

What's Up [the Hill]?

On July 16, overlapping with our volunteer assistance to DEP in monitoring water quality on the lower Androscoggin, we rallied thirteen additional volunteers to assist the Maine Historic Preservation Commission [MHPC] in a Phase 1 archaeology survey of a target parcel associated with our Houdlette Conservation Project described in the last issue of Merrymeeting News. The core parcel in this protection effort is approximately 28 acres and labeled I in the aerial photo. Not wanting to invest in a conservation/archaeology project only to see a house built in the same field, our bridge buyer insisted the Houdlette's convey to FOMB a Sale Option for their portion of the field [II in the aerial] if he was to go ahead and facilitate protection of the 28 acres [adjacent to their property] from development. The Houdlettes thought long and hard about this and decided to sell us the time-limited Option.

We had yet to conduct any archaeology on the upper part of this field owned by the Houdlettes before on July 16 with a large crew of volunteers, transecting the entire length of the parcel with 50cm square test pits every 20 meters. Native American materials were found in over 50% of the pits, 18th century artifacts were also found and there was a very unusual spectrum of soil types present in the traverse. There should also be an 18th century foundation on the site but this was not revealed to us. Protection of this upper parcel is critical to the site integrity from archaeological, biological and aesthetic points of view.

Not only were artifacts discovered this day but also the presence in record amounts of one of Merrymeeting Bay's rare mud plants, spongy arrowhead or *Sagittaria calycina*. A later mud plant survey on August 22 revealed the following additional rare plants: Eaton's bur marigold [*Bidens eatonii*], Estuary bur marigold [*Bidens hyperborea*], Parker's pipewort [*Eriocaulon parkeri*], and Rigid



arrowhead [*Sagittaria rigida*]. The first four of these are considered species of special concern and the last one state threatened.

Thanks to Bob Weggel, Jay Robbins, Nancy and Nate Gray, Jess Murray, Chris Gutscher, Hilary Warner-Evans, Dave Halliwell, Ed Friedman, Martha and Arthur Spiess, Kent Cooper, Mary Perkins and Dave Barber who came on short noticed and worked really hard.

TO PROTECT THESE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT PARCELS ABOUT \$600,000 IS NEEDED. SO FAR THE MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION HAS SECURED ABOUT \$235,000 FROM THE LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY CONSERVANCY HAS PROMISED \$75,000, BOTH ONLY TOWARDS THE ARCHAEOLOGY COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT. FOMB HAS COMMITTED TO RAISE A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE \$290,000 BALANCE THROUGH GRANTS AND MEMBER DONATIONS. SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER WE HAVE RAISED ABOUT \$63,000. RARELY WILL YOU HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP PROTECT SUCH A RESOURCE. WE NEED YOUR HELP NOW!

PLEASE WRITE "DRESDEN" IN THE MEMO SECTION OF YOUR VERY LARGE CHECK AND SEND IT TO FOMB, P.O. BOX 233, RICHMOND, ME 04357. THANK YOU!!