

Kennebec Estuary Land Trust

Dedicated to conservation of the natural, historic, scenic, cultural and agricultural resources of the Kennebec Estuary

Summer 2009



Along the Kennebec Estuary, A Painter's Perspective

by Sally Loughridge

Last spring the Kennebec Estuary region emerged as an exciting focus for my next painting series. I have always been drawn to intersections of the land, water and sky. Be it gentle or swift, the movement of water against a margin of land fascinates me.

I was familiar with some of the peninsular lands embracing the Kennebec River. I approached the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust to invite their collaboration on the exhibit by providing educational material about the inspiring areas they own or manage.

For the last year I have been visually breathing in the organic beauty and "quality of place" in the Kennebec estuary region. The rivers and the areas they flow through offer countless spots of compelling beauty. Hiking through Thorne Head, Sewall Woods, and up Higgins Mountain brought varied delights – the glinting river beyond the trees, sun patches and rock walls, lichen and low growing berries. Merrymeeting Fields offered the contrasts of forest and field, wild flowers and

lush greens against a steel blue sweep of river.

Traveling by river in summer and fall, I felt enormous gratitude that these expanses of life filled splendor remain. In July, against a backdrop of brilliant water and lime green marsh grasses, I watched seals, cormorants, nesting osprey, leaping sturgeon and stripers. Huge stretches of marsh, forest and waterways spread out before us as we cruised through the Back River into the Kennebec. I imagined myself as a journeying Native American, in quiet harmony with the seasons and the wildlife. As sudden fog cloaked the islands, the river became a route of mystery, soft edges and caution.



Marsh Notes, by Sally Loughridge at Mae's Cafe through September 2

In early fall I cruised the Sasanoa River past Hockomock Point and dramatic cliffs on Bonyun Preserve. Moving through Goose Rock Passage, I watched eagles, osprey, fish and seal. Returning to the river in October I traveled north to Merrymeeting Bay past broad swaths of *continued on pg 2*

November 30, 1988

Jack Witham and Bill Blaiklock lead a meeting at Patten Free Library to discuss formation of a Lower Kennebec Land Trust. 35 people attend.



Fall 1989

Now more than 70 land trusts in Maine, representing 10% of entire nation.

Fall 1990

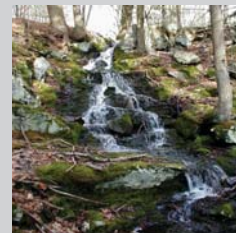
Membership Goal met - 100 members and a healthy bank balance!

February, 1989

Organizational Committee: Bill Blaiklock, Arrowsic Jack Witham, Arrowsic Tom Barrington, Bath Natalie Kavin, Bath Hal Bonner, Georgetown John Doane, Phippsburg Chris Hall, Woolwich

August 16, 1989

1st Annual Meeting held at the Cosmopolitan Club in Bath. Gene Dumont spoke on "Wildlife Resources of Merrymeeting Bay and the Lower Kennebec Region." Members on their knees looking at maps.



Winter 1991

LKRLT receives first easement! A major portion on Long Island across from Fort Popham covering more than 80 acres and two miles of shoreline.

KELT is a non profit membership supported land conservation organization founded in 1989 servicing Bath, West Bath, Arrowsic, Woolwich, Georgetown, Westport Island, Dresden and Bowdoinham.

Board of Directors

- Jack Witham, President
Arrowsic
- Dennis Dunbar, Vice President
Westport Island
- Maria Grill, Secretary
Arrowsic
- Anne Hammond, Treasurer
Bath
- Will Brune
Georgetown
- Bill Blaiklock
Arrowsic
- Tom Barrington
Bath
- Andrew Perry
Bath
- Bill Carney
Phippsburg
- Steve Taylor
Woolwich

Dear Friends,

We are celebrating 20 years of conservation in the Kennebec Estuary!

As you have hopefully heard, the board and membership voted in February to change our name from Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust. We feel that our new name more succinctly ties us to the region we work to protect and signifies the emergence of a refreshed, dynamic organization.

The land trust began modestly in 1988 with a discussion by the Arrowsic Conservation Commission. We received non-profit status in November of 1989 and to date have protected 1,651 acres. Please have a look at the timeline; maybe you remember some of the events such as the opening celebration at Thorne Head in 2000? None of this would be possible without the confidence of our members, support of our donors, and the undeniably rich natural assets of our region.

The Kennebec Estuary, stretching from Merrymeeting Bay to Popham Beach, is a nationally significant coastal resource. The estuary makes enormous contributions to our lives: clean water, beautiful views, recreational opportunities and healthy food. KELT is working to preserve the ecological integrity and biological diversity of this resource. We are improving public accessibility at our preserves and offering more educational programs. An informed appreciation of what we have today will yield strong protection for the future.

I extend my sincerest appreciation to all those who contribute to KELT. From installing a waterbar, helping with a mailing, leading a walk, to writing a check, each endeavor makes our success possible.

- Jack Witham, Board President

continued from pg 1 wild rice tinged warm yellow in the afternoon light. Cedar branches overhung the river, reaching low toward their own reflections.

Stunning beauty extends from Merrymeeting Bay to Popham Beach. The day after a fierce November storm, the breeze and tides were strong; building waves collided against the rock, the beach and each other.

Each fleeting wave was part of a fierce and transitory rhythm that would be exciting and challenging to paint.

Mae's Café in Bath is hosting the exhibit through September 2. I hope that the show will increase awareness of the estuary as a precious commodity to protect and enjoy. I am donating a portion of the sale of my artwork to the Land Trust to support their energetic and farsighted stewardship.

Fall 1993

Alternative Minimum Tax laws changed to allow deduction of full value of gifts of appreciated property. This may substantially increase the value of easement and land donations.



1994 Year End

Operating expenses remain under "careful control". Total expenses were \$1,037.45.

Fall 1995

Bill Blaiklock recognized for his 7 years of service, first as founder then board president. "Your grace, guidance and leadership... has been a vital factor in our success."



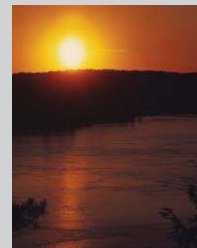
Fall 1994

Bowdoinham analyzes costs and benefits of large housing development on 307 acre farm, concluding that "Undeveloped land is the best tax break a town has."

Fall 1995

Soldier Point easement completed along Goose Rock Passage on the lower Sasanoa in Georgetown.

LKRLT joins the Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition



Volunteers are Wonderful!

As a non-profit organization with an enormous mission and a petite budget, KELT is reliant on volunteers to help us accomplish even a portion of the conservation work that is possible in the Kennebec Estuary.

From the hours contributed by board members, to time donated by office volunteers and sweat spilled by the trail crew, **we could never do it without you!**

Office Volunteers (and hours worked since February)

- Pam Tetley - Indefatigable file sleuth (74 hrs)*
- Caroline Bliss - Ever cheerful office help (17 hrs)*
- Amy Kerr - Database Wizard (26 hrs)*
- Jill Brown - Morse High student and researcher (11 hrs)*
- Nancy Perkins - GIS Savior (21 hrs)*
- Jack Swift - Historical detective (130 hrs)*

We are thankful for all our volunteers, but want to pay special tribute to the **Swift/Gravino family of Georgetown**. Jack Swift and his daughter Kathy Gravino researched decades of deeds and wrote content for our Higgins Mountain and Weber Kelly trail maps. His son-in-law, Bob Gravino, monitors the Weber Kelly Preserve and put it in tip top shape while generating a wonderful community of trail stewards. Generosity and love of nature run in the family, at right is an article written by Kathy's grandfather about Bay Point, where the Weber Kelly Preserve is located.

News Outside the Door

By J. Otis Swift

From the Sept. 9, 1933 Times Record

The Georgetown Road, running up from the sea at the little fishing hamlet of Bay Point, Maine, is the "Road to Paradise" for mineral lovers. It is ballasted with crushed rock from the feldspar quarries. It winds among spruce, fir, pine, turning aside for ancient ledges bedecked with rock tripe, shield lichens, gray-white reindeer moss. Seaward thunder the breakers on sands of Popham; westward the blue Kennebec ripples past the old granite fort. Eastward the clam flats are patrolled by snow-winged gulls and solemn herons. Underfoot among the broken feldspar gleam great wedges of muscovite mica, jet black crystals of tourmaline, waxy white quartz, emerald green beryl, sometimes clear enough for gems, blushing bits of rose quartz, opaque green and pink tourmaline, and wine red garnets – Mother Nature's jewel casket broken open and scattered. It makes a fine roadbed, distracting to naturalists because every step reveals new beauties. All pockets are soon filled and the burden grows heavy. Most of the look is treasure that cannot be carried back to the city. The hiker feels a miser who cannot take his gold with him to heaven. But there is the sense of triumph in the collecting of riches without having injured the happiness of others.



Noreen Blaiklock leads an April walk on edible plants; Morse High students "prune" at Sewall Woods; Nancy Sferra teaches water bar construction; trail crew at Higgins Mountain.

Fall 1996

Jason and Virginia Schoener donate easement on 154 acres in Georgetown. The land includes woodland, rock outcrops, significant shore frontage on Robinhood Cove and a large hill along Route 127 known as the "sledging hill".

Fall 1999

105 acre land acquisition on Bay Point Road in Georgetown. The first actually owned by LKRLT.



Fall 2000

Higgins Mountain in Georgetown, a 42 acre ledgy woodland, is donated by Carolyn (Billie) Todd.

Summer 1998

Two easements donated in Woolwich. 44 acre Hockomock Island in Brookings Bay and 150 acre Hockomock Bay Farm on Barley Neck with over four miles of undeveloped shorefront.

Major fundraising campaign initiated to acquire Thorne Head.



April 2000

Thorne Head Preserve official opening! \$420,000 raised - funders included Land for Maine's Future Maine, foundations, individuals and businesses. The Maine Coast Heritage Trust Land Heritage Award presented to LKRLT for the "most significant contribution to conservation in Maine in the past year."



Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee has been working hard to ensure that all our properties are in good shape for the summer hiking season. Eight public preserves have a Volunteer Property Monitor. These dedicated volunteers alert us to issues that need attention such as trail erosion, parking, tree work and signage. In several cases the VPM's have established their own trail crews - if you would like to join a crew please contact Alicia at the KELT office, 442-8400.

The **Bath Trails Committee**, a group of city, private and non-profit members, is working steadily on the new Whiskeag Trail. This 5-mile multi use trail will run from the Bath YMCA to the tip of Thorne Head, passing through McMann Field and Oak Grove Cemetary. It will be an incredible resource for mountain bikers and hikers, as well as providing a nice alternative for kids walking to school. Trail guru, Lester Kenway, came and helped identify the best layout for the trail and provided advice on what improvements needed to be made. We will lead a **mountain bike and hike of the entire trail on September 19** at 9:30 for the fit and hardy!

Volunteer Property Monitors

Stone School Path: Kate Mackay
 Higgins Mountain: Bob Trabona
 Weber Kelly: Bob Gravino
 Merrymeeting Fields: Pam Tetley
 Thorne Head: Tom Barrington
 Sewall Woods: Lauren Mofford
 Bonyun Preserve: Dennis Dunbar
 Green Point: Richard & Margaret Totten

We hired a **Field Team from The Nature Conservancy** for Green Point and Weber Kelly Preserves. They are removing invasives species, GPSing boundary lines, installing boundary markers and building bog bridges July 20-23 and August 10-14. Come join them and learn from the pros!

Over 50 people have participated in our **Trail Building 101** series of classes. There is one more class on September 12 on properly maintaining existing trails- dont miss the fun!

We hope to run **Trail Building 201** next spring with workshops on more advanced trail building techniques, including a GPS class. Let us know if you are interseted.

KELT's **Thorne Head Preserve** is included on the new, highly touted **Maine Birding Trail** available through Down East Books. The area is rich in common warblers and vireos and Blackburnian Warblers are noteworthy. The trail designates 82 sites that feature excellent birding, and also excellent parking, paths, and facilities.

The Maine Forest Service and Maine Association of Conservation Commissions is holding a **Community Forest Workshop** on October

23 from 8:00am-3:30pm in Bath. Register at www.meacc.net. The highly interactive agenda will include a visit to a working forest as well as information on:

- + What community forests are and the benefits they provide a town.
- + How towns across Maine are managing their town-owned forests for wildlife, recreation and wood products.

KELT is receiving help from the **Maine Conservation Corps** this summer! We were granted a team for two weeks in August (Aug. 4-8, 10-14). This crew will work on portions of the new Whiskeag Trail, specifically where it passes through the Sewall Woods and Thorne Head properties. They will be building bog bridges and improving trail connections according to Lester's guidelines. Volunteers are encouraged to join this experienced crew! Call 442-8400.



Fall 2001
 A committee is formed to find permanent office space and hire staff.

Fall 2002
 Westport Island is added to the service area when the Bonyun family gifted 68 acres of wooded property on the Sasonoa River including 1.5 miles of shore front.

2003 Milestones
 The first office opens at 1 Front Street in Bath at the Old Customs House. Easements are now held on 650 acres and 527 acres are owned in fee. For the first time, our net worth is over \$1,000,000.

Winter 2000
 Our sixth easement on a 9 acre wetland on the Back River in Arrowsic donated by Phine Ewing and Don Hudson. Total protected acres up to 450 in Georgetown, Arrowsic and Woolwich.



Spring 2003
 Merrymeeting Fields Preserve acquisition in Woolwich on Chopps Creek and Merrymeeting Bay adds another 125 acres



Dear KELT Members and Supporters,

It has been a quick ten months since I joined the land trust. Thank you all for your support and advice as I learned the language and people involved with this important sector of the non-profit world.

KELT is involved in so many interesting projects this summer! We have our first intern from Bowdoin College, a helpful crew from the Maine Conservation Corps, a city wide partnership through Bath Trails, and a new hiking guide listing our preserves (come by the office for a copy). In addition to over 400 acres of new conservation land under discussion, our Green Point Preserve in West Bath is being improved for visitors with a kiosk, trail map and parking area. I hope you will make time to visit this lovely property which provides access to Brigham's Cove.

Membership support is critical to enhancing our Quality of Place in the Kennebec Estuary. Please use the enclosed envelope to send in your membership dues today, and thank you to those who quickly responded to our renewal mailing in May.

I welcome your comments and look forward to meeting each one of you. Please call me at 442-8400, email ckinne@kennebecestuary.org.

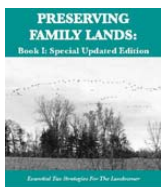
- Carrie Kinne, Executive Director



Wesley Hartwell, a Bowdoin College Junior, is interning at KELT this summer as a Psi-Upsilon fellow. Wesley works 40 hours per week, bicycling from Brunswick to the office or other far off points to GPS properties, track down boundary information and establish our GIS capabilities.

Barth Day was on April 22. To show support for our work many local businesses donated a portion of the day's proceeds to KELT totalling \$370.80!

Thank you to: **Now You're Cooking, Bath Natural Market, Bath Printing, Patten Free Library Book Store, Marnee's Cookies and Halcyon Yarn.**



STEPHEN J. SMALL

A special new edition of Steven Small's classic **Preserving Family Lands: Book I** has recently been published. It includes information on the new conservation easement tax incentives and encourages landowners to act this year to take advantage of those incentives. We have several copies available for loan - come on by!

KELT Wish list:

Since it is our birthday, are we permitted to make a wish (or two)? If you can help, please call us!

- A small vacuum for our office
- A volunteer to update online event listings
- Book cases



Summer 2006

Major campaign doubles membership to 250, new brochure & map mailed to all regional residents.

Kennebec Estuary Collaboration (KEC) is established as partnership between LKRLT and Phippsburg Land Trust.



February 2009

Members vote to accept changes to the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, including a new name. Staff and assets of the KEC absorbed by the new Kennebec Estuary Land Trust

Summer 2004

Sewall property on Whiskeag Road in Bath purchased.

A fire burned about 1/2 to 3/4 of an acre on the ridge Higgins Mountain in Georgetown on August 30th.

Spring 2007

New office space 92 Front Street in Bath and a full time Executive Director for KEC. Strategic Conservation Plan written.

Fall 2008

Carrie Kinne hired as Executive Director.

"State of the Kennebec Estuary" report released.



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Save these Dates for KELT

Through September 2 *Along the Kennebec Estuary Art Exhibit*

Over 40 lovely landscapes by Sally Loughridge of the estuary. Mae's Cafe, Bath.

July 25, 9:30-11:30am *Summer Exploration: Mud Plants of Chops Creek*

Chop's Creek supports an abundance of rare aquatic vegetation. Barbara Vickery, Director of Conservation Programs at The Nature Conservancy, will lead us to a private conserved property where these unusual plants flourish in a special freshwater tidal environment. Register & receive directions by calling KELT at 442-8400.

August 2, 9:00am-1:00pm *Kayak Merrymeeting Bay*

Paddle alongside seals, ospreys, eagles. This expedition is lead by registered Maine Guides and narrated by Alicia Heyburn, KELT Outreach Director. Kayak, paddle, PFD provided. Register with Maine Maritime Museum at 443-1316. Special price for KELT members. \$60. Min. age 12.

August 6, 5:30pm *Forest Pests and Pathogens Training*

Learn to ID Asian Long-horned Beetle and steps that can be taken to survey for this invasive and others like it. Attendees will receive materials and handouts prepared by the Maine Forest Service. Bath City Hall.

August 19, 7:00pm *KELT Annual Meeting*

Join us at Mae's Cafe where a back drop of Sally Loughridge's beautiful artwork will set the scene for an informative and inspiring evening. Brief business meeting followed by a narrated tour through the exhibition by the artist and delicious birthday cake to celebrate KELT's 20th anniversary!

September 24, October 22, November 19 7:00 pm *Fall Lecture Series*

Wood, Water, Wind: Alternative Energy and Impacts on the Kennebec Estuary
Current facts presented by leaders in Maine's energy sector. Held at Maine Maritime Museum.