



ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

The Land Trust of Deer Isle & Stonington, Maine

Summer 2018

Deer Isle's Wetland Jewels

Vernal pool – the very name conjures a deep-in-the-woods place of mystery, of tranquility. Yet, a vernal pool is anything but still and static. Instead, it's a dynamic place teeming with life, one that provides ideal conditions for a few, very specific creatures. Necessary for the life cycle of these creatures, and a welcome food source for others, a vernal pool is a critical, but often easily misunderstood and even more easily destroyed wetland feature.

Characterized by their ephemeral quality, vernal pools are temporary bodies of water, typically appearing in late winter and gone by mid-to-late summer. In the interim, however, they are an interestingly complex habitat for salamanders, wood frogs, and other creatures. Significantly, there are no fish in vernal pools. While generally shallow, pools vary in size from small to large as lakes! Unlike many other bodies of water, vernal pools have no inlets or outlets. Their water derives from rain and winter melt, while warm summer weather causes them to dry up. Some may even dry up and refill with water several times during one season.

These dramatic transformations perfectly suit some organisms like fairy shrimp, which spend their entire lives in vernal pools. Their eggs are able to survive long periods of freezing and dryness, while the eggs of amphibious creatures require water for their survival. Salamanders, for example, lay their eggs in vernal pools, but live terrestrial lives most of the rest of the year. They move to pools soon after the first wet, warm night of spring to lay their eggs, sometimes traveling great distances and even crossing roads to reach a pool.

Not only are vernal pools ideal for egg incubation, they're also a rich food source for ducks, egrets, hawks, and other carnivorous creatures, and serve as resting places for migrating spring birds. Some pools are dominated by amphibians, others by invertebrates. Some are ringed

by wildflowers and others by grasses – primarily in the western states – each of which can be a food source or pollinator attracting particular species.

Although vernal pools have declined significantly across the country, with 90% of them gone in California (EPA) alone, there are still “quite a few” on Deer Isle, according to IHT Executive Director Mike Little, including on Quaco Rd, Shore Acres and Settlement Quarry, and on Little Deer. Among the threats to vernal pools are some of the usual suspects: pollution from run-off, development



4th Graders at Local Vernal Pool Photo: George Linkletter

and urbanization, invasive species, harvesting of forests, and use of pesticides and herbicides. And although, since 2007, a “significant vernal pool habitat” is protected through the National Resources Protection Act, the effect of recent federal roll-backs on wetlands regulations will have to await assessment regarding vernal pools.

How to protect our vernal pools? If you believe you have a vernal pool on your property or come upon one, avoid disturbing the pool bottom and egg masses;

(Cont. on page 2)

Wetland Jewels

(Cont. from page 1)

“maintain a closed canopy forest (at least 75%) of trees ... at least 5 inches in diameter”; avoid compacting soil in the area; allow fallen logs and branches to deteriorate; and avoid the use of chemicals within a 100-foot radius of the pool (Maine Forest Service). Another way to protect this vital wetland asset is by requesting a “field determination,” of your pool. Officially classified by the state’s Environmental Protection Department, a vernal pool deemed “significant” is protected under the law. For additional information about vernal pools in general and about how to have your vernal pool assessed, log onto: http://www.maine.gov/dep/land/nrpa/vernalpools/fs-vernal_pools_intro.html. Another useful site: vernalpools.me, which offers abundant information, videos, and a downloadable children’s coloring book featuring vernal pools. And don’t forget to pick up a copy of Kim Ridley’s *The Secret Pool*, available at IHT’s Nature Store. 🌿



Yellow Spotted Salamander Photo: Marissa Hutchinson

From the Executive Director | *Mike Little & Paul Miller*



It has been quite a run! And now for my last Director’s column for the newsletter. IHT has come a long way in the 10 years I have been here – and I think it is a good way. When I arrived, the Trust had just acquired Scott’s Landing. Since then, it has added the Lily Pond

Park beach and woods, the Lisa Tolman Wotton Nature Preserve on Little Deer Isle, the Church Lands off King Row (not yet even officially open), as well as smaller shore lots at Cat Cove and the Oceanville Bridge. All these provide access to the woods or shore for ALL – residents, summer people, tourists, clammers, kayakers, hikers. All are welcome to visit IHT properties for recreation or for work. Welcome!

This sense of being there for everyone is central to the Trust and, as I leave, I want to urge you to nurture and expand on what has been done. We all need the refuge that Nature can provide – and in our rapidly overcrowding world it takes outfits like Island Heritage Trust and all its members and supporters to make access to Nature available. Keep up the good work. And Goddess Bless. 🌿



If Island Heritage Trust can be compared to a ship, then it has recently ended a highly successful, ten-year voyage having gone through rough seas, fair weather, and even discovered some new lands. I’d like to take this opportunity in my first newsletter entry to thank the skipper of that ship, Mike Little, for his vision, leadership, and navigation skills over the last decade. I was lucky to be able to spend the month of May working with him so that the Trust could have a smooth transition. During that time, I believe I got to know him fairly well. As it turns out, he and I have a lot in common, notably a passion for bird watching and protection of bird habitat!

While I may still be getting my sea legs at the helm of the Trust, I look forward to building on what Mike has accomplished. In the years to come, I hope to work on conserving more land that will benefit the people of the island community. Clean water, clean air, places to recreate and enjoy nature & wildlife, as well as open access to the resources of our waters are vital. Island Heritage Trust will continue its important mission to provide and protect these resources for the benefit of the public. With this sentiment in mind, I look forward to what the future holds for us on the island.



The newly donated Oceanville Beach Photo: Elke Dorr

IHT’s Newest Beach

Along Deer Isle’s rocky shores there are few beaches and most are privately owned. Consequently, those that are open to the public are particularly valued by visitors and residents alike. Through the generosity of summer residents, one small, private beach has recently been donated to IHT. Located in Oceanville, the beach is situated at the Inner Harbor side of the bridge, along the shore of Buckmaster Neck.

Since the 1970s, summer residents Arie van Everdingen and the late Donald McKenzie have owned the adjoining farm, which extends across Oceanville Road, to the gravel beach and down to the shore of Inner Harbor, right beside the bridge. Prior to the recent sale of the farm, Mr. van Everdingen decided to donate the two acres of land on the water side of the road – including the beach – to IHT to guarantee public access, not only to the beach but to the clam flats in Hatch Cove. Both Arie and Don were “always happy to see people using the beach and the shore access to the clam flats.” They noted too, that people using the beach made an effort to keep it clean.

The small beach is a perfect place for families to bring

children as the water is warmed when it rises over the tide flats. It is also an excellent place from which to launch kayaks and small, hand-carried boats on a rising tide. From here, one can paddle to several IHT properties including the new Gross Point Preserve, along the southern shore of Inner Harbor; Crystal Cove Preserve in Oceanville, near Cat Cove; Polypod Island in Southeast Harbor; and Whig Island in Long Cove! Since all lie in rather protected waters, they offer ideal kayaking destinations for families. Please remember to plan for tide changes and the faster water currents at Bray’s Narrow leading to Long Cove.

Other paddling destinations include Mariners Memorial Park, at the west end of Long Cove, as well as Sheep and Little Sheep Islands in outer Southeast Harbor. Additionally, there is the possibility of circumnavigating Oceanville (Whitmore Neck). Limited parking for clammers, swimmers, and boaters is along each side of the road just south of the bridge.

It is largely through the generosity of people like Mr. van Everdingen, that IHT can make available for public use places for swimming, access to clam flats, and beaches to enjoy.

April Vacation Nature Camp

Martha Bell, IHT's environmental educator, remains deeply involved in Deer Isle's elementary school curriculum, introducing children from all eight grades to the wonders of nature and its attendant stewardship responsibilities. Most recently, during April's spring break, with help from Dana Mark, Island Institute Fellow, and Jayden LeDeux, Deer Isle college student, Martha led IHT's second Nature Camp. Attendance almost doubled from the previous year. One family from Delaware, having experienced the camp the year before, made a special trip to bring their two children back for a repeat visit. A number of the applicants noted that the children had been inside all winter and were desperate for outdoor activity. This proved true: the kids were excited and stimulated by their experience - jumping in to explore and try new things, running around with abandon while getting dirty and wet. One camper, who does not normally discuss the school day with her parent, happily described her experiences at the camp.

All in all, fourteen 1st through 4th grade students participated, visiting Barred Island, Causeway Beach, Crockett Cove Woods, Shore Acres, and the Lily Pond, where they hiked, built forts, cleaned up beaches, played games, made pottery, and learned to identify various critters and plants. A favorite activity was putting their hands into a "feely" box, trying to figure out what was in there and then drawing it. Some were visiting these places for the first time



2018 Nature Camp Photo: Marissa Hutchinson

their activities and at lunch and snack time. While building forts, they created a little village, comparing design and building techniques and "visiting" with each other to enjoy each other's work. Campers kept nature journals where they practiced their observation, writing and drawing skills. They learned how to explore without damaging their surroundings. They practiced leaving the environment better than they found it, helping to clean up litter they found along the way and expressing dismay that grownups would litter such beautiful places.

The Island Community Center provided roomy, flexible accommodations for the home base of the camp, with the kitchen, gym and playground - along with the woods - which were perfect for exploring. The flexibility of the space enabled programming to continue regardless of the weather. Max Mattes of Edible Island made pizza and baked cookies with the campers. IHT's ability to rent a van, provide breakfast, lunch and snacks, and perhaps most important, offer scholarships for nine of the kids, ensured the success of the camp.

Building on this experience and hoping to make it a regular IHT offering, Martha is already planning for next year. It is clear that the campers look forward to reconnecting with Martha during her afterschool Nature Club and future field trips.

As Elementary School principal Tara McKechnie said in reporting on Martha's work in her school: "Thank you to Martha Bell and to the Island Heritage Trust. What an amazing resource you are for our school!" Indeed! 🌿



2018 Nature Camp Photo: Marissa Hutchinson

and expressed great excitement over the prospect of bringing their families back to them.

Martha's overarching rule was, "Be kind to the earth and be kind to each other." The kids were encouraged to listen to and appreciate each other as they explored. Campers and leaders had wonderful conversations during

Mike Little Retires after 10 years as Island Heritage Trust's Executive Director

When he visited Deer Isle in 2008, several weeks before he was offered the job as IHT's new Executive Director, Mike Little recalled coming over the causeway, awed by the beauty all around, and saying out loud, "Oh, my gosh, I gotta get this job!" Prior to accepting the offer to lead the Trust, Mike had cut his executive leadership teeth as the Belgrade Regional Conservation Association's first executive director. Tasked with the protection of seven major lakes, BRCA serves 13 towns in its mission to protect the watershed.

Deer Isle offered not only a marked change in scenery, but new challenges as well. When he assumed his new job, there were some "fissures," according to Mike, between the Trust and the community. Moreover, the Lily Pond project, a major undertaking, was about to begin. In recalling that period, Mike said, "I came in the door and [Lily Pond] came in the door," at nearly the same time, creating a significant opportunity to enlarge the Trust's lands and to heal many of those "fissures." Determined to change the community's perception of the Trust as an adversarial, elitist organization to a community partner and valued resource, Mike made that goal a priority.

Now, some ten years following those first challenging weeks, Mike observed that ideas about the Trust have changed for the better. Ann Hooke, long-time IHT member, former acting chair of the Trust, as well as Stewardship Committee Chair, commented that early on, Mike "quickly developed good working relationships with the island community," citing "a marked increase in donor support," as only one example of the improved relationships. The key, Mike emphasized, was to understand that "the perception of the Trust had to change ... we worked hard to make that happen and continue to do so." While the Lily Pond project acted as a catalyst for changing perceptions, long-term implementation of new programs and ideas helped turn the tide as well, including enlarging significantly our work with the schools to develop and implement hands-on projects; offering clammer access and kayak launches; making preserves accessible community resources; and taking a more pro-active role in the community by offering and participating in public events such as the Ice Cream Social and the Friday Farmers' Market, in addition



Mike Little awarded commemorative plate for service to IHT. Photo: Elke Dorr

to an expanded program of walks and talks.

There were other challenges along the way as well, Mike noted, chief among them fundraising, but "that's always a challenge," he laughed. The recession, however, made that task even more difficult. When the Trust hired Marissa Hutchinson as its first Development Director (a position which is now full-time), the work of fundraising was made much easier for him, Mike said. A substantial increase to the Trust's holdings presented some additional challenges with the increased work of stewardship, now ably managed by David Vandiver, Mike observed. Presently the Trust holds 835 acres in easements and 620 acres in fee lands while in 2008, at Mike's arrival, there were 760 acres in conservation easements and 458 acres in fee lands.

Of the Trust's achievements under his leadership, Mike is perhaps most proud of the Lily Pond Project. Not only did it help to rebuild community relationships, but the project provided protection for that beloved island resource, transforming it - through a three-phase acquisition process - into a protected public park for island residents and visitors. Also proud of how strong the Trust's educational component has become, Mike was quick to credit Martha Bell, IHT's Environmental Educator, calling her "a major ambassador in the community," for the Trust. He mused that "perhaps this

(Cont. on page 6

Mike Little Retires
(Cont. from page 5)

is the most important achievement in the long term” – helping to educate the younger generation about the value of conservation and the benefits not only to the environment, but also to people’s well-being.

Looking back, Mike said he would like to have had a little more time to continue the now “solid fundraising efforts, to firm up the Trust’s financial underpinning.” He also regrets that he won’t be part of accreditation, a complicated process still a long way from completion. And he laments that the Backbone Trail (a cross-island trail project) didn’t have “the traction to continue.”

His prescription for the Trust’s future and ongoing work, however, is simple and confident: “Just keep on doing what we’re doing.” And despite increased land

holdings, Mike commented that his ideal vision is to have an IHT preserve “accessible within a half mile range of everyone on the island.”

As for what he’ll miss, Mike doesn’t hesitate in saying, “the comradeship of the staff,” as well as interacting with the board and the towns. Having bought a farm in the Bucksport area with his wife, Dawn – an accomplished potter – Mike will take on new challenges and, he emphasizes, he will continue to “bird and dance,” a clear reflection of his dual passions for birding and Scottish Country Dancing.

So it is with thanks for a job well done, that we wish you “Mar sin leat,” Mike – Scottish Gaelic for farewell and a wish for happiness!

From My Perspective: Scott’s Landing | Tim Henderson

My daily work life consists of sitting at computers solving tech problems. It is a sedentary career, so during my non-working hours I try to disconnect from technology and get outside as much as possible, even taking short walks on local preserves during my lunch break. I enjoy hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing and trail running with my wife and my friends, and if my cell phone tells me I have no signal I’m quite content.

One piece of tech I carry on long hikes is my GPS. It’s a critical backcountry tool. It tells me where I’ve been, where I am and helps me get where I’m going. When I traverse the trails of IHT I think about those same GPS attributes in the land

around me. Where has this land been in the past, what is its history? Where is it now, how is it being used? How will future generations see it?

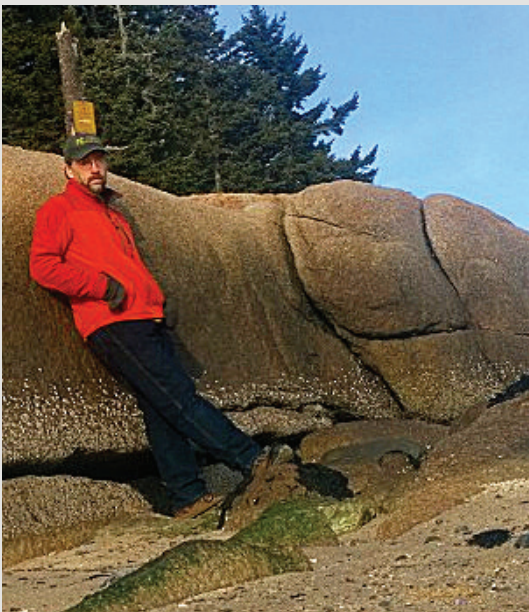
The preserve I like to walk the most is the Edgar Tennis Preserve. There’s so much history there. The foundations of homes, fields, orchards and pastures make me think about life long ago. The idea that this was once an active Native

American area fascinates me. When thinking about the history of a place, we have the luxury of seeing the past

all at once and define it in terms of family generations or even centuries, but history takes time. Now I’m here creating another piece of history. Slowly but surely my footsteps walk down these paths that may someday be “discovered” by future travelers wondering who created these trails and why.

In an increasingly connected world I encourage everyone to take the time to meander the trails of IHT, especially Tennis Preserve. Turn off your phone and take in the quiet of this Forever Wild land. That phone will be obsolete in 6

months. That “Tweet” will be ancient history in 30 minutes, but the stone laid in the foundation of the Pickering Farm Homestead is still fascinating 200 years later. Relax, breathe in, decompress and pause on the shore overlooking Toothacher Ledge. You may find seals there basking in the sun. I guarantee their day is not being interrupted by the buzzing of Facebook notifications. 🌿



Tim Henderson

Tidings

The Trust is pleased to announce a number of recent grants:

LISA TOLMAN WOTTON PRESERVE: From the **Maine Community Foundation's Land Conservation Fund**, \$5,000 to complete the removal of a dilapidated house on the property. From the **Norcross Foundation**, a \$1,000 grant also for the removal of the structure.

From the **Fields Pond Foundation**, \$4,000 for construction of the parking area.

And from the **Davis Conservation Foundation**, \$5,000 for construction of the kiosk, signage, boardwalks and bog bridges, as well as trail materials.

CHURCH LAND PRESERVE: From the **Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation**, a grant of \$10,000 for parking, signage and trails.

LILY POND: From **Land for Maine's Future**, a grant of \$2,400 to create an accessible trail.

CAMP KOOKY: From the **Eleanor F. Stich Recreation Trust**, \$750 to transport Camp Kooky campers.

New Board Members: The Trust welcomes Karen Hill and Mickie Flores as our newest board members.

Scott's Landing: If you've been wondering what the tags are at the preserve, they're part of the Schoodic Institute's phenology project, a study of plant and animal life cycle events. Recent evidence suggests that climate change may be creating a “mismatch” between the timing of bird migration with the timing of insect emergence and the flowering and fruiting plants on which birds depend for fuel. Scott's Landing is an ideal study site because of its abundance of migrating birds and the diversity of its flowering plants. For more information visit the Institute's website: schoodicinstitute.org

Supporting an IHT Preserve

Have you ever wondered who and what make the maintenance of IHT preserves possible? Who keeps the trails cleared? Who builds the bog bridging and kiosks? Who designs the brochures & signage? While IHT may be your immediate response, the real answer is folks who care about protecting and preserving our unique properties and making them available to all:



to students and teachers, families, summer visitors and islanders, scientists, and hikers of all ages. It’s people like you who help not only with the physical maintenance of IHT properties, but with essential financial support.

Each of our preserves possesses unique characteristics: some, like Settlement Quarry, feature bold granite formations, while others hold enormous moss beds or the remains of former farms and orchards. All possess stunning views; all protect specific habitats that require ongoing monitoring and maintenance. To accomplish the work each preserve requires, IHT offers an opportunity to support a preserve during our annual Shore Dinner auction when the highest bidder for each preserve becomes its proud sponsor for a designated period of time. Through their generous financial support, sponsors help us maintain their favorite preserve. For their generosity, their names will be posted on a sign at the entrance to the preserve for the duration of their support. So be sure to thank those preserve sponsors for their contribution. Better yet, consider becoming a proud sponsor yourself. You won’t regret it.



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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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Fern Photo: Elke Dorr



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Annual Meeting

Recipients of 2018 Rowan Wakefield Award: Diane and Ian Walker



Diane and Ian Walker at the IHT Annual Meeting. Photo: Elke Dorr

This year's annual meeting marked the close of one chapter for IHT with the retirement of Mike Little, while simultaneously beginning the next chapter with Paul Miller's arrival as our new Executive Director. A

social hour was followed by a presentation to Mike of a commemorative plate honoring his service. Stirring remarks came from David Vandiver, IHT's Stewardship



Retired Executive Director, Mike Little (left) with Paul Miller. Photo: Elke Dorr

Director, and Martha Bell, Environmental Educator, about their respective work. Cited for their distinguished and dedicated service to the Trust, Diane and Ian Walker were named this year's Rowan Wakefield Award winners. Not only has Diane served several terms on the board, but she's been interim chair and served on various committees for many years. Ian was recognized as one of the Trust's most dependable volunteers, helping to steward Settlement Quarry in countless ways, including building an impressive stone bog bridge. Moreover, the two are members of the Heritage Society, generously naming the Trust in their will. Congratulations to two remarkable IHT members!