Welcome to Your Future Valentine Farm Conservation Center

By Kirk Siegel, Executive Director

2019 Annual Report
A Message from Kirk

In this time of upheaval, I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe. Here at MLT, we are adjusting daily to the evolving pandemic. Currently our office is closed, but work continues. Barbara and I are working from home, and important committee, and other planning meetings, are being held electronically. Until it is safe to congregate, all of our in-person events are canceled. Despite all of the unknowns, we remain committed to moving on, looking to the future, and working with you to conserve the land that is so important to all of us.

The MLT board and staff will be with the people and communities of the Mahoosuc Region every step of the way as we all endure and recover from this jolt. For 30 years we have been working together to open opportunities to be outdoors. We are so grateful to our members, supporters and volunteers for their help acquiring preserves, caring for our trails, bridges, gardens, and boat launches, and helping others discover them. In 2020 we will all be called upon to stretch ourselves in many ways to help our region back onto the path of reaching its full potential to provide sustenance and quality of life for all.

We think the best way we can help our communities cope and recover is to continue to provide free access to our perpetually conserved lands to find respite, exercise or the sounds and sights of nature. If you are not able to enjoy our preserves at this time, we are working hard to bring nature-based education and inspiration to our website and social media platforms. Stay tuned as we roll out Habitat for All and show you how you can learn and participate in this fun and exciting adventure.

You have inspired, supported, and engaged us, and in upcoming weeks and months we will do everything we can to keep you connected to the things you love. We’ll make sure you know about new trails and trail conditions, new conservation projects, opportunities to lend your skills in a safe setting (whether on a trail or at your computer at home), and deep knowledge about making nature and habitat big in your life.

We want to know how you are doing, and we may check in with you by phone or email. Don’t hesitate to reach out to us! Barbara and I are in our home offices and fully engaged in doing work for the benefit of the natural areas and communities of the Mahoosuc Region. Let’s stay safe and keep in touch.

Kirk Siegel, Executive Director
In the category of things to look forward to—we are hopeful that the 2nd annual Mahoosuc Ridge to The River Challenge will go as scheduled on September 12, 2020. With 68 pre-registered in mid-March, and a 26.2 mile distance added to the 13.1 mile and 10k options, we are on track for an even bigger event this year. Sign up at www.ridge2river.me (your pre-registration fee is refundable in the event of cancellation). And this year’s sweet sticker will be available from MLT and Mahoosuc Pathways for $1.

You may have noticed that being outside, especially in places like a forest or a beach, feels good. In fact, time outside is an investment in your health. Sunlight allows our body to produce vitamin D to support a healthy immune system. Wandering through a forest we inhale compounds given off by trees and plants that also energize the immune system. Fresh air and sunlight can also help us recover from illness. The 1918 flu pandemic was the deadliest flu of the 20th Century. In the United States so many people were sick that they were housed in tents and put outside to breath the fresh air and bask in the sunlight. They didn’t know it at the time, but fresh air is a natural disinfectant killing flu bugs. Sunlight also kills bacteria and stops flu viruses. If one report is correct, fresh air and sunlight reduced deaths among hospital patients from 40% to about 13%.

Coronavirus is new and we don’t know for sure how effective fresh air and sunlight might be. But the treatment is free and fun. So, if you are like us and you like free and fun, get outside—every day!

Thanks to Jeanne Christie, Outreach Program Manager, Teens To Trails
Mahoosuc Land Trust Contributors

The board of directors and staff of MLT extend our deepest appreciation to the individuals, businesses and foundations listed on these pages for their support this past fiscal year, January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019. As always, any omissions or misspellings are unintentional. We encourage you to notify us of any changes. Thank you.

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**Names presented in BOLD are Sustaining Members**

- New Member*
- McCoy-Chapman Forest Campaign supporter**
- Monthly Donor**
Crescent Park 1st graders visited Valentine Farm

111
Bird species found on Valentine Farm

32
Crescent Park 1st graders visited Valentine Farm

10
Monarch butterflies were tagged at the pollinator garden

1
Benefit art show by Dorrie Casey

100s
Of beautiful sunsets on Songo Pond
Many of you have asked how you can best support Mahoosuc Land Trust during these unsettling times. At the moment, what would be most helpful would be for you to consider making a gift to our annual fund. This fund covers the expenses associated with daily operations—electricity, plowing, telephone, etc.

Please consider making your donation monthly. Join the 22 members (their names are in red in our list of 2019 donors) who make monthly donations and are members of MLT’s Longfellow Club. Every month we can count on these funds to pay bills or take advantage of a new opportunity in good times and bad.

Finally, for those who have already given, we respectfully ask that you consider increasing your gift in light of this unprecedented situation. Your generosity will sustain us through this difficult period and prepare us for the moment when we can be fully open to the public once again.

All gifts can be made at www.mahoosuc.org/donate, or you can send a check to PO Box 981, Bethel, ME 04217.

Thank You!

Thanks to You, We Met the Match!

In 2019, the Stifler Family Foundation presented MLT with a generous challenge. To encourage contributions to our operating fund, they would match all new and increased donations to our annual fund up to a total of $20,000.

Thank you to our 70 new members and 78 current members who had their donations matched. We finished the year in a strong financial position and are looking forward to a robust 2020.
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