



BELGRADE REGIONAL CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

BRCA News ~ Winter 2003



Mike Little has served as BRCA's watershed coordinator since 1999.

Mike Little hired as first BRCA Executive Director

In December the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance named Mike Little executive director of the 15-year-old land trust. Mike is BRCA's first executive director and has served as its watershed coordinator since 1999. As executive director he will finish the surveys of all seven Belgrade Lakes to identify threats to the individual lakes. Mike already has developed remediation programs and projects to correct problems that affect water quality, like phosphorus run-off, erosion control and invasive species management.

In addition to watershed protection Mike will now also work on stewardship of the more than 7,000 acres overseen by BRCA, including the Kennebec Highlands project, and administration

of the 400-member organization.

Mike's previous positions include executive director of the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center in Brattleboro, Vt., from 1996 to 1999. He also has served as a wildlife technician and wetlands scientist for various groups including the Putnam Project, in Dublin, N.H., the Maine and Vermont Herpetological Atlasing Projects and the New England Wildflower Society Invasive Plants Survey. Mike earned his bachelor's degree from Columbia University and his master's in environmental administration from Antioch New England Graduate School in Keene, N.H.

Stop by and see Mike in BRCA's office in Belgrade Lakes Village.

Kennebec Highlands deals near completion

Access Committee planning improvements to trail system and resource protection

Negotiations hopefully are close to conclusion for the blueberry fields and surrounding woodlands at the top of Vienna Mountain in the Kennebec Highlands. Agreement is close on a deal to purchase approximately 370 acres of forest and put a conservation easement on 200 acres of blueberry fields. This is the final piece of land in the original project. Once an agreement is reached a fundraising drive for the final \$90,000 of BRCA's \$1 million match will be launched.

Our hardworking Kennebec Highlands Access Committee recently applied for the first grant for access improvement. These funds are set aside by The Land for Maine's Future Program (LMF)

specifically for access improvement, and can amount to five percent of acquisition costs. At their December 17 meeting LMF voted to grant BRCA \$66,000 for the first phase of access improvement. This phase will involve creating two new trails with small trailhead parking areas and signage, disposing of appliances, tires, vehicles and other refuse, vehicle barriers to protect two pond trails from further degradation, and creating the long awaited Kennebec Highlands brochure and trail map.



Brian Alexander

Thanks again for all of your help. With some luck we will complete this outstanding project in 2003 – then it will be time to celebrate this monumental accomplishment.

President's Message

Growing pains prompt renewed effort and focus

Warmest greetings to everyone. I hope you all had a pleasant holiday.

One very sad event that occurred in November was the tragic death in an automobile accident of Maggie Schneider. Maggie was the daughter of Bobbi Mayer and Dave Schneider, granddaughter of Kay and Eddie Mayer, and a former member of our Conservation Corps. She was a wonderful, active and caring young woman who brightened every life she touched. Our sincerest condolences go out to the family.

Recently BRCA has been experiencing what can only be described as growing pains. Our involvement in the Kennebec Highlands, Conservation Corps, Milfoil and Watershed Management has stretched our infrastructure very thin. Recent efforts by the Board of Directors to catch up with ourselves, so to speak, include hiring Mike Little to be our full-time executive director, strengthening and enlarging our committee structure, formulating a formal annual budget for the first time and attending to other

administrative details. We hope the result will be a stronger organization positioned to meet future challenges.

There are abundant opportunities to become involved with one or more of these committees, and we would welcome your help. So, I urge you to review the committee list (page 3) and let us know if one interests you.

We are currently pursuing a number of exciting land preservation possibilities. These range from fee acquisition of parcels on Whittier and North ponds to large conservation easements on East and Salmon/McGrath ponds. There is also the good possibility of protecting another spectacular view in Belgrade by accepting an easement. We'll keep you informed.

Our new Web site is shaping up very nicely. Pay it a visit at www.belgradelakes.org.

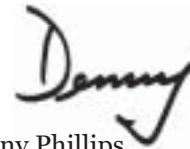
The Conservation Corps's annual appeal went out recently. Please respond as generously as possible to support this hard working group of

young people.

The last item I want to mention is what we refer to as the Dolley property. As the result of a Kennebec Highlands land transaction, BRCA now owns 11 acres, including a house and barn, on Long Pond. The house is structurally sound, the barn less so, but fixable. Long term plans include renovating the house for an environmental education and Kennebec Highlands visitor center, perhaps even moving the BRCA office there. More news will come as it evolves, but there will be many opportunities for volunteer involvement.

As always, please contact Mike at 495-6039, or me at 397-5945 with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Have a great winter,



Denny Phillips
President, BRCA

Creating a legacy: take a step that will help BRCA live forever

We all hope BRCA will be around for a very long time to support conservation in the Belgrade Lakes watershed. However, few realize that our articles of incorporation as a public land trust essentially require that we live forever. When BRCA accepts land or conservation easements it agrees to preserve those lands and maintain them for "public access" in perpetuity. Should BRCA cease to exist for any reason, we would be required to pass our lands on to another land trust. This is a charge that we take very seriously.

In the ongoing effort to gain members and bring in funds to conduct day-to-day activities, this need for longevity can be forgotten. Therefore, I was delighted to learn recently that a longtime member and generous supporter of BRCA had named BRCA a beneficiary in their will. What a perfect way to create a legacy, while ensuring that our land trust remains viable into the future.

Such a legacy can be tailored in many ways—to benefit a specific property or program, add to the Annabelle Gawler Stewardship Endowment, or create an endowment of one's own. If you want to learn more about this method of donation, please contact us at 495-6039.—Denny Phillips

Kennebec Highlands trail crew seeks help and housing

This spring the Maine Conservation Corps will begin building two trails in the Kennebec Highlands for BRCA. In-kind matches like housing and volunteers will help place BRCA higher on the conservation corps's job priority list. By providing living arrangements for conservation corps workers (as was done when they created The Mountain trail) and volunteer trail workers to work under the crew leader our chances of getting help will be increased and costs reduced.

Finally, these crews are interested in receiving training from BRCA in nature and conservation related subjects during their time with us. If you can help BRCA provide housing, volunteers or instruction, or would like updates as information is provided, please contact us at 495-6039, 397-5945 or brcahk@gwi.net

Send items of interest for future newsletters to Alicia MacLeay, 17 Richardson Rd, Rome, ME 04963; phone: 495-2028; e-mail: alicia@macleay.com

Committee Reports

Committee structure and updates

BRCA has grown significantly over the years. While the Board meets monthly, much of our work is done in smaller groups. Below is a list of all active BRCA committees. If you're interested in getting involved feel free to contact a committee chair or BRCA.

Executive Committee: Made up of the president, treasurer, secretary and up to two other directors, it deals with personnel matters and any urgent business that cannot wait for the next Board meeting.

Conservation Corps Board: Oversees operations and fundraising for the Belgrade Lakes Conservation Corps. Contact: Mike Little (495-6039)

Financial/Grants Review: With treasurer, sets investment, financial transaction, and audit policy. Reviews grant commitments, budgets and insurance needs. Chair: Charlie Baeder (293-3160)

Kennebec Highlands: Responsible for land acquisition in the project area and development of a management plan in conjunction with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. Co-Chairs: Denny Phillips (397-5945) and Jane Eberle (776-3783)

Membership: Conducts membership recruitment and outreach projects like this newsletter, the Web site, brochures and events. Chair: Alicia MacLeay (495-2028)

Milfoil: Carries out projects like boat launch inspections to monitor, prevent and control invasive species. Chair: Maggie Shannon (495-6039)

Land Trust: Handles acquisition and management of lands and easements outside of the Kennebec Highlands. Chair: Denny Phillips (397-5945)

Watershed Committee: Works with the executive director to oversee the Watershed Program, including contract/grant commitments and scheduling. Chair: Denny Phillips (397-5945)



The Belgrade Lakes Conservation Corps is gearing up for another summer of erosion control projects in the watershed. High school students age 16 or older who are interested in joining a work crew should contact the BRCA office.

Milfoil Committee update

The Milfoil Committee formed in April 2002 to contain the threat of invasive species in the Belgrade chain of lakes. In 2003 the committee hopes to have inspectors at each public boat launch three days a week from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The committee also plans to increase Plant Patrol and Hand Removal workshops for divers and waders, with one already scheduled for August 9, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The committee also plans on continuing surveys of all boat launches and perimeters of each lake and the Belgrade Stream.

The committee, including representatives from each lake association and the executive director, meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the BRCA Office. All interested are welcome to attend. —Maggie Shannon

Finance Committee report

The Financial/Grants Review Committee, responsible for budget, investments, insurance and audits, began meeting in December. It currently has three members and would like to add two more from BRCA's membership. If interested contact treasurer Charlie Baeder at csbaeder@ctel.net.

In 2002 BRCA had its first audit. The audit, for 2001, was positive and a copy is available upon request. BRCA's Internal Revenue Service Form 990 also is available to the public and can be viewed online at GuideStar, the national database of nonprofit organizations, at www.guidestar.org.

As of the end of 2002, BRCA had assets of \$1.3 million including land valued at close to \$1 million. We are running in the black and are budgeting to do so again in 2003. As our 2002 financial performance is reviewed we will report back to the members. Thanks for making this possible. —Charlie Baeder

Amendment to expand executive committee

The following by-law amendment will be voted on at the March 13 BRCA Board meeting: Amend Article VI to read, "Section 2. Executive Committee. The Board of Directors may elect an Executive Committee consisting of **five directors**, at least two of whom will be officers...."

This amendment will increase the Executive Committee from three to five members and increase our efficiency. For more information contact Roy Bouchard (495-2911 or sueandroy@gwi.com).



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Prefer to receive future newsletters online? Just let us know! E-mail Mike at brca@gwi.net.

Upcoming BRCA and conservation events

Round Top Snowshoe - Saturday, February 22, 10 a.m.

Join Brian Alexander for a snowshoe hike up the Round Top Trail in the Kennebec Highlands. Meet at the intersection of Wildflower Lane and Watson Pond Road (about a 1/2 mile south of Blueberry Hill) for this moderately strenuous, 4.2-mile round-trip hike. Bring snowshoes, water, snacks and proper attire. Estimated time: 3+ hours. RSVP (397-4877 or brian@redoaksports.com) by Feb. 14.

DEP Milfoil Summit - Friday, February 28

The Department of Environmental Protection's Milfoil Task Force is holding a Milfoil Summit. Contact Mike (495-6039).

Invasive Plant Atlas - Sunday, March 2-Sunday, March 3 (tentative)

Volunteer for the New England Wild Flower Society's Invasive Plant Atlas of New England project. The society is training volunteers this spring and summer to identify invasive plants and document their range. Volunteers should have an interest in plants and be willing to commit time to the project. Contact Mike (495-6039) for volunteer forms and information. More info on the project can be found at www.eeb.uconn.edu/invasives/ipane.

Kennebec Highlands Talk - Thursday, March 13, 7 p.m.

Maranacook Community School, Rte 17, Readfield
BRCA president Denny Phillips will introduce attendees to the natural and recreational resources available in the 6,000 acre Kennebec Highlands. \$3 admission benefits BRCA.

Maine Water Conference - Wednesday, April 16

Augusta Civic Center
Sponsored by the George Mitchell Center, UMO (581-3244).

Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance

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