

The Newsletter of **Presumpscot Regional Land Trust**

Engaging with communities to conserve, steward, access and enjoy local lands and clean water

Fall/Winter 2017

Welcome, Gorham Trails

After over a year of discussion, members of our land trust voted on September 17 to incorporate the conserved lands of Gorham Trails Inc—a small land trust within the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust's coverage area. The vote took place during our Annual Meeting at Randall Orchards in Standish, which brought over 120 members and community supporters.

The leadership of Gorham Trails reached out over a year ago asking whether Presumpscot Regional Land Trust would assume responsibility for their conserved lands. As an all-volunteer town land trust, the coverage area of Gorham Trails overlaps with that of Presumpscot Regional Land Trust—making the two organizations a natural fit to combine.

After a thorough due-diligence process, we are confident that adding the Gorham Trails conserved lands and trails within our

land trust will help build our regional organization. This process was made possible by grant funding from Maine Coast Heritage Trust and extensive pro-bono legal services from Pierce Atwood. As one organization, we will be able to continue the current work of both organizations more effectively and efficiently.

Jeff Merrill, a long-time Board Member of Gorham Trails, said, "Too often people consider outdoor recreation as something to be enjoyed sporadically, requiring a vacation, a weekend getaway, or a full day's outing. The vision of Gorham Trails was to ensure these activities remain available in our own back yard, to be incorporated into our daily routines. All of us at Gorham Trails are so glad that Presumpscot Regional Land Trust shares this vision. They are the ideal steward for Gorham Trails' conserved lands and trails going forward."

(article continues on page 2)



Our new conserved land along Nason Brook in Gorham

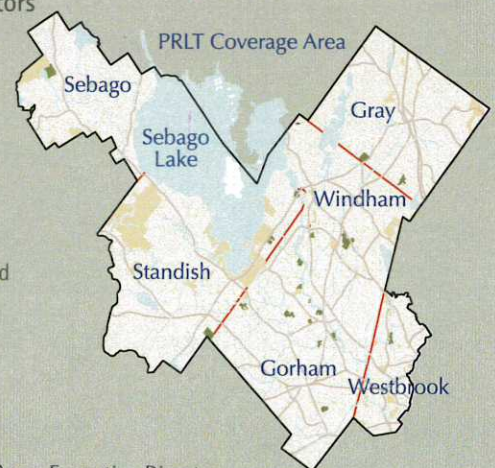
Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

Presumpscot Regional Land Trust supports healthy lands, waters, wildlife, and people across the Presumpscot River watershed through conservation, water quality monitoring, education, and public access – and conserves land in the towns of Gorham, Gray, Sebago, Standish, Westbrook and Windham.

The Land Trust has 14 public access Preserves and 1,600 acres of forever conserved lands – with miles of trails and water access points that are free and open to the public, including the 28-mile Sebago to the Sea Trail. Learn more at www.prlt.org.

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Toby Jacobs, Stewardship and Outreach Coordinator

(cover story continued from page 1)

Our land trust is committed to continuing the mission-based work of Gorham Trails. After the consolidation, the land trust will have 33 conserved properties totaling 1,600 acres—including 14 public access preserves with miles of trails and water access in the towns of Gorham, Gray, Sebago, Standish, Westbrook, and Windham. The land trust will also continue to coordinate the 28-mile Sebago to the Sea Trail project and monitor water quality at 30 sites along the Presumpscot River and its tributaries.

Gorham Trails was known for the Frazier Preserve. The conserved land starts adjacent to the Access Road to Gorham High School and connects to town-owned land adjacent to Gorham Middle School. In addition to the trail, our land trust now owns 6 acres of conserved land adjacent to the high school, with opportunities to collaborate with the school to create an outdoor learning space that will enhance place-based learning.

Mike Parker, current board member of our land trust and past board member of Gorham Trails in the 1990s said, “Presumpscot Regional Land Trust is well placed to steward the Gorham Trails conservation lands. I am proud of our land trust’s commitment to conservation throughout the region.”

Warren Whitney, Program Director for the Maine Land Trust Network, a program of Maine Coast Heritage Trust said,



Frazier Preserve Trail adjacent to Gorham High School

“Gorham Trails provided some important trail resources for the community, but despite the energy of a few dedicated volunteers, it didn’t have the organizational capacity to continue managing these lands over the long term. To its great credit, Presumpscot Regional Land Trust has stepped up to take responsibility for these community assets. That’s not only a great thing for Gorham, but for Maine, as Presumpscot Regional Land Trust is doing its part to strengthen the statewide fabric of conservation lands which are so important to Maine’s future.”

Go to www.prlt.org click on Preserves and Trails for an interactive map of public access lands and a brochure of trails in Gorham.

Land For Maine’s Future

Last month, we held our annual meeting and volunteer appreciation event at Randall Orchards for the second year. We are so glad 120 members and community members joined us for a festive event that included ample homemade pie and cider.

This month, we hosted a tour of legislators at Randall Orchards to showcase one of the largest forever conserved working farms in the Greater Portland area (a nearly 500-acre conservation easement). The Randall Orchards conservation project was only possible due to the Land For Maine’s Future Program. The Land For Maine’s Future Program also made our Black Brook Preserve in Windham possible (the flagship project that started Windham Land Trust).

Thirty years ago, Maine voters overwhelmingly approved a bond to purchase lands of significance for recreation and conservation, such as Black Brook Preserve and Randall Orchards. Since then, Land For Maine’s Future Program has helped to protect more than 600,000 acres of land in Maine for us – forever. This program is vital because Maine has the lowest percent of public land of all states on the East Coast. We expect that in the coming years there will be more significant conservation projects in our region that will only be possible with support from the Land For Maine’s Future program.



Apple picking at Randall Orchards



Our 2017 Annual Meeting at Randall Orchards

Letter from the Executive Director



As I begin my third year as director for our land trust, I am excited to report our service to the community continues to grow. Here are some of the highlights.

We are wrapping up our second full year of providing monthly education programs. Over 350 people have joined us so far to learn more about the environment and explore local conserved lands. These programs included collaborations with six different community organizations.

Last month, we added Gorham Trails' conserved lands within our land trust. We now steward a total of 1,600 acres of conserved lands for wildlife and the community forever, and 14 public access preserves with trails and

water access. This is twice as much as we provided just two years ago. Check out our new interactive preserves and trails map on our website www.prlt.org/preserves.

Our first Water Stewards season after merging with Presumpscot River Watch was a great success, with 30 citizen scientists monitoring water quality throughout the Presumpscot River Watershed. We can now use this data to help identify clean water conservation priorities within our region.

Land conservation projects continue to come our way and we are actively reviewing over half a dozen different prospects now. Our growing service to the region is possible due to the increasing number of you who are members and business partners--thank you.

Rachelle Curran Apse

Letter from the Co-Presidents

What an exciting time it is for our growing land trust. At our annual meeting in September, the membership voted to merge with the former Gorham Trails. This transfer brings new conserved land and some excellent trails within our land trust's stewardship. This growth also allows our land trust to have a greater regional impact on conservation.

For the past six months, we've looked closely at the question of impact by working on a Strategic Plan to guide the organization over the next five years. We cast a wide net for input, receiving comments from our members, municipalities, and community organizations. This has been a rewarding and productive process. We've used all the input to set concrete goals and strategies to increase conservation in the area and better serve our communities.

We are thrilled to have three new board members to help us execute this plan--Melissa Hamlin, an attorney from Westbrook; Matt Streeter, an Environmental Consultant from Portland; and Tom Pitman, a STEM high school teacher from Gorham. Welcome aboard, Melissa, Matt, and Tom.

As we say hello to some, we say goodbye to others. Moving into the new year, we will transition from three co-presidents to two. After serving for six years, Andy Colvin is leaving the board to spend more time with his young family. We will miss his thoughtful comments and leadership, however we are so glad he is staying involved as a member and volunteer with our land trust.

Thank you,
Andy, Tamara, Priscilla



Andy Colvin



Tamara Lee Pinard



Priscilla Payne

Mill Brook Preserve Expansion

This spring our public access trails in Mill Brook Preserve in Westbrook were open to the public to see the alewife migration. Hundreds of people flowed in to see the largest migratory fish run from Casco Bay. The final fish count for this year is just in--nearly 40,000 fish swam through our Mill Brook Preserve up to Highland Lake to reproduce, which is good news because the size of the alewife run last year was nearly the same.

We are excited to announce the expansion of Mill Brook Preserve with two new parcels of conserved land and 1.5 more miles of trail. This makes Mill Brook Preserve one of the largest remote trail systems on forever conserved land in the Greater Portland area, and the only one with spectacular views of the spring fish migration. Thank you to Steve and Sue Cullinan and the City of Westbrook for donating vital land along Mill Brook for conservation and trails. Thank you also to Casco Bay Estuary Partnership and Westbrook Environmental Improvement Corporation for grant funding to help make this project possible.

Mill Brook Preserve now has four trailheads. The newest and largest is the northern trailhead at the intersection



Steve and Sue Cullinan with Board Member Mike Parker

of Methodist Road and Route 302, which is the best way to access the new trails. Along the new section of trails there are several pools where alewives will congregate in the spring. We would especially like to thank Foundation House volunteers, IDEXX volunteers, and the many individual volunteers who helped make this new section of trail possible. We hope you can get out and explore the Mill Brook Preserve this fall and if you are lucky you will spot alewife swimming through Mill Brook back out from Highland Lake to the ocean.

Volunteer Opportunities this Fall

As a local community based-nonprofit our success is based on active and engaged volunteers. We want to say a big thank you to the over 130 volunteers who helped our land trust this year including: water stewards, land stewards, trail builders, event supporters, and those who served on committees and the board. We have more volunteer opportunities this fall:

TRAIL WORK

Volunteers can help with a variety of tasks involved with the construction of the new bridge at the Hawkes Preserve. There is something for all ability levels. Our other trail priority this fall is trailwork on two of the new public access preserves: West Sky and Meadowland Preserve. Both need signage updates and general clearing.

LAND STEWARDS

We are looking for new volunteer stewards. Stewarding a public access preserve includes visiting the preserve each month and helping with basic trail maintenance.

EVENT SUPPORT

We host an outreach event at our preserves every month, and we can use help with setup and logistics such as checking people in, directing parking, or taking pictures during events.



Trail work volunteers



Sign-up to Volunteer at:
www.prilt.org/get-involved/

For more information contact us at
toby@prilt.org or 839-4633.

Community Feedback on Priorities for our Region

Thank you to all the members, community members, and organizations in the region who shared feedback on priorities for our region. Community feedback is critical to our strategic planning process in determining our organizational priorities for the next five years.

In addition to members and community members, we heard from 46 organizations.

We asked open-ended questions to find out what are the biggest community concerns and how we can provide greater service to the region to address community concerns below is the summary.

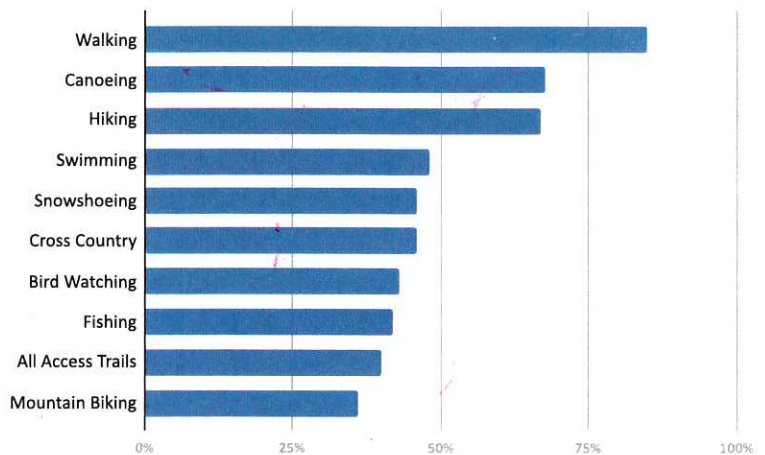


Strategic Planning Retreat with Board and Committee Members

Top 10 Concerns Regarding Quality of Life in Our Region:

1. Sprawl, pace and type of Development
2. Clean water and water quality
3. Lack of public access open space and trails
4. Lack of planning that ensuring livable town centers
5. Lack of land conserved for wildlife and natural resources
6. Disappearing local farms, lack of local food and farmers markets
7. Need quality education
8. Lack of affordable housing
9. Traffic
10. Lack of outdoor time/nature time by all people especially young people

Top 10 Favorite Outdoor Activities in our Region



Ten ways our land trust can be of greatest service to our region

- Create programs focused on getting youth outdoors in nature
- Focus on families: regularly provide family friendly programming
- Continue providing public education programs out in nature
- Expand regional trail network
- Focus on conserving land/open space with public access
- Protect lands that improve water quality
- Expand local farms/local food conservation program
- Proactively work with municipalities on conservation plans
- Expand cross section of partners to accomplish regionally significant conservation projects for wildlife and community
- Increase trails and create all access trails

We will be finalizing and sharing our five-year goals and strategies in the upcoming months. Thank you to each of you who shared your priorities for our region.

Volunteer Spotlight: Don Wescott & Andy Colvin

Our land trust will be saying farewell to two long-time board members this year: Don Wescott, who served on the board since 2009 and Andy Colvin who served on the board since 2010.

Don first became involved with the land trust by volunteering to do trail work. While his initial motivation was getting outdoor exercise after his retirement, what kept him going was thinking back to his childhood in Brooksville. There were many places available then where kids could play and enjoy the outdoors. Since then, the outdoor spaces he enjoyed as a child have been developed or made unavailable to the public. He saw our land trust as a way to ensure that lands would be available to future generations.

The same could be said for Andy. Growing up in Standish, he developed a love for the outdoors while biking, running and cross country skiing near Sebago Lake on land made available to the public by the Portland Water District.

After starting out with trail work, Don took on stewardship on Gambo Preserve. He then joined the board and became chair of the Stewardship Committee. When Don saw there were activities happening at Hawkes Preserve that were degrading the preserve for wildlife and public enjoyment of nature, he worked with volunteers and school children to



Don Wescott



Andy Colvin

improve and extend the trail system to connect to the new Great Falls Elementary School. This insight pointed the way toward a larger strategic goal for the land trust of engaging more with the next generation.

Andy came onto the board with a communications background. He chaired the Community Engagement Committee; was heavily involved in the merger of Presumpscot Regional Land Trust, Windham Land Trust and Presumpscot River Watch; and became a Co-President after the merger. He contributed his ideas and point of view to the land trust through these important changes and appreciated the opportunity to engage in conversations where much was at stake for the future of conservation in the region.

Both Don and Andy came on the board when the bulk of day-to-day operations were done by volunteer board members. They saw it through an important period of growth in staff, membership, and conserved lands. Today, the land trust is more capable of taking on projects of regional importance and fulfilling its mission, due in no small part to their contributions. Fortunately, the land trust will not be saying goodbye to Don and Andy. Don plans to continue as a steward, and Andy will stay on the Community Engagement Committee.

Thanks to Don and Andy for their incredible leadership and continued volunteer service for our land trust.

by Matt Streeter

Sustainer Invitation

Our land trust has nearly doubled in size and impact in the last two years. We now have 1,600 acres of forever conserved lands for wildlife and the community, 14 public access Preserves with trails and water access, a new team of water stewards monitoring water quality in the rivers and streams, and we need to build a strong foundation to sustain our work into the future. But fully meeting the needs of our community depends on sustaining that growth.

To do that, we are announcing the kick-off to our new Sustainers program. Sustainers are individuals who provide unrestricted annual support to our land trust of \$1,000 or more. We invite you to consider being a founder in our new Sustainers program.

Sustainers provide critical leadership support needed to sustain our mission to conserve, steward, access and enjoy local lands and clean water for the benefit of current and future generations.



Sustaining Nature for the Next Generation

Sustainers

I want to become a founding Sustainer with the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust by making an unrestricted gift.

___\$1,000 ___\$2,500 ___\$5,000 ___\$10,000 Other \$___

Name _____ Address _____

Town/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Make check payable and mail to: Presumpscot Regional Land Trust, P.O. Box 33, Gorham, Maine 04038. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all donations to PRLT are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. To learn more about the program contact Executive Director, Rachelle Curran Apse at 839-4633. Thank you to everyone who has already given at this level this year for being a founding SUSTAINER.

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Paddling the Presumpscot event at Hawkes Preserve August 2017

Membership Makes it Happen

Our largest source of financial support comes from people like you.

Presumpscot Regional Land Trust supports healthy lands, waters, wildlife, and people across the region through conservation, water quality monitoring, education, and public access - and conserves land in the towns of Gorham, Gray, Sebago, Standish, Westbrook and Windham. Membership gives you unique opportunities to connect with our preserves and meet others who care about conservation and public access trails.

Yes, I want to support the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust today.

___\$35 ___\$50 ___\$100 ___\$250 ___\$500 ___Other \$___

SUSTAINERS

___\$1,000 ___\$2,500 ___\$5,000 ___\$10,000 ___Other \$___

Name _____

Address _____

Town/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

___My company will match my gift

Make check payable and mail to:

Presumpscot Regional Land Trust, P.O. Box 33, Gorham, Maine 04038 or donate at www.prlt.org. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all donations to PRLT are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.



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Upcoming Events

History and Geology Walk

Sunday, November 19, 10am
Hawkes Preserve, Gorham

Join our land trust for a mid-fall walk at Hawkes Preserve in Gorham. We will have three leaders and topics. Lindsay Spigel of the Maine Geological Survey will discuss evidence she has found of landslides in the area over the last 10,000 years; Don Wescott will talk about the history of the Cumberland & Oxford Canal and Towpath; and Toby Jacobs will lead the group over the new bridge that the land trust staff and volunteers built this year.

Full Moon Snowshoe

Saturday, January 27, 4:30pm
Randall Orchards, Standish

Join us for a nearly full moon snowshoe at Randall Orchards – the farm we helped protect as farmland forever. We will meet at the farm at sunset and head out to explore the nearly 500 acres of conserved orchard and forest under the moonlight. After the walk, we will be serving hot cider from apples grown and pressed on-site at the Orchard. The snowshoe will be about one mile and the program will last two hours.

All events are free, but space is limited, RSVP required.

To learn more and RSVP go to: www.prlt.org

Contact us at 839-4633 with questions or to sign-up by phone.