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Photo: Steri Romer



VINAL COVE CONNECTOR

The Missing Link

Ten years ago, VLT was in the process of acquiring an easement on Charles and Caroline Pardoe's parcel of land east of Round Pond, and planning a trail across it that would take hikers from Round Pond to Vinal Cove—an idea that became a reality in the summer of 2013. Five years ago, we began to imagine connecting the dots between that trail and the trails on our Fish Hook Preserve, located only half a mile east of Vinal Cove. To do so, we would need to cross two intervening properties in private ownership—one belonging to the Pardoes, and one belonging to Charles Sullivan.

idea, while reserving the right to deliberate a bit longer about the long-term use of his property; the Pardoes agreed to give us a trail easement conditional on Sullivan doing the same. That question was answered emphatically in 2020, when VLT gratefully accepted the Sullivan property, now known as the Overlook Preserve, as a gift.

Within weeks of completing the new trails at Overlook, Linnell and I were out again, revisiting the linkage across the Pardoe land. We subsequently sent the Pardoes a map of the proposed link, and made arrangements to walk it with Charles Pardoe, Jr.

True to their word, the Pardoes approved our proposal, and in December 2021 we signed the paperwork to formalize the Vinal Cove connector—almost half a mile of trail that would be the last link in the chain. From its beginning near Vinal Cove, the trail rises steadily through a series of shady ledges, with the land falling away dramatically to the left side. At the top of the hill, you're 100' above sea level, on mossy ledges under towering spruce trees. From here, the forest character changes sharply—the ground is nearly level, and young birch trees are on all sides of you, amid islands of huckleberries and bracken ferns. This is the evidence of a forest fire here roughly fifty years ago. A final 200 yards, mostly across open ledges, brings you to a fork in the trail—swing left to meander along the shoreline portion of the Overlook Preserve, or go straight to cross Overlook quickly and reach Fish Hook.

Work began on this final section late last fall, and by the time you read this, the trail will be finished and ready for hiking. There are a few important points to keep in mind. The

trail is entirely on private property, intended only for hikers—there is no parking allowed at the trailhead or in the gravel driveway nearby, so please leave cars at one of the three designated parking areas for the preserves. One reason for this is that the trailhead is right at Vinal Cove, next to an especially tricky curve in the Calderwood Neck Road. There is ample room to walk safely along the shoulder here, but hikers should always be cautious of drivers in this area. All in all, you can now enjoy a 2.5 mile hike from Round Pond to Carrying Place Bridge, with more than a mile of it hugging the shoreline of Mill River.

—Kerry Hardy, Stewardship Coordinator



Log steps lead to a section of open granite ledges on the new Vinal Cove Trail. Stewardship and photo by Kerry Hardy.

It never takes much arm-twisting to get Linnell and me out on a ramble, so in the spring of 2017 we bushwhacked our way from Round Pond to Fish Hook to see what the possibilities might be for creating a trail that linked these two anchors. The bold ledges, diverse forests, and scenic vistas on both parcels quickly convinced us to take the next step, and we soon got in touch with both landowners. To our delight, they both agreed to help us create such a trail. Mr. Sullivan conditionally approved the



Lichens on the "wedding cake" section of the Vinal Cove Trail. Photo by Linnell Mather.

Interview with Our Outgoing Executive Director

Vinalhaven Land Trust: When did you start working for VLT and what was your role? What are some of the noticeable differences between the work of VLT then and now?

Linnell Mather: I first started working for VLT in late 1994. I was hired for just a few hours a week to support the recordkeeping involved with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Challenge Grant that VLT had been awarded towards the purchase of Roberts Island. At the time, the cottage, now our office at Skoog Park, was not winterized, so Lucy McCarthy and I worked out of the back room of her house for the winter months. (All the files and a fireproof file cabinet had to be transported back and forth as the seasons changed.) Lucy's role as Assistant Coordinator was also part time. I did much of the bookkeeping from home on what was then a state-of-the-art Gateway desktop computer. Those unable to attend meetings in person could phone in on a scratchy conference line and do their best to hear and be heard. Volunteers did much of the work: assessing possible land protection projects, creating trails, monitoring properties, creating the newsletter and other mailings, and all the fundraising. Email? I might have gotten one or two a day.

Those few hours quickly expanded as I took on donor management and most aspects of the financial reporting for VLT. Members of the VLT finance committee bought VLT's first notebook computer (which weighed in at about ten pounds) for me to use, so I didn't have to fight for time on Lucy's computer.

Now, as an accredited land trust, we have strong policies in place that help guide our work and help ensure permanent land transactions, sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship. Achieving this requires that much more

of our work be staff driven. VLT currently has a staff of four, plus a seasonal steward during the summer months. More and more of our operations are "in the cloud," cutting back greatly on our use of paper and allowing us to easily share reports and documents in real time. Board and committee meetings can be joined by Zoom, which also allowed us to work remotely for thirteen months when Covid first became a concern. We've gone from having five or six miles of trail to maintain to having closer to twenty miles, including the trails at Middle Mountain, which we steward for the town. And those emails? I've gone from one or two a day to seventy-five to a hundred. That's a mixed blessing.

VLT: Based on your experience working for a land trust in an island community, what are some key attributes to being successful?

LM: Have you heard the old saying, "if you want to make the gods laugh, start making plans?" That applies to working for a land trust. Few days go the way I envision when I start on that first cup of coffee at 5 AM. The ferry does not run, necessitating rescheduling a meeting. I get an email that trees are down on one of the trails. A landowner calls, interested in learning more about land conservation. A new opportunity to support the community presents itself. The tent set up for annual meeting has come down in the night's wind and rain, soaking the hundred chairs set up under it. One has to be flexible, able to change gears on the run. A pair of hiking boots lives under my desk, so I can quickly change footwear and get out on the land—whether to meet with someone, deal with an issue, or just get a quick nature fix.

There is so much more to be aware of now in our work: climate change and all it is bringing, including sea level rise and new invasive or threatening species, such as disease-carrying ticks and browntail moths. When evaluating a potential project, "climate resilience" is now one of the attributes we look for.

One needs to be passionate about connecting people of all ages—from preschoolers to those less agile—to the special places of Vinalhaven. Our work is now so much more than "just" protecting land. It involves sharing our passion for the nature of Vinalhaven and finding ways to reach and engage a broad constituency in appreciating this special island.



Executive Director Linnell Mather may come to the office looking presentable and elegant, but she always stashes a pair of hiking boots under her desk in order to make her Clark Kent-style transition into the hands-on Executive Director in the field!

VLT: What have been some of your favorite memories and success stories from your years at VLT?

LM: There are so many memories that I will cherish from my time working here. Learning from Lucy McCarthy, whose passion for conservation has influenced my work ever since. The moment when I was able to share with the VLT board that we had raised the funds needed to close on the Tip Toe Mountain Preserve, ensuring that the high ground, a place enjoyed by generations of year-round and seasonal residents of all ages, would remain open for future generations. Achieving our first renewal of accreditation in 2017. Chatting with potential donors, and learning firsthand about what motivates them to support our work.

But the acquisition of the Overlook Preserve will always be one of the most exciting moments for me. From the first time VLT's Stewardship Coordinator Kerry Hardy and I explored that incredibly varied parcel in 2017, I knew it was special. Not only for its location, between two previously protected parcels, but also for its diversity of habitats, ranging from hardwood seeps boasting several species of good size hardwoods to high domes of bare granite. Kerry, assisted by Aryeh Lieber, VLT's seasonal steward in 2021, created trails and structures that allow hikers to experience these habitats and, I hope, to share my appreciation of Charles Sullivan's generosity in donating that land to VLT.

It has been both a gift and an honor to work for VLT. Thanks to all of you, I have met so many wonderful people, learned so much, and explored parts of the island I would not have seen otherwise. With a clear and achievable strategic plan in place, a strong and engaged board, and some great staff, the organization is well positioned for whatever comes next.



VOLUNTEER ON OUR TRAILS

We're excited to get back out on the trails with you this season! If you want to join us in our upkeep duties, keep an eye out for our trail maintenance work days.

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. Let us know if you'd like to be alerted as work days are scheduled by sending an email to programs@vinalhavenlandtrust.org.

We'll also be spreading the word with posters around town and posts on Facebook and Instagram.



Photo: Acacia Berg

Give This Spring

Spring is the time of returning bird songs and bright blossoms, and also the time to reaffirm your support for VLT by renewing your membership. If you're not a member already, we'd love to sign you up!

Your membership helps maintain more than 17 miles of trails for hikers of all abilities, aids in providing educational Walks and Talks programming available to enthusiasts of any age at no cost, and supports educational tools that encourage students to learn about the habitats, plants, animals, and natural resources of their island home.

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!

WALKS AND TALKS PREVIEW

This season's Walks and Talks offers a schedule filled with events for a variety of interests and abilities. Here is just a taste of what we have scheduled so far:

Weekly Bird Walks: every Thursday from June 16th-September 15th

April: Basin Cleanup

May: Warbler Walk, Vernal Pool Walk

June: Wild Flower Walk, Geology Walk, Forest Management

July: Wildflower Walk, Low Tide Walk, Wind Turbine Tour, Hurricane Island Trip

August: Fairy Houses, Burnt Island Hike, Dog Walk, Grasses and Sedge Walk, Low Tide Walk, Geology Walk

September: Saltwater Marsh Walk, Coastal Cleanup

Learn more about these events and others by visiting the event calendar available on our website.

Leave a Legacy

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 the 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.

By The Way

Island Explorers

VLT's popular day camp hopes to be back this summer, but we're looking for a qualified individual or team to lead it. Please email programs@vinalhavenlandtrust.org if you or someone you know could be interested!

Annual Meeting

We hope you will join us under the tent at Skoog Park on Friday, July 29th at 4 p.m. for VLT's 37th Annual Meeting. Our speaker this year will be Amy Watson, CEO of Fox Islands Electric Cooperative, Inc. (FIEC), an electric transmission and distribution utility, and managing member of Fox Islands Wind, LLC, a 4.5 MW wind generation facility. Prior to moving to Maine, she served as General Counsel, representing an electric cooperative in Colorado, on large-scale solar projects, legislative regulations and other legal matters.

After the usual reports from board members and Linnell, please enjoy a beverage and some nibbles while we all get to see one another again. As we did last year, all voting will be done by proxy; we'll be mailing those to you in early July.

VLT Merchandise

Show your support for our work to conserve 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, visit our website or 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 Pam Grumbach, notecards with Vinalhaven images taken by our staff and volunteers, and 3' x 4' maps of Vinalhaven's geology created by Olcott Gates. Images and prices are on our website: vinalhavenlandtrust.org/vlt-merchandise.

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Katharine Baker & Peter Titelman
Ben Matlock & Ted Todd
Mark & Mary Lou Tolette
Cortland & Roxanne Tolman
Silas Towler
The Trafford Family
Robert & Virginia Travers
Darrow Lebovici & Margaret Twohey
Andrew & Katherine Updegrove
Joseph & Mary Lou Upton
Danielle Vacanti
Christi & Jan van Heek
Cecily Vaughan
Christian & Mary Verlaque
Alan Farago & Lisa Versaci
Gary Krog & Lori Versaci
Christine Vincent
Jean Vincent

Karen Walbridge
Jonathan Wales
Kate & Tom Walker
Judy Heining & Ted Walsh
Chris & Jennifer Walton
Bessy Kong & John Wasielewski
Susan Brownsword & Craig Waters
Nancy Weaver
Barbara Keen & Constance Webster
Dana & Noel Webster
Kathy & Randy Webster
Mary Jo & Paul Webster
Cynthia & Gary Wegner
Lorraine Ferguson & Adam Weinberg
David & Sandra Weiss
Michelle Tullier & Avrum Weiss
Barbara Weitz
Jason Hearst & Sarah Welch
The Welsch Family
Cristy West
Charles Pardoe & Mariette Westermann
Beth Furman & David Wetherbee
Pamela Wetherbee
Joseph & Sarah Whinery
Ann Helwege & Tim White
Barbara Deuell & Peter Whitman
Coralee & Rodney Whittemore
Bob & Nyla Wiebe
Erin Wietecha
Bob Wilbanks
Andrew Kimball & Sarah Williams
Ben Williams Sr.
Benjamin & Betsy Williams
Christopher Lane & Christine Williams
Jeanne Segal & Dick Williams
Jesse, Sr. & Linda Williams
Karen & Jeffrey Wills
Lloyd Van Lunen & Margaret Wilson
Beth Newbold & Pat Winkler
Katherine & Carlton Winslow
The WLS Foundation
Frank Marchell & Cindy Wojcicki
Wendy Wolfe
Allie Wood
David & Nancy Wood
Eleanor & Timothy Wright
Joan Wright
Rick Wyman
Christine & Leonard Yannielli
Albert L. Yetter
Dick & Holly Young
Spencer Youngblood
Roz Zander
Stephen Zoloth
Joshua Stein & Laura Zucker

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

Thank you!

Environmental Education at Vinalhaven School



High school students attending the Envirothon training in Orono and a middle school student designing his 3D printer lobster trap for the HICS&L project. Photos by Acacia Berg.

At Vinalhaven School, many exciting environmental education programs are underway or have already happened this spring, and boy, does it feel good to see the students outside and learning all together again!

In March, a group of high-achieving students in Dan Ganoza's high school science classes participated in the Envirothon, a problem-solving and team building competition for high school students focused on Earth and Environmental Science topics. Taking place on the campus of University of Maine at Orono, Vinalhaven students attended the spring training and learned about this year's subject focuses from professionals in each

field. While on campus, they also had the opportunity to learn more about an educational and/or professional future in the environmental and natural resource sectors.

We're also proud sponsors of an ongoing collaboration between the middle school science students and Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership (HICS&L). Putting their conceptual scientific knowledge to the test during classroom visits and activities led by HICS&L's John Van Dis, Emily Cohn's middle school students have been working to create fishing & aquaculture gear using their inherent innovation and their 3D printers. After continuing to build their traps and collect

data throughout the spring, the students will get to visit Hurricane Island for some site-specific learning and project building in June.

By the time you read this, elementary students will be out and about as well, with educational hikes on our trails led by Tanglewood Learning Center and an interactive presentation about Vinalhaven's First Peoples by our own Kerry Hardy. Seeing the students' curiosity, intuitive inspirations, and enthusiasm come to life in—and outside of—the classroom is what fills us with hope for a future led by this next generation of island stewards!

—Acacia Berg, Programs and Communications Coordinator

SCHOLARSHIPS!

This year, for the first time, VLT will be offering several scholarships to Vinalhaven students:

- An annually renewing \$2,000 scholarship for a graduating senior pursuing further education or training in a field that aligns with our mission
- Two scholarships for high school students to attend the Sustainability Leadership summer program at Hurricane Center for Science and Leadership
- Two scholarships for middle school students to attend a summer program at Tanglewood Learning Center
- Similar summer camp experiences, involving nature, sustainability, STEM, or the like, are also eligible.

To find out how interested students can learn more and apply, email programs@vinalhavenlandtrust.org.

A FOND FAREWELL AND A WARM WELCOME

New Programs and Communications Staff

Over the winter, we bid adieu to Sherry Rega, VLT's former Programs Coordinator. In her tenure with VLT, she upgraded us to a new, resource rich website, as well as expanding our outreach and communication programs, and we wish her all the best in all her future endeavors!

In her place, Acacia Berg joined us as the new Programs and Communications Coordinator. Acacia comes to us with a background in environmental education and regenerative agriculture. She grew up learning to appreciate the gifts of the natural world through gardening, foraging, maple sugaring, and exploring the forested ravines of her childhood home in the Driftless region of Wisconsin. Over the years, she's refined her interests through an environmental education at Conserve School and Knox College, and through experience in community with others on organic farms and in the food justice movement. Since coming to Vinalhaven to get to know her partner's beloved childhood home and work on the Creelman Farm, she has fallen in love with the island's natural beauty and tightknit community, and has been enjoying

making a life on Vinalhaven year-round.

At VLT, Acacia manages our website and social media accounts, organizes environmental education programs for Vinalhaven School, and facilitates outreach to members and the larger community. She is excited to be part of the VLT team and to engage with community members, so if you stop by the office, be sure to say hi!



Acacia Berg. Photo by Dmitri Chambers.

Ecosystems Investigation Network



A wild day at State Beach! Photo by Linnell Mather.

VLT is excited to be partnering with the town's Sea Level Rise Committee and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) in bringing the Ecosystems Investigation Network to the island later this year. This community science opportunity supports field-based collaborative research into the climate-driven changes happening in the Gulf of Maine and its watershed. The Network includes locally and regionally focused projects designed to engage participants in rewarding work and generate scientific data and understanding. This Network—its tools, people, and guides—is designed to be a resource for scientists and communities to create projects involving all kinds of people, from middle school students to seasoned sportsmen. The participants collect and consider data to reveal new patterns and new understandings of how climate change is impacting our region's species, communities, and habitats. Through connected efforts and conversations, it is our hope that what we uncover together gives us all a better understanding of the effects of climate change on our regional watershed system. You can learn more about the Network at investigate.gmri.org.

Vinalhaven has deep cultural and economic ties to the coast and the waters of the Gulf of Maine. The Sea Level Rise Committee has been working since 2016 to better understand the impacts of sea level rise and storm surge, and to share what they learn with decision makers and the community so that Vinalhaven can be a better informed and more climate resilient commu-

nity. You can learn more about their work from their page on the Town of Vinalhaven's website: townofvinalhaven.org.

What will the Ecosystems Investigation Network look like on Vinalhaven? This project will allow anyone on island to collect and upload data about coastal flooding and its impacts. Though there will be four designated coastal monitoring sites (Lane's Island, State Beach, the north end landing and Grimes Park), anyone can participate from any location of their own choosing. As the varying weather patterns around the island can lead to differences in tide height and possible storm surge, this project aims to uncover those patterns.

This project welcomes everyone to participate—contribute your observations, document the types of impacts you are seeing, and share your concerns. Even if you're not out at high tide, you can still look for evidence of flooding, such as high water marks, which could be washed up seaweed or other ocean debris or signs of erosion.

Once this project launches, we'll be sharing more information about how to participate in the Wind, on our website, and in our monthly digital newsletter. If you're not already receiving that, and would like to, please email programs@vinalhavenlandtrust.org to sign up.

—Linnell Mather, Executive Director of VLT and co-chair of the Vinalhaven Sea Level Rise Committee

Message From The President

Change is in the Air.

That was the phrase that former VLT President Susie Lawrence used in 2010 to describe the pending departure of our first Executive Director, Lucy McCarthy. It is an apt description for this moment as we contemplate the retirement of Linnell Mather in the fall of 2022. Linnell started working for VLT as the bookkeeper in 1994 and has served as our first full-time Executive Director for the past seven years.

Linnell has accomplished a great deal on behalf of VLT in the past seven years, and I outlined some of them in my letter sent out in February, announcing her plans: Whole Place conservation areas, environmental education and outreach, renewal of accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Linnell's professional expertise in the land trust world has also led her to serve on the steering committee of the Maine Land Trust Network, and locally she is co-chair of the Vinalhaven Sea Level Rise Committee. Through her efforts, and the staff she leads, VLT is as strong as it has ever been, and we will have a further chance to acknowledge her service this summer at the annual meeting.

By the time you read this newsletter we hope to be well along in our search for a new Executive Director. You can check our website for updates, and if you have any thoughts or comments, please email search@vinalhavenlandtrust.org.

—Lee Campbell, President

TICK CHECK



With the warm weather comes tick season, unfortunately. 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.

Our Leadership

Board of Directors

Jim Boone
Lee Campbell, Jr.,
President
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David Hyde
Bill Jaques

Cay Kendrick
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Yvonne Thomas
Mark Tolette,
Treasurer
Pam Wetherbee

Staff

Linnell Mather, *Executive Director*
Acacia Berg, *Programs and Communications
Coordinator*
Kerry Hardy, *Stewardship 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.

If you'd prefer to pay by credit card or PayPal, please visit our website: vinalhavenlandtrust.org

and click on the Donate Now button. Thank you!

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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.

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

WISH LIST

The next Executive Director!
Visit our website to learn more about
the search and send leads our way.



Vinalhaven Land Trust conserves and stewards our island's important natural, recreational, and agricultural resources, including scenic and other traditionally valued places, for the benefit and enjoyment of the entire Vinalhaven community. Through education and engagement, VLT seeks to advance understanding and appreciation of the natural world.



Vinalhaven Land Trust

12 Skoog Park Road
PO Box 268
Vinalhaven, ME 04863



Photo: Acacia Berg