

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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Oceanside's Newest Conservation Easement

A STORY OF COLLABORATION, COMPROMISE, AND CONSERVATION

by Roger Berle, *President*



In 1969 Tony Brackett, an eighth generation Cliff Islander, seized an opportunity to buy twenty-five acres of open land toward the south end of Cliff. These multiple parcels were all that remained from the ownership of the McVeigh-McKeen-Herman family, which also owned Jewell Island at one time.

He recruited thirty other summer folks to invest in a corporation to be called *Land Associates of Cliff Island (LACI)*. His vision, and one shared by decades of board members and shareholders, was to hold the land until it appeared that some portion of it could provide a particularly important resource for the sustainability of the Island's year-round community.

Despite annual LACI Board conversations to this purpose, it was over thirty years before LACI acted on Tony's vision. LACI granted an easement to the City of Portland for a new barge landing and

sold some acreage to the Cliff Island Septic System Association for a community leach field.

In 2015 there arose concern that LACI's remaining holdings might lose their 95% open space tax abatement. Many meetings and much intense debate later, the LACI Board developed a plan to place three parcels, or about ten acres, under a Conservation Easement to be held by Oceanside. Two parcels are modest shore lots on the northwest side of the island. While still showing the effects of major storm blow-downs, the interior parcel is substantially untouched save for a few deer trails and an historic well. All three are beautiful.

Right up to the August 2017 vote to donate the conservation easement to OCT, the divergent viewpoints pitched the value of permanently preserving more lovely Cliff Island acreage against continuing to save it for further potential community sustainability needs. Finally, a compromise unfolded: essentially, to balance enacting this conservation measure with the holding back of a similar amount of LACI land closer to the "village" for possible housing or economic opportunities in the future. Cliff Island wants and needs both.

The LACI Conservation Easement is the sixth Oceanside holds on the island.



MEETING THE LTA STANDARDS *By JOHN SPENCER*

About 400 land trusts in the country are accredited by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). Accreditation is an independent verification that a land trust meets high, national standards for land conservation, stewardship, and nonprofit management. OCT became accredited in 2015 and is one of only about 30 all-volunteer land trusts with LTA accreditation.

Following the LTA's Standards and Practices, OCT completed the LACI transaction going through a process that requires:

- 1. Conversations with the landowner** to be sure both parties understand the goals and requirements of a potential easement.
- 2. A site visit** by OCT to walk the property boundaries and get comfortable with the natural resources on the property and identify any potential issues.
- 3. Analysis of the transaction** to
 - **document** the transaction with maps, surveys, and title research;
 - **review** the transaction against OCT criteria such as conservation values, public benefit, and OCT's goals and purposes;
 - **analyze** OCT's capability to support the transaction with sufficient resources to defend and steward the easement; and
 - **assure** that the transaction does not represent a conflict of interest within the organization.
- 4. Acceptance of the transaction by the OCT Board** based on the above.
- 5. Due diligence** to complete the transaction with such items as a **negotiated easement document** that specifies what can and cannot be done on the property and a **baseline report** on the condition of the property at the time the easement is granted, noting that the baseline report is used as a reference in ongoing **annual monitoring**. These steps are done in collaboration with the landowner and are subject to outside legal review.

The process is rigorous and time consuming. It is intended to provide landowners comfort that an easement transaction is done right and done with a responsible counterparty.



MONARCHS ARE BACK! *By HARRY PRINGLE*

If you thought you saw lots of monarchs this summer, you're not alone! Large populations were reported on all the islands in Casco Bay. On Little Diamond Island, I tagged 50 monarchs and could easily have tagged well over 100.

The Cape May monarch monitoring project estimates that this will be the best migration year since 2012, and one of the top 10 in the 25 years they have been keeping records.

Although all of this is cause for hope, who knows what next year will bring. Weather in Mexico over the winter, storms or drought during the spring migration, and many other factors can drastically affect the number of migrating monarchs. Cross your fingers!



BILL NEEDELMAN

OCT board member, Bill Needelman conducted a walking tour highlighting the development of the Victorian summer community while reflecting on the island's natural history. Geolo Ogc forces created the Casco Bay Islands and oriented their beaches and views. These forces established the canvas which inspired talented designers, such as John Calvin Stevens, to develop the "Shingle Style" into a national architectural movement. The tour concluded at Hagge Woods. Guests were then invited to four cottages.



INGALLS COTTAGE



TOUR



ZERNER COTTAGE

Meet our New Directors



HOPE MACVANE grew up on Cliff Island where she learned early the deep interconnectedness of our natural environment and the importance of environmental stewardship. Graduating from Bates College, with a BA in biology and teaching certification, Hope began teaching earth science and chemistry at South Portland High School. She later earned her MS in Education from the University of New England. Hope lives in Windham during the school year with her husband and two children, and summers on Cliff Island.

While often involved in environmental efforts, being on the board of OCT will be her first formal experience in land conservation. Hope has always felt strongly about taking care of our natural environment. She explained, "Growing up on Cliff Island, we were always outside - working, playing or learning (in the one-room elementary school we would often have our classes outside, incorporating academic concepts with our local ecosystem). I think that I have much to learn of this more formal aspect of land conservation." She brings a knowledge of Casco Bay and great enthusiasm to the task.

When asked about her conservation goals, she commented, "I think of my own children and how they have grown to love Cliff Island. To preserve that natural space for them to bring their children and grandchildren someday makes me smile. I would like to think, that as part of the OCT board, I am helping to preserve the wonder that one feels when looking out over the water, with the smell of spruce, salt and seaweed... rooted to the same place your family has loved for generations. What a wonderful gift for so many!"



Bitten by the bird-watching bug as a middle school student in Deerfield, Massachusetts, DAVE HIRTH traces early connections to an appreciation of nature. He is a graduate of Bowdoin College, and holds an MS from UMass-Amherst and a Ph.D. from Michigan. He spent six years in Wildlife Biology Programs at the University of Florida, and thirty years at the University of Vermont. Dave's research has mostly involved animal behavior and habitat selection by birds and mammals. Dave admits, "I could put the room to sleep on the topic of deer behavior and especially breeding behavior!"

In Vermont, Dave was active on town conservation committees and regional planning commissions. On Cliff Island he has served two terms on the board of ACE (Cliff Island Association for Athletics and Conservation

Education). He hopes to help Oceanside Conservation Trust increase the area of existing conserved properties and properties that provide habitat for uncommon plants and animals.

Dave and Dana, his wife of 52 years, have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. They have had a summer house on Cliff Island for 42 years and have been Maine residents for four years.

BILL STAUFFER is a small business entrepreneur based in Portland, Maine, who summers on Little Diamond Island with his wife and two daughters. One of his businesses, Eco-story LED Lighting, has been an "Adopt a Trail" sponsor with Portland Trails. Eco-story supplies energy efficient LED lighting to companies like Chipotle and Chili's restaurants as well as numerous Portland based businesses.

Bill is also an Ambassador with The Freedom Story, an NGO working in northern Thailand to prevent children from being trafficked into prostitution.

In 2014 Bill was awarded their Freedom Award for his fundraising campaign to build a new resource center in Chiang Rai, Thailand, for at risk children. More recently, Bill has worked to start a scholarship fund for USM's Stonecoast MFA program for writers of social justice causes. Bill is a graduate of Colby College and holds an MFA in creative writing from USM.

His first experience with conservation land was as a child sailing around the islands of Penobscot Bay in his family's old leaky wooden runabout and Sunfish. He discovered the beauty of islands such as Butter, Ram, and Warren Island State Park – and the importance of conserved and accessible land left in its natural state. Bill's first exposure with Oceanside occurred the first year his family moved to Little Diamond Island and an effort to preserve several lots into conservation was underway. Since that time, Bill, his wife, and two daughters have spent time every summer boating the islands of Casco Bay.



SPRING MONITORING - OUR DIRECTORS AT WORK



Long Island



Cliff Island



Little Diamond Island - We found it!



Peaks Island

INVASIVE MOTHS IN THE CASCO BAY AREA

by David Hirth

When I hear the word “invasive,” my mind immediately jumps to a bunch of plants, such as oriental bittersweet, purple loosestrife, and Japanese barberry, but the truth is, there are invasives around us from many groups of plants and animals. In the southern coastal Maine area, including Casco Bay, there are two invasive moths that have been getting a lot of attention lately. These are the browntail moth and the winter moth. Both have found their way here from northern Europe and both can be significant defoliators of our native trees, especially oaks. In addition, the browntail caterpillars shed toxic hairs that cause a poison-ivy-like itchy rash if they come in contact with your bare skin. Winter moth caterpillars are small (“inch worms”) and a pale greenish or greenish brown color. Browntail caterpillars are hairy and brown with two broken white stripes running the length of their bodies and two red spots at the rear end.

Both moths have the potential to defoliate a lot of trees. Trees can withstand this kind of punishment for one or two years, but by a fourth year they may begin to die. What can we do about these pests? Like all successful invasives, they lack predators in this introduced habitat. Winter moths presently occur along the coast from Rhode Island to Downeast Maine and are attracting some research attention. Entomologists at the University of Massachusetts are experimenting with a parasitic fly that has been effective against introduced winter moths in Canada. In fact, Cushing Island has been selected as a field test site for this research. Browntails have conspicuous winter nests that can be clipped out of trees, but they are most often at the tops of oaks where they are hard to get at without a bucket truck. Browntails have a very limited range right now (York and Cumberland Counties in Maine) and because of that have attracted little research attention or funding. Last summer was predicted to be a big one for browntails based on number of nests, but our cool rainy spring apparently greatly reduced the number of caterpillars that made it through to the summer.

Do these moths have vulnerable points in their life cycles that would help us to control local populations? Winter moths create cocoons in the soil at the bases of trees, and the adult females that emerge from these cocoons climb up the tree trunks on warm winter days to lay their eggs in bark crevices. Caterpillars hatch from these eggs and climb to the tree tops to feed on new green leaves in the spring and summer. Some homeowners have put a ring of sticky material around the trunk to intercept the female moths and the caterpillars. That technique may be effective on a backyard level, but on a broader scale, parasitic flies may turn out to be a more successful strategy. Browntail caterpillars can be killed by injecting trees with nests with a toxin that goes to the leaves. Nests are easy to spot in tree tops and these nests can be clipped, but this is an expensive method and is practical only on a very local level. Widespread control of either of these moths would be difficult.



BROWNTAIL MOTH CATERPILLARS



WINTER MOTH ON OAK



WINTER MOTH EGGS



MALE WINTER MOTH

THERE’S AN APP FOR THAT!



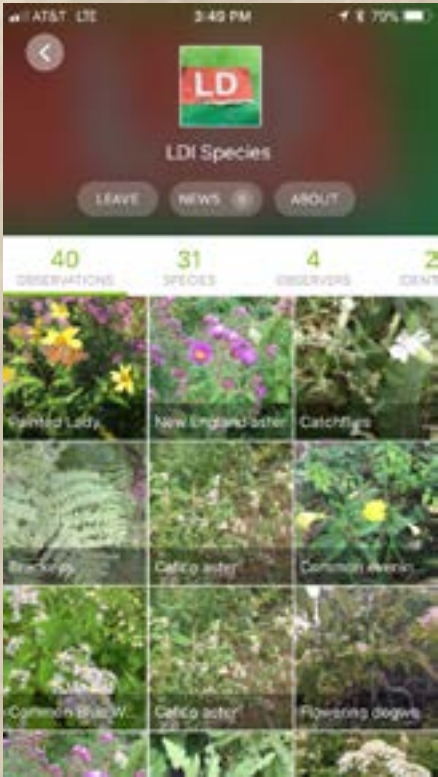
by Dale Doucette

Thanks to OCT the public enjoys nearly one hundred acres of preserved land in Casco Bay. Indeed the sites are places for everyone to enjoy. The physical boundaries of the sites are well defined, recorded and managed, but they are more than just land areas, they are also habitats for a vast variety of life: plants, animals, birds, reptiles, insects and marine creatures. In this time of change, it is important to know and understand as much as we can about all life on our islands. Using our smart phones and other devices, it is now possible, and easy, to observe, identify, record and share our observations of life in the natural world. We can be citizen scientists. There’s an App for that. It is called **iNaturalist** and it’s free and available on your smart device.

Have you ever wanted to identify a particular tree, plant, butterfly or seaweed? iNaturalist will help you. Simply open iNaturalist on your phone, take a picture and submit it as an observation. The program will help you identify it.

Within iNaturalist you can create a specific project area. For example, if you download the iNaturalist and go to the project labeled LDI Species, you will see pictures and information of observations made on Little Diamond Island. Your observations can provide valuable research data to scientists around the world, and they will also provide a record that will help demonstrate changes occurring in an area.

Join **iNaturalist** at <https://www.inaturalist.org> and use this app to help identify living things in the environment. Share your observations on this app and help create a list of living things in your corner of Casco Bay. **Be a citizen scientist!**



NEW NATURE BOOKS TO SHARE!
Check our website, oceansideconservationtrust.org for suggestions and reviews of several intriguing new books!

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017

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
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Tom Bergh	207-232-6733	Peaks Island
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Bill Stauffer	207-650-1993	Little Diamond Island

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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

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.



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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

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

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OF CASCO BAY WELCOMES
YOUR SUPPORT.

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