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To promote conservation of the Chiputneticook Lakes

# W OODIE WHEATON LAND TRUST

C O N S E R V A T I O N   N O T E S

Issue 13, Fall 2016

## Chiputneticook Lakes Region . . . *personal observation*

*by Josh Levitsky, B.S. Environmental Biology*



Spending time in Northern Maine is great for the soul. If you love to fish or explore the woods, an experience here will galvanize you to come back.

In this region, characterized as the southern extent of the boreal forest, one finds a lot more than just sprawling acres of woods. The land here is a vast patchwork of lakes emptying into rivers, with bogs forming on the water’s borders, and as you move up in elevation you will find what seems like never-ending forest. Many folks treasure the hunting experience and wildlife photo opportunities of moose, deer, grouse and

even an occasional black bear, all due to the wide range of habitat in this region. The good luck fishermen find with landlocked salmon, smallmouth bass and their favorite shore lunch of white perch can be ascribed to the fresh, crystal clear, Class A, clean water.

One of my favorite hobbies while out paddling in the canoe or hiking on the trails is to scan the lake shore or forest floor for often overlooked but truly distinguishable plants and wildflowers. The following are a few accounts of these interesting little discoveries I have found around Forest City, Maine.

At the south end of Mud Lake, where it flows down the East Branch of the St. Croix river is a grove of old growth hemlocks, dating back to at least the early 1900s. In addition to being dwarfed by giant hemlocks, you can experience Mud Lake Falls, a large cascading step waterfall. Adjacent to Mud Lake Falls,

this 500-acre conserved land thick with giant hemlock, pine and birch provides habitat for colorful, unique and interesting wildflowers, lichens, mushrooms, fauna, vernal pools and a host of other plants only seen under such conditions. During the fishing season, guides often cook lunch at “the stream” and encourage guests to take the short hike through this old growth forest to the always popular view from the head of the falls. While on this same walk I came across the beautiful red cardinal flower and the distinct two-tiered leaf arrangement of the indian cucumber root. When found in abundance, you can dig two or so inches under ground below the stem of the indian cucumber root plant and you will find a delicious snack. The end of the root contains a protruding white, edible bulb. Once you clean off the dirt, you can enjoy a bite with a flavor resembling, as the name suggests, fresh cucumber!

*Continued on NEXT PAGE ►*





# A Living Legacy

*The Woodie Wheaton Land Trust is grateful for the lasting Legacies of Robert Hector, Burt and Sarina Gwirtzman, Sam and Betty Shine and Ruth Wheaton. We are reminded daily of their unique footprint. Such generosity has inspired the Trust in unprecedented ways. Endowments created, land donated and Sarina's broad support toward closing an outstanding balance on Dri-Ki Point have positively impacted the forward progress of the Trust.*

As we prepare for the future, we move forward with a new Conservation Manager and a younger generation of board members with vested interest in the future of this lakes region. Like all of us, they recognize its unbroken shorelines, crystal clear and clean water, and expansive biodiversity as imprinted reminders that it all matters.

A combination of institutional memory and new approaches to the land and its exploratory offerings will help guide our efforts. Youth and inspiration, appreciation for those things not often noticed along the trail, and a zest for silent sports, wildlife, adventure, and traditional uses put greater emphasis on the good work of the Trust. Guides, especially seasoned guides, have helped shape this vision, and are now able to reflect on what has been accomplished as we near our 25-year mark.

Our volunteer Board of Directors, working tirelessly to fulfill our mission, recognizes the funding lynchpin that confronts land trusts today. With both federal and state funding to support conservation needs at a standstill, the burden to fund a small but necessary staff is critical to the future. The strategic importance of planned giving with named endowments as non-material legacies weighs heavily in capitalizing on new opportunities.

We stand committed to conserve the vistas, unspoiled shorelines and special places of this region. Perhaps around a noon campfire you communed together and touched the earth on such beautiful and storied Spednic lunch sites as "Muncie", "The Stream", "Monument Island", "Squatters", "Birch Island" or the "Sand Beach" or East Grand sites like "Greenland Island", "Norway Point", "Art's Annex" and "The Hideaway".

Many are tucked beyond view, nestled in the shade amongst unblemished shorelines, where eagles and loons nest each year, surrounded by the picturesque expanse of fir, spruce or hardwood, a backdrop of our precious granite shorelines. These are our gentle footprints, favorite respites of wisdom, shared with integrity, meaning and a sense of place that are ultimately timeless. For over 60 years, folks have revisited these memorable places, telling the old stories, feasting on landscapes and breathtaking expanses of water, then returning refreshed to a busy world.

We invite you to consider a named endowment, signifying a legacy and lasting footprints from folks who care, who are proud of a lifetime of relationships, accomplishments, truths and values that will live on in the lives and places they've touched.

*Art Wheaton*

*Continued from page 1*

Still another local adventure is the newly built East Grand Highlands Overlook Trail, just across East Grand Lake. The hike from the trailhead to the scenic overlook alternates from dense birch and maple forests to colorful flowering meadows. Each flower within these meadows has an ephemeral life, with a series of new wildflowers continually blooming as the year goes on. From spring until fall, you will first be amazed by purple lupine, then awed by bright pink fireweed, and as the leaves start to change you are left with the yellow of solidago (goldenrod). This transition from one flower to the next makes the trail bright with colors from spring until fall.

As the Highland Trail system continues to expand, additional areas are being explored for new possibilities. While volunteering to flag the initial framework of these new trails, I came across a clearing littered with pink lady slipper orchids. These orchids are quite the treasure, with beautiful pink and white colorations throughout their unique, delicate flowers. I am sure there will be many more future discoveries in store as the trail is extended.

Through the local guides and friendships made, I have been fortunate enough to have had these rewarding experiences this summer. My hope is that others may be just as fortunate with their opportunities. Whether your time outside is spent casting a line, paddling a kayak, hiking new trails, or walking new covers with a bird dog, be sure to take a little extra time to look around and acknowledge those things that often go unnoticed.



# *Congratulations* New Conservation Manager *Anna Rickard*

We take a moment to congratulate Anna Rickard, who has recently been promoted to Conservation Manager. With her 2016 B.S. Degree in Geo-environmental Studies and a minor in Biology from Shippensburg University, preceded by a two-year tenure with WWLT as an intern and administrative assistant, she continues to be a great asset to our team.

Anna enjoys, camping, kayaking, canoeing, shooting, and exploring the area with her dog BB. She has mastered the traffic in Forest City as well as the personalities of our diverse board of directors.... surely more challenging than GIS mapping.



## The Heart of Our Mission

*by Dale Wheaton, Director & Lands Committee Chair*



The Woodie Wheaton Land Trust's mission to conserve lands remains at the heart of our purpose. The Lands Committee is always working to identify parcels having tangible public benefit and to create opportunities to bring them under Trust stewardship. Such efforts may be in the form of land acquisition to achieve conservation objectives, to secure public access, or to enhance availability of outdoor recreational opportunity. Buying property is but one of many tools. We may hold conservation easements to protect wild and natural values or engage in partnerships to resolve environmental issues on the ground. In all arenas, we continue to be busy.

Two separate waterfront land projects were developed this past summer, both offering significant long-term value to waterway users. Neither project is mature, but we are hopeful for their future development. The Trust has also been approached to hold two conservation easements. These conversations are still preliminary.

In addition to these lands projects, WWLT has partnered with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the St. Croix International Waterway Commission to resolve erosion problems at the Spruce Mountain Cove campsite on Spednic Lake; has assiduously worked to find a way to install a much needed privy on Half Moon Island on East Grand Lake; has flagged erosion issues near "The Arm" bridge on East Grand Lake; and has facilitated routine upkeep of the Baskahegan Lake landing. The Trust has also explored with landowners the concept of two other walking trails in the area. This season WWLT worked to secure funding to improve the condition of the Castle Road (augmenting monies contributed by Mike Thomas) via our seat on the Spednic Lake/St. Croix River Stewardship Fund Committee.

In June, as part of "Stewardship Work Day", a group of guides and volunteers gathered and removed three boatloads of metal scrap from Dri-Ki Point. The point was purchased by the Trust in early 2014 and is surrounded by the forever wild lands and waters of Spednic Lake's mid-section. These scraps were the remaining evidence of a once vibrant commercial sporting operation owned by Ed and Florence Hitchens in the 1950s that occupied the site. The metal was carted to Danforth for metal recycle. A subsequent overnight visit in September tidied up residual debris from the main lodge and gave the land back to nature. Dri-Ki Point's spectacular beauty amidst miles of conserved shoreline have made it a popular waypoint for canoeists and a favored lunch spot for guides over the past several decades. Thanks go to Patrick and Sandy Patterson, Andy Brooks, Mitch Cochran, Anna Rickard, Josh Levitsky, Mike Langeluttig, Butch Myers, Dale and Jana Wheaton, and Brett Vose for their contributions to this project.

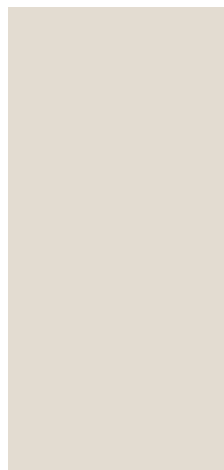




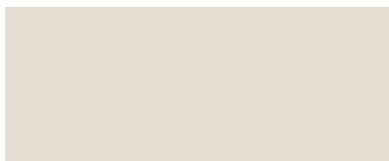
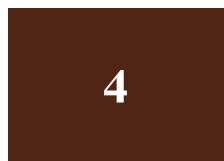
*Pleurotus populinus* (mushroomcollecting.com)



*Pleurotus ostreatus* (mushroomcollecting.com)



*Pleurotus serotinus*



# Mushrooms of Maine

by Esther Tozier, nama & mma member

*Fruit of the forest floor.... Popular mushroom talk rescheduled for next summer. From field to fork—check our website for an upcoming date!*

It is fall in Washington County, Maine, a little cool and rainy today, a much welcomed rain this year, for our wells and for a fall mushroom hunter.

I enjoyed my first wild mushroom, right here in this county about 10 years ago. It was a beautiful fall weekend; my husband and I were spending it along Musquash Stream with friends. They had a little camp nearby. We took to the woods in search of birds and mushrooms. While I had grown up eating out of the garden, our friends had grown up eating directly from the woods. And not just fiddleheads and berries.

After a great day spent traipsing through the woods, we cleaned and prepped our finds. The old cast iron frying pan was warmed up: in went a few onions, green peppers and nice fresh Oyster mushrooms. This was one of the best meals of my life! Little did I know how healthy it was as well. It was another three years before I found the link between these marvels and their medicinal qualities.

So without further ado, I would like to introduce you to a couple of the Oysters in our neighborhood. This will be a short introduction, to whet your curiosity and appetite, I hope.

On the menu that evening was *Panellus serotinus*, commonly known as the Late Fall Oyster Mushroom, or the Greenback. These delicious edibles grow clustered on dead or dying hardwoods in our area, such as beech, maple, elm, oak and birch. With caps 1-6 inches wide, smooth, shaped like fans or oyster shells, these beauties are a distinctive sight on a late fall day.

Greenbacks can range in coloring, up and down the green scale, with a touch of purple shading thrown in. Their gills are a yellowish to dull orange, leaving a yellowish spore print.

Gills are attached to stubby lateral stalks, if they have a stalk showing. *Panellus serotinus* is a great little edible to learn about.

Its cousin *Pleurotus ostreatus*, known as Oyster mushroom, Hiratake, or Tomogitake is the better known of our Oyster mushrooms. This oyster is known for its medicinal value as well as its edibility. It has a high protein content, is high in B vitamins, and contains almost all of the essential amino acids. It has been used as a nutritional supplement to help combat high cholesterol.

Oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) prefer sugar maples, alive or dead. They also will grow on beech, elm and oak and can be found from early fall in great clusters on their hosts. The white to slate, cream to pale brown colored caps range in size from 2 to 5 inches across and some are larger. They are shaped like a scallop, or semicircle.

Gills are pure white to a pale lilac/gray tint. They will leave a spore print similar to their color. Sometimes a short off-centered stalk is present. When it is, gills will run down the stalk.

*Pleurotus populinus*, also known as the Oyster mushroom, a separate species from *Pleurotus ostreatus*, is described and used in the same way. *Pleurotus populinus*, as suggested by its name, generally grows on poplars, the quaking aspen in our area. They can be found usually in spring to early summer.

These are the great edible oysters in our woods!

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# The Common Loon... A Symbol of Unspoiled Wilderness

by Gwen Campos, Director

On Wednesday, July 13th, the Land Trust welcomed Danielle D'Auria, a biologist from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W). Her focus is on understanding the loon population statewide. Danielle spoke to attendees on the importance of keeping our waterways clean and preserved to protect the loon habitat. "Maine is home to 75% of the territorial pairs of loons in New England and New York, making Maine the stronghold for the northeast loon breeding population," said Danielle.

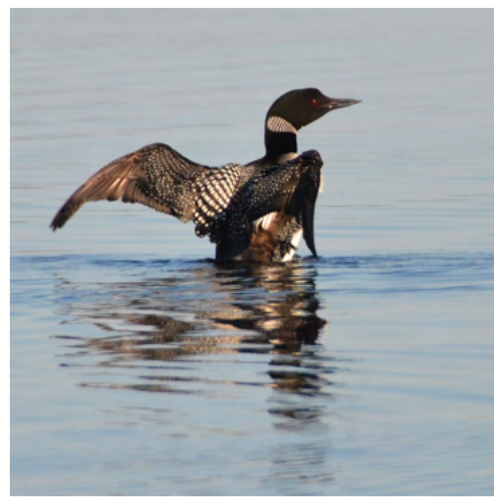
She also spoke about the different ways biologists monitor the loon population in the State of Maine. One way is the Annual Loon Count hosted by the Maine Audubon Society. This annual program happens the third Saturday of July every year. An estimated 900 volunteers go out on lakes around the state and count loons. To sign up for next year's count, contact Susan Gallo at (207) 781-6180 x. 216 or e-mail [sgallo@maineaudubon.org](mailto:sgallo@maineaudubon.org) with your name, address and the lake or general area where you would like to count.

Danielle was introduced to our attendees by Lance Wheaton. Lance has also spent many hours studying the loon population in Northeastern Maine for programs funded by the federal government. Paddling his

canoe over miles of water, he has seen various locations where loons nested, whether it was on a rock or on shore.

Danielle discussed that one way to preserve our loon population would be to fish without lead. Many loons die due to lead poisoning from eating fish that have digested a lead jig. Lance brought up the point that not only lead but the stainless steel, bronze, gold, galvanized and brass hooks that fish break off of lines don't break down in salt water or fresh water. Mild steel is a different type of fishing hook that is known to break down when it meets with the stomach acids in the fish. In preserving our fisheries we are also helping to preserve our loon habitat and population. "Being a Maine Guide in this part of the wilderness is a great way to live and learn the ways of the outdoors. It is a way to keep and preserve the outdoors to the way it was when I began," said Lance.

Danielle ended the talk with a question and answer session where she and Lance were able to answer some questions from the audience. The children in attendance each received a sticker for their curiosity as well. The Woodie Wheaton Land Trust would like to extend our gratitude to Danielle and Lance for spending a very informative evening with us!



## Director Taking Leave

### *Homer Clough*

Homer Clough has been a Woodie Wheaton Land Trust board member for the past three years. He served on the Trust's Lands Committee contributing knowledge from his past experiences working within the Maine forestry industry as well as prior business ownership experience.

After finishing high school, he joined the US Marine Corps and completed a tour in Vietnam. After completing his military obligation, he started working in the forestry industry for Sewell and Baskahegan Companies. While attending Forest Ranger School at the University of New Brunswick, Homer obtained his Master Guide License. He then pursued multiple business ventures, including ownership of JAC Inc., the Briarwood Motor Inn, and Lincoln Tire Co. In addition to his work on the Lands Committee, Homer also volunteered his time leading many of our summer kayak and canoe trips.

The Trust is grateful for Homer's commitment and service on the board and wishes him well in his future endeavors.





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# The East Grand Highlands Trail... Progress & Plans

*By Steve Mine, Director & EGH Committee Chair*

Work on the East Grand Highlands Hiking Trails (EGH) initially began this past winter. We are excited to say that we have made great progress and the first trail is already open to the public! Currently the Overlook Trail is made up of three miles of trail beginning from the trailhead and ending at a high elevation ridge, providing views of Sucker Lake, East Grand Lake and New Brunswick from a large overlook platform.

**T**he first step was to flag the trail and mark it with GPS points over this past winter. Funds to provide support for this project were acquired by a grant from the Davis Conservation Fund totaling \$5,000. This money, added to the funds pledged by WWLT, the local Chamber of Commerce and the Chiputneticook Lakes International Conservancy (CLIC) gave the project the needed funding to get started.

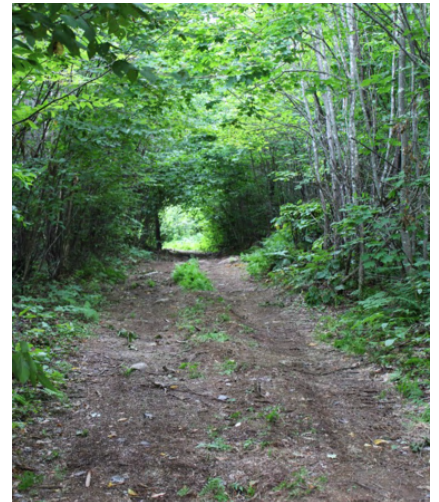
Numerous volunteer work-parties did a large share of the work in the late spring and early summer. A contractor installed a large gravel parking lot along US Route 1 after volunteers cleared the area of all trees and brush. Additionally, Crone Construction built a beautiful wooden kiosk at the parking lot trailhead to house trail information and maps. The wood for this kiosk was generously donated by Mike and Angela Cowger, owners of Cowger Cabins on East Grand. To maintain a log for safety purposes, a sign-in kiosk was built and installed at the beginning of the trail.

The main trail follows an old logging road, which had to be cleared of trees and brush. On a steep section of the trail, early signs of water damage and erosion from heavy spring rains became apparent. Wes Lord, owner of the Greenland Cove Cabins, kindly donated equipment time to ditch the sides of the trail to help with the runoff. Now a favorite spot to many, an 8'x20' wooden overlook platform stands at the summit of the trail, which offers a beautiful view and quiet resting spot. In addition, hikers can now enjoy their lunch there thanks to Dave Conoly and The North Maine Woods, Inc., who generously donated a picnic table. Our focus is now shifting onto our plans for additional trails. The "second phase trail", which loops below the overlook and connects back to the main trail, has been

flagged and initial labor has started. As of now, it is 1/4 finished. The "third phase trail", planned to circumnavigate Sucker Lake, has also been scouted and flagged.

In July the Overlook Trail was officially opened to the public for use. We continue to be encouraged by the trail log showing the trail's active use (45 entries in 14 days) in addition to kind words about the trail left behind for us to read. On September 17th the WWLT sponsored a "Grand Opening" for the Overlook Trail in conjunction with "Great Maine Outdoor Weekend". Ultimately the goal of this event was to celebrate the opening of the trail, to create a greater awareness of the project in the community and to get folks outside to enjoy the great outdoors.

To complete the entire project will take another 3 to 4 years and will require a tremendous amount of community support in the form of dedicated volunteers. It will also require additional funds from outside resources to help with trail development and a dedicated committee to plan, promote and facilitate the work. We are hopeful that our goal is achievable and are grateful for those both within the community and from away, who have shown their support.



**Anyone interested in volunteering or wanting more information can contact Anna Rickard at [WWLTOFFICE@gmail.com](mailto:WWLTOFFICE@gmail.com).**





# "Mickey Finn" Children's Conservation Day 2016

*By Jean Swanson, Director & Event Chair*



The Woodie Wheaton Land Trust hosted our third "Mickey Finn Children's Conservation Day" on Saturday, July 30 at the Riverfront Park in Houlton, Maine. The event presented outdoor, environmental education learning opportunities to over 50 children and their families. This event is part of the Trust's ongoing Conservation Education and Community Outreach Initiative.

By moving the event to downtown Houlton, we were able to increase attendance and expand the number of learning and interactive stations this year. This day gave children the opportunity to practice ATV and archery safety thanks to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) and ATV Maine representatives. Throughout the day many worked on their fishing skills while trying their hand at casting with IF&W's "Backyard Bass" magnetic fishing equipment.

The youngsters visited interactive, learning stations such as "Skull and Pelt Identification" manned by Maine Warden

Josh Beal. At the "Lifecycle of a Seed" station the kids were able to plant and take home a seed of their choice to observe as it begins to grow.

Other stations included "Maine Tree Identification" provided by Pleasant View Tree Farm and "All About Birds" presented by the Aroostook Birders Club. Maine's Department of Forestry kindly donated tree seedlings for each child to take home and plant. WWLT Directors helped man additional stations such as "Freshwater Fish Identification" and "Basic Knot Tying" and even provided fly-tying lessons. Educator and Naturalist, Stephen Amos offered a unique hands-on opportunity for the children to experience a myriad of skeletal invertebrates and arachnids with both slides and live specimens.

Near the end of the day, children left with goodie-bags stuffed with educational handouts, tee shirts sprayed with their own wildlife creations and homemade birdfeeders. A hot dog lunch was included, made possible by support from

CLIC, Wheaton's Lodge and Andy's IGA.

The Trust would like to thank donors who earmarked gifts for this event and our generous sponsors: Machias Savings Bank, CLIC and F.A. Peabody as well as the many volunteers including the Maine Warden Service, Usborne Children's Books, IF&W, 32-Below Ice Cream, the Houlton High School Honor Society, the Houlton Rec. Center, and our friends at the Houlton Chamber.

***"Thank you for a wonderful day! We loved all of the activities!"***

***-Sara***

***"It was a GREAT day!"***

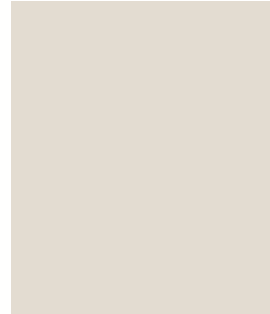
***- Jaclyn***



# Backcasts ....



JULY 4th  
LOBSTER FEST  
AT  
WHEATON'S  
LODGE



SUMMER  
SPEAKER  
SERIES &  
FIELD TRIPS



ANNUAL  
MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING &  
PIG ROAST





# a season in review



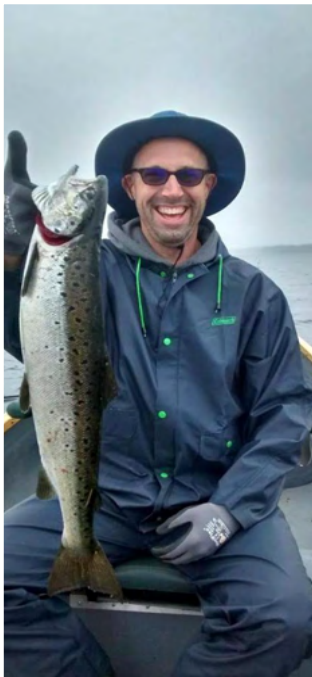
## SUMMER INTERNSHIP

This summer the WWLT welcomed Caitlin Lucas as our Conservation and Outreach Initiative Intern. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Caitlin for the efforts and dedication she put forth during her time with us. Wishing you the best of luck in all that you do!

*We Fondly Remember ...*



*Paul Lachance*



THE ONES THAT  
DIDN'T GET  
AWAY!



## Woodie Wheaton Land Trust

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www.woodiewheaton.org  
207-448-3250

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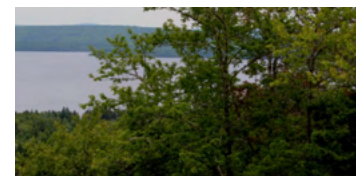
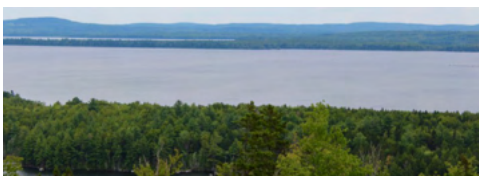
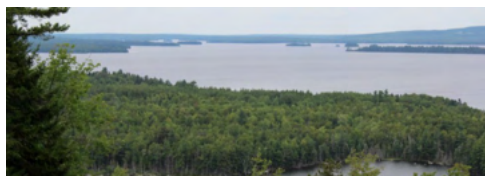
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Anna Rickard



To promote the protection, preservation and conservation of land and water in the Chiputneticook Lakes region of eastern Maine and western New Brunswick for the benefit of present and future generations.