

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2002

Volume 11 Number 4

OUR GOALS

To create a 30-mile network of multi-use trails within Greater Portland.

To serve as a public advocate for the protection of and access to natural places within the region.

To encourage the participation of neighborhoods, schools and the business community in trail use and stewardship.

Presumpscot River Preserve Update

BY NAN CUMMING

AS OUR FUNDRAISING EFFORT TO create the Presumpscot River Preserve continues, the Preserve itself is growing to 60 acres from the original forty-eight. Just downriver of the Presumpscot River Preserve is the most exciting new piece of our conservation plan. In October 2002, Portland Trails negotiated a purchase agreement to protect 9.5 additional acres of riverfront property, which includes more than 2,900 feet of shoreline. This land, owned by the Reiche family, consists of three parcels. Each parcel is beautiful, largely untouched open space.

The first parcel lies on the north side of the Presumpscot, reaching from the site of the former Smelt Hill Dam all the way to the Allen Avenue Extension Bridge with more than 1,700 feet of riverfront. This property will connect to Walton Park, a new riverfront park being established by the Town of Falmouth. The Town plans to expand the parking area and create a boat launch facility on the site, providing access to both properties for hand-carried boats. Both parcels will provide excellent shore and river fishing opportunities—something that has been enjoyed informally for many years along that shoreline. The north shore will also provide a view of Presumpscot Falls, which have not been seen since the dam was built in 1731. Now flowing freely, the falls are at their most dramatic upstream from the dam site.

The two other parcels lie on the south side of the river and offer almost 1,200 feet of shoreline. These contiguous parcels have never been developed and are inaccessible to vehicles. But they will serve an important function as a portage around the new falls. Several intrepid Portland Trails members joined Portland Trails' V.P. Elizabeth Ehrenfeld for a paddle along the Presumpscot on November 11—many were grateful not to have to [continued on next page]



photo: Dana Hutchins, Image Works



photo: Melissa Kim, MaineToday.com

John Connelly braves the falls in his canoe—the first person to accomplish this since 1731. Do not try this if you are not an experienced canoeist—a safe portage is being developed by Portland Trails.

Presumpscot River Preserve Update

[continued from front page]



photo: Melissa Kim, MaineToday.com

Portaging around Presumpscot Falls.

face the rapids in their canoes! The Reiche family wants to see this land preserved and is donating both of the south side parcels (appraised at \$40,000) to Portland Trails in support of our efforts.

Like other organizations that are currently working to protect the river—the Friends of the Presumpscot, Presumpscot River Watch, Friends of Casco Bay, and a group of many more stakeholders organized by the Casco Bay Estuary Project—Portland Trails is working to ensure the long-term health of the river corridor. The acquisition of the three Reiche parcels is an important part of Portland Trails' long-range plan to preserve as much of the shoreline of the Presumpscot River as we possibly can.

Our campaign is scheduled to conclude in just a few weeks so that we can pay for the properties we've described by the end of the year. But to meet our goal we need your help! Gifts of \$50 and \$100 dollars from our members add up significantly. Plus—the Maine Fund for Conservation Land Acquisition has given us another challenge grant. If we can raise \$10,000 from individuals like you by the end of 2002, they'll match that with an additional \$10,000. So if you can donate \$250 or more by the end of the year, your gift will be doubled! To make a contribution you can call the office with a credit card number, make a gift through a secure payment option on our website, www.trails.org, or simply send a check—we are grateful for whatever help you can give. ☺

In Memoriam

GEORGE POTTER: VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE

It is with real sadness that we share with you the passing of George Potter in early October. George was our first volunteer project manager – for the Fore River Bridge at Stroudwater Crossing – in the early 90s. Working closely with the Maine Audubon Society, he put in literally hundreds of hours obtaining the 14 necessary permits — including one from the FAA to bring in the 75-foot crane used to swing the 90-foot bridge in place in one piece. A then-fledgling organization, PT really needed this success as a measure of our credibility. George was persistent and capable, calling on his extensive financial and development experience to get the job done. On a fine December morning in 1994, the bridge was anchored into place, with board members, friends and the media watching and celebrating.

With his good humor and tireless efforts, George Potter set the standard for the many terrific volunteers who've since helped Portland Trails in so many ways. We send our condolences to George's wife Kate and his family. And we are so grateful to have had the chance to know him and work with him.

THE NEW EASTERN PROM TRAIL KIOSK



Donated by the Portland Rotary Service and Memorial Fund and Members of Portland Rotary in memory of Robert G. Booth, Rotarian of the Year 1997. The kiosk was designed by Tony Taylor with a map by Map Adventures.

Banner Year for Trails and Green Space

THE TRAIL BUILDING SEASON is now over for 2002, and we are preparing for our winter tasks, including closing the deer yard section of the Stroudwater Trail and turning our attention to ensuring that Portland Trails finishes the year in the black through our annual appeal to our membership. As Portland Trails works to finish our largest ever fundraising effort to finance the acquisition and trail costs of the Presumpscot River Preserve, let us not lose sight of all of the other exciting projects we have accomplished this year.

Therefore, while our work for 2002 is not yet done, it is worth pausing to observe that we have some great achievements to celebrate over the last year:

- Completion of negotiations for the 60-acre Presumpscot Preserve. The closing on the final 9.5 acres in Falmouth is scheduled for December 20. The Presumpscot Preserve will conserve 60 acres of important wildlife habitat and also create a regional green space for hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing right in the midst of one of Maine's most densely developed urban areas.
- Creation of the first section of trail at Hall Elementary School in Portland.
- Extension of the Lyseth Elementary School Trail to Pine Grove Park in North Deering.
- Work with the Stroudwater Village Association to preserve an important piece of property at the corner of Congress and Westbrook Street in Stroudwater.
- Construction of the last segment of the Stroudwater River Trail to complete the 2 miles of trail from Outer Congress Street to the terminus of Hutchins Drive.
- Reconstruction of the Stroudwater Trailhead at Congress Street and construction of a 5-car parking area by Peter Kennedy, the original donor of this beautiful land.
- Important maintenance work on the Oatnuts Park Trail (that will connect into the Presumpscot Preserve Trail) and maintenance on the Stroudwater Trail by our cracker-jack Trail Stewardship Committee led by Bud Quinn.
- A fantastic Presumpscot River Gala celebration on October 25 to celebrate our work in conserving 60 acres of outstanding riparian wildlife habitat along the Presumpscot River. The celebration was wonderful and the themes of the many displays and auction items emphasized the wildlife preservation and green space values that we are putting to use in Portland and Falmouth.

Portland Trails could not have begun these efforts without strong support in the Greater Portland community. Further, they simply would not have succeeded without the consistent and steady backing of our members and supporters. So as we strive to make it to the end of a busy year, Portland Trails extends its special thanks to the members of its board of trustees and volunteers who have worked especially hard this year, and to its more than 800 members in Portland, Falmouth, Westbrook, South Portland, Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, Yarmouth, and Freeport – Portland Trails cannot preserve green places and develop walking, running and biking trails without all of you!



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The "SPLASH" is a Huge

BY CHRISTINA WHITE



ON FRIDAY NIGHT, OCTOBER 25TH, over 300 Portland Trails supporters gathered at The Pavilion on Middle Street for terrific music and food, and to support Portland Trails by taking part in a huge silent auction and raffle gala.

Guest Host Amy Sinclair, WGME Special Reporter, pronounced the event "absolutely a blast." Two local bands, Clown School Dropouts and Long Black Veil, alternated music sets while supporters bid on over 250 items ranging from a tour of the Cianbro oil rig to a dog-sled trip to a fully-outfitted L.L. Bean kayak. Bidders enjoyed the plentiful, delicious hors d'oeuvres served by Black Tie Catering.

Board Member Tony Donovan was a real trooper, peddling Raffle Tickets most of the evening. The winning Raffle ticket, held by Gretchen Sommer, entitled her to a trip for two to London with free airfare, six nights in a 3 star hotel, a rental car for a week (generously provided by AutoEurope) AND limousine transportation to and from the airport, a London tour book, umbrella and tea!

The SPLASH added over \$15,000 support to Portland Trails' year-long effort to raise funds for the purchase of land along the Presumpscot River. Kudos to board member Cheri Musgrave, her committee, and all the hard working volunteers and board members who helped make this fundraiser a tremendous success. Thanks must also be given to the many businesses and organizations who supported us with their generous donation of auction items—please take a moment to review this list of generous donors!



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Jeff Diggins
Alice Nowill
Amaryllis Clothing Co.
American Skiing Company
Amy Stacey Curtis
Angela Adams
Arabica Coffee House
Artifacts
Aurora Provisions
Auto Europe
Back Bay Bicycle
Barber Foods
Bay Ferries
Bayview Old Port Gallery
Benkey
Bill Dodge Auto Group
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Blue Sky Farm
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& Bretton Woods
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photos: Phil Poirier

Portland Public Market
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 Portland Schooner Co.
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 Portland Symphony Orchestra
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Our Second Senior Stroll

THE SECOND SENIOR STROLL TOOK PLACE on a very summery Sunday, August 18th at 2:00pm at the beautiful, woodland Stroudwater Trail, with well-known Maine botanist, Mike Auger. Eighteen seniors, with waterbottles in hand, met us at the Trail parking area on Blueberry Lane, which runs off Outer Congress Street just past UnumProvident.

Mike, who is an assistant ecologist for the Maine Dept. of Conservation and has worked at The Nature Conservancy, focused his hour-long walk/talk on native and non-native plant species that were observed along the trail, with special emphasis on invasive plants, such as bittersweet, loosestrife, and barberry. Color handouts were provided to all participants.

The Senior Stroll Program has three objectives: (1) to familiarize area senior citizens with our beautiful trails, so that this groups' usage of trails will increase, **(2)** to strengthen the "senior voice" in our membership, and, **(3)** long term, to expand our current group of seniors, who volunteer at various Portland Trails events and on-going activities."

The program, which is free and open to the public, will be planning more Strolls for the Spring, '03. If you would like notification of future Strolls, or if you would like to help us in the planning, please call the Portland Trails office at 775-2411.

10K A RUNAWAY SUCCESS

The weather gods cooperated on Sunday, September 22nd delivering a "near perfect" morning to the over 300 registered runners and walkers for Portland Trails 3rd Annual 10K.

Twenty-three year old Derek Veilleux from Saco was the overall winner at 33:25, beating his own '01 winning time of 33:46. Byrne Decker, who was the top runner in 2000 still holds the record on this course at 32:02 .

Among women runners, Jenna Richardson, a twenty-two year old from Palermo, turned in a new record for the race with a finish time of 36:11. She shaved nearly 2 minutes off the old record.

Top Portland Trails members in order of their times were: Charlie Humphreys (35:24); Mike Musca (38:35); Tom Shyka (40:36); Julia Sheridan (43:22); George Shaler (44:44); Kate Vickery (48:08); Jim Cohen (48:53); David Turesky (49:15); and Elizabeth Bordowitz (53:18).

The race took place on the spectacular Eastern Prom and Back Cove trails. The fourth annual race is scheduled for September 21, 2003.

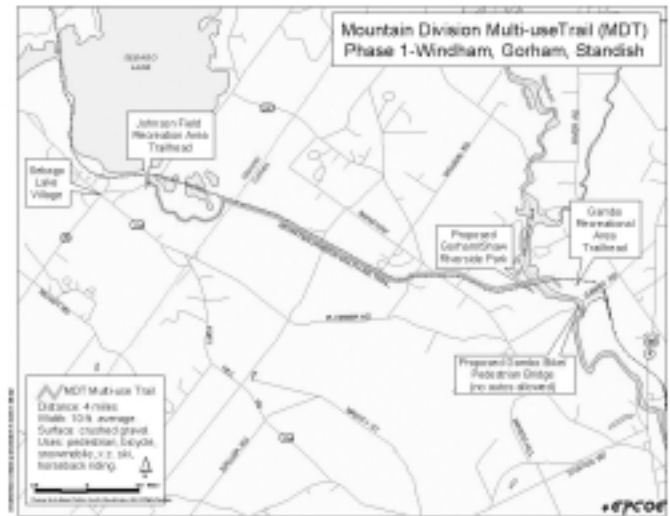
Congratulations to all runners and walkers!

After eight years in the making, the Mountain Division Trail finally will have its first section on the ground.

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON MOUNTAIN DIVISION TRAIL

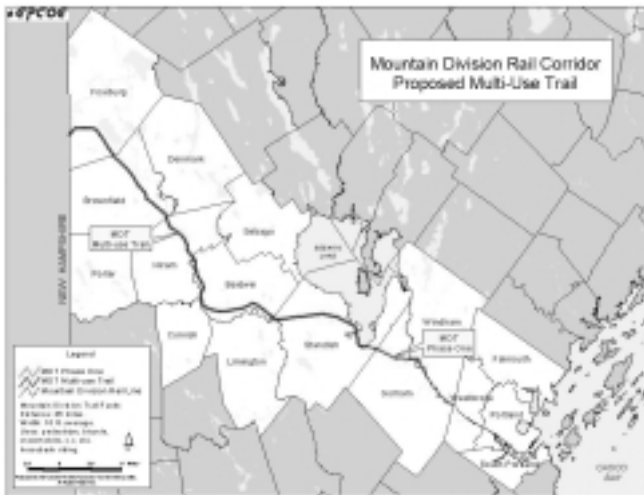
IN A GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY HELD in late October, members of the Mountain Division Alliance celebrated with Congressman Tom Allen, MDOT Commissioner John Melrose and other partners, including the Greater Portland Council of Governments, the Portland Water District, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission and Portland Trails. As mentioned by several speakers, successful projects require both vision and tenacity — qualities needed in spades by all involved. Special thanks go to John Balicki, MDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, and David Willauer and Dan Stewart from the Greater Portland Council of Governments, along with countless others involved along the way. PT vice president Jeff Sommer attended the ceremony representing the board.

Portland Trails has played a pivotal role in fostering this project. PT's former executive director, Alix Hopkins, has chaired the Alliance since its formation in 1994. At the time



PT's board of trustees voted to support her as chair because of the ultimate goal of creating a rail-with-trail within the 50-mile corridor between Fryeburg and Portland in Maine, and in the big picture, continuing through New Hampshire and Vermont to Montreal. The possibility of rail service restoration remains alive as the State purchased the corridor between Fryeburg and Windham in 1997. This first section, comprising four miles, will be placed between the Windham soccer fields, through Gorham to Standish, with completion expected next summer.

The Alliance's next step is to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to build support for extending the trail in both directions— toward Fryeburg and, ultimately, to Portland, connecting with the Fore River Trail. People interested in helping in an organization-building capacity should contact either Dan Stewart at the Greater Portland Council of Governments at 774-9891 or Alix Hopkins at 688-2242. 🐾



Thanks to these generous sponsors of Portland Trails' Splash!

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Stroudwater's Effort to Preserve Open Space



photo: Laura Newman

Campaign Chair Karen Hinchliffe indicates the level of funds raised so far. The view from the property looks out on the Fore River and Audubon Sanctuary.

WHEN PORTLAND TRAILS' Fall newsletter went to press, the group of concerned citizens advocating to preserve a parcel of open space in historic Stroudwater were scrambling to close the deal and prevent development. Since then, the effort has truly taken off!

Thanks to loans from several generous individuals, the Stroudwater Village Association and Portland Trails were able to close on the parcel, and the "Campaign for the Corner" was on its way. The group had already raised over \$12,000 from neighbors; they have now developed a comprehensive strategy to raise the \$80,000 needed to pay off the loan and care for the property. The SVA hopes that this will be the first step in a broader effort to preserve Stroudwater's historic landscape and character.

In early November, a barometer sign was unveiled on the site (visible from Westbrook Street), formally launching the Campaign — with press attending. A week later, the City Council voted in favor of their request to put \$25,000 toward the land purchase. To date, individual donations top \$17,000, which means that the Campaign is already past the half-way mark!

To learn more about Stroudwater's unique history and natural features, plan to attend a special Gala Banquet event at the Embassy Suites on March 8, 2003. For details on this, or to contribute to this citizen effort, contact campaign chair Karen S. Hinchliffe at 775-7501) or treasurer Becki Thomas at 780-6558.

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

If you know people who love to walk, run, bike, or enjoy nature on the trails, why not give them a Portland Trails gift this season? We can ship items to you or you can save this cost by stopping by the office to pick up your order.

- **\$35.00 – Individual Portland Trails Membership**
Full year membership includes newsletter subscription, trail map and window decal
- **\$50.00 – Family Portland Trails Membership**
Full year membership includes newsletter subscription, trail map and window decal
- **\$45.00 – Portland Trails Membership Gift Package**
A full year individual membership with your choice of Portland Trails colorful logo t-shirt (size XL) or Jewell Falls Poster (add \$3.00 postage)
- **\$15.00 – Portland Trails T-Shirt**
White cotton with purple and green Portland Trails logo, size XL (add \$3.00 postage)
- **\$15.00 – Portland Trails 3rd Annual 10K T-Shirt**
Natural cotton with race/walk logo, size L or XL (add \$3.00 postage)
- **\$15.00 – Jewell Falls Commemorative Poster**
(add \$4.00 postage)
- **\$4.95 – Portland Trails Map and Trail Guide**
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New Board Members

Rich Henry, age 39, Insurance Software. Single, lives in Cape Elizabeth. Pet is an English Setter. Interests include hiking, biking, martial arts, travel and reading. Rich was a volunteer on the construction of the Stroudwater Trail. Would like to see more trails that provide access to the unspoiled areas surrounding Greater Portland.

Janice Mitchell, Manager of Community Relations, Anthem Blue Cross. Janice lives in Portland with her two teenage children. She enjoys golfing, skiing, hiking, traveling, painting and gardening, and watching her children play baseball, football and field hockey. Janice runs daily on the Back Cove

Trail. She hopes to help PT increase membership and trail usage, and promote community awareness of the organization as a community resource.

Michael Musca, age 45, Assistant Airport Manager at the Portland Jetport. Married to Kathleen Kelly Musca, three children. Michael and family live in Falmouth. He is an avid runner, competing in 5K, 10K and marathon races. Michael was on the organizing committee for PT's first 10K Tukey Trot and he runs on the Stroudwater Trail during his lunch break. He visualizes the perfect course as one that connects the Stroudwater Trails to the Back Cove and Eastern Prom Trails.

Annual (Fun) Meeting

If you have ever set one toe on any of the great trails in Portland, plan to join us on **Monday, January 27th, 2003 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at our legendary Annual Meeting!** This year we'll be meeting at the Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress Street in Portland.

Unlike most Annual Meetings, Portland Trails hosts a meeting that is both informative and fun. At this event you will find great people like you, along with music and food. We will have volunteer awards, the unveiling of our ambitious trail expansion plans, upcoming events, and there will be some special activities, and **PRIZES!!** At a meeting!

Join us and learn about the fascinating history of the Presumpscot River, learn more about our plans to connect trails throughout the City and add even more, and hear about our work with kids and seniors.

Don't Miss It This year!