

ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

The Conservation Land Trust of
Deer Isle and Stonington, Maine, and Surrounding Islands



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Extreme Chemistry at Pine Hill

By any measure, meticulous scientific exploration on a molecular level seems not merely a daunting pursuit, but an impenetrable, mysterious, and perhaps even arcane process for most of us. For Dr. Amanda Olsen, however, such work is inextricably bound to her undisguised passion and the intense focus of her professional life – the study of how rocks break down.

Since 2009, the enthusiastic professor in the School of Earth and Climate Sciences at the University of Maine, Orono, has been bringing groups of students to IHT's Pine Hill Preserve to study the process known as chemical weathering. By regularly sampling the rocks at Pine Hill (approximately 4 times per year) and subjecting them to testing in the lab, Professor Olsen is



Student Eileen Yardley taking a sample

enlarging our understanding of how rocks and water interact “to release elements to the environment.” In a recent interview, she noted, “In particular, we are interested in the release of heavy metals that can be toxic.” And like Dr.

Nishanta Rajakaruna (see Spring 2011 newsletter), Professor Olsen finds the Pine Hill site particularly suited to her work because it is composed of serpentine, a rock extremely low in nutrients and high in heavy metals.

While the extensively published professor spoke with ease about the complex chemistry involved in her work, she confessed that she “hated chemistry in college.” However, she soon realized that it “could answer questions about the earth’s surface,” she said. Since that realization, she’s been determinedly pursuing chemical studies of extreme rock, like that found at Pine Hill. In such research, Dr. Olsen is among a very exclusive group of U.S. scientists, perhaps numbering between only 10-20, currently working on chemical weathering of serpentinite.

How such sampling is accomplished is essentially a very physical process involving lysimeters – “little wells that look like PVC pipe that collect soil and water,” according to Dr. Olsen -- and drilling into rock at various depths with specialized drills. Drilling at Pine Hill is limited to about one meter, as the exposed rock allows for horizontal sampling into the quarry face to see what was going on beneath the surface before it had been mined. Findings indicate that chemical weathering occurs in the bedrock at a depth of 5 meters (approximately 16.4 ft), as water infiltrates the rock through naturally occurring micro-fractures. Because fracture patterns differ, their effect on weathering is concomitantly variable. Dr. Olsen added, “most evidence of weathering, however, occurs in the top

meter.”

In addition to fracture patterns, biota (plants, fungi, and bacteria) affect the rate of weathering as they mobilize nutrients. Consequently, some of Dr. Olsen’s experiments are focused on



Dr Amanda Olsen and son, Micah

how biotic and abiotic (without biological organisms) conditions affect the breakdown of rock. Not only through studies in the field and laboratory, but also through geochemical modeling, she is exploring other, related questions. In fact, lab studies and modeling may ultimately yield findings leading to a better understanding of “relevant planetary conditions,” on inaccessible planets beyond our own, she said.

Regarding the valuable and fragile ecology of Pine Hill, Dr. Olsen emphasized she is very conscious about “modifying the environment,” when she takes samples, making every effort to “prioritize the preservation of the site.” She also expressed her deep gratitude to IHT for its ongoing willingness to accommodate her scientific pursuits. Clearly impressed by the site on a variety of levels, Dr. Olsen has even taken her young son to Pine Hill, showing him the beauty to be found on its summit, as she continues to decipher the “chemical signature in the rock.”

Photos courtesy of Dr. Amanda Olsen



From the Executive Director

Glorious autumn is upon us! Downeast Maine is at its most beautiful in the fall. As you drive or boat around Deer Isle, consider the natural landscape and many scenic views we are blessed to have around us every day. In good part, this is thanks to generous and forward-thinking landowners who appreciate the role that land trusts play in conservation: by owning land outright or holding a conservation easement that limits and controls development. This is the

core of what IHT does. School programs, Walks & Talks, bird walks - all are secondary to this core purpose. Protecting land and resources is the heart of the land trust business. Sometimes it is flashy and exciting, as when IHT acquired the Lily Pond Beach, but more often it takes the form of quiet discussions with families about what they want for the future of their land.

For that is what a Conservation Easement really is, a property owner's "blue print" for the future use and direction of their

land. IHT is the entity that can make that possible. This is hidden work - most people never see this side of IHT. It's not glitzy, no razz-ma-tazz, just a lot of hard work and commitment.

And we couldn't do it without the ongoing financial support of folks who care about preserving the island's natural landscape and resources. Thank you for supporting our mission and as we look to the holidays, we hope you will remember the Trust in your giving.

Have a happy and joyous holiday season.

Preserve Marathoners



Pam Getto sang in the chorus and her daughter Riley made her second appearance as the Giggling Gull this summer in the Opera House production "Bert Dow, Deep Water Man." Following the final performance in August, the Gettos' very full schedule opened up a bit, prompting Riley and her brother, Luke, to propose walking *all* of the island preserves. And they did. Averaging three preserves a day until they'd hit all nine. Tennis Preserve afficiandos will recognize the bizarrely twisted spruce found on its shore trail, one of Pam's favorites. Riley who "really like[s] heights," prefers Pine Hill. No surprise, coming from a Gull. (Photos: Pam Getto)



Congratulations to
Ann Hooke!
2012 recipient of the Rowan
Wakefield Award



With many thanks for many years of
volunteer service:
trail builder, teacher, trustee,
stewardship "pioneer," mentor,
mapmaker, person of cheer!



ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST NEWSLETTER

The mission of the Island Heritage Trust is to conserve significant open space, scenic areas, wildlife habitats, natural resources, historic and cultural features that offer public benefit and are essential to the character of the Deer Isle area.

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Roger Bergen	Chair
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Steve Cox	Rena Day
Elke Dorr	Lew Ellis
Linda Glaser	Nancy Gross
Ann Hooke	Judy McCaskey
Woody Osborne	Ginnie Peacock
Ellen Rowan	Diane Walker

Each IHT preserve is unique in what it has to offer the public. For those who like to clam or just walk in the woods with man's best friend, Shore Acres with its pink granite ledges, miniature wetlands, and mixed forest is a jewel.

Island Heritage Trust acquired the 37-acre parcel as a generous donation from IHT trustee Judy Hill in 2000. Judy's parents, Clark and Marjorie Hill, had originally purchased farmland that included Shore Acres in 1943, from Ralph Barter, co-

Shore Acres: Clams, Conifers and Canines

founder with his brother Arthur of the Barter Lumber Company, who had obtained the property several months earlier and made as a condition of the sale public access for clammers. Prior to that the land had belonged to generations of Greenlaws and their relatives going back to 1767. But its first residents, of course, were the native Americans who had camped and fished in the area for thousands of years. According to Bill Haviland, one of these peoples, the Etchemins, had a campsite on the Shore Acres property, still marked by heaps of discarded clam shells.

One of the principal stipulations Judy made with her donation was the continuation of public access for clammers. A dog lover herself, she also insisted that dogs be allowed to enjoy the preserve equally with their human owners. Leashed dogs are allowed from May through September and off leash for the remainder of the year. Judy proposed that the preserve be called Shore Acres because when her parents had purchased their farm, they discovered a sign in their barn with that name.

The flora and fauna of Shore Acres are particularly rich and varied. While spruce and fir predominate, the result of logging operations in the fifties, other conifers and hardwoods are making a comeback. And unlike some of the other IHT preserves, Shore Acres is low-lying and provides relatively easy trails for those who are not fond of treks up and down steep slopes. Its rather boggy environment, easily traversed along wooden planking, supports unique wetlands, home to an amazing variety of plant and animal life. For those who like to mushroom, Shore Acres has a lot to offer. Aptly named, its long shore line along the shallow waters of Greenlaw Cove boasts abundant beds of mussels and clams in the tidal flats. A spectacular view of Mount Desert from the preserve's extensive granite ledges invites visitors to stop and catch their breath. Not to be missed is the letterbox with stamps for IHT passport holders, located at the junction of the Shore and Goldthread Trails. For this writer and her canine best friend, Zac, Shore Acres is the first choice for a walk on a crisp autumn afternoon.



Zac keeps a weather ear up

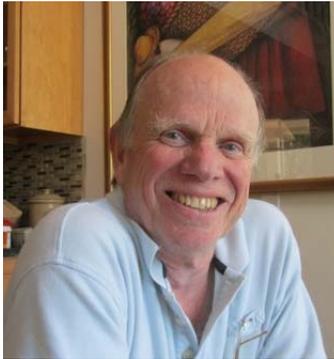
Anne Sigmund

Diane Walker reminds shoreland owners, real estate professionals and property "shoppers" of a handy guide to the laws and regulations that affect land within 250 feet of the ocean, lakes, rivers and wetlands, and within 75 feet of certain streams. "Maine Shoreland Zoning: A Handbook for Shoreland Owners," produced by Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection, Spring 2008 (42 pages) can be downloaded at www.maine.gov/dep/land/slz/citizenguide.pdf or call the Bangor office at 1-888-769-1137.

"As a long-time supporter of Maine's Shorelands law, I am convinced of its importance to our surrounding water, clam flats and other fisheries. Last year when Ian and I circumnavigated Deer Isle in our kayak, I was immensely grateful to the Maine folks and legislators who, in the 1970s, enacted this law. Because of their effort, as one paddles along our shores, Deer Isle's natural beauty – trees, rocks and water – is mostly what you see. Yes, you can see houses tucked behind trees and some on the shore built before the '70s, but for the most part, one sees a natural scene. Few folks have any idea why that is. As escapees from NJ, where there is no such law, and most ponds, lakes, rivers, and much of the seashore are covered by house after house after high-rise, we find Maine's cleaner water and mostly natural scene to be remarkable." Diane Walker

Welcome New Trustees

Woody Osborne confessed he hadn't given any "thought to getting actively involved with IHT," at least not right after he and his wife, Jane, bought their house in South Deer Isle. The arm-twisting from members came a bit later, he said laughing.



Jane, an environmental educator, also influenced him to volunteer.

Although he'd had no previous involvement with land trusts in his career as a Washington, D.C. civil rights lawyer, he said that since moving to Deer Isle in 2010, he's

developed a heightened awareness of the natural world. "You can't live on this island without concerns about the environment," he said, adding, "The longer I'm here, the more I see the fragility of the island."

Long active in an association of labor and employment lawyers, as member and president, Woody looks forward to using his people skills as an IHT trustee. "It takes time to settle in," he remarked, in reference to joining any group. "You need to observe and figure out how best to contribute." He expressed his hope that IHT will continue to pursue "projects that bring people together," and emphasized the need "to get across the value of IHT to the whole community."

Since retiring, Woody has developed a serious interest in photography. He would love to become better at it, he admits. He'd also like to read more, particularly in his favorite genre, history. Still amazed by his and Jane's busy schedules in retirement, he said he has "no regrets," about leaving his city life behind for the new rhythm of his island life.

The first thing you notice about Garrett Aldrich is the mega-watt smile lighting up his face. To say he beams is an understatement. That's not to say he lacks a serious side, however. The native Deer Islander says he's well aware that IHT hasn't always enjoyed wide popularity among local residents, misperception and rumor often responsible. He hopes, as a trustee, to help maintain IHT's hard-won, favorable image by being not only "a voice for locals, but to locals," by helping to connect the

Trust and the community.

It's a role in which he's had much practice - connecting people. In his job as captain of the Isle au Haut ferry, he provides an essential service for folks, many of whom he's come to know well and care about deeply.

Marveling at the beauty he looks upon daily, he said he never tires of looking. "Certain weather patterns allow you to see something you've seen a thousand times before, but see it differently. I would love to become part of preserving some of this."

When he talks about growing up on Little Deer, it's the freedom he returns to again and again: how he ran through the woods or climbed Pine Hill. He remembers "lots of shorefront" then, open, accessible. Now it's "built up," he said, and access is decreasing. Shifting his focus to Meredith, his wife, and to his two young daughters, he said he's teaching Iris and Maeve to become good stewards of the environment, "something they can take with them wherever they go."

"I thought it would be hard to leave because of



my four-generation roots there," mused Steve Rowan, IHT's newly elected treasurer, about moving from his home in Wayland, Massachusetts, to Deer Isle. "But I haven't really missed it. We love the island and its people."

The retired community bank executive and his wife, Ellen, have become active volunteers since becoming year-round residents of the island in 2008. While Steve quips about not worrying what day of the week it is since he retired, the reality is that he keeps a full calendar of volunteer commitments, including serving on the Deer Isle Conservation Commission.

Reflecting on the Trust's current fiscal health, Steve remarked that IHT is facing many of the (cont. on p. 6)



Editor's Note: The Cymrot girls were the first to turn in completed Passports to the Preserves. Their mother, Helen, was kind enough to send us this account of their first visit to the island in August.

Passport to Discovery

When "my husband, our two daughters and my parents arrived on Deer Isle, we . . . noticed the Island Heritage Trust office on our winding trip into town, intending to check it out on Monday.

Meanwhile, we noted "an ice cream social scheduled for the next day and decided to go. At Lily Pond, we saw the letterboxing passports and Mike Little pointed out the letterbox to the girls. He also showed them the garter snake he had caught in his garden that morning and the two kinds of land snails that live on the island.

"After the first stamp, the girls were hooked. And when they heard there was a prize if they got all of the stamps, they decided that they would. That afternoon we went to two more spots and on

Monday we got up and out early because we had been told about getting to Barred Island at low-tide. The girls were anxious about the idea of getting stuck on the island (though we tried to convince them it would be fun). Barred Island was by far our favorite hike. It was like fairy land with the moss everywhere---unlike anything the girls had ever seen. With just a day off the island to visit Jordan Pond, we went to at least one, usually two, Island Heritage Trust hikes each day....which for an almost 5 and almost 8 year old, was no small



task! At one of the sites we reached a fork in the trail and had to decide whether to continue on for another three mile loop or to give up. Four year old Zoe happily committed to

going on (though we had no idea how she was going to accomplish another 3 miles). Thankfully the letter box was just steps into the next loop.

"We were leaving Saturday morning so the girls knew we would have to go to both Pine Hill and Shore Acres that morning. When we got out of the car at the first spot, we realized that Zoe had forgotten her shoes . . . but she was happy to walk barefoot and be carried at points that were too hard and again, the box was a very short walk in---which on other days we may have regretted, but on Friday morning felt like a miracle! At Pine Hill we were rewarded with a breathtaking view and luckily another hike that could be accomplished on bare feet.



"We had such a fantastic week hiking each day and the girls were thrilled with their passport prizes. Without the letterboxes, there is no way that we would have chosen that way to spend each day---and more importantly, that the kids would have been the ones willing and excited to do so. We were so appreciative of the effort---the girls loved signing their names in the notebooks and seeing the stamps at each site. I think we have found a new family hobby for future trips and a way to make hiking and exploring new places even more fun for the kids.

"My older daughter and my mother went to Jill Hoy's painting class on Wednesday morning (sponsored by IHT) and loved it. My dad, an avid birder, went on the migratory bird walk and was thoroughly impressed by the kindness and warmth of the IHT volunteers.

"Thank you for your work with IHT and all of the effort that went into creating the letterboxes. They had a huge positive impact on the whole family's experience on Deer Isle!"

(Photos: Helen Cymrot)

Volunteers Initiate Backbone Trail



Holt Mill Pond estuary in September

On Saturday morning, September 15, a dozen volunteers and IHT staff went to work cutting the first section of the Backbone Trail, a foot trail that is supporters hope will one day run the entire length of the island. Starting in the Holt Mill Pond Preserve near the Island Medical Center and running along the southwest edge of the pond, about half a mile of trail was completed, including a footbridge crossing a small brook. Volunteers Bob Knowlton, Stroud Watson, Al Merritt, Anne Beerits, David Williams, Tom



Cory Fifield

Anne Beerits

Stevenson, Susie Murphy, and Roger Bergen, wielding bow saws and loppers, cleared a trail that intentionally meanders by several enormous beech trees, over a lovely, small brook and past peek-a-boo views of the pond. Also on hand that day was Stewardship Assistant, Cory Fifield, who was "instrumental in helping flag and begin the trail," according to George Fields, Stewardship Director.

The next section of trail will lead towards Toffet Pond, which was donated to IHT in its early



George Fields, chief bridge engineer

Anne Beerits

Anne Beerits years and has been largely inaccessible since then. Historically, these inland waterways powered mills and were lively sites of island commerce in bygone days. Today, the extensive Labrador Swamp and surrounding estuaries serve as a critical "recharge" areas for fresh water, as well providing habitat for both woodland and riparian species. Largely undeveloped, this is one of the island's most significant natural areas.

Weather permitting, monthly volunteer work parties will continue on the third Saturday morning of the month. FMI contact IHT at 348-2455. All are welcome!

(cont from p. 4)

same challenges other non-profits are contending with in the wake of a stressed and slowly recovering national economy. As a result, "we have to be very mindful of where we spend our money, making sure we do it wisely," he said. Praising IHT's recent focus on community issues such as water access and quality, Steve said he hopes to contribute to and support those efforts.

When not volunteering for various community organizations, Steve plays tennis, tends five recreational lobster traps, sails, and maintains a sizable vegetable garden, often sharing his summer bounty with friends and neighbors. Long recognizing the island's remarkable beauty, Steve said, "Now, when we wake up in the morning, we look at the scenery and we can't believe we live here!"

Inspired Philanthropy

This wonderful story and photo came to us from longtime summer visitor, Lora Venesy: “Every summer, 3 families who have known each other since college 25 years ago, spend a much anticipated, relaxing week on Hitz Point on Sylvester Cove. The group: Burokers (gracious hosts), Airharts, and Venesys, has expanded, with the number of children now totaling seven, ranging in age from 2-13.

“Although finding a common activity is sometimes challenging, everyone loves nature and art. This year, the group decided to host an art show/sale at the end of the week, showcasing their many talents: face painting with powder made from shells, rock painting, signs made with periwinkles, etc. Family and friends were invited and, of course, items were quickly bought up! Afterwards, there was a short discussion about what to do with the collected money. Since hiking and nature is so important to everyone, there was no argument (unbelievably) about what to do. It was unanimous: the money would be donated to IHT! There have been many wonderful memories on the trails, with favorites being Barred Island, Tennis Preserve, and Lily Pond.

“The group of philanthropic artists included Belle Buroker (13), Racy Moran (13), Ben Buroker (10), Margot Venesy (7), Vivienne Airhart (7), Owen Buroker (6) and Beatrix Airhart (5). Adrienne Venesy, who is 2, didn’t participate in the festivities or voting, but provided moral support. Over \$50 was raised, and everyone was incredibly proud to donate proceeds to the IHT; they felt like they were doing something really positive by supporting their favorite organization. And all were excited to have their picture taken with Mike!”



Hitz Point fundraising collective celebrates donation to IHT *Lora Venesy*

Support Our Work

- ◆ Become a member, or gift someone else with a membership.
- ◆ Donate to a special project or preserve.
- ◆ Support stewardship by endowing an acre for \$435.
- ◆ Name IHT in your will, or as a beneficiary to life insurance policy or retirement account.
- ◆ Create a conservation legacy through planned giving.
- ◆ Encourage others to do the same.

Such support enables IHT to conserve Deer Isle as a legacy for the future. Furthermore, the estate planning options named above may also have **significant favorable tax implications for donors and heirs** – the proverbial win-win situation. Contact IHT or a financial planning advisor for more information.

“Living in rural Maine, my natural habitat, I experience a sense of connectedness and well-being. From this perspective, my rationale for including IHT in my estate planning was clear: contributing to local conservation helps sustain the health of the human community.” Anne Flewelling, Sedgwick

**2011 Annual Report may be downloaded at www.islandheritagetrust.org
or call 348-2455 for a print copy**

Barred Island letterbox entries – 2012

Glad we got to this beautiful hike on our last day in Maine. Serenity I will not forget or see back in the city of NY. Faye & Barbara

Very special first date! ☺ Kira & Larry

I liked the trail a lot. I saw a mouse enter his home. Samantha

Wonderful hike! Very fun! Beautiful weather looking for wild cranberries. 3 generations of Thompson women hiking together

What a day – what a place – another one for the pockets of memory. Phil E., Stonington



Holt Mill Pond: a wild place worth exploring Anne Beerits

Christmas shopping??

IHT's Nature Shop has children's books, puzzles, maps, games, toys, bird houses and feeders, field guides, note cards, binoculars, hand lenses, and science kits

Your purchase brings people closer to nature and helps IHT do the same.

Most weekdays and 10-4 PM on weekends between Thanksgiving and Christmas



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Address Service Requested



**Community celebrates IHT's
25th Anniversary with ice cream
and games at Lily Pond!**