Northern Exposure for July Garden Tour

Have you ever been to the headwaters of the St. George River? This year’s 22nd annual Gardens in the Watershed Tour will take you there on Sunday, July 14, from 10 am to 5 pm featuring seven gardens in Montville, Union, and Hope. Besides the gardens, one of the highlights of tour day is the drive following the Georges River as it meanders through the watershed with magnificent vistas of rolling hills, farms, fields of wildflowers, ponds and lakes.

This year gardens were chosen not only for their beauty and diversity but also as examples of sustainable living. Dorolenna Farm in Montville, an 1840 farmstead with a newly built timber frame barn, is an organic farm selling to local buyers. Garden owner, Andrew Marshall, will give a talk about “Growing with the St. George in sight: an organic approach” at 11 am.

Another Montville garden site offers a wonderful example of creating alternative gardens and housing featuring three translucent domes with garden sculptures interspersed amongst the fragrant perennial collections. The owner created one of the first regional sales of fragrant perennial flowers that has developed into Alda’s Wedding Flowers.

Fernwood Nursery specializes in native and woodland plants hardy to this area. The Sawyer’s share that “visiting the nursery, you will get a glimpse of our lives at Fernwood as we raise animals for food and fiber, as well as organic vegetables. Sustainability is an integral part of our life goals and we derive a lot of satisfaction from knowing we can provide for ourselves.”

Four gardens will be highlighted in Hope and Union. One is a haven of green valleys that overlook many rock, perennial and annual gardens where over 2,700 sunflowers were planted last year. There will be a composting discussion at 2 pm by the garden owner, Robert Pearse. Hobbs Farm & Greenhouse sells vegetables and is the largest grower of scented geraniums in the country! An eclectic mix of garden art, two fountains and flowerbeds grace the third Hope site. Not to be missed is an extensive perennial garden collection in Union with scenic views of Seven Tree pond.

Tickets are $25 in advance from local merchants, the Land Trust office and online at georgesriver.org/garden, or $28 on tour day at any of the garden sites. Home Kitchen Café will again be catering lunch. There will be 15 raffle items to choose from ranging from a dwarf conifer, garden baskets, dahlia bulbs, hand blown bud vases, artwork and more that will be on display at the lunch site in case you want to buy another raffle ticket during the tour.

We’re delighted with the generous response from 85 local merchants and private individuals who are helping to fund this event and support the mission of the Land Trust. Many thanks to Bangor Savings Bank who is the major sponsor again this year, to the hard working garden owners and our many volunteers who will assist in the gardens on tour day.

Conserving History and Nature: Trolley Marsh Preserve

A Finnish family settled in the midcoast in the early 1900’s when a trolley ran along the St. George River from Thomaston to Warren. For many years, one branch of the Anderson family lived on this property with their house, now gone, across the street. Fondly remembered by the family heirs were their days spent harvesting their blueberry crops or exploring the abandoned trolley line at the edge of the marsh along the river.

Recently, eleven Anderson heirs sold this 113-acre treasure of marsh, woodland, and forest. Thanks to the efforts of the Andover Historical Society who raised funds for the purchase. The marsh is a prime example of salt marsh with muck, shell beds, and probably a glacial erratic. It is currently a privately owned property.

Photo: Remains of the historic trolley along the St. George River.
Meet Our Artists in Residence

Artists have long been inspired by the natural beauty of Maine, and the midcoast has a particularly long and strong tradition of place-inspired art making. We are fortunate to have found a partner in the K2 Family Foundation that seeks to foster sustainability and create opportunities for artists whose work incorporates scientific awareness and concerns. And so it is with great pleasure that we are launching an artist-in-residence program!

The artist in residence program offers professional visual artists, performing artists, and writers the opportunity to pursue their artistic disciplines while being inspired by the area’s extraordinary landscape. The artists will have access to many of the Land Trust’s holdings as a resource for creating new site-inspired or site-specific work.

Elizabeth Billings and Michael Sacca were chosen from more than 25 applicants to be the first artists in residence. Elizabeth and Michael share a similar visual aesthetic, and approach their work from diverse vantage points: photography, cinematography and the use of digital media on one hand, drawing, gathering, weaving and installation art on the other. Using the diversity of these techniques and the common ground of the Georges River, their goal is to visually portray the essence of the watershed and their connection to it through all four seasons.

The Land Trust and K2 Family Foundation want you to have the opportunity to share in the development of the final artwork. The artists began the year with a public presentation of their work in Thomaston in May. You can follow their progress through their blog, which will visually document their travels, reflections and thoughts at billingsandsacca.com.

During their residency, Elizabeth and Michael will organize further events to chart their progress and encourage public awareness of the richness and unique qualities of the Georges River landscape. In each of their seasonal residencies, they will invite Land Trust members and the public to presentations or local food potluck picnics on the river. At the end of the year of visual exploration, their combined artwork and blog entries will be edited together into a chapbook and an exhibition; celebrating the watershed and the residency.

Elizabeth and Michael will be the featured guest speakers at our Annual Meeting on September 18 at the Old Town House in Union.

Welcome Our New Board Member!

As a child, Jeannie Klainer’s family traveled from Minnesota to Maine— not to the coast but to beautiful Sebec Lake in Piscataquis County, where, she grew to love the deep, clear, cold waters, and the mountains and endless trails.

“ It’s time for me to give back to the Land Trust for all the joy it has given me.”

Now living year-round in Maine, Jeannie still heads north to the family camp on Sebec, but notices more gates to keep hikers out and the lake bottom, ten feet below, isn’t as clear as it used to be. In residing on the midcoast, Jeannie quickly discovered the extensive system of trails that have been developed and maintained by the Land Trust. She loves being able to trek from mountain to mountain in all seasons, and wants these resources to be around for generations to come. We’re delighted she’s joined the Board to help protect our beautiful watershed and keep our trails open to the public.

TROLLEY MARSH PRESERVE Can’t

perennial streams and open fields to the Land Trust. The purchase was made possible with grant funding from two State of Maine funding sources, whose grants are specifically directed to protect valuable habitats throughout the state. Estuarine wetlands, found on this portion of the St. George River, are not just a priority for Georges River Land Trust but also for the Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program. In addition, the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund uses its funding to acquire and manage wildlife conservation areas of statewide significance.

Now named the Trolley Marsh Preserve, because of the historic trolley line and the extensive marsh system, the Land Trust will ensure the valuable habitats and historic features found on the property will remain intact. Next door to the Trolley Marsh Preserve, the Land Trust holds an easement on the Oyster River Winegrowers, owned and managed by Allie Willenbrink and Brian Smith. These two properties provide 1.3 mile of protected riverfront that is home to coastal wading birds and waterfowl, and include a large 18-acre salt hay marsh. This stretch of the river is inundated by the tides, and is popular to discover by boat. Eagles, osprey and great blue heron can be found swooping over the marsh, in search of food.

The Georges River Land Trust is very pleased to offer this property as a permanent asset to the Warren community and surrounding area, and welcome people to visit and explore after we complete a management plan and public access improvements this year,
Making Ultimate Impact on Our Community—
The Watershed Society Grows

As a member of our community, you have many opportunities to make an impact that will affect our families and loved ones. But we are a different kind of organization. Together, we have made a commitment to steward the land for our children...forever. How is that possible?

Stewardship, the act of protecting critical areas from legal and financial challenges, as well as ongoing care and monitoring for environmental threats, is a challenge that requires financial support that is just as permanent as the protection itself. Our Watershed Society members take that challenge to heart by writing Georges River Land Trust into their wills. Our Board directs these gifts towards reserves and endowments that ensure our long-term success. Even the most modest of families can make a tremendous impact by planning a gift through their will.

Recently, Mickey and Joyce Sirota joined 15 other members that collectively have some of the farthest-reaching impact within Georges River Land Trust supporters. “We have enjoyed hiking on your trails, attending the Garden Tour, and participating in your programs. But most of all, we appreciate what you do to preserve the lands within the Georges River watershed. We hope that our bequest will help keep current and future properties available for the benefit of all even after we are no longer here to appreciate them ourselves.”

If you would like to know more about how to remember Georges River Land Trust in your will, please contact our Executive Director, Gail Presley, or visit georgesriver.org/plannedgiving. All conversations are regarded with the utmost confidentiality, and no commitment is required to learn more about how you can make an impact on conservation that will stand in perpetuity.

Apple Trees and YOUR Membership

Listening to someone speak recently, they referred to our membership as a beautiful apple orchard. You are a member of a great organization in Georges River Land Trust, and it is our hope that through renewing your membership this year our orchard will bloom again this season. The speaker continued and asked us: “Can anyone tell me what the true fruit of an apple tree is?” Several attempted an answer: “apples”, no, “the seeds in the apples”, not quite, “a new apple tree”, yes! We need the orchard to bloom through your renewed membership, but we also need a new generation of apple trees to join you in making our community an amazing place to live.

Please renew your membership today, and tell your family about the great work that you are doing through your membership, and ask them to double your impact by joining this year. To make your apple tree bloom, consider monthly renewing support or a one-time gift by going to georgesriver.org/donate.

Calling all PHOTOGRAPHERS!

GRLT hosts fun events year-round and is in need of portraits and action photos to share with the community. Amateur or professional welcome.

FOR MORE INFO:
Contact Peter at peter@grlt.org

Calling all GRAPHIC ARTISTS!

GRLT is looking for someone to help condense its Quest program materials into tangible tools for kids to use at the trailheads.
Artists in Residence at Annual Meeting

Tuesday • SEPTEMBER 18 • 4 pm
Elizabeth Billings and Michael Sacca, our 2013 Artists in Residence, will be the featured guest speakers at our Annual Meeting at the Old Town House in Union. It will be a great opportunity to hear about their experience half way through and see some of the art they are creating. Join us for a fun afternoon potluck featuring local foods.

Thursday, June 13, 7 pm | History of Ship Building on the Georges River. Renny Stackpole will talk about the antebellum period of shipbuilding and impact of Civil War on the industry. Talk will be held at the Thomaston Historical Society, 80 Knox Street. **FREE**

Saturday, June 22, 10 am - 1 pm | Paddle and Lunch on the St. George River, White Oak to Warren section, led by Dick Matlack. Call for directions to starting point. **FREE**

Tuesday, June 25, 11 am - 1 pm | Picnic with our Artists in Residence, visit the Riverview Hayfields Preserve in South Thomaston to see the land through an artist’s eyes. Bring your sketchbook. Call for parking instructions. **FREE**

Sunday, July 14, 10 am - 5 pm | 22nd Annual Garden Tour

**REVELRY** | Wednesday, July 24, 2 pm - 4 pm | A Monet on the Marsh. Bring your sketching materials and camera for a trip to the Tenants Harbor marsh that abounds in wildlife and water lilies. Refreshments follow tour. **Land Trust Members:** $30, **Non-members:** $40

**REVELRY** | Saturday, July 27, 5 pm | Tour of Clark Island Wildlife Refuge and Gardens. Enjoy a guided tour of 50 acres of wildlife habitat and gorgeous gardens in a restored granite quarry. **Land Trust Members:** $35, **Non-members:** $45

Wednesday, July 31, 10 am - noon | Barefoot Hike for Kids and Grandparents at Thordike Brook section of Georges Highland Path in Rockport. **FREE**

**REVELRY** | Tuesday, August 6, 6 pm | Sunset Reception at Blue Water Fine Arts Gallery. Barbara Ernst Prey will host a wine and hors d’oeuvres gathering overlooking Port Clyde harbor. She will talk about how the landscapes of our area inspire her art. **Land Trust Members:** $25, **Non-members:** $35

**REVELRY** | Saturday, August 10, 5:30 pm | Fiddling Around Celtic Style. A summer’s evening of refreshments and Celtic fiddle music with Tom Judge and Susan Groce, two of the finest fiddlers in the midcoast area! **Land Trust Members:** $50, **Non-members:** $60

**REVELRY** | Saturday, September 7, 4 pm | Celebration of River, History, Food and Friends. The celebration will combine period food, beverages and a reenactment of the historical novel Come Spring on a farm in Warren on the St. George River. **Land Trust Members:** $50, **Non-members:** $60

**REVELRY** | Saturday, September 21, 10 am - 1 pm | Hike/Lunch on Frye Mountain to find American Chestnut trees, led by Eric Evans, vice-president of the American Chestnut Foundation. **FREE**

**REVELRY** | Saturday, September 28, 3 pm | Taste the Grapes – Taste the Wine. Savage Oaks Winery invites you to their vineyard for a tour followed by a grape and wine tasting. The Badger Café and Pub in Union will provide hors d’oeuvres. **Land Trust Members:** $30, **Non-members:** $40

For more details, visit: [www.georgesriver.org/events](http://www.georgesriver.org/events)