

Column #3

CELEBRATING PLACE: 30th Anniversary Notes from Blue Hill Heritage Trust

Places to Walk: The Peters Brook Trail, One of Many

By Jim Dow, Executive Director, Blue Hill Heritage Trust

People are walking more these days. It is a wonderful trend among our residents and visitors since walking is a well-recognized way to maintain or improve a person's health. As a result, there is a growing community demand for safe places to walk. Our Trust has taken the lead in meeting that demand, providing safe as well as enjoyable places to walk in all seven towns that we serve.

Our trails on Blue Hill Mountain are the most well-known and the most heavily used. But there are trails on many of our other conservation lands that provide diverse opportunities for people to exercise while exploring the beauty and wonder of the natural world around us: Snow's Cove in Sedgwick, Hundred Acre Wood in Brooklin, John B. Mountain in Brooksville, Patten Stream in Surry, Greenbie Natural Area in Castine, Weinland Nature Study Area in Penobscot, to name but a few. All are different. All are free and open to the public.

One trail that has become popular because of its proximity to Blue Hill village as well as the quality of the experience that it offers is our trail along Peters Brook, which empties into Blue Hill harbor near our A B Herrick Landing on the East Blue Hill Road. It is a relatively short trail, only one mile out and back, but what a beautiful place to walk. Majestic trees in a well-managed forest. A waterfall. Peacefulness. There is a reason that people love it.

This trail is available for public enjoyment thanks to the generosity of members of the Byers family (Bill Byers, Corinne Sucsy and Marty Gay) who donated a conservation easement on the land to our Trust in 2005. Though the land remains in private ownership, the easement prevents its future development. It also granted our Trust the right to create and maintain the current public walking trail.

Now we have the chance to expand this public walking opportunity. A sixty two acre parcel of land with extensive frontage along the western side of the brook has become conservation land, thanks to Posie and Doug Cowan, who recently donated this land to our Trust.

This new parcel, located on the opposite side of the brook from the existing trail, provides a variety of wildlife habitat and includes a diverse forest and a large portion of a wetland known as Albion's Meadow that feeds Peters Brook. After an ecologist completes a natural resources inventory for us that identifies fragile areas of the property, we will be working to design a new trail section that connects to the existing trail via a bridge over the brook. This will offer walkers a new perspective on this beautiful landscape.

The Cowans are enthusiastic about their gift and about sharing the beauty of the place with others. "Doug and I are excited that this property will complement the magical Peters Brook trail that so many people enjoy", says Posie. "We are also excited that our gift will allow the

Trust to enhance this recreational opportunity located so close to town by extending the trail across the Brook so that people can experience the natural beauty of Albion Meadow and the land's other natural features. We are confident that the Trust will be a great steward of this land.”

Maintaining trails, like the existing Peters Brook Trail, and creating new ones, as we hope to do on our new land, are time consuming and sometimes expensive endeavors. Yet we think it is worth it. Not only do these trails promote the health of our community members, they also connect people to our landscape. To know it is to love it – and people will work to protect what they love.

If you have not walked our trails, make time to do so this summer. If you like to walk with others, join one of our “Tuesdays at 10” walks, a group hike led by a Trust volunteer on a different trail each Tuesday at 10 AM. If that’s not for you, use one of our trail guides to find your own way. Both the trail guide and the “Tuesdays at 10” schedule are available at our office at 258 Mountain Road or on our website www.bluehillheritagetrust.org



Caption for photo: The Peters Brook Trail rewards walkers with a waterfall and quiet beauty.

