

# Maine Heritage

THE NEWSLETTER OF MAINE COAST HERITAGE TRUST

FALL 2015

## SMALL IN ACREAGE, LARGE IN COMMUNITY BENEFITS

### Sustaining a Local Tradition

On winter weekends when snow conditions are right, “it’s seldom you don’t see families up there with their kids,” says East Machias Selectman Kenneth “Bucket” Davis, speaking of the sledding hill that Maine Coast Heritage Trust is acquiring for use as a town park.

“People have been sliding there as long as I can remember,” he adds, confessing that he still joins the young sledders despite being in his sixties. Local schools bus their students to the hill for outdoor time, where they can enjoy fresh air, exercise and beautiful views overlooking the East Machias River.

This 2.5-acre field was listed for sale, raising the prospect that new owners might restrict the community’s traditional access. So MCHT Project Manager Jacob van de Sande negotiated with the owners to subdivide this popular hillside from their house lot and sell it to the Trust. After protecting the land with a conservation easement, MCHT will transfer the property to the Town.

“It’s not often our Board of Selectmen has an opportunity to get a piece of land,” Davis observes, given that “money is tight these days.” MCHT’s gift will create a park within walking distance of the town center and less than a mile from the local elementary school.

### Gardens Grow an “IncrEdible” Community

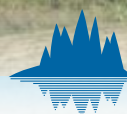
Not far from East Machias, the small town of Milbridge is working hard to ensure that “food is for everyone”—in midwife Pam Dyer Stewart’s words—by providing community members with free local, organic produce. MCHT recently helped advance this inspiring vision by purchasing a 4.6-acre field overlooking Narraguagus Bay that will offer extensive public gardens within an easy walk of downtown.

Dyer Stewart is a board member of the Milbridge Women’s Health Resource Library, which sought MCHT’s help acquiring what will be a central hub for its volunteer IncrEdible Milbridge (IEM) project. Launched in 2013, this initiative to make healthy eating accessible already has more than 50 volunteers and many businesses helping support two dozen public vegetable gardens around town.

The inspiration came from Todmorden, England, a town that had suffered economic setbacks. Neighbors there gathered and asked what could pick up the community on many levels,” Dyer Stewart says. “They decided that food was a common denominator.”

Todmorden’s grassroots approach to revitalizing community through local food has spread to towns around the world, and is beginning to transform Milbridge. “Everyone loves it,” Dyer Stewart observes: “We hope it will help revive the strong downeast tradition of family gardening and acquaint area students with that.”

IEM has a wealth of ideas for the new property, including vegetable gardens, orchards and a walking trail.



**Maine Coast Heritage Trust**  
A Statewide Land Conservation Organization



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN by Tim Glidden

## Voices Raised in Support of Conservation

When I ask others about their favorite Maine settings, the places that live within them, many of those lands are conserved. Someone they never knew—years or generations ago—recognized the special qualities of that place and took action to preserve its essence through time.

At Maine Coast Heritage Trust, we are honored to work every day with visionary landowners, committed citizens, local land trust representatives and dedicated public servants who sustain this venerable tradition. Their actions help ensure that despite all the changes in the world and the growing development and population pressures, people decades hence can still savor unspoiled settings and benefit from the state's working forests, farms and waterfronts.

When MCHT began 45 years ago, its founders thought they'd get the job done within a decade and close up shop. Now we know better. We realize that to have a natural landscape that sustains our economy and our spirits, we need to keep protecting the vulnerable farms, swimming holes, sledding hills, trout streams and other settings whose loss would diminish Maine.

One of the greatest threats to conservation has always been complacency, taking for granted the lands already protected and not focusing on the generations to come. When I began working in this field, I worried that Mainers might—in the midst of so many natural treasures—grow blasé, indifferent to the need for continued land protection and stewardship.

Admittedly, there wasn't much evidence of that. Through three decades, residents have consistently

supported bonds for the Land for Maine's Future Program by a two-thirds majority. Membership in local land trusts and MCHT is strong. People are flocking to the parks and preserves set aside for their benefit—enjoying these settings on their own and joining organized programs like land trust field trips and Great Maine Outdoor Weekend events.

But still I was concerned that the public will to sustain land conservation might weaken.

I worry less about that prospect now. This year has awakened a diverse chorus of voices extolling the benefits of Maine's conserved lands and calling for that tradition to continue. Through public hearings, letters to the editor, and neighborhood conversations, citizens are affirming their steadfast commitment to save the best of Maine. Fishermen, farmers, hikers, paddlers, hunters, business owners and local leaders are all lifting their voices, sharing a unified message: "we want land conservation in Maine to continue being a top priority."

As Mainers, we share this commitment because we value the gifts of place. Senator Angus King, one of the earliest and most outspoken advocates for Land for Maine's Future when it formed in 1987, shared this reflection in 1998 on the immeasurable importance of land conservation:

*"Someday, 50 or 100 years from now, a family will come ashore at Mount Kineo, camp, spend the night, see the sun rise over that remarkable feature, and they won't know us, they won't remember our names, but they will experience something that is — to say uplifting is an understatement — it's the essence of our humanity and our relationship to the land and to nature."*

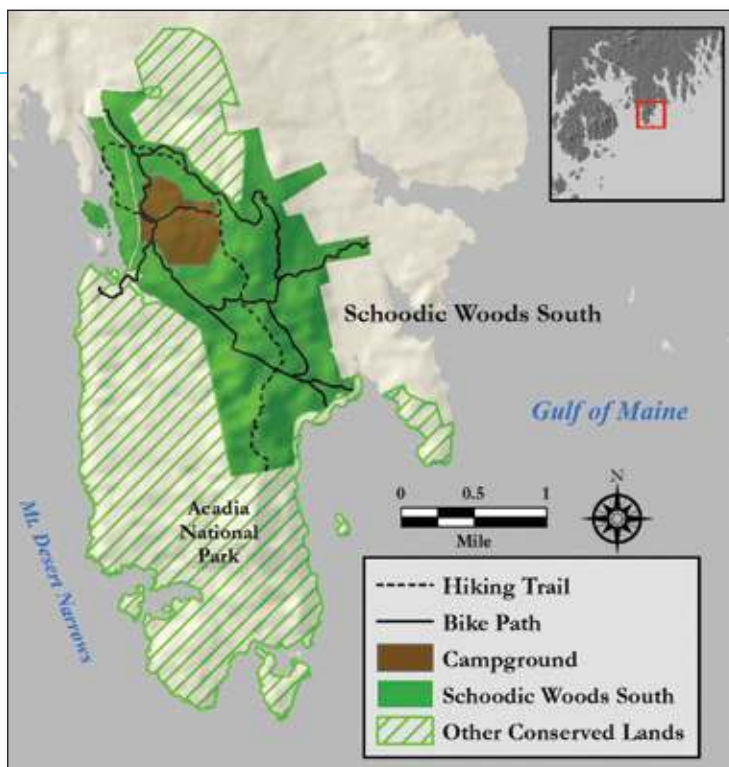
# Acadia Benefits from New Trails and Campground

Maine Coast Heritage Trust recently helped celebrate the opening of Schoodic Woods Campground, the culmination of nearly two decades of collaborative conservation work to protect 1,400 acres adjoining the Schoodic Point holding of Acadia National Park. Located in Winter Harbor, the newly constructed campground has 94 sites, 8.5 miles of biking paths, and 4 miles of hiking trails.

Peter Drinkwater, who has run the Winter Harbor 5&10 store for 26 years, sees the whole package—trails, bike paths and campground—as a “boon for the area.” The community has experienced more economic lows than highs in recent years so he welcomes the boost that both campers and day-trippers will bring to the town; “it’s definitely a positive.”

As far back as 1996, the prospect of large-scale timber-harvesting and development threatened more than 3,000 acres of woodlands in Winter Harbor. The scale of development proposed—a 250-room lodge, 150-room hotel and 18-hole golf course—would have dramatically altered the peninsula’s wild character. MCHT, Friends of Acadia and many other partners persisted through years of failed negotiations, trying repeatedly to create a protected buffer for the Park’s holdings.

They eventually secured help from New Hampshire-based Lyme Timber, a visionary timberland investment management firm. In conjunction with a family foundation, Lyme formed Schoodic Woods LLC, which in 2011 succeeded in purchasing all 3,200 acres from the developer. Schoodic Woods



CHRIS KITTREDGE

subsequently donated a conservation easement to Acadia National Park that protects the land’s southern half from any development save for modest recreational improvements.

Before donating that land to the National Park Foundation this fall, Schoodic Woods constructed the campground, bike paths and hiking trails to exacting National Park Service standards. “The remarkable generosity of this gift of land and recreational facilities places it squarely in the tradition of Acadia’s leading Park visionaries,” observes MCHT Project Manager Bob DeForrest. “Not only did they secure these key lands, but they created the infrastructure to support public enjoyment of them.”

## Join Us and Experience the Maine Coast

*“Among all the benefits of being a Maine Coast Heritage Trust member, the biggest one is knowing—when I’m out enjoying a spectacular preserve—that I’ve had some small hand in helping keep that place wild and beautiful.”*

*John R., MCHT member*

Many MCHT members feel as John does, delighted to help save places where all of us can enjoy hiking, picnicking, and simply hanging out along the shore. This past season, we heard that sentiment a lot on the Trust’s 46 field trips, in which members and friends got to experience granite-rimmed islands, bold headlands and other coastal landmarks. Our members receive first notice of field trips and special events, getting rare opportunities to join knowledgeable guides exploring some of Maine’s most beautiful places. In addition, members

receive the MCHT *Preserve Guide*, discounts to the annual Maine Land Conservation Conference, and this newsletter—with “Featured Preserve” descriptions, land protection news, and more. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our passionate members. If you are not currently a member, we hope you will join today. New members who join by 2016 will be eligible to win a weekend stay at the cabin on MCHT’s Saddleback Island Preserve (see page 4). Please use the enclosed envelope or join us online at [www.mcht.org](http://www.mcht.org).



# Saddleback Island



Saddleback is one of the larger islands in the Merchant Row archipelago off Stonington, an assemblage of 50 granite-rimmed islands famous for its quarrying history and legendary for its beauty. Two-thirds of the islands have been permanently protected either through conservation easements or direct ownership (by seven different organizations and agencies).

Lying at the far eastern end of the archipelago, 78-acre Saddleback Island tends to have fewer visitors than islands closer in to Stonington. It's a quiet and appealing destination for picnicking and for camping. Camping is on a first-come, first-served basis, with group size limited to five people (unless advance permission is granted).

The one designated campsite lies along the north shore in the island's saddle, near cellar holes from settlers' homes dating back at least to the 1830s. During the late 1800s when feathers were gathered for fashionable hats, Saddleback was a popular site for plume hunting funded by gun-manufacturing companies (according to historian Charles McLane).

On some early charts, Saddleback appears as "Ash" island and its forest may once have been dominated by this species. In the 1890s, Native Americans from Pleasant Point (near Eastport) came to the island routinely for ash boughs to use in furniture-making.

The family that sold Saddleback Island to MCHT in 2004 had owned it for nearly 50 years. They bought it after cruising by and picnicking on the "saddle." The family built only a modest cabin (which is now rented on a short-term basis to MCHT members), and a wharf that washed out twice (with only vestiges now remaining).

"Saddleback makes a wonderful base camp for exploring Merchant Row," notes Regional Steward Douglas McMullin, "and with all the conserved lands in the vicinity, there's a lot to take in."

**DIRECTIONS:** Saddleback Island is a 3- to 4-mile paddle from launch sites at the Stonington waterfront or Old Quarry Ocean Adventures. Anchorage off the campsite, along the northern shore, is sheltered from sou'westerly breezes but very exposed if winds move north.

**NEARBY CONSERVED LANDS:** MCHT owns and manages six other island preserves in Merchant Row: Green, Sand, Gooseberry, Bills, Little Camp and Nathan/Little Nathan Islands (the only other MCHT preserve in the vicinity with an established campsite).

## Wellness Trail Opens at Erickson Fields Preserve



MARINA SCHAUFFLER

“The Camden Hills offer plentiful options for mountain hikes, but not everyone can tackle those steeper trails,” notes Ron Howard, General Manager of Maine Coast Heritage Trust’s Aldermere Farm. “Whether they’re toddlers, seniors or somewhere in between, many community residents want to enjoy a woods walk with a gentler grade and wider, smoother trail.”

To meet this need, MCHT recently opened a wellness trail at its Erickson Fields Preserve, a 1.4-mile loop that introduces visitors to more of its 93-acre preserve. The trail crosses a pasture marked by stone walls, and then enters a woodland where wolf trees have grown up from former pasture.

Even before it was completed, neighboring landowners were out enjoying the new trail. Bob and Julie White, whose home abuts the preserve, found themselves—in Bob’s words—“really getting to know this piece of land,” and in the process “becoming bigger and bigger fans of what the whole Trust does.”

Growing more attached to the preserve, Bob says, prompted them to help out, “trying to be a good neighbor.” Bob built a kiosk for the new trail while Julie, a surgeon at PenBay Health, connected MCHT with health programs and helped lead the first of the Preserve’s “Doc Walks” (where people can talk with area doctors about the health benefits of exercise). The trail has fitness stations along it for those who want to build in an extra workout.

Word is out about the trail, Bob notes: “you’d be amazed at how many people are using it already.” In the course of half an hour, he’s observed four to five groups arriving—even on a weekday.

There’s already discussion of extending the trail because MCHT just purchased an adjoining 71-acre parcel that eventually could offer a trail leading close to the popular Beech Hill Preserve, an open summit that MCHT helped Coastal Mountains Land Trust protect (with help from the Land for Maine’s Future Program). “The new

trail and potential future connections enhance our goal of creating a wider network of alternative paths between villages and neighborhoods that will benefit everyone,” observes Lynda Clancy, a member of the Camden-Rockport Pathways Committee.

Alongside widespread community enthusiasm, there has been generous financial support for the trail from Pen Bay Healthcare, Cordjia, Energy Systems Group, the Jane B. Cook Charitable Trust and the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation.

“Erickson Fields has been best known to date for its 2-acre vegetable gardens which, with the help of an energetic Teen Ag Crew, have yielded about 20,000 pounds of produce this year—most of which went to local food pantries and the school lunch program,” Ron Howard observes. “Although the Preserve is in a high-traffic location near two schools, few people noticed it. Now, there’s a steady stream of visitors stopping by to enjoy all that Erickson Fields has to offer.”

Maine Coast Heritage Trust is dedicated to protecting land that is essential to the character of Maine and to the health of coastal communities. Since 1970, more than 144,000 acres have been permanently protected, including more than 300 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 involvement.

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## WHAT'S INSIDE

- ▶ **Broad and Deep Support for Conservation (p. 2)**
- ▶ **New Schoodic Woods Campground Opens (p. 3)**
- ▶ **Featured Preserve: Saddleback Island (p. 4)**
- ▶ **A Focus on Wellness at Erickson Fields (p. 5)**

Visit us online at [www.mcht.org](http://www.mcht.org) for:

- **MCHT Preserve Listings**
- **Notices of Field Trips and Events**
- **Staff News**
- **Job Postings**
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## Helping Kids Get Outside



Maine Coast Heritage Trust worked with the Lubec School to establish an Outing Club 17 years ago, and each year it helps the school introduce students to the wonders of the outdoors—through activities like full moon hikes, snowshoeing, animal tracking, orienteering, kite flying, hiking, kayaking, bicycling and—most recently—whale watching. This September, MCHT offered students from this small community downeast the chance to meet some of their largest neighbors in the Bay of Fundy.