Scott’s Landing preserve will open next summer

As you read these lines, the Island Heritage Trust will shortly become owner of Scott’s Landing, the spectacular 22-acre property adjacent to Old Ferry Road in North Deer Isle. The property will offer the public several walking trails, access to the shore, 1800 ft. of rocky and sandy beaches, and places to enjoy views of Eggemoggin Reach and the Deer Isle Bridge. The Trust will have a grand opening celebration in the summer of 2007. “We are thrilled that this wonderful property may now be enjoyed by generations of islanders thanks to the effort and generosity of so many IHT volunteers and donors,” said IHT President Ken Crowell.

Readers will recall that Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) purchased the land from Nathan Pitts in January, 2006. MCHT is preparing to close on the sale of the two-acre house lot it marketed this summer and to transfer the remaining 20 acres to IHT. As real estate prices continue to escalate dramatically, land trusts increasingly use this practice. By selling a small portion of a conservation property without sacrificing the integrity of a project, trusts are still able to acquire special lands for conservation and public enjoyment.

This past summer, the IHT Board of Trustees voted unanimously to endorse a Memorandum of Understanding with MCHT on the terms of the transaction. A Conservation Easement to be held by MCHT will ensure the land remains undeveloped and open for low-impact recreational use. The house lot buyer has strict limitations on the size and height of a home built there because of deed restrictions that will be enforced by IHT. In addition, the parcel will remain on town tax rolls. Proceeds from the house lot sale will establish a Stewardship Endowment Fund. Fund income will provide on-going stewardship support for Scott’s Landing, including substantial voluntary tax payments to the town of Deer Isle.

The IHT Board agreed to donate a hay rake and mower used on the Scott’s Landing property to the Deer Isle Stonington Historical Society. The farm implements will be restored and displayed in a new barn to be built on the Society’s Sunset Rd. property. “The mowing machine and raking machine were used by my grandparents and great-grandparents to work the farm in their time,” Nathan Pitts said recently. “I have raked with that machine myself not that long ago,” he added.
**The Trust is YOU**

A gratifying number of letters arrive at the IHT office thanking our staff and volunteers for lovely experiences visitors and area residents alike have at our preserves. It is an amazing fact that most of our preserves were outright gifts made by far-sighted and generous folks. The lands that we have purchased were largely paid for with gifts from our contributors.

But it is the time that so many dedicated volunteers give to the Trust work year after year, summer after summer that really makes this enterprise special. With only a single full-time employee and one part-timer, overseeing our 8 preserves, 24 easements, and 8 islands is quite a task. We may be a very small part of our environment — only some 7% has any conservation protection — but we have a big responsibility.

As you look over this newsletter, you will realize that we, like all land trusts in the nation, are moving in some quite new directions. Stewardship of our special places and community outreach are now at the forefront of our activities. Our preserve stewards, trail volunteers, and conservation easement monitors are invaluable. Our ever-popular Walks and Talks series, the Adopt-A-Preserve programs at the school, and the new summer young naturalist program all help unite our community.

As more and more new people come to Deer Isle to spend part or all of the year, we are a way to get to know one another. We are not a public or government agency. We are just a group of private individuals who band together to work for what is special about this place, for now and for years to come. We welcome new volunteers. You are the Trust.

**Eaglets take flight**

Eagle pairs on at least two of our conserved islands were successful in fledging young this year! Mark Island hatched a chick in late April that survived the adverse early June weather to fledge in mid-July. Walt Reed regularly saw the chick and parents during his boat tours. Unfortunately, the old Barred Island pair, nesting on Second Island this year, lost their chick during this same period. The Carney Island pair hatched two chicks, but only one survived to fledge. In August, Pam Haskell sat down to breakfast and noticed an immature eagle about 20 feet away. She was able to snap this great photo of what is undoubtedly the Carney eaglet, as you can see Carney Island in the background.

Need a gift idea? Give an IHT membership and support the Annual Appeal!
Rolling out the welcome mat for Pine Hill are Stewardship Director Ann Hooke and Executive Director Mac Herrling.

(Photo by Marnie Reed Crowell)

Counting butterflies
School programs underway

The new school year has just begun and already four classes have taken trips to their adopted preserve! Mark Woida’s 6th Grade science class visited Barred Island for a three-hour program to begin documenting the flora and fauna. Students explored tide pools, counted migrating monarch butterflies, and even searched for salamanders. The 4th Grade visited Shore Acres preserve and the Kindergarteners visited their spot at Gray’s Cove Beach. The fifth grade studied geology at Settlement Quarry. The goal of the program is to get students outside to observe and appreciate the natural world while supporting curriculum needs with hands-on experience. Hopefully each class will visit during each of the three seasons. The Outreach Committee seeks more volunteers to help with these trips. If you have special knowledge in natural history or just like to help kids enjoy nature, we encourage you to join us!

Pine Hill Opens
Take in the view again

“Wonderful! We always used to climb up Pine Hill for the great view!” That’s what folks say when they learn that the area has now been given to IHT. IHT staff and volunteers joined other islanders in taking in the spectacular views from the top of Pine Hill on Little Deer Isle as the Trust officially opened the Pine Hill Preserve at the end of October. Visitors to the top of Pine Hill are treated to the site of the bridge, the Reach, Caterpillar Hill, Naskeag Point, Mount Desert Island, the Causeway, Carney and Heart Islands, and the hills of Isle Au Haut. Pat and Kurt Fairchild donated the hilltop and its accompanying seven acres to IHT in early 2006. They will be on hand to dedicate the Preserve next summer.

The Fairchilds donated the land to IHT to allow islanders to enjoy its hilltop and trails in perpetuity. In addition, IHT wants to protect the rare serpentized peridotite rock and unusual flowering plants, lichens, and ferns found there.

To provide safe and enjoyable access to the property, IHT improved the driveway entrance off Blastow Cove Road and built a small parking area. There is now a handsome sign cut from peridotite gracing the Preserve entrance. A register box is stocked with new green Pine Hill brochures featuring a map, description of the views, and a history of the land. Visitors are urged to stay on the trail to protect the fragile soils and plants. Rock climbing is not recommended. The rock on the quarry face is loose and unstable.

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(Photo by Mac Herrling)
First children’s summer series a success

The first summer of children’s nature programs offered by IHT saw youngsters outdoors exploring flow- ers, rocks, birds, worms, and arrowheads. Children and often parents and grandparents had fun bird watching and journaling at Heritage House. One Saturday, they looked at rocks and the geology of Deer Isle, and another, they went painting next door at the Historical Society’s Heritage Gardens. Lee Fay had them handling red wiggler worms and learning about composting. Anthropologist Bill Haviland showed Indian artifacts and had the youngsters lined up on the lawn beside the society enthusiastically hurling darts with an ‘atl-atl’ (ancient spear-thrower).

Josephine Jacob provided clever, themed snacks. Local artist Frederica Marshall, who specializes in Oriental brush painting and watercolor, led a great painting class. Ann Hooke shared her knowledge of rocks and gems and Deer Isle geology. Marnie Reed Crowell helped Lee demonstrate the use and care of binoculars that were given some years back in honor and in memory of IHT supporters. (Note: We also have 10x hand lenses that are used by groups and in the not-too-distant future we hope to acquire more binoculars.)

Who owned this clay pipe?

Scott’s Landing, on the Reach, is a part of Deer Isle rich in history. Nathaniel Scott purchased property from William Eaton in 1784, and four generations of the Scott family provided ferry service from here to the mainland until construction of the bridge. Even before William Eaton settled the place in 1762, it was the site of various events. The pipe shown in this photograph is a material remnant of one such event.

The pipe, found a few years ago, was picked up on the beach near the old ferry and steamboat landing. Probably made in Scotland, it is composed of kaolin or pure white clay with the letters U and D visible on back of the bowl. Such pipes may be dated fairly precisely, in this case between 1725 and 1755.

Given its age, the pipe may have been lost by someone in an incident that took place in 1726. In the preceding fall, the Penobscot Indians agreed to lay down their arms, ending what was known as “Dummer’s War” (1721-1725). In return, a sloop was sent from Boston to “Agemogen” (Eggemoggin) with trade goods and hostages for repatriation to the Indians. The sloop arrived at the agreed upon place—the passage between Deer Isle and Little Deer – in January, by which time the Indians had removed to Mount Desert, and the vessel became frozen in ice. The parties did meet, with various Indians walking 7 or 8 miles over the ice to trade.

We may never know, but was this pipe smoked by the sloop’s Captain Sanders or one of his crew while waiting for the ice to release the vessel? Or was it perhaps dropped by one of the Indians who traded with the mariners from Boston?

In any event, that “Agemoggin” was chosen for this meeting suggests it may have been used for others before colonists settled on Deer Isle. What is certain is that it reminds us that the island’s history did not begin in 1762, no matter how little we know of what went before.

- Bill Haviland