The Ellis River Lands Celebration
– We Connected the Dots!

In 2017, a high priority from the 2015 Strategic Plan was fulfilled! The purchase of 227 acres from the deFrees-Holt Family Trust connects the biologically diverse landscape along the Ellis River to forested uplands. Through the purchase of an additional 133 acres from A&B Equipment, along with a proposed 180-acre easement from John Starr and Brie Weisman, the Ellis River is now connected to our Rumford Whitecap conservation lands.

This land acquisition was made possible through generous community gifts and grants from the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, Fields Pond Foundation, William Wharton Trust and John Sage Foundation.

“**This project will both conserve important natural habitats and create a connection between two of the State’s Wildlife Action Plan Focus Areas… it begins the long-term process of protecting the wide diversity of wildlife that depends on this exceptional river corridor.**”

Don Cameron, Ecologist, Maine Natural Areas Program

**Hastings Farm Easement**

Our MLT mission has long included the preservation of high quality agricultural farmlands in the region.

Working with Maine Farmland Trust, we completed the donated easement this past year on the 173-acre Hastings Farm owned by Sonny Hastings on the Intervale Road in Bethel.

Sonny was inspired to donate the easement by his late sister, Ann Hastings Morton. Ann served on the Mahoosuc Land Trust Board and it was her desire to see one of Bethel’s oldest farms and the place where she grew up remain in agricultural use forever. The property has been farmed by generations of the Hastings family and is now under lease for growing potatoes and corn.

2 Mahoosuc Land Trust
Two More Reasons to Visit Rumford Center

This year, make sure to include Rumford in your travel plans and take some time to visit two of our newly completed projects: the Hastings’ Landing canoe launch and the Glassface Mountain Trail.

Long time Bethel resident and dairy farmer, Sonny Hastings, helped to fund the purchase and construction of the canoe landing. He dedicated the launch in memory of his sister, Ann Morton, a former MLT Board member and land trust advocate. In addition to Sonny, generous support from John Hoyt, Bart McHugh, Jane Kingsland and many others made land acquisition and the construction of the hand carry boat launch possible.

The new site is part of the Androscoggin River Trail, which begins in Shelbourne, NH and ends in Rumford. The trail currently consists of seven launch sites, with an eighth to be completed in Gilead.

Community gifts were matched by funding from the Maine Water Access Fund, Quimby Family Foundation, and the LL Bean, Maine Land Trust Grant Program. The launch site was designed by the Androscoggin Watershed Council and constructed by Mike Cooper.

During the summer, an energetic work group from the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Oxford County Conservation Corps partnered with Mahoosuc Land Trust to complete a .6 mile trail to a scenic overlook atop Glassface Ledges (elevation 1253’). The trail begins at the back of the adjacent cemetery and climbs up to an open ledge overlooking the Androscoggin River valley. The ledges provide unobstructed views of the river and the valley below. Sections of the trail are somewhat steep, so wear hiking shoes. The end of the trail is a great place for lunch.

The Glassface Mountain property was gifted by Maureen Sheldon of Rumford to the Mahoosuc Land Trust in 2014, and funding for the trail construction was made possible by grants from the Maine Recreational Trails Program and the Quimby Family Foundation.

Please see our website www.mahoosuc.org for a map and more information on these additions.

2017 Noteworthy Plans

Mahoosuc Land Trust is committed to building stronger community connections by partnering with local organizations to expand our education and conservation opportunities.

**Nature Play** is a new pilot program that began in the summer of 2016 at the Crescent Park School in Bethel. Mahoosuc Land Trust facilitators, Molly Siegel and Paul Motts, worked with 30 students, grades K-3, in the Summer Quest program with the Mahoosuc Kids Association. As its name suggests, a big focus of Nature Play is to give kids the chance to explore nature and develop their own sense of wonder.

Each day was jam-packed with activities, as well as lots of time for play and exploration. Nature kaleidoscopes were made from plants collected from the school landscape. Exploring what makes our planet “just right” to support life encouraged thinking like a scientist. Creating sun photos demonstrated the power of the sun. Thanks to Paul Motts for developing the curriculum.

The **Nature Play** program with Mahoosuc Kids will be continued in 2017 through grant support from the Onion Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, Environmental Trust, Sunday River Maine Community Fund and long-time donor Martha Chandler. This spring the program will be expanded with a new curriculum developed by Paul Motts for kids in grades 4-6 at the Andover Elementary school.
2017 Noteworthy Plans (continued)

Gardeners Growing Healthy Communities

In 2015 the Gardeners Growing Healthy Communities nonprofit was established to create gardens that grow healthy produce for distribution to community members with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This spring, our Valentine Farm Conservation Center will be the site of the organization’s gardener training program, through which community members use their love of gardening to transform their community. The eight-week training begins indoors, as participants learn the practical aspects of successful vegetable gardening, and continues as they work at the organization’s community produce gardens in Rumford and South Paris.

The training will be held Tuesdays, April 4th-May 23rd from 5:30-8:00pm, at the Valentine Farm Conservation Center, 162 North Road, Bethel.

The registration fee for the eight-week program is $100. Limited scholarships are available. FMI contact Barbara Murphy at bmurphy1454@gmail.com or (207) 890-1626.

2016 Transitions

Valentine Farm Conservation Center – Our New Home

The generous bequest of 142 acres of land and buildings along the North Road in Bethel by Dick Valentine enabled us to move our office operations to the newly named Valentine Farm Conservation Center.

Hundreds of volunteer hours and donor support converted the residence built by Dick Valentine to an energy efficient, beautiful office space. Also, through a special Bethel Rotary Club grant, a lab/exploration room has been created for future youth and adult programs.

Planning is underway for the construction of a universal access 1.1 mile trail that will crisscross the property’s wetlands, fields and forest. Grant funding from the Maine Recreational Trails Program is making this trail possible.

If you are interested in touring the office, give us a call at 207-824-3806. Regular office hours are 9 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Mahoosuc Land Trust Staffing Changes

We extend our thanks to Jolan Ippolito who staffed our fundraising efforts for ten years, beginning with the successful Rumford Whitecap campaign. We are grateful for her dedicated service and welcome her volunteer involvement on our new Education Committee.

We welcome Jolan’s successor, Barbara Murphy, as the new Development Coordinator of the Mahoosuc Land Trust. She will focus on fundraising and development with particular attention to donor relationships and activities.

Barbara is well known in the Bethel area as a co-founder of Gardeners Growing Healthy Communities and as a long-time teacher of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. Her skills in these areas will be a valuable asset as the Land Trust begins to institute new programs at the Valentine Farm Conservation Center.
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- Dorrie Casey and Archie Purcell
- Martha Chandler
- Robert Duplessie
- Larry Ely and Ginger Lawson
- Richard E. Gordet and Sonja Johanson
- Walter Hatch
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* New Land Trust Donor

We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please feel free to call Barbara with corrections.
Legacy Gifts Ensuring the Future of MLT

My wife, Michaela, and I have been enthusiastic members of the Mahoosuc Land Trust for many years, drawn by our interests in land conservation. The organization – particularly the patience and advice of Jim Mitchell - was very helpful in guiding us toward putting a conservation easement on some of our own property in Albany Township in 2013.

Our recent decision to make the Mahoosuc Land Trust part of our estate planning was an easy one; we admired and supported the organization’s work and its goals. Having been a volunteer and Board member of the Land Trust for the past few years, I realize how dependent we are on the generosity of our supporters for their financial and sweat-equity contributions. Our community is stronger because of institutions like the Mahoosuc Land Trust and the people who support them.

Bob O’Brien
Board President

A special thank you to our Legacy Circle Members:

William Andrews  •  Martha Chandler  •  Nancy Coan  •  Larry Ely and Ginger Lawson  •  Walter Hatch
Bob and Lida Iles  •  Jack Kallis  •  Jim and Henrietta List  •  Jack and Lucy Nordahl
Bob O’Brien and Michaela Casey  •  John Shorb  •  Jan Stowell

Your financial support helped to make 2016 a very successful year. Here are several ways to make your generous giving go even further:

MAKE YOUR ANNUAL GIFTS BIANNUAL!
We need a continuous flow of operating funds to carry out our ambitious staff and volunteer work.

MAKE YOUR ADDITIONAL DONATION BEFORE MAY.
It helps us better manage our expenses throughout the year.

GIVE IN MONTHLY INSTALLMENTS.
The Longfellow Club is an automatic way to insure your contributions continue uninterrupted.

DONATE AN ITEM FROM OUR GROWING WISH-LIST:
A working brush mower, garden shovels, rakes and trowels in good condition, a wheelbarrow.

MAKE A PRE-TAX GIFT
from your required distribution from your IRA if you are older than 70 1/2.
These gifts are not included in your taxable income, if made directly to the Land Trust.
What’s Happening…
We’d love to see you this spring. Come have some fun with family and friends at these free programs. For details visit our website or sign up for our regular e-Newsletter.

**April 19 - Iconic Places: White Mountain Flowers/Bloom Time Changes.** Georgia Murray, an Appalachian Mountain Club Staff Scientist, will share her expertise and insights on the impact of climate change on the bloom periods of wildflowers. 7 pm at McLaughlin Auditorium, Gould Academy.

**May 3 - Iconic Places: Trekking the Appalachian Trail.** Carey Kish will regale us about his 189-day trek along the Appalachian Trail in 2015. Kish will show images of the mountain scenery and talk about the camaraderie of fellow hikers, fun trail towns, trail angels, scary wildlife encounters and the highs and lows of hiking for six months. 7pm at the Shelburne, NH Town Hall.

**May 11 - Searching for the Plants and Flowers of Spring.** Bring a bag lunch and join Lynne Zimmerman, Master Naturalist, and Barbara Murphy, Development Coordinator for MLT, for a lunchtime discussion (12:30) on strategies for identifying less familiar flowers, including some edible plants, along with harvesting considerations. A guided walk to identify spring flowers will follow at 2:00. Valentine Conservation Center, Bethel. 12:30-4:00. This talk is co-sponsored by the Western Mountains Senior College and the Valentine Conservation Center. To be sure we have adequate seating for the lunch, please RSVP to Liz Wooley (ewooley@roadrunner.com).