

ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

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



Volume IV, No. 1

Spring 1994



Photo courtesy of Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Island Heritage Trust Signs Easement for Scraggy Island

*Listed on Register of
Critical Areas*

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N LATE DECEMBER 1993, THE TRUSTEES ACCEPTED A FOREVER-WILD EASEMENT ON SCRAGGY ISLAND. This is the culmination of a year of cooperative effort between owners Ken Crowell and Marnie Reed Crowell, IHT's Land Committee, and our consultant Stephanie MacKay Levy. This brings to six the conservation easements now held by IHT.

For two decades, Scraggy Island has been recognized as one of the most significant heron rookeries on the coast of Maine, and also one of the top five eider nesting areas in East Penobscot Bay. There is also an osprey nest. Scraggy was an early listing on the State Register of Critical Areas. The Critical Areas program, begun in the 1970s, identified 650 separate locations statewide that were deemed worthy of special protection due to their significant botanical, zoological, geological or scenic attributes. About two-thirds of these areas are privately owned; the rest are owned by the State or Federal Government or by conservation organizations. It is important to note that the privately owned areas

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IHT Signs Easement

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continue to enjoy all the rights and responsibilities of private property ownership, including the right to develop the land within the development regulations of the town, and the responsibility to pay property taxes. No special restrictions are imposed when a property is designated as a Critical Area. Any special protection is entirely a matter of conscience with the private owner. All owners of Critical Areas were notified by the state of the reasons why their property was deemed worthy of registration. In the case of Scraggy, the owners are very knowledgeable naturalists who completely understand the importance of protecting this area in perpetuity, and IHT is glad to be of assistance in establishing the easement.

With the decline in the state's economy during the 1990s, the Critical Areas Program was merged with another state program called the Heritage Program into a consolidated program called the Natural Areas Program, which is now totally supported by federal funds. It remains to be seen whether the program will have the resources to remain "pro-active" in working with willing landowners, helping them to understand what sorts of things they can do with their land that will not destroy its unique qualities (for example, when and where they can walk on their land and not disturb the bird nesting colonies). Local land trusts like IHT can help by undertaking this "pro-active" role, especially if we can provide from our friends and members the expertise in zoology, botany and geology

that is required. Because Scraggy's bird colonies are especially vulnerable to human disturbance, the easement does NOT grant public access to this island.

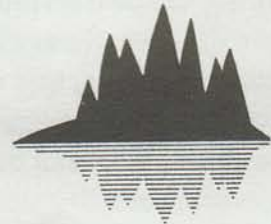
In Deer Isle/Stonington, the Maine Natural Areas Program maintains a listing of eight Critical Areas in addition to the Scraggy Island Heronry Critical Area. These are:

- Western Island Heronry and Eider Nesting Area
- Eaton Island Heronry
- Little Sprucehead Island Eider Nesting Area
- Bald Island Eider Nesting Area
- Hardhead Island Eider Nesting Area
- Outer Scott Island Eider Nesting Area
- Grass Ledge West Eider Nesting Area
- Barred Island Eider Nesting Area

There are also five preserves: Round Island Preserve, Barred Island Preserve, Crockett Cove Woods Preserve, Wreck Island Preserve and Pickering Cove. If you would like to know more about these areas, please contact our office. If you would like more information about the Maine Natural Areas Program, you can write for a brochure to State House Station 130, Augusta, ME 04333.

Maine Coast Heritage Trust Redefines Relationship with Local Land Trusts

MCHT has developed a new plan for its future relationships with Maine's 73 local land trusts. To set the framework for these relationships, MCHT will develop a strategic map of the coast and inland lakes and rivers, prioritizing areas to be protected. "Conservation partnerships" will be worked out to deal with those areas where MCHT priorities and the local conservation groups' priorities coincide. A preliminary review with MCHT indicates that all the island and shoreland conservation easements currently being considered by IHT would fall within MCHT's priorities. IHT and MCHT would work as "conservation partners" negotiating the easements, with MCHT providing technical assistance as needed. Later this year a state-wide conference is planned to determine what can be done to provide assistance to inland land trusts not being assisted by MCHT in its newly defined role.



Summer Program & Activities

IHT has a busy schedule this summer! Here's the lineup so far:

PLANNING FOR THE SUMMER

Summer is the year's busiest time for Island Heritage Trust. Activities include community events, sales and other activities, all depending heavily on volunteers. Jackie Binnian is again recruiting volunteers to staff the Stonington and Sunset offices, and Nita Barbour will help with scheduling. Peg Myers and Liz Westin will look after revenues from the sales of items at both offices and from the benefit sale (see below). Along with Sue Oliver of the Fishermen's Wives Association, Joanne Greiwe will coordinate arrangements for the Steel Band street dance and raffle (see below). Anyone wishing to help with IHT participation in the Fourth of July parade in Deer Isle, call 348-5274.

Plans for a Dan Fogelberg benefit concert in September were called off due to scheduling problems. >

SUMMER BENEFIT SALE

Mailed out with this newsletter is the catalog for our summer benefit sale, which is taking the place of the silent auction fundraiser this summer. Listed are more than forty specialty items donated by members, businesses and friends. Items on sale or available exclusively from the catalog cost (on the average) about \$200 and include an exquisite Planter's chair marked down from \$1,550, custom-made jewelry, a variety of sail and motorboat cruises, nature/picnic walks, stays at local inns and B&B's, and two seats at Carnegie Hall in Isaac Stern's box. Sale prices end September 30, 1994. >

STONINGTON STREET DANCE & RAFFLE

Through a welcome liaison with the Island Fishermen's Wives, IHT is going to be co-sponsoring a Street Dance to raise money for a swimming pool. Learning to swim and water safety are important issues for fishermen and their relatives, and this traditional livelihood is important for the character of the Deer Isle area. The date (mark

your calendar!) will be August 8 with a rain date of August 15. The music will be provided by the terrific Caribbean-style, Flash-in-the-Pan Community Steel Drum Band organized by Carl Chase. (Yes! A steel drum band in Maine!) This band has been playing in Brooksville for two years every Monday night to large crowds of people, entirely due to word-of-mouth advertising. So put on your comfortable shoes and get ready to dance, or just come to enjoy the music, food and laughter. At 9:00 p.m. the winning ticket for a fundraising raffle will be drawn. The winner will get two nights at The Opryland Hotel in Nashville and two tickets to the Grand Ole Opry. The donation is courtesy of Sandy and Dean Chase of Deer Isle (see order form on back page). >



ARTIST'S RECEPTION SET FOR JULY 31

Beautiful Notecards at the Printer's

Through the generosity of artist Faith Munson of Little Deer Isle, IHT will soon be offering a set of six notecards that are simply breathtaking. You will want to order many, many sets to give as gifts and to use yourself. The three scenes feature the Stonington waterfront seen from the water, the view from Caterpillar Hill, and an unusual view of the Deer Isle Bridge from atop a quarry. All revenues will go toward supporting IHT and our work. These cards really capture the spirit of the place!

The original paintings that were reproduced on the cards, together with other Deer Isle landscapes by the artist, will be shown at Kate Fairchild's Eastern Bay Gallery in Stonington on July 31. We expect this to be a "sell-out" show, so you may want to arrive early. As the date approaches, call us for more details. >

President Bullish on IHT

I am delighted to say that this is the most promising Island Heritage Trust current status and outlook report I have given since I became president seven years ago. Finding the next president to take over this well-managed, financially sound organization with its valuable mission should be easy. Any volunteers?

At the annual meeting in 1993 we reaffirmed land conservation as our overall goal and established three priorities to achieve it: (1) to help landowners seeking conservation easements and to work cooperatively with other organizations that share our goal; (2) to get the word out on the value to the community of land conservation and what we are doing to make it happen; and (3) to develop a viable management system and sound financial organization.

After a slow start, our land conservation program is moving impressively ahead under the new leadership of Stan Myers, chair of the Land and Stewardship Committees. Currently we hold six easements protecting three miles of shore on Deer Isle and surrounding islands. Eleven more easements are being negotiated, which would protect an additional 7 1/2 miles of shore. We continue to have a mutually supportive working relationship with Maine Coast Heritage Trust, even as it cuts back on some of its services.

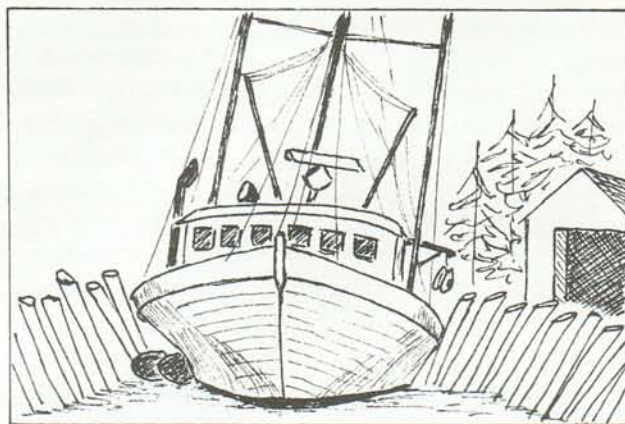
Management is sound. I am especially pleased with our progress at the management level. At our elections the past two years we greatly strengthened our Board of Trustees and a year ago we hired Abbie McMillen as our Executive Director. Working closely with the Board, she has helped revamp and support our new committee structure, organized our new Sunset office, and computerized much of our management files, in particular, our financial and fundraising records. Especially important, she has relieved me of much of the day-to-day administrative duties that had been a heavy burden to me.

Finances are strong. Financially, we have never been in such sound shape. Under the Development Committee chairmanship of Roger Steinharter we have diversified our source of support so that it is more evenly shared among our various backers: foundations, individual donors, supporters of our auctions, benefit sales and concerts. Finally, our endowment, supported by our new bequest program, will begin to pick up an increasing share of our operating costs.

We very much appreciate the efforts of the many donors and volunteers who are making our fundraising so successful, including the special role the Trustees are undertaking. Our annual fall fundraising campaign is still the major source of our individual donor support, without which we could not operate. Please continue to help us.

Community relations. We now are turning our attention to the need to do a much better job in telling the community just what IHT is and what we are doing to preserve the unique beauty and character of the area for future generations, and also what we are doing to help the well-being of the community and economy now. We will be doing this with our proposed IHT video at meetings, with publications, publicity and with new working relationships with local organizations.

-Rowan Wakefield, President



1993 Tax Law Changes Help Landowners Donate Conservation Land

In 1993 Congress repealed the Alternative Minimum Tax as it applies to gifts of appreciated real property. Under the new law, most gifts of this type will earn an income tax deduction equal to the property's *full fair market value*. The donor may use the deduction equal to 30% of that year's adjusted gross income. Any remainder can be carried forward over the next five years. In many cases, the revised law allows as much as twice the amount of deduction as under the old law.

General Purpose Grant from Brace Foundation Starts the Permanent Endowment

We are now the extremely fortunate recipients of a \$10,000 unrestricted grant from the Brace Foundation, a portion of which will be used to start our permanent endowment fund! This grant was made possible through the efforts of Trustee Katharine Butler.

As you know if you have been involved in fundraising for a nonprofit organization, many, many hours are spent by volunteers and professional staff in the annual process of raising next year's operating funds. This is time that could be better spent in accomplishing our primary mission, which is not to raise money to perpetuate the organization, but to protect and preserve this beautiful portion of the planet through easements that *we must enforce in perpetuity*.

Therefore, the Trustees decided last year to try to establish a permanent endowment that would generate earnings that could be put to use for operations.

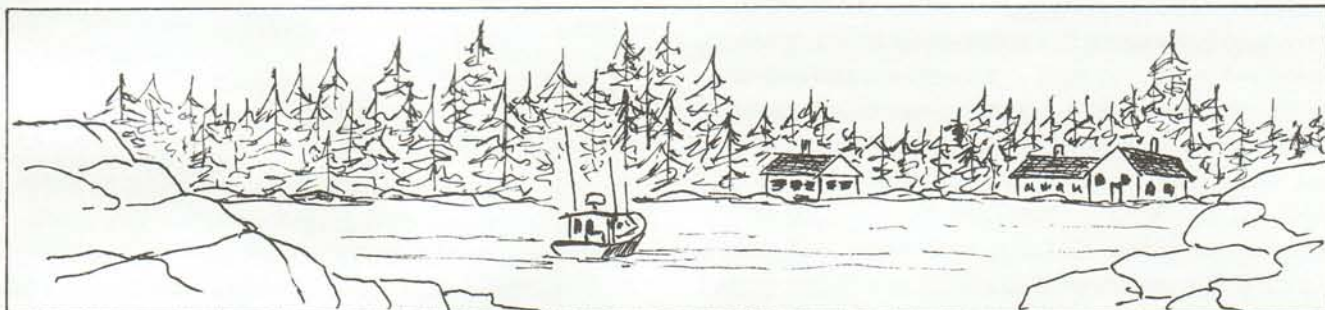
The Development Committee, under the energetic direction of Trustee Roger Steinharter, continues to pursue a number of philanthropic organizations in hopes that they will contribute to this endowment. For the most part, these organizations seem to be interested primarily in funding specific, short-term, unique projects. But finally, a foundation sympathetic to the notion of unrestricted grants has come to our aid, and we are profoundly encouraged by this.

Bequest Program Launched

Another potential source of significant funding for the permanent endowment is the same source used by educational institutions: bequests. We have established a bequest program under the able professional leadership of Trustee Dan Hotaling, who ran the planned giving program at Antioch College for five years before his retirement to Deer Isle a year ago. We have prepared a brochure describing this program. If you, or someone you know, might be considering a bequest, please write or call us for a copy of this brochure. Dan Hotaling may be contacted by writing to him at Box 322, Deer Isle, 04627, telephone 207/348-2415.

Special Discretionary Grant Received from Cheney Foundation to Prepare Map

We are printing a new, 4-color map of Deer Isle, Stonington and the surrounding islands within the IHT service area. It will be available at our Stonington office and local stores. It is based on the USGS topographic maps and is similar to the Blue Hill Heritage Trust map of their territory, but larger and more detailed. It will be a lovely item to give as a gift, to hang on your wall just to look at, and to use for locating areas of the Island and surrounding islands that are special to you and your family and friends. We are indebted to the generosity of Larry Belles and the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation for making this possible (see order form on back page).



News from The Board of Trustees

The Trustees have held two full Board meetings since your last newsletter: one in November and one in May. In November, we approved an operating budget for calendar/fiscal year 1994. We also discussed how and whether the organization could become more "pro-active" in setting conservation priorities and engaging in specific land-conserving, public-access projects for the Island and its residents. We established a Task Force, ably led by Stan Myers, to explore the possibilities. It has met a number of times and, while it is too early to make any announcements of specific projects yet, several are in the conceptual design stage, and could become extremely exciting.

At their May meeting, the Trustees approved the program and agenda for the July 27, 1994 annual meeting of members. They also discussed a revised set of by-laws to reflect the many changes in the organization since its founding in 1987, and approved an investment program for the Stewardship Fund and the permanent endowment.

Stonington Office Activities

With the move of the administrative office from Stonington to Sunset, the Stonington space is now totally free of office clutter and available to become the public education, reception and sales area for which it is uniquely suited. Thanks to Tim Emerson and Kathy Drew, it has been freshly painted. Thanks to some hard work this spring (especially by Harriet Steinharter in getting materials ready), we will have exciting new items for sale (books, maps, notecards, T-shirts, sweatshirts, posters). What we need now are volunteers to redecorate the space early in the season, and more volunteers to staff it throughout the season. Jackie Binnian has sent a questionnaire to all recent volunteers to see if they will help again. Anyone who has not heard from Jackie and would like to help, PLEASE call the Sunset office (207/348-5274). It is going to be a lot of fun: relaxing, productive and sociable. Join us! We are grateful to all volunteers for their help, particularly the core group that has been working with us several years.

IHT Updates Its Membership Lists and Publications

All member names, with winter and summer addresses are now up-to-date and on index cards, available to members and volunteers. Also, thanks to suggestions from Trustee Jackie Binnian and volunteer Fran Peterson, we have updated our general brochure and fact sheets. You are welcome to stop by the Stonington office to obtain copies.

Budget and Finance Report

Here are the important highlights:

1993 actual revenues	= \$48,540
1993 actual expenditures	= \$42,186
1994 budget (balanced!)	= \$41,600

Every penny that IHT receives (memberships, donations, grants, auction proceeds, etc.) goes into the bank. Therefore, right after the annual membership drive in the fall or the silent auction in the summer, the bank account looks pretty healthy. However, like squirrels, we must draw on the bank account over the lean winter months to pay our fixed operating expenses. The accompanying graph shows how the amount in the bank fluctuated during 1992 and 1993. We never hit zero, but we came fairly close during the summer of 1992, before the silent auction. This year, we will be holding a catalog benefit sale in place of the silent auction.

The auditor's report on our 1993 financial performance is available. Write or call the office to request a copy.



New "Current Use" Tax Law Changes Affect Landowners

IHT, as a member of the Penobscot Bay Land Trust Alliance, was a sponsor of a well-attended seminar in February to clarify the recent changes in Tree Growth and Open Space tax legislation. The new rules give landowners with less than 100 acres in tree growth three basic options:

- 1) *Take the land out of tree growth* and pay a penalty amounting to five years of back taxes plus interest.
- 2) *Transfer the land to one of several open space categories*, each with a different level of tax relief, the highest being 95% if classified "forever wild" with a conservation easement and public access.
- 3) *Develop a commercial harvesting plan* certified by a registered forester. At the seminar, we learned that the contents of the harvesting plan are between the forester and the landowner, and most landowners' forestry management objectives can probably be accommodated.

The deadline for choosing one of these options has been extended to April 1, 1995 (instead of 1994), and the deadline for having the commercial harvesting plan prepared is now April 1, 1996. If the landowner does not choose an option, the assessor may remove the land from tree growth and the owner would have to pay a penalty equal to 30 percent of the difference between the current fair market value of the land and the tree growth assessment.

At the same time, the legislature clarified the open space legislation, which for years had confused local assessors because of its ambiguities. The new law

gives assessors the following formula to reduce taxes on land put under open space:

- * ordinary open space - 20%
- * permanently protected with a conservation easement - 50%
- * forever wild protected with an easement - 70%

Public access qualifies for an additional 25% in each of the above three categories. This should be helpful to assessors who have not recognized that land encumbered by conservation easements loses development rights in perpetuity and therefore should not be taxed as if its "highest and best use" hadn't changed.

In 1993, the following amount of land was in tree growth or open space:

Stonington:

Total acreage in town:	6,272
Acres in Tree Growth:	477
# Parcels	19
Acres in Open Space	91
# Parcels	3

Deer Isle:

Total acreage in town:	19,776
Acres in Tree Growth:	3,830
# Parcels	76
Acres in Open Space	166
# Parcels	5

WISH LIST

- ★ *two round-trip tickets* to Nashville (for example, frequent-flyer tickets);
- ★ *a portable screen* for showing slide shows;
- ★ *a laser-jet or ink-jet printer*;
- ★ *volunteers interested in education*;
- ★ *volunteers to staff the Stonington office*;
- ★ *volunteers interested in communications*.

NEWS AND NOTES

Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Landowners is a very well-written and useful new publication prepared by MCHT that we will have available at our office for sale at a bargain price of \$3.45 per copy, which includes sales tax (add another \$2.00 for postage and handling if you want your copy mailed to you). It would be wise to order this publication early, as they will go fast!

We are grateful for the contributions that have been received in memory of Ernest Reed Wilbur, brother of Elliot Wilbur, Little Deer Isle summer resident, with whom we have been discussing land conservation.

Maine Coast Heritage Trust is not planning a state-wide land trust conference for 1994, but there was an invitational New England Land Trust conference for staff members in May at which Abbie McMillen represented IHT, and there will be a national Land Trust rally in Chattanooga, Tennessee

Oct. 29-Nov. 2. Anyone interested in more information call Abbie.

We are very pleased to announce that Ruth Dayton of Sunset is researching and writing a history of IHT. Ruth and her husband Bill have just become year-round residents, living in an Emily Muir house on Burnt Cove.

The Trustees accepted with regret the resignation of Peter Graf, whose new seafood business is turning out to be very demanding of his time and energy.

New IRS rules require that donors of \$250 or more (cash, check, goods or services) receive written acknowledgement. The responsibility of obtaining this acknowledgement legally rests with the donor, but IHT will make every effort to send the acknowledgement at the time we receive your donation. If we fail to do this, please don't be shy about contacting us. And save your acknowledgement in your tax files.

ORDER FORM

I want to support the efforts of Island Heritage Trust to preserve the beauty, character and culture of the Deer Isle area and I am enclosing a donation for this purpose and my \$10.00 membership.

Amount _____

Please send me _____ (number of) raffle tickets at \$5.00 each for a weekend for two at The Opryland Hotel, including two tickets to the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, for the benefit of the Island Fishermen's Wives Association Swimming Pool Fund.

Amount _____

Total enclosed _____

Please send me the following:

- _____ information on the volunteer needs of IHT
- _____ information on conservation easements
- _____ an order form for your publications, maps, cards, T-shirts, sweatshirts
- _____ an extra copy of the 1994 summer benefit sale catalog

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Please make checks out to
Island Heritage Trust and mail to P.O. Box 55, Sunset, ME 04683.
Thank you!