

2025 Impact Report



Maine Coast
Heritage Trust

The evolving nature of conservation

Conservation is often measured in acres protected or miles of coastline preserved, but the impact of MCHT's work extends beyond simple statistics. Conserved lands and waters create habitat for wildlife; increase biodiversity; strengthen resilience to the impacts of a changing climate; contribute to healthy local economies; safeguard access for traditional, commercial, and recreational activities, such as fishing, farming, hunting, hiking, and boating; and help preserve the character and vitality of Maine communities.

Like the ecosystems we work to protect, conservation is constantly evolving. At MCHT, our work in 2025 increasingly included partnering with communities and organizations to address shared challenges — such as affordable housing, access to land and water, food security, and sustainable and working waterfronts — and create lasting

benefits for people and nature. Community conservation efforts like these expand the relevance and visibility of our work in ways that are tangible, immediate, and connected to people's daily lives and livelihoods.

Across the state, year by year, MCHT is continuing to learn what's working, where we need to adapt, and how we can meet the needs of today's communities while conserving this special place we call Maine for generations into the future.

Our 2025 impact report highlights what our collective outcomes look like: Together with our partners and supporters, we were able to conserve close to 10,000 acres, including more than 35 additional miles of freshwater and saltwater shoreline, and ensure that more of Maine's lands and waters remain permanently open to the public. Thank you for making this possible.

With gratitude and excitement for what we will achieve together in the year ahead,



MacKenzie Davis (Micah), Chair of the Board

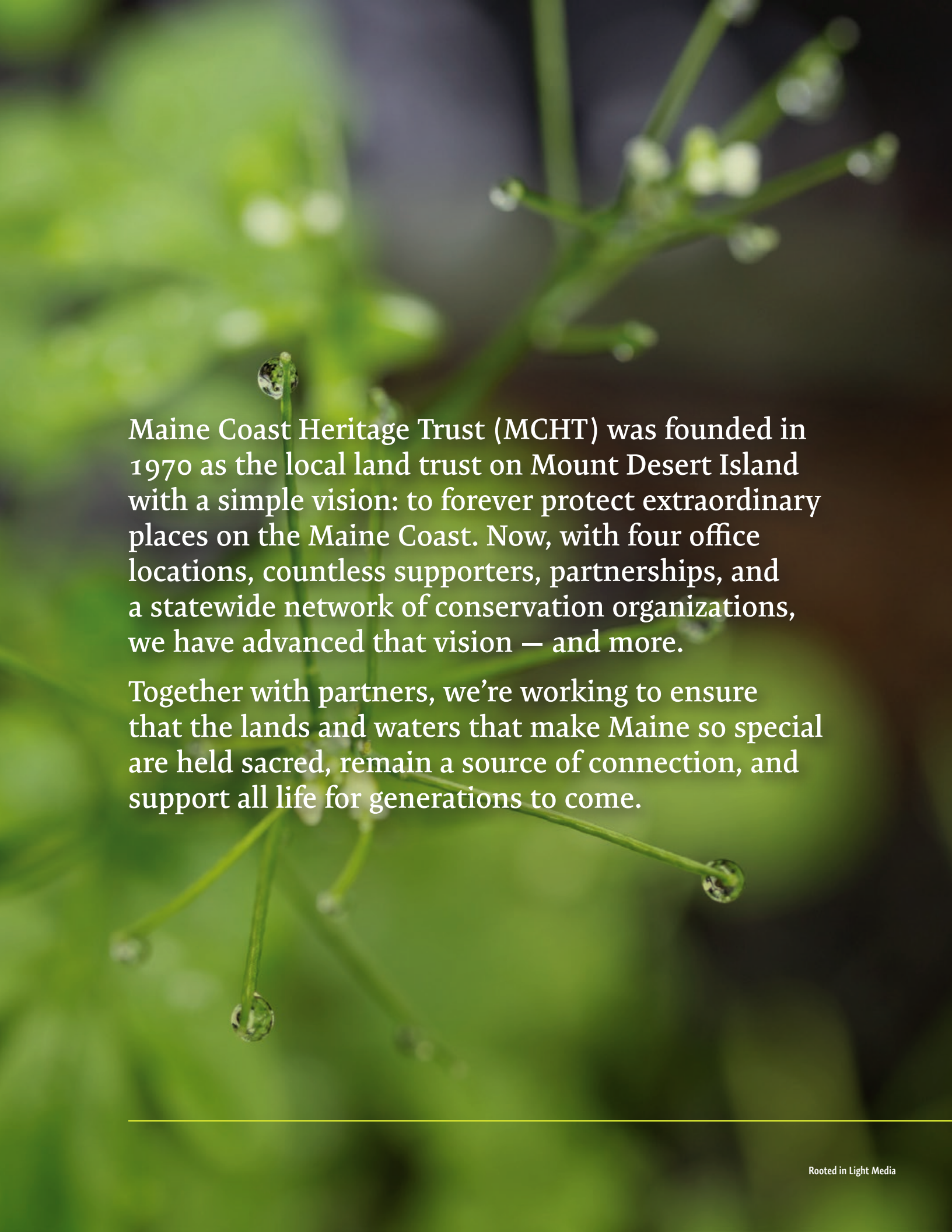


Kate Stookey, President and CEO

PS. Did you notice we adopted a new logo? This new look was designed to reflect the breadth and vitality of conservation work today. We are grateful for the grant funding that made this possible and hope you enjoy this new splash of color and life! Read the story of our logo at mcht.org/about/evolving-our-brand



**Maine Coast
Heritage Trust**



Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) was founded in 1970 as the local land trust on Mount Desert Island with a simple vision: to forever protect extraordinary places on the Maine Coast. Now, with four office locations, countless supporters, partnerships, and a statewide network of conservation organizations, we have advanced that vision — and more.

Together with partners, we're working to ensure that the lands and waters that make Maine so special are held sacred, remain a source of connection, and support all life for generations to come.

Our vision

is 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

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

Our values

Enduring commitment

Respect for all

Active collaboration

Continuous learning

Our priorities

Lands, waters, and climate

Conserve healthy ecosystems and actively respond to a changing climate

Community conservation

Contribute to the wellbeing of people and coastal communities

Collaboration & partnership

Accelerate the pace, scale, and impact of conservation

Organizational capacity

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

Thanks to the generous support of people who care deeply about Maine, MCHT ...



Coordinated 145 events and programs — reaching 4,675 community members and conservation colleagues — and held 48 events for over 800 volunteers

MCHT and Maine Maritime Academy (MMA) formed a landmark partnership to promote public safety, environmental stewardship, and student leadership in response to ongoing concerns about unpermitted fires and associated wildfire risks in Maine. Last fall, more than 150 members of MMA's incoming Regimental class participated in a half-day wildfire risk mitigation event focused on reducing fuels and enhancing the firebreak in the southern section of MCHT's Witherle Woods Preserve in Castine.



Completed 5 new priority river projects across three coastal watersheds totaling about 543 acres

Building on our ongoing collaboration with the Downeast Salmon Federation (DSF) to strengthen the health and resilience of the Narraguagus River in Downeast Maine, MCHT partnered with DSF to preserve 150 acres of land above Little Falls. This addition expands community access to the river and complements removal of the Ice Control Dam in Cherryfield, clearing passage for sea-run fish, including endangered Atlantic salmon.



Completed 7 priority marsh projects conserving nearly 260 acres

We completed active restoration at Old Pond Marsh in Hancock, wrapping up a years-long partnership effort to restore the marsh's natural function and water flow. This project, which launched our statewide restoration program, is showing how restoration helps plants grow back and marshes move inland as sea level rises.



Completed 4 land return projects totaling over 26 shorefront miles

Alongside many other land trust partners and organizations like First Light and the Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship, Wabanaki nations, and Wabanaki-led nonprofits, MCHT helps acquire and return land to Wabanaki stewardship and increase Wabanaki cultural access to conserved lands. This work is critical to ensure that all people benefit from conservation of lands and waters in Maine.



Brought together 420 people for two full days of activities and networking, including 14 workshops, at the annual Maine Land Conservation Conference

At the annual Maine Land Conservation Conference, the co-directors of Wabanaki-led food sovereignty organization Niweskok received the Espy Land Heritage Award, endowed in honor of long-time MCHT President Jay Espy to recognize exceptional individuals and organizations for their dedication and success in protecting the character of Maine. Through their dedication to acquiring Goose River Farm in Swanville as a permanent home for Wabanaki agriculture, cultural education, and stewardship, Niweskok exemplifies a powerful model of land conservation: a model of creating a space where ancestral knowledge, seed saving, wild harvesting, and intergenerational learning can thrive.

Pictured from left to right: Nicole Francis, member of the Mi'kmaq Nation, Andrea Francis, member of the Mi'kmaq Nation, and Alivia Moore, citizen of the Penobscot Nation — three co-directors of Niweskok, a Wabanaki-led food sovereignty organization

Your **impact** in 2025

Your support of Maine Coast Heritage Trust enables more than just the permanent conservation of land — it expands public access, increases coastal resilience through marsh restoration, improves the health of rivers and watersheds, advances meaningful efforts to reunify Wabanaki Peoples with ancestral homelands, and so much more. Thank you for your partnership and all that we accomplished together in 2025.

In Maine, we are fortunate — nature is still big and bold, and it delivers stunning reminders that we are part of it

MCHT collaborates with landowners, communities, organizations, Tribal entities, and others to meet the challenges Maine faces and set the state up for a healthier future.

We do this by:

Protecting critical wildlife and biodiversity, and creating more public access to the land and sea.

Caring for and managing the land over time to enhance its ecological and community benefits.

Connecting people to the land, restoring relationships between people and place, and building awareness.



Statewide Impacts

Last year, MCHT's Maine Land Trust Network (MLTN) program helped advance Maine's conservation movement by hosting the annual Maine Land Conservation Conference and Richard G. Rockefeller Conservation Internship Program; disbursing grants and funding; providing organizational assessment and capacity support; and developing a 2026-2030 strategic plan. We also helped raise **\$9.8 million** in collaborative conservation efforts, on top of **\$20.7 million** in commitments made directly to MCHT.



Public Policy Wins

In 2025, MCHT worked at the State House in Augusta on several bills impacting Maine's **80+ land trusts**. Legislative wins included partnering with Land for Maine's Future staff to revamp the state's conservation lands registry; joining with other land trusts to improve Maine's landowner liability protections associated with conservation projects; and collaborating with The Nature Conservancy, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, and others to secure legislative approval for regulations that will mitigate renewable energy development impacts to critical wildlife habitats. MCHT also successfully defeated a variety of proposals that sought to undermine land trusts and land conservation activities in Maine.

The maps on the following three pages span the entire coast of Maine and showcase some of the work made possible thanks to donor support.

Marsh restoration projects

Priority rivers

New places conserved

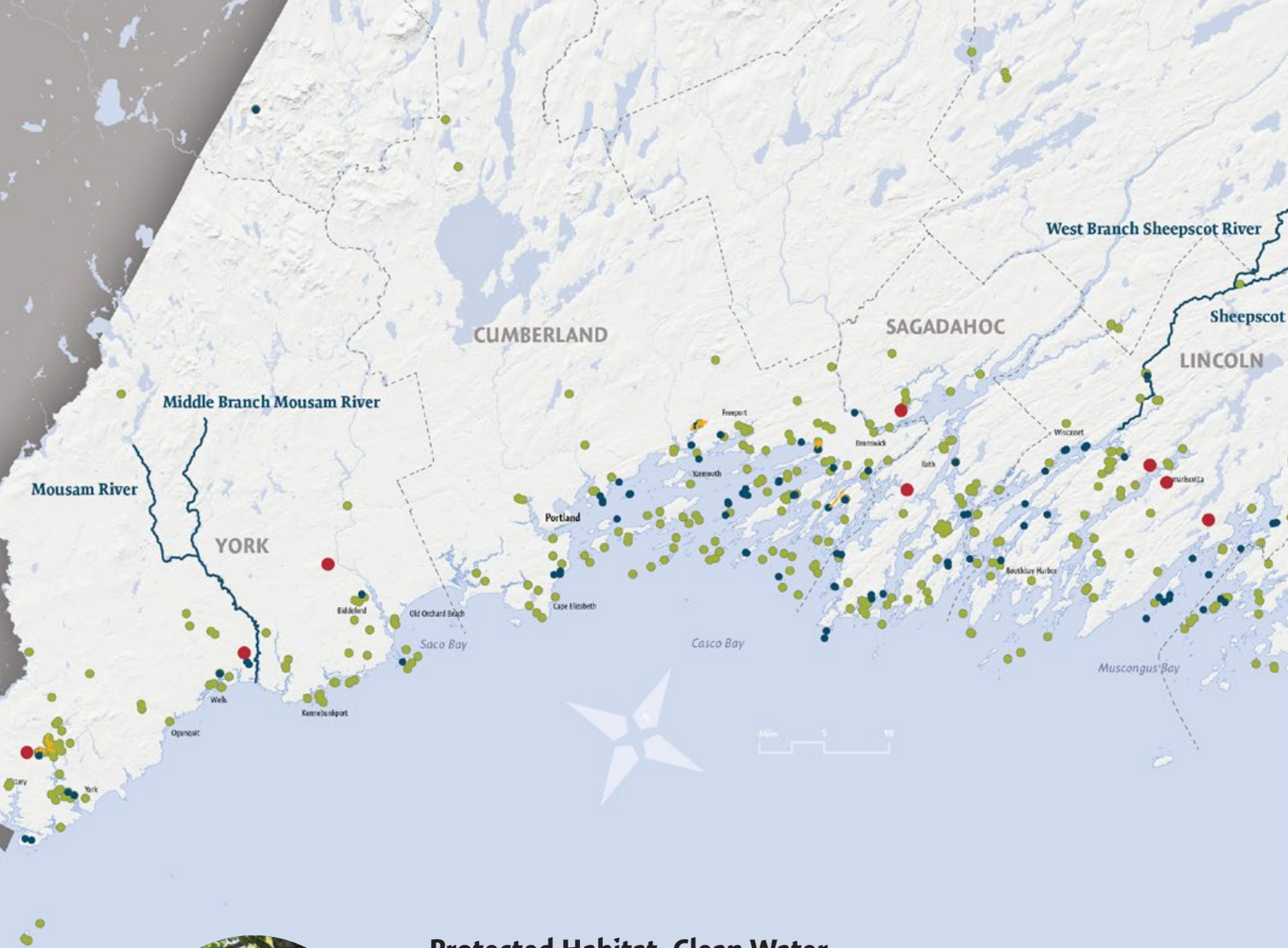
The 26 places conserved in 2025 comprise a total of nearly 10,000 acres (that's more than the size of Isle au Haut) and include nearly 35 miles of coastal and inland shoreline (that's more than the distance from Freeport to Wiscasset or Blue Hill to Hancock).

Lands cared for

Our stewardship staff monitored and cared for a total of 45,739 acres and maintained over 106 miles of trail (that's about the distance from Southwest Harbor to Lubec) and more than 50 campsites.

Partnership projects

In 2025, 12 of the 26 new places conserved are now under the care of partners — carrying on our tradition of working with partners to conserve hundreds of places throughout Maine since 1970.



Protected Habitat, Clean Water

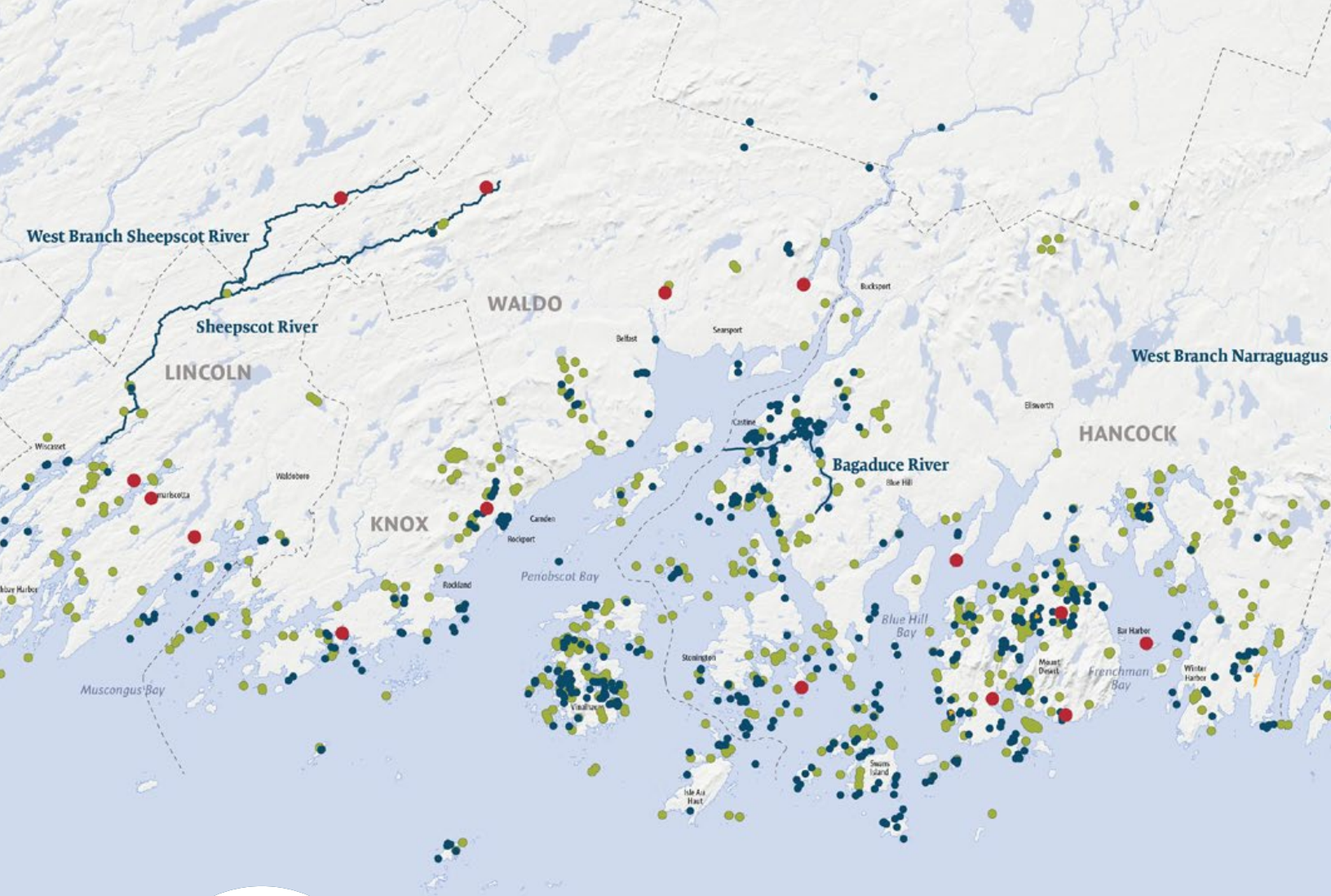
With the support of the City of Biddeford, Maine Water Company (MWC) and MCHT permanently conserved more than **250 acres** of forest and publicly accessible open space in a key watershed area of the Saco River in western Biddeford. This newly protected forestland provides vital habitat to a suite of Maine's native species. It also protects the high quality drinking water of the Saco River, a critical natural and cultural resource and the sole drinking water source for about **40,000 residents**.



Conservation and Workforce Housing in Rockport

MCHT donated approximately one acre of land, and the site of an existing 1850s farmstead across from our Erickson Fields Preserve, to Midcoast Regional Housing Trust (MCRHT). Responding to the region's urgent housing crisis, MCRHT will create long-term, multi-family, year-round housing. We also expanded Erickson Fields by an additional five acres, enhancing opportunities to collaborate with the elementary school, strengthen and create new agricultural programming, increase public access to conserved lands, and complement wider planning efforts in Rockport.

Read more stories at
mcht.org/impact-stories



MDI Landscape Protected

We worked with Land & Garden Preserve to further the conservation of **168 acres** of forests, cliffs, and wetlands at Hunters Cliffs, Hunters Beach, and Day Mountain in Seal Harbor, safeguarding one of Mount Desert Island's most scenic and ecologically rich landscapes. The property contributes to more than **22,000 acres** of connected conservation land and preserves public access to a beloved network of trails leading directly to Acadia National Park.



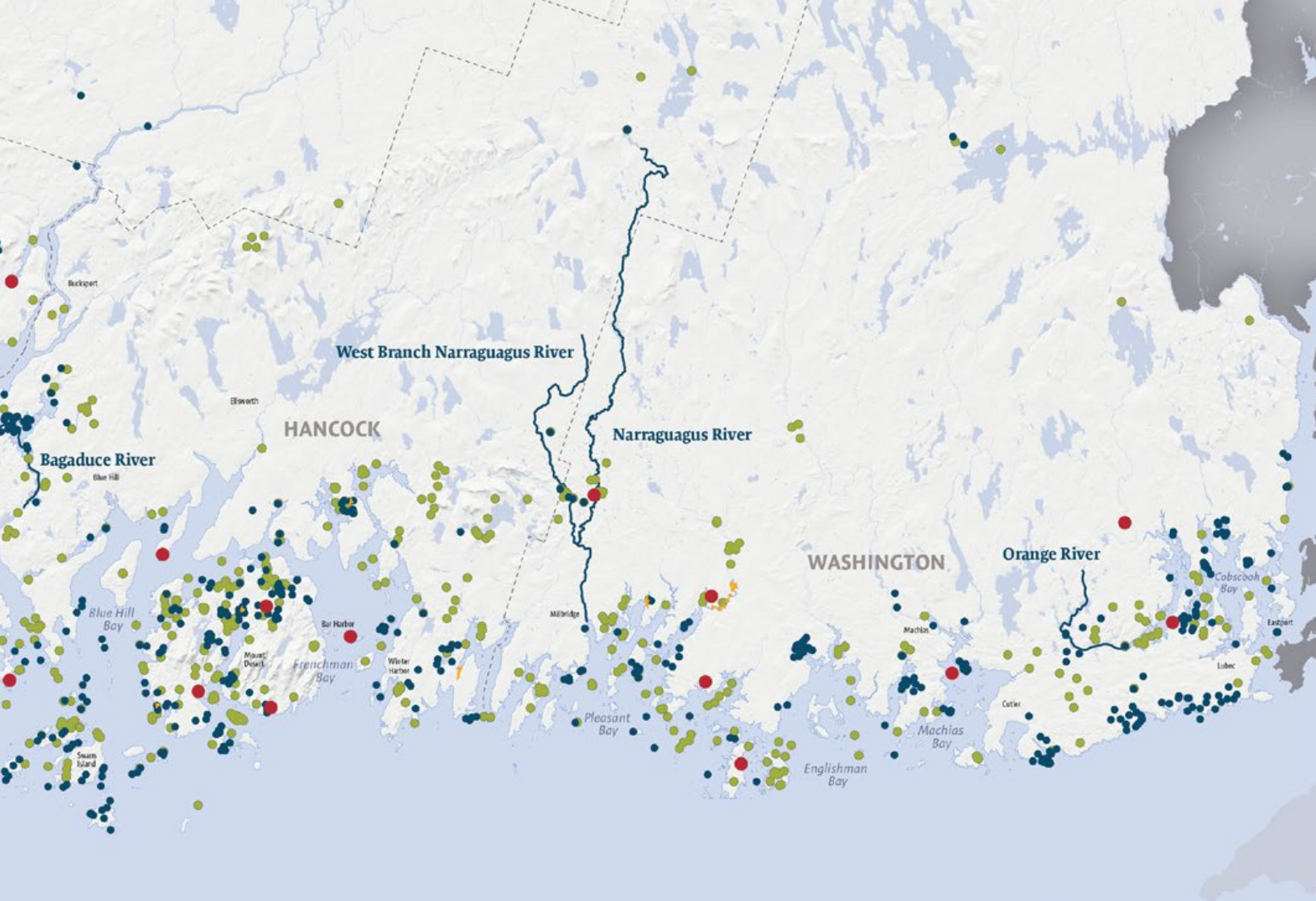
Local Park Expanded

Together with the Town of Southwest Harbor, we expanded Chris's Pond, a treasured local park, by three additional acres, enhancing access and green space in the downtown area. This milestone reflects years of collaboration, community input, and a shared vision to enhance public spaces and preserve natural beauty for generations to come.



Bold Coast Wilderness Preserve

In partnership with Northeast Wilderness Trust, MCHT conserved one of the last expansive forests on the Eastern Seaboard (**over 2,000 acres**) to establish the Bold Coast Wilderness Preserve in Downeast Maine. This landscape-scale effort enhances the ecological value of neighboring conserved lands; increases habitat connectivity for plant and animal communities; and enables public access for hunting, fishing, and quiet recreation.



L.L.Bean Grants

We administered a total of **\$65,000** to nine land trusts across Maine for priority conservation projects through the L.L.Bean Maine Land Trust Grant Program. Funds supported Downeast Lakes Land Trust in completing a trail extension on the **2,015-acre** Lakeville Forest Tract on Sysladobsis Lake; Loon Echo Land Trust in completing restoration work on heavily used trails at southern Maine's Pleasant Mountain; and seven other projects.



Climate Resilience Grants

MCHT awarded **\$4.1 million** in Climate Resilience Conservation Fund (CRCF) funds (part of a \$69 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to support land conservation projects across much of Maine. One of the first CRCF grants was awarded to Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust to protect Hart Woods, a **551-acre** connected block of forest spanning from Bremen to Bristol that provides strong freshwater and land-based climate resilience benefits.

Read more stories at
mcht.org/impact-stories

2025 conservation impacts at a glance



35+
miles of freshwater
and saltwater
shoreline protected



26
places permanently
protected



16
partnership
projects completed



2
islands protected



16
new places permanently
open to the public



≈10,000
acres conserved



11
coastal river and
tidal marsh projects
completed



39
acres added to four
existing preserves

Total impact since 1970



200,000+
acres conserved
with partners



168
MCHT preserves
open to the public



341
coastal islands
protected with
partners



106
miles of MCHT
trail to explore

What does community conservation look like?

Here's one example:

We distributed **16,933** pounds of fresh produce from Erickson Fields and **204** pounds of ground beef from Aldermere Farm to area food assistance sites.

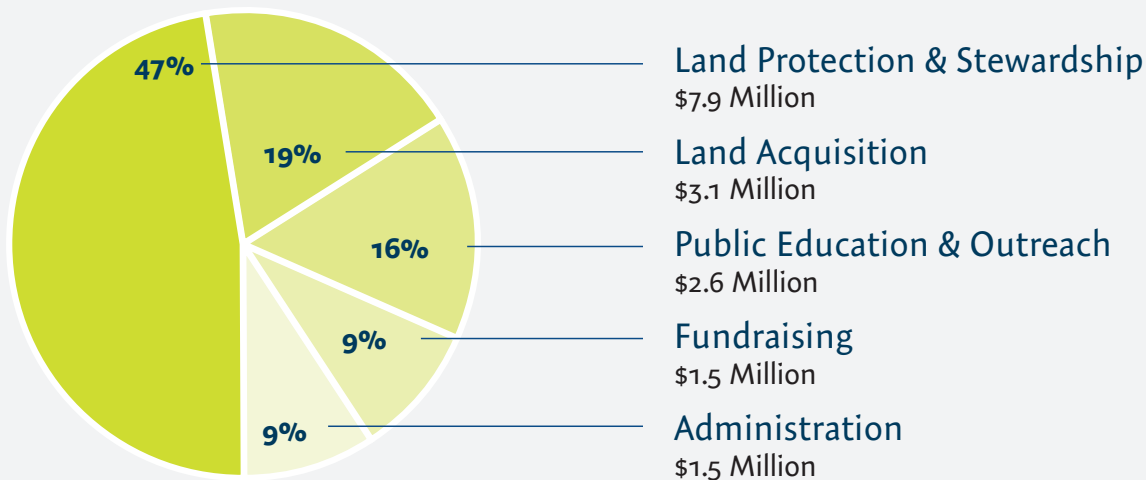


82% of your gifts directly supported conservation

Every conserved acre, restored marsh, and protected shoreline highlighted in this report was made possible by people who care deeply about Maine. For every \$10 MCHT spent in 2025, \$8 went directly to protecting and caring for coastal lands and islands, safeguarding critical wildlife habitat, and connecting people to the coast.

Donations

3,384 donors gave to MCHT in 2025, with **372** giving for the first time. (If you're a new donor, welcome to MCHT! We're so glad you're here.) **432 donors** gave monthly, which helps us be more proactive and strategic in our conservation work. We're grateful to have **797 donors** giving at *The President's Circle* level.



The above represents a summary of how your generous contributions were spent in 2025 and the source of funds applied. Our 2025 audited financial statements and Form 990 will be available later in 2026. A complete set of MCHT's 2024 financial statements are available at mcht.org/resources/financials.

Where do these funds come from?

- Private restricted contributions & grants (40%)
- Investment draw (28%)
- Annual fund (20%)
- Public restricted grants (11%)
- Other revenue (1%)



"I was drawn to Maine Coast Heritage Trust because they embody the meaning of community conservation and I wanted to give as much as I could and to work with the amazing people who make it happen."

Alix Hopkins
Council member, *President's Circle* donor,
and volunteer

Our dedicated volunteers

Our board of directors, advisory council, and volunteer committees continue to grow with passionate people who bring both their dedication and expertise to help MCHT achieve its mission. We thank them for their commitment to conservation, their invaluable guidance, and their partnership in advancing our work.

Be Part of the Movement

It's going to take all of us to build resilience for Maine's lands, waters, and communities in a changing climate. Whether you're contributing to our annual fund, participating in a special project, or making the Maine coast your legacy as part of The Legacy Circle, there are so many ways to get involved and protect the coast in perpetuity.

Learn more at

mcht.org/get-involved
