

JON EVANS

## The Perley Mills Community Forest Project

LOON ECHO LAND TRUST IS WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TOWN OF DENMARK to protect one of the last large undeveloped tracts of forestland in the Lake Region- the Perley Mills Community Forest. On October 31, 2012 over 1,600 acres of land that spans the towns of Bridgton, Denmark and Sebago was put under contract between Loon Echo and seller K&W Timberlands. The property has been owned by K&W Timberlands since 2002 and prior to that by SD Warren Company since 1951. The purchase and sale agreement gives just over one year to fully fund this regionally significant project.

The property has significant wildlife habitat and recreational features including Pickerel Pond, Willett Pond, Willett Brook, Sucker Brook, large wetlands that support wading birds and waterfowl, and three miles of the Narrow Gauge Trail. Canada Lynx and Small Whorled Pogonia, federally threatened species, may be supported by the parcel's habitat.

The Narrow Gauge Trail was a part of the sixteen mile Bridgton and Saco River Narrow Gauge railroad (1882-1941) and now it serves as a state ITS 89 snowmobile and regional ATV network. Future public uses of the land will include snowmobiling, ATV'ing, hunting, fishing, boating, swimming, walking, bicycling, cross-country skiing and horseback riding, offering a major public benefit and economic asset to the region.

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### Community Forests and Their Benefits

A community forest is a more robust version of the historical practice of a town forest or communal lands; where the land is protected and kept open for the use of the citizenry, but additional safeguards are put in place to protect the integrity of the forestland. Community forests are owned and managed by either a municipality or other group such as a land trust for the benefit of the population. Participation from the public is encouraged on creating a management plan for the property. The property is protected through a conservation easement and a sustainable forestry management plan.

In addition to protecting local resources, these important lands can act as a buffer or connecting link to other conservation properties. They are also economic drivers in the way of providing revenue from timber harvesting and other forest products to the town. These important properties act as outdoor classrooms, provide open space and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, and most importantly, connect people back to the land by offering a place to interact with nature close to home. For more information on community forests visit the Community Forest Collaborative website at [www.foresteconomy.org](http://www.foresteconomy.org).



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## 25 YEARS AND STRONGER THAN EVER

25 YEARS WAS AN EXCITING AND MAJOR MILESTONE for Loon Echo Land Trust. We stayed true to our mission and our accomplishments have been great. A few highlights of 2012 were the closing on and taking ownership of Hacker's Hill and the gifting of Pondicherry Park to the Town of Bridgton. It is now time to look forward to the next 25 years and 2013 is already looking positive with our latest land campaign which will bring Loon Echo's land holdings to 5,700 acres (see page 1). Below is a chart of our major land acquisitions throughout our 25 years – we realize that these feats are accomplished with the backing and commitment of you - our membership – and for that we would like to say “Thank You!” To view the Anniversary booklet or video visit [www.loonecholandtrust.org](http://www.loonecholandtrust.org).

### Summary of Conservation Accomplishments

Years	Acres Protected (total)	Conservation Values Protected (During the Five Year Period)
1987-1991	550	Three farms, one mile of lake frontage and one mile of multi-use trail conserved.
1992-1997	1060	Two farms, one mountain, 1.7 miles of lake frontage, one rare forest, and eight miles of multi-use conserved.
1998-2002	1240	Four woodlots, one farm and one mile of multi-use trail conserved.
2003-2007	3333	One farm, one mountain, one park, 1/3 mile of lake frontage, fifteen rare plants and forests, and seven miles of multi-use trails conserved.
2008-2012	4023	One hill, one bog, three woodlots, three rare plants, and one mile of lake and one mile of river frontage conserved.

## CONSERVATION WINS BIG

CONSERVATION NATIONWIDE was a big winner this past November. Here in Maine we voted on a \$5 million bond to fund the Land for Maine's Future program which has been instrumental in protecting vital open space throughout our state. The measure passed with 62% of the vote in favor of the bond. Overwhelming approval for conservation did not stop at our border – protecting land, open space and water quality in our communities was a top concern throughout our nation. Of the 57 measures on the ballots, 46 passed. The 21 states with conservation measures on their ballots will provide upwards of \$2 billion overall to fund various conservation initiatives.



ERIK BARTLETT

Beautiful stone wall resting spot to take in the beauty of Mayberry Hill Preserve.

## CALL FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

LOON ECHO HAS SEVERAL COMMITTEES that assist in decision making ranging from conservation objectives to marketing initiatives to boundary monitoring. Contact us at (207) 647-4352 or [info@lelt.org](mailto:info@lelt.org) to learn more about serving on a committee.

- Lands Committee
- Stewardship Committee
- Trek Committee
- Development Committee

### STAFF

*Executive Director*

Carrie Walia, [carrie@lelt.org](mailto:carrie@lelt.org)

*Stewardship & Volunteer Coordinator*

Jon Evans, [jon@lelt.org](mailto:jon@lelt.org)

*Membership & Communications Coordinator*

Beth Phelps, [beth@lelt.org](mailto:beth@lelt.org)

### SPECIALISTS (NON-STAFF)

*Event Manager*, Carol Meader,

[trek@lelt.org](mailto:trek@lelt.org)

*Cartographer*, Pam Edwards

[mapping@lelt.org](mailto:mapping@lelt.org)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Eller, *President*

Brian Dillon, *Vice President*

Robert Gowdy, *Treasurer*

Connie Cross

Eric Dibner

Edward Friedman

Allen Erler

Jerry Holt

David Hursty

Michael McSally

Norm Nicholson

Carol Sudduth

John Thomas



8 Depot St., Ste 4  
Bridgton, Maine 04009  
207-647-4352  
[info@lelt.org](mailto:info@lelt.org)

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## PROJECT UPDATES

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CONNIE CROSS

*Fresh tracks in the snow atop Hacker's Hill.*

### **HACKER'S HILL - ALMOST THERE!**

HACKER'S HILL, A BEAUTIFUL SCENIC PROPERTY IN CASCO, was deemed a conservation priority at Loon Echo's inception over 25 years ago. If you have ever visited this gem then you are aware of its boundless beauty and economic importance to the regional area.

In the spring of 2011 Loon Echo accepted the challenge of raising \$800,000 within one year to purchase this extraordinary hilltop. We closed on the property in July of 2012 and met the \$700,000 mark in October; both achievements are encouraging and exciting milestones. Although Loon Echo is the current owner of the property we still have approximately \$80,000 left to raise prior to July of 2013 to pay off the one year bridge loan and to fund a perpetual endowment to maintain the property to its current standard of excellence with the help of volunteer caretaker Don Fowler.

Contributions are encouraged to help complete this project. Gifts of any amount can be sent to Loon Echo Land Trust, 8 Depot Street, Suite 4, Bridgton, Maine 04009 and indicate the gift is intended for "Hacker's Hill." Keep abreast of the project's progress or special Hacker's Hill events by visiting [www.loonecholandtrust.org](http://www.loonecholandtrust.org). If you have not yet made it to the top of this special hill then make it a priority for 2013 – the gate reopens on Memorial Day weekend.

### **Do you love Loon Echo Land Trust and want to shout it to the world?**



We now carry t-shirts, polos and fleece vests that display the new logo. Whether you are out hiking one of our beautiful preserves or out and about in town you can represent your favorite regional conservation organization in style.

- T-shirts - \$12.00
- Polos - \$25.00
- Fleece Vests - \$35.00

You can order apparel on-line at [www.loonecholandtrust.org](http://www.loonecholandtrust.org) or call the office at 207-647-4352.

# JANUARY- JUNE 2013 EVENT CALENDAR

All outdoor events are subject to weather conditions and/or date changes. Please check our website for updates and additional activities at [www.lelt.org](http://www.lelt.org). Always wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the weather conditions and varied terrain, for winter programming there are a small number of snowshoes available upon request. Bring water and snacks with you. Call (207) 647-4352 for more information.

## Mushers Bowl Snowshoe Hikes at Bald Pate Mountain

Saturday, January 26 and  
Sunday, January 27

Join Loon Echo for the annual snowshoe hikes to the summit of Bald Pate Mountain in South Bridgton. These hikes coincide with the annual Mushers Bowl weekend that takes place at Five Fields Farm and Loon Echo's Bald Pate Mountain Preserve. Hikers should meet at the main parking lot of Bald Pate Mountain at 9:45 a.m. each day for this moderate 90 minute trek.

## Valentine Snowshoe Hike at Pondicherry Park

Thursday, February 14

This winter event is a walk in the park...strap on your snowshoes (snow permitting) and take a tour of Bridgton's Pondicherry Park. Along the way we will observe impressive stonewalls and a glimpse into Bridgton's past, as we trek through the forgotten pastures of farms gone by. Depending on conditions, animal tracks will be identified. After the hike, guests are invited to



A youth work group installing bog bridging at Bald Pate Mountain Preserve.

stop in at the Tannery Pub to get warm. This 90 minute, moderate hike is a fun way to celebrate with your special Valentine! Meet at the Bob Dunning Bridge kiosk on Depot Street at 3:00 p.m.

that don't want to don skis or snowshoes, there will be snowman making contests throughout the morning. Warm up by the open fire while enjoying hot chocolate, smores and delicious treats. The nominal fee of \$10 for adults and \$5 for children will include trail passes, food and prizes. Equipment rentals will be available for an additional charge.

For more information, please contact us at (207) 647-4352 or [info@lelt.org](mailto:info@lelt.org). Rain date will be Sunday, February 17 at the same time.

## Snowfest

Saturday, February 16

Loon Echo celebrates winter with our 2nd Annual Snowfest. Please join us for a day of fun and adventure on Saturday, February 16 from 9:00-11:00 a.m. at Five Fields Farms located on Route 107 in South Bridgton. The day will begin with a 5k and 10k timed cross country ski race for beginner and intermediate levels followed by a fun snowshoe run for children (youth snowshoe run is free). For those of you

## Sunrise Hike at Bald Pate Mountain

Wednesday, March 20

Back by popular demand, the "First Sunrise of Spring" hike, Wednesday March 20 at 6:00am. This moderate hike begins at the main parking lot of Bald Pate Mountain with a 25 minute ascent to the summit to catch the sunrise at 6:46 a.m. and officially welcome spring at 7:02 a.m. In the past, trekkers have been treated to a glorious sight as the sun peeks over Rattlesnake Mountain in Raymond and casts the day's first shadows. Tailgate party with hot cocoa and donuts back at the parking lot.

## Earth Day Hike at Bald Pate Mountain

Monday, April 22

Come along on Loon Echo's annual Earth Day hike to the summit of Bald Pate Mountain in South Bridgton. This moderate 90 minute hike is a popular start to the hiking season. After the hike, join Loon Echo staff at Bray's Brew Pub in Naples for a mug of Bald Pate Celebration Ale! Hikers should meet at the main parking lot of Bald Pate Preserve at 3:00 p.m.

## Pleasant Mountain Work Day

Saturday, April 27

Time to "get dirty and give back" at Pleasant Mountain's Ledges Trail! Join Loon Echo volunteer trail adopters and the Maine Chapter of Appalachian Mountain Club as we clean up this popular trail after the long winter. Drainage ditches will be cleared of debris, brush will be cut and trees removed from the trail. Some tools will be provided. This is a moderate to difficult hike that requires work boots, gloves and plenty of water and snacks. This work day will last approximately 5 hours. Meet at the Ledges trailhead on Mountain Rd. at 8:15 a.m.

## Hacker's Hill Work Day

Saturday, May 4

Hacker's Hill in Casco is Loon Echo's newest preserve and we invite you to a spring clean-up day to prepare the hill for the busy season. Volunteers can expect to rake up pine cones and needles, prepare the flower gardens and inspect/repair picnic tables. This will be a fun community event

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The desire to protect this forest stemmed from Loon Echo's goal to accelerate the pace and quality of land protection in partnership with municipalities and from Denmark's interest in owning a forest for the benefit of the public. For nearly five years Denmark's Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission have sought an opportunity to own a forest to preserve quality of life, rural character, access for recreation, and to support the local economy. Through the guiding tool, the Lake Region Greenprint, Loon Echo and Denmark representatives selected this property as one worth pursuing in partnership as it scores high in the regional land use and conservation plan.

In June of 2013, Denmark residents will be offered the opportunity to own and manage the Denmark portion of the property, as well as the Bridgton parcel, subject to a conservation easement held by Loon Echo. The two neighboring parcels are divided by town line, but their natural qualities are very much intertwined. The unbroken forest and large wetland and stream complexes will benefit from having one owner who can set and implement comprehensive management goals. By owning forestland, the town may guarantee public access as well as have long-term income from sustainable forest management operations. This income stream will support the management of the property as well as benefit municipal programs and projects over decades to come.

Pickerel Pond, the jewel of the property located in the



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A section of the Narrow Gauge and ITS 89 snowmobile trail that cuts through the Perley Mills property - Loon Echo's latest land campaign.

heart of the Denmark parcel, is used by the public for fishing, swimming and boating with small watercraft. It is currently available to the public by "permissive trespass"; future public access will be guaranteed as a part of this project.

Ephrem Paraschak, Denmark's Town Manager, is optimistic that the project will soon take shape and provide the region with a community forest. "The Town of Denmark is very excited to be partnering with Loon Echo Land Trust to implement Denmark's long term comprehensive plan goal of preserving large tracts of forest. The property will not only be preserved for the citizens of Denmark, but also for future generations of the Lake Region area."

The towns of Bridgton and Sebago will also benefit



from the Perley Mills Community Forest Project. Besides public access and the economic development opportunities that a regional trail network provides, Bridgton's drinking water source will be safeguarded. The Bridgton Water District's land is next door and their wells tap the Willett Brook aquifer, and the community forest property contains the headwaters- Willett Pond and Willett Brook.

The Sebago property, 135 acres, lies along both sides of Swamp Road. The land is perched above Hancock Pond, and the protection of the gently sloping forestland will help maintain the water quality of the great pond. In early December Loon Echo presented the project to the Sebago Board of Selectpersons, opening the door for the opportunity for Sebago to consider owning this parcel as a part of the regional community forest project.

"Securing the contract to purchase this land is one of Loon Echo's largest commitments to regional, collaborative conservation. It's a bold but attainable project that will advance the organization's goal of protecting high quality natural resources in partnership with municipalities," stated Loon Echo Executive Director, Carrie Walia.

Contributions are encouraged to help fund this project and are necessary to meet the terms of the purchase agreement. Gifts of all amounts can be sent to Loon Echo Land Trust, 8 Depot Street, Suite 4, Bridgton, Maine 04009 and note the gift is intended for the "Perley Mills Community Forest." Additional information will be made available on Loon Echo Land Trust's and the Town of Denmark's websites in early 2013.

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## NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

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AS MANY OF YOU MAY BE AWARE, PONDICHERRY PARK was officially gifted to the Town of Bridgton in June of 2012. New trail signs were installed throughout the Park and the “dog loop” was dedicated welcoming the four legged friends of Pondicherry. The old fireplace at the Hancock Educational Amphitheater was encapsulated with fieldstone and mortar making it much more aesthetically pleasing. The amphitheater is a popular meeting place for Stevens Brook Elementary students as they learn about the Park’s unique natural resources and habitat qualities. Loon Echo was happy to donate white holiday lights to the Town for decorating the Dunning Bridge which made for a welcoming and festive entrance to the Park this past holiday season.



*Dunning Bridge aglow with holiday lights a welcoming site to visitors.*

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THE PITCH PINE GROVE AT THE SUMMIT OF BALD PATE Mountain has seen it all over the centuries. Fire, ice storms and relentless winds have battered these rugged trees and their future is in doubt as they rely on fire to open the cones that drop the seeds for regeneration. Loon Echo invited Andrew Cutko of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to come to Bald Pate to map the pitch pine grove and determine its approximate age of at least 100 years old. Andrew heads the Maine Natural Areas Program and also co-authored a fascinating book entitled “Natural Landscapes of Maine.” It serves as a guide to Maine’s unique natural communities and ecosystems and assigns a rating of its rarity. The Pitch Pine grove at Bald Pate is note worthy due to its elevation and distance north. The Red Pine Woodland at Pleasant Mountain was mapped as an exemplary model during the summer of 2010. A better understanding of our unique places will help us preserve them for future generations.



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## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

**DEAN AND MARY ZEILON**

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DEAN AND MARY, RESIDENTS OF NAPLES, MAINE, first got involved with Loon Echo in 2003 when they were encouraged by neighbor and one of the organization’s founders, Jim Tabor. In 2005 Dean and Mary donated a conservation easement on their Pitts Woodlot property. The woodlot was put together by personal purchase of properties abutting their original house lot of 6 acres purchased in 1987; the conservation area totals 36 acres. Dean and Mary designed and erected a sign along Lewis Road indicating the conservation area as Pitts Woods specifically to remember and honor Miss Ruth Pitts (the previous owner) who cared deeply for her woodlot and wished it to remain free of development.

“A conservation easement both preserves and permits. It preserves for the public both locally and our many vacationers the appearance that is a Maine trademark. It permits the land owners to improve their forest through sustainable woodlands management. Loon Echo is one of 96 land trusts in Maine, it is extraordinarily effective and efficient and it is right in our own backyard,” stated Dean. “We are proud to be members of Loon Echo’s Sustainability Society, a multi-year giving program that enables Loon Echo to have the resources to continue their good work.”

Both Dean and Mary have been very active volunteers with the Naples Library. Mary is also involved with the McLaughlin Garden Center in South Paris and Dean is the President of the MIT Club of Maine. They have had the good fortune to travel extensively but are proud to call the Lake Region of Maine home.

*For more information on membership please visit [www.loonecholandtrust.org](http://www.loonecholandtrust.org).*

Calendar continued from page 4 and be sure to bring your camera and a picnic lunch. Work clothes, gloves and water are recommended for this morning event. Meet at the summit off Quaker Ridge Road at 9:00 a.m. *Approximately 3 hours.*

### Spring Stroll at Mayberry Hill Preserve

Saturday, May 18

Bring your camera and bug spray as we take the easy loop through Mayberry Hill Preserve in Casco searching for spring's numerous wild



ERIK BARTLETT

flowers and various bird species. Pink Lady's Slippers can be seen along the way and this wonderful 1 mile trail

offers a relaxing walk through Loon Echo's first preserve. Meet at the trailhead on Mayberry Hill Road at 8:45

a.m. for this 90 minute walk.

### Summer Solstice Celebration at Bald Pate Mountain

Friday, June 21

Join Loon Echo for the annual trek up Bald Pate Mountain. to celebrate summer's arrival and honor one of Loon Echo's founders, Bob Chase. In the past, poetry, music and food were shared during this event and your contributions are welcome. This *moderate hike will last 2 hours.* Meet at the main parking lot of Bald Pate Mountain. at 5:00 p.m.



CONNIE CROSS

Happy cyclists enjoying the 2012 Loon Echo Trek.

## SAVE THE DATE!

Don't miss out on Maine's premier bicycling and hiking event!

# LOON ECHO TREK 2013

SEPTEMBER 21

SHAWNEE PEAK, BRIDGTON MAINE

Hike or Bike to benefit the Loon Echo Land Trust

- In 2012 over \$45,000 was raised from sponsorship, business support, registrations and pledges
- \$35,000 in additional in-kind donations was raised
- 311 trekkers hiked or biked
- 43 businesses sponsored
- 73 community members volunteered

THANK YOU!



## Sustainability Society

A society made up of a group of individuals concerned with sustaining and enhancing Loon Echo Land Trust's efforts to protect the natural beauty and environmental health of the Lake Region.

Loon Echo would like to thank the charter members of this multi-year giving program:

Lawrence Balboni, *in memory of Bob Chase*  
 Daniel and Elizabeth Crofts  
 JoAnne and David Diller  
 Joan Goodhew  
 Terence Harrist, *founding member*  
 Eric Hyson and Mary Hobler Hyson, *in honor of Wyonegonic Camps*  
 Marc and Nancy Stretch  
 The Wonderful Foundation, Loraine Gardner and Daniel Dolgin, *in honor of Carrie Walia*  
 John Thomas  
 Paul and Lucia Woodruff, *in memory of Archibald Woodruff III*  
 Dean and Mary Zeilon

*For more information on the Sustainability Society please visit our website at [www.loonecholandtrust.org](http://www.loonecholandtrust.org).*



8 Depot St., Ste 4  
Bridgton, Maine 04009  
Address service requested



## Time to Get Started on Succession Planning

*The following article was written by Rich Merk, Otisfield resident and president of the Small Woodland Owners' Association of Maine (SWOAM). SWOAM is partnering with Loon Echo and other Maine land trusts to inform landowners of their options when determining the future of their forests and farms. SWOAM intends to develop informational booklets on the topic of Succession Planning tailored to the Maine landowner, as well as work with land trust partners to hold workshops in our region in 2013. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Rich at (207)-415-1628 or Carrie Walia at Loon Echo at (207) 647-4352.*

Families own some 42% of all woodlands in Maine, and 45% of those woodlands are owned by people 65 years of age or older. This amounts to about four million acres of Maine land. These same statistics probably represent the ownership percentages for Maine farmland and fields as well. These facts would not be alarming if there were succession plans in place to direct what is going to happen to the land when it is owned and managed by future owners.

Succession Planning involves a process through which a landowner develops and implements a plan to direct how their land will be managed in the future after they no longer own the land. The planning process allows the owner to decide what values and goals they consider important, who they may want involved in the future management of the land, and how to approach the intended future owners to start the implementation of a desirable plan. Often a child may have a strong tie to the land, making the ownership transition easier although family politics may still be a factor if there are multiple children involved.

Without this planning process being implemented during the owner's lifetime, the future of the land may be uncertain. Knowing that the land will be left to certain individuals may not be enough, as they may change the use of the land. If woodlands or farmland are converted to house lots or commercial sites, the owner's stewardship legacy of the land is lost and the rural nature of the neighborhood may change as a result. Fragmentation of large parcels can compromise rural economies, recreational activities, and the associated water quality and wildlife habitat.

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**Succession Planning is a process that allows parents and children to talk about the future of one of their largest assets—their property.**  
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If during the process of Succession Planning an optimal future owner is not found, the owner may want to consider other options such as donating land to a land trust or placing a conservation easement on the property to restrict the future types of uses.

Thinking about our future passing is daunting, and yet we need to plan for what will happen to our land as part of our stewardship responsibility. The nature of multigenerational land ownership changed during the last century. As we became more mobile, careers became more important and communications became better, resulting in fewer children staying home to work the land. Now oftentimes the family land is just a commodity, not a way of life or a continuation of the stewardship of the land.

Succession Planning is a process that allows parents and children to talk about the future of one of their largest assets—their property. No child wants to think of losing their parents and will not likely bring the subject up for conversation, yet it is something that needs to be discussed if the spirit and character of the family is to continue. Surveys in Maine have determined that only 41% of landowners have wills, and over 60% of landowners who have desires for their land in the future have not talked to the next generation about their wishes.

Even if you do not own a large parcel of land there are ways that you can help ensure the consistency of future land use through the support of land trusts and others who manage rural land on behalf of the public. Please do not wait until you are sick, or worse. Think about what you can do to ensure the best stewardship of the land in the future as a part of your legacy. Consider the benefits of Succession Planning today.

*Loon Echo's Bob Chase Legacy Society planned giving program is an example of the type of program families can protect their land through. If you would like more information on this planned giving society please contact Loon Echo at 207-647-4352 or visit [www.loonecholandtrust.org](http://www.loonecholandtrust.org).*