



CURRENTS

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGES RIVER LAND TRUST

Garden Tour Celebrates Its 20th Anniversary

Sunday, July 10, GRLT will celebrate the 20th Anniversary for its signature *Gardens in the Watershed* tour.

This year visitors will travel through rolling hills and farmland dotted with lakes, ponds and the St. George River, to six gardens in the towns of Appleton, Hope and Union. The self-guided tour takes place from 10 am to 5 pm, rain or shine.

This year's gardens offer an array of mixed perennial borders, vegetable gardens, ornamental plantings, stone walls, herb beds, chickens, garden art and more... Hobbs Pond, Alford Lake, Sennebec Pond and the St. George River can be viewed along the route. Plein air artists will be situated throughout the gardens on tour day and compliment the beauty and diversity of the gardens. You will have an opportunity to purchase raffle chances on specific paintings you see underway as you visit the gardens.

Three short garden talks are planned at different garden sites: Anne Cox, landscape designer, will speak on Favorite Perennials; Lorie Costigan, owner of Glendarragh Farm Lavender will talk about Growing Lavender; and Jesse Watson, founder of Midcoast Permaculture Design of Rockland, will talk about Permaculture Design. There is an extensive list of raffle items: garden gift baskets, two hours garden design or cleanup, a crabapple tree, and multiple gift certificates from area nurseries and flower shops!

Tickets are priced at \$25 in advance and \$28 on tour day. Tickets and brochures for the self-guided tour will be available at local stores and from the GRLT office. A gourmet bag lunch catered by Home Kitchen Cafe is available by pre-order.

We are grateful to Bangor Savings Bank for being our major sponsor this year and to more than 80 other businesses and individuals whose contributions support the Garden Tour. Deep appreciation goes to the six garden owners who are busily making preparations for your visit and to the volunteers who will be helping on tour day.

In the classic book on gardening on the Isles of Shoals, Celia Thaxter wrote: "The new growth rejoices. The gladness of green growing things is apparent to any seeing eye. They rejoice with a radiant joy in sun and rain and air and dew, in all care and kindness." The GRLT Garden Tour Committee rejoices in its 20th year of planning the Garden Tour, one of the main fundraising events for GRLT. We'll see you in the gardens! 📧



Stepping Up for the Georges Highland Path

Are you looking for a way to make a significant contribution to the Georges Highland Path? Do you want to ensure it continues to be the model trail system utilizing public-private partnerships? We recently received a challenge gift of \$10,000 from an ardent supporter who believes the Path is one of GRLT's greatest assets for promoting land conservation and outdoor recreation. Your gift as a Friend of the GHP will be matched dollar for dollar thereby doubling your support for conservation trails. Our goal is to raise our \$10,000 match by July 1 in order to fully staff our trails program in time to address the many maintenance needs on the Path. Please consider a generous contribution (worth double what you give!) to keep our premier trail system in shape. 📧

Reflections on Life in a River Town

by Kellie Brooks, GRLT Volunteer

“So, how did you end up in Warren?” Ever since moving from NYC, I often hear that question. The trio of Camden, Rockport and Rockland gets the hype, but I discovered this gem of a town nestled at the head of tide of the St. George River by chance, and I couldn't be happier. As I admire the view from the center of town, tidal fluctuations cede below and it's not the first time I'm perched at the juncture of transition. Indeed, a lot can happen when waters change direction: renewal, synergy, creativity. I wonder what I'll discover here...

As I settle in, untie my roof-strapped kayak and wonder where I'll put in first, I'm delighted when I find the perfect launch site just down the street! I'll soon paddle the waterway's bends and shoreline all the way down to Thomaston, with a low view that rewards the quiet and attentive. A peace is revealed on the river that clears away daily worries and concerns, a sort of Thoreauvian meditation on nature's pace. Ah, I dream of a life that moves no swifter than water on its way out to sea. Perhaps I've found it.

Exploring the St. George on foot also has its pleasures. Once, on a morning stroll, I meet a storyteller with memories of childhood days when his grandfather owned this land, and he talks of history, defunct canals and a woolen mill. Across the way, part of the old mill is now an antique store; repurposed old buildings make good environmental sense and I gladly find several of them in this unassuming village. A self-guided walking tour recounts local history, but it's from him I learn of the old trolley path on which I am sometimes found. I'm charmed by his stories, but it's when I first spy the bald eagles - oh, those majestic creatures! - that I'm captivated. They were scouting for prey on large rocks mid-stream, and I remark I've never seen such large birds - could they be hawks? - when he laughs out loud. I've since hiked the woods with my binoculars, searching for their elusive nest (how can I miss a one ton roost?) Meanwhile, I'm content watching them soar, lucky to lay my head down so close to our winged symbol of freedom.



But more than the recreation or the wildlife, it's the people. Yes, the old adage remains true. There's Brian Smith, vintner of Oyster River Wine Co., an oenophilic self-starter with vision, who kindly sells his Villager White from his barn. I'm unsure if he instigated my locavore tendencies or is benefiting from them, but either way, I like that he's just down the road. And then there's Jay Sawyer, metal crafter of the riverside gate on the downtown green, whose sculpture garden wowed on first visit. A welder who's found creative expression with medium and large-scale construction is as prolific and engaging as I could wish for as a neighbor.

My wanderings continually reveal inspired life along the watershed. The flow of water, the flight of birds, the flourishing of artist and entrepreneur - Warren rewards curiosity. We've developed a synergy, full of tidal renewal and unexpected vitality. I'm thrilled it's here I ended up. 🌿

Wanted: Hosts with the Most!

Thanks to your support, GRLT will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2012! To make it a special year, we are planning a series of parties and events to benefit the Land Trust. The events will help us reach beyond the Land Trust membership to engage the general public in activities, raise money for stewardship and conservation actions, and engage our volunteers for a great cause and to have fun!

We are looking for GRLT members who would like to host an event. The events would take place at the convenience of the hosts and at any time during 2012. Parties and events could be as simple as a hike on the Georges Highland Path with refreshments at the summit, a moonlit winter walk on the frozen St. George marsh followed by a chili supper, or a wine tasting and dinner party at a seaside home. Do you have a big screen TV and love tennis? A breakfast at Wimbledon could be your event. Elaborate or simple; the hosts decide.

Get your party juices flowing! You choose what type of party/event you want to host, and how many guests to include. Your gift to the Land Trust is arranging the event and providing refreshments or meals. Coordinators at GRLT will help you plan, take care of advertising, registering guests, and collecting admission fees.

Intrigued? Interested? Inventive? Please contact Jane Rasmussen (372-6390) or Ellen Bates (372-8815) and they'll help you find ideas and inspiration for your party. Through the parties, the hosts and guests will join together to help advance the mission of GRLT.

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.

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Best Nature Sites Book Available

"This book is an invitation to ramble rather than a guide for hikers," says Tony Oppersdorff, co-author of the recently published book, *Best Nature Sites Midcoast Maine (Route 1 Corridor Brunswick to Belfast)*. He and his coauthor, Kyrill Schabert, spent the last few years wandering along the coast, talking with local conservation organizations, including GRLT, and visiting wonderful nature sites that are all easily accessible from Route 1. The book identifies 40 locations that are conserved and open to the public, and includes sidebar articles by scientists, naturalists, and conservationists that interpret the wonders of biology, geology, and cultural history. Copies of the book are available for purchase at the GRLT office or Eastern Tire in Rockland.



Welcome to new members:

Dr. Robert Andersen
Jeanne Bulanchuk
Camden Real Estate Company
Susan & Jim Davenport
Kathy Estabrook
Jenness & Goldie Gushee
Lys McLaughlin & Tom Pike
Kristi Neidermann
Diane & Ken Oelberger
Mike & Keri Vilchinsky

Thanks to these new Evergreen Circle members:

Peter Duffey
Kate & Fernando Laguarda
Sally O. Smythe
Katie Syrett



Wish List

Your gift of \$250 will help us purchase GRLT Event signs

Your gift of \$1,000 (or two \$500 gifts!) will build a new Oyster River GHP footbridge

Thank you to our past Wish List funders:

Kathy Estabrook
– new vacuum cleaner
Norma Jones & Chris Tilt
– new signs for the Garden Tour
Ken Wexler – new GPS



Watershed Discovery in the Classroom

Developing an appreciation and understanding for how human activities affect our water supply is a first step in the protection of water resources for a healthy, viable future. Jennifer McFarland, a third grade teacher in Appleton, developed a yearlong curriculum focusing on the Georges River watershed. Using the students' backyard watershed has helped them make connections that they can see and experience first hand.

During the course of the year, experts came into the classroom to expand the students' understanding of the science of

how a watershed works, the geography of their own watershed, the local and broader geologic context for the watershed, potential impacts to watershed functions, the history of the river and land uses, and conservation as part of the watershed story. The students developed a wonderful visual of the 51 miles of the river from Frye Mountain to Muscongus Bay, and built watershed models, which finally put the language of a watershed in perspective. In a program with Sid Quarrier, local geologist from Appleton (and GRLT volunteer), they took a "flight" of the watershed through images and gained an understanding of the history of the river from a human and geologic perspective. Our own Annette Naegel helped the students create a web of life in the watershed to study the interconnectedness of nature.

This journey of discovery helped the students become engaged advocates for the preservation of the land and water resources. The students created action plans for how they could help promote clean water and reduce non-point source pollution. Early in the year they were asked what they thought the word watershed meant. Ideas included a shed with water, a greenhouse with barrels of water, etc. Now they giggle when they look back at where they started and marvel at how far they have come. They have truly begun to understand the uniqueness of "their" river! 🌿



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EVENTS

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

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

JUL 30 **Saturday, 9:30 am-2 pm.** Kayak/canoe to Tommy's Island, led by Les Hyde. For experienced paddlers equipped to paddle in open waters. Bring canoe or kayak and picnic lunch to have on the island. Depart from Tenants Harbor public landing. One hour paddle out on incoming tide, paddle back on outgoing tide.

AUG 5 **Friday, 8:30-10:30 am.** Join GRLT & Herring Gut Learning Center for a tidal pool walk for kids and parents, led by Herring Gut staff. Walk will take place at Birch Point State Park in Owls Head. Please call GRLT office to register.

AUG 21 **Sunday,** GRLT Annual Celebration and Business Meeting. Time and location to be announced.

SEP 10 **Saturday, 10am-12 noon.** Natural History of the Weskeag. Opening of new Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife upland footpath and kiosk. Jim Connolly from the INFW will talk about birds of the Weskeag.

SEP 17 **Saturday, September 17, 10 am-1 pm.** Canoe/kayak paddle on Stevens Pond. Led by Charles Hudson & Sharon Salmon, volunteers of Liberty Lakes Association and GRLT. Bird identification by Douglas Prescott, GRLT volunteer. Meet at public landing, Rt. 173, 1 mile south of Liberty Village and 4/10 mile south of junction of Trues Pond Road and Stevens Pond Road. Bring boat and lunch. Rain date-Sunday, September 18. Please call GRLT office to register.

