



# ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

The Land Trust of Deer Isle & Stonington, Maine

Fall 2016

## *Natural Learning*

Each Tuesday afternoon after the regular school day ends, about 13 kids from grades two to five gather in the Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School cafeteria, or if the weather cooperates, outside at the picnic table by the greenhouse. They'll enjoy a quick midday snack and participate in a game that helps them work off their pent-up energy before settling down to tackle their reason for meeting: learning about their outdoor environment.

One recent sunny and mild October afternoon, the set of boisterous grade-schoolers that comprise the Nature Club munched on banana muffins, tangerines and celery and carrot sticks before embarking on a rigorous running game of "minnows and sharks." The game is repeatedly interrupted by nature discoveries: someone stumbles on some tiny mushrooms that need to be examined; another child falls and spots a woolly caterpillar and the crowd gathers to look; and a bright pistachio-green katydid is spied in the grass and everyone wants a turn handling the delicate bug. Each discovery proves to be an ideal time for their teacher, Island Heritage Trust environmental educator Martha Bell, to impart a quick lesson about the workings of the natural world. Even as they play, it's clear the kids are finding nature as much fun, if not more so, as the games they play.

"I love it," bellows nine-year-old fourth-grader Billy Joe Gove, Jr. "We get to see nature and today we get to make forts."

Second-grader Chloe Alexis Duncan, 7, loves "going into the woods."

Indeed, following their playtime on this particular day, the group collects sheets and clothespins and tramps down an overgrown trail for a lesson in the basics of surviving in the woods. Along the way there are gleeful shouts of "deer poop!" as the kids revel in identifying one of the more ubiquitous mementos of the physical world in these parts.

Past projects have included finding and naming insects and collecting milkweed seeds to mix with soil to make meatball-sized nuggets to plant and create a butterfly habitat.



Nature Club kids opening milkweed pods Photo: George Linkletter

The Nature Club is one of the many hands-on science programs that have been implemented in the Deer Isle-Stonington school system the past few years as a result of IHT's direction and support. The collaboration coincides with and complements a new push by the school system into project-based learning and a beefed-up emphasis on science. Martha's role has been critical in the collaboration's success.

"Ever since Martha started, she has been extremely concerned and willing to make sure the IHT programs coincide with the curricula and needs of the school," says Mickie Flores, science teacher for grades 6 through 8. "And that takes work."

Blended grade-levels, which have swelled the number of kids that participate in programs, as well as an emphasis on proficiency-based learning at DISES (*cont'd on page 3*)





Greater Yellow-legged Sandpiper at Shore Acres Preserve Photo: Marissa Hutchinson

## From the Executive Director | *Mike Little*



As Island Heritage Trust comes to the end of another successful year, both in education programming and land protection, I want to address some comments that have gotten back to me about “the true business of the land trust.” It has become clear to me that there are some

folks who believe that Island Heritage Trust has lost its way, gone “off mission,” as it were. I have heard such comments as, “Don’t talk to me about education, I’m a land guy,” as well as the opposite, “What does the Trust want with more land? We need to educate the children of this island to be stewards.” Both comments are valid. Both are rooted in old paradigms. There is a middle ground, however, and that is where I think a successful, long-lived land trust will be located.

By the time the new year comes, I hope that the Trust will have closed on two major property gifts – yes, gifts – from owners who wish to see their beloved land remain open and available to the public. These gifts involve fifty acres on Little Deer, and about thirty acres in the Greenlaw District. Both will enter the realm of publicly accessible

lands. As our charter suggests, this is the core work of the Trust – protecting land. Whether through ownership or easement, for public access or to protect a view-shed, these lands will remain undeveloped. This means open space to soothe the soul, to engage the feet, to harbor wildlife, to sequester carbon, and a dozen more positive benefits. This is what a land trust provides. Through a conservation easement, a land trust can keep your land just the way you would like it to remain, as we like to say, forever. Yes, forever, though we recognize the limitations of that term. The same applies to owned properties: they will be open to the public (sometimes with restrictions) for as long as land trusts last.

This Trust’s goal is to last indefinitely – forever, if you will. With easements and land the Trust acquires, however, comes responsibility. We call it stewardship. The lands must be managed so the public can enjoy them, which means creating and maintaining trails and parking areas, building bog-bridges, etc. These areas could perhaps be left on their own – but have you ever tried to access the interior of some of the protected islands in Merchants Row, where there has been no active stewardship? Blowdowns and tangles make it impossible to get off the shore. Island Heritage Trust wants to make its lands as accessible as possible (*cont’d on page 3*)



(cont'd from page 2) for as many people as possible – as much as our funding allows.

Which brings me to education. Sure, we provide programs to introduce school kids to nature, to get them outdoors, to help the teachers with science requirements. We do all that, but there is so much more. By being involved with our community (and where is that community better expressed than in the schools?) through school programs and Walks and Talks for adults and kids, the Trust is building a core of support and ensuring its own future. As one generation passes, the next must be ready to take on the tasks. After all, who is going to love and preserve these lands in the years to come if not the young people who come after us? We see it as our obligation, indeed our duty, to educate them to care about the natural world and open space, so they will be ready to shoulder the burden of protecting these places. And it is a burden – one that includes physical components like trail building and tree cutting; mental components such as easement monitoring and reporting; and financial components such as fundraising, even when you would rather be walking a trail with saw or clippers. In our over-developed world, keeping things “natural” is a lot of work!

Have I answered the questions? Education is for the kids, the future and the Trust. Land protection is for the island, for the kids, and for the future. Gone are the days when land trusts thought that they could protect land by buying and putting a fence around it. That model only breeds anger and distrust. Looking forward, the present model is to acquire the land (and most of IHT's land has come through donations), open it up and invite the public in. Come walk our trails, visit the ferny glades, or the rocky shores. Revel in the views and curse the mosquitoes. This land is held in trust for you and me and the future. ✂



Wildflower ID at Scott's Landing with Val Libby Photo: Susan Robinson

(cont'd from page 1) has led to an expansion of Martha's role there.

“The kids need outdoor time more than ever,” says Martha, and “I have a hard time saying no.”

In late September, she and Mickie, along with folks from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, took 50 seventh- and eighth-graders to Causeway Beach to study four different kinds of invasive species including bittersweet vine, *rosa rugosa*, common periwinkle, and green crabs. It was an enormous undertaking that required establishing five different field stations, all demanding careful oversight. A week later, the two took 46 fifth- and sixth-graders to Barred Island for a soil project involving sampling techniques and drawing.

“She is never missing a beat,” says Mickie of Martha.

Other programs to which she provides invaluable support include a science enrichment program, “Science with a Twist,” and re-opening a nature trail that has been closed for more than a decade and which has become an immediate resource for the school. The work doesn't stop when school isn't in session: this past summer, Martha led “Kids in Nature” walks for IHT every week and provided nature programming for local summer camps. She oversaw interns working on eel grass and ocean acidification citizen-science projects and helped elementary school teachers on project development.

Martha's work in the elementary school is an extension of her role developing projects for the Marine Studies Pathways program at the high school, which strives to make education more relevant to those non-traditional students inclined to choose a vocational path, such as fishing, as a career. The Pathways program has expanded beyond science to include other disciplines such as U.S. history, civics, and English. The kids are learning the history of the fisheries, for instance, as well as how math can be applied to their fishing endeavors, and how fisheries legislation is established.

“Martha has been an almost daily presence in the Marine Pathways,” says Todd West, principal of the Deer Isle-Stonington High School. “Having a community partner like IHT is a great opportunity.” ✂

### EDUCATION VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

*Do you love sharing the joy of the natural world around us, especially with the younger generation?*

Then give us a call because Martha, while awesome, can't do it all. **We need you** to help us continue our programs of connecting kids with this beautiful and rich natural world.

# One Horticulturalist's Rant: Invasive Plants

**M**y new rant is invasive plants. While there is a welcome surge of enthusiasm on the Blue Hill Peninsula for native wildflowers (Wild Seed Project & Native Gardens of Blue Hill), there seems to be a blind spot towards the damage done by invasive plants already present in our landscapes by the thousands and those still sold by some local nurseries, eg. Burning Bush.

I was admiring a friend's garden the other day as she has enthusiastically planted a number of small native wildflowers. I turned and there was an enormous Tartarian honeysuckle shrub (*Lonicera tartarica*) overarching the driveway. I suggested she take it down and her reply was, "Oh, but the birds love the berries." Well, that is exactly the problem.

The birds transport the seeds and the shrub comes up in hedgerows, fields and vacant ground. Its fruit is not as nutritious for the wild birds as fruit of other native shrubs, but it colonizes faster. We should spend more of our time and energy on removing the intruders in our natural landscapes. If I am really grumpy, I'll say we still have plenty of wildflowers and pollinator plants, but we won't have the habitats for long if we keep allowing the invasives to spread.

What are some of the worst culprits? The indestructible Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), introduced from Asia as a garden ornamental, is now rampant everywhere. It produces millions of seeds carried by wind and water, clogging drainage swales, and is immune to salt spray. Just look around, it's everywhere in huge colonies. It requires a rigorous program of cutting, digging roots, and – dare I say? – cautious use of herbicide to



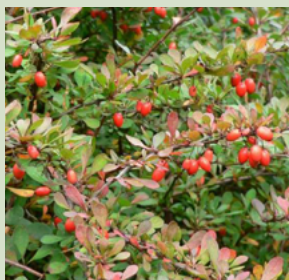
Japanese Knotweed



Multiflora Rose



Norway Maple



Barberry

conquer it. Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) from Asia, has lovely pale pink fragrant flowers in early summer and decorative red hips in fall. It was introduced by the USDA Soil Conservation Corps to control erosion in the 1930s and farmers were told to plant it as hedgerows. Now it is wide spread, long arching canes forming impenetrable mounds. It is not an important source of food for wild birds, but it does claim habitat that could support native shrubs. Get rid of it!

Trees have horror stories too. The Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) a ubiquitous fast growing shade tree is tolerant of poor soil, shade, compaction and salt spray (even from the winter roads). Its millions of seedlings have decimated the natural woodlands of New York State, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, etc. Its methods of domination include numerous seeds that germinate quickly even in heavy shade, a shallow, dense root system that absorb nutrients quickly. The roots leave little space for other plants to grow, even wildflowers, and the heavy shade cast by the tree cuts down on the rest.

For additional information, consult with your local land trust stewards, UM Cooperative Extension, and the Maine Forest Service, which publishes online lists of the invasive plants and their status. [www1.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive\\_plants/invsheets.htm](http://www1.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive_plants/invsheets.htm)

And, please, if you go to a nursery and they are selling Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*) or barberries (unless they bear no fruit), don't buy them. They are highly invasive too. We just haven't seen the damage they can do – yet. 🌿

- Val Libby | Volunteer, Landscape Historian & Horticulturist



## TENNIS PRESERVE LETTERBOX QUOTES

***"Beautiful trail; summer paradise!" -From Reiss family, ages 20-87.***

***"This is balm for my soul."***

***"I dreamt of golden trees and glassy water and found myself here."***

***"What an adventure wonderland!" - Australia***





# Meet IHT's New Chair, Woody Osborne

If you ask Woody Osborne whom he most admires, he answers after a long and thoughtful pause – Martin Luther King, Jr., Lyndon Johnson, and Eleanor Roosevelt. The common element which connects them in Woody's view is their determination to uplift those who were marginalized, oppressed, or suffering. It is really no surprise, then, that these three also serve to inspire Woody's own service to his community. As IHT's newly elected Chair of the Board of Trustees, Woody brings to his job a conviction that service to one's community by helping improve the quality of life for folks is a worthy endeavor.

After moving permanently to Deer Isle in 2010, Woody wasted no time in volunteering at IHT and also in college coaching students through a program at Deer Isle Stonington High School. With amazement at the passage of so much time, he notes the same students he once coached as high schoolers have now finished college.

Following his retirement from a legal career in Washington, D.C., where he litigated labor and civil rights cases – “on the side of good,” he chuckles – he and wife Jane moved to a home in South Deer Isle. Confessing that he was initially ambivalent about buying a house on the island, he adds that now just the thought that his kids and grandkids, who love coming here, could have the house to come to when he's no longer here, is enormously satisfying to him. “You know, it's that feeling for a place,” he says, “that means so much.” And it is in great part his feeling for this place he now calls home that motivates and informs his work for the Trust.

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*“...it's that feeling for a place that means so much.”*

Remarking on what he hopes to accomplish during his tenure as chairman, he laughs and says modestly, “You know, I really have a lot to learn.” Shifting back to his goals, he says, “I would love to make Martha Bell [IHT's education coordinator] a full-time employee,” adding that “her work is just so valuable.” By way of illustration, he describes how Martha just that morning brought a group of first and second graders by Heritage House before they headed to Crocket Cove for a field trip. Musing about IHT's education efforts he emphasizes that the Trust



Woody Osborne Photo: Elke Dorr

“contributes a great deal to the schools through all our educational programs.”

About IHT's mission and work, he says it's “hard not to be in favor of land conservation,” yet there is a great deal to consider in the process. “How we manage our resources is a very high priority, particularly our budget,” so we can maintain the land and easements we're responsible for. “While much of our property has come as gifts to the Trust, our ability to accommodate those gifts, vis-a-vis staff, ongoing monitoring, documentation and legal obligations, is critical,” he says, and adds that most folks aren't aware that just maintaining trails and all our easements and owned land requires ongoing funding. “I have a growing appreciation for all the work the Trust does,” he says. Determined to attract more volunteers for the ongoing work required by the Trust's many efforts, and given IHT's limited staff, he remarks how essential it is to recruit and train volunteers. “We have to depend mightily on our volunteers,” he says.

When not working for the Trust or his church and other community organizations, Woody is a keen photographer and an avid reader. He remarks on the growing number of books in his “to-be-read” stack. A book of poems by Maine's own Edna St. Vincent Millay lies on a table near his elbow. His enthusiasm in describing some of her poetry is as passionate as his ideas for the Trust. As he thinks about his move from the nation's capital to this small island community, he says with a sigh, “I love the winters, the passing of seasons, the beauty,” and adds, “You know, I also really like the people here, the way they are.” ❧

## From My Perspective

My name is Lola Stephens and over the summer I helped Martha Bell and IHT. This summer was my second year working with IHT on Citizen Science projects. One thing I helped with over the summer was monitoring sea water. We went out to a dock at the Deer Isle Yacht Club and collected a sample. We brought the concentrated sample back to the lab where we checked it under a microscope for harmful phytoplankton to alert people harvesting shellfish.

Another thing I helped with was testing the mud at the Causeway Beach. We took multiple readings of different things in the mud such as pH and temperature. Along with this we also checked the sand to see if there were any baby clams as a way to monitor



the health of the beach. Also at the Causeway Beach and the Middle School's beach grass patch we measured the length and width of the eelgrass.

Recently I went on a hike near Ellsworth with Martha Bell and Mike Little along with other scientists. The hike was organized to learn about new naturing apps and how they can be used for research. I particularly enjoyed learning how to use iNaturalist and

have been using it a lot since leaning about it.

Volunteering has been great for me; it's a fun and engaging experience. The work with Martha has also given me knowledge and an edge on the curriculum in my school science class biology unit. ✨



*This past summer work on Mark Island Light finally began. Two sides have been scraped, powerwashed, mortar raked out, and re-pointing finished. There are still two sides to go, and painting, which should be completed next summer. We are grateful to mason Chuck Reed of Sedgwick who has had to haul barrels of fresh water, tools, and materials to Mark Island, no easy task.*



MacKenzie Estrella Photo: Martha Bell

*No matter the tide time or task MacKenzi (Kenzi) Estrella, Martha Bell's 2016 summer intern, was always eager and willing. She assisted in citizen science projects by monitoring phytoplankton & eel grass, tested clam flat acidification, and helped with Kids in Nature programming and Arts Camp.*

## NATURE SHOP

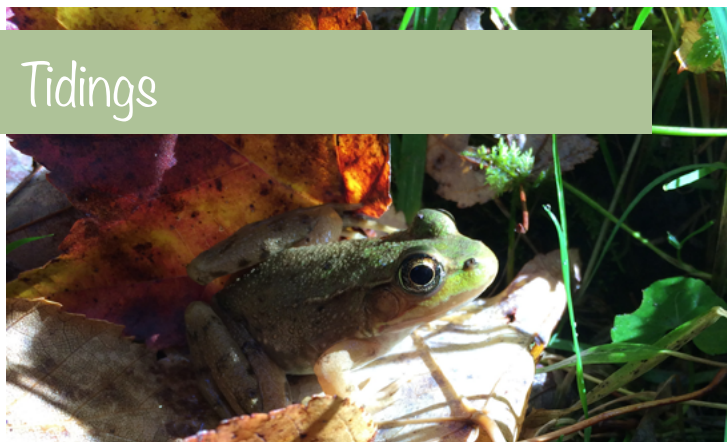
**Don't miss this great little shop! We have educational and fun, nature-based items for all ages.**

- ◆ Island & Trail Maps
- ◆ Children's Books
- ◆ Bluebird Houses
- ◆ Binoculars & Field Lenses
- ◆ Notecards, Postcards & Posters
- ◆ Educational Games, Puzzles & more...

& our specialty - **Field Guides** covering everything from the stars and birds to amphibians to lichens.



## Tidings



**Record number** of visits to the preserves this year: 16,000! (calculated using the Nature Conservancy's sign-in algorithm) 227 actual sign-ins include 54 from Canada; 21 from other countries; and from virtually every state in the U.S.

**Great collaborations** happening with citizen science on berries and birds. Schoodic Institute, Earthwatch & local land trusts are coming together to support this project. In a recent field workshop we were excited to work with volunteer scientists Ken Crowell, Jo Jacob, Wendy Alpaugh, Susan Guilford, Mike Little and Martha Bell, as well as some volunteers from across the country and the world!

**Welcome** to new board members Christine Linkletter (Treasurer) and Doug Wilson! Little Deer Isle is now well represented.

**A big thank you** to the volunteers assisting with the afterschool Nature Club: Dana Mark (Island Fellow), Darby French, Buzz Masters, Jess Trainor & Madison Eaton!

**Clean Island Partners** had a great summer organizing and inspiring many to tackle their own littered roadsides. This community group is also working on broader trash issues - for more info & to be on the email list, contact Marissa, 207-348-2455.

**Stewards and monitors needed** - Help us with the stewardship and monitoring of our properties and easements. Trainings for stewardship volunteers will be held in May. For more information contact Marissa or David at 207-348-2455.

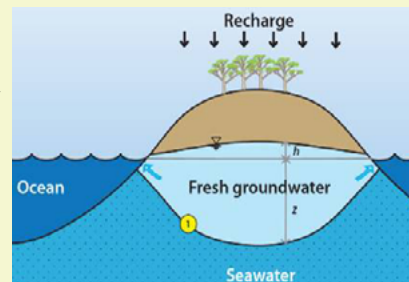
**Volunteers** are the backbone to all the Trust's work. If you are someone who loves nature, Deer Isle, and ensuring the Trust serves the community well, come talk to us about becoming a volunteer. We have many different ways you can contribute time & skills that make a difference and are fun. And if you have a friend that might be interested - let us know about them too. Contact Marissa at [marissa@islandheritagetrust.org](mailto:marissa@islandheritagetrust.org) or 348-2455.

**Wings, Waves & Woods Festival:** Save the date for next year's Festival: May 19-21, 2017. Follow on Facebook for more info.

## ANNUAL MEETING: Freshwater Resources

Island Heritage Trust's annual meeting, held July 13, 2016, began with a social hour followed by a slideshow presentation about the island's freshwater supply by guest speaker Robert G. Marvinney, a Maine state geologist with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

Marvinney discussed how water is drawn from the ground and is replenished by rain and snowfall since there are no underground rivers or lakes beneath Deer Isle. He explained how the island's limited and interconnected ground water supply, found in cracks in the bedrock of the



island, can be easily contaminated by salt water intrusion, natural contamination, and by human activity such as spills and leaks. Emphasizing careful use of water, Marvinney recommended that we be vigilant about monitoring our practices as well as possible spills and contamination. Additionally, he advised testing our water regularly and warned that our actions affect the entire community's water supply, not just that coming into our own homes.

*For more on this presentation, contact us at 207-348-2455.*



## ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

### ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST STAFF

Michael Little, *Executive Director*

Marissa Hutchinson, *Development Director*  
*/Volunteer Coordinator*

Martha Bell, *Environmental Educator*

David Vandiver, *Stewardship Director*

### Board of Trustees

Woodley Osborne, *Chair*

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### Newsletter

Elke Dorr

Linda Glaser

Marissa Hutchinson

Val Libby

Sandra Ward



## ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

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7th & 8th grade preserve trip to Causeway Beach & Scott's Landing

Photo: George Linkletter

## Join Us!

### Celebrate Island Heritage Trust's 30th Anniversary by taking part in our *"Every 30 days for our 30th"* 2017 Monthly Giving Challenge!

After 30 years in the making we are bigger, better, and more able to bring you the things you love - open space, beautiful views, and closeness to nature.

What better way to celebrate than in small monthly giving ceremonies! Join the Luna Giving Society (our monthly giving program) to be a steady, reliable participant in keeping Deer Isle's natural beauty accessible and engaging for all.

To join our "Every 30 days for our 30th Challenge" and become a *Luna Society* member, visit [ISLANDHERITAGETRUST.ORG](http://ISLANDHERITAGETRUST.ORG), click on "DONATE NOW" and select "MONTHLY."



**Really want to show your love for Deer Isle's natural beauty - go all out by signing up or increasing your monthly donations to \$30 a month for our 30th Anniversary!**



**Clean Island Partners** took 2nd place in this year's 4th of July parade for their *Mahalo for Not Littering* float!



Board members & stewardship volunteers on a **guided island stewardship tour** this spring, with Ann Hooke & Bill Haviland.