



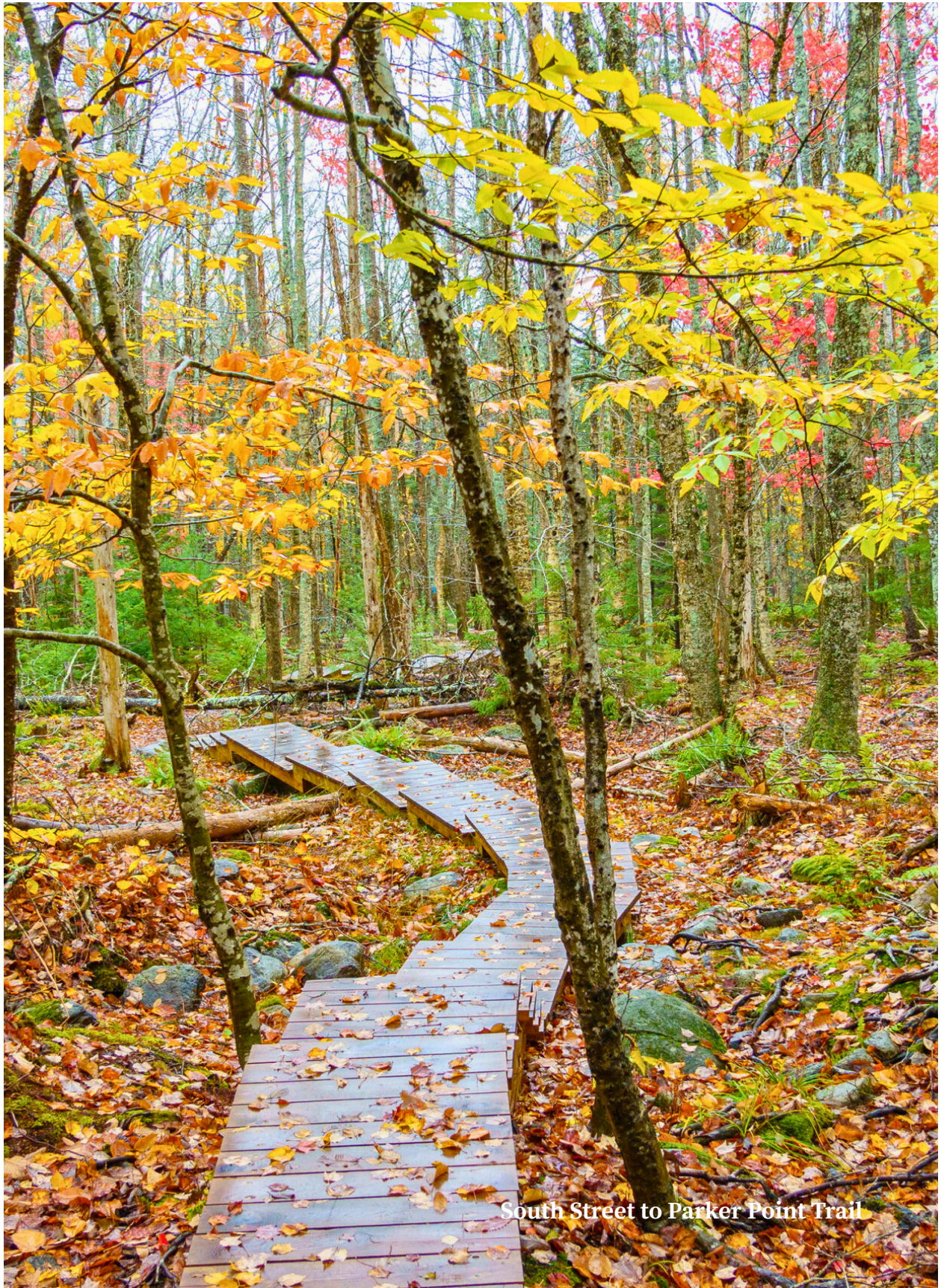
BLUE HILL HERITAGE TRUST

2025

Caterpillar Hill

ANNUAL REPORT

BLUE HILL HERITAGE TRUST



South Street to Parker Point Trail

OUR TEAM

STAFF

George Fields, *Executive Director*

Megan Flenniken, *Development Director*

Andrew Czwakiel, *Land & Stewardship Director*

Harlie Burke, *Administrative & Development Coordinator*

Brooke MacDonald, *Education & Outreach Coordinator*

John Harriman, *Lands Manager and Conservation Forester*

Ella Skolfield, *Land Steward*

Emily Siedel, *Stewardship & Outreach Associate*

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CONTACT US

Email: info@bluehillheritagetrust.org

Phone: (207) 374-5118

Website: bluehillheritagetrust.org

40 YEARS OF BLUE HILL HERITAGE TRUST

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In 2025, we celebrated our 40th anniversary. It is hard to believe that my own tenure with Blue Hill Heritage Trust (BHHT) has now exceeded 11 years. Those first few years, our team consisted of just a few staff members working from the William Carlton House at the corner of Mountain Road and Route 15. The building was modest: small rooms, a sloping enclosed sun porch utilized as a conference room, and a tiny bathroom upstairs.

We grew out of that building in 2017 and moved into our current headquarters on Hinckley Ridge Road. Today, with eight full-time staff, plus summer interns supporting stewardship and outreach efforts, we are poised for further growth. As we embark on a new strategic planning process, we are evaluating how best to strengthen our finance and fundraising operations, enhance our technology and software systems, and ensure that our organizational capacity keeps pace with the investments we have made in land stewardship and conservation.

Looking ahead, we are excited about opportunities to expand our impact across the Peninsula. By growing our footprint around Penobscot's Wallamatogus Mountain, protecting a beloved blueberry field overlooking the Salt Pond in South Blue Hill, and strengthening habitat connectivity and climate resilience through strategic acquisitions, we remain committed to conserving the landscapes that define this region. We are also exploring new focus areas where BHHT can make a meaningful difference in the years ahead.

Our work of conserving land for habitat protection, recreational access, historic and scenic preservation, and agricultural and natural resource protection is as critical today as it was 40 years ago. We are grateful for your financial support toward educational programming, land acquisitions, and everything in between.

Thank you for helping make our first 40 years so successful. We hope you will join us as we build on that legacy and ensure that the next 40 years are even more impactful.

With gratitude,

GEORGE FIELDS

To lead in conserving land, water, and wildlife habitat on the greater Blue Hill Peninsula. To teach and practice a stewardship ethic. To promote ecological, economic, and community health for this and future generations.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



In 2015, I joined the Board of Directors, motivated, in part, by having a home next to a large conserved property and wanting to help steward it. This parcel came to BHHT through the merger with The Conservation Trust (TCT) of Castine, Brooksville, and Penobscot in 2014. The acquisition was led by my mother, Liz Parish, who recognized the importance of conserving the open fields and water views that form the gateway to the Castine Peninsula.

Through my time on the board, I came to appreciate not only the land BHHT protects, but the people who make the work possible. A striking change over the last decade has been the organization's growth and increased capacity. In 2015, there were just two full-time staff: Jim Dow, our first-ever Executive Director, and George Fields, our current Executive Director. Our volunteer board embodied the spirit of a grassroots organization: arranging hikes and outings, raising funds to purchase land, and recruiting community members to become involved with the Trust.

Today, we have the luxury of an office full of talented people who specialize in community outreach, education, development, forest management, land acquisition, and conservation. The organization has given rise to a new generation of conservation-minded community members and has grown to encompass not just conservation but also sustainability. Whether helping to ensure food security by protecting farmlands, providing firewood to the local wood bank to heat homes, or supporting eco-friendly composting of organic materials and waste, we are building a sustainable community with and for all people on the Peninsula.

As I reflect on my family's journey and my time with Blue Hill Heritage Trust, I am filled with gratitude for all who have helped shape this remarkable organization. The landscapes we protect, the communities we sustain, and the opportunities we create for future generations are made possible by people who believe in this shared vision. I hope you will continue to support Blue Hill Heritage Trust's mission.

BROOKE PARISH

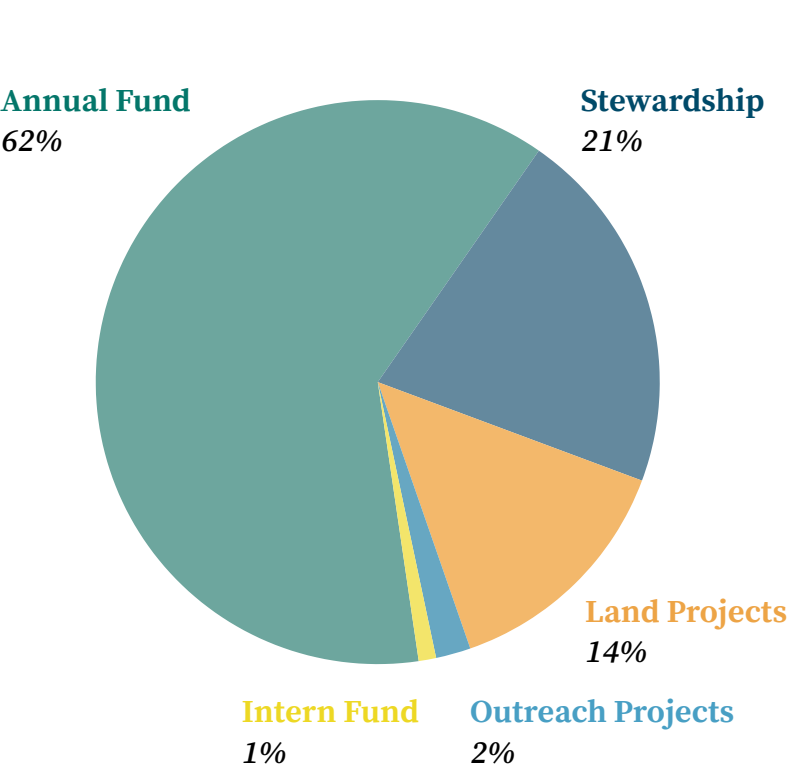
We'd like to recognize **Norm Alt**, who concluded his service on the Board after an extraordinary 18 years. We are grateful for Norm's dedication to BHHT's mission and the communities we serve.

DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Blue Hill Heritage Trust (BHHT) brought in over \$1.1 million in 2025, marking another financially stable and successful year. We are incredibly appreciative of each and every gift and pleased to see that the BHHT community remains steadfast in its commitment to support a valued community resource.

The fall annual appeal raised \$555,354, and 43% of donors increased their level of giving to recognize our 40th year of community-based conservation!

TOP FUNDS AS DIRECTED BY DONOR:



Annual Fund

The annual operating fund was supported by 916 individual donors and private foundations, for a total of \$706,538. Unrestricted giving is a vital revenue source, and this funding allows BHHT to operate effectively and remain responsive to opportunities that may arise.

Project Funding

Restricted giving is a cornerstone of BHHT project success, and we value each philanthropic partnership. We received 53 restricted gifts, for a total of \$432,383. All project funding was directed towards the mission-critical work highlighted in this report.



LAND PROTECTION AND STEWARDSHIP REPORT

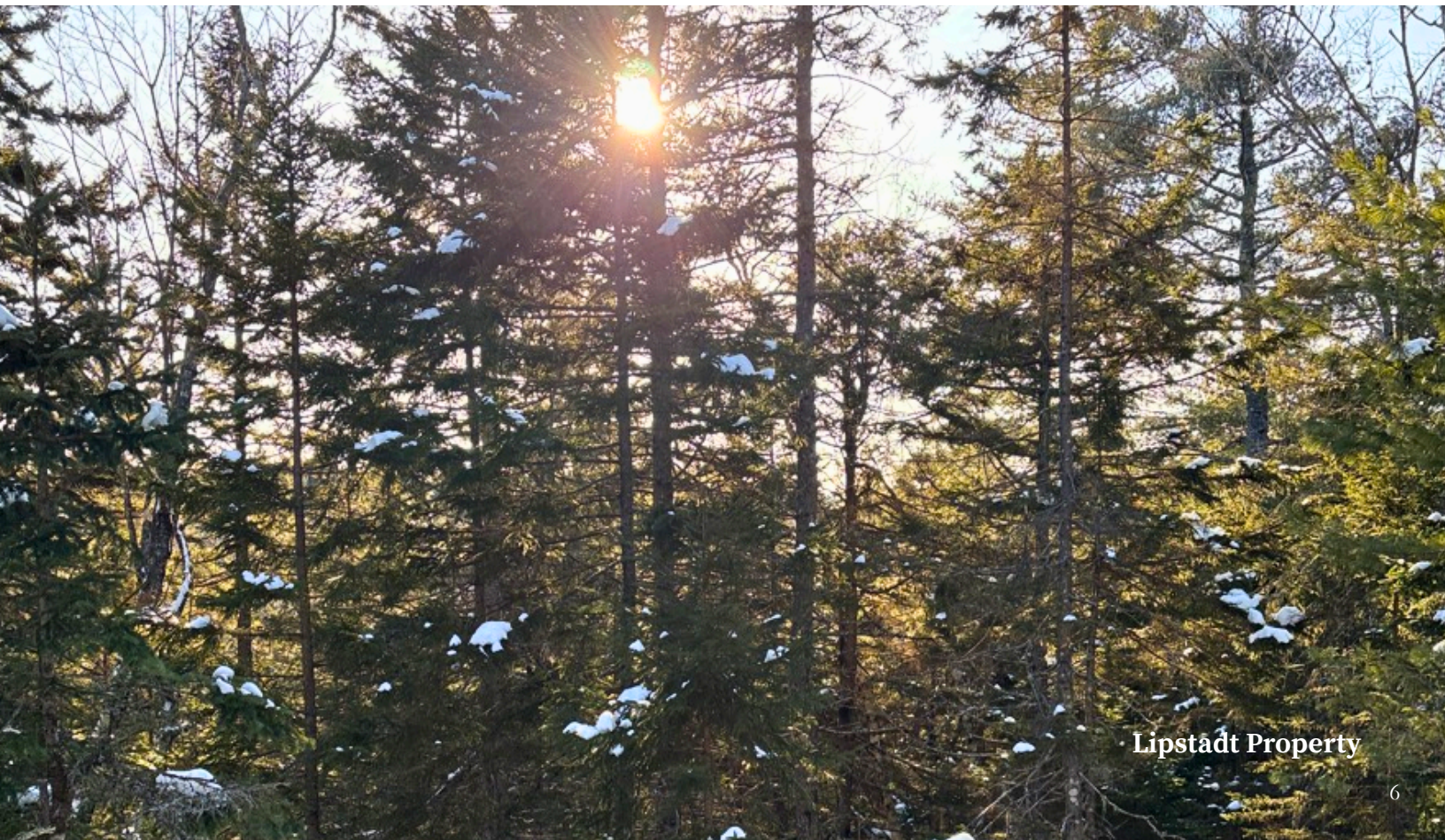
LIPSTADT PROPERTY CONSERVATION

In 2025, we successfully conserved the **137-acre Lipstadt Property**, a significant forested tract in East Blue Hill. Located just northeast of Penny's Preserve, and near a focus area for our work, this property strengthens a well-known and valued conservation landscape and a growing region of protected lands.

The property is characterized by mixed forestland and is bisected by a small brook, enhancing its ecological diversity. Protecting a large, contiguous block of forest habitat in the region supports wildlife movement, landscape connectivity, and ecological resilience.

While Lipstadt Property is currently managed for its conserved forest habitat and lacks formal trails or a parking area, we are actively exploring opportunities to connect it with nearby conserved lands. Plans include a public hiking trail, with potential trail linkages to Penny's Preserve, supporting expanded and interconnected recreational opportunities in the coming years.

The protection of the Lipstadt Property reflects our continued commitment to conserving high-value forestlands that support both ecological health and future public access opportunities.



STEWARDSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Forest & Habitat Stewardship

- Planted five acres of trees and shrubs and mowed the pollinator meadow in **Surry Forest** to improve wildlife habitat
- Conducted forest stand improvement on 36 acres of trees in **Meadowbrook Forest**
- Removed invasive species, including bittersweet on **Blue Hill Mountain** and multiflora rose at **Ferry Landing**
- Maintained beaver and alewife habitat
- Conducted a prescribed burn of blueberry fields at **Caterpillar Hill** with the Maine Forest Service (*below*)
- Monitored over 12,000 acres of property via field and aerial checks



Trails, Access, & Infrastructure

- Initiated an 80-ft bridge replacement project at **Meadowbrook Forest**
- Completed over 800 feet of trail restoration with bog bridging at **Furth Talalay** (*below*)
- Built a parking area and began trail work at **Walker Pond** and **Newbury Neck**
- Began building an accessible boardwalk overlooking Eggemoggin Reach in Sargentville
- Improved drainage on **Blue Hill Mountain**
- Finished the Albion Meadow Loop's bridge at **Penny's Preserve**
- Designed new interpretive signage for **Hundred Acre Wood**



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

These projects reflect a year of steady, hands-on stewardship made possible through the efforts of staff, partners, and thousands of volunteer hours. Volunteers play a vital role in caring for these lands, ensuring they remain healthy and accessible for future generations. We are grateful for their support and welcome anyone interested in getting involved.

\$65k

Value of In-Kind Time

1800+

Volunteer Hours

130+

Stewardship Volunteers



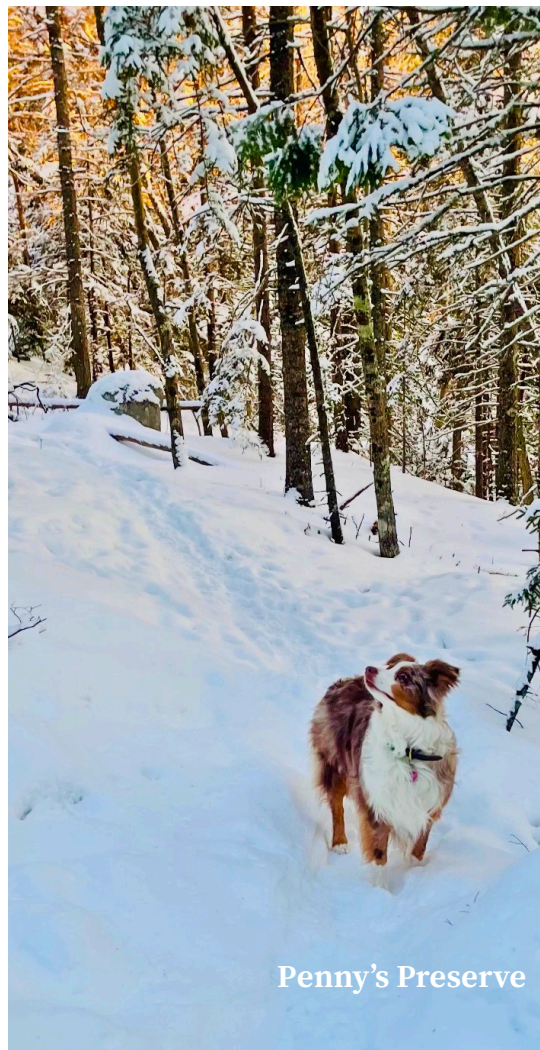
Hundred Acre Wood



John B. Mountain



Carter Nature Preserve



Penny's Preserve

TOTAL LAND HOLDINGS

12,000+
Total Conserved
Acres

1,800
Acres of Protected
Farmland

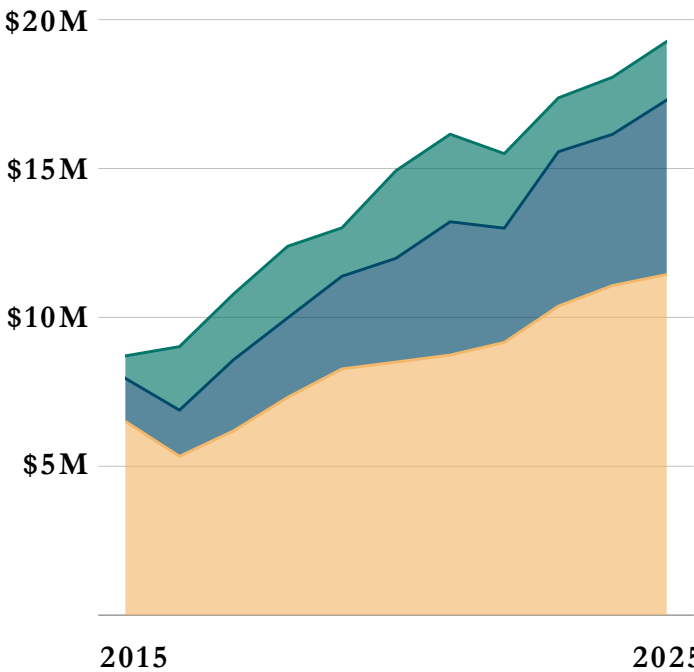
145
New Acres Added
in 2025

56
Total Miles of
Hiking Trails

23
Trails Open to
the Public

FINANCE REPORT

BLUE HILL HERITAGE TRUST TOTAL ASSETS



CURRENT & FIXED ASSETS
2025 TOTAL: \$1,966,195

INVESTMENT FUNDS
2025 TOTAL: \$5,859,670

CONSERVATION LAND
2025 TOTAL: \$11,438,330

BHHT’s assets grew by \$1,236,826 in 2025, for a total of \$19,330,875. The bulk of the growth came from the investment portfolio. Two acquired parcels brought the total conserved land to 9,131 acres, adding \$369,251 in assets.

OPERATING EXPENSES & INCOME

Expenses were \$58,572 lower in 2025 as BHHT was able to trim costs.

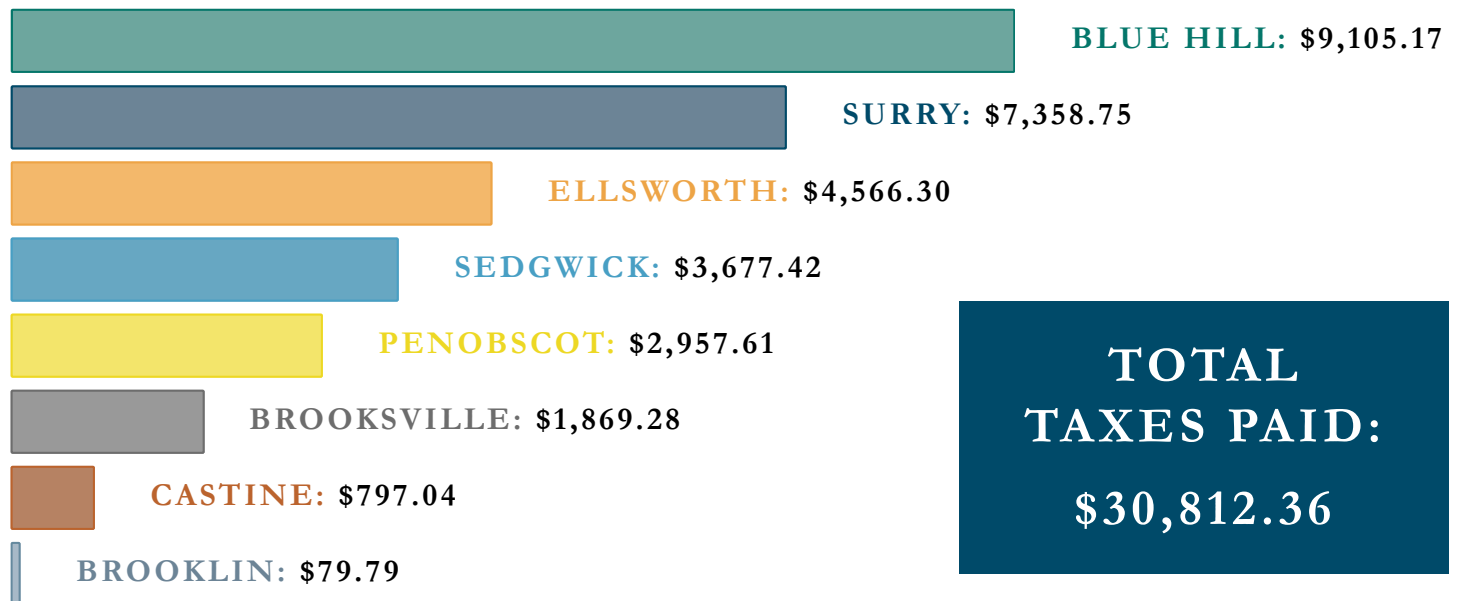
Income was up in 2025, largely due to the sale of a lease. Grant revenue was a struggle to acquire, as many federal program funds were reduced. Non-profit land trusts are pivoting to private foundations to offset the federal shortfall. **An increased portion of BHHT’s income will need to come from donor support.**

EXPENSES:	2024	2025
MISSION-RELATED OPERATIONS	\$857,999	\$910,270
MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION	\$371,727	\$224,945
FUNDRAISING	\$137,390	\$173,509
TOTAL	\$1,367,116	\$1,308,724

INCOME:	2024	2025
UNRESTRICTED	\$966,144	\$1,188,731
RESTRICTED	\$629,693	\$528,829
IN-KIND	\$67,500	-
GRANTS	\$115,791	\$212,800
LEASES, MERCHANDISE, OTHER	\$118,522	\$595,412
TOTAL	\$1,897,650	\$2,525,772

2025 REAL ESTATE TAXES

With the increase in market values across the peninsula, BHHT's property taxes increased by \$1,119.13 from the year prior. **BHHT is pleased to provide a tax base to our communities through Maine's Open Space Taxation Program**, paying a total of \$30,812.36 in taxes in 2025.



Blue Hill Heritage Trust wishes to thank all our donors, foundations, and state funding sources for operations and project partnerships that have made us what we are: a strong, dynamic community resource. Join us in making the next 40 years as remarkable as the first 40.



EDUCATION & OUTREACH REPORT

Community-based conservation is at the heart of Blue Hill Heritage Trust's work. Our education and outreach programs engage community members of all ages through guided walks, volunteer opportunities, workshops, youth programs, and special events. These experiences foster a deeper understanding of the natural world while inspiring lifelong stewardship.

Our programming also serves an important social purpose: building community. Time and again, participants have shared that they “met their friends” through Blue Hill Heritage Trust events and activities. By creating welcoming opportunities for people to learn, explore, and connect, we strengthen both conservation outcomes and community bonds.

Conservation does not happen in isolation. Through education, outreach, and relationship-building, we cultivate a community that is informed, engaged, and invested in the future of our region's natural resources.

20

Partnerships

250

Hours of Programming

100

Programs Offered



Forest Days Field Trip

PUBLIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Honoring the Ancestors Paddle

In October 2025, Blue Hill Heritage Trust partnered with Penobscot Nation citizens, local landowners, and community supporters to help facilitate the historic **Honoring the Ancestors paddle** along the Bagaduce River — retracing an ancient Wabanaki canoe route for the first time in centuries. The journey honored Penobscot ancestors, renewed connections to ancestral homelands, and celebrated the importance of access, remembrance, and reconciliation.

BHHT provided logistical support, indigenous history interpretation, and coordination with landowners, helping create a powerful day of ceremony, shared meals, and relationships that will inspire future paddles and collaboration.

Other 2025 Program Highlights:

- Hosted programs during every month, totaling over **50 public programs** in 2025
- Co-hosted nine “**Friends From the Field**” webinars
- Led three “**Farmland Forever**” tours of BHHT-protected farms
- Offered **accessible walks** for the senior living community Parker Ridge
- Collaborated with local libraries to create **interactive storybook trails** on the John Murphy Trail and Hundred Acre Wood
- Concluded the two-year **Wabanaki Speaker Series** with presentations delivered by the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy Nations
- Hosted annual community favorites including **Alewife Day** on Pierce Pond, the **Blue Hill Mountain Trail Race**, and the **Pumpkin Promenade**



SCHOOL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Forest Days for Local Schools

Forest Days has become Blue Hill Heritage Trust's flagship school program. It fosters students' connection to the natural world through year-round outdoor exploration, mindfulness, and movement.

Traditionally offered to students in grades K-2, Forest Days expanded in 2025 to serve K-8 thanks to growing interest from local educators. During the summer and fall, our Outreach Team developed nine two-hour Forest Day sessions for middle school students. Each month, September-May, we brought students outside and led programs that incorporated science, art, physical activity, discovery, self-reflection, and a whole lot of fun!



Forest Days at Brooksville Elementary School



Forest Days campfire



Wreath making at GSA



2025 BHHT interns

Other 2025 Program Highlights:

- Led over **40 school programs** across **eight peninsula schools**
- Hosted K-12 field trips to learn about **alewife migration and beaver coexistence**
- Took George Stevens Academy students overnight to **Hurricane Island**
- Taught students to identify balsam fir, tip legally and without damaging trees, and about the **importance of wreath making** to Maine's economy
- Hosted **afterschool programs** in three local elementary schools
- Guest lectured to the Human Dimensions of Wildlife class at the **University of Maine**
- Continued the **James W. Dow Internship Program's** tradition of developing the next generation of conservation professionals

DONOR REPORT

HERITAGE SOCIETY:

The donors that sustain our annual fund with gifts of \$1,000 or greater

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Penny's Preserve

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Contact Us

Dr. Megan Flenniken
Director of Development

(207) 374-5118

Megan@bluehillheritagetrust.org

Federal Tax ID (EIN)

22-2655830



BLUE HILL HERITAGE TRUST

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