

BLUE HILL HERITAGE TRUST

BLUE HILL / BROOKLIN / BROOKSVILLE / PENOBSCOT / SEDGWICK / SURRY Fall/Winter 2009

John B. Mountain: A Gift of Land in Brooksville



Some places on our Peninsula seem to call out for conservation, places so perfect in their natural state that it seems obvious that they should be protected from development.

John B. Mountain is one of those places. Fortunately the call was heard loud and clear by a Brooksville couple. This summer they completed their personal effort to protect this remarkable place by donating the land to the Blue Hill Heritage Trust. The Trust will now be responsible for this land's long term stewardship.

John B. Mountain, or simply "John B" as it is commonly referred to by those who know it, is very small as mountains go – its summit is only about 300 feet above sea level – yet it holds a prominent place along our coast between Orcutt Harbor and Horseshoe Cove in Brooksville, forming part of the scenic coastal backdrop enjoyed by those who travel by

boat along the western end of Eggemoggin Reach. For those who enjoy looking the other way, from land out over the waters of Penobscot Bay, it offers startlingly beautiful views from its summit over the islands to the south, as well as views in all other directions – to the mountains of Acadia to the east, Blue Hill Mountain to the northeast, to the Camden Hills to the west, to Holbrook Island Sanctuary, Smith Cove and Castine to the northwest.

The 38-acre parcel of land that encompasses John B also offers other natural features that make a visit there special – diverse forestland, including pitch-pine stands near the summit, unusual and beautiful rock outcroppings adorned with lichens and moss and habitat for a variety of birds and mammals.

Joel and Ruth Davis saw a "for sale" sign on this land in 1998 as they passed by it on their way to a Christmas celebration with their children. They immediately called the realtor, shortly thereafter completing its purchase. They knew from the outset that it was land that should be conserved rather than developed, but they took the time to investigate the pos-



(Above) John B. Mountain as seen from Eggemoggin Reach. (Right) A group of youngsters make their way to the top of John B on one of the trails that will be available to the public.

sibilities, wanting to do it right. In the meantime, they started caring for the land, hiring a forester to advise them and

Continued on page 7

More Farmland Forever!

New easement protects 137 acres in North Blue Hill. See page 3.

Getting to Know a Place:

An Inventory of Wallamatogus Mountain

"The first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces."

— Aldo Leopold, Sand County Almanac

One way to figure out what "pieces" are found on our conserved lands is to conduct a Natural Resource Inventory. This summer ecologists Jill Weber and Sally Rooney have been doing that for us, exploring the bogs, slopes and forests of the 273-acre Wallamatogus property in Penobscot that we are purchasing in partnership with the Conservation Trust of Brooksville, Castine and Penobscot.

They took careful inventory of the plants and animals they saw, which included an abundance of wildlife: deer, bear and bobcat tracks, an oven bird nest, a spruce grouse with chicks, and porcupine. Two rare natural communities were discovered — white cedar woodland and spruce heath barren — as well as many other remarkable pieces of nature, from sundew plants to 120-year-old black spruce.

This inventory demonstrates that Wallamatogus Mountain provides habitat for both rare and common communities, as well as space for natural processes to unfold. This information will form the basis for our long-term management plan for this new conservation property.



Jill Weber and Sally Rooney take a core sample of a black spruce as part of the natural resource inventory.

Natural Community Key

- Anthropogenic/Spruce-Fir Forest (Regeneration)
- Anthropogenic/Spruce-Fir Forest (Intact)
- Spruce-Northern Hardwoods Forest
- Red Spruce-Mixed Conifer Woodland
- White Pine-Mixed Conifer Forest
- Spruce Heath Barren
- Spruce-Fir-Cinnamon Fern Forest
- Bluejoint Meadow
- White Cedar Woodland
- Acidic Cliff-Gorge
- Mountain Holly-Alder Woodland Fen

Map digitized by C.Clews Lawther 10/09.
Based on Jill Weber's field notes 10/09.

0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Project Update:

This property is one of the projects included in our "Uncommon Places, Shared Spaces" capital campaign. We still have an additional \$65,000 to raise to complete our share of the funding for this project. If you can help, please let us know.

Jed Island:

Permanent protection still a goal

Did you get to Jed Island this summer? Some did... humans as well as eagles and seals! Our partnership with the Maine Coast Heritage Trust is working to raise the funds necessary to acquire this lovely island in Blue Hill Bay and thus ensure its permanent protection for the enjoyment of all. We still have a long way to go to reach the \$800,000 goal. If you can help, please let us know.



Conservation Easement Gift Protects 137 Acres in North Blue Hill

October 16th was indeed a special day. Carole Beal's long-standing dream for her land came to fruition in the company of her family when she signed a deed that granted a conservation easement on the 137-acre property that she has owned and lived on and loved for nearly 40 years. The pleasure of being able to assist a landowner with an act of conservation that provides public benefit as well as private satisfaction was very real for the Trust representatives who shared this moment.

Carole and her former husband first visited the land in 1970 with Rufus Candage, a local businessman and realtor (and one of the founding Board members of this Trust). The wood had been largely cut off it and the fields were being used to grow corn. The property was one of the first homesteads in the area, though the house itself had disappeared. Carole's affection for the place was immediate, and grew after it was hers, as a new home was built on the old foundation, children were born, hay was cut and years passed.

From neighbors, a new idea

As the idea of protecting farmland in the area began to take hold in the 1990's, an effort spearheaded by her neighbor and friend Paul Birdsall, Carole investigated the possibilities, but the timing was not right. She watched as other local farms, including two farms that border her property, were protected through the Trust's **Farmland Forever** Program. This year, the timing was right. Having made provisions for her adult children and their families on neighboring land, and able to benefit from the incentives for donating a conservation easement provided by a recent change in federal tax law, she and her family worked with Trust staff over several months to tailor the terms of an easement.

The conservation easement prevents future development on 137.5 acres of field and forest, yet it allows the land to be used for agricultural enterprises and commercial forest management, which have been the traditional economic uses



A good deed done! With daughter Aimee, granddaughter Maia, and son-in-law Jim Church close by, Carole Beal signed and delivered the conservation easement to Board President John Merrifield last October.

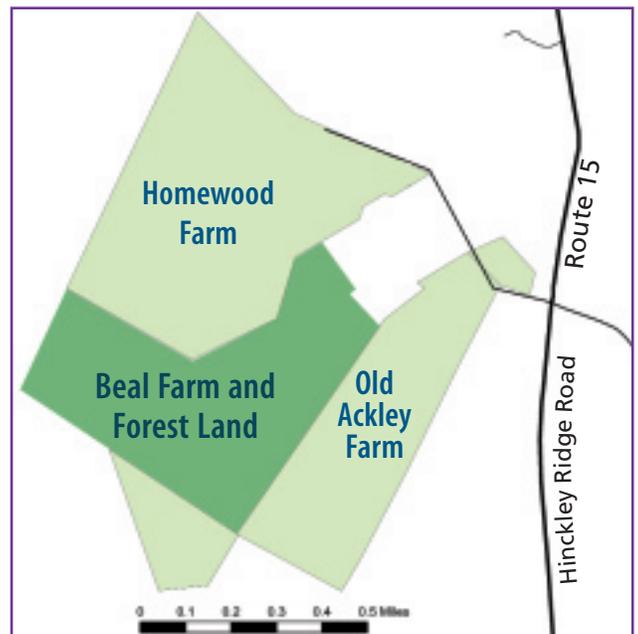
“Today is a special day. I dearly love these fields and woods. Thank you for all your hard work and thoughtful suggestions for protecting them.”

– Carole Beal, Conservation Easement Donor

of the land. The easement also protects a variety of wildlife habitat found on the property. As an added benefit for wildlife, this property is located between two other protected farmland tracts, and now creates an unfragmented block of protected land of nearly 450 acres.

The Trust, as with all conservation easements, now assumes in perpetuity the responsibility for monitoring the future uses of the property and ensuring compliance with the terms of easements. The easement grants the Trust the legal right to enforce those terms when and if necessary.

This gift brings the total of farmland acreage protected by the Trust in the Route 15 Farmland Corridor to 1710, and the total of protected farmland in the Peninsula area to 1860 acres.



An Enthusiastic Turnout for Annual Meeting

The beautiful campus of Kneisel Hall in Blue Hill was the setting for the Trust's 2009 Annual Membership Meeting on September 9th. An enthusiastic crowd of nearly 100 persons gathered for this annual celebration of the Trust's achievements. As Executive Director Jim

Dow noted in his remarks, Kneisel Hall was an especially appropriate place for this meeting, given the important connection between nature and music, and given that the campus is adjacent to one of our conservation properties and that Ellen Werner, Kneisel Hall's Executive Director, is a former President of our Board of Directors.

A reception was followed by reports from Board president John Merrifield and Treasurer John Murphy. Departing Board member Whitney Landon was recognized for 12 years of service, and Mary Barnes of Sedgwick was elected to a three year term on the Board of Directors.

The evening's program began with a slide presentation by Execu-

tive Director Jim Dow, "Conservation Lands: Old and New," that reviewed some of the Trust's past land projects and highlighted those completed since the last meeting. Stewardship Coordinator Charlotte Clews Lawther, an experienced naturalist and outdoor educator, capped the evening with a captivating talk about what makes the Blue Hill Peninsula so special and so worthy of conservation. (An excerpt from Charlotte's talk is included on page 5). It was an enjoyable evening. If you weren't able to make it this year, please join us in 2010.



Board member Peter Sly (left) and conservation easement landowner Jack Hooper share a greeting at the annual meeting last September at Kneisel Hall.

President's Column:

Thoughts on a 25 Year Legacy to the Community

As we approach the completion of our Trust's 24th year of local conservation work, I have been reflecting on the contributions to life on the Peninsula made by this organization and the many people who have been involved in its work. Have we made a difference? Here are some thoughts.

If not for Blue Hill Heritage Trust...

- There would be a housing development on the western slope of Blue Hill Mountain, but no managed hiking trails to the summit.
- The remarkable view from Caterpillar Hill might well have been blocked by one kind of development proposal or another, and we wouldn't be picking blueberries on the old Cooper Farm each summer.
- There would be no 878-acre unfragmented block of wildlife habitat at Kingdom Woods, nor the opportunity to enjoy walking its 3 miles of trails or to continue to hunt there.

- We would not have 1700 acres of protected farmland that is and will continue to be a source of local, high quality food.

- Thousands of feet of scenic undeveloped coastline, now protected by conservation easements, would have likely been converted into residential uses.

- There would be no vehicle through which we as a community, and as private landowners, could work to balance the steady development pressure that exists on our Peninsula.

Working with a whole lot of conservation-minded landowners and with the support of our loyal members, we indeed have made a difference. And we intend to continue this work, with a sense of accomplishment and pride, knowing that we are keeping the important places in our community protected, not just for ourselves but for generations to come. Thank you for your continuing support.

John Merrifield

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2008

Reviewed by the accounting firm of
Loiselle, Goodwin & Hinds, CPAs)

Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$266,471
Certificates of deposit.....	\$156,677
Long-term investments	\$596,921
Pledges receivable	\$118,480
Office building	\$156,159
Other	\$3,596
Conservation land.....	\$3,438,634
Total Assets	\$4,736,938

Liabilities and Net Assets

LIABILITIES

Debt for land	\$105,000
Debt: office building	\$72,500
Other	\$5,322
Total Liabilities	\$182,822

NET ASSETS

Permanently restricted	\$1,583,521
Temporarily restricted	\$270,093
Unrestricted but designated	\$2,564,264
Unrestricted	\$136,238
Total Net Assets.....	\$4,554,116

Total Liabilities and

Net Assets	\$4,736,938
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A Wild, Woody and Rural Place

The Blue Hill Peninsula is a place of great ecological diversity and abundance

(an excerpt from Charlotte Clews Lawther's annual meeting presentation)

The Blue Hill Peninsula is a place of great ecological diversity and abundance, and a place that has long been more hospitable to fish and forest than to men and women.

About 65,000 years ago, the Laurentian Ice Sheet descended from Northern Canada, and rumbled its way across Maine, scraping south toward the ocean. It gouged out the rugged-ragged peninsulas and bays, taking with it a great deal of Maine's topsoil. When at last the glacier came to rest, like a bulldozer out of fuel, it dumped an enormous pile of debris, known as a terminal moraine, off the coast of Massachusetts. This underwater mountain of Maine's topsoil is called George's Bank. As the glacier receded, and the ocean rose to its present day level, the Gulf of Maine was formed.

The George's Bank effectively deflects warm Gulf Stream waters from the coast of Maine, and instead, cold, oxygen-rich water flows in from the Labrador Current. Five large, nutrient-rich rivers overflow from the land each spring to fuel a unique counter-clockwise gyre in the Gulf of Maine. The cold, nutrient-rich waters and long sunny summer days combine to create a diverse coastal ecosystem.

1,000 native plant species

The cold water is responsible for more than marine diversity. Botanists have counted at least 1,000 species of plants in the Blue Hill Peninsula area, and the cold coastal waters are at least partly responsible for this diversity as well.

Our springs and often the first two months of "summer" are quite cold, foggy and dreary. People might resent the mildew and failed pea plants, but many Northern plants love this climate and do very well right along the coast line. Boreal tree species such as jack pine, black spruce and grey birch grow readily in our cool moist climate. When the long summer days do eventually warm up the



ocean, the water holds the heat well. This is the reason that our fall climate is slightly milder than further inland.

Northern and southern species mix

This climate buffering effect means that several southern plant species are able to thrive on the Blue Hill Peninsula that would not make it further inland or much further Downeast. One such example is pitch pine, commonly found in the warm sandy soils of New Jersey, or Cape Cod. This is one of the very few places that you will find a northern forest species such as jack pine growing right



The Laurentian glacier receded from Maine approximately 12,000 years ago (see map above), creating an environment of rich diversity. The cold waters of the Gulf of Maine and the long summer days are responsible for the happy coexistence of jack pine, a northern species, and pitch pine (pictured to left), a southern species.



Charlotte Clews Lawther, an experienced naturalist and outdoor educator, oversees the stewardship of the Trust's conservation lands.

next to a southern species such as pitch pine.

And of course the climate and the effects of the glacier have made it a difficult place to scratch out a living for humans. This might explain why the natural wonder of this "wild, woody and rural" place remains relatively intact and why we still have the opportunity to conserve it.



Highlighting Local Food Sources...

A crew of Trust volunteers helped us participate in the 4th Annual Food and Wine Festival organized by the Blue Hill Peninsula Chamber of Commerce in October. Our booth, staffed by Gina Grojean (left) and John Merrifield when this photo was taken, highlighted the local farms on which we hold conservation easements and which are an increasing source of locally produced food. A list of participating farms can be found on our website, www.bhhtmaine.org

A Special Thanks

We want to thank the diverse group of accomplished volunteers who led our Walks and Talks program this year: Enoch Albert, Heather McCargo and Pam Johnson, Sally Rooney, Charlotte Clews Lawther, Jim Dow, Tom Bjorkman, Chip Moseley, Anna Fernandez, Kirk Lurvey and David Porter.

Leaves of Three: A report on our website

"Is this poison ivy" has become a common question on our Walks and Talks programs. Increasing amounts of this plant are being found throughout the Peninsula. For a short report on poison ivy prepared by Board member Pam Johnson, visit our website www.bhhtmaine.org



Blue Hill Heritage Trust

Board of Directors

- John Merrifield, Blue Hill, *President*
- Pamela Johnson, Sedgwick, *Vice-President*
- Norman Alt, Brooksville, *Vice-President*
- John Murphy, Sedgwick, *Treasurer*
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- Paul Birdsall, Penobscot
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- Tim Garrity, Blue Hill
- Jim Kannry, Blue Hill
- Norman Mrozicki, Surry
- Kim Ridley, Brooklin
- Peter Sly, Brooklin

Staff

- James W. Dow,
Executive Director
- Sheila Corbett,
Membership/Administrative Coordinator
- Charlotte Clews Lawther,
Stewardship Coordinator

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.

25 in 2010

As 2009 winds to a close we are thinking ahead. 2010 will be the 25th anniversary of the founding of our Trust by a group of far-sighted local people. How far we have come, thanks to you, our members. Our achievements, both old and new, are reflected throughout this newsletter. A celebration seems in order.

And that is what we intend to do next year – celebrate our place and what we have done together to protect it over the last 25 years. We are planning an expanded series of outdoor programs for all ages, some lectures, the creation and opening of some new trails and at least one very special summer event. Our Board and staff look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in person to thank you for your help.



One of our members keeps telling us that "we are a bright light hidden under a basket." It is true that we focus on our core work – working with landowners to protect land – and we do not spend our scarce resources on lots of publicity. Next year, though, we are going to lift the basket. We are going to work to tell the story and enjoy doing it.

Stay tuned for more details. We hope you will celebrate with us.

Jim Dow, Executive Director

Land Report

As of October 31, 2009

Conservation Easements held by BHHT:

65 parcels, 3360 acres

Conservation Land owned by BHHT:

40 parcels, 2137 acres

Total protected to date:

5497 acres

John B. Mountain: A Gift of Land in Brooksville

Continued from page 1

a local resident to do some clean-up work. They also spent time getting to know the land itself, enjoying walks along the trails on the property.

As a first step in their long-term protection plan, the Davises granted a conservation easement to Maine Coast Heritage Trust in 2004. The second step, completed in July, was their gift of the remaining ownership interest, and the responsibility for its long-term stewardship, to our Trust. Understanding that proper stewardship requires proper funding, they also made a generous financial contribution to our Stewardship Fund, which helps support the long-term care of conservation lands.

Now it is our turn to get to know the property and plan for its care. We are currently completing a resource inventory and a management plan. We look forward to a “grand opening” of a public walking trail next spring.

What a gift to us all!



(Above) The view of Blue Hill Mountain from John B.

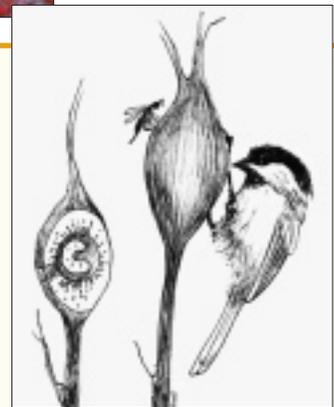
(Left) The youngsters arrived! The view to the southwest over Horseshoe Cove and beyond.

Year of the Grods: Nature's elegance revealed

From the rocky coastlines to sandy roadsides, wet ditches to dry fields, at least 15 species of Goldenrods (genus *Solidago*) grace the Blue Hill Peninsula with their cheery yellow blooms. Botanists fondly refer to them as “grods,” and this fall they were everywhere, including John B Mountain. Perhaps it was the exceptionally wet early summer combined with the sunny dry August that contributed to this year's bounty. The abundance of one particularly good looking species, Downy Goldenrod, (pictured to right) stood out.

Many people take these weedy looking plants for granted – or worse, blame them for seasonal allergies (though ragweed is a more likely culprit). But if you look closely at this common plant you will find a complex and fascinating ecological story. Each single “flower” is composed of hundreds of smaller flowers, which makes goldenrod an important source of late-summer, early-autumn nectar for bees. And other insects

depend on goldenrods for their livelihood too. There are a number of insects (moths and flies) that lay their eggs exclusively on goldenrod stems. The larvae burrow into the stem and trigger a hormonal response in the plant so that it will form a hardened case of stem-tissue around the tender young insect. Start looking around this winter and you will see these round stem-galls everywhere. Cut one open and you will likely find one or more larvae safely tucked away, unless someone else beats you to it. Woodpeckers and chickadees love to prey on the tasty grubs if they can get through the thick wall of the gall. And few species of wasps specialize on parasitizing these galls by piercing the thick gall wall with their ovipositor to lay their eggs in the body of the nutrient-rich insect larvae inside. Goldenrod is just another example of how when we start to look, we find nature's elegance revealed, often in our own backyard.



Blue Hill Heritage Trust

5497 *Community-Based Land Conservation*
Acres protected since 1985

PEOPLE ON THE LAND: A mushroom identification workshop led by Board member David Porter, capped our 2009 Walks & Talks program.

