

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.

www.oceansideconservationtrust.org
An independent program of the Land Trust Alliance
Accreditation Commission
Land Trust

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

217 COMMERCIAL STREET, SUITE 302 | PORTLAND, ME 04101
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!

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

217 COMMERCIAL STREET, SUITE 302
Portland, ME 04101

OCEANSIDE CONSERVATION TRUST
OF CASCO BAY



Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Volume 16, 2020



“DUE TO COVID...”

“Due to COVID ...” How weary we all are of that phrase! This past year has been full of difficulties, obstacles, and sadness for many. Within this newsletter we offer positive reports of how the work of OCT has gone on despite the challenges of COVID-19. In 2020 we’ve added a property, monitored all fee properties and conservation easements, been awarded re-accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance, received a grant to monitor climate change, held regular board meetings via Zoom and a real/virtual annual meeting, improved our website, and published a newsletter! Our work has been accomplished in new and different ways. All this is cause for celebration, and we hope Oceanside’s members, friends, and donors will be reassured that our work as a land trust goes forward, steadily and successfully, pandemic or not. We sincerely thank you for supporting our efforts.

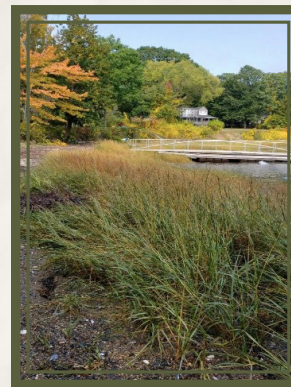
INTRODUCING BISHOP HEALY WOODS



Unconsolidated shale and granite pebbles make up the narrow gravel beach strand.



The view of Bishop Healy Woods from offshore is spectacular!



A pocket fringe marsh is located at the northeast end of the property.



Attorney Sarah McDaniel, OCT President Roger Berle, and real estate broker Nate Stevens sign the documents.

by Roger Berle

Two unique pieces of Little Diamond Island shorefront land are now safely in the hands of Oceanside Conservation Trust. Both parcels front on the road. While one offers beach access behind the old Coast Guard Station, the other sits high up over Diamond Roads and brings with it some very interesting history. In a fascinating story shared by Harry Pringle at our annual meeting, we learned that the property was the site of a former Catholic Bishop’s getaway retreat destroyed by arson nearly a century ago.

This preservation project is the result of an amazing, short-term fundraising effort, boasting some exemplary generosity and foresight. If it were not for the persistent focus and commitment of several island leaders, the latter parcel could well be on the way to sporting a secluded private home – as opposed to a gem available to all for passive recreation, in perpetuity.

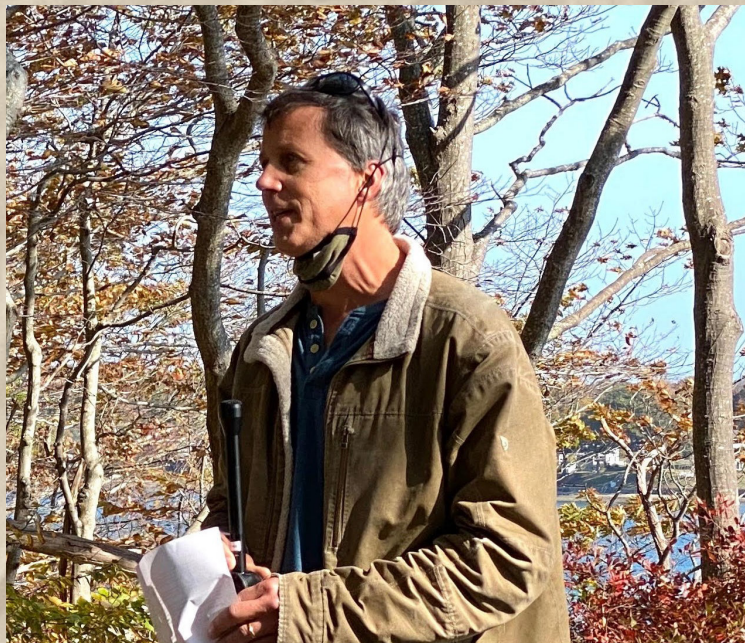
Hats off to the “little” community which made this happen – on-Island!

Read about the conservation values of Bishop Healy Woods on page 3.

ANNUAL



Honoring Priscilla Doucette



Bill Stauffer

Our 2020 Annual Meeting at Bishop Healy Woods on Little Diamond Island created a delightful hour of land preservation fellowship. The thirty OCT members present were rapt as we began with a celebratory appreciation of Priscilla Doucette's remarkable service to Oceanside and ended with Harry Pringle's fascinating tale of the Bishop Healey cottage, long disappeared from where we stood. In between, we appreciated the attention of all attendees as we recounted Oceanside's past year. Beyond soaking in the beauty of both the day and the site, perhaps the brightest moment was Bill Stauffer's report on raising the \$300,000 with which to buy these two parcels. It was a remarkable achievement, especially since it all happened on LDI itself. These Islanders met an opportunity head-on and succeeded in creating a treasure that will outlast themselves and all their progeny! A big thank you to Lesley MacVane and Josh Ritter at Portland Media Center (channels 2 and 5) for recording the annual meeting, which can be viewed on our website, oceansideconservationtrust.org.

by Roger Berle

Look for two articles about Priscilla Doucette on pages 8-9 of this newsletter, and please check our website <http://oceansideconservationtrust.org/on-raising-the-funds-to-purchase-the-two-ldi-lots/> for more on Bill Stauffer's report on the remarkable fundraising achievement on Little Diamond.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

While I was delighted to have convened our gathering on our newest piece of conserved island land, for me the highlight of the 2020 OCT Annual Meeting was the opportunity to celebrate the long service and unique contributions of Priscilla Doucette to Oceanside. A life-long summer native of Little Diamond Island, Priscilla has served as either a Board or Advisory Board member for several decades. When leaving her full board position in 2016, she handily convinced us to return her son, Bill Needelman, to the seat he had held prior to her. So the "Bennett Family OCT Board Seat" remains secure. Meanwhile, Priscilla has also applied her magic to the wonderful Newsletter your hands are holding at this very minute. This publication has evolved in substance and color (and is now in color) since she and Jane Laughlin started it in 2004. It stands out markedly from the mailings that other nonprofits send to their members.

Twice per year, my responsibility is to compose a President's message. Once I finish a draft that I hope will pass muster and then hit the send button, I sit back in both fear and excitement to read Priscilla's return comments. Along with her standard "You didn't ask them for MONEY!" and other feedback, she unfailingly slaps my wrist over my tendency to capitalize words her English teacher training has persuaded her is quite improper. And this relates so consistently to when she would pinpoint and ask for full clarification of some Agenda item at the Board table which I had insufficiently addressed or summarized. She is a stickler for details! Perhaps more than anyone else, I shall dearly miss you, Priscilla.

Thank You!!
Roger



Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020

Roger Berle, President	207-712-5565	
	207-766-2827	Cliff Island
John Spencer, Vice President	781-237-4038	
	617-680-0012	Cushing Island
Jane Laughlin, Secretary	207-799-9285	
	207-766-2570	Great Diamond Island
Chris Stevenson, Treasurer	207-772-1941	Cape Elizabeth
Tracy Ames		Chebeague Island
Tom Bergh	207-232-6733	Peaks Island
David Hirth	207-406-4169	
Liz Johnson	207-865-6626	Peaks Island
	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
Daveis 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
Bishop Healy Woods	Little Diamond Island	OCT	2020	4+ acres

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

COASTAL OBSERVATION SITES ARE COMING TO OCEANSIDE

by John Spencer and Doreen Johnston

The beach by our house was where I played all day and was the long-used site of lobster bakes. It is no longer a beach at high tide, and the bakes have moved to higher ground. The shore road above another island beach was a gravel road. Now it is a stone road covered by rocks washed up from recent storm surges. The fields we ran through as kids became impenetrable stands of invasive honeysuckles, bittersweet, and barberry. The latter hosted the ticks that in the last ten years gave me Lyme disease - twice.

Rising sea levels and global warming are changing not just the place where I grew up but the entire Maine coast. Oceanside's monitoring visits to its properties are recording even more observations of these changes with similar signs on each of the Casco Bay islands where it holds easements or has fee-owned land.

Land conservation plays an important role in responding to the changes we are seeing in our communities. Conserved land acts as a natural buffer along coasts and riverbeds, captures carbon and other greenhouse gases, and provides refuge for plants and animals as the climate changes. Oceanside is working to address these changes with consistent annual monitoring, stewardship work, and additional land protection. Understanding local impacts helps us plan for conservation that will aid in preserving the scenery, character, and wildlife of our communities and will make us more climate resilient. Part of this effort is a recognition that we need additional capacity to

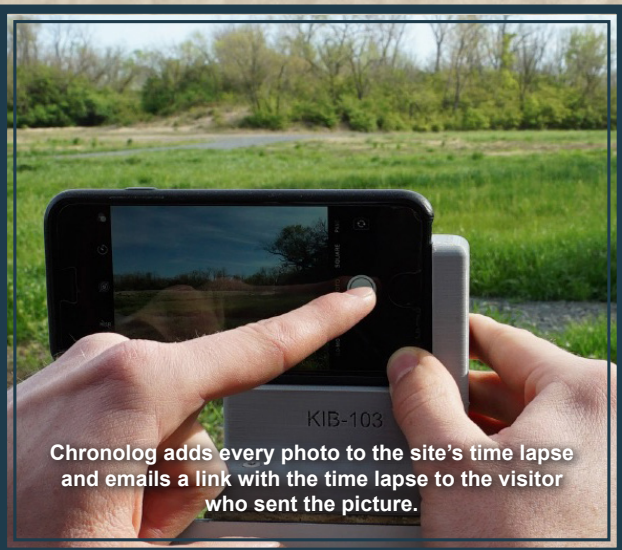
monitor and bear witness to these environmental changes. Oceanside's latest action was to apply for a grant from the Island Institute that would enable us to deploy an observatory network to collect and store images of change over a long time period. We were awarded the grant in October of this year, and we will be implementing the project over the next year along with a long-term commitment to collect and share the data that will be used to document the changes we are seeing.

That grant is based on Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative's Climate Change Observatory (CCO) Network, already operating on a Portland Trails site. The CCO Network is a citizen science photo monitoring program designed to assist with the observation, measurement, and documentation of long-term climate change trends. Oceanside's CCO sites will use a platform called Chronolog, an effective way to crowdsource and leverage data to create time-lapses of areas that monitor environmental changes. Oceanside has goals that this effort will encourage participation in climate change study, develop community ownership in climate action, and inspire adaptation solutions.

We saw the need and are thankful for the support from the Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative and the Island Institute to make our goals achievable. Watch for the observation sites next year and help us out when you can.



Instructions on the sign tell visitors to take a photo and email it to Chronolog using a site code unique to the location.



Chronolog adds every photo to the site's time lapse and emails a link with the time lapse to the visitor who sent the picture.

MEETING 2020

The two lots recently preserved by OCT on Little Diamond Island are remarkable for their scenic beauty and conservation values. But they are also notable for their history - a history which in many ways mirrors that of our country. The story spans two centuries, with tales of Irish immigration, slavery, discrimination, the first Black Catholic Bishop in America, summer colonies and clambakes, orphans, the

KKK, and an island mystery. To hear and read this fascinating story, please go to our updated website, oceansideconservationtrust.org and listen to Harry Pringle reveal the history of Bishop Healy Woods. Text is also available at

<http://oceansideconservationtrust.org/bishop-healy/>



Harry Pringle



Healy Cottage LDI

This photo of Bishop Healy's Cottage (c. 1910) shows the buoy station (Rand's) in the foreground, with the Sisters' orphanage to the right. To the immediate left of the lighthouse in the center of the photo you can see the Bishop's cottage, with the roofs of other still-existing cottages behind it on the other side of the island. The perspective is a bit deceptive; they look like they're nearby but they're not.

Photo courtesy of Phil Lee, Little Diamond Island

CONSERVATION VALUES OF BISHOP HEALY WOODS

by John Lortie

Bishop Healy Woods is part of a larger forested ecosystem found on the northeastern half of Little Diamond Island. Red oak, white pine, pitch pine, and American beech 50 to 75 feet tall are the dominant trees found here, and they provide important habitat for numerous songbirds during the breeding, migrating, and wintering seasons. Collectively the islands of Casco Bay provide critical habitat for migrating songbirds during their journey from breeding grounds further north to the wintering grounds of the southern United States and areas much further south in Central and South America. This area is referred to as the Atlantic Flyway.

During the spring and fall thousands of migrating songbirds travel along the eastern seaboard, hugging the coast and following food sources. Bishop Healy Woods is part of these critical feeding areas on which songbirds depend to refuel while flying north and south. In the spring when the oak trees are flowering in mid-May, numerous species of warblers can be seen gleaning insects attracted to the

oak flowers. These insects provide fuel for migration. Habitat loss and degradation along the Atlantic Flyway has impacted many species of songbirds. OCT's acquisition of these lots will help protect and ensure that critical feeding habitat is maintained. These properties provide habitat for many other species besides migratory birds, including several species of bats, small mammals, and deer.



MONITORING FOR

“Performing our land trust tasks during Covid was mostly similar to other years’ experiences. While periodically stewarding and, by the way, fully enjoying the open spaces we are responsible for, we were outside in nature, distant from anyone else, observing shorelines from the water, or exploring boundaries for corner markers or signs of trespass. The only difference in 2020 was that we each separately monitored our own island’s holdings. One of the strengths of our annual monitoring procedures is having Board members from other islands come along to observe with a perhaps more objective set of eyes.”
- *Roger Berle*

“I have missed the comradery and the learning experienced at meetings and our monitoring trips. Yet, Covid has also meant I have visited a number of our conservation lands alone, and this had the effect of bringing me closer to these parcels, perhaps the way these protected pieces of land are best experienced, for the mind and the soul.”
- *Bill Stauffer*

“For the first time in my twenty years as an OCT board member, I did not participate in the annual spring monitoring of properties. Aside from the fact that monitoring is an important responsibility and duty of a land trust, it is just so enjoyable after a long winter to walk in the woods and along spectacular island shorelines with my OCT friends! The crunch of evergreen needles underfoot, the scent of ramps, the rattle of cobble beaches, the bird-song – I felt a great sense of loss in May of 2020.” - *Jane Laughlin*



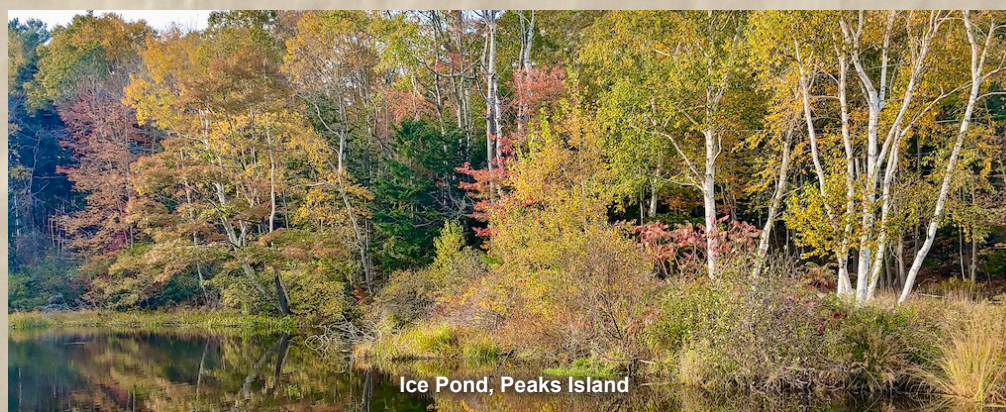
At Wreck Cove on Long Island, storm surge continues to push the cobble beach landward.



Beautiful Cliff Island shoreline is conserved through OCT.



Dave Hirth observes the Belknap Bluffs easement on Cliff from offshore.



Ice Pond, Peaks Island

CLIMATE CHANGE



The upper limit of the storm surge where the beach grass has eroded away on Fowler's Beach, Long Island.



Roger Berle flags a boundary marker of the LACI easement on Cliff Island.



Wild iris and low water level at Echo Pond, Peaks Island



Tidal erosion on Little Diamond Island



This is one of the boundary pins that is difficult to locate on Fowler's Beach. In this early spring photo, the beach was eroded. By the monitoring in May, the pin was once again buried.

“As a Portland-born director who is not from away but went away, I have been hunkered down in Massachusetts to ride out the pandemic. This is the third year in my life that I have not been in Maine. It hurts not only to miss friends and family there but also to see a slowing in conservation efforts. While we all wait for effective vaccines and therapeutics to emerge, my work continues with reading, ZOOM calls, and whatever the internet can offer. It is a slowing, but not a stop. Just this Fall: OCT carried on with completion of annual monitoring visits. We applied for and got a grant to roll out a coastal observatory network to gather data on the climate change underway. We completed our application for reaccreditation with the Land Trust Alliance. We developed a land management plan for the newly acquired Putnam lots (now called Bishop Healy Woods) on Little Diamond Island. We are partnering with the Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative on the Park Rx program to get housebound citizens out walking the trails with public access. I take comfort from these actions that, even while I am away, progress is being made in the unique part of the world that OCT helps protect.” - *John Spencer*