

GOTT PASTURE PRESERVE

LAND DONORS: GEORGE E. LADD III,
LINCOLN F. LADD, AND ROBERT M. LADD
OWNED BY: KLT, WAYNE



Gott Pasture
(Jym St. Pierre)

George Ladd first came to Wayne with his father in the early 1920's. They stayed at the Maurita Inn on Main Street, hired a horse and wagon, and asked the locals for the best place to fish. The Ladds were directed to Wilson Pond, where they spent several days fishing under an oak tree. George's son, Lincoln, recalls his father telling him that bass leapt out of the water straight onto their lines!

Inspired by the quiet beauty of Wilson Pond and their incredible fishing luck, George and his father inquired about the property. Land owner Luther Norris was willing to sell the undeveloped forested parcel, Lincoln says. "The land was for sale for back taxes, and my grandfather and father bought it jointly." That was in 1924. A small shuttered cabin and several tent platforms were built — and Camp Ladd began.

As predictably as the seasons, the Ladd family returns to Wilson Pond each summer. The original tent platforms have been replaced by a constellation of cabins along the shoreline. From June to September, more than one hundred members of the Ladd family make their way to Wayne, Maine from across the country. The culminating weekend is always July 4th when almost fifty Ladds reunite for fireworks and festivities. Family activities are typical of most Maine summer retreats. "The kids go canoeing and swimming. Everyone gathers in the camp's mess hall for

dinner, and cookouts are held on Saturday nights," says Robert, Lincoln's brother. Wildlife, including raucous herons in a nearby white pine rookery, have adapted to the visitors who have called this land a summer home for eighty years.

When their parents passed away, Lincoln, Robert, and their brother, George, decided to protect part of their family lands permanently. So, in 2003, they donated the 75 acres that George Ladd and his wife Helen had purchased in 1957 to the Kennebec Land Trust. This property, adjacent to the family camp, had been known locally as Gott Pasture, and Lincoln and Robert remember watching Charlie Gott's cows back when it was still a wooded pasture.

The Ladds, as well as visitors from surrounding communities, now frequent KLT's Gott Pasture throughout the summer. A wooden sign, parking area, and registration box welcome hikers,

and a path follows the steep glacial ravines and shoreline. Visitors can stop to see a 19th-century farmstead foundation, impressive red oaks and white pines, and a vernal pool.

Robert Ladd knows what this land means to his family. "When you ask my kids where their roots are, they'll say Wayne." With the donation of Gott Pasture Preserve, visitors for generations to come will have the opportunity to develop their own connections to this permanently protected conservation land.



Wilson Pond, Gott Pasture (Jym St. Pierre)



Left to right: Robert Ladd, Lincoln Ladd, George Ladd (Contributed)



Wood frog (Megan Gahl)

April rains and thawing temperatures herald one of the Northeast's most spectacular, if largely unnoticed, wildlife migrations. Emerging from the forest floor, legions of Maine's wood frogs and mole salamanders move en masse toward small woodland pools marking one of the first signs that spring has finally arrived.

— Phillip deMaynadier, Wildlife Biologist,
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries
and Wildlife