



FALMOUTH LAND TRUST
ANNUAL
REPORT

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A Note From the Executive Director

As we switched our fiscal year in 2022 from a calendar year to a July-June year, this annual report covers 18 months (January 2022-June 2023).



Mila Plavsic

The past year and a half has been a productive time for the Falmouth Land Trust. We restarted our Education and Outreach programming, connecting 1,100+ children and adults, including those with special needs, to nature. FLT expanded our partnership with the nonprofit Cultivating Community to better support their infrastructure and renewable energy needs at FLT's Hurricane Valley Farm, where New Americans grow thousands of pounds of food each year, including for schools and food pantries. Through the hard work of volunteers and staff, we improved wildlife habitat by removing invasive plants on three preserves and planting native shrubs at our Morrill Stillings Bird Sanctuary. In addition, volunteers and staff spent many hours repairing and clearing trails on sections of Falmouth's 55+ miles of trails. The important work of site visits to monitor conservation easements and fee properties, updating management plans, etc. also continued thanks to staff and volunteers as well.

FLT has come a long way since our founding in 1981 and we are proud to now be a newly accredited land trust (as of February) which is helping to care for some municipal lands as well as FLT lands (as of March). In the last half of 2022, we were pleased to welcome Rebecca Dugan as our new Education & Outreach Coordinator and Whitney Bushey as our new Stewardship Manager. Other highlights include that, in May, FLT moved into a larger office space (74 Lunt Road, Suite 100) and in June we welcomed our first Americorps service member, Sarah Payne. We have a few acquisitions in the works which will add to our conservation portfolio, so please stay tuned for more about those projects in the coming months. In the meantime, don't forget to take a moment to get out in the Maine woods right here in Falmouth. Let the forest take away some of the stress of daily life and leave you feeling refreshed and reinvigorated. We owe a debt of gratitude to the community members who have preserved these special places and we all have a responsibility to keep building on their work. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered and/or supported FLT in 2022 and 2023 - this amazing community is what will keep the Falmouth Land Trust going into the future!



Images (left to right): Yellow warbler photographed by FHS student Ian Doherty; planting native shrubs at Morrill-Stillings Bird Sanctuary

A Note From the Board President



Michael Vance

It has been my privilege to continue to serve as the President of the board of the Falmouth Land Trust. This represents a year and a half of significant accomplishments and milestones for the Trust, many of which Mila outlined above, and all of which are symbolic of our primary effort this past few years: the growing maturity of our organization and its ability to have the capacity and strength to manage our open space lands while continuing to invest in new and exciting projects.

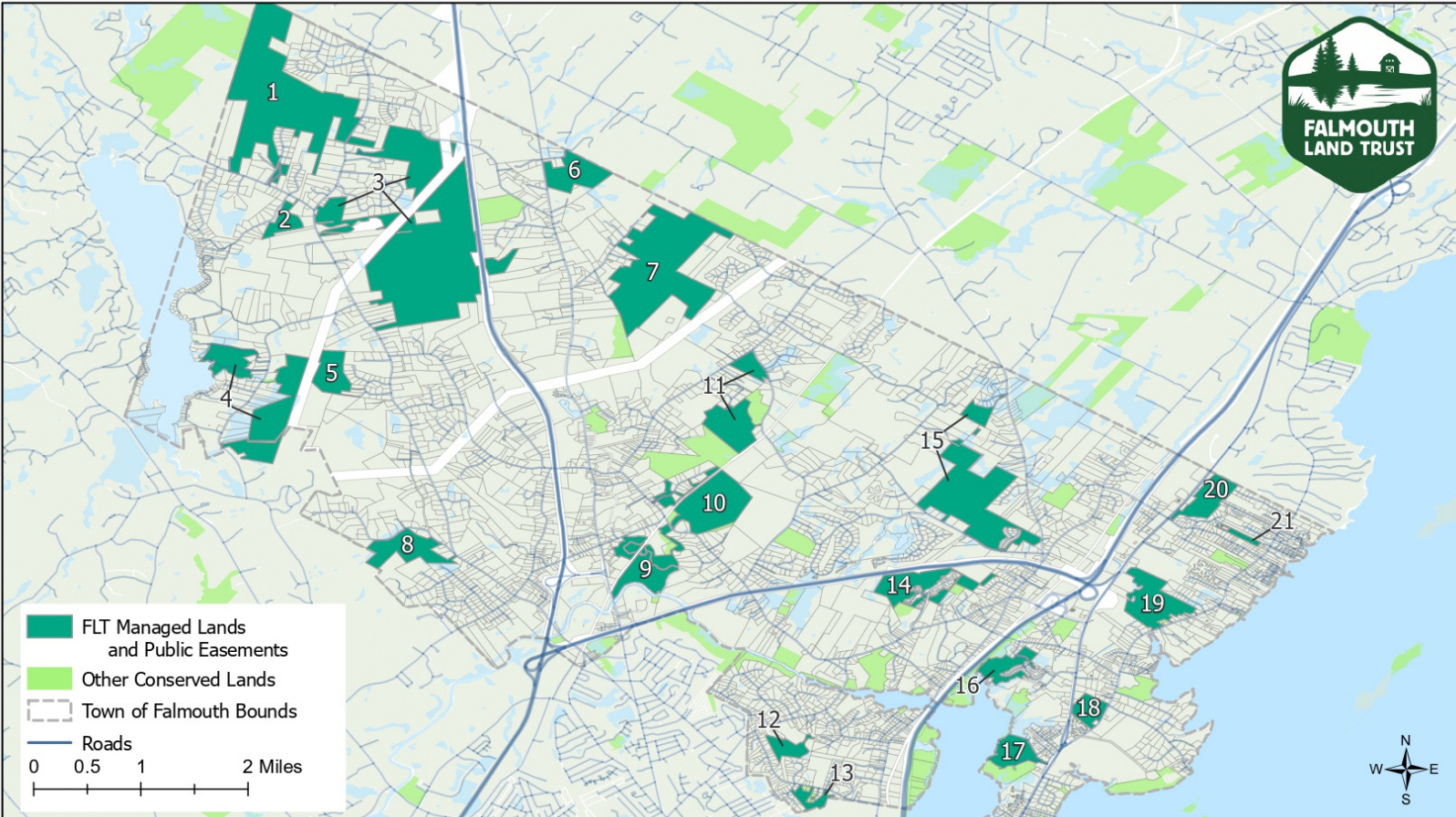
Pursuing accreditation takes board and staff time. Managing open space for the town in addition to the trust takes the expertise of our professional staff. Leasing office space for us to be able to operate efficiently takes partnership with our business sponsors as well as the funds for our lease.

None of this is possible without your support, whether you are a board member, a volunteer, a donor, or a business sponsor. Thank you for helping the Falmouth Land Trust in growing to meet the needs of stewarding our open spaces from now until forever.



Images (left to right): Pink lady slipper flower along a trail; nature loom craft with Winfield Children's House students; FLT trail blaze at McCrann Preserve

Conserved Land in Falmouth



- 1 North Falmouth Community Forest
- 2 Morrill-Stillings Bird Sanctuary
- 3 Blackstrap Hill Preserve & Community Forest
- 4 Suckfish Brook Conservation Area
- 5 Stone Ridge Easement
- 6 Hurricane Valley Farm
- 7 Hadlock Community Forest
- 8 Hardy Road Conservation Area

- 9 River Point Conservation Area
- 10 McCrann Preserve
- 11 Falmouth Community Park & Town Forest
- 12 Pleasant Hill Woods
- 13 Ledges Preserve
- 14 Ridgewood Preserve
- 15 Woods Road Community Forest
- 16 Tidewater Farm

- 17 Maine Audubon Easement
- 18 Pine Grove Park
- 19 Falmouth Nature Preserve
- 20 Underwood Springs Forest
- 21 Woodman Preserve

There are over 2,700 acres of conserved land under FLT's care. Over 55 miles of trails provide opportunities for public recreation such as hiking, mountain biking, and dog walking. FLT's trails and properties are also host to various guided walks and community events throughout the year.

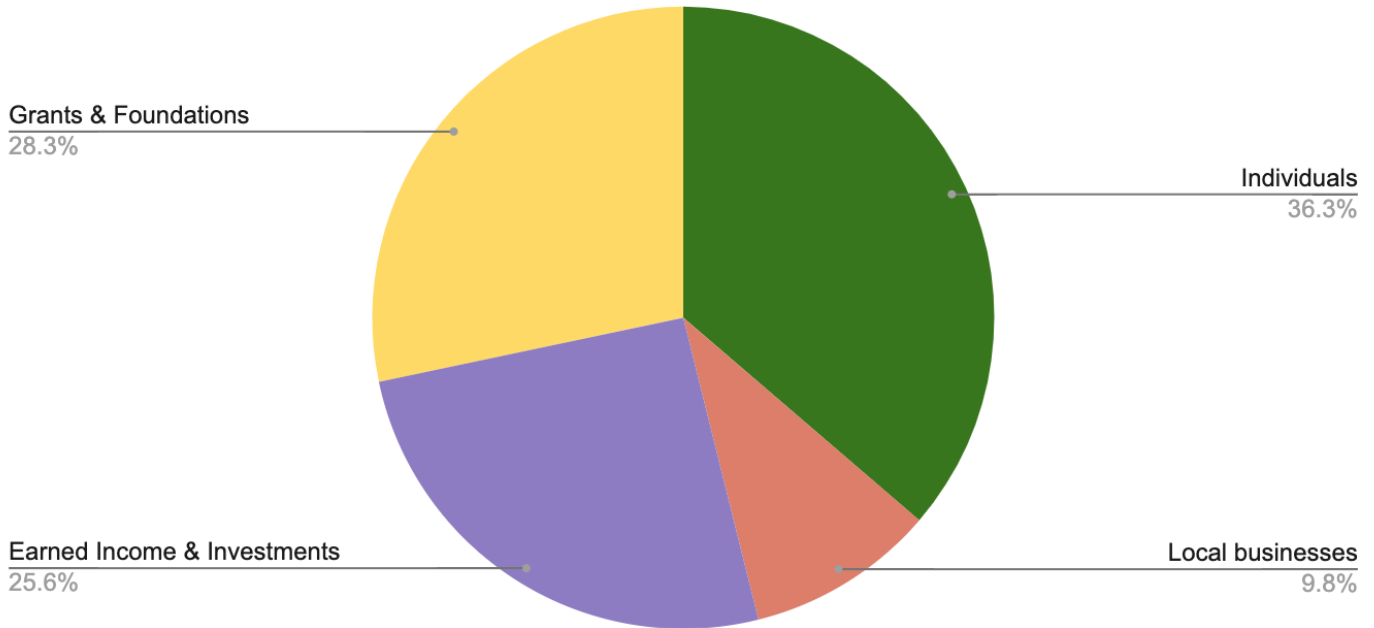


Images (left to right): Red eft; shelf fungi at Underwood Springs; guided walk at Suckfish Brook

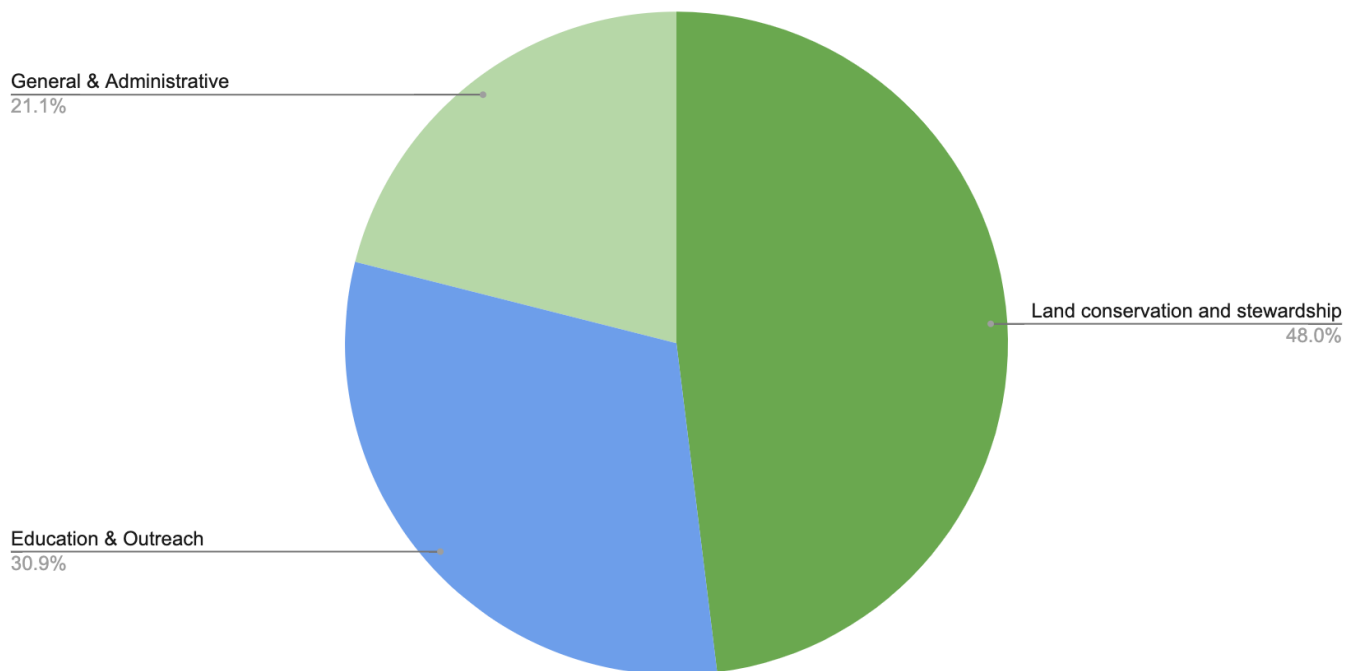
FLT Finances

Please note: these financial totals cover 18 months, from January 2022 - June 2023

Sources of Operating Funds (total: \$268,317)



Uses of Operating Funds (total: \$261,675)



Education and Outreach



FES kindergarten students examine a froglet during a pond ecology field trip at Portland Yacht Club

Our education programs are back in full swing after a pandemic pause. Kids and community members were able to participate in guided walks, school programs, presentations, field trips, community events, and more.

Programming by the numbers:

- 950+ kids
- 200+ adults
- 120+ hours of programming

Partner schools and organizations:

- Falmouth Public Schools
- Friends School of Portland
- Cheverus High School
- Winfield Children's House
- KinderVillage Preschool
- Falmouth Corner Preschool
- Forest Playgroup
- Girl Scout Troop 692
- Falmouth Community Programs
- Oceanview at Falmouth
- Falmouth Memorial Library
- PSL Strive

Stewardship

Falmouth Land Trust's stewardship program has been hard at work on various projects that are part of a larger effort to identify and proactively manage water, erosion, and access issues to ensure that trail users have a safe and positive experience. Projects have included rebuilding flooded trail sections, installing fencing, managing invasive species, and ongoing re-blazing of all 55 miles of trail. FLT's hunting and foraging rules have also been updated to respectfully protect Falmouth's natural resources and allow for a diversity of communities to engage with our conserved land. The hiring of a Maine Conservation Corps Environmental Steward has added capacity for projects like remapping trails and preparing new kiosk maps. Remote monitoring software has also been purchased to more efficiently manage our growing easement monitoring commitments.

Volunteers have contributed over 65 service hours to these projects during monthly Fieldwork Fridays, organization workdays, trail monitoring, and easement stewardship. Volunteer partners include many community members, Cheverus High School, Martin's Point Healthcare, and Idexx.



FLT staff and volunteers install a new split rail fence in the Morrill-Stillings Bird Sanctuary parking lot

Hurricane Valley Farm

FLT purchased Hurricane Valley Farm in 2015 with support from the Town of Falmouth and partnered in 2018 with Cultivating Community to provide farmer training to new Americans at the farm. This unique partnership has returned the land to food production, while allowing the public to enjoy the trails around the farm in all seasons.

The multi-purpose 100+ year-old barn is integral to the work of the farm and supports Cultivating Community in its work with immigrant and refugee farmers:

- 32 community garden plots for households growing food for themselves and their neighbors
- selling produce at seven multilingual farm stands that match SNAP and WIC benefits and at 20 wholesale markets, including 14 food pantries and two public school systems
- CSA-like program providing bags of culturally relevant food to 34 new immigrant families in southern Maine at no cost

The barn is depended upon for safe and dry storage of farm tools and equipment; drying space for storage crops; office and meeting space for staff, farmers, and gardeners; workshops for the public; plus winter housing for chickens (and soon goats!). In 2022, FLT kicked off a capital campaign to save the barn, as it needs a new roof, a new south-facing facade, and other repairs. As of the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the last \$100,000 remained to be raised.

At the other end of the farm, where the farmhouse and high tunnel greenhouses are, plans are in the works to further improve the sustainability of the farm. At the end of 2022, the Town of Falmouth, in partnership with FLT and Cultivating Community, was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the State of Maine's Community Resilience Partnership. The grant program "helps communities in Maine plan for climate change, reduce carbon emissions, transition to clean energy, and increase their resilience to the effects of climate change." Funds will be used for a solar array, battery, and heat pumps. This will reduce the use of fossil fuels there and provide clean power for the greenhouse fans, produce wash & prep area, and the cold storage unit utilized by New American farmers who grow various crops year round. Special thanks to Revision Energy for partnering with FLT by providing some in-kind donations to get this done for Cultivating Community!



Images (left to right): Barn at Hurricane Valley Farm; Cultivating Community logo; bonfire and tent at 2022's Barn Fest fundraiser

Hurricane Valley Farm Continued

Thank you to these generous donors for supporting the Hurricane Valley Farm Barn Fund:

Many community members

Anchor Beam Sponsors (\$50,000)

Michael and Judith Vance

Gable Sponsors (\$25,000)



Maine Beer Company



Do what's right.

Clapboard Sponsors (\$10,000)

Clifford and Susan Gilpin

Post Sponsors (\$1,000+)

Claudia King

Marsha J. Clark and Peter Goffin



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

FLT recognizes the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion and is actively learning and working to make outdoor spaces safe and accessible to all. The last year and a half has included a lot of learning and the beginning stages of multiple projects. One board member has participated in a six-month training through First Light, an organization that serves as a bridge between conservation organizations and Maine's indigenous tribes who seek to expand Wabanaki stewardship of land. This intensive learning journey has resulted in FLT working towards becoming an ambassador organization.

Projects related to the physical accessibility of properties have included the installation of benches and identifying which properties are accessible by Portland's METRO bus. Two benches have already been installed at FLT properties to offer trail users a place to rest along the way. Additional benches have been constructed and will be placed along trails in the coming months. FLT trails that are accessible by bus have been noted on our website, and initial conversations have been had with METRO staff to improve bus stop and trailhead signage. These conversations are also part of a larger FLT-led effort to inform bus users of all regional trails accessible by the various bus routes.

FLT Supporters

We would like to thank the following individuals and families for their support in 2022 and/or 2023. Our apologies if we have inadvertently left anyone off this list.

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