



SACO VALLEY LAND TRUST

2019

Conserving Land in the Lower Saco River Valley since 1988
sacovalleylandtrust.org

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*Meetings are held
on the first Thursday,
monthly, 7 pm,
Saco City Hall.*

*Annual meeting:
May 3, 2018*

*Website-
For information and
maps:
sacovalleylandtrust.org:*

*Facebook.com/
sacovalleylandtrust*

*Contact us:
sacovalleymaine
@gmail.com
P.O. Box 1581
Saco, ME 04072*

Conservation Bridge Campaign Update:

In 2017, we started a conversation about purchasing a lot abutting our 72 acre Land Stewards parcel on West St. in Biddeford. Soon after signing a purchase agreement for that lot, we were approached by another abutter with a generous offer to create a separate house lot before selling their home and to sell the remaining 50 acres for conservation. We saw the value in these lots, as they directly connected Land Stewards and the Chretien Donation parcel, and brought our holdings much closer to the Cranberry Marsh North Easement across Guinea Rd. Now we had a big project and made the commitment to push forward with grantwriting and appeals to local residents and businesses.

With much assistance from our development assistant Suzanne Foley-Ferguson and from the Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative, we have met nearly half of our financial goal, have completed the purchase of the two lots with an internal loan, and are continuing outreach in the Biddeford area. We hope to continue acquisition of connector lots from willing landowners through donation or purchase in the coming years.

This project will:

- Increase the habitat value of our other holdings in the area by expanding contiguous acreage
- Provide an opportunity for some habitat improvement to attract New England Cottontail and woodcock
- Provide further research on these valued habitats to guide us in planning for future public access across a potentially wide area of connected protected land within a high-development pressure area.
- Allow for limited timber stand improvement, which will provide additional funds to cover purchase and stewardship



We extend our appreciation to the following foundations and businesses, who also recognize the value of larger connected areas of special habitat:

Fields Pond Conservation Foundation • Davis Conservation Foundation
Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund • Student members of the UNE Environmental Club
Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution • Hannaford Community Bags Program

Recognition, too, for our many loyal members who contributed:

Mary & Bill Johnson • David & Melinda Anderson • Inga Browne • Jim & Edna Leary
Bill & Lorraine Hutchins • Robert Filgate • Joyce Purvis • Nancy Richmond • Marjorie Miller

Adding value to this project are Natural Resource Conservation Service, which is funding management plans and underwriting habitat improvement on the Land Stewards parcel, and the Maine Natural Areas Program, which provided a wetlands functions and values assessment and a natural resource survey on both lots. Also, York County Soil and Water District sponsored our application to MOHF and will participate in management assistance.

2018 Accomplishments

- Purchased 89 acres in the West St./Guinea Rd. block
- Purchased ESRI mapping software to improve our land management information
- Hired a development assistant
- Completed several management plans and accomplished some management tasks.
- Created a Capital Fund within our treasury to allow us to quickly sign Purchase and Sale agreements
- Discussed ways to collaborate with Scarborough Land Trust in the North Saco/Nonesuch River area
- Worked with NRCS on management plans, crop tree release and invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle removal.
- Was an aggrieved party in a timber trespass case brought by the Maine Forest Service, which resulted in a requirement that the logger carry insurance for all future jobs.
- Worked on a boundary swap on the Great Cranberry Marsh parcel that redefined a poorly described line and gives the marsh more of a protected setback from potential development
- Welcomed two volunteers from Biddeford, who have some great plans to make the Moreau Donation and Davis Farm more accessible from Benson Rd.

We would like to share the following letter of support from Paul Dest of the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve in support of our Conservation Bridge Project.

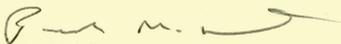
The Wells Reserve recommends that the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund board of directors fund of Saco Valley Land Trust's "Little River Conservation Bridge" project. If successful, this acquisition would increase SVLT's already significant holdings in the Little River watershed in Biddeford, further protect the vernal pool complex that occurs in this watershed, and provide opportunities for stream connectivity and habitat restoration projects.

The Little River watershed is an often-overlooked body of water. Its tributaries originate in the uplands of Biddeford southwest of Route 1, flowing quietly through a rural part of this community. The fact that there is a significant amount of undeveloped land east of Route 1 in this rapidly growing region of Maine is unusual, providing conservation opportunities that may not exist in 10 to 20 years. The waters of this river system eventually cross under Route 9, where they become estuarine, forming the border between Biddeford and Kennebunkport. Significant sections of the lower portion of the Little River – with its vast salt marshes and pine-oak uplands -- are part of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge.

The Conservation Bridge project would protect 90 acres in the watershed upstream from the Refuge, adding to the acreage currently under conservation. This would help protect the water quality of the river, as its forested buffers would remain intact. In addition, there are opportunities to restore and/or create early successional habitat for the New England cottontail and other species on the property, and to remove two stream barriers that will improve connectivity for fish. These projects will most likely only occur if the land is protected.

Over the next 10 years, SVLT has an opportunity to protect significant acreage in this watershed. The Little River Conservation Bridge project is a great place to start.

Sincerely,



Paul M. Dest
Reserve Director



Access over the stream at the Moreau Donation was nearly impassable (above). Rick's long day of brush removal provides seasonally wet, but useable, access across the old Benson Rd. Be aware that the road is washed out in one area creating problems at times. See Rick's letter at right, p3.....



Management Plans-a Key to Improved Value

As part of our slow-but-steady work towards becoming a nationally-accredited land trust, we are focusing on improving oversight of our parcels. NRCS-funded management plans of our in-fee properties are a very useful tool. The forester we hire with this funding provides information about soil types, wetlands, tree species, invasive plants and habitat. He also makes sure the boundaries are marked clearly and that any deed restrictions are followed. After reviewing these plans, we may also ask a biologist for further information on habitat and species, and recommendations for protecting vernal pools and other high value habitat.

Continues on back page



Yes! I want to join Saco Valley Land Trust in 2019 and support conservation in Biddeford, Saco and Buxton.

Name _____ new - returning member

Address if different from Mailing label _____

Email(permission to send quarterly newsletters) _____

Join as a **Member** \$30 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 other \$ _____

Join as a **Business Sustaining Member** \$100 \$200 \$250 \$500 other \$ _____

Donate to the **Conservation Bridge Project** \$ _____

Please mail to: Saco Valley Land Trust, P.O. Box 1581, Saco, Me 04072
Donations by debit/credit card or Paypal accepted securely at our website:
sacovalleylandtrust.org



Invitation to Local Businesses

We believe that most businesses in the area recognize conservation work as valuable to the quality of life of their employees and the communities they serve. We are reaching out to local businesses to become **SUSTAINING MEMBERS of SVLT**, by pledging an annual Sustaining Membership Donation. Over the 31 years of our existence, SVLT has operated on a shoestring. New developments, such as the need to comply with national standards (insurance, yearly monitoring, up-to-date recordkeeping standards, to name a few) has increased the cost of operations significantly. In order to meet our goals and obligations, and to work to keep our present holdings protected, our basic operating costs are about \$20,000 a year for our all-volunteer organization. Use card above, or contact us at sacovalleymaine@gmail.com to join.

Congratulations to Advisory Board Member Annica McGuirk and her husband Tom Ianello on the birth of their son Pierce James!

From a new volunteer:

Good Morning All,

My volunteer work this past summer, fall and winter consisted of opening a trail at the end of SVLT's Benson Rd. on the Moreau Property in Biddeford. Also walking the Davis Farm property from Teaberry lane to the Cranberry bog on the Cranberry Marsh North Easement. I have this initial trail marked in my google map app. Will be going back and marking this with some trail work once the ground dries up a bit.

Attached are some before and after pics of the trail into the Moreau property. I spent about nine hours on a Saturday to open the access to the property. Also made some initial markings of a trail in the property. Because this property is so wet most of the time, it would probably only be a winter hiking destination. I love doing this type of work and find it very rewarding. Will keep you posted on all futures efforts. Still a lot to do !!

Rick Sargent



Saco Valley Land Trust
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IMPROVEMENTS AT WOODMAN PRESERVE

Orion DeLima, of Saco and BSA Troop 371, earned his Eagle rank by constructing a sturdy kiosk at our Moses Woodman Preserve in Buxton. Orion is a senior at

Thornton Academy. He enjoys playing music and participating in the school's theater program. Orion plans to study cybersecurity, and will attend Northeastern University. He joined Scouting as a tiger cub in first grade and has participated ever since. "Scouting has really given me an appreciation for nature and wildlife in general," Orion told us.

The Eagle rank is earned through completing a specific, approved, project that is self-designed and requires candidates to work with other organizations, seek materials and expertise, organize scouts and adults to complete the project, and answer questions about his project at his Eagle Board of Review.

Thank you to **Deering Lumber** and **Evonik Industries** for donations of material to complete this project, and thanks to Scout Troop 371 for their continuing interest in improving public access to the beautiful Moses Woodman Preserve.

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Then we can discuss questions to help us determine the best use for each lot:

- Are parcels easily accessible and have enough upland for trails or should habitat protection be our primary goal?
- How can we fight invasive species in the long run?
- What other partnerships might help us meet our various goals over time, such as habitat protection, species protection, public enjoyment and education?
- Does the parcel have areas where tree stands can be improved or could we carefully harvest mature trees in small areas?

Can we then harvest carefully, avoiding damage to soil and working during seasons when the operation will cause the least impact to valued species?

These decisions are not made lightly. The Board of SVLT is committed to responsible management of resources to meet a wide range of needs.