

Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust

Fall 2015 Newsletter



The view from the Berry Pickers' Trail into the Orbeton Stream valley.

2015 In Review: Fighting for A.T. Land Conservation in Maine

There's no way to sugarcoat it: land conservation in Maine faces some challenges as we end 2015. Programs that require participation of the state government – Forest Legacy, Land for Maine's Future – are currently without a state partner. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, which over its 50-year history has helped to fund 41,000 state and local park projects, was allowed to expire by congressional inaction in September. LWCF was one of America's best tools for conserving land for public use and Appalachian Trail projects were one of the beneficiaries. The current congressional proposal for LWCF restructuring aims to gut the program's primary purpose, despite overwhelming public support and bipartisan support in Congress. The Orbeton Stream conservation easement – a collaborative project among the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust, High Peaks Alliance, The Trust for Public Land and numerous other groups, was completed with federal funding from the Forest Legacy program. It works. It's necessary.

Despite the headlines, public support for conservation in Maine remains high – just look at the polls showing near-universal support for the Land for Maine's Future program. Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust sees this support in the work we do. The pace of conservation along the Appalachian Trail is increasing, not slowing down, and we are seeing a growing awareness that the A.T. corridor

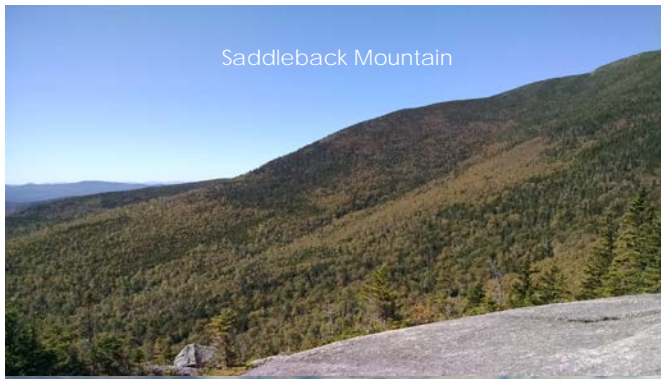
represents a natural conservation backbone running through the State of Maine. All of our current projects lie within this area: Redington Forest, with its extensive streams, vast timberlands and high-elevation forests; Gulf Hagas-Whitecap, a wild and remote forest between the spectacular West Branch of the Pleasant River and the rugged peaks of the White Cap Mountain range; and several small but critical parcels along Maine's A.T. which will help to ensure that the trail corridor remains robust and unspoiled.

So while 2015 was a challenging year for conservation and the Appalachian Trail, two things were strengthened by adversity: the partnerships between the organizations who work tirelessly to save land for public use, and community support for land conservation. We see it more and more each day and the numbers show it, too. As the year comes to a close, we'd like to thank all of you who make protecting the Appalachian Trail in Maine a reality, whether you do so by donating your time, skills or money to a land trust. Without your help, the work you see in this newsletter could not be accomplished.

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Autumn on Maine's Appalachian Trail



Saddleback Mountain



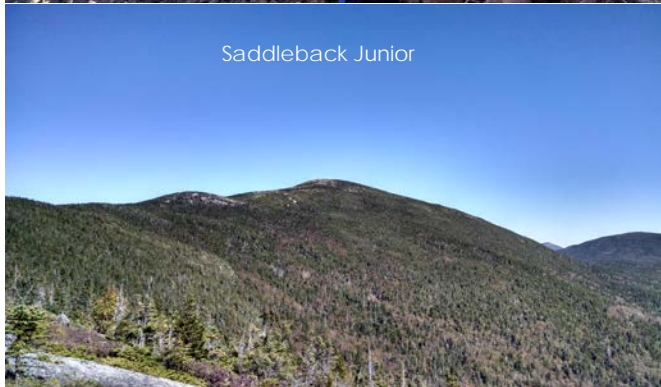
Grafton Notch



Mount Abraham



Redington Forest



Saddleback Junior



Bigelow Range and Crockers

Maine A.T. Land Trust Enlists New Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of a strong land conservation program, and we're pleased to welcome three new individuals to Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust! With an uptick in our project work, we need stewardship help more than ever, and these three talented individuals are answering the call:

- **Mike Morrone.** Mike lives in Gray and is a call center supervisor at TD Bank. He lived in Colorado for a little while before returning to Maine with his girlfriend, Brittany. They like to hike, ski, bike and venture all over Maine's mountains in their spare time. Next year they plan to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. For now he's content to help with conservation easement monitoring duties – he can be seen in the photo of Mount Abraham above.
- **Deb Carroll.** We met Deb when she came on a trip with the land trust earlier this year, and she finally caught the volunteering bug when a stewardship trip was offered in September. She works for the Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce and is also a freelance writer and photographer for the *Sun Journal*. Pretty much all her free time is devoted to hiking and volunteering.
- **Olin Jenner.** Olin is a recent graduate of Colby-Sawyer College with a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Science. He's decided to hone his skills by putting his professional expertise at the land trust's disposal. His knowledge of freshwater ecosystems will be valuable in putting together management plans and baseline documentation for land trust properties. Originally from Rockland, he now lives in South Portland.

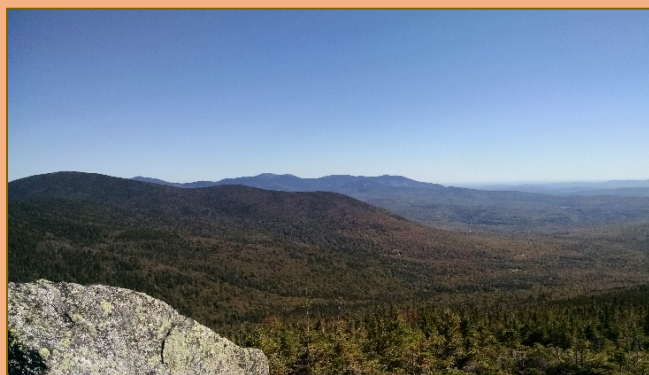
Thanks for your help, guys!

Community Update



- The **Rangeley Trail Town Festival** was a great success! For the second year in a row we had great weather and a great turnout (see photo above). The community has really embraced the event and local businesses were busy. Thanks to Linda Dexter of Ecopelagicon for organizing this event.
- The **Great Maine Outdoor Weekend** was held from September 25th to 27th on conservation lands and trails statewide! There were dozens of events serving thousands of hikers, bikers and others. The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust hike on Saddleback Mountain up the Berry Pickers' Trail was amazing (see photo at right).
- By popular demand, our **monthly hikes** will be continuing through December! The next hike will be up the Baldpates (TBD but later in November). Check our website or sign up for the email newsletter for more info.
- Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust board member Bob Cummings was recently honored by the Natural Resources Council of Maine with the **2015 Conservation Award for Lifetime Achievement** for his extraordinary contributions to the conservation of Maine lands. Bob covered environmental affairs for the *Portland Press Herald* and the *Maine Sunday Telegram* for twenty-five years. An Appalachian Trail thru-hiker and trail maintainer, he is president of the Phippsburg Land Trust and a lifetime corresponding member of the Appalachian Mountain Club Maine Chapter and the Maine Appalachian Trail Club.

Project Update



- **Mount Abraham Fire Warden Trail.** At long last, the bridges over Rapid Stream have been repaired! Crossing two large streams is no longer necessary to climb this spectacular mountain. Most vehicles can now drive to the trailhead proper.
- **Gulf Hagas-Whitecap.** The White Brook Trail is still in need of a Maintainer – if you are interested contact Ron Dobra, MATC White Cap District Overseer, at 207-695-3959 or rdobra@matc.org.
- **Berry Pickers' Trail.** Though we had a special bushwhack hike up this trail in September, it is still not open to the public. The good news is that some potentially rare species of plants have been found on it, which has caused the work of cutting and marking the trail to be delayed. The work will now be done in the spring and the trail will be open for use in the summer of 2016. Check out the view from the ridge (photo above).
- **Conservation Funding in Maine.** This has been a tough year for land conservation in Maine, as state funding has been restricted and threatened at the political level. The Land for Maine's Future program has been faced with maneuvers which threaten the future viability of the program. Additionally, the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy program – vital for the Crocker Mountain and Orbeton Stream projects – will not be pursued at the state level next year. Conservation organization across the state continue to do great work in spite of this!

Meet Derek Markgren: A Leader in the Business and Non-profit Communities



Derek and Megan on Little Jackson Mountain, Mount Blue State Park

- **How did you first hear about the Maine A.T. Land Trust?** *I joined the MATC as a member a couple of years ago and indicated I would like to help. Tom Lewis, the first MATLT President asked if I was interested in joining the board.*
- **What made you want to get involved?** *Having an interest in the outdoors, conservation, Maine, and hiking scenic trails all contributed to my desire to help MATLT in any way I can.*
- **How are you involved?** *I am a Board volunteer, serve on the Finance committee, am the Treasurer and also serve on the Executive Committee of MATLT.*
- **What is your background - where are you from?** *I am from Wells, Maine; I went to school in Florida and after graduating, my wife and I decided to make Maine our home, primarily for the quality of life.*
- **Where did you work prior to working in conservation?** *I am a CPA serving primarily tax clients in and around the Portland market. On a daily basis I work with leaders from both the business community and the not-for-profit sector. I think there is more common interest there than most people think.*
- **What made you decide to work for conservation organizations in Maine?** *My love for the outdoors and my desire to help in any way that I can. Maine is unique in the region with more undeveloped land than any other state in the area, more than 90% of the state is forested, however 95% of it is owned privately.*
- **What kinds of work do you do for different conservation organizations?** *As a CPA in a firm with a wide range of nonprofit and conservation organizations, I have the opportunity to work with conservation leaders on a regular basis, both advising on tax issues, and helping to design appropriate internal controls for their organization.*
- **What do you see as the most important issues in land conservation in Maine today?** *How we as a state balance the need for business development and conservation. In other words, how do we create jobs to keep Mainers here but also keep the Maine that brought us all here in the first place?*

The Conservation Values of Redington Forest

Peter S. McKinley



Redington Forest, seen from Quill Hill. Crocker Mountain looms over Black Nubble (foreground).

Over the course of the summer, I've had the opportunity to make numerous visits to this 10,000-acre working forest property in Maine's High Peaks region, which is a high-priority conservation area for many organizations and the State of Maine. Historically, this area of Maine has been subject to management practices resulting in younger and less biologically rich forests needed for the timber industry itself. The Redington Forest property is no exception. There is a network of logging roads crisscrossing this land (they can be seen in the photo above) and despite the remote location, evidence of diverse and abundant recreational use—ATVs, hunters, fisherman, hikers—in all areas of the property each time we have been out on the land.

Despite this use, the natural forest regeneration of the Maine woods allows the ecological and natural landscape values of Redington to persist. In fact, because of historic use as timber supply, the land has remained in a primarily forested condition versus undergoing permanent conversion to another use. In the lower-elevation mixed wood working forests of beech, maple, birch, spruce, and fir, there are miles of intact streams that harbor brook trout and other cold water fish species, and the steep and rocky nature of the terrain provides for many small gorges and waterfalls on Nash Stream. There might even be a state-endangered species in these streams—the Roaring Brook Mayfly (*Epeorus frisoni*), New England's only endemic mayfly species and similarly threatened northern bog lemming and northern long-eared bat. Because of the many ravines, there are even areas of old-growth forest where timber harvesting was impossible or impractical. The higher-elevation spruce and fir areas have been largely left intact due to the same constraints. On the west flank of Crocker Mountain—mostly in the Redington Forest area, despite the summit's presence in the Appalachian Trail corridor—there are fir waves in the balsam fir stands in extensive areas above 3,000 feet in elevation. These forests support high-elevation boreal species of birds such as blackpoll warbler, Canada jay, and black-backed woodpecker. Ideal habitat for the Bicknell's Thrush, one of Maine's species of Special Concern and highly prized by birdwatchers and conservationists alike, is abundant on the property within extensive areas of forest above 2,700 feet available for nesting and rearing young.

These factors, combined with an abundance of many of Maine's most special ecosystems—dozens of acres of wetlands for inland waterfowl, hundreds of acres of mountain forest, thousands of acres of lowland forest teeming with black bear, moose, pine marten, white-tailed deer, frogs, fish, and songbirds—indicate that Redington Forest is prime land for conservation from an ecological perspective. Such large diverse blocks of habitat area needed for population viability of these numerous species under increasing pressures from regional forest loss, fragmentation, and now climate change. Continued existence and adaptation of these many plants and animals to a changing climate depends upon large contiguous forest blocks such as this parcel in conjunction with existing and other ongoing conservation projects in the landscape.

Peter S. McKinley, Ph.D., is Vice President of the Maine Appalachian Trail Land trust and is a Climate Adaptation Ecologist with The Wilderness Society.

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Maine Appalachian
Trail Land Trust
P.O. Box 761
Portland, ME 04104

We need your help! The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust is currently working on four different projects to conserve over 15,000 acres of land along the Appalachian Trail. We are taking on stewardship and land management responsibilities to ensure that these lands remain open to public use! Please consider giving today - \$10, \$50, \$100 – because every bit helps and we provide real conservation value for your donation.

To make a donation, please send in this form with your check or head over to <http://matlt.org/support-our-work/> to make your contribution online. **We also accept gifts of stock and can work with your financial advisors.** Please call us at 207-808-2073 or email us at info@matlt.org if you'd like to discuss giving options with our staff.



Thank you for your continuing support of the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust! Your donation supports our ongoing project work and allows us to continue operations, fund stewardship activities and protect land along the Appalachian Trail.

____\$1,000 ____\$500 ____\$100 ____\$50 ____\$35 ____\$10 \$____(other amount)

Please make checks payable to: **"Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust"**

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Your donation is tax deductible. Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.