

Bangor Land Trust

# NEWS LETTER

Spring / Summer 2023

## AN IMPORTANT BRIDGE

The trunk of a large fallen tree used to be the only bridge over the stream that flows across the land that is now Northeast Penjajawoc Preserve. Using this bridge required confidence in one's good balance and a sense of adventure. Fans of Robin Hood might have enjoyed re-enacting the encounter with Little John.

When Bangor Land Trust purchased this land in 2007, we promised our state and federal funding agencies to protect water quality and wildlife habitat while providing public access. This required a better bridge!

In 2009 we removed the venerable tree trunk that had sustained stream crossings for so long and replaced it with a more conventional bridge. The University of Maine kindly gave us two 30-foot laminated Douglas Fir beams. We added planks, railings, and more. It was a fine solution and allowed many visitors to enjoy what lay



on the other side of the stream.

Alas, proximity to water and the passage of time with its annual burden of fallen leaves took its toll. Tiny wildlife, bacteria and fungi, are important to a healthy ecosystem. We welcome them elsewhere on our preserves, but not on, in, and through our bridge! They did their work of rot anyway, an effective but unwanted job of recycling the bridge's lumber. Painting, sweeping, replacing

broken boards, shoring up footings, all helped a little, but it became clear that the tiny creatures were winning and we were going to have to do something more. We reached out to our members for funds to repair the bridge and we thank them for their gifts.

Other microorganisms entered the picture, bringing us COVID. Our national, state, and local governments helped fund our defense against the social and



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## A LETTER *from* BANGOR LAND TRUST PRESIDENT

*Dear Friends,*

This month we happily welcomed three new board members to Bangor Land Trust. We hope you will enjoy getting to know them! As we put them right to work they are asking us some basic questions about how we meet our responsibilities as a land trust.

We take seriously our responsibility to conserve only land that is worth conserving – land that is rich with conservation values. Once we have conserved it, we have a responsibility to maintain its conservation values. This is the commitment we make to the state and federal agencies that fund our land purchases.

So now you might ask, what are “conservation values”? How do you maintain them? Almost all the funds we receive are for habitat protection. Penjajawoc Marsh is an Important Bird Area, nationally recognized for its role in preventing species extinction. So the conservation values of Penjajawoc Marsh and its associated uplands are its wildlife habitats, its ability to provide homes and food for everything from dragonflies and salamanders to bears and bobcats, along with a list of over 180 bird species. When there is so much in the news about habitat losses and our over-heating planet, we are fortunate to be able to do our part, here in Bangor.

We look forward to sharing this adventure with you, through our programs, map, and Nature Bingo games. The more you know, the more interesting and enjoyable it is. We are very appreciative of your support!

*Lucy Quimby*



# NATURE NOTES

## SOUNDSCAPE AWARENESS *By Steve Norton*

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“For decades, land trusts have understood the importance of preserving natural landscapes. More recently that idea has grown to include preservation of dark skies and cultural resources. So it naturally follows that conservation can be an important tool in preserving our natural soundscapes as well. At the very least, the hope is that our visitors can become more aware of the sounds around them while they are enjoying the scenery.” These are the words of Donna Bissett of Maine Coast Heritage Trust, written recently to introduce the work of my group, The Island Soundscape Project, to a land trust audience. However, to some it may beg the question, “What is a soundscape?”

The term “Soundscape” originally refers to our naturally occurring sonic environment, that is, what we hear when we are in a landscape. Its meaning has grown to include how we understand the relationship between all sounds in extra-musical terms. It is a common trope to suggest that the sounds of the outside world constitute an orchestra or a symphony. However, consider that an orchestra is coordinated by a conductor, and that a symphony is composed by a composer. To use these top-down models is to ignore how a soundscape is composed from the bottom up, by individual entities: singing insects, frogs, birds, mammals, humans and their creations, wind, water and other sounds of the physical world. All of these lend their voices in their own times and according to their own natures as contributions to the soundscape—the sum total of sounds available from a particular place at a particular moment, indeterminately composed and yet coherent as what it is.

An idea which grew out of the soundscape movement in the 1970s, the term “Acoustic Ecology” (also referred to as “soundscape ecology”) describes the sonic relationships and causalities among an environment and the creatures within it. Through listening we can gain a unique understanding of the world we inhabit, one that often augments and even contrasts with the world we see. The soundscape can give us clues about the composition and density of the biodiversity in an ecosystem. It can also reveal the health of an ecosystem’s functioning. This is nicely described by Bernie Krause’s “Niche Hypothesis,” a

paper first published in 1987, which proposes that species which have co-evolved in a particular ecosystem manage to sort their own calls into discrete frequency bands or “niches,” so that they can be heard by their own kind among all the other calling species without having their voices drowned out or “masked” by the others.

With the advent of human-made industrial machinery in the 19th century—automobiles, trains, aircraft, factories, etc.—a new kind of masking arose, one caused by volume (amplitude) rather than frequency. Many creatures in ecosystems affected by this loud machinery noise have had difficulty adapting to these sounds, some of which are so loud that no amount of frequency shifting can compensate for the disturbance. Creatures who cannot adapt must leave or die out. This kind of sonically driven habitat loss is likely unaccounted for in studies of habitat loss which consider more visually obvious factors such as development, agricultural clearing and forest fragmentation. This means there is a good chance that habitat loss is underestimated in conservation planning.

Fortunately, here in Bangor, we are not subject to extreme levels of industrial machinery noise. Our Bangor Land Trust properties do not escape occasional noise from air and road traffic, but they are reasonably buffered from I-95 and other local roads so that sounds in the immediate forests are able to be heard well by the local inhabitants. For a human visitor, the sounds of the creatures can frequently precede sightings. In a recent visit to the Central Penjajawoc Preserve, a crow ruckus revealed a pair of crows rousting a great horned owl, who gave one irritated hoot. Minutes later, the sound of a large bird flushing revealed a wild turkey rocketing through the forest.

When one enters an unfamiliar environment, they might ask themselves, “How well does what I hear match what I see?” The answer reveals how well (or poorly!) the soundscape and the physical environment are in balance. And when it is out of balance because the soundscape is dominated by human industry, the question becomes “When will we decide that this is a problem that we need to solve?”

# SAFETY FOR EVERYONE ON BANGOR LAND TRUST PRESERVES

As the poet Gary Snyder wrote, “Nature is not a place to visit, it is home.” It is indeed our home. It is where human beings evolved over millennia. That is why a walk in the woods, looking for birds, photographing flowers, or just sitting under a tree is such a good way to calm our minds and reduce stress. In these difficult times, beset by COVID, we want to be sure that everyone seeking wellbeing in our preserves is safe there.

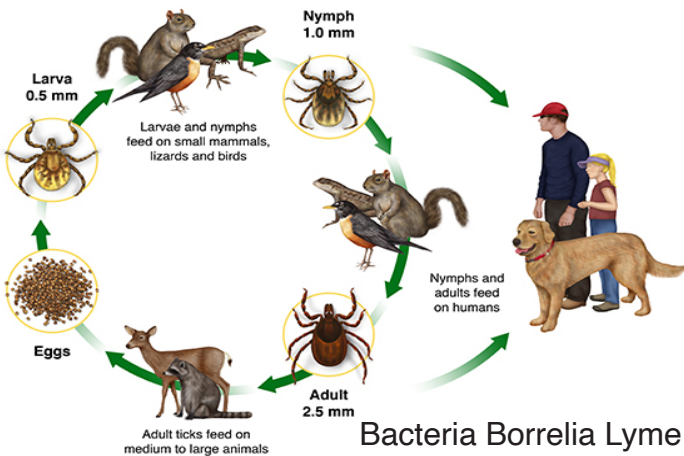
Two major threats to our health are bacteria carried by deer ticks that cause Lyme and other diseases, and the COVID virus. Safety requires taking precautions against both.

To avoid tick-borne diseases, dress defensively with pants tucked into socks and shirt tucked into trousers, wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to see ticks that may have climbed aboard, and do a thorough tick check when you get home. Treating your clothes with permethrin is a good way to repel ticks. The Maine CDC website has excellent information on ticks.

Having BLT preserves be safe in the time of COVID requires that each of us be thoughtful of others that we may meet. The COVID virus spreads through aerosols – from the lungs of someone breathing deeply. People who are not yet showing symptoms and unaware that they are sick can and do spread COVID. Please stay at least 6 feet from everyone not masked or fully vaccinated. If you are moving fast along a trail, please yield to more slow-moving walkers. If you are on a bike, please stop and figure out with the person you are passing how you can maintain physical distancing in a way that is comfortable for both parties.



Lyme Disease: Tick and Host Lifecycle



**We still have T-Shirts** left to give out to anyone who would like to support Bangor Land Trust and the work that we do

**All new members that donate \$35 or more can get a FREE edible landscape project T-Shirt while supplies last.**



Donations not only help with our edible landscape project, but they also help conserve land for everyone to enjoy. Your support also helps to:

- Maintain a 10-mile network of trails
- Protect the forests and grasslands that help air quality and against climate change
- Provides educational & nature-based events, and games
- Brings you our newsletters, and other great information for an entire year

**Thank you to everyone who has already donated and received a T-Shirt, we appreciate your support!**



The Bangor Land Trust newsletter is available to view in full color on our website [www.bangorlandtrust.org](http://www.bangorlandtrust.org) (use your phone's QR code reader to bring you to the website!)



Bangor Land Trust can also be found on facebook, follow us for updates

# WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At our Annual Meeting in February Bangor Land Trust members voted to add three people to our Board. Each of them brings special knowledge and skills as well as a commitment to helping Bangor Land Trust meet our goals of maintaining a healthy ecosystem in and around Penjajawoc Marsh and helping our community appreciate and enjoy the land we have conserved.

**Kevin Allcroft** is a consulting forester who owns his own forestry business (Forestry Concepts) with a mission of working with landowners to help them achieve their goals. BLT recently hired him to do a timber inventory for Walden-Parke Preserve, and a couple of people who were lucky enough to tag along with him returned full of enthusiasm about what they learned. He writes long-term forest management plans – beginning with an inventory, then identifying short and long term goals relating to forest sustainability, recreation, water protection and wildlife. He also has experience working with the Boy Scouts and other community groups. Some years ago, as an Orrington Selectman he participated as a stakeholder in the creation of the Penobscot Valley Community Greenprint.

**Jim Contino** is a retired forester who has explored and enjoyed our preserves for many years. He developed experience in managing both forests and people in his earlier role managing fiber supply for a paper mill. He understands that Bangor Land Trust wants to manage “with a light touch.” “During the past 40 years of my working career I have embraced the principles of multiple use, stewardship, and sustainability.” Bangor Land Trust is now responsible for managing over 800 acres of forest, which require some management to promote forest health and wildlife habitat even if we never harvest. During our interview with him his questions and suggestions made clear that he will be a valuable resource as we tackle the challenges ahead.

**Steve Norton** is an acoustic ecologist introduced to us by Ciona Ulbrich of Maine Coast Heritage Trust. She saw that his audio inventories of wildlife on our preserves could be an efficient way for us to document who is making their homes on Bangor Land Trust preserves and where. Steve is very tech-savvy; he introduced us to acoustic ecology. His soundscapes captivated us. He will help us find new ways to be attuned to the natural world around us – knowing who is out there, and what they sound like,

even if we don't actually see them. Another way to enjoy Bangor's wild back yard! Steve is the author of Nature Notes for the spring newsletter.

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## AN IMPORTANT BRIDGE ~ *continued from page 1*



economic damage it caused. Thanks to Penobscot County Commissioner Peter Baldacci and his two fellow commissioners who saw Bangor Land Trust's value to our community, we received enough American

Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds to complete our budget for replacing the bridge and improving the trail leading to it. A committee is working diligently investigating materials, bridge designs, and trail improvement methods. Stay tuned! This is a work in progress. We will need volunteers!

We are currently working with A.I.T. Engineering in Brewer, a spinoff of Habib Daghar's Composite Lab at the University of Maine. We plan to purchase three 30-foot composite “C” beams, material designed for the space age with a predicted life span of 120 years, more or less. The beams are relatively light. We will need a group of 4 or 5 strong volunteers to carry them in to the work site. We will add decking, railings, footings, etc. During the remaining life span of the current bridge we will plan and organize this project.

Please call 942-1010 or email [info@bangorlandtrust.org](mailto:info@bangorlandtrust.org) to let us know if you are available to pitch in and help with this exciting project – we will need all hands on deck!


















*The bridge served us well over the years but is now in need of replacement*

Bangor Land Trust Nature Bingo Game

Spring Wildflowers in Walden-Parke

**How to play:** Look for the flowers in Walden-Parke preserve; when you find one, enter the date in the box below its picture. When you find 4, all in a row, a column, or on one of the two diagonals of 4 boxes, you have completed the game. Send a copy of the completed card to [info@bangorlandtrust.org](mailto:info@bangorlandtrust.org) or postal mail a copy to Bangor Land Trust, PO. Box 288, Bangor, ME 04401 and make arrangement to receive a Bangor Land Trust water bottle prize.

			
Canada Mayflower	Northern Blue Violet	Painted Trillium	Yellow Clintonia
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
			
Starflower	Fringed polygala	Red Maple	Pussy Willows
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
			
Bunchberry	Rhodora	Trailing Arbutus	Pink Lady's Slipper
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
			
Blue Flag	Red Trillium	Jack-in-the-Pulpit	Foamflower
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:

Walden Parke is now even bigger, so more places to explore and play Nature Bingo. Here's an opportunity to play last year's spring bingo with the additional challenge of finding as many as you can on the newly acquired trail. Enjoy your journey!! Bingo sheets can also be found in color on our website

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