

FOREST HISTORY

For thousands of years, Abenaki Indians hunted and fished along this stream and in the surrounding woodlands. During that time, natural disturbances including windstorms, diseases, and fire shaped the forest.

The first settlers arrived in this region in the late 18th century, and the town was incorporated as Vassalborough in 1771.

Working with oxen and hand tools, families



Therese Kerhner

slowly converted forestland to fields, and harvested timber for fuel and lumber. Farming peaked in the late 19th century; at that time, approximately 60% of the landscape was cleared. These historic land uses still influence the species composition and structure of today's woodlands.

As you hike from the KLT registration box from west to east, look for several distinct forest types, the most common of which is Aspen-Birch. This natural community regenerates quickly following abandonment of agricultural lands or following timber harvesting events, and can be seen at various stages throughout the property. The aspen overstory trees are approximately 70-80 years old, and are being replaced by oak, maple, and hemlock.

The trail also features two additional uncommon natural communities—a sugar maple forest, and by the stream, a bluejoint meadow.

GEOLOGY

The bedrock at the Seawards Mills Conservation Area consists of metamorphic rocks of Silurian age, about 420-430 million years old. The rocks are well layered, with beds of metamorphosed sandstone and schist that are 6 inches to a foot thick. The layering has been rotated from original horizontal to nearly vertical attitude by the geologic forces that acted on the rocks hundreds of millions of years ago. The bedrock at this location is overlain with a thick veneer of glacial marine mud deposited after the glaciers of the last ice age melted.

PARTIAL LIST OF BIRD SPECIES

Green Heron	Black-throated Green Warbler
Broad-Winged Hawk	Black-and-white Warbler
Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker	American Redstart
Pileated Woodpecker	Ovenbird
Veery	Common Yellowthroat
Great-Crested Flycatcher	Scarlet Tanager
Red-Eyed Vireo	Song Sparrow
Cedar Waxwing	Swamp Sparrow
Northern Parula	Chipping Sparrow
Yellow Warbler	Rose-Breasted Grosbeak
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Red-Winged Blackbird

A small wading bird, the **Green Heron** can be hard to find as it stands motionless waiting for small fish to approach, but it frequently announces its presence by its loud squawking.



© Marie Reed

VASSALBORO TODAY

The 44-acre Seawards Mills Stream Conservation Area is part of a much larger undeveloped landscape in Vassalboro. This permanently protected conservation land and privately owned woodlands and agricultural lands help define the character of central Maine, protect wildlife habitat, and support local economies based on natural resources.

In Vassalboro, KLT also owns the 97-acre Davidson Nature Preserve and the 320-acre Vassalboro Wildlife Habitat.

South of Seawards Mills Stream Conservation Area, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife owns the 4,417 acre Alonzo Garcelon Wildlife Management Area, consisting of 1,813 acres around Spectacle Pond and another 2,604 around the Mud Mill Flowage.



KENNEBEC LAND TRUST

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.tklt.org.

Please join us!

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

*Thanks to those who contributed expertise and time for this brochure:
Mary Denison, Stan Eller, Molly Melrose, Robert Marvinnay,
Glenn Hodgkins, Mike Smith; Howard Lake, Jean Luc Theriault,
CCGIS, Farmington; Vassalboro Historical Society, Michael Shaffer,
Nate Gray, Dave Courtemanch, Dana Suga, Justin Schlavin,
and Elizabeth Cole.
October, 2011*



SEAWARDS MILLS STREAM CONSERVATION AREA

Vassalboro, Maine

**PROPERTY DEDICATION
OCTOBER 23, 2011 NOON**

44 Acres donated by
Elizabeth Cole, June 2011



Therese Kerhner

The Kennebec Land Trust (KLT) works cooperatively with landowners and communities to conserve the forests, shorelands, fields, and wildlife that define central Maine.

KLT protects land permanently, offers opportunities for people to learn about and enjoy the natural world, and works with partners to support sustainable forestry and farming.

**WELCOME TO
KENNEBEC LAND TRUST'S
SEAWARDS MILLS STREAM
CONSERVATION AREA**
We hope you enjoy your visit!



Theresa Kerchner

The 44-acre Seawards Mills Stream Conservation Area was donated to KLT by Elizabeth Cole, a long time Vassalboro resident, in June 2011. This permanently conserved property features a mature hemlock forest, 3,800 feet of undeveloped frontage on historic Seawards Mills Stream, and 15 acres of agricultural fields which are leased to Vassalboro farmer, Dana Suga.

Seawards Mills Stream, which flows 2.7 miles from the outlet of Threemile Pond (elevation 180 feet) into Webber Pond (elevation 120 feet), is important wildlife habitat and is also an alewife passageway. The field edge, open water and wetlands along the stream, woodlands and vernal pools also provide excellent habitat for deer, waterfowl, amphibians and songbirds.

An easy one-mile loop trail on the north side of the stream begins at the KLT sign and follows the stream.

**SEAWARD FAMILY
WATER POWER AND EARLY MILLS**

The “Sowards”, “Seward”, or “Seaward” family developed the mills at the inlet to Webber Pond. In 1787 Giles Seward built a house on the east side of Webber Pond near the stream. This historic home is still standing. Giles was listed on the 2nd census of Vassalborough in 1800.

**1893
USGS map**

Pond in lower right corner is Threemile Pond;
Seawards Mills Stream flows west to Webber Pond

Due to seasonal high water flows and the drop in elevation (head), this location was an ideal site for water powered mills. During the late 18th and 19th centuries there was a grist mill over Seawards Mills Stream at Cross Hill Road, excelsior* and saw mills on the north side of the stream, and a hub mill on the south side. *manufactured wood shavings for furniture



Grist Mill, at the Bridge over Seawards Mills Stream, Vassalboro, 1900. Copied from an original in the possession of Freeman Butler, Cross Hill Road. Collection of Vassalboro Historical Society 74.18.1

Seawards Mills Stream Conservation Area, Vassalboro

44 acres – owned by Kennebec Land Trust

Public uses: This KLT property is open to the public for hiking, nature observation, cross-country skiing, hunting, and other low impact non-motorized recreation. **No ATV's are permitted.** The agricultural fields are leased to a neighboring farmer. Please do not walk through the farm fields or park in field entrances.

Parking and trail access: Parking is along the edge of the Seaward Mills Road, 0.2 mile east of the intersection of the Cross Hill Road and Seaward Mills Road. Look for the KLT sign and registration box at the edge of the field. **Trail:** An easy trail features 3,800 feet of undeveloped frontage along Seawards Mills Stream, wetlands and woodlands. Be careful if you loop back along the Seaward Mills Road. Total length from trailhead back to the designated parking area; 1.0 miles. **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), travel east on the Webber Pond Road, for 1 mile. Turn right on the Hannaford Hill Road; travel 2.1 miles to the Cross Hill Road. Turn left on the Cross Hill Road, travel north for 1.6 miles. Turn right on Seaward Mills Rd. Parking is along the edge of the road, 0.2 miles on the right. Look for the KLT sign, registration box and trailhead at the edge of the field and woods.