



Harpswell Heritage Land Trust

"preserving and protecting Harpswell's natural open spaces, islands, shoreline and cultural heritage for current and future generations"

Newsletter Fall 2012

Issue #39

HHLT Welcomes New Outreach Coordinator

Hello from Julia:

I'm so glad to be here in Harpswell working for your local land trust. I truly enjoy the satisfaction that comes from working with dedicated volunteers to protect natural places and encourage people of all ages to connect with the outdoors.

Since I'm new here, I'd love to hear from you! Please let me know what programs you'd like to see us offering. What would you like to read about in this newsletter?

Let me tell you a little about myself... I live in Bowdoin with my husband, Andy, and our daughter, Sophie. We built a new house on our land there, and we plan to someday have a small farm.

For the past three years, I worked as the Stewardship Coordinator and Educator for the Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association in Jefferson. I became engrossed in freshwater ecology and very much enjoyed the community of people I got to know. Most of my time was spent communicating with and supporting all the wonderful volunteers who made the programs possible.

Before my time at Damariscotta Lake, I had a variety of interesting experiences

(See Outreach, continued on page 7)



Andy McLeod photo

Julia McLeod joined the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust as part-time Outreach Coordinator in September. For the first time, HHLT now has two part-time employees!



Chris Heinig led a popular clamming workshop in July.

Mary Ann Nalff photo

Community Viewpoints Survey Results

After 25 years of conservation work in Harpswell, HHLT conducted a survey of our community over the last year in order to chart a course for our future and make sure we are serving the community in our work. We were very pleased and grateful that more than 350 people responded in writing or in small group discussions. In the last few months we have analyzed the responses and we want to share with you the results.

We were glad to learn that 82% of respondents believe that HHLT has the necessary vision to protect our town's natural resources; 86% agree that HHLT is preserving Harpswell's character for the future, and 86% agree that HHLT helps people enjoy Harpswell's beautiful natural places.

From the responses, comments and suggestions for the future, several key themes emerged:

Respondents rated preserving undeveloped shoreline, freshwater and coastal wetlands, public shore access, and drinking water supplies as the high-

est priorities for the Land Trust.

Respondents suggested that the most important area in which we should improve is communication with our members and the community. We were directed to increase our outreach to all constituencies within Harpswell, particularly young people.

We were encouraged to expand programs to educate people on conservation and environmental issues and enhance public access to our preserves so more people can enjoy these special places.

Finally, we were directed to build our financial and membership base to assure the long term sustainability of HHLT and its good work.

We are discussing how we can best respond to the challenges the community has given us, and we will be reporting on our progress.

As we enter our next 25 years, we will benefit greatly from your input. If you have additional comments or would like a more detailed summary of results, please contact Julia McLeod.

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Contact HHLT

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info@hhlmaine.org
www.hhlmaine.org

We need photos!

Do you enjoy photography? We're looking for volunteers to take photos of HHLT properties — both of scenery and of people in the outdoors. Contact Julia for more information

Winter and Spring Events

All events are free and open to all.

For more information: 721-1121 or outreach@hhlmaine.org

In early November, the Wednesday Walkers, a Mid-coast walking and hiking group, went for a hike on the Cliff Trail and Giant's Stairs. If you would like to hear about future walks, join their online group by sending an email to Wednesday_walkers-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Heirloom Apple Tasting

Sat., Nov. 17, 2:30-4:30 p.m.

HHLT Community Room

Join Harpswell Heritage Apples for a tasting of local heirloom varieties. Bring your own apples if you'd like.

Snowshoe Hike

Sat., Jan. 26, 1 p.m.

Meet at the HHLT office at 1 p.m.

Join Alicia and Henry Heyburn for a snowshoe trip at the Skolfield Shores Preserve. Enjoy the beauty of winter on the coast. If there's no snow, enjoy a walk anyways.

Vernal Pools

Early April, date TBD

Location TBD

Explore vernal pools and the variety of critters that use them with Biologist Harvey Pough.

Woodcock Watch

Tues., May 7

Curtis Farm Preserve

Experience the timberdoodle's mating dance with Forester Rob Bryan. Learn about these fascinating birds (read more on the back page).

Discover Shore Birds

Sat., June 1, Time TBD

Skolfield Shores Preserve

Join veteran birder John Berry for a walk at the Skolfield Shores Preserve to watch shore birds in action. John has birded extensively and has led birding walks for Merrymeeting Audubon.



Calling all families who enjoy the outdoors!

We would like to organize a series of play groups for families to spend time together outdoors. If you're interested in joining, contact Julia McLeod at outreach@hhlmaine.org or 207-721-1121.

HHLT will soon have a monthly email newsletter. Find out about environmental news, read about our walking trails, and hear about public events. Sign up by sending an email to outreach@hhlmaine.org.

What's Been Happening in HHLT's Community Room?

In the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust's Office on Harpswell Neck Road, there is a large meeting space we call the Community Room, which is open for free use to non-profit groups.

Some recent activities and events, include two summer art shows. The Casco Bay Art League put on a show of lovely works created by local artists. Later in the summer, well-known photographer Tom Jones



Janet Alexander leads a yoga class in HHLT's Community Room.

exhibited interesting aerial photographs of Harpswell in his show, "Harpswell From The Air."

During the month of October and into November, Harpswell Heritage Apples, the Harpswell Garden Club, and

the Harpswell Conservation Commission hosted Monday evening information sessions about how to deal with winter moth infestations.

October and November have the Community Room busy on Wednesday mornings with Matter of Balance Classes sponsored by the Mid Coast Senior Health Service.

And the Community Room continues to provide regular meeting space for a variety of community groups, including the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island, Harpswell Garden Club, Casco Bay Art League, Harpswell Festival, town-sponsored yoga classes, and several others. If your community group is looking for a place to meet or hold activities, please contact HHLT at outreach@hhlmaine.org or 207-721-1121.

Why support the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust?

Harpowell Heritage Land Trust is committed to preserving and protecting Harpswell's natural open spaces, islands, shoreline and cultural heritage for current and future generations through education, conservation and landowner assistance.

"Why not support the land trust?... Because of the special places, because if you don't save them, someone will build a McMansion in the middle of it. Every view in this town is a million dollar view."



Bob Waddle is a lobster dealer and innkeeper in Harpswell. He has lived in Harpswell just about his whole life. In addition to being a long time member of HHLT, he also helps maintain the Long Reach Preserve hiking trail.

Here's what some of the community members who completed the Community Viewpoints Survey had to say about HHLT:

"Without the HHLT, my grandchildren would never know the Harpswell I have known since I was a child."

"Nature day camp is terrific."

"The most valuable thing for me is preserving land for public use. I've spent probably 100 hours hiking and feeling grateful for the beautiful trails through the woods in Harpswell."

"HHLT is the best hope for ensuring adequate water supply to meet needs while also protecting the coast from run-off. That seems the most critical issue we face."

"What I love about the islands is we can't tame them. Three quarters of my dreams take place there. It's the most stable delight of my life."



Elsa Martz photo

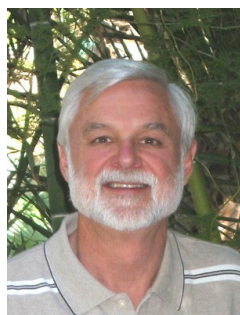
Stover's Point Preserve is one of 12 preserves protected and kept open for public use by the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust.

Volunteer Thanks

HHLT thanks trail volunteer Bob Wegel for his regular stints improving the Wilson's Cove Trail and his generous contributions to the creation of the Widgeon Cove Trail now under construction. We thank the following volunteers for their help with our mailings: Nancy Bennett, Marcia Blue, Marie Clarke, Nellie Coulter, Lynda DeHaan, Hannah Dring, Judith Redwine, Hank Schwartz, Trisha Sheaff, Charlotte Sinnett, and Hannah Trowbridge. We are grateful to John Loyd, Alan Sawyer, Cindy Sawyer, and Cynthia Wood for their service on our Development Committee. We thank Peggy Shanler for her help with our Nature Day Camp. We thank Rob Bryan of Forest Synthesis LLC for volunteering his expertise as a forester and ecologist. We thank Hope Hilton for her assistance with our interviews of prospective employees. Thanks to Pat and Becky Gallery, Bill and Helene Chase, and Simply Susie's for their willingness to help with event refreshments. Finally, thanks to Doc Phillips for this beautiful sign displaying HHLT's logo over our Community Room doors.



President's Message



This issue of our newsletter is being sent to both members and non-members of HHLT. If you are a member, thank you for your past and continuing support.

If you are not yet a member, please consider joining us as we pursue our mission to preserve and protect Harpswell's natural open spaces, islands, shoreline and cultural heritage for future generations.

When I first joined HHLT, my primary motivation was the protection of undeveloped land and shoreline. As I learned more about the Land Trust and joined the board, I became aware of all the different ways the Land Trust

works to serve its community.

First, we work with local landowners to identify, protect and preserve important natural areas, plant communities, wetlands, marine environments and valuable wildlife habitat that will eventually disappear in Harpswell.

Second, all our preserves (land the trust owns) and some of our easements (privately owned land) are open for you and others to use for hiking, nature study, bird watching and, in some cases, hunting.

Third, we work to educate our community about the value of Harpswell's natural resources to our economy and quality of life.

Please take a few moments to read the articles in this newsletter. If you like what you see, please use the enclosed envelope to become a member.

Charlie Johnson

Preserve Notes

The properties that HHLT owns are called preserves. Many have trails on them. Hard-working HHLT volunteers strive to make the preserves accessible and enjoyable places for community members to walk and observe nature.



Forester Rob Bryan led an invasive plant identification workshop at the Curtis Farm Preserve.

Curtis Farm Preserve

At the Curtis Farm Preserve in South Harpswell, a grassy parking area has been established at the entrance to Williams Field on Harpswell Neck Road, 1.7 miles south of the post office. New gravel has smoothed out the entrance driveway. The Stewardship Committee is working on plans for trails and parking along Basin Point Road. The public is welcome on the preserve. **Hunting is permitted, so please wear your blaze orange during hunting season.**

Johnson Field Preserve

At Johnson Field on Bailey Island, an Eagle Scout project led by Ian Hathaway has resulted in improved drainage around the boathouse and along the uphill side of the driveway which, it is hoped, will finally solve the problem of runoff entering the boathouse. The scouts also installed posts and rope to define a parking area. A second Eagle Scout project will likely cut back the overgrown shrubbery along the waterfront and construct and repair picnic tables. Have you ever been to Johnson Field? The grassy field and beach provide a beautiful view of a vibrant Maine fishing harbor. The preserve is located at the junction of the Harpswell Islands Road and the Abner Point Road.



The boathouse at the Skolfield Shores Preserve got some upgrades thanks to a crew led by Max Johnstone.

Skolfield Shores Preserve

The boathouse at Skolfield Shores Preserve is an early 20th century building with links to Harpswell's boatbuilding tradition. When it became apparent that the boathouse required repairs, prospective Eagle Scout Max Johnstone jumped at the chance to help out. Max led a crew of volunteers in 160 hours of work on the historic boathouse, which included repairs to its supporting posts, cleaning, painting, and improving high water access.

Houghton Graves Park

Two picnic tables have been installed at Houghton Graves Park on Orr's Island. One is in the shade looking down into Beal's Cove through the trees and a second is at the southern end of the park with a great view looking north over Beal's Cove and Rat Island. The entrance to the short walking trail is on Harpswell Islands Road opposite Lowell's Cove Road. Follow the path between the split-rail fence and the cat-tail marsh.



A nice spot for a picnic at Houghton Graves Park.

Easement Notes

Some beautiful properties are preserved by conservation easements. These properties are privately owned. Their owners have chosen to restrict future development to ensure that the natural beauty is available for future generations. Some are open to public access, while others are not.



Wilson's Cove Trail is an easy 1/2 mile walk with a nice view.

Wilson's Cove Trail

At the Wilson's Cove Trail, a small load of gravel was dumped to facilitate volunteer Bob Weggel's efforts to reduce the wet spots along the trail. The parking lot for this short walk is on Harpswell Neck Road, almost a mile south of Mountain Road.

Widgeon Cove Trail at the Dunning Farm

A parking lot has been constructed at what will be the trailhead of the Widgeon Cove Trail about a mile south of Mountain Road on Harpswell Neck Road. Work on the trail has been ongoing and we aim to have the trail open for public use by next summer or fall.

Easement Monitoring

Trustees and volunteers have been busy with the annual monitoring of HHLT's conservation easements to ensure that the purpose of the easement is being upheld.

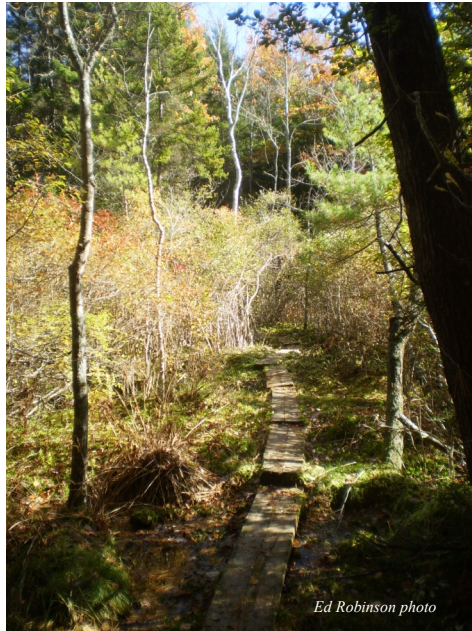
Find more information about all of our preserves at www.hhlmaine.org.

Losing Yourself at Long Reach Preserve

By Ed Robinson

Right up front I'll state that I am not advocating getting lost in this lovely forest, but it is a great place to get away with your thoughts, or a good friend. With 93 acres and substantial depth between Route 24 and the waters of Long Reach, here you will find solitude and beauty in many forms. Stick with the new yellow trail markers and you will have trouble getting "turned around."

On a gorgeous autumn day, I grabbed my camera and chose the full loop trail because I needed some exercise. After leaving the parking area to the right of Trufant-Summerton Ball Field, I entered the cool forest and approached the southern end of Long Marsh. Here the marsh is fresh water, but as you go north to Doughty Cove,



Ed Robinson photo

that is a highlight of this property. There I flushed two mallards, which may have been attracted by a good crop of red oak acorns. Mid-day sun highlighted the lush sphagnum moss in bright green and red, along with cranberry and cotton grass.

Dropping further down the trail, I came to Long Reach itself, a flooded valley that shelters productive mud flats. Total shoreline on the property is 2,400 feet, with some steeper sections so please watch your step. The habitat here supports not only mollusks, but also shorebirds and waterfowl. To prove the point, several black ducks flushed as I walked to the shore's edge. I heard but could not see an osprey somewhere overhead. I saw a wildlife trail along the shoreline, with deer tracks in the soft soil.

On your return, the loop trail winds its way back through the southern end of the peat bog, and over the rocky ridge. The southern part of the trail takes you along an old stone wall, and

finally back to the parking lot. My walk, stopping to take lots of photos, required 1 ¼ hours. If pressed for time, you can take the shorter bog trail and skip the



Ed Robinson photo

walk down to Long Reach. However, this beautiful property could easily absorb two or three hours of your day, and you would return home refreshed.

The preserve shares a parking area with the Trufant-Summerton Ball Field, which is approx. three miles south from the Brunswick town line on the Harpswell Islands Road (Route 24). Park on the right upon entering the ball field property and follow the signs and blazes.



Ed Robinson photo

the marsh transitions to salt water. I could hear birds calling in the trees on all sides and enjoyed the fresh scents wafting on a gentle breeze.

Crossing a small stream, I started up the first of two ridges, about 90 feet in elevation. The trees in this forest are diverse, including beech, hemlocks, red spruce, red maples, birch and white pines. Numerous rock outcroppings running north and south illustrate the folded bedrock geology common to Harpswell.

Crossing over the ridge to the west, I walked down along the freshwater bog





Learn About Clams with Chris Heinig



Harpswell Heritage Land Trust 2012 Summer Programs

Mary Ann Nahf photos

HHLT's 2012 Annual Meeting: The Legacy of Rachel Carson

By Alicia Heyburn

HHLT members and friends filled the hall at the Elijah Kellogg Church on a hot July evening. The draw was an array of tasty food provided by the board of trustees, updates on HHLT projects and an enticing program titled: "Where have we come since *Silent Spring*?"

Speaker Gail Carlson, a Colby College Professor, did a wonderful job helping us recognize the 40th anniversary of the Clean Water Act and the 50th anniversary of the release of Rachel Carson's influential book, *Silent Spring*. Both of these national works had impact in Harpswell.

The words and work of Rachel Carson were a catalyst for great change in the way we treated our earth. Professor Carlson believes we can still learn about the human relationship to the land, oceans, wildlife, and importantly, to ourselves, and encouraged us all to (re) read the book and let it guide our choices for grocery shopping, lawn care and lifestyle. Despite the efforts of Carson and others who followed, a long list of harmful chemicals is still in daily use— we must be educated consumers and thoughtful inhabitants of the earth.



Rachel Beane's Geology of the Giant Stairs



14th Annual Nature Day Camp



Mitchell Field Community Garden

The Mitchell Field Community Garden celebrated its first growing year in 2012, with 11 families tending plots and 190 pounds of produce donated to the Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program in Brunswick.

There is plenty of room for future growth at the garden, both for more people to rent plots and for a bigger community garden.

"We are grateful for all the community support we've received from our Harpswell neighbors, who have contributed seedlings and tools and volunteer service and from the many local businesses who provided discounted or free goods and services," said organizer Jane Covey.

The Community Garden at Mitchell Field is funded by HHLT but run by volunteers. Anyone interested in getting involved or renting a plot should contact Jane at 725-5601 or covey-brown@gmail.com.

If you're interested in starting a community garden in your neighborhood, contact Julia McLeod at HHLT.



(Outreach, continued from page 1)

working as a newspaper reporter, wilderness guide, trail crew leader, English teacher, and more. I grew up in Wayne, Maine, and I don't intend to leave my home state.

I very much look forward to learning about coastal ecology and working with volunteers here in Harpswell. The land trust has volunteer opportunities for all ages and all interests — from taking photographs to stuffing envelopes, from teaching children to writing articles for the newsletter, from organizing events to working on trails. Please be in touch if you're interested. You can reach me at outreach@hhlmaine.org or 207-721-1121

Another Invasive Strikes Harpswell

By Anne Perry

In past decades Harpswell has experienced, and survived, gypsy moths, browntail moths, and hemlock wooly adelgids. Another challenge arrived last May when an alert resident on Harpswell Neck detected unusual defoliation of trees around her nursery and reported it to the State entomologist. It was found to be the winter moth (*Operophtera brummat*). This non-native species causes severe defoliation of hardwood trees and can eventually kill them.

The “upside down” life cycle of this moth means that all summer and fall it lies disguised in the soil as it develops to the adult breeding stage. Not many of us are expecting a plague of insects to emerge from soil in winter, but here are these brown male moths hanging around lights as December approaches. In springtime tiny, but voracious, “looper” caterpillars hatch and start feeding on buds and leaves of hardwood trees, dropping to the soil by late June to complete the cycle.

While the State is researching the winter moth extent and control, there are preventive measures residents can take. Find out more by visiting www.harpswell.maine.gov, picking up a flyer at the Town Office, or coming to drop-in information sessions at the HHLT Community Room on Nov. 12 or Nov. 19 from 6-8 p.m.

(Woodcock, continued from page 8)

of short calls and then soars as high as 300 feet in the air. He then drops to the ground in a dizzying, erratic flight while making chirping sounds. The air rushing through his feathers adds a twittering sound. A female woodcock will land nearby and watch as the male struts around with wings stretched upward, bobbing and weaving.

The female's ground nest will be a rudimentary affair in leaf and twig litter, with up to 4 eggs. Within 2 weeks of birth, the chicks begin short flights and are independent within 5 weeks.

As with many other species, woodcock have suffered from long term changes in land management and the loss of habitat. While they are not considered a threatened species at this time, their numbers have fallen more than 1% annually for the last 4 decades. For its

part, Maine's Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife has designated woodcock a “species of greatest conservation concern.” Wildlife managers, hunters and conservationists have mounted a number of programs to create young forest habitat to help woodcock, and more than 50 other species will also benefit including deer, ruffed grouse, warblers and New England cottontails.

Make a point to get out in the field next spring on a pleasant evening to see if you can witness the soaring flight and unique calls of the romantic little male woodcock. Or join Rob Bryan for a guided trip (see the events calendar on page 2 for more information). And next time you stumble upon one of the birds in thick cover, you will have a better appreciation for just how special this little bird is.

Thank You to Long-Time Trustee, Doc Phillips!

By Mary Ann Nahf

HHLT lost a strong and effective leader this year when Doc Phillips retired.

Walter “Doc” Phillips joined the Board of Trustees in 1993, a year after the Harpswell Heritage Trust registered to become an independent membership organization. In the Land Trust's first 10 years, it had been part of the Harpswell Historical Society, primarily to hold easements on historical properties.

Doc served as president from 1996 to 2001. Under his leadership, the Land Trust continued to grow, acquiring Potts Point, Stover's Point and Long Reach Preserves. An additional 525 acres were preserved by conservation easements from land owners and membership passed 400.

In 1997, when Doc heard about another Land Trust's day

camp program, he immediately thought how this would be a good way to reach out to Harpswell's youngsters. After getting pointers from program directors at Chewonki in Wiscasset, he initiated our Nature Day Camp the following year.

When Doc stepped down in 2001, 950 acres of land open to the public had been acquired. HHLT added *Land* to its name, an executive director was hired and office space was rented across from the Anchor Office in Harpswell Center. Prior to this, the Phillips' home served as the Land Trust's office.

After taking a year off, Doc returned to the Board in 2002. He served as Treasurer for 6 years, and as Lands Committee Chair until his retirement.

Besides with the Land Trust, Doc kept busy helping with the Harpswell Neck Fire and Rescue and serving on numerous Town committees. *Thanks and Good Luck Doc!*



Stalking the Timberdoodle

By Ed Robinson

Unless you enjoy skulking around in alder thickets, you may not have encountered one of Harpswell's more interesting birds. If you have flushed one of these tiny missiles, you were probably too startled to get a good look at him.

Our friend is properly called the American woodcock (*scolopax minor*), although he has many folk names, including timberdoodle, night partridge and brush snipe. The woodcock is scientifically classified with sandpipers and other shorebirds, but his preferred habitat is brushy young forestland. Here, the bird's brown, black and gray feathers offer great camouflage to foil predators.

With short legs, a chunky body and a large, round head, the woodcock will not win avian beauty contests, but he is distinctive in many ways. Large eyes are

located high on the head, the key to spotting predatory raptors. While the woodcock eats snails, spiders, ants and seeds, his long, straight bill gives him access to his preferred foods, invertebrates, mostly earthworms. That bill is used to probe soft soil in thickets.

Woodcock are migratory, spending winters in the south-east among the Gulf coast and Atlantic coast states and summers in the north-eastern United States and maritime Canada. Cold fronts in mid October and early November will push the birds south,

flying mostly at night, and they will be back in Maine by early April. This is the trigger for one of nature's more interesting courtship routines.

Early and late in the day, even in bright moonlight, the male chooses a forest opening. Here he makes a series

(See *Woodcock*, continued on page 7)



Brian B. Allen photo



Mary Ann Noh photo

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