

FALL NEWSLETTER 2005

Volume 14 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.

Just in Time for the School Year

Portland Trails Goes Literary

BY BOB KRUG

BY THE USUAL CRITERIA OF ORGANIZATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT, Portland Trails' is quite successful. Its Board of Trustees can point to many accomplishments that attest to the effectiveness of their stewardship. On one particular criterion, though, their performance is off the scale, exceeding all reasonable expectations. The Board is really, really good at selecting Executive Directors. Two at-bats, two home runs. It comes as no great surprise, then that both of the multi-talented women who have held the position are adding "author" to their resumes in 2005.

Nan Cumming, our Director since 1999, took a longer road to publication than she had expected. In 1997, when Nan was Assistant Director of the Maine Historical Society, she presented a paper, "Following Diana: The New Woman in the Maine Woods," at a conference on the History of Women in Maine. Her paper was derived from a section of her 1995 master's thesis. Nan's was one of the conference papers selected for publication by the University of Maine Press. It took seven years, but at last, the Press issued *Of Place and Gender: Women in Maine History* in the Spring of 2005.

Now that book is out I give it a "thumbs up." In it, I met a host of fascinating 19th and early 20th century women who braved the outdoors and broke convention when society wanted them to stay in the kitchen. Nan's chapter highlights "Fly Rod" Crosby, a remarkable woman who coined the phrase "Maine: The Nation's Playground," and who, in 1897, became the first licensed Maine Guide. Other chapters profile everyone from Penobscot basket makers to the wives of 19th century sea captains.

For Alix Hopkins, her seven-plus year tenure as our first Executive Director was the transforming experience of her life. She lived the process whereby volunteer effort directed toward a goal metamorphoses into something much broader. Building a trail became building a community. Her wish to share these experiences led her to write the book, *Groundswell: Saving Places, Finding*

[continued on next page]



Peter Monro and Alix Hopkins made a pretty good team right from the Portland Trails start for in 1991.

Photo: Courtesy of Groundswell

Just in Time

[continued]

Community, which has been published by The Trust for Public Land. In it, she profiles five projects around the country that exemplify the expansive, multiplicative principle represented by the creation of Portland Trails. In addition



Photo: Courtesy of Groundswell

Volunteers building one of the first PT boardwalks. PT co-founders Nathan Smith and Tom Jewell were part of the crew, shown second and third from the right, respectively.

to PT, readers learn about the restoration of a river in the Bronx; creating a community forest in Bellingham, Washington; a collaboration of ranchers in Montana; an economic development program in rural North Carolina; and an unusual example of community-supported agriculture in Minnesota and Wisconsin. It took four and a half years to research and write, but on August 19, 2005, Alix held the first author's advance copies in her hand. I anticipate reading it.

We offer our sincere congratulations to the two women who have so successfully guided Portland Trails. Join us on Wednesday, October 19 to offer yours in person—your invitation to our publication party is included in the center of this newsletter. 🐾

NEWS FROM MILE 0.0

MAINE OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND

The *Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund* (MOHF) has been helping to fund critical conservation and wildlife projects throughout the state since it was created by the legislature in response to a grassroots effort from environmental and sportsman's groups in 1996. Portland Trails received generous funding from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund to build our trail along the Fore River in 2000. In 2003 another MOHF grant helped fund the construction of the Presumpscot River Trail.



Supported solely through proceeds from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Lottery Ticket, MOHF finds its funds lagging while grant proposals continue to pour in. So if you enjoy playing the lottery, choose the new “Lucky Duck” ticket—so even if you don't win your money will support many great projects!



Photo: Vivian Turcott

PORTLAND PERFECT BECAUSE OF TRAILS

As you know, Portland regularly ranks high on many lists of best places to live, visit, raise children, etc. And now Portland has received even more accolades. First, *Vegetarian Times* cited Portland as one of their top ten “green towns” in the United States. They praised Portland Trails' work in particular. In August, *Outside* magazine rated U.S. towns in their “Where to Live Now: 18 Perfect Towns that Have it All.” Portland was included there too—and again, the magazine credited Portland Trails' work in making the city such a great place to live and play! Thanks to all of our supporters who make it possible!

HEY: SCHOOL'S IN!

What do we have to look forward to now that vacation is over?

WELL, *Education*. And with beaches and blockbuster movies in the rearview mirror, how about renewed focus on *Health and Education*? By extension, how about *Health Education*? With the growing trend toward obesity in children, as well as adults, we know it's important. But, on the national, state and local levels, less money is available to establish, build, and maintain infrastructure for "good clean simple" outdoor recreation. It's needed more, but happening less.

What to do? Reverse this situation...

Who is to do it? The answer, as always, is not some faceless "they," but "we!" Portland Trails is already on the job:

- Securing land and protecting it in perpetuity;
- Building trail networks on these lands;
- Working in our schools to get our kids out on the trails.

We are in the schools to create play exercise, certainly. But we are also there to help kids learn to make better choices about health and behavior. And we're there to engage the kids in land and trail stewardship, so that the trails in their town – the trails that may one day connect their home to their school – will exist where they are all grown up.

Portland Trails: The answer. Right here. Right now.

After a brief moment of celebration, let's crank our goal up a notch. Portland Trails makes it easy, even fun, to stay healthy? Why not?

See ya out there!



Roger K. Berle

ROGER BERLE
President, Board of Trustees

P.S. If we get today's kids on the case, they can take over for us when it's time...



Students at Riverton School plan improvements for their school grounds.

OFFICERS

Roger Berle, *President*
Brent Bridges, *Vice President*
Jeff Sommer, *Vice President*
Aurelia C. Scott, *Secretary*
Rob Levin, *Treasurer*

TRUSTEES

M. Cheryl Brandt
Russell A. DeConti
Tony Donovan
Elizabeth Ehrenfeld
Jayne Engel
Tom Farmer
John Fidrych
Mark Goettel
Tom Jewell, *Co-Founder*
David Littell
Cheri Musgrave
John Osborn
Betsy Peters
Tim Prince
Nan Sawyer
Amy Steenstra
Bill Sweeney
Clarkson Woodward
Arthur Woolverton

ADVISORY TRUSTEES

Dick Anderson
Colin Baker
Timothy Brooks
David Buchanan
Jim Cohen
Abigail King Diggins
Bruce Hyman
Susy Kist
Bob Krug
Wendell Large
Burnham Martin
J. Peter Monro
Phil Poirier
Eliza Cope Nolan
Nathan Smith, *Co-Founder*
Richard Spencer, *Co-Founder*
Phil Thompson
Lois Winter

STAFF

Nan Cumming, *Executive Director*
Laura Newman, *Education and Community Outreach Coordinator*
Jaime Parker, *Trails Manager*
Isabel Aley, *Development and Communications Assistant*
Jamien Jacobs, *Curriculum Consultant*

Photo: Laura Newman

SCHOOLS GROUNDS AS LEARNING LANDSCAPES

BY CATHERINE GENTILE

STUDENTS AND STAFF at the Dora Small Elementary, Longfellow Elementary and Nathan Clifford Schools have much to talk about this fall while they work in their outdoor classrooms: flowers-setting seed pods, shimmering spider webs, even a puff mushroom or two. Science is about observation, and that's what students are doing – observing changes in the gardens they built and planted as part of Portland Trails' 2004-2005 School Greening Projects.

This isn't ordinary playground chatter coming from Longfellow School students. Listen carefully – the children are describing how their herb garden and chestnut tree have changed over the summer. The pond is now teaming with plants, dragonflies and other darting insects.

A Dora Small student uses his shadow to tell time by standing on the analemma with his arms raised. Others



Nathan Clifford School students plant raised beds.

notice the increased number of birds and butterflies – must be the bird and butterfly houses they built last year. Another girl weeded and watered the gardens this summer and distributed the vegetables.

Watch – a child leaps in the air, lands in a cloud of dust. She and her classmates at Longfellow are in the outdoor



Small School Students at work improving their school grounds.

classroom discussing displacement of matter. During language arts class, one student uses the dust cloud as an image in the poem he is writing. When the social studies teacher asks how the settlers on the Conestoga wagon train felt at the end of the day, a dust-lined hand shoots up. "Like they ought to take a bath," she answers.

"How many dust particles are in that cloud?" the math teacher asks.

"I don't know."

"How about using what we know about probability to figure it out?" she suggests.

Logical thinking. Modeling that it's okay to take risks, to make educated guesses.

The green space at Nathan Clifford is flourishing thanks to the students who planted shrubs as part of their science unit on erosion. Students here have made Joni Mitchell proud by turning their parking lot back into a paradise.

The dust cloud has settled.

"Can anyone guess what diffusion means?"

After lively speculation, the teacher prompts, "Where did the dust go?"

"To the ground."

"It blew away."

"Up my nose."

Others at Longfellow are in The Learning Courtyard, another Portland Trails' School Greening project. They're planting bulbs purchased with funds from a Portland Trails' grant. They'll get the tools from a Garden

House designed and built, complete with window box and bird bath, by the Girl Scouts.

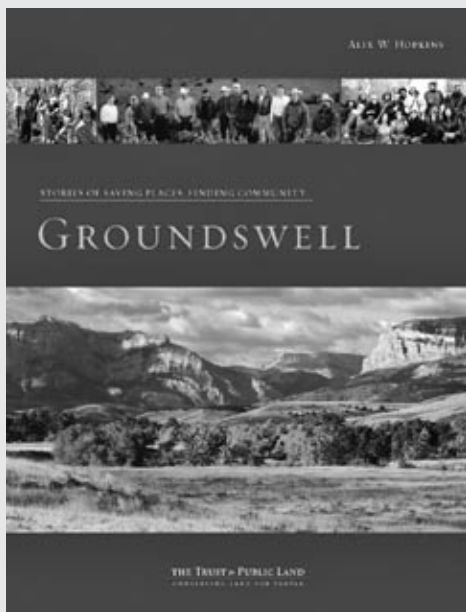
Jamien Jacobs, Curriculum Consultant at Portland Trails reports that this year, students will be building nature trails, tracking the coming of spring in the Journey North Project, adopting trees and monitoring their growth. Students and staff at the new East End School (that's the working name for the old Jack School on Munjoy Hill) will enjoy the green space that a committee of administrators and community members (including Portland Trails) folded into their landscape-to-be.

Jamien notes, "I'm looking forward to helping teachers and kids figure out how to use their outdoor spaces as part of their learning landscape." As the smiles of students at the Dora Small Elementary, Longfellow Elementary and Nathan Clifford Schools show –learning is fun out there. ☺

Portland Trails PUBLICATION PARTY

Wednesday, October 19 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm
Jameson Gallery, 305 Commercial Street

Come help us celebrate the publication of:



Groundswell: Saving Places, Finding Community by Alix Hopkins,
former Portland Trails Executive Director

'Following Diana, The New Woman in the Maine Woods', a chapter within
Of Place and Gender: Women in Maine History by Nan Cumming, current Portland Trails Executive Director

Portland Trails Map and Trail Guide: 2nd Edition

Enjoy brief readings from both books, light refreshments, and Jameson Gallery's exhibitions: *Paintings from the World*, works by Thomas Paquette and *The Water is Wide*, works by William Manning.

Please RSVP to Isabel Aley at 775-2411 or Isabel@trails.org

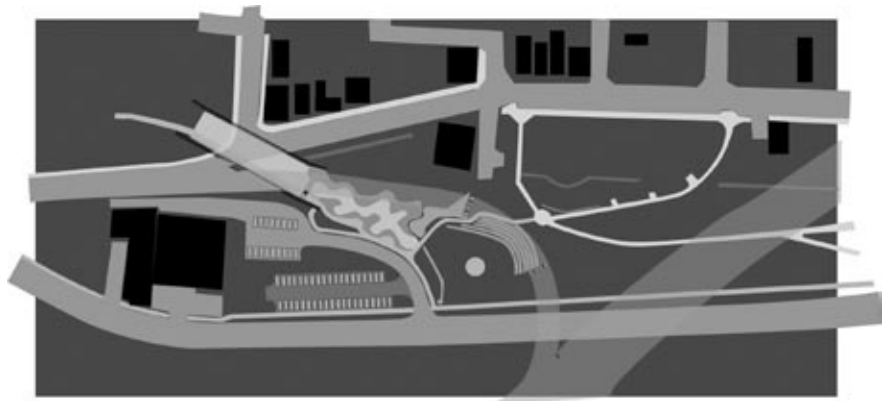
CASCO BAY BRIDGE'S HARBOR VIEW PARK:

A New Home for Portland's Skateboarders?

BY MARSC R. HILLS

Take yourself back to downtown Portland in 1995. Kids on skateboards are at it again: maybe a half dozen of them, plying Middle Street next to the Nickelodeon Theater, practicing jumps onto, over and off of the traffic barrier

in the middle of the street. Traffic lurches as drivers dodge airborne teens and avoid the barrier, which is spray-painted with symbols, "tags" in the parlance of the urban street artist.



C. Michael Lewis

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DECADE MAKES. Today, a dedicated skate park exists for a community of boarders on Marginal Way, and the "Legal Wall", an expansive stretch of concrete that borders the East End Water Treatment Plant, offers a sanctioned canvas for the urban street artist.

Except that all is not well in the Forest City. The Marginal Way SK-8 park, suffering from neglect and located on land subject to an impending Portland/MeDOT land swap, will close within 18 months.

"My understanding was it was always supposed to be a temporary location," Eli Cayer says of the current skate park. "And it isn't skate friendly anymore, the tar has deteriorated and the barriers have gotten spread out or disappeared altogether."

Cayer, a community organizer and street artist, has been bicycling the streets of Portland as a messenger for a decade, and riding them as a skateboarder for two.

"Skateboarding and bicycling have really changed the way I see the landscape," Cayer confesses. "I don't see walls or barriers, I see places to skate and paint." And he's always had an eye open for just the right spot for a new park for alternative sports and artists.

Eli Cayer believes he has found the ideal space. And Portland Trails thinks he just might be right.

"The first time I saw it, I was blown away," Eli says of the vast subterranean tunnel beneath the Casco Bay Bridge. "In its day, two freight trains would pass through it simultaneously carrying goods from Portland Harbor to the Boston and Maine and the Grand Trunk Railroads." Abandoned at the close of the railroad's heyday, the tunnel is known to few except urban artists who decorated the columns of the old Million Dollar Bridge and others at the very margins of society.

Eli Cayer's vision for it includes a skate park, new "Legal Wall," and a venue for alternative art, rock bands, and world class skateboarding demonstrations. He also sees the area becoming a vital link to Portland Trails' planned extension of the Waterfront Trail to western Commercial Street.

"That place is filthy now, and a little scary," says Cayer. "Build a trail there and no one will want to use it. But give it to the skateboarders and street artists, and they'll take care of it, make it safe, make it a destination."

The City of Portland, Portland Trails and Cayer's organization, MENSK [the act of good intention], are bringing his vision of a permanent home for skateboarders and alternative street artists closer to reality. Once little more than landscaped varnish to a one end of the Casco Bay Bridge, Harbor View Parks sits poised to become an important link in Portland's vibrant urban lifestyle. 🐾

Volunteer Profile: Mary Collins

BY AURELIA C. SCOTT

IF YOU STOPPED AT a Portland Trails' information table in the last two years, you probably met Mary Collins. Mary is a PT volunteer who doesn't shovel gravel or swing a hammer. Instead, she spreads the word about trails as an outreach volunteer.

Mary brings a background in conservation and education to her PT role. She grew up on a farm near Lewiston and has always loved the outdoors. She is a member of Gorham Trails and serves as President of Gorham Land Trust.

When she isn't helping a land-based group, Mary selects books for Gorham Public Library's home delivery program. It is heartening to choose books for strangers, she says, many of whom tell her, 'you decide for me.'

"I've realized that I'm desperate to please them. I want to select the perfect book every time."

Mary came to Portland Trails through OLLI – the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at USM. She was part of OLLI's service learning course that developed

a recruitment program to engage more seniors in Portland Trails' work.

"At least they got me out of it," she laughs.

Before retirement, Mary taught in USM's graduate program for adult education. She now serves on OLLI's curriculum committee, and

lucky for us, takes one OLLI course a semester. She reports that USM recently beat out such institutions as Harvard and Duke to become the National Resource Center for the nationwide OLLI program.

"An active senior college system makes it attractive for folks to retire here," says Mary. More folks retiring here means more seniors to be recruited to Portland Trails' unique blend of volunteer activities.

"There are lots of seniors who use and care about the trails," says Mary. "Now we're letting them know that Portland Trails is as fun as the trails themselves." 🐾



Mary Collins

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, September 24, 9:00 – 12:00 p.m.

Volunteer Work Day: Nathan Clifford School

We'll continue our partnership with the Nathan Clifford PTO by greening the Nathan Clifford School grounds, planting 15 trees and other plants, weeding, and preparing the garden for winter. The culmination of two years of work by students, teachers, and parents! If you have them, bring basic gardening tools and shovels (labeled with your name) and workgloves. Refreshments will be provided. Meet at the back of the Nathan Clifford school. Call Portland Trails at 775-2411 for more information.

Friday, October 21, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Senior Stroll: "A Bit of Portland History" on the Eastern Prom Trail with Rep. Herb Adams

Join Herb Adams for a fascinating walk along the Portland waterfront where he will describe the history of Portland and the enormous impact that the coastline has had on the City's development from colonial times to the present. Please RSVP by calling Portland Trails at 775-2411 or emailing info@trails.org

Wednesday, October 19, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Publication Party at Jameson Gallery, 305 Commercial Street

Portland Trails has three publications to celebrate! Former Portland Trails Executive Director Alix Hopkins will read a selection from her book, "Groundswell — Stories of Saving Places, Finding Community," published in September. Current Executive Director Nan Cumming will read an excerpt of her chapter in "Of Place and Gender: Women in Maine History," entitled "Following Diana: The New Woman in the Maine Woods," published in March. Finally, the new edition of the "Portland Trails Map and Trail Guide" will be available for preview and purchase. Come join us at the Jameson Gallery for this very special event. Please RSVP to isabel@trails.org or call the office at 775-2411.

Every Thursday evening

Trail Maintenance and Construction

**Portland Trails' storage shed, Stroudwater Trail,
at the end of Blueberry Road**

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



Portland Trails
 305 Commercial Street
 Portland, ME 04101
 207.775.2411
 info@trails.org

Non Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Portland, ME
 Permit No. 675

Visit our website at www.trails.org

Printed on recycled paper. Layout and typography by O'Brien Design.

Join Us In Building Portland Trails!

Give this to a friend **or** Suggest someone who might want to join. (We'll send them a free newsletter.)

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

MC/Visa # _____ Exp.Date _____

Name as written on card, if different from above: _____

Membership Levels:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Bridgebuilder..... | \$1000 | Family..... | \$50 |
| Trailblazer..... | \$500 | Individual..... | \$35 |
| Pathfinder..... | \$250 | Student/Senior..... | \$10 |
| Bushwhacker-..... | \$100 | | |



Make checks payable to:

Portland Trails
 305 Commercial Street
 Portland, ME 04101
 207.775.2411