



- ORONO - LAND - TRUST -

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Serving Orono and surrounding communities
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Photo by Linda Swackhamer

Ben Hale, OLT's president addresses the crowd at the 2026 Annual Membership Meeting at the Keith Anderson Community House in Orono. At left, is Dr. Phil Fanning, the keynote speaker with his presentation on native bees.

OLT 2026 Annual Meeting makes a buzz

By Gail White and Linda Swackhamer

Orono Land Trust's 40th annual meeting was held on May 15th. We started with a potluck dinner with goodies from attendees. The annual speaker was Dr. Phil Fanning who spoke to the members about native bees in this area. Dr. Fanning has a BSc. and MSc. in Environmental Science, and a Ph.D. in Entomology, all of which he completed in Ireland, his original home. In the US, he worked as a postdoc at Michigan State University before moving to the University of Maine in January 2020. His lab focuses on managing invasive pests and studying the ecology and behavior of insects in agroecosystems. Additionally, he works on topics surrounding pollinator conservation and health. Phil was a wonderful speaker.



Bookmark design by
Jenn Dann for OLT's
40th anniversary

edited by Jerry R. Longcore, James E. Bird, and
Robert Klose, with preface by

(Continued on pg. 2)

2026 Corps field work a big boost for OLT

Text and photos by Charlie Todd

In their first of three weeks, the amazing crew from the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) greatly boosted ongoing efforts to control invasive plants on OLT properties.

This year's Corps members are Danny Dorathy, Lolly Mertinek, and Callie Richards. OLT Board member volunteers Harry Cunningham, Dave Erker, Charlie Todd, Gail White, Jenn Dann, Dan Baumert and Bob Bass joined the MCC crew at multiple OLT properties to manage glossy buckthorn saplings, with Asiatic bittersweet, knotweed, and bush honeysuckle.

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Bike rides for kids held Wednesdays

by Tom Cassidy

The Penobscot Region of the New England Mountain Bike Association (PRNEMBA) has launched a new weekly youth mountain bike program this summer. Held on Wednesdays at the Caribou Bog Outdoor Center on Taylor Road in Orono, the group rides are designed for new mountain bikers ages five to ten.

The program has gotten off to a great start, with eight to nine children participating during the first two weeks. The machine-built

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OLT holds Annual Meeting and celebrates 40 years

(Continued from pg. 1) Bernd Heinrich. In addition, Jerry is the author of Nature Clips, the OLT feature in every newsletter for the past 26 years! Jerry was given a crafted wooden bench, which will be placed on the CBCA Interpretive Trail.

President Ben recognized Sharon Fitzgerald who is retiring from the Board. Sharon shares many of her wildlife photos, and will continue in her work on OLT membership. New Board members are Harry Cunningham, and Ray Hintz. Both men are volunteers who have donated much time and expertise to OLT. The Carpenter family and Anita Haskell were acknowledged for their generous gifts to OLT. Dave and Pat Thompson donated 60 acres of land in Hudson to OLT, and the membership voted to sell this land and funds will go to OLT's legacy account. Jenn Dann, OLT's treasurer, gave the OLT's financial report. She then told the membership of all the monthly activities the Outreach Committee has planned to celebrate our 40th anniversary. Members received a bookmark that she created, which displays monthly events for the OLT celebratory calendar.



Photo by Linda Swackhamer

Dr. Phil Fanning presented a slide show on native bees at the 2026 OLT Annual Meeting on May 15.

The Watershed Academy: 9th grade Orono High students and OLT

by Charlie Todd

Teachers from Orono High School representing the Watershed Academy attended the meeting. OLT, the Penobscot Nation, and the ninth-grade class from Orono High are collaborating on nature-based programming at the Caribou Bog Outdoor Center (CBOC). The Watershed Academy is an initiative to host students for multi-discipline outdoor learning. Projects have included stream engineering, pollinator gardens, and invasive plant eradication, see below. Eleven members of the Orono Land Trust collectively contributed at least 115 hours to the Watershed Academy sessions, preparations, coordination and planning meetings, and project administration. Our work with the students explored these topics:

- trail development and maintenance

- trail maps & signage
- water crossings infrastructure
- culvert installations
- bridge design
- interpretive trail design and layout
- basic wetland ecology
- critical wetland functions
- stream hydrology
- beavers as engineers of wetlands
- adaptive strategies for beaver dams
- demise of the American chestnut as a foundational tree in eastern forests
- overview of chestnut restoration
- showcase of our chestnut orchard
- global concerns for pollinator declines
- introductory pollinator conservation
- hands-on work to establish native plant

gardens to benefit pollinators

- understanding invasive species
- identifying invasive plants in Orono
- hands-on removals of invasive plants near CBOC and Taylor Pond
- mission and benefits of land trusts
- balancing conservation of natural resources with outdoor recreation
- techniques to study wildlife
- retrieval of game cameras deployed in a study of wildlife along the Dorion Rd.
- examples of game camera images
- development of the Caribou Bog Outdoor Center
- opportunities for outreach, education and nature study
- think globally, act locally approach to conservation.

Interesting visitors sighted at Black (Stump) Pond



Photos by Ron Logan

In late May we had rather rare visitors to the Caribou Bog Conservation Area (CBCA). About 40 Short-billed Dowitchers were seen at Black/Stump Pond (above). The photo at right shows three Dowitchers, along with some friends: Two Least Sandpipers and a Lesser Yellowlegs. CBCA has become an exciting place for birding and other wildlife sightings as volunteers have replaced culverts, aided in habitat restoration, and improved trails for people to spend time outdoors.



Out and About

OLT Board member Tom Cassidy noted that **PRNEMBA mountain bike club** took about 100 hours to prepare the flow trails at Bangor Hill for the season, and they've been opened for the season. He noted that the trails will need some extra annual maintenance for the next few years until the gravel settles... More biking news: Oliver Moore reports that **The UMaine Cycling Club** has been active this semester getting the trails in good shape, putting in 46.5 hours of community service on the two trails at Piney Knoll. In addition to Piney Knoll work we've been volunteering with PRNEMBA over at Bangor Hill, and have been able to open the top sections of both Blue Jay and Otter trails... OLT Treasurer, Jenn Dann reports: OLT volunteers participated in

the **Town of Orono's Street and Stream Clean-Up Day** on May 16. We hauled two big bags of trash out of the Piney Knoll Conservation Area, and planned out some trail and bridge work for the summer. We were rewarded with a great pizza lunch at the Library afterwards. Great weather and company for cleaning up Orono!... From OLT Board member Gail White: **Peter Johnson** has worked tirelessly to improve Sally's Field in the Jeremiah Colburn Natural Area (JCNA). He's cut dead, fallen trees, cut invasives, filled holes and bush hogged the field in late fall. Red Fox like tumbling in the grass and the deer really like eating the new green shoots! Thank you!... Watch for **a new sign at Caribou Bog Outdoor Center**, welcoming visitors to enjoy the trails...

Maine Conservation Corps assists with invasives

(Continued from pg. 1)

At this time of year, glossy buckthorn has no mature fruits, that can reproduce. We pulled or "high cut" 11,000 stems of this prolific invasive over the week. "High cut" is a technique used in combatting invasive plants in the landscape. We do not cut them at ground level at this time of year, as buckthorn responds with prolific stump sprouts. Cutting stems at a height of 3 - 4 feet, followed by removal of any new shoots later in the season has killed >80% of glossy buckthorn in a pilot effort at Pine Pond in 2025.



OLT Board member Dave Erker at work with the MCC crew.



Danny Dorathy (left to right), Harry Cunningham, Bob Bass, Callie Richards, and Lolly Mertinek, working to support native plants by controlling invasives at Sparrow Pond at Hinds-Keleti CE.

Contact OLT if you would like to assist. There's

unlimited opportunity as we shift to critical time periods for other invasives as the season progresses.

Summer bike rides for kids

(Continued from pg. 1) trails added last summer have provided beginner-friendly terrain, making it possible to offer a program tailored to young riders.

Weather permitting, the rides will continue throughout the summer. Because of the participants' young age, PRNEMBA asks that you register and that a parent or guardian remain with their child during each ride.

This new program is a wonderful opportunity for local children to build confidence on the trails, develop riding skills, and enjoy the outdoors in a supportive and fun environment.

Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/prnemba-youth-mountain-bike-ride-tickets-1990872970648>.



PENOBSCOT REGION
NEMBA

YOUTH MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDE

WEDNESDAYS
STARTING JUNE 17TH

5:00 - 6:30 PM

Caribou Bog Outdoor Center 153 Taylor Rd, Orono



Age: 5-10
Parent/guardian: Required to attend
Ability: Riders should already be able to ride a bike independently or be assisted physically with tow-rope or seat by parent
Experience level: Beginner
Trail terrain: Dirt roads and some single track with roots and rocks at green level
What to bring: Mountain bike, mac ride or shotgun seat for little riders, towie rope if needed, helmet, water, bug spray, snack, and a smile
Waiver: Signed waiver required before participating - click the QR code, and register to sign



Orono Land Trust participated in the Orono Arts Festival on Sunday, June 28th, displaying art inspired by nature. Many people stopped by our table to talk and look at our displays. Jenn Dann and Gail White were available to answer questions and promote our wonderful land trust. Photo by Gail White

Consider a donation to the Robbins Lumber Fire Relief Fund



As you may know, an explosion and fire occurred at Robbins Lumber Company in Searsmont, Maine, on May 15th, resulting in the deaths of two firefighters and severely injuring several others. The Robbins Lumber Fire Relief Fund has been established by the Town of Searsmont to provide relief to victims and families affected by this terrible tragedy.

What you may not know is that, in 2022, the Robbins Lumber Company donated over \$6,500 worth of the pine boards used throughout the Caribou Bog Outdoor Center and the remainder was used to side much of the new equipment building (Erker's Barn). Should you wish to make a personal donation, please do so by writing a check payable to the Robbins Lumber Fire Relief Fund by the end of July and either deliver in person to the Searsmont Town Office or mail to: Town of Searsmont, P. O. Box 56, Searsmont, ME 04973

In Memory of Sandy Johnson

Sandy Johnson, OLT's longtime supporter, friend, and neighbor, passed away in March at the age of 101. Sandy's home overlooks Sally's Field in the Jeremiah Colburn Natural Area, to which she provided trail access from Bennoch Road. OLT was grateful to be named the beneficiary for memorial donations in her obituary. A note that accompanied one of these donations called Sandy "marvelous, generous, funny, and smart", and we couldn't agree more!



Photo by Gail White

Nature Clip

by J.R. Longcore

Hummingbird Clearwing Moths— A Story of Mimicry and Camouflage



Fig. 1. Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

When scarlet Bee-Balm (*Monarda didyma*) is in full bloom in your backyard it may attract a Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubis*) (Fig. 1) or a species of Hummingbird Clearwing, which is a species of moth. Maine is part of the North American range of three species of so-called “hummingbird moths”; the Hummingbird Clearwing (*Hemaris thysbe*) (Fig. 2), the Snowberry Clearwing (*Hemaris diffinis*) (Fig. 3), and the Slender Clearwing (*Hemaris gracilis*), which is often misidentified and state listed as rare or threatened (no image). Larvae of these species are large and green like tomato hornworms and they feed on various plant leaves but are not garden pests.

Many organisms survive depending on their ability to “disappear”, i.e., blend into the habitat, or to look like something distasteful or dangerous to a predator. It is at this time that camouflage (an organism’s natural resemblance to something else) and mimicry (organisms of different species look alike) are in play.

A snowshoe hare (*Lepus americanus*) changing its pelage to white in winter is an example of camouflage—white on white blends in. Hummingbird moths with their 2–6-inch wingspan, fast wingbeat, and large size make them look more like a bird than an insect. Snowberry Clearwings are marked like a bumble



Fig. 2. Hummingbird Clearwing (*Hemaris thysbe*).

bee, so predators avoid them being aware of being stung. These are mimicry. Brennan (2013) identifies two kinds of mimicry, Batesian Mimicry wherein a harmless species resembles a poisonous or dangerous species, and Mullerian Mimicry wherein several species resemble one another despite being unrelated and all being unpalatable.

The day I photographed these moths the Snowberry Clearwings had obviously entered the mating



Fig. 3. Snowberry Clearwing (*Hemaris diffinis*).

period (Fig. 4). The female would soon be laying eggs on the underside of Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) leaves or on *Viburnum* or *Prunus* species. The Snowberry Clearwing’s name is associated with the Snowberry plant, a deciduous shrub in the honeysuckle Family. Larval clearwings like Snowberry. They

(Continued on pg. 7)



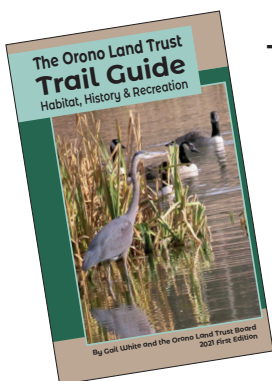
Fig. 4. Mating pair of Snowberry Clearwings.

eat its leaves and use it as a host for their cocoons. If you watch your pollinator garden diligently you will likely see these interesting mimics using their long proboscis to reach the nectar in your flowers.

J.R. Longcore

Reference:

Brennan, Heather (June 3, 2013). Camouflage and Mimicry. Retrieved June 23, 2026, from Explorable. com. <https://explorable.com/camouflage-and-mimicry>.



Thank you to local vendors who are selling our reprinted, revised **OLT Trail Guide/2nd Edition**:
 In Orono: Ampersand, Rose Bike, UMaine Bookstore.
 In Bangor: Ski Rack, Slippin' Gears, Alpenglow.

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You can donate your vehicle, boat, or ATV to Orono Land Trust! Follow this link: <https://careasy.org/nonprofit/orono-land-trust> Thank you!

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Orono Land Trust
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Orono, Maine 04473

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Calendar

Next scheduled Board meeting:

Wednesday, August 12, 6:30 pm at Keith Anderson
Community House, 19 Bennoch Rd., Orono

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

Orono Land Trust Membership Application / www.oronolandtrust.org

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

Name: _____ Preferred email: _____

Address: _____ Preferred phone: _____

_____ \$10 Student Membership	Business Memberships	Donation only
_____ \$25 Individual Membership	_____ \$100+ Chickadee Membership	_____
_____ \$50 Family Membership	_____ \$250+ Cardinal Membership	for _____
_____ \$100- \$999 Supporting Membership	_____ \$500+ Loon Membership	
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I'd like to make an additional donation to help protect green space in Orono. \$_____

Please send my newsletter by: email only _____ US Postal Mail _____

