



BELGRADE REGIONAL CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

BRCA News ~ Winter 2005

The Long View

Belgrade Landowners Preserve Spectacular View, Water, and Habitat

Over the last 40 years, artists, photographers, and innumerable locals and visitors have stopped to enjoy the spectacular view from Jack and Kati Sutton's home on the West Road in Belgrade. Thanks to the Suttons' recent land preservation agreement with BRCA this panorama that reaches from Long Pond to Mount Washington is now permanently protected for future generations to enjoy.

The Suttons' voluntary land protection agreement with BRCA, allows them to limit development on three acres on the West Road while retaining ownership of the land. The agreement ensures that the property will be protected forever, regardless of who owns the land in the future. The Suttons decided to partner with BRCA because of its commitment to protecting the Belgrade Lakes watershed's water quality and lands and its success with the 5,600-acre Kennebec Highlands project, which is visible from the Suttons' property.

The rapid development of the Belgrade Lakes region was a major



photo: Kati Sutton

factor in the Suttons' decision to conserve the land. "We know there are limits to the types and intensity of development that can take place without degrading the natural assets that attract such development," said Jack Sutton. "Our goal is to permanently remove development temptation from this parcel, thereby preserving the view from the West Road for the benefit of all who pass this way and pause to enjoy it, now and in the future."

The Suttons decided to conserve the land and its view not for their sole enjoyment, but for "the numerous folks who have stopped throughout the years to enjoy the view by day and the stars by night," said Jack Sutton. It was the land's stunning views that prompted him and his wife to buy the

property in 1963 after seeing it at sunset after a summer picnic on Blueberry Hill in Rome.

Conserving the land will have a positive impact on conservation beyond preserving its view. Limiting development decreases runoff into the lakes, which preserves water quality, and helps protect large tracts of land for wildlife habitat. "It's our hope that this land will be a foothold on which to increase an expanse of uninterrupted forest anchored on the north by the Kennebec Highlands," said Denny Phillips, chair of BRCA's land trust activities. "Many species need larger ranges to roam and, with our woods being fractured by development, this gift may provide the impetus to others in the area to add their land to the corridor."

\$40,000 Needed to Complete Mount Phillip

As many of you know, BRCA, together with Pine Island Camp, recently purchased more than 200 acres on the summit and south slope of Mount Phillip in Rome. This important property has wildlife habitat, two streams, and a popular hiking trail that leads to the peak of this local landmark. Realizing that the land, with nearly a mile of road frontage on Route 225, is very

attractive for development, and the impact that development would have on the traditional uses of Mount Phillip and on Great Pond's water quality, BRCA immediately began negotiations with the owner when the land came on the market in 2004. The result was BRCA purchasing the property in December. But our work is not over.

Thanks to many generous donors,

BRCA and Pine Island Camp have already raised \$150,000 toward the purchase. BRCA is now asking its members, all Great Pond shorefront owners, and Rome property owners to help us raise an additional \$40,000, to complete the purchase and provide for the permanent stewardship of Mount Phillip.

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Conservation Corps Seeks Director for 2005 Season

The BRCA Conservation Corps is looking for a director for the 2005 season. Are you or someone you know passionate about the Belgrade Lakes watershed, environmental issues, and educating the public? Working with the corps is a wonderful opportunity to work toward preserving the natural beauty of our seven lakes.

The corps director will head two crews of high school students working to correct erosion problems around the Belgrade Lakes watershed and will visit property owners to discuss non-point source pollution and lake-friendly living.

The directorship, an AmeriCorps position with BRCA, begins in April and runs for six months. The position includes many training opportunities, and the chance to volunteer at water festivals, fairs, watershed surveys, and tree plantings with other Maine AmeriCorps workers.

Applicants must have a four-year college degree or equivalent experience. The director will receive a stipend, health insurance, mileage reimbursement, and an education award upon successful completion of the term of service. For more information, please contact Sue Kring at the Maine Conservation Corps at (207) 287-4398 or BRCA at (207) 495-6039.

Energetic, committed high school students interested in performing physically demanding work for the corps may also apply to be on a crew by contacting BRCA.

BRCA Closes on Mount Phillip, Moves on McGaffey Mountain

BRCA has been busy with many land trust activities lately. In December we closed on the 197-acre parcel that contains the trail to the summit of Mount Phillip in Rome. Thanks to many generous members, our search for leadership donations exceeded expectations. We have now begun the general fundraising campaign to reach the full purchase price and to raise enough funds to comfortably steward Mount Phillip—a big responsibility. (See story on page 1.)

The purchase of 24 acres on McGaffey Mountain, to the south of the Kennebec Highlands, is nearing. The parcel was considered early in the Kennebec Highlands project, but was not for sale at that time. The land is in a key location, which will protect a spectacular panorama to the northwest.

The donation of an easement by Jack and Kati Sutton to protect the

view across from their house on the West Road in Belgrade has become final. Recognizing that increasing development pressure would eventually consume this lot, Jack and Kati worked with BRCA to ensure that this spot will always be available for the public to enjoy. (See story on page 1.)

Work is ongoing to protect a large parcel in the vicinity of Long Pond and another in New Sharon adjacent to the north boundary of the Kennebec Highlands.

We invite you to share your thoughts about local land preservation with BRCA and its Land Trust Committee. Feel free to contact us at brcakh@ghi.net or attend one of our Land Trust Committee meetings. Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the BRCA office in Belgrade Lakes.

—Denny Phillips
(brcakh@ghi.net)

Conservation Corps Plans Golf Tournament and Dinner

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, the BRCA Conservation Corps is planning two major fundraising events for Wednesday, August 17, 2005. The events include a Pro Am Golf Tournament hosted by the Belgrade Lakes Golf Club and an elegant dinner at The Village Inn in Belgrade Lakes. Proceeds from the tournament and dinner will be shared between the BRCA Conservation Corps and the local lake associations—East Pond, North Pond, Salmon/McGrath, Messalonskee, BLA (Great and Long ponds)—to support milfoil prevention efforts and other water quality improvement programs. Anyone interested in serving on the golf tournament or dinner committees should contact Jerry Tipper (gtipper@somtel.com) or Brian Bernatchez (Golden.Pond@LPL.com).

Jane Eberle Appointed to Natural Resources Committee



In November BRCA Board member Jane Eberle was elected to her first term in the Maine state legislature, House of Representatives District 123, which covers parts of South Portland and Cape Elizabeth. Following on that success, Jane recently was appointed to the Committee on Natural Resources and now is looking

forward to combining local and state-wide efforts to work on behalf of Maine's environment.

The Natural Resources Committee oversees air and water quality standards; natural resource protection; waste

management and disposal; hydropower and dams; energy facility siting; waste-to-energy facilities; mining; site location and development; shore land zoning, subdivisions and growth management; and general environmental policy. The committee also oversees the Department of Environmental Protection.

"I am thrilled to be appointed to a committee that is responsible for issues of such importance to Mainers," said Jane. "I am excited to get to work in sustaining our most valuable resources, and protecting the health of our families and landscape of our state." Congratulations, Jane!

Stewardship Accomplishments Aplenty

First, a big thank you to all the stewardship committee members and volunteers for their outstanding efforts this past year. Thanks to you, we had a number of successful work days and tackled rubbish removal on Mount Phillip, and trail maintenance and improvements and erosion control on other parcels.

At Mount Phillip, volunteers removed illegally dumped rubbish from the access roads. A 20-yd dumpster was filled with discarded tires and another dumpster was nearly filled with miscellaneous rubbish. After the cleanup the roads were blocked off to help prevent further dumping. Another project was the demolition of the "Dolley" camp and cleanup of the partially burned house on that lot.

The Kennebec Highlands was the focus of a significant amount of work this past year. Projects that were sponsored by Land for Maine's Future (LMF) and separate jobs funded by the Department of Conservation (DOC) were completed, in addition to trail maintenance projects by volunteers.

The LMF projects were funded by an Access Improvement grant. This work has been in process for two years and the projects were completed on time and under budget. They included two parking lots and two trails—Round Top and Sanders Hill. Rubbish and junk vehicles also were removed and road plugs were installed to prevent more rubbish dumping. Erosion control was addressed throughout the Highlands, mainly by the construction of waterbars and ditching, and the "Saddle Camp" was secured to prevent additional vandalism.

DOC-funded projects included the construction of waterbars, complete with the haying and seeding of skid trails on the "Thorndike" parcel. Additional erosion control measures were completed on the Frog Hollow Trail and North Vienna Trail. Also, in cooperation with the Rome Snowmobile Club, two new bridges were constructed on the Kennebec Highlands Trail. The DOC also funded regular trail maintenance and patrol of the Highlands. Some of the trail maintenance done by volunteers included bog bridging, drainage, rock waterbars, brush removal, stepping



stones, and stump removal, all to make your hiking experience in the Highlands that much more enjoyable.

Projects for the Kennebec Highlands in 2005 will include regular trail maintenance and improvement, patrolling, and more erosion control. We also hope the DOC will start the management plan process for the Kennebec Highlands this year.

Projects for BRCA properties this year include adding a parking lot for Mount Phillip and some trail relocation and view improvement from the top of Mount Phillip. We will also perform regular trail maintenance and improvements. A big project will be the rebuilding of the Monataka Barn (aka Dolley Barn) for storage of tools and equipment and other potential uses. Other projects include completing baseline documentation for some of our new easements coming on line in 2005, updating management plans for BRCA properties, and completing a stewardship handbook.

This is just a partial list of the stewardship projects accomplished this past year and what we plan to do this year. If you have any questions or want more detailed information, or would like to help our stewardship efforts, don't hesitate to call or e-mail me.

—Brian Alexander (BrianA@ghi.net or 397-4877)

Inspector Honored

Lea Ramirez, a BRCA boat inspector who helped stop Eurasian watermilfoil from entering Great Pond on Labor Day weekend, received a newly created Governor's Award from Gov. John Baldacci on November 5. Lea was one of four honored for outstanding service in preventing new invasive species from entering Maine waters. The award was created by the state Department of Environmental Protection and the Governor's Office. (You can read about Lea's save in the fall 2004 BRCA newsletter.)

\$40K Needed to Protect Mount Phillip

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If you agree that Mount Phillip is an important part of the beauty and appeal of Rome and the Belgrade Lakes, please help us complete this important project by sending in your tax-deductible donation today.

With your help, we can permanently preserve this community resource for our children and our children's children, by:

- protecting Mount Phillip from development;
- conserving its woodland wildlife habitat and streams; and
- maintaining access for hikers, hunters, and others who love the outdoors.

We greatly appreciate all contributions. Your gift will build upon the heritage of our community, and help maintain the water quality of the Belgrade Lakes, now and for the future.



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Upcoming events

Join Us for a Cross-Country Ski Through the Kennebec Highlands on March 6

A cross-country ski trip through the Kennebec Highlands is planned for Sunday, March 6, and is open to all interested skiers. The trip will begin in Vienna, traveling over Vienna Mountain, which offers an incredible view of the western mountains, and will continue over Kidder Pond and McIntire Pond. The trip will finish on the Roxy Rand Road off Route 27 in New Sharon. Total distance for the trip is approximately five to six miles, more if the group wants to explore along the way.

The group will meet at 9 a.m. on March 6 at the parking area on Roxy Rand Road, which is off Route 27 in New Sharon. From Farmington, Roxy Rand Road is on the right four miles south of Route 2. From Belgrade Lakes it is on the left three miles north of Route 225 in Rome. The group will shuttle to Vienna to start the trip. Skiers should bring a lunch and enough water for the day.

Please contact David Axelman (davidaxelman@yahoo.com or 634-3451) with any questions and to help determine the number of interested people.

Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance

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