and office work and research, Ethan Ross and Tucker Schulze completed their internships in August. Thank you for your good work for KLT this summer, Ethan and Tucker!

Enclosed in this newsletter are copies of their summer research project.

For information about the internship program, visit www.tkltr.org. We will begin recruitment for next summer in late December 2023.

Ethan Ross

I had a great time working with the Kennebec Land Trust this summer. It was an amazing experience, from grant writing to stewardship tasks to meeting everyone involved in the organization. I loved working at Hales Pond and being able to see the completion of the trail there, with the dedication at the end of the summer. Everyone at KLT was super nice, and I am very grateful for all of their help and support. I picked up many transferable skills, and I will be excited to put them to use for whatever life holds after my last year of school. Thank you again, KLT, for a wonderful experience!



Tucker Schulze

I had an excellent and rewarding experience with KLT this summer. I felt I was given a true crash course in what it means to work for a land trust, with all of its complex functions. One of the reasons I chose this internship was I appreciated the diversity of experiences I believed I'd be getting. Every day was certainly different from the last. I gained valuable stewardship skills with hands-on work in the beautiful lands KLT works to conserve. There were also many opportunities to foster skills in an office and administrative setting, especially considering all the rain we had! My favorite, and what I believe to be the most valuable experience, was getting to conduct a joint research project with Ethan, the other intern, on trail accessibility at Howard Hill. I'm extremely proud knowing that this work is going to have such a profound impact for many in the community in Central Maine. Working in the beautiful environment of Kennebec County this summer was truly special as well. I felt inspired every day by the work I was doing, both for the place and for the community. Thank you KLT for an amazing summer! Looking forward to seeing all the great things this organization will accomplish.



2023 Staff Transitions

Welcome Victoria Vandervort, Seasonal Stewardship Assistant

Victoria has been working with Public Lands for the past five years. Beginning with the U.S. Forest Service in Leavenworth, Washington, in 2019, she has helped to protect over 600,000 acres of wilderness by patrolling hundreds of miles with just a pack and a smile. She has surveyed campsites and cultural sites using GIS maps in the backcountry, educated hikers on Leave No Trace ethics, and cleared trails using crosscuts and other hand tools. Along with her backcountry knowledge, Victoria has a bachelor's degree from Savannah College of Art and Design. She continues to create artwork through interpretive signs for trailheads and bulletin boards. With a combination of art and wilderness experience, Victoria is excited to help KLT this fall and is looking forward to gaining new and valuable experience.



Thank you for your annual support of KLT! Your **membership donation is your most important financial contribution.**

When you receive your membership renewal in November, please contact Marie or Theresa if you have questions about your annual membership gift.

Not a KLT member? Please consider an annual donation to support KLT and land conservation!

Looking for an idea for a holiday gift? How about a KLT membership, a copy of *Take a Hike!* or *Writing the Land: Maine* or a gift to our 35th Anniversary Land Acquisition Campaign - see insert.





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Kennebec Land Trust 2024 Lyceum

Maine Mammals and Their Habitats: Mustelids, Bats & Deer

March 14, 21 and 28 at 6:00 PM
More information to come soon!

Photo: Fisher, *Bree Furfey Vermont Fish and Wildlife*

