

News Release

April 24, 2007

For Immediate Release

Contact

Margaret Pizer, (207) 729-5181 ext. 202, mpizer@tnc.org
The Nature Conservancy in Maine

Land Trust takes Ownership of Fernald's Neck Preserve

Lincolnvile property transferred after nearly 30 years of ownership by The Nature Conservancy

LINCOLNVILLE, ME—A prominent symbol of conservation in Midcoast Maine has changed hands but will remain well protected. Ownership and stewardship responsibilities for the 326-acre Fernald's Neck Preserve on the shores of Megunticook Lake in Lincolnvile and Camden have been transferred from The Nature Conservancy to Coastal Mountains Land Trust. The Land Trust will manage the property for its natural features under a forever wild conservation easement retained by The Nature Conservancy.

The Conservancy is also transferring to the Land Trust two funds totaling over one million dollars: \$550,000 reserve fund to finance additional land protection projects near the preserve and a stewardship endowment of \$500,000 to pay for management of the preserve and a \$550,000 reserve fund to finance additional land protection projects near the preserve and in the Megunticook Lake watershed. The Conservancy and the Fernald's Neck Stewardship Committee made the decision to transfer the property in consultation with Coastal Mountains Land Trust.

"The Nature Conservancy has a history of transferring land to other conservation organizations with the experience and staff capacity to steward the property," says Mike Tetreault, Executive Director of The Nature Conservancy in Maine. "We know Fernald's Neck will be in good hands with Coastal Mountains Land Trust."

The Conservancy and Coastal Mountains Land Trust have a long history of partnering on conservation actions in the Land Trust's service area. In 1996, the Conservancy transferred the 23-acre Harkness Preserve in Rockport to the Land Trust. The Land Trust also helps with management of the Conservancy's Simonton Corner Quarry Preserve in Rockport.

The Land Trust has protected more than 5,500 acres in the coastal mountains region of Maine since its founding in 1986. The organization has a strong network of more than 1,700 members and over 100 volunteers in the area, as well as full-time stewardship staff responsible for land management on their preserves and easement lands. Under this new management, the public use guidelines for the Fernald's Neck Preserve will remain the same until the Land Trust has the opportunity to create its own management plan for the preserve.

"Our close collaboration with The Nature Conservancy during the past twenty years has brought new land into conservation and enabled the long-term care that truly preserves the public value of these properties," says Scott Dickerson, Executive Director of the Land Trust. "We're honored by the trust placed in us by The Nature Conservancy in transferring this exceptional place to our care."

Fernald's Neck was protected for conservation in 1969, when local residents, among them the late Charles Chatfield of Rockport, raised funds and formed a corporation in partnership with The Nature Conservancy to purchase 285 acres. A developer had expressed interest in buying the land, which is located on a large peninsula in the middle of Megunticook Lake, but the concerned residents sprang into action to protect its forests, bogs and nearly four miles of shoreline. The corporation formally dissolved in 1979 and the preserve was transferred to the Conservancy. That year, an additional 36 acres, known as the Hattie Lamb Section, was donated by Margaretta W. Thurlow in memory of her mother. In the early 1990's two inholdings were purchased from the Ethel F. Harkness Trust: the 3-acre Balance Rock parcel and the 2-acre Narrows parcel, bringing the total preserve acreage to 326 acres.

"It is important to preserve the Maiden Cliff blueberry barrens area, which has been enjoyed for many decades and will continue to be enjoyed by future generations," says Helen Black, Mr. Chatfield's sister and a longtime Rockport resident who also helped raise the funds for the original purchase of Fernald's Neck. "It is especially appropriate to transfer Fernald's Neck Preserve to our local Land Trust in memory of Charlie Chatfield, who worked tirelessly for 40 years preserving wild nature in the Camden/Rockport area."

Fernald's Neck Preserve includes some spectacular 60 foot cliffs on the west side of the peninsula. The preserve land is reverting farmland covered with mixed forests, mostly dominated by white pine, red spruce, red oak and hemlock. The "great bog" extending in from Megunticook Lake to the center of the preserve supports an array of plants including pipewort, leatherleaf, sweet gale, and rhodora as well as pitcher plants, rose pogonia and blue flag iris.

A variety of wildlife inhabits the Neck, including deer, moose, porcupines, showshoe hares and migrating warblers. Bald eagles frequently nest on some of the islands just offshore from the preserve. Fernald's Neck provides valuable open space and natural character in the busy Midcoast region of Maine.

###

The Nature Conservancy is a leading international, nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities representing the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To date, the Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 15 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 102 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. The Conservancy in Maine has over 8,000 members and owns and manages the largest private system of nature sanctuaries in the state, consisting of 76 reserves. Visit us on the Web at nature.org/maine.

Coastal Mountains Land Trust has been working for more than twenty years to establish a system of conservation lands that permanently protect biological diversity, scenic landscapes, and agricultural, forest, and water resources in the western Penobscot Bay region of Maine. The Land Trust also works to promote awareness of the value of land conservation and to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy and experience local natural lands.
www.coastalmountains.org