

HIGHLIGHTS

For Island Heritage Trust Preserves without Nature Trails
And Other Places with Public Access



GRAYS COVE REACH BEACH



On the far shore rises Naskeag, for so many years a beacon for annual gatherings of the Native American groups living along the coast. At many places along this protected side of Deer Isle along the Reach the early peoples found rich hunting in marshes such as the one across the road.

If the tide is low you can see the handsome delta patterns in the fine muds of the beach, patterns that delight the physicist. Look carefully at the holes and tracks and trails made by shellfish and marine worms. Biologist Dr. Robert Knowlton tells us that the biomass and species diversity of organisms under this mud here exceeds that of the organisms on its surface. In this “invisible world”, the tracks and holes reveal the preferred zones where the various mollusks and marine worms live.

You may want to bring a small shovel or clam rake and a plate on which to put your specimen. Even though you are not harvesting any clams, you should have a shellfish license available at the Deer Isle town hall. Both Stonington and Deer Isle have a shellfish committee and jointly they hire a warden to protect the clam flats. A Recreational license for a youngster costs very little and comes in a nice plastic folder, a great keepsake. Conservation regulations are not a nuisance; they are an outstanding example of local control and they can save our valuable resource for sustainable harvesting.

Although most species here have no commercial value you will be well rewarded just digging them to take a quick look.



You can find one worm with a head like spaghetti, (spaghetti worm, *Amphitrite* spp. above). Another is called shimmy worm (*Nephtys* spp. below) for the way it writhes back and forth when you touch it and *Glycera* shoots out a blood red proboscis, almost like a snake’s tongue.



Be careful: some of these worms pinch and sting. As with any other live creature, be sure to return it safely to its home.

Every beach on the Island has its own “personality”, its own distinctive physical characteristics and its own community of plant and animal species. How would you characterize the Reach beach? How is it like and unlike the Causeway beach or Sand Beach or any other beach you know? See the downloadable [*Species Almanac*](#) for further information.

Elizabeth Compton gifted the beach here at Gray’s Cove to Island Heritage Trust. Across the road lies a marsh (below) which she also protected by the gift of a conservation easement to be held by the trust. It is easy to see why these protected waters so full of game and marine resources were spots favored by the first people here. Archeological sites dot the east side of Deer Isle.



LILY POND PARK



Randy and Sandy Haskell, from an Island family, for years kept the Deer Isle's fresh water Lily Pond Beach open to the public. To assure future access, they contacted IHT. With a grant from the state program called Land for Maine's Future, as well as some smaller foundation support and invaluable help from Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Island Fishermen's Wives and Island Community Center, the beach purchase was made in 2009. The adjacent dam to regulate the water flow was acquired in 2014.



The mixed habitat is just what many of our birds favor. Grade 7 ventures here to study the aquatic microorganisms and plants and invertebrates associated with fresh water pond habitats.



Water lilies and pickerelweed fringe the shore.



When school is out, this is a favorite swimming hole.



Several species of dragonfly and belted kingfishers clatter overhead. You may even spot a beaver.



Is the Lily Pond more important for what is above the water surface or below it?



The aquatic life views our lilies this way:



Over the years Maine's Inland Fish and Wildlife Department has stocked fish for recreation such as the brook trout below. (What would happen if local fishermen introduce more species for bait or for fishing? It would be disastrous.)



In the shallows by the beach you may see the common sunfish called pumpkinseeds (below).



Green frogs (below) are among our most common frogs. Spring peepers live here too.



You are not likely to see many reptiles here, such as snapping turtles and garter snakes (below). Neither one wants anything to do with humans.



In winter the pond sometimes freezes over for excellent ice skating or maybe even ice boating. Ice boating was popular on the Lily Pond and on the Mill Pond as well as on Walker Pond across the Reach.

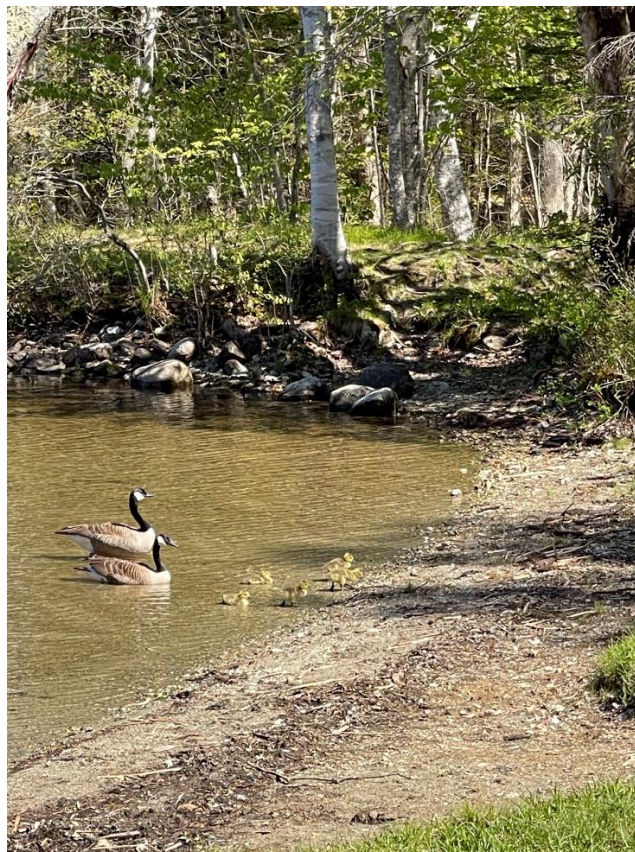


The Lily Pond is primarily spring-fed. What do you know about where your drinking water comes from? Here we do not have some mysterious aquifer; there is no underground river. For much of the Island we have only lenses of what amounts to water gathered in between the cracks in the granite. Picture a jar of marbles with some water poured into it. If the water between the “marbles” is removed, salt water from the sea around us can seep in and ruin our wells for years. How will water issues limit Deer Isle’s development? What role will the Lily Pond play in the future?

In early spring the shoreline woods is delicately fringed with a blooming lace - the shadbush, what some old timers call Island pear.



Purchasing this area was a remarkable achievement. Stewarding it for generations to come will be another feat.



MARK ISLAND/MARIN VIEW

From Burnt Cove Market the scenic Sand Beach Road traces the western edge of the Island leading eventually to Stonington. Halfway along, a pullout on the road, the Marin View, affords the best place where you can see Mark Island Light from the mainland.



John Marin, 1870-1953, one of our nation's preeminent artists, painted some of his finest works in Stonington. Abstract as they are, one can clearly see in the paintings that the artist spent profitable hours at the Sand Beach roadside turnout, looking at the very special scenery including Mark Island. His painting of Mark Island Light is one of the treasures of the Portland Museum of Art.

Marin rented at Sand Beach and in Stonington before he moved on downeast to Addison. His daughter in law Norma tells of going to Boothbay to pick up a new sailboat. On the way back, shortly after she and her companion left North Haven the fog closed in. After some anxious time, the fog parted just enough to reveal a lighthouse. Norma declared triumphantly that now they were safe; the Thoroughfare was just ahead.

But her companion was less reassured; don't you have to count the seconds between fog horn blasts or light flashes and consult the chart to be sure you have the right lighthouse? "Oh no," Norma laughed, "It looks just like the Mark Island Light painting."

The coast of Maine has attracted a number of our country's finest artists – Winslow Homer, Rockwell Kent, and Andrew and Jamie Wyeth come readily to mind. Deer Isle has its own

astonishingly numerous and productive cadre of living artists as well as the fine Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. These artists can be counted on to keep supplying us with images of this jewel, the picturesque small lighthouse island set amidst some of the world's finest island scenery.

At the entrance to the waterway known as The Thoroughfare, stands Mark Island Light. First lit on New Year's Day of 1858, this is the welcoming beacon at Deer Isle's front door. In 1998 Island Heritage Trust took title to Mark Island as a wildlife preserve and the US Coast Guard agreed to maintain the light itself.

The triangle area between the islands here has been recognized as a wildlife region of national significance. In addition to being a good place to watch for seals and porpoises, one can expect to see loons, scoters, and rafts of eider ducks here. Cormorants, black guillemots, common terns and, in late summer, even purple sandpipers on their way to the ledges offshore can often be spotted.

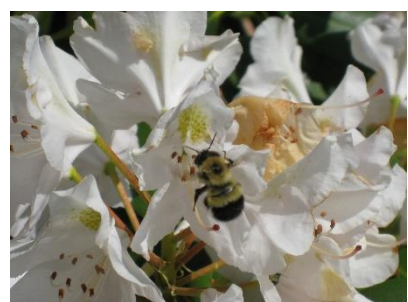
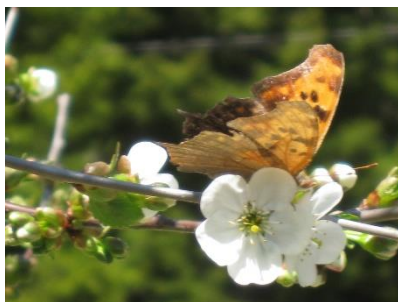


Heritage House

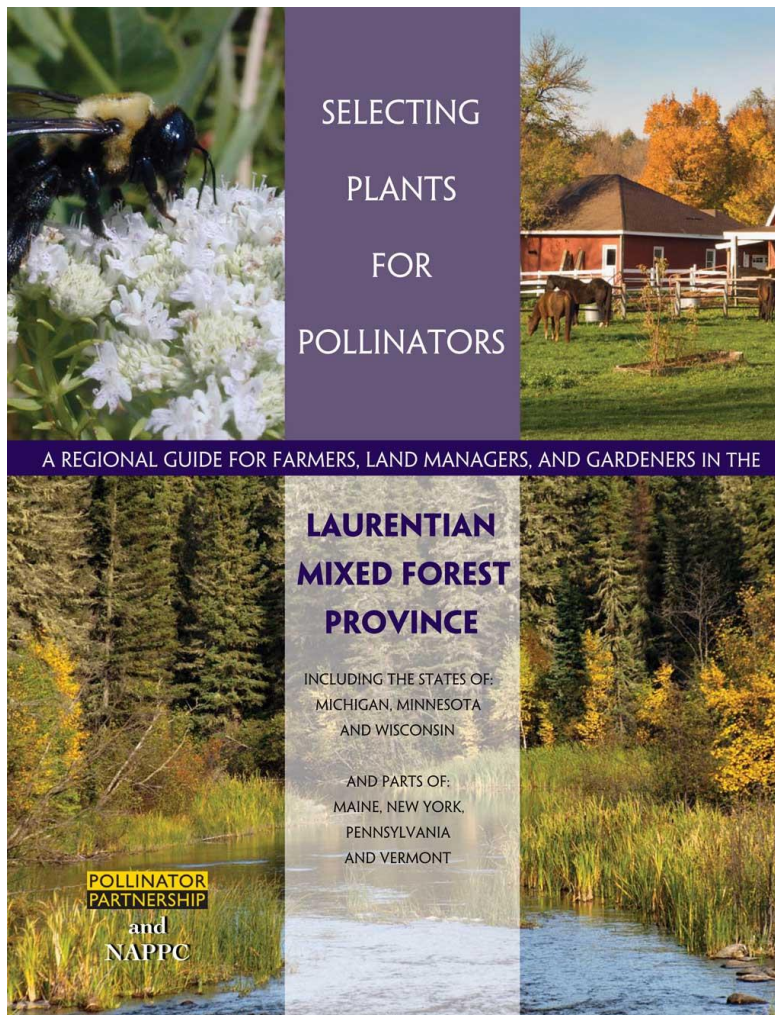
420 Sunset Road, Route 15A



Next to the Deer Isle Stonington Historical Society stands the headquarters of the Island Heritage Trust. In the building (built by Salome Sellers's grandson after the Civil War) you will find the trust office and the Nature Store where you can find trail guides, field guides, binoculars, clothing and other nature-related items. Hours are 8-4 PM, Monday through Friday, year round, and 1-3 PM Saturday and Sunday in summer, July and August.



Behind the barn lies the old orchard, now shared with the historical society. The unmowed area around the fruit trees has been designated The Pollinator Patch. We are realizing that our nation's food supply depends largely on insect pollination. A complex of disasters has struck the imported honey bee populations. Maine has a number of native pollinator species and we can learn how to encourage them from ice-out to first frost. See www.pollinator.org and the Fish and Wildlife Service at <http://www.fws.gov/pollinators/> for information according to your zip code.

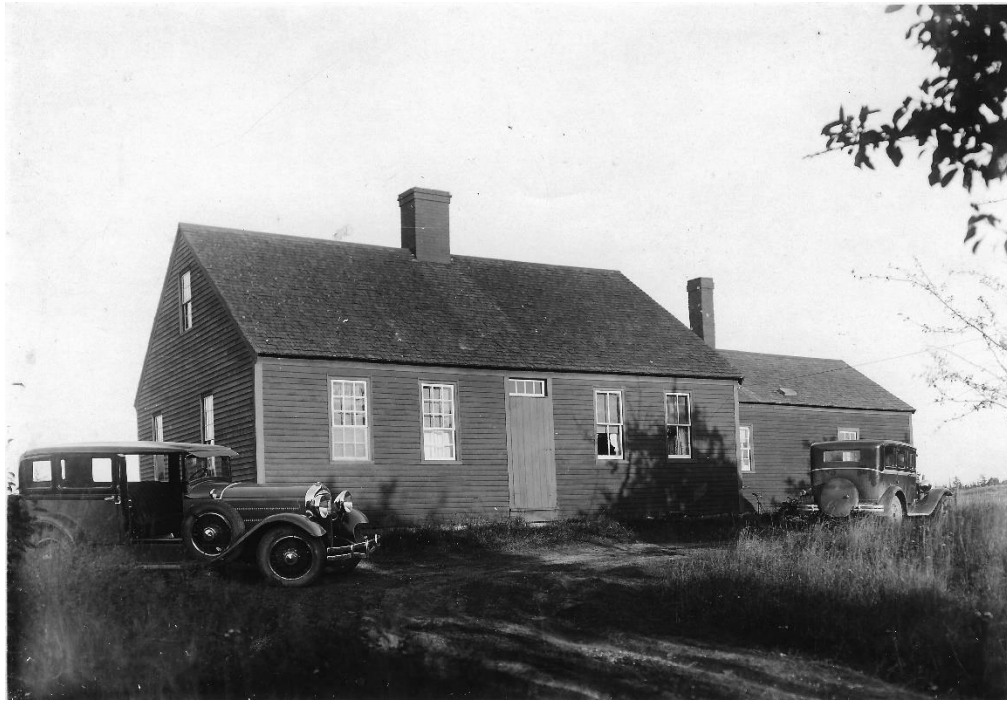


Download the [Species Almanac](#) for more about our plant and animal species.

Salome Sellers House

The Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society shares the Old Sellers Farm with Island Heritage Trust. The farm has become a campus with the headquarters of both the historical society and the land trust. The small original home of Salome Sellers has become the focal point of Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society with exquisite interior period displays. Outbuildings now house the Archives with its America's Cup displays and a barn full of exhibits of Native American materials and the Island's early industries, sure to please all ages. On the grounds there are interesting Heritage gardens which showcase plantings of different time periods as well as the rejuvenated orchard and gardens showcasing planting for our pollinators.

Winter hours are Wednesdays and Fridays, open 11-4 PM. In summer the Society is open on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 1-4 PM.



In 1960 a group of enterprising citizens bought the Sellers house (above), built in 1830. It became the focus of the newly-formed Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society.

Mariners Memorial Park



This small park is owned and maintained by the Evergreen Garden Club. Walk the mowed perimeter path one way for a half mile and then turn around to experience a quite different view while getting a mile of good exercise—and this small park is a favorite place for folks to exercise their dogs as well.

Island Heritage Trust holds what is called a Conservation Easement guaranteeing that no future development threatens this small gem of a park. Each grade of the elementary school has adopted a preserve which they study and visit, as pictured here.



The daffodils planted here were put here by grateful patients to say thank you to Dr. Tony Garland when he retired. He was one of the founders of the Island medical center. An ornamental tree by the parking lot honors Dr. Dan Rissi. These lovely plants are not what you call “invasives”. We call them naturalized because they are happy outside of our gardens, but they do not take over. When a plant species “from away” becomes so aggressive that it takes over everything, then we call it an invasive. Biologists do not yet know what makes a species that is fine in one place and at one time change its ways and become an invasive.

Oxeye daisies, rugosa roses and lupines are flowers which are not native but have made themselves quite at home here, but hardly invasive. However, Japanese knotweed or “Mexican Bamboo” (neither Mexican nor a bamboo) is an invasive that is a real pest here on the Island. Purple loosestrife is an invasive in Maine and most of New England. Oriental Bittersweet has invaded much of the Island and is smothering the native species. The garden club members have not yet succeeded in getting rid of all the bittersweet. Did you find any?



From the parking lot you might choose to pause at the picnic tables and admire the view and the gentle rise topped with daffodils and bluebirds or tree swallows in season. The contours here at Mariners Park were shaped by glaciers long ago. You can see the ridge of a moraine extending east-west, sloping up to the right as you walk toward the shore. Another moraine runs along the shore.

The field is a prime spot for observing butterflies such as the Northern pearl crescent, spring azure, ringlet, and tiger swallowtail. If you learn your butterflies you might want come back and count butterflies for the great national Fourth of July butterfly count, not unlike the December Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Citizen scientists, amateur volunteers, gather valuable scientific data so we have facts on which to base our efforts to take care of our environment. See the web site of the North American Butterfly Association, www.naba.org.

To begin your Mariner's Mile perimeter walk, retrace your steps along the road back to the Memory Fence. Follow the mowed path as it parallels a rail fence. In 1961 a group headed by Ethel Farrell and Capt. Walter Scott founded the Evergreen Garden Club. They purchased the 23 acres of the old Morey Farm here on Long Cove. Over the years club members planted ornamentals along this Memory Fence to honor their loved ones.

Speckled alder, several dogwoods, our native holly, hawthorn, and apple are clues that remind us this was once a farm. Every year in the second or third week of May these shrubs are alive with waves of warblers. The Island observes a festival called Wings, Waves, Woods to celebrate.

After skirting the adjacent woods, the path leads down to the shore road which bisects the park. Commercial clambers and fishermen use this access. On the beach here are seaside goldenrod, beach heather, and a variety of other salt-tolerant grasses, rushes and sedges.



Before you head on up the shore bluff, you will see the Mariners Memorial with its barely visible ship engraved on the granite. Mariners Memorial Park is a memorial to our seafarers, the men who lost their lives at sea. The Stonington-Deer Isle Historical Society has exhibits on local seafaring traditions and the early America's Cup crews composed entirely of Deer Isle men.

Off shore you can see several fishing boats moored. This is a working waterfront. As with all our Island coastline, you can easily see how the runoff from our gardens, lawns and driveways could affect our marine resources. The Evergreen Garden club prides itself on maintaining this park as a pollution-free zone. We must be careful about what poisons we use. Shorelands zoning regulations help us maintain a filtering vegetated buffer zone—not just trees—along the shores. Our precious nursery grounds for shellfish, lobsters, and fish species depend on that protection.



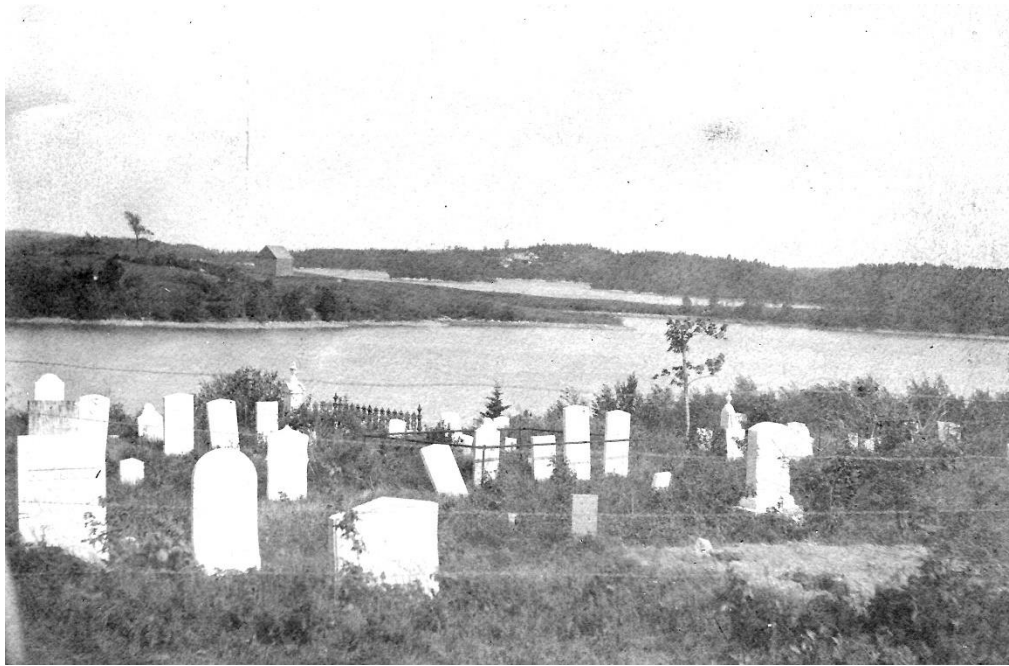
At the height of the shore bluff (above) you can see the results of the glacier that scoured here a mile or so thick, over 16 thousand years ago. Material deposited by ice from the glaciers of the past has left us with piles of unsorted sediment known as *till*. The deposits piled up in ridges or hills are called moraines. The beach at the foot of the bluff here is made of gravel eroded by wave action on the glacial till.

Follow the mowed path upslope past the apple trees and memorial benches to complete the circle, pausing on your way to inspect the small bog screened by shrubs and larch trees - and poison ivy. Beware!



Where the glaciers scooped out a pool that does not drain, a special association of plants and animals thrives. This little bog is one of the best places on the Island to see the magenta flowers of the wild azalea (actually now classified as a rhododendron) which is called **rhodora**. Along all our roadsides you can see this lovely flower, in bloom almost at the same time as the **shadbush** and **aronia**.

The larch trees here, also known as tamarack or hackmatack, are conifers that do not lose their needles all at once. In autumn they turn a lovely gold and in spring they bear pretty strawberry-red cones.



This old photograph shows the Morey Farm as seen from the cemetery at the head of Long Cove. The purchase of the farm was the Evergreen Garden Club's first conservation project.

Holt Mill Pond



Holt Mill Pond Preserve is owned by the town of Stonington. Once the site of a mill as the name suggests, this important marsh serves as nursery for many of our marine species. Penobscot Bay is the second largest bay on the east coast, outranked only by the Chesapeake Bay. However, for impressive salt marshes Maine offers Scarborough Marsh, southwest of Portland, at close to 3,000 acres. Salt marshes have been targets of relentless development from the days of the European colonists right up to today. Yet our marine resources depend on them. Here on Deer Isle, every bit of shoreline counts—and how property owners maintain their lawns eventually impacts our coastal ecosystems.

The Holt Mill Pond trails are accessed from near the medical center but this preserve is perhaps best enjoyed by kayak or canoe. You can go upstream quite far even at mid-tide and you will be impressed by the depth of the clay and silt that the marsh grasses hold.

The Backbone Trail begins here. It is a community work in progress that currently extends as far as George's Pond outlet. Two new, relatively short Holt Mill trails take hikers down a series of short switch-backs and on a short loop. These trails have enough contour and irregularities that although it is not taxing, this is not the place for those with walking challenges. Birders will probably be delighted with the woodlands harboring wrens and thrushes. An overlook

takes you to view the marsh where you are very likely to see ducks and shorebirds. Overhead an osprey and northern harrier (formerly known as marsh hawk) are likely to be cruising.

Deer trails take you to several other overlook detours, spots farther up the marsh where you will surely be impressed with how deep those mud banks are at low tide. Although there is no beach here to explore—and marsh habitat is too fragile--children may be delighted at the trees with strange shapes—a rhinoceros of an ancient beech tree, an old yellow birch that looks like a headless woman with a bustle. The forest is carpeted with more *Mianthemum*, Wild Lily-of-the-Valley, than most of us have ever seen in our life. Moss scholars will find a number of species to challenge them, well beyond the elementary half a dozen they might have learned at our Island's other preserves.



Henry Holt was born in 1644 in Andover, Massachusetts. He built his mill somewhere near the harbor just east of where the present road crosses the cove. This view(above) shows it was formerly a busy place.

Bridge End

The property known as Bridge End is now owned by the town of Deer Isle. Maine Coast Heritage Trust helped a dedicated group of citizens acquire this property for the town through private donations from donors. Some wrote checks; some accompanied their piggy bank contribution with a little note. All contributions were appreciated.

The park is open from dawn to dusk and toilet facilities are available seasonally. Thanks to grant funding from both the Maine Department of Transportation and Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, there is a public boat launch site, a floating dock, and a parking lot for trucks with boat trailers. Picnic tables overlook the shore.



The beach here shares the same natural history with the nearby Island Heritage Trust Preserve at Scott's Landing, with the added attraction of dramatic views of the underside of the bridge. Not to be missed! See the [Species Almanac](#) for more about our shores. See the *Scotts Landing* Virtual Guided Nature Tour for a photograph of the ferry that predated the bridge.



June 19, 1939 was Dedication Day for the completed Deer Isle-Sedgwick Bridge.



On June 21, 2014 the bridge was rededicated and our new park was opened with a great day of celebration.

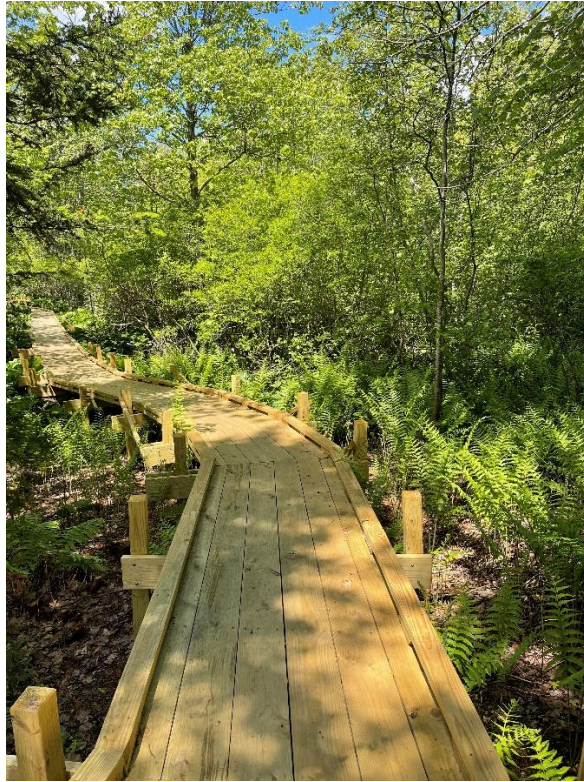
School Nature Trail



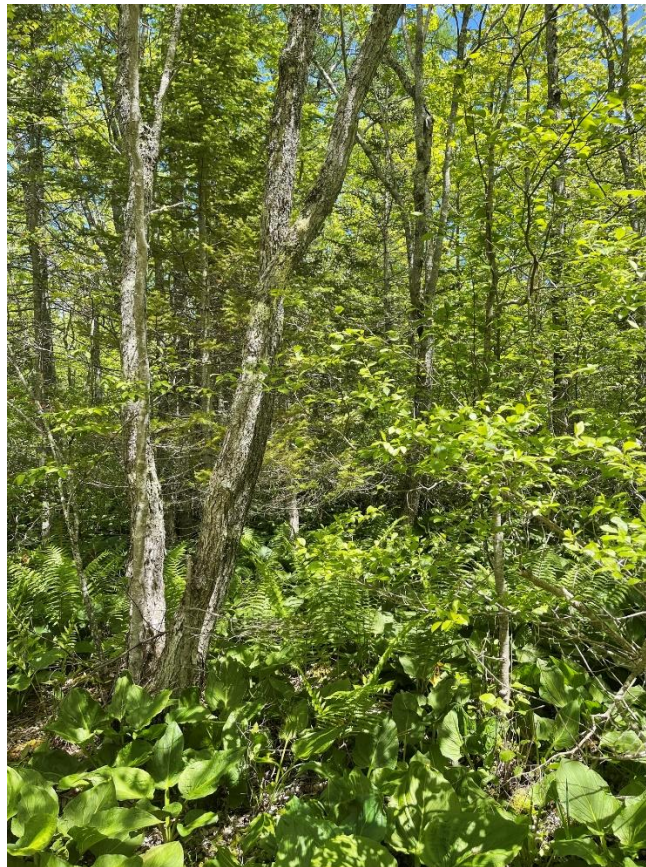
The Nature Trail at Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School is open to the public and visitors are most welcome when school is not in session. A boardwalk winds through the mixed forest with a .1 of a mile handicapped accessible and .3 of a mile overall.



Island Heritage Trust is the partner founding organization. Under the direction of teacher Mickie Flores, board member of IHT, and with the help of IHT's Environmental Educator Martha Bell and the outstanding craftsmanship of Josh Worthington, two outdoor classrooms with kiosks complement the trail.



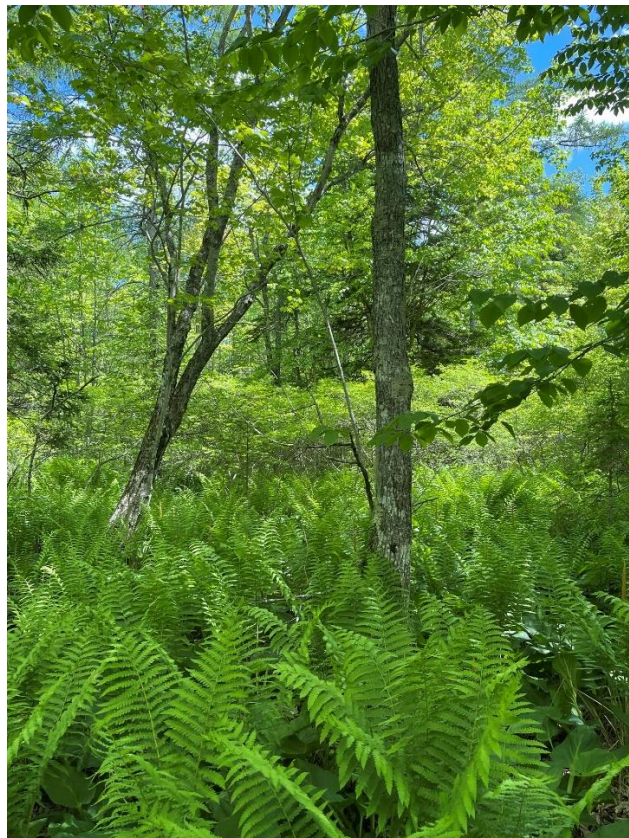
Any time of year, this pleasant walk feels spacious and welcoming.



Students will encounter Red Maple, Birch and a variety of native shrubs. They especially enjoyed researching the thermogenic properties of skunk cabbage.



They learn about our lichens close up



...as well as our common ferns.



Bunchberry blossoms, Wild Lily of the Valley and Starflower bloom along the way.



The trail loops around a grand old birch.



A woodpecker left its mark on the post circling to the narrower trail which leads to the school building by way of the kiosk and outdoor classroom.



Not only do the students have a birdfeeder, they can use binoculars. This habitat is home to ovenbirds which virtually scream plaudits to the “Teach er, teach er, teach er”.



Their beloved teacher Michele Flores came to Deer Isle in 2008 from New York State where she had been honored as Governor’s Fellow. In 2011 she was recognized as Governor’s Fellow

here in Maine, and in 2022 she went to Washington DC to receive the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

Over the past six years Mickie arranged grants and contributions from over a dozen agencies and coordinated a similar number of volunteers from the community and IHT- no small achievement while also teaching every day.

During the challenging days of Covid, every child in the elementary school went outdoors to the nature trail morning and afternoon so that the custodial staff could disinfect the classrooms. The bigger and on-going effect was that the children and their teachers developed a deep appreciation for being outdoors.



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Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society

Penobscot Marine Museum

Marnie and Ken Crowell