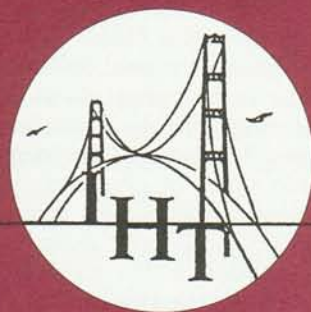


# ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

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



Volume IX, No. 2

Fall 1999

PHOTOS BY DANA DOUGLASS



## *A Kayaker's View of the Islands*



**W**HAT A SUMMER! Day after cloudless day! Although the gardens suffered from lack of rain, for an individual trying to get a guide service established, it was perfect. I offer wilderness canoe trips in the spring and fall, but in the summer I provide sea kayaking excursions among the islands of Deer Isle. From Memorial Day until Labor Day we lost only two days to bad weather. What a summer!

Most of my trips take eight novice kayakers on a three-hour tour out of Stonington Harbor. We usually stop at Russ, Green, and Rock Islands. It is the perfect short trip. We get the lovely view of the bay from the top of Russ, a refreshing swim in the quarry at Green, and a touch of the Caribbean on the white shell beach and turquoise water around Rock.

Several times in the summer I have taken small groups out for a multi-day camping trip among the islands. These are the trips I cherish the most. They allow folks an opportunity to settle into "a world away." We camp on Sheep, Buckle, Steve's, Russ, or Wheat Islands. There is nothing like eating a good

meal as one reclines against a granite ledge, falling asleep to the sound of the tide ebbing or flowing, and hot coffee in the morning as the sun rises and the lobstermen move out in their boats to pull their traps.

### *Low-impact, "leave no trace" ethic*

As a kayak guide I am impressed by several things, some of them contradictory. I am reminded daily what a privilege it is to live in such a unique and beautiful place. I am also acutely aware that as our world grows congested, more and more folks are seeking out places to reconnect with nature. The islands around us are attracting many of these folks. As a guide I am responsible for providing access to islands that are becoming quite crowded. Yet I believe that kayaking is a relatively low-impact way to be among the islands, and I notice that the islands that seem most well-cared for are the

islands used by the guiding outfits for overnight stays. Guides are instructed in, and tested on, island use and ethics, and most of them spend part of each trip teaching guests about "leave no trace" methods of interacting with nature.

I recognize the contradiction of wanting the islands to remain untouched, and at the same time enticing people to use them. But the truth is people need these places to restore their lives and spirits. They will find a way to get to them one way or another. Our best hope is that organizations like the Island Heritage Trust, the Maine Island Trail Association, the Nature Conservancy, and various guiding outfits will be relentless in their efforts to set more places apart, to educate people on use and stewardship, and to continue to clean up and monitor the places we love.

*Dana Douglass*



IN THE SUMMER of 1999 IHT developed a series of activities to engage our membership and the public in learning about our surroundings and in participating in caring for some of our properties. Three types of programs were organized: guided boat cruises, service projects, and evening talks and guided walks on subjects related to land conservation. We had a very enthusiastic response.

The day scheduled for the boat cruise to visit the islands owned by IHT was perfect! The winds were light, the air was clear, and the water and islands sparkled in the sun! Those who went along were clearly eager to get out on the water to view these beautiful islands, to hear about their human and natural history, and to learn more about management issues. Many IHT members went along on the cruise, but we also reached some new people, who learned about the work of IHT for the first time. For excitement we even spotted a bald eagle overhead!

The day set for the island cleanup was not a sparkling one. In fact, it dawned with a heavy fog. Nonetheless, thirteen hardy souls joined Stan Myers on his boat, which navigated through the fog to Millet Island. Using a tender, the cleanup crew was ferried ashore, where in an hour or so they filled fourteen bags of trash collected from the island ledges. The haul included one tire, one large fish box, lots of rope, buoys, plastic mo-

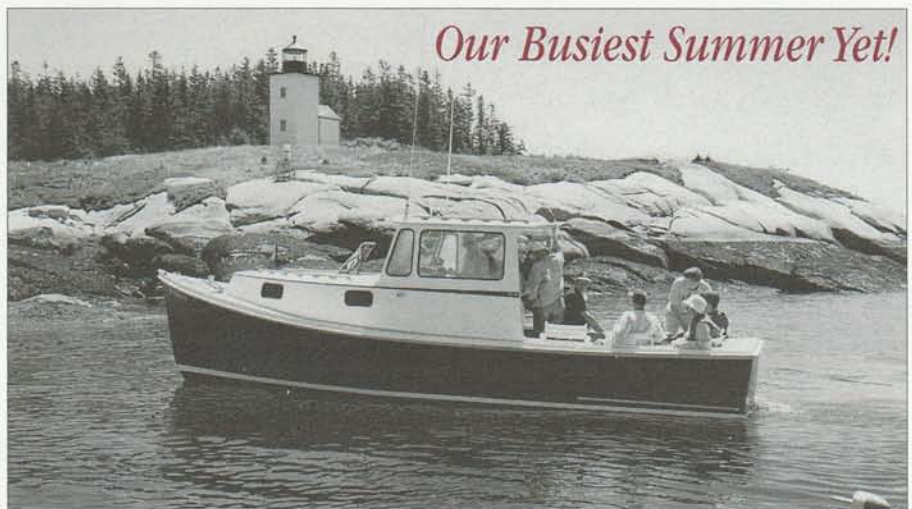


PHOTO BY STANLEY MYERS

*Seen in front of Mark Island Light, John Peterson in his boat "Tango II" was one of those taking passengers on the IHT summer boat tour of the islands.*

tor oil containers, soda cans, and styrofoam cups. Most of this trash by its nature was waterborne, not left by visitors.

What a pleasure to walk that beautiful island and to see it much cleaner as a result of our efforts. As plastic and foam are hazardous to both marine mammals and to birds when ingested, cleaning an island has more than an aesthetic benefit.

The "Summer Nature Walks and Talks" series was developed in cooperation with the Deer Isle and the Stonington Conservation Commissions, and the Walking Trails Group. Two IHT members, Ian Walker, a hydrogeologist, and Roger Hooke, a geomorphologist, shared their expertise at two talks, both well-attended. The guided

walks touched on diverse subjects: summer bird calls; how to build a trail; the secret world of bogs, swamps, and marshes; forest plants and trees; tide-zone inhabitants; and island geology. Those attending were enthusiastic and had thoughtful questions and observations to make, a clear sign of their interest. For those eager to hike, there were walks on Isle au Haut and up Blue Hill Mountain.

As this was the first summer of the "Walks and Talks" program, we were amazed at the real hunger for these kinds of programs. A total of 227 people participated in the "Walks and Talks." We hope that we can carry this program through the year into next summer. The programs of this past summer can be repeated. There are also several possibilities for additional topics: talks on soils, forest management, water management, and the relationship of sewer regulations to shore ecology. Guided walks on ferns and mosses, spring wild flowers, stars, mushrooms, mud-flat ecology, vernal pools, and edible wild plants are all possibilities. Service projects will continue to focus on trail maintenance and on island cleanup, but could also include trail building. We are always open to suggestions for topics and for possible leaders.

**Ann Hooke**

## *Good Turnout at 1999 Annual Meeting*

THE ANNUAL MEETING of IHT members was held in July 1999 with an overflow crowd filling the meeting room of the Island Country Club. The main attraction was a slide presentation by Carl Little of the College of the Atlantic on "Art of the Maine Islands." He showed a series of color slides of paintings of coastal Maine islands by artists of the 19th and 20th centuries, including a number who painted on Deer Isle, from John Marin, William Muir, and Karl

Schrag, to Jill Hoy.

During a short business meeting prior to Carl Little's talk, Dana Douglass was elected as a new trustee and Judy Hill, Dan Hotaling, and John Peterson were re-elected to serve another term each as trustees. The officers of the Trust, Gordon Rittmeyer, President, Ann Hooke, Vice President; Dan Hadley, Treasurer; and Peg Myers, Secretary; were elected to serve another one-year term each.



## Land Committee Report: Ongoing Efforts to Protect More Land

THE LAND COMMITTEE has been active this past summer in a series of discussions on a broad range of conservation projects. These discussions have been typical of the necessary dialogue that takes place between IHT and any landowner contemplating long-term protection of his or her property. It is not a good idea to discuss specific projects until a legal document has been signed, but because of our ultimate need for very wide community support, we'll make one exception with regard to our efforts to protect the Caterpillar Hill viewshed.

Island Heritage Trust and the Blue Hill Heritage Trust have been collaborating in discussions with two landowners controlling more than 100 acres of blueberry fields prominent in this magnificent view. Their land is seen as the keystone in the larger effort to ensure preservation of the pres-

ent view. We believe our joint efforts with willing landowners will ultimately be successful. However, development pressure on this scenic land is high, and both land trusts will require strong financial support from their constituencies to make preservation a reality.

Other land protection discussions continue regarding the protection of a piece of land that would provide the opportunity for a fine public walking trail to a secluded and attractive shoreline. Conservation easement discus-

sions are also continuing with the respective owners of two of the largest and most prominent islands in Stonington's archipelago. In addition, the owner of some of the most scenic land bordering the Deer Isle Thorofare wishes to protect her property permanently against future residential development. We hope to be able to help.

Finally, the GIS, or Geographic Information System, should be up and running by the time this newsletter is received. Megan Shane will have demonstrated her considerable efforts to get us started. The beginnings of a data base will allow us to keep track of all of Deer Isle's environmentally significant land features (habitat, wetlands, vegetative cover, etc.), in addition to its land ownership and protection patterns. All of this is key information for guiding future Land Committee activities.

**Stanley Myers**



*In last summer's cleanup of Millet Island, 14 bags of trash were collected by a hardy crew of 14 volunteers.*

PHOTO BY ANN HOOKE

## Our Wonderful Volunteers

IHT DEPENDS ON volunteers for its success. In several venues dozens of people gave generously of their time and talents to make the IHT's programs happen. At the office in Deer Isle, volunteers greeted visitors and informed them about our mission, sold cards, tide charts, and maps, which are the source of funds for IHT. Special thanks to Judy Hill for keeping the office and other shops around the island supplied with items.

We provided a number of educational experiences, in addition to the slide-lecture on "Art of the Maine Islands" at the annual meeting. Many helped make the boat tour and the "Walks and Talks" series so enjoyable.

Stewardship responsibilities in connection with the conservation easements take a great deal of time and effort. We thank our conscientious stewards for their careful attention to monitoring of the properties. Deserving special thanks are Ken Crowell and Barbara and Ralph Seeley for their efforts at Barred Island Preserve and the Tennis Preserve.

We appreciate the help of *The Island Ad-Vantages* and local businesses for their support in publicizing our events. We want to thank the following volunteers for all they did to make it a banner year for IHT.

**Volunteers at the Office:** Fran Peterson, Coordinator; Nita Barbour; Nancy Dontzin; David Hayman; Loni

Hayman; Judy Hill; Pam Pace; Barbara Seymour; Barbara Seeley; Dorothy Moore; Page Hawk.

**Summer Events:** Boat skippers: Stan Myers, John Peterson, Gordon Rittmeyer. Island Steward-Guides: Richard Bartlett, Ken Crowell, Diane Walker. Shore Greeters: Ann Hooke, Judy Rittmeyer. "Walk and Talk" Leaders: Ken Crowell, Bettina Dudley, Roger Hooke, Stan Myers, Marshall Rice, Sr., Ralph and Barbara Seeley, Diane Walker, Ian Walker.

**Stewards:** Chandler & Nita Barbour, Richard Bartlett, Peter Beerits & Anne Greacen, Ken & Marnie Crowell, Kathy & Tim Emerson, Dan Hotaling, Rich Howe, Stan Myers, John Peterson, Barbara & Ralph Seeley, Herb & Nancy Seltz, Harriet Steinharter, Rowan Wakefield Diane & Ian Walker, Jean Welch.



AS THE STEWARDSHIP responsibilities of IHT have increased in recent years, the committee has expanded. There are now 24 members, all of whom act as stewards. Also, the committee has adopted more formal procedures for monitoring the easements we hold and the land we own. Stewards have new forms to document their visits. These forms and the abstracts for individual easements compiled by Stan Myers have improved our ability to keep good records so necessary for doing the job of monitoring.

As more people come to Deer Isle as tourists and as residents, and as they increase their use of natural areas, IHT is trying to manage these areas in ways that allow for recreation while protecting the environment. We have increased our contacts with the Nature Conservancy and the Maine Island Trail Association in an effort to apply a broader cooperative approach to management.

On our own properties we feel that we have been successful managers. Generally, visitors to our areas respect the site. Littering is minimal, and dogs, where permitted, are kept on a leash. The islands – Wreck, Round, Millet, and Mark – remain sparkling gems. Signs discreetly located identify our ownership and specify day use only. The Settlement Quarry, open for a full year, has weathered well. Vandalism has been minor. Winter blow-downs necessitated some modest trail clearing. There are

## Stewardship Committee Report

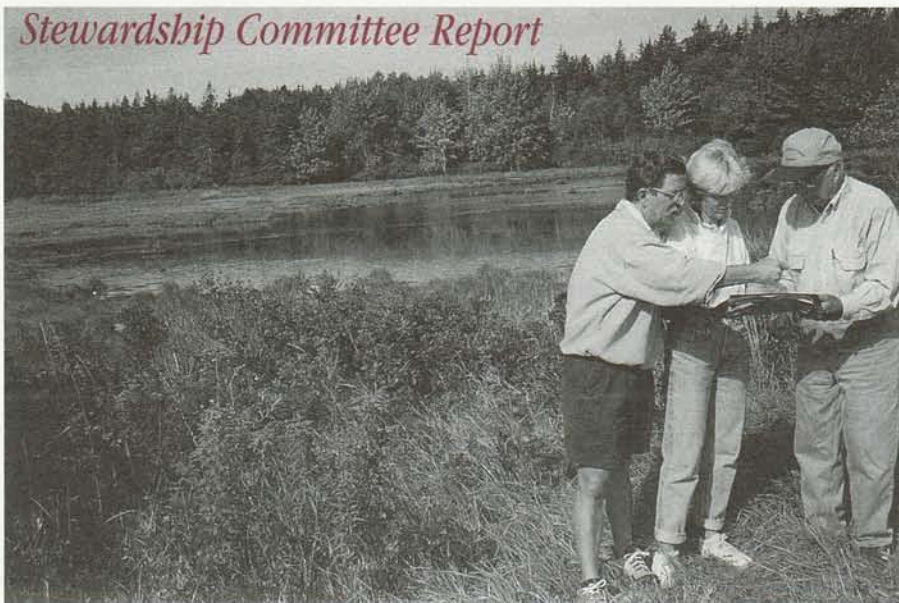


PHOTO BY BARBARA WAKEFIELD

*Standing in front of the wet marsh on Oak Point, Elizabeth Compton and her husband, Harvey Peterson, review the status of the easement on her property with Rowan Wakefield (right), IHT steward.*

plans for an illustrated sign at the viewing platform identifying significant landmarks. Visitors clearly enjoy the Quarry.

Both the Tennis and the Barred Island Preserves are used extensively. At the Tennis Preserve modest shore erosion led to a minor trail relocation and some wet areas along the trail have been improved with simple boardwalks. Previous problems of vandalism, gnome houses, and standing stones were minimal this year. Harassment of nesting ospreys has been reduced by educational signs that greet visitors as they come onto the island. The biggest challenge is the illegal parking along Goose Cove Road. It has been help-

ful to have a steward present on days of heaviest expected use. All our management efforts are compensated for by the enthusiastic comments heard over and over from visitors to our properties.

Work on an IHT land-use policy for our properties continues. The Stewardship Committee is looking at issues regarding particular properties and is developing informational materials as needed.

**Ann Hooke**

## New Cards by Faith Munson / Raffle of the Originals Next Year!

ONE OF THE HAPPY EVENTS of the summer was the arrival of two new cards created from watercolors by Faith Munson. The first is a scene at the top of the Settlement Quarry showing the view looking toward Isle au Haut. The other is a view of Mark Island and the lighthouse tower seen across the water. In addition, we have reproduced an old favorite, Faith's watercolor of Stonington Village as seen from the water. We are de-

lighted to have new cards to offer. When you are thinking about Christmas, don't forget that these cards would make wonderful gifts.

Next summer, thanks to the generosity of Faith Munson, we plan to raffle off the original watercolors of the Quarry and Mark Island from which the cards were made. Look for further details in our spring newsletter and the formal announcement early next summer.



## Island Heritage Trust NEWSLETTER

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