

Bangor Land Trust News

Fall 2018

PEDAL THE PENOBSCOT 2018

by Michele Benoit

Twelve years in, the ride is still exciting and fresh. This year, one could add the word ‘invigorating’ or ‘bracing’ as first riders arrived with temps still in the high 30s, bravely and boldly wrapped in tights, arm warmers, long-sleeve jerseys, full-finger gloves and under-helmet hats. The day slowly warmed to beautiful, and riders shed layers, trusting SAG wagon drivers to hold jackets, stashing warmers into pockets, beaming smiles of gratitude as the temperatures rose. Riders seemed to embrace the suggestions offered during send-off: Watch out for cars. Watch out for each other. Have fun, and let the river be your guide.

A little bit of Pedal by the Numbers: This year, 179 riders registered for the event, including 64 new riders, at least three riding their first-ever century ride, and one riding her first century AND riding on her birthday! Most chose our ‘marathon’ loop (26 miles), but riders found lots of company in the 50- and 100-mile rides as well. The 12-mile out-and-back to Orrington saw its numbers more than double from last year, with 15 riders.

This year saw some returns and additions to Pedal the Penobscot. The Maine Dairy Council welcomed riders with Maine cheeses and tempting chocolate milk--the perfect post-ride recovery drink. Folks from REDD offered up samples of their five different-all-delicious energy bars. A new manager welcomed us warmly to High Tide and a new musician shared music that made us smile--and sing along!

Our routes stayed the same, but we made a few changes to our rest stops. For the first time ever, century riders could take advantage of snacks etc. at the Hudson rest stop, where new faces waited to welcome early in the day. Jeff Kirlin, a.k.a., The Thing of the Moment, braved early morning to capture the send offs of all five sets of riders, sharing the fun, the hopeful, the unique, and the intense auras of riders ready to begin.

A few sweet tales...One woman, Janice, shared how she trained all winter so she’d be in shape for this ride. Others also challenged themselves... Eric and Teresa rode their first century ride together and finished--tired, satisfied and happy. Joyce gamely donned a sash and sampled a birthday donut, complete with candle.

Riders joined us from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont. Pedalers hailed from 44 Maine towns: Midcoast to Downeast, the County way down south to Portland. Forty-six riders affiliated with 11 teams shared the road. Nineteen of you were students at some stage in your academic career. Only slightly more of you were men. Riders ranged in age from 13 months (Ok, she rode in the trailer behind her awesome mom!) to two riders in their eighties! It’s never too soon and never too late to ride Pedal the Penobscot.

Save the date - September 8, 2019!



Ride planning committee members (seated from left): Carolyn Hathaway, Michele Benoit, Lynn Bolduc, Ray Bolduc, Lucy Quimby, Carol Gregory and Carolyn Eaton with Team USA captain, John Poirier.

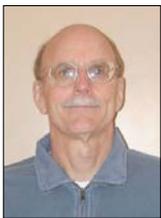


PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,



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Vice President



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Grace Bartlett
Michele Benoit
Katelin Craven
Chris Dalton
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What experiences do you love most on Bangor Land Trust preserves? Do you value the illusion of being the only human for miles around, with minimal traces of prior human presence? Do you seek solitude or the company of a friend? Do you love the smell of the woods – of fresh air, fir trees, and sunshine on the forest floor, and the sounds of wind in the trees, the murmur of a flowing brook? Are encounters with the natural world important to you – the huge pine with its carpet of needles, the gift of sighting a moose, a Saw-Whet Owl, an American Bittern, lady-slippers, or a porcupine leaving a funny track in the snow moving away without hurry, thinking that you would not want to tangle with its needles?

Can we enlarge our thinking to be concerned about the experiences of other animals for whom this land is home? What helps the Hermit Thrush find a safe patch of ground on which to nest and raise its young? How do the resident bear families react to the human activities in Bangor's Wild Back Yard? What support does BLT offer deer in the winter? Are their yards still safe? When will a fox feel that it is safe to hunt for food to feed its young? What about the rare/endangered bird species whose use of Penjajawoc Marsh has won it international recognition as an Important Bird Area? How can we manage our shared use of this wetland and upland to support their survival on our planet?

And what about your trail experiences? Well-placed and well-kept trails are crucial to our enjoyment. Trail maintenance is always on our agenda, always an item in our budget and planning. We hope that the recent work on the Walden-Parke Blue Jay Loop makes it a better all-season, all-weather, multi-use trail. The permanent residents of the preserves also use these trails on a daily basis. What about these trail users that cross our trails and scurry off into the wild? How can we be good neighbors to them and give ourselves the pleasure of knowing they are there?

Thank you so much for your support of Bangor Land Trust – it's what makes possible all those experiences, right within Bangor city limits.

Sincerely,





NATURE NOTES

by Grace Bartlett

Among the Bangor Land Trust preserves the one that fascinates me the most is Northeast Penjajawoc Preserve. It is there that I have the opportunity to observe up close the northeast tip of Penjajawoc Marsh. It is a magnificent area for birds (resident, migratory, nesting, rare, and endangered), but it's the wetlands themselves that speak to me. What makes it a marsh? What about it makes it such a rich biodiverse area?

Following the trail from the Kittredge Road, you descend to the marsh. If you cross the bridge and bear right, you go uphill. Thus the area is like a bowl, with the marsh at the bottom of the bowl. The marsh acts like a sponge, absorbing great quantities of water during storms and releasing the water slowly at other times. Some water ever so slowly seeps down into the groundwater, gradually raising the water table. When bubbling, gurgling streams enter the basin, they suddenly slow down. The debris, sediment, nutrients, and minerals they've carried along start to settle out, like soggy Cheerios sinking to the bottom of your cereal bowl. It's here that the biodiversity begins. To quote Alice Outwater (1996) in *Water: A Natural History*, "The wetlands' underwater world does a remarkable job of cleaning the water" (pg. 25). The microscopic plankton bacteria chow down on the organic matter, while the tiny phytoplankton make food for themselves from the inorganic matter. And thus the water is cleaned.

But it doesn't stop with housekeeping. Because the water has slowed, it becomes warmer. The plankton, at the bottom of the food chain, increase in numbers in warmer water. With more plankton there can be more zooplankton. With more zooplankton there can be more insects. With more insects there are more frogs, salamanders, minnows, and, yes, birds. You get the picture. The whole ecosystem (and food chain) benefits from the wetlands being a slow water, spongy place.

This space we call a cattail marsh is made up of about 50% open water and 50% cattails, sedges, arrowhead, pickerelweed, and other plants. These plants provide food for muskrats and beavers, as well as food for ducks and other birds. These plants also offer protective nesting areas for Least Bitterns, wrens, and American Coots. All of this is undergirded by bedrock, glacial marine silt and till, and topped off with muck...glorious muck. No, muck is not just a brand of boots, it's also an important soil type. The black, granular, water-saturated, muddy stuff is rich in organic matter coming from decomposed plants, plankton, and other micro-creatures. Muck is an important component of what makes a marsh a marsh. Marshes are incredible, complex places that include grasslands that are a transition zone between the aquatic and terrestrial spaces. These, too, are valuable to wildlife. Collectively, the marsh complex supports great biological diversity. Thus we come full circle. Next time you are at Northeast Penjajawoc Preserve check out the marsh. It's a remarkable composite of life.



View from Station #2 (Cattail Marsh) in Northeast Penjajawoc Preserve. Photo taken by Grace Bartlett.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Sunday November 4 at 10 a.m.

**Beyond the Flowers and Leaves:
What You Can See in the Fall**
with Clare Cole • Central Penjajawoc Preserve

Saturday December 1 at 10 a.m.

**North Penjajawoc Forest:
A Hidden Loop Hike**
with Donne Sinderson
Meet in the City Forest Kittredge Road
Parking
Area (all the way down)

Thursday, February 28 at 6 p.m.

Annual Meeting
Dysart's Broadway Restaurant
Dinner 6:30 - Short Business Meeting 7:00 - Speaker 7:30
Speaker: Aram Calhoun on Vernal Pools

Nature Watch Through the Seasons

Did you know that nature has a calendar too? Why do certain changes happen to plants and animals at certain times of the year? Join us for a series of walking talks at Walden-Parke Preserve to observe and learn more about these changes. We'll discuss journals, sketching, and citizen science data as a way to record the changes and when, if, and how to start a collection. There'll be time for journals and sharing of favorite discoveries at the end of each walk. Meet at the Tamarack Trail kiosk on the following Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

- Jan. 12 **Trees, Hibernation, Tracks**
(bring snowshoes or skis in deep snow conditions)
- April 13 **Plants, Mammal Sign, Birds**
- July 13 **Flowers, Insects, Amphibians**
- Oct. 12 **Ecological Cycle, Leaf Creations**

Please RSVP to the office for one or all!

For more information and stormy weather cancellations, visit the BLT website, email info@bangorlandtrust.org or call 942-1010.



#1



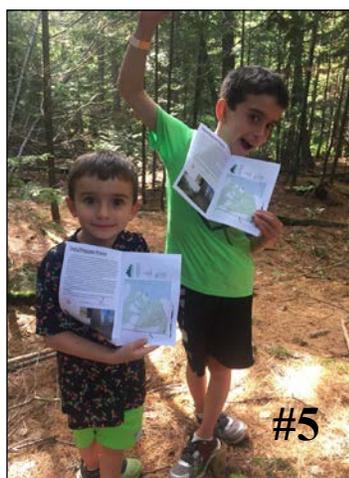
#2



#3



#4



#5

Top left clockwise: #1- Butterflies, Dragonflies & Other Insects at Central Penjajawoc Preserve with Roger Rittmaster; #2 & #3- Forest Weaving creators with their creations; #4- Tree ID Workshop with Steve Sader and Larry Beauregard, and #5- Sam and Beckett hot on the trail during the Take to the Woods Challenge.

PARTNERSHIPS

Everything in the natural world is interconnected. Plants and animals depend upon other living organisms for sustenance and survival. Human communities are no different. Bangor Land Trust is part of an ecosystem that helps to sustain us. In addition to our generous members and corporate sponsors, who are our lifeblood, we've received support of many kinds from a wide variety of organizations in our community. We're giving a shout-out of appreciation to some of them here:

PINE STATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB: These are the generous and dedicated folks who make Pedal the Penobscot a fully supported ride. Thanks to their ham radio operators riding the routes in the SAG wagons, Pedal participants have been assured of help in case of trouble on the road.

MAINE AUDUBON AND FIELDS POND AUDUBON CENTER: Maine Audubon, centered in Falmouth, owns about half of West Penjajawoc Grasslands Preserve, and allows Bangor Land Trust to manage their land along with ours. Fields Pond Audubon Center in Holden co-sponsors bird walks every spring with Bangor Land Trust, along with additional occasional nature programs



Neighborhood Bird Walk at West Penjajawoc Grasslands

MAINE MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM:

Several members of BLT's Programs Committee, and a number of our walk leaders are Maine Master Naturalists. Expert naturalists volunteer their time, through the Maine Master Naturalist Program, to train other naturalists, who then volunteer in their home communities to share with others.

BOY SCOUT TROOP 41: Troop member Lukas Modrusan and his father built a number of Bluebird/Tree Swallow houses for West Penjajawoc Grasslands. Thank you, Daniel and Lukas!

UMAINE STUDENTS IN CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING: INTRODUCTION TO CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATING AND PLANNING:



These students put their skills to work building nesting boxes to welcome kestrels to Bangor Land Trust preserves.

SPEAKING UP FOR US (SUFU): This organization is run by and for adults who live with developmental disabilities. Members and staff have volunteered for Pedal the Penobscot and help monitor Walden-Parke Preserve.

ORONO LAND TRUST: In 2001 OLT invited BLT to join with them on the Caribou Bog-Penjajawoc Lands Project, a landscape-scale effort to conserve significant portions of an 18,000-acre corridor reaching from Penjajawoc Marsh north to Alton. For 17 years Orono Land Trust has partnered with Bangor Land Trust on grant applications, management plans, publicity, and specific conservation projects. Representatives from both boards meet together periodically as the Corridor Committee. Thank you OLT for being such a reliable, generous, and trustworthy partner.

PENOBSCOT REGION NEMBA: Our local mountain biking organization put their Wednesday Night Trail Grind energies to work to construct two low bridges over some seasonally very wet trail and help clear brush that was cut to widen and dry out Walden-Parke's Blue Jay Trail.



Local NEMBA trail work crew

STEWARDSHIP - WEST PENJAJAWOC GRASSLANDS

Welcoming bobolinks to West Penjajawoc Grasslands in late May is an important rite of spring in Bangor. The sight of a male bobolink with its yellow cap burbling its song as it flies skyward to advertise its nesting prowess and attract a mate delights even beginning birders without binoculars.

For many years a neighboring farmer has hayed the field to feed his dairy cows. Each year we have worried about the timing of his mowing. Early cutting creates good hay for dairy cows but risks destroying bobolink broods; hay cut too late lacks nutrients that dairy cows need. No mowing at all leads to the eventual loss of the entire field to broad-leaved and woody vegetation. Maintaining a field that will sustain bobolinks is an interesting challenge! When our farming neighbor retired his cows, Bangor Land Trust took up that challenge.

What care does West Penjajawoc Grasslands need to keep it attractive to bobolinks, and how can Bangor Land Trust provide that care within our budget? As it turns out, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, part of the USDA, has a staff person in Skowhegan, Laura Lecker. She walked the Grasslands in October and consulted with Dave Thompson about the soils map he created 3 years ago. She told us that while dairy cows need early hay cut before the baby bobolinks are able to fly safely, beef cattle and horses could get adequate nutrition from hay that is cut later. She recommended annual mowing at a time that would not disturb the bobolinks, and an application of lime to reduce the acidity of our soil. She also thought it might benefit the bobolinks to have the mown hay removed from the field. She will check with her colleagues for more information about that. We are hoping to find a farmer in the area who could use this slightly later cut hay, and would be willing to mow the field in return for the hay.

As always, we are very appreciative of Fritz and Caroline Oldenburg who gifted West Penjajawoc Grasslands to us in 2004, the volunteers who have provided mowing services and equipment, and members and supporters whose donations have helped pay for mowing when needed.



Top: Dave Thompson and Laura Lecker in deep discussion.
Bottom: View of Penjajawoc Marsh from the field.

SHARE YOUR LOVE OF THE LAND. GIVE MEMBERSHIP TO BANGOR LAND TRUST THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

Send in the form below with your payment to Bangor Land Trust, PO Box 288, Bangor, ME 04402-0288. The new member will receive a gift message from you inside their membership package which includes: certificate of membership, Bangor Land Trust decal, hiking-friendly water bottle, maps and trail information.

New Member Name _____ 

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please enroll the above at the following level:

Individual/Family \$35-\$99
 Supporter \$100-\$249 Benefactor \$500-\$999
 Patron \$250-\$499 Founder \$1000 +

Name of Membership Giver _____

Message _____

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BOOK CORNER

by Lucy Quimby

Have you been thinking about a way to make a difference that will last even after you're gone? You can give an enduring gift of Bangor's wild back yard to future generations by making a bequest to Bangor Land Trust in your will.

For more information call 942-1010 or send a message to info@bangorlandtrust.org.

*"Nature is not a place to visit,
it is home."
Gary Snyder*

What nature writing have you read that you would like to share? Please let us know so we can post your suggestions and comments on our website. My current favorite book (in addition to Berndt Heinrich's *A Naturalist at Large*) is M. Amos Clifford's *Your Guide to Forest Bathing, Experience the Healing Power of Nature*. Clifford has been active in introducing the Japanese practice of shinrin-yoku, translated as "forest bathing," to the United States. There is even an Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs, which offers special training and certification for guides.

Your Guide to Forest Bathing includes do-it-yourself instructions to facilitate a deeper connection with the forest and benefit from its stress-reducing, healing powers. For example: walk really, really slowly, and let your breathing deepen and slow. Then focus your attention on any movement that you see in the forest, no matter how small. Just walk very slowly, attending to all the movement around you – from very broad to very small. It's a wonderfully relaxing exercise.



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www.bangorlandtrust.org
info@bangorlandtrust.org

BANGOR LAND TRUST'S MISSION:
"Protect for public benefit
land and water in the Bangor region
that have special ecological, natural,
scenic, agricultural, or recreational
significance while increasing public
understanding of the value of
land and water conservation."



STEWARDSHIP NEWS FROM WALDEN-PARKE

When the Oldenburgs and Shuberts gifted Walden-Parke Preserve to BLT in 2005, we held a public stakeholders' meeting at the Bangor Public Library to hear how community members wanted this preserve to be managed. The City had recently widened and resurfaced trails in the Bangor City Forest and we heard from many folks that they wanted Walden-Parke Preserve to keep its more rustic and natural feel. It has been with these comments in mind that over the years we have "improved" the trails on Walden-Parke only to the extent necessary to keep them as dry as possible and pleasant to use. When water collects on a trail, trail users tend to go around it, thus widening the trail and, eventually, increasing the size of the wet and muddy spot.

In 2011, with helpful grants from the Elmina B. Sewall and Stephen and Tabitha King foundations, we had extensive work done on the Blue Trail. We installed culverts, brought in gravel, and even re-routed parts of the trail. Several big mud holes were no more.

As time passed, use, rain, and melting snow caused mud puddles and mud to appear on the trail again. We saw mud holes begin to widen as users went around the mud. "Mud Season without Mud" became our major project for the summer and fall of 2018. You may have seen the GoFundMe page that has allowed generous donors to provide \$931 towards this \$6,935 project.

A layer of gravel was spread and packed down over the middle of the trail, with special attention to the wet spots. This recent work may have made the trail look uncomfortably "civilized" – but eventually grass will grow and soften its edges. In April, when you have been cooped up too long and want to get outdoors between the spring rains, listen to the birds, and enjoy the spring flowers, we hope you will enjoy a firm dry trail.