

Merrymeeting News

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

FALL 2002

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

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Support comes from members' tax-deductible donations and grants.

Education

Hands Around the Bay, Speaker Series, field trips.

Conservation & Stewardship

Protecting natural resources through private and public ownership, easements and stewardship.

Membership Events

Paddle tours of the Bay, field trips, conservation meetings, potluck suppers and shoreline clean-ups.

Research and Advocacy

Water quality, data collection, toxics, fisheries restoration.

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On-Line

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ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT CHOICE VIEW FARM IN DRESDEN

People have made the Merrymeeting Bay area home for nearly 10,000 years. Native Americans first settled in the area after the end of the last Ice Age, and they were here when European traders and homesteaders arrived in the early seventeenth century. River banks and shorelines were the focus for most of this settlement, although the character of the Bay has changed markedly from a marsh to a tidal estuary as sea level has risen over the last 10,000 years.

During July of 2002 archaeologists from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) conducted an archaeological survey of Choice View Farm by excavating about 85 test pits totaling more than 25 square meters in area. The survey's purpose was to determine what cultures, if any, built houses or made campsites along the shoreline overlooking the Bay. Given its proximity to a major river, we anticipated some prehistoric (or pre-Columbian) Native American sites, and possibly a Native American village recorded in the Eastern River vicinity in 1625. From historic records we also knew that the Cork Settlement, a short-lived European community established by Robert Temple in 1718, might be located in the vicinity.

This archaeological survey work is paid for by the Land for Maine's Future Board as part of archaeological assessment of LMFB purchases required in the legislation establishing the LMFB. Archaeological survey results are used in planning for management of the parcel, usually by avoiding archaeologically sensitive areas in future access, development, or land modification activities.

Historic Preservation Commission archaeologists, lead by John Mosher, found few historic artifacts and none could be attributed to the Cork Settlement, or to the 17th century. In fact, most historic artifacts - cut nails, pearlware



John Mosher of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission unearthing a piece of Choice View Farm's history
photo: Ed Friedman

LOCKWOOD DAM: THE NEXT STEP?

The Lockwood Hydroelectric Project, owned by Florida Power & Light Energy (FPLE), is now the lowest dam in the Kennebec River, located about 63 river miles inland from the river's mouth. Accordingly, the operation of the Lockwood project and the requirements for fish passage placed on it will directly impact the migration and persistence of Atlantic salmon, American shad, American eel, alewife, blue-back herring, and other native anadromous fish species in the Kennebec River watershed. The project is currently undergoing relicensing and the parameters established in the new license, which could last anywhere from 30 to 40 years, will have a profound impact on whether or not these native migratory fish species are ever restored to the Kennebec River Watershed.

The Atlantic Salmon Federation and our partners in the Kennebec Coalition feel strongly that the decisions and actions of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in this proceeding will have a significant impact on whether Atlantic salmon and other native migratory fish species are ever restored to their historic habitat above Ticonic Falls in Waterville. We have urged them to conduct a thorough environmental and ecological analysis of the dam and its impacts on anadromous fish species. Unfortunately, FERC has made the initial decision not to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the project, instead opting for a less comprehensive Environmental Assessment (EA). To make matters worse, FERC has also stated their intention to not even release

a draft of the EA for public comment or input of additional scientific information. We hope that they will change course on this matter.

Given its position as the lowermost barrier to fisheries migration in the Kennebec River, we have recommended that FERC pay special attention in its analysis to the number, type and locations of upstream fish passage devices that may be required in order to pass all native fish species seeking upstream passage at the project. Due to the unique configuration of the Lockwood Dam, we believe effective upstream fish passage will be inherently difficult and will require a thorough, site-specific analysis of migratory fish behavior below the project at a variety of flow conditions and seasons. Such an analysis has not been done.

We have also recommended that the Commission seriously consider the need for at least two fishways or fish lifts at the project: one at Ticonic Falls and one at the project powerhouse. The scientific literature is filled with studies and observations which show that locating a fishway or elevator well downstream of a natural falls and migratory pathway results in low passage effectiveness due to the "dead-ending" of those fish that follow their natural instinct to move upstream past the fishway and toward a natural falls. In this case, the natural migratory pathway on the Kennebec River at the Lockwood project is via the ledges at Ticonic Falls, not the powerhouse tailrace.

Our extensive observations of the Ticonic Falls ledges and those of FPLE and others since the removal of the Edwards

Dam in 1999 indicate that large numbers of migrating fish are attempting to migrate upstream via the natural migratory pathway at the Ticonic Falls ledges and thousands of these fish remain at or near the ledges for the duration of their natural migration season.

In addition to the "usual suspects" that we often refer to when we talk about anadromous fish restoration (i.e., Atlantic salmon, alewife, shad, etc.), there is the high likelihood that the endangered shortnose sturgeon inhabits the Lockwood project area on a seasonal basis. Habitat conditions in the Ticonic Falls reach, especially the deep hole directly below the Ticonic Falls ledges, appear to be suitable for shortnose sturgeon spawning and early juvenile development. Unfortunately, FPLE has conducted no field studies to determine if the species is now seasonally present in the project area.

These issues need to be fully addressed under the relicensing process. After all, the effectiveness of upstream and downstream fish passage ordered by FERC at the Lockwood project will be the major determining factor in the restoration of native anadromous fish species in the Kennebec River drainage above the river's first major falls in Waterville.

Decisions on whether or not to do a full EIS on the Lockwood Dam, or to even release the Draft EA for public comments, will be made in the coming weeks.

Stay tuned.

*John R. J. Burrows
Maine Coordinator
Atlantic Salmon Federation*

BAY DAYS, FALL 2002

On September 24th we hosted area 4th grade students for a field trip on the shores of Merrymeeting Bay. 275 students from Brunswick and Bowdoinham schools learnt about phytoplankton, fish, geology, archeology, rare plants, watersheds and a host of other topics dealing with Merrymeeting Bay. Many thanks to Andy Cutko, Ann Hammond, Anne Stires, Bill Milam, Chet Gillis, Christine Goodman, Christine Smith, Clancy Cummins, Dana Cary, Dick Nickerson, Ed Friedman, Fritz Kempner, Jean Briggs, John Cross, Karen Hahnel, Kathleen McGee, Leon Ogradnik, Libby Crosby, Meghan Kreider, Peter Milholland, Ruth Deike, Shaye Robbins, Steve Eagles, and Steve Walker. These volunteers took time from their busy schedules to share their knowledge of the Bay.

The next day Warren Whitney gave "Merrymeeting Bay, A to Z in 30 minutes" talks to a total of 100 6th graders from the Hall-Dale Middle School. These students, from Dresden, Farmingdale, and Hallowell, were studying "Life Along the Kennebec". As always, stories of enormous sturgeon lurking in the Bay were a wide-eyed attention grabber, ("no way", "cool", "would they eat you?").

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Merrymeeting News

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Merrymeeting News is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay. For information call Warren Whitney, Executive Director, at 666-3376.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MERRYMEETING BAY 2002-2003 SPEAKER SERIES

7:00 p.m., Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College, Brunswick

January 8th event held at Bridge Academy, Dresden at 7:00 p.m.

December 11th event held at 7:30pm, Cram Alumni House, Bowdoin College, 83 Federal Street, Brunswick

NOV 13 PULP, PAPER AND POLLUTION.

Michael Barden, *Maine Pulp and Paper Association*; Nick Bennett, *Natural Resources Council of Maine*; John Dieffenbacher-Krall, *Maine People's Alliance*; Tom Saviello, *International Paper*.

DEC 11 ARCHEOLOGY OF THE MERRYMEETING BAY AREA.

Arthur Spiess, *Maine Historic Preservation Commission*.

7:30 p.m. at Cram Alumni House. Pot Luck Dinner and FOMB Annual Meeting at 6:00pm.

JAN 8 BUTTERFLIES OF MAINE AND THEIR LIFE HISTORIES (at Bridge Academy in Dresden)

Christopher Livesay, *Avocational Lepidopterist*.

FEB 12 KENNEBEC: CRADLE OF THE AMERICAS: SELECTED READINGS FROM ROBERT TRISTRAM COFFIN'S NOVEL.

Frank Burroughs and Gary Lawless, *Local Authors and Publisher*.

MAR 12 BIRD SOUNDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY.

Will Broussard, *Cornell Certified Natural Sound Recordist*.

APR 9 WILD RICE COMMUNITY DYNAMICS.

John Lichter, *Bowdoin College Assistant Professor*, Julie Grinvalsky and Tim Pasakarnis, *Bowdoin College Students*.

MAY 14 THE KENNEBEC ICE INDUSTRY.

Eleanor Everson, *Ice Historian*.

Contact us at 207-666-3376 or fomb@zwi.net for more information.

CONSERVATION, DEATH AND TAXES

Of conservation, death, and taxes the later two are certain and the first an option. People decide to conserve land for many reasons. Love of the land is probably foremost but financial benefits surely run a close second.

Many of us have heard the expression "you can't take it with you when you go". Before you "go", however, you have a couple of choices. You can choose to protect the land you have loved for those that follow and you can minimize the tax burden on your heirs.

Most of us don't like to think too hard about these matters because it means looking mortality in the face and declaring ourselves ready. But lets face it, when your number is up your number is up (note the expression says "your number" not mine). Do you appreciate the open land around you? Did you as a child? For hunting, fishing, walking, skiing, watching wildlife, thinking, dog walking, farming, building a tree house, catching frogs? If you've got the land these days we can help you protect it.

As a special added incentive for land preservation (limited time only?) a number of the towns around the Bay have recently given property taxes a major hike! Woolwich a few years ago, Harpswell and Bowdoinham this year, and Richmond is digging into their surplus to cover what would otherwise be an increase. Often the State is stepping in and telling towns they are not

keeping up with current real estate values so valuations must get boosted.

In other words, we all suffer because real estate prices are aggressively (and often artificially) pushed sky high, courting the investment (and second home) markets.

In many of the protection strategies the difference between the conservation value of your land (appraised value when protected) and the full market value of the land (no restrictions) may be taken as a charitable deduction on your income taxes. Property taxes may decrease if your land is protected and your estate value may also decrease. With the recent tax increase in Bowdoinham some property taxes, particularly along the Bay, have gone up 100%. Land protection may ease this property tax burden directly and of course with the now greater difference between full market and conservation values the amount used for deductions against both income and estate should be increased.

The current competitive real estate market means more challenging times for land protection than usual. Higher taxes can provide a conservation opportunity as well.

Lots of different protection strategies exist and if you would like to discuss which might be right for you give Whit or myself a call.

Ed Friedman

TIDINGS

Europeans first encountered grasses of the *Zizania* genus in the New World, and could not immediately agree about what to call them. In the vicinity of the Great Lakes, where *Zizania palustris* grew abundantly, the French explorers, trappers, and missionaries referred to it as folle avoine--wild oats. English colonists along the Atlantic seaboard, finding a different species, *Z. aquatica*, growing in lakes, ponds, rivers, and freshwater estuaries, had the same idea, and frequently designated the plant as the water or marsh oat. The northerly habitat of the plant, its pale green color, tasseled head, long stalk, and narrow bladed leaves were no doubt responsible for this identification. A stand of *Z. aquatica* might be easily mistaken for a field of oats, were it not for the great disparity in size and, upon closer examination, the pronounced dissimilarity in the seeds of the two plants.



photo by Warren Whitney

The other name given to the plant was suggested by the fact that it grew in water, and especially by the shape and texture of its grain: wild, or Canadian, or Indian rice. The resemblance of its grain to that of the true rices was not merely a matter of appearance. It held good in the kitchen and at the table, where early Euro-Americans found it a very satisfactory substitute for cultivated rice.

Strictly speaking, oats, domestic rice, wheat, barley, rye, and corn belong, like wild rice, to the world's great family of grasses, and all of them existed as wild plants long before they were domesticated. As a general proposition, the domestic form of a plant tends to replace the wild one entirely, or to reduce its range very drastically, usually to remote areas where agriculture is impossible. Thus, despite the fact that so many men of a certain age profess to have sown them so extensively in their youth, even wild oats are not particularly wide spread or abundant, and I cannot say for certain that I have ever seen a single specimen.

The natural world, like the human one, is obsessively preoccupied with what you might call investment strategies. As a good many CEO's have recently demonstrated for us, timing is everything in investment--you've got to know when to buy and when to sell, when to scam and when to scam. The strategy of wild rice is predicated on the fact that its circumstances are liquid but its assets are not. It grows in water but has no off-shore accounts; it must raise its own seed-money, which is the only kind of money it has. Its treasury is a tempting target for fly-by-night profit-takers, against which

duck hunters provide, at best, a very limited kind of protection. It keeps on investing entirely in itself, plowing all of its assets into its redevelopment budget, which also is its pension fund. The whole enterprise goes belly-up every autumn and starts from scratch the following spring. If it were a business instead of an aquatic plant, it would be a baseball team, with its home office on Yawkey Way, adjacent to the Boston fens. Given such a history, it is perhaps understandable that the plant's investment strategy is morbidly cautious and conservative, hardly the kind of thing to attract the buckaroos on Wall Street.

To speak more plainly: wild rice is an annual. On the Bay, long mats of dead and sodden stems are drifting back and forth on every tide by mid-November. Walk along the Beach at Popham and you will find windrows of them as flotsam along the dune line. The seeds that have not been eaten by blackbirds, rails, sparrows, ducks, mice, or geese, and have not been carried by the current into water that is too deep, or washed high and dry by wave action, settle into the mud of the tideflats and spend the winter there. They are programmed not to germinate until they have spent at least three months under ooze and water that gets no warmer than 35 degrees. Once that dormancy is over, they will germinate when the water temperature climbs back up to about 45 degrees. The roots form first, then shoots, or tillers, grow up from them. There may be a few as three or four tillers per root, or as many as 50, depending on how closely the roots are spaced. They grow rapidly through the summer, and are full grown by Labor Day. It appears to me that an average stalk on Merrymeeting Bay

would be about ten feet tall, although there is considerable variation. Roughly a foot of the plant consists of its tasseled head, more properly called the inflorescence. The wild rice I have seen growing in the lakes and ponds of inland Maine is usually three or four feet shorter, and proportionately narrower in the stem.

Z. aquatica seems never to have been relied upon by human beings as a significant source of nourishment. The closely related *Z. palustris*, which grows particularly well in the Great Lakes basin, is a very different story. Its grain is not so meager as that of *Z. aquatica*, and has been an important dietary staple for at least two millennia. The Ojibway people, whom the Europeans found first in the vicinity of Lake Huron, and who drifted from there westward, to Minnesota and beyond, relied on it as the staff of life, and attached a religious importance to the rituals of its harvesting and preparation. The wild rice that we buy in the stores is of this species, and most of it is raised in the upper midwest, particularly Minnesota and Wisconsin. By far the greater portion of this has been domesticated, is grown in flooded fields, and harvested mechanically.

When a wild plant is domesticated, its investment strategy, and the whole logic of its existence, is modified. For human purposes, there are two very inconvenient things about the strategy that wild rice has evolved, and that has enabled it to survive in its harsh and unstable environment. The first of these is that its crop does not mature all at the same time. Some seeds will be ripe and ready to harvest in September; others will not be ready for another month or so. This is true even of the seeds on a single tiller.

The logic of this seems pretty clear. At any specific time, the seeds might be vulnerable to conditions of exceptionally high or low water, to an early freezing up of the lake or river, or to huge concentrations of seed-eating insects or migratory birds. So the plant creates the botanical equivalent of a balanced portfolio, timing its investment so that losses at one season can be offset by gains at another.

From a human standpoint, the second disadvantage of wild rice is that the seed “shatters” easily. “Shatter” in this sense refers to the dispersing of the seeds from the stalk. In the case of wild rice, the ripe seed falls with only the slightest disturbance of the stalk, which would leave a human harvester, unless he

were very careful and very skilled, with only the unripe seeds to harvest. The Ojibway used canoes. The paddler moved the boat ahead in a straight line; the harvester had two sticks, each a little shorter than a yardstick. With one of these, she reached out with her right hand and bent a clump of stalks carefully over the boat, then beat the stalks gently with the stick in her left hand. Then she reached out to the other side of the canoe, now using her left hand to gather and her right hand to thresh. The canoe glided ahead as she did this. It was by all accounts a delicate art, and not one easily mastered. Bend the stalks over the canoe too roughly, and your crop falls into the water. Thresh the stalks too heartily, and you get a lot of inedible green grain mixed in with harvest. Don't thresh them heartily enough, and you get no harvest at all. It must have been a very

smooth, sibilant sort of operation, the canoe ghosting along slowly through the grass, the sheaves of rice bowing into it, first from one side, then from the other.

In seeking to turn *Z. palustris* into a cultivated plant, agronomists have worked to make the grain more shatter proof and to produce a greater uniformity of maturation.

The extent of their success is indicated by the fact that wild rice is common, and relatively affordable, in our supermarkets. It is not of course entirely wild, at least in a behavioral sense; its investment strategy is now guided by an alien philosophy.

We may regret that the rice that grows so abundantly in the Bay and its tributaries is of the less usable variety, and is, on the basis of the one tiny experiment I have conducted, not worth harvesting. Or we may not. We do not find ourselves in competition with lesser creatures, who are better adapted than we are to harvesting it. I am of course thinking particularly of the ducks. The Bay will hold them from their first arrival, in September, until its flats freeze over. They harvest the rice in a long, slow, moderate, and sustainable fashion. It has been that way for millennia, from before the time of the Europeans and before the time of the people they found here. Much has been altered, but the rhythm of the *Z. aquatica* has thus far been unaffected, and it, from my own parochial and partial point of view, is as crucial to the annual rhythm of the Bay as the tides are to its diurnal one.

The paddler moved the boat ahead in a straight line; the harvester had two sticks, each a little shorter than a yardstick.

*Franklin Burroughs
Tidings is a regular feature of Merrymeeting News*

HOMELAND SECURITY

Due to our history of international conflicts over energy supplies, primarily oil, we find ourselves in these days of "homeland security" and economic downturn. On the positive side, however, we are presented with an excellent opportunity to look at how Maine, as a state, can be more self-sufficient, and economically stable. Energy consumption/production and food production are two areas that could give us a return far beyond what we invest.

Maine receives as much solar radiation in the course of a year as most of the country, making the use of solar power more than feasible. With more coastline than any state its size we have tidal energy options and along the coast and in the mountains wind power solutions abound. The sources are available in large quantities and the technologies are no longer pie-in-the-sky alternatives to CMP and FPL.

In Germany the government has determined it is in their best national interest to provide incentives for people to use and produce clean and green alternative energy. Small alternative energy producers like you or me are paid between \$0.07-.09/kwh for energy we send back into the power grid that is made from biomass or wind power. Not too bad you might think, but for electrical energy made from solar radiation (photovoltaics) we would be paid \$0.46/kwh! They have no president and vice-president in bed with the electric, coal and oil industries. No lobbyists with campaign contributions enticing Congress to trade off public health, environmental and economic benefits for increased corporate profits, large CEO salaries and stock options. Germany seems to better understand what truly provides national security.

Besides electrical generation the two other major uses for fossil fuel here are for heating and transportation. Starting tomorrow any oil fired furnace in the state and any vehicle running on diesel could begin using a biofuel or biodiesel made from soybeans or rapeseed, both crops that can be grown here. Though biodiesel does have a slightly lower BTU content than petroleum fuel it also contains no sulfur, greatly reduces unburned hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, particulate matter and other emissions while at the same time providing increased lubricity for a longer engine life. Biodiesel is non-toxic and biodegradable, supports farmers, and helps preserve farmland. Biodiesel can also be manufactured from used fryer oil as the Chewonki Foundation is doing. If people insist on continuing to eat artery-clogging Mcburgers, fries and deep fried seafood, lets put those clogged arteries to use for the common good!

Legislation in Maine should be passed that phases in alternative energy. Like many other issues that come before the Legislature, energy sustainability could start with state procurement policies. Generate the energy necessary for the running of state government through (true) alternative means (and by this I don't mean the burning of our northern forests or our toxic waste). Uses of biofuels could begin immediately and electrical generating capacities using solar and wind could be phased in a bit more slowly. Strong incentives should extend immediately to individuals, municipalities and school districts. We should have aggressive goals for achieving widespread use of these clean green alternatives, perhaps 30% in two years, 50% in four years, 75% in six years and 100% in ten years.

Here in Maine and around Merrymeeting Bay some of the best agricultural land in the country is still readily available, although the appetite to subdivide

every field into a dozen house lots is strong. These lands, both private and state, could be better used for self-sufficiency as well as economic benefit. Agricultural and other open lands provide a net gain to municipalities in that no services need be provided in exchange for their tax revenues. Agricultural lands provide for fish and wildlife habitat protection, and recreational as well as farming opportunities. Overall these factors contribute far more to quality of life in our communities than do fields of new homes.

Maine grows large quantities of potatoes, blueberries, cranberries, apples, smaller quantities of corn, wheat, etc. There are still many family farms in Maine, most of which grow a variety of foods and there remains a great deal of untapped potential.

We already have a procurement policy in Maine that requires a small percentage of foods bought by the state be from Maine. This is a good start, but we have the ability to do much better. And we can. Further, we should require that, in the beginning, a certain percentage of this food be organically grown. This percentage should get higher and mirror that of the alternative energy policy. In 25 years we should be growing 70% of our own food, and 70% of that should be organic. Great Britain has already voted to adopt a similar policy which states that 30% of agricultural land be organic and that 70% of the domestic market be organic by 2010. With all our abundance, we could easily do the same.

Some of our state departments (Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Conservation, and Agriculture) own hundreds of acres of land that is leased to farmers. Incentives should be provided for tenants to farm the lands using organic methods. Those farmers using conventional techniques should be given the opportunity to switch to organic (which takes 3 years) by reducing the lease rate on the land retroactively when organic status has been achieved.

Some of you may ask: why organic and why in Maine? Organic means no harmful pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides (many of which are derived from petroleum) into our bodies our soils and our fish and wildlife; it means more beneficial cover cropping techniques creating healthier soils. It is the only agricultural sector that is growing and is doing so at a rate of about 30% annually as more farmers and consumers recognize the benefits. Local produce of course means less energy (fossil fuel) getting to market, fresher foods that supply higher levels of nutrients, with the added benefit of knowing your food suppliers.

Energy and food are two of the population's more important commodities. Our resources are diminishing at a rapid rate. Coal and oil are not only in shorter and shorter supply they are slowly killing us. Agricultural land is going to the last and final crop, houses.

We consistently give "incentives" to corporate interests. Tens of millions in TIF's, BETR reimbursements, and bail-outs. These "incentives" have often not given us the return on investment that level of subsidy should, CEO pay scales still remain off the charts, accountability is an old fashioned concept and stockholders suffer. These "incentives" have led us to a serious budget deficit and have hampered our future.

We should be thinking long-term and invest (our tax dollars) in that which strengthens our economic base, reduces our dependence

on non-renewable and dwindling resources (which also, in the long run, lowers our cost of energy), and benefits public health and the environment.

Kathleen McGee

Resources:

- For local farmers contact: Maine Department of Agriculture, Augusta
- For local organic farmers contact: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Assoc., Unity
- For biodiesel information contact: World Energy, Boston; Frontier Energy, South China, or Ed Friedman, FOMB

SCHEDULE CHANGE:

There is a change in the schedule printed on the yellow Speaker Series card that was mailed out in early October. The November 13th event will be *Pulp, Paper and Pollution*. The reading by Frank Burroughs and Gary Lawless from Coffin's *Kennebec: Cradle of the Americas* will be on February 12th, (not November 13th). We hope you'll come to all the events!

ANNUAL MEETING

Be sure to join us for the FOMB Annual Meeting and potluck dinner at 6:00 p.m. on December 11th at the Cram Alumni House at Bowdoin College, 83 Federal Street in Brunswick.

FOMB will supply a main course and beverages. You're encouraged to bring a salad, side dish, bread, or dessert. If you can't, don't worry, there will be plenty of food! After eating we'll take care of business and then at 7:30 there will be talk on *Archeology of the Merrymeeting Bay Area* by Arthur Spiess of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. We look forward to seeing you there!

FRIENDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY
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Thank you to David Hansen for designing this issue of MMNews.

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

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS.

- \$15.00 enclosed for individual membership. \$20 Family
- \$30 Smelt \$50 Alewife \$100 Striped Bass \$250 Salmon \$500+ Sturgeon
- \$ _____ enclosed as an additional tax-deductible donation.

NAME _____

RR# OR STREET ADDRESS _____

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\$6.00 enclosed for a copy of **Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Landowners.** (\$5 for the book, \$1 for postage)

- Renewal Gift From:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

(from first page)

ceramics, and window glass - probably date to the nineteenth century and were scattered on the fields during farming activity.

We did, however, find a prehistoric archaeological site, and one that surprised us. One of the test pits overlooking a stream gully near the shore produced stone flakes, which are the byproduct of making tools like spear points and arrow heads. When more flakes and the broken edge of a spear point were recovered in the immediate vicinity, we surveyed a metric grid system over the land and dug one-meter-square test units. By the end of a week of work, we had found about 50 flakes and stone tool fragments made from gray chert, a type of stone that was used primarily during the Paleoindian period (between 12,000 and 10,000 years ago at the end of the ice age) and the Ceramic period (3,000 years ago to European contact). While we cannot be absolutely certain without further digging and more “diagnostic” specimens, based on the chipping style of the fragments of stone tools that

have been recovered, we believe the site is Paleoindian in age. In addition to this “positive” evidence, our extensive testing failed to recover any fragments of Native American ceramic pots, a usual artifact type on Ceramic period sites (hence the name).

Paleoindian sites are rare in Maine, and this would be the first one on the shores of what is now Merrymeeting Bay. The ecology of the Merrymeeting Bay area has, of course, changed dramatically since Paleoindian occupation, so we are intrigued by the questions that arise with discovery of this site.

Because further excavation of the site may answer many questions, including exactly how old the occupation is, and because excavation of the site is not complicated, we would like to run a “dig” next year that would welcome participation by Friends of Merrymeeting Bay members who might want an archaeological experience. Please contact Ed or Whit if you might be interested in participating.

John Mosher and Arthur Spiess

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FRIENDS OF
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