Downeast Lakes LAND TRUST *Traditions*

Downeast Lakes Land Trust Newsletter

SPRING 2003 Volume 1, Issue 1

DOWNEAST LAKES FORESTRY PARTNERSHIP FUNDRAISING BEGINS—OPTIONS SIGNED

As a supporter of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust, you are part of an ambitious undertaking called the Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership. This is a project of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust and the New England Forestry Foundation to conserve 342,000 forested acres in eastern Maine. These acres—strategically positioned between more than 450,000 acres of conserved lands in New Brunswick, Canada, and 200,000 acres of state, federal and Native American lands in Maine—make the overall conservation impact inspiring. The completed project will forever secure one million acres of essentially uninterrupted habitat across an international boundary.

We are pleased to announce that the New England Forestry Foundation has signed an option to purchase a conservation easement on 312,000 acres of Downeast forestland. This easement area will surround the 27,080-acre Farm Cove Peninsula, which will be owned by the Downeast Lakes Land Trust. The fundraising deadline for both projects is now May of 2005.

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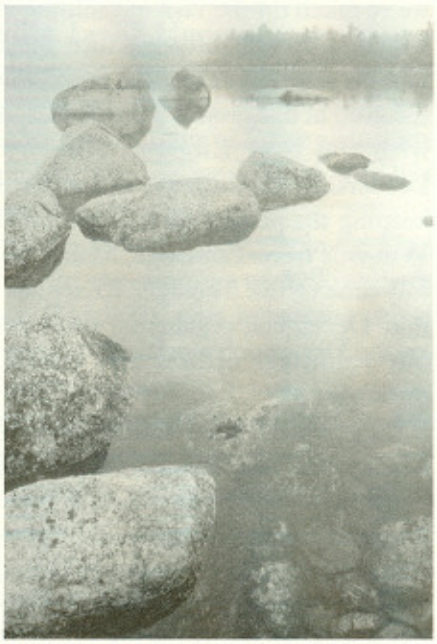

Glaciers scoured lakebeds and dropped boulders to form a natural water-based rock garden in the Downeast Lakes region.

ST. CROIX PRESERVATION DEAL COMPLETED

Foundation buys 3,000 shoreline acres for $2.5M, donates land to state

Gov. John Baldacci on Monday [March 31, 2003] announced the completion of a decade-old preservation effort for "the most beautiful spot in the world"—a 50-mile stretch of St. Croix River and Spednic Lake shoreline in northern Washington County between Baileyville and Danforth. Conservation efforts along the river, which forms the border between Maine and New Brunswick, began a decade ago when leaders pledged to cooperate on St. Croix preservation projects.

"It has taken a long time, but it's finally done," said Elizabeth Swain of the New England Forestry Foundation.

The project's 3,000 acres, which were owned by a group of investors and managed by New Hampshire–based Wagner Land Management Co., have been purchased by the foundation for $2.5 million in private and public money, and donated to the state. The deal was completed on March 20.

"It will belong to the public, as well it should," Swain said.

The project includes a 500-foot strip of forested land along 34 miles of the upper St. Croix and 16 miles of Spednic Lake, as well as several small islands.

About 20 miles of Spednic shoreline previously had been

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Executive Director, Office Manager, Grant Writer, and Consultants

As our vision of land conservation moves closer to the reality of land ownership and its many responsibilities, we've taken on the task of building a working land trust with appropriate infrastructure. Stephen Keith has been hired as Executive Director. Steve, who has been intensely involved in this project since its inception, serves as liaison with the New England Forestry Foundation, the Leadership Committee, and other organizations while keeping the project on task and moving forward. Kristy Williams from Talmadge, Maine, has been hired as our full-time Office Manager. Kristy has been working since mid-December, organizing three years of records from our volunteer efforts and coordinating numerous meetings.

Experienced grant-writer Leslie Hudson of Orono, Maine, has been hired on a part-time basis to help us build capacity. Frank Reed, a consultant to the New England Forestry Foundation, moved from his home in Randolph Center, Vermont, to Grand Lake Stream from December through March to provide advice and support while writing grants for the DLLT/NEFF Partnership. He has also joined Steve Keith, Jimmie Upham, and Kurt Cressey in promoting the acquisition and easement to selectmen in the local towns where the easement lands are located.

Our website is being updated thanks to the generosity of NEFF (www.downeastlakes.org), and a new Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership brochure has been printed. The brochure, enclosed in this mailing, was created specifically for use by the Leadership Committee in fundraising efforts and features a new map of the full easement and acquisition areas.

A significant role of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust is improving the economic opportunities and well-being of our region. As we develop and implement our various plans, we are confident this will improve the long-term economic health of our community. Your ideas and suggestions are welcome.

The trust is renting Amy Perkins' house at 40 Shaw Street as our office, which is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

You may reach us by phone at 207-796-2100 or by email at downeastlakes@panax.com.

Sincerely,
Steven Schaefer, President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Stephen Keith

OFFICE MANAGER
Kristy Williams

NEWSLETTER
Olga Lange
Stephen Keith
Andrea Olsen
Jane Crosen Washburn

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Bob Upham
Jane Crosen Washburn
Lee Whitely

All Photos by Ben Brouwer except as noted

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For all of us who have been working on this project, the lakes and forests that surround Grand Lake Stream give us the motivation to complete this important landscape conservation effort. We have worked steadily for three-and-a-half years to make the dream of protecting these lands become an ever-growing reality. Here is a summary of our recent endeavors:

The Leadership Committee, under the direction of Jake Lea, has been meeting on a regular basis formulating fundraising strategies. They have chosen Julia Emlen as their primary fundraising consultant to the project. They are moving forward with a fundraising campaign and working to identify individual donors who might be interested in supporting the project. They are in the process of inviting many guests to visit Grand Lake Stream this year and see the project lands and waters.

The Passamaquoddy Tribe has been meeting with the DLLT Board of Directors and NEFF representative Frank Reed to discuss this projects relationship to their lands to the east and the west. The Tribal Government wholeheartedly supports our efforts, and we look forward to mutually pursuing a strong conservation ethic that will enrich the quality of our forestlands.

The Trails, Ecological Reserve, and Forestry Committees are meeting monthly to formulate draft policies for managing the Farm Cove Peninsula lands. Eventually, the DLLT Board will be called upon to adopt management policies in preparation for becoming responsible landowners. Seven Islands Land Company, under the direction of John McNulty, Vice President of Seven Islands, in consultation with our various committees, is developing a draft forest management plan for the 27,080 acres. Once adopted by the Board, this plan will guide management of these lands under Trust ownership.

The Events Committee is working closely with NEFF and the Leadership Committee to plan and coordinate several donors events this spring and summer and to prepare for our annual meeting to be held the last weekend of July in Grand Lake Stream (see announcement at right).

Ecologists Norm Famous and Janet McMahon are completing their two-year Ecological Reserve Plan this fall. Their findings are informing the development of our forest management plan and the efforts of our Trails Committee. Educational programs associated with an ecological inventory of the DLLT purchase lands include an ongoing summer internships program. This program has produced several reports for publication.

DLLT grantwriter Leslie Hudson is applying to foundations for funding for capacity-building. The Trust will be developing and maintaining relationships with foundations so that we can continue to foster giving after the project is complete. We are working closely with NEFF to coordinate this effort.

We have recently been awarded grants from the Davis Conservation Fund (in the amount of $10,000), the Mifflin Foundation ($15,000), plus numerous private donations including many significant donations from you, our members and supporters.

Our end-of-the-year request amounted to over $16,000. Your support is greatly appreciated!

I look forward to seeing you at our annual meeting this July.

Best Regards, Stephen Keith, Executive Director

YOU'RE INVITED...

...to our second annual meeting and picnic for Board of Directors, Advisory Board members, and supporters on Saturday, July 26 from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. in Grand Lake Stream on the east side of the dam.

Lunch will be served at 12:45. This event will again coincide with the Grand Lake Stream Folk Art Festival, which will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, July 26 and 27.

_____ Yes, I would like to attend

_____ Number of people for lunch

_____ Vegetarian option

Name _____

Phone _____

Please reply to: Events Coordinator
P.O. Box 75, Grand Lake Stream, ME 04637
Phone: 207-796-2100
Email: downeastlakes@panax.com

SUMMER INTERNS 2002

by Wayne Curtis, DLLT Advisory Board

"I've never seen this many loons," said Joe Schine one August afternoon near the dam at Grand Lake Stream. "If you're quiet and you're looking around and paying attention, it's amazing what you can really see."

Paying attention to the land was why Schine had come to Grand Lake Stream last summer. He was one of five interns from Vermont's Middlebury College who moved in for the summer, sharing a house just off the stream.

They were invited by the Downeast Lakes Land Trust to help inventory the landscape—to get a clearer view of what sort of wildlife inhabits our woods and lakeshores. The information will be used by the trust and the New England Forestry Foundation in building support for the long-term conservation of the land, as well as aid in developing a forest management plan that takes wildlife needs into consideration.

The 2002 interns included two 2002 Middlebury graduates, Ben Calvi and Laurie Richmond, along with undergraduates Schine, Ben Brouwer, and Andrea St. John. They were joined for much of the summer by a sixth intern, Anthony Battista, a graduate of the University of Maine at Machias.

With so much land to survey, the group began their summer by narrowing the scope of the project. Geographically, their primary interest was in the 27,000-acre parcel being considered for acquisition by the trust, which includes Farm Cove Peninsula and lands along Fourth Machias Lake.

Working with wildlife and wetlands ecologist Norm Famous and assistant Joe Musante, the interns undertook surveys of common loons and aquatic birds, putting an emphasis on identifying nesting and breeding pairs. (Aquatic birds are any that need a freshwater ecosystem to feed and reproduce.) They also participated in the statewide damselfly and dragonfly survey.

The interns traveled by foot, motorboat, and canoe, exploring the shorelines of 31 of the 34 lakes. Over the summer they observed 206 common loons, including 23 nesting pair and 12 loon chicks. These numbers are assumed to be underestimated—but even so, this region still accounts for nearly 10 percent of the adult loons in northern Maine, the state with the largest population of loons in the Northeast.

Other aquatic birds found in the survey included 34 bald eagles, along with spotted sandpipers, osprey, belted kingfishers, common mergansers, common goldeneyes, and common terns. Among the more notable observations were several black terns, which the state of Maine has listed as endangered. Of the 18 other aquatic bird species known in the region, 9 were observed to be nesting. Of all birds—aquatic and non-aquatic—the interns identified some 135 species on Farm Cove Peninsula alone.

The dragonfly and damselfly survey was part of a five-year state-sponsored project, which intends to create an atlas showing the distribution of Maines 162 known species of odonates. The interns focused their efforts on four sites, located along rivers and in peat bogs. The process involved capturing dragonflies in nets, then following a standard protocol for preserving the specimens. Because of the difficulty of distinguishing species, the samples were sent to the state for positive identification. The interns collected 158 specimens for the state project, although it's not yet known how many individual species these entailed.

Anthony Battista spent the early part of the summer cruising the Farm Cove Peninsula for vernal pools. These often elusive seasonal pools are formed each spring from rains and meltwater, and typically vanish by late summer. Although a fleeting part of the landscape, they host a surprising diversity and play a critical part in the local ecology, especially for local salamander populations.

And as if they weren't busy enough, three of the interns also incorporated art projects into their summer, in which they sought to interpret the Grand Lake Stream landscape and culture through writing, photography, and painting.

How does all the survey pull together? Laurie Richmond fed the survey data into a state-of-the-art computer mapping system (GIS), which will allow not only a complex analysis of the area's ecosystem, but also a snapshot of the land in the summer of 2002. This baseline survey should prove invaluable in years to come, as a tool to evaluate and fine-tune land management strategies to ensure continued ecological health.

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UPDATES

Karin Tilberg has been involved in our project since its inception. As a member of our Board of Directors and chair of the Ecological Reserve Committee, she has been key to the success of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust. Karin recently left her position as acting director of the Northern Forest Alliance and accepted an appointment by Governor John Baldacci as Deputy Commissioner of the Maine Department of Conservation. We wish Karin the best in her new position.

Tom Colgan, CEO of Wagner Forest Management, has honored our request for protecting deer-wintering habitat within a recent harvest along the Big Lake Landing road. Tom's willingness to leave a 330' uncut buffer along the east side of Gardner Brook and 330' on the west side of Bonney Brook gives the many deer we see around Grand Lake Stream a greater chance of surviving a tough Maine winter. We appreciate the open dialogue between Tom and the land trust.

The Grand Lake Stream Guides' Association has been instrumental in supporting the mission and goals of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust. We share a belief that clean water, healthy forests, and undeveloped shorelines will protect traditional uses and the local economy. The Guides Association helped us with several events last summer including our annual meeting and lake tours for donors. The association also supported us with a significant financial gift. We appreciate their commitment to this important conservation effort and look forward to working with them this summer on several exciting field trips.

Lee and Sue Whitely hosted the first fundraising event of 2003 in March at their home in Acton, Maine. Thanks to Lee and Sue, David and Debbie Tobey, Lindsay Swift, Chris Wheaton, and Cynthia Wood for making this gathering a success.

Jeff McEvoy, from the Natural Resources Council of Maine and an active supporter of the trust, has recently purchased Weatherby's Lodge, a sporting camp in Grand Lake Stream. Congratulations and a warm welcome to Jeff and his family.

PRESERVATION DEAL

Continued from page 1

preserved by the local Woodie Wheaton Land Trust and the St. Croix International Waterway Commission.

The land trust, primarily made up of local anglers, started the project and nurtured it all the way through but chose to partner with the New England Forestry Foundation when its scope outgrew its founders, explained Dale Wheaton of the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust.

Half a million acres already have been conserved on the Canadian side of the river, including most of the shore.

"They got a head start on us," Swain said.

In Maine, the Department of Conservation's Bureau of Land Management will take responsibility for the river shore, which is a major recreational resource. More than 5,000 people canoe the upper St. Croix each year, and campgrounds and boat launches dot the shore.

The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife will manage the lakeshore, which is an important wildlife habitat. Maine's bald eagle restoration program began in the area, and the federally protected birds often are spotted fishing in the waterway.

Federally endangered Atlantic salmon also live in the St. Croix River.

The $2.5 million deal is composed of $1.43 million from the state of Land for Maine's Future bond money, $175,000 in federal conservation funds, and $50,000 from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund.

About a million dollars in private funds from more than 300 donors was raised by the New England Forestry Foundation. The Woodie Wheaton Land Trust raised $120,000 of that.

"In these tough economic times, it is particularly gratifying," said Amos Eno, executive director of the foundation. "We've been blessed with outstanding partners."

"This is how things get done—a lot of effort by a lot of people," the governor added.

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Our Mission

The mission of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust is to ensure the long-term economic and environmental well-being of the Downeast Lakes region through the conservation and exemplary management of its forests and waters.

Photo by Frank Reed

This is a critical time for building capacity for the land trust. We continue to need your support. Please send your tax-deductible contributions to the Downeast Lakes Land Trust.

Enclosed is my gift of $_____ to support the trust's conservation efforts.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, and Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email (optional) _____

Thank you for your support!

Downeast Lakes Land Trust, P.O. Box 75, Grand Lake Stream, ME 04637

FUNDRAISING

Continued from page 1

We also congratulate our partners, the New England Forestry Foundation, and our neighbors, the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust, for completing the St. Croix River Project (see the accompanying *Bangor Daily News* article). This purchase of a 500-foot-wide conservation corridor along Spednic Lake and the St. Croix River, the international boundary, completes the first phase of the Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership.

Each of these accomplishments represents tremendous work on the part of all who have been involved. This year the Downeast Lakes Land Trust and the New England Forestry Foundation have focused on strengthening our partnership, establishing a dynamic Leadership Committee, selecting appropriate project fundraisers, establishing the ecological reserve and forestry management plans, seeking donor and foundation support, and communicating with regional towns, organizations, and individuals that may be affected by our efforts.

DLLT has also hired staff and built infrastructure so that we can be responsible landowners when the project is complete.

With our recent efforts, we are well placed to move forward toward our mission of ensuring the long-term economic and environmental well-being of the Downeast Lakes region through the conservation and exemplary management of its forests and waters.