



The Mountain Ear

News from GPMCT 2023 and Annual Report 2022

Nightjar Research in the Wildlands

by Logan Parker, *Ecologist, Maine Natural History Observatory*

Aerial insectivores (birds that eat bugs), including Nightjars, are experiencing widespread declines across North America. The Eastern Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*, one of two Nightjars breeding in Maine) with its loud and recognizable “song,” is a regular visitor to the Wildlands. The probable reasons for decline are habitat alteration and destruction, loss of suitable prey, and increased predation.



Long-term Nightjar monitoring started in Maine in 2017, but we still know little about their reproductive success, nest predation rates, or diet composition. We know even less about their migratory timings, pathways, migratory connectivity, stopover locations, and potential threats.

I organized this Nightjar project to collect data in these areas of whip-poor-will ecology. During this pilot field season, we initiated both nesting ground surveys and movement studies in four areas of the state, including GPMCT's Wildlands.

Despite the wet weather, we banded 28 whip-poor-will and deployed nanotags on 20 of these birds. We also documented nesting activities, gathering critical insights into nest outcomes and potential sources of predation, including a whip-poor-will nest in the Hothole Valley. We also collected



Whip-poor-will on nest in the Wildlands

observations of Chuck-will's-widow activity there. Our successes this year were due in part to GPMCT's generosity in granting our team access to the property.

In mid September our Motus towers (a radio receiver network using radio telemetry to track signals from transmitters attached to the birds) detected what appears to be our first tagged bird moving south towards its wintering grounds. In early October, one of the Wildlands' birds was detected just north of the Rio Grande in Eastern Texas. Already, we are beginning to shed light on previously unknown aspects of this bird's life history. In the next phase of our project, we will continue to compile, review, and analyze our data while preparing for our next season of effort.

Working alongside our partners at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Biodiversity Research Institute, and our growing network of land managers and landowners, we will collect even more vital data on the breeding and movement biology of Maine's whip-poor-will and the Common Nighthawk in 2024 and 2025. We look forward to finding ourselves back in the rich and biodiverse forests and fields of Hothole Valley, working by the light of our headlamps and regaled by whip-poor-will song and the “boom” of diving nighthawks.

For more information visit:
www.mainenaturalhistory.org/mainenightjar



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

PO Box 266
Orland, ME 04472
207-469-6929
info@greatpondtrust.org
www.greatpondtrust.org

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THE MOUNTAINEAR

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New Directors



President Carl Derian introducing new directors Dan Kercheis, Denise Smith, and Hannah Johnson at the annual meeting in July

In 2022 the Trust welcomed three new members of the Board of Directors:

Denise Michaud-Smith has been a life science teacher at Bucksport High School for 18 years. She has just finished hiking the 48 peaks over 4000 feet in the White Mountains.

Hannah Johnson is a physical therapist for Northern Light Health in Bucksport and Blue Hill. She and her husband (Steward, Phineas Peake) recently bought a house in North Orland.

Dan Kircheis has been involved with GPMCT for about 15 years as a trail work volunteer with the Boy Scouts. He moved from Bucksport to Carmel last year to live on his 200-acre woodlot. Dan was formerly a fisheries biologist at the Craig Brook fish hatchery.

This year we've welcomed two new directors:

Laurel Lockett splits her time between Lucerne and Tampa, Florida where she is an environmental law attorney. Her family has had a camp on Phillips Lake since the 50's, where she spends much of the year.

Jackie Hewitt is a former board member and has worked in land use planning, development and conservation and served as the chairman of several comprehensive-planning committees. Jackie is a certified Maine Master Naturalist. She and her husband Chuck live in Holden.

Capital Campaign
Emily Hawkins, Treasurer

We are so thankful to the 200 donors who enabled us to finish Growing the Dream Capital Campaign early and above our goal. We planned on \$2.36 million and as of this past April, we were about \$310,000 over that goal. The campaign supports these major initiatives:

- Complete the purchase of and build stewardship funds for a 355-acre addition to the Wildlands
- Build stewardship funds to maintain the gift of the 25-acre Joost Family Preserve on Verona Island

- Invest in Wildlands infrastructure, including equipment, trails, roads, and bridges
- Secure additional funds for land acquisitions currently in negotiation

Campaign Goal: \$2.36 Million	
Land acquisition	\$1,466,764
Stewardship funds	\$786,500
Campaign costs	\$105,950
<i>(Does not include \$57,595 in-kind donations)</i>	

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, we have been spending some of that money to pay for acquisitions and for road work to get ahead of the storms driven by climate change. Other funds will go toward future land acquisition and other stewardship projects.

From the President

Dear Supporters,

2023 marks the 30th Anniversary of GPMCT. There is much to celebrate!

1. Our longtime supporters who have made possible the work we do;
2. Our new supporters who bring energy and resources to the cause;
3. Exceeding our goal of \$2.36 million Capital Campaign thanks to many generous donors! Thank you all!



E-fishing to assess fish passage improvements in Cascade Brook

Going back a year, 2022 was an important year in our history, with some notable conservation efforts.

- The purchase of the west side of the Dead River added 355 acres and 7000' of shoreline to the Wildlands and includes important wading bird and wild brook trout habitat. That the shore of the Dead River will never be developed is a great accomplishment.
- Purchased 183 acres on the Northwest side of the Wildlands, which includes the summits of Hothole Mountain and Condon Hill, a 5-acre blueberry field and a section of snowmobile trail.
- Accepted the donation of the Joost Family Preserve, 20 acres and a half mile of shoreline of the eastern channel of Verona Island. We've begun making it accessible for hiking and picnicking as part of our effort to foster conservation and community involvement in Bucksport and Verona.

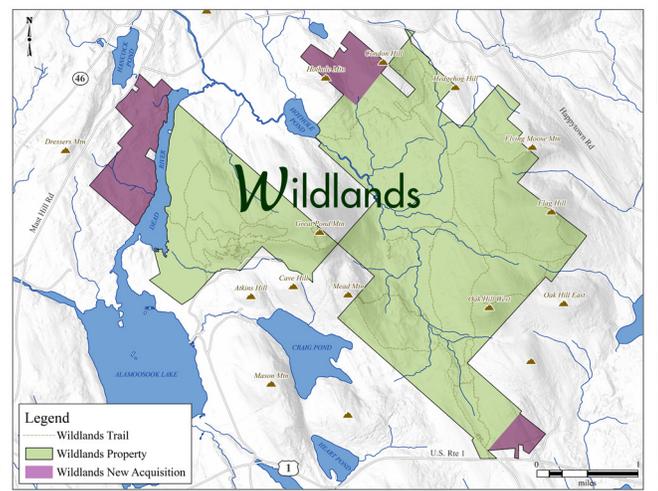
This year:

- Purchased the 76-acre Tower property (it includes a cell tower), which abuts the South Trailhead, providing a buffer to the development uphill and preventing clearcutting for a solar farm installation.

We also have continued rigorous stewardship with many new projects in the last 2 years:

- Continued our long-term restoration forestry project, this year thinning 90 acres, reducing the population of diseased beech, and encouraging growth of other species.
- Named the 2023 Maine Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year (In 2022 we were named the Hancock County Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year).
- Hosted the Forestry Field Day in September with Maine Tree, Maine Woodland Owners, and the Maine Forest Service, celebrated the award and our 30th anniversary - and I hope Roger Greene felt like he won the World Series, because in the world of forestry, he did. The award recognizes the Trust's commitment to rehabilitating the forest, controlling erosion via numerous road and stream-crossing projects and numerous events, both for professionals and the local community about sustainable forest management practices. Many thanks to Roger, the volunteers, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which facilitated our forestry and climate resilience projects, leading to this award.
- Built major new bridges on the Dead River Road and one just completed on the Valley Road.
- Continued replacing culverts with larger, more long lasting ones- 11 new ones so far this year. Replacing culverts and aging bridges means big improvements to fish habitat and to our ability to withstand major storms. Soon after bridge construction, we identified trout migrating above the bridges.
- Begun clearing Valley Road of saplings and small trees between the shoulder and the ditch. All of this activity has made recreational use of the Valley Road at times unpleasant- and at times impossible. We apologize for that but have to prioritize the health of the watershed.

Continued on next page



Natives and some odd summer residents

On June 11, 2023, **Donna Reis** and **Laura Sabastiani** conducted a bird survey and identified 35 birds in the Wildlands. Have you spotted any of these?

- American Goldfinch
- American Robin
- Barred Owl
- Black-and-white Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Blue Jay
- Blue-headed Vireo
- Cedar Waxwing
- Chuck-will's-widow -- Recorded
- Common Nighthawk
- Common Yellowthroat
- Eastern Kingbird
- Eastern Phoebe
- Eastern Phoebe
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Great Crested Flycatcher
- Hermit Thrush
- Mourning Dove
- Nashville Warbler
- Northern Flicker
- Northern Parula
- Northern Waterthrush
- Ovenbird
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Purple Finch
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Scarlet Tanager
- Song Sparrow
- Swainson's Thrush
- Tree Swallow
- Tree Swallow
- Veery
- Wilson's Snipe
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

From the President (cont.)

- Every year for the last 5, we've added to the Capstone multi-use trail, including .8 miles last year and another 1.2 (still under construction) this year. A reroute of the Picnic Trail is part of this year's project but won't be complete until 2024.
- Stuart Gross trail reroute: If you've been up the mountain this year, you may have found yourself on a narrower trail in the woods, with many great views off to the south, ending at the South Overlook. This is the result of a long-planned reroute. Winter users will be familiar with this new section, which we would use seasonally to avoid some of the icy upper section of trail.
- The new Chestnut Ledge trail is under construction. It's a great, short walk from the north trailhead.

While we rejoice in our accomplishments and the progress we've made in our conservation efforts, we must also take a moment to reflect on the loss of a dear friend and dedicated board member, Sarah Levine. Sarah was a long-time supporter of GPMCT and an invaluable member of our board. Her passion for the environment, dedication to our cause, and enthusiasm for Maine's natural beauty left an indelible mark on our organization. Our heartfelt condolences go to Sarah's children, Anna Winger, and Alex LeVine. We are planning a memorial event next spring.

Warm Regards,
— Carl Derian

Join the Stuart Gross Legacy Circle!

Thinking about how you could provide a legacy for the Trust? Including GPMCT as a beneficiary in your will or living trust will ensure the Trust's future and continue conservation for the next generation.

Contributing from an IRA, 401K, or Roth can be a great way to give and may provide tax advantages. What better way to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Trust!

If these ideas are of interest, please contact us.



From the Executive Director

How Big is Big Enough?

The Wildlands, at its current 5137 acres, is larger than 30 of Maine's 35 state parks. It comprises about 20% of Orland's land area. It is especially large given its location on Route 1 and its size appeals to visitors who value remoteness, who want to travel far from pavement and the roar of civilization. Size and remoteness are also essential for wildlife:

Big chunks of wild country retain species and subspecies (biodiversity) better than small wildlands. Connectivity also increases the effective size of a wildland. Small, isolated habitats lose species due to inbreeding depression and genetic drift in small, isolated populations. (Howie Wolke, Why We Need Big Holistic Wilderness)

5000 acres is the minimum size to be marginally effective at sustaining the present landscape mosaic in Maine

ecosystems: it is large enough to have a cross-section of natural communities, entire watersheds of small streams and ponds, as well as the home ranges of most species that occur in the region. In an area of increasing development pressure, a large habitat block like the Wildlands, if it has connecting corridors, can keep species from blinking out over time.

5137 acres is also less significant compared to the approximately 10,000 acres of Maine forest and farmland lost to development every year. Our work is not done. Growing beyond our present boundaries and establishing corridors to other conservation lands is essential to preserving remoteness and to our mission of protecting wildlife habitat.

– Landon Fake

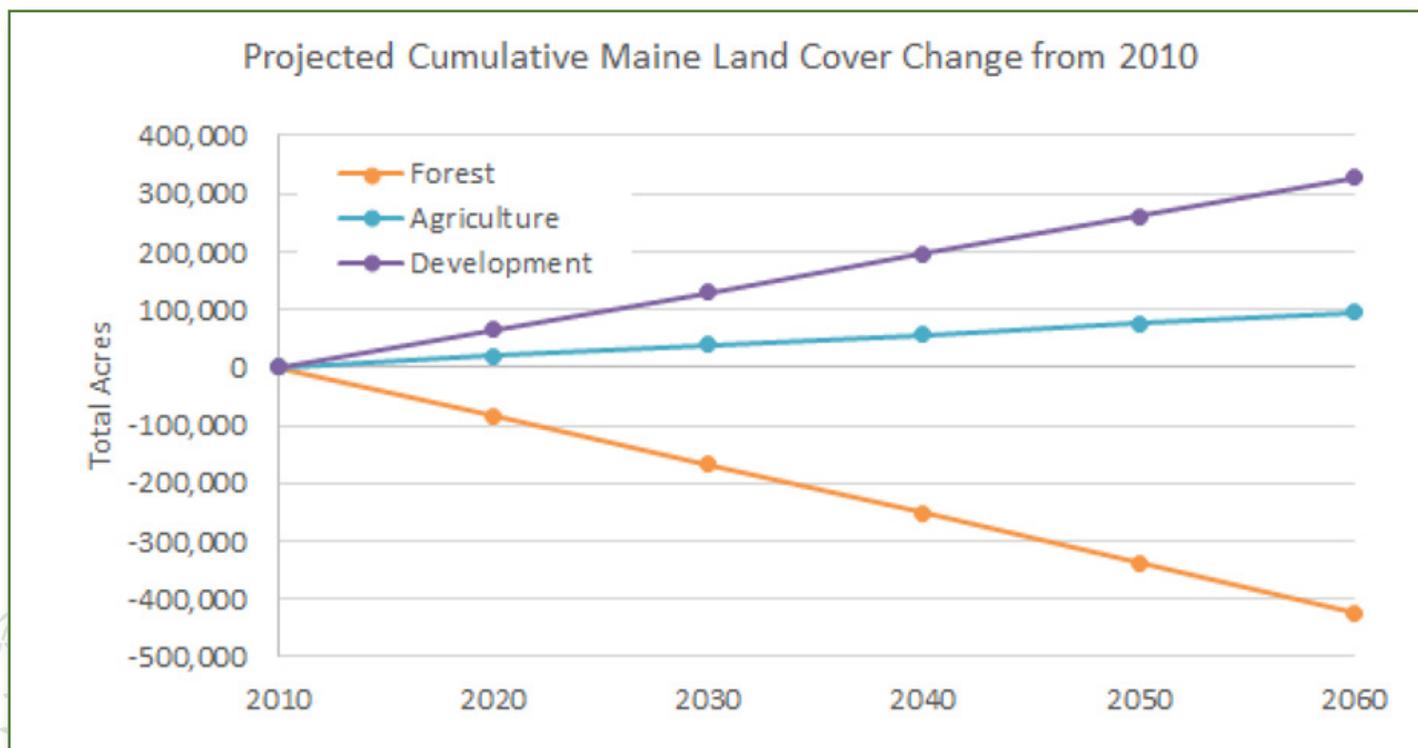


Chart by New England Landscapes Future Explorer

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR, 2022 & 2023
Congratulations and many thanks to
Carol Bennatti and Liam Reardon!



Memorials

Sarah LeVine (1940-2023) & Bob LeVine (1932-2023)



Longtime Trust supporter, board member and friend, Sarah E. Levine, died in August. Her husband Bob died shortly thereafter. Sarah met Bob, another Harvard anthropologist, in Nigeria in 1961. They married in Chicago in 1968 and worked together for more than 50 years.

The LeVines spent many happy summers in Hancock County. They were active members of the Toddy Pond Association, devoted to protecting the pond's wildlife and ecosystems. Sarah published a citizen history of both Toddy Pond and the Morgan Bay Zendo, in Surry. In recent years, she was passionately involved with Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust and the Wildlands. She served on the board as President, Vice President, and committee chair, and perhaps as importantly, as host of many lively dinner parties with eclectic mixes of people, young and old, and always excellent food.

Born in England in 1940, Sarah was educated at Oxford and Harvard Universities. After she received a PHD she dedicated herself to fieldwork focused on the socialization of children and the impact of women's education on child and reproductive health in Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Mexico, Venezuela, India, and

Nepal. She was the author of a wide range of books, including *Mothers & Wives* (1979) and *The Saint of Kathmandu* (2008). She also wrote novels under the pseudonym Louisa Dawkins.

Born in New York City in 1932, Bob LeVine was a leading figure in the field of psychological anthropology. Professor of Education and Human Development at Harvard University, he was the author of many books about communities in Africa and around the world, including *Culture, Behavior & Personality: An Introduction to the Comparative Study of Psychosocial Adaptation* (1982) and *Psychological Anthropology: A Reader on Self and Culture* (2010).

Sarah died quickly and unexpectedly of cancer. Bob died of complications related to dementia. The LeVine's most recent book together was, *Do Parents Matter?* (2016). A comparative look at global parenting practices, the book synthesized learnings from their research for American parents.

They are survived by their children and their children's partners, Anna LeVine Winger and Joerg Winger of Berlin, Germany, and Alex LeVine and Jordanna Fraiberg of Los Angeles, and by three beloved granddaughters, Isabella and Rose Winger, and Eva LeVine, all of whom were lucky to be with Bob and Sarah during their final days.

GPMCT has lost an extraordinary supporter who left an indelible mark on the organization. Her insights, leadership, and kindness enriched our board meetings and inspired us all, reminding us that our work is not just about preserving land; it's about the people who share our passion and commitment. She was a guiding force in shaping GPMCT's vision for the future, and her legacy will forever inform our ongoing conservation work.

We will be planning a memorial event in the coming months.

Alex and Anna have requested donations be made in Bob and Sarah's names to the Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust.

American Beech in the Wildlands

Roger Greene, GPMCT Forester



From the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

In seasons of abundant beechnut crops, the nuts are a primary component of the diet of black bear, white-tailed deer, squirrels, pine marten, microtine rodents, and ruffed grouse. Maintenance of mature, nut-producing trees enhances the survival of these species as well as benefit pine marten and fisher, which prey on rodents. Beech mast exceeds all other mast as a high-octane food for wildlife.

A common tree in the Eastern Forests, American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) was once a tall, stately tree, with smooth, gray bark and deep green leaves which turn a brilliant amber in autumn. It can live upwards of 400 years and grow to more than 100 feet. The beech was once prized for its hard, dense, close-grained lumber. People and animals eat its nuts. It often becomes the climax forest type over time, along with sugar maple. The trees have the ability to grow in full shade, biding their time until another tree falls down, opening space for the patient beech to launch skyward.

In the late 1800's, beech bark disease (BBD) was introduced when a shipload of European beech arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, bringing a scale insect (*Cryptococcus fagi-suga*) that bores into the bark to lay its eggs, which then allows infection by *Neonectria* fungi.

BBD has killed millions of trees in New England alone. After many of the partial harvests in the Wildlands in the 1990's, diseased root systems responded by producing understory thickets of aggressive sprouts that quickly began to exclude regeneration of other hardwood species, leaving us with more than a third of the forest consisting of diseased beech trees. Without intervention this fraction will increase.

To counter this sprouting, we're reducing the number of beech without the use of pesticides, using a technique called high-stumping. With this approach, the trees (usually less than 6-inch stems) are cut 2.5 to 3 feet above the ground, reducing the likelihood of regrowth, while encouraging more desired undergrowth species. The cut trees provide cover for ground-nesting birds and then decompose, fertilizing the soil and giving way to a more diverse and healthier group of hardwoods. This technique was developed by Dr. Ralph Nyland of Syracuse University. His trials demonstrated that 75% of the cut beech died within a year. Treatments monitored in the Wildlands have shown an 87% reduction, where a mostly closed overstory canopy exists. We've applied this method on about 500 acres where



Beech trees with and without beech bark disease

the total proportion of beech varied from 47% to 82% of the total basal area.

Although sprouting usually occurs on these "high stumps," most of the sprouts die within the next year. The sprouting depends mostly on the amount of shade. If there's too much sun exposure, they are more apt to sprout and persist. We expect a 75% reduction of survivability which will reduce the number of beech to no more than 20% of the treated stand. Every ten years, we will evaluate the stands to see if another treatment is needed.

The Wildlands does have isolated clusters of beech trees that are disease-free - and we are careful to preserve them. Keep your eye out and you'll see what a spectacular tree they are when not infected with BBD.



Naturalist Cathy Rees measuring a rare disease-free beech tree on Condon Hill

New Bridge on Valley Road



Aaron Payer of Holyoke Construction at work on the Hothole Stream bridge



Forester Roger Greene and Steward Malcolm Richardson testing the new bridge



GET YOUR JANE CROSEN MAP T-SHIRT!

SCAN THIS CODE:



Volunteer Andy Peake at work on new kiosk

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!

2022 Annual Report

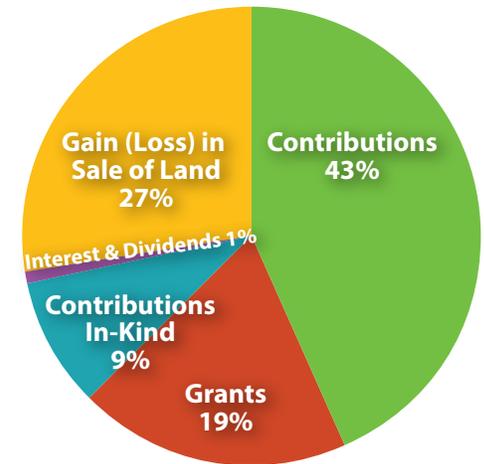
Revenue, Expenses, Allocations

for FYE June 30, 2022 (not including Capital Campaign)

Support & Revenue

Contributions	\$245,740
Grants	\$109,280
Contributions In-kind	\$50,658
Merchandise Sales	\$201
Special Events	\$3,848
Interest & Dividends	\$4,091
Appreciation (Depreciation) of Investments	\$(185,123)
Gain (Loss) in Sale of Land	\$152,165
Miscellaneous Income	\$96
Total Support & Revenue	\$380,956

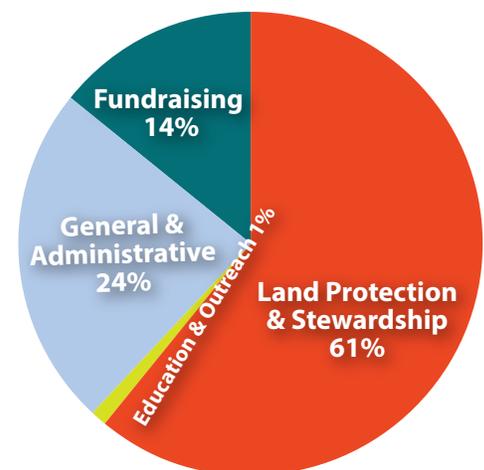
Support & Revenue



Expenses & Allocations

Land Protection and Stewardship Programs	\$203,547
Education & Outreach Programs	\$4,476
General & Administrative	\$79,733
Fundraising	\$47,547
Total Expenses	\$393,673

Expenses & Allocations



Change in Net Assets

Net Assets – June 30 2021	\$6,359,707
Net Assets – June 30,2022	\$6,728,520
Change in Net Assets	\$368,813

Major Reserved Funds By Type

Donor Restricted General Endowment	\$226,896
Board Designated for Wildlands Stewardship	\$372,890
Board Designated for Land Acquisition	\$132,901
Total Major Funds	\$732,687

Thank you for your generous support of GPMCT

The following made donations between January, 2022 and October, 2023. We are grateful for all gifts, and apologize for any errors or omissions!

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