

Tom Settle mire is recipient of 2016 Espy Land Heritage Award

Award presented at the annual Maine Land Conservation Conference
Maine Coast Heritage Trust

TOPSHAM

Maine Coast Heritage Trust has named Tom Settle mire as recipient of the 2016 Espy Land Heritage Award. Each year MCHT presents the award to an individual, organization, or coalition for exemplary conservation efforts in Maine. The award was presented over the weekend at the annual Maine Land Conservation Conference held at the Mt. Ararat Middle School and Orion Performing Arts Center.

Upon presenting the award, MCHT President Tim Glidden remarked, “Tom’s leadership, energy, and sheer force of will have made a lasting impact in land conservation and community agriculture. It is an honor to present this year’s Espy Land Heritage Award to him.”

Settle mire, a professor emeritus of biology and biochemistry at Bowdoin College, has been a land trust innovator for decades. As a former president and current member of the board of directors of the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, his energy and ideas have created a model for land conservationists across the state and beyond.

Among his accomplishments is the popular Saturday Farmers’ Market that the land trust established at Crystal Spring Farm in Brunswick. Settle mire’s brainchild, the farmers’ market demonstrates how land trusts can advance the local food economy while involving the community at every level. Since its inception, the farmers’ market has become a community hub, hosting 40 vendors and as many as 3,000 customers every Saturday.

Crystal Spring Farm is a working farm with a tenant farmer lease agreement that covers the land trust’s costs; provides a retail outlet for local farmers and producers; supports a Community Supported Agriculture program providing locally grown food for 500 families; has a local community garden boasting a solar-powered water system, demonstration gardens, and learning opportunities for students and adults; is home to a large sheep flock, co-managed by Settle mire; and offers five miles of hiking trails.

Settle mire was humbled by the award and encouraged all to continue the important work of land conservation. “This work is critical and we must find ways to engage the next generation. Now let’s got back to work — because we are not done yet.”

In honoring past President Jay Espy, the board of directors at MCHT created a fund that awards \$5,000 per year — with the winner able to direct the funds to the conservation charity of their choice. Tom has chosen to split his cash award between a community garden for families nominated by the Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program and to the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust local agricultural efforts.