

Maine Heritage

THE NEWSLETTER OF MAINE COAST HERITAGE TRUST

SUMMER 2014

Collaborating to Conserve a Birding Mecca



TIM SWAN

FOR MIDCOAST ORNITHOLOGIST DON REIMER AND OTHER BIRDERS, THE WESKEAG RIVER ESTUARY IS A FAVORITE DESTINATION THAT OFFERS EXCEPTIONAL BEAUTY AND A GREAT DIVERSITY OF SPECIES.

Through the work of many partners, a wild expanse along one of midcoast Maine's largest tidal marshes will soon be permanently protected and accessible for public recreation. Maine Coast Heritage Trust holds a purchase option to acquire 220 undeveloped acres along the Weskeag River estuary between Thomaston and Rockland.

The Maine Birding Trail calls the Weskeag "second only to Scarborough Marsh... as Maine's most productive wetland." It has been a site in the International Shorebird Survey since the 1980s. Local ornithologist Don Reimer, who conducted those surveys for more than a decade, says he recorded "30 different species, and would occasionally see 2,000-3,000 shorebirds at a time."

The Weskeag River estuary is one of 22 Important Bird Areas in Maine due to the number and diversity of migratory shorebirds, as well as tidal wading birds and water birds. "It's just a mecca—being disturbance-free and offering perfect settings for roosting and feeding," notes Lindsay Tudor, a shorebird biologist with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and

Wildlife (DIF&W). "Ecosystems like this are increasingly vital given how many of these species are in decline."

The property includes more than a mile of unbroken estuarine shoreline where river otters enjoy foraging. Woodlands and upland meadows support bobcat, moose and "another whole suite of birds," Reimer says, many of which—like bobolink and

meadowlark—are threatened by loss of grassland habitat. Protection of the upland acreage will allow the marsh to migrate inland as sea level rises, helping species like Nelson's sparrow and salt-marsh sparrow that depend on marsh habitat.

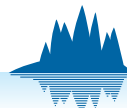
MCHT will manage 120 acres of the new 220-acre acquisition as a public preserve.



DON REIMER

GREAT AND SNOWY EGRETS ARE AMONG MORE THAN 30 SPECIES OF SHOREBIRDS THAT RELY ON THE WESKEAG RIVER MARSH AND WILL BENEFIT FROM COLLECTIVE CONSERVATION EFFORTS.

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Maine Coast Heritage Trust
A Statewide Land Conservation Organization



Collaborating to Conserve a Birding Mecca *continued from page one*

Another tract will be owned and managed by Georges River Land Trust (GRLT), and a third will be added to DIF&W's R. Waldo Tyler Wildlife Management Area. To acquire all 220 acres and care for its new preserve, MCHT needs to raise \$970,000. The Trust is seeking funds from individuals and public sources, including the Land for Maine's Future Program, the National Coastal



Wetlands Conservation Grant Program, and DIF&W through its duck stamp program.

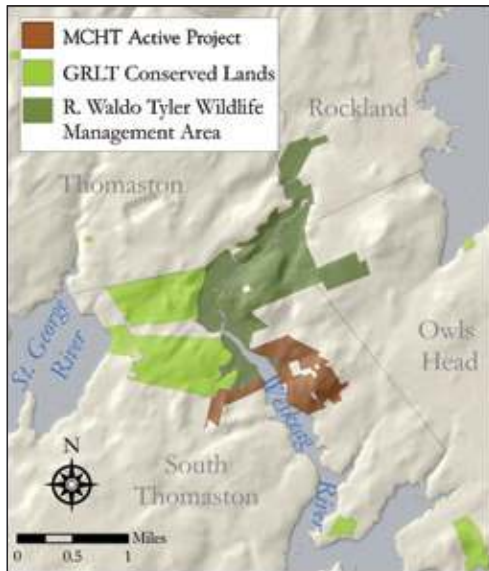
"This additional habitat will create a conserved area spanning more than 1,300 acres of marsh and upland, resulting in near-complete protection of Weskeag Marsh," observes MCHT Project Manager Steve Walker. Through several acquisitions from the 1960s onward, the State has assembled 600 acres along the upper Weskeag, most of it saltmarsh and freshwater wetlands. GRLT invested more than a million dollars in recent years to protect 500 additional acres of upland buffer to the marsh and tidal flats, along with several productive farms in the watershed.

When this latest opportunity arose on short notice, the local land trust sought help from MCHT. "They have the tools and nimbleness to make this happen, which is a critical contribution," notes GRLT Conservation Program Director Annette Naegel. "So many partners have brought their different strengths to this process, and worked together to figure out the best way forward."

Once the acquisition is completed, the public will be welcome to visit the new preserve and observe its abundant wildlife. MCHT plans to



maintain an existing trail system and construct a new parking area (off Buttermilk Lane in South Thomaston). There is also a trail and observation deck on the adjoining DIF&W lands.



THE WESKEAG RIVER PROJECT WILL HELP SUSTAIN A VALUABLE ESTUARINE ECOSYSTEM IN AN INCREASINGLY DEVELOPED REGION OF THE MIDCOAST SITUATED BETWEEN THOMASTON AND ROCKLAND.



REMEMBERING RICHARD ROCKEFELLER

Love is an action, never simply a feeling.

– bell hooks



RICHARD ROCKEFELLER EXPRESSED HIS LOVE FOR PLACE AND PEOPLE IN AN EXTRAORDINARY life of service that centered on the coast of Maine and extended around the world. Through his kind and generous nature, creativity and leadership, he had an impact that will be felt for generations.

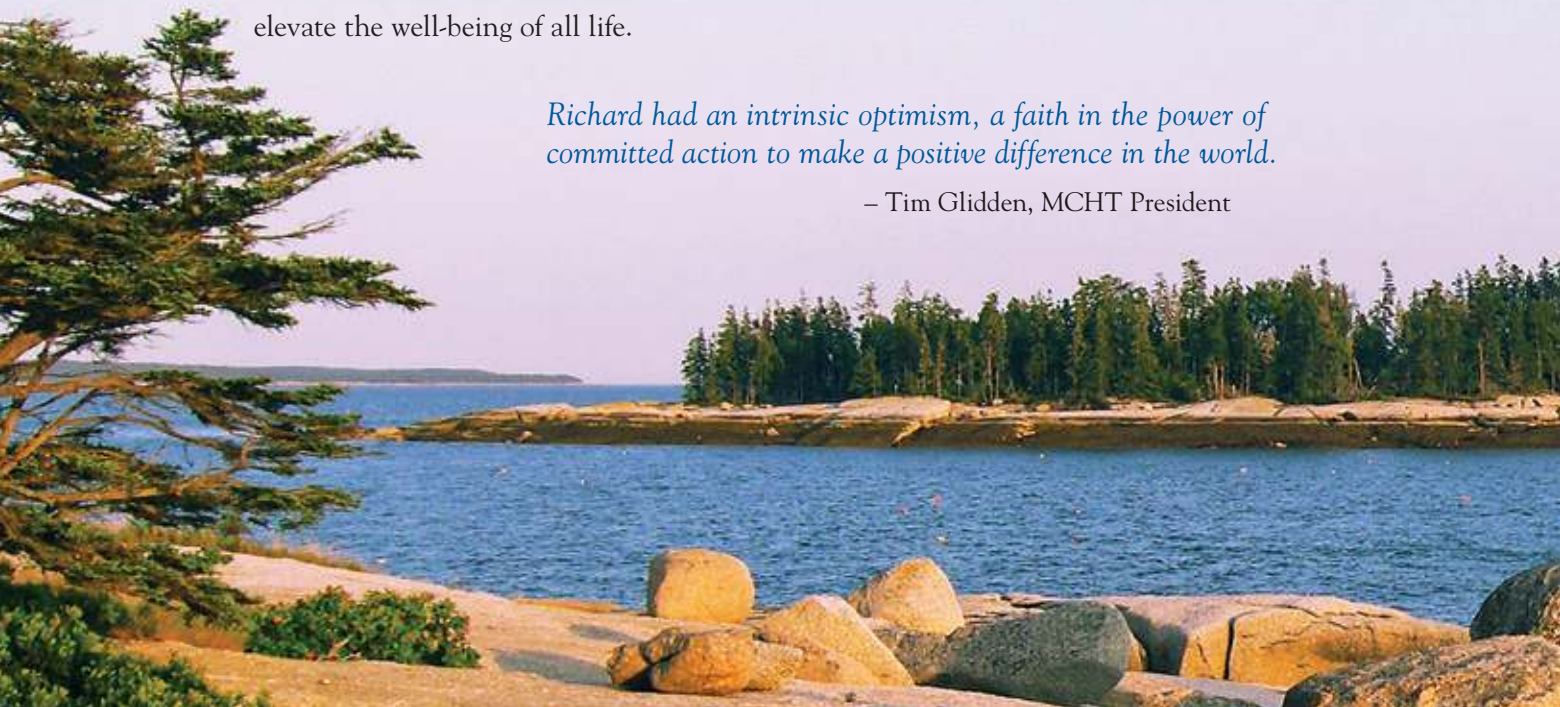
Richard had an abiding passion for the coast of Maine and an unmatched dedication to its conservation. He joined the board of Maine Coast Heritage Trust in 1989, serving alongside his mother Peggy (who cofounded MCHT in 1970), and became progressively more involved in helping the Trust grow. MCHT benefitted immeasurably from his insightful leadership for 25 years—during which he chaired the Lands Committee and the Board of Directors, and led the Trust’s successful \$100 million Campaign for the Coast.

At no time was his commitment more evident than when planning began in 2000 on the Campaign for the Coast, says former MCHT President Jay Espy. Richard understood the need for bold action and offered to lead this effort, with a goal he thought sufficiently ambitious to “capture people’s imaginations and stir them to action.” Then Richard discovered that he had chronic myelogenous leukemia—a cancer of the blood cells that at the time was considered terminal. Undeterred, he told Jay “now that I know what’s most important to me, we will go forward with the Campaign.” Thanks to a new treatment released shortly thereafter, Richard remained healthy and relentlessly active—in development, strategic planning and countless other facets of the Trust’s work—until a plane crash claimed his life this June.

Alongside his unwavering commitment to MCHT, Richard worked for 14 years as a physician; raised a family; launched an innovative nonprofit dedicated to improving patient-physician communication; founded and chaired Hour Exchange Portland; advocated new treatments for veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; and worked on numerous foundation and nonprofit boards seeking to elevate the well-being of all life.

Richard had an intrinsic optimism, a faith in the power of committed action to make a positive difference in the world.

– Tim Glidden, MCHT President



What was striking in his leadership, recalls David MacDonald, MCHT's former Director of Land Protection, was the spirit of team camaraderie he cultivated, showing great respect for everyone and valuing their expertise. "Richard drew others in with his energy and enthusiasm, readily sharing his sense of wonder and curiosity. He was a brilliant thinker, with the ability to see around the next corner and make insightful connections." His way of listening carefully, synthesizing, and coming at topics from a different perspective, says former MCHT Board Chair Tom Ireland, "would challenge everyone's thinking and lead us to a better outcome. Richard brought to the table a keen intellect and an extraordinary range of interests: I don't think I ever spent time with Richard without learning something!"

Among the outpouring of reflections that MCHT has received, expressing deep appreciation for Richard's many contributions, there is a shared sense that his greatest lesson and legacy will be in the example he set—leading through loving action.

Everybody has to get involved in thinking through their contributions to the world rather than just a contribution to themselves. We really need folks out there making substantial imaginative new types of contributions. Philanthropy needs to expand to include service on everybody's part.

– Richard Rockefeller



Richard was the uncanny combination of so many superlatives: devout about the local and global landscape; passionate about its protection; and unfailingly kind to people.

– Forrest Berkley, MCHT Board Member

Richard was very ambitious for the organizations he cared about, leading them to set high goals and then giving generously of his time and resources to achieve them. With the Campaign for the Coast and other efforts, he set a tone for MCHT: think big!

– Linzee Weld, MCHT Council Member

Richard had a doctor's heart. He was truly a healer, continually looking for ways to heal people, the earth and people's relationship with the earth. People trusted him, knowing he had the best interests of others in mind.

– Jay Espy, President, Elmina B. Sewall Foundation



Leading from the Heart: *Reflections from a Conference Dialogue*



THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN ROGER MILLIKEN AND TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS AT THE MAINE LAND CONSERVATION CONFERENCE WAS RECORDED ON VIDEO AND IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.MLTN.ORG

More than 450 people attended Maine Coast Heritage Trust's annual land conservation conference in April, exchanging ideas, experiences and strategies. One highlight of the two-day event was a dialogue between author and environmentalist Terry Tempest Williams and Maine conservationist Roger Milliken. These long-time friends shared moving stories about why they love Maine, what sustains their activism, and how they strive in conservation work to "speak and listen from the heart."

Williams spends part of each year in Maine, and finds here a welcome model of restoration that gives her courage to confront what she calls the "deep wounding" in the American West (from the pollution and habitat disruption associated with oil and gas extraction). "You are part of the healing grace," she told the audience, "that is restoring both heart and land to wholeness." That process of transformation, Williams believes, is as much spiritual as political, so

the question becomes "how do we tell stories in a way that opens hearts instead of closing them?"

Milliken describes himself as a "recovering centrist" who no longer seeks middle ground with those of differing perspectives, but strives to acknowledge and sustain connections to the land—understanding that as "the source of our common wealth." He feels Maine is blessed to have a "strong interweaving between people and nature," with great potential to create a new ethic that integrates the needs of both. "There's the possibility now, with agriculture, forestry and Gulf of Maine fisheries," he says, "to define and practice a kind of right relationship where economic activities are nestled into the landscape [as] a respectful part rather than an imposition." That ethic, he acknowledged, calls us to speak directly about our love for the Earth—something that can be hard to do in corporate boardrooms or town meetings.

Both Milliken and Williams

acknowledged the importance of the solo time they spend in nature, where they can slow down and pay attention—"listening to what the Earth wants" rather than thinking that we can only address the formidable challenges we face by working "faster, harder, smarter." Restorative time outdoors reminds us, in Williams' words, "of what the Earth knows that we forget, this revolutionary patience and sense of succession." Participating in that continual unfolding can help alleviate burnout and sustain energy for the "work of healing" and listening in our communities.

That spirit was captured in the closing passage Williams read from her newest book:

"How shall we live?

*Once upon a time, when women
were birds, there was the simple
understanding that to sing at dawn
and to sing at dusk was to
heal the world through joy.*

*The birds still remember
what we have forgotten, that the world
is meant to be celebrated."*

2014 Land Heritage Award Winner



MCHT PRESENTED ITS 2014 ESPY LAND HERITAGE AWARD TO SCOTT DICKERSON WHO RECENTLY RETIRED AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COASTAL MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST. DICKERSON WORKED TIRELESSLY FOR DECADES PROTECTING THE LANDSCAPES OF WESTERN PENOBSCOT BAY AND FOSTERING LEADERSHIP AT MANY LEVELS WITHIN THE LAND TRUST COMMUNITY.

RICHARD ROCKEFELLER

1949 - 2014

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*Richard never let
the sun set
on a good cause.*

— Ed Woodsum,
Former MCHT Board Chair

All of us at Maine Coast Heritage Trust are grieving the sudden loss of one of Maine's foremost conservation champions. Inside this issue, we share some reflections on his extraordinary life and contributions.



Connecting Land and Spirit



Planting the Seed

Three New Videos Highlight Conservation in Action

Maine Coast Heritage Trust has three exciting new videos, produced in partnership with Seedlight Pictures, that capture the vital essence of its work—from protecting and caring for significant coastal landmarks to helping kids grow their own vegetables. These compelling snapshots, each roughly six minutes in length, can be seen at mcht.org/video.



Keeping the Promise

STAFF NEWS



MCHT welcomes two new staff members. **Jacob van de Sande** (at left) joins the Land Protection Team covering Washington County. He worked previously for more than a decade as an educator and hatchery manager for the community-based Downeast Salmon Federation (which ran the Downeast Rivers Land Trust) in East Machias. The Trust's new Planned Giving and Major Gifts Officer, **David Warren** (at right), comes to MCHT from Vermont where he worked in development for a health care foundation and Vermont Public Radio & TV. A native of Brunswick, David is pleased to be back in his home terrain.

