



WATER SHEDS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RANGELEY LAKES HERITAGE TRUST
FALL 2011

CELEBRATING **20** YEARS OF COMMITMENT
TO CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY



South Bog

A Tapestry of Conservation



Hunter Cove



Bemis Stream



Lunch Island
Mooselookmeguntic



Cupsuptic Lake



Height of Land



Kennebago & Rangeley
Rivers & Bald Mtn.



Rapid River



South Bog Eaglets

Photo by NextEra Energy



This year marks an important milestone in the life of Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust. Twenty years ago a small group of people joined in a shared vision and took action to assure that the Rangeley region we cherished would continue to be enjoyed by our children and grandchildren. Today over 1,300 have joined the effort and the accomplishments depicted in photos and statistics are something we can all be proud of.

While ambitiously pursuing traditional land trust goals of conserving, stewarding, and providing public access to the region's special places, RLHT has taken on additional challenges of importance to the community. Our Headwaters Lake Protection program trains and organizes volunteers and hires Courtesy Boat Inspectors to monitor water quality and protect our waters from the threat of invasive plants. The Scenic Byways program works with local, State, and Federal partners to enhance scenic vistas and develop amenities that contribute to the local economy.

One of the most rewarding programs we have

developed is the outdoor recreation and environmental education program - EcoVenture. Over the 13 years of the program we have doubled in size and programming and graduated our first group of campers to become counselors and leaders. As we look back twenty years from now on the next two decades of accomplishments of RLHT it will be this generation of young people who will both benefit from our efforts and be responsible for our future. This is our legacy - both as individuals and as an organization.

Ed



The next generation of stewards of the Rangeley region get ready for a full day of paddling, hiking, swimming, and learning about the natural world we all value and enjoy as participants in EcoVenture's 13th season

I know I speak for the entire RLHT staff team in appreciating the opportunity to be a part of the wonderful accomplishments of this incredible organization. There is no greater privilege than to have meaningful and challenging work which results in lasting benefits to the place we all call home.

We are inspired by and truly grateful for the generosity that makes that work possible. Our staff, board leadership, and members share a desire to contribute to something that is larger than any one of us. In a time when too much focus seems to be placed on self interest and short term satisfaction, RLHT provides an opportunity to participate in something that will have meaning and value beyond our lifetimes and

impacts beyond our personal interests. Sometimes the greatest personal satisfaction can come from making a difference in the lives of others. I take great pleasure in knowing that in the years to come our accomplishments will continue to be enjoyed and appreciated by future Rangeley residents and visitors.

Our challenge now is to assure that the work which we have started and the responsibilities we have assumed becomes the foundation for even greater things to come. The power of our combined time, talents, and financial resources has resulted in remarkable achievements. The projects we are currently working on are likely to lead to an even more impressive list when we reflect on future milestones!



20 Years of Commitment to

Conservation and Community

- 1** 2,443' mountain conserved - Bald Mountain
- 1** new and improved Cupsuptic Lake Park and Campground
- 2** spectacular overlooks built at Height of Land and Whip Willow Farm
- 2** public restrooms constructed along the Rangeley Lakes National Scenic Byway
- 4** invasive aquatic plants infestations averted by trained boat inspectors
- 11** miles of snowmobile trails hosted on RLHT conserved lands
- 14** years of water quality monitoring on Rangeley region lakes and ponds
- 15** islands conserved - many with primitive campsites
- 17** miles of critical brook trout stream and river habitat protected
- 18** parcels of donated land and conservation easements
- 28** parcels of conserved lands (not counting islands)
- 30** miles of recreational trails maintained on conservation lands
- 36** miles of Rt. 4 and 17 designated as the Rangeley Lakes National Scenic Byway
- 47** miles of lake and river shore front protected
- 70** miles of shoreline patrolled for invasive aquatic plants
- 85** volunteers currently trained to identify invasive aquatic plants and inspect boats
- 125** children participating in EcoVenture each year for 13 years
- 450** acres of wetlands conserved
- 1,300** members working together to support RLHT's efforts
- 1,400** hours of volunteer time patrolling shorelines and inspecting boats in 2011 alone
- 12,000** boats inspected for invasive plants over 10 years
- 12,800** acres conserved protecting scenic beauty, wildlife habitat, & providing public access
- 6,000,000** \$ in Federal Highways grants for Rangeley Lakes Scenic Byways projects
- 8,000,000** \$ raised to fund land acquisition (\$600,000 still to be raised & pay outstanding debt)
- countless** hours of service by volunteers helping with trails, EcoVenture, fundraising & more
- priceless** contribution to Rangeley region quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors alike

HEIGHT OF LAND OVERLOOK COMPLETE - DEDICATION PLANNED FOR NEXT SUMMER!!!!!!

"This project showcases how local citizens, state and federal agencies can work together to create something spectacular. The Height of Land and the Rangeley Lakes Scenic Byway is an attraction that draws people to the area and helps fuel the local economy," said Maine DOT Commissioner David Bernhardt.

Rebecca Kurtz, RLHT Program Director and Rangeley Lakes National Scenic Byway Coordinator, and Larry Johannesman, MDOT landscape architect, inspect the completed overlook



The overlook, which used to be no more than a shoulder along the highway now has a beautiful and safe turnout with native stone seating and four interpretative panels which feature land conservation, the Appalachian Trail, the watershed and the scenic vista. Funding for this project came from federally-directed money specifically for the Height of Land project. Surrounding the overlook is over 500 acres of forest land that was purchased by the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, forever protecting the view from development. The parcel is adjacent to the AT and stretches to Bemis Stream where it enters Mooselookme-guntic Lake. The Land for Maine's Future program invested \$379,000 to support RLHT's \$1 million dollar acquisition of the property. RLHT's fundraising for this acquisition is ongoing. Phase II of the project, the Conservation Walk, which will feature bronze plaques on boulders and ledges with inspirational quotes from great American conservationists is in the planning and design stage.

HeadWaters Lake Protection - Shoreline Patrols

BY REBECCA KURTZ

This August nearly 70 volunteers participated in RLHT's new and exciting team-based effort to identify and map the populations of aquatic plants growing in 7 lakes and ponds in the Rangeley region. Trained by RLHT to identify native and invasive plants and coordinated by team leaders, each volunteer spent 2-12 hours on the water, peering into the depths and collecting data. Following the training, they received technical support and ID assistance from volunteer Ellie White and Rebecca Kurtz, Program Director. Over the course of the month, the volunteers surveyed an estimated 70 miles of shoreline.



Program Director, Rebecca Kurtz, and Team Leader, Ellie White, work with volunteers to identify plants collected by survey teams

Over 65 different aquatic plants were collected and identified and fortunately they were all native ones that provide wildlife habitat while supporting Rangeley's world class fishery. If invasive plants are found as these trained volunteers continue their vigilance, RLHT will collaborate with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to initiate a rapid response effort. The effort will be designed to prevent the further spread of the invaders before they start impacting water quality, recreational opportunities and property values. The shoreline surveys will be documented and a full report and maps for each lake or pond will be available before year's end. If you would like to help in this important effort or support RLHT's Headwaters Lake Protection Program, please contact Rebecca Kurtz at 864-7311 ext 5. or email rkurtz@rlht.org.

Rangeley River Deer Wintering Habitat Improved

This summer we completed the second phase of a stewardship project on the Rangeley River which is designed to improve deer wintering habitat. The parcel includes over 80 % of the river corridor and over 3,000' of shore frontage on Mooselookmeguntic Lake. It provides deer wintering area designated by the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as highly significant to the survival of the area deer herd and provides a vital corridor within the larger deer wintering area, providing food, movement and shelter. The property also has a long history of recreational use, primarily fishing and hunting, but in more recent years, it has served as an important connector to other significant snowmobile trails in the region.

With 70% cost share funds from the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), through the Dept. of Agriculture, we conducted a non-commercial thinning of 19 acres, dropping trees on site for the sole purpose of enhancing wildlife

habitat. The sparse overstory and dense fir regeneration on this property provided little cover and forage for the winter deer herd. The overall goal was to release softwood saplings



and poles quickly to provide closed crown cover for white-tailed deer. The killing of hardwoods encouraged stump sprouts and root suckers for browse in the interim, while the retention of cedar provided longer term forage.

Coupled with the State's plan to increase the size of Maine's deer herd and RLHT's comprehensive Forest Ecosystem Plan and organizational goals, and with matching support from the Rangeley Region Guides and Sportsmen's Assoc., the Rangeley River deer wintering area project has been closely monitored by MDIFW as a fine regional pilot project that supports Maine's statewide deer management plan.

Expert Saddleback Trail Crew Repair Cascade Stream Gorge Washouts



Taking a break to enjoy the scenery!

Heavy rain events this summer which uprooted enormous spruce trees on steep slopes and made the rock staircases unstable forced the closure of portions of this popular hiking trail in late summer. Skilled steep-terrain sawyers Jared Emerson, Kevin Donoghue, Jeff Richards and Sam Loud, from Saddleback Mountain's trail crew along with RLHT's Shelby Rousseau, spent a full day on the property cutting down trees and re-stabilizing rock staircases.

With its steep ledge walls and water falls the 100' deep Cascade Stream Gorge was added to the Maine State Planning Office's Register of Critical Areas in 1978 because of its unique natural, scenic and geologic features. The 28 acre parcel was acquired by RLHT in 1998 and is well worth a visit!



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CUPSUPTIC LAKE PARK AND CAMPGROUND



New state of the art bath house including solar heated hot water.

The Cupsuptic Lake Park and Campground had a very successful summer season with rave reviews on the newly improved facilities, wonderful new bath house, and friendly and capable management. Kudos to our campground managers Heather and Randy Targett for their dedication and hard work and the PARC Foundation for their design services

and financial support! We are currently working in partnership with the PARC Foundation on Phase II improvements which will include new full service sites and a pavilion to provide a place to read or play games and a cozy shelter from inclement weather.



Check out our fully outfitted Montana cabin tents set up on your choice of site including comfortable cots, lanterns, camp kitchen, tables, and chairs - can be equipped with a wood stove to stay cozy and warm on those spring and fall camping, fishing, or hunting trips. Thanks to Cabelas for generous discounts on the furnishings.

- Board of Directors**
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“Celebrating twenty years of commitment to conservation and community”

“THE MISSION OF THE RANGELEY LAKES HERITAGE TRUST IS THE PERMANENT PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT SCENIC , HISTORIC, AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE RANGELEY LAKES REGION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC AND ENJOYMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

**For more information please visit us online:
www.rlht.org or contact Bill Pierce
207-864-7311 (ext. 3) or bpierce@rlht.org**

- Staff**
- Nancy Perlson, Executive Director
 - Shelby Rousseau, Stewardship Director
 - Rebecca Kurtz, Program Director
 - Bill Pierce, Development Director
 - Heather & Randy Targett, Cupsuptic Lake Park & Campground Managers
- Many dedicated part-time seasonal, program & support staff and volunteers.....THANK YOU!
- PRINTED ON 10 % POST CONSUMER RECYCLED FSC CERTIFIED PAPER**