



ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

The Land Trust of Deer Isle & Stonington, Maine

Spring/Summer 2019

Spring Migration

“Each new year is a surprise to us. We find that we had virtually forgotten the note of each bird, and when we hear it again, it is remembered like a dream, reminding us of a previous state of existence. How happens it that the associations it awakens are always pleasing, never saddening, reminiscences of our sanest hours.”

— Henry David Thoreau

Through their many contributions – pollination, seed dispersal, insect reduction – birds are essential to the health of our environment. Our economy, too, benefits substantially from birdwatching. That popular activity contributes around \$36 billion annually to the U.S. economy, according to birdwatch.org. Yet, birds also enhance our lives in ways not so easily quantifiable. Who among us, for example, hasn’t been delighted by early morning birdsong? Or marveled at a soaring eagle? And who can ever forget seeing a murmuration of starlings shifting themselves as one body in the blink of an eye? Such compelling sights and sounds rivet us earthbound humans and often leave us breathless with awe.

In the Down East area, the annual, highly anticipated spring bird migration is currently underway. A remarkable phenomenon by any measure, it is yet another occasion inspiring awe at the astonishing variety and number of arriving birds and, at the extraordinary journeys many of them undertake. Little wonder, then, that communities celebrate the event with festivals, including Deer Isle, with its own Wings, Waves and Woods.

Beginning with the earliest migrants such as Rusty blackbirds, which generally arrive in our area in late March, the great migration is considerably longer than we might imagine. It continues to the arrival of Blackpoll



Heron (photo by Elke Dorr)

warblers, which, according to Friends of Acadia, come “straggling through well into June.” Among the many returning species are the ospreys – a familiar sight to islanders. They migrate from as far away as Central or South America. Great Blue herons, too, arrive to fish the abundant, shallow waters of Down East ponds or in quiet coves and marshes. Warblers, typically palm, pine and yellow-rumped, arrive in late April along with many other species that continue to arrive into May. These include Blue-headed vireos and Yellow-bellied sapsuckers, as well as Ruby-throated hummingbirds, the latter leaving their winter homes – an area that extends from southern Mexico to northern Panama – as early as January.

IHT has long celebrated the Island’s rich bird diversity through our birding walks and talks. With Scott’s Landing, the Trust acquired a fine habitat for a variety of birds, one that is a favorite with birders from near and far, most particularly during the annual spring and fall migrations. Other preserves, too, are home or waystop to many species of perching birds and water fowl. To

(Cont. on page 3)



Lily Pond Preserve (photo by Susan Robinson)



By the time you read this newsletter, I will have started my second year as our Trust's Executive Director. The first year went by remarkably fast, and during it I developed a full appreciation of the year-long life cycle of the organization. There is a dazzling complexity to our

land trust, many pieces to the puzzle, which the staff work diligently to manage.

We probably wouldn't be able to accomplish this feat if it weren't for all of our volunteers, who in myriad ways help allow the staff to focus on what they have to, so a big thank you to them. Soon we will be adding a new staff position – a volunteer coordinator/office manager.

Sadly for IHT, Marissa Hutchinson, our Development Director, accepted a position at Haystack, and with her move has returned to her life-long artistic interests. We wish her the best in her new position, but certainly miss her here at the office! She ably managed and imposed an orderly system on the Trust's annual life cycle of events and activities, which I have dubbed the "Marissa Model." This model has allowed us to rather smoothly transition

From the Executive Director | Paul Miller

to our new Development Director, Julia Zell, who started officially on April 22nd, Earth Day. Please stop by the office and welcome her to the IHT family when you can.

The staff changes don't end there. Sadly, David Vandiver, our Stewardship Director, has submitted his resignation effective August 1st. David will officially retire from his non-profit career after 42 years of service, and will be focusing on his efforts as a caretaker of properties in Castine and Penobscot. During his tenure with the Trust, David has strengthened our stewardship efforts in many ways, but specifically in the monitoring efforts of our owned properties and conservation easements. Join me in thanking David for his service and dedication, and wishing him luck in his new endeavor. You only have two months left to sign up for a Tuesday Trail Day with him!

Pete Dane, our treasurer, recently commented to me that "now is the time to reorganize and re-imagine." With staff turnover seeming like our theme for 2019, these were meaningful words. I printed and then taped them to my computer monitor. Indeed, with our new staff members, we will be reorganizing and re-imagining IHT, infusing it with new energy and purpose. Stay tuned!

Spring Migration (Cont. from page 1)

increase appreciation and awareness of both our native and migrating birds and the role they all play in our lives, Paul Miller, IHT's Executive Director and life-long, expert birder, will continue to lead the popular walks on the second Saturday of each month throughout spring, summer and fall. (Check our 2019 Walks and Talks schedule for details.)

To enjoy some of the annual spring migration, Paul offers some tips. He advises going outdoors an hour after sunset, when birds take advantage of the more stable air. Rivers of birds are aloft during the night hours and can be easily observed. Paul recommends going out at the full moon in April and May, using a pair of reasonably good binoculars to focus on the moon. You will see birds move during spring migration, he says, from right to left across the face of the moon, and from left to right in fall. He notes that often we can hear birds at night better than we can see them and suggests finding an open field near woods to listen for the countless numbers passing overhead. While they can be heard with our ears, unaided, Paul adds that there are new microphones that can capture the "entire suite of calls at night," which are completely different from their daylight calls.

Citing the availability of abundant information on the Internet, he highly recommends BirdCast, a site created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Among other information,



Eastern Phoebe

the site provides a real-time migration map that visually tracks bird migrations across the country with the same Doppler radar system that helps forecast weather. In fact, he believes "it's the best tool for showing us a visualization" of birds' migratory patterns. With much enthusiasm, Paul advises that "the more time you spend outdoors observing birds, the better your life is going to be!"

For further information visit the following websites:

<http://birdcast.info>; <https://www.allaboutbirds.org> - both created by Cornell Lab of Ornithology

<https://ebird.org/home>;

<http://www.mainebirdingtrail.com/Seasons.html>;

<https://friendsofacadia.org/migration-birds>

Solar Power Donation to IHT

After Anita and Bill Haviland installed 39 solar panels to provide power for their summer and winter homes on the island, they realized they were using considerably less electricity than they were producing. Bill said they concluded that "the power company was getting a substantial amount of free electricity from us." After their neighbors declined their offer to buy the Havilands' surplus electricity, Anita came up with a creative idea: they would donate their extra power to IHT, thereby lowering the Trust's electric bill through clean energy. IHT's monthly electric bills are significantly lower now, at about \$16/per month. Bill describes the arrangement as a win for himself and Anita in that the donation is a charitable deduction, IHT's electric bills are lower, and everyone's carbon footprint is reduced. Bill noted that the idea was prompted by a letter the couple received from the electricity supplier, Fairpoint Energy, informing them that if



Anita and Bill Haviland with their solar installation
(photo by Paul Miller)

they used less than 5 kilowatts of electricity in any month, they would be billed \$5.00. The irony wasn't lost on Bill and Anita that the source of the letter was from the company's "rewards department."

From My Perspective



Dr. Kenneth Crowell (photo by Marnie & Kenneth Crowell)

I Married a Bioblitz Ken Crowell

We came to Deer Isle back in 1962, Marnie to paint, I to do research on the islands. Little did we know that I would spend the next 35 years studying the mouse populations of the island archipelago and Marnie would eventually write the proposal to transfer ownership of Mark Island from US Coast Guard to IHT. She has also been a life-long shell collector. In no time she had ID'd the shells of Penobscot Bay at Barred Island. Intertidal salt marsh and upland fog forest habitats were all new delights to us.

As soon as we retired here we revived the Christmas Bird Count and started the Warbler Wave [now Wings, Waves and Woods]. When National Moth Week came along we quickly fell in love with those largely nocturnal Lepidoptera, the moths, and began giving moth breakfasts for IHT. There may be over 300 bird species known in Maine; but there are 800 species of moths!

And all those mosses—we gave walks promising that one could identify six species of mosses from the car window and be right. That has become our approach to sharing our love of nature: make it so easy to begin that you cannot say no.

Now that we have the Internet, beginners have

access to experts to introduce you to the mosses or mushrooms you meet. Snap a photo with your smartphone and go online at your leisure. We created DeeriNature based on our experience leading walks on each of IHT's preserves. Nature activities on-site make learning easy and fun. Before you know it, you have lots of familiar old friends greeting you on your walks. You're a bioblitz!

So just what is a bioblitz? The term, coined by a Park Service naturalist in 1986, describes enthusiastic volunteers of all ages in an intense period recording all living species in an area, usually a public park or nature reserve. In order for IHT to be a good steward of its preserves, we need to know what is there. Are the trout lilies at Scotts Landing really the only ones on the island? How many bogs have pitcher plants or orchids? Are you seeing chipmunks or red squirrels?

We need your help. This is where iNaturalist comes in. In early 2011 on a preserve in California, Scott Loarie was leading a nature walk. He demonstrated a new app called iNaturalist which sent his smartphone photos with a GPS latitude/longitude reading and the time to iNaturalist, where these records are identified or confirmed and then can be used by researchers worldwide.

Whether you think of yours as a personal, rather extended sort of bioblitz, or just a biowalk, it's win-win-win! Not only do scientists around the world use your iNaturalist data to work on the big questions, but every day you meet new organisms, meet old friends, enjoy what is special about Deer Isle and feel a genuine pride in our grand land.

Land Trust Evolution David Vandiver

My first encounter with a land trust was in West Virginia in the 1990s. Harper's Ferry was the national headquarters of the Appalachian Trail, which has its own trust called the Trust for Appalachian Trail Lands. I landed a job on their staff with no previous land trust experience, and was just beginning work when my family's chance to move to Maine arose. Little did I know that Maine was one of the mother lodes of the land trust world.

In 2015 when hiring on with IHT, I finally had the chance to dive fully into this world. It was, and continues to be, an on-the-job educational experience in a broad array of topics. After four years of continuous exposure, I tend to get the ostrich syndrome, burying my head in the sand of desktop details, and forget that many have never heard of conservation land trusts. Some regions of the United States still have no local land trust. This is made obvious when I am on the phone with my family of origin, back home in Searcy, Arkansas, where the nearest land trust, 60 miles away, was formed in 2007, and lists only 6 supporters. It has been a struggle to explain to them what I do each day on Deer Isle, as I show up for work. I have compared our work to that of parks and recreation departments, fish and wildlife agencies, and environmental protection groups. Each comparison helps in some ways, but falls short of the full picture.

Today, Maine is home to over 80 land trusts, and the first here was Maine Coast Heritage Trust. It's also the largest and among the best endowed. It was founded in 1970, by Tom Cabot and Peggy Rockefeller after a conversation she had with a friend the year before. "We've got to do something," she pleaded, and they did. So did a lot more folks in the mid-to-late 1980s in other Maine towns, including Deer Isle. A movement was spawned that is beginning to mature in Maine, and is still in its infancy in other regions of the nation.

It seems inevitable, given the rapid growth of the land trust movement over the last few decades, that degree programs will eventually be developed for land trust education at the college level. Laws and regulations have been and continue to be enacted to guide our work, in regard to both taxation and real estate transactions. Though it may not make headlines, what is visible if you look closely is the birth of an institution. I can imagine a day when just about every county in the U.S. will have a local land trust staffed with professionals, some with degrees in the field, and doing the work of protecting wild places, farmland, historic landmarks, working waterfronts, and fragile landscapes. It's that kind of institution – vital and needed everywhere. It will, I believe, endure the test of time.



IHT Bids Farewell to Marissa

It is with regret that we announce the departure of Marissa Hutchinson, IHT's Development Director. Wanting to return to her artistic interests, Marissa accepted a job at Haystack and left her front-office perch at IHT, March 1. For many, Marissa was the face of IHT, the person who first greeted them as they walked through the front door, the go-to person for their questions regarding anything involved with the Trust. Her ready smile, congenial personality, willingness to help, as well as her bright and curious intellect were hallmarks of her 9 years at IHT. Many projects benefitted by her energy and enthusiasm.

Marissa began her work for IHT as a part-time AmeriCorps member. When her AmeriCorps service ended, the Trust offered her a job as its first Development Director, soon making it full-time. In addition to her development tasks, Marissa also worked on publicity, the Walks and Talks brochure, monthly e-blasts, the Shore Dinner, and various administrative tasks. Who can forget her wall of stickies in the right-hand corner above her desk – a mosaic of the many tasks she posted as reminders to herself? And how could the Ice Cream Social have been pulled together without her oversight and hands-on help? She once even hand-crafted balsam sachet pillows. Such were her wide-ranging interests and creative efforts for many areas of the Trust's work.

It is with much gratitude for all she accomplished on behalf of the Trust that we extend to Marissa our warmest wishes for success in her new job.

Island Clean-up Effort by IHT Staff

IHT staff joined the Island-wide clean up of roadside litter, Friday, April 26. They cleaned up a section of Sunset Road, from Heritage House to the Sunset Post Office. Paul said he was so enthused about the project that he also cleaned up a section of Sunshine Road, where he lives. “People really came together and the IHT staff was happy to do our part,” Paul said.

The effort is a collaboration between IHT and other Island organizations, the towns and countless volunteers. Approximately 450 bags were distributed by the Trust, while the Town also gave out special bags from DOT. Volunteers with trucks picked up the full bags and ferried them to the transfer station on Sunday.



IHT staff gathered litter during the annual Island Roadside Clean-up. From left to right, Julia Zell, Development Director; Paul Miller, Executive Director; David Vandiver, Stewardship Director; Martha Bell, Environmental Educator. (photo by Julia Zell)

In Memoriam

Stanley F. Myers

August 24, 1927-December 14, 2018

It is with great sadness that the Trust has learned of the passing of Stanley F. Myers. In the history of most organizations, there are members whose contributions are not only noteworthy, but become part of the very lifeblood of the organization itself. Such a man was Stan Myers who, through his love of the natural world and his attendant passion for conservation, helped a nascent Island Heritage Trust evolve into a viable and forward thinking organization.

As early as his college years, Stan was acutely aware of the value of preserving land for the benefit of generations to come. In 1948, he and three college friends came to Stonington on a camping trip and ended up buying Gooseberry Island, which Stan later donated to Maine Coast Heritage Trust, as IHT did not exist at that time. In the 1970s, he and his wife, Peg, bought property on Webb Cove, on which they created a conservation easement. They continued to spend summers there even after they began living year round in Blue Hill, in 1995.

According to Bill Haviland, long-time IHT member and past president, Stan was “a major force in the early years of IHT.” Ian Walker, member and supporter of the Trust, agreed and added, “Stan was a gem. He made it his business to know what was going on. He went about his work quietly and very effectively” Ultimately Stan would serve as both vice president and president of the organization.

Ann Hooke, former board member and chair of both the land and stewardship committees, remembers Stan not simply persuading his colleagues at the Trust to make Settlement Quarry its first preserve, but “getting the financing to acquire the property.” Ann also noted that Stan was an avid sailor who loved seeing the land from the water. As a consequence, he was very concerned “about protecting views from the water.” He was a “main driver of easements,” she added, and “kept detailed notes on all of them.” Through his tireless efforts, Stan helped grow the Trust’s land acquisitions and its vision for the future. In the words of Ian Walker, Stan was “a seed planter.”

Peg Myers noted that Stan always hoped to contribute to preservation along the Maine coast in general, and along Deer Isle’s coast in particular. He was simply “enchanted by the island’s incomparable beauty,” she said. Describing Stan’s death, she remarked that he fell off a ridge while hiking near their home in New Hampshire, and added that he would “regret only that it wasn’t off the shore of Webb Cove.”

Stan is survived by his wife, Peg, his two sons, and two grandchildren.



WELCOME, JULIA ZELL: The Trust is pleased to welcome Julia Zell as our new Development Director, whose first day on the job coincided, most fittingly, with Earth Day, April 22. Hailing from Jericho, Vermont, and with an educational background in art and sculpture, Julia first came to Deer Isle during 2011, to take a blacksmithing class at Haystack with Doug Wilson. So impressed with what she called “the island’s incredible beauty, Julia came to live here permanently two years ago.”

Coming soon: our new and improved website with a fresh look, reorganized information, and a more user-friendly format.

SCHOOL NEWS:

DISES nature trail to be completed.

Kids in Nature programs are already on the calendar and will be held at various preserves throughout summer. Camp

Kooky, Island Arts Camp and Scamp Camp will take nature hikes all summer long.

Citizen Science opportunities: Get outdoors and get involved in one of these projects to help researchers.

Phytoplankton samples taken weekly at a local dock will be counted and identified with microscope. Resulting data will be reported to Department of Marine Resources (DMR).

“Martha’s love of nature and capacity to gently teach children is truly a gift.”

— Tara McKechnie, DISES Principal

Phenology studies at Scott’s Landing: Participants (middle school to adult) will track the timing of buds, leaves, flowers and fruit on various plants to see how these cycles converge – or not – with bird migration feeding. A simple app will be used and data reported to the Schoodic Institute.

Clamflat Mud at Causeway Beach will be measured at low, mid and high tides to record the pH/acidity level. This helps researchers determine how juvenile clams survive as ocean chemistry changes. Data shared with Hancock Soil and Water project. Contact Martha bell at mbell@islandheritagetrust.org

2018-2019 Memorial Gifts

Island Heritage Trust is honored to have received donations in memory of the following individuals:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>John Sullivan</i> | <i>Jennifer Russell</i> |
| <i>Nita Hale Barbour</i> | <i>Carol Gunderson</i> |
| <i>Polly Peterson</i> | <i>Betsy Hodges</i> |
| <i>Hawley Peterson</i> | <i>John Culbertson</i> |
| <i>Norma Sellers Vickerson</i> | <i>Beverly Cairns</i> |
| <i>Brittany Amber Kunst Flynn</i> | <i>Peterson Family</i> |
| <i>Fran Peterson</i> | <i>Stan Myers</i> |
| <i>Pete Peterson</i> | <i>Don Reiman</i> |
| <i>Francis S. McGuire</i> | <i>Bob Smith</i> |
| <i>Matthew Asbornsen</i> | |

Accreditation Update

The Trust is currently embarked on an effort to achieve accreditation, defined by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission as a step “that results in public recognition of organizations demonstrating compliance with established quality standards.” Working with a consultant and a grant from Maine Coast Heritage Trust, a committee has been reviewing the various policies and procedures that govern IHT’s work to ensure that we are in full compliance with Land Trust Standards and Practices. We expect that the Trust will enter a lottery for first-time applicants later this spring and that, if selected, our full application will be considered by the Commission in 2020.



ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST STAFF

- Paul Miller, *Executive Director*
- Julia Zell, *Development Director*
- Martha Bell, *Environmental Educator*
- David Vandiver, *Stewardship Director*

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Newsletter

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ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

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ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

The Conservation Land Trust of Deer Isle and Stonington, Maine

Save the Dates

Annual Meeting:

Thursday, July 11, 2019

Shore Dinner:

Saturday, July 27, 2019



Shore Acres (photo by Woody Osborne)