



Cultivating the Next Generation of Environmental Stewards

This year, we are beginning a new initiative to cultivate the next generation of environmental stewards. It is the next step in connecting youth to the local environment, through already established public school, afterschool, and summer programs throughout the region. These stewards will work hands-on to help wildlife species that are declining and threatened on Land Trust Preserves.

The Presumpscot region has the highest development pressure in the state, while only 3% of the land is forever conserved—yet 20% of the land statewide is conserved. As a result, wildlife habitat is quickly fragmenting and disappearing. This project gives youth the opportunity to make a positive impact in their community by helping to protect important wildlife habitat in the field.

In collaboration with US Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Maine Beginning with Habitat Program, the Land Trust has identified four project areas to pursue:

- 1. BIRDS:** Support three threatened bird species (Eastern screech owl, yellow warbler, and great blue heron) by planting native riparian trees to provide habitat along the banks of the Presumpscot River and tributaries.
- 2. BATS:** Help the threatened little brown bat by creating and installing wooden bat boxes for habitat.
- 3. FISH:** Promote the slowly rebounding alewife fish migration and native brook trout along the Land Trust's Mill Brook Preserve in Westbrook, by mechanically removing invasive plants and replacing them with native shrubs to improve native and migratory fish habitat.
- 4. POLLINATORS:** Support the dozens of butterflies, bees, and moth species that are threatened. The environmental stewards will convert fields on Land Trust Preserves to pollinator gardens to provide critically needed habitat.

Thank you to the Onion Foundation, and to the Land Trust Business Partners and Individual Members for helping to support this initiative. If you are interested in volunteering with the Land Trust on this initiative, or you work with youth that may be interested in volunteering, please contact Toby Jacobs, Stewardship and Outreach Manager at toby@prlt.org.



Youth Planting Native Trees at Hawkes Preserve

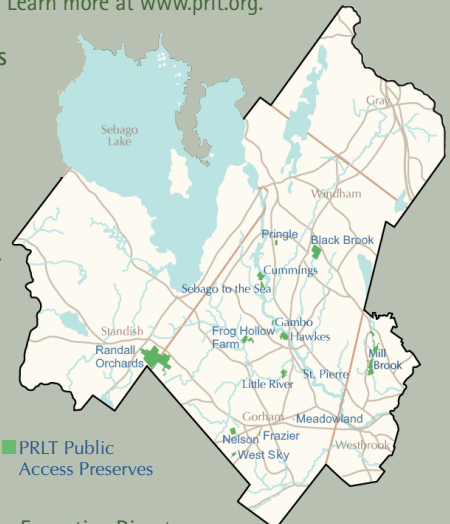
Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

Presumpscot Regional Land Trust engages with communities to conserve, steward, and provide access to local lands and clean water for current and future generations to enjoy.

We are a community based nonprofit primarily serving Gorham, Gray, Standish, Westbrook, and Windham. We hold 1,650 acres of conserved lands with 16 free public access preserves that include trails and water access. We are the water stewards of the Presumpscot River watershed and we coordinate the Sebago to the Sea Trail, a 28-mile trail from Standish to Portland. Learn more at www.prlt.org.

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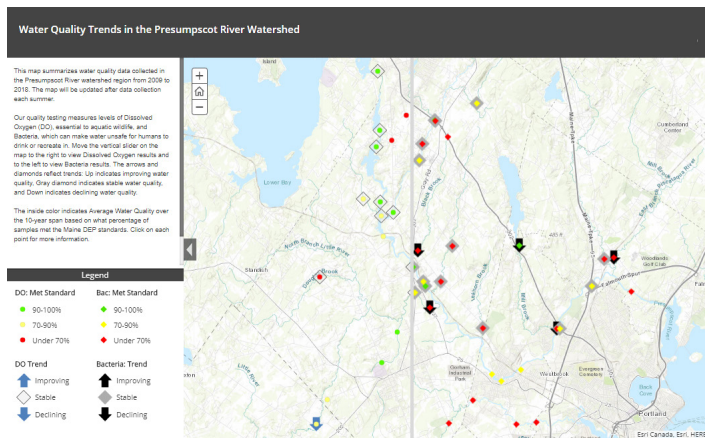


PRLT Public Access Preserves

Staff

- Rachelle Curran Apse, Executive Director
- Toby Jacobs, Stewardship and Outreach Manager

10-Year Water Quality Trends



2019 Water Quality Trends

We have developed a new interactive map, available to view on the Waters section of our website, that shows changes in water quality throughout our region over the past 10 years. The map includes sites all along the Presumpscot River and its tributaries as well as four new sites on the Stroudwater River.

The Presumpscot River watershed covers much of Greater Portland and is the largest freshwater input into Casco Bay. As the region has quickly grown so has recreational use of the river; there are now over 20 water access

points for paddling the river, several swimming holes, and numerous great fishing spots. Due to the recent removal of barriers, the river also now hosts the largest fish migration from Casco Bay.

For Maine's most urban river, the good news is that the majority of the top recreational spots along the Presumpscot River have been generally below the state threshold and stable for E. coli bacteria levels. The concerning news is that many of the tributaries to the Presumpscot River exceeded state standards for bacteria levels the majority of the time, and bacteria levels are increasing at many of these sites.

Clean water is critical to safe recreation and for healthy wildlife habitat in the watershed, and this is the reason for our Water Stewards program. The findings from the Water Stewards program help identify important places to conserve land and work in collaboration with partners on restoration projects. Thank you to Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, University of Southern Maine's Environmental Science and Policy Department, IDDEX Laboratories and to the Land Trust Business Partners and Individual Members for supporting the water stewards program. Learn more at www.prlt.org/water.

INTERN SPOTLIGHT

We are excited to welcome our two recently hired interns who will be working with us this summer.

Kyla Curtis will be a Stewardship Intern. Kyla's background in environmental studies and outdoor activities makes her a great fit for this position. She says, "I enjoy hiking and spending time in the woods. I'm excited about this internship so I can experience more of Southern Maine and learn about land conservation." She will assist in planning and building trails, working towards land trust accreditation, and hosting outreach events. Kyla is a rising junior at the University of Southern Maine where she is studying Environmental Policy and Planning.

Ben Libby will be a Water Steward and Fish Count Summer Intern. He says, "I have always loved being in the outdoors and I believe that keeping the earth beautiful while preserving its resources is extremely important." He will be assisting in the coordination of the Water Stewards program, including supporting the volunteer citizen scientists, running water samples in the lab, and conducting data analysis. In addition, he will be a wildlife steward, assisting in the coordination of USM's annual alewife count used to estimate how many fish reach Highland Lake from the ocean through their spring migration. Ben is a rising senior at the University of Southern Maine where he is majoring in Environmental Science and Policy.

These internship positions are possible thanks to Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, and University of Southern Maine's Environmental Science and Policy Department, and to the Land Trust Business Partners and Individual Members.



Kyla Curtis



Ben Libby

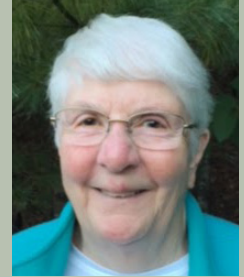
Letter from the Co-Presidents

Winter appears to be in the rearview mirror, which means we are gearing up for spring trail cleanup. Over the next couple months our staff will be working with numerous volunteers. This is a great opportunity for you to help on some of your favorite trails. Volunteers are so important to us. Much of our trail work would not be possible without you. So, a big shout out to our volunteers!

At the Board level we are making great strides on ensuring all our policies and procedures are in order so that we can apply to become nationally accredited. Check out the more in-depth article in this newsletter that provides the details on land trust accreditation. The bottom line is that national accreditation certifies we are following best practices to care for the land we conserve for current and future generations to enjoy.



Tamara Lee Pinard



Priscilla Payne

Letter from the Executive Director

This is an exciting time at the Land Trust. We have several large potential land conservation projects in the works, and two of them may be ready to announce as early as this fall. While our region continues to grow quickly, so does the awareness that forever-conserved land for wildlife and for the public to access nature are critical for a thriving community. This is why we are focused on conserving land now for future generations.

Landowners regularly call us to discuss land conservation options. We work with many partners to help conserve more land. One important partner is Maine Farmland Trust, a statewide land trust focused just on conserving farmland. Together, we have helped to ensure farms like Randall

Orchards are protected. Several more farm conservation projects are in the works within our region.

We are also working with several municipalities to help conserve town and city forests. This will ensure forested parks with public trails will be available for future generations. I look forward to sharing updates on our many potential collaborative conservation projects that are on the horizon.



Rachelle Curran Apse

Happy Spring Adventuring, Rachelle Curran Apse

What's your legacy?

Consider making it the places that make our part of Maine such a wonderful place to live, work, and play. Consider including Presumpscot Regional Land Trust in your will or estate plan.

Through a planned gift to our Land Trust, you can leave a legacy of forested river corridors, sweeping views of working farms, and walking trails for the next generation to experience the value of nature.

Planned gifts come in all sizes, and each is an expression of a person's desire to make a difference and leave a lasting legacy. A bequest is the most common way to make a planned gift. You can donate a specific amount or a percentage of your assets in your will or estate plan, or make a donation of land to our Land Trust.



Family in Mill Brook Preserve

We would be honored to discuss planned giving options with you. Please contact our Executive Director, Rachelle Curran Apse, at (207) 839-4633 or rachelle@prlt.org and learn more at www.prlt.org/planned-giving.

Why Seek Accreditation? A Little History

by board member Mike Parker



Plumbowl Conservation Easement along the Presumpscot River

Most land trusts in Maine have humble beginnings. Many started around kitchen tables in the 1970's and 80's in response to the threat of chaotic housing and commercial development seen as sprawl. In 2000, such a group in Windham rallied against a 41-unit subdivision proposed along Black Brook. That year they formed Windham Land Trust, obtained a grant from Land for Maine's Future, and shouldered a note for the remainder to buy what is now known as Black Brook Preserve.

Similarly, a group of Gorham residents, then called Gorham Land Trust, raised funds in 1995 to buy 41 acres along the Presumpscot River. This has evolved into the Hawkes Preserve, which includes a 1-mile trail connecting trailheads at the end of Tow Path Road and behind Great Falls Elementary School. At about the same time, a group calling itself Gorham Trails was building trails and acquiring conservation easements, principally on designated open spaces in subdivisions. The most visible of these today is the Frazier Preserve, connecting the high school with the middle school. All of these entities, along with Presumpscot River Watch, have since merged into Presumpscot Regional Land Trust.

These humble, all-volunteer organizations sought conservation expertise that was in short supply in the early days. Maine Coast Heritage Trust became a fountainhead

for such expertise, with its Maine Land Trust Network program, and built itself to serve the sprouting array of Maine land trusts. The Land Trust Alliance assumed the role of defining best practices and standards for land trusts nationally and created a national accreditation.

Before merging, both Windham Land Trust and Presumpscot Regional Land Trust independently undertook a course in standards and practices offered and funded by Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Both boards independently aspired to national accreditation, and in the course of merging, maintained that commitment, soon after receiving an Excellence Grant from Maine Coast Heritage Trust. This helped fund a portion of the costs of preparation. When accepting the grant, the board committed to apply for national accreditation in 2020, a commitment that is now demanding time and devotion from both our staff and our board.

The work of a land trust endures in perpetuity, and so, therefore, must the land trust itself. Accreditation helps by ensuring that standards for procedural and financial sustainability exist and that succession protocols are in place. This is why your vibrant board and staff are now rigorously pursuing accreditation. You can wish us well and keep us motivated by continuing your support and enthusiasm for the work of your Land Trust in perpetuity.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Choose Your Own Adventure



Trailwork at Black Brook Preserve

We are looking for volunteers in the following areas for the 2019 field season:

NEEDED: Water Stewards

This summer will be our third water quality sampling season (building on decades of work by the Presumpscot River Watch). We need 30 volunteer citizen scientists every other Saturday morning from May to September collecting water samples and recording data. Water Stewards work in teams so you don't need to be available for every sampling day. No prior experience is necessary, as all training is provided. The volunteer training will be held Saturday, May 4th at the University of Southern Maine Gorham Campus.

NEEDED: Wildlife Stewards

This field season we will begin several projects to improve wildlife habitat at our preserves. Projects include removal of invasive Japanese knotweed from floodplains, making and posting wooden boxes for little brown bats, planting pollinator gardens in meadows, and planting native trees along riverbanks.

NEEDED: Spring Trail Clean-up Volunteers

This May and June we will be holding our annual clean-ups at each of our preserves. No prior skills are needed, and we will provide all necessary tools and equipment.

Learn more and sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities at

www.prlt.org

or contact Toby Jacobs at toby@prlt.org with questions.

River Partner Invitation

Like a river, your donation to the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust will "flow" year round, when you become a River Partner and make a recurring monthly gift. It's a great way to spread your support throughout the year.

The River Partner program is a safe and easy way to give. You choose how much to donate, and you can increase, decrease, or stop your gift at any time. Your recurring gift can be made either through a credit card by going to www.prlt.org and click on donate, or through bank to bank transfer (ACH) by filling out the information below.

I want to be a River Partner giving a monthly gift of:

___ \$10 ___ \$15 ___ \$20 ___ \$25

___ \$50 ___ \$100 Other \$ _____

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Address _____

Town/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

___ I want to be a River Partner and give through bank to bank transfer. I have enclosed a check for my first month's gift. Please transfer my future monthly gifts from my checking account using the bank information on my check.

Signature (required for River Partner monthly giving through ACH) _____ Date _____

I understand that this is an automated monthly giving program billed on or about the 20th of each month. Gifts are processed directly through Gorham Savings Bank. For questions or to make changes please email us at info@prlt.org or call us at 839-4633. You will receive a tax-deductible receipt for your contributions at the end of each year.

Make check payable and mail to: Presumpscot Regional Land Trust, P.O. Box 33, Gorham, Maine 04038 or donate at www.prlt.org. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all donations to PRLT are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

A small, stylized handwritten signature in black ink.

NEW IN 2019: Mill Brook Preserve South

Mill Brook Preserve in Westbrook has quickly become one of our most loved preserves—not just for its trails, but also for its rich and diverse wildlife habitat. The Preserve is now 157 acres in size, including extensive forests, wetlands, and shore along Mill Brook. It supports the largest migratory fish run from Casco Bay, which can be viewed each spring as thousands of alewives swim from the ocean to Highland Lake.

We are excited to announce that this year we will be opening Mill Brook Preserve South with a 1.5 mile family-friendly loop trail through forests and wetlands with great views of Mill Brook. The trailhead will be off East Bridge Street at Mill Brook Estates, which is close to downtown Westbrook, the Westbrook Community Center, the Sebago to the Sea Trail, and a public bus stop.

In the spring and fall, members of Westbrook High School's alternative education COMPASS program will help clear trails at this new Preserve, while learning about the history and ecology of the area. In addition, youth groups from the Westbrook Community Center's Summer Teen Adventure Camp will help build bridges,



Youth Exploring in Mill Brook Preserve

boardwalks, and other structures, and will learn about trail design and tools. If you would like to help build the new trail system at Mill Brook Preserve South, please let us know. Look for a trail grand opening this fall.

Mill Brook Preserve South and its trail system is possible thanks to a grant from Cornelia Warren Community Association, Westbrook Housing, and to the Land Trust Business Partners and Individual Members.

Randall Orchard's Expanding Trail System

Last year, in collaboration with landowners Julie and Robert Randall, we opened to the public a 1.5 mile loop trail with a trailhead on Randall Road. This summer we will expand the trail system; it will be a great stop on your way to or from apple-picking this fall.

We plan to add a second 1.5 loop trail in a new section of the nearly 500 acres of conserved land. This new trail will pass by wetlands and vernal pools. It will be a great place to see and hear frogs each spring, along with lots of other wildlife. The forest is dense, and walking in this area is an immersive experience in nature. Much of the trail will be on an old woods road, meaning the trail will be easy to follow and family-friendly.

This trail will be built with the help of summer interns, volunteers, and through a collaboration with Standish Parks and Recreation youth summer camp. If you would like to be involved, we would love to have your help. The grand opening for the expanding trail will be held as part of the Land Trust's Harvest Celebration and Annual Meeting on Sunday, September 15th.

Thank you to the Narragansett One Foundation, Julie and Robert Randall and to the Land Trust Business Partners and Individual Members for the funding to build the next phase of the trail system.



Randall Trail

Thank you to everyone who supported our Land Trust in 2018 through winter 2019

Together we protected more open space for wildlife and people to enjoy, we monitored the water quality of the streams and rivers, we built and improved more trails to get into the outdoors, and we provided educational programs to hundreds of people to learn about and discover the unique natural areas in our region.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS - *Gifts of all sizes make individuals members for a year*

Sustainers \$1,000+

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Businesses, Municipalities, Agencies, & Foundations

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
City of Westbrook
Cornelia Warren Community Association
Douglas, McDaniel, & Campo Foundation House
Gorham Times
Grandiflora Garden Club
Great Falls Construction
Hannaford Supermarkets
Hillside Lumber
IDEXX
MCHT's Maine Excellence Program
MCHT's Summer Intern Grant
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Nappi Distributors
Narragansett Number One Foundation
Onion Foundation
PATCO Construction
Town of Gorham
Westbrook Trailblazers
Westbrook Recreation & Conservation Commission
Windham Watershed Protection Grant
United Way

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Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

PO Box 33, Gorham, Maine 04038 | info@prlt.org | www.prlt.org

Upcoming Events

Nelson Preserve Trail Grand Opening

Saturday May 11th at 10 am – Gorham

Spring Run: Fish Migration Walk and Family Program

Saturday June 1st at 10am

Mill Brook Preserve, Westbrook

Exploring for Mushrooms

Saturday, July 13

Black Brook Preserve, Windham

Intro to Paddling the Presumpscot and Family Paddle

August, Date TBD – Westbrook

Harvest Celebration and Annual Meeting

Sunday, September 15 at 5pm

Randall Orchards, Standish

All events are free, but space is limited, and RSVP is required.
To learn more about these events and to RSVP, go to our website
www.prlt.org or call 839-4633.