



Land Trust News June 2014

Our purpose is to preserve and protect the intrinsic values and public benefits of the natural resources in the Towns of Chebeague and Cumberland - mainland, island and contiguous Casco Bay - and to be responsible stewards in perpetuity for those resources in our trust.

Knights Pond & Blueberry Hill

Knights Pond and Blueberry Hill is a 215 acre gem that straddles the towns of Cumberland and North Yarmouth. The clock is now ticking on a project led by CCLT and four other partners to conserve this spectacular property and make it forever available for recreation and simple enjoyment of its varied, natural beauty. This special place includes a 46-acre pond, a large block of forestland, a network of trails, critical wildlife habitat and views of Casco Bay. It offers a myriad of recreational opportunities, including ice skating, hockey, hiking, cross country skiing, bird watching and hunting. It is close to schools and the town centers, so offers wonderful opportunities for children to connect with the natural world. We hope, in the coming months, you will join CCLT and our partners—the Trust for Public Lands, the Royal River Conservation Trust and the towns of Cumberland and North Yarmouth—to walk the property, learn more about our exciting opportunity to purchase this land and to support this critical effort. To inquire about CCLT walks on the property, please email [Penny Asherman](mailto:Penny.Asherman).



“Big Night” at Frog Pond & Salamander Swamp

Why did the yellow spotted salamanders, spring peepers and wood frogs cross the road? Why, to mate and lay their eggs on the other side—in CCLT’s Frog Pond.

If you are a frog or a salamander, crossing Range Road is a very dangerous undertaking. So, on April 15, the first warm and rainy evening of spring, CCLT mobilized dozens of volunteers to wave signs, signal to motorists and, with the help of the Cumberland Police Department and event leaders Chris Franklin and Sally Stockwell, escorted hundreds of amphibians to the safety of Frog Pond. The sounds of this evening alone—the mixed chorus of peeping and croaking frogs and the laughter of children volunteers—makes this annual CCLT event one of our happiest and most rewarding. [Watch video](#).



Horseshoe Crabs Come Ashore



On May 31 and June 1, over 150 people of all ages witnessed horseshoe crabs coming ashore on the beach at Payson Property on the Cumberland Foreside. Ideal weather, horseshoe crabs and the beautiful beach set the stage for a great hands-on experience. Carol Steingart and Alyssa Lyon, both marine educators, explained the history of the horseshoe crab (the crab is older than the dinosaurs and not related to other crabs!) and why they are so beneficial to humans (its blue blood helps keep our medicine and medical equipment germ-free!).

At touch pools, Carol and Alyssa showed how gentle the crabs are and demonstrated their unique anatomy. Participants were able to hold, feed and marvel at adult and young crabs. Kids and adults waded in the shallow water to spot horseshoe crabs making their way at high tide to the shore to lay their green eggs. One mom who attended said, “What a fantastic day. The whole family keeps talking about it.”

CCLT is very grateful to the Robbins Family for sharing their property and to our event sponsor this year, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Maine. This sponsorship made it possible to hold the program twice, doubling the number of kids and families who could attend, and minimizing the waitlist.

Winter Visitor at Indian Point

Snowy owls, large and ghost-like, normally spend their summers in the Arctic and their winters in Canada. In some years, though, when their food supply in Canada crashes, they venture into the northern tier of states, including Maine. The winter of 2013-14 was one of these so-called irruption years; and it was one of the most spectacular ever, with hundreds of snowies appearing throughout the Northeast and Upper Midwest and several making their way as far south as North and South Carolina and Arkansas.



Last December, Chebeague’s Bev Johnson, enthusiastic bird watcher and accomplished bird photographer, was alerted by a friend that one of these beauties was at Indian Point, a CCLT protected property on Chebeague Island. Bev returned many times to photograph the bird, even during a January 18 snowstorm, and simply to watch and marvel at it. She shared these observations with us:

The Snowy Owl stayed from the end of December through March. Another one showed up in April for a couple of weeks, probably on her way north. This was a perfect place for them, plenty of food (rodents and birds) and the snow was deep enough so no one

was driving down the road to the Hook. We could see and monitor the owl from Cottage Road without disturbing her.

Bev was also excited to report that earlier in the season she had seen “one Piping Plover on the beach for few days that could have been seeking a mate. Perhaps there could be a nesting pair someday.” She is also pleased to observe that “people are starting to realize the importance of not letting their dogs chase the migrating shore birds and run through the dune grass during the nesting season.”

Help the Monarch Butterflies

If Monarch butterflies, those iconic symbols of summer throughout North America, could talk, they would say they love milkweed plants, but hate the invasive swallow wort weed. Monarchs love milkweed plants because they need them for procreation. But when Monarchs mistake the swallow wort for milkweed, as they sometimes do, they are laying their eggs on a plant that is extremely toxic to their larvae.



CCLT is doing its part to restore the country’s population of Monarchs by planting more milkweed and encouraging property owners to eradicate swallow wort on their land. In a pilot project, the land trust has planted milkweed seeds at five test sites from one end of Chebeague Island to another and a dozen other islanders have requested seeds and planted them on their own properties. The trust plans to use its experience in this first year to launch a more extensive planting operation beginning in 2015.

In addition, CCLT is engaged in an effort to alert property owners on Chebeague to the dangers of swallow wort plants and to encourage them to do what they can to eradicate this pernicious weed. Several gardeners on the island, who have spent long, back-breaking hours attacking it, can testify to how tenacious swallow wort is. [Read this helpful bulletin](#) that provides some tips on how to control it.

CCLT Wish List

CCLT is seeking donations of new or gently used items to properly equip our volunteer stewards in the field. To donate an item from the following wish list, please contact Brian Marcaurelle at marcaurelle@gmail.com. CCLT WISH LIST:

Working handheld GPS; Compass; Backpack for carrying gear; Blaze orange vest; Pruning shears; Loppers; Folding branch saw; Trail rake; Hammer; Galvanized nails.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Penny Asherman, *President*; Leila Bisharat, *Vice-President*; Carl Tubbesing, *Secretary*; Jim Thomas, *Treasurer*;
Susan Burgess; Nancy M. Cline; Chris Corbett; Rob Crawford; Brian Marcaurelle; Roger Monthey
Nancy Savage Marcus; Sarah McKinnon; Roger Monthey; Michael Porter; Susan Stranahan; Rod Vogel