



Round the Mountain: Let Talk Trails!

TRAILS HAVE A WAY OF BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER.

When our Land Trust began conserving Bald and Ragged Mountains in 2003, we had little notion of how many people would be part of this effort. The original vision still leads the way as we launch this campaign to conserve 1,400 acres that will secure the water supply for six coastal towns, protect native flora and fauna, and allow for construction of a nine-mile Round the Mountain Trail.

Of all the campaign components, people get most excited about trails and having access to nature within our community. We believe that conserving land and building trails on Ragged Mountain will add the kind of infrastructure which, like good schools, is critical to the long-term vitality of this area. Trails are near the top of the list when people talk about “livable communities.”

Even as we work to complete the purchase of the initial Mirror Lake Conservation Easement by December 31st, 2017, we are finalizing a plan for the design, layout, and management of the Round the Mountain Trail system. This winter, we will host meetings with partner organizations and interested community members to ensure we balance the needs of all trail users including walkers, hikers, mountain bikers, and Nordic skiers. We are working with Gartley & Dorsky Engineering, which is providing pro-bono services, to safeguard that our project exceeds best practices for trail work both during and after construction.

The Trail will be a mid-elevation loop trail around the mountain that will serve as the central artery for a larger system of trails. From the Snow Bowl, the trail will climb eastward to the notch between Spring and Ragged Mountains before descending towards Mirror Lake. It will circle below Ragged’s scenic cliff face, then turn back towards Hosmer Pond. Except for climbs at each end, the overall trail will be relatively

level, cross a series of seasonal streams, pass through one of the largest undeveloped forested areas in the Midcoast, and offer views of both Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond.

Trail users will be able to connect with smaller purpose-built trails such as the existing Georges Highland Path, for hiking only, and the Goose River trail network, for mountain biking. The trail’s main corridor will be constructed to a width of six to ten feet, depending upon whether the aspect is well suited to winter-time snow retention and grooming for Nordic skiing and fat biking.

In total we are raising one million dollars, as part of the \$4.2 million Round the Mountain Collaboration, for the design, construction, and endowment of the Round the Mountain Trail. With a successful fundraising effort, the Land Trust’s

goal is to complete construction of the entire nine-mile trail by the end of 2019.

This multi-use trail will have two principal trailheads, at the Snow Bowl and on Hope Street. The trail supports the Town of Camden’s vision to see the Snow Bowl become a four-season recreational hub. Town staff are working with us to design the Snow Bowl trailhead, including a small stone amphitheater that will be located between the ski slopes and the toboggan chute. From there, the first two miles of the trail have

already been completed. In the summer of 2018, we plan to begin the next four miles, extending from Spring Mountain to the Hope/Rockport town line on Hope Street. We will build a second parking area west of Thorndike Brook to provide an access point at approximately the halfway point of the trail.

Please reach out to Executive Director Ian Stewart if you have specific comments, desires, and concerns for recreation on Ragged Mountain.

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Letter from the Director

The Little Land Trust that Could

Most good things in life require a leap of faith. This is why our Land Trust has always believed in setting bold goals for conserving land in the communities we serve. No matter how large the project, we have always felt that the dramatic landscape and incredible sense of place found along the western side of Penobscot Bay is worth doing everything we can to protect it. Fortunately, this commitment has been shared by a large number of people who care about this community. Together, we have permanently protected some extraordinary places, from Beech Hill in Rockport to the Ducktrap River and from Fernald's Neck to the Belfast Rail Trail. Setting ambitious goals and inviting people to participate has an incredible way of making things happen. This attitude may have been best summarized by the recent comment of one of our loyal members, who told me that she thinks of our organization as "the little Land Trust that could."

This year is no exception. We are working on one of the most ambitious conservation projects ever undertaken in this community – the Round the

Mountain Collaboration. As with all leaps of faith, it is time for us to ask for your help. December 31st is the deadline for the purchase of the Mirror Lake Conservation Easement. We need your support to rally the community around this incredible opportunity to protect our mountain, our water supply, and access to open space.

We have a special year-end challenge, announced at *Our Mountain Voices* in September. Every new gift to the Round the Mountain Collaboration, up to a total of \$100,000, will be matched dollar for dollar by anonymous donors. Additionally, the Maine Water Company has committed a donation of \$200,000 for the Round the Mountain Trail immediately upon signing the Mirror Lake Conservation Easement. Thus, any gift you make before year-end will result in a 3:1 release of funds for the conservation of this mountain! Please think about what you can do to help make this project happen. Tell a neighbor, take a friend for a hike, make a contribution, and share your enthusiasm for doing something big and bold.

La Stewart

LMF Turns 30!

The Land for Maine's Future program has protected 600,000 acres of land in Maine. Maine voters gave LMF resounding support at the ballot box – passing bonds in 1987, 1999, 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2012. In 2017, \$3.2 million will be distributed by LMF to support projects that conserve public access, natural resources, and support local economies.

Our community has benefited from LMF on seven occasions including the Beech Hill Preserve in 2003, in the Ducktrap, along the Passy Greenway, in Camden Hills State Park and the Bald & Ragged Mountain Preserves. We submitted an application in September for the Round the Mountain Collaboration – the Mirror Lake Conservation Easement.

Coastal Mountains Land Trust will work with a coalition of organizations for an LMF bond in 2019. To learn more about LMF and/or to visit the properties protected through the program, using the 30th LMF Passport, visit www.landformainesfuture.org





Final Piece of Knight Pond Puzzle Comes Together

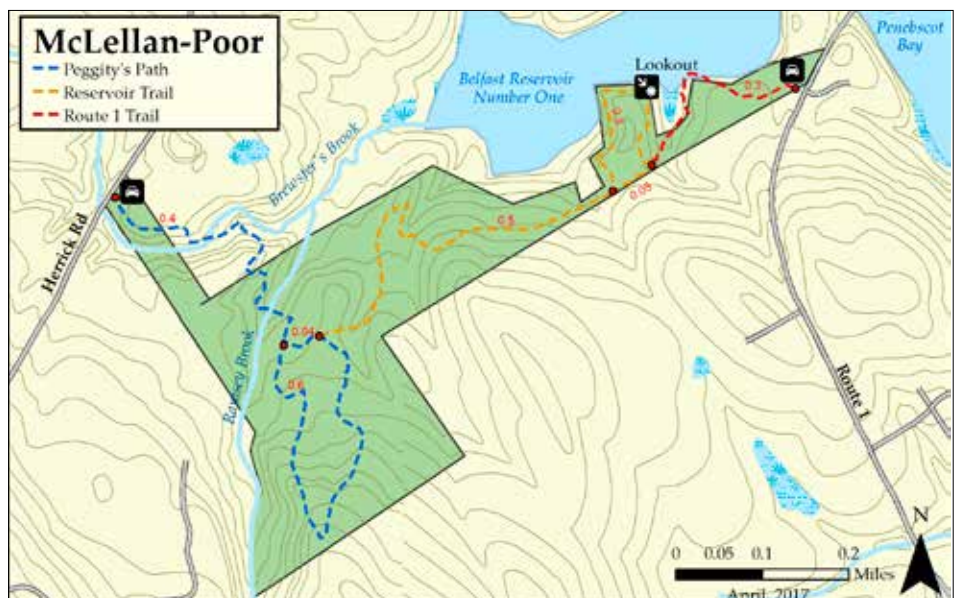
Earlier this year, siblings Robert “Bob” Metcalf, Jr. and Sherrie Pierce, long-time residents of a 165-acre farm on Knight Pond in Northport, signed a donation agreement with the Land Trust, pledging to gift a conservation easement for the permanent protection of this unique property. The former dairy farm includes a significant wetland known locally as the Knight Pond Bog. The Bog (technically a “fen”), contains pitcher plants, orchids, the northernmost population of Atlantic white cedar in Maine, as well as, rare and endangered insect species such as the ebony boghaunter, and the New England bluet. The easement, designed in collaboration with Maine Farmland Trust, ensures that all of Knight Pond is permanently protected through the combined efforts of

the Land Trust, the Ducktrap Wildlife Preserve, the Town of Northport, and the State of Maine. Approximately half of the property will be permanently available for agriculture and forestry, and includes prime farmland soils as well as cleared agricultural fields, while the other half, mostly wetlands, will remain forever in its natural state. Bob shared his thoughts about protection of the property during a recent visit: “My grandmother wanted this property conserved and I was all for it too... I don’t want it subdivided. Fifty or one hundred years from now, I’d want to see it as it is today. That would be my ideal.” Bob and Sherrie, representing their mother Elizabeth Metcalf’s estate, look forward to helping to ensure that the family’s long-term vision for this property is achieved.

New Entrance for McLellan-Poor Preserve

With the help of a Belfast contractor and volunteers, we installed a new trail head and parking area along Route 1 in Northport for the McLellan-Poor Preserve.

A trail extension made possible by a trail easement gifted by the Belfast Water District meanders through coniferous stands, brushy alder thickets, and along Reservoir Number One, once serving as Belfast’s primary water supply. Being able to cross Water District property enhances the likelihood of wildlife sightings. Hikers may see ducks, beavers, and great blue herons.



Howe Farm Goes Organic

When Sarah Rheault donated an easement on her 118-acre farm in 2005, she did so to fulfill the vision that she and her late husband, Andy, had shared – a protected, working blueberry farm and a place for people to hike and enjoy incredible views of Camden’s coastal mountains. These goals are in keeping with the promise the Rheaults made to the Howe family when they purchased the property.

When the Land Trust met with Sarah to discuss the future of the land, we were careful to make sure that the easement allowed flexibility for a future farmer. To conserve a farm, it is important to strike the right balance between guiding the management of the property and providing opportunity for farmers to adjust best practices and adapt to changing circumstances. As such, contrary to what many might believe, most working farm easements do not explicitly require farm practices to be organic. Instead, our easements require farmers to go through a standard planning process which guarantees that the farm complies with best management practices established by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, including those for integrated pest management. Our intent is not to describe how a farm should be run, but suggest a process for continuing to review and improve farm practices into the future.

This type of adaptive land stewardship, which relies on a strong partnership with landowners, is how the Land Trust and the Rheault family have been able to plan for

transition to organic management of the Howe blueberry fields. Organic farming is a rigorous undertaking. The first challenge was finding a contractor willing to take on 30+ acres of prime blueberry fields. In Maine, less than 10% of the state’s annual blueberry harvest is certified organic. Very few farmers are willing or able to make the significant investment, both physical and financial, required to manage

a field organically. We signed a long-term lease with Warren-based Ewing Fruit Company to manage this acreage which will become MOFGA-certified organic in 2019. We were also fortunate to receive support from neighbors who are pleased with the change to organic. They funded a stewardship reserve to assist with the Land Trust’s costs of overseeing the operation and lease. As well, the Rheault

family generously offered that all proceeds from the lease agreement be dedicated to benefit the Land Trust and its stewardship of this property.

We are grateful for our partnership with the Rheault family, the Howe Farm neighbors, and the Ewing Fruit Company. They all believe in and support this beautiful farm so that it will continue to produce wonderful local fruit in a sustainable way. The fields’ transition to organic management means we will no longer have to close the last section of the trail during the summer. As always, please respect the farmer and fields by staying on the trail and refrain from picking the blueberries! To learn how to access the Rheault Trail via the Hodson Preserve, visit our website at coastalmountains.org.



Building Better Access at the Hodson Preserve

The Hodson Preserve in Camden got a new kiosk and roadside sign while the Wednesday stewardship crew built a 16-foot bridge on the Rheault Trail. This ensures that people can keep their feet dry from rising streams in the spring on their way to the summit of Howe Hill.



Sarah Rheault inspects her new bridge.

A New Look for our Preserves

We have begun the process of installing two-sided road signs so that our preserves are visible and welcoming. The Wednesday Work Crews and summer interns installed roadside signs at Beech Hill, Long Cove Headwaters, Ducktrap River, Head of Tide, Bald Mountain, Hodson, and McLellan-Poor Preserves.



Look for more to come!



Beech Hill Campaign Finishes with a Grand Entrance

Replica stone pillars and gates at the Beech Hill Preserve, originally commissioned in 1913 by John Gribbel, have been built and installed, completing our rehabilitation of the Beech Hill Historic District. Thanks go to the hard work of Dante Ravelli Masonry and Rockport Steel for creating this entrance so meticulously, based on historic photographs and a detailed drawing from architect and former Board member Meg Barclay. These gates were supported by generous gifts from Gribbel's great-grandchildren William, Theodore, and James.

Our Mountain Voices

On September 22, the Land Trust booked the Camden Opera House to celebrate our sense of place. This was also the public launch of the Round the Mountain Collaboration where a challenge was issued to help us raise \$100,000 to match gifts made from the community. 35 people, including artists, musicians, a poet and an ecologist joined us to share their love and appreciation for coastal mountains. We have a December 31 deadline to raise the funds necessary to secure the Mirror Lake Easement. This is a critical first goal in our \$4.2 million Round the Mountain Collaboration. Also involved with the event were 40 artists who got



creative with slabs of wood. Those items sold at a silent auction on the night of the event and raised well over \$6,000. It was truly inspiring to see the work and get a

sense of the appreciation people have in this community for the land. We were humbled by the support. Thank you.

“Liking us” on Instagram

Instagram, used widely today by organizations and individuals, is a social media platform for sharing experiences through photos. Instead of sentences, the pictures are interpreted through hashtags and cryptic expressions. This summer we hosted a series of Instagram Takeovers to connect and engage with our followers, encourage new followers, and promote the Round the Mountain Campaign. It was a great way to share the diverse ways people like to spend their time, why they love this area, and in particular this mountain (we are speaking about Ragged, of course). We invited some of our followers to post their photographs directly to the Coastal Mountains Land Trust account, and by the end of the summer, our followers had swelled from 200 to 600. We noticed an increased use of our hashtags and heard about people getting outside and onto the trails. Success! It was fun to get new images of our preserves and trails. Thank you to all who were part of the Takeover, including Jonathan Laurence, Brian Willson, Mike Ames, and Deanne Wrubleski, among many others.



Most popular Instagram photos of summer 2017.



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#coastal_mountains_land_trust

Happy Trails, Skip Pendleton

The Land Trust is sad to say goodbye to a true friend. Skip Pendleton, a past Board member, was a hard-working and beloved trail builder and steward of the land. Most of all, he was a terrific fellow. The Land Trust presented Skip a lifetime achievement award in 2015 and installed a bench in his honor at Head of Tide Preserve in Belfast. He will be sorely missed by many organizations and people. We are grateful for his work and effort on our behalf these many years.



1933 - 2017

UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 10:00AM-12:00PM
Coastal Mountains Nature Program: Geology of Bald & Ragged,
Snow Bowl

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 6:00 PM
Christmas by the Sea parade, Camden

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 11:30 AM-1:30 PM
New Year's Day-Beech Nut Open House

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2:00-3:30 PM
Polar Plunge, Camden Harbor Park

APRIL TBD, 6:00 PM
Volunteer Orientation, Camden & Searsport

Serving the communities of
Rockport, Camden, Hope, Lincolnville,
Northport, Belfast, Belmont, Morrill, Waldo,
Swanville, Brooks, Knox, Searsport,
Stockton Springs, and Prospect

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LANDSCAPES

Newsletter of the Coastal Mountains Land Trust FALL 2017