

## Caterpillar Hill is a local treasure

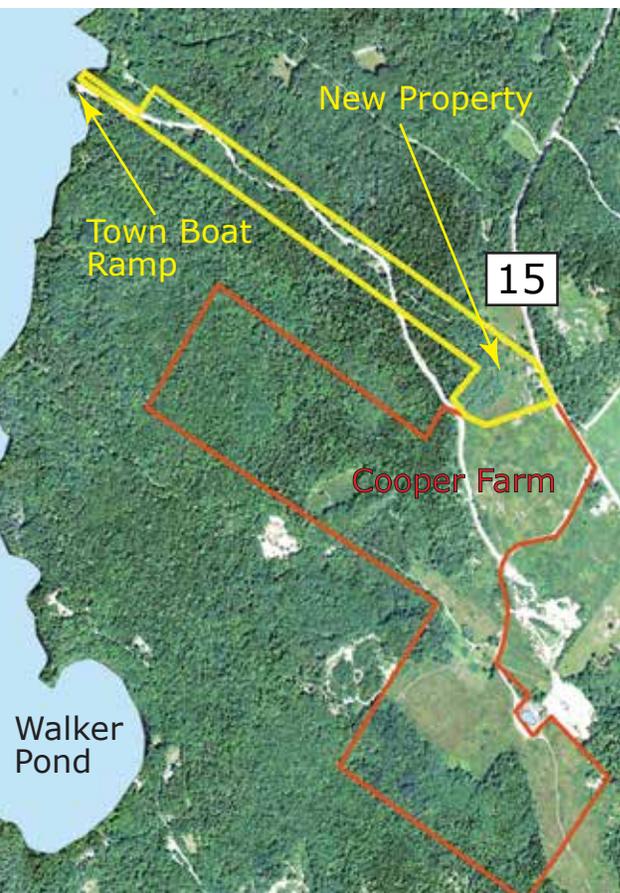
### Your View, Your Place, Your Community

On July 3, Blue Hill Heritage Trust signed a purchase option to acquire 32 additional acres on Caterpillar Hill, adjacent to our Cooper Farm. Formerly owned by Basil Ladd, the property was purchased, at the end of June, by Conservation Limited Development, LLC. Conservation Limited Development is associated with Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and will hold the land while we raise money, both for purchase and for a fund to cover site-work and ongoing stewardship. We have until September, 2018, to raise the \$605,000 needed. Our goal is to increase access to the view, and create a public space for picnicking and other recreation.

BHHT will be the ultimate owner of the property, but like the original Cooper Farm project, this is a joint fundraising effort. We will partner with Island Heritage Trust, as well as MCHT, to raise money, as this iconic view is important to all our missions. We are also excited at the opportunity to work with the town of Sedgwick in protecting the view on Caterpillar Hill, which the community identified as a priority in its most-recent comprehensive plan.

In addition to protecting the scenic views from the roadside, acquisition of this land offers an opportunity to work with the town on the part of the property where the town roadway to Walker Pond runs. With town support, we will soon apply for a Land for Maine's Future grant to cover part of the acquisition cost, as well as starting private fundraising.

This project has been a long-term priority for the Trust, and we are excited to finally have this opportunity. So stay tuned!





And the view may soon be getting better . . .

## BHHT Staff

Hans M. Carlson, Executive Director  
George Fields, Associate Director  
Chrissy Allen, Development Director  
Laura Blandford, Membership Coordinator



[www.bluehillheritagetrust.org](http://www.bluehillheritagetrust.org)

## Interns

Our summer interns, Devon Funt (center) and Tyler Brenton (right), are working hard. Here they are cutting bridge timbers with George, for the new trail near John B. Mountain. After the summer, Devon will be finishing her degree at Unity College, and Tyler will begin his at the Maine Maritime Academy, in Castine.



## Board of Directors

Norman Alt, President  
Terry Moulton, Vice President  
Johanna Barrett, Treasurer (New in 2017)  
Phyllis Taylor, Secretary  
Mary Barnes  
Peter Clapp  
Doug Cowan (New in 2017)  
Samantha Haskell  
Sarah Jaffray King (New in 2017)  
Sarah O'Malley  
Brooke Parish  
Hannah Webber (New in 2017)

Find out more at our 32nd Annual Meeting  
Meet our newest board members  
August 23rd, 2017

## Wooden Boat School

29 Naskeag Point Rd, Brooklin  
Meeting at 5 pm, free & open to all  
BBQ at 7 pm, \$35 per person  
Please RSVP for BBQ by August 18

(207) 374-5118/info@bluehillheritagetrust.org





COMMUNITY BASED LAND CONSERVATION SINCE 1985

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Conservation is, at heart, an act of imagination – an act of hope. Conservationists envision what they would like to see, for both the natural and human communities of our region, and work to make that vision a reality. And while we act for ourselves, we act more for those who come after us. This is the essence of good stewardship.

Sometimes this means working to preserve something cherished – an iconic view, a traditional community resource – but it can also mean restoration, and working with the land to regain something vital. This is certainly the case with our newest, and largest property – the 2100-acre Surry Forest – which will be dedicated to Pam Johnson, one of BHHT’s greatest stewards.

Unfragmented by public roads and free from residential or commercial development, Surry Forest has been locally known for generations – people have walked, hunted, and skied there over many years. The Trust has also long recognized that its size, undeveloped character, and wetland features make it ecologically important. A large portion of the forest was identified, in a 2014 study, as being within one of several vital wildlife corridors running north-south along the entire peninsula. Thus, when the property first came up for sale, also in 2014, we considered buying it, though the purchase price at the time was beyond our organizational means.

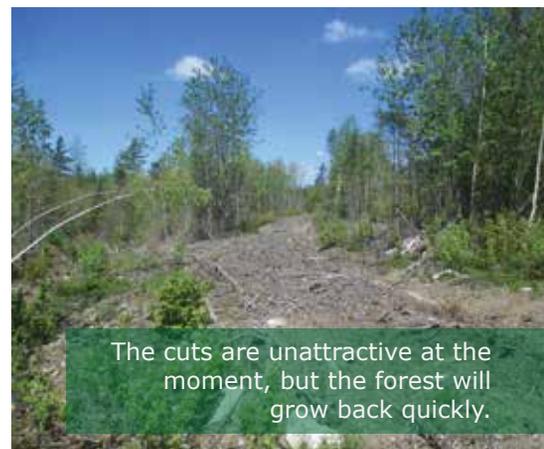
The forest had been cut several times over the last forty years, but the timber was again at a point where a large-scale commercial pulp harvest made economic sense. We could not compete, and a timber company bought the land, logged it between 2014 and 2016, and then again put it up for sale. This time, however, at a price within our reach, and thanks to The Conservation Fund, we were able to finalize ownership in March of 2017. TCF bought and held the property while we raised the private and public money needed for purchase and long-term care.

The aftermath of the logging operation is unattractive, and this is what strikes people most powerfully at present. And things are, in fact, ecologically impoverished for the moment on much of the property. The good news is that forests regrow in this region, and they do so with surprising speed and vigor. None of us will live to see a fully mature forest, but it will not take long for things

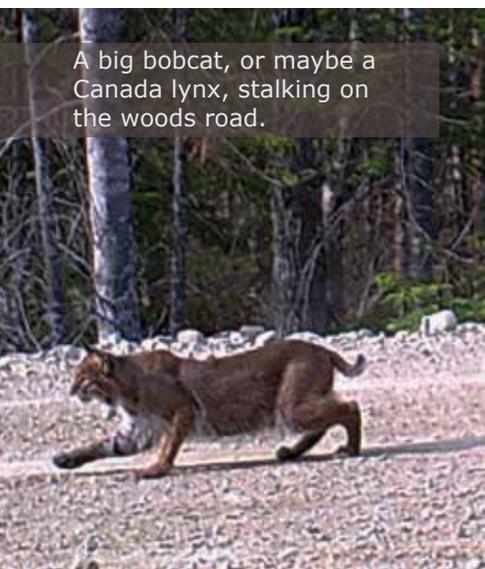
to change for the better, and people in the future *will* enjoy a biologically complex and age-diverse woodland. This is our long-term goal for the property. And here is where imagination is so important.

It’s fair to say that Surry Forest exists as much as an idea right now as an actual woodland, so what will be the nature of the future forest, and what can we do as conservationists to enhance its complexity and diversity? These are the stewardship questions at hand. We can act to make up for past excesses, and can play an active role in restoration, and perhaps learn something in the process. This for us is truly exciting and hopeful.

Beyond its benefit to wildlife and its recreational value, given time and an approach toward forestry driven by wider ecological needs and not the bottom line, Surry Forest could become a model, unlike any found nearby. The forest has the potential to be a sustainable source of high-quality wood, but our real hope is that it will also be an educational resource for the entire region, and that ours and future generations will get the chance to better know the place where we live – a place of forests and of people – by watching and helping this woodland regrow.



The cuts are unattractive at the moment, but the forest will grow back quickly.



A big bobcat, or maybe a Canada lynx, stalking on the woods road.



Surry Forest is part of an important wildlife corridor on the peninsula.

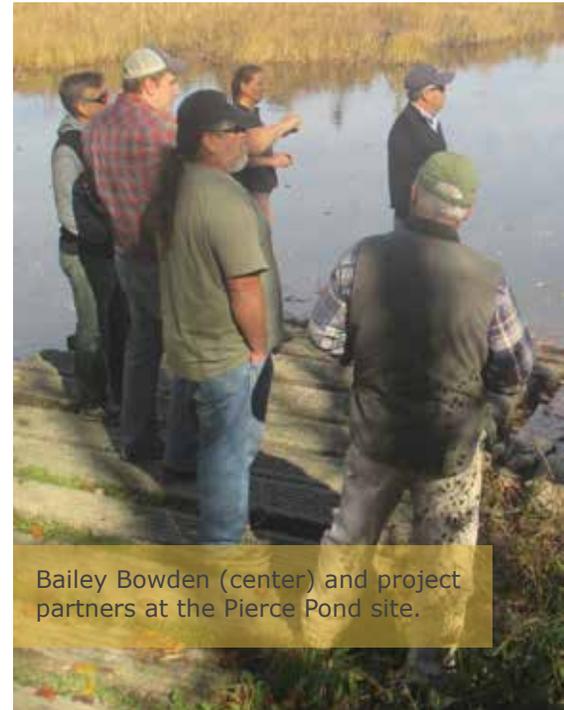
# Meet a Citizen Scientist and Local Conservationist

When Bailey Bowden was a boy, he often took his wagon down to the corner gas station, filled a gas can, and then went home to wait for his father to return from work. That gas can had to be ready because he didn't want any excuses or delays in going on the water. Fish and fishing were his passion as a boy, and decades later, when the Department of Marine Resources closed local alewife fisheries, after a study found decreasing populations, he brought that same passion to studying fish and restoring fish habitat.

The problem, according to Bailey, whose family has fished Northern Bay for generations, was that there *were* fish – a lot of fish – but also a shortage of good data, and a lack of official knowledge about what he and others were doing to save fish. Alewives are a major food-chain component for marine mammals, wading birds and larger fish in the bay, yet, despite their importance, little data had been collected, or work done on this vital ecology.

Two fisheries which concerned him most were Pierce and Wight ponds, both in Penobscot, and both crucial habitat for anadromous fish, like alewives. Bailey has been fishing both ponds most of his life, so he was familiar with the dams, ineffective fish ladders, changing water levels, and other obstructions which hurt fish there. He also knew that he and the Penobscot Alewife Committee had been netting fish up and over these obstructions, and that fish still managed to find their way to their spawning grounds. While the population was challenged, he knew it could still be viable.

So he began by collecting data, and in that moment he went from lifelong fisherman to fisheries researcher and activist. He also started something much larger, for his data, including monitoring zooplankton levels in the ponds and estuaries, is helping to determine how well nourished fish are in one environment versus another. This influences their growth rate and potentially their reproductivity, and he and others are now collecting DNA samples for calculating the age of the fish returning to spawn each year. This is answering related population questions. Do juvenile alewives that migrate into an estuary in July grow faster and therefore migrate into the open ocean one year earlier than the alewives that



Bailey Bowden (center) and project partners at the Pierce Pond site.

leave the ponds in October? Would this explain why some fish reproduce at age three and some at age four? If they were born the same year, are they delayed in development due to their environment and their ability to get back to the bay? And, is this delay in reproductive development effecting the fish population?



Millions of juvenile Alewives swim in a thick school, eventually finding their way into Northern Bay Estuary.

Bailey's work started as an effort to convince DMR to reverse its decision, but his and others' work has clearly grown wider as time has passed. Most importantly, it has led to a large and important restoration project to return the historic and natural streamflow leading out of Pierce and Wight Ponds. In collaboration, and using this research, the town of Penobscot, the Penobscot Alewife Committee, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and NOAA have raised the funds needed to remove existing dams and replace them with fishways, like the one recently completed on Patten Stream in Surry.

What are currently ineffective fishways, riddled with obstructions, will become permanent fish ladders with rock weir pools that will allow for easier migration of these anadromous fish.

These projects have meant new partnerships for community based alewife committees, and Bailey credits Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Blue Hill Heritage Trust for being key drivers on fishway improvement. He also points to the Downeast Salmon Federation, particularly their important work in public outreach and education, as well as Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries for data gathering and policy work.

We would say that it's the alewife committees, working and building grassroots support, that have made all of this happen. It is proof that conservation begins with vision, and is accomplished through study and hard work.

Thanks to the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, Blue Hill Heritage Trust will build an educational site at the Pierce Pond Fishway, with a walking path, viewing areas, and interpretive signage. Here, kids will get close to fish and interact with the people in their communities working to protect this vital resource.

For Bailey, kids are central to all his work. “The newest generation, they’ve lost their connection with these anadromous fish runs,” he says, though he recalls when some 4th graders visited from the Bay School. Brett Ciccotelli, from the Downeast Salmon Federation was there, and at first the kids were standoffish. Soon, however, all were handling fish, and fish parts, and calling it the best fieldtrip ever. To Bailey this is the hope, for “they are the future stewards.”



Netting Alewives with Elementary Students.

## The Legacy of a Lifetime — Pamela Johnson, 1949-2016

Late last year, we lost our long-time Board member and dear friend, Pam Johnson, to ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). Pam was an artist, writer, illustrator and author of children’s books, horticulturist, garden designer, doll-maker, sheep farmer and lover of animals and the natural world. She was also an ardent conservationist who believed deeply in the mission of Blue Hill Heritage Trust.

Pam served our Trust for more than twenty years in many different ways – as a member and officer of our Board of Directors, including a term as President, as Chair of our Stewardship Committee, as a volunteer ready to assist with whatever needed to be done to move us forward, and as a vigorous advocate for the protection of our Peninsula’s precious wildlife habitat. She was smart, knowledgeable, perceptive, committed and kind, with a sharp wit and a generous spirit – and always self-effacing. Her gifts of time and talent were enormous.

It is fitting that the new Surry Forest property will be dedicated to Pam. When the opportunity to acquire this land first arose in 2014, she immediately saw its value to wildlife and to our human community as an unusually large conservation property. Even when that opportunity passed unrealized, her interest in the land didn’t wane. When the property was offered for sale again in 2016, Pam pushed us to take the risk of such an ambitious acquisition project, even as her own health was failing.

And her involvement in protecting this land did not stop, even as her illness progressed. A couple of her close friends wished to do something significant in her honor, and with her guidance made a major gift toward the purchase of this land, giving us confidence that we would be successful in raising the necessary funds. And when she succumbed to her illness in November, we learned that even death would not end her stewardship of this project and our Trust.

Nearly the entire value of Pam’s estate will benefit the Blue Hill Heritage Trust. Her will directs that half of this bequest be applied to the purchase and stewardship of the Surry Forest. Reflecting her clear understanding of perpetual land stewardship obligations, Pam directed that the other half be added to the Trust’s Stewardship Fund, to help cover the costs of the long-term care of all our Trust’s conservation properties. Although she was only able to make modest financial gifts during her lifetime, Pam’s will be the single largest gift the Trust has ever received.

Although Pam often seemed to prefer the company of her plants, animals, and books to other people, one could have had no better friend or colleague. We miss her. She left us too soon. Yet because of her unusual vision, hope, and generosity, her legacy will endure.



Pam Johnson was Trust President, from 2005-2007, and a tireless board member for over twenty years.

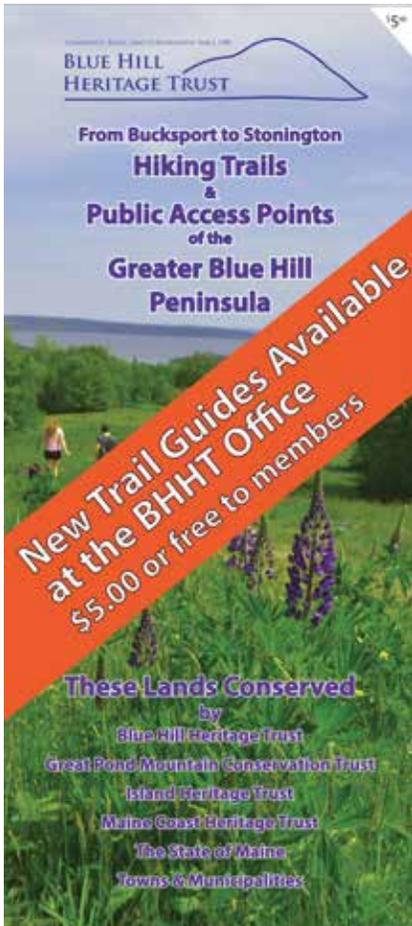
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# 2017 Summer News



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