

WFAs Training for Trail Safety



Wilderness First Aid (WFA) relies on many of the same principles as traditional first aid but is designed to be administered in more remote settings, like BHHT trails. Recently BHHT staff joined other outdoor professionals and enthusiasts for a two-day WFA training course taught by Gerry Brache, Senior instructor at the SOLO Wilderness Medicine and Rescue School. We learned basic steps in responding to medical situations when doctors and hospitals are not immediately accessible. This training will help us be prepared and stay safe when working on our properties and leading outdoor events.

The most important lesson that we learned from the WFA course was that planning, preparation and mindfulness are the best ways to prevent or alleviate emergencies in the outdoors. Make a plan of where you will be traveling, tell someone where you are going and when you should be back, check the weather and bring appropriate supplies, bring all necessary medications and enough food and water, and be mindful of your level of ability. Most accidents could be avoided or mitigated by following these simple steps.

Here at BHHT we want everyone to stay safe and healthy while you get outside to enjoy the resources that we all work so hard to protect.



Trail Stewards Are Essential

Blue Hill Heritage Trust has almost 30 miles of trails across the peninsula, all of which have to be maintained regularly. This is a tremendous amount of work, and whether you’ve met them or not, you should know that your favorite BHHT trail has a steward looking after it all year long. These volunteers walk the trails regularly, making sure they are clear and safe, and they maintain the information and sign-in sheets at the kiosks. When there’s a bigger problem requiring machines or more muscle, they call in our stewardship staff, but for the most part they maintain everything you enjoy when you hike one of our trails.

It’s not too much to say that we could not do the upkeep on our network of recreational trails without these dedicated volunteers.

So if you meet a steward on your favorite trail, say Thanks!



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Growing Food & Community

Chrissy Allen, Development Director



Last spring, we made the decision to eliminate a substantial portion of our back lawn and install a community garden. We did this to reduce our carbon footprint by mowing less, but also to help grow food for two local organizations working hard to combat food insecurity on the peninsula. Both the Tree of Life Food Pantry and Healthy Peninsula’s Magic Food Bus are leading in addressing this issue and our garden was an experiment in putting our land to use in addressing a community need.

Thanks to grant funding from the Onion Foundation and the Maine Farmland Trust, each Wednesday this summer Luke Allen could be found out behind our office cutting and washing heads of lettuce, banding bunches of radishes, and bagging up various peppers and snow peas.

While this may not seem like typical work for a land trust, there is a growing trend among land trusts nationally to focus on this kind of community need in addition to protecting land. This project is just one of the many ways that BHHT is trying to listen to and frame its work around the needs of the community. While protecting land is at the core of what we do, we have a real obligation and happy opportunity to use that land as a resource to have a positive impact on the lives of our human and natural communities.

Trina Parson – A Force for Good

This summer the peninsula said goodbye to Trina Parson, a woman who was in every sense a force for good. Trina moved to the Blue Hill Peninsula in the late 1980s and began her work with several area educational, health, and environmental nonprofits. Whether you are sending your child to George Stevens Academy, taking a loved one to receive care at the Northern Light Cancer Care center in Brewer, or enjoying a hike on a beautiful BHHT trail, Trina’s mark is there. The Trust was very fortunate to have Trina serve on our board of directors, and to have her as an ardent cheerleader and advocate for our work after she stepped down.

Former board President John Merrifield remembers Trina as, “bright, always fully informed and engaged. As a board member, her strength was ‘organizational development’ during the period we were shifting from a volunteer organization to a professionally run one. Her knowledge of the community (land values, interactions with the schools and the hospital) were of great value to BHHT in the early years. After she left the Board, she was always a supporter, major donor and advocate for land conservation. She was just a classy woman with very wide-ranging interests.”

On behalf of our whole community, thank you Trina.



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It's been a busy and productive year for Blue Hill Heritage Trust, and I want to thank everyone who supported us, volunteered for us, attended programs, or simply enjoyed our protected land. Your engagement with our mission and work is vital to us in so many ways, and we are grateful for all the appreciative feedback we get from you.

The big land news this year was the finalization of our protection of Meadowbrook Forest and the adjacent land donated to us by the Lawrence Family Foundation. In addition, last month, we bought 78 acres from the City of Ellsworth, this is land adjacent to the northern edge of Meadowbrook. This means that all together there are over 2200 acres of prime wetland habitat, wildlife corridor, and open space north of Surry center for everyone on the peninsula to enjoy. There is now a parking lot at the entrance off Rte. 1, and signage to guide you on the roads, so please go and explore this beautiful property. In this newsletter, you will read a bit about what's happening in Surry Forest, and you will hear more about this sister forest in years to come.

Within you will also read about a few of the programs we worked on in your communities in 2019. These, and all the others, were aimed at engaging you and your communities with the land, giving you a sense not only of the beauty of this place, but also a sense of the caring needed to keep these lands and people on the peninsula healthy and vibrant into the future. Long-lasting conservation relies on good stewards working to protect and heal the land, teach the next generation the necessity of this kind of care, and engaging with community partners to amplify all our work.

Fulfilling this stewardship commitment for the Trust is all about people. All of you who help support us are part of this, and so too are the people working here in this office. And this is something I don't get to share with you nearly enough. Every day, I get to come to work with dedicated, energetic, and highly educated people who put their heart and soul into conservation. This includes not only the full-time staff, but also the summer interns and high-school volunteers who are with us each summer, all of whom care deeply about the land and about the people in our communities.

These are professionals working in your communities, but they are also reaching out to the wider world of conservation and making their mark there too. Whether it's at the national Land Trust Alliance's Rally, here in the US, or the Forest School Association in England, BHHT staff and board were there in 2019, teaching workshops and presenting about conservation here on the peninsula. Our interns too took what they learned here out into their professional lives and they too will make a difference. This is how good stewardship gets passed on and how the work builds.

The conservation happening on the peninsula is part of something bigger, and at least in some ways BHHT is leading the way. Sometimes the coast of Maine can seem a long way from the center of action, but the fact is that what we are all doing here matters at a larger scale. This is what you are supporting when you join us in that work, the effort to make the world better one small place at a time.



(Left to Right) George Fields, Max Hillgraf, Morgan Zenter, Landere Naisbitt, Beth Dickens, Soren Denlinger, Sandy Walczyk, Hans Carlson, and Chrissy Allen.

In only four short years, Surry Forest has shown its resilience. The forest was heavily harvested in 2014 and 2015, just before purchase by Blue Hill Heritage Trust. Most of the mature wood was removed from the property leaving the forest raw and open, with large logging trails, bare stumps, and exposed soil.

The forest took a hard hit, but BHHT was committed to protecting the land despite its current condition. Pioneer tree species like poplar and birch have shot up now, growing feet per year and filling the understory with green, shimmering leaves. Thousands of small pine and fir seedlings have erupted from the forest floor beneath blowdowns and slash. The previously bare soils in log yards and trails are now carpeted with golden rod, sweet fern, raspberries, and sarsaparilla.



Surry Forest 2019

the development of mature forest characteristics, and create sustainable value for the local community. Stewardship of this kind is a long strategy, one that several generations of people will experience firsthand, but the end result will be worth the wait. One day, with time and wise management, Surry Forest will contain towering stands of pine and oak, and dark, shady fir groves, but for now I am content to pick blackberries on the sunlit trails and appreciate all that this young forest has to offer.



Surry Forest 2016



It will be decades before Surry Forest regains the mature forest characteristics that it had before the harvest, but it is healing, and providing habitat and beauty for wildlife and humans alike, and there is a lot that we as stewards can do to assist the forest in this process.

I conducted the first inventory of the forest this summer, and the information that we found will set the stage for the work we do to help the forest heal and develop. When applied with thoughtful planning and humility, forest management practices can help to improve cut over properties like Surry Forest. Over time, BHHT will conduct management activities, such as thinning and selective harvesting, that seek to improve the diversity of species and habitat on the property, promote



Enjoying Pine Needle Tea

relationships with each other and the natural world.

During my time in graduate school at Antioch University, New England, I had the opportunity to work with a forest school practitioner who was trained in England, where the philosophy and practice originated. This past October I had the honor of attending and presenting at a conference in Surrey, England continuing my professional development, and learning more about this distinct approach to environmental education. I am so excited to be able to share what I am learning with local peninsula schools.

Relationships are at the heart of this approach. The three agreements that we discuss and take seriously each session are: "take care of yourself, take care of each other, and take care of the forest." The curriculum is emergent, which means it is led

by participant's curiosity and wonder, and appropriate and supervised risk-taking is encouraged to build confidence and skill. Play, exploration, and movement are central to learning and so is emotional and social development. The program strives to provide a space to improve the wellbeing of the participants and the land.

As we circled up to begin on that first day out in the forest, another child dropped to her knees and shouted, "Oh no! She fell over!" A balsam fir friend had blown over in the wind. Several children rallied around the tree and brainstormed ways to help it stand back up. By the end of the day it was propped up looking happier than it had in a long time. First graders are amazing stewards of the earth. The intention of Forest Days is to keep this connection alive and thriving.



Surry Kindergärtner  
Maverick Lenart



Forest Days Classroom