



Maine Heritage



CHERISHED LAND BECOMES AN OPEN CLASSROOM

Photo courtesy of The Community School

Students at The Community School have cultivated special relationships with the land that surrounds them, where they play, explore, and learn every day.

Imagine your classroom isn't just a room with four walls but a mossy coniferous forest, salt marsh, and epic granite outcropping overlooking a winding tidal creek and the hills of Acadia. The students of The Community School of Mount Desert Island (TCS) have been so lucky, thanks in part to the generosity of a landowner who opened 72 acres on Babson Creek to them. When the landowner decided to sell the property, The Community School and Maine

Coast Heritage Trust began working together to protect this ecologically varied oasis and ensure the school's students—and other community members—can continue to enjoy access to it.

This land is very familiar to Misha Mytar, MDI Senior Project Manager at Maine Coast Heritage Trust. It's visible from Babson Creek Preserve, home of MCHT's office on MDI, and has long been a conservation priority for us, especially given our focus on

marsh protection and efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the coast. "This parcel connects to Acadia National Park and MCHT's Kittredge Brook Forest Preserve, forming a network of undeveloped land and important habitat, including salt marsh," says Misha. "When the opportunity came up to work with The Community School to protect the ecological integrity of this area and continue to make the land available to the students and others, we were thrilled."

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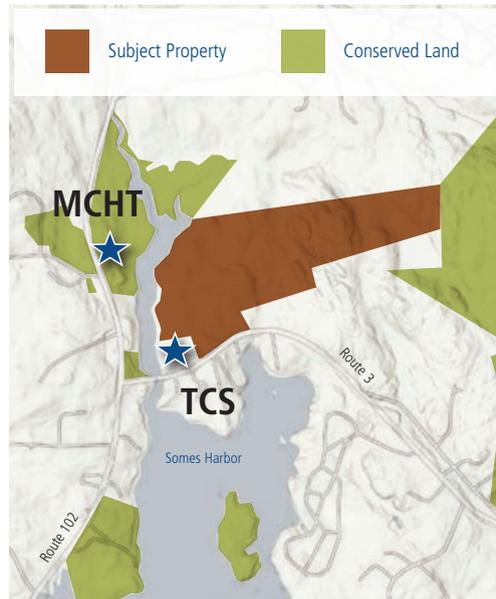
CHERISHED LAND BECOMES AN OPEN CLASSROOM

CONTINUED FROM COVER

After several years of working with the landowner, MCHT and TCS secured an option to purchase the property earlier in 2022 and have been working together on a plan for TCS to own the land to be used for educational purposes, with MCHT holding a conservation easement limiting development of the property to protect habitat and the viewshed. Should TCS no longer own the property, it would be transferred to MCHT.

Jasmine Smith, founding director at TCS, says of the project, “Not only are we extending our classroom space to inspire the next generation of stewards and curious, mindful thinkers, but the land will now be protected in perpetuity. That just warms my heart. Both organizations are meeting their missions and collaborating on a long-term effort that is broadly beneficial.”

TCS fosters a strong sense of place in students, encouraging a deep and abiding attention to the natural world around them. Jasmine is excited to share this ethic with the community by offering more nature-



based programs and inviting others in the community to explore and enjoy the land. She says, “We are really committed to accessibility at The Community School in general, and we’ve already generated a long list of ideas and started reaching out to community members, groups, and fellow teachers in the area.”

Many have already given generously to the project, and partners closed on purchase of the property in August, but fundraising continues for essential stewardship funds to care for the land over time. We

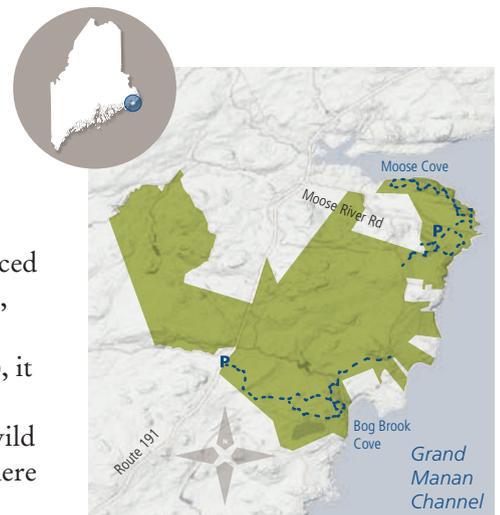
hope to complete fundraising for the Babson Creek Learning Forest by the end of 2022, at which point many will breathe a sigh of relief knowing the land will be permanently protected and cared for, and that TCS students and other community members can continue to learn and grow here. 🌍

To learn more about the project or make a gift, head to MCHT.ORG/CONSERVATION-WORK/INITIATIVE/LEARNING-FOREST.

FEATURED PRESERVE

BOG BROOK COVE, CUTLER AND TRECOTT

This expansive Bold Coast preserve totals nearly 1,800 acres and was pieced together over multiple years with support from Land for Maine’s Future, the state’s conservation program. Combined with the State of Maine’s Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land (which MCHT also helped protect!), it is part of the largest contiguous area of conservation land on the Maine coast outside of Acadia National Park—and it certainly has a uniquely wild feel. The Norse Pond Trail leads to stunning Bog Brook Cove beach, where unusual rock formations can be reached at mid-tide or lower. 🌍



For more information about this preserve head to MCHT.ORG/PRESERVE/BOG-BROOK-COVE.

LOVE OF PLACE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Kate Stookey

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kate Stookey'.

“... to care for this land and the lives and livelihoods it supports. For me, that’s what conservation is all about.”

My first six months at Maine Coast Heritage Trust have flown by, and I continue to be impressed and inspired by the dedication, expertise, and teamwork I see among my colleagues and within our broader network of partners and supporters.

At any given time, MCHT staff are working on dozens of projects around the state. Each one involves people from up and down the coast who represent a wide range of professional backgrounds, political persuasions, and life experiences, all coming together in support of a shared goal—like preserving the ecological integrity of a learning forest on Babson Creek on Mount Desert Island (cover), protecting and restoring marshes (page four), or offering public trails on the beautiful Bold Coast (page two). Every day at MCHT, I witness this love of place for Maine and the collaboration that it engenders.

I fell in love with Maine as a kid growing up in Blue Hill, exploring, hiking, camping, and often seeking serenity in the woods and along the rocky shorelines of the peninsula and coastal islands. This place, and the people who also call this place home, made me who I am and instilled in me a desire to care for this land and the lives and livelihoods it supports. For me, that’s what conservation is all about.

It is a privilege to be a part of this collective effort to protect and care for this place we love so much. I look forward to meeting more of you, hearing your thoughts and ideas, and experiencing how you are bringing your own unique offerings to this work. I still have much to learn, and, as always, I welcome your questions, suggestions, and feedback.

Please feel free to be in touch at president@mcht.org.

REMAKING OLD POND MARSH

MCHT photo

MCHT staff join marsh scientists and restoration specialists to discuss what needs to be done to make the marsh more functional and productive.

On a drizzly morning in June, a group of Maine Coast Heritage Trust stewards, marsh scientists, and restoration specialists met at the Old Pond Preserve trailhead in Hancock, where they spent the day in knee-high boots exploring the salt marsh and learning all they could about how it's functioning—or, rather, not functioning as well as it could.

Like many Maine marshes, this one was formerly farmed for salt hay (*Spartina patens*), and human manipulation of the marsh in the form of embankments (earthen berms) and ditches has impacted the movement of water within the system. MCHT Regional Steward Tatia Bauer explains, "Agricultural legacies left on the marsh cause unwanted pooling, which leads to loss of marsh vegetation." Without healthy plants, the marsh can no longer capture sediment as it comes in with the tide, causing the marsh to sink over time. This is especially problematic as sea level rises—marshes can't keep up.

MCHT launched its Marshes for Tomorrow Initiative to protect Maine's top-ranked marshes for resilience in a changing climate. Tidal marshes represent one of our most important coastal habitat types—numerous kinds of wildlife spend some part of their life cycle in marshes, and

they buffer storm surge and absorb carbon dioxide from the air. MCHT is protecting land surrounding marshes so that as sea level rises, they can migrate inland and re-establish. But if the marshes aren't functioning properly, land protection only gets us so far.

Based on information gleaned from this visit to Old Pond Preserve, marsh restoration practitioner Geoff Wilson from Northeast Wetland Restoration is developing a plan to connect existing channels to allow the pools to drain and encourage revegetation. The project has received funding from the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program and will "help facilitate processes where the marsh is building itself back up, ultimately increasing the elevation of the marsh and making it better suited to follow sea level rise," says Tatia.

This is one of the first projects of this kind to occur in Maine, and MCHT is excited to share what we learn with other land trusts throughout the state in a series of workshops in 2023. Tatia, who began working at MCHT earlier in 2022, says, "It's exciting to play a role in the beginning stages of this work for MCHT and for the state. I feel like I got here at just the right time." 🌱



Photo courtesy of the Blanchard family

PETER P. BLANCHARD III, 1951 – 2022 IN MEMORIAM

All of us at Maine Coast Heritage Trust mourn the passing of Peter Blanchard, a true champion for the Maine coast. Peter served on the board of MCHT from 2009 through 2018 and actively on council in the years following. However, his work on behalf of the coast began long before he joined the organization. "Peter combined deep scientific knowledge with a passionate love of the coastal landscape and its

inhabitants," says board member Tom Ireland. "He was a quiet but persistent advocate for stewardship worthy of the land he was helping to protect. His generosity, his gentleness, and his sense of humor made him a wonderful conservation partner. His impact on the coast was profound and will continue to inspire those of us who were lucky enough to work alongside him." 🌱

Peter was a great supporter of our effort to care for conserved lands and generously established a bequest. If you would like to make a gift in his honor, you can make a donation online or by mail and denote that you would like it designated to the Peter and Sofia Blanchard Stewardship Fund or contact Nicky Blanchard at NBLANCHARD@MCHT.ORG OR 207-607-4369.

IN BRIEF

Making Land Trust Trails More Accessible

Enock Glidden, an adventurer, motivational speaker, and advocate for others with disabilities is working with Maine Trail Finder and land trusts throughout the state to improve accessibility of trails. Earlier this year, he was the keynote speaker at the Maine Land Conservation Conference hosted by MCHT.



The Aldermere & Erickson Campaign is Underway!



A successful campaign to raise at least \$3 million for critical new infrastructure and equipment will make these beloved agricultural preserves in Rockport safer, more efficient, and more inclusive in the decades to come.

Making Progress in Coast-wide Effort to Save Marshes

Since beginning the Marshes for Tomorrow Initiative in 2016, MCHT has completed 36 marsh migration projects. This is part of the effort to make the coast more resilient to climate change.



IN MY WORDS, RENEE DUNCAN

STONE BARN FARM STEWARD & OUTREACH MANAGER, MDI

Earlier in 2022, Maine Coast Heritage Trust welcomed two dedicated outreach specialists to the Stewardship Department who will be leading outings, managing MCHT programs, and partnering with other organizations to connect people to the land. Welcome, Renee (and Maggie)!

What's your connection to Maine?

I grew up in the suburbs of Detroit but visited Maine on a camping trip with my family the summer after third grade. I made elaborate plans to return to and live in Maine and then actually did move here in 2010 to work at Acadia National Park as the "raptor intern." I've been here

ever since. Watching for migrating hawks and looking out over the mountains and bays helped anchor me to Eastern Maine.

What will you be doing in this new position?

I'll be taking care of the Stone Barn Farm Preserve and coordinating MCHT's outreach efforts in the MDI region. I think the most exciting part for me is listening to people share what they care about and what their values are. And then, to try and collaborate to bring those values to life somehow, through programming and projects. I'm excited to hear what people think would be a good way to bring community to Stone Barn Farm. The ideas I've heard so far have been wonderful. 🌿



Have ideas to share about Stone Barn Farm or possible collaborations in the MDI area? Renee would love to hear from you! You can be in touch at RDUNCAN@MCHT.ORG

These are the highlights! To see expanded versions of all the stories, visit:

[MCHT.ORG/MAINEHERITAGE](https://mcht.org/MaineHeritage)

IF YOU HAVEN'T MADE YOUR 2022 GIFT TO MCHT YET, THERE'S STILL TIME! GIVE BACK TO THE COAST TODAY AT [MCHT.ORG/GIVE-NOW](https://mcht.org/give-now).



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Everything you read about in this newsletter is possible thanks to the generous support of Maine Coast Heritage Trust donors.

Donors are creating more public access to the coast, strengthening coastal communities, making Maine more resilient to climate change, and so much more. Thank you to all who are a part of MCHT.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Creating Babson
Creek Learning Forest

Marsh Restoration

& More!

NAME THAT PLACE

Some hints...

It's home to (among other animals) black bear, bobcat, and fisher!

It offers 5.5 miles of trails, including a universally accessible trail leading to beautiful views of the Grand Manan Channel.

SEE INSIDE FOR
THIS FEATURED PRESERVE

