



LELT taking steps to ensure bright future

You may be wondering how Loon Echo Land Trust and support of local conservation is faring with the downturn in the economy. So, I want to share with you the status of our organization and the important steps we are taking to ensure Loon Echo has a bright future.

First, the good news. Loon Echo owns



2,609 acres of preserve land worth \$3,105,158, with another 787 acres in private conservation easements. Holding

this amount of land for the benefit of the public has increased our visibility in the community, while at the same time heightening our stewardship efforts.

One of our current projects, the expansion of the Pleasant Mountain Preserve,

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LMF protects heritage, shapes future

By Carrie Walia
LELT Executive Director

You've probably heard about the Land for Maine's Future Program (LMF) if you have read the Loon Echo News or browsed through a Maine newspaper during election time. But did you know that the program's fate is in your hands?

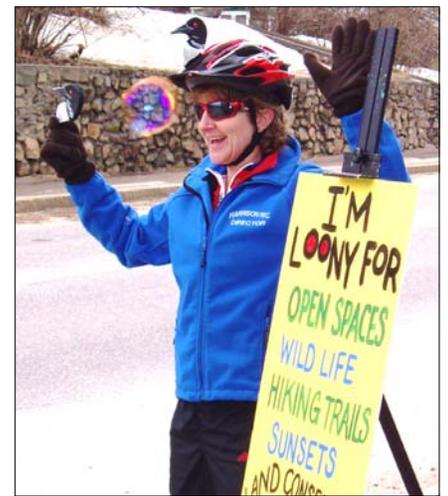
LMF was developed in 1987 when citizens urged the state's leaders into action to help protect natural areas for future generations to enjoy. A \$35 million bond package passed as a result, the biggest bond to-date. The bond was backed by a



majority of voters in 16 counties. Soon LMF became a critical tool for protecting treasured open spaces. Since 1987 another \$82 million has been bonded to help purchase important lands and conservation easements from willing sellers that amount to an astounding 490,000 acres.

Many of Loon Echo's own properties have been protected, in part because of

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'Loony Girl' Paula Holt displays the custom-made loon heads available to this year's trekkers! Pages 2-3.

Why I care

Erica Bartlett

Member: Since 2000

Occupation: Product Manager at I-many, Inc. (a software company)

Home: Portland, but grew up in Casco

Personal: Enjoys writing, reading, photography, walking hiking and cooking (with a focus on local/seasonal foods).



"My father helped start Loon Echo in the 1980s, and both of my parents were heavily involved in it. Caring about the land and wanting to preserve it for future generations has simply become part of who I am. I want to make sure that we are not the last ones who can enjoy all the peace and beauty that the natural world offers."

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Yes you can!

If I can ride in the Trek ...

Every year my job at the Loon Echo Hike n' Bike Trek has been to start the trekkers off on their rides. "Five, four, three, two, one," I shout through the bullhorn, "and you're off!" In the beginning I used my role as a convenient excuse not to ride myself. Riding even 25 miles seemed like a lot of work to me. Why were all these folks doing it for *fun*?



But then I began to feel like the proverbial bridesmaid and never the bride. Always the Trek volunteer but never the rider. I thought a few bragging rights of my own might be nice. Also, truth be told, I was a little ashamed of myself. As the president of Loon Echo, shouldn't I be out there setting an example? Shouldn't I at least try the Trek myself so I would be able to tell others what a great event it was from personal experience?

So, having talked myself into riding and then writing a pledge raising letter to all my friends and relatives, thereby assuring I could not back out without losing face, I started to train for the 2004 Trek. At first the hill up Route 85 on the east side of Panther Pond was daunting, but soon I was pedaling all 14 miles around the lake. I dragged my husband Lou along and we started planning 25-mile excursions.

Then I got a call from my athletic daughter-in-law. "I think what you're doing is great," she said, "but if you can do 25, you can do 50." FIFTY?! What had I gotten myself into? Now I had more face-saving to do. So on we went, Lou and I, one day biking 35 miles over hilly terrain, and actually feeling not too beaten up at the end.

Then the day of the Trek came, and the most I had ridden was 35 miles. "Oh, it's an easy 50," people said, "no problem, you can do it." I performed my usual job with the bullhorn, then

got on my bike and set forth, trying hard not to think about all those miles ahead of me.

I won't regale you with a mile by mile account of my ride, except to say that I loved the peaceful beauty of the route, the laughter and camaraderie of my biking companions, and the encouragement we all gave each other as we tackled endless Knights Hill Road. Pulling up to the rest

stops where I, too, wore cycling shorts and a helmet made me one of the gang, and when I reached the 25-mile half-way point at the Cold River Campground, believe it or not, I was gung-ho to turn around and do another 25 to Shawnee Peak.

I do admit that Knights Hill Road was a killer. Every time you think you've reached the summit and can coast downhill, you find more uphill looming in front of you. But pedaling alongside a 13-year-old gave me some starch — if he can do it, so can I, I told myself, and I don't care if I'm 50 years older than this kid.

The pride I felt when I rode into the parking lot at Shawnee Peak, limped off my bike, and headed for the nearest swig of water with ibuprofen was worth every sore muscle I felt the next day. I had earned my bragging rights. And I can finally assure anyone, even unathletic, nervous nellys like me, **Yes You Can!**



Connie Cross and Lou Dapas riding in their first Trek in 2004.

LELT Contacts

Board of Directors

Connie Cross, President
David Hursty, Vice President
Robert Gowdy, Treasurer
Mark Van Winkle, Secretary
Maggie Bauer
Dottie Chalmers
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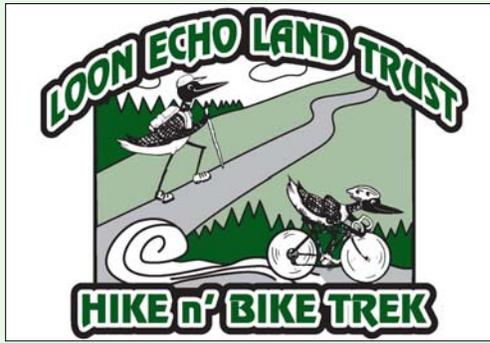
Heidi Schellenger,
Development Coordinator
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207-647-4352

Website

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“Loon Echo’s values mirror our own here at Hancock Lumber, which is one of the reasons we are proud to support the Hike n’ Bike Trek once again this year. Stewardship and preservation of our resources is what these programs are all about.”

—Kevin Hancock,
CEO, Hancock Lumber

Saturday, September 19th

Be an ‘Early Bird’ and register today to save \$\$\$

Choose from a 25, 50 or 100-mile Bike Trek
— “the toughest century in Maine!”—
or a 6-mile Hike Trek.

New this year: Loon heads and tails for helmets and hats! (minimum pledge required); **team registration** and **awesome prizes** (Kennebec River white water rafting trip and Bear Pond weekend get-away).

Register at www.lelt.org or 207-647-4352.

Please help Loon Echo conserve land by participating in **our biggest fundraising event!**

A Special Thanks to the ‘09 Trek Sponsors!

Hancock Lumber	Maine Interfaith Power & Light
Shawnee Peak Ski Area	Moose Landing Marina
Nassau Broadcasting Maine	The Printery
Mount Washington Radio	Bridgton Hospital
Yankee Amateur Radio	Carey Kish
The Bridgton News	Ernie's Cycle Shop
About Time Graphics	Camp Wigwam
Appalachian Mountain Club	Chalmers Insurance
Cry of the Loon Shops	Hannaford Supermarkets
MacDonald Motors	Northeast Planning Associates, Inc.

LELT Calendar of Events

Program	Description	Date, time
Summer Solstice Hike at Bald Pate	Celebrate the first day of summer with a hike up Bald Pate to remember Bob Chase, a founder of Loon Echo. Meet at the trailhead for a 20-30 minute walk to the summit.	Saturday, June 21 5 p.m.
Pondicherry Park Walk	A 1-mile walk through the park to see construction progress. Meet at Loon Echo’s booth at Art in the Park at 9:45 a.m. or at trailhead across from the hospital at 10 a.m.	Saturday, July 18
Natural Community Hike	A moderately difficult hike on the Ledges Trail at Pleasant Mountain. Basic introduction to a woodland community. Meet at the trailhead on Mountain Road.	Friday, August 14 10 a.m.
Annual Meeting	The 22 nd Annual LELT Meeting. See details Page 8.	Sunday, August 30
Hike n’ Bike Trek	Bike 25, 50 or 100 miles or hike six miles on Pleasant Mountain. See details above.	Saturday, September 19
Forestry Walk at Mayberry Hill	Join us for an educational walk on sustainable forestry with Jay Braunscheidel of Integrated Forest Management. Learn about forest management and the role it plays in the community. Meet at the trail head on Mayberry Hill Road in Casco.	Saturday, October 17 10 a.m.
Digital Tour of LELT Preserves	Tour the LELT land preserves in a slide show at Bridgton Community Center by Jon Evans, Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator. Light refreshments will be served.	Saturday, November 14 10 a.m.
Snowshoe Hike at Pleasant Mountain	A moderately difficult hike up the Ledges trail. Appropriate clothing, boots, snowshoes/traction devices, water and snacks needed. RSVP is required for this hike.	Saturday, December 12, Ledges Trail , 10 a.m.

To register or for more information email info@lelt.org or call 647-4352. All outdoor hikes and walks are subject to weather conditions. Additional activities will be posted to LELT’s online program calendar at www.lelt.org.

Please welcome LELT's development coordinator

Hello,

I can still hardly believe that while many people are struggling to find work, I was able to find a job which allows me to use the skills I have to support a cause I care deeply about – protecting and conserving western Maine's natural resources.

I am almost as thrilled to be back in the land preservation community as I am to be back in Maine.

I have been living 'outside' for more than 25 years, and a lot has changed. One of my favorite childhood memories is riding my pony through an orchard in Gorham - an orchard that has since been converted to a subdivision.

Many of the trails, forests and meadows that I explored back then no longer exist, and I'm proud to be part of a group that protects those resources in the northern Sebago Lake region for tomorrow's children.

My responsibilities to Loon Echo include working with the Board of Trustees to diversify sources of funding, and making sure that our supporters know how much we appreciate them. I have spent the last two months learning as much as I can about the organization, and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in coming months at our hikes and special events.

Warm Regards,

Heidi Schellenger

Howell family donates key easement for Pondicherry

Thanks to a family's generous donation, a strategic corridor to Bridgton's Pondicherry Park has been secured. Frank and Nicky Howell and their children, Justin and Ali Kiger, made the donation through Snapdragon LLC, the family's real estate and intellectual property holding company. Snapdragon holds the property for both the Magic Lantern and Down East Inc. in downtown Bridgton.

"Snapdragon's board really believes Pondicherry Park is a wonderful addition to the town," said Frank Howell, who is president and chief executive officer of Down East and the managing member of Snapdragon.

The donation will allow construction of a trail leading from the Bridgton Community Center on Depot Street to the Bob Dunning Memorial Bridge, the main gateway to Pondicherry Park.

The Kendall and Anna Ham Charitable Foundation Bridge will be located further to the south behind the Bridgton Learning Center. Its purpose is to serve the elementary school, allowing students quick access to the park for educational programs.

Duties: Grow operating revenue, expand donor opportunities, communication and appreciation, maintain database and provide administrative assistance to Carrie, and assist with major campaigns.

Contact Information:
Heidi@lelt.org,
647-4352

Personal: Heidi and her husband, Jim live in Norway with Jim's Mom, Carrie; Hunter, their elderly Chesapeake Bay Retriever; two young horses; and six (despite Hunter's best efforts) chickens.

Past Experience: Peace Corps Volunteer (Nepal), Lancaster Farmland Trust (Pennsylvania), Non-profit consultant (Montana).

Leisure Activities: Training for the Western Foothills Land Trust Sprint Triathlon on July 11, home improvements, working with horses, reading, gardening, and trying to keep the chickens alive.

Thoughts about Loon Echo: "I am so impressed with the passion and dedication of the board, staff and members of Loon Echo. I will be working very hard to make the creation of this position worthwhile – it is my goal to diversify and stabilize the income flow, so LELT can protect and conserve land."



Heidi Schellenger

Except for the bridges and the purchase of a six-acre field, the park is nearly complete.

"The focus for this year is to finish park construction and further fundraise for the Bob Dunning Memorial Bridge so residents and visitors can access the park from downtown," said Carrie Walia, Loon Echo Executive Director.

A few of the trails need further definition and leveling, but overall the trail system is constructed. Trail signs and markers, made by volunteer Ernie Kozun, have been installed.

"It is amazing to see how Pondicherry Park's walking trails have become so defined in such a short time, said Jon Evans, Loon Echo's stewardship and volunteer coordinator. "People are clearly using and enjoying the trails. The signs are unique and inviting to children; birds, butterflies, turtles, and rabbits now define each trail."

Visit www.pondicherrypark.org to download and print a trail map.

Despite tough economy, members are giving

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was set in motion last summer with the preliminary approval of \$761,000 from the Land for Maine's Future Program. Since then two parcels have been negotiated for purchase and are working their way through state review. The review process will conclude in the fall, so Loon Echo has put the public fundraising campaign on hold until more is known about the state's contribution to each property. *(See the related story on Page 1 for more on LMF and the Pleasant Mountain Project.)*

We have increased our grant-writing efforts to private foundations and already are seeing results. The Davis Conservation Foundation recently awarded Loon Echo \$5,000 to begin a regional conservation plan to identify the most important lands in the region, so we can seek out projects with the greatest conservation value.

Another bright note is that you, our members, have continued giving during these hard times. We have even gained some new members, many of whom were introduced to Loon Echo when hiking at a preserve.

Yet there are areas of concern, so we are taking steps to address them. Loon Echo's daily operations are currently funded by three primary sources of income: membership dues, investment income from endowments, and the Hike n' Bike Trek. The income funds the office, staff to manage land transactions and administration, and stewardship programs on our easements and preserves.

When comparing the first quarter of 2009 to last year, the number of members has remained consistent, but there has been a 20 percent decline in income. Some members have reduced their donations and some have postponed their support until the economy improves. So to compensate for the decline,

we have trimmed the 2009 budget by 2.6 percent. We hope, of course, that the economy will improve and contributions will increase by the end of the year.

One way that you can help Loon Echo and also have a great time is by participating in the Hike n' Bike Trek on September 19 at Shawnee Peak Ski Area. New to the event this year are handmade loon heads and tails for mounting on bike helmets and hats. We have also brought back a team registration option with two great prizes, a guided whitewater rafting trip down the Kennebec River and a weekend getaway at Camp Wigwam on Bear Pond. *(See the Trek event details on Page 3.)*

We are fortunate to have a modest endowment (\$341,000 as of 3/31/2009). The Finance Committee has carefully invested the fund, so Loon Echo didn't suffer as much as most investors during the past year. Even so, we need to grow our endowment if we are to meet our responsibilities of protecting land in perpetuity.

So the Loon Echo Board of Directors decided it's time to invest in the organization- to develop more capacity, provide greater services and set aside quality lands for future generations. In May, we welcomed Heidi Schellenger of Norway as our part-time Development Coordinator. She will be working closely with the Development Committee to expand our financial capacity and to build membership.

We know that public support of Loon Echo's mission is strong and we hope to tap into that desire to keep the northern Sebago Lake region pristine and natural. You can help by telling your friends and neighbors about Loon Echo's efforts and encouraging them to join us. Finally, I'd like to express my deep appreciation for all of you who support Loon Echo. With your help, I know we can keep moving forward.

Crooked River Initiative Series

Loon Echo is part of the Upland Headwaters Alliance, a collaboration of area land trusts working with the Portland Water District to protect the Crooked River Watershed through outreach and education.

June 22: Glacial Origins of the Crooked River Watershed.

Woody Thompson of the Maine Geological Survey will present on the geologic history of the river's watershed at the Norway Public Library at 7 p.m.

June 27: Conservation Forestry Field Day. The American Forestry Foundation and its partners will lead participants through forestry and wildlife management, carbon sequestration and other topics on a conservation property in Waterford from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

July 18: Jugtown Plains Habitat Walk and Talk. John Gunn, forest ecologist and ornithologist, and Pixie Williams, plant biologist, will guide participants through the

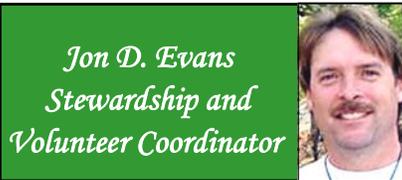
flora and fauna of the Jugtown Plains, a Hancock Lumber property. Meet at the Casco Firehouse parking lot at 2 p.m.

August 6: Forest to the Faucet Presentation. Paul Barton of UMass will share a study of public reservoir watersheds in the Northeast, significant to the Sebago Lake watershed. Paul Hunt from the Portland Water District will speak about water quality research on the Crooked River. 7 p.m., Alford Auditorium at St. Joseph's College in Standish.

FMI: 207-647-4352, www.lelt.org

Pleasant Mountain is dynamic, diverse

As I begin my second year with Loon Echo, I now have the opportunity to peel back another layer of learning on all the



wonderful lands acquired over the years. Each property has its own character and diversity. Pleasant Mountain, with its varied terrain and extensive habitat

types, is by far the most dynamic property in Loon Echo's holdings.

Our Pleasant Mountain stewardship program attempts to strike a balance between offering a safe and well-built trail system and protecting sensitive tree and plant species as well as habitat where wildlife travel, reproduce and forage. Hikers, hunters, and nature enthusiasts, as well as wildlife and plants, all get to utilize and enjoy the mountain.

In this and upcoming newsletters, I will share Pleasant Mountain's most dynamic features in a series of articles.

Before we get started, I should explain that the Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) classifies all the natural communities and plant species in the state. They are ranked by their state (S) and global (G) rarity. This ranking method is explained at the Maine Department of Conservation website, in the Maine Natural Areas Program section (<http://www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mnap/>).

Please join me as we explore the rare plants and forest types on the mountain in this article and on a hike up the Ledges Trail on Friday, August 14. (See the event calendar on Page 3 for further information).

Part 1: Ironwood-Oak-Ash Woodland Community

The Ironwood-Oak-Ash Woodland Community is characterized by stunted red oak mixed with white ash and scattered ironwood and white pine. It is located along the upper Ledges Trail on the eastern side of Pleasant Mountain. This unique woodland area has most likely experienced past logging activities and foot traffic from trail users.

For the long-term health of this community, access should not be further established, therefore allowing this unique habitat to flourish. This management approach, also limits the opportunity for invasive plants to colonize these areas. This community has a state ranking of S3 (rare with 20-100 occurrences).

Within this woodland community is an herb layer that consists of a variety of species, including wild columbine and wild sar-



One threatened plant is the Fern-leaved false foxglove

saparilla. Also discovered were three state threatened plant species including Douglas' knotweed, Canada mountain-ricegrass and Fern-leaved false foxglove.

Douglas' knotweed is an annual grass that reseeds each year. It depends on open, dry, sparsely vegetated areas for survival. Because of the extensive open rock and woodland formations on many areas of the mountain, this could be the best site for this species in the state. Douglas' knotweed has a state ranking of S2 (imperiled) because of its rarity in Maine, but the global ranking is G5 (demonstrably secure).

The Canada-mountain ricegrass is found in open grassy areas amongst common mountain ricegrass, stunted red oak and blueberries. According to the state botanist, Don Cameron, the ricegrass had been historically collected from Pleasant Mountain since 1954, but 50 years later it is still occurring on the mountain. Canada-mountain ricegrass has a ranking of S2 with a global ranking of G5.

The third threatened plant is the Fern-leaved false foxglove (pictured above). This rare plant species was found in a small patch, but it may occur in other areas on the mountain as well. The Fern-leaved false foxglove has a state ranking of S3 (rare), with a global ranking of G5T4 (demonstrably widespread, abundant and secure).

In the next newsletter, we will visit the Red Pine Woodland on the north peak of the mountain. In the meantime, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 207-647-4352 or jon@lelt.org.

LMF has helped expand our preserves

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the LMF program. In 2004 Loon Echo was awarded \$400,000 for the Sebago Headwaters Preserve Project (Bridgton and Naples) and more recently \$761,000 was secured for the expansion of the Pleasant Mountain Preserve (Bridgton and Denmark).

The first Pleasant Mountain expansion project parcel, 61 acres, was sold to Loon Echo on December 30 of last year by Chet Homer, owner of Shawnee Peak Ski Area. Mr. Homer generously sold the property below market value. The land contains the lower portion of the Bald Peak hiking trail, including the Needles Eye waterfall. A second property, 350 acres on the southeast side of the mountain, is working its way through state review.

The Pleasant Mountain and Sebago Headwaters Preserves are only a small portion of the nearly 500,000 acres protected by LMF over the years. These lands are so diverse in location and natural qualities that every resident benefits no matter where one lives, works or recreates.

Forests sequester carbon, shelter wildlife, and continue the tradition of Maine's forest-based industry. Farms produce dairy, meat, vegetables and flowers that reach our local markets and children's mouths. Snowmobile trail networks are linked to allow for winter-time tourism and recreation across county lines. Shorefront on lakes, rivers and the coast guarantee access for boating, fishing and clamming industries and protect habitat for sensitive species. And our beloved mountain ranges are kept free of development so explorers can hit the trails and get their feet wet while navigating stream crossings.

But the current reality may or may not allow this program to continue. LMF expended its last dollar in July 2008.

The Land for Maine's Future Program has helped conserve:

- √ **1,000 miles of shorefront**
- √ **158 miles of snowmobile trails**
- √ **30 recreational water access sites**
- √ **250,000 acres of working forestland**
- √ **15 working farms**
- √ **426 acres of Loon Echo preserve land**



Chet Homer, owner of Shawnee Peak Ski Area, and Carrie Walia, LEIT executive director, at the closing of the 61-acre addition, which contains the Bald Peak hiking trail and Needle's Eye waterfall.

A \$306 million bond package unveiled by Gov. John Baldacci in March included \$18 million for the Land for Maine's Future program. Since then many organizations and concerned citizens have contacted their legislators asking them to support a generous LMF bond this year in hopes that the program will not grind to a halt.

At the time this article is being written, legislators are turning their attention to bonds. If the proposed bond package is approved, Maine residents will be asked to cast their vote in either November 2009 or June 2010.

While LMF has been a real success story, it is not the program alone that should get all the credit. It is the average person who cares about the character and heritage of our community and state who is the true hero.

To learn more about Land for Maine's Future visit the Maine State Planning Office at www.maine.gov/spo/ or the Maine Land Coalition at www.mainelandcoalition.org.

You're invited to LELT's Annual Meeting!



LELT President Connie Cross at Pondicherry's Kneeland Spring.

Sunday, August 30

Magic Lantern Theater's Tannery Pub,
Bridgton

3:30 p.m. — Pondicherry Park walk

Meet at the Magic Lantern, led by Jon Evans

5 p.m. — Social hour

Light refreshments and a cash bar

6 p.m. — Dinner

*A light meal consisting of sandwiches, salad,
chips, dessert, beverage*

7 p.m. — Volunteer recognition and a
short business meeting

Please **RSVP** by August 21.

Yes, I/we plan to attend the 2009 Loon Echo Land Trust Annual Meeting

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ E-mail _____

Number of Guests: _____ @ \$12/per person = \$ _____

Payment: Check (payable to Loon Echo Land Trust)

Credit Card (Visa or MC) _____ Exp: _____

Send by August 21 to: LELT, 1 Chase St., Bridgton ME 04009

**Loon Echo Land Trust
1 Chase Street
Bridgton ME 04009**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED