

## Nature Day Camp: “Absolutely 100% amazing”

*By Courtney Cronin, camp leader*

**T**his summer Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT) celebrated its 21st year of Nature

Day Camp! 119 campers from near and far explored eight different beautiful natural areas in Harpswell.

From rocky spruce-lined shores to vibrant diverse forests to fields filled with wild blueberries and butterflies, the camp aims to connect kids' curiosity with a budding love and understanding of nature.



JULIA MCLEOD PHOTO

With patient, passionate leaders, kids flipped rocks, searched through seaweed and dug in the muck in search of marine life; scampered up boulders, climbed cedar trees and hiked trails on forest explorations; harvested wild berries and savored local honey; practiced yoga on sandy beaches; made up songs about nature; and

documented their discoveries in their nature journals.

Over the course of each week of camp (4 days for preschoolers and 5 days for elementary age campers), the children demonstrated a compassion and curiosity for the environment that defines the mission of the HHLT.

*Continued on page 2*

*“We all think that this is such a wonderful and special camp. It’s fun, educational and my daughter says it is absolutely 100% amazing. Thank you so so much.”  
– a happy camp parent*

## Little Ponds: Agriculture, industry, literature, nature

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

*By Nancy West*

**L**ittle Ponds is the wild Maine blueberry of preserves. Its 22 acres in east Harpswell burst with goodness in the realms of nature; historical agriculture and industry; and literature. Yes, even literature.

Several Great Island family names tie into the Little Ponds Preserve, now owned by Harpswell Heritage Land Trust.

Susan N. Pulsifer bought the land in 1929. Susan and her husband, Harold, were writers: Susan published several books. Harold published a magazine and, as a poet, was a finalist for the 1938 Pulitzer Prize. They named their new place “Little Ponds” for two fresh water ponds next to a tidal mill pond. Susan later intended for the property to become a wildlife

sanctuary in memory of Harold and neighbor Sheldon Ware, both keen birders. Her grandsons (Coleman, David, Keith and Morgan Pulsifer) made it happen and now, ninety years after her purchase, we can all enjoy her restful, living, and breathing land and water.

Walking the Preserve’s quarter-mile

trail steps you out of a 21st-century life. It wends through fern meadows, past trees festooned with fungus, past other trees with deep holes pecked by pileated woodpeckers, to a cattail marsh, the “Tiemeer Pond”. There, in the spring, you’ll hear red-winged blackbirds singing their hearts out wooing a mate. The trail is a perfect starter trail for families with small children: Kids might wonder why a mussel shell lies in the trail. What creature put it there? Adults, especially without inquisitive

*Continued on page 2*



NANCY WEST PHOTO

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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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## Little Ponds Preserve

*Continued from page 1*

children along, will find internal stillness.

While the trail features forest and marsh, the Preserve includes a mill pond on which I've seen a great blue heron fishing four feet from a snowy egret as a falling tide exposed mudflats. At higher tides kingfishers call and fly from their perches. The mill pond is mentioned in many of the deeds documenting property sales of the mid-19th century among the Coombs family. Samuel and Priscilla Coombs had 12 children, six girls and six boys. Samuel and his sons bought and sold properties in the area dozens of times, often amongst themselves. In

1859 Joseph, James, and William Coombs collectively bought property with a boundary at the "Head of [the] Mill Pond" with reference to "the Mill buildings." The previous owner bought it from Robert P. Ridley in 1858; Riddleys had owned it for decades and operated the mill. In 1850, Robert Ridley and his neighbors collectively grew 131 bushels of wheat and 1026 of corn—grist for the mill.

The Coombs family farmed there for at least 60 years. Samuel raised 75 sheep there in 1870 and 60 in 1880. With his sheep, oxen, milch cows and other cattle needing water, is he the one who dammed a stream at the west end of the Preserve? An 1872 deed places a "bolt ... near the dike." If "dike" equals "dam," the dam and ponds were created by 1872. Two sons, Harmon and John farmed there into the 1920s.

Now, literature: Harmon

Coombs sold land to Elbert Brackett (1921) who sold it to Susan Pulsifer. Harmon also sold land to Carrie Tiemer in 1920, hence "Tiemer Pond." Carrie's daughter, Gertrude, was an artist and poet of stature who bought a home on Dingley Island in 1934. Her poetry was published in, among other places, a 1955 Downeast magazine's tribute to Robert P. Tristram Coffin—a native Harpswellian and 1936 Pulitzer Prize winner in poetry. And, Edna St. Vincent Millay, who acquired Ragged Island in 1933, won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1923. I like to imagine these four writers converging for a poetry reading in the Cundy's Harbor schoolhouse in 1936....



NANCY WEST PHOTO

## Nature Day Camp

*Continued from page 1*

Eight sessions of camp greatly expanded the reach of this popular camp. For the first time in the camp's history, two sessions of camp were held at the same time, in different locations, during every week during which low tide fell in the morning. Despite this expansion, all but two spots in camp filled within 24 hours of opening enrollment in February.

provides scholarships.

Thank you also to the volunteers who donated their time, energy and expertise to creating diverse and full learning opportunities. We are looking forward to next summer!



COURTNEY CRONIN PHOTOS

*"My camper came home each day truly inspired by the camp leaders. The camp leaders had a meaningful, positive impact on her, including her attitude toward the outdoors and her understanding of local histories."*  
— a happy camp parent

## Thank you!

Nature Day Camp is made possible and is kept affordable by the generous support of HHLT's members and Holbrook Community Foundation. A grant from the Leonard C. and Mildred F. Ferguson Foundation supported the expansion to two concurrent weeks. The Harpswell Garden Club





# NEWS AND UPDATES

CURT CHIPMAN PHOTO

## Conservation

This spring Harpswell Heritage Land Trust was granted a conservation easement on 16 acres of land with 1,530 feet of shorefront between Cundy's Harbor Road and Quahog Bay. A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement with a landowner to conserve a piece of property forever. This easement will help protect the water quality, marine resources and scenic beauty of beautiful and productive Quahog Bay.

HHLT is actively working with two other land owners who are interested in granting easements to conserve the natural character and wildlife habitat of their land. HHLT is also exploring projects that would expand one of our preserves, improve public access to another preserve and protect an important shellfish flat.

## Stewardship

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

Trails need work every year, and HHLT was lucky this year to have some help

from Bowdoin THRIVE students and visitors sponsored by Elijah Kellogg Church to harden trails and install bog bridging at Otter Brook Preserve and Curtis Farm Preserve. More work days are being planned for September and early October, and more volunteers will be very welcome! Sign up for volunteer opportunities emails on our website.

## Stover's Point Preserve

Lexi Rogalinski was the land trust's monitor at Stover's Point Preserve from the end of May until September. Lexi spent a few hours each day at the preserve talking with visitors and explaining the rules for use. She did an excellent job, and reported that the only problems she encountered were dog-walkers who did not know their dogs had to be leashed between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. She counted the cars

and people each time she visited and was not surprised to find some very high-use days, such as 4th of July and other summer weekends. Even then, trash left behind was minimal.

## Little Ponds Preserve

Our newest preserve, Little Ponds, officially opened in early June and was part of the Harpswell Hiking Challenge. Walkers enjoy this short and lovely trail off Bethel Point Rd and it has become a favorite with many local dog walkers, according to one of the stewards. Little Ponds is well worth visiting.

## Community Outreach and Education

HHLT continues to seek out innovative and effective ways to engage diverse audiences within our community.

## The Forest Playground

The Forest Playground spent its first summer at Curtis Farm Preserve, where many families enjoyed it.

"This is one of the coolest playgrounds we've ever seen!" wrote one visitor.

The Forest Playground will move to Harpswell Community School for a portion of the fall and will pop up at another Harpswell preserve next summer.



CURT CHIPMAN PHOTO



CURT CHIPMAN PHOTO

## Harpswell Community School

HHLT continues to offer outdoor science learning for all grade levels at Harpswell Community School, including field trips to 12 of Harpswell's preserves and trails.

*Continued on page 4*



# Outdoor Fun and Discovery! Summer 2019



TOM BARRETT PHOTO



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JULIA MCLEOD PHOTO



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## News & Updates

*Continued from page 3*

## New Trustees and Staff

This summer we said goodbye (for now) to several members of our Board of Trustees and one member of our staff. Thank you to John Boomer, Dave Brown and Sharon Oehmig, who each served nine years on the board before reaching their term limits. Thank you also to Andrea Stevens, our Stewardship Coordinator, who decided to leave HHLT in June.

## New Staff

For many years, HHLT functioned with no paid staff. In 2001 the organization brought on its first part-time executive director. Next was an outreach coordinator in 2012 and a stewardship coordinator in 2018.



*Janice Thompson*

Now HHLT has a total of five year-round staff members. All are part-time, with hours that add up to just under three full-time equivalents.

This growth is made possible by increases in membership support.

**Janice Thompson** started in May as HHLT's Development Director. Janice, her husband, Jeremy and 17-year-old daughter, Bee, are recent transplants to Harpswell from the Boston area. She comes to us with more than 30 years of fundraising experience at MIT, the Kennedy School at Harvard, the Boston Athenaeum and the Meadowbrook School of Weston. She is currently writing a novel about Sarah Clayes, a real character who was unjustly accused during the Salem witch



*Priscilla Seimer*

trials of 1692. Janice plays piano for the UU Church in Brunswick and trombone with the Harpswell Concert Band.

**Priscilla Seimer** started in July as Stewardship Coordinator. She transitioned from the Board of Trustees to the position, which made it easy for her to jump right in. Priscilla's undergraduate work was in the field of natural resources. More recently she completed the Maine Master Naturalist Program, Certified Interpretive Guide training, and many other natural history and botanical programs. She has done trail work with the Maine Appalachian Trail Club since 1992.

**Katie Neal** started in July as Communications and



*Katie Neal*

Membership Assistant. Katie recently moved to Harpswell with her husband and three boys (Truxtun - 7, Alden - 4, and Forrest - 11

months). She comes to HHLT with 13+ years of experience working within nonprofit organizations. Most recently she served as the Director of Programs & Evaluation for an education-focused organization. She has a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Clemson University and a Master's degree in Nonprofit Management from Regis University.

## New Trustees

This summer, HHLT welcomed five new members to its board of trustees.





COURTNEY CRONIN PHOTO



JULIA MCLEOD PHOTO



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Currently a Humanities Teacher at Harpswell Coastal Academy's Division 1, **Cristine Bachor** previously launched a new branch of the Transitional Youth Program in NH and worked as a case manager in Anchorage. She arrived with her husband and three daughters, now ages 15, 12, & 8, to Harpswell six years ago, seeking a place to sail and explore with her family. Cristine was introduced to the land trust through her volunteer positions with Harpswell Community School, where she was working to increase the amount of time students had access to the outdoors and creative, hands-on science and art experiences. Joining HHLT's Programs Committee was a natural extension of this desire to encourage families to discover the wonders of the natural world here in Harpswell.

**Steve Caulfield** has spent his entire career in healthcare, academic medicine, organized

systems of care, consulting and insurance. His experience has included leadership positions in public and private firms, nonprofits and startups. Steve and his wife of 55 years, Joanne, live on Orr's Island. Steve recently has stepped down as Chairman of the Board of Maine Maritime Museum in Bath.

**Chris Heinig** is a marine biologist and President of MER Assessment Corporation, a marine biological consulting firm located here in Harpswell. His career in marine science has included founding a mussel, oyster and clam farm in Middle Bay; consulting internationally on hatchery design and operation; permitting and environmental monitoring; and marine environmental consulting services to a diverse group of clients. Chris has been married to his wife Anne for 42 years and together they have two daughters, Anneliese of Richmond, and Grace of Portland.

**Heather Merriman** has a professional background in civil and environmental engineering. She has spent many years assisting New England communities to mitigate the nutrient enrichment impacts of land development on coastal waters through wastewater and stormwater management plans. Heather enjoys volunteering in education and is passionate about bringing nature-based learning to the curriculum. Personally, she has deep family ties to the Harpswell community. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, gardening, and exploring the islands of Casco Bay with her husband and daughter.

**Bob Sansone** has been living in Harpswell since 2016, full time since 2018, with his wife, Wendy. Before that, they lived in Yarmouth for more than 25 years, where they raised their four children. Bob was the Chief Human Resources Officer at Tyler Technologies, where he worked

for 23 years before retiring in 2018. He was also the Vice President of Human Resources at ABB Environmental Services (formerly EC Jordan) for six years.

**Doug Warren** grew up in Brunswick and spent 32 years in the newspaper business as a writer and editor at The Portland Press Herald, The Miami Herald and The Boston Globe, where he worked for 21 years. He also taught journalism and advised the student newspaper, The Daily Texan, at the University of Texas at Austin. Doug and his wife, Pam Berry, a small business owner and professional photographer, have two children, Emma and Jackson. They spend much of the year at their home on Orr's Island and also reside in Austin, Texas.



LUCY BIRKETT PHOTO

# Invested in Harpswell

By Ed Robinson

**W**e all have our own reasons for living in Harpswell, whether we are seasonal or year-round residents. For the Frank family of Quahog Lane, scenic beauty clearly ranks high on their list. But they also place great value on the health of the community, taking into account public education and green space for all to enjoy.

When asked why they have been long time supporters of the land trust, Marta noted the importance of HHLT's public education and outreach efforts. Having been involved with recreation programs in Harpswell for many years, Marta appreciates the benefits of outdoor activities for children and teaching them about



conservation issues.

Robert is an active trial attorney, having spent recent months far from our shores while handling a major case in London, England. Robert characterized their donations to HHLT as an investment in Harpswell, one that he clearly sees as valuable now and well into the future for generations to follow.

In talking with the Franks, it is obvious that they feel a deep connection to Harpswell. Echoing comments by her granddaughter, Marta noted that we are privileged to live in such a beautiful community and we have an obligation to keep it that way.

## 2018-2019 Business Sponsors

Please help us thank these businesses for supporting conservation and education in Harpswell! Interested in becoming a business sponsor? Call us or check our website!

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Continued on page 7



# Wellness of the Earth

*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

Wellness has been the year-long theme for Harpswell Heritage Land Trust in 2019, so it was fitting that the health of our planet was the focus at HHLT's annual meeting.

What are the biggest environmental problems facing humanity today? asked philosopher Dana Sawyer, the meeting's keynote speaker. After hearing responses that included overpopulation, water and air pollution, resource depletion and the pursuit of wealth above all else, Sawyer replied:

"Those are symptoms of the problem. The real problem? The way we see the world."

Sawyer, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Religion at Maine College of Art, argued that our environmental problems are "the result of out-of-date belief paradigms" including one that maintains the resources of the planet are there for us to do with as we choose. He added that the way to address climate change and its impact on humanity is to "find a new way to conceive of the natural world and how we fit in it."

"The heat, literally, on us to change is enormous," he said.

Sawyer, 68, was born in Jonesport and is the author of two critically acclaimed biographies of philosophers Aldous Huxley and Huston Smith. He and his wife, Stephani, are avid hikers and kayakers who spend six months each year in a cabin without electricity or running water on a lake near Acadia.

The challenge for humanity – around the world and in Harpswell – is to recognize that we have internalized society's viewpoints, leaving us blind to other possibilities in terms of interacting with the natural world. "We don't realize how much of society's Kool-Aid we've drunk," Sawyer said.

He added that belief paradigms (what comedienne Lily Tomlin has labeled "collective hunches") are slow to

change. "But they can be."

Sawyer outlined three ways of looking at humanity's relationship with nature:

"Resource-ism": In which the planet's resources are there for us to do with as we choose.

"Nature matters": In which the planet is seen as a home. This is man's place in the universe. At least until we exploit it to the extent that we need to move.

"Social ecology": In which the earth is viewed as a living entity.

He said the question of which viewpoint is correct could be debated ad infinitum. "The question is: which viewpoint is sustainable?"

As for solutions, Sawyer pointed out that "each generation has to correct the problems given to it." He called education "most primary" and argued "only a new seed will grow a new crop." The initial barrier is getting people to listen to each other, which can be difficult because "people are looking at the world through

their own set of glasses."

Sawyer's comments echoed a quote from Susan Hand Shetterly's recent book "The Seaweed Chronicles: A World at the Water's Edge," which explores the important role seaweed plays in aquatic and human life and the challenges presented to both by climate change.

"What's required here is not only a behavioral shift, but a deeper one that reconfigures how we humans see our place in the world and, equally, how we value the lives of species other than our own."

HHLT President Lynn Knight said Sawyer's call for a new approach is something the land trust membership and the general population need to hear. "If we do not, then the earth that supplies our lifeblood of resources will no longer support us."

She added: "To me, the thought-provoking evening reaffirmed the importance of HHLT's work preserving and protecting nature and turning the attention of adults, and especially children, to the beauty, importance and fragility of nature through education."

Sawyer closed his talk pointing out that Maine remains a beautiful place and the challenge is to keep it that way.

It's about talking to the people who live in our larger 'village' again," he said, "and opening up to the complex relationships all around us."



HHLT President Lynn Knight with Annual Meeting speaker Dana Sawyer

TIM MCGREIGHT PHOTO

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## Events and Programs

Events are free unless indicated. More events added all the time.  
Details: [hhlmaine.org](http://hhlmaine.org).

### Trees and Shrubs with Kyle Rosenberg

Sat., October 12, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Otter Brook Preserve  
• Advance registration requested.

### Winter Solstice Lantern Walk

Fri., December 20 from 5-6 p.m. at Houghton Graves Park • Advance registration requested.



ERIC MICHAEL TOLLEFSON  
PHOTO

## Harpowell Day: A Celebration of Traditional Handcrafts and Subsistence Skills

Saturday, October 5 from 12-4 p.m.

Join Harpswell Historical Society and Harpswell Heritage Land Trust for a celebration of traditional handcrafts and subsistence skills. This event happens rain or shine at the Harpswell Historical Society Museum, Centennial Hall, the Meeting House, the one-room schoolhouse and outdoors. For all ages, there will be much to see, do and learn about during this free event celebrating Harpswell's history.

Parking is at the Elijah Kellogg

Church, 917 Harpswell Neck Road, Harpswell.

Observe demonstrations of skills and handcrafts, including rug hooking, candle making, churning butter, printmaking and more. Most of the demonstrations encourage active participation.



CURT CHIPMAN PHOTO

Deepen your understanding of Harpswell's rich history through browsing the museum and going on guided tours of the graveyard and historic buildings. Listen to a talk on 19th century Harpswell

shipbuilding and seafaring.

Enjoy live music, storytelling and a poetry reading.

Visit Two Coves Farm's sheep in the historic Cattle Pound.

Learn from a period schoolmarm in the one-room schoolhouse and play a hoop and stick game of long ago.

Eat delicious food.  
And more!



CURT CHIPMAN PHOTO