



Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

P.O. Box 10404
Portland, Maine 04104



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

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of Casco Bay
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“The woods are lovely, dark and deep...” Robert Frost’s poetry reminds us that some forests – like the Daveis Sanctuary – simply have a special loveliness about them; it’s in the way the sunlight filters through the trees, the smell of evergreens and the ocean in the air, and the crunch of needles underfoot. It’s in the silence, dark and deep.



Located at the northeastern shore of Peaks Island in Casco Bay, the Daveis Sanctuary is nearly seven acres of spruce forest bordering on rocky shore. The land was acquired between 1903 and 1926 by the Daveis family of Portland from the descendants of the owners of the Trefethen and Skillings farms. Prior to World War II, when the property was occupied in the summer months by Mary and Mabel Daveis, the sisters regularly had the wooded area swept clear of underbrush. While creating a park-like environment favorable to songbirds, their efforts also reduced the risk of fire on the island. In 1946 the will of the Daveis sisters left the property to their trustees “... to be forever kept and maintained ... as a legalized wild bird sanctuary and arboretum ... [the intention being] the preservation and development of the wild beauty of the estate and the attraction, propagation, and preservation of songbirds.” In 1977 the trustees passed the ownership of the property to Maine Audubon Society, and in 1991 Audubon donated the parcel to Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay.

While acting in compliance with its own purposes and by-laws, Oceanside endeavors to respect the intention of the Daveis sisters to preserve a bird sanctuary. How best to accomplish this goal is sometimes a complex question. Some environmentalists advocate a hands-off approach which would leave the vegetation entirely untouched, while others recommend clearing dead branches and trees, maintaining paths, removing exotic species (such as bittersweet), and planting species that will attract birds. OCT’s position has been an intermediate stance between the two philosophies.



The property required some definite hands-on effort to restore the natural beauty of the sanctuary.



Before



After

In one of the open areas, OCT has planted barberry, blueberry, and beach plum, and has removed a large patch of invasive bittersweet.

In 2004 OCT engaged the services of Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) of Falmouth to conduct an ornithology study and suggest a long-term management plan. At an upcoming meeting, OCT Board of Directors will discuss BRI’s recommendations for enhancing the property for breeding and migratory birds, for eliminating invasive plants, and for facilitating environmental education through passive and active educational efforts.

Recognizing the importance of cooperation in local conservation efforts, Oceanside will carry out recommendations of the BRI study in collaboration with Peaks Island Land Preserve (PILP) by developing a management team and utilizing volunteers. Larry Niskanen, a hands-on environmentalist, has spent many hours working in Peaks’ forests.

continued on next page

Whether one favors a hands-off or a hands-on approach to conservation land, it's easy to agree on "hats-off" to the foresight of the Daveis family, to the efforts of the PILP volunteers who assist OCT's stewardship with their frequent monitoring of the Daveis Sanctuary, and to the generosity of Peaks Islanders who have increased the land under protection through donations of additional, adjacent properties. Look for an article on the Skillings Woods, another truly lovely woods, in our next newsletter.

PROTECTING WRECK COVE

A very special 11.3 acre parcel on the south shore of Long Island has been protected this year by a conservation easement which will prevent development and keep the secluded wild cobble beach of Wreck Cove and the forested land behind it intact for future generations to enjoy. The parcel is owned by the Town of Long Island and is now protected by a conservation easement held by Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay. Oceanside appreciates the careful work of the town's Wreck Cove Committee and the town attorney, Rob Crawford, in shepherding this through the drafting process.

It was a Long Island lobsterman, Tom Johnson, who first had the idea to protect the town owned land at Wreck Cove as forever wild. He brought that proposal before the town's Planning Board in September 1998 where it gained Planning Board support, and the Wreck Cove Conservation Committee was established in October of 1999 to bring the proposal before the town meeting in May 2000. At that meeting Long Islanders voted not just overwhelmingly, but unanimously, to authorize the Selectmen to place the town owned Wreck Cove land under conservation easement. We celebrate the foresight of the people of Long Island in protecting this lovely property.



WELCOME!

Oceanside Conservation Trust welcomes Bob Bittenbender to the Board of Directors. Bob brings a multitude of expertise to our organization. Bob says he "has a great love of the outdoors and interest in what goes on in the natural environment." For over thirty years he has been in the business of growing plants. Bob has specialized in the recovery of wetlands, including work on Maine Turnpike and a superfund site in Connecticut.

Bob has recently become the assistant property manager for the Maine Audubon Society in Falmouth. In this position he will help oversee not only Audubon's Falmouth land, but also other holdings such as Borestone Mountain in Monson, Hog Island, and the Scarborough Marsh.

Bob also is an avid birder. He teaches adult education courses such as "Landscaping for Birds," and "Birding 101" at Portland Adult Education and Merrymeeting Adult Education in Brunswick. We will use his knowledge of birds as well as horticulture in our ongoing efforts to improve bird habitat at the Davis Sanctuary on Peaks Island. Bob's combination of skills and interests will be invaluable to Oceanside in our endeavors to oversee all of our current holdings and will be an asset to property owners who may wish to consider Oceanside's stewardship for their properties.



Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay 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.



Properties protected by 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	OCT	2001	1.5 acres
Wreck Cove	Town of Long Island	Long Island Civic Association	7/29/2004	11.3 acres

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