



WHERE CHILDREN & NATURE MEET

New Outdoor Classroom and Stroller Accessible Trail Open at Belfast Area Children's Center

In 2024, Coastal Mountains Land Trust began meeting with the teachers at the Belfast Area Children's Center (BACC) to see how we could help them expand nature-based learning through our *Learning Landscapes** program. BACC already had an incredible asset on its property — an adjacent forest and wetland that led to a peaceful pond and connected directly with the Hills to Sea Trail. One teacher, Anne Dreesen, who recognized the profound benefits of outdoor learning, hand-built a pavilion as a home base to help bring her students outside more often.

The woods there are truly magical. On one of the Land Trust's first visits, a beaver glided across the pond. Its dam held the water at a perfect height, creating a thriving habitat full of wonder for young explorers.

BACC provides year-round childcare for children as young as 6 weeks. With such young learners, teachers had little time to plan, design, and build an outdoor learning space, and guiding an entire class of toddlers to the site posed a real challenge — that's where our partnership came in. Trails, preserves, and outdoor access are what we, as a Land Trust, know best — and we were excited to support the effort.

Working side by side with the teachers, we outlined a shared vision for the space: a stroller accessible trail that looped down to the water, an outdoor privy, pavilion upgrades, and a platform for kids to step-up and see the pond over the tall reeds. Together, we raised

funds through both the BACC and Coastal Mountains networks. Erin Amadon of Town 4 Trails was hired to design and build the trail, and volunteers from the Hills to Sea Trail Coalition generously contributed their time, skills, and materials to create stump circles and install hooks, benches, and seat storage at the pavilion — transforming the area into a true outdoor classroom.

Now, the space is ready for students, and a dream more than 20 years in the making has finally come to life. With these improvements, BACC can now offer a summer camp program for the first time.

It's remarkable what can happen when a community unites around a shared vision — and it's remarkable how regular access to the outdoors can make a difference in a child's life. Thank you to the many people — teachers, administrators, neighbors, donors, volunteers, and contractors — who made this project, and seeing those cheeky beavers at work, possible.

FOOTNOTE

* *Learning Landscapes* is a Coastal Mountains Land Trust program that seeks to (1) conserve land or secure access to land adjacent to schools to be used for outdoor learning, (2) build outdoor classrooms on the school and/or preserve property and provide trails, signage, and infrastructure to create safe and accessible outdoor learning environments, and (3) provide educators with the mentoring and resources needed for effectively teaching outdoors.

A HURDS POND LEGACY

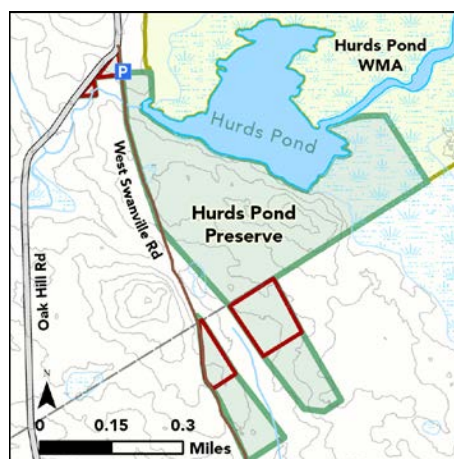
Partners Protect Land and Access to Special Pond in Swanville



CREDIT: JACOB GERRITSEN

One of the Land Trust's most ecologically valuable Focus Areas is centered around the Hurds Pond and Meadow Brook Preserves in Belfast and Swanville. Last year, we acquired the Hurds Pond Preserve's keystone parcel, completing conservation of the entire pond. With our partners at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Maine Coast Heritage Trust, along with some instrumental community leaders, we've been working to conserve this area for more than two decades. This spring, we acquired two additional properties, which expand the preserve and will allow for a parking lot to improve access to the new preserve. To date, 886 acres of land have been conserved through this partnership.

In April, John Holmes and Sally Savage donated an acre of land on Oak Hill Road to the Land Trust. We're pleased to share their goal of reassembling parcels of the multi-generational "Holmes Farm" as part of the larger preserve. In the next year, we will install a parking lot off Oak Hill Road on the land they donated. This will become the public access point to the preserve for hiking, cross-country skiing, and hand-carry water access to Hurds Pond and Meadow



New acquisitions outlined in red: the Holmes and Savage parcels west of Hurds Pond, and the Doak parcels to the south.



David Thanhauser

Brook. We are grateful for John and Sally's generosity and their foresight in acquiring the property for this long-held vision.

In March, Stephen and Elaine Doak sold their 10-acre property to the Land Trust. This addition to the preserve will connect our ownership into one contiguous parcel. We are grateful that they shared our goal of adding their land to the Hurds Pond Preserve.

These exciting additions and improvements to Hurds Pond Preserve are bittersweet, as they come at a time when the community mourns David Thanhauser, one of the leading visionaries of preserving this special place. We'll remember him for

his kindness, his incredible generosity, and his deep dedication to seeing Hurds Pond and Meadow Brook preserved. He led conservation of over 258 acres of land, including the Bormet Tract, the Sucker Brook Tract, the Sucker Brook Conservation Easement, the Rocky Knoll Tract, all part of the Meadow Brook Preserve, as well as the Hurds Pond Preserve. David served on Coastal Mountains Land Trust's Board of Directors and Land Protection Committee for six years and was a friend to all of us in this work. He will be missed, but his legacy will live on in the natural beauty and wildlife of Hurds Pond forever.



YOU ARE INVITED!

Join us for our 40th Anniversary Celebration

Whether you're new to Coastal Mountains Land Trust, have been part of our community for all 40 years, or joined us somewhere along the way, this celebration is for you. Board and staff are deeply grateful to each and every member for their support. As a membership-based organization, YOU make everything we do possible — from conserving land and maintaining trails to hosting free community events and partnering with local schools to connect people with the natural world.

We've accomplished much over the last four decades, and are delighted to invite you to a very special celebration:

COASTAL MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST'S

40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Wednesday, August 12
Cellardoor Winery Pavillion
367 Youngtown Road
Lincolnton, Maine

Enjoy an evening of community, food trucks, wine, Land Trust merch, and a live concert by The Mallett Brothers Band, all set against the beautiful backdrop of coastal mountains at Cellardoor Winery.

This event is free, but registration is required. Please reserve your spot through Eventbrite, where you'll also find additional event details: bit.ly/4v2mx1z

Member Benefits & Registration

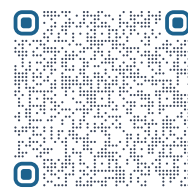
Members will enjoy a complimentary drink. In the spirit of our anniversary, help us welcome more people into the Land Trust family by inviting your friends to join you and become members at any gift level.

Space is limited, and members receive priority registration. *If space allows, the event may open to the public, though this is not guaranteed.*

We look forward to celebrating this milestone with you and thanking you in person for being an essential part of the Land Trust's past, present, and future.

Ian Stewart
Executive Director

Scan to reserve your spot!





Maianthemum canadense, Canada Mayflowers, emerge from a bed of moss at Marsh Meadow Preserve signaling that field season is around the corner!

THE FACES OF FIELD SEASON

The hands and heart of our Summer Stew Crew

After the snow on Ragged Mountain has melted, the mud at Main Stream has subsided, and the black flies along the Ducktrap have awoken, another “field season” at Coastal Mountains Land Trust begins. While our stewardship staff spends time working outside all year, the stretch from May to October is widely referred to as “field season.” Some might claim this unofficial season begins when the mowers and weed whackers come out of winter hibernation, but here “field season” doesn’t truly begin until the seasonal staff arrive.

This year, the Land Trust is excited to welcome two seasonal staff members to our stewardship team. Seasonal Trail Steward, Helen Vaughn, is from Cape Elizabeth, Maine, and graduated from Middlebury College with a degree in biology. She previously worked as a Seasonal Land Steward at Kennebec Estuary Land Trust and most recently as a beekeeper at Champlain Valley Apiaries in Vermont. Outside of work, Helen is looking forward to exploring local swimming spots, finding the best ice cream around, and enjoying live music.

Tony Vieira, this year’s Pendleton Stewardship Intern, is from Freedom, Maine, and recently graduated from the Ecology Learning Center in Unity. His background in landscaping and farm work, as well as his time volunteering with the Hills to Sea Trail Coalition will serve him well out on the trails this summer. In the fall Tony will be attending University of Maine Orono to study forestry. He is especially excited to expand his knowledge of local flora and fauna and learn more about the stewardship and land management practices that help care for these special landscapes.

Tony and Helen will be busy this summer helping keep our trails trimmed, improving unsustainable sections of trail, surveying invasive species, and assisting with volunteer and community events. Whether they are laying down new sections of bog bridging at Head of Tide Preserve to keep your feet dry or moving massive rocks on Bald Mountain to build staircases, be sure to say hello if you see them out on the trails this season!



Helen Vaughn



Tony Vieira



Stewardship Coordinator Tommy Diehl swings from a hemlock tree with excitement at Main Stream Preserve, because our seasonal staff have arrived!

SUMMER 2026 COMMUNITY EVENTS

All events are free!



JULY

July 1, 5:30 pm

Arts on the Hill: Rockville
Beech Hill Preserve, Rockport

July 2, 10 am

Happy Wanderers: Sears Island
Searsport

July 9, 6 pm

Arts on the Hill: Jenn Schott
Beech Hill Preserve, Rockport

July 19–25 (dates may vary)

Free Community Blueberry Picks
Beech Hill Preserve, Rockport



AUGUST

Aug 6, 10 am

Happy Wanderers:
Meadow Brook Preserve
Swanville

Aug 19, 6 pm

Arts on the Hill: The Hot Suppers
Beech Hill Preserve, Rockport

Aug 28, 5:30 pm

Arts on the Hill: Paul Winter
Beech Hill Preserve, Rockport



Scan for
full details +
to register

 coastalmountains.org/events

SEPTEMBER

Sept 2, 5:30 pm

Arts on the Hill: The Sugar Snaps
Beech Hill Preserve, Rockport

Sept 3, 10 am

Happy Wanderers:
McLellan-Poor Preserve
Belfast

Sept 12, 2 pm

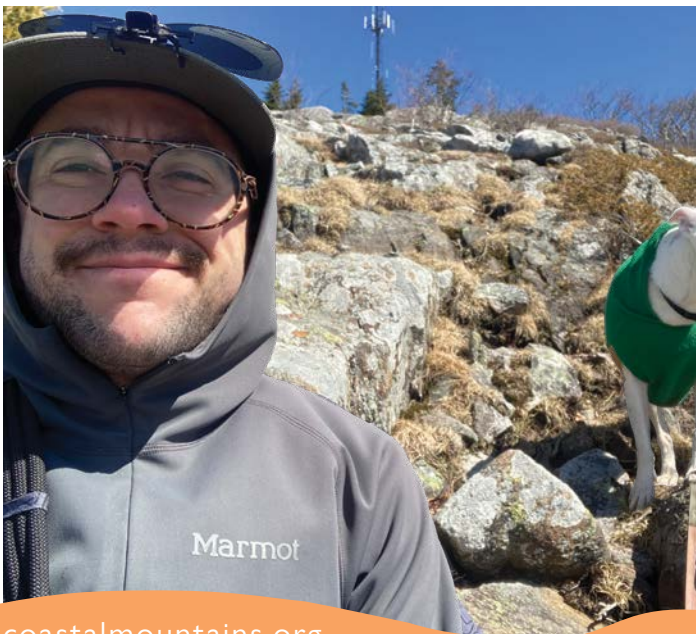
Kites & Ice Cream
Beech Hill Preserve, Rockport

Sept 17, 5:30 pm

Nature Program:
Measuring Forest Changes
Ducktrap Preserve, Lincolnville

MEET TAYLOR!

Taylor Sherritt will be joining the Land Trust team this summer as our Community Events Assistant. After attending a workshop on Beech Hill last year, he was truly inspired by the staff's commitment to conservation and community. Taylor is a teacher, nature lover, and comic doodler from Ohio. He moved to Maine six years ago and is now living his literal dream life in an off-grid yurt in Brooks with his lovely partner and sweet doggo, Rosie. Taylor will be helping our team run our free community events all summer long. Say hello!





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CREDIT: TIM SHAW

COASTAL MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST IS ACCREDITED FOR THE FOURTH TIME

LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

Coastal Mountains Land Trust is proud to share that we have once again earned reaccreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This marks our fourth accreditation success (out of four possible) — a rigorous achievement that reflects years of dedicated work and reaffirms our commitment to strong finances, ethical practices, responsible governance, and enduring stewardship of the lands we protect.

You can learn more about the Commission and the standards behind accreditation at landtrustaccreditation.org.

Serving the communities of

Belfast, Belmont, Brooks, Camden, Hope, Knox, Lincolnville, Monroe, Morrill, Northport, Prospect, Rockport, Searsport, Stockton Springs, Swanville, and Waldo

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Helen Vaughn (she/her), *Seasonal Trail Steward*



LANDSCAPES