



ANDROSCOGGIN LAND TRUST

Spring 2025



Camp Gustin- Sabattus

Maine Game Warden Sergeant Harry Wiegman talks with MCI participants about ice fishing at Camp Gustin

Coming Soon, New Trails at Camp Gustin



Legend

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|--------------|
| Trail Head | Bog Overlook Trail | Stone Dam Trail | Pavilion |
| Parking Lot | Green Bog Trail | Bridge | Beach |
| Blue Trail Labonte Falls | Field Trail | Boat Launch | Amphitheater |
| Red Trail Labonte Falls | Accessible Trail Head & Accessible Parking | Viewshed | Bathroom |
| Cut Across Trail | Beaver Tale Trail | Day Use Sites | |

About the Trails

Blue Labonte Falls Trail

Starts at the main trail head. The loop trail is 2 miles with viewsheds of Labonte Falls, Curtis Bog, and Curtis Brook. Moderate elevation gains with highest point at 435' lowest 240'. Two bridge crossing, water features, hills, forested trail, bench for seating.

Red Labonte Falls Trail

0.4-mile loop spur trail off from the Blue Trail. Great views of Labonte Falls. Water features, hills, forested trail, bench for seating.

Bog Overlook Trail

Access to Curtis Bog from the Blue Trail. Great for bird watching. Water features and bench.

Field Trail

0.7-mile connector trail. Great views of Curtis Bog and wildlife watching. Connects to Blue Trail, Beach, Pavilion and Amphitheater.

Beaver Tale Trail

The trail with an amazing tale. ADA, Bridge crossing, boardwalk, water and rock features, forested trail, bench for seating, views of Loon Pond.

Stone Dam Trail

Short trail to the historic stone dam on Curtis Brook. Water and rock features, ADA.

Green Bog Trail

Starts at the main trail head. The loop trail is just under 1 mile with viewsheds of Curtis Bog. Moderate elevation gains with highest point at 418' lowest 307'. Most challenging trail.



Do not forget
to book your
camping Trip
at Camp
Gustin



Fish-On!

Ice Fishing with MCI

On February 21st, ALT hosted students from Maine Community Integration (MCI) at Camp Gustin in Sabattus and introduced them to ice fishing. Ice fishing is one of Maine's premier winter activities that draws enthusiasts, young and old. MCI's program supports young people through nature-driven social advocacy programs, equipping immigrant girls and other young people, along with the families and communities that support them, with the skills and resources to raise their voices, access equal opportunities, and live healthier, more fulfilling lives. ALT partnered with MCI to provide an opportunity for a group of MCI girls to learn about and experience a day of winter fun on the ice.

Camp Gustin is ALT's conservation area acquired in 2022 consisting of 95 acres, located on Loon Pond in Sabattus. Camp Gustin abuts Curtis Bog, which consists of 114 acres of ALT conserved land. Community members, partners, Lands for Maine's Future, The Conservation Fund, Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund collaborated in a multi-year campaign to allow ALT to conserve this former Boy Scout Camp to ensure that it remains a protected outdoor recreational asset for the community forever. ALT's February ice fishing event with MCI was an opportunity for ALT to extend Camp Gustin's value to the youth of the greater Lewiston/Auburn area.

When the group of a dozen MCI girls arrived at Camp Gustin on the morning of February 21st, ALT Board Member, Jim Pross was just finishing shoveling out the outhouse and greeted the group. Over a foot of unbroken snow blanketed the ground nearly everywhere but the dirt road. The tall pines and hardwoods of Camp Gustin's forest stood in the snow like sturdy soldiers protecting Loon Pond's frozen shoreline. The cloudless morning sky forecasted a good weather day of outdoor fun. Ashley Medina, Program Coordinator at MCI and an ALT Board Member, greeted Jim and let him know that the girls were excited to get on the ice. Jim and Ashley led the girls down to the pond on the single snowmobile path made some days before which provided some snowpack for the girls to walk on without going calf-deep into the snow. The girls walked with some trepidation onto the ice, after receiving some words of caution about ice safety.



MCI students learning about the important jobs Maine Game Wardens do.

Many thanks to Maine Game Warden Sergeant Harry Wiegman.



Sergeant Wiegman's family has a distinguished and significant history with ALT, with multiple generations having contributed their skills and dedication to the organization over a considerable period, demonstrating a deep and enduring connection.



Board Member Emmy Andersson's daughter learning how to bait a hook with Amy Soper

Once on the ice, introductions were made, and it was revealed that for every one of the 12 girls participating it was the first time any of them had been on a frozen body of water. While several of them had been on rink ice before, none had ever experienced the wonder of standing on a frozen pond. ALT's Stewardship and Lands Director, Amy Soper, arrived on the scene and the group marched back up the path to the roadway to help unload all of the equipment for the day: a folding table, ice fishing traps, a Solo stove, firewood, a propane grill, and the ice auger.

Amy set up the folding table and displayed the ice fishing equipment for her instruction and demonstration. She handed out flash cards of Maine fish species to each of the girls, and offered insight into what they could hope to catch at Loon Pond. Amy demonstrated how the ice fishing traps, or "tip-ups", worked as the girls listened intently. They were all excited, and some anxious, to see how the ice auger worked. Before Amy began drilling the first hole, she reassured the girls, who had never witnessed such a thing, "Now don't worry, the ice we're standing on won't crack, and we all aren't going to fall in the water. A geyser of water isn't going to come shooting out of the hole." The girls watched in delight as the electric auger drilled through nearly 16 inches of ice, and when they huddled around the ice hole to take a measurement of how thick it was, several couldn't resist splashing their fingers in the water. The girls broke into groups of two, and one by one, began setting their tip-ups in their assigned holes. Jim worked with the girls as they baited their hooks with the shiners, while the rest of the group followed Amy as she drilled the holes. Some of the girls delighted in pulling the bait from the bait bucket and baiting the hook, while others insisted that their partner take on the task.

When the traps were set, several of the girls worked with Jim to start a fire on the ice in the Solo Stove. Others bustled about on the ice, while some wandered in the woods along the shore, exploring and experiencing Maine in a way they hadn't before. Just then, Game Warden Sargeant Harry Wiegman unloaded his snowmobile from the bed of his Inland Fisheries and Wildlife pick-up truck and drove it down onto the ice. Amy introduced Sargeant Wiegman to the girls and he explained the role that Game Wardens play in natural resource protection. Sargeant Wiegman, who insisted that everyone call him "Harry," asked Amy to drill him a hole in the ice. The girls watched, wondering what he was going to do. He took out his jig pole and explained to the girls how it worked. Then, as if the snowmobile and jig pole were not exciting enough for the girls, Harry took out his fish-finder. The girls were all very interested in Harry and the toys he brought. Several of them spent the rest of the day trying out the jig pole with their eyes glued to the fish finder, watching fish swim by the bait.



ALT Board Members and volunteers, Josh Nagine, Judy Marden, Emmy Andersson, and Missy Bilodeau all came to check out the fun and meet some of the girls. Jim and Amy grilled veggie burgers for lunch and some of the girls sampled Amy's wild caught lake trout that she pulled through the ice a few days before and smoked just for the occasion. Judy Marden made chocolate peanut butter balls that she brought for the girls for dessert.

With the ice fishing slow in the morning hours, some of the girls were led on a walk through the snowy woods, while others did teenage girl things like making Tic-Tok videos on the ice. "It was so great to see our girls exploring this special place throughout the day and being themselves while enjoying the new experience," Ashley Medina offered. "I'm proud of them for being open to new things like ice fishing, even when they are pushed out of their comfort zone. I am always amazed at how quickly they can adapt and take on new experiences," she continued. Right when the girls seemed to despair that there were no fish, despite spotting them on Harry's fish finder, Amy announced, "Hey girls, what did I tell you we are supposed to say when you see a flag go up?" She pointed out to one of the tip-ups, and several of the girls recalled Amy's instructions from earlier and yelled-out, "FISH-ON !" Finally, a flag.

Harry instructed the two girls whose trap it was on how to set the hook, and one of them volunteered to give it a try. Sadly, the fish got off. But the girls were hooked on the excitement and anticipation that ice fishing brings. After rebaiting the hook, it was only a few minutes later before someone called out, "FISH-ON!" The girls followed Harry and Amy to the triggered tip-up, and as Harry slowly pulled the trap out of the ice hole, the girls could see the line running. One of them set the hook and then followed Harry's instruction for pulling the fish up and out of the hole. Everyone delighted at the sight of the twelve-inch pickerel laying on the ice. As Harry removed the hook, he offered some information about the species and gave the fish to one of the girls to release back into the water through the hole in the ice, as all the others watched in anticipation.



As the day drew to an end, although the fire was doused, the girls' excitement was not. Several resisted the fact that it was time to head home, and sat on Harry's snowmobile watching the fish finder as one among them worked the jig pole. Finally, Ashely said, "Alright girls, let's thank Harry and say goodbye." "Thank you, Harry! Thank you, Amy!" they each called out as they trod off the ice, and up the bank of Loon Pond to their waiting vans.

The sunny sky continued to brighten and the woods of Camp Gustin, were quiet once again. Camp Gustin has been offering joyful new outdoor experiences to young people in the area for decades. ALT's ice fishing event with the MCI girls demonstrated that at Camp Gustin, the opportunity for outdoor learning and new experiences for local youth is here to stay.



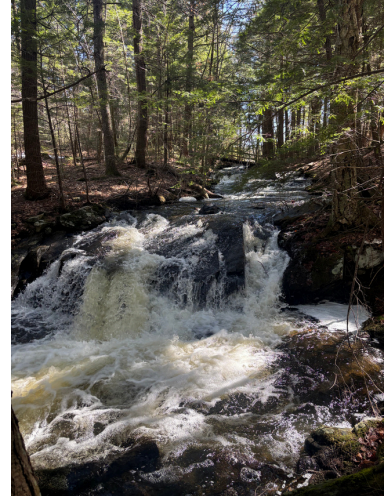
-Jim Pross, ALT Board Member

Protecting Maine's Pristine Lakes



Maine's 6000 scenic lakes are as woven into our quality of life as they are into the landscape. As part of ALT's mission to Protect, through land conservation and stewardship, the important natural areas, traditional landscapes, and outdoor experience in the Androscoggin River watershed ALT had taken pivotal steps in the preservation of Maine's scenic lakes and the vital ecosystems they support. Over the last 3 years ALT has conserved almost 3 miles of shoreline on two of Maine's great lakes, and we are working on conserving an additional 1200 feet. This conservation effort not only protects the scenic beauty and biodiversity around these great lakes, which is a crucial habitat for various wildlife, but also ensures recreational opportunities for future generations. This initiative upholds the mission of ALT to promote sustainable stewardship and conservation of the region's natural landscapes and resources.

ALT finalized two major projects Camp Gustin Conservation Area and Forest Pond Conservation Area. ALT acquired fee ownership the Camp Gustin property in Sabattus as of September of 2022 with the support of Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, Land for Maine's Future, Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, and The Conservation Fund. The Camp Gustin project permanently protects 95 acres adjacent to our 334-acre ALT-owned Curtis Bog Conservation Area in Sabattus, along Loon Pond and Curtis Bog. This project protects approximately 1,800 feet of shore frontage on Loon Pond, several flowing and intermittent streams, vernal pools, and wetland including 15 acres of Curtis Bog. Camp Gustin also provides equitable outdoor access to low-impact recreation, including hiking, biking, swimming, fishing, canoeing/kayaking, and snowshoeing.



In a generous end-of-year gift for 2024, a family has gifted the pristine 17-acre property surrounding the beautiful Forest Pond in Canton along with supporting stewardship funds. Forest Pond Conservation Area protects the 100-foot buffer around this 45-acre, remote pond with no development. Its rocky shoreline has several rock bluffs and is a cold-water fishery. There are snowmobile and ATV access trails along the northwestern boundary that are maintained by active snowmobile and ATV clubs. Forest Pond is stocked annually with rainbow trout and is a historic brook trout habitat. Protecting Maine lakes and fisheries is crucial because they provide vital habitat for wildlife, offer significant recreational opportunities, support a diverse ecosystem including fish species, waterfowl, amphibians, and other aquatic life, making them important for maintaining ecological balance. By securing a 100-foot buffer around this natural treasure, ALT helps ensure the preservation and protection of its scenic beauty and biodiversity for future generations.

ALT's latest project will insure resource protection for a 300-acre property in central Maine. This project is supported by the of Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, Land for Maine's Future, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund. This project offers significant ecological and recreational benefits, preserving open spaces and public access while protecting threatened species and 1200 feet of undeveloped shoreline. The conservation efforts safeguard a large habitat area with diverse ecosystems, including wetlands and forests, contributing to wildlife protection while maintaining the historical tradition of public recreational use.





2024 River Clean-Up Crew

ALT's commitment to the conservation of the Androscoggin River Watershed is reflected in successful volunteer-driven clean-up events, which have effectively removed litter and debris, enhancing the river's health and promoting the sustainability of this essential ecosystem.

The 2024 River Clean-Up saw over 60 dedicated volunteers come together to address storm damage and restore access to the Foundry Site Carry in Boat Launch in Livermore Falls. These efforts demonstrated remarkable community spirit and environmental commitment. Despite the site being inaccessible due to storm damage, volunteers worked tirelessly to remove trash and debris, ensuring the area was safe and functional again, and even repurposed some of their finds, highlighting their resourcefulness and dedication to maintaining clean waterways.

Upcoming events – Save the Date

Please check our website and social media for event updates

June 5th-2025 Plant Paddle with Lake Stewards of Maine - Loon Pond 9am-12pm. Sign up on facebook event or Lake Stewards of Maine.

June 23rd-2025 Fishing, Fiddle & The Fixins 12-6p \$5 Pre person Register at gardenclub@sabattusrec.com

July 21st- 2025 Sunset Yoga & Soft Rock Cello. Join us from 6-9pm Camp Gustin Loon Pond R., Sabattus.

August 25th-2025 Paddle & Cold Creeps Band. Register at gardenclub@sabattusrec.com

August TBD Camp Gustin Family Fun Day. Loon Pond Rd Sabattus. Live music, games, hikes, fishing and more.

September 13th 2025 Annual River Clean-Up. Join us from 9am-12pm at Festival Plaza Auburn

November TBD - Annual Meeting

Many thanks to 2024 River Clean Up business sponsors:

- Androscoggin Bank
- Franklin Savings Bank
- Eagle Creek
- Otis Federal Credit Union
- Hight Family of Dealers
- Appraisal Group
- Main Land
- Wood Pellet Warehouse
- Norway Savings Bank
- Axis Natural Food
- Freeport Wild bird Supply
- Pallet One



A Banking Force For Good



A heartfelt thank you to the Jay Rec. Committee and all volunteers whose dedication and hard work greatly contribute to the success of our initiatives, helping to foster a vibrant and supportive community environment.

**See you all at the next River Clean-up on
September 13th 2025 from 9am-12pm at Festival
Plaza Auburn**

Scan for events information



Spotlight of New Board Members

Margaret Craven

Margaret grew up on a small farm on the west coast of Ireland and is well acquainted with and loves the outdoors. Her professional training is in social work and she worked at John F. Murphy Homes for 25 years.



She is in the process of retiring from the Maine State Legislature after serving in the House for nine years and the Senate for six. She holds a Masters degree in adult education from USM Gorham and an undergraduate degree in Social Sciences from USM. Margaret is widowed after a fifty year marriage, has two sons and three grandchildren. She is an avid walker and hiker and spent 40 years as a long distance runner. She keeps busy serving on several boards with organizations that provide services to vulnerable populations. Margaret states, “my biggest concern is global warming, but the good news is that we know how to rectify that; we just need to do it.” Margaret lives with her partner Ted Walworth. Together they like to hike, walk in the woods and tend their garden in season. They also like to travel. In the past three years they have been to Ireland and France and they went to the UK on Queen Mary 2. In January they are headed to the Galapagos. Margaret looks forward to serving on the ALT board and getting to know her fellow members and the staff.

Hunter Steele

Hunter grew up in Lewiston and lives in a property abutting Thorncrag providing an outlet for his enjoyment of exploring trails. He recently graduated from Bowdoin College with a BS in Economics and works remotely for OGx Consulting, where he works to guide public-sector companies through organizational change management processes. As a lifelong resident of Lewiston who has returned to his hometown after graduating college, he has a keen interest in the future of conservation in Androscoggin County. His passion for conservation has been reinforced with his research into Edmund Muskie’s Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act.



Ashley Medina

Ashley Medina was born in Texas and has lived in Lewiston, Maine, since she was three years old. She is a proud mom of two teenagers and serves as the Community Engagement Coordinator at



Maine Community Integration. Ashley is passionate about using her lived experiences to advocate for positive change in her community. With strong ties to her Indigenous roots, she finds deep healing in nature, reflecting the values of her ancestors who respected and cared for the Earth. Ashley loves nature and is dedicated to learning as much as she can to advocate for the conservation of Maine’s forests. In her role, she works closely with inner-city youth, helping them access the outdoors and encouraging them to explore the environment, learn about wildlife, and experience the mental, physical, and spiritual benefits that come with connecting to nature.

Jon Svor

Jon is a life-long resident of Lewiston and currently lives in Lewiston with his wife, Toni, and identical twin daughters Julia and Abigail.



Originally going to UMaine Machias for Environmental Studies with a concentration in Marine Biology, Jon has always felt a desire to be outdoors in nature. Jon changed his career path to computer technology and has been working in the computer field for over 24 years. Jon currently works for Auburn Savings Bank as VP and IT & Security Officer and owns his own computer consulting business. Jon is a Red Cross Blood Donor Ambassador for the bank, helping out with local blood drives in the area. Jon enjoys spending time outdoors hiking in Maine and getting out in nature whenever he can. He also enjoys bass fishing with his family, playing hockey locally in the Contractor’s Hockey League, volunteering his time to maintain the hockey league’s website, and watching his daughters play tennis at the collegiate level.

Flora Fauna

The lady's-slipper flower holds a special place in the hearts of many Mainers. They always make for a unique find when out exploring the woods in the spring and early summer.

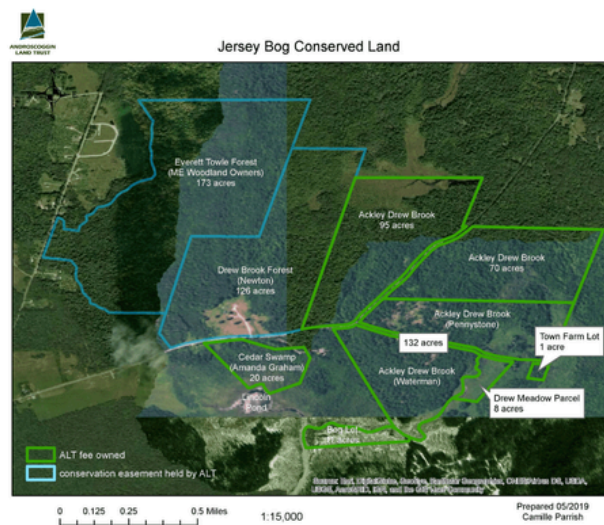
One often encounters the pink lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) which grows on most of ALT's properties. However, it is a special treat when one stumbles upon a population of yellow lady's-slippers (*Cypripedium parviflorum*), a species that is uncommon in Maine and considered rare in other New England states. In the center of one of ALT's land holdings—Jersey Bog—lies a very large population of the yellow lady's-slipper.



This yellow lady's-slipper bonanza can be found in the cedar swamp, a 20-acre parcel owned and managed by ALT, which sits between Bear Pond Road and the Bog Brook Pond. The cedar swamp was acquired by the land trust in 2012 as a donation from Hannaford Brothers as part of a Wetland Mitigation Compensation agreement when they were building their Turner supermarket.



The Jersey Bog Conservation Area is part of a large wetland complex in the towns of Buckfield and Turner. While the entire undeveloped habitat block surrounding Jersey Bog is over 4,500 acres, the Androscoggin Land Trust currently conserves 600 of these acres. The ALT properties are a mix, with some being owned outright by the land trust and others in private ownership with ALT holding an easement of the conserved land.



While there are no hiking trails within the Jersey Bog Conservation Area, these ALT-owned properties are open to the public and are regularly used by hikers, bird-watchers, hunters, fishermen and others. For more information, check out the Jersey Bog pages on the ALT's website.

Rick Speer, ALT Board Member



**ANDROSCOGGIN
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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.

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Megan Ricker – Turner

Jon Svor – Lewiston

Rick Speer – Auburn

Rob Taylor – Jay

Staff

Amy Soper – Stewardship Director

Thank you for your continued support of ALT and the work we do. ALT celebrates 35 years of commitment to preserving and protecting the lands and waters in the Androscoggin River watershed. As we look ahead, we are dedicated to creating an inclusive network of trails and natural spaces, ensuring everyone can appreciate the value of nature and outdoor experiences. Our commitment to protecting natural spaces includes safeguarding lands and waters within the Androscoggin River watershed. We collaborate with landowners to ensure the preservation of these vital resources. Please consider supporting our mission by donating, helping to ensure the ongoing protection of the Androscoggin River watershed and fostering a love for nature among all communities.

Scan for membership
information



Ask us about our trail program, volunteer trail work days or property monitoring opportunities! Please contact us at: (207) 782-2302 or info@androscogginlandtrust.org

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