Winter 2021 Volume 15, Issue 2

Downeast Lakes Land Trust®

Downeast Lakes Traditions

Forests and Lakes—For People—Forever®

A winter camper traverses Sysladobsis Lake.

Securing The Future of Sysladobsis Lake

Downeast Lakes Land Trust, The Trust for Public Land (TPL), and Lakeville community members are excited to announce the acquisition of the Lakeville Forest Tract! Through a two-year, $2.7 million campaign led by local and seasonal residents, this 2,015-acre parcel is now conserved in perpetuity for future generations to enjoy. The Lakeville Forest Tract will be included in the existing Downeast Lakes Community Forest, and managed by DLLT for wildlife habitat, public recreational access, and sustainable timber stewardship. The Lakeville Forest Tract contains significant lakeshore frontage on Sysladobsis and Horseshoe Lakes, upland hardwood forests, and critical riparian habitat in the Downeast Lakes region.

This ambitious project received substantial support from publicly-funded conservation programs, including $710,000 from the Land for Maine's Future Program, and $600,000 each from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and the U.S. Forest Service's Community Forest Program, where the project ranked #1 in the nation for 2020. In addition, the Lakeville Expansion received an overwhelming number of generous donations from a nationwide network of ardent supporters.

DLLT is currently finishing the management plan for this new addition to the Downeast Lakes Community Forest. This plan will help inform and guide land management decisions that will provide exemplary recreational opportunities and points of public access for the entire region. Highlights for the future stewardship of the property include establishing two hiking trails, constructing a trailered boat launch on Horseshoe Lake, building a hand-carry launch on Sysladobsis Lake, and improving existing road conditions. In addition, DLLT is working with local ATV and snowmobile clubs to address trail maintenance and improved parking for area trails. Once completed in the coming weeks, this management plan will be available to read on DLLT's website, and we will begin collecting public comments and input via email.

"We are all very excited," said Jay Petri, 5th generation camp owner and member of the Lakeville Campaign Committee. "We worked together, and put the Lakeville community and forest access in the forefront of our minds. There was nothing but a positive reaction about the project from everyone we approached in the community."

The Lakeville Forest will become the latest addition to the Downeast Lakes Community Forest, which now encompasses 57,703 acres in the Downeast Lakes region. Owned and managed by DLLT for wildlife habitat, public recreational access, and a sustainable timber economy, the Downeast Lakes Community Forest is one of the largest community forests in the nation. We'd like to thank everyone, near and far, for their support throughout the campaign, and we look forward to working with the Town of Lakeville and the surrounding communities to support our motto of Forests and Lakes - For People - Forever®.

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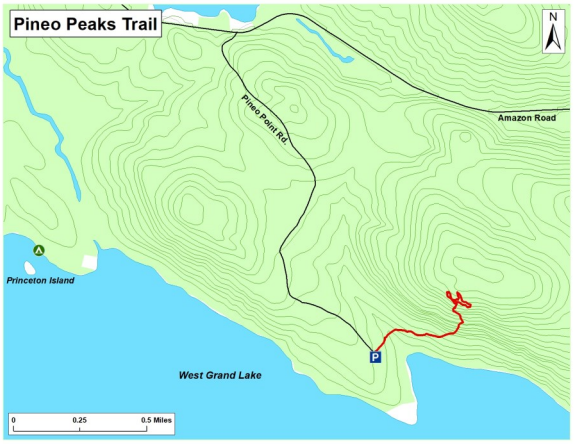
Blazing A New Trail In The Community Forest

As the Downeast Lakes Community Forest has grown, so has the need for expanding public recreation opportunities for local residents and visitors to the region. DLLT's all-volunteer Trails Committee and staff members are always working to create new ways to support the traditional economy of outdoor recreation and tourism.

We are thrilled to announce the construction of "Phase 1" of the Pineo Peaks Trail – a new hiking option near the northeastern shore of West Grand Lake. This area is located within the Amazon-Musquash Ecological Reserve and Special Management Area, and contains several unique forested habitats and geological features. The trailhead is located along the Pineo Point Road, and when fully completed, will connect to the newly-created Princeton Island Cove campsite.

With its remote location and rugged terrain, DLLT contracted with the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) to complete the construction of this trail. MCC has worked with DLLT on several past recreation projects, and the organization has an excellent reputation for trail building and recreational management in Maine. With a six-person team working for three weeks during the late summer of 2021, this year's crew members traveled to Maine for the entire summer and early fall from such far-flung places as Arizona, Minnesota, and West Virginia.

The current phase of the trail that is completed begins at Pineo Point Road, and meanders through mixed woodlands before climbing high above the lakeshore to a series of granite ledges, glacial erratics, crevasses, and boulders. Here, the trail winds through this rock-strewn maze and creates a small loop that allows hikers to explore different micro-routes amongst the incredible geological features of the area. The total trail length with the loop is 0.8 miles (one-way). These rock formations extend all along this steep ridge, and when the leaves are down, offer partial views of West Grand Lake and other areas to the west.



Future phases of the project will lengthen the eastern portion of the trail over both Pineo Peaks and extend the western portion of the trail from the campsite, up along Oxbrook Stream. When fully completed, this trail will offer hikers a truly remote, lengthy, and challenging trail in the Downeast Lakes Community Forest. In the meantime, enjoy exploring the ledge loop!

MISSION

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

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President's Message

Dear Friends,

As we approach the close of the year, we have much to celebrate and much cause to feel hope for the future. We are celebrating the addition of the Lakeville Forest Tract to the Downeast Lakes Community Forest! The purchase of this exceptional forest secures public access to two spectacular Downeast lakes, and it's a testament to the visionary commitment of residents and campowners in the Lakeville area that this cherished resource will be protected for the enjoyment of all future generations.

The heritage of Sysladobsis and Horseshoe Lakes is best celebrated by their unofficial muse, the sporting writer Edmund Ware Smith. Smith's spirited portrayals of his years spent exploring this area still speak to many of us who have heard a loon call on a silent morning, or watched a landlocked salmon kiss the surface as it gulps a caddisfly.

It's been more than 70 years since Smith wrote of the pull of the Downeast Lakes, but his spirit lives on in the new generations who are free to seek out these same experiences in much the same way Smith did. And it is because of the dedication of today's Downeast conservationists – because of you – that future generations will also be free to visit these beautiful lakes and expansive forests. Because of you, they too can find and cherish these special, unspoiled places, and, when it's their turn to lead, they too must rise to the challenges of their day to conserve and steward these places for the next generation. And so on, ad infinitum.

I feel lucky to work everyday beside a team of passionate, committed, and talented conservationists. Over the past two years, I've been especially fortunate to work closely with the inheritors of Edmund Ware Smith's legacy to secure the future of Sysladobsis Lake and its neighboring lands for posterity:

Dagmar Friedman
Marilyn Hartman
Dan Jones
Susan Linscott
Gordon Mott
Steve Norris
Jay Petri
Patty Verbeeck
Van Wood

These drivers of the Lakeville Expansion Campaign led the way for all of us with their passion, hard work, and love for a storied corner of the Downeast Lakes region. I feel grateful to have pulled my oar beside theirs.

It is up to each of us to carry the torch from here, and to look always for those bright souls who have the dedication to, and the love for, these Downeast Lakes, so that they may take up the torch and carry it into the future.

Until then, I know you'll join me in carrying on a little farther.

I'm glad of that, too.

Warm regards,

David Montague

Corporate Sponsors

Corporate Sponsors support our vision for the economic and environmental well-being of Grand Lake Stream and the Downeast Lakes Region. These businesses made gifts in 2021, and are featured on downeastlakes.org through 2022.

Other businesses contribute to Downeast Lakes Land Trust through their employee matching grant programs. Thank you also to these companies, and to the donors who created the matching grant opportunities!

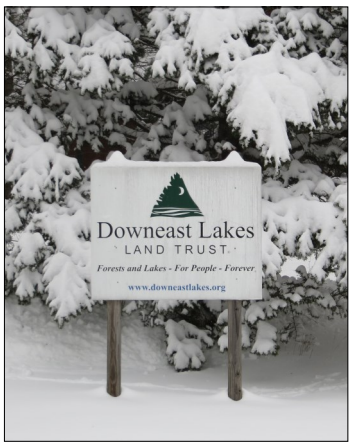
Brook Trout ($1,000 +)

- Bailey's General Construction
- Davis Forestry Products, Inc.
- Grand Lake Canoe and Paddle
- Machias Savings Bank
- The Pines
- WBRC Architects Engineers

Grand Laker ($250 +)

- C&C Trucking
- Chet's Camps
- Daybreak Adventures Guide Service
- Hanscom Construction, Inc.
- Leen's Lodge
- The Pine Tree Store
- Treeline, Inc.
- Weatherby's Lodge
- Wild Fox Cabins & Campground

If you are interested in becoming a corporate sponsor of Downeast Lakes Land Trust, we are a 501c3 non-profit organization, so all donations are tax deductible. For more information, please contact DLLT Development and Outreach Manager, Colin Brown, at cbrown@downeastlakes.org, or call (207)796-2100.



Volunteer lake monitors learning how to spot milfoil on Big Lake, led by staff from Lake Stewards of Maine.

Big Lake Milfoil Coalition Update

During the summer and fall of 2021, the Big Lake Milfoil Coalition made great strides in the fight against the highly-invasive variable-leaf water milfoil. An in-depth, level three survey of Big Lake and all tributaries was completed, revealing several milfoil infestations and allowing the Coalition to collect important geographic data. The primary infestation continues to be located in Clifford Bay (the area of original discovery), with additional infestations in Musquash Bay, and at the mouth of Big Musquash Stream. Floating patches were observed by boaters and surveyors in many areas of the lake, and several smaller infestations were promptly removed by trained volunteers to prevent spread.

Most of this crucial survey work and data collection was completed by passionate volunteer lake monitors who traveled from all across the state of Maine to assist with these removal efforts which are critical to the economic and environmental well-being of the Downeast Lakes region. This fall, using funding from Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Coalition contracted New England Milfoil for 8 weeks of diver-assisted suction harvesting, removing more than 23,000 gallons of this aquatic invasive. The Big Lake Milfoil Coalition is now comprised of many area organizations, municipalities, and businesses, including Downeast Lakes Land Trust, The Passamaquoddy Tribe, Lake Stewards of Maine, Woodland Pulp, LLC, Grand Lake Stream Guides Association, Princeton Rod & Gun Club, Big Lake Campmeeting Association, and the Big Lake Camp Owners Association. Each of these groups bring dedicated expertise and long-standing support for the region.

DLLT and coalition members are so thankful for the many volunteer hours spent on the water, as well as the generous donations that are helping make these efforts possible. Local camp owner and dedicated volunteer, Bill Inglee, remarked about the severity of the threat and importance of the formation of the Coalition.

"Until the discovery and identification last year of invasive non-native variable-leaf milfoil last summer by our local Game Warden, Brad Richard, and Joe Musante, Passamaquoddy Tribe biologist, few of us in the Big Lake area fully understood the serious threat Milfoil posed to pristine northern lake areas such as our own. Capable of clogging a watershed, undermining the native fish population, and spreading further in a wonderful northern area like ours, with pristine waters and few people, the discovery was extremely disturbing news to say the least."

While these measures showed some success in milfoil removal, we are still in the very early stages of the fight against this invasive plant. Ongoing efforts will continue in 2022, and for several more years, to monitor and remediate the situation. The vigilance of local residents, boaters, and recreationists in the area is paramount to the future success of these collaborative efforts. If you are interested in volunteering or donating to this ongoing fight, please contact Downeast Lakes Land Trust. To donate, visit www.downeastlakes.org/donation, or send a check labeled "Big Lake Milfoil Coalition."

"While much work still remains to be done, this year went remarkably well and we are very optimistic about the future," said Inglee. "And for the local camp community, there is a new appreciation for the positive role played by DLLT in protecting the environment all around us in such a dynamic and effective way."

Collaborating To Assist Wildlife Tracking Efforts

In the world of non-profit conservation, partnering with other organizations and agencies is a crucial element of our work and mission. A central focus of DLLT's conservation efforts is to enhance wildlife habitat throughout the Downeast Lakes region, and as the old saying goes – "many hands make light work!"

When DLLT was contacted by the Motus Wildlife Tracking Network (Motus) and they identified the Downeast Lakes Community Forest as a potential key location for their network of tracking towers, we were eager to assist in their research efforts. Motus is an international collaborative network of researchers that use automated radio telemetry to simultaneously track hundreds of birds, bats, and insects. The system enables a community of researchers, educators, organizations, and citizens to undertake impactful research and education on the ecology and conservation of migratory animals.

Located on a mountain top with clear signals in all directions, Motus' telemetry tower (pictured above) has a minimal impact on the landscape, and with its higher elevation, is able to link migratory species' movements in the Downeast Lakes region to the Motus network. This valuable data is contributing to scientific research across the globe and informing habitat management within the Downeast Lakes Community Forest.

For more information, please visit www.motus.org.

DLLT Honors Former Board Member With Conservation Award

This past July at Downeast Lakes Land Trust's annual picnic and meeting, DLLT celebrated the conservation accomplishments of the 2021 Downeast Lakes Conservation Award winner, Lee Whitely. Those who know the inner workings of the Downeast Lakes Community Forest, know that Lee has been a driving force of the Trust's efforts since its inception. A passionate outdoorsman, he has long-standing ties to the Downeast Lakes region, first coming to the area decades ago to hunt, fish, forage, and enjoy the peace and quiet of his Fourth Machias Lake camp.

"Lee shuns the spotlight, but he's been instrumental behind the scenes at DLLT for nearly two decades," said DLLT President David Montague.

After his retirement as President of the Technical Papers Division and Director General of the Axhom Division of Lydall, Inc., Lee moved to Grand Lake Stream, and became involved in numerous community activities and events, including the early formation of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust. With his recent retirement from the Board of Directors, he leaves behind an extensive legacy of exemplary land conservation successes, having served on the Leadership Committee of the Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership, DLLT's Forestry, Wildlife, Finance, and Governance Committees, and most recently, served for several years as DLLT's Board Vice President.

"It's rare for a board volunteer to actively seek out the hardest jobs and the toughest assignments in organizational governance – the sticky issues and challenging topics that no one enjoys sorting out – but that's exactly what Lee did, and he did it for years and years," said Montague.

The handmade paddle was generously donated by Dale Tobey of Grand Lake Canoe & Paddle, and wood-burned by Ryan Cross of Robbinston. To hear fellow DLLT Director Sue LaPlante's speech honoring Lee, please visit DLLT's YouTube page, DowneastLakes.

"Non-governmental organizations like DLLT rise and fall on the shoulders of the Lee Whitely's of the world, and this award is just a fraction of the acknowledgement he deserves for the pivotal role he's played in this organization's growth and success."

Support DLLT This GivingTuesday and Double Your Impact!

Donate to Downeast Lakes Land Trust on Giving Tuesday (November 30th), and your generous gift will be matched up to $5,000 by DLLT's Board of Directors. These crucial donations will help continue to protect Forests and Lakes—For People—Forever®.

GivingTuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Over the past nine years, this idea has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give and celebrate generosity.

For this year's GivingTuesday, taking place on November 30th, your generous contribution to DLLT will be matched by DLLT's Board of Directors! For every dollar you donate, DLLT's Board will match it **up to $5,000**, providing crucial support for conservation efforts in the Downeast Lakes region, and helping DLLT continue to improve wildlife habitat and provide public recreation opportunities in the Downeast Lakes Community Forest.

Grassroots generosity and community action are powerful forces for good, especially in turbulent times. Join us this GivingTuesday and support Downeast Lakes Land Trust. Whether donating on our easy-to-use online platform (www.downeastlakes.org/donation), mailing a check with a "GivingTuesday" note, or stopping by our office in Grand Lake Stream, your gift will support the lasting legacy of DLLT's conservation success in the Downeast Lakes region. We hope you will consider Downeast Lakes Land Trust for your GivingTuesday donations!

DOWNEAST LAKES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Get more information and keep up to date at www.downeastlakes.org

Downeast Lakes LAND TRUST®

Upcoming Programs & Events

December 2
Wreath Making
Join DLLT staff and volunteers for this annual community favorite! Make your own wreath with balsam tips from the Community Forest. Participants meet at the GLS School Building from 4-6 pm.

December 17
Annual Christmas Bird Count
DLLT sponsors this annual citizen science outing in conjunction with The Audubon Society. Count at your feeders from home in GLS. For more details, email scote@downeastlakes.org.

Little Wild Ones Club

Every Thursday from 10 am – 12 pm - Geared for ages 0-5, the Little Wild Ones will go on nature adventures in the Downeast Lakes Community Forest. This program is free for everyone, and no commitment or reservations are needed – come when it's convenient and stay as long as you'd like! Meet at the Grand Lake Stream School Building. For more information, please contact Sarah at scote@downeastlakes.org

Future Community Events

Other great community events will appear in DLLT's summer newsletter.

July 4th—Grand Lake Stream America Celebrations

July 30-31 – Grand Lake Stream Folk Art Festival, Grand Lake Stream Plantation.

July 31 - DLLT Annual Picnic, West Grand Lake Shore

DLLT Photo Contest

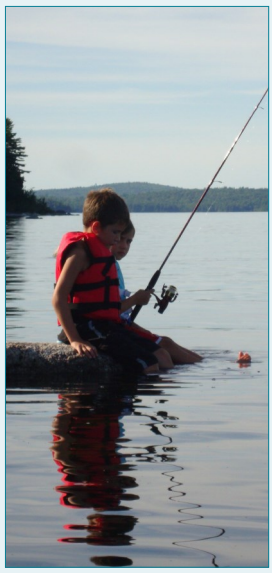
DLLT is pleased to announce the start of this year's ***DLLT Photo Contest***. Show us your best photographs of the area! For official contest rules, please visit www.downeastlakes.org. All photographs submitted will be judged by a panel of DLLT Staff and Volunteers. Please email all submissions to: **photo@downeastlakes.org. The deadline for submission is April 15, 2022.**

Photos will be selected for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category. **NEW THIS YEAR** - $25 gift cards to The Pine Tree Store for each category winner, and the "Best In Show" winner (voted on at the GLS Folk Art Festival) will win a free Guide day in Grand Lake Stream! *(Pictured: 2021 Forests winner, Logan Johnson)*

A New Hat For Winter

For a minimum $25 donation, DLLT supporters can get this cozy hat to stay warm all winter in the Downeast Lakes. To get one, simply make a note on your next donation, whether online, mail, or in-person. Show off your DLLT pride this winter in forest green!

Make A Lasting Impact With Legacy Gifts



Are you interested in leaving a lasting legacy in the Downeast Lakes region for future generations? Not sure where to get started?

The numerous options for planned giving can seem overwhelming, but the impact on conservation in the region can be a powerful tool for generations to come. To get started on your planned giving journey, DLLT can direct you to financial resources that will help you explore your options and choose a method of giving that's right for you. Call (207) 796-2100 to get started. The future stewards of the Downeast Lakes Community Forest will be thankful for your passion and foresight!

Calling All Volunteers!

By Sarah Cote

DLLT has been very busy with public programs, natural resource management, and many projects throughout the Downeast Lakes Community Forest. With more than 57,000 acres to manage, the growing list of projects has stretched the capacity for DLLT's staff and current volunteers. During this growing stage, we've started developing a comprehensive volunteer plan to attract community members to help us reach our goals as a non-profit. Our new Volunteer Program will begin with the start of the new year, and will highlight the many needs for volunteer help.

The Volunteer Program welcomes all ages, from all walks of life, to participate in projects and activities that they may find interesting. These activities will help DLLT grow and fulfill our motto of "Forests and Lakes - For People, Forever®." Volunteers may come for just one event, or put in 200 hours of community service throughout the year - there is no commitment and volunteers may participate whenever it is convenient for them to do so. Working with your schedule, volunteering with DLLT is fun, educational, and makes a major impact in your community!

We are hoping to reach a broad range of DLLT supporters with a wide variety of interests including; ecological monitoring, citizen science projects, wood working, trail building and maintenance, office support, and educational programming. This is just a sample of projects volunteers can participate in. We understand that not everyone can come out to the woods and help us build trails, but there are many people who are passionate about the Downeast Lakes region and can help DLLT in a variety of other ways. Our goal is to reach all of these people and show them how easy (and fun!) it is to be involved in community conservation.

The Volunteer Program will really be great for anyone looking for new hobbies or ways to make a difference. Anyone interested in joining the new initiative can reach me at scote@downeastlakes.org, or please visit the "volunteer opportunities" tab on our website. This is where we will post events like trash clean-ups and loon raft building, as well as other special project needs. This program will be the first of its kind here at DLLT, and we are looking forward to sharing our love of nature and passion for promoting the natural and cultural history of the Downeast Lakes region with members of the community and beyond.

Words From The Woods

By Ernest Carle

Reminders of old logging camps can still be found in today's Downeast Lakes Community Forest.

Curious evidence that shows historic land management practices in the Downeast Lakes Community Forest is one of the more interesting things that your forester notices. On a recent visit, as I was laying out access for a harvest, I found a casing for an old well. When I pulled the cover off, I could see water down about 15 feet. Seeing my remote surroundings, I immediately wondered - "What is an old well doing way out here?"

That discovery sent me to my go-to historian, Roger Milligan, a forester and native of Grand Lake Stream, for his recollection about a possible former logging camp in that area. As it turns out, that logging camp, active in the 1960s, was the last in the area to use horses to skid the wood. Meeting with Roger at his trapper's shed on Squirrel Point, he showed me a 1930s vintage picture which shows a pair of horses and two men who worked at a logging camp run by Harold Milligan, Roger's grandfather. Horses were used in pairs to haul sleds loaded with logs in the earlier days when road access was more limited. More common in later years, when men "4-footed" the pulpwood, horses were used individually and often. After the 48-inch-long wood was piled up, scalers (Roger being one of them) would measure the piles and crews would be paid for their production. An essential tool for the process, pulp hooks were in the hands of every logger who piled wood.

Even though we don't know the name of the particular foreman at this last horse logging camp, Roger dropped some names that I immediately recognized: Carl Ripley, Carroll Gatcomb, Mike Holland and Willis Damon, my father-in-law. Billy Hayward from Princeton used his cable crane to load pulpwood onto much smaller trucks than we are used to seeing go through town today. One crew that hailed from Nova Scotia, had men with the surnames of Bushey, Thibault, and Neddeau, and they could produce 75-80 cords of pulpwood in a week!

With the gradual move toward mechanical logging, Roger recalled that skidders were tried out first at the Farm Cove Mountain logging camp. Early horse logging was important to get logs to the nearest waterways to be floated downstream to population centers that housed mills. In the hands of modern-day timber companies, skidders have become an indispensable tool. Still, it is very valuable to me to keep the memory alive of the men and horses who once frequented our woods, plying their trade in the traditional ways.

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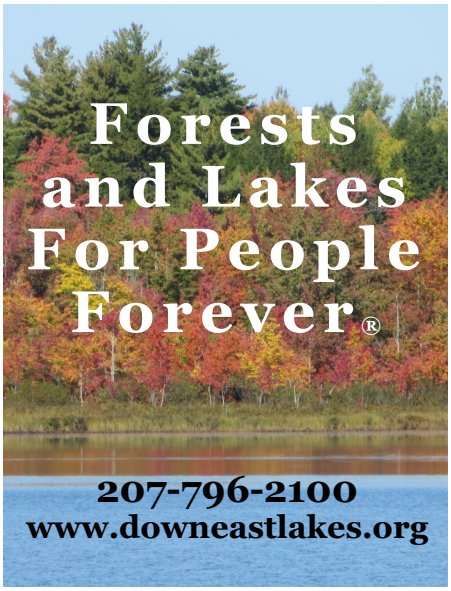

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DLLT Welcomes New Staff To Our Team

Downeast Lakes Land Trust is thrilled to welcome two new staff members to our team! Each will serve a vital role in the organization, strengthening our capacity to ensure "Forests and Lakes – For People – Forever."

In July, **Susan Bard** was hired on as DLLT's Natural Resources Manager. Susan has a Bachelor's degree in wildlife biology from Unity College, and a Master's in wildlife science from New Mexico State University. She has worked as a wildlife researcher and manager for state agencies and universities, and has several years' experience in the Downeast Lakes region as a guide and lodge manager. Her work with DLLT will focus on wildlife habitat enhancement, timber harvest planning, and recreational management. Susan lives year-round in Grand Lake Stream.

In August, **Sarah Cote** joined DLLT as the new Education and Volunteer Coordinator. Sarah's passion for outdoor recreation, wildlife conservation, and connecting people to nature led her to a degree in Wildlife & Conservation Biology from the University of New Hampshire. Sarah has experience as an interpreter with a captive wildlife sanctuary. She has also held numerous seasonal wildlife technician jobs, and mostly recently served as a Wildlife Technician at nearby Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge. Sarah will be leading and coordinating all public education programs and events, working with local schools, and managing DLLT's volunteer program. She lives in Princeton with her husband, Matt, and their dog, Roscoe.

Be sure to say hello to our new staff if you see them out and about in Grand Lake Stream or in the Community Forest!