



LOON ECHO LAND TRUST

Protecting land for future generations

THE EDWARDS FOREST

*A Loon Echo Connectivity
Forest Project*

www.lelt.org

What is the project?

Loon Echo Land Trust (LELT) proposes to acquire 38 forested acres in Harrison, Maine to protect forestland and provide clean water for the Crooked River.

Why is this project important?

This project is important because it protects the forestland and animal habitat, helps provide clean drinking water, builds a connected landscape, and enhances recreational opportunities.

What natural features are on this 38 acres?

The property provides excellent water filtration and habitats for early successional animals, such as deer, ruffed grouse, and chestnut-sided warblers. The property slopes east towards the river with wetlands and seasonal streams on the property adding to species diversity.

While the land has some site disturbance from previous forestry operations, forest regeneration appears vigorous. Open areas have, in addition to vigorous White Pine regeneration, early successional plants like various briars and other shrubs, as well as some early tree species, such as birch.

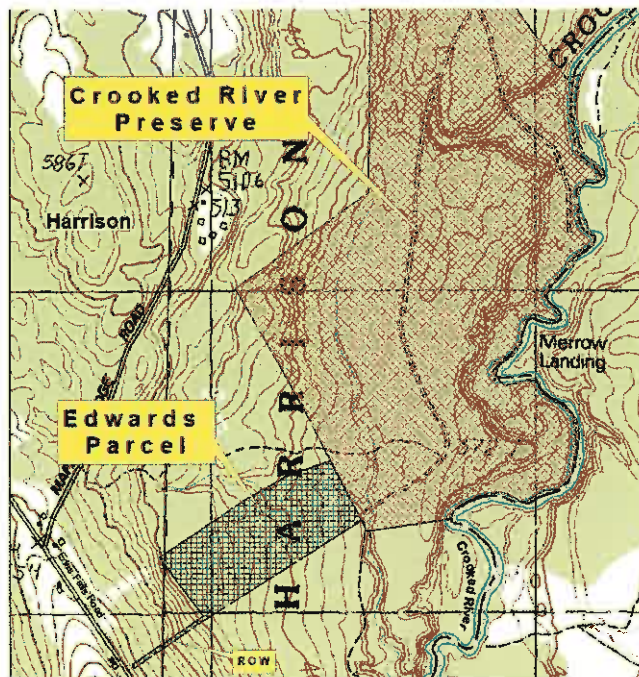
When did this project begin?

In 2013, LELT held a public outreach meeting about protecting the Crooked River. Attendees supported the idea of forming community recreational forests, which are forestlands owned and managed by the community. These forests are managed by the community and the community determines what activities are allowed on the land. At this community meeting, local residents also expressed an interest to have access to the following activities: permanent public access for hunting, fishing, trapping, walking, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and snowmobiling.

In 2015, LELT acquired the Crooked River Preserve (Preserve) with financial support from residents of Harrison and surrounding communities, and the Land for Maine's Future program. The Preserve consists of two main parcels and the Edwards Project will be added to the Intervale parcel, which boasts a significant Northeastern interior pine barren and contains more than a mile of frontage along the Crooked River.

How does this project protect our drinking water?

Protecting forestland is an easy and relatively inexpensive way to get clean drinking water. "Forests produce great water quality because they have multiple ways of stopping pollutants from getting into water bodies. First, the forest canopy slows rainfall which prevents large surges of rainwater from eroding soil and carrying it to the lake or to streams that feed the lake. Water that lands on the forest floor is absorbed by the leaf litter layer and absorbed into the ground where it is taken up by the roots of trees and other plants in the forest."¹



What is "connectivity" and why is it important?

Habitats and species function best as part of a large, interconnected network. The more connected the landscape, the more species are able to adjust to changes in the environment. These 38 acres will be added to LELT's Crooked River Preserve and will create a contiguous 337 acres of conserved lands to protect habitat and our source of drinking water. This property adds to the 1500 acres of conserved lands in close proximity.

What is the potential economic impact of the project to the region?

Clean Drinking Water

In order to avoid costly water treatment plants, protecting the source of drinking water is of the utmost importance. By protecting the land in the watershed of the Crooked River, the water flowing into the river remains clean. In part, due to the undeveloped nature of the watershed, the Crooked River currently has the highest rating for water quality, Class AA.² Permanently protecting land around the river is key to maintaining this high quality drinking water.

Clean water in the Crooked River not only benefits local residents, but it also benefits the region. "The Crooked River is the largest tributary flowing into Sebago Lake, and consequently plays a vital role in terms of water storage and drinking water."³ Sebago Lake is the main drinking water source for approximately 200,000 people who live and work in 11 communities in the greater Portland area. Due to the high water quality of the lake, the Portland Water District (PWD) has been granted an exemption to the filtration requirements of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act since 1993,⁴ a significant financial savings.

¹ Sebago Lake: State of the Lake Report. Portland Water District, 2015. Pg. 4. https://www.pwd.org/sites/default/files/state_of_the_lake_report_-_2015_-_web.pdf

² The Crooked River: Characteristics, History, and Fisheries Management. Pellerin, James, Pierce, Urban D. Jr. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, April 2015. Pg. 32.

³ Ibid. Pg. 15.

Portland Water District (PWD) recognizes the importance of protecting forestlands and has been actively involved in contributing financially to land protection efforts in the Sebago Lake watershed. LEIT and PWD are working closely together on multiple projects, and PWD is contributing to the Edwards Project as well.

Recreational Opportunities

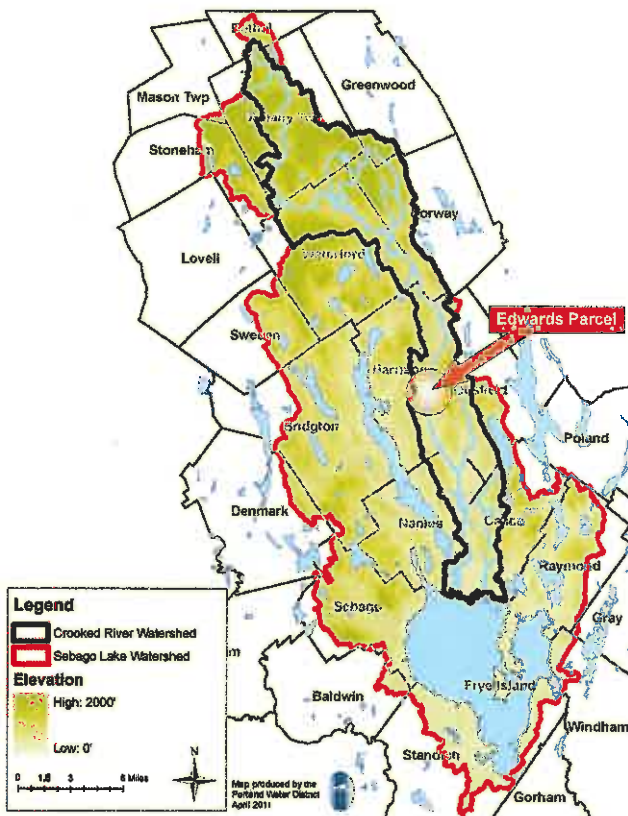
Purchasing the Edwards property will add additional acres to the Crooked River Preserve on which the public is allowed to hike, hunt, fish, snowmobile, walk, mountain bike, and horseback ride.

Protecting land along the Crooked River also enhances recreational opportunities in the region. Currently



Landlocked Salmon

Location within Sebago Drainage



there is not a significant amount of development along the Crooked River, allowing for “a unique aesthetic opportunity in southern Maine to enjoy a wilderness type experience for fishing, canoeing, hiking, or hunting.”⁵

Protecting the waters of the Crooked River plays a key role in protecting the valuable fisheries in the Crooked River and also Sebago Lake. According to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, “The Crooked River is the single most important spawning and nursery tributary supporting the wild salmon sport fishery in Sebago Lake. Aside from its importance as a spawning and nursery tributary for wild Sebago Lake salmon, *the Crooked River also provides substantial recreational angling opportunity as a high quality riverine salmon fishery.*”⁶

Sebago Lake is an important economic source for southern Maine due to its popularity as a recreation destination, especially for fishing. “Sebago Lake is home to one of Maine’s few indigenous landlocked salmon populations, making it both historically and genetically important. Sebago holds the distinction as a worldwide destination for salmon anglers since the early 1900s. Sebago also produced the current World Record Landlocked Salmon caught by Edward Blakely in 1907.”⁷

Revenue is generated not only from fishing licenses, but also from local marinas, outdoor guides, vacation rental properties, restaurants, and other local businesses. The high water quality of the lake has allowed these recreational opportunities to thrive. However, if the water quality were to decline and therefore hurt the fishery, then the region would suffer economically.



Winter Snowshoe Hike - Crooked River Preserve

⁴ A White Paper on the Protection of the Lower Bay of Sebago Lake. Portland Water District, 2004. Pg. 2. <https://www.pwd.org/sites/default/files/sebago-lake-vision-white-paper.pdf>

⁵ The Crooked River: Characteristics, History, and Fisheries Management. Pellerin, James, Pierce, Urban D. Jr. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, April 2015. Pg. 14.

⁶ Ibid. Pg. 4.

⁷ Sebago Lake Landlocked Atlantic Salmon Management Plan. Brautigam, Francis, Pellerin, James. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 2011. Pg. 3.

What does the project cost?

Loon Echo has until December 31, 2018 to raise the funds to purchase the property.

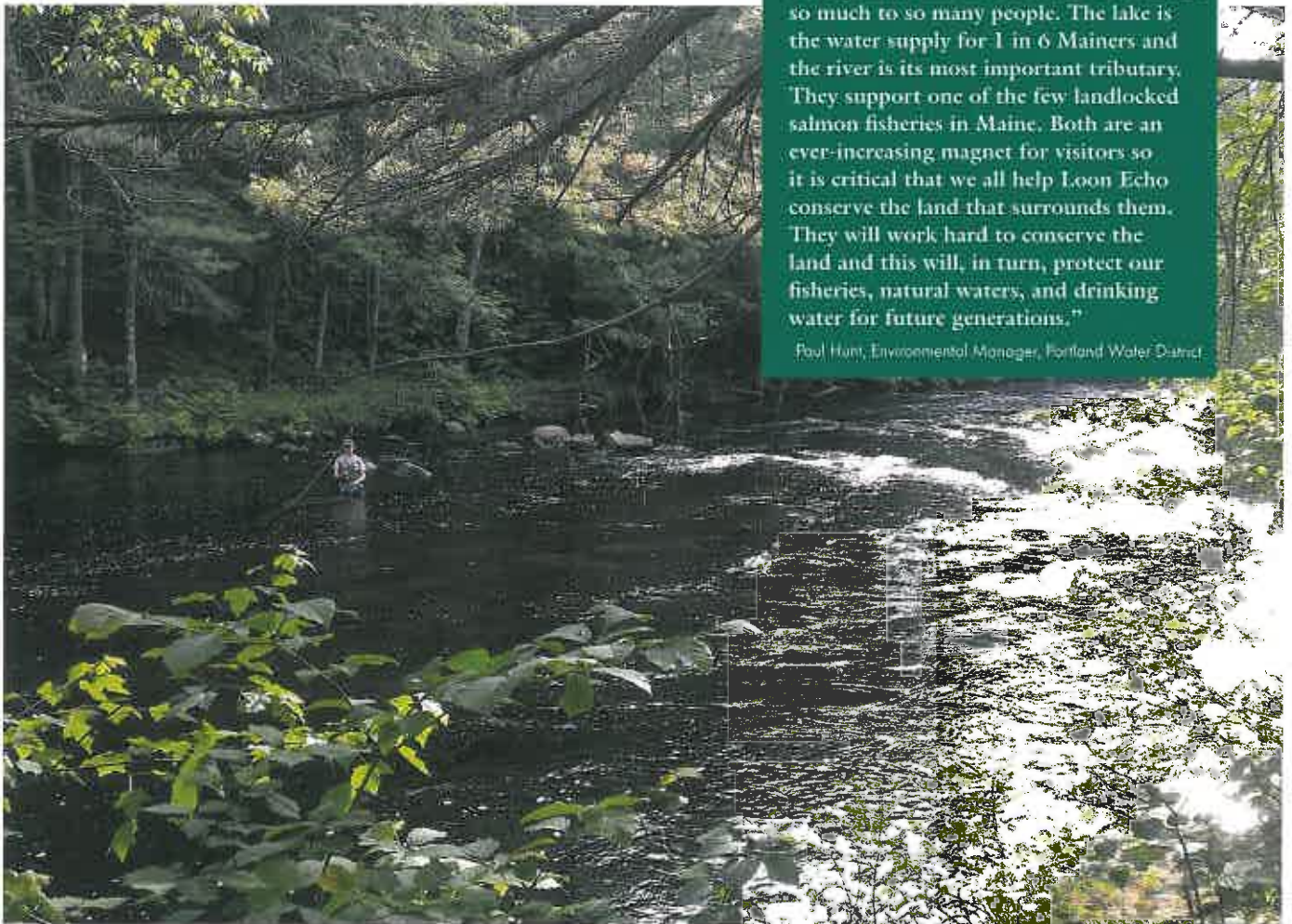
Project Budget

Appraisal/ purchase cost	\$31,000
Stewardship fund for perpetual maintenance	\$25,000
Due diligence fees	\$5,500
Forest plans, signs, etc.	\$3,500
TOTAL	\$65,000

How can I help?

You can make a donation to the project. This can be done online at www.let.org or you can mail a check to: Loon Echo Land Trust, 8 Depot St, Suite 4, Bridgton, ME 04009. All donations are eligible for tax deductibility.⁸

Please help us spread the word about this project. Your support of this project will enable you and other year-round and seasonal residents to continue to enjoy public access to hunting, fishing, trapping, walking, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and snowmobiling.



"Sebago Lake and the Crooked River mean so much to so many people. The lake is the water supply for 1 in 6 Mainers and the river is its most important tributary. They support one of the few landlocked salmon fisheries in Maine. Both are an ever-increasing magnet for visitors so it is critical that we all help Loon Echo conserve the land that surrounds them. They will work hard to conserve the land and this will, in turn, protect our fisheries, natural waters, and drinking water for future generations."

Paul Hunt, Environmental Manager, Portland Water District

About Loon Echo Land Trust

Loon Echo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 1987 by community members who saw the need to preserve the natural areas of the region. Throughout the years, we have worked with area residents, businesses, and organizations to protect land through conservation easements, land purchases, and land donations. With approximately 6,700 acres under protection, we continue to maintain our lands and multi-use trail systems for the benefit of the public. We proudly serve the towns of Bridgton, Casco, Denmark, Naples, Harrison, Sebago, and Raymond.

Our mission: Loon Echo Land Trust protects land in the northern Sebago Lake region of Maine to conserve its natural resources and character for future generations.

For more information please contact:
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⁸ Loon Echo Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Gifts made to this campaign will fund the purchase of the property; project related expenses; and the establishment of a reserve account to support the ongoing maintenance of this property, other LETL properties, and the mission of LETL. LETL's Board recognizes its responsibility to be a careful administrator of all such funds. If the purchase of this property is not realized as a result of this campaign, donors will be notified and may then choose to have their gifts returned to them or applied to another LETL purpose.