



TONY BARRETT PHOTO

Engaging with Nature During a Time of Social Distancing

By Tim McCreight, Chair of HHLT's Communications Committee

Each year the land trust selects a concept or word around which we focus our thoughts. Several months ago we decided

on "Engagement" to celebrate the variety of ways we connect with the natural world around us. The idea encompasses a proactive, joyful interaction; a leaning-in to get the most out of the fields and woods and waters that mean so much to us.

The idea of engagement in a time of enforced social distancing is, or course, ironic. We get that. But it is also true that as our once-normal world contorts in the face of a pandemic, our personal needs remain constant. The benefits of a walk in the woods has never been

more clear or more welcome. So yes, we should engage—keeping our distance, or course.

Engagement will take many forms for the people of Harpswell. The trail and preserves are open

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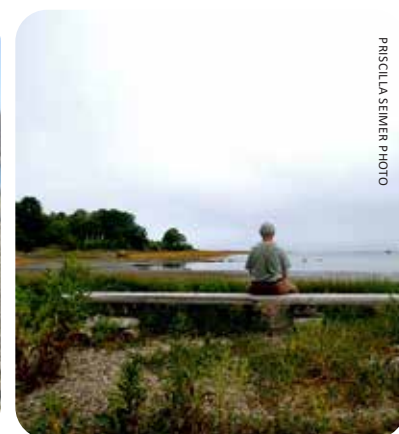
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Harpowell Nature Watchers

Connecting with nature and community!

By Lynn Knight, HHLT President

If you join Harpswell Nature Watchers, you can connect with a community of nature lovers who are going outside and observing nature doing what nature always does. It's a great way to remind ourselves that we're all part of something bigger.

Harpowell Nature Watchers was born out of an effort to introduce people to the fun and rewarding activity of nature journaling, which entails simply jotting down a few words or pictures in a calendar as you note the seasonal changes around you.

For example, I like to record when the

red-winged blackbirds return from their winter migration in early March and when showy lady slippers bloom in mid-June.

I have been keeping a nature journal for two years now and I share some of my observations via the Harpswell Nature Watchers Facebook group and email list. It has been



Starflower
(Lynn Knight photo)

gratifying to compare notes from year-to-year and to take the time to share some interesting facts about plants and other natural phenomena I'm observing.

Other members of the Facebook group share their observations too, and we get wildlife updates from Ed Robinson. It is a fun way to learn from each other and keep track of the seasonal cycles of nature.

Search on Facebook for "Harpowell Nature Watchers" or sign up for a monthly email on the HHLT website.

Our Mission:

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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Engaging

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and seeing increased use. With the arrival of spring there are buds and bugs and sprouts everywhere we look. Birdwatchers will take to the marshes, alert to mating calls as familiar species return. For some people (and you know who you are), birding is a lifelong challenge to collect as many sightings as you can. For others, the music in the trees and grasses is enough, uncounted but no less thrilling.

For children, walking in the woods or exploring a tide pool is a helter-skelter encounter with shapes and smells and textures. Fearless as they turn over rocks and poke their tiny fingers into shells, they are making a connection with the world that can sustain them throughout their lives.

The Harpswell Heritage Land Trust has a long commitment to fostering intellectual engagement too. Because of health concerns, workshops, group walks and other programs are temporarily halted, so we are fortunate to have robust resources available online. Through digital newsletters and a website filled with articles, photographs and links, people sequestered at home can fill their hours with local history, interviews with their neighbors and stories from nature.

As much as our world has to offer, it also asks something of us; engagement is a two-way street. If you are on a trail, please move a limb or pick up a bit of litter. The usual teams of volunteers who refresh the trails each spring are unable to be out this year, so it falls to each of



CHRIST CHIMMAN PHOTO

us to lend a hand. As a member of the trust, you contribute by reminding the people around you about the soothing benefits of nature and help preserve these lands for the future.

Henry David Thoreau knew something about the benefits of nature and offers us valuable advice:

"Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth."



JULIA MCLEOD PHOTO

10 ideas for engaging with nature close to home

1. Collect as many different rocks/shells/leaves/etc. as you can find and arrange them in a beautiful pattern.
2. Start a nature journal. Write about what you notice.
3. Pick up trash along the side of the road or along the shore.
4. Start a life list for all the birds you identify. Not sure how to identify birds? Check out Merlin (an app for your phone) or look online at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
5. Build a fort or fairy house.
6. Make a campfire and sit around it while stargazing.
7. Finally pull out those invasive plants you've been eyeing (check our website for identification resources).
8. Make a mini bouquet.
9. Start a garden.
10. Buy a motion-activated game camera to capture photos of nearby wildlife..



ANDREA STEVENS PHOTO

NEWS AND UPDATES

CURT CHIPMAN PHOTO

Conservation

Two new conservation easements have been added to our portfolio so far this year. This brings the total acreage of Harpswell's special places conserved by HHLT to 1,688.

Conservation easements are voluntary landowner agreements. Beloved land remains privately owned with restrictions on future development. HHLT is responsible for making sure the restrictions are upheld forever.



The first conservation easement is on a 23-acre piece of land with 1,400 feet on Widgeon Cove near Harpswell Center. Preserving this land helps protect the cove's valuable marine resources, along with waterfowl and wading bird habitat.

The second conservation easement is on a 41-acre parcel between Mountain Road and High Head Road in North Harpswell. This easement

protects the important wildlife travel corridor within the Otter Brook Focus Area of Harpswell's Open Space Plan and includes a crucial salt marsh that supports the base of the marine food chain.

Stewardship

COVID-19 has presented all of us with many challenges. While we do our best to stay at home, work remotely, keep physical distance and help where we can, spending time outdoors

has become more important than ever.

We are pleased that the land trust's trails and preserves remain open. Each preserve now has a sign posted with guidelines to keep the trails safe for everyone. Thank you to our visitors who continue to practice

social distancing and other safety measures as we support one another during this time.

The virus has also made how the land trust works on its trails a bit more challenging. Unlike prior years, when we welcomed groups of volunteers to help with trail work, this year we will be looking at very small and spread out groups. The Stewardship Committee is still

determining how to do this and still accomplish the needed work.

Stay safe, enjoy the outdoors, and we'll see you on the trails—from at least six feet away, of course!

Community Outreach and Education

Daily Outdoor Ideas

Every weekday, we are sharing ideas for simple outdoor activities on our website. Some are geared toward parents who are unexpectedly finding themselves homeschooling. Other ideas are great for adults who suddenly find themselves spending more time at home. Recent posts inspire readers to study seasonal changes, make a museum, go on a scavenger hunt and more!

Website Resources

Have you checked out our website recently? There are lots of resources for information and entertainment. We encourage you to check out the "Our Environment"

section for interesting articles about local wildlife (look for Nature Notes), wellness, native and invasive plants and more!

Nature Day Camp

All eight sessions of Nature Day Camp filled in record time—just 15 hours after registration opened! We are crossing our fingers and hoping that we will be able to run camp this summer.

The Forest Playground

Did you get a chance to check out the Forest Playground last summer or fall? It spent time at Curtis Farm Preserve, Harpswell Community School and Bowdoin Central School. We look forward to setting it up again when it is safe to do so. A quote from a happy visitor:

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



CURT CHIPMAN PHOTO

Thank you to our 2019 donors!

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

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Tony Barrett: True dedication to Harpswell, trails, Maine

By Doug Warren

This article was written in February, before the coronavirus began to impact our behavior in Maine. Sadly, Tony's wife, Marguerite Kelly passed away in April, just before this article went to print.

Many people volunteer their time and talents to benefit their local communities. Tony Barrett takes that kind of engagement to a whole other level.

On a recent weekday morning, Tony was looking forward to a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, which oversees management of a 267-mile portion of the trail in the Pine Tree State.

The previous day, he'd been in an all-day training session on erosion control as a member of the Harpswell Recreation Committee in preparation for a \$110,000 project designed to improve and "harden" the town's popular Cliff Trail.

Later in the week, he'd be attending a meeting of the Shellfish Growers Climate Coalition, which raises awareness nationally on the impact of increasing water temperatures and ocean acidification, particularly on Maine's coastal environment.

And that's just a portion of the activities Tony has on his plate.

Fortunately, Harpswell Heritage Land Trust is also on Tony's "to-do" list. He's a member of HHLT's Stewardship Committee, has built trailhead kiosks and is a periodic trail maintainer.

"Although I am not a steward, HHLT is blessed with a large cadre of dedicated volunteer

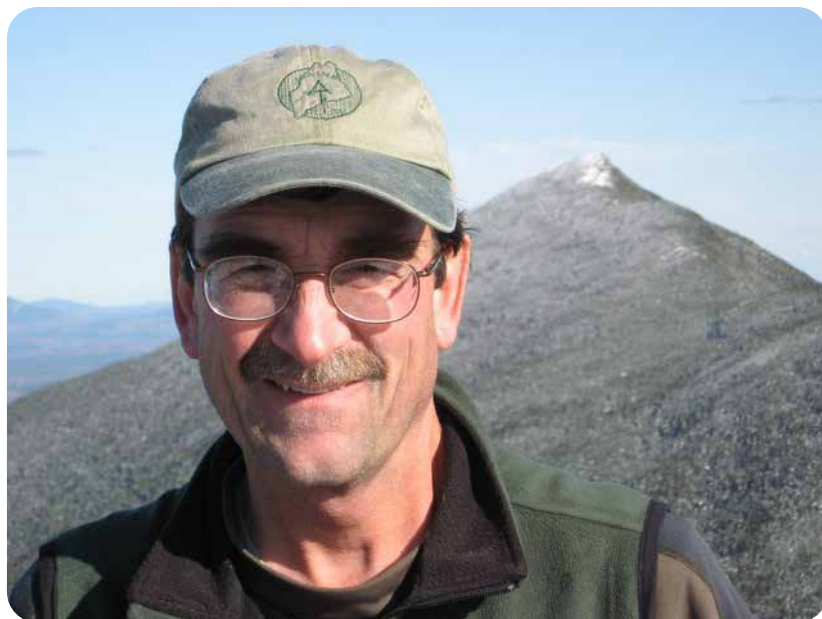
stewards. Being a steward is a great entry-level way for people to get involved with HHLT," Tony said. "A big part of the land trust's mission is to get people out on the land and people need trails to do that."

Tony's myriad interests and activities reflect a life full of far-flung adventures and occupations. Now 66, he grew up in Framingham, Mass., and graduated from the University of Chicago with a degree in geophysical sciences. After earning an MBA in Finance/International Business, Tony joined Amoco Production Company, where he held various financial positions in North America, as well as assignments in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

His career with Amoco took him to Houston, where he was Vice President of Negotiations and then to Cairo for six years, where he ultimately served as Vice President responsible for Amoco's natural gas business development and gas marketing efforts in the Middle East.

Then, in 1998, Tony and his wife left the corporate world behind. They lived in a travel trailer and followed their passions. They started a cross-country bicycling trek from Oregon to Virginia, which Tony completed after some interruptions. He did the same thing on the Appalachian Trail in 1999.

In 2000, after a search for a new home that was supposed to take in mid-Cape Cod and western Massachusetts, but wound up focused solely on Harpswell, the couple bought a home on Long Point Road. Tony quickly became engaged



in conservation/environmental advocacy for a variety of non-profit organizations. Marguerite was the long-serving treasurer for the town of Harpswell.

Along with his work for the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, Tony is also on the Board of Directors for the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust and is a life-member of the League of American Cyclists, East Coast Greenway Alliance and Adventure Cycling.

"Tony is truly dedicated to conservation and public recreation in special places," said Ed Robinson, a HHLT trustee, as well as a friend and business partner. "With his work on the East Coast Greenway bike path and his trail work in Harpswell and on the Appalachian Trail, Tony makes a real impact."

Why does he do it? Because, at least in part, he has remained engaged with his wide range of interests.

"My passion for bicycling,

walking, trails and land conservation are all interconnected and there is a network of people across the state who share similar interests from whom to draw inspiration," Tony explained. "The need for volunteer help is constantly changing, which allows me to try different things so that my efforts remain satisfying and interesting."

Right now, his focus is on consulting with an aquaculture firm that grows oysters, and the effort to improve and protect the Cliff Trail. "I try to balance my time between working to improve/help and savoring/enjoying Harpswell and Maine," he said.

The effort seems to be paying off. HHLT Executive Director Reed Coles offered this assessment: "Tony's passion and commitment make Harpswell, the State of Maine, and the world a better place to live."

Public Notice and Comment Period

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting natural places and working lands forever. HHLT is pleased to announce it is applying to renew its accreditation, having first achieved land trust accreditation in 2015. The public comment period is now open. Check our website for details.



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This week in Harpswell: February 8-16

In 2020, Harpswell Heritage Land Trust is collecting and sharing photos in a year-long series called "This Week in Harpswell." During one week in each season, we encourage people of all ages and experience levels to take to the trails and shoreline with camera in hand! The next week is May 23-31. Submit your photos! Check our website for more photos from February: www.hhlmaine.org/this-week-in-harpowell-february-2020/.



Photographers (clockwise starting with snowman): Steve Moore, Lucia Nixon, Gina Snyder, Shani Kiczek, Elizabeth Bailey, Karen Kurkjian

Harpowell Heritage Land Trust, 207-721-1121, info@hhlmaine.org, www.hhlmaine.org