



Vinalhaven Land Trust

CONSERVING THE NATURE OF VINALHAVEN

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2013 • Vol. 26, No. 2

Big Tip Toe Mountain Purchased at Last!



On September 27, 2013, Vinalhaven Land Trust purchased the 40-acre parcel on the western shore of Vinalhaven. For generations, Big Tip Toe Mountain has been the secret province of sure-footed youth and adults-in-the-know, scampering up to catch sweeping western views of Penobscot Bay from this high promontory. Its conservation value and development potential make this a very consequential acquisition for both of the Fox Islands.

With shorefront on Crockett Cove and the Thorofare, bold western views and microscopic bryophytes, granite, basalt, fresh and salt water, this preserve will have something for everyone, including fishermen—the extensive coastal wetlands have all the markings of a lobster nursery. Big Tip Toe is an ecological tapestry, with so many of Vinalhaven's signature qualities woven together in this one place.

Though locally renowned for its breathtaking sunsets, the 40-acre parcel has the habitat diversity to support a remarkable array of species. From the fresh water wetlands to an exemplary salt marsh, the lower elevations around Big Tip Toe are as ecologically exciting as the peak is scenic. The rocky intertidal zone, draped with bladder wrack, gives way to a *Spartina* saltmarsh, then a fresh water wetland, and finally a spruce-fir forest that closes in around a forested fen over *Sphagnum* peat. A lush stand of seaside golden-

rods crowns the scene. Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department as well as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have documented the significance of this habitat.

Now, with access assured, bird watchers will be able to come enjoy the thrill of looking down on the sharpshinned hawks during their migration, as they flap and glide just below the peak. Lovers of botany will have a field day exploring the multitude of species, and those prone to quiet contemplation will have new access to the serenity of Crockett Cove.

The property includes 4600± feet of frontage on Penobscot Bay and Marsh Cove, and 850± feet of shorefront on Crockett Cove. Together with the town park at Little Tip Toe and VLT's Whitmore Pond Preserve and Perry Creek Conservation Area, the future Big Tip Toe Preserve will provide an important conservation connection at the western end of the island.

The board will take the next year or so to make plans for the management of this property, with the goal of creating additional opportunities for public enjoyment and for environmental education for Vinalhaven school children and all lovers of the natural world. The location and building of trails to promote public access while protecting sensitive plant and animal habitats can be a delicate balancing act. The very qualities that make the area around Tip Toe Mountain so important

to preserve also make it vulnerable to damage from excessive or careless use. Many in our community have contributed generously to the acquisition and stewardship of this property. Thank you.

YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

You, our members, make it possible for VLT to promote "the conservation of our island's significant plant and wildlife habitat, our water resources, and scenic or historic spaces." We depend on your support to do this.

We know there are many worthy organizations asking for your attention. Please take a moment to think about what you love about our island and give as generously as you can. You have the power to ensure that we can continue to "conserve the nature of Vinalhaven."

Please be on the lookout for VLT's recently mailed year end appeal, or check out the "join us" section of our website (vinalhavenlandtrust.org) for the "donate now" button or a downloadable form. Members' donations fuel the work that your land trust does each year.

You are Vinalhaven Land Trust.

From Advanced Bird Walks to Winter Moths

Over 1300 participants enjoyed forty five VLT sponsored walks and talks this year, covering topics such as birds, Vinalhaven history, lobstering, and energy. Phil Crossman entertained us with the final installment of his circumambulation of Vinalhaven, Kirk Gentalen led many fascinating bird walks, and Steve Rosen talked about the Vinalhaven lobster industry, just to name a few of the many events offered.

Planning is under way for next year's programs and your ideas are always welcome. You can contact Jim Boone at jimboone@hotmail.com with suggestions.



Photo Left:

The stone and tidal waterworks that powered the Bodwell Granite Polishing Mill, the adjacent C. E. Noyes Grist Mill and the still further adjacent trip hammer and bellows at Charles Littlefield's Blacksmith Shop are still largely intact. Phil Crossman, who owns half of that remarkable assembly, explains to participants on the VLT Energy Walk how the three Leffel turbines drove that considerable industry, moving the workday ahead with the tide, about 40 minutes each day, during the 1800s and early 1900s. *Photo by Arlene Rodenbeck.*

Three Cheers for Volunteers!

Vinalhaven Land Trust relies on the many generous volunteers who give of their time and skills to help us accomplish a wide variety of tasks, from getting this newsletter in the mail, to helping organize our great Walks and Talks season, and a bit of everything in between. Give us a call or send us an email if you'd like to volunteer. We have something for every interest and ability.

VLT especially wants to thank the following, who have volunteered in the past year. If we have inadvertently left your name off this list, apologies!

Annual Meeting: A special thank you to Sue L'Africain for organizing this meeting and keeping us all on track for another year, to Peggy Ewing for her beautiful sketch that graced the announcement, Josef L'Africain for bartending, Alex Day and Josef L'Africain for delivering folding chairs to Skoog Park, Marc Candage and the Vinalhaven Fire Department for the loan of the chairs, Addison Ames and family for setting up VLT's tent, and Zofia Lamprecht for writing the newsletter article.

Donated goods and services: Thanks to the generous supporters who donated a door prize of \$150 of electricity they had received from the Fox Islands Electric Cooperative annual meeting, to the good friend who paid to have the gardens at Skoog Park tended, and the generous soul who regularly hauls our office trash and recyclables to the transfer station.

John Hansen donated advertisement space in Maine Boats, Homes and Harbors magazine, and Becky and John Burnham gave us a copy of "The Turner Farm Flora". A special thanks to Jaques and Company for all their help with the Capital Campaign.

Easements & Acquisitions Committee: Lucy Quimby, and Betsy Ham and Steve Walker, both of Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Errands, pick up, and delivery: Marian Godfrey, Fred Granger, and Carl Philbrook

Finance Committee: Charles Lowrey and Hugh Martin

Fourth of July: Emma and Sophie Sawatzky, Aidan Perseto, and James Stenson for riding on VLT's float in the parade, Wadson Michael for driving, and Del Webster for the use of his electric vehicle.

Mailings: Nancy Campbell, Elaine Crossman, Ethelyn Day, Suzanne Heller, Stevie Kaimmer, Sarah Lawrence, Lucy McCarthy, Carol Petillo, Arlene Rodenbeck, and Carol Thompson

Management Plan Committee: Javier Peñalosa for doing natural resource inventories on many of VLT's properties

Monitoring: Alex Day and Patrick Trainor
Office help: Arlene Rodenbeck and Rick Morgan for preparing handouts and trail maps, and Taina Litwak for her help in revising and updating trail maps.

Newsletter Proofreading: Stevie Kaimmer
Stewardship: Ed Hirst and Pam Johnson, and Rick Morgan for helping our steward with

work on the preserves.

Technical Support: Nevins Bartolomeo

Walks: Cec Girz and Army Armstrong, Merry Boone, Phil Crossman, George Fosque, Kirk Gentalen, Janet Gohres, Charlotte Goodhue, Karol Kucinski, David Lawrence, Rick Morgan, Javier Peñalosa, Ken and Sylvia Reiss, Arlene Rodenbeck, Patrick Trainor, Dana and Noel Webster, Bob Wilbanks, David and Sally Wylie, and Christine and Len Yannielli. And hats off to Gabe McPhail for all her help creating the beautiful walks posters and for helping organize the successful "Meet Your Local Farmer" series.

A special thank you goes to VLT's board of directors. None of this would happen without their hard work and generosity. VLT is lucky to have such dedicated and involved people on our team.

IN MEMORIAM

VLT and Vinalhaven lost a wonderful and dedicated volunteer this year. The passing of Laura Hamilton leaves a hole in our community and her place around the table, helping write thank you letters to our donors, will not be the same. Our thoughts are with her family and we will remain thankful for her kindness.

A Peek Behind the Curtain: Conservation Review Criteria

We want to share an important part of our conservation evaluation with our members and the community at large. Vinalhaven Land Trust has very specific criteria when we consider land we accept for conservation. We have carefully developed these criteria over many years to ensure the conservation values truly warrant protection and justify any changes in tax revenues and development potential for the town. Accepting a property or easement commits VLT to stewardship and monitoring in perpetuity, a responsibility we do not take lightly.

After extensive discussion with the landowner and spending time on the property, we consider whether the land is part of one of our focus areas, such as The Basin, Seal Bay, Perry Creek or Mill River; or whether it provides connectivity to other protected property. Isolated parcels scattered across the island provide far less habitat and recreational value and they are more difficult to monitor. The Basin and Perry Creek are

great examples of where this strategy has yielded outstanding results. It is hard to imagine Vinalhaven without these protected treasures.

We look at habitat value for plants and animals, and rely on state and federal assessments to supplement our local knowledge. Big Tip Toe Mountain, for example, is unusually rich in bryophytes (mosses), and the adjacent small islands are excellent bird habitat—witness the osprey nest.

The importance of protecting water resources is singled out in our mission statement: every property is evaluated in terms of its fresh water resources as well as fresh and salt water wetlands.

The potential for public enjoyment of the property is also considered. Properties with exceptional scenic value, or that offer a platform for educational opportunities are given special consideration. We inquire about whether the community has traditionally enjoyed a property—

like Isle Au Haut Mountain or Old Harbor Pond.

Talking to the land trust about conserving some or all of your property does not commit you to moving forward. Part of our mission is to help families fulfill their long term goals for their property. VLT can be a sounding board for landowners as you consider your options. To those who have conserved their property, we extend heartfelt thanks.

A very important issue for us is whether taking a piece of property or an easement is right for the island—not just the environment but also the community. These are judgment calls, and we rely on the many perspectives represented on our board to help guide this determination. So far, they haven't steered us wrong. We hope you agree.

-Elizabeth Swain, Chair of Easements and Acquisitions Committee



VLT Welcomes New Board Members

Board terms usually start and end at Annual Meeting time. Stepping down this year were three members who have given exceptional service to VLT, both as board members and committee members: Peggy Ewing on Development, Bruce Hopkins on Management Plan and Nominating, and Karol Kucinski on Environmental Education and Nominating. VLT thanks them for their years of dedicated service.

Five new members—Chuck Gadzik, David Hyde, Kevin Moore, Skip Thompson, and Pam Wetherbee—were elected to serve on our board. They have very diverse backgrounds and bring a lot of financial and ecological knowledge to the board.

Chuck Gadzik and his wife Cynthia began building a home on the Island over 15 years ago and have been year-round residents since 2006. Chuck has been involved in Maine forestry for over 30 years in both public policy and managing commercial forest lands in eastern and northern Maine. He currently manages timber holdings in Aroostook County part time. He is

an avid walker and enjoys VLT trails and properties.

David Hyde has been a summer resident on Maine islands for over thirty years, and a seasonal resident of Vinalhaven for ten. He finds himself drawn to islands, valuing their beauty and topography as much as the communities that exist on them. He has been connected to the environmental community in Maine for many years and served on the Board of Maine Audubon for seven years. He started and ran a not-for-profit organization, so he understands the challenges of that world and also its importance to achieving its goal of land conservation, specifically on Vinalhaven. David co-owns and operates a frozen yogurt business, GoBerry, in Portland. When not enjoying his home on Old Harbor, he lives in Pownal with his wife, Sarah.

Kevin Moore and his wife, Kristel, have been living on Vinalhaven full time for five years. They are proprietors of Island Groundworks, specializing in concrete construction on his side of the company and gardening and landscaping on hers.

Skip Thompson has been a Vinalhaven resident for 13 years, after many years as a “summer”. He served as the trail steward for VLT for a period of time. For the past 8 years, he has been a builder on the island. His primary interests with VLT are budget development and trail management.

Pam Wetherbee states that she is “so grateful to the islanders and seasonal residents who had the foresight in the last century to begin protecting the special natural and historic places that make Vinalhaven so unique”. She has been happily spending time on Vinalhaven for almost 5 decades and now resides five months of the year on Old Harbor. Pam is also on the board of the Friends of the Vinalhaven Library and is an enthusiastic member of the Eldercare “Bottle Brigade.” She works as a financial services consultant and project manager, and when not in Vinalhaven, lives in Dover, MA.

Glad Things

Tuck Godfrey, Executive Director



**I will be the gladdest thing under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers, and not pick one.**

The acquisition late in the summer of the land around Tip Toe Mountain came together through the combined efforts of many folks, who worked together to make it possible. People whose families have been here for 200 years, many who grew up spending summers here, and some who have just discovered the island, all seemed equally determined to keep this special corner of the isle open for future generations to enjoy and draw sustenance from.

It is worth asking: “Why is this place so important to so many?” “Is this place unique, or does this support tell us something about how people feel about Vinalhaven, generally?” and “Why was it important for the land trust to decide to keep it for all the people?”

Those who have spoken about their connection to Tip Toe express a range of feelings. Some climb Big Tip Toe a couple of times a month just to recharge their batteries, surrounded by all that magnificence. Some don’t go so often any more, but feel a connection from annual summer visits when they were children. For them, it seems, Tip Toe crystallizes an experience of Vinalhaven that continues to define— along with all their other childhood experiences— their sense of who they are.

Some like to focus on the things that they’ve never seen anywhere else: the view from the top, the atmosphere in the Gorge— things that strike them with awe. To others, Big Tip Toe and the land around it bring together in one place all the wonders they associate with time spent on the island.

For the land trust, Tip Toe is all these things, and it is more. It is a window into the essence of Vinalhaven as a place. An essence that was here before we came, that influenced the form our community has taken, in its early days and throughout its development, and that continues to enrich the culture and economy of this place. It is a gateway through which all of us may step, if we choose, into that place where connection with the deepest roots of our nature as humans is open to us.

Those roots tie us to one another through the communities that are essential to our survival, but they also tie us to that inner stillness where we must go to find our strength. Because we are each bound to these two conflicting sides of our nature, we need to come together to set aside places that help us connect the two. Tip Toe can be such a place.

**I will look at cliffs and clouds with quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass and the grass rise.
And when lights begin to show up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine and then start down.**

(Afternoon on a Hill, Edna St. Vincent Millay)



Counter-clockwise from right: The young, and the young at heart, explored tidepools this summer with environmental educator Amy Palmer. Photos by Katie Sawatzky.

Lower right: Naturalist Beth Gilford led an enthusiastic group on Lane's Island to learn more about wildflowers. Photo by Arlene Rodenbeck.



A Winter Moth Solution for Vinalhaven

On August 22, 2013, Joe Elkinton gave a presentation not only about the Winter Moth but also about his research and development of the parasitic fly breeding and release program, the only one of its kind in the United States. Joe, an entomologist and researcher from UMass Amherst spoke at the invitation of the Winter Moth committee and Vinalhaven Land Trust.

The Winter Moth (*Operophtera brumata*) was introduced to North America from Europe and was first recorded in Nova Scotia in the 1950s. It has no native predators. In 2012, following an unusually warm winter, the Maine Forest Service identified the presence of Winter Moth in more than 20 coastal Maine communities, including Vinalhaven. This is a serious invasive pest that feasts on hardwood trees, fruit trees, and shrubs such as blueberries. The parasitic fly, *Cyzenis albicans*, also from Europe, has been proven a safe biological method in controlling outbreaks for the past fifty-nine years in Nova Scotia and British Columbia.

Joe gave a fascinating lecture and slide show highlighting the history of the Winter Moth and its geographical path of migration since its intro-

duction to North America. He shared with us his research on the fly and its intertwined life cycle with the Winter Moth. We learned of the complicated, expensive, and labor intensive process of sending a team to British Columbia each spring to gather Winter Moth larvae and overwintering them as pupa in the lab. During his visit, he toured the island looking for Winter Moth damage and determined that Vinalhaven would qualify for a fly release in the spring of 2014. This, however, depends on several factors. If we have a harsh winter, we may have a natural collapse of the Winter Moth and thus not qualify for a release. There is also a risk of lab failure, resulting in an insufficient number of flies.

There is much work to be done in the coming months and with the help of volunteers, including students from the middle school's Vital Signs Club, we hope to assist Joe by any means possible to make the fly release successful.

In conclusion, the Winter Moth is here to stay but Joe is optimistic that the fly will bring the Winter Moth under control faster here than elsewhere, due to the fact that we have more coniferous trees versus hardwoods, therefore limiting

the supply of food available to the Winter Moth caterpillar.

To band your trees or not to band? Banding involves wrapping a strip of heavy weight paper covered with a sticky substance around the trunk of a tree to prevent the female Winter Moth from crawling up the tree to lay eggs. The consensus is that if you have a tree or trees that you want to try to protect, go for it, but the effectiveness of banding is very limited in protecting your trees, since the caterpillar can balloon from tree to tree.

To prevent further spread of the winter moth, people are encouraged not to move soil or plant material off the island.

For further info about Joe's research, go to <http://elkintonlab.wordpress.com/research>.

With thanks to Charlene Donahue, Maine State Entomologist.

-Pam Johnson, Winter Moth Committee

VLT Summer Camp a Big Hit

Young people combed Vinalhaven's land and sea in an exciting new summer program! Island Explorers, led by Amy Palmer, VLT Environmental Education Coordinator, ran for four weeks this summer, with a total of 32 participants between the ages of 5 and 11. The program, run in partnership with the ARC, fit in right after the school's summer program called Scamp, so we began with lunch at school, and then explored from there. On Tuesdays, we explored the forest floor, finding multitudes of invertebrates and mushrooms, along with the occasional salamander (a very exciting find). On Wednesdays, we headed to the pond to catch insect larvae and tadpoles. On Thursdays, we headed to Lane's Island to explore the intertidal zone.

One week we even caught 63 green crabs! We brought a lot of our finds back to school so we could look at them really closely under the microscope. Of course, some ecology games were interspersed with our explorations: we imagined we were snails, crabs, salamanders, raccoons, and mosquitoes, among other Vinalhaven fauna. Each day ended with a different craft and special snack from Sara Barrett, the ARC's summer intern. It was a super-fun four weeks, and we hope to do it again next year! Thank you, ARC and Vinalhaven School, VLT's valued partners!

-Amy Palmer, VLT Environmental Education Coordinator



Photos by Amy Palmer and Katie Sawatzky.



Annual Meeting Rundown - August 2013

The crowd was energetic, all arriving bundled up in woolen things and hats, prepared for yet another outbreak of the rain that had been dampening us all day. But the gray day was kept at bay beneath a well worn white tent.

President Susie Lawrence called the meeting to order right on time, and VLT board members took their turn to stand at the podium and give positive news on the institution's progress and warm acknowledgements to outgoing board members and the community of Vinalhaven.

The guest speaker, Jay Espy, executive director of the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation in Freeport and former president of Maine Coast Heritage Trust, impressed on us the link between land conservation, public health, and the economy. He feels we are in the fourth era of land conservation: community based conservation, which seeks to not simply protect land, but also to contribute significantly to the pros-

perity, livability, and vibrancy of our communities and the people who live in those communities. Some of Jay's points:

- It's about public health; combating obesity and mental health diseases.
- It's about access to local food and food security.
- It's about outdoor spaces that incorporate local arts and culture.
- It's about supporting economic growth using local assets and ingenuity.
- It's about each of us individually and collectively living richer, fuller lives.

He pointed out the many ways time spent in the natural world improves our health and productivity, including, but not limited to, a decrease in obesity and diabetes, better performance by students with ADHD, and improvements in hypertension, depression, and anxiety disorder. "The principle of identifying

community assets, protecting and using those assets well, and taking advantage of collective ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit to build an increasingly vibrant and resilient community, applies nearly everywhere and resonates with nearly everyone."

In closing, Jay said, "I applaud Vinalhaven Land Trust and Vinalhaven for the remarkable work that has been accomplished and know this community will continue to serve as a model for Maine in the years to come."

Altogether, the meeting was one of optimism and enthusiasm, full of applause and chuckling, and finished off with refreshments and a beautiful cake to honor Susie Lawrence, our outgoing president. And in the end, it didn't even rain!

-Zofia Lamprecht



Chris DeSorbo of Biodiversity Research Institute gave a fascinating talk on the history of bald eagle research in Maine, followed by a walk the next day to Folly Pond to spot some eagles. Photo by Arlene Rodenbeck.

25th Anniversary Campaign Strengthens VLT

During its first 25 years, Vinalhaven Land Trust focused on conserving key properties, working closely with families and other partners. Looking to the future and recognizing this accomplishment, the board reflected on the true extent of the obligations members have undertaken and we vowed to build a financial foundation that will sustain stewardship of our remarkable properties. In the fall of 2011, VLT launched a capital campaign to help position us to anticipate and respond proactively to the emerging environmental and economic challenges facing us. Together we must ensure the integrity of existing protections in perpetuity.

The 25th Anniversary Campaign was conceived to address these needs as identified in our strategic plan developed in 2006. We wanted to create a designated account for sustained stewardship of \$875,000 that would provide dependable funding of approximately \$30,000 per year to support the management and care of all VLT properties.

As the campaign took shape, an opportunity arose to

protect an iconic and beloved piece of the Vinalhaven landscape, Big Tip Toe Mountain. With the imminent threat that traditional public access to this cherished spot might be lost, its purchase became another goal of the campaign. VLT purchased this keystone property in September 2013 for \$710,000 and will begin to create Big Tip Toe Mountain Preserve to protect community access to this property that has long been a favorite of both year-round and seasonal residents. As part of this second arm of the campaign, our goal is to raise an additional \$75,000 to provide for the perpetual stewardship of this important preserve.

The response to the Campaign has been enormously positive with over 200 gifts received, ranging from \$10 to \$250,000. Our goals appear to be important to many. Four matching opportunities designed to encourage participation were offered; this includes one by our partner Maine Coast Heritage Trust who made funds available through The Pew Charitable Trust. Individuals and families, long time VLT members, and

new members have donated generously and, in some cases, more than once.

To make sure that an opportunity is available for all to join this exciting and successful effort, we are gratefully accepting donations until December 31, 2013. Pledges can be made payable over a few years. We are a community organization, responsive to collective needs and dependent on the support of our members. Broad participation has always been important to VLT. Every gift continues to make a difference.

Many thanks to all of you who have joined the Campaign and have made an investment in the future of Vinalhaven Land Trust. You have increased our capacity to do the work to which we are committed and have assured our ability to conserve the nature of Vinalhaven.

-Susie Lawrence and Didi Stockly, co-chairs of the Capital Campaign Committee



Looking for the elusive eagle at Folly Pond. The eagles were not eager to appear. Photo by Arlene Rodenbeck.

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Support Vinalhaven Land Trust

Please join us in protecting Vinalhaven's natural beauty. To become a member, complete this coupon and return it to the address below or drop by our office in the cottage at Skoog Park. Annual dues (for each calendar year) are \$10 per person.

I would like to make an additional contribution to Vinalhaven Land Trust of:

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

Check enclosed.

Please charge my Visa or Mastercard # _____

Signature _____ exp. _____

Name _____

Address _____

Town/City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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.

Questions? Please call us at (207) 863-2543. Thank you! www.vinalhavenlandtrust.org
Please mail to: Vinalhaven Land Trust • PO Box 268 • Vinalhaven, Maine • 04863

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Photo by Kerry Hardy.



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