



View of the Salmon Falls River in South Berwick.

WOODS TO WATERS REACHES FUNDRAISING GOAL!

The largest fundraising campaign in Great Works Regional Land Trust (GWRLT) history, not involving Mt. A to the Sea, reached a successful conclusion at the October celebration event at Beach Plum Farm when Chris & Rosalind Magnuson generously donated the final \$48,500 needed to reach our goal. Their generosity stems from a long respect and relationship with our natural resources. The more than two-year capital campaign was built on Board members Tom Gilmore's (Bauneg Beg) and Tin Smith's (Salmon Falls Tidal Waters) multiyear discussions with landowners about conserving their lands. These landowners came to very generously support the projects through compensation at less than appraised value or through outright donation. These two major projects were concurrent with more than 10 others also supported by this campaign.

Campaigns such as Woods to Waters have their foundations in a variety of relationships. The very first relationship is that of the individual parcels with their surrounding landscapes and natural resources. Both the Bauneg Beg and the Salmon Falls Tidal Waters parcels are exemplary and integral to their respective landscapes. The unique habitats found at the three peaks of Bauneg Beg are now all conserved – intact. The conservation of the parcels that make up Salmon Falls Tidal Waters prevents the largest coastal unfragmented habitat block south of Portland from being bisected by development. Importantly, all of these parcels have personal significance. Glenn Thompson grew up on the family land on Bauneg Beg and he chose to remain there, with his wife Jean. His connection to the land is intimate, as is Sarah Cullen's connection to her childhood farm and forest on the Salmon Falls estuary. Chris and Roz Magnuson recognized how their land fits into a much larger ecosystem that has value to wildlife and to people. Each of these landowners was willing to build a relationship with Great Works Regional Land Trust to permanently conserve their lands. They had to trust our efforts would succeed as we progressed through the many hurdles, none of them certain, required to close these deals.

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Great Works Regional Land Trust

Your local land trust in the communities of the Berwicks, Eliot, Ogunquit and Wells

www.gwrlt.org



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REGIONAL LAND TRUST

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GREAT WORKS REGIONAL LAND TRUST is dedicated to the protection of the natural, historic, agricultural, scenic, and recreational resources within the Maine communities of Eliot, No. Berwick, So. Berwick, Berwick, Wells and Ogunquit. Great Works Regional Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation. Contributions are tax-deductible.

From the Executive Director



As we begin the new year, we refocus ourselves and our goals for the future. Winter is a time to slow down, plan, and reconnect, and I share those feelings about GWRLT’s organizational goals as well. It’s incredible what we can accomplish together. While we are a country divided in so many ways, we are one people for whom the environment is not abstract; it is the land we walk, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. We can all value, respect, and care for that. If nothing else, it is the commonality in the place that we call home that can bring us closer together.

Great Works Regional Land Trust has had a big year in 2024, and as we look to all we want to accomplish in 2025, there is much to be grateful for and much to plan for. We recognize the need to create better access and inclusion, redefining what we can do for our members, our community, and the environment. Our collective commitment to conservation has been palpable. You have shown your support for this work, and we thank you for it. Over 130 acres were conserved in 2024. We plan to open two new conservation areas in 2025 – the two projects from the Woods to Waters Campaign: Bauneg Beg Mountain Conservation Area-South and Salmon Falls Tidal Waters.

Regarding trail accessibility, we are working on securing funding to create GWRLT’s first Universal Access trails. We are also committed to updating our trail maps, kiosks, and website. We are thrilled that the greater Maine community has supported the Maine Trails Bond, which makes up to \$30 million available to improve our state’s vast network of trails and enhance access to Maine’s natural treasures. It’s heartening to know that these efforts are not only about conserving land but also about making that land accessible to everyone. Our GWRLT community will benefit greatly from this opportunity. Even as development pressure continues, we know that conservation of our wild and natural areas matters deeply to our quality of life.

We commit to you once again by being the best stewards we can be and continuing to provide public access and conservation of our lands and waters for future generations. Great Works Regional Land Trust will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2026, and it’s clear that the work we’re doing is laying the foundation for a thriving future — for both the land and the people of our state. Please join us throughout the year to connect, laugh, share stories and hopes, and get outside in this beautiful place we get to call home. Keep up the incredible work, and here’s to a year filled with even more growth, connection, and conservation.

Jordan Kelley

We bid a fond farewell to Dan Maxton, who has left as GWRLT’s Community Engagement Coordinator for a position with the communications team of Efficiency Maine. Dan approached his work with a high degree of professionalism and vision and was always a cheerful presence. His capabilities and commitment to our mission have made an impact on our work and

community. He greatly expanded the range of hikes offered with the addition of Science Saturdays and History Walks. In addition to his Community Engagement role, Dan provided essential support to GWRLT’s development team. Dan remains committed to GWRLT, and will continue to participate as a member from his home in South Berwick.

From the Board: Sandy Agrafiotis, President

It is gratifying to me to be a part of this Board, not only because I recognize the value and importance of the Trust, but also because I enjoy the spirit of collaboration that drives what we do. Constructive work by volunteers, in these next years particularly, will be needed to insure continued success as defined by our strategic plan. Board members agree that with the active participation of more of our members, we can accomplish much more. As available land diminishes, increasing property prices and competing development projects, the coming five to ten years are critical to the success of conservation and land protection.



Dolores Leonard of ROCA Communications, who contributed her expertise as facilitator of our annual retreat, commented, "I was so impressed by the Board's high level of camaraderie, thoughtfulness, and dedication to the cause." Many volunteers as well as Board members have worked enthusiastically since the early days of GWRLT both to protect habitat and to establish areas for public access and enjoyment. I know that many of you, our members, have a similar dedication to conservation and we thank you for your years of support. Now I invite you to consider how you might contribute further to the work ahead as we approach our 40th year.

Some options for your involvement are: leading walks, soliciting donations for the annual auction, writing grants, representing GWRLT in your town, working on special events, joining one of several committees.

Please contact any Board or staff member to learn more about how you can become a more engaged part of GWRLT. A small amount of coaching can give a volunteer the confidence to do previously unfamiliar work. And thank you for helping to make GWRLT a vital community asset.

In November the Great Works Regional Land Trust Board and Executive Director participated in a productive day-long retreat to prioritize goals for the next five years and to clarify our strategic plan. The Board identified these components of the 2030 vision:

- Continue the strong commitment to responsible conservation and stewardship of properties and preserves, with a goal of maximizing the benefits to the six communities and beyond.
- Present educational programs serving multiple age groups.
- Grow endowment to ensure long-term financial viability and success.
- Double membership; increase value to our members.
- Strive for broad recognition of GWRLT's successful commitment to preservation, conservation and education.
- Offer staff compensation at industry standards and train volunteers to be prepared to assist staff and board when needed.

Land Protection Update

40 Acres donated in North Berwick

Stephen and Paula Roberts of Concord, NH donated a 40-acre parcel of land in memory of Harlan and Stella Roberts - Stephen's parents and longtime North Berwick residents. Situated adjacent to the Bauneg Beg Mountain Conservation Area - South, this parcel offers significant potential for expanded



trail connectivity and preservation of undeveloped forested areas within the Bauneg Beg Mountain focus area. The newly protected land features a diverse ecosystem, including a healthy mixed forest, rock outcroppings,

wetlands, and vernal pools. Great Works Regional Land Trust extends heartfelt thanks to Stephen and Paula Roberts for their invaluable contribution and looks forward to further efforts in conserving the natural areas of North Berwick.

Our donation of this North Berwick property is made to the memory of Roberts family members - past, present and future - who were early settlers and long-time inhabitants of the Bauneg Beg Hills. We and our family have long enjoyed the property's forested landscape, and now wish to permanently protect it from development - to preserve its woodland and wildlife; to provide for water protection, open space and recreation opportunities; and to sustain healthy communities by connecting people to nature.

It is with great pride and gratitude that we donate this North Berwick property to GWRLT for perpetual care and stewardship. We offer the reminder that GWRLT is small but mighty, and punches well above its weight class. We heartily support the organization's important and everlasting efforts, and hope others will join in its mission.

Forever; for everyone.

- Stephen & Paula Roberts

Woods to Waters Reaches Fundraising Goal! ...continued from page 1

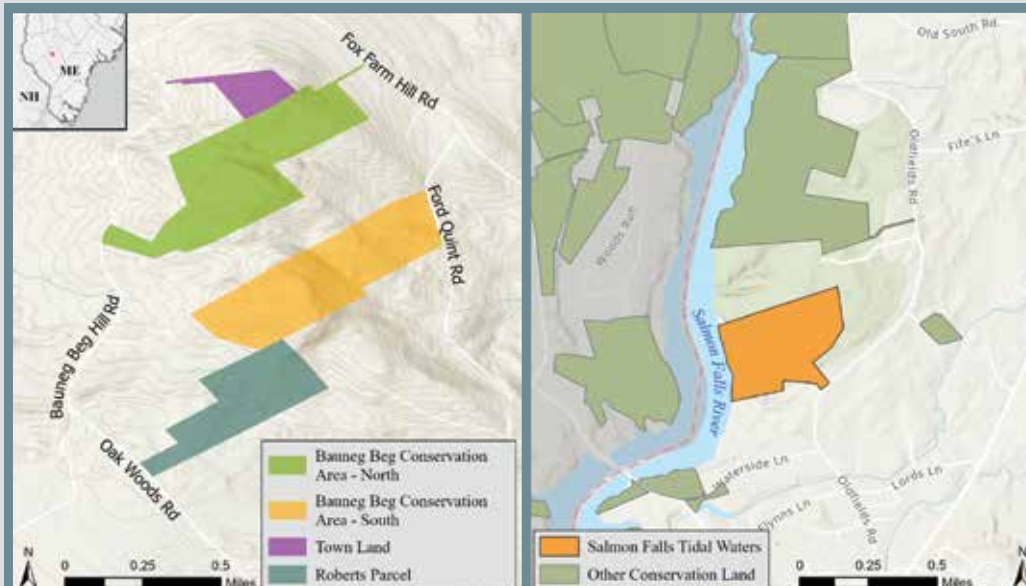
The next step in the effort to conserve these properties involved applying for major grants to fund acquisition costs. Federal partners have specific guidelines associated with each program to conserve specific resources. They also want assurance that we can finish the deal and steward the land in a way that conserves those resources. This is where the GWRLT staff really steps up. Professionalism when dealing with federal partners is essential. Knowledge of resources and their needs, proficiency in mapping and other technical skills sets the tone for a partner that understands the long-term stewardship needs which conservation land ownership requires. Three different federal partners found us worthy of their program support. The Land for Maine's Future Program (LMF) supported each project for the requested amounts in separate grant rounds. Great Works Regional Land Trust has an established record of completing LMF supported projects, both through Mt. A to the Sea and our farmland protection efforts. We have been reliable partners for exceptional state-level projects. Our State LMF partners know we have done the proper background data collection and diligence that demonstrates their statewide importance as well as fulfilling the long-term stewardship and public access requirements (for non-farm projects) in balance with each other. These projects embody what the LMF stands for - exceptional properties that should be conserved for future generations to enjoy in both their cultural and wildlife resources.

The wonderful support both Bauneg Beg and Salmon Falls Tidal Waters received from their Town's citizens at associated Town Meetings provided essential matching funds for state and federal dollars. Our relationships with our towns and their citizens have a proven track record and are constantly evolving as GWRLT seeks to assist Towns to conserve those natural, historical working landscape resources they have valued within their Comprehensive Plans. Great Works Regional Land Trust efforts to conserve shorelines also help protect surface water quality as part of municipal Stormwater Management Plans. It is due to a relationship of mutual respect and caring that our residents have "livable" communities.

Lastly, the importance of Great Works Regional Land Trust's general membership, volunteers and public at large is never to be understated! We asked and you answered! Individuals that had special connections to these lands, memories of wedding ceremonies, of childhood hikes and explorations on these properties stood up at Town Meetings and articulated recreational and historical values. They spoke of the natural beauty to be found on them. They pointed out that these properties were larger and more important than the boundaries that defined them. They organized fundraisers. They reached into their pockets and provided matching funds for the public campaign that brought us to the finish line! Thank you to all!

Future generations will enjoy the results of this generosity. They will make new memories to share with their children. We hope they will experience the same array of wildlife that we have been able to experience in our time. We know that our future management will build in the capacity and resilience for these parcels to contribute to those same habitat values. This is the mission of GWRLT! For everyone, forever!

- Jean Demetracopoulos



Great Works Regional Land Trust looks forward to opening the **Salmon Falls Tidal Waters** property and **Bauneg Beg Mountain Conservation Area-South** to the public in 2025.

WOODS TO WATERS PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS:

Federal Partners:

Land and Water Conservation Fund (BBMCA)
North American Wetlands Conservation Act (SFTW)
National Wetlands Conservation Grant (SFTW)

State, Regional Partners:

Land for Maine's Future (SFTW)
Great Bay Resource Protection Partners (SFTW)

Municipal Partners

Town of North Berwick (BBMCA)
Town of South Berwick (SFTW)

Institutional Support:

Kennebunk Savings
Anonymous Private Foundation

Our whole region can celebrate a crucial milestone for conservation in Southern Maine. The success of the Woods to Waters Campaign proves that conservation is a priority for communities in our service area.

- Dylan Hertzberg, GWRLT Land Protection Coordinator



Property closing photos. From top left: Sarah Cullen, Chris and Roz Magnuson, Glenn and Jean Thompson. Cullen closing team, shown below, left to right: Attorney Rob Levin, Carolyn Everest, Tin Smith, Sarah Cullen, Jordan Kelley, Jean Demetracopoulos, Dylan Hertzberg, Jane Brekke, Attorney Flora Drury.

The generous support of local municipalities, major grantors, campaign donors and members has brought the Woods to Waters campaign to a close. We are excited to create public access to these new conservation areas.

- Jordan Kelley, GWRLT Executive Director



Stewardship Update: Trail Renovation!

Bauneg Beg Mountain Conservation Area-North

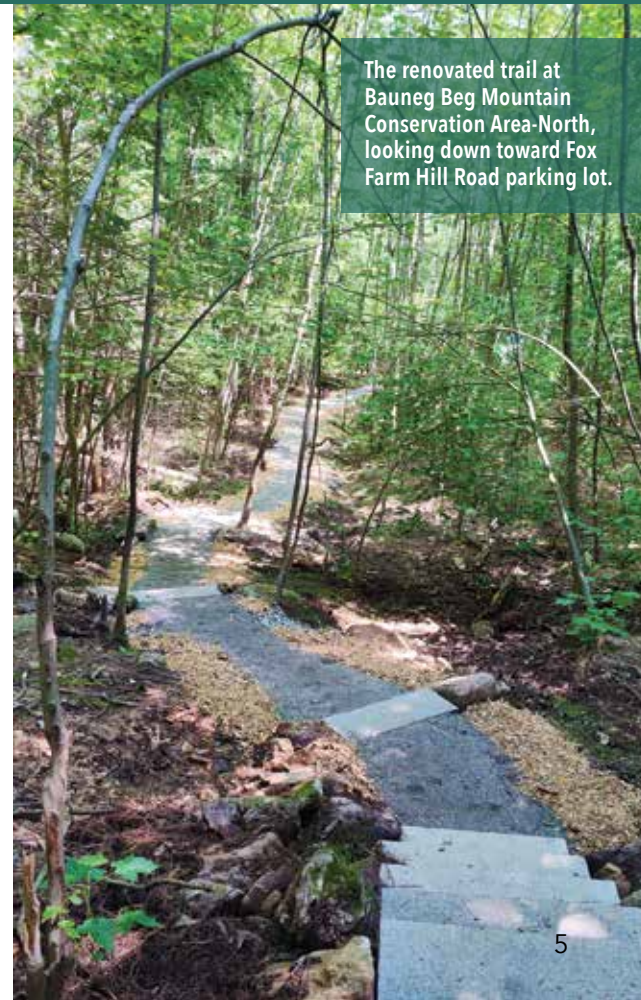
The GWRLT stewardship team talked for years about ways to improve the wet and muddy section of the Bauneg Beg Mountain Conservation Area (BBMCA) trail from the Fox Farm Hill parking lot. With a narrow 50-foot-wide boundary, a steep, rocky slope, and significant mountain runoff and seepage, it would be a challenge!

The 2022 Spring Auction "Fund-A-Need" raised \$4,212 for the trail renovation. We then hired a professional trail designer, Erin Amadon of Town 4 Trail Services, to assess the trail and devise a plan to renovate. For permanent, sustainable improvements, the renovation estimate came in at \$33,000. In 2023 we applied for a grant through the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) which provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail uses. GWRLT was awarded the necessary funds in May of 2024.

The project was awarded by bid to Mike Cooper, Caribou Recreation Development. Both Erin Amadon and Mike were terrific to work with as they have years of experience as professional trail designers and builders.

Once Mike completed the technical trail work in early summer 2024, employees from Lavallee|Brensinger Architects came for a volunteer workday and completed the bench cutting to improve the upper section of the trail; GWRLT volunteers completed the final touchups.

Thank you to all for continued support of GWRLT stewardship and to all those supporters contributing to this much appreciated trail renovation.



Beaver Dam Heath

One of my favorite GWRLT preserves is Grant's Meadow at Beaver Dam Heath, somewhat selfishly because of its close proximity to my house and I am a volunteer steward there, but largely because I love anything with the name 'Heath' in the title.

Grant's Meadow is a 178-acre preserve with a 0.5 mile loop trail that runs along the edge of Beaver Dam Heath. This was a pioneer preserve – Berwick's first public hiking trail! I enjoy walking the trail which is short and flat and winds through typical Berwickian vegetation: perennial deep green moss, lycopodium, trailing arbutus and teaberry blanket the ground; high bush blueberries line the vernal pools where wood frogs and peepers sing in the spring; stands of red pine, balsam fir and white pines tower overhead. However, Beaver Dam Heath, along which the trail winds, is the real story. The conservation value of this property is phenomenal.

Beaver Dam Heath is 1,500 plus acres of wetlands and upland forest. The wetlands are dominated by Atlantic white cedar, red maple and gray birch with scrubby spirea, leatherleaf and winterberry. Open areas are blanketed with a variety of ferns and sedges. First thing of note – Atlantic white cedar swamps are one of the rarest forest types in the eastern United States! Then there is the fact that this is a large, unfragmented area, something increasingly rare in Maine and in the Northeast. Large contiguous natural areas are vital to the survival of a number of rare and endangered species. In addition to the Atlantic white cedar, this unfragmented wetland supports the rare and threatened spotted and Blanding's turtles and black racer snakes as well as several rare and/or threatened plants such as Wiegand's sedge, Eastern joe-pye weed and button sedge.

I think I love heathlands because I read so much Gothic literature in my youth – something about the windswept moors, the isolation, the romance. I wasn't thinking about endangered turtles and sedges back then. But now, those endangered turtles and sedges just add depth to my feelings. The best way to see the heath is when it is frozen, there is literally no other way to get around out there unless you care to slog through waist-deep muck. So, if you want to experience Beaver Dam Heath at its finest, join us for our February 22nd winter foray out onto the Heath. Register online through the Events Calendar.

Board member Susan Pike, a researcher and an environmental sciences and biology teacher at Dover High School, writes the Nature News column for the Portsmouth Herald.



Looking into the Heath from the Grant's Meadow trail. Susan Pike photo.

**SAVE
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DATE!**

30th! ANNUAL SPRING AUCTION Online Auction March 2-8, 2025

**AUCTION PREVIEW & KICK-OFF PARTY AT BEACH PLUM FARM
MARCH 2nd -- 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM**

Mark your calendars for another exciting auction, March 2nd to 8th! On Sunday, March 2nd, come to our Beach Plum Farm headquarters for a look at an enticing selection of our auction lots and light refreshments. On the 8th, keep an eye on your bids!

Explore the site and plan your bids on unique items and experiences, generously donated to support our mission—as always, there's something for just about everyone. Your bids directly contribute to protecting Southern Maine's most beloved natural and cultural resources. Spread the word, mark your calendars, and join us in making this auction another tremendous success! Visit gwrlt.org/event/auction2025/ to learn more about this year's auction.

You can help by joining Great Works Regional Land Trust today.



Yes, I/we wish to join/renew.

Membership Levels:

- Student/Senior \$25 Supporter \$100
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I'd like to receive emails about Great Works Regional Land Trust news and events

Want to volunteer?

Office help:

- Mailings
- Research

Committee Work:

- Development
- Membership
- Stewardship

Stewardship:

- Property maintenance
- Invasives removal
- Trail work
- Building maintenance

Special Events:

- Spring Auction (held in March)
- Cooking/baking for an event
- Volunteer Appreciation
- Annual Meeting
- Special Events

Outreach:

- Distribute newsletters, posters
- Give a talk to an organization
- Booth help at local festivals
- Write an article
- Photography
- Lead a hike

- I'd like to receive emails about volunteer opportunities.
- Please call me to discuss volunteering with GWRLT.

Donate online at:
gwrlt.org/donate



Great Works Regional Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

Would your business like to sponsor the GWRLT newsletter?

- Your logo in hard copy newsletters
- Social media post highlighting your business
- Your logo in the monthly eNews
- Mailed to over 2,000 households, businesses and organizations
- Over 300 copies distributed at trailheads, businesses, Town Halls, libraries

Email info@gwrlt.org to learn more.

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2025 PRICES

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Upcoming Events & Outings You Won't Want to Miss!

gwrlt.org



Ice bubbles in the water at the Negutaquet Conservation Area.

- Jan 8 - **Wednesday Wandering** | 10am to 12pm | Negutaquet C.A., North Berwick
- Jan 18 - **Starting Native Plants from Seed w/Ginger Laurits** | 10am to 1pm | Beach Plum Farm, Ogunquit
- Jan 25 - **Winter Hike w/ Michael Wright** | 10am to 12pm | Tuckahoe Preserve, Berwick
- Feb 12 - **Wednesday Wandering** | 10am to 12pm | Savage Wildlife Preserve, South Berwick
- Feb 15 - **Winter Nature Hike w/ Susan Pike** | 10am to 12pm | Orris Falls C.A., South Berwick
- Feb 22 - **Beaver Dam Heath Hike w/ Michael Wright** | 10am to 1pm | Grant's Meadow Preserve, Berwick
- Mar 2 - **AUCTION KICK-OFF PARTY** | 1pm to 4pm | Beach Plum Farm, Ogunquit
- Mar 2-8 - **Spring Auction - online**
- Mar 8 - **Beavers of Orris Falls w/ Paul Dest** | 10am to 1pm | Orris Falls C.A., South Berwick
- Mar 13 - **Moonrise Hike/Picnic w/ Susan Pike** | 6pm to 8pm | Bauneg Beg C.A.-North, North Berwick
- Mar 15 - **Science Saturday: Lichens & Ledges** | 10am to 1pm | Kenyon Hill Preserve, South Berwick

Scan the QR
code to sign
up for hikes.



All outdoor hikes and adventures are open and free to all. However, we suggest a \$5 donation per person or \$10 donation per family for non-members. Registration required. Register at gwrlt.org/event today!