



# TwelveMilesOut

*A Newsletter of North Haven Conservation Partners    Fall 2025*



Photo by Farooq Siddique

## A Change in Leadership

At our Annual Meeting in August, long-time Board President, Badge Blackett, passed on this important leadership role to Peggy Mayfield. Badge has served on the NHCP Board since 2003 and as President since 2012, dedicating 22 years as a member of the NHCP Board and 13 years as Board President. NHCP has accomplished a great deal during that time including the conservation of many of our properties such as Narrow Place Beach, Peleg Thomas Preserve, North Shore Preserve, Sage Woods and Pulpit Harbor. Badge was instrumental in shepherding these complex land acquisition and conservation projects, utilizing his professional skills and experience. For most of Badge's professional career he worked on managing land conservation projects around the country, first for the Trust for Public Land and later for the National Wildlife Refuge Association. He was also instrumental in supporting the development of NHCP's educational programs, its land management practices and ensuring the financial stability of the organization. NHCP and the North Haven community owe Badge a huge debt of gratitude and thanks for all he has done to help conserve and protect the environment of this very special



island. Badge will remain on NHCP's Board of Directors sharing his professional experience and depth of institutional memory.

NHCP is excited about the energy and skills that Peggy Mayfield brings to the leadership of this next chapter of the organization. Peggy and her husband Scott purchased their home on North Haven in 2011 and quickly became involved in many community organizations. Peggy joined the NHCP Board in 2020 and has been actively engaged as a member of the

Finance Committee and as Chair of our Outreach Committee. She spent her professional career working for a firm that specialized in international cost of living research which gave her the opportunity "to see the world". Peggy is an enthusiastic horticulturalist who has been involved with numerous conservation organizations and garden clubs on both the local and national level. Her experience, as well as her commitment to conservation and the North Haven Community, make her the perfect person to take on the President's role. Peggy will be a huge asset for NHCP and its next phase of environmental conservation and education on North Haven.

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# President's Letter

Dear North Haven friends and NHCP supporters,

2025 has been a busy and productive year for North Haven Conservation Partners. We have strengthened our education commitment to young people in our year-round and summer community by creating an Education and Outreach Coordinator staff position that will lead our Fox Island Outing Club and public outreach programs. This position will ensure the continuation of the excellent programming that Amilia Campbell, Maria Keeler, and Nathaniel Liddle have brought to our youth community. We are also in the process of planning for and building a storage barn in the Sage Woods to store our equipment and tools as well as the tractor the Sage family has donated to NHCP. We hope the building will be completed in the next few months – but we recognize the challenges of building on an island.

2025 has also been a year of transitions – with the passing of Ted Sage and Ran Miner. Sage Woods is one of the island's most precious jewels and a reflection of Ted's commitment to the land. Holding Ground on the North Shore Rd. provides us all with access to the



shoreline and the marvelous views of West Penobscot Bay and the surrounding islands via an easement from the Miner family.

Transition is also taking place at NHCP ... in August at our annual meeting, Badge Blackett officially retired from his position as President of NHCP. He has been an integral part of NHCP for the past 23 years, including 14 as President, and we are grateful that he will remain a valued member of our Board.

I am looking forward to the challenges and steep learning curve that come with a new endeavor. Our programming in 2025 has been well received, and I look forward to having NHCP continue collaborations with other island organizations. When we combine a walk with a history or geology lesson, or a tree or bird expert, we have an opportunity to learn something while engaging with the natural world. Please share your programming ideas with us as we plan for 2026.

Peggy Mayfield



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**Kayl Brandon**

## Staff

**John Stevens**

*Executive Director*

## Welcoming Board Member Kayl Brandon

After growing up in Louisiana, North Carolina, Texas, and Missouri, Kayl is happy to be putting roots down on North Haven. She studied Environmental Plant Science at Missouri State University and has spent the past decade or so farming. She is currently farming at Turner Farm and has been for eight seasons, four as Farm Manager. When Kayl is not farming, you can find her knitting, sewing, or working on house projects with her partner, Ross. She feels passionate about community engagement and is grateful to be a part of North Haven Conservation Partners.





## Outreach Programs

NHCP offers an ever-growing number of programs that are meant to be informative, fun and to inspire participants to care for and take action to protect the island's natural environment. Although most of our adult programs are scheduled during the summer, NHCP strives to offer programs throughout the year in an effort to better serve the year-round community. Many of the events NHCP hosted this summer were in partnership with other island organizations, strengthening the bonds of community while allowing the involved organizations to share the expense of the program and to reach a broader audience. Over 300 people participated in NHCP's programs in 2025.

**Valentine's Day Candlelight Hike at Peleg Thomas Preserve** – Participants enjoy a beautiful candlelit trail that leads to a warm fire and hot chocolate.

**Great Back Yard Bird Count** – For the third year NHCP has participated in this citizen science, bird monitoring project with participants collecting important bird population data.

**Sage Woods Tour** – Explored the Sage Woods, its trails and the legacy that Ted and Hope Sage left this community.

**Crabtree Point Walk** - Explored the Davis and Almy family's beautiful Crabtree Point property with its stunning views.

**Invasive Species Field Workshop** – Specialists from the Maine Forest Service, Maine Natural Areas Program and Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District provided instruction on invasive species identification and treatment. In partnership with WEBB

**Family Tidepool Exploration** – Participants of all ages learned about the intertidal zone and tide pools of the North Haven shore.

**Introduction to Astronomy and Dark Skies** – Farooq Siddique shared his knowledge of astronomy and dark skies initiative.

**Mushroom Presentation and Mushroom Workshop** - Greg Marley shared his extensive knowledge of mushroom natural history and foraging in a general presentation followed by an in-depth hands on workshop. In partnership with Watermans Community Center.

**Hurricane Island History Tour** – Participants toured Hurricane Island, learned about its history and the educational and research of the Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership (HICSL). In partnership with the North Haven Historical Society and HICSL



Hurricane Island Tour

### Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge (MCINWR)

– Community members who came to NHCP's Annual Meeting learned about the MCINWR, the National Wildlife Refuge system and the local volunteer group Friends of Maine Coastal Islands NWR.

**Picnic Lunch Jazz Concert** – Improvised Jazz band Jump off the Bridge performed at the Peleg Thomas Preserve. In partnership with Fox Island Concerts.

**Burnt Island Walking Tour: History and Conservation** – Chuck Curtis of the Mullens Head Parks Commission provided an overview of the history of land ownership of Burnt Island and NHCP staff offered an overview of the island's conservation history. In partnership with the North Haven Historical Society and Mullens Head Parks Commission.

The participant numbers and program descriptions can't capture the true value of these programs which is in the excitement of a child finding a crab in the seaweed, the awe-inspiring beauty of walking Crabtree point on a foggy day, or the simple joy of sitting in the shade with a cool ocean breeze on a hot summer day listening to a concert. Learning about how to manage your land, identify edible mushrooms or a new constellation, or just spending time with the people that make up the North Haven community connects us all to the environment, each other and this place.



Peleg Thomas Jazz Concert



Hurricane Island Tour



Hurricane Island Tour

## Thank you to our 2024-2025 Donors

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### Sage Woods Endowment Gift Donors

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This is the Fox Island's Outing Club (FIOC) tenth year of environmental education and outdoor recreation. A huge thank you goes to Amilia Campbell, the founder of FIOC, and to Maria Keller for her many years of dedication to growing and leading these programs. Reaching this milestone is something special—we've spent a decade creating space for North Haven youth to learn, explore, and find inspiration in their natural environment, while planting the seeds for future conservationists.

This past school year, 24/25, FIOC ran 17 afterschool programs for students in 3rd through 9th grade, with 18 participants joining in! We have already kicked this school year off with Nature Journaling with our 5th and 6th graders, and are looking forward to future campouts, compass navigation courses, and hikes off the island.

#### FIOC 24-25 Programs

- Camping
- Cider Pressing
- Vinalhaven Hike
- Small Mammals
- Compass Navigation Course
- FIOC Winter Survival
- Birding
- Vernal Pools

NHCP is seeking an enthusiastic and experienced individual to take on the role of Education and Outreach Coordinator. This is a part time position, averaging 5 hours per week, and is very flexible. Please contact [nhcp@northhavenconservation.org](mailto:nhcp@northhavenconservation.org) for more information or to apply for this position.



## American Chestnut Restoration

The American Chestnut was once a widespread and prolific tree species that made up an important part of the forest ecosystem providing an extremely valuable resource for both wildlife and humans. In the late 1800's, Chestnut Blight, a deadly pathogen (*Cryphonectria parasitica*) from Asia, decimated the American Chestnut species across its range. The American Chestnut Foundation (ACF) was founded to develop a blight-resistant American Chestnut tree and restore it to its native range across the Eastern U.S.

The Maine Chapter of the American Chestnut Society (MCACS) was established to help restore the American Chestnut tree to Maine. Maine is the northernmost end of the chestnut tree's natural range and currently has more mature, flowering, wild American Chestnut trees than any other state. This is due primarily to Maine's geographic isolation from denser populations of chestnut trees to the south where the blight is more readily spread. By collecting and propagating seeds from healthy wild chestnut trees, the Maine Chapter is working to repopulate the species here in Maine.

Ultimately it would like to see the American Chestnut restored to a place of ecological and economic importance and self-sustainability throughout its original range. The Maine Chapter has started the *Chestnuts Across Maine* initiative (CAM) to partner with local land trusts, schools and other public land organizations to establish plantings of the American Chestnut on lands open to the public. Working with the MCACS and the North Haven Community School, NHCP is proud to participate in this *Chestnuts Across Maine* initiative.

On June 5, Eva Butler from the MCACS, students and staff from the NHCS and NHCP staff planted 10 American Chestnut trees at the NHCP North Shore Preserve. Tree tubes and wire fencing was used to protect the trees, mulch and weed matting were used to fight grass competition and duff from around oak trees was added to the soil as it has been found that mycorrhizae in topsoil, associated with oak trees, is helpful to the success of the chestnut trees. Volunteers helped water the trees over the course of the summer. With some luck and care we can all watch them grow.



## Stewardship

Managing the lands in our trust continues to be a priority of NHCP.

**Trails** provide the community with a way to experience our properties and to connect with the environment that NHCP is working to protect and conserve. The maintenance of these trails is an ongoing project requiring the clearing of blowdowns, cutting back the ever-encroaching brush and limbs, as well as the building and repairing of bridges and boardwalks. **Volunteers** are critical to this work and have included students from North Haven Community School, Bowdoin College, and local citizens. In total 25 volunteers contributed nearly 100 hours of labor helping to improve and maintain NHCP trails. **Tools** are also important to this effort and this year NHCP invested in a DR Field and Brush mower to mow trails and help in the effort to control invasive species. NHCP also invested in an electric weedwhacker to clear trails while also making the decision to invest in sustainable energy.

**Eagles** again nested on Burnt Island directly above the trail near the old cabin site. That section of the trail was re-routed away from the nest in an effort to avoid disturbance to the nest. Unfortunately, the nest failed this season. Although the exact reason for the nest failure cannot be determined, there was ample evidence that people disregarded the trail closure which would have disturbed the nesting pair and may have resulted in the nest failure. NHCP staff also transported a deceased bald eagle from North Haven to the mainland so that the cause of death could be determined. The leading cause of death for bald eagles in the State of Maine is lead poisoning, usually from ingesting lead ammunition in dead animal carcass. NHCP strongly encourages sportsman to use non-lead ammunition. NHCP continues to monitor and care for the four nesting **Bluebird** boxes it has installed at its various preserves. When the nest boxes were cleaned in March of 2025 there was evidence of nest-building in three of the boxes but no evidence of egg fragments that would indicate successful nesting.

**Burnt Island Access:** For many years the Cobb family has generously allowed public access to Burnt Island across their property on Coopers Lanes. Recently the piece of property where the current parking for Burnt Island is located was purchased from the Cobb family by Ed and Peg Merrens, who have been visiting North Haven for nearly 40 years. Working with the Cobb and Merrens families, NHCP has rerouted the access trail, which we ask people to now use. Again, thanks to the Cobb family, NHCP will be building a new, two car parking space in a slightly different location on Coopers Lane. The Merrens, thoughtful new neighbors and supporters of conservation and public access to Burnt Island, are generously allowing continued parking in the existing location until the new parking spot is completed. NHCP would like to sincerely thank both the Cobb and Merrens families for their willingness to work with NHCP to provide uninterrupted public access across the bar to Burnt Island. We would also like to thank all the trail users for your patience and cooperation as the project moves forward.

**Picnic Tables:** A recent outdoor recreation study conducted by the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation found that picnicking was most common use of public lands. To support and encourage the use of the properties we own, NHCP has placed picnic tables at a number of locations, including a new table at Narrow Place (Tar Tank) Beach. Other tables are located at Pulpit Harbor, Peleg Thomas, North Shore Preserve and Burnt Island. We hope that the community will enjoy these amenities and the stunning views and peaceful surroundings they offer.

**Invasive Species:** Controlling invasive species continues to be a major effort of NHCP and includes mechanical efforts and the very limited use of herbicides, when needed. Repeated mowing, in areas where that is possible, is the easiest and most cost-effective method used. NHCP's new DR Field and Brush Mower has greatly increased the area we can treat. Focusing on targeted areas such as the birch grove on the North Shore Preserve, pushing back growth along trails and "releasing" native trees and shrubs allows NHCP to utilize limited resources while having the greatest results.

NHCP tried a relatively new control method on a small patch of Japanese Knotweed next to our office on Iron Point Road. This method involves cutting and removing the knotweed stems then placing metal screen with ½ inch by ½ inch spacing over the treated area. The theory is that the knotweed will sprout through the screen and as it grows the mesh will girdle the stems. This will continue through the growing cycle and eventually kill the plant.

**Tree Planting:** NHCP continues to plant trees to improve the forest ecosystem, increase species diversity and control invasive species. In addition to the 10 American Chestnut trees planted as part of the Chestnuts Across Maine project (see American Chestnut article), 5 hybrid chestnut trees were also planted. NHCP also planted 25 white birch saplings in the white birch grove on the North Shore Preserve. In addition, 25 white pine seedlings and 25 red spruce seedlings were also planted at the North Shore preserve.

**Sage Woods Stewardship Barn:** Thanks to the generous support of the North Haven community, NHCP met its fundraising goal for building a new Stewardship Barn on the Sage Woods property. If everything goes according to plan, the site work will be completed by this fall and the building will be completed by the spring of 2026. This building will allow NHCP to store and maintain its tools and to do a better, more effective job of maintaining the trails and properties in out trust. The outpouring of support for this project has been a real tribute to the work and legacy that Ted and Hope Sage have given our community through the Sage Woods.

**Island Clean Up:** NHCP partnered with the North Haven Recreation Council to host the annual spring island cleanup effort. NHCP staff joined partnering organizations Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Island Trails Association, Maine Marine Trades Association and community volunteers to remove marine debris from a number of MCHT conserved islands off of Owls Head. These cleanup efforts not only keep the island environment free of trash but keep plastic and other marine debris out of the ocean.



North Haven Community School Volunteers



Bowdoin College volunteers



DR Field & Brush Mower





Photo by Farooq Siddique

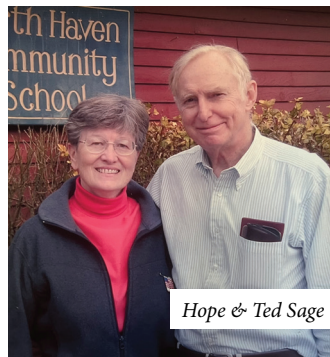
## Remembering Ran Miner & Ted Sage

It was a somber spring for the NHCP community with the passing of Ran Miner and Ted Sage, both incredible men and longtime supporters of NHCP.

Ran served on the NHCP Board of Directors for many years including serving as its President. He, along with his wife Beth, donated conservation and public access easements to their beloved Holding Ground property on the North Shore which provides access to a beautiful stone beach and amazing views of the northerly islands.

Ted worked tirelessly for 30 years creating the trails and well-managed forest that make up the Sage Woods. Ted along with his wife, Hope, donated conservation and public access easements to 13.5 acres of their land to ensure that the community will always have access to this local treasure.

Both of these men and their families have left a lasting legacy and significant impact on NHCP and the North Haven Community.



Hope & Ted Sage



Beth & Ran Miner



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