

The **Milliken Project** lays out a published plan (<https://watervilleclt.org/milliken-project>) where WCLT and partners (Habitat for Humanity, South End Neighborhood Association and the Quality of Life Committee) work with residents on two streets (Moor and Carrean) in the South End to find ways to increase affordable homeownership, decrease energy consumption, provide opportunities for local youths-to-seniors to earn extra incomes, increase recreational opportunities, decrease food insecurity, and renovate homes



while maintaining the historic character and affordability of the neighborhood.

These are ambitious goals. More financial resources are needed if goals are to be reached. The city supported WCLT's application to the U.S. Conference of Mayor's "Community Wins Competition". As winners of the competition, the \$50,000 grant provides funding for another home renovation.

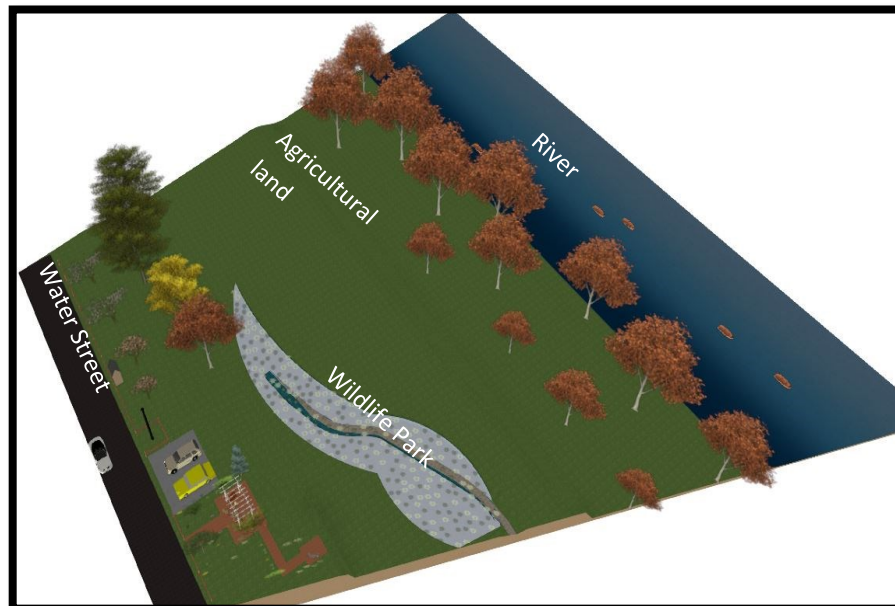
The South End Neighborhood Association plans include increasing the number of soil

boxes in their Moor Street Community Garden. Because of the interest of a generous donor, more shade trees may be added to the Moor/Water Street playground.

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Waterville Community Land Trust
 PO Box 1834
 Waterville, ME 04903
watervilleclt@gmail.com
Watervilleclt.org



Are You a Gardener or Artist?

We are looking for your ideas for our park. A portion of it will be improved as a wildlife refuge with a boardwalk and educational signs. But, there's room for more activities! How about a statuary trail or a community garden? Write us with your ideas!

WCLT is a 501c3
 nonprofit
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**Spring
 2021
 NEWSLETTER**

WCLT and City of Waterville Receive Housing Award

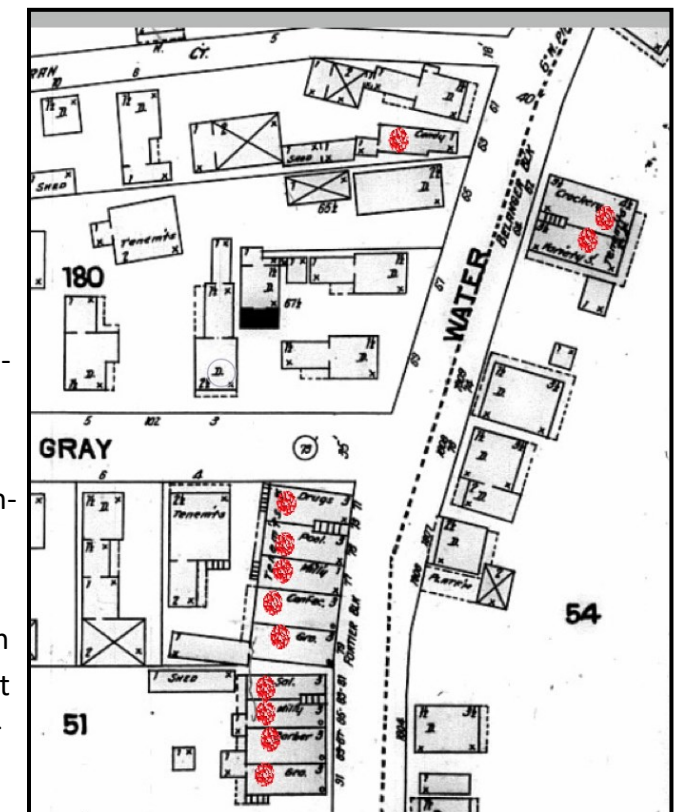
Waterville was named one of eight recipients of the [2021 CommunityWINS® Challenge](#), a joint effort by the [U.S. Conference of Mayors and Wells Fargo](#) to advance housing affordability solutions in local communities. The awards recognized outstanding mayoral-based initiatives that assisted their city in reducing the cost burden of housing and increasing access to safe, affordable places to live.

The grants totaling \$1 million were distributed to four city categories, based on population. Each nonprofit received funding aimed at assisting cities with the opportunity to invest, strengthen, and address housing affordability issues in municipalities across the United States. Waterville was honored alongside Denver, CO; Anchorage, AK; Grand Rapids, MI; Frankfort, KY; Chicago, IL; Newark, NJ; and Brownsville, TX.

Over the years Waterville mayors and city councils have developed playgrounds in the North and South Ends, maintained Kennebec River access on Water Street, assisted with maintaining the South End Neighborhoods Association's Moor Street Community Garden, and hold a special fund for capital projects in the South End.

WCLT will use the \$50,000 award to continue our work in the Milliken neighborhood of the South End. We will complete our current home project at 3 Moor Street and will use the proceeds from its sale to a working family to purchase our next project. (See back page for information on the Milliken project.)

Sustainable changes to neighborhoods require more than renewed houses. Return of some portion of homeownership to areas with more than 50% absentee ownership would be beneficial to developing "community". Development of an agricultural or arts-creative based business would give youths and others an opportunity to learn entrepreneurial skills. Increased recreational assets, such as a bicycle path along the Kennebec to the Kennebec-Messalonskee Rivers confluence, could stimulate recreation-based businesses to develop commercially zoned parcels along Water Street. Around 1900 there were many French-Canadian owned businesses on Water Street, shown by red dots on the adjacent 1930's Sanborn map. In this just this one small city block there were grocery, variety, barber shop, confectionary, and drug stores.



LIVES LINKED TO LAND

A Personal Family History by Rhea Cote

Land. Owning Land. Being on the land. Taking one's stories from the geography of lives lived and then sharing that land/stories with those who have lived on the land before you. South End, 'down the Plains,' or *dans les plains*, in French, however you know that piece of geography, the stories buried in the landscape echoes the generations that have become legend.

My family, beginning with Rose Giroux married to Frank Ronco, anglicized spelling of Rancourt, owned the land and house at 227 Water St. My mémère, Annie Giroux Côté, lived with her aunt Rose and was deeded the house and land. Annie's father, as the story was told to me by my aunt, fell through the ice walking across the Kennebec River and Annie's mother died two weeks after Annie was born, from a broken heart. Annie married Charles Côté, whose father had immigrated from Québec, working on the farms as he walked to Waterville.

Frank Ronco/Rancourt was a Civil War veteran, discharged August, 28, 1865. Annie and Charlie had 10 children and my father, Ray, was given a piece of the original land, almost two acres, to build the house where I grew up at 233 Water St.

There was an obsession with the family in the need to own land and I often wondered where that intensity to own a piece of geography originated. Was this some ancestral calling to belong to a place before or after immigration from France and then Québec? I've seen this obsession in films—immigrant, or unlanded people gaining land and then fighting to the death in order to keep their property.

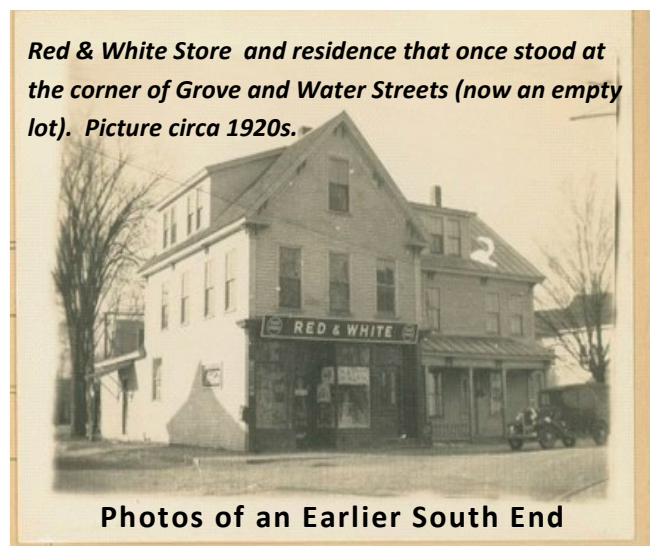
The land I grew up on was treated as if it were farm land and my parents, their parents kept large gardens of vegetables, flowers, and in earlier days—animals such as goats or pigs. I have memories of covering the corn seed before I could play as part of the work that needed to be done as stewards of the land. Later years, all the gardens were turned into lawns complete with a small pond where the neighborhood kids played year-round or families would come and sit on the lawn to let their kids run on the grass. In winter, my father strung a set of lights over the pond so I could skate...when the neighborhood boys weren't using the pond for hockey.

This ownership of land was instilled in me and I carry the obsession to own the geography that I live on and tend. I believe in the strength that a piece of land gives itself to story, told, retold, invented, and shared. My writing came about because of the land on which I experienced my formation as a girl. The entire neighborhood has an identity and a reason for defining the people who live in the South End. There are multitudes of stories—to be told about the challenges and the victories of the generations who live, and have lived, on this land beside the Kennebec River.

Rhea Côté Robbins is the author of 'down the Plains'.

WCLT would like photos and/or stories of your family history in Waterville!

Just send to our email: watervilleclt@gmail.com We will notify you if chosen to be published and of any requested edits that may be required for publishing.



PROGRESS AT WCLT'S PROJECT HOME

3 MOOR STREET

