



POTTS POINT PRESERVE PHOTO
BY BRANDON ANDRUSIC

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Climate Change and Harpswell Trails

By Ed Robinson

My Dad, like many in his generation, loved to complain about the weather. His attitude came from living on a hardscrabble, mountain-top farm where the weather's impact on livestock and harvests was a big deal.

Weather also impacts communities like Harpswell with little farming activity. The ice storm of January 1998 left five inches of ice on surfaces, dropping power lines across New England. The Patriots Day storm of 2007

resulted in ten inches of rain and snow melt, 100 mph winds, 25-foot seas and massive flooding.

We hear regular news stories about climate change and more severe weather events. Several Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT) properties have suffered repeated blow-downs, with large trees thrown about like pick-up-sticks. Clearing these tangles and keeping hiking trails open is hard physical work.

Is this a new age of severe weather events, or do we have selective recall for big storms?

WGME (Channel 13) weather expert Charlie Lopresti is a

friendly and knowledgeable weatherman. Charlie began our chat with global warming, stating that the earth has been warming for more than a century. Since 1896, the average annual temperature in Maine has risen by 3.20 °F. The trend has accelerated since 1960 with 18 of the 19 hottest years on record occurring since 2001!



Trail volunteers Jeff Stann, David Morton and Tom Carr at Little Ponds Preserve. (David Morton photo)

New England is warming twice as fast as other areas of the US, in part because the Gulf of Maine is the second fastest warming body

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How Land and Easement Acquisitions Work

By John Tisdale

Harpowell Heritage Land Trust exists to preserve and protect Harpswell's natural resources, cultural heritage and access to the outdoors now and forever through conservation, stewardship and education. Translating this mission into practice and protecting the extraordinary lands that make Harpswell so special is a long and involved undertaking.

The process of acquiring land or easements for conservation is driven by several considerations, including the nature of the

property, the interests and goals of the owner and the financial resources available at a given time.

In many cases, the process begins with a conversation between HHLT's Executive Director, Reed Coles and a landowner about preserving and protecting a beloved piece of property. HHLT will then assess the parcel using detailed project selection criteria consistent with its conservation priorities. New conservation land must have an identifiable public benefit, such as open public space, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, historic buildings, water quality protection

or undeveloped shoreline. Lands with recreation potential or fragile habitats are especially desirable.

Assuming both the land owners and HHLT want to continue, the next step is a collaborative process to find the best method of conservation.

Sometimes a landowner will sell (at a discount or at market value) or donate a property to HHLT, creating a preserve. Donations of land ensure the land's permanent protection, while also offering potential tax benefits to the donor.

For high priority properties, HHLT sometimes will undertake

a fund-raising campaign and seek grants to purchase the land, as it did with the recent Strawberry Creek purchase.

Conservation easements are another tool used by land trusts to protect the natural values of land and important cultural or historic places. Conservation easements are voluntary agreements between a landowner and the land trust that restrict how the land may be used or changed in the future. Landowners retain ownership of the property and can sell it, but the restrictions go with the property through all future sales. This is an arrangement that allows the owner to continue to

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