

December 11

## Maine Voices: Land trusts remind us of state's vitality

**Maine's 88 land trusts are rooted in local communities and are one reason why we are a conservation leader.**

By TIM GLIDDEN, ALAN HUTCHINSON and JOHN PIOTTI

Maine has something to be quite proud of this holiday season: a recently released survey of land conservation and land trusts has reported Maine to be a national leader.



[click image to enlarge](#)

## PPH Opinion

Throughout Maine, the work of land trusts helps ensure access to the state's natural resources, while also protecting them.

Telegram file photo

[Select images available for purchase in the Maine Today Photo Store](#)

The Land Trust Alliance ([www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org)) reports that since 2005, Maine land trusts have helped ensure the future of nearly 1.8 million acres of active farmlands, productive forests, working waterfronts and open space important to local communities and wildlife.

In total number of acres conserved from 2005 to 2010, Maine ranks first among Eastern states and second nationally. But Maine leads the way in more than total acreage -- our state is also a leader in its distinctive approach to land conservation.

Those 1.8 million acres have been conserved in large part through the hard work of land trusts across Maine.

Land trusts are private, member-supported nonprofit organizations that are rooted in local communities and work to sustain the vitality and character of those communities.

Maine is home to 88 land trusts, a reflection of the state's grass-roots approach to conservation. Local efforts allow communities to shape their futures with creative projects -- projects that reflect their own unique values and identities.

In interior Maine, the Amherst Mountains Community Forest partnership has protected open space for hiking, hunting, and educational opportunities, while generating income for the town from sustainable timber harvests.

In Trescott, 80 acres of Bog Brook Cove Preserve are managed for commercial blueberry cultivation, and the preserve provides the only public access point to Bog Brook Cove Beach. And at Broadturn Farm in Scarborough, a local land trust has made it possible for a young couple to sell vegetables, flowers and meats to the local community.

In Maine, we understand that our forests, farms, and waters sustain our natural resource-based economy, outdoor recreational traditions, and tourism -- as well as provide fish and wildlife habitats and other ecological values.

Take a closer look at those 1.8 million acres and you will find networks of hiking, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing trails, sustainably managed forests, endangered species habitat, family farms, ecological reserves, hundreds of thousands of acres for hunting and fishing, deer wintering areas, trout ponds and other wildlife habitat, beaches, boat launches, working waterfronts, coastal islands, rocky headlands, campsites, canoe trails and more.

Communities and land trusts across Maine have helped develop a style of conservation that works. It is an approach that sustains core Maine industries like fishing, farming and forestry while protecting our most important ecological and recreational areas and renewable natural resources.

It is an approach that maintains the rural, natural character that draws thousands of tourists to our towns, sporting camps, and campgrounds year after year, while supporting growth and prosperity in ways that are tailored to fit each community.

It is an approach that draws on Maine's remarkable traditions of voluntary conservation and of private landowners providing opportunities for public access and recreation on their lands.

It is an approach that recognizes the importance of private landownership in Maine, and uses conservation easements and other means to help keep productive forests as forests and farms as farms.

So many of us live in Maine because we cherish our connection to the land and the outdoors and we appreciate the countless benefits that they continue to provide to us. Whether it is fields, forests, a rocky coastline, secret trout ponds or granite mountaintops that capture your heart, woods, farms and waters continue to define why we live, work and play in Maine.

As 2011 draws to a close, we hope you will join with us in taking great pride in Maine's distinctive brand of conservation and in recognizing the importance of land trusts in helping sustain the vitality and character of our communities and our state.

Head out during the holidays and enjoy a conserved property -- for it doesn't take long to find a special place near you that a land trust has helped make available.

Success stories abound but important work remains, and you can help. Please consider making a gift to one or more of Maine's land trusts this holiday season. A charitable contribution to support land conservation is a gift that will continue giving for generations to come.

For a list of land trusts in your area, please visit [www.mltn.org](http://www.mltn.org).

*Tim Glidden is president of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, found online at [mcht.org](http://mcht.org). Alan Hutchinson is executive director of the Forest Society of Maine, found online at [fsmaine.org](http://fsmaine.org). John Piotti is executive director of the Maine Farmland Trust, found online at [mainefarmlandtrust.org](http://mainefarmlandtrust.org).*

**Were you interviewed for this story? If so, please fill out our [accuracy form](#)**

**[Send Question/Comment to the Publisher](#)**

Recommend

Sign Up to see what your friends recommend.

[Tweet](#)<

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.pressherald.com/opinion/land-trusts-remind-us-of-states-vitality\\_2011-12-11.html](http://www.pressherald.com/opinion/land-trusts-remind-us-of-states-vitality_2011-12-11.html)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.