

NANCY CAMBEL

Tiger Hill Community Forest and the Northwest River in Sebago, ME

A New Trail for All

JUST ONE YEAR AGO, YOUR SUPPORT ENSURED THAT PEABODY-FITCH Woods in South Bridgton would be protected forever. Now under Loon Echo Land Trust [LELT] ownership, public access for recreational opportunities including hunting, walking, and nature observation is guaranteed forever. The forest surrounds the house and fields of Bridgton Historical Society's [BHS] Narramissic Historic Farm. Peabody-Fitch Woods was originally part of the historic Peabody-Fitch Farm (now called Narramissic), which was established in 1797, just three years after Bridgton was incorporated.

Now we need your help to build a 1-mile, gravel surfaced, universally accessible trail and parking area on the property. The collaborative trail project between LELT and BHS has already raised over \$70,000, but we still need to raise another \$20,000 to ensure the project is finished in the fall.

The gravel-surfaced trail, to be constructed by Warren Excavation of Bridgton, will weave its way along rock walls, through woods and bring visitors to a viewpoint of the farm, fields, and distant White Mountains. The gently

sloping universal access trail will allow for non-motorized use; appropriate for walking, skiing, running, snowshoeing and some wheeled mobility devices. Currently, there are no facilities of this type in the greater-Bridgton area.

So far, the collaborative trail project has received funding from the State of Maine's Recreational Trail Program, Maine Land Trust Network, L.L. Bean, and private donors. Donations for the accessible trail project can be made online at lelt.org or by mailing a check to Loon Echo Land Trust at 8 Depot St, Suite 4, in Bridgton.

LELT has also secured funding to contract with professional trail builders from the Appalachian Mountain Club to construct a backcountry hiking loop on the property. This new trail should be completed in late summer 2020. We'll be seeking volunteers to put the finishing touches on the trail so stay tuned if you're interested in getting dirty with our stewardship team.

Phase two of the new trail project, scheduled for 2021 and pending fundraising efforts, will include installing interpretive signage to educate visitors about the ecology and cultural history of the land.

Peabody-Fitch Woods, the existing trail to the quarry, and the grounds of the farm are open to the public all year round. In normal times, BHS offers regular house tours for visitors. This summer, due to the current public health crisis, BHS plans to provide house tours for small groups by appointment only, with strict social distancing requirements.



LOON ECHO
LAND TRUST

NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DEAR FRIENDS,

THE WORLD IS A MUCH A DIFFERENT PLACE THAN THE LAST time you received a newsletter from Loon Echo. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new attention to the value of time spent outdoors, elevating the connections between nature and health, and further exposing inequities in

access to safe outdoor spaces.

Like many, I've sought refuge these past few months on trails and lands owned by Loon Echo. Standing on the shore of the swiftly flowing Crooked River amidst a recent spring freshet, I was assured by the evidence in front of me that yes, the familiar signs of the season have not changed, unlike so many other aspects of our lives. I think I can speak on behalf of thousands of recent visitors to our lands when I say thank you. Thank you for your support of land conservation that has ensured moments of peace in a time of crisis. As if we needed another reason to believe in conservation, we can add "pandemic emotional therapy" to the list. As we begin to look toward recovery however, how can we ensure that access to the outdoors is a human right?

Simply put, we need your help now more than ever to make sure that land conservation is prioritized as an essential component for the health and resilience of our communities. I wish I could paint a rosy picture about the future of land conservation in Maine, but the truth is,

public funding for this work is at its lowest point in many years. The State of Maine's conservation funding program, Land for Maine's Future, has not been replenished since 2012. A bill to provide funding was not acted on in 2019, and it's looking increasingly unlikely that it will be acted on in 2020. Of the nearly \$2 million dollars that LETL has raised in the last 3 years to protect 2,000 acres of land in the Lake Region, zero dollars came from the State of Maine. Furthermore, a 2019 report from the Connecticut-based Highstead Foundation concluded that "Following the 2008 recession, [private] foundation support for organizations focused on land conservation and management declined almost 50%. Declines in support for land trusts specifically were even more severe."

Friends, your support for this work is as critical now as it has ever been. Land conservation makes our communities more beautiful, equitable, resilient, and safe. It provides peace in our greatest times of turmoil. And right now, it needs your support. Please, if you live in Maine, call your legislators and ask them to support the Lands for Maine's Future Program. If you can, consider a donation to Loon Echo and other local land conservation organizations. COVID-19 has once again illuminated the indispensable need for land conservation, but we are at a critical moment in the history of this movement. Your voice and your support is needed.

Thank you and be well,



WELCOME, AIDAN!

WE'RE EXCITED TO WELCOME aidan hagerty to the LETL Team! Aidan is LETL's first ever summer stewardship intern. Aidan has already been hard at work assisting Jon with trail work, removing graffiti from Pleasant Mountain, and collecting data about trail usage and infrastructure. Currently residing in Denmark, Aidan is a rising sophomore at St. Lawrence University and enjoys rock climbing, skiing, and fishing.

Want more frequent updates from LETL?

Sign up to receive LETL's monthly E-News on our website or by sending an email to Maggie (membership@lelt.org).

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UNPRECEDENTED CIRCUMSTANCES

IN EARLY APRIL, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR 33-YEAR HISTORY, LELT made the difficult decision of temporarily closing the backcountry trail system at Pleasant Mountain Preserve. The closure, at the request of local fire departments and health professionals, came in response to rescues occurring far into the forest in late March, requiring the response of multiple departments and dozens of individuals. Another rescue on the mountain would have required dozens of individuals to come in close proximity with each other, and would have required large amounts of PPE when supplies were low. To show support for our community first responders & their families, we made the tough decision to temporarily close those trails.

While the closure was understood and supported by the vast majority, use of the trail continued. The trail closure brought on a unique set of stewardship challenges. Temporary 'trail closed' signs were removed and stolen multiple times. Pleasant Mountain was also the victim of vandalism. Since reopening, LELT stewardship staff and volunteers have picked up trash from the trail and removed graffiti from the ledges and summit.

These beloved trails were reopened in May to the joy of many. The trail network on Pleasant Mountain receives 20,000 visitors per year (as measured by infrared trail counters at trail heads). Pleasant Mountain is one of the most popular hikes in the State. Many features contribute to the popularity of the trails & mountain: its status as the tallest mountain in Southern Maine, its close proximity to Portland, the views, the ease of access, and multiple trail options.

With access to the outdoors more important than ever, LELT's other 11 preserves and 20 miles of trails remained open while the Pleasant Mountain trails were closed. We'd like to thank everyone out on the trails for choosing to recreate responsibly and doing their part to keep themselves and others safe and healthy.



Aiden removing graffiti.

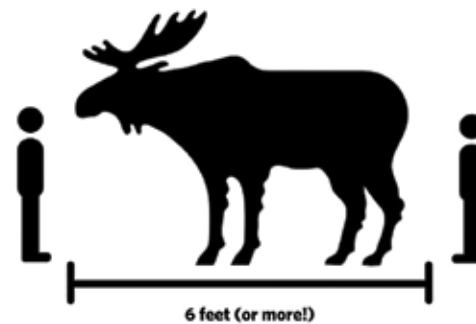
Guess that wildflower!

Answers on page 7



Remember!

Always keep at least one moose of space between you and others



This Maine physical distancing reminder brought to you by The Nature Conservancy

Annual Meeting will be Virtual

LELT's 33rd annual meeting will be virtual this year. Tune into a video presentation on Sunday, August 23rd to hear about new projects & initiatives and elect officers. The video will be available for viewing for a week after 8/23. You are invited to submit questions and discussion topics via an online form on our website. Paper ballots to elect officers will be mailed or emailed to all LELT members prior to the event. This event is free, however registration is required. Call 207-647-4352 or visit www.lelt.org/annualmeeting.

LELT EVENTS

While our regular spring schedule of events was canceled due to COVID-19, we are moving forward with plans to restart in-person, outdoor events this summer. All 2020 LELT events will take current guidance from state and local officials into consideration in order to protect the health of everyone in our community. **Precautions include physical distancing,**

limiting the number of participants, required pre-registration, and wearing masks when distancing is not possible. All events are subject to cancellation and/or changes.

Please visit lelt.org/events of our Facebook page for detailed information and registration prior to attending an event.

Date	Event	Location
July 20, 12:30 pm - 1:15 pm	Pondicherry Park Walk	Pondicherry Park
August 3, 12:30 pm - 1:15 pm	Pondicherry Park Walk	Pondicherry Park
August 5, 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Acoustic Sunset with Bruce Marshall	Narramissic & Peabody-Fitch Woods (and online)
August 12, 9:00 pm - 2:00 am	Evening Star Party	Hacker's Hill Preserve
August 15, 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Acoustic Sunset with Christine & Mo	Hacker's Hill Preserve (and online)
August 17, 12:30 pm - 1:15 pm	Pondicherry Park Walk	Pondicherry Park
August 21, 7:45 pm - 10:00 pm	Maine Outdoor Film Festival	Hacker's Hill Preserve
August 23, 5:00 pm - 5:45 pm	33rd Annual Meeting	Online - Wherever you are!
August 31, 12:30 pm - 1:15 pm	Pondicherry Park Walk	Pondicherry Park
September 5, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Hawk Migration Watch	Hacker's Hill Preserve
September 19th - 27th	Trek for the Trails <i>Presented by Norway Savings Bank</i>	LELT Preserves



What Will Your Legacy Be? You're Invited to join the Bob Chase Legacy Society

Land conservation is forever. Through a planned gift to Loon Echo Land Trust, you can leave a legacy of abundant natural resources, scenic views, working forests, space to recreate, and safeguard our rural character for generations to come.

There are many ways to make a planned gift. If you would like to ensure that our forests are protected for future generations to enjoy, consider a gift to LELT in your estate plan, or name LELT as a beneficiary of your retirement account or life insurance policy.

Anyone who makes a bequest or other planned gift to LELT becomes a member of the Bob Chase Legacy Society. Bob Chase was a lover of the natural world. Passionate and charismatic, Bob's vision and leadership were a driving force behind Loon Echo's initial formation and successes until his passing in 2005. In naming the Legacy Society after Bob, we seek to honor his lifelong commitment to make the world a better place.

Legacy gifts may provide you or your estate with important tax benefits. Be sure to consult with your attorney or a trusted personal adviser to determine which gift(s) is most appropriate for you. If you have general questions, please contact us at 207-647-4352. Learn more at www.lelt.org/members/legacygiving.



MAKING IT TO THE TOP — Bob Chase, (center), outgoing president of Loon Echo Land Trust, is assisted in reaching the summit of Bald Pate Mountain by friends and fellow Loon Echo Land Trust members, (from left), Lou Dapas, Friends of Bald Pate Mountain Co-chairman Gene Bahr, Grove Newcomb, incoming LELT Vice-president Wendy Newcomb and Connie Cross, incoming LELT president.

FROM THE BRIDGTON NEWS, JULY 3, 1997

Ballad of Bald Pate

Bob didn't let his dystrophy slow him down, he was all about community activity.

Prior to Bald Pate Mountain, our land trust had never faced a fundraising campaign, until this rocky knob, its land cut over, arose on our horizon for sale.

With leadership, engaged neighbors and a few long months, money was secured to purchase and protect the land.

To celebrate, we hiked to the Pate. The last leg up the outcrop Bob rode in a garden cart rolled and carried to the top.

-Eric Dibner



Kayaking the Northwest River

EXPANDING TIGER HILL COMMUNITY FOREST

WE'RE WORKING TO PROTECT MORE LAND ALONG THE Northwest River in Sebago! LELET has signed an agreement with a local landowner to purchase 20 acres of land along the river and abutting the newly established Tiger Hill Community Forest. The land will protect wetlands and important upland buffer for the Northwest River, Sebago Lake's second largest tributary, in addition to wildlife habitat in a State of Maine conservation focus area.

Once purchased by LELET, the land will also serve as a primary public access point to the Tiger Hill Community Forest and a small parking area and kiosk will be constructed. What's even more exciting about the protection of this property is that it will provide two public access points for paddlers to explore the Northwest River. As recent staff expeditions have proven, the paddling and bird watching on this upper stretch of the Northwest River is fantastic.

LELET has already secured grants from a number of private foundations and conservation programs, including the Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, Portland Water District, the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, Open Space Institute, and the Goldberg Foundation.

We need to raise just \$6,000 more dollars by the end of October to protect this land and its incredible benefits for wildlife and recreation. Please head to the 'Projects' section of our website for more information or to donate in support of this land protection effort. You can also mail a check to LELET and indicate that you'd like the donation to support the Deering-Northwest River Project in the memo line or with a note. Join us in ensuring public access and protecting more wildlife habitat in this wild and undeveloped corner of the Lake Region, forever!

Thank You.

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched every aspect of our society. Thank you to our members for your continued support during these uncertain times. Your support of LELET ensures that our forests and open spaces endure through thick and thin, in good times and in times of stress. Your support means the community has access to trails and other outdoor spaces. Maine's Lake Region remains a special place, thanks for helping keep it that way forever.

Supporting Local

We hope you will continue to support your local businesses and nonprofits as you are able to during this uncertain time. We are all interconnected, and the well-being of our community depends on your support. We're committed to buying and contracting locally whenever possible. Thanks to our local business sponsors and vendors:

Allagash Brewing	Khiel Excavation
Baxter Brewing	Maine Street Graphics
Brian Grady	Migis Lodge
Bridgton Books	Mike Harmon Property Services
Bridgton News	Minuteman Press/Cardinal Printing
Camp Laurel South	Muddy River Signs
Chalmers Insurance	Northwest Forest Management LLC
Dianne Lewis Design	Norway Savings Bank
Fernwood Cove Camp	Nurture Through Nature
Gateway Marina	Panther Run Marina
Grandy Oats	Pleasant Mountain Camping
Gray Forestry Supply	Shawnee Peak Ski Area
Hancock Lumber	Ski Hot, INC
Hatch Excavation	Squeaky Clean Laundromat
Hayes True Value	The Good Life Market
Jones & Matthews PA	Warren Excavation
Jotul North America	Winona Camps
K. Tarr Construction	Wyonegonic Camps
Kettle Cove Marina	

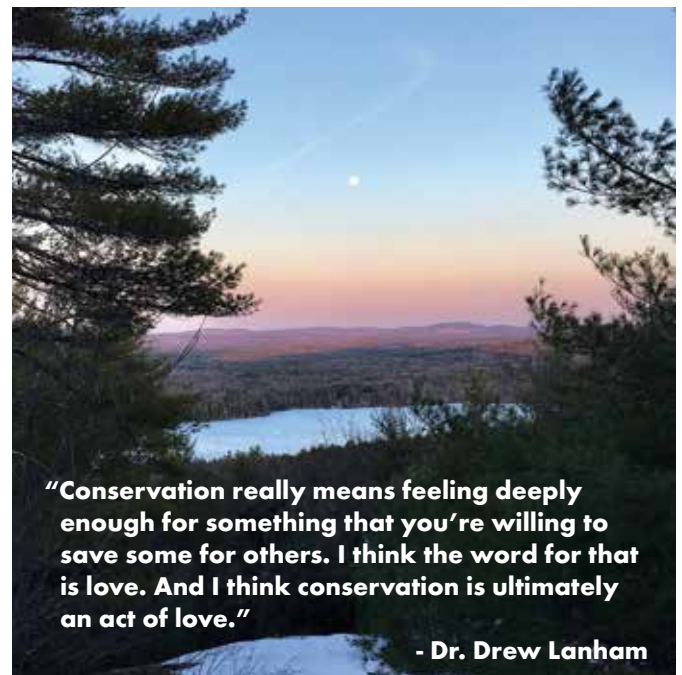
CARES Act & Your Giving

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides incentives for people to make contributions in order to support nonprofits that will be hard hit by the economic shutdown.

If you use the standard deduction and give up to \$300 to charity in a year, you can add up to \$300 to the standard deduction.

If you itemize, for 2020 you can now deduct 100% of your charitable contributions from your adjusted gross income (up from the previous 50% cap). If you have a business, the 10% limit has been increased to 25%.

Loon Echo Land Trust encourages you to speak with your tax professional about these changes to learn how they impact your personal finances.



"Conservation really means feeling deeply enough for something that you're willing to save some for others. I think the word for that is love. And I think conservation is ultimately an act of love."

- Dr. Drew Lanham

NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

EACH YEAR WHEN I FLIP THE CALENDAR TO MARCH, I LOOK fondly to the awkward transition from winter to spring. Some years the trails are fully packed in snow and winter is very much in charge. Others, winter loses its grip early and spring fever ensues. March 2020 threw a curveball. LELT staff were ready.

As COVID impacted our region, Loon Echo trails and forests became a place to escape to. Unconditional love; these protected spaces allowed us to feel alive and normal when everything else was so different.

However, there were days when there was too much love. Our preserves saw unprecedented use in March, and particularly April. Parking areas at some of our most popular preserves—Pleasant Mountain, Bald Pate Mountain, and Raymond Community Forest—overflowed.

As a result of sustainable trail building standards and the commitment of many, Loon Echo's trails welcomed the masses, and handled the traffic wonderfully. Since 2005, Loon Echo has raised and invested over \$100,000 in trail hardening and erosion control projects.

The volunteer stewards that help maintain the 35-mile trail system do a fine job keeping ahead of the curve and providing guests with a top notch experience. We cannot do it without them. I would like to recognize Ken Hoch and Linda Horowitz for their years of volunteer trail work at Bald Pate Mountain. I have been at LELET since 2008 and they have volunteered for trails and conservation easement monitoring every year. Thank you both (and the pups)!

Despite everything that was not happening this spring, Loon Echo was very busy behind the scenes planning for trail building at Peabody-Fitch Woods, conserved in 2019. As conditions allow, construction of parking and multi-use trails will begin this summer. Currently there are public benefit snowmobile, ATV and pedestrian trails. By the end of 2020, new walking trails, ski trails and pedestrian trails will be installed. LELET is proud to collaborate on this cultural experience with the Bridgton Historical Society. Stay tuned and stay involved with this exciting project!

In closing, I would like to thank Aidan Haggerty of Denmark, Maine, for accepting the job as Loon Echo's first ever intern! He has worked closely with the stewardship aspects of land management and has displayed poise, character and wisdom that are beyond his years. Aidan increased LELET capacity to address preserve management issues and provide consistency for our visitors. He will be resuming studies at St Lawrence University in New York in the fall. Thank you for being my right hand man all summer!



Jon Evans, Stewardship Manager

Find us on YouTube

Did you know that we have a YouTube channel? You can watch videos taken on our preserves as well as our curated playlists of videos by other people about the outdoors, land management, and our trails. Search "Loon Echo Land Trust" on YouTube to start watching!





JERRY MONKMAN

The Northwest River & Tiger Hill Community Forest, looking north.

THE NATURE OF RESILIENCY

The term “climate resilience” is one you’ve probably been seeing with more frequency. It refers to the set of conditions that allow an ecosystem to endure, recover from, and adapt to severe weather, including storms, flooding, droughts, and high temperatures. Similar to the way in which many people and man-made systems are stressed beyond capacity during this assault on the norm caused by the pandemic, elements of the natural world are at increasing risk of losing function owing to the ongoing shocks of a warming climate.

The good news is that LETL and other land trusts play a key role in mitigating the effects of climate change by identifying, protecting, and managing landscapes that are able to adjust to changing conditions. These lands not only support wildlife, but also offer a host of human health benefits, including clean air and water. By working with partner organizations as part of the Sebago Clean Waters (SCW) initiative, we are able to share resources and knowledge that make more of this critical work possible.

You might be wondering, “How does one determine which lands have these climate-resilient superpowers?” Enter the Resilient and Connected Lands data developed by The Nature Conservancy, an SCW partner. This data is one key set of information we map—along with other wildlife habitat and water quality characteristics—to inform the decisions we make about land conservation priorities.

The Resilient and Connected Lands data rates resiliency based on factors such as geophysical settings, landscape diversity, local connectedness, and biodiversity. The Tiger Hill Community Forest and Peabody-Fitch Woods are two high-resilience lands that LETL recently conserved. For example, Peabody-Fitch Woods shares a boundary with the 1,400-acre Perley Mills Community Forest and is close to



Bald Pate Mountain Preserve, making it highly connected. Among the elements that make the Tiger Hill Community Forest rank high in biodiversity are its waterways that support eastern brook trout, landlocked salmon, and a smelt spawning run.

Financial and technical support from SCW and several of its partner organizations was instrumental in conserving these climate-resilient lands, and will continue to be as we identify other suitable parcels to protect in the future. Working closely with other land trusts and conservation organizations is a crucial part of building a network of lands that are able to recover quickly from disruptive change. In doing so, we are protecting both environmental and human health.

Sebago Clean Waters (SCW) is a collaborative effort of nine conservation organizations working to protect water quality, community well-being, a vibrant economy, and fish and wildlife habitat in the Sebago region through voluntary forestland conservation. SCW’s goal is to protect 25 percent (35,000 more acres) of the Sebago Lake watershed in the next 15 years. To learn more, visit sebagocleanwaters.org.

Answers to Wildflower “Quiz” page 3

1. Red Trillium, *Trillium erectum*
2. Fringed polygala (“Gaywinds”), *Polygala paucifolia*
3. Sessileleaf Bellwort (“Wild Oats”), *Uvularia sessilifolia*
4. Pink Lady’s Slipper, *Cypripedium acaule*
5. Painted Trillium, *Trillium undulatum*
6. Goldthread, *Coptis trifolia*



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PRESENTED BY Norway Savings Bank

**September 19th, 2020 –
 September 27th, 2020**

Out of care for the health and safety our community, the 20th anniversary of the Loon Echo Trek is going virtual! And we're switching it up a bit. We hope you're as excited about the new format as we are. Proceeds from the Trek support the maintenance of LElt's trails and the creation of new opportunities for people to be together outdoors. Give back to the trails, Trek for the Trails!

How it Works

Get outside for a hike, walk, run, skip or stroll on any of LElt's 12 conserved properties (ranging from Pleasant Mountain to Hacker's Hill Preserve) from 9/19/20 - 9/27/20. A time-trial trail race on Pleasant Mountain is available for the competitive folks. Top finishers in each age category will be rewarded with a coveted Good Life Market pie and Strava bragging rights. All other participants can complete their "Trek" by visiting any LElt preserve from September 19 to September 26. That means even a drive up to Hacker's Hill makes you a Trekker!

All Trekkers will automatically be entered into a raffle for prizes from local businesses, including one-day lift tickets and a 2020-2021 season pass to Shawnee Peak Ski Area!! Participants are encouraged to document their Trek with photos and videos.

Cost

\$20 Adult
 FREE for Youth 16 and under
 Register at www.lelt.org/trek

PROTECTING LAND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Loon Echo Land Trust conserves over 8,000 acres of land and maintains 32 miles of multi-use recreational trail for the benefit of the public. These important open spaces protect the region's water resources, wildlife habitat, working forests, scenic views, recreational opportunities and rural character. A membership driven non-profit, Loon Echo welcomes all those who have a passion for protecting the region's land and quality of life for current and future generations.

Loon Echo Land Trust proudly serves the towns of Bridgton, Casco, Denmark, Harrison, Naples, Raymond and Sebago.

Stay connected with Loon Echo!

- Like Loon Echo Land Trust on Facebook
- Follow @loonecholandtrust on Instagram
- Follow @loonecholandtrust on Twitter
- Signup for our monthly E-News on our website, www.lelt.org



LElt Membership

Join or renew today! A donation of any amount makes you a LElt member for one year. Your gift to LElt supports all the work that goes into protecting and stewarding the landscape of the northern Sebago Lake region.

- \$50 - Individual \$100 - Family \$250 - Land Steward
 \$500 Conservator \$1000 - Trustee \$_____

Check Enclosed or Credit/Debit Card #: _____ Exp Date: _____

Name(s): _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

- I'd like to remain anonymous. Please save paper and do not send a thank you. I'm interested in volunteering.

Return to: Loon Echo Land Trust 8 Depot St, Ste 4 Bridgton, ME 04009

Visit loonecholandtrust.org/donate for more giving options or to donate directly online.