

# Meet the Moment

2024-2028



Maine Coast  
Heritage Trust



# Maine Coast Heritage Trust

- 7 Challenges and opportunities for Maine**
- 12 Impact**
- 14 Guiding principles**
- 20 Our vision**
- 22 Our mission**
- 24 Our values**
- 30 Goals and objectives**
- 40 Future vision**



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

Our state boasts over **3,400 miles of coastline,**

more than **4,600 offshore islands,**

over **32,000 miles of rivers and streams,**

more than **6,000 lakes and ponds,**

and **the largest** contiguous block of **undeveloped forestland** east of the Mississippi.



# Changes, both welcome and imposed, present challenges for lands and waters and the communities that depend upon them.

<b>Rising seas</b>	Seas will rise 3 to 5 feet by the year 2100 (at least)
<b>More precipitation (and flooding and infrastructure damage)</b>	Extreme weather events have increased 74% since 1958
<b>Wildlife and habitats at risk</b>	75% of plants and animals are vulnerable to climate change
<b>Increasing development pressures</b>	Maine was the most moved-to state in 2023
<b>More people seeking outdoor spaces</b>	Maine state parks and Acadia National Park see record numbers of visitors in recent years
<b>Increased mental stress</b>	Time in nature is proven to increase wellbeing

Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine," Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Atlas® Van Lines Migration Patterns Study, "Nature and Mental Health: An Ecosystem Service Perspective"



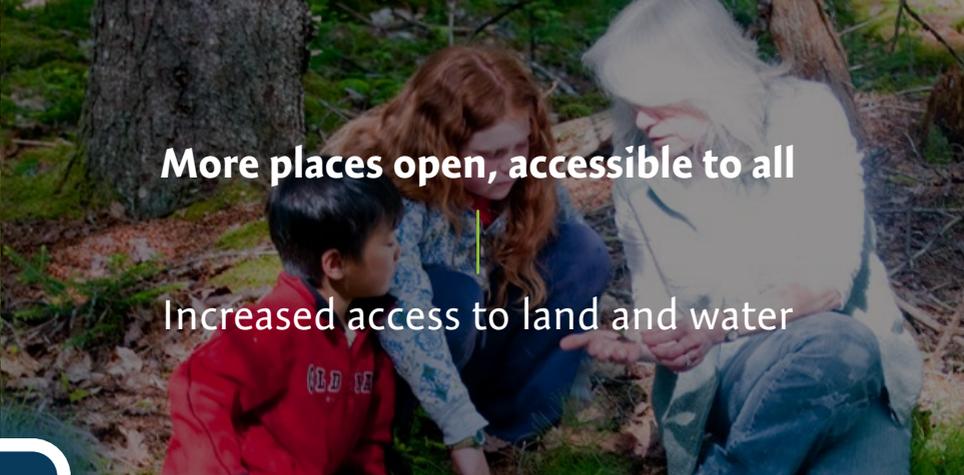
**Forests, fields, wetlands,  
and waters full of life**

Functioning ecosystems, protected habitat



**Global warming slows—  
helped by protected forests  
and wetlands storing carbon**

Forests and wetlands remain intact



**More places open, accessible to all**

Increased access to land and water



**Increased public access to water as the  
shoreline migrates inland**

More water access sites

**How conservation  
makes a healthier Maine**



**Growing economy**

Healthy forestry, fishing, and agriculture  
sectors and outdoor recreation industry



**Natural areas protected, mitigating impacts**

Communities adapting to change



**Healthy food for all**

Protected land for farming



**Affordable housing, livable communities**

Greenspace protected, sustainable  
development supported



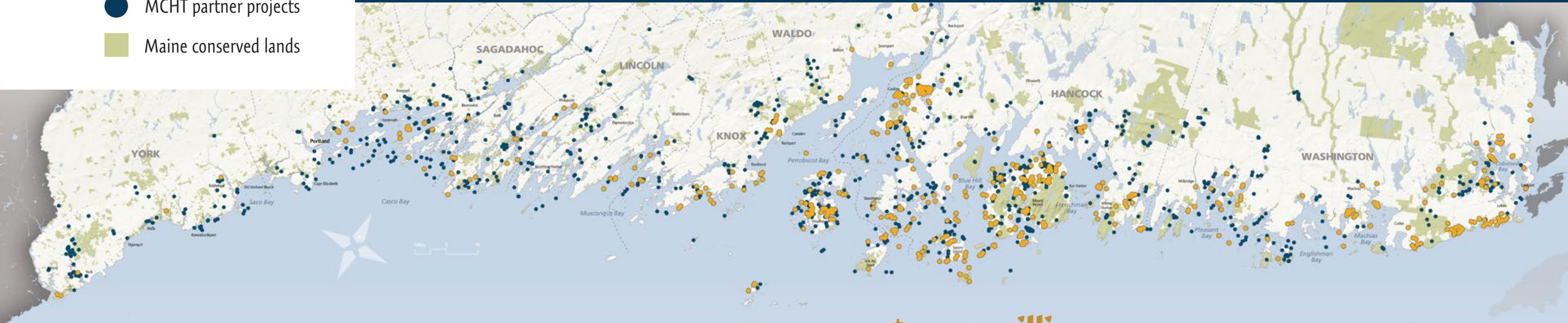
Conservation emerges as part of the solution to many of the challenges Maine faces.

Maine Coast Heritage Trust has over 50 years of experience facilitating complex conservation projects and advancing statewide initiatives.

**Anyone who has spent time on the Maine coast has likely seen or walked on places MCHT helped conserve.**

# Over 50 years of impact

- MCHT conserved places
- MCHT partner projects
- Maine conserved lands



**200,000+** acres conserved with partners

**341** islands protected

**168** places open to the public, **106** miles of trail to explore

Founder and coordinator of the **Maine Land Trust Network**

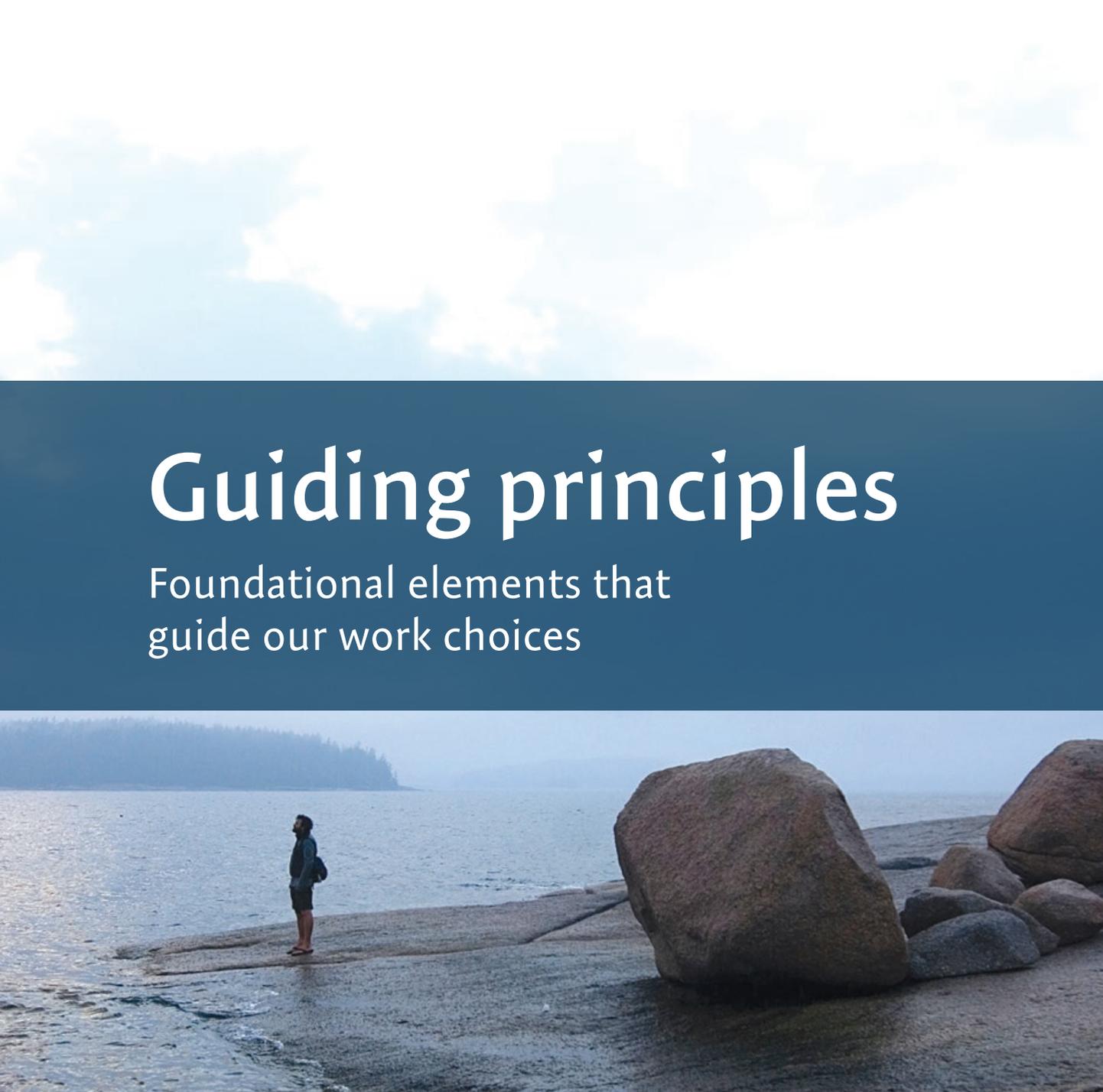
**\$200+ million** raised since 2014 toward conservation in Maine

Pioneered use of conservation easements in the **1970s**

Co-founder of the national **Land Trust Alliance**

Co-creator of **Land for Maine's Future**

*Data updated in 2026*

A photograph of a person standing on a rocky beach, looking out at the ocean. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds. The person is small in the frame, emphasizing the vastness of the natural environment. The rocks are large and smooth, typical of a coastal area.

# Guiding principles

Foundational elements that  
guide our work choices

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 asked, “How can we rise to meet challenges and opportunities and be more effective moving forward?”

Partners are encouraging us to be more ambitious in our efforts and further engage and support communities.

“[MCHT] identified the most important places to protect and did it—that’s a big impact on our landscape and our quality of life ...”

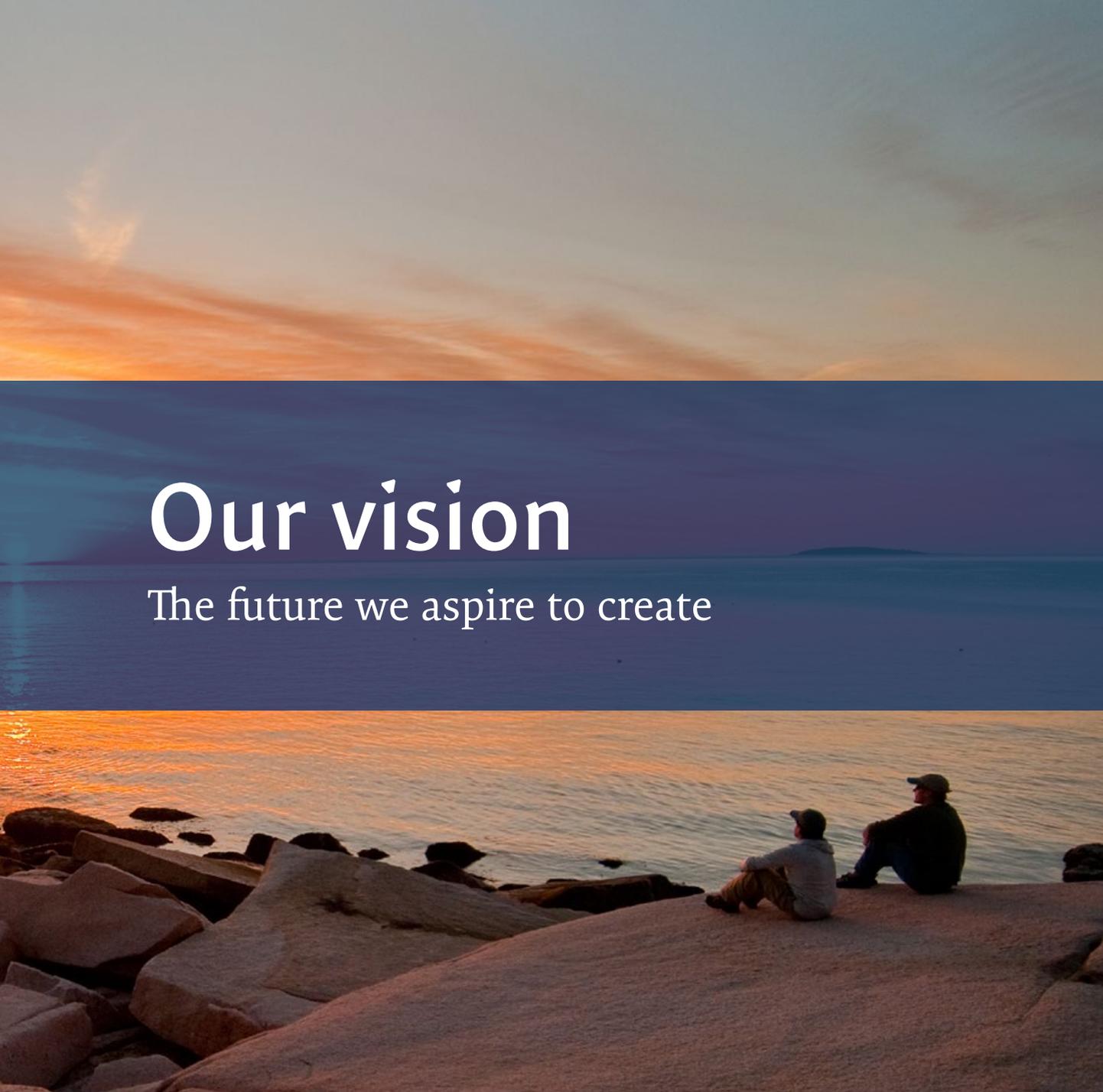
**“We can’t do it alone ...  
MCHT could be a catalyst  
and key partner ...”**

“[MCHT should be] shifting focus to addressing mitigation strategies for climate change ... understanding impacts of sea-level rise, migrating marshland with mapping, promoting, raising funds ...”



MCHT has long invested in partnerships, community-based conservation, and statewide initiatives.

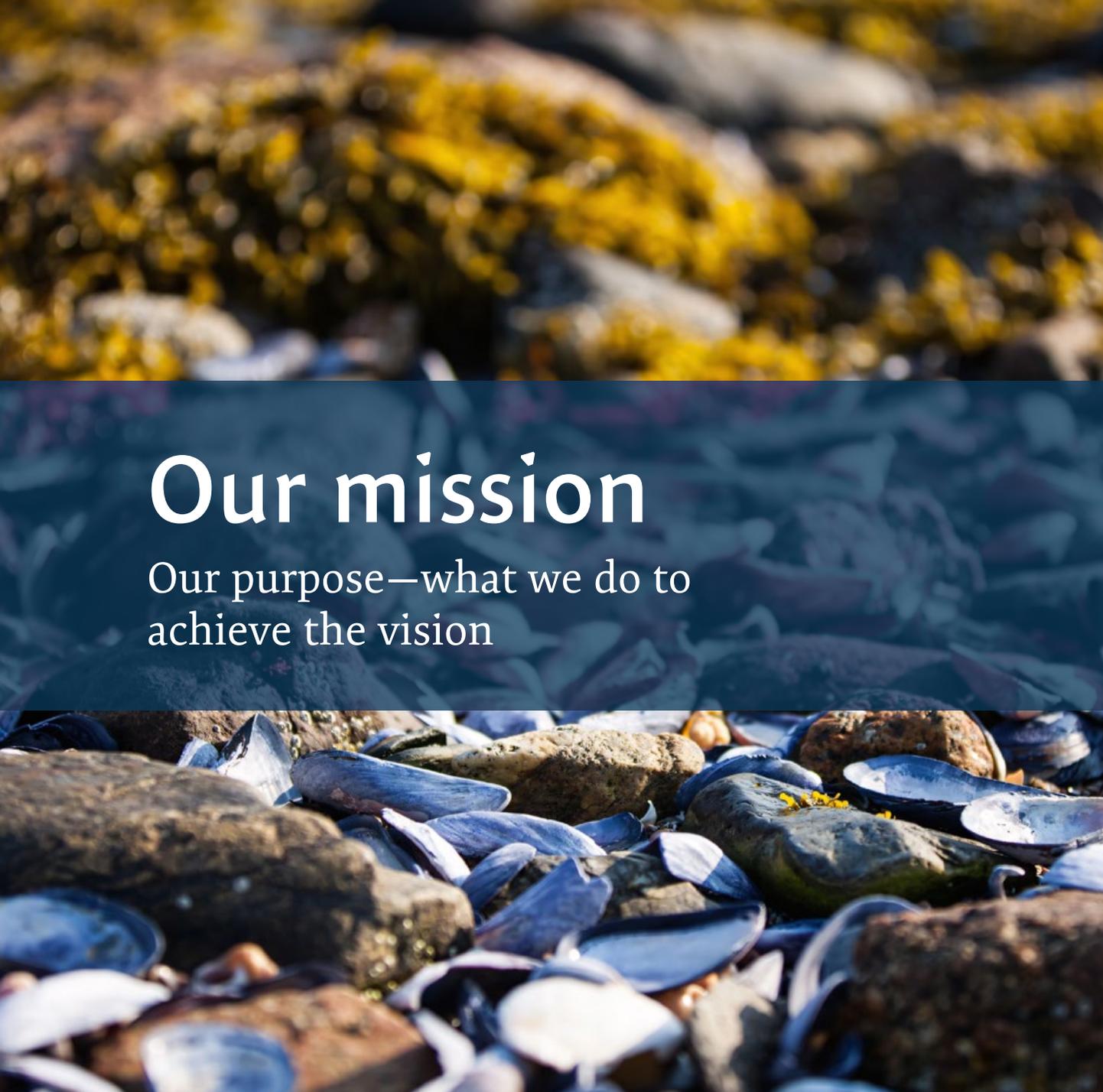
Guided by a new vision and mission, we're leaning into our strengths and evolving our organization and Maine's conservation movement to increase our impact in the years to come.



# Our vision

The future we aspire to create

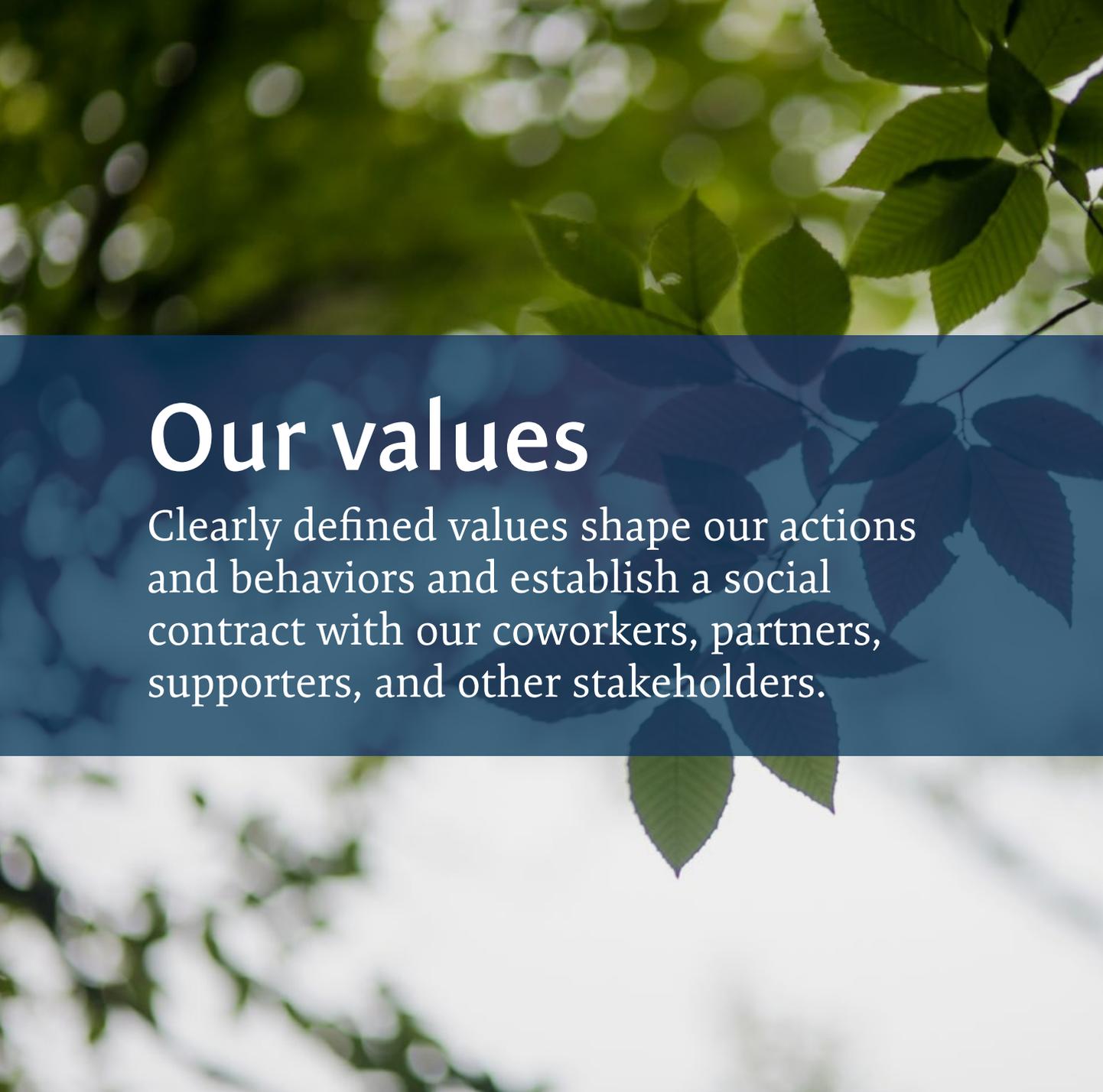
To create a world in which the lands and waters that sustain life are healthy, resilient, and an enduring source of connection for all.



# Our mission

Our purpose—what we do to  
achieve the vision

To advance the conservation  
of lands and waters in  
Maine to ensure ecological  
wellbeing and foster  
thriving communities.



# Our values

Clearly defined values shape our actions and behaviors and establish a social contract with our coworkers, partners, supporters, and other stakeholders.

MCHT Board, staff, and volunteers advance the conservation of lands and waters in Maine with joy and passion!

We value:

- Enduring commitment
- Respect for all
- Active collaboration
- Continuous learning



## Enduring commitment

We recognize that caring for land and water is a lasting responsibility and a privilege, critical to the health of our communities, our state, and the wider world.

- We show up, thoughtfully and consistently
- We speak up for nature and wildlife
- We follow through and hold ourselves accountable



## Respect for all

We understand that as in nature, diversity builds resilience. By welcoming people's unique identities, experiences, and perspectives, our work is made stronger.

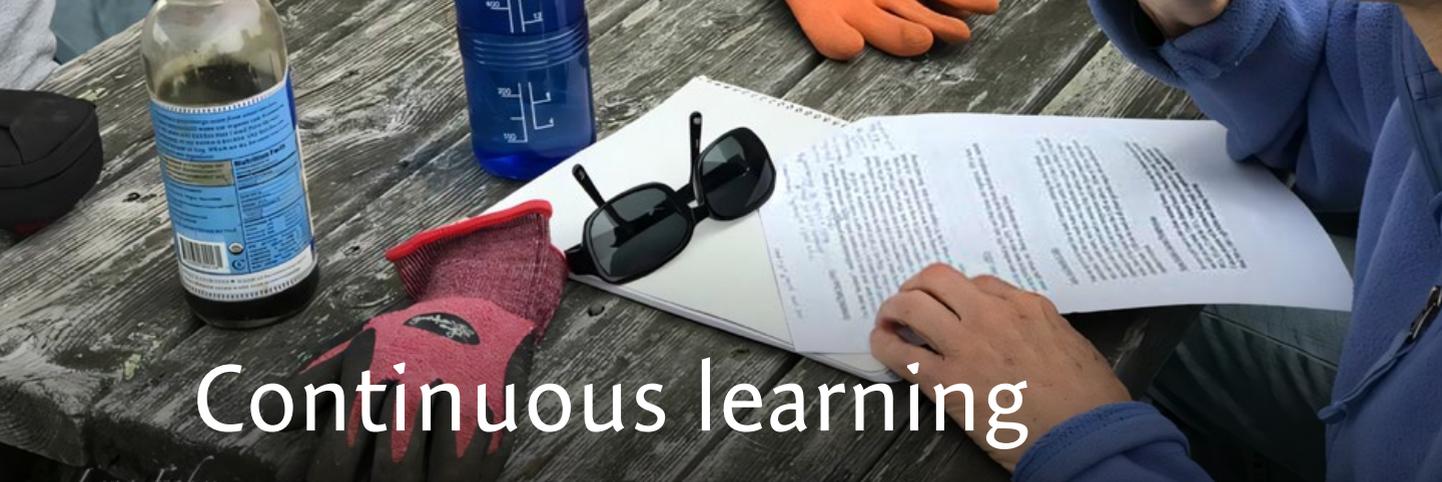
- We are committed to equity and inclusion in all aspects of our work
- We honor the inherent value and interconnectedness of all living beings
- We are kind and truthful in our interactions



## Active collaboration

We believe in cooperation and the power of shared work. By approaching each situation with openness and a desire to understand, we are able to achieve greater impact together.

- We seek out points of connection and common goals
- We prioritize relationships
- We drive change in partnership with others



## Continuous learning

We are curious, sharing what we know and seeking to learn from others, embracing both failures and successes as vital ingredients for innovation and the evolution of our work.

- We listen and respond to those engaged in and affected by conservation efforts
- We invite open, rigorous, and informed debate
- We look ahead, anticipating future challenges and opportunities and investing in our collective ability to respond

Four areas of focus  
will guide our work  
moving forward



**Lands, waters & climate**



**Community conservation**



**Collaboration & partnership**



**Organizational capacity**



# Goal 1

Conserve healthy ecosystems and actively respond to a changing climate

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Protect interconnected and climate-resilient coastal habitats at a landscape scale
- Accelerate the conservation of priority coastal watersheds
- Employ stewardship best practices for all MCHT holdings
- Increase public understanding of and interest in Maine's natural environment



## Goal 2

Contribute to the wellbeing of people and coastal communities

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Be a visible advocate and practitioner of inclusive approaches to conservation
- Increase access and connection for all to coastal lands and waters
- Assist with land-use solutions that help address the needs of coastal communities
- Continue our role as the local land trust on Mount Desert Island



## Goal 3

Accelerate the pace, scale,  
and impact of conservation

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Mobilize a stronger and more adaptive network of local land trusts
- Inspire more people to care about and participate in conservation efforts
- Leverage new and existing partnerships to increase positive conservation outcomes across the state



## Goal 4

Ensure that MCHT is well-resourced and aligned to achieve our mission

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Foster a culture that attracts and supports a diverse group of staff, Board, and volunteers to feel connected, empowered, and inspired
- Increase and diversify funding sources and expand MCHT's base of supporters
- Invest in the tools and places that support productive work
- Refresh MCHT's brand and expand the impact of communications

# We will be successful when we've:



Deepened  
**community  
connection**  
to lands and waters

Created active **wildlife  
corridors** with  
resilient and interconnected  
coastal zones, wetlands, and  
upland forest blocks



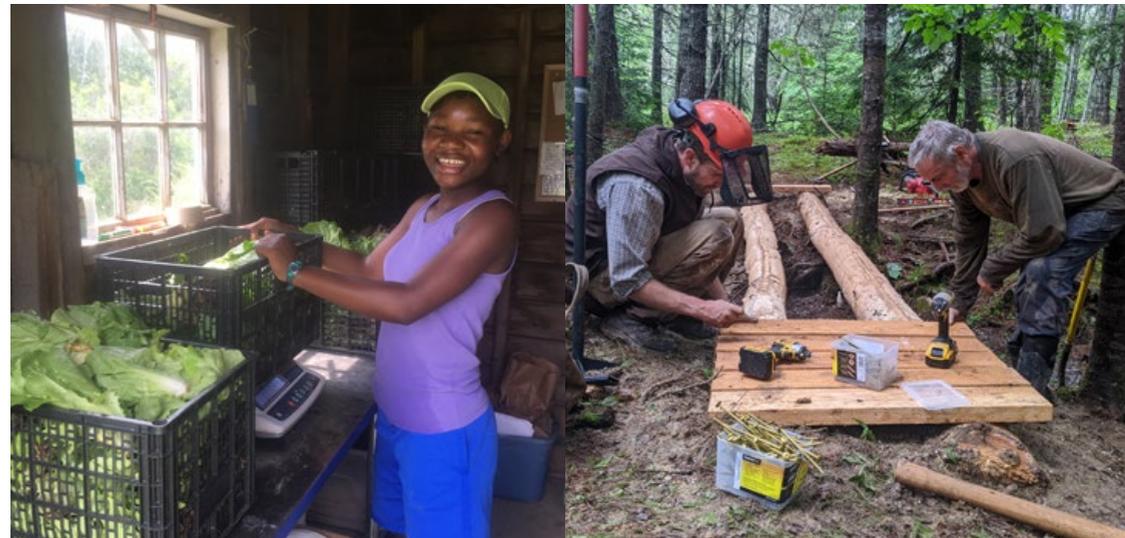
**Mitigated  
disruption**  
of coastal ecosystems and  
communities from sea-level rise  
and other climate-related events

Accelerated the pace of  
**conservation  
statewide**  
by activating a broad coalition  
of partners



# More land conserved ...

... in collaboration with a broader coalition of partners ...



... with support and engagement from a wide array of committed individuals ...

... by an organization of diverse professionals acting collectively and efficiently.



This place we call **Maine**  
is unlike any other, beloved by people around the world.

Together, we can ensure that the **lands  
and waters**  
that define Maine are held sacred, remain a source  
of connection, and support all Maine people for  
generations to come.

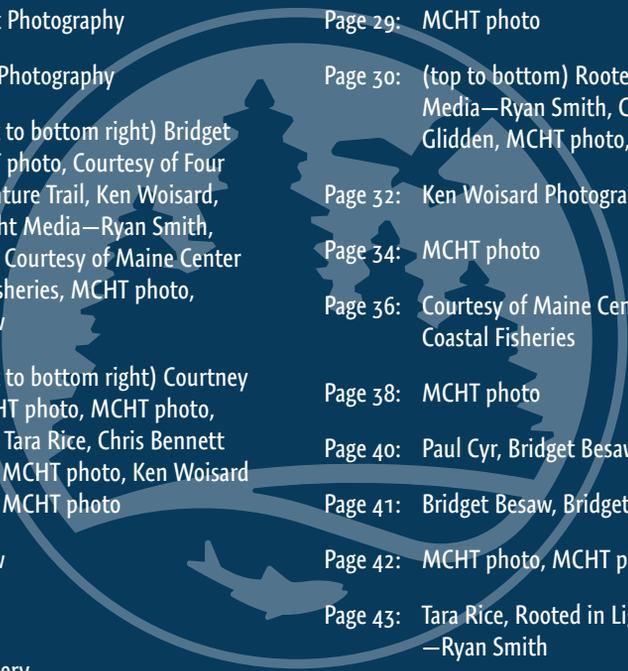
---

Support, Donate, Volunteer

**mcht.org**

## Photo Credits

- Cover: Chris Bennett Photography
- Page 2: Ken Woisard Photography
- Page 8: (from top left to bottom right) Bridget Besaw, MCHT photo, Courtesy of Four Season Adventure Trail, Ken Woisard, Rooted in Light Media—Ryan Smith, MCHT photo, Courtesy of Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries, MCHT photo, Bridget Besaw
- Page 18: (from top left to bottom right) Courtney Mooney, MCHT photo, MCHT photo, MCHT photo, Tara Rice, Chris Bennett Photography, MCHT photo, Ken Woisard Photography, MCHT photo
- Page 20: Bridget Besaw
- Page 22: Collin Howell
- Page 24: Katherine Emery
- Page 26: Bridget Besaw
- Page 27: Maine Mountain Media
- Page 28: Courtesy of Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries
- Page 29: MCHT photo
- Page 30: (top to bottom) Rooted in Light Media—Ryan Smith, Courtesy of Enock Glidden, MCHT photo, MCHT photo
- Page 32: Ken Woisard Photography
- Page 34: MCHT photo
- Page 36: Courtesy of Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries
- Page 38: MCHT photo
- Page 40: Paul Cyr, Bridget Besaw
- Page 41: Bridget Besaw, Bridget Besaw
- Page 42: MCHT photo, MCHT photo
- Page 43: Tara Rice, Rooted in Light Media—Ryan Smith
- Page 44: Bridget Besaw



Maine Coast  
Heritage Trust



**Maine Coast  
Heritage Trust**