

# LANDMARKS

THE YORK LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

A treasured sculpture sits within the 12-acre pocket of forest recently donated to the York Land Trust.

## LEGACY OF LOCAL SCULPTOR PRESERVED WITHIN 12-ACRE PARCEL IN CAPE NEDDICK

When New England-based sculptor Henry Davisson bought a 12-acre patch of forest off of Mountain Road in Cape Neddick in 1972, he did not mind that the land was too rocky to build on. In fact, he bought the land for the rock itself – not to quarry, but to sculpt.

Davisson did not immediately get to work. He let the stone rest for a few decades, returning in the early 2000s to finally start chipping away at his artistic vision. The resulting granite sculpture, which he completed in 2004 at the age of 63, is a beautifully rendered female figure sitting cross-legged within an egg-shaped cutout that measures several feet tall. Named “Oestre/Easter” after the Anglo-Saxon goddess of springtime, she sits in dappled light surrounded by leaf litter and mossy rocks and stumps, occasionally catching the eyes and imaginations of hunters and others who have stumbled across her over the years.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The York Land Trust is a member-supported, nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving and protecting lands of ecological, historic, scenic, agricultural and cultural significance in the greater York, Maine area, for the benefit of all.

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It is always risky to predict spring in York, but hopefully by the time you receive this newsletter, we will see encouraging signs of its arrival. Like spring, York Land Trust is sprouting new and exciting growth this season. The leadership of our new Executive Director, Amelia Nadilo, has been a powerful source of this growth. Speaking for the entire Board, we could not be more thrilled about Amelia's arrival and grateful for how quickly she has settled into YLT and the impact she is already having on the organization. She has established a talented team around her, having recently promoted Liz Walworth into the permanent role of Stewardship Director and hired Myrilla Hartkopf in the new role of Assistant Stewardship Director.

Another growth area for YLT includes the wide range of land protection projects we are currently engaged in, including more than a dozen currently in the works or already completed this year. I cannot recall a time when we have had so many, and so varied a list of land projects. In this newsletter, we feature a beautiful 12-acre parcel off Josiah Norton Road that

was generously donated by the Davisson family earlier this year. As you know, these land protection projects require legal, survey, appraisal, and other closing costs. Please consider donating to the recently established Doreen McGillis Land Protection Fund to help facilitate these important transactions. A contribution not only helps protect land in York but is also a tribute to the incredible career-long impact Doreen has had — and continues to have in her new role as YLT's Land Protection Specialist.

Spring has sprung. We hope you enjoy it out on the land at a YLT preserve.

Sincerely,  
Jared Chase



The Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (MTA2C) is an effort led by a coalition of national, regional and local partners to protect a network of connected conservation lands and natural resources within a 48,000-acre focus area in Southern Maine for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The MTA2C Partners include: the US Fish and Wildlife Service/ Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Great Works Regional Land Trust, Kittery Land Trust, and York Land Trust.

For more information,  
please visit [www.mta2c.org](http://www.mta2c.org).



**Sculptor Henry Davisson completed Oestre/Easter at the age of 63, working throughout the year and in all kinds of weather to bring her to life.**

legacy but also an important piece of wildlife habitat that sits within a 963-acre block of undeveloped land within the Cape Neddick River watershed. The surrounding land holds historic remnants in a region known as Toddville, which includes a family cemetery, cellar holes and stonewalls.

"We hope that this very thoughtful land donation will lead to additional opportunities for conservation in this ecologically and historically significant area of the town," says Amelia Nadilo, York Land Trust's Executive Director.

If you or a loved one has a piece of land that you would be interested in donating to York Land Trust either now or in the future, please contact Amelia Nadilo at [anadilo@yorklandtrust.org](mailto:anadilo@yorklandtrust.org).

## LEGACY OF LOCAL SCULPTOR PRESERVED

*- continued from page 1*

When Davisson passed away peacefully at the age of 80 in 2021, his daughters Lora and Beth sought to honor their father's legacy by preserving his artwork and the surrounding patch of woods that meant so much to him. They reached out to York Land Trust and generously donated the land and covered the associated costs to conserve this forested landscape and the stories and relics it holds.

Thanks to Lora and Beth's generosity and foresight, we were able to acquire the property this winter, permanently protecting not only their father's artistic





Liz Walworth has taken on the role of Stewardship Director.

## LIZ WALWORTH NAMED YLT'S NEW STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

*Myrilla Hartkopf hired as YLT's new Assistant Stewardship Director*

Having worked as York Land Trust's Stewardship Assistant since November 2021, I am thrilled to announce that I have taken on the role of Stewardship Director as of this spring. Over the last year and a half, I have had the pleasure of learning from and working with YLT's fantastic staff, dedicated partners, members, and volunteers. I extend my most sincere thanks to those who have provided me with the support and guidance that prepared me for this role. I look forward to growing these relationships as we move forward together as an organization and community in caring for some of the most special and ecologically valuable land in York.

The land trust community is in a time of growth and transition, exploring what the future of land conservation in Maine looks like. We are grappling with questions such as who has access to land and outdoor recreation, how we can best honor the history and future of Native people on Maine soil and how we can steward land for resiliency in a changing climate. York Land Trust has achieved an incredible amount in land conservation and stewardship since 1986. I look forward to continuing this work and finding opportunities for growth amidst all that is to come as we continue to steward our land for its intrinsic value and for the benefit of all.

Lastly, I am thrilled to welcome Myrilla Hartkopf as our new Assistant Stewardship Director! Myrilla will be such a strong and positive addition to our team, and I cannot wait for you all to get the chance to know her in the months ahead.

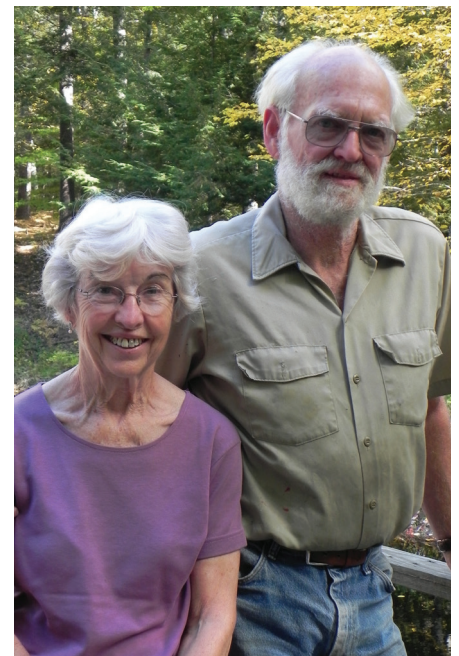


Myrilla Hartkopf has filled the new position of Assistant Stewardship Director.

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: WARREN AND DEB TAYLOR

Warren and Deb Taylor exemplify the practice of protecting what you love. Their deep affinity for the natural areas of York has moved them to support the work of York Land Trust in numerous ways over the years. From volunteering their time to donating money, land, easements, and even a house, they have been instrumental in our growth as an organization and are an inspiration to others of what supporting conservation can look like.

Warren served a full 9-year term on our Board of Directors from 2004-2013 and was a longtime member of the Stewardship Committee, helping to shape and implement numerous efforts to care for the land in thoughtful and effective ways. Monetary donations made by the Taylors have allowed us to make significant land purchases, including the 7-acre parcel that abuts our headquarters on which our Near Point Trail sits. They also donated a conservation easement on 22 acres surrounding their homestead on Scituate Road in 2009 and placed an additional 12.5 acres under conservation easement in 2023. In a first of its kind for YLT, their donation of a house in Kittery in 2014 generated \$150,000 of income that directly supported land protection projects in the Mt. Agamenticus region.



Longtime York Land Trust members and supporters Warren and Deb Taylor on their beloved property on Scituate Road. By protecting this land in a conservation easement, they have ensured that it will remain wild and undeveloped in perpetuity.

“Deb and Warren Taylor are conservationists in every sense of the word. They have led by example and we are so grateful for the numerous, significant, and creative ways that they have contributed to our work and benefited the community over the years,” says York Land Trust President, Jared Chase.

If you would like to explore planned giving options to support York Land Trust, please contact Amelia Nadilo at [anadilo@yorklandtrust.org](mailto:anadilo@yorklandtrust.org). Such conversations are non-binding and confidential.

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## NOTES FROM THE FIELD: CITIZEN SCIENCE SMELT SURVEYS AT SMELT BROOK PRESERVE



Maine Department of Marine Resources/Tom Watson

Our 300-acre Smelt Brook Preserve provides important spawning habitat for sea-run rainbow smelt, who lay their eggs at night during the spring.

True to its name, Smelt Brook Preserve is home to a species of fish called rainbow smelt, one of a dozen migratory fish species native to Maine that spend most of their lives at sea but return to bodies of freshwater each spring to spawn. Measuring up to 9 inches long, they are the smallest of Maine's sea-run fish and offer sustenance to a variety of wildlife including other fish, seals, and birds — not to mention humans.

The statewide population of rainbow smelt has been declining since the 1980s, depleting this important link in the food web. To track their numbers and identify ways to help smelt rebound, biologists from the Maine Department of Marine Resources, the Downeast Salmon Federation, and other conservation agencies and organizations have teamed up to conduct smelt surveys across the 300 streams that flow along Maine's coast.

This spring, we have welcomed biologists and volunteers from the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve to conduct smelt surveys at Smelt Brook Preserve to help add to this longstanding database. With the assistance of a committed crew of citizen science volunteers, the team has collected weekly water samples in search of traces of smelt DNA, and visual surveys in search of egg masses and active adults.

Collectively, these statewide surveys will assess the status and distribution of smelt populations and identify spawning locations in need of restoration. We are so pleased to be able to support this important study, and grateful to the citizen science volunteers who are helping to make it happen!

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

With songbird melodies by day and peepers' choruses by night, trees beginning to bud and maple sap running, longer days of glorious sunshine and familiar perennials blooming – Maine is abuzz this spring and so is York Land Trust.

This season, we are focusing on fruitful land conservation opportunities, growing our stewardship team, flourishing program offerings, and nurturing our volunteer program. All the while, we are planting the seeds and working towards a more sustainable future. There are unlimited benefits to conserving land and we see the impact of this work immediately today and will for generations to come. Permanently protecting cherished landscapes strengthens this area's climate resilience, protects natural resources, and provides vital food and habitat for wildlife.

It has been inspiring to see the community's support in climate action, as seen with the popular passage of the town's Climate Action Plan and other local efforts spearheaded by York Ready for Climate Action. We look forward to supporting and amplifying these initiatives to further protect York's scenic and treasured natural areas and the livelihoods of our community members. When individual efforts work in tandem with local, state, and federal

efforts, the potential of what we can achieve together grows exponentially.

There is a role for everyone in conservation and climate work. Whether you are pulling invasives on preserves, attending our educational programs, donating to land conservation, or telling your neighbors about York Land Trust – you are contributing, and we are so very grateful for our members and volunteers.

As Christine E. Nieves Rodriguez says in *All We Can Save*, community is our best chance. "It turns out that communities are the most important force that allows humans to weather great storms, literally and metaphorically. The climate crisis will intensify, but our communities will continue to rise – because they were always standing."





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### Call For Building Material

**Donations!** Do you have building materials leftover from a project? We are in need of dimensional lumber of all shapes and sizes, various kinds of usable hardware, (screws, nails, brackets, etc.) and working power tools. If you would like to donate material, please email Stewardship Director Liz Walworth [lwalworth@yorklandtrust.org](mailto:lwalworth@yorklandtrust.org).

Invite your friends to connect online: [yorklandtrust.org](http://yorklandtrust.org)

 [facebook.com/YLT.York.ME](https://facebook.com/YLT.York.ME)

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## UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Please visit [yorklandtrust.org/events](http://yorklandtrust.org/events) for event descriptions and registration details.

### PROGRAMS:

#### GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Friday, May 12 | 3pm-4pm  
York Land Trust Headquarters

#### BIRD WALK WEDNESDAY

Wednesday, May 7 | 9am-10:30am  
Highland Farm Preserve

Wednesday, June 14 | 9am-10:30am  
Highland Farm Preserve

#### NATURALIST ADVENTURE SERIES: NATURE JOURNALING

Saturday, May 20 | 10am-12pm  
Highland Farm Preserve

Saturday, June 10 | 10am-12pm  
Fuller Forest

#### GARDEN STORYTIME WITH YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Monday, May 22 | 10:30am-11:30am  
York Land Trust Headquarters

### EVENTS:

#### 3RD ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 13 | 9am-12pm  
York Land Trust Headquarters

#### ANNUAL FUNDRAISER:

#### FOSTER'S CLAMBAKE AT YORK LAND TRUST

Sunday, September 17 | 4pm-8pm  
York Land Trust Headquarters

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE!**

#### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Our programs and events have been generously sponsored by the following businesses:

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We extend our sincere thanks to these businesses for helping us connect our community with nature!