LANDSCAPES
FALL 2018

Clean Water, Open Space and Trails, Forever

786-acre Mirror Lake Conservation Easement complete. Trail work begins!

On September 27, 2018, Coastal Mountains Land Trust purchased the 786-acre Mirror Lake Conservation Easement on the southwest side of Ragged Mountain in Rockport and Hope from the Maine Water Company. This project is the largest in the Land Trust's history, stretching for two miles along Route 17 and rising to the ridgeline of Ragged Mountain. After more than a decade of negotiations, this agreement permanently protects critical wildlife habitat, the water supply for over 20,000 people, and public access for hiking, mountain biking, running, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and hunting.

The Mirror Lake Conservation Easement is the keystone project of the Round the Mountain Collaboration, our partnership with the Maine Water Company, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, local municipalities and outdoor recreation groups. Since June 2016, we have raised more than $3.5 million in funds to support this effort. Looking ahead, the partnership needs to raise an additional $1 million to secure a 498-acre easement around Grassy Pond in 2019, and to finish development of the nine-mile Round the Mountain Trail in 2019 and 2020.

Another result of this transaction is that the Maine Water Company has agreed to invest the proceeds of the sale locally. First, the company gifted $250,000 in support of the stewardship of the Round the Mountain Trail. Second, half of the net proceeds from the agreement will be returned as a rebate to local customers on their monthly bills, starting in 2019. Customers in the Camden-Rockland division will share in the benefits of the project through credits totaling over $400,000. Third, the other half of net proceeds will be reinvested in infrastructure improvements to the Mirror Lake water system.

In mid-October, the Land Trust also signed a contract with OBP Trailworks to begin construction of the Round the Mountain Trail in early 2019. The Land Trust will build the first 5.5 miles of trail between the Camden Snow Bowl and Hope Street by fall of 2019. Designed for non-motorized recreational use, the trail will be six to eight feet in width and will accommodate users of all levels. Gartley & Dorsky Engineering generously donated the construction and erosion control plans needed for this large project. When completed, the Round the Mountain Trail will connect with a growing network of more than 20 miles of trail, including a section of the Georges Highland Path on Ragged Mountain that is now permanently protected by this easement.

Fifteen years ago, our Land Trust adopted a vision of conserving a 3,500-acre area around Bald and Ragged Mountains. With this project, the Land Trust has conserved 80% of that area thanks to the generous cooperation of landowners and ongoing support of community members, foundations and public agencies. Enjoy your clean water and the mountain's expanding trails in 2019!

COASTAL MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

One of my favorite afternoon hikes is the quick climb up Hatchet Mountain in Hope. Whether on my way home from work or between errands to and from town, it is the perfect distance with a great payoff—an absolutely incredible view extending from Blue Hill to the hills of Rockland. And to top it off, each time I've been there over the past six months, I've had the place to myself. Just me, my dog Fern, and a 180-degree view of the coastal mountains.

Being alone in nature can be tremendously gratifying. Coming upon a red fox, spotting a barred owl, or listening to the wind in a mountaintop forest are the kinds of experiences you have only when you are alone or with just a few people. Many of us are drawn to the outdoors and to the work of the Land Trust because we enjoy quiet places to hike, walk, ski, and explore that are not overrun with people and the traffic and noise they can bring.

It is also important, however, to appreciate those times when we run into other people on the land—birders out searching for an unusual species, hunters accessing their deer stands, joggers heading up the trail on a long run, or even a group of high school kids looking for a chance to be away from their parents. When I happen upon a group of people coming along a trail or an occasionally full parking lot, I try to keep in mind that we will be more able to preserve nature if there are a lot of people who care about it in the first place.

In this issue of *Landscapes,* you will notice a theme of celebrating the use of Coastal Mountains Land Trust preserves by the community. From the development of the Round the Mountain Trail, to our series of community events for kids and families, to the Hike-the-Guide challenge, we are making a sincere effort to get people outside to enjoy our coastal landscape. At the same time, we remain as committed as ever to caring for the land and ensuring it is protected from overuse. I hope you enjoy your next outing and take a moment to say hello to those you meet on the trail.

Win-Win Opportunity for Conservation

Charitably Directing Your Retirement

Recently, one of our most loyal annual supporters approached us about directing his annual IRA distribution to the Land Trust this year. As he explained, he and his wife were motivated to consider this type of donation in light of recent changes in tax law, which led them to look over their total tax liability.

For those aged 70½ or older, making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) by directing one's IRA's required minimum distribution (RMD) to the charity of your choice is a particularly tax-efficient way of giving. If you designate a nonprofit charity as the recipient of the QCD from your IRA, the amount designated will not be counted as taxable income. In the case of our generous member, because his total tax burden was going to be significantly higher this year, one way to minimize his income tax was to gift his RMD. For both parties, this is a win-win: we receive a generous donation and he is not hit with a high tax bill.

We were especially grateful to have received notice in advance of this gift because funds of this sort must be sent to the charity directly from the IRA custodian. Donors need to provide their investment advisor with our tax identification number so that they may facilitate the funds being sent directly to the Land Trust. Once we receive the funds, we provide a gift acknowledgment letter which documents the charitable use of the IRA distribution.

Our Land Trust has benefited enormously over the years from members who give generously on an annual basis. We rely almost entirely upon the support of individuals and foundations. In light of the changes brought about by the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act this year, we thought that eligible donors might want to consider taking advantage of this creative and tax-efficient alternative method of supporting our mission. If you have questions or would like to learn more, please don't hesitate to contact Kathy Young at 236-7091 and she would be glad to find a time to meet with you individually.

Recent Conservation Projects

Gross Tract *Ragged Mountain Preserve*

In August, the Land Trust acquired 9.1 acres on the southeastern slope of Ragged Mountain from Grace Gross, a longtime resident of Camden. This addition to the Ragged Mountain Preserve contains a scenic mix of coniferous and deciduous forest and is crisscrossed by several woods roads. Little Goose Brook, which later joins the Goose River, meanders through the property. Grace and her late husband Stephen purchased the property in 1959. The Grosses' sons were all integral to conserving the property, and the entire family is happy the property will remain available for the public to enjoy.

Robbins-Colcord Tract

Long Cove Headwaters Preserve

In July, the Land Trust received a donation of 18 acres of land in Searsport that contains forested uplands, and a wetland which hosts a nesting rookery for great blue herons, a species of special concern as determined by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The wetland is also designated a high value Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat by the Maine Beginning with Habitat program. This tract of land is in close proximity to the Land Trust's 456-acre Long Cove Preserve, and is a valuable addition to the conservation of the natural resources in the area. We are grateful to Rebecca and Edgar Raines, along with Rhoda Sutfin and Rhonda Colcord Altman, for their donation and their patience during a long process of clarifying the title to the land!

We Hiked-the-Guide

Last fall, L.L. Bean generously donated 35 Stowaway backpacks in support of our Hike-the-Guide Challenge. Hikers who completed 12 or more hikes in our Trail Guide received one of these backpacks. The program has been so successful that we only have a few backpacks left! Get'em while they last! An enormous thanks to L.L. Bean for helping us get this program off the ground.

Hunting on Land Trust Preserves

As a percentage of its total area, Maine has the least amount of public land of any state on the east coast - only 6.5% of the land in the state is public. While many states rely on public agencies to conserve natural places and guarantee public access to the outdoors, Maine's Land Trusts have led the work to protect the commons. Together, some 95 Maine Land Trusts have conserved more than 2.5 million acres of land, 90% of which is open to hunting.

In the communities served by our organization, hunting continues to be an important part of Maine's rural culture. Access for hunting and fishing to land we now conserve is a tradition for many local families. They know the land better than most, and strengthen their deep connection with the land by spending time with friends and family outside, hunting, and putting food on the table. Over the years, the hunting community has participated actively in the work of the Land Trust, as donors, volunteer land stewards and members of our board and staff.

Hunting is allowed on all Land Trust preserves with the exception of Fernalds Neck, Harkness, Hodson, and McPheters Preserves, as well as the field portion of the Beech Hill Preserve. The Land Trust restricts trapping and predator hunting on all preserves except those that were funded by the Land for Maine's Future program.

Each year we receive many calls asking about hunting on our land. We allow the use of temporary tree stands, with permission as long as they are labeled with a name and phone number. Most hunters visit the preserves during the deer firearm season in November, but many participate in the archery season in October, or hunt for turkeys in May and October. Within our 15-town service region, 731 deer and 242 turkeys were harvested in 2017.

Hunting is not allowed on Sundays, and Saturdays are generally the busiest hunting days. If you visit our preserves during hunting season, and we hope you will, please wear orange and keep your dogs on leash. For more detailed and specific information about hunting season dates and regions, visit the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife's website at: maine.gov/ifw/hunting-trapping.

Volunteer Profile: *Erica Buswell and Scott Giroux*

by Erica Buswell

We volunteer at Long Cove Headwaters Preserve in Searsport because it's in our neighborhood! When we started volunteering, I was working as a Farmland Protection Project Manager at Maine Farmland Trust. As part of the land trust community, I knew how challenging it can be to steward protected properties, especially with a volunteer labor force. Since I had professional experience with easement stewardship, I wanted to lend a hand to a valuable land trust partner.

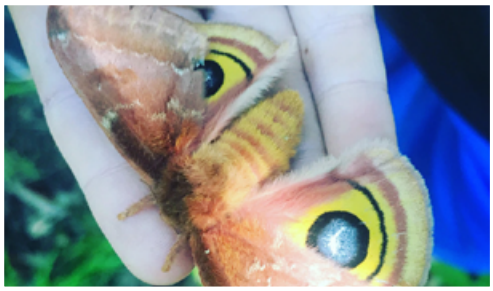
Our stewardship work is primarily focused on preserve monitoring. Each year, we walk the entire boundary to confirm that it's well-marked and that there aren't any unauthorized activities taking place. Our monitoring visit takes a good chunk of time, given the 456 acres. We also walk the trails of the preserve several times a year and report management needs to the Land Trust. We do some mowing of the trails once a year.

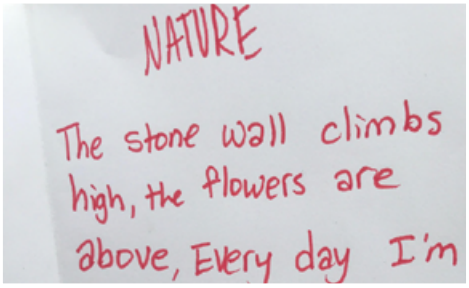
Along one of the property boundaries, there's a beautiful, hand-dug spring tucked away. Every year when we reach that point on the boundary, we stop and marvel at the fact that someone excavated a really big hole, and then artfully lined it with rock. There are all kinds of interesting signs of human history on the property from when it was the Savery Farm. The first year we explored, we made a poor decision to try to traverse a marshy area, because it looked like no big deal. Halfway between the high and dry areas on either side of the marsh, the water got much deeper, and we found ourselves slogging through icy, knee-high water in the middle of November. It was a long way back to the car after that!

Long Cove is a significant parcel of undeveloped property tucked away in a part of Searsport that's surprisingly rural. It's a fantastic oasis. We're quite fortunate that CMLT protected it—at one point it was to be a dump for toxic waste in the midst of our community. Instead, we have a beautiful place to walk, and all of the flora and fauna from our neighborhood have a secure home.

A Season of Art, Music + Nature

Between May and November, Coastal Mountains Land Trust hosted 25 individual interactive, hands-on, outdoor events for kids, families and the greater community. Join us the next time we get together! See the calendar on the back page.





Clockwise: 1) Bay Chamber students kicked off our Arts on the Hill 2018 series; 2) Over 200 kids from Appleton, Hope, Lincolnville, Camden and Rockport joined Land Trust staff and volunteers in the woods; 3) Field trip discovery at the Hatchet Mountain Preserve; 4) Poem written at Pizza and Paint event at the Bok farm; 5) Artists lunch during Pizza & Paint; 6) Beech Hill blueberry farm tour taught raking and winnowing.

Evergreen Member Profile:

Ken Hartzell and Peter Debrine

Ken and Peter have been members since 2008 and enrolled in the Evergreen Membership Program in 2010. Recently they told us that like many "from away", their journey to the Midcoast started while on vacation. The beauty of Maine's natural landscape drew them to the region, but over time, as they explored further and began meeting kindred spirits for whom conservation of the land was equally important, Ken and Peter decided to put down roots. "I guess you could say that the land drew us, but it was the people that kept us," says Ken.

Unfortunately, they've been pulled away from Maine for a number of years, but they hope to return one day permanently. In their absence, supporting the Land Trust continues to connect them to the community that they love so dearly.

Evergreen Membership allows donors to automatically contribute a monthly gift through their bank account or credit card. The Land Trust processes the donation automatically each month and sends the donors one letter at year-end to acknowledge their total giving for the tax year.

"The work of Coastal Mountains Land Trust is so important - not only conserving these incredible places but also making them accessible for the community to enjoy. This is exactly the kind of place we want to live," says Peter.

Becoming an Evergreen Member is easy, convenient, and spreads your support over time, making it easier on your budget—and ours. Whether you live here or away, consider becoming part of the Evergreen Program to spread your commitment to conservation throughout the year. Thank you Ken and Peter—your generosity over this last decade has been fantastic and we look forward to your return!

COASTAL MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST
101 Mount Battie Street
Camden, ME 04843
207-236-7091
www. coastalmountains.org

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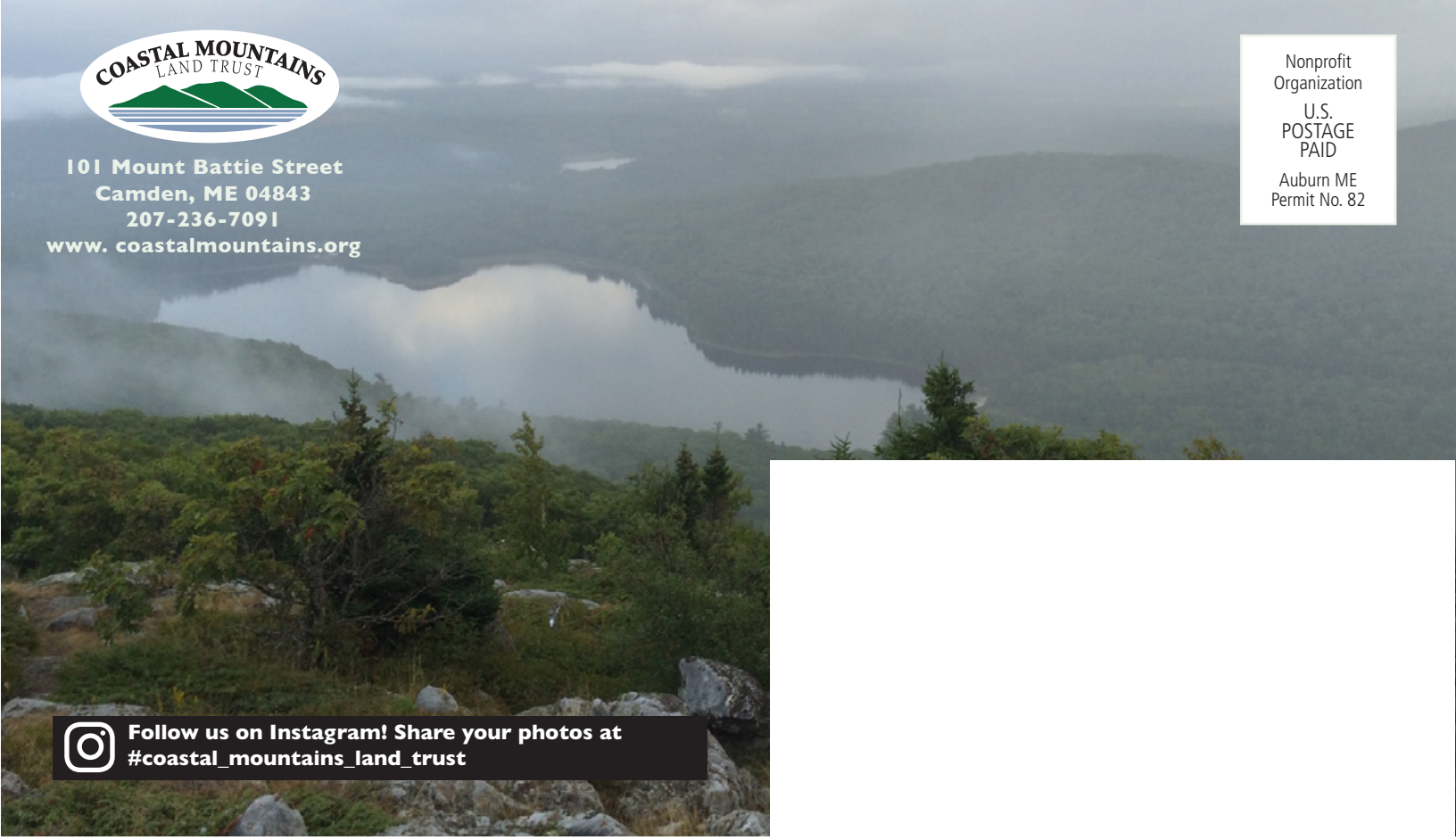

Follow us on Instagram! Share your photos at #coastal_mountains_land_trust

LANDSCAPES

Ryan Gates: New Stewardship Project Manager

Since moving to Maine in 1998 to go to Unity College, Ryan has called Maine home, and has no plans to leave now. Having worked all over the state before settling in the midcoast in 2004, Ryan was hired as our Land Trust's Stewardship Project Manager this July. For the previous 6 years, Ryan worked as the Farm Operations Manager at Aldermere Farm in Rockport. Fortunately for us, he joined our team just in time for the chaos that is blueberry season. "This new position has been super exciting," explains Ryan, "and enabled me to continue a career in land conservation in the community my family calls home." Ryan resides in Rockport Village with his wife and two kids and loves living in town. "It is a magical community here on the coast, a place where people understand and value land conservation."

FALL & WINTER EVENTS CALENDER

NOV 3, SATURDAY 10AM–12PM *Geology of Camden Hills State Park,* Camden Hills State Park | **NOV 8, THURSDAY 7PM** *Rediscovering Ecologic Agriculture:* talk by Robert Lawrence, Camden Public Library | **NOV 17, SATURDAY 9 AM–11AM** Hike-the-Guide Outing, Hatchet Mountain Preserve, Hope | **DEC 13, THURSDAY 7 PM** *21 Opportunities per Week to Lessen Your Carbon Footprint:* talk by Robert Lawrence, Camden Public Library | **DEC 15, SATURDAY 9 AM–11AM** Hike-the-Guide Outing, Stephenson Preserve, Belfast | **JAN 1, TUESDAY 11:30AM–1:30PM** New Year's Day-Beech Nut Open House | **JAN 10, THURSDAY 7PM** *Waste Not, Want Not* by Professor Brent Kim, Camden Public Library

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