



P.O. Box 833, Skowhegan, ME 04976 [somersetwoodstrustees@gmail.com](mailto:somersetwoodstrustees@gmail.com)

---

December 2020

TRUSTEES

John Gibson III VMD  
*President*

Ernest W. Hilton, Esq. PE  
*Vice President*

Gregory A. Dore  
*Treasurer*

David D. Barter  
*Secretary/Clerk*

Ann Dorney, MD  
Kate Drummond  
Patty Hager  
Robert B. Haynes  
Eric Lahti  
Warren Shay, Esq.  
Chris Young

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jennifer Brockway

HONORARY TRUSTEES

William F. Reid, Jr.

ADVISORY BOARD

Joe Dembeck  
Eliza Townsend  
Patty Van Horne  
Greg Drummond  
Sam Horine  
Alan Habershtock  
John Noyes  
David Turcotte

Dear Friends,

As the new executive director at Somerset Woods Trustees, I grow prouder of this organization with each property I visit, volunteer I meet and project I discover. With trails for hiking, biking, and skiing, picnic spots and woods to explore, the SWT supports our community all year long. I am writing to ask that you support SWT this holiday season with a gift to our Annual Appeal.

What does your support mean for Somerset Woods Trustees and our community? It means accessible properties for hunting, fishing, and nature enjoyment. It means trails and water access for family fun. It means abundant and diverse wildlife. It means an investment in working together for a vibrant, healthy community.



In a year of challenges, the SWT has reason to be grateful. We welcomed more visitors than ever to our properties as community members turned to outdoor recreation for respite from pandemic pressures – many for the first time. So many families discovered the





hiking and biking trails of Coburn Woods in Skowhegan. The Kennebec Banks Rest Area hosted your socially distanced gatherings, from staff meetings to July 4th picnics. Teachers discovered Weston Woods & Waters in Madison for outdoor learning. Together with Skowhegan Outdoors, community members took to the water for the first annual Kennebec Paddlethon. More than two dozen community members volunteered with SWT for the first time.

With all this increased use, we have had opportunity to learn from you. You have asked for more property information and trail signs. You have asked for more trails. Most frequently, you have asked for maps!

Inside this newsletter you will find announcements of new trails created through the hard work of our stewardship volunteers. And I am pleased to report that several recent grant awards mean 2021 will bring maps and trailhead kiosks for many of our properties! I encourage you to reach out to me if you would like to help with these projects, or if you have ideas to share in how SWT can make our properties safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all members of our community. Reach me at [somersetwoodstrustees@gmail.com](mailto:somersetwoodstrustees@gmail.com) or by phone (207) 679-7306.

The importance of outdoor, public spaces has never been so clear. Please join me in supporting these spaces and special places with a gift to Somerset Woods Trustees.

With sincere best wishes,

Jennifer Brockway, Executive Director



*Somerset Woods Trustees is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID# 01-6016350.*





WINTER 2020

## WESSERUNSETT STREAM PRESERVE TAKES SHAPE

FUNDRAISING CONTINUES FOR KEY PARCEL PROVIDING TRAILS, HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

---

Somerset Woods Trustees' next property acquisition will provide easy access to hiking trails and Wesserunsett Stream to Skowhegan residents and visitors alike.

When fundraising is complete, the new Wesserunsett Stream Preserve behind Robin Court will offer a diversity of habitat, stunning terrain and 1200 feet of stream frontage, all within walking distance of Skowhegan's eastern neighborhoods. In time, the trails here will connect across SWT's Parson's Field and Malbon's Woods, providing connectivity all the way to the Kennebec at the Great Eddy!

SWT worked with a conservation buyer to secure the 38-acre parcel earlier this year. While we continue to fund raise to pay the loan, an array of community volunteers has worked to develop a trail system. Property steward and SWT Advisory Board member David Turcotte has coordinated the trails project, with support from several Trustees, community volunteers and Skowhegan H.S. students and advisors. We look forward to officially opening the trails early next year!





## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### A Walk in the Woods

As 2020 slides by, the Trustees of Somerset Woods would like to thank all of our supporters, old and new, for a successful year. Some things have changed and may be harder, but overall we are thankful for the renewed commitment you have given us.

We had a great year at Weston Woods and Waters with new infrastructure and trail improvement. A big thanks to Bob Abbott, property steward, for leading the charge. It is also worth noting that our pending acquisition on Wesserunsett Stream greatly increases our footprint in that area of Skowhegan. By combining that parcel with our existing Swimming Hole property, we will have 47 acres and 1200 feet of frontage with good trails. Thanks are due to Dave and Melanie Turcotte, John and Janice Malek and Trustees Warren Shay, Kate Drummond and Bob Haynes for the planning and development of new trails on these combined properties that we will call Wesserunsett Stream Preserve. We are fortunate that these two efforts have generated new users, new volunteers and new partnerships.

The Trustees would also like you to know of our concern for all people to feel safe and welcome on our trails and conservation properties. It is our desire to be inclusive in all we do. To that end, we have discussed ways in which we can improve our goals of getting users from all ethnicities, identities and economic backgrounds to take advantage of the outdoor opportunities we offer. We will partner with any organization that has the need and desire to get their clients into the Great Outdoors. Please let us know if we can help further the goals of any group you are involved with.

If you have not seen our new trails and properties, a good New Year's resolution would be to get out on them in 2021. Our older properties have much to offer also. You can find information on our web site ([somersetwodstrustees.org](http://somersetwodstrustees.org)). All of us at Somerset Woods Trustees wishes you and your families a wonderful holiday season and a safe and healthy 2021. Thank you for your ongoing support. - Jack Gibson, President

### Board of Trustees

Jack Gibson, Pres.  
Ernie Hilton, Vice Pres.  
Greg Dore, Treasurer  
Davida Barter, Secretary  
Kate Drummond  
Chris Young  
Robert Haynes  
Eric Lahti  
Warren Shay  
Ann Dorney  
Patty Hager

Jennifer Brockway,  
Executive Director

### Advisory Board

Patty Van Horne  
Joe Dembeck  
Greg Drummond  
Sam Horine  
Alan Haberstock  
Eliza Townsend  
David Turcotte  
John Noyes

### Honorary Trustee

Will F. Reid, Jr.



Somerset Woods Trustees is a nonprofit conservation organization with a mission to protect lands in Somerset County that have significant natural or cultural resources and manage them in a sustainable way for public benefit.

Weston Woods & Waters,  
Madison,  
photo K. Leblanc







## WESTON WOODS & WATERS

### MADISON

It's been just over one year since Somerset Woods Trustees acquired Weston Woods & Waters - marking the successful completion of SWT's most ambitious project to date. Readily accessible from in-town Madison, the property features many miles of woodland trails and extensive frontage on the Kennebec River. Recently, SWT granted a lease of the property to the Town of Madison. The lease doesn't in any way affect public use. SWT has similar leases on several high-use recreational properties in Skowhegan.

If you have spent any time exploring the trails at Weston Woods, you have likely had the pleasure of meeting property steward Bob Abbott. Trail builder, tour guide, historical reference - Bob brings it all to his stewardship of this 300-acre all-seasons gem. Bob has created a network of trails allowing a short walk or a long hike, and he routinely greets visitors and shares a story or two. On your next visit, take a moment to appreciate all the work that goes into the trails you enjoy. Consider, too, joining Bob as an SWT stewardship volunteer.

## TOM HENDRICKS RETIRES

### TIRELESS STEWARD & KNOTWEED WARRIOR

Somerset Woods Trustees regretfully says good bye to Trustee Tom Hendricks. The tireless steward of Kennebec Banks and Young's Wildlife Preserve resigned in October to prepare for his move to a warmer zip code. While we're excited for him and his new adventures, we're sad to see him leaving Maine and the lands he has so carefully stewarded.

"Tom brought quiet determination and integrity to do the best possible," remarked Trustee Ernie Hilton. As caretaker, Tom was a near daily presence at Kennebec Banks, waging a years-long, successful battle against Japanese knotweed and creating a footpath along the river upstream towards the Great Eddy.

He's made Young's Preserve in Concord a special place to visit, whether for a quick walk out to the beaver bog or a 2-mile hike on the Loop Trail on the side of Fletcher Mountain. We're going to miss you, Tom - you have left mighty big shoes to fill!





# JACOB'S PINES

LOWER MILLS ROAD, EAST MADISON

Have you visited Jacob's Pines? Volunteers Janice and John Malek together with Chris Messinger and Trustee Eric Lahti completed the first trail here this fall. The loop trail works its way from the trailhead into the pines for a lovely walk any time of year.

The original 40-acre Jacob's Pines was gifted to Somerset Woods Trustees in 2018 by the Town. The Trustees purchased an additional 15-acre parcel to provide public access and trailhead parking off Lower Mills Road. We look forward to developing additional trails and a trailhead kiosk with maps come spring.

**Want to help build and maintain SWT trails? Email [somersetwoodstrustees@gmail.com](mailto:somersetwoodstrustees@gmail.com)!**

