



Maine Heritage

DOWNEAST EDITION
SUMMER '21



BRINGING BACK ALEWIVES TO SEAL COVE POND

© Redbird Media Group

After conserving numerous acres around Seal Cove Pond and Seal Cove over the past several decades, MCHT is now focusing attention on restoring fish passage in the brook that connects the two, which runs along and then under Route 102.

Every spring the alewife fish swims from open ocean waters up coastal rivers to inland lakes and ponds to deposit eggs, and, every fall, juveniles race back downstream. Historically, waterways from what is now Virginia up to the Maritimes swelled with these sea-run fish, which provided food for countless wildlife species as well as humans. Mount Desert Island was no exception.

Flash forward to today and the picture is different. Right now,

there are just two places on the island where alewives make that annual pilgrimage, and, at one site—Seal Cove Pond in Tremont—their numbers are dwindling. Their survival at this run is due, in part, to the effort of Acadia National Park's former biologist Bruce Connery, who spent years tinkering with the waterway, even running alewives upstream with dip nets when necessary. Colleagues from the park, volunteers, and neighbors pitched in to help in this clunky, hopeful endeavor.

Why go to all this trouble? As Bruce puts it, "Alewives are a foundation fish for species we love—bald eagles, osprey, seals, stripers, mink, fishers." When alewives are running, animals and other fish are eating, and the ecosystem is working the way it's supposed to. The cultural and economic implications are significant as well. Alewives are a valuable source of bait, and their diminishing populations are impacting commercial fisheries and local livelihoods. From MCHT's perspective,

CONTINUED INSIDE >>

FROM THE PRESIDENT

ON THE MISSION



Tim Glidden



Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) conserves and stewards Maine's coastal lands and islands for their renowned scenic beauty, ecological value, outdoor recreational opportunities, and contribution to community well-being. MCHT provides statewide conservation leadership through its work with land trusts, coastal communities, and other partners.

Our board chair Tom Armstrong asks someone to read Maine Coast Heritage Trust's mission statement at every board meeting. No matter what's on the agenda, no matter how pressed we are for time, I always find it valuable to pause and hear those words spoken out loud. Every time I do, I'm reminded of how deep MCHT's roots go and how our branches continue to grow.

Since MCHT was founded in 1970, this mission statement has changed little while the context in which we do our work has changed a great deal. Threats to the environment and biodiversity have always been a concern of this organization, but in our rapidly changing climate, the problems and our response to these threats has become increasingly complex. While the loss of open, undeveloped coastal lands inspired the creation of MCHT 50 years ago, the need and desire for places to get outside and access the coast has only become greater over the decades—particularly now, in the wake of the pandemic.

While serving as MCHT's president over the past ten years, I've seen this organization adapt and stretch in remarkable and necessary ways to remain true to its mission. We've also weathered tremendous challenges, which is not in and of itself an accomplishment, but rather an indicator of the organization's strength, agility, and competence over the long haul.

Thanks to you and others who support MCHT year after year, we have capacities today that we didn't dream about 50 years ago. Decades of investment and relationship building in communities up and down the coast are yielding powerful partnership projects that show how land conservation can help solve problems ranging from the loss of traditional water access for clambers to food insecurity. MCHT has become the state leader in creating more permanent public access to the coast and has launched several initiatives designed to make the coast more resilient to climate change. This organization is as strong and impactful as it's ever been.

With every faith in a bright future for Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and after ten years of the most fulfilling work of my life, I have decided that the time has come for me to step down as president by the end of this year. It has been a rare and deep honor to get to know you over these years and to work alongside you on behalf of the Maine coast. Thank you for everything. I remain your partner in the mission to keep the coast open, healthy, working, and beautiful—now and forever.

BRINGING BACK ALEWIVES TO SEAL POND COVE CONTINUED FROM COVER

maintaining this critical link in the food chain is essential to maintaining the conservation value of the land we protect. In other words: what is the value of conserved land that doesn't support life and livelihoods?

In 2016, MCHT launched its Rivers Initiative—an effort to restore several key coastal rivers in eastern Maine. This codified a more expansive outlook on land conservation efforts to include river restoration work and got us thinking about our conservation work at Seal Cove Pond a little differently.

In the past decade, MCHT completed three successful land conservation projects on Seal Cove Pond resulting in permanent protection of nearly 100 acres, 1.5 miles of shore frontage, and a traditional boat access site. “It was clear to me that if we could restore fish passage between Seal Cove and Seal Cove Pond, we could significantly increase the value of the land we've already conserved along these shores,” says MDI project manager Misha Mytar.

Over the past several years, Misha has been working with the Town of Tremont and a host of supporting organizations—including Acadia National Park—to develop plans to construct nature-like fishways at two sites along Seal Cove Brook. The first would be installed downstream, at the site of an old dam, and the second would reconstruct the fishway at the current dam. Locals who know the place and problem



From left to right, Norm Closson, Joseph McLean of Acadia Civil Works, and MCHT's Misha Mytar discuss fish passage at Seal Cove Brook.

intimately have been instrumental in helping MCHT and engineers design for success. One of those people is Norm Closson, who spent decades observing the changes in the brook and managed the fishways at the dams. “Each fishway is different. There's no one-size-fits-all solution,” he says.

Now, MCHT is fundraising for a one-of-a-kind project to make improved fish passage at Seal Cove Pond a reality. Private donors have stepped up to support the effort and the project received \$50,000 from the National Fish Passage Program, but we still have a way to go to restore this critical watershed. “What MCHT has done so far to improve fish passage in parts of Maine is amazing,” says Bruce Connery. “If successful, it will be this incredibly rich resource they brought back for the people of MDI.” 🌱

LEARN MORE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFORT AT [MCHT.ORG/CONSERVATION-WORK/INITIATIVE/SEAL-COVE-POND-FISHWAYS](https://mcht.org/conservation-work/initiative/seal-cove-pond-fishways)



IN MY WORDS: ANN AND DAVID INGRAM MCHT DONORS

We first got to know Maine Coast Heritage Trust through Aldermere Farm, and our

relationship with the organization grew from there. Over the years we've supported the annual fund and special projects in the Midcoast and elsewhere throughout the state. It's important to us to get to know the people and programs of the organizations we're supporting—

to really wrap our arms around them. We've had that opportunity with MCHT.

We're both directly involved with nonprofits, so we know what good governance looks like. MCHT isn't just giving lip service to its mission—they're actively pursuing it. And their success in raising money for the recent Campaign is further proof that there are supporters like us who find land conservation to be important.

When we set out to make our estate plans, we talked to David Warren at MCHT, and we've set up a special fund to help preserve accessibility and provide for ongoing stewardship of MCHT's lands and programs. Over the decades we've come to love Maine's natural beauty, and the people here have been good to us. We wanted to give back to this place that has become so important to us. 🌱

A SAFE & SPRUCED UP STONE BARN FARM PRESERVE

© Sara Gray

The distinctive stone barn, built in 1907, is in need of reinforcement and restoration.

In 2019, Maine Coast Heritage Trust donors came together to help acquire the iconic Stone Barn Farm property in Bar Harbor as a preserve forever open to the public. In many ways, the timing couldn't have been better—in 2020, more people than ever were looking for places to go outside. Rob and Tammy Packie, who live nearby, saw members of the community enjoying numerous activities on the new preserve, from walking dogs to sledding to skating on the small pond. "This property is diverse ecologically and also diverse in terms of use from the local community," says Rob.

Over the past year, MCHT land steward Douglas McMullin has been busy with trail work and creating and posting signage. But this is the kind of work that happens at any MCHT preserve—it's the special buildings on the Stone Barn Farm property that make it an exceptional preserve to care for. "I'm often asked about what kind

of events or programming we're going to run out of the barn," Douglas says. "The unfortunate reality is that until we can get the structure stabilized and safe, we can't really make use of it."

Here's the good news: thanks to generous donors, MCHT is beginning phase one of the project to update the barn. To the average viewer, not much will change about the beloved Stone Barn—we're committed to maintaining the old look of the barn as much as possible. The old red roof will be replaced with a new one and windows will be restored. Inside, the structure will be reinforced with steel and carpentry. "I can't wait for this to be a safe space for MCHT and other community groups to use," says Douglas. Also in the works is a parking lot that will be tucked discreetly off Crooked Road. 🌲

WE CONTINUE TO FUNDRAISE TO MAKE THESE PROJECTS POSSIBLE. LEARN MORE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFORT AT [MCHT.ORG/STONE-BARN-FARM](https://mcht.org/stone-barn-farm)

FEATURED PRESERVE LOOKOUT ROCK, BROOKSVILLE

Conserved in 2017, this preserve may be on the small side (just 17 acres) but it offers outsized views of Eggemoggin Reach, Penobscot Bay, and beyond. And thanks to the hard work of regional land steward Caleb Jackson and numerous seasonal staff members and volunteers, the half-mile there-and-back trail is beautiful and well cared for, winding through lichen- and moss-covered forest to the summit's open ledges.

Parking is limited here, so have other local places in mind if you choose to pay a visit and you find the lot is full. (Blue Hill Heritage Trust is a great resource!) Be sure to bring a camera—you'll want to get photos of those views. 🌲

MORE INFORMATION AT [MCHT.ORG/PRESERVE/LOOKOUT-ROCK/](https://mcht.org/preserve/lookout-rock/)



REMEMBRANCES

BY MCHT PRESIDENT TIM GLIDDEN

This year, we've said a final goodbye with regret to two old friends who played leadership roles in Maine Coast Heritage Trust's story for many decades. When we pause to acknowledge their contributions, I am reminded of all those who have written that story over the past half century. In my faith tradition we honor the "mighty cloud of witnesses" — those who have gone before and by whose example we are now inspired in the same cause. Dianna Emory and Charlie Dodge are two of our shining witnesses.

Dianna Kilby Emory



Dianna served on the MCHT board from 1998 to 2007 and actively ever since then on our advisory council. She was passionately committed to the well-being of Maine's natural world: woods and waters, coast and islands. The nonprofit boards she served on are literally too numerous to name but included Friends of Acadia, The Forest Society of Maine, and Frenchman Bay Conservancy in addition to MCHT. Dianna was a doer and a leader; with her energy and enthusiasm she inspired us to bring the impossible within reach. Dianna also drew on her deep experience in clinical counseling to make connections between mental health and direct experience in the natural world. I am personally indebted to her for the unreserved generosity and kindness she showed me when I joined MCHT—a seemingly infinite source of introductions, unstinting hospitality for my many, many visits to MDI, and a boundless reservoir of well-informed advice. We will miss her sparkle and elegance and be forever grateful for her commitment to MCHT. 🌿

Charles W. H. Dodge



Charlie served on MCHT's board from 1989 through 1996 and as a member of our advisory council in the years since. Charlie was an innovator in his professional life, including more than thirty years with S.D. Warren Co. here in Maine. He was a passionate outdoorsman and while that term is out of fashion, it perfectly captures his enjoyment of the natural world through fly-fishing, skiing, sailing, and hunting. That passion extended to the conservation of the lands and waters of Maine and a deep commitment to environmental protection, causes he pursued with his wife Marylee through their generous support for a myriad of related organizations, including board service with many. It was my privilege to spend time with Charlie getting his advice and perspective on the strategic challenges facing MCHT. He was always glad to see you and his stories, told with a dry, keen humor, were always worth the trip! Charlie was a strong connection back to MCHT's earliest years, and we feel the loss of his presence. 🌿

There are way more stories to share than we can fit in the print newsletter! Check out the digital version of Maine Heritage to learn more about the work that MCHT donors are making possible up and down the coast.

[MCHT.ORG/MAINEHERITAGE](https://mcht.org/MaineHeritage)

IF YOU HAVEN'T MADE YOUR 2021
GIFT TO MCHT YET, HEAD TO:
[GIVE.MCHT.ORG](https://give.mcht.org)



KEEP THE COAST *MAINE*

Everything you read about in this newsletter is possible thanks to the generous support of Maine Coast Heritage Trust donors.

Donors are creating more public access to the coast, strengthening coastal communities, making Maine more resilient to climate change, and so much more. Thank you to all who are a part of MCHT and the ongoing effort to keep the coast Maine.

Maine Coast Heritage Trust
1 Bowdoin Mill Island, Suite 201
Topsham, Maine 04086

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Fishway Restoration
at Seal Cove Pond

Stone Barn
Farm Update

& More!

NAME THAT PLACE

Some hints...

Until recently, it was owned by the same family dating back to before the Revolutionary War.

On a clear day you can spot the windmills of Vinalhaven.

SEE INSIDE FOR
THIS FEATURED PRESERVE