

## Land trust adds nearly 200 acres of conservation land on Maquoit Bay

By **Emily Guerin**

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BRUNSWICK — The Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust has added a key piece to its patchwork of conservation land along Maquoit Bay.

The group announced Monday that it secured a conservation easement on the 194-acre Henshaw property on Bunganuc Road near the Freeport town line. The land includes 1,500 feet of shore front on Maquoit Bay, and acres of woods and fields.

Angela Twitchell, executive director of the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, said the deal brings the total amount of conserved land along Maquoit Bay to almost 1,000 acres, and links various other tracts of conservation land together.

"Maquoit Bay has some of the best habitat in all of Casco Bay," she said. The Henshaw property is part of the largest unfragmented landscape in the county, and one of the most valuable coastal areas on Casco Bay.

It's also special, she said, because the property is loved so dearly by the Henshaw family, who will retain ownership of the land.

"One of the greatest things about this project was how the family had a vision about ensuring this would be conserved forever," Twitchell said.

"It's just so clear they loved the property so much."

The Henshaws bought the property in 1944. Owner Jack Henshaw, whose parents purchased the land, recalled road tripping up to Brunswick in a 1940 Ford.

"It was always a place to call home," he said, "No matter where we were living it was a place to come back to ... our motivation was not to break up the land and that's what we've done."

The property will be known as the Chase Reserve after Benjamin Chase, a Revolutionary War hero who is buried on the Henshaw's land.

Twitchell said at just over \$1 million, the deal was among the largest the land trust had ever been involved with. The group partnered with numerous other state and non-profit agencies to secure funding to buy the easement, which will ensure the property is never developed. Twitchell also credited landowner Jack Henshaw for making the easement deal affordable for the land trust.

The land trust received an approximately \$772,000 grant from the National Coastal Wetlands Grant Program, and \$150,000 grant from the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program, plus additional support from the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, the Open Space Institute and Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

The property will be closed to the public until the land trust decides where to develop trails and a small parking area, and raises money for those projects. Twitchell said the land trust hopes to connect future trails to conservation land in Freeport and surrounding preserves in Brunswick.

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