

FARMING, TROLLEYS, ROADS, AND DAMS

FLORA AND FAUNA

As you hike the loop trail, imagine an earlier time, over 300 years ago. Before Vassalboro was settled as a farming community, the Abenaki Indians hunted and fished along the Kennebec River, in forests and wetlands, and in the waters that are now known as Webber Pond.



Collections of Maine Historical Society
MMN #6018 on www.mainememory.net

In the 1800's, farmers cleared this land for crops and pastures, and mill owners dammed the pond for water power. In 1909 the trolley line opened and connected the rural town of Vassalboro to the cities of Waterville, Augusta, and Lewiston. The KLT loop trail crosses a trolley line that was abandoned in 1932. All of these historical land uses altered drainage patterns and soil conditions and influenced the vegetation patterns at VWH. As you walk in the forest and wetland today, we hope you enjoy seeing the varied plants and birds on the site.

Trees and Shrubs

- white pine *Pinus strobus*
- red maple *Acer rubrum*
- American elm *Ulmus americana*
- red oak *Quercus rubra*
- brown ash *Fraxinus nigra*
- green ash *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*
- white ash *Fraxinus americana*
- silky dogwood *Swida amomum*
- arrowwood *Viburnum dentatum*
- nannyberry *Viburnum lentago*
- American hornbeam *Carpinus caroliniana*



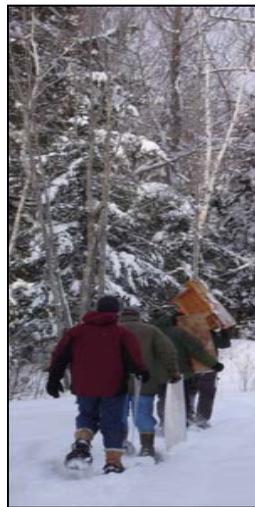
swamp white oak
(*Quercus bicolor*); or bur oak
(*Quercus macrocarpa*)
or hybrid

Theresa Kerviner

BIRDING THE LOOP TRAIL

On the trail towards the pond, many kinds of birds can be seen and heard. The silky dogwood shrub-wetland is excellent habitat for birds that nest and forage in early successional plant communities. Listen for chestnut-sided, yellow, and black and white warblers, American redstarts, white-throated sparrows, partridge, and the very vocal gray catbirds. Closer to the pond, where there are taller white pines, you can hear the rapid trill of the pine warbler and the flute-like songs of veeries and hermit thrushes.

WOOD DUCK BOX TRAIL



Lisa Kane

On the west side of Webber Pond Road, opposite the KLT parking lot, there is a short trail to a cattail marsh with wood duck boxes. The boxes are used by wood ducks, hooded mergansers, common goldeneyes, great crested flycatchers, tree swallows, and barred and saw whet owls.

Throughout the marsh you might notice male red-winged blackbirds displaying their bright wing-patches and giving several types of whistles, chirps, and songs. In the trees, brush, and sky surrounding the marsh, you might also see osprey, bald eagles, swamp sparrows, and song sparrows. Early in the morning or in the evening you might hear the laughing whinny of the Sora rail. Though you might hear this bird, it is very secretive and seldom seen. Be sure to watch for deer, bear droppings, rabbits, various types of turtles, and numerous frogs throughout the summer.

About Kennebec Land Trust



The mission of the Kennebec Land Trust is to work with landowners and communities to protect the natural features, working landscapes, and fragile ecosystems of the Kennebec River and Lakes Region of Maine. KLT is dedicated to preserving the natural attributes that make our region a great place to live, work, or visit.

Protected properties include Vaughan Woods in Hallowell, Curtis Homestead in Leeds, Mount Pisgah in Winthrop, Parker Pond Headland in Fayette, Davidson Nature Preserve in Vassalboro, and Webber-Rogers Farmstead in Litchfield. Most KLT conservation lands offer public access for hiking, paddling, bird watching, skiing, and just enjoying nature, in all seasons.

A full listing of Kennebec Land Trust properties and their recreational uses, and an interactive map with directions, can be found at our website:

www.tkl.org

Please join us!

**KLT~PO BOX 261; 134 Main Street;
Winthrop, Maine 04364~207-377-2848**

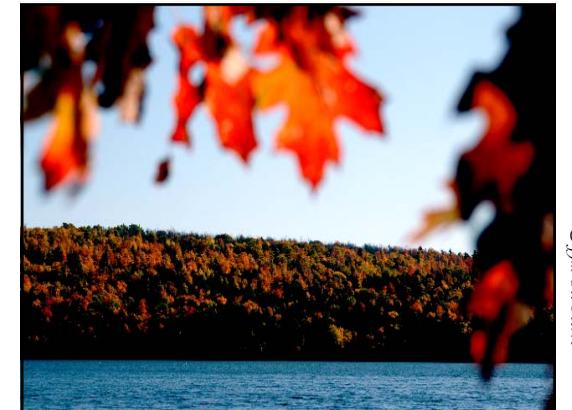
kennebec@fairpoint.net



KLT Colby College Interns Andy McEvoy and Bryan Prelgovisk,
Vassalboro Wildlife Habitat, mixed hardwood-conifer stand

Thanks to those who contributed expertise and time, towards this brochure:
John and Molly Melrose, Ian MacKinnon, Howard Lake, Bob Mohlar,
Josh Brown, Andy McEvoy, Lisa Kane, Janie Matrisciano, Jym St. Pierre,
Robert Marvinney, Maine Natural Areas Program ~ Text : August, 2008

VASSALBORO WILDLIFE HABITAT Vassalboro, Maine



© Jym St. Pierre

Kennebec Land Trust

*KLT is dedicated to protecting the
landscape of the Kennebec River and
Lakes Region*

WELCOME TO KENNEBEC LAND TRUST'S VASSALBORO WILDLIFE PRESERVE

This valuable 285-acre conservation area was donated to the Kennebec Land Trust in four separate parcels over a period of three years, from 2004 to 2007. The property name, Vassalboro Wildlife Habitat (VWH), reflects the donor's love for nature and her desire to protect the habitats of Maine's diverse wildlife species—from insects and amphibians to birds and mammals.

Vassalboro Wildlife Habitat will remain forever as an undeveloped, open, and scenic landscape, and will be managed for wildlife, non-intensive public uses, and education about wildlife habitats.

The VWH conservation lands were part of several family farms in the 19th and 20th centuries. Farmers in Vassalboro grew many of their own crops, and shipped produce and dairy products to markets on two rail lines and on the Kennebec River.

THE FOUR PARCELS AND PUBLIC ACCESS

The main access point for the VWH is the trailhead on the east side of Webber Pond Road. A large wooden KLT sign, parking lot, and registration box mark the beginning of a pleasant one-mile loop trail. This path features 2,200 feet of shoreline along Webber Pond, a historic trolley line route, and forest and wetlands that were farm pastures as recently as the mid-1900's.



The Strong Farm (circa 1880-1900) on Webber Pond, before trolley line construction. This house, which burned in 1928, was south of the VWH sign and entrance to the loop trail.

The three other parcels that comprise KLT's holdings include two parcels west of Webber Pond Road and an 18-acre parcel on the east side of Webber Pond. The large parcel south of the Natanis Golf Course includes several beaver bogs located along three minor streams, and both early successional forest stands and a beautiful, more mature mixed hardwood-conifer stand. There is a short trail to a cattail marsh on this parcel, but the remainder of the property is currently managed as wildlife habitat. The 18-acre parcel on the east side of Webber Pond rises to provide a glimpse of the Bigelow Range from the easterly boundary. There is no developed trail system on the 18-acre parcel.

A volunteer stewardship committee (some pictured below), is working with KLT to maintain the Loop Trail and to offer educational programs, especially for school children.

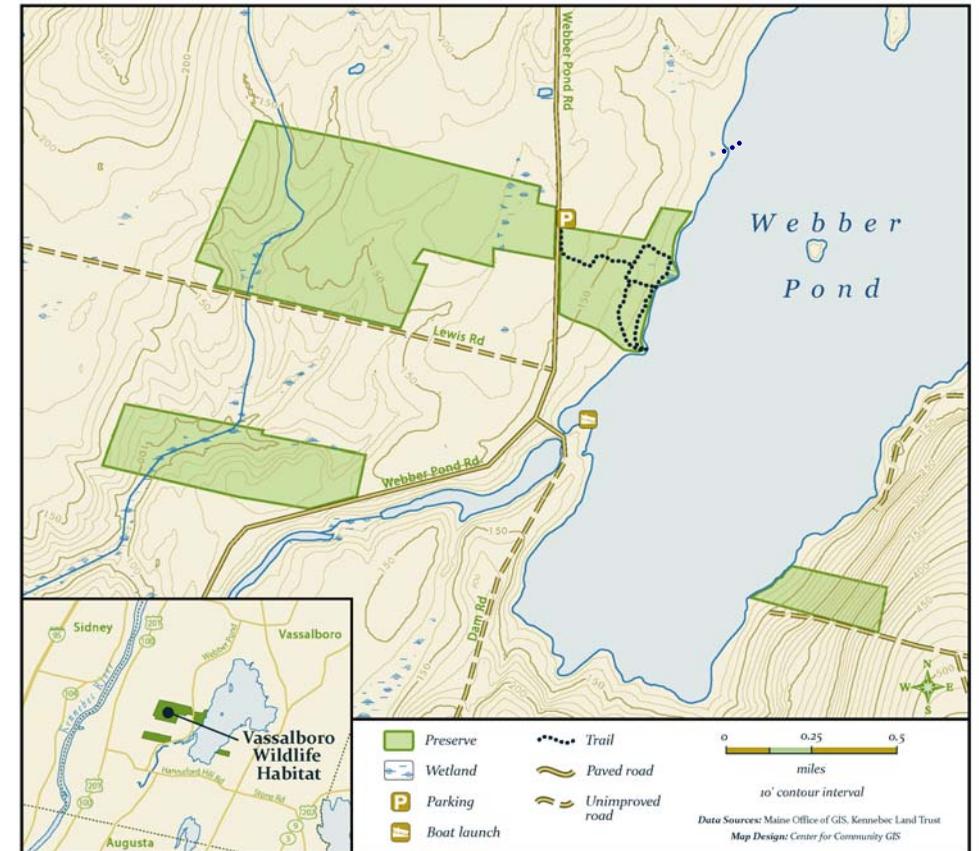


Theresa Kerchner

GEOLOGY

The bedrock formation at VWH includes thickly bedded, poorly sorted sandstone and thin mica schist that have been metamorphosed. The area along the east side of Webber Pond is underlain almost entirely by glacial marine clay. As you hike along the Loop Trail, you may see many small pieces of gray Vassalboro schist, which are millions of years old.

Vassalboro Wildlife Habitat



Trails: The main public access to the VWH is from the 35-acre parcel on the east side of Webber Pond Road, where a large wooden KLT sign identifies the trailhead. An easy one-mile loop trail features 2,200 feet of undeveloped frontage along Webber Pond and views of a wooded island to the east. The trail comfortably accommodates several hikers walking together. **Water access** to the shore of this parcel is available via the public boat landing at the Webber Pond outlet.

Public uses: Vassalboro Wildlife Habitat is open to the public for nature observation, hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, and hunting by permission. **Hunting** is by permission of KLT, 207-377-2848. **Hunting is not allowed on the parcel with the hiking trail** on the east side of Webber Pond Road.

Dogs: Out of respect for hikers and small children, dogs should be under voice command or on a leash. Please pick up after your pets.

Directions: From Route 201 in Vassalboro (roughly two miles north of the Augusta-Vassalboro line), turn east on the Webber Pond Road and go 0.5 miles past the Webber Pond Public Boat Landing to the KLT sign (just south of the Natanis Golf Course).