



SACO VALLEY LAND TRUST

2021

Conserving Land in the Lower Saco River Valley since 1988

Board:

Richard Rhames
Nicol Tift
Sue Littlefield
Chris DiMatteo
Denis Rioux

•Advisory Board:

Mike Brennan
Nan Cone
Dan Dallaire
Tamara Gallagher
Edna Leary
Annica McGuirk
Sue Sladen

•Meetings are

usually held on the
first Thursday,
monthly, 7 pm-Check
Facebook for Covid
schedule

•Website for maps

and information:
sacovalleylandtrust.org

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

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

sacovalleymaine@gmail.com

P.O. Box 1581
Saco, ME 04072



Mission Statement:

Saco Valley Land Trust's mission is to protect for future generations land of agricultural, silvicultural, recreational or biological significance, and to promote a more general understanding of the value of such conservation efforts.(1988)

Saco Valley Land Trust was created 33 years ago, and our mission has changed little since then. Today, it seems that our original mission is even more timely.

In 2021 and beyond, population growth and development pressure will continue to shrink valuable habitat, and planning is needed to maintain habitat corridors that allow species to maintain healthy populations. *SVLT has been focusing on several significant habitat blocks,(identified by the State in its Beginning With Habitat program) like the area around **the Great Cranberry Marsh in Biddeford**, acquiring adjoining parcels from willing sellers or donors.*

In 2021 and beyond, as extreme weather becomes more common, we need to protect our natural waterways. When unimpeded by development, watersheds and feeder streams filter sediment, replenish aquifers, and are shaped by past floods. Shaded streams protect fish habitat and slow evaporation during drought. *The Nonesuch River, once the site of a productive sawmill at the **Thurston Mill Site in North Saco**, now flows freely, providing its eco-benefits through Saco, Scarborough, Gorham, and back to the Scarborough Marsh.*

In 2021 and beyond, we are facing global warming head-on. We know that healthy soil, and the forests and farmland it nurtures, will provide carbon sequestering that helps the earth, and us, to mitigate damage. *SVLT protects over 1200 acres of farmland and forest, including the **Libby Farm property in North Saco and the Chappell Easement in Biddeford (above photo)**, and works to improve the health of both through best practices.*

In 2021 and beyond, and especially beyond Covid, we will continue to find solace in nature. *SVLT's in fee parcels, like the **Moses Woodman Preserve in Buxton**, are open to anyone for low-impact use. Many of our other parcels are trail-less, providing a true immersion experience to those who are willing to wander with a map and compass.*





Why do people want to move to our area? There are certainly many reasons, and we think that the existence of the undeveloped spaces that SVLT protects and maintains is one of them!

If you are a local employer, please consider pledging to be a yearly member of our Trust. Knowing that we can count on local businesses who have pledged a **Sustaining Business Membership** will help us to meet our obligations to expand, monitor and improve our properties to serve the needs of the community!

We will acknowledge our business partners on our Facebook page, website and in our newsletter. FMI, please contact us at sacovalleymaine@gmail.com or see our membership form on the next page.

SVLT continues its work thanks to the support of:



Davis Conservation Foundation: supporting our efforts to reach out to more potential members, supporters and volunteers

Saco Middle School's Sebago 7 & 8 team: Thank you for your dedication to raising funds: 100 friends, family and locals contributed so far, an impressive, and appreciated, showing of support. The following organizations assisted their **CONSERVE OUR COMMUNITY** project:



Fields Pond Conservation Foundation- grant for land purchase

Saco Conservation Commission- financial support

New England Grassroots Environment Fund- grant for public outreach

350Maine- organizational assistance to the students of Sebago 7

Saco & Biddeford Savings-overseeing the fundraising for this Project

THANKS to our generous local friends:

- loyal yearly members/donors: *David & Melinda Anderson, Tom Armstrong, Henry Beeuwkes & Margaret Mills, Inga & Peter Browne, Glenn Evans, William & Lorraine Hutchins, Ben Moreau, Barry Costa Pierce, Joyce Purvis, Rachel Rioux, Richard Sargent, Michael Sheldon, Harmon & Jan Woodman*
- volunteer trail maintainers
- Saco Bay Trails, for maintaining the Goosefare Trail off Rte. 1
- hannaford.bags4mycause.com and shaws.bags4mycause.com and the customers who support this program



Year in Review

It seems that 2020's projects are still ongoing, but at least we kept moving forward in this unique year. Our monthly meetings ended up being held outdoors (even this winter!) at a board member's home, since Zoom meetings didn't seem to be productive for us. Contact us by email if you would like to attend.

Our biggest 2020 project-**Conserve Our Community**, spearheaded by the group of **Saco Middle School seventh graders** (now eighth graders), **known as the Sebago 7**, did not raise enough funds before the purchase agreement expired last December on a lot on the Nonesuch River. **However, their fundraising was impressive and the project still has a chance of being completed this spring.** Please consider going to our website sacovalleylandtrust.org to donate. Funds will be used for stewardship or another land purchase, if this project cannot be completed. *Continued on next page*

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

Name _____

Address, if different from mailing label _____

We are updating our member list-will you provide us with your phone # or email address so we can contact you?

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 or memberships by debit/credit card or PayPal accepted securely at: sacovalleylandtrust.org

Continued • We have been working on a survey, have commissioned an ecological study at the newly acquired **Conservation Bridge Project**, and have flagged out a trail on the **Thurston Donation/Thurston Mill Site**, to hopefully connect to more land along the Nonesuch River (see "Conserve..." above).

• An Eagle Scout candidate from Troop 371, Nolan Green, is working on a new connector trail at **Woodman Preserve**. Bog bridges will be added in a few spots, but the trail will primarily be on higher ground, and suitable for bicycles as well as hikers and skiers. *Continued on back page*

James H. Leary 1930-2021 Remembered

Several of Saco Valley Land Trust's original founding Board are no longer with us. Most recently, North Saco dairy farmer Jim Leary passed away. Jim and his wife Edna were among those who set up Saco Land Trust as a 501c3 nonprofit corporation in the 1980s. They began the work of voluntary perpetual land conservation in the Saco Valley with an idea and a commitment. That was more than 30 years ago. SVLT is still an all-volunteer organization and the tasks of acquisition and stewardship are still the responsibility of committed conservationists like Jim and Edna Leary, the late **Alan Cone**, the late **Lew Weston**, and others who have served as directors over the decades.

SVLT was maybe a bit unique in having actual farmers on its Board. We still do. Being tied to the land lends a perspective to the work, and it's a perspective that's being lost we fear. The Leary Farm still operates. And Saco Valley Land Trust continues the work begun by the Founding Board over three decades past.

We believe that work to be more important than ever. Won't you join us as part of the next generation committed to conservation ?

Jim's family has suggested memorial donations to SVLT.

Woodman Donation, Biddeford





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• Last year we wrote about the timber harvesting that took place at the Woodman Preserve. Some of you have contacted us with concerns about the post-harvest appearance of the preserve, and we understand. Even we who frequent the Preserve are having to get used to how some areas have changed, but we know from experience that the woodland will swiftly recover. There's still some work to do to the campsite area - the dying pines had to be removed for safety, and the appearance of that area will be improved when the remaining slash is cleaned up.

Our goal with this harvest was to lessen the possibility of losing all the hemlocks to *Hemlock Woolly Adelgid* in the next decade or so; removing some hemlocks will allow the rest to expand their root system and overstory, which will improve their health. Mature Ash trees are threatened by the *Emerald Ash Borer*, so some of the larger ash on the site were removed to give the young oak, ash, pine, and maple more sunlight. The upgraded road improves access and parking for trail users. The Trust also generated some income to use for stewardship needs: signs, trails, bog bridges, ecological studies. Healthier forests provide more ecological services, while still providing a place of solitude for all.

Below, L to R: Wildflowers • Regenerating pines on Cranberry Marsh North Easement • Exploring at Middle Goosefare Trail • Nonesuch River at Thurston Mill Site trail

