Summer 2026 Volume 20, Issue 1

Downeast Lakes LAND TRUST®

Downeast Lakes Traditions

Forests and Lakes—For People—Forever®

Happy Birthday, DLLT!
Celebrate 25 Years of Community Conservation

Starting with the threat of commercial development and loss of public access in the surrounding forests and lakes in the 1990s, community-led conservation in Grand Lake Stream had humble beginnings around neighborly kitchen tables. Through tireless work with many state and federal agencies, nonprofit partners, and generous supporters, the "Downeast Lakes Land Trust" was formally incorporated in 2001. Over the past 25 years, this grassroots organization has built itself into the largest working community forest land trust in the country, owning and managing 58,220 acres.

To celebrate this milestone birthday, DLLT Board, staff, and volunteers have put together a weekend-long celebration of events to honor the people and places that have inspired the vision of "Forests and Lakes, For People, Forever." Whether you were helping out in the early days or new to supporting DLLT, all are welcome to attend the August 1-2 events. We hope to see a huge community turnout in support of this conservation milestone. For full event details and how to register, please visit our website.

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25th Anniversary Events

July 31 - Founders' Dinner (invitation only) - 6 pm

August 1 - Community Events Day

- 8 am - 10 am - DLLT Headquarters Meet-n-Greet. Stop by for coffee and snacks!
- 10 am - Forestry Tour, led by Kyle Burdick and Ernest Carle
- 10 am - Group Hike at Tower Hill Trail, led by Colin Brown
- 1 pm and 3 pm - Kids Pontoon Boat Ride (must pre-register)
- 1 pm - 4 pm - Adult Grand Laker Rides (must pre-register)
- 2 pm - 4 pm - Mushroom Workshop, led by Esther Tozier
- 6 pm - Evening Celebration! DLLT remarks, strawberry shortcake, music, and Comedy Show with Brian Giles.

August 2 - Annual Meeting, Picnic, and Benefit Auction.
12 pm - 2 pm at the DLLT Headquarters. Please RSVP for the picnic by using the QR Code!

Welcome New Faces In Grand Lake Stream

Downeast Lakes Land Trust is excited to be significantly expanding staff capacity in 2026, and is pleased to introduce new hires to help carry out the Trust's mission. Be sure to say hello this summer in Grand Lake Stream!

Colin Brown - A new hire, but familiar face in Grand Lake Stream, Colin Brown returns to DLLT in a new capacity as Stewardship and Outreach Manager. Having previously worked in education, development, and outreach capacities for DLLT, Colin most recently served as the Executive Director for Downeast Coastal Conservancy. He is excited to be back in the community forest, and is eager to work with the many volunteers that help build and promote outdoor recreation opportunities and education in the region. Colin lives on the banks of the Pennamaquan River in Pembroke with his wife, Laura, and their two young children. He enjoys hiking, fishing, paddling, photography, playing music, gardening, foraging, and anything else that gets him outdoors.

Luke Bailey - Luke recently joined Downeast Lakes Land Trust in May 2026 after working for the USDA in New Hampshire. With a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Maine, Luke is working as the Natural Resources Steward and manages important wildlife habitat projects for DLLT. Growing up in Fort Kent, Maine, Luke has been close with nature from a young age, and is excited to apply his knowledge in this new position. Luke lives in Baileyville, and enjoys trapping, running, birding, fishing, and spending time in Aroostook County.

Silvia Hartt - Silvia Hartt joined DLLT in May 2026 after her graduation from the University of Maine with a B.S. in Forestry. She will be working as the Forestry Fellow and bringing experience from multiple areas of forestry and natural resource management. Silvia grew up in Mount Chase, ME and has always had a passion for the outdoors. In her free time, she enjoys hunting, fishing, canoeing, hiking, camping, ice fishing, and pretty much any other outdoor activity. She's excited to begin here at DLLT and looks forward to the opportunity of applying her skills and gaining experience while learning!

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Executive Director's Message

Dear DLLT Community,

As I approach the one-year anniversary of my service as Executive Director of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust, I feel energized by the strength of this organization and the opportunities ahead. One of the things that makes DLLT so special is the deep commitment people bring to its mission and future. As we continue to grow, we are thoughtfully balancing innovation with the traditions and values that have guided us for 25 years. Finding opportunities to improve as a leader in land conservation is an ongoing process, and I believe we are moving forward in a way that honors our history while positioning us for an even stronger future. As we steer this organization toward next year's waypoint, I am mindful of our community's needs and our budget, and I seek to make the best use of our human and natural resources to ensure maximum benefit.

I am especially proud of our staff and their capacity for impactful stewardship of the community forest and its natural resources, as well as their contributions to education and engagement, which enrich our community and bring benefits felt across a colorful patchwork of interests. Let's celebrate the 25th year of this amazing organization with generosity and engagement that we can all agree benefit our shared goals.

I would also like to thank the Board of Directors, past and present, for their vision and commitment to the mission. Their spirit of volunteerism and selflessness is admirable. As a governing body, they have created the largest working community forest in the country! This was accomplished by endless hours, overcoming many struggles, and a general unwillingness to accept defeat.

Sincerely,

Brian Tripp

Corporate Sponsors

Corporate Sponsors support our vision for the economic and environmental well-being of Grand Lake Stream and the Downeast Lakes Region. Businesses also contribute to Downeast Lakes Land Trust by incentivizing employee volunteer hours. Thank you to these companies, organizations, and donors who chose to use their time for DLLT causes!

Brook Trout ($1,000 +)
- Bailey's General Construction
- Grand Lake Stream ATV Club
- Indian Township Tribal Gov.
- Machias Savings Bank

Grand Laker ($250 +)
- Furbush Roberts Printing Co.
- Owen Gray & Son, Inc.
- Lakeville Camp Owners Association
- Town of Lakeville
- Maine DACF
- Quad County Snowmobile Club
- Chet's Camps
- L.L. Bean
- Grand Lake Canoe & Paddle
- W.T. Gardner & Sons
- Mt. Jefferson Backcountry Riders

DLLT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so all donations are tax deductible.

MISSION

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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Silvia Hartt, Forestry Fellow
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New Forest Management Plan

In 2025, DLLT renewed the comprehensive forest management plan (FMP) that encompasses the Farm Cove, West Grand, Wabassus, and Yacolucci Woods tracts. A sound forest management plan ensures land owners and managers are moving forward with purpose. It outlines where we were, where we are now, and where we want to be.

These plans are due for updating every 10 years. With an everchanging forest landscape from human, animal, and climate interaction, making necessary changes to the plan are critically important to maintain the highest standards of exemplary management. Since the last FMP, there have been changes to riparian policies, new land acquisitions, and rearrangements of habitat units. This FMP update was generously supported by Maine Timberlands Charitable Trust and the Firebird Foundation.

"While we don't measure animal use, we can measure habitat conditions over time," said contract forester Kyle Burdick, who wrote the plan update. "Currently 4 out of 7 of our Deer Wintering Areas are meeting their goals for conditions set in 2008, with ongoing management work continuing across the remaining areas. These goals are met when a combination of primary and secondary (really good and good) shelter conditions amount to over 50% of the total management unit."

If you are interested in reading the full plan, it will be accessible on the DLLT website by July 1, at https://downeastlakes.org/forest-activities/documents.

25 Years. One Extraordinary Forest. Your Chance to Do Even More.

This year marks a milestone: the 25th anniversary of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust—and the creation of the largest working community forest in the country. What began as a bold local vision has become a national model for conservation that works—for wildlife, for people, and for the rural economy.

Because of you, 58,220 acres around the Downeast Lakes are permanently protected. Cold, clean waters support native fish. Working forests provide sustainable timber, jobs, and access. Trails and campsites invite quiet recreation. Families return year after year to a place that still feels whole.

Anniversaries are a time to celebrate—but also to decide what comes next.

The next 25 years will demand more. Climate pressures and rising stewardship costs mean that maintaining what we've protected isn't enough. We must strengthen forest management, expand access thoughtfully, invest in long-term stewardship, and act on new conservation opportunities. That takes resources—and a community willing to lead.

This is why we're asking you to give at a higher level this year.

An increased gift does more than mark the moment—it powers the work ahead:

- **$100** more helps maintain trails and access points
- **$250** more supports habitat monitoring and planning
- **$500** more invests in sustainable forestry
- **$1,000+** helps secure long-term stewardship

If you've given before, please consider increasing your annual gift by 25%. If you're able to stretch further, this is the year your leadership can shape the future. What makes this forest extraordinary isn't just its size—it's that a community chose to care for it together.

Join us. Give boldly. Help write the next chapter.

Ready to make a difference? Scan the QR code or visit our website to donate today.

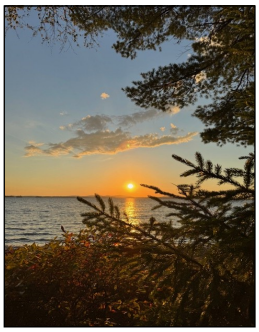
DLLT Photography Contest Winners

We are proud to present the top three category entries of the 2026 DLLT Photo Contest! Thank you to everyone who sent in their best shots. Congratulations to the top three place winners. Stop by the DLLT booth at the GLS Folk Art Festival, and vote for the "People's Choice" winner. That winner will receive a $25 gift certificate to The Pine Tree Store, courtesy of Downeast Lakes Land Trust!

Sunrise—Sunset

First Place - Stephanie Smith

Second Place - William Inglee



Third Place - William Inglee

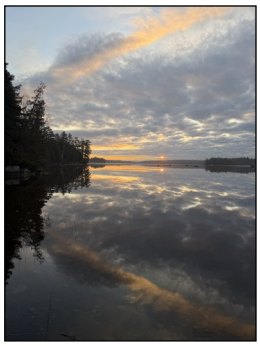
Traditions

First Place - Stephanie Smith

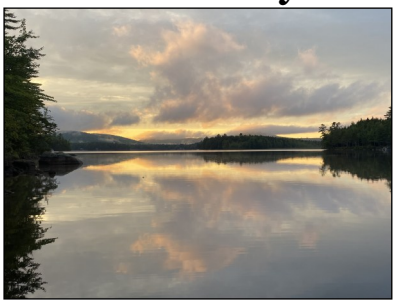
Second Place - William Inglee

Third Place - William Inglee

Waterways



First Place - Stephanie Smith



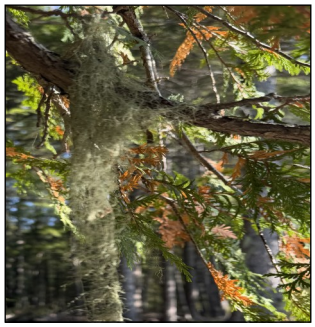
Second Place - Andy Markievich

Third Place - Peter Millard

Flora & Fauna

First Place - Nora Sawtelle Feder

Second Place - Stephanie Smith



Third Place - Stephanie Smith

A Quick Glance at DLLT Highlights

Milfoil Remediation Project Gets Significant Support From Maine DEP

DLLT's work with area partners to remediate the milfoil infestation in Big Lake received major support from this year's round of Plant Control Grants from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

DLLT received $114,240 over the next two years to support the crucial effort to remove the invasive species from our local watershed. The award was the largest grant distributed during this funding round, reflecting the state's strong commitment to protecting the Downeast Lakes. Funds will be used for contracted vegetation removal, local survey assistance, and project management.

New Improvements Coming to the Fourth Lake Road

As part of DLLT's ongoing commitment to maintain exemplary forest access in the region, the Fourth Lake Road will see the fifth phase of its improvement this upcoming summer.

In recent years, DLLT has made major improvements to several sections of the road. This year, the final mileage in the middle will be completed. From approximately mile 1.5 to mile 3.5, the road will see new brushing, ditching, resurfacing, and grading, completing this ambitious project. Costs for 2026 are estimated to be $50,000, which will drastically improve driving access west of Grand Lake Stream. Be sure to be on the lookout for construction equipment in the roadway this summer, and drive safe!

Welcome Back, Kyle!

DLLT is pleased to welcome Kyle Burdick back to Grand Lake Stream. Kyle spent several years working for DLLT as the Community Forest Manager, and most recently, was the lead forester for Baskahegan Company. This past winter, he updated DLLT's Forest Management Plan (see page 4) and will be contracted for DLLT forestry work.

Dobsis Narrows Trail Extension Slated For Summer

DLLT staff are working with volunteers in Lakeville this summer to extend the popular Dobsis Narrows Trail along Sysladobsis Lake. Currently at 0.3 miles, the trail will be extended to a total of 1.1 miles, and will create a loop that circles back to the parking area. This project was made possible by generous support from the L.L. Bean Maine Land Trust Grant Program.

Pineo Peaks Trail Cleanup

As we continue to clean up from last August's microburst, DLLT will be leading efforts to clear the western side of the Pineo Peaks Trail, leading out to the Princeton Island Cove campsite. Hikers can still hike the eastern section of the trail, up to the ledges and rock formations. But, the western side of the trail is still impassable due to downed trees. Stay tuned to our social media for updates on when the trail can be fully re-opened, and thanks for your patience.

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DOWNEAST LAKES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Get more information and keep up to date at www.downeastlakes.org/events, and don't forget to follow us on social media for updates!

Public Events and Programs

June 4 - Birding Walk

Bring your binoculars and take a stroll through town in search of GLS's feathered friends. Meet at The Pine Tree Store at 7 am.

June 29 - Full Moon Paddle

A summer favorite! Bring your own paddlecraft, PFDs, and gear to the bridge at Big Musquash Stream at 7 pm to view the sunset and moonrise.

July 10 - Tower Hill Cleanup

Join DLLT Staff for this volunteer event, as we clean up the site of the former GLS Fire Tower to turn it into a public picnic site. 9 am - 12 pm.

July 21 - Trapping 101

DLLT's own Luke Bailey will present a hands-on look at trapping, and discuss its critical role in habitat and wildlife management in the community forest. 4 pm at the DLLT Office.

August 1 - Mushroom Workshop: A Guide to Easy Edibles

Join local mycologist Esther Tozier, as she presents this walk-and-talk workshop about the many fungi species in the community forest. Part of the 25th Anniversary celebration. Participants meet at the Pocumcus Lake Trailhead on Fourth Lake Road at 2 pm.

August 7 - Outdoor Movie - "Listers: A Glimpse Into Extreme Birdwatching"

Meet two wacky brothers as they dive deep into the world of competitive birding. A hilarious, heartfelt, and R-rated documentary. Meet at the DLLT Headquarters, and bring a chair and blankets. Showtime starts at 7 pm. Free popcorn!

Kids Friday Fun

Engaging adventures, intended for kids ages 7+

June 26 - Birdhouse Building, 9 - 11 am at DLLT's Office. Bring an old license plate!

July 17 - Stream Exploration, 9 - 11 am at Little Falls on Water Street. Bring water shoes and bathing suits!

August 7 - Caribou Rock Boat Trip, 9 am - 12 pm. Space is limited. To register, email cbrown@downeastlakes.org.

August 25 - Gassabias Portage Volunteer Day (Rain Date: August 27)

Help DLLT and Maine BPL staff clear brush and blowdowns from the Gassabias Portage, a key footpath of the Eastern Maine Canoe Trail. Space is limited, call DLLT or email cbrown@downeastlakes.org to register.

September 17 - Fourth Machias Lake Group Paddle

Bring your own boat, PFD, and paddle for a group trip around Fourth Machias Lake, discussing land use history and one of the largest ecological reserves in Maine. 9 am - 3 pm, meet at the West Grand Lake Dam to caravan out to Fourth Machias Lake. BYO lunch.

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Welcome New Board Member - Bill Inglee

Mr. Inglee is a graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and spent his entire career working in Washington DC on Capitol Hill, in the Department of Defense and in several corporate VP jobs for Lockheed Martin. His last position was the Staff Director of the Committee on Appropriations in the US House of Representatives. Bill has also served on numerous charitable boards including the Friends of the US National Arboretum, which he also chaired for several years. Bill has owned his camp on Big Lake for over 20 years and uses it to explore native plants and wildflowers as well as trees. Bill now lives on Amelia Island, Florida, year-round but always spends a long summer season on Big Lake. His property is directly across from Grand Lake Stream and while he loves the morning sunrise over the ocean in Florida, nothing compares to his 3-mile view across Big Lake of the magnificent sunsets over Grand Lake Stream.