



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

VLT Merchandise	2
Reflections on Tip Toe	3
35 Years of VLT	4
All-Trail Challenge	7

Photo: Sophia Schaefer

New Land Protection 2020 WAS A BANNER YEAR FOR LAND PROTECTION

Thanks to generous donors, VLT was given three parcels of land in 2020.

We featured Little Garden Island in our fall 2020 newsletter. This rocky 5.4-acre island in the White Island group in western Penobscot Bay was donated to us last March by our partners at Maine Coast Heritage Trust. As this island hosts an active heronry (heron nesting site), public access will be limited to outside of nesting season. To learn more about Little Garden, you can find our fall newsletter on our website under the “News” menu.

“Connectivity” is a word we often use when thinking about conservation priorities. Land trusts look for connectivity in the lands we protect as we seek to create larger areas of undeveloped habitat and corridors so wildlife can move safely between those larger blocks. We also look for options to connect our trails, providing hikers with opportunities for longer hikes through varied terrains, something that is often requested.

Early in 2017, Kerry Hardy, VLT’s stewardship coordinator, and I were looking at our map of protected properties on Vinalhaven with connectivity in mind. We were intrigued by the possibility of a trail from Round Pond on the North Haven Road to Maine Coast Heritage Trust’s Carrying Place Bridge Preserve on Calderwood Neck. Such a trail would start on the Round Pond Preserve, protected by an

easement held by VLT, and run through other land also protected by an easement held by VLT. However, there was a privately owned 34-acre parcel that needed to be crossed in order to reach VLT’s Fish Hook Preserve. From there, one could hike down to the eastern edge of that preserve and across the road to the Carrying Place Preserve.



Mill River from the Overlook parcel. Photo: Kerry Hardy.

We knew the owner of that 34-acre parcel, Charlie Sullivan, who had given us the first cornerstone parcel of what is now the Fish Hook Preserve in 2006. We wrote him, asking if he might be willing to grant us a trail easement across his land. Imagine our delight when he responded that he would like to come meet with us in early summer to walk a possible trail and explore options for the property. It had been thirty-four years since Charlie and his wife, Susan Maycock, had last been to the island; we looked forward to giv-

ing them the tour.

With their permission, Kerry and I started exploring the property to site a possible trail—and were blown away by how beautiful and varied it is. There are high bare ledges, separated by hardwood seeps that contain some of the largest red maples and yellow birches on Vinalhaven, and over 2,500 feet of frontage on Mill River. An area, still regenerating from the fires of 1933, boasts an expansive fern and birch meadow. Intriguing rocks sport toupees of naturally dwarfed balsam fir; the rocky curves of glacial erratics are softened by mosses and lichens. I confessed to Kerry that I felt this was a parcel very worthy of permanent protection, due not only to its location, but also to its varied habitats and topography that will provide climate resilience for both plants and animals as our

climate changes.

Like so many conservation projects, this one proceeded slowly over the next few years, as Charlie and I explored options to help him achieve his goals for the property. The project went through several iterations, which was not unusual as landowners contemplate the legal, financial, and possible estate ramifications of conserving the land that they love. Fast forward to the fall of 2020, when Charlie announced that he would like to donate the property to VLT before the close of the year!

A Banner Year *continued from front page*

A new loop trail should be available for hiking by late spring, accessed from the Fish Hook trailhead on the north side of the Calderwood Neck Road. The trail all the way to Round Pond will take longer to develop, as other landowners will be involved.

If completing the Overlook parcel project was a long slow waltz, our final 2020 project was a fast-paced tango. In May, VLT was contacted by Basin Land Trust (BLT), asking if we would be interested in owning their 24-acre parcel to the north of the Basin entrance, as the trust was terminating in late October, per its incorporating documents. In 1989, BLT had granted a conservation easement to VLT on

this parcel, with Maine Coast Heritage Trust as “backup” easement holder. Though VLT monitors had been making annual visits to this site, Kerry and I had never personally explored this parcel before—so we headed out again, and encountered yet another wonderful landscape. Exploring a fern meadow near the shore, we discovered several rhubarb plants, likely indicators of an early settler; old quarry works provide another clue to this parcel’s past. High ledges offer a breathtaking view over Hurricane Sound. Basin Land Trust had long referred to this parcel as the “Barton’s Quarry Lot”, as Muriel Perkins purchased it from the four Barton siblings back in

1939. VLT will be retaining that name for this parcel. It will be managed under the terms of the Basin Management Plan, a joint project of VLT and MCHT that provides consistent and informed management guidance for all the conserved lands surrounding the Basin.

With many thanks to the trustees and shareholders of the Basin Land Trust, this parcel was gifted to VLT at the end of December 2020.

Given that access to this parcel is on the Hurricane Sound side, by small boat only, and that VLT needs to be very mindful of respecting the privacy of our abutters, this preserve may not be open to the public until later in 2021.

The board and staff of VLT are incredibly grateful to these generous donors, who have entrusted their land to our care in perpetuity. We are honored by their generosity, and look forward to sharing these special places with you.

– Linnell Mather

Photo left: Barton Quarry Lot, by Kerry Hardy.



VLT MERCHANDISE

Show your support for the nature of Vinalhaven by purchasing one of the many items available from our office at Skoog Park or at the Flea Market this summer. If you don’t plan on getting to the island this year, call us and we would be happy to mail you any of the following items: hats, fleece vests, tote bags with an Elaine Crossman print, notecards with artwork by Penelope Lord, notecards with Vinalhaven images by Kerry Hardy, and 3’ x 4’ maps of Vinalhaven’s geology created by Olcott Gates. Images and prices are on our website: vinalhavenlandtrust.org/vlt-merchandise

Be In Touch

If you have not yet received the 2020 Annual Report, stop by the office and pick one up.

In the cooler months, we send out monthly emails with news and environmental film and book recommendations. These will be more frequent in the summer when we have weekly walks scheduled. If you want to be added to our mailing list, please send an email to programs@vinalhavenlandtrust.org.

Check our website and visit us on Facebook for events and information. We’re on Instagram, too! [@vinalhaven_land_trust](https://www.instagram.com/vinalhaven_land_trust)



Photo: Sherry Rega

Reflections on Tip Toe

I am always grateful for Tip Toe and the trails around it, but especially this year when getting outside and exercising was the main event of my day. My family would all run down the Tip Toe Road at our respective paces and join up to walk the mossy loop or scramble up the rocks and look out into the bay.

I love the moss that stays bright green into the winter, the total flatness of the

ocean on a calm day, and the bubbly purple rocks on the Shore Trail. If I am lucky, in the early summer I can count the lady slipper flowers, singly popping out of the decaying wood and wet rot. The Tip Toe trails are short, beautiful slices of nature, and the perfect break before running back home.

– *Sophia Schaefer, summer resident*

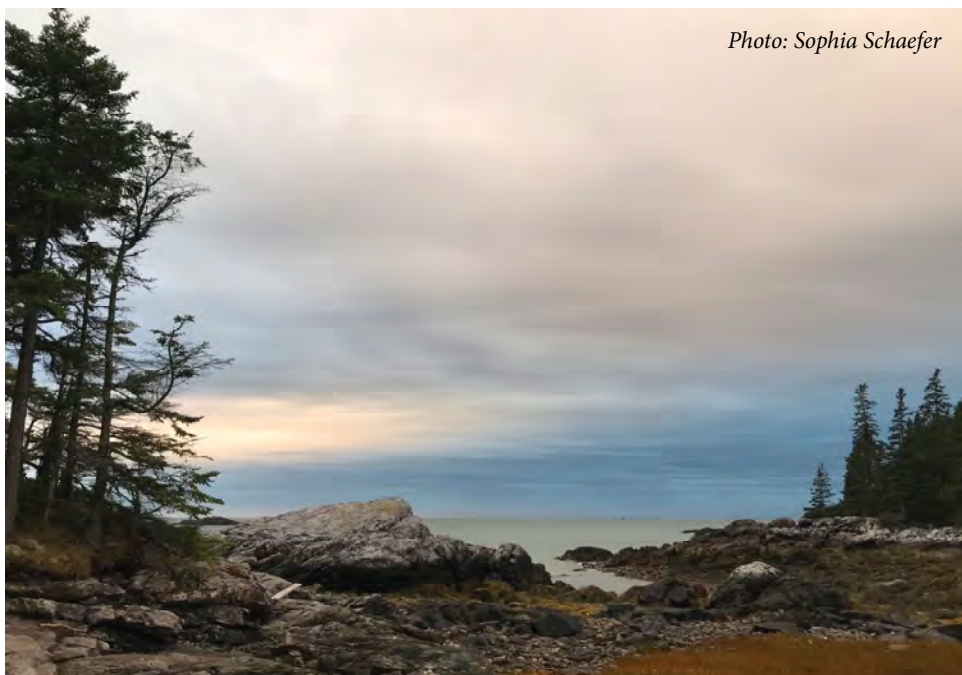


Photo: Sophia Schaefer

ANNUAL MEETING

Please plan to join us on Friday, July 30th at 4:00 p.m. for VLT's 36th Annual Meeting! Due to gathering restrictions, we will be meeting via Zoom, which means you can attend even if you can't be on Vinalhaven. Our speaker will be Tim Glidden, the outgoing president of Maine Coast Heritage Trust, our valued partner in conservation.

We will also have the usual address from our president, executive director, and tributes to outgoing board members. We can all toast to each other on zoom and hope to meet in person next year. Note that as we did last year, if you are a member in good standing, proxies for agenda items requiring a vote will be mailed to you well in advance of the meeting.

Environmental Education

2020 was a challenging year for all. We had to cancel most of the programs in the Vinalhaven School last year, though we were able to offer support by giving the school an \$11,000 grant to purchase educational materials for all grade levels. They purchased microscopes, aquariums, textbooks, science kits for data research, test tubes, and more. This spring hope is on the horizon! The middle school will visit Hurricane Island, and the lower grades will go on a hike with Tanglewood Learning Center for a return to some of the great programs we have helped support in the past.



Photo: Kerry Hardy

Planned Giving

You can make a provision now in your estate plan that will benefit VLT in the future. A gift from your estate will help ensure that the places we save today will be conserved forever. Protection and stewardship in perpetuity is what Vinalhaven Land Trust promises and, together, we can make this pledge a reality.

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 a beneficiary of an insurance policy or retirement plan. Please contact Linnell Mather 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.

35 Years of Vinal

1986-1990

1986: VLT incorporates and receives 501(c)(3) status.
 1987: First newsletter (on a mimeograph machine!)
 1988: VLT funds a natural resources inventory to support the town's comprehensive planning process.
 1988: VLT purchases land abutting the town's Armbrust Hill Town Park and then donates it to the town.

Protected Acres: 515 acres
New Trails: Perry Creek: Roy Dyer Trail and Round the Rocks Trail
Members: 400+



1991-1995

1991: VLT makes first payment in lieu of taxes (VLT's properties are exempt from property taxes, but we nevertheless make a payment "in lieu of taxes" to support the town.)
 1993: Skoog Memorial Park dedicated, now site of our office and home to Island Sail.
 1994: VLT starts Environmental Education program at Vinalhaven School. Lucy McCarthy and Linnell Mather become VLT's first paid employees.
 1995: First Annual Report.
 1995: Protection of seabird nesting islands in the Brimstone Archipelago begins.

Protected Acres: 1,060 acres
New Trails: E.L. Campbell Trail at Polly Cove, Fox Rocks Trail on the A.W. Smith Preserve
Members: 500



1996-2000

1997: Office at Skoog Park opens year-round.
 1997: Anchor Fund established.
 1998: Lucy McCarthy becomes Executive Director.
 1999: Thanks to George Flynn, VLT establishes endowment for Skoog Park.

Protected Acres: 1,368 acres
New Trails: Trail connecting north and south Perry Creek
Members: 559



2001-

2001: Thanks to challenge from E. L. Campbell, VLT adds \$75,000 hardship fund.
 2001: VLT donates source maps to support of an updated plan.
 2002: VLT hires first hardship Coordinator.
 2003: Donation of watershed of Rock to the protection of water supply.
 2005: Outdoor school program established.
 2005: VLT revises membership to the current plan.

Protected Acres: 1,700
New Trails: Whitmore
Members: 700



Vinalhaven Land Trust

2005

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2006-2010

2007: VLT expands and relocates office building.

2007: The first VLT sponsored 8th grade field trip to Mount Katahdin.

2009: MCHT & VLT draft Basin Management Plan, to guide the management and stewardship of the more than 950 acres of protected land around the Basin.

2009: First VLT website launched!

2009: Executive Director Lucy McCarthy wins Espy Land Heritage Award.

Protected Acres: 1,970 acres

New Trails: Watershed Trail, Mill River Preserve all-accessible trail, Granite Island trail, and the Wendell and Leola Smith Trail, allowing public access to Starboard Rock to be re-opened.

Members: 800

2011-2015

2010: Art for Land's Sake auction raises \$12,000 for stewardship.

2011: Lucy McCarthy retires, Tuck Godfrey joins the team as Executive Director.

2011-2013: 25th Anniversary Campaign raises \$1.8 million dollars to purchase Tip Toe Mountain Preserve and help ensure the stewardship of all of VLT's protected properties.

2012: VLT receives first accreditation from the nationally recognized Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

2013: VLT offers its first summer camp, led by Amy Palmer.

2015: Linnell Mather becomes Executive Director.

2015: VLT's first color newsletter!

2015: VLT and PIE partner in offering Perspectives After School programming.

Protected Acres: 2,153 acres

New Trails: Tip Toe Mountain Preserve

Members: 868

2016-2020

2016: *The Little Island*, by Margaret Wise Brown, is the first book featured on the Story Trail.

2016-2019: VLT supports the re-introduction of alewives in Old Harbor Pond.

2017: Accreditation is renewed for another five years.

2017: Funded by VLT, Hurricane Center for Science and Leadership is in the Vinalhaven School for the first time teaching scallop aquaculture.

2018: An agricultural easement at Enion Farm protects 34 acres.

2020: The Covid-19 pandemic drastically limited in-person programming, but our staff, board, volunteers, and members adapted to keep VLT's mission alive and thriving. We donated environmental education resource kits, gratefully received three significant properties, created three new trails, grew our member base by more than 100, and logged a whopping number of volunteer hours.

Protected Acres: 2,274 acres

New Trails: Story Trail, Fish Hook Preserve, Marcuse Wetlands Preserve

Members: 987



President's Message

Dear VLT members and friends,

As this newsletter shows, the staff, volunteers, and members of VLT have been active in recent months, and I know we all look forward to an interesting and lively spring and summer season. As I sit here in late March, with the temperature pushing past 60 degrees, it is easy to imagine getting out in nature frequently, and I look forward to seeing more people in person.

I want to thank our dedicated staff, volunteers, and members for their work and support.

– Lee Campbell

Summer 2021 Walks

Our walks program is back this summer! We have a full season of outdoor walks planned, while indoor talks will have to wait until 2022. Here is a taste of what we have scheduled so far:

Weekly Bird Walks: every Thursday from June 17th-September 9th

May: Warbler Walk with John Drury

June: Scudder Shoreline Cleanup, Where Language and Landscape Meet, and Spring Wildflower Walk

July: Creelman and Roberts Harbor Farm Tours, Invasive Plant Walk, Photography Workshop, Wildflower Walk, Writers Workshop

August: Dog Walk, Writers Workshop, Sage Woods Walk on North Haven, Low Tide Walk, Bee Demonstration, Ground Water Resources Walk, Intertidal Walk

September: Coastal Cleanup

Pre-registration is required for all walks. Email walks@vinalhavenlandtrust.org to register. The schedule may change between now and summer, and some walks are still in the planning stage. For more details and up-to-date information, please visit our website: vinalhavenlandtrust.org/walks-and-talks.

TICK CHECK

Don't forget to perform frequent tick checks on yourself, your family, and your pets. For more information on ticks and tick strategies, visit the resource page on our website:

VINALHAVENLANDTRUST.ORG/RESOURCES



Photo: Kerry Hardy



Photo: Sheri Romer

Spring Giving

The returning songbirds are music to our ears as spring starts once again, and also the time to reaffirm your support for VLT. If you're not currently a member, we'd love to sign you up!

During the pandemic, our trails have been available year-round so you could get outside and explore our beautiful island. Your membership helps maintain over 17 miles of trails for hikers of all abilities, and supports educational tools that encourages students to learn about habitats, plants, and the nature of their island home. As a member of VLT you are helping to protect the woodlands, wetlands, and salt marshes that define and ensure the nature of Vinalhaven.

You can renew your membership by using the response card we recently mailed out, the form on the back of this newsletter, or the "Donate Now" button on our website: vinalhavenlandtrust.org. Thank you for your support!

All-Preserve Marathon

Winter on the island can easily slide into routines. James and I were determined to break free from the tyranny of the Running Club's "standard loop"—Lanes Island plus Sands Road, Old Harbor Road, High Street, East Main, Foot Bridge, and Round the Mountain figure-eight. It didn't take long for this conversation to turn to preserves and trails. While looking at the maps, we realized that while we had covered some of the favorites—Perry Creek Conservation Area, The Basin (Williams Trail), and Huber—there were SO MANY preserves we had yet to set foot on.

In an uncanny stroke of good luck, it so happened that the next day was President's Day and therefore James had a holiday from educating the fine students of Vinalhaven. This time window

opened up the possibility to do, not just ONE after school preserve, but ALL the preserves starting at 9 am. Thus, the idea was born.

The first glitch in the plan occurred at 9:05 am when we realized that both Middle Mountain and Perry Creek were untracked and crusty. Further glitches occurred on a regular basis as we realized that ALL the trails were untracked and crusty. We didn't cross paths with many hikers that day but we finished tired and grateful to the town, VLT, MCHT, The Nature Conservancy, et al. for providing us with all that magical terrain.

— Pat Benzie and James LePage, Vinalhaven Running Club



Photo: Kerry Hardy

TRAIL WORK DAYS

Mark your calendar! Fridays: May 28th, June 25th, July 23rd, and August 27th are opportunities to help with trail maintenance this summer. VLT stewardship coordinator Kerry Hardy will lead these monthly expeditions during which you will spend 2-3 hours pushing back encroaching brush, trimming branches, installing signage, and accomplishing whatever else needs to get done. Volunteer parties meet at Skoog Park at 9 a.m. to venture out to a VLT preserve. Closed toes shoes are required; long pants are recommended.

James LePage on Starboard Rock. Photo: Pat Benzie



GET YOUR PASSPORT NOW

All-Trail Challenge!

Get your passport to walk all the trails this summer! From July 1st until October 1st, we challenge you to walk all of Vinalhaven's trails which include those on the properties of Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and the Town of Vinal-

haven. The incentive for this program is to raise awareness and celebrate the beauty of Vinalhaven's conserved land. Your passport will be available at the VLT office, or at the flea market this summer. A small fee will be charged for the processing of ma-

terials, with discounts for members and no charge for Vinalhaven School students. For more information, and a registration form, visit our website: vinalhavenlandtrust.org/passport

WISH LIST

Thinking of replacing your smaller but still reliable pickup truck? VLT is looking for a vehicle with reasonable clearance so our stewardship coordinator can navigate Vinalhaven's dirt roads without losing the muffler. Please contact Linnell if you might have something to offer.



Our Leadership

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 Lee Campbell, Jr.,
President
 Art Carpenter
 Emily Cohn,
Secretary
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 Chuck Gadzik
 David Hyde,
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 Pam Wetherbee

Staff

Linnell Mather, Executive Director
 Kerry Hardy, Stewardship Coordinator
 Sherry Rega, Programs Coordinator
 Sheri Romer, 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. Yearly membership is \$20 per person. Thank you!

\$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other \$ _____

Check enclosed.

Please charge my Visa or Mastercard # _____

Signature _____ exp. _____ CCV _____

Name _____

Address _____

Town/City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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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




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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