

## Boothbay Region Land Trust



### **BRLT PROTECTS 100 ACRES IN RIVER~LINK NATURAL CORRIDOR**

*by Christine Selman, Communications & Outreach Manager*

#### **Boothbay Region Land Trust is happy to announce the purchase and protection of a large tract**

of forested land off River Road in Edgecomb. The property, which transferred ownership to BRLT on October 13, includes just over 100 acres of mostly forested land with frontage on River Road. The land abuts existing BRLT conservation land on the backside and is contiguous with numerous other conserved properties as part of the River~Link system. The acres closest to River Road are landscaped and contain an old farmhouse with a somewhat recent addition, as well as a two-bay garage and attached two-bedroom apartment. BRLT plans to section off a smaller 3 to 5 acre lot, including the road frontage and structures, for resale to recoup a significant amount of the organization's original investment. Meanwhile, the remaining 100 acres of forested land will be maintained as conservation property by BRLT. This new conservation parcel will further extend the natural lands in BRLT's River~Link focus area, creating greater connectivity for wildlife in the largest conservation corridor on the Boothbay peninsula.

River~Link began in 2002 as a conservation effort to create a continuous natural corridor between and along the Sheepscot and Damariscotta River watersheds. A number of partners have collaborated in this process over the years, including neighboring land trusts, municipalities, nonprofit organizations and state agencies. Following several significant conservation projects within the River~Link focus area, including BRLT's 2006 acquisition of land on McKay Road abutting Edgecomb's Schmidt Preserve, a corridor was established connecting BRLT's Zak Preserve on the southern end of River~Link with Dodge Point Public Land in Newcastle on the North. Currently the River~Link initiative encompasses over 1,400 acres of continuous protected natural space. The new River Road property will further extend the natural lands in this corridor, providing greater protection for wildlife at a critical time.

*(Continued on page 5)*

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## INTRODUCING PRESIDENT ROB WHEELER

**Meet Rob Wheeler, Boothbay Region Land Trust's new board president.** A longtime resident of the Boothbay region community, you may recognize Rob from his years of leadership at J. Edward Knight, or his various volunteer engagements such as fundraising for Special Olympics Maine.

Rob has been in the financial services industry for over twenty years. His career started in banking where he spent the majority of his time at Key Bank. In 2001, Rob left banking to join J. Edward Knight & Co. Rob purchased the agency in 2009 and now operates six agency locations in midcoast Maine.



Rob lives in Boothbay with his wife Sandy and their daughter Jaime. He has served on numerous nonprofit boards and is actively involved with several insurance industry councils, both on a national and local level. Rob grew up in the Boothbay region and enjoys boating and all types of outdoor activities.

Rob has been on the Boothbay Region Land Trust board since 2020. Rob shares, "I am fortunate to take over as the president of the board at an exciting time for the organization. We are in great financial shape and have a strong team running the day-to-day operations. I am excited to continue the good work of those who previously served in this role." We, too, are excited to welcome Rob to the leadership team!

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Nicholas J. Ullo  
*Executive Director*

V. Skye Wood  
*Development Director*

Christine Selman  
*Communications &  
Outreach Manager*

Tracey Hall  
*Environmental Educator*

Scott Peterson  
*Stewardship Manager*

Cindy Casey  
*Administrative Assistant*

### MEET OUR NEW DIRECTORS

**Cindy Bailey** is the Assistant Controller at Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences. She previously spent over a decade in public accounting as a nonprofit auditor. She lives in Wiscasset with her husband Phil and her children. Cindy will also serve as BRLT's Treasurer.

**Alan Bellows** is a lifelong hiker and backpacker. He has a long history of supporting trails and currently serves as Vice President of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. Alan is also a long-time BRLT volunteer and a member of the Stewardship Committee. He lives in Boothbay with wife Wendy on their hobby farm.

**Kim Byrd** is a retired insurance executive with over thirty-five years in the professional liability industry. Kim has been actively involved in civic affairs in Hartford, CT where she lives half the year, as well as in the Boothbay area. In her free time Kim likes to run, hike, boat and enjoy the outdoors.

**Bruce Harris** is an attorney with Griffin & Harris in Boothbay Harbor. He currently serves as president of the Boothbay Region YMCA, on the boards of Education Boothbay and Harbor Theater, and is a proud Rotarian. He and his wife, Medea, and their children live on Southport Island.

## NEW ORIENTEERING COURSE PROVIDES FUN NAVIGATION CHALLENGE TO HIKERS

by Christine Selman, *Communications & Outreach Manager*

### Orienteering is a fun and challenging way to explore the outdoors. Many of us are fond of our

GPS and may not be accustomed to reading maps in our daily lives. Orienteering is all about using maps and a compass to navigate terrain. BRLT is excited to share a new orienteering course at Penny Lake Preserve that encourages visitors of all ages to study maps, notice terrain features, use a compass and discover the hidden markers (punches) throughout the preserve to complete the challenge.

The inspiration for the orienteering course came from Boothbay Region High School STEM teacher Emily Higgins. Higgins approached BRLT in the spring of 2023 about the possibility of collaborating with her ninth grade class to create an orienteering course at Penny Lake Preserve. BRLT Environmental Educator, Tracey Hall, spent the spring meeting with Higgins and her class and working together to plan out a course. In developing the course, students considered the topography, cardinal direction, and natural landmarks in order to locate markers.

“I was thrilled when Emily Higgins approached me with the idea of creating this course with the help of her students,” notes Tracey Hall. “Their thoughtful research and design included visiting other courses, and applying lessons on mapping and navigation. The result is an entertaining orienteering course that is available for everyone to enjoy at their own pace and on their own schedule.”

Hikers who would like to try the orienteering challenge can find printed guides at the Penny Lake Preserve trailhead as well as compasses for borrowing (please be sure to return these to the kiosk). The guide provides a map on one side, and numbered clues on the other. The map indicates the relative location of fourteen markers that must be found throughout the preserve. All markers are in close proximity to the trail, though hikers will have to travel slightly off-trail



*BRLT's new orienteering course at Penny Lake Preserve is now open. Course guides can be found in the kiosk along with compasses, which are available for loan.*

to discover them. Use the map to note trails as well as topography to help you along the course. Each marker comes with a hint. Using a compass may help to decipher cardinal directions provided in the hints. Hints also challenge hikers to consider their knowledge of local features such as tree species. Each dark red marker is numbered to match the map and hint, and includes a punch-pattern that matches the punch-marks on the orienteering guide. Punch your course guide as you go until you locate all fourteen markers and complete the challenge!

Autumn is a great time to get out on the course while leaves and ground terrain are still visible, or, for those of you looking for an added challenge, check out the course in winter. Happy exploring!

## MEET OUR NEW STAFF

by V. Skye Wood, Development Director



*Above Left: Cindy Casey joins the staff as BRLT's new Administrative Assistant; Above Right: Scott Peterson transitions to the year-round Stewardship Manager position.*

**Please extend a warm welcome to our newest year-round staff members, Cindy Casey and Scott Peterson!** Although they are new to our year-round team, they are certainly not new to the Land Trust. Cindy joined the BRLT board in 2019, serving one term before stepping down this fall to take the job as administrative assistant. This is a newly-created, part-time position designed to support BRLT's growing needs. Scott joins the mainland team after serving as Damariscove Island caretaker for three summers with his wife, Aiko Pandorf. He replaces Daniel Hill as stewardship manager after Daniel's departure in September to pursue opportunities in southern Maine, closer to his significant other.

Cindy, a Southport Island native, graduated from Boothbay Region High School before obtaining a degree in sociology and nutrition from Keene State College. Upon returning to Boothbay Harbor, she began teaching at a local preschool while getting a master's degree in education. Since then, Cindy has been teaching pre-K through first grade in the Boothbay region, most recently at Edgecomb Eddy School. Growing up on the Boothbay peninsula, Cindy has spent years on the BRLT hiking trails and supporting its mission. In her spare time Cindy enjoys hiking, kayaking, and spending time with her husband Adam and labradoodle, Millie.

Scott grew up in New Hampshire and spent summers in Maine on his uncle's dairy farm, as well as on the coast of Casco Bay. He returns to his roots after a varied career in leadership development, experiential education, and community economic development, which took him as far afield as Zimbabwe and Northern California. He enjoys being active as well as relaxing outdoors.

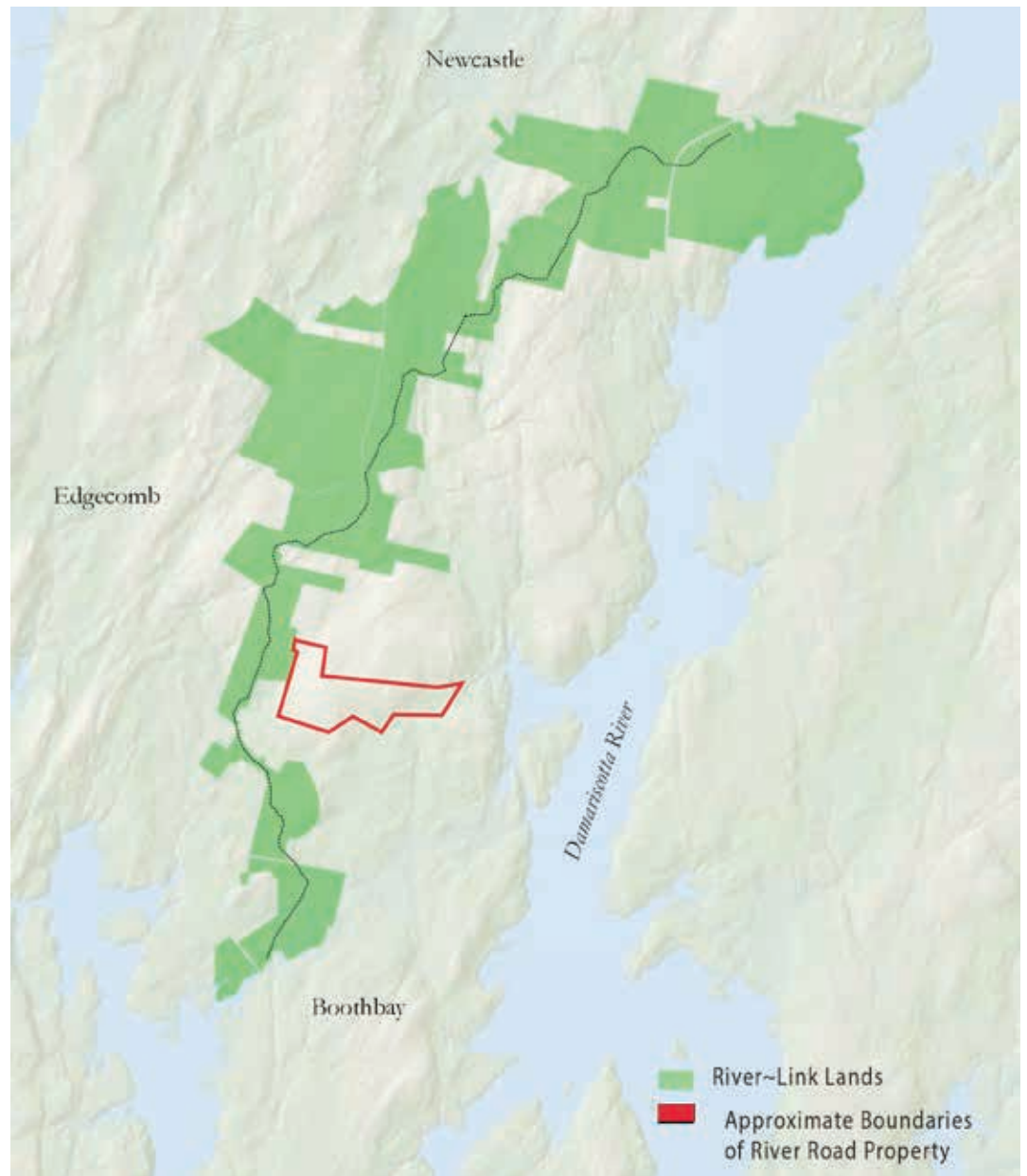
If you see Cindy or Scott in the office or on the trails, please introduce yourself! You may also reach them at [ccasey@bbrlt.org](mailto:ccasey@bbrlt.org) or [speterson@bbrlt.org](mailto:speterson@bbrlt.org).

## BRLT Protects Acres (Continued from page 1)

The warming climate has implications for wildlife, both plant and animal, across the planet including in Maine. One major concern for conservation organizations like BRLT is species migration. As the climate warms, many species are being pushed out of their traditional ranges. As these species migrate, often in search of food or habitat, forest fragmentation presents a major hurdle. The 2019 Maine Land Conservation Task Force noted that landscapes fragmented by roads, energy infrastructure, dams, and other development present barriers to many species whose ranges may shift. The Task Force called for “Maintaining landscape-scale connectivity and conserving a network of ecological reserves within a matrix of undeveloped land [to offer] the best chance of retaining a diverse variety of plants and animals.”

River-Link provides this sort of connectivity in our region, and will better support wildlife in a changing climate.

Likewise, this project also supports the work of Maine’s 2020 Climate Action Plan, calling for a 30% increase in total acreage of conserved lands with a focus on conservation of high biodiversity. The Climate Action Plan notes that “Maine’s forests provide an opportunity for maximizing carbon storage. Unfragmented forests and intact riparian corridors provide key linkages for species migration. Intact landscapes provide natural strongholds which are better equipped to recover from disturbance.” For all of these reasons, Boothbay Region Land Trust has eagerly pursued this conservation project. BRLT’s



Lands Committee unanimously recommended the purchase of the property to the Board of Directors, and the Board, in turn, also unanimously supported this purchase.

“The flora and fauna of the Boothbay region are important to the identity and livelihoods of the people who live here,” explains Executive Director, Nick Ullo. “The properties that are part of River-Link, including this newly acquired parcel, represent rare unfragmented, forested lands within the rapidly developing and progressively more-congested Midcoast region,” Ullo notes. “By adding to this natural corridor, BRLT is supporting protected habitat for wildlife species from birds to moose, and providing resources for our community to remain resilient in the face of climate change.”

## ART AND SCULPTURE WOW ATTENDEES, RAISE RECORD FUNDS FOR BRLT

by Christine Selman, *Communications & Outreach Manager*

### Two hundred attendees gathered on a stormy Friday night in August at the Boothbay Playhouse

for Boothbay Region Land Trust's quadrennial Art Auction, which netted over \$100,000 to benefit land conservation and public access in the Boothbay region. The sold-out event was the culmination of the Land Trust's *Art for Acres* series, which included a Stone Symposium and Art Preview. The evening featured both live and silent auctions with sixty-six works of art ranging from paintings and sculptures, to jewelry, photography, and much more.

The auction was originally planned to be held under a tent at the Land Trust's Oak Point Farm. However, the forecast of heavy rain, thunder and lightning necessitated a quick pivot just 48 hours before the scheduled event. Boothbay Playhouse Weddings generously donated their newly-renovated space for the evening. Staff and volunteers worked swiftly to adjust plans, wrap and move art, and prepare the space for a dynamic event. Guests were commendably

flexible and understanding, arriving at the event under rainy skies.

The intensifying storm outside seemed to match the energy of the room which only grew stronger as the evening progressed. Attendees enjoyed cocktails and appetizers as they bid on silent auction items early in the evening. Two classical musicians with *Vigorous Tenderness* provided music for the cocktail and dinner hours. Following a full meal catered by Seacoast Catering and Lobster Bakes, auctioneer John Bottero kicked-off the live auction portion of the event with much anticipation. Bottero, with over 30 years of auctioneering experience, led the auction with enthusiasm and insight that kept the energy high, at times inviting artists in attendance to share their perspective on their craft.

The top selling paintings of the evening included *A Soft*



*The energy was high and the mood was jubilant as attendees bid on over sixty works of art in support of BRLT.  
Photo courtesy of Bob Crink*

*Morning*, by Donald Demers and *Daylilies at Oak Point Farm* by Brad Betts. Top selling sculptures included Andreas von Huene's *Eagle and Trout*, as well as John Catizone's symposium sculpture, *Sounding*.

While many established artists generously participated in the auction, a number of young artists also showcased their work, some for the first time. The successful sale of Grant Auber's *Dancer 1* swiftly generated commission work for the up-and-coming artist. Sculptor Joseph DiMauro, who previously interned during the 2018 Maine Stone Workers Guild Stone Symposium, this year sold two beautiful sculptures including his 13-foot tall symposium piece, *Seeking Aperture*. For a number of artists working to establish themselves, *Art for Acres* and the auction offered opportunities for exposure and networking that will support their growing careers.

"Art for Acres has been an incredible event that has benefited the entire community," organizer and Development Director, Skye Wood explains. "Hundreds



*Participating sculptors of the Maine Stoneworkers Guild live-sculpted over the course of 10-days. From left: Dan Ucci, Sam Finkelstein, John Catizone, Andres von Huene, Joseph DiMauro, and Isabel Catherine Kelley pose beside Joseph DiMauro's Seeking Aperture. Photo courtesy of Jim Newton*



*Stoneworkers Guild artist, Dick Alden, explains to an attendee how to use sculpting tools. Visitors were invited to create their own soapstone pendants during the symposium. Photo courtesy of Bob Crink*

of people had the opportunity to view and appreciate the art of our region, while also learning about and experiencing the art of sculpting. We believe that the interaction between nature and art will build greater appreciation for both art and nature. The funds raised will directly support the ongoing mission of Boothbay Region Land Trust to conserve the natural habitat and scenic beauty of our region for everyone."

Since 1991, Boothbay Region Land Trust has hosted an art auction every four years, which has grown in support and scale ever since. The collaboration between artists and Boothbay Region Land Trust is one that promotes the incredibly creative and talented arts community while also supporting the work of the Land Trust. *Art for Acres* would not have been possible without the generous support of lead sponsor, Tindal and Callahan Real Estate, as well Auction Sponsors Knickerbocker Group, Midcoast Hospitality, First National Bank, Studio 53, Back Meadow Farm, and Rockport Granite.



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FOLLOW US:   

The Boothbay Region Land Trust seeks to conserve for the public benefit the natural habitat, scenic beauty and working land of the Boothbay region.



# Save the Date

## WINTER SOLSTICE LANTERN WALK



Boothbay Region  
Land Trust

Celebrate the winter solstice and the return to longer days with a self-guided illuminated walk.

**Date:** December 21, 2023

**Time:** 4:00pm-7:00pm

**Where:** Oak Point Farm  
60 Samoset Rd. Boothbay Harbor



2023 Annual Conservation Partners:

