



## From the Executive Director • Julia Zell

As I sit down to write this letter to you, our members, I am at a loss for words. The vocabulary of 2020 has been 'unprecedented,' 'challenging,' and 'uncertain.' It feels, however, like some of the potency of this language has been lost; what to write then? We have heard and spoken these same words many times over since March because they are true and continue to be true. This *has* been an unprecedented year full of challenges and uncertainties. As we approach the winter solstice, the darkest day of the year, we find ourselves still amid a global health crisis. But soon, we will be turning a celestial corner. After the longest night, the sun will grow stronger, lasting longer each day thereafter until the summer solstice. Knowing this, helps me weather the winter storms, both metaphorical and literal.

Here, at Island Heritage Trust, I am proud to say, we are still a seaworthy vessel amongst the waves. We have adapted how and where we do our work, how we share our work with all of you, and feel a renewed sense of purpose. The one thing that has remained constant throughout this year are these lands that we hold dear. Now, more than ever, it is critical to have accessible, safe, open spaces to exercise one's mind and body. At IHT, we all feel incredibly proud to help provide and protect these invaluable resources.

While we continue to work from home, and Heritage House remains closed to the public, we are strategizing new ways to deliver programming and keep our trails and preserves in top shape. Our staff -- Jacob, Tenley, Terry, and Martha -- have all been stellar at adapting from our previous methods of working and engagement. I must also say ***a big thank you to our volunteers.*** To those who met outside to learn how to safely clip Browntail Moth webs in the late winter, and then borrowed our pole pruners to continue the work on your own properties, and even helping neighbors! To those who

kept us informed of issues on our trails, and then joined our carefully directed and limited Tuesday Trail Crew workdays to help keep the preserves safe and accessible to our community. And to those who helped with our collaborative *Friends from the Field* webinar series, the other virtual programming in lieu of our familiar Walks & Talks calendar, and our daily engagement with our local school students. Overall, our relationships with our volunteers, community members, and supporters have, in many ways, grown even stronger as we find new ways of connecting, learning, and sharing with one another. We are inspired by the possibilities borne out of necessity during this time and are committed to maintaining the positive aspects of what we have created this year.

Of course, at the risk of sounding melancholic, we have also been deeply saddened by the isolation and separation this health crisis has caused. We miss seeing many of you pass through our office for the latest preserve or program information, or even just to chat and catch up. Additionally, not all of our volunteer roles have been easily adaptable to remote work and we miss those of you who would oversee the Nature Shop and cheerily engage with visitors. We also have run into difficulty with some folks struggling with internet and technology issues, skills that now define our ability to connect. This has been a year of extremes, and I am certain everyone is doing the best that they can. I want you to know that we miss you and we very much look forward to the next time we might run into you on one of our trails, attending an event or program, or welcome you back to Heritage House for a visit. Until then, please, take good care and stay well. •

*Julia Zell*





# Martha Bell: Master Naturalist & Environmental Educator



Martha Bell's passion for the natural world is so clearly part of who she is that when she says, "You want to bring people along with you," you know in your bones she does precisely that in her work as IHT's Environmental Educator. It was her enthusiasm for the natural world, in fact, that led her to apply to Maine's Master Naturalist Program, a rigorous educational program founded in 2011, which "trains volunteers to teach the public about Maine's natural world." Held in various locations throughout the state each year, the course took Martha to Ellsworth. Already a Master Gardener, she understood well the kind of strict requirements demanded by the program: 100 hours of class and field work; a commitment of 40 hours of service to the community in the first year following her graduation, with 20 hours each year thereafter for re-certification; countless hours of homework for the course; and a capstone project that would complete the intense, year-long course of study.

She relished every moment of her course, buoyed, she said, by being with "like-minded people," and "so excited to be among those who share an enthusiasm" for the natural world. Meeting monthly for a three-hour lecture as well as an all-day field trip, the course also required extensive homework, such as keeping a detailed log with drawings. It was the latter that was at first intimidating to her, she said. The intensive study required for drawing the various specimens forced her to "look more closely" at the structure of her subjects. It demanded careful scrutiny of details that the casual observer might overlook such as leaf edges, textures, striations, or number of petals, for example. Students were also required to keep a phenology calendar, recording cyclic natural phenomena, such as bird migrations and climate.

For her capstone project, Martha wanted to "maximize outreach by connecting environmental educators and Master Naturalist students, as well as teachers, schools and organizations." To that end she worked with the Blue Hill Consolidated School and Blue Hill Heritage Trust in

coordinating field trips. She also conducted nature walks with the school's third grade art students, using magnifying tools, drawing, and other hands-on activities. Connecting various organizations led to her hosting a luncheon for members of Explore Outdoors, an educational collaboration of Downeast Audubon and Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust. She introduced one of the members of Explore Outdoors to the Deer Isle - Stonington (DIS) nature trail as a model for creating a similar one in Ellsworth. Still on hold is an exchange program between the DIS schools and the Blue Hill Consolidated School in which students from each will guide those from the other school through their respective nature trails.

Finishing her capstone project was nearly within reach and graduation just around the corner, when the corona virus interrupted all plans and programs. As a result, she had to put her exchange program between the schools on hold. Although Martha is now officially a Master Naturalist, the graduation ceremony to be held at Birdsacre was first postponed until September, but has since been cancelled altogether, with a class reunion to be held in the future. In the meantime, her enthusiasm is never on hold and far from diminished. When she describes helping others to see the intricacies of plants, geological formations, lichens, or sea creatures, for example, she says in typical Martha style, "You want people to get excited, to look deeply, and just see the pure beauty of it all." •

- Elke Dorr, *IHT Board Member*



Martha measuring the temperature of the mud at Causeway Beach



# From My Perspective by Martha Bell

## *Environmental Educator for Island Heritage Trust*

We all remember mid-March 2020. The pandemic news and restrictions meant drastic adaptation and employing creativity. For Island Heritage Trust (IHT) and Blue Hill Heritage Trust (BHHT) the global health crisis sparked a heightened level of collaboration. Early on, we asked, “How do we inspire and teach others about the natural world during this strange time?” The idea of the “*Friends from the Field*” webinar format emerged and we decided to give it a try.

Each webinar is co-hosted by IHT’s Jacob McCarty and BHHT’s Landere Naisbitt. Prior to the start of the program, there is often a casual conversation with the speaker that conveys an in-person experience for the viewing audience. Following each 40-minute presentation, questions from the audience are answered via the chat box or by asking the presenters themselves with the audio feature.

Reflecting on the last nine months, I believe our project has been a fruitful collaborative success. We have completed 25-plus nature-related webinars that include such diverse topics as lady slippers, snake sex, migratory fish, beavers and mushrooms. Moreover, we have reached well over 1,000 people, some from all over the globe through our co-hosted webinar series. The contributions of my Master Naturalist classmates, colleagues, scientists, artists, gardeners, and educators, in addition to several indigenous people who shared stories about their traditions, have helped to make the series possible and truly made it a community-wide effort.

Please join us in 2021, for our new webinars that will include conversations with those who have been instrumental in conservation efforts around the peninsula. Tune in most Thursdays at 4:00 pm EST. If you are unable to join at this time, however, you may still view our growing library of webinars at your convenience on the IHT and BHHT websites.

The images to the right are just a few of the wonderful and wide array of topics covered in various webinars and remote learning sessions. If you have ideas for future webinar topics or speakers, please contact me, Martha Bell: [mbell@islandheritagetrust.org](mailto:mbell@islandheritagetrust.org). •



<http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/>

“All About Browntail Moths!”



“Learning with Nature:  
Zoom Session for Families Remote Learning”



“Tracking Maine’s Great Blue Herons Beyond State Lines”



“Marine Mammal Stranding Response  
in the Northern Half of Maine”





## Behind the Scenes in Stewardship

Looking at the calendar in my temporary stewardship home office the other day, I was startled to realize that I've been working at IHT for a full year now. It's a cliché, but the months have truly flown by as I've been learning the ropes, and, like many of you I'm sure, my sense of time has been turned on its head by our current public health situation.

Serving as IHT's first full-time Stewardship Director is an honor and I feel very fortunate to be part of this amazing team of staff and volunteers. With much help and guidance from our Stewardship Committee --particularly IHT's longtime Stewardship Chair, Ann Hooke -- as well as IHT's former Stewardship Director, David Vandiver, I've been getting to know the Trust's 25 preserves (including the islands) and our 37 conservation easements.

Stewarding these places has many facets, but our most important duty is to safeguard the natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources that IHT pledged to protect when it acquired a given preserve or accepted the donation of a conservation easement. For our preserves, that might mean maintaining a scenic view of the water by mowing a meadow to prevent trees and shrubs from blocking the view, as we did last spring at Scott's Landing, taking care to complete the work before grassland birds started nesting. Or, it might mean developing a plan for controlling black swallowwort -- a locally uncommon, non-native, invasive vine -- at Lisa Tolman Wotton Nature Preserve, before it spreads further and crowds out native plant species, which birds and other wildlife depend on for food and shelter. It might also mean ensuring recreational access. I've quickly come to appreciate that keeping our trails and beaches safe and enjoyable places to visit is a lot of work! We were very fortunate to have Terry Real back this year as our Summer Stewardship Assistant. His knowledge of the preserves is invaluable and together we were able to tackle many projects and slowly re-start our volunteer Trail Tuesday workdays with appropriate safety precautions. I know Terry agrees with me that working with volunteers on the preserves is one of the highlights of the job.

In conservation easement stewardship, our role is different, but no less important. Ranging in size from 2 to 145 acres, these are properties that private landowners and IHT have jointly committed to protect in perpetuity. We work as

partners with the landowners to safeguard the natural, scenic, historic and/or cultural resources of these lands (and islands) through voluntary, legally-binding restrictions on development and other land uses. And each easement, like each property, is unique. Many of the easements that IHT holds were primarily created to protect wildlife habitat, while others preserve scenic viewsheds, undeveloped shorelines and islands, historic sites, or traditional access for shellfish harvesting. Most of IHT's easements have some combination of these "conservation purposes."

But how does the land trust know if we're being good stewards of our preserves or our conservation easements? The answer, in part, is monitoring. Over the last several months, I've spent a good portion of my time conducting monitoring visits of IHT's easements and preserves. In the case of our easements, annual monitoring visits provide an opportunity to ensure that the terms of the easement are being upheld, to make observations about the state of the property's conservation values, to address any questions or concerns a landowner may have, and to build and maintain relationships with our partner owners. When possible, we try to walk the property with the landowner, and, obviously, this year that necessitated a few adjustments.

At first glance, monitoring our preserves may seem unnecessary. After all, we visit most of them frequently throughout the year to work on trails, check kiosks, manage vegetation, etc. An annual monitoring visit is different though. While not a legal obligation (as is the case with easements), it is considered a best management practice and it's a chance to step back and re-examine whether we are really fulfilling our management goals and protecting each property's unique resources. These visits also include walking the boundaries to check that they are well-marked and free of encroachment. Based on these observations, we may find the need to revise our workplan for the year ahead.

Helping to take care of 1,450 acres of preserves and easements is a big responsibility, but also a great joy -- particularly on those summer evenings when the light seems to last forever and I find myself on a preserve at the end of my workday, it hits me just how lucky I am. Thank you for being part of the IHT community and supporting the stewardship of these special places. I look forward to seeing you on the trails! •

- Tenley Wurglitz, *Stewardship Director*





## Volunteer Spotlight

### Anne Beerits

Founded in 1986 at a kitchen table gathering, Island Heritage Trust had its origins in and continues its work today with a cadre of dedicated volunteers who are the heart of its work. Anne Beerits has long been among that hard-working group, serving in a multitude of ways. She first got involved as a board member and then served on various committees, including Program and Wings, Waves, and Woods. As volunteer steward for the Edgar B. Tennis Preserve, she helped with trail-building and maintenance. She also helped



with the Shore Dinner and dedicated time to newsletter production and editing. While Anne can't recall the precise year her service to IHT began, it was of long duration.

Aside from her volunteer work, Anne is the proud co-owner and operator of Nervous Nellie's Jams and Jellies, along with her partner and artist, Peter Beerits. When asked what IHT means to her as a local business owner, Anne says, "IHT is a community resource; we are all trying to make a living that helps Deer Isle continue to be a better place. When we can do that together – that's the best." She goes on to explain how she interprets IHT's mission: "To maintain the value of our island through collaboration. To help people have a deeper relationship with the island and the nature here...to their place, their home." She offers what such a relationship has meant to her: "The natural world has always been, and continues to be, spiritual nourishment for me." And while conservation is interpreted variously, Anne views it as "a mechanism of sustaining the ecological value of a particular place for the greater good: critters, humans, the whole works." She adds that it also means "to fully acknowledge our land's historical relevance and also its future."

IHT is not the only beneficiary of Anne's volunteerism. She also served on the board of the Deer Isle-Stonington Chamber of Commerce, prior to putting on her IHT hat. When asked why she volunteers, she stated simply, "I volunteer because I can and it feels good to contribute." To those who would like to volunteer but lead busy lives like hers, she says, "You have to pace yourself." She urges them that when they can, they should strive to do more.

Volunteers like Anne are a vital part of IHT's work and we recognize their contributions in helping us protect our fragile land. Through our volunteers, we continue to build relationships with our unique community, all of us working together to – in Anne's words – "help Deer Isle be a better place." And to all our volunteers: Stewardship Trail Crew, Preserve Stewards, Nature Shop Ambassadors, Committee Members, and our dedicated Board of Trustees, you make fulfilling our mission possible. IHT could not do it without you! •

- Jacob McCarty, *Outreach Manager*

P.S. If you are interested in volunteering for IHT please email me at: [Jmccarty@islandheritagetrust.org](mailto:Jmccarty@islandheritagetrust.org)

# IHT Welcomes Two New Board Members!

We are so pleased to announce two new, interim board members: Abby Barrows and Anna Goff, both of Stonington. Each has been involved with IHT in the past and will bring her skills and passion for the Island to this organization. They will be officially voted onto our Board of Trustees by you, our members, at our Annual Meeting next year. Please join us in a warm welcome to Abby and Anna!



**Abby Barrows** is a Marine Research Scientist and grew up in Stonington, Maine. Her passion for travel brought her to the University of Tasmania, where she earned a BSc in Zoology. After mapping the canopy of old-growth temperate rainforests

and trapping Tasmanian devils, Abby studied and published two papers on seahorse and pipefish behavior and diversity in Papua New Guinea. She has traveled the Southern Oceans and South Pacific by boat, trekked the Himalaya, explored the Middle East, researched sea turtles and big cats in South and Central America, dived Mediterranean wrecks, and worked aboard schooners and lobster boats in the Gulf of Maine. On her travels, she saw one thing in common everywhere: plastic pollution. Abby directed global microplastic pollution research since 2013, developing the most diverse and largest known dataset available to-date. She has published multiple papers on the subject and obtained her Master's degree from College of the Atlantic in 2018. When not studying plastics, you can find her out on her oyster farm, Long Cove Sea Farm in Deer Isle, Maine.

**Anna Goff** of Starbird Farm, Stonington:

"I have been drawn to the study of plants and ecology for as long as I can remember. Though I grew up in an urban setting, just over the border of Chicago, I was lucky to have family and mentors who took time to share their own love of nature with me. My time spent in local preserves, exploring and volunteering, were formative experiences. Naturally, I pursued an undergraduate degree in Environmental Biology. After a year of doing primarily lab work related to soil remediation at Cornell, I realized I needed to find work with more of a direct connection to the land. On a whim, I applied for an Americorps position farming with draft horses within a community for adults with developmental disabilities located outside Philadelphia. I fell in love with farming and fell in love with the community at Camphill Village Kimberton Hills, where I remained as a gardener and caretaker for four years. While there, I began an apprenticeship in the theories and practice of biodynamic agriculture, which I completed while working as a gardener in Avena Botanicals' herb gardens in Rockport, ME. Maine quickly felt like home. I have lived in Stonington for four years now. Over the past three years I have built and opened a farm stand at my home near Burnt Cove Market, where I sell organically grown seedlings, vegetables, and cut flowers. I also trial vegetable varieties for Fedco Seeds and work as a landscape gardener, tending perennial flower gardens. Last year I participated in IHT's program committee. I would love to help with the good work you are doing to protect beautiful spaces for flora and fauna to grow and to help community members to learn for generations to come." •



## ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

### Island Heritage Trust Staff

Julia Zell, *Executive Director*

Martha Bell, *Environmental Educator*

Tenley Wurglitz, *Stewardship Director*

Jacob McCarty, *Outreach Manager*

Terry Real, *Seasonal Stewardship Assistant*

### Board of Trustees

Bill Wiegmann, *Chair*

Woodley Osborne, *Past-Chair*

Karen Hill, *Treasurer*

Mickie Flores, *Secretary*

Abby Barrows

Elke Dorr

Anna Goff

Ken Kleeman

Stephen Rowan

Doug Wilson

Bert Yankliun

### Newsletter

Elke Dorr

Ann Hooke

Woodley Osborne



## Preserve trails remain OPEN!

Please check out website for detailed guidelines on how to safely visit our preserves at this time. Key guidelines include: maintaining a 6ft minimum distance and wearing a mask when encountering others, having a plan B or C if you arrive at a full parking area, dogs on leash at all times, and do not use the sign-in boxes.

## Thank you for a successful Summer Season!

We are so grateful to all of you for helping to make the summer of 2020 a success, despite unimaginable challenges. Folks handled themselves safely and respectfully at our preserves and we had no major incidents. There was excellent participation in our virtual events, webinars, and other programs, even from those who were unable to visit Deer Isle this year! And we received an outpouring of support for our continued work and pursuit of our mission. *Thank you!*

## Programs to remain virtual for the time being

We will not be encouraging the gathering together of individuals until it is safe to do so. In the meantime, check our website and online calendar for the most up-to-date program information, virtual resources, and webinar registration.

## Heritage House still closed to the public until further notice

The staff is working from home for the time being. We will check phone messages every day, but emailing [iht@islandheritagetrust.org](mailto:iht@islandheritagetrust.org) with any questions or concerns is the best option. Thank you for understanding. Check our website for more info.

## Collaboration with Island Workforce Housing

Over the past year we have been working with IWH towards securing land for both conservation and workforce housing, and have succeeded! Land on Sunset Crossroad has been acquired for IWH's phase 1 building site, along with a future 14-acre preserve and a 3-acre conservation easement along the Oliver's Pond wetland area. We will keep you informed as we work towards building a plan for creating access to this beautiful area that is now protected!

## *In Memoriam:*

Alexander S. Kasparian  
Alf Butters  
Alice Sawyer Shepard  
Annie Pressey  
Arie van Everdingen  
Arle Schardt  
Betty McNally Hartnett  
Bigelow Cushman  
Bob & Skip Smith  
Bonnie Lateiner  
Caleb Happ  
Chris Williams  
Colin Walsh  
Diane Walker  
Dick & Dorothy Kirkpatrick  
Don Joffray  
Eleanor Walker  
George "Pete" Barbour  
Gerry Immonen  
Jean Porter  
Jennifer Russell  
John & Fran Peterson  
John Grant  
John H. Culbertson Jr.  
John H. Murphy  
John Sullivan  
Mariegold Wollam  
Mary McGuire  
Mrs. Cairns  
Nancy Seltz  
Pamela Beden-Poling  
Pearl Spencer Mullican  
Pete & Prow Peterson  
Ruth Duchacek  
Ruth Powell  
Sarah & Wilfred Armster  
Sheila Nichols  
Stan Griskivich  
Stan Myers  
Terry Romano  
The Peterson Family  
Willard Stinson



# ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST



The Conservation Land Trust of  
Deer Isle & Stonington, Maine

---

P.O. Box 42  
420 Sunset Rd  
Deer Isle, ME 04627  
207.348.2455

*Celebrating 33 years of  
land conservation in  
eastern Penobscot Bay  
and the Deer Isle area.*

*Thank you for your  
enduring support!*

## *Tributes In Honor Of:*

Ann & Roger Hooke  
Betsy Gooding  
Carol Walsh  
Caroline Werth  
Cathy Hart  
Chris, Elysia, Zariah, Elliot, & Duncan Kapsha  
Dr. William A. Haviland  
Earth Day's 50th Year  
Emily Wendell  
Jacob McCarty  
James Lyon  
Jay Denbo  
Jeffrey & Diana Hartnett  
Jill Smith & Jennifer Morrow  
Julia Zell  
Margaret Myers  
Marnie & Ken Crowell  
Martha Bell  
Michele Flores  
Mike & Dawn Little  
Nat Barrows  
Robin Alden & Ted Ames  
Sue & Tom Montgomery  
Susan McClure  
Tenley Wurglitz  
Wendy Alpaugh & William McDonnell  
Woody Osborne

*Printed on 100% Recycled Paper*

