



Sheepscoot Log

Newsletter of the Sheepscoot Valley Conservation Association

Summer 2010

California couple donate land near Trout Brook Preserve

The SVCA is the recipient of a 10-acre wooded parcel in Alna donated by Tom and Susan Richards of Los Osos, California. SVCA is pleased to accept the property which is near Trout Brook, a Sheepscoot River tributary, as it will expand our popular 126-acre Trout Brook Preserve. The trailhead to the Preserve's public hiking trail is located on Route 218 south of the Head Tide dam and just north of the Alna Store.

The Richards attended the donation closing at SVCA's office in June. Tom shared the story of how they had acquired the Alna property in 1968 while he was getting his doctorate in marine biology from the University of Maine, in a program that included two years at the Darling Marine Center in Walpole. Tom and Susan would stay in a trailer park near Round Top in Damariscotta that was then run by the



Donors Susan and Tom always referred to the property as "LaPrelle Woods" after Jeannie LaPrelle Lamb (pictured left), Susan's mother, who loved to spend time there.

former owner of the parcel, Ralph Keene. Upon hearing from Tom and Susan that they loved Maine and would like to own some property here, he offered to sell them the land in Alna "at a price that students could afford."

The Richards moved back to California after graduate school, but never lost their protective interest in their Maine property, arranging for a local forestry



The donated wooded parcel has been cared for by a local forester.

company to maintain it, and to conduct a small timber harvest in 1990. "We love Maine," Susan said, "and in our hearts with that land we were a part of Maine, and we wanted nothing to happen to it. We've always wanted it to remain natural, and we're just so thrilled that SVCA agreed to take it."

At the Richards' request, the property will be named "LaPrelle Woods", after Susan's mother. Susan said that her mother, whose name means "the Pearl", loved to visit the property while they were in Maine and enjoyed many picnics at the site.

Along with their donation of the property, the Richards have made a donation to SVCA's stewardship fund. As a land trust, SVCA accepts the responsibility for preserving the conservation values of land parcels on which they hold easements or own in fee. SVCA must forever monitor conditions and activities on and near each parcel and react to problems as they are discovered, including defense of these properties in court should

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Our mission is to conserve the natural and historic heritage of the Sheepscoot Watershed through land protection, habitat restoration, advocacy, education and support for compatible land uses.



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*The Sheepsct Valley
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From the President



Dear SVCA Members and Friends,

All of us at SVCA hope that you and your family are enjoying the especially beautiful Maine summer. Buttercups, clover, osprey, eagles, fox families, bobcats, bullfrogs, and much more have been seen and heard in abundance along the Sheepsct River. Each has reinvigorated our passion to make sure our watershed will always provide a safe place for these inhabitants, as well as for us.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the SVCA recently completed and the board unanimously approved, a 5-year strategic plan. A summary will be available on our website later this summer and a full report will be available for pick-up at our headquarters. The plan will keep the board and staff focused on our priorities and provide us with a way to measure our success. Here are just a few of the key goals:

- Launch Phase 2 of our new proactive efforts to protect SVCA priority Focus Areas (areas identified as significant habitats and for water quality protection) beginning with the Sheepsct Bog. In five years, 50% of our land work will be within the eight focus areas.
- Double the number of trail miles on SVCA Preserves
- Increase our corps of volunteers by 50% and members by 25%
- Update our website and develop social networking applications
- Take a leadership role in midcoast Maine's "12 Rivers Collaborative," a multi land trust project within a New England wide conservation program (see article on page 5)
- Enhance our research capabilities into emerging threats to our watershed to be prepared to advocate from a position of greater strength and knowledge

The new Strategic Plan does not reflect a shift in the SVCA's mission. After much discussion – both within and beyond the immediate family – we believe that our mission continues to reflect the needs of our watershed and the community's priorities. The plan is a road map so we know where to go, and whether or not we have arrived!

I hope very much that you will continue to be a part of the SVCA as we embark on this journey. There is much to do, but, as you know, we almost always have a lot of fun doing it!

Many thanks.

Honor Fox Sage

Geocaching Challenge Continues...



Laurie McBurnie was the first to find and log all 7 caches on each of the 7 SVCA preserves and took home the grand prize of a donated Patagonia fleece. Both Bob Olson (pictured right) with wife Peg and Breck Holladay (below) were right on her heels on the opening day of the challenge. Both



received SVCA t-shirts for being the first to find an individual cache. The geocaching challenge is great fun for all ages. For more details about the challenge see the website at www.sheepscot.org/geocaching.htm



Recalling Past Events

Vernal Pool Walk



Spotted Salamander eggs and more were discovered during a vernal pool walk led this past spring by naturalist Lynne Flaccus.



Bird Walk



Kirk Gentalen (above) expert birder, naturalist and education coordinator for the Maine Coast Heritage Trust led a walk around the Marsh River Preserve in May.

Benefit Concert



Photo by Callie Wronker

The “Young Geezers” trio (above) performed a benefit concert at the historic Alna meetinghouse in June. Proceeds from the concert were given to the SVCA and the Committee for Alna History. Thanks guys!

Sheepscot Trust Dinner



The Sheepscot Trust dinner, held in July this year, is SVCA’s way of thanking Trust members for their generous support.

Upcoming Events

Paddle on Turner Pond

Friday, August 20 9:00 am



Join Tom Eichler for a paddle on this beautiful pond in Somerville. Bring a lunch. The group will paddle to a picnic and swimming spot.

Palermo Preserve Nature Walk

Thursday, August 26 10:00 am

Champagne on the Sheepscot

Saturday, Sept. 11 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Stetser Preserve Nature Walk

Saturday, Sept. 25 10:00 am



Celebrate National Public Lands Day with a walk on SVCA’s newest preserve in Jefferson.

Grand Opening of Turquoise Trail

Sunday, October 24 1:00 pm

Join us for the Grand Opening of the new turquoise trail on the Bass Falls Preserve located on Rte 218 in Alna.

"California couple donate land.." continued from cover

the need arise. At the present time, SVCA has over 50 easements and in-fee properties. To ensure SVCA has the funds to support these responsibilities both now and in the future, each donor is asked to contribute to the stewardship fund as they are able with the SVCA raising the remaining funds from generous donors or grants.

We are so grateful to the Richards for their generosity.



Board, staff and friends of SVCA celebrate with Susan and Tom Richards (seated) as they make official their donation of land and stewardship funds to SVCA.

"Champagne on the Sheepscot"

Join us as we raise a toast and thousands of dollars for SVCA's programs while enjoying fine food, great music, good friends, champagne and more, plus a chance to vote a winner of "The People's Choice" Photography Contest

Saturday, September 11

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

at

*the historic home of Priscilla and Brett Donham
in Head Tide*

Tickets are \$40 (\$20 tax-deductible)

Patron tickets \$125 (\$105 tax-deductible)

Look for your invitation in the mail.



Wiscasset Bypass and the SVCA



Although a highway bypass around the town of Wiscasset has been under study and discussion for a half century, the Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association has never been a strong proponent. Fifteen years ago, when the latest chapter in the bypass was begun, SVCA's position was that the periodic summer traffic backups did not warrant the environmental damage that construction and use of a bypass would produce.

Throughout the 90's we supported a no-build option. But when the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) began laying out alternative routes, and political pressure for a bypass mounted, we undertook a careful analysis of the potential environmental impacts of each route based on a number of indicators including wetland loss, landscape fragmentation, effects on threatened and endangered species as well as the number of residences and businesses that would need to relocate. The results of this analysis indicated that of all the proposed routes, N8c would be the least damaging, despite its requiring a new long bridge over the Sheepscot, and would also be the most effective route in terms of reducing summertime traffic congestion. Therefore, while still favoring no-build, the seeming unlikelihood of its acceptance by the MDOT road planners led SVCA to lend reluctant support to N8c as the next best alternative.

Although the MDOT preferred a different bypass route, the Army Corps of Engineers, the designated decisionmakers under the controlling federal environmental legislation, recently determined that N8c is indeed the route that would be least environmentally destructive. While this decision is a significant step in the process, budgetary constraints, environmental impact study requirements and estimates that the project price tag could reach \$100 million have led many to speculate that it will be decades before the bypass is built, or that it may never be built at all. Even in the best of circumstances it will be over a decade before completion of construction, which only strengthens the case for prompt implementation of further summertime traffic mitigation measures in Wiscasset, including better management of pedestrian flows.

12 Rivers Conservation Collaborative

Conserving land on a regional scale

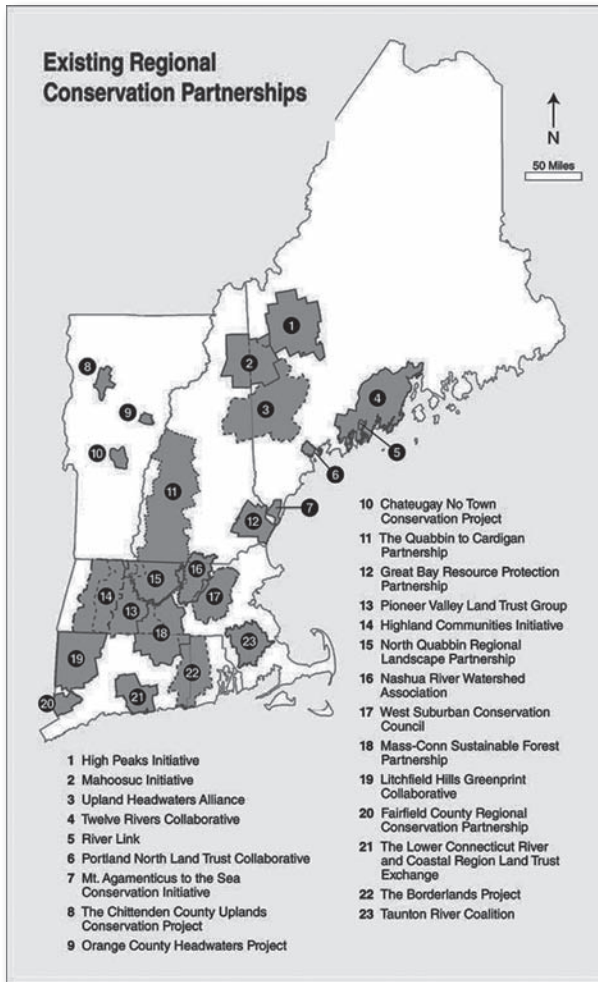


Figure 12 from the *Wildlands and Woodlands* Report. The 12 Rivers Collaborative is part of a larger vision for conservation of New England wildlands and working woodlands. For a full copy of the report, visit the SVCA office or see it online at www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org.

The SVCA is part of an emerging conservation collaborative that is exploring ways to conserve forestland at a regional scale in midcoast Maine. The 12 Rivers Conservation Collaborative - named for the number of river systems that extend from the Kennebec estuary to the western shore of Penobscot Bay - is a response to the growing awareness that landscape-scale conservation can accelerate the pace of conservation while keeping costs low. By bundling smaller projects into a shared conservation effort, the collaborative hopes to expand organizational capacity, attract new funding sources, gain greater economies of scale, and increase the benefits available from the products and ecosystem services that the reconnected land may yield.

The 12 Rivers Collaborative is nestled within a larger New England vision for conservation of wildlands and working woodlands. In May 2010, Harvard Forest, a research and educational center affiliated with Harvard University, released a study on changing

land uses in New England. The study, entitled *Wildlands and Woodlands*, reports that, for the first time since agricultural abandonment in the mid-1800's, all six New England states are losing forest cover. Furthermore, the current wave of deforestation, which often involves asphalt and concrete, is much more difficult to reverse than the historical clearing of the land for farms or lumber.

The *Wildlands and Woodlands* vision calls for a long-term conservation effort to retain at least 70 percent of New England forestland permanently free from development. Protection of this forestland, along with farms and other open space - our natural infrastructure - provides for a landscape that continues to provide essential environmental, social and economic benefits to the region.

Individually SVCA and similar organizations are committed to conservation; collectively we can expand the scope of our efforts and make regional forest conservation a priority that individually we could not.

Youth Promise Pitches In

This Spring SVCA had great help on our Bass Falls Preserve from the Youth Promise organization out of Newcastle. Five students from the area participated in community service to clear the trails of winter debris. SVCA Board member Dave Lieser lent a hand (and chainsaw) to make the bigger jobs more manageable. Youth Promise will also be helping to install the new kiosk in preparation for our Grand Opening of the turquoise trail at the Bass Falls Preserve on Sunday, October 24 at 1 p.m.

Land for Maine's Future (LMF) Bond

For more than two decades, LMF has proven to be a critical tool in protecting special places throughout the state, from the north woods to Maine's magnificent rivers, and from popular recreational areas in our communities to the state's signature coastline. The bond question will go to voters this fall.

Say YES to LMF this November!



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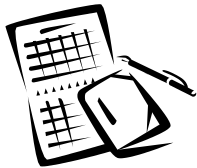
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*Protecting 3,180 acres of land through purchases and conservation easements,
including more than 15 miles of Sheepscot River frontage.*

People's Choice Photography Contest

Enter your image of the Sheepscot Valley by August 27

Cash prizes of \$100, \$50 and \$25 to be awarded



2009 Contest entry "Monarch of the Sheepscot" by Susan Russell

Enter your favorite image(s) of the
flora, fauna, landscapes, people or
communities of the Sheepscot Valley.

Entries due by August 27, 2010

Winners chosen by popular vote
on September 11 at the
"Champagne on the Sheepscot"
fundraiser

For full contest details see
www.sheepscot.org or
call the office 207-586-5616