

The York Land Trust Newsletter

LANDMARKS



47 Acres Protected in Area of Statewide Significance

In our ongoing efforts to protect wildlife habitat across York, we often look for opportunities to acquire parcels adjacent to existing conservation land. In doing so, we aim to fill in critical conservation gaps and ensure that wildlife may continue to nest, forage and thrive without the obstacles posed by habitat fragmentation and development.

Our recent acquisition of 47 acres north of Third Hill achieves just this. Surrounded on three sides by conservation land, the newly protected property sits within a broader 5,441-acre block of undeveloped land in the Mt. Agamenticus region. Our stewardship of the land will help protect high-value wetlands and streams for wildlife including brook trout and turtles and preserves the rare Central Hardwoods Oak Forest Ecosystem. Existing trails on the property will be maintained for public access and are part of a vast network of trails in the Mt. Agamenticus region.

The property falls within the focus area of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (MtA2C), which spans from Tatnic Hills of Wells to the coast of Kittery and York. Located at the confluence of northern and southern habitat ranges, this area contains more biological diversity than anywhere else in the state and, for this reason, is designated as high value conservation land of statewide ecological importance.

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The York Land Trust is a member-supported, nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving and protecting lands of ecological, historic, scenic, agricultural and cultural significance in the greater York, Maine area, for the benefit of all.

THE YORK LAND TRUST
1 LONG NECK MARSH RD.
YORK, ME 03909
Telephone: 207-363-7400
E-mail: info@yorklandtrust.org

For more information, please visit our website: www.yorklandtrust.org



The Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (MtA2C) is an effort led by a coalition of national, regional and local partners to protect a network of connected conservation lands and natural resources within a 48,000-acre focus area in Southern Maine for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The MtA2C Partners include: the US Fish and Wildlife Service/Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Great Works Regional Land Trust, Kittery Land Trust, and York Land Trust.

For more information, please visit www.mta2c.org.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS ON MTA2C

You have heard the saying, “*It takes a village to raise a child.*” Well, it takes many “villages” to permanently protect more than 5,200 acres in southern Maine, and that’s what the partners of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (MtA2C) have accomplished since first coming together as a coalition in 2002. As we celebrate MtA2C’s 20th anniversary this year, we’re reflecting on all that the group has accomplished over the past two decades, and all that it still hopes to achieve.

At the conclusion of the successful Agamenticus Challenge in 2002 — which raised more than \$3 million to protect wildlife habitat in the Mt. Agamenticus region — those involved recognized the need to do more to address the mounting threats of development in the area. So that year, York Land Trust and nine other conservation organizations in southernmost Maine formed the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative to permanently protect the most



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

ecologically important land in the region. They established a goal of conserving 19,000 acres within a 48,000-acre focus area that spans parts of York, South Berwick, Ogunquit, Wells, Kittery and Eliot — a region that contains drinking water sources for three towns and holds the greatest species diversity in the entire state.

With widespread community support that includes budget appropriations, bond initiatives, grants and individual gifts, the

collaborative has protected more than 5,200 acres, bringing the total acreage of protected land within the focus area up to 15,289 acres. This focus area hosts more than 60 miles of trails available for hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, hunting, birding plus a variety of public programs for all ages.

As we look to the future, we recognize that land preservation will continue to prove critical in slowing the effects of climate change, safeguarding our drinking water, and nourishing our bodies and minds. We hope you’ll join us in celebrating MtA2C’s accomplishments thus far, and continue to support efforts to achieve our long-term goal of protecting 19,000 acres in this very special region.

Sincerely,
Cliff O’Connor

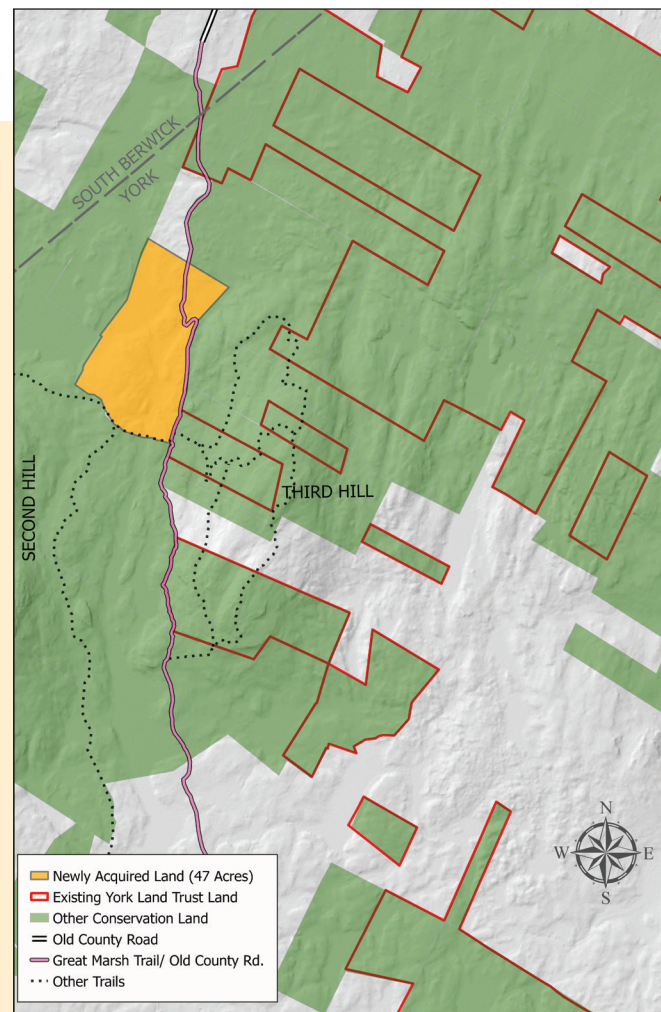
47 Acres Protected

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Protecting land in this region will prove ever more important as wildlife ranges shrink and shift with climate change, says Doreen MacGillis, Executive Director of York Land Trust. “By conserving land here, we’re supporting the future of native wildlife that need to adapt to a rapidly changing world,” MacGillis says.

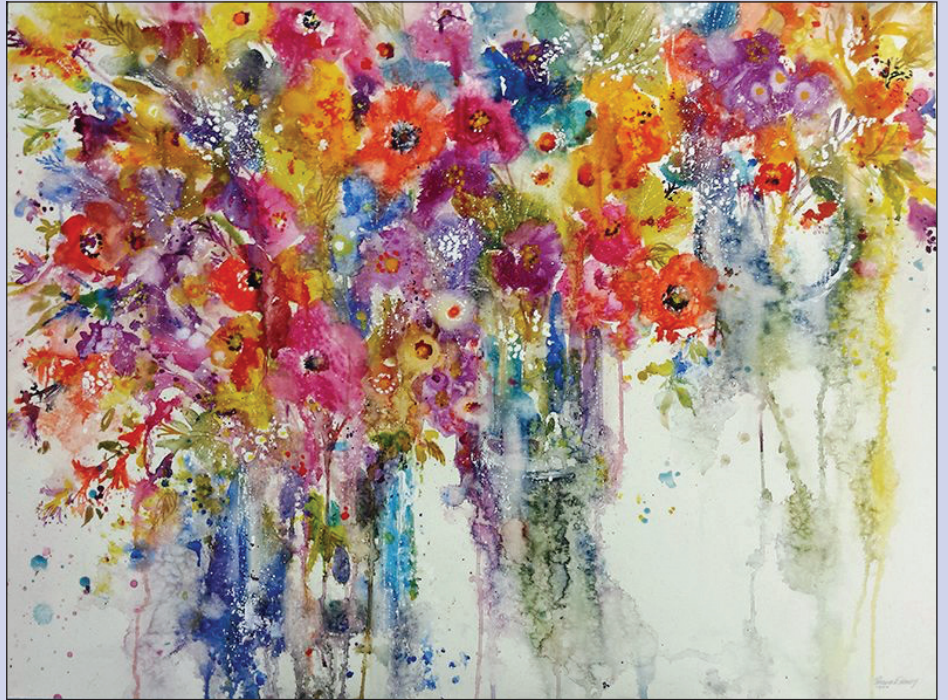
York Land Trust received a grant from the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program to fund the property acquisition. Other project costs were covered by a generous bequest from the late artist Patience Haley Ghikas who resided in Cape Neddick before passing away in 2020. *If you’re interested in learning about giving to YLT in your will, please see our Charitable Giving story on Page 3.*

We are grateful to have been able to protect this special parcel of land and look forward to sharing it with you.



Local Artist Leaves a Legacy for the Land

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.*



English poet, John Donne, wrote these words more than 400 years ago, but they are as true today as they were then. We — the entire physical world — are interconnected, and are “the less” when acting alone.

These words came to mind as I viewed the beautiful exhibit of the late artist, Patience Haley Ghikas (1926-2020), at the York Public Library this winter. Though Patience was born in Boston, her connection to southern Maine ran deep. Her father, a professor at Phillips Exeter Academy, was born in Maine and she spent many summers during prep school and college working as a waitress in Ogunquit. It was there that she came to know Henry Strater, founder of the Ogunquit Museum of American Art, and the many artists who were part of the art colony in Ogunquit at that time. Her work was displayed at the 1953 opening of the Ogunquit Museum and, more than 70 years later, the Museum lent a selection of her paintings to York Public Library for its 2022 exhibit.

A longtime resident of Cape Neddick, Patience Haley Ghikas painted whimsical watercolors of floral arrangements and other botanical scenes that evoked her love and appreciation for the natural world. As evidence of this passion, she left behind more

than just her paintings: She designated a generous bequest to York Land Trust in her will that helped us purchase the 15-acre field next to our headquarters and 46 acres north of Third Hill (see cover page story).

Patience was deeply moved by and connected to the world around her. York Land Trust along with York Public Library and the Ogunquit Museum of American Art have each benefited from her life and her legacy — and we are all the better for it.

Written by Gail Gilcrest, York Land Trust Board Member and a docent at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art. A version of this story appeared in The York Weekly in February 2022.

A New Guide to Giving

Did you know that you can support YLT’s work now and in the future in a variety of different ways, and enjoy potential tax benefits in return? While some of these giving options might be familiar, others are less well known. In addition to cash gifts, you can also name York Land Trust as a beneficiary of your retirement plan; donate stocks, bonds, or mutual funds; or give a memorial gift in honor of a loved one, just to name a few.

We’ve printed a new Guide to Giving that outlines each of these options in further detail. To receive a copy of this brochure, please contact info@yorklandtrust.org or download it from our website at yorklandtrust.org/support.



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Mrs. Virginia Beutner

YLT Supports the York Climate Action Plan

In May, the York Climate Action Plan (CAP) will seek approval from voters to enact plans to reduce town-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030, and establish a long-term roadmap for climate adaptation and mitigation.



YLT supports the Climate Action Plan and encourages residents to vote in support of it as well.

As an organization, York Land Trust has already begun taking concrete steps towards reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and minimizing our carbon footprint. We recently hired ReVision Energy to outfit our headquarters with energy efficient heat pumps and a 14-panel solar array on the rooftop of our Community Room. This new setup will help power our office while also reducing our annual utility costs and slashing our carbon dioxide emissions by the equivalent of 500 gallons of gasoline or 5,000 pounds of coal burned each year. We intend

for these appliances to offer educational opportunities for the community, and would be happy to answer any questions you may have about transitioning your own home or workplace to renewable energy.

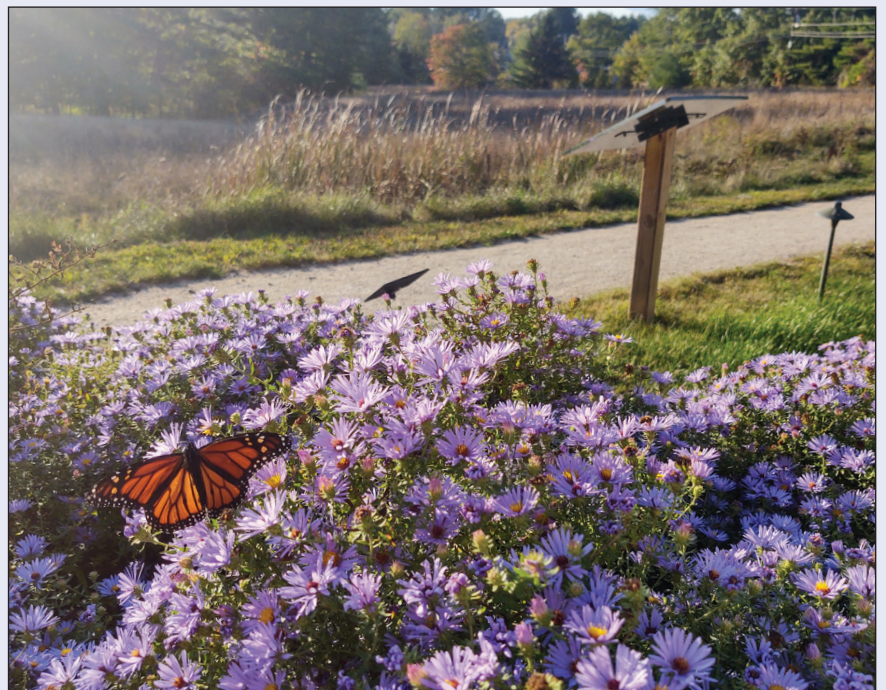
In addition to these office renovations, we've also been offering a webinar series called Climate Conversations alongside partners at the York Public Library, Maine Natural Areas Program, Efficiency Maine and ReVision Energy. You can find recordings of these webinars in the *News* section of our website, and stay up to date on upcoming programs in the *Events* section.

Tackling climate change and meeting the goals of the York Climate Action Plan will require ongoing community collaboration. We're excited to be taking these initial steps, and look forward to continuing to work together toward a more sustainable future.

HELP PROTECT LOCAL HABITATS BY REPLACING INVASIVE PLANTS WITH NATIVE ONES

Our upcoming Native Plant Sale (Sat., May 7th) will offer you a chance to replace invasive plants on your property with native plants and shrubs that are healthier for your garden and more beneficial to pollinators like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds!

Many non-native ornamental plants are invasive, meaning that they spread easily and can rapidly overtake landscapes if left unchecked. Bittersweet, Burning Bush and Barberry are just a few of the many invasive plant species commonly found in this region. These plants can easily spread from your yard into neighboring areas and even onto our wildlife preserves, where they can quickly outcompete native species by consuming limited water, nutrients and sun light. For a full list of invasive plants, visit the Maine Natural Areas Program's Advisory List of Invasive Plants at maine.gov/dacf/mnap.



By removing invasive plants from your garden and yard and replacing them with something native, you're doing your part to protect local habitats and help pollinators. We hope you'll find a few varieties that you love at our 2nd Annual Native Plant Sale!



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Learn more and register at yorklandtrust.org/events

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

May 6 @ 3pm - 4pm | York Land Trust Headquarters

Join York Land Trust and a special guest from Pierson Nurseries in Biddeford to learn about techniques to support native plants in your garden and the benefits of gardening with these varieties.

NATIVE PLANT SALE

May 7 @ 9am - 12pm | York Land Trust Headquarters

Looking to expand your garden this spring? Check out York Land Trust's Native Plant Sale! You'll find more than two dozen perennials, shrubs and trees, all provided by Pierson Nurseries in Biddeford.

CELEBRATE BIRD MIGRATION WEEK!

May 16 - 20 | Daily Walks @ 9am - 10:30am | Multiple Locations

In celebration of spring migration, we're offering a week of morning bird walks at a different preserve each day! Join us to learn how to ID birds, recognize birdsong, and explore the habitats birds love most. Family friendly and beginner birders welcome.

SUMMER SOLSTICE YOGA CLASS

June 21 @ 9am - 10:15am | York Land Trust Headquarters

Celebrate the first day of summer with a morning yoga class at the York Land Trust Headquarters! Darcy Specker of Cider Hill Yoga will lead the class with a focus on vinyasa flow and the connection between breath and movement.

