

Welcome

Bonyun Preserve is conservation land managed for the preservation of wild-life. The Preserve is open free of charge to the public from dawn to dusk. Help us protect what you have come to enjoy. Natural areas are delicate; foot traffic only, no camping, fires, pets, bicycles, or motorized vehicles. Please respect boundary signs and enjoy your visit.

Ecology of the Preserve

As you walk the trails look for six natural areas that support a variety of flora and fauna.

1. Tidal Inlet Mill Cove's salt marsh supports wading birds such as snowy egret and great blue heron, as well as migrating shorebirds.

Low tide mud flats offer abundant crustacean and marine worm habitat. Fish fry shelter in the shallow waters.

2. Mixed Old-growth Woods Great white pine, oak and hemlock are habitat for woodpeckers and songbirds. Two osprey nests are located on Thomas Cove shore. White-tailed deer, fox, raccoon, and mink use these forests for food and shelter.

3. Fresh Water Marshes Wetlands nurture amphibians and birds. Mosses and ferns take root on the banks.

4. Sasanoa River Estuary Part of the Kennebec-Androscoggin watershed draining one-third of the state, the estuary is a nationally-recognized habitat for birds and fish.

This section of the east coast flyway is essential for the survival of migrating birds. Over 40 species of fish use these waters including striped bass, *Morone saxatilis*.

5. Riparian Areas Land adjacent to waterways is used by 85% of Maine's vertebrates. Amphibians find food and shelter along the small streams that drain into Mill Cove.

6. Pocket Wetlands Salt marsh uplands provided early settlers with hay, *Spartina patens*. Populated by salt-tolerant species, marshlands are the most productive ecosystems in the world.



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Geology of the Preserve

Westport Island is underlain by granite bedrock, covered for the most part with thin, relatively poor acidic soils.

The general landscape was shaped by events that occurred during the Pleistocene epoch, which began about 2 million years ago. There were at least four periods of glaciation during which huge ice sheets covered all of Lincoln County.

The last major glaciation spread southeast about 18,000 years ago. As it moved, the glacier ground up rocks beneath it and deposited this newly eroded material as a compact layer of glacial till. The sheer weight of the ice sheet depressed the land surface, while the large quantity of water tied up in the ice lowered the surface of the sea by as much as 350 feet.

As the ice melted the land began to rebound and emerge from the sea. This emergence lasted from about 13,000 to 10,000 years ago when sea level was 180 feet below the present level. Since that time, a slow submergence of the land has brought the sea up to its present level.

Land Use History

6000 years ago to 1700. Abenaki tribes inhabited seasonal camps in the rich fishing and clamming grounds of the Kennebec estuary.

1607-1676. European settlements, established for fishing, lumber and fur trade, expand along the rivers and on islands like "Jeremysquam"-now Westport Island.

1735 Timothy Dunton, first permanent Westport Island settler, arrives.

1810 Main Road (Rt. 144) laid out to connect five island mills.

1860 Seamen and fishermen outnumber farmers 3 to 1.

1880 Forty sailing vessels lie in Westport Island coves. Riggs Mill is operating on the southwest portion of the Island.

1941 Eugenia and William L. Bonyun buy 120 acres from the Thomas family. The Thomas family, and their ancestors before them, farmed on Thomas Point since the island was first settled. The Bonyun family began truck farming, and raised three sons on the property.

1979 Bonyun land is placed under conservation easement to Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

2002 Heirs donate Bonyun Preserve to the Land Trust.

The Donors

Bill and Gene Bonyun were beloved folklorists who pioneered the concept of folk songs as living history, and sang folk and maritime songs in the classrooms and concert halls of America. Bill and Gene generously protected this land in its natural state for future generations to enjoy.

Join Us!

Please help KELT conserve land, preserve culture, and ensure wild-life habitat in the Kennebec Estuary. Membership support is extremely important. Become a member today!

Consider a gift membership for someone who cares about the beauty and ecological integrity of the region.

- Individual \$25
- Family \$50
- Steward \$100
- Conservator \$250

I would like to volunteer!

*Make checks payable to KELT and mail to:
KELT, PO Box 1128 Bath, ME 04530*

Name

Address 1

Address 2

City

_____ Zip

email

Gift from: *(include address)*

Bonyun Preserve

West Shore Road
Westport Island, Maine

Kennebec Estuary Land Trust

*Dedicated to conservation of the
natural, historic, scenic, cultural and
agricultural resources of the
Kennebec Estuary*



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