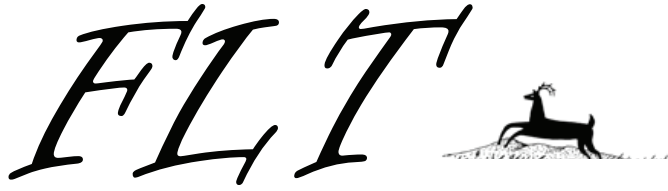


Notes from



The Newsletter of the Francestown Land Trust, Inc. Spring 2011

Search for Native Brook Trout

Affected by a number of factors including the stocking of non-native competitive species - such as brown and rainbow trout - pollution and land conversion, the fabled native brook trout that once dominated NH's fast flowing streams and ponds is now found in less than five percent of its original habitat. However, with the reforestation of former pastures and the resulting improvement in water quality, restoration of native populations becomes a possibility that New Hampshire's scientists, fisheries managers and anglers are eager to explore.

Wild brook trout require clean, cold water, thriving within a narrow temperature range. During the course of a year they may migrate from winter habitat to foraging areas, to spawning sites, and back again. Perched culverts and dams block fish passage and can strand trout in summer-warmed waters. Forests along streams are key to the survival of trout: they provide shade that cools the water and they shed leaves on which aquatic insects forage. Spawning habitats must have a constant flow of cold water, and a sediment size that allows oxygenated water to circulate around the eggs. Headwater streams - some of which like that in the photo may look quite marginal to the casual observer - hold the future for our wild brook trout populations. These fragile waterways rely on landowner stewardship for protection.

Barry Wicklow, St. Anselm professor and FLT board member, is part of a coalition* gathering scientific data in the Piscataquog River and its headwaters. The group's goal is to help restore a viable wild brook trout population. Last summer base line data



was collected: culverts were surveyed, riparian vegetation was assessed, temperatures were monitored and brook trout and other fish from 15 streams were counted, measured, and weighed. DNA samples were taken from wild trout and are being analyzed to determine whether they are the offspring of the native brook trout or of previously stocked trout.

The study revealed that there are only a few structures impeding fish passage and that there are some headwater streams fed by cold springs and shaded by intact forest that provide "thermal refuges" for brook trout even in hot, dry summers like 2010. Three of the streams studied arise in Francestown.

The coalition will be working with Fish & Game and the public to establish stocking policies that will assure good fishing while protecting native trout. It will also work with NH DOT to replace culverts as necessary and to establish forested buffers between the Piscataquog and River Road in New Boston. And, of course, Professor Wicklow and his intern(s) will continue to monitor the streams studied last year and to explore new headwaters. Landowners wishing to help should contact Barry at 547-9904.

* Trout Unlimited, NH Council, Basil Woods and Merrimack Chapters of Trout Unlimited, NH Fish and Game, New Boston Conservation Commission, Russell Foundation, Saint Anselm College Biology Department, So. NH Planning Commission.

A Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends of FLT,

I have a former college roommate, the “Brickman,” who when he buys a lottery ticket, does something to make each transaction special. Once he walked backwards into the store in the hopes that this action would bring him the luck he needed to win. He is still waiting for that winning ticket but in the meantime he is providing me with entertaining experiences. Like the Brickman, our society often seems to believe that there are shortcuts to our goals.

But good things more often take time. Superstitious charms rarely hasten the day. Sound work takes time. Patience is essential to real success and the Frankestown Land Trust has been no exception to the rule. The Land Trust was created by a few visionaries in 1986 and accepted its first easement on 9.7 acres in 1989. It then sat idle for 10 years until one individual became the catalyst that rallied the town to purchase 223 acres along Rand Brook in 1999. Almost all the money came from 153 committed individuals. Since then over 400 individuals and 10 foundations and governmental agencies have come together to help conserve an additional 1,425 acres. This is in addition to the 1,000+ acres conserved by our conservation partners over the same period.

We have arrived at our 25th anniversary having grown from a small core of concerned and dedicated citizens to a concerned and dedicated community partnering successfully with other organizations. Our accomplishments have been the work of many for the benefit of all. Our strongest asset may be our vision of the common good.

As we move forward into the next 25 years we look to strengthen our relationships, deepen our ties to the community and further connect our protected areas in order to enhance the functional value of the open space we are protecting for wildlife and people alike. Wonderful relationships take time to build and nurture: the Frankestown Land Trust’s relationship with our town and community will continue to grow as will all of our relationships with the land itself.

On behalf of everyone who enjoys the fruits of our efforts I would like to thank those who founded the Frankestown Land Trust and everyone who has supported FLT’s work. I invite all to join us in moving the Frankestown Land Trust forward in the next 25 years. You will find it to be rewarding work.



Stewart Closing Spring 2010

Dennis P. Calcutt

2010 Frankestown Land Trust Board of Directors

Dennis P. Calcutt, Chairman	dcalcutt@comcast.net	547-2604
Greg Neilley, Vice-chairman	neilley@comcast.net	547-2856
Herb Bromberg, Secretary	herros@tiac.net	547-2711
Abigail Arnold, Treasurer	abigail03043@hotmail.com	547-6806
Gerri Bernstein, Outreach	gerribernstein@msn.com	547-3719
Ray James, Easement Steward	rmjames8808@yahoo.com	547-8447
Ben Haubrich, Land Manager	bph03043@gmail.com	547-2075
Barry Wicklow, PhD, Biologist		547-9904

Picture Perfect—2 Additions to Rand Brook Forest!



For five years the map of Rand Brook Forest has been marred by two little moth holes of unprotected land. No longer. In October 2010, Anne Seamans donated 3.7 acres at the top of Driscoll Hill to the Land Trust. The remains of the settler from whom the settler takes its name can be found here. Driscoll was not one of the earliest settlers nor did he live here long, but rumors of a murder in the home probably served to keep the name alive. The Seamans family's support of conservation underlies the protection of almost a third of the Rand Brook Forest.

In March of 2011, after a number of years of discussion with town selectmen, Greenfield residents voted to sell five acres to FLT. 4 acres consist of uncommon black gum swamp providing important wildlife habitat.



Wild Times: Fun Family Outings With FLT

Adventures with Carol Lunan
Saturday, July 16th, 10 AM—Noon

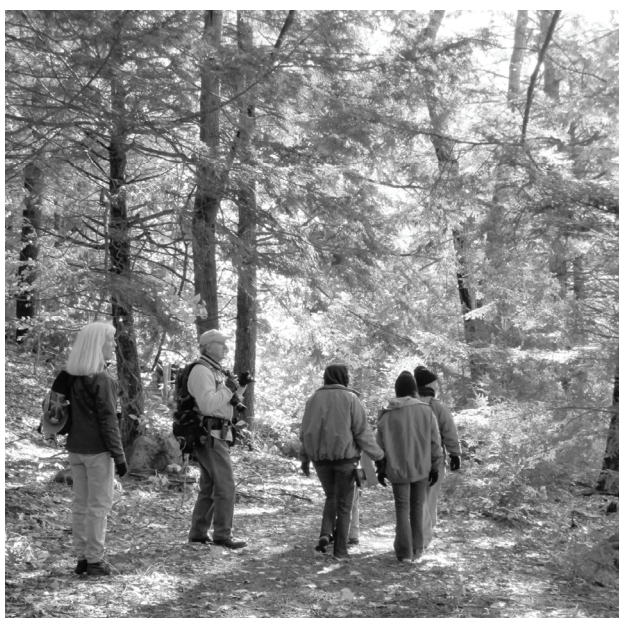


This summer Carol Lunan is returning to Rand Brook Forest to try to discover what animals make their home there. Look for tracks, identify scat, check trees and bushes for signs of who may have passed along the way. Find what there is to eat and who might find it tasty. (Rain date July 17th.)

Carol Lunan, M.Ed. has spent over 20 years working with children and families in a variety of settings. She currently offers a parent cooperative pre-school program, The Learning Vine, and co-facilitates a summer “camp” program at the Grapevine in Antrim.

Look for outing details in early summer in the Franconia News or call 547-8895.

Class VI Road Hike
Saturday, October 16th, 9AM



This fall FLT and the Conservation Commission will once again head out on another in our series of hikes for adults and interested teens that will explore our abandoned roads (with a few detours) and the historic remains they pass by. Meet at the horse sheds in the center of town at 9 AM. Bring water and dress for a 2-4 hour hike—time depending on group pace. Please leave your dogs at home. For more information, contact Ben Haubrich at 547-2075 or Betsy Hardwick at 547-8773.

FLT FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES
Fiscal Year Ended 12/31/2010

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Current Assets	
Cash	54,119
Pledge Receivable	2,500
Investments, at market	163,634
Prepaid Expenses	<u>250</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>220,503</u>
Property at Cost	<u>551,811</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>772,314</u>

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	352
Other	<u>0</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>352</u>
Net assets	
Net assets, unrestricted	
Unrestricted	9,790
Board designated	
Stewardship	184,748
Future projects	23,459
Property	<u>551,811</u>
Total net assets, unrestricted	769,808
Net Assets, temporarily restricted	<u>2,154</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>771,962</u>

TOTAL ASSETS & LIABILITIES 772,314

Footnotes:

1. Excludes income to board designated funds and non-cash easement donations. In 2009 FLT accepted stewardship responsibility for 4 easements covering 142.5 acres.
2. Includes cost of JH Nature Series and support of environmental education at the Francestown Elementary School.

Operating and Project Income & Expense

Income¹

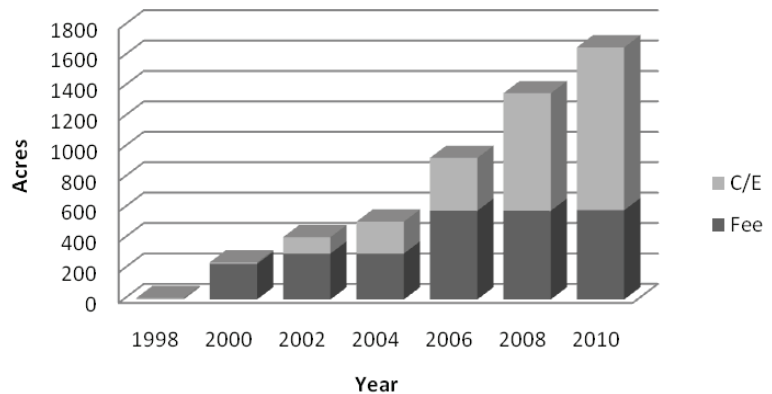
Annual Fund/Undesignated	29,079
Grants	123,000
Member Dues	2,004
Francestown News/ Joan Hanchett Nature Series	1,000
Headwaters Project	<u>40,020</u>

Total Operating/Project Income 195,103

Expense

Land Maintenance	
Insurance	1,623
Property Taxes	1,180
Miscellaneous	<u>31</u>
Total maintenance	2,834
Education and Member Relations ²	2,578
Project Costs incl. stewardship	178,028
General and Administrative	
Accounting	1,664
Insurance	532
Office Expense	1,140
Misc	<u>671</u>
Total G&A	4,007
Fundraising	<u>333</u>
Total Expense	187,780
Net Operating Income	<u>7,323</u>

Acres Protected by FLT



Thank You to the 2010 Supporters of the Francestown Land Trust

Anonymous
 Beverly Abbott
 Len and Meredith Allen
 Elizabeth and Brewster Ames
 Larry Ames
 Tom and Kay Anderson
 Abigail and Frances Arnold
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 Drinkwater
 Dorothy and Ron Smart
 Leonard Smith
 Pat Soucy

(Continued on page 7)

A Worthy Alternative

By Meredith Allen

Photo by Ben Haubrich

Even people who have never seen one “in the feather” seem to feel passionate about bluebirds. We are dazzled by the male’s sky-blue feathers and his robin-red breast. A bluebird singing from a flowering tree is such a common calendar subject, almost a symbol of spring. And who hasn’t been amused by the famous photo of the “angry” bluebird staring right at the camera? I’ve even seen it on T-shirts!

Those of us fortunate enough to possess an open field on our property will often erect bird houses in that field, hoping to attract those famous “bluebirds of happiness.” Frequently, however, I’ve heard people report that no bluebirds came to their boxes, “only tree sparrows.” I have never understood the disappointment in their voices. For me, hosting a pair of dazzling tree swallows is an equally happy event. Of course, there are many fortuitous springs when we have both bluebirds and swallows nesting on our property, and then this birdwatcher’s joy is boundless.

Every year, during the first ten days of April, I think about tree swallows heading northward from the southern parts of the United States, some from distant Central America. If they haven’t arrived by April 7th, I begin to worry. And then, usually by April 9th, I hear that familiar chittering. I look up and am delighted to see a tree swallow, often only one, climbing and diving and swooping low over our small collection of nest boxes. By mid-morning, the bird has disappeared. (This disappearing act seems to be quite normal for tree swallows. They can be gone for as long as four days. No one seems to know why they vanish, nor where they go. This mysterious behavior can continue even during the incubation period with no apparent harm done to the temporarily abandoned eggs!) A few days later, he has returned with at least two other swallows. To me, no other common summer resident can come close to matching the soaring grace of the tree swallow. Up, up, he climbs ‘til all that is visible is the flash of white belly. He turns, tucking his wings in slightly, hanging momentarily in mid-air, the sun glittering on his almost iridescent blue-green feathers. Then, down he flashes, swift as a downhill skier, agilely riding the air. The three birds, obviously two males and a female, continue to chase one another, sometimes skimming close to the ground, at other times barely visible against the clouds. They hover around one nest box, then another. And after an hour

of such joyous sport, they have vanished.

When the swallows have finally selected each other, the pair begins to appear every morning, usually around nine o’clock. It can take a female tree swallow three years to acquire her adult plumage, indistinguishable from the male. The young female is a distinctly brownish back. Thus it’s easy to discern whether the male has chosen an experienced mate or a novice. Some ornithologists suggest that the brownish color allows a youngster to hang around with a mated pair ready to step in if something happens to the adult female. And dreadful things can happen to them.



In the spring of 2000, I was startled and dismayed to notice a male house sparrow at our feeder. House sparrows have become ubiquitous in towns and cities, rare in the country except as avian residents of working farms. They, along with starlings, are known to be aggressive competitors for renting rights at nest boxes. I tried my best to scare him away, with no success. That awful summer, he killed five female tree swallows. He’d enter the nest box, pin the unsuspecting bird to the floor and drill her head. After sadly removing the last victim, I plugged all the nest box holes with sticks. I knew that if sparrows nested successfully (and this bird had managed to attract a mate), they’d return relentlessly, year after year. He disappeared at last, but so had the disappointed swallows. In that year, I’d counted 9 birds circling our property. We’ve never had more than four since the Year of the Sparrow

(Continued on page 7)



The January Joan Hanchett Nature program with Wendy Booth provided the basic information required to get Levi Clark started with beekeeping. Levi's great grandfather Joe Ludwig was renowned locally as an enthusiastic and successful apiarist.

(Continued from page 6) Close Encounters

Assassin. That summer I ordered two new nest boxes with special slim openings designed to admit only tree swallows.

The next year, three males and a young brown female appeared. And now I shall quote from my nature notebook. 5/21/01: "We seem to be the house of doom for tree swallows. As I wrote this morning, the bride was furnishing her first home. She'd select a piece of straw, always from a supply she'd discovered at the base of the young oak. Then she'd soar away on ecstatic wings, swooping, dipping and circling before she'd enter the nest box. Her mate watched indulgently from the top of the box. On the odd occasion when this novice went to the wrong box, he'd chide her gently. The idyll ended abruptly. Busily searching for the next straw, an accipiter seized this innocent and flew off with her. Suddenly a small group of swallows appeared and followed the hawk in futile pursuit. Minutes later, her mate circled the field, "crying" piteously, and then he, too, disappeared. I was astounded three hours later to see a pair of trees on the box, nodding their heads, rhythmically bowing, obviously part of their courting dis-

play." This pair fledged four young in June.

The female sparrow's nest construction is a leisurely affair, interrupted by those mysterious absences, often taking two to three weeks. The straw nest is built rather carefully, and, when it is completed, she searches for feathers with which to line it. At season's end when I remove old nests, I'm surprised to see the number of feathers she's managed to collect. I've often observed the swallows copulating atop their box but I hadn't known until I read Stokes' *Guide to Bird Behavior* that this occurs a week before the female begins to lay the four or five eggs. Incubation lasts for about two weeks. Then, for the parents, begins a frantic three-week period of stuffing insects into insistently gaping maws. Even this period can end sadly. One year, I found the nest filled with five apparently healthy nearly grown swallows, just below the nest box. The babies, unmolested, were dead. Some creature for some unknown reason, had pulled the nest with its occupants from the box...and then left it! Needless to say, we immediately bought a predator guard for that box.

Although the nestling period usually passes uneventfully, I've never been present to witness the young birds as they launch themselves from the security of the box. Fortunately, swallows are strong fliers. The parents feed them for only a few days and then, unlike most passerines, they are on their own. Young bluebirds and robins obligingly hang around to delight us. However, the fledged swallows and their exhausted parents once more vanish. Perhaps "our" swallows fly to the marsh on Rte. 136 in Greenfield. I have stood there, dazzled by great numbers of them, listening to their chattering cries as they soar and swoop in graceful arcs, thriving on the insects that a healthy wetland provides.

Sometimes, in late summer, if I'm lucky, I see a group of swallows gathered like black beads strung on the wires that parallel our road. They are early migrators. Another summer is drawing to its inevitable close.

2010 Supporters of FLT (continued from page 5)

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Pat Swan
Guy Swenson and Mary Lindstrom
Fletcher and Janet Taft
Ben and Kate Taylor

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**Celebrate FLT's 25th Anniversary
Sunday, June 12th 3:30 PM
Old Meeting House, Francestown, NH**

Join Endangered Species Biologist Susi Von Oettingen as she shares her detective work on the White Nose Syndrome that has caused population collapse in five of New Hampshire's 8 bat species.

Then celebrate our 25th anniversary with re-



freshments and special guests—FLT's founders and past board members

**Joan Hanchett Nature Series
Friday, May 20th 6:30 PM
Francestown Elementary School**



This popular series brings Lilly Plasse of Othala Acres Heritage Poultry and her chickens to town. Lilly will help us with the ABCs of deciding if raising chickens is for you, which breeds to pick, how to house them, feed them and keep them healthy and laying.