



the Trailhead

Take a hike...in your backyard

A publication of Saco Bay Trails

Vol. 6 No. 1 Spring/Summer, 2005

SBT pushes for Cascade Falls preservation

A proposed development on the site of the Cascade Inn will preserve more than 14 acres of land around the historic Cascade Falls, thanks in part to lobbying efforts by members of Saco Bay Trails.

For several months this spring, members of our organization have worked with city planning officials

and the developer, Village Works LLC, to set aside 14.22 acres of land around the falls. The proposal is part of a contract zone sought by the developer to build a mixture of commercial properties and residential buildings on the site.

As part of the deal, the developer will assist with cost of developing

and improving the existing trail system. Saco Bay Trails currently maintains a trail that begins behind the restaurant and terminates at the falls. This trail would likely be changed as a result of the development, although the specifics of this have not yet been discussed.

CASCADE FALLS, continued on page 4

RiverWalk easement assigned

At our April meeting, members of the Saco Bay Trails board voted to assign our easement on the Morsey property to the City of Saco in order to assist in the construction of the RiverWalk trail. Saco Bay Trails had negotiated the easement with Teddy and Mary Morsey several years ago in order to prepare for the eventual construction of this trail, which will run from the base of Cataract Falls to the end of Hall Avenue. The board voted in favor of the assignment after contacting the Morseys to receive their permission for this change. Construction of the trail is being coordinated by a committee of Saco Spirit and the City of Saco and is expected to begin this summer.



Photo by John Gold

Saco Bay Trails members listen as Parker Schuerman of The Nature Conservancy discussed the natural history of the Saco Heath.

President's message

Calling all volunteers: Help wanted on the trail

Muscle bound guys, delicate ladies, energetic kids, retired old folks (I can say that because I'm one) – we need YOU! We need you to come on out to our trail work parties and lend a hand. We can find jobs for everyone.

Our new Trail Coordinator, Mark Whitmore, has already been hard at work, and a small group of volunteers has helped him build the Walther Pond trail, a lovely spur off the Ferry Landing Trail. But as we move into the summer we need to build

MESSAGE, continued on page 4

The Saco Heath:

A special place for Saco's wildlife and people

Saco's Heath was once considered to be a nuisance. The city's early settlers sought to tame the great wild area, cutting its Black Spruce, Hemlock and Beech trees and trying to drain its waters in an effort to create farmland.

But the Heath's enormous size resisted the manual efforts of pick and shovel and today it is considered a natural gem, home to many different species of birds, insects and plants - not to mention blueberries - according to Parker Schuerman, southern

Maine reserves manager for The Nature Conservancy.

Schuerman described the natural history of the Heath to a group of about three dozen at the annual meeting of Saco Bay Trails on May 10. The Heath is known as a domed bog because of the way its peat rises above the surrounding land. It was formed by glacial action and then filled in by peat moss in a process known as paludification.

Since the arrival of Saco's first settlers in the 1600's, the
THE HEATH, continued on page 2

SBT elects board, honors outgoing trustee

At its annual meeting May 10, members of Saco Bay Trails reelected five members to the board of trustees. Caryl Everett, John Andrews, Ron Albert, Patti Brodeur and Mark Whitmore were all voted in to three year terms expiring in 2008. In addition, members reaffirmed the terms of current trustees Jane Hamblen, John Gold, Tom Goulding, Wendy Hunter, Deb McKenney and Sheila Painchaud.

The membership also honored trustee Carol Benoit Reynolds, who stepped down from the board after serving for many years. Carol was a tireless organizer of and helper at many Saco Bay Trails events, including the holiday home tour and the silent auction fundraiser. She also played a significant role in Saco Bay Trails' appearance at the Saco Sidewalk Arts Festival each year. Carol was awarded a plaque honoring her years of service and was appointed an honorary trustee.

Following the membership meeting, the board of trustees met to appoint the following officers: President: Caryl Everett, Vice President: John Andrews, Treasurer: Deb McKenney, Secretary: Jane Hamblen.

We would like to thank our speaker, Parker Schuerman of The Nature



Photos by John Gold

Scenes from SBT's 2005 annual meeting: Above, Trustee Tom Goulding reviews an information packet with Secretary Jane Hamblen and President Caryl Everett. Top right, an informational display. At right, Caryl presents outgoing trustee Carol Benoit Reynolds with an plaque honoring her service.



Conservancy, the Dyer Library which donated the use of the Deering Room and a projector for the meeting and to Librarian Anastasia Weigle who put together a display of natural his-

tory materials and also developed a packet of information for attendees that included background on the Saco Heath and tips for making the backyard more friendly to wildlife.

THE HEATH, from page 1

Heath's role in the community evolved from nuisance, to resource, as loggers removed its trees and miners attempted to exploit its reserves of peat, which in some areas is up to 15 feet thick. Beginning in the 1980's, attention on the Heath turned to preservation when the last landowner to attempt mining instead

sold 400 acres of land to The Nature Conservancy.

Since then, TNC has acquired 1,800 acres of the bog in a series of land purchases and swaps. Today the organization continues to seek to preserve portions of the bog, which is publicly accessible via a trailhead on Route 112 that leads to a mile-long boardwalk.

Volunteer Mark Whitmore returns as trail coordinator

We begin the 2005 trail season by welcoming back Mark Whitmore to the board of trustees and most importantly as our trail coordinator. Mark, who has been a regular volunteer and leader of work parties, now brings his enthusiasm, optimism and strength to the challenging task of keeping our trails maintained and growing.

Mark expects to focus on maintenance issues during the 2005 season, including bridging an erosion problem on the Atlantic Way trail and renewing the gravel bed on the Ferry Landing trail. He is also hoping to return to the Industrial Park/Old Sawmill Trail complex and continue

work that was started in 2003.

In order to spread the workload (and the fun), Mark is hoping to develop a strong volunteer base from

which to draw both trail workers and potential leaders of work parties. He will be working with our volunteer coordinator Wendy Hunter on this.

Sign up to learn more about work parties

A Saco Bay Trails workparty is a great way to meet new people, get some exercise outside and do something good for your community. No special skills are required and we supply all tools. To find the date of the next event, sign up for the SBT email newsletter on our website or send an email to our volunteer coordinator, Wendy Hunter at

wendy.hunter@maine.gov or our webmaster, John Gold at jgold@desktoppub.com. You can also call our president, Caryl Everett at 282-1123. We have scheduled work parties for **Saturday, June 18** and **Saturday, July 16**. We will post details of these events (location, time) on our web site at www.sacobaytrails.org.

CALENDAR

JUNE

14 Monthly meeting, 7 p.m.
New Saco Recreation building
Franklin Street.

18 Trail work party. Time and place to be announced on our website, www.sacobaytrails.org.

JULY

12 Monthly meeting, 7 p.m.
New Saco Recreation building
Franklin Street.

16 Trail work party. Time and place to be announced on our website, www.sacobaytrails.org.

AUGUST

9 Monthly meeting, 7 p.m.
New Saco Recreation building
Franklin Street.

Visit our web site for an updated list of events and work parties:
www.sacobaytrails.org

SBT Trustees, 2005-06

Caryl Everett, President
John Andrews, Vice President
Deborah McKenney, Treasurer
Jane Hamblen, Secretary
Ron Albert
John Andrews
John Gold
Tom Goulding
Wendy Hunter
Sheila Painchaud

Advisory Trustees

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The Trailhead

The Trailhead is published twice a year, in the spring and in the fall. It is mailed free of charge to members of Saco Bay Trails and anyone who requests a copy. If you'd like to be on our mailing list, drop us a note or send an email to: info@sacobaytrails.org



Photo by Caryl Everett

Saco Bay Trails trail coordinator Mark Whitmore checks the view of the pond. Behind him is the granite resting bench dedicated to Ina Walther.

SBT completes Walther Pond spur trail

With summer still waiting in the wings, we have already completed our first trail project of 2005. Working with a small band of volunteers, Trail Coordinator Mark Whitmore has constructed a short spur trail off the Ferry Landing Trail.

Named the Walther Pond Spur, this trail takes visitors from the woods road that leads to the Ferry Landing

trail to a small pond on land donated to Saco Bay Trails by sisters Sandra Greenier Clark and Tamera Devine. At the pond we have installed a granite bench in memory of Ina Walther, the grandmother of Sandra and Tamera and the person who willed the land to the sisters. Visitors to the pond can watch songbirds and waterfowl as Ms. Walther once enjoyed.

Saco Bay Trails Membership Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pioneer | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailblazer | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pathfinder | \$50 | Organizational | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> School | \$50 |

Memberships are renewed annually in the spring or fall. Join at the \$25 level and above and receive a free trail guide. Membership at the \$50 level and above will also receive a free T-shirt.

Mail to: Saco Bay Trails, P.O. Box 720, Saco, Maine 04072



Saco Bay Trails file photo

The Cascade Falls offer visitors a chance to catch a glimpse of Saco's history.

CASCADE FALLS, from page 1

If the city approves the contract zone and the development plans, the land would be donated to Saco for public use. Proposed trail improvements might include a parking lot on Cascade Road for hikers. We also envision the possibility of building a bridge over the falls which would offer spectacular views of this resource.

As of our publication date, the proposal was scheduled to be heard by the City Council. We'll have more details on our website and in our fall newsletter, so stay tuned.

MESSAGE, from page 1

up a large cadre of trail workers. Will you join us?

Wear work clothes and gloves and think about sunscreen, bug repellent and so forth. We might ask some people to bring a shovel or rake. The work party will have an assigned leader, and the leader will tell you what jobs are available. Maybe staining boardwalk. Or moving wheelbarrow loads of gravel. Or carrying wood to a work site. Cutting brush. The list varies depending on what that particular trail needs.

We'll keep you well supplied with water, coffee and snacks, and we usually will take up only your morning, working 9am to noon. It's fun to work outdoors on a worthy community project with a group of like-minded and friendly people! And you will be amazed at how much a group of people working together can accomplish in a short time.

We're working up a schedule for work parties, so mark your calendars, and then come on out and lend a hand. We've built up a strong board of trustees and honorary trustees and now what we need are trail workers!

Thank you to all who help

We offer our thanks to **Great Works Internet** of Biddeford who generously donate internet access and web space (www.sacobaytrails.org) for our organization. We also thank the **Saco Parks and Recreation Department** for their donation of office space and a meeting area at the new Parks and Recreation building at 75 Franklin Street. And of course we thank all of those who volunteer their time and donate their money to make us a success.