



CURRENTS

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGES RIVER LAND TRUST

Planning for Perpetuity

So much attention is paid to our land projects when the land is first conserved. Less publicized, though, is what we do with this conservation land after it is protected. Our conserved properties do not simply sit there unused; the land is actively managed for a variety of obvious and not-so-obvious uses.

Today, we protect 51 properties in the Georges River watershed region, totaling more than 2,600 acres of farmland, forests, and river and lake frontage. Approximately 75 percent (2,000 acres; 38 properties) of our conservation properties are privately owned and protected with a conservation easement. In short, landowners grant GRLT certain development rights on privately owned properties that allow us to permanently protect the property's conservation values — agricultural, silvicultural, natural habitat, and scenic. The landowners choose to give up these development rights while still retaining ownership, and they can continue to make substantial use of their property.

For instance, a landowner may harvest timber for household use or may actively farm the land in an environmentally responsible way, yet they and any future owners are prohibited from engaging in development activities that negatively affect the conservation values. Typically, these properties are not open to the public because they remain privately owned.

The remainder of our conservation portfolio (600 acres; 13 properties) consists of land that GRLT owns outright. Once acquired, we develop a management plan for each "preserve" based upon the property's conservation values, a site-specific natural resource inventory, and how the property fits into GRLT's mission and the overall land-use pattern of the region. The management plan guides all of our activities on a property and is updated every five to ten years.

Two of our conservation properties exemplify the uniqueness of our properties and their management plans. The Riverview Hayfields Preserve in South Thomaston was conserved in large part because it provides important habitat for grassland nesting birds. It also buffers the adjacent mudflats on the St. George River that are vital feeding grounds for waterfowl and shorebirds. Our management activities on the preserve reflect these important features. Currently, we mow the property every other year to keep the fields open for nesting birds and we limit public access to reduce the risk of interference with the primary users of the property — birds.

We conserved the Gibson Preserve in Searsmont, on the other hand, because of its scenic location along a stretch of the upper St. George River and because of its potential for public recreation. To meet this management goal we maintain a robust network of trails on the 124-acre property for four-season recreational pursuits such as hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, and nature observation.

Clearly, our work does not end the minute we acquire a property. Protecting land is truly a long-term responsibility that we approach with much thought and deliberation to ensure that the reason we protected the land in the first place is still the case for generations to come. 🌿



Our mission
dictates the lands we choose
to conserve and our objectives
for managing them.

Objective #1:

Protect ecological and biophysical aspects of the watershed, including endangered, threatened, or rare species, important habitats, and representative natural communities, because they have inherent value.

Objective #2:

Protect traditional uses (farming, fishing, forest management) and assist with their responsible management as a means to support human communities.

Objective #3:

Provide appropriate recreational opportunities and education for the community to promote a deep appreciation and understanding of the ecology, natural history, and cultural history of the watershed.

Interpreting Your Way

Along the River



If you are traveling south from Union on Route 131 to the outflow of the river in Thomaston and across to the Weskeag Marsh, you will have the chance to learn about the connections between upstream and downstream river habitats. Natural and cultural history is featured on colorful new interpretive displays strategically located at public riverfront locations in Union, Thomaston and South Thomaston.

The Land Trust embarked on this project to draw attention to the natural resource values of the St. George River and the Weskeag Marsh, two biologically linked river systems. The natural history displays provide information on alewives, an anadromous fish, rare plants, invertebrates, natural communities, and migratory shorebirds.

Conservation, public awareness and long-term stewardship are goals shared by GRLT and our partners on this project: Town of Thomaston Conservation Commission, Friends of Weskeag, MidCoast Audubon, Georges River Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge complex of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

You can find interpretive displays in the following locations:

- 1- The first most northerly display is near the GRLT Fisherman's trail and Pool Preserve on Route 131 in Union. This is one of the most popular fishing spots on the river and is the site of the rebuilt dam that allows anadromous fish to access upstream spawning grounds.
- 2- The second display is located at the Thomaston Town Green and adjoins the Thomaston Village Trail of the Georges Highland Path. Here the river turns estuarine and expansive mudflats appear at low tide along the shore.
- 3- The most southern display is located on Buttermilk Lane at the Ralph Waldo Tyler Management Area, the largest tidal marsh in the midcoast and the most productive shorebird roosting and feeding site in Muscongus Bay.

We encourage you to visit them and share what you learn! 📖

Union Town Team

The Land Trust service area encompasses 14 towns, and they each have their own unique character and interests. Last winter we initiated some focused outreach in the middle watershed to find out how GRLT was perceived, and what we could do to better meet the needs of local residents.

With the applied energy of volunteer Peter Duffey (now a member of our Board of Directors) the Union Town Team was formed. Peter lives on Seven Tree Pond and believes the St. George River is one of the greatest assets in Union. He enlisted the help of GRLT member Rebekah Smith, and Director Dick Matlack, to interview engaged Union residents about how GRLT could be more active in Union. They have many great ideas!

Acting on this advice, the Union Town Team formed a partnership with the Vose Library to offer a series of presentations over the summer, which proved popular with residents. GRLT staff covered wildlife in the watershed, popular outdoor recreation sites, and opportunities for young naturalists in the talks. We hosted two neighborhood parties to talk about the mission of GRLT and invite more input and advice. We had a booth at Union Founders Day, and we're discussing a trail and outdoor activity center with the Vose Library.

We are grateful to our local "champions" for leading these efforts, and we're eager to work with people from our other towns. Give us a call if you'd like to see a GRLT Town Team in your community! 📞

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, CONSIDER SHOPPING AT GRLT...

We have great gifts in store for all your "natural" friends & relatives including: Bird posters, Muscongus Bay Atlas, Weskeag notecards and *Best Nature Sites*.

Need a Great Gift?

Georges River Land Trust

Founded in 1987, the mission of the Georges River Land Trust is to conserve the ecosystems and traditional heritage of the Georges River watershed region through permanent land protection, stewardship, education, and outdoor experiences.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alvin Chase, President, Warren
David Elliot, Vice-President, Whitefield
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Peter Duffey, Union
David Farmer, Cushing
Bruce Hammatt, Tenants Harbor
John Hufnagel, Owls Head
Marcie Porter, Searsmont
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Bruce Gerard, Trails Manager

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Introducing... NEW Directors!

Stacy Benjamin lives in
Searsmont with her husband John.

While raising her two children, she worked on wetland mitigation projects with the Maine Department of Transportation as a program consultant. Once the kids were older, she joined the land use team at the State Planning Office and served as program director for two years. She also served three terms as selectwoman and assessor in Searsmont. Stacy has been a member the Land Protection Committee for several years and looks forward to sharing her state and municipal experience while learning more about the Land Trust's conservation education and fundraising activities.

Peter Duffey grew up in southern California and earned a degree in business from UC Berkeley. Peter and his wife Caroline have been on the east coast for 22 years, with Peter working at various software companies. The family bought a house on Seven Tree Pond 8 years ago, coming up on weekends and spending more time in the summers. They retired two years ago and now live in Union year round. Peter has been an outdoor enthusiast for many years and enjoys swimming, kayaking, and fishing. He often says, "It is nearly impossible to live on the St. George River and not feel the urge to help preserve the river and surrounding watershed." He became a GRLT volunteer in 2010.

John Hufnagel dreamed of moving to Maine to live full time from the time he purchased his first boat to use in Penobscot Bay. He spent his free time and vacations at his family's cottage in Owls Head, cultivating an early interest in land conservation from simply being outdoors from morning to night and growing his own fruits and vegetables to sell to neighbors. John practiced law for over forty years gaining particular expertise in Real Estate Land Development and Trusts and Estates. John spearheaded a fundraising operation to purchase Ash Island, a wild and special spot. Being here in Maine at last brings the opportunity for him to connect all of his passions in one place, and he is honored to be able to join the other dedicated members of the Georges River Land Trust. 🌿



Wishing Well

Your gift of \$70
will help to purchase
4 orange traffic cones

Your gift of \$250
will help to purchase
conservation property
boundary signs

Your gift of \$300
will help to purchase
1,000 GRLT membership decals

Thank you to our past
Wish List funders:

Pat Ashton, Mary Ann Carey,
Norma Jones, Heidi Lyman,
Chris Tilt (GRLT Event Signs);
Harry Bickford (Oyster River
GHP Footbridge)

GRLT Honors 33 Years of Service

At our August 21 Annual Meeting at the Appleton Preserve, four Board members were honored for 33 years of service! Commemorative photographs were presented to express our gratitude for their years of dedicated, tireless, inspiring, and successful work on behalf of conservation in the St. George River watershed. 🌿

Our many, many thanks go to Phil McKean (Left), Dick Matlack (Center), Pat Ashton (Right) and Mandy Funkhouser (not shown).



Volunteer Spotlight

Leslie Fuller of Cushing, Maine began volunteering in 2009. Living by the St. George River, she enjoys daily offerings of birdlife, wildflowers, tides and changing weather. In addition to her volunteer duties, she juggles home, family and work. Her easy going manner, sense of humor, love for sports and wildlife is enlivening — and conscientious work, invaluable. 🌿

Thank you,
Leslie!



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GEARING UP FOR OUR 25th Anniversary...

That's right! Next year marks 25 years of conservation, stewardship of protected properties, community programs and activities — all made possible by YOU.

Please help us celebrate by supporting the 2011 GRLT Fall Appeal. Your generous donation will help protect our ecosystems and sustain our traditional heritage.

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If you plan to hike our other GHP trail sections, please use extreme caution and wear brightly colored (preferably blaze orange) clothing. Because hunting is allowed on many of our preserves, we encourage you to visit them on Sundays when hunting is prohibited. If interested in hunting the properties, please contact us for written permission.

Canal Path, Searsmont
Hogback Mountain, Montville

Hunting Season is now in full swing! Due to landowner request, the following sections of the Georges Highland Path are closed through December 10:

“To conserve the ecosystems and traditional heritage of the Georges River watershed region through permanent land protection, stewardship, education, and outdoor experiences.”

We are excited to present the new Georges River Land Trust mission statement — after months of thoughtful deliberation and discussion, the GRLT Board of Directors voted on the following statement to best capture our organization's overall goals, provide a sense of direction, and guide our decision-making:

Mission: Possible!

DEC 8
GRLT Volunteer Celebration
Thursday, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm. Join GRLT Board and staff to honor and celebrate its many volunteers amidst the inspiring work of local artist, Eric Hopkins. Location: Eric Hopkins Gallery, 21 Winter Street, Suite 3, Rockland.

NOV 27
Wreath Making
Sunday, 1 pm - 4 pm. Workshop led by Abraham Knight. Learn how to make a 22-inch wreath. Location: Union. Cost: \$15 covers brush material and ribbon. Registration: Limit ten persons — please call the GRLT office at 594-5166 to register.

NOV 10
Glaciation in Earth History
Thursday, 6:30 pm - 8 pm. Illustrated talk by local geologist, Sid Quarrier. Sid will look back to early parts of our planet's history when extensive glaciations may have impacted the course of evolution of life, formation of major coal deposits across the globe, and when Antarctica became a major ice cap. Co-sponsor: Rockland Public Library. Location: Downstairs meeting room in Rockland Public Library.

OCT 22
Demonstration of Logging with Horses
Saturday, 10 am - 12 noon. Led by Jason Glick and Jim Ostergard, local horse loggers. Demonstration will be followed by a hayride for kids. Location: Watershed Farm of Jason and Jen Glick, Prescott Hill Road, Montville. Directions: North on Rte. 131 to Searsmont, west onto Rte. 173 in Searsmont village before new bridge. Pass the church on the right. Follow sharp curve and at top of hill, turn left onto Prescott Hill Road. Farm is first driveway on left.