



Harpswell Heritage Land Trust

Our Mission: To preserve and protect Harpswell's natural open spaces, islands, shoreline and cultural heritage for current and future generations through education, conservation and landowner assistance

Newsletter Spring 2013

Issue #40

Sustaining Harpswell's Forests

By Ed Robinson

Cast your eyes upon a typical forest plot and what thoughts come to mind? A hard pressed farmer might see mature red oaks that would pay for that new truck. A bird enthusiast might see mixed shrubs and conifers that shelter his favorite songbirds. A logger in need of work might envision a small clear cut, while an ardent preservationist might want to ban chainsaws from that forest forever. And all of them have valid points for discussion...

Maine has a long history of forestry, and the industry still accounts for a large chunk of our economy. Over the years, timber management practices have evolved, as has the nature of land holdings. Recent studies at Harvard have shown that while the New England forest



Sustainable forest management is important for water quality, wildlife habitat, and profit. (Ed Robinson photo)

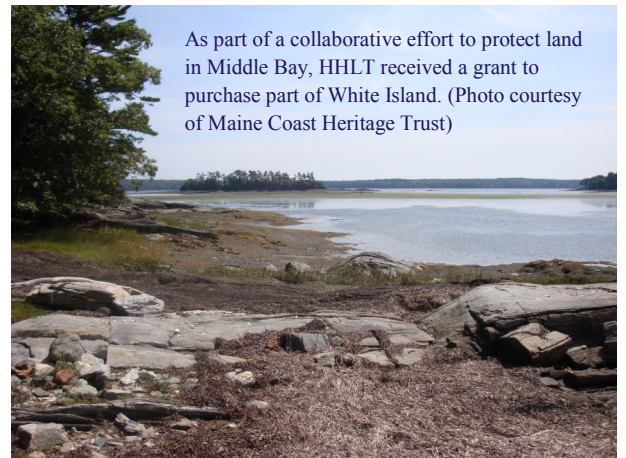
is growing, much of it is now in private hands, often in plots of 5 – 100 acres. In Harpswell, the large farms of the 18th century have gradually been divided for residential development, leaving a patchwork of small woodlots. These scattered

forests play a large role in the scenic beauty of Harpswell, and are critical to the health and natural diversity of our community.

Local consulting forester Rob Bryan says that forestry is now driven by three overlapping considerations—economic feasibility, sustainability and social implications. The trick is in balancing those considerations, and that can be a major challenge in some areas. Fortunately the days of indiscriminate clear cutting have passed, at least in the US. Some people would prefer that timber harvests were strictly limited but this has its own long-term implications (think of all those deadly forest fires in the West, fueled by huge amounts of dead wood). The consensus view has become that forests are a vital, renewable resource, and if they are managed carefully they will produce a variety of valuable products, while protecting wildlife and sources of clean water. For those of us who love seeing a mix of wildlife, timber harvests can play a vital role in creating forest openings and regenerating new growth that support a wide range of species, each according to its desired habitat.

When planning a timber harvest, it is tempting to think of cutting the best trees to maximize your immediate financial

(Continued on page 6)



As part of a collaborative effort to protect land in Middle Bay, HHLT received a grant to purchase part of White Island. (Photo courtesy of Maine Coast Heritage Trust)

Collaboration Leads to Success for Conservation Projects

Harpswell Heritage Land Trust actively seeks ways to work together with other groups, and collaboration has paid off with two new conservation projects.

Through a partnership between the Town of Harpswell and HHLT, more than 12 acres along the wild shoreline of Otter Brook on Harpswell Neck will be preserved forever, protecting the water quality of Harpswell Cove and valuable wildlife habitat.

With help from the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, HHLT received a \$300,000 grant in February to protect 63 acres of valuable wildlife habitat on White Island in Middle Bay.

Protecting Otter Brook

Since Otter Brook is a high priority focus area of the Town's Open Space plan, selectmen saw an opportunity for conservation when the Town acquired the property on Hildreth Road after its former owners didn't pay their taxes. At the

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Collaboration Leads to Conservation Success

(continued from the front page)

2012 Town Meeting, Harpswell residents voted to authorize the selectmen to donate a conservation easement on 12.4 acres of the 14.5-acre property. The conservation easement limits development on the property forever, while allowing the town to sell it and thus return it to the tax rolls.

Otter Brook, which runs north from Mountain Road to the northern end of Ewing Narrows, is the longest stream in Harpswell and has considerable freshwater marsh abutting its southern half. The variety of habitats and lack of development are home to a diverse group of plant and animal species. The lands abutting Otter Brook, although privately owned, have been used traditionally for hunting, hiking, and cross country skiing.

The purpose of the easement is to forever conserve the undeveloped character of the property, preserve the ecological value of the Otter Brook corridor, and protect marine water quality in Ewing Narrows and Harpswell Cove, into which Otter Brook drains.

“The Hildreth Road property is another opportunity for Harpswell to further the preservation of our history. It has dense forest, diverse wildlife, natural flowing waters, and still has room for single family living,” said Harpswell Selectman Alison Hawkes. “It made sense to work with the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust to protect our natural resources for the future.”

The part of the property not covered by the conservation easement has frontage on Hildreth Road and is suitable for a single family home.

White Island

The White Island project results from a collaborative partnership to conserve ecologically valuable land in Middle Bay by three land trusts. HHLT received the \$300,000 grant through the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants Program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and channeled through the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife.

With this grant money, HHLT will purchase 16 acres of upland and 47 acres of intertidal wetlands from Julia Stevens.

White Island is a 116-acre island with extensive intertidal wetlands and only seven developed lots. It is located in Middle Bay, between Mere Point and Harpswell Neck. The property to be protected has 3,287 feet of shore frontage and includes mudflats and eel grass beds that provide valuable habitat for wading birds, shore birds, water fowl, mussels, quahogs, and soft shell clams. The project also protects the water quality of Middle Bay and Casco Bay, thus protecting habitat for numerous plants and animals important to commercial and recreational fishing and to the marine food chain.

“This project demonstrates the effectiveness of strong conservation partnerships. Hopefully, working together with the State of Maine, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Coastal Wetlands Grants program, Maine Coast Heritage Trust and local land trusts can continue important conservation progress in Maquoit and Middle Bays,” said Keith Fletcher, Southern Maine Project Manager for Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

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Contact HHLT

Harpswell Heritage Land Trust
PO Box 359
153 Harpswell Neck Rd
Harpswell, ME 04079
207-721-1121
info@hhlmaine.org
www.hhlmaine.org

Check out our new and improved website at www.hhlmaine.org!



The Town of Harpswell worked with the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust to protect valuable wetlands and wildlife habitat along Otter Brook on Harpswell Neck. (Rob Bryan photo)

Volunteers Make Everything We Do Possible!

Why do you volunteer for HHLT?

I volunteer for HHLT because I deeply believe in land conservation for future generations and educating people about protecting the land and understanding its ecosystems.

—**Harriette Griffin**

I love the mission of HHLT and the beauty of the conserved lands.

—**Rich Knox**

It's the people I work with that are my incentive to volunteer.

—**Anne Perry**



Harpswell is the prettiest place we have ever lived. I'd like to keep it that way forever!

—**Ed Robinson**

To experience properties that I have not visited in awhile--having a volunteer work trip as an 'excuse' to get out is sometimes needed to get over my ever-increasing inertia to stay indoors. Once out, I always enjoy the place and people.

—**Tony Barrett**

I think the mailings are important, and it's a pleasant and easy way to be of use.

—**Hannah Dring**

I volunteer for HHLT because I care about the natural environment that supports my community and they are the group that focuses on that issue. They make good use of my time and I feel valued.

—**Alicia Pulsifer Heyburn**

Thank you for your help!

(since the fall newsletter)

Nancy Bennett, Marcia Blue, Marie Clarke, Jane Collins, Nellie Coulter, Lynda DeHaan, Kara Douglas, Harriette Griffin, Samuel Jamison, Sheila Karajin, John Loyd, Anne Perry, Alan Sawyer, Cynthia Sawyer, Maureen Soutter, Hannah Trowbridge, Katrina White, and Cynthia Wood.



HHLT volunteer opportunities: there's something for everyone!

- Trail work or carpentry
- Mailings and other administrative tasks
- Writing or editing
- Photography
- Programs with kids, such as Nature Day Camp
- Planning or leading programs and events
- Providing refreshments for events
- Gardening
- Fundraising
- Carrying out the Land Trust's mission by serving on a committee (programs, communications, development, stewardship, or lands)
- And much more!

If you're interested in volunteering, contact Outreach Coordinator Julia McLeod at 207-837-9613 or outreach@hhlmaine.org. Or fill out a volunteer interest form at www.hhlmaine.org

Harpswell Community Garden at Mitchell Field

If you are looking for a sunny space protected from deer to grow your own organic vegetables and/or for a meaningful way to help produce wholesome food for Harpswell neighbors, join the Harpswell Community Garden at Mitchell Field.

The Harpswell Community Garden brings together a community of gardeners, both novice and experienced. The garden, which is located at Mitchell Field off Harpswell Neck Road, offers two sizes of rental plots, a Harpswell heritage orchard, and a Common Garden, where volunteers grow vegetables to donate to local people in need.

The garden is in its beginning years, and we need your input and support! Please let us know what you want from a community garden in Harpswell by

taking a short survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/C3FM8MC>. You can learn more about renting a plot or volunteering at www.harpswell.maine.gov or by contacting Cyndy Bush at 725-2660 or bushcyndy@aol.com or Jane Covey at coveybrown@gmail.com or 725-5601.

The garden is sponsored by the Town of Harpswell and organized by a volunteer committee, with financial support from HHLT.



Harpowell Heritage Land Trust 2012 and 2013 Members

Welcome to our new members!

Tim Baribeau and Caroline Daut
 Pamela Berry and Douglas Warren
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Many thanks to our renewing members!

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Alfred M. Senter Fund
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Eaton Peabody Foundation
Maine Community Foundation
Newman's Own Foundation

What we conserve stays conserved. Your legacy could last forever. Please consider HHLT as you plan for the future.

Hey Kids and Parents: The Land Trust has programs for you!

Harpswell Family Outing Club

The Harpswell Family Outing Club is a collaborative project of the Harpswell Community Nursery School, Harpswell Recreation Department and Harpswell Heritage Land Trust. Our vision is to build community around enjoying the outdoors together. Monthly outings include hikes, stream and tide pool explorations, farm visits, and more. Join our group on Facebook or send an email to outreach@hhltmaine.org to join our email list.



Janel Johnson photo

Nature Day Camp

July 15-19, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
For children entering 2nd-6th grades
Fee: \$75
Scholarships available

Join us to discover Harpswell's unique environment and varied habitats.

Come with us to explore mud flats, beaches, tidal pools, the forest and a fresh water pond. Parents will need to drop children off at a different Harpswell location each day. Since 1998, HHLT's Nature Day Camp has provided kids with a week of fun and exploration. Download a registration form at: www.hhltmaine.org.



Mary Ann Nahf photo

"My kids loved it...The program instilled an appreciation and sense of stewardship for Harpswell. Thank you!"

Sustaining Harpswell's Forests

(continued from the front page)

return. This is called high grading, and it is strongly discouraged by knowledgeable foresters. Imagine yourself as a breeder of fine horses—would you sell your best stallions and mares, keeping the lesser beasts? In managing a forest for long term benefits, it is better to upgrade the quality of a stand by retaining some top quality trees for added growth and seed stock, while selling weaker, less desirable trees. We should plan for a mix of species so we are not dependent upon one species that may be hit by disease. Over time, the forest will become more productive and more valuable.



The key to sustainability is to look at the big picture. Landowners all have personal objectives for their properties, but it helps to consider neighboring lands and the best use of each parcel in question. A series of thinning harvests every 10 years to remove young trees for wood pulp may be the most productive economic solution for one parcel. In other cases, the best choice may be to allow natural forces to “manage” an area over time, either to protect areas prone to erosion, or to secure critical habitat for threatened or endangered species.

Rob notes that in recent years we have seen positive examples of sustainable forestry in Harpswell. If you exit Route 24 by Harpswell Autos, drive down Long Reach Lane and cross the causeway over the marsh. You will be in the Austin Cary Lot, managed by the Baxter State Park Authority. This 222-acre parcel, on both sides of Long Reach marsh, is a demonstration area for modern forestry practices. Selective cuts have been done here twice in the last 25 years to improve the health and value of the trees left standing. Walking through these lovely woods you will see old stumps and a great deal of new growth,

as mature trees spread their crowns and smaller trees fill in the gaps.

Driving south on Route 123, as you enter Harpswell, you will see on your left the rolling field that is part of Liberty Farm. Just to the south of the field is a nice stand of mixed pine and hardwoods where harvesting occurred this past winter. Rob said this was the second harvest of the property in the last 15 years. The first cut opened the forest canopy to allow in more light, triggering regeneration of many new seedlings. The current harvest was intended to remove the least desirable trees and to allow the best trees their optimal chance of healthy growth. With less competition for water and nutrients and more sunlight reaching the forest floor, the preferred canopy trees and the seedlings established in the first cutting will continue to flourish. This forest is protected forever under a conservation easement held by HHLT.

We are lucky to have so much healthy forest cover in Harpswell. As you drive our roads or walk our trails, take a minute to appreciate the beauty and diversity of our forests, along with the planning and effort necessary to keep them healthy for hundreds of years to come.

2013 Spring and Summer Programs

May

Harpswell Family Outing Club trip to Two Coves Farm: On **May 11 at 9:30 a.m.** join the Harpswell Family Outing Club for a trip to Two Coves Farm to visit the lambs and chicks. Learn about how to care for farm animals, take a tour of the farm, and watch a sheep dog demonstration. All ages welcome. Wear your boots. Two Coves Farm is located at 90 Neils Point Road in Harpswell. Park on Neils Point Road and walk up. Please do not pull into the driveway.

Birding Extravaganza: Through a collaboration with Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, Kennebec Estuary Land Trust, and Merrymeeting Audubon, we're offering six birding outings this spring. Check out www.hhltmaine.org for more information.

June

Hike Harpswell Challenge: The Harpswell Recreation Department's National Trail's Day celebration is on for **June 1 & 2, 2013**. Hiking, fun and prizes. For more information, visit www.harpswell.maine.gov.

Horseshoe Crabs: On **June 8 at 9 a.m.** at the Alfred Skolfield Preserve, join Tulle Frazer to learn about horseshoe crabs during their mating season. The preserve is located on the west side of Harpswell Neck Road north of the Brunswick/Harpswell town line. Since parking is limited, please meet at the HHLT office at 153 Harpswell Neck Road to carpool. Registration for this event is limited. Please pre-register to 837-9613 or outreach@hhltmaine.org. This event is co-sponsored by the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust.

Harpswell Family Outing Club Tide Pool Exploration: On **June 15 at 9 a.m.** join HHLT's Julia McLeod for a morning of exploration at Pott's Point Preserve. To get there, take Harpswell Neck Road to its end and park by the side of the road. We will walk along private Pott's Point Road to the preserve.

Clams, Oysters, and Mussels: Learn more about shellfish this summer, and try your hand at digging clams. Chris Heinig will talk about shellfish lifecycle and threats at HHLT's office at 153 Harpswell Neck Road on **June 27 at 7 p.m.** We'll get out on the flats for a clam digging workshop on **June 29**.

July

Harpswell Family Outing Club Swimming and Games: On **July 6 at 1 p.m.** join us for swimming and games at Stover's Point Preserve. To get there, drive south on Harpswell Neck Road, pass the old West Harpswell School then turn left on Stover's Cove Road. Turn right on Stover's Point Road and follow it to its end.

Annual Meeting: See back of newsletter for more information.

Sunset Cruise in Middle Bay: Join us on the water to take in the breathtaking scenery of Middle Bay. Enjoy the wild shorelines of Harpswell's Islands. Keep an eye out for seals, dolphins, eagles, shore birds, and more. Enjoy tasty snacks, wine, beer and soft drinks aboard the *Island Romance*. Chat with friends, listen to live music, and learn about land protection projects in Middle Bay.

Support the work of HHLT by joining us for our first sunset cruise in Middle Bay on **July 23 from 6:15-8:15 p.m.** We will leave from the Dolphin Marina and



Mary Ann Nahf photo



Ed Robinson photo

Restaurant in Harpswell. Tickets cost \$50 per adult and \$25 for children under 12. Space is limited, so sign up soon. Find more information on our website: www.hhltmaine.org.

Wednesday Walkers Come to Harpswell: Join the Wednesday Walkers for a hike in Harpswell on **July 31 at 9:30 a.m.** (Location TBD).

August

Harpswell Family Outing Club Hike: On **August 10 at 9:30 a.m.** join us for a hike at Long Reach Preserve. Park at the Trufant-Summerton Ball Field on Harpswell Islands Road, around three miles south of the Brunswick town line.

September

Wednesday Walkers Come to Harpswell: Join the Wednesday Walkers for a hike in Harpswell on **September 11 at 9:30 a.m.** (Location TBD).

Hear About the Maine Island Trail Association at HHLT's Annual Meeting

You're invited to HHLT's Annual Membership Meeting on Tuesday, July 16 at the Elijah Kellogg Church Fellowship Hall at 917 Harpswell Neck Road in Harpswell. Our featured speaker will be Brian Marcaurelle, who will talk about

"The Maine Island Trail at Twenty-Five."

Enjoy stunning coastal photos and hear the story of how the Maine Island Trail grew from humble beginnings to become one of America's preeminent water trails.

The Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the wild islands of Maine. As managers of America's first recreational water trail, MITA promotes responsible use and volunteer stewardship on more than 200 coastal islands and mainland sites that comprise the Maine Island Trail.

Doors open at 6:30 P.M. There will be refreshments and



Camping is a popular activity on Crow Island (Kenny Robinson photo)

door prizes. Brian's presentation will follow a short business meeting at 7 p.m.

The Board of Trustees will be asking HHLT members to consider a change to the Land Trust's by-laws. Please see the insert in this newsletter for more information.



HHLT's Crow Island Preserve is one stop on the Maine Island Trail (Alicia Heyburn photo)



Return Service Requested

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PO Box 359
Harpswell, ME 04079

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