

Merrymeeting News

The Newsletter of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay • P.O. Box 233 • Richmond Maine 04357

WINTER 1995

To Preserve, Protect and Improve the Natural Ecosystems of Merrymeeting Bay.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay was formed in 1975 for people who care about the Bay's future. FOMB was revitalized in 1991 and re-incorporated as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our support comes from memberships, tax-deductible donations, and grants.

Education — Much of what we do is intended to increase our own awareness and knowledge of the important ecosystems that make up Merrymeeting Bay. We strive to learn more about the interrelationship we share with the Bay's flora and fauna, and about what impact our activities have on the Bay.

Research — We work to obtain basic data about the Bay, both for our own use and for use by others, to help us make well-informed decisions.

Property Protection — As a land trust serving the communities of Bath, Woolwich, Dresden, Richmond, Bowdoinham, Topsham and Brunswick, we provide information about conservation easements to area property owners, hold land in trust, and provide long-term stewardship.

WINTER OF '95: A TIME OF RENEWAL AND RECOMMITMENT

THIS PAST WINTER has been a time of renewal and recommitment for many of us in FOMB. As the holiday season began in November and continued through December, many of us found ourselves devoting increased time to family and friends, to keeping warm, and to keeping the driveway plowed. All of which kept us from attending to some of our duties in FOMB. Nevertheless, we saw the year out with a very well-attended and warm-hearted potluck supper at the Chase Barn Chamber on the campus of Bowdoin College. Mssrs. Linwood Rideout and Maxwell Ward of Bowdoinham reminisced about their experiences on the Bay, joined by others, including Harry Prout, also of Bowdoinham. Joe Trafton of Topsham surprised everyone by announcing that he had put together a slide show for the occasion, accompanied by taped music, called "A Three-Minute Tour of Merrymeeting Bay." We sat spellbound as beautiful images of the Bay flashed by: the shoreline, the bridges, the marshes, the islands and everything else from Brunswick to Richmond — all photos taken by Joe himself as he traveled from site to site on a sunny day in his motorboat.

In January, we participated in a process initiated back in October by Maine Coast Heritage Trust to organize a statewide land trust network. Such a network would help newer trusts get their feet wet in the essentials of easement development and non-profit organization. Other helpful functions would be maintenance of standards and practices, clearinghouse activities, and statewide publicity. FOMB helped to emphasize, along with Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust, that such basic services are needed if the Kennebec River watershed is to be adequately served by its constituent land trusts. MCHT has also begun an intensive conservation planning effort in close partnership with mid-coast land trusts that would help area trusts work together. Meetings in Damariscotta have been very well attended by representatives from land trusts covering Boothbay, Bristol, Damariscotta, Medomak Valley, Pemaquid Lake, and Merrymeeting Bay. We are hopeful that such meetings will continue and will perhaps in future involve partnerships with groups that have closer ties to the Bay.

It was in January that the City of Bath's Forestry Committee solicited our management ideas for their large parcel of wooded land at Butler Head. We submitted a general six-point plan, recommending that the property remain wooded, that low-impact trails be maintained, that school groups be allowed to use the woods as a "living laboratory," and that FOMB be asked to help with further planning and activities. We were gratified to learn that our recommendations were enthusiastically welcomed.

Good news came from Ed Benedikt of Brunswick, who reported at our January board meeting that the initial phase of the Water Quality Program was virtually complete, i.e., the bibliography of all known natural resource and water quality studies pertaining to Merrymeeting Bay (over the past thirty years). The bibliography has been written on a computer spreadsheet program, which allows the information to be made available in any number of useful ways. We were very excited to hear that so much progress had been made and we looked forward to distributing the bibliography to all who would find it useful. Ed, by the way, was elected to the State Legislature in November, as a Representative from Brunswick.

Ed Friedman of Bowdoinham reported on ways to continue the Sightings project. Many grade school teachers have expressed interest in participating, using Marilyn Cole's *Sightings Log Book*. Only our own lack of a coordinator stops us from jumping into this more deeply. This would be a fun project for someone who has a little free time, involving nature watching, kids, teachers and parents. Please call if you'd like to help out.

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2ND ANNUAL MERRYMEETING BAY FAMILY BIKE-A-THON

PLEASE HELP US with our 1995 **Merrymeeting Bay Family Bike-a-Thon** to be held May 27, beginning at 9:30 a.m., at the Richmond Sauna in Richmond Corners. We will need riders, pledges of support, and volunteers.

This year four routes have been

mapped out: a 50-mile complete circuit of the Bay, a 25-mile route that crosses the Bay by boat (fun!) at Abagadasset Point, and a mountain bike trail — plus a new short route for younger kids.

Registration forms will be available at bike shops and other locales in the area, or write us at P.O. Box 233, Richmond 04357, or call 737-4282.

T-shirts will be given to each participant who pledges \$25 or more, and prizes will be given to the three riders

who bring in the largest amount in pledges.

So, get ready to have fun, bike around the Bay, and help raise money for FOMB! □

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

THROUGH THE YEAR, volunteers will be needed to help with FOMB

WINTER OF '95: RENEWAL & RECOMMITMENT

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Joe Trafton of Topsham reiterated his interest in donating an easement to FOMB. His offer led to an animated discussion, resulting in the restructuring of the Property Protection Committee. Esther Lacognata of Topsham agreed to coordinate the committee through the coming year. We are very excited that Esther has taken on this job; she is committed to environmental protection through private conservation efforts, is knowledgeable, having served in state government and as chair of the Topsham Planning Board, and is very capable in the field of group process. Her contributions on the board have already proven immeasurable.

February's bitter cold sent some of us to vacations in warmer climates — the "mild" winter notwithstanding — but we

still managed to meet with Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust, the Phippsburg Land Trust and the Cooperative Extension Service to plan a brochure that would describe natural and public sites in the area. The project will involve a lot of legwork to track down the management plans of the various state-owned properties and other sites to determine whether they allow increased public access. Volunteers will be needed to make phone calls, write descriptions, help with maps and so on. Please get in touch with us if this interests you.

In March, our Steering Committee met in Brunswick to discuss the map we are putting together under the guidance of Janet Parker of Portland and Bob BaRoss of Cape Elizabeth. The purpose of the map is to give an overview of the Bay and its tributaries on a single sheet of paper, with enough detail to be informative and designed attractively enough to be framed and displayed in the den.

Esther Lacognata announced that she had already pulled together a good group of FOMB members and staffers from Maine Coast Heritage Trust and The Nature Conservancy who would hold a meeting in late April to plan a conservation strategy and develop a team that will carry our goals forward.

In March, we recommitted ourselves to working with Nancy Coverstone of the Extension Service to further streamline our activities. As this process continues, we have asked, "Is research where our priorities should lie? Is education most important? Do we have the strength of purpose to monitor conservation easements in perpetuity? Where do membership activities and fund raising fit in? Through our work with Nancy, we have tried to come up with plans that

serve our mission and are responsive to our members. Our board members and friends have been equal to the task, offering sensible ideas, individual perspectives, and a great deal of knowledge and caring.

FOMB's winter of '95 was not without its losses. Nancy Churchill, nurturer of FOMB's revitalization in 1991, and treasurer and chairman subsequently, resigned from the board in November. As organizations grow and involve more people as time goes on, it is easy to forget that organizations come into being because of the vision and hard work of one or two individuals. Nancy provided direction, helped create a viable structure, established contacts, raised grant monies, and found the people who will take the group forward. We owe her a great deal, and will miss her initiative, confidence and ability.

Marilyn Cole of Bath also left the board in November, to devote more time to her interior decorating firm, Cameloc Designs. Marilyn began our Sightings project. Her vision was that members would record their sightings of birds, animals and wildflowers to bring people into a Ring Around the Bay. She designed and illustrated a small booklet for this purpose, which is still available. Marilyn felt that Sightings would be an ideal school project for younger kids, and that the Bath-owned Butler Head property could become a site where kids and adults would gather to share their observations. We express our appreciation for her enthusiasm and energy and wish her the best of luck.

Harbingers of spring appeared when two new members joined the board in January: Bill Hoffman of Dresden, who offered to serve as Secretary; and Vance Stephenson of Brunswick, who offered to serve as Treasurer. Both have been valuable additions to our team. □

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Merrymeeting News

is the newsletter of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, P.O. Box 233, Richmond, Maine 04357, published in the winter, spring, summer and autumn. *Merrymeeting News* is sent to all FOMB members (\$10 annually). For information call Tim Nason, Black Spruce Type/Graphics, Dresden (737-4282). FOMB welcomes donations to help pay for the cost of printing and postage.

projects. Jean Parker, our Special Events leader, has announced four events that she will need help with.

The **1995 Merrymeeting Bay Family Bike-a-Thon** will be held on Saturday, May 27. Volunteers will be needed at the registration table, to help with prizes and t-shirts, to hoist the banner and put up signs, to bring food and to help with clean-up.

The **2nd Annual Swan Island Picnic** will be held in August. Helpers will be needed with publicity, registration, food, clean-up and so on.

FOMB will again have a booth at **Common Ground Country Fair**, to be held September 22, 23 & 24 in Windsor. We will need help in setting up the booth, answering questions, passing out literature, taking memberships and donations, and in clean-up.

We plan to hold another **Pre-Christmas Potluck** sometime in December. Help will be needed in arranging speakers, getting out publicity and so on.

If you would like to help with any of these, please write or give us a call.

Many activities arise suddenly that need volunteers. Last year, we participated in a guided tour of Merrymeeting Bay sponsored by Maine Maritime Museum, a shoreline clean-up day sponsored by the Maine Island Institute, and a day-long Beacon School field trip program at the Merrymeeting Bay Wildlife Management Area. Let us know if you would like to be alerted as projects like these develop; likewise, let us know if you hear

FRIENDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY

PLEASE CALL the following steering committee members if you have a question or would like to work with Friends of Merrymeeting Bay. All of our committees welcome your assistance in developing programs. Don't be shy, call today — we are very friendly people!

STEERING COMMITTEE

Ed Benedikt, 45 Harding Road, Brunswick 04011	442-0445
Ed Friedman, RR 1, Box 1186, Bowdoinham 04006	666-3372
Bill Hoffman, RR 1, Box , Dresden 04342	737-4525
Tad Hunter, Foreside Road, Topsham 04086	729-1544
Bill Jewell, RR 1, Box 475, Woolwich 04579	443-6520
Esther Lacognata, 19 Elm Street, Topsham 04086	729-4088
Tim Nason, 15 Alexander Road, Dresden 04342	737-4282
Jean Parker, Hockomock Island, Woolwich 04579	442-0982
Vance Stephenson, 7 Brookview Drive, Brunswick 04011	443-3572
Joe Trafton, Pleasant Point, Topsham 04086	729-1734

of an event we should participate in.

Let us know, too, if you would be interested in clipping newspaper or magazine articles that pertain to the Bay. Information from these could be used as material for our newsletter and be helpful as we develop working relationships with other groups.

THE DIOXIN-FREE PAPER CHASE

IN PAST NEWSLETTERS we have outlined some of our concerns about the presence of dioxin in Merrymeeting Bay.

One of the primary sources of dioxin is the chlorine bleaching process that is used in the manufacture of paper. All Maine paper mills use this process, and produce dioxin as a byproduct.

We at FOMB have tried to find paper that has been produced without chlorine bleaching and, if possible, manufactured from recycled materials. Such paper has been hard to locate, and when it is, it sometimes comes with a kicker. For example, the Beckett Concept paper used in this newsletter, advertised to us as 100% chlorine-free, is actually "ele-

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Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, P.O. Box 233, Richmond, Maine 04357

ANNUAL DUES \$10.00 (tax deductible). Renewal Gift

I enclose \$ _____ to cover membership for _____ year(s).

I also enclose \$15 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$500

other \$ _____ as a tax-deductible donation.

NAME _____

RR#/STREET ADDRESS _____

TOWN / STATE / ZIP _____

PHONE _____

SEASONAL ADDRESS _____

I would like —

- A copy of **Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Landowners**. A check for \$5.00 is enclosed.
- A copy of **Preserving Family Lands: Essential Tax Strategies for the Landowner**. A check for \$5.00 is enclosed.
- An **FOMB T-Shirt** (lg. x-lg. xx-lg) A check for \$15.00 is enclosed.

Note: Write checks payable to FOMB. An additional donation of at least \$2.00 per order is requested to cover the cost of postage and a padded envelope.

DIOXIN-FREE PAPER

Continued from the previous page

mental chlorine-free but not secondarily chlorine-free," meaning that the virgin portion is chlorine-free, but that the recycled portion might be chlorine-bleached. Another attractive paper available in a wide range of colors and weights, Simpson Quest, is sold as chlorine-free and 100% post-consumer recycled, but also shares this problem.

Other problems associated with chlorine-free papers, so far, include higher cost, limited availability, unattractive product range, incompatibility with some laser printers, and being manufactured in Canada (Domtar Sandpiper) and Germany (Hammermill Unity DP). Certainly these are minor considerations, but they do reduce consumer acceptance.

We plan to continue to seek out recycled chlorine-free paper despite the difficulties involved; we will also accept the compromises as we yet encourage Maine papermakers to switch to chlorine-free manufacturing processes. □

Pintail



EVENTS FOR WILDLIFE WATCHERS

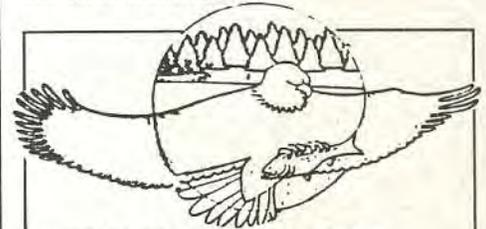
NATURE EXPLORATION activities for children in grades K through 4 are to be held by the Merrymeeting Bay Audubon Society. The first, **Build a Bird's Nest**, May 6 in North Bath, will explore how and where birds build their nests. A **Wildflower Walk in Woolwich** will take place May 20.

A **Bird-a-Thon** fund raising event will also take place on May 20. It will work much like the annual Christmas Bird Count, but be held in the warm weather and sunshine of spring. Participants will recruit pledges from neighbors, friends and relatives based upon the number of bird species seen that day.

For more information on these events, contact Nancy Chandler in Sebasco Estates at 389-1565.

The Audubon Society frequently sponsors canoe trips into Merrymeeting Bay.

Write to the Society's local chapter at P.O. Box 178, Wiscasset, ME 04578 for more information. □



FOMB T-SHIRTS

OUR COLORFUL T-SHIRTS are still available at \$15. Please send checks and a donation of \$2 to cover postage to P.O. Box 233, Richmond, ME 04357. The T-shirts are bright teal-blue Hanes Beefy-Ts, with a multi-color image on the front of an eagle in flight clutching a fish in its talons. On the back is printed "Friends of Merrymeeting Bay" in white script. Shirts are available in large, x-large and x-x-large (medium is sold out).



**FRIENDS of
MERRYMEETING BAY**

P.O. Box 233 • Richmond, Maine 04357

*Forwarding and address
correction requested.*

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