



Phase II of the Pleasant Mountain project will preserve up to 795 additional acres. (Daniel Lake photo)

\$1.83 million project nearly done

By Carrie Walia
Executive Director

Pleasant Mountain has been a conservation focus for Loon Echo since 2003. Today, we are nearing completion of Pleasant Mountain Phase II, a \$1.83 million project that will preserve up to 795 additional acres of this grand piece of landscape in the Lake Region.



mountain encompasses eight square miles and its main summit is the highest point in southern Maine at 2,006 feet. Its forests and streams provide habitat for many animal and plant species, including rare plants and unique forest communities of statewide importance.

(See story below).

The vast forestland cleanses rainwater that flows down into the Moose Pond and the Saco River watershed. The mountain's recreational opportunities, including the extensive hiking trail network and the Shawnee Peak Ski Area, im-

Why is Pleasant Mountain so important? This isolated

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After 13 years, Connie Cross stepped down as president of LELET's Board of Directors. **Page 2.**

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Dunning Bridge craftsmen have links to LELET

Andy Buck and Brian Grady were instrumental in building the bridge and have long been associated with Loon Echo Land Trust. **Page 8.**

Study: Pleasant Mountain Ecologically Rich

Thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous family, we hired Dr. Rick Van de Poll of Ecosystem Management Consultants to conduct an ecological study of Pleasant Mountain. Work began last fall.

The study's findings will help LELET's management make decisions regarding the protection of plant and animal habitat, forestry management and how to minimize the impacts of trail use on sensitive habitat. The data from the year-long study will be provided to the Maine Department of Conservation's Natural Areas program. The study has found several undocumented plants, forests, and animals, thanks to the calcium-rich bedrock on Pleasant Mountain:

- Three rare plants – Blunt-lobed Woodsia, New Jersey Tea, Wild Chess
- Eight plant species of conservation interest, such as Rock Sandwort and Yellow Lady's Slipper
- Bobcats' presence spotted
- More than four forested natural communities of statewide significance



Yellow Lady Slipper

60 attend annual meeting honoring Connie Cross

Our 23rd Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, August 29, at beautiful Camp Winona in Bridgton. As the hot August sun set, about 60 members, board members and staff were treated to spectacular views of Pleasant Mountain, while cooling off with refreshments in the “Round House” and later enjoying a wonderful meal prepared by the Ordways’ staff at the “Junior Wiggy Building.”

LELT member and long-time visitor to the Lakes Region, Blake Zimmerman traveled from Ohio to attend the meeting with his daughter, Kate. He said, “My first visit here was in 1955. I have been climbing Pleasant Mountain since I was about 12 years old and try to make it up every year (when my knees are up to it!). This was my first Annual Meeting. It was very informative and well done.”

We auctioned photographs donated by Wayne Peabody’s *Green Parrot Aerials* and LELT member Peg Nation in a silent auction. Winners of the photography were Maggie Bauer of Denmark, Joan Erler of Bridgton, Carolyn Ehrman of Bridgton, and Lorne Schneider of Denmark.

For the business portion of the meet-



Maggie Bauer presents Connie Cross with a plaque honoring her many years of service as new LELT president, David Hursty, looks on.

ing, we elected new officers, reviewed financial reports, and Executive Director Carrie Walia presented the Pleasant Mountain Phase II project, explaining the importance of conserving up to 795 additional acres of this local landmark.

Celebrating Connie’s Tenure

After 13 years, **Connie Cross** stepped down as president of LELT’s Board of Directors. Many of you know that Connie has been involved with LELT since our founding in 1987 when she served as Secretary. Connie was applauded for her vision, leadership, and unparalleled commitment to conservation.

Board member Maggie Bauer presented her with a plaque honoring her many years of service and incoming president David Hursty presented her with a crystal loon from the Board of Directors.

“I was very touched by all the kind things people said at the annual meeting,” Connie said

recently. “And overwhelmed by the beautiful crystal loon and the plaque created by Maggie Bauer and given to me by the Board. I truly felt, though, that all those words really belonged to our staff and directors and to our members as well. It is rewarding to know that together we have accomplished good things that will last into the future.”

Connie won’t be going far, though; she’ll remain on the board as a director at least until 2013!

Transitions

We elected **David Hursty** as our new president of the Board of Directors. A former head master of Bridgton Academy, David has been a member of the board since 2007. Most recently David served as vice president.

“I am pleased and honored to be named board president,” David said. “I feel more than a little intimidated trying to fill the shoes of Connie Cross who has guided the organization through a period of unprecedented growth. As Loon Echo approaches its 25th anniversary in 2012, we are all fortunate that Connie and others like Eric Dibner, Om Devi Reynolds, Erik Bartlett, Polly Bartlett, and Bob Chase

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Lorne Schneider of Denmark.

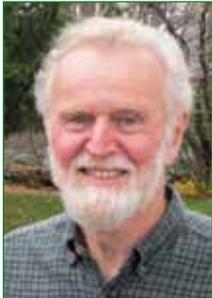
Annual meeting

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took a bold leap and formed what has become one of the premier land trusts in Maine.”

David stated that Loon Echo’s commitment to protecting the region’s precious land for future generations is as strong as ever. He looks forward to working with the professional staff, members and supporters to continue that important mission.

We also welcomed **Allen Erler** to the Board of Directors. Allen was introduced to LELT when he joined Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator Jon Evans last year on a vernal Equinox hike to the summit of Bald Pate Mountain to see the sunrise. He was immediately hooked on LELT!



Allen Erler

Allen has always loved the outdoors, particularly hiking and camping. Now he’s added stewarding lands and trails to his list of passions.

Before moving to Maine with his wife, Joan, Allen owned an insurance adjustment company in Westborough, Massachusetts.



About 60 members and staff gathered at the ‘Round House.’

“During my working years, I continued to find time to enjoy the woods and mountains,” Allen said. “Helping preserve natural environments is important to me and this influenced our decision to move to Maine. We found the home and quality of life that we’d hoped for, and I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the board of LELT to preserve the natural beauty of this region.”

Dottie Chalmers Cutter’s three-year term ended this year, and she decided to step away from the Board. Her valuable business and community relationship-building experience as Personal New Business Producer/Agent for Chalmers Insurance Agency will be missed.

We appreciate Dottie’s past contribu-

tions to the Board as well as her work on the Hike n’ Bike Trek Committee.

Staff News

Welcome **Charlotte Nolan**, who joined LELT in August, as our new Membership and Communications Coordinator. Charlotte holds a degree in English Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, Ohio. For many years, Charlotte worked as a freelance writer in both Ohio and Maine.



Charlotte Nolan

Her career also includes positions in small business management as well as working on non-profit development teams. Her position at Loon Echo includes writing and coordinating newsletters, press releases and other forms of communication as well as coordinating membership and donor development efforts.

Charlotte and her husband, Tom, moved to Maine in 1998. They live in Bridgton with their two Labrador Retrievers, Molly and Emma. Away from work, she loves to hike, garden, read, sing, and is learning to play the violin.

LELT Contacts

Staff

Carrie Walia, Executive Director
Jon D. Evans, Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator
Charlotte Nolan, Membership and Communications Coordinator

Board of Directors

David Hursty, President
Brian Dillon, Vice President
Robert Gowdy, Treasurer
Mark Van Winkle, Secretary

Maggie Bauer

Connie Cross

Eric Dibner

Karen Eller

Allen Erler

Jerry Holt

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Pleasant Mountain

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pact the economic vitality of the entire region. And, in the end the mountain is just plain beautiful.

In 2003, we launched an ambitious Capital Campaign to protect Pleasant Mountain, and generous donors – local families, summer camp alumni, and private foundations – helped us protect 1,450 acres at a cost of \$1.5 million. Shortly afterwards, The Nature Conservancy was granted a conservation easement of 1,400 acres of private land on the western slopes of the mountain, resulting in a total of 2,850 acres of land conserved during the Phase I “Lakes Region Legacy” campaign.

Since then, Loon Echo has become the primary steward of the 10-mile hiking trail system and has secured more than \$60,000 in funding to improve trails and lessen the impact of erosion on water quality.

In 2008, we sat down with The Nature Conservancy and identified other large parcels of land that could possibly be conserved and approached several landowners. That’s when we began the Pleasant Mountain Phase II project.

So far in Phase II, we have closed on three important parcels of land and several parcels are very close to being added to complete the project. Our first property, a 61-acre parcel on the northeastern slopes which includes the lower portion of the Bald Peak hiking trail and Needles Eye waterfall, was sold to Loon Echo by Shawnee Peak Holdings.

A 350-acre property on the southeast side of the mountain was acquired this past July. This property gently rises to the base of exposed, rocky cliffs that are visible from most vantage points in the Lake Region. It offers an excellent woodland buffer to the more critically sensitive ridge and higher elevation slopes of Pleasant Mountain, and provides excellent habitat for white-tailed deer and moose. The snowshoe hare is very common here, and consequent-



View of Moose Pond from 350-acre property on Pleasant Mountain.

ly, several predators frequent the area including coyote, fox and bobcat.

A 1.5-acre property located adjacent to the popular Ledges Trail on Mountain Road was gifted to Loon Echo by Pleasant Mountain Farms just weeks ago. And among the parcels that we are close to conserving is a 34-acre property on the west side of the mountain which will be gifted by K&W Timberlands.

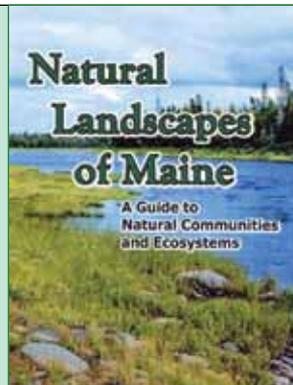
Most of Phase II has been funded through state and private foundation grant awards (Land for Maine’s Future Program, Kendal C. and Anna Ham Charitable Foundation, Fields Pond Foundation and the Burch-Safford Foundation), individual donors and the generosity of sellers who offered us bargain prices on their properties. An anonymous family offered a \$25,000 challenge grant that helped us raise the necessary funds by the end of 2010.

By the end of February, all of the negotiations will be completed. We like to say around here that “the land we protect today will determine the character of our landscape for all time.” Thanks to the generous supporters of Phase I and II, the Pleasant Mountain Preserve will remain one of our most precious resources for generations to come.

Did you know?

The Maine Department of Conservation in 2010 released *Natural Landscapes of Maine, A Guide to Natural Communities and Ecosystems*. This book is a rich resource for budding ecologists interested in learning about unique forests and plant communities in Maine.

For more information visit: http://www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mnap/publications/community_classification.htm.



Greenprint

The Lake Region Greenprint Project is nearing completion! The regional conservation goals have been developed and action plans are underway. Look for the full story in the summer 2011 issue of *Loon Echo News*.

'Paddle for the Loon' Raises Funds for LELT

Camp Wohelo Director and LELT board member Mark Van Winkle couldn't participate in this year's Hike n' Bike Trek, so he decided to create his own fundraiser for LELT.

On November 14, Mark set out on a solo 16-mile stand-up paddleboard trip from Harrison to Camp Wohelo in Raymond, through the waters of Long Lake, Brandy Pond, the Songo Lock, and Sebago Lake. Paddleboarding, rooted in Hawaiian culture, has been a water sport for nearly a century. Usually, the paddleboarder lays face-down on a surfboard and uses a swimming motion to move through the water. Stand-up paddleboarding is much more difficult.

Mark raised more than \$300 with his "Paddle for the Loon."

Here's Mark's account:

"I launched from a friend's house, just south of Newfound-Owatona on Long Lake. When my wife Quincy dropped me off, there were two loons in the water out front of me (In total, I'd see eight that morning). It was a pleasant paddle down the lake, such a nice day. I imagined all the people enjoying Bald Pate Mountain, Pleasant Mountain and Pondicherry Park – places LELT has helped preserve. I didn't see anyone on the lake or anything but cars until I went under Route 302 in Naples after two hours of paddling. The current pulled me right under the bridge and through 'construction central.'

"At that point, I'd passed through Harrison, Bridgton, Casco, Naples and had Sebago in my sights. The last stop



Mark Van Winkle makes waves on Long Lake during his trip.

– Raymond! After a short portage to get through Songo Locks, I was the most scared of the whole trip. My fin caught on some vegetation and I almost went in headfirst!

"Somehow I survived and made it to Sebago Lake State Park where I saw people out of cars for the first time on my trip. They were enjoying a walk on the beach – enjoying public access property. This, combined with the loon sightings at the start of my trip gave me strength to finish the long paddle.

"After three hours and as is common, the wind picked up on Sebago and I battled headwinds for my last four miles. Overall, it was quite an enjoyable trip, but after almost 4½ hours, I was glad to be done!"

Updates: Membership and Bike Trek

We welcomed 128 new members in 2010! Here's what some of them said:

"We came to live in Maine for its rural quality. As business owners and members of the community, we think it's a good idea to support Loon Echo because they protect land. They protect that rural quality that we value." –*Joe DeVito, Bridgton*

"We've always been interested in Loon Echo, and we wanted to support what's happening in the town of Bridgton. We love what LELT is doing for the town. LELT's and LEA's work on Pondicherry Park and the Dunning Bridge project is what led us to join as members." –*Elsa Freeman, Bridgton*

Bike Trek: The 10th Annual Hike n' Bike Trek raised \$28,893 for land conservation! Thanks to our 47 area and business sponsors, 193 registered participants, and 72 dedicated volunteers. Get ready for a bigger and better Trek – September 17, 2011.



Going for a Hike? Thank a Stewardship Volunteer!

It's a sparkling autumn afternoon, and you have reached the summit of Pleasant Mountain. You take your family



Jon Evans

*Stewardship
and Volunteer
Coordinator*

up through the young forest of Bald Pate Mountain for a picnic under the summer sky and gaze at the lakes and ponds below. Or maybe you take the family dog for a walk on the gentle

terrain at Mayberry Hill Preserve. Loon Echo maintains more than 20 miles of trails, but have you ever wondered how? Many loyal volunteers and friends make it possible!

In 2002, Loon Echo installed an "Adopt a Trail" program similar to the program the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) uses to address trail needs. Volunteers adopt a section of trail for three years or more and report to the Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator after their spring, summer and fall outings.

There are three basic aspects of the trail adopters' job. In the spring, they clear trails of debris from the winter and clean out drainage ditches. Over the summer, adopters will clip back brush in order to maintain a comfortable corridor through the forest. Fall means making sure drainage ditches are ready to handle the spring runoff and making sure trail markers are visible for winter when trails are less discernible.

With the help of boys and girls camps, alternative schools and friends and neighbors, the LETL trails are getting consistent care. Twice a year, the Maine Chapter AMC shares its skills with LETL and helps out on the popular



Trail adopters clip brush on Pleasant Mountain's Ledges Trail.

Ledges Trail at Pleasant Mountain. We build stone stairs and do drainage work to prevent erosion each year.

Stewardship volunteers also help monitor the 15 conservation easements we hold. Properties ranging in size from 10 to 160 acres are visited once a year to ensure the terms of the easement are being met.

Last August, LETL hosted a picnic at the beautiful Bicentennial Park in Denmark to thank the many volunteers

that we depend on to help us with our work. Volunteers help in many ways – from creating maps, stuffing envelopes, being on committees, to building kiosks and donation tubes.

At the picnic, stewardship volunteers were recognized with plaques naming them as "trail adopters." Later, we installed the plaques on kiosks at the various trailheads.

So, next time you are out and about on one of LETL's preserves, take a look around and notice all the work that volunteers accomplish each year. Check out the names on the plaques at the kiosks. If you know one of these great volunteers, join us in saying "Thanks!"



Maine chapter AMC and LETL volunteers break from spring trail maintenance of the Ledges Trail.

Interested in volunteering? Call Jon at (207) 647-4352.

LELT Calendar of Events

Program	Description	Date
Mushers Bowl Snowshoe Hikes	Join Loon Echo for a moderate snowshoe hike to the summit of Bald Pate Mountain in South Bridgton during the popular Mushers Bowl Weekend. Snowshoe hikes both days begin at 10 a.m. Check in at the Five Fields Farm Stand at 9:45 a.m. to register. Hikers should bring the appropriate winter clothing, snacks, water and snowshoes (a few pairs are available upon request). Approximately 2 hours.	Saturday and Sunday January 22 and 23
Pondicherry Valentine's Day Snowshoe Hike	Looking for a special way to celebrate Valentine's Day? Take your sweetheart on an easy-moderate snowshoe hike in beautiful Pondicherry Park in downtown Bridgton. Meet Loon Echo staff at the Bob Dunning Memorial Bridge kiosk behind The Magic Lantern Theatre at 8:45 am. Hikers should bring the appropriate winter clothing, snacks, water and snowshoes (a few pairs are available upon request). Approximately 90 minutes.	Saturday February 12
Sunrise Hike at Bald Pate Mountain	Welcome the first spring sunrise with an early morning hike up Bald Pate Mountain in South Bridgton. Hikers should bring appropriate winter clothing, water, snacks, flashlight and snowshoes (a few pairs are available upon request). Brave hikers will meet at the Bald Pate parking lot at 6 a.m. Sunrise is 6:41. This spectacular, moderate hike is one of our most popular hikes, and you won't want to miss it! Approximately 2 hours.	Sunday March 20
Trail Maintenance at Pleasant Mountain	Join Loon Echo and Maine Chapter AMC for trail maintenance on the popular Ledges Trail at Pleasant Mountain. Workers will meet at the Ledges Trailhead on Mountain Road at 7:45 am. Some tools supplied. Bring work boots, gloves, water and plenty of energy-rich snacks. This is a moderate-difficult hike, so expect a thorough work out as we prepare the trail for the many visitors expected in the 2011 season. Approximately 5 hours.	Saturday April 16
Earth Day Hike at Bald Pate Mountain	Hikers should bring hiking boots, water, snacks and meet at the Bald Pate parking lot at 3 p.m. Fun for the whole family, including your four-legged friends! Celebrate Earth Day at the summit with poems and music (Don't forget to bring yours to share!). Afterwards, enjoy a Bald Pate Celebration Ale at Bray's Brew Pub on Route 302 in Naples. A portion of the proceeds are donated to Loon Echo. Approximately 90 minutes.	Friday April 22
Spring Hike at Pleasant Mountain	One of our favorite hikes will take place at Pleasant Mountain on the South West Ridge Trail. Hikers will go to the Southwest summit, and along the way will see lady slippers, columbine and other wildflowers in bloom. This is a moderate-difficult hike and the proper boots, clothing, energy-rich snacks and bug spray are required. The group will meet at the trail head on Denmark Road at 8:45 a.m. Approximately 4 hours.	Saturday May 14
Summer Solstice Hike at Bald Pate Mountain	Celebrate the first day of summer with a moderate hike up Bald Pate and also remember Bob Chase, one of the founders of Loon Echo, who loved this mountain. A short walk of 20-30 minutes brings you to the rocky summit with views of the surrounding lakes and hills. All hikers and four-legged friends are welcome and should meet at the Bald Pate parking lot at 5:00 p.m. Approximately 90 minutes.	Tuesday June 21

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 contact Jon Evans at jon@lelt.org or 207-647-4352 for more information.

Dunning Bridge craftsmen have links to LELET

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Andy Buck and Brian Grady have a lot in common. They're part of a fraternity of artisan craftsmen that is respected and admired by their colleagues. Words like "master" and "artist" describe their work. They're quietly passionate about their professions. And they've each long been associated with Loon Echo Land Trust.

Their areas of expertise complement each other - Buck is a timber frame builder and Grady does custom sawing. At the recent dedication of the Bob Dunning Memorial Bridge at Pondicherry Park in Bridgton on November 27, the two men who have been so involved in the building of the bridge spoke humbly about their own contributions, but not about each other's.

"Brian Grady has really been instrumental and given a lot to this (bridge), and I don't think he has gotten the credit he deserves," said Buck. "He was the lead guy. He sawed all the timber, and he oriented it so that the roundness of the sawed timber was on the bottom. He has a real good eye."

"Andy's the best," Grady simply said. "It was great working with him and such a good bunch of guys."

Andy's association with Loon Echo began with his grandparents. They originally bought a family poultry farm in Naples in the 1930s. As the years went by and development encroached upon the area, they knew that the frontage on Cold Rain Pond would make their property attractive to developers. So they contacted Loon Echo in 1990 and began the process of protecting the farm with a conservation easement. Today, Andy lives, works and harvests wood on that farm and takes comfort in knowing that it will always remain protected.



Brian Grady (left) and Andy Buck honored fellow craftsman Bob Dunning by choosing to make each timber frame from a different tree. "Bob would have loved using wood that's indigenous to this area," Andy said.

Brian's history with Loon Echo dates to the late 1990s. Living on Bald Pate Mountain when a proposal came along to build a 1,500 ft. television tower there, Brian called the Trust for Public Land to find out how he could stop it from moving forward. They suggested he get in touch with his local land trust. At the time, Brian said he "didn't even know he had a local land trust." But that all changed quickly. He met Bob Chase and began helping Loon Echo save Bald Pate. Since then, he has been taking care of the mountain and is one of Loon Echo's most valuable stewardship volunteers.



Pondicherry Park supporters take the first walk across the Dunning Bridge dedication at the dedication on Nov. 27.

With its curving lines and 16 different species of indigenous wood, the Bob Dunning Memorial Bridge has a lot of Andy's and Brian's passion built into it. It will remind us for years to come of the connection between nature, conservation and community. It's clear that these two craftsmen understood that all along.

The Pondicherry Park and The Bob Dunning Memorial Bridge project is in its final stages with \$25,000 left to raise. Thanks to more than 700 donors, LELET and Lakes Environmental Association will donate the park to the Town of Bridgton in June 2011.