



KENNEBEC LAND TRUST

PO Box 261
134 2B Main St.
Winthrop, ME 04364

Phone: 207-377-2848

kennebeclandtrust@gmail.com



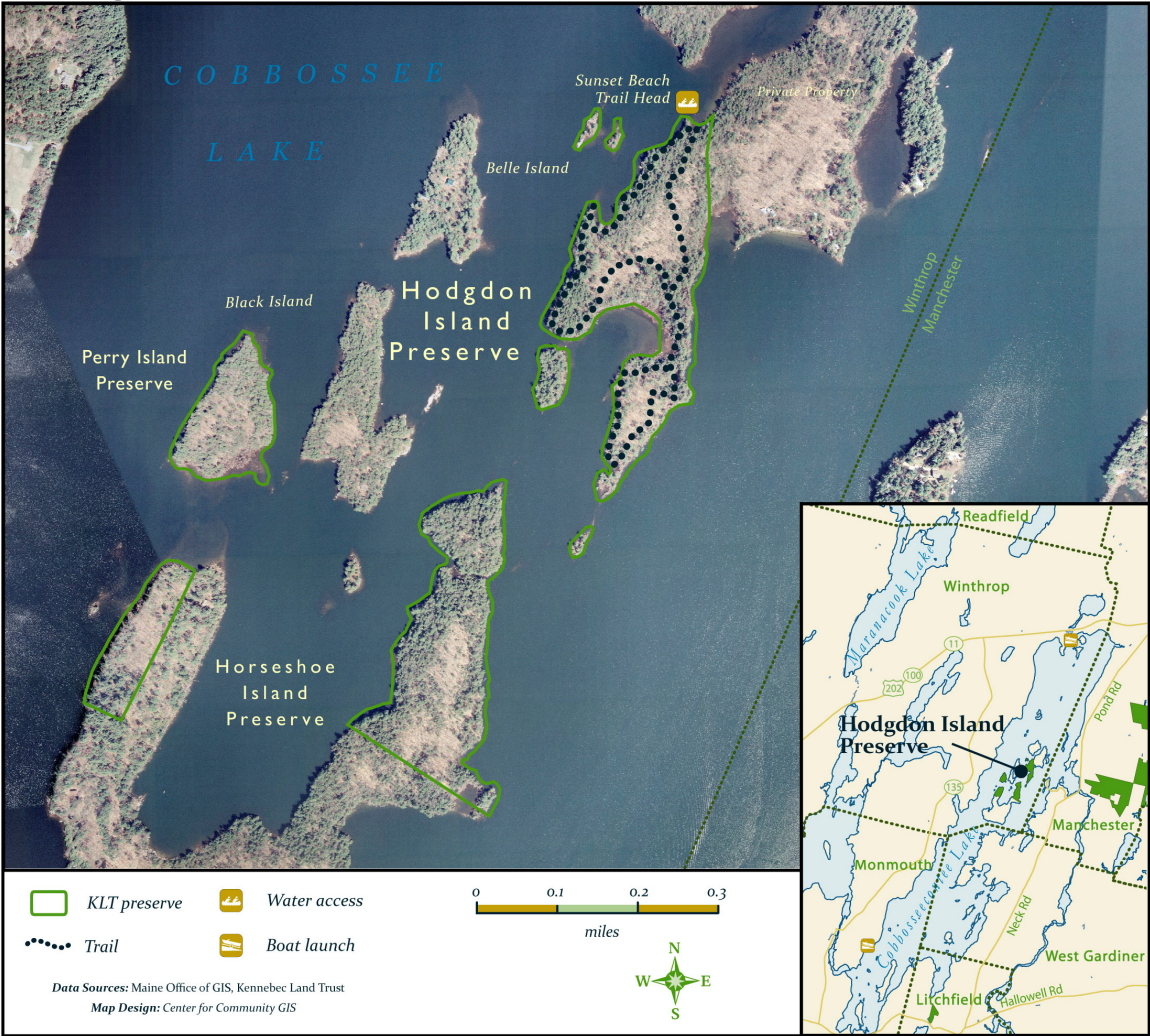
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Hodgdon Island Preserve, Winthrop



17 acres ~ owned by Kennebec Land Trust

SAVE
THE
DATE!

AUGUST 9TH

KLT's 2009
ANNUAL
MEETING
and
FIELD TRIP

HIKE THE
NEW
HODGDON
ISLAND
TRAIL

The Kennebec Land Trust NEWS



Volume 26 No. 1 / Spring 2009

134 Main St. #2B, Winthrop, Maine 04364 www.tkltr.org 207-377-2848

FAMILY ADVENTURES, EXPLORATIONS
AND DISCOVERIES



Luke Bartol and Barbara Moss, discovering.

Tom Bartol, KLT Board Member, Membership Committee

For many years I hiked alone or with adult friends. Hiking with two young children is a different experience, but still full of fun and adventure. The changes began when I started carrying my infant son in a backpack, talking about the sights as we walked. Both sons have inspired me to learn more about trees, plants, and bird names, and they now lead me down paths, pointing out the exciting things they find. We don't walk as far or as fast now, but I see more through the eyes, ears, and imaginations of my children. While they have fun exploring, they are learning about all that nature has to offer.

Within a 15-mile radius of Augusta, KLT offers a dozen or more places for a family hike. From the rocky shore of the Parker Pond Headlands in Fayette to bird watching and berry picking at Davidson Nature Preserve in Vassalboro, there are family friendly 1 to 2 mile trails with plenty of variety to experience. Bring a picnic lunch, or take an after dinner walk, and see what KLT has to offer.

Not sure if your kids are interested? Before you suggest a hike, go to the KLT website, learn a bit about the property you are going to visit, and share this with your kids. Make it an adventure by having the kids find the vernal pools at Gott Pasture, or Nose Rock at Webber-Rogers Farmstead. Bring water and a healthy snack for the end of the trail. My oldest brings a nature journal for drawing or writing what he sees. Kids can mark their hikes on a map or check off a list of KLT properties they've explored. KLT's

Adventure, Explore, Discover family guide to eight of its properties is available for a small fee—contact our office for more information.

Taking children outdoors to the woods and wilds is one of the best investments we can make.

Often when I'm hiking I meet people who haven't heard of KLT. Many people love the outdoors but don't know of us, and right on the trail it's an easy sell to recruit them as members. If every current KLT member (nearly 600) recruited one person to join, we could double our membership, a goal we hope to reach by the beginning of 2012. We ask each member who is reading this to talk to your friends or to people you meet while you're hiking and encourage them to **join us so we can reach 1200 by 2012!**



Adventures in cross country skiing.
From L: Isabel MacKenzie, Silas Bartol,
Tom Bartol, and Frank MacKenzie.
Manchester Bog, February, 2009.



Luke Bartol, hiking.

Cover Photos, Tom Bartol

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Bob Marvinney

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Hello KLT Members and Friends!

As we move into the wonderful season of summer and its renewal of our forests, fields, and gardens, I first and foremost want to thank each of you for your continued support of KLT. Membership renewals have continued apace, and it is heartening for all of us to know that during these difficult economic times, you keep KLT near the top of your charitable giving. It means much to know that you support our mission and the efforts of our dedicated staff and Board of Directors. We look forward to a great year, with many exciting programs and conservation opportunities in the works.

I hope you were able to participate in our annual Lyceum programs in March and April, focusing on forest management. We are very fortunate that this series attracts such talented experts on timely subjects. This year’s program, sponsored by the Maine Forest Service, presented a broad spectrum of forest management options that can be valuable as we look at KLT properties where such activities might be appropriate, and when considering our own lands. Thanks to all who make this meaningful lecture series possible, most especially our annual Lyceum supporters Gloria, Lincoln, and Robert Ladd.

If you have read this column over the past year (you have, haven’t you?), then you should be well informed of the Trust’s strategic planning process. Having spent countless hours during the last year gathering input and working on our plan, I am pleased (and relieved) to report that the plan is complete! This was a huge undertaking, but the plan will serve to guide us through the next several years of growth of the land trust. One key goal, to develop a strategic conservation plan, is well underway. This effort will produce a digital map database of our service area, with which we will be able to identify the most valuable properties for conservation efforts. Stay tuned for more information on this project.

I hope you will participate in as many of our spring and summer programs as your schedule will permit. I guarantee that you will not be disappointed. And I look forward to seeing many of you on these outings and at our Annual Meeting. Thanks to all, and I hope you will welcome spring by visiting some of the beautiful places protected by KLT.

Bob Marvinney

The Kennebec Land Trust is sponsoring Old Hallowell Day’s 5K Road Race on July 18, 2009.

Come enjoy central Maine’s historic riverside city. Participate in the road race, watch the parade, enjoy the music, and much more!



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2009 KLT STEWARDSHIP ANNUAL WORKSHOP

Diana McLaughlin, KLT Board Member and Chair, Stewardship Committee

KLT stewards gathered for their annual meeting and training day on the sunny, snowy morning of January 21. While the outside temperature struggled to reach zero degrees, the attitude and enthusiasm of the participants was unmistakably positive. In keeping with recent tradition (or perhaps popular demand), Gloria and Lincoln Ladd hosted the meeting in their beautiful family home in Wayne. The location was especially fortuitous this year since the Ladds’ spacious living room could accommodate a record turnout of over 40 stewards!

Following welcoming remarks from Lincoln Ladd and KLT’s Stewardship Director Theresa Kerchner, each steward had a few minutes to talk about the property they care for. The dedication and affection that each of these volunteers had for a KLT protected land was evident, and all benefited from the chance to share information and their experiences.

Howard Lake and Theresa spoke about Maine’s new Conservation Easement Registry, a legislative resolve that requires Maine land trusts to file annual monitoring reports with the State Planning Office.

And what topic would be the perfect complement to a discussion about stewardship? Why, birds, of course! Birders and stewards Al Haury and Tom Mickewich updated the group on their project to develop lists of bird species observed on certain KLT lands. USFWS Wildlife Biologist and KLT steward Ron Joseph gave an informative and entertaining presentation on bird life accompanied by stunning photographs and complete with bird calls. Here are a few highlights from Ron’s talk that you may not have been aware of.

- 212 species of birds breed in Maine
- This includes 5 pairs of sandhill cranes
- Maine is about 25% wetlands
- 5 species of insectivorous warblers (those that eat insects) can live in different locations of the same stand of conifers



Theresa Kerchner

Ron Joseph and KLT Stewards - 2009 workshop

KLT thanks all of its stewards, volunteers, and staff for caring for our protected lands.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

- Vin & Vinnie Burns

Denise Crowell

Steve & Laurel Coleman

Jennifer Curtis

Rachel Dyer & Jonathan Leach

Andrew Escoll & Tina Snider

Margaret Eastman

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Winthrop Area Chamber of Commerce

The Business Partners in Conservation program recognizes business leaders and companies in our community who have made significant contributions of cash, goods, and services to support the regional conservation efforts of the Kennebec Land Trust.

To learn more about this program, please contact KLT Board member Norm Rodrigue at 207-622-6204.



Jim Norris

Jim Connors, KLT Steward, Mt Pisgah; Fire Tower Repair

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE
WITH OUR OUTREACH, EDUCATION,
LANDS, LYCEUM, AND
STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

FALL, 2008 - SPRING, 2009

Jane Andrews, Tom Bartol, Jerry Bley, Andy Bosworth, Josh Brown and Family, Mark Brown, Harold Burnett, Ginny Coady, Jim Connors, Dave Courtemanch, Stephen Engle and Jean-Luc Theriault,
Center for Community GIS - Farmington, Marc Civittolo, Elizabeth Davidson, Jane Davis, Joel Davis, Brian Donahue, Eric Doucette, Phil Downes, Pat Ellis, Tom Feagin, Betty Foster, Donna Freeman -
Ladd Recreation Center, David Foster - **Harvard Forest**, Sarah and Doug Fuller, Ruth Grauert, Chris Halstead, Denny Harnish, Al Haury, Glenn Hodgkins, Bea Horne, Malcolm Hunter, **Kents Hill Students**, Lloyd Irland, Charlie Jacobs, Paul Johnson, Ron Joseph, David Kahl, Lisa Kane, Brian Kent, Gloria, Lincoln and Robert Ladd, Howard Lake, Leslie Latt, Barbara and Mort Libby, the Lund Family, Janie Matrisciano, Ian Mackinnon,
Maine Forest Service (MFS), John Melrose, Morten Moesswilde - **MFS**, Bob Mohlar,
Monmouth Academy Students, Barbara Moss, Bob Mulliken, Steve Musica, Jim Norris, Daniel and Jim Perkins, Steve Pelletier - **Stantec**, Jeff Pidot, Beth Pochopien, Bryan Pregovisk, Ralph Record, Norm Rodrigue, Deb Sewall, Nancy Sferra - **Nature Conservancy in Maine**, Andy Shultz - **MFS**, Karen Simpson, Tim Sniffen, Jym St. Pierre, Dave Stevenson, Eliza Stinneford, Mary Sturtevant, Hank Tyler, George Viles, Clyde Walton, Alan Weaver, Sam Whittemore, **Winthrop High School Students**

KLT AND WHO WE ARE - *Karen Simpson, KLT Member*
TOM AND DONNA MICKEWICH, MEMBER PROFILE



Jane Davis

Tom and Donna Mickewich

It was a sunny, warm, early spring day when I met Tom and Donna Mickewich at the Curtis Homestead. The snow had finally melted and the ground was pretty well dried out. Swallows were soaring around the old hay field and bird song filled the air. It was the kind of day that we dream of all winter long. Spring is a busy time for KLT stewards. Trails need to be cleared of blow-downs and plants and saplings encroaching on trails need to be cut back.

When Tom and Donna attended a KLT Lyceum on birding in the spring of 2003, they had no idea of the adventures and challenges that lay before them as stewards of the Curtis Homestead. As Tom recalls, Theresa Kerchner approached them and asked if they were interested in joining Andy Bosworth as stewards of the Leeds property. “We don’t know what we’re doing, but we’ll do it,” they said with typical modesty, and that’s how it all began. The Mickewiches had just retired from 35 years of teaching in Michigan and had returned to Maine, where they both grew up. Their love of the outdoors and sense of community service made them a perfect fit for the job.

Stewards of KLT properties must focus on both large scale planning and the small, everyday details. When Tom and Donna first began as stewards, the parking lot had already been built, the Lower Fields Trail had been cut, and there was a woods road leading to the far end of the property. But the hay fields were reverting to forest and the trail to Curtis Rock was still a dream. Tom and Donna’s first projects were to burn the old fields and to remove invasive plants from the roadside.

Tom says there have been three major changes in the Curtis Homestead property since 2003. The first came when the Curtis Rock and Woodlot Trails were laid out and built in 2004. The Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) was enlisted to build bridges over the streams crossing the Curtis Rock Trail. The Mickewiches credit the MCC for their fine work and only later mention that before the work could start, they needed to haul bales of hay to the project site on their backs. “It’s a good thing I have horse genes,” laughs Donna.

Nat Bell, a logger from Leeds, worked with Tom and Donna and KLT Advisory Board member Jim Connors on a second project, the widening of the old hayfields. The enlarged fields have diversified the wildlife habitat of the Homestead property. Tom points to pairs of bird houses around the ten-acre field and explains that the houses attract both bluebirds and swallows. Andy Bosworth, a science teacher at Monmouth Academy, worked with one of his students to place the houses in pairs because swallows will not allow another swallow to nest in its territory but will accept a neighboring bluebird. Piles of cuttings from the field clearing provide additional shelter for a variety of birds and small mammals.

The third change is the information kiosk, built by Zac Sager as an Eagle Scout project. Tom and Donna maintain the displays, and last year, with the help of Jamie Ault, they added shrub plantings around it.

Then there are the little things. Donna keeps a close eye on a rhubarb patch and daffodils from the original Curtis farmhouse. Tom has made all the trail signs and keeps them in good repair. They plan to repaint the trail blazes within the next few weeks. Tom is also interested in recording all the birds on the property and perhaps doing some historical research about the Curtis family and their lives on the farm.

When asked what it takes to be a steward, Tom and Donna say it’s not rocket science. It doesn’t take special talents, just a love of the outdoors, a little brawn, a vision for the possible, and real dedication to preserving a very special place.



View from Curtis Rock looking east to Monmouth Leeds Bog

Jane Davis

NATIVE PLANTS IN OUR LANDSCAPES

Eric Doucette, Botanist and KLT Member



Don Cameron

New Jersey tea - Ceanothus americanus

When choosing native plants for garden planting, commercial availability and ease of cultivation must be considered. Three woody plant species that reach their northern range limits in Maine and that make good specimens for local gardens are black gum (Nyssa sylvatica), swamp azalea (Rhododendron viscosum), and New Jersey tea (Ceanothus americanus). Interestingly, both black gum and New Jersey tea have populations in Kennebec County that are isolated from other more southern populations.

Black gum is a medium-sized tree that naturally occurs in forested wetlands, on lakeshores, and in floodplains, although it is amenable to drier soils in a garden setting. Black gum typically grows in a pyramidal manner, with regular horizontal branching that is architecturally pleasing, particularly in younger specimens. Older trees develop lower branches that angle down toward the ground, producing a densely foliated specimen tree. The leaves are dark green and very glossy, producing a shiny appearance to the foliage. Fall foliage color is spectacular and is typically a vibrant red, although oranges and yellows occur occasionally. Black gum is renowned for its disease resistance and superior foliage quality. This species can be used as a formal planting or incorporated into native pond-side or wetland plantings. Its unique branching structure and intense fall foliage are sure to generate questions from visitors.

Swamp azalea is a native deciduous shrub that occurs along wetland edges, although it also can be planted in a conventional garden setting. Requirements are full sun to part shade, acidic soils, and adequate moisture. It is typically a multi-stemmed shrub averaging 3-4' tall. Many specimens have a bluish tint to the foliage that imparts a unique appearance. Fragrant white flowers are produced in late June or early July, later than most horticultural varieties of rhododendrons and azaleas, making Swamp azalea a welcome addition to the azalea garden. The flowers are intensely fragrant with a spicy smell, often described as "clove-like." Hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies all visit these flowers. Fall foliage is typically a pleasing red, although not as vibrant as that of Black gum. Swamp azalea works well in a shrub border, planted along wetland edges, and as a small specimen under-planted with spring bulbs.

New Jersey tea is a 2-4' tall shrub that naturally grows in well-drained sandy or rocky soils in prairies, upland woods, and pine barrens, and on rocky lakeside ledges. It has red, deep-reaching roots that impart a resistance to drought once they are established. Individual flowers are tiny, but collectively they are grouped into showy, white inflorescences at the tips of branches. The flowers are produced in late June or early July and are particularly well known as butterfly "magnets," although other insects, as well as hummingbirds, will also frequent the flowers. Many species of butterfly use this plant as a nectar source and a few species as a larval food source. The bluish-black capsular fruits are eaten by birds and are somewhat showy. Fall foliage is generally unremarkable. This species performs best in full sun, in well-drained soils that are circumneutral or at least not overly acidic. Planting in the front of a shrub border or as a taller groundcover on drier sites would be good uses for this butterfly nectar plant.

These three native plant species are becoming more readily available in nurseries in Maine and should be utilized for their aesthetics, ease of cultivation, and wildlife attraction, as well as to diversify the plantings in our home landscapes.

WHERE CAN I FIND BLACK GUM ON KLT PROPERTIES?

Paddle to Norris Island or Perkins Woods, Androscoggin Lake, Wayne (directions: www.tkl.org), take a good field guide, and have fun botanizing! If you are new to tree and shrub identification, try these two field guides: *Trees and Shrubs of New England*, by Marilyn Dweley, Down East, 1980; or *Forest Trees of Maine, Centennial Edition*, Maine Forest Service 207-287-2791 or www.maineforestservice.gov.



KLT Newsletter Sponsor

KENNEBEC LAND TRUST AND PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL FOR VOLUNTEERISM



Theresa Kerchner, Stewardship Director

On April 21, as the President was rallying the nation to do volunteer work, I was evaluating KLT's stewardship and land conservation priorities for the year ahead. I quickly calculated that KLT could provide President Obama with hundreds of opportunities to witness the spirit of volunteerism in our twenty-town service region. As accommodating hosts, KLT Board members, stewards, and volunteers would be proud to show off our trails on forested preserves, the undeveloped shorelines of our islands and wetlands, and the open fields of our conservation areas and farmlands.

If the Obamas come to Maine they could:

Hike newly constructed or improved trails on the Cobbossee Islands or Mt Pisgah, in Gannett or Tyler Woods or Wyman Forest, at Jamies Pond, or in the Macdonald Conservation Area or Vassalboro Wildlife Habitat, with a rest for inspiration on newly constructed benches;

Dig holes for KLT's beautiful wooden property signs or registration boxes - we will provide the post hole digger, but we can't guarantee that there won't be rocks;

Help control invasive plants at the Davidson Nature Preserve; the Reynolds Forest; the Webber Rogers Farmstead Conservation Area; Perkins, Westman or Vaughan Woods; or Mathews Wildlife Habitat - we will let them use our nifty weed wrench;

Learn about our proposed school-based forestry project at the Curtis Homestead Conservation Area or about watershed protection at Echo and Torsey Ponds - they may be asked to carry cedar for new bog bridges;

Visit a significant vernal pool at Gott Pasture Preserve, Besse Historic Conservation Area, or Torsey Pond Outlet Conservation Area - they would soon be experts at identifying wood frog and salamander egg masses;

Join KLT staff and stewards when they meet with land owners to monitor donated conservation easements;

Participate in field trips that inspire the next generation of naturalists and conservationists; or

Join a professional ecologist assisting KLT with natural resource inventories.

If the First Family would prefer a mosquito-free setting they could join KLT Board Members and volunteers as they:

Communicate with land owners who are considering conservation donations; **Develop** KLT's strategic planning and conservation planning initiatives; or **Write and edit** grant proposals and newsletters.

As I developed a list of people the Obamas would meet, I thought about why KLT members are motivated by the land. Listening to our members, stewards, and Board members, I hear several common themes. We understand that the earth's resources are finite and that we need to be responsible stewards of the land, water, and air; we want our children and the generations that follow them to know the places we love, and we are inspired by the beauty in our corner of Maine.

**Even if the Obamas don't visit Kennebec County, we thank you:
land donors, stewards, members, and volunteers all.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



KLT WELCOMES summer stewardship assistant and recent Colby College graduate Bryan Prelgovisk (left, with KLT Reynolds Steward Phil Downes). Bryan will be working on invasive plant control and trail projects. Also with us this summer is KLT intern Katie Epstein, Davidson College (photo right). Katie will be interviewing land donors for a KLT conservation history publication.

