



# SACO VALLEY LAND TRUST

2020

Conserving Land in the Lower Saco River Valley since 1988

•**Board:**

Richard Rhames  
Nicol Tiftt  
Sue Littlefield  
Chris DiMatteo  
Denis Rioux

•**Advisory Board:**

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Sue Sladen

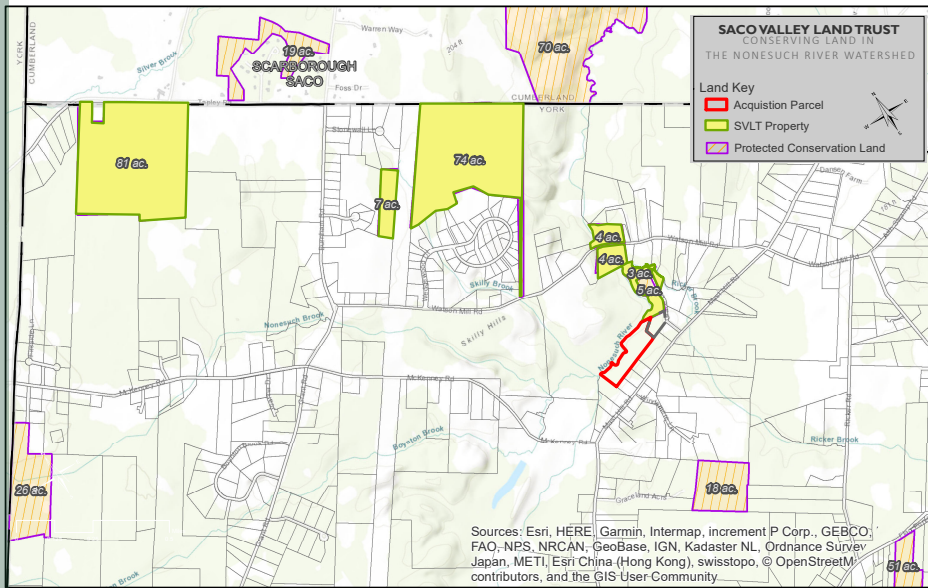
•**Meetings** are held on the first Thursday, monthly, 7 pm at Saco Transportation Station

•**Website** for maps and information:  
[sacovalleylandtrust.org](http://sacovalleylandtrust.org)

[facebook.com/sacovalleylandtrust](https://facebook.com/sacovalleylandtrust)

[sacovalleymaine@gmail.com](mailto:sacovalleymaine@gmail.com)

P.O. Box 1581  
Saco, ME 04072



## Seventh Graders team up with SVLT to 'CONSERVE OUR COMMUNITY'

• Students at Saco Middle School have teamed up with the Saco Valley Land Trust to conserve an eight acre piece of land that runs along the Nonesuch River on Grace Lane in Saco. The land will be beneficial for many people and not only people, animals too! Here at SMS we are truly passionate about helping people and animals live together and find their peace, we hope you might feel the same! The land will be the perfect place for everyone to enjoy it.

To donate online go to [sacovalleylandtrust.org](http://sacovalleylandtrust.org) then you can click the Sebago 7 tab, where there is a link to PayPal - just make sure to choose that you're supporting the Sebago Seven conservation effort. You may also send a check directly to Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution, 252 Main Street, Saco, ME 04072, to the attention of Lynne Belanger. Remember to mention that you are supporting SMS Sebago 7. We would also like to thank you in advance for your generosity!

Thanks,

Abby and the Sebago Seven Team

*If you'd like to be more involved or have questions about the project or donating, please contact Mr. Andrew Fersch (teacher) at: [afersch@sacoschools.org](mailto:afersch@sacoschools.org) or view the Sebago Seven page on SVLT's website*



# Year in Review

**2019** was full of small, but significant projects, the kind that are necessary to keep our organization moving forward. Volunteers and contract assistants, plus lots of Board member commitment made 2019 a year of momentum.

- A survey was completed of our Land Stewards parcel on West St. in Biddeford-important because this parcel plays a key role in the ongoing Conservation Bridge Project (CBP). CBP's goal is to connect as many of our lots in Eastern Biddeford as possible through purchase or donation; creating more permanent protection for the area's unique habitat and protecting water quality.

- We have been working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to create management plans for all our properties. Management Plans for the focus lots of CBP-including Land Stewards, were all completed in 2019, and the plan has suggested control of invasive plants, such as honeysuckle and buckthorn before doing a harvest designed to open up space for the remaining trees to grow faster and be healthier. A loop trail for small-scale logging equipment has been laid out through all three lots, on the high ground and away from sensitive wetlands. It is possible this process will give us a foundation for a trail system and public parking.

This whole area of forest has grown up, mostly unmanaged, since it was almost completely destroyed in the Fire of 1947. Our forester works to minimize disruption, to give wide berth to any sensitive habitat, to use platforms or tree waste to protect necessary water crossings, to leave important habitat features such as standing dead trunks and to use slash (tree limbs) on the ground to provide food and protection for sprouting trees and small wildlife, as well as to return nutrients to the soil over time.

- The Trust, represented by two of our Board members, spoke against a zoning change in the Cranberry Marsh North/Guinea Rd., Biddeford area. Mark Ward, whose field research has focused on the distribution, biology, and conservation of rare amphibian, reptile and invertebrate species in Maine, wrote a letter in support of leaving the existing zoning in place, reasoning that Rural zoning requires lower density, which will help protect the sensitive vernal pool areas on CMN.

- At the Woodman Preserve in Buxton, our forester eliminated invasive plants over the last two years. In January 2020 a small logging operation took place on the higher ground away from the river. Goals were to thin the hemlock stand to improve the health of the remainders, which may increase their odds of survival when the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid inevitably reaches this area. Opening up the canopy allows the tree's roots to spread, adding nutrient-absorbing capacity.

Hardwood areas were also thinned, focusing on harvest-sized ash trees. An Eagle Scout candidate from Saco's Troop 371 plans to create a loop trail through this area for his project. More on that as it progresses!





## YES! I want to join Saco Valley Land Trust and support conservation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address, if different from mailing label \_\_\_\_\_

Join as a MEMBER \$30 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Join as a BUSINESS or INDIVIDUAL SUSTAINING MEMBER \$100 \$200 \$250 \$500 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donate to the Conservation Bridge Project \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donate to the Sebago Seven "Conserve our Community" project \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donations by debit/credit card or PayPal accepted securely at our website: [sacovalleylandtrust.org](http://sacovalleylandtrust.org)

## Sustaining Individual and Business Memberships

As with any decades-old volunteer entity, we sometimes struggle with organizational details and securing resources to further our perpetual conservation mission. Over the last few years we've been fortunate to find some part-time/project-based assistants who've been willing to work at reduced rates helping with grant writing, technical support, and on-the-ground tasks.

We are currently working to "build the capacity" of SVLT: Increasing membership and available resources with which to continue to build on past success. Most of our Trust's early acquisitions were based on donations of land or easements. But, despite the tax advantages, not everyone can simply donate their land for conservation. These days parcels must often be purchased (even if at a reduced "Bargain Sale" rate).

We hope to further increase our membership and annual supporter base to build on the strength of our organization. [We hope you'll help.](#)



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- Many of our parcels were monitored this year, as usual. We are [required to monitor all six of our easement properties](#) annually. Someone walks the property and talks to the owner to see what is happening on the property. Each easement is written with unique retained rights and Trust responsibilities. Chappell and Huston/Timber Ridge Easements are farmed, while Carll/Merrill, New England Woods/UNE, Cranberry Marsh North and Patoine Field are left as woodland or open space. Each of these parcels have restricted access due to owners' current uses, so please check with us before visiting.



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- **Our in fee parcels are monitored every one to three years.** There are many opportunities for new volunteers in this area, especially in Biddeford. Map-reading and compass skills are useful, but many of the lots are well-demarcated and fairly easy to walk. Contact us if you are interested. Sevigny, Chretien, Conservation Bridge, Moreau, and Davis Farm are either well marked or have woods roads to follow. Contact us by email if you would like a map or survey of these parcels. Adopting a specific parcel and committing to regular monitoring is a great way to get outside and give some valuable time to your community
- We talk a lot about **invasive plants** in our efforts to maintain or improve the health of our properties. Most of these plants arrived here through nursery purchases for ornamental garden plants. Check out [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive\\_plants/invsheets.htm](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive_plants/invsheets.htm) for the updated State List of Invasive Plants. There are varying opinions among plant scientists of the proper way to view these plants, and an outright war on them is not likely to eradicate them. The main goal in forest management is to cut the population way back before tree removal, so they will not dominate, and then slow or prevent tree regrowth. Most of the common invasive here thrive in filtered sunlight, but tolerate woodland shade by leafing out earlier than the trees. Spring wildflowers have the same need, and also are threatened by invasive growth.

