



# CURRENTS

VOLUME 25, NUMBER 1  
SPRING 2011

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGES RIVER LAND TRUST



## Three Fabulous Conservation Projects at Year-End

Interior woodland, old farm fields, nearly a mile of historic riverfront, and shorebird feeding mudflats are all part of the landscapes conserved through conservation easements with three different families.

The Walker family, which includes eight siblings from across the country, shared a common goal – their wish to see their family farm conserved in Owls Head. They remember their father musing about having a “swath of green from one end of Owls Head to the other.” In 2010 they made it a permanent reality by conserving 132 acres from North Shore to South Shore Drive, across the center of the peninsula. The interior woodlands, vernal pools, wetlands and remnant fields will remain available as habitat, and for recreation and management by the family and future generations.

Blair and Ellen Torrey have been coming to Appleton for more than forty years to enjoy “Fox Run,” the name given to their riverfront property by one of their children. The Torreys had a vision to keep the land productive and have been managing the woods, developing trails, planting trees and creating a wildlife pond so their 121-acre property would remain hospitable to fox and other wildlife. This conservation easement project includes frontage along the old river canal, potential salmon rearing habitat, wading bird habitat and deer wintering areas. The Torreys have opted to open a section of their land to the public via a future trail section of the Georges Highland Path.

James Skoglund can trace his family’s connection to his land in St. George and the surrounding communities for generations. Mr. Skoglund’s 23 acres once belonged to his great grandfather, and while it took several generations to

return it to the Skoglund family, he was determined to see that it could never be divided nor further developed. Along Route 131, a view across gently sloping fields opens to Cutlers Cove and its mudflats, frequented by birds as well as clambers. One thousand feet of river shoreline are now permanently conserved, ensuring the land and the nearby flats will remain available for mixed uses.

With these three projects and the countless hours contributed by the families, the Land Trust has now protected 2,641 acres in the Georges River watershed region. 🌿

## A New Face on the Board

Please help us welcome Bruce Hammatt to the Board of Directors! Bruce came by his appreciation of nature at a young age while birding with his mother, and she got him involved in the Saturday morning bird watching outings sponsored by the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History.



Bruce’s interests grew into a passion for water activities, especially sailing, fostered by growing up near the shore on Cape Cod. At the time, the bay was largely undeveloped and had a beautiful serene atmosphere.

*Continued on page 3*

## A Tall Task

Between the Georges Highland Path and our conservation properties, we have 46 miles of trail that will require routine maintenance this season. Add to that another eight miles of proposed trail expansion, and it is easy to see that 2011 will be quite busy.

This year, in particular, we could really use your assistance in maintaining our vast network of trails. Do you have a little bit of time that you can volunteer for this purpose? You don't need any special skills or knowledge; the only requirement for the job is an interest in being outdoors and taking a walk.

Additional Trail Adopters are needed for our most popular and frequently-traveled sections of trail:

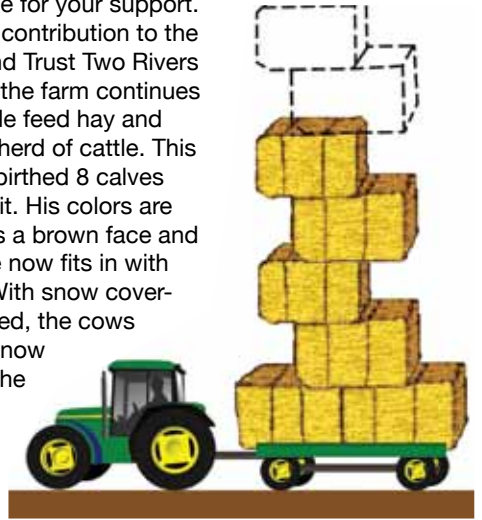
- Ragged Mountain (Rockport/Camden)
- Spruce Mountain/Mt. Pleasant (Rockport/Warren)
- Frye Mountain/Hogback Mountain (Montville/Freedom)



If you are interested in learning more about our team, contact Jay Astle, Stewardship Program Manager, at 594-5166 or via email at [jay@grlt.org](mailto:jay@grlt.org).

## Getting Closer to our Goal

The Land Trust is grateful to the many donors who gave gifts to secure permanent protection of the 252 acres of farmland owned and operated by Donald Paulsen in South Thomaston. With a recent \$25,000 matching grant from the Maine Community Foundation, the Land Trust has been able to offer an opportunity to double the value of donor dollars. Thanks to many people and grant support we have raised \$208,000 toward our \$272,000 goal. So there is still time for your support. Please make your contribution to the Georges River Land Trust Two Rivers Fund. Meanwhile the farm continues to produce valuable feed hay and support a healthy herd of cattle. This summer, the girls birthed 8 calves including one misfit. His colors are reversed as he has a brown face and white body, but he now fits in with the rest of them. With snow covering their normal feed, the cows love to climb the snow mounds to reach the lower branches of pine trees, a real treat according to Betty Paulsen.



## A Hiking Buddy Fondly Remembered



Dear GRLT Board and Staff,

This is a thank you note written on behalf of a dog named Zeke. It is a tribute both to Zeke and the founders and stewards of the Georges Highland Path (GHP).

Zeke's life was enriched by the Georges Highland Path more than I suspect a human could fathom. His first hike up Spruce Mountain was made at the tender age of ten weeks old. He survived it, even though he may have been a bit young for so much exertion. In subsequent years he completed the trip several thousand times more. This was in part due to Zeke's owner being a Trail Adopter and loving to hike the trail, easily accessible on foot via an old skidder trail.

Zeke is among the many nominees for "Best Dog Ever." It's anyone's guess how much his wonderful disposition and calm behavior were due to getting regular vigorous exercise while enjoying all the scents and other diversions along the GHP. My guess is that it was a major factor.

Providing a place for dogs to exercise may seem like a small thing, even a frivolous thing for a land trust to consider. I'm sure it had nothing to do with why the GHP was created. But it was a big thing for Zeke and no doubt is for the many other canines who get to enjoy the trail. Their owners appreciate it and that probably generates good will for the land trust community.

Zeke's last hike on Spruce Mountain occurred several years ago. One morning while going up the trail, he stopped and sat down with a finality and a look in his remarkably expressive eyes that couldn't be mistaken. The old hips just weren't going to do this climbing stuff anymore. Our slow trip back down the hill and home was made with many tears as the realization dawned that an important part of my life had just ended.

Zeke could still manage a sedentary old man's lifestyle close to home, which he did until just a few weeks ago. His passing at 12½ has caused me to reflect on the countless hours he spent on the GHP. Doing so leads me to the conclusion that you, as well your predecessors in the mid 90's (especially Dave Getchell) deserve thanks for establishing, expanding, and maintaining a great trail system—from a dog's perspective!

Sincerely,

An Anonymous Trail Adopter

## Georges River Land Trust

Founded in 1987, the mission of the Georges River Land Trust is to conserve and steward the natural resources and traditional character of the Georges River watershed region for the public benefit.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alvin Chase, President, Warren  
Phil McKean, Vice-President, Cushing  
Richard Matlack, Treasurer, Owls Head

Pat Ashton, Spruce Head  
Christine Beacham, Liberty  
David Elliot, Whitefield  
David Farmer, Cushing  
Mandy Funkhouser, Spruce Head  
Bruce Hammatt, Tenants Harbor  
Marcie Porter, Searsmont  
Jim Robbins, Searsmont  
Ken Wexler, Owls Head

### STAFF

Executive Director  
Gail Presley  
Administrative Assistant  
Linda Arnold  
Stewardship Program Manager  
Jay Astle  
Conservation Program Manager  
Annette Naegel

Currents is the publication of the Georges River Land Trust © 2011. Design and layout by Betsy Welch Design. Currents is printed on recycled paper using soy ink.



## Wishing Well

Volunteers needed!

- Webmaster – 2-4 hours a month
- Grant research – 2-4 hours a month

Your gift of \$250 will help us with one of the following much needed items:

- New vacuum cleaner for the office
- Reprint of Georges Highland Path brochures for our kiosks
- Materials for a footbridge at the Appleton Preserve
- New signs for the 20th Anniversary Garden Tour

**MAR 5** **Saturday, 10 am-12 noon.** Snowshoe/winter hike on the Canal Path. Led by Mike Shannon, GRLT volunteer and well-known local naturalist. Wear hiking boots and bring snowshoes and a snack. Meet at the Canal Path on Ghent Road in Searsmont.

**MAR 24** **Thursday, 6:30-8 pm.** Natural history of frogs in Maine. Talk by Susan Gallo, Maine Audubon biologist. Held at the Thomaston Academy, room 208. Enter from parking lot behind the building, at the library entrance. Room 208 is on the second floor.

**APR 21** **Thursday, 6-8 pm.** Celebrating the mid-coast hills, sponsored by GRLT and the Rockland Public Library. Presentations by local land trusts celebrating the history, natural features and ecology of our “hills.”

**MAY 14** **Saturday, 8-10 am.** Early morning bird walk in Cushing. Join local bird enthusiast, Brian Willson at the Pleasant Point Nature Preserve in Cushing to spot migratory birds, especially warblers. Beginners and children welcome. Bring binoculars. Meet at Pleasant Point Nature Preserve on Stone’s Point Road in Cushing.

## EVENTS

**MAY 21** **Saturday, 10 am-12 noon.** Fly fishing demonstration with Trout Unlimited at the Pool Preserve. Learn how to fly cast or improve your skills at the Pool Preserve in Union. Casting into the river requires a license, but instructions on land do not. Bring boots and fishing rod if you have them. The training is suitable for adults and kids 10 and older accompanied by an adult. The event is free to members of GRLT, \$10 for non-members. Limited to 15 people. Please call to register by May 19th.

**JUN 23** **Thursday, 10 am-12 noon.** Medicinal plant walk with Wanda Garland, local naturalist, at preserved property in Warren. Please bring snack, water and pencil/paper for notes. Call GRLT to register and receive directions.

**JUL 10** **Sunday, July 10, 10 am-5 pm.** 20th Anniversary Gardens in the Watershed Tour, featuring seven country gardens in Appleton, Hope and Union. Tickets will be available at local area stores or from GRLT office.

## A Tribute to Alice Skinner

As evident from the tremendous response of people in this community and beyond to the loss of Alice Skinner, she was held in great esteem and affection by all who knew her. The Georges River Land Trust is no exception.

Alice will be remembered here as someone with a true and deep interest and reverence for life and a strong connection to the natural world. At the Land Trust, we were extremely fortunate to have had an enduring relationship with Alice extending over many years. It began when Alice and her husband Wick came to GRLT to protect their wonderful land on the St. George River, in one of the first conservation easements in the Georges River watershed. We will miss you Alice, your warmth, dedication and commitment, which touched all of us at GRLT as it touched so many others.



### Bruce Hammatt

*From page 1*

Bruce served on the Board of Trustees of the Orleans Conservation Trust for 20 years where he learned about the various tools to conserve land. “It took the town some time to recognize the charitable benefits of easement and land donations,” said Hammatt, “but as more land was developed, the locals began to truly appreciate conservation of the remaining open space.”

After retiring from a career with the Cape Cod Five Cent Savings Bank, the Hammatts moved to the shore of the St. George River in Tenants Harbor. Bruce immediately looked to connect with people who are passionate about and dedicated to conserving natural resources, and maintaining the quality of the water and waterfront. His experience in the financial industry and philanthropy – his bank had a foundation and he was on the Board of the Kelley Foundation – will be a significant asset to the Land Trust.



SERVING APPLETON CUSHING HOPE LIBERTY MONTVILLE OWLS HEAD ROCKLAND ST. GEORGE SEARSMONT SOUTH THOMASTON THOMASTON UNION WARREN

8 North Main Street • Suite 200  
Rockland, Maine 04841

207-594-5166  
www.grlt.org  
info@grlt.org

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ROCKLAND, ME  
PERMIT NO. 141

## Inside this Issue:

Three Fabulous Conservation Projects .....	1
A New Face on the Board .....	1
A Tall Task.....	2
A Buddy Fondly Remembered ..	2
Getting Closer to Our Goal.....	2
A Tribute To Alice Skinner.....	3
Calendar of Events .....	3

## Meaningful Membership

Community is important to most of us, and one way to be a part of a community is through Land Trust membership. It means that you belong; you have a passion, an identity, and a communal association with others who value conservation—an exciting place to share your commitment to our natural world.

So this is an invitation for meaningful membership in GRLT. Meaningful membership means:

- Attending (or leading!) an outing. Your participation enriches us, broadens us, strengthens us, and adds to the committed, dynamic community that we strive to be.
- **Renewing your membership to sustain our work.** Our members' financial support means we can protect special landscapes, maintain our trails, do more in the community, and make a difference in people's lives.



## SAVING TREES

**2010 ANNUAL REPORT** In an effort to save trees and printing costs, the 2010 Annual Report is not included in Currents, but will soon be available online at [www.grlt.org](http://www.grlt.org). For those of you who wish a printed version, copies of the Annual Report will be available by calling the GRLT office or emailing your request to [info@grlt.org](mailto:info@grlt.org).

**CURRENTS** Do you recycle your issue of Currents right after you read it? Switching to electronic delivery will also help us save on paper, printing, and postage costs. You can choose to receive an email when it has been posted to our website, [www.grlt.org](http://www.grlt.org). Please sign up by sending an email to [info@grlt.org](mailto:info@grlt.org). Just another way to conserve!

**RIPPLES** Our monthly email news update lets you know about the wonderful conservation projects and educational events that are happening all the time at GRLT. We'll tell you about the next upcoming series of Walks & Talks, new conservation and trail projects, and ways you can join in and help out. If you would like to receive Ripples, send an email to [info@grlt.org](mailto:info@grlt.org) and we'll add your address to our group email distribution list. Don't miss an issue by letting us know if your email address has changed.

