

Maine Legacy

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The
Liatris
Mysteries
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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
Storehouse

Winter 1995

A Tradition Of Protection Hallowell Island

I couldn't have heard better news!" That was Lester Seeley's reaction to the Maine Chapter's year-end purchase of Hallowell Island. The protection of this sprawling 63-acre Cobscook Bay island has special meaning for Seeley - and not simply because it is in his home town of Edmunds.

"That island's got a little bit of everything," says Seeley, noting the open blueberry barrens on its northern end, a dense spruce forest to the south, beaches, seal ledges, songbird, shorebird and waterfowl habitat, and the company of eagles.

It has remained in its natural state because Seeley and others, most notably Dr. Arthur West of Suffolk University, took action to preserve the island 30 years ago. In 1964, the Hallowell family had placed the island on the market. A potential buyer had building plans that included a small landing strip on the island's open and low-lying northern end.

At the time, Seeley and West were



An eagle's-eye view of Hallowell Island

both associated with Suffolk University's Friedman Field Station, a marine research facility on the mainland just across the water from Hallowell Island. They felt the island should remain undeveloped, but the University, a logical buyer, was unable to take title.

Fortunately, they were able to work

out an arrangement with another educational institution, New England College, to buy the island with funding provided by the Williams Foundation. The island has since become known alternatively as Williams Island in recognition of the foundation's timely generosity.

For the last three decades, students from the nearby field station have used Hallowell for research; local residents have picnicked on its beaches and gathered its bounty of wild cranberries and blueberries. Wildlife has come and gone undisturbed.

All that could have changed were it not for New England College's commitment to the island's preser-

*Deep within
Cobscook Bay,
Hallowell Island sprawls
off the coast of Edmunds.*



MAINE STATE LIBRARY *Continued on page two*

JAN 25 1995

The Director's Column

by Kent W. Wommack

I think everyone who works for The Nature Conservancy, be it as a volunteer or as a staff person, feels a special affinity for the organization. There is a spirit of optimism, of opportunity, and of respect for both people and nature which permeates the organization. It is a spirit which inspires people to do their best because they care deeply about the Conservancy's mission.

It was this entrepreneurial spirit which first attracted me to the Conservancy fourteen years ago, and which continues to inspire me today. Each year has brought new challenges and new opportunities for achieving the Conservancy's mission and for personal growth and satisfaction.

This year will be no exception. With the \$5 million Maine Legacy campaign just completed, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Chapter members (see page seven), the coming year will be one for consolidating our



Kent Wommack on recent visit with conservation partners in Mexico

gains, undertaking selective new projects, soliciting our members' advice and planning for the future. As part of this process, I will be taking a six-month sabbatical, beginning this spring and running through September.

I plan to use much of my time away from the office for reading, research and writing about conservation issues. I hope to visit other Conservancy field offices, preserves and bioscience sites to see first-hand how they are

addressing similar conservation challenges, and to share my knowledge and experience from Maine. I also expect to research sustainable economic development issues related to our work on larger landscapes.

I plan to return to the Chapter office following our annual meeting in September with fresh perspectives and renewed energy as we undertake a new strategic plan for tackling the conservation challenges ahead.

In my absence, I am delighted to say that Barbara Vickery will serve as Acting Executive Director. Barbara joined the Chapter in 1983 as Director of Science and Stewardship, and has been one of the Chapter's most valued and respected staff members ever since. In her current capacity as Director of Conservation Planning, Barbara has helped spearhead some of our most ambitious conservation efforts, including our work at the Waterboro Barrens and in Cobscook Bay.

Hallowell Island

continued from page one

vation. Early in 1994, when the college decided it needed to sell the island, Debbie Reed, then chair of the college's board of trustees, contacted the Maine Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. New England College sought to achieve both the sale and long-term protection of the island, a win-win outcome made possible when the Conservancy agreed to the \$125,000 price set by the college.

"The island *should* be preserved," says Mrs. Reed. "I am delighted that the Conservancy is the new owner, and that the island will continue to be available for educational purposes."

From the Conservancy's point of view, Hallowell Island's eagle habitat makes it particularly significant. It lies

between three active nesting areas, all within eagle's view of Hallowell; any significant development on the island could have threatened the breeding success at all these nests. Moreover, for years Hallowell was itself a nest site and, as Doug Mullen of Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge says, "that island will have another nest on it sooner or later."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would like to include Hallowell Island as part of the Moosehorn Wildlife Refuge. That may occur someday, but for now this beautiful island will be owned and managed by the Conservancy.

This summer the Chapter's stewardship staff will get acquainted



Hallowell Island

with the island and its traditional uses. We're hoping Lester Seeley will provide them with an introduction to the island he has watched over for so many years.



Barbara Vickery

Meanwhile, Barbara has gained respect throughout the Conservancy and is frequently called upon as a resource for science and conservation planning. In addition, she serves on numerous committees and task forces here in Maine.

I am truly grateful to our Chapter Trustees, Barbara and all my other colleagues at the Conservancy for this opportunity. I look forward to rejoining them all next fall, which should be exciting: we've already got some great projects in the works for this year!

Indian Point-Blagden Preserve Gains Parcel

The Chapter received a .3-acre donation of land at our Indian Point-Blagden Preserve. This forested parcel, donated by Phoebe Milliken of Greenwich, CT and Bar Harbor, had been surrounded by the Maine Chapter preserve. Indian Point-Blagden Preserve, a 110-acre forested preserve on the west side of Mount Desert, has over 1000 feet of rocky shore frontage on Western Bay, and provides an ideal spot for seal-watching. The preserve was donated to the Maine Chapter in 1968 by Donald and Zelina Blagden, who summered there for many years. We are grateful to Mrs. Milliken for her strategic addition to this popular preserve.

Barred Island Preserve Expands

The Conservancy's Barred Island Preserve on Deer Isle has been greatly enhanced through a year-end gift by George Pavloff of Cape Elizabeth. Mr. Pavloff contributed a 40% interest in a 48-acre tract of adjacent coastline. He will donate the rest of his ownership in the property in two installments, one in 1999 and another in 2004.

Mr. Pavloff, who with his late wife Elli owned and operated the adjacent Goose Cove Lodge for many years, donated this land to the Maine Chapter to secure what has become a traditional access point to Barred Island. The partly forested 2-acre island is connected to the mainland by a sand bar at low tide. Donated to the Maine Chapter in 1969, Barred

Island is a popular destination for lodge guests and for local residents.

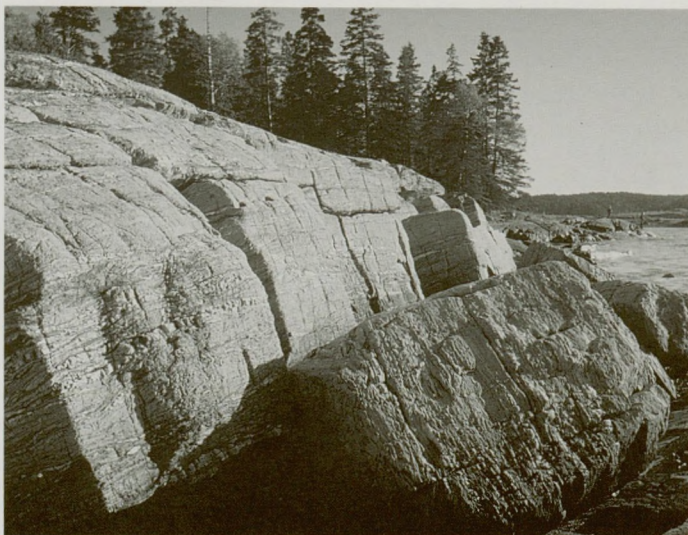
When Mr. Pavloff sold Goose Cove Lodge in December, he was also able to fulfill his desire to leave a fitting memorial to his wife.

"This gift," explained Mr. Pavloff, "is as much from Elli as it is from me."

That fact was made poignantly clear when Mr. Pavloff had a corner of the donated property resurveyed so that it would contain one of his wife's favorite spots: a granite bench that sits along the shore at "Prayer Rock." This rock ledge provides a view to the ocean through the trees, and is part of the 1900 feet of shorefront that will become part of the Barred Island Preserve.



LINA S. RICH



Barred Island, above, is linked to the mainland by a sand bar at low tide. Left, the Indian Point-Blagden Preserve

GEORGE WERTNER

The

CASE OF

Liatris

THE MISSING SEEDS

Mysteries

In some ways, the Kennebunk Plains represents an embarrassment of riches.

Once again this August, *Liatris scariosa*, commonly known as the Northern Blazing Star, bloomed at this southern Maine site in purple profusion. Many visitors came to the sandplain grassland simply to marvel at this late summer explosion of color, one of the most singular events on Maine's natural calendar. Others came to solve a mystery.

Despite its lush abundance here, this dramatic flower is fading out of existence throughout the rest of its range. Now, however, thanks to persistent scientific sleuthing at the Plains, we may understand at least one factor in the flower's decline and what can be done about it.

Over the course of the past two years, researcher Peter Vickery may have discovered a culprit responsible for the plant's alarming decline worldwide and, through some effective detective work, shown how the slide can be stopped. The story of Vickery's research reads like a mystery for which only the final chapter remains to be written.

Missing seeds

Fully 90% of the world's population of Northern Blazing Star are found at the Plains. There are hundreds of



The Northern Blazing Star displays its botanic fireworks at the Kennebunk Plains each year. Similar displays are rapidly disappearing at sites throughout southern New England.

PETER VICKERY

thousands of plants here, perhaps millions. Worldwide, the plant is found at only 67 other sites and fewer than a third of those can boast even 50 plants - only a handful exceed 1,000. Sparse and isolated, these roadside, hilltop and sandplain populations are disappearing. But why?

Because seedlings seemed scarce, Peter Vickery thought the answer might be found in the low rate of seed germination, a fact that meant few new plants to bolster or renew existing populations. In the fall of 1993, he set about collecting *Liatris* seeds for Conservancy-supported germination experiments. Given the structure of the plant and the minute size of the

seeds, this was intricate work.

A mature *Liatris* plant can have as many as 15 stalks (although the average is much lower). Each stalk can carry up to 50 flower heads, what most of us think of as the flower itself. These starbursts of purple are actually composites of roughly 50 tiny flowers apiece (If you do the math - 15 stalks x 50 heads x 50 flowers - you get a staggering 37,500 flowers per mature plant!).

As Vickery opened the flower heads, he made a surprising and unsettling discovery. The base of the flowers, where the tiny seeds should have nestled safely, were "all munched up," eaten by some predator with a mighty appetite. In flower head after flower head, nearly all of the seeds had been devoured.

With these unpleasant clues and the advice of entomologists Don Mairs at the Maine Department of Agriculture and Richard Dearborn of the Maine Department of Conservation, Vickery could form a pretty good hunch as to what the culprits looked like. Nevertheless, he had to wait nearly a year to come face to face with one.

The glutton

This past summer, he pried open the flower heads much earlier in the



BILL SILVER JR.

Peter Vickery, Maine-based avian ecologist for the Massachusetts Audubon Society, was first drawn to the Kennebunk Plains by its population of Grasshopper Sparrows, right, but one rare species led to the next.



PETER VICKERY

The larva burrows into the base of the flower head to feed on its seeds, above.

Fortunately, the Conservancy's management methods have limited the caterpillar's destructive appetite - at least at Kennebunk Plains.

growing season. The glutton within turned out to be, as expected, a small caterpillar, presumably the larva of a moth.

The entomologists believe that these larvae emerge from eggs laid on the flowers, burrow into the flower head (like a corn borer) and take up residence at the base of the flowers. Here the half-inch worms spend the summer munching, with impressive thoroughness, a destructive swath through the seeds. By late September, apparently sated on seeds, they vacate the premises, migrate down the stalk and burrow into the sandy soil.

This is a fairly likely scenario, but science needs facts. At this point, almost anything seen floating on scaled wings (that is, moths and butterflies) can be considered a suspect. The entomologists were able to narrow the list down to lepidoptera because of telltale characteristics of the larvae, i.e., patterns of bristles on the foot-like protuberances on their undersides.

Moths are the primary suspects, however, because the modus operandi of this caterpillar matches what is known about moth larvae feeding

habits. Unlike butterfly larvae which feed openly, moth larvae are known to dine in more secluded sites, like those within the base of a flower head.

Meanwhile at least one false lead has been followed and abandoned. Last summer, a Conservancy researcher caught a pretty little moth nectaring on a Northern Blazing Star flower head at the Kennebunk Plains. When its common name turned out to be *Northern Blazing Star borer*, things looked promising. Promising, that is, until it became clear that this moth's offspring feed on roots, sometimes stalks, but never on the flowers.

So who are these seed-feasters and who lays the eggs from which they emerge?

A waiting game

To solve that part of the puzzle, Vickery has turned to a third entomologist, David Wagner at the University of Connecticut. This summer Vickery cut off a number of flowering stalks, wrapped them tightly in plastic and sent them special delivery to Wagner's lab in Connecticut. Wagner placed the base of the stalks into sand and behind glass and has watched as the larvae eventually emerged and, as predicted, made their way down the stalks and into the sand. There the larvae pupated - entered a cocoon-like

pupa stage during which the insect undergoes its miraculous transformation into its final adult form.

Wagner hopes to "force" the pupae to hatch this spring and then identify the moth. If this scheme works, the investigators will gain valuable information on its range and habits, as well as answers to a variety of questions. For example: How dependent is it on the Northern Blazing Star as a host and how much of a factor is it in the species' decline elsewhere?

Ashes and survival

While they wait, Vickery may have already discovered at least one answer to that second question.

Since 1987, the Kennebunk Plains has been managed jointly by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy. For the last five years the Conservancy has conducted prescribed burns on various plots as a way of protecting the habitat for grassland birds and for the *Liatris* itself.

Over the previous 50 years, the Plains had been managed as a blueberry barren. The regular burning then had contributed to the grassland's survival over time. In fact, Peter Vickery thinks it may have saved the Northern Blazing Stars outright.

continued on next page



PETER VICKERY

The Liatris Mysteries

Continued

Vickery began to compare flower heads from plots burned recently to those untouched by fire in many years. The correlation between infestation and fire could not have been clearer. Vickery found that the insect was wiping out up to 90% of *Liatris* seeds in areas which had not been burned in over 10 years. In contrast, the loss was closer to 10% on those sections burned more recently.

While these findings are important, if unanticipated, validation for the Conservancy's fire management strategy at the Kennebunk Plains, the greatest value may be to the other 67 stands of *Liatris scariosa*. Many of these are in sharp, apparently uncontrollable decline. To casual



BRUCE KIDMAN

A prescribed burn at the Kennebunk Plains

observers, the crisis at such locations may be hard to discern because mature plants continue to bloom each year. But if these mature plants cannot drop viable seeds to the ground, it will be only a matter of time until the stalks

of purple starbursts are consigned to memory.

Even here, several crucial questions need to be answered: Is it the fire itself that destroys the insects? Or, do the increased nutrients left behind by the fire change the plant's chemical composition and make it less delectable to the larvae's tastes? As Peter Vickery is quick to point out, it is much too early to declare victory -

but stay tuned as this mystery unfolds (we will let you know when the moths appear).



BRUCE KIDMAN

Julie Henderson, shown here with her husband, Tony French, and daughter, Piper, will be resigning her position as Director of Science and Stewardship in February in order to spend more time with her growing family. Julie has been a mainstay of the Chapter's stewardship program since joining the staff in 1987. Her extraordinary dedication, caring perspective and good humor will be sorely missed by all of her colleagues and scores of preserve volunteers throughout the state. We know Chapter members will join us in wishing Julie and her family well in the years ahead.

6-Maine Legacy, Winter 1995

Carol Wishcamper Receives The Nature Conservancy's Highest Award

The Oak Leaf Award is The Nature Conservancy's highest honor, recognizing exceptional contributions and service by volunteers.

At the Conservancy's national annual meeting in Tucson, Arizona in September, the Oak Leaf Award was bestowed upon Carol Wishcamper of Freeport. Carol served as a member of the Maine Chapter Board from 1983 to 1993 (the full ten years allowed under the By-Laws). She led the Board as Chairperson for two years and served in other officer and committee chairperson positions during most of her tenure.

Following her retirement from the Board in 1993, Carol generously and effectively continued to serve *ex officio* as chair of the campaign committee for the Maine Chapter's \$5 million capital campaign, launched during her chairmanship (see opposite page).

Carol was also recognized for her many contributions to the Conservancy's international programs.



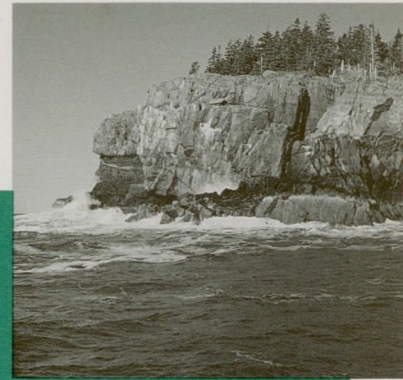
Following ten years of exceptional service, Carol Wishcamper received the Oak Leaf Award from Conservancy President John Sawhill.

Following fact-finding missions to several Latin American countries, she inspired the Maine Chapter's Board of Trustees to devote \$400,000 of the Maine Legacy Campaign to international projects benefiting Maine's migratory birds. The criteria developed by the Chapter to select appropriate international projects have since been adopted for use by several other state offices.

The Waterboro Barrens,
left, and Shipstern
Island below

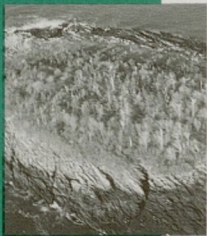


HAROLD MAIDE



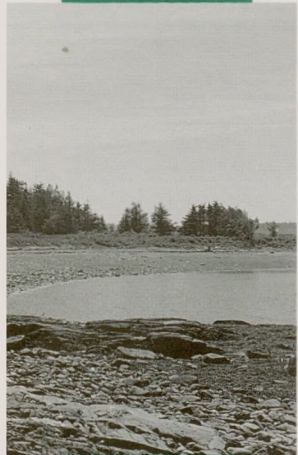
Maine Legacy Campaign Reaches \$5 Million Goal

Appleton Bog



JOHANNA THOMAS

Mark Island



Hog Island

As the 1994 holiday season rolled around, the Maine Chapter's fund-raising staff was too anxious to feel festive. After four and one-half years of hard-won progress in the teeth of a recession, the Chapter's Maine Legacy capital campaign was an agonizing four percent short of its \$5 million goal.

With campaign completion scheduled for December 31, there was no likely prospect for raising the last \$200,000...when what to our wondering ears should appear, but a call from the Coast that was full of good cheer!

To describe a miracle succinctly, James Barthe, a California resident who summers in Maine, had done extremely well in his business. Now he and his wife, Nancy, wanted to share their good fortune with others and Jim was calling to ask if we could use a year-end stock gift worth more than \$200,000? *Could we ever!*

And so the Maine Legacy campaign ended with a financial flourish, the Maine Chapter's largest single gift from living individuals in its 38-year history. To say we are grateful for this unsolicited act of extraordinary generosity could not be more of an understatement.

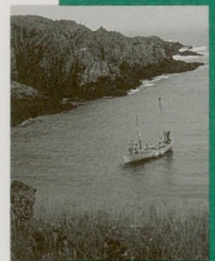
But we are equally grateful to each of the thousands of individuals, foundations and corporations who contributed the preceding \$4.8 million.

There was virtually no slack in the system: every gift was needed, every gift counted and, most importantly, every gift contributed directly to the protection of Maine's best remaining natural lands - as the photographs on this page attest. It was a tremendous achievement of which we can all be proud.

Thanks to one and thanks to all!



Perham Bog



North Libby
Island



Great Duck Island

BILL SILVER, JR.



HAROLD MAIDE



Flamingos near
Celustun, Mexico

Saco Heath

Field trips are a good way of learning about Nature Conservancy preserves and other areas protected by the Conservancy. Also important is the opportunity of sharing the outdoors with some very nice people. We have taken suggestions from Maine Chapter members to heart in planning and scheduling trips. Look for more trips in upcoming newsletters.

Spring 1995 Field Trips

1. *The Woods In Winter*

Saturday, February 18, 1995 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Whose woods are these? Preserve steward and naturalist Peter Blanchard will provide a naturalist's response to Robert Frost's question as he leads a natural history walk at the **Indian Point-Blagden Preserve**. He also invites intrepid hikers back to his Mt. Desert home where he'll have a blazing fire and hot drinks to go with the lunch you pack. **Added attraction:** For those still game, Peter will lead a 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. cross country ski on the island's famous carriage trails.

2. *Saco Heath On Skis*

Saturday, February 25, 1995 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

We had such a good time on last year's trip on **Saco Heath**, we decided to do it again. Join naturalists Nate Green and Ken Rice for some moderate to strenuous cross country skiing tour on this introduction to the mystery and romance of Saco's urban wilderness.

*Butler Preserve
on the Kennebunk
River.*



Saco Heath in winter

3. *Mother's Day: Butler/Marshall Preserves*

Sunday, May 14, 1995 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

If you can't (or won't) sing for your mother this Mother's Day, let Maine's returning songbirds do it for you. Join writer/naturalist Andrew Weegar for a walk along the Kennebunk River at the **Butler and Marshall Preserves** in Kennebunk. The preserves are owned and managed by the Kennebunk Land Trust following transfer from the Conservancy in 1991. The walk will be over just in time for you to treat your mother to lunch at one of the area's fine dining establishments.

Field Trip Reservation Guidelines

Reservations: A must. PLEASE CALL the Maine Chapter at (207) 729-5181 during business hours. Space is limited to 15 persons per trip and phone reservations are accepted strictly on a first come, first served basis. If space is available when you call, you will be asked to send in the fee.

Fee: Non-refundable \$15 per person, adult or child.

Weather: Trips will be held rain, shine or snow - so please dress appropriately (ask if you are not sure). Bring a beverage, lunch or snacks depending on the time.

Maine Chapter Summer Jobs

The following positions made possible by the Richard Saltonstall Jr. Memorial Endowment and the Ingram Richardson Memorial Fund, are available with the Maine Chapter this summer. The deadline for applications is March 10. For complete job descriptions and information on how to apply, please call the Chapter office at (207) 729-5181.

Conservation Planning Assistant

May 8 to September 1, Brunswick,
\$7-9.00/hr. depending on qualifications

Southern Maine Stewardship Assistant

May 15 to September 8, Sanford, \$7.00/hr.

Fernald's Neck Preserve Warden

June 15 to November 1, Camden/Lincolnville, \$7.00/hr./part time

Plover/Tern Warden:

May 2 to August 14 (25 hrs/wk, full time pending funding availability) Seawall Beach, Phippsburg, \$7.00/hr.

Damariscove Island Caretaker/Naturalist

Two positions, June 7 to September 6, Boothbay,
\$2,700 per position.

Russian Scientists Study Conservancy Methods

Nine Russian scientists visited Nature Conservancy sites in eleven states, including Maine, this fall. As leaders in the effort to establish Russia's first nongovernmental biodiversity conservation organizations, they were interested in every aspect of the Conservancy's program, from collecting scientific data to attracting new members and working with preserve neighbors.

During their 28-day tour of Conservancy offices from Florida to California, the Russians seemed most impressed by the organization's commitment to solving problems by working with others. Since the conservation movement in their country has been the exclusive province of scientists, they initially thought the Conservancy's willingness to work with private landowners, businesses and even state government officials a risky enterprise. They also came to appreciate the Conservancy's rigorous planning efforts and its balance of local and national priorities.

L.L. Bean gave each of the visiting Russians a \$100 gift certificate and the store's personnel, right, made sure the boots fit.



BRUCE KIDMAN

In Maine, the Russians toured the Saco Heath Preserve, above, and the Sunkhaze Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, top.

Haven For Lost Terns

The Conservancy has transferred four small islands in Frenchman's Bay just west of Mt. Desert Island to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service so that common, arctic and roseate terns will have a better chance of returning to historical nesting grounds. While there is concern for increasing the numbers of terns in general, roseate terns are listed as federally endangered. The four islands, Ship, Trumpet and East and West Barge, were acquired by the Maine Chapter through gift and purchase between 1979 and 1984. A partial interest in Bar Island is also included.

Ship and Trumpet have been identified as sites abandoned by the terns due to past disturbance, and the Service has begun efforts to attract the colonial seabirds back home. Similar efforts in Maine have restored tern colonies to Petit Manaan Island, Seal Island, East Egg Rock, Stratton Island, Matinicus Rock and Jenny Island.



BILL SLINGER, JR.

Tern

Conservancy Scorecard

	Maine	National
• Acres protected	101,888	over 7 million
• Preserves	83	1,400
• Members	11,360	790,000

For those who love numbers, we have included a Conservancy scorecard. Actually, we are rather proud of these numbers, particularly those that reflect the number of member households supporting our work.



KYLE STOCKWELL

Bald Head Preserve

Saco Heath Preserve

Saturday, April 22

Saturday, April 29

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

If you have meant to help build our Saco heath boardwalk, these may be your last chances. We plan to construct the final lengths and create a loop trail from that point. Bring a lunch and expect to work hard, have fun and get your feet wet.

Great Wass Island Preserve

Saturday, May 20

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

After a winter of being ravaged by high winds and ocean storms, the trails of

Work Days

this 1,600-acre island preserve need your help. Spend a day clearing blowdowns and repairing boardwalks and trails. You will learn some Great Wass Island natural history while taking in the island's spectacular scenery.

Waterboro Barrens Preserve

Saturday, June 3

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

There is always trail maintenance to be done on a 2,000-acre preserve. Take a day to clear trails, install trail signs

and help build several foot bridges over Waterboro's clear, cool streams.

Douglas Mountain Preserve

Saturday, June 10

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Douglas' panoramic views draw a daunting number of visitors year-round. Help us assess the wear and tear on the trails and prepare the preserve for another busy season.

Have we snagged your interest? If so, please call Nancy Sferra (490-4012) for the Saco Heath, Waterboro Barrens and Douglas Mountain work days, or Kyle Stockwell (729-5181) for the Great Wass Island work day.

Volunteer Classifieds

Many opportunities are available: short-term or long-term, inside or out. Please call our office (729-5181) for our recently printed volunteer information packet. Volunteering is a great way to make a hands-on contribution toward preserving Maine's natural areas, to meet new people and to learn and practice new skills. For example:

Light trap builder with knowledge of electrical wiring to construct two battery powered bucket light traps (we'll provide the prototype).



Last summer's work day at Musquash Pond Preserve drew volunteers John Jones, front, Mary Perkins, Emily Anderson, Jennifer Jones and Anna Marie Thron.

Volunteer Notes

We want to thank all who have donated their time and energies to The Nature Conservancy during recent months. Special thanks to: the flame resistant crew who helped conduct prescribed burns at Kennebunk Plains this fall, **Paul Dest, Nancy McReel, Peter Vickery, Zach Boyajian, Wes Ackley, Joel Carlson and Stan Goodnow**; Stan again for his boundary line work at the Plains; **Nate Green, Dwayne Snyder, Caroline Dillon, Hannah Edmunds, and Matthew Wheeler** for their work on the Saco Heath boardwalk; **Forrest Sherman** of the Environmental Airforce for flying staff on an inspection tour of a potential land gift.

Thank You!

The Maine Chapter is extremely grateful for the important support we have received in the form of gifts of goods.

Heartfelt thanks to: **Mr. Robert W. Armstrong, III** of National Medical Care, Inc. in Waltham, MA for the donation of 3 cellular telephones, charger and battery pack; **Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Mary** of Freeport for the gift of a four-drawer file cabinet; **Mr. and Mrs. Ward Miner** of Harborside for a Minolta camera; and **Mr. Craig Troeger** of Van Buren for a cellular telephone.

Wish List

As our capacity grows, so do our needs. One way we conserve our resources is by asking our friends to provide the tools we need to do our jobs well. Some items are fairly specialized, while others may be gathering dust in the back of your garage:

- dictionary;
- used truck, in good condition;
- laptop computer (Mac or IBM);
- lopping shears;
- global positioning system;
- portable light table;
- external modems (9600 baud or higher);
- VCR;
- sighting compass;
- headlamps;
- microwave oven;
- small garden cart (wheel base less than 35");
- portable electric space heater;

Please call Sue Hastings (729-5181) if you can help out - and thanks!

Erskines Do Well Doing (Lots Of) Good

Like many members, Ralph and Celia Erskine wanted very much to help the Maine Chapter fund its work.

However, the retired Brunswick couple had another financial goal to consider: their desire to increase their income. The Erskines feared the two goals were incompatible. If they gave capital to the Conservancy, it seemed they would necessarily give up needed income.

Fortunately for the Erskines, and for us, they learned in 1990 about an excellent way to achieve both their goals - the Conservancy's *Long Term Income Fund*. Conservancy supporters over 50 years of age can make tax-deductible gifts to the Fund and receive income for life. At the end of the donors' lives, their capital gifts will be used to protect biological diversity wherever they have designated. In the Erskines' case, their funds are designated for use in Maine.

Aside from its obvious benefits to the Conservancy, donors find that the Fund is a considerable financial boon to them in two ways:

- they often earn more income from the Fund than they were receiving from the donated cash or securities, *and*

- they earn a sizeable tax deduction for making the gift.

The amount of the tax deduction depends on the donors' ages and the rate of income being produced by the Fund. The older the donors and smaller the rate of income, the larger the tax deduction.

In the Erskines' case, these benefits have proved real and valuable. The Fund is now earning approximately 7%, which is more than the bank accounts were earning from which the Erskines drew the cash for their gifts. Further, the cash benefit to the Erskines is actually greater than 7%, since they have taken a tax deduction for their gifts. As a couple in their mid-seventies and early eighties, the Erskines have earned tax deductions of approximately 40% of the value of their 1994 donation.

The cash benefit of the deduction is equal to the donors' tax rate times the deduction. That cash amount, along



Ralph and Celia Erskine

with their income from the Fund, adds up to a handsome yield for the Erskines.

The Erskines are happy with the performance of the Fund, and have continued to make gifts to it for each of the past five years. As Ralph Erskine puts it:

"There may be a better way to combine our love for Maine's natural assets with our human needs for increased income, but we certainly haven't found it".

We're deeply grateful to the Erskines for their generous gifts to the Fund. They are creating a permanent, and growing, legacy of support for the Maine Chapter.

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Maine Legacy

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New Talent For Protection And Conservation Planning

The Maine Chapter's land protection and conservation planning departments were bolstered this winter with the arrival of two new staff members, Polly Warholc and Nick Becker. Polly joins our staff as Protection Secretary. She holds an undergraduate degree in biology from Penn State University and plans to continue her education in the field.

Project Information Coordinator Nick Becker, a Wisconsin native with a B.S. in biology from Northland College, has worked as a biological technician for Alaska's Tongass National Forest and provided resource monitoring and logistical support for researchers at Wisconsin's Apostle Island National Lakeshore.



BRUCE KIDMAN

Polly Warholc at Saco Heath Preserve



Nick Becker, left, and his wife Dianna have two children, two-year-old Cole and two-month-old Kaleb (born just a week after his dad joined our staff).

Conservators enjoyed a hike into Crystal Bog this past summer. The Maine Chapter sponsors infrequent trips to this highly sensitive preserve. To celebrate the occasion, volunteer preserve steward Candy McKellar invited the group back to her house for lemonade and home-baked pies.



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