

"Singing Grounds:" Woodcock like new habitat site



Photos by Amber Roth.

Woodcock nesting adjacent to one of the Singing Grounds created during the past two years by OLT volunteers and UM students on the Caribou Bog Conservation Area. Hatched eggs in nest (at right).

Amber Roth, Assistant Professor of Forest Wildlife Management, School of Forest Resources & Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology at UM Orono has sent this photo and note:

"I've visited the two log landings where we cleared trees on a couple evenings recently. I've observed male woodcock displaying on both the south landing and the north opening of the north landing. I also found a woodcock nest just east of the south landing... The woodcock nest near the south log landing at Caribou Bog hatched this morning. I found the hen with 4 chicks a few meters from the nest. The chicks are now banded!"



Special: Thanks to OLT Volunteers

This issue celebrates the many volunteers who make the OLT a powerhouse of land stewardship in our area. For over 30 years, the OLT has been an all-volunteer community engaged in conserving forests, wetlands, recreation trails and habitat. Behind the scenes, there is also the work of grantwriting, organizing, and education about the issues that drive the land trust movement. The Board of the OLT includes members who work on finances, legal issues, and environmental sciences.

Have a look inside this newsletter edition and allow us to express gratitude for our great community. Consider joining us on trail days, fundraising, outreach, membership ... we have a great time doing this good work. Join us! See pages 4-6.

Interested in helping with OLT trail work? Contact Bucky Owen (buckyandsue@gmail.com) 866-4892



Photo by Gail White

Trail work and stewardship of habitat is accomplished by a great community of OLT volunteers.

Veazie Railroad Trail Update

by Bucky Owen

Well, what a season so far!!! We removed over 300 trees along the RR berm; most dead or dying fir and large aspen with dying tops. The University (UM Orono) will finish clearing their section of the railroad bed. Recently, we widened 2000' of the Kirkland access trail; we had 3 brush saws and 3 chainsaws working all morning. Seven employees of **Woodard and Curran Engineering** helped with the work.



Photo by Jenn Dann

See more on this, next page by OLT's Vice President Ben Hale.

Comparison photos show progress on the Veazie Railroad Trail reaching towards the Kirkland Road extension in the Caribou Bog Corridor project.

OLT Board member Bucky Owen and Mac Hunter, Emeriti professors from the UM Orono Department of Wildlife Ecology, authored an opinion piece in the **Bangor Daily News**. The May 18 essay states: "Among the many successes of this year's legislative session is a modest update to state law that will significantly protect biodiversity in the face of accelerating landscape change... LD 736 allows the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) to expand Maine's ecological reserve system, which is a network of public and private lands that was created in 2000 to protect select examples of all the different types of ecosystems found in Maine. Ecological reserves also offer premier sites for recreation, including hunting and fishing."

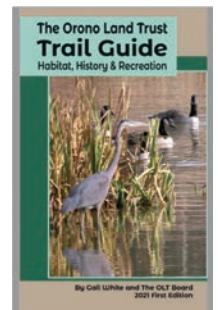


Photo by Gail White
Bucky Owen and Cricket

American Chestnut Project report, also from Bucky Owen: "Great day in the orchard; 11 of us reset the mats, fertilized the trees, and weeded. Everything looks good, only 1-2 trees didn't make it through the winter. Very dry so Charlie and I filled the water tank in preparation to water the orchard... Our tallest tree is 8'

6" with several coming right behind it! That's two years of growth!!!! Thank you, everyone; great job."

A hearty thank you to all who have already purchased a copy of the **OLT Trail Guide**. Thank you to our business partners who have stocked and help sell our books: **Rose Bike, Ampersand, Marsh Island Brewery** in Orono, Bangor's **Epic Sports, Slippin' Gears, Ski Rack**, and **Pat's Bike** in Brewer. Explore new places! And it makes a nice gift for visitors to our area.



The Orono Land Trust was selected to be a beneficiary of the **Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag Program** during the month of May. A portion of each Community Bag purchase goes to a local non-profit in need. Donations from Community Bag sales support civic, education, health & wellness and military/veterans organizations. OLT has been gifted \$178.00 from this effort. Thanks!



Progress on the Veazie Railroad Trail (VRT)

by Vice President Ben Hale

As noted in a previous newsletter, OLT received a \$50,000 grant from the Maine Recreational Trails Program to upgrade the VRT from Kirkland Ave in Old Town to Bangor Land Trust's Walden Park. OLT is obligated to provide an additional \$20,000 in match, including labor and use of our equipment.

Our work began in earnest this May with the removal of trees along the railroad bed between Pine Pond corner and the Kirkland Trail. These were primarily dead and dying fir overhanging the trail, affecting drainage and adding roots to the trail surface.

Then, our own Dave Erker hopped onto an excavator, and for 6-½ days pulled stumps and leveled much of the berm adjacent to the trail to improve drainage. By June 1st this work was completed, and a major clean-up began, chipping branches, removing logs, cutting small roots, leveling the berm, and seeding exposed areas. This work will occupy us through June.

In late June a Maine Conservation Corps 3-person team will join OLT volunteers for a month to spread gravel on much of the trail. We will need 3 to 6 OLT volunteers daily during July to accomplish this work.

Finally, in August we will tackle the drainage problems in the Orono Bog. We plan to build a bridge, install two culverts, add beaver deceivers, and resurface the entire bed to the Bangor Forest. We just signed a contract for 1200 yards of gravel to be delivered to various sites along the entire trail. We will spread the gravel from these sites using three tractors and dump trailers.

As you can see, we have a tremendous amount of work to accomplish. The grant is for two years, but we hope to get most of the work done this summer, fine tuning everything next year.

If you haven't already, please consider joining our volunteer cadre; wonderful exercise, great camaraderie, and below minimum wage! Contact Bucky Owen if you are interested (buckyandPhoto by Jenn Dann Comparisonsue@gmail.com).

OLT Board Activity

Several changes on the OLT Board recently include retiring member Molly Mac Lean, who will continue to volunteer on Membership (thank you!!). New member Dave Erker joins the Board (again! Thanks!) and is active on trail work.

White-tailed Deer Harvest on Piney Knoll

by J.R. Longcore

In 2011 OLT initiated an archery hunting program for White-tailed Deer on Piney Knoll Conservation Area (PKCA). The deer herd had expanded substantially on Marsh Island so that landscaping vegetation around homes was being heavily browsed, which elicited complaints from homeowners. The number of associated black-legged deer ticks also was noticeably high, which exposed residents to Lyme Disease and other tick-borne maladies. During 2011 through 2016 I issued 40-60 permits annually on a first-come basis; however, up to 19 applicants did not hunt in any given year. Starting in 2017, to improve the situation, I issued up to 50 permits but only 25 would be for an Early Season and 25 for a Late Season, thus reducing the numbers of hunters afield at any given time but affording at least 50 individuals an opportunity to hunt.

Forty-one deer have been harvested on PKCA, 18 males and 23 females, with 15 deer having been harvested in the first year (2011). For perspective, the historical White-tailed Deer harvest by bow in the Town of Orono ranged from 2-20 per year with mean of 9 during 2003 to 2010 and kill ranged from 9-41 per year with a mean of 22 during 2011-2021. Hunter reporting of ticks has been inconsistent; however, it seems that fewer ticks have been noted by hunters since 2018. OLT's participation in the Expanded Archery Season of the ME Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has broadened the diversity of recreational activities available to residents and students on PKCA, while alleviating some homeowner concerns.



OLT President Adam Toothaker wrangles with a beaver deceiver device at Caribou Bog.

Orono Land Trust celebrates our volunteer community!

Photos by Gail White, with Jenn Dann & Linda Swackhamer

We are an all-volunteer Board and an amazing amount of people power goes into the work we do in this area (Orono, Old Town, Veazie and Argyle).

OLT wants to thank and celebrate our community for contributing their skills, effort, and dedication to the land. Our commitment to conservation work is apparent in the many trails we maintain, ski tracks we groom, and habitats we restore. Unseen is also the grant writing, accounting, legal counsel, outreach and education. Tractor driving, gravel hauling, and wildlife science... It truly takes a village.

Recreation and habitat conservation are ingredients for the good life in Maine, and this is the work of land trusts. We acknowledge the Penobscot Nation, whose land and waters we reside on, and where we endeavor to leave 'a beautiful trace' with our words and deeds. Thank you!



Volunteers replace a bridge during trail work with canine assistance.



Installing beaver devices is a way to work with wildlife in the wetlands.



Big equipment, cooperation, and elbow grease get the job done in trail work on the Veazie Railroad trail.



Joanna Toothaker shows the joy of discovering turtle eggs during a culvert replacement at Caribou Bog.



Girl Scout Troop #1806 helps out in the American Chestnut orchard project, demonstrating their STEM skills.



Photo by Linda Swackhamer

OLT Board member Gail White proves that the Manter Pine on the Manter Easement in Veazie is a grand old tree.



These volunteers assemble a bench at Otter Point (it looks like a Flintstones skateboard, but it's not.)



The Stillwater trail is decorated by volunteers for the public's holiday enjoyment. Thanks to Tony Francis for organizing this community celebration.



The Caribou Bog trail system has nice paths for winter sports, grooming provided by volunteers from the Penobscot Valley Ski Club and OLT members.



Photo by Linda Swackhamer
Dave Thompson describing future projects at CBCA.



Photo by Jenn Dann
"The Four Sawyers of the Apocalypse" working on the Veazie railroad trail.

UM Orono Capstone students volunteer for OLT

by Linda Swackhamer

This school year, OLT has been fortunate to host Capstone students from UMO. Capstone projects demonstrate skills and service to the community. At right is a poster produced by student Isabelle Jandreau, who worked with OLT member Joanna Toothaker. Jandreau designed safety and protocol materials, including videos, for the OLT CNC (Computer Numerical Control) Sign Project. OLT launched a signmaking effort to produce durable wayfinding and interpretive signs on our stewarded properties.

UMO student Jason Clarke is also working with OLT Board member Tim White on website development and database design for our membership work. Thank you!





Photo by Linda Swackhamer

The Orono Bog Boardwalk is open for the season, a must-see! Check it out at <https://oronolandtrust.org/lands-trails-maps/trails/orono-bog-boardwalk/>.

Unauthorized bike trails at Piney Knoll

by Jenn Dann

Though not a mountain biker myself, Piney Knoll Conservation Area seems like a great place to bike. Nice hills, good connectivity to UMaine trails and town, and even a trail designed and built by mountain bikers with some light jumps and rails. The property on the other side of the railroad tracks from Piney Knoll (*which is NOT owned by OLT*) is crisscrossed by lots of bike trails and small jumps.

Unfortunately, we've had a spate of unauthorized mountain bike trails built on Piney Knoll. OLT has in the past considered additional trails to meet the requests of our recreationists, and our mission includes balancing conservation with development. But we also need to provide some uninterrupted habitat for the wildlife, and we need to limit erosion from trails into the stream on the property. We think we have a good balance of trails and open space at Piney Knoll to meet those goals.

Bottom line, it is never OK to make new trails on property without permission from the landowner. If you'd like to get more involved in OLT trail maintenance and decision making, we would love to have you volunteer!

Mike O: A Natural Wonder

by Jenn Dann

Mike Opitz knows OLT's Piney Knoll Conservation Area (PKCA) thoroughly. As the steward of this property for the past 15 years, and a fellow with a steel trap of a mind, he knows the details of the land. He's built new trails and kiosks, put up signage, overseen a timber harvest, tackled garbage dumping problems, hosted tours and natural resource inventories, researched cultural history of the land, planted trees, tested soils, marked boundaries, listened to neighbors' concerns, mowed grass and shoveled snow, cut down countless broken limbs and trees, pruned fruit trees, you name it. And – this deserves its own sentence because of its massive impact – has singlehandedly removed thousands of invasive plants from the property.



Photo by Jenn Dann

That's Mike Opitz at PKCA.

Having done all that, you would think he might have lost a sense of wonder for the place. And yet, on one of our recent walkabouts of Piney Knoll, he stops in sheer admiration of a massive white pine tree, considers how old it is, appreciates that it has avoided serious pest damage, and takes a photo of it. A few weeks later, he texts to tell me of some new white flowers he's not seen before that a friend is helping him identify. He clearly has a deep love and respect for this place.

Mike has decided to retire from his steward role at Piney Knoll, although he is still out there almost daily continuing to work and wonder. All we at OLT can say is thanks, Mike. You've made an indelible difference to Piney Knoll and made it a very special place for our community. You're one of its wonders!

The Giant Ichneumonid Wasp— A Parasitoid of a Related Hymenopteran Insect

A series of events preceded the opportunity to observe and photograph the egg-laying behavior of this Long-tailed Ichneumonid Wasp (*Megarhyssa macrurus*). Several years ago, I had a large Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) cut down that was taking moisture from the garden; however, the 5-foot-high stump was left standing, which provided the idea substrate for the interaction of the two Hymenopteran species, both common in Eastern North America. Certain hardwood trees, especially Silver Maple, attract a type of non-stinging wasp called the "Pigeon Tremex Horntail" (*Tremex columba*) that oviposits its eggs under the bark where the larvae hatch and bore tunnels in the decaying wood until they pupate within the burrow.

The Giant Ichneumonid is a natural enemy of this species of horntail because it lays its eggs on the larvae of the horntail that hatch, then the ichneumonid larva enters and consumes the paralyzed horntail larvae. The Giant Ichneumonid is known as a "parasitoid" because it kills its host. The sequence of events for these images started when the female with a nearly 3-inch-long ovipositor arrived at the Silver Maple (Fig. 1). The female staged at a selected location on the stump (Fig. 2) then she assumed the drilling position to enter the wood

(Fig. 3) and Fig. 4 depicts the position in which eggs were being deposited.

Events in the natural world are usually interconnected and this story is no different. It seems that the spores of a saprobic "white-rot" fungus (*Cerrena unicolor*) get into the ovipositor of the horntail when she lays her eggs, and after the spores germinate the growing mycelium provides food for the horntail larvae (Kuo, 2007). The fungus also enhances the success of the Giant Ichneumonid by emitting a pheromone that can lead the ichneumonid to the horntail! This fact piqued my curiosity, so I examined the old stump for this fungus, which has



Photos by J.R. Longcore.
Fig. 1: Giant Ichneumonid arrives.

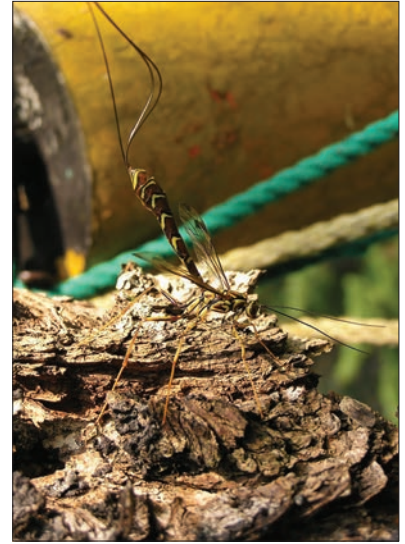


Fig. 2: Female at oviposition site.



Fig. 3: Female in drilling position.

(Con't. next page)



Fig. 4: Female in position of inserting eggs.



Fig. 5: Under surface of fungus.

(Con't. from pg. 8) a distinctive underside surface of maze-like pores, which I found (Fig. 5). The top of this polypore was also stained green from algae, another common condition for this fungal species. Thousands of events like this are ongoing daily; alas we are privileged to see only a few of them.

See these references for more information:

Kuo, M. (2007, March). *Cerrena unicolor*. Retrieved from the MushroomExpert.Com Web site: http://www.mushroomexpert.com/cerrena_unicolor.html

Pigeon Tremex Horntail and the Giant Ichneumon Wasp (<http://extension.colosate.edu/topic-areas/insects/pigeon-tremex-horntail-and-the-giant-ichneumon-wasp-5-604/>)



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Thank you!

Gratitude to the local businesses that have sponsored sales of the OLT Trail Guide.

These shops have provided sales and display space for the book, \$15, with all proceeds going towards land stewardship work.

Thanks to: Rose Bike, Ampersand, and Marsh Island Brewery in Orono. Epic Sports, Ski Rack, and Slippin' Gears in Bangor. Pat's Bike in Brewer.

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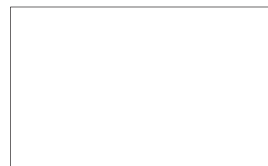
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Calendar

• Next Board meeting: Wed., August 10, 6:30pm, (online?),
no July meeting.

Membership renewal dates are printed next to your address on mailed print versions of this newsletter. Electronic versions of the newsletter do not contain your info. To renew your membership, contact our website oronolandtrust.org. Thanks!



Please check for membership expiration date on your address label above.

Orono Land Trust Membership Application / www.oronolandtrust.org

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