

Saco Bay Trails

Annual Report 2024



Members

Stephanie Ainsburg	Jan Filgate	Brooke Palmer
Ron Albert	Roberta Gallant	Joanna Pappas
Linda Beane*	Jane & Bob Hamblen	Fred Parent
Denise Benedict	Marcia Hanson	Lisa Patterson
Susan Penna Bernier	Andrew Holbrook	Kate Peterlein
Marty Birmingham	Caryn & Steve Husman	Lynn Quincy
Kyle & Angela Bolduc*	Dennis Jackson	Mogens Ravn
Nancy & Charles Borg*	Jessica Janson	Neil Raymons
Colleen Bossie*	Thomas Klak	John Read*
Barbara Boutet	David Kortz	Carol Reynolds*
Maria Brandt*	Janice Lane	John Riordan
Jacqueline Bucar	Donald Lauzier*	Linda Rogoff
Joan Buotte	Peggy Litoff	Dan Ross
James Burnell*	Joyce Mailman	George Roth
Lisa Canino	Karen Malmgren	Ted Sirois
Margaret Carney	Kimberly Matthews	Susan Slee
Denise Clavette	Christine McAuliffe	Lynn Soucy
Larissa Crockett	Deborah & Christopher	Helen Stevenson
Samuel Cummings	McKenney	John Sullivan
Susan Curtis	Carolyn Meadows	Beverly Thorpe
Andrew Dabczynski	Gail Merritt	Martin & Carolyn
Odette Dansereau	Greg Miller*	Turnidge
Doug Dolan	David Mokler	Elaine Vadeboncoeur
Joy Elsner	Kathryn Murphy*	Wendy Weiler
Joy & Ron Eon	Audrey Northway	Pieter Whittemore
Glenn Evans	Maggie O'Neil	Patricia Wright
Josh & Jenny Fecteau	Shawn Ouellette	

*Life Members

Saco Bay Trails' mission is to create and maintain this network of trails and to promote its acceptance and use by the public. We are an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and maintaining recreational trails in the Saco Bay Area.

We envision a permanent network of free, easily accessible, well-maintained, well-marked and well-publicized trails, which people with a broad range of abilities can use and enjoy.



Saco Bay Trails
P.O. Box 720
Saco, Maine 04072
We are a 501(c)(3) organization

Trustees

Ryan Gorman, President
Marty Birmingham, Vice President
Janice Lane, Secretary
Steve Husman, Treasurer
Susan Slee, Events & Outreach
Jane Hamblen, Events & Outreach
Andrew Dabczynski
Wendy Weiler
John Riordan

Advisory Trustees

Carol Benoit Reynolds
Michael Bolduc
Jacqui Bucar
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Eric Cote
Ted Cotsis
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Sheila Painchaud
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Kenneth Rice
Dan Ross
Elaine Vadeboncoeur
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Annual report design

Custom Communications
7 Paul Avenue
Saco, Maine 04072

Photos

Ryan Gorman, Susan Slee, Wendy Weiler, and Andrew Dickinson/City of Saco.

On the Trail: Reflecting on 2024's Progress and What's Ahead

Dear Members,

As we enter 2025, I want to take a moment to appreciate our dedicated volunteers for their amazing work in 2024 and the impact we've made together as a community. This year, our volunteers dedicated over 425 hours of service, contributing more than \$12,900 in value to benefit our community. Their efforts have ensured that our trails remain safe, accessible, and well-maintained, while also enriching our community through family-oriented nature programs and outdoor education.

Beyond trail development, we've strengthened our community connections by participating in over a dozen local events. Our 3rd Annual Fairy House Building Day at Cascade Falls Park was a huge success, bringing in hundreds of families to enjoy the magic of the outdoors at Cascade Falls. We also participated in Saco Main Street's Bark in the Park and Pumpkin Harvest Festivals, showing our continued support for local non-profits and our community.

This year, we also made strides in expanding our outreach to local schools, offering students meaningful, hands-on experiences with nature. In April, we partnered with the Sebago 7th grade team, helping clear storm damage and clean up trails behind Saco Middle School. Later, during Saco's Community Day of Kindness, we hosted teachers and 8th grade students, working together to improve the Middle Goosefare Trail. These projects not only enhanced our trails but also fostered a sense of stewardship and appreciation for the environment among students.

Saco Bay Trails is growing and embracing exciting changes. After three years as president, I will be transitioning into a supporting role on the board. Leading this organization and working alongside such a passionate and dedicated team has been an incredible experience.

I am especially proud of how we have strengthened our connection with the community. As we welcome new leadership, we look forward to finding new ways to engage our members, bringing in fresh voices and perspectives to guide our continued growth and evolution.

I encourage each of you to reach out to our Trustees to explore ways to get involved. They are a fantastic group of individuals who share a deep passion for our trails and our community.



Saco Middle School teachers & 8th grade students teamed up with SBT to improve the Middle Goosefare Trail.

Your energy, ideas, and commitment are what make Saco Bay Trails a thriving organization, and we would love to have more members actively participate in shaping its future.

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you on the trails!

Sincerely,
Ryan Gorman



Clockwise from above: New trails signs; Fairy House at Fairy House event; the SBT trailer decked out for the Saco Lights Parade; Volunteers working on Plymouth & Vines; New memorial bench on Middle Goosefare



Cascade Falls

Cascade Falls continues to be our most visited trail. The parking lot is almost always full during the summer and has many visitors year round. The stone dust trail that goes in both directions from the kiosk to the Trout Pond Loop and the Ledge Trail is well maintained with easy footing.

We encourage visitors to stay on the trails for their safety and for preservation of the unique habitat. Fairy House Building Day held yearly in July continues to be a favorite event at this location. Last year it had over 300 visitors. Ruby the Rock Snake which was begun on Fairy House Building Day continues to wind up the Trout Brook Loop Trail thanks to visitors who continue to paint rocks and bring them to add to the growing serpent.

Horton Woods

Horton Woods continues to be one of our most popular trail systems, and with good reason—it's the largest and longest in our network.

The Saco Parks and Recreation Department did an incredible job with the boardwalk leaving the parking lot, enhancing the accessibility of the trail.

Our 2024 work party focused on trimming, clipping, raking, and clearing the Blue Heron and Woodcock Trails up to the large bridge over Stackpole Creek. While this type of trail work might not be glamorous, it's essential for maintaining the most heavily used area of Horton Woods, ensuring it remains in great shape.

Looking ahead to 2025, we'll focus on evaluating trails further out, including the Red Oak Trail and the Stonebridge Trail where it leaves City property and transitions onto private land.

Ferry Landing Trail

The short-but-unique Ferry Landing Trail has demanded increasing attention over the past few years, and certainly received it in 2024. In May, an excellent work party turnout succeeded in removing more than two pickup truck loads of damaged and rotted boards from the boardwalks.

Trails Report

Those were replaced by pressure-treated materials, making the boardwalk as good as new. It was discovered by SBT President, Ryan Gorman, that the north branch of the trail actually traverses private land, so that portion has been re-routed away from the trail's second, shorter boardwalk; it is hoped that the second boardwalk will be removed in 2025. We ask that hikers take care to avoid the old trail and follow the newly rerouted section in the future.

Atlantic Way, Plymouth, and Vines Trails

Atlantic Way Trail

Atlantic Way is a very popular trail with locals and visitors alike. It did not require any significant trail work in 2024. Trail users are kind enough to remove branches that blow down and generally keep the trail looking good. A dedicated volunteer designed, built and installed a ramp on the west end of the bridge that crosses the marsh.

Early in 2024 under frozen conditions Rachel Carson folks were able to make improvements to the tidal flow of the marsh. Also in 2024, City of Saco was awarded a federal grant to improve the Atlantic Way Trail, however, with federal funding in jeopardy, it is hard to know when/if work will commence. We hope to replace the kiosk at Seaside this year.

Plymouth and Vines Trails

Plymouth, Vines and Link Trails got a lot of attention in November thanks to 16 volunteers, who leveled and stabilized at least 20 Bog Bridges on these trails. Trail blazes were repainted and now match the colors that are on our website's trail map. Saco Middle school students used a router to create new trail signs which were hung that day to help new visitors navigate the trails. The wobbly railings of the arched bridges were stabilized. These trails are enjoyed by many folks in the neighborhoods and Saco Bay Trails appreciates their support in maintaining these trails.

Middle Goosefare Brook

On Saco's Community Day of Kindness, members of SBT joined forces with a handful of teachers and a busload of students from Saco Middle School. Under the direction of Sue and Jane, we entered the trail from the Old Camp Loop. A large tree is down near the entrance and would require an additional work group with chainsaw expertise. It is not interfering with trail access. We raked, trimmed and cleared the loop and then moved onto the Sweetser Link. The drainage areas on both sides of the slope were cleared and raked. We finished by clearing The Goosefare Picnic Area. Bulbs were planted in hopes of seeing the fruits of our work in the spring while enjoying the positioning of the bench.

Wildwood and Branch Brook Loop

The Wildwood and Branch Brook Loop trails remain popular and well used. 2024 saw extensive repairs done to the lead up to the first bridge. Much stone, gravel, and sand were used to curb erosion that had started on the upstream side of the approach to the bridge. Additionally, water bars were cleared on the hill just past the bridge to divert any water from heavy rains off the trail before they reach the stream bank and bridge.

Many thanks to the volunteers from both Saco Bay Trails' work party volunteers and an enthusiastic crew from Saco Biddeford Savings Institution who donated their time and energy to this project. Many wheelbarrow loads of stone were moved and hand placed on the bank adjacent to and under the bridge. This was followed by cubic yards of gravel and sand to fill in the stone and restore the trail on the lead up the bridge.

A job well done! As of this writing the repairs look just as they did on day one and no further erosion has appeared. Aside from this the only work needed was minor repositioning of bog bridges on the Loop.

Ted Wells Memorial Trail

This trail remains in good condition, with clearing of trail debris easily handled by a team of two during a brief walk. However, future plans are currently on hold as TED Wells Trail is closed. Oceanwood has undergone a leadership change and has implemented a new policy regarding public access to the trailhead.

We will keep the membership informed as developments unfold with both Oceanwood and U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

Mary Merrill Trail

2024 was a quiet year for maintenance on the Mary Merrill Trail. Thanks to the continued support of The Ecology School, the first portion of the trail is mowed by their staff, keeping it in great shape. This short spur typically requires minimal upkeep, limited mostly to light pruning.

Our scheduled 2024 work party was canceled due to weather, so we plan to evaluate the trail and bridges in spring 2025 to assess any potential damage and determine necessary repairs. We also have plans to replace the bench overlooking the river during the upcoming season.

TRAILS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Annual Meeting Minutes: April 9, 2024

President Ryan Gorman called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Trustees attending were Marty Birmingham, Ryan Gorman, Jane Hamblen, Steve Husman, Janice Lane, John Riordan, Sue Slee and Wendy Weiler. Total attendance was 19 people.

Declaration of Quorum.

The meeting began with President Gorman introducing the board members. He then acknowledged the significant milestone of Saco Bay Trails' 25th anniversary, which occurred in October 2023. President Gorman further reported on the organization's robust membership numbers.

In 2024 our volunteers had over 425 hours of service, contributing more than \$12,900 in value to benefit our community.

Goals for 2024

- Expand our outreach efforts in order to grow membership and increase our volunteer base.
- Explore new fundraising, sponsorships and grant opportunities.
- Improve our internal processes to reduce costs and increase efficiency.
- Vice President Marty Birmingham gave credit to President Gorman for our updated website.

2023 Recap and 2024 Goals

Treasurer, Steve Husman reviewed the financial reports and answered questions from the attendees. He noted that the organization is working to reduce costs. Printing and postage are two key areas we have an opportunity to cut costs. One of the biggest expenses is our insurance to cover volunteers and the board – we are exploring options to reduce this cost.

Discussion was held regarding exploring the possibility of giving Ferry Landing trail, the only trail land owned by Saco Bay Trails, to the City of Saco.

Vice President Marty Birmingham provided an overview of the work done last year and future work that will need to be done.

Susan Slee recapped our 2023 outreach efforts and provided an overview of plans for 2024.

Wendy Weiler was presented as a candidate to be voted in as a new board member.

Slate of officers presented for 2024:

President – Ryan Gorman
Vice President – Marty Birmingham
Treasurer – Steve Husman
Secretary – Janice Lane

Board members to be presented to election:

Susan Slee
John Riordan
Jane Hamblen
Andy Dabczynski
Wendy Weiler

A motion was made to accept the slate of officers and board members as presented.

M: Dan Ross
S: Steve Husman

The motion was carried and the slate of officers and board members accepted.

The speaker for the evening was Josh Fecteau, a local naturalist. Josh presented an informative program on local birds and bird watching.

Motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM:

M: Steve Husman
S: Wendy Weiler

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Lane,
Secretary

Saco Bay Trails Statement of Activity January - December 2024

	TOTAL
Revenue	
Bird Walks Sponsor	300.00
Donations	1,055.82
Annual Appeal	568.15
General donation	5,153.33
Memorial Donations	500.00
Total Donations	7,277.30
Fundraising	
Bench Fund	-60.32
Memberships	2,623.97
Total Fundraising	2,563.65
In-Kind Donation	197.51
Services	1,858.08
Total Revenue	\$12,196.54
GROSS PROFIT	\$12,196.54
Expenditures	
Administrative Expenses	177.73
Annual Meeting	231.00
Annual Report Expenses	406.71
Dues and Memberships	200.00
Insurance	1,651.25
Office Supplies	38.88
Post Office Box Rental	282.00
Postage	13.60
Postage for Membership Mailings	68.00
Website expenses	1,000.88
Total Administrative Expenses	4,070.05
Fundraising Expense	
Park Benches	233.39
Total Fundraising Expense	233.39
Outreach Expenses	10.20
Brochure Printing	119.42
General event expense	993.65
Outreach Expenses - Other	500.00
Trail Map Printing	842.11
Total Outreach Expenses	2,465.38
Purchases	197.51
	TOTAL
Trails Expense	26.35
Trail Building & Maintenance	2,284.45
Total Trails Expense	2,310.80
Total Expenditures	\$9,277.13
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$2,919.41
NET REVENUE	\$2,919.41

Balance Sheet

ASSETS

Current Assets

Bank Accounts

Petty Cash	17.75
SBS - Middle Goosefare	4,901.12
SBS - Savings Account	15,980.41
SBSI Checking	12,234.98

Total Bank Account \$33,134.26

Total Current Assets \$33,134.26

Fixed Assets

Land Values	12,000.00
Storage Trailer	4,900.00

Total Fixed Assets \$16,900.00

Other Assets

Equipment and Supplies	1,782.00
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Total Other Assets \$1,782.00

TOTAL ASSETS \$51,816.26

56,447.74

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Equity

Opening Bal Equity	-2,147.31
Retained Earnings	-5,450.50
write off/depreciation of asset Net Revenue	2,919.41

Total Equity \$51,769.34

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY \$51,816.26

Annual Appeal Donors

Susan Penna Bernier
Walter & Kathleen Bissell
Kyle & Angela Bolduc
Nancy & Charles Borg
Colleen Bossie
Christina Buckley
Joan Buotte
D.M. Capezzuto
Larissa Crockett
Ronald Duby
Joy Elsner
Joy & Roland Eon
Charles Garland
Gerard Gaudette
Jane & Bob Hamblen
Cris Hart
Jean Horton
Barry Hudson
Joyce Mailman
Karen Malmgren
Deborah & Christopher
McKenney
Gail Merritt
Maurice Nadeau
Dan Ross
George Roth
Sally Smith
Beverly Thorpe
Judy Tripp
Martin and Carolyn Turnidge
Saco Valley LLC dba Saco
Valley Shopping Center

Meet the Team Behind the Trails

Meet the dedicated members of our Board of Trustees—the people who make Saco Bay Trails happen. Each trustee brings a unique mix of experience, passion, and expertise to the table, helping to guide our mission and shape the future of our organization. From trail maintenance and event planning to community outreach and conservation efforts, their leadership and love for the outdoors make Saco Bay Trails what it is today. We are always looking for new board members with fresh ideas and a shared enthusiasm for our mission. If you're passionate about trails and community, we'd love to hear from you!

Susan Slee

I'm one of SBT's Outreach and Events Coordinators. After retiring from teaching in Maine's public schools, I moved to Old Orchard Beach to enjoy more beach walks. Soon after settling here, I discovered Saco Bay Trails and found that I love walking on our trails just as much as the beach. The magic of Cascade Falls inspired me to create the Fairy House Building Day event.

Steve Husman

I've been treasurer of SBT for two years. It's been great to be on the board and support the trail system that my wife, my dog, and I have enjoyed for years. It's been eye opening to see all that goes on to care for and promote the trail system. The trails are a real treasure in our community and I'm happy to play a part in making sure they can continue to be enjoyed and explored by all.

Wendy Weiler

Hi I'm Wendy, I am a long-time resident of Saco, with three generations at Thornton Academy. After retiring from a 40-year career in healthcare as a Medical Technologist in Transfusion Medicine, I've stayed active in the community. Besides being involved with Saco Bay Trails, I'm also an active board member of Saco Main Street. I volunteer at Biddeford City Theater, Mary's Walk, and Thornton Academy. My hobbies include gardening, cooking, hiking, birdwatching, singing, and attending concerts. Through my involvement with the local community choir, Voices in Harmony, I've had the opportunity to travel the world, promoting peace and understanding.

Ryan Gorman

Hi, I'm Ryan Gorman! I've been with the Saco Bay Trails board since 2019 and have had the privilege of serving as president for the past three years. I live in Saco with my wife and two kids, and as a Registered Maine Guide, I love spending time outdoors—especially camping, hiking, and fly fishing. Working as a trail crew leader in Baxter State Park really fueled my passion for trails. Outside of my work with Saco Bay Trails, I'm also a scout leader with Troop 310 in Saco. It's been incredibly rewarding to serve my community and share the joy of the outdoors with my family and scouts.

Jane Hamblen

Hello, I'm Jane Hamblen. I have been a Saco Bay Trails (SBT) board member for 4 years and am currently the co-coordinator for Outreach and Events. As an avid walker, I am delighted to have well-maintained trails in my backyard, but I know it takes many hands to keep the trails well-maintained. This is why I joined Saco Bay Trails.

In my role as co-coordinator for Outreach and Events, I work alongside dedicated volunteers and fellow board members to plan and execute events that encourage community participation and support for our trails. I am proud to be part of an organization that values stewardship, collaboration, and the love of nature.

Thank you for your support and involvement with Saco Bay Trails. Let's continue to work together to protect and enjoy our beautiful trails.

Janice Lane

Hi, my name is Janice. I have been a board member of Saco Bay Trails since 2006. Love of the outdoors and helping to make it accessible to others is what drives my commitment to the organization.

Andrew Dabczynski

I have been happy to serve on the SBT board for the past three years, as I enjoy the chance to help maintain the local trails I enjoy walking so much. I'm a retired music educator, and I find serving the community and my church to be very fulfilling. Hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing are my favorite outdoor activities, all delightfully doable on the Saco Bay Trails network.

John Sullivan

Greetings! I am John Sullivan, a new addition to the Saco Bay Trails Board of Trustees in 2025. I am excited to serve this organization, as well as the broader community that utilizes this network of wonderful trails. As a consistent user of the trails and a novice birder, I recognized the amount of work required to maintain accessibility and minimize our impact on the ecosystem surrounding them. I will seek to leverage my diverse background to provide support wherever needed to accomplish this mission.

TRAILS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Sylvan Trail

This will be the second full season of regenerative growth following the selective timber harvest performed by the landowner in 2023. As the forest continues to recover, we're excited to observe the early stages of habitat transformation. Selective timber harvesting can benefit wildlife by creating a variety of habitats.

By removing specific trees, more sunlight reaches the forest floor, encouraging the growth of diverse plants and understory vegetation. This increased plant diversity provides food and shelter for a wider range of species, supporting a healthier and more balanced ecosystem.

This year, we'll revisit the site to assess the trail and determine next steps for future trail maintenance.