



Tidings of the Turtle



Captain Sandy's mark from the collections of the Maine Historical Society

Francis Small Heritage Trust Newsletter – December 2006

New Limerick access to Sawyer Mountain Highlands

There's a great new place to park for a hike up Sawyer Mountain, and it is big enough for a school bus to turn around! The Trust's new parking lot, compliments of a Land for Maine's Future access grant, is near the end of the public part of Sawyer Mountain Road in Limerick. Previously, development near the trailhead had reduced parking options for hikers and hunters who wished to start from the Limerick side of the mountain. From the parking lot there is a footpath, presently marked with flagging, but soon to be more permanently and yet simply marked. This foot trail follows an old logging access and goes up through the woods on our recently acquired Smith parcel, across a lovely mountain stream, and up along ledge to join other Trust land for an easy walk through pretty woods to the upper part of Sawyer Mountain Road (which is also closed to ATVs). Hikers can continue up to the summit for the expansive views.

On October 22, the Sacopee Healthy Communities Coalition sponsored a hike from this parking lot to enjoy the sights from the summit. (See photo above by Larry Mounce.) Having left cars on both sides of the mountain, the group went down the



Sawyer Mountain Road trail to the Trust parking area on Route 117 in Limington.

When you go: From Limerick, take Emerys Corner Road to the Sawyer Mountain Road and turn left. Beyond Libby & Son U-Pick, you cross Lombard Hill Road, and Sawyer Mountain Road becomes gravel. From there, continue on the Sawyer Mountain Road for approximately eight tenths of a mile. On the right is the parking area. Please note that overnight parking is not allowed. The Trust hopes soon to be able to construct an informational display, a map box, and proper signage for the lot.

New conservation easement

In the spring of 2006, the Trust received a conservation easement on the 60-acre Charles E. Cole Farm in Hiram, land that includes forest and wetlands as well as farmland. There is a good possibility that the Trust will receive additional easements on adjacent properties, which would ensure continuing open space in the area. While public access is not part of the easement, the protection provides for wildlife habitat and ensures that the land will be forever protected from development. The Trust is grateful to Mary Elizabeth Cori-Jones for her generous gift, which included stewardship funds to ensure the long-term protection of the property.



Above: New parking area in Limerick (Hilary Wallis photo).

Libbys nominated for People's Choice Award

Who is “an outstanding individual or group who is making a difference in their community”? This summer the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) sought nominations for the People's Choice Award. FSHT's favorite team of Sherwood and Lorraine Libby was among the five finalist nominees who “received multiple nominations or otherwise were distinguished from among a crowded field of excellent candidates.”

Founding directors of the Trust, the Libbys were nominated together because of their combined activities on behalf of the environment – from their testimony and activism leading to legislation in 1966 protecting the Allagash as a wilderness river, to their activities that led to the creation of Maine's Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC), the Saco River Corridor Commission, and the founding of the Francis Small Heritage Trust. The public voted online, and the winner of NRCM's People's Choice Award was Eric Brown of Fairfield, ME, who founded Gang Green, an environmentally-focused group of teachers and students.

Annual Meeting hears about Community Energy

The 15th Annual Meeting of the Francis Small Heritage Trust was held on October 29, 2006 at the Horizons Building, South Hiram Elementary School.

At 7:00 pm, Sue Jones of Community Energy Partners presented “Community Energy: Local Power, Local Benefits.” Sue showed examples of how small businesses and municipalities reduce high energy costs by installing energy efficient and renewable energy projects. Sue showed a number of examples of community and farming groups using wind turbines. Questions from the audience brought out the point that new turbines do not have the latticework that is particularly dangerous to birds, and explored the aesthetics of turbines on the landscape.



People's enjoyment of the Sawyer Mountain Highlands is the reason the Trust protects the land. Photo by Larry Mounce.

Trust seeks legal defense of Sawyer Mountain Highland property

The mission of the Francis Small Heritage Trust is to conserve natural resources, and to provide public access to acquired lands in order that traditional enjoyments such as hiking, observing nature, hunting, and fishing might be continued.

We believe that our donors – individuals, foundations, Land for Maine's Future – expect us to stand by this mission, and to honor the agreements we made with each of them regarding these properties, most of which are concentrated in the Sawyer Mountain Highlands.

After recent town hearings in Limington failed to resolve the separate disagreements between the Trust and a local developer in one case, and an abutting Sawyer Mountain Highlands landowner in the other, the Trust's directors voted unanimously to seek protection of its holdings through the courts.

A proposed adjacent subdivision does not, in the Trust's view, meet the town ordinances addressing lot dimensions and pollution runoff. The risk here is environmental degradation of Trust lands.

An existing road through Trust property is at the center of an ongoing dispute with some landowners over the boundaries, and about what changes can be made to the right-of-ways. A primary concern is the changes to the land that increased use of the road will bring. Another concern is that the existing vegetation is what holds the fragile mountain soils in place. Removal of this vegetation, along with operations such as grading by heavy equipment disturbs the soils and allows them to be washed down the mountain. The Trust believes that the short-term actions being performed will lead to long-term problems with the access ways, which would impinge upon the quality of the land we have promised to protect.

The Trust has not entered lightly into a legal defense of its properties. This approach promises to be costly, lengthy, and energy consuming. At the same time we are committed to taking the mission of the Trust seriously. We are confident that you would ask no less of us.





Please accept my donation of _____ to help protect the Sawyer Mountain Highlands as well as aid in other conservation activities of the Trust.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Contributions & memberships are tax-deductible under IRS code 501 (C)(3).
Francis Small Heritage Trust, Inc. PO Box 414 Limerick, ME 04048
(207) 637-3510 www.FSHT.org

Other ways I can contribute:

- Erosion control (building water bars, etc.)
- Boundary maintenance, working with surveys, and walking lines
- Identification of plants, wildlife, and other natural features
- Nature photography
- Monitoring
- Fundraising
- Other: _____

Trust ends sale of dragonfly nymphs

Any time humans try to control nature, there can be unintended consequences. Recently some biologists have raised the concern that by transporting dragonfly and damselfly nymphs from one location to another, we might interfere with local natural populations.

- There exists the possibility that local populations of native dragonflies and damselflies could be harmed by introducing more aggressive species from other places.
- There exists the possibility that non-native "exotic" species could be introduced.
- Dragonflies eat more than mosquitoes and mosquito larvae. An overpopulation of dragonflies could increase competition and harm populations of other local rare or endangered insects.

The Trust concluded that the risks outweighed the benefits

The Francis Small Heritage researched these issues and decided to discontinue the selling of dragonfly and damselfly nymphs after 2006. We hope our dragonfly customers will continue to support our conservation work.

The Trust made this decision reluctantly, because there are increasing health risks from mosquitoes and because using a natural biological enemy of mosquitoes seems greatly preferable to widespread insecticide spraying, which can have serious effects on human health as well as on other life in our environment.

We liked selling dragonfly nymphs because it put us in touch with so many of you in the community, and it was a good fund-raising activity. The Trust welcomes any suggestions for another activity that can achieve these results.

And what can you do about mosquitoes? The Maine Department of Health and Human Services website gives this advice:

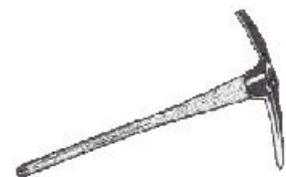
- Use insect repellent.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks when outdoors.
- Install or repair window screens.
- Avoid being outdoors at dawn or dusk.
- Drain standing water.

For more information visit on the web: www.maine.gov/dhhs. Then under "Health" choose "find information about West Nile Virus." Click on "How to protect yourself from West Nile Virus." You can also find more information about Eastern Equine Encephalitis, which is a concern in our area due to the favorable habitat.

Invasive plants *continued from back page...*



blade) to break up soil and rocks around a Multiflora rose or other invasive shrub so that the whole woody plant can be pulled out. Use the Japanese knife, too, to dig out all the roots. To get at a dense growth of bittersweet, cut the plants, but first tie bright flagging around the stems near the ground so that after the vines are out of the way, you can find and dig out the roots of each plant. Bag up and take away all the plant material.





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Invasion!

Invasive plants not wanted here

You have seen a lot about cleaning boat bottoms to prevent invasions of our lakes and ponds by zebra mussels and plants that will crowd out other aquatic animals and plants, and will choke the waterways.

But did you know that there are plants that invade the land and marshes? Initially welcome because of its vivid magenta color, Purple loosestrife has taken over in some parts of Maine and has prevented other marsh plants from growing. Now it is beginning to take hold locally.

Along roadsides and edges of woods, Asiatic bittersweet is invading. At first it too seemed welcome – because of its bright orange berries that people used as decorations. But it is a tough and fast-growing vine that almost seems to send out its tentacles as you watch it. It can totally enwrap and pull down small trees.



In this area, shrubby honeysuckles are growing thickly along roadsides. Once they may have seemed sweet and pretty, like the native fly honeysuckle, but now they don't leave room for anything else. Other shrubs that are invading are Multiflora rose, Autumn olive, Japanese barberry, and Common and Glossy buckthorn. See pictures and descriptions of these and other invasive plants on: <http://www.mainenaturalareas.org>. Click on Program Activities, and then go to Invasive Plants.

Most of these plants are very successful because they have abundant fruits to spread seed and they have especially strong and fast-growing root systems. When you find them, get to work before they can spread their seed. If possible, dig them out by getting out all the roots. You can use a shovel and a hoe or a weed wrench, a mattock, or a Japanese gardening knife. With a Japanese gardening knife (a thick trowel with a sharp edge, part of which is serrated), you can dig and tunnel along the root without cutting it and leaving part in the ground. Use a mattock (its double head is both a pickax and a heavy hoe-like

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