



Tidings of the Turtle



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

Francis Small Heritage Trust Newsletter – December 2013

Low-impact logging demonstrated

Draft horses and industrial-size tree harvesters don't often work side by side. But they did in October in Limington in an unusual demonstration of low-impact logging systems. The demo was aimed at educating landowners about timber harvesting systems that leave light environmental footprints. About 55–60 people attended the morning-long show hosted by Francis Small Heritage Trust and assisted by Three Rivers Land Trust.

Horse loggers John Plowden of Stow and Peter Hagerty of Porter showcased a traditional system in which trees are cut with chainsaw, chained, and dragged by horses to a nearby landing. Their rapport with the horses and their nimbleness in snaking logs out of tight quarters without damaging standing trees was impressive.

Nearby, Brad Sanborn of Parsonsfield – sitting in a climate-controlled cab and manipulating levers like a video gamer – showcased the brute strength of a cut-to-length harvester. The machine handled trees like they were tooth-picks, plucking them from stands, twirling them, stripping them of branches, chopping them into logs and stacking them neatly. In spite of its size, the cut-to-length harvester also leaves a light footprint because the logs aren't dragged out, but are carried out in the bunk of a four-wheeled forwarder.



Brad Sanborn demonstrates the cut-to-length harvester owned by McLucas Trucking of Porter.

Forester Charlie Moreno was a tour guide extraordinaire and gave passionate explanations of the silviculture goals of the harvest.

Everybody got a chance to ask questions. Folks expressed admiration for the skill of the operators as well as appreciation for the education they received. Some of their comments are below:

- "[We] were very impressed with the logging demonstrations. The organization was great – for the visitor, simply but clearly done – and most informative. Charlie was a good group leader and explained things well. That cut to length machine was amazing. Praise for all the groups that did the organizing."
- "Today was great opportunity to learn about these options for logging. We appreciate all the work that went into it."
- "[We] found the small woodlot harvest event very interesting. ... The "star wars" machine that fells, limbs, cuts to length, and stacks in one fell swoop is amazing!"

Cinematographer Silas Hagerty of Smooth Feather Productions is preparing a short video of the event which will be available soon. Please check our website www.FSHT.org for the release.



John Plowden prepares his horse to haul the logs.



We lose a great friend, Bos Savage



Just a year ago we were proud and happy to announce in this newsletter that we had hired Robert “Bos” Savage as our Executive Director, our first paid staff. It was a part-time job, but Bos filled that time full, to the benefit of the Trust.

Now we are very sad to say that Bos died on November 7. He would have been just fifty-nine on November 27.

We first knew Bos as a member of our Board of Directors from 1999 through 2008, bringing experience in the stewardship of land. He had a key role in the start of placing a conservation easement on the Trust’s land in the Sawyer Mountain Highlands. When he was on our Board, Bos kept us moving ahead at meetings – no doubt because he had had a long day and would have an early morning as Director of Properties for Maine Audubon, where he managed 15 sanctuaries for over 23 years.



A soapstone carving by Bos

As Executive Director, Bos excelled at making friends for the Trust, encouraging financial contributions and other kinds of support and cooperation. He had an ability to talk with people whose interests differed from those of the Trust and especially to listen to their points of view. And he loved going out and meeting new people and talking with students and youth groups. He had a great time when he joined an outing of South Hiram second graders in our Developing a Sense of Place program

Bos led our Board through the development of a Strategic Plan, setting goals for the next five years. Next he drew up a Stewardship Plan with the Board, and he made a calendar of fundraising activities. So he has left us with good directions for the future.

Bos would surprise us with his many connections and interests. He represented York County on the Advisory Council to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. A registered Maine Fishing Guide, he was an avid fisherman and outdoorsman who loved Maine and its natural beauty. And he was an artist in his cooking and soapstone carvings.

Bos passed on his artistic talent to his son, Ian. And his love of the outdoors is shared by his wife, Cynthia, who is a good friend to the Trust.

We will miss Bos terribly. We are grateful for the strength he brought to the Trust, and we will strive to build on what he began for us.

History talk and hike in Limerick

The Trust was invited by the Limerick Historical Society to give a talk on September 5 about the early history of the area and of the work the Trust has been doing to protect open land. This was followed on September 7 with a hike up Sawyer Mountain from the Limerick side.

Gil Harris and Hilary Wallis gave the talk and a PowerPoint presentation showing highlights of sights to see along our trails.

We shared history, starting with the Laurentide Ice Age from 25,000 years ago. The transition of our land went through stages of melting glaciers and the growth of lichens, and then small trees, and finally the great northern forests that were inhabited by rabbits, squirrels, wolves, bobcats, moose, deer, and elk (also black flies). The Abenaki, People of the Dawn, had their hunting grounds in the Sacopee Valley, relying on the forest for survival. They were hunting, fishing, and cultivating gardens at the time Europeans arrived. The Abenaki considered themselves as forest creatures, just like the beaver, deer, and wolves that inhabited the forest. They respected the land, using just what they needed and giving thanks for nature’s provision.

As Gil explained, when the Europeans arrived, they came from lands overpopulated, with resources drained. They saw the abundance of the land and treated it like an endless resource, cutting down forests and decimating wildlife populations. This development has continued until the present day so that it is important to protect the remaining open land. That’s where the Francis Small Heritage Trust comes in.

We went on to tell about the Trust’s namesake, Francis Small, who is said to have purchased the land between the Ossipee, the Little Ossipee, and the Saco rivers (our five-town area) from the Abenaki chief, Wesumbe, also known as Captain Sandy. As Captain Sandy was not literate in the European manner, he used a mark for his signature on the documents. His mark was the sign of the turtle that we use as our logo.

On the hike, we noticed our turtle signs along the trails. Saturday was a beautiful day for a hike. We stopped to explore the old Sawyer homestead site and the natural beauty of the land. At the top, we enjoyed the view, snacks, and the camaraderie of our fellow hikers.



A boardwalk starts a trail

A sturdy boardwalk now makes a loop trail possible around The Heath, a boggy wetland in Cornish and Limerick. Sean Turner of Hollis completed his ambitious Eagle Scout project this summer. Sean took many steps to build the boardwalk – obtaining approval of the plan from Maine’s Department of Environmental Protection, getting donations of materials – including power-line poles – and getting helpers to move the heavy materials.



The boardwalk under construction.

Tom and Edie Sisson, who granted the Trust the easement on this land, were proud to attend the celebration of Sean’s becoming an Eagle Scout. The project had been born when they met Sean through his grandparents, Stephen and Sally Manchester, who lived near the Sissons’ land in Limerick.

Now that the boardwalk is in place, work is proceeding on the loop trail. Volunteers from the Maine Teen Camp in Porter cleared a section of an old trail on the north side of the Heath. An experienced trail maker, Karl Gifford, helped the Trust plan and flag the route of the rest of the trail so that it would give walkers an experience of the woods and wetlands while keeping their feet dry and not creating erosion. Next year we are looking for volunteers to help us clear and mark the trail and to help with a kiosk and signs.



Please accept my donation of _____ to aid in the educational and conservation activities of the Trust.

Please send me a free hiking map.

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maintain stewardship funds to ensure that enough financial resources are available for the legal protection of the properties from encroachment.

But even all of these protections may not be enough. Recently in Pennsylvania, a well-funded gas exploration company challenged a conservation easement on a property where they wanted to do fracking (natural gas extraction by fracturing the rock beneath the property). Such a challenge could easily exhaust the stewardship funds of a small land trust. For the company, the legal expenses are just the cost of doing business. For a small land trust, such a challenge could lead to financial disaster. Fortunately in this case, a federal court ruled in favor of the easement.

To guard against such challenges, FSHT has joined the Land Trust Alliance and 463 land trusts in forty-seven states to form the TerraFirma Risk Retention Group. TerraFirma provides insurance to help member land trusts when their conserved properties come under legal attack. The existence of such insurance makes these conserved properties all across the nation less of a tempting target for companies with deep pockets. These companies would easily be able to overwhelm the finances of a single small organization. So as a fourth level of protection, FSHT has enrolled all of its owned properties and its held easements into the insurance program.



Protected forever – another layer...

Ensuring that protected land remains protected for public use is not an easy task, especially since that protection is intended to last forever. The first layer of protection is ownership. But that is no guarantee that future property managers will have the same commitment that we do now. So a second layer of protection is to place a permanent conservation easement on the land; an independent third party is the holder of such an easement. That is what FSHT has done on the primary section of the Sawyer Mountain Highlands. As a third layer of protection, organizations such as FSHT



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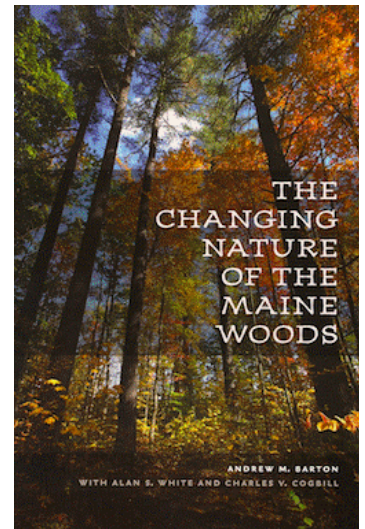
The Changing Nature of the Maine Woods

The ecology of the ever-changing Maine forest was the topic of a talk by Andrew Barton at the Annual Meeting of the Trust on November 17 at the Porter Town Hall. Barton is the author, with Alan White and Charles Cogbill, of the recent book *The Changing Nature of the Maine Woods*. Barton gave an overview of Maine's geological history and showed how the forest reemerged and changed up to the arrival of Europeans. He discussed the changes since settlement, and showed what the effects of global warming are likely to be. Following the presentation, questions from the

audience showed how much the community knows and cares about their woodlands.

Prior to the public portion of the meeting, there was a business meeting of the Board and members of the Trust. The following slate of Directors and Officers was voted in:

Marlene Livonia – President
Gil Harris – 1st Vice President
Dan Kidd – 2nd Vice President
Dick Jarrett – Treasurer
Kathy Chaiklin – Secretary
Peter Zack – Director-at-large



A Sense of Place

We are in the third successful year of the program “Developing a Sense of Place: Introducing Second Graders to Protected Lands in Their Communities.” Participating schools this year include the Line School serving Limerick and Newfield and the South Hiram Elementary School.

Special thanks to the Narragansett Number One Foundation, Healthy Sacopee, private donors, and participating parents and teachers who make this program possible.

