



- ORONO - LAND - TRUST -

AN INVESTMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



Serving Orono and surrounding communities

www.oronolandtrust.org

Vol. 138, Fall 2024

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OLT considers the future: We have questions

by Linda Swackhamer

The Orono Land Trust has been an all-volunteer organization for over 40 years. Our very active Board members and a small core of volunteers perform all of the tasks in this community-based environmental group. Our skill sets are diverse: outreach, construction, financial. We are foresters, botanists, birders, grant writers, techies and graphic artists. Some members lead trail walks for the public, and some have governmental experience in Augusta. The Orono area is diverse. There is a sense of community engagement baked into Maine's culture. What's your expertise?

OLT is asking questions about the future: What does conservation look like in times of climate change? What is the role of recreation, and how does it coexist with our mission of protecting habitat? What is OLT's place here on traditional Penobscot territory? How can we walk together as people who share a love of this land?

We have seen a lot of changes in the decades since OLT was founded. And we do think about the future. **Our mission remains:** "The Orono Land Trust exists to protect, manage, and preserve portions of the natural environment in Orono and surrounding communities, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. We work to balance conservation and development, extend and maintain trail systems connecting natural areas, encourage appreciation of natural habitats and ensure perpetual access to public lands and waters."

Our members have a wealth of skills and experience: How can we build on that 'human equity' and grow into what will be a very different environmental future? How do our senior members share their decades of work? **And, importantly, how do you get your news and information? Social media, texts? Do you use the OLT website for maps and announcements?**

We welcome members of all ages and backgrounds. We can use your help in trail maintenance, media, education, legal matters, and fundraising. Adopt a trail. Organize a hike. Join OLT, let's build this community's future together. Email Ben at President@OronoLandTrust.org to connect and share your skills.



Photos by Adam Toothaker

Bucky Owen and Charlie Todd (above) inspect an American Chestnut sapling. The trees have been inspected for blight, and prepared for winter weather. Below, a volunteer shows viable chestnut seeds collected in the American Chestnut Project orchard.

Chestnut Project preps for winter

OLT Board member Bucky Owen declared, "Great day in the orchard today!" Owen directed a team of volunteers to inspect and provide winter protection for the American Chestnut tree grove that OLT is growing in Orono. This work is part of a larger project to bring back an iconic tree. A terrible blight decimated chestnuts in the eastern forests of the U.S. A long-term breeding program in several states is using science to breed a more resistant tree that is valued for its food, timber and as an important habitat component.



Helping out were: Adam T., Alan G., Glen K., Gudrun K., Jenn D., Sharon F., Kate L., Charlie T., Linda S., Isabel H., Peter J., and Bucky O. Metal or plastic sleeves were placed at the base of each tree (about 105 trees) and then soil was mounded around the sleeves to prevent small mammals from girdling the base of the trees under the snow. We found several viable chestnuts on the ground (a first!), but also detected blight on 1 or 2 trees. There are 28 trees with fruit on them.

OLT members have planted a pollinator garden in the orchard to support the Winsome Fly, which parasitizes Japanese beetles. Charlie T. has submitted a grant proposal to increase the number of these gardens both in the orchard and at several other locations at CBCA.



Photo by Dave Erker

A new garage for equipment is going up at CBCA (above), next to Dave's Depot.



Photos by Adam Toothaker

Volunteers work to build the new garage, which will house gear for maintaining trails at CBCA.

New garage is built for trail gear at CBCA

OLT and the Penobscot Valley Ski Club own tractors, ski groomers, and tools of all kinds that are used by volunteers to maintain trails in all seasons. A new facility is expected to be completed soon to store the gear at the Caribou Bog Conservation Area (CBCA). The construction team jumped in to create a 4-bay garage that provides secure storage. Kudos to the project crew!

A reminder: Wear orange outdoors- it's hunting season! Be visible! At CBCA, Hunting is only allowed on the west side of the Veazie RR Trail. The trail is posted.

PR NEMBA new trail plan

Penobscot Region, New England Mountain Bike Association (PR NEMBA) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote more mountain biking opportunities in the greater Bangor area. A new trail at CBCA is being planned for Bangor Hill as NEMBA has received a grant for trail building. The organization received a grant for trail building. Several OLT Board members walked the site and a contractor flagged the proposed trail. PR NEMBA will adopt the trail, maintain it and handle invasive plants. This should prove to be an asset to the biking community!

Veazie Lands Committee

OLT member Marek Skacel and several neighbors have been cleaning up and leaf-blowing trails in Veazie. Bikers and hikers enjoy trails there. If you are interested in volunteering at Veazie, contact Linda Swackhamer at linswak@gmail.com. Veazie Lands Committee could use more volunteers, thanks!

OLT Board changes

The OLT Board bids farewell to Judy Walker, whose skills on Outreach, event planning and more, will be missed. Thank you, Judy!

We also greet new OLT Board member Gudrun Keszocze, of Orono, and thank her for stepping up to join the Board. Gudrun teaches German at UMaine Orono, and has a wealth of outdoor experience to share



Photos by Adam Toothaker

The Stillwater Trail in Orono gets a new bridge. At top right, Dave Thompson tests out the structure. The team of volunteers (bottom right) enjoys a moment. This project provides access for this well-travelled trail.



Stillwater Trail in Orono gets a new bridge

Check out these pictures of the brand new Stillwater trail bridge! A team built a new walkway in September. Former OLT Board member John Banks allowed OLT to use his private trail to replace the structure and restore access along the river trail. Seasonal flooding has been an issue along the river. Many folks benefit from the maintained trail. Thanks go to John, Dave T., Adam, Charlie, Gail and Cheryl!



Orono Bog Boardwalk Fall hours

Visit this special place! Fall hours are: 8:00am to 4:30pm, until the Daylight Savings Time ends on 11/3.

Check it out online at <https://umaine.edu/oronobogwalk> or <https://www.facebook.com/OronoBogBoardwalk/>

Do you enjoy volunteer work that doesn't involve bugs, heat, cold, wind, rain, or rough terrain? If so, reach out to membership @oronolandtrust.org to find out about indoor volunteer opportunities that don't include the words sunscreen or bug dope!

Donating your old car can benefit OLT. This website provides more information. Charitable Adult Rides and Services. If you know someone who wants to donate, let them know!

<https://careasy.org/nonprofit/orono-land-trust>



Loosestrife Patrol at Black Pond

OLT Board member Adam Toothaker contributed these photos shot while helping with invasives patrol at Black Pond, CBCA, on August 8. Purple Loosestrife (above), adds a beautiful color to the landscape but actually multiplies and displaces native flora. Also destructive is the plant *Phragmites*, which is that tall, plumed grass taking over wetlands, especially in the skating pond. These plants invade and choke out populations of slower-growing or shorter-statured plants, and clog waterways. OLT volunteers manually remove these pests, timing the work to prevent seed distribution. *Phragmites* propagates by seed, stolon, and rhizome. Join in! Maintaining open waterways for birds and encouraging native plants is continual work for land care at OLT. Plus, you get to see beautiful creatures like

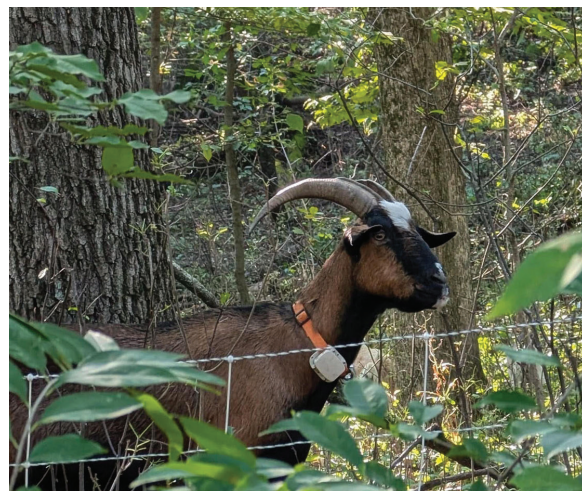


Black Ash tree project

At the Orono Bog Boardwalk, OLT Board member Jerry Longcore reports that some graduate students are looking for Black Ash tree seeds to bring to a seed bank. Ash only has seeds every eight years. Black Ash is endangered by the Emerald Ash Borer insect. The tree is very important in Wabanaki culture as basket material, and in their origin story. Saving seeds might be a hedge against the Ash Borer, or future disease, and provide hope for growing trees in the future.

Woodcock singing grounds

On October 19 OLT is to join a forestry team to continue clearing woodcock singing grounds at Caribou Bog Central. Members will meet with chainsaws and loppers. Bring an orange vest or jacket, and work gloves. Bucky Owen is organizing the work day.



Contributed picture

OLT Board member Gail White writes: "I just saw that a land trust is using goats to tackle invasive plants. A little wire around the forest and add a goat and see what happens!"

Stillwater Christmas Light Trail

Orono resident and OLT member Tony Francis organizes the amazing holiday displays on the Stillwater Trail in Orono. He could use some help with the Stillwater River Christmas Light trail this year.

To mitigate the risk of flooding, he plans to create wood bases filled with gravel to set the large standing decorations on. Some bases will be as large as 3' x 3' x 2' and he'd like to have at least 10 of them. He'll get the wood from Lowe's Depot and the gravel from the Town. He really just needs folks to assemble the boxes.

He also needs help with the setup, especially folks that can carry boxes of lights, string the lights, and pull the electrical cables. Contact Adam Toothaker at adam@oronolandtrust.org to join in on this great neighborhood project.

Adopt a Trail

by Bucky Owen

Please consider adopting a trail or section of a trail for OLT. Individuals or families can participate. Initially, we'll concentrate on the Caribou Bog Conservation Area (CBCA), but if you have another OLT trail that you want to adopt, that's fine. If you are interested, but don't have a specific trail in mind, we'll work with you to help select one. We will provide trail maps, any specific trail needs, and contact information. We suggest volunteers check their trail 2-3 times a year, once just before snowfall and again in the spring, and, perhaps, during mid-summer. A pair of clippers and loppers are all the equipment needed. Most of the work will be brushing out the trail borders as well as reporting needed culvert and bridge repairs, downed trees, or other larger projects. OLT has a trail committee, headed by Gail White, ready to assist you.

Please consider this request; make it a family affair and contact Gail or me to volunteer or get more information. Bucky Owen buckyandsue@gmail.com, Gail White gpwhite1951@gmail.com



OLT Board member Dave Erker recently traveled to Iceland, where he is keeping warm in an OLT hat.



Viceroy butterfly seen recently by Sharon Fitzgerald. Thanks!

Nature Clip

by J.R. Longcore

Interactions in Nature: A Plant, A Spider, and It's Prey

Two years ago, Eric Doucette, President, of the Josselyn Botanical Society, sent me seeds for butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and wild bee-balm (*Monarda fistulosa*). Most of the seedlings I set out survived and by the second year both species flowered profusely and attracted a variety of pollinators. The bee-balm also attracted one of the 200 species of crab spiders in North America—the goldenrod crab spider (*Misumena vatia*) (Fig. 1). These spiders, also called “ambush” spiders, hide among the petals of flowers and use their small fangs to inject venom to immobilize their unsuspecting prey, which are mostly flies, butterflies, grasshoppers, or bees. In Figure 2, this crab spider on wild bee-balm has captured a Northern Broken-Dash butterfly (*Polites egeremet*).

Obviously, these crab spiders do not use silk to wrap their prey, instead they just hold on to it and suck out all the body fluids. These crab spider species have another talent of being able to change color to match the color of the flower they are on, which is a useful ability to blend into the background. In Fig. 3, this specimen of *Misumena vatia* is almost all yellow, which matches the interior of the white hollyhock flower (*Alcea* sp.).



All photos by J. R. Longcore
Fig. 1. Goldenrod crab spider on wild bee-balm.



Fig. 2. Goldenrod crab spider with prey

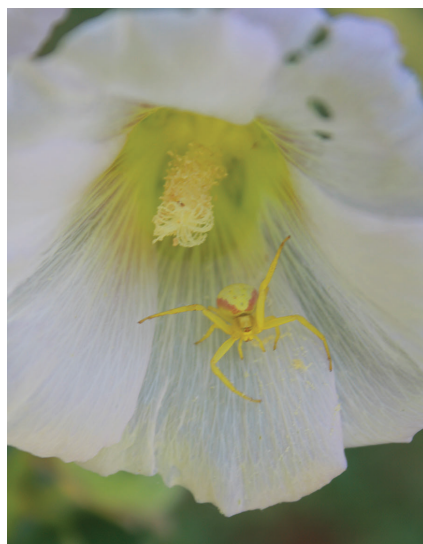


Fig. 3. Yellow colored goldenrod crab spider

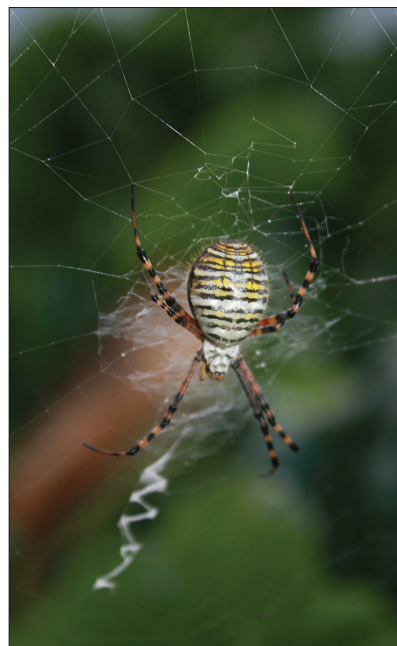


Fig. 4. Banded garden spider on chard

In contrast, for the first time in Maine, I have seen the orb-weaving, banded garden spider (*Argiope trifasciata*) (Fig. 4), that made its home in the middle of the chard patch in the garden. Interesting examples of wildlife lurk throughout the environment, but sometimes you must look closely to see through their camouflage.

J.R. Longcore.

Acknowledgments: Phillip DeMaynadier identified the *Polites egeremet* specimen. I used the AnimalDiversityWeb, University of Michigan, Museum of Zoology for some life history information.

The Orono Land Trust Trail Guide

Habitat, History & Recreation



By Gail White and the Orono Land Trust Board
2021 First Edition

Second edition of the OLT Trail Guide announced

In 2021, OLT published a trail book outlining the properties and projects of this all-volunteer organization. Photos and maps illustrate the range of recreation trails available in this area (Bangor, Orono, Veazie, Old Town). The book was a smashing success for OLT, both as a fundraiser and outreach tool. It also sold out very quickly and we have had many requests for copies.

OLT recently decided to reissue and update the trail book, so look out for announcements about the 2024, second edition of the Trail Guide. The book will be printed locally, and sold in area shops and at OLT events. It makes a good gift and introduces new neighbors to this great conservation community. Look out for our announcement soon! And thank you again for the great support shown for this project.

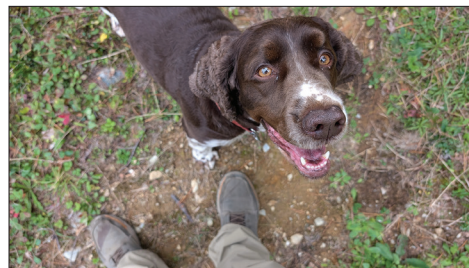
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Penobscot Valley Ski Club
Rose Bicycle

Vistra/Casco Bay Energy

**and thank you to the members and
volunteers of OLT.**



Cricket on the trail!

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Orono Land Trust
PO Box 4,
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Calendar

**Next Board meeting: Wednesday, Nov. 13, 6:30 pm at
Keith Anderson Community House, 19 Bennoch Rd., Orono**

Please Note: This newsletter is distributed in 2 versions: A printed hard copy, and a digital emailed format. If you would like to save paper and mail costs, please notify linswak@gmail.com.

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