



Tidings of the Turtle



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

Francis Small Heritage Trust Newsletter – December 2012



Executive Director – a big step

We are excited to announce that we have hired a part-time Executive Director, Robert (“Bos”) Savage.

With over 23 years as Maine Audubon’s Property Manager, Bos has deep experience in land-conservation management. His educational background prepared him for our mission of protecting natural resources and for our educational programs. Bos earned a Bachelor of Science, Magna Cum Laude, from the University of Maine/Orono, with a major in Wildlife Biology and a minor in Land Use Planning. Later, through the Teachers for Secondary Schools Program at University of Southern Maine/Gorham, he was certified to teach Secondary Science. Before his work at Maine Audubon, he taught Secondary Science at the Regional Educational Alternative School in Hollis. This ties in well with our on-going activities with students in the current alternative education program.

Bos is an avid fisherman and is a Registered Maine Fishing Guide. His other interests include canoeing, soapstone carving, and cooking.

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Second graders explore and report

A duck call sounds in the woods. Children, interrupted in their animal investigations, come running. They crowd expectantly around a diminutive figure — the “quacker.” She is Barbara Bald, tracker, from Alton, NH, and the scene is from the Trust's nature program, "Developing a Sense of Place: Introducing Second Graders to Protected Land in Their Communities."

Students from Hollis Elementary (SAD 6), the Line School in Limerick/Newfield (RSU 57), and South Hiram Elementary (SAD 55) — more than 140 in all — are participating in year two of the program, which challenges the young naturalists to find evidence of animals on October hikes, then to return on snowshoes in winter to locate and identify tracks of their furry friends. The Hollis classes are exploring the Sawyer Mountain Highlands in Limington and Limerick; the Line School classes are investigating the Poulin Preserve near the Little Ossipee River in Limerick; and the South Hiram classes are hiking in the Jagolinzer Preserve along the Saco River in Limington.

Funding for this program comes from the Giovanella Family Trust of the Maine

Community Foundation, Healthy Sacopee, and an unrestricted grant from the Clark Charitable Trust.

Here are some reports from the field:

Barbara taught us about coyote ears so we could hear the brook better with all the waterfalls.

(See above photo.) — Brookey

I learned new things like lichen and club moss.

— Jack

It was the best trip I've ever had in second grade.

— Gabrielle

I saw scat and learned a lot.

— Claire

Justin found a beaver sign in the woods. I think he was using the tree for his house.

— Zach

We found eggs. I hope in the winter we do not see a bear.

— Rachael

Reflections on *Betting the Farm*

If you were one of the many in attendance at the screening of *Betting the Farm* at the Porter Town Hall on Oct. 21, you most probably headed home thinking that dairy farmers in our state have faced some extraordinary challenges and have often made some unbelievable sacrifices.

Having spent the last several months traveling around Maine visiting over 120 farms, I was not surprised to watch how hard all the dairy farmers portrayed in the movie were working. No doubt about it - a day in the life of a farmer includes many frustrations and never-ending responsibilities.

Two weeks ago I listened to Aaron Bell and Carly DelSignore of Tide Mill Or-

Aaron viewed the movie as a real eye-opener for people to learn about the status of a small dairy farm in today's global marketplace. He applauded the message that was clearly communicated by the film of the significance of buying local. He is still somewhat amazed that a group of small farmers came up with this unthinkable plan of starting their own milk brand where farmers garner ninety percent of the profits. To say that the odds of succeeding against national brands with this business plan were slim is quite the understatement.

Although MOOMilk is not profitable yet, sales have increased by twenty percent in the last four months. By the end

The mind-boggling diversity of Tide Mill Organic Farm can be seen on their website www.tidemillorganicfarm.com. In addition to the dairy cows, they raise chickens, pigs, turkeys, cattle, and organic vegetables. They have a sustainable logging operation, a creamery, CSA program, and a farm stand.

In the ten-week span when the MOOMilk farmers did not receive a paycheck, Aaron and Carly had to rely on income from some of their other enterprises. When I asked Aaron how some of the farmers who were not so diversified were able to survive, he explained that some ended up selling family heirlooms and "working their woodlots to death." At times while viewing the movie, it was unsettling to watch these families confront the quagmire of many debts and the resulting stress and uncertainty about their future.

While Oakhurst and other large milk companies are spending millions of dollars each year on advertising, MOOMilk has had a zero advertising budget. Aaron explained that there has been a cult-like following of this organic milk label and that the loyalty for the MOOMilk brand has been phenomenal.

Hats off to filmmakers Cecily Pingree and Jason Mann for creating a documentary that beautifully captured the plight of small organic dairy farmers in our state. They enabled viewers of the movie to have a firsthand look into some of the frustrations and struggles facing the farmer's corporation. Best wishes are sent to MOOMilk in the new year as they strive to expand and provide quality organic local dairy products to our state.

Our family continues to discuss the movie and when we travel to different locations, we look to see if MOOMilk is being sold. MOOMilk may not have an advertising program in place, but it appears that *Betting the Farm* has contributed significantly in helping to market this Maine-produced milk and in encouraging the Maine consumer to support local agricultural enterprises.

Mary Quinn Doyle, Unique Maine Farms
www.uniquemainefarms.com



Photograph courtesy of Pull-Start Pictures

ganic Farm speak at a gathering in Belfast. They were sharing their plans to find funding to build a chicken processing plant that meets USDA standards on their dairy farm. They were the young couple with four children on the coastal farm in Washington County that were portrayed in the movie. Like the other farmers in *Betting the Farm* they continue to demonstrate an amazing innovativeness and resiliency. As MOOMilk expands throughout New England, Aaron and Carly also hope to expand their organic chicken sales in the same markets.

Recently Aaron Bell was kind enough to spend quite a bit of time on the phone. He shared his thoughts on the movie and provided an update on how MOOMilk is doing.

of December, seven additional farmers will have joined the group including the Guillemettes from Lyman. MOOMilk sales in the Boston market have skyrocketed to surpass those earned from the 250 stores where it is carried in Maine.

The fact that MOOMilk has progressed to the current level is quite amazing in view of all the struggles that the movie depicted - leaky cartons, pasteurization issues, equipment malfunctions, insufficient shelf space, etc. Aaron told of several additional major hurdles since the movie was produced. But thanks to a two million dollar financial investment into the company, payment for the MOOMilk farmers is moving in the right direction.

Executive Director

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Bos is a former FSHT Board member and Vice President (1998–2008). Because he is an old friend who knows us and our area well, he will be effective in our work immediately. We will benefit from his communication and management skills, his successful grant-writing and fundraising record, and his expertise in land stewardship.

In all our years, we have proudly described FSHT as an all-volunteer organization. While we can no longer say that, we are convinced that having such a professional person actively focused on our work will enable us to carry out our mission successfully.

We are grateful to the Davis Conservation Foundation and to individual donors, including Richard A. Spencer, for funding to support this position.



Campers lend a hand

This summer, campers and counselors from around the world attending the Maine Teen Camp in Porter hiked the Jagolinzer Preserve. While they were there, they helped to find historic barbed wire from the days when the area was used for grazing cattle. The campers used flagging to mark the wire to make it more visible. Inclement weather prevented a later hike to the Sawyer Mountain Highlands—but maybe next year this can happen.



Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting on October 21 at the Porter Town Hall, the Board of Directors and Officers were elected. During the public portion of the meeting, the film *Betting the Farm* by filmmakers Cecily Pingree and Jason Mann was shown. Peter Zack introduced Emily Graham, who ran the Portland Food Co-op for 5 years. She explained how cooperatives function. Following the screening of the film, there was lively discussion among people in the audience. Please see the article by Mary Doyle on the facing page.



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

Please send me a free hiking map.

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Contributions & memberships are tax-deductible under IRS code 501 (C)(3).
Francis Small Heritage Trust, Inc., PO Box 414, Limerick, ME 04048
(207) 221-0853 (Please note the new number) www.FSHT.org

Forest Works! partnership

Forest works! Yes, it does! In last year's newsletter we told about our partnership with the York County Working Forest Protection Project. The group is still going strong but under a snappier name. **Forest Works!** is the new name of this collaboration of two land trusts — Francis Small Heritage Trust and Three Rivers Land Trust, ten major Maine conservation organizations and agencies, and independent forester Everett Towle.

The Trust has benefited from the help of consultants paid for by a grant to Forest Works! You may have noticed a new look to communications from us, including a new brochure. That is thanks to our Membership Consultant, Mike Gaito.

Although Mike has moved to Vermont, a new Membership Consultant will be hired in 2013 to work with the land trusts. Deb Chapman, Circuit Rider for the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, helped FSHT with ways to strengthen our organization. The Forest Works! Outreach Consultant, Lee Burnett, has organized meetings with landowners and Selectmen from area towns, and he is continuing that process.

A regional dinner meeting with landowners was held at Willowbrook in Newfield on June 20. People were invited from the FSHT area towns – Cornish, Limerick, Limington, Newfield, and Parsonfield, and towns in the Three Rivers Land Trust area – Acton, Alfred,

Lebanon, Sanford, and Shapleigh. Lee Burnett gave an overview of Forest Works! and its purposes. Steve Walker of Beginning with Habitat gave a presentation on conservation at the regional landscape level. Marcel Polak of Forest Works! and the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions described the important role that conservation commissions play locally and their significance to regional conservation. And Greg Caporossi of Trust for Public Lands spoke about community forests. Guests had an opportunity to ask questions and talk with one another about what they hoped to do with their land.

On www.forestworksme.org you can learn more about Forest Works!

and its partners and find useful resources. The website states this central message:

A forest that works provides:

- Forestry jobs that cannot be exported
- Wood products and a source of renewable energy
- A natural filtration system that keeps groundwater clean
- Elbow room and nourishment for a variety of wildlife
- Recreational opportunities within a short walk, bike ride, or car ride

As a partner in Forest Works! the Francis Small Heritage Trust is committed to helping you realize these benefits from forested land.





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Where can I hike?

The Francis Small Heritage Trust owns or holds an easement on over 1,950 acres of land in northern York and southern Oxford counties.

Sawyer Mountain Highlands

Only 22 miles from Portland, these 1,400 acres of Trust-owned land are open for public use for hiking, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling on existing trails, and cross-country skiing. Enjoy the view from the summit or just take pleasure in walking through the woods. There are parking areas at both the Limerick trailhead on the Sawyer Mountain Road and

the Limington trailhead on Route 117. Parking is also permitted at the end of the Shaving Hill Road in Limington. Check the www.FSHT.org website for directions to the several miles of trails — or explore the wilderness areas off the trails. If you choose to leave the trails, please bring a map and compass, and optionally a GPS.

The Jagolinzer Preserve

The 20-acre Jagolinzer Preserve offers the beautiful Pease Brook, a waterfall, old dam, wetlands, forest, and frontage on the Saco River. The area is available during daylight hours for hiking, nature study,

and other low-impact activities such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The preserve is located off of Route 25 just east of the Cornish line.

Bald Ledge in Porter

The Bald Ledge overlook in Porter commands an inspirational view of Colcord and Bickford Ponds and the surrounding hills, so the trail from the north end of Colcord Pond to this promontory is a favorite of local hikers. The Trust plans to create a new trail to the ledges from Kennard Hill Road side.

And how can I help?

The following properties are currently being prepared for public use. Trails need to be constructed, signs erected, and in one case, an Eagle Scout candidate has plans for a bridge across a wetland.

The Heath

The Trust holds a public-access easement on this 188-acre preserve. The Heath (pronounced “Haith”) is located off of Route 5 on the Cornish-Limerick line. Currently the Trust needs help in laying out and marking the trails, drawing maps,

and erecting a sign in the parking area. The initial plans are for a loop trail around the main wetland.

Poulin Preserve in Cornish

The Trust is seeking input for deciding how to manage this parcel located on the Saco River in Cornish near the canoe take-out on Route 5. What do you feel would be the best public use of the property and still honor the conservation ideals of the Trust? Please let us know your thoughts!

Poulin Preserve in Limerick

This 18-acre parcel is located on the Clark’s Bridge Road. It has been used as an outdoor laboratory for the “Sense of Place” program by students at the Line School. We would like to establish a marked nature trail on the preserve. Needs include an improved parking and turn-around space, signage, markers for points of interest along the trail, nature guide booklets, and a map box.

