



The Newsletter of the Francestown Land Trust, Inc.

Spring 2019

Money in the Bank and the Changing Landscape of Childhood

I've gathered my group around the tall blooms of a meadowsweet. It is buzzing with activity and my second-grade students are mesmerized by the comings and goings of the smallest metallic green bees. It is a full sensory experience for us observers—the thick sweet fragrance, the low grumbling buzz of the bees, and the flash of their jeweled green bodies. We are in it, watching the bees flit from small fuzzy flower to flower, gathering nectar, their green bodies dusted with yellow pollen granules. My students are drawn into this moment, like bees to the honey.

When we think of protecting land for future generations, look at a child. They are the future and what they experience now will color the way they make the world.

But this is not usual for these 8-year-olds. Their world is less and less about smelling flowers and watching shiny green bees. Instead, they are digital natives, with screens up to their faces, between them and the world around them.

Childhood is different now. And just as we conservationists watch for changes to habitats that need protecting and animals that are endangered, I think we need to pay attention to the changing landscape of childhood.

Recent studies show that children can identify more corporate logos than trees in their neighborhoods. The average 8-year-old spends over four and a half hours a day engaging with electronics. That's four and a half hours they could be doing something else.

Think back to your own time as a child. Perhaps you spent your time catching frogs, chasing lightning bugs, humming to a snail or laying on your back in a big meadow to watch the swallows dip and soar through a blue, blue sky. By the age of eight, you might have

Money in the Bank *Continued on page 2*



Susuie Spikol leads the popular Babies in Backpacks and Toddlers in Tow program, introducing children to the wonders of nature at an early age. Photo by Jenn Sutton.

FLT 2019 Annual Meeting Thursday, June 6th

Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau's Woods

The featured speaker at this year's annual meeting of the Francestown Land Trust will be Dr. Richard B. Primack, Professor of Biology at Boston University.

For more than twenty years, his research has focused on documenting human impacts on the diversity of the living world. This interest took him to Thoreau's Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts, where, in the 1850s, Henry David Thoreau made meticulous observations about the natural world.

Dr. Primack has used these observations as a starting point to examine the effects of warming temperatures and other aspects of climate change on plants and animals. Much



Dr. Richard B. Primack

has changed in a century and a half. Many wildflower species have declined in abundance or disappeared completely from Concord. "Ice out" on Walden Pond; the arrival of migratory birds; the appearance of leaves and blossoms; the emergence of butterflies; all occur earlier

than in Thoreau's day. All are indicative of the potential worldwide impact, where widespread disruption of ecosystems and loss of species are being observed.

Please join us at 6:30pm on Thursday, June 6th at the Old Meeting House, Francestown, to hear the fascinating story of how climate change has affected nature in and around Walden Pond and Dr. Primack's perspective on what ordinary citizens can do.

His quote from Thoreau is germane: *"In short, I am convinced, both by faith and experience, that to maintain one's self on this earth is not a hardship but a pastime, if we will live simply and wisely."* (Walden)

Money in the Bank *Continued from page 1*

been able to recognize a few bird calls, or know the names of the trees you climbed. You were most likely a neighborhood native, knowing the backyards, dirt paths, and streams that made up your 8-year-old world. Even for me, a kid growing up in Brooklyn, I knew where to find the first robin's nest of the season, how to help a worm back off the hot dry concrete, and when to look for the fireflies that glowed along East 22nd Street. The time spent as a child rambling and exploring the nooks and crannies of the wild places goes right into our heart. It is fundamental in shaping a world view that embraces the natural world.

The more removed our children are from the everyday experiences in backyards, parks, fields, streams, and mountaintops, the harder it will be for them to find their way back. When we think of protecting land for future generations, look at a child. They are the future and what they experience now will color the way they make the world.

So, today let's all put down our screens for a while and instead hold out our hands to the children of this world. Let's take back those four hours and do something that gets right to the heart of it all. Together, go outside to catch a frog, climb a tree, rescue a worm, talk to a crow, look under a log, and lean back on the earth to watch the stars. The world we want for our children is here right now. It's as important as writing a check to help protect land. It's money in the bank for our children's children's future.

The Harris Center for Conservation Education, in Hancock NH, is dedicated to promoting understanding and respect for our natural environment through education of all ages, and leads programs in the Francestown Elementary School and many other area schools. HCCE also directs protection and exemplary stewardship of the region's natural resources, conservation research, and programs that encourage active participation in the great outdoors.

Susie Spikol, the author of this piece, is the Community Programs Director for the Harris Center for Conservation Education.

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FRANCESTOWN
LAND TRUST

Founded in 1986

A Letter from the FLT Board

Our climate is changing.

We hope everyone can join us at the FLT Annual Meeting at 6:30pm on Thursday June 6th, when Dr. Richard Primack will present his meticulous observations demonstrating the effects of climate change around Thoreau's Walden Pond.

Whatever your views are about the extent to which mankind is responsible for these changes, the effects are upon us. What remains unclear is exactly how climate change will affect us here in New England in the years ahead.

During periods of uncertainty such as this, uncertainty can turn into inaction. While mitigating climate change will require substantial international action, the saying "Think Globally, Act Locally" pertains.

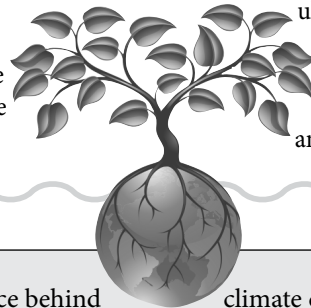
If we are to see our local natural environment adapt to climate change (and even help mitigate climate change) preserving open space has never been more important.

Forested land can sequester carbon, reduce emissions of nitrous oxide, and reduce day-time peak temperatures, providing protection for heat-sensitive plants and animals.

Undeveloped land can help protect us from the impact of expected increases in periods of both flooding and drought.

Living with climate change and living in a sustainable, if altered, natural environment will depend in part on what we do to maximize biodiversity today—for example, by connecting open spaces (particularly in the north/south axis) for species migration.

Preserving open space has never been more important. Thank you for your support as we all "act locally" to do what we can to keep our beloved region vibrant and beautiful into the future.



Think Globally, Act Locally

The forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands in our country could absorb the equivalent of all greenhouse gas emissions from U.S. vehicles, per a recently released Nature Conservancy (TNC) study. That encouraging information should be good news to the 53 percent of Americans who feel helpless to do anything about global warming. That feeling of separation from the political process is undoubtedly one of the biggest challenges facing governments at all levels and on all issues. So the question as it relates to the specific issue of climate change is how can public policy be aligned to empower those who are unsure about their place in this debate?

According to surveys the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and George Mason University's Center for Climate Change Communication have conducted, 70 percent of Americans believe climate change is definitely occurring and 53 percent believe global warming is mostly caused by humans. With numbers that high, one would think finding constructive solutions to this challenge would be easy. Unfortunately, as we continue to see, that is not the case. Instead, the search for solutions too often becomes bogged down in Congress or in state legislatures across our country. Perhaps part of the reason is the small percentage of the population who are completely dismissive of the

science behind and strenuously address it.

But maybe there is another explanation for this continued difficulty. It is, frankly, entirely understandable why 53 percent of Americans feel helpless to do anything about global warming. Usually, the impacts from global change are presented in catastrophic terms: rising sea levels, increased coastal flooding, more destructive hurricanes, and severe droughts. Such stark predictions leave the public overwhelmed. Yes, they need to know the truth about what our future will look like, but how can an individual possibly prevent a Category 5 hurricane from destroying a coastal community? Furthermore, the solutions sometimes sound either far too wonky—try explaining the operating mechanics of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative— or are politically controversial, such as those that would institute an economy wide carbon tax.

However, if we can shift the search for long-term answers to actions that resonate with those overwhelmed Americans, we can do far more to preserve the way of life people in New Hampshire and elsewhere cherish. For example, Americans love the outdoors. A 2018 U.S. Department of Commerce study noted that overall spending on outdoor recreation hit \$412 billion in 2016. Maintaining a strong outdoor recreation industry with its 4.5 million jobs is directly linked to

climate change fight any effort to

the protection of the special natural areas which draw these outdoor enthusiasts. Likewise, Americans expect the water they drink and the air they breathe will be clean and safe. By taking action to preserve natural landscapes, which filter the amount of pollutants that enter drinking water systems, and to preserve forests, which sequester the pollutants that dirty the air, more local successes can lead to more long-term solutions.

As the TNC study highlights, these nature-based solutions directly impact the health and well-being of us all. Just as importantly, if presented as viable and proven answers, they can provide outlets for concerned citizens to act on those seemingly crushing problems like droughts, floods, or wildfires. If you are a member or supporter of a land trust or conservation commission, or if you are a private landowner who has committed to keeping your woodlands in an undeveloped state, you are already acting to address these problems. The challenge before us is twofold: (1) show our neighbors they also have the capacity to take-on this problem and (2) demonstrate to policy makers that solutions already exist.

They are called our forests, our grasslands, and our undeveloped natural areas.

Matt Leahy is Public Policy Manager for the Society for the Protection of NH Forests. Forest Notes, Winter 2018-2019, reprinted here with permission of the author.

2018 Frankestown Land Trust Financial Report (preliminary, unaudited)

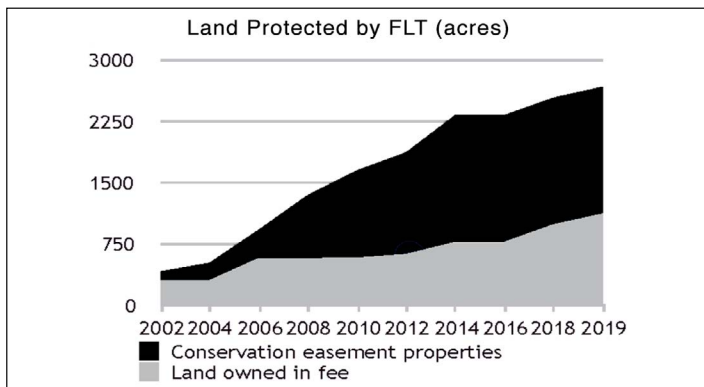
Statement of Income and Expense

Income	
Annual Fund	13,345
Undesignated donations	2,995
Membership Dues	3,505
Project Donations	17,117
Grant Income	95,000
Other Income	600
Investment Income	(5091)
Processing fees	(97)
Total Income	127,374

Expense	
Member relations and education 2,619	
General operating costs	
Postage and printing	851
Accounting	800
Fees	75
Insurance	728
Corporate memberships	500
Information Technology	417
Investment Fees	1,459
Land maintenance	
Property Tax	1,285
Liability Insurance	1,551
General Maintenance	67
Easement stewardship (insurance)	1,682
Project Expenses	
Fee land purchase	120,000
Reduction in fair market value	126,590
Other project expenses	26,317
Total Expense	284,941
Total 2018 Net Gain/Loss	(157,567)

Statement of Financial Position

Non-fixed Assets	
Operating Reserve	24,284
Stewardship funds (long term invest.)	278,691
Future Project funds	171,443
Total Non-fixed Assets	474,418
Fixed Assets	
Fee owned land (1127-acres)	1,169,806
Total Fixed Assets	1,169,806
Total Assets	1,644,224
Liabilities and Equity	
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	5,617
Unrestricted Net Assets	1,679,616
Total Liabilities and Equity	1,644,244



Frankestown Audience Not Too Rattled

Bet you already knew that the Timber Rattlesnake is the only venomous snake in New Hampshire—and that it is the only snake with a rattle on its tail.



But did you know that they...
 ... Can be up to 5 feet long? ...
 Have vertical pupils, not round?
 ... May range in coloration from nearly black, to having darker blotches on the back and sides, to light yellow with strong patterns of dorsal blotches and saddles? ...
 Are ectotherms, meaning they can't regulate their body temperature, so they seek out warm locations on ledges in the sun to keep warm?
 ... Can travel great distances, but must return to the same wintering den year after year?
 ... Are mild-tempered and will retreat if disturbed, striking only if harassed or stepped on?

An audience of 90, adults and children, learned all this, and more, last November. The occasion was a lively talk by Tom Tynning, Professor of Environmental Science at Berkshire

Community College, who returned to Frankestown as part of the Joan Hanchett Nature Series.

Tom embellished his informative Power Point presentation with interesting stories and a table display of a Timber Rattlesnake skeleton and rattle. Attendees were invited to pick up and shake the rattle, which kept everyone entertained. Tom has been involved with the documentation of Rattlesnakes in New England for some time and despite there being only one known location of rattlesnakes in New Hampshire, he feels that, with care, there is a chance we can hang onto that population.

Timber Rattlesnakes are endangered in New Hampshire and it is against the law to harass or kill them. They are often confused with milk snakes, garter snakes, northern water snakes and black racers; but should you feel pretty confident you've seen one, you are encouraged to call N.H. Fish and Game at (603) 271-2461 or (603) 271-3361. Learn more about Timber Rattlesnakes at www.wildlife.state.nh.us

Animal Sounds—What Do You Think They Mean?

Naturalist Audrey Eisenhauer from the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center returned to Frankestown Town Hall on March 22nd with a presentation on Animal Sounds—another in the Joan Hanchett Nature Series.



Audrey won over her audience of 58 adults and children by giving us her

vote of confidence, telling us that we probably knew more about animal sounds than we thought. She played a variety of animal sounds, asking us to guess which call belonged to a specific animal. For both adults and children, it was not always an easy decision and there were some surprises for the guessing audience!

Audrey used pre-recorded audio—and her own impres-

Animal Sounds Continued on page 5

Animal Sounds

Continued from page 4

sive owl call—to get us to think about how the calls sounded and what they might mean. What kind of emotion did the calls portray - Friendly? Not so friendly? Happy? Angry? Flirty? Or simply conversational? Did it sound like the animal was looking for a mate? Defending its territory? Voicing irritation with the neighbors? Talking to its babies?

We were then treated to up-close views of three live animals native to New Hampshire—each with their own sounds and stories. We met a very handsome Barred Owl, *Strix varia*; a “not so big” Big Brown Bat, *Eptesicus fuscus*; and, surprise, a Wood Turtle, *Glyptemys insculpta*.

You might be familiar with the kinds of sounds made by the Barred Owl and the Big Brown Bat. But do Wood Turtles really make sounds? Well, they don’t make voiced sounds. But they do thump their body against the earth, which makes vibrations. The theory is that the vibrations mimic the sound of rain hitting the ground, which brings earthworms up to the surface as they try to avoid getting caught in flooded burrows. And then, the Turtles snap them up! In some corners, it’s called “grunting for worms” and it’s definitely a sound.

At the end of the presentation, there was time for questions and to gain a heightened appreciation of the three animals.

And the next time I hear an animal sound, I’ll be thinking about what it might mean.

Thank you to all our previous year’s Donors

The Frankestown Land Trust is dependent upon, and deeply appreciative of, community support. Whether you are a Frankestown resident, a neighbor in the region, or you just have a special place in your heart for our town and its wild places, we would like to express our gratitude to all who have supported us during this past year:

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Join Us at the FLT Annual Meeting

FLT 2019 Annual Meeting
Thursday, June 6, 6:30 pm
The Old Meeting House, Francestown NH

Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau's Woods

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Learn more on page 2.



Thoreau's Cove, Concord, Massachusetts. Photo: This image is available from the United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID det.4a22665.

Join our email list to learn about our upcoming events.
Contact us at info@francestownlandtrust.org to be added to this list.