



Tracts & Trails

Newsletter of Scarborough Land Trust

Conservation Lands - A Powerful Source of Renewal and Relief

by Jeremy Wintersteen, SLT Board Member

I've been on Scarborough Land Trust's Board since the early 1990s and currently serve on the Acquisition Committee and Broadturn Farm Sub-Committee. During my 25-plus years with this organization, I've always been very proud to work with SLT. Proud of our terrific, experienced and professional staff and proud of our diverse, knowledgeable and committed all-volunteer board. Critical to our success in conserving more than 1,600 acres for public use is our good working relationship with the Town of Scarborough, the support of Scarborough citizens who have passed four land bonds over the last 20 years, and YOU, our dedicated supporters.

Importance of conserved lands has never been more apparent than right now. Social distancing. Self-quarantine. Shelter in place. These previously unheard-of actions now rule our everyday lives. As we



learn to live in this very different world, I hope you will find that the land SLT has conserved offers you an opportunity to get outside, enjoy nature and recharge your batteries.



Jeremy Wintersteen Sr. and Jr. taking advantage of conserved lands for exercise, fresh air, and renewal.

Whether it's feeling the sun or wind on your face, spotting an animal, noticing something on the ground or in a tree, seeing the morning light emerge or the shadows getting longer, or just taking a walk, conservation lands help to lift our spirits. They also calm us down and give us time to clear our minds a little. Getting outside and being in nature provide a comforting hand, so I'm grateful for SLT's open properties and trails. Thank you for your support of the land trust and for helping us conserve important parts of Scarborough. Stay safe and healthy, help others, get outside and be hopeful.

Message from Executive Director

by Rich Bard



It has been the great privilege of my life to work in conservation in one way or another for over 25 years. I have spent my career in captive breeding of endangered species, reintroducing wolves to the southwestern U.S., managing

Maine's wildlife as a state biologist, and, finally, as a land trust Executive Director. A primary reason for each of these separate conservation focuses is ensuring that we pass down to the next generation the same rich and vibrant environment as we are fortunate to have today. Nevertheless, my work has never felt more important for today than during the COVID-19 crisis.

In this chaotic moment of uncertainty, people are seeking out SLT preserves and other natural areas at what may be unprecedented rates. Why? I believe it is more than extra time on our hands or a need for

movement. A walk on the streets outside one's home would suffice if those were the reasons, and, I might add, would likely provide more physical separation than a walk on a trail used by others. So there has to be more to it. I believe it is a desire for connection with nature - to be grounded and inspired by the sights, sounds, and smells of the forest. Nature's unique ability to ease our troubles is crucial in times like these.

I hope you are among those who have taken advantage of Maine's bounty of wild places and that you have found solace and felt refreshed when you re-emerged from the forest.

What a gift it is that so many people give generously of their time and money to keep places like Fuller Farm, Pleasant Hill Preserve, and the other SLT preserves open and available for you to use. Imagine, for a moment, if your favorite place to hike had never been conserved by SLT - if none of the preserves existed at all because no one took seriously our need to connect with nature. **If you are a donor or volunteer, know that the people using our trails in this time of trouble are able to do so because of you. On behalf of everyone using the trails, thank you.**

Guidelines for Trail use while Social Distancing

These are the guidelines in effect as of the time of printing. Please consult our website for updates.

- Observe all posted signs with updated rules.
- Park only in designated areas. If the parking lot is full, find another place to hike.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from anyone not in your household group.
- Alert other hikers if you are approaching from behind.
- Be sure you have full control over your dog so it does not approach other hikers.
- Do not pet other people's dogs.
- Use common sense and courtesy to avoid negatively impacting other hikers.
- Have Fun!

Keep up with SLT News and Events

For the most up-to-date information on SLT's response to the COVID-19 crisis, including the eventual resumption of our monthly walks and educational opportunities, keep in touch with us on the internet at:

1. **www.ScarboroughLandTrust.org** – check our News and Events page and/or sign up to receive our monthly eNews at the bottom of the home page.
2. **Facebook @ScarboroughLandTrust** – for the latest news and plenty of other information of interest from SLT and our partners.

Volunteer Spotlight

Tom and Charlotte Nolan moved to Scarborough in 2017, and one of their first priorities was finding a place where their active 5 year-old Labrador Retriever, Lucy, could romp and play. When they discovered Fuller Farm, the three of them were elated.

“We’d been living in Bridgton where there were plenty of hiking opportunities and wide-open spaces,” says Tom. “We worried there’d be nowhere to take Lucy off-leash. Finding Fuller Farm so close to home made the move a lot easier for all of us.”

Having a history of supporting local land trusts, the Nolans began sharing their time, treasure, and talents with SLT. During one of their weekly outings at Fuller Farm, Charlotte and Lucy met Stewardship Director Hannah Chamberlain. After chatting with

Hannah, Charlotte quickly volunteered to staff a tabling event, then another, and soon Tom was offering up his trail-building assistance to the land trust. When Fuller Farm’s stewards were ready to retire, Tom and Charlotte eagerly agreed to step in.



Tom and Charlotte Nolan, along with their dog Lucy, have found many ways to help Scarborough Land Trust and make a difference in the community.

As liaisons between the land trust and their Blue Point Congregation Church community, they’ve helped organize meetings and communicate plans for the Blue Point Preserve to church members. Tom has agreed to be the first steward of the BPP property and already has been assisting Hannah with trail creation. Charlotte has signed on to assist with this year’s Broadturn Farm Dinner team.

“We want Scarborough Land Trust to thrive,” says Charlotte. “And it takes all of us pitching in to make that happen.”

Fuller Farm Hayfield Trail Closure for Bird Study

The fields at Fuller Farm are beautiful, but they also provide a critical – and dwindling – habitat resource for grass-nesting birds. This spring and summer, the Hayfield Trail, which bisects the fields, will be closed to the public so we can conduct a survey of those birds. *Note: All other trails at Fuller Farm will remain open.*

When Scarborough Land Trust first protected Fuller Farm back in 2001, bobolinks and eastern meadowlarks were common in the productive hayfields on both sides of Broadturn Road, but their numbers have declined since then. While we know habitat loss from housing developments in the neighborhood is a major factor, we are trying to understand and manage other causes for this decline. One of these is human and dog disturbance on the Hayfield Trail, which bisects the field.

In past years we have asked people to leash their dogs during nesting season. This year, starting April 15th, we’re taking it a step further and closing the Hayfield Trail and all the fields to human (and canine) uses during the bobolink nesting season. Excluding recreational use on the Hayfield Trail this season will help us get a more accurate understanding of how many birds are nesting in the field. Based on our observations, we’ll be able to make better decisions about how to manage the field in the future. We’re thankful to be able to work with the Ag Allies program (learn more at <https://www.somersetswcd.org/ag-allies/> and with a

scientist from the University of New England to monitor the bird population in the field.

We know this news will disappoint some trail users, but we hope that as members of Scarborough Land Trust you will understand the importance of caring for wildlife habitat as well as trails. There are easy ways to detour around the Hayfield Trail. These options will be marked with blue stakes so that navigation will be simple. Dog owners, please be extra careful to keep your dogs leashed along the edge of the field to avoid disturbing birds.

Once nesting season is over and the nestlings have taken flight, the trail will be reopened, likely in late July or early August. We look forward to sharing the results of our survey and to moving forward with confidence toward our management goals.



Springtime at SLT Preserves

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