All of you, friends of IHT, who were on Deer Isle Labor Day weekend and were able to be at the Settlement Quarry on Saturday the 5th, know what a glorious day we had for the opening and what a happy occasion it was. A group of about 150 people cheered as Bill Donovan, retired stonecutter from Stonington, with Gordon Rittmeyer, President of IHT, and Ann Hooke, Vice President and steward for the Quarry, cut the ribbon officially opening the Quarry to the public. Many of the people who had worked since 1996, when IHT purchased the 50-acre Quarry, clearing a parking area, preparing trails and signs, building an entrance kiosk and a bench for viewing were on hand to celebrate. On that sparkling day there was a feeling of community pride in seeing the abandoned and neglected site turned into a place where people can enjoy the history, geology and natural beauty of the old quarry and surrounding woods.

After the ribbon-cutting all were invited to walk through the banner-decked kiosk and up the hill to the viewing platform at the top of the Quarry. From the top there is a superb view of the Deer Isle Thorofare, its many islands and rise of Isle au Haut beyond. Beside the platform is a granite block, with an old drill hole through it, placed so that one can sight all the way down to Great Spoon Island! It is a wonderful place to watch a sunset or an osprey soaring overhead.

Here under high-flying fishhawks and eagles, Mary McGuire of Oceanville told the crowd about the history of the Quarry and of her memories of the days when her father owned it.

Mary McGuire reminiscing about the history of the Settlement Quarry, which was owned by her father.

Among other stories, she told of her father’s beloved horse, "Ike," who was buried at the Quarry where he had spent his

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Opening of Settlement Quarry
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working life in the 1920's.

Dr. Roger Hooke of Mountainville gave a brief geological history of the area, answering questions about where the granite came from and what traces were left by the glaciers during the Ice Age. Ken and Marnie Reed Crowell answered questions about the natural history and bird life of the area. The afternoon ended with Ann Hooke leading a walk over the "Glacial Erratic Trail," arriving at the parking lot in time for door-prize drawings for IHT maps, cards, T-shirts, posters and a donated gift of polished granite, thanks to the generosity of Walter Reed, of Deer Isle Granite Co. There were lots of happy winners! Refreshments for all were kindly donated and served by Sarah and Dick Paget.

Many people spent many hours exercising their skills to prepare the Quarry for public use. Don Reiman designed the entrance kiosk in keeping with the industrial nature of the Quarry, using heavy timbers and a corrugated tin roof. He also designed the viewing platform at the crest of the Quarry. Tim Emerson and his crew built both of these handsome structures. Ann Hooke and her crew cut and marked three woodland trails, which are already showing signs of steady use. Ian Walker worked with Ed Davis to create a 12-car parking area graced with a very handsome granite entrance sign designed by Jeff Gammelin of Freshwater Stone & Brickwork in Orland. A final task was to pile up rock cairns around the directional and informational signs thoughtfully designed by Diane Walker.

Island Heritage Trust is pleased and proud that the Settlement Quarry is now open to the public. Many people at the opening expressed their pleasure that this historic site is preserved and that it has been turned into a fascinating and beautiful place to visit. Ann Hooke serves as steward for the Quarry, and she will need volunteers to help maintain the trails and facilities. If you would like to help with this community enterprise, call the IHT office at 348-2455.

Ann Hooke
As Island Heritage Trust completes its 11th year, we can be proud of the long list of accomplishments that demonstrate real progress toward protecting the environmental and scenic qualities that make Deer Isle and Stonington so special. In just the past two years we have brought five new properties under the direct ownership of IHT. Four of these, Wreck, Round, Millet and Mark Islands, were gifts to the Trust. The fifth, the Settlement Quarry, was purchased. The Trust now has stewardship responsibility for a total of 20 parcels of land consisting of 500 acres and 11 miles of shoreline. This growth means that we have to develop organizationally in two ways: one, in consolidating the gains we have made, and two, in building for future.

Consolidation. A primary focus for consolidation is stewardship. Until recently our stewardship responsibilities have been modest enough that informal procedures and word-of-mouth communication among a small number of stewards was sufficient. But now we need to take a closer look at our expanding stewardship role. We need to decide how many stewards we should have, what sort of tracking and record systems are necessary and what guidelines are needed for public access. Ann Hooke, our new Vice President, has agreed to take on these responsibilities by chairing our Stewardship Committee. She has already begun to work out ways to meet these challenges.

A second important area for consolidation is our financial program. While we are not a wealthy organization, our finances are becoming more complicated, as we become owners of additional property, and as we receive funds restricted for specific purposes. We need an accounting system that accurately shows our financial health and is understandable to our trustees and members. And we must ensure that our funds are invested prudently for future needs. Dan Hadley, our new Treasurer, is working on these objectives.

A final area for consolidation is to update our publications and trustee manuals. We must keep our brochures and newsletters current and appealing to inform our members and to engage potential supporters. Peg Myers has agreed to continue as Chair of the Publications Committee.

Building for the Future. As comfortable as we feel about our progress to date, this is not the time to take our eyes off a vision for the future. The Land Committee is continuing to work on the acquisition of additional easements and potential gifts of island and shoreland properties. We have every reason to expect the next several years will see an increase in the land we protect.

We will also be working to build the organization by broadening our base of support. While talking to many residents and visitors to the island, it is apparent to me that there is a great interest in supporting the mission of IHT. The key to reaching these people is showing them firsthand what IHT can accomplish. Two ways of doing this are to develop a program for more personal contact between current members and potential supporters, and by sponsoring public events that allow people to find out who we are and what we do. There is no better example of how the latter works than the grand opening celebration of the Settlement Quarry in September. Well over 150 people attended this event. For many it was their first exposure to IHT. Based on the reaction of many of these people, we are certain to bring in new members and supporters.

As I take over leadership of the Trust, it is obvious that the past presidents, officers and trustees have been extremely successful in developing an organization that is focused on its mission and has been effective in carrying it out. It is financially sound, has a group of committed volunteers and is truly making a difference to the community. This provides a wonderful jumping-off place for the future. We still have additional land that deserves protection and a large reservoir of potential members and skilled volunteers waiting to be tapped. Bringing them together is the challenge and the fun!

Gordon Rittmeyer
Land Committee Considers Stonington Islands and Caterpillar Hill

As it is not wise to count your chickens before they are hatched, it is not advisable for the Land Committee to talk about accomplishments before they are completed. But without being specific we can say something about the nature of its talks with various landowners. Typically we may be engaged in discussions with about a dozen landowners. Currently we are actively talking with the owners of four islands about conservation easements. Because of the finality implicit in signing a legal document, people think slowly and deliberately about the future of their land. And well they might, as these properties represent a sizable asset, and most involve families where there are diverse opinions about their island’s future. All of these island discussions started some years ago, and all have moved steadily in the direction of long-term protection. Until the legal process is completed, however, we can make no announcements.

One particular project that can be described in general terms has to do with the very familiar but still glorious view across the blueberry fields of Caterpillar Hill to Deer Isle, Penobscot Bay and the Camden Hills. A year ago the obviously increasing development pressure along Route 15 caused a member of IHT to ask what we were doing to preserve this view.

This question led to a series of discussions between Island Heritage Trust and Blue Hill Heritage Trust to explore ways in which this panoramic view could be protected. Both Trusts recognize the importance of this project and have agreed on a basic plan that has already begun. Landowners have been identified and conversations have been initiated with several of them about saving the blueberry fields and the view! But as noted earlier, decisions about one’s land are generally made slowly and deliberately. This project will be no different, but the process has been started.

Stanley Myers

Jean Welch Honored at Annual Meeting

From time to time the Trust presents the Rowan Wakefield Award to someone who has contributed significantly to its objectives. At the annual meeting July 15, it was the happy task of Stan Myers, retiring President, to present the award this year to Jean Welch for her many years of loyal service to the Trust. Jean, who has been a member of the Board since IHT’s beginning in 1987, serving as its first Secretary, is retiring this year. During those 11 years Jean has served actively on almost every committee of the Trust, including the Land, the Stewardship, the Nominating and the Membership Committees. Stan Myers presented her with the award for her many years of service and “in recognition of her constant and faithful efforts to ensure the health and success of this organization.”

Three new trustees were elected to the Board by the membership. They are Ken Crowell, a longtime member of both the Land and the Stewardship Committees; Dan Hadley, of Stonington, and Ann Hooke of Mountainville. Following that election, the trustees chose a slate of four new officers for the Trust. Gordon Rittmeyer who served the past two years as Vice President, was elected President, succeeding Stanley Myers. Ann Hooke was elected Vice President, Dan Hadley, Treasurer, succeeding Dan Hotaling, and Peg Myers, Secretary, succeeding Nancy Seltz.

Following the business meeting Brad Allen, a wildlife biologist from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, gave a very interesting slide talk on protecting the habitats of sea birds, particularly eider ducks and terns, on the off-shore islands in Maine.

Rowan Wakefield
IHT Plans GIS Natural Resource Inventory

Every land trust needs criteria to make the fundamental decision as to whether it should undertake to conserve a particular property. Early on Island Heritage Trust adopted guidelines to help it make these decisions. They describe various types of land particularly deserving of protection, such as islands, undeveloped shoreland, land protective of water resources, scenic areas and land permitting public access.

Recently the Land Committee has felt the need to sharpen these criteria. Clearer science-based guidelines are necessary, so that land important to the long-term environmental health of the island could be more reliably identified. We knew we would need help with this project and talked about how to find a qualified person to work with us. This past summer we got very lucky! Board member and retired biology professor, Ken Crowell, met Megan Shane, a master’s degree candidate at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. She was spending the summer in Stonington and was available. We found her to be highly skilled, and recruited her to help us develop a natural resources inventory of Deer Isle and its surrounding islands.

There is already a great deal of natural resource information available in various state, county and local agencies, as well as with private organizations and individuals. The task is to identify these sources, define the information required and organize it in a useful and accessible way. Megan has proposed cataloguing these data in a Geographic Information System (GIS) database, consisting of overlay maps with supplementary text describing the maps and providing additional information. Typical information to be included:

- Currently conserved land
- Wetlands and watershed boundaries
- Vegetative cover
- Shorebird & seabird nesting areas
- Bedrock & surficial geology
- Deer wintering area
- Essential shellfish habitat
- In-depth natural resource information on select properties, as available

We believe that the information not only will benefit the Land Committee but also will be of real value to other island organizations. The Planning Boards of both Deer Isle and Stonington and the towns’ respective Conservation Commissions should find it helpful, and we plan to make it available to them. Cataloguing this information into a GIS database has now developed into Megan’s master’s degree project to be completed in May 1999. We can hardly wait to see the results!

Stanley Myers

Expanded Stewardship Committee Takes On Additional Responsibilities

It is the job of the Stewardship Committee to see that all of the land owned by IHT is properly cared for and that all the conservation easements it holds are properly monitored. As the Committee’s new Chair, I want to ensure that it can effectively handle all its rapidly growing responsibilities. Currently the committee is reviewing land use policies as well as clarifying stewardship procedures in an effort to provide more consistent and attentive stewardship.

We have expanded the committee with the addition of a number of new stewards. This will permit our responsibilities to be spread out amongst a larger group. Our new stewards are: Anne Greacen and Peter Beerits, Nita and Chandler Barbour, Tim and Kathy Emerson, Rich Howe, Ralph and Barbara Seeley, Nancy and Herb Seltz and Harriet Steinhardt.

Over the winter we will be completing guide sheets and easement abstracts for each property to facilitate annual stewardship visits and to ensure our office records are current and complete. Those properties newly acquired by IHT need signs identifying our ownership and providing rules of use. These will be designed and fabricated this winter in time for installation in the spring. Summer is our busy season but there is also plenty to do in the winter!

Ann Hooke
Fifteen Volunteers Make IHT Summer Office a Success

Fran Peterson has been organizing and coordinating the IHT summer volunteers' program for the past five years. This year she recruited 15 volunteers — both year-round and summer residents — who staffed our new Deer Isle Village office on weekdays, providing information and offering our maps, Terry Lester posters, Faith Munson notecards and T-shirts for sale.

In combination with Judy Hill’s extensive sales program in area gift shops, these volunteers raised over $3,000 for the Trust. In addition they provided information to several hundred visitors about the work of IHT and about special places people can visit on the island, such as the Settlement Quarry and Barred Island Preserve. Gordon Rittmeyer, President of IHT, expressed his appreciation for the work Fran and the volunteers have done. “We are extremely grateful to Fran and the volunteers for all the time and hard work they put into our summer volunteer program. They are a key to our success, because in addition to bringing us sales income, they represent us to the public.”

The office will be open again next summer, and Fran has agreed to coordinate the volunteers again. Anyone wishing to volunteer can call IHT at 348-2455.

Rowan Wakefield

Three Great Gifts for Christmas!

Absolutely the Best Map of Deer Isle!
A large (26”x36”), four-color map prepared from the US Geological Survey 7.5’ series.
Only $20.00, shipping included, rolled in a tube.

Faith Munson Cards
A set of four views of Deer Isle, beautifully painted by Faith Munson.
Eight cards in all, with envelopes.
$10, shipping included.

Terrell Lester Poster
Large (22”x28”) color print of “Sunrise over Stonington Harbor.”
$10, shipping included, rolled in a tube.

Send check to ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST, P.O. Box 42, Deer Isle, ME 04627

These items may also be purchased at our new office on Bridge St. in Deer Isle Village, Tuesday and Thursday, 10-noon.

Island Heritage Trust Newsletter
is published twice a year by Island Heritage Trust
P. O. Box 42, Deer Isle, ME 04627
Telephone 207-348-2455

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