

Newsletter Fall 2020



Please Add Your Support for the Charles Pond Property Purchase! Jill Rundle, President

Remember March? In the spring of this chaotic year, normal became anything but.

With the help of our volunteers, members, and the community, GLLT found a new normal that confirms the power of our conservation mission. We've seen record numbers of visitors exploring the trails and discovering an emotional connection to the natural world. A world that sometimes gets overlooked in the fast pace of our modern lives.

So, after we sorted out working remotely, we worked out ways to help our visitors get the most from their time outdoors with social distance and safety in mind. We have posted "virtual" hikes on our website, and we created nature outings for all ages and wherever you may go; up a mountain, or into your own backyard.

Most important, we reconfirmed our mission to protecting and conserving critical ecosystems and pristine areas of our region as a legacy. In the future, when the normal may not be what we remember, we want to be sure that it will include access to the wonders of the natural world. The critical importance of accessible natural areas for humans, as much as for wildlife, is the foundation of our mission. The Cold River is the heart of a special watershed just west of Kezar Lake. At the north end is the much loved Stone House conservation easement and it's spectacular public trails; at the southern end is the pristine Charles Pond. The watershed is the heart of the town of Stow. Maine.

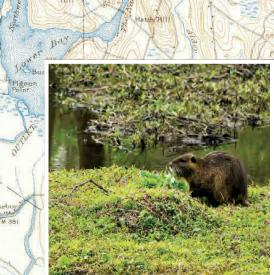
The Greater Lovell Land Trust and the community can conserve a very special property that includes nearly 3,000 feet of frontage on Charles Pond and on the Cold River and is home to wildlife of all sorts, including iconic mammal, bird, aquatic and flora species.

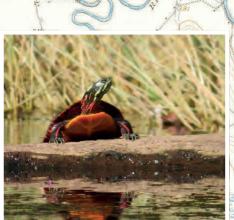
With almost 90 acres of upland forest and 20 acres of wetland—including pond shore frontage, river frontage, and may types of wetland—the

Charles Pond property is a unique opportunity to conserve this significant ecosystem now and for the future of our community.

The project fundraising goals are ambitious, but a significant amount has been raised against the goal. The complete project cost is \$350,000 and with positive results on outstanding grant applications we will be close to the amount needed. But time is running out, we are trying to complete the fundraising in time for a year-end closing.

The GLLT needs your support to secure this important community resource. Please join us in conserving this special property as a legacy for the future.







Valuing Nature for People: A Look Beyond the Trails at Long Meadow Brook Reserve

Erika Rowland, Executive Director Photos by Rhyan Paquereau

We love the trails, views, wildlife, and water access that are available to us on conservation lands—the recreational, health, and scenic benefits are undeniable. But recreation and scenic views are just the tip of the iceberg. The natural ecosystems of the conservation lands around us provide a wealth of less obvious values that are essential to human wellbeing. Collectively they're known as "ecosystems services"

While incredibly important, a discussion of ecosystem services can seem somewhat abstract and complicated. Even the term "ecosystem" is not in our daily vocabulary. But, everything in the landscape that is not man-made is a part of the natural ecosystem.

The services that ecosystems provide are critical to human economies, and fall into four categories:

Provisioning: the products taken directly from the land include clean drinking water, wild food, and wood products.

Regulating: functions that sustain the natural world, such as the pollination of crops and other plants, erosion reduction, flood control and water filtration by forest cover and wetlands.

Cultural: influences on human creativity and cultural development, inspiration for artistic expression, and outdoor recreation.

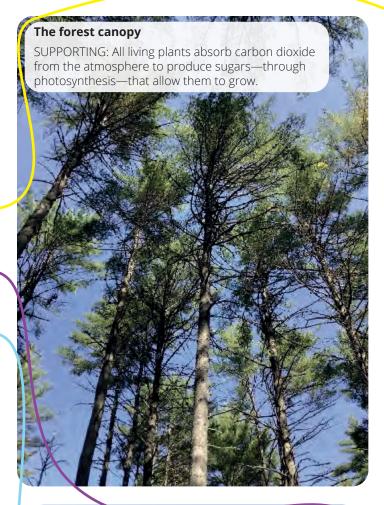
Supporting: processes that make the other services possible, such as nutrient cycling through decomposition, and water cycling through evaporation and precipitation.

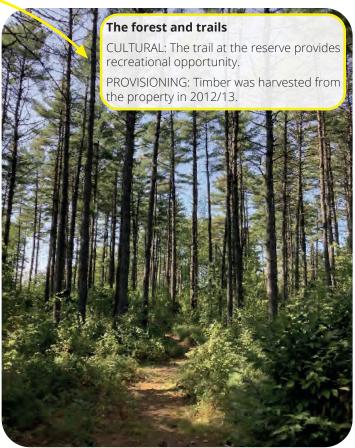
The list goes on, but you're starting to get the idea... maybe. Let's take a look at GLLT's Long Meadow Brook Reserve to see these concepts on the ground, even if we can't observe the processes in action.

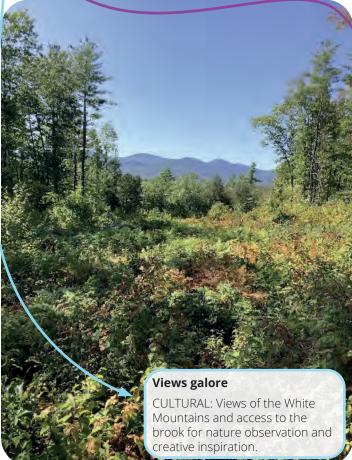


An *ecosystem* is made up of plants, animals, insects, fungi and other living organisms, as well as the non-living materials, such as soils, water, and rocks. The living and nonliving components are linked through all kinds of processes and energy flows.











The 5,400 acres that are conserved by GLLT, as well as lands conserved by others, all contribute to the long list of benefits provided by natural ecosystems. Roads, buildings, factories, shopping malls, and dams are important to our economy and our well-being, but humans are deeply reliant on the natural world and products and processes that we may not often take note of. Ponder these connections on your next stroll along the trails in our beautiful area.

Deceiving the Busy Beavers at Whitney Pond

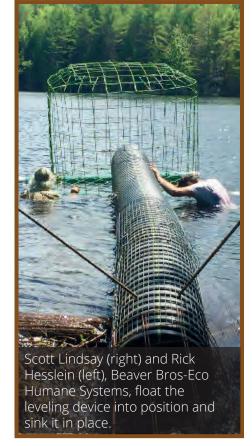
Erika Rowland, Executive Director

iving in harmony with beavers is not always easy. This year the spring melt at the GLLT property at Whitney Pond in Stoneham had staff and volunteers wondering whether harmony was even possible.

The property, purchased in 2014, completely surrounds the beautiful pond, and has a remote cabin available for rent on the pond shore. Each year, the active beavers have reinforced and added height to their dam at the outlet stream that carries water toward Crooked River. A bridge to the cabin crosses the stream just below the dam. As has happened in the past, high water during 2020 spring thaw flowed around the ends of the dam. The water flowed down the road and across the bridge. and carried (again) much of the gravel and crushed rock that we replace each year into the stream. Something had to change.

Beavers are one of nature's most important environmental engineers. Their ponds create habitat for their own needs but also for some aquatic insects, plants and animals not found in streams. I first learned about their amazing role in nature in *The Beaver* Pond, by Alvin Tresselt, a wonderful introduction to natural cycles and ecological process and function. In my work in the Northern Rockies I applied this learning (and more in the intervening years) to projects for beaver reintroductions on grazing lands as a climate change adaptation tool. Beavers, eliminated from that region early in the 20th century, were being reintroduced as a natural solution to manage the spring snowmelt. Melting winter snow is the primary source of water in that part of the US. As the air temperatures are increasingly warming and drying and beaver ponds are natural reservoirs for limited water resources. Keeping water in our local natural systems may become an important tool in the Northeast, as we continue to face late summer dry periods as we have this year.

Back to this spring... Thankfully, Maine's Inland Fisheries & Wildlife biologist, Scott Lindsey, had a solution



that he had successfully implemented in other locations: a pond leveling device. The name seems self-explanatory, until you actually see it. The basic idea is a pipe that runs from the pond through the dam. The pipe is set at the human-desired water level for the pond, which is below the level that the beavers established with their dam engineering. The balancing consideration is maintaining the water level necessary for the beavers to continue to thrive.

Beavers are amazingly tenacious creatures. The dam and the pond behind it are critical to their survival and if they hear running water, their response is an irresistible urge to stop the flow. Scott and his colleagues have found that protective cages around the end of the pipe in the pond and any exposed stretches outside the dam are necessary to prevent beaver guerrilla tactics. Beavers will chew through the pipe if they are able to access it. Thus, deception is key to success.



The leveling device saved GLLT's Whitney Pond bridge and solved our erosion problem, literally overnight. By the next morning, the water level was down in the pond and water was trickling through the pipe in the dam. The beavers kindly covered the pipe with branches, helping to improve the aesthetics. The real test of our pondlevelling device will be the spring of 2021, when we hope to see the beavers active in the pond while the bridge and the road stay dry.

The water remains low at Whitney Pond this fall, as it is everywhere around the state. Finding ways to live in harmony with beavers may become an ecological necessity, as warmer and drier stretches interspersed with intense, heavy rains become the norm for our area. Give us a call if you'd like to learn more about deceiving beavers.



A Paean of Praise to the Groundhogs

Rhyan Paquereau Land Steward

ost people consider beavers to be the ultimate ecosystem engineer. Clearly, these folks have never been to Lovell, or strayed into the woodlands in the Kezar River, Cold River, and Kezar Lake watersheds. Those of us who have hiked the hills know all too well that the lowly beaver is not the only ecosystem engineer in town. That title is shared with the humble groundhog. Specifically, the GLLT Groundhog.

The average hiker knows the groundhog as a disturber of pristine lawns and marauder of vegetable patches, but chances are you've seen signs of Groundhog handiwork in the forests of our area without even knowing. It's a common mistake. Most hikers who see Groundhog sign in the forest think "state worker" or "contracted trail crew," but this is a classic case of misidentification.



The first step in recognizing Groundhog sign is understanding a bit about their behavior. Groundhogs are highly social creatures, almost always seen in groups, and these groups typically utilize trails to navigate the forest. Groundhogs will often use the same trail for decades, and an easy way to tell if a trail is still in use is to keep an eye out for cut branches. Groundhogs, like you and me, hate to have branches in the way on trails. Because of this, any fallen tree or branch reaching down into the trail is cut and discarded near the trail. Groundhog cuts are quite clean, resembling that of a saw.

A handy trick for telling when a new trail is about to be built by a group of Groundhogs is to keep an eye out for bright colored flagging tape. Groundhogs will leave a trail of colored flagging (orange and pink are typical, but blue has also been observed) to mark the route of a new trail, which they then build over the course of several weeks.

Groundhogs like a hilltop lookout, and can be seen working below open rocks and cliff faces to remove impediments to the view. They also utilize personal conveyances to access their trail habitat, and when rocks or trees create parking issues, a Groundhog group is likely to appear in force to make a change.

Like beavers, Groundhogs are notorious for manipulating the flow of water. Any hiker knows that water on a trail causes erosion damage. To avoid this, Groundhogs have been known to build some pretty clever structures. There are many forms but the easiest to identify in the field is the waterbar; a shallow angled trench lined with stones or a log on the downhill side. Groundhogs build waterbars to divert running water off the trail and prevent damage, one of their biggest challenges.



Now that you know how to read their sign, the next time you're out on a GLLT trail remember that it was made possible by your local Groundhogs. It's important to note that Groundhogs go into hibernation in late fall, but if you'd like to join a GLLT Groundhog outing next spring, contact us at <code>info@gllt.org</code>.

Join the Zabinsky Boatman Challenge

\$5,000 A YEAR FOR 5 YEARS

So many generous partners have stepped up to the challenge, Bruce, but, oh my goodness, time is really running out!

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Bradditional \$25,000 of out.

Long time seasonal residents Bruce Zabinsky and his wife Bonny Boatman are strong supporters of the Greater Lovell Land Trust. Bruce serves in the important role of Treasurer of the GLLT and Bonny is a volunteer docent and frequent speaker.

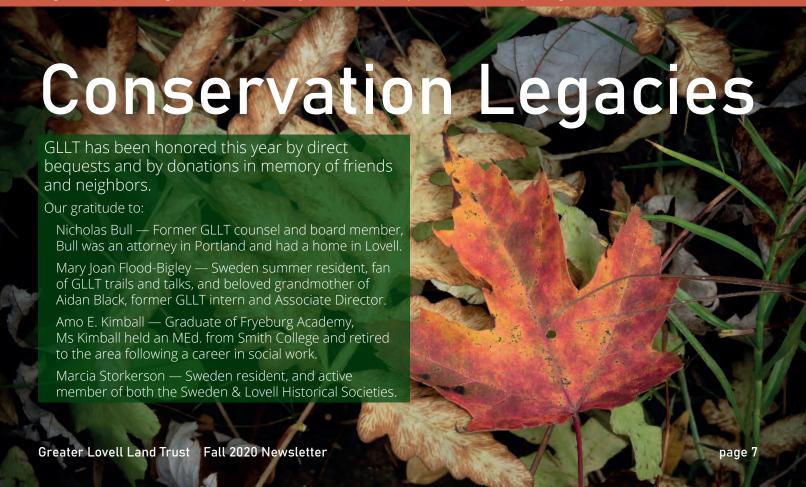
They have taken their support for the important work of the GLLT to a new level and they are challenging members and supporters to join them by matching their donation of \$5,000 a year for five years to support the operational costs of our important efforts in conservation for the region.

Bruce and Bonny have seven partners so far. An additional challenge from an anonymous donor will add one more \$25,000 donation if 10 donors pledge to participate before the end of the year.

Please join Bruce, Bonny and the generous donors who have already committed to meeting the Zabinsky Boatman Challenge. Help the GLLT meet the costs of conservation, public access, trails and programs for all ages, and year-round environmental education and outings.

Contact: info@gllt.org or call 207.925.1056

Bequests and donations in memory of friends and loved ones have been a deeply touching way for us to remember members, supporters, and neighbors who are no longer with us. Bequests of any kind can be made a part of advance estate planning. Contact us for more information.



GLLT's Environmental Education Programs — A Sense of Normalcy

Leigh Macmillen Hayes, Education Director

As we enjoyed BYO picnic lunches after the GLLT-sponsored paddle at Charles Pond in September, member Janet Sheffield said, "GLLT's programs, despite the masks, have been the only normal thing we've done this summer."

Back in March when the nation shut down, we decided we needed to try to find ways to offer a positive spin. After all, we live in an area where the fields and forest not only protect our watersheds and provide habitat for all creatures and plant forms, but also soothe us with their restorative nature.



Sierra examining her finds.

First we offered virtual hikes on the gllt.org website so that even those who weren't in Maine could still experience spring as it emerged. While virtual programs continued, we collaborated with three other local organizations to create weekly Pocket Nature Journals for the young and young at heart. And the list went on, from building a Nature Naturally website page filled with activities and inspiration, to a few challenge activities aimed at encouraging everyone to step outside and explore. We even tried our hand, albeit with some beginner blips, at YouTube videos.

When at last Oxford County allowed small groups to gather, we began to think of ways to meet without putting anyone at risk. The Maine CDC reviewed our proposed plan for limiting numbers, requiring pre-registration, wearing face masks, and asking people if they'd self-quarantined. We added that our guests would be instructed to practice physical distancing by imagining keeping the length of a moose between us. Robert Long from Maine CDC responded: "The event would be allowed with the precautions you describe. I love the 'length of a moose' guidance."

Upon hearing that, the GLLT Board agreed that we could once again offer walks. With slightly frazzled nerves but a sense of excitement, a small group of docents served as guinea pigs and worked out the details for leading people safely through the woods during this time. Public programs in May included a visit to a vernal pool and a Lady's Slipper walk.

It felt awkward to ask for pre-registration emails and whether people had self-quarantined or had a negative COVID-19 test, but with each ask, members responded positively



Hunting for water sliders.

and those who couldn't participate graciously understood. One person wrote, "That's why Maine has such low numbers."

Some planned events were cancelled because the topics or the new protocol didn't mesh or presenters weren't comfortable leading a group, but other speakers helped us find new ways to share the wonders of the natural world. Outdoor talks were held at Lovell's Athletic Fields, where we set up flags



Attending one of the GLLT's educational talks at the Lovell Athletic Fields



Frog and Toad Safari

indicating sit spots. Others were offered online so we could reach a wider audience who couldn't physically attend.

Though Lovell Recreation couldn't offer its usual summer camp, we worked with Director Meg Dyer and provided a

weekly small group hike for local kids. The Storybook Trail at Kezar River Reserve was updated twice, and our self-guided plant tour was prepared by a small team of docents and posted at John A. Segur Wildlife Refuge West on New Road.

GLLT's calendar was again full of a variety of activities to help us share the natural world with our friends and neighbors. None of it could have happened without the dedication of our intrepid volunteer docents, the committed support of the GLLT board, and the enthusiasm of participants like Janet Sheffield.

Thank you all for helping us provide a sense of normalcy in Western Maine despite living in the midst of a global pandemic.



Thank you all!

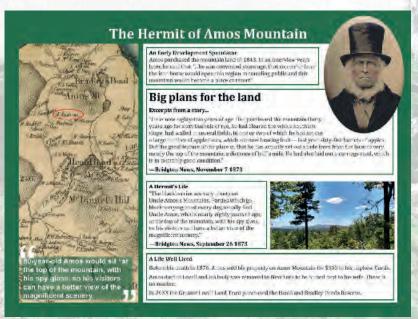
Signs of the Times

When of human history is recorded in the forests of our landscape. Stone walls, stone-lined cellar holes, and all kinds of treasures buried in centuries-old dumps are there for the finding. There are also signs of the indigenous peoples who occupied the land prior to early pioneer settlement, but their signs often take a bit more expertise to identify.

GLLT has many properties with historical features. The land trust's Heald and Bradley Ponds Reserve alone has the remnants of four homesteads dating to Lovell's pioneer settlement in the early 1800s, a mill site at the outlet of Heald Pond, and a mystery structure. With support from the Ed Meadows Conservation Fund, GLLT will be developing and installing

interpretive signs at five of the historical sites at the property. Keep an eye out for the new installations late this fall and next spring to learn about some of the early European settlers to the area.







November 15, 12:30pm - 3:30pm

Feeding Our Neighbors

Bring non-perishables for the Sweden Food Bank, and the North Lovell Food Bank both of which support the towns GLLT serves. Then we'll hike through the woods looking for the food caches the mammals have created along the trail.

December 5, 9:30am - noon

Christmas Beside the Brook

For the annual Christmas Tree Hunt, we'll try to spot the decorated tree along a trail beside a brook. Extra pinecones, peanut butter, birdseed, and other natural goodies will be available to enhance the decorations. Hot cocoa and tea provided, BYO cup.

January 1, 12:30pm - 3:30pm

First Day Hike 2021 (snow date: Jan 2) Join GLLT to ring in 2021. We'll warm up with a climb to a GLLT summit, looking for bear claw trees along the way. BYO cup and we'll provide hot cocoa and tea for all. Toast to Lovell and the surrounding towns. Snowshoes or micro-spikes a must.

January 16, 9:30am - noon

Wildflowers of Winter (snow date Jan 23) Some call them weeds, but we know them as wildflowers' winter structures. Join us to explore their idiosyncrasies as we snowshoe along a GLLT path.

January 30, all day

Community Snow Day

Sled, snowshoe, skate, x-c ski with GLLT and Lovell Recreation. We'll provide the places: you bring the equipment.

Your health and safety are important. We ask that you preregister for programs. Registration confirmation will include event location. Masks will be required. E-mail leigh.hayes@gllt.org.

State of Maine guidelines for group activities may change. GLLT will follow state protocols. Help us keep you safe; check the latest information at *maine.gov*.

February 12, 9:30 - noon

I'm in LOVE with GLLT & LEA

On this collaborative hike, leaders from the two organizations will share the wonders of the winter world as seen through their collective experience. Home-made cookies, hot cocoa, and tea will be served. BYO cup.

February 19, 9:30am - noon

February Friday Fascination

Snowshoe the trail with us and we'll let nature be our guide as we celebrate fascinating finds along the way.

February 27, 9:30am - noon

Snoga: Snow Yoga

Let's don our snowshoes and learn to perform some modified yoga movements as we walk along a GLLT trail.

March 13, 9:30am - 2:00pm

March Madness

Choose one, two, or all three peaks to bag at Heald and Bradley Ponds Reserve. At each summit we'll provide snacks and camaraderie. Snowshoes or micro-spikes might be necessary.

March 28 7:30pm - 9:00pm

Friday Night Owl Prowl

Who cooks for you? GLLT Land Steward Rhyan Paquereau will help us answer that question as we try our own calls and listen for a response. Snowshoes or micro-spikes might be necessary.

April 17 - 25, All Day; Any Day

Earth Week Clean-Up

In honor of Earth Day, join us at your leisure to pick up debris from Route 5 or any local roadside. Be sure to take a photograph of you and your findings. And if you aren't in the area, send us photos of you doing the same elsewhere. We'll share them all via our Earth Day map.

April 21, 9:30am - 1:00pm

Circle the Earth GLLT Style

We'll hike along a GLLT trail that will take us around a small portion of the Earth, pausing at viewpoints to pay reverence to it with prose or poetry. You are welcome to share something you've written or read.

May 1, 9:30am - noon

Fairy Shrimp Safari

We'll hike a short distance to a local vernal pool and then let our eyes adjust to life underwater. No, we won't get wet, but we will dip nets and containers as we try to gain a better understanding of amphibians that inhabit these special places.

May 15, 9:30 - noon

Dragonfly Emergence

You'll need bug spray and bug nets for this one because the mosquitoes can be fierce, but watching dragonflies emerge as they transform from aquatic beings to those about to take flight is a notable experience.

May 29, 9:30 - 11:00am

Lady's Slippers Walk

We've been invited to admire the delicate flowers that adorn the land of a GLLT member. Join us for this special walk.

June 25, 9:30am - 2:30pm

Hike and Paddle, Hike or Paddle

The choice is yours, With our friends at LEA, we'll hike up along a GLLT trail and enjoy its ins and outs during the morning hours. Then we'll don our PFDs, and grab our paddles and boats to take to the water. Bring your own hiking boots, poles, binoculars, bug stuff, water, snacks, lunch, PFD, whistle, canoe or kayak, paddles. You may sign up to join us for one event or both.

Tuesday Trackers

Are you curious to learn more about the mammals with which we share the woods? Join us as we head off trail and try to discern patterns and behavior in the snow.



News from the Susan Clout, Interim Director Charlotte Hobbs Memorial Library



Your library is busy! Open Mondays (12-6), Wednesdays (10-4), Fridays (10-4) and Saturdays (9:30-12:30) and planning expanded hours in the winter with some evening hours.

- The Book Cellar is open whenever the library is open with a huge collection of adult books for purchase and a wonderful collection of children's books too!
- Several programs meet by Zoom each month: Story Swap, Page Turners and the Writing Group meet regularly. Check: *hobbslibrary.org*
- Don't miss Meet The Author on Zoom each month with featured Maine authors (Alex Myers, Barbara Ross, Robert Spencer, Kate Christensen, Dave Patterson and more).
- We offer digital events to keep our programs guideline-compliant. Our November Holiday Fair will be online. Watch for updates!
- Call the Library (207-925-3177) to be put on our mailing list.

Backpacks and Snowshoes

Thanks to an extremely generous donation of books by long-time GLLT supporter Sarah Davis Blodgett, GLLT's Nature Backpacks have returned to the shelves of Charlotte Hobbs Memorial Library with updated contents. Each one holds a host of field guides and equipment related to the following themes: constellations; birds; trees; or mammals.

Periodically, the themes may change: mushrooms; geology; insects; wildflowers; or pond life may be among the offerings. Check one out as you would a book and enhance your hikes in the woods.

In addition, don't forget that the Charlotte Hobbs Memorial Library has **snowshoes for you to borrow** for when you head out onto the trails, thanks to the GLLT!





News from the KLWA Rick Pilsbury, President



The Kezar Lake Watershed survived the unusual summer of 2020 unfazed and healthy. All initiatives and programs moved ahead as planned thanks to the continued support of our members, sponsors and hard-working board. We adjusted on the fly by holding virtual gatherings and replacing our annual meeting with a special edition of our newsletter. We're prepared for whatever the future brings confident the KLWA will be at the ready.

Water quality continues to be excellent and thanks to LIPPC and others, free from invasive plants. Partnering with LIPPC, we acted quickly when Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) re-opened Cushman Pond to commercial bait fishing. Bait fishing nets may have contributed to Cushman's previous invasive plant issues. Cushman is in year three of being invasive-free. Work continues; stay tuned.



Our Loon Project had mixed results with strong human support for nesting protection but poor fledging results due to predation, habitat loss and large boat wakes. The current project has three more years to go at which time we'll be able to draw conclusions. Go to the loon page on our new website, *kezarwatershed.org* to see a loon chick learning to fly.

Our fisheries got a boost this summer when we learned crayfish were returning to the watershed. Many fish species, including largemouth and small-mouth bass, thrive on crayfish. We also saw a few Chinese Mystery Snails, which are unwelcome but we were able to remove the threat.

Once again, thanks to everyone who supported KLWA this year. See you in the spring!

GLLT Board of Directors 2021

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Special Note:

Greater Lovell Land Trust has been here through these wild and uncertain times, offering new environmental education activities, carrying out familiar programs with a compliant twist, and working hard to maintain trails and lands for all to enjoy and find renewal.

Please consider supporting our efforts. Visit our website gllt.org to donate and to see other ways to get involved in our work.

Erika Rowland, Executive Director Leigh Macmillen Hayes, Education Director Rhyan Paquereau, Land Steward Alice Bragg, Office Manager



@greaterlovelllandtrust

www.gllt.org

207.925.1056



and Cold River watersheds for the benefit and enjoyment of the natural and human community today and as a legacy for the future. Me work with our neighbors, towns, and like-minded organizations to protect and preserve the ecosystems of the Kezar Lake, Kezar River,

F.O. Box 225, Lovell, ME 04051

