

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

P.O. BOX 10404 | PORTLAND, MAINE 04104  
OceansideConservationTrust@gmail.com | Tel. 207-699-2989

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

Membership Dues: \$20.00

Additional Gift: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Seasonal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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. Contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law; dues are not.

Thank You!

Printed on recycled paper

Since 1982, approximately 85 acres  
on Casco Bay Islands have been  
permanently protected.  
Oceanside Conservation Trust  
of Casco Bay welcomes  
your support.

OCEANSIDE CONSERVATION TRUST  
OF CASCO BAY  
P.O. BOX 10404  
PORTLAND, MAINE 04104



PRSRT  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Portland, ME  
Permit No. 658

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

Volume 6 Edition 2, November 2009

Battery Steele

MILITARY BEGINNINGS

Battery Steele is a 14-acre World War II shore fortification on the ocean side of Peaks Island. Completed in 1942 and named for Colonel Harry Lee Steele, a coastal artillery officer in World War I, it protected the coast from Kennebunk to Popham Beach. Battery Steele was armed with two 16" guns which could fire a projectile weighing as much as a Volkswagen 26 miles. Each gun was mounted in an enormous concrete bunker, open to the east but protected by a projecting hemi-circular concrete roof.

Several hundred yards apart, an underground concrete tunnel big enough for trucks to pass through connected the two bunkers. Behind and beneath that tunnel were vast concrete magazines. The entire installation was covered with earth and vegetation and largely hidden from view. The crater formed by the removal of the earth became Trout Pond. Although U-boats did appear off the Maine coast and sank a ship off Cape Elizabeth in 1944, no German Navy surface ships ever crossed the Atlantic. Battery Steele's guns were never fired in anger. Old-timers on Peaks recall, however, that when the guns were fired for practice, the whole island trembled.

CIVILIAN TAKE-OVER

For fifty years following the end of World War II, generations of Peaks Island residents and visitors enjoyed Battery Steele as a strange and wonderful – if untended – public park. Others used it as a dumping ground for junk cars and construction debris. In the 1970s and 1980s the property was owned by several non-profit organizations. In 1995 Battery Steele was again for sale. To prevent the loss of this unique public space, islanders formed a land trust called Peaks Island Land Preserve. A Herculean community effort raised enough money to buy Battery Steele. Unsure about the future of their new organization, PILP gave

Oceanside Conservation Trust an easement which insured that Battery Steele would remain forever undeveloped and open to the public. Under PILP's stewardship, the Battery is closed to cars (functional or otherwise) but is in every other way unchanged. The Battery became the cornerstone of an ongoing effort by PILP and OCT to preserve appropriate lands on Peaks Island for public use; this preserved land now amounts to about 20% of the island's total acreage.



NATURE RETURNS

Recently new visitors have come to Battery Steele. Over a dozen beavers in three lodges have raised the level of Trout Pond more than a foot and have caused flooding. Wildlife experts consulted by PILP anticipate that the beavers will eventually move on when the food supply dwindles. Interestingly, their activities have attracted more visits by mink, muskrat, frogs, blue herons, and black-crowned night herons.



What does Battery Steele mean to Peaks Islanders?  
by John Whitman

Battery Steele is important to Peaks Islanders for many reasons. It's a place to take first-time island visitors and make them walk through the pitch black tunnel, booting and hollering in Maine's biggest echo chamber. It's a place to come to grips with the occasional grandeur and the ultimate horror of war. It's a place where ever-changing graffiti mark the passage of island teenagers who partied there on summer nights. It's a place to reflect that even a concrete monolith will eventually crumble to death, but the tides will forever surge through Hussey Sound. It's a place that will always belong to everyone who has lived on Peaks Island since 1942 and to which we can always return to gaze out over the marsh toward Jewell Island, Outer Green, and – on a very clear day – the lighthouse on Sequin.





# 2009 Annual Meeting - Daveis Sanctuary



OCT's Annual Meeting was held in July at the Daveis Sanctuary on Peaks Island. Arriving by Casco Bay Lines, private boats, trucks, and foot, members gathered for a tasty picnic supper. While A.J.Alves flipped burgers and hot dogs on the grill in the back of his truck, Jess Burton and Jean Gulnick served salads and desserts. A variety of drinks rounded out the menu. Enjoying the unsurpassed view, members socialized and got caught up on island events.



Board member Brenda Buchanan led some of the members, including James Hackett, on a walking tour of the Daveis Sanctuary and abutting Echo Pond and Skillings Woods. Explaining the history of the properties, she emphasized their importance today and told how OCT works to keep this land in its natural state for future generations.



Boblen's remarks centered on the watershed of Casco Bay. He discussed the far-ranging effects of run-off from Bethel to Cape Elizabeth. All the past pollutants still within the soil, as well as every new contaminant from this area, ends up in Casco Bay. He discussed the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership's mission: to preserve the ecological integrity of Casco Bay and ensure the compatible human uses of the Bay's resources through public stewardship and effective management. OCT members present empathized with these goals.

In the first issue of Oceanside's newsletter, December 2004, the Davies Sanctuary was the front-page story.

The land still is one of OCT's premier

properties. Donated to Maine Audubon by the Davies sisters in 1977, and given by that organization to OCT in 1991, this property preserves a scenic park, cobble beaches, spectacular ocean views, and a deep forest. Generations of year-round visitors have enjoyed picnics, walks, and quiet moments in its 6.8 acres. Despite the loss of numerous trees in the Patriots' Day storm of 2007, the forest is refuge to numerous migrating birds. Shore birds abound along its rocky ledges. Volunteers have cleared the storm debris and new growth is abundant. In the park at Davies Sanctuary is a stone marker commemorating the life of the late Dr. Harold E. Hackett, a founding member of OCT.



Roger Berle conducted the brief annual meeting and introduced the guest speaker, Curtis Boblen, Executive Director of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP), based at the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service. Boblen has extensive experience in environmental science and policy, as well as watershed management.

## GRANTS for PNLTC GOALS

New grant money will help Portland North Land Trust Collaborative achieve its goals of administrative efficiency, regional conservation planning, and accreditation preparation. PNLTC is an innovative partnership formed in 2006 among Falmouth Land Trust, Chebeague & Cumberland Land Trust, and Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay.

**Conservation Planning:** With funding from the Margaret Burnham Charitable Trust and the L.L.Bean Maine Land Trust Program, the three trusts have collected information on the significant natural and open areas in the region. We have developed a regional map and brochure picturing the 55 protected properties on islands and the mainland, and we are close to completing our Portland North Regional Conservation Plan.

**Accreditation Preparation:** As participants in the pilot program of the Maine Land Trust Excellence Program, a partnership between The Pew Charitable Trust, the Land Trust Alliance, and the Maine Land Trust Network, OCT will receive considerable financial assistance to prepare for accreditation. OCT will benefit from efficiencies gained by working together with the other trusts in the Collaborative. Committees will develop policies and procedures and gather information that will be shared by all three organizations. This model of collaboration is the first of its kind in the country.

**Organizational Support:** Grants from three foundations will support our work in administering to the land trusts: Norcross Wildlife Foundation, the Davis Conservation Foundation and the Cumberland County Fund of the Maine Community Foundation. With these funds, the Collaborative will increase its ability to coordinate board communications, build awareness of the trusts on the web, and professionally manage membership data.

**Personnel:** PNLTC is very excited to introduce a new staff person, Doreen Johnston. An enthusiastic conservationist, Doreen will serve as the Collaborative's Administrative Assistant. Last summer the Collaborative had three enthusiastic and professional interns. Shannon Hulst gathered GIS data, and assisted with baseline documentation, property document storage, and landowner research. Randa Capponi completed extensive research in support of our preparations for accreditation. Nick Lunt designed and built the brand new OCT website which should be online this month.

## OCEANSIDE CONSERVATION TRUST OF CASCO BAY

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2009-2010

Roger Berle, President.....	781-5331 766-2827 Cliff Island
Brenda Buchanan, Vice President....	854-5824
Jane Laughlin, Secretary.....	799-9285 766-2570 Great Diamond Island
Stephanie Weaver, Treasurer.....	761-4212 Cushing Island
A.J. Alves.....	766-2423 Peaks Island
Mike Beaudoin.....	774-0522 766-3028 Cliff Island
Bob Bittenbender.....	892-3818
Erno Bonebakker.....	871-0048 615-6664 Chebeague Island
Priscilla Doucette.....	772-5705 Little Diamond Island
Jeanne Gulnick.....	766-2601 Peaks Island
Eric Handley .....	899-0027
Michael Johnson.....	232-5778 Long Island
Christine McDuffie.....	829-3231 766-5277 Long Island
Harry R. Pringle.....	774-0437 766-3326 Little Diamond Island

### ADVISORY BOARD:

Tom Bergh.....	766-2419 Peaks Island
Mark Greene.....	766-4440 Long Island
Eliza Cope Nolan.....	772-5024 Cushing Island
John Whitman.....	766-2211 Peaks Island

## 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
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

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



## MEET OCT'S NEWEST DIRECTOR

*Eric Handley*



Oceanside's newest director is Eric Handley, a retired media specialist with environmental interests.

Before moving to Portland, Eric enjoyed a thirty-year career editing documentary programs for PBS, The History Channel, and The Discovery Channel. He also edited award-winning programs for flagship PBS series *Nova*, *Frontline*, and *The American Experience*.

He is an adjunct teacher of digital editing at Emerson College in Boston and has website design certification from Northeastern University.

Eric quickly became involved in his new community by joining Portland Trails, Maine Narrow Gauge Railway, and Portland Landmarks, and by volunteering as a Portland History Docent.

While serving on the board of directors of Friends of the Eastern Promenade, he was active in helping to control invasive plants, increasing public awareness through bird walks, and aiding in construction of connecting trails like the Fort Allen Connector. Eric also volunteers at Maine Audubon helping to control invasive plants.

As an Oceanside director, Eric plans to aid stewardship programs and help monitor land use. He is interested in using his media skills to help with newsletters and web sites for the land trust.

**"After attending only a few meetings, I came away convinced that it is possible through land trusts like OCT and the commitment of its volunteers to conserve the environment and views we love in Maine."**

## CELEBRATING NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

*N*ational Trails Day is an annual event coordinated by the American Hiking Society to celebrate more than 200,000 miles of trails across all 50 states. To celebrate this day, on June 6th the Portland North Land Trust Collaborative sponsored GIS/GPS trail-mapping workshops at Wreck Cove on Long Island, Lunt School Trails in Falmouth, and Twin Brooks Recreation Area in Cumberland, hosted by Oceanside Conservation Trust, Falmouth Land Trust, and Chebeague & Cumberland Land Trust respectively.

Hiking along recreational trails and working with experts from the Center for Community GIS (CCGIS), workshop participants used GPS (Global Position System) units and computers with GIS (Geographic Information Software) to gather data and generate maps. The goal of mapping the 1500+ acres of conserved land overseen by the three member trusts is to create a comprehensive database supporting effective regional land use, stewardship, and planning. By training local community members to use GPS and GIS technology, the land trusts encouraged the participants' involvement in the mapping project while increasing community awareness about effective stewardship of conserved lands.

The events were funded by grants from L.L.Bean and the Margaret Burnham Charitable Trust and organized by the Portland North Land Trust Collaborative.



*In the workshop hosted by Oceanside at Wreck Cove on Long Island, the participants plotted way points describing their entry to the property, and then broke into two groups to plot points at the survey pins to the south and to plot points around the wetlands to the north and west. Upon their return to the Long Island Library, instructor Jean Luc Theriault entered the data into his computer and displayed the results on a map showing an aerial photo with an overlay of the tax map identifying the property boundaries. Because the tax maps are often imprecise and because the GPS readings can vary up to ten meters, it is important to make proper disclaimers about the precision of any maps resulting from these methods. Also, the blow-down area where the forestry clean-up occurred was not mapped. Such a map would have been interesting to see, because the aerial photo predates the 2007 storm blow-down, and so shows the pre-storm tree cover. I think everyone enjoyed the workshop and learned a good deal. by Christine McDuffie, Workshop Participant*

## WRECK COVE UPDATE

*By Mike Johnson*

*I*n the two years since the Patriots' Day storm clean-up on the Wreck Cove property on Long Island, most of the large red spruce left in the open area of the cut have fallen. The remaining forest around the cut is healthy and intact. Young spruce seedlings that were just sprouting on the forest floor at the time of the cut have responded to the new open canopy and are growing well. Other herbaceous vegetation now growing in the open area includes evergreen wood fern, bracken fern, hay scented fern, red raspberry, sedges, and paper birch



seedlings. Paper birch is an early successional tree that responds well to disturbance. As the forest begins to grow again, it will likely transition to mixed wood dominated by red spruce and paper birch before becoming more spruce-dominated. No invasive species have colonized the cut areas.

## Volunteers OCT MEETS THE STANDARDS

*Land Trust Alliance Standard 7:*

### VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

The land trust has volunteers, staff and/or consultants with appropriate skills and in sufficient numbers to carry out its programs.

In addition to its all-volunteer board of directors, OCT welcomes volunteers who can assist in caring for our properties and maintaining an active land trust. Opportunities range from simply joining as a member, contributing financially, following our activities through our newsletter, and sharing your support of land conservation with your friends and neighbors to actually working on our properties.

Oceanside regularly monitors its protected properties; volunteer stewards help us achieve that mission. If you are able to visit one of our properties periodically and act as "eyes in the field" and as an ambassador to people you meet on the property, let us know.

From time to time, OCT has work parties on its properties. Projects range from controlling invasive plants, restoring native vegetation, installing signs, and removing fire and safety hazards. Periodically we need help with short term project-oriented tasks such as preparing mailings, filing, and organizing or staffing events such as the Annual Meeting.

**Whether your talent is photography, writing, fundraising, or trail maintenance, OCT can match you with an opportunity to use your skills.**

*If you'd like to volunteer speak to an OCT board member, contact Jessica Burton at Portland North, 699-2989, e-mail: [portlandnorth@gmail.com](mailto:portlandnorth@gmail.com); or drop us a note at OCT, PO Box 10404, Portland, Me 04104.*

*For more information see Land Trust Standards and Practices from the Land Trust Alliance [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org)*

## A VERY SPECIAL ISLAND VOLUNTEER *By Roger Berle*

*C*arolyn Walker's family has summered on Cliff Island since the early 1900s. Her forebears were thoughtful, faithful, and generous members of our tiny community. Carolyn, however, has taken this ethic to an impressive level.



Carolyn has been a summer homeowner here for several decades, sharing a classic cottage on the northwest shore with her husband Michael and her three boys – Matt, Alex, and Nicky.

She has always been among the first to volunteer for various community projects. As a long-time board member of ACE (Cliff Island Corporation for Athletics, Conservation, and Education), Carolyn has taken the lead in addressing invasive species removal from Cliff. She has provided islanders with research materials, and she has led shovel parties aimed at purple loosestrife removal. She regularly walks the island with both clippers and a notebook in hand, relentlessly attacking bittersweet and other offenders.

In 2009, she talked her son Matt into applying for the ACE position of Managing Intern for Invasive Species Removal. While adamantly insisting that she would not be responsible for "managing" Matt, she still has tutored him in identification and removal strategies and accompanied him



# Maintaining the Health of Our Properties: ALIEN VS. NATIVE SPECIES

By Dale Doucette

Plants from all parts of the world have been imported to North America. Plants from Europe, Asia, and Africa have been used to decorate and beautify lawns and gardens. The result was often visually stunning while the side effects went unnoticed. In an ecosystem, the quantity and quality of life depends on the health

of the system. In a rich ecosystem, energy from the soil and the sun is effectively passed up the food chain, supporting a vast diversity of life. The introduction of alien plants has diminished the richness of many North American ecosystems, and the health of those systems is substantially compromised. In his recent book, *Bringing Nature Home*, Douglas Tallamy explains the difference between native and alien plants and the undesirable effects of using alien plants. Alien species have introduced diseases and insects for which native species had no defenses. For example, the American chestnut, which evolved over a period of 87 million years, was

the primary producer of nuts in the eastern uplands of the United States. The chestnut supported an immeasurable amount of wildlife. A disease carried by the Japanese chestnut trees introduced in 1904 “functionally eliminated” the American chestnut from the eastern deciduous forests in only 50 years. A single order of Asian iris imported in 1916 carried the Japanese beetle larva. Having no natural insect enemies, the destructive Japanese

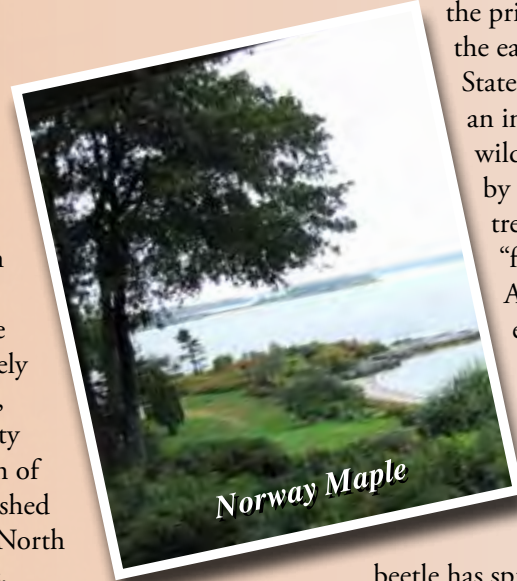
beetle has spread nationwide. (Tallamy)

Alien plants have no natural predators and easily out-compete native species. Japanese knotweed (commonly called bamboo), oriental bittersweet, and the Norway maple are examples. Japanese knotweed spreads rapidly by rhizomes, seeds, and even pieces of its stem. It creates a dense growth that shades out all other plants and is extremely difficult to eradicate. Birds feed on the berries of the oriental bittersweet and widely scatter the seeds. New plants grow quickly, choking out native shrubs and strangling large trees. The Norway maple, introduced in 1756 and now the most common shade tree in North America, occupies the space and uses resources that would have been available for a native tree. Unfortunately, it will not pass energy up the food chain. (Tallamy) Many insects, valuable sources of protein in the food chain, are not able to eat and live on alien trees. “In a comparison of the diversity of herbivorous insects in Oxford, Pennsylvania, more than three times as many insect species were associated with native plants as with alien plants.” (Tallamy)

Native plants improve the health of an ecosystem. They live together and sustain each other, successfully passing energy from the sun and the soil up the food chain. “Native plants are an integral part of the natural lives of everything from bacteria to birds .... Native plants evolved with native wildlife, so everything from the shape and structure of the flowers to the tannin content of the leaves is tailored to the feeding habits of insects, birds, animals and other native creatures.” (Roth) We are learning more and more about ecosystems, how they work, and how people have damaged them. Some damage can be undone, but not all. To totally eradicate destructive alien species is impossible, but some plants can be controlled. For example, land stewards in OCT are working to minimize the spread of bittersweet and other invasive plants. In the future people can make better choices about what they plant. Multi-flora rose, oriental bittersweet, autumn olive, and oriental honeysuckle diminish the health of ecosystems and should be avoided. Blueberries, service berry, viburnum, winterberry, pagoda dogwood, river birch, white oak, and tamarack are a few of the native species that can be used for healthy ecosystems. OCT board members, Bob Bittenbender and Eric Handley can be contacted at Maine Audubon Society for more information.

Roth, Sally. *Organic Gardening*, Nov.-Jan. 2009/10.

Tallamy, Douglas W., *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*, Timber Press Portland, OR, 2007.



Norway Maple



Apple Tree



River Birch



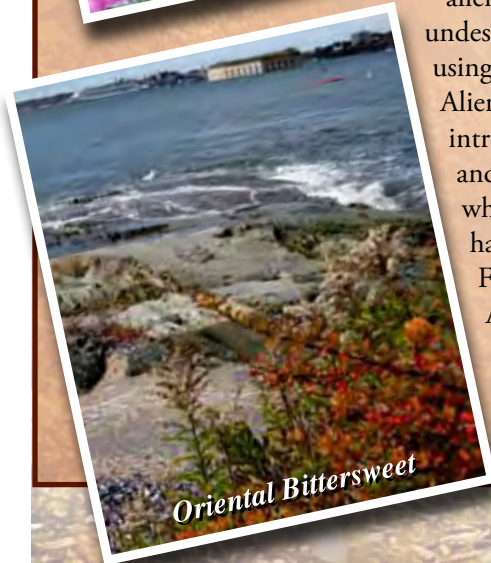
Oak Tree



Blueberries



Purple Loosestrife



Oriental Bittersweet

Very Special Volunteer (continued from page 3)

as the on-island “expert” in meeting with property owners who wanted to know more about what species had invaded their yards. This initiative fired right up in early July and consumed much of Cliff Island’s 2009 summer.

While this 2009 effort successfully exceeded expectations, particularly in drawing energetic volunteer participation, the removal process will require tedious, dedicated persistence over coming years. OCT director Bob Bittenbender came to Cliff from Maine Audubon to kick off this summer’s program. Bob believes that because Cliff is somewhat remote, we have a better chance of keeping these alien species away from our shores once they have been removed.



Finally – at least for 2009! – Carolyn was not satisfied with only getting rid of the bad stuff... With ACE funding, she designed and planted a Native Species Demonstration Garden in front of our Library to show islanders what plants they might consider using – the right stuff.

Thank you, Carolyn!!