



Daggett Brook, Amity, Maine

## *Restoring Connection in the Headwaters*

by Anna Levitsky

Healthy lands and waters don't happen by themselves. At the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust, active stewardship is key, and it's something every one of us can practice on our own properties, from planting native species to improving stream habitats.

A major focus this year has been the new Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) in the headwaters of East Grand Lake. This three-sided concrete culvert replaces an old metal culvert that had long blocked fish and other aquatic life. Wild native brook trout, amphibians, and countless smaller organisms can now move freely between feeding, spawning, and rearing areas, reconnecting miles of high-quality habitat.

restore the natural stream channel. It spans the full width of the brook, allowing water to flow freely. Future heavy rains and spring melt will bring back the natural stream bottom, giving fish and invertebrates habitat and safe passage. Unlike the old metal culvert, which often became clogged and contributed to erosion, the new structure can handle higher water volumes, improving both aquatic health and road resilience against washouts and flooding.

This project would not have been possible without strong partnerships. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided crucial technical guidance and funding support,

The passage was designed to

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Dick Kaufmann & The Glenn Pearson Band



Honoring Reggie Simons' service to WWLT

## A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Every season at the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust brings its own gifts. Summer gives us long days, the call of loons on the lake, and, if you're like me, an unhealthy amount of blueberry pie. It also gives us the chance to roll up our sleeves and care for the lands and waters that mean so much to us all.

In this newsletter, you will see glimpses of the work that happened this summer. Lands were cared for, new partnerships formed, and special places made ready for the future. But more than anything, I hope you see this: **you made it all possible.**

Since 1994, the WWLT has grown strong because of the generosity and vision of people like you. You matter. Your support is a wise investment in the care of the lands already protected and in the future places still waiting for us. Because of you, we can act quickly when opportunities arise, whether it is restoring a trail, building a partnership, or protecting land before it is lost.

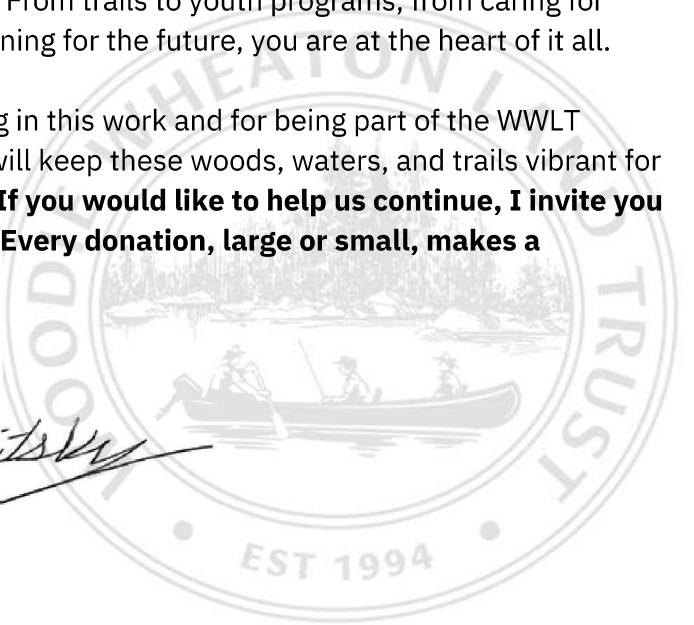
We also recognize that many of you have a deep, generational connection to this region. For some, it was your grandparents or parents who first brought you here and taught you to love this special place. Whether you live here year-round or visit when you can, your heart rests easy knowing that when you look around, **the landscapes you fell in love with are still here and unchanged.**

As you read these stories, I hope you feel proud of what has been achieved side by side. From trails to youth programs, from caring for beloved places to planning for the future, you are at the heart of it all.

Thank you for believing in this work and for being part of the WWLT family. Together, we will keep these woods, waters, and trails vibrant for generations to come. **If you would like to help us continue, I invite you to make a gift today. Every donation, large or small, makes a difference.**

With Gratitude,

**Anna Levitsky**  
Executive Director



# Restoring Connection in the Headwaters

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while local contractors brought the vision to life with skill and care. Our Land Steward, Erik Kindblom, coordinated the efforts in the field, battling black flies, to ensure everything ran smoothly. Many of you know Erik as a familiar face on our trails and a tireless advocate for the land.

In addition to the Aquatic Organism Passage project, we are implementing a range of habitat and forestry practices in the Headwaters. These include installing wood duck, owl, and bat boxes, as well as creating early successional patches with brush piles to support songbirds, game birds (such as grouse and woodcock), deer, and pollinators.

We are thinning forests to help reestablish deer wintering areas, and creating snags and downed logs to provide habitat for small mammals and other forest-floor species. Finally, we are beginning invasive plant management, targeting species such as coltsfoot and wild parsnip along old logging roads.

These efforts keep our lands healthy and resilient for wildlife, for waters, and for everyone who enjoys this special region. Active stewardship matters at every level, whether on Trust land or your own property, and we are grateful to everyone who makes it possible.



*NRCS Resource Conservationists evaluating aquatic habitat of Daggett Brook to determine possible future conservation practices*



*NRCS Resource Conservationists netting off and relocating aquatic organisms downstream prior to removal of old metal culvert. Treeline working crew watching all the action!*



*Wild native brook trout located in Daggett Brook*

# *The “Big Beautiful Bill” & Charitable Giving Advice from an Expert*

**by Anna Levitsky & Nicholas Porto, CPA, MSA**

At WWLT, we know that many of you think carefully about your giving—both in terms of the impact it has on the land and the way it fits into your own financial planning. We want you to feel informed and confident before making significant gifts to WWLT, and part of that means sharing updates on new tax laws that may affect your charitable giving.

Congress recently passed the Big Beautiful Bill (BBB), which brings notable changes to the way charitable giving is treated in federal tax law. While the details may feel technical, these updates could affect how our donors approach their giving.

First, it’s important to say up front: **we at WWLT are not tax experts**. The information below comes from our friends at Baker Newman Noyes, and we strongly encourage you to speak with your accountant or financial advisor before making decisions.

Here are some key takeaways:

- **For non-itemizers:** Beginning in 2026, taxpayers who do not itemize deductions will be able to claim a new charitable deduction—up to \$1,000 for single filers or \$2,000 for joint filers.
- **For itemizers:** Those who do itemize can still deduct larger charitable contributions. However, under the new law, deductions only apply once annual contributions exceed 0.5% of adjusted gross income. For example, someone with \$500,000 in income would only receive a charitable deduction if their contributions were in excess of \$2,500.
- **Deduction limits:** The historical cap remains in place, allowing deductions of up to 60% of income.
- **Impact on top earners:** For individuals in the highest income bracket (starting around \$626,000 for single filers, \$752,000 for joint filers), the charitable deduction no longer offsets at the full 37% top rate. Instead, deductions are capped as if the rate were 35%, reducing the overall tax benefit of charitable giving at those levels.

What does this mean in practice? For many donors, the BBB creates both opportunities and new thresholds to consider when planning gifts. For others (particularly those at higher income levels), the benefit of giving may be somewhat reduced.

No matter your situation, we encourage you to discuss these changes with a trusted advisor. Charitable giving is still one of the most impactful ways to support the causes you care about, and at WWLT, we are deeply grateful for the generosity that sustains our work.



# Preservation in Practice: Muncy Point & the Hands That Helped

by Anna Levitsky



*Mitch Cochran hauling debris from Muncy Point*

Muncy Point has long held special meaning for the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust. Our late board member, Dale Wheaton, a registered Maine Guide, knew the lake like few others. He spent countless days on Spednic, often pulling ashore at Dri-Ki for lunch, his eyes always drifting across to Muncy Point. To Dale, its small size didn't matter. He knew that if it were ever developed, it would leave a permanent mark on the character of the lake so many of us love.

WWLT first had the opportunity to visit the property in 2014. After that initial trip, Dale stayed in contact with the landowner in hopes they would consider selling. Ten years later, his persistence and vision paid off: in 2024, Muncy Point was purchased and permanently preserved.

Of course, protecting land is only the beginning. When we first stepped into the camp hidden away on the property, we realized just how much work lay ahead. Years of stockpiled supplies and building materials were tucked into corners. It was clear this wouldn't be a simple clean-up.

And that's where our story circles back to the Maine Guides. Just as WWLT itself was founded by local guides, today's guides continue to carry the tradition of stewardship forward. On the morning

of our first clean-up day, even in the height of their busy season, several of them met us at the Castle Road landing, towing boats and ready to help.

By the end of the day, five full boatloads of debris had been ferried back across the lake and hauled to the dump. Thanks to the Spednic Lake & St. Croix Waterway Stewardship Committee, a new picnic table now welcomes paddlers and guides who stop to rest and enjoy the view. The site already feels transformed, though more work remains.

Looking ahead, our vision is to keep Muncy Point simple and true to its character: a primitive campsite and lunch ground for guides and paddlers, with the existing camp left in place to provide shelter in bad weather. The goal is to make it a functional, low-impact stop that serves the people who know and love Spednic, while preserving the quiet wildness that makes it so special.

Much of what the WWLT does simply wouldn't be possible without volunteers. From the guides who know these waters best, to the community members who share their time and energy, it is their hands and hearts that make preservation real.

There's still more work to do, and a second clean-up day is planned for next summer. If you'd like to join in, whether to lend a hand or simply to see the property for yourself, email me at [anna.levitsky@woodiewheaton.org](mailto:anna.levitsky@woodiewheaton.org).

*With deepest gratitude, we thank Andy Brooks, Mitch Cochran, Mal Stephens, Reggie Simons, Erik Kindblom, and Lars Zoepfel for helping make our first clean-up such a success.*



*Reggie Simons delivering Muncy's new picnic table*



*Many hands make light work*

# Student Spotlight: Trail Data Detectives

by Anna Levitsky

This past year, students from Wilbraham & Monson Academy in Springfield, MA, where WWLT’s Land Steward Erik Kindblom teaches during the school year, took on a special project: digging into the East Grand Highlands Trail log.

For a rural community like Danforth, the numbers were impressive: hundreds of hikers logged visits in just two years. The Overlook Trail was the clear favorite, with more than half of all hikers choosing it. Summer Sundays drew the biggest crowds, and on average,

hikers spent nearly three hours on the trails. Most visitors came from Maine, but the log also recorded travelers from across the country and even overseas.

The students also shared helpful feedback from hikers, like the need for clearer signs on the Boulder Ridge trail. Their thoughtful work not only celebrates how well-loved the trails have become but also helps us plan for the future.

A big thank you to Gavin, Koin, Nam, Roman, and Pristine for their care and effort on this project.



The East Grand Highlands Trails, three connected trails totaling just over four miles, became Danforth’s first hiking area thanks to the generosity of the David B. Snow Jr. Family Trust and a partnership between WWLT and the Greater East Grand Chamber of Commerce. The Trails remain privately owned by the Snow family, but open to all, overlooking the beautiful Sucker Lake.

Fall is the perfect time to visit. Grab your boots, bring a friend, and come see for yourself!

## Partner with Us: WWLT’s New Corporate Sponsorship Program

by April Fowler

At the WWLT, we believe the lands and waters of the Chiputneticook Lakes Region are more than scenery, they’re the heart of our community. These are the places where we work, play, and raise our families--and the reason so many of you return each summer to the lakes, quiet forests, and peace found only here.

We’re inviting all businesses to join us to protect these cherished places through our new **Corporate Sponsorship Program**.

**Our goal is to raise \$10,000 and welcome 15 new business partners** into our conservation family in the coming year.

Help us protect the places that make this region so special--for the people who call it home and the families who return year after year.

To learn more, reach out to April Fowler at 207-448-3250, or email [office@woodiewheaton.org](mailto:office@woodiewheaton.org).

| CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Trailblazer</b><br>\$250             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recognition on WWLT website</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Forest Steward</b><br>\$500          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recognition on WWLT website</li><li>Social media shoutout</li><li>Recognition in newsletter</li></ul>                                                                                               |
| <b>Lake Guardian</b><br>\$1,000         | Everything above, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Logo with link on website</li></ul>                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Watershed Partner</b><br>\$2,500     | Everything above, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Logo in semi-annual newsletter</li><li>Custom lake tour</li></ul>                                                                                                           |
| <b>Conservation Champion</b><br>\$5,000 | Everything above, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recognition at all events</li><li>Private lake tour</li><li>First in line sponsorship opportunities</li><li>Exclusive brand placement on all publicized materials</li></ul> |

# WWLT Sponsors Maine Warden Camp

by April Fowler & Warden Leach



This past July, the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust was proud to sponsor Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's Warden Camp. Youth from across New England joined together to explore Maine's outdoors alongside a team of game wardens, gaining hands-on experience in conservation law enforcement and outdoor skills.

The camp, started four years ago by Wardens Leach and Sperrey, was created to introduce young people to the life and work of a Maine Game Warden while providing mentorship to those who dream of one day wearing the uniform. Each year, campers learn valuable lessons in outdoor safety, wildlife stewardship, and the responsibilities of protecting Maine's natural resources.

This year, the Maine Warden Service teamed up with UMaine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Greenland Point and the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust to make the week unforgettable. Campers enjoyed swimming, fishing, canoeing, and practiced survival skills such as fire building and using a map and compass. A highlight was the arrival of a Maine Warden Service float plane--giving campers the chance to see the aircraft up close and ask the pilot about their work.

When Warden Leach called and asked me to come to Warden Camp and spend some time with the campers, I was honored. We decided I should share what conservation looks like from a land trust's perspective, and how young people can be good stewards of the land. My presentation encouraged campers to see themselves as active caretakers of the woods, waters, and wildlife of Maine. The campers seemed eager to participate in our discussion and had plenty of responses to the scenarios we discussed together. I enjoyed my afternoon at Greenland Point.

WWLT is honored to support this unique program that inspires the next generation of conservation leaders.

Warden Leach adds "Warden Camp was created for, and targeted toward, Maine kids, especially those from rural communities, to come and learn what life as a Maine Game Warden looks like. They do that while building a positive relationship with law enforcement, they may not get otherwise. Many of the Wardens who assist at camp came to Greenland Point as a youth. I took hunter's safety at Greenland Point and have many fond memories of camp. Warden Sperrey and I would like to thank the WWLT for their sponsorship and for helping us make the experience memorable for the campers."





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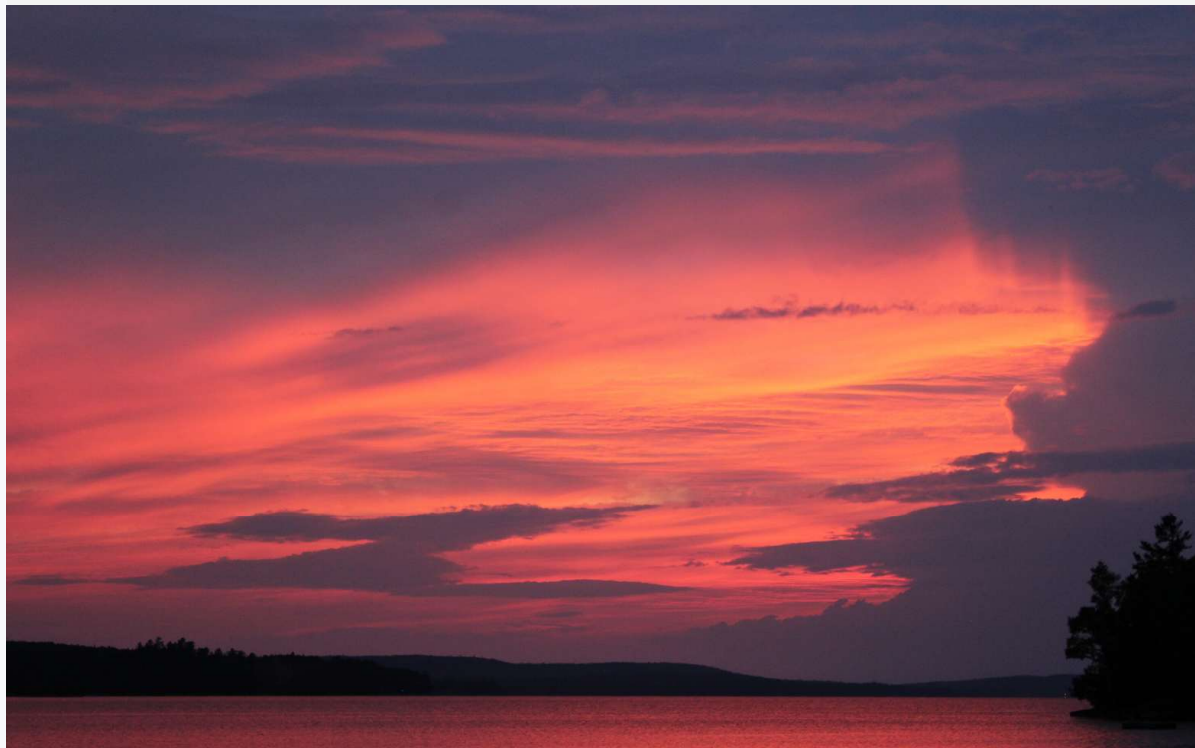
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## ***Lakes & Land You Love***

Our mission is to protect, preserve, and conserve the land and water of the Chiputneticook Lakes Region of Eastern Maine and Western New Brunswick.

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