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www.oronolandtrust.org

Brent Halsey, Jr. Outdoor Classroom and Demonstration Forest

The Forest was created and laid out by James River Timber's Vice President, Brent Halsey Jr. in 1992 and constructed during the following year. Tours of the Forest started in 1993 and the Orono Land Trust was given a conservation easement in 1995. Brent created the classroom to help people, particularly school children and teachers, to understand the business of forestry. It is located on a seven acre site on the north side of Park Street (U.S. 2) next to the Huber Corporation building in Oldtown. The Forest is part of Project Learning Tree (PLT) which is a nationwide environmental (con't pg 5)



Chipping brush and deadwood in Halsey Forest

SKI OUTING February 6, 2010

Sponsored by

Penobscot Valley Ski Club, UM Campus Recreation and OLT

We have a great opportunity to explore the University of Maine cross-country ski trails on Saturday February 6, 2010 with guides, a barbecue at noon, and an après ski soak in the hot tub or a swim in the pool at the beautiful UM Recreation Center.

Many thanks to Kristie Deschesne, Associate Director of Campus Recreation, for her invitation to use the Rec Center facilities for the barbecue and pool/hot tub, plus trail guides. Now we just have to find the right person to provide snow. We have not planned a no-snow date but you can check out the latest activity report on the OLT web-site www.oronolandtrust.org.

The schedule will offer skiing on trails north of Stillwater Avenue in the morning and then ski to the recreation center for a barbecue lunch. After lunch we will explore the UM trails south of Stillwater Avenue and follow Trail 11 to the OLT Marsh Island Preserve east of Route 2. Times for assembling: 9:15 a.m. at the rec center for food delivery and car-pooling to College Avenue Extension for the start of skiing with our guides. 12:45 if you just plan to ski in the afternoon. We will have lunch from 12 to 1:00 then ski on the UM trails south of Stillwater and the OLT Preserve. Swimming will start after 3 p.m. Some of the trails are groomed for skate-skiing but this will be primarily a classic ski. We may divide into fast and slow groups. All ages welcome. (con't page 2)

----- **Mission Statement** -----

The Orono Land Trust exists to protect, manage, and preserve portions of the natural environment in Orono and surrounding communities, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. We work to balance conservation and development, extend and maintain trail systems connecting natural areas, encourage appreciation of natural habitats and ensure perpetual access to public lands and waters.

Life Flourishes—Under the Snow!

As I gazed out my porch window watching snowflakes gently accumulating on the back lawn my mind was searching for an appropriate topic for this NATURE CLIP. The “eureka! moment” came when the depth of snow obliterated the entire lawn in a white blanket and “*not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse*”. (With apologies to Clement Clark Moore, 1779-1863). Although it appeared that not a creature was stirring under that snow in reality an intricate, interconnecting pattern of runways would soon be in use by the local population of meadow voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) (Fig. 1). One of the most abundant rodents in North America, this small, vegetarian mammal, which inhabits grassy fields and other clearings, is a key prey item of many species of hawks and owls and of the red fox (*Vulpes fulva*) and eastern coyote (*Canis latrans*). Under the insulating cover of snow, meadow voles actively forage daily for foliage, roots, twigs, and occasionally seeds. In agricultural areas with deep snow they can cause extensive damage to trees in young orchards by eating the bark below the snow line. A number of years ago, meadow voles girdled and killed my only young Wolf River variety apple tree by girdling it. As you skim across the glistening snow on winter ski trails, be mindful that under your feet life goes on for species unseen, but essential to the foodweb of the ecosystem.



Photo by Jerry Longcore

Meadow vole runways exposed by melting snow in March.

OLT's New WEBPAGE

www.oronolandtrust.org

SKI OUTING (*con't from pg 1*) We will supply bratwurst, hotdogs, and rolls, hot water and cocoa powder, plates, cups and napkins. We would like to have the condiments, oranges and apples, veggies, cookies, and cider, provided pot-luck style. In order for this to work we need to have you RSVP to sjacobs@maine.edu. If you plan to come, please RSVP even if you won't be bringing food. You are welcome, but we need to know how many we will be feeding. Please bring food to the rec center between 9:00 and 9:15 on Saturday morning. People may wish to ski in the morning, and have lunch, then leave. Others may want to lunch, ski, and swim, but not do the morning ski. Your choice. Just let us know about the lunch part for a head-count. Trail maps are available at www.maine.edu/campusrecreation.

- Kristie would like you to know about the Black Bear Cross Country Ski Race Sunday February 7th. The race starts at 11am.

We hope you can join us for this great outing!
Sally Jacobs sjacobs@maine.edu
Emily Cartwright emilyski@yahoo.com
Kristie Dechesne
Kristie_Deschesne@umit.maine.edu

Moving?

Be sure to send us a change of address.
PO Box 4, Orono ME 04473

Dog Owners

We respectfully request that dog owners abide by the requests of several people. Please carry a leash in case it is needed. Please remove poop from the trails, driveways, public ways. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Thank you. OLT

Wish List

- A chairperson and several members for new Membership Committee
(Call David Clement 866-0420)
- A fireproof file cabinet (Call David Clement 866-0420)
- A steward for SKLAR PARK
(Call David Thompson 866-4615)



Trail Day

October 3, 2009

A big THANK YOU to all the volunteers who came out to help with trails. A lot of improvements were made and most volunteers admitted to having fun! The rain even held off until after noon.

Jim Bird was joined by Jerry Longcore, Phil Locke, Ron Davis, Susan Priest, and Edwin Nagy at the Orono Bog Boardwalk. They were able to re-level sections and were finally able to remove the above-ground section of the old money pipe. They re-tied ropes, replaced staples and replaced deck boards. Theresa Sinclair with many of her co-workers at Bank of America spread large amount of chips on the trails behind their building in the tech park. Jim Hinds, Ron Logan and Bruce

Chipping and burning the brush piles in Sally's Field:
Photo by Edwin Nagy

Malmer worked at Newman Hill widening the path from encroaching brambles and branches. Dave Thompson worked along with Jack Blease, Sally Jacobs, Beth White, John Alexander, Pat Thompson, Gail White with grandson, Noah and Bob Miller with grandson, Isaac at Sally's Field in the Jeremiah Colburn Area. They chipped piles of branches and put the chips on the trails. A lot was accomplished and we have a lot more to do in the Spring.

David Wardrop, David Scheidt, Don MacKay and John Manter cut back brush along McPhetres Forest trails and developed the new access trail from Davis Drive, to be announced in the near future. 15 brothers from fraternity Sigma Chi followed up with their own trail day cutting back more brush from walking trails, re-painting blazes on McPhetres Forest trails, fixing a walking bridge, moving cobble stones to a new stream crossing on Buck Hill Conservation Area, and pruning red pines in the pine plantation. Sigma Chi, we look forward to working with you again.

Thanks to all these volunteers the trails are in good shape for winter activities. Get out and enjoy

Receive the OLT Newsletter Online: A Win-Win Choice

The Orono Land Trust is joining the ranks of almost every other modern organization by offering electronic delivery of the OLT Newsletter. The choice is yours. There are several advantages of choosing electronic delivery, advantages especially pertinent to an all volunteer non-profit organization interested in preserving natural areas.

By choosing electronic delivery (details below), you reduce the need for paper production, thereby reducing the use of natural resources. Your waste paper stream is reduced, as is your personal filing clutter.

By choosing electronic delivery, you will also save the OLT a significant amount of money which can be better used toward programs and preservation. It turns out that the Newsletter uses about 20% of the OLT Operating Budget. Sending the Newsletter to you electronically cost almost nothing.

If you want to change over to electronic delivery, email the OLT at oronolandtrust@roadrunner.com, call David Clement (866-0420) or write us with your wish and email address at PO Box 4, Orono, ME 04473. You can also indicate this choice on your next donation to OLT. Once on the electronic delivery list, you will receive an email with the quarterly Newsletter. You can also view the current and past Newsletters on the new and improved OLT website, www.oronolandtrust.org.



Buck Hill CONSERVATION AREA FIELD WORKSHOP

On Saturday August 15, several members of the Orono Land Trust, the Bangor Land Trust, the Veazie Land Association, and the Veazie Conservation Commission were treated to a tour of the Buck Hill Conservation Area in Veazie. The group saw firsthand the ways the town is caring for this conservation area by controlling invasive species, managing the forest, and improving wildlife habitat.

John Manter, Chairman of the Veazie Conservation Commission, kicked off the tour by giving a brief history of the site and introducing David Vardrop, Veazie's town forester. To provide a background for what the group would see during the field tour, Dave discussed the cost sharing opportunities and grants that have funded much of the work on the Conservation Area. These have come from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Project Canopy a program of the Department of Conservation's Maine Forest Service.

During the tour the group walked through several fields that are being reclaimed from an invasion of Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora Thunb*). Multiflora Rose is a thorny perennial shrub that is native to Japan, Korea, and eastern China. It can form impenetrable thickets and exclude native plant species. It is extremely prolific and invades forest openings and fields. According to the Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group, Multiflora Rose is classified as a noxious weed in several states. Dave and his staff are battling this invasive species by repeated mowing with a farm tractor and mowers as well as herbicide use in areas not conducive to mowing. The Town of Veazie has a 5-year cost-sharing contract with USNRC to combat invasives and to maintain early-successional, grassy habitat.

The group also viewed some of the improvements to the extensive trail system in the Conservation Area. Wooden bridges or cobblestone fords have been constructed at several water crossings. In other areas, ditches and culverts have been installed to improve the trails and make them passable even during wet seasons. The Town of Veazie obtained a 2008 Maine Forest Service Project Canopy grant to help fund trail improvements, as well as signage, new maps and forest stand improvements.

As a conclusion, Dave discussed the silvicultural manipulations that a forester can perform to achieve management goals and the advantages of Veazie's efforts to manage its forestlands. All would agree that it was a fantastic way to learn a lot while hiking through our local fields and forests on a beautiful summer afternoon!

Photos by Don MacKay

At least some of the people pictured: Don MacKay (Veazie Conservation Commission), Gail White, Mike Opitz (Orono Land Trust), Mimi Barnes (Orono), Lucy Quimby (Bangor Land Trust), Dave Scheidt (Veazie Land Association), and J. Manter (Chairman – Veazie Conservation)



Orono Land Trust Works Toward Accreditation



At its August meeting the Orono Land Trust Board of Directors confirmed its intention to work toward accreditation. This is a major undertaking, probably requiring three years of steady updating of records, policies, and documentation. Though accreditation is now voluntary, the Board feels that going through the process

will make the organization stronger in the future, and ensure our ability to fulfill our mission.

The accreditation process was developed by the Land Trust Alliance (www.LTA.org), an umbrella organization which unites and champions organizations in local communities working to save natural areas. With the encouragement of land trusts all over the country regulatory agencies and even the IRS, the LTA published revised standards and practices for land trusts six years ago. Due to rare public and governmental perceptions that some land trusts were not living up to their non-profit status and appropriate policies, the LTA devised a thorough accreditation program. Applicants for voluntary land trust accreditation must demonstrate compliance with a set of accreditation indicator practices selected from *Land Trust Standards and Practices*. These practices are designated by the Land Trust Alliance and indicate a land trust's ability to operate in an ethical, legal and technically sound manner and ensure the long-term protection of land in the public interest. Indicator practices are chosen based on the following criteria:

- Responsible governance of the organization
- Protection of the public interest with sound and sustainable land transactions and stewardship
- Ethical operations
- Accountability to donors and the public
- Compliance with all laws, such as IRC §170(h) and §501(c)(3)

Of the approximately 1600 land trusts in the country 78 have been accredited since the program's inception three years ago. Any OLT member interested in the process should contact the OLT President David Clement.

Halsey Forest *(con't from pg 1)*

education program established to teach school children about forests and forest management. The Halsey Forest was the first demonstration classroom in the United States!

A large kiosk with benches and picnicables is located near the entrance. A mile of trails winds through the Forest leading to eight outdoor classrooms: (1) Wolf Tree, (2) Clear Cut, (3) Selection Cut, (4) Wildlife Tree, (5) Riparian, (6) Wood Measurement, (7) Continuous Forest Measurement Plot, and (8) Wildlife Garden.

During the 90's James River Foresters continued to conduct tours. Most years saw over a thousand visitors. In the late 90's Georgia Pacific acquired the paper mill and the Forest. They continued to make improvements in the forest and conduct tours. In 2002 the Forest celebrated its 10th anniversary with a program honoring Brent Halsey Jr. who was killed shortly after the Forest opened. Unfortunately Georgia Pacific sold the mill to Red Shield which did not continue the program. Red Shield closed and Town Fuel and Fiber purchased the mill in 2008. The new company is working with the OLT to revive the program.

In 2008 an Advisory Board of teachers, foresters, and interested persons was established to facilitate the PLT programs and undertake improvements to the facilities and trails. A good example of this is the work day held Saturday, December 6, 2009. A crew consisting of Advisory board members, Dave Clement, Molly Maclean, and Dave Thompson; OLT members, Jack and Cindy Blease; and Home Depot volunteers, Paul Corcoran, Kyle Corcoran, Justin and Jamie Fournier and Aileen Clarke, chipped several years accumulation of dead trees, and brush that had accumulated on an area of an acre and half. About five to six cubic yards of chips are in a pile that will be spread on the trails this spring.

The next newsletter will have another article outlining the path forward to getting the Forest back in shape and operating for the benefit of all visitors.

David Thompson, Steward

Board of Trustees

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Calendar

January 6, 2010 Board meeting
February 3, 2010 Board meeting
February 6, 2010 Ski Outing (see page1)

Please check for membership expiration date on your address label.

ORONO LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone _____

Email: _____

_____ \$25 Individual Membership

_____ \$100-\$999 Supporting Membership*

_____ \$50 Family Membership

_____ \$1000 Life Membership

*All but \$50 of your donation will go into a long-term fund for future land acquisitions and for stewardship of existing lands.

I'd like to make an **additional** \$ _____ donation to help protect green space in Orono.

Please send my **newsletter** by: _____ Email, _____ U.S. Postal Mail, or _____ both Email and U.S. Postal Mail

I am interested in helping on one of the following committees:

_____ **Lands** – The core committee, always on the lookout for new areas, monitors land-use changes.

_____ **Stewardship and Trails** – Backbone of OLT, monitors properties, maintains trails for public use.

_____ **Outreach** – Plans and conducts events and programs of education and entertainment, publicity, newsletter, brochures, website.

_____ **Membership** – Encourages existing and new members to participate in OLT activities. collects dues, maintains database.

_____ **Veazie Land Association** – Oversees Veazie Lands, easements, trails, etc.

_____ **Caribou Bog – Penjajawoc Corridor Project** – Identifies properties in preservation area for acquisition or easements.

_____ **Orono Bog Boardwalk** – Maintains Boardwalk, organizes programs, budget, fundraising.

_____ **I'd like to share these other interests and talents:**