



SPRING 2024

NEWSLETTER

Serving Lovell, Stoneham, Stow, and Sweden, Maine

A Note From Our President and Interim Executive Director

BY: CAROLYN HOTCHKISS AND RHYAN PAQUEREAU

2023 was a whirlwind year for GLLT. We saw the completion of our largest land project to date, the construction and grand opening of the Groundhog Trail, tremendous growth in our pollinator garden, and strong attendance at our public programs. The whirlwind continues in 2024 and we are full steam ahead on land protection projects, community engagement, and on collaborative efforts with our neighbors.

On the land protection front, we now have 83% of the funds needed to complete the 1,350 +/- acre Kezar River South project, which will be our largest land acquisition so far. Located along the Kezar River in Lovell and Sweden, this property will add significantly to GLLT's portfolio of protected lands in the Kezar River Valley, as it directly abuts the 1,315 acre Kezar Corridor Lands which we acquired in 2022-23.

In 2023 we reached 2,500 people through public programming, and we're hoping to reach even more through our community engagement efforts in 2024. You'll still see some of our classic events on the calendar this year such as the Salamander Sashay trail run, the return of newer events such as the Pollinator Festival, and the introduction of totally new events, such as Intro to Backyard Maple Sugaring. Collaboration makes many of these programs possible, and these collaborations will be going strong in 2024. For example, GLLT has been able to teach a record-sized group (40 students!) from the regional middle school's Maine Environmental Science Academy (MESA) each week, and we will be partnering with local homeschool families this year to reach a new group of area students.

Speaking of collaboration, we're continuing work with our neighboring land trusts to help develop and implement climate-informed conservation and land management goals for our entire region. This collaboration has been ongoing for several years, and has entered a new phase with added momentum in 2024 that includes refining how we can work together to protect climate resilient lands across our region and has given us access to funding which can help initiate land protection projects. In fact, both Kezar Corridor Lands and the Kezar River South property are located within a climate resilient corridor which was identified by this collaboration.

2024 is still young, but so far the horizon looks bright and there is no shortage of work to be done. Much of the work we do is supported by (or simply would not be possible without) our dedicated volunteers, who donate their time to do everything from leading our organization, staffing our educational and outreach programs, and building our trails. If you share our passion for this special place, then we invite you to join us as a volunteer to help make our mission possible.

The Docent Squad: A Quarter Century of Discovery and Learning

BY: MOIRA YIP

Just over twenty-five years ago, in 1997, the docent program opened for business. The previous year, the GLLT had acquired the Heald & Bradley property with help from The Nature Conservancy, and part of that project included a \$20,000 fund to establish a program of walks and talks for the public. Thus was born the docent program! Education Director Kevin Harding (who started out as an unpaid volunteer) led most of the walks to start with, but he slowly built up a team of docents from among the GLLT ranks. People would attend one of his walks, and he'd grab the most enthusiastic ones and suggest they might like to join the squad. Few could resist. He trained us himself. As an experienced schoolteacher he knew that we had to be able to inspire our audiences, and he taught us the importance of telling engaging stories, not just "naming things". The Nature Conservancy money allowed him to bring in outside experts to supplement our training, and also to invite evening speakers. By the end of his tenure there were 21 docents.

During the first phase, the program focused on adults and on building public support for our new and unfamiliar organization. In 2010, Kevin retired, preparing carefully for the handover of his beloved docents to his successor Bridie McGreavy. Bridie and Executive Director, Tom Henderson, began conversations with the Lovell Rec program and the schools, about doing some sort of program specifically for kids. This built the foundations for Leigh Macmillan Hayes, one of the docents since 2008, who was anointed as our new education director in 2014, and stayed till her retirement at the end of October 2023. She started collaborating with Lovell Rec on a kids' program one day a week in the summer. But Leigh worked year-round, which made it possible to also have programs during the school year.

Working with kids is a special skill, but a very important one. They are the next generation of our community, on whom the future duty of caring for these lands will fall. Some docents are better at it than others. Luckily, our interns are a great asset for this part of the summer program. During the school year, the GLLT has been working with middle school kids in the MESA (Maine Environmental Science Academy) program, initially for one term but now for the full year. Dawn Wood is just one of the docents who has been heavily involved with this program.

So who are we? The current 25 active docents come in all shapes and sizes. We range in age from 18 to 80. We are women and men from the Lovell area, but also from Massachusetts, Florida, California, the UK, and Canada. We are parents, professors, artists, psychologists, veterinarians, homemakers, dentists, business people, lawyers, social workers, editors, recent graduates, and teachers. Several are couples. Some are "lifers": five are still active from the original Kevin Harding era.

What do we do? Throughout the year, we lead walks for members of the public on land trust lands. The walks usually have a focus: birds, plants, mushrooms, geology, old stone walls, tracking in the snow. We are trained to talk about the whole ecosystem, but inevitably each of us has a particular passion - mine is mushrooms. And so we have a little bit more knowledge in our favorite area, and tend to lead those hikes. Each week, the docents go on a Tuesday Tramp, where we look at everything we find, and zero in on anything new and different. We can obsess for hours over precisely identifying a small plant, but then we also want to know what animals eat it, which insects pollinate it, when does it flower, does it have medicinal uses.... the list never ends.

A group of Docents and staff celebrating Leigh on her last day with the GLLT.
Photo by Lizzy Echard

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Moira Yip closely examining a mushroom.
Photo by Jessie Lozanski



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We teach each other, a “community of mentors”, and then when we lead our next walk we have stories to tell.

We are always looking for new recruits. Most of us didn’t start as experts in anything. All you need is enthusiasm for the outdoors, for learning, and for sharing that knowledge. You give as much time as you can spare, helping in whatever way works for you: leading walks, helping with kids, planning programs, organizing or giving talks.

We think we have the best education program of any land trust in Maine, and we are very proud of it, of our leaders, and of each other. Just like our properties, we plan on the docent squad being around in perpetuity, passing the baton to future members and future leaders!

The GLLT is enormously grateful to all the docents who have given their time and passion to the organization and the entire community over the years.



All Access Trail

Being able to access our lands is nearly as important as conserving them in the first place, which is why we are proud to announce that GLLT will begin work on our first “all access” trail this spring, which will be located at the Kezar River Reserve in Lovell. All access trails are designed to be as accessible as possible for people of all physical abilities, which means ensuring that the trail is level, wide, and has a surface free of obstacles. This project will see the conversion of the beloved Storybook Trail from conventional hiking trail to a 6 foot wide, gravel surfaced, level trail which will wind its way through the woods above the Kezar River and past the cherished storyboards. Opening this trail will be a huge step towards making the open spaces we protect and the communities we serve more accessible and more welcoming to more people; and we are working closely with an experienced contractor and the Maine DEP to ensure that the trail is built properly.

Board & Staff Members

Directors:

Carolyn Hotchkiss- *President*
Betsy Alden- *Vice President*
Bruce Zabinsky- *Treasurer*
Jim Buck- *Assistant Treasurer*
Deb Nelson- *Secretary*

Kelly Attenborough
Jon Bricetti
Tom Clay
Gail deWildt
Susan Golder
Nancy Hammond
Robert Katz
Toni Stechler
Moira Yip

Staff

Rhyan Paquereau- *Interim Executive Director & Stewardship Director*
Lizzy Echard- *Education & Community Engagement Coordinator*
Alice Bragg- *Office Manager*
Jessie Lozanski- *Departing Land Steward & Educator*





In the Wake of the Spongy Moth

BY: RHYAN PAQUEREAU



Top: adult female spongy moth laying eggs.
Bottom: spongy moth caterpillar
Photos by Moira Yip

This past summer and fall numerous people have stopped by the office asking the same question: “what’s with all the forest management in our area lately?” While there are many reasons as to why woodlot owners choose to harvest trees, the recent uptick in tree cutting may be related to the recent departure of a powerful pest. During 2021-2023 southern Oxford County experienced a significant outbreak of spongy moth, formerly known as gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*). While this invasive pest from Europe has been in North America since the 1860s, the combination of disease, predators, and climate often prevent chronic outbreaks. However, when conditions are right, spongy moth populations soar and can defoliate entire forests in outbreaks lasting 3-5 years. Their favorite trees are those in the oak and willow families, though once they defoliate these they will eat the leaves of just about anything else, except for fir and ash. Because of differences in their life cycles, healthy and mature hardwood (broadleaf) trees are generally able to survive 2 or more years of heavy or complete defoliation, while softwood (needle leaf) trees may only be able to withstand a single season of complete defoliation. However, even the largest, healthiest hardwoods can be killed after a single season of defoliation if secondary factors such as drought, fungal infections, and other insect pests attack an already stressed tree.

GLLT’s service area was hit particularly hard by the recent outbreak, and many of you will have noticed a sharp increase in the number of dead trees of all age classes (most notably, mature eastern hemlocks and red oaks) in the yards and woodlots around the towns we serve. While there are several treatment options available to fight spongy moth, these are often not practical to implement at woodlot scale due to cost, labor intensity, and the potential risk for environmental impacts. Given this, woodlot owners often choose to let an infestation run its course and then salvage many of the dead trees. This practice

helps recover the economic value of dead trees, while also helping to clear space in the canopy for the next generation of trees to grow into. A standing dead tree is only valuable until it starts to rot, which is why salvage harvests often take place shortly after an outbreak ends. If done properly, a certain number of standing dead trees will be left behind, as these “snags” are of great value to wildlife. Like many things in life, prevention can be the best treatment. Healthy stands are the most resilient during infestations, and these can be built through proper thinning. Removal of trees already in poor health reduces the number of trees killed in an infestation, and it improves the vigor of healthy trees by giving them more room to thrive.

While the recent spongy moth defoliation may be the driving force behind some of the salvage cutting we are seeing in our service area, it is important to understand that there are many reasons to cut trees to meet a wide range of forest management goals. Much of the harvesting we are seeing is being done irrespective of the recent spongy moth outbreak, and may be for routine timber harvesting, the creation of certain habitat, or the aforementioned stand improvement. In fact, many woodlot owners are obliged to harvest timber if they have their land enrolled in the Maine Tree Growth or Open Space tax programs. A major goal of both of these programs is that they keep forested land managed as working forests to provide both open space and reliable economic stimulus to a community.

GLLT Volunteers: A Community

BY: JESSIE LOZANSKI

The Greater Lovell Land Trust is a community organization- we serve the community, we are supported by the community, and through our volunteer programs we create community. The Groundhogs, our trail crew, and the Weekly Weeders, the wonderful group who manage our Pollinator Garden are two of our volunteer groups that wholeheartedly embody this statement.

As a Land Steward, I was able to work side by side with the Groundhog crew this summer as we made our way up Patterson Hill and came out the other



Some of the Groundhogs- Randy, Brian, Bob, Jim, Basil, Chris, Sarah, and Rhyan after a long day of working the trail at Patterson Hill. Photo by Jessie Lozanski

side with a handsome trail and newly found muscles after swinging pulaskis for weeks on end. What working on this project made me

realize is that the most valuable part of the process was not the completed trail but the strong team of volunteers that it developed. Doing hard, grueling work together with sweat pouring off our brows coalesced what would be an unlikely group of individuals into a community. Friendships were forged, stories were told, and landmarks of great Groundhog feats were created. As you walk the trail at Patterson Hill, notice the boulders at your side that took three people with pry-bars and pick-axes working together to excavate or the stone walls where every rock dug up from the trail had been carefully placed by volunteers, and know during all of these tasks laughs and jokes abound from people happy to have found other people that want to dig around in the dirt just like them.



Linda, Nancy, and Vicky setting up the winter seed sowing box. Photo by Alice Bragg

Along with the Groundhogs, our Weekly Weeders are a hardy and visionary bunch that have tirelessly worked to create life out of an empty spot of land and some seeds. Braving the hot sun and buzzing gnats, every spring and summer the Weekly Weeders go out with spades in hand and lovingly care for the beautiful and delicate plants that make our Pollinator Garden a thriving ecosystem. Over the years that the Weekly Weeders have been active, we have not only watched a garden grow but a group of locals come together and blossom into a tight-knit group of friends with the bright kernel of a shared love of nature at their center.

Non-profit organizations are always in need of volunteers, it is the only way we can manage to complete the great work we want to bring to the world. Part of this great work though is within the volunteer groups themselves. Bringing people together, that is a mission just as valuable as protecting land and nowhere is it more evident than when you see the smiling faces of GLLT's volunteers.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

- Groundhogs
- Weekly Weeders
- Education/Outreach
- Trail Monitoring

Email
info@gllt.org
or scan the
QR code for
more information



An Update on Kezar River South (KRS)

BY: RHYAN PAQUEREAU

We have made excellent progress towards completing the 1,350-acre Kezar River South (KRS) project. Just over \$2,000,000 has been raised through grant awards and generous donations, though we still have a ways to go to reach our nearly \$2,500,000 goal. The KRS project will add another 1,350 acres to the 1,315-acre Kezar Corridor Lands along the Kezar River in Lovell, which GLLT acquired in 2022-23. The KRS property will protect 4.5 miles of frontage along the Kezar River, nearly a mile of frontage on Keyes Brook, the summits of two hills, and will secure public access to the land for hunting, hiking, skiing, and motorized recreation on an existing trail network.

GLLT will need your help to make this project happen, so keep an eye out for a fundraising campaign this spring. Don't want to wait for the fundraising campaign to support this project? We are happy to accept donations now, just make sure you note that it is for the KRS project when you mail your donation to PO Box 225, Lovell, ME 04051.

News from the KLWA

STEVE LEWIS, PRESIDENT



Kezar Lake
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

KLWA is currently working on several issues that directly affect Kezar Lake and the waters of the ponds and streams that feed into it.

The first one has to do with the Narrows public boat ramp. It has needed repair for a couple of years. The Town Selectboard contracted out the design as it required handicapped accessibility be included. The design that came back included the cutting of over 30 trees in the area, many within the 100 foot shoreline protection zone and increasing runoff into the Narrows.

When this became known, KLWA and the Lovell Invasive Plant Prevention Committee approached the Town and asked to work with them to come up with a new plan, that KLWA would pay for, that wouldn't need to cut down so many trees, would reduce runoff, and make boat inspections safer. We are working with the Selectboard on a revised plan and hope to have it done by May with the work on the ramp to be done next fall.

Some of the trees marked for cutting at the Narrows Ramp

We are also working on helping LD-2101, get passed in the Legislature. Its intent is to make it much easier for Towns to recover the money spent in taking violators of the shoreline zoning ordinances to court. Right now, enforcement by towns of the regulations protecting the quality of our waters is often not done because of the cost to the Town of doing so. There is an infamous case on Sebago Lake where egregious violations were knowingly done by a very wealthy shoreline owner thinking he could just outlast the town involved in court.

We are now using our new HQ, the "Water Shed", right next to the Center Lovell Market for our operations. A great workspace, and we are planning regular office hours through the spring, summer, and fall, so come in and check us out.



GLLT would like to thank our Community Partners:



**New Suncook PTA
Sweden Food Pantry**



The Evergreen Society

BY: BETSY ALDEN

How do you keep a mission moving forward to preserve our environment and provide protection of lands forever? We chose the word evergreen for our newly created society to embody the notion of forever because the GLLT's mission spans beyond our lifetimes, carrying forward our promises—evergreen and renewing.

The Evergreen Society members pledge a five-year gift of \$1,000 or more a year to the Greater Lovell Land Trust. These gifts create a pool of funds that the GLLT can depend upon to support programs and operations. The fund creates the base for our work protecting our lands, building and maintaining trails, and monitoring boundaries. It also supports our community outreach including our school and recreation department programs, as well as our on-property classes and community environmental education programs.

Will you consider becoming a founding member of this The Evergreen Society? Those who join during 2024 join the ranks of our Founding Members. The Evergreen Society has an annual summer gathering to honor and update our members.



THE EVERGREEN SOCIETY
GREATER LOVELL LAND TRUST

To learn more and to join:



Calendar Highlights



APRIL 17, 10 AM- 12 PM

Life in a Vernal Pool

GLLT will lead you to a vernal pool that teems with aquatic life in various life cycle forms.

APRIL 20, 10 AM- 12 PM

Family Vernal Pool Exploration

Families are invited to attend this vernal pool exploration led by GLLT. This event is co-sponsored by GLLT and Lovell Rec. Children must have an adult present.

APRIL 20, 10 AM- 12 PM

Earth Day Community Volunteer Day

Celebrate Earth Day by giving back! Day will consist of cleaning up our pollinator garden and collecting roadside trash in Lovell Village.

APRIL 20, 4- 5 PM

Bug Hotels for Kids

Celebrate Earth Day with the Library and GLLT by creating a bug hotel! Children of all ages are welcome to attend! Weather permitting. Event will be held in the library's gazebo. No registration required.

MAY 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 6:30 AM- 9:30 AM

Feathered Friends Friday

For all ages and all birding abilities, including newbies. Learn from GLLT docents as we visit various sites and get to know the feathered friends of different natural habitats.



MAY 4, 9 AM- 11:30 AM

Salamander Sashay 5K Trail Run/Walk

The run/walk will take place in the Kezar Corridor Lands. The route will circle Dan Charles Pond on ATV trails and gravel roads, passing by a couple of vernal pools.

MAY 11, 2 PM-3:30 PM

Spring Family Scavenger Hunt

Explore the woods with GLLT to find as many items on the scavenger hunt list as possible!

JUNE 1, 10 AM- 11:30 AM

Bio Blitz Kick-Off Hike

Learn about what a BioBlitz is and using iNaturalist, see how many different species we can record in this citizen science program! Then, throughout the month of June, go out on your own and record as many species as possible on GLLT properties!

JUNE 14, 9 AM- 12 PM

Geology Hike up Patterson Hill

Join local geologist, Brian Hammond and Stewardship Director, Rhyan Paquereau, on a hike up Patterson Hill. Brian will discuss glacial features, the origin of the local granite, and more!

Stay tuned on our website calendar and social media for more programs to be scheduled!

Pre-registration for programs is **required**, unless otherwise indicated. Other programs and events may be scheduled and are announced via the website calendar, email, and social media.

Register for Programs using the QR code or visit our website.



Calendar Highlights



JUNE 21, 8 PM- 9:30 PM

Full Moon Hike

Discover the beauty of the forest at night! Bring your flashlights and hike to the light of the full moon. Location TBD.

JUNE 22, 9 AM- 12 PM

Kayaking Charles Pond

Join GLLT staff while we take a leisurely paddle on Charles Pond. BYO kayak/canoe.

JULY 6, 1 PM- 4 PM

Pollinator Garden Festival

Explore our pollinator garden, play games, learn about our pollinators, and more at this fun day! No registration required.

JULY 9, 9:30 AM- 12:30 PM

Mill Brook Pond Conservation Easement Walk

Join the landowner for a hike on the Mill Brook Pond Conservation Easement property. This is private land, now protected in perpetuity.

JULY 15, 6 PM- 7:30 PM

Vermicomposting 101

Also known as worm composting, vermicomposting is a fun way to get nutrient-rich soil. Learn how to create a simple, inexpensive worm composting bin, how to care for your worms and maintain the bin, and how to harvest and use the compost.

JULY 27, 9 AM- 10:30 AM

Summer Family Scavenger Hunt

Explore the woods with GLLT to find as many items on the scavenger hunt list as possible!

AUGUST 2, 5:30 PM- 7:00 PM

Owl Pellet Dissection

Ever wondered what an owl eats for dinner? Well find out by dissecting your own owl pellet! Pick apart We'll provide all the materials! Takes place at Hobbs Library.

AUGUST 7, 7:30 PM- 8:30 PM

AUGUST 16, 1 PM-3 PM

The Snowy Owl

GLLT Docent, Bonny Boatman, will give a presentation on the Snowy Owl at the Charlotte Hobbs Library.

AUGUST 9, 1 PM-3 PM

The Belted Kingfisher

What creature burrows along the bank of the lake and has two fused toes? Come hear Bonny Boatman's informative and amusing talk regarding the wonders of the Belted Kingfisher. At Hobbs Library.

AUGUST 17, 10 AM- 12 PM

Monarch 101

Learn all about this remarkable endangered species with a lecture at the Hobbs Library followed by a monarch tagging demonstration at the GLLT pollinator garden.

SAVE THE DATE

**GLLT
ANNUAL MEETING**

Sunday, August 11 - 5- 7 pm

Eastman Hill Stock Farm



P.O. Box 225
Lovell, ME 04051

**SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY
E-NEWSLETTER!**



Spring 2024 Newsletter

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