



Tidings of the Turtle



Captain Sandy's mark from the collections of the Maine Historical Society

Francis Small Heritage Trust Newsletter – December 2010



Trail signs sprout on Jagolinzer Preserve

Some people who take the 45-minute walk on the Jagolinzer Preserve miss the beautiful waterfall or even the path to the lookout point on the Saco River. That should not be a problem any longer. Thanks to help from the students and teachers at the Hollis Learning Center, the preserve now has both directional signs and small turtle plaques to mark the trails. The students erected the signs just in time for a bird walk led by Vin Lawrence on May 15 (see page 2).

The twenty-acre Jagolinzer Preserve is in Limington off of Route 25 just east of the Cornish town line. The area offers a beautiful brook and waterfall, an old dam, wetlands, forest, and frontage on the Saco River. A sign one-half mile west of the junction of Routes 25 and 117 marks the right-of-way starting at Olive's Way to the nature area. The area is available during daylight hours for hiking, nature study, and other low-impact activities such as cross-country skiing.



The view from Bald Ledge in Porter

The Bald Ledge overlook in Porter commands an inspirational view of Colcord and Bickford Ponds and the surrounding hills, so it is no surprise that the trail from the north end of Colcord Pond to the promontory above is a favorite of local hikers.

For years the National Audubon Society (NAS) has overseen a 25-acre parcel next to the ledges, a gift of the Giovanella family of the Bickford Pond area who retained ownership of the ledges and approximately 200 additional acres. Since the Audubon Society is headquartered in New York City, they decided a few years back that a local organization in Maine might better be able to manage the property. So they contacted the Francis Small Heritage Trust to see if we would be interested in owning and protecting the property.

This summer NAS officially transferred its holdings near Bald Ledge to the Trust – as a gift, in addition including a generous stewardship endowment. The

Forest Society of Maine, represented by its then Director of Forestland Conservation, Peter McKinley, kindly agreed to hold an easement on the property.

Bald Ledge is more than just a view. Our new property is in the Porter Hills, and on it the Maine Natural Areas Program has identified the Ironwood-Oak-Ash Woodland natural community and two rare plants, Bottlebrush Grass and Douglas' Knotweed. We will be looking for other rare plants that are in the Porter Hills. The Maine Natural Areas Program can be found at www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mnap.

The Trust is pleased to have a footprint in Porter. While some thoughts are being given to creating a new trail to the ledges from the direction of Kennard Hill Road, for now we're content to revel in the view.

In the photo above, Janice Campbell of Hiram admires the view from Bald Ledge.





A job well done: Students tackle soil erosion.

Mountain roads and trails are some of the hardest places to control soil erosion. A typical rainstorm can generate vast quantities of fast moving water. And that water can rapidly transform a road or trail into a free-running stream, washing away the topsoil in the process.

On October 29, students from the Bonny Eagle Alternative High School constructed a water bar to protect the road, the topsoil, and the water quality of the streams on Sawyer Mountain. The goal of a water bar is to direct any water that is on the road or trail so that it flows off onto the forest floor. There, the water can slowly soak into the ground and replenish the water table. Without the water bar in place, the water would continue running down the traveled way, dislodging topsoil as it picks up speed. Eventually the soil-laden water would enter a ditch or stream where it would harm the surface water quality in addition to damaging the road surface.

The water bar was constructed from a hemlock log, a natural material chosen for its ability to resist rot. The log was buried in the road at an angle and it protrudes only a few inches above the road surface. This way, it can direct the flow of water off the road without impeding normal travel. Keeping the road passable is important for hiking, emergency vehicle access, logging, and other allowable uses.

The students worked hard because it was hard work! First the group had to hike in one mile, carrying heavy tools and supplies including steel bars, pick axes, shovels, and a peavey. Once at the site, some students prepared the log by stripping off the bark with a draw knife while others dug a trench and broke up stones for the fill in front of the bar. Also, holes had to be bored in the log for the anchoring rods. Joe Anderson of the York County Soil & Water Conservation District was there to offer guidance and explain how the water bar should be built, as well as to lend a helping hand. Instructors from the school and the Riverview Foundation all pitched in to share the work.

On the way back, the group detoured to explore the foundation of the Ebenezer Walker homestead from the late 1700s and early 1800s.

The students demonstrated that they could work well as a team. They also could take personal satisfaction and pride in their accomplishment. Program Director Frank Conway wrote, "I have rarely seen my students come back from a trip so energized!"

The Trust heartily thanks all the students and teachers who made this work party possible. Some of them are pictured above, standing behind the newly installed water bar.

Bird walkers look for warblers

Sixteen people of all ages went for a bird walk on May 15 – warbler season – led by naturalist Vin Lawrence in the Trust's Jagolinzer Preserve. Vin reminded us of birders' role as advocates for the environment. We can be aware of changes we see in bird migration and the possible relationship to climate change. He told of Herb Wilson's documentation of the first of each bird species seen in spring in Maine. (To help document the spring 2011 bird migration, ask to be on Wilson's mailing list: whwilson@colby.edu. Next February he will send you his data form so that you can participate.) As we walked through the preserve, warblers we saw or heard were Northern Parula Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Ovenbird, and Common Yellowthroat. We sent our list to the York County Audubon Society for their May 14–15 Birding Challenge.

Katherine Rhoda Entertains

At the Annual Meeting of the Trust at the Porter Town Hall on November 7, Katherine Rhoda gave a lively concert of songs – some her own, some traditional, sometimes engaging the audience in singing. In addition to guitar, she played her instruments from the early 1900s, including the ukelele, Marzophone, and violin-guitar, and described the instruments and their history. In the days before records, when people entertained themselves by playing instruments, the ones Katherine demonstrates were sold door-to-door with play-by-numbers sheet music. But Katherine doesn't play by numbers! See more on the web at www.KatherineRhoda.com.





Cornish land to be conserved

The Trust is able to protect a large parcel of land that has rare plants, a large bog, and rich forested uplands, thanks to the kind donation of a conservation easement from Thomas and Edith Sisson. The easement will cover most of their land in Cornish, with some of their Limerick land included to enhance a trail around the wetlands (“The Heath,” locally pronounced “Haith”). The boundary survey has not been completed but the Trust estimates that the protected land will be approximately 130 acres. The easement will protect this land forever from development and provide for public access.

Don Cameron, Ecologist for the Maine Natural Areas Program, identified seven rare plant species on this land and wrote, “There are only a small number of similarly rich sites in the low mountains of southwestern Maine, and to date not one is on conserved or protected land. A conservation easement at this site will be the first step in the long-term protection of these species and the habitat they need.”

Earlier this year the Trust asked for help to raise the \$23,000 that is needed for surveying, legal work, and stewardship on this easement. We have received generous support from individuals and two very welcome grants, one for \$10,000 from the Davis Conservation Foundation and one for \$8,000 from The William P.

 Please accept my donation of _____ to aid in the conservation activities of the Trust.

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(207) 637-3510 www.FSHT.org Please send a free hiking map.

Wharton Trust. As we are close to our goal, we are confident that the easement will be completed in 2011.

The easement has these goals:

- To protect a wildlife corridor, serving the Trust’s goal of connecting the Trust’s 1,400 acres on Sawyer Mountain with conservation land to the west;
- To provide public access and opportunities for education;
- To protect seven rare plant species;
- To provide watershed protection, preserving a large bog and streams;
- To protect habitat for waterfowl;
- To protect historical features – such as old cellar holes and a cemetery;
- To keep an area available for forestry.

Plus, the beavers are back! The Sissons do not allow trapping of beaver, but the beavers had disappeared for some years. This fall the beavers have gotten busy and raised the water level of The Heath. The Sissons are happy to have them around.

Learn to control invasive plants

Cutting, uprooting, and (minimally) spraying invaders, nine volunteers worked hard near the Sawyer Mountain trailhead on Route 117 on August 14. Joe Anderson of the York County Soil & Water Conservation District showed us how to control invasive terrestrial plants. This was a follow-up to a talk Joe gave for FSHT in 2009.

We learned to choose a method based on how widely spread the invasion is and how the plant spreads. Wind or birds spread seeds or berries, so a short-term

tactic is to cut the plant before seeds form. But some have very aggressive root systems that should eventually be eliminated.

Joe said to look for a mechanical method before turning to a chemical one. With any of the chemical applications, even though Joe uses ones that rapidly lose their potency, he does not use them where they could get into a stream or wetland. Some chemicals can be used only by a licensed applicator like Joe.

Asiatic bittersweet can grow from fragments of roots, so digging out all the roots works only where there are few plants. We cut the stems a little above the ground and then sprayed a little glyphosate onto the cut stems to kill the roots. We smothered the cuttings in a tarp. Never leave them where they can root.

We removed **Japanese barberry** and **shrubby honeysuckle** with a Weed Wrench, which has a lot of leverage and can pull out the whole root of a woody plant very cleanly. **Japanese honeysuckle** is a vine that can be pulled by hand if it is in small patches, especially in moist soil.

Next we went to a site on Route 11 in Limington to learn ways to control **Japanese knotweed** (“Mexican bamboo”). One is a cut-stem method. Joe cut the stem at the first segment and then poured into the hollow stem a solution of glyphosate to kill the root. As that is inefficient for large patches, Joe mainly used a chemical spray that he is licensed to use. A chemical-free way to control knotweed is to mow it three times a year.

Information on terrestrial invasive plants is available at www.yorkswcd.org.



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A fun activity for younger hikers: Spot the Next Turtle



The trails on both Sawyer Mountain and the Jagolinzer Preserve are now marked with small wooden plaques with an engraved yellow turtle. The turtle is the mark of Chief Wesumbe, also known as Captain Sandy, who once roamed these lands.

A fun game for younger hikers with their parents is to find the next turtle along the trail. There are turtles facing hikers coming each way. Sometimes turtles are on both sides of the same tree. Sometimes the turtle facing backwards is on a different tree. So finding the turtles facing backwards adds to the fun. How many turtles can you find?

How much wood would a wood duck box ...?



Illustrations by Amber Carr

Would you know a wood duck if you saw one? Peter McHugh would. And a couple of years ago the Limington sportsman approached the Trust with a request. Would we consider the placement of several wood-duck nesting boxes on Trust property in the Sawyer Mountain Highlands to encourage the reintroduction of wood ducks to the area?

We would, and introduced McHugh to Limington Boy Scout Troop #315, for which the Trust is the sponsoring agency. Under the guidance of their leader, Marc Raychard, the Scouts worked with McHugh to fashion three handsome duck boxes. Last March the builders positioned the boxes, each stuffed with hay for the mom and prospective wood ducklings, on poles in wetlands off Route 117 and along Shaving Hill Road.

