

Land & Garden Preserve and Maine Coast Heritage Trust Permanently Protect 168 Acres at Hunters Cliffs, Hunters Beach, and Day Mountain in Seal Harbor, Maine

The Land & Garden Preserve, in partnership with Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), has furthered the conservation of 168 acres of forest, cliffs, and wetlands in the Hunters Cliffs, Hunters Beach, and Day Mountain area of Seal Harbor. This significant conservation milestone safeguards one of Mount Desert Island's most scenic and ecologically rich landscapes.

The property includes undeveloped forest, exposed granite ledges, and pocket wetlands that contribute to more than 22,000 acres of connected conservation land. The area features a perennial stream flowing to Hunters Brook and roughly 1,800 feet of bold granite cliffs along the western shore of Hunters Beach — a stunning stretch of coastline visible from popular overlooks within Acadia National Park and from the Park Loop Road.

Enhanced protection of this land through an expanded conservation easement – a voluntary legal agreement to protect land in perpetuity – preserves its ecological integrity, scenic beauty, and long-standing public access to a beloved network of trails, including the Day Mountain, Hunters Beach, and Hunters Cliffs Trails. These trails connect directly with Acadia National Park and provide visitors with extraordinary views of the coastline, forest, and mountains.



“This is an incredible moment for the Preserve and for conservation on Mount Desert Island,” said Patrick MacRae, CEO of the Land & Garden Preserve. “The lands at Hunters Cliffs and Day Mountain form a breathtaking backdrop to Acadia National Park and a vital corridor for wildlife and recreation. Working with MCHT ensures they will remain forever undeveloped and accessible to the public.”

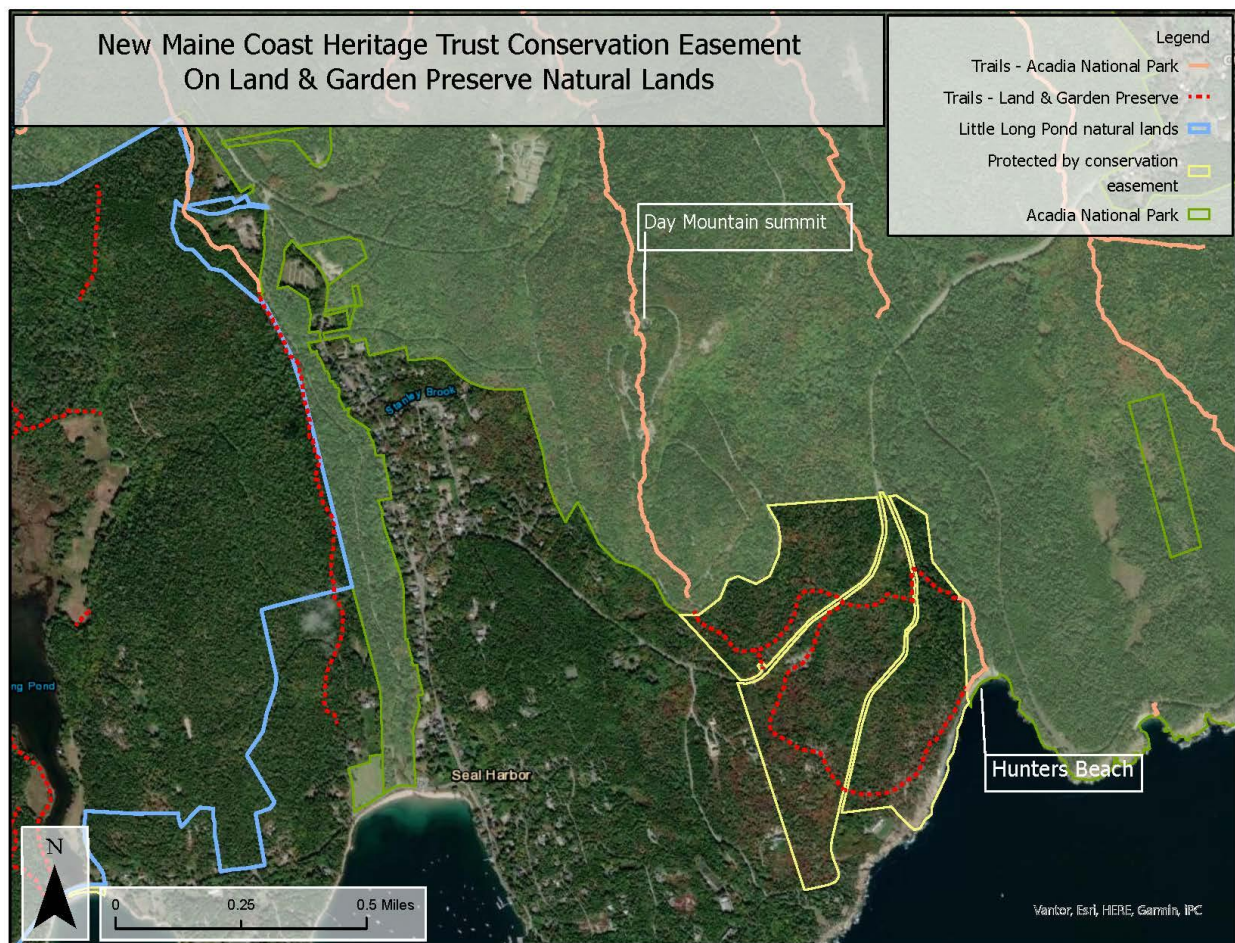
View from Hunters Cliffs looking north over Day Mountain

The land was a bequest to the Preserve by David Rockefeller, Sr. in 2018, with the flexibility to resell. “With that flexibility came an enormous responsibility,” MacRae continued. “We paused to reflect on how best to honor this gift, whether to view it as a financial asset or a

conservation opportunity. Ultimately, we chose protection. This decision reaffirms our mission to care for the landscapes entrusted to us.”

The new agreement furthers the conservation that Rockefeller began with MCHT in this area in the early 1990s. While those efforts are more narrowly focused on creating trail corridors, this agreement expands conservation to the larger landscape and enables the creation of a safer parking location and an expanded trail network.

The Preserve will continue to own and manage the land, while MCHT will provide long-term oversight to ensure compliance with the agreed-upon conservation protections. This partnership builds on a long history of collaboration between the two organizations, which share common beginnings. The Land & Garden Preserve was founded by David Rockefeller, and MCHT was co-founded by his wife, Peggy Rockefeller. Their shared tradition of conservation continues today at Little Long Pond, which is owned and managed by the Preserve and protected under a conservation easement held by MCHT.



“This project reflects what’s possible when conservation partners bring their complementary strengths to the table,” said Misha Mytar, senior director of land protection at MCHT. “We applaud the Preserve’s decision to further conserve this area’s treasured features and are so pleased to help create lasting benefits that people can enjoy for generations to come.”

The newly protected land serves as a critical buffer to Acadia National Park at Hunters Beach and Day Mountain, protecting the park’s scenic and ecological values from future development.

The completion of this conservation effort marks a celebration of enduring partnership, stewardship, and vision, one that ensures the wild, scenic beauty of this portion of Mount Desert Island that will continue to inspire visitors.

About the Land & Garden Preserve

The Land & Garden Preserve connects people, nature, and history through the care and sharing of historic gardens and natural lands on Mount Desert Island, Maine. Its properties include the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden, Asticou Azalea Garden, Thuya Garden and Lodge, and natural lands at Little Long Pond and Hunters Cliffs. Visit www.gardenpreserve.org or more information about visiting and supporting the Preserve.

About Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) advances the conservation of lands and waters in Maine to ensure ecological wellbeing and foster thriving communities. Since 1970, we have worked to guide the conservation movement and support a network of more than 80 land trusts. Together with partners we’ve protected nearly 200,000 acres, supporting the needs of people, plants, animals, and ecosystems across the coast. We’re dedicated to ensuring our natural areas can mitigate the effects of climate change and support all people and life for generations to come. Learn more about our work and get involved at www.mcht.org.