



# Maine Heritage

MIDCOAST EDITION  
2022



## BIRTH OF A NEW ERA AT ALDERMERE FARM AND ERICKSON FIELDS

Photo by Chris Cannella

Erickson Fields apprentice Olivia Caron (left) and Aldermere Farm apprentice Mimi Rebein (right) work together to build a curriculum for youth that expands their knowledge beyond just one farm.

A local school bus pulls up to Aldermere Farm, hisses to a stop, and a handful of kids race down to the barnyard. These kids know: if they see Heidi Baker, general manager, waving her hands, putting a finger to her lips, and pointing to a ladder, it's going to be a special day. One by one, they climb up a wooden ladder to the second floor of one of the cattle paddocks in the old barnyard, make their way across the floor worn slippery by hay bales, and

belly up to the edge of the loft to watch a miracle take place—to watch a calf being born.

Over the past several years, Heidi and others at Maine Coast Heritage Trust have been grappling with the fact the old barnyard at Aldermere Farm has come to the end of its useful life. We began to conceive of a design that would allow staff to work “smarter, not harder” to provide quality care for the cattle and run programming for kids and local farmers. But we

also wanted more people to experience these intimate and powerful moments—not only lucky program participants. That's how the idea for combination barn and visitor center was born, with an accessible vestibule overlooking daily operations—and these kinds of everyday miracles—at the farm.

Earlier this year, Maine Coast Heritage Trust kicked off the public phase of a campaign to raise at least \$3 million for this

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## ALDERMERE FARM AND ERICKSON FIELDS

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unique barn and visitor center and additional new structures, equipment, and improvements at Aldermere Farm and nearby MCHT preserve Erickson Fields. All of these updates are critical to making the public preserves safer, more efficient, and more inclusive for the decades to come.

These preserves already host thousands of people a year through programming, special events, trails, and community gardens. They also generate thousands of pounds of food annually for food pantries, schools, and local businesses, and serve as educational resources for area farmers and gardeners. But insufficient and outdated infrastructure and equipment are holding Aldermere Farm and Erickson Fields back from making an even greater community impact.

“Over the years, we’ve done as much as possible with what we have, but it’s time to make a significant and meaningful investment in these preserves,” says Heidi. “I just know the impact of this campaign, when successful, will be tremendous for everyone in our community.”

Thanks to early and generous donors, we’re over two-thirds of the way towards raising at least \$3 million, and this transformational campaign continues to gain support and momentum. “I know that these preserves mean a lot to so many people, but it’s moving to see the outpouring of generosity,” says David Warren. 🌱

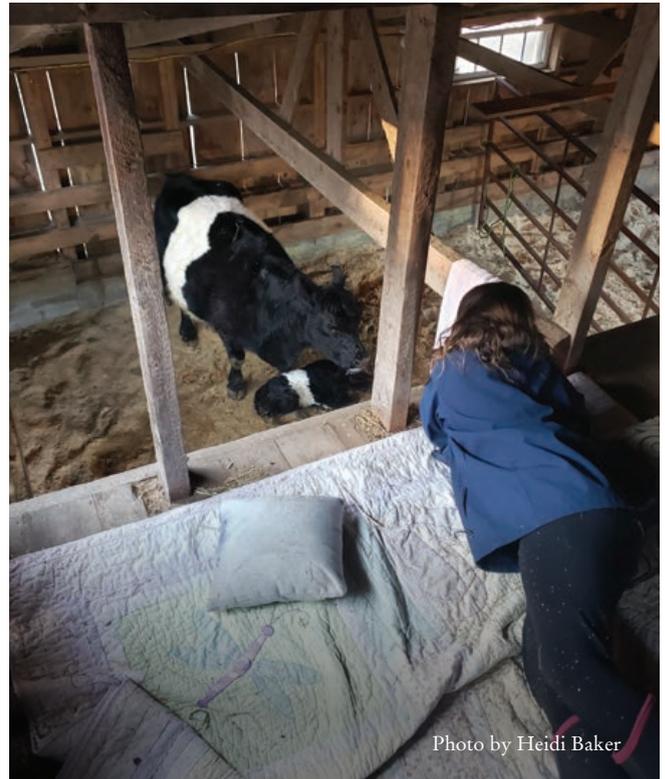


Photo by Heidi Baker

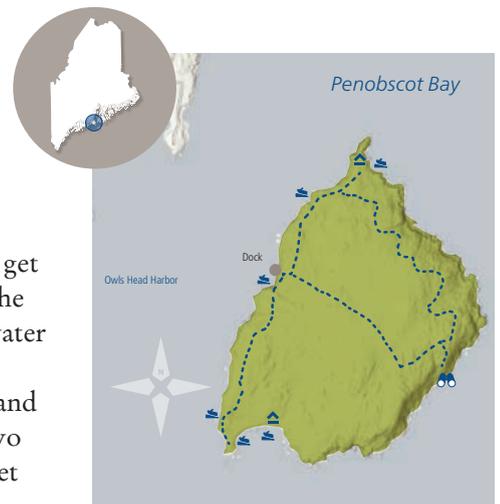
Calving can be a long process. Program participant Isabelle Baker makes herself comfortable in the hayloft and patiently waits for the new baby to be born.

For more information about the campaign and the specific projects it will make possible, visit [MCHT.ORG/MOO](https://MCHT.ORG/MOO).

## FEATURED PRESERVE

### MONROE ISLAND, OWLS HEAD

As far as off-shore island preserves go, this 225-acre gem is quite easy to get to! Around the time MCHT acquired Monroe Island, we worked with the town to create a public park on the mainland, which offers convenient water access for commercial and recreational boaters. Put in at Richard Carver Harbor Park and experience the preserve’s beaches, bold bedrock cliffs, and two-mile network of trails. Interested in spending the night? We offer two first-come, first-served campsites on the island (though don’t forget to get your free parking permit from the Owls Head Town Office!). 🌱



For more information about this preserve head to [MCHT.ORG/PRESERVE/MONROE-ISLAND-OWLS-HEAD](https://MCHT.ORG/PRESERVE/MONROE-ISLAND-OWLS-HEAD).

## 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 making community preserves safer, more efficient, and more accessible (cover), celebrating Maine’s incredible plants and animals (page four), or guaranteeing permanent public access to a stunning Midcoast island (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](mailto:president@mcht.org).

# NATURE BUMMIN' WITH KIRK GENTALEN

Photo by Kirk Gentalen

The “strawberries and cream” mushroom (also known as *Hydnellum peckii*) is particularly striking!

Every month, Midcoast land steward Kirk Gentalen shares a story about what he's been seeing in and around his back yard and on the job for Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

Would you like to keep tabs on what's going on in the natural world? And have a laugh while you're at it? Head here to get notified when Kirk posts a story: [MCHT.ORG/NATURE-BUMMIN](https://mcht.org/nature-bummin). Meanwhile, here's a taste of his Nature Bummin' column from early fall of 2021.

When we find mushrooms on our travels, our minds often go directly to whether it's edible or poisonous. (How human-centric we are!) Lately I've been hearing comments about the colors that mushrooms have been adding to the largely green forest world, the reds of Waxy Caps, the oranges of Chanterelles and Jellies, the blues of Cortis, and the everything else that's out there.

What (I suspect) most people don't think about is spores. Bottom line: a mushroom's job is to disperse spores. It's not there to feed us, kill us, or thrill us. It's a spore dispersal unit, and they're really good at what they do. Lightweight and usually wind-driven, spores are carried along in search of the right spot to grow a new fungus. It's not likely they'll find it, but releasing a lot of spores



increases their chances. Also, there are many critters and slime molds that feast on fungal spores.

Consider this: whenever you walk outside, be it in the woods or to catch the bus or whatever, you have spores landing on you. At all times you are spore carriers! (Alright, maybe not so much in winter, but you get what I mean.) You're part of the overall fungus team! Do you feel important yet? 🍄



## 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](mailto:NBLANCHARD@MCHT.ORG) OR 207-607-4369.

# IN BRIEF

## Making Progress in Coast-wide Effort to Save Marshes

Since launching the Marshes for Tomorrow Initiative in 2016, MCHT has completed 36 marsh migration projects. Several more are expected to close before the end of the year, including two in Brunswick and one in Yarmouth.



## 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.



## MCHT and Mount Desert Island School Collaborate to Protect Land on Babson Creek

Kids from The Community School have been learning and exploring in the 72 acres abutting their school for years. Now we're ensuring students—and other community members—can continue to access this beautiful and ecologically significant place.



## IN MY WORDS, ZHENYA MIKHA TEEN AG CREW ALUM



Zhenya Mikha started participating in Maine Coast Heritage Trust's Teen Ag Program at Erickson Fields in Rockport in the summer of 2020 and served as a program leader in 2021 and in the spring of 2022. She

plans to attend college in Maine and study ecology and psychology.

**What did you learn during your time on the Teen Ag Crew?**

I knew a little bit about different sustainable farming methods, but it was interesting to see what Aaron [Englander, program manager] does. We used things

like bone char and fermented fish on the plants. We ground up the fish right here—it was kind of gruesome but also really cool. I plan to study ecology and psychology, and maybe someday work in the conservation field.

**What about conservation interests you?**

I'm interested in animals and land conservation. So much land is depleting, and we're losing an incredible amount of animals. Even thinking about all the species that have been depleted in my lifetime... it's so sad. Plus, I've always been an animals nerd. I love my dog, and I also love learning about all kinds of animals—whale, rhinos, reptiles are really interesting. 🐾

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:

The Aldermere & Erickson Campaign

Nature Bummin' with Kirk

& More!

### NAME THAT PLACE

Some hints...

This island preserve is only half a mile from the Owls Head mainland.

At the northern tip of the island are the remains of a former US Naval range tower used to assess speeds of Navy ships.

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SEE INSIDE FOR THIS FEATURED PRESERVE

