

Espy Land Heritage Award Recipients

The Land Heritage Award was established by Maine Coast Heritage Trust in 1987 to recognize exceptional individuals and organizations for their dedication and success in protecting the character of Maine. The award is presented during the plenary session of the Maine Land Conservation Conference. Past recipients have been given a granite and wood plaque engraved with MCHT's logo and name. Since 2008, when the award was renamed and endowed in honor of Maine Coast Heritage Trust's long-time President Jay Espy, the **Espy Land Heritage Award** has been a framed certificate and a check for \$5,000 directed to the conservation organization of the recipients choosing. Past recipients include:

2023: Janet McMahon: For her decades of ecological research and clear, compelling conservation planning, which have helped protect some of Maine's most special places and supported communities across the state

2022: Jerry Bley: For the professionalism, humility, positive energy, and tireless dedication he has brought land trusts, state agencies, landowners, and community partners over nearly four decades, conserving working and natural landscapes in every corner of the state to the benefit of current and future generations of Mainers.

2021: Susan Alexander: For her quiet dedication to conservation, unwavering integrity, and tireless commitment to building lasting connections between the people of Maine's midcoast communities and their surrounding landscapes.

2020: No award due to COVID-19

2019: Burnham Martin: For three decades he has listened, collaborated, and coached the people of Maine to create places that connect us with the outdoors.

2018: Portland Water District: Through their unique partnership with conservation organizations they have protected forests, secured public access, and safe-guarded naturally clean water in the State of Maine.

2017: Barbara Vickery: For over three decades she has shaped many of Maine's greatest conservation successes through collaborative leadership built on a foundation of exemplary science.

2016: Tom Settlemire: For more than 30 years, his boundless energy and optimism have strengthened communities through land conservation, agriculture, and education.

2015: Owen Grumbling, Ph.D.: For his leadership in countless municipal conservation initiatives, his foresight in helping create a national caliber center for coastal and estuarine research and education, and his dedication to teaching Maine's future environmental leaders.

2014: Scott Dickerson: For his tireless leadership in conserving the rivers, mountains and islands of western Penobscot Bay and beyond. His commitment to excellence and his many contributions at the local, regional, state and national levels have inspired a generation of conservationists.

2013: Andy Cadot: For nearly four decades of remarkable achievements on behalf of the lands, water and people of Maine. Andy's broad based and self-less service to non-profit, public, philanthropic and political organizations will have an enduring impact on the State.

2012: Paul Birdsall: For his leadership and many contributions to conservation and farming, including being a founding board member of Blue Hill Heritage Trust and current board member of Maine Farmland Trust, as well as mentoring the next generation of young farmers.

2011: Downeast Lakes Land Trust: For outstanding leadership in creating and realizing a vision that uses land conservation as the key to sustaining a strong economy, a vibrant community and a healthy environment.

2009/2010: Don Hudson (year designation changed to avoid confusion): For his unique contributions and leadership in integrating land conservation, environmental education and outdoor recreation throughout the state of Maine, which has helped so many young people to become passionate, lifelong conservationists.

2008: Lucy McCarthy: For her embodiment of all that is required for successful conservation: integrity, leadership, empathy, expertise, persistence, and a deep caring for the land and people of Vinalhaven.

2007: Dave Getchell Sr. for his rare combination of vision, inspiration, cooperative spirit, and on-the-ground accomplishments which together have had far reaching impact on the lives of many. For his belief in building common ground and the power of getting people out on the land in order to build a conservation ethic. *1st ever Espy Land Heritage Award. \$2,000 directed to MITA, \$1500 to Friends of Baxter, \$1500 to Georges River Land Trust.*

2006: Tin Smith for outstanding commitment and leadership to land conservation in southern Maine and throughout the state.

2005: Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust for their tremendous impact on the landscape, people, and economic health of the Rangeley Lakes Region.

2004: Quoddy Regional Land Trust for 18 years of hard work and collaboration resulting in the protection of fantastic lands in a region with few human and financial resources. QRLT was also recognized for its commitment to working with the communities it serves.

2003: Jane Eberle and Denny Phillips for their vision, enthusiasm and dedication to the creation of the Kennebec Highlands conservation project. The project was recognized for its ambitiousness and focus on providing public access.

2002: Coastal Mountains Land Trust for overall excellence

2001: US Fish & Wildlife Service's Gulf of Maine Program for invaluable assistance to conservation efforts in Maine.

2000: Joe and Adelaide Trafton for their passionate dedication to preserving the places they cherish. The Traftons purchased, conserved and restored two peninsulas in Mid Coast Maine.

1999: Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust for its steadfast efforts to protect the wetlands and shore frontage along the Back & Kennebec Rivers. In 1999 they raised \$420,000 to conserve the 96-acre Thorne Head Peninsula.

1998: Blue Hill Heritage Trust for its visionary capital campaign to purchase Fourth Pond as well as its new farmland protection initiative which may serve as a model for others.

1997: Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust in recognition of 13 years of outstanding leadership and community involvement in land conservation. Particularly inspiring was their \$700,000 campaign to purchase Crystal Springs Farm, one of Brunswick's last working farms.

1996: Freeport Conservation Trust in recognition of a stalwart commitment to defending a conservation easement and correcting a violation. The trust successfully withstood a difficult and costly challenge.

1995: Linda Labaree in recognition of her ten years of dedicated leadership at Vinalhaven Land Trust and in Maine's local land trust community.

1994: Senator George Mitchell to honor his instrumental role in the passage of numerous measures that will help preserve the ecological integrity of Maine including land acquisition funding for waterfowl habitat protection in Cobscook Bay and funding for the Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge.

1993: Dick Spencer for his outstanding work with Portland Trails and the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust.

1992: Rowan Wakefield Founder of both Island Heritage Trust and the Penobscot Bay Land Trust Alliance. In his work for these organizations, he developed a conservation curriculum for the local high school; assisted with comprehensive planning efforts; produced a booklet to help cash-poor landowners preserve their properties; and hosted an exchange with conservationists from the U.K.

1991: Damariscotta River Association for their innovated land protection efforts along the Damariscotta River including raising \$295,000 to help the state purchase the Dodge Point Reserve; protecting a 30-acre island in the Damariscotta River; developing an innovative environmental education program for area schools; and establishing a water-quality monitoring program along the estuary.

1990: Land for Maine's Future Board. In its first three years, the LMFB helped facilitate some of the greatest land conservation projects in Maine's history, including the Tide Mill Farms and Commissary Point on Cobscook Bay, Dodge Point, Mt. Kineo and Sandy Point Beach in Stockton Springs. Its first 17 projects encompassed more than 45,000 acres and 94 miles of shore frontage. The LMFB worked cost-effectively (with only one staff person) and achieved a new level of public/private partnership.

1989: Bill Bonyun for placing an easement on his saltwater farm, protecting 150 acres, a stand of old-growth white pine, and more than two shorefront miles on Westport Island. The easement, granted to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, was valued at \$680,000.

1988: Stanton and Susanna Waterman for preserving a major piece of coastal wildlife habitat and one of the coast's most scenic coves known as the "Punchbowl" on Eggemoggin Reach. Almost all of their 200-acre tract will be held "forever wild." The easement, whose fair market value represented nearly one million dollars, was granted by a family of modest financial means.

1987: City of Belfast for its decision to preserve a city-owned waterfront parcel as a park. The city granted an easement to MCHT, providing that the land should be used only for passive recreation and water access. The city chose open space preservation despite several competing demands for industrial, commercial, and residential development.