



Twelve Miles Out

A Newsletter of North Haven Conservation Partners Fall 2023



North Haven Conservation Partners developed a Strategic Plan over 20 years ago. In 2022 the Board of Directors began the process of re-evaluating the organization and developing new goals and priorities to address current environmental concerns and issues facing our island community. The NHCP Board embarked on an intensive, thorough and thoughtful strategic planning process that will guide our work into the future. The process included reviewing the organization's history, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses, considering factors that are impacting the island environment and community and outlining the goals and objectives that fit our mission.

NHCP developed a new mission statement that remains true to the original vision of NHCP, clearly stating the organization's goals and how they will be accomplished. The new mission statement is: *North Haven Conservation Partners is dedicated to helping conserve the island environment through land stewardship and protection, public education, and community collaboration.*

As a Land Trust, conserving and protecting properties with important natural resources or public access values through ownership or easements will continue to be a focus of our work. The island's landscape will continue to be altered as development pressure increases. Conserving those special places of the island will ensure that North Haven remains the beautiful place we all love.

Stewarding the properties we currently own, by maintaining the ecological health of those lands, providing public access and ensuring their scenic beauty is a key organizational goal. NHCP is working diligently to control invasive species, restore and maintain natural communities and improve public access to our properties.

Offering educational programs to provide knowledge and skills that will help participants better understand, appreciate and enjoy the natural environment and inspire learners to take action to help conserve and protect that environment, is a key goal for the organization. NHCP will continue to provide education programming to a broad audience of the greater North Haven community, including youth and adults, summer and year-round community members and visitors. We welcome suggestions about programming that is of interest to the community.

Collaborating and engaging with community partners and the broader North Haven and Conservation Community is central to fulfilling NHCP's mission and to successfully achieving the stated goals of our new Strategic Plan.

We hope that the North Haven community will continue to support NHCP and the priorities outlined in the new Strategic Plan which is available in print and on our website.

**Read our new
Strategic Plan!
Scan the QR Code**



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President's Letter

Dear Members & Friends,

What a year! If all you read are headlines in this newsletter, even that will give you a sense of NHCP's growth and accomplishments over the last twelve months. A summer walk series that attracted more than 200 participants. The growth and maturity of our year-round outdoor education programming serving all ages of island residents and visitors. The completion and implementation of a comprehensive strategic planning process to fully align the investments of our time, energy and resources with clearly articulated priorities. Active engagement with the Town of North Haven's work on sustainability and environmental resilience in the face of warming ocean temperatures and sea level rise. A festive annual meeting in August. An accomplished and energetic new board member.

While the conservation lands we own and take care of may be the most visible evidence of NHCP's activities, we never lose sight of how they fit into our larger mission of community partnership, the capital P in our name. In the coming year we will continue the patient work of creating an island-wide trail system that links our properties and enhances their accessibility. The goal of our stewardship activities is to provide you with well cared for landscapes that amaze you with their natural charm, recharge you with their essential

tranquility, and remind you of the simple pleasure that a beautiful piece of open land can bring to your life. Through our growing investment in our environmental education programs, we hope to inspire the future stewards of this remarkable place to find the energy and commitment to carry the island's environmental legacy forward.



The idea that weaves NHCP's priorities and activities together is that protecting an important piece of land is not an end result. Rather, it is the tangible means through which we partner with each of you – by providing a living, useful year-round resource for recreational activity, environmental education, enjoyment of nature or simply savoring the fact that generations of us can share the memory of a view that will not change.

Badge Blackett

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**Aldo
Leopold
Benches**

Aldo Leopold was a leader in the conservation movement and pioneering author and philosopher on environmental ethics. His book, *A Sand County Almanac*, is an inspiration and, though published in 1949, is still totally relevant to modern conservation and land management practice. NHCP partnered with Watermans to host a viewing of a documentary film about his life titled *Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time*. In honor of Mr. Leopold's contributions to conservation, NHCP built two Leopold Benches, one placed on our North Shore Preserve and one at our Peleg Thomas Preserve. If you have the chance, we hope you will read his book, watch the movie or simply sit on these new benches and watch the sunset.





Minister's Creek Minke Whale

In early August, a dead minke whale was discovered on the shore of Minister's Creek in Pulpit Harbor. Marine Patrol and Allied Whale, the marine mammal laboratory at College of the Atlantic were notified. Allied Whale is authorized by NOAA Fisheries to respond to marine mammal emergencies and strandings from Rockland ME, north to the Canadian border. Staff from Allied Whale contacted NHCP staff to request information and assistance in collecting data on this whale.

On August 6, NHCP staff took a group of Allied Whale researchers to the carcass where they took numerous measurements, determined gender, and collected a series of skin, blubber, muscle and baleen tissue samples. The minke whale was a mature female that was 27 feet 5 inches long. Researchers could not determine the cause of death though they felt that the whale likely chased feed into the shallow, narrow Minister's Creek at high tide and got stranded.

Minke whales often feed on mackerel and pogey's (menhaden) which were present in large numbers in Pulpit Harbor at the time of the stranding. These whales are a species of baleen whale, are the smallest and most abundant of the rorquals (baleen whales), and are not considered threatened or endangered in the US.

The skeleton of a young female minke whale that washed up on the beach in Wooster Cove in 2016 is on display at the North Haven Community School. Students, staff and community members worked diligently to process, preserve and reassemble the skeleton, offering a unique learning experience for all involved. This project culminated with the building of a timber frame structure to display the skeleton for the community to enjoy for years to come.



Allied Whale researchers taking measurements and samples



Minke whale washed up on shore in Minister's Creek

Community Partnership & Volunteers

NHCP would like to thank all of our partners and volunteers that are so important in helping NHCP achieve its mission. In 2023 NHCP partnered with Waterman's Community Center to host a viewing of the film *Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time* and a Coffee and Compost program where NHCP's Executive Director discussed land management.

NHCP is partnering with the Town of North Haven, serving on the town's Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change working group, a priority area identified during the town's Visioning process. The group's work has helped prioritize efforts that can be addressed through enrollment in the Maine Community Resilience Partnership Programs Community Action Grant. The first grant cycle focused on funding the study on saltwater intrusion into wells and Fresh Pond, the source of the town's drinking water.

NHCP continues to partner with Mullen's Head Park Commission to manage Burnt Island and we partnered with the Town Recreation Council for the annual Island Cleanup effort. NHCP was represented at the Maine Land Trust Network's first post-covid, in-person, Maine Land

Conservation Conference held in Rockport in May where issues from climate change to the future of land stewardship were discussed. We continue to maintain a close partnership with W.E.B.B (Water, Earth, Birds and Bees), including being one of the guest speakers on forestry at their annual potluck. Other partners include Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Island Trail Association, NH Historical Society and Hurricane Island Center for Leadership and Science.

Volunteers are a cornerstone to the success of NHCP. Our Board of Directors volunteers countless hours guiding the work of the organization from completing a new Strategic Plan, to serving on our various committees, and rolling up their sleeves to help clear trails or plant trees. In 2023 community volunteers helped with Island Clean up, trail clearing and invasive species control. A special thanks to Denis Moonan who built the NHCP trail head sign-in boxes. Thanks also to a group of students from Bowdoin College and a group of students from North Haven Community School who helped work on trails and control invasive species. In total 54 volunteers donated over 150 hours of time in support of NHCP's mission and conservation efforts.





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Education & Outreach

The goal of NHCP's education programming is to provide knowledge and skills that will help participants better understand, appreciate, and enjoy the natural environment, and inspire learners to take action to help conserve and protect the natural environment. Our efforts to reach this goal include our Fox Island Outing Club programs, our public outreach programs, monthly North Haven News articles, NHCP's invasive species brochure, and ever-increasing resources available on our web site.

NHCP's Fox Island Outing Club (FIOC) is our signature education program, and this September marks the eighth year this program has delivered environmental and outdoor education programs to island youth.

During the last school year, FIOC held over 20 outdoor programs with students in grades 1-7. Students learned about birds, insects, vernal pools, and hiked NHCP trails and even some trails in Vinalhaven. Winter survival was a fun and popular program, with students learning to start fires with flint and steel, build shelters, and boil water over an open fire. Third and fourth graders got to camp out, learn the principles of Leave No Trace, how to set up tents, and cook on a camp stove. Programs for the 2023/24 school year will be geared towards students in grades 3-8 and will be on Friday afternoons with topics including plant identification, compass navigation, wilderness survival skills, and basic camping skills.

NHCP's public outreach programs are designed and offered to reach a wide audience of both adults and youth, summer and year-round community members and visitors to the island. NHCP now offers programming throughout the year, usually at no cost to participants. In 2023 NHCP offered 15 programs with over 200 participants. Programs ranged from fly-tying to the effects of climate change on Coastal Maine Forests.

We hope you will join us for more fun and educational programming in the year to come.



2023 Programming

- Wreath Making
- Candlelight Hike- Summer & Winter
- Back Yard Bird Count
- Fly Tying
- Vernal Pool Exploration
- Family Friendly Foraging & Wildflower Walk
- Crabtree Point Walk
- Tide Pool Exploration
- Kayak Tour of Burnt & Calderwood Islands
- Wild Edibles & Foraging
- Hurricane Island Tour
- Youth Wilderness Survival
- Annual Meeting & Walk- Effects of Climate Change on Coastal Maine Forests
- Green Fire- Aldo Leopold & A Land Ethic for Our Time film viewing



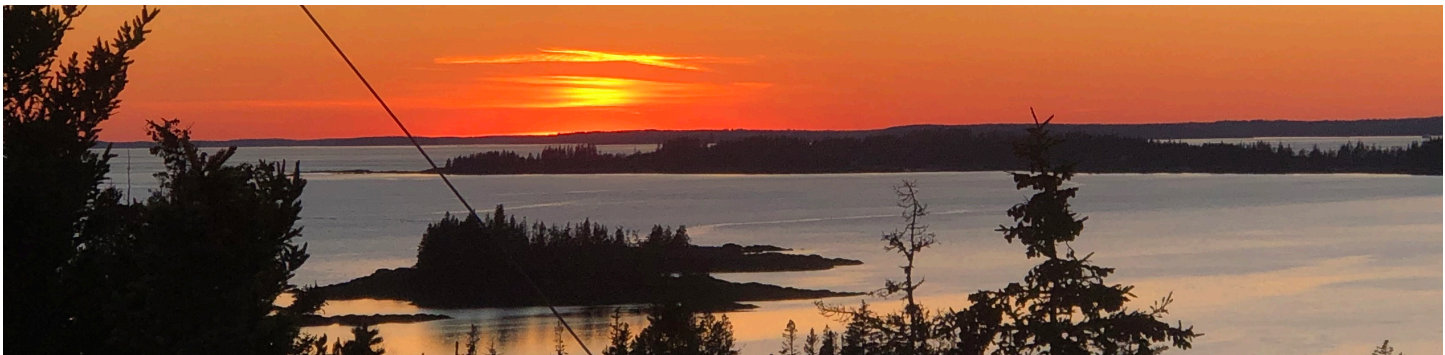
Photos from top: Fox Islands Outing Club campout at NHCS, Fly tying workshop with Patrick Gallagher, Wreath making & Foraging Workshops with Rachael Alexandrou.



New Member Spotlight: Martha Neale

Martha Neale grew up on her family's dairy farm in Rhode Island. She became a science teacher and married into a family farm where she and her husband George raised beef cows. Four children and various off-farm jobs kept them busy for many years. After inheriting the family farm twenty years ago, they began raising Katahdin sheep, pigs, layer hens and vegetables. For the last 15 years they have been retailing their products from a farmstand and local farmers markets.

Wanting to slow down and still keep busy, Martha and George have fulfilled a life-long dream of living in Maine with the purchase of the Sampson Farm in North Haven. They are transitioning responsibility for the Rhode Island farm to their youngest daughter and her husband while the Sampson Farm house and fields are being rejuvenated and returned to productivity.



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