

Owls Head Conservation Commission

Annual Report 2018

The Owls Head Conservation Commission happily reports that Plaisted Preserve on North Shore Drive receives many visitors on a regular basis. Besides the original trail a second trail has been laid out. Bog bridges have been built and the trail has been maintained with wood chips where needed. Thanks to a few sturdy volunteers, invasive species are in the process of removal, trails have been marked and winter debris have been swept aside.

The Commission would like to acknowledge the work of Beth and Bill Long who have spearheaded the development and maintenance of the trails. Sadly, the sign that was generously donated to the town to mark the Plaisted Preserve has been missing for several months. We remember waiting for permits and the wherewithal to hang the sign. Much goes into what seems relatively simple. We had hoped for its return; at this point it must be replaced, which is costly. In the meantime, just a reminder that the preserve is diagonally across from the fire station, and is marked by a parking area and kiosk.

The Preserve, besides hosting resident hikers, welcomed the Riley School of Rockport this spring, who had requested to help with a massive clean-up of the beach fronting the preserve. The trash brought in through the winter amassed 600 pounds. Besides weighing the trash, the students culled reusable materials to incorporate into their "recyclable materials" art projects which culminated in an exhibit at the school. The students were industrious and at the same time thoughtful as they skirted fragile mosses and "left no trace" except for a clean beach. Thank you, Riley School! The commission plans to offer numerous opportunities to our local school groups to visit the preserve: to observe, explore, and to work together to care for the land. And mostly to enjoy the outdoors.

The former Buckminster property has been on the market at a reduced price which is within fair market value. We now have an opportunity to purchase the land to create the Village Common we approved at a town meeting five years ago. In an area where there is a P. O., general store, church, library, town cemetery, and a war memorial, it still is the most suitable site to create a place for residents and visitors alike, to walk, sit and take in the natural beauty of the land. The plan is to host farmers' markets, arts and craft fairs and community events such as skating, the tree lighting, x-country skiing, and other activities through the seasons. The commission continues to seek pledges to meet its goal of \$150,000 to purchase the property. There is a need for substantial lead gifts to make this proposal a reality. If you are interested in speaking with a member of the commission, the town office will provide contact information. You may also fill out a pledge form at the town office. The commission recently applied for a grant with the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation to help with the purchase, but even if the award is granted, the project is still dependent upon the support of our residents. We may never get this opportunity again, and the land could be lost to us forever, lets act on this quickly!

The commission will continue its lecture series on relevant topics that affect our area. Water level rise, warming temperatures, tick activity, invasive species, healthful plantings, and effective composting, to name a few. Watch for our next offering. A few technically inclined members are exploring options to create a website which will help to keep everyone informed of the latest environmental news and trends as well as activities and events.

Besides a capital campaign to purchase the former Buckminster property, the OHCC has two additional fundraising events planned for the summer. An annual yard sale held in June, and a community BBQ in August, complete with live music, co-sponsored by the OHCC and the Kitchen Committee.

OHCC meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 6:30 PM in the community room of the Town Office on Ash Point Drive. All are welcome. There is strength in numbers and your help is much needed.

Kathryn DerMarderosian – Beth Long – Jeanne Johnson – Dick Matlack – Jim Devery – Kelly Bell – Catherine Wiejaczka – Ken Wexler – John Ware