

Maine Heritage

THE NEWSLETTER OF MAINE COAST HERITAGE TRUST

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Conservation in Sipp Bay Protects Traditional Access to the Land and Water

SHELLFISH HARVESTERS AND THOSE PURSUING RECREATION WILL BENEFIT FROM MCHT'S WORK TO CONSERVE ACCESS TO SIPP BAY.

A combination of voluntary conservation agreements and outright purchase of land in a remote corner of Cobscook Bay is allowing Maine Coast Heritage Trust to protect values important to the region. The projects secure permanent public access to the shore and support the local economy, while protecting ecologically rich and productive wildlife habitat. The effort involves four separate properties in Sipp Bay, which together form a conserved area that serves as an outstanding example of the Trust's work to enhance a community in down east Maine.

MCHT purchased a 16-acre peninsula and is in the process of acquiring an adjoining 78-acre wooded parcel at the gateway to Sipp Bay that

together conserve a total of 9,200 feet of shorefront. The peninsula is a defunct commercial campground that has long been used as an unofficial access point by area clammers and "wrinklers," periwinkle harvesters, many of whom are members of the

"Without MCHT's action, Sipp Bay would essentially be closed to a lot of public activities."

—Tess Ftorek, Registered Maine Guide

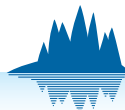
local Passamaquoddy tribe. "It's really good to know that this land will stay open to the public. It will help sustain the traditional harvesting of wrinkles, clams and worms... and that is a

critical part of people's livelihoods here," says Roland Newall, a tribal member and chief of the volunteer fire department in nearby Perry.

The Trust also arranged conservation easements on two largely undeveloped parcels, the 74-acre Sipp Bay South property and 75 acres on Fox Point that protect an additional 16,550 feet of saltwater frontage. Heavily wooded and lined with salt marshes and clamflats, the two easement properties bracket the west side of Sipp Bay just inside the Pembroke town line. Those two properties will not be open for public access.

"The ecological values of these properties are very high, with abundant and high-quality wading bird

continued on page three



Maine Coast Heritage Trust
A Statewide Land Conservation Organization



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN *by Tim Glidden*

Looking Forward

Each summer my family and I pile into an open workboat and head out to Birch Island, nestled between the Mere Point and Harpswell peninsulas in Casco Bay. We've owned a camp out there for ten years, and it has become a touchstone in our lives, particularly for my daughters. It's a place where an hour sitting on the shore watching the local osprey fish the cove on a rising tide is time well spent for the lessons it teaches about the importance of savoring—and working to save—the Maine coast.

Coming to the presidency of Maine Coast Heritage Trust from my previous job as executive director of the State's Land for Maine's Future program (LMF) both expands and focuses a lifetime that has revolved around protecting our vital natural resources and enhancing the economy and jobs that depend on them. Over the course of a decade at LMF I was privileged to oversee a shift in

the program that increased funding for the conservation of Maine's working forest, active waterfronts, and threatened farmland, while continuing to help protect Maine's remote wild places—such as MCHT's Marshall Island preserve.

My work experiences at LMF and earlier in my career have taught me the value of listening and building partnerships, traits that I am quickly learning rank among the Trust's most basic strengths. Working on the nonpartisan staff of the Maine Legislature in the 1980s and early 1990s immersed me in thorny issues ranging from public access to the land to water quality protection. There I met a remarkable cross section of Mainers whose friends and neighbors had entrusted them with resolving issues critical to the long-term future of our state. That was followed by seven years as deputy director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine where I continued my path of working in

partnership to protect Maine's natural resources.

In my first months at MCHT I have been impressed at how well the organization listens, both to the MCHT community itself—our members, staff, board, council—and to the local communities in which we operate. It is clear that the Trust believes deeply in a Maine where the quality and character of its natural resources are integral to its future and where the voices of Maine's people really matter.

Maine has made remarkable progress in recent years.

Since 1997 conserved lands have almost tripled to nearly 3.8 million acres of wilderness, working forest, active waterfronts and fertile farmland, and the Trust has played a vital role in that accomplishment. Maine's character, future and heritage are defined by its incredible natural assets, especially its coast. Without MCHT's work, Maine would be a poorer place.

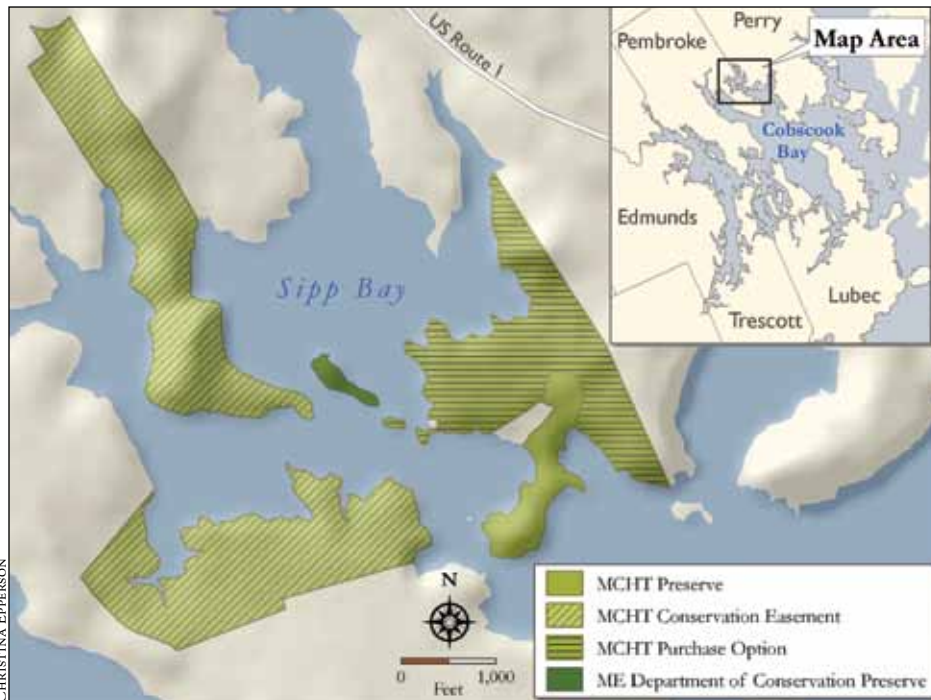
Today, though, MCHT in particular and the

land conservation community in general stand at the edge of an entirely new period. The political, financial and economic challenges we face have never been greater. The responsibilities of caring for protected lands are growing as a direct result of our success. Most importantly, the role and relevance of land conservation in society are under examination as our understanding of human and natural communities deepens and the threats of development, climate change and pervasive economic uncertainty mount. Even as we extend the foundations of the Trust's work, we must broaden the working definition of land conservation. The Trust has a unique ability to stand in the middle and bring all sides of an issue together, to create partnerships among disparate stakeholders and to maximize benefits for everyone involved. It couldn't be a more exciting time for MCHT, and I am thrilled at the opportunity to be part of its future.



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Conservation in Sipp Bay continued from page one



THE SIPP BAY CONSERVATION EFFORT ADDS TO THE TRUST'S RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE COBSCOOK BAY REGION.

and waterfowl habitat as well as very productive mudflats," MCHT project manager Marty Anderson explains. "In addition, the 16-acre peninsula [Sipp Bay Preserve] has several documented archeological sites. This is an amazing opportunity for the Trust to protect a diverse and important part of Cobscook Bay."

The Sipp Bay Preserve, however, "has great potential for public use as a coastal park or preserve," Anderson says. "It has terrific views across Cobscook Bay and even a set of reversing falls at the entrance to the bay." Part of MCHT's forthcoming management plan includes reaching out to local stakeholders for their input on how the property should be used. Anderson and regional steward Deirdre Whitehead anticipate walking trails and day-use facilities on the property, as well as an upgraded boat launch site, plans that fit nicely with the town of Perry's desire to enhance recreational opportunities and public access to the water.

"We're thrilled that MCHT's purchase will guarantee access to Sipp Bay," adds Tess Ftorek, a Registered Maine Guide who, with her husband

Steve, operates Cobscook Hikes and Paddles in nearby Robbinston. "We've been taking canoe and kayak trips out of that site for 15 years. People are coming here from all over the world to experience our pristine coastal environment. Without MCHT's action, Sipp Bay would essentially be closed to a lot of public activities."

Whitehead says the Trust will "undevelop" the property by removing old power poles and structures left over from its days as a campground. "Looking at this project as a whole, it fulfills so many goals, both for the Trust and for the local economy," Whitehead points out. "We have habitat and wildlife protection, recreational potential, and support for the local resource-based economy. Everyone wins here."

Funding for the projects remains to be finalized, with key support in hand from the Pew Charitable Trusts, as well as pending grants from public and private sources still in process.

SIGN UP SOON FOR FIELD TRIPS

Afloat or ashore, MCHT offers a variety of late summer and early fall field trips. Advance registration is not required for most trips, and many tours are free. For a complete list and more information, go to www.mcht.org/tours.

- August 7** *Boot Head Preserve Hike.* A 700-acre gem on the Bold Coast in Lubec, the preserve's sweeping ocean views, woods and bog areas are the focus of a leisurely three-mile hike.
- August 15, 22** *Marshall Island Hike.* Follow an MCHT steward/naturalist along the sand beaches, tidal pools, and six-to-eight miles of trails on the largest undeveloped island in Maine. The \$50 cost includes one-hour boat rides to and from the island.
- September 3**
- August 28** *Machias Bay Petroglyph Kayak Tour, Machiasport.* Created by Native Americans over thousands of years, the petroglyphs chiseled or pecked into rock depict humans, animals, spirits, visions and events. Cost is \$55 per person.
- September 16** *Frenchboro Nature Hike.* Explore the 970-acre Frenchboro Preserve on a six-to-eight mile hike through maritime forests, rocky headlands and shoreline trails.

Foundation Grant Boosts MDI Initiative

With an inspirational lead gift of \$1 million to the Mount Desert Island Land Conservation Initiative, the Martha and Alexis Stewart Charitable Foundation is helping Maine Coast Heritage Trust secure permanent protection of the natural landscapes that define MDI's unique



PHOTOS © BRIDGET BESAW



quality of place.

Encouraged by the opportunity to protect 516-acre Kitteredge Brook Forest, the largest undeveloped parcel of land on the island, MCHT launched the MDI Initiative with the ambitious goal of raising \$10 million to conserve land critical to the island's character and its communities. "Success in this effort will allow us to realize great opportunities to maintain the island's shoreline,

MCHT'S MOUNT DESERT ISLAND INITIATIVE SEEKS TO PROTECT DIVERSE LANDSCAPES SUCH AS KITTEREDGE BROOK FOREST AND THE SCENIC WESTERN SHORE OF THE ISLAND.

trails, farmland and wetlands," says Director of Land Protection David MacDonald. "It's truly heartening that conservation-minded partners like the Martha and Alexis Stewart Charitable Foundation share the commitment of protecting MDI's special places."

In keeping with the spirit of collaboration that has defined Maine Coast Heritage Trust's 40-year history as the local land trust for MDI, the Stewart Foundation gift also helped MCHT secure a 50-percent match on a \$2 million challenge grant offered by an anonymous donor and The Pew Charitable Trusts. "The Martha and Alexis Stewart Charitable Foundation helped us reach a critical milestone in our effort," says MCHT Director of Development, Sue Telfeian.

MCHT has a little over \$3 million left to raise to reach the MDI Land Conservation Initiative goal of \$10 million. Please contact Sue Telfeian (stelfeian@mcht.org or 207-729-7366) to learn more about how to leverage your gift through a new 50-percent matching opportunity offered by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Davis Family Challenge.

Staying in Touch with MCHT Online



Following MCHT on Facebook is a great way to learn about what's happening on the Maine coast: upcoming MCHT field trips and events, land protection stories, news from Aldermere Farm and our other preserves, and volunteer opportunities. Visit our Facebook page and click "like" to keep in touch.

If you would prefer MCHT news and information delivered right to your inbox, join our e-community by signing up for e-mail updates (approximately one per month). Simply visit www.mcht.org and click "Join!"

And yes, you also can follow MCHT on twitter!



The New Buzz in Blueberries



MELISSA LEE



ISTOCK

MCHT RESEARCH INTO BUILDING POPULATIONS OF NATIVE POLLINATORS FOR ORGANIC BLUEBERRY PRODUCTION MAY HELP OTHER GROWERS REDUCE THEIR DEPENDENCE ON RENTED BEE HIVES.

Maine Coast Heritage Trust's plans to convert 88 acres of blueberry fields at the Trust's Bog Brook Cove Preserve to organic production may well benefit other growers in Maine. A new research project aims to increase the nesting habitat for native pollinating bees to reduce the need to bring in commercial rented hives.

In Maine's huge commercial blueberry barrens, owners commonly rent thousands of beehives from companies that truck the hives up and down the East Coast to pollinate various crops. Beyond the expense of renting the hives, there is some suspicion that concentrating the honeybees' activities in monocrop plantings is a factor in colony collapse disorder, a mysterious affliction that kills a third or more of commercial hives every year.

"We're trying something a little different," Regional steward Melissa Lee says. She has been working with local Boy Scouts to create nest boxes for native pollinators, such as mason bees and leafcutter bees. Rather than living in hives, the bees prefer individual tubes. The nest boxes are essentially blocks of wood with 12 to 14 holes drilled in them and attached

to posts in three of the preserve's nine blueberry fields. Nesting boxes will be added to the other fields in future years as the transition progresses. "We hope to increase the populations of these native bees to reduce the need for rented hives," Lee explains. "As part of the transition to organic methods, we want to mimic the natural system as much as possible."

Because of the project's implications for other organic growers, the Trust has hired a research coordinator who will monitor blueberry blossom pollination and use of the nest boxes, among other duties, to determine their effectiveness.

"This work has tremendous relevance for us and other organic growers who want to improve habitats for native pollinators," says Dwayne Shaw, executive director of the Downeast Rivers Land Trust, which owns 36 acres of organic blueberry land. "Anything we can learn that will encourage native bees is good information to have."

"Hives of bumblebees will also be placed on some fields," Lee adds, "because they work when it's cool and foggy, which is commonly the case in May and June on the Downeast Coast." Bumbles also pollinate more efficiently than honeybees.

The project offers an elegant, yet simple, solution that could help small growers reduce their reliance on rented hives, save them money and help local bee populations.

SUCCESSFUL BURN OF ISLAND JUNIPER

MCHT staff and six Maine Forest Service rangers recently conducted a prescribed burn of seven acres of common juniper, a native plant that has thrived a little too well, on MCHT's Calderwood Island Preserve. The burn was intended to restore some of the grassland that once covered the island. MCHT stewardship staff will monitor the island over the coming years to evaluate the burn's long-term effectiveness.

Despite its brevity, the burn required considerable preparation. Last year a summer work crew cut fire breaks to protect nearby trees, while the logistics on the day of the burn itself required transporting staff to the island via boat, and the Forest Service bringing in their crew and hundreds of pounds of equipment by helicopter. MCHT extends its thanks to all at the Maine Forest Service who made the day a great success!



MAINE COAST HERITAGE TRUST

is dedicated to protecting land that is essential to the character of Maine, its coastline and islands in particular.

Since 1970, more than 135,000 acres have been permanently protected, including 290 entire coastal islands. MCHT provides conservation advisory services free of charge to landowners, local land trusts and state and community officials. A membership organization, MCHT welcomes your support and inquiries.

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STAFF NEWS

Amy Dorsky joins the staff at Aldermere Farm as the new program assistant. The Southern Maine native lives in Appleton with her husband and three daughters on a 160-acre farm, 153 acres of which are under conservation easement.



Heather Halsey is MCHT's new community program manager. Her responsibilities include running sustainable agriculture programs at Erickson Fields Preserve and encouraging appropriate farming and agriculture-related programs at other MCHT preserves.



Misha Mytar has been named the new project manager for Mount Desert Island. She joins MCHT from a post as senior planner for the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.



CONSERVATION CONFERENCE SHOWS STRENGTH OF LAND TRUSTS

Events both serious and light-hearted marked the 2011 Maine Land Conservation Conference in April. The annual event drew more than 400 participants representing 160 organizations, including 60 land trusts from Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts and even New Brunswick and Ontario, Canada. They crowded 33 topical workshops, as well as panel discussions and field trips, devoted to improving and expanding land conservation in Maine.

One of the highlights was the presentation of the 2011 Espy Land Heritage Award to the Downeast Lakes Land Trust for its commitment

to wildlife habitat conservation, support of local jobs through sustainable forest harvesting, their enhancement of public recreational access and much more. "It is a great honor to receive the Espy Land Heritage Award," said Mark Berry, its executive director. "It comes at an important time for our community."



TIM GLIDDEN, MARK BERRY & JAY ESPY

"The conference has developed into an important information-sharing and learning opportunity for the state's land trust community," says Warren Whitney, MCHT's Land Trust Program Manager. "Its success spotlights the health and strength of land conservation in Maine and across New England."