



ANDROSCOGGIN LAND TRUST

Autumn 2016

Inside this issue:
Exciting new partnership
with Evergreen Subaru!

The Androscoggin Land Trust is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) membership-supported organization dedicated to protecting, through land conservation and stewardship, the important natural areas, traditional landscapes, and outdoor experience in the Androscoggin River watershed. We currently conserve approximately 5,000 acres of land including over ten miles of riverfront along the Androscoggin River.

2016: An eventful year for ALT!

As ALT prepares to wrap up the 2016 year, we are reflecting on the events that many people participated in, and we are grateful for the energy and impact they brought with them. We are also reflecting on events that involved just a few people, or maybe only one person, cleaning up a trail or enjoying a quiet moment taking in a serene view, as well as the events that occurred on our conserved land that no person witnessed: wind pushing leaves from one side of the river to the other,

animals preparing for colder weather, an eagle finding the space to build a nest. The contents of this newsletter will take you to some of ALT's properties, to relive some of our events and to acquaint you with some of the inhabitants of the lands we conserve. Below are a few glimpses into some of our events in 2016. We hope to run into you outside somewhere soon!



*Work Day and Geocaching Contest Event
at French Falls*



*Androscoggin River
Clean-up before
Balloon Festival*



*Paddle After Hours LA part of
ARWC's Source to Sea*



*GMOW
Auburn River Day
with the City of Auburn*

Evergreen Subaru and ALT “Share the Love” Partnership!



ALT & Evergreen Subaru take a hike together

ALT is so happy and grateful to have been selected as this year’s Share the Love Hometown Charity by Evergreen Subaru. This is an exciting partnership and we are enjoying getting to know the great Evergreen Subaru team, especially through spending time with them out on the trails!

How the Share the Love Program Works:

From November 17, 2016-January 3, 2017, anyone who purchases a new Subaru at Evergreen Subaru in Auburn can choose to direct a \$250 donation from Subaru of America to one of five pre-selected charities. Four are national charities and one is a local, “Hometown Charity”, that the dealership selects from their own community. There is no cost to the customer or the charity and the funds can really add up! Last year, Evergreen Subaru raised \$25,000 through Share the Love for the 2015 Hometown Charity! ALT is honored to have been selected this year. If you are (or someone you know is) planning to purchase a Subaru in the near future, know that doing so at Evergreen Subaru during the Share the Love campaign will have the added benefit of supporting the work of ALT!

ALT ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, November 15, 2016

Hilton Garden Inn Auburn Riverwatch

5:00pm – 6:00pm Refreshments

6:00pm Meeting, Guest Speakers and Film Screening

-Free & Open to the Public-



ALT staff, board members and their Subarus



Filmmaker Mark Ireland films in Lewiston

Special Screening of *Community Conservation in Maine*, a Documentary Film by Mark Ireland

Come see an exciting new documentary that highlights some of the work of land trusts in Maine, including ALT.

Guest Speaker from Evergreen Subaru, our Sponsor and Partner in the Subaru Share the Love Program

Hear from Evergreen Subaru about the Share the Love Program and Subaru’s relationship with conservation.

BOATS 'N' BREWS RIVER RACE

— James Pross, Board President

On June 25th, the first annual Boats-n-Brews River Race began on a cloudless morning at 9 a.m. with 66 plus paddlers launching 50 canoes and kayaks into the Androscoggin River from Auburn's Festival Plaza. Racers paddled to the marshalling area, just upstream from the footbridge that joins Bonney Park in Auburn to Simard-Payne Park in Lewiston. With the 3rd Annual Great Falls Brewfest planned for that afternoon, the Boats-n-Brews River Race proved to be an excellent addition to the positive atmosphere surrounding a big day for the Twin Cities.



As I stood at the center of the footbridge, I thanked our 23 local race sponsors on my trusty bullhorn and then took in the view of the collection of paddlers who had assembled below as we listened to an acapella rendition of the National Anthem performed by local 8th grader Sidney Roy. It was striking to see the colorful palette of canoes and kayaks assembled on the Androscoggin River in downtown L/A. Although ALT has hosted many paddling events over the years, this was the largest single gathering of paddlers that any of us could recall. The image of the boats below underscored the successful work we are doing to foster public appreciation for the recreational opportunities that the River offers the 19 communities we serve.

After the race started, ALT's Treasurer Jon Mercier battled the poison ivy that lines the riverbank at Dresser's Rips so he could capture photos of the participants as they navigated their vessels around boulders and through the rapids. Some participants tipped their canoes in the rips, but came-up smiling before continuing to the finish line. As racers crossed the finish line at the Durham Public Boat Launch, a blue-sky backdrop framed the scene and the cheering spectators made the smiles of the participants grow as they finished.

After the race, participants gathered back at Festival Plaza for an awards ceremony. Whether participants were out to win the race, or just have fun, the atmosphere was festive, with category winners and runners-up receiving commemorative glass mugs. Many donated raffle prizes were also awarded which added to the smiles that had dominated the morning.

As I made my way to the Great Falls Brewfest, crossing the footbridge, I had a moment to reflect on the earlier sight at the starting line. The first annual Boats-n-Brews River Race truly connected the community to the River in downtown L/A in a way that we have not seen in years. At ALT we strive to connect people to the environment to foster their desire to protect it. The River is the heart of the landscape in our large service area. ALT protects 10 miles of river frontage from Jay to Lisbon so that people will connect to the River for generations to come. Our children's children can grow up and develop a sense of place that will strengthen the communities we serve, instilling pride and appreciation for the natural spaces that belong to all of us. Getting people out in large numbers and enjoying the River in a highly visible way goes a long way toward changing the old perceptions about the River and its value to our community. At ALT, we are proud to be leading this charge, and we invite you to join in our efforts with your continued giving and volunteer support. We thank the racers, the businesses that supported the event, and the volunteers who helped to make it all happen!



Learn to Fish

ALT has been happy to coordinate a Learn to Fish event every summer for the last 5 years in partnership with Tree Street Youth and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. On the day of the event, the excitement builds for the ALT staff, board members and volunteers as they watch the Tree Street Summer Youth Program participants and their counselors walk across the bridge from Lewiston to Auburn to spend time fishing on the shore of the Androscoggin River. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife provides fishing poles and great instruction. Each year, while the fish are released back to the river, all involved take lasting memories with them.

ALT recently asked Tree Street Youth Co-Founder and Executive Director Julia Sleeper to share some of her thoughts about the Learn to Fish program. "Tree Street loves to provide novel experiences to our youth," relays Julia. "These opportunities to do things that many of our youth otherwise may not have the opportunity to do can have a significant impact on their vision for the future and the ways in which they choose to spend their social time."

The impact extends beyond the time spent on the river. As Julia shared, "many of the kids want to go back and ask questions about how big the fish can get, if they can go back

and catch more, if they can eat them, and how could the fish like the taste of worms?! I still remember the very first time we did Learn to Fish, and the exuberance of the kids shrieking the first time one of them caught a fish and the entire group running over. This memory gets relived almost every year by the new youth who have the same experience when they catch their first fish. Still to this day, youth recollect these moments at the center."

Tree Street Youth serves about 600 youth annually, 80 during the summer program. Most of the summer participants also attend school year programming at Tree Street. Julia wrapped up her thoughts about the Learn to Fish program by saying "we are so grateful for the continuous support of the Androscoggin Land Trust in helping make these types of opportunities possible for our youth! We truly believe in the power of the natural environment and that these opportunities can be not only eye-opening, but also life changing!" ALT is very grateful for the Learn to Fish experience as well and congratulates Tree Street Youth on the recent start of their building construction/renovation where their wonderful programming will continue. ALT looks forward to seeing Tree Street Youth out and about again soon!



Property Spotlight:

Purinton Homestead Conservation Area, West Bowdoin

— *Judy Marden, Board Member and Chair of Lands Committee*

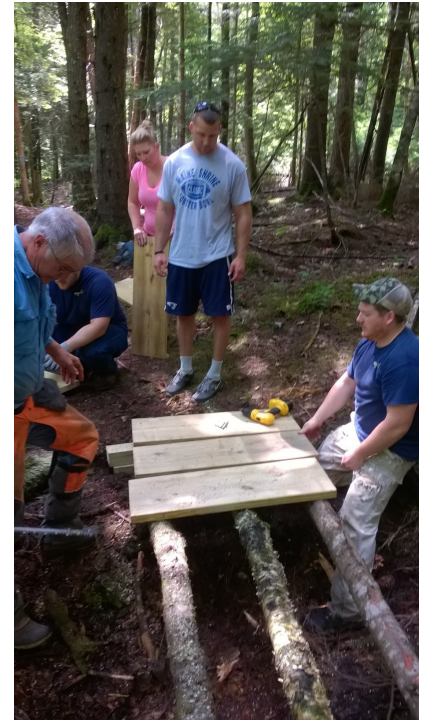
This past July, Matt Purinton could be found tromping along the trail across the road from his family homestead in West Bowdoin, accompanied by volunteers from ALT and the Walmart Distribution Center. Back in 1820, when the Purinton family built their house with bricks made from clay found on the property, they made a trail across the road to cut wood for the woodstove and go fishing in Gillespie Brook. Now, the trail is part of the Purinton Conservation Area, owned by ALT, and open for public recreation. Matt, the fifth-generation owner of the house, entertained his partners in hard labor with stories of his family's history as they hauled logs, cut brush, and made the historic old trail easier to find and follow.

The trail needed work, and who better to lead a work trip than Doug Boyd, ALT's Stewardship co-chair, and chainsaw wizard! Doug had completed a "crop tree release" project on the conservation area last summer (a program of selective cutting to encourage trees considered most beneficial by the Natural Resources Conservation Service). He knew exactly where to find plenty of felled trees to use in rebuilding bog bridges.

For two days, a variety of volunteers joined Matt, Doug and Deb Charest to re-blaze the trees, cut back vegetation encroaching on the footpath, and rebuild ramps and bog bridges, which had been placed years earlier to help prevent degradation on the sides of the trail and assist in crossing muddy sections. A young father pushing his tiny son in a stroller carried loppers to clear overhanging branches along the way. Brion Gallagher, a recent Appalachian Trail hiker, helped tear out and replace old rotten logs in five bridges at key water crossings. A mountain-biker, riding on the preserve trails, paused to provide some expert advice: log bridges need to be constructed in a corduroy fashion, across the footpath, rather than lengthwise. Why? So bike tires won't get stuck between them and throw the rider, of course! Now we know the bridges are functional for other frequent users, and the mountain bikers won't have to ride off-trail to keep going.

According to Gallagher, "Very few of the changes we made took more than time and effort and a little encouragement, and we got great results." There are still more areas to address, as well as some things left behind. "We didn't pick all the blueberries, or pick the flowers, though we did smell some." A Maine Master Naturalist, he added "did you know that in Maine during the summer, fifty new wildflowers will bloom each week?" You'll find a lot of them at Purinton.

ALT acquired the Purinton property in 2001, and protected it with a Declaration of Trust, stating it was to be used for "daytime non-motorized low-impact outdoor recreation." The work-trip volunteers found that the property is being well-used: hikers, dog-walkers, mountain bikers, birders, and anglers all enjoy its beautiful woods, fields, wetlands and stream. More work needs to be done, both on regular maintenance and a few other major trail projects, which will provide opportunities for more volunteers to join in the fun. We are enormously grateful for the work of the individual volunteers, the participants from Walmart's community service program, and to Doug and Susan Boyd who donated materials.



Protect Local Lands with a Gift to ALT!



Your contributions and volunteer efforts are vital to our continuing work to protect important natural landscapes for future generations and to offer enriching outdoor experiences in these special places. Among the ways to contribute, you can:

- **Become a member/renew by making a donation today:** Use the enclosed envelope, or make a donation online using a credit card at androskogginlandtrust.org/donate
- **Consider Planned Giving:** Provide a future gift to ALT by means of a bequest or trust, to make a lasting impact on local conservation efforts while providing for you and your family. Find out more on our website or give us a call!
- **Ask us about our Volunteer Land Stewardship Program:** Learn how you could help by visiting and monitoring one of ALT's properties. To hear about this and other volunteer opportunities, please contact us: (207) 782-2302 or info@androskogginlandtrust.org

Thank you for your consideration!

Meet Shelley Kruszewski, ALT Conservation Director



In August, we welcomed Shelley Kruszewski to the position of Conservation Director, ALT's primary staff role responsible for the full range of activities central to our mission—from land stewardship and education to membership outreach, event planning, and everything in between. In just a few months, Shelley has brought remarkable initiative, communication and organizational skill, and enthusiasm to this key role. We look forward to Shelley's committed leadership in the promising years ahead.

Shelley grew up in Durham, where her interest in the environment was sparked by early outdoor experiences with her family. "Much of my childhood was spent camping, hiking in the white mountains and paddling the lakes and rivers in Maine and New Hampshire," she recalls. In Durham, Shelley's family connection to John Ackerman, a long-time ALT board member, introduced her to the important work of our organization. Prior to becoming a staff member, Shelley signed up with ALT to be the Volunteer Steward for John Ackerman Island (Lisbon Island).

Shelley earned a B.A. in English at the University of New Hampshire and a master's in Community Planning and Development with a focus on Land Use and the Environment from the Muskie School of Public Service. In addition to her conservation experience working for the Association of State Wetland Managers and ReTreeUS, she also served as Associate Dean of Admission at Waynflete School and worked in the legal field. Before starting grad school, she spent time in Costa Rica, leading tours at a butterfly garden and developing a particular passion for the world of insects. Shelley enjoys a variety of active outdoor pursuits, including hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, paddling, and biking.

As residents of Auburn, Shelley and her husband Pawel appreciate the many nearby recreational opportunities of the Androscoggin River and the lakes and hills of the central Maine region. "I feel so fortunate to be working at ALT," Shelley remarks, "as conserving forests, local farms and other lands of ecological value is vitally important work. And I am grateful to have the opportunity to work with so many partner organizations and businesses in the region"

Inhabitant Spotlight: The Porcupine

— *Dana Little, Board Vice President and Kay Little*

ALT owns thousands of acres that provide wonderful habitat for the porcupine. I frequently encounter this prickly member of the rodent family in my travels. On one such occasion, the individual pictured below lumbered off slowly and climbed a tree as I approached. A porcupine does not have to be quick on the ground as it is well-protected with a coat of quills and good climbing skills.

An adult porcupine has about 30,000 quills, which are considered by scientists to be modified hairs. Contrary to popular belief, a porcupine cannot throw its quills. Instead, the porcupine contracts its muscles, so that the quills stand up and detach more easily when they make contact. The barbed quills can work deep into the unfortunate creature who encounters them, with potentially lethal results, if a victim is unable to remove them and open its mouth to eat, for example.

The best way to spot a porcupine's den, is to look in the woods for a pile of rocks with a hole among them, out of which extends an apron of several feet of the animal's droppings.

I have also found porcupine by following the sounds of its shrieks and wails which can be heard from a distance. The porcupine does not hibernate in the winter but spends colder days snuggled up in its den. On warm winter days, you can see its trail, a shallow trough in the snow, created as it traipses back and forth between its den and favorite trees, that it visits to strip bark from the smaller branches. When I find freshly cut branch tips littering the ground under a tree, I look up to see if I can catch a glimpse of the culprit.



In Maine, fishers, coyotes, bears, and great horned owls prey on the porcupine. But it is abundant here and in no danger of extinction. Scientists believe that the ancestor to the current-day porcupine

traveled on rafts from Africa across the Atlantic Ocean to Brazil, and then migrated to North America. The porcupine has traveled a long distance to our lands and given us the chance to wonder at its unique adaptations for survival. You can be on the lookout for signs of these interesting animals the next time you are out for a walk!

Community Forest Advisory Committee Update

— *Mary Howes, Board Member*

After the purchase of over 1200 acres of land in Jay and Canton from Verso Paper in 2014, ALT began the process of planning how to manage the forest land. It began with public meetings in Jay to engage as many people as possible to learn about what the communities would like to see in the future for these properties. From there, a group of dedicated volunteers were appointed to a new Community Forest Advisory Committee. A great mix of people were included: town officials/managers, ATV club members, teachers, students, a botanist, a professional logger, community members and members of the Jay Recreation Committee.

According to Jay Town Manager, Shiloh LaFreniere, "ALT's Community Forest Advisory Committee is a great asset to this community. Their dedication and hard work in overseeing the forested land as well as hosting community events to introduce these properties to the residents has been wonderful. The collaboration between the Advisory Committee and Jay's Recreation Committee is also a great example of different groups working together to benefit the communities that they serve. The dedication of both of these groups is a tremendous benefit to all of our citizens."

The group started meeting in February of 2016 and have been very active since then. They have held several meetings on the different parcels of land, and invited the public, in order

to get to know the properties included in their Community Forest area. The April meeting was an exploration of the Canton Rivershore Conservation Area, in search of a vernal pool. A workday was held at the Spruce Mountain Conservation Area with time dedicated to education around invasive species. On June 20th, a Summer Solstice and Full Moon Madness Trail Tour was held at the Alden Hill Property. In August, a Geocaching Treasure Hunt was held at French Falls, with GPS units provided to help participants find the caches. Several children participated and had fun collecting the clues contained in each geocache that ultimately allowed them to solve a riddle for a prize.

One specific function of the committee is to follow the forest management plans that were written for each property by a licensed forester. The committee advises ALT on matters related to the forest properties. Their goal is to maximize the benefits from each parcel and follow sustainable practices.

The Jay Recreation Committee has been a great partner in this work. They have coordinated and participated in substantial clean-up work, installed signs, organized events and promoted these public lands. The mutual goal is to get the community excited about the great assets we have and to promote the use of the trails, to take care of the land, be proud of it, and above all to get outdoors and explore!





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ANDROSCOGGIN LAND TRUST

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Staff

Shelley Kruszewski
Conservation Director



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Jay Hannaford Helps Reusable Bags Program Benefits ALT in November!

For the month of November, ALT will receive a \$1 donation every time someone purchases the blue reusable bag with the good karma message at the Jay Hannaford. We are grateful for this opportunity and the support of the community.



We love our sponsors!

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
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