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**BRUNSWICK-TOPSHAM LAND
TRUST NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2004 #31**

**NEW CAMPAIGN TO EXPAND CRYSTAL SPRING FARM;
CSA PROGRAM MEETS FIRST YEAR GOALS**

INSIDE: SURVEY, 2004 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM AND RETURN ENVELOPE

MOFGA Young Maine Chefs Event at Crystal Spring Farm August 22

CSA PROGRAM AT FARM OFF TO FINE START

*Goal of 75 First-year Members Attained;
Farmers Make Startling Progress in Short Order*

Almost anytime you drive by Crystal Spring Farm during these long summer days, you will see workers in the fields bringing a remarkable property back to life. And what a creative life that is!

Seth Kroeck, manager of Crystal Spring Community Farm, has made excellent progress with the Community Assisted Agriculture program he introduced to the BTLT's signature property this year. His goal of attracting 75 members to the CSA was attained by mid May, and Wednesday pick-ups of produce began in early June. Appreciative members are being treated to a wide array of organic produce that will only diversify and grow as the season continues. He is also marketing at the thriving Saturday Farmers' Market at the Farm. Response to his efforts has been unflaggingly positive. For more information about the CSA please go to www.crystalspringsca.com.

Kroeck, who signed a five-year lease with the BTLT in January to return the Farm to mixed-use agricultural production, has made startling progress in just a few months. In addition to preparing the ground for planting, he has purchased vital equipment, built hen houses, made a number of vital repairs to the greenhouse and outbuildings, dug a well for irrigation, while all along getting informative newsletters sorting on Farm activities to all CSA members.

"Our first six months at Crystal Spring Farm have been a dream," Kroeck said. "The soils here are beautiful, the infrastructure is limitless, and, most importantly, the passionate support of this community is like no other I have seen in my farming experience in the Northeast."

2004 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE BEGINS!

Goal to Build Membership to 1000

With the BTLT beginning its second major capital campaign for Crystal Spring Farm in ten years, a strong membership is more important than ever. Our goal this year is an unprecedented 1000 supporters.

Your continued support, at a higher level if possible, will help enable us to conduct the capital campaign efficiently while attending to all other BTLT operations. Membership support is the vital backbone of everything we do. Please remember that rejoining now will save us the expense of sending subsequent reminders. So, please, fill out the membership form on page 3 and continue to help **preserving day for tomorrow!**

CAMPAIGN WILL DOUBLE SIZE OF CRYSTAL SPRING

Goal to Raise \$1.7 Million by The End of 2005;

Former Governor King Calls Property a "Gem"

The Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust has begun a \$1.7 million dollar capital campaign—it's second major campaign in ten years—that would double the size of its signature property on the Pleasant Hill Road in Brunswick.

The project was announced by BTLT President Lloyd Van Lunen at the BTLT's annual meeting in May. In April, the BTLT signed an agreement with two heirs of Beatrice Dionne to purchase 162 acres of Crystal Spring Farm on the north side of Pleasant Hill Road for \$1,368,000. (The farmhouse and surrounding 25 acres are remaining in the family).

A 17-member campaign finance committee has been formed with an immediate goal to raise \$300,000 before the September 1 closing and complete the effort by the end of 2005. The BTLT has hired Bar Harbor-based consultant Gary Friedmann to assist in the effort.

In 1998, the BTLT completed a \$775,000 capital campaign to purchase and preserve the 160 acres of the farm south of Pleasant Hill Road. Since then the BTLT has worked successfully to develop public access to the property, an extremely popular Saturday Farmers Market and to return the land to active and sustainable agricultural use. "Those efforts have combined to create an unmatched, vital community resource valued by literally thousands of area residents and visitors," Aley said. "Protecting the north side of the road will enable us to build on what we, with the tremendous support of the community, have been able to accomplish."

When the BTLT was founded almost 20 years ago, it rated 347-acre Crystal Spring Farm as its top conservation priority. "The Farm," said BTLT director Jack Aley, "is the signature rural heart and soul of our community. It is our Central Park. There is arguably no more important or strategically located natural resource in the mid-coast region."

Former Governor Angus King, a Brunswick resident and a member of the project's campaign advisory committee, called the property a "gem"...Someday many years from now, a family will picnic in its fields, hike its trails, or simply enjoy its sights and sounds, all because of the vision of this generation. They won't owe our names or lofty titles, but their thanks will come across the fields to us on the soft spring breeze."

BTLT BOARD GAINS THREE NEW DIRECTORS

New Crystal Spring Farmer Addresses Annual Meeting

At its annual meeting in May, the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust elected three new directors it has sought for many years, announced a major new project and learned of significant strides being made by the new farmer at Crystal Spring Farm.

Elected to the board of directors were three Brunswick residents whose services the Trust has sought for many years: Nelia Dunbar and Jan and Liz Pierson.

The same slate of officers was elected for the coming year. Lloyd Van Lunen and Carla Rensenbrink will continue to serve as president and vice president, while Angela Twitchell and Dana Cary will carry on as secretary and treasurer.

President Lloyd Van Lunen welcomed the some 50 guests and publicly announced the Trust's \$1.7 million capital campaign to double to 322 acres the size of Crystal Spring Farm, the BTLT's signature property on the Pleasant Hill Road in Brunswick.

Seth Kroeck, who signed a 5-year lease with the BTLT in January, outlined his progress with creating a mixed-use agricultural venture at Crystal Spring Farm. He announced that his goal of recruiting 75 members to his Community Assisted Agriculture Program had been attained. He then presented a slide show on the ongoing progress made at the Farm since his family and assistant moved into the Farm in February. The presentation was very warmly received.

MAINE CHEFS AT CRYSTAL SPRING AUGUST 22 Tastings Will Showcase Young Chefs and Maine Food

The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association will sponsor tastings of the offerings of young Maine chefs at Crystal Spring Farm in Brunswick Sunday, August 22 from 3 to 6 pm. Proceeds from the event will benefit MOFGA operations.

Chefs representing 14 Maine restaurants will prepare one or more dishes reflecting the style of his or her restaurant. The event, which will include live music, will feature organic, Maine grown ingredients.

Participating restaurants are: Cleonice Mediterranean Bistro, Ellsworth; Francine, Camden; Portuguese, Waterville; Newcastle Inn, Newcastle; Fore Street, Portland; Joshua's, Wells; Havana, Bar Harbor; Drumcap, Bar Harbor; Castine Inn, Castine; Harreseket Inn, Freeport; Akari, Portland; Chebeague Island 1, Chebeague Island; Treble Ridge Catering, Jefferson and Downeast Seoul, South China.

Advanced tickets must be purchased by August 9, and can be reserved by calling Heather Fisher at MOFGA at 207-568-4141. Ticket prices are \$50 for MOFGA members (\$55 at the door; \$60 for non-members (\$65 at the door); \$25 for children aged 2-18 of MOFGA members (\$30 at the door) and \$30 for children of non-members. Children under age 2 are admitted free.

CRYSTAL SPRING ON NATIONAL REGISTER Designation Recognizes Farm as National Treasure

Crystal Spring Farm, the BTLT's signature, 160-acre property on the Pleasant Hill Road in Brunswick, has been named to the National Register of Historic Places. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission announced the listing this spring.

The designation cites the Farm as "an example of a mid-twentieth century family farm with local significance that reflects a period of rapidly changing approaches to dairy farming."

While the protection for properties on the Register is limited, it does allow for a review process to mitigate the impact of any projects involving federal funding. If key features of the Farm described in the nomination are changed or eliminated, the listing can be removed.

The application for the Farm was developed by environmental historian Edward Hawes, BTLT director and history teacher Rick Wilson and former BTLT director Becky Koulouris.

TRUST SHORTS

Saturday Farmers' Market Off to Stellar Start

Shop here first! One of the most important things BTLT supporters can do to support area farmers and the preservation of their land is to shop at the Saturday Farmers' Market at Crystal Spring Farm. The Market is bigger than ever with almost 30 vendors from all over southern Maine. You will find virtually every food group and all of it local and fresh. One regular visitor to the Market said, "Every Saturday morning I look forward to coming here; it's like a big block party!"

Bird Walks at BTLT Properties Prove Popular Again

Once again, the annual bird walks at key BTLT properties have proved very popular. Multiple walks in May and June at Bradley Pond Farm and the Highland Preserve in Topsham and Crystal Spring Farm in Brunswick drew scores of avid birders who spied everything from goldfinches to red-eyed vireos. For more information about the walks please contact BTLT director Tom Peterson at 725-2204.

BTLT Thanks GWI for Internet and Website Service

The BTLT continues to get free Internet service from Great Works Internet, which also provides a website to the Brunswick River Education Alliance. CREA focuses its activities at the 230-acre Highland Green Preserve in Topsham, which is protected by a conservation easement held by the BTLT. "The Trust deeply appreciates the public service GWI provides," said BTLT executive director Jack Aley. "These services greatly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of both the BTLT and CREA."

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear Land Trust Members and Friends:

As nearly all of you must now know, the BTLT has signed a purchase and sales agreement for 162 acres of land north of Pleasant Hill Road, facing our current holding of Crystal Spring Farm. It is no exaggeration to say that this is the single most important action by the trust since the purchase of the original farm itself in 1998. This property was at the top of nearly everyone's priorities for conservation in the discussions that went into the Open Space and Recreation Task Force report. It will preserve one of the private holdings with the most traditional public use for recreation in Brunswick. It will maintain the most scenic gateway into town. And it will double the area of Crystal Spring Farm, greatly enhancing its already remarkable potential for agricultural, recreational, and educational use.

The story behind this wonderful turn of events is a remarkable one. In the end, our chance to buy this land was a rather narrow one. As is so often the case, powerful pressures fully to develop this land were present, and these very nearly prevailed. Only a singular chain of decisions and circumstances led to a happier outcome.

Chief among these was the change in the Trust's approach to something as fundamental as owning Crystal Spring Farm itself. The original intent when the Farm was purchased was to place a conservation easement on the property and then to sell it to a conservation minded buyer. This would have preserved the appearance of the farm and its habitat value, but in the end, it would have done little else. As various fund-raising events took place

at the farm, the public made its feelings known quite clearly that they hoped for and could foresee a greater public benefit. Thus arose the concept of the Trust's continuing ownership and development of the farm itself.

Most of you are familiar with the rest of the story. The construction of miles of trails, the special events held throughout the seasons, the spectacular growth of the farmers' market, and most recently the rebirth of serious agriculture with the Crystal Spring Community Farm CSA have all created public benefit wildly in excess of our original vision for the Farm. There has also been a more subtle result from all of this. The Dionne family could see the excitement and the promise in these changes, and they clearly developed a positive feeling for the Trust's work. Without this, there is no doubt we would not be in the fortunate position we now find ourselves. Land trusts aren't supposed to run farms, but, in this case, working "outside the box" has been a triumph. Parenthetically, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust has experienced a similar flow of unexpected benefit from their holding of Aldemere Farm in Rockport with its famous belted Galway cattle.

We also find ourselves in the "fortunate" position of facing a fundraising effort for 1.7 million dollars over the next 18 months. We are confident we can succeed at this, but it will take the hard work of many people and the generosity of all of you to achieve this goal. There would have been no other conservation player had we not been up to the challenge. When we succeed at this, we will leave a priceless gift to the community.

By Lloyd Van Lunen, BTLT President

