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### WISH LIST

A trail camera



## 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](http://www.vinalhavenlandtrust.org). Annual dues (for each calendar year) are \$20 per person. Thank you!

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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.

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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.



FALL 2016

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 29, NO. 2

# Vinalhaven Land Trust

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### READING IN A MAGICAL OUTDOOR SETTING

## Vinalhaven's New Story Trail

Reading while spending time in nature—can it get any better than that? Vinalhaven Land Trust and Vinalhaven Reads don't think so.

Vinalhaven Reads (VHR), a group of year-round and seasonal island residents, was formed to help raise the reading and literacy skills of students at Vinalhaven School. Inspired by a visit to a project in New Hampshire where enlarged pages from a children's picture book are displayed in holders along the length of a trail, VHR approached VLT to discuss creating just such a trail on one of our preserves. The goal is twofold: to foster a love of reading and to encourage children and their caregivers to spend time in nature. Children who love to read do better in school, with improved writing and communication skills, which are key to success later in life. And it is well documented that spending time in nature can relieve stress, boost happiness, and inspire creativity.

With full support from VLT's board of directors and grant funding from the Knox County Fund of the Maine Community Foundation, the L.L. Bean Maine Land Trust Grant Program, and many hours of volunteer time, the trail became a reality. Steward Kerry Hardy and Executive Director Linnell Mather scouted out a new trail last fall when we began planning. The Granite Island Preserve seemed the perfect choice: the relatively flat terrain and varying habitats make for a family-friendly hike down to the shores of the Basin, a pristine 500-acre inlet surrounded by protected land and considered one of the most beautiful places on Vinalhaven.

The first stop on the new trail, which is dedicated to the memory of Margaret Wise Brown, author of many beloved books for children,

is a natural clearing, where a kiosk provides information on the current book offering. A short hike through the trees and over some exposed ledge leads to an enlargement of the title page of this book, displayed in a custom-built aluminum holder securely mounted to a large, granite boulder.



Photo: Samantha Thompson

Along the trail, the remaining pages of the book are displayed on more mossy boulders. Early readers take pleasure in reading each page, often aloud, then running along the trail to find the next page, until the end of the book is reached. On reaching the last page, readers can see the blue waters of the Basin, sparkling through the trees, inviting them to come sit on the rocks, dabble their toes in the chilly water, go for a swim (in season!), and explore for crabs and mussels. With almost

ninety-six percent of the land surrounding the Basin protected, it's a mecca for wildlife, including seals, terns, great blue herons, osprey, deer, snowshoe hare, and river otters.

Many volunteers were involved at almost every step of the process. Special mention goes to Hugh Martin, who cheerfully spent the better part of two days drilling the holes for the holders, with Sue Martin serving as 'gofer' and making sure Hugh and Kerry had everything they needed as they progressed down the trail.

There have been challenges: the holders have not been as waterproof as we had anticipated, and some of the pages of our first offering, *The Little Island*, by Margaret Wise Brown have gotten a bit damp. We are exploring some alternative mounting methods with the installation of the next book, *Little Beaver and the Echo*, by Amy MacDonald, which was completed in early November.

We have all seen the terrific results when children are continually exposed to books. We have also all heard how children are not spending enough time outside and way too much time in front of television, tablet, and computer screens. This project will get kids—of all ages—reading in a magical outdoor setting and having fun while doing it. We have heard back from so many who have explored and loved the trail, from excited groups of children to adults revisiting a favorite book from childhood while enjoying the serene surroundings. The trail provides a platform to connect people to the land through children's literature. It is our hope that both connections will provide endless delight and inspiration.

-Linnell Mather, Executive Director



Photo: Kerry Hardy

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## CELEBRATING MARGARET WISE BROWN

### Author of *Goodnight Moon*

For a week last August, VLT celebrated the life and work of Margaret Wise Brown, the noted author of such beloved children's classics as *Goodnight Moon*, *The Little Island*, *The Runaway Bunny*, and more than a hundred other titles. Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia, Vinalhaven Historical Society, Vinalhaven Public Library, Vinalhaven Reads, and Vinalhaven Chamber of Commerce all partnered in offering events that explored Brown's work and life.

Brown had a long relationship with the state of Maine, and summered on Vinalhaven for the last 14 years of her life at an oceanside cottage she named "The Only House." She often hosted her illustrators there, including Leonard Weisgard (*The Little Island*), Clement Hurd (*Goodnight Moon*) and Garth Williams (*The Little Dog That Belonged to Himself*), who shared her appreciation of the beauty and quiet of Vinalhaven. Brown was renowned for her insistence that the illustrators of her books get the same credit and compensation as the author.

Over 300 eager participants enjoyed one or more events during the week which culminated in a special read-along event for children on the lawn across from the library. Said one participant, "This was a wonderful week; I went to every event. Thanks so much!"

Perhaps the highlight of the week was a walk led by former VLT board member Jim Boone to "The Only House" property, which overlooks Hurricane Sound and the little island that inspired her book.

"Thanks VLT for putting on this event, I never knew Margaret Wise Brown spent time here, and *Goodnight Moon* has always been one of my family's favorites."

## Trail Work on Middle Mountain

Over the course of the last year or so, VLT and its many volunteers have succeeded in reclaiming, and even expanding, the network of hiking trails at the town-owned Middle Mountain Park.

This story actually begins with my predecessor, former VLT steward Kirk Gentalen, who would occasionally, as a favor to the town, take a weed-whacker and make a pass up the Middle Mountain trail. This seemed like a fine thing for a land trust to do, so when I had a little extra time last summer I did the same. Come to find out, the trail was badly overgrown, so I recruited a couple of stellar VLT volunteers (Rick Morgan and Stan Nantais), and between the three of us, we made it at least passable.

Coincidentally, this was just about the same time that Lloyd Roberts, the man who had donated Middle Mountain Park to the town, was calling our office to see if we could help reclaim that very same trail. Linnell and I invited him to join us on a fine October day to walk the trail, and he was enthused to see the progress. At the same time, he pointed out the faint traces of some other, long overgrown trails, and we all decided it would be good to bring those back as well.

In addition to one trail which offers fine westerly views to the Camden Hills, we learned (from Del Webster) about another old trail that went down to the head of Long Cove. With a little snooping around, I found some very old blazes on trees, which allowed me to retrace that trail as well. At this point, another exciting possibility emerged: both of these "lost" trails ended within a few feet of a hiking trail, on private property belonging to Wanatha Garner of Long Cove Farm. Would it be possible, we wondered, to tap into their trail and create a whole new loop?

Early in May, Linnell and I walked this proposed loop with Wanatha and Hugh Roth. To our delight, they agreed to let us make the connection...and even went one step further, by allowing us to make a short spur that brought hikers out on a sunny ledge on the shore of Long Cove. Now we had our hands full, but it

seemed that the end result—almost a mile of "new" hiking trails— would be well worth the effort involved.

Thus it was that VLT, assisted by a small army of volunteers this summer, hacked our way around and through the various obstacles. By late August, the work was completed with the help of some visiting Bowdoin College students on a freshman orientation service project. To complete the project an information kiosk was placed in the Middle Mountain parking lot and a provisional brochure and map were created to help hikers find their way.



Photo: Sarah Crossman

If you haven't yet had a chance to see the changes at Middle Mountain, keep it in mind for a fun hiking outing in the future. The fall and winter views are spectacular, and in the spring and summer you'll be surprised by the diversity of birds to be seen and heard there. As you hike around, think about the many public and private partners involved in a project like this—the original donor, the town, the land trust, the volunteers, and the cooperating landowners who have made it all possible—and you'll enjoy the hike all the more.

-Kerry Hardy, Stewardship Coordinator

## A LONG-LASTING IMPACT

### Looking Back at the 25th Anniversary Campaign

With thanks to the many generous donors who supported our fundraising efforts, VLT wrapped up its ambitious 25th Anniversary Campaign at the close of 2013. That was three years ago: what has the campaign enabled VLT to accomplish?

Most notably, Big Tip Toe Mountain and the 40 acres surrounding it are now protected by VLT. The preserve, VLT's newest, is incredibly diverse, containing rocky summits, islands, salt marshes, wetlands, and vernal pools. This diversity has allowed us to develop a wonderful series of trails to the shore and to other high ground, in addition to the traditional scramble to the top of Big Tip Toe Mountain.

One trail to the shore winds through mossy glades, over a colonial era stone and timber dam, and out to the shore of the Thorofare, where opportunities for beachcombing and picnics abound. If the tide is right, one can explore the outcroppings of banded rhyolites and look for spherulites (the small, rounded bodies found in some of the vitreous rocks along Vinalhaven's northern shores.)

Additionally, there is a loop trail to Middle Tip Toe, which provides access to yet more high ground as well as several outstanding overlooks to the north, west, and south.

The other goal of the campaign was to help ensure VLT had the funds necessary to continue to steward our properties. Campaign funds have been invested conservatively and the

dividends are used to cover most of the cost for this program. VLT's first 25 years focused on conservation; our next 25 is more likely to focus on stewarding those protected properties. Stewardship is not as readily visible as a 40-acre preserve, but the careful observer can see what this aspect of the campaign has allowed us to accomplish. Many of our preserves have new informational kiosks at the trail heads and the signage on our trails has been updated. We now have programs in place to train and support the many volunteers who annually inspect every property protected by VLT to be sure all conservation values are intact. Our trails are inspected more frequently, to make sure they are not eroded or obstructed by blowdowns or other hazards. Our steward is working a few more hours per week, which allows him to lead walks in the summer and do programs in the school. In addition, he dedicates many hours a week to all the responsibilities that come with making sure that visitors to our preserves have a positive experience while also ensuring that the plant and wildlife habitats, water resource, and scenic resources of those preserves are also protected.

Thank you to everyone who supported the 25th Anniversary Campaign. Your generosity has had, and will continue to have, a long-lasting positive impact for VLT and for the island we love.



Spherulites  
Photo by Kerry Hardy



WE COUNT ON YOUR  
GENEROUS YEAR-END  
SUPPORT

## The Season of Giving

Through our expanding environmental education program, VLT inspires the next generation to become better stewards of the island you love. Our Walks and Talks program provides opportunities for all to learn more about the nature of Vinalhaven. Our conservation efforts focus on protecting those significant plant and wildlife habitats, water resources, and traditionally valued spaces that nourish our lives and our souls.

To sustain these efforts, we depend on steadfast support from our members. Please give as generously as you can to VLT's year end appeal; take a moment today to send in your contribution. You can also donate securely on line at [vinalhavenlandtrust.org](http://vinalhavenlandtrust.org) or on the phone at 207.863.2543. Thank you!

# For Future Generations

By thinking ahead now, you can help Vinalhaven Land Trust in the future. We invite you to be a part of that future by including VLT in your estate planning. A planned gift of almost any size will help ensure the protection of the habitats and scenic views we all love.

Such a gift could be accomplished by simply adding a codicil (amendment) to your will, or by naming VLT as the beneficiary of an insurance policy or retirement plan. Please contact Linnell at 207.863.2543 for more information on planned giving options.

In planning your gift, you should consult with a financial advisor or attorney to discuss your particular situation. Vinalhaven Land Trust can provide you with a list of potential advisors for you to contact.



## NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This has been a year of partnerships, as you will discover perusing this newsletter. From the very popular Story Trail to the reclaimed trails at Middle Mountain, VLT has devoted resources to several successful collaborative efforts this year.

It was just a year ago that steward Kerry Hardy and I walked the overgrown trails of Middle Mountain Town Park with Lloyd Roberts, who had donated these beautiful 82 acres of land to the town in 1992. We were so impressed with the diverse plant communities, the incredible vistas to both north and south, and the number of birds we heard even that late in the season. We knew VLT wanted to be part of reclaiming this wonderful asset for our community. Every Trail Tuesday, our monthly volunteer stewardship day, of 2016 was spent blazing and re-cutting the trails at Middle Mountain. We installed a new kiosk at the trail head and created a preserve brochure with a map of the trail system. I love hearing reports from individuals and families who are rediscovering this great park. Read more about this on page two.

Perspectives After School, our collaboration with Partners in Island Education, brings experiential learning to students in Pre-K through 5th grade. With a schedule both parents and students can count on, programming covers the gamut from planting gardens to building bat houses and learning about bat conservation. There are opportunities to make one's own spider web out of sticks and yarn and then to go exploring in the woods behind the school to look for the real thing. In the colder months, programming might involve creating a vision of a kid friendly town, making clay pots, or time in the snow learning about winter tracking. Now in its fourth year, this program offers hands-on activities where students are encouraged to ask questions and to interact with others from their own classroom as well as students from other grades in both the middle and high school and adults from the community. The program is based out of the school cafeteria, but that does not limit our ability to explore what our small town has to offer.

The idea for Story Trail came to us from Vi-



nalhaven Reads and is another project that took almost a year from first discussions to the official opening this October 12 with students for Vinalhaven School's 2nd and 3rd grades. Read more about this great project on page one!

This year we have also worked with North Haven Conservation Partners (Walks and Talks), Hurricane Center for Science and Leadership (Walks and Talks and Environmental Education), Vinalhaven Public Library (Walks and Talks), Maine Coast Heritage Trust (land management and much more), and Hollins University (Margaret Wise Brown week.) These collaborations allow us to expand not only what we offer but also to whom it is offered. They bring new perspectives and opportunities to hike and learn to all who spend time on the island. Our reach is extended, we make new friends, and we get to work with organizations whose missions we respect.

### SUPPORT VLT WHEN YOU SHOP AT AMAZON!

Just go to [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com)

First time users, select Vinalhaven Land Trust as the charitable organization to receive donations of 0.5% on your eligible purchases. There is no charge to you, and your existing account stays the same. It's an easy way to help VLT every time you shop!

## Transitions

### New Board Members



**Cay Kendrick** began volunteering with VLT by painting the office trim while her two children were participating in Island Sail. Following an initial career in mineral exploration geology in the northwest U.S., Cay currently works as a freelance graphic designer, and has created posters and ads for our Walks and Talks program. After twenty years of renting on Vinalhaven, she and husband, George, now own an 1850s Cape which they are in the process of renovating. When not on Vinalhaven, Cay lives in Yarmouth, ME, where she spearheaded efforts to protect the Spear Farm Estuary Preserve.



**Sean Mahoney** serves as the Executive Vice President and Director of the Maine office of the Conservation Law Foundation, where he focuses on marine conservation and sustainability, climate change, transportation and energy infrastructure, and restoring and protecting Maine's rivers and coastal watersheds. Prior to joining CLF in 2007, Sean practiced environmental law in San Francisco and Portland, ME for 15 years. Sean lives in Falmouth, Maine and has been coming to Vinalhaven for the last decade to Calderwood Neck.



VLT welcomes back **Lucy McCarthy**, who first joined the board of VLT in 1991 after moving to the Fox Islands. She then worked eighteen years at the land trust, first as Coordinator and then as Executive Director, overseeing the conservation of an archipelago of seabird nesting islands, and other Whole Place Conservation initiatives as well as positioning VLT to receive national accreditation. Lucy has served on the town's board of appeals and comprehensive planning committee, and currently chairs the town budget committee. She also serves on the board of Maine Coast Heritage Trust. She and her husband John Drury enjoy their time on Green's island.

### Departures

Three valued board members stepped down at the annual meeting:

**Jim Boone**, the father of one of VLT's signature and beloved programs—our Walks & Talks series, which in 2016 sponsored over 40 walks and 13 talks. As this community knows, Jim and Merry give their time and energy in a myriad of ways for all our benefit. At board meetings, Jim was a great listener and problem solver, bringing expertise and judgment to every issue. Fortunately for us, Jim will continue to coordinate our Walks & Talks Program, but his regular presence at our meetings will be deeply missed. At least he isn't going anywhere!

Also stepping down was **Patience Trainor**, monitor extraordinaire of property on which VLT holds conservation easements. She has served as board secretary, been a member of the Executive Committee during a time of transition, and played a key role on the Strategic Planning team. She has helped to build a strong VLT board as a member of the Nominating Committee and has acted as an inspirational guide on land trust

walks, sharing her knowledge of Vinalhaven's special places and its flora and fauna with others.

**Thena Webster** joined the board in 2010. In addition to serving as secretary for several years, a task she accomplished with her customary quiet humor and competence, she also chaired the Monitoring Committee. Under her leadership, monitoring forms were updated, training sessions instituted, and new monitors recruited, all aiding VLT in ensuring this vital part of our work was accomplished to a very high standard.

Staff member **Colleen Conlan** has moved on from VLT. She will be greatly missed for her hard work and dedication. She joined as Office Assistant, but her writing and organizational skills enabled her to take on a much larger role. Colleen was instrumental in collating documents and drafting statements for the first phase of the renewal of accreditation process. Speaking for the Board, President Susie Lawrence thanked Colleen for the support she provided us all, specifically citing her careful attention to detail.

### Greetings

VLT welcomes **Luke Milardo** as our new Programs Coordinator. A graduate of Bowdoin College, Luke has most recently served as an Island Institute sponsored Island Fellow on Frenchboro, where he planned, developed, and implemented high-quality, long-range service learning projects for students in the Frenchboro School.

We welcome back **Sheri Romer-Day** who has returned to her former position of Office Assistant at VLT, a job she previously held from 2011-2014. In addition to handling the routine office tasks, she will also be the staff contact for the monitoring committee. Sheri's first day was Sept 22nd so, if you call the office, be sure to say hello and welcome her back.

# Celebrating Our Volunteers

We'd like to thank the following people who have helped VLT in the past year. If we have inadvertently left off your name, please accept our apologies. We truly value your support!

**Annual Meeting:** We thank Sue L'Africain for organizing this event and making the process go so smoothly. This is her fourth year in this role, and every year we update and refine the checklist. Addison Ames set up VLT's small tent; David Lawrence and Sandy Lieber tended the bar; Mike Mesko and Steve Rosen provided ice; the fire department loaned us their chairs and tables; the Lion's Club set up their large tent; and the town office loaned us their projector screen. Pat Lundholm and Heather White lent their skills to help make it a successful meeting.

**Committee Members:** Many community members, both year-round and seasonal, serve on committees. We are grateful to Sue L'Africain (Annual Meeting), Sarah Forbes and Pat Lundholm (Communications), Lucy Quimby (Easements and Acquisitions), Emma Baker, Emily Cohn, and Pat Paquet (Environmental Education), Louisa Ives, Charles Lowrey, and Hugh Martin (Investment), Javier Peñalosa (Preserve Management), Bill Jaques and Elise Stockly (Development), Merry Boone, Beth Gilford, Janet Gohres, Jeff Kilbreth, Rick Morgan, Arlene Rodenbeck, Patience Trainor, and Sally Wylie (Walks and Talks).

**Graphic Design:** Huge thanks to Cay Kendrick, for creating the posters and Wind ads for all our Walks and Talks, and to Taina Litwak, for her

continued assistance in redesigning our trail brochures. Both of these outreaches have been very well received.

**Mailings:** We're always so thankful for those who heed the call, like Dory Bayer, Gillian Creelman, Kay Giffin, Pam Grumbach, Suzanne Heller, Stevie Kaimmer, Sally Leser, Mia Mather, Anna Poe, and Carol Thompson.

**Newsletter help:** A big thank-you to Alison Angel and Carol Thompson for proofreading, and to Emma Baker, Jim Boone, Helena Brigman, Emily Cohn, Gabe Harp, Norbert Leser, and Amy Palmer for photos.

**Transportation to Hurricane & North Haven:** Thanks to Lev Byrd, Arthur Farnham, George Fosque, Norbert and Sally Leser, Hugh and Sue Martin, David Swain and David Wylie.

**Office help:** For her professional help and cheerful company, we thank Penelope Lord for helping to create a digital file for each of our properties; Mia Mather and Arlene Rodenbeck also volunteered to take on some office tasks over the summer.

**Weekly trail help:** We thank Pam Johnson, Don and Valerie McQuillan, Peter Richards, Hugh Roth, Rick Morgan, David and Yolanda, Marco, and a great group of incoming freshmen from Bowdoin College who helped clear and mark trails on both VLT and town owned preserves.

**The Story Trail:** So many great volunteers pitched in to help make this a reality. Phil Crossman, Sue Dempster, and Kelly Richards of Vinalhaven Reads proposed the idea and supported us in grant writing, obtaining of copy-

rights, and installation. Sam Tibbetts designed the brackets and holders over coffee one morning, using his napkin as a sketch pad. Hugh Martin, with support and backup from Sue Martin and VLT steward Kerry Hardy, drilled the holes for mounting the brackets. Jeff Kilbreth, David Lawrence, and David Wylie, along with members of VLT board and staff, spent a rainy afternoon installing the pages of the story in the holders. Many thanks to Joe Marcus and Peter Richards for picking up additional supplies and brainstorming ideas. Rick Morgan helped Kerry attach the holders to the brackets along the length of the trail.

**Coastal Cleanup:** We thank all the people who showed up on a windy Saturday morning in late September to help with this annual event:

Merry Boone, Jim and Pam Grumbach, Bob Hahl, Mark Jackson, Norbert Leser, Jamie and Toby Martin, Rick Morgan, Susan Petersmeyer, Hugh Roth, and Kathy Shirley. Arlene Rodenbeck organized a great cookout for the participants following the cleanup. Thanks to Jim Boone for boat transport out to Roberts Island and to Steve Rosen for the use of his truck to transport several loads of trash and debris to the dump.

**Finally:** We could not do this without the support of the board of directors. They, too, volunteered their time and skills for many of the opportunities above, as well as leading walks, monitoring properties, proofreading and editing, and sharing their wisdom and insights through their work on VLT's many committees.



Top left: Pam Grumbach at Coastal Cleanup on Roberts Island. Photo by Norbert Leser. Bottom left: Rick Morgan proudly displaying one of the panels on VLT's new Story Trail—see our cover story (bottom); photo by Kerry Hardy. Center left: Volunteer Hugh Martin hard at work drilling holes for the anchor bolts that hold the story panels; photo by Kerry Hardy. Center: Returning from Roberts Island with a boat and skiff load of debris. Photo by Norbert Leser. Top right: Participants on the Perry Creek Geology Walk, led by George Kendrick, part of this year's Walks and Talks program; photo by Norbert Leser. Bottom right: Migrating Bird Walk, led by John Drury; photo by Norbert Leser. Wildflower Walk, both also part of this year's Walks and Talks program; photo by Norbert Leser.

Won't you join us in helping VLT accomplish our goals and achieve our mission? Whether it's one time or a weekly commitment; whether it's in the office or out in the field; whether it's seasonal or year round; whether it's technical or manual skills you have to offer; we welcome your time, energy, and ideas on how you might help.