

Community-Based Land Conservation since 1985

Blue Hill Heritage Trust

BLUE HILL / BROOKLIN / BROOKSVILLE / PENOBSCOT / SEDGWICK / SURRY

Fall/Winter 2010

A Summer of Celebration



*Mountain Day
on Blue Hill Mountain*



A Gala Dinner and Auction



A 25th Anniversary Gift:

New Conservation Easement on Wight Pond

A new conservation easement in Penobscot will protect a 178-acre parcel that has extensive frontage on both Wight Pond and McCaslin Stream, one of the pond's major fresh water sources, and includes expansive, freshwater wetlands.

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Our Trust's 25th anniversary celebration took many forms and engaged hundreds of people. A Gala Dinner Party and Auction. Mountain Day. An expanded program of Walks and Talks. A series of columns in *The Weekly Packet*. An Annual Meeting with record attendance. It was thrilling and inspiring to see our community respond with such enthusiasm to the Trust's work over the last 25 years.

Amidst it all, we continued on with our everyday work of stewarding the land already conserved, building public walking trails and working with landowners to conserve other lands of special significance to our community.

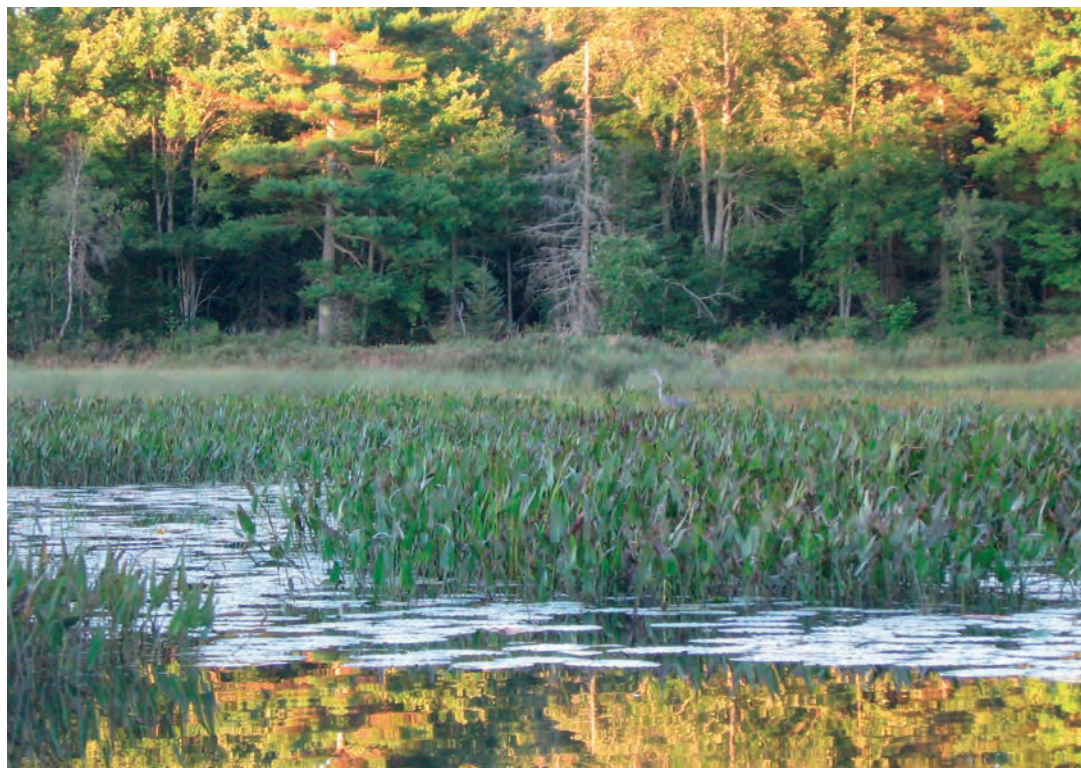
Both the celebration and the results of our continuing core work are highlighted throughout this newsletter. Thanks to everyone who helped make this year so memorable!

The shoreline of the newly protected property on Wight Pond includes wetland plant species that provide cover and foraging habitat for dozens of waterfowl and wading bird species.

Wight Pond

Continued from page 1

Wight Pond in Penobscot is one of the numerous small ponds that are scattered throughout our landscape. While Blue Hill Bay, Egge-moggin Reach and the other salt water resources that surround the Blue Hill Peninsula attract most of the attention, these fresh water ponds, and the streams and wetlands



ment, is once again leading the way. A founding Board member of our Trust, Paul has been a driving force in the

my land on the Pond will inspire others to follow suit."

The terms of the easement will prevent any future residential or commercial development on the land but will allow its continued use as a woodlot for growing and harvesting forest products. As with all conservation easements, the property remains in private ownership with our Trust assuming responsibility for ensuring that the purposes and terms of the easement are upheld in perpetuity. Paul, who fully understands the importance of effective long term stewardship of conservation easements, also made a separate gift to our Stewardship Fund, which helps cover the costs of those long-term responsibilities.

We look forward to the opportunity to work with other landowners interested in following Paul's lead in protecting the remarkable natural values of Wight Pond.



"I hope the protection of my land on the Pond will inspire others to follow suit."

PAUL BIRDSALL, a founding Board member of our Trust and a leader in local farmland conservation, donated this easement because of his long standing appreciation for the special qualities of Wight Pond.

associated with them, are no less important. They hold high value for wildlife and they provide recreational and aesthetic enjoyment for people.

Long and narrow and relatively shallow, Wight Pond's 135 acres stretch for two miles, draining into Winslow Stream and the Bagaduce River. The pond supports a warm water fishery of bass, pickerel and white perch as well as an alewife run. It is one of the least developed ponds on the Peninsula.

The Wight Pond area was identified as worthy of conservation action in a conservation planning report prepared for our Trust in 2009. This conservation easement begins the work of protecting the natural values of this place.

Paul Birdsall, the donor of this ease-

Trust's local farmland conservation work. His conservation interest extends beyond farmland, however, and his appreciation for the Wight Pond area has been long-standing.

"It is a place that deserves protection," remarks Paul. "I hope the protection of

Thanks

We extend a special thank you to the following businesses for generously supporting our 25th Anniversary Celebration Party and Auction:

Major Sponsors: The First and The Union Trust Company

Blue Hill Inn
Blue Hill Garage
Knight Associates
Brooklin Boat Yard

Bar Harbor Bank and Trust
Ellsworth Builders Supply
Maine Vacation Rentals
William McHenry, Architect

Blue Hill Co-op
Merle B. Grindle Agency
Saltmeadow Properties
Slaven Realty

More Farmland Forever: King Hill Farm

It often takes time – and perseverance – to make good things happen. So it is with a new conservation easement on King Hill Farm in Penobscot that will be completed by year's end.

King Hill Farm has been one of the Peninsula's premier organic farms for decades, serving both local and statewide markets. Founded by Dennis and Ron King in the early 1970's on an abandoned farmstead that looks southerly to Blue Hill Mountain, this farm has not only produced high quality food. It has also produced knowledgeable young farmers who have trained there as apprentices. Dennis's artistry in enriching the soil as part of the farm's management – even though his academic training was in wildlife biology – is well known and evident to those who visit the farm.

We had previously worked with Dennis and his wife Jo Barrett in 1999 to protect a separate 135-acre parcel of prime farmland along Route 15 – a joint transaction in which our Trust purchased the development rights and Dennis and Jo bought the remaining ownership interest – that became part of the King Hill Farm operation.

Placing a conservation easement on the main farm was the next step, which we began in 2006 as part of a farm ownership succession plan. We sought and received a promise of financial assistance from the Land for Maine's Future Program in purchasing the development rights on this land. But life got in the



King Hill Farm is one of the premier organic farms in the state as a result of the “farming artistry” of Dennis King (above, lower left photo). A new conservation easement held by our Trust will help ensure that its rich soils remain available to help feed us.

way: a series of events stalled progress, including a debilitating stroke suffered by Dennis. The owners stuck with it, however, as did our Trust and the Lands for Maine Future Program. Recently the Maine Farmland Trust joined this partnership by supplying funding support for necessary survey work.

The land is located in our Farmland Corridor Focus Area, identified in our 2009 strategic conservation planning study. This project pushes the total farmland acreage protected through our “Farmland Forever” program over the 2000-acre mark.

Passing it On: The Future of Farming on the Blue Hill Peninsula

The Halcyon Grange in North Blue Hill was filled on October 17th for a discussion of the future of farming on our Peninsula. Jointly sponsored by our Trust and the Blue Hill Historical Society, the event featured a presentation by John Piotti, the Executive Director of the Maine Farmland Trust, and a panel discussion among local farmers moderated by Trust Executive Director Jim Dow. The high level of local interest in this issue was evident by the attendance and the discussions that followed the presentations. The Trust continues to do its part by working with landowners to protect the farming potential of local high quality farmland on our Peninsula.



Dennis King and Jo Barrett (second and third from right) of King Hill Farm with other local farmers at the farming forum on October 17th co-sponsored by our Trust and the Blue Hill Historical Society.

Get the Kids Outside!

Our Weekly Family Walks did just that this summer. Each week we met at a different BHHT trailhead and spent a couple of hours running through the woods, jumping off rocks, splashing in streams and of course, sitting on logs. We were delighted to have hikers of all ages join us and we learned something new about our local habitat each week. We braved abundant black flies and mosquitoes, a few very hot days and a few very rainy days. Each week it seemed the berries got thicker and we picked our fill of bunchberries, partridgeberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and everyone's favorite: wintergreen berries! We look forward to resuming our Family Walks next Spring.

Charlotte Clews Lawther



Walks & Talks

This year our 12th annual Walks and Talks program included a diverse assortment of outdoor learning opportunities on conservation lands throughout the Peninsula, beginning with a look at winter constellations in February and ending with a walk in search of mushrooms in September. People of all ages, residents and visitors, filled each of these events. A special thanks goes out to all the program leaders who volunteered their time and knowledge. To right, a report on the mushroom walk. Below, photos from the walk.



The Magic of Mushrooms

By Kim Ridley

One smells like garlic. Another exudes a milky sap. Weird or whimsical, deadly or delicious, mushrooms come in endless shapes and sizes and have fascinating life histories.

Plant biologist David Porter shared some of these stories with nearly 40 people on a September afternoon as they walked a trail on the Blue Hill Heritage Trust's Cooper Farm property in Sedgwick in search of mushrooms.

They weren't disappointed. Within minutes of entering the mossy woods, the group came upon a cluster of tiny, tan Marasmius mushrooms, which has a garlicky odor. Soon, they were spotting mushrooms everywhere.

Among the few edible mushrooms the group found were puffballs and a very late chanterelle. Porter cut a puffball in half to demonstrate how to distinguish it from the developing stage of another mush-

room, which might be poisonous. "When cut in half, puffballs are completely white inside," he said.

All told, the group found 23 different kinds of mushrooms and fungi in a very short time, from small, slimy Slippery Jacks to several kinds of Lactaria, which exude a white sap. Other interesting finds included *Daedalea quercina*, which has a maze-like pore surface; Coral mushrooms (*Ramaria* sp), Hedgehog mushrooms (*Hydnum repandum*, in photo to left), the poisonous *Amanita citrine* and a whitish, ruffled Jelly fungus.

"Mushrooms play an important role in the environment – they're not just nasty looking excretions," said Porter, emeritus Professor of Plant Biology at the University of Georgia and a Blue Hill Heritage Trust board member. "What we see of mushrooms are the fruiting bodies, while the 'business end,' or mycelia, of mushrooms perform essential biological feats underground, such as helping trees absorb nutrients."

PHOTO BY GARY HARMATZ





Trail Notes

By Pam Johnson

Our Patten Stream property in Surry contains a trove of woodland and riparian plants. Some of our best native groundcovers can be seen from the new trail at the north end of the property.

Many people are familiar with **bunchberry** (*Cornus canadensis*), the ground-hugging dogwood that thrives in our

moist acid soils (photo to left). Its white “flowers” (actually bracts) appear in May or June, lasting for weeks and occasionally re-blooming in late summer. In autumn the fruit is brilliant scarlet and its foliage turns shades of burgundy late in the season. The seeds are edible though not palatable to all, and are sometimes called “crackleberries.”

Less familiar, but abundant at Patten Stream, are **Pyrolas**, members of the Wintergreen family, **twinflower** (*Linnaea borealis*) and **partridgeberry** (*Mitchella repens*), members of the Honeysuckle and Madder families, respectively.

Two favorite groundcovers are **goldthread** (*Coptis trifolia groenlandica*) and **dewdrop** (*Dalibarda repens*). Both have small deep green leaves, tiny white rose-like flowers and spread into delicate cushions in shade or dappled light.

Hike this trail, take along a good field guide and discover these gems that grow almost underfoot.

Photography Exhibit Honors Our Work

In honor of Blue Hill Heritage Trust’s 25th anniversary, a small group of organizations and individuals have put together a photography exhibit featuring

Trust lands. The exhibit will be on display at the Blue Hill Library’s Britton Gallery throughout the month of December.



This image from our AB Herrick Memorial Landing property on Peters Cove in Blue Hill is one of twelve on exhibit at the Blue Hill Library’s Britton Gallery during the month of December.

New Land Project

New trail possibility.

Story on page 8.



James Gagne (on right), our summer trail steward, and an MCC crew member do some rock work on a Blue Hill Mountain trail, one of our summer trail maintenance projects.

Connecting People to the Land: Trail Work Continues

Trails have become an important element in the public benefit that our Trust provides to our community. Among other benefits, they get people out on the land to experience the assortment of natural areas that have been conserved.

Creating and maintaining trails requires work and money. Fortunately we are able to find people willing to help with the physical labor and to contribute the funding that is necessary to support the cost associated with this work.

This summer our trail work benefited from the assistance of a Maine Conservation Corps crew who spent ten days restoring sections of our heavily used Blue Hill Mountain trails. This work was funded in part from a grant by **Irving Community Fuel Grant Program**. We also benefited from the work of James Gagne, our summer trail steward, who assisted our Stewardship Director Charlotte Clews Lawther and numerous volunteers in maintaining the trails on all our properties.

And there are more trails to come: we are planning the development of two new trails next summer.

Annual Meeting 2010



Our 2010 Membership Meeting continued the year's celebratory spirit. A record crowd of members and friends shared an enjoyable evening on September 9th at Kneisel Hall, socializing, reviewing the Trust's achievements and doing a bit of business. The enthusiasm for the Trust and its work, and the camaraderie, made for an exceptional event.

Tribute to Paul Birdsall

Vision. Leadership. Dedication. Focus. Generosity.

These are some of the words that describe what Paul Birdsall has brought to our organization over the last 25 years. He helped found the Trust in 1985, seeing it as a vehicle for conserving local productive farmland. He has worked tirelessly for 25 years to bring his vision into reality: our Trust will have protected over 2000 acres of exceptional farmland on the Peninsula by the end of the year. Although he is retiring from the Board, his conservation work continues. He continues to serve on the board of the statewide Maine Farmland Trust as well as on our Lands Committee. Paul has shown us how one committed person can make a huge difference. *Thank you, Paul.*

Former Board President John Merrifield (on left) with new President Mary Barnes

President's Column: Join Us

In taking over the reins from John Merrifield, I realize how solid the Blue Hill Heritage Trust is as an organization. Under John's leadership, the Trust continued to solidify its mission, hone its professional practices, and pursue conservation projects across the Peninsula. Thank you, John.

Our 25th anniversary year is drawing to a close. As we move ahead, we are challenged to preserve the unique life and habitat of the region. The effort to conserve it will take each and every one of us – those who have lived here for generations and those who have come more recently.

The meeting included election of the following Board members to new three year terms: Norman Alt, Pamela Johnson, Peter Clapp, Norman Mrozicki and Kim Ridley. It also honored the Board service of two retiring Board members, Tim Garrity and Paul Birdsall.

John Merrifield, stepping down as President after three years of service, gave his final President's report to the membership and Treasurer John Murphy reported on the Trust's financial status, noting that a full audit was completed for the 2009 fiscal year, which is available for review, and that the IRS Form 990 informational return is available on the Trust's website. It was capped with a presentation by Executive Director Jim Dow that included images of the lands that the Trust has protected over the last 25 years.



My hope is to broaden the Trust's community, to reach out to every town on the Peninsula, and to expand the conservation of our fields, forests and watersheds – the beautiful landscape we all use and enjoy.

Join us. Join your family. Join your neighbors. Join together.

Mary Barnes, President

A highlight of the meeting was the honoring of several volunteers for their special contributions: **Joy Richardson** for organizing the 25th Anniversary Party on July 17; **Courtney Weaver**, for spearheading the Mountain Day celebration on August 8; **John Merrifield** for his leadership as Board President for the past three years, and **Paul Birdsall** for 25 years of exceptional service.

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2009, (from audit report by Loiselle, Goodwin & Hinds, CPAs)

Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$322,459
Certificates of deposit	73,454
Long-term investments	757,615
Pledges receivable	89,764
Office building.....	151,216
Other	3,984
Conservation land	3,590,386
Total Assets	\$ 4,988,878

Liabilities

Debt for land	\$66,000
Debt: office building.....	78,048
Other.....	3,874
Total Liabilities	\$147,922

Net Assets

Permanently restricted	\$1,683,521
Temporarily restricted	201,185
Unrestricted but designated	2,779,490
Unrestricted	176,760
Total Net Assets.....	\$4,840,956
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$4,988,878

Celebrating Place: Anniversary Notes from BHHT

The Penobscot Bay Press generously provided us space in *The Weekly Packet* from July to September for a ten-part series of columns about our Trust's history and work. An excerpt follows, from the final article written by Executive Director Jim Dow. For the complete series please visit our website, www.bhht-maine.org

Now what? The Next 25 Years

What a summer to celebrate the Trust's 25 years of land conservation! Blessed with magnificent weather that highlighted the beauty of the Blue Hill Peninsula, our two 25th anniversary celebrations, a gala party and auction in July and 'Mountain Day' in August, drew nearly 1000 people, all of whom enjoy and are part of this place. Many more celebrated with us in other ways.

Now we are ready to shift our focus from the last 25 years to the next 25 years, from the work completed to the work to be done.

Steady Stewardship

That work begins with stewardship – caring for what we have. Our success over the last 25 years means we have a lot of land to care for.

Our Trust holds more than 50 conservation easements on about 3300 acres of land. This part of our stewardship job involves forming and maintaining working relationships with the 65 or so landowners with whom we share an ownership interest.

Then there is the stewardship of the lands we own – over 2200 acres. There are always things to be done, beginning with keeping the boundaries marked and sometimes extending to complicated issues such as right of ways with abutters or illegal dumping, not to mention monitoring the health of the ecological systems on the land.

More Recreational Trails

Trails increase the stewardship burden dramatically. Yet providing walking

opportunities throughout our landscape will continue to be an important part of our work.

New Strategic Lands

Beyond stewardship, there are the opportunities to conserve additional lands. We are far from done. We have however become much more selective than we were in the early days – that is a result of both our heightened awareness about the costs of stewardship and our belief in the value of strategic conservation planning.

We will also need to keep our organization fresh, vigorous and focused. We will need to attract new financial resources and be open to new ideas and new approaches. The work we are currently doing to prepare our Trust for national accreditation is part of that ongoing and never-ending effort to build and maintain an organization that is effective, efficient and sustainable.

More Young People Involved

Most importantly, we will certainly need to expand the pool of people who are involved in our work, especially the younger generation. They, after all, will need to assume responsibility for this organization and this work in the future.

We have built a wonderful community organization over the last 25 years – an organization of people taking care of their place. I hope I am around to see what has been accomplished when the 50th anniversary rolls around. Onward and upward!

– Jim Dow, Executive Director

*Leave a
Lasting Legacy*

Name the Trust in your will.

To find out how, call 207-374-5118

L.L.Bean Grant Assists with New Office Visitor Center

As part of our effort to provide educational and recreational benefits to our community, we are creating a new outside informational kiosk and small "visitors center" at our office building. We are pleased to have received a grant from the L.L.Bean Land Trust Grant Program, administered by Maine Coast Heritage Trust, that will help fund this project. We still need donations of furniture – comfortable chairs, couch, an area rug. Let us know if you can help.

Blue Hill Heritage Trust

Our Mission

To conserve land and water of special ecological, natural, agricultural, scenic, cultural and recreational significance in Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Penobscot, Sedgwick and Surry, and to work to increase public understanding of the importance of land and water conservation.

Board of Directors

Mary Barnes, Sedgwick, *President*
Pamela Johnson, Sedgwick, *Vice President*
Norman Alt, Brooksville, *Vice-President*
John Murphy, Sedgwick, *Treasurer*
David Porter, Brooklin, *Secretary*
Heather Albert-Knopp, Penobscot
Mitchell Baum, Brooklin
Peter Clapp, Blue Hill
Bonnie Copper, Penobscot
Jim Kannry, Blue Hill
John Merrifield, Blue Hill
Norman Mrozicki, Surry
Kim Ridley, Brooklin

Staff

James W. Dow,
Executive Director
Sheila Corbett,
Membership/Administrative Coordinator
Charlotte Clews Lawther,
*Director of Stewardship
and Outdoor Programs*

Land Report

As of December 31, 2010

Conservation Easements held by BHHT (55)..... 3655 acres
Conservation Land owned by BHHT (41)..... 2144 acres
Total Protected Land since 1985: 5799 acres



View from the new conservation land across the north end of Noyes Pond to Blue Hill Mountain.

12 New Acres in Blue Hill Open New Trail Possibilities



Strategic additions to conservation lands we already own make sense. An end-of-the-year gift of a parcel of land that abuts Trust land on the eastern slope of Blue Hill Mountain and at the north end of Noyes Pond in Blue Hill is just that. This land will conserve additional wildlife habitat and travel corridors. It will also help make it possible for us to create a walking trail from the Mountain to the Turkey Farm Road

sometime in the future.

The 12-acre forested parcel includes both wetland and upland sections and shares a boundary with a 108-acre parcel we acquired in 2007. It is within a "conservation focus area" identified in a recent planning report that the Trust commissioned to help guide its work. We are grateful to Madcap Properties Limited Partnership for this generous gift.

