

LAND LEGACY

A NEWSLETTER OF THE KENNEBUNK LAND TRUST



Nature is just enough; but men and women must comprehend and accept her suggestions.”

*Antoinette Brown Blackwell,
US Abolitionist, Preacher &
Suffragist (1825-1921)*



Day of Caring 2013

Wednesday, June 5th: The sun was bright, the sky was blue, and light breezes stirred the air just enough to keep the bugs away. It was the kind of day you can't say no to, and a perfect day for stewardship work. On that day, eight outstanding volunteers from Pratt & Whitney joined five KLT Stewardship Committee members to accomplish needed improvements at the Trust-owned Alewife Woods Preserve. Undertakings for that day included: mitigation of erosion problems and trail re-routing, installation of a span bridge, removal and replacement of deteriorated bog crossings, and clean-up as a result of trash left on the property.

This year marked the 12th year in a row this dedicated group from Pratt & Whitney has joined KLT for the United Way Day of Caring. The commitment and loyalty of the "Pratt Team" is exemplary and we are most grateful for their hard work, creative problem solving, and outstanding attitudes. We're already looking forward to next year!

Kennebunk Land Trust preserves are open for recreational enjoyment during daylight hours. We encourage the public, residents and visitors, to get outdoors, be active, and have some fun. And we love to get feedback about what wonderful things you observe when visiting.

It's All Free & Cool, too!

Yes indeed, it's really all free, and it's very COOL! Come join us for ice cream and a hike on Wednesday, August 7th, at 6:00pm. We'll scoop out a cool, creamy goodie and guide you through the beauty of Wonder Brook/Murphy Preserve just off Route 35 in Kennebunk. We know the weather will be ideal, but just in case we've set a rain date for Thursday, August 8th – same time, same place. We hope to see you there!



From the Chair

by Scott Gasperin, Board Chair

The Kennebunk Land Trust has enjoyed some great successes so far in 2013. We have successfully acquired, through generous donations, two unique parcels of land to add to the wild lands under permanent protection. Also early in 2013, the Board and Staff completed the first phase of a comprehensive strategic planning process that provides guidance for the next five years. A few key themes of the document include a dedication to increase outreach within the community, expand on the strengths of the current Board, increase property acquisition in high target areas, and increase volunteerism. We have already begun taking action on these goals by participating in Chamber of Commerce events, reaching out to community leaders to get their thoughts and recommendations, and planning a series of guided walks on several of our trails over the summer. We will also, once again, have a table at the Farmer's Market, where we will have information about the Trust and be available to answer your questions. Stop by our booth and pick up some literature and maybe even a t-shirt or hat to give as a gift or to wear proudly to show your support for KLT.

As we move through 2013, I hope you will become inquisitive about Kennebunk Land Trust and what this organization is doing within our community. We have a lot of exciting places to see, so visit our website, pick up one of our new maps, and head out to one of the many trails. When you visit one of our trails, send a note to the office to let us know what you think. We will be busy this summer and would love to have your support, feedback, and involvement.

New Officers

At a recent meeting, the Board of Directors elected Scott Gasperin, Chair; Isabel Lescure, Vice-Chair; Brian Champion, Treasurer; and Stuart Bowen, Secretary. We welcome their leadership.

Huntington Common

It is with regret that we announce the cancellation of the ADA pathway and overlook project on our Huntington Preserve along the banks of the Kennebunk River. Due to circumstances not involving Kennebunk Land Trust, we are unable to move forward at this time. We hope the effort can be rekindled at some future point, and we appreciate your understanding.

Chair
Scott Gasperin

Vice Chair
Isabel Lescure

Treasurer
Brian Champion

Secretary
Stuart Bowen

Gordon Collins
Tony Liguori
Nora Ordway
Beth Sandmire
Tom Wellman

Executive Director
Marie Louise St. Onge

Administrator
Linda Scotland

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KLT's Annual Report to the Community: Tales from The Woods



Please plan to join the KLT Board of Directors and staff as we host WCSH television's own Bill Green. On Wednesday, September 25th, the Trust will host a social soiree to report on its 2012 accomplishments. At this event, we will welcome well-known Maine native, television personality, and nature reporter, Bill Green. Bill will address guests with some of his noted "Tales from The Woods" and answer questions.

An RSVP is required on or before September 16th, so we hope to hear from you. Come and enjoy stories of accomplishment and adventure, and light refreshments.



Two New Acquisitions for The Trust

by Marie Louise St.Onge

The Board of Directors and staff are delighted to announce the recent acquisition of two outstanding parcels of land in Kennebunk. The successful protection of these two properties spells good news for the land, the river, and the community. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work with these thoughtful individuals who value conservation and prize the land and its worthy features.

Spiller Drive

Once known to many as the Gilpatric Farm, this now protected 14-acre preserve is a portion of the original farmland and includes what historically were known to locals as the “little interval” and the “big interval.” In addition to being farmed, livestock grazed the grassland and apple trees yielded fruit. Located principally in what is now floodplain, pictures reveal the effects of time and the shifting of the river’s banks over decades.

The Gilpatric Farm was purchased by Emily J. (Storer) Spiller in 1926. She and her husband, Robert A. “Bert” Spiller, farmed the land and ran a dairy business together at the site until Mary’s death in 1945. Bert continued to farm the land on his own until he died in February of 1959.

Raspberries grew in abundance on the farm, and sold for ten cents a pint! The “little interval” was sometimes planted with oats or millet, or it was left as meadow. At times, corn and squash were grown on the “big intervale” yielding a larger and later harvest than the gardens near the farmhouse. And, the “big interval” was used to graze the dairy cows. In 1938, Spiller’s milk sold for ten cents a quart and a dozen farm-fresh eggs cost forty-five cents. Spiller milk was known at the time to be “...ranked second in cleanliness in the entire State.” Credit for

this status was readily given to Emily who sterilized the milk bottles and utensils in a large boiler on an oil stove.

The cropland was plowed by a pair of horses and a steel #90 Wiard plow. Bert Spiller is believed to have purchased his last plow when he was 73 years old in 1946 at a cost of \$33.50. At that time, Bert plowed not only his own land but the land of many other Kennebunkers as well.

An average day on the farm would be likely unimaginable to many of us today. Bert rose at 3:00am to begin milking, and at 4:00 Emily began bottling. At 6:00am, Bert was feeding the animals, and Emily was preparing breakfast. By 7:00am, Bert was delivering milk and returned with empty bottles by 9:00. Throughout the day, Emily was busy with cooking, washing, cleaning, killing and dressing a hen when called for, and preparing dinner which was served at noon. In different seasons, Bert tended chores such as chopping fire wood for heating and cooking, plowing fields, haying, and planting crops. By 5:00pm, the cows needed milking again, supper was at 6:00pm, and chores completed by 7:30pm. An hour or so a day was time enough to relax, read the newspaper, and enjoy listening to the Philco radio before retiring at 8:30.



The parcel is 63-acres in size, wooded with significant wetlands and upland ridges, and has frontage along two important tributaries of Ward Brook.

On recent visits to the now woodland intervals, several bird species have been observed including the boisterous and large pileated woodpecker. And over the past few seasons, ample signs of deer, fox, turkey and the occasional coyote indicate that they also call this home.

The protection of this property was made possible by an outstanding contribution from long-time Kennebunker and landowner Barbara Storer. Emily and Bert Spiller were Barbara's grandparents. Barbara came to live on the farm when she was four years old and she has long held the wish that this land, a portion of the former Gilpatric Farm, be kept in its native state and made available for public enjoyment. Over the next year, the Stewardship Committee of Kennebunk Land Trust will determine appropriate recreational uses for the preserve. We hope you'll watch for further announcements.

Alfred Road

Robert Welch moved to Kennebunk with his family when he was just a boy. From the beginning, he enjoyed the rural nature of the Town and being in the woods. And still, at the end of his life, Robert was described as a "country boy" at heart.

With a strong interest in maintaining their father's legacy, Fran Welch-Bregger and her two brothers, Jim and Bill Welch, chose Kennebunk Land Trust to help make that dream come true. Now living out of state, Fran, along with her two brothers and her husband Ray, continue to appreciate the beauty of the 63-acre parcel on visits "back home." They happily remember growing up on the farm located just off Alfred Road.

Robert Welch worked his entire career for the United States Postal Service as a mailman in Kennebunk. He met his wife of over 50 years, Helen Knudsen, here in town when she was working in a tailoring business owned by the Postmaster. Kennebunk is where they met, made their home, and reared their children. A homemaker for many years, Helen later worked for Kennebunk Light and Power Company.

Originally, their homestead sat on land near the Maine Turnpike, but when the turnpike expansion plan was finalized, Helen and Robert raised their home from its foundation and moved it to the site on Alfred Road. That was home for the rest of their days.

When we spoke about the land, Fran described a place that remains important to her, a place that holds great memory and meaning, and a place that is "well worth saving." She spoke of gardens and farm animals, and the great enjoyment her father took in owning and caring for the land. She does not remember a time in her childhood when there wasn't home grown food on the table, and she grew up drinking fresh, raw milk straight from the back yard. When she referred to the farm animals she grew up with she said, "We named them and we ate them. Kids today just can't imagine that!" There was pride and warm enjoyment around each word she spoke.

The parcel is 63-acres in size, wooded with significant wetlands and upland ridges, and has frontage along two important tributaries of Ward Brook. Kennebunk Land Trust is honored and grateful for the opportunity to work with this family to conserve another beautiful place in Kennebunk, a place that will benefit wildlife, residents and visitors alike.



After School Adventurers

Students who participated in the Sea Road After School Adventurers Club enjoyed two excursions to KLT properties. On a chilly February afternoon, students enjoyed a late afternoon snowshoe trek at Alewife Woods Preserve. And to celebrate Earth Day, in April the same group of students convened at the KLT owned Sea Road Preserve. Joined by their Program Director, Laura Butterworth, and KLT volunteer, Tom McClain, the students explored and discussed the origins and intention of Earth Day, and read poetry. A great time was had by all.



It's T-shirt Time

Check out our new t-shirts and hats – they look great! Available in several locations including: Frame Works on Main Street, Ball and Skein on Port Road, HB Provisions on Western Avenue, KLT office on York Street, and at our table at the Farmers' Market on Saturday mornings.



Great News

We are honored to announce the award of a grant from the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation. Mrs. Sewall lived much of her life here in Kennebunk and she was a strong supporter of KLT. Whether at a “by-chance” meeting at the Post Office or a telephone call to express interest, Mrs. Sewall kept up to date on the work of the Trust. We are delighted that her legacy lives on so strongly and that Kennebunk Land Trust remains included.

2013 Annual Appeal

by Isabel Lescure, Development Committee Chair

As the Trust prepares to launch its 2013 Annual Appeal, we look forward to having the opportunity to write or speak with many of you about our work. Throughout the fourth quarter of the year, Board members and staff will reach out to ask for your support. There are many ways in which the Kennebunk Land Trust works for this community protecting wildlife habitat, water resources and river frontage; providing free public access for recreational enjoyment; preserving greenspace, and enhancing the quality of life for all to name a few. Your generous donations will help the Trust to work toward increasing acquisitions and educational opportunities, and expanding public access where appropriate. We hope you will continue your support for the Kennebunk Land Trust and play a part in protecting the natural areas of our community. Your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law; your generosity is very much appreciated.

Our Thirteenth Auction

From all of us at KLT, a great big thank you for making our Thirteenth Annual Dinner and Auction a terrific success. For thirteen years, the Trust has been fortunate to have the strong support of all of you. And that is what continues to make our biggest fundraiser of the year a fun night and a great fundraiser. With everything from an island retreat to a snowy sleigh ride, the evening tasted good, looked attractive, and was great fun.

You can count on us again next year – we're already planning our Fourteenth Annual Dinner and Auction for Friday evening, May 2nd. And we hope we can count on you.



Kennebunk Land Trust

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