

## Of Time and Two Rivers by Jon Eaton

Heraclitus, the philosopher of flow, pointed out that you can never dip your toe into the same river twice. On the Penobscot River I grew up with in Bangor in the 1960s, that was a good thing.

Between Millinocket and the sea, the Penobscot served as water supply and open sewer for 22 tanneries, 25 textile mills, and numerous pulp and paper mills discharging the untreated equivalent of all the domestic wastewater from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island.

Straight-piped municipal sewage provided froth for the brew. Turbid, fetid, and oxygen-starved, the river on occasion carried swirling mats of sludge or bank-to-bank suds when a bad mix in a pulp digester went overboard untreated.

And we accepted this. The look and smell of the Penobscot belonged to the established order of things. Bangor's abandoned waterfront seemed as natural as the litter that lined rural roads in those pre-Bottle Bill days. As longtime NRCM activist Bill Townsend remembers, "It was just a different world, and an awful lot of people would say, well, that's the price you pay for progress." When we weighed the 3,000 jobs provided by Great Northern Paper Company against the 500 tons of organic waste its mills flushed downstream daily, the river smelled like money.



*Improvements to the Penobscot River will restore hundreds of miles of habitat to anadromous fish - a plan of breathtaking optimism unimaginable 40 years ago.*

***"There is economic value to a quality of place.  
People want to live and work here  
because of that quality."***

***—Bill Houston, river guide***

### Turning Tide

The tide finally started turning in the late 1960s, even before the landmark Clean Water Act of 1972, but the river of time carried me away from Bangor after 1970. By 1989 I was living in Thomaston, a town on the St. George River.

That year I joined the Georges River Tidewater Association (GRTA), a group of volunteers dedicated to restoring the estuary. Though rated Class SB—swimmable and fishable—the St. George then was just another river no

one wanted to dip a toe into. Too small for big industry, it was fouled instead by domestic sewage. Shellfish harvesting was either prohibited or severely restricted on the entire 1,500 acres of clam flats lining the 8-mile channel between Thomaston and the sea.

Today Thomaston has new sewer lines and a lagoon treatment system that discharges into the river only in the winter months. The neighboring town of Warren operates a modern treatment plant and enlarged its lagoons in 2001 to receive sewage from the new state prison. The estuary is once again swimmable and fishable. The landed value of last year's clam harvest was \$3 million. The GRTA's role in bringing that about required 12 years of advocacy and a lot of vital assistance from NRCM, and the St. George is a small river.

Everything about the Penobscot River

- Continued on page 3

## Plum Creek Violations Result in Mudslides

Upon researching the Seattle-based Plum Creek's forest clearing on Kibby Mountain in Kibby Township (northwest of the Bigelow Preserve), NRCM found that Plum Creek ignored the "stop work" recommendation of an independent inspector. The logging activity led to massive erosion resulting in an unprecedented 900-foot mudslide and violated regulations designed to protect water quality and Maine forests from bad timber practices. Adding insult to injury, Plum Creek and the logging contractor, Theriault Tree Harvesting (TTH), did not even show up for a follow-up site inspection meeting with Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) officials to view the damage.

"Plum Creek is a repeat offender of Maine's timber laws and should face the consequences when they violate the rules," said NRCM Executive Director Brownie Carson. In 2006, Plum Creek was fined \$57,000 for repeatedly violating Maine's Forest Practices Act, the largest such fine that had ever been assessed in Maine.

"TTH and Plum Creek created a huge scar on a hillside in Franklin County, for which they should be fined. But this case must also be seen in the larger context of Plum Creek's poor record of performance in Maine's woods, and its unprecedented application for the largest development in Maine history, in the Moosehead Lake region," said Carson. "This could be a clear warning about how Plum Creek may behave if given a permit to develop two resorts and 1,000 house lots around Moosehead Lake."

To stay informed of the latest on the Plum Creek issue and other news, sign up for our Action Network at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org).



*Mudslide on Kibby Mountain*



Natural Resources  
Council of Maine

3 Wade Street  
Augusta, Maine 04330-6317

### CHECK YOUR LABEL!

Please call NRCM with  
address corrections  
or duplicate mailings!

NON-PROFIT  
U.S.-POSTAGE  
PAID  
BRUNSWICK, ME  
PERMIT NO. 65

## • VIEW FROM MY WINDOW •

### Thank You, Now More Than Ever

I would like to take a moment in this issue of *Maine Environment* to personally thank you for being a member of the Natural Resources Council of Maine. When times are tough, contributing to a nonprofit organization whose mission you believe in may mean sacrificing in another area. Your generosity during this time of economic challenge demonstrates just how much protecting the nature of Maine means to you.



With so much attention on the economy across the country and here in Maine, the important work of protecting our environment is not often front page news. But, because of your support, NRCM maintains sharp focus on safeguarding our clean air and clean waters, reducing the use of toxic materials, designing a 21st century energy plan, and promoting sustainable land use and forest management policies. Over the long term, effective environmental stewardship is essential for a healthy Maine economy.

NRCM's work at the Legislature, now past the half-way point this session, includes environmental issues that affect Maine's economy now and in the future. Our staff are a strong presence at the State House every day. Lawmakers rely on our research and expertise in order to make informed decisions that will serve the best interests of Maine people.

Many of the bills we are working on illustrate the critical nature of NRCM's role. I offer two examples: "An Act to Secure Maine's Energy Future" (L.D. 886) and "An Act to Provide for the Safe Collection and Recycling of Mercury-containing Lighting" (L.D. 973.)

As Advocacy Director Pete Didisheim noted in his testimony supporting LD 886, "Maine is highly vulnerable to an energy shock that could cripple our economy and disrupt lives and businesses statewide. Our heavy dependence on heating oil, and the age and inefficiency of our buildings, are setting us up for an extremely challenging future." NRCM worked with House Speaker Hannah Pingree on L.D. 886. Her bill proposes aggressive investment in energy efficiency and a comprehensive program, over a 10- to 20-year period, of retrofitting, weatherizing, sealing, and insulating Maine's homes and businesses.

L.D. 973 also relates to energy conservation (compact fluorescent light bulbs), but it addresses the need to remove even small sources of mercury from our waste stream. NRCM supports this bill, and worked with Representative Seth Berry on it, because we want to protect fish, wildlife, and our children from the toxic threat posed by mercury contamination.

Outside the legislative halls, we continue to focus on protecting the North Woods. We recently filed final comments on Plum Creek's massive Moosehead development, and will carefully consider our options after LURC casts its final vote. Your steadfast support during the lengthy (four-plus) years of this difficult case has enabled us to reduce the footprint of this plan and improve the conservation. We intend to persist in defending the integrity of the landscape in the North Woods.

Like many other families, businesses and non-profits, NRCM has felt the impact of the economic downturn. We have cut expenses in every possible way, while staying committed to the environmental advocacy that is our hallmark. You will have noticed that this newsletter is four pages instead of eight —just one example of these cuts. Please visit our website for more detail and commentary on our work. As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Throughout our 50 years protecting Maine's environment, our members have always stepped up when Maine's environment—and NRCM—have needed you most. Trying economic times like these are no exception. Thank you for your ongoing support. —*Brownie Carson, Executive Director*

## • NRCM IN ACTION •

A glimpse at where NRCM staff have been working in communities around Maine.

**Emmie Theberge**, NRCM's clean energy outreach coordinator, presented a talk about energy saving tips and ideas at the Pittsfield Regional Energy Forum in April. The Forum is an annual event that promotes energy conservation, saving money by saving energy, recycling, and more.



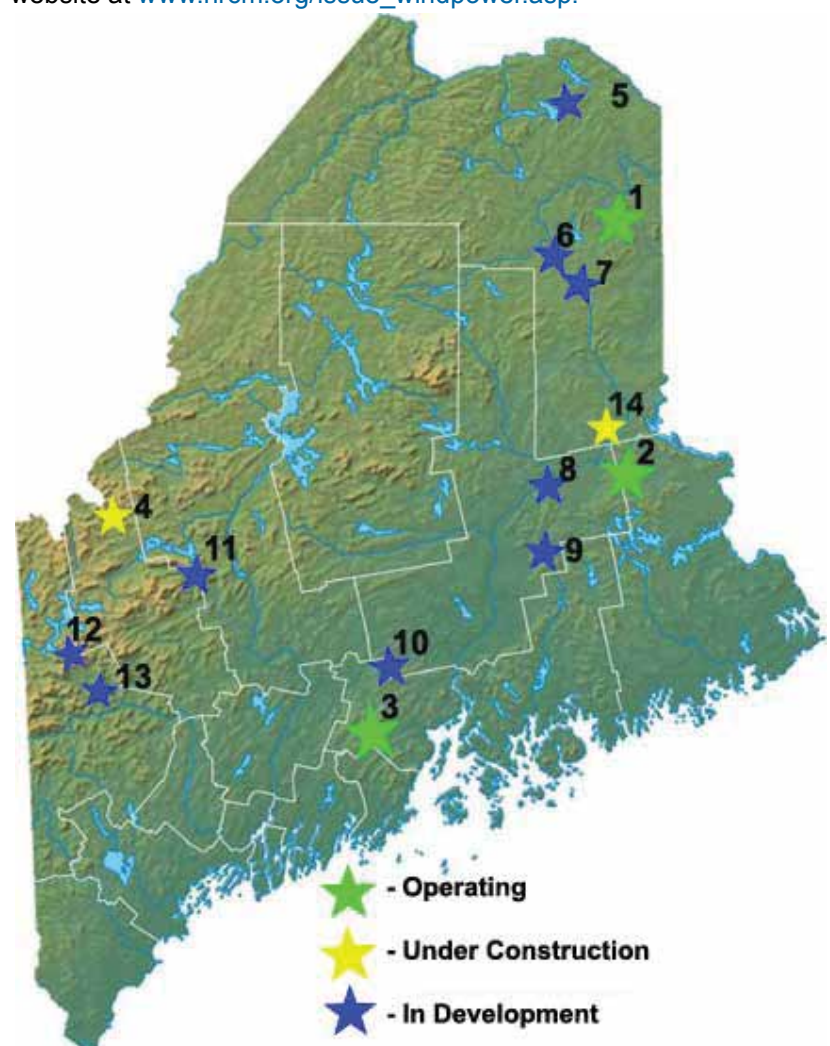
Unity College hosted **Pete Didisheim**, NRCM's advocacy director, as he presented "Protecting Maine's Environment: Greatest Hits and Lessons Learned," as part of the Mark Lapping Lecture Series. Pete provided a broad overview of some of Maine's big environmental victories and first-in-the-nation accomplishments, including NRCM's vital role in them. He gave an "inside view" of how some of these victories were won, and what they tell us about strategies for future success.

**Grants Director Gabby Rigaud** fielded questions about NRCM and our work protecting Maine's environment at the Sustainable Living Expo in Damariscotta in mid-April. This year's Expo, sponsored by the Midcoast Green Collaborative, had a special emphasis on living sustainably.



## NRCM Introduces New Maine Wind Project Map

Wind power is one of the safest sources of power for our environment and people. It's renewable, produces no emissions, and is good for our economy. Learn more about Maine wind projects, visit our new Maine Wind Project Map at our website at [www.nrcm.org/issue\\_windpower.asp](http://www.nrcm.org/issue_windpower.asp).



1. Mars Hill (Power production in megawatts: 42)
2. Stetson Ridge (57 MW)
3. Beaver Ridge, Freedom (4.5 MW)
4. Kibby Mountain (132 MW)
5. Aroostook County Wind, Future Phases (250 – 450 MW)
6. Aroostook Wind, Bridgewater Phase (350 MW)
7. Oakfield (50 MW)
8. Rollins, Lincoln (60 MW)
9. Passadumkeag Mountain, Grand Falls Twp (MW to be determined)
10. Mount Harris, Dixmont (MW to be determined)
11. Stewart Mountain, Highland Plantation (MW to be determined)
12. Record Hill, Roxbury (55 MW)
13. Longfellow, Rumford (40 – 55 MW)
14. Stetson II, Stetson (25.5 MW)

## Maine Environment

Editor / Allison Childs Wells Design / bright red bicycle design

Contributors / Judy Berk, Beth Dimond, Allison Childs Wells

Editorial Board / Judy Berk, Beth Dimond, Stacie Haines, Gretta Wark, Allison Childs Wells

Executive Director, Natural Resources Council of Maine / Everett "Brownie" Carson

President, NRCM Board of Directors / Eleanor Kinney

*Maine Environment* is provided four times a year to more than 12,000 members and supporters of the Natural Resources Council of Maine. NRCM is a Maine-based nonprofit membership organization working to protect, conserve, and restore our land, air, wildlife, and water, now and for future generations. Membership starts at \$28/year. Join online at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org).

Copyright 2009. All rights reserved.

*Maine Environment* is printed on processed chlorine-free, post-consumer recycled paper.

Please recycle this newsletter by passing it along to family, friends, or public officials, or to a doctor's office, dentist's office, school, retirement home, or library.



Natural Resources Council of Maine  
3 Wade Street, Augusta, Maine 04330-6317  
(800) 287-2345 • FAX (207) 622-4343  
[www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org)

is orders of magnitude larger, and its resurrection was never a foregone conclusion. Even as its water quality improved, conservationists fought five years in the 1980s—with NRCM leading—before defeating the Big A Dam, which would have flooded Ripogenus Gorge on the West Branch. Opposing Bangor Hydro's application for the Basin Mills Dam in Orono, which would have obliterated prime nursery habitat for thousands of salmon smolts, took eight years in the 1990s.

"Today," says Nick Bennett, staff scientist for NRCM, "the pulp and paper mills remain the greatest pollution threat to Maine's major rivers." Phosphates from the mills caused an algae bloom in the Penobscot in 2004 that stretched from Millinocket to the sea.

Another challenge is to restore the runs of alewives, blueback herring, and shad that once made the estuaries critical nursery areas for Gulf of Maine groundfish. Each spring when the river herring gathered in bays and estuaries for their runs upriver, young groundfish feasted on them. "We won't get our cod and haddock back until we restore anadromous herring to Maine's rivers," Bennett believes.

Laura Rose Day, executive director of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust (PRRT), adds that river herring are equally important to salmon. "Alewives," she says, "provide prey buffering for salmon smolts that are migrating downriver." Without alewives as sacrificial shields, too few smolts reach open sea through the gauntlet of estuarine predators.

### Breathtaking Optimism

PRRT—a coalition of NRCM, five other conservation groups, the Penobscot Indian Nation, and the hydropower company PPL Corporation—hopes to return 11 species of native sea-run fish to the Penobscot by removing the Veazie and Great Works dams and building a fish bypass for the Howland Dam. These changes, along with a new fish lift at the Milford Dam, will restore hundreds of miles of habitat to anadromous fish, just as the removal of the Edwards Dam restored river herring to the Kennebec. It's a plan of breathtaking optimism, and it would have been unimaginable 40 years ago.

River guide, activist, and fellow Bangor native Bill Houston notes that the recent Brookings Institute study of Maine's prospects confirmed what many have been saying all along. "There is economic value to a quality of place. People want to live and work here because of that quality. And there is great value in the sound of a clean, wild, free-flowing river."

—Jon Eaton, Advocacy Coordinator, Georges River Tidewater Association

## Meet Marshall Burk, NRCM's First Paid Staff Person

A good "Jeopardy" quiz show question if the category were "NRCM," would be: This person was the first paid employee for the Natural Resources Council of Maine. And the answer: "Who is Marshall Burk?"

I got to learn the answer firsthand when I had the pleasure of driving him from his home in

Winthrop to the Edmund S. Muskie Environmental Lecture at Bates College on March 25th, an event co-hosted by NRCM. After a warm greeting from Marshall and his wife, Nona, at their home, I was fascinated by story after story about the early years of NRCM. Marshall talked of dinners hosted "right here in the kitchen," with some of the founders and early supporters of the organization, including NRCM luminaries Marion Fuller Brown and Bob Patterson.

Marshall was hired by NRCM in 1964 and in the words of Bob Patterson years ago, for whom he had nothing but the highest praise, Marshall's job was to "keep us informed of what's going on over there at the State House, get out a monthly newsletter, and get out a weekly legislative report alerting us to what's coming up and what the hearings are and who's behind them."

That was 45 years ago. Today, Marshall is still active with NRCM. I first met Marshall when we were both attending last year's public hearing in Augusta about Plum Creek's massive Moosehead Lake development proposal. My conversation on our way to the Bates lecture was a wonderful way to connect even more deeply with NRCM and our work. To hear of the dedication of the founders, volunteers, and our first paid staff member was a great history lesson and made me even more proud of the work that is done, and has been done for the past 50 years, by NRCM to protect the nature of Maine.

—Beth Dimond, Public Affairs Coordinator



## A Lasting Legacy

Maine's mountains, forest, rivers, lakes, coast, and communities are inextricably tied to our way of life. By remembering NRCM in your will, you can leave a legacy that reaches beyond your lifetime and protects Maine's cherished landscapes for those who come after us. Bequests are critical to NRCM's long-range financial strength and our ability to address future challenges.

For more information about bequests or other forms of deferred giving, please call Mathew Scease at (800) 287-2345 ext. 230. Please visit our website at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org).



## • WASHINGTON WATCH •

### Clean Energy and Climate Security Debate Heating Up

President Obama set the stage for addressing global warming this year by including in his budget proposal to Congress revenues that would be generated if we capped carbon pollution emissions and sold credits to carbon emitters. The House and Senate subsequently passed budget resolutions that also included a "placeholder" for carbon cap revenues.

Setting a cap on carbon emissions is the most significant action we can take this year to protect and restore the planet, repower America with clean energy and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Senate Majority Leader Reid and House Majority Leader Pelosi have said they intend to move climate and energy legislation this year. Chairman Waxman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee has introduced the America Clean Energy and Security Act and has committed to passing it through the Committee by Memorial Day. Other bills to address global warming are being advanced in both chambers. The stakes are very high and the debate is bound



to reveal strong opinions on all sides.

NRCM is working with a coalition of environmental and economic groups in a coordinated way to analyze the various approaches. We are also continuing a dialogue with Maine's Congressional delegation about the importance of addressing global warming with a federal cap program in 2009. Congress must stay on this ambitious timetable and not be derailed by partisanship or narrow interests.

In the months ahead, we will be calling upon NRCM's supporters to contact Maine's delegation. Each member of our delegation needs to hear from a wide spectrum of Maine citizens that the economic, health, environmental, and national security impacts of global warming are too great for any of us to ignore for another year. We will all need to be "climate champions" to help lead the nation to our clean energy future, as Maine has led on so many critical issues before.

—Lisa Pohlmann, NRCM Deputy Director

Join Us at these Upcoming Events  
in Celebration of NRCM's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!  
Visit [nrcm.org/attendanevent.asp](http://nrcm.org/attendanevent.asp) for more

**Saturday, May 9 Alewife Celebration**, Salt Bay Reserve, Damariscotta. Alewife fish ladder tour starts at 1:00 p.m. followed by a showing of the movie, "Closing the Circle: The Alewife Run in Damariscotta Mills, Maine," introduced by the film's producer Naomi Shalit. Children's activities provided during the 30-minute movie.



Wood Duck

**Saturday, May 16 Birding at Lobster Cove Meadows**. See, hear, and learn about Maine's beautiful birds at their height of spring migration during this easy birding walk at Lobster Cove Meadows Preserve in Boothbay, led by birders Jeff and Allison Wells. Meet at the Lobster Cove Meadows parking lot at 8:00a.m., done by noon. Bring binoculars, if you have some.

**Saturday, May 30 Celebrate Rachel Carson's birthday with us at Laudholm Farm, Wells** featuring the film, "Sense of Wonder," based on the one-woman play by Kaiulani Lee depicting the ailing Carson in her final year. In documentary-style, "Carson recounts with both anger and humor the attacks by the chemical industry, the government, and the press as she focuses her limited energy to get her message to Congress and the American people." Includes a reception from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m., with the film and questions from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., and a bird walk with Derek Lovitch from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

**Saturday & Sunday, June 6 & 7 Visit our booth in Stonington** in celebration of World Ocean Day (June 8), at Old Quarry Adventures, 130 Settlement Road.

**Saturday, June 27 Join Cloe Chunn, author of 50 Hikes in the Maine Mountains**, for a guided nature walk on the Little River Community Trail near Belfast. This fairly easy four-mile hike starts at 10:00 a.m., and Cloe will focus on wildlife and wildflowers along the trail. Rain date: Sunday, June 28

**Saturday, July 18 Paddle the Kennebec** with us from Sidney to Augusta in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the removal of the Edwards dam. Get your canoes and kayaks ready, and watch for more details.



DOUG WATTS

## Do It Yourself Activities!

Celebrate NRCM's 50th with these Self-guided Activities. Visit our website at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org) for more great ideas!

- Visit an Land for Maine's Future area.  
Write a letter to-the-editor in support of Maine's environment.
- Participate in awareness days like Endangered Species Day (May 15), National Trails Day (June 6), and the summer solstice (June 21).
- Stay at a participating Maine sporting camp, where NRCM members can get a 10 – 20 percent discount.

## First Brownie Points Raffle Drawing June 1!

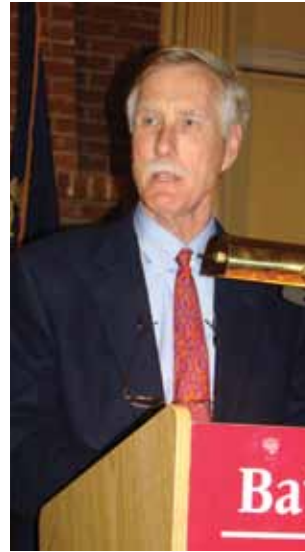
By May 31, send us your name, address, phone, and email, along with all NRCM events and activities you participated in so far in 2009. You'll be entered into our drawing for these and other special prizes:

- **Two-night Getaway** at the Blair Hill Inn in Greenville overlooking Moosehead Lake
- **Puffin Watch Cruise** from Hardy Boat Cruises out of New Harbor
- **A Maine Lobster Bake** especially prepared for you by a Maine lobstering family
- **Half-day Kayak Rental** from Kayak Excursions in Kennebunk
- **\$10 Gift Certificate** to Play It Again Sports in Brunswick

**NRCM thanks these donating Maine businesses!**

## 50 Events Celebrating 50 Years

Recent highlights in pictures:



### Gov King at Bates

Angus King was featured at this year's Edmund S. Muskie Lecture, co-sponsored by NRCM and Bates College, with an introduction by Brownie Carson. The former governor spoke about environmental leadership and cited examples from Edmund Muskie and NRCM.

### Citizen Action Day

People from across the state attended this year's Citizen Action Day. Pictured here, three of our youngest activists, from Wilton and Jay (L to R: Ella S., Emma A., and Evan S.).



### My Maine exhibit

Throughout April, our My Maine This Week photo exhibit was showcased at Bage! Maine in Augusta. It will be at the Skowhegan Public Library through May 13. Contact [beth@nrcm.org](mailto:beth@nrcm.org) if you'd know of a place in your town that would like to host this beautiful exhibit!

## Congratulations!

**John Shields** of South China, Maine, is the winner of the LL Bean 8 x 40 Field Binoculars and a Bean's Ridge Runner Day Pack, raffled at the NRCM table Sportsman's Show in Augusta. Way to go, John!



### Visit our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Online Scrapbook – and Help Us Build It!

Send us your thoughts, photos, and other "memorabilia" from events and activities you participated in to celebrate NRCM's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Send to [beth@nrcm.org](mailto:beth@nrcm.org).

### Tip of the Day

**Clip for Growth** Grass clippings make good fertilizer when they decompose. Leaving them on your lawn keeps them from taking up space in landfills, too.

For a Tip of the Day every day, visit our website at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org). Have our tips sent directly to your home page through our RSS feed!

### Send Us Your "My Maine This Week"



"Penobscot Bay with full moon rising over Blue Hill"  
—Larry Pritchett, Rockland

Do you have a photograph you'd like to share that shows your love for Maine? A poem? Send your submissions to [beth@nrcm.org](mailto:beth@nrcm.org). Visit our website often at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org) to see how others are enjoying Maine.