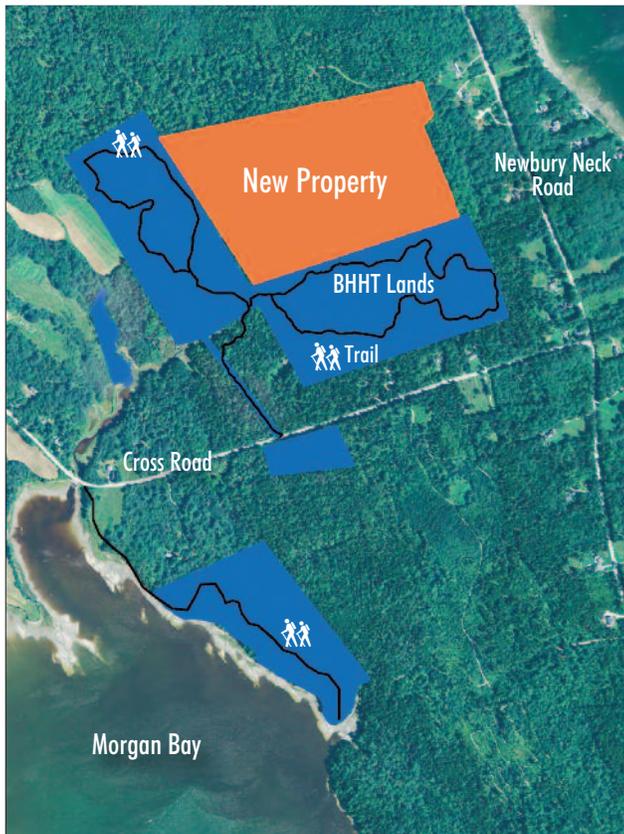


## Blue Hill Heritage Trust

Fall/Winter 2015 Newsletter

Serving Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Castine, Penobscot, Sedgwick, Surry

### *New Conservation Land Addition in Surry*



A 48 acre parcel of land off the Newbury Neck Road in Surry has been purchased by our Trust to expand the wildlife habitat protection already provided by two adjacent parcels of conservation land.

Together with our Furth Wildlife Sanctuary and Talalay Nature Sanctuary properties, this parcel will create a habitat block of one hundred acres. It will also form part of a wildlife corridor that runs from the large wetland known as Emerton Heath along Emerton Brook and associated tributaries to the head of Morgan Bay. This new parcel hosts a variety of tree species, includes wetlands, and has lots of evidence of use by wildlife.

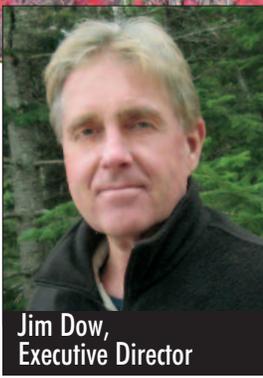
While the primary conservation value of this land is wildlife habitat protection, it will also provide us the opportunity to extend the public nature trail

network that already exists on our two adjacent properties.

This property was offered for sale as a potential residential subdivision. The opportunity to create a large habitat block and prevent an abutting land use that might have spillover effects on our conservation lands prompted us to act. To complete the purchase, we borrowed money from a local bank. We are now engaged in a fundraising effort to repay the loan and make the necessary contribution to our Stewardship Fund.

#### *You can help*

We need to raise \$46,000 to complete this project. If you would like to make a financial contribution to the conservation of this land, please call us.



Jim Dow,  
Executive Director

## Where do we go from here?

Three decades after its founding, Blue Hill Heritage Trust is a healthy, active, widely supported, nationally accredited, community-based non-profit with a state-wide reputation that has delivered lasting benefits to the well-being of the Blue Hill Peninsula community. But where do we go from here?

### A new strategic plan will help guide us.

This year we took a hard look at ourselves—both our strengths and weaknesses. We also invited feedback from others through a public survey, holding “focus groups” in each of our seven towns and conducting personal interviews with people from various sectors of the Peninsula community.

Here are some of the things that we learned. People value what we do. People’s perceptions of what is important to do and what we have done match up well, but there are some issues, such as fish passage restoration and general environmental advocacy, which do not. “Protecting wildlife habitat” ranked highest on the public survey, with “creating and maintaining walking trails” a close second. Schools would like more of our help introducing young people to the natural world. We are not as well-known throughout our service area as we should be.

The result of all this information gathering and analysis was the adoption by our Board of Directors of a new five year strategic plan that we will use to help guide us forward. The major goals of that plan are as follows:

**Strengthen our stewardship commitment.** Our land conservation success over the last thirty years has resulted in a very large and perpetual stewardship obligation. It is a growing challenge but one that we must and will meet.

**Conserve more high priority land and water resources.** Our land conservation work is not done, but we will be increasingly selective in what projects we undertake. We will give a new focus to lands and waters that provide wildlife travel corridors, which are essential to protect if we are to keep a diverse wildlife population on the Peninsula. We also hope to work more closely with town governments on projects of importance to them, as we have recently done in Surry.

**Expand community outreach and engagement.** We intend to deepen our working relationship with schools, local governments, and other organizations, forming collaborative projects whenever possible, while continuing our outdoor and educational programs. We know that collaborative land conservation can help build a sense of



community by creating places we all know, share and care for.

**Continue to create and maintain public trails and water access sites.** To love what we have here, people need to experience it. We know that our trails are helping people develop that appreciation. They provide safe places to walk for health and recreation as well as an attraction for the visitors and seasonal residents who fuel a substantial part of our local economy. We have plans to create new trails in a variety of natural areas throughout the Peninsula.

**Build our organizational capacity.** We have always operated a very lean organization, maximizing the donations that support our work. Yet as our land and trail portfolios grow, we will need to match that growth with increased capacity, especially in stewardship. We will need to grow our membership base. We will need to continue to recruit the help of active volunteers.

### New Mission Statement

Our recent strategic process led to a decision to revise our mission statement to better express what we do and why. Going forward our mission statement will read as follows:

To conserve in perpetuity land and water resources that support the long-term health and well-being of the natural and human communities on the Blue Hill Peninsula.

### Necessary Refinements

These goals are some necessary refinements to how we approach our work, rather than major changes. They reflect a thorough assessment of where we are as an organization at this point in time. They are also judgments about how we can best fulfill our mission. So off we go into the next thirty years. I hope you will be part of our journey forward.

*A similar column appeared this summer in The Weekly Packet, as the last in a nine part series about our Trust written by our staff in celebration of our 30th anniversary. All can now be found on our website at [www.bluehillheritagetrust.org](http://www.bluehillheritagetrust.org)*

# Stewardship: Many Lands, Many Tasks and Many Helpers

Our Trust's land stewardship responsibilities are never ending, and they grow with each new parcel of land we conserve. Our Associate Director George Fields leads our Stewardship Program but he depends on the help of many volunteers. More than 290 hours of volunteer time have been contributed to our stewardship work this year. Here are a few recent photos of our stewardship work and some of the people who did the work. Thank you, volunteers!



## Keep Walking Our Trails This Winter

As the snow flies this winter, our goal is to keep at least one trailhead parking area in each town plowed. Check our website after snowstorms for a listing of which parking areas are open. Get out and enjoy the winter beauty of our Peninsula!



*Clockwise from top: a big crew of volunteers, including 8 members of the Maine Island Trail Association helped dismantle and remove a dilapidated cabin from our Carleton Island property (5.6 tons of materials in 2 days!); George Fields monitoring a property on the Great Meadow in Sedgwick, one of 82 properties on which we hold conservation easements; Board member Brooke Parish (on right) and a crew of Maine Maritime Academy students helped remove fallen trees at our Schumacher Preserve in Castine.*



*Charlie Read and Ann Flewelling, new members of our Stewards Circle*

## Stewards Circle: Leave an Enduring Legacy

We are pleased to welcome Ann Flewelling and Charlie Read to our Stewards Circle, which honors people who have chosen to leave a lasting legacy by providing critical assistance to our work through bequests and other planned gifts. Ann and Charlie have named Blue Hill Heritage Trust their wills. Here's why, in Ann's words:

*We live on Snow Cove on the upper Bagaduce River, the same pristine area that caught our hearts and called us home nearly 20 years ago. BHHT's preserve on Snow*

*Cove protects this quiet cove where ancient horseshoe crabs, eagles, hawks, osprey, blue herons, ducks, and other shore birds abound. We've chosen to express our gratitude for BHHT's work by naming the Trust as beneficiary in our reciprocal wills.*

Please consider joining the growing list of people who have chosen to leave an enduring conservation legacy. Unless otherwise directed by the donor, all planned gifts help support the long-term stewardship of our conservation properties. Please contact our office for more information.

Mann's Meadow is an expansive wetland located in Surry, hidden away between Route 172 and Route 176. It is a natural refuge for waterfowl as well as many other species of wildlife. As the head waters of Smelt Brook, this wetland is also an important source of freshwater for Morgan Bay, helping to create the estuarine environment that gives the Bay such biological richness. Now thanks to the cooperation of the town's selectmen, a major portion of this unusual landscape feature is conservation land.

The Town of Surry had acquired a legal interest in this 29 acre parcel through the real estate tax lien process. Because of the nature of the property, it had very little economic utility or market value. The town selectmen recognized this but also recognized that it had real environmental value. They called us and asked us to consider acquiring their interest for a nominal cost, which we did.

We were well aware of Mann's Meadow as a significant local wetland. The Friends of Morgan Bay, our local partners in this part of the Peninsula, had regularly promoted its ecological values, but we had only observed it from the air on our annual monitoring flights. After we visited it on the ground, observing first hand its use by otters, eagles, beavers, and a variety of ducks and other birds, it was clear that we were an appropriate owner. Beyond its environmental value, it is a place of wild and natural beauty.



## Mann's Meadow New 29-Acre Wetland Parcel



*Mann's Meadow from the air in spring and from the ground in fall. Waterfowl, such as the common merganser below, benefit from this wetland.*



ALAN D. WILSON, www.naturesonline.com

Going forward we hope to work with the owners of the other land around Mann's Meadow to ensure its ecological functions continue long into the future.

One of the main goals of our new strategic plan is protect more high priority land and water resources. This place hosts such resources. If we are to maintain our wildlife populations, if we care about the freshwater sources that feed our estuaries and our groundwater supplies, the conser-

vation of places like Mann's Meadow needs to be a priority.

Another goal of the new strategic plan is to expand our community engagement, including working more closely with local town governments on projects of mutual interest. This project (and the Patten Stream fishway project, see below) are the types of cooperative town-land trust projects that we hope will be replicated in other Peninsula towns.

B. TEDESCO PHOTO



## New Fishway on Patten Stream

Thanks to a collaboration of many parties, a fishway was built this fall in Patten Stream that will allow alewives to migrate freely up the stream to Patten Pond, curing a blockage created by a highway abutment. Next May's alewife run will be an exciting time in Surry! We were pleased to assist with this multi-year project and now look forward to similar projects elsewhere on the Peninsula.

# Community

**Ecologist Cathy Rees** of Brooklin led a “Native Plants in Your Landscape” workshop for Trust members as part of our 2015 **Walks and Talks** Program, which included events in each of the seven towns in our service area.



**Students** from Brooksville Elementary School explored our **Snow Natural Area** property along the Bagaduce, part of our effort to get young people out on the land.

## Outreach and Engagement

One of the goals of our new 2016-2020 strategic plan is to expand our community outreach and engagement. Over the last thirty years, we have protected a portfolio of lands that host diverse conservation values. We are now going to devote more time and energy to embedding those lands into the life of the people of the Peninsula community. More trails, more events, more programs, more engagement with schools and young people. But we are not waiting for 2016 to begin that work. Led by our new Outreach Coordinator, Chrissy Allen, and the members of our volunteer outreach committee, we are already off and running.



## Local Farms and Food Systems

A hot topic at the recent national land trust conference was the role of land trusts in local food systems. Our Trust has been directly involved in our local food system for many years through the conservation of prime local agricultural lands, such as that found on **Quills’ End Farm**, at right. Land trusts across the country are experimenting with new ways to engage in the protection and development of local food systems. We too will be investigating new potential roles for our Trust in this important part of our community life.



## Wish List

- Portable generator
- Utility trailer (5' x 7')
- Hedge trimmer (gas powered)
- Two handled post hole digger

## STAFF NEWS

### Welcome, Pete!

Pete Collier has joined our staff as a part-time administrative assistant. Pete grew up in Surry, is a graduate of George Stevens Academy and Kenyon College and has a deep interest in natural resource conservation. He recently moved back to our Peninsula and now lives in Sedgwick with his wife Pi and son Jet. He



replaces Hannah Hurvitt who “pinch-hit” for us for a few months before entering graduate school.

## Blue Hill Heritage Trust

### Board of Directors

Mary Barnes, *President*  
Norman Alt, *Vice-President*  
Pamela Johnson, *Vice-President*  
Terry Moulton, *Treasurer*  
Phyllis Taylor, *Secretary*  
Mitchell Baum, Peter Clapp,  
Bonnie Copper, Maynard Forbes, Samantha Haskell, Jon Hopkins, Sarah O'Malley, Brooke Parish, Tricia Quirk

### Staff

James W. Dow, *Executive Director*  
George Fields, *Associate Director*  
Chrissy Allen,  
*Outreach/Development Coordinator*  
Pete Collier,  
*Administrative Assistant*



## Bob Marville Honored at Annual Meeting

A great crowd of members gathered at Kneisel Hall on August 25th for our Trust's 30th annual membership meeting, enjoying a social hour and then hearing reports on the Trust's recent work from its Board leaders and staff. Executive Director Jim Dow presented a visual tour of the Trust's work over the last 30 years and then introduced the Trust's strategic goals for the near future.

Of special note was the presentation of an award to Bob Marville for his many and various contributions to the Trust's success (in photo at right with Board President Mary Barnes.)



## Milkweed and Monarchs



One of our members recently asked about planting milkweed on some of our lands to benefit monarch butterflies. Read our Stewardship Committee Chair Pam Johnson's reply on our website, [www.bluehillheritagetrust.org](http://www.bluehillheritagetrust.org)

## By the Numbers

As of October 31, 2015

Conservation Easements:  
82 properties / 3,554 acres

Conservation Land Owned:  
67 parcels / 3,293 acres

Assists and Deed Restrictions:  
4 parcels / 308 acres

TOTAL Protected Lands:  
153 parcels / 7,155 acres

Miles of Trails: 25

## President's Column

### Perpetuity Takes Leadership

Inherently, with conservation comes the questions of how long can it last, what can be done and how. Over the years, conservation easements have made it possible for landowners to guide the future use of their land. Typically, the land is identified for open space, wildlife habitat and scenic vistas providing public benefit while remaining in private ownership and on the tax roll. In addition to the lands we own, our Trust holds conservation easements on 82 parcels of land across the peninsula. It's our job to monitor and enforce these easements. This commitment is forever – “in perpetuity.” As you might imagine,

this takes leadership and a well-run organization.

The Trust is just that. It is clear in its mission, fiscally responsible, operates with clear policies and engages competent staff and many volunteers to carry out its mission, all working productively together. Each of us is a leader. Perpetuity takes leadership. This is the commitment we make to conservation. Join us! Come! Learn! Engage! Try something new. Conservation across the peninsula is for everyone and we have fun making it happen.

Onward,  
*Mary Barnes, President*

