

Maine Heritage

THE NEWSLETTER OF MAINE COAST HERITAGE TRUST

SUMMER 2007

COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION DOWNEAST

Through increased collaboration, land trusts downeast are conserving places that contribute to the natural integrity, cultural traditions and economic health of Washington County. MCHT recently secured 127 acres on Ripley Neck in Harrington (shown here), which will give the public access to 1.5 miles of shoreline.

The rugged and beautiful landscape of downeast coastal Maine defines its communities and its residents—whose lifestyles and livelihoods are bound to the land and sea. For more than two decades, Maine Coast Heritage Trust has worked with communities, landowners and partners to conserve special places along this unique stretch of coast. Protected lands in Cobscook and Pleasant bays provide critical habitat for diverse wildlife and sustain shore access for recreation and harvesting. Preserves along the rugged Bold Coast (which stretches from Cutler to Lubec) offer opportunities to enjoy traditions like hiking and hunting.

Now MCHT is facilitating a collaborative process involving Downeast Rivers Land Trust in Columbia Falls, Great Auk Land Trust (GALT) in Milbridge, and Quoddy Regional Land Trust in Whiting. "We're glad to be helping

these partners discuss their shared goals and explore ways to operate more strategically and sustainably," says David MacDonald, MCHT's Director of Land Protection.

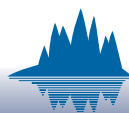
With \$55,200 from the Land Trust Alliance/Maine Coast Protection Initiative and \$21,000 from Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, the Downeast Land Trust Collaboration recently hired a shared fundraising specialist and began developing a regional conservation plan. "This effort is drawing in new partners as well," MacDonald notes. "The Washington County Council of Governments and GIS classes at the University of Maine in Machias are helping us prepare the plan."

MCHT also is collaborating with GALT on its "Summit, Forest & Seacoast" campaign, which seeks to conserve three prime properties around Pleasant Bay that traditionally have been used for hiking,

picnicking, fishing and hunting. With support from the State's Land for Maine's Future Program, MCHT recently acquired the first of these properties, Willard Point in Harrington, through a purchase substantially below the land's appraised value. The 127-acre tract has majestic stands of mature spruce, fir and pine, and 1.5 miles of wild shoreline. Former owner Charles Milmine notes that the land had been in his family since 1911, and "nothing has ever been done to it in that time. Our family has always had a strong conservation ethic, and I inherited that."

MCHT plans to create a loop trail for hiking and a parking area to make the Willard Point preserve more accessible. MCHT and GALT are seeking financial support for two additional campaign projects, a 117-acre tract atop Pigeon Hill (on the Petit Manan peninsula) and 23-acre Tibbett Island (just off of a town park in Addison).

continued on page 3



Maine Coast Heritage Trust
A Statewide Land Conservation Organization



President's Column by Jay Espy

Protecting a Unique Stretch of Coast

Along the Eastern Seaboard, there are few—if any—places that remain as wild and unspoiled as Maine's easternmost coast. The shoreline between Mount Desert Island and the Canadian border holds some of Maine's most breathtaking scenery and some of its greatest concentrations of wildlife. Dramatic cliffs along the Bold Coast are interspersed with unusual geological formations such as caves, blow holes and arches. The region's impressive tidal flats (with tidal ranges averaging 20 feet) and nutrient-rich waters create prime habitat for a great diversity of species—including migratory shorebirds, bald eagles and waterfowl.

This remote stretch of coast holds far fewer people than counties to the south and west. The population in Washington County is roughly equal to that of Lincoln County in the midcoast, yet the land base is five times as large. The 2000 Census reported 13 people per square mile in Washington County, as compared to 317 people per square mile in Cumberland County.

Washington County's low population has helped keep the natural values of this unique region largely intact. The relentless development pressures working eastward along Maine's coast have not yet reached peak force here. However, second home development is accelerating, fragmenting formerly unbroken shorelines and making it hard for many residents to keep up with spiraling property values. More than 64 percent of households in

Washington County now cannot afford the median home price.

Increasing development can undermine community traditions, closing off informal access to wildlands that generations of residents have enjoyed for hunting, fishing, picnicking and walking. In the 200-plus miles of shoreline from Petit Manan Point to the Addison-Beals town line, only six sites now provide assured access for marine harvesting and recreation. Loss of traditional access sites diminishes the local economy and the quality of life.

Nearly 20 years ago, former MCHT Board member and eighth-generation lobsterman Jasper Cates argued that indiscriminant development along the Bold Coast would hurt both the region's natural resource-based

economy and its community traditions. The force and logic of his argument prompted MCHT to engage in protecting some of downeast Maine's most stellar landmarks: Western Head, Boot Head and Hamilton Cove.

With the expansion of local land trusts in Washington County over the last decade, more of our projects there have become collaborative efforts—completed in partnership with local conservationists. Now those local trusts are discussing their future visions and finding ways to enhance their capacity for effective land conservation.

The collaborative planning underway in Washington County is part of a broader trend within the land trust movement, in which trusts across the nation are taking steps to ensure that their organizations will remain sound and strong for decades to come. It's an exciting time for coastal conservation in Washington County, and MCHT is pleased to be part of this local initiative.



Conserved lands downeast, like MCHT's Boot Head Preserve (shown here), ensure continued public access to lands that local residents and visitors have long enjoyed for hiking, hunting and shellfish-harvesting.

Conservation Downeast *continued from page one*

GALT hopes to acquire both these properties by the end of this year.

To keep pace with the heightened interest in land conservation downeast, and to work more closely with its local land trust partners, MCHT has opened a new field office in Columbia Falls staffed by Marty Anderson, who joined MCHT's land protection staff in April. He and Patrick Watson, MCHT's project manager downeast for many years, will work as a team to serve partners and landowners in Washington County. "We're excited to see such strong commitment to the region's future," Watson says. "The collaborative efforts underway should bring real benefits to the landscapes and communities downeast."



Jeff Romano

Building on past successes, such as the protection of Cobscook Bay's Reversing Falls (shown here), land trusts downeast are working collaboratively to strengthen conservation efforts.

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES

Donors who would like to contribute to Maine Coast Heritage Trust while retaining a secure source of income may be interested in creating a charitable gift annuity. Through this simple contract, the donor transfers cash or other assets to the Trust and MCHT agrees to pay the donor a guaranteed fixed amount annually for life (secured by the charitable assets). The donor benefits from steady, predictable payments (without concerns about low stock



Rich Knox

Charitable gift annuities with MCHT offer donors a guaranteed fixed income and a charitable income tax deduction, while fostering conservation of Maine's Coast.

RATES OF RETURN FOR CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES^W

Age	Rate of Return (as of 2007)
60	5.7%
65	6.0%
70	6.5%
75	7.1%
80	8.0%
85	9.5%
90+	11.3%

(source: American Council of Gift Annuities, www.acga-web.org)

dividends or fluctuating market performance), and receives a charitable income tax deduction for a portion of the asset value that is transferred.

The amount of each annuity payment MCHT provides depends upon the gift amount and donor's age. MCHT offers CGAs for a minimum of \$25,000, which can be structured to provide income for one or two individuals (who do not need to be related). The accompanying box shows rates for a single-life gift

annuity. "For people under age 60, the charitable gift annuity may be less practical, but younger donors can arrange deferred annuities," explains Development Director Jonathan Labaree. "In that case, MCHT would not start making payments for some period of years. Since the payments are deferred, they end up being higher than if they started right away." For more information on CGAs, please contact MCHT's development office at 207-729-7366.

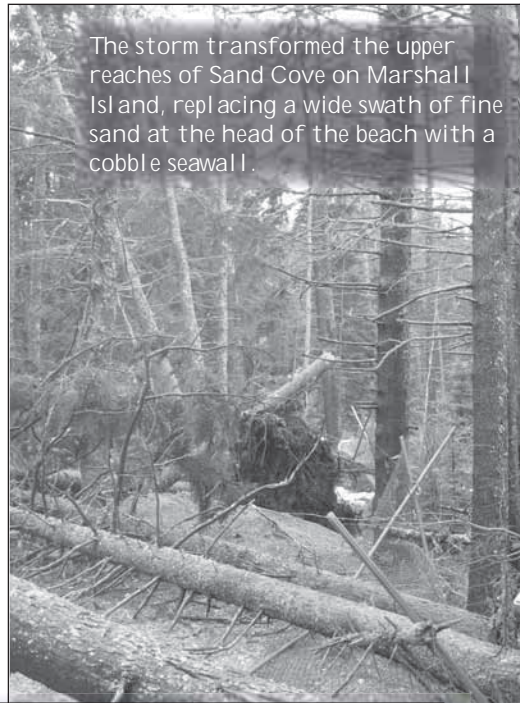
STEWARDSHIP: April Nor'easter

The Nor'easter storm that blew through New England on Patriot's Day weekend in April left its mark on many coastal preserves—downing trees, flooding shorelines, and adding tasks to the long “to do” lists of MCHT's regional stewards. With heavy rains, pounding surf and winds gusting up to 81 mph, the storm inflicted extensive damage. All of Maine's coastal counties were declared federal disaster areas, with York and Cumberland counties hardest hit. Preliminary estimates of damage to public infrastructure stand at \$45 million, according to the Maine Emergency Management Agency.

Storm damage was aggravated by astronomically high tides, notes Terry Towne, MCHT's Regional Steward on Mount Desert Island. “The normal tidal range here is 10.6 feet. That day, the astronomical high would have been 13.2 feet, but the storm surge drove it up to 14.5 feet. On Frenchboro Island, for example, the beaches were washed clean but all that marine debris is now 50 feet into the woods.” MCHT had already hired a four-person crew for 20 days to clear trails on Frenchboro Island. Damage from the storm necessitated another four days of work.

The offshore islands were among the hardest hit in the storm, Towne notes. On Marshall Island, the expansive beach at Sand Cove changed dramatically—with the upper quarter of the beach now large cobbles rather than fine sand. Several new sections of trail, Towne observes, “succumbed to storm surge or downed trees.”

Douglas McMullin, who stewards Trust preserves from Castine to Merchant Row, found that “far and away the storm's epicenter for my region was at Witherle Woods in



The storm transformed the upper reaches of Sand Cove on Marshall Island, replacing a wide swath of fine sand at the head of the beach with a cobble seawall.



TERRY TOWNE



Terry Towne

Among the 100-plus trees downed by the storm at MCHT's Witherle Woods Preserve were several that toppled a boundary fence.

Douglas McMullin

While many MCHT preserves experienced losses in the Patriot's Day storm, the Manset Fields shoreline on Mount Desert Island gained an influx of new sand, markedly expanding the beach.

Castine.” McMullin spent a full day cutting downed trees at one preserve boundary so that neighbors could reach their cars and have power restored to their home. By mid-May, McMullin had already spent more than a week attempting to clean up the Preserve's primary entrance and several trails. More than 100 trees in the preserve were downed or fell over trails, and several areas were covered by extensive deadfalls. With help from two Maine Maritime Academy volunteers, McMullin strove to make trails passable, but more work remains.

Amidst all the damage, there were a few welcome effects from the storm. Towne notes that the beach at MCHT's Manset Fields property on Mount Desert Island is greatly improved, with much added sand making it a more appealing site. And at one island preserve, where the wharf on an adjoining property encroached on MCHT land, the storm swept away every trace of that pier. “We had been talking about how to resolve that boundary conflict,” Towne notes wryly, “but I expect the discussion will be very different now.”

2007 MAINE LAND CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

The tenth annual Maine Land Conservation Conference, held May 5 and 6 in Wiscasset and Brunswick, drew 400 conservationists to hear an engaging mix of speakers, workshop presentations and discussions. MCHT is grateful to all those who helped make the conference a resounding success, particularly the lead sponsors L.L. Bean and Eaton Peabody. The two-day event offered much valuable information and inspiration for participants—judging from the positive evaluations that came in at the close of the conference.

KEYNOTE: Meeting the Challenges Ahead



Vermont Land Trust

In a thought-provoking keynote address, Darby Bradley—Vermont Land Trust's Special Assistant for Government and

Donor Relations, spoke of how land trusts can serve the public long-term by operating with high standards and maintaining public trust.

Exhorting land trusts to think outside the box, Bradley suggested that "land conservation do more than conserve land." He cited

Vermont's symbiotic alliance between affordable housing and conservation interests, and the potential for further partnerships with those promoting economic development, sound land use, local foods and place-based education. VLT, in his words, "is becoming an organization in which land is what we do, but building healthy communities is what we're about."

Increasingly, land trusts must face the thorny issue of easement amendments, contending with unanticipated changes while enhancing the public benefits of

conserved lands. Bradley advocated that trusts view easement amendments as "the exception, not the rule," and base their decisions on a clear, written policy. The governing motivation, he noted, should always be public interest—not landowner benefits or land trust convenience.

"We have an enormous and growing capacity to serve our communities," Bradley concluded, "so long as we keep the public interest foremost in our minds, ensure that the public's investment is protected, and ensure that all members of society will benefit from our work."

Waste NOT, Want NOT

At this year's conference, MCHT undertook a successful experiment using biodegradable plates, cups, napkins and cutlery. Thanks to new advances in compostable products and a very supportive caterer (Susan Robson, of Sarah's Café in Wiscasset), 400 conference participants ate and drank off compostables and then threw them into biodegradable trash bags. At the end of the day, MCHT's receptionist Celeste Black (one of the prime forces behind this "zero-waste"

effort) took about 20 of these bags up to Morris Farm in Wiscasset, an organic community farm with a composting operation. Some of the Farm's sheep and lambs gathered to watch the unloading process, kicking their heels and wiggling their tails. Watching these sheep gathered by a maple tree, Black reflects, "reminded me how we can ALL help close the circle by buying compostable products and treating 'waste' as a resource in disguise!"



© Bridget Besaw

Compost from the Maine Land Conservation Conference went to Morris Farm, an organic community farm in Wiscasset.

Staff News

MCHT welcomes four new staff members. Membership Manager **Patty Renaud** brings development experience from her former work at the Maine Hospice Council and Natural Resources Council of Maine.

Marty Anderson, the new project manager in MCHT's Columbia Falls office, worked previously as Executive Director of Great Auk Land Trust. **Kirk Gentalen** joins the stewardship team as a part-time regional steward on Vinalhaven.

Deborah Chapman works part-time as the Operations Circuit Rider for the Maine Land Trust Network, helping local trusts around Maine build their organizational capacity. Deb formerly served as President of Georges River Land Trust and as Vice President of the MLTN Steering Committee.

In Memoriam: Laura Riley

Longtime MCHT Council Member Laura Riley died in Florida this winter, following a fall. An experienced photographer and journalist, Mrs. Riley and her husband of nearly 50 years, Bill, shared a passion for conservation and coauthored two books—the *Guide to the U.S. National Wildlife Refuges* and *Natures's Strongholds: The World's Great Wildlife Reserves*. "Laura was one of the most dedicated and talented conservationists I have known," reflects MCHT President Jay Espy. "She leaves behind a remarkable legacy of appreciation and hope for places still wild—from Maine to Florida and well beyond."

Tin Smith Receives Land Heritage Award



Rich Knox

Tin Smith of Wells received MCHT's 2007 Land Heritage Award.

MCHT awarded its annual Land Heritage Award to Tin Smith, a conservationist and farmer from Wells. Tin was a founder of Great Works Regional Land Trust more than 20 years ago, and has helped spearhead successful regional conservation efforts such as York County's Coastal Mosaic Project and what evolved into the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Initiative. He helped create the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve and now serves as its Stewardship Coordinator. Tin has served on the Maine Land Trust Network Steering Committee as well. In making the award, MCHT President Jay Espy called Tin "one of the leading lights for conservation in his region and in Maine." He praised Tin's capacity to unite optimism and enthusiasm with thoughtful pragmatism. "Tin is a true leader with a gift for seeing possibility in everything that he takes on," Espy noted. "He is as far-reaching in his zeal for land protection as anyone I have ever encountered."



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 123,000 acres have been permanently protected, including 265 entire coastal islands. MCHT provides conservation advisory services to landowners, local land trusts and state and community officials free of charge. A membership organization, MCHT welcomes your support and inquiries.

1 Bowdoin Mill Island, Suite 201, Topsham, Maine 04086
207-729-7366

P.O. Box 669, Mt. Desert, ME 04660
207-244-5100

P.O. Box 141, Columbia Falls, ME 04623
207-483-6586

Aldermere Farm, 70 Russell Ave., Rockport, ME 04856
207-236-2739

Visit us at www.mcht.org

Maine Coast Heritage Trust
1 Bowdoin Mill Island, Suite 201
Topsham, Maine 04086

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