Downeast Lakes
LAND TRUST

Landings

Downeast Lakes *Landings* is our email newsletter with the latest news from the Downeast Lakes Land Trust.

January 2026

25 Years of Conservation—and the Future We're Building Together

Honoring our roots, celebrating our impact, and inviting you to give generously as we begin our next chapter.

DLLT: Rooted in Community, Guided by Values

The Downeast Lakes Land Trust (DLLT) was founded in 2001 by local citizens who recognized a pivotal moment for their communities and their landscape. Large timberland holdings were at risk of being liquidated and subdivided, threatening public access, working forests, and the natural resources that define life in the Downeast Lakes region. **What emerged in response was a bold, community-driven vision: a land trust grounded in conservation, access, and local benefit.** Those founding values continue to guide DLLT today.

From the beginning, DLLT has believed that conserving forests and waters serves many purposes at once. Healthy ecosystems support wildlife and clean water, but they also sustain local economies, scenic beauty, and a way of life deeply connected to the land. ***The Downeast Lakes region is not a static landscape. It is a place of working forests, living waters, and essential habitats, where stewardship must balance ecological integrity with long-standing livelihoods.***

That balance reflects another core value that has held true since DLLT's inception: respect for the region's historic relationship to the land. Generations of families have relied on these forests and lakes, and DLLT was created not to exclude people, but to ensure that this relationship could endure. Conservation here is inseparable from community, and thoughtful economic opportunity rooted in sustainable land use has always been part of the mission.

People are at the heart of this work. DLLT has been guided since its earliest days by an all-volunteer board and supported by committed community members, landowners, donors, partners, and volunteers. Their passion and generosity have made long-term land protection possible and

have allowed a grassroots organization to grow into one of Maine's most impactful regional land trusts.

Science and sound data are also central to responsible stewardship. DLLT values research and collaboration with specialists as essential tools for understanding and managing forests, waters, and wildlife. Decisions grounded in science help ensure that conserved lands remain healthy and resilient for generations to come.

Equally important is the belief that public access matters. Conserved lands should be places where people can explore, reflect, and connect. Hiking, paddling, fishing, hunting, and other outdoor experiences foster appreciation for this remarkable region and reinforce the public trust that underpins DLLT's work.

Over the past 25 years, these values have shaped major conservation milestones, from the landmark Farm Cove Community Forest and working forest easements to subsequent acquisitions at Wabassus Lake, West Grand Lake, Talmadge, Lakeville, Meddybemps Lake, and Big Sand Beach. Today, DLLT stewards 58,220 acres of conserved land and easements, including ecological reserves set aside to protect sensitive habitats. It has also partnered with the New England Forestry Foundation, the Woody Wheaton Land Trust, and other organizations to protect more than 370,000 additional acres and to create a 1.2 million-acre conservation corridor between Maine, Quebec, and New Brunswick.

While the scale of the work has grown, the values have not changed. Rooted in community, guided by science, committed to access, and respectful of working landscapes, Downeast Lakes Land Trust continues to protect the lands and waters that make this region special—for today and for generations to come.

Save the Date: Celebrate 25 Years with Downeast Lakes Land Trust

July 31 - August 2, 2026

Mark your calendar and plan to join us **July 31–August 2, 2026**, in **Grand Lake Stream, Maine**, as Downeast Lakes Land Trust celebrates its **25th Anniversary**. This special weekend will bring together friends old and new for a joyful mix of connection, reflection, and outdoor fun in the heart of the Downeast Lakes region.

Throughout the weekend, we'll honor the people and partnerships that built DLLT while looking ahead to the future of conservation. Highlights will include outdoor adventures, family- and community-focused activities, and educational opportunities that celebrate our shared commitment to the land. A **Founders' Celebration** on Friday evening (by invitation) will pay tribute to the visionaries who helped launch the trust, followed by a full weekend of events designed to engage supporters of all ages.

On Saturday, enjoy coffee and donuts with members of the founding team, along with morning and afternoon activities to be announced. In the **evening, join us for a special celebration activity (details to come)** to cap off the day in true DLLT style. The weekend will conclude on Sunday with DLLT's much-loved **Annual Picnic and Auction**, supporting conservation for years to come.

Whether you've been part of DLLT since the beginning or are just discovering our work, this milestone celebration is for you. **Save the date**, and stay tuned for more details in the months ahead. Let's celebrate 25 years of people, partnership, and place—and look ahead to the next 25.

Serving People and Place: Who Benefits from DLLT's Conserved Lands

At Downeast Lakes Land Trust, conservation is about more than protecting land from development—it is about sustaining the people and communities who depend on these forests, lakes, and shorelines. Our approach is rooted in the belief that healthy lands and healthy local economies go hand in hand.

By conserving working forests and public access lands, DLLT helps create meaningful economic and educational opportunities using local resources. According to *How the Forest Legacy Program Supports Maine's Economy and Quality of Life*, a report by the Maine Forest Service and the Maine State Planning Office, land conserved by DLLT supports approximately 175 jobs. These are real livelihoods tied directly to the stewardship of the land.

Those who benefit from DLLT's work reflect the diversity of the Downeast Lakes region. Local Maine Guides rely on conserved waters and woods to sustain their businesses, as do lodge owners and the Grand Lake Stream store that serve residents and visitors alike. Local timber harvesters and contractors depend on responsibly managed forests for long-term employment, while natural science researchers study ecosystems protected for the future.

DLLT's lands also serve seasonal camp owners, local residents, and visitors seeking recreation and connection to nature. Our Passamaquoddy tribal neighbors maintain cultural ties to these lands and waters, while Grand Lake canoe builders continue a proud local tradition shaped by this landscape. Educational programs, ATV and snowmobile trail access, and public recreation further strengthen community connections.

Clearly, DLLT's conserved acres of pristine forests, shorelines, and waters form the backbone of the local economy. By protecting these lands forever, we are investing in people, traditions, and opportunities that define Downeast Maine—today and for generations to come.

Looking Ahead: The Next 25 Years of Conservation

As Downeast Lakes Land Trust celebrates 25 years of protecting the lands and waters that define this region, we are also looking forward—with purpose and optimism—to the next 25 years.

A central priority is engaging a new generation of supporters who share DLLT's mission, vision, and values. Conservation succeeds when people feel connected to the land and invested in its future. By welcoming new voices, volunteers, and donors, we can ensure that stewardship remains strong and community-rooted for decades to come.

Long-term conservation also depends on financial strength. DLLT is committed to securing reliable, annual operational funding in perpetuity—support that allows the organization to grow thoughtfully and continue serving as a national model for a community forest land trust that is open to the public and protected by easements.

Finally, exemplary stewardship and management of our forests, waters, and wildlife habitats will remain a core priority. By balancing ecological health with sustainable economic use, DLLT will maintain productive working forests, protect water quality, and strengthen wildlife habitat within a self-sustaining framework that supports local communities and long-term resilience.

Together, we can ensure that the Downeast Lakes region remains healthy, accessible, and resilient—now and for the next 25 years and beyond.

Your Generosity Built This Legacy—Help Carry It Forward

For 25 years, the Downeast Lakes Land Trust has stood at the intersection of people, place, and possibility. What began as a grassroots response by concerned community members has grown into a lasting commitment to protect the forests, lakes, and shorelines that define the Downeast Lakes region—and the way of life they support.

Because of generous supporters like you, 58,220 acres are conserved forever, open to the public, and thoughtfully stewarded for wildlife, recreation, education, and local livelihoods. These lands sustain working forests, support local jobs, safeguard clean water, and offer space for reflection, adventure, and connection. They are places where traditions

continue, communities thrive, and future generations can experience the same sense of wonder we do today.

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we invite you to **give generously to Downeast Lakes Land Trust** in honor of this milestone. Conservation is a long-term promise—one that requires ongoing care, strong partnerships, and sustained financial support. Your gift has a direct and tangible impact on the land and the people who care for it. For example:

$1,200 supports one full week of summer interns, helping train the next generation of conservation professionals while expanding DLLT's stewardship and education capacity.

$500 sponsors an appreciation cookout for dozens of volunteer trail and campsite stewards, recognizing the people who donate countless hours to keeping our lands safe, welcoming, and accessible.

$2,500 pays for 1,000 feet of resurfacing along 4th Lake Road, improving access for visitors, staff, Passamaquoddy neighbors, and emergency response while protecting road durability.

$600 provides ten hours of contracted grant-writing and grant-research services, helping secure critical funding that strengthens DLLT's long-term financial sustainability.

$300 supports four months of postage expenses, ensuring consistent communication with members, landowners, partners, and supporters across the region.

Together, we have accomplished something extraordinary. With your continued generosity, we can carry this shared vision forward—keeping roads and boat launches accessible, habitats healthy, and opportunities for connection growing—while protecting Downeast Maine's lands and waters for the next 25 years and beyond.

Use the QR code to give or click on the link below.

Make a 25th Celebration Donation Link

A Season of Support: DLLT Awarded Four Grants to Close Out 2025

As the year came to a close, Downeast Lakes Land Trust received welcome news that will carry our work forward in meaningful ways. Since Thanksgiving, DLLT has been awarded four grants totaling **$64,000**, providing strong support for land stewardship, trail improvements, and organizational capacity.

A **$6,500 L.L.Bean Maine Land Trust Grant** will help extend the Dobsis Narrows Trail this summer across challenging, storm-damaged terrain on the 2,015-acre Lakeville Forest Tract near Sysladobsis Lake. This investment will improve public access and enhance a much-loved outdoor experience.

DLLT also received **$5,000 from the French Family Foundation** to support general operations. This grant was made possible through the advocacy of longtime DLLT supporter Ted Williams.

A significant **$40,000 grant from the Maine Timberlands Charitable Trust** will support implementation of DLLT's new forest management plan, strengthening our commitment to sustainable forestry and long-term stewardship.

Finally, a **$12,500 grant from the Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust** will bolster general operations, helping ensure DLLT remains strong, responsive, and effective.

We are deeply grateful to these funders for their confidence in DLLT's mission and for helping us end the year on such a positive note.

A Shared Commitment to Conservation: Bill Inglee Joins DLLT's Board

Bill Ingle stands beside a majestic 300-year-old hemlock tree in the community forest.

Downeast Lakes Land Trust is pleased to welcome Bill Inglee to its Board of Directors. A longtime supporter of DLLT, Bill spends his summers at his Big Lake camp, where he has owned property for more than 20 years and developed deep personal ties to the region, its waters, and its natural communities. An avid naturalist, he uses his time on Big Lake to explore native plants, wildflowers, and trees, and has partnered locally with the Lake Stewards of Maine on invasive milfoil mitigation efforts.

Bill is a graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and spent his entire professional career in Washington, DC, serving on Capitol Hill, within the U.S. Department of Defense, and in several senior corporate leadership roles at Lockheed Martin. His last position was Staff Director of the Committee on Appropriations in the U.S. House of Representatives. In addition to his public-sector and corporate experience, Bill has served on numerous charitable boards, including the Friends of the U.S. National Arboretum, which he chaired for several years.

Now residing year-round on Amelia Island, Florida, Bill continues to spend extended summers on Big Lake. His background in nonprofit governance, fundraising, operational effectiveness, mission delivery, and volunteer engagement, combined with his strong commitment to conservation and stewardship, will be a tremendous asset to the Downeast Lakes Land Trust.

Please join us in warmly welcoming Bill Inglee to the DLLT Board of Directors.

From Around the DLLT Community Forest and Waters

Christmas wreath making and cribbage tournament: December 7, 2025

DLLT's Executive Director Brian Tripp tagged along with Maine IF&W's own research biologists in late December. This controlled Mesocarnivore study is conducted on DLLT's property and uses bait sites and game cameras to record Pine Marten, Fisher, and Ermine. Word of the week: Mesocarnivore- an animal whose diet consists of 30-70% meat, balanced with non- vertebrate foods such as insects, fungi, and fruits.

On Wednesday, January 21, DLLT hosted its second inviting coffee and muffin hour, offering friends and community members a pleasant morning of camaraderie and good company.

DLLT extends heartfelt thanks to all who joined this gathering and looks forward to welcoming everyone at future Coffee & Muffin Socials throughout the year.

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