



A Falmouth Land Trust newsletter to the community Fall 2020

UNDERWOOD SPRINGS FOREST PRESERVE CREATED BY OUR COMMUNITY

In 2020, FLT launched an ambitious project to protect the last and largest parcel of undeveloped land east of Route 1 in Falmouth. Acquiring that land, later named Underwood Springs Forest, would have been a substantial undertaking for FLT in a normal year, but it was a herculean effort during a pandemic year with many unpredictable challenges. By the end of March, we wondered if we should abandon this vision altogether.

Thankfully, there was an outpouring of support, generosity, and community spirit to protect this 52-acre forest from development and create a new preserve near to so many neighborhoods. A sense of pulling together emerged in part because people were so enthusiastic about protecting this last parcel of forest.

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MILESTONES AT THE HURRICANE VALLEY FARM

Each fall we've reported on the progress of the growing season at the Hurricane Valley Farm (HVF) and our efforts to restore the property to sustainable agricultural production and increase food security in Maine. We are pleased to report that our partner in building that vision, Cultivating Community (CC), continues to bring life back to the farm by expanding the number of household garden plots, improving soil and expanding the agricultural enterprise training programs for farmers who seek to establish agribusinesses in our region. This year HVF saw several new activities including the establishment of a high tunnel greenhouse.

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Marian Ibrahim, at HVF in summer 2020 - photo credit Ian McLellan

BIRD CONSERVATION TAKES HOLD ON MORRILL ~ STILLINGS PRESERVE



As you may recall, FLT introduced the public to the Morrill Stillings Preserve with a grand opening in 2019 attended by fifty community members. Since opening this new preserve a year ago, FLT staff and trustees have continued to improve the ecological and wildlife aspects of the property. In particular, a partnership with Patrick Wallig, a Falmouth High School student who has been working on his Eagle Scout project, resulted in the creation of several new nesting boxes for blue-birds and saw-whet owls on the preserve. The boxes were hand made by Patrick. The Biodiversity Research Institute supported the work by advising on locating and installing the hand made boxes.

In the years ahead, FLT will focus on enrichment planting to ensure our avian friends have food supplies in all seasons. We look forward to seeing birds and wildlife enthusiasts steadily increase at this very unique property.

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Executive Director's Update

Land Trusts have protected more than 56 million acres of land across the United States. 56 Million acres is an area that is more than twice the size of Maine. Together, this constellation of small, local, land trust organizations are a powerful force for conserving land, waterways, and habitat. These organizations are also providing access to nature for millions of people today and in the future. As part of that larger movement, the Falmouth Land Trust (FLT) has permanently protected more than 50 parcels of land in Falmouth totaling approximately 1,600 acres. As a small organization, FLT has done this for nearly forty years without a lot of fanfare—mostly with thousands of volunteer hours and lots of hard work by our board and community members.

Over the last few years, FLT has sought to grow its capacity so that the organization can have greater impact in Falmouth. The board and staff have worked hard to expand our outreach, programming, and events so that we could highlight the mission of FLT and the many reasons land conservation is important to our quality of life. We served 900 students in the schools with activities that connected them to nature and land. We provided monthly hikes and opportunities for the community to get to know our properties.

This year, we've heard that getting outside to be in nature has been critical for mental and physical health. The huge increase of users on trails and conservation properties is heartening, and we are pleased that the community is finding these resources important during a time of need. To our delight, 2020 has reinforced the importance and relevance of our work.

The best way to create a strong, durable, and impactful land trust is by strengthening our connection to our community. The Falmouth Land Trust is a non-partisan, community-based organization working to conserve land for public benefit. If you believe this is good for our community and our future, please show your support. Like the Land Trust movement across the country, when we work together we can make great things happen. It's been a pleasure and a privilege to serve this community in 2020—despite the challenges we have faced. FLT's board and staff look forward to more exciting opportunities to share our mission in the year ahead. On behalf of everyone at FLT, we wish you a safe and healthy fall season. - JENNY

Ways of Giving to Falmouth Land Trust

Annual Gifts - Please consider a yearly gift by donating online at www.falmouthlandtrust.org or by mailing your check to Falmouth Land Trust, Attn: Development, P.O. Box 6172, Falmouth, Maine 04105.

Monthly Giving - Please consider making a monthly gift, which allows for the convenience of being a monthly donor while providing ongoing support and stability for the work of FLT. Your gift will automatically be charged monthly to your credit card. You are able to adjust your giving level or cancel your commitment at any time.

Gifts of Securities - You may wish to consider the benefits of making a gift of securities. Some donors find that a gift of this type can provide significant advantages.

Matching-Gifts - Many local corporations sponsor matching-gift programs by which an employee's charitable donation is matched with a contribution by the corporation. In this way, donors can easily leverage the value of their contribution; in some cases, the matching contribution is as high as three to one.

YES! I/we wish to support land preservation in Falmouth and would like to give a tax deductible gift of:

Supporter: \$25.00 \$50.00 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

Name(s) _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

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My check, payable to Falmouth Land Trust, is enclosed.

I wish to provide a recurring gift to the Falmouth Land Trust.

Please charge my credit card in the following amount with the following frequency:

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You may also contribute online at www.falmouthlandtrust.org

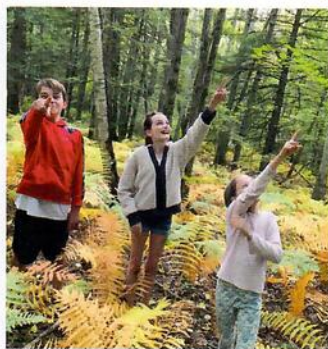


New Preserve Continued...

As COVID became the top priority and funding became uncertain from the Town and other institutional sources, many community members repeated the phrase, "If we work together we can do this." The community rallied behind the idea of conserving Underwood Springs Forest, and countless people stepped forward to help. Businesses put up banners, kids put up posters and creative community members worked together to complete mass mailings. Renowned artist, Eric Hopkins, provided a painting for a raffle. Over four hundred donations flowed from the community to complete the purchase. We were honored to receive grant support from the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program, the Davis Conservation Foundation, and the Casco Bay Estuary Program. In November, FLT was delighted to close on the property and add it to its portfolio of protected lands. This project was a tremendous demonstration of strength, not just for FLT, but for the community as well.

FLT can now begin the careful and important work of creating a preserve with accessible trails, informational signage, bog bridges, and kiosks. This work will occur over the next half year. The property will have a few parking spots and access from the Friends School campus. Other pedestrian access will be via entry paths from designated neighborhoods. We look forward to having community involvement in the process of creating and building the trail system.

In addition to vernal pools, delicate and rare plants, and deep ravines on the property, there are areas with significant invasive species that will need to be monitored and, when possible, removed. FLT is excited to improve Underwood Springs Forest as we manage it for habitat and trail uses. We remain thankful for the support to conserve this project and are delighted to see that land conservation is valued in Falmouth. We look forward to opening the property to the public in 2021 and having a community celebration for all that we accomplished together.



Milestones at the Hurricane Valley Farm Continued...

The greenhouse is important and allows the planting season to start earlier in the spring resulting in greater productivity. In addition to expanding bee-keeping, HVF saw 27 growers from nine different countries working to produce food this year. The number of beneficiaries continues to increase—as do the connections to this land.

In October, FLT signed a long-term lease with Cultivating Community that is intended to keep CC working on the property until 2040. This is an exciting development in the future of the farm. As we celebrated the signing of the lease this fall, John Yanga, a farmer from South Sudan who helps manage the farm, expressed great "thankfulness for his ability to access FLT land in order to grow food and build new friendships." We look forward to seeing both cultivation and relationships flourish on this property in the years ahead.

In addition, this year FLT began to tackle the deferred maintenance needs on the large barn, including replacing broken and failing windows with new weatherproof ones in order to keep the barn dry and sealed. The cost of these improvements totaled over \$20,000 dollars. As funds become available, FLT has plans for additional repairs and maintenance to the building including the roof, siding, and doors of the barn. We are excited to see the property transform in small and large ways and look forward to new activities at HVF in 2021 and beyond.



Alex Redfield, Michael Vance, Dee Dee Germain and John Yanga, HVE Lease signing.

IS THE LAND TRUST IN YOUR WILL?

One of the longest-standing items on my wife's and my to-do list was estate planning. No one gets particularly excited about this, so it isn't surprising that we put it off for nearly a decade. Estate planning is an opportunity to reflect on how you can ensure the legacy of the philanthropic groups you support. We



worked with our attorney to build a tiered list of organizations that represent the causes that matter the most to us. In a way, it is thrilling to know that even though we may

have passed, we will still have an impact on the matters we consider vital, and this will allow our children and broader community to benefit for years to come. Judith and I are happy to have the Falmouth Land Trust as one of the beneficiaries of our estate. If conservation is important to you, please include FLT in your estate plan.

- MICHAEL VANCE,
PRESIDENT FLT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Falmouth Land Trust is grateful to local businesses for lending their support to keep Falmouth green and healthy!

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Falmouth Land Trust's mission is to preserve and care for fields, forests, farms, and shorelines, in the Town of Falmouth, while maintaining the historical character and nurturing an enduring stewardship and enjoyment of the land.

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CONSERVING LAND IN OUR COMMUNITY FROM 1981 'TIL FOREVER



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