



Tracts&Trails

Newsletter of the Scarborough Land Trust

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CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE, FOR WILDLIFE — *FOREVER*



Spring is always a welcome friend. The sun warms the ground, days expand pushing back the night. Life is renewed. It is one of the pleasures of living in New England to welcome the change of seasons. I wait anxiously for the seemingly unreal amplification of the calls of tiny spring peepers. Every year,

I ponder the newly emerging lime-green leaves as they unfold day by day. As an enthusiastic birder, spring also brings back our almost forgotten avian friends, now decked out in their finest breeding plumage. We rejoice in this time of year with events, programs and the start of summer field work season (check out Mother's Day at Broadturn Farm, [page 5](#)).

This is also a special time of year at Scarborough Marsh. Driving by or walking at our Blue Point Preserve, I ask, "when will I see the first Glossy Ibis for the year?" How about the first Snowy Egret or Willet. The Marsh provides a unique home for many species of wildlife not found in much of Maine. Scarborough Marsh is an ecological jewel. As the largest contiguous salt marsh in Maine, the

Marsh helps provide an identity for the Town, a resource of State significance and one to celebrate.

On [page 3](#) of this newsletter, we pay homage to the partnership between the Friends of Scarborough Marsh (FOSM) and Scarborough Land Trust. There is a long history of conservation between these two organizations to protect this valuable resource. We, however, are far from resting on our laurels. New challenges confront the Marsh requiring an assortment of conservation tools. Our land protection criteria are considering additional threats, such as sea level rise. We understand the importance of the rivers and brooks that empty into Scarborough Marsh and for the interaction between the uplands and the marsh fringe. SLT will increase its efforts to protect the health of the Marsh. We will also partner to increase education efforts with the public. These efforts will require additional human and financial resources over time.

We look forward to our continued partnership with FOSM and charting a new era in the protection of Scarborough Marsh. One that will add to the legacy of Scarborough for future generations.

—AJM

Cover photo by Dan Kehlenbach

New Property Added to Fuller Farm



Sounds of Spring are filling the air in Scarborough. Spring peepers and wood frogs calling at night near wetlands and vernal pools are a sign that Winter has receded and Summer is on its way. With the latest purchase by the Scarborough Land Trust (SLT), frogs and other animals dependent upon wetlands and vernal pools have been given a reprieve. That's because four vernal pools and three acres of wetlands have been protected as part of SLT's purchase of eight acres along Burnham Road.

Vernal pools are a special type of wetland that are

active breeding areas for amphibians. The State of Maine's Department of Environmental Protection has identified them as essential breeding habitat for certain species of frogs

and salamanders. Because vernal pools are temporary and usually dry up by late summer, they contain no fish predators that would normally eat amphibian eggs and larvae. The wetlands also help filter the water which flows into the Nonesuch River.

The other five acres are upland forest with a mix of conifer and hardwoods species. The uplands are an absolute must for the amphibians that breed in the vernal pools. They spend most of their adult lives living in the forest understory, returning to the pools only to breed in the early spring. In addition to amphibians, other animals use the forest for food and shelter. SLT found both nesting Pileated Woodpeckers and Barred Owls. The mix of forest and wetlands provides good quality habitat for both migratory and breeding songbirds.

The purchase, located on the west side of Fuller Farm Preserve- one of SLT's most popular preserves- brings the total size of the Preserve to 228 acres. The new parcel was sold to the Scarborough Land Trust by George Baker in memory of his father, George Baker Sr. Without the desire of the Baker Family to work with SLT, the property, if sold

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Scarborough Land Trust and Friends of Scarborough Marsh: Strong Conservation Partners



With their strong sense of place and shared vision of land protection, Scarborough Land Trust (SLT) and Friends of Scarborough Marsh (FOSM) have found many effective ways to collaborate over the past 20 years. The two organizations have worked together on major land acquisition projects, programs and speaker series, and have shared plans, strategies and board members.

In 2009, they partnered to protect an important 45-acre parcel of land abutting the Marsh owned by the Gervais family. Protection of this property furthered the groups' mutual goals of preservation of wildlife habitat and scenic views, water quality, and recreational opportunities. It is also a great example of the power of local collaboration in leveraging state and non-local funding. In addition to FOSM and SLT contributions, funding for this \$975,000 project came from the State's Land for Maine's Future Program, Scarborough Parks and Conservation Land Board fund, Julie N Trustees Fund, Davis Conservation Foundation, Ducks Unlimited and private donations. Once purchased, the Gervais farm was added to the 3,200-acre Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area (SMWMA), managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW).

Also added to the SMWMA in 2014 was a 3-acre parcel of upland forest at the edge of the Marsh thanks to SLT/FOSM efforts. When the Jannelle family expressed interest in donating this parcel, the two groups shared the costs and worked with the Town of Scarborough, MDIFW, and the Jannelles to address title, survey and other property needs.

Five years later in 2019, they came together again to conserve a 14-acre parcel that would become beautiful Blue Point Preserve. SLT, after a long 10-year process, began the job of assuming ownership and joined forces with FOSM to raise the necessary funds. FOSM provided funds for early acquisition tasks and made a large \$22,500 donation for the final fundraising effort. They also sent a letter to their donors encouraging them to donate, resulting in another 73 donations totaling \$8,350. Most recently in 2022, FOSM donated \$30,000 toward the successful SLT acquisition of the 390 Payne Road and 11 Bridges Drive parcels, which added another 55 acres to our Warren Woods Preserve.

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Hemlock Grove Preserve

Tucked away at the end of Saratoga Lane is a gently meandering trail that invites visitors to pause beneath shady boughs of hemlock, gaze into gullies plush with ferns, and enjoy a handful of blueberries where the canopy opens up. Hemlock Grove Preserve is one of our newest trail networks, and in partnership with the town, offers one mile of easy to moderate trail. The trail crosses glacial eskers and connects to a loop trail on Town property, and ends at the powerlines. Hemlock Grove Preserve was acquired by SLT in 2000, and the trails that navigate this property are historically social trails that have developed over time as neighbors explored the property. In the spring, skunk cabbage can be found in the many streams that collect in the gullies created by the eskers. These streams all feed into the Dunstan River, making this property a critical part of the Scarborough River Watershed helping protect Scarborough Marsh. Hemlock Grove's topography reflects glacial features called eskers, which are comprised of sand, gravel, and boulders and create knolls and steep gullies. Eskers are formed by subglacial rivers depositing sand and stone that was scraped up into the glacier as it traveled across the landscape, and released during melt periods. The hemlock trees that this preserve is named for are estimated to range in age from 50 -150 years, and create habitat for porcupines, who feed on hemlock tips and cones. This second growth forest is also excellent habitat for foxes, raccoons, skunks, opossums, owls, woodpeckers, and deer. Hemlock Grove Preserve provides wildlife and people with natural space in a rapidly developing area.

The trails at Hemlock Grove Preserve are wide and mostly flat with areas of slight grade. White Pine Way is 690 feet long, wide, and flat, and provides access to all other trails. The Powerline Spur exits SLT property onto the powerlines. The Esker Trail has a slight grade in some places, and provides views of the streams and gullies, and takes visitors through a hemlock nursery. Some roots and uneven or rolling topography are present on the half-mile Town Loop Trail. The Town Loop Trail takes visitors through a mature Hemlock Forest. At present, all trails have natural dirt beds. ●



A few things to know before you go:

Parking at the end of the circle is limited to three cars. Please respect our neighbors and visit another time if parking is full. Hunting is not permitted on Hemlock Grove Preserve. Dogs must be leashed at all times and all waste must be carried out to protect the watershed and wildlife, and to preserve the quality of the trails for all visitors. All other typical SLT guidelines apply and can be found on the kiosk, or at our website.



Mother's Day at Broadturn Farm

Sunday, May 14 • 9 am to 1 pm

Join us for flowers, plants, food trucks, walks, fun activities for kids.... and more!

Local Vendors will be there for shopping unique items:

- Food Trucks **Crepe Elizabeth & The Greeks of Peaks** will be there to tempt you with delectable delights
- **SLT** is offering Native trees and shrubs for presale and will also have a selection to shop from at the Event. Presale information and inventory list is available through our website
- **Broadturn Farm** selling fresh bouquets
- **Rebel Hill Farm** selling native wildflowers
- **Old Wells Farm** will be there selling organic seedlings.
- **15 Minute massages** will be offered in Broadturn Farm's air bnb.
- There will be **fun activities for kids**, including planting sunflower seeds, face painting, story time and walks on the trail led by SLT volunteers.
- **Parking available** along the access road (7 Hansen Rd)

A percentage of the proceeds will help support the conservation mission of the Scarborough Land Trust

An Old Barn Finds New Life



A stroll along Eleanor's Trail at Pleasant Hill Preserve will take you past a weathered and beaten barn. The barn is the last remaining structure from the old Benjamin Farm. After an engineering study, SLT determined the barn is not suitable for use as a storage facility. While building integrity is lacking for equipment and materials storage, over the years other occupants have moved in and made it home.

Each spring a colony of Barn Swallows return to nest. Constructing their nests of mud, the swallows raise their young, feeding them insects caught on the wing over the meadows and wetlands of Pleasant Hill. They are welcome tenants, considered even more special by the fact that Barn Swallows are declining overall. This is often attributed to the decrease in flying insects. SLT is trying to do everything we can to keep this population of birds healthy.

SLT has decided to dedicate this barn solely for wildlife habitat. In addition to the swallows, SLT hopes to attract

another insect eating flying machine, Big Brown Bats. Across New England, bat species are also under pressure from the decrease of insects to an introduced fungus causing white nose syndrome, often fatal to hibernating bats. SLT board member and volunteer, Tom Nolan constructed three large, 4 feet x 4 feet, bat houses attached to the inside of the barn. Joe Dehler for his Eagle Scout project built an additional two bat houses, one affixed to the outside of the barn.

Other parts of the structure will provide homes for wintering Eastern Garter Snakes, nesting Eastern Phoebes, hunting grounds for Red Fox and Stripped Skunk and more. To protect the barn and visitors, SLT is installing a fence around the structure thanks to a donation of materials from Ron Forest and Sons. SLT is also developing an interpretative panel that will explain the new purpose of the barn. The panel will be located near the barn along the trail. Many of these changes at Pleasant Hill Preserve are the result of a generous anonymous donation made to SLT for use at the property.

New Trail Funding Helps Make SLT Preserves More Accessible

A \$12,500 grant from American Trails will help complete improvements to the Bird Trail at Fuller Farm Preserve.

The Trails Capacity Program is administered by American Trails and primarily funded by Bronco Wild Fund, a Ford Motor Company program dedicated to connecting people to the outdoors, responsibly. The goal of the Trails Capacity Program is to invest in building trails and community capacity nationwide through research, education and stewardship.



Piper Shores offers Matching Gift to help with the start of improvements at Warren Woods.

Piper Shores is offering to make a \$3,500 matching gift to SLT if we can raise an additional \$3,500 to fix several sections of trail at Warren Woods. The funding will help reverse natural resource damage from widening muddy areas and make the trails more enjoyable to visitors. To help us reach this match, make a contribution by mailing a check to SLT, Warren Woods Trail Project, PO Box 1237, Scarborough, ME 04070 or at <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/scarborough-land-conservation-trust/>.



Piper Shores

Lookout Point at Blue Point Preserve



SLT is proud to announce the opening of a new trail at Blue Point Preserve. Following a freshwater stream, this very short out-and-back trail will lead you to a lookout point offering a new vantage point of the Scarborough Marsh. This short trail is sure to be a wonderful birding location. The marsh overlook trail offers the potential for observations of Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Osprey and Glossy Ibis in the spring and in the summer months, Black Duck and Bald Eagle sightings in winter. The area along the trail is a popular spot for migratory songbirds. SLT's hope is that this new trail will add to people's enjoyment of Blue Point Preserve and provide another connection to Scarborough Marsh.●

New Property...continued from page 2

to someone else, could have added two to three additional buildings on the border of Fuller Farm Preserve.

The sale was designed as a bargain sale, or below market sale, comprised of a partial sale and partial donation. Funding for the acquisition was from the Town of Scarborough Land Bond, Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program (MNRCP), Bass Pro/Cabela's and individual donors. A portion of the donations used for this project were from the paddle raise at last summer's Broadturn Farm Dinner.

SLT Stewardship Director, Samantha Wolf, will manage the property as part of the Fuller Farm Preserve and these eight acres will be protected forever for the benefit of the people and wildlife of Scarborough. George W. Baker, Sr. constructed a trail on the property that connected to Fuller Farm. SLT will maintain this trail for the benefit of residents that live in the Burnham Road area. SLT is also working on creating a trail that will connect Fuller Farm Preserve and Broadturn Farm Preserve, which is only about ½ mile away from this new property.

In grateful appreciation of the Baker Family, SLT will dedicate a bench in the memory of George W. Baker, Sr. Thanks to all the funders of this project, including all the individuals who helped make this acquisition possible. SLT Conservation Director, Scott Kunkler, is busy working on several future land conservation projects.●

Strong Conservation Partners...continued from page 3

Because educational programming and outreach is a common mission for both organizations, they frequently co-sponsor programs and speakers. Last summer, SLT and FOSM teamed up to teach the kid-friendly "Follow the

Raindrop" program, which in a 3-session series followed a drop of rain from a fresh water stream at our Broadturn Farm Preserve, down to the brackish waters of the Marsh at our Blue Point Preserve and on out to the salty ocean at Ferry Beach. It was so successful, both organizations have agreed to run it together again this summer. And SLT and FOSM often co-sponsor community outreach efforts like the "Big Trees of New England" lecture last fall, with ongoing plans for FOSM to partner with SLT for their future library lecture series.

The trust, respect and open communication that are key to this kind of successful partnership has been fostered over the years by sharing board members, strategies and plans. FOSM has a de facto board member slot for SLT on the FOSM Board, and FOSM Vice President Stephanie Smith currently serves on SLT's Land Acquisition Committee. Most recently, SLT held a strategy session with FOSM to set land acquisition priorities and also shared a concept plan for a Blue Trail on the Nonesuch River.

With rapid development and the dual biodiversity and climate change crises, land protection is more important than ever. Both groups are working hard to quicken the pace of land conservation and reach the goal of protecting at least 30% of Scarborough land by 2030. SLT recently hired a Conservation Director who is currently working on a dozen land conservation projects, totaling over 300 acres, and FOSM has made a very generous commitment to help fund pre-acquisition costs for all land conservation projects abutting the Scarborough Marsh and its tributaries. There is no doubt that the strong, long-term partnership of SLT and FOSM will continue to maximize the collective effectiveness of land conservation in Scarborough.●



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UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

MAY

Saturday, May 6 @ 9 am (to 1 pm) – SLT Annual Spring Clean Up, *five properties around Scarborough*

Saturday, May 13 @ 4 pm – Bird Walk with Eddie Woodin and Andrew Mackie, *Broadturn Farm*

Saturday, May 13 @ 10 am – Wildflower Walk with Becky Seel, *Warren Woods*

Sunday, May 14 @ 9 am (to 1 pm) – Mother's Day Event at *Broadturn Farm*, flowers, native plants, crafts, food, kid activities

Saturday, May 20 @ 8 am – Bird Walk with Brad Woodward, *Blue Point Preserve*

Saturday, May 27 @ Noon – Invasive Species Info and Work Session with Samantha Wolf, *Pleasant Hill Preserve*

JUNE

Tuesday, June 6 @ 6 pm – Virtual program – Anatomy of a Trail with Samantha Wolf

Saturday, June 10 @ 8 am – Bird Walk with Brad Woodward, *Fuller Farm Preserve*

Wednesday, June 13 @ 7:45 pm – Bats with Andrew Mackie, *Broadturn Farm*

Saturday, June 17 @ 9 am – Amphibians and Reptiles of Southern Maine with Greg LeClair, *location TBD*

Wednesday, June 21 @ 10 am – Wildflower Walk with Becky Seel, *Warren Woods*

Thursday, June 29 @ 8:30 pm – Fireflies with Don Salvatore, *Pleasant Hill Preserve*

JULY

Saturday, July 15 @ 7:45 pm – Bats with Andrew Mackie, *Broadturn Farm*

Saturday, July 22 @ Noon – Invasive Species Info and Work Session with Samantha Wolf, *Fuller Farm Preserve*

Sunday, July 23 @ xx – Contemplative Summer Walk with Nicole Diroff, *location TBD*

Saturday, July 29 @ 10 am – Wildflower Walk with Becky Seel, *Warren Woods*

AUGUST

Tuesday, Aug 1 @ 6 pm – Virtual Program – Anatomy of a Trail with Samantha Wolf

Thursday, Aug 24 @ 6 pm – Annual Broadturn Farm Dinner, *Pre-purchase of tickets required*

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 2 @ 10 am – Invasive Species Info and Work Session with Samantha Wolf, *Blue Point Preserve*

Thank you to our Business Community Partners

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TOM & JULIA RANELLO
of The Ranello Group
at RE/MAX Shoreline

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