



Stories and Updates from the Coast

2025

Cover photo of Sand Cove by Ken Woisard Photography. We're now working to conserve this place of approximately 120 acres in Beals. Through this project, we're building on decades of collaborative conservation efforts, adding to an extraordinary network of conserved lands, and further protecting the ecological health and natural beauty of the Great Wass Archipelago. This is the kind of work you help advance when you support MCHT. If you would like to make a gift to this project, visit mcht.org/sand-cove.

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Crashing waves at Bog Brook Cove Preserve. Photo taken by Wabanaki Youth in Science Ancestral Lands Trail Crew member Logan Dana. Learn more about our collaboration on page 8.



For all you make possible, thank you.

At Maine Coast Heritage Trust, four principles guide our work: conserving Maine's iconic coastline and natural areas; supporting human connection to land and water; promoting biodiversity and increasing climate resilience; and working in partnership to advance conservation outcomes statewide.

In this issue of our "Stories and Updates from the Coast," you'll see how, guided by these principles, we're making the Narraguagus River watershed healthier, exploring how we can help Maine's future forests, working with Wabanaki Youth in Science's Ancestral Lands Trail Crew to care for and increase access to lands in Washington County, and protecting stunning places on the coast—including a Deer Isle peninsula we will now be able to explore and cherish for decades to come.

Everything you'll learn about on these pages is made possible through the generosity and collaboration of donors, partners, and people who hold a deep connection to this special place called Maine. Thank you for your ongoing support of MCHT and for all you make possible on behalf of these extraordinary lands, waters, and communities.



With gratitude,

Kate Stookey
MCHT President and CEO



THE NARRAGUAGUS RIVERS INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Eleven years of conservation efforts in this Downeast watershed have strengthened its health and long-term resilience.

The vast and uninterrupted shoreline of Eagle Lake in the Narraguagus River headwaters. Last year, MCHT supported a Forest Society of Maine project to conserve over 5,000 acres here.

Photo by Jerry Monkman of Ecophotography, courtesy of the Forest Society of Maine.

As alewives and other sea-run fish migrate up the mouths of Maine rivers next spring, we will celebrate the impact that these aquatic habitats have on the health and resilience of coastal ecosystems.

For more than a decade, we have worked with partners across the state to carry out our Rivers Initiative, a collaborative effort to protect and restore five key rivers that provide passage to sea-run fish and support wildlife and human communities in countless other ways along Maine's coast. These aquatic habitats will become ever-more important landscape connectors in a warming world, which is why we remain committed to their wellbeing now and in the future.

The Narraguagus River, located in Downeast Maine, has seen great progress in restoration efforts since becoming a focus area of the Rivers Initiative in 2014. Running for 55 miles from Eagle Lake in Hancock County down into the Narraguagus Bay in Millbridge, this river flows with some of the cleanest and healthiest waters on the Eastern Seaboard. It has long provided spawning grounds for sea-run fish including alewives, shad, brook trout, and Atlantic salmon, and these fish are central to the local culture, ecosystem, and economy.

While this river and its watershed remain healthy by many measures today, centuries of human activity and development along its banks have taken a toll. Over the past 11 years, MCHT has worked closely with partners in the region to help increase connectivity within the channel, expand riparian buffers, and bring the river back to its natural form. In collaboration with the Downeast Salmon Federation (DSF), The Nature Conservancy, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, and the Forest Society of Maine, we have collectively completed a total of 18 projects in and around the watershed that have protected 16,024 acres and 30.7 miles of river frontage. MCHT does not hold any land in this watershed, but instead has supported our partners in purchasing the land.

Recent project highlights include the protection of 3.2 miles of shoreline along the river's headwaters on Eagle Lake in partnership with the Forest Society of Maine, and the protection of a 2,900-acre parcel along the river's west branch in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. This new parcel, called the Spring River Narraguagus Addition, includes 12.5 miles of frontage and abuts existing conservation land—resulting in contiguously protected, undeveloped, 45,000 acres of habitat. This type of landscape-scale conservation has become a priority of MCHT in recent years as climate change forces species to migrate and adapt to a warming world.

To support the passage of sea-run fish up into inland waters, MCHT has helped spearhead plans to remove the Ice Control Dam in Cherryfield that has blocked migration since its construction in 1961. Based on a five-year study conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers, the Town of Cherryfield voted to remove the dam in 2023 and replace it with a nature-like fishway. This project was funded by a \$9.1 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that was secured by project partner DSF and includes the improvements to a riverside public park. The project will break ground in the summer.

“We have made real breakthroughs in the past couple of years,” says Jacob van de Sande, MCHT associate director of Land Protection, who has worked on restoration efforts along the Narraguagus in different capacities for three decades. “It is a great example of how the Rivers Initiative has built over time, and how this work takes a long time to unfold. These are not two-year plans or five-year plans, these are ten, twenty, thirty-year plans to achieve the kinds of goals we are seeking.”



Meanwhile, MCHT continues to expand public access elsewhere along the river in collaboration with DSF, which has been a partner on 15 of the 18 projects carried out within this watershed. Together with DSF, we have preserved 8.5 miles of shore frontage across 1,328 acres—including a 150-acre parcel above Little Falls on the Narraguagus River that DSF purchased in May. Beyond expanding community access to the river, riparian buffers like these also help filter storm runoff and provide cool havens for vulnerable species including endangered wood turtles, wood ducks, black ducks, and a variety of mammals.

Our coordinated efforts in this region will support all of the species that find a home in this watershed—from the sea-run fish returning this spring, to the birds of prey that may feed on those fish, to the flowers that may bloom from the bird's droppings, to all the other species that find a home in or around these waters. A coastal habitat is only as healthy as the freshwater arteries that bring that habitat to life. 🌊

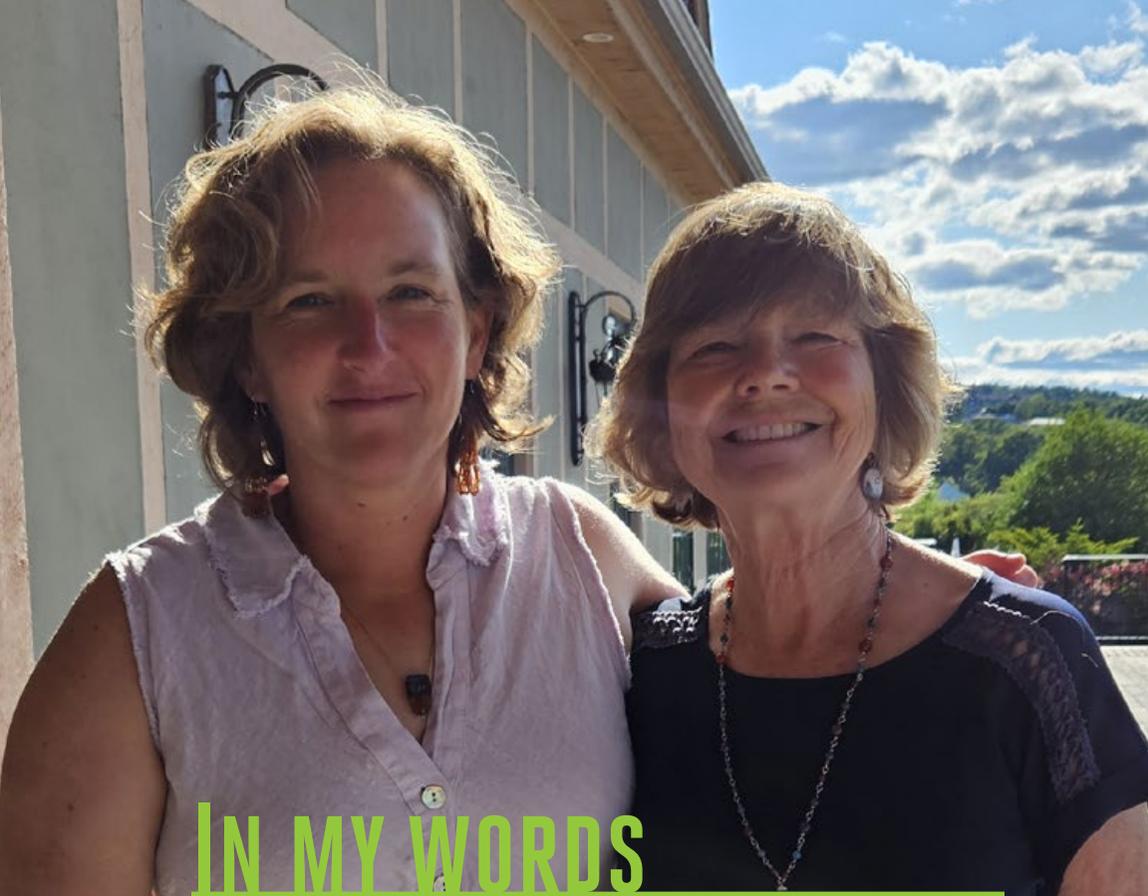
Photo: In 2018, [Project SHARE](#) (Salmon Habitat and River Enhancement) and MCHT staff (some pictured above) teamed up to remove rocks from a riverbed. In a single day, the current sped up significantly and water level in the impoundment went down by two inches, re-opening fish habitat that had been impaired for over 100 years.

PROJECT SHARE

While we work to protect land along the Narraguagus River watershed, we're also supporting restoration efforts, which includes working with Project SHARE in its efforts to improve in-stream habitat, including felling logs in the river and removing old dams that restrict the river's flow.



[CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO TO LEARN MORE](#)



IN MY WORDS

MISHA MYTAR AND BETSY HAM

In August, Misha Mytar stepped into the role of senior director of land protection at Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Misha succeeds Betsy Ham, who spent more than two decades shaping Maine Coast Heritage Trust’s land protection legacy and oversaw 320 conservation projects and the protection of over 50,700 acres of Maine’s most cherished landscapes while serving in a leadership role. “Misha’s promotion is a testament to her conservation expertise, collaborative nature, and relationship-building skills,” says MCHT President and CEO Kate Stookey. “We owe a big congratulations and thanks to these two important figures in Maine’s conservation landscape.” At this significant moment of transition, we’re reflecting on the past and looking to the future of Maine and land conservation’s role in supporting healthy lands, waters, and communities now and for the decades to come.

BETSY

What excites you about the future of conservation in Maine?

Betsy: I think we can be there and helpful to communities confronting challenges like sea level rise. We can help them with planning and conserving the natural areas that are and can continue to help communities. I think big land protection—going after really big pieces of land—will be important coupled with addressing community needs. We have a growing population that needs more access to nature. There’s nothing that sells the natural world like being in the natural world. We’ve got to keep working with partners, moving both kinds of conservation forward.

Misha’s going to do a great job in this role—she’s a strategic planner by trade, she can visualize the big picture and work on the little details to get us there. Makes it easier for me to go out on hikes in Washington for sure!

What accomplishments are you proudest of from your time at MCHT?

Betsy: Guiding my colleagues to be their best selves. I believe you could put MCHT’s land protection team up against any land trust in the nation and they would shine. I’m also proud that we upheld both pillars of our mission—ecological protection and community wellbeing—in how we approach our work. I think this is something that really distinguishes our organization.

I’m happy I was able to work with others to show how that rivers-ocean connection is so important to the health of coastal ecosystems and to raise up the Rivers Initiative. And of course there are certain projects that come to mind—in particular the great collection of island and mainland access conservation that happened over years in St. George and Owls Head, beginning back when I was a Midcoast project manager. Centers Point in my hometown of Bowdoinham is very special to me. It’s a place that people had enjoyed, then it was purchased, a house was built, access was cut off—I was so happy to see it open again, and support the ecology of Merrymeeting Bay.

MISHA

What accomplishments are you proudest of from your time advancing land protection on Mount Desert Island?

Misha: As a project manager on Mount Desert Island, I especially appreciated projects that engaged partners in conservation efforts. For example, the Jones Marsh Project, which was a collaboration between MCHT and the Island Housing Trust, had the double outcome of protecting land of high ecological value surrounding tidal marsh and creating much-needed workforce housing. Collaborating this way helps us get more impactful and lasting conservation work done. It’s essential to invite more people to contribute to, shape, and advocate for conservation in the years to come.

What excites you about the future of MCHT and land conservation in Maine?

Misha: I’m excited to execute our strategic plan that prioritizes collaboration and creativity in conservation. We’re committed to accelerating the pace, scale, and impact of conservation which will require us to work with long-time partners and find new ones. We must utilize the conservation tools already in our belt and develop new ones. It’s an exciting time, and I look forward to continuing this work with such an incredible team that brings such a variety of experience and expertise to the table.



COLLABORATING TO CONNECT PEOPLE TO LANDS AND WATERS

“When we work alongside DCC and MCHT, we’re not only improving trails, we’re strengthening understanding and reciprocity across communities.”

— Jennifer Galipeau,
executive director of Wabanaki Youth in Science

In Perry, a walk through 92-acre Sipp Bay Preserve got a little easier thanks to members of the Ancestral Lands Trail Crew, a program of Wabanaki Youth in Science (WaYS). Alongside Maine Coast Heritage Trust Regional Land Steward Kyle Koch, the trail crew rerouted 1,000 feet of trail, hardened areas with gravel, and addressed drainage issues last summer.

Other preserves of partner land trust Downeast Coastal Conservancy (DCC) and MCHT benefited from improvements as well. Trail crew members hardened areas along a traditional canoe portage between Orange lake and Rocky lake, long used by Wabanaki people. This work improved access to places of quiet beauty, fish runs, and abundant wildlife.

“This collaboration was key for us in Washington County,” says Kyle. “They’ve been able to support us with some of our more difficult projects that would have been a challenge for our field crew to finish all by ourselves.”

For three years, these organizations—WaYS, DCC, and MCHT—have been learning from each other and about each other’s needs and capacities, sharing resources and collaboratively fundraising for programming that connects people to lands and waters. Colin Brown, executive director of DCC says, “This collaboration has not only been very helpful for DCC’s stewardship efforts, but has built a great relationship with a Wabanaki-led organization that offers essential science programming and connects young Tribal members to culturally significant sites Downeast.”

Photo: In 2023, Wabanaki Youth in Science Ancestral Lands Trail Crew members supported MCHT stewards in efforts to improve trails at Meserve Head Preserve in Machias, a 71-acre forest gifted to MCHT in 2020.



At Sipp Bay Preserve in Perry, Ancestral Lands Trail Crew members rerouted a rough part of a trail and helped harden areas with gravel and drainage issues with a culvert and rock, improving the accessibility of trails that lead to views like this one.

In 2025, programming among these organizations was as robust as it's ever been and, thanks to support from generous donors, the trail crew spent about four weeks working at MCHT and DCC preserves in Washington County.

“This partnership is about more than shared projects, it's about relationships and mutual respect,” says WaYS Executive Director Jennifer Galipeau. “When we work alongside DCC and MCHT, we're not only improving trails, we're strengthening understanding and reciprocity across communities. For Wabanaki young people, this work is also about reconnecting with ancestral pathways, stories, and responsibilities to the land.”

Since 2020, the WaYS Ancestral Lands Trail Crew has worked across hundreds of miles on Wabanaki homelands. They've worked with a wide variety of partners, including the National Park Service and Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters, and land trusts like MCHT and DCC. Jayden Dana, a WaYS trail crew team leader, shares, “It's been cool to be able to work on MCHT and DCC trails and then return to those places in my free time. I've gotten to see places I haven't been to before. Being Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, it's important to me to be able to revisit old gathering places. 🌿”



WaYS Trail Crew Team Leader Wambli Martinez working on a bridge on a Downeast Coastal Conservancy trail. Photo by Logan Dana.

WABANAKI YOUTH IN SCIENCE

Wabanaki Youth in Science is a nonprofit committed to “weaving Wabanaki cultural knowledge with technology and science.”

VISIT [WABANAKIYOUTHINSCIENCE.ORG](https://www.wabanakiyouthinscience.org) TO LEARN MORE AND SUPPORT WAYS AND ITS ROBUST PROGRAMMING, INCLUDING THE ANCESTRAL LANDS TRAIL CREW

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

Friends of MCHT share their work and stories

Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) have been working together to care for Maine's wild islands and increase access to these natural treasures for decades. In 2024, MCHT and MITA embarked on a new era of collaborative partnership that strengthens our collective stewardship and allows us to connect more people to these special places.

MAINE ISLAND TRAIL ASSOCIATION

“The aim is well in line with how we manage the rest of the Trail: Do what's best for the islands as well as the people who love them.”

— Brian Marcaurelle, MITA program director

MITA protects the beauty and recreational benefits of Maine's islands by encouraging recreationists to act as stewards and help care for them over time. It was founded in 1988 to establish the Maine Island Trail, a water trail that spans the coast of Maine and is comprised of hundreds of islands open to boaters. As a membership organization, MITA provides its

members with information on low-impact use and maintains a robust volunteer program. “Stewardship primarily by users themselves—either in the form of respectful recreation or volunteering to make sure these places are maintained—is a bedrock philosophy that still guides us to this day,” says Brian. 🌍

Marshall Island, home of MCHT's Ed Woodsum Preserve. Photo courtesy of Maine Island Trail Association.



Landing back at Webb Cove on Deer Isle. Photo courtesy of Maine Island Trail Association.

“With a devoted network of educated users, world-class volunteer coordination, and a fleet of nimble skiffs, MITA is a powerful force for stewardship and connection.”

— Amanda Devine, MCHT senior director of stewardship

SUPPORT MITA! BECOME A DONOR TODAY.

MITA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to advancing a model of thoughtful use and volunteer stewardship of Maine's coastal islands, creating an inspiring recreational water trail that is cared for by the people who use it. Your donation today will help ensure that Maine's islands remain pristine and accessible for generations to come.

[VISIT MITA.ORG/DONATE](https://www.mita.org/donate) TO LEARN MORE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE



ART FROM THE COAST

Adeline Turgeon (age 11)
My Campground
2025
paint, markers, and tape
8" x 10"

“My artwork was inspired by summers spent at my campground. One of my favorite memories is watching the sunsets with my family. I used different techniques creating this piece to help portray the natural beauty of the surroundings.”

— Adeline Turgeon

Adeline joined classmates at Camden Rockport Middle School in a collaborative project that resulted in art displayed at Maine Coast Heritage Trust’s Aldermere Farm Welcome Center earlier this year. Over several months, the students learned about and reflected on their relationships with nature and the importance of caring for the land, ultimately producing remarkable paintings and poems.

Maine Coast Heritage Trust was excited and grateful to collaborate with numerous artists, educators, students, and other organizations through this project. We’re eager to see the newly built Aldermere Farm Welcome Center continue to house creative works and storytelling that inspires visitors to consider their connections to place and what conservation can make possible.



Adeline (center) with family members, celebrating the artwork on display at the Aldermere Welcome Center in Rockport earlier this year.

HELPING THE TREES OF TOMORROW TAKE ROOT TODAY



BY CATHERINE SCHMITT,
SCIENCE COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST AT SCHOODIC INSTITUTE

In an open section of the Schoodic Forest in Winter Harbor, Maine, surrounded by birch thicket and balsam fir saplings, a tulip tree stands 10 feet tall. Its namesake leaves, turning yellow in the waning daylight of fall, hang at jaunty angles, catching the sunlight. The stem is straight, the roots hold fast.

In late October 2024, technicians with Schoodic Institute measured the tulip tree's height and growth and any signs of browse from snowshoe hare or deer. They made special note of the leaves. The end of the growing season in fall, along with its beginning in spring, are when a plant's adaptive tendency is on display. The yellowing is a good sign that the tree is going dormant in time for the incoming winter season. Observations of the single tulip tree suggest that this species, which currently grows only as far north as Connecticut and up the Hudson Valley, can grow quite well in the cool, moist Downeast coast of Maine.

The tulip tree was one of eight species planted by Schoodic Institute scientists in 2019 as part of Future Forests of Coastal Maine, a research experiment at conservation areas between Winter Harbor and Belfast. Maine Coast Heritage Trust is a partner in the project, along with Blue Hill Heritage Trust, Coastal Mountains Land Trust, and Waldo County Soil & Water Conservation District.

Coastal Maine has its own unique climate, warmer and wetter than inland parts of the state where most forest research takes place. The Belfast-to-Schoodic region is also an area of transition, where many plant species near the northern edge of their range, and overlap with boreal species at the southern edge of their range.

A Schoodic Institute technician in the assisted migration experimental plot in Schoodic Forest.
Photo by Suzannah Buzzell/Schoodic Institute.

As temperatures increase and precipitation patterns change, some plants may no longer be located in suitable habitat. It may get too hot, too wet, or too dry, or the plants may have to deal with unfamiliar insects and diseases.

For a plant population on the edge of its range to survive, it will need to adapt, drawing upon its own genetic diversity to adjust to the new climate.

The alternative is to “migrate”—an individual tree may succumb to changing conditions, but a population can survive as seeds are dispersed by wind and animals. Plants have been shifting their ranges in response to climate for hundreds of millions of years, since well before humans came on the scene. But humans have made today’s situation very different from the past. 🌍

This is the beginning of a full-length article, the first article in a series called “Helping Maine’s Future Forests,” which explores assisted migration, and why some feel it should be part of our response to a changing climate. Catherine Schmitt visits parks, gardens, preserves, and forests across the state where, as in Schoodic Forest, scientists and conservation organizations are experimenting with warm-adapted trees and shrubs from more southerly locales. What are the ethical, cultural, and ecological implications and questions that surround proposals to assist plants? Could we do it? Should we do it?

[LEARN MORE AND READ THE FULL SERIES](#)



AUTHOR BIO

Catherine Schmitt is a science communication specialist with Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park. She writes about research in Acadia and across the National Park System and is the author of *The President’s Salmon* and other nonfiction books. Her writing is informed by her scientific background, which includes a master’s degree in ecology and environmental science and experience studying lakes, streams, wetlands, and beaches throughout the Northeast.



A technician collects data on the height and condition of a tulip tree in the Schoodic Forest assisted migration study. Photo by Shannon O'Brien/Schoodic Institute.

KAREN FOXWELL'S INSPIRATION TO GIVE

Karen Foxwell's roots are deep in Maine, but she herself didn't live here until somewhat recently. The pull of those roots, and of her mother, who had a home in Northport, were strong. Every time her plane landed in Maine, she felt "emotionally and mentally better."

Now Maine is home, and she couldn't be happier about that. She's quick to share stories of people here showing up for one another, turning out for community events, and hosting spaghetti dinners to raise funds to support neighbors when they get sick. Having lived in places with a lot more pavement, she speaks about the gift of experiencing, every day, land

in a natural state—about how that can ground us more than we realize. She also speaks about the myriad challenges faced by so many in Maine, including food insecurity, and admirable efforts to increase food access in her Midcoast community.

Karen first learned about Maine Coast Heritage Trust through a local news spot



featuring the effort to conserve Cousins River Marsh and Fields in Yarmouth. She was intrigued by MCHT's prioritization of lands that would enhance the state's resilience in a changing climate and was compelled to make her first gift. Later, she made the connection between a place she admired—Aldermere Farm in Rockport—and MCHT. (MCHT owns and manages the working Belted Galloway farm and community center.)

Hearing from the Aldermere Farm and Erickson Fields staff about the vision of a more inclusive and sustainable preserve and the need for improved infrastructure inspired her to support the farm's recent fundraising campaign. She continues to

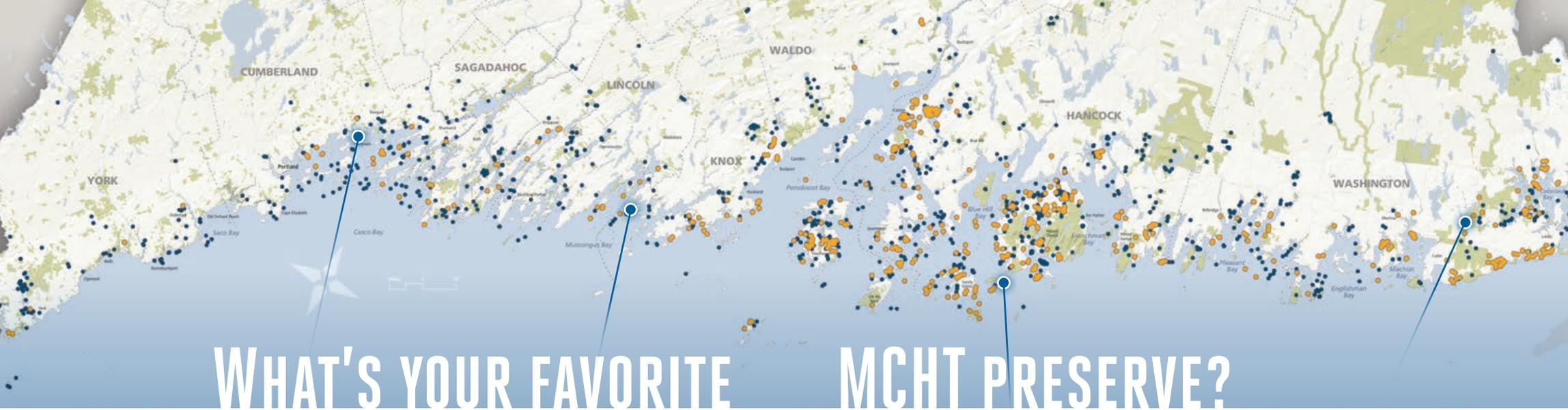
support the ongoing work of engaging youth through programming that advances generative farming and also feeds the community. Open land, community wellbeing, food access—the work of MCHT brings together several causes she's passionate about.

In 2024, Karen chose to make a planned gift to Maine Coast Heritage Trust, extending her generosity beyond her lifetime, to support work she believes in and a place she loves. Looking to the future, Karen considers the value and importance of growing connections between people and nature. She recognizes and appreciates MCHT's efforts to work collaboratively and foster an ethic of caring across Maine. "When people don't care, you start losing things that matter," says Karen. For Karen, healthy lands, waters, and communities matter, and conservation has a vital role to play. 🌱

There are countless ways to make the Maine coast a part of your legacy with a planned gift, and it's never too soon to consider how you can make a difference.

[VISIT MCHT.ORG/LEGACY](https://www.mcht.org/legacy)
TO LEARN MORE OR REACH
OUT TO DAVID WARREN AT
[DWARREN@MCHT.ORG](mailto:dwarren@mcht.org)
OR 207 522 9228.

Photo: Aldermere Farm, a preserve of Maine Coast Heritage Trust, is a working farm and community center in Rockport, where we advance regenerative farming practices, provide agricultural programming, and collaborate with community organizations to support food access in the Midcoast.



● MCHT conserved places ● MCHT partner projects ■ Maine conserved lands



“Lanes Island is a magical place. We feel so fortunate to be able to enjoy this beautiful piece of land. When we are on Lanes, we feel like we are a world away, but are right around the corner. Thankfully, MCHT preserves this land.”

BETHANY C.
Photo by Jerry Monkman



“Neds Point has become simply ‘our favorite cove’ after nearly fifty years of paddling the Maine coast. Because we canoe, our paddling destinations don’t typically include islands but Friendship Long Island provides protection. The small cove feels ‘other worldly’ and getting there once every summer carries us through the rest of the year.”

DON H.
MCHT Photo



“During a recent summer, on a visit to **Great Gott Island** to explore an MCHT preserve while visiting Little Gotts (even smaller), I bumped into an artist that happens to live in our neighboring town. MCHT makes this beautiful world more amazing each day... in every way.”

DONALD G.
MCHT Photo



“Rocky Lake offers a rare experience, deep in the quiet of downeast Maine, surrounded by trees, water, and solitude. It’s one of the few places I’ve been where you feel truly encompassed by nature and I can’t wait to return.”

NOLAN O.
Photo by Ken Woisard Photography

Share about your connection to MCHT preserves at [MCHT.ORG/TELL-US-YOUR-STORY](https://mcht.org/tell-us-your-story)

SOUTHERN MAINE UPDATE

MIDCOAST MAINE & PENOBSCOT BAY UPDATE



With support from funders, we continue to collaborate with and host an annual gathering of descendants of Malaga Island. At this year's event, descendants lifted up goals, including continuing to find and connect with one another and to gather and share more accurate histories from Malaga, which has been an MCHT preserve since 2001. This fall, members of a steering committee, including descendants, gathered at the Maine Maritime Museum's ongoing exhibit featuring histories from and voices of descendants.

Top left: Gebung Woods, Ryan Smith Photography
Left: Steering Committee for Malaga Island Descendants gathered at Maine Maritime Museum. Photo courtesy of Danielle Arroyo.

MCHT is fundraising to conserve Gebung Woods, a 650-acre parcel in Southern Maine, in partnership with Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. This project will anchor a collaborative effort to protect and restore the Mousam River watershed—a priority in MCHT's Rivers Initiative. Parcels of this size are rare in this part of Maine, where development pressure is high.

We partnered with Outdoor Access Solutions (OAS) to conduct an outdoor accessibility assessment of Cousins River Fields and Marsh Preserve in Yarmouth, along with preserves in the Mount Desert Island area. OAS provided actionable recommendations and detailed trail descriptions, which we're incorporating into updated preserve web pages and signage in the new year.

Working together with Maine Water Company, MCHT was able to conserve 257 acres of land a few miles from the vibrant downtown of Biddeford. Now we continue to raise funds for stewardship to develop trails and improve access to this special greenspace.



Through a collaborative effort with Island Heritage Trust, the Haystack Mountain School of Craft, and generous landowners, MCHT conserved 11 acres of undeveloped shoreline on Canary Point, in Deer Isle. Now an MCHT preserve, this special place on the coast, and its walking trail has been and will continue to be enjoyed by many.

At Aldermere Farm in Rockport, the Welcome Center's new solar array installation will power the entire farm operations at Aldermere and Erickson Fields (and MCHT's Topsham office!) while a new accessible trail with views of pastures and Lily Pond is already getting lots of use from the community.

In response to ongoing concerns about unpermitted fires and the associated wildfire risks in Witherle Woods, we teamed up with Maine Maritime Academy and Maine Forest Service to promote public safety, environmental stewardship, and student leadership in September. Almost 200 students participated in a half-day wildfire risk mitigation event focused on reducing fuels and creating a shaded fuel break.

Over the summer, we teamed up with Adaptive Outdoor Education Center (AOEC) and other partners to organize a visit to Little Camp Island off Stonington. Through MCHT's Community Innovation Fund, we were able to donate an adaptive kayak with stabilizing outriggers, a kayak chariot with transfer bench, a beach wheelchair, a sidestep device for helping with tricky equipment transfers, kayak cushions, and other gear for AOEC to add to its gear library.

Top right: Canary Point, Ken Woisard Photography
Right: Island adventure with Adaptive Outdoor Education Center and other partners, MCHT photo



MDI-AREA UPDATE



DOWNEAST UPDATE



MCHT’s Mount Desert Island preserve Blue Horizons was the site of lots of stewardship activity this year, as staff and partners worked to identify and mitigate the spread of Emerald Ash Borer. This invasive insect kills ash trees and has been rapidly progressing throughout the state.

We collaborated with the Town of Southwest Harbor and its Conservation Commission to enhance a treasured local park, Chris’s Pond. Expanded by a three-acre land donation, the town has opportunities to improve access to the pond, with area for a new entrance and parking and more space to gather.

In the Hunters Beach Cliffs and Day Mountain area of Seal Harbor, 168 acres of forest, cliffs, and wetlands are now permanently protected, thanks to a partnership between MCHT and the Mount Desert Land & Garden Preserve. This conservation milestone safeguards one of Mount Desert Island’s most scenic landscapes.

In September, we gathered at Kelley Farm Preserve in Bernard on Mount Desert Island to celebrate the fall season with friends and neighbors. We explored the preserve (including the community gardens!) together, pressed apples, made and flew kites, and shared updates and answered questions about recent MCHT projects in the community. This was one of dozens of events MCHT offered in 2025.

Top left: Blue Horizons, photo by Katherine Emery
Left: Chris’s Pond, a gathering place in Southwest Harbor



At Old Pond Preserve in Hancock, we were excited to see positive changes in the marsh due to our recent restoration efforts. By digging runnels in the marsh, we have helped reduce standing water, bringing back normal tide exchange. These improvements have resulted in plant growth such as Salicornia or “pickleweed,” often one of the first plants to recolonize pools after restoration.

We worked in partnership with Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT) to create the new Bold Coast Wilderness Preserve, permanently protecting a 2,037-acre forest block that connects inland forest to the sea, ensuring these lands support the wellbeing of wildlife and people into the future. Initially purchased by MCHT, the land was transferred to NEWT in November.

This summer, we collaborated with groups such as the Atlantic Salmon Federation and local educators to bring students from Lubec and Whiting to the East Machias River to release endangered Atlantic salmon fry—part of a hands-on program exploring the species’ life cycle and the challenges they face along Maine’s coast.

About two dozen people gathered at Sipp Bay Preserve in Perry for sandwiches, local snacks, and tours of the preserve. Through conversation with staff, maps, and information about projects happening in Hancock and Washington Counties, attendees left well-informed about conservation underway in the region.

Top right: Old Pond Marsh, where new plant growth indicates positive change following restoration efforts

Right: Students from Lubec and Whiting participating in the Fish Friends program

WORKING TO ENSURE THAT MAINE'S EXTRAORDINARY LANDS AND WATERS ARE HEALTHY, WORKING, AND OPEN TO ALL.

What is Maine Coast Heritage Trust?

Founded in 1970, Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) is a state-wide nonprofit land conservation organization protecting and caring for Maine's iconic coast and guiding state and national conservation movements. We work alongside individuals, communities, organizations, state and federal entities, and Tribal Nations to build the state's resilience in a changing climate and ensure that the lands and waters that define Maine remain a source of connection and support all people and life for generations to come.

A STATE AND NATIONAL LEADER IN LAND CONSERVATION

- Pioneered use of conservation easements in 1970s and helped establish legislative rubric that makes them possible
- Co-founded the national Land Trust Alliance
- Helped launch and sustain Land for Maine's Future, the state's popular land conservation program
- Coordinator of the Maine and Trust Network, supporting Maine's community of 80+ land trusts
- Completed the largest coastal conservation campaign in the state's history in 2020
- Involved in over half of Maine's newly protected coastal access sites over the past decade



Acres Conserved with Partners



Islands Protected With Partners



MCHT Preserves Open to the Public



Miles of Trail to explore

OUR MISSION

Maine Coast Heritage Trust advances the conservation of lands and waters to ensure ecological wellbeing and foster thriving communities. We are committed to:

- Conserving Maine's iconic coastline and natural areas
- Supporting human connection to the lands and waters that sustain us all
- Promoting biodiversity and increasing climate resilience in Maine
- Working in partnership with others statewide to advance conservation outcomes

We work to ensure a future Maine with coastlines, waters, and woods full of life; where all people and communities are engaged in the outdoors and actively protect and care for the lands and waters that sustain us; and where functioning natural systems support vibrant communities and economies.

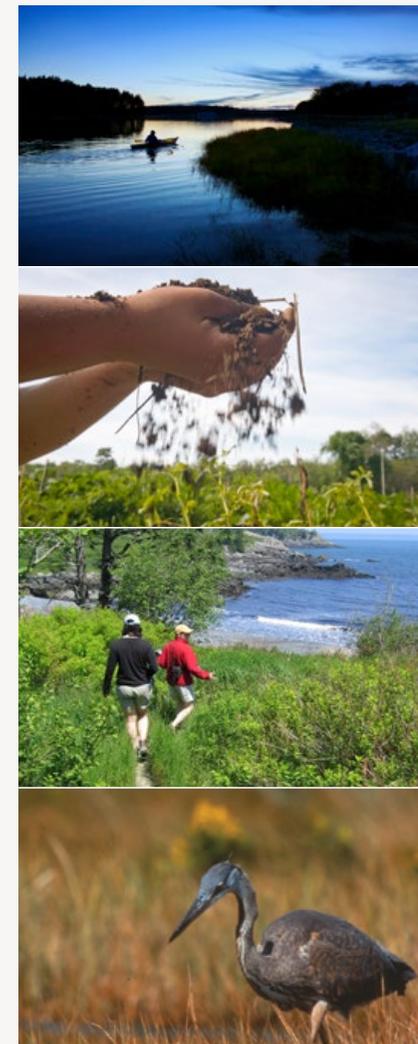
Together we make this vision a reality.

You can support this work by making a gift, volunteering with us, or joining us for events. **VISIT [MCHT.ORG](https://mcht.org) FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

TO DONATE TO MCHT'S ANNUAL FUND, VISIT [MCHT.ORG/GIVE-NOW](https://mcht.org/give-now).

Making a planned gift is a powerful way to secure a better future for lands and waters in Maine and all who love and care about this place. It's never too soon to consider how to make the Maine coast part of your legacy.

PLEASE VISIT [MCHT.ORG/LEGACY](https://mcht.org/legacy) TO LEARN MORE.



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



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Photo of Long-eared owl taken on Vinalhaven by MCHT regional land steward Kirk Gentalen. Kirk cares for MCHT conserved lands in the Midcoast area and authors the Nature Bummin' column on mcht.org and the Vinalhaven Sightings Report at VinalhavenSightings.blogspot.com.