Brunswick Topsham Land Trust Annual Report 2015

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A Legacy
A Note from Our Leadership

Reflecting on Legacy as We Turn 30

For many individuals, turning thirty is a major milestone – one that prompts reflection on how we have spent our three decades on earth – as children, teenagers, and young adults. After considering how we have spent our youth, our attention shifts to what is ahead. We start to appreciate that the future is not just our future, but a future that is shared by family, friends, and indeed, anyone we connect with during – and beyond – our lifetime. We also start to understand that the decisions and actions of our first three decades are integral to how that future plays out.

Similarly, as the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust celebrates its thirtieth anniversary, we have taken a moment to reflect on what we have achieved, what we have learned, and how this can benefit our community and our natural surroundings as we move forward. What have we accomplished? How has it prepared us for what lies ahead? And what will be our legacy?

In thirty years, thanks to those who have supported us, we have grown from a small group of dedicated neighbors into a professional organization that is seen as a leader in land conservation. The will of our members to support our annual budget and fund our land projects has enabled us to expand our conservation holdings and fulfill our stewardship obligations. Volunteer support and community partnerships have allowed us to build synergy and amplify our community-building. The determination of our Board of Directors and staff to embark on creative programming and ambitious fundraising has woven us into the fabric of our community.

Looking back, we are grateful for the broad-based support and mission-driven work that has laid the foundation for our legacy. Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunity to build upon that foundation with the enduring gifts of conserved lands that protect our quality of place, trails for public recreation, educational activities to foster appreciation of nature, and community programs that bring economic and social benefits to our region. With your help and continued commitment, we are creating a legacy that will give our community and organization the confidence and resilience to endure – “now and for generations to come”.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Angela Twitchell, Executive Director

Brad Babson, Board President

Cover: Young Explorers pick blueberries at Crystal Spring Farm. Photo by Lisa Martin.
The Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust has been working since 1985 to protect our heritage of rich natural resources, provide access to land for recreation and traditional land uses, and support resilient communities, both human and wild. We have protected and must now steward over 2,300 acres of land – forever. We work hard to offer many ways for people to engage with our conserved lands. When a community is deeply connected to its land and natural resource base, it prospers on many levels. We are so grateful to our many donors, grant makers, volunteers, and community partners who make it possible for us to leave a legacy of strengthening our community through conservation.

**Legacy**

*noun*
- A gift left for or handed down to the next generation
- Anything received from an ancestor or predecessor
Protecting Important Places

Thanks to the increased resources brought in during our Comprehensive Campaign and the many conservation opportunities before us, our Lands Committee was incredibly busy and successful during the 2014-2015 fiscal year. During this time we worked to reach agreement with landowners and began due diligence on 17 projects totaling 264 acres in the Towns of Brunswick, Topsham and Bowdoin. These projects are in some of our most important conservation focus areas – Middle Bay, Cathance River, Muddy River, Woodward Cove – and offer the chance to conserve agricultural lands, protect large undeveloped habitat blocks, and connect important trail systems.

Of these 17 projects, two closed in our 2014-15 fiscal year and are highlighted below. The remaining 15 conservation projects are expected to close by the end of June 2016. This increased pace of conservation would not be possible without the support of our members – THANK YOU for making this exciting and lasting contribution to our community possible!

Another Piece of the Puzzle Conserved in the Historic District of Pennellville

The tradition of neighbors getting together to conserve cherished lands continued in fiscal year 2014-2015 with the conservation of a 2-acre meadow in the Pennellville Historic District. Our first land conservation project was Pennellville Meadow, where neighbors came together in 1988 to protect a 16-acre section of the meadow. Since then, the Land Trust has conserved five other properties in the Pennellville area for a total of 66 acres. Our conservation activities in and around the Pennellville Historic District are a contribution to preserving the special natural, aesthetic, and historic character of this unique area.
Expanded Conservation on the Muddy River

The generosity and forethought of Dana and Marilyn Cary – long-time supporters of the Land Trust and conservation in the Merrymeeting Bay area – enabled us to conserve another parcel of land along the Muddy River through the donation of a conservation easement on their property. The addition of this 8.2-acre parcel increases the area of land conserved along the Muddy River in Topsham to 534 acres. The property contains high value scenic, ecological, wildlife and fishery resources. The 800 feet of protected shoreline along the Muddy River is of particular importance as part of the headwaters of Merrymeeting Bay.

"Marilyn and I planned in recent years how to care for this special land in our estate plan. We were both so satisfied to complete our easement, and give the Land Trust a big ‘thanks’ for their support of our plans." – Dana Cary

Dana Cary, proudly displaying the harvest from his conserved land in Topsham.
Farmers’ Market
Our farmers’ market at Crystal Spring Farm continued to thrive during its 16th season. Thousands of people visit our market weekly to access healthful local food. The market gives over 40 local vendors a valuable opportunity to market their goods directly to customers and support their small businesses. Now in its second year, our market EBT program makes fresh local food accessible to low-income families.

Tom Settlemire Community Garden
This year the Community Garden hired a part-time coordinator to oversee volunteers and manage the Common Good Garden, where food is grown for the food bank and soup kitchen at Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program. Thanks to the coordinator’s organizational efforts, the number of volunteer hours in the Garden increased dramatically, many new groups lent a hand in the Garden, and collaboration with the Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program expanded.

Young Explorers
In 2015, Young Explorers grew food at the Community Garden, toured a farm, and explored the trails. Volunteer educators Corie Scribner and Olivia Griset created an enriching curriculum for Explorers, and Young Explorer “graduates” passed on their experiences by leading craft activities. We redesigned our Passport, added a Parent’s Guide, and increased our array of educational tools, including nets, field guides, and maps.

Merrymeeting Food Council
This important collaborative project has brought together dozens of people from local organizations, farms, Bowdoin College, and quasi-government programs to create a community network that aims to support local food production and make nutritious food accessible to everyone.
**Labyrinth in the Woods**

We have partnered with First Parish Church to plan and develop a 50-foot diameter outdoor labyrinth. The labyrinth is nestled in the woods at Crystal Spring Farm and will be accessible by trails near the Community Garden. Construction of the traditional 7-circuit path of granite paving stones was completed in the fall of 2015. Named to honor Susan Fitzgerald – a beloved educator in our area – the labyrinth will be an enduring gift to our community.

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**Stewardship**

2015 was a busy year in stewardship! We trained our first group of trail monitors, expanded our crew of trail work volunteers, and added easement and property monitors to steward our growing list of conserved properties. These volunteers provide a significant service to the Land Trust – acting as valuable eyes and ears on our properties. Trail workers alert us of safety issues (such as blowdowns across a trail) and maintenance needs, and do invaluable upkeep on our 17 miles of trails. Easement and property monitors ensure the conservation values of properties remain strong. Together, these volunteers help us keep our precious local landscapes beautiful and accessible.

Our trails, close to where we live and work, give people a place to exercise and connect with nature every day. We work hard to keep them beautiful and healthy. In 2015, we renovated Cathance River Nature Preserve trails to create extended hikes, enhance ecological conditions, and reduce ongoing maintenance needs. We also created a Maquot Road trail connection to existing trails at Crystal Spring Farm and are in the final stages of planning a new trail at Chase Reserve in Brunswick.

Stewardship is forever, so 2016 will bring a host of new projects, along with the continued steady work of carefully tending lands entrusted to our care. Serious stewardship of our lands is both our responsibility–and our legacy–to future generations.
In 2015, Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust completed its $7-million *Strengthening Our Community Through Conservation* Comprehensive Campaign. The success of the Campaign went beyond financial donations and included a dramatic increase in land protection projects. The Campaign enabled us to expand our programs and create a critical dedicated fund for stewardship.

**Funds Raised**
Through a combination of land and conservation easement donations, private contributions, and public grants, the Land Trust raised over $7 million, exceeding the goal of $5.9 million. More than 1,200 members, donors, and partners contributed to the Campaign. With this support, Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust has significantly strengthened its capacity to be a key community partner.

**Acres Protected**
The Campaign spawned conservation of 27 properties totaling 1,001 acres, devoting $4.5 million to new projects that protect significant wildlife habitat, farmland, and new places to enjoy the outdoors. Highlights of the new properties afforded by the Campaign include: Chase Reserve on Maquoit Bay, Ricker-Scammon Farm in Topsham, 12 properties along the Cathance River totaling 351 acres, and 7 properties totaling 135 acres in our Middle Bay focus area.
Community Partners and Business Partners Giving Societies
In support of our work, over 30 individuals now give $1,000 or more annually through the Community Partners program. Nine businesses donate $1,000 or more annually through the Business Partners program. These initiatives, and the generous support they are eliciting, are integral to our long term sustainability, and we are working to grow them as we move out of the Campaign.

Stewardship Endowment
The Campaign doubled our conserved properties, and highlighted the importance of providing for the care of these precious lands – forever. Through the Campaign, we raised $450,000 for land stewardship and created our first ever endowment fund to support ongoing care of these properties. We will need much more to fully fund our commitment to steward the land in perpetuity and have a goal of growing our dedicated stewardship fund to $2 million over the next 10 years.

I grew up in a family where being part of the natural world was a way to learn and help understand the cycle of life. I am forever grateful for those lessons. They have provided a path toward a life that feels connected and amazed.

By becoming a volunteer with the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust more than 25 years ago, I found a way to begin to give back what others had given me. Being a part of the Land Trust’s work to build community through conservation, promote education, help with hunger prevention, build our local food economy, and much more has been a gift to me.”

Tom Settlemire and his family exemplify the many ways to support the Land Trust’s mission. Their support includes: dedicating countless hours of volunteer time; donating at the Community Partner level (annual membership of $1,000 or more); establishing the Marilyn Settlemire Scholarship Program at the Community Garden; providing Comprehensive Campaign gifts; giving a planned land easement donation; and planning an estate gift that benefits the Land Trust.
Thank You!

Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, businesses, and organizations for their support of the Strengthening Our Community Through Conservation Comprehensive Campaign and annual contribution during fiscal year 2015.

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“We feel deeply connected to our community and its beautiful landscapes, and BTLT plays a major role in this. In everything it does—from protecting land to providing agricultural and recreational resources and a wonderful array of educational activities—this vibrant organization connects people with people, and people with the natural world. We can’t think of a better contribution we can make to our community than supporting BTLT.”

~ Jan & Liz Pierson
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Volunteer Spotlight

Pam VanVolkenburgh – a member since 2010 – is an active volunteer in the Community Garden and spends one morning a week helping us with office tasks.

“I believe in what you are doing. It is very important work in terms of preserving land and promoting community values. Being outdoors is important for everybody—whether you are a baby or 100 years old. I have a little time each week and helping BTLT is my way of supporting your important work.”

Volunteers like Pam are an integral component of the Land Trust’s activities. Thank you, Pam, for all that you do to support our mission!
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“I support the Land Trust because protection of natural ecosystems and farmland is so important to our future. The Land Trust has so many ways it connects with the community; trails at Crystal Spring and the Cathance River, the Farmers’ Market, the Community Garden, and education events. BTLT is a shining example of organization done right. The work that you are doing continually reminds me that we can still create a bright future for our young people to inherit. Thanks!”

~ Nick Whatley, owner of Business Partner, Morningstar Stone & Tile

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Contribute $1,000 or more annually

- Bank of America
- Brunswick Hotel & Tavern
- Cribstone Capital Management
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For 30 years, Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust has protected places that make our community and landscape extraordinary. By including the Land Trust in your estate plans, you can ensure this legacy continues for generations to come.

Planned gifts come in all shapes and sizes and each is an expression of one person’s desire to make a lasting impact. You do not have to be wealthy to make a planned gift. We can work with you and your advisors to create your unique legacy towards the mission of conservation in our community. If you are interested in making a planned gift or have already made a provision for the Land Trust through a bequest, beneficiary designation, or other arrangement, please contact Angela Twitchell at 207-729-7694 or angela@btlt.org.
Statement of Activities for the Year Ended June 30, 2015

Thanks to our members and donors, the Land Trust is healthy and growing. With approximately $3.5 million in net assets and fiscally responsible budgeting, we are moving into the future on a solid financial foundation.

SUPPORT, REVENUE, AND GAINS

Contributions $329,952
Donated Land and Easements 219,000
Grants 122,450
Other Revenues 62,434
Total Support, Revenue and Gains $733,836

EXPENSES

Programs $596,710
Supporting Services 94,712
Fundraising 87,631
Total Expenses $779,053

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS ($45,217)

NET ASSETS

Beginning of year $3,515,219
End of year $3,470,002*

* Of this total, approximately $98,000 is permanently restricted, and $1,195,000 is restricted or designated for specific land projects or other purposes.

BREAKDOWN OF PROGRAM EXPENSES

Agricultural Programs 109,183
Education & Outreach 40,160
Land Conservation 356,761
Stewardship 90,606
Total Program Expenses 596,710

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The current-year loss was funded by pledge payments collected in the current year, but recorded as income in previous years under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust is a nonprofit, tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, a publicly supported organization as defined by Section 170(b) A-6. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. An independent auditor’s report is available upon request. Our 990 is also available online at www.btlt.org.
Support, Revenue, and Gains by Category
Totaling $734K for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015

- Contributions 45.0%
- Donated Land and Easements 29.8%
- Grants 16.7%
- Other Revenues 8.5%

Expenses by Category
Totaling $779K for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015

- Programs 77%
- Fundraising 11%
- Supporting Services 12%

Program Expenses by Category
Totaling $596K for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015

- Land Conservation 60%
- Education and Outreach 7%
- Agricultural Programs 18%
- Stewardship 15%

1998 wins MLTN Land Heritage Award
1999 establishes Saturday Farmers’ Market
2012 completes land trust accreditation process
2012 founds Tom Settlemlre Community Garden
2015 completes largest ever comprehensive campaign