



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Scallop Aquaculture	3
VLT 2016 Donors	4,5
New Trails	6
Walks and Talks	7
Lee Morehouse Tribute	7

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KERRY HARDY

A Hike Across Time

A great many land trusts, ours included, were formed in the 1970's and 1980's. That's more than a generation ago, in human time, but just a blink of the eye in "land time." Therein lies the greatest challenge that any land trust faces: how can we—a group of people who come and go—make good on these promises we've made to protect land in perpetuity?

As Vinalhaven Land Trust enters its second generation, we think about this question—a lot, in fact—and I'd like to take you behind the scenes on a little "hike across time," to illustrate what keeps a land trust ticking. The hike will cover about seven miles and four decades of conservation work on Vinalhaven.

It starts and ends at the North Perry Creek Preserve, in the parking lot made for us by John and David Arey in 1992 (before that, hikers had to park alongside the road). Once the parking lot was completed, we needed a short connector through the woods to reach the Roy Dyer Trail—so Eric Davis, who was on the board at the time, just took his chain saw up there and cut it.

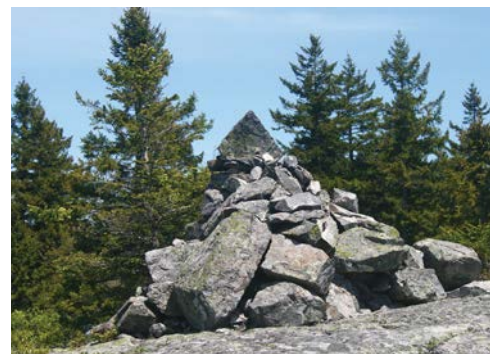
A twenty-minute downhill hike brings us to the Saltonstall Reservation at the mouth of Perry Creek. The late Senator Leverett Saltonstall began working to conserve this land in the 1960's. In 1984, his vision became a reality when his surviving children gifted the pristine 75-acre parcel to MCHT, which transferred it to VLT in 1989. Here at the shore of Orchard Cove, you can look east across the water and see another 1984 milestone: the very first conservation easement recorded on Vinalhaven, given to Acadia National Park by John and Mary Brock on nearly a mile of shoreline on Calderwood's Neck and adjacent islands.

From here, we'll walk back west about a mile

to the head of Perry Creek, then cross over to the Andrew W. Smith Preserve at Fox Rocks. This parcel involves three generations: In 1992, Gail Smith gave VLT a conservation easement on 290 acres of land here. Today, the land is owned by her granddaughter Louisa Ives—who serves on VLT's finance committee.



Panoramic view from the South Shore Trail



While at the cairn, see if you can spot the brass marker in the ledge a few feet away.

As the trail follows the south shore of Perry Creek, it climbs to some high ledges that offer spectacular views of the creek and its surrounding forests, all preserved from development. Panoramic views like this always seem to collect visitors—if we're lucky, we may even bump into a group of hikers listening as ge-

ologist George Kendrick tells them about the seismic events that created Perry Creek and thrust the land on this south side quite a bit higher.

Half a mile ahead, on open ledges beside a tall cairn of rocks, you may spot the brass geodetic survey monument that marks the highest point on the island, 211 feet above sea level. Five more minutes of hiking brings us to the rocky summit known as "Fox Rocks," where a great fire scorched this end of the island in 1933 and made headlines all across New England. Today, the fire is mostly forgotten, but the vistas it left behind are the most expansive on the whole island.

Back on the trail now and in another five minutes we'll come to the North Haven Road. To reach this point, we've crossed five parcels owned by VLT and three others protected by easement, but there are more ahead of us, across the road in the Middle Mountain Town Park. Last fall's newsletter detailed our work here, first with the Town of Vinalhaven, and then with Wanatha Garner and Hugh Roth of Long Cove Farm, to reclaim and connect additional trails around Middle Mountain. This creative arrangement takes us into new territory, literally and figuratively, and deserves an equal measure of good faith and courtesy from the hikers using the trail.

At the eastern end of these new trails, you're standing on the shore enjoying the breeze that funnels up Long Cove. From the western end, you're on high ledges with all of West Penobscot Bay below you and the Camden Hills in the background. Finally, before leaving the summit of Middle Mountain, it's worth seeing the granite plaque there in memory of

(Continued on page 2)

Message from the Executive Director



We all have our own indelible images and experiences in nature, but it's not always bright sun, green moss, and time outdoors here at Vinalhaven Land Trust. The cold, damp months of winter, when the days are short and the wind bitter, are when we catch up on all the less exciting but still essential tasks necessary to running a land trust. Many of these are common to all businesses: tax filings, work plans, and budgets, but some are unique to our industry.

One of these is management planning for our properties. This is the challenge of creating a guideline for stewarding land in perpetuity, even though the conservation values on the land are dynamic and ever changing. The plans help us prepare and deal with those changes as well as ensuring the conservation values that originally drew us to a place are protected as intended, even as staff and board members change over time.

As an accredited land trust, we are required to develop a written management plan for every conservation property within twelve months of acquisition. This plan needs to identify the property's key values, answering why VLT felt it was important to protect it. There is sure to be ample conservation worth, such as wetlands, salt marshes, or undisturbed habitat, but there might also be significant cultural or natural features, or strong community value. For example, while Tip Toe Mountain Preserve has extensive and diverse habitats, it has also been used by various segments of our community for generations. Protecting it for

continued on opposite sidebar

Walking Through Time

Continued from Page 1

Wilfred Woodruff, the missionary who came to the Fox Islands in 1838 to preach the Mormon faith. Supposedly, he paused under a shady pine here on a hot summer day, to relax and compose his mind before speaking later that day at Carver's Harbor.

From here, a ten-minute downhill hike has us back to the North Haven Road. Crossing it again takes us down the Indian Ladder Trail easement to Perry Creek, passing over the weathered shell heaps left by those who lived here before us. The last mile of our hike climbs through huckleberry clearings on the Round-the-Rocks trail, then through shady spruce-fir forests along the Roy Dyer Trail, back to where we began.

These seven miles of trail over protected wild land did not happen by accident. We've crossed purchased, gifted, town-owned, and even privately-owned lands ranging in size from ½-acre to almost 300 acres. The agreements that made this possible span more than thirty years and involve multiple generations of both donor and land trust families. Linda Labaree was VLT's president when this Perry Creek parking lot was created; her son Jonathan was VLT's president when we began reclaiming the trails on Middle Mountain in 2015.

Our lands, easements, trails, and outreach events create connections not just across the landscape, but also across time. This is how people, who come and go, can hope to protect land in perpetuity.

-Kerry Hardy



Lloyd Roberts enjoys a view of the Camden Hills from land he donated to the Town at Middle Mountain.

VLT MERCHANDISE

Show your support for the nature of Vinalhaven. Visit the office at Skoog Park to purchase hats, vests, tote bags, and wildflower calendars and notecards designed by artist Penelope Lord. Geologic maps of the island created by Olcott Gates are also available. It's a great way to remember your time on this island!

IN THE GREAT GREEN ROOM

Margaret Wise Brown Book Discussion

Monday, August 14, 9:30 a.m. at the Vinalhaven Town Hall

As part of VLT's Margaret Wise Brown week of events last August, author Amy Gary pre-viewed her Brown biography, *In the Great Green Room* (released January 2017) to a Vinalhaven audience. Whether you have read it or not, we hope you will join Tina Cohen this summer in a discussion that can include reactions to the book as well as an update on the VLT Story Trail, which has featured Brown's *The Little Island*.

Scallop Aquaculture

VLT is proud to offer logistical and financial support for our environmental education program on scallop aquaculture. A partnership between Vinalhaven School, Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership (HICSL), Vinalhaven Fisherman's Co-op, and VLT, the program is designed to engage students in authentic research while experimenting with aquaculture as a viable industry.

"I wanted to do real science, a long-term, scientific study related to marine life so that students had a real-life example of what scientists do," explained middle school science teacher Emily Cohn. "There's also the possibility of connection to their future and their livelihood by making sure there are options for future industry here."

In monthly sessions with scientists from HICSL, students have learned various aspects of the field from scallop anatomy to the technologies needed to implement aquaculture. The scallops are harbored in a net at the Co-op docks.

"There's the goal of learning science, but there's also the goal of building community around this project," said Robin Chernow, Lead Science Educator at HICSL. "Hopefully students will feel empowered to be part of the conversation of whether it's a worthwhile option for specific situations and how they might go about the process, if they were to pursue it."

So far, students are excited and hopeful for the project.

"I like working with my friends to measure the scallops and to see how much they grow. They grow quite a bit every time we see them," said

middle school student Lincoln Dennison who, with classmate Von Jones, discovered a pearl while dissecting a scallop.

Evan Roberts, a high school student who works at the Co-op and keeps an eye on the scallops, commented on how lucky he is to be able to work directly with animals like scallops. His classmate, Rosie Morel, described the potential for the project as a practical industry: "If lobstering doesn't work, people can always do this, with the scallops."

The program will culminate in field trips to Hurricane Island, where students will learn from HICSL's large scale aquaculture site.

-Luke Milardo



ISLAND EXPLORERS SUMMER CAMP

VLT's popular day camp will return for three sessions this summer, all of them full of the outdoor adventures and explorations that make Maine summers so unforgettable.

Hands-on learning experiences will focus on exploring nature, learning about habitats, and having fun with new friends.





Each session meets Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

- July 17-20: 5 to 7-year-olds
- July 24-27: 5 to 8-year-olds
- July 31-August 3: 8 to 10-year-olds

Check our website for further details and updates. vinalhavenlandtrust.org

TICK PREVENTION STRATEGIES

We're not the only ones getting outside and active this season. Don't forget to conduct frequent tick checks on yourself, your friends, and your pets, and follow these rules to help avoid ticks altogether:

-  Wear long sleeves and long pants, and tuck pant legs into your socks.
-  Wear light colored clothing so ticks are easier to spot.
-  Stay on the beaten trail to avoid brushing tick-infested undergrowth.
-  Wear insect repellent with DEET.

Executive Director (continued)

all of us to enjoy, now and forever, preserves its natural beauty while providing a venue for environmental education, exploration, and enjoyment. We must manage Tip Toe and all our properties to ensure those conservation and community values remain strong.

Our initial management goals for any new property need to be identified and prioritized as part of that first plan, such as how best to use this resource to benefit our community. Almost always, some improvements are necessary to make that happen. Trails need to be located to allow visitors to experience the healing benefits of time spent in nature, while avoiding sensitive habitats. Parking areas, signage, and brochures need to be designed. Carrying capacity needs to be estimated to determine how many visitors a preserve can handle while still protecting conservation values and making sure visitors feel that their experiences are unique. Resource inventories of the plants, birds, and animals identified at or near a property help inform us if there are invasive species that should be targeted for removal or a rare, threatened, or endangered species of whose habitat we need to be mindful.

Even in the early stages of owning a property, there are threats that we need to be thinking about, such as overuse, nearby development, or fire. We now also consider the threats from climate change and sea level rise. Our management plans list actions to help prepare for threats and if possible, mitigate them.

While planning for the short term, we are always thinking about how to accomplish our long-term goals. There may be opportunities for outreach, environmental education, and improvements such as creating an interpretive trail, or a gently graded path accessible to all ages and abilities.

Like the landscape for which they provide guidance, management plans are not static. The initial plans are reviewed and updated after five years, sooner if circumstances warrant, and then again at least every ten years. Regular visits from our steward, other staff, monitors and insights from visitors help inform those updates.

Nature is constantly changing. Our work to conserve the nature of Vinalhaven has to reflect that fact, and management planning is one of the ways we accomplish this.

-Linnell Mather

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We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list. If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, please accept our deepest apologies. Thank you!

New Trails and Fish Tales

Folks often stop by the office to ask us what's new for hiking trails and outdoor fun on the island, so here's a quick checklist for coming attractions in 2017:

Fish Hook Preserve: This new section of trail, completed last summer, is about ¼ mile long and swings to the west of the existing trails. Watch for a left turn at the foot of the first hill—follow it, and you'll soon be perched on

Marcuse Preserve: Drive up-island just past the wind turbines and look for the trailhead on the left at the foot of the hill. This new trail will take you uphill through a regenerating clear cut, then back down to the edge of a large forested wetland. A long section of log bridging will take you out to an elevated "island" in the middle of it all—a great place to sit quietly and watch for wildlife. We hope to

quickly spawn in the weedy shallows around the edges of the pond. After spawning, they'll soon head back out to sea—and loons, cormorants, herons, ospreys, eagles, and otters will be seen all around Old Harbor Pond, doing their best to intercept them.



a bold granite ledge overlooking this charming tidal creek.

Tip Toe Mountain Preserve: A new trail will allow hikers to go south along the western shore and loop around the salt marsh. This will be especially useful if you ever stay on the beach when the tide comes in over the stone dam in the existing trail; now, you can take this new detour around the marsh and be back at your car in minutes—and your feet will be dry! Also, with the Town's blessing, we've cut a trail that allows for a much more gradual climb of Little Tip Toe. We plan to have this complete by June 1, 2017.

have this ready for visitors by mid-July. Let us know if you'd like to volunteer on this project.

In addition to those mentioned above, be sure to check out the sections of trail added at Middle Mountain Town Park last year and described in our newsletter last fall. The bird watching should be at its best there from mid-May until late June.

Alewives: Get ready for a lot of wildlife activity at Old Harbor Pond in late May and early June, when the Maine Department of Marine Resources will bring the second batch of mature alewives to help rebuild the spawning run here. Once released, the adult fish will



Wild Calla is just one of the Marcuse Preserve's many wetland plants.



Alewife -- it's what's for dinner!

The State will supply us with fish this spring and again in 2018. By late August of each year, the two-inch long juveniles will gather at the outlet, and begin their own four-year odyssey in the ocean, before—we hope—returning to Vinalhaven and completing their life cycle as mature adults.

-Kerry Hardy

Planned Giving Opportunities

Thinking ahead in the present will ensure that future generations enjoy and learn from the nature of Vinalhaven. You can be a part of that future by naming VLT as a beneficiary in your will. A planned gift of any size will help protect the places we love while securing the programs that serve our school and community. Please contact Executive Director Linnell Mather to discuss how you can make a lasting impact at VLT.

Trail Tuesdays: Volunteer with VLT

May 23, June 13, July 11, and August 15 are our volunteer trail maintenance days this summer. VLT steward Kerry Hardy will lead these monthly expeditions during which we will spend 2-3 hours pushing back encroaching brush, trimming branches, installing signage, and accomplishing whatever else needs to get done. Experience and tools are great additions, but a willingness to help is best of all. Volunteer parties meet at Skoog Park at 9 a.m. to venture to a VLT preserve.

Our Leadership

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Staff

Linnell Mather, Executive Director
 Kerry Hardy, Stewardship Coordinator
 Luke Milardo, Programs Coordinator
 Sheri Romer-Day, Office Assistant

Help Conserve the Nature of Vinalhaven

Join us in protecting Vinalhaven's natural beauty with your membership or additional contribution. Use this form or donate online at www.vinalhavenlandtrust.org. Annual dues (for each calendar year) are \$20 per person. Thank you!

\$100 \$50 \$25 Other \$ _____

Check enclosed.

Please charge my Visa or Mastercard # _____

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All donations, including dues, are tax deductible and will ensure that you receive VLT's newsletter and notice of special events. Contributions at all levels are greatly appreciated.

www.vinalhavenlandtrust.org • 207.863.2543 • PO Box 268 • Vinalhaven, Maine • 04863

WISH LIST

Trail camera
 Canister vaccum



Vinalhaven Land Trust promotes the conservation and appreciation of our island's significant plant and wildlife habitat, our water resources, and scenic or traditionally valued spaces in order to preserve the character of the community for generations to come.

Photo: Kerry Hardy



Vinalhaven Land Trust



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