

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

Volume 9 Edition 1, June 2013

CHILDREN CONNECTING TO NATURE

Earth Day on Long Island

Long Island school children cleaned Fowlers Beach for Earth Day and took pictures of tidal specimens for Project Noah. They are submitting information to Gulf of Maine Research Institute for a vital signs study on climate change.

Oceanside Conservation Trust holds a conservation easement on this property which is owned by The Town of Long Island.



Peaks Island Children Combat Invasive Plants by Jeanne Gulnick

Peaks Island Elementary School has become the epicenter for a collaborative effort begun by Oceanside Conservation Trust on Peaks Island to educate and engage the island community on the threats associated with invasive plant species.



Oceanside Conservation Trust applied for a grant to fund a hands-on invasive species education project in the island school. The students will learn to identify and eradicate invasive species. The project connects students to a local problem while teaching them about island ecology, plant identification, basic scientific methods, computer mapping and other topics.

The Peaks Island Fund of the Maine Community Foundation, an island philanthropy which supports projects that focus on efforts to enhance life on Peaks, was initially receptive of the idea. Before committing \$7200 to the project, however, they requested that OCT sit down with other island organizations, including Peaks Environmental Action Team (PEAT) and the Island Institute so that the work proposed in the grant would not be limited to those associated with the Peaks Island School. A larger community-wide project was begun!

OCT director, Bob Bittenbender, a well-known expert on invasive plant species and property manager at Gilsland Farm, has made several trips to the Peaks Island School and introduced students and teachers to some of the most insidious island invasives—Japanese knotweed, Oriental bittersweet, Japanese barberry, black swallow-wort, Norway maple and multi-flora rose. Many excellent examples were found right in the school yard. Bittenbender stressed the problems associated with these plants and the best methods for removing or controlling their distribution in the entire island community.

Jeff Tarling, arborist for the City of Portland, additionally shared his expertise on invasives and suitable native species that would make excellent replacements. Tarling generously offered to purchase native plants for a school property removal project. Removal of invasives on the school property has already begun. The planting of native species on the school property will serve as a model for the greater island community.

According to Peaks Island School Principal Cindy Nielsen, "These activities provide a unique opportunity for the students to learn science through the analysis of real world problems and the search for viable solutions. This experience could help build our elementary students' interest and aspirations of pursuing science fields as their own career paths."



After conducting additional independent research, 4th and 5th grade students have created brochures describing the island's "most wanted" invasive species. These were shared during the Earth Day Fair at the island community center sponsored by PEAT and staffed by Island Institute Fellow, Maggie Small, who has also worked extensively with the Peaks Island School on this project. Additionally, the brochures are displayed prominently on a new bulletin board erected by PEAT near the ferry landing.

Elementary school students shared their developing expertise on invasives with students attending the Peaks Island Academy, an alternative island school. The Peaks Island Academy students will also be involved in invasive species removal and planting of native species at other island locations.

OCT hired Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative Executive Director Jessica Burton to oversee and administer this grant. Burton has been integrally involved in the planning of this collaborative project, which she calls "an excellent model of teaching stewardship to kids so they can see their impacts in a very tangible way." Burton envisions that this project could be an important model for community-wide collaboration and action on invasive species in other communities as well.

On May 18th, more than 30 islanders came together for a work day on Peaks Island Elementary School property. After several hours of hard work, a huge stand of Japanese knotweed, a giant Japanese barberry, countless small Norway



maples, Oriental bittersweet shoots, and black swallow-wort plants were removed. Native blueberry, bayberry, cranberry and juniper were planted. Many islanders left the event ready to tackle invasives in their own backyard.

According to 5th grader Jonah Green, "The

best part about this project is that we get to learn and work outside. Our work could be helping the entire Peaks Island Community and others as well!"

The project will continue into next year. Students will begin to map the distribution of invasive species around the island and ramp-up eradication efforts on some protected properties using what they learned this year on the school ground project. Peaks Island Elementary School students will continue to share what they have learned with the greater community and engage the Peaks community into action on this critical problem.



Chebeague Students Connect by Erno Bonebakker

The students at the Chebeague Island School continued their engagement with the project to enhance the outdoor recreation values of Little Chebeague Island. OCT board member Erno Bonebakker met with the 3-4 grade class in the island school in late March to discuss possible community service projects on Little Chebeague. The students also reviewed and critiqued drafts of revised signs to be posted this season.

Unfortunately a planned trip to Little Chebeague for both the 3-4 and K-2 classes in late May was rained out. Erno instead met with the 3-4 class and discussed the post glacial evolution of Casco Bay and its islands.

Plans are being made to engage Long Island high school and college students to work on an archaeological dig and to explore the possible remains of a very early building on Little Chebeague. This work is sponsored by the Long Island Historical Society and will take place August 6-16. Visitors to the dig site will also be welcomed.



As always, one and all are welcome to help with stewardship on Little Chebeague. Anyone interested in joining a workday should contact Maria Jenness, The Maine Island Trail Association Stewardship Manager, at 761-8225.

Last Child in the Woods - Book Review by Jane Laughlin

Last Child in the Woods - Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

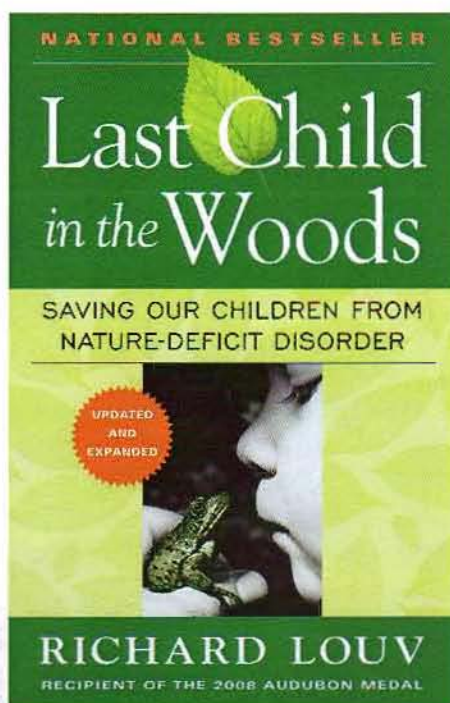
by Richard Louv, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2006, 334 pp.

Will I collect and catalog the rocks, insects, or plants in the field behind my house? Or maybe this year it should be the pond? These were always the crucial decisions for me on the first day of summer vacation when I was a child. Equipped with a new pair of sneakers and a notebook, I was prepared for my summer job - which was to go outdoors and play. Times have changed.

Within the last few decades, the way children understand and experience nature has changed significantly; most young people today are aware of endangered species, climate change, and global threats to the environment, but their physical, emotional, and spiritual intimacy with nature is fading. In *Last Child in the Woods*, journalist Richard Louv examines the twin fear factors of our society (stranger-danger and liability), and explores the increasing divide between children and the natural world. He illustrates the environmental, social, psychological, and spiritual implications of that divide. Definitely more than a nostalgic lament, *Last Child in the Woods* directly links the absence of nature in the lives of today's wired generation to the rise in childhood obesity, attention disorders, and depression.

What exactly is Nature-Deficit Disorder?

Louv uses this nonmedical term to describe "the human costs of alienation from nature, among them: diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses. The disorder can be detected in individuals, families, and communities." He builds his case with an extensive and interesting review of studies, statistics, and anecdotal evidence throughout the first third of the book. However, if you already intuitively accept the underlying premise that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of children and adults; and that nature nurtures creativity and imagination through free play in an open-ended environment (loose parts theory); and that natural landscapes and gardens are therapeutic, restorative, and can actually reduce aggression and violence; then move on to the solutions and suggestions offered in "The Nature-Child Reunion." It is this hands-on chapter that will hold the greatest interest for parents, grandparents, and teachers looking for ways to get the kids outdoors to play again.



What's the cure?

First we must recognize that time in nature is not merely leisure time. Rather, it's an essential investment in our children's health (and our own). One of the challenges facing parents is the fine line between presenting and pushing - or, "One parent's hike is another's forced march." "Your job isn't to hit them with another Fine Educational Opportunity, but to turn them on to what a neat world we live in," writes Deborah Churchman in the journal *American Forests*. Here are just a few practical solutions suggested by Louv's research:

- Walk after a rainfall to count worms.
- Turn on a porch light and watch insects gather.
- Find a ravine, field, pond, swamp, or vacant lot and go there frequently. "It's better to know one mountain than to climb many."
- Plant a flower or vegetable garden.
- Build a sunflower house.
- Go birding. Listen to loons.
- Take a Moth Walk: "In a blender, mix up a goopy brew of squishy fruit, stale beer or wine (or juice that's been hanging around too long), and sweetener (honey, sugar, or molasses) ... Then take a paintbrush and a child or two, and go outside at sunset. Slap some of this goo on at least a half-dozen surfaces - trees are best, but any unpainted and untreated wood will do. Come back when it's really dark, and look at what you've lured. You'll usually find a few moths, along with several dozen ants, earwigs, and other insects."
- Read books about nature to your child. This is an indirect experience, but unlike TV, does not numb the senses or dictate thought. Reading stimulates imagination.
- "Structure some unstructured time" into your child's schedule. This leads to constructive boredom. (This is a good thing!)
- Don't be scared stupid by "stranger danger." Be scared smart, saying "Pay attention," not "Be careful." Teach children to be alert and aware, not afraid.
- Turn off the television and limit time with electronics.
- "Our children ought to be out there on the water. This is what connects us, this is what connects humanity, this is what we have in common. It's not the Internet, it's the oceans."

~ Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Closing the nature divide is not as simple as making a list. Parents need help from schools, nature organizations, city planners, and each other. *Last Child in the Woods* closes with a look to the future and the ways we, as parents, grandparents, citizens, and members of conservation organizations, can be part of the healing process for nature-deficit disorder. *Last Child* is scary, enlightening, and hopeful. It's not "hammock-reading," but I recommend it highly for your summer reading list.

MCHT Keynote Address Review

by Roger Berle

"Go Outside to Play and Don't Come Home 'til Dark!"

A blast from our pasts? Yes! But also a message heard by five hundred attendees from Dr. Cheryl Charles at the MCHT Annual Land Trust Conference on April 27. Dr. Charles addressed the importance of land trusts and community leadership within the children and nature movement, noting that the land trust community itself is a positive and critical element in this effort to create and sustain positive social change. Reconnecting children and nature is fundamental to children's and everyone's health and well-being, the health of communities, and the future of the Earth itself. This Keynote Speaker from New Mexico may have been preaching to a choir, but she proposed an imperative, updated philosophy if today's conservationists are to have heirs to our good works.

Future land stewardship is as much at stake as the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of our children and grandchildren. Dr. Charles' nonprofit, *Children in Nature Network*, advocates community well-being and healthfulness. Her premise: despite a weekly average of fifty-five hours spent hooked up electronically and a national thirty per cent obesity rate, children still have an innate sense of wonder. Unfettered by a generation of challenged, fearful parents who have themselves forgotten about the natural joys of hiking, camping and fishing, tomorrow's children, unguided by rules and schedules, will rediscover and reconnect with nature; the result will be natural growth in happiness, creativity, collaboration, problem-solving...

...and an appreciation for the Maine landscape and playscape their forbears have preserved for them. A new generation of conservation leadership will then take over the tasks performed with such dedication over the past forty years of the land trust movement. During those decades, Oceanside Conservation Trust and its conservation cohorts have managed to preserve over twenty per cent of Maine's beauty. While there are yet more special places to be set aside, what we have now must be cared for and stewarded far into the future.

Let's make sure we nurture the next generations of community members who will learn the joys of land preservation.

SAVE the DATE

*You are cordially invited
to join us for the*

**OCEANSIDE
CONSERVATION TRUST
OF CASCO BAY**

31st Annual Meeting On Cliff Island

**THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2013
3:15-6:30**

** RAIN OR SHINE **

*Featuring a special presentation on
"Measuring the Successes and
Challenges of an Island-Wide Invasive
Species Management Program"*

*Tour OCT's protected lands on
Cliff Island and visit demonstration
sites showcasing effective invasive
species management strategies.*

A picnic dinner will be served on the island

To reserve your place, please
call 699-2989 or email
info@oceansideconservationtrust.org

PROPERTY MONITORING Spring 2013

Michael Beaudoin adds the yearly tape to a boundary on Peaks Island.



A. J. Alves provides the usual elegant transportation on Peaks Island.

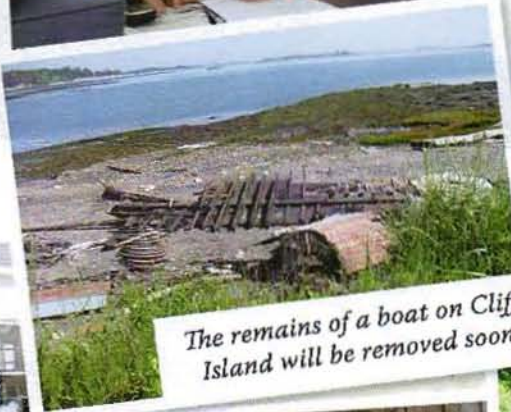


OCT monitors stopped to chat with future property stewards.



Where in Casco Bay did the monitoring crew end their day?

Erno Bonebakker and Eric Handley transfer GPS data to the map while underway to the next island.



The remains of a boat on Cliff Island will be removed soon.



Tick ID sign posted near Wreck Cove.

Oceanside's bench monument at Echo Pond



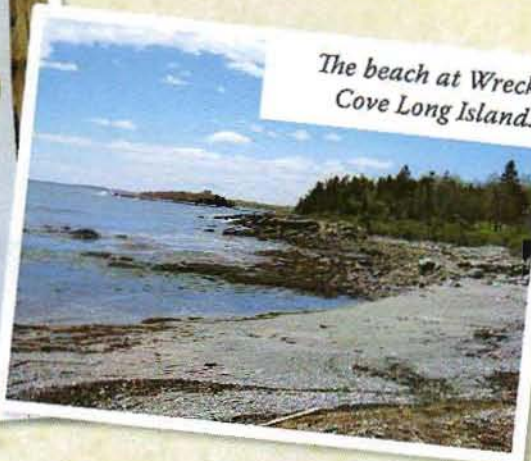
Hagge Woods on Little Diamond



Here it is! John Spencer finally finds the missing marker.



The beach at Wreck Cove Long Island.



WINTER CONNECTIONS

The Third Annual Winter Bird Trip

OCT director Bob Bittenbender and Maine Audubon naturalist Mike Windsor led last winter's trip around Casco Bay. Despite the chilly weather, the group was very willing to stand outside to see the birds. The Casco Bay Lines crew were helpful and even went slightly out of their way to show the group an eagle.

Many of the participants contributed little tidbits about the bay that were informative and added to the success of the trip



Feb 16, 2013 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mail boat run out to Cliff Island on

Casco Bay Lines

23 species

- Canada Goose 15
- American Black Duck 10
- Mallard 5
- Greater/Lesser Scaup 5
- Common Eider 25
- Surf Scoter 30
- Long-tailed Duck 50
- Bufflehead 15
- Common Goldeneye 10
- Red-breasted Merganser 10
- Red-throated Loon 5*
- Common Loon 50
- Horned Grebe 5
- Red-necked Grebe 3
- Cooper's Hawk 1
- Bald Eagle 1
- Ring-billed Gull 5
- Herring Gull 15
- Iceland Gull 1
- Great Black-backed Gull 5
- Razorbill 12
- Rock Pigeon 10
- Blue Jay 1
- American Crow 5

OCEANSIDE CONSERVATION TRUST OF CASCO BAY

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Eliza Cope Nolan.....	772-5024 <i>Cushing Island</i>
John Whitman.....	766-2211 <i>Peaks Island</i>

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

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
Davis 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	Helea 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

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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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

Check out our new website!

Printed on recycled paper

Since 1982, approximately 88 acres
on Casco Bay Islands have been
permanently protected.
Oceanside Conservation Trust
of Casco Bay welcomes
your support.

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