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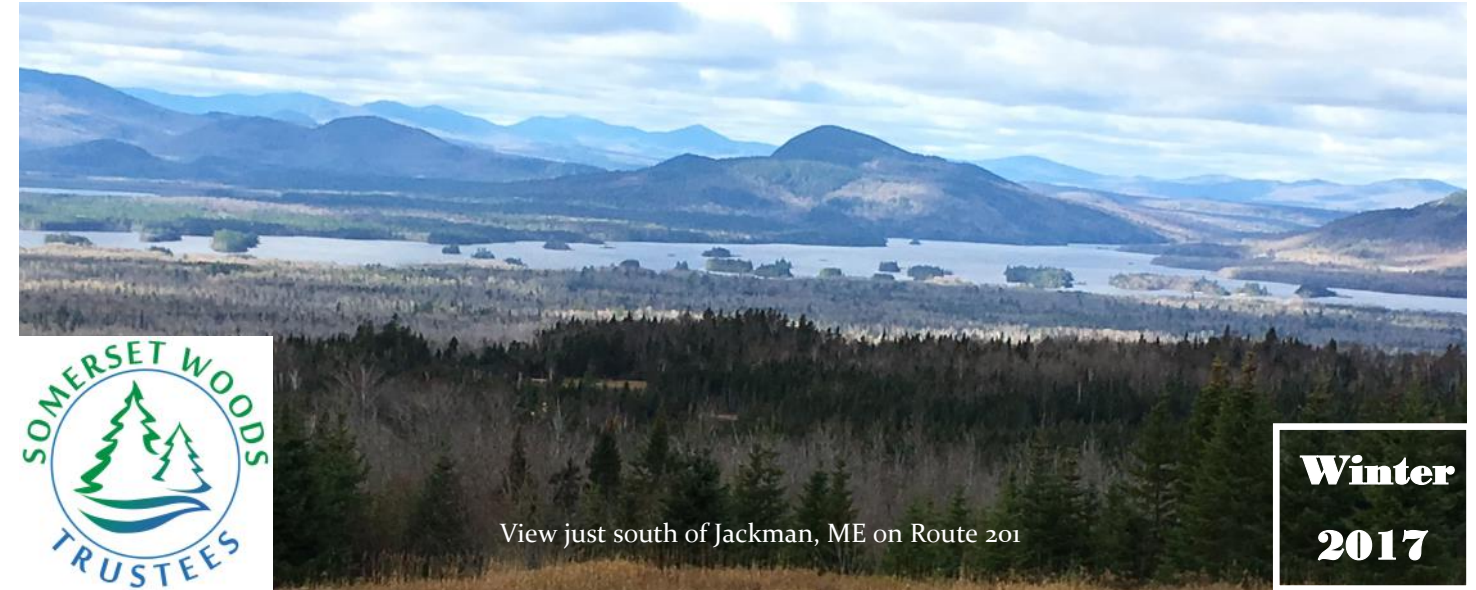
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Nancy Williams



Coburn Woods Update

Our new trail system at Coburn Woods opened October 29! The ribbon was cut by SWT's President Jack Gibson (left, in picture) and Brian Alexander, President of the Central Maine chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association. With over 3 miles already constructed, SWT and Brian hope to expand the trail another three miles by next fall in order to complete a mountain bike trail system of over six miles.



Winter
2017

SWT CELEBRATES TWO GIFTS OF LAND FOR CONSERVATION

With great gratitude we are delighted to announce a gift of 195 acres in Madison and an expected gift of 200 acres in the Township of Concord.

Madison: The Jackson Farm

It will not be a surprise to all who know Alfred Jackson that he would protect his land for conservation. Alfred's land is a quintessential Maine farm with neatly cut fields and a sustainably managed forest with old growth preserved and cherished. Alfred, with his wife Dassie, now deceased, worked for over 65 years to establish and enhance the natural beauty and other assets of this property.



Alfred Jackson (left) and Eric Lahti

Alfred's intent and desire are to preserve and protect the premises to assure the property and its values are kept in their present condition and eventually made available as a public asset. In March 2017, Alfred signed a deed that conveyed the property with an exclusion for his home's 5-acre houselot. The remaining property was conveyed to SWT with a life estate retained by Alfred.

In September, 2017 the Trustees honored Alfred and his family at a dinner at the Heritage House. Eric Lahti, trustee and long time friend of Alfred, said that "Alfred is one of our great conservationists. His love of land is evident in every woods

trail, the clean stream that flows through the property, and the pristine fields that provide a view of the farm that is timeless."

The Trustees have examined the property and have found it to have outstanding values for ecological and recreational purposes, well within the mission of the Somerset Woods Trustees. At a future time SWT will open trails within the land. (con't, next page)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

A Walk in the Woods

Jack Gibson, SWT President

Every year goes by and we find that new opportunities and challenges materialize for Somerset Woods Trustees. The gifts of land from Norcross and Alfred Jackson are wonderful opportunities to protect their abundant natural resources, to provide new trails and to develop environmental education.

As well, we try to look strategically forward and identify properties that, if protected, will help maintain the character of Somerset County through the next decades that will undoubtedly bring change and development. The pristine and scenic river corridor of the Kennebec River is our greatest asset. The Kennebec, from Bingham to Madison and to a lesser extent from Madison to Skowhegan, is still relatively undeveloped.

Gravel pits may be the major "development" that has taken place along the river in the past but many pits have been dug to the end of their commercial viability. We are seeing some of these come up for sale and when sold, become house lots or trailer parks. Do we want the view from the river to lose its favor of wilderness?

There are now four parcels of greater than 25 acres for sale on the river. Two of these parcels are near our Townsend Preserve (Indian and Fowl Meadow Islands) and Thompson Islands. We are having an internal debate about pursuing these properties to keep them undeveloped. Are these more valuable to preserve than the smaller parcels downriver that are in danger of sale and development? We would love to hear from our constituency, you, to let us know if our priorities align with yours. If not, what would you see as important for us to try and protect? Please take the time to drop us a line and let us know.

YOUNG'S WILDLIFE PRESERVE

SWT has accepted 200-acres in the Township of Concord being offered by Norcross Wildlife Foundation of Massachusetts. Norcross received the land in March, 2000 as a gift from James R. and Diana C. Young. The Young family has owned portions of the property since 1916. Norcross was founded by Arthur Norcross in 1939, and maintains a 8,000 acre wildlife refuge in Monson, Massachusetts. Over many years Norcross has provided grants, gifts, easements and loans for land to other not-for-profit wildlife conservation organizations. The foundation's board voted in October to transfer the Young parcels to SWT.

The property is on both sides of Fletcher Mountain Road with the west side rising steeply toward the summit of Fletcher Mountain. The headwaters of Martin's Stream begins within this property on the east side of Fletcher Mountain Road, joins other streams as it flows south, and eventually drains into the Kennebec River in Embden.

Jackson's Farm, con't In July, 2017 Joe Dembeck, a board member of SWT and Executive Director of the Somerset County Soil and Conservation District, and staff from Maine's Inland Fish and Wildlife conducted an aquatic habitat survey. They found that even with the low water level of July, the pools were full of fish, crawfish and salamanders.

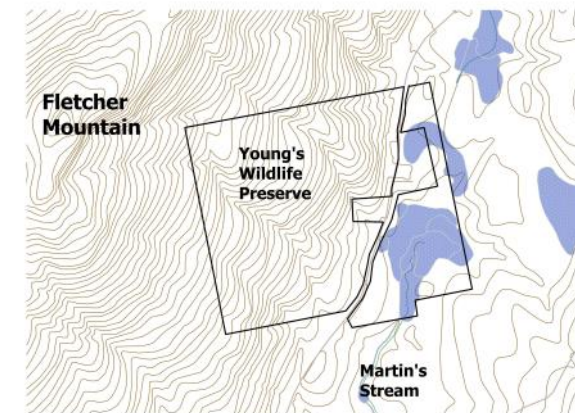
Alfred has life tenancy on the property and his privacy should be respected. **Please contact SWT to request permission to visit the property.** We know Alfred would enjoy meeting you!



The land was gifted to Norcross requiring that the land be maintained perpetually as a wildlife preserve. Norcross posted the roadsides with "No Hunting" signs. SWT will post the land as a wildlife preserve.

Norcross has provided SWT with their management plan for the property. SWT will develop a similar plan that will enhance wildlife. Dr. Young has reported that he has seen coyotes, chickadees, nuthatches, all kinds of finches and grosbeaks, cardinals, sparrows, downy and hairy woodpeckers, indigo buntings, red-bellied woodpecker, and wild turkeys.

Once all legal documents are completed between Norcross and SWT, we will announce a workday for those who might like to assist us to clear and mark a trail so that the public will enjoy visiting this preserve.



UPDATE ON PARSONS FAMILY PRESERVE



After receiving a grant from the Eastman Charitable Fund in 2017, SWT has pursued development of our 20-acre field on Malbons Mills Road to increase pollinator habitat.

Ants, bats, bees, beetles, birds, butterflies, flies, moths, and wasps are already abundantly found but by increasing the native wildflowers and shrubs growing on the property, more insect species will flourish at the preserve.

This year we focused on controlling the chokecherry that has invaded the land and threatens to shade out many flower species. Around the preserve monument we are testing a technique that may eliminate the chokecherry. We are also planting native wildflower seeds in this area. This summer we noted an increase of native lupines and unusually tall milkweed. Seeds of wildflowers sown in the fall of 2016 flowered and should spread over the years.



A small kiosk with an interpretive sign and brochure rack will be added in the spring of 2018.

DON'T MISS SWT'S NEW WEBSITE

Be sure to find our new website! We have developed a website that we hope is user friendly and will provide our web visitors with a better experience to learn about SWT and our land. The website has been developed using the GoDaddy web platform. There may be a short transition when the website will appear only as <https://somersetwoodstrustees.godaddysites.com> but will soon return as www.somersetwoodstrustees.org. We hope you will let us know what you think of our new website!