

OWL'S HEAD CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Like many small towns across the state, Owl's Head is trying to balance reality and economics with the responsibility to care for its cemeteries. This situation was made even more challenging in 2000 when the state placed the legal requirement to "keep in good condition and repair, all graves, headstones, monuments or markers designating the burial place of Revolutionary soldiers or sailors or soldiers or sailors who served in the United States Army, Navy or Marine Corps in any war and shall keep the grass suitably cut and trimmed on those graves from May 1st to September 30th of each year".

The Cemetery Committee has been researching what would be involved in headstone restoration and what resources are available to do this work. We feel, along with the Town's Selectmen, that the first priority should be to identify all of the veterans' graves and make sure these are marked with flags for Memorial Day. We'd like to collaborate with the Mussel Ridge Historical Society on this project since they have done similar work for Revolutionary War veterans. We also will be talking to people who can professionally restore headstones in order to figure out the costs involved and hope to get money from the town and from donations to pay for this. Due to the number of gravestones involved, restoration will be a multi-year effort.

The Cemetery Committee has also found that cleaning headstones can be a project undertaken by family members using easily obtained materials and lots of water. The Maine Old Cemetery Association (MOCA) has a printable brochure on their website (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~memoca/moca.htm>) which can be downloaded. This brochure is also available at the town office. We plan to schedule someone from MOCA to come here and offer instructions on cleaning to those who are interested.

The Town has established an account for the Cemetery Committee so that tax-deductible donations for gravestone repair and restoration can be received pending the Town's acceptance of the warrant article. To donate, please make out a check to "Town of Owl's Head" with a memo or reference to "cemetery restoration".

We want to thank Sue Choate for her work at the Don Wiley Cemetery. She has moved piles of dirt, created a stone wall, trimmed trees (to name a few things) and the results are beautiful. We are also very thankful for the good job Terry Morang continues to do keeping the town cemeteries cleaned, mowed, and trimmed. All of your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Just a reminder: to help keep the cemeteries looking nice, please remember to remove old, weathered real and plastic flowers.

Respectfully submitted,

Kennedy Crane III William G. Gay Michael Voncannon