

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Volume 15, 2019



OCT FIRST TO FIELD TEST NEW TECHNOLOGY

by John Spencer, OCT Board Member

As reported in our last newsletter, Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative (SMCC) received a grant in November 2018 from the Dorr Foundation to develop a smart phone application that would help a land trust evaluate the relative health of a property. SMCC partnered with Dimagi, Inc. to develop a data collection application that can be used in the field on mobile technology, with or without internet connections. The first application release was in May 2019. **Assisted by Doreen Johnston of SMCC, Oceanside Conservation Trust was the first to conduct a beta test of the software on our annual monitoring visits.** The app, accessible on smartphones, tablets and ipads, directed monitors to report on a disciplined and detailed number of observations, including natural conditions, human impacts, and land health. It also captured pictures. The monitoring team was able to review data collected after the site visit prior to release into a cloud based database. Monitoring reports were generated with the photos for review and were approved at the next OCT board meeting.

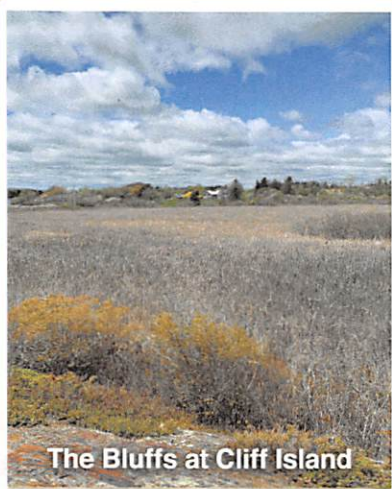
From this initial use, OCT clearly saw improvements in both timing, content, and value from the monitoring work. Modules that also document a conserved property's health, signs of climate change, and an inventory of flora and fauna are already drafted. OCT is the first beneficiary of the relationship SMCC has with Dimagi. CommCare, according to their website, "is the world's most powerful mobile data collection platform." It is the hope that this, along with future tools from SMCC's LandCare Initiative, will help OCT and other land trusts steward their land effectively and support further community outreach.



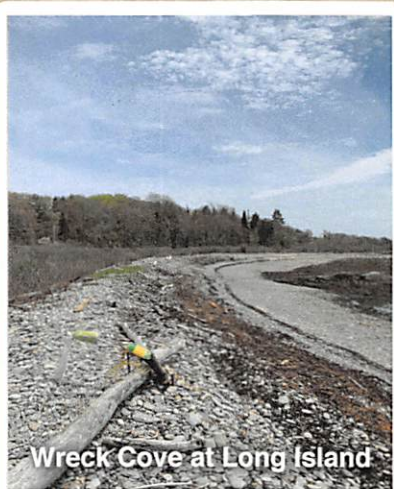
During a monitoring visit to Peaks Island, Doreen Johnston of SMCC (left) records John Spencer's data on her tablet as Roger Berle and Tom Bergh assist.

MONITORING 2019

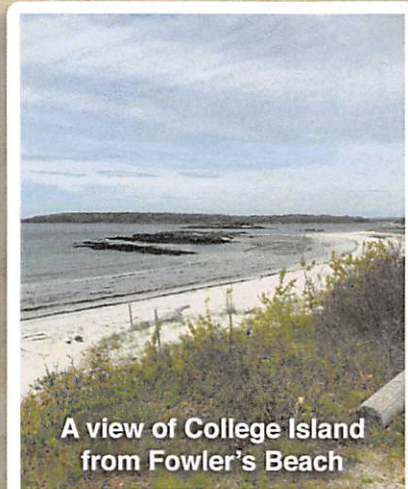
As a nationally accredited land trust, Oceanside Conservation Trust conducts an annual visit of each protected property. Among other tasks, monitors check boundaries and natural conditions, assess winter damage, clean the beaches and paths, take photographs, and record findings. Over the course of three days in late May, we monitored sixteen properties on five islands in Casco Bay. That's a lot of fresh air and exercise!



The Bluffs at Cliff Island

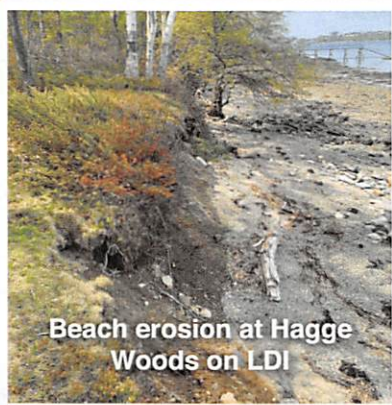


Wreck Cove at Long Island

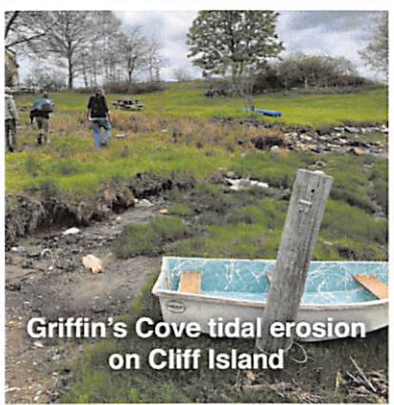


**A view of College Island
from Fowler's Beach**

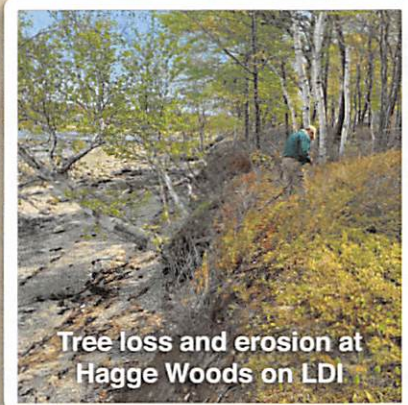
Armed with the technology of new maps, templates, and tablets, Oceanside is better equipped to record and track changes to the landscape due to natural events or human impact on conservation properties. Property monitors noted flood and tidal erosion and damage from strong storms on Little Diamond and Cliff Island properties.



**Beach erosion at Hagge
Woods on LDI**



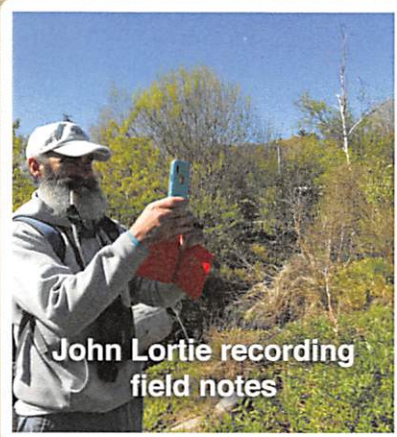
**Griffin's Cove tidal erosion
on Cliff Island**



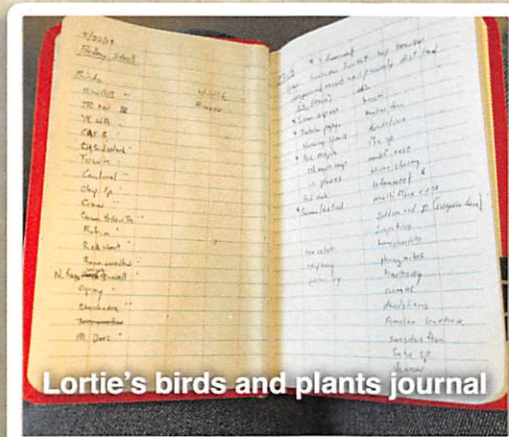
**Tree loss and erosion at
Hagge Woods on LDI**

OCT board member John Lortie is a professional wetland scientist and certified wildlife biologist. During our annual monitoring of conservation properties, John noted in his bird journal the variety of bird species present. He identified them by sight and by song, calling out names steadily as we walked the properties.

Among the many birds noted were doves, ruby-throated hummingbirds, blue jays, American crow, American robin, gray catbird, northern parula, yellow-rumped warbler, black-throated green warbler, song sparrow, barn swallow, chickadee, American goldfinch, cardinal, pileated woodpecker, mallards, osprey, and bald eagles. According to John, conservation lots on our Casco Bay islands serve as critical refueling stations for migratory birds.



John Lortie recording field notes



Lortie's birds and plants journal



Unusual bird sighting on LDI

SMCC SUMMER ASSOCIATES ASSIST OCT

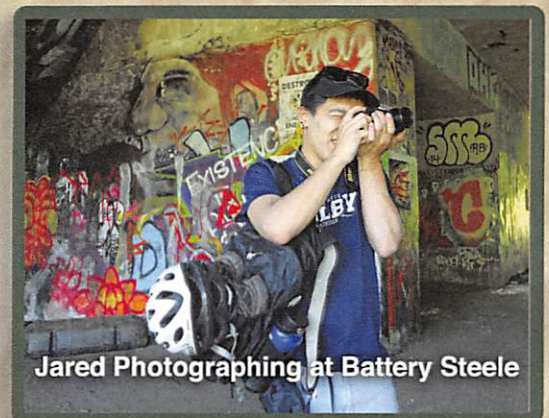
This summer Oceanside Conservation Trust was fortunate to have Jared Long and Lily Nygren assist with several different projects. As part of their internship at Southern Maine Conservation Trust, Jared and Lily worked to complete property maps of some OCT properties (including Skillings Woods on Peaks Island) using a template created by former SMCC Summer Associate Sammie Wolf. These property maps will be essential as we begin the re-accreditation process with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The maps are also very helpful for the annual monitoring visits to orient the stewards to the boundaries, corners, and other landmarks on each property. Now a junior at Bates College, Lily plans to major in biology. Jared, a senior at Colby College, is pursuing his degree in Environmental Studies. OCT wishes them well in their future endeavors!



Lily and Jared on Peaks Island



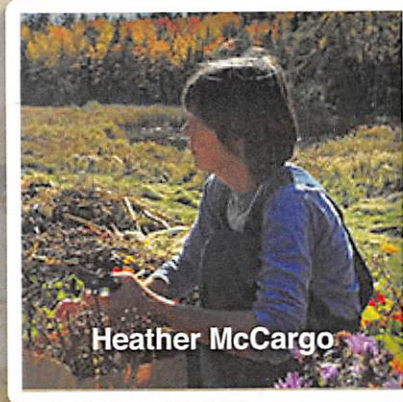
Lily with seaweed



Jared Photographing at Battery Steele

ANNUAL MEETING AT LONG ISLAND

This year's Annual Meeting featured a special presentation from Heather McCargo, Founder and Executive Director of The Wild Seed Project. Heather is an educator with 30 years of experience in plant propagation, landscape design, horticulture, and conservation.



Heather McCargo

that support the rest of land-based life. These plants have co-evolved with our region's animals, insects, fungi, and soil microorganisms. Many species are mutually dependent on each other – they pollinate plants, disperse seeds and are part the food chain.



Goldenrod

We have displaced native plant habitats and all the complex relationships they support with paving, buildings, turf and high-maintenance exotic plants. With a rapidly warming climate, it is important that we not lose more native habitat and the ecosystem services it provides. Sharing space in our yards and developed landscapes with native plants can stitch together remaining wild habitats, provide corridors for native plants and animals to forage and reproduce, and create the pathways to migrate north as the climate warms.

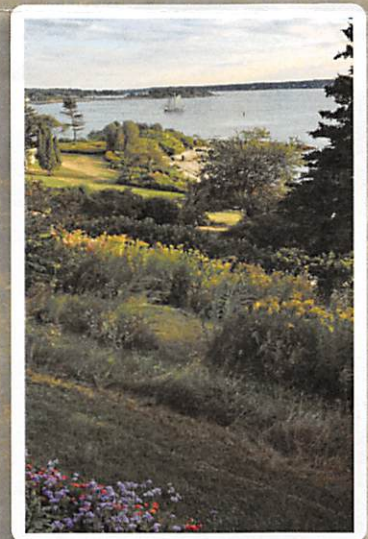


Seed packets were distributed to OCT members at the meeting

The following are highlights from Heather's slide presentation at the meeting and from her numerous publications. As stewards of over 90 acres of preserved land in Casco Bay, OCT recognizes the importance of Heather's work to all of us who care about our environment:

Why Going Native Matters: Beauty, Biodiversity and Resilience

Maine's native plants are crucial to supporting our local ecosystem, and each of us can have an impact on our region's biological diversity by how we landscape our properties. Native plants are the species of trees, shrubs, vines, wildflowers, grasses and ferns that have grown in our region for millennia. Native plants create the habitats



Sharing our space

Genetic diversity is a species's best strategy for dealing with a changing climate, since it allows for rapid adaptation. Landscapes filled with cloned plants lack this resiliency. As you look to add native species to your landscapes, seek out nurseries that are propagating from seed the natural forms of native plants, not the cultivars. If each of us offers up some space in our yards to native plants, our urban and suburban landscapes could connect with

COMMUNITY CENTER AUGUST 1, 2019

remaining wild habitat to support pollinators, birds, and all the diversity of life that makes Maine such a beautiful state.

"The monarch butterfly's need for milkweed during its caterpillar stage is a well-known example. A native tree such as the red oak provides food and shelter for hundreds of other species, from insects to birds and small animals."



Milkweed

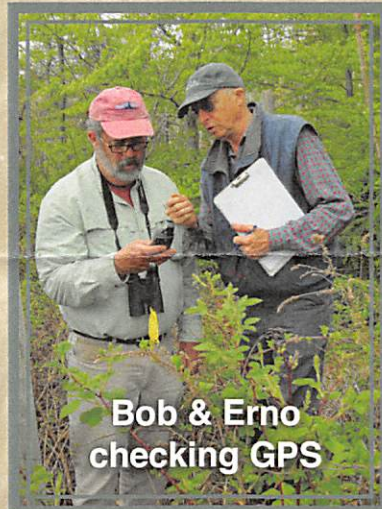


Oak Trees

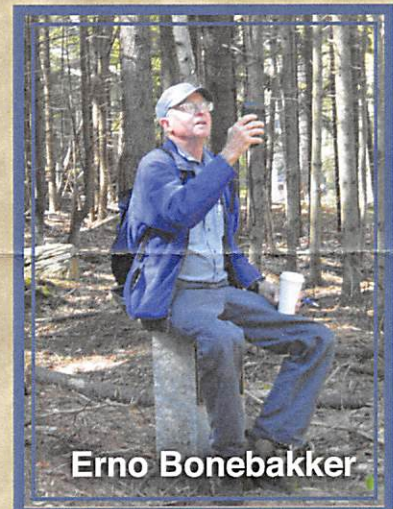
OCT THANKS RETIRING DIRECTORS



Bob Bittenbender

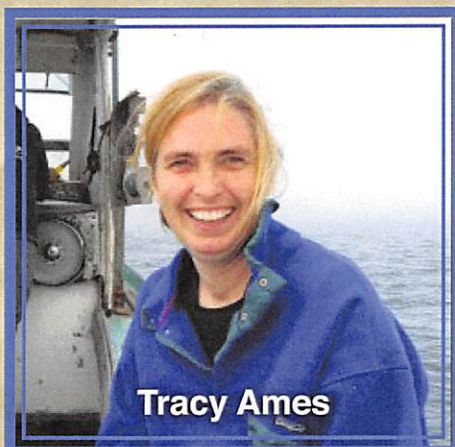


Bob & Erno
checking GPS



Erno Bonebakker

WELCOME NEW DIRECTOR TRACY AMES



Tracy Ames

Oceanside Conservation Trust is excited to welcome Tracy Ames to the board. Tracy is the founder of Maine Island Ecologists, a volunteer, research-based, science group that has been conducting natural resource inventories and ecological studies for land trusts and conservation groups on Casco Bay Islands since 2012. As an ecological researcher, Tracy has conducted native and invasive plant monitoring studies, rare plant mapping, weed eradication projects, seabird monitoring studies, small mammal research, marine invasive research, and other ornithological studies. As a plantsman, Tracy owned and

TAGGING MONARCHS ON LITTLE DIAMOND: SUMMER, 2019



The first monarch I saw on Little Diamond this year arrived in our garden on June 23. She was flying fast and low, obviously searching for milkweed. June having been warm and wet, the milkweed was lush and plentiful. Sure enough, several days later tiny eggs were visible under the upper leaves of several of our milkweed plants.



By mid-July, there were a number of caterpillars chomping away at our milkweed. They were also plentiful on the milkweeds in the garden Barbara Lee tends at the top of the Casino path, and in Marjorie Shaw's garden on the east end of the island. In fact, at any given time in Marjorie's garden you could find 10 or 15 caterpillars on milkweed plants so eaten away that they looked barely alive. For some reason – orientation, protection from wind, warm temperature, who knows exactly what – that small patch of milkweed became by far the most prolific monarch nursery on the island.

As August approached, it was clear that this was going to be a really good year for island monarchs – in my experience, the best in the last decade at least. Every day our flower garden hosted three or four nectaring monarchs at a time, and the caterpillars kept on coming. So, I ordered 100 tags from monarchwatch.org.



On Labor Day, I started tagging. Tagging monarchs is easy once someone shows you how. The tiny, almost weightless Mylar tags are attached to the outside of the butterfly's forewing. They do not affect the ability of the monarch to fly. Each tag has a unique numeric code, which along with the date and location of the tagged butterfly, is entered into a national online database. Tags recovered at the overwintering sites in Mexico, or along the migration route south, allow researchers to learn more and more about migration patterns and routes, the health of the migrating monarch population, and the spread of the summer breeding population.

The chances of a tag from any of the 100 monarchs on Little Diamond being recovered are probably worse than the chances of winning the Mega-bucks lottery. But each year, hundreds of tags from around the nation are in fact recovered, so you never know... and besides, there's always next year!

by Harry Pringle, former OCT board member



WELCOME TRACY AMES (CONTINUED)

operated a landscape design and management business for 15 years. Her projects included developing a landscape master plan for a newly established recreation area in the town of Limington, installing a rooftop garden on Portland Harbor Hotel, and devising bluff restoration plans with islanders on Chebeague. She currently resides on Chebeague Island with her husband, Jeremy and their two daughters, Alissa and Sophia.

MORE NATIVE SPECIES SHARING OUR SPACE



witch hazel



winterberry



red choke berry

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019

Roger Berle, President	207-712-5565	Cliff Island
	207-766-2827	
John Spencer, Vice President	781-237-4038	Cushing Island
	617-680-0012	
Jane Laughlin, Secretary	207-799-9285	Great Diamond Island
	207-766-2570	
Chris Stevenson, Treasurer	207-772-1941	Cape Elizabeth
Tracy Ames		Chebeague Island
Tom Bergh	207-232-6733	Peaks Island
Jeanne Gulnick	207-766-2601	Peaks Island
David Hirth	207-406-4169	
	802-318-6063	Cliff Island
John Lortie	207-766-2499	Long Island
Hope MacVane-Tray	207-749-8175	Cliff Island
Bill Needelman	207-400-9022	Little Diamond Island
Bill Stauffer	207-650-1993	Little Diamond Island

ADVISORY BOARD

Brenda Buchanan	207-854-5824	Westbrook
Priscilla Doucette	207-772-5705	Little Diamond Island
Mark Greene	207-766-4440	Long Island
Christine McDuffie	207-829-3231	
	207-766-5277	Long Island
Eliza Cope Nolan	207-772-5024	Cushing Island
John Whitman	207-766-2211	Peaks Island

PROTECTED PROPERTIES

PROPERTY	LOCATION	OWNER	DATE ACQUIRED	APPROXIMATE SIZE
Fowler's Beach	Town of Long Island	Long Island Civic Association	5/25/1987	6.38 acres
The Bluffs	Cliff Island, Portland	Robert & Josephine Belknap, Tenants in Common	12/26/1989	18 acres
Dave's Sanctuary	Peaks Island, Portland	OCT	5/14/1994	6.8 acres
College Island	Town of Long Island	OCT	9/7/1994	1 acre
Battery Steele	Peaks Island, Portland	Peaks Island Land Preserve	7/28/1995	14.3 acres
North Point	Cliff Island, Portland	Helen W. Kenefick	12/1997	9 acres
ACE Ballfield	Cliff Island, Portland	Cliff Island Corporation for Athletics & Conservation Education	1/31/2000	15.4 acres
Griffin's Cove	Cliff Island, Portland	Cliff Island Corporation for Athletics & Conservation Education	12/22/2000	.75 acres
Everett & Mildred D. Skillings Woods	Peaks Island, Portland	OCT	2001	2 acres
Wreck Cove	Town of Long Island	Town of Long Island	7/29/2004	11.3 acres
Echo Pond	Peaks Island, Portland	OCT	04/2005	.4 acres
Memorial Woods	Little Diamond Island	Little Diamond Island Association	09/2006	.5 acres
Hagge Woods	Little Diamond Island	OCT	2012	2.5 acres
Gardiner Parcel	Cliff Island	Cliff Island Corporation for Athletics & Conservation Education	2014	.3 acres
LACI Easement	Cliff Island	LACI	2017	10.8 acres
Ice Pond Easement	Peaks Island	PILP	2017	2+ acres

In addition, OCT has a cooperative role in the protection of Cow Island, Stockman's Island, and Rose's Point, Chebeague Island.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of OCT is to facilitate the conservation of wild or undeveloped open space, scenic areas, and historic landmarks in the Casco Bay region and to foster low-impact and respectful access to these resources, as well as to enhance the cultural, economic, and civic well-being of residents and visitors. The Trust may acquire, hold, and transfer interests in land, including easements, in order to accomplish this mission and to assure that a diversity of ecosystems will be available to future generations. In addition, the Trust may hold charitable, cultural, and educational activities for the benefit of residents and visitors. (Adopted 10/24/96)

VISION STATEMENT

While maintaining the highest standards of stewardship and land management, OCT will become a leader in coordinating and facilitating land conservation efforts among individuals, island organizations, and land trusts in Casco Bay.

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

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OceansideConservationTrust@gmail.com | Tel. 207-699-2989

www.oceansideconservationtrust.org

In order to support the work of Oceanside Trust, I/we are sending this contribution.

Membership Dues: \$20.00

Additional Gift: _____

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Membership is renewable at any time before the OCT annual meeting. Please check the four-digit number directly following your name on the address label; the number indicates the year your most recent membership dues were received if applicable. Your contributions are tax deductible.

Thank You!

www.oceansideconservationtrust.org

Land Trust
Accreditation Commission
An independent program of the Land Trust Alliance

OCEANSIDE CONSERVATION TRUST
OF CASCO BAY WELCOMES
YOUR SUPPORT.
SINCE 1982, OVER 100 ACRES
ON CASCO BAY ISLANDS HAVE BEEN
PERMANENTLY PROTECTED.

217 COMMERCIAL STREET, SUITE 302
Portland, ME 04101

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