

## Wellness and the Outdoors

*This is one in a series of articles about wellness this year. For more, sign up for our email newsletters or visit our website.*

By Doug Warren

**H**arpowell's sweeping ocean vistas, rock-bound shores and fragrant forest trails are beautiful to behold and a balm for the soul.

What if they also help promote good health?

That's the proposition behind Harpswell Heritage Land Trust's year-long campaign for Outdoor Wellness, with a series of events, talks and articles throughout 2019 focusing on the healing qualities of nature.

"We really want to get the message out that enjoying the outdoors not only keeps you

happy, but it also helps keep you healthy," said Reed Coles, HHLT's executive director. "We are particularly blessed here in Harpswell to have such a bounty of natural beauty to enjoy."

Already this year, the land trust has shared information and inspiration about the health benefits of a walk in the woods and gardening, as well as how to protect ourselves from Browntail moth. HHLT is offering a variety of events to help us be well, including programs on ticks, medicinal herbs, edible landscapes and opportunities to get out on the trails and out on the water. And a new pop-up outdoor play and learning area will engage families. Check [www.hhlmaine.org](http://www.hhlmaine.org) for activities throughout the year.



CURT CHILMAN PHOTO

HHLT is not alone in its belief that time spent outdoors is beneficial to human health. "The Nature Fix," a popular and influential 2017 book by Florence Williams, sets out to quantify, through various scientific studies being conducted around the globe, findings that support the

volume's subtitle: "Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative."

Williams travels from Japan and Korea to Utah and Finland to witness the work that scientists are doing to determine the impact that time spent in Nature

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## Johnson Field Preserve: Finding safe harbor

*This is one in a series of articles exploring the history of HHLT preserves. For a longer version of this article and others, visit our website.*

By Nancy West

**W**hat makes Johnson Field Preserve precious is that it's only a field—a field preserving a view that makes the hearts of locals and visitors sing. It's a view to dream about when you're longing for the best places of your life, with a harbor for boats that earn their living, a sandy beach for wading and swimming, and

water that smells salty and fishy and right.

That dream doesn't include three homes. With a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet in Harpswell's Shoreland Zone, the Preserve's 3.5 acres could have allowed three houses to block the view of any passersbys on on Harpswell Islands Road who seek a soul soothing Maine experience.

Between the Preserve and the town's adjacent Mackerel Cove lot, both with conservation easements, all visitors, local or from away, can see the essence of coastal Maine forever. The view needn't be only in their dreams.

Past visitors to Mackerel

Cove have been accidental and not. Will Black, the first settler, must have had friends visit on what was known as Will's Island in Harpswell's 1758 Act of Incorporation. If you'd been his friend, wouldn't you have? He was displaced to Orr's Island by Deacon Bailey and his wife, Hanna, who surely had company, too. A 1776 Royal Navy chart shows nine structures on "Bailes Island," implying that someone's visitors stayed.

I learned this while trying to learn why the cove is called Mackerel Cove. Most Harpswell coves are named for people, not fish. And if named for fish, with

cod king of early fisheries, why wasn't it "Cod Cove"?

I still don't know why the name, but I did pick up interesting tidbits. "Mackerel Cove" shows up in deeds around Johnson Field in 1803. Other early 1800 spellings were more phonetic: "Macril," "Makrell," and "Mackrell Cove," for instance. An 1809 deed records the sale of land "...beginning at a head of a cove called Mackerel Cove..." by Lazarus Bates to Capt. David Perry.

While sailing from Rockland to Portland, a storm tossed Perry's ship about. He bucked up his quaking crew with, "We shall

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To preserve and protect Harpswell's natural resources, cultural heritage and access to the outdoors through targeted conservation, responsible stewardship and education.

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## Johnson Field Preserve

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find a safe shelter at Mackerel Cove, on Bailey's Island. I know lots of Harpswell people, and they have the true kind of hospitality."\* While sheltering in the cove, he met Jane Alexander, whom he married in 1804. Their daughter Margaret married Capt. Hugh Sinnett, acquiring the homestead in 1844. Hugh was a farmer, fisherman, and California gold rusher. His cousin, William Sinnett, donated Giant's Stairs to the town in 1909.

Mackerel Cove has been a safe harbor for other accidental visitors. In 1826, a schooner with tobacco and flour foundered off Cape Elizabeth and was towed



to Bailey Island to salvage cargo, sails, and rigging.\*\* In 1869, a Category 3 hurricane wrought havoc in New England onshore and at sea. "[T]he schooner Potomac, of Boston has gone to pieces in Mackerel Cove. The crews were saved."\*\*\* In the same storm, after hitting Halfway Rock, the schooner Lydia limped to Bailey Island without mainsail, rudder, lifeboats, and anchors.\*\*\*\*

Most people visit Mackerel Cove under sunnier circumstances of weddings, vacations, walks along the Giant's

Stairs, and visits to the sculpture commemorating lobstermen at Lands End. H. Elroy Johnson, the lobsterman who posed for the sculpture (Created for the 1939 New York World's Fair), lived above Johnson Field Preserve.

And dreams can bring people to the Preserve. Surely, during his 1936 seminar on dreams, Carl Jung stepped out on the porch of Library Hall to admire Mackerel Cove. Because of Johnson Field Preserve, you can do that still.

### References:

\*Sinnett, Rev. Charles Nelson. 1911. Our Perry Family in Maine. Lewiston, The Journal Print Shop. P. 11.  
\*\*4 Feb 1826. Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics.  
\*\*\*13 Sept 1869. Daily State Gazette, Trenton.  
\*\*\*\*Rindlaub, Curtis. 2000. The Maine Coast Guide for Small Boats. Peaks Island, Diamond Pass Publishing, Inc. P. 111.

## Wellness

*Continued from page 1*

has on humans. In Japan, for example, she participates in "forest bathing," a wildly popular form of communing with the natural world. During more than a decade of testing, scientists there found that leisurely forest walks, compared to urban walks, deliver a 12 percent decrease in cortisol, known as the "stress hormone." Their subjects also recorded a 1.4 percent decrease in blood pressure and a 6 percent decrease in heart rate, along with reports of better moods and lowered anxiety.

Williams also documents the challenges faced by the Korean government in its efforts to get a generation of tech-addicted, stressed-out teens to detox in so-called "healing forests."

We face many of the same challenges in this country, at all age levels. Her bottom line: "I came up with a kind of ultrasimple coda: Go outside, often, sometimes in wild places.

Bring friends or not. Breathe."

That is also the mantra of the Center for Community Health and Wellness based on the Parkview campus of Mid Coast Hospital, where reducing barriers to physical activity is a key part of its mission. Often this means working with patients to increase ability and confidence, or working with partners to create more accessible outdoor spaces.

"There is growing evidence that green exercise, or exercising outside, has both mental and physical health benefits, and that these benefits are "synergistic" – meaning exercising outside seems to have a greater health benefit than the exercise alone," explained Melissa Fochesato, the center's director of Community Health Promotion.

According to Fochesato, these benefits include stress management, restoring mental fatigue, improving mood and self-esteem and an improved perception of health. "One of the best-kept secrets about

exercising outside is that exercise itself feels less difficult outdoors than it does indoors," she added.

The Center for Community Health and Wellness offers several programs to help people increase their physical ability to exercise, and works with partners, such as HHLT, to make parks and trails more accessible to all community members. Fochesato encourages people to visit the center's website, [midcoasthealth.com/wellness](http://midcoasthealth.com/wellness) or call 373-6585 for more information.

HHLT Outreach Coordinator Julia McLeod said the many efforts of the land trust to promote wellness are integral to its mission to serve the Harpswell community.

"For people of all ages and abilities, nature offers a place of calm and beauty, which stimulates our creativity and boosts our mood. Seeing that we are one small part of something much bigger than ourselves helps our daily worries fade to the background," said McLeod.

# NEWS AND UPDATES

CURT CHIPMAN PHOTO

## Conservation

Our Lands Committee is working on three new conservation easements that, if all goes well, will protect shorefront, wildlife habitat and scenic beauty of 65 acres in Harpswell. A conservation easement is an agreement between a landowner and a land trust that protects the natural, scenic and historic character of a beloved property forever.

## Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee and volunteer stewards manage HHLT's 17 preserves and trails for public use and habitat. They also monitor and enforce our 22 conservation easements.

Last fall, 18 volunteers took part in the annual monitoring of our conservation easements, which cover more than 1,100 acres. Thank you for taking the time to monitor and report on the condition of these easements!

## Invasive Plants

The Harpswell Invasive Plant Partnership (HIPP) is working on mapping invasive plants on any property in Harpswell that is open to the public. This information will provide important baseline data to direct future management of

invasive plants. HIPP also raises awareness about the impact of invasives on native plants and their habitats and removes invasive plants from HHLT and Town properties. Volunteers are welcome! Find out more at [www.hhlmaine.org/hipp/](http://www.hhlmaine.org/hipp/).

## Monitor at Stover's Point

This summer, Stover's Point Preserve will have a monitor. The monitor will walk the beach frequently to educate visitors about the Preserve's sensitive natural resources, observe and document visitor use and ensure visitors are following guidelines.



*Stover's Point Preserve is a popular spot for beach goers and our Nature Day Camp. A monitor will check on conditions this summer. (Curt Chipman photo)*

## New Trail at Little Ponds

Please join us to celebrate the new trail at Little Ponds Preserve, which will be open to the public starting June 1. We are looking

forward to introducing you to our first preserve in Cundy's Harbor.

## Community Outreach and Education

The Programs and Communications Committees and staff continue to seek out innovative and effective ways to engage diverse audiences within our community.

## Play and Learn Outdoors

We are excited to launch an outdoor play and learning area for families. It will include a story walk, tools for exploration, an imagination zone, balance beams, a teepee, large musical instruments and collaborative art projects. We hope to have this ready in May at Curtis Farm Preserve. In late summer it will move to another Harpswell location. Contact Julia

McLeod at 207-837-9613 if you want to help make this a reality. This project is funded by a grant from the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership.

## Nature Day Camp

Our popular Nature Day Camp is expanding to eight weeks this summer. Even with added weeks, camp filled very quickly and there is a waiting list. Camp includes exploration, storytelling, music, yoga, scientific inquiry, sensory awareness, arts and crafts and running games to engage children with nature.

## Events and Programs

See the back of this newsletter for engaging, inspiring and fun events for all ages.

## Short Courses

This June we are offering a Short Course on Island History, which includes trips to Malaga and Eagle Islands. In the fall we'll offer a Short Course on Mammals. These short courses offer in-depth learning for adults. Sign up for our email newsletter to be notified when enrollment opens. They fill quickly!

## Harpswell Community School

We continue to offer outdoor science learning for all grade levels at Harpswell Community School. For the second year, all third graders are embarking on a school-year-long learning adventure at nine preserves and trails in Harpswell.

# Thank you to our 2018 donors!

Donors who are also volunteers are marked in italics below. Thank you for your valuable time!

We try to be as accurate as possible. Please forgive us (and let us know) if we made an error.

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Stippler  
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Anne Skinstad  
Francine and Babiche Slack  
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Gayle Slattery and Robert  
Wexler  
Marion and Robert Small

# 10 Ideas to Enhance Your Wellness at HHLT Preserves

1. Take a walk on the **Hackett and Minot Trails** before the trees leaf out to find spring ephemeral wildflowers in bloom. Look closely at the tiny features of mosses and lichens. Listen to the frogs at the vernal pool.
2. Catch the spring bird migration in the early morning at **Curtis Farm Preserve**. Bring a picnic breakfast to enjoy at the Mount Washington overlook. Visit the "pebble" on the way back.
3. Bring family and friends to walk the new trail at **Little Ponds Preserve** in Cundy's Harbor. Stretch your legs as you enjoy the scenery.
4. Visit **Pott's Point Preserve** to explore tidal pools, build a cairn and enjoy the 360-degree view. Bring a picnic because you'll want to linger.
5. Collect shells, skip stones, fly a kite or practice yoga on the beach at **Stover's Point Preserve**.
6. Build a fairy house or gnome home with your kids at **Houghton Graves Park**. Spend some time with no agenda. Simply daydream.
7. Bring your dog for a walk at **Long Reach Preserve**. Meander across the newly renovated bridge and take in the scents and sounds of the marsh bog. Enjoy the quiet.
8. Kayak to the **Helen and Walter Norton Preserve** on Birch Island in Middle Bay. Explore the serene coves, land at the small gravel beach, go for a swim or stay overnight.
9. Participate in a **stewardship work day** at one of the HHLT preserves. Tidy up the winter weary trails or plant some trees. Feel a sense of satisfaction from giving back and make connections with your neighbors. Sign up for volunteer opportunities emails to learn more.
10. **Be creative!** When you visit these preserves, bring a camera or a notebook. Sketch; jot down observations, thoughts and ideas; or write a poem!



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Gordon and Mary Beth Smith  
James and Ruth Smith  
Lynn and Adam Smith  
Otey Smith and Nancy Egan  
Robert and Jean Buckley  
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Susan and Sidney Smith  
Craig and Barbara Snapp  
Karin Soderberg  
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Evangeline Sparks  
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Anderson**  
Holly and David Bargeron  
Tom Fisher  
**In memory of Mary  
Fiske Beck**  
Beck Foundation  
**In honor of John Boomer**  
Nancy Hughes  
**In honor of Thomas Carlisle**  
Todd and Victoria Carlisle  
**In honor of Chris  
and Barry Coflan**

Annie Sollish  
**In honor of William  
Cogswell**  
Doug and Jane Collins  
**In memory of Posie Ford**  
Janet and Peter Toohy  
**In honor of Emily  
Lowenberg**  
Nathaniel and Eugenia  
Wheelwright  
**In honor of Susan Lowery**  
James Lowery  
**In honor of Ralph and  
Beverly Merriman**  
Douglas Nielsen  
**In honor of Ed Robinson**  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas  
Mitchell  
**In Honor of Scott and  
Patty Ruppert's 40th  
wedding anniversary**  
Greger and  
Margaret Anderson  
David and Lindsay Deinzer  
**In memory of Jonathan  
Scholes**  
Charles and Nancy Scholes  
**In memory of Shirley  
Spaeth**  
Mary and Tom Bauer  
Linda Clement  
Jane and Larry Cochran  
Reed Coles  
Greta and Gary Gulezian  
Missy Susag  
Phil Susag

# Jeff Marshall: Sustainable gardening and a legacy

By Doug Warren

Looking out the bay windows in a cozy nook of his cluttered living room, Jeff Marshall introduces the spectacular view ranging from southwest to northwest in what he calls “my nature theater” with a gracious, sweeping gesture.

Out on the shore of Doughty Cove here on Sebascodegan (Great) Island, huge sheets of ice are stacked up randomly near where spring-fed streams flow into the tidal zone. Marshall recalls seeing a pair of bald eagles feeding nearby on what might have been the carcass of a coyote and otters feasting greedily on running smelt.

“Mother Nature is my spiritual guru,” he explains before offering a tour of the gardens he has established in the front of the house, built in 2007, which he bought in 2010 as his retirement home. There, a visitor is introduced to an astounding array of apple, cherry and pear trees, herbs, vegetables and berry bushes that provide Marshall with an abundance of produce each year. The variety is proof positive of what’s possible despite the sometimes-harsh realities of Maine’s climate.

You can see it yourself. Marshall is leading a tour of his edible landscape this summer. Check the back of this newsletter for details.

“It amazing how many plants do well here,” Marshall said. “I think kids – and their families – would learn and benefit from seeing this bounty.”

To that end, Marshall has decided to join the ranks of those making a legacy gift to Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT) and is leaving his house and his 1.7-acre property to HHLT in his will.

“I don’t have any children, and

all my relations are quite solvent,” Marshall said. “But I want to do this for their kids and for the children of Harpswell and ultimately, in some small way, for the environment of our planet.” The bequest comes with no strings attached, he added, but he hopes his gift can provide a learning experience.

“Legacy gifts like Jeff’s are extraordinarily valuable,” said Reed Coles, HHLT executive director. “They give us the flexibility to sustain our work for the benefit of Harpswell’s future generations. We are humbled by Jeff’s generosity and very grateful for his planned gift.”

A native New Yorker, Marshall, 74, grew up in a truly communal community called Hickory Hill in Rockland County, just outside the city. He graduated from Pratt Institute and worked for years as a freelance commercial artist in New York before shifting gears and going to work at a nursery back in Rockland County. He ran his own business – Marshall Arts Landscaping and Design (Green Belt) – for 15 years before retiring.

His Maine connection stems



from a family farm in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, which he visited throughout his life. On the way north, he always stopped in Freeport to shop at LL Bean. When his plan to retire to 100 acres he had purchased in Cape Breton fell through because of his inability to gain Canadian citizenship, his focus shifted to Maine. A cousin’s son was attending Bowdoin College and that connection ultimately led to Harpswell.

Marshall wanted a place on the water and a piece of property where he could pursue his interest in sustainable gardening. He found it on the shore of

Doughty Cove, surrounded by 600 acres of largely undeveloped land, including the 222-acre Austin Cary Lot. He moved to Maine full time in 2011. He became involved with the land trust and along the way, someone suggested he should make out his will. That process brought about the bequest to HHLT.

“I thought the best thing would be to take an environmental perspective on the whole thing,” Marshall said. “It’s all about future generations.”

For more information about planned giving, contact Reed Coles at [info@hhltmaine.org](mailto:info@hhltmaine.org) or (207) 721-1121.

## Come Aboard our Sunset Cruise



Join us on the water to take in Harpswell’s breathtaking shoreline from high up on the deck of a Casco Bay ferry built for comfort and stability. Keep an eye out for seals, porpoise, eagles, shore birds and more. Enjoy delicious and complimentary food, including hors d’oeuvres, lobster rolls, salads and desserts. A cash bar is available. Chat with friends and learn about Harpswell’s fascinating natural and human history. Your ticket price supports the work of Harpswell Heritage Land Trust.

**Monday, August 12, 6-8 p.m.**

Visit our website to buy your tickets today.

This cruise always sells out.



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## Events and Programs

Events are free and do not require advance registration unless otherwise indicated. More events added all the time.

For details: [www.hhltmaine.org](http://www.hhltmaine.org).

### Tick Talk

Thurs., April 25, 6-7:30 p.m. at  
Harpswell Heritage Land Trust

### Hoping for a Harpswell Heron

Sunday, April 28, 3-4:30 p.m. at  
Harpswell Heritage Land Trust

### Nature Meditation

Sat., May 4, 8-9:30 a.m. at  
Fishmoon Yoga and Curtis  
Farm Preserve • Advance  
registration requested.

### Beyond Birding: Bird Behavior

Sat., May 18, 8:30-10:30  
a.m. at Curtis Farm Preserve  
• Advance registration  
requested.

### Birding for Kids

Sat., May 25, 9-10:30 a.m. at  
Curtis Farm Preserve

### Harpswell Hiking Challenge & Celebration of Little Ponds Preserve

Sat. and Sun., June 1-2

### Wonders of Maine's Wildlife

Thurs., June 6, 7 p.m. at the  
Orr's Island Library

### Short Course on Island History

June 17 & 22: Malaga Island  
June 27 & 29: Eagle Island  
Fee and advance registration  
required.

### Summer Solstice Celebration

Friday, June 21, 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
at Johnson Field Preserve

### Edible Landscaping Tour

Tues., June 25, 6-7:30 p.m.  
at Jeff Marshall's home  
• Advance registration  
requested.

### Wildflowers with Priscilla Seimer

Sat., June 29, 10 a.m.-12  
p.m. • Advance registration  
requested.

### Medicinal Plants and Their Uses

Tues., July 9, 5:30-7 p.m. at  
Harpswell Heritage Land  
Trust • Advance registration  
requested.

### Lichens with Jeff Pengel

Sat., July 20, 10 a.m.-12  
p.m. • Advance registration  
requested.

### Island Overnight by Kayak

Fri., July 26 to Sat., July 27  
at the Helen and Walter  
Norton Preserve on Birch  
Island • Advance registration  
requested.

### Paddle and Picnic

Fri., August 2, 9:30 a.m.-9  
p.m. leaving from Bethel  
Point • Advance registration  
requested.

### Sunset Cruise

Mon., August 12, 6-8 p.m. Buy  
your tickets today!

### Fungi with Alan Seamans

Sat., August 17, 10 a.m.-12  
p.m. • Advance registration  
requested.

### Ferns with Jeff Pengel

Sat., September 14, 10 a.m.-12  
p.m. • Advance registration  
requested.