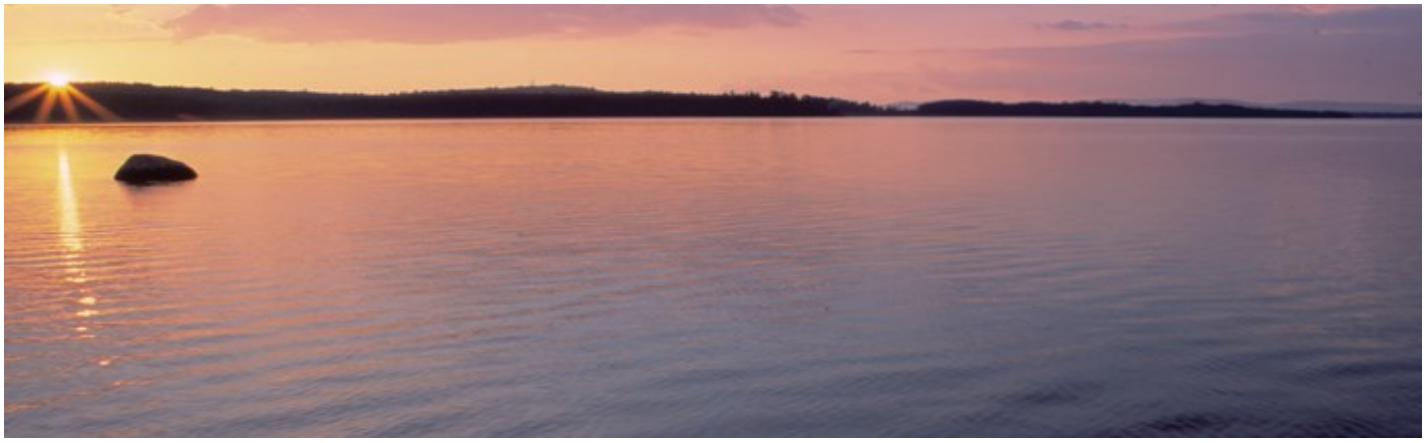
Downeast Lakes
LAND TRUST ®

Winter 2015 Volume 9, Issue 2

Downeast Lakes Traditions ®

Forests and Lakes—For People—Forever

West Grand Lake Project Nearing Completion



2016 Targeted For Closing

As 2015 draws to a close, we are nearing the end of our campaign to purchase 22,000 acres adjoining the Farm Cove Community Forest for management as the West Grand Lake Community Forest. After seven years of fundraising, and with the tremendous support of federal, state, and private entities as well as numerous individuals, the Downeast Lakes Land Trust is in the home stretch of this landmark conservation effort, which we anticipate closing in 2016.

The property was protected by a conservation easement in 2012, and completely surrounds the town of Grand Lake Stream. Once purchased, it will be managed for wildlife habitat, recreational access, and a sustainable forest economy. Our remaining time is short, but new funding possibilities show great promise for reaching the finish line before DLLT's 2008 option agreement expires. DLLT's Board of Directors, Campaign Advisory Committee, and staff are grateful for your support, and we look forward with great anticipation to realizing the goal of bringing local leadership to the management of 56,000 contiguous acres of community forestland. Together, we will make 2016 a banner year for conservation in Downeast Maine!

Major Stream Crossing Restoration Completed

In the ongoing effort to restore stream habitats, the Downeast Lakes Land Trust (DLLT) and partners completed a culvert replacement project at Grand Lake Brook, located on the Fourth Lake Road in the Farm Cove Community Forest. Through the installation of a 20 foot wide bottomless arch culvert, the stream crossing has been greatly improved, allowing for better fish passage along a natural stream bed. The Grand Lake Brook arch culvert is the largest stream crossing structure that DLLT has installed, helping improve road conditions and wildlife habitat.

"Projects like the Grand Lake Brook crossing are great collaborative efforts between federal, state, and local entities that benefit our local fisheries and watersheds, and improve the Trust's road network for public access," said DLLT Executive Director David Montague.

Provided with funding from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the site work was completed by Hanscom Construction, Inc., Project SHARE, and DLLT Community Forest Manager Kyle Burdick. Due to the scale of this project, the Fourth Lake Road was closed at Grand Lake Brook for six days and traffic was rerouted. Downeast Lakes Land Trust would like to thank the community for its patience and understanding during this restoration project.

The Downeast Lakes Land Trust has restored 26 stream crossings in the Grand Lake Stream area and plans to continue to improve public access and fish and wildlife habitat. For more information, please visit www.downeastlakes.org.

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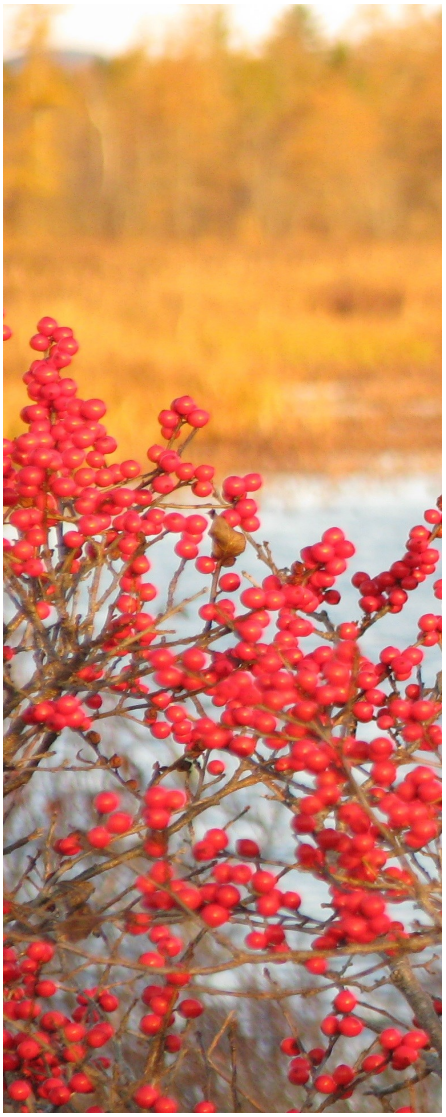

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

WANING DAYS OF THE WEST GRAND LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST PROJECT

The waning of one of the most beautiful autumns I can remember in DLLT territory signals the waning, too, of the time before your land trust must close on the West Grand Lake Community Forest. Only by way of that purchase can we be sure that the beauty I referred to –scarcely restricted to the fall season– will remain a part of our lives. Without fee ownership of this property, we will have no control of how it will be managed. Industrial logging, for example, would go a long way toward undoing the values that so many of us have labored to keep intact.

Help from our friends and supporters is absolutely crucial in this respect. The amount donated (or pledged over a multi-year period) is less important than wide participation. A generous long-time donor has offered a $100,000 challenge toward completion of the project; if we can meet that challenge by way of our general donor base, we will be that much closer to ensuring the permanent protection and proper stewardship of the land in question. The acquisition will likewise guarantee that about a third of the West Grand Lake Community Forest – including the fabulous wetland flowage of Big Musquash Stream– will be forever wild, unaffected by human activity of any kind, even as this ecological reserve, all 7100 acres of it, will remain open to the public and to all traditional uses.

I gratefully request that anyone reading this message respond with a donation that is significant to him or her. Both the seasonal and the resident communities have so much to gain by our success.

Sincerely,

Sydney Lea

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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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As 2015 dwindles and we look ahead with anticipation to the new year, I am reflecting on the milestones the Downeast Lakes Land Trust will encounter in 2016. For me, the close of 2015 marks my first full, calendar year as Executive Director, and what a year it has been! To say I have had a steep learning curve would be a bit of an understatement, but I have enjoyed, as I continue to enjoy, the opportunity to get to know the woods, waters, and people of the Downeast Lakes region, as well as the broad network of friends, colleagues, and supporters throughout Maine and across the country.

In 2015, we said goodbye to Education and Communications Manager Tanya Rucosky and welcomed Colin Brown to the DLLT team; we weathered record snowfall and an especially late spring; we welcomed old friends back to our community and met new friends at every turn; we gathered on the shore of West Grand Lake in July to celebrate another year of working towards our promise of **forests and lakes, for people, forever®**; we employed local contractors and Forest Stewardship Council-certified sustainable timber management practices to provide timber products for local mills and improve habitat under our Focused Species Forestry plan; and in September, we saw the ecological restoration of one of the largest stream crossings in the community forest with the installation of a 20' wide bottomless arch on Fourth Lake Road at Grand Lake Brook.

The year 2016 marks the 15th anniversary of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust's founding. With your support and the help of many partners, in just 15 years DLLT has conserved more than 370,000 acres of forests, wetlands, lake shore, and riparian corridors. When combined with adjoining conserved lands in Maine and government lands in New Brunswick, this has formed an international corridor for wildlife habitat that is seven times larger than Baxter State Park! With 97 percent of the land conserved by DLLT remaining working forestland, this land supports an estimated 1,100 jobs in the local economy while ensuring access for recreation including snowmobiling, hunting, camping, canoeing, and fishing in some of the most beautiful land in Northern New England.

With your continued support in this eleventh hour, DLLT will reach another major milestone in 2016 with the purchase of the 22,000-acre West Grand Lake Community Forest. The completion of this campaign will be the product of 15 years of our supporters' generosity and hard work, and it will bring to fruition the ambitious conservation vision of DLLT's founders. I hope you will join me in celebrating 15 outstanding years of successful community-based conservation in Downeast Maine.

Gratefully,

David Montague

CORPORATE PARTNERS

Corporate Partners support our vision for the economic and environmental well-being of Grand Lake Stream and the Downeast Lakes Region. These businesses made gifts in 2015, and are featured on downeastlakes.org through 2016.

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 +)

- Bangor Savings Bank
- Chet's Camps
- Finite Carbon
- Grand Lake Lodge
- Hanscom Construction
- The Lyme Timber Company
- Machias Savings Bank
- Norton Insurance Agency

Grand Laker ($250 +)

- Bailey's General Construction
- Davis Forestry Products, Inc.
- Furbush Roberts Printing Co.
- Grand Lake Canoe & Paddle
- Leen's Lodge
- Old Town Canoe Co.
- Patagonia
- Pine Tree Store
- Prock Marine Company
- Weatherby's
- Whitney Wreath

Gerald and Buff Corsi© California Academy of Sciences

DOWNEAST NATURE NOTE

Short-tailed Weasel or Ermine—*Mustela erminea*

The short-tailed weasel, or ermine, is a small mammal, native to North America and Eurasia. These agile, slender, and aggressive weasels have a voracious appetite for small mammals, birds, frogs, and eggs. In summer, the short-tailed weasel has a brown coat, with a white throat and chest, blending into the surrounding forest. During the winter months, in northern climates, *Mustela erminea* is known by the common name of ermine. Sporting a pure white coat with a black tail tip, ermines are camouflaged in deep snow, measure 5 to 12 inches in head and body length, have a tail length of 3 to 4 inches, and weigh about half a pound. These creatures are one of the more elusive animals in the Farm Cove Community Forest. They will burrow and nest in many different places, including stone walls, rotting stumps, rock and brush piles, and under tree roots. This winter, be on the lookout for their bounding track pattern and you might be lucky enough to see one!

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DOWNEAST LAKES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

History & Heritage

Tipping Field Trip—November 29, 1 pm

Community Wreath Making Party—December 1, 6 pm

Evening Snowshoe Trek—January 15, 2 pm

"Allagash Tails and Tales"—presented by Tim Caverly—January 25, 6 pm

Great Backyard Bird Count—February 12—14

Family Ice Fishing Day—TBA

Maine Maple Sunday—March 26

Looking Ahead

Explorations & Adventures
-Tuesdays, in July & August. 9:30—12 noon.
Serious Skills for Boys and Girls
-Thursdays in July & August. 9:30—12 noon.

Baxter Outdoors' Downeast Lakes 5-miler and the 12th Annual West Grand Lake Race
-Mid—August

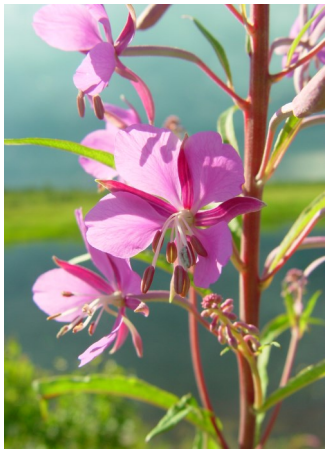
Community Events

Other great community events - such as the 22nd Annual Grand Lake Stream Folk Art Festival, Grand Lake Stream Guides Association dinners, Grand Lake Stream America 4th of July, and more, to appear in our summer newsletter and **www.downeastlakes.org**.

DOWNEAST LAKES LAND TRUST PHOTO CONTEST!

The Downeast Lakes Land Trust (DLLT) is pleased to be hosting the first ever "***DLLT Photo Contest***." The beauty of the Downeast Lakes region is truly something to behold and its varied landscapes, abundant wildlife, local traditions, and colorful characters offer many subjects to be captured on film. Show us your best photographs of the area! 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, 2016.**

PHOTO CONTEST RULES



- All photos must be from Washington and Hancock Counties, north of Route 9.
- All photos must be submitted as a JPEG, JPG, or GIF, with a minimum resolution of 5 mp.
- By submitting photos, participants agree that DLLT shall have the unlimited right to reproduce submissions in any electronic and print media that it may choose in the future.
- Categories are: **Waterways, Forests, Wildlife** (no pets), **Traditions, Community, and Sunrise/Sunset**. Limit 2 submissions per category. You may not submit one photo in multiple categories.
- Each submission must have an accompanying Name, Address, Phone Number, and Email Address.
- Please **DO NOT** submit the following:
  - -Photos that violate or infringe upon another person's or entity's privacy or other rights, including but not limited to copyright.
  - -Photos that contain explicit, unlawful, nude, obscene, violent or other objectionable or inappropriate content, as determined by the DLLT panel in its sole discretion.
  - -Photos that contain commercial or corporate logos or copyrighted materials, except those of DLLT.

Photos will be selected for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category and an overall "Best In Show" winner. Winning entries will be posted on the DLLT website, featured in our summer newsletter, and featured in a DLLT photography show in Grand Lake Stream. Good luck!

Education Programs Highlight Summer and Fall

By Colin Brown

Residents and visitors in the Downeast Lakes region were treated to an exciting summer and autumn filled with free public programs offered by the Downeast Lakes Land Trust (DLLT).

For younger children, "Explorations and Adventures" once again captured youthful energy and imagination with birding, hiking, and stream exploration. Highlights of the program were visits from local artist Rebekah Raye to teach watercolor painting and from Abbe Museum Educator George Neptune, who enthralled both kids and adults with Passamaquoddy stories, songs, and dances.

"Serious Skills for Boys and Girls" programs taught many valuable lessons for older kids such as fly tying, whittling, kayaking, and cooking a shore lunch. Students even honed their orienteering skills and were tested by the Downeast Lakes Geocache Challenge. Community service and environmental stewardship was also a focus, as boys and girls helped DLLT staff reroute a section of the Wabassus Mountain Trail. Many thanks go out to those who volunteered to help make these programs a success!

On July 31, DLLT hosted a moonlight paddle up Musquash Stream. By the light of the full moon, over 30 paddlers made their way upstream, searching for wildlife and listening to the evening songs. It was a successful second outing for this annual family event.

A series of public education programs was held this fall, including a migration birding walk, a foliage viewing paddle up Musquash Stream, and a hike along Little Mayberry Cove Trail to celebrate the Great Maine Outdoor Weekend. The highlight of autumn events was "Apple Cider Pressing," hosted by David and Roxzanna Montague. DLLT Executive Director David Montague was at the helm of his trusty apple press, teaching families the traditional method of making apple cider. Throughout the afternoon, children and adults helped grind and press about 10 gallons of apple cider, taking home quarts of the finished product to enjoy. Along with cider pressing, other apple-themed activities were offered, including a local apple taste test and bobbing for apples.

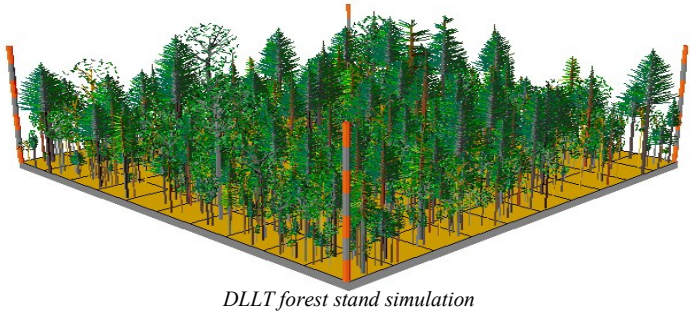
The education programs of 2015 were very successful and well attended throughout the year. We will continue to offer dynamic public programs to the Downeast Lakes region and hope to see you at a DLLT event in 2016!

Community Forest Manager's Words From The Woods

By Kyle Burdick

Oddly, this issue's "*Words from the Woods"* actually begins in my windowless office in the middle of the snowiest winter in recent memory. Last winter and spring, I found myself hunched over my keyboard, clicking and tapping away, analyzing our new tree inventory data, forest maps, and planning for a sustainable future. While it might not meet the idyllic image of a forester "managing" the woods, this is an essential component of modern forest management, and I could not have been more pleased with the results.

Since obtaining ownership of the property in 2004, DLLT has seen a significant increase in forest stocking as the result of a conservative timber management program aimed at balancing the social and economic values of the forest with achieving wildlife habitat goals. In short, DLLT's forest management program has been very successful and well beyond sustainable.



DLLT forest stand simulation

Analysis results show deer wintering habitat and pine marten habitat have improved at a faster rate than anticipated, we have more timber than expected, the West Grand Lake Community Forest has more timber than anticipated, and our hemlock stands are growing faster than predicted. The data revealed that our aspen-birch forests, while increasing in total merchantable stocking and value, are actually declining in acreage. This is likely due to natural forest succession, giving way to shade tolerant, longer living species. This forest type is very important for American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, Moose, and Chestnut-sided Warblers, to name a few, and DLLT's adaptive management process will allow us to respond appropriately to ensure the future availability of this habitat.

We will continue to use *Focus Species Forestry* (developed by Maine Audubon) as a guide while increasing the property's overall timber stocking, providing sustainable forest products and their associated jobs, and maintaining roads and public access. People can learn more in our updated forest management plan, set to be released at year's end.

DLLT gives special thanks to the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation for financial support of our latest forest planning effort.

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Downeast Lakes Land Trust Honors Former Executive Director

The 2015 Downeast Lakes Land Trust (DLLT) Conservation Award was presented to former Executive Director Mark Berry for his eight years of hard work and dedication to DLLT and to the people of the Downeast Lakes region. Presented by Board President and Vermont Poet Laureate, Syd Lea, the award was given at DLLT's Annual Meeting and Picnic.

Under Mark's leadership, DLLT brought exemplary management to a 34,000 acre working community forest, pioneered a model carbon offset program, and launched the West Grand Lake Community Forest Project. Mark is currently the President and CEO of Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park, located in Winter Harbor, ME.

"In his eight years as executive director, Mark worked tirelessly on behalf of DLLT with an innovative and conscientious approach to conservation," said DLLT Executive Director David Montague. "He devoted himself wholeheartedly to DLLT's mission, and this recognition of his hard work is well deserved."

The award was a white ash canoe paddle, handmade by local craftsman and DLLT Board Member Dale Tobey and wood-burned by Deb McMichael, a Grand Lake Stream artist. The Downeast Lakes Conservation Award was created to honor those who have made extraordinary contributions toward the long-term economic and environmental well-being of the Downeast Lakes region of Maine.

From left to right, DLLT Executive Directors David Montague (present), Mark Berry (former), and Steve Keith (former). Photo credit: Stephen Schaefer

DLLT Annual Meeting & Picnic

Benefit Auction on the shore of West Grand Lake
Sunday–July 31, 2016—12 - 2 pm
14th Annual Meeting

Cookout lunch by Grand Lake Stream Guides
Lunch served at 12; By reservation—RSVP to
info@downeastlakes.org
(207) 796—2100