

EVENTS

- April 4** **Anadromous Fish Run Restoration**
6:30 PM Presenter: Paul Christman Margaret Chase Smith Library (Skowhegan)
- April 23** **Avian Haven FEATURING FOUR LIVE FANTASTIC BIRDS**
10:30 am Skowhegan Recreation Center 39 Poulin Drive
- May TBA** **Smith Pond Paddle**
9:00 AM to Noon Easy Paddle Canoe launch off Route 150 just north of the Wesserunnett Stream bridge (Skowhegan)
- June 25** **Townsend Preserve Paddle** Breakfast & Lunch Further Details TBA
- June 26** **Celebration of Parsons Field** Further Details TBA
- August 9** **Star Gazing Time (Rain evening: August 11th)** 8:00 PM Taylor Field, (Skowhegan)
- August TBA** **FIRST SWT FRIENDS OF CONSERVATION CELEBRATION & AWARDS** 6:00 PM to 8:00PM
- August 17** **Kennebec Banks Annual BBQ** 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM (Skowhegan)
- September TBA** **Great Northern Outdoors**
- November TBA:** **Archeological Dig at Richmond Fort** Presenter: Eric Lathi

Please check our website, www.somersetwoodstrustees.org or Facebook page for updates and changes to this schedule.

Somerset Woods Trustees
P.O. Box 833
Skowhegan, Me. 04976

Spring Appeal Enclosed: Your support makes a huge difference!
Please Enjoy our Newly Designed Newsletter!

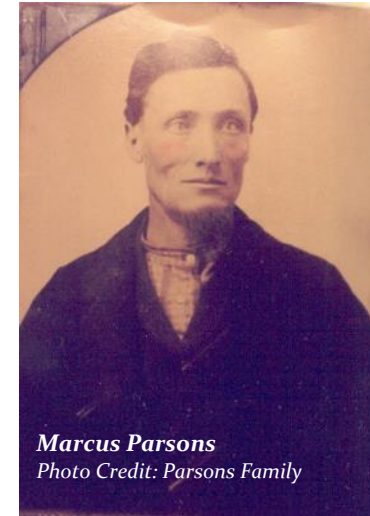


2011 Dedication of Cleaver Landing

WINTER-SPRING
2016
NEWSLETTER



PARSONS FAMILY GIFTS LAND TO SWT



Marcus Parsons
Photo Credit: Parsons Family

By the Parsons Family

“Like many families in Skowhegan, the Parsons family has a long history there. The first to arrive came from Amesbury, MA following the Revolution, and settled in Cornville. In the 1850s, Marcus Parsons, an early graduate of Waterville College (now Colby College), acquired some land and went into lumbering. He prospered, thanks in part to years of lumbering in northern Wisconsin and Michigan. There, among other adventures, he had a scrape with Indians (we have inherited his revolver); visited San Francisco during the Gold Rush; and, one Illinois afternoon, witnessed a Lincoln-Douglas debate.

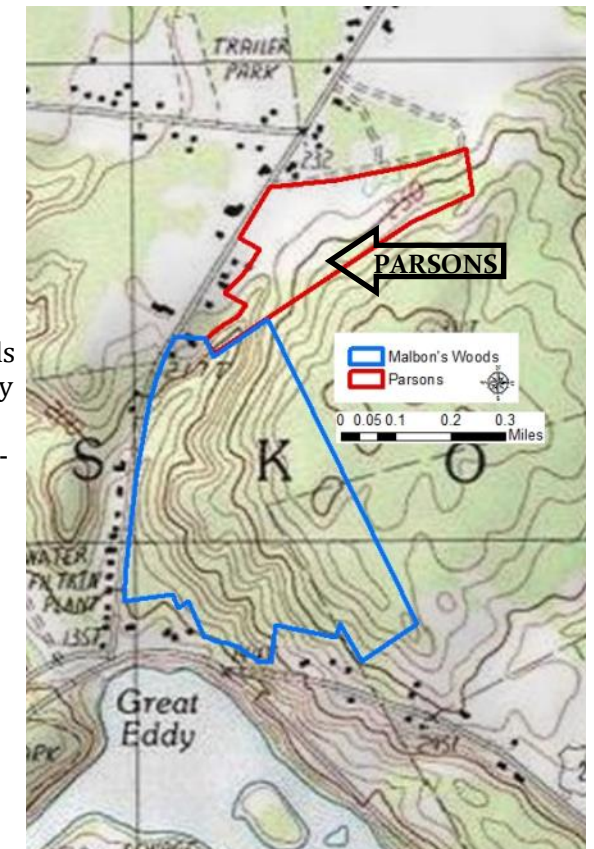
Returning to Maine, he continued lumbering and managing his sawmill, and built a home in Skowhegan: the white farmhouse, barn, and outbuildings that are still on the left side of Malbon Mills Road up the big hill from the Eddy. During the rest of his life, he continued to acquire land, including the field and woods we are donating to Somerset Woods Trustees.

Marcus died in 1914, and is buried in the small cemetery up the road. Our grandparents, Lindley (Marcus’s nephew) and Mabelle, his wife, inherited the house and much of the land, including those acres of woods and field. Lindley, a farmer, hayed the field every year, and developed a particular affection for the big pines down the trail toward the river.

After our grandparents died, his two sons, Marcus (II) and William, our fathers, sold much of the land and the house, but kept the field. Beginning in our childhoods, in the 1950s, we have visited the field and woods often — to play ball, fly kites, pick wild strawberries (late June into early July), enjoy picnics, look for wildflowers and wildlife (foxes, deer, songbirds, and more), take photographs, and just walk around or sit appreciating its nature and beauty. We will continue to do so now that the land is a Somerset Woods property. It is our hope that neighbors and other community members will do the same. We also hope that any who conceive other uses for the property — agricultural, horticultural, environmental, educational, recreational, artistic, etc. — take their ideas to the Somerset Woods Trustees. It’s a beautiful piece of land, close to town, available for people’s use and appreciation.”

The Trustees of SWT wish to thank the entire Parsons family for this generous gift of land. We are planning a celebration this spring or summer for a dedication ceremony for all to attend. The Parsons gift of land abuts our Malbon’s Woods property. The Trustees will be developing a management plan for the land which will surely include keeping this land open for those wild strawberries!

Thank you Marcus L. Parsons, III, John H. Parsons, Lynn P. Chorich, William H. Parsons, and Stephen F. Parsons.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

A WALK IN THE WOODS

I have been very fortunate to be president of Somerset Woods Trustees. I say fortunate because I get so much from giving my time and yes, money; but most of all, I get to meet so many of you!

This past summer I was driving by our Thompson Island property on my way to our camp and I saw a vehicle parked by the river. You can safely drive right to the river's edge on this beautiful river access site. I decided to check on the activity and swung in. There was a young man and his wife there with their two children. The man was using a "weed whacker" to trim the grass on the foot path from the parking spot to the gravel bank. I knew we had not given permission for him to be cutting. I explained who I was and that this was SWT's property.

We talked and I found that he lived not far up the road. He said they brought their children there often for a swim. Now, when we obtained this lovely spot, I thought of river users such as canoers, kayakers, tubers, fisherman, etc. but I hadn't given a thought to it being a "swimming hole".

I was and am so very pleased that these folks are using this river access for their enjoyment. I bet those kids will grow up and tell tales about the swimming hole. Needless to say, there was a smile on my face as I drove back onto the road and headed north.

This is just one small part of my good fortune. I very much believe that SWT is conserving land for our and future generations, especially those who may not have a camp. Your support is the reason we are able to do this. Thank you.!

Jack Gibson



DO YOU LOVE YOUR LAND AND WANT TO ENSURE THAT IT REMAINS FOREVER PROTECTED?

Do you own land that has been in your family for generations or that you hope to pass on to your children? If your land has significant conservation value, with important natural or historic resources, donating a **conservation easement** can be one of the smartest ways to conserve the land you love, while maintaining your private property rights and possibly realizing significant federal tax benefits.

The U.S. Congress recently passed new incentives for conservation easements to encourage protection of forests, farmland, historic areas, and lands with high scenic value or high value animal habitats. The new incentives include the following:



- Raising the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30 percent of his or her income in any year to 50 percent;
- Allowing qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100 percent of their income; and
- Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years.

These changes give donors of high value land more time to take advantage of tax deductions and at higher yearly deductions. SWT currently holds eight conservation easements which total nearly 900 acres. We are eager to help you determine if a conservation easement is right for you. Please feel free to give us a call (207-465-5058) for more information.

SOMERSET WOODS TRUSTEES: DEDICATED TO "COMMUNITY" SINCE 1927

Somerset Woods Trustees have created public trails within their preserves, providing beautiful places with great destinations of views, unique terrain, and habitats. Visitors to our preserves are healthier from their experiences, both physically and mentally.

How can you walk through a pine forest with the wind softly echoing through the tree tops or climb to the top of a ridge to watch the sun settling upon the horizon without refreshing your spirit and body? I love watching solitary hikers stopping to observe a red elf crawling along the leaf litter or observing the delight of children as they race for the trails, leaving their parents far behind, or seeing a happy dog running circles around its owner, impatiently pulling on his leash towards the waiting woods road.

SWT has creatively planned its preserves, contributing to the local community and its economy. Our preserves attract tourists who shop and eat in our downtowns and purchase artwork, antiques, gas and gifts from our local merchants. We own and maintain a very popular picnic park in Skowhegan on the Kennebec River; lease land to an archery club; provide land for agricultural research; signed a no-cost lease to encourage the Maine Appalachian Trail Club to build their training facility in Skowhegan; provide the land on which the Debe River Trail was built; and offer educational programs for kids and adults.

We are now talking about doing even more, and across more of Somerset County. SWT is a growing organization because of you and your support.

Where are the special places in your community that you want to remain forever open to the public? What amenities can we offer your community to help you build a stronger economy? Call or write us; we want to hear from you!

Sometimes in a large organization it's hard to see how your donations are spent. SWT is a lean (but not mean!) machine—our trustees give many hours of their time to our communities.

At SWT the results of your donations are obvious—better maintained trails; more educational programs for your children; and new properties protected.

Thanks so much! I look forward to meeting you!

Nancy Williams

FLASH ALERTS

- ◇ SWT thanks the Eastman Charitable Foundation for their generous support of a \$5000 grant for improvements to the Philbrick and Taylor Field Preserves. Thanks, too, Nina Pleasants for initiating this success!
- ◇ Keep you eye on our website for updated maps, trail brochures and pictures!
- ◇ SWT Trustees have voted to create Friends of Conservation and SWT Volunteer of the Year Awards

TRUSTEE NEWS

Kate Drummond is a science teacher at Skowhegan Area High School, where for the last ten years, she has mainly taught chemistry. A graduate of Carrabec High School ('93) and Brandeis University ('97), she grew up in the shadow of Bigelow Mountain in the town of Highland Plantation, Maine. In 2011, she earned a masters degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of New England. The majority of her childhood was spent outside exploring by horseback, bicycle or foot with her family at a sporting



camp on a remote lake in Maine. There she spent many hours swimming, canoeing and fly-fishing. She lives in Madison with Peter, her partner and fellow adventurer. Her recent experience as a Teacher-Ranger in Acadia National Park, and as a student in the Maine Master Naturalist Program have ignited a new fire to take a more active role in outdoor education and conservation in Maine.

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