



*Spednic Lake*

## ***Tannery Shores - Where the Plank Road Ends***

*By Anna Levitsky*

On behalf of the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust, we are pleased to share an update on the former Clark property on Spednic Lake, which WWLT purchased in 2023. Since the acquisition, many of our supporters have reached out with thoughtful questions about our plans and the future of the property. In response, we have spent the past two years carefully evaluating the site, including a full engineering assessment of the existing camps and structures, while also taking time to better understand the deep history of the land so that any future work appropriately reflects its significance. That effort is now taking shape through the launch of the Tannery Shores Project, which begins this summer.

As many of you know, this property is truly unique, both in its setting and its story. It sits within one of the most ecologically significant and undeveloped lake systems in Maine. It is surrounded by nearly 50 miles of protected shoreline on the U.S. side of the watershed and looks across Spednic Lake to a 68,000-acre Canadian ecological reserve. Spednic itself is one of the largest, largely undeveloped lakes in the state. Few places offer such an immediate sense of wilderness, ecological continuity, and cross-border conservation. At the same time, this shoreline holds an equally important human history rooted in the region’s tannery era.

In the mid-1800s, this landing was part of a busy industrial corridor supporting the hemlock tanning industry. Vast stands of hemlock supplied bark that was stripped from the forest, transported across lakes, and processed into sole leather for markets in Boston and beyond. Workers, families, goods, and supplies moved through this remote landscape by water, with this landing serving as an important link in a cross-border system of tanneries, mills, and early settlements along the St. Croix watershed.

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## **A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### *Seasons of Change*

Winter is finally starting to let go, and spring is making its way back to Forest City. I have a real respect for people who embrace winter and find ways to enjoy it. I tend to be the one turning up the heat at the first hint of a draft and counting the days until sandals are socially acceptable again.

Spring here has a way of connecting the past and present. The loons return to the same lakes. Grand Laker canoes head out in the early mornings, following routes that have been used for generations. It is a reminder that some things carry forward, even as seasons change.

That same idea has been on my mind at the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust. Over the winter, we have been preparing for a season that brings both familiar traditions and new opportunities. In this newsletter, you will see new events, partnerships, and ways to get involved.

One project I am especially excited about is the former Clark property on Spednic Lake, now called Tannery Shores. As you'll read in this newsletter, this property has a long history, and instead of losing that, we have the chance to care for it and give it a new purpose.

Tannery Shores is about honoring what came before while creating something meaningful for the future. As the Land Trust continues to grow, so does our work. Projects like this help us expand our programs and create new ways for people to connect with the land and its history.

At its core, this is what we have always done: care for special places so they can be enjoyed for years to come.

Spring is a good reminder that change does not mean leaving things behind. It means building on what is already there.

If you would like to learn more about the project or see it in person, I would be glad to chat. Tannery Shores is an opportunity to bring new life to a special place, opening the door for both longtime visitors and those who have yet to experience all that this area has to offer.

As we move forward with this project, I hope you will consider showing your support.

**Anna Levitsky**  
Executive Director



# Where the Plank Road Ends

(Continued from page 1)

As the tannery era declined in the late 19th century, the land transitioned into a quieter period shaped by woods-work and seasonal logging. In the early to mid-20th century, Spednic Lake entered a new chapter as its fisheries and natural beauty drew people back. Sporting camps, guides, and anglers returned, building a recreation-based economy centered on access to the water. By the 1950s and 1960s, this landing once again became an important entry point, supporting lodges, camps, and a strong guiding community. Generations of visitors launched boats here, began fishing trips, and formed lasting connections to the lake.

That continuity was interrupted around 1960, when access to the original landing was altered and eventually restricted as private development expanded along the shoreline. For decades, the current landing south of the original site has served as the primary access point, continuing its role as a key gateway to Spednic Lake and the broader outdoor economy. When public access to the historic landing came into question in recent years, it became clear that its future could not remain uncertain. After careful consideration, the Trust determined that the only way to protect this legacy was to acquire the property and place it under permanent conservation stewardship.

The parcel we now steward includes the historic landing site, 17 acres of shoreline and forest, interior roads, and the remnants of the former Clark camp area. Since the acquisition, we have been developing a vision that honors the past while serving the future: restoring the property as a place of access, learning, and connection.

Through the Tannery Shores Project, our long-term goal is to fully restore the site as a hub for outreach, education, and public engagement. We envision a place where people can experience Spednic Lake not only from the water, but from the shoreline itself, through guided paddles, conservation programming, and opportunities for seasonal stays that deepen their connection to this landscape. It also provides an opportunity to generate revenue to support our ongoing operations through occasional rental opportunities.

This property offers something rare: the chance to stand within a living example of conservation at scale, where intact shoreline, protected waters, and international ecological reserves meet in a single view. We believe that time spent here does more than inform- it helps people feel the importance of conservation in a direct and lasting way.

Phase 1 of this effort begins this summer and focuses on the boathouse and grounds. Work will include removing a large, visually intrusive deck and renovating the boathouse into a functional and welcoming space for visitors. Canoe racks will be installed so WWLT's canoes, which have been stored off-site for several years, can return to the water's edge. This will allow us to host paddling events and outreach programming directly from the property, eliminate the need for trailers and external launch sites, and open the door to partnerships with regional conservation organizations, including those highlighted on the following pages.

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

Ultimately, Tannery Shores is about honoring what came before while creating something meaningful for the future. We extend our sincere thanks to all of our members and supporters who made the acquisition of this extraordinary property possible, and we hope you share in our excitement for what comes next.

We are grateful to share that \$15,000 has already been raised to begin this work, allowing early construction to move forward this summer. **To complete Phase 1 by July, we must raise an additional \$60,000**, bringing the total project cost to \$75,000. This includes funds dedicated towards long-term maintenance of the property. Completing this phase will allow us to activate the site immediately, and build momentum for Phase 2 (cabin renovations).



*Sketch depiction of the renovated boathouse concept*

**We invite you to help bring this vision to life, and we are deeply grateful for any support you can provide to help complete this important first phase.**

## *Join the Flock: Volunteer Birders Needed*

*By Anna Levitsky*

The Woodie Wheaton Land Trust is seeking a few keen-eyed volunteers who enjoy birding and time on the water to help us better understand the birdlife along Monument Brook in our Headwaters Forest. This past year, with support from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, we began installing wood duck boxes along the brook, with plans to add more this season.

Wood ducks typically begin laying eggs in April and continue through June, and we would love to know if

our boxes are being used. We are seeking volunteers who are comfortable paddling Monument Brook and can report back on activity at the duck boxes. For those who enjoy birding, we would also welcome notes on any species you observe along the way. It is a wonderful opportunity to contribute to our understanding of this special habitat.

If you are interested and would like more details, please reach out to Anna at [anna.levitsky@woodiewheaton.org](mailto:anna.levitsky@woodiewheaton.org).



*From left to right: Hooded Merganser, Great Blue Heron, and Chestnut-sided Warbler spotted in their natural habitats. Photo credit: Wendy Oellers-Fulmer*

# *SCIWC Takes Over Forest City Dam*

*By Neal Berry, Executive Director,  
St. Croix International Waterway Commission*

The day that many have hoped for and waited a long time for has finally arrived—on January 22, 2026, the United States Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued an order approving the surrender of the FERC license at the Forest City Dam. On March 19, 2026, FERC officially made the surrender effective following the required transfer of dam safety documents to the St. Croix International Waterway Commission (SCIWC) and the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). This long wait has come just over nine years after Woodland Pulp LLC filed its first surrender application for the dam on December 23, 2016, and over two years since the most recent surrender application filed on October 31, 2023.

The next step is for the SCIWC and Woodland Pulp to execute two property agreements, which will include the physical dam structure and adjacent properties in both Maine and New Brunswick. After the completion of these property agreements, which are expected in the next 60-90 days, the SCIWC will become the official owner of the dam. While this is happening, Woodland Pulp and the SCIWC have been in communication and agree on water level management during the transition of ownership.



Moving forward, Woodland Pulp will continue to operate and maintain the dam per an executed Operations, Access, and Maintenance Agreement. An international dam doesn't change hands often, but the finish line is now in sight and within reach.

We sincerely thank everyone who submitted letters and comments supporting the surrender and change in ownership during the FERC process. Your efforts played a vital role in helping this come to a sensible conclusion that will have long-lasting benefits for the local communities surrounding the lake. Stay tuned for an announcement once we become the official owners of the dam, and perhaps you'll see us out at the dam fishing for salmon in the spring (not too close to the fishway though!), enjoying a swim in the summer, or canoeing down the stream.

## *Water Level Information at Your Fingertips*

*By April Fowler*

Staying informed about local water levels across the St. Croix watershed is essential for recreation in our region. Fortunately, there are reliable, publicly accessible tools that provide both real-time data and long-term historical trends.

The **Environment and Climate Change Canada Water Office** provides this data for East Grand Lake, helping users track seasonal trends and changing conditions. This station is part of a broader hydrometric network that collects standardized measurements across Canada, helping users better understand how water systems respond to weather and watershed conditions. [https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/report/real\\_time\\_e.html?stn=01AR009](https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/report/real_time_e.html?stn=01AR009)

The **St. Croix International Waterway Commission** also offers a comprehensive local water conditions page. This site compiles data from multiple gauging stations throughout the watershed, including lakes, rivers, and dam-controlled flows. <https://www.stcroix.org/water>

Together, these tools give a clear picture of water conditions across our region.

# 2025 Chiputneticook Circle

WWLT's Chiputneticook Circle program recognizes the commitment of our most generous members who make gifts of \$1,000 or more during the course of a year. Chiputneticook Circle donors provide critical annual support that allows WWLT to continue to protect and preserve eastern Maine's and western New Brunswick's exceptional places. By contributing to WWLT as a Chiputneticook Circle member, donors show their commitment to significantly supporting WWLT now and into the future.

## The Trust would like to express gratitude to the following 2025 Chiputneticook Circle members:

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## Thank you to our 2025 Donors!

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Conservation-minded members help us carry on the legacy of preservation, so future generations can get to know and love the area just as much as we do.

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*In honor of Jana Wheaton, and in  
memory of Dale Wheaton*  
Mr. Christopher Garofano



Please join us in protecting the Chiputneticook Lakes Region of Eastern Maine and Western New Brunswick today, tomorrow, and always. With a minimum gift of \$30, you'll be a part of a growing, passionate community. As a 501(c)(3), memberships are tax-deductible. Donate online at [WoodieWheaton.org](http://WoodieWheaton.org)

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*In memory of Dale Wheaton and Bud Brooks. I would also like to honor Jana Wheaton and all the Guides I was fortunate enough to share a Grand Laker with.*
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- Mr. & Mrs. Charles & Joanne Yestramski
- Mr. & Mrs. Walter & Heather Zakupowski  
*In memory of Jane Cook*

# Lace up your Boots! There's a New Trail to Explore!

By Anna Levitsky

There is a new hiking opportunity ready to explore this season, and it comes with a story that feels right at home in the Baskahegan landscape.

The Cold Spring Hiking Trail Project, developed in partnership with the Citizen Organization for Rural Education (CORE) and the Greater East Grand Region Economic Council (GEGREC), is now open and offers 1.4 miles of trail that highlights both the natural beauty and history of the region.

The project includes a trailhead on US Route 1 and two separate trails. The Pickerel Pond Tote Road Trail follows a 0.70-mile stretch of the former Gentner Haul Road, leading to a long-abandoned logging camp on the shore of Pickerel Pond. The Overlook Trail begins at the same trailhead, follows an existing road, and then transitions into a newly developed in-woods section that leads to a sweeping view over the upper Baskahegan Valley and Lake.

That overlook has a story of its own. Board member Dan Daggett recalls setting out to explore Cold Spring Hill after noticing a newly cut woods road while out on Baskahegan Lake with his father. What began as a simple morning walk through a network of skidder trails led to the discovery of a striking natural viewpoint high above the valley.

As Dan describes it: *“While perch fishing on Baskahegan Lake with my father, I spotted a new woods road on Cold Spring Hill and resolved to explore it.*



*The next morning, after wandering several dead-end skidder trails, I followed a promising high-elevation path and some 400 yards in, stumbled upon a bald ledge carpeted in Caribou moss, opening to a sweeping westerly view of Baskahegan Lake, the valley, Stetson Mountain, and beyond it all, the mighty Mt. Katahdin.”*

Unknown to Dan at the time, CORE was also exploring the idea of creating a trail that would provide access to Pickerel Pond. That shared interest in expanding outdoor access and highlighting the area's natural features ultimately became the foundation for this partnership.

If you are looking for somewhere new to explore, we encourage you to check out the Cold Spring Hill trails this summer!

Cold Spring Hill - Scenic Vista



# *Come Paddle and Discover the Places That Make this Region Special*

By Anna Levitsky

This summer, the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust is partnering with Downeast Coastal Conservancy and Downeast Lakes Land Trust to offer a free, guided paddle series across Washington County. Each outing brings you to a different conserved landscape, creating a unique opportunity to explore the natural beauty of Downeast Maine while getting to know the land trusts working together to protect it.

Maine has an incredible conservation story to tell. As of 2025, our state leads the nation in land trusts per capita, with 84 organizations collectively conserving close to 3 million acres. That work fills an important gap. Because less than 7% of Maine's land is publicly owned, a figure significantly lower than in many other states.

Here in Washington County, we are fortunate that these three land trusts are collaborating to steward the landscapes that define this place we all love. And yet, despite the abundance of conserved lands around us, many people have not had the opportunity to experience them firsthand. This paddle series is an invitation to do just that.

Whether you are a seasoned paddler or simply looking for a new way to experience the outdoors, these trips offer a meaningful way to connect with the land, the water, and the people working to protect both. We hope you will join us this summer and discover just how much there is to explore right here at home.

For more information and to register, please scan the QR code or visit our website.



## **July 16 | 9 AM to 12 PM | Spednic Lake, Forest City**

Paddle the scenic wilderness of Spednic Lake to Mud Lake Falls at the Maine–New Brunswick border. Along the way, enjoy a glimpse of old-growth forest, with an optional hike to the falls, and learn about local conservation efforts. The trip wraps up back at WWLT's Tannery Shores lakeside property with a provided picnic lunch.



## **August 22 | 10 AM to 1 PM | Vining Lake, Cooper**

Explore the remote beauty of Vining Lake, surrounded by 406 acres of conserved land and home to iconic Maine wildlife, such as moose and brook trout. After paddling the lake, take a short hike to a granite outcrop overlooking a marsh, then return to enjoy hot dogs roasted over the fire.



## **September 17 | 9 AM to 3 PM | Fourth Lake, Grand Lake Stream**

Pack a lunch and paddle your way through history with a visit to an ancient Wabanaki fishing weir, then continue on to the newly reclaimed Gassabias Carry, a historic portage connecting two watersheds. This outing also highlights the Fourth Lake Ecological Reserve and the conservation efforts that make this landscape so special.



*Scan for more information*

# WWLT Welcomes Back Summer Staff

By April Fowler

As the days grow longer and the waters warm, we're excited to welcome back our summer stewardship staff to Forest City. Each year, this dedicated team plays a vital role in caring for the lands and waters that define our region.

From maintaining trails and monitoring our properties to assisting with events and engaging with the community, our summer stewardship team is often the first friendly faces you'll meet out in the field. Their work helps ensure that our natural spaces remain accessible, healthy, and protected for all who enjoy them.

We're grateful to have such an enthusiastic and hardworking duo joining us for the season ahead. If you see them out and about, be sure to say hello and thank them for the important work they do!

Welcome back, Erik and Lars!



## WWLT Corporate Sponsors Make A Difference!

We extend our sincere gratitude to the corporate sponsors who support the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust. Your commitment to our mission helps protect the lands, waters, and outdoor traditions that make the Chiputneticook Lakes region of eastern Maine and western New Brunswick so special. Through your generosity, whether financial or in-kind, you play a vital role in conserving critical habitats, maintaining public access, and ensuring future generations can experience the natural beauty we all value. We are proud to partner with businesses that recognize the importance of stewardship and community. *Thank you!*

### PREMIER SPONSOR

2026 Summer Speaker Series



### PREMIER SPONSOR

2026 WWLT Annual Meeting



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# 2026 Speaker Series & Events

This event series is made possible through the generosity of our Premier Sponsor, **R.M. Davis.**



## Get Moving Exercise Class

**Monday & Thursday** | 9 -10:15 am

All are welcome!

**Location:** WWLT Center

Get Moving is back! Join our gentle exercise program, taught by Jana Wheaton, that promotes strength, well-being, and a happy outlook. Classes begin Monday, June 1, at 9:00 am. Please call WWLT to sign up at 207-448-3250



## WWLT Annual Meeting

**Sat., July 25** | 11 am - 2 pm

RSVP by Wednesday, July 22

**Location:** WWLT Center

SAVE THE DATE! Please join us for our annual meeting and membership drive! Come for lunch, music, and community. We welcome back Dick Kaufmann and the Glenn Pearson Band for entertainment—more details to follow. Please contact WWLT to register. More information can be found on our website closer to the date.



## Tie One On - Fly Tying & Wine Tasting Event

**Sat., June 13** | 2 - 4 pm

RSVP's helpful, All are welcome

**Location:** WWLT Center

Cast a line into an afternoon of craftsmanship and flavor. Join us for "Tie One On", where skilled fly tiers teach you the art behind the perfect fly while you enjoy a curated wine tasting in a relaxed, rustic setting. Whether you're an angler, a wine enthusiast, or just looking for a unique afternoon out, this event brings together tradition, technique, and taste.



## Mushroom Walk & Talk

**Saturday, August 22** | 1 - 3:30 pm

RSVP by Wednesday, August 5

**Location:** East Grand Highlands Trails  
Rt. 1, Danforth, ME

Join mycologist Esther Tozier as she shares her knowledge of edible, toxic, and medicinal mushrooms and the proper means of identification. The talk will be followed by a walk on the trails to gather several species for discussion. Bring a basket for gathering, a small sharp knife, sturdy shoes, a notepad, and a pencil. Rain or shine.



## Paddle to Mud Lake Falls

**Sunday, July 12** | 9 am - 12 pm

RSVP by Wednesday, July 8

Rain Date: Sunday, July 19

**Location:** Meet at the WWLT Center

Paddle the scenic wilderness of Spednic Lake to Mud Lake Falls at the Maine–New Brunswick border. Enjoy an optional hike through old-growth forest to the falls, and learn about local conservation along the way. Provided picnic lunch back at WWLT's Tannery Shores property. More info can be found on our website.



## Tick Talk - Info Session

**Date & Time : October - more details to come**

**Location:** Virtual

Join WWLT and the Sierra Club Maine Chapter to learn important information about Lyme disease, a tick-borne illness prevalent in our region. Hear from local experts and get your questions answered. **Visit [woodiewheaton.org/news-events](http://woodiewheaton.org/news-events) or our Facebook page for updates.**

For updates & more information:

Visit [WoodieWheaton.org](http://WoodieWheaton.org)  
or follow us on Facebook



To RSVP & register for events:

Contact us at 207-448-3250  
or [office@woodiewheaton.org](mailto:office@woodiewheaton.org)



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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.

*Contact Us*

Center Open Seasonally  
May 1 - October 1  
207-448-3250  
office@woodiewheaton.org



Donate online or  
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