



Harpswell Heritage Land Trust

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.

Newsletter Fall 2013

Issue #41

Challenges For Our Ocean

By Ed Robinson

It is hard to believe that anyone who spends more than a few days in Harpswell could fail to cherish the beautiful sea that ebbs and flows throughout our town. For those who grew up here, the ocean surely played a role in your life, possibly providing at least part of your income. For transplants, the beauty of our coastal town was probably a major factor in your decision to relocate here. But the ocean we love is threatened on many fronts, and we must be alert to the problems.

For much of human history, oceans were seen as a resource without limit, as well as a dumping ground for untold quantities of wastes. Maine has a rich history of harvesting all manner of foods and industrial products from the ocean, from giant whales to much smaller shellfish and marine plants. But we have not always been good stewards of that ocean, thanks to agricultural, residential, and industrial wastes that have caused pollu-

tion. All that sea glass beloved by tourists did not fall in the ocean by chance!

All of us have heard about the depletion of vital marine fish stocks. A recent Frost and Sullivan market research report noted that in the last 40 years, average annual seafood consumption has risen from 1 to 18 pounds per person while ocean fish harvests have been essentially flat. As incomes rise in developing countries, and people learn more about the health benefits of eating fish rich in omega 3 fatty acids, demand will continue to grow.

Ocean pollution has been a major concern for many years and in the Western world we have made great progress in reducing the damage. Regulatory agencies and conservation groups at all levels have developed education initiatives and oversight programs to bring about significant drops in industrial

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We listen! Harpswell Heritage Land Trust is involving the community in its planning for Curtis Farm Preserve. (John Boomer photo)

Curtis Farm Preserve: A Gathering Place

Peg Newberg remembers her son crying with joy when he found out that Curtis Farm was going to be preserved forever by Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT). He was particularly happy to hear that the "rock" (a huge glacial erratic on the property) would be protected. Peg describes how her children grew up playing on that rock, and now her grandchildren play there too.

"It's a magical place for young people and we would like it to continue to be for future generations," Peg said.

Peg and Don Newberg live next door to Curtis Farm Preserve, but it isn't just neighbors who remember spending time on the property. Many people in town remember going to the bean hole suppers that the boy scouts put on there,

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Harpswell's local marine-based industries depend on a healthy ocean. (Elsa Martz photo)

Our fall newsletter is mailed to all property owners in Harpswell. If you are not already a member, please consider joining!

Harpswell Heritage Land Trust Board of Trustees

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- Deane Van Dusen

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- Julia McLeod, Outreach Coordinator

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Keep in touch! Send us your email address to be added to our monthly email newsletter.

Curtis Farm Preserve

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or playing on the baseball field that was formerly on the property.

“This was a gathering place,” Peg added. The town was lucky that past owners of the property allowed people to enjoy it. When the property went up for sale, that access was put in jeopardy.

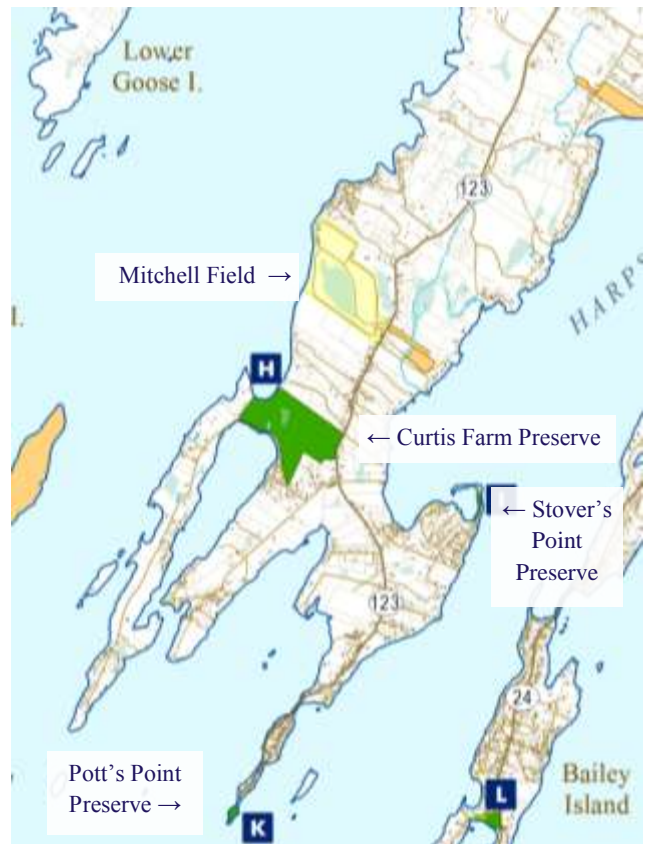
In the end, HHLT was able to raise the money to buy the property and protect it from development. As the largest piece of undeveloped land in South Harpswell (86 acres), the property is as important for wildlife and plants as it is for people.

This August HHLT embarked on a process of seeking community feedback on public uses of Curtis Farm Preserve. This process has led to the formation of the Friends of Curtis Farm, which is a group focused making recommendations to HHLT’s Stewardship Committee about trails and other improvements to the property. Feedback has varied from walking, skiing, and snowshoeing trails to interpretive signs or camping. Forester Rob Bryan has

drafted recommendations for improving wildlife habitat on the preserve.

“It’s full of animals. I would like to see this land preserved for them,” said one member of the Friends group, Johanna Wigg. “They’re being forced out elsewhere.”

To get involved, contact Julia McLeod at 207-837-9613.



The Harpswell Family Outing Club explored Pott’s Point Preserve in June.

Families Exploring Nature Together

The Harpswell Family Outing Club is a collaborative project of the Harpswell Community Nursery School, Harpswell Recreation Department and Harpswell Heritage Land Trust. Our goal is to build community around enjoying the outdoors together.

Upcoming events include:

- Nov. 3, 11 a.m.: All About Birds: Build nest boxes to hang on HHLT preserves. HHLT office, 153 Harpswell Neck Road.
- Jan. 12, 1 p.m.: Create Nature Journals. Cundy’s Harbor Library, 935 Cundy’s Harbor Road.
- Feb. 9, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.: Try Out Snowshoeing. Mitchell Field, 1428 Harpswell Neck Road.

For more information, contact Julia McLeod at 207-837-9613 or outreach@hhlmaine.org or join our Facebook group.

Harpwell Heritage Land Trust's Community Partnerships

Harpwell Heritage Land Trust actively seeks out community partnerships. By working together, we get more accomplished! Here are some of the groups HHLT has or will partner with.

Local Schools

With their focus on project-based and place-based learning, Harpswell Coastal Academy (HCA) is a natural fit with HHLT's goals of engaging young people with Harpswell's environment. Not only that, but the school is within walking distance of HHLT's Curtis Farm Preserve. Discussions are in the works for interesting collaborative projects.

HHLT is also working with teachers, staff and the PTO to develop and implement place-based educational programs for students at Harpswell Community School.

The Harpswell Family Outing Club

is a collaboration of HHLT, the Harpswell Community Nursery School, and the Harpswell Recreation Department.



Harpwell Coastal Academy students explore HHLT's Stover's Point Preserve. (Photo courtesy of Harpswell Coastal Academy)

Town of Harpswell

HHLT actively collaborates with many town committees, including the Town Lands, Recreation, and Harpswell Community Garden Committees and the Conservation Commission.

Other Land Trusts

Maine is lucky to have so many Land Trusts! HHLT recognizes that each local Land Trust can accomplish more when we work together. The Middle Bay Wetlands Partnership brings together HHLT, Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, and Maine Coast Heritage Trust to preserve valuable wildlife habitat and wetlands around Middle Bay.

HHLT also organizes joint events with Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust and Kennebec Estuary Land Trust.

Harpwell Helpers

The Harpswell Helpers is a new group of individuals and organizations in Harpswell that are working to benefit the community. We work together to help us plan events, share information, and collaborate when appropriate.

Why support the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust?

Harpwell Heritage Land Trust is a membership-supported and volunteer-driven nonprofit. More than 90 percent of our operating expenses come from membership contributions. Here's what some of our members say about why they support HHLT:

Harpwell is a unique and wonderful collection of beautiful islands and an awesome peninsula. We want to do our small part to keep it so.

—William McLin



Rob Bryan photo

Open space helps preserve the water table and water quality. Creating wildlife corridors and buffers against development help preserve both eco-diversity and the shore's resources. All of this also gives us humans a place to reflect, recreate and rejuvenate.

—Susan Lowery

My support is rooted in the need to protect our coast, wetlands and land and though I support controlled development in the town, I also want to preserve parts as I knew them as a child.

—Chad MacArthur

I support the Land Trust because Harpswell has been my lifetime home, and is precious to me as a haven for wildlife as well as people. The Trust has contributed immeasurably to the quality of Harpswell life. I recently met a young couple based in Washington who have undertaken to restore a virtually derelict Victorian farmhouse in the village. They



explained that their choice of Harpswell was a direct result of their admiration for the Trust's work here.

—Abigail Sibley

I contribute to the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust because of the vital work it does in preserving the beauty of our coastal community and because of its educational mission, which will help ensure that Harpswell is preserved for future generations. —Doug Warren

A Wrap-Up of 2013 Events and Programs



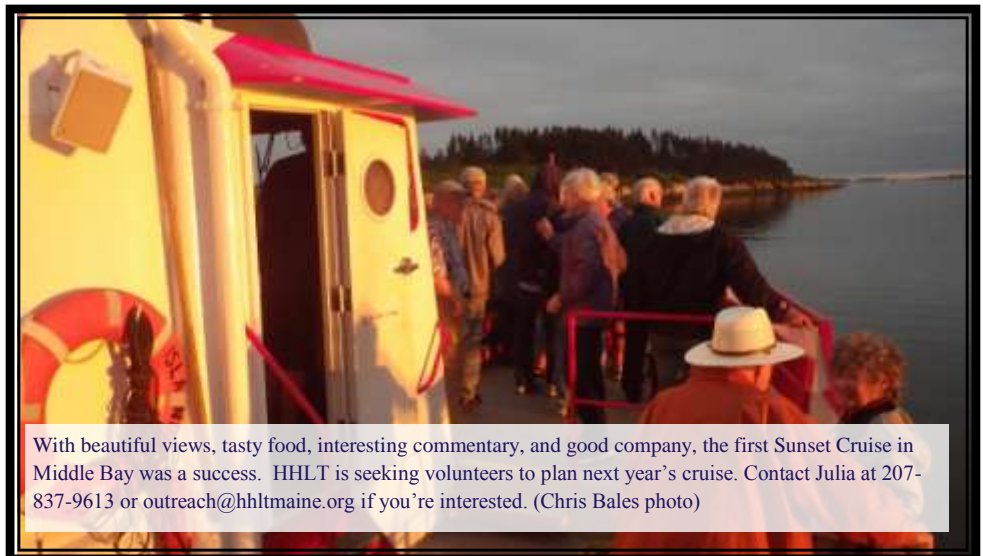
Tulle Frazer led a program about horseshoe crabs this spring. HHLT organizes a variety of programs for all ages. (Curt Chipman photo)



The Birding Extravaganza was a collaborative project of HHLT with Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust and Kennebec Estuary Land Trust. (Curt Chipman photo)



Learning how to dig clams.



With beautiful views, tasty food, interesting commentary, and good company, the first Sunset Cruise in Middle Bay was a success. HHLT is seeking volunteers to plan next year's cruise. Contact Julia at 207-837-9613 or outreach@hhltmaine.org if you're interested. (Chris Bales photo)

Please Thank These Businesses for Supporting Conservation in Harpswell

We greatly appreciate our business sponsors, who donate or discount goods and services or support the Land Trust with cash donations.

We'd love to add you to this list! Contact us for more information at 207-721-1121 or info@hhltmaine.org.

2013 HHLT sponsors

Boucher Perkins Campbell Paradis

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Sponsors of HHLT's first Sunset Cruise in Middle Bay



Kenney Landscaping



Thank You to the Land Owners who Decide to Conserve Their Land

There are many ways to support Harpswell Heritage Land Trust. One of those ways is to choose to conserve land through donating it, selling it at a bargain, or donating a conservation easement. When land owners donate conservation easements, they maintain ownership of the land but give up the right to develop it now and in the future.

Louise and Chuck Huntington chose to donate a conservation easement to HHLT on their historic farm in 1999. The Huntingtons bought their 1839 home with 50 acres in the 1950s, and they raised their four children there. Chuck taught biology at Bowdoin College and Louise taught preschool and music.

The property was one of Harpswell's original saltwater farms (though it has no ocean shorefront), and it includes undeveloped forest, small ponds, and wetlands. The main house is the only brick Greek Revival Cape known to have been constructed in Harpswell.

"We talked and debated quite a bit," said Louise about the process of deciding if and how to protect the property. In the end they decided to write the easement so future owners could have a small farm on the property. Their children were "all for it," Louise added. "They're very interested in conservation."

"We love having natural, open space around us," Louise said. "I hope that it can mean as much to other families as it has to us."



Spy Rock Farm is preserved forever, thanks to the forward thinking of Louise and Chuck Huntington and their family.

Thank You Kiran

Kiran Pande spent 10 weeks with HHLT this summer through Bowdoin College's Community Matters in Maine Summer Fellowship Program. She developed trail maps and guides for HHLT and Town trails; created other communications materials; helped with Nature Day Camp and the Sunset Cruise; and assisted with other projects. HHLT shared Kiran with Maine Coast Heritage Trust.



Kiran Pande at Nature Day Camp (Kara Douglas photo)

Thank You to our Wonderful Volunteers

HHLT is a volunteer-driven nonprofit, and we are very grateful for all our dedicated volunteers. If you don't already, please consider volunteering with the Land Trust. Among other things, we are looking for volunteers to:

- Research and write up the history of HHLT preserves.
- Help us keep our web presence up to date and optimized.
- Regularly submit event listings to local newspapers and online calendars.

The following people volunteered for HHLT in the past year in the office, on trails, leading programs, and much more. All told, they put in more than 600 hours, and this doesn't include the many volunteer hours our Board of Trustees put in.

We couldn't do it without you!

George Bangs	Tom Carr	Chris Heinig	Abby Roy
Terence Barley	Andrew Cawley	Adam Hunt	Alan Sawyer
Rachel Beane	Caroline Chipman	Ana Ibanez	Cynthia Sawyer
Nancy Bennett	Curtis Chipman	Krista Ingram	Maya Schofield
Marcia Blue	Marie Clarke	Samuel Jamison	Henry Schwartz
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	Jobie Fagans	Jay McCreight	Bob Weggel
	Tulle Frazer	Marnie McFarland	Katrina White
	Emi Gaal	Andy McLeod	Johanna Wigg
	Will Gantt	Don Miskill	David Wilson
	Harriette Griffin	Ken Oehmig	Cate Wnek
	Jonathan Gruber	Ned Perry	Cynthia Wood
	Allisen Haggard	Susan Radomski	Wesley Wood
	George Hausch	Judith Redwine	Aimee York

Meet HHLT's New Members of the Board of Trustees

At its annual meeting in July, the membership elected four excellent new members to the Board of Trustees. We are very fortunate to have them on board. The new Trustees are:



John Berry.

John is a licensed Certified Public Accountant, a retired financial manager and consultant, and has been CFO of Oakhurst Dairy and Sebago Shoe Company. He is

an avid birder, who also enjoys hiking and kayaking. John is a trustee, vice-chair, and former treasurer of Maine Audubon, and has served as president, vice president, and now treasurer of its Merrymeeting Chapter. A Maine Native, he and his wife Jane have two grown children and live on Great Island near Cundy's Harbor. When asked why he is willing to devote his energy and time as an HHLT trustee he says "I support the land trust to preserve habitat in Harpswell for the benefit of birds and animals and so that residents of Harpswell can enjoy and experience nature and the outdoors." John will be serving on the Lands, Programs, and Investment Committees.

Dan Huber.

Dan is a mechanical engineer by training and registered Maine State Professional Engineer. He loves the outdoors and spending time



on the water. He and his wife Chris live on Weber Lane on the Neck overlooking Stover's Point Preserve and the cribstone bridge beyond. They are both well-known to many for their work on the Harpswell Bandstand Committee; Dan

was responsible for designing the structure and supervising its construction. He also serves on the town's Energy Committee. Dan says: "I spent much of my adult life in the Bluegrass Region of central Kentucky. I witnessed many beautiful horse farms lost irretrievably to poorly regulated development. Harpswell is blessed with incredible natural beauty and I feel obligated to help preserve it for future generations, while accommodating for change that is necessary to maintain viability for the community." Dan will be serving on the Stewardship and Building and Grounds Committees.



Jeff Stann.

Jeff is a retired Landscape designer whose firm focused on residential gardens that attract wildlife. He had a previous twenty-year

career in fundraising at the Smithsonian Institution and the Smithsonian Associates program. Jeff also holds a PhD in History, and has published on the history of scientific exploration, Latin America, and cities. A dedicated birder, he has travelled from Tierra del Fuego to Alaska and New Mexico to Nova Scotia in pursuit of birds. He is also an avid hiker, and is looking forward to building a kayak and getting back into boating. Jeff and his significant other, Ellen Shillinglaw, live on Orr's Island. When asked why he joined the land trust he says "I joined because I learned about the important work of HHLT from friends here, because I believe in protecting land for the long-term use of those who come after us, and because I wanted to contribute to my new community." Jeff will be serving on the Stewardship and Development Committees.



Deanne Van Dusen.

Deanne is a licensed Landscape Architect currently employed by the Maine Department of Transportation managing the Field Services and Mitigation Division. He is

responsible for wetland delineations, functional assessments and wetland compensation projects. He lives in the Nationally Registered 1783 Tarr-Eaton house in Harpswell Center. His parents purchased the structure from the Harpswell Historical Society in 1982 and spent eight years carefully restoring it. He purchased it from them in 1999. Deanne and his family have worked with the Land Trust since its formation through honoring the preservation restrictions on the Tarr-Eaton House, the first property easement held by the Trust. He is dedicated to historic preservation and has a long history of restoring historic buildings using 18th and early 19th century practices. He also has much experience in natural resource conservation, land stewardship, trail development and site amenities. He tells us "My interest in HHLT is focused on outreach and the Harpswell community. Through the Trust we build strong connections and relationships while enhancing the town for present and future generations. The work is rewarding, tangible and fulfilling." Deanne will be serving on the Stewardship Committee, where he has already been serving as a volunteer, and on the Building and Grounds Committee.

There's a New Trail in Town...

The Widgeon Cove Trail is nearing completion. When it's ready, we'll put up a roadside sign. The parking lot is across the street from 708 Harpswell Neck Road, within sight of the Wilson's Cove Trail.

Trouble in the Ocean

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and agricultural wastes flowing into the sea. The practice of towing garbage barges into the ocean for dumping has been curtailed. Coastal communities have set higher water quality standards, mandating up-to-date water treatment and septic systems. Stringent controls on coal fired power plants have cut the amount of acid falling back to Earth in rainfall. Around Casco Bay, coastal landowners are being encouraged to avoid the use of toxic materials on their lawns. Still, tens of thousands of pieces of plastic end up in the ocean each day.

In 2013, there have been news stories about three issues of growing concern for communities like ours. First, the temperature of the ocean around us has risen. Even if the long term situation changes, in the near term these rising temperatures are having an impact. Local fishermen have begun to notice scarring and darkening of lobster shells, believed to be caused by a bacterium. While the meat from a diseased lobster is still edible, there is an impact on the marketability of the catch. The rate of lobster shell disease in Maine is reported at ~1 out of 1000 (my observations this summer were higher), but the fear is that the rate will increase.

Many observers report that eel grass beds are being damaged, and in some areas have been nearly eliminated. In the past, eel grass found broad use as a fertilizer and locals harvested it from beaches to insulate basement walls. In the ocean, eel grass serves many roles, from absorbing excess nitrogen to stabilizing sediments, and providing vital cover for young fish, lobsters, and clams. Scientists are trying to determine possible causes for the problem, knowing that eel grass may be impacted by climate change, eel-grass specific diseases, or nutrient imbalances. There is growing evidence that a primary factor in eel grass decline is the green crab.

Public Enemy #1: The Green Crab

If there is a Public Enemy #1 along Maine's coastline these days, it is proba-

bly the green crab (*Carcinus maenas*). While Maine experienced an invasion of green crabs in the 1950's, with significant damage to shellfish populations, the situation today is as bad and may become worse. Surveys along the coastline from Freeport to Downeast have found areas where clams less than two years old in soft sediments have been all but eliminated by green crab predation. To make matters worse, there is growing evidence that when the crabs burrow into the mud trying to find shellfish, they either cut or uproot eel grass, causing long-term impacts on multiple species.

The Maine Department of Marine Resources has labeled the green crabs as "...so destructive to native species, the Department will focus its efforts on reducing green crab populations rather than on their management as a sustainable commercial fishery." There might be some relief in sight if the green crabs had a commercial value sufficient to encourage active harvesting of them, but I'm told that there is almost no demand for these crabs for human consumption. To make matters even worse, there is concern

that the current plague of green crabs are an Icelandic strain so the crabs may be sufficiently cold weather resistant to survive even colder than average Maine winters.

Various groups are looking at ways to attack this problem, either by aggressive efforts to knock down green crab populations, or by finding higher value commercial uses for the crabs. Mother Nature may come to the rescue at some point, since an imbalance in populations is often corrected by disease or the emergence of new predators. But in the meantime, shellfish harvesters will face a significant loss of income and other species may see serious population declines.

When we look out over the ocean on a lovely clear day, it is easy to feel like all is well on Earth. But it is important for us to understand the threats to our vital ocean resources, and to do our best to mitigate those threats in our everyday decisions. Groups such as HHLT have a role to play as well, in the way that we protect our land and water resources, and also in the education programs we provide for the community at large.



Public Enemy #1: The green crab. These crabs have a distinctly green shell, and their shell is up to three inches wide. (Tony Barrett photo)



Photos by Kara Douglas

During a HOT week in July, 25 children explored Harpswell's coastal and inland habitats during the Land Trust's annual Nature Day Camp. What a fun week! Thank you to the volunteers who made camp possible: Kara Douglas, Mary Ann Nahf, David Wilson, Don Miskill, Don Newberg, Peggy Shanler, Natasha Wagner, and our parent and grandparent volunteers.

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Curt Chipman photo

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