



Stories and Updates from the Coast

2024

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Cover Photo: Ryan Malagara

Near Maine's world-revered Bold Coast, MCHT is working with Northeast Wilderness Trust to conserve over 2,000 acres. This remarkable conservation opportunity enhances decades of conservation in the region and protects one of the last places on the Eastern Seaboard where wildlife can roam to and from rocky shores and inland woods.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BOLD COAST WILDERNESS PRESERVE AND OTHER PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES AT [MCHT.ORG/CONSERVATION-WORK](https://mcht.org/conservation-work)

Growing up in Blue Hill, the time I spent hiking around the woods and camping out on islands instilled in me a deep sense of wonder and grounding I've carried with me throughout my life. As an adult, I am more and more aware of how special Maine is and appreciate why people continue to be drawn here. Maine has a strong gravitational pull.

Unique stories fill the pages of the annual publication you hold in your hands; I'm sure you each have your own. Our stories remind us why we commit ourselves to the work of conservation. Here in Maine, nature is still big and bold enough to remind us that we are part of it. We want to make sure this remains true.

Alongside a growing and increasingly more diverse community of people who care about and are impacted by the health of our shared lands and waters, Maine Coast Heritage Trust is making sure conservation protects healthy ecosystems, fosters thriving communities, and deepens our connections to nature and one another. We envision a Maine with coastlines, waters, and woods full of life; where all people and communities are engaged in the outdoors and actively work together to protect and care for the lands and waters that sustain us; and where functioning natural systems help curb climate change impacts and support vibrant communities and economies.

How can we work together to realize this vision? This is one of the questions we're asking as we commit to accelerating the pace and scale of conservation and to playing our part in addressing the multifaceted challenges Maine faces in the coming years.

Thank you for your ongoing support of MCHT and conservation in Maine. We couldn't do this work without you.




With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K Stookey'.

Kate Stookey
MCHT President and CEO

WHERE NATURE IS BIG AND BOLD

An aerial photograph of a vast, diverse forest landscape. A winding river flows through a marshy area, surrounded by dense green and yellow trees. The forest extends to the horizon under a clear blue sky.

There are few places on the Eastern Seaboard where open coastal lands connect to inland forests, and most of those remaining are in Maine.



People exploring Rocky Lake Preserve, including local students who helped care for the trails last summer.

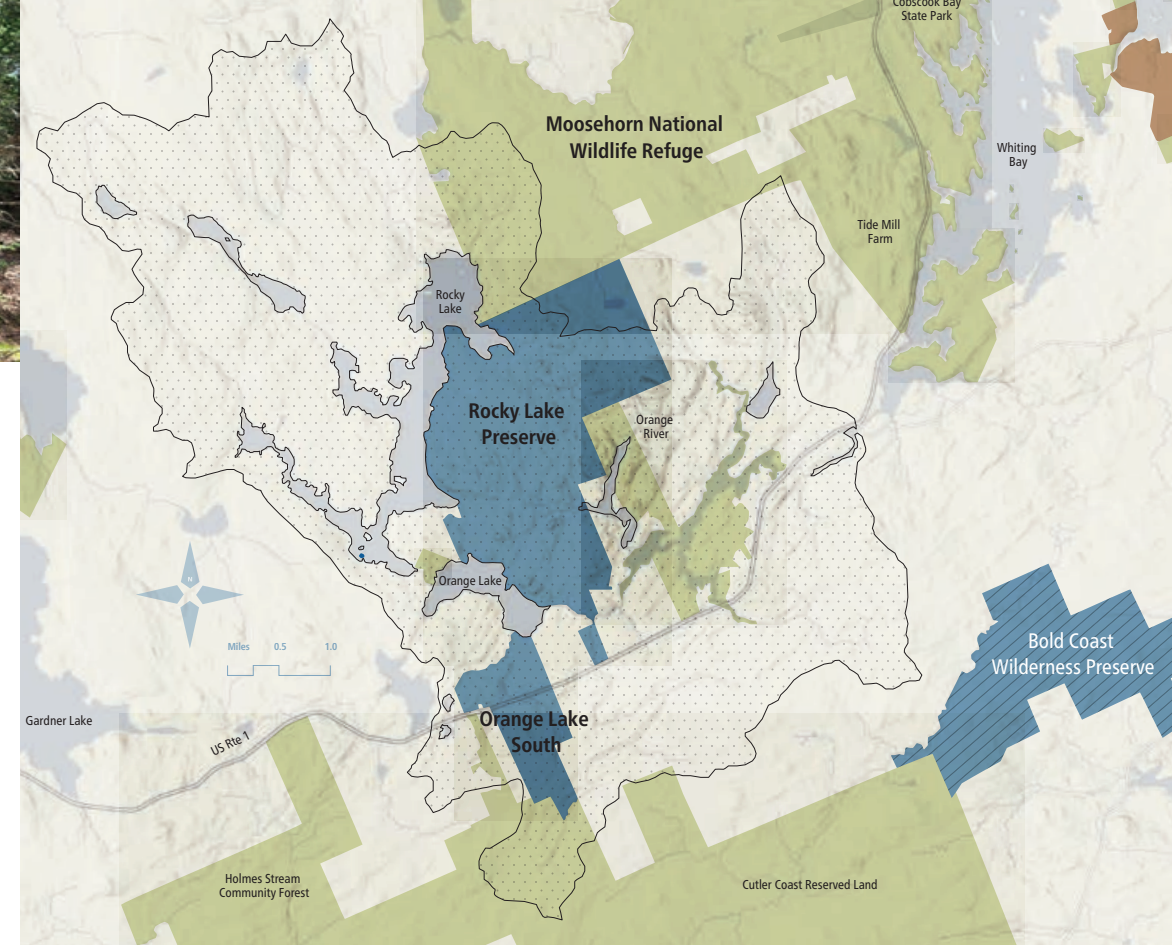
In the northeastern corner of the country, together with partners, Maine Coast Heritage Trust helped conserve thousands of acres on Maine’s iconic Bold Coast starting in the 1980s. Since then, we’ve continued protecting forested lands stretching to the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, including the 585-acre Orange Lake South parcel (conserved in 2018), and over 3,000 acres surrounding Rocky Lake (conserved in stages since 2017), now our largest preserve.

This past summer, kids gathered at Rocky Lake Preserve in Whiting to take part in Watershed Camp, a collaboration between MCHT and Maine Outdoor School. While exploring this increasingly connected, protected landscape over the course of a week, classroom concepts like “ecosystem” came to life for these ten- to thirteen-year-olds. Cathy Lookabaugh, who joined MCHT earlier in 2024 as the first Community Outreach Manager for Washington County, helped coordinate the camp.

“[The campers] discovered the intricate balance between the living, non-living, and cultural elements that shape our world,” she says. They also helped Rocky Lake Preserve’s steward, Kyle Koch, restore a section of trail and blaze a new path. “This work gave them a sense of accomplishment, and was a highlight for many,” says Cathy.

Here and everywhere else we care for land, MCHT is focused on balancing the needs of plants, animals, and people—ensuring there are places for wildlife to survive and thrive, supporting the needs of communities, and connecting people with the outdoors. To raise awareness about free and open preserves in the region and connect people with the greater Orange River watershed, MCHT and conservation partners collaborated to gather and promote information about the Orange River Water Trail, an easy-to-access and easy-to-paddle nine-mile water trail spanning a patchwork of conserved lands.

Over the past several years, MCHT has worked with the nearby town of Cutler on projects to improve trail access, lay groundwork for a



● MCHT Preserves ● Conserved Lands ● MCHT Conservation Easements ○ Orange River Watershed ● MCHT Active Project

future town park and public water access site, and support efforts to create affordable housing close to the town center. This fall, MCHT initiated a fundraising effort with Northeast Wilderness Trust to conserve another 2,000 acres adjacent to the Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land, further protecting this region with a rich concentration of at-risk species and habitats.

“The future Bold Coast Wilderness Preserve is just a quarter mile from the ocean, and represents an extraordinary conservation opportunity,” says MCHT project manager Jacob van de Sande. Other projects in this region could result in the protection of thousands more acres. With each new conservation success, and as we work with partners and community members to care for these lands and waters over the long haul, we’re further protecting the ecological integrity of the region and contributing to a healthier, more resilient Maine. 🌍

Cover photo, Ryan Malagara. Other photos by Tara Rice courtesy of *Down East* magazine, and MCHT photos.



IN MY WORDS

JANE ARBUCKLE AND AMANDA DEVINE

For nearly three decades, Jane Arbuckle guided Maine Coast Heritage Trust’s stewardship efforts and a team that grew as the amount of conserved land in our care grew year after year—exceeding 45,000 acres as she wrapped her tenure with MCHT earlier this year. Jane’s love of land and easy laughter is infectious, and her knowledge of the Maine coast, our organization, and the work of stewarding land—including many dozens of far-flung islands—is staggering. Thankfully, she’s close by and continues to support MCHT in myriad ways. After a national search, we’re thrilled that Amanda Devine, who began at MCHT in 2010, has joined the leadership team as our new Director of Stewardship. At this significant moment of transition, Amanda and Jane have some questions for one another.

AMANDA: Reflecting on your long career with MCHT and in land conservation, what stands out to you?

Jane: So much! Some first thoughts include the ongoing cooperative work, both internally and externally. The organizational commitment to a holistic view of stewardship and its crucial value to land conservation—from the start of a

project and long into the future. The Richard G. Rockefeller Conservation Internship Program—from its inception, through the planning, fundraising, and long-term commitment to bringing young people into the conservation world.

Photo: Amanda Devine (left) joins MCHT’s leadership team as the new Director of Stewardship, following Jane Arbuckle (right), who served in this role from 1996-2024.

JANE: Do you anticipate any major changes in the way MCHT stewards its lands?

AMANDA: Can you share one of your favorite memories from an MCHT preserve?

Jane: Seeing a property for the first time has always been exciting, and often left me in awe—Moose Cove, Mason Bay, Lookout Rock, Woodward Point, Gooseberry Island, Marshall Island...and on and on. Once while visiting Boot Head, I stopped to talk with some visitors who remarked that the trails were the finest they had experienced in Maine and wondered who was responsible for that, who maintained them. It was fun to be able to say, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and in particular, Melissa Lee! At an open house we hosted on Malaga Island, a woman shared that her grandmother had been born in her family’s home on Malaga. I was able to show her exactly where the house had been. We both burst into tears.

AMANDA: What are your hopes for the future of Stewardship?

Jane: I hope that it remains a vital, respected component of the land conservation continuum. And by that, I mean that stewards continue to be key partners in conservation planning, in determining the best ways to manage land and engage with the communities and people with a connection to those lands.

Amanda: I believe MCHT’s stewardship practices and policies will prove to be a useful framework into the future, but there are places where subtle course adjustments can be made. For example: Anticipating that Maine’s climate will become suitable habitat for plant species currently to the south of us, could some of the areas we currently mow each year become places where we plant the forests of the future? We have been, and will continue to be, more discerning about where we create public access infrastructure. Leaving some conserved lands intentionally trail-less goes hand in glove with improving access for more people in other places. I am hopeful that these management strategies will allow us to serve human and non-human communities with greater equity.

JANE: What do you see as the challenges for Stewardship in the coming years?

Amanda: Impacts from climate change, including sea-level rise, increasingly severe storms, and the proliferation of non-native species... Perhaps the biggest challenge I see is a philosophical one, however. So much of our collective pain comes from our species’ perceived divorce from nature. How do we, with a global population of eight billion and rising, reintegrate with the natural world so that we all see the value in it? And how can land stewardship be part of that reintegration? I don’t have answers to those questions, but I am devoted to pursuing answers. 🌱

ANIMAL PERSONHOOD AND CONSERVATION



Photo: Courtesy of Brandon Keim

Each year as summer winds down I make a pilgrimage to see semi-palmated sandpipers. They're easy to miss if you don't know them and magical once you do: tiny brown-and-white shorebirds who gather in mud flats at low tide, running frantically along the contours of each incoming wave, feeding on the invertebrates who will fuel their epic migratory flights across the Atlantic Ocean.

All birds are marvelous, but sandpipers are particularly dear to me. It was slightly more than a decade ago that a flock pitter-pattered around me as I lay on the beach, and there was something about them—perhaps it was the way an inch of water was a raging torrent at their scale—that made me wonder: What is it like to be a sandpiper?

Considering that question would make me reflect on the scientific study of animal intelligence, which was—and still is—escaping from the legacy of the last several centuries, during which conventional wisdom held that animals are little more than biological stimulus-response

machines. That wisdom was changing, but the lessons of contemporary research had yet to percolate through popular culture.

I didn't subscribe to that mechanistic view of animals, of course. I'd known too many thoughtful, sensitive cats and dogs. But I came to realize that I was in the habit of truly recognizing the intelligence, the selfhood, of only a few creatures. It wasn't customary to think of wild animals that way.

Beauty, transcendence, wilderness, ecology, biodiversity, natural history, conservation: None of these frameworks for relating to the natural world included an

explicit regard for animals as sentient individuals rather than units of a species or population. And while some nature-loving people did consider other animals to be thinking, feeling beings, as is the case in traditional Indigenous ontologies, that perspective was too easily dismissed as sentimental anthropomorphism. It belonged in children's movies and the animal rights movement rather than environmentalism.

Nowadays that separation is difficult to justify. That's in part because culture is shifting—ours is an age of cute animal videos, the effects of which rest on a certain degree of empathy—and also because of the science, which has flourished. It's no longer controversial to speak of animals being conscious or self-aware or emotional; sophisticated forms of intelligence are acknowledged not only in a few exceptionally brainy creatures, like dolphins and chimpanzees, but throughout the animal kingdom. Studies abound of bumblebee feelings and garter snake relationships and the

cultural knowledge of deer. To see other animals as sharing essential mental properties with humans isn't anthropomorphism. It's common sense.

This is relevant to our relationships with all animals, not just those who are wild; and when it comes to nature, one of the obvious connections is to the ethics of hunting, fishing, and trapping. The implications run much deeper, though, beginning with a richer appreciation of nature and the meaning of conservation.

On my latest sandpiper-watching trip, to Tills Point Preserve in Penobscot, I also saw a blue heron resting in a treetop and eastern phoebes flitting at the forest's edge. A garter snake crossed my path and red squirrels alerted each other to my approach. Knowing that every one of those creatures was a someone, living life in the first person, quite different from myself but also profoundly relatable, made each encounter that much more delightful.

AUTHOR BIO

Brandon Keim is a Maine-based freelance journalist and contributing editor at Nautilus. His new book, *Meet the Neighbors*, is about the science of animal intelligence and our relationships to wild animals and to nature.

In protecting places like Tills Point and other Maine Coast Heritage Trust preserves, we don't simply protect habitat in perpetuity; we protect homes. We preserve species, biodiversity, and ecosystem function; we also preserve individuals, communities, and ways of life. These are places for people to enjoy in perpetuity—human and nonhuman alike. 🌿

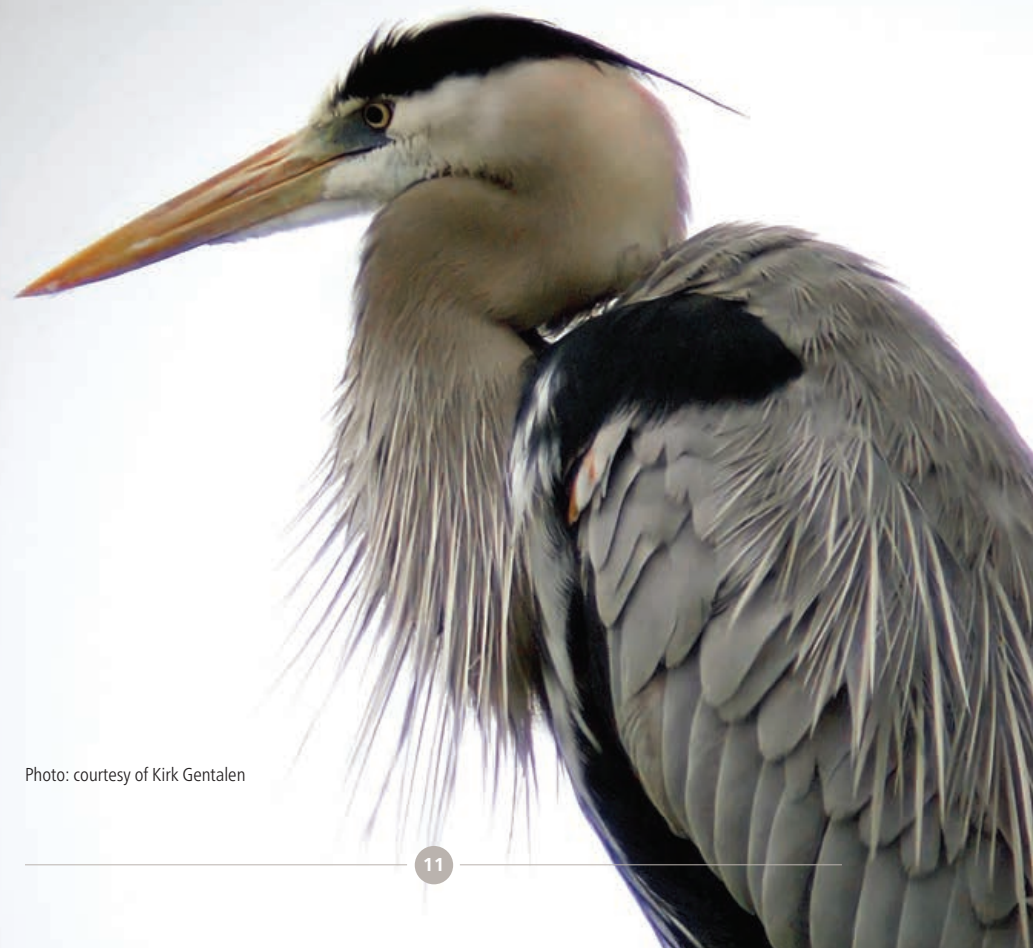


Photo: courtesy of Kirk Gentalen

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

Friends of MCHT share their work and stories

MCHT and Queerly ME have worked in partnership consistently since the summer of 2023, hosting and creating LGBTQIA+ programming on some MCHT preserves as well as sharing resources with each other and co-applying for grant funding. While each organization has a distinct mission, we share a goal of increasing access and connection to Maine's lands and waters.

QUEERLY ME

“Finding connection to community and finding connection to the natural world are integral to our growth and wellbeing.”

— Kyle Warnock, founder of Queerly ME

In 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, Queerly ME's founder Kyle Warnock dusted off a camera tucked away in a closet and found connection through photographing members of Maine's queer community. These interactions spurred other ideas to grow community and increase LGBTQIA+ visibility and access to resources across the state—three tenets of Queerly ME's mission today. Initiatives like the ongoing documentary project, a directory of LGBTQIA+

resources, and diverse outdoor programming advance their mission in powerful ways.

Queerly ME now hosts approximately three outdoor events every month and has reached 11 of 16 counties in Maine and hundreds of people. “In these ways we're helping LGBTQIA+ adults establish strong support systems and community connections while feeling empowered to engage in nature as their authentic selves,” says Kyle. 🌍



In July of 2024, MCHT and Queerly ME hosted a field trip to Monroe Island Preserve. We have more collaborative events in the works!

“I was seeking to deepen my connection to my queer identity and find my place in the community. Over the past three years, Queerly ME has exceeded my expectations, helping me achieve these goals and much more... [Queerly ME] has undeniably been a catalyst for positive change in the Maine LGBTQIA+ community.”

— Lydia Coburn

SUPPORT QUEERLY ME! BECOME A DONOR TODAY.

Queerly ME is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to creating and increasing LGBTQIA+ visibility, resource accessibility, and Queer centered outdoor programming in Maine. Your donation today will make it possible for Queerly ME to commit to full-time employees, which will be transformative for this organization already making a tremendous impact.

[VISIT QUEERLYME.ORG TO LEARN MORE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE](https://queerlyme.org)



ART FROM THE COAST

“These murals are an homage to nature, the Wabanaki peoples of the Midcoast Maine region, and the communal gathering around said nature to create spaces for inclusion, gardening, foodways and self-growth.”

— Norma Randi Marshall

Norma Randi Marshall is a Passamaquoddy member of the Wabanaki people and lives truly “downeast” in Washington County. She is a painter and digital illustrator who focuses on her heritage and the beautiful surroundings of the Wabanakik territory, also known as Maine. One can contact Norma, follow her art journey and view her artwork via Instagram (@emerald_forests) and online at normarandi.com. Her work can be seen at the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay, National Audubon Society at Hog Island in Bremen, the Puffin Project Visitor Center in Rockland, and at the Farnsworth Art Museum (2025).

Visitors can experience Norma’s work in person as they pass through an archway to the gardens and trails of Erickson Fields Preserve in Rockport. This art project aims to share a narrative of food sovereignty and the ongoing importance of the Midcoast region to Wabanaki Peoples, while depicting how growing food can bring people together across different communities, and support care of the Land and its health for future generations. To all who contributed to make this project possible, **thank you.**

Mother Earth by Norma Randi Marshall, can be seen at Erickson Fields Preserve, Rockport



SITTING WITH DEEP TIME IN CASCO BAY

BY LAURA POPPICK

On a warm July morning, I walked half a mile down a grassy trail at Woodward Point Preserve in Brunswick to reach the rocky shore. My stroll through this 87.5-acre conserved peninsula felt, in a certain way, like time travel. I passed first through meadows of newly blooming goldenrod; then through older stands of pine, ferns, and blueberry bushes; then to the mica-flecked edge of Woodward Cove that has stood against the tug of tides for millennia.

At the edge of the sea, the past, present, and future swirl together. Resting my palms on the beige and grey stone, I touched back some 445 million years to the Silurian period, when the quartz and feldspar grains that comprise the rock first began accumulating at the bottom of a now extinct ocean. Over time, that seafloor debris became buried beneath Earth's crust and pushed down into the mantle, where heat and pressure cooked it into metamorphic rock that later rose to the surface through further tectonic movements.

Much of the layered, rusty rocks throughout Casco Bay share a similar origin story. They formed long before legs ever carried any animals down grassy paths. When plants were just beginning to knit the ground in green and continents remained largely lifeless. With my hands touching down on that schist—that metamorphosed seafloor—I tried to imagine this younger Earth.

Photo: Woodward Point by Jerry Monkman

The rocky shores of Woodward Point Preserve offer a sort of time travel back to the Silurian period, some 445 million years ago, when forests had not yet evolved and continents remained largely lifeless.

An osprey screamed overhead, calling me back to the present. Our lives brim with busyness, and with the heartbreaks of ongoing environmental crises and social injustices. These injustices and crises urgently demand our attention, call us to work for a healthier and more just future. Sitting on those Silurian rocks overlooking Woodward Cove, I was also reminded of the long arc of Earth's 4.54-billion-year history and how brief our lives are in the scheme of that history. How fortunate we are to be here at all, to care for this place as well as we can while we can, and to remember that change will continue unfolding long after we're gone.

Further offshore, another hump of even older metamorphosed seafloor rises up out of Casco Bay as Whaleboat Island. This 122-acre MCHT preserve sits about a mile east of Harpswell Neck and is made up of bedrock that formed some 465 million years ago, during the Ordovician period, when the very first backbones were just beginning to evolve within fish. The rocks themselves derive from ash and other debris that plumed out of a volcanic arc and settled at the bottom of a shallow sea.

On a recent visit, mist rolled over the neighboring islands as I tried to evoke that Ordovician world in my mind's eye, conjure what it looked, smelled, and sounded like. I glanced around and stripped Whaleboat Island of its barnacled tidepools, its hay scented fern, its spiderwebs and rose petals fluttering in the wind. I removed the seagulls crying above, and their stray feathers floating in the waves. I imagined a world in which none of these familiarities existed, when most of life's dramas took place under the sea.

As long ago and far removed as this version of Earth may seem, this planet had already spun through more than four billion years before those quartzes and feldspars ever began coalescing to form the rock beneath me. These Casco Bay islands and peninsulas are, in the scheme of Earth history, quite young. And those rose petals stuck in the spiderwebs, the feathers floating in the barnacle-laden tide pools, the humans taking all of it in? Infants, brand new visitors of this ancient world.

We can look for these reminders from deep time as we traipse along Maine's rocky coastline, recall how we all evolved from the same eroding crust. 🌊



Photo: Laura Poppick

Whaleboat Island is made up of bedrock that formed 465 millions years ago. The minerals within them derives from ash and other debris that plumed out of a volcanic arc and settled at the bottom of a shallow sea. Tectonic movements later brought those deposits to the surface as we see them today.

AUTHOR BIO

Laura Poppick is a science and environmental journalist whose stories have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Audubon*, *Scientific American*, and elsewhere. Her debut book *Strata: Stories from Deep Time* will be published by W.W. Norton in July 2025.

TOM DUFFUS'S INSPIRATION TO GIVE

A career conservationist on why he decided to make a legacy gift to Maine Coast Heritage Trust

What are some of your first experiences of Maine?

One of my earliest memories is from a trip I took with my family out to Whitehead Island in Muscle Ridge. That was the first time I smelled the breeze freshening off the ocean in the morning. To this day, when I catch that very particular, sweet smell, that memory rises up for me. I've been literally around the world, sailed across the Atlantic Ocean, been to every state but Alaska... Europe, South America, Asia...but I keep coming back here. This landscape is more subtle than the Rocky Mountains but every bit as deep in terms of its natural fortitude and beauty and diversity. To me, it's spectacular. It's my home.

When did you first learn about Maine Coast Heritage Trust?

When I was a teenager, I worked on the water and started really opening my eyes and seeing this amazing wilderness that was the Maine coast. Around the Deer Isle thoroughfare, there were all these wild islands, and I started asking myself, how did they come to be like this? Elsewhere on the coast, people were building, but not on these places that had been conserved.

I learned about the concept of land protection as I learned about MCHT, and it inspired my career. Here I am, 38 years later, and I've been able to affect the permanent protection of over 760,000

acres across 17 states and four Canadian provinces including over 185,000 acres in Maine alone. I am blessed to be working to save this place in my role with The Conservation Fund here in Maine. And I am especially fortunate to do this with MCHT as a partner and donor.

What's the value of conservation?

The world is changing so quickly, not always for the better, and having places that people can rely on, having that sense of stability—it's an important mental health item. It really matters to people. I think that since 2020 more people have really started to see the value of land conservation. It's a magical moment when a community that was skeptical of land conservation says, yes, you are part of the solution. I've seen that happen again and again.

What makes MCHT unique?

MCHT's leadership of the Maine Land Trust Network is extremely important. Maine's land trust community figured out that supporting one another, rather than having sharp elbows, is how to get the work done. That tone was set early on by MCHT and it is the DNA of land conservation in Maine—working together. I've done land protection all over North America and this is the only place where this happens in an earnest way.

What inspired you to make a planned gift to MCHT?

My career has always been on the forward-end of land protection, so I have directed my modest estate gift to MCHT's stewardship of conserved lands. Stewardship is increasingly expensive as more places are conserved and more people use trails

and damage sensitive places. These are real challenges, but the challenges of stewarding the land shouldn't be a barrier to protecting more of it. My hope is that I might inspire others to give. It's a great investment, with a permanent return.

What do you hope for the organization moving forward?

There are ongoing challenges such as sea level rise, which I know MCHT is being very thoughtful about, and challenges of supporting communities and their connection with the natural resources. I hope MCHT keeps its focus on land protection and stewardship, which are core and essential. It's imperative that people support this work, because it's not done. There is a lot of land yet to be conserved. 🌍

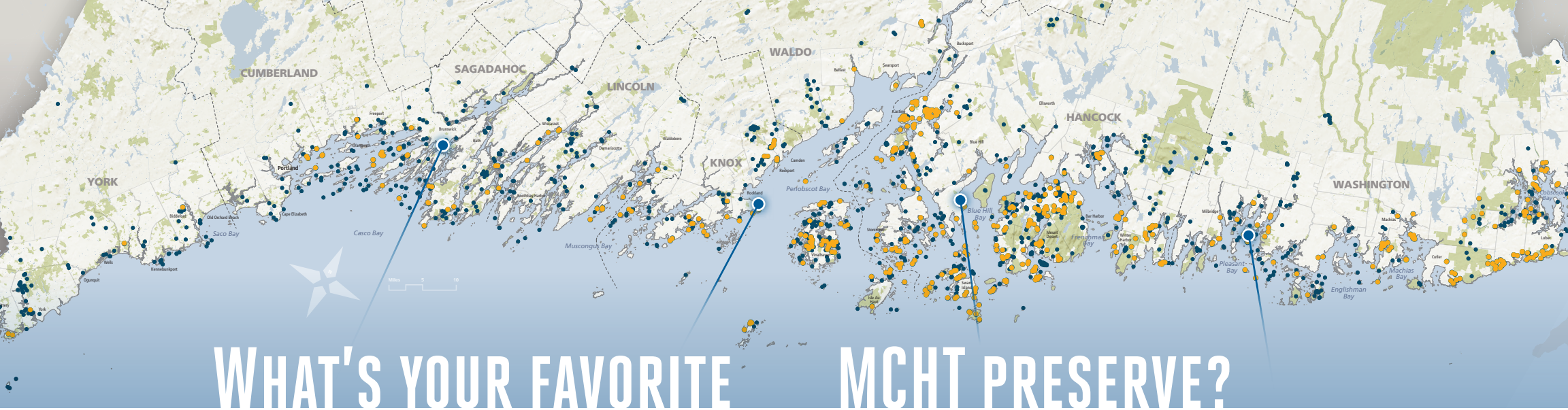
THERE ARE COUNTLESS WAYS TO MAKE THE MAINE COAST A PART OF YOUR LEGACY WITH A PLANNED GIFT, AND IT'S NEVER TOO SOON TO CONSIDER HOW YOU MIGHT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

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



Tom (right) and his son Iain on the Bold Coast.

Photos courtesy of Tom Duffus
Tom, age 13 (left), with his mother, a Mainer who shared her love of Maine with him and his sisters.



WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MCHT PRESERVE?

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



"I've spent lots of time walking the trails at **Woodward Point** and usually see interesting wildlife (it's the only place I've ever seen porcupines in Maine). I love to sit on the peninsula and write in my journal or sketch. It's a really precious place to me."

PHOEBE LITTLE, PORTLAND, ME

Photo: Jerry Monkman



"As a sea kayaker, I enjoy destinations that are not too far off the mainland and allow primitive camping. **Monroe Island** is easy to get to and has wonderful campsites. I cherish summer evenings sitting around a campfire and listening to the waves lap the shore."

DAVID BUTLER, WINDHAM, ME

Photo: David Waddell



"I've lost track of how many times I've visited **Harriman Point**, which becomes more interesting and beautiful to me every time I visit. I also like knowing that E.B. White lived and worked in this area. As a preschool teacher and big fan of *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little*, I appreciate the view of his home across Allen's Cove."

JOSH INGRAM, ME

Photo: Josh Ingram



"We have hiked the **Frank E. Woodward Preserve** in every season and in every kind of weather and each of those situations changes the magic of this spot in a different way. The serenity of the space creates a hush of all conversation, and we follow the trail in silence like we are walking on holy ground."

PAULA HOGUE, WOONSOCKET, RI

MCHT photo

This preserve was hit hard by last winter's storms. Learn more on page 27.

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



In March, MCHT teamed up with Maine Beer Company to host a fundraising event at the Freeport brewery to raise awareness about the importance of conservation in a changing climate. Hundreds gathered to hear from Hannah Pingree, the Director of the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, and enjoy good company, food, drinks, and art.

Together with the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge and York Land Trust, MCHT conserved more than 47 acres in the upper reaches of the York River last January, advancing habitat and marsh protection in a region of Maine under pressure from rapid development and climate change. This is the latest in a series of projects in the York River marsh area resulting in the protection of over 400 acres.

In August, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous & Tribal Populations, the Maine State Archives, and MCHT worked together with community members to coordinate a gathering on Malaga Island, an MCHT preserve since 2001. For the first time, descendants of the islanders evicted from their homes by the State in 1912 came together to “reclaim the narrative and build a future rooted in healing and justice.”

Top left: York River Marsh, MCHT photo
Left: Tides of Change Event, Rooted in Light Media
Top right: Event at Aldermere Farm, MCHT photo
Right: Canary Point on Deer Isle, Ken Woisard

At Aldermere Farm and Erickson Fields, new infrastructure made possible through the recent campaign has increased visitation at Aldermere Farm and allowed for staff to host larger farm tours, as well as provide space for community members and organizations to gather. Stop by for a visit!

On Monroe Island Preserve, MCHT collaborated with organizations Tender Table, an organization focused on storytelling, food, and celebrating Black and Brown community; and Kindling Collective, a queer-centered gear-share library and education center, to host a BIPOC campout in September.

MCHT staff have been busy coordinating with Midcoast Conservancy to prioritize and protect lands within the Sheepscot Watershed, part of MCHT’s Rivers Initiative. The Sheepscot is one of eight Maine rivers that support Atlantic salmon, a unique population potentially best suited to transition through a changing climate.



MCHT and Island Heritage Trust continue to fundraise to conserve Canary Point in Deer Isle, a place beloved by community members and artists and craftspeople from around the world attending nearby Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. This is one of five places featured in a soundscapes project spearheaded by faculty and students at University of Maine; an audio-visual documentary premiered at Haystack in August.



MDI-AREA UPDATE



DOWNEAST UPDATE



Stone Barn Farm draws daily visitors and is the site of an increasing number of collaborations with community organizations. MCHT is currently fundraising to improve the accessibility and functionality of the property's trails and buildings, with hopes to one day offer an all-access path on the property.

Over the spring, volunteers joined MCHT staff to count fish at Seal Cove Pond, where we recently worked with the town of Tremont and other partners to construct nature-like fishways. Restoring river herring populations at this location helps feed local wildlife, provide bait for fishers, and enhance the ecological value of surrounding conserved lands.

Mount Desert Island stewardship staff continue to care for 20 places and over 30 miles of trails open to the public. Outstanding stewardship projects this year include a new parking lot and trail improvements at Blue Horizons, a bog bridging project on the Cranberry Isles, and a series of cleanup events.

On Mount Desert Island, MCHT is advancing our Marshes for Tomorrow initiative through the acquisition of land at Bass Harbor Marsh, staff presentations on the ecological significance of and conservation opportunities for Maine marshes, and the initiation of marsh restoration projects at Babson Creek and Mitchell Marsh. In Hancock, our first restoration project is in its monitoring phase.

Together with others managing land for public access in the Orange River watershed region, MCHT created and published a new website with information about the easy-to-access, easy-to-paddle, nine-mile flat-water Orange River Water Trail, and hosted a paddle for community members. Visit orange-riverwatertrail.org to learn more!

MCHT assisted the Forest Society of Maine in protecting 5,300 acres, expanding existing conservation land to create a larger, unbroken region of wild and ecologically vital habitat in the headwaters of the Narraguagus River, a focus area of our Rivers Initiative.

MCHT is now working with Northeast Wilderness Trust to conserve over 2,000 acres of forest adjacent to the Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land, advancing a rare opportunity to conserve thousands of acres near the coast and further protect one of the last places where inland forests connect to the sea. Pressured by climate change, wildlife benefit greatly from these expansive corridors.



After a series of winter storms, many MCHT preserves required extra attention this year. At Frank E. Woodworth Preserve in Harrington, crews spent nearly two weeks re-routing trails and clearing downed trees to re-open the trail network. Stewards were heartened to receive calls from local folks expressing gratitude for the work to keep the preserve open to the public.

Top left: Blue Horizons Preserve, Katherine Emery
Left: Stone Barn Farm Preserve, Nora Holloway
Top right: Orange River, Ryan Malagara
Right: Frank E. Woodworth Preserve, MCHT photo

IN MEMORIAM

Over Maine Coast Heritage Trust's 50-year history, our organization has been guided by countless extraordinary individuals. This year, we said goodbye to two deeply kind and passionate people who made a lasting difference for the coast of Maine and on those of us who had the pleasure and privilege of working with them.



Marion Cameron "Camie"
Barrow, board member 2016-2024

As a founding member of Maine Coast Heritage Trust's Next Wave of conservationists in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, Camie generously shared her love of the outdoors and encouraged her contemporaries to engage in the work of conservation. In 2016, she joined MCHT as a board member, bringing unrelenting discernment and kindness to the task of protecting and caring for Maine's precious lands and waters. Camie also served on the board of the Maine Council Atlantic Salmon Federation and was active in a variety of other causes, including the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, advancing conservation throughout the state and close to her home.

"Grounded in her love of Maine, Camie was a warm, highly competent presence on our board, helping us navigate change and fulfill our commitments to Maine's lands, waters, wildlife, and communities," says MCHT board chair Tom Armstrong. "She made a lasting difference for our organization and the coast of Maine."



Keith Fletcher, land protection
manager 2010-2024

During his long stints at The Nature Conservancy in Maine and Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Keith worked with just about every land trust in Southern Maine to help make communities healthier and greenspaces available to all. At MCHT, he worked tirelessly—often seven days a week—assisting landowners, towns, and partner organizations. Uninterested in personal credit, he just wanted to conserve as much land as possible.

For MCHT and through volunteer work with other land trusts he completed over 140 projects conserving 8,000 acres of land in Maine's most populated and fast-developing region of Southern Maine. "Keith embodied the term collaboration," says MCHT's Director of Land Protection, Betsy Ham. "He was patient, kind, a talented and empathetic negotiator, strong fundraiser, and excellent communicator. He left a permanent and beautiful mark on southern Maine, and we are forever grateful."

In Maine, nature is still big and bold enough to remind us that we are part of it.

With 3,400 miles of coastline, 4,500 offshore islands, 32,000 miles of rivers and streams, 6,000 lakes and ponds, this place is extraordinary and so are the opportunities for conservation to ensure it remains so.

Building on 50 years of impact across the coast and state, Maine Coast Heritage Trust advances the conservation of lands and waters to ensure ecological wellbeing and foster thriving communities.

Together, we can realize a future Maine where

- communities are more resilient to climate change;
- wildlife survive and thrive in healthy woods and waters;
- and everyone has access to special places and outdoor experiences.

Let's ensure that the lands and waters that make Maine so unique are held sacred, remain a source of connection, and support all people and life for generations to come.



GIVE, VOLUNTEER, SPREAD THE WORD.

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

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



Places for wildlife

Collaborations to offer more
outdoor experiences

& enhanced protection of some of the
Eastern Seaboard's last vast, open areas

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Photo: Least sandpiper at Moose Cove at Bog Brook Cove Preserve, by Nathaniel Child