



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our Mission is to preserve, protect, and improve the unique ecosystems of the Bay through:

Education

Conservation & Stewardship

Research & Advocacy

Member Events

Support comes from members' tax-deductible donations and gifts.

Merrymeeting News is published seasonally by Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB), and is sent to FOMB Members and other friends of the Bay.

For more information call:
Ed Friedman
Chair of Steering Committee
666-3372



Dresden Archaeology, Wildlife and Rare Plant Site Protected

After four long years, we are within a whisker of finalizing protection for this unique parcel along the Kennebec in Dresden. Featuring world class pre-historic and historic archaeology, highest value wildlife habitat, rare plants and known variously as the Houdlette Conservation Project, the Dresden Falls Site or Archaeological Site 25.45 nearly \$600,000 has been raised to accomplish ensuring the site will remain protected and available for all Mainer's to enjoy. The property will be owned by The Archaeological Conservancy. Because multiple layers of protection serve best to ensure permanent protection in an unknown future, there is a preservation agreement with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and a conservation easement [currently in process] held by FOMB.

Donor thanks for completion of Phase Two are due: Orman Hines, the Merrymeeting Bay Trust, Land for Maine's Future, John & Petey Ambrose, Chet & Jeanne Gillis, William Waters, Donna & Chris Brent, Charles & Jennifer Baima, Bob & Diane Weggel, Susan Leiter, Tim Nason, Mike & Caryl Giggey, Kathleen McGee & Ed Friedman, Ruth Innes, Thomas Hughes, Rock Agostino & Anne Gorham-Creative Maine Taxidermy, Donna & Chris Brent, John & Robin Noyes-The Picture Framer, Judith Hunnewell, The Archaeological Conservancy, Gerry Milliken, Judith Clarke & Tom Rusk, Fields Pond Foundation, David & Nancy Barber, Tim & Sue Shepard, Kathy & Jim Bridge, the Frick Foundation, Peter Axelson, John & Susan Holt, the ADP Employee Match Program and John Ferdico.



Panorama of Dresden Falls Field.



Fish printing at Bowdoinham's Smelt Festival

Sardine Songs

Reading to the alewives, Damariscotta Mills

Sardine Songs

1
(sardine factory, Belfast)

May we be blessed by
the spirits of these fish
swimming through our world
from the world above
from the world below
rising from the depths of the future
blessing the depths of our past

2
waited all night

in the dark they
gather in the cove
nets, in the water,
nets, in the morning
torn and
gone, all gone.

Were there ever any fish?
Was there ever any sunrise?
Did we dream water full of silver our
pockets full of gold?

3

falling into the soft
sea of darkness
slowly, slowly to bed
wrap me in a blanket of fish
shining in the water like stars
like light from a million years
below some vast ocean of sky
where there is nothing
nothing to hold on to -
flashes, and then
gone

4

I am calling the stars in to me
come in through the head
come in through the chest
come in to my heart
stars fall, become
shining fish
in my body
darkness falls, becomes
cold in my body
I am cold water
becoming fish
from hot stars
becoming granite
calling the water to
come into my body

on such a cowering day

the rain is so heavy,
and the soil is subdued,

the greenery of leaf and stem
glistens and shines
a sparkling conversation

all the wet skin,
the feather and the fur
still out a'huntin
despite anything.

The rock you and I
crawl under
is no more waterproof than
our souls –

as the rains advance
and as we wonder what is next,
we are confronted with our own
survival,

who can say
if we are the fittest,

on such a cowering day.

Andrew Fiori

Stars have fallen into the water
stars have fallen into the rock
the sun enters the water
the moon enters the water
the stars enter the water
the light enters the water
fish shine like shards

5

sing a song of herring
all those sweet
sardines those
little fish those
flashes of light
in a dark world
bringing the world back
bringing the world back
to us

Gary Lawless

FOMB Preliminary 2011 Year-End Financials

While each year is different, 2011 was more atypical with activity around the Houdlette Conservation Project. From a technical perspective, FOMB was indeed a non-profit organization last year: income of \$97K, came in just shy of \$103K in cash outlays to result in a small operating loss for the year. Overall cash position remained constant and FOMB ended 2011 with \$216K of cash in our bank accounts, comparing to \$219K at yearend 2010. \$41K of our cash is restricted for use in protecting existing conservation easements.

Complementing bank cash, FOMB had an additional \$59K of liquid assets on account with Wells Fargo: equities in Calvert Social Investment vehicles with a year-end market value of \$43K and \$16K in money market funds. FOMB remains a 'passive' investor (i.e., all equity positions resulted from in-kind stock donations). Combined with cash in the bank, FOMB's total pool of liquid funds at year-end was \$275K.

Houdlette dominated fund raising efforts during 2011, and \$42K of income was related to this cause. We raised an additional \$50K for Phase 1 of the project that was paid directly from the Grantor at closing and is not reflected in our books as income/outlay. Further income of \$15K came from a Frick Foundation grant, ear marked for staffing requirements of the organization. Revenue from renewals and new memberships totaled \$16K, representing a welcome 16% increase over prior year and reversing a pattern of decline.

It should come as no surprise that Houdlette was also the leader on the expense side of the equation, and \$45K of the year's outlay consisted of conveying the first parcel in the package. An additional \$11K was incurred on behalf of Houdlette for administering the transactions (e.g. appraisals, other closing costs) and property maintenance. FOMB also assumed a \$170K short-term note to facilitate the Houdlette Phase 2 acquisition during 2011. I am pleased to report that funding has been identified to repay this obligation and the first check written in 2012 was a \$30K partial repayment.

Activity was not limited to Houdlette and numerous smaller projects, such as \$4K in legal expense to contest the Kennebec dredging, made up the bulk of remaining expenditures. As always, FOMB maintained focus on projects directly benefiting the Bay and limited our outlays for fundraising. Members continue to get a big bang for the buck supporting us. The Membership & Fundraising bucket (which includes postage for the annual appeal) represented just 3% of overall spending.

Cash Income \$97,400

Grants + Restricted Donations (Houdlette, Kennebec Dredging)...68%
 Membership Dues...17%
 Unrestricted Donations (Annual Appeal)...13%
 Other (interest income and event fees)...2%

Cash Expenses \$102,700

Conservation & Stewardship (Houdlette)...56%
 Staffing...20%
 Education, Research & Advocacy (Kennebec dredging, water quality, archaeological digs, Bay Day)...9%
 Miscellaneous, administration...10%
 Membership & Fundraising...3%
 Newsletter...2%

Respectfully submitted,

Vance Stephenson, Treasurer (retired)

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay 2011 Accomplishments

Media

Print: (Over 30 articles-US & Canada) Outings, Speaker Series, Androscoggin River Reclass, Lawsuits: Atlantic salmon ESA, St. Croix alewives, Worumbo dam, Kennebec dredging. Radio:2x (US & Canada)

Volunteers

Approximately 3600 volunteer hours (450 days)
75 volunteers

Membership

434 members (13 new members)
Speaker Series - 285 people
Outside 2011 (Paddle Series & Walks -110 people)
Newsletters -3

Grants

\$150,045 (Received & pledged): staffing & Houdlette Conservation Project

Outreach Presentations

DMR Kennebec Celebration, Augusta
Maine Maritime Museum Cruises
Wildlife Appreciation Day at the State House
Brentwood Rehabilitation Center
Ducks Unlimited
Brunswick Volunteer Fair
Wetlands Jam

Education

Two Bay Days (273 students)
School Visits (22 visits, 1036 students, 28 teachers, 12 schools)
Non-School (1,200 people)
The DaVinci- Summer Camp (45 students)
Web site updates-extensive additions to Cybrary

Conservation and Stewardship

Houdlette Conservation Project
Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition
Continuous Landowner Outreach
Ongoing Stewardship Activities

Research

Phragmites removal follow-up on the Abbagadasset River
Thwings Pt. Archaeology Dig
Assisted MDIF&W with bald eagle breeding/nest surveys
Water Quality Monitoring - 26 sites

Advocacy (postings, letters, testimony, etc)

Lawsuit-Atlantic salmon ESA listing
Lawsuit-Kennebec Dredging
Lawsuit-St. Croix Alewives
Lawsuit-Worumbo Dam Rebuild

Healthy Rivers/Healthy Gulf promoting safe fish passage
Merrymeeting Bay Wildlife Sanctuary Signs
Testimony and comments on the Androscoggin River upgrade
Fish Consumption Advisories posted
Bay Bridge Estates Overboard Discharge permit revisions

Primary Partners

Friends of Casco Bay
Town of Phippsburg
Penobscot Bay Watch
Phippsburg Shellfish Commission
Phippsburg Land Trust
Forest Ecology Network
National Environmental Law Center
Earthjustice
Friends of Kennebec Salmon
Smart Meter Safety Coalition
Bowdoin College Environmental Studies
Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Endangered Species Coalition
Androscoggin River Alliance
Maine Maritime Museum
Department of Marine Resources
Bowdoinham Public Library
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
Maine Land Trust Network
Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition
Patagonia Outlet, Freeport
Chops Point School
Environment Maine
Town of Bowdoinham
Brunswick TV 3
Deluge Entertainment



Two 'friends' enjoy excellent skiing on the Bay

From the Chair-2011 in Review

What a ride we've had this last year! FOMB became one of the busiest environmental advocacy organizations in Maine with four concurrent lawsuits in federal court whilst simultaneously making amazing headway protecting the most significant prehistoric archaeological site in Maine from the period of 4,500-9,000 years ago. Our education efforts reached probably 2,500 students and non-students and research efforts continued largely in the form of extensive water quality monitoring with continued focus on upgrading the Androscoggin. Our Speaker Series and Outings programs were reasonably well attended and as of this writing, our speaker programs are again being broadcast on Brunswick Community TV after a several year hiatus. We hope soon to have programs on the Harpswell station as well. Speaking of media, FOMB was featured in the media over thirty times last year, largely as a result of our four lawsuits [Endangered Species Act, Worumbo dam rebuild, Kennebec dredging and St. Croix alewives]. While in court we lost [though should have won] the Worumbo and dredging cases, as a member at our January annual meeting pointed out, we won in the court of public opinion, communities were thankful for our support and the defendants know they will continue to be watched. The ESA and alewife cases are still in process.

Our Land for Maine's Future [LMF] proposal for the second phase of the Dresden archaeology/rare plant project scored third highest of approximately 30 proposals. As of this writing we have raised enough money [over \$170K] to repay our loan for acquisition of the property but still have a bit more to go to meet our total costs. We are also awaiting actual payment of the LMF award, something that always takes far longer than expected. In-school volunteers made 22 visits to 12 area schools while we again had two very successful Bay Days. Hydroelectric interests interfered for the first time in three years with our Androscoggin upgrade efforts no doubt in retaliation for our suit to uphold the Endangered Species Act requiring them to stop killing Atlantic salmon. This effectively killed for 2011 any action to upgrade the Androscoggin, but our license intervention at the DEP did positively impact relicensing terms for the Bay Bridge Estates overboard discharge [60,000 gallons/day into the lower Andro] permit.

All of our accomplishments are in large part due to the incredible volunteer efforts of members [3,600 hours] and our important advocacy partners for whom we are so grateful [National Environmental Law Center attorneys Josh Kratka, Chuck Caldart, Joe Mann and Mary Rock, Earthjustice attorney Roger Fleming, our local attorneys Dave Nicholas and Bruce Merrill, and activist Doug Watts]. It is a pleasure here to also welcome our new Executive Coordinator [chosen from a field of superb candidates] Jeff DeRosa, who is coming off the summit of Mt Washington and back home [Bath] to excitedly join our family. Special thanks our wonderful Steering Committee for their continuing service and to all of you, our vital members. Thank you all!

Respectfully Submitted,

Ed Friedman, Chair

Greetings from the Exco

Growing up in Bath, my friends and I devoured everything in our path: ice cream, ball fields, pizza, playgrounds, and swimming holes. Our pursuit of the latter is how I first discovered Merrymeeting Bay. On a sunny bike ride that went longer than usual, we ran out of road at Butler Cove. This "new" place our parents never took us too was quite peculiar. After all, to us it appeared to be a lake, but tides clearly ebbed and flowed which suggested ocean. To our pleasant surprise, no ocean we ever knew provided such warm water. Thus, we responded accordingly with lake oriented activities including swimming, wrestling, and riding our bikes into the water. And we probably would have been happy calling this a lake forever if it wasn't for that large "shark" (probably a sturgeon) that jumped out of the water – a startling moment that inspired all fifteen of us rough/tough kids to sprint out of the shallows screaming for dear life. Although wrong, we were now convinced it was the ocean.

As the new Executive Coordinator of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, I am thrilled for the opportunity to eliminate confusion about the Bay. My wish is to expand our educational mission to both curious kids and adults. But it can't end at education as I don't want people to just know about the Bay. I want folks to fall in love with it and I'm excited to meet the group of dedicated members and volunteers who believe in our mission. Like all non-profit organizations, FOMB is only as strong as you allow us to be. Consequently, I will work to make our support network happy, and I will do this by matching the commitment and energy of our dedicated steering committee, members and volunteers.

To this position I am proud to bring a diverse range of experience. Here in Maine I earned a degree at USM (Geography/Anthropology). I have also served as the Dockmaster at Robinhood Marina and a TV weather-guy at WGME-13 in Portland. Outside of Maine I served for two years as the Senior Meteorologist and Fire-Team Leader for the United States' Antarctic Program (South Pole) and three other years on top of Mount Washington at the Observatory. Most recently I completed a Master of Arts in International Relations and Environmental Politics (Newcastle University, U.K.) and have spent the last 18 months back with the Observatory serving as their Programs Manager. Thus, my interests and experience are in classroom education, scientific research, non-profit management, and environmental advocacy. And yes, cold weather!

Over the coming months, I trust that you'll find me approachable and interested in your own story. So please get in touch with me! I look forward to learning from all of you.

Jeff DeRosa, Executive Coordinator

Good intent

The land I purchased borders on a small stream in the central Maine region. This small stream eventually wends its way to Unity Pond. From Unity Pond to Twenty Five Mile Stream, from Twenty Five Mile Stream to the Sebasticook River, from the Sebasticook to the mighty Kennebec River and on down to Merrymeeting Bay and shortly from there to the Gulf of Maine. I regularly sit and ponder the water that flows from here where I sit, perched on my bridge, to the Gulf of Maine. Do some of the same molecules I see roiling past my feet actually make it all the way? Are they the same when they get there? Or does the journey change them somehow. Are they evaporated, consumed....or even defiled in some manner? Perhaps sucked up to be sprayed on a garden or to quench the thirst of a weary warbler migrant. The possibilities seem and probably are endless.

This stream is in remarkable shape. It contains most if not all of its original aquatic inhabitants. I will go down in late summer, slip on a facemask and snorkel and slip into a pool downstream to observe the brook trout and minnows.

This world that they occupy is on one hand intimately familiar to me and on the other hand, wholly foreign. I cannot remain here without dying of exposure and the fish cannot leave here without doing the same. But for a brief time I get to visit them in their world and while they may not enjoy my intrusion they do seem to tolerate it....somewhat. It is not as though they have a choice. They can and do flee at my clumsy pink approach but they cannot leave the stream as I can. They are physically bound to it while I am not.

A little history is required to get this story, such as it is, in context. Long before I purchased this property a pair of three foot culverts had been installed in the stream to allow heavy trucks to access the wood lot on the far side. Over the years the culverts began to deteriorate. In 1997 beavers managed to plug the culverts solid. The results were predictable. Fifty feet of the road washed out in the spring freshet. I purchased the land in 2004. The culverts were beyond deteriorated. One had collapsed completely and the other was well on its way. The beavers were gone too, long since trapped out. Having dealt with culverts regularly in the past I was determined to see them gone and replaced by something far more permanent and fish friendly. I did some calculations and figured out the watershed size and what I needed to accommodate as far as flows. I decided whatever I put in there better have the flow capacity for a 500 year event. I wanted this bridge to be "over built". So, I began collecting materials. The first "material" was a John Deere model 510 backhoe. Weighing in at 14,000 pounds this massive backhoe would be the project workhorse. Next came stone. Great big chunks of it. I collected sixty stones from the woods out back and transported them by backhoe to the site. None weighed less than 500 pounds and most were much heavier. I ordered 12 wheeler loads of bank-run gravel. I purchased fifty pieces of granite from an old hotel foundation in Pittsfield, Maine and had them delivered via pulp truck to the end of my driveway. Then I hunted and hunted for "I" beams. Big ones. Capable of carrying a loaded 80,000 pound pulp truck across a 13 foot span. I searched the classifieds, Uncle Henry's and finally found them not two miles as the crow flies from the building site. I had the beams cut to length and delivered to the bridge site. Now I had all the building blocks for the bridge.

In August, during very low stream flows I removed the culverts from the stream bed and began building the bridge buttresses. Silt fence was employed around the construction site to limit mucking up the water. I take some small measure in pride when I tell you that the pool below was never clouded with silt. The bridge buttresses would be capped in concrete to provide a level surface for the "I" beams to rest upon. My neighbor and close friend assisted me. Another friend lent me their concrete mixer and yet another, the generator to power the mixer on site. It took far less time to construct the bridge than it did to collect the materials. For example, the backhoe took me 9 months to find. The "I" beams about 6 months. The granite took around three months to find. In all I spent nearly two years "getting ready" for the job. I could have called a contractor and in the end spent three times as much as I spent for the backhoe alone. I would have had a bridge sooner but instinct told me it would not be the right bridge, my bridge. Within three weeks or so of beginning the construction the bridge was complete with an additional three foot culvert sunk in the road bed as an overflow salvaged from the original culverts. In all, the site could handily pass a 500 year rain event with room to spare! All at the minimal cost of \$4,500. The backhoe or labor excluded.

Epilogue: To my complete amazement the bridge site has been converted. It is now a dam site. The entire span has been filled with brush, mud, rocks and leaves. The culvert, like 1997 is stuffed solid with "chewings". The dam holds back a four acre pond. At nearly six feet tall the dam is an impressive piece of REALLY old world craftsmanship. How could this be? I was just here a week ago and there was NO beaver dam. As I stare at the dam one of its engineers silently appears a short distance away. The beaver quietly regards my presence for a moment before slipping below the surface. The ripples spread and echo through the inundated alder stems and tree trunks. A pair of wood ducks explode up through the alders. Bursting into view, they wheel and disappear upstream.



Gardiner Paperboard dam blocks alewives from the Cobbosseecontee watershed

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay • Box 233 • Richmond, Maine 04357

Membership Levels

- \$1,000+ Sturgeon \$750 American Eel \$500 Wild Salmon \$250 Striped Bass
- \$100 Shad \$50 Alewife \$20 Smelt Other

Name

RR# or Street Address

Town/State/Zip

Phone

Email

- Renewal New Member Send me information about volunteer opportunities.

\$7 Enclosed for a copy of *Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Land Owners* [\$5 for book; \$2 for postage.]

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay

- Steering Committee**
- Ed Friedman, Chair (Bowdoinham)
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- Kermit Smyth 725-8420
- Executive Coordinator**
- Jeff DeRosa
- HRHG Outreach Coordinator**
- Kathleen McGee 666-3598
- Thanks to David Hansen for layout and design of this issue.*



Expert witness Randy Bailey photographs Pejepscot dam's upstream approach on the Andro



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Merrymeeting Bay Eagle Report for 2011

FOMB again collaborated with MDIFW to monitor eagle nesting and productivity in the Merrymeeting Bay vicinity during 2011. Intensive, statewide monitoring of Maine's eagle population ceased with the removal of bald eagles from Maine's list of Threatened & Endangered Species in 2009. Pilot Ed Friedman and FOMB volunteers conducted early surveys in April & May to monitor traditional nests. I flew with Ed in June to evaluate nesting success, numbers of eaglets, and search areas of suspect nesting. Our Auburn-based flight route allows monitoring of the lower Androscoggin River (below Turner) and the lower Kennebec River (downriver from Sidney) in addition to the Merrymeeting Bay itself. We monitored nesting outcomes of 36 eagle pairs this year. Successful nesting by 23 pairs (64%) yielded 38 fledgling eaglets in the region during 2011. The Kennebec River population increased to 13 pairs, but the level of 55% nesting success was lowest. Ten eaglets fledged from Kennebec River nests between Sidney and Richmond. The smaller Androscoggin River population (8 pairs) had higher nesting success (75%) but yielded only 8 fledgling eaglets between Turner and Brunswick.

Although no new eagle pairs were discovered in Merrymeeting Bay this year, it was a banner year for eagle reproduction there. Ten (67%) of the 15 eagle pairs nesting in Merrymeeting Bay nested successfully reared 21 fledgling eaglets. A set of triplets in a Woolwich nest, and the state's first record of quadruplets at a Perkins Township nest helped boost reproduction statistics. All 3 eagle pairs on Swan Island were successful in 2011 = another first! While the eagle population is not yet at carrying capacity (especially if ongoing fisheries restoration initiatives make headway), the reversal of fortunes for bald eagles in the region is quite dramatic since the low point where only 1 nesting pair remained in this region during 1979!

Capping our season during this final flight was a check we made of a nest on the Sebasticook River [joining the Kennebec at Winslow] towards the end of the alewife run in early June. In the final two miles below Benton Falls dam [now the first dam] we flush counted 35 eagles taking advantage of the plentiful fish [2.75 million alewives were passed through the fish lift at Benton this year]. Also present were many osprey but with plenty of river herring to go around, the usual osprey/eagle interactions were absent. Two weeks later there were a couple of dozen striped bass [14-40"] at the dam picking off the tail end of the blueback herring run while a seal pup learned the ropes playing catch and release with a blueback. These were the first striped bass in the area since Edwards dam was built in 1837. The natural eagle aggregation was unmatched in recent times and together the abundant wildlife provided a first-hand look at what a restored river could look like.

*Charlie Todd, Biologist
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife*