



FALL NEWSLETTER 2004

Volume 13 Number 2

OUR GOALS

To create a 30-mile network of multi-use trails within Greater Portland.

To serve as a public advocate for the protection of and access to natural places within the region.

To encourage the participation of neighborhoods, schools and the business community in trail use and stewardship.

Grants = Greener Grounds!

BY CATHERINE GENTILE

KIDS AT THE LYMAN MOORE MIDDLE SCHOOL still refer to the Lyseth School trail as their own trail – and why not? They're the ones who helped design and build the trail when they were in 3rd grade. Ask them about their experiences and they'll tell you what they learned from a boulder that was right in the middle of a trail pathway. Rocks are cool things to climb on, they said, but what about their friends in wheelchairs? In discussing the problem, they uncovered the solution. "How about putting a path around the rock?" And so they built a trail that was both interesting and accessible.

Such is the cooperative problem solving modeled by teaching staff and practiced by kids who are working with Portland Trails Laura Newman to develop greener around their schools. As Education and Outreach Coordinator, Laura facilitates the myriad details that would, under ordinary circumstances, bring a multi-faceted project to the proverbial screeching halt. And while Laura will tell you her enthusiasm and energy is fueled by the kids and teachers who are dedicated to hands-on learning, she'll also confess that, until recently, these projects were limited in scope due to – what else – funding issues.



Kindergartners at Nathan Clifford School plant and water perennials in the new cedar beds built by parents last May.

This fall, however, the projects' scope (and Laura's smile) will be broader due to three major grants awarded to Portland Trails.

The **Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust** has just approved a \$35,000 grant to Portland Trails. **Aristotle Fund of the Maine Community Foundation**, a long-time supporter, has awarded Portland Trails \$15,000. An **Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Healthy Communities Grant** of \$30,000 is another welcome first-time award. These grants will support Trails' school-ground greening projects in six Portland area schools. Natural elements such as gardens, trees, wetland learning areas and "outdoor classrooms" will be incorporated into the projects. The activities involved will give teachers opportunities to integrate curriculum with experiential and community service-learning.

The Aristotle, EPA, and Cox grants will also support the development of a school grounds arm for the Portland Trails web site. Pictures and reports on each school's project will be posted as well as teaching resources and coalition information. The coalition, a cadre of individuals from neighborhoods, schools, Portland Parks and Recreation Department, Maine Audubon, Portland Water District, landscape architects, the business community and others, will work toward ongoing support and maintenance of the school greening projects. These awards promise to help Portland Trails continue partnering with schools and Parks & Rec to help children and adults create urban environments that are conducive to healthy, imaginative play, while encouraging appreciation of the natural world. With history as our predictor, the kids at Lyman Moore are right – obstacles are opportunities for creativity. 🌿

A Report from the Stroudwater Trail

BY MARC HILLS

"OH...MY...GOD! WHAT IS THAT, LIKE TWO MILES?" That's the standard reaction I get when I tell coworkers at UnumProvident that I walk to work from my home in Deering. Actually, my daily commute is closer to four and a half miles.

For some, the fact that I walk to work is unfathomable. They stop and offer me a ride, assuming that I've had car trouble or encountered some unmentionable financial crisis. Sometimes, I think they have me pegged as some sort of uber-environmentalist freak. It's nothing like that. I've enjoyed hiking and backpacking for years, so walking several miles is nothing. In fact, without a heavy pack, it's a joy. Thanks to Portland Trails, I'm able to spend most of those four plus miles in the woods.

I begin my commute in the Evergreen Cemetery, where the trails take me through a vast space of towering pines and ground-hugging ferns. Its openness is uncanny; I call it the Lyceum. Occasionally, I encounter one of Portland's several resident coyotes with their distinctive skittish, loping gait.

I briefly reenter civilization as I cross Brighton Avenue. At the five corner intersection at Brighton and Capisic I amble down Hillcrest Street, an unpaved (and largely unnoticed) road across from the Breakwater School. There, I reenter the woods at the Fore River Sanctuary. Within a quarter of a mile, I encounter Portland's only natural cataract, Jewel Falls, where the cascading water drowns out the last sounds of traffic I will hear until I reach trail's end on outer Congress Street.

If I'm late, I take Congress Street past Stroudwater Crossing to the UnumProvident service entrance by the Elks Club. But most mornings, I again escape the morning hustle by ducking onto the Stroudwater Trail at the new "River's Edge" housing development. This under-appreciated trail follows the Stroudwater River for about a mile until I reach the back of the UnumProvident Portland Campus.

I walk to work about twice a week year-round. I do it for a lot of reasons – conservation, exercise, the simple joy of walking in the woods. But the real reason may be that my walk in the woods, where I see wild turkey, deer and heron, cross 22 wooden bridges, and hike past streams, ponds, and a tidal estuary, is my gift to myself. I do it because it is a period of calm and solitude in a hectic life. I do it because it centers me before a busy workday. I do it because in Portland, blessed with this wonderful system of trails, I can. 🐾

Adopt-a-Trail is Proving Popular

BY NAN CUMMING

PORTLAND TRAILS' ADOPT-A-TRAIL program enables businesses and community groups to adopt a section of their favorite trail with a \$1,500 annual donation to Portland Trails' stewardship budget. The gifts pay directly for trail maintenance, which ensures that the trails remain pleasant places for all to enjoy. Last Spring we announced that Wright Express, UnumProvident Corporation, and Northern Utilities, Inc. had all stepped forward to support the program.

We are delighted to announce three new Adopt-a-Trail partners: Woodard & Curran, L.L. Bean, and Gorham Savings Bank.

Care to guess which trails each company adopted? Woodard & Curran chose a section of the Fore River Trail near their headquarters, fitting, as Woodard & Curran staff donated technical expertise to extend the Fore River Trail. L.L. Bean is adopting a section

of the Presumpscot River Trail in Falmouth near the new portage facility around Presumpscot Falls. And Gorham Savings Bank is sponsoring Portland Trails' Jewell Falls Trail within the Fore River Sanctuary—a beautiful waterfall right in the heart of Portland.

"Portland Trails is a great local organization and a national model," says Janet Wyper of L.L. Bean as she explains the company's reasons for joining Adopt-a-Trail. "We are very impressed by the work they do and the partnerships they create that enable so many of us to enjoy beautiful natural areas in Greater Portland. It's an honor to continue to support such a strong example of grass roots efforts that support community interests. Adopting a trail is a natural extension, so to speak, of the work we've already done with them."

Thank you, and welcome.

L.L.Bean

Gorham
SAVINGS BANK



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Serendipity, Strategic Planning, and Trail Building

ONE OF THE WONDERFUL ASPECTS of being involved with Portland Trails is that each year brings unanticipated opportunities for new trails and green spaces that may never have been contemplated before. All of us are constantly learning about new hidden jewels within Greater Portland. These prospective trail projects might be triggered by a proposed development, or suggested an energetic volunteer or community members who wish to improve a neglected parcel or schoolyard or to protect a unique recreational asset or natural site.

The new trail opportunities join the list of core trail and green space projects already on Portland Trails' drawing board. These projects stay on our priority list because they are vital to Greater Portland's developing network of trails and green spaces—they can transform a neighborhood or provide public access to scarce resources such as frontage on Casco Bay, Portland Harbor, or the Fore, Presumpscot and Stroudwater Rivers.

Of course, trails take time. We may monitor the pace of development, changes in land ownership, the availability of funding, and the interest of opinion leaders for years before a project comes to life. Each year we assemble a portfolio of potential projects, including new as well as long-term priorities, which are likely to be ready for construction come spring. Planning for each trail project involves defining possible trail alignments, securing easements or ownership of the trail corridor, obtaining the necessary permits from municipal, state, and federal entities, raising needed funds, and lastly, scheduling trail crews and volunteer workdays.

Not all projects navigate this obstacle course successfully. However, all of the trail projects that remain viable must fit within the limits set by Portland Trails' annual budget. This is our yearly challenge: to take advantage of unique, unanticipated and sometimes fleeting opportunities for trail and green space development, to continue our progress toward creating and maintaining the long term trail network and green space goals described in Portland Trails' Vision Map, and to maintain a sound financial position so that future opportunities can be realized.

Painfully, the opportunities for trail projects exceed Portland Trails' volunteer, staff, and financial resources, so we must continue to prioritize among our projects. However, this year we are inaugurating a new planning process. Our goal is to establish a more systematic review of potential projects, and thus create greater lead time for planning, permitting, and fundraising for the coming year's projects.

These strategic planning efforts coupled with our inaugural Trails Summit in September will continue to cultivate the opportunistic qualities that have resulted in so many wonderful trails to-date, while providing a planning process that recognizes our finite resources and the long lead times needed to successfully complete a trail project.

We look forward to telling you more about our 2005 trail projects in the coming months.



Jeff Sommer

Photo: Phil Poirier

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THE PRESUMPSCOT PRESERVE: Bigger and Better than Ever

A summer of hard work by a six-person Maine Conservation Corps team, PT Trails Construction Manager Jaime Parker, Stillman Restoration/Design Landscape Designer David Buchanan, and a host of volunteers has resulted in lots of infrastructure improvements to the magnificent Presumpscot River Preserve.



Photo: Jaime Parker

The Maine Conservation Corps crew found it easiest to float the lumber they needed to the work site.

"Brian Gilbert and his MCC crew were great," says Jaime. "Everything we had planned for summer work got done." 'Everything' included having the MCC crew not only do the work, but also talk with trail users, updating them and taking feedback from dog-walkers, hikers, and mountain bikers.

One of the most memorable days was in mid-July when Jaime and the crew performed an old-fashioned log-float down the Presumpscot. In addition to being fun, it was the easiest and least environmentally damaging way to transport lumber to the three building sites along the river. Two canoes and a kayak guided the lumber "raft" during the four-hour float. What did the crew create with all that lumber? They built twelve bridges, a boardwalk, bench installation, two portage ladders, and water bars.

"This is a site that has grown back and recovered from many centuries of heavy use," says David Buchanan. "It offers a quiet space outside of the City." The crew's

summer work made that quiet space accessible.

In addition to being better, the preserve is bigger. George and Mary Goodall of Falmouth have donated 3,600 feet of beautiful, untouched shoreline on the south side of the river between the Gray Road in Falmouth and the Maine Turnpike 'Falmouth spur.' The Goodalls' generosity improves visitor's access to the original 48 acres of preserve purchased in 2002.

The Goodalls' trail license agreement with PT allows hikers, skiers, snowshoers, and mountain bikers to use a three-foot wide trail along the shore. Portland Trails will install signage, maintain the property, and work to preserve its natural, wild state.

"It's a great way to see the town, see nature, and



Photo: Bud Quinn

Maine Conservation Corps crew hard at work.

Guest Editorial

BY JIM COHEN

Property Tax Cap: The Wrong Trail for Maine

FIRST, LET'S GET PAST the rhetoric on the property tax cap. If you read the actual words of Carol Palesky's initiative, you will see that it does not cap government spending, nor does it cap state taxes. So your property taxes might go down, but your state taxes could go up. This may be good for property owners from away, but it is bad for Maine residents who must make up the difference. Palesky is particularly bad for the 33% of Maine people who rent. Renters pay no property taxes, and are therefore unlikely to see any decrease in their housing costs due to the cap. But renters will be subject to any increases in state taxes caused by Palesky, and any cuts in services. That's a bad deal.

Also, despite the promises, the cap won't stop revaluation from coming. The Maine Constitution makes that clear.

What the initiative will do is cut property taxes revenues by about 30% statewide, more in some communities than others. For Portland, under a best-case scenario, the city would lose about 40% of the \$112 million it collected in property taxes last year, over 70% of which went to schools and public safety.

Applying the math, the bulk of cuts will come from police, fire, and the schools, but less "vital" services like parks, sidewalk plowing, and the METRO are likely to be gutted or eliminated. To say the least, this cuts at the core of both the Portland Trails mission and the quality of life we currently enjoy in this city.

Are these scare tactics? I wish I could answer yes. Unfortunately, it is the cold hard reality, people need to know it, and only massive state tax increases will stop it from happening. Only don't hold your breath. If the solution must come from Augusta, we may be living with chaos for a long time.

James Cohen serves on the Portland City Council and is a past president of Portland Trails. Jim's views are his own. One component of Portland Trails' mission is to advocate for public policies that are trail friendly. Portland Trails periodically provides space in the newsletter to guest commentators who address topics related to conservation, trails, open space.



Photo: Christina White

Portland Trails' crew leader, Jaime Parker.

get in shape," said PT Vice President, Falmouth Trails Committee founder and Falmouth resident, Elizabeth Ehrenfeld.

This autumn, planned work on the Portland and Falmouth sides of the river includes signage installation, the addition of railings on the two portage ladders, steps at the trailhead, a site map, and a water access ladder.

With family-friendly loop trails, varied, contour challenges for mountain bikers, and easy access to and from the water, there is something for anyone wanting to enjoy the quiet of nature. Join us on the Presumpscot, along with the turtles, Great Blue Herons, and, if you are lucky, a Bald Eagle. 🐾



Photo: David Buchanan

Bridge designed with wide railings to accommodate bike handbars.

Portland Tree Trust Partners with Portland Trails

BY LAURA NEWMAN

ONCE NICKNAMED "The Forest City," Portland has worked hard to restore and maintain the trees that are part of its character. The Portland Tree Trust, a private / public partnership, deserves much of the credit, for the trust is funding many of the trees that are finding their way into Portland's streets, parks, public grounds and schoolgrounds. This is good news for Portland Trails' schoolground greening projects. City Arborist Jeff Tarling has been working with us to plan future tree planting and greening projects. In fact, he has worked towards implementing planting plans at each school for many years. This past spring, trees were planted at Lyseth Elementary, Lyman Moore, King Middle, Nathan Clifford Elementary and Deering High Schools.

Portland Parks & Recreation and the Portland Tree Trust look forward to working with Portland Trails and Portland Public Schools to add new trees to more of Portland's schoolgrounds. Trees benefit schools aesthetically by making them more inviting, and they add the environmental benefits of cooling shade and cleaner air. Trees are also used in educational programs, beginning in kindergarten. Teaching children the benefits of trees is a great way to introduce them to their role as future stewards of the environment. The Tree Trust and individual school greening projects are the sole sources of trees for Portland schoolgrounds

The Portland Tree Trust depends on donations and needs your support! For more information, contact Jeff Tarling, City Arborist, at 874-8793, or visit the website at www.ci.portland.me.us/misc/forestry/trust

VOLUNTEER PROFILE by Cheri Musgrave

John Peverada

IT ALL STARTED ONE EVENING as John Peverada and his wife Judy were out for a walk on the Stroudwater trail. He noticed a nail protruding from a stair tread in the flight of stairs at the beginning of the trail. John's first instinct was to go home, get his hammer, and fix the problem. Then he wondered, "Who does the maintenance on all of the Portland trails?" Not being one to sit idly by, John called Nan at the PT office. Nan put him in touch with Bud Quinn, our veteran trail steward. And thus began a huge improvement to our trail stewardship program.

John is a regular on Thursday's "stewardship evenings," when anyone interested is welcome to help Bud with maintenance projects on that evening's designated trail. Some nights it's just Bud and John. They do every-



Photo: Bud Quinn

John Peverada

thing from installing a new bench or resetting one that has tipped over, trimming brush, putting up new signs, or organizing the tool shed. Bud describes John's contribution in this way: "John has been my right-hand man all summer long on Thursday work nights." He adds, in a reflective tone, "He has devoted a lot of time and effort to Portland Trails."

Maybe it's because John is a Portland native and as a child used to play around the Stroudwater area where we now have trails, or maybe it's because he's a really nice guy. Whatever the reason, we are extremely lucky that we can count on him. He's a busy man giving freely of his time after working all day as the City of Portland's Parking Manager. A man who sees a need and pitches in inspires us all. Thank you, John. 🐾

You can join John and Bud any Thursday night to help and maintain our trails.

Contact Bud Quinn at trlwkr2k@aol.com for details.

Schedule of Events

Every Thursday evening

Trail Maintenance and Construction

Portland Trails' storage shed, Stroudwater Trail—at the end of Hutchins Drive

Come meet up with Trail Steward Bud Quinn to help with trail maintenance and construction projects. Bud will be there every Thursday, so just join in when you can! To learn more, contact Bud at trlwlkr2K@aol.com.

Tuesday, October 5th, 4:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Washboard Laundry Fundraiser

207 Danforth Street, Portland

Portland Trails will be the recipient of Washboard Laundry's "Wash N' Care" night on Tuesday, October 5th. Washboard Laundry will donate 50% of all proceeds



from the washers, dryers, soaps, and other supply sales that night. And any clothing dropped off that evening for wet or dry cleaning will yield 15% for Portland Trails! Try

their wet cleaning service—a chemical-free alternative to dry cleaning that is better for humans and the environment! Between now and October 5th, Washboard Laundry has also set up a "fundraising machine" for Portland Trails—50% of all sales from that washer will go to Portland Trails. So come do your wash with us—or drop off some cleaning for a good cause.

Friday, October 8, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Senior Stroll: Tai Chi Movement on the Eastern Prom Trail

Paula Mueller, Tai Chi Instructor.

Meet at the Eastern Prom Trail trailhead at the corner of Commercial and India Streets.

Wednesday, November 17th, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Portland Trails Board Meeting

The public is always welcome to join us at our bimonthly board meetings in the conference room of the Casco Bay Ferry Terminal on Commercial Street.

For more information, please call Portland Trails at 775-2411 or email us at info@trails.org.

THANK YOU...

Portland Trails would like to thank these very special volunteers who shared their expertise with us this year by leading our series of "Senior Stroll" guided walks.

- ❖ **Liz Bradford**, owner of Enerjoy Health/Fitness Programs in Falmouth
- ❖ **Rebecca Stephans**, founder and primary yoga teacher at Diamond Center, a yoga and bodywork studio on Peaks Island
- ❖ **Dr. Mark Swanson**, Department of Geosciences, University of Southern Maine.
- ❖ **Lois Winter**, Conservation Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—Gulf of Maine Program
- ❖ **Paula Mueller**, Tai Chi Instructor—you can still catch this great walk, see the Events Calendar for details!

304 RUNNERS AND WALKERS GO THE DISTANCE (6.2 MILES!) TO SUPPORT PORTLAND TRAILS

BY NAN CUMMING

DESPITE OMINOUS WEATHER FORECASTS throughout the week, the morning of the Portland Trails 10K Race/Walk dawned fresh, clear, sunny, and cool. Perfect running weather. And the course—following the Eastern Prom Trail with a loop around Back Cove—is a stunner in any weather.

Portland Trails originally conceived the race 5 years ago to celebrate the connection of the Eastern Prom and Back Cove Trails. Now, the race/walk is a highly-anticipated event in the racing schedule. We are proud to attract some of the fastest runners in the region along with recreational walkers who come to enjoy some healthy exercise in a fun, social setting.

This year's event was held on September 19. Ethan Hemphill of Freeport topped the male division with a

time of 33:12 and Kacie Herrick of Auburn won the women's field in 43:37.

We are grateful for the support of our 10K sponsors: Healthy Portland and Healthy Maine Partnerships, Norway Savings Bank, Hannaford Supermarkets, The Patagonia Outlet, Intermed, Orthopaedic Associates of Portland, Portland Water District, SMRT, The Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Co. and Museum, Shipyard Brewing Company, Grapheteria, Organic Trails, The Bay Club, Associated Portable Toilets, BagelWorks, LT's Inc., and B&M Baked Beans, for the work of race consultant Charlie Scribner and 10K committee member Mark Goettel, t-shirt designer Laura Newman—and our great crew of volunteers.

See you all September 18, 2005!



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