

Tidings of the Turtle



Dragon Lizard Trail on Jagolinzer Preserve

Visitors to the Jagolinzer Preserve now have a new option: The Dragon Lizard Trail! No, you will not really encounter a dragon on the trail, but if you look carefully, you might come across a salamander or two. So how did it get its name? Well, during an educational outing, one of our visiting second graders misheard the name “Jagolinzer Preserve” as the “Dragon Lizard Preserve.” The name with the same audible cadence was so memorable that we decided to name the new trail that we were working on as the Dragon Lizard Trail—Ridge to River. The ridge is the sand and gravel esker that was deposited

10,000 years ago when the Saco River, running through the mile high glacier, left behind a mound of eroded gravel. The trail starts at the beginning of the Bypass Trail which is on the way to the waterfall. The trail follows along the top of the ridge, crosses the Bos Savage Loop Trail, and then descends to the river. The trail eventually rejoins the loop trail near the bridge.



Good things happening with the Trust: Past, Present, & Future

FSHT had some great events this summer, including a Moonlight Hike at Jagolinzer Preserve to complement a story walk, the Moon Over Malibu Maine by Tanya Shevenell, also at Jagolinzer.



In our next event, Meadowfall Farm and Forage foraging expert Evan O'Day will lead a mushroom foray on August 22 at 2 pm at Bald Ledge. The event will start at the Varney Road trailhead.

If you haven't completed our trail challenge, check out the article elsewhere in this newsletter.

There will be a geocaching hike on September 19, at 10 a.m. at the Sisson Heath (GPS address 1236

Sokokis Trail N, Cornish, ME 04020) in Cornish. If you have never been geocaching and would like to learn how, we recommend setting up an account at geocaching.com and downloading the app prior to the event. It is a fun treasure hunt, and while you can do this on many trails, there are also geocaches in cities, towns and many places worldwide. We enjoyed a great presentation by Johanna Vienneau this past spring at the Kezar Falls Circulating Library, and will use the knowledge she shared with us to lead this hike. The Heath Loop is 2.5 miles long, so put on your hiking shoes.

Due to limited parking at the Sisson Heath, there will be parking attendants and we recommend car pooling if possible.



The board and officers meet annually in November with our members (anyone who has donated is a member), and also have a program that is open to the public. Keep an eye out for more information at the end of October.

If you would like notifications about events at Francis Small Heritage Trust, go on our website and sign up for news updates.





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Heart of the Den: How Kamys Cabin Became a Community Hub This Year

Nestled in the scenic Porter Hills at our 46-acre Devils Den property, Kamys Cabin has quickly grown from a rustic landmark into one of the Francis Small Heritage Trust's most cherished assets. Constructed by Kris Kamys and local builders following his purchase of the parcel in 1991, the cabin officially became part of the Trust's protected lands in May 2023. Since then, our vision has been to restore and develop the lodge into an environmental education center and a gathering spot for the community. Over the past year, that vision truly came to life through two unforgettable events that highlighted just how much this space means to our region.

Our winter utilization began on February 7th with the Devils Den Snow Day. Despite crisp 15°F temperatures, nearly 100 snowshoers, hikers, and snowmobilers gathered at the summit. Inside Kamys Cabin, the Vermont Castings Defiant stove kept visitors warm and cozy while neighbors swapped memories of Devil's Den from decades past. The event featured a wonderful partnership with the Sacopee Valley Snowdrifters (SVSD), who arrived by snowmobile and groomer to serve up hot food and desserts, raising \$500 for local trail maintenance. The day was made extra special by the presence of Gene Stacey, who originally helped build the cabin and returned to see it filled with community warmth.



by to share stories and celebrate. The event welcomed 14 new newsletter subscribers, celebrated raffle winners, and featured a profoundly generous gift commitment from a visiting couple to support our ongoing stewardship work.

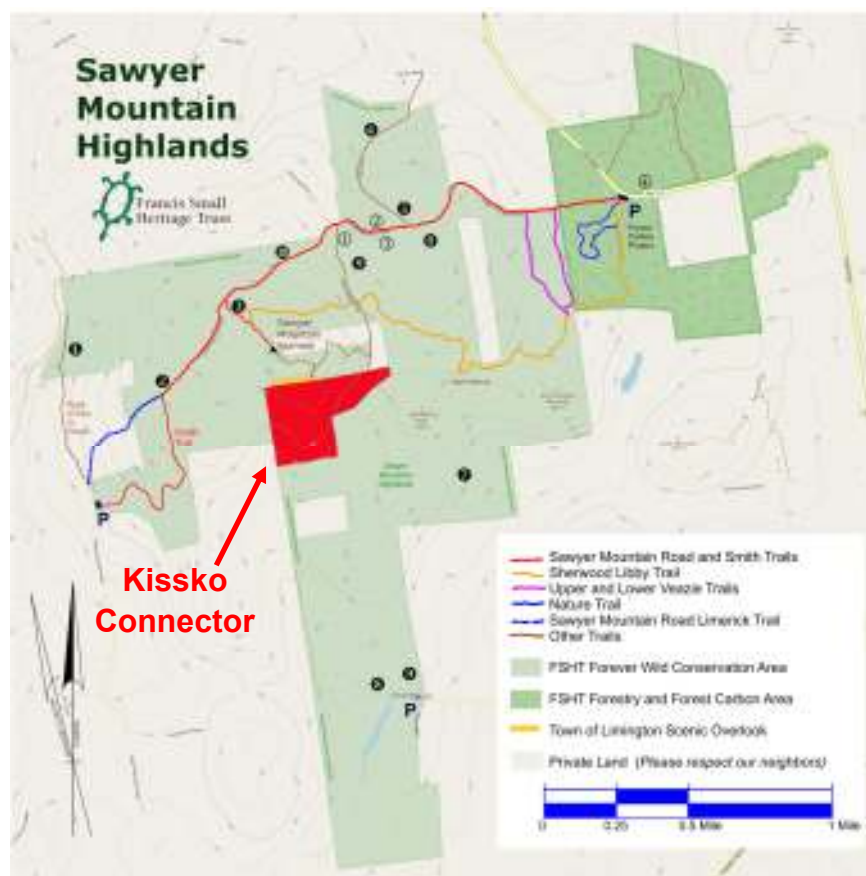
These two successful events demonstrated the incredible potential of Kamys Cabin as a central home for community conservation. Looking ahead, the

Trust is eager to make even greater use of this valuable resource at Devils Den. Inspired by the enthusiastic turnout, our all-volunteer board is already planning necessary deck and porch repairs to ensure the cabin can safely accommodate larger gatherings, outdoor workshops, and educational programs in the years to come.

Kamys Cabin stands as a testament to what we can accomplish together. We look forward to welcoming you back up to the Den for many seasons to come!.



Spring brought another vibrant gathering on May 23rd for our Devils Den Open House. With wild pink lady's slippers blooming right outside the cabin door and a display of local historical photos set up inside, Kamys Cabin hosted a steady stream of foot traffic. Neighbors from Bickford and Colcord Ponds, rock climbers exploring the Devil's Cartway, and hikers trying out our brand-new Connector Trail all stopped



The Kissko Forever-Wild Connector

Last year we initiated the project to purchase 50 acres which will connect FSHT land in multiple directions: From the east, the area of the High Pasture will connect to the Smith Trail in Limerick. Plus the land from the south at the Shaving Hill Road will connect to the summit area. The purchase, which will complete in November, will fill in a large hole in the Sawyer Mountain Highlands.

What is exciting about this land? Well for one, there is a bear den on the property! It also contains ledges with beautiful views adjacent to the Town of Limington Scenic Overlook. Currently these ledges are off limits, but soon visitors will be able to enjoy them.

We are still actively raising money for this purchase and would welcome any help.



Francis Small Heritage Trust — www.FSHT.org — mail@FSHT.org
PO Box 414 Limerick, ME 04048 — 207-221-0853

The Golden Turtle Award: FSHT Honors Its Volunteers



L to R: Dan Hester, Golden Turtle, Ray Noiles

What’s in a friendship? When Dan Hester, FSHT board member and octogenarian, needs help managing the construction and placement of kiosks at various Trust trailheads, he calls on an “old” friend from his elementary school days. **Ray Noiles** was a class-

mate of Dan’s, though a year younger (multi-grade class), at the former Mt. Cutler School in Hiram. Ray lives in Barrington, NH, but never fails to answer the call from his school buddy. Truly, this is a friendship that has caught fire. With gratitude FSHT, at its 2025 Annual Meeting, honored Ray Noiles as the third recipient of its coveted Golden Turtle volunteer award.

Volunteers, of course, are the life blood of this organization. Those providing infusions over the past year include Deborah Marble, Toni Carros, Joe Ramey, Mirika Ramey, Bennett Ramey, Corbet Ramey, Mark Pennock, Julie Stern, Jacob Bartlett, Margaret Zack, Dave Lappin, Land Share Riders, Ron Adams, Robin Marciello, Cathy Lambert, Susan Kantola, Nancy Wladkowski, Mary Jane Jarrett, Seth Bacon, Michelle Mowry, Mary Emerson, Kathy Huchthausen, Steve Moy, Heidi Paulding, Abigail Paulding, Jeff Jarrett, Denise Oliver, Daniel Hill, Doug Bowen, Kevin Mowry, James Phy, Rob Heard, Emily Heard-Lepalla & Evan, and Cindy Heard. Bloody well done, y’all!

Watch for a volunteer/board member work in progress: On May 27 FSHT hosted a munchie and drink laden meet-and greet by the kiosk at the base of the Sawyer Mountain Highlands near the Rte. 117 trail-head. It brought together Limington members of the Trust’s board of directors and several aspiring volunteers with the intention of creating a team to provide stewardship of Trust properties in the Highlands. In June, under the leadership of FSHT’s newest board member Steve Kelley, members of this team widened the existing parking lot on Rte. 117. Next project: removal of the invasive bittersweet plants that are choking the trees at that trailhead.

The (Carbon) Plot Thickens ... Measure by Measure



The Maine woods are in trouble. Doug Bowen of Porter, a charter member of the Trust’s Forest Carbon Project, has for decades managed several woodlots in the Sacopee Valley area. He shares these thoughts:

“Generations of over-cutting to supply Maine’s now collapsing paper and biomass industries leave our forests dominated by low value, often unhealthy, trees. Instead Maine needs to grow forests where valuable oak, white pine, and sugar maple can grow to maturity. Today chips and pellets are barely worth processing while markets for long-lasting wood products stay strong.”

“Forests with many mature trees store by far the most carbon but take a long time to grow. Meanwhile, the Francis Small Heritage Trust has been growing trees to maturity for nearly two generations on its preserved land. FSHT and other land trusts capture and store an outsized share of Maine’s forest carbon.”



Maggie and Doug at work measuring trees on Plot #3

FSHT’s Forest Carbon Project began almost a decade ago with the urging of Peter Hagerty, a retired horse-logger from Porter. Three 100’x 100’ plots were created at the base of Sawyer Mountain Highlands in Limington. The goal was to measure the amount of carbon captured by the trees within the plots over time.

In Plots #1 and #2, characterized primarily by mature softwoods and mixed hardwoods, all trees over 6” in diameter were measured (at breast height, about 4.5’) then remeasured 3.5 years later.

Plot #3 is an anomaly, filled with large numbers of very small hardwood trees-red oak, beech, maple and birch-besides some mature softwood. When the plot’s trees were first measured in late fall 2022, a determination was made to free up some of these small trees by cutting down the gray birch and diseased beech. Red oak, particularly, might do well under warming climate conditions. In addition all trees with a diameter of 2” or greater were measured.

In late May 2026--3.5 years later--Doug joined volunteer Margaret Zack, guest Daniel Hill (land steward for Three Rivers Land Trust), Maggie Lowry and Peter Zack (Trust board members), and emeritus member Hilary Wallis in measuring the trees in Plot #3. While no analysis has yet to be performed on the data gathered, a “worthy assumption” is that the very small, freed-up hardwoods will show good growth gains. Stand by for the actual results.

The team did have its thinking complicated when it became clear that Doug’s caliper and Maggie’s diameter tape measure didn’t always agree. Conclusion; some trees have round trunks and others oval. Doug is nonplussed. “When looking at a large cohort of trees measured over time,” he says “things will average out.” Calculating forest carbon is an inexact science, to be sure.

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Chief Wusumbe’s mark of the turtle from the collections of the Maine Historical Society



Solidarity Commitment

On April 9, 2026, five members of the FSHT Board of Directors traveled to the Wells Reserve at Laudholm Farm to attend a workshop for local land trusts and organizations which have participated in a First Light Learning Journey and are interested in taking next steps. First Light is a collective of non-native land-oriented organizations across Wabanaki homelands here in Maine, working to **relearn** and the stories of our lands, **recenter** Wabanaki voices, and **return** land, money, and decision-making authority to Wabanaki communities. In 2024 two members of the FSHT Board of Directors committed to a year of First Light meetings for this learning journey, and brought back learning points for the full board to think about and discuss in a process of re-learning the 13,000 year old history of indigenous life on “our” protected lands. This meeting was a First Light regional effort to help each of our participating organizations to move our work from **re-learning** to **recentering** to listen to the Wabanaki voices, now so very active in our state, to hear those voices wanting to connect to the non-native organizations working hard to preserve lands that native peoples lived on for centuries before us, and now are clear that they want their voices not only heard, but with the expectation that land trusts and other organizations will in time move toward a plan of **returning** land, money, and decision-making about tribal land to the tribes. This essential learning journey is a collaboration between native and non-native people building relationships over time and across Wabanaki communities, which allows us to move forward together with trust and momentum to build systemic change.

“The restoration of Wabanaki land relationships is a necessary pathway toward the conservation of the lands we love, and toward healing us all.”



FSHT Trail Challenge

Are you ready for a hiking adventure? The Francis Small Heritage Trust Trail Challenge is live until August 31. There are 2 difficulty levels, Explorer (kid-friendly strolls) and Adventurer (more difficult trails). Each level has 4 trails, and each trail has a wooden animal rubbing plaque. Visit the trail challenge page in the news section of our website (<https://fsht.org/news/>) in order to print your double sided passport. Alternatively, pick up a paper copy at a local town hall or library, or the prize businesses. The passports have directions to the trails, and there are maps of the trail challenge routes on our website as well as at the trailheads.

Ready to start walking? Take that passport and a crayon or pencil to the plaques on our trails and make rubbings on the passport for each trail. One trail also has an additional history plaque and historical information, and is marked on the map. Make all the rubbings to win a prize (an ice cream at Route 160 Ice cream or a gift card at Sugar N Spice bakery). You will also be eligible to enter a drawing for a \$50 gift card at Local Gear. Completed passports should be mailed in (the address is on the passport) and all prizes can be picked up on September 12 at Local Gear, 10-11 a.m. (or other arrangements made to receive them after that date).

The plaques are not hidden - we just want you to check out our trails. That, truly, is the best prize, but an ice cream, baked goods or outdoor equipment are excellent bonuses!



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Frogs and Toads and Salamanders...and Donkeys? Oh, My!



Farmer Myke with friends at the November's Harvest Farm

How many of you readers out there have heard of “Big Night”? No, it’s not the Dublin Pub Crawl or Saturday evening at the Ossipee Valley Music Festival. “Big Night” occurs when conditions are just right in the spring---rainy, with the temperature above 40 degrees Fahrenheit. It is then that many amphibians---frogs, salamanders, toads---leave their winter hideaways and migrate to vernal pools to mate and lay their eggs.

This spring, through FSHT’s Wetlands/Vernal Pool program, the third grade students and teachers at Line Elementary School (Newfield) and Sacopee Valley Elementary School (S. Hiram) learned about “Big Night” and visited vernal pools on their respective campuses.

“Farmer Myke” Russell’s appearance to lead the walks at Line Elementary was especially note worthy. Myke, a Trust board member, was in, in his younger days, a keeper of frogs---28 species was it?---including a poison dart frog. (“I always handled it with gloves.”) He knows a LOT about amphibians. Exuding expertise he netted a HUGE polliwog, explaining to the kids that it was a bullfrog in the making, having wintered over to its second season.

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Myke is also a hunter and trapper, and very good at animal tracking. During the fall and winter he took part in the 13th year of FSHT’s Sense of Place program which introduces second grades to Trust protected lands in their communities. SVES, Line and H. B. Emery School (Limington)---nine classes in all ---participated. Myke was able to tear himself away from his duties at November’s Harvest Farm in Limington long enough to lead the Line hikes on the Gerry Preserve in Newfield, where his keen eyes pointed out a couple of buck rubs to his charges.

The final word goes to Lyn Eaton, second grade teacher at Line Elementary. “Thank you so much to all of you and the Francis Small Heritage Trust for this wonderful experience. We all had a wonderful time and the children are still talking about it. It is so refreshing to see them outside and enjoying nature while learning so much.”



Sacopee Valley Elementary School third grade students visit their vernal pool.



H.B. Emery Elementary School second grade students on their Sense of Place fall hike.

Unplug! Explore! Discover Local Family Adventures with our New Explorer’s Guide!

Looking for a budget-friendly way to get the kids outside this weekend? You don’t need to drive far to find incredible nature trails, hidden waterfalls, and local wildlife. The Francis Small Heritage Trust (FSHT) has officially launched its brand-new Explorer’s Guide, and it is your family’s ultimate ticket to local outdoor fun.

What is the Explorer’s Guide?

The Explorer’s Guide is a beautifully illustrated, easy-to-use map series designed specifically for families, casual hikers, and local residents. It highlights trails across York, Oxford, and Cumberland counties, making it simple to choose the perfect route based on your family’s skill level.

Top Family-Friendly Preserves to Check Out:

- **Jagolinzer Preserve** (Limington): A local favorite featuring a scenic walk along the Saco River, complete with small cascading waterfalls and clear trail markers perfect for little feet.
- **Sawyer Mountain Highlands** (Limerick and Limington): Great for slightly older kids who want a mild challenge, leading up to historical stone walls and beautiful overlook views.

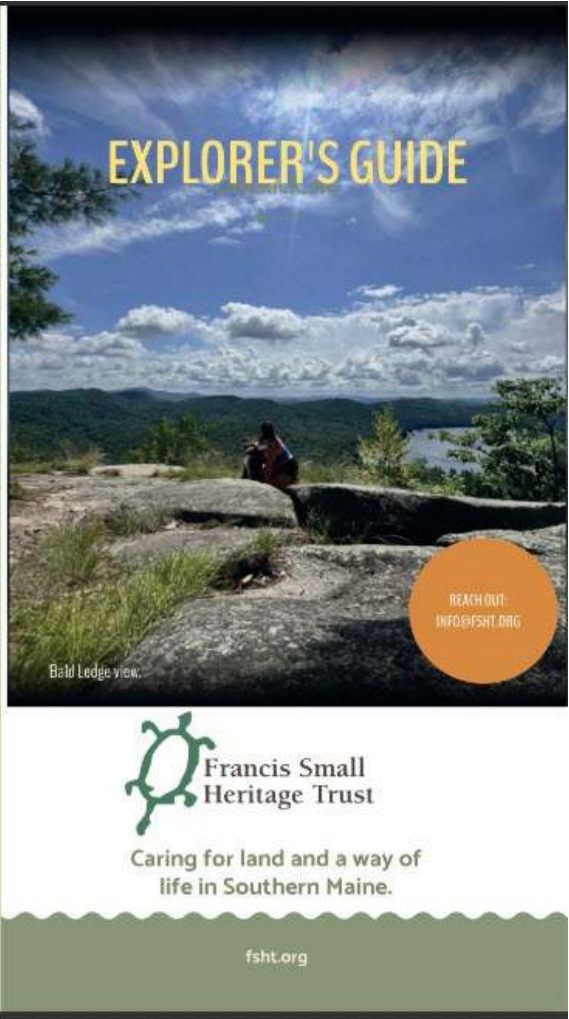
How to Get Your Guide and Start Exploring:

1. **Grab a Copy:** Grab a physical guide directly from the local town offices, libraries or at one of our trail-head kiosks, or download a digital version online before you head out.
2. **Join the Summer Challenge:** Combine your guide with the active 2026 Trail Challenge (running through August 31st). Kids can search for hidden animal plaques along the trails, track them in a printable passport, and win fun local prizes!
3. **Pack the Essentials:** Bring water, bug spray, and a camera to snap photos of the local history and wildlife you find along the way.



Learn More: Visit fsht.org to view trail maps, download your trail challenge passport, or find directions to a preserve right in your backyard.

- Trail Challenge Information: <https://fsht.org/news/>
- Explorer Guide/Brochure: <https://fsht.org/trails-and-maps/>



We Love Dogs, But...

FSHT properties are dog friendly. But not all dogs are friendly. Maine state law requires that pets be under the control of their owners at all times. Recently, there have been some issues with dogs. At the Jagolinzer Preserve, we ask that dogs be kept on a leash for the safety of our visitors and neighbors.



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