Nature, Community, Forever

FALL 2014

A Closer Look at Stover's Point Preserve

By Doug Warren

n a sparkling summer Sunday morning, Stover's Point Preserve is bustling, but by no means crowded. The four-acre swath of sand, rock and gravel that curls around a grassy salt marsh is dotted with sun worshippers in folding lawn chairs and families with young children wading in the gently lapping waters of Harpswell Sound. Cars are parked here and there along the gravel spine of the preserve. One SUV backs a small fishing boat into its element.

Stover's Point offers glorious panoramic views: Off to the east is the supple curve of the Cribstone Bridge connecting Orr's and Bailey islands. To the west runs the long, green length of Harpswell Neck. Everywhere you look, boats of all kinds rock at their moorings or glide across the water that glistens in the sun.

Brandi Adams of Harpswell and her son, Hayden, 5, have spread their towels on the marsh side of the point. Adams says she tries to come to Stover's at least once a week during the summer. "I like it because of the safety, the beauty and the opportunities for learning about nature all the time," she says. Hayden sits on his chair set up in the warmer waters of the marsh. He's on the lookout for fish.

Over on the east side of the point, where the



MARY ANN NAHE

more rocky north shore shifts to sand, Alan McGregor and Tammy Roy of Harpswell are soaking up the sun and the scenery. McGregor says a visit to Stover's Point is a Sunday morning ritual: coffee, breakfast and maybe a Bloody Mary. "It's awesome," says McGregor, who appreciates the role played by the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust in preserving special places like Stover's Point. "The more parcels we can preserve, the better!"

The Huston family originally deeded Stover's Point to the Nature

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Harpswell Heritage Land Trust's first Preschool Nature Day Camp spent a fun morning at Stover's Point Preserve.

Harpswell Heritage Land Trust Launches Forever Fund

By Reed Coles, Executive Director

hen we protect a preserve or an easement, we are making a commitment to protect and steward that land or building forever.

Forever is a long time.

To provide the long-term funding for HHLT to continue to preserve and protect the Harpswell we love, we have established an endowment called the Forever Fund. This fund will ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the scenery and recreational opportunities we enjoy today.

The Forever Fund was initiated when HHLT was awarded a \$25,000 challenge grant from the Maine Community Foundation's Ram Island Conservation

Fund to match the first \$25,000 in contributions. HHLT's Board of Trustees pledged an equal amount to increase the match to \$50,000. Right now every dollar of your donation to the Forever Fund will be matched!

More importantly, your gift to the Forever Fund will leave a lasting legacy for your descendants, support continued conservation of Harpswell's special places and ensure that HHLT remains a vibrant organization now and in the future.

Donations of cash, pledges, securities and irrevocable planned gifts all qualify. We encourage you to consult with your financial and legal advisers.

For more information, or to contribute to the Forever Fund, contact me at 207-721-1121 or info@hhltmaine.org.

Our Mission:

To preserve and protect Harpswell's natural environment, wildlife, open spaces, islands, shoreline and cultural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations through conservation, stewardship, education and landowner assistance.





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Note From the President

arpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT) is applying for national accreditation this fall. Your Board of Trustees started down the road to accreditation in November 2011 with a formal organizational assessment that compared our policies and procedures to standards and practices established by the Land Trust Alliance, an umbrella group for the country's 1,700 land trusts, of which HHLT is a member.

Our decision to pursue accreditation was two-fold. First, preparing for accreditation strengthens our ability to execute our mission. And second, achieving accreditation demonstrates to our members, donors, funding agencies, community partners and the public that HHLT's operations meet the highest national standards.

The process of preparing for accreditation has met our expectations, yielding a criteria-driven project review process, policies to guide Board decision-making, management plans for our preserves, a renewed emphasis on stewardship and more. We are now hard at work compiling our application.

Since the accreditation program began in 2008, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission has granted its seal of approval to only 254 land trusts, 11 of which are in Maine. I look forward to HHLT joining this select group and want to thank our Executive Director and the Accreditation Committee of the Board for the countless hours they have invested to help HHLT achieve this milestone.

Best. Charlie Johnson

News and Updates

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Summer events and programs were well-attended and enjoyable, including the Sunset Cruise, HHLT's Annual Meeting with a panel discussion about "Our Changing Ocean," the grand opening of the Maine Coast Fishermen's Oral History Initiative, several Harpswell Family Outings and two sessions of Nature Day Camp. See page 4 for photos.

New Trustees

HHLT is happy to welcome two new members to its Board of Trusteees. **Gina Perow** is a native of Harpswell, growing up on Orr's Island and making her home with her husband, Chuck, and three children, Casi, Sophie and Sam, on Great Island. Her hobbies include running, hiking with her kids and making healthy food. She has served as Recreation Director for the Town of Harpswell for the past five years, and she already works closely with HHLT to collaborate on programming. Gina is interested in making sure current and future generations have access to the water.

Lynn Knight was an environmental consultant for 25 years. She was a Vice President at Eastern Research Group, where she managed research studies for the US Environmental Protection Agency. She also wrote public education documents, designed public outreach programs and supported the EPA in several national and international stakeholder initiatives related to drinking water treatment, wastewater treatment, climate change, producer responsibility and electronics recycling. In a volunteer capacity in Massachusetts, she was a founding member and 10-year participant in the town of Carlisle's Land Stewardship Committee, which assists the Conservation Commission in managing the town's conservation properties. She is also a trustee of the Carlisle Conservation Foundation, a private land trust. In addition, she is a founding member and past Chair of a watershedwide invasive species cooperative group of 40-plus member towns, land trusts and government and non-government organizations.

Seeking Public Comment for Land Trust Accreditation

he Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT) is pleased to announce it is applying for national accreditation.

Our application will be submitted to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. The Commission will conduct an extensive review of our policies and programs to ensure they meet national standards for excellence in protecting important natural places and working lands forever.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how HHLT complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see http://www. landtrustaccreditation.org/ tips-and-tools/indicatorpractices.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation. org, or email your comment to info@ landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on HHLT's application will be most useful if submitted by Nov. 21, 2014.



Land Conservation

Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT) is working toward preserving the wild scenic beauty of southern Little Yarmouth Island. The Island is located in Quahog Bay, between Yarmouth Island and the Raspberry islands. This parcel is one of the last remaining undeveloped island properties to be conserved in eastern Casco Bay. Many surrounding islands are already conserved, and they provide valuable habitat for birds and other wildlife. HHLT has applied for a grant from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Program. The Land Trust has a history of success with this grant program. Past grants have helped fund the purchase of Curtis Farm Preserve, White Island Preserve and the pending purchase of part of Liberty Farm. If HHLT is awarded the grant, the purchase will close next summer. The new preserve will be open to the public.

Stewardship

HHLT continues to focus stewardship efforts on Curtis Farm Preserve. The preserve now has master plans for improving and maintaining wildlife habitat and for public access. HHLT has applied for a grant to fund invasive plant removal and to do patch cuts to make small openings in the forest to encourage new growth. Trails are in process.

HHLT has initiated a volunteer steward program. Volunteeers are assigned to each of the Land Trust's preserves and trails. These volunteers work closely with HHLT's Trustees to maintain trails, pick up trash, stock brochure boxes and keep an eye on things. If you see our stewards, please thank them.

The Land Trust says goodbye and thanks to summer employee Ben Godsoe. Ben writes: "My work with the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust has

come to a close this summer, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you. I greatly appreciate being welcomed into the HHLT community. This summer I participated in many aspects of land trust work. All of the projects I worked on were exciting, and I learned a lot about land trust programs, land stewardship and management, organizing events and the value of volunteerism.

"I felt privileged to work with volunteers to develop and begin construction of a trail system on Curtis Farm Preserve. Volunteer trail workdays were a great way to accomplish tasks, but also meet neighbors and others who value this unique property. Curtis Farm Preserve and other HHLT properties speak to all ages and walks of life, with big rocks to climb on, trails to walk, shores to traverse, woods to explore (and hornet nests to dodge). Public lands help define our sense of place, influencing the course of our lives and changing the way we think about the world and our place in it.

"Thank you all for your hard work to preserve Harpswell's special places and empowering residents and visitors of all ages to actively engage the natural world." And a big thanks to you, too, Ben!

Community Outreach

HHLT is pleased to announce the launch of

the Holbrook Education Initiative. This partnership between Holbrook Community Foundation and Harpswell Heritage Land Trust will expand the environmental education opportunities for Harpswell's youth and families through collaborative work with local schools and expanded nature camps. You will hear more details in the coming months. Thanks to this initiative, Outreach Coordinator Julia McLeod will now work full-time for HHLT.

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Upcoming Events and **Programs**

For more information, visit www.hhltmaine.org. All events free unless otherwise indicated.

Every Thursday, 10 a.m. Rain or Shine Hiking Group for young children and the adults in their lives

Mon., Oct. 20, 6:30 p.m. **Nest Boxes for Birds** Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, 153 Harpswell Neck Rd

Sun., Oct. 26, 1-3 p.m. **Harpswell Family Outing:** Cider Pressing & Apple Day Harpswell Coastal Academy, 9 Ash Point Rd

Sun., Nov. 9, 3-5 p.m. **Building Nest Boxes** Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, 153 Harpswell Neck Rd \$10 materials fee

Thurs., Nov. 13, 6:30-8 p.m. A Late Autumn Yoga Practice with Kara Douglas Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, 153 Harpswell Neck Rd Pre-registration required. Suggested donation, \$5-\$20,

Sun., Nov. 23, 1-3 p.m. **Harpswell Family Outing:** TBD

CURT CHIPMAN PHOTO



Abigail Sibley: A Local Artist, a Local Friend to the Trust

by Christine N. Farrell

rive down three hills, park by my car, then walk down the lane." Those were her directions. And perfect they were.

Abigail Sibley's cottage was built in 1937 on the shores of Middle Bay on 27 acres purchased by Abigail's father, a Bowdoin professor, for \$1,200. Each summer, Abigail and her family came to explore Middle Bay and observe the farmers and fisherman then earning a living in Harpswell.

Traveling today down those hills (count 'em, three!), you know a true Maine beauty awaits you at the bottom. Hidden in the trees, the cottage sits on ledge, providing Abigail the artist with exquisite eye candy to paint. Long ago Abigail studied history to earn a PhD, but today Abigail paints, to the delight of all of us here in Harpswell.

Abigail's note cards are unique oneperson views of the natural beauties of the Neck and the Islands. One spectacular card features the Great Blue Heron, another the Puffin. Other cards capture the rugged splendor of pine and fir trees clinging to ledge.

Abigail chose to honor the work of HHLT by creating watercolors and contributing the hand-tinted cards to the Land Trust for their sale. Abigail believes the Land Trust is one of the best changes she has seen in the 50-plus years of visits to Harpswell. HHLT supports the "good will, expertise and generosity of the people" of the Harpswell community, she says. By painting cards for the Land Trust, Abigail has found a way to contribute in her own unique way. Do you have unique assets or skills you would like to contribute? Help out however you can and be like Abigail, a true friend to Harpswell Heritage Land Trust.

Summer Events and Programs

Harpswell Heritage Land Trust hosted a variety of summer events and programs, including (from left to right) the grand opening for the Maine Coast Fishermen's Oral History Initiative, a new Preschool Nature Day Camp, our annual meeting with a panel discussion about "Our Changing Ocean" and our second annual Sunset Cruise.





PHOTO COURTESY OF GALEN KOCH, CASCO BAY ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP



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We very much appreciate our business sponsors, who donate or discount goods and services or support the Land Trust with cash donations. Please thank these businesses for supporting conservation in Harpswell.

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Alicia Heyburn organized the successful 2014 Sunset Cruise, and even recruited her daughter, Caroline, to help out.

R. A. Webber and Sons **Scarlet Begonias SchoolHouse Cafe** Shaw's Supermarket Stoddard L. Smith, PA **Taylor Made Signs** The Vicarage by the Sea Vail's Tree Service Wilbur's Of Maine Chocolate Confections









Thank you to our dedicated volunteers

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Stover's Point Preserve

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Conservancy in 1970. In 1971, ownership was transferred to the Harpswell Garden Club and finally to the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust in 2000. Directions to the site can be found on the HHLT website: (http://hhltmaine. org/conserved-land/ public-access/stovers-pointpreserve/) Be sure to take the admonition about protecting your vehicle's undercarriage to heart. Stover's Point Preserve is not easy to find, but the trip is well worth it for anyone seeking the pristine beauty and serenity of the Maine coast.





During the past year, the Harpswell Family Outing Club built nest boxes for birds and hung them at Curtis Farm Preserve. This summer bluebirds and other songbirds moved into the boxes. This fall you can learn about nest boxes and make one to take home. See page 3 for more details.



JULIA MCLEOD PHOTOS



Fall Migrations

by Christine N. Farrell

e know that Harpswell and Casco Bay are perfect places to spend the summer. But did you know that we also live in a fall wonderland? If you, like me, are a birder, you know that we live in a perfect place to see birds of all kinds, especially birds on the run to South America.

Birds traveling from the Artic migrate south right through our community every year. The Casco Bay region is rich in food and shelter for these migrants. If you visit many of our preserved properties, you are sure to see travelers on the wing.

You may find gorgeously colored birds in our fields this fall, including Scarlet Tanagers, Pine Warblers, Cedar Waxwings and Eastern Bluebirds.

On the shore, catch sight of loons, osprey, plovers, terns, herons and the occasional Snow Goose. Spot the Belted Kingfisher as it dives headlong from the air into the water to catch a tasty treat.

If you are really lucky, you may be able to add a Sandhill Crane to your life bird list. A few were recently spotted in August in Cumberland County.

Where are the best places to raise your binoculars to the skies? Harpswell has many excellent properties on which to observe and identify our tiny

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Fall Migrations

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friends: Skolfield Shores Preserve, Widgeon Cove Trail, and Long Reach Preserve. At Curtis Farm Preserve, the Land Trust provides 86 acres of food and shelter to warblers, wrens, flycatchers and swallows. The land at Curtis in the fall is covered with native wildflower seed heads, offering rich sources of high protein for our traveling friends from the north. They stop here during the day and night to replenish as they make their way to Costa Rica, Nicaragua and even farther south.

Bring your binoculars to any of these properties and you will be delighted by seeing and hearing the birds overhead. You will be reminded of the incredible miracles that happen every day in the fall as these avian migrants travel hundreds, if not thousands, of miles from Canada through our region to the tropics.

Always on the move, these little travelers need lots



SNOWY OWL PHOTO BY NORM TALBOT, FRANKLIN, ME

of food and shelter to make their annual journeys. By leaving our properties natural, HHLT is able to offer these birds healthy corridors to make the journey. The Land Trust helps preserve not just the land itself, but also the centuries of migrations that these little birds perform year after year, from north to south and back. Without corridors of preserved land, these birds would struggle to make their annual migration. Visit our properties and enjoy our trails. You will be delighted by the sights and sounds you will find. Guaranteed!

Seven Great Fall Birding Spots in Harpswell

- 1. Curtis Farm Preserve, Harpswell Neck
- 2. Pott's Point Preserve, Harpswell Neck
- 3. Garrison Cove, Bailey Island
- 4. Skolfield Shores
 Preserve, Harpswell
 Neck
- 5. Giant's Stairs and McIntosh Lot trails, Bailey Island
- 6. Long Reach Preserve, Great Island
- 7. Mitchell Field, Harpswell Neck

What are your favorite fall birding spots in Harpswell? Add to this list by sending us an email to outreach@ hhltmaine.org or posting on our Facebook page.

The Value of a Field

By Ed Robinson

eople generally think of forests as critical wildlife habitat. But forests are only part of the solution to providing food, water, and shelter for all Nature's creatures. Many species require a diversity of habitat through the stages of life. We need to consider open spaces in the overall habitat equation, especially fields or meadows.

Before the European settlers, dry land openings existed on poor soils, or were created by natural disasters, beavers or Native Americans. In the last 200 years, wide-scale clearing of forests created vast stretches of farmland. In Maine, farms on marginal lands were abandoned in the early 20th century, and fields often reverted to forest. The loss of those fields contributed to declining populations of woodcock,

pheasant, and in Northern Maine, whitetail deer.

I recently stayed two weeks at our old farm in central New York, spending time each day in the 45-acre field. The field is particularly valuable as the only open land among 8,000 acres of private and state forest. While we maintain food plots of corn, clover and soybeans, we manage the field to include wildflowers, goldenrod, milkweed, bull thistle, blackberries and dozens of other trees and shrubs. As a result, the field has a diversity of wildlife that would not exist if it was dedicated just to wheat or alfalfa.

Field corn was over eight feet tall this year, and several deer were spotted taking advantage of the great food and cover. After my mowing was done, a flock of turkeys moved in to harvest seeds and grasshoppers. With all the flowering plants, the field was alive with butterflies, dragonflies, hummingbirds and even a large swarm of honey bees spotted one day on a Norway spruce.

I observed many birds, with blue jays, chickadees and downy woodpeckers moving on the field edges.
Red-tailed hawks love to soar on the thermals, and one day I came upon a Cooper's hawk that had harvested

a wild turkey poult. The hawk stared me down for long seconds before reluctantly flying away with the remains of his kill. He might equally have taken one of the cottontail rabbits who thrive in the wide hedgerows we have allowed to flourish.

The rich grasses harbor a wide variety of smaller creatures, from crickets and spiders, to grass snakes and white footed mice. Day and night, these small creatures serve as prey species for the raptors, striped skunks and red fox. On two occasions I heard coyotes calling, announcing success in the constant battle for food.



ED ROBINSON PHOTO

of small fields, including those at our preserves at Curtis Farm, Skolfield Shores, Long Reach and the Hackett Land Preserve. When you visit these properties, enjoy the forested areas, but spare a few minutes to explore the open spaces and look for the wildlife that needs this kind of habitat to prosper. With help from the Friends of Curtis Farm, vour Land Trust has a new habitat management plan for that wonderful 86-acre property that includes a four-acre field. HHLT will gradually enhance the habitat of the field so that we can better serve humans and wildlife alike.

HHLT has several examples



PO Box 359 Harpswell, ME 04079

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