The Kennebec Land Trust was formed in 1988 by local citizens who wanted to work cooperatively with landowners and communities to protect our natural features, working landscapes and fragile ecosystems. KLT is a private, non-profit membership organization dedicated to preserving these treasures so that we do not spoil the very things that make our region a special place to live and visit.

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The Kennebec Land Trust is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization.

Directions to The Curtis Homestead
Take Route 202 to Monmouth. From Route 202, take the Bog Road to the west. The KLT parking area is about 1.5 miles on the right.

History
The stone walls and abandoned farm lands at The Curtis Homestead Conservation Area are evidence of the patterns of land use that defined Maine’s 19th century agricultural era. Alter Curtis Sr., from New Hampshire, settled in this region in the late 1800’s, during a time when proprietors for the Pejepscot Patent were selling large settlement lots.

By 1870, Curtis Homestead was a very busy place. There was a general store where you could also get your mail at the post office, three corner shops and a steam saw mill right next to the Curtis farm. The little one-room school was less than a quarter mile away.

Over the years, the land was turned into timber lands by Alter Curtis, his son Abner Curtis Jr., then his son Orin E., then Orin’s youngest child, Archie. Archie and Harriet Curtis’s son, Kenneth Curtis, became Maine’s 67th governor. He served from 1967-1975 as a Democrat, a rare achievement in Maine politics until that time.

A Partial List of Common Plants

Trees
- white pine (Pinus strobus)
- jack pine (Pinus banksiana)
- northern white cedar (Thuja occidentalis)
- balsam fir (Abies balsamea)
- hemlock (Tsuga canadensis)
- tamarack (Larix laricina)
- eastern hemlock (Tsuga canadensis)
- striped maple (Acer pensylvanicum)
- white ash (Fraxinus americana)

Shrubs
- young ferns
- young ferns
- young ferns
- young ferns
- young ferns

Seeds
- swamp milkweed (Asclepias incarnata)
- bergamot (Monarda didyma)
- common bergamot (Monarda punctata)
- vervain (Verbena hastata)
- dill (Anethum graveolens)
- cow parsley (Anthriscus sylvestris)
- meadow rue (Thalictrum dioicum)
- milkweed (Asclepias curassavica)
- blue jack-in-the-pulpit (Arisaema triphyllum)
- Canada mayflower (Mimulus canadensis)

Wildflowers
- Canada mayflower (Mimulus canadensis)
- white trillium (Trillium grandiflorum)
- black trillium (Trillium atheun'sii)
- manunda (Monarda fistulosa)
- echinacea (Echinacea purpurea)
- coreopsis (Coreopsis tinctoria)
- prairie coneflower (Rudbeckia)
In 2000, Governor Kenneth Curtis and his sister, Rebecca Curtis Meredith, donated 360 acres of their family lands in Leeds, Maine, to the Kennebec Land Trust. This area was likely used by Native Americans for hunting, fishing, and gathering of various plants. Three acres of this land were given to the Curtis family and are now owned by the Land Trust.

Long before the Curtis family arrived in this part of Maine, long before there even was a Maine, this region was a prehistoric crossroads for native people who were traveling between the Kennebec and Androscoggin River waterways. This area was likely used by Native Americans for hunting, fishing, and gathering of various plants.

Today, The Curtis Homestead is part of a valuable community conservation area that encompasses fields, forests, wetlands and portions of Bog Brook.

Ken and Rebecca Curtis’s childhood memories include blueberrying on the bog, catching brook trout in local streams and harvesting timber with workhorses. Thanks to their generosity, the Curtis lands can be enjoyed by many future generations.

The four trails on The Curtis Homestead feature areas that were the former cultivated fields, pastures, orchards, wooded pastures and woodlots at the Curtis Farm. Because of the underlying geology, soil and topography influenced historical agricultural land use, the trails also highlight very different natural features.

Lower Fields Loop Trail: Easy 1-mile round trip, with short side trail to a bench at the edge of the bog. For a short distance, this trail follows the small brook that the Curtis family used for water for their cattle. The first part of the trail, with relatively even topography and glacial outwash soils, was in cultivation and hayfields as late as 1958, when Ken and Rebecca Curtis’s parents, Harriet and Archie Curtis, were still farming.

The red oak tree to the right of the barn in the farm photograph is now surrounded by forest. Until 2000, the Curtis family’s barn and barn were located where today’s parking lot and barn are. The above photograph was taken in 1948 and this is the narrow path that would be part of the “Historical Ice Road” that marked the time when the Curtis fields were abandoned and the site became forested once again.

White pine trees grow well in sunny areas where there were once hayfields or cultivated lands. It almost looks as if these trees were planted, but actually the seeds blew in from pine trees bordering the cultivated fields.

Upper Fields Loop Trail: 0.7 mile. Easy round trip, the first section of the Curtis Rock Trail. At the first stone wall, the trail loops back around to the field, just 60 years ago, in 1948, the land on either side of this trail was not forested, but was in fields for hay or cultivated crops.

Curtis Rock Trail: 1.4 miles round trip. This easy/moderate trail starts north of the open fields and follows the wooded road that Archie Curtis used when he hauled cut trees with his workhorse. This portion of the farm, with its varied topography, wetlands and large boulders was used for orchards, pasture land and woodlots.

Looking east from Curtis Rock, you can see Bog Brook, the “oak island” and the surrounding peatland. The peat is of variable thickness and beneath it is a thick layer of glacial marine mud. This marine mud was deposited approximately 11,000 years ago, after the last glacier melted, when shallow ocean waters covered this area.

The “oak island”, part of The Curtis Homestead Conservation Area, is an upland area with impressive red oaks and large white pines. The oak island is accessible in the fall when the water is low, and in the winter when the ground is frozen.

Woodlot Trail: 0.7 mile. This moderate trail passes through a peatland woodland that was managed in the farm woodlot. The trail begins at Curtis Rock (a glacial erratic) and follows the eastern edge of the bog, providing several wonderful views with benches before looping back to an intersection with the Curtis Rock Trail.