Two conservation easements help protect scenic character

The coast of Maine is blessed with many scenic harbors, adored by both residents and visitors, whether viewed from the water or from shore. Given our maritime heritage, these places are of special significance in defining our sense of place.

Center Harbor in Brooklin is one of those classically beautiful Maine harbors and is an important element of the Blue Hill Peninsula landscape. It is home to the Brooklin Boatyard, a hub of local economic activity widely known for the fine yachts it produces, and is well known by sailors who cruise the Maine coast. It also has a long tradition of use by both full-time and summer residents.

Thanks to the complementary efforts of the Emory and Winthrop families, an important stretch of shorefront on Center Harbor in Brooklin will remain as it is. Conservation easements granted to Blue Hill Heritage Trust will protect the character of the shorefront portions of their two adjacent properties, northern edge.

As with all our conservation easement projects, these properties remain in private ownership. However, as a legal agreement between the landowners and the Trust that permanently limits certain uses of their land in order to protect its scenic character, the conservation easement does change some of the rights normally associated with land ownership. It also conveys to the Blue Hill Heritage Trust the right and responsibility to ensure that the use restrictions set out in the easement are adhered to by cur-

The members of the Emory and Winthrop families have life-long connections to Center Harbor and were motivated by a desire to help protect a place they love. The conservation work continues previous efforts to protect the character of Center Harbor: a conservation easement held by Blue Hill Heritage Trust protects land at the head of the harbor while another held by Acadia National Park protects Chatto Island, which helps form the harbor.

"It is exciting to know that the character of Center Harbor will be maintained," said
the shore along nearly 1000 feet of the harbor's

to the Mountain to the Bay
69 Acre Parcel Now Protected by Conservation Easement

Near the center of Blue Hill village a surprisingly large area of forested land remains. Bounded on the west by Route 15, on the north by the Mountain Road, on the east by Route 172 and on the south by Main Street, this green center has houses scattered along the public roads on its edges, but otherwise has escaped development. This land provides a natural link between Blue Hill Bay and Blue Hill Mountain, the two preeminent features of the town's landscape.

Now, thanks to the foresight of Bob and Jean Meyer, a substantial portion of that land will remain undeveloped open space, with its wildlife and scenic values protected. The Meyers, who have owned and carefully steward their 69-acre parcel since 1970 and who have lived on this land since their retirement in 1983 from international work with the United Nations and CARE, have placed a conservation easement on their property that will be held by the Trust.

The terms of the easement preclude both future development (other than repair or reconstruction of the Meyers' existing home) and fragmentation of the property through subdivision. Because of their own fondness for walking and their respect for the traditional use of the land as a walking corridor between the village and the mountain, the easement also allows the Trust to create a public walking trail across the property.

Bob and Jean have been long-time members of the Blue Hill Heritage Trust. Bob was an early member of the Trust's Board of Directors who gave special attention to land stewardship issues.

"This green oasis hosts a variety of wildlife near the center of town, and is one of those wonderful natural places that should not be lost," says Nick Sichterman, a current member of our Board of Directors who knows the property well. Thanks to the Meyers' lasting gift, it won't be.

19th Annual Meeting

Tuesday, August 3rd at 7:30 p.m.
Bay School's Emlen Hall on South Street in Blue Hill

This year's Annual Meeting will include a review of the highlights of the past year's work, a discussion of new initiatives, the election of Board members and a guest speaker.

We look forward to discussing our accomplishments and the challenges ahead with our members and friends.

If you care about the future of the Blue Hill Peninsula landscape, please join us. The public is welcome.
68 acre easement protects views and habitat in Sedgwick

People driving
Route 172 between Sedgwick and Blue Hill or along the Hales Hill Road from Brooklin to Sedgwick have long enjoyed the vistas over the Great Meadow, a natural area that stretches between the Salt Pond and the Benjamin River and helps form the boundary between the towns of Sedgwick and Brooklin. A conservation easement granted to the Blue Hill Heritage Trust will now protect 68 acres of land on the Great Meadow that has importance for its scenic and wildlife values.

The conservation easement covers the southerly portion of a property known locally at various points in time as the Campbell Farm, Punchbowl Farm or Meadow Brook Farm. The land includes a portion of the wetlands associated with the Great Meadow as well as upland hayfields, woodland and blueberry land that front on Route 172 and the Hale’s Hill Road.

The terms of the conservation easement on this property prohibit all residential development on the south side of Route 172, while allowing agricultural activities that are compatible with the goal of protecting important wildlife habitat. It also allows the construction of a barn, sited so as to protect the view.

Boblinks, Savannah Sparrows, Northern Harriers, Bitters

The wildlife values of this property are exceptional. The land provides habitat for a variety of species of plants and animals. Among those benefiting from the loss of many hay fields and the early mowing of many of the remaining ones. In order to protect the bobolinks and other nesting meadow birds, the conservation easement prohibits mowing of the hayfields except for footpaths prior to July 15 of each year. Other bird species using the property include savannah sparrows, northern harriers, and bitters.

Ben and Dianna Emory, the landowners and donors of the conservation easement, are committed conservationists. Dianna is on the board of directors of Maine Coast Heritage Trust and is chairman of Friends of Acadia’s board, and Ben is president of the Blue Hill Heritage Trust board of directors. They began working in partnership with Blue Hill Heritage Trust and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust to design the easement shortly after acquiring the property in 2002.

Dianna commented, “For years I have biked by these magnificent fields and hoped that they

from the estate of Gordon Campbell, I was thrilled. We are so excited to be able to preserve its character and its ecological qualities. We also think it very important to let owners now and in the future continue traditional agricultural uses to the extent that they do not degrade the ecology.”

Private ownership, with BHHT overseeing easement responsibilities

Although the land remains in private ownership, by accepting the conservation easement Blue Hill Heritage Trust assumes responsibility for ensuring that the terms of the easement are upheld. As with all easements, this requires regular communication with the current and future owners, occasional monitoring visits to the property, and if necessary, enforcement action. “This land is a great piece of our cultural and natural heritage,” said Jim Dow, the Trust’s Executive Director. “We are grateful for the chance to help protect this land. We hope other land owners along the Great Meadow will continue the conservation work that the Emorys have begun.”

Wish List

- Metal flat file (for maps and charts)
- Round office table (40” or so diameter)
- Someone to manufacture wooden information kiosks for our trails (we have the design)
The sixth season of our annual Walks & Talks series began in April this year, with a wide range of programs during the spring months. Thank you to our speakers and trip leaders Bruce Norelius, Mark McCollough, Susan Hand Shetterly, Pam Johnson, Sally Rooney, Leslie Clapp, Anne Brayton, and Robert Baldwin for donating their time and expertise. The series will continue through September. Please join us for the following events.

All programs occur rain or shine unless noted. For more information or directions, please call us at 374-5118.

Friday, July 9th, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Mosses and Lichens of Kingdom Woods
Explore mosses and lichens on the trail and forested wetlands of the Kingdom Woods Conservation Area. The walk will be led by local botanist, educator and the former President of BHHT, Dr. Alison Dibble. Meet at the east Kingdom Road parking area for the Kingdom Woods Nature Trail, near the Upper Carleton Stream Marsh. Wear boots. Bring a hand lens if you have one. Children are welcome.

Saturday, July 24th, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Louise Bourne's Drawing Workshop at the Carter Nature Preserve.
This workshop is for people of all levels of experience who wish to translate what they see into the language of drawing. Louise is a well-known artist who lives on the Blue Hill Peninsula. Participants will have the opportunity to draw vistas as well as studies of intriguing natural objects. Rain date: July 25. For more information and/or to register contact Louise Bourne at 326-4277 or lbourne@hypernet.com. Cost: $35.00. Number of participants is limited.

Saturday, August 7th, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Conservation 101
Jim Dow, Executive Director of the Blue Hill Heritage Trust, will lead a walk through the Kingdom Woods Conservation Area – land strategically pieced together by BHHT over the last 6 years. Jim will outline the natural and conservation history of this 700-acre preserve to illustrate why and how we do what we do. Meet at the KWCA parking lot on the Kingdom Road in Blue Hill.

Saturday, August 14th, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.,
Plants at the Carter Nature Preserve
Co-sponsored by Downeast Audubon, this will be led by botanist and plant ecologist Sally Rooney. The Carter Nature Preserve is owned by BHHT and stewarded by the Friends of Morgan Bay. Meet at the trailhead, near the Cross Road Bridge, Surry. Rain date: August 15. Call Downeast Audubon to register at 664-4400.

Saturday, August 21st, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.,
Louise Bourne's Drawing Workshop at Blue Hill Mountain.
This workshop is for people of all levels of experience who wish to translate what they see into the language of drawing. Rain Date: August 22. For more information or for reservations contact Louise at 326-4277, lbourne@hypernet.com. Cost: $35.00.

Saturday, September 18th, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Margaret Baldwin’s Drawing Workshop at the Carter Nature Preserve.
Spend a fall morning drawing and discover the joy of looking and truly seeing. Margaret has taught art in the local schools for 20 years. She has exhibited her work in many galleries. Enrollment is limited. Cost: $35.00. Call Margaret at 667-8328 to register.
New Software Allows Greater Mapping Capacity

Thanks to a very generous donation from the ESRI corporation of its ArcView GIS (Geographic Information Systems) computer software program, we have taken a major step forward in our mapping capacity. The gift of this software, with a retail value of $3500, resulted from an application to ESRI's non-profit grants program prepared by staffer Misha Mytar. Both Misha and Erika Rowland, our stewardship coordinator, have GIS training and are putting this new tool to work in various aspects of our work. Thank you, ESRI!

Staff News: Misha!

We are pleased to welcome Misha Mytar to our staff. As our Program Assistant, Misha engages in various aspects of our work with a primary focus on membership services. Misha is a graduate of George Stevens Academy and Yale University. After college, she chose to return home to engage in community work here.

“We are delighted to provide opportunities that allow young people of Misha’s caliber to return home, says Jim Dow, the Trust’s Executive Director. “We are also pleased to help develop the next generation of conservation leaders. We are especially fortunate to have Misha. She brings skill, intelligence,

Executive Director Jim Dow:
Can it happen here?

Recently, during school vacation in April I traveled with my son Noah to Philadelphia to watch my daughter and other members of the George Stevens Academy track team run in the Penn Relays. After a long Maine winter it is always a pleasure to have a change of scene, and Noah and I enjoyed the sights one finds in the metropolitan areas of Boston, New York and Philly. Yet the most striking image from that trip was the change I found in the rural landscape outside of Princeton, New Jersey, a place I knew well 30 years ago when I attended college there. Beautiful, sweeping fields were being cut up into small lots for huge houses — “Mansions,” some would call them. I stopped the car at one point to take in the scene — this was land consumption and the transformation of a landscape at its most dramatic.

When I returned home, I told Peter Clapp, one of our Board members, about this experience. He responded by telling me of his recent trip to North Carolina, and how stunned he was by what he saw — houses being built right on the edge of the ocean, as well as on top of the mountains in the western part of the state. As Peter put it, “If people think nobody would ever be foolish enough to put a house right on top of Blue Hill mountain, they ought to see what I saw. Thank goodness for the Blue Hill Heritage Trust.”

Could what Peter and I observed elsewhere happen here? Of course. It is already happening, incrementally, sometimes dramatically. Can we do anything about it? Of course. The work is underway — the Blue Hill Heritage Trust is working hard to protect significant places such as those described elsewhere in this newsletter and, importantly, several local towns are working to revise their local comprehensive plans to help them manage the inevitable change. Whether we can do enough fast enough to maintain the character of this wonderful peninsula is the question. The answer is up to us. It is certainly worth the effort.

Did you know?

Nonprofits such as Blue Hill Heritage Trust are playing an increasingly important role in the state, regional and local economy.

Expenditures by Maine charitable non-profits totaled $4.6 billion in 2000, 12.8% of the Maine Gross State Product.

In Hancock County, non-profit expenditures totaled over $258 million and provided 14% of total private employment.

Thanks to those Business Members who support our work.

Bar Harbor Banking & Trust
Blue Hill Books
Blue Hill Family Chiropractic
Blue Hill Garage

BHHT Board Members
on a recent field trip. Pictured from left, Peter Clapp, John Murphy, Ben Emory, Alison Dibble and Ellie Courtmanche.
A new baby in the family!

Erika Rowland, our Stewardship Coordinator, gave birth to Eleanor Seabrook Cowan in January. Mother and daughter (and husband Karl and brother Sam) are doing fine. After a maternity leave, Erika returned to her part-time position with us in March.

New Preserve Signs

We have created new signs for the properties we own. Look for them.

Spring and summer are busy seasons for our stewardship program. The work includes monitoring the conservation easements we hold as well as undertaking various land management tasks on the lands we own. Our Stewardship Coordinator Erika Rowland, in the photo above, checks a boundary line on one of our properties.

Landmark Volunteers to Return

This summer a team of teenagers from the Landmark Volunteers program will once again assist us with our stewardship work. Landmark Volunteers is a non-profit summer service organization that recruits high school students to assist non-profit organizations around the country with the goal of providing the students “a chance to understand how voluntary service functions as an essential element of the American experience.”

Aerial Monitoring of Easements

In late May, we completed an aerial inspection of the properties on which we hold a conservation easements. It is our legal responsibility to ensure that the terms of each of those easements are upheld. We accomplish that through a monitoring program that includes regular communications with landowners, visits to the land and biennial aerial inspections. This year staffs Erika Rowland and Misha Mytar flew with Pat Andrews, a pilot who donated his services through Lighthawk, a charitable non-profit organization that arranges non-commercial flights for conservation purposes. We are very grateful to Pat and LightHawk for their help.
More Conservation Land on the Mountain

The Trust has acquired an additional 21 acres of land near the summit of Blue Hill Mountain. This land is located on the northern side of the mountain and forms part of the view of the mountain as seen from both the Ellsworth Road (Route 172) and Route 15 in North Blue Hill.

This new parcel abuts the 79-acre parcel left to the Trust by Louise Frederick in 1998 that includes the popular Osgood Trail. It also abuts the 175 acre parcel bequeathed to the Town of Blue Hill “for conservation purposes” by Ruth Hayes in 1977, which hosts the walking trail with the stone staircase that was constructed with the help of the Trust last summer. Together these 275 acres of conservation land help protect the scenic, recreational, ecological and spiritual values of the peninsula’s defining landmark.

We are grateful to Tobey and Jon Woodward, the former owners who presented us the opportunity to purchase this land. We are also grateful to Louise Frederick who made this purchase possible posthumously: funds from her bequest to the Trust covered the purchase price. As long-time Trust Board member Peter Clapp put it, “This would make Louise happy.”

Map showing newly acquired tract purchased by BHHT.

Louise Frederick and Ruth Hayes used their wills to make significant conservation contributions to the place they loved. Bequests and other types of planned gifts make a major contribution to our work that may not be possible during one’s life. Please contact us for more information about planned gifts.

Mountain Stewardship: Towers Present Complex Issues

The land old structure. In late May, after receiving a
Yes! I would like to help conserve the ecology and beauty of the peninsula landscape by enrolling as a member.

Conservator $1000 and up
Benefactor $500 - $999
Sustaining $100 - $499
Contributing $50 - $99
Family $35
Individual $25

☐ Please find enclosed my/our tax-deductible gift of $. 
☐ Please contact me about bequests and other giving opportunities.

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City/State/Zip: ______________________
Phone: ____________________________
e-mail: ____________________________

Please make your check or money order payable and mail to:
BLUE HILL HERITAGE TRUST
P. O. Box 222
Blue Hill, ME 04614

The land we own on the summit of Blue Hill Mountain was a gift from the late Louise Frederick, whose family had owned the land for generations. Along with the land came two leases, one held by the state for a fire tower, the other by a private local company for a communications tower. Both present stewardship challenges, requiring us to balance the conservation of this land with the public benefits associated with the use of these two pre-existing structures.

Fire Tower: Sentiment vs. Safety

The fire tower on Blue Hill Mountain has been the subject of much discussion during the last year. Its owner, the State of Maine Forest Service, no longer has any use for it (it was last used for forest fire detection about 15 years ago) and wishes to remove it. The Trust, as the owner of the land on which the tower rests, has had increasing concerns about the safety risks associated with its use by hikers. It was not designed for recreational use, it has had no maintenance attention for years, and no one is managing its day-to-day use.

The Selectmen of the Town of Blue Hill have been considering for many months whether to accept ownership because of local residents’ attachment to the 50+ year report that the safety wire on the stairs had rusted through, the Trust’s Board of Directors felt it had no choice but to take a firm position. On the basis of the safety risks alone, it voted unanimously to request the state to remove the tower. This action does not preclude the Town from accepting ownership of the tower, and the risks, responsibilities and costs associated with ownership.

Communications Tower: A Cost of Staying in Touch?

The communications tower, owned by a local company, is used by two cellular phone companies, WERU (the local community radio station), the ambulance service, the University of Maine and others. There is increasing pressure to add more communication equipment on this lease site, especially as cellular phone usage increases locally.

Given the mountain’s prominence in our landscape it has unique value for electronic communications that serve our community. For that same reason, it of course also has unique scenic, recreational and spiritual values. Many people have strong feelings about this tower, some see it as critical part of our community infrastructure, others would like to see it removed. Our Board of Directors will be confronted with the challenge of balancing these values in lease renewal negotiations that will begin early next year. The Board will be seeking comment from the community as part of this process. We urge you to send us your thoughts on this issue.