

Keewaydin Farm: Prime Farmland in Bowdoinham Protected

There are *jewels* in our midst! The specific gems are landowners Malcolm and Lucille Jewell, who worked for over 8 years arranging for permanent protection of their 110 acre farm. Consisting of expansive fields and productive forest land stretching from the Cathance River to Interstate 295, Keewaydin Farm has been permanently protected by the donation of a conservation easement to Maine Farmland Trust.

On a stunning September day, like many we've experienced this fall, a group of over 20 folks witnessed and celebrated the event, including land trust members and four generations of the Jewell family. All spoke of their connection to the land, and their gratitude to the owners for pursuing their dream of seeing the farm protected from non-agricultural use in the future.

Malcolm welcomed the guests, reflecting on the history of the farm. His

great grandfather, T.W. (Tom Bill) Fisher, built the farmhouse in 1846. Tom Bill's daughter (Malcolm's grandmother) and her husband, who was the doctor in town, used the home as a summer residence, because the farm was too isolated and transportation

too difficult to live there year round.

In 1946, Malcolm was just out of the Navy and working in Lewiston as a research chemist when he and Lucille moved to the farm with their 2 small children, aged 1 and 3. There was no running water and only a single light-bulb in each room. It was early April with several inches of slush on the ground, no dry firewood, only a fireplace and woodstove in the kitchen

Continued on page 2



PHOTOS BY CHRIS HAMILTON

Lucille and Malcolm Jewell are fourth-generation owners of scenic Keewaydin Farm.



By granting an agricultural conservation easement to Maine Farmland Trust, the Jewells have ensured that Keewaydin Farm will be available for farming in the future.

On the inside

- Our 5th Birthday achievements
- Maine FarmLink:
Feather Foot Farm, Aurora
The Nevell Farm, Penobscot
- Regrouping and planning
for a future land bond
- Neil Crane brings large-farm
perspective to MFT board

Keewaydin Farm Easement Protects 110 Acres

Continued from page 1

for heat. Their means of transportation was an old wreck of a car that barely worked. Still, they were very happy to be there.

Bowdoinham was a very different place in 1946. Fisher Road was only a dirt road with a third as many homes. Most were active farms. Down the road was a water-powered sawmill and other customary rural enterprises common in those days. But time has brought changes. The road is now paved and almost a super highway, the number of homes has tripled and there are very few farmers left in the area.

Looking to the future

As the complexion of the neighborhood changed, Malcolm and Lucille began to worry about the future of their beloved farm. The Jewells did not want to see the land developed. After he retired from S.D. Warren in 1990, Malcolm began speaking with many people about land protection. Ultimately he was referred to Maine



A JEWELL FAMILY PORTRAIT: Four generations of the Jewell family gathered at Keewaydin Farm to celebrate the donation of a conservation easement to Maine Farmland Trust.

The easement permits limited development by family, while keeping prime farmland intact.

Farmland Trust by Rupert Neilly, land protection specialist with Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Over several years we worked together to address the wishes and concerns not only of the landowners, but also their family. The result is a somewhat complex easement that sets aside a homesite for grandson and farm manager Andy Fiori (see article next page) and will allow for construction of homes for

each of the three children, if they want, while still assuring that the prime agricultural land will be available for farming in the future.

As Malcolm and Lucille signed the documents, family members and others in the group spoke wise and kind words, gratefully acknowledging this generous gift of farmland preservation, which will benefit generations to come.

A Big Thank You

We wish to convey our thanks for the following generous grants and donations:

Norcross Wildlife Foundation,

for \$2500 grant for website design

Professional photographer Hugh Chatfield of Portland,
for farm photographs for use in our new outreach materials
Volunteer Sue Lanpher for office help and more farm photos

Wish List

Are you a graphic artist?

Want to use your talents for a great cause? Good news...

Maine Farmland Trust needs a volunteer website designer!

Call LouAnna at 207-469-6465.

On the Ground: What Is Involved in Farming Protected Land

At the family ceremony held to sign the agricultural conservation easement on Keewaydin Farm (see feature story, pages 1 and 2), Malcolm Jewell introduced his grandson Andrew Fiori as the “farm manager.” This was, of course, no news to the family, as Andy has been working closely with his grandparents to develop his vision for the farmland. Andy and his wife Melissa are building their new home on the portion of the farm known as the old Town Farm site.

Andy had been among the family members whose input was sought as the Jewells decided on terms for the conservation easement. Still, when all was signed and done, Andy posed the practical question: “OK, so now what do I need to do?”

Like most conservation easements held by Maine Farmland Trust, the Keewaydin Farm easement requires that farming methods protect the soil resources to the extent possible, in accordance with “best management practices” at the time. The easement also requires the farmer to work with

the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a federal resource for farmers, to develop a Conservation Plan for the farming activity.

With respect to what the farmer can produce, few limits are imposed. All agricultural activities are permitted, except those that result in removal of considerable amounts of topsoil (such as ball-and-burlap nursery stock). The easement was written to be as flexible as possible, so that farming operations can change over time, as the markets and economics may dictate.

Like his grandparents, Andy is committed to good land stewardship. After going over the specific terms of the easement relating to agricultural operations on the farm, Andy commented, “Well, that’s great. It’s basic-



PHOTO BY CHRIS HAMILTON

A BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIP: LouAnna Perkins, MFT Executive Director, reviews the terms of the conservation easement with Keewaydin Farm manager, Andy Fiori.

ly what I would be doing, anyway!” And that’s what Maine Farmland Trust attempts to do with an agricultural conservation easement – provide a framework that limits non-agricultural development of the land and gives guidelines for land stewardship, but leaves the decisions about the farming enterprise to the farmer.

Happy Fifth Birthday, Maine Farmland Trust

Last June, Maine Farmland Trust had its fifth birthday, but we were so busy the date passed without fanfare. In the spring of 1999, the founders of MFT sought to bring a land trust focus to the issue of Maine’s rapidly disappearing farmland. We wanted to help farmers, landowners, land trusts, and government staff develop tools to protect valuable land for future farm use. We envisioned that MFT would be the principal land trust in the state working on farmland protection. And look how far we’ve come:

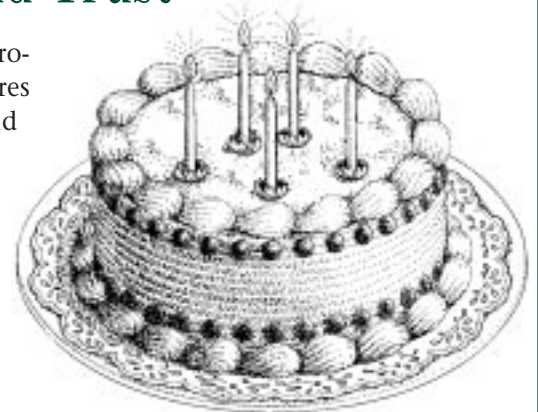
In direct land protection:

- We hold 12 easements on 1718 acres of farmland in 7 counties.

- We partnered with others in protecting 8 farms totaling 1282 acres using state and federal farmland protection funding.
- We worked as consultant and “sounding board” for owners of another 8579 acres, who are considering their options to protect their land.

In keeping farmland active:

- We operate Maine FarmLink, a collaborative program designed to connect exiting farm owners with new farmers seeking farmland.
- We participate in Farms for the Future projects and collaborate with the Eat Local Foods Coalition and similar groups to enhance



farm viability and vitality.

In just five short years, Maine Farmland Trust has become a well-recognized land trust, and a leading statewide voice for farmland protection issues. Happy Birthday, MFT!

Helping the Next Generation Afford the Farm:

Notes from Susie O’Keeffe, Coordinator, Maine FarmLink, a Maine Farmland Trust Program

Few people are surprised to learn that the price of land is one of the greatest obstacles facing prospective farmers. We spend a lot of time at MFT exploring ways to overcome this problem. Fortunately, as we work with our colleagues to come up with long-term solutions, farmers are working it out. Several of the six links that took place this growing season are great demonstrations of how both generations are compromising to keep Maine’s farms active. Two of these examples are below.

A New Start for Tulloss’ Feather Foot Farm in Aurora

Sometimes family circumstances dictate that farms must be sold. John and Erica Tulloss spent over eighteen years creating a beautiful 137 acre farm in Aurora. “When we arrived it rained in the house, there were no barns, no fencing and no gardens,” John explained. In July it was decided that John had four months to buy out Erica or Feather Foot Farm would be sold. If the property couldn’t be sold as a farm, it would be divided for house lots. John immediately listed the farm with FarmLink.



Prospective farmers Emily Lowell and Dan DeLuca had been working with FarmLink since April of 2003. “We really wanted to farm in southern Maine but could not find anything we could afford,” Emily said. Although not as expensive as a farm in southern Maine, Feather Foot Farm was still more than Emily and Dan could manage. So, John took a second mortgage,

Through FarmLink, younger farm families carry on the agricultural heritage of farmland that would otherwise be lost to development.

bought Erica’s half and sold Emily and Dan 97 acres, the barns and the house. “I realized that I had to hold on to part of the farm, at least temporarily, so

they could get started,” John explained. “What mattered to me was that the farm was saved.”

“John has been incredibly generous and kind,” Emily said. “He has given us everything we need to get started including the equipment and machinery. He clearly wants to see the farm remain the beautiful place he created, and we are committed to doing this.”

Emily and Dan have four small children. They hope to raise vegetables, small animals, and want to start a therapeutic farm for children with special needs. MFT is helping explore the sale of development rights as a way for Emily and Dan to afford the remaining property and to protect the entire farm.

Buy, Protect, Sell: Birdsall Moves to Protect 100-Acre Farm in Penobscot

Recently, MFT board member and farmer, Paul Birdsall, purchased the 100 acre Nevell Farm in Penobscot. With the help of Blue Hill Heritage Trust, Paul placed a permanent agricultural easement on the farm and then asked FarmLink to find a farmer to buy it.

Philip and Heather Retberg learned about Paul’s effort to save the Nevell



Farm owner John Tulloss temporarily divided his 137-acre farm in Aurora to enable new farmers Lowell and DeLuca to get started.



The versatile barn on Feather Foot Farm can accommodate a variety of livestock, including cattle, sheep and draft horses.

PHOTOS BY JOHN TULLOSS

Landowners Are Making the Difference

Continued from page 4

Farm soon after Paul contacted FarmLink. They had been renting a small piece of farmland in Brooksville where they raised beef, chicken and pork seasonally. They knew the Nevell Farm fit their needs. They also knew they couldn't afford it. "Paul just kept coming down on the price 'til we could buy it," Heather said, smiling. Phil and Heather were exactly the kind of young farmers Paul wanted for the farm. "I took a big bath on this one but it was worth it," he said. "That land was just too good to let go, and I really believe that Heather and Philip have what it takes to succeed."

With the help of a grant from the Petty Foundation, Heather and Phil are building a new home using the timbers from the old farmhouse. With their young family, two sons and another child on the way, they will expand their livestock operation and sell to local markets.



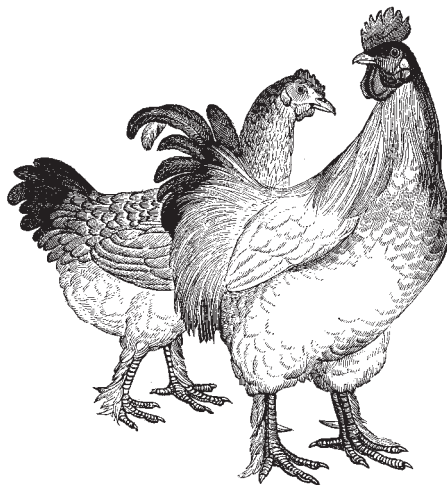
Landowner Paul Birdsall and FarmLink buyers Heather and Phil Retberg with son Benjamin pause for a photograph as they discuss future plans for the former Nevell Farm.



The Retbergs will return the scenic Nevell Farm to active production. A conservation easement on the property restricts its use to farm-related activity, and keeps it affordable as farmland.

What is FarmLink?

Protecting farmland from development is an important step towards fulfilling the mission of Maine Farmland Trust. But because the majority of Maine farmers are now of retirement age, getting new farmers onto the land is also imperative. Many farmers who wish to retire simply do not have anyone in the family who is interested in taking over the farm. Likewise, many people who want to farm do not have the family or resources to help get them started. Maine FarmLink is a program of Maine Farmland Trust, connecting next generation farmers to the land and resources they need to keep Maine's farms viable now and into the future.



Planned Giving: Include MFT in your will.

A bequest to support farmland protection is a great way to leave an important legacy.

For more information, contact
LouAnna Perkins,
MFT Executive Director
at 207-469-6465.

Regrouping from the disappointment of no land bond on the ballot

Farmers have frequently said, "The best way to protect farmland is to make farming profitable." This is, of course, absolutely true. At Maine Farmland Trust, we collaborate with organizations working to enhance farm viability. But like any small business, farming can be a risky enterprise. And market value of land is often higher for development than for agriculture, even when the farming enterprise is doing well. That's why we also need an array of tools to protect farmland, to ensure that it remains available for agriculture into the future.

One such tool is the purchase of development rights — the farmland owner is paid for granting an easement that permanently prevents conversion of the land to non-agricultural uses.

This tool relies on a combination of federal, local and state funding, with the State's portion paid through the Land For Maine's Future [LMF] Program. Almost every issue of *Maine Farmland Trust News* has highlighted an impor-

tant farm protected by purchase of development rights. A number of farms are working with local land trusts and/or Maine Farmland Trust, hoping to apply to the program in the near future.

And therein lies the rub. We are at the end of the five-year land bond for the LMF Program that was overwhelmingly supported by the voters in 1999, especially popular because it set aside 10% or 5 million dollars for purchase of development rights on farms. Unfortunately, despite broad public enthusiasm, and despite the efforts of many dedicated people, no land bond

appears on our November ballot.

Purchase of development rights, with LMF dollars leveraging both federal and local dollars, is not the only tool we have for protecting farmland. However, it's a crucial one. Often, protection of the first farm in an area is the golden key to motivating the community to consider other economic development and land protection strategies and tools. And, for some strategically important farmland parcels, it may be the only tool that will work.

What can be done? Well, we're stepping back to regroup. We're re-energizing our work with other land trusts, state and federal partners. Reviewing the issues that challenge working landscapes. Broadening our coalition of supporters. Listening to

Maine's farmers and landowners, as well as the fishing and forestry communities who all face the loss of working land or access to land.

And so, we're taking this year's absence of a land bond in stride. We're going to use this as an opportunity to help design a future bond package that will even better address the challenges of working lands in Maine over the long term. Then, together, we'll come up with a strategy that will successfully steer passage of a new bond proposal through the legislature and onto the ballot in 2005. We invite you to call us with your ideas and concerns!



LouAnna Perkins

We're going to design a land bond package that will even better address the challenges of working farms



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Frank Miles, *President*
Cape Elizabeth
- John Piotti, *Vice-President*
Unity
- Steven Page, *Secretary*
Searsport
- Christopher Hamilton, *Treasurer*
Whitefield
- William Bell, *Hallowell*
- Paul Birdsall, *Penobscot*
- Neil Crane, *Exeter*
- Bambi Jones, *Alna*
- Russell Libby, *Mt. Vernon*
- Susan Morris, *Waldoboro*
- Arthur Thompson, *Presque Isle*
- Dan Tibbetts, *Windsor*

ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Jeremiah Cosgrove,
Saratoga Springs, NY
- Susan Edwards, *Brunswick*
- James P. Hastings, *Skowhegan*
- Chellie Pingree, *North Haven*
- Jo D. Saffier, *Pownal*
- R. Collin Therrien, *Augusta*
- Adrian Wadsworth, *North Turner*
- Walter Whitcomb, *Waldo*

STAFF

- LouAnna Perkins,
Executive Director
- Kristin Varnum,
Administrative Assistant
- Susie O'Keeffe,
FarmLink Coordinator
- George Maendel,
Project Manager,
Western Waldo Initiative



Maine Farmland Trust

P.O. Box 1597

Bucksport, Maine 04416

207-469-6465

e-mail: info@mainefarmlandtrust.org

MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

We're the only statewide land trust devoted exclusively to farmland protection. Our budget is primarily funded by individual donors/members. Please join us. With your help, we can meet the challenge.



Membership Categories:

- Individual..... \$25
 - Family..... \$45
 - Contributor \$100
 - Sponsor..... \$250
 - Sustainer..... \$500
 - Patron..... \$1000
 - I would like more information. Please contact me.**
 - Please contact me about protection options for my farm property.**
- Additional donation \$ _____ .

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

e-mail _____

**Please mail with your check to:
Maine Farmland Trust, P.O. Box 1597, Bucksport, ME 04416.**

Maine Farmland Trust is a non-profit organization, and membership dues and donations are tax-deductible.



Frank Miles

From the President's Desk: "1000 Checkbooks for Farmland"

Maine Farmland Trust's fifth birthday brings not only successes to reflect on (see box page 3), but also new challenges. In 1999, we had about 30 members and one grant that permitted us to organize and create a strategic plan. A year later we had enough "start-up" grant funding to hire a part-time director, begin developing programs, seek more members and increase grant support. Since then, we have been fortunate to increase our membership almost twenty fold! Unfortunately, initial grant support gradually disappears for maturing non-profits. Grant funders seek to fund

"projects" rather than support for general operations. Yet without sufficient operating funds, we can't stay in busi-

Grants do not fund our day-to-day operating budget.

ness to do the projects. That's our puzzle: How do we grow our programs while keeping the organization afloat?

The need is clear. We must develop "A Thousand Checkbooks for Farmland" – a twist on the notion of "A 1000 Friends of...". Yes, a thousand checks each year would go a long way toward funding our operating budget, which is vital if we are to continue the critical work we've begun.

Those of you who are current members (over 500 to date) have been increasingly generous. We need that trend to continue as you renew your memberships and respond to our Annual Appeal. We also simply need more members. The bottom line for non-profit organizations is an increasing number of members with checkbooks, folks who value our work

and will send a check to help support our operations.

We hope you'll decide to be counted as one of the *Thousand Checkbooks for Farmland*. And then – why not help us find our next 500 members? You can tell your friends about us and pass this newsletter on to someone you know will be excited about our work. With your help and support, we can continue to do the vital work we do – preserving Maine's farmland.

Established in 1999, the purpose of the Maine Farmland Trust is to permanently preserve and protect Maine's agricultural lands; to assist landowners, land trusts, and municipal and state agencies in identifying and protecting agricultural lands; and to make those lands available to farmers.

PHOTO BY CHRIS HAMILTON



Our Fifth Anniversary Edition

Looking back...
Looking ahead...
Read all about it inside!

Meet Neil Crane: Award-Winning Potato Farmer, Brings Large-Farm Perspective to MFT Board

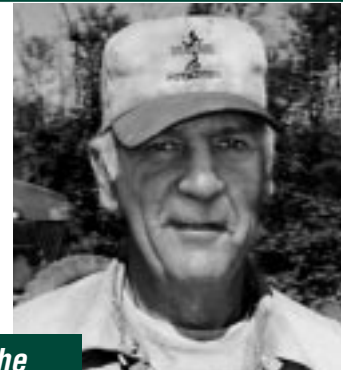
When you reach for a tasty bag of potato chips at your local store, you are in a sense reaching much further than is obvious. Depending on the brand you buy, you may be reaching into the rich glacial till soil of the central highlands of Maine for sweet, round, white chipping potatoes from a field of Crane Brothers Farm of Exeter, Maine, operated by our board member Neil Crane, together with his brother Vernon, Neil's son Steve and Vernon's son Jim. Steve and Jim represent the fourth generation of this family farm operation which includes 2100 acres of potato, grain corn and silage corn fields. The potatoes are sold to Frito-Lay and processed in Connecticut. Grain corn is sold to a regional mill in Pittsfield, while silage corn is marketed through a cooperative arrangement with local dairy farms.

Crane Brothers Farm recently received the National Potato Council Stewardship Award for implementing advanced Integrated Pest Management methods as an integral part

“Economic policy too often ignores the major contribution that farms make to all aspects of life in Maine.”

of its farm operations. These awards are given to potato growers who represent the best tradition of American agriculture by producing wholesome food while protecting our great natural resources for future generations.

Neil is active in agricultural organizations and has consulted with the Maine Department of Agriculture to help shape policy in ways that will benefit all of Maine's farms. Commenting on the challenges



ahead, Neil observes, “there is often a big disconnect between farm-

ing and the communities of which farms are a part. Many people merely commute through their communities... They are unaware of the economic value of agriculture within the community.” He is concerned, too, that economic policy too often ignores the major contribution farms make to all aspects of life in Maine. A long-time commodity farmer, Neil brings a valuable perspective to the board of Maine Farmland Trust.