



Vinalhaven Land Trust

CONSERVING THE NATURE OF VINALHAVEN

NEWSLETTER

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VLT Achieves Accreditation

February 9, 2012 started out like any other day at the VLT office, as the part time staff of three dealt with the routine tasks each day brings: responding to emails, paying bills, and developing a project budget, as well as the tasks more specific to our work such as drafting easements or planning a fund drive.

And then, around 11 a.m, the phone rang. Sheri Romer-Day, office assistant and accreditation coordinator, answered. She chatted with the party on the other end for quite a while, before turning around, face aglow, to announce, "VLT is accredited!" These three words meant that VLT had achieved the goal begun more than three years ago, when former executive director Lucy McCarthy proposed to the board that the

organization take advantage of this opportunity (offered by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance) to be publicly recognized for the quality of our work.

The public is increasingly demanding accountability from government and nonprofit organizations, including land trusts. Independent accreditation provides the assurance of quality and permanence of land conservation that the public and donors look for, and publicly recognizes a land trust's ability to protect in perpetuity the places its community holds dear. As Tammara Van Ryn, Executive Director of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission put it, "Accredited land trusts meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The accreditation seal lets the public know that the accredited land trust has undergone an extensive external review of the governance and management of its organization and the systems and policies it uses to protect land."

Thanks to a grant from the Maine Land Trust Excellence Program, Sheri was hired to oversee the completion of the application for accreditation. The application process also afforded VLT the opportunity to update and sharpen policies and procedures that will guide our operations and streamline our work. Coincidentally, having such comprehensive documentation helped ease the transition to a new executive director.

The questions focused on indicator practices such as the following:

- Responsible governance of the organization
- Protection of the public interest with sound and sustainable land transactions and stewardship
- Ethical operations
- Accountability to donors and the public
- Compliance with all laws

All this work really began over twenty-five years ago with the organization's conscientious founders, who laid the framework and principles by which VLT has done its work. Each new board member, staff person, and volunteer has continued to contribute to the high standards that have enabled us to achieve this prestigious mark of excellence.



Vinalhaven Land Trust originally adopted the Land Trust Standards and Practices as its guiding principles in 2005. In order to achieve the coveted accreditation status, however, VLT had to prove that we actually implemented these principles, and that they guide all decisions made and actions taken by the organization. Our "proof" was compiled into two 4-inch notebooks containing more than 1,300 pages and weighing over fifteen pounds—and we had to create four such sets of notebooks, three for the Accreditation Commission to review and one for us.

As Vinalhaven Land Trust strives to promote the conservation of our island's significant plant and wildlife habitat, our water resources, and our scenic and historic spaces, in order to preserve the traditional character of our community for future generations, rest assured that we will continue to maintain the highest of standards.



VLT's accreditation coordinator Sheri Romer-Day poses with one of the four sets of notebooks prepared for VLT's application for accreditation.

Winter is the Shortest Season

Hello to all VLT friends! I started my work with Vinalhaven Land Trust in early January, and can only say thank goodness we didn't have three feet of snow this year. The open winter has allowed me to travel the island by bicycle, and learn my way around most of the twenty-five properties owned in fee by VLT. On top of that, there have been grant proposals to help write, conservation easement properties to monitor, access issues to research, and meetings with other organizations like Maine Coast Heritage Trust and other Penobscot Bay area land trusts.

Through it all, I'm keeping my eye on the all-important Memorial Day deadline for having all the trails and signs at their best for the wave of summer visitors. In

short, I'm finding plenty of ways to spend my 16 hours a week—and my to-do list just keeps getting longer.

My work takes me to a lot of beautiful spots, so whenever I head into the field for the day, my camera goes along too. It's a Canon EOS Rebel—not the fanciest maybe, but certainly as good as I need. I carry it in a watertight, impact-resistant Pelikan hard case, which I consider to be the best sixty-five dollars I ever spent. Over the last five years it's saved my camera and two lenses from at least fifteen serious falls, from Mt. Katahdin to the Grand Canyon and back again. Having the Pelikan allows me to always have my camera handy, no matter how wild the weather or rough the terrain, and that's pretty much my golden rule: if you

walk around in wild spots and always have a camera, you'll get good pictures. Here are a few of my favorites from the past three months.

I'll look forward to meeting many of you over the course of the coming summer. Feel free to contact me with any questions or comments you have about VLT's preserves and trails: recent blowdowns, interesting things you spotted, good or bad experiences, whatever; and by all means if you'd ever like to volunteer for some trail work, please do get in touch. You can email me at kerry.hardy@vinalhavenlandtrust.org.

See you on the trails!

-Kerry Hardy, Stewardship Coordinator



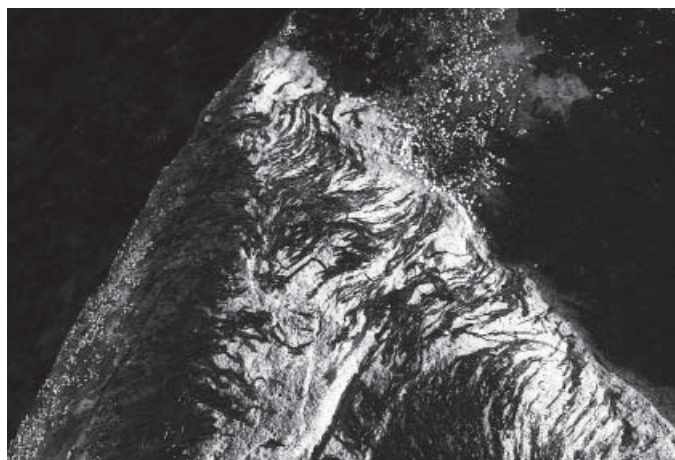
Long Cove seen from Fox Rocks: I'm sure a million other people have taken virtually the same shot, but that doesn't make me like this any less. It was taken just around sunset in mid-February, with the temperature in the teens and a northwest wind blowing at my back. What a great spot to have a conservation easement with hiking trails.



Gray seal family: In late January, VLT board member Steve Rosen was kind enough to take John Drury and me out to Seal Island in his lobster boat for a chance to see a lot of gray seals and bald eagles. The seals were having their pups then, and the eagles—anywhere from thirty to eighty at a time—are prompt to clean up any that don't survive.



Hooded mergansers on Carver's Pond: The male "hoodie" might well be called the Elvis of ducks, with a resplendent pompadour that he inflates at will. The female is similarly equipped, but calls different characters to mind—Phyllis Diller, or maybe even Elsa "Bride of Frankenstein" Lanchester.



Ledge near Stoddard Island: Whenever I visit Stoddard Island, I come back with four or five dozen pictures. There's just always something there to point the camera at—waterfowl, land and seascapes, or just a ledge covered with barnacles and rockweed like this one. I haven't yet figured out why most maps call it "Stoddart" but all the locals call it Stoddard Island—can anyone out there solve this riddle for me?

Remembering George Flynn

VLT lost a good friend on March 20, with the passing of George Flynn.

George had a sincere belief in Maine's maritime tradition. In addition to his longstanding support of Vinalhaven Land Trust, he also served on the Board of Trustees of Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport, ME, and was their president for a number of years. He suited Maine and Maine suited him because Mainers tend to shun pretention and show.

It was George's love of boats and boating that brought him to Vinalhaven more than 50 years ago. He was looking for someone to build a wooden lobster boat for him to use while cruising the Connecticut River. Boat builder Gosta (known affectionately as Gus) Skoog was just the man for the job and they became fast friends. And this friendship ultimately culminated in a permanent home for the land trust office in Skoog Memorial Park

As young men, Gus Skoog and his brother Fritz had left Sweden for Vinalhaven, seeking work and a better life. Gus started out in the quarrying industry, cutting paving stone for the Bodwell Granite Company. But the granite industry collapsed during the depression and Gus was out of a job. He showed his exemplary work ethic and learned boatbuilding. In 1974, when he had been building boats for about 40 years, Gus was quoted as saying, "I wasted 20 years of my life as a stonemason before I found my real trade as a boat builder."

In the 1960s, George purchased a 1.3 acre wedge

of land on Sands Cove so Gus could have a larger site for his boatbuilding business. This wedge was mostly built land, part of the original Stone Yard, the area where Bodwell Granite Company had cut and sculpted granite. Over the years, the area around the shed and out into Sands Cove was gradually filled with grout, the debris from the cutting operations. When the shed's doors were closed for the last time, the Stone Yard was divided up into numerous parcels as compensation for the stockholders; it was one of these parcels that George purchased. He had thirty-two loads of fill brought in and he and Gus put up the little red building, where Gus built many more boats—over 100 in his lifetime—before retiring in 1986, at the age of 90.

After Gus passed away in 1987, George began to think about the future of his property, searching for a way to meld his love of the land with his affection and admiration for the sea, and to commemorate the skills, work habits, and sturdy character of Gus Skoog. In 1993, George generously offered these 1.3 acres to Vinalhaven Land Trust, but before the board could accept the gift, he had to go to the expense of clearing title to a tiny wedge of land near the road that was missing an owner. In 1993, Skoog Memorial Park was dedicated in honor of George's good friend, Gus. George also gave us a gift of seed money towards the upkeep of the park, providing it was matched 1:1 by VLT's supporters, a match VLT's members quickly helped us meet. The park is now home to our office, where our staff and visitors enjoy

incredible views of the entrance to Carver's Harbor. Island Sail has a waterfront location here, there's a kiosk with trail guides and other information, many VLT and Maine Coast Heritage Trust walks start from the park, and the picnic tables along the shore are a wonderful spot from which to watch the comings and goings of the ferry and the lobster fleet. George's gift in memory of his friend continues to benefit the entire community.

George came to Vinalhaven to visit with the Skoog family almost yearly, until failing health prevented the trip. He would stow several loaves of Portuguese sweet bread in his truck—it's said he never owned a comfortable sedan. His excursions always brought him to Skoog Park and a visit to the office, where he became good friends with the staff and board. Watching the impact his gift made as VLT matured and the sailing program grew gave him great pleasure.

A lifelong resident of Hartford, Connecticut, George had a full life of 91 years when he passed away at Middlewoods of Farmington, where he had lived in recent years. He was a graduate of the Kingswood School and Brown University (class of 1943), with a degree in engineering. After serving in the Army's Supply Corps in World War II, he worked for Pratt and Whitney Machine Tool in West Hartford, Connecticut.

"Sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me..." We'll miss you, George!

-Linnell Mather with invaluable assistance from past VLT president, Linda Labaree



In 1963, Artist Ellery Thompson painted George Flynn aboard East Wind, the boat Gus Skoog had built for him. Photo courtesy of George's niece, Betsy Hamilton.

HONORING THEIR MEMORIES WITH SUPPORT FOR VLT

Vinalhaven Land Trust is honored when someone chooses to make a donation to us in memory of a loved one. We asked some donors for a short quote to share with you about these people who loved Vinalhaven and the work of Vinalhaven Land Trust.

“Three tickets to Heaven.” That was the note NANCY SWAIN wrote on a stash of ferry tickets to Vinalhaven she sent daughter Elizabeth a year or so before she died. She believed in conserving special places for all to enjoy, but it was the people of Vinalhaven she appreciated the most.

Nancy was a smart and straightforward New England Yankee, so she found many kindred spirits on Vinalhaven.

GEORGE WEBSTER was a familiar sight to many of us, as he and his wife, Dot, walked through town and out the Sands Road almost every day. In George’s memory, Dot has donated a beautiful granite bench, created by Fred Granger, to VLT. Visitors to Skoog Park now have a place to sit as they peruse our trail guides or wait for an event to begin, and contemplate the roadside that George had loved.

MATTHEW SIMMONS loved being aboard the Piper, his lobster boat, on Penobscot Bay with his wife, Ellen, and his five daughters. He treasured spending time in the Muscle Ridge, cruising through the North Haven and Vinalhaven thoroughfare, and picnicking in the White Islands—watercoloring each of these spots that were so near and dear to his heart. He brought an energy that was contagious to his life, his work, and his passions.



Thanks to these stalwart volunteers, several truck loads of trash were cleaned up from around the Basin in a mid-April Vinalhaven Land Trust and Maine Coast Heritage Trust co-sponsored event. Pictured: Kerry Hardy, Virginia Quick, Merry and Jim Boone, Andy Dorr, Pat Lundholm, and David and Susie Lawrence. Photo by MCHT steward, Kirk Gentalen.

Changing Times

There are many ways to communicate these days, and although VLT does not feel any need to be at the forefront of the new technologies, we do want to reach you, our members and supporters, in ways that work best for you. This beloved newsletter has been published semiannually since 1988, but we now have alternative choices to offer.

Our website (www.vinalhavenlandtrust.org) offers in-depth information about VLT, including discussions of what we do, the history of some of VLT’s preserves, information about our board, and a complete and current listing of all VLT sponsored events. From the website, you can link to Kirk Gentalen’s Sightings Report, co-sponsored by VLT and Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Combining both in-depth information and humor, these reports provide wonderful insights into what Kirk and others have recently spotted in the woods, fields, waters, and backyards of Vinalhaven.

Following VLT on Facebook is another great way to learn about what’s happening on the island. There you’ll find reminders about upcoming walks, talks, and other events, land protection stories, news from our preserves, the occasional great picture, and volunteer opportunities. We see this as a vehicle for both reference and spontaneous conversation about goings on at VLT. The

Facebook page is a place for you to upload pictures of and comments about Vinalhaven’s wilderness, its wildlife, and the people who are out enjoying them. If you are on Facebook, we invite you to visit our Facebook page and click “like” to keep in touch.

We occasionally send emails (rarely more than four per year) to let you know some exciting news, such as our Accreditation recognition. We use Constant Contact to support this option, and if you don’t want to receive these emails, all it takes is a click of the mouse to opt off the list. Providing us with your email address at info@vinalhavenlandtrust.org will ensure that you receive these mailings.

Finally, we are starting to post our newsletters on our website. If you are among the people who do all your reading at your desk, or on your Kindle or iPad, and would like to receive your newsletter the same way, you can let us know at info@vinalhavenlandtrust.org and we will notify you when it is “up”, and stop mailing the paper copy.

There is something here, we hope, for everyone. We welcome your feedback on any and all of these information sources, and hope you’ll participate in all that work for you.

-Pat Lundholm

CALLING ALL MEMBERS

Your membership in Vinalhaven Land Trust is what makes our organization effective and successful. If you haven’t already done so, please support VLT by renewing your membership today. With a mild winter behind us, these longer, warmer days of spring have us listening for peepers and woodcocks, thinking about hiking VLT’s trails, and looking for spring warblers. As you look forward to the new season, remember how important your membership is to conserving the woods, fields, and wetlands of our island and providing programs that educate all of us on being better stewards of the natural world. We need your support and we thank you for it.

SUMMER EVENTS CALENDAR 2012

All events are free and open to the public and are held rain or shine. Unless noted, all walks originate at Skoog Park, which is located off of Sands Road, about 500 yards west of the ferry terminal. Check out www.vinalhavenlandtrust.org for more information, events, and updates.

MAY

Mornings (1,10,15,22) at 7 a.m.: Bird walks with Kirk Gentalen, in partnership with Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT). Meet at the Medical Center parking lot. Parking is limited, so please walk, bike, or carpool if possible.

12th at 8 a.m.: Warbler Walk with John Drury.

19th at 9:30 a.m.: Native American names for common plants and critters with Kerry Hardy.

JUNE

19th at 9:30 a.m.: "Meet your local farmer" tour of Spark Plug Farm, in partnership with the ARC and Maine Farmland Trust (MFT).

30th at 9:30 a.m.: June Carver Roberts Memorial Wildflower Walk: Wildflowers of Lanes Island with Janet Gohres.

JULY

3rd at 9:30 a.m.: "Meet your local farmer" tour of the Creelman Family Farm, in partnership with the ARC and MFT.

10th at 7p.m.: Quarries with Scott Candage, Washington School.

11th and 18th at 8 a.m.: Bird walks with Kirk Gentalen, in partnership with MCHT.

17th at 9:30 a.m.: "Meet your local farmer" tour of Hall Farm, in partnership with the ARC and MFT.

18th at 7p.m.: Fox Island Stories, with Harry Gratwick, in partnership with Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library. To be held at the Vinalhaven Public Library.



20th at 4 p.m.: Annual meeting. A brief business meeting followed by our speaker, Kevin Case of the Land Trust Alliance. Join us afterwards for delicious refreshments, and a chance to meet and visit with the staff, board, and other VLT members.

21st at 12:30 p.m.: Visit North Haven to hike the Mullen Preserve. Meet at north end dock for boat ride across and bus ride to the Preserve.

24th at 7 p.m.: "Owl Came Down from the Mountain" talk with Len Yannielli. Washington School.

25th at 9 a.m.: Intertidal Walk with Javier Peñalosa.

31st at 9:30 a.m.: "Meet your local farmer" tour of Long Cove Farm, in partnership with the ARC and MFT

AUGUST

Wednesdays at 8 a.m.: Bird walks with Kirk Gentalen, in partnership with MCHT.

4th at 9:30 a.m.: Walk to Margaret Wise Brown's "Only House," with Jim Boone.

6th at 9:30 a.m.: Beachcombing with Josie Iselin, Lane's Island.

9th at 9:30 a.m.: History of the Trotting Park with Patrick Trainor.

10th at 9:30 a.m.: Forest Pests and Pathogens with District Forester Morten Moesswilde.

12th at 9:30 a.m.: Lobster Industry Walk with Bobby Warren. Please park at Skoog Park and walk to Ferry Terminal.

14th at 9:30 a.m.: "Meet your local farmer" tour of Carol Baker's permaculture gardens, in partnership with the ARC and MFT.

14th at 7 p.m.: Island Circumambulation III with Phil Crossman. Washington School.

18th at 9:30 a.m.: A Geologic Walk through Time with George Kendrick.

21st at 7 p.m.: Easements and Land Use, in partnership with Maine Farmland Trust. Washington School.

23rd at 9:30 a.m.: Roadside geology with Patrick Trainor.

28th at 9:30 a.m.: "Meet your local farmer" tour of Charlotte Goodhue's gardens, in partnership with the ARC and MFT.

SEPTEMBER

Wednesdays at 8 a.m.: Bird Walks.

Volunteer Opportunities at VLT

Volunteers! Without them, VLT would not be able to accomplish all that we do. Have you ever wondered how you could help? Here are some ideas.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

• **Adopt a trail:** walk one of VLT's trails on a regular basis, and report to VLT's Stewardship Coordinator if you notice any issues, such as trash, overuse, blowdowns, or missing signage.

• **Monitors:** if you're interested in becoming a more committed volunteer, think about becoming a monitor. VLT needs to monitor the properties on which it holds conservation easements at least once a year. An experienced monitor would work with you to familiarize you with a property and train you in the necessary observation and reporting skills.

• **Island Monitoring:** Are you on the water a

lot? VLT could use people to keep an eye on our protected properties from the water, and keep us apprised of usage and any possible issues.

• **Thank you notes:** Would you like a somewhat less physical job? Do you have neat handwriting? Could you commit to come in for a couple of hours a week for several weeks to fill out thank you cards?

• **Walks and Talks Committee:** Do you like our Walks and Talks program? Do you have new ideas for programs? Join the Walks and Talks committee.

SHORT-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

• Help on trail work days.

• Come to Skoog Park for work days: weeds to pull, things to paint.

• Help with our annual meeting: it would be very helpful to have more hands and trucks

to pick up, set up, and return the folding chairs that we borrow for our annual meeting, scheduled this year on July 20.

• Provide "finger foods" to serve after the annual meeting.

• Help with a mailing.

• Photocopy trail guides and brochures and restock the kiosk and the trail heads.

• Host a Walks speaker who wants to stay overnight.

• The Walks committee occasionally needs boats to transport groups.

• Do you have special skills that you think would be of benefit to VLT?

If any of these are of interest, please call or stop by the office and we'll connect you with the person who can help you get started. And thanks!

VINALHAVEN LAND TRUST DONORS IN 2011

VLT gratefully acknowledges the following, who made grants or gave donations to VLT last year:

In memory of:

Philip W. Brown
Matthew R. Simmons
David Strawson (3 gifts)
Nancy Swain
George Webster

In honor of:

Flora Drury
Peggy Ewing
Susie Lawrence (2 gifts)
Curly & Sandy Lieber
Richard A. Sparrow
Holmes & Didi Stockly
Carol Thompson
Pam Wetherbee
The marriage of Eleanor Bartolomeo
and Young Fan

Matching Gifts

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The Frances W. Emerson Foundation
Otter Island Foundation
The Samuel P. Pardoe Foundation

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Bruce & Jane King
Sarah Crossman & Chad King
Christian & Gwendolyn Koelbl

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.

VINALHAVEN LAND TRUST DONORS IN 2011

VLT gratefully acknowledges the following, who made grants or gave donations to VLT last year:

Bettina Krampetz	MPK Associates	Alice Bissell & Stephen Rosen	Dorothy & Paul Tasillo
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Questions? Please call us at (207) 863-2543. Thank you! www.vinalhavenlandtrust.org
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Vinalhaven Land Trust promotes the conservation of our island's significant plant and wildlife habitat, our water resources, and scenic or historic spaces in order to preserve the traditional character of the community for generations to come.



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CONSERVING THE NATURE OF VINALHAVEN



VLT strives to promote the conservation of both wildlife habitat and historic spaces. Heritage apple trees, such as these wonderful specimens, are examples of both. Photo by Kerry Hardy.