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Vol. 139, Winter 2025

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Orono hosts 2025 Great Caribou Bog Ski Races



Photo by Karen Francoeur

Racers take off at The Great Caribou Bog Ski Race on Feb. 15, 2025 in Orono.

The 2025 Great Caribou Bog Classic and Freestyle Races were recently held over two weekends at the Caribou Bog Outdoor Center (CBOC) in Orono, Maine. The event was sponsored and organized by The Penobscot Valley Ski Club and OLT. The Classic Ski Race took place in Orono, Maine on Saturday, Feb. 8th under a bluebird sky, temperatures in the teens and low 20s and fabulous snow conditions.

The 10k-lap course was well groomed with good snow cover over the entire course. Forty-three people registered and 39 finished in the race. The goal of this race is to offer a ski event for all ages and abilities.

CBCA Winter Ski Map, pg. 5

The ages ranged from 19 to an 88-year old, M12-class skier. Skier abilities ranged from first time racers to veteran NENSA Marathon/ Zak Cup series racers. Another main theme of the Great Caribou Bog Ski Races is that folks just have fun. The smiles seen on the faces of the racers was a testament to fun had by all. A blog written by Damian (Continued on Pg. 3)

OLT attends 2025 Banff Mountain Film Fest



Photos by Linda Swackhamer

OLT Board members Gudrun Keszöcze (above left) and Sharon Quinn Fitzgerald (right) staff the OLT table at The Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour at Husson University, which took place on Wednesday, Feb. 7 and Thursday, Feb. 8. The often sold-out festival screens different short adventure and outdoor films each night. There are door prizes and local conservation groups are invited to have a table in the lobby of the Gracie Theatre. Every year filmgoers view inspiring and informative offerings from around the world.



Photo by Dan Baumer

A great gang on the deck of the Caribou Bog Outdoor Center in Orono, for the 2025 Ski Races.



Photo by Steve Mierzykowski

This ermine was spotted at Caribou Bog Conservation Area (CBCA), part of a close encounter captured at Black Pond in December, 2024.

See something? Please say something!
The Caribou Bog Outdoor Center has suffered vandalism, trash dumping, and three thefts recently on the property. If you see anything odd, please contact Orono police or email president@oronolandtrust.org.

Save the date: Friday, May 9.
Details of the 2025 OLT Annual Membership Meeting will be announced in the next OLT newsletter, early April. The Keynote program will be announced.



Photo by Sharon Quinn Fitzgerald

Sharon Quinn Fitzgerald sends this picture from CBCA: "Sure was nice to get out and ski ever so briefly in the week between Christmas and New Years! The folks pictured are John and Dan Fitzgerald."



Photo by Dan Baumert

Dan contributed these photos: "Some ice formations along the trails today. First one is Beaver Pond outlet. Second along Steep Hill trail."



Photo by Gail White

OLT Board member Gail White writes: "Dan B., Dave E, Jim W., and I moved 4 trailers, 2 brush-hogs, and the Tym tractor into the new CBCA barn that already had the PVSC ATV with groomer and roller. The Barn is now in full use and may have inches to spare!"

2025 Great Caribou Bog Ski Races



Photo by Anthony Viselli

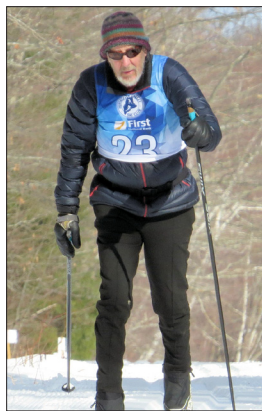
A delighted Helene Viselli ready to race at CBCA!



Photo by Karen Francoeur

Race Director and OLT Board member, Dan Baumert, presides over the awards ceremony.

(Continued from Pg. 1) Bolduc, the overall winner of the 30K, reflects the experience of one racer (<https://www.nwve.org/single-post/the-great-caribou-bog-classic-2025>).



Contributed photo

OLT Board member Bucky Owen out on the trail for the 2025 race at CBCA.

A team of 20+ volunteers ensured the race ran smoothly from parking cars to verifying the final results. Even the aid station was festive as it featured a Caribbean theme with pink flamingos and tropical vegetation.

Penobscot Valley Ski Club and OLT Board member, Dan Baumert, served as Race Director. The Caribou Bog Outdoor Center was the headquarters and venue for the awards and raffle presentation. Each of the top three overall male and female winners in each race received a wooden engraved award.

Awards were made from a 300-year-old hemlock piling that supported an elevated trestle of the old Veazie Railroad. Parts of the race course were on the historic Veazie Railroad Trail, a major OLT project for the last few years.

The Freestyle Race was held on Saturday, Feb. 15, with great groomed trails and 30 racers. Best overall racer was Miles Kirby with a time of 34:52.0.



Photo by Dan Baumert

The Caribou Caribbean Aid Station brightened a wonderful day for race participants. Above, left to right are Anne Lichtenwalner and OLT VP Lynn Caron.

Skier Damian Bolduc, of Northwest Vermont Endurance, said, "This was an excellent event enjoyed by many from the skiing community. Skiers from several states, colleges, and clubs converged on the most remote event on the calendar and were treated to a race that had something for everyone! The venue was a lot of fun, and I look forward to visiting it again."

The overall race results can be found at <https://www.webscorer.com/racedetails?raceid=379854&did=499120>.



Photo by Charlie Todd

December 16, 2024 was a big work day. Here, Bucky Owen (at left) opens the gate for Dan Baumert on the tractor doing some heavy lifting. That piece of timber will be a "turtle log" for Boulder Pond.

Winter land stewardship

Before the ski races and snowshoes come out, the OLT volunteers were working in December to aid habitat and prepare for snow.



Photo by Gail White

A lot accomplished! Trail work included clearing a 2-foot wide tree by Dan Baumert on the bog trail!

December 16, 2024, **Dan Baumert** writes: "While conditions still allowed relatively easy access on the trails, some of us also removed some remaining fallen trees still on the trails. A large tree at the entrance of Smith Farm was removed this afternoon as well as a larger tree on the Newman Hill/Dorian trail. Then finally I saw **Gail White** at the Putnam parking lot late in the day and with the assistance of her super powers we were able to remove a very large pine tree off of the Hines/Killtie snowshoe trail that does get quite a bit of use. I also checked the RR Grade from Forest Ave. to the Bangor City forest and that was clear. Someone had already removed any downed trees on that section. So at this time all of the CBOC trails east of the RR grade and the Kirkland trail should be cleared of all downed trees of the recent storm. There are still some trees down on the back bog trails off of Putnam and beyond the bog. The access to some of these trails may still be difficult due to high water so may have to wait until water levels drop or freeze up. So now the trails are ready for snow again!"

Jeff Stevenson added: "The rabbit trail off Kirkland is clear. The Hines/Killtie trail and the upper snowshoe bog trail down to the bog (still high water) is clear too. The lower part of the snowshoe bog trail in to the bog/water is good also. Started out the ski trail but the stream was too high."

Thinking of Spring

Text and photos by Charlie Todd

Tree swallows are still widespread but their overall numbers have declined across the US by 30% over the past 55 years. OLT is steadily adding a few nest boxes each year to accommodate them at the Caribou Bog Conservation Area.

OLT Board member Bucky Owen maintains more than fifty nest boxes at the Penobscot Valley Country Club!



These two eggs at Beaver Pond failed to hatch in 2024. Tree swallows often use soft duck feathers to line their nests.



Ron Logan on the ice inspects a nest actively used at Pine Ponds in 2024. He is an adjunct member of the OLT Board and an avid photographer.



Photo by Sharon Quinn Fitzgerald

From Sharon Quinn Fitzgerald: "In January, I walked back to the Heron Pond at CBCA yesterday afternoon after the rain/wind storm. Water was high and flowing. The picture above is of the Beaver Pond outflow."

Winter Wonderland!

Here is the latest map by Julian Wiggins for Caribou Bog Outdoor Center outlining *Winter usage*. There are dedicated groomed trails for skiing, and other areas for snowshoeing or hiking. This map can be accessed on the OLT, CBOC, and Penobscot Valley Ski Club websites, Facebook, or by taking a photo of the QR code on the map. A *Summer usage* map is also posted.

<https://oronolandtrust.org/lands-trails-maps/newman-hill/>

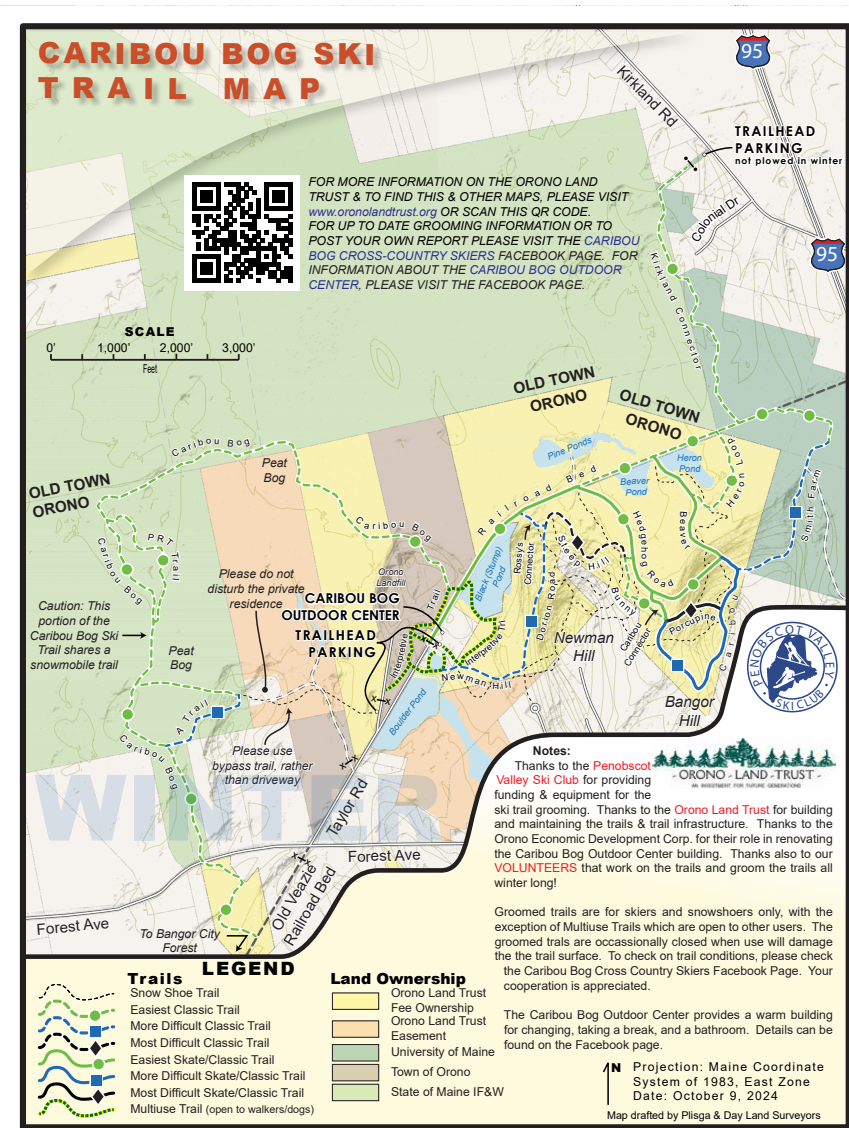


Photo by Gail White.

Ash tree survey

Gail White received an email from Environmental Services Manager at Town of Orono, Megan Hess. "Hess and Penobscot artist, author and environmentalist Gabriel Frey flagged 10-12 Brown/Black Ash trees in the Colburn Area. These trees will be treated for Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The trees are along the brook that divides the property. Hopefully you will see the pink flagging in this photo (at left)."

Brown, or Black Ash is a Northeastern native tree central to Wabanaki culture. It's particular wood quality is vital for basketmaking, an important tradition. Ash is threatened by the borer, and OLT is collaborating to identify and monitor this danger to our region's forests.

Nature Clip

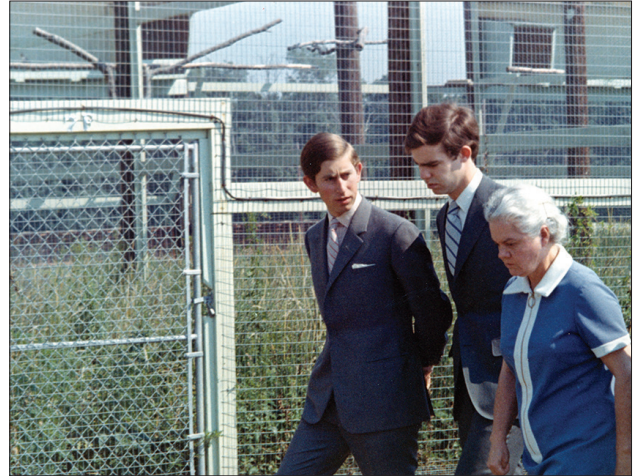
by J.R. Longcore

Requiem for the Grand Old Party (GOP) and Environment

During the 1960s environmental awareness was emerging as Americans were alarmed by the Santa Barbara oil spill fouling California beaches, the Cuyahoga River catching fire, and Lake Erie, which was receiving 1.5 billion gallons of noxious industrial wastes and human sewage per day, was a stinking mess. In 1962 Rachel Carson documented the actual and widespread threat from pesticides, including the persistent organochlorine compound DDT that was highly effective but had an unknown dark side. One of its breakdown products (DDE) caused severe thinning of bird's eggshells thereby increasing cracking and removal from the nest by incubating adults. The American bald eagle and other bird populations were substantially affected across their range by the effects of DDT.

In response to public demands for federal action, Grand Old Party republicans, including President Richard Nixon, with help from like-minded democrats who controlled the House and Senate, enacted a flurry of legislation to protect or restore the environment: Clean Air Act, 1963; National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 1969 that required Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for federal government projects; Reorganization Plan No.3, 1970 that was a message from Nixon to Congress to establish the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); Clean Water Act, 1972; Marine Mammal Protection Act, 1972; Endangered Species Act, 1973; Safe Drinking Water Act, 1974; Toxic Substances Control Act, 1976; Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 1976 that regulated disposal of hazardous and solid waste. This legislative legacy affirmed the commitment of the GOP to protect the resources that supported us all.

My time (1972–1976) in Washington, D.C. as the Staff Specialist, Pesticide and Pollution Research / Wildlife Diseases in the Fish & Wildlife Service, mirrored this progressive time. In spring 1971 a millionaire republican, Nathaniel P. Reed, became Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and National Parks. His passion for a clean environment and his influence of legislation are reflected in these federal Acts. He also contributed to the success of the first Earth Day—April 22, 1970. His autobiography *Travels on the Green Highway—An Environmentalist's Journey* relates his achievements throughout Florida and in Washington, D.C. as



USFWS photo, photographer unknown.

Fig. 1. Prince Charles, Mr. David Eisenhower, and Dr. Lucille Stickel in pen area for contaminant research, Patuxent Wildlife Center, Laurel, MD.

Assistant Secretary of Interior. (I have a copy to loan). High regard for federal civil service employees at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland often resulted in visiting dignitaries such as Prince Charles and David Eisenhower (Fig. 1) be given a tour of the Center. All Patuxent employees who helped with this visit were given a Richard Nixon pen (Fig. 2).

Unfortunately, the break-in of the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate building and associated cover-up resulted in almost certain impeachment of Nixon by the democrat-controlled Congress, which included Maine republican William Cohen who supported impeachment. To Nixon's credit this Grand Old Party republican owned up to his culpability and had the character to resign on August 9, 1974. The next day as I ate lunch in Lafayette Square the *Marine One* helicopter left the White House for the last time with Mr. Nixon and family aboard.

Since the start of the industrial revolution (~1830) gaseous emissions (i.e., carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons, water vapor) have risen substantially to such levels that they trap heat and increase temperatures all around the globe. Climate change is now an existential threat to a livable environment. The highest average global temperature on record was 15.1° C in 2024, which was the first year it exceeded the 1.5° C threshold above pre-industrial levels. World leaders have responded and are working through

the Paris Climate Agreement and other avenues to address this emerging crisis.

With the election of the 45th president, who voters assumed was still a Grand Old Party republican, they soon learned the party had evolved under the oxymoronic slogan on red caps into maga republicans. Former Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich (<http://robertreich.org>), documented the worst actions of this presidency including, calling climate change a "hoax", rolling back more than 100 environmental protections, and removing the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement. The majority members of the GOP-held Congress failed to impeach this president twice! The 46th president made strides to address the climate issue by efforts to reduce use of fossil fuels by encouraging use of electric vehicles, increasing wind and solar power, and rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement. Then in 2024, H.L. Mencken's 1920 prediction (July 26, 1920, Baltimore Sun): "On some great and glorious day, the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last, and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron." was fulfilled. With a barrage of Executive Orders from his black sharpie, the 47th president spewed out his disdain for the environment by fast-tracking fossil fuels, again withdrawing the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement and any related pacts under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), he pushed for use of domestic fossil energy resources except for solar or wind, halted all offshore wind energy leasing, and paused issuing new or renewed approvals, permits, leases or loans for wind projects. And this was just within 15 days. With an expected 4



Photo © J. R. Longcore

Fig. 2. Richard Nixon pen given to Patuxent staff during Prince Charles visit.

more years of ignorant, ill-advised (stupid?), and corrupt decisions from the White House, the environment will degrade further as global temperatures continue to rise. Abnormal and severe weather patterns contribute to drought, wildfires, flooding, sea level rise, and have increased the destructive force of hurricanes. The result is human suffering, even death, and destroyed homes and infrastructure, which have overwhelming financial costs to replace. Equally alarming is the dismantling of the federal civil service workforce, to be replaced by subjects loyal to the 47th president. Unless the remanent Grand Old Party republicans in Congress can stiffen their spines, organize and convert maga republicans to denounce and resist chaos and restore some integrity to the party, someone will soon be writing a Requiem for Democracy.

J.R. Longcore

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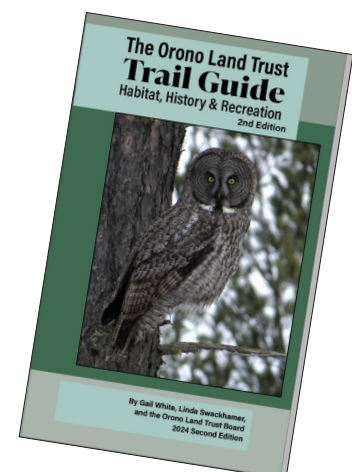
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Calendar

**Next Board meeting: Wednesday, March 12, 6:30 pm at
Keith Anderson Community House, 19 Bennoch Rd., Orono**

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Orono Land Trust, PO Box 4, Orono, Maine 04473

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