

Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust

Spring 2015 Newsletter



Redington Forest, as seen from Mount Redington.

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Redington Forest Project Announced

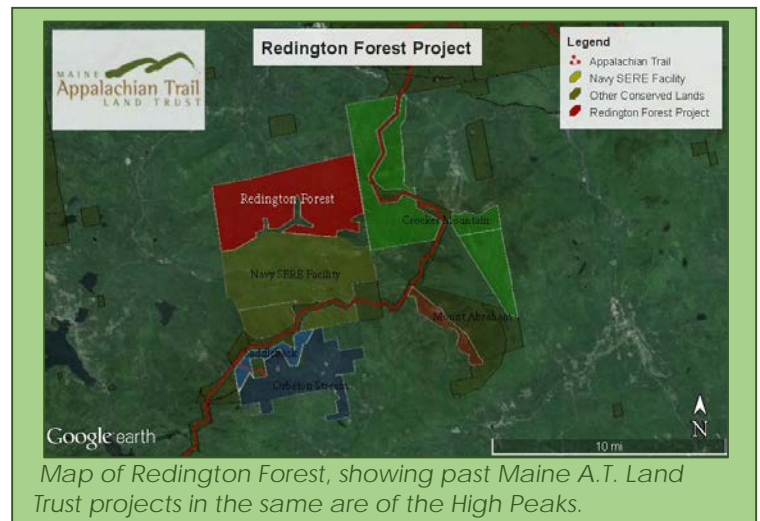
The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust is pleased to announce that we will be partnering with The Trust for Public Land and the United States Navy on the Redington Forest project. This 10,000-acre forest has outstanding wildlife habitat, landscape-scale connectivity potential and as a working, sustainably-managed forest it will continue to provide jobs for Franklin County. This area has long been used for hiking, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, ATV riding and cross country skiing by individuals from the local area and those who visit the High Peaks region. These uses will continue under a conservation easement which will be held by Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust and the U.S. Navy. There will be opportunities for new recreational trails as well.

At this time the land trust is examining the possibility of an ecological reserve component and certain high-elevation areas will be under habitat management for rare species like Bicknell's thrush. Development rights on the parcel will be extinguished, ensuring that these lands will remain forested in perpetuity and the Appalachian Trail viewshed will be protected. Once the easement is acquired, Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust plans to use the protected property for recreational/youth group outings, stewardship and trail maintenance opportunities, and healthy lifestyle programs.

In the coming months, we will be posting more photos and maps of this very special property so you can see for yourself why these Appalachian Trail lands need to be

preserved. We also want to hear from you. This is a very exciting project and these lands will be open for public use, so it's important to have the input of our members and supporters.

This project is a major step for conservation in the High Peaks and we're going to need every bit of support you can give. The State of Maine will not be participating in conservation projects for the foreseeable future, and it's up to land trusts to step up and protect our resources. Please consider supporting this project – information on how to do so can be found on the last page of the newsletter.



Doubleheader Birding Hike in The High Peaks



Perham Stream Birding Trail in East Madrid

The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust will be partnering with Western Maine Audubon, Sandy River Land Trust, High Peaks Alliance on a birding hike in the High Peaks on Saturday, May 23rd. The start time is to be determined but it will probably be early (7am or so) in order to hear the birds and complete the 2.2 mile loop. We will be meeting at the Perham Stream Birding Trail in East Madrid (see map below). The trail (shown above) winds through fields on the edge of the forest and the terrain is mostly flat. There are excellent views of the surrounding mountains. Over sixty species of birds have been identified across six separate habitat types.

This will not be an ordinary birding hike, however – after we complete the circuit hike, we will be leading any and all takers up to higher-elevation habitat on nearby Mount Abraham. The mountain contains one of the largest above-treeline areas in the state, and this is prime habitat for rare species like Bicknell's thrush and Golden Eagle. The upper-elevation areas are maintained by the State as an ecological reserve, and Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust is an easement holder and therefore a land steward of this part of the mountain.

Normally, Mount Abraham is accessed via the Appalachian Trail and an official A.T. side trail. An alternative approach is from the east via the Fire Warden Trail, but either of these routes would take several hours of strenuous hiking. Our excursion will be led by Peter S.

McKinley, Ph.D., Climate Adaptation Ecologist for the Wilderness Society. McKinley and the staff of Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust are familiar with an alternative approach to Mount Abraham which should allow us to get within a thousand feet of elevation of the summit via car. From that point there will be some fairly strenuous hiking but it should not be more than two miles up and back.

If you are interested in attending this hike, please contact us at info@matlt.org or by calling 207-808-2073. This hike is free and open to members and the general public alike. We are happy to answer any questions beforehand. Please RSVP by May 21st!



The A.T. and The Maine Trails System

By Bill Plouffe, Maine A.T. Land Trust President

In 1973, the Maine Legislature passed An Act Relating to a State Trails System. The legislation directed that the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation “shall establish trails on state-owned lands and encourage the establishment of trails on private lands by governmental agencies and private organizations.” It even granted the Commissioner, with the consent of the Governor and the executive council, the power of eminent domain provided “that not more than 25 acres in any one mile may be acquired without consent of the owner.” The legislation further authorized the Commissioner to enter into agreements with private organizations to provide for maintenance of established trails. Today, the law may be found, with minor changes, in 12 M.R.S.A. § 1892.

The Maine Trails System consists of: “Recreational trails,” which can be for motorized and non-motorized use; “primitive trails;” and “facilities,” which are camp sites, shelters and the like. “Primitive trails” are defined in the law. The most important part of the definition reads:

Trails providing for the appreciation of natural and primitive areas and for the conservation of significant scenic, historic, natural or cultural qualities of the areas through which the trails pass and offering primarily the experience of solitude and self-reliance in natural or near-natural surroundings.

Except where they are on existing roads, primitive trails are for non-motorized use only.

The 1973 law names only one trail as a primitive trail: **“The Appalachian Trail shall be included as a primitive trail in the Maine Trail System and other trails may also be included.”** Since 1973, many snowmobile and ATV trails have been developed as recreational trails. However, we believe that the AT remains the only designated primitive trail.

The legislative history of the 1973 law suggests that it was enacted in part as a response to the National Scenic Trails Act; the 1968 federal law that established the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail as the first National Scenic Trails and which urged the states to take appropriate steps to protect those trail corridors. However, only modest progress was made toward that protection goal until 1978, when Congress authorized federal funding for acquisition of the trail corridors and the National Park Service took over the project.

For more than 40 years, the AT has had a special status under Maine law. The “values” which are at the heart of the AT are written into Maine law. These are the same values that the Maine AT Land Trust works to protect.

Community Update



- On Sunday, August 16th we will be partnering with **U.S. Cellular and the Portland Sea Dogs** for non-profit night at Hadlock Field in Portland! We will be having ticket giveaways and there will be a staffed table set up at the stadium for the game. More details to come as we get closer to the date.
- Maine A.T. Land Trust Executive Director Simon Rucker will be appearing on **MPBN** in July! More details can be found on our website when the date is announced. It is safe to say that he will be talking about all things related to the Maine Appalachian Trail.
- Thanks to the kindergarten class at the **East End Community School in Portland** for being great hosts! Executive Director Simon Rucker was lucky enough to be able to tell this great group of kids about the Appalachian Trail, health, and nature as it relates to their lives in the big city.

Executive Director's Update

Spring is a busy time for the outdoor industries in Maine, and the land trust world is no exception. Fieldwork season begins in May but because winter holds on for so long in the mountains, much of the work Maine A.T. Land Trust needs to get done has to wait...and wait...and wait. While we wait, we eagerly plan for the outdoor season. One of the tasks we are hoping to complete by the end of the summer is the baseline documentation of the Redington Forest conservation easement area. This involves spending lots of time on the property to inventory roads, trails, tree species, wildlife, habitat types and other features of the property. We will even look at views of the property from the nearby Appalachian Trail, since well over half of it is visible from the trail. All of this data will create, in effect, a snapshot of the conditions on the land. One of the best ways to become familiar with a place is by spending lots of time there - quiet, reflective time in particular. So rather than make long day trips to the property or stay in "nearby" hotels, our baseline crew will be camping out on the property. If you want to lend a hand, get in touch with us and let us know what you have in mind.

Our planning is also focused on getting our trips into the calendar. So far we have three outings in the books, but since there are so many events to fit in such a narrow timeframe - the Maine mountain summer can be all too brief - the calendar will be rapidly filling up with partner hikes and festivals and vacations. Check our website if you're interested in fitting one of our events in your summer. And as always, if you have a suggestion or a request for an Appalachian Trail hike, let us know. You'd be surprised at our ability to accommodate requests! In the meantime, have a great summer and get out on those trails!

Land For Maine's Future in Peril



Many all of Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust's projects have been completed with funding from the **Land For Maine's Future** program (such as Mt. Abraham, above). Governor LePage has recently announced that he will only release the voter-approved conservation bonds if the Legislature approves his bill to increase logging on state-owned land. Our Redington Forest and Gulf Hagas-Whitecap projects both need this funding to proceed. Please contact your Maine legislative representatives and let them know that our LMF funds need to be released!

Legislative Update - LD 911



A draft of legislation to enhance the scenic impacts to be measured when a proposed wind energy development applies for permits to construct the facility is now making its way through the Maine legislative process. **LD 911** would require more extensive analysis of the visual impact of wind energy installations, especially on immensely significant scenic areas like the Appalachian Trail. Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust supports this legislation as a means of protecting Maine's A.T. lands - you can read more about this bill on our website at www.matlt.org.

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Trails Update



If you squint you can visualize the completed Berry Pickers Trail.

- **June 6th is National Trails Day.** If you're not out with us, get out with somebody!
- This summer, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club will be constructing the new official A.T. side trail – **the Berry Pickers' Trail** - up Saddleback Mountain from the east side. Permission to build the trail has been secured from the landowners (including Maine A.T. Land Trust). Because the trail traverses lands above 2700 feet, permission from the State of Maine is also required. After all this is taken care of, construction (courtesy of MATC) should begin. This trail will allow for a loop hike to the summit of Saddleback and it will join the Fly Rod Crosby Trail.
- The State of Maine has adopted a **management plan for the Crocker Mountain unit**, which was acquired by the State in 2013 with the help of Maine A.T. Land Trust. The plan outlines the potential for hiking/backpacking trail(s) that would provide 2-3 day backpacking loops partially following the A.T. in the vicinity of Crocker Mountain. One such loop could be established with a new trail through the Rapid Stream valley linking Sugarloaf Peak and Mount Abraham.
- The **Fly Rod Crosby Trail** is open. There have been a few questions about the route since the closure and re-routing of the ATV trail in the area on the west side of Saddleback Mountain.
- We are looking into the possibility of more trails on the **Orbeton Stream** property. There are issues of access but there have been requests from members and the public about more trails in the area.

Land Update



White Cap Mountain

- The **Gulf Hagas - Whitecap Mountain** project to protect the highest mountain in the 100-Mile Wilderness is moving right along. The high elevation parcel next the Appalachian Trail has been acquired from Carrier Brothers by a purchaser from whom Maine A.T. Land Trust may or may not acquire a conservation easement in order to help this Forest Society of Maine conservation project become a reality. Funding will be provided in part by both the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program and Land for Maine's Future (LMF). Governor LePage, in a surprising move, has accepted Forest Legacy funding for the project (\$1.7 million). While Maine A.T. Land Trust and all the partners on Gulf Hagas-Whitecap are pleased that this has occurred, we are disappointed that the Governor has continued to withhold LMF funding for this project and dozens of others. These two vital conservation programs still face significant headwinds at the State level, so if you would like to contribute to the success of this project and conservation in Maine you can contact your State of Maine representatives and/or the members of the Congressional Delegation to express your support for those programs.
- There is a nice article in the Spring 2015 edition of Appalachian Trail Conservancy's magazine *AT Journeys* about the **Orbeton Stream** project, written by Maine A.T. Land Trust President Bill Plouffe and Board member Claire Polfus. A copy of the article can be read on our website at matlt.org.
- The land trust is currently working on two **partner acquisition projects** which are in the confidential phase. We will have more about these in our next issue.



Maine Appalachian
Trail Land Trust
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We need your help! The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust is working on a project to conserve 10,000 acres of forest in Maine's High Peaks. **If we don't raise enough funds by the end of 2015, we will not be able to hold the conservation easement over Redington Forest which will protect this valuable land from development.** Please consider giving today - \$10, \$50, \$100 – because every bit helps.

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 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 ____\$25 ____\$10 \$____(other amount)

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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