



The Land Trust of Deer Isle & Stonington, Maine

Fall 2018

Meet Our New Executive Director

Paul Miller describes a particularly memorable incident from his childhood that even now fills him with an abiding sense of wonder. He had been walking near the Kikemuit River, he says, and as he crossed a bridge, he watched the agitated water and was astonished by what he saw: a migration of countless scallops. He muses – with earnestness and joy in his voice – that the experience was perhaps the catalyst that launched his interest in environmental science. Over the years, as he was growing up in Warren, and then Warwick, Rhode Island, there would be countless other experiences that nourished and enlarged his passion for the natural world.

In following that passion, Paul attended Maine's Unity College, where he earned a B.S. in environmental science with an emphasis in ecology, and then an M.S. in Sustainable Natural Resource Management. His career ultimately took him to Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park in Florida, where he served for 14 years as the on-site biologist for the 54,000 acre preserve, responsible for resource management, prairie restoration, and exotic species mapping. In addition, he monitored the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow, the most endangered bird species in the continental U. S. With his move to Maine, however, he says he wanted to explore non-profit work after his long tenure in a state position in Florida. Just prior to accepting the offer from IHT, he served as a conservation biologist for the Loon Echo Land Trust in Bridgton, Maine.

His evolution from biologist to executive director is one he feels his background and work experiences will enhance, but he readily admits that he hasn't had much fundraising experience apart from grant writing. He's quick to note the need for fundraising, and emphasizes

that "we must do it; it's a fundamental part of how IHT exists." And he marvels as he says that he has already seen first-hand the generosity of donors. As he begins to hit his stride, Paul says he's asking questions that he hopes will lead to an evolved approach in fulfilling the Trust's mission. Perhaps we shouldn't be asking "what we can do for the community," but rather, "what does the community need?" he says. Recognizing that the Trust "can't possibly do everything," he enthusiastically ticks off a list of issues and goals – beyond only preserving lovely views – that are not only possible for IHT to address, but necessary: providing places to recreate, to hunt

and fish; ensuring shore access as well as fresh water; engaging in collaborations with the towns as well as with other organizations. Prioritizing goals, he says, is essential. He feels it's important that IHT act to support the community, noting that land trusts across the country have evolved since their origins, when simply conserving land was the goal.

Remarking on the accreditation process that the Trust has taken some early steps to pursue, Paul emphasizes that "it's the right thing to do." It helps us "tighten the ship," and imposes "standards [that become] the common language" that all accredited land trusts (cont'd on p5)



Paul so over moving things

Sue Miller



Elke Dorr

From the Executive Director | *Paul Miller*



My first trip to Deer Isle was about a year and a half ago. As my wife, Sue, and I came over the top of Caterpillar Hill, the view suddenly opened up, and I nearly drove off of the road! What I saw before me, from the vantage provided by the elevation, was an expansive view of Penobscot Bay, forested islands, the Camden Hills, Deer Isle and Isle Au Haut, and the distant Atlantic. The grandeur of the view was stunning.

On that first, and subsequent trips to Deer Isle, I was impressed with the scenic beauty that the island holds, itself one of the prominent features of that view from Caterpillar Hill. As you drive off the historic bridge and onto and around the island, you are treated with world-class views of hidden coves, adjacent islands, and quaint villages, boats of all shapes and sizes, ocean shores, and unbroken Acadian forests, all conspiring to create an enticing sense of place.

I consider that aesthetic I write of – this sense of this place – as an expression of a small-town, New England land ethic. The naturalness of the island's forests, left to stand in a natural way, provide habitat for the animals that need it, and resources for people such as timber, firewood, and hunting grounds. The villages are charming, often with elegant architecture, and no big-box stores to be found. Indeed, an aesthetic that I agree with.

Travel almost anywhere else and you can readily see the results of our unchecked population and capitalism: concrete jungles with chain stores, traffic and air pollution, light pollution at night that obscures the stars! We don't have to worry about that on Deer Isle. The island community places great value on its scenic qualities (consciously or not). Island Heritage Trust is a major stakeholder in conserving the natural components that make this place unique.

This summer, Sue and I bought a house out on Sunshine Road. As a new member of the island community, I, too, want access to conserved lands for hiking, birding, and nature observation. I am a biologist at heart!

Paul Miller

Phenology and Citizen Science

While we most often think of IHT preserves as places for relaxation, meditation or exercise, there is an underappreciated role the preserves fill in their usefulness to scientists. As outdoor labs, IHT preserves have already served as sites for serpentine studies (see Spring 2011 Newsletter) and chemical weathering (see Fall 2012 Newsletter). For Schoodic Institute scientists and Deer Isle-Stonington students, as well as community volunteers, Scott's Landing now also serves as a locale for a phenology project that is part of PhToM: Phenology Trackers of Maine and the Downeast Phenology Trail. Phenology is "the study of plant and animal life cycle events," and tracks "the timing of flowering and fruiting plants, emergence of insects, and bird migrations." How climate change affects these cyclic events is at the heart of the study and accomplished through observation of migrating songbirds and food availability for them, according to Elizabeth Orcutt, a senior science technician at the Institute.

Devised by Dr. Richard Feldman and Dr. Abe Miller-Rushing, the science coordinator for Acadia National Park, as well as researchers at the Institute, the project began in 2015, through funding from Earthwatch and Shell. The study, designed as a citizen science endeavor, relies on volunteers from partner organizations to help collect data. Currently, the Downeast Phenology Trail involves nine trails among multiple organizations such as Blue Hill Heritage Trust, Fields Pond Audubon and the National Park Service and, of course, Island Heritage Trust. In an interview, Dr. Miller-Rushing noted that "Phenology works as a citizen science effort because ... it tells us about our daily lives, things that affect us."

When Martha Bell, IHT's Environmental Educator, learned of the project, about the time PhToM was seeking Downeast partners, she connected with Orcutt in order to involve Deer Isle-Stonington students. Regularly making trips to Scott's Landing to inspect plants and record relevant data, students from various grade levels identify and track tagged plants by observing and recording the timing of such developments as leaf emergence, bud development, and bloom. Among the plants they observe

are serviceberry, viburnums, winterberry, rubus and holly, while bird species include Blackpoll Warblers, Black-capped Chickadees, Red-eyed Vireos, and Swanson's Thrush. All data-gathering is facilitated with mobile

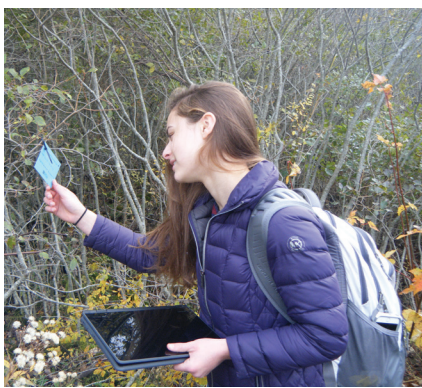
device apps – eBird, Nature's Notebook and iNaturalist – that offer descriptions to aid identification, and ask the user a series of yes or no questions. Once the data is entered, it is then transmitted electronically.

According to Orcutt, questions that the researchers hope to answer over the duration of the project include: Are birds migrating later or at the same time each year, and if so, what does that mean in the Downeast region? What ecological consequences are associated with these changes? How do these affect us? Current funding will cover the project for at least 5-10 years, said Orcutt, allowing researchers to analyze the data over time in order to help determine how we will address changes in these events.

Not only students can participate in the study, but community volunteers as well. Orcutt noted that participants come from all walks of life and professions, but all have an interest in the natural world. Training, she said, is offered and the apps are very user friendly: "You really can't mess it up," she said, regarding the programs and process. Visiting a site is done throughout the growing season, from March or April to November; however, even if participants are unable to monitor for the entire season, they can still participate for a shorter time. With evident enthusiasm for the project, Orcutt commented that volunteers often become so "tuned in with a particular plant, that it's exciting to watch that connection happen." Martha Bell echoed that sentiment in noting how students often have "a-ha moments when they see a change in plants. They really like being part of a scientific study."

For further information about the study, visit the Schoodic Institute's website: <https://www.schoodicinstitute.org/phtom-phenology-trackers-of-maine-and-the-downeast-phenology-trail/>

To volunteer in the study, please contact Martha Bell at mbell@islandheritagetrust.org or 348-2455. ✎



Training/Field Work

Martha Bell

Welcome New IHT Board Members

Mickie Flores is probably the science teacher we all wish we had had. In the many projects she's introduced to her students, using the outdoors has been key. Named a Maine Governor's STEM FELLOW in 2012, she was also named Teacher of the Year for Hancock County in 2015. Even before she took the job at Deer Isle Stonington Elementary School (DISES), however, Mickie had become an IHT volunteer. Because Reach Beach is her favorite island beach she began serving as a volunteer teacher there through the school's Adopt-a-Preserve program.

One of her student projects involved a Gulf of Maine Research Institute Grant and a collaboration with Island Institute Fellow, Dana Mark. Another evolved from a long-standing concern about beach grass loss at Causeway Beach. The issue was discussed at IHT shortly after former Stewardship Director Janna Newman arrived. She suggested getting students involved in an environmental education project as part of the Marine Trades program, which led Martha Bell, IHT Environmental Educator, to approach Mickie about launching such a project with her 7th grade class. Today the successful beach grass project still continues with enthusiastic support from the students as well as their families, and is another example of Mickie's skill in helping islanders make a positive connection with IHT and its mission and often doing so in collaboration with Martha.

Mickie has long recognized the importance of public access to wild lands in the community. She first became aware of public shore access on Long Island, where she grew up. There it was readily available, but when she moved to the Adirondacks, she discovered that access was definitely not a given. She realized that deliberate action must be taken to ensure it. So when she visited Barred Island for the first time with Ken and Marnie Crowell, prior to moving here, she recognized immediately the great value of that preserve to the larger community.

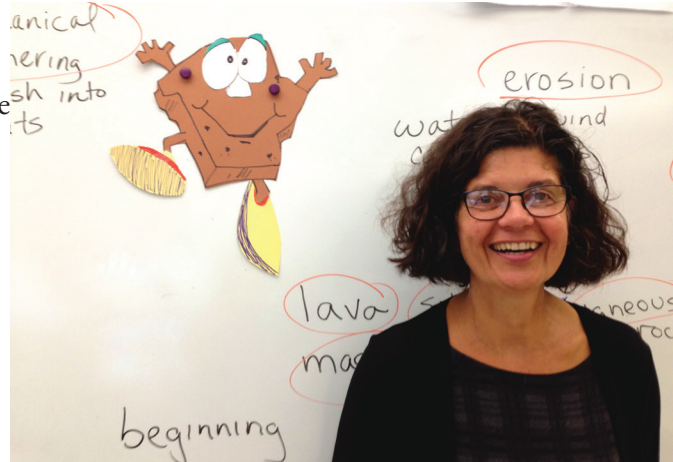
A graduate of Cornell University, Mickie previously taught science for 25 years to middle and high school students as well as at SUNY Potsdam. During that time she raised two children and managed to climb all 46 Adirondack High Peaks! After their introduction to the island by the Crowells, Mickie and husband Tim Whitten found a house in Sunset in 2008, and Tim then

discovered the building that now houses his Marlinspike Chandlery. When asked if she considers retiring from teaching on the island, Mickie said, "As long as I continue to love teaching, I won't quit! It is just so much fun." IHT is indeed fortunate that Mickie has become a member of the board.

Karen Hill first came to Deer Isle when her sister was at the French Camp in the '60s! Karen fondly remembers the beach and rocky shore at Goose Cove Lodge where her family stayed. After she grew up, got married, and had a daughter, the family started spending

summers in a vintage cabin on Pitcher Pond near Lincolnville Center using the cabin as a base for long canoe paddles, enjoying the eagles that gracefully soared above, and hearing the mating calls of loons. In 2004, her husband, Ned, organized a father-daughter canoe trip on the St. Croix River in northern Maine, guided by Dana Douglass and assisted by Mike Woods, both of whom are long-time Deer Isle residents.

Water, kayaks, woodland lakes, and human connections drew the Hills to Deer Isle. Hoping to retire on a freshwater pond, they purchased a lot on the Lily Pond and built a home there in 2008. During the winter, they still live in Columbus, Ohio, but Karen, at least, is able to be on Deer Isle from mid-May to mid-October, while Ned, a professor of Economic Development and



Mickie Flores (top) & Karen Hill (bottom)

Ann Hooke



Shore Acres Preserve Marissa Hutchinson

Public Policy at Ohio State University, must leave in August. Still, they both have been actively involved with IHT: walking the preserves, attending the Shore Dinners, and participating in many other IHT activities. Karen also started volunteering on the Hospitality Committee, in the office and the Nature Shop. The past two summers, she took on the enormous task of chairing the Shore Dinner Committee, resulting in the Trust's most successful dinner ever.

With an MBA from the University of Connecticut, she worked for 30 years in the banking business doing investment banking, budgeting, long-range financial planning, and marketing of financial products. Given this extensive background in banking and finance, it is not surprising that she now serves on IHT's Finance Committee and also hopes to help with fundraising and development.

Not only is she active with IHT, Karen is also a member of the Deer Isle – Sunset Congregational Church and sings in the choir. She is an active member of both the Blue Hill Garden Club and Evergreen Garden Club. With such deep connections and active participation in island organizations, she and Ned are thinking seriously about becoming year-round residents of Deer Isle after Ned retires from teaching. 🌿

(cont'd from p1) use and that allow for “collaborative relationships.” While it's a complicated process, accreditation helps “shine a light on the work” he says, and assures donors and the community at large that the Trust has passed a high bar. He likens it to any professional certification by which we are assured of the highest credentials and practices.

After a very busy summer as he and his wife, Dr. Susan Miller, now on the staff at Island Family Medicine, settled into their respective new jobs, as well as into the house they recently bought on the island, he's ready to resume his avid interest in birding. In answer to why he loves it as much as he does, he says that he enjoys simply watching the birds and happily points out the White-crowned Sparrow at the feeder swinging from a tree branch in front of the IHT office. “They're sentient beings,” he notes. “They make decisions. And they're accessible.” He adds dramatically, “And their ancestors were dinosaurs!” When not avidly birding during his leisure time, Paul loves to read and is an enthusiastic fan of J.R.R. Tolkien and the world he created in his books. “Middle Earth was a vehicle, a space for his language creations,” he says with nearly as much enthusiasm as when he talks about birds, or the Trust and his own role in its ongoing work. 🌿

A Meditation from David Vandiver



Blue Heron on the Lily Pond

Cathy Hart

At IHT's annual meeting in August, Stewardship Director David Vandiver addressed the attendees with a very personal perspective on his work: how his contact with the natural world works to heal brokenness. We wanted to share with you some highlights of his thoughtful reflection.

... As you might guess, I spend a lot of time alone in the woods as part of my work. I cherish that time, and from boyhood have always been drawn to this kind of solitude. If I'm working in the woods, only part of my mind is on the task at hand. But I've observed over time that another part of my brain is doing something else when I'm in a wild place. I've always known that this thing was something I needed. It's like medicine.

... being in a wild place – and for me especially when I'm there alone, and most especially when I'm quiet – meets a need in a way that nothing else can. The best word I can find to describe it is healing. So when we build trails and parking lots, put up signs and make maps, to me we are, in essence, facilitating for others an access to the healing power of nature.

After encountering a group of young boys on the trail, he writes this about their exuberance:

...I long to be able to have just what those boys were having. But I can't fully have that experience. I've lost too much of that early innocence. I have a broken heart, and maybe you do too. And even though you can do a lot of good work with a broken heart, sometimes you just need to receive some good medicine. Or maybe you just need to re-create yourself now and again, or need to take time to slow down and recharge. Name it what you will, but one thing seems true to me – the wild world has never lost its power to reach out and touch me just the way I need it to. When I see the thousands of names that accumulate on our sign-in sheets at the kiosks of our preserves, I know our work is done. May it keep on being done. 🌿

NATURE SHOP



Don't miss this great little shop! We have educational and fun, nature-based items for all ages.

- ◆ Island & Trail Maps
- ◆ Children's Books
- ◆ Binoculars & Field Lenses
- ◆ Notecards, Postcards & Posters
- ◆ Educational Games, Puzzles & more...

& our specialty - **Field Guides**, covering everything from the stars and birds, to amphibians to lichens.



This October, Deer Isle-Stonington 5th & 6th graders visited Holt Mill Pond Preserve, following in-classroom discussions about the important role salt marshes play. Students took core samples, studied salt marsh ecology & geology, and flattened ridges in an area damaged by ATVs to help the salt marsh recover with IHT's Martha Bell, volunteers, and their science teacher, Mickie Flores.

Tidings



Lisa Tolman Wotton Nature Preserve Mushrooms

Mary Offutt

Monthly Bird Walks continue with our new Executive Director, Paul Miller! Every **second Saturday of the month** Paul will lead a bird walk at Scott's Landing Preserve. All levels and all ages welcome. If you need to borrow a pair of binoculars, give us a call and Paul will bring along some extras.

SAVE THE DATE:

2019 Wings, Waves & Woods Festival is May 17-19

New Directional Trail Signage up at Shore Acres

as well as upgrades to a good stretch of bog bridging make the new and old trails that much more lovely. *Thank you donors and volunteers for a year of such strong support! Your increased giving and time makes projects like these happen!*



Tuesday Trail Building Work Parties Continue. Every decent weather Tuesday throughout the year, David Vandiver will be leading volunteers on trail work parties: some building new trails, some updating old ones. Contact Marissa or David to be put on the list for updates on the weekly location: marissa@islandheritagetrust.org, dvandiver@islandheritagetrust.org or call 348-2455.

Maine Master Naturalists' training in Ellsworth

starting in March 2019. To learn more, visit their website **mainemasternaturalist.org**.

WANTED: Volunteers are the backbone to all the Trust's work. If you are someone who loves nature, Deer Isle, and ensuring the Trust serves the community well, come talk to us about becoming a volunteer. We have many different ways you can contribute time & skills to make a difference. You can contribute as a Committee Member...

- Event Planner
- Environmental Ed support person for field trips & projects
- Citizen Science Volunteer
- Writer
- Photographer
- Trail Builder

For more information, to sign up, or to suggest a friend or two who might be interested, contact Marissa at marissa@islandheritagetrust.org or 348-2455.

Wish List: Aluminum Utility Trailer (ours is on its last, rusty bit of life); the Trust is also dreaming of a truck...



ISLAND
HERITAGE TRUST

ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST STAFF

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Marissa Hutchinson, *Development Director*
/Volunteer Coordinator

Martha Bell, *Environmental Educator*

David Vandiver, *Stewardship Director*

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Barred Island Preserve

George Linkletter

DISES 7th & 8th graders loving the Lisa Tolman Wotton Preserve

During the recent summer, Deer Isle-Stonington 7th and 8th grade students assisted in the substantial trail project at IHT's Lisa Tolman Wotton Nature Preserve. Comprising over 40 acres that include cedar groves, small ravines, and a winding stream, the Trust's newest preserve is located on Little Deer Isle's Blastow Cove Road.

In June, the 35 students carried in the lumber, which volunteers subsequently transformed into bridges and boardwalks over the summer months. They were delighted to return in September to traverse the loop and walk upon their efforts as they carried out field work for a rock cycle study. Martha Bell distributed maps, soil corers, markers and baggies, and instructed the students in collecting soil samples and rocks, and in observing weathering and erosion along the paths.



Students were also instructed how to identify black swallow-wort, after which they spent time eradicating a patch of this invasive species near the preserve's parking area.

Also known as dog-strangling vine, the plant grows very rapidly and can blanket other vegetation. It is also toxic to many insect larvae including monarch caterpillars.

