

NEWS RELEASE
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LAND TRUST ENTERS PUBLIC PHASE OF HISTORIC \$7 MILLION CONSERVATION EFFORT

Contact: Angela Twitchell, Executive Director, Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust
(207) 729-7694; angela@btl.org

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

The Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust is seeking broad, new support to complete an ambitious capital campaign to conserve the remarkable diversity of the natural heritage of our midcoast communities.

Launched in 2011, The Campaign for Brunswick-Topsham has already secured more than \$6 million in donations and grants toward a goal of \$7 million. The focus in this final stage will be on expanding membership and building a stewardship fund to care for the properties the land trust is conserving – *forever*.

“It has taken many loyal supporters to get us this far in this bold capital campaign,” said executive director Angela Twitchell. “Now we are hopeful new supporters who appreciate and enjoy what the Land Trust has done to strengthen our communities will seize this opportunity to help us complete this important effort. It will take a groundswell movement of people that believe in what is happening here, and it’s all very exciting.”

“Now we are hoping more people in this community will become members of the Land Trust to strengthen this work,” added Brad Babson, President of the BTLT Board of Directors. “In addition to becoming members, we are asking those who love this community to contribute stewardship funds to allow us to care for these lands forever.

The overall goals of this historic campaign include protecting 23 priority land preservation projects totaling some 1,100 acres and establishing an \$800,000 stewardship fund to monitor and care for the Land Trust’s holdings in perpetuity. A third objective is increasing membership from 900 to 1,500 members and doubling annual membership income to \$205,000 in order to help sustain the Land Trust’s ambitious mission and programs.

“We’re doing more than conserving land now; we’re making sure that our promise to protect these lands in perpetuity can be upheld forever,” said Babson. “What’s more, we are working hard to create memorable opportunities for people of all ages and walks of life to connect with the natural areas we are blessed to have in the Brunswick-Topsham area.”

Since the campaign began, 680 acres across 11 properties have been conserved. These will remain forever undeveloped open space for the enjoyment of generations to come. An additional twelve projects totaling 480 acres are expected to close in the next two years. These lands are located in locally treasured landscapes including Middle and Maquoit Bays, the Cathance, Muddy, and Androscoggin Rivers, and include important trail connections and productive agricultural lands.

To learn more about the BTLT and how you can contribute to the Campaign for Brunswick-Topsham, please go to www.btl.org, call 729-7695 or email angela@btl.org.

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About the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust

The Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust was formed in 1985 around the conservation of a small coastal meadow. Since then it has preserved more than 2,200 acres of precious natural resources in Brunswick, Topsham and Bowdoin.

The land trust's mission is to "preserve, protect and steward the cherished landscapes and rich natural resources of our communities, to provide access for recreation, and to support local agriculture and other traditional land uses, now and for generations to come."

The Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust enjoys a national reputation for providing extraordinarily diverse and widespread public benefit through its conservation programs that touch the lives of virtually everyone in the towns it serves and many from beyond.

Programs built over 30 years include

- building and maintaining more than 17 miles of hiking and skiing trails.
- conserving Crystal Spring Farm as a community asset and working to promote local agriculture,
- running the state's largest farmers' market,
- providing individual garden plots for community members at the Tom Settlemire Community Garden, and
- growing food to feed the hungry (more than 3,600 lbs last year alone).

The many educational and recreational opportunities the Land Trust offers range from a winter gardening series and mentoring students in community service to butterfly and bird walks and many other diverse outdoors adventures.

The Land Trust is governed by a 21-member Board of Directors drawn from the community and chaired by its President, Brad Babson. Angela Twitchell, the Executive Director leads a small, committed professional staff.

The Land Trust's organizational efficiency and capacity have been recognized by a national accreditation group for land trusts. The Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust is one of only 15 Maine land trusts to pass a most rigorous accreditation process.

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