IHT Acquires Polypod Island! It Was A Close Call...

"Can you help us protect Polypod Island?" This is just the kind of question the founders had in mind when they established the Island Heritage Trust a dozen years ago. Polypod in Southeast Harbor is a familiar part of the landscape, one of those small, undeveloped islands that people like to explore or use for a summer picnic. It is also one of the places assumed to be immune from change until a "For Sale" sign goes up. In this case the sale was announced in an ad in a local newspaper. The price was $115,000.

"We will sure try," was our reply. And in March of this year, after a roller coaster ride of hope and disappointments, IHT accomplished the purchase of Polypod Island. What is needed to protect land that is actively for sale is MONEY. Like many smaller land trusts, IHT does not have ready funds for land purchases. To be able to buy land it must find private donors, conservation-minded foundations, or public funding.

Our first question was whether any building on the island could meet the setback requirements of the shoreline ordinance. But a quick inspection of the island with a measuring tape confirmed that indeed it could be built upon. The option of a "bargain sale" was discussed with the owner, but that discussion was not fruitful. The neighbors around Southeast Harbor, increasingly aware of the potential for changes to the island, organized "The Friends of Polypod" and successfully began to solicit a major part of the necessary funds.

IHT called on the Maine Coast Heritage Trust for help. It was able to secure two grants that increased the funds pledged to $100,000. We were almost there. Optimism was high when the news came that the island had been sold to a private individual for the asking price, which was now $120,000! Hope vanished. The Deer Isle Planning Board received an application for a residence to be built on the island; at a hearing the Board granted the permit. Gordon Rittmeyer, President of IHT, attended the meeting and afterward approached Polypod's new owner. He described the neighbors' concerns and the joint efforts of the Friends of Polypod and IHT to purchase the property. Gordon asked the owner if he would be willing to explore ways to minimize changes in the island's appearance. Surprisingly, the owner said he would be willing to talk about IHT's concerns.

Several days later the owner called expressing uncertainty about his plans for the island. He had not realized the extent of the

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President’s Letter: With Each Success, More Challenges

TrHE PAST six months have seen the successful purchase of Polypod Island in Southeast Harbor, our second outright purchase of land. You will read about the details in the feature article of this newsletter. This purchase was a cliffhanger, and it taught us a lesson about being prepared. We came within a day or two of losing this beautiful island, which everyone incorrectly assumed was unsuitable for development.

One major effort now underway to give us better planning capability is the use of sophisticated new technology (Geographical Information Systems) to identify ecologically sensitive areas and create detailed maps containing the information we need to plan effectively. Roger Hooke has applied for a grant that will allow us to pursue GIS mapping capability. This is an outgrowth of Megan Shane’s work as an intern last summer, which showed us the potential of the technology.

An example of the way in which unanticipated events occur is the sudden appearance of commercial moorings in island anchorages off Stonington. Last summer a firm in Camden began placing rental moorings in many traditionally open anchorages in the Deer Isle area. These moorings have an out-of-the-area phone number on them as a means of collecting a fee for their use. They have been indiscriminately placed in front of private islands and can be expected to appear next to islands owned by IHT. We, along with many organizations and individuals, have responded by sending letters strongly objecting to this practice, to the Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies having jurisdiction over these waters. How disheartening that a group would try to make money from the people who freely visit our protected islands! But it alerts us to the increasing pressures of development and our need to be ready to deal with change.

Gordon Rittmeyer

Stewardship Committee Report

By the time you read this the summer work of the stewardship committee will be well underway. Stewards and easement owners will have started their summer easement visits. We are planning a workshop in June for all stewards to be led by Doug Dradziewicz of The Nature Conservancy to discuss effective stewardship procedures and ways to identify and address problems.

As our responsibilities increase, we would like to recruit a group of people who enjoy helping with trail maintenance. All ages and skills are welcome. If you are interested, please get in touch with Ann Hooke (348-6933) or the IHT office (348-2455). We are also setting up a core stewardship group interested in broader policy issues to help streamline our processes.

An illustrated sign for the viewing platform at the Settlement Quarry identifying the islands in view is being constructed by Michelle Billings and Doug Wilson of Little Deer Isle. The sign has been given in memory of Robert Whitcomb. It is hoped that by May the woods will be dry enough to allow for the removal of the old cars from the Quarry.

We are ready for another summer of visitors at Barred Island Preserve with trail work and improvements to the parking area. Please help us to reduce impact from heavy use by going to the Tennis Preserve or the Settlement Quarry if the parking area is full. It is important that cars not park on Goose Cove Road, as such parking blocks safe passage of emergency and other vehicles.

As more and more people visit the off-shore islands, there is a growing need to educate the public on low-impact use of these sensitive areas. When you visit islands, please follow the suggested guidelines on posted signs. If you notice nesting birds or young seals, please remember to leave them in peace.

With this newsletter you will find a listing of this summer’s “Walks and Talks” series. Many events are repeats of successful ones held last summer, including the island boat tours and the island clean-ups. We have added some new “Walks and Talks” as well. We hope you enjoy the wild Maine that IHT is striving to preserve.

Ann Hooke
Sponsored by Island Heritage Trust, Stonington Conservation Commission, Deer Isle Conservation Commission, Deer Isle Walking Trails Group

**Sun. May 14:** Vernal Pools – explore the rich life in these woodland pools. 
Meet at Sunset Memorial Garden, opposite P.O. at 1:00 pm. Reservations necessary: 348-6933. Led by Ken Crowell and Carol Bennatti.

**Sat. May 20:** Warbler Wave Walk. Meet at Sunset Memorial Garden, opposite P.O. at 7:30 am. Extra binoculars available. Led by Ken and Marnie Crowell.

**Mon. June 12:** Bird Calls for Beginners. Led by Dom Parisi. 
Meet at Mariners’ Park at 8:00 am. (Rain date June 14.)

**Sat. June 17:** Woodland Trees and Flowers. Led by Marshall Rice, Sr. 
Meet at the Tennis Preserve at 9:00 am. For info, call 348-6933 or 348-2455.

**Fri. July 7:** Tide Zone Critters of Deer Isle with Bettina Dudley. 
Barred Island Preserve at 8:30 am. Reservations necessary, call 348-6933.

**Fri. July 14:** Walking Trails Group Hike with Sally Rooney to help us identify ferns and mosses. Meet at Crockett Cove Woods at 9 am at Preserve entrance on Whitman Road (FR 88) Stonington. For info, call 348-2559 or 367-2448.

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**Wed. July 19:** Island Heritage Trust Annual Meeting, 7:00 p.m. Island Country Club. All welcome.

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**Sun. July 23:** Caring for Island Spruce-Fir Forests. Talk by Max McCormack, retired professor of forestry, and Henry Trial, Forest Service Entomologist. Sunset Parish Hall, 7:00 pm, just south of post office in Sunset.

**Mon. July 24:** Spruce-Fir Forest Walk. Led by Max McCormack and Henry Trial. Meet at Deer Isle Congregational Church parking lot, 9:00 am. Bring bag lunch. Back by 1 pm. For info, 348-6933.

**Fri. July 28:** Water Resources of Deer Isle. Ian Walker, retired hydrogeologist. Sunset Congregational Church Parish Hall, 7 pm. All welcome.

**Mon. July 31:** Guided Boat Tours of the Islands to see three of IHT’s public access islands, learn about the natural and human history of the islands, and consider management issues. Leave from Stonington Town Dock. No charge. Reservations necessary: 348-6933. (Rain date, Aug. 1.)

**Thurs. Aug. 3:** Polypod Island Celebration. Leave from Mariners’ Park at 11:30 am in kayaks or canoes, or meet at Polypod Island for mid-day picnic and exploring. High tide 2:20 pm. (Rain date, Aug. 4.) For information, call 348-6933.

**Sun. Aug. 6:** Introduction to the Geology of Deer Isle with Roger Hooke, retired geologist. Sunset Parish Hall, just south of Sunset post office, 7:30 pm.
Mon. Aug. 7: Bedrock Geology Field Trip around Deer Isle with Roger Hooke.
Meet at Deer Isle Congregational Church, at 9 am. Bring bag lunch and wear hat with brim.
Back by 1 pm. For information, call 348-6933.

Mon. Aug. 14: Glacial Geology Field Trip around Deer Isle with Roger Hooke, as above.

9:30 am. For location, call 348-2559.

Sat. Aug. 26: Walking Trails Group Hiking Trip to Isle au Haut.
Reservations necessary, call 348-2559 or 367-2448.

Meet at Burnt Cove Market at 9:00 am. Reservations necessary, 348-6933.

For late summer and fall “Walks & Talks,”
visit the IHT office in Deer Isle village to get schedule.

Community Service Opportunity to help care for IHT lands
Enjoy working with all ages, outdoors, taking care of places you love.
Meet new friends. No prior skill necessary.

Fri. June 30: Shore Cleanup of Campbell Island.
9:00 am. Bring work gloves, chainsaws, loppers, water, and bag lunch.
Reservations necessary: Call 367-5144. (Rain date, July 1.)

Mon. July 17: Shore Cleanup of Wreck Island,
9:00 am. Bring rubber gloves and bag lunch. Reservations necessary:
Call 348-6933. (Rain date, July 18.)

Fri Aug. 11: Trail Maintenance at Tennis Preserve.
Meet at Preserve, 9:30 a.m. All welcome. There are jobs for everyone. Wear work gloves
and bring a bag lunch. For info, call 348-2559. (Rain date, Sat., Aug. 12.)

Fri Aug. 25: Settlement Quarry Cleanup and Trail Work,
9:00 a.m. Wear work gloves and bring a bag lunch. All welcome.
Meet new friends while you help clean up the quarry. (Rain date, Aug. 28.)

Want to help at Barred Island Preserve?
Volunteers are needed to provide information, and monitor parking and traffic to
the Preserve at peak use times, i.e., between July 20 and Labor Day, three hours
on either side of low tide, on days when the weather is good. If you are interest-
ed or know someone who would like to volunteer, please get in touch with Ken
Crowell (348-6065).
IHT Office Has New Look!

When members and friends drop into the IHT office this summer, they will notice some new improvements. Thanks to the design talents of Don Reiman and the fine cabinetmaking skills of Ian Walker, the office in Deer Isle is being transformed. Using Don’s plans, Ian has spent the spring building a large bookcase, a 30x40 inch map case, a display wall for posters, maps and important notices, and two display tables, one for each window.

The result of these renovations is excellent storage space for books, bound files, and our large supply of maps, as well as a handsome display space for notices and items for sale to benefit the Trust. Now visitors and passersby can look in the office windows and find posters, photos, and information reflective of IHT’s goals and accomplishments easily visible and attractively arranged.

New Deer Isle maps for sale this year

We have a wealth of new maps to show off in the new spaces. Roger Hooke has developed a series of maps from the Natural Resources Inventory GIS project conducted last summer by Megan Shane. These include, among others, maps of the geology of Deer Isle, maps of the island’s wetlands, and a map updating the preserved lands on Deer Isle. We also have some new geology maps available for sale. Look for a description of these maps elsewhere in the newsletter. Do stop in to admire our new look!

Rowan Wakefield

What’s New This Summer at IHT’s Office

This summer we’re adding several new items to those on sale at our office. We’re pleased to say that Terrell Lester has a stunning new poster of Mark Island in sea smoke that he is making available to us. By the beginning of the summer this poster should be on view. We’ll also have new T-shirts. One will show the IHT logo in white or black on colored shirts; the other will feature a design by a well-known local artist.

The Faith Munson note cards of the view of Isle au Haut from the Settlement Quarry, and one of Mark Island, as well as the reprint of the popular view of Stonington from the water, are still available. The cards can be matted for framing; samples with mattes are on display at the office.

What we consider the “Best Map of Deer Isle” created from Coast and Geodetic Survey maps is still available. We also have new geological maps from the USGS to offer for sale: the Geology of Northern Penobscot Bay; Surficial Geology of Maine; and Bedrock Geology of Maine.

Books in stock include the Conservation Commission’s “Quick Key to the Birds of Deer Isle,” and “Wild Flowering Plants of Deer Isle,” as well as Marnie Reed Crowell’s book on Mark Island, and Richard Myrick’s “Deer Isle Sketchbook.”

The IHT office will be staffed by friendly, knowledgeable volunteers Monday through Friday from 10:00 to 3:30 as in past summers, thanks to coordination by Fran Peterson. They will welcome the chance to chat with you, answer any questions, and show you the new items for sale.

Judy Hill

Island Heritage Trust Newsletter

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Carl Woodward

Annual Meeting Reminder
Wednesday, July 19, 2000
7:00 pm
Island Country Club
Details to be announced
Save the date!
Rowan Wakefield
Trustee Member

As we go to press we have learned sadly of the death of Rowan Wakefield on April 24th. Rowan was a tireless and devoted friend of IHT, who served as president for eight years. From IHT's fragile beginning he was responsible for building a strong and effective organization that flourishes today. After Rowan retired from the presidency, he continued to work actively as a trustee while handling its public relations activities. His enthusiasm and energy was a model for us all. He will be greatly missed as a leader and as a friend. A memorial service is planned for June.

Polypod Island
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neighbors' concerns. At the same time he had invested monetarily and emotionally in the project. But he said he would be willing to withdraw if the expenses he had laid out could be recovered. Fund-raising efforts were redoubled with a new sense of urgency. The choice was now very real. It was either raise $125,000 or live with the loss of an undeveloped island. Additional funds were raised and finally at the last minute a bridge loan was negotiated allowing IHT to proceed with the purchase. Although we are still seeking the last $8,000 to pay off this indebtedness, Polypod is now owned by IHT. It will remain a delightful undeveloped place, as it has always been, available to anyone with a small boat and an urge to explore. Our experience confirms the increasingly important role that land trusts play in helping communities when they want to preserve land in its natural state.

Stanley Myers

Raffle of Faith Munson Watercolors to Benefit IHT

You could be the lucky winner of one of two fine new watercolors painted by Faith Munson, that she has generously donated to the Island Heritage Trust. One of the watercolors titled "View from the Settlement Quarry" features Isle au Haut in the distance. The other painting is of Mark Island with its lighthouse as seen from Sand Beach Road. The paintings measure 9" x 13" each. Double matted, they come to 15-3/4" x 20."

Both watercolors are on display at the IHT office, as are the note cards of the same views. Raffle tickets for these paintings at $1 each will go on sale at the IHT office by Memorial Day weekend. The drawing will take place at the IHT annual meeting on July 19th. We hope you will attend, but you need not be present to win. For more information please call (207) 348-2455.