



## Boothbay Region Land Trust



### NATURAL PLAY SPACE COMING TO OAK POINT FARM

*by Christine Selman, Communications & Outreach Manager*

**Oak Point Farm's diverse natural features provide many great benefits to the Boothbay region,** including offering the ideal setting for BRLT's growing educational outreach. One of Boothbay Region Land Trust's strategic focus areas is education. Among its goals is to develop programs that reach youth of all ages throughout the region. The land trust hopes to foster a deep and lasting connection to nature among the next generation, and as part of this effort, we are excited to share plans for a new natural play space in development at Oak Point Farm. With specially designed features that encourage interaction with nature through play, kids will be inspired to create, explore, and learn about the natural world.

The idea for a natural play space has been taking shape over the past few years as BRLT has increased

collaborations with schools and childcare facilities and expanded programs at Oak Point Farm. Since moving to Oak Point, the land trust has been able to observe how families, school groups, camps and daycares utilize the preserve during visits. One notable observation has been that groups of families attending our educational programs tend to stay on after programs end with caregivers wanting to talk and kids wanting to play. However, there is not always a great location for these casual gatherings to take place. At times caregivers may gather near the parking lot until their children become too unruly. School groups and daycares also enjoy visits, but are limited by how and where to take breaks following educational

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## FROM THE DESK OF HAL MOOREFIELD

**Serving as Boothbay Region Land Trust's** president for the last three years has been a humbling experience. So many wonderful people contribute so much to the land trust that my job has been easy— I've only had to be a cheerleader for those who do the work to achieve BRLT's mission and for those who support the work through their charitable giving.



There are literally hundreds of people helping BRLT to fulfill its mission every year from our dedicated staff, to our talented board, to our volunteers without whom we could not function, and to our members. The land trust's base of support was broad before COVID-19 struck, but it has grown even more over the last sixteen months as new visitors discovered the healing power of nature by hiking our preserves.

When the pandemic struck the US last spring, we all felt fear and uncertainty upon us, as businesses began to lock down and some even had to close their doors permanently. None of us knew whether donations to nonprofits like BRLT would continue to come in when so many were losing their jobs and had to cut expenses. Ultimately our fears proved to be unwarranted.

The loyalty of Boothbay Region Land Trust's membership was nothing short of remarkable. Existing members continued to make donations, and many new members did as well. In fact, BRLT received more donations during the COVID shutdowns than during those same months the previous year. Just as remarkable was our staff who continued to work remotely or on site as necessary so that the land trust's conservation mission never stopped. In fact, BRLT's new Lands Manager, Brad Weigel, was hired in March 2020, and then moved to Maine and started work in the teeth of the shutdown. So, from the perspective of the land trust, one silver lining of the past year and its struggles is that so many people, residents and visitors alike, discovered the importance of having BRLT's preserves on our peninsula.

With its acquisition of Oak Point Farm and the construction of its universal access trail (now in the process of being tripled in length due to its popularity), Boothbay Region Land Trust began to consider new ways it could serve the region and connect with the community. The land trust board just approved the construction of a natural children's play area at Oak Point Farm so that families will have a safe place for their young children to begin to experience nature (see cover article). In the future you will see BRLT partnering with other nonprofits in this region in new ventures to preserve more of our peninsula's priceless natural treasures.

It has been my privilege to serve BRLT at a time when its mission had never been more important to the people of the Boothbay region.



*Natural play space concept design for Oak Point Farm created by Bill Joyce of Carson Douglas Landscape Architecture*

## Natural Play Space (Continued from page 1)

programs. Without a designated place for groups to enjoy unstructured play before departing, staying on was not always an option. BRLT saw an opportunity to better engage with children by creating a space that encouraged direct and unstructured outdoor play in nature.

Natural play spaces are play areas designed to incorporate natural elements such as wood, stone, sand and plants to foster creative play among children while blending cohesively into their surroundings. They include features that invite children to explore nature and incorporate natural materials into their play. Natural play spaces are less structured than standard playgrounds, and their features invite interpretation and imagination. These spaces create inclusive environments through their open-concept designs and accessible settings that promote creativity and learning, while fostering an interest in nature.

The natural play space at Oak Point Farm will be located in a wooded area a short distance from

the main parking lot. Local landscape architect Bill Joyce of Carson Douglas Landscape Architecture in Edgecomb has created a concept design in consultation with BRLT staff. “The concept design has laid out a number of great, creative options for us to draw on,” explains Executive Director Nick Ullo. “As we begin to prep the area later this summer, we will be able to better determine the features that work best with the setting including the granite and rock formations as well as the tree circle. We look forward to sharing more updates as the project moves forward.”

John Copeland of Kennebec Trail Company in Bath, who has worked with BRLT most recently installing the universal access trails at Oak Point Farm, will be assisting with this project as well.

The new space will ultimately enhance BRLT’s existing children’s programming by providing additional resources for use by visiting groups from daycares to schools. It will also provide a safe and stimulating setting for children to play.

## PLANNED GIVING SUPPORTS BRLT'S CONSERVATION MISSION

**Over the past five years Boothbay Region Land Trust has significantly expanded its operations.**

The acquisition of a new preserve at Oak Point Farm not only provided BRLT with its first permanent home, but also allowed the public to experience a mosaic of unique Maine natural features on Boothbay Harbor's last saltwater farm. Hundreds of donors contributed more than \$3 million to the campaign for Oak Point Farm to fund its purchase and improvements.

But just as important as those campaign contributions was the impact that BRLT's endowment had on its ongoing operations, which now had to include the operation and maintenance of a large farmhouse and grounds. Many years ago, thoughtful donors started BRLT's endowment, which today produces more than 55% of its annual income. Put another way, BRLT's endowment now produces more money for its operations than all individual donations to the annual fund combined.

BRLT's mission is to 'conserve for the public benefit the natural habitat, scenic beauty and working land of the Boothbay region' in perpetuity. The best way to ensure the organization can fulfill its mission forever is through an endowment which produces a steady stream of income that is not subject to the unpredictability of annual fundraising. Increasing its principal amount will allow even more operational expenses to be paid from the endowment, thereby ensuring the future of BRLT's conservation goals. It also allows for more annual funding to support special stewardship projects that expand visitor access, as well as enhance our educational programming.

The most effective way to increase BRLT's endowment is through planned giving, which simply means that BRLT is included in your estate planning. A gift to BRLT's endowment through a will, trust, insurance policy, annuity or other legal vehicle means that your gift will produce income for BRLT's conservation operations forever, thereby helping to maintain all of its public preserves



*A planned gift to BRLT's endowment means that your gift will produce income for BRLT's conservation operations forever.*

on the peninsula for future generations to enjoy.

A planned gift to BRLT can be made with almost any kind of property, which can then be liquidated and the proceeds added to BRLT's endowment. Such property can include real estate, vehicles or boats, stock, insurance policies and all types of trusts. Most planned gifts are made only after you consult with your own attorney, accountant or financial professional to ensure that any gift fulfills your charitable giving and estate planning goals. With a little bit of planning, it is an easy way to know that your assets are doing good work well beyond your lifetime.

We recognize that not everyone has the ability to make large donations during their lifetime. By the same token however, many donors have accumulated sufficient assets during their lifetimes to make a significant donation from their estate or through their will. If you would like to support BRLT's conservation mission on the Boothbay peninsula, there is simply no better way to make your gift keep paying dividends forever than by making a planned gift to BRLT's endowment. If you would like more information on how to initiate a planned gift to Boothbay Region Land Trust, please contact Development Director Skye Wood at [vwood@bbrlt.org](mailto:vwood@bbrlt.org).

## THANKS TO ANONYMOUS DONOR, OAK POINT FARM VISION NEARS COMPLETION

Shortly after purchasing Oak Point Farm in 2017, the land trust's board of directors began exploring design plans for the farmhouse renovation. Ultimately the renovation was broken into distinct phases with an initial focus on updates that ensured public access, operational improvements, and structural upgrades. Beyond this, the larger vision included plans to enhance public use of the full downstairs visitor center. This would entail a significant reworking of the kitchen space on the west side of the building, including moving the kitchen to a more discrete location, and removing a wall between the kitchen and dining room to create a large public gathering space.



*The newly created meeting room opens on to Oak Point Farm's expanded deck, creating a unique public space with versatility to support a wide variety of programming from lectures and workshops, to fundraising events.*

Given the major financial commitment undertaken in the Oak Point Farm campaign to pay off the mortgage for the property and complete the early and most pressing renovation work along with developing the trail system,



*The third phase renovation (in progress) will create a large public gathering space while improving the building's flow and functionality.*

BRLT did not anticipate completing the kitchen renovation for at least a couple more years. However, we are pleased to share that the land trust secured funds this spring to move forward with this final phase of renovations to the farmhouse earlier than anticipated. The support of an anonymous donor has fully funded this project, which is currently underway and will be completed later this summer.

“The additional funds that we received to fulfill our vision of the farmhouse visitor center could not have come at a better time,” Executive Director Nick Ullo explains. “Given pandemic restrictions, we knew that indoor programming would be limited this summer, and now we have been able to utilize this quiet time to finish updates to the

building. The new room created by this renovation will provide a really fantastic public gathering space that is larger than any current space we have, and which also connects to the new deck, providing more versatility in use.”

This phase of the renovations will also improve the overall functionality of the farmhouse, giving the downstairs a more open and public feel. The open-concept design will provide a space that flows more cohesively and feels more inviting.

With the completion of this renovation the original vision of the farmhouse will be achieved. We look forward to sharing the finished space with members and visitors in the coming months.

## ACCESSIBLE TRAIL EXTENSION IN DEVELOPMENT AT OAK POINT FARM



BRLT's Board of Directors voted this winter to fund additional universal access trail around the fresh water pond at Oak Point Farm, extending the system to just over .5 miles of accessible trail and ensuring that the most spectacular views of the shore and the wildlife rich habitats around the pond can be enjoyed by everyone. Work is already underway and is scheduled for completion in August.

## SAVE THE DATE! ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING RETURNS TO OAK POINT FARM

**Mark your calendars now, because this year's Annual Membership Meeting will be in person once again, and we are planning a memorable evening that you won't want to miss!** On Saturday, September 18 at 4pm we will gather at Oak Point Farm under the tent for an evening of reconnecting with Boothbay Region Land Trust members and friends. Enjoy a delicious meal provided by Seacoast Catering while enjoying live instrumental music and catching up on all of BRLT's news and activities.

Following dinner, our guest speaker, Dr. Heather Goldstone, will present a fascinating talk entitled *Five Things You Should Know About Climate Change (but probably don't)*. Dr. Goldstone's presentation will explore everything from causes and amplifiers of climate change to solutions and policy. You are sure to walk away with new knowledge and strategies to advocate for climate solutions.

Dr. Heather Goldstone is chief Communications Officer for Woodwell Climate Research Center. She has extensive experience as both a scientist and a journalist, and she is passionate about melding data and narrative in climate change stories that build awareness and inspire action. Dr. Goldstone's prior experiences include founding and hosting a weekly science-focused radio show called Living Lab Radio for WGBH. She also wrote the Climatide blog about coastal communities facing climate change. Her extensive reporting on science and the environment has appeared in outlets ranging from Cape Cod Times and Commercial Fishery News to NPR's Morning Edition, The Takeaway, and PBS News Hour. In 2014, she was recognized for the breadth of her work with WGBH's Margret and Hans Rey/Curious George Producer award.

A short business meeting will conclude the evening. Dinner tickets are \$15 per adult (accompanying children eat free). Tickets can be purchased by visiting our website at [bbrlt.org](http://bbrlt.org) and clicking on the "Special Events" Tab under the "Events & News" menu, or by calling our office. We look forward to coming together once again as a community supporting conservation and public access.

## SUMMER ON DAMARISCOVE ISLAND IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ADVENTURE

Every summer Boothbay Region Land Trust welcomes two seasonal caretakers who live and work on Damariscove Island. Located five miles offshore, Damariscove is easily the land trust's most remote public preserve. The caretakers' jobs include maintenance and upkeep of the island's trails and structures, as well as welcoming and overseeing the hundreds of visitors who flock to Damariscove each summer. The caretakers spend the summer in a rustic one-room cabin without running water, appliances, or modern conveniences. Needless to say, these positions tend to attract people who love nature and are up for an adventure, and this season's caretakers, Aiko Pandorf and Scott Peterson, fit the bill.

Aiko and Scott hail from California though they have a long-time connection to Maine, where they have spent summers for the past 20 years exploring the coast of Casco Bay while rehabbing an old family camp. Aiko's professional background is in the nonprofit sector where she has worked in virtually every capacity from communications and fundraising director, to executive director, and consultant. Scott's career has been in education with a focus on promoting civic engagement. His expertise is in curriculum design and learning facilitation. Both Aiko and Scott bring strong communications and public engagement experiences to these positions and are sure to be excellent ambassadors of the land trust at Damariscove this summer.

One trait that has been a strong point of connection between Aiko and Scott throughout their lives together is their mutual love of adventure. It led them, early in their relationship, to move to Africa together, where they spent several years working and exploring, and ultimately it is also what led them to seek the



*Aiko Pandorf (left) and Scott Peterson (right) join BRLT as seasonal caretakers on Damariscove Island.*

caretaker positions on Damariscove this summer. "The pandemic has taught us that opportunities for adventure are not infinite," Pandorf and Peterson explain. "After months of being locked down, we are seeking something completely different. We love and respect Maine's coastal ecosystem and the range of people who enjoy it recreationally and for their livelihood. We are looking forward to sharing our love of Maine and to learning from visitors we meet at Damariscove this summer."

Aiko and Scott will spend approximately ten weeks on Damariscove Island undertaking a range of projects from trail clearing to carpentry. Please feel free to introduce yourself on your island adventures!

### In Memory of James (Jim) Dun (1936 – 2021)

Jim was intimately involved with Boothbay Region Land Trust for many years, serving in numerous vital roles including: Board Member (President, VP, Treasurer), Grants Committee (Chair), Finance Committee (Chair), Lands Committee (Chair), Investment Committee, Stewardship Committee, and Development Committee. He will be missed.





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Boothbay Region Land Trust

2020 ANNUAL REPORT  
& MEMBERSHIP LIST



## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT & MEMBER LIST ONLINE NOW!

2020 was a year of great challenges. The pandemic required Boothbay Region Land Trust to adapt to countless changes from programming and outreach, to fundraising and events. In spite of this, finances remained strong throughout the year, as did use of the preserves, many of which saw record visitation. We at BRLT are grateful to the many members and volunteers who supported our mission and enabled us to provide an essential resource for the community during this time. To view the full 2020 Annual Report & Member List, please visit our website at [bbrlt.org](http://bbrlt.org) and click on the “News” link in the top menu.

