

OWLS HEAD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - ANNUAL REPORT 2020

OHCC MISSION STATEMENT

The Owls Head Conservation Commission seeks to preserve and protect the natural resources of Owls Head, and to advise, educate and make recommendations to its residents and to the town's governing bodies. The commission works to create opportunities for residents to interact with the natural world, thus fostering life long stewardship in retaining the natural beauty of Owls Head for future generations.

Plaisted Preserve welcomes many visitors throughout the year, but never more since the event of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gratefully, several years ago, as noted in the comprehensive plan, residents expressed a desire for more outdoor spaces and off road walking trails. Since that time, Georges River Land Trust has opened Ash Point Preserve, the town of Owls Head has created Plaisted Preserve, and the town is currently developing The Harbor Park. These spaces have provided a great respite during this time of unprecedented restrictions.

Plaisted Preserve continues to be maintained by its members, who groom trails, work to control invasive species, maintain trail marking, and create new trails. This year several foot bridges were added. The construction of a more substantial bridge system is currently under way to navigate through a particularly wet area. As in all forests, trees have blown down, and though they continue to serve the natural world, some block the trails and need to be removed. All that is described requires attention. Volunteers are welcome. We appreciate the ongoing support we receive from Georges River Land Trust in working with the preserve.

OHCC will be introducing its own web page this year which will include: our mission statement, list of members, information regarding upcoming meetings and events, meeting minutes, and links to areas of related interests and concerns.

OHCC members compiled a list of all public water access points within the town, and visited the sites to assure they were properly maintained and accessible. This information is now recorded and filed with the town of OH.

A hot topic with all coastal towns and conservation commissions is the concern for sea level rise. To be proactive rather than reactive will not only help to put safety measures into place to protect persons and properties (both public and private), but it will save the town tax dollars. Good planning is ultimately cost effective, and in the case of sea level rise, there are federal funds available to support preventative and safety measures. A few members of the OHCC attended a workshop sponsored by the town of St. George, in which a task force created an assessment plan related to prevention and readiness for the effects of a rise in sea level. The OHCC will be working diligently to get the wheels in motion to support a similar initiative for Owls Head.

The Roadside Pick-Up initiative this year was to include a collaboration with Ash Point Elementary School, but due to the pandemic, residents were invited to pick up bags from the town office and work on the clean up independently. We hope to involve the community in more creative ways in the future.

The OHCC meets the first Wednesday of the month at 6PM. All are welcome. Meetings are normally held at the airport, but have been scheduled on the ZOOM platform since March. Check the OH town website and the OH town bulletin boards for updates.

Respectfully submitted, Kathryn DerMarderosian

