

## **Tracts&Trails**

Newsletter of the Scarborough Land Trust

AUTUMN 2022

VOLUME 46 : ISSUE 2



#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**

by Andrew Mackie



This summer we had two new and exciting developments. Actually, we had more than two, but I only have limited space in my letter!

Abby, our seasonal Education and Communications Specialist, partnered with Friends of Scarborough Marsh (FOSM) to

develop and conduct a youth program about water. The focus was to follow a drop of water from the western part of Town to the ocean. We decided to create a program with one field session each week for three weeks. Overall, the participating kids and parents visited Broadturn Farm, Blue Point Preserve and Scarborough's Ferry Beach. I was fortunate to help out on each of these field experiences; what a fun time to watch their sense of wonder as we netted up mummichogs, amphipods, gastropods and other creatures living beneath the water's surface. The whole point of the program was to instill in the participants how important protecting our water is for the entire Town. Witnessing their excitement while swishing their nets and mucking around in boots refreshed my passion to protecting more land in Scarborough. It was obvious that the Nonesuch River, Scarborough Marsh, and Saco Bay depend upon the surrounding uplands and its ability to filter and store water coming into these systems. We would have no mayflies in Silver Brook at Broadturn Farm if not for the forests hugging the creek. We would

have no Scarborough Marsh without the hardwood and pine forests lining the salt grass expanses. SLT looks forward to taking the lessons learned from this summer's pilot program and improving on the water series for next year. We are grateful to FOSM for all their support.

The second major event is tied closely to the first. As an organization we decided to recognize and award an individual with the first SLT Conservationist of the Year Award. It was an easy decision for the committee to select Eddie Woodin as the recipient. Eddie is a strong

supporter of SLT and the Scarborough Community. But he is more than that. Eddie realizes the importance of connecting the younger generation with nature and getting them out onto the land. He has been both an advocate



Conservationist of the Year Award from left to right: Betts Armstrong, Eddie Woodin, Andrew Mackie

and leader of fostering these connections. It was an honor to present the award to Eddie at our Annual Dinner at Broadturn Farm in August. Congratulations Eddie. We also look forward to presenting the award in the coming years to individuals, families or businesses that are moving conservation forward in Scarborough. — *AJM* 

Cover photo by Dan Kehlenbach

## **Expanding Fuller Farm Preserve**

The Land Trust is excited to announce that we are closer to finalizing the purchase of a property that will expand the size of Fuller Farm Preserve by almost 8 acres while providing additional recreational opportunities. But the value it holds for protecting water quality and wildlife far surpasses the size of its borders. Almost three acres of wetlands abound through the maple, oak and white pine forests, absorbing water from heavy rain events, trapping sediment and excessive nutrients, and ensuring the continued high level of water quality of the streams and aquifers that eventually feed into the Nonesuch River. As water collects and pools in these areas in the Spring, amphibians such as the wood frog take advantage of the situation and lay eggs. These pools, free from fish, give the young frogs a chance to survive and grow to become adults. Eventually, the frogs leave the pools and use the drier forests that surround the pools to find food and shelter during the summer and fall seasons. Other

wildlife also use the area, either calling it home or using it as a stopover in their migrations further north. Our staff looks forward to sharing these stories with children and adults during educational programs we plan to hold on the property. The only thing remaining is raising the funds to complete the transaction. To make a donation towards the purchase of the property, contact the Land Trust today!

SLT is committed to preserving open tracts of natural lands, farmland and wildlife habitat for the benefit of people and wildlife. If you are considering options for your property and leaving a legacy for the future, or would like more information, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your family. Our desire is to better understand your objectives for the property to see if working with Scarborough Land Trust will meet your needs. To find out more, contact Scott Kunkler, Conservation Director, at (207) 289-1199 or skunkler@scarboroughlandtrust.org.

## Scarborough Land Trust's Invasive Species Task Force

It's a lovely, sunny afternoon, and you decide to take a stroll down Eleanor's trail at Pleasant Hill Preserve. You're appreciating the biodiversity, the vibrant spectrum of natural colors, when you turn the corner to see a large swatch of Japanese Knotweed. A monoculture of the non-native plant towers ten feet high—tall enough to suppress native seedlings, and yet too short to provide cooling shade. Peering through the woody stalks reveals a dense wall of the stuff with not an inch of room to spare. You might be thinking, 'What is this plant, why is it here, what's the impact on the Preserve, and what is Scarborough Land Trust (SLT) doing about it?'

As many nature enthusiasts know, there are multiple invasive plant species throughout Maine, and SLT preserves have not been spared. Some invasive species in Maine were imported for horticulture, agriculture, or erosion control, and some were accidentally introduced during importing of other goods. A plant becomes invasive when it outcompetes native species and dominates the ecosystem. This decrease in biodiversity has a ripple effect on native species, like Spicebush Swallowtail Butterflies, which have co-evolved with native plants, like Spicebush, and rely on them for shelter and sustenance.

If you've attended our Invasive Species Trainings at Pleasant Hill Preserve this summer, you may have heard of a section of trail as the Invasive Species Gallery – this area showcases Multiflora Rose, Autumn Olive,

Bittersweet Vine, Japanese Knotweed, Purple Loosestrife, and Honeysuckle all competing with each other in a dense tangle, with a few native plants reaching for the sun here and there. Once you recognize the invasive species, it's hard not to notice them everywhere. Sometimes, it's overwhelming.

SLT has formed an Invasive Species Removal Task Force this summer, and we continue to make space for native plants into the fall. All our treatments have been manual-removal based, relying on the strength and gumption of hardy volunteers and SLT staff to pull up, cut back, and untangle invasive species from our local ecosystems. We have hosted Task Force Work Days on alternating Saturdays at Fuller Farm, Pleasant Hill, and Blue Point Preserves, and groups from local businesses have joined us for productive and fun workdays! We now have a group of enthusiastic and informed Task Force volunteers who head out whenever the chance arises. SLT continues to provide the training and tools, and we hope to keep this work up until the snow flies.

The next time you take a stroll down Eleanor's trail, you will see large patches of open space where Knotweed once dominated. Though it looks bare now, we will need to continue cutting knotweed regrowth multiple times this fall until the temperatures drop low enough to limit its growth. An assertive approach to cutting regrowth is the best way for SLT to keep the knotweed at bay long enough

(continued on page 12)



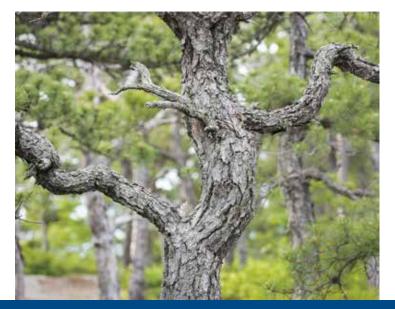
Bringing Back a Native Plant Community at Blue Point Preserve



Example of a managed pine barren - Wells Barren Preserve, Maine. Photo Credit: Dan Kehlenbach.

Take a walk at Blue Point Preserve this fall and you will come across a section of the trail that is actively being cleared. You might wonder what is going to be built along the trail? Actually, this is just the opposite. SLT is working to bring back a native coastal pitch pine community.

If you look at some of the smaller pines you will see that they are different from the much larger white pines. These are the often twisted and gnarled pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*). Pitch pine occurs from central Maine to northern Georgia, often found in sandy soils (pine barrens). These communities consist of pitch pine as the dominant tree with scrub oak, heaths and grasses in the understory. These barrens were often maintained by fire. In the



absence of major disturbance, such as fire, hardwoods will become the dominant canopy species shading out pitch pine.

At Blue Point, another factor is adversely impacting the pitch pine community: a high number of invasive plants that out compete the pines for resources. Asiatic bittersweet vines cover the pines and slowly cause their death. In addition, bush honeysuckle suck up nutrients and space. Walking on the trail in this section, you will see several dead pitch pines smothered by bittersweet. SLT is actively removing the invasive species and cutting back the white pine and poplar, giving the pitch pine room to grow.

While we can't reintroduce fire to Blue Point Preserve because of the proximity of neighbors, we can manually cut the understory every few years helping to keep the invasive plant species and sapling hardwoods at bay. Restoring this plant community will hopefully bring animals favoring these barrens, which include unique species of insects and a variety of migrating songbirds.

Want to help restore our native plant communities? Volunteer with SLT. For more information visit the volunteer page at https://scarboroughlandtrust.org/volunteer

An example of the twisted nature of the branches and scaly bark of a typical pitch pine tree.



# SCARBOROUGH LAND TRUST Annual Report

July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022



### The Year in Review, July 2021 to June 2022

#### **July 2021**

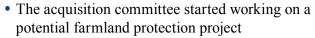
- Staff toured Fuller Farm Preserve with NRCS to determine future pollinator projects
- Staff and volunteers continued visitor surveys at various preserves



- A new invasive species ID and control workshop was developed
- Debris from an old dump at Blue Point Preserve was hauled off site
- A new program about moths was developed and well attended

#### August 2021

- The Annual Dinner at Broadturn Farm was the best yet in spite of a brief rainstorm
- Boardwalk construction started on the rerouted hayfield trail at Fuller Farm Preserve



- Cabela's presented a \$10,000 check to SLT for Warren Woods expansion
- Nine education programs were conducted during the month, including Stream Explorers, Tree Tour and Astronomy
- Stewardship Director worked with the USFWS on Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge to improve New England cottontail habitat

#### September 2021

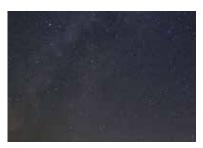
- Staff held a half day planning session to set priorities for the year
- Seasonal Education and Communication Specialist, Becca, leaves after a great summer of programs and projects
- Executive Director outlines plans to expand Warren Woods Preserve and protect the Nonesuch River

#### October 2021

- The Board of Directors creates a SIMPLE IRA plan with a matching component helping build sustainability for employees
- Voting starts at Town and Country Federal Credit Union – SLT will be awarded a \$3,000 grant to help with trail improvements at Sewell Woods
- Staff and board participate in four-part Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice workshop hosted by Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative

#### November 2021

- A task force focused on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice is formed to work on a case statement and new policies for SLT
- Fall newsletter hits mailboxes including first Annual Report
- An astronomy program was conducted at Pleasant Hill Preserve



 LL Bean and Maine Coast Heritage Trust awarded SLT \$3,250 for improvements to the Bird Trail at Fuller Farm

#### December 2021

- Acting quickly to protect 55-acres being sold via an on-line auction, SLT borrows funds from an internal fund to buy the property, including a stretch of the Nonesuch River, forested wetlands, and more
- First official financial review completed by an outside CPA firm
- Awarded a \$5,000 grant by Onion Foundation for translations of kiosks into five most spoken languages in the Greater Portland area



 SLT joins Writing the Land initiative and selects poets to invite onto three preserves

## The Year in Review, continued...

#### January 2022

- Winter birding program conducted at Ferry Beach, linking our freshwater river systems with the health of Saco Bay
- New winter hats with the SLT logo arrive and are available for sale



- A strategy session with the Friends of Scarborough Marsh was held to set land acquisition priorities along the Marsh
- Staff began development of a relationship with the ME Turnpike looking to protect wetlands for mitigation requirements

#### February 2022

- Winter Wildlife Tracking program conducted virtual and in the field
- A program, "Ask Andrew" was held to answer questions by the community related to SLT programs and projects
- The Town of Scarborough and SLT met to discuss areas of mutual interest

#### March 2022

- Closed on 16.5 acres along Gorham Road, with the parcel added to Warren Woods Preserve
- Entered into two purchase and sale agreements for 9.5 and 8 acre parcels in Scarborough
- A concept plan for a Blue Trail on the Nonesuch River was developed and shared with the Board of Directors of Friends of Scarborough Marsh
- Started discussions with the owners of a local farm about long-term conservation
- The Stewardship Committee updated current hunting regulations for SLT properties

#### April 2022

- First volunteer appreciation event held to recognize the amazing volunteer work carried out across the organization
- The Executive Director participated in planning sessions for the Town's Community Services Master Plan

- Fuller Farm Bird trail work begins with a training session for staff and volunteers
- Woodcock programs conducted at Pleasant Hill and Libby River Preserves

#### May 2022

- Annual Clean Up across many of SLT preserves
- A wood turtle survey in cooperation with ME Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was conducted at several of our properties
- Bird and wildflower walks were held during the month
- In partnership with the Scarborough Library a talk and book signing was conducted by Sue Inches focusing on her new book *Advocating for the Environment*
- Native plant sale held in Scarborough in partnership with Rebel Hill Farms
- A pollinator parade and story time held at Pleasant Hill Preserve
- Scott Kunkler starts as Conservation Director
- Donation for Pleasant Hill Preserve supports improvements to the property

#### June 2022

- Abby Wilson starts as the seasonal Education and Communication Specialist
- SLT participates in our first Scarborough
  - Farmer's Market for the summer
- Fern and wildflower walks held during the month
- The Stewardship Committee meets at the Saco Heath Preserve to discuss boardwalk construction techniques with representees of the Nature Conservancy

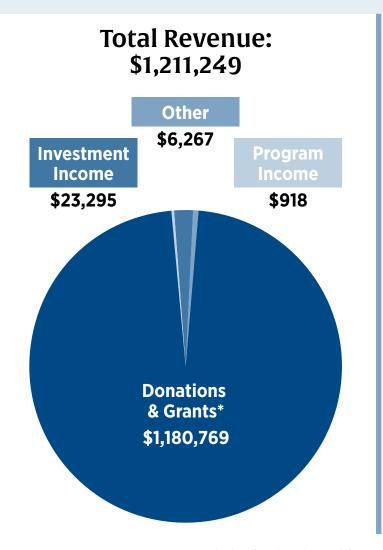


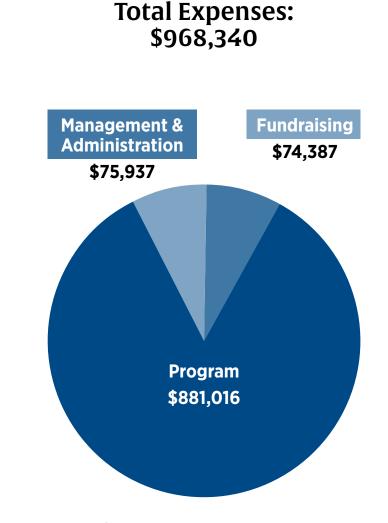
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions: \$2,359,857

Net Assets without Donor Restrictions: \$4,346,778

**Total Liabilities:** \$27,852

**Total:** \$6,734,487





<sup>\*</sup>Includes funds released from donor restrictions for projects

#### THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS 2021 - 2022

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Anonymous (1)

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Camalotte Foundation Charlie and Eliza Lee

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#### **Pleasant Hill Preserve Fund**

Anonymous (1)

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Town and Country Federal Credit Union

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#### **Warren Woods Expansion Campaign**

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Maine Natural Resources Conservation

Program

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Michelle and Jeff Raber Daniel and Nancy Ravin

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#### 91 Burham Acquisition

Anonymous (1)

Pharibe Wise Eddie Woodin

KEY: \* represents donors that made gifts as tributes

#### **Business Community Partner Program:**

#### **Trailblazers**

Smith & Wilkinson Eddie Woodin (BCP)

#### Stewards

Scott & Sunny Townsend, Keller Williams Realty TRSS Wealth Management, LLC Mercedes-Benz of Scarborough Oak Hill Beverage The Downs Evergreen Credit Union

#### Sustainers

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Pine Tree Seafood & Produce Co.
Neil and Heather Jamieson
Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution
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#### In-Kind

Rising Tide Brewing Co. Ron Forest and Sons Bite into Maine Grandy Organics Bass Pro Shops & Cabela's Outdoor Fund

## Make a Lasting Impact -









## **Donate Real Estate to the Scarborough Land Trust**

#### **Property/Lands for Conservation**

Discuss whether your property is suitable for a new preserve, protected farm, or conservation easement.

#### **Property/Lands for Resale**

Donate vacant, residential, or commercial property for resale by the Land Trust to help support conservation projects.

#### **Benefits:**

- Opportunity to leave a permanent legacy in Scarborough
- Avoid capital gains on highly appreciated property
- Charitable income tax deduction
- Reduce estate tax burden
- Support an organization with a long-track record of conservation success
- Foster the protection of watershed and wildlife conservation
- Preserve valuable agricultural land

Contact Executive Director, Andrew Mackie to discuss possible real estate donations at amackie@scarboroughlandtrust.org or (207) 289-1199.



LAND TRUST

## **SLT's Invasive Species Task Force** *continued from page 3* ...

to allow native plants to rebound – something that can be seen near the far end of Eleanor's trail! Regular cutting of knotweed in addition to shady conditions has allowed native plants like jewelweed, goldenrod, and seedlings of nearby oaks and maples to grow.

If you're thinking of tackling invasive species at home, we hope you can attend one of our trainings, or visit USM Extension's webpage for some self-guided research.

Thanks to all our volunteers for pitching in on this long-term habitat management project – it truly could not be done without you!



Join the Invasive Species
Removal Task Force and
make a difference – contact
Stewardship Director,
Samantha Wolf at swolf@
scarboroughlandtrust.org.



New England Cottontail and Pleasant Hill Preserve



An exciting habitat restoration project is planned for Pleasant Hill Preserve. A portion of the eastern edge of the forest beside Monty's Loop will be managed for New England Cottontail Rabbit (NEC), the only rabbit native to our region.

In 2006, NEC was a candidate for the Federal Endangered Species list, but thanks to breeding programs and habitat restoration through State, Federal, Tribal, non-profit, and private sector efforts, by 2015 NEC was removed as a candidate species. However, populations remain small and scattered, as suitable habitat is difficult to find due to development, and they face strong competition from deer and the introduced Eastern Cottontail Rabbit. Presently, the NEC's range has been reduced to one-fifth of its historic size. Suitable habitat includes early successional forest: the type of age-, strata-, and bio- diversity one would see in an agricultural field left fallow for many years, or in areas of open canopy where old trees have fallen, creating a break for seedlings and saplings to grow. These ecosystems are also known as thickets.

Previously, SLT created NEC habitat at Libby River Farm. This management project is currently in good standing, and an application for funds for its upkeep will be submitted this fall. Upkeep includes selectively cutting ten to twelve-foot saplings to maintain the early successional forest and encourage growth of shrubland. Planting of native shrubs may be part of future management. SLT has recorded other early successional species here, including Bobcat and American Woodcock, so we know that the habitat is successful and the project is on target.

NEC habitat management at Pleasant Hill Preserve would include edge feathering, native shrub planting, and brush management. Edge feathering involves cutting selected trees and trimming back brush between mature forest and open field to create a wavy, thirty-foot-wide and fifty-foot-long border. Edge-feathering creates brushy areas of cover for rabbits. This management encourages the growth of young forest, which benefits the rabbits, as well as species like American Woodcock, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow and Flycatchers. Native shrubs would be planted into the field and edge-feathered area to provide suitable forage and more cover. Brush management would involve maintaining the edge-feathered area and controlling and preventing establishment of invasive species in the habitat site.

There is a population of NEC on the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge (RCNWR) land in Cape Elizabeth, just across the Spurwink River from Scarborough's RCNWR land and Pleasant Hill Preserve. Our hope is that in time the rabbits will disperse from this site and move



towards Pleasant Hill, or that restoration specialists will recommend Pleasant Hill as a release site for NEC. SLT Staff and volunteer efforts to manage invasive species, plant native ones, and encourage early successional forest growth will make the difference – hopefully, the New England Cottontails will approve of our restoration work and make themselves at home!

#### **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: John Sweeney**



Over the past year, Stewardship volunteer extraordinaire John Sweeney has worked many hours on major improvement projects across most of our SLT properties. It all started last August at Sewell Woods where he bumped into Tom Nolan, Board Member and Lead Steward at Fuller Farm and Blue Point Preserves, while he was exploring local

area trails. Their friendly conversation quickly led to John asking if there were any jobs the Land Trust needed help with. To which Tom immediately replied, "Boy! Do I have some work for you!" John soon found himself helping Tom with two major projects at Fuller Farm - rerouting the Hayfield Trail and restoring the Bird Trail.

The rerouting of the Hayfield Trail to the upland edge of the property was done to better protect the Bobolinks that nest in the fields, and the restoration of the Bird Trail involved replacing many degraded bog bridges, repairing badly eroded sections, and widening the trail to give adaptive access to those with mobility needs. He also worked with Tom and a local boy scout working on his Eagle Scout project to bring in and spread lots of mulch to improve the muddy landing zones at either end of the Bird Trail boardwalk

Once the Fuller Farm trail work was finished, John was looking for even larger, more long-term projects he could be a part of, so Tom put him in touch with SLT Executive Director Andrew Mackie, who suggested projects at our Blue Point and Pleasant Hill Preserves. At Blue Point Preserve, John is helping with an important, ongoing pitch pine habitat restoration project which involves removing aggressive invasive species like Autumn Olive, Bittersweet and Honeysuckle that have overrun the property, and eventually planting an acre or more of native pitch pine trees, which will provide habitat for more native birds and other wildlife.

At Pleasant Hill Preserve, he is in the process of shoring up the upper half of the barn to help preserve it for swallow and bat habitat. This summer, he stabilized a structural beam on the second floor, and this fall, he will erect a wood and wire fence around the entire barn, for which all the lumber and gate hardware has been generously donated by Ron Forest & Sons Fencing. Hopefully, this will discourage visitors from disturbing

the wildlife and bird habitat in and around the barn. He also helped build foundations for two sheds, a larger one to accommodate a new shed at PHP with a larger capacity for storing tools and building materials, and a smaller one at Fuller Farm for the placement of the smaller shed from PHP.

When he's not working or volunteering for SLT, John enjoys hiking, camping, mountain biking, paddle boarding and waterskiing. His love of nature and the outdoors began as a child growing up in the Poconos Mountain area of Pennsylvania, where he spent a lot of time camping with his family and exploring the foothills of the nearby Appalachian Trail. He graduated from Penn State with a degree in Environmental Resource Management, and after graduating, went to work for Aquatic Analysts, Inc., an environmental consulting group specializing in lake, pond and watershed management. In 2019, he and his wife decided it was time to pursue their dream of living closer to nature, and the Portland, Maine area had been on their radar for some time. They soon purchased and renovated a house here in Scarborough, his wife secured a science teacher position in Wells, and John started working for Ken Fengler Landscaping in June, fulfilling his dream of getting back to outdoor work.



Eric Morabito (left) and John Sweeney (right)

When asked what is most rewarding about your volunteer work with SLT, John said, "The opportunity to make new relationships and meet people from different walks of life who share similar interest in the environment and land preservation. And knowing that the land we are working on will be preserved for generations to come, especially with so much development coming so quickly. It's great that it's all being protected."







From top left: Al Timpson, Beth and Paul Dwyer, Oysters from Pine Tree Seafood

Photo credits: Pete Ryan



## Highlights from the Broadturn Farm Dinner:

- August 25, 2022 marked the 10th Anniversary of the Annual Broadturn Farm Dinner
- The Dinner was another sold-out event!
- The night was perfect with over 200 people in attendance!
- We raised \$49,000 in support of the Scarborough Land Trust with an additional \$65,000 pledged during our special paddle raise to support land conservation in Scarborough.
- The venue, food, beverage, music and service were fantastic! Dandelion Catering once again delighted attendees with an amazing meal, appetizers, dessert and cocktails. Pine Tree Seafood treated the crowd to oyster service, Beals provided their fun ice cream bar, and beverage service was courtesy of Nonesuch River Brewing, SOPO Wine Co. and Round Turn Distilling. And guests were thrilled to take home the gorgeous flowers donated by Broadturn Farm.







2nd row: Kathy Harvey-Brown, Meghan McDonald, Scott Townsend, Sunny Townsend, Katy Foley; 3rd row: Kerry Hall, Tom Hall, Liz Hayden, Tom Nolan; Bottom right: Dan Ravin, Nancy Ravin, Fran Myers, Bob Myers



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#### **UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS**

#### **November**

- Saturday, November 5 @ 1 pm Native Seed Sowing Workshop with the Wild Seed Project, Cabela's Community Room, Scarborough
- Thursday, November 10 @ 6 pm -Forests for the Trees and for Climate by Tom Doak. In partnership with Saco Valley Land Trust. Location - Dyer Library, Saco
- Thursday, November 17 @ 7 pm -Conservation Options for Your Property, a conversation with Conservation Director, Scott Kunkler, Scarborough Public Library

#### December

- Monday, December 5 @ 6 pm -Big Trees of Northern New England by Kevin Martin. In partnership with Friends of Scarborough Marsh - Scarborough Municipal Building, Council Chambers A&D.
- Tuesday, December 13 @ 6 pm -Coastal Climate Change by Pete Slovinsky and Jeremy Gabrielson. In partnership with Saco Valley Land Trust. Location - Scarborough Public Safety classroom

#### **January**

- Saturday, January 7, 2023 @ 9 am -Coastal Birding with Executive Director Andrew Mackie, Ferry Beach, Scarborough
- Saturday, January 21, 2023 @ 10 am -Snowshoe Tour of Pleasant Hill Preserve
- Sunday, January 29, 2023 @ 2 pm -Contemplative Winter Walk, Pleasant Hill Preserve

#### **February**

- Saturday, February 4, 2023 @ 10 am -Winter Wildlife Tracks with Stewardship Director Sami Wolf, Libby River Farm Preserve
- Saturday, February 18, 2023 @ 10 am Snowshoe Tour of Fuller Farm Preserve

#### **April**

- Sunday, April 2, 2023 @ 1pm -Volunteer Appreciation Event
- Sunday, April 30, 2023 @ 2 pm Contemplative Spring Walk, Pleasant Hill Preserve

#### Thank you to our Business Community Partners

#### TRAILBLAZERS









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#### Newsletter

Copy Editor: Rita Breton Editor-in-Chief: Andrew Mackie Design: Barton Design, Inc. Printing: Partners Printing