

Community-based land conservation since 1985

BLUE HILL ■ BROOKLIN
BROOKSVILLE ■ CASTINE
PENOBSCOT ■ SEDGWICK ■ SURRY

Fall/Winter 2014

BLUE HILL HERITAGE TRUST
P. O. Box 222, Blue Hill, ME 04614

Blue Hill Heritage Trust

Gifts of Conservation on the Bagaduce

*Above: The newly conserved river frontage. Below: The view across the cove to our Bluff Head property.
Left: The landowners, their attorney, our staff and Board members at the conservation easement closing.*



Gifts of conservation easements on two adjacent riverfront properties in Sedgwick will help conserve a wildlife-rich cove along the mainstem of the Bagaduce River. Donated by Keith and Zoe Tenney and Peter and Judy Robbins, these easements complement our earlier acquisition of the Bluff Head property which forms the other shore of the cove.

Though relatively small in size, totaling five and a half acres, the two newly protected parcels have over 1100 feet of river frontage that includes high value wetlands. The easements will ensure that



any future development on the parcels will be set back from the shore a sufficient distance so that the land will continue to provide valuable habitat for the waterfowl, wading birds, otters and other wildlife.

The value of this section of the Baga-

duce is well-known to the donors of these conservation easements, who have lived on this land for decades and delighted in the wildlife sightings. When we approached them about helping us protect the cove, they offered their enthusiastic support. We are very grateful for their generous act of conservation.

These conservation easements are the final projects in our multi-year, multi-project Bagaduce River Watershed Project, a collaboration with Maine Coast Heritage Trust funded in part by a matching grant from the federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) program.

▶ **See Partnership Brings Success**
story on page 2



Bagaduce Watershed Project Completed

What began as an interesting partnership idea in 2010, took shape in 2011 as a lengthy proposal to the highly competitive federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) program, took flight as a one million dollar grant award in 2012, and led to a successful two year conservation collaboration that included eighteen land projects throughout the Bagaduce River Watershed, has now reached the finish line, or at least a rest stop.

A place of statewide significance

We have long regarded the Bagaduce River as one of our service area's most valuable natural assets. We learned that many others shared that view. People who used the river, people who lived in the watershed, wildlife biologists, photographers, birders, hunters and representatives from other non-profit organizations and governmental agencies all eagerly joined the partnership effort and helped craft the NAWCA grant proposal. This collective judgment was confirmed by the grant award, one of only 23 in 2012 throughout the entire United States.

The eighteen properties that were included in this project included five at the north end of Wights Pond (above), Battle Island (insert) and Bluff Head (to right).

Places for wildlife to live and people to explore

This summer the last of the land projects in the NAWCA proposal were completed, the remaining grant dollars spent, and the final required match secured. All of the projects protected important places for waterfowl, wading birds and other wildlife in the Bagaduce watershed, both on the main stem of the river as well as on streams, ponds and wetlands that are critical parts of the watershed. Many of these lands will be places for people too, new places where we can share some of the natural wonder of our Peninsula.



LESLIE CLAPP PHOTO



18 projects and 1245 acres

The eighteen land conservation transactions that comprised the overall project included conservation easements on ten

parcels of privately owned land and the full ownership of eight parcels, fifteen of which were granted to our Trust for future stewardship with the remainder granted to Maine Coast Heritage Trust. They total over 1,245 acres, including both wetlands and associated upland areas, about 9,000 feet of frontage on the river itself, 7,000 feet of pond frontage and nearly 20,000 feet of stream frontage.

Special thanks

We are grateful to the landowners who donated land or conservation easements that provided critical matching value, as well as to those landowners who made their land available to us for purchase. We also offer a special thanks to Maine Coast Heritage Trust, our major partner in this undertaking and formal grantee of the NAWCA award, whose Senior Project Manager Ciona Ulbrich not only worked with us on the various land projects, but also assumed primary responsibility for drafting the grant proposal and managing the detailed reporting required by the granting agency.

Stewardship: A Growing Responsibility

With each new parcel of land or conservation easement comes a new and perpetual responsibility for the long-term care of that property. We take these stewardship responsibilities seriously, and devote a great deal of time and expense to stewardship each year. Your annual unrestricted membership gifts help support this work. We also must raise additional money to add to our professionally managed Stewardship Fund for each

new land project so that distributions from this Fund can help cover these costs well into the future. We are very grateful to those members who help us meet this critical need.

As we enter a new organization-wide strategic planning process, the question of how best to ensure that these conservation lands that we all enjoy will be properly cared for in perpetuity will be a topic of much discussion.

The Numbers

As of October 31, 2014

81 Conservation Easements

3,564 Acres – Easement Lands

3,073 Acres – Owned
Conservation Land

25 Miles of Trails

17 Farmland Forever Parcels

Trail work aplenty!

The November 2nd storm wreaked havoc on our trails, but the work of clearing away the many fallen trees began right away. Here Associate Director George Fields and volunteer Ken Burgess work to restore the trail from Blue Hill village to the Mountain.



Executive Director's Column

So What about Property Taxes?

In Maine, as in other states, property tax exemption for non-profit charitable organizations has been a long-time and well-accepted state policy. However, land trusts, as a relatively new type of non-profit charity, are often singled out as “taking land off the tax rolls,” especially when towns are feeling the squeeze from other state policies. Currently in Maine the state squeeze is on, causing the issue to surface again in the state legislature and in a local newspaper article. The article included my lengthy response, which is available at bluehillheritagetrust.org/press.

The short answer is this: Land trusts, including Blue Hill Heritage Trust, are tax exempt under Maine law, as recently confirmed by Maine’s highest court, because of the public

benefits that they provide that otherwise might be provided by government.

Though tax-exempt, we choose to pay property taxes

Our lands are not off the tax rolls. We choose to pay taxes as a matter of organizational policy, in recognition of services, particularly fire protection and roads, provided by the towns in which we own land. We do so pursuant to Maine’s Open Space tax classification law.

— Jim Dow



In Celebration of Red Oaks

Our Board Vice-President and Stewardship Committee Chair Pam Johnson writes, “The red oak trees that dominate portions of our Kingdom Woods Conservation Area should inspire everyone to plant and nurture this tree species.” Pam explains why on our website, www.bluehillheritagetrust.org

More Land Conservation on Blue Hill Mountain

Thanks to a landowner interested in protecting wildlife habitat, an eighteen acre parcel on the north side of Blue Hill Mountain is now conservation land. The former owner, Tobey Woodward, a Sedgwick resident and knowledgeable woodsman, offered our Trust the opportunity to acquire this wooded parcel because he thought that we were the

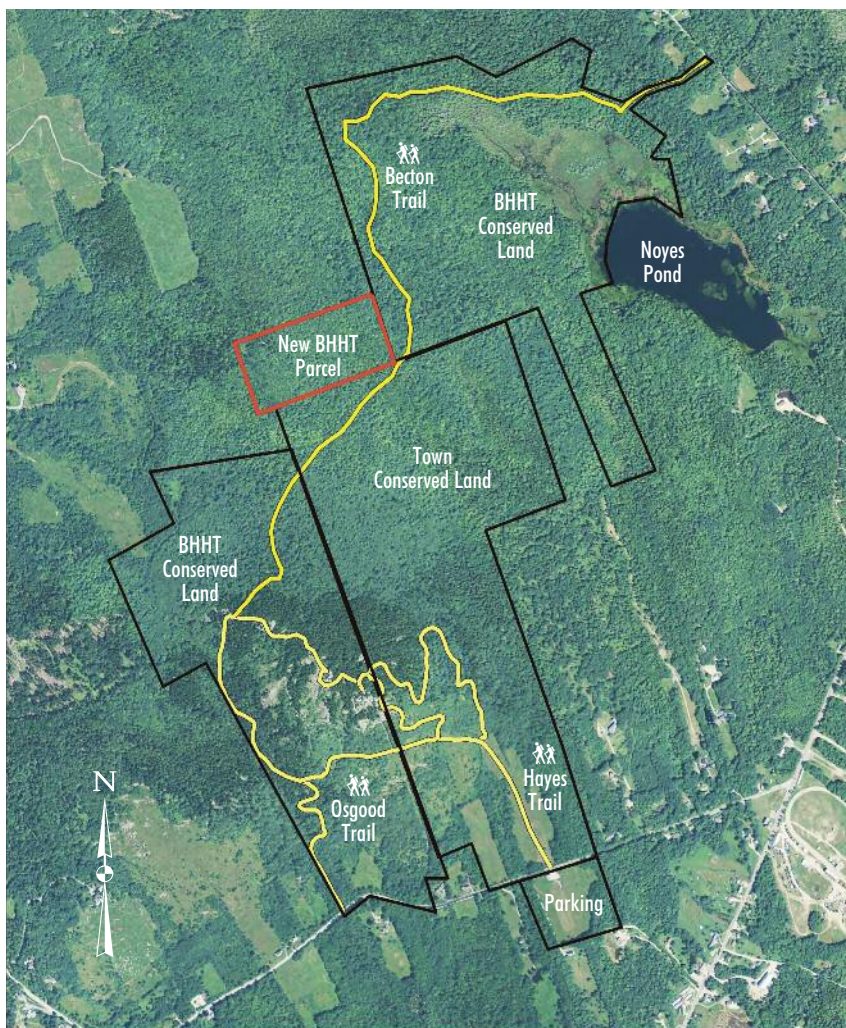
We were chosen to be the future caretakers of land enjoyed by one family for three generations.

right future owners of it. Three generations of his family had used it as a wood lot and as a place to hunt, so the future ownership was important to him. We

were pleased to be able to arrange a purchase that met his needs as well as ours.

This parcel abuts other Trust property and is located in one of our priority conservation focus areas. By acquiring it we have expanded the undeveloped area for wildlife habitat on the Mountain and protected the hiking experience on our Becton Trail, which runs up the north side of the Mountain in close proximity to the new property.

This land came to us with a small hunting camp, nicely concealed in the woods. We are considering what to do with it. An outpost for a summer nature camp? Share your ideas with us!



President's Column

Beyond a Moment in Time

I was walking along a woods road the other day in the sparkling autumn sun and noticed a leaf suspended two feet above the road. It was a wonder to behold. Just there in midair—stopped on its journey to the earth—frozen in time and place. I imagined a spider had helped the leaf be where it was somehow but I didn't need to know. I just loved how the leaf was caught there for "a moment in time" in the sun.

We are all here for a "moment in time." The landscape of the Peninsula preceded us and will reach beyond us. Our Trust, too, is part of this continuum of nature through the land conservation that you make possible.

The Stewards Circle

We have established The Stewards Circle to acknowledge those who recognize the importance of our role in this continuum by including our Trust in their estate plans. Bequests and other planned gifts from the members of this group of far-sighted donors will support the long-term care of the places that we have conserved for future generations.

Recently, the Trust received a sizable bequest from one of our earliest members. It was inspirational. Please consider reaching beyond this "moment in time" by planning an inspirational gift of your own. Please join me as a member of The Stewards Circle.

Mary Barnes, President

ANNUAL MEETING 2014



Maynard Forbes

was honored at our 2014 annual membership meeting, held this year in Castine, for his

contributions to The Conservation Trust of Brooksville, Castine and Penobscot (TCT) and to the successful merger of TCT with our Trust. The program celebrated the land projects completed by TCT over its 35 year history.

Thanks to all who attended. It was once again an enjoyable evening. If you missed the meeting this year, please join us in 2015.

People



Children and parents explore the intertidal zone along the Bagaduce River at our Snow Cove Natural Area during a Walk & Talk led by science teacher, naturalist and Trust member Sarah O'Malley.



Blueberries for us all

People of all ages enjoyed free blueberry picking and a spectacular view on our Cooper Farm property on Caterpillar Hill.



Passport to the Trails

These two young hikers found all the passport letterboxes on our trails and stopped by our office for their prizes.



A Note from Our Membership Coordinator

This summer and fall were packed full of programs and events for people of all ages! Our community outreach so far this year totals 35 events and well over 1,000 participants.

Our series of nature-based programs are supported by our membership—thank you!—and they are also a wonderful way to attract new members to the Trust. We signed up 30 new members at our events this year.

Although we offer these excellent educational and recreational programs for free, they do take much time and resources to plan, publicize, and present. Your membership gifts and a great team of volunteers make these programs possible.

*Eileen Mielenhausen,
Membership Coordinator*

Want to help spread the word?

- Share this newsletter with a friend.
- Take a neighbor out for a walk on our trails.
- Invite co-workers to one of our programs.
- Tell a business owner that we have a business membership program.
- Talk to your family about making a legacy gift through our Planned Giving program.

5 Senses to Explore

A scavenger hunt for natural treasures at our Snow's Cove Preserve in Sedgwick was one of our children's programs this year. The leader, Amy Bebell, a teacher at the Brooklin School, encouraged the young participants to use all five senses in exploring the natural world. These children are doing just that.



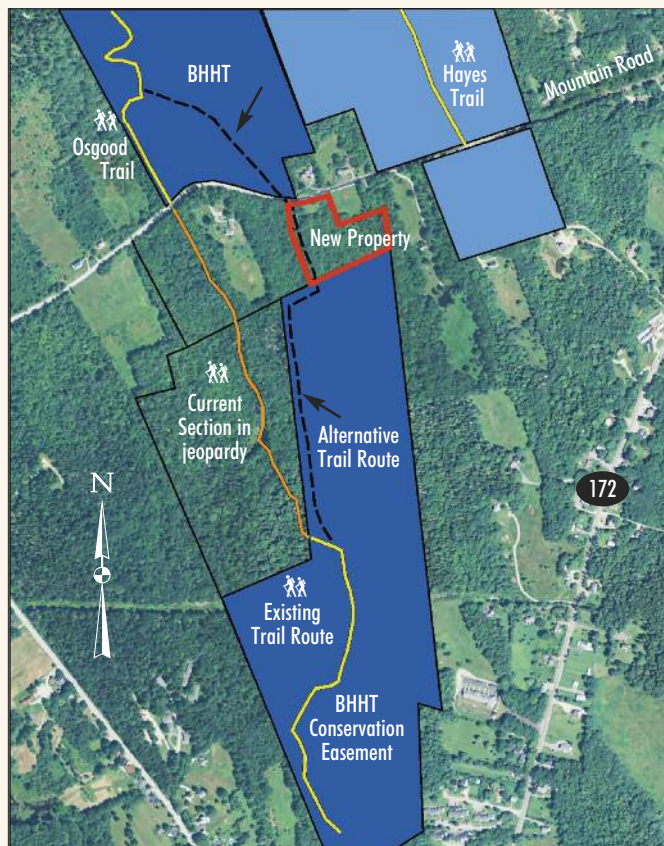
Trails

Did you hike the Mountain this fall amidst the autumn glory?

Protecting the Walk from the Village

One of our most popular trails is a woods walk from the Blue Hill Post Office to the Mountain Road, where it connects with the Osgood Trail to the summit of the Mountain. Local residents and visitors use it many times each day. Some begin their day with a quiet

leisurely walk along the path. Others run it. Some even use it for a long hike up and over the Mountain to the Turkey Farm Road and back—an eight mile walk. The long-term protection of this community asset and the experience it offers is a priority for us.



Part of the trail route is now permanently protected, thanks to a 2004 conservation easement gift from Bob and Jean Meyer. Part is not, and, as a result of a change in land ownership, is now in jeopardy.

To ensure that a walking route from the village to the Mountain endures into the future, we have purchased a small parcel of land that will provide an alternative route, if that becomes necessary. Since we will only need a small section of the five acre parcel for the trail, we expect to re-sell the remainder to repay the loan that made this purchase possible.



Oh, what a fungus!

Lions Mane, also known as Bears Head (*Hericum coralloides*), is one of the wonders found along our Patten Stream Trail.

Blue Hill Heritage Trust

Mission Statement

The mission of the Blue Hill Heritage Trust is 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 increase public understanding of the importance of land and water conservation.

Board of Directors

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We are pleased to report that 100% of our current Board of Directors support our work with their financial donations, along with contributing many hours of time on our volunteer board and committees.

Staff

James W. Dow, *Executive Director*
 George Fields, *Associate Director*
 Eileen Mielenhausen,
Membership Coordinator

