



Tidings of the Turtle



Earlier this spring, a bull moose enjoys a swim in a beaver pond in the Sawyer Mountain Highlands. Both the Porter Hills and Sawyer Mountain offer excellent wildlife habitat.

Below: The panoramic view from Devil's Den in the Porter Hills



Exciting new project: The Porter Hills Conservation Initiative

The Francis Small Heritage Trust has embarked on another ambitious project — the Porter Hills Initiative — which is a vision of conserving lands that have been on the market and an expansive effort to obtain the funds to accomplish our goals. The Maine Natural Areas Program has designated this area as having high priority for conservation and habitat protection, and there are nearby properties with connectivity and resilience that will support and enhance the maintenance of this Focus Area. We are working to purchase lands that become available in

the Porter Hills, and to also accept conservation easements on those where owners want protection of their land while maintaining their ownership. Our intention, to the extent that this is possible, is to keep these lands open to the public for traditional uses such as hiking, hunting and fishing, and to also allow the uses of snowmobiles, ATVs, and mountain bikes on the old roadways and trails where those uses have been long established. We also want to encourage sustainable forestry in suitable areas, all while preserving and protecting critical habitats.


At the start of this year, we already owned the Bald Ledge Preserve and we have a conservation easement on a part of the Fox Farm property, both within the Porter Hills Focus Area.

Over the past year and a half, FSHT has moved from our initial vision to a very detailed and comprehensive plan. We have advanced from owning just 25 acres at Bald Ledge to the expectation of acquiring almost 750 acres of the Porter Hills by the end of this year.

... story continued on the next page

Newsletter of the Francis Small Heritage Trust — Summer 2022 — www.FSHT.org

Special eight page pull-out souvenir section of Your Weekly Shopping Guide

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



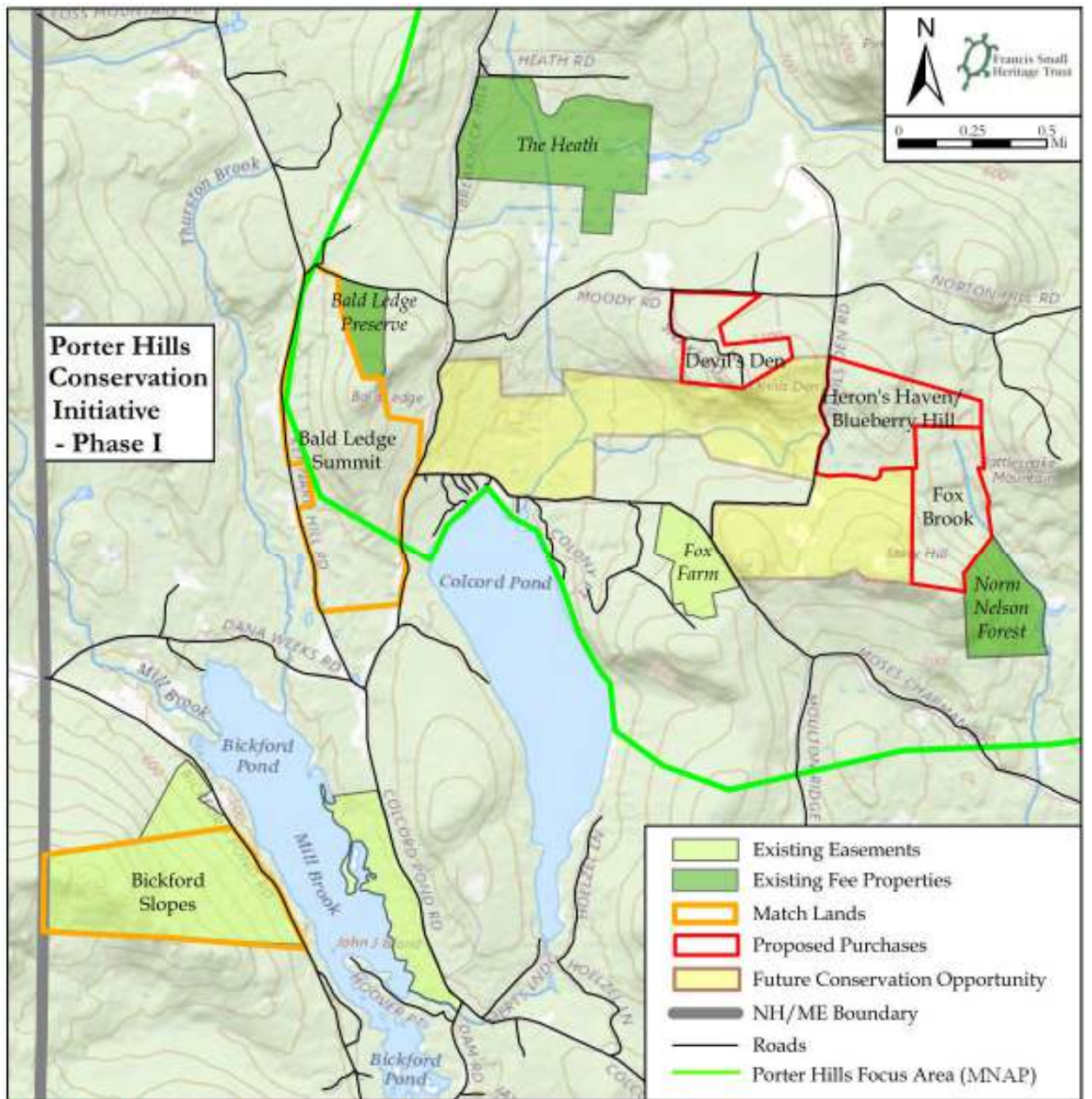
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Porter Hills Conservation Initiative

Continued from the front page

The initial effort on the Porter Hills project was entirely by volunteer work of a small committee of our Board of Directors. As the complexity of the project became clearer, we were encouraged by others in the conservation field to engage the services of an experienced consultant in land conservation. Funding of our need for consultant services and for expenses such as survey work and appraisals was made possible by generous grants from the William Wharton Foundation and by a large grant that was enabled by our work with the Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative (SMCC). Those grants and other generous donations have given us almost \$150,000 to manage the significant expenses of this work. With unanimous support from the FSHT Board of Directors, we enlisted the services of Jerry Bley, owner of Creative Conservation LLC. Jerry is renowned across the state for his knowledge and skills in helping land trusts and families conserve important lands for future generations. Jerry has worked as our project manager to move confidently in developing our plans, finding necessary mapping services, acquiring purchase agreements with willing landowners, and securing the appraisal services that we have needed. In addition, two other consultants have worked with us for writing the actual grant applications. Alison Truesdale developed our successful application to the Maine Natural Areas Conservation Program (MNRCP) for the acquisition of a 133-acre parcel that includes about half of the 100-acre Great Porter Heath. Cheri



Map of the Porter Hills Initiative. Four of the seven parcels have summit views accessed by existing trails or by trails to be developed. The adjacent Norm Nelson Forest is open to the public and is protected independently by the Maine Woodland Owners

Dunning, with support of the SMCC, was the author of our Land For Maine's Future (LMF) application. On May 26, we were notified that our LMF proposal has been accepted (Yay!!), and this will enable the acquisition of five other very significant properties in the Porter Hills.

Although the LMF grant will enable the acquisition of those five properties, this grant provides funds for less than half of the total cost of these lands. Without the willingness of a local family that is donating two of those properties, we would not have had the necessary funding. Jerry is working with this family to manage the process of donating those lands, and he is working on plans for other conservation easements on other lands in the Porter Hills. The Forest Society of Maine, which already holds other conservation easements here, is a partner in this effort.

We are also reaching out to other landowners; if they may have interest in selling their land, we would include those lands in a future proposal that we will hope to develop in the next few years. We have the extreme good fortune of having a group of dedicated residents from this area, who have supported and promoted this effort every step of the way. The project is big and very important, and we move forward one step at a time to keep these significant lands in southwestern Maine's Porter Hills protected and available for future generations, while continuing to support the local tax base.



Seth Locke admires Devils Den which has the capstone, panoramic view that draws visitors to this place for all the year around. This view is at the southern edge of this 50-acre parcel. Plans include development of a new parking area and a new footpath to this view.





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Gould Island — A Treasure in the Saco River



*Gould Island as viewed from the air
Photo credit: John Tiplady*


Gould Island is an island in the Saco River, about 4 miles downstream from the Route 5 bridge across the Saco that runs from Cornish to Baldwin. The island is officially in Baldwin, with Limington on the westerly shore. It is located just downstream from where the power lines cross the river.

Gould Island is about 9.5-12 acres, and about a half mile long by 200-300 feet wide. All of the land is in the “flood plain” status area. The island can be reached by canoe, or, at low water, it is possible to wade across the river.

The island was generously donated to the Francis Small Heritage Trust by Jo Pierce of Baldwin.

A visit several years ago showed tracks of deer, raccoon and bobcat. The north upstream end collects branches and trees during the spring run-off.

The island has a mixed hardwood forest. There are some gentle sandy beach areas on the Limington side while on the Baldwin

side, the bank is steep down to the water. While there are no official trails, it is easy to walk the perimeter of the island as well as visit the forested interior. There are multiple inlets which provide excellent habitat for plants, animals, insects, and aquatic life. 



Looking upstream, Gould Island is on the right and Limington is on the left

The Jagolinzer Legacy

Jagolinzer Preserve. The second graders who, prior to the pandemic, came to hike its 20 Limington acres by the Saco River, seemed happy to say the words... comfortable on the tongue, perhaps.


A Limington Boy Scout troop, under the guidance of then FSHT director Bos Savage, created a lovely loop trail there more than a decade ago, after a seriously ill Phil Jagolinzer, University of Southern Maine professor of accounting, granted a public-access easement on the property that he had once hoped would be his future house site. While Professor Jagolinzer still owned the property, FSHT and the public enjoyed the use of the land. In May of 2020, Phil’s family donated the actual land to the Trust, thus granting more control of the preserve to FSHT. The conservation easement, however, still remains in place, guaranteeing that the public will be able to use this preserve forever.

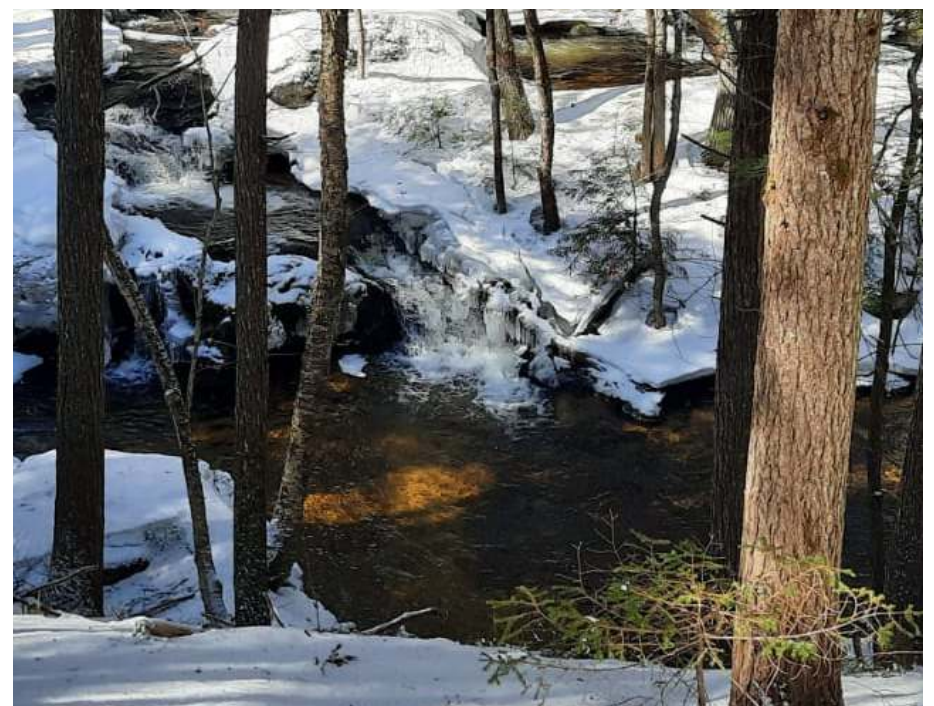
The early months of the pandemic brought a serious influx of visitors, a number of whom were experiencing the preserve for the first time. Great on the face of it, but our neighbors had to contend with the problems associated with overflow parking. A shout out to Isaac Sprowl and Jesse Harrington, who for years have plowed, gratis, the parking lot in winter. In response to their concerns, gently stated, the Trust added signage

and moved the 500-foot right-of-way through Isaac’s property further from his house.

Pease Brook delineates the western boundary of the preserve, gurgling its way to the Saco River. Its cascades have long drawn admiring comments from visitors, who today can contribute a visual image of their beauty. Thanks to a grant from the Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative, of which FSHT is a member, a Climate Change Observatory

sits on the high bank above the cascades. Its Chronolog Platform, essentially a post with a holder for a cellphone, allows an observer to photograph the water flow and upload it, creating a time lapse record of seasonal, and yearly, changes.

The Jagolinzer Preserve is truly one of those “gifts that keep on giving.” The Trust celebrates this legacy of the Jagolinzer family, and is committed to honoring it through responsible stewardship into the future. 



On the left is the Chronolog camera platform and on the right is one of the many photos that have been uploaded to the Chronolog website



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Ingalls Pond Through the Seasons

The Ingalls Pond Conservation Area is in northern West Baldwin, and extends for about 3/4-mile along the west side of the Pequawket Trail highway (Routes 5/113/117), and ends at the Hiram town line. In this scenic area we have about two miles of mostly level trails, all excellent for walks in the woods and along both the Saco River shore and the pond shorelands. These trails are also perfect for winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Many also come here for fall kayaking or boating and for winter ice fishing.

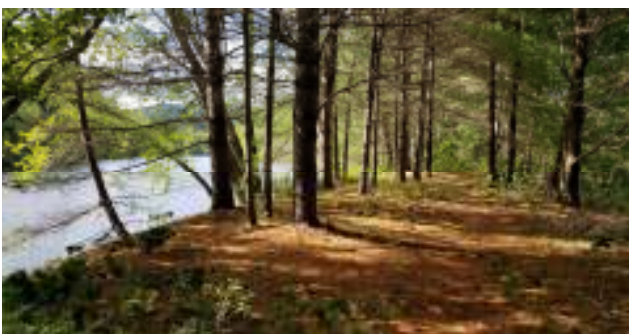


The parking area has space for at least a half dozen vehicles. The main access trail is straight ahead beyond the cars and information kiosk. This parking area is not maintained for winter use because there is limited space to push away snow, and the main highway snow bank usually blocks all access. The highway is at the right edge of this view.

Alternative Parking:

There are two other places near to the trail head that can be used for winter parking:

1. About 200 yards south of the trail head a parking area is maintained by Brookfield Power where they have an access road for the Hiram Falls dam. Brookfield keeps this plowed in winter with space for 4 or 5 vehicles. From there, visitors can either walk up the road side, or go directly to the Mountain Division RR tracks to walk the RR northward to our trails.
2. Across the highway, within sight of our parking area, the P.Y. Estes quarry has a wide, plowed access area under the

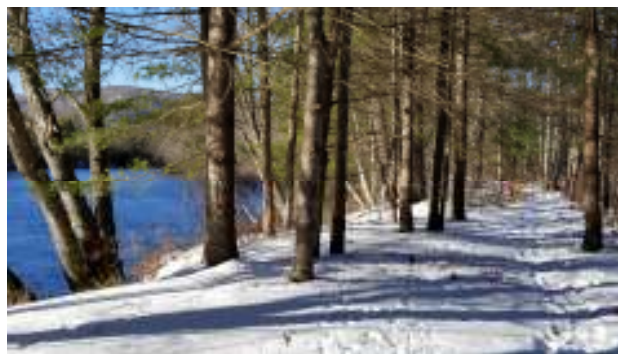


Late summer of 2020 view from the Old County Road with the Saco River on the left and Mt Cutler in the distance up the river. Most of the trail follows the old road, except for a few places where it diverges to give better views.



The view across the pond from the road-side in October. All shorelands in the photo are in the conservation lands of the trust. In the distance, you see the entire main ridge of Mt Cutler in Hiram.

power lines. This is a good parking area on weekends, and can also be used by a few cars on week days as long as visitors park well out of the route of access to the quarry.



Early this year with snow on the ground

Trails and Views:

Trail Guide pamphlets are usually available in a box at the information kiosk, but a PDF copy can also be downloaded from our web site. From the FSHT parking area, the access trail crosses a part of the pond on an old causeway that was constructed for the County Road more than a century ago. During spring high water, this causeway may be submerged (use access at the Brookfield parking area in those conditions), but this route is just over 100 yards to the RR crossing. When you walk the causeway, you might notice some asphalt pavement in the walkway. This was the paved County Road that was used until the current highway was constructed in 1941.

Beyond the RR crossing, visitors have three choices of trails:

- (1) A short trail straight ahead leads to the river shore and the Ingalls Pond cove of the river.

- (2) Bearing to the right, the Old County Road trail gives a beautiful walk near the Saco River shore.
- (3) Staying on the RR road bed, the RR is also used as an access trail along the entire length of the Ingalls Pond shores.

After about a half mile walk from the RR crossing, the trail is approaching the Hiram town line. Here, visitors have a choice; one fork of the trail continues to follow the river shore for a short distance into Town of Hiram lands, while the other route leads in a short distance to the RR. Both of these trail sections use the RR as the return route along the ponds.



View to southward, along the Mountain Division RR with Ingalls Pond on the left. You may also be able to see the Channel 8 TV tower on the Saddleback Hills in the distance. You can also see ATV tracks in the snow. Although the ATVs cause some erosion, they also tend to pack the trail for easier travel. With deeper snow of winter this becomes a snowmobile trail, and the traveled way is then becomes the area between and above the tracks

Besides the scenic views, we value these lands and waters as habitat for several species of turtles, for important water fowl and wading bird habitats, and as a natural holding area for flood waters, which alleviates downstream flooding.



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Riverview Family Trails — a work in progress

The Riverview Family Trails Conservation Area in Cornish has a quarter mile of Saco River frontage just 500 feet to the south of the highway bridge from Cornish to West Baldwin. The River Road — which has no road maintenance — starts at the Cornish end of the bridge, where there is also a popular canoe and kayak river access. The FSHT parking area is accessed by driving south for about 500 ft on River Road.

It is our intention to maintain the quarter mile of the River Road that crosses our property to have it suitable for walking, running, bicycling and for light weight motorized traffic. In the winter this road becomes snow-covered and this is a popular part of the regional system of snowmobile trails, which also makes it a good place for cross-country skiing and winter foot travel. It is also our intention to complement the old roadway with a system of walking trails to give better access to the river and, perhaps, to some other scenic places on the property. Some of this work has been accomplished. A site plan is available that shows details of boundaries, the river, the road, and trails that have been developed.



Improving the River Road has had its challenges. This photo shows the largest of several mud holes in the road on April 30 of 2020. Heavy vehicles and poor drainage had made it nearly impassable.



This bridge was built by volunteers of the local snowmobile club, the Cornish Snowcruisers. In addition to turning the road into a mud wallow, heavy vehicles had also broken down the support of one corner of the bridge.



Karl Gifford of Sebago Stonework built a stairway of infiltration steps to descend from the higher level of the road down to a natural shelf closer to the normal river water level. During a spring high water, these steps will be partially submerged, and at a time of major flood they will disappear under water. However, we expect these to resist erosion damage and to remain usable for many years.

There is still much more work to be accomplished. We need to complete the south end of the Riverside Trail, and also develop the short Riverview Trail for a view point to south of the parking area. Also, only one of the signs shown on the site plan has been

installed; we need more signs and an informative kiosk.

But, the Riverview Family Trails property already has reasons to come here to take a scenic walk along the river.



The road and bridge after improvements. Dan Hester built the removable railing to reduce the damage to the bridge. The distant part of the road is where the big mud hole had been, and the muddy water used to drain down the road almost to the bridge.

The road is not the only improvement. At the same time we had other volunteer work to clear brush, cut away branches, dig drainage ditches, and remove metal trash that had been dumped over the river embankment. This cleared a path for the Riverside Trail.

This view of the river and a part of the trail that continue to south of the steps helps to show why we expended this time and effort. There are many viewpoints along the river, and many places for fishing access.



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Sawyer Mountain Highlands — Driscoll Acquisition

Another piece of the puzzle filled in...

The Francis Small Heritage Trust is very appreciative of the Driscoll family who agreed to sell their forty-acre parcel in the Sawyer Mountain Highlands to FSHT. Both the discontinued Sawyer Mountain Road and the New Skidway Road run through the middle of the parcel and both have long been used by hikers and snowmobilers. Protecting this valuable natural resource has long been a priority. Unfortunately, poor logging



Porcupette (baby porcupine) on the Driscoll property.

landowners in the area who would like to protect their property for public use. A special thanks goes not only to the Driscoll Family, but to all of the donors who made this acquisition possible.



FSHT has also printed a new map of the Sawyer Mountain Highlands. If you would like a free printed copy which includes trail descriptions, please let us know.



practices from the 1980s have left the Sawyer Mountain Road badly eroded. Now that the Trust owns the land, we can begin the process of installing water bars and other improvements to combat erosion and to protect the mountainside. It may also be possible to reroute the hiking trail so that the badly eroded area can recover.

Beginning in 1996, the Sawyer Mountain Highlands has been pieced together from fourteen separate purchases. The purchase of the Driscoll parcel fills in a huge hole! FSHT is always interested in talking with

Jerry Bley wins the Espy Land Heritage Award from MCHT

Jerry Bley was not only instrumental in shepherding FSHT through the complex process of making the Porter Hills Project a resounding success, he was recently recognized for his outstanding statewide conservation work.

The Maine Coast Heritage Trust has named Jerry as the recipient of the prestigious 2022 Espy Land Heritage Award, an annual award that recognizes an individual,



Jerry Bley

organization, or coalition for exemplary conservation efforts in Maine. Along with the award, the recipient directs grant funds to conservation organizations of his or her choosing. Jerry designated FSHT to receive a grant of \$1,000 to further our charitable work. The Board of Directors of the FSHT voted unanimously to use these grant funds to further our educational programs in the local schools. Thank you Jerry!

FSHT and Green Mountain Conservation Group team up

The Francis Small Heritage Trust and the Green Mountain Conservation Group (GMCG) in Effingham New Hampshire have been teaming up over the years to provide educational opportunities for youth in our area. Most recently, GMCG educators led by Tara Schroeder conducted three lessons with the SOLE (Sacopec Outdoor Learning and Excursions) classes of the MSAD55 middle school. The lesson topics included water quality testing, macroinvertebrate sampling as a bioindicator, and microplastics. Students did their study and sampling along the banks of the Ossipee River

behind the middle school. The takeaway for SOLE students was the importance of reducing or eliminating our use of plastics.

In addition, FSHT and GMCG have supported SOLE in their yearly raising of Brook Trout In the Classroom (TIC). Students maintain tank water quality from February to May and raise the trout from eggs to fingerlings. Trout eggs come from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife hatchery. The trout are then released into a local stream that matches the water quality the trout need to survive.



*Heron with a fish in its mouth.
(Photo taken on Sawyer Mountain)*



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Forest Carbon Project: Plotting for the Future



Nathan Burnett teaches advanced math at Sacopee Valley High School in South Hiram. In March Nathan got a call from his mom, Paulette “Polly” Taleishi of Gorham. Polly was excited. She had returned from hiking in the Sawyer Mountain Highlands and had something to share with her son. In her words:

After I hiked on the Sawyer Mountain trail in Limington, I explored the adjacent Francis Small Heritage Trust forest carbon project. I was glad I did! I learned so much from the signage and information board! It's a community-based project. Most of us know that trees are important to preserve our air quality. This project uses science and math to explain and track the forests' impact on climate change. This is the sort of grass-roots citizen science that will improve the future. As you walk along the interactive trail, you see trees marked with different colored ribbons which correspond with a table that describes each tree's carbon amount. It was fun!

For his part, Nathan was amused. What his mom hadn't known was that since the winter of 2019 he had been part of the Trust's Forest Carbon Project (FCP) committee, a nine person team under the leadership of Peter Hagerty, retired horse logger and, for many years, a central figure in the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association Low-Impact Forestry program. In-

spired by his mentor, Mitch Lansky, editor of *Low-Impact Forestry* as if the *Future Mattered* (2002), Pete has become persuaded that trees are the “guards at the door” in the effort to confront climate change.

From Lansky:

It is highly unlikely that the (carbon) reduction goals can be met unless there is a massive effort to take carbon out of the atmosphere and store it — in addition to drastically reducing emissions...Expanding the area and volume of forests is one of the most promising of...natural climate solutions.

(The Maine Organic Farmer and Gardener, Spring, 2022)

To test this perspective the FCP team created Plot #1, a cordoned 100-foot by 100-foot forested area not far from the Sawyer Mountain trailhead on Route 117 in Limington, with the intent of measuring the amount of carbon captured over time if the plot remained undisturbed by cutting. Members measured the diameter of every tree in the plot that was at least six inches at breast

height, noted its species, tagged it and used a “carbon calculator” to estimate, in pounds, how much carbon that tree was storing. The colored ribbons that Polly observed? An attempt to classify each tagged tree by its status in the plot—dominant, codominant, intermediate, and suppressed.

Plot #2 was created nearby and the same process of measuring and tagging and calculating followed. What remains is a determination by the group whether Plot #2's carbon capture can be enhanced by selectively cutting suppressed trees.

Of course, lurking in the shadow of this exercise is a pivotal question: Can the forest products industry and climate change activists reconcile the inherent tension between sustaining local timber economies and maximizing carbon sequestration and storage in the woods? Stay tuned.



Forest Carbon Signs created by Marty Tracy

Conserved lands benefit our local communities. Not only is water quality and wildlife habitat protected, but municipal expenses are reduced. The lands also provide recreational and educational opportunities for the public and draw visitors to our local merchants. **Many people do not realize that FSHT pays taxes (or makes payments in lieu of taxes) to all of the communities that we serve. Would you be willing to support our work or to join our mailing list?**

Please contact us via US Mail or contact us or donate online at the address below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Francis Small Heritage Trust, Inc. is a 501 (C)(3) charitable organization and contributions and memberships may be tax-deductible. Thank you for your support!



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Francis Small Heritage Trust

"The Francis Small Heritage Trust works to conserve wildlife habitat, forests, and farms and to protect watersheds in northern York and far southern Oxford counties, for the purposes of environmental education, passive public recreation, and conservation."

This map shows some of our properties that are open to the public.

The Trust pays taxes or makes payments in lieu of taxes to all the towns in which it owns property. Hunting and snowmobiling are allowed on most properties. There are also many parcels where logging continues. For more information visit <https://fsht.org>



INGALLS POND:

An easy walk along the shore of Ingalls Pond as well as the Saco River. Follow ME 113 to West Baldwin and continue north of village about 1 mile. Ingalls Pond is directly across from Estes Quarry.

SAWYER MOUNTAIN HIGHLANDS:

There is access from 2 sides of the mountain with views of Sebago Lake and Ossipee Mountain from the top.

- The **Sherwood Libby** trailhead is located on ME 117, 2.5 miles south of ME 25 in Limington. Trail is 4.6 miles round trip. 2.5 to 3 hours, moderate difficulty.
- The **Nature Trail** located near Sherwood Libby trail is a 30-45-minute walk where nine stations feature points of educational interest. Easy.
- The **Smith Trail** is located on Sawyer Mountain Road in Limerick, 0.9-mile past Libby's U-Pick. Trail is 2.6 miles round trip. 2.5 to 3 hours, moderate difficulty.

GERRY EASEMENT:

The level snowmobile trail through the woods is about 0.6 mi which allows daytime access to the 62-acre Gerry Preserve. Easy
From Route 11 in Newfield, go south on Bridge Street, crossing the Little Ossipee River. Parking for one car along the road is on the left just past the bridge. For the first 535 feet, the trail is not on easement land, so please stay on trail and respect the landowner's wish for quiet (horses nearby).

GOULD ISLAND :

The 10-acre island is accessible by canoe or kayak and is located just downstream from the Old Bald rapids.

JAGOLINZER PRESERVE:

Views of the Saco River and a waterfall. Easy. Located in Limington, 0.5 miles west of the junction of ME 25 and ME 117 at Olives Way. A sign at Olives Way marks the right of way to the preserve. The trail is 45 minutes round trip.

PORTER HEATH:

The 133-acre Porter Heath includes about half of the 100-acre Great Porter Heath and the property is located at the junction of the Old County Road and the Heath Road. There are no trails yet.

RIVERSIDE FAMILY TRAILS:

This property in Cornish is currently being prepared, but it still offers a beautiful walk along the Saco River. The small parking area is located 500 feet down the River Road which starts near the canoe takeout next to the Route 5 bridge. Walk down the River Road beyond the parking area and turn left just past the snowmobile bridge to find the stairs to the river.

BALD LEDGE:

Views of Colcord Pond and surrounding hills. Easy.
From the junction of Old County Rd and ME 25/160 in Porter, drive north to Colcord Pond Rd. After 2.8 miles, where Colcord Pond Rd bears right, follow Dana Weeks Rd, then Kennard Hill Rd. Drive 1.5 miles and turn right on Danforth Rd. At the split, bear right on Varney Rd. The trail is 1.4 miles, 30 minutes round trip.

SISSON EASEMENT/ THE HEATH:

A 2 to 3-hour walk through woods around the Heath, a wetland. Easy.
From Limerick on ME 5, 3 miles north of ME 5/160, past the metal guard rail, turn right between the guard rail and a huge rock.
From Cornish on ME 5, 5.7 miles south of ME 5/25; turn left immediately after road curves around a huge rocky outcrop. (0.4-0.5 miles from Spur Rd. after Beldan Dr. on left).



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