

· 15-ACRE FIELD ACQUIRED
· A TIME TO HEAL

· MAKING A DIFFERENCE
· YLT THANKS 2020 DONORS

· PLANTING FOR POLLINATORS
· UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring 2021

The York Land Trust Newsletter

LANDMARKS



Kevin McGinn

Field of Dreams

York Land Trust is pleased to announce our recent purchase of the scenic 15-acre field and pond directly next to our headquarters. Acquiring this field has always been part of our dream for our permanent home as it offers space for the community to immerse themselves in nature, enjoy walks in a beautiful landscape and engage in new learning opportunities. We will now be able to incorporate this very special area into our public access trail system, program offerings and seasonal activities.

In protecting the meadow, YLT is also preserving and managing a critical patch of habitat for Bobolinks, the strikingly beautiful birds that migrate from South America each spring to build their nests and raise their young in the field. We look forward to timing the mowing of the field to support these sensitive species and their chicks.

Our acquisition of the property expands YLT's 300-acre preserve along Smelt Brook, a major tributary of the York River

and helps protect the river's water quality. The York River is an important feeding and nesting area for hundreds of species of resident and migratory birds and an important nursery for 26 species of fish.

YLT is also working with landowner Julia Clough to purchase a conservation easement on an additional 10.5 acres of land abutting the field that will stay in her ownership. The conservation easement, which we expect to complete by the end of this year, will allow her land to be used for agricultural purposes but will prevent residential and non-agricultural structures from being built.

We could not have gotten as far as we have in these efforts without the generosity of our supporters. We extend our sincere gratitude to all of the individuals, businesses and foundations who made this project possible.



It has been more than a year now since Covid-19 changed all of our lives. The challenges caused by the pandemic and upsetting national events have led to feelings of stress, sadness, loss and anger for many people. But, as we move forward and take action, feelings of hope are slowly spreading.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To this end, we encourage you to come visit the newly acquired field adjacent to our headquarters; walk the new trails at Fuller Forest Preserve; volunteer for a trail work day; and learn something new at an upcoming program or event highlighted in this newsletter.

There is much healing needed right now and York Land Trust is committed to doing all that it can to help the people in our community regain their sense of well-being by offering opportunities for people to connect with nature and with each other.

As you embark on your own journey of healing, please know that your land trust is a steadfast ally and resource along the way. Together we will help each other heal while also working to protect more of the beautiful lands that we all love and enjoy!

Sincerely,
Cliff O'Connor

A TRIBUTE TO CHELSEY REMINGTON



We mourn the recent death of Chelsey Remington who was a dedicated York Land Trust Board Member from 2008-2017.

As Chair of York Land Trust's Development Committee for four years, Chelsey helped to significantly increase the land trust's operating support, membership rolls, and the success of our fundraising events. Chelsey and her husband David led by example in their own generous charitable giving and their support helped the land trust acquire several important properties for conservation.

Over the past few weeks, YLT has received many generous donations from Chelsey's friends and relatives in her memory and in recognition of her love of nature and devotion to YLT. We are so grateful for this tremendous outpouring of love and support for Chelsey and for the land trust.

A New Place to Gather

If you have passed by the York Land Trust Headquarters recently, you may have noticed the construction activity going on inside our garage. This space is being renovated to create a handicapped-accessible, energy-efficient community room that can be used for educational programs, lectures, events and meetings. While Covid-19 has limited our ability to host in-person activities over the last year, we are planning ahead for a time when it will be safe to gather indoors again. When that time comes, our beautiful new community room with its abundant natural light and views of the surrounding fields, will be ready to receive you!



Fred Weston of Stillwater Sustainable Homes, LLC is overseeing the renovation of YLT's new community room.

The York Land Trust is a member-supported, nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving and protecting lands of ecological, historic, scenic, agricultural and cultural significance in the greater York, Maine area, for the benefit of all.

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For more information, please visit our website: www.yorklandtrust.org



The Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (MtA2C)

is an effort led by a coalition of ten national, regional and local partners to protect a network of connected conservation lands and natural resources within a 48,000-acre focus area in Southern Maine for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The MtA2C Partners include: the US Fish and Wildlife Service/Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, Great Works Regional Land Trust, Kittery Land Trust, York Land Trust and York Rivers Association.

For more information, please visit www.mta2c.org.

In Appreciation of Our Volunteers

So much of the work we do at York Land Trust is enhanced and supported by our dedicated crew of 50+ volunteers. This past month, members of the community volunteered their time to clean up our preserves in celebration of Earth Day, build new trails, and tidy up the gardens at our headquarters. Others have worked behind the scenes on program and event coordination and administrative tasks. We extend our sincere gratitude to all who have shown up and supported our mission in these meaningful ways!

We're always eager to welcome new volunteers to our organization. If you're interested in getting involved, please fill out a volunteer application at www.yorklandtrust.org/volunteer or contact Laura Poppick at lpoppick@yorklandtrust.org for more information.



Volunteer Richard Leigh shown sprucing up the gardens at YLT's headquarters.

New Trails at Highland Farm and Fuller Forest Preserves

With warmer days settling in, we've taken to the trails and have been busy upgrading and expanding routes at our Highland Farm Preserve and Fuller Forest Preserve in preparation for increased foot traffic this spring and summer. At Highland Farm Preserve, we have worked to re-route a quarter-mile section of the NEC Trail that we closed off during the winter due to safety concerns related to the construction of a new shooting range on an abutter's private property. The re-route offers a much wider buffer between the trail and the shooting range, so that hikers may safely traverse this section of the forest, which connects to the Junkins Loop Trail.

At Fuller Forest Preserve on Bartlett Road, we've added to the 0.75-mile Red Oak Trail that we constructed last fall. The expanded route traverses through relatively flat and easily accessible forested terrain with a couple of spots to sit on a bench and marvel at the huge, old Oak trees. Round trip, the trail system offers about 4 miles of hiking, including a crossing over Dolly Gordon Brook to a large loop trail that joins with a 2.8-mile trail system on Kittery Land Trust's abutting Norton Preserve.

We extend our thanks to the hardworking crew of volunteers who joined our trail building efforts!



From left to right: Clayton Smith, Nancy Hall, Gary Goss and Kate Marshall building new trails at Fuller Forest Preserve.

Thank You For Supporting York Land Trust in 2020!

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The Benefits of Gardening with Native Plants

We are looking forward to hosting our first Native Plant Sale on May 8th, and hope it will be an educational opportunity and resource for local gardeners!

Here are a few reasons we recommend gardening with native plants:

- 1. They attract native pollinators:** Do you enjoy watching bees and butterflies flit around your yard? Then that's one great reason to garden with native plants! Native plants provide pollen and nectar for native pollinators. Native plants are adapted to the local climate and soils and local pollinators are adapted to them. Non-native plants support far fewer native insects and birds than native plants do.
- 2. They help diminish the spread of invasive plants:** A number of non-native, ornamental plant varieties are invasive, meaning that they easily spread and can rapidly overtake landscapes. In so doing, they often outcompete and prevent the growth of native plants by either shading them out or consuming limited water and nutrients. By opting for native varieties, you help maintain vital habitats and diminish the spread of invasive plants.
- 3. They are beautiful!**
While some non-native plants have alluring colors and forms that plants native to Maine may lack, there's still plenty of beauty to be found in plants native to this region!



Learn more about these benefits at our May 7th Gardening with Native Plants program and at our Plant Sale the next day!

See Page 6 for more information on these upcoming events.

CHECK OUT A BIRDING BACKPACK AT YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY!

This spring, we're thrilled to have partnered with York Public Library to create two birding backpacks now available for checkout! These kits include a pair of binoculars; a Sibley field guide to birds; beautifully illustrated bird ID cards; and a trove of birdsong recordings to help you learn the language of the creatures in your backyards and along local trails. You'll also find a map of regional preserves where you can go birding, and a journal to keep a record of all that you see and hear.

These backpacks are available to all library cardholders ages 14+, and can be checked out in tandem with a pair of hiking poles also available through the library.

We hope these materials help deepen your knowledge and appreciation of the birds that migrate through our marshes, fields and forests each spring, along with the ones that stick around all year. There's so much we can learn from birds, and we hope you find as much delight in them as we do!





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Call Patty if you have any questions at 363-7400 ext. 4.

Invite your friends to connect
online: yorklandtrust.org



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FSC

Upcoming Events

“Know Your Land”: Discussion of Traditional Indigenous Sustainability Practices

Thursday, May 6 | 5pm – 6pm | online

Join us for an evening discussion with Kathy Pollard and Ann Pollard-Ranco of Know Your Land Consulting on traditional Indigenous sustainability practices and philosophies. We'll dive into the Four R's (relationship, respect, responsibility, and reciprocity) and learn how planting and supporting native plants in our gardens and within our preserves can embody some of these principles. Presented in partnership with White Pine Programs. Register at yorklandtrust.org.

Gardening with Native Plants Friday, May 7 | 1pm - 2pm | YLT Headquarters

Gardening with native plants doesn't only beautify your garden, it also attracts and supports bees, butterflies, birds and other animals. Join York Land Trust and a special guest from Pierson Nurseries in Biddeford for this program to learn about techniques to support native plants in your garden. We'll discuss native plants that grow well in our region, tour the York Land Trust native plant garden, and will have an opportunity to purchase plants to take home. Register at yorklandtrust.org.

Native Plant Sale Saturday, May 8 | 10am - 2pm | YLT Headquarters

Looking to expand your garden this spring? Join us at our Native Plant Sale on May 8th! We'll have more than two dozen varieties of native shrubs, trees and perennials on sale, all provided by Pierson Nurseries in Biddeford. To view photos and descriptions of the plants that will be available, visit yorklandtrust.org.

Trek Back In Time: History Walk at Hilton-Winn Preserve

Saturday, June 5 | 10am - 12pm | Hilton-Winn Preserve

Join local historian Bryce Waldrop of the Historical Society of Wells and Ogunquit for a history walk at our Hilton-Winn Preserve. We'll explore the remnants of 19th century agricultural life, including the foundations of a homestead and a mill. We'll learn about the families who made this land their home, how they lived their lives here as farmers during the 1800s. Register at yorklandtrust.org.