



## Little Ragged Summit Conserved!

*Gifts from the Town of Camden and a key purchase protect 123 acres and build momentum for the Round the Mountain Collaboration*

When we began to conserve Bald and Ragged Mountains in 2003, we knew that progress would come in fits and starts. This past year was a huge start. Beyond signing an agreement that provides us with the opportunity to purchase two conservation easements on 1,400 acres of land owned by the Maine Water Company around Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond, we negotiated and completed two significant projects that protect Ragged Mountain's second summit, Little Ragged, and are critical to fulfilling the vision of the Round the Mountain Trail.

In February, the Town of Camden gifted two mountaintop parcels adding 63.6 acres to the northern end of the Ragged Mountain Preserve. There has been a long-standing partnership between the Town of Camden and the Land Trust, and this gift is one of the strongest endorsements we have received for the Round the Mountain Collaboration. "For a long time, the Town of Camden has been supportive of the idea of protecting this mountain, which is the backdrop to our community," said interim Camden Town Manager, Roberta Smith. "The Select Board was unanimous in its support for making sure that these two properties are permanently protected."

Composed of two landlocked parcels, this scenic ridgeline property includes a rare subalpine natural community type—rocky summit heath—and a rare plant, smooth sandwort. This gift also permanently protects a section of the Georges Highland Path and will allow the Land Trust to build a key section of the Round the Mountain Trail.

In January we completed the purchase of a 59-acre parcel owned by Winston Pendleton, who worked patiently with us for over thirteen years to see this land become part of the Ragged Mountain Preserve. Well known by hikers of the Georges Highland Path, it includes the scenic granite summit of Little Ragged, offering panoramic views of Penobscot Bay to the east and the White Mountains to the west. The land is blanketed by a mix of rocky heath summit habitat, dense softwood stands, and mixed hardwood forests that stretch down to Gillette Road. The lower half of the

property will allow us to develop a key section of the Round the Mountain trail as it rounds the northern end of the mountain.





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## Hands on the Mountain: Ragged Mountain Trail Care Day

Whether you like to hike, bike, run, ski, bird, or just enjoy being outside, please join us for a morning of work maintaining the growing trail network on Ragged Mountain, with a celebratory lunch afterwards. We'll bring tools and materials, and you can bring positive energy, your friends, and work gloves! We'll split into small groups to tackle projects on the Land Trust's trails, Camden Snow Bowl, and mountain bike trail system.

Saturday May 20, 9:00 am.  
Meet at Snow Bowl,  
catered lunch at 12:30 pm.  
RSVP to [info@coastalmountains.org](mailto:info@coastalmountains.org)

## Rail Trail 5K: Fun Run Walk/Stroll — A Community Celebration

Celebrate National Trails Day by joining us for the Rail Trail 5K Fun Run along the Passagassawakeag River in Belfast on June 3 at 9:00 am. Starting near the Armistice Bridge, this inaugural Rail Trail 5K celebrates the completion of the scenic Belfast Rail Trail. Runners, joggers, walkers, wheel chairs, baby strollers, and dogs are all welcome! To register, visit our website at [coastalmountains.org](http://coastalmountains.org)



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Stockton Springs, and Prospect

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# LANDSCAPES

Newsletter of the Coastal Mountains Land Trust SPRING 2017

## Turn Your Passion into a Legacy

Estate planning is a deeply personal activity. So much so that donors may not have shared their decisions with the intended recipients of their generosity. This was just the case recently when a long-time member passed away and we learned that she had put Coastal Mountains Land Trust in her will. In the words of her daughter, “She was a true philanthropist, giving her time and energy to so many things.” We were one of four charities to receive a share of Audrey Post’s estate. A lover of the outdoors who enjoyed exploring our trails, Audrey had a passion for land preservation and believed strongly enough in our mission that she was willing to generously include our organization in her estate plans.

At our Land Trust, we invite members to join our Summit Circle by letting us know of their intention to support our mission through their will. Planned gifts are powerful and enduring. Knowing your intentions means that we can thank you in person and keep you involved and informed about our work and progress. Annually, we invite the Summit Circle members to a gathering—this year we will take them on a boat ride on Penobscot Bay to enjoy the view of Ragged and Bald Mountains from the water.

There are many mechanisms to provide support for the work of the Land Trust—while you are living and after you are gone. We are happy to talk with you about any and all ideas you may have about how to maximize your ability to support your family and your charitable goals through estate planning.

Memorial giving is also important. Recently we have been honored to receive very generous gifts in memory of some incredible advocates for the land trust. Being nominated as the recipient “in lieu of flowers” offers another important way for families to recognize and encourage philanthropy to the cause that was special for their loved one. Special thanks to the family and friends of the following individuals who have sadly left our communities but not our hearts: Jack Higgins, Leonard Lookner, Cathy Morgan, Audrey Post, and Lois Dickson Rice.

## Letter from the Director Together for the Land

Over the past decade, my work with the Land Trust has provided the opportunity to talk about conservation with all kinds of people. I’ve sat at the table with snowmobile clubs, business leaders, farmers, poets, hunters, those newly arrived to Maine and those that have been here for generations. What I’ve learned is that one thing we all share is a love for this place and a desire to take care of it.

In the wake of this year’s historic election, many have been asking how we, as a country and as individuals, can begin to bridge the divides that seem so apparent in our country. While there are many ways to approach this question, I think that land trusts—as local organizations focused on building and maintaining strong relationships between the land and the community—are uniquely positioned to help diverse groups of people work together. Land trusts can help change how we interact with the land, and perhaps even how we interact with one another.

Land conservation has been and will continue to be something most people in our country value. Nationally, large majorities have supported local and state-level conservation initiatives. Maine voters and legislators, when given the opportunity, have enthusiastically approved funding for Land for Maine’s Future program five separate times between 1987 and 2012. In the fifteen towns we work in, from Rockport to Prospect, we enjoy a strong working relationship with local governments and local citizens. I think this is because of the broad consensus, that spans our political divide, that protecting our sense of place is crucially important to the well-being of our local communities. Recent collaborations with the City of Belfast on the Belfast Rail Trail and the Town of Camden on the Round the Mountain project (see front page) demonstrate the strong local support that benefits our Land Trust.

So, if you are looking to find a way to make a difference and to open a positive conversation with someone you don’t always engage with, consider starting with a project on the land. Consider getting involved with the Land Trust by helping with a stewardship or land protection project and invite someone you don’t always agree with to join you. Perhaps by working together on the land, something we *can* agree on, we can begin to find common ground.



Executive Director

# LAND PROTECTION



## Featured Preserve: Main Stream

In 2010 Coastal Mountains Land Trust protected a significant wildlife corridor along Main Stream when Central Maine Power transferred ownership of 270 acres of land in Stockton Springs and Prospect to the Land Trust. The Main Stream Preserve includes a two-mile stretch of Main Stream and large areas of riparian wetlands. Other significant features include prime habitat moose, bear, bobcat and woodcock habitat as well as evidence of human settlement dating back to the 1800s. Hikers, naturalists, and hunters enjoy the property throughout the year.

Preserve Steward Tim Webster is committed to exploring the natural and human history of this property and is excited about sharing his extensive knowledge with others. After deciding he wanted to volunteer with the Land Trust, Tim chose to steward this property because he already knew and loved it—he roamed the property hunting and fishing and knew the diversity of habitat types and wildlife. He wanted to be a part of watching over the land.

Over the two years he has served as steward, Tim has seen evidence of beaver, deer, bear, moose, coyotes,

fox, partridge, woodcock, and even bobcat. Though he is fascinated by the ecology, what he finds most rewarding about stewarding the land has been clearing the boundaries and making trails with a great group of people. Clearing boundaries is no easy task with seven miles of twisting and turning angles through young, dense fir stands.

Fortunately, a tenacious volunteer crew was up to the challenge! The crew also did a fantastic job creating an easy-to-moderate, two-mile hiking trail. As the trail meanders through black cherry floodplain, hemlock groves, alder thickets, and grassy fields you will find Tim's favorite spot in one of the fir stands among large glacial erratics.



Volunteer Tim Webster looking for boundary pins.

We invite you to explore Main Stream and learn about its human and natural history. You can access the Preserve by turning onto the Harris Road off of Route One in Stockton Springs (across from Just Barb's restaurant). From the Harris Road take a left onto Green Valley Road, then the first right onto Old County Road, then the first left onto Sherer Road. Park along the side of the road, at the end of Sherer Road.

## Wayfinding in the Woods

Getting lost in the woods and then finding your way home is a great way to learn about the land. In the forest, it is not uncommon to lose one's path, confuse one place with another, or think to oneself, "Haven't I passed by here already?" The natural places we protect have few hard lines, corners, and intersections by which to orient yourself.

There is both an art and a science to finding one's way outdoors. Deer trails, bark scrapes, stream corridors, or just about any distinct natural feature can serve as reference points or navigation tools. New England's long history of human habitation and the evidence of past land use, including stone walls, foundation holes, and barb wire fencing are markers on the land that can also help you find your way.

As a Land Trust managing many miles of trails, we work with a range of signs, markings, and monuments to help the public and ourselves safely navigate through the environment.

One of the most basic goals of wayfinding is to get people out to interesting or scenic parts of our preserves and safely back home again. The Land Trust routinely marks and maintains many miles of lines to clearly identify the boundaries and trails of the conservation lands we've committed to steward in perpetuity. We have a variety of techniques to semi-permanently mark the land to help ourselves and the public find and follow our trails and boundaries.



**Trail Blazes:** For trail reassurance markers, we paint light blue dollar-bill-sized blazes on trees. Blue was chosen by the hiking community almost a century ago, because of its contrast to both light and dark colored bark. If a preserve has multiple trails, we color-code each trail, using other colors like orange and red. Have you ever seen more than one marked blaze on a tree? Two blazes indicates a turn in the trail, with the top blaze pointing in the direction of travel.

**Cairns:** Cairns are deliberately stacked piles of stones, and have had many uses over the centuries. Once used for ceremonial purposes, as burial monuments, to locate buried items, and to mark geographic locations, we now use them to mark trails where blazing trees isn't possible. Cairns on trails work best when they are constructed by informed staff or volunteers. A 10' x 10' cairn on the summit of Bald Mountain was constructed many decades ago to indicate the summit's highest point.

**Boundaries:** Boundary lines are the most permanent and frequently found markers in the forest. With over 112 miles of boundary across our 30+ preserves, we blaze our property lines to clarify land ownership by cutting a small rectangular notch into the bark of a tree and painting it red. Some historic property boundaries may contain evidence of 100-year old blazes, now just a paint-free healed wound on the tree. A triple red blaze indicates a corner pin. Stone walls were historically built to clear pastures and hayfields, and to mark property boundaries. Small cairns and survey boundary pins are common corner markers.

## Explore Nature with Us

Our Coastal Mountains Nature Program was founded by Land Trust Board member Roger Rittmaster in 2014 through his work at the Camden Conservation Commission. Since then, it has expanded into a free monthly (February to November) program of walks and talks exploring the natural history of Midcoast Maine. Each outing has a particular area of focus, led by a knowledgeable leader. These events are appropriate for families and children as young as ten. Some of the more recent topics and explorations include:

- Winter animal tracking
- Identification of edible and poisonous mushrooms
- Common Maine ferns
- Butterflies and dragonflies of early summer
- Interpreting Maine's coastal geological landscape
- Geology of Bald and Ragged Mountains



Check out our website for a complete list of these, and other, events. There is something for everyone!

## Beech Hill Docent Program Turns 10

Docent is a word derived from the Latin word “docere,” meaning “to teach.”

Beech Hill docents are a diverse group of volunteers who share a passion for all things Beech Hill. Their primary role is to welcome and inform interested visitors to the hut at the top of Beech Hill—Beech Nut—about the history and stories of the preserve. Acting as outreach ambassadors, docents are a vital part of the Land Trust's mission and community engagement program. Often the first Land Trust face that visitors to the Hill encounter, docents assist in creating a positive connection between the public and the Land Trust. Started in 2007 by longtime volunteer Sonia



*Sonia Spalding, the “founding docent,” at Beech Nut.*

Spalding, these trained volunteers enhance a visit to our most popular preserve by sharing their knowledge about the lovingly restored stone hut “Beech Nut,” our MOFGA-certified organic blueberry farm, as well as the 295-acre preserve, which features open space, wildlife habitat, and hiking trails.

Our reliable docents serve as hosts during the spring, summer, and fall schedule of Beech Nut open houses. Many visitors, after making their way up the Hill's winding farm road, have delight written all over their faces when they happen upon the unexpected and welcoming sight of Beech Nut's open door. Docents also assist in our busy summer schedule of events, from Arts on the Hill programs, to August's well-attended free blueberry pick, and the wildly popular, end-of-season Kites and Ice Cream afternoon of fun.

The dedication of these important volunteers ensures Beech Hill is a place that is open and welcoming to all who venture up the hill. We are so grateful! And we are actively seeking new volunteers who want to join this special crew and become trained docents. **Please call our office at 236-7091 and let us know that you'd like to get involved—we will be hosting an orientation session in the spring.**