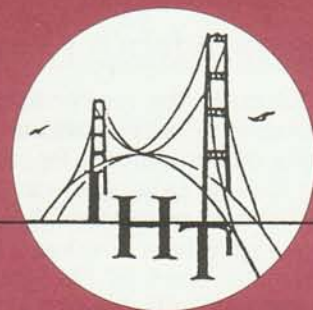


ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST



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

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PHOTO COURTESY MAINE COAST HERITAGE TRUST

Eagle's-eye view of Wreck Island (arrow on the left), Millet (center), and Round (right), IHT's recently acquired islands.

Are Land Trusts and Economic Development Compatible?

Our local newspaper recently quoted a member of the community as saying, "Enviro-conservation groups like Island Heritage Trust, DMR, and NMFS are working to stop all work and industry and eliminate good paying jobs."

It struck me that this is probably a fairly widely held view. If so, we have not done a good job in communicating IHT's mission, nor where we stand on the economic development of the island.

Island Heritage Trust is dedicated to conserving significant open space, scenic areas, wildlife habitats, natural resources, and historic and cultural features on the island. Our intention is to do this in cooperation with those who

earn their living here, not in opposition to economic development. If we are seen as against all change, we lose credibility. Change is inevitable. The island will change and develop no matter what we as an organization do.

What we *can* hope to accomplish, however, is to help create a vision for how this change can be planned and managed so as to preserve the island's special character for future generations. At the same time, we must recognize the need for economic development and make it part of the plan. A recent survey of islanders was very reassuring in that most of those who responded had a preference for the kind of future development

that is very consistent with both economic opportunity *and* preservation of the essence of the island environment. Our hope is not that the island will be unchanged a hundred years from now, but that it will be an even better place to live, work, and visit than it is today.

How much use can our protected properties stand? In a vein similar to the economic development issue, we are faced with the issue of public access to the protected property owned by IHT. I would like IHT to be seen as an organization that encourages residents and visitors to appreciate the value of our natural resources

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Stewardship Committee Report

Recently the stewardship committee has been working to improve our procedures for monitoring easements and caring for IHT-owned properties. A series of forms have been developed to facilitate the work of the stewards. Stewards will be identified to landowners and the public by their new hats that have "Island Heritage Trust Steward" printed across the front.

The major project has been to start work on a comprehensive stewardship policy statement for all our IHT-owned properties. This statement flows from our mission: to conserve significant open space, scenic areas, and historical and cultural features that offer public benefit and are essential to the character of the Deer Isle area. Each individual property reflects a unique aspect of Deer Isle and has unique needs and potential contributions. A comprehensive statement recognizes those individual qualities, while it provides greater consistency in stewardship practices, especially

as they relate to habitat protection and safe enjoyment by the public.

While this policy is being developed, related questions about public use of our islands are also being considered. Mark Island with its light tower, our most recently acquired island, is part of a relatively small area southwest of Deer Isle (also including Scraggy, Andrews, Second, and the Fort Islands) that has been designated as a Class A Habitat of "state or national significance, based on the seasonal species composition of relative abundance of wildlife using them." While we want to ensure minimal use during nesting season, opportunities will be provided to visit Mark Island sometime during the summer.

You may want to visit our newly acquired islands, Millet, Round, and Wreck. They are beautiful places for day trips. When you go, please help our stewards by carrying out any trash you find, and let me know at the office (207-348-2455) if you see signs of abuse or overuse.

Summer Service, Field Walks, and Education Series

Island Heritage Trust, in cooperation with the Deer Isle and Stonington Conservation Commissions, is planning a summer series of educational and service opportunities. You will be able to hear evening talks on subjects related to our island environment. Some proposed topics include:

- The Changing Forests of Deer Isle
- Bogs, Swamps, and Marshes Are Not the Same Thing
- The Geology, Ecology, and Pollution of Water
- The Effect of Man's Activities on Mud Flats and Intertidal Zones
- Pros and Cons of Preserving Undeveloped Land
- A report by Megan Shane on her natural resource inventory using GIS (Geographic Information System)

Guided summer field walks to learn about birds, woodland plants, geology, insects, and tide-zone critters will also be a part of this series. The trips will be limited in size. Some trips will be specifically geared for children, others for adults.

Service work days will provide an important opportunity for you to help us maintain some of your favorite island trails, while giving you a chance to learn how trails are designed and kept up. While working on human trails, we will surely also notice deer, mouse, and snail trails!

If you have a topic you would like discussed, an aspect of nature you would like to learn more about, or a resource person you would like to recommend, please contact me by mail at 2240 Midland Grove #302, St. Paul, MN 55113 up to June 14. After that date you can phone me at (207) 348-6933. Do plan to join us!

Ann Hooke



PHOTO BY ROWAN WAKEFIELD

Ann Hooke, Chair of the Stewardship Committee, models one of the new hats for use by stewards as they visit properties and easements that IHT owns.

By late June the Settlement Quarry and Barred Island Preserve will again be refitted with signs and ready for summer visitors. Enjoy the grand views and the woodland trails! *Ann Hooke*

Economic Development

Continued from page 1

and to learn how to protect them, while at the same time enjoying their use in ways that do no harm – in other words, to use them to the maximum extent consistent with future generations' being able to do the same. We are presently engaged in formalizing a stewardship policy for the six properties that we own. It is very difficult to put the general principle "do no harm" into specific preservation policies. I do hope that we can strike a reasonable balance between long-term protection and present enjoyment. As we learn more about what works and what does not, we will modify our policies to reflect this learning. I would greatly appreciate hearing your views on this subject. Please write, call, or e-mail if you have comments.

Gordon Rittmeyer,
President

Land Committee Reports Two New Gifts

Three important land conservation projects were finalized in 1998. In April the deed for Mark Island, with its historic light tower, was received at last. This news properly occupied much of our newsletter last spring. Then in December we received two new gifts. The first was from longtime Stonington residents, Robert and Evelyn Fisk, who deeded to IHT a 27-acre woodlot in Deer Isle. They believed it would benefit the community if it remained in its present undeveloped state, and we agreed! The second gift was the donation of a conservation easement restricting development on a small but scenically significant parcel of Penobscot Bay shoreline. We are delighted with these new additions to our land holdings.

IHT's stewardship responsibilities now extend to more than 550

acres and 11 miles of shoreline. They include ten islands, five of which offer public access. We are pleased with the conservation progress this record represents, and we fully expect that our report a year hence will equal or exceed the results for 1998.

The Fisks' woodlot deserves further comment. It includes and totally surrounds a small, undeveloped pond, Toffet Pond, which drains with a strong flow into the Labrador Swamp, which in turn drains into Crockett Cove. Protecting this fresh water source is especially important because of its significance for the environmental health of Crockett Cove and ultimately the island's fisheries.

Bob Fisk has said that an old-timer told him that Toffet Pond got its name back in the days when ice was cut there in the winter. It was

a long, tough haul to drag the ice to a shed, and so it became known as "tough-it" pond. Who knows? But we like the story!

Stanley Myers



Annual Meeting Reminder

Wednesday, July 21, 1999

7:00 pm

Island Country Club

Details to be announced
Save the date!

Dana Douglass Takes Over IHT Publicity Role

Dana Douglass of Deer Isle has agreed to take over the public relations work of the Island Heritage Trust from Rowan Wakefield, who has handled publicity for IHT since he stepped down as president five years ago.

A native of Portland, Dana grew up in Maine and graduated from Bates College. He and his wife Anne, and his son and daughter moved to Deer Isle in 1998. Once here he founded the Granite Island Guide Service, which offers canoe and sea kayaking trips from July to Labor Day in the waters off Stonington. The Guide Service provides all the necessary equipment, food, and instructions for day and overnight trips. Dana is very busy during the summer, as sea kayaking has become the fastest growing recreation in Maine after skiing. But sea kayaking is not his only interest. Dana was ordained as a minister in the United Church of Christ in 1983. He currently serves as pastor of the Church of Christ in Holden. Dana is committed to the goals of IHT. He hopes that Deer Isle, as it adapts to inevitable change, can retain its unspoiled character. His love and respect for the environment dates back to an around-the-world bicycle trip he and his wife took as their honeymoon in 1983. "I gained a deep appreciation for the beauty and frailness of the world's environment. I profoundly believe we are stewards of the earth, which is why I am enthusiastic about working with IHT to help it ensure the preservation of our beautiful island, its shore, and surrounding islands," he said.

Rowan Wakefield

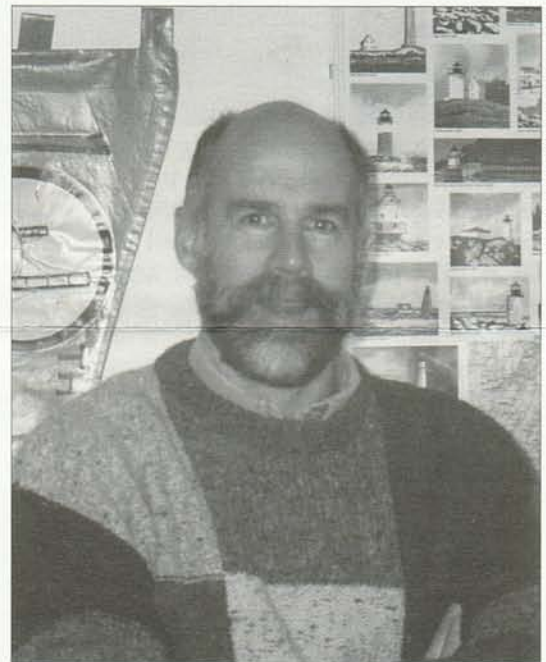


PHOTO BY ROWAN WAKEFIELD

Dana Douglass of Deer Isle, photographed at the IHT office, will be writing news releases and other publicity for IHT.

Land Protection Is in the News

The March 4th edition of the *Wall Street Journal* carried an article about the nation's largest-ever private land protection deal. It involved a conservation easement on more than 750,000 acres in Maine. While preserving its logging rights, a timber company is selling its development rights to the nonprofit New England Forestry Foundation. Articles in *The New York Times* this past winter have also described protection efforts for old-growth redwood forests in California, cattle ranches in New Mexico, and timbering in Maine's northern forests. What's happening to create these deals and generate this kind of news?

One thing that is occurring is that, as corporate restructurings change the management plans of major companies in the forest products industry, very large tracts of land are suddenly appearing for sale. Another factor is that a diverse group of land users are beginning to recognize the important role land trusts can play in balancing competing land-use interests. Saying it differently, land trusts are increasingly being seen as problem-solvers, not as problem-makers. They operate successfully in cities and towns, as well as in rural and remote areas, and many communities are gaining a better understanding of how a land trust can be of benefit.

The 1998 census of the Land

Volunteers Will Staff Office This Summer

As she has so ably done in recent years, Fran Peterson will again organize volunteers this summer to staff the IHT office to dispense information and sell our fund-raising items: notecards, T-shirts, and maps.

Located on Bridge Street in the village of Deer Isle, the office will be open from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm beginning June 28th until Septem-

ber 24th. If you have a question about land conservation, we have a good resource library on conservation issues, which is available for public use, and our volunteers can be helpful. If you wish to purchase a very fine map of Deer Isle produced by IHT, or need some attractive notecards, or just want to say "hello," stop in. All are most welcome!

Trust Alliance, the "trade association" of land trusts in this country, reported that there are 1,213 local and regional land trusts operating throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, a 63 per cent increase over ten years ago. The Island Heritage Trust is just one of 80 land trusts in Maine, up from 70 a decade earlier. Collectively, local and regional land trusts have helped protect more than 4.7 million acres, and these figures do not include any of the big numbers reported in the past year.

On average, land trusts own about a quarter of the land that they protect. The remaining three-quarters is in private ownership, protected by conservation easements. Conservation easements are legal documents covering a landowner's development rights. Sometimes these rights are sold to a nonprofit organization, such as a land trust, but more typically they are donated. The trust then becomes a perpetual steward, ensuring future owners do not violate the donor's restrictions on development.

Conservation easements have long been the specialty of land trusts. Increasingly they are the tool of choice for protecting land with important public values. With conservation easements land remains productive, in private hands, and on the tax rolls. Public interests are served by ensuring

that scenic and recreational areas are preserved for future generations and that environmentally significant areas are not degraded.

Stanley Myers

Archipelago Boat Trip on July 20

In association with the IHT annual meeting in July we are planning a boat tour of the islands in the Deer Isle archipelago on Tuesday, July 20 (rain date, July 22). We will identify and enjoy the islands owned by IHT - Millet, Round, Wreck, and Mark - in addition to many other islands. Depending on the number of people wishing to make the trip, there will be several boats. A knowledgeable guide will be on board to answer questions related to wildlife and island history. Make plans to join us on the 20th and then come to our annual meeting the next evening. Watch for details of this great opportunity to see and learn about the lovely islands of Merchant Row.

Ann Hooke



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P. O. Box 42, Deer Isle, ME 04627

Telephone 207-348-2455

Newsletter Committee: Peg Myers,
Harriet Steinharter, Rowan Wakefield

Trustees of IHT:

Gordon Rittmeyer, *President*

Jacqueline Binnian	Peg Myers
Ken Crowell	Stanley Myers
Marnie Reed Crowell	Dom Parisi
David Duncan	John Peterson
Daniel Hadley	Nancy Seltz
Judy Hill	Roger Steinharter
Ann Hooke	Rowan Wakefield
Dan Hotaling	Diane Walker
Chris Joyce	Carl Woodward