

FOMB Speaker Bios & Zoom Programs, 2023-2024

All talks 7:00pm on 2nd Wednesday of each month, October-May

Check www.fomb.org home page prior to each presentation for log in link detail.

October 11, 2023

Public or Private Power? Question 3

Seth Berry, Former State Representative, Co-founder: “*Our Power*”



Seth Berry

Seth Berry (he/him/his) is a Maine-based business, education and policy leader. An avowed progressive, Seth ran seven times for state legislature – winning each time in a district that voted twice for both Trump and LePage. During his service Seth was elected House Majority Leader by his peers, and chaired several top legislative committees. Seth also co-founded [Our Power](#), a Maine-based movement to replace the state’s two large, investor-owned electric utilities with a not-for-profit, consumer-owned utility that will focus on the state’s climate goals, cutting costs, and improving reliability.

For his policy achievements, Seth has received the Sierra Club Legislative Leadership Award, the Northeast Clean Energy Council’s Maine Clean Energy Champion Award, the President’s Award from the Maine Development Foundation for bipartisan leadership on jobs and workforce measures, the Maine Children’s Alliance “Giraffe” Award (given to those who “stick their necks out for kids”), the Prevention Award from the Maine Alliance to Prevent Substance Abuse, the Clean Air Award from the American Lung Association of Maine, and has been named Margaret Chase Smith Distinguished Maine Policy Fellow at the University of Maine.

Earlier in his career, Seth spent the 1990s teaching in inner-city New York, and most of the next decade teaching back home in rural Maine. He also taught graduate-level courses in education in both New York and Maine. In 1999 Berry won the Hexter Award for Excellence in Teaching from the Public Education Association, and his teaching was featured in New York City’s Best Middle Schools, published by Soho Press.

Since 2011, to make ends meet while serving in the legislature, Berry has also directed business development at [Kennebec River Biosciences](#). KRB is a Maine laboratory and business working to improve the health and sustainability of aquatic farms and fisheries worldwide.

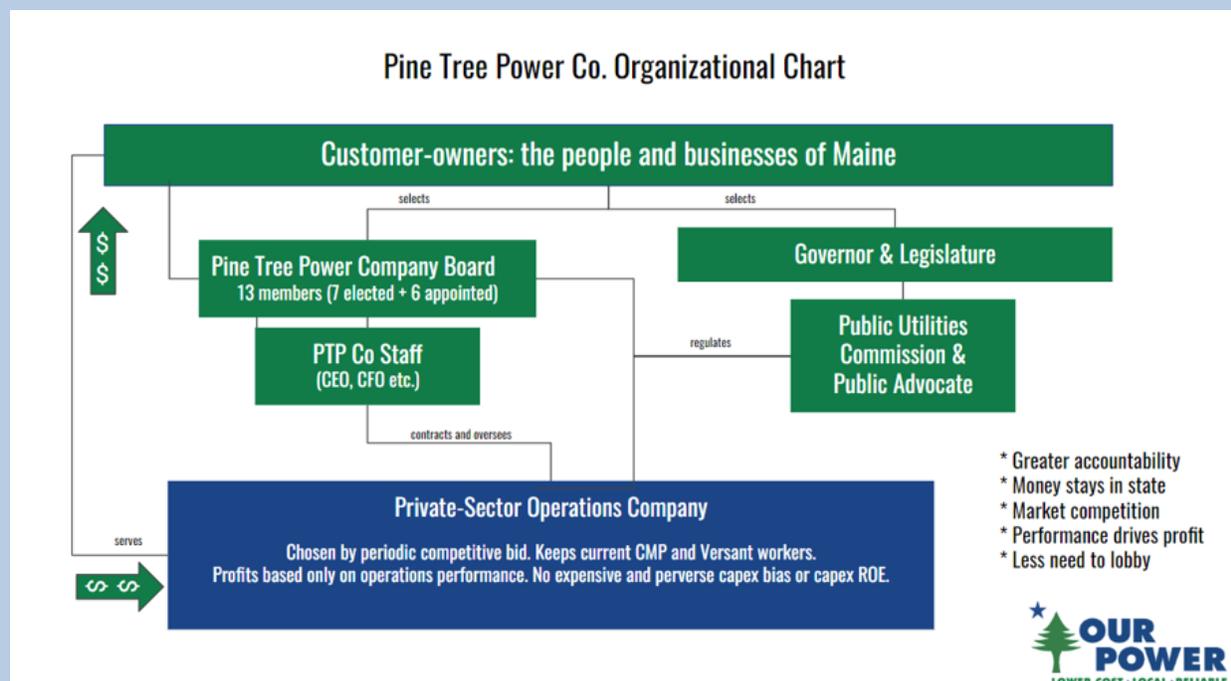
Seth holds a BA from Brown and an MA from Columbia University. He and his wife Adelaida have two bicultural sons, and live as close to the land as possible, harvesting much of their own food and firewood and using both passive and active solar for heat and to charge their zippy 2017 Chevy Bolt. To visit Adelaida's family without enlarging their carbon footprint, Seth once hitched a ride on a freighter with his ten-year-old son from Philadelphia to South America.

Get the Facts on "the Most Important Climate Vote in the U.S. this Year!"

Maine's Question 3 has been called "the most important climate vote in the U.S. this year."

So what are the facts, and how can you help?

On November 7th and before, Mainers will vote on what leading climate activist Bill McKibben has called "a model for transforming a nation and a world seeking (climate) solutions." Climate leaders across the U.S. are watching! The people-powered [Pine Tree Power](#) campaign has been endorsed by national groups like [350.org](#) and Sierra Club as well as Maine Youth for Climate Justice, Maine Climate Action Now! and others, but it also faces a multimillion-dollar ad campaign against it. Knowledge is power. Come join FOMB and former Rep. Seth Berry, co-founder of Our Power, to get the facts about Question Three on this year's ballot!



November 08, 2023

Endangered Species-Now More Than Ever!

Tara Thornton, Deputy Director, Endangered Species Coalition



Tara Thornton



Tara Thornton, Deputy Director for the [Endangered Species Coalition](#), has worked for ESC for the last seventeen years. She began as the Northeast Representative, then advanced to Program Director and now serves as Deputy Director. In this capacity, Tara supervises staff, develops ESC policy and program priorities, works with coalition partners to formulate joint strategies and tactics, and is an integral part of the ESC leadership team with a focus on organizational development.

Prior to joining ESC, Tara worked on environmental and social justice issues for twenty years. She was the Executive Director for the Military Toxics Project, a national non-profit network of neighborhood, veterans', Indigenous, peace, environmental, and other organizations representing people affected by military contamination and pollution.

Tara also help found the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW), a global coalition that campaigns for a ban on the use, transport, manufacture, sale and export of all conventional weapon systems containing uranium (usually called depleted uranium weapons). The International Coaloition also seeks health monitoring and compensation for communities affected by the use of uranium weapons and the environmental remediation of such sites.

Tara has also been a Canvass Director and worked on outreach programs for NGO's and political campaigns in New York, Virginia, South Carolina and Texas. She holds a B.S. in Communication and Political Science from Ohio University.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the [Endangered Species Act](#). Tara will discuss the many successes of the Act, the threats species still face and what we hope to accomplish for the next fifty years and beyond.

December 13, 2023

Geologic History of Merrymeeting Bay

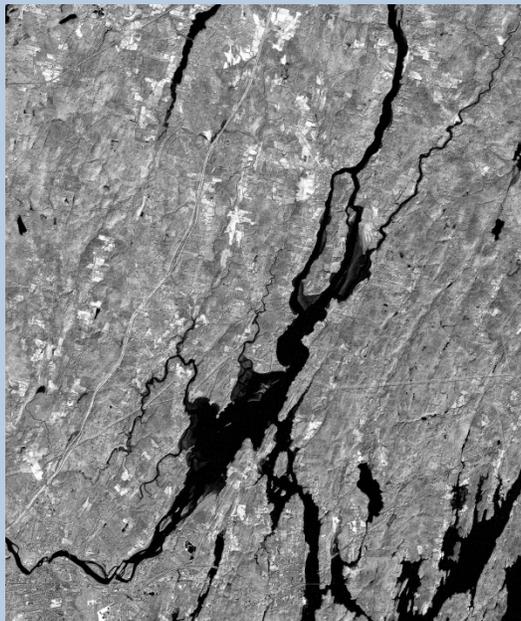
Joe Kelley, Marine Geologist



Joe Kelley

Dr. Joseph Kelley is a Maine native who was born in Portland and attended Cheverus High School. He went on to obtain a BS in geology at Boston University, and Masters and Ph. D. degrees at Lehigh University. His first professional position was as an assistant professor at the University of New Orleans. He returned to Maine in 1982 as the State Marine Geologist with the [Maine Geological Survey](#). In 1999, he joined the University of Maine as a Professor of Marine Geology where he worked for the next 20 years.

The Maine coast is geologically defined by its bedrock framework, its glacial overprint and modern wave and tidal processes. Central to the latter is the contemporary rise of sea level. This talk will show how all three elements of the coast have come to bring us what is so appreciated by the shoreline today in Merrymeeting Bay.



Merrymeeting Bay, LANDSAT image.

January 10, 2024

Archaeology from Swamps & Caves

Becca Peixotto, Field Archaeologist



Becca Peixotto

Becca Peixotto currently serves as a Project Archaeologist for [Henry M Jackson Foundation](#) in support of the [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency](#). Her graduate work focused on historical archaeology and resistance landscapes of the [Great Dismal Swamp](#). She embraces scientific methods in order to address theoretical, social and historical questions about landscapes, material culture, ideas of wilderness, and public engagement with the past. Becca is involved in several projects outside of the Dismal Swamp including the [National Geographic/Wits University Rising Star Expedition](#) which excavated the fossils of *Homo naledi* and the [Maryland Historic Trust/Archaeology Society of Maryland Biggs Ford project](#) investigating Middle and Late Woodland villages. Becca also actively supports efforts to encourage women and girls in science as an AAAS IF/THEN Ambassador. She is experienced outdoor educator (Outward Bound) with expertise in wilderness expeditions in mountain and desert environments, including backpacking and rock climbing, for youth, adults and returning veterans.

What connects the impossibly narrow passages of a cave in South Africa, an impenetrable swamp in southern Virginia, and other challenging locations? For archaeologist Dr. Becca Peixotto, the answer is the search for new understandings of our shared human history, and a sense of adventure. Join Becca as we explore the [Rising Star Cave](#) in South Africa where, in 2013, scientists uncovered 250,000 year old fossils of an ancient human relative now known as *Homo naledi*, and venture into the [Great Dismal Swamp](#) in southern Virginia to glimpse the remnants of the remarkable resistance communities who once sought refuge there. She shares her own winding path to archaeology as well as the spirit of curiosity, exploration, and risk taking that lead to ground-breaking discoveries and personal ones and let us ask new questions.

February 14, 2024

Dam Removals on the Kennebec River

John Burrows, Executive Director, U.S. Operations-Atlantic Salmon Federation



John Burrows

John R.J. Burrows is the Executive Director of U.S. Operations for the [Atlantic Salmon Federation](#) (ASF). ASF is an international non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wild Atlantic salmon and their ecosystems. John oversees ASF's restoration and conservation programs, communications, and advocacy activities in the U.S. John has been with ASF since 2000 and has worked on a variety of regulatory and policy issues, FERC hydropower relicensing, and habitat connectivity and river restoration projects, including the removal of several large dams. Under ASF's Maine Headwaters initiative, John and other ASF U.S. staff have completed more than 50 small dam removal and fish passage projects across Maine, restoring access to more than 1,200 miles of river and more than 30,000 acres of lake and pond habitat. John earned his B.A. from Gettysburg College and an M.E.S. from the Yale School of the Environment.

Atlantic salmon are a critically endangered species found only in a handful of rivers in Maine. The recovery of this iconic species will depend in great part on what happens in the next few years with four dams on the Kennebec River. John will discuss the importance of the Kennebec River to salmon recovery, and the current status of the ongoing regulatory proceedings that will determine the future of the Kennebec River, Atlantic salmon, and the further restoration of sea-run fish in the watershed for decades to come.



March 13, 2024

Biocontrol Research in Merrymeeting Bay

Hillary Peterson, Integrated Pest Management Specialist, MDACF



Hillary Peterson

Dr. Hillary Peterson is the [Integrated Pest Management](#) Specialist at the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry within the [Plant Health Programs](#). Hillary grew up in Brunswick, Maine, and received her B.S. in Biology at the University of Maine, and then her Ph.D. in Entomology at Penn State University. She has spent time working with invasive species and biocontrol in several agroecosystems including berries, tree fruit, and corn. She recently moved back to Brunswick and couldn't be happier to be back in her home community!

DACF Integrated Pest Management Specialist. Hillary Peterson will describe her work deploying two classical biological control agents for invasive species in Maine. For the invasive spotted wing drosophila (a cousin to the common fruit fly), which is extremely problematic for small fruit and berry crops, Peterson teamed up with the Fanning Lab at U. Maine to release the parasitoid *Ganaspis brasiliensis*. For the invasive black swallow-wort, an incredibly challenging to control plant that confuses monarch butterflies, Peterson worked for a second year to release and track potential establishment of *Hypena opulenta*, a species of moth from the Ukraine. The caterpillar stage of this moth only feeds on swallow-worts.



Spotted wing drosophila. Photo: [Martin Cooper](#), Wikimedia.

April 10, 2024

Conservation Challenges for Bald Eagles

**Chris DeSorbo, Director of Raptor Program, Senior Research Biologist,
Biodiversity Research Institute**



Chris DeSorbo



Photo: Logan Route

Chris DeSorbo joined [BRI](#) in 1998, and oversaw a Common Loon behavioral ecology and toxicology study in Maine's Rangeley Lakes region. As BRI expanded its mercury research to include other species, the raptor program was born. Through the program, Chris initiated what has now become the most extensive Bald Eagle sampling and banding effort in Maine's history. Recent [BRI raptor program](#) projects have emphasized various studies of migrating raptors, and using individual tracking technologies to inform conservation and management decision-making relevant to Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and other raptor species.

Chris's current projects at BRI include evaluating mercury and lead exposure in adult resident Bald Eagles and Common Loons, assessing mercury exposure and risk to North American migrant raptors, and evaluating the use of offshore wind energy areas along the Atlantic coast by migrating Peregrine Falcons and Merlins.

In addition to raptor work, Chris also oversees BRI's projects related to wildlife and solar energy development. Chris has a M.S. in Environmental Studies/Conservation Biology from Antioch University, 2007 and B.S. in Biology from UNH, 1996. His research interests include:

- Raptor toxicology, with a special emphasis on Hg
- Migration Ecology
- Raptor movement studies and applications to management and conservation decision-making
- Identification and conservation of raptor aggregation areas
- Evaluating relationships between raptors and anadromous fisheries
- Addressing conservation and management needs of Upland Sandpipers in Maine

The Bald Eagle is among the most widely recognized and most historied North American bird species. Chris will review the causes for the population decline, the subsequent recovery, and the role Maine's population played in supporting it. Chris will review some of the past and present Bald Eagle research that has occurred in Maine and elsewhere, and the challenges the species faces in the post-recovery era.

May 08, 2024

Fort Western on the Kennebec: 1628-1919

Linda Novak, Director, Old Fort Western



Linda Novak



Old Fort Western

Linda Novak is the Director of Old Fort Western. She is a graduate of the University of Maine with a BA in Anthropology. One of her earliest excavations was Fort Western in 1983 before she headed south to the College of William & Mary in VA where she earned a MA in Anthropology Specializing in Historic Archaeology. She spent eleven years in Virginia and worked for the James River Institute of Archaeology, supervising the re-cataloging of the Jamestown Ceramics, and the Collections in Yorktown including the Poor Potter Kiln Site, Yorktown Battlefield, Nelson, Smith and Ballard Houses and the Great Valley Road Archaeological Collections. She then joined Colonial Williamsburg as Assistant Conservator and then Assistant Curator of Archaeology before moving back to Maine. In 2010 she came full circle when she was hired as Director and Curator of Old Fort Western.

Join Linda Novak as she leads her Historic Interpreters in telling the history of Fort Western. Fort Western is best known as a military installation during the French and Indian War. Still, its history is much more expansive and played a significant role in Maine during the 17th and 18th Centuries and then locally until the 20th century. See how the 1628 Trading Post at Cushnoc and the Plymouth Patent evolved into the Kennebec Proprietors and how the Kennebec Proprietors proposition Massachusetts Governor William Shirley to build the Fort in 1754. See how, after Captain Howard bought the Fort, his sons Samuel and William repurposed it into a home and store. It remained the home where Captain Howard's descendants resided until the 1850s before they sold it to the Sprague Company for use as a tenement. Finally, find out how the Fort was taken through eminent domain by the City of Augusta and given to Guy P. and William H. Gannett, who renovated the garrison before giving it back to the City of Augusta to open as a museum on July 4th, 1922.

The End

Thanks for Coming!