



Great Pond Mountain
CONSERVATION TRUST

The Mountain Ear

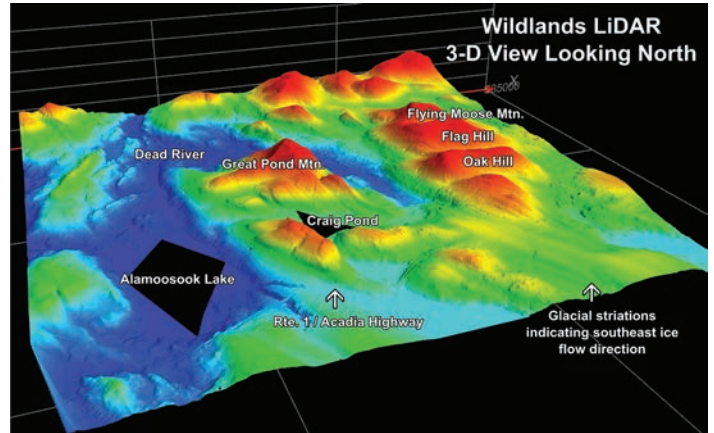
News from GPMCT 2021 and Annual Report 2020

The Rise and Fall of Great Pond Mountain

by Leah Page

The USGS elevations of Great Pond Mountain shown on topographic maps vary over the years, from 1037’ in 1900, to 1038’ in 1948, to 1030’ in 1982. With the use of relatively new technology called Light Detecting and Ranging (LiDAR), precise elevations can be determined by targeting the Earth’s surface with an aircraft-mounted laser and measuring the time for the reflected light to return to the receiver. A LiDAR survey generates 3-D elevation models, which are used for many scientific and land-use planning applications. LiDAR “sees” through trees, foliage, and water to the ground, resulting in imagery that shows roads, buildings, streams, and even glacial features such as erratics, eskers, and large-scale striations carved into the bedrock 20,000 years ago during the last Ice Age.

LiDAR data is available free to the public from the Maine Office of GIS. The new Wildlands trail map involved importing over 4 million geographic points over the 40-square mile area, which translates to 100,000 elevation points per square mile. At the end of the process, it was determined that the Great Pond Mountain summit is 1,009’.



Although the summit is officially 20 feet lower than it was when I was young, it doesn’t feel that way when I hike the mountain now!



The new Wildlands trail map



The Bluebird Trail Project

by Kurt Silberstein

Birds, like humans, are experiencing a housing shortage in this part of Maine. To help alleviate the problem and provide a welcome shelter for our feathered friends, GPMCT has for years participated in the Bluebird Trail Project, which provides nesting boxes for cavity nesting birds (Black Capped Chickadees, Tree Swallows, Eastern Bluebirds, Tufted Titmouse, House Wren, White Breasted Nuthatches) whose natural nesting sites have been declining. The project is sponsored locally by Downeast Audubon. We maintain 18 nest boxes in the Wildlands, which have a high rate of occupancy, as you can see in the photos.



*Conserving Land, Water and
Wildlife Habitat for the
Communities of Northwest
Hancock County, Maine*

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THE MOUNTAINEAR
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Mountain Conservation Trust*

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New Directors and Officers

In August 2021, at the annual meeting of the Trust, a new slate of officers was voted in, including Carl Derian, President; Jack MacBrayne, Vice President and Kurt Silberstein, Secretary. Emily Hawkins will continue as Treasurer. Several new directors and officers were also elected.

Leah Page grew up in Bucksport and attended Bucksport High School. She spent her childhood roaming around Great Pond Mountain and swimming in the surrounding lakes and ponds. She studied at Dalhousie University in Halifax and since 2007 has worked in the mining industry, specializing in cartography and 3D geological modeling. Leah has carried out environmental compliance, permitting and Indigenous relations programs in coastal Nova Scotia, northern Ontario, and Colorado. She has been a GPMCT volunteer since 2011, created five Wildlands Trail Map iterations, and is working on a LiDAR compilation for land-use planning and graphic design for outreach material. Leah lives in a very old home in Bucksport with her two dogs.

Marcis Curtis grew up in Dedham and spent his free time exploring the woods around Lucerne Lake. He has always sought to understand the intricacies of ecological relationships through observation, research, drawings, and general nerdery. After earning a BA in Political Science from Colorado College, Marcis completed a Community Arts Training program in St. Louis, MO. In 2015 he started Citizen Carpentry, which creates a learning environment and encourages the creative reuse of materials. In 2019 he returned to Maine to pursue a graduate degree at UMO in Entomology – a choice delayed by the pandemic. In the meantime, he became a Certified InterNACHI Home Inspector for Perkins Home Services.

Carol Bennatti has lived in Maine since she came here at age 18 to earn a BS in Wildlife Management from the University of Maine. She spent the next few years working for the University, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Forest Service on a variety of studies, while continuing to teach programs on birds of prey. After earning a masters in environmental education, she taught at George Stevens Academy for 34 years. Carol is happiest when working in the garden or woods and observing birds and other wildlife. She was involved with the Trust

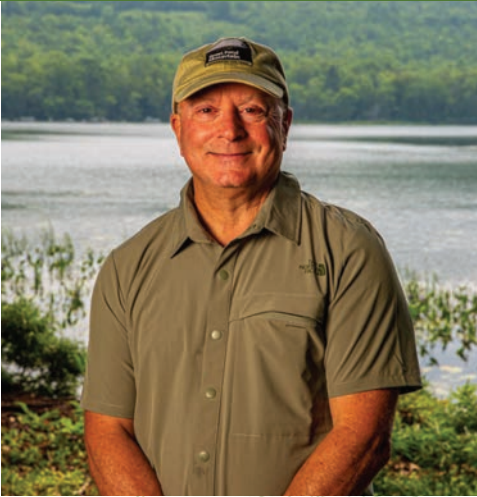
from its early days and currently serves on the Land, Stewardship and Conservation Advisory committees.

Josh Firmin grew up exploring the forests and fields of southwest New Hampshire and now calls Brewer home. His love affair with Maine began as a student at the University of Maine, where he earned his BS in Mechanical Engineering Technology. Josh was active with the campus outdoor program MaineBound and following college worked with communities to create and enhance local recreation opportunities. Josh is a registered Maine Guide and has extensive training in wilderness medicine and swiftwater rescue. In his spare time, Josh can be found enjoying the rapids on Maine's white-water rivers or exploring the outdoors with his three young children.

Anna Perna lives in Holden with her husband, Earl Black. A current and former member of numerous Maine nonprofit boards, Anna has also volunteered for the Bangor Land Trust's Pedal the Penobscot fundraiser for many years. She's an avid hiker, biker, walker, kayaker, snowshoer, cross country skier, and nature enthusiast. "I'm grateful to live in an area with an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities like the Wildlands, which is practically in my backyard."

Liam Riordan is a professor of history at the University of Maine. He earned a B.A. in history at the University of California, Berkeley, and a Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. A specialist on the American Revolution and the Maine statehood era, Liam is on the City of Bangor's Historic Preservation Commission and is a past board member of the Maine Humanities Council. He lives in Bangor with his wife Susan Thibedeau. They have two children and enjoy Maine best when at their camp on Toddy Pond in East Orland. Liam chairs the Trust's Sustainable Singletrack Subcommittee, is the Trail Steward for the Popple Grove Bike Loop, and served on the Ad Hoc Trail Committee.

From the President



I first visited Alamoosook Lake with my my future wife, Mary Durbin, in 1988. Thirty-three years later, I haven't missed a summer! In our early days we would hike the Jeep trail in its rawest form. Today, the route to the summit is far improved with the Stuart Gross Trail and other options to the top. I continue to be humbled by its beauty and serenity. Our other favorite hike is Mead Mountain: it's challenging and the breathtaking views are the eye candy of the property.

I am honored to be GPMCT Board President. On behalf of the board, I'd like to thank departing President Chris Johnson for his years of service. During Chris's tenure we experienced a degree of change unique in the Trust's history. His ability to move the Trust to virtual meetings and online documentation in short order, as well as to steer us through the pandemic, was exceptional.

Moving forward, we have five new Directors who will help guide us in new and exciting directions. On the docket are an extension of the mountain biking trail to further segment user groups, reconstruction of the Stuart Gross trail, and two major bridge rebuild projects along the Valley Road to enable more public access to the interior of the Wildlands. We continue to install new signage to help all visitors find their way, and ensure a positive environment for people, wildlife, and our maturing forest.

Around the corner we will be announcing a capital campaign to help finance new and exciting land acquisitions and maintenance projects. These efforts will ensure that we continue to be recognized as a major force for conservation in Maine.

— Carl Derian

Confirmed as President at the August 2021 Annual Meeting

Former President's Report

The August 2021 Annual Meeting was the end of my term as President. While the challenges of my term have been significant, the Trust is in a good place, with a solid foundation and about to start an exciting next chapter.

We've embraced the need for a younger perspective and are bringing on five new directors, three of them in their thirties. The expertise on the current board is comprehensive and they continue to do important work: advancing our mission of conservation, helping with road and trail maintenance, working to recruit new business supporters, and managing our increasingly complex finances. Carl Derian, the new President, brings a wealth of business leadership and commitment to our mission. He will be supported by this strong board and a terrific staff.

Many other things have evolved and changed since I first came on the board. The biggest difference is the speed of change. Challenges are presenting themselves sooner and more frequently. Staff and board are juggling multiple priorities, with many ancillary issues waiting to be on the front burner. Our embrace of the digital cloud has given the board a wealth of information at their fingertips, easier communication, and ability to respond more quickly. The Trust had already begun using video conferencing for board meetings and we didn't miss a beat when the pandemic turned everything upside down. There are multiple Zoom meetings every week as committees complete their work.

With a great board and staff and the infrastructure to support them, we are embarking on a large project to increase our land protection, invest in our road network, and take on some exciting new initiatives. I will be deeply involved in this project even as I step away from board and committee work. Perhaps we'll meet soon and you can tell me how I did. I'm not going far, just getting out of the way. Best to all of you who have helped us get here!

— Chris Johnson

Served as President 2018-2021



2021 Summer Intern John Nugent

by Malcolm Richardson, Land Steward

As GPMCT Land Steward, I find myself running to and from gates, trails and outhouses, juggling the challenges of the day and a maintenance backlog as old as I am [*ed.: he's not very old*]. Thankfully, for eight weeks this summer we were fortunate to hire John Nugent, a student at UMaine, who came to us through the Maine Coast Heritage Trust Richard G. Rockefeller Conservation Internship Program.

With 5,000 acres and no shortage of projects before us, we immediately immersed John in the details, drudgery and ultimately satisfying work of land management. He thrived! John did a little of everything, from the rugged work of running the chainsaw and tractor to the science of hydrology mapping and visitor surveys. With his efforts our institutional knowledge of Wildlands waterways and visitors grew by leaps and bounds, allowing us to better manage the woods and protect the waters we all hold dear. Thank you John!

New Interpretive Sign, courtesy of Downeast Audubon

Cathy Rees, Education Committee Chair of Downeast Audubon, worked with Alice and Nick Noyes to put together a new sign with great photos by Leslie Clapp. The sign overlooks bird habitat at the junction of Valley and Hothole Pond roads. The shortest access is from the North Gate.

Migrant Birds

Look for them May to October



Resident Birds

Look for them year-round



Blend right in with our new camo sticker!



From the Executive Director



When the Trust acquired the Wildlands in 2005, we inherited many primitive trails and roads that were useful for getting around, but which now have erosion problems. Because many were routed straight up hillsides, stormwater runs directly down them, carrying soil with it. On some of the early trails, as the undergrowth and duff wore off, the many footsteps (and bike

tires and hooves) compacted the soil and a shallow trough formed, creating a channel for storm water. Over time the soil eroded away and, in some places, the trail has become a drainage ditch or ephemeral stream. The old jeep trail, where it left Don Fish Road, is a good example of this: in some places it is several feet deep and large enough to need a bridge to span it for hikers.

Jeff Marion, a recreation ecologist with the US Geological Survey, estimates that 100,000 cubic yards of soil have been lost from the Appalachian Trail. Like the AT, the Wildlands' trails were never intended for today's level of traffic, nor were they constructed using modern trail-building techniques. Despite the challenges, Marion believes that older trails can sustain a growing number of hikers. "I'm still very optimistic about being able to provide increasing opportunities for visitors to enjoy these amazing natural areas,"

he says, adding that it will take further research, good land management initiatives, and, inevitably, more funding. [ref: *SIERRA Magazine, The Sierra Club, Oct 13, 2019*]

Over the long term, the Trust needs to modify many of its legacy trails to be more sustainable. Erosion creates difficult-to-address maintenance issues. It threatens aquatic organisms and fish and eventually accelerates eutrophication in the Dead River and Alamoosook Lake. In the next few years we will be replacing the culverts with bridges on Don Fish Road and Dead River Road so that Mountain Brook can get down to the lake without eroding more soil and aquatic organisms can traverse a natural stream bottom.

Modern trail construction techniques create more sustainable trails: the alignment almost always goes across the fall line in switchbacks, with frequent dips or "grade reversals" to allow water on the trail to spill off. While switchbacks decrease the likelihood of erosion, when the turns are close together, they encourage hikers to take shortcuts between them. This fairly quickly creates a visible trail that attracts others and soon there is a fall line trail that stormwater runs down, negating the effect of the switchbacks. We have made brush piles in some places as natural "signs" to discourage this, but it is an ongoing effort.

GPMCT has an active "adopt-a-trail" program of volunteers who really make our trails possible. If you are interested in adopting a trail and in hands-on learning about trail construction and maintenance, contact us.

See you out on the trail (stoically taking every switchback).

— *Landon Fake*



Memorials



Linda Best

1948 – 2020

by Cherie Domina

Linda Best, 72, one of GPMCT's founding board members and lifelong cheerleaders, died June 20, 2020, at home in South Portland.

I met Linda in 1992 when we joined Stuart Gross on his mission to conserve Great Pond Mountain. Linda was Stuart's unofficial caregiver, companion, and chauffeur, and she often climbed the mountain with him. She and I were GPMCT's first Events Committee, where she dreamed up big band dances and geology walks, among other ideas that she always made into EVENTS. She edited and published *Our Favorite Recipes* (GPMCT's 1997 cookbook) – I still make her blueberry cake.

While living in Belfast, Linda rallied friends for spur-of-the-moment trips to picnic at Craig Pond. Sometimes, when people met Linda, they wondered if could be for real. She really was – just as loving, fun, kind, and generous as she seemed.



Paul Liebow

1946 – 2021

Dr. Paul Averill Liebow, 74, of Bucksport and Great Cranberry Island, ME, and Redondo Beach, CA, died February 1, 2021.

Paul is survived by his wife of 43 years, Evelyn; their daughter, Sarah, and her husband, Brandon. Paul grew up in Woodbridge, CT, attended Yale University, and graduated from the University of California San Diego Medical School. An Emergency Department physician, EMS/Maine Lifeflight Director, and medical advocate for his friends and family, he was also an environmental activist and author. Paul had recently written a screenplay memorializing his ancestors lost in the Holocaust, and a book of nature poetry, *Auroras over Acadia*.

Paul loved the Wildlands and was especially interested in providing opportunities for children to explore nature. He was on the Board of Directors from 2009- 2015 and a member of the Stewardship committee through 2020.



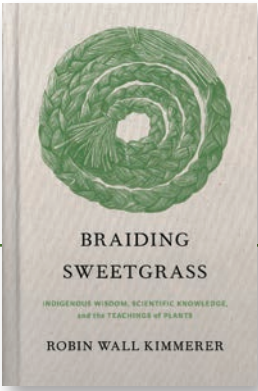
Susan D. Van Leer

1930 – 2021

Wherever she was throughout her life, Sue Van Leer was engaged in serving others in her community. In 1966, Sue and Ted purchased a camp on the western shore of Alamoosook Lake facing Great Pond Mountain.

The Van Leers were early members of the Trust, becoming deeply involved in efforts to protect the area they loved. In 2005, when 4000+ acres around the Mountain came up for sale, Sue and Ted committed themselves to conserving the Great Pond Mountain for future generations.

Through their fundraising efforts, Sue and Ted became passionate advocates and benefactors of the Trust, roles that Ted continues today.



Robin Wall Kimmerer

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants (Milkweed, 2013)

Book Review by Bob Mercer

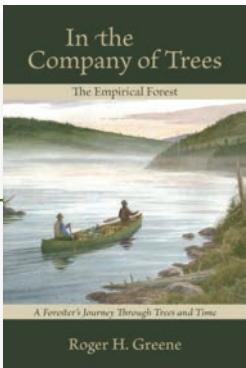
Braiding Sweetgrass, published in 2013, is one of the books I re-read every few years to reacquaint myself with Robin Wall Kimmerer’s central theme: reciprocity.

A botanist, professor of plant ecology, director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment (SUNY, Syracuse), and member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Kimmerer reminds us that inherent in her Indigenous culture is this tenet: “A gift comes to you through no action of your own, free, having moved toward you without your beckoning. It is a reward; you cannot earn it, or call it to you, or even deserve it.” Mother Earth as the bearer of the gifts of food, shelter, and clothing - basic human needs. It is up to us to reciprocate by giving Mother Earth good health.

One way is to treat all the earth’s inhabitants, living and nonliving, as persons - as individuals, not objects. In doing so we elevate all things to a higher plane and honor Mother Earth.

Kimmerer describes sweetgrass, or *wiingaashk* in the Potawatomi language, as the sweet-smelling hair of Mother Earth and weaves stories of the healing, fragrant plant throughout the book. “Breathe it in and you start to remember things you didn’t know you’d forgotten.”

I can’t recommend this book enough and suggest you try reading it outdoors – her wisdom and ideas are best conveyed among the birds and the whisper of the wind in the trees. I look forward to your reaction.



Roger Greene

In the Company of Trees: The Empirical Forest (Custom Museum Publishing, 2021)

Book Review by Malcolm Richardson

At GPMCT we try to see the forest *and* the trees. Crucial to this pursuit is the work of our resident forester, Roger Greene, who recently published his first book. *In the Company of Trees* offers a compelling narrative that shines a light

on the process (and history) of forestry in our northern woodlands. Roger’s journey to “Geezer Pond” makes accessible to all readers the science and art of managing timber and imparts a valuable portion of his 50+ years of experience in the field.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
Congratulations and many thanks
to Dave Doherty!





Geo Atwood, Dave Doherty and Carol Bennatti install a climbing tree in Popple Grove

Thank you!

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

We want to acknowledge the many friends of GPMCT who donate their time and talent in a variety of ways – from trail construction and maintenance, to Board and committee service, to representing the Trust in the community. Thank you all!

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2020 Annual Report

Revenue, Expenses, Allocations for FYE June 30, 2020

Support & Revenue

Contributions & Grants	260,723
Merchandise Sales	725
Special Events	1,681
Interest & Dividends	12,211
Appreciation (Depreciation) of Investments	7,034
Miscellaneous Income	27
Total Support & Revenue	282,401

Expenses & Allocations

Land Protection and Stewardship Programs	164,002
Education & Outreach Programs	26,648
General & Administrative	70,482
Fundraising	39,522
Total Expenses	300,654

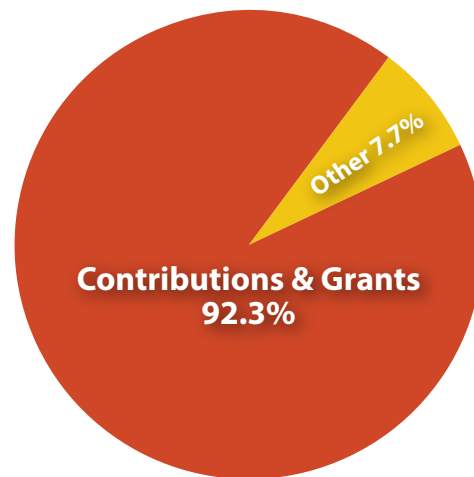
Change in Net Assets

Net Assets – June 30, 2019	5,540,532
Net Assets – June 30, 2020	5,522,279
Change in Net Assets	(18,253.00)

Major Reserved Funds By Type

Donor Restricted General Endowment	235,173
Board Designated for Wildlands Stewardship	388,572
Board Designated for Land Acquisition	152,995
Total Funds	777,040

Support & Revenue



Expenses



Thank you for your generous support of GPMCT

The following made donations between January 1, 2020 and October 1, 2021. We are grateful for all gifts, and apologize for any errors or omissions!

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Alamoosook Lake Association
Astbury Trucking
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Baker Island

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Brian Keegstra

Bjorn Lange

Carl Derian

Zoe Weil

Christopher Johnson

Karen Balas-Coté

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