



SACO VALLEY LAND TRUST

PRESERVING LAND IN THE LOWER
SACO RIVER VALLEY SINCE 1988
SPRING 2011

Cranberry Marsh North: Back to the Future

Nearly a year ago SVLT acquired a conservation easement on over 170 contiguous acres in Biddeford. Given the project name, Cranberry Marsh North, and located in an important statewide “focus area” -- the Biddeford-Kennebunkport Vernal Pool Complex -- the easement will safeguard critical habitat and important forest resources in perpetuity.

This spring, working with ecologist Mark Ward, SVLT will begin to study and further document the parcel’s vernal pools and important wetlands, as well as the Spotted Turtles, Fairy Shrimp and other exotic critters that reside there.

Until 1960 the woodlot was owned by Joseph G. Deer-
(continued on p.2)



SVLT’s newest acquisition: the Great Cranberry Marsh (looking southeasterly toward “Cranberry

ing and provided wood to his lumber company. Its pine timber was last harvested in the 1930s. Though the next generation of saw timber was delayed by the ravages of the great 1947 fire, White Pine is now making a come-back on the property and its management (as well as other tree species) is allowed under terms of the easement. Any commercial or non-commercial forest management activities must be carried out

according to a professionally prepared plan, and approved by SVLT's board.

With this method of conservation, while SVLT does not own the property outright, under terms of the easement Cranberry Marsh North is now protected from development, and can continue to store sunlight in its young forest for eventual, sustainable harvest, as before.

City of Biddeford Adds to Conservation Land

In June 2010, the Biddeford City Council approved the transfer of three parcels of City owned land to SVLT. One of the parcels consists of 23 acres (Biddeford tax map 1-61) located in the City's largest block of unfragmented habitat between South St., Rte. 111 and Andrews Rd. This piece has over 1700 feet of frontage on Swan Pond Brook. The State of Maine has given Swan Pond Brook a "high" value rating both as a fresh water fishery and a riparian habitat zone.

Another parcel (map #3-17-4) is 6 1/2 acres primarily of wetland and granitic ledge outcrop, located southwest of the Proctor Rd. It is part of the Biddeford-Kennebunkport Vernal Pool Complex, a State recognized "focus" area of ecological importance due to its high concentration of pocket swamps and vernal pools, which support a rich diversity of wildlife, including the state threatened spotted turtle and the state endangered Blandings turtle.

The City's most significant contribution, also located within the vernal pool complex is a 53.5 acre parcel (map #3-12-1) between West St. and the Proctor Rd. known as "the Great Cranberry Marsh". This piece is an ecologically significant peat bog and forested wetland very similar to the Saco Heath, though smaller in size. This unique natural ecosystem supports a variety of plants that are able to survive in the harsh, nutrient poor, acidic environment of the Marsh, including the carnivorous pitcher plant, and of course, cranberries. This parcel is adjacent to the 170 acre Cranberry Marsh North, on which SVLT holds a conservation easement.

The City of Biddeford is to be commended for its foresight in committing these 3 parcels, totaling over 80 acres, to conservation.

Denis Rioux

Thought for the day:

Humankind-despite its artistic pretensions, its sophistication and its many accomplishments-owes its existence to a six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains.

If you are interested enough to be reading this newsletter, we hope you will become a member, rejoin or become a board or committee member:

Saco Valley Land Trust has been working for over 20 years to help landowners protect properties that are special to them. In that time we have received as donations, or purchased, over 600 acres in fee and 400 acres of protective conservation easements. These small accomplishments, taken as a whole, will help Saco and Biddeford remain special places to live now and into the future.

As our plate becomes fuller, our need for new board members and volunteers grows. The current Board members willingly squeeze in a remarkable amount of work for the Trust each month, but there are so many other projects and tasks, big and small, that we would like to see accomplished. So if you would like to add your talents, whatever they may be, to the job of land protection, get in touch with us. From stuffing envelopes to public relations and land monitoring, any skills will be useful!

Rest Easy at the Woodman Preserve!

Once again, an Eagle Scout candidate from Boy Scout Troop 371 (of Saco) looked to SVLT for a worthwhile project. Scout Phil Levecque proposed to build benches at scenic locations throughout the Moses Woodman Preserve in Buxton. Over several weekends last fall, Phil led a group of Scouts, parents and friends to do trail clean-up, create a loop trail to a scenic spot, Deering Lumber of Biddeford generously donated pressure-treated lumber for the project. Now there are sturdy places to sit and enjoy the peaceful surroundings: on the riverbank, at the intersection of the two major trails and at the “cliff”, which is a rocky overlook. This is a great place to stop after scrambling up the steep hill from river level! Phil also painted a map of the trail system and installed it near the entrance of the Preserve. Thanks to the many hours donated by Phil’s crew, and his able leadership, we have another improvement to Woodman Preserve, and he has successfully achieved his rank of Eagle Scout.

Sue Littlefield



Eagle Scout Phil Levecque

Tripp in the Woods

The SVLT owns several parcels of land in various stages of management and neglect. It is the objective of the trust to improve the management of those properties for open space, wildlife habitat and timber production. There are two properties which represent opposite ends of the management scale.

The Woodman Preserve property in Buxton is an old farm that was abandoned in the early 1900’s. At that time the lot was mostly open field and pasture. Since then trees have reclaimed the site and have grown unmanaged for one hundred years. As you walk on the trails created by several Eagle Scouts you will notice the poor quality of the trees and the high amount of disease and dead wood. The trust has started to slowly remove the poorest quality trees to begin the process of improving the health of the forest. This is a long term project, akin to weeding carrots on a one hundred year cycle.

The Tapley Road property in North Saco is also a portion of a farm. The previous owners had the forethought in the 1950’s to hire a forester and begin managing the woodlot for the long term. Over the years many harvests have been conducted to thin the woodlot under the direction of a forester. As a result the current woodlot has a high percentage of healthy, high value trees. The value per acre exceeds that of the Woodman lot by a large margin, not to mention that all the harvests in the interim were income to the landowner. Additionally the harvests have created a multi-age structure in the forest and a variety of wildlife thrives in the various types of habitat available.

Joel Tripp

We Need You!!!!

Some ways to help:

Consider helping as a property monitor

Volunteer for a boundary-marking day

Encourage friends to join

Share our website with your email list

Help us update our web-site

Become a board member or volunteer your skills

Get out and walk our properties and
share what you find with others.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

We greatly appreciate your support each year!

We use your annual membership dues for our general operating expenses.

Name _____

Address or email _____

Membership Level:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____ (any amount)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Please share this newsletter with your friends!!! We are happy to mail, or email copies: Contact us at sacovalley@gmail.com or POB 1581, Saco, Me



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