



The Heron

Fall 2004

The Newsletter of the Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc. • www.mattlandtrust.org • mattlandtrust@earthlink.net

Land Donation: What's Involved

By Gary Johnson

If you've ever thought about donating land to the Mattapoisett Land Trust (MLT) or some other land-conservation organization, you have many alternatives from which to choose. We can only give a brief overview of your options here but we hope it will encourage you to speak to one of our directors about how your desires can best be met.

As you know, the MLT is a non-profit organization dedicated to owning, or holding a conservation restriction (CR) on, any property we deem worthy of conservation for the benefit of present and future generations. Benefits vary with each parcel of land, making "worthy of conservation" a broad term, including both land that supports threatened species and land that has scenic significance; land that can be used for hiking and picnicking, as well as land that protects our drinking water.

Most of the property we own has been donated to us, but we are sometimes able to purchase property that is particularly helpful in allowing us to meet our goal of land preservation. Because of our limited resources and the high price of real estate, these purchases typically must be made at a price below market value, with the difference between the selling price and the market value considered a charitable contribution, thereby providing a tax benefit by reducing the seller's taxable income.

As mentioned, there are many options when it comes to land donation. For example, you can choose to donate all, or only part, of a property. Or you can donate a remainder interest with a reserved life estate so that you would get a tax advantage during your lifetime, but the land would go to the MLT upon your passing. Another option is to donate through a bequest, with or without specific restrictions on how the property can be used.

If you wish to continue to own the land but restrict what can be done with it in the future, you might consider selling or donating a CR to the MLT. A CR specifically limits what can be done with a property in the future and binds all future landowners to those conditions. Both state and town approval are required for a CR to be issued; these approvals require evidence that the public will benefit from restricting development of the land. Once a CR is in place, it can only be removed by the state legislature. In

accepting a CR, the Land Trust takes on the responsibility of monitoring compliance to the CR, usually through annual visits to the property. If you opt for a CR, then you typically will receive tax benefits as well.

Broad as the definition is, not all property qualifies as "worthy of conservation." This includes property that would be better cared for by private individuals. If you own such a property, you can still contribute to the Land Trust's conservation efforts by donating the property with the understanding that the MLT would sell it and use the proceeds to protect other land in town. This was done in the case of a portion of the recently donated Shoolman property (for more details, see "Property Updates" in this newsletter).

This may all sound complicated, but there is a very simple first step. We would like to sit down with you and discuss your vision for your land. Once we know what you want, we can work together to help you achieve it. In the end, everyone wins.

Gary Johnson



"Salty the Seahorse" at Dunseith Gardens

Tom Richardson



"Autumn at the Munn property"

Featured Creatures

Autumn is a wonderful time to observe many species of birds migrating through Mattapoisett on the way to their wintering areas. We've described two of these below, so that you can be on the lookout for them in the coming months. And while you're hiking on one of the MLT properties, if you see an unusual or interesting species, take a picture and submit a Field Log form on the MLT website!

Brant (*Branta Bernicia*):

Approximately 24" long, the all-black head and bill distinguish this small goose from others. Brants summer on the northern arctic coast and winter on the coastal waters. Highly social birds, you'll see them nesting along the shore of ponds, streams or small islands, feeding on grasses, sea lettuce and eelgrass. Look for their black head, neck, and chest, and a large white rump while they're in flight. Flocks of Brants typically fly low over the water in long wavy lines.

Common Eider (*Somateria Mollissima*):

The Common Eider is a 25" duck often seen in large flocks floating along the coast. Male Eiders have a very distinctive white back and black flanks, making them look a bit like a skunk in the water, while females are all brown. You'll see Common Eiders building their nests of seaweed, grasses, and sticks on the ground of rocky islands. And believe it or not, these birds can dive as far as 60 feet underwater for sea urchins, crustaceans, and blue mussels. This is one of the reasons that Common Eiders are particularly susceptible to oil spills.

Kids Corner

Do You Have Suggestions for Activities We Could Offer Area Kids?

We'd love to hear your ideas on fun, educational outings or events that get kids involved with the land trust and appreciating the outdoors! Call Diane Perry (508.758.9063) if you'd like to suggest an activity that could be sponsored by the MLT.



Gary Johnson

"The MLT thanks area Boy Scouts for their help at Tub Mill!"

Join the Mattapoisett Land Trust!

Membership Renewal – We only exist with your help!
Cut along the dotted line and mail in your support!

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail: _____

Seasonal Address (If Applicable) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Dates _____

Membership Categories:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|---|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$ 30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$ 250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$ 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$ 500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$ 75 | <input type="checkbox"/> Founder | \$1000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of Salty \$5 (children under 12 years) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | _____ | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | _____ | | |

Please make your check payable to:

Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 31, Mattapoisett, MA 02739

We would like to hear from you!

Whether your contributions come in the form of tax-deductible financial gifts or through volunteer services, your support matters! Your annual membership contributions support the operating expenses of the MLT. Mowing, inspections, forestry services, trash pick-up, legal and accounting advice are all part of what keeps the organization vital and growing. In addition, whether you are concerned about preserving the scenic beauty of Mattapoisett, maintaining its biodiversity, or fear the degradation of Buzzards Bay waters from septic systems and chemical run-off, there are many ways you can volunteer your time and services, allowing for the enjoyment and education of future generations.

To become a member of the MLT, renew your membership, learn more about upcoming events, and find out about volunteer opportunities, check out our new website: mattlandtrust.org, or email us at mattlandtrust@earthlink.net. We would like to hear from you and welcome any suggestions or comments!

Property Updates

THANKS TO EDITH SHOOLMAN: A LEGACY OF CONSERVATION

By Susan Reid

Probably only a handful of you ever knew the late Mrs. Edith Shoolman, a longtime seasonal resident of Mattapoisett's Brandt Beach neighborhood. But we're hoping that all of you will come to appreciate the significant conservation legacy that she has left for us and our future generations.

Mrs. Shoolman, who passed away in April 2003, made some marvelous contributions to local conservation. In 1984, she, with her husband Eliot, donated an 80-acre undeveloped parcel of land in Rochester (known as "Oldfield Farm"); this land, which abuts the Mattapoisett River, has been protected from development and has remained open for public recreation for some 20 years. Mrs. Shoolman recently enhanced her conservation legacy when, upon her passing, she bequeathed all of her Mattapoisett property to the MLT. This generous bequest included three parcels of land, all in the Brandt Beach neighborhood; two adjacent landscaped (but otherwise undeveloped) parcels bordered by Oaklawn, Ocean View and Bay Avenues (1.1 acres), as well as a developed 0.5 acre waterfront parcel on Bay View that includes a house.

We are excited to continue to maintain the grounds of the undeveloped parcels of land, which will be known as "Shoolman Park." This park already is known for drawing a diverse variety of songbirds, and now is available for the public to enjoy. And, recently, we've added a memorial sundial, several park benches, and a plaque commemorating the park as a bird sanctuary.

The developed parcel posed a dilemma for the Land Trust, however. Houses, especially waterfront homes, require substantial ongoing maintenance and can pose significant liability issues. At the same time, we are an all-volunteer organization, with no paid staff. Fortunately, because Mrs. Shoolman left the property to us without restrictions, we were able to consider a host of options, including using the house as an office, renting it out, or demolishing the house and retaining the land as open space. After lengthy and thoughtful deliberation among the board, we decided it would be best to keep the home in private hands, with deed restriction added so that the current home may only be minimally expanded and cannot be replaced with a monster home that would be out of character with the neighborhood.

It perhaps goes without saying that we intend to use the proceeds from the sale of the house to fund the purchase of other conservation land in town, parcels that have greater conservation value due to their size, connection to wetlands and water resources, and/or habitat or recreation values. In this way, we hope to further enhance the already significant conservation legacy of the late Edith Shoolman.

HILLER COVE PROJECT

As many of you are aware, we are in the midst of a campaign to raise funds for the purchase of 60 acres located on Aucoot, Hollywoods and Bowman roads. As of early October, we are approaching the \$50,000 mark! Cash gifts now total \$38,726 and pledges amount to \$10,940. The MLT has exercised its option to purchase the Boardman property for \$300,000, with a closing date in mid-November. We have made progress, but could use all of the help we can get! If you'd like to contribute to the Hiller Cove Project, please send your contribution to the MLT, P.O. Box 31, Attn: Hiller Cove.

FIELD PROPERTY CONSERVATION RESTRICTION

Spotlighted in the MLT Spring '04 newsletter, the Field Property CR will be finalized this month. The property will continue to be privately held by the Field family, who will be able to use it as they have in the past, with the stipulation that the land will remain "as-is" in perpetuity. The property consists of 64 acres of Mattapoisett Neck: 37 acres of forest, 7 acres of open fields, a fresh water pond, and over 20 acres of salt marsh along the northeast shore of Brandt Island Cove and extending inland nearly to Molly's Cove on Mattapoisett Harbor. Our thanks go out to the Field Family for making this CR a reality!

Gary Johnson



"Dedication of a Princeton Elm on the Tub Mill property at the MLT's B-Earth-Day celebration, May 1, 2004"

WE NEED YOU!

Have you ever wondered who plants the flowers at Dunseith Gardens? Or assists with tending the Tub Mill property? The MLT is looking for volunteer stewards of the Dunseith Gardens and Munro properties to assist with flower planting and light maintenance. Please email Allan Schubert (allan.schubert@comcast.net) of the MLT if you're interested.

Who We Are:

Luana Jovold



In an effort to illustrate the diversity of our members' backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs, we continue with our Member Spotlight column, and sat down this time with Luana Jovold, Board Member and Clerk of the MLT:

MLT: *Where did you grow up?*

LJ: I grew up in Seattle, WA. After college, I taught English and Drama at a local high school. Then I went to Norway to visit my father's family and was offered a teaching job there. That was a great opportunity to learn more about my cultural heritage. I lived there for four years and then returned to the U.S. and taught in Jamestown, NY, before returning to Seattle to work on my master's degree and teach Norwegian at the University of Washington. Following this, my husband, Gary Johnson, and I returned to Jamestown, where I was a professor at Empire State College, and then moved to Pittsburgh and on to the Boston area.

MLT: *What is your educational background (college, degrees, etc.)?*

LJ: I have a B.A. in Drama, with a minor in English Literature, and an M.A. in Scandinavian Languages and Literature, both from the University of Washington. I have teaching certification from both Washington and New York states, as well as from Norway.

MLT: *What attracted you to Mattapoisett?*

LJ: My husband and I were attracted to the natural beauty of the area, the small intimate neighborhoods (and wonderful, welcoming neighbors), close proximity to the water, and being close enough to large metropolitan areas to take advantage of the extended cultural resources. We began living in Mattapoisett year-round in 1999.

MLT: *Are you retired?*

LJ: Yes and no. Although I am no longer working full-time for one employer, I do a number of part-time things. I am very active in Sons of Norway in the Boston area. I am currently Counselor and Language Program Coordinator for Norumbega Lodge #506 in Boston. I teach 7-8 Norwegian language classes a week, six in Boston, one in Mattapoisett, and one in Fairhaven. I serve as Marketing Director for Land of the Vikings, a cultural and recreational facility in Sherman, PA, owned by the Third District, Sons of Norway. I am a free-lance musician, playing mostly traditional Scandinavian music with Boston Scandinavian Ensemble. Our group has played two benefit concerts for Friends of the Mattapoisett Library. We have recorded five cassettes, one CD, and one instructional dance video. My degree in Scandinavian Languages and Literature gives me the opportunity to do additional interesting jobs, such as translation work, simultaneous interpretation, and writing a course in Norwegian for Simon and Schuster Audio. I also do occasional lectures on various aspects of Scandinavian culture, including one on Viking Art for the Friends of the Mattapoisett Library.

MLT: *What are your hobbies or past times?*

LJ: When I'm not busy being a "professional Norwegian", I love to read, cook, knit, play music, etc.

MLT: *Tell us a little about your family.*

LJ: My background is Norwegian. I have lots of family both in the Pacific Northwest and in Norway, where my husband and I spend the summers. Gary and I have one daughter, Berit, who currently lives in Brooklyn, NY and is active in theatre as a stage manager.

MLT: *Why have you chosen to get involved with the MLT, and to be a board member?*

LJ: My husband and I have been on the MLT board for ca. four years. I am serving my second term as Clerk of the MLT. I feel that it is important to be an active member of the community. My upbringing in the Pacific Northwest and the years I spent living in Norway have instilled in me a respect for and an appreciation of the environment. I firmly believe that having close contact with nature, having access to open spaces, is essential for one's physical and psychological well-being. To me, walking in the woods, means being nurtured and protected, while looking out over the water means experiencing tranquility and feeling connected with family living on the other side.



Gary Johnson

"Luana at a coffee shop in Norway"

MLT: *How do you see the MLT contributing to Mattapoisett's future?*

LJ: I enjoy working on the board with other like-minded volunteers for the good of the whole community. Preserving open spaces for current and future residents and visitors to enjoy, improving the quality of the water supply, and maintaining the natural beauty and character of Mattapoisett are very important to me. On my last trip to Seattle, a cousin and I visited the neighborhood where we grew up and drove past our grandparents' home. The fruit and vegetable and flower gardens which were characteristic of the neighborhood were gone, the lots had been sub-divided and there were twice as many houses. There were few trees and no real open space. I was appalled at the change. I don't want to see that happen here. I don't want Mattapoisett to look like Route 6 on the Cape.



Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.
Post Office Box 31 • Mattapoisett, MA 02739

Calendar

FALL ACTIVITY

Sunday, November 7, 1:30-3:30 PM

Fall Walk at Haskell Swamp

Explore the habitats and wildlife of Haskell Swamp Wildlife Management Area, comprised of 2,712 acres of red maple swamp, Atlantic white cedar swamp, oak/white pine upland habitat and small areas of eastern hemlock, located in Rochester, Mattapoisett and Marion. We'll meet at 1:30 PM to walk, with Ruth Bates as our guide, followed by tailgate refreshments (some seating available). Walk suitable for kids and dogs, also!

***DIRECTIONS:** Head north on North St.; turn right onto New Bedford Rd.; turn right onto Dexter Lane. Continue all the way to end of Dexter Lane, past the Rochester Police station and the Rod & Gun Club.*

Rain Date: Sunday, November 14.



The Heron is published bi-annually by the Mattapoisett Land Trust. The MLT, formed in 1974, is a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Its purpose is to preserve open space for the enjoyment of current and future residents of Mattapoisett, as well as to educate the public about the sound use of natural resources, and to work with other organizations having the same goals.

Our membership consists of annual contributors – our primary source of revenue – and a volunteer board of directors: Bob Atkinson, Ruth Bates, Brad Hathaway, Martin Hudis, Elizabeth Leidhold, Paul Osenkowski, Luana Josvold, Richard Kallio, Shawn Kennedy, Jenny Mello, Blanche Perry, Diane Perry, Susan Reid, Elizabeth Richardson, Allan Schubert, Eleanor Smith and Gary Johnson, President. The Mattapoisett Land Trust is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. All contributions are fully tax deductible.

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