Voices for Nature

Buck O’Herin

Three years ago our motivation for merging was to become more sustainable, more effective, and to protect more land. To get there, we created a “road map.” We also created a framework of values and practices—a “culture document” to assist us in building a healthy and collaborative organization, and to ensure that all voices would be heard. Is there a relationship between knitting our organizations together and more effectively knitting the landscape together? I think so.

As we conserve land and the corridors connecting them, how do we ensure that we can hear the stories of these places? Where do bobcats den? What waterways do otter and mink need? Where do great blue herons nest? Can wildlife get from one area to another to maintain viable populations? Becoming conversant with the landscape and the lives of other species takes time and all of our senses—especially observation. We need to develop a “culture document” of sorts to ensure that we can hear these vital stories.

Author Gary Nabhan tells the story of a 20th century Tohono O’odham man from the Arizona desert whose four-year old grandson has never spoken. He wants to help the boy talk so he kills and cooks a loquacious mockingbird and feeds it to the boy. The flesh and qualities of this talkative bird become part of the boy. The story seems irrational to western minds but for the Tohono O’odham whose stories have flowed from the land for generations, this solution arises from relationship and context.

For all cultures, living in close contact with the natural world does not guarantee a balanced relationship, but it does result in more cohesion between people and a place. Caring and understanding comes from connection. We are excited to join with the people and voices of Medomak Valley Land Trust to further the conservation and education work vital to all lives in our region. As my term as board chair begins I look forward to the work of keeping us all connected.
A year ago I was searching for change.

Change of address. Change of job. Change of career. The problem was I didn’t know how to make that change happen. Fortunately, during this quest for change, I had the opportunity to explore the vast natural playgrounds of the west coast via a road trip from San Diego, CA to Bellingham, WA. Adventures in Joshua Tree, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Olympic National Park, and a spectacular day at Mt. Baker in the Northern Cascades provided me with endless amounts of clarity, inspiration, and confidence. Upon returning home from that trip, I was more motivated than ever to make change happen. Three months later, I accepted the opportunity to serve as one of Midcoast Conservancy’s AmeriCorps Outdoor Adventure Members. Change accomplished.

Or so I thought. Little did I know that the real change was just beginning.

The idea that adventures in nature empower humans isn’t a new one. It is, however, an important one.

Thanks to the partnership between Midcoast Conservancy and AmeriCorps, as well as your ongoing support, positive change is impacting hundreds of students in rural Maine. The catalyst of this change: outdoor adventure—the same catalyst that empowered my change.

The idea that adventures in nature empower humans isn’t a new one. It is, however, an important one. There is so much research that shows how time in nature helps children build confidence, enhances their creativity, heightens their level of empathy, gives them a sense of belonging and offers them opportunities to lead an active life, along with many other benefits. The more positive experiences children have in nature, the stronger their connection to it grows. This connection to nature eventually leads to caring for nature, which in turn leads to protecting it. Therefore, it’s safe to say that nature is essential to children, and children are essential to nature.
During our Outdoor Adventure Programming at schools, I see these facts come to realization in front of my eyes, and I must say, it’s much more powerful, inspiring, and memorable than reading a book or research paper!

I’ll certainly never forget my time with a seventh grader named Alyssa. When I first met Alyssa in the fall during our fat tire bike programming, she was nervous and uncertain about participating. She told me she wasn’t super confident about biking, especially on trails at Hidden Valley, because she believes she is a clumsy person and she had never ridden a bike before. Fast forward two weeks later and after practicing persistently (while also having loads of fun), Alyssa rode a bike independently for the first time in her life. Her burst of giggles and excitement were contagious, and her sense of pride was radiant! The next week at Hidden Valley, Alyssa was, “ecstatic” to be able to practice riding on an actual trail.

Watching her ride down the trail by herself was amazing! The cherry on top: when we were walking back to the barn Alyssa proudly told me, “When I grow up I want to build a trail in my town so others can enjoy nature like this!” By providing Alyssa the opportunity to learn how to bike, she was able to have a positive experience in nature that inspired her to be a steward of it in the future.

To make this story even sweeter, three months after biking with Alyssa, I was back at her school for cross-country ski programming. The self-proclaimed clumsy Alyssa was more confident than ever being on skis for the first time. When I noted the change, she said, “This program has definitely made me more confident. I can do things I never thought I would be able to do! It’s even inspired my inner tree hugger! Every day, I want to plant another tree and do stuff outdoors in nature.” Her favorite part of the program: that it opened up possibilities and allowed her to participate in something that makes her and others around her happy. In fact, she ended our conversation by saying, “In the future, I want to give kids the opportunity to bike, ski, and explore nature.”

Me too, Alyssa, me too.

With your generous help and support, we can continue to positively create change in the lives of children in rural Maine through outdoor adventure and empower them through a renewed connection to nature.

AND JUST LIKE THESE CHILDREN, MAY WE ALL BE EMPOWERED BY NATURE. AND, TOGETHER, MAY WE FOREVER EMPOWER NATURE.
It is with great pleasure that we welcome the staff, volunteers and supporters of Medomak Valley Land Trust to the Midcoast Conservancy family.

We have been anticipating this moment for quite some time and in the coming months there will be ample opportunities to gather, learn, play and work together to protect what is important to all of us: clean water, lands for wild species and getting outdoors and active.

We are eager to become familiar with the people and places of the Medomak Valley watershed and to introduce our Medomak supporters to new places to explore in this beautiful part of Maine.

Within these pages you will see how we are putting your generous support to work. Part of this work is creating the next generation of people like you who will take care of what you love. It is an honor to do this work on your behalf.

Jody Jones
Executive Director

Merger committee: (F) Daniel Ungier, Jody Jones, Laurie Howarth, Buck O’Herin. (B) Sally Butler, Carolyn Gabbe, Carole Cifrino, Susan Morris, Susan Russell, John Atwood.
Those of us who live, work, and play in Maine come here—or stay here—because of our connection to this place. Each of us forms our own deep connections with the lands, waters, and living beings. Whether it’s snow falling on the trees as you hike a familiar trail, a sunset across Damariscotta Lake or the Sheepscot River, or a chickadee talking with you from a tree, this planet is the reason we’re all here, and it sustains us on all levels.

Midcoast Conservancy’s recent re-organization to align water and land protection speaks to that understanding. We, and our funding organizations, have done cutting edge work on both, protecting over 12,000 acres of land, preventing the spread of aquatic invasives, and monitoring water quality. Integrating the staff and volunteers who work on land and water protection allows us to think differently about how the two are connected, for example, by what’s required to support habitat for Atlantic salmon. The Sheepscot River’s health depends intimately on what surrounds it, and what feeds into it.

The Whanganaui river in New Zealand gained status as a legal entity in 2017, with the same legal rights as a human. At the same time, two (human) guardians were appointed to act on behalf of the river. Shortly thereafter, the Ganges and Yamuna rivers in India were granted status as legal entities, citing the Whanganaui river case. The Wabenaki tribes that lived in Maine long before Europeans arrived used the rivers for sustenance and transport; the Penobscot today still see themselves as indistinguishable from the river of their heritage.

What slice of the earth are you a custodian of?

—Wendell Berry
If Fish Could Talk

Maranda Nemeth

Every spring, when the temperatures rise and rivers are flowing from the thaw of the winter, sea-run fish sense the change and migrate up from the ocean, armed only with instincts to reach the spot where they were born. The 12 native species of sea-run fish of coastal Maine have remarkably evolved to move in between the freshwater habitats inland and the salt water habitats of the ocean. In their travels up river, the fish have no control of what lies ahead. But what if they could talk to us? What would they say?

Sea-run fish know only that their purpose is to survive and to reach their spawning grounds which are freshwater reaches beyond the estuary. Atlantic salmon, blueback herring, and lamprey are swimming toward cool water and riffle habitats; alewives toward warm, shallow lakes. The biological call to carry their genetics forward to the next generation is their drive. I can only wonder what fish think as they approach a dam or a perched culvert, impelled to keep swimming in the face of a complete barrier. Talk about hitting a wall! We do know that when a fish does reach a barrier, they give it their best to swim through. If they exert all their energy, Atlantic salmon can swim up to 16 feet/second and river herring up to 12 feet/second, but only for a certain distance. However, if the barrier is impassable, the fish will swim round and round and wait at its base. Most will expend their energy and perish in this waiting game; for the few that make it past that barrier, there are more ahead. If a fish could talk, I bet they would beg for help.

Across our Sheepscot River, Medomak River and Damariscotta Lake watersheds, there are over 230 barriers blocking or slowing sea-run fish from reaching their critical habitat. We define a barrier as either a dam, undersized culvert, or a natural barrier such as a beaver dam or impassable waterfall. Each barrier takes a toll on the energy reserves the fish has built up over years; for fish that do make it to their spawning ground, fewer successfully reproduce because their energy is spent. With the presence of barriers and declined sea-run fish populations, we see algae blooms in the lakes, fewer freshwater mussels, and less river herring to harvest in support of the economy. Sea-run fish are inextricably linked to the entire ecosystem.

This past March, the United Nations recognized the critical role of ecosystem restoration as a tool for improving environmental conditions and enhancing human communities by designating 2021–2020 is also been designated "International Year of the Salmon" by national and internal fishery agencies. Both of these global recognitions come after growing calls to put ecological restoration at the forefront. Together with your support, we are aligning our work globally by prioritizing restoration locally for a healthy and resilient coastal ecosystem. Last year, we removed a dam on the mainstem of the Sheepscot in Coopers Mills and we expect to see fish migrate without any hesitation towards the riffles upstream and the lake of Long Pond.
The Head Tide Dam Modification Project

DESIGN FOR THE HEAD TIDE DAM MODIFICATION PROJECT DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TOWN OF ALNA, ATLANTIC SALMON FEDERATION, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, AND NOAA. THE PROJECT WILL WIDEN AND DEEPEN THE LEFT OPENING WHICH WILL REDUCE THE RIVER FLOW VELOCITY IN BOTH OPENINGS AND ENSURE SAFE AND TIMELY MIGRATION FOR ALL SEA-RUN FISH. CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN THIS JULY. (LV BROWN STUDIO LLC AND INTER-FLUVE, INC.)

This year, we will modify Head Tide Dam to reduce the river flow velocity and establish a safe gateway for sea-run fish to the Sheepscot watershed. Next year, we are set to construct a fishway into Branch Pond at the top of the West Branch. We have other projects in the works at Clary Lake and Trout Brook because Atlantic salmon, alewives, and shad all deserve a comeback.

The fish in our rivers need us, and working together, we can speak for the fish.
This spring marks the end of Midcoast Conservancy’s first forest management season at the Hidden Valley Nature Center (HVNC).

We were handed the torch by founders Bambi Jones, Tracy Moskovitz, and Gary Hayward in December 2017 and I feel lucky to be part of continuing their award-winning forestry program. Last year, our Forest Management Plan at HVNC included a new round of support from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for Timber Stand Improvements or “TSI”. We resumed our work with forester Barrie Brusila of Mid-Maine Forestry and began a well-planned TSI project along Hermit Thrush Trail.

TSI goes by other names (e.g. Crop Tree Release or Forest Thinning) but the basic goal of this work is to rework a forest stand to encourage better growth of high quality trees. Previous heavy commercial harvesting at HVNC has led to crowded regeneration and low quality trees. Thinning creates more space for higher quality trees that have great potential. The major by-products of this thinning are firewood and sawlogs. We process, sell and utilize onsite the firewood; saw logs are sawn into timbers for our framing courses and stock for our funky furniture, which both provide income for our mission. Everything that is not worth removing from the forest for our use—which is likely the majority of the thinning—such as tops of trees, butts of logs and very low quality logs are left on the ground as a crucial contributor to forest health. By leaving large debris behind, we are allowing for a slower, more natural decay – the same timeline as the trees growing beside the debris. If
material is allowed to decay slowly it holds its nutrients 
(carbon included—a most crucial component of soil) 
for longer, allowing for a slower release of those nutri-
ents to the forest biology.

**Thinning to encourage the growth of high quality**

**trees is something that motivates me personally as**

**the Forest Manager.**

I see this work as the first step in a process toward 
long-term forest management. With the protection of 
HVNC by Midcoast Conservancy, I am proud to say 
that this management is forever. Even though I will 
never see the most dramatic results of the work I do 
today, it is the most exciting part in my mind. With 
your support, we have the opportunity to take the 
excellent program that was begun by HVNC’s founders 
and think about what forestry can look like hundreds of 
years from now. This may not be the simplest concept 
for us humans, but when you consider the life span of 
trees, particularly the long-lived species we are 
encouraging to grow, the concept of forever becomes 
more powerful.

The benefits of this type of management are enor-
mous. A first consideration of any landowner might 
be the future value of standing timber. If forest trees 
are allowed to fully mature before harvest, the value of 
that timber is enormously magnified. As demonstrated 
at HVNC, during the time it takes for trees to mature, 
creativity and NRCS support can offset the cost of 
management.

Setting aside timber value (because it gets plenty of air 
time!), consider the enormous benefits of long term 
forest stewardship. HVNC has 25 miles of well-maint-
tained trails that are the byproduct of forest manage-
ment and are enjoyed by more of you every year. Our 
type of selection harvest maintains a continuous can-
opy, shading the soil that facilitates water retention. 
By employing appropriate scale harvesting equipment, 
disturbance to the soil is minimized, facilitating proper 
percolation of moisture that results in clean water. As 
our trees mature, continued selection harvest will allow 
remaining trees to eventually grow into a multi- story 
canopy necessary for many native species of birds. 
Further, if a certain percentage of trees are allowed to 
fully mature and never be removed, the benefits of 
old, dead and decaying trees to a healthy forest can be 
realized. Through these practices, a forest stocked with 
old trees will be the result. There is much study lately 
on the carbon sequestration abilities of forests. Studies 
suggest that old trees accrue more volume in carbon per 
year than younger trees; long term forest management 
allows us to continue to learn.

The Hidden Valley Nature Center has the benefit of 
being nearly 1000 acres of protected land abutting large 
tracts of other undeveloped lands. Thanks to the type of 
forest management that has been ongoing for the better 
part of the past decade, numerous animals species call 
HVNC home, including otter, mink, ermine, beaver, 
barred owl, water snake, and eagle, along with signs of 
moose, bobcat and fisher. All of these animals depend 
on large tracts of healthy forest to create their habitat.

I am the current guardian for the trees at HVNC. I’m 
honored to speak on their behalf as I work to ensure we 
all benefit from their life-sustaining gifts.

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**CARBON CAPTORS**

Trees capture and store carbon. As part of their growth trees pull CO2 from the atmosphere, 
separate the carbon from oxygen and store the carbon in wood. Every year, trees add more carbon 
to their volume in growth. On an acre scale, a well-stocked and healthy forest can hold in the 
ballpark of 100 tons or more carbon in living and dead trees as well as in the soil, according to our 
forest scientist friends who are working on these calculations. As trees grow, they can be absorbing 
several thousand pounds of carbon per acre per year; during maturation they store increasingly more 
and for a long time. According to the USDA, a Northern Red Oak is capable of living up to 500 years!
For centuries we’ve been molding the landscape to fit our growth and needs as humans. Each time a house is built, or a driveway is carved into the landscape, we’re removing a piece of nature’s sponge. How can we as humans return the balance of natural processes? On Damariscotta Lake, and the Sheepscot and Medomak rivers, we live where the land and water meet, unique places with infinitely varied juxtapositions of plants, water and rocks. Each piece of this ecosystem functions to slow, store and filter water. Simply by mimicking natural systems, and using nature’s toolkit of plants and rocks, we can begin to restore nature’s sponge.

In a natural, unaltered setting, trees and forests play a critical role in creating healthy watersheds. When it rains, trees, soil and other plants act like a sponge and absorb a significant amount of water. Trees and plants provide critical ecological functions of storing and filtering water. Plants also do pollutant removal by breaking up the soil and providing a host for microbiological life, allowing for decomposition of the pollutants to take place in the soil.

Without nature’s sponge, rain and melting snow pick up and carry sediments, oils, fertilizers, pet waste, trash and other pollutants into what we drink, and where we swim and fish. This is known as nonpoint source pollution. This is pollution that comes from diffuse sources on the landscape that is carried into our surface waters. As the winter snow melts, it may unveil eroded gullies on camp roads and driveways. Instead of allowing water to race down these gullies, carrying with it the fertile soil or polluted runoff, we can slow the flow of the water by implementing best management practices, which are methods to minimize, repair or prevent pollution from nonpoint source sources. A best management practice for an erosion gully could be creating plunge pools that allow the water to slow, filter and soak back into the ground, or constructing rubber razors to divert the water back into a forested landscape.

Last year, you helped us keep 8.2 tons of pollutants from flowing into Damariscotta Lake. The federal Clean Water act grant also funded this work through cost-sharing with landowners in the Damariscotta Lake watershed. Together we corrected issues of erosion or runoff that were impacting water quality. In addition, our Youth Conservation Corp completed fourteen projects to keep runoff from entering our beloved water bodies, including planted vegetation buffers to filter and slow the flow.

We want to partner with you this year. Using nature’s toolkit, and mimicking natural systems, we can work together to filter contaminants from stormwater before they entering Damariscotta Lake, the Sheepscot River or the Medomak River. If you have potential projects, questions about our programs, or would like a free site consultation, please give us a call.

Nature is our teacher. We just have to restructure the way we work to partner with nature, not against it. With each project we complete, we can add a piece of the sponge back into the natural system.

YCC Crew installs a rubber razor.

Funding for these projects, in part, is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. This funding is administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with the EPA.
Stay up to date by following us on Facebook and checking our website. Additional information can be found at www.midcoastconservancy.org/events or by contacting us at 207-389-5150 or info@midcoastconservancy.org.

**Upcoming Events**

**May**
- May 19: Pancake Breakfast
  Alna General Store
- May 21:
  Bird Identification Hike
  Damariscotta
- May 25: Conservation Stewardship Workshop
  HVNC
- May 25: Native Plant Sale
  Midcoast Conservancy office, Edgecomb
- May 26: Wildflower Hike
  Montville

**June**
- June 1: Conservation Stewardship Workshop
  Coopers Mill
- June 5: Wildflower Hike
  Waldoboro
- June 8: Home Firewood Production Basics
  HVNC
- June 12: Restoring Atlantic Salmon Talk
  Whitefield
- June 15: Wildlife Habitat Tour
  Searsmont
- June 25–Aug. 6: Summer Writing Workshops
  Waldoboro, HVNC, Palermo

**July**
- July 5–8: Summer Timber Frame Course
  HVNC
- July 11: Member BBQ
  Jefferson
- July 13: Wildlife Habitat Tour
  Montville
- July 14: Full Moon Paddle
  HVNC
- July 20:
  Love the Lake Regatta
  Jefferson
- July 23:
  Great Blue Heron Talk
  Bath
- July 27: Midcoast Adventure Challenge
  HVNC

**August**
- August 10: Habitat Tour
  Montville
- August 11:
  Live Edge Music Festival
  HVNC
- August 14: Full Moon Paddle
  HVNC
- August 24:
  Identifying Edible and Medicinal Mushrooms
  HVNC

**September**
- September 7: Champagne on the Sheepscot
  Alna
- September 13: Full Moon Paddle
  HVNC
- September 14: Autumn Hike with NRCM
  Montville
- September 29: Race Through the Woods
  HVNC

**October**
- October 5:
  Goosepecker Trekker
  Freedom
- October 10: Full Moon Paddle
  HVNC
- October 11–14: Fall Timber Frame Course
  HVNC

**November**
- November 10:
  Wild & Scenic Film Festival
  Belfast
Trail Sections Seek Adoption
Irene Syphers

Trail Stewards are the eyes and ears of the trails. Trail Stewards are encouraged to visit their trail at least three times annually — especially after storms. Stewards keep the trails open and inviting by checking on trail structures, and by stocking maps and sign-in sheets. Issues should be reported to Irene. The time commitment associated with trail stewardship can be flexible based on the length of the trail section you have adopted—approximately 30 minutes per mile of trail. Contact Irene at (207) 389-5158 or irene@midcoastconservancy.org.

Available Stewardship Sections

1. NORTHERN HEADWATERS: MINK RUN
Montville
Be part of something BIG! The Mink Run section of trail comes in at a mere 0.3 mile of trail, but it is part of second longest continual trail in Maine: the Hills to Sea Trail from Unity to Belfast. Mink Run is centrally located in the Northern Headwaters trail network. The hike in is 0.75 miles from the Halldale Rd, Montville, trailhead. Here you will find hemlock groves, glacial erratics and babbling waterways.

2. WEST BRANCH PRESERVE: LEAN-TO LOOP
Somerville
Dive into Trail Stewarding and get to know the 1-mile Lean-to Loop. This section of trail gives you the feel of the Appalachian Trail while sticking close to home in midcoast Maine. The Lean-to Loop requires dedication to general campsite upkeep along with the trail corridor improvements. This trail is low difficulty due to the relatively flat terrain.

3. MCLAUGHLIN’S CROSSING: BIG PINES AND WOODS ROADS
Palermo
These three out-and-backs feature several points of interest including the aforementioned Big Pines; they really are a treat! In Spring 2019, Midcoast Conservancy and volunteers will work to expand the length of the Big Pines Trail. Make your mark doing on-the-ground support for creation and maintenance of this hidden gem. The woods roads take you out to an active beaver pond. Combined, the three trails span 1.3 mile.

4. SWEETGRASS WINERY TRAIL
Union
Maintenance on this property offers an opportunity to steward 1 mile of trail clean of debris and finish with a glass of wine at Sweetgrass Winery. These farmland fields and forests are nestled on a ridge separating the watershed of the Medomak and St. George Rivers.
Buy Land, they’re not making it anymore! – Mark Twain

Joan Ray

While there’s debate about what Mark Twain actually said, nevertheless a century ago Twain recognized that there’s a limited amount of land, and his contemporary John Muir and others advocated for preserving some of the nation’s most spectacular lands in the newly created national park system. Anticipating the threat of development on a much smaller scale than today’s, they recognized that preserved land was critically important for animal habitat, as well as places for people to hike, study nature, and perhaps most importantly, renew their souls.

Today, we are faced with the prospect of rapid development of our beloved midcoast Maine. Maine has the smallest percentage of federal and state protected lands east of the Mississippi. Land trusts have stepped up to ensure that there will always be wild places for wildlife and people to thrive. Midcoast Conservancy has conserved over 12,250 acres of land, and with new staff and resources we aim to accelerate the pace of conservation.

While Twain advocated buying land, this is often not feasible for a small non-profit. Luckily we have scores of people who understand how important conservation is, and who want to find out how to conserve their land. Midcoast Conservancy protects land through two methods: actual ownership of land (a preserve), or through a “conservation easement”, where the landowner continues to own the property but gives up the right to develop all or part of it. The structure of an easement is flexible to adapt to the particular needs and desires of the easement donor, often stipulating sustainable forestry or agriculture may continue or that a limited number of house lots are allowed. The conserved land remains privately owned and may be sold or passed down to heirs, with the conservation protections that were placed on the property continuing through all future owners, in perpetuity. If you would like to find out more about conserving your land, we are here to help. Contact either Anna Fiedler or Joan Ray.
New Guardians of Nature at Midcoast Conservancy

Chris Massi

Chris Massi is Midcoast Conservancy’s first Director of Development! Chris is a long-time conservationist with over twenty-five years of fundraising experience. Until coming to Midcoast Conservancy, Chris ran the Development and Alumni Relations Office on an interim basis for a university in Ireland; before that, he worked with the Riverlife Task Force in western Pennsylvania, where he led the fundraising and finance operations for a riverfront renewal project. Through partnerships with local citizens, corporations, foundations, and the state and federal government, this effort brought new life – and protections – to nine miles of neglected urban riverfront. Chris and his wife Martha Sullivan have a home on the Eastern Shore of Maryland near the Chesapeake Bay and Chris has a long family history in New England.

Addie Halligan

Addie Halligan is our new Water Resources Manager. Addie comes to Midcoast Conservancy with a background in stormwater and landscape design. She received her Masters in Ecological Landscape Design from the Conway School in 2017. Addie is passionate about hiking, swimming, all of the outdoors, and sees the coast of Maine as the perfect canvas for working, living, and building community.

Joan Ray

Joan Ray came to Midcoast Conservancy after the merger with Medomak Valley Land Trust, having served as MVLT’s Land Conservation & Stewardship Director for ten years. After graduating from Colby College and then from Boston University, Joan lived in Boulder, Colorado where she worked in the high-tech industry and volunteered for numerous different conservation organizations. Joan believes in the importance of protecting land to ensure that the things we care about remain into the future – land to hike on, places for animals to migrate and breed, and clean water to support our local fisheries.

Emma Cipriani, Yasmin Libardi, Jonathon Alspach and Jade Christensen

Our AmeriCorps Outdoor Adventure team has grown. Emma Cipriani and Yasmin Libardi joined us last fall. Emma hails from southern New Jersey, graduated from the University of Vermont and served as a Peace Corps Education and Youth Development Volunteer in Mongolia. Yasmin grew up on Long Island, NY and attended college in Edinburgh, Scotland, where she earned a BSc in Psychology. After years of living and working in Scotland and Sweden, Yasmin moved to Whitefield over a year ago.

We have two Maine Conservation Corps members with us for 11 months as well. Jonathon Alspach is our Railsback MCC member focusing on Damariscotta Lake and other crucial waters and Jade Christensen is devoting her time to stewardship of your lands. Jonathon studied environmental science and ecology at Loyola University, where he worked to restore a historic calcareous fen and oak-hickory savannah in the Chicago countryside. Jade graduated from the University of Maine at Orono with a BS in Wildlife Ecology with a dual concentration in wildlife science and management and Fisheries management.
Buck O’Herin

As of January 1, Buck O’Herin has moved into the role of Board President, taking over for retiring President Susan Russell. Buck has worked in the education and conservation fields for more than 35 years. He was a board member of the Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance beginning in 1999 and was the group’s first executive director. He is a founder of the Waldo County Trails Coalition that in 2016 completed the 46-mile Hills to Sea Trail from Belfast to Unity and he is currently the part-time coordinator.

Sally Butler

Sally Butler was a frequent visitor to Maine before moving to Waldoboro along the Medomak River in 2005. A childhood in the English countryside gave her a life-long appreciation of animals and the natural world. A Radcliffe graduate with a degree in landscape design, Sally chaired her town’s Open Space Committee and served for ten years as a Conservation Commissioner upholding the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. Since settling in Waldoboro, Sally has been especially active in Medomak Valley Land Trust and has served on the board and the majority of the committees. Conserving land for wildlife habitat is of particular importance to her.

Laurie Howarth

Laurie Howarth has lived and worked in Waldoboro since 1986. She is semi-retired from a 43+ year career in veterinary medicine. She has been a board member of MVLT for the past two years and was part of the merger committee. The natural world with its animals, land, plants, and waters has been the undercurrent of her life since childhood. She has a son who recently returned to Maine to live and work. Her husband, Bill Chapman, is a boat captain working for Kieve Wavus. They share their lives with four lively dogs and love spending time at their camp on Friendship Long Island.
Damariscotta Lake — A Model of Success

Four years ago, generous donors joined with the towns of Jefferson, Newcastle and Nobleboro to help launch our first Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). Each year we’ve hired three young people who learn skills needed to stop contaminated soil from flowing into the lake. YCC has proven to be an effective model by applying landscaping practices on dozens of properties around the lake and is part of the Maine Lakes Society’s LakeSmart program. Erosion-control efforts keep excess nutrients out of the lake, protect clean water and promote a healthy food web. If you’re interested in a site visit and assessment by the Youth Conservation Corps contact Jonathon Alspach, our 2019 Railsback Fellow (207-389-5162). It’s free and if you decide a project is right for you, the only cost is for materials.

YCC Crew Leader selected

We are excited to welcome Aidan Manahan as our YCC Crew Leader this summer. Aidan brings a tremendous wealth of knowledge and is working towards his Civil Engineering degree at the University of Maine. He recently completed a class in outdoor education, has been a tutor, a deckhand operating a ship with seven sails with a crew of four, and an alpine ski racer at national and international levels.

Aidan spent many days of his childhood playing on Damariscotta Lake with his family, and more recently whitewater paddling down the Sheepscot River. He sees his position at Midcoast Conservancy as the perfect opportunity to protect the beautiful place he calls home and give back to his community. We look forward to having him on our team.

The Scoop on Hydrilla

Ever since the invasive aquatic plant hydrilla was found in Damariscotta Lake in 2009, volunteers and paid Courtesy Boat Inspectors (CBI’s) have worked to keep the harmful plants from spreading, and volunteers patrol the lake each year for potential infestations. Addie Halligan, our Water Resources Manager will be searching historic infestation sites and removing any plants she finds. Regular boat inspections, along with our annual removal work has led to no hydrilla found in two years! Boat inspectors work at launches and help owners remove plant fragments as boats come and go. Hydrilla can grow up to a foot a day when left unchecked. Boat inspectors and our volunteer “plant patrollers” are prevention heroes, ensuring hydrilla and other problem plants don’t take hold.

We are now looking for this season’s boat inspectors. Learn more on our website’s Join page, under Job Openings.

This work is supported by donors to the Railsback Legacy Fund: Thomas Fitton & Eileen Udry, Priscilla & William Watson, E. Murray Senter Charitable Trust, Joan & William Scollo, Sharon Abair & Dewey Meteer, and Howard Whitcomb & Annie Merrill.

This work is also supported by the Kieve-Wavus Endowment Fund and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Thank you!
A legacy gift to Midcoast Conservancy can provide peace of mind.

Take comfort in knowing that your generosity will last beyond your lifetime.

Contribute a larger gift than you thought possible.

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Our World, Your Legacy

The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit

– based on a Greek Proverb

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Caren Clark
Ann Dix
Marcia Drenzyk
Bill & Diane Fisher
Charlie Witherell

In Memory of Harry & Agnes Gough
Paul Gough

In Memory of Peter Kinney
Gwen Kinney & Lindy Casale

In Memory of Ben Kress
Steve Kress & Elissa Wolfson

In Memory of Norm Mackie
Cindy Mackie

Honorary Gifts

In Honor of Susan Russell
Midcoast Conservancy’s fearless first board president stepped down after three years of talented, strategic and thoughtful leadership.
We thanked her at our Annual Meeting in December and the group below gave to Midcoast Conservancy in her honor:

John & Maggie Atwood
David Wright & Carole Cifrino
Chuck & Meg Dinsmore
Wendy & Tom Eichler
Anna Fiedler & Jacob McCarthy
Louana & Ted Frois
Carolyn & Peter Gabbe
Meaghen & Tim Greene
Laurie Howard & Bill Chapman
Bambi Jones & Tracy Moskovitz
Jody Jones & Jack Witham
Buck O’Herin
Steve Patton & Lise Hanners
Mary Kate & Bob Reny
Hugh Riddleberger & Louise McIlhenny
Glenn Ritch & Lily Fessenden
Sandy & Honor Sage
Joanne & Bob Steneck
Marty & Betty Welt

In Honor of Thomas Balch
Sara Balch
Patricia Matrai & William Balch
Mariquita Morrison

In Honor of Sally Butler
Gary & Kay Campbell

In Honor of Augustus Caselden
Janet Masland & Larry Keating

In Honor of Megan Chase
Elizabeth Chase

In Honor of Lorenzo Exposito
Newcastle Realty

In Honor of Jane Farlow
The Bradford Family

In Honor of Captain A.D. Hall & Helen Hall
Marie Hall

In Honor of John Guarnaccia
Diane Cowan

In Honor of the late Bill & Margaret Judd and their grandchildren:
Kathy Stevens, David Stevens, Lara Estoff, Samara Estoff, Nathan Pudlin & Rebecca Pudlin
Diana & Paul Stevens

In Honor of Molly McCabe
Terry & Moira McCabe

In Honor of John Morris’s retirement
AIA Maine

In Honor of Steven Neill
Newcastle Realty

In Honor of Brooke Pacy
Russ & Pam Hansen

In Honor of Peace Corps Preserve
Karen Graff Scholnick

In Honor of Joanne & Bob Steneck
Janis Kerch

In Honor of the Stevens Family
(Diana and Paul, Kathy, David)
Dan Sheline & Ruth Bender

In Honor of Alison Daley Stevenson
Dan Sheline & Ruth Bender

In Honor of Allan & Barbara Sylvester
Newcastle Realty

In Honor of Marty Welt’s 75th Birthday
Chuck & Meg Dinsmore
Thomas Laurent

We apologize for those we inadvertently missed.
Please contact us with corrections at kristin@midcoastconservancy.org
Conservation Partners

The following individuals have partnered with Midcoast Conservancy through gifts of conservation land, conservation easements, by allowing access to trails, or testing water quality on their land:

Vic & Kate Ahlefeld
David Albright
Allen’s Blueberry Freezer Inc.
Patricia & Victor Ashland
Susan Beverly
Keith & Constance Bodine
Tom Boothby
Bob Brooks
Laura Buxbaum & Brian Dunn
Pat Coon & Wynne Wirth
Carolyn, Alan & Ben Cooper
Glenn Courtier
Alan & Lorna Crichton

Lincoln Academy
Lincoln County Fish & Game
Maine Audubon
Maine Coastal Observing Alliance
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Maine Department of Marine Resources
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
Maine Farmland Trust
Maine Forest Service
Maine Lakes Society
Maine Natural Areas Program
Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association
Maine Sport Outfitters
Mathieu’s Cycle & Fitness Store
Medomak Middle School
Medomak Valley High School
Mid-Maine Forestry
Miller Elementary School
Miller School
Mount View Elementary & Junior High Schools
Mount View High School
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Natural Resources Conservation Service
New England Forestry Foundation
New England Mountain Bike Association, Central Maine Chapter
Outdoor Sports Institute
Palermo Consolidated School
Prescott Memorial School

ReVision Energy
Sheepscot General Store
Sheepscot Valley Brewing Company
Sound of Perfection
Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine
Strong Machine Adventure Racing
Sun Dog Outdoor Expeditions
Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Teens To Trails
The Nature Conservancy
Tobey’s Grocery
Town of Alna
Town of Whitefield
Trail Monster Running
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Unity College
University of Maine at Orono
University of Southern Maine
Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead
Waldoboro Shellfish Committee
Walker Memorial School
Washington Lakes Association
Whitefield Elementary School
Whitefield Lions Club
Whitefield Run Club
Whitefield Trails Committee
Wilderness Medical Associates International
Wiscasset Community Center
Wiscasset Elementary School
Wiscasset Middle/High School
Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway
Photo Album

AMERICORPS

ANNUAL MEETING

BIATHLON

HVNC
Midcoast Conservancy members enjoy great benefits above and beyond knowing that you are helping us support healthy lands, waters, and communities in Midcoast Maine.

Members receive 40% discount on overnight stays at Hidden Valley Nature Center, as well as discounted fees for workshops and classes, and pay no day-use fees at HVNC. Members also receive e-news twice a month, as well as our biannual newsletter, and invites to member gatherings and events.