



Landmark Heritage Trust

A land trust for the towns of Carmel · Dixmont · Etna · Hampden · Hermon · Monroe · Newburgh · Winterport

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Our new website (www.LandmarkHeritageTrust.org) is up and running, and upgraded too. In an effort to get our message out to a broader audience, we've been busy making it more visible via more contacts. I think we've been successful at this. Now, people can reach us through not only our own web address but also via two other places. Folks can click on us via a link the *Maine Coast Heritage Trust* has for us on its LHT page, and now the newly established SAD22 Education Foundation has placed a link to us on it's home page.

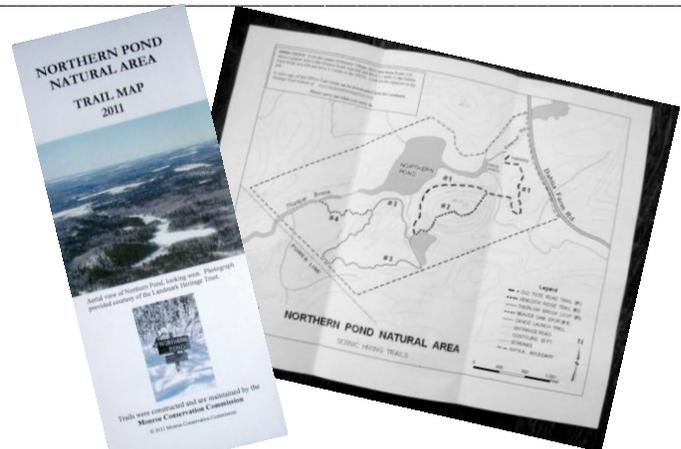
We are particularly excited about the latter connection. Since SAD22 (Hampden-Newburgh-Winterport) covers a big piece of our territory, people who live and work in these towns will now see our name more regularly and frequently on the Education Foundation's mailings and its website – and all for the purchase of a simple one-time-only advertisement we purchased not long ago. And by making our website more interesting to read (see how we think we'll do this by reading this Newsletter), we hope to gain more members.

Our new website also has a Pay Pal link so that those who like to support us with contributions or pay dues can now do so the modern, electronic "computer way".

As always, our sincere thanks to all who give their continuing support.

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Landmark Heritage Trust is a nonprofit corporation available to work in Carmel, Etna, Dixmont, Hampden, Hermon, Monroe, Newburgh, and Winterport to protect open space and the area's agricultural, scenic, historical, and recreational resources. We encourage conservation of natural resources by fostering environmental awareness through education and preservation of open space through conservation easements, donations of land and other resources. Landmark Heritage Trust is open to everyone. We are always looking for new members, especially people interested in helping by volunteering their time and expertise. All are welcome to attend our meetings to learn more about this local land trust.

Conversations with an Owl

Rebecca Childs

The owl arrived Thursday morning. I first noticed it as I was going to work. It sat there on a branch with the morning sun warming it, its eyes blinking periodically. It chose a strategic spot; on the edge of the woods, with a great view of both the compost heap and the chicken run. Its head pivoted minutely as it took in both locations.

The owl was there on Friday morning, and again on Saturday. Saturday I had the time to watch it more frequently. Twice, when I watched, it swooped down after the blue jays that were scavenging in the compost, but it arrived too late. It seemed nonplussed by its miscalculation and their quickness. I did errands in town and when I returned the owl had moved to a different tree. I watched it swoop to the front of the chicken coop; I hoped it caught my resident rat, but no, its talons were empty. It flew back to the original perch. I stayed outside and talked to it.

I asked if it was hungry. It did seem odd that it was out during the day. I looked at it, its wise eyes staring me down; its gentle soul sending me a message. I thought of the Native American myth that when you hear the owl call your name, it is foretelling your death. I wouldn't mind if an owl brought me that news.

"Will you speak to me owl? Would you share words of wisdom, or just tell me you are hungry? Which would it be?"

It looked at me carefully before it spoke. "I am not bringing news of your death. I need food for my family. I took your young hen late last winter, and remembered this place. This is the edge of my hunting ground and I am waiting for you to open your coop.

"You can't have my chickens," I replied, "but there is a rat living inside. I will haul out a bag of rye to tempt it to come out, and then you can catch that for your mate." I pulled out the bag of rye and let some spill on the ground.

Barred owls mate and have their young in late winter or early spring. Winters like this one are particularly difficult for owls because of the deep snows, which make it difficult for them to catch small rodents, their primary food source.



Barred Owl – R. Childs

"Thank you. I will see what I can do, but I will need to begin looking elsewhere soon."

I went back inside, and looked out the window occasionally. I waited until dusk, the fire-wood in the house was gone and I needed to bring some in. I had put that off because the owl was close to the wood shed. As I walked over I said, "I'm just bringing in wood, you can stay."

The owl ruffled its feathers, looked one last time and politely said "It is time for me to move on. Thank you for trying to help." It spread its wings and in a silent whisper disappeared into the dusk.

A week later, the owl returned. By then I had set a trap for the rat. That morning, I went out to feed the chickens: in the trap was the dead rat. I carefully extracted it and threw it into the garden. As I threw it, I told the owl to take it; he listened. Even before the rat touched the snow, the owl had swooped down and grabbed it in its talons. He flew into the nearby scrub where he was able to get a more reliable hold; then flew off to the west where I knew the owls nested.

FEBRUARY 20TH SNOWSHOE OUTING IN MONROE

Eleven people showed up at Rebecca Childs' home to go snowshoeing on a forest trail along the North Branch Marsh Stream. The day was sunny and brisk, the snow deep and crusty. One never can tell what an outing might reveal. On that day, the group was on the lookout for bobcat sign since one was observed by neighbors only the day before. Unfortunately, we did not see any signs, but we found a currently used den deep in the bank of the river. After taking photos and gathering a sample of scat, the group went back to the house to conduct further research by asking a wildlife educator, Nancy Childs, what she thought. River otter! The presence of fish scales was a surefire indicator.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



If you would like to be on our e-mail notification list, please call Tony DeFeo at 234-2053 or e-mail him at landmarkheritage@gmail.com. For Outing and/or Event ideas, call Don Phillips at 525-0930 or email him at d_phillips@prexar.com

April 9, Saturday, 10:00 am: Vernal Pool Day. Visit one or more vernal pools on property owned by LHT member Rebecca Childs in Monroe. Meet at her house (291 Stream Road, Monroe). Bring boots (hip waders would be ideal) for wading in shallow water, and wear warm clothes. Rain date: April 16, same time and place

June 11, Saturday, 10:00 am: Join the LHT and the BBWC in paddling a 6-mile flat water section of the Marsh stream from Monroe to Winterport. Meet at the intersection of the Stream and Moody Rd in Monroe (See DeLorme Atlas & Gazetteer Map 22 D5) Bring a canoe or kayak, paddle, PFD, lunch, water and appropriate clothing for the weather.

LHT Board of Directors Meeting – A schedule of upcoming monthly Board meetings is listed below:

March 2; April 13; and May 25, 2011

These meeting dates are all on Wednesday evenings, at 7:00 pm at the home of President Tony DeFeo, 2885 Kennebec Road, Newburgh. All LHT members welcome.

The LHT Program Committee wants to know the interest level for organizing an outing to either the (1) Orono Bog Boardwalk; or (2) setting up a birding trip at the NPNA come May or June. Please let us know.

NEW NPNA TRAIL GUIDE

The Monroe Conservation Commission updated the NPNA Trail Guide last month. Originally created in 2004, the update shows several new trails that traverse the western part of this 160-acre holding. Download it by going to the LHT website at www.landmarkheritagetrust.org, then head out there to use it. Find the link on the Properties page.

WEBSITE NEWS #1

We are happy to announce that we are becoming more adept at adding content to our website; and the site is being updated more frequently. We urge you to check it out for news and events that will be timelier than what you may find in the news letter.

WEBSITE NEWS #2

Admit it! Those of us who love the great outdoors always look forward to the changing of the seasons and chance wildlife encounters. For instance, with so much snow on the ground, we know we will cherish those first signs of spring – like the ringing *con-ga-reee* that heralds the season's first arrival of red-wing blackbirds, those welcomed crocuses bursting out in your yard; spring peepers chorusing from goodness only knows where. Well, let everyone know. Email me what you saw or heard, when, where, and any other significant observations of yours, and I will place it in our next Newsletter and/or in our website under a new *Sightings and Observations* feature. For an example of what this feature may look like (and a thrilling wildlife sighting experienced by one of our members), see the next page.

SIGHTINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

- A bobcat was observed by Judy Keogh in Monroe on 2/19/2011.
- Perhaps the same bobcat was observed by Rebecca Childs (Judy’s neighbor) stalking birds outside Rebecca’s window only about 8 feet away in Monroe on 2/24/2011. See her photo on right.



We encourage LHT members to submit observations to either Don Phillips (d_phillips@prexar.com) or Rebecca Childs (rchilds58@myfairpoint.net). Let’s see if we can fill this box up by the end of this year.

MEMBERSHIP

Please fill out the renewal information below for another year of LHT membership. If you fill it out now, you will save the LHT time, paper, and postage. We thank you for your continual support.

Membership Contribution

- \$ 5 Students & Seniors
- \$ 10 Individuals
- \$ 15 Family
- \$ 30 Business
- \$100 Donor
- \$250 Patron
- \$500 and up ... Benefactor

To volunteer time & expertise, please check

- () Public Relations
- () Land Monitoring
- () Fund Raising
- () Planning/Research
- () Mapping/Marking existing roads, trails etc.
- () Education
- () Sign Making

Remember that contributions are tax deductible

NAME: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 TOWN: _____ STATE & ZIP: _____
 PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Please make checks payable to the Landmark Heritage Trust, and send check to:
 Landmark Heritage Trust
 c/o Carol Cuddy, Treasurer
 P.O. Box 105
 Dixmont, ME 04932



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