

ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

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



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From Modest Beginnings. . .

With IHT's 25th anniversary soon approaching, a small group comprised of IHT founders as well as past and present chairs of the board of trustees recently gathered to discuss the Trust's evolution and their hopes for its future. Begun with modest aspirations to secure easements to protect land, according to Dud Hendrick and Cherie Mason, the organization has matured considerably over the years, at the same time its original purpose has evolved. No longer simply about acquiring easements and property, IHT, like other land trusts throughout the country, is shifting its focus to embrace sustainability and to more purposefully engage and be engaged in the community.

Hendrick and Mason, both founding IHT members, "met with other trusts" including Blue Hill Heritage, to learn how they were managing similar goals. They also sought legal counsel from Maine Coast Heritage Trust. The group even took a boat tour around the islands, noted Hendrick, to become familiar with the compass of Deer Isle's archipelago. Attracting people to the cause was an "easy sell," he said, though the group had "no particular lands in mind," for acquisition, simply a deeply shared concern about preservation.

In reminiscing about early projects, Mason recalled that as a way to involve young people, the group decided to sponsor an essay contest for island high schoolers. In awarding the winners a bus trip to Boothbay, the group hoped to impress upon the students the "evils of development," chuckled Mason. "We hoped that the young people

would appreciate even more the unspoiled beauty of Deer Isle after they saw Boothbay." Mason laughed in describing the students' reaction: "They were thrilled with Boothbay and all it had to offer!"

Bill Haviland, who has served two

new land purchases could be made." Even the Lily Pond project wasn't enthusiastically supported at the outset, he said. That changed dramatically, however, as more of the community was enlisted, beginning with the Island Fishermen's Wives. Despite a national economic crisis coinciding with fundraising efforts for the project, sufficient money was raised in record time, a les-



IHT co-founders, Dud Hendrick and Cherie Mason

Elke Dorr

terms as chair of the board, said he first became involved with IHT while acting as steward of Bradbury Island, when it was transferred to the Trust. He remarked that there was "an image of the Trust as a bunch of outsiders telling the town what to do." The early struggle was often about "winning over the people and local government, convincing them that saving land is valuable," he observed.

Regarding property acquisitions, Haviland noted that there was some "shellshock from the Scott's Landing project. . . after which we required a balanced budget for two years before

son for the Trust in the importance of securing community support for its endeavors.

We learned from Lily Pond, to "engage the community," observed Roger Bergen, current chair of the board. "That's not to say we don't have challenges still," he added. "We have two buildings to maintain [Heritage House and Mark Island Light]," as well as paid staff to fund. "Next year will be harder," he said, referring to fundraising. "In fact, it's getting harder for all non-profits to find the money."

Continued on p. 3



From the Executive Director

Land conservation began as an effort to provide habitat for wildlife – especially those critters that were hunted. The National Wildlife Refuge system was, originally, an effort to protect wetland habitat for migrating waterfowl important to duck hunters. Our national parks were born out of the “nature is sublime” movement during the 19th century, and were intended to foster the spiritual development

of their visitors. The national forests were set aside to preserve timber for future harvest, at a time when private lands were being decimated by clear-cuts.

At the end of the 20th century, researchers discovered that people need natural areas and open spaces. Dubbed “nature deficit disorder,” the lack contact with green space was shown to have adverse effects on child development and behavior. And the reverse is also true, exposure to open space can help a range of disorders.

Here on Deer Isle, IHT,

through its preserves and programs, attempts to address all these issues: protecting natural resources—shoreline protection helps keep clam flats clean and open, protecting wildlife—the fields at Scott’s Landing are managed for nesting bob-o-links and savannah sparrows, and the views from Settlement Quarry and Pine Hill are sublime. We connect people to nature through Walks & Talks, miles of trails, and school programs.

Thank you for supporting all of IHT’s endeavors—we cannot do it without you.

Shore Dinner Auction Confirms Well of Support for Preserve Stewardship

At IHT’s most successful Shore Dinner auction, a near sellout crowd of more than 90 people came to enjoy a summer evening in a spectacular setting at the McWilliams home.

The auction followed appetizers, as Sally Richardson exhorted attendees to bid on a variety of goods and services. In a new twist, the auction sought to raise stewardship funds for two particular preserves: Settlement Quarry & Shore Acres. Would people bid on something that they couldn’t take home with them?

Mary Ann Tynan did not hesitate to toss out the first bid, precipitating a lively response as attendees competed enthusiastically to contribute (nearly \$5000!) to the upkeep and care of preserves that many of us have been enjoying for decades.

This gratifying show of support confirms that people value the preserves, understand what stewardship means in time and dollars, and want to support IHT’s efforts. We couldn’t be more delighted. Thank you!



Opening bidder, Mary Ann Tynan, flanked by Mike Little and Ray McCaskey



Auctioneer Sally Richardson works the crowd

Anne Beerits

ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST NEWSLETTER

The mission of the Island Heritage Trust is to conserve significant open space, scenic areas, wildlife habitats, natural resources, historic and cultural features that offer public benefit and are essential to the character of the Deer Isle area.

420 Sunset Road
PO Box 42
Deer Isle, ME 04627
207-348-2455
iht@islandheritagetrust.org
www.islandheritagetrust.org
Mike Little, Executive Director
George Fields, Stewardship Director
Marissa Hutchinson, Admin. Assistant

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Ellen Rowan	Diane Walker

Meet Marissa

If you ask Marissa Hutchinson where she's from, her answer is likely to stun you: born in Pennsylvania, she moved early in her life to Kentucky, Montana, Alaska, then east to Maine's Monhegan Island, all of which fostered a desire for more travel. During her college career and in the time since, she's visited and lived in such exotic and remote locations as most of us only ever read about. A year spent in Japan studying ceramics and traditional Japanese architecture eventually led her to China, Thailand, Russia, Laos and Serbia. She remarks almost incidentally that she once took a 5-day train trip across Mongolia. And one year, on her birthday, she watched the sun rise over Angkor Wat in Cambodia. It was in Serbia, she says as if it were Vermont, that she discovered Geoff Warner's website, which ultimately brought her to Deer Isle, to apprentice with the cabinet maker for two years, learning all she

could about furniture making. The Island is also where she met her life partner, Roger Olsen.

Not only does she know her way around a woodworking shop, she also happens to be a certified kayak guide, a potter and an accomplished knitter. Earning both a Bachelor of Arts and of Science, she went on to the



Marissa Hutchinson

Elke Dorr

University of California at Berkeley to pursue a master's in science and architecture. While at Berkeley, she knew she wanted to work at IHT, she says, and wrote the AmeriCorps grant that landed her a position with both Island Community Housing and IHT. She ended up dividing her time between the two non-profits. When her AmeriCorps service concluded, IHT secured funds to keep Ms. Hutchinson as a part-time employee, a 20-hour per week position she says she loves, which gives her time for her family, including daughter Lucy. She's quickly made herself indispensable at IHT, managing everything from recruiting and coordinating a cadre of volunteers to assisting Mike with a long list of administrative tasks.

It's challenging, she remarks, to recruit volunteers, given all the island non-profits. She marvels, however, at all IHT accomplishes through its volunteers and observes that so much "is [done] from the good of people's hearts." She added, "I just love coming to work."

(continued from p. 1) While the group considered fundraising a serious, ongoing challenge, attracting new members was simultaneously high on the list of priorities. Bergen pointed out that IHT's school programs aim not only to educate students about environmental issues, but also to create future members. Hendrick noted that even in its early days, the Trust sponsored nature walks to educate and create public awareness about the environment, still a significant aspect of the Trust's work.

As for the future, it's clear all those gathered agreed that the challenges for IHT are shifting. Stewardship, perhaps the "most important thing we do," said Haviland, will require ongoing funding, as will retaining paid staff, "particularly an executive director of Mike Little's caliber and experience," added Bergen. Bringing in new volunteers is yet another challenge, all concurred, as so much of the Trust's work depends on a corps of active volunteers.

On the horizon regarding new projects is a "ways to the water" initiative, an effort to secure working waterfront access, as well to ensure clean, fresh water. Another developing project is an island-wide trail system for which a nascent committee comprised of a handful of community volunteers is already forming. For IHT, both these endeavors present new opportunities to forge community-wide partnerships; both also offer new opportunities to help improve the essential quality of life on the island.



Roger Bergen, Current Chair of Board of Trustees, and Bill Haviland, past Chair

Elke Dorr

Early Visionary: Dr. Edgar Tennis

The day after a snowy Christmas in 1943, Dr. Edgar Tennis and his wife, Muriel, set off for Maine to see a saltwater farm that was for sale. They parked by the Sunshine Rd, trudging almost a mile through snow to reach the 1800's farmhouse set by the mouth of Southeast Harbor. As they crested the knoll overlooking the farmstead and saw smoke curling from the chimney, the sunlit water sparkling just beyond, they knew they'd found the place they'd been looking for.

Nearly 70 years later, thanks to the foresight and generosity of Dr. Tennis, nearly 145 acres of public access land surround the house and its 36 acres, including about 1½ miles of shoreline, and more than 4 miles of trails. Each year, in every season, hundreds of people come to walk, picnic, swim, bird-watch, hunt, study ecology, snowshoe, cast the ashes of loved ones and propose marriage on this beautiful corner of Maine's coast.

Having grown up near the Chesapeake, Dr. Tennis rued the pricey, super-sized coastal development that locked the shore away from all but a handful of wealthy families. He didn't want

to see that happen to Maine, so in 1976 he gave 100 acres of shore-front land to the State of Maine (IHT would not come into being for another 10 years). Later, additional acreage was donated and conservation easements added, in keeping with Dr. Tennis's vision for the property. He wanted anyone to be able to enjoy this land as his family had for over 30 years; he didn't want to see it broken up into lots or even turned into a park with picnic tables and "facilities." He wanted it to remain the natural Maine woods that he loved so well.

In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.

Baba Dioum, Senegalese conservationist

Now 80 years old, Dr. Tennis's daughter, Mimi Asbornsen, has spent every summer here, but one, since 1944. And it is here that her own daughters, Karin & Birgit, learned to row a boat, dig clams, go fishing, and drive a car backwards down a very long, narrow driveway! The family property has recently been deeded to them and Mimi notes that, due to the cost of upkeep and taxes, she "would be very surprised if they could keep it."

Whoever owns the property, it is IHT's responsibility to see that the restrictions of the easement are honored, no matter how many times the land falls to new owners. Forever.

This is a tricky aspect of conservation easements. Terms are spelled out by the owner who has a particular vision, a set of values that become part of the legacy of the land. But it becomes the land trust's job to make sure everyone thereafter toes the line. In crafting a conservation easement, heartfelt values and a vision of the future are translated into language for recording in a property deed. This document then directs perpetual stewardship of the property: a profound legal and ethical responsibility, marked by mounds of paperwork, regular site visits and plenty of diplomacy!

In the old days here, travel was mostly on foot or by boat; boundaries were defined by creeks, stone walls, prominent trees or rocks. Access was shared, naturally, to wharves, shoreline, ponds and paths. And most families, too, were linked by kinship somewhere along the line.

It is different now, in so many ways. Real estate values today shape not only land use, but our island culture and economy. Preserving what we collectively value takes the kind of foresight, planning, time and money, to which Dr. Tennis committed himself on our behalf. Literally countless generations will benefit by his legacy.

Matthew Asbornsen 1929-2011

IHT lost a good friend this year. Along with his wife, Mimi, Matthew has been a generous supporter of IHT and a devoted steward of the Tennis Preserve. We will miss his fine and gentle spirit.



Tennis Preserve

Elke Dorr

Swamps Wanted!

Wetlands elicit different responses depending on who you talk to: contractor, duck hunter, frog or hydrologist. Prior to the 1970s the defacto U.S. national policy was to drain or convert wetlands, usually for agriculture or property development. By the 1970s, more than half were destroyed before their significance was realized.

Most people still consider wetlands to be “junk” land. But from an ecological standpoint, in addition to their habitat value, they are vital groundwater management and water purification systems. They absorb water during wet seasons and gradually release it during dry spells, thereby refilling depleted aquifers. Furthermore, wetlands act as kidney-like filters, trapping impurities, such as toxic chemicals and other pollutants, before dispersing the water downstream, cleaner than when arrived.

One acre of wetlands can store 1 to 1½ million gallons of water!

Torrey Pond and its surroundings probably represent the largest area of wetlands on Deer Isle, followed by the Labrador Swamp which nearly bisects the center of the island from roughly Small’s Cove to Southeast Harbor. IHT’s newest acquisition, a small wetland on 3.25 acres, is part of the Labrador Swamp watershed. Located near the Goose Cove Rd, it flows easterly through a culvert lying under Route 15A before it merges with water flowing out of Labrador Swamp, emptying, finally, into Crockett Cove. Thus, the health of these freshwaters affects not only the groundwater and aquifers in their path, but ultimately the shellfish flats in the Cove.

When Kathleen & Charlie Osborn and their neighbors, Jim & Gail Plotts, recently donated this wetland property to IHT, they were assured that it will remain in its natural state, conveying all of the ecological benefits that wetlands have to offer. For its part, IHT is interested in helping to preserve a healthy water supply on the island. Protecting wetlands, especially within a particular watershed, is one approach to sustaining a clean water supply.

Outdoor classroom at Tennis Preserve

With the school year just starting, IHT’s environmental education offerings are already a favorite addition to the Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School’s curriculum. Debrae Bishop coordinates the program, which connects students in grades K through 8 with specific IHT preserves, enabling hands-on learning in the field.

When asked how the program was working, DISES principal Mike Benjamin noted that in last year’s survey of teachers, comments were “very positive.” He felt that IHT had done an “excellent job of matching sites with the various grades” and ensuring that the material the students learned supported the school’s own efforts to upgrade the curriculum. Mr. Benjamin added that the program exposed the children to places on the Island that may be new to them and, in his view, trips to these sites helped the students to understand the value and importance of these preserves to Island life.

DISES’ middle school science teacher, Mickie Flores, said that the kids were surprised and excited by the program because it made a “viable connection with what they were learning to their own backyard, enhancing in-classroom natural history and social studies programs. Ms. Flores was especially pleased that the program corresponded so well to her lesson plan for the seventh graders who visit the Lily Pond, looking at real life phenomena and processes that reinforce what she is teaching in the classroom.



Elke Dorr
Eighth graders visit Tennis Preserve to study deer ecology
L-R: Debrae Bishop (IHT School Programs Coordinator), Natalie Knowlton, Krisford Melanio, Justin Eaton, Ali Eaton, Marvin Merritt, Ally Eaton

Welcome to Three New Trustees



Ginnie in her study

Ann Sigmund

The Reverend **Virginia Peacock**, or Ginny, as she likes to be called, has always had a strong interest in preserving the land. Drawn to Deer Isle for its austere beauty, she has led the Episcopal congregation of St. Brendan's for nearly three years.

An Illinois native who spent thirteen years in the unforgiving climate of Michigan's upper peninsula, she is no stranger to winter weather and, to be honest, even enjoys it. Ginny is struck by the richness of community life on Deer Isle, even in the depths of winter. When she was invited to join IHT's Board, Ginny enthusiastically agreed to serve. "We are all too often crushed by the hectic pace and noise of life. The Island's beauty can nourish us," she explains, "it can feed us spiritually and IHT is an ideal organization for helping us to notice that beauty."

She adds that the land here is a gift that must be preserved, not just for the privileged few but for every single soul fortunate enough to be living here. Shore access and affordable housing, so that people who work on the island and give it its unique character can actually live here, are issues that she feels strongly about. She sees an important role for IHT in generating a deeper understanding of the Island's limited resources, like water and energy. Believing that IHT can do a better job of engaging with the local community to keep the Island healthy in terms of the land, she wants to use her membership on the Board to help make that happen. Thanks to her congregation, ecumenical colleagues, and community involvement, she understands the concerns of both those from away and those who have lived their whole lives on the Island and is convinced that they can be reconciled.



Lew Ellis is an Islander born and bred. Growing up in a yellow and green clapboard house a stone's throw from Deer Isle village, he swam Northwest Harbor as a boy, climbed Pine Hill, and, on hot summer days, bought ice cream cones at Annabelle's at the old Deer Isle Post Office.

Lew knows the Island, understands its needs, and works hard as one of the Town of Deer Isle's three selectmen to meet the challenges of this very unusual community with its mix of fishermen, retirees, artists, tradesmen, and summer people. He brings a much needed local perspective to IHT deliberations and serves as an important bridge between IHT and the town. Lew is not new to IHT, having served both on its Advisory Council and the Lily Pond Management Committee, so his move to the Board is a natural progression. He is convinced that the IHT can do a better job of getting local people involved and helping them to see IHT as an asset providing valuable services.



Lew and Josie

Ann Sigmund

The issue that inspires him most is the whole question of shore access. As Lew puts it, "the Island is a tremendous asset with its ocean shoreline but the number of places where you can put a boat in the water is extremely limited. We need to fix that." He adds that we ought to work to ensure that everyone can get the chance to reach the water and that folks on boats can easily access the Island. He firmly believes that IHT should keep this issue in the forefront of its agenda and plans to play a role in doing just that.

Now into her second term on the Board of Trustees, **Rena Day** wasn't always enamored of IHT. Like many islanders, she expressed some early wariness, but that changed significantly over time, she says, as she observed the Trust accomplish various goals. The organization as a whole is much more respected by the community than it once was, she remarked. Ms. Day credited the late Judy Hill, a devoted and active IHT member, for launching Ms. Day's involvement in the Trust by inviting her to join the Land Committee. "I really came to believe in IHT," she said. She also believes that as the Trust moves forward, it should increase its efforts in community-oriented projects such as "ways to the water," an effort to secure working waterfront access. "We have to continue to earn community acceptance," she commented.



Rena & Emmett

Elke Dorr

Although Ms. Day was born in Connecticut, both her maternal and paternal ancestors were from the island. She was a teenager, however, before she moved here, following her parents' purchase of land on Plumb Point.

Annual Report Corrections

Inadvertently omitted from the list of

Patrons: Kenneth and Cherie Mason

Sustaining members: Rena Day, Josephine Jacob and Jim Adams, Frederica Marshall, Cynthia and Walter Voigt

Family members: Barbara Alweis, Cathy Hart

A sincere apology to all.

After graduating from DISHS, she went away to school, got married, and pursued a career as an administrative assistant, including working for the Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center and for WLBZ-TV, both in Bangor. Eventually, she moved back to Deer Isle, settling on Plumb Point.

One of the changes she has observed over the years is that the Trust has at last settled into a permanent home at Heritage House, made possible by the generosity of Ken and Marnie Crowell. She particularly likes the Trust's proximity to the Historical Society, with which she also is involved, serving as corresponding secretary. The location makes ongoing cooperative ventures possible, she remarked enthusiastically.

While she's quick to praise IHT for making the preserves available to the public, she laments, "The islanders themselves don't use them enough." She believes IHT needs to continue its efforts to make islanders feel a "part of things," and cited the inclusion of three islanders on the Advisory Board as a good example of doing precisely that. It's vital too, she said, "to get younger people involved." The more community acceptance we build, "the more secure we'll be."

Island Heritage Trust Membership

I/we want to help IHT preserve the natural beauty and way of life on Deer Isle now and for future generations

Enclosed is my tax-deductible membership donation

___\$250 Conservator ___\$100 Sustaining ___\$50 Family ___\$35 Individual

Name _____ **Telephone Number** _____

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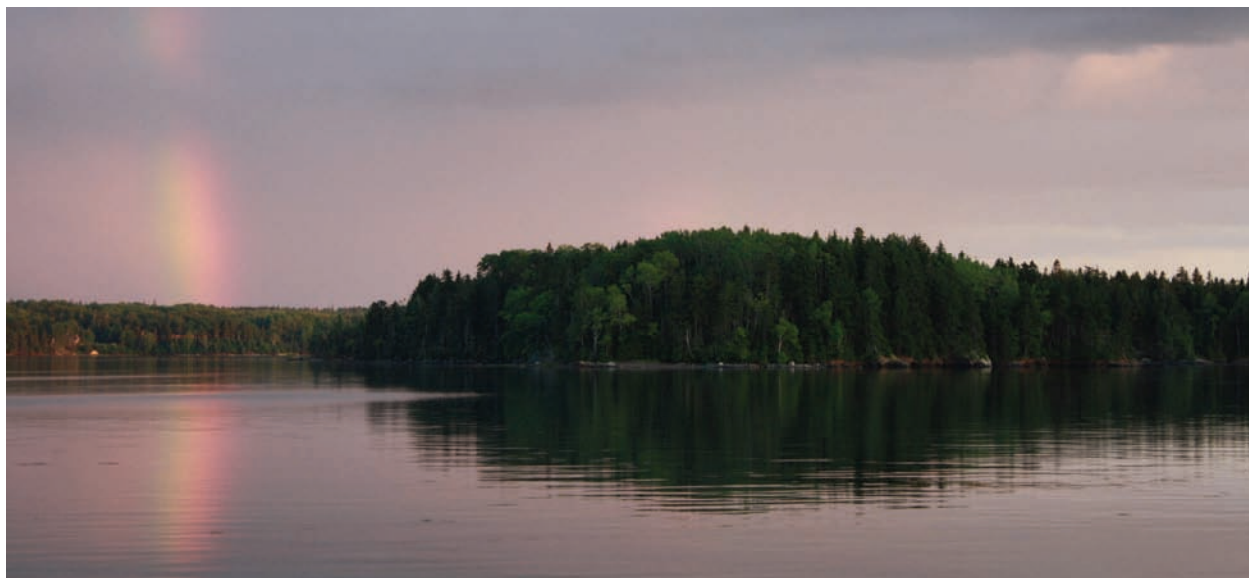
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☐ Please keep me informed about IHT activities and news with brief, monthly e-mails

☐ I want to volunteer — please contact me about what I can do to help.

Please mail form to: Island Heritage Trust / PO Box 42 / Deer Isle, ME 04627

A remarkable 70% of IHT's operating budget comes from member donations — Thank you for joining that effort!



IHT bookkeeper Pat Gross caught this rainbow over Carney Island late this summer and sent it on to us. Thanks Pat!

Do you have favorite photos of your family enjoying a visit to one of the preserves? Please send them to:

mlittle@islandheritagetrust.org

We'd love to include them in one of our newsletters or on our website. A fun way to support IHT!

The Power of Bequests

Bequests of land or money have a powerful impact on our work and create a lasting legacy for the donor. Please consider naming Island Heritage Trust in your will.



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P.O. BOX 42
DEER ISLE, ME 04627
(207) 348-2455

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Pat Heanssler checks out some ducks on one of Mike's winter bird walks