

Kennebec Land Trust Legacy Society

The Trust's Legacy Society is a group of forward-thinking KLT supporters who care about the future of land conservation in central Maine and have chosen to make planned gifts that ensure our long-term success as a regional conservation leader. We thank the following individuals and families for their contributions to our Legacy Society. If you would like more information about making planned gifts to KLT, please be in touch with Theresa Kerchner, Executive Director, at the KLT office: 207-377-2848 or TKerchner@tklt.org.

Please enjoy these essays compiled from past issues of the
Kennebec Land Trust's News



View from Mount Pisgah, Brian Kent

Conserving Land for the Grandchildren

Patrice Putman and Jerry Casey, Legacy Society Members

Spring 20224

Our family has supported KLT for many years and we have enjoyed KLT properties for even longer. Mount Pisgah is one of our favorite places in all of Maine. Climbing the mountain and then braving the fire tower is a rite of passage for many in central Maine. Top that off with a picnic and a visit to the blueberry bushes and it's always a good day. Others have their own favorite spots – Vaughan Woods, Torsey Pond, Howard Hill, Horseshoe Island, or tens of others. If you're in central Maine, chances are you're within striking distance of a KLT property.



Jerry Casey and Patrice Putman

My family donates to KLT because our lives in Maine are better as a result of the work KLT does and the many properties it protects. We love the idea that these properties will be conserved for all time. That means our grandchildren and their grandchildren for generations to come will be able to enjoy the same woods and pastures and islands that we have enjoyed.

Joni Mitchell had a hit song (“Big Yellow Taxi”) that always sent a cold chill down our spines:

“Don’t it always seem to go
That you don’t know what you got ‘til it’s gone
They paved paradise, put up a parking lot.”

All of us growing up saw some of our favorite places go from places of high adventure (building forts, digging for worms, playing hide and seek) to pavement. In my (Patrice’s) case, my favorite place for adventure was turned into a cul-de-sac with five high-end houses. I know they are lovely houses, but for the last fifty years, every time I go past that street I miss my woods. Jerry lost a beloved cranberry bog and skating pond that literally became a parking lot. As Joni said, “you don’t know what you got ‘til it’s gone.”

KLT properties will never be gone. KLT is preserving not just the land and the trees and the farms and the lakes, but also the potential for adventures. That is why KLT is so important to our family. That is why we donate to KLT every year and why we will be leaving a legacy donation.

Leaving a legacy donation is easier than you think. It’s very easy to include KLT in your will or as a beneficiary of a retirement account. Any estate lawyer or financial advisor should be able to help you with this. You can leave a specific amount or a percentage of your estate. If you grew up having great adventures in the woods or pastures or at your favorite swimming hole, please consider making KLT part of your final bequest. Future generations will thank you.

Conserving Land for Future Generations

*MJ, Scott, and Dick Wagner; Jo Wagner's daughter, son, and husband
Spring 2023*

Jo and Dick Wagner came to Maine as newlyweds in 1956, when Dick was stationed at the Brunswick Naval Air Station. They already had ties to Maine from family trips, and they knew that this was where they wanted to build a future together. They settled in Manchester in 1960 when Dick got a job at CMP after his stint in the Navy.



Jo & Dick Wagner

One of the things Jo loved best about Maine was its beautiful and diverse undeveloped landscapes. She and Dick made sure the whole family got outdoors as much as possible to enjoy their adopted state, making hikes and picnics to local preserves and state parks a regular part of family life. Over the years, Jo was an enthusiastic supporter of conserving those lands so that future generations could enjoy them as much as she did, as well as protecting fragile ecosystems that were under increasing pressure from development. This focus made her a natural early supporter of the Kennebec Land Trust. She especially loved the fact that KLT is a local organization that concentrates on preserving properties in the area where she and Dick spent more than 60 years exploring, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and building strong connections to the land.

Leaving a legacy gift to KLT was one of Jo's deepest wishes. She knew the good folks at KLT would put her contribution to the best possible use, and she was comforted that her gift would support KLT's mission into the future.

Jo Wagner, 90, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022, at the Androscoggin Hospice House in Auburn.

Maine Lands for Future Generations

Mary Denison, Past KLT President

Spring 2022

Ronn and I both grew up in Kennebec County and cherished the time we spent outdoors, whether exploring a neighbor's field in search of wild strawberries or discovering a new path through the woods peppered with trillium and pink lady's slippers. I distinctly remember when I first tried eating tart sorrel and sweet clover nectar as I foraged around in the backyard. Ronn remembers spending countless hours with friends "walking the creek" to look for frogs and the perfect skipping stones. As kids, we took for granted that we had plenty of wild open spaces in which to play and learn. As adults, we now realize just how precious those wild open spaces can be.

As a Board Member of the Kennebec Land Trust for over ten years, I have seen firsthand how this organization oversees and protects publicly accessible conservation land. With a remarkably capable staff and a dedicated group of volunteer stewards, the mission-focused work is performed to the highest ethical standards. We have included a bequest to the Kennebec Land Trust in our estate planning in the hope that our small contribution will help ensure that future generations in Kennebec County will have the same access to nature that we both enjoyed as children.



*Ronn Gifford & Mary Denison,
Conservation Leaders & Legacy Society
Members*

Maine Lands for the Next Generation

Jim & Muffy Floyd, Land Donors and Legacy Society Members

Spring 2021

Both of us have strong links to Maine and its lands, starting in childhood. When we decided where to live soon after getting married in 1971, we made a conscious decision to stay in rural Maine and own land. We have never wavered from that goal. But having beautiful places to enjoy requires foresight, planning, and yes, financial support.



As we worked on our estate plan a few years ago, we wanted to preserve the land we had. Connecting with KLT resulted in our decision to donate our land to KLT as the Vienna Woods Conservation Area*. We have faith in KLT's strong commitment to stewardship, but stewardship requires more than just ownership, it requires financial commitment as well. As a second part of our estate plan, we have included KLT as a beneficiary in order to help the organization protect Maine lands for future generations.

* In March of 2015, Muffy and Jim donated the KLT 71-acre Vienna Woods conservation easement. In 2019 they donated the property in fee to KLT. Here's what they had to say about the property at the time of their initial donation:

When we first stepped onto this land almost forty years ago, it was love at first sight. With its open fields, woodland, vernal pool, and views of the Western Mountains, we jumped at the chance to buy in 1993. Rather than owners, we view ourselves more as its caretakers. Working with KLT to conserve the property has been a very positive experience. We feel great comfort in the knowledge that our land will be forever protected.

The Davidson Nature Preserve: A Gift for Generations

Elizabeth Byrd Wood, Spring, 2020

“Blueberry muffins and juice will be ready when you return,” my aunt used to call out as my sister and I, along with our children, would make our way over the damp paths to the blueberry fields behind her house, carrying tin pails and blueberry rakes. Berry picking was a favorite activity of our summers in Maine, from the time when our children were toddlers to when they were youngsters, then



teens. The morning sun would warm us as we crouched in the fields, picking the tiny wild berries. Breezes mercifully kept the bugs away, and after the first plink, plink, plink of berries landing in the pails, the only sounds we heard were the chirps of the goldfinches and chickadees flitting among the birches.

These blueberry fields and the surroundings woods and wetlands now make up the Davidson Nature Preserve, a 97-acre preserve in North Vassalboro. In 2005 my aunt, Elizabeth Davidson, who had retired and moved to Maine thirteen years earlier, donated the land to the Kennebec Land Trust. Today the property welcomes visitors of all ages and interests who come to pick berries, hike down to the fen to watch the herons, or seek out the many varieties of birds found in the woods and open fields.

My aunt’s love of the natural world, especially the birds, and her attachment to Maine prompted her gift of land to KLT. During her time in Maine (she now lives in a retirement home near Boston), Elizabeth was a keen observer of what was occurring in the preserve over the seasons. She recalls a magical expedition organized by KLT Advisory Board member Ron Joseph to watch the aerial displays of the woodcocks, and hearing their insistent *peenting* calls during courtship rituals in the early spring. She remembers seeing golden-crowned kinglets in the hemlocks on the path to the fen and scarlet tanagers on the now-named Tanager Trail. My aunt is a musician, and the flute-like call of the shy evening thrush echoing through the deep woods was a particular delight to her. She is pleased that the Davidson Nature Preserve not only provides a sanctuary for birds, but also serves as a critical habitat for bees and other insects that pollinate the blueberries.

Last summer my aunt and I visited the preserve late in the afternoon. Bright coral-colored Canada lilies and Queen Anne’s lace dotted the fields, and a few blueberries still remained. My aunt noted—with approval—the dedicated work of the KLT summer interns to remove invasive plants and keep the trails cleared. We checked the visitor log, and she was delighted to see that her former neighbors continue to make use of the property along with newcomers from other states.

Conserving a Land Ethic and our Cultural Heritage

Avery Siler, Legacy Society member and past KLT intern

Spring, 2019

Before my internships with KLT, I had never been to Maine. Once I arrived, it didn't take me long to understand why people love it so much – there's something about it that just gets into your soul. I was lucky enough to see a fair bit of the state in my two summers at KLT, from Cutler Coast to Katahdin to the Bigelows, but I'm very glad that I was rooted in Kennebec County. Its hills and lakes, its forests and fields, all became a home to me. I can't think of a better guardian of that home than KLT.



At a time when I was just beginning to consider what a career in conservation could look like, KLT shaped my idea of what conservation could and should be: a land ethic marked by a consideration of the whole system within which humans interact with the environment, and a dedication not only to land, but to people and cultural heritage. KLT's work goes beyond just setting aside natural places to considering how conservation can be a tool to help communities of both the ecological and the human varieties. I'm consistently impressed by the creativity KLT's staff and volunteers bring to their work, whether it's creating the Local Wood WORKS initiative or restoring the blueberry fields on Mt. Pisgah.

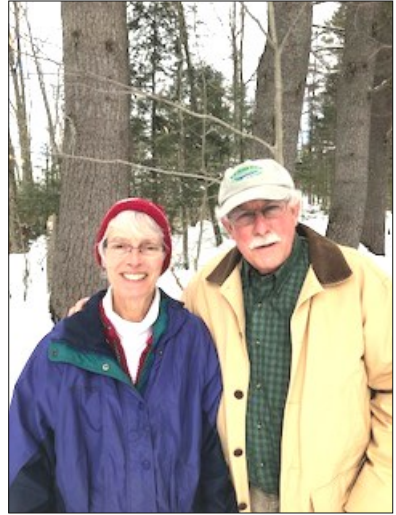
As a young person working in a non-profit, I don't have huge financial resources at my disposal, but I wanted to be able to make a meaningful gift to KLT and help ensure support for years to come. I made KLT a beneficiary of my 401(k), a step that enabled me to plan a larger gift than I could currently give otherwise. It was simple to name a beneficiary through my online account. There's also the added benefit that because KLT is a 501(c)(3), the gift won't be subject to the estate tax. I'm so grateful for KLT, and I'm thrilled to be able to support it.

Maine Lands for Family, Friends and the Next Generation

Luvia and Tim Sniffen, KLT Conservations Leaders

Spring 2018

Luvia and I came to Maine in 1978, drawn in part by the open space still to be found in this corner of our country. Luvia grew up in inner city Chicago but found joy in her northern Wisconsin camp experiences. I loved the woods and waters of southern Virginia, and I was saddened on each return home to find another special place gone. One of the best gifts we could give our boys was the chance to grow up with lots of outdoor opportunities, and happily we found that possibility here.



Work with the Conservation

Commission in Readfield introduced us to the Kennebec Land Trust. KLT supports our town in many ways on many projects: acquiring grants, holding easements, building trails and bridges, surveying and protecting critters (salamanders to goshawks), creating attractive maps and brochures, and all the time offering pleasant folks to be with.

We know Maine too will change, but thanks to wise foresight and planning, many natural areas here will remain, and they will be open for everyone's enjoyment. Our family finds this a wonderful area to live in or to visit. We believe generations to come will benefit from the work of the Kennebec Land Trust.

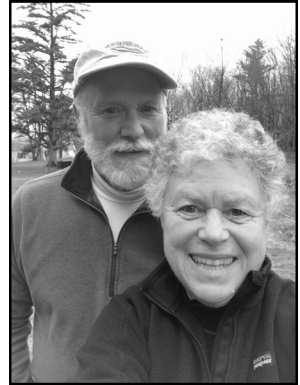
"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts." - Rachel Carson

Maine Lands for Family, Friends, and the Next Generation

Cheryl Harrington, Past President

Spring, 2017

Denny and I have been enjoying the beautiful Kennebec landscapes for many, many years. We were natural early supporters of the Kennebec Land Trust, our very own local organization dedicated to identifying and protecting key undeveloped wooded and open areas for future generations to enjoy. Over the years we have been happy to work with KLT in many ways: on the ground, literally; in the Board Room; on the Lands Committee; and, to the best of our ability, financially.



One of our favorite KLT places is Mt. Pisgah in Winthrop. We have been hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing the Mt. Pisgah terrain for years. By our count, through four generations of dogs! We used to pick the blueberry fields when our children (now pushing fifty) were young, so we are quite excited about KLT's refurbishing of the blueberry fields on the western summit. Actually, Denny and I were married not far from those fields, on a day our friends and family will never forget. How many times have you climbed the fire tower as part of a wedding celebration?

The plants and animals that we love to observe, like the barred owl that swooped across our path just this week and the beautiful historic stone walls that run through many of KLT's properties, are a vital part of what makes our unique mid-Maine landscape. The lakefronts and islands protected by KLT are also very uniquely "Maine," and the thought that many of them will remain available for our grandchildren and their grandchildren to enjoy in just the same way we love them is very satisfying. We travel often but are never disappointed when we return home to roam the KLT terrain. We all should cherish the beautiful natural scenery we have been so lucky to protect here in Kennebec County.

Maine's Most Valuable Asset

George Rogers, Land Donor

Spring, 2016

Both Judy and I come from families that in some cases came to Maine as early as the 1600s. On both sides, my family helped found the town of Litchfield in the late 1700s. Our family history helps explain why my feelings for the land upon which I live are so strong. As I got older, it became clear to me that I, like the five generations that

preceded me, were but temporary stewards of the land. It would take just one inept steward to undo the work of my predecessors and do irreversible damage to the land that I love. I knew that I needed to find a vehicle to prevent such damage from happening, not just to my land but to land across the state. A land trust seemed to fit the bill. Life had already made it clear to me that any organization is only as good as the people of whom it is comprised. To my delight, I was introduced to the Kennebec Land Trust, which proved to be staffed and supported by capable, energetic, and caring people. I have every confidence that long after I am gone, KLT will continue to play a leading role in protecting Maine's most valuable asset, its undeveloped land.



One Family's Long-term View

Glenn Hodgkins, Advisory Board Member, Past President

Spring, 2015

For the last twenty years KLT has been my top priority as a non-profit to support with volunteer time and donations. It gives me hope for the future. My wife Sara also finds KLT's mission to be a vital one. KLT has played – and will continue to play – a critical role in protecting many acres of woods and wetlands in our area that would otherwise be developed. Conserving 5000+ acres is an amazing achievement, made possible by much hard work and the support of many local people. Conservation projects like KLT's are needed not only for our native wildlife and plants, but also for ourselves and our kids and grandkids to enjoy and experience. Our family has been hiking KLT trails since the kids were babies, and our teenagers Anna and Benjamin still enjoy these family outings. Anna, like me, is into birding, and Ben really appreciates the blueberries and the swimming. Being in the woods recharges me, particularly in busy times. Just today I was birding at Hutchinson Pond in Manchester and was thrilled to see black-throated blue warblers, blue-headed vireos, and great-crested and alder flycatchers. We will continue to be strong supporters of KLT for the next twenty years.



One Family's Long-term View

Barbara Libby, Advisory Board Member

Spring, 2014

Mort joined KLT 25 years ago, and I became involved a few years later. As the organization has grown, so has our admiration. Mort was a businessman, and he appreciates KLT's ability to squeeze the maximum out of every dollar. We love the palpable, enthusiastic feeling for Maine and its resources that resonates throughout the membership.

Lake Cobbossee, Hodgdon, Horseshoe and Perry Islands, and Vaughan Woods are places we look forward to all year long. All of us!

We are proud to be able to donate our time and skills to KLT publications. We will be contributing to the Capital Campaign with a donation that will support the printing of KLT's new Hiking Guide. As members of KLT's Legacy Society, we are planning ahead to ensure that the Trust has the resources needed for the long term.

***Editor's note:** Many of you read and appreciated KLT's 20th Anniversary 2010 book, *Between Person and Place*, which was designed by Mort's firm LPK and co-edited by Barbara.



