

# ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

The Conservation Land Trust of  
Deer Isle and Stonington, Maine, and Surrounding Islands



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Spring 2012

## Celebrating 25 years . . .

It was in 1987, when Ronald Reagan was president, gasoline was 88 cents per gallon and we were riding high on a real estate and construction boom, that Island Heritage Trust was founded. Between 1970 and 1990 land development in Maine occurred at four times the rate that the population increased. The classic Maine landscape, especially along the coast, was morphing quickly as new houses, many of them second homes, sprouted like mushrooms after an autumn rain.

Land conservation was a natural counter-response to this "land consumption" that was rapidly usurping scenic views, traditional access, farmland, wilderness and wildlife habitat. Most land trusts, including Maine's 100 or so, have sprung up since the 1980s, resulting in the permanent protection of many acres and miles of shoreline.

With twenty five years of experience, is protection and conservation still the goal? Yes, but. . . The Trust is part of a conservation movement that is still young and evolving. IHT is more selective now, requiring that new properties meet a high standard for public benefit. Top priority is given to properties that permit public and/or shore access; that are contiguous with other protected land; or that are of particular historical or ecological significance, such as protection of fresh water resources. Best of all are projects like the Lily Pond: it helps protect a fresh water resource and

surrounding habitat, *and* ensures public access forever to a natural asset that the community has enjoyed for as long as anyone can remember. Imagine summer without the Lily Pond . . .

Since its inception, IHT has protected 1,265 acres, including all or part of 18 islands (not to mention a lighthouse!). Additionally, we co-manage another 286 acres with The Nature Conservancy and Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands. This is a huge day-in-and-day-out stewardship responsibility, not only for the 462 IHT-owned acres, but also for 803 acres in conservation easements not under IHT ownership. We are legally responsible for upholding



Leading the way

Elke Dorr

the terms of these easements, even when deeds are transferred to heirs or new owners outside of the family.

Thank goodness for our volunteers! About 150 of them do everything from walking boundary lines with compasses and clipboards to answering the phone in the office, joining others to pick up trash on an island shore or introducing a kindergarten class to wonders to be found at the tide's edge at Reach Beach. As an organization that depends on its members, we are delighted that about 700 people actively support us, not only through their annual membership, but

often with much more.

In 2011, we had a record number of visits to our preserves: more than 10,000! Interestingly, most of those, by far, were visitors to the island, not residents. Maine's economy, and that of the island, is increasingly reliant on tourism revenues. In surveys conducted for the Maine Office of Tourism, visitors to Maine name outdoor recreation and touring as their top two travel categories. Protected lands with public access can therefore serve as an economic stimulus. People crave meaningful experiences in the natural world as an antidote to hectic, technology-driven lives.

Perhaps our most rewarding, and essential, endeavor is connecting people of all ages with nature. Each year, well over 200 island children visit "their" preserve in fall and spring for a class outside of the classroom. This year we are offering more than 40 programs in our year-round Walks and Talks series: a beach trip designed especially for toddlers, strategies to attract bluebirds to your backyard, sketching outdoors with Island artists, identifying heirloom apples, birding by kayak and star gazing, for starters. Most of these programs are free thanks to volunteers eager to share their love of nature and the outdoors with others. This is not just about environmental education, but learning to use our senses, being quiet in a wild place, and developing a deeper awareness of our surroundings.

We have a collective and abiding interest in the island as a place, providing us as it does with clean water and air, natural resource-based livelihoods, amazing places to play, explore, and learn—a refuge for the spirit. May it always be so.



## From the Executive Director

Spring is here and we are gearing up for a most exciting summer with a full schedule of events celebrating the Trust's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Join us for an enlarged schedule of Walks and Talks, to include birding expeditions, invasive plant workshops, geo-caching, and much more. As we continue the work of preserving the land, natural resources and way of life of Deer Isle, we are also directing our energies to fundamental concerns, such as the continued availability of fresh water. Although there are many threats to our little island, there is also much to celebrate. Deer Isle, as we are well aware, is one of the most gorgeous places in the country. Not only do we enjoy an abundance of natural beauty, but we also have a working harbor and working clam flats. This is the real Maine! Additionally, most of the island forest is working forest. To preserve this resource, IHT holds several easements that protect woodlands from development, yet allow for commercial harvesting of timber.

For 25 years the Trust has worked to improve the quality of life on the island, a mission that began, like so many island ventures, around a kitchen table. To IHT's founders, Lloyd Capen, Dud Hendrick and Cherie Mason, and to those who carried on what they began, we owe many thanks. Please join us this summer as we celebrate their achievement and IHT's ongoing work to help protect what we all love. So, go for a bird walk, visit a preserve, or dig clams – all are activities open to you because of Island Heritage Trust.

## Island Walking Trail

"Sure, let's talk about it," was Mike Little's response when Geoff Warner approached him one Friday morning at the Farmer's Market. His idea? A walking trail down the center of the island, akin to the byways of yore when Islanders walked everywhere. There is a precedent for such modern day paths. The Georges River Land Trust has pieced together a 40-mile trail known as the Georges Highland Path—from Searsmont to Thomaston--across numerous private properties, all achieved with a handshake. Cities like Portland are linking urban neighborhoods with foot paths that encourage more walking and less driving. Geoff's idea seemed like a good one, so a small committee was formed to look into it. As of now, a first segment has been roughed out: beginning at the Airport Road south of Holt Mill Pond, continuing by Toffet Pond (part of a parcel donated to IHT in 1998), and continuing north to the Sunset Cross Road. The project has gotten unanimous support from the Stonington selectmen, who noted that permits will be required for several foot bridges and boardwalks, which will likely be needed.

An avid walker herself, Ann Barrows eagerly joined the effort to begin an island trail. Noting that it is a "rather historic method of getting around," she is "passionate about places to walk that are safe and fun." On a recent visit to Scotland she was impressed with the ancient network of walking paths that make it very easy to go just about anywhere on foot. The United Kingdom has, in the last decade, codified "the [historic] right to roam" on many of its lands, a right (*cont. p.6*)



**Ann Barrows and family setting out** Lydia MacDonald



### ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST NEWSLETTER

The mission of the Island Heritage Trust is to conserve significant open space, scenic areas, wildlife habitats, natural resources, historic and cultural features that offer public benefit and are essential to the character of the Deer Isle area.

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# A Way to the Water Preserved

Waterfront access, clammer access, ways to the water . . . all reflect an increasingly urgent concern, that of shore access for commercial clam harvesters in the face of property transfers. Although clam-



**Shellfish  
Forever!**

Commercial Harvester  
access to the shore and flats  
secured by  
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mers traditionally may have had owners' tacit permission to cross property to reach clam flats, when ownership changes, access does not always convey; in fact, new owners may even prohibit access altogether. Such a potential scenario is

mother's intention was carried out was to transfer the property - a pathway approximately 30 feet wide by 200 feet long -- to IHT, thereby preserving access in perpetuity. Mike Little noted that such a gift ensures that the access provided by Janice Plumb will have an "existence beyond one lifetime," a gift of immense value to commercial island clammers as their water access is increasingly imperiled.

The Ways to the Water initiative is one of several new endeavors the Trust is pursuing in its more mature role in helping not only to preserve island lands, but island culture as well. Recently, Mike Little, in company of Ginny Olsen and Shellfish Warden Raelene Pert, rode throughout the island to identify points of access for commercial harvesters. Several IHT properties already provide access: Shore Acres, Reach Beach, Causeway Beach, Bow Cat, and Scott's Landing. Soon, each of these sites will be identified with signs designating them as access points for licensed clammers. Little indicated that two other easements to be placed under IHT's management are currently in process, one nearly completed and one still under discussion with owners.

IHT is always ready to "discuss clammer access with anyone," Little remarked, emphasizing that offering shorefront access to clammers contributes significantly to the island way of life. Applauding the generosity of the entire Plumb family and Mrs. Plumb's prescience, Little remarked, "Mrs. Plumb had the foresight to set up access when times were changing" and the clammers are the beneficiaries of her gift. He added, "IHT is now helping to preserve her intentions."



what prompted Janice Haskell Plumb to retain a parcel of land within her larger property and specifically designate it as access for island clammers, said her daughter, Rena Day.

A pathway long used by clammers was already in place, noted Day, when the Plumbs bought their property in the 1950s. They welcomed clammers by keeping that path open. Many years later, when Janice Plumb sold off some of the land, she retained the pathway, continuing to make it available to clammers to reach the water. But times change and she was concerned that others might eventually close off the path. Recently her children, Rena Day, Penelope Plumb and Fred Plumb, have determined that the best way to make sure their

**TICK ADVISORY:** Ticks and thus tick-borne diseases are becoming more prevalent here as they continue to migrate north, notes Dr. Gregory Thibodeau of the Maine Coast Veterinary Hospital, estimating that 20-25% of the dogs he sees test positive for Lyme disease.

The providers at Island Family Medical Center would like to see any patient with a tick on the body for more than 24 hours. Less than that, observation is all that is needed, as even an infected tick is very unlikely to transmit the disease in that short time period. Also, anyone with signs or symptoms of Lyme disease (rash, fever, etc.) as described in the link below should be seen. Lyme disease can be averted with timely diagnosis and treatment with antibiotics. Please protect yourself and your pets.

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/lyme/lyme-faq.shtml>

## Birding Festival Benefits Island

The Deer Isle-Stonington Chamber of Commerce was looking for ways to expand “the spring shoulder season” and attract more visitors to the Island during the less popular, but still beautiful period before Memorial Day. IHT wanted to find a creative approach to educating Islanders and visitors about the rich biodiversity that surrounds them on Deer Isle and to encourage conservation. According to Christina Shipp, owner of the Inn on the Harbor and past president of the Chamber of Commerce, a birdwatching festival was a natural because it combined a “low maintenance activ-



**Christina Shipp** *Anne Sigmund*

ity that had minimal impact on the environment with a visible, high appreciation event.” Wings, Waves, Woods had the potential to contribute to “prosperity without over-commercialization.”

According to a 2006 U.S. Fish and Wildlife survey, 71 million Americans generated over \$85 billion in economic benefits observing, feeding or watching wildlife in the U.S. Most of that activity has been focused on birdwatching. Another survey indicates that 36% of Mainers engage in birdwatching, placing Maine among the top six birdwatching states. Offering Wings, Waves,



and Woods in mid-May combined the goals of both organizations. Moreover, the unique confluence of nature and art yields a festival mix that increases the attraction for visitors and residents alike.

Now in its sixth year, the Wings, Waves, Woods event is meeting the expectations of both the Chamber and IHT. Barrett Gray, proprietor of Boyce’s Motel, sets aside several rooms for birders each year. Barrett notes that tourists come to Deer Isle in the weeks before Memorial Day to take advantage of both the lower winter rate and increasingly pleasant weather. Having an activity-packed festival at this time gives these “early bird tourists” something meaningful to do. For Christina, one of the festival’s challenges is to target “people within striking distance of the island.” She sees a need to focus on Bangor to attract day tourists who may not stay the night but will shop, visit galleries, have lunch, and buy gas. It is

helpful to have as many of the island businesses as possible open during the festival.

No less important to the commercial potential of the birding festival is its artistic component. Each year the work of a local artist is featured on the publicity materials for the event (left), and a reception for a birding and nature exhibit at the Pearson Legacy Gallery is the opening event for the weekend.

This year’s artist is Frederica Marshall, who first came to Deer Isle nine years ago to teach a painting workshop. It was love at first sight and she convinced her husband and fellow artist, Herman Kidder, that this was the place to live. A member of IHT, Frederica cleans up the Lily Pond shore from her kayak each spring and swims there frequently during the summer months. And, of course, each January she participates in the Christmas Bird Count. For Frederica, there are a handful of places she considers the most beautiful in the world. Having lived in Japan for 28 years, she counts several spots there among that number. But the remaining places that she finds amazing are all on the Island. During this year’s birding festival, she will be conducting a painting workshop.



**Frederica Marshall**  
in her studio *Anne Sigmund*

# Nature's Power Struggle

Out-of-control, irrepressibly rampant, "killer" plants have long been a subject of science fiction and the delight of Hollywood special effects departments. However, the real-life effects on our environment of such unrestrained and formidable adversaries can be as destructive and costly as anything Hollywood might conjure. According to some estimates, the cost to the U. S., in both damage from invasive species and in efforts to control their spread, totals nearly \$200 billion annually. These aggressive interlopers represent "the second greatest threat to global biodiversity after loss of habitat," states the Maine Department of Conservation (DOC) website.

An invasive plant, as defined by the DOC, is one "not native to a particular ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm . . . ." Such harm, adds the DOC, can affect animal habitat, waterways, agriculture and forest regeneration. Harder to quantify, however, is the immeasurable loss to scenic landscapes that characterize particular places, ones that often resonate within us in deeply meaningful and profound ways.

While the New England Wildflower Society identifies 99 invasive plants, those affecting Deer Isle constitute a narrower list; among them are Asiatic bittersweet, Japanese barberry, Japanese knotweed and Norway maple. Of these, the bittersweet and knotweed are the most pernicious, according to Dr. Sandra Wachholz, Maine Master Gar-

dener and Professor of Criminology at USM.

It was the connection between the sale of invasive species and its implications for the sociology of law that prompted Dr. Wachholz to make invasive terrestrial plants her specialty as a Maine Master Gardener over a decade ago. Why, she wondered, was it "legal to sell invasive plants that [threaten] our ecosystem?" While the damage to ecosystems can be enormous, legislation in many parts of the country has not kept up. Dr. Wachholz writes

that Asiatic bittersweet, for example, "can colonize whole habitats. It is, simply put, murderous. It wraps itself around other plants, strangling them." Japanese knotweed also destroys native vegetation, creating "thickets so dense it literally shades out all other plants." Often, invasives like multiflora rose began their lives innocently enough, having been touted as "natural hedges," or backyard plants. Subsequently, their seeds, carried by birds or the wind, found favorable environments to spread unchecked.

Invasive plants can imperil the fragile ecology of an island. They

can quickly spread, compromising and even eradicating vulnerable native vegetation. According to Mike Little, Asiatic bittersweet has been found at the Lily Pond and Scott's Landing, while Japanese knotweed has been spotted at Pine Hill. Although ongoing stewardship of preserves is a significant part of the Trust's routine work, it also conducts annual workdays that focus on the removal of invasives. In addition, IHT offers workshops



**Harvesting invasives, L-R Samantha Curtis, Sandra Wachholz, Joanne Greiwe, Peter and Marilyn Fuchs** *Marissa Hutchinson*

as part of the annual schedule of Walks and Talks to educate the public in the identification and eradication of invasive species in their own backyards.

Aside from working to eliminate invasives on both public and private lands, Dr. Wachholz recommends encouraging local greenhouses not to sell invasives such as barberry. She also supports the passage of legislation banning the sale of invasive species.

For additional information about how to recognize and eliminate invasive species, please log onto <http://umaine.edu/publications/2536e/>.



**Secretive Toffet Pond on the route of proposed trail**

*Peter Collin*

(cont. from p. 2) that is anathema in the U.S. where land laws favor the individual rights so embodied in American life.

Sonny Stinson, who had given permission for a portion of the proposed trail to cross his land, knows the interior of the island well. In a recent interview, he noted that his is the tenth generation of a family that first settled here in 1789, on land originally held by Andrew Small. The view from his window takes in 20 acres of mowed fields on a high spot looking west to Small's Cove.

His land is crisscrossed by a web of old logging roads that ultimately link the east and west sides of the island and extend southerly all the way to Sunset Avenue. He recalled making that round-trip walk as a younger man from his home through the interior of the island into Stonington. "We never used to think anything of walking."

Full of historical nuggets, he recounted that one of the many old roads near Toffet Pond leads to the remnants of an old stone dam (once part of a grist mill), on the brook flowing out of the pond. At one time, this road continued on to Small's Cove where there once was a town landing. "Back then most everybody had a small grain field of oats or wheat. Oats tolerate cool weather quite well."

While he doesn't know the origin of the name Toffet, or Tophet (as it is shown on old maps), he grinned and said that the name meant hell "if you had to cross it," thanks to the near-impenetrable surrounding thicket. About the walking trail, Sonny muses with characteristic understatement that, "It'd be a good walk."



Barrett Gray says that he is always surprised that some Islanders are unfamiliar with the IHT preserves and haven't experienced firsthand how great they are. He went on one of the annual "salamander excursions," led by Mike Little and recommends this spring event as "phenomenal fun."



**Barrett Gray**

*Anne Sigmund*

## Island Voices



**Rebecca Daugherty**

*Anne Sigmund*

To the right of Rebecca Daugherty is her ink drawing of the Barred Island Preserve. Together with the Tennis Preserve, it's one of her favorites. "They are a bit easier for winter hiking" than some of the others, she explains. Rebecca generally visits an IHT preserve once or twice a week. She has special memories of the Lily Pond, where she first tried out a kayak that she herself built.

# ◆Letterboxing◆

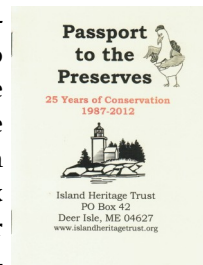


Each preserve has its own stamp hand-carved by Marissa Hutchinson

Island Heritage Trust is excited to introduce the *Passport to the Preserves* and a collection of letterboxes at nine of the island's preserves, a fun way to get the whole family out and hiking the trails. Letterboxes contain a unique stamp for each preserve, an ink pad, and a notebook for visitors to leave a note or place an image of their own signature stamp.

To find our letterboxes you just need to enjoy a walk on the trails and keep an eye out for the wooden box with the letterbox inside - have your *Passport to the Preserves* with you and ready to stamp! Free passports may be picked up at Heritage House.

When your passport has a stamp from all nine of the letterboxes, stop by the Heritage House in Sunset for a prize! You may also enter a drawing for all passport participants that will take place in the fall. The winning entry gets a handy field guide.



## Island Heritage Trust Membership

I/we want to help IHT preserve the natural beauty and way of life on Deer Isle now and for future generations

Enclosed is my tax-deductible membership donation

\_\_\_\$250 Conservator \_\_\_\$100 Sustaining \_\_\_\$50 Family \_\_\_\$35 Individual

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Summer Address \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Please send this print newsletter by e-mail in future
- ☐ Please keep me informed about IHT activities and news with brief, monthly e-mails
- ☐ I want to volunteer – please contact me about what I can do to help.

Please mail form to: Island Heritage Trust / PO Box 42 / Deer Isle, ME 04627

A remarkable 70% of IHT's operating budget comes from member donations –  
Thank you for joining that effort!

## Save the Date! Annual Shore Dinner--July 28

## Mark Your Calendars!

### Preserve Work Party Dates

All take place from 8:30-11:30 AM with snacks and coffee provided. Please bring gloves, clippers, etc.

**Pine Hill: Friday, June 1**

**Lily Pond: Wednesday, June 6**

**Bowcat/Causeway: Saturday, June 16**

**Scott's Landing: Thursday, June 21**

**Shore Acres: Tuesday, June 26**

**Reach Beach: Monday, July 2**

**Settlement Quarry: Thursday, July 12**

### Island Beach Clean Up with MITA, MCHT, & IHT ~This year IHT has a boat!~

**Saturday, June 16th**

Will leave from Old Quarry Ocean Adventures, please call 348-2455 to reserve space in a boat and coordinate details.

And then, just for fun . . .

### Volunteer Potluck at Heritage House

**Weds, June 20 5-7 PM**

(Bring a friend/neighbor who might like to get to know IHT)



Third-graders Tommy Hutchinson and Annie Reynolds use a hand lens to study the composition of granite at Mariners Park

*Anne Beerits*



ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

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View from Pine Hill

*Marissa Hutchinson*