

# EXPLORE MAINE



TUMBLEDOWN MOUNTAIN  
BY BILL AMOS  
WINNER OF OUR 'I LOVE OUR MAINE LANDS' PHOTO CONTEST

## Places to Explore, Books by NRCM Members, and Much More

This year's edition of *Explore Maine* is so packed with ways to enjoy our great state that we expanded it to eight pages! In honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway—the issue upon which the Natural Resources Council of Maine was founded—you'll find an in-depth article highlighting the hard work and the individuals who made it happen, as well as NRCM's special role in that effort. This year also marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Acadia National Park, another of Maine's unique gems. To keep with that theme—special places that are federally protected, owned by the people of the United States—NRCM staff, board, and fellow members share with you their experiences and tips for exploring Maine's national wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, Acadia National Park, and the lands proposed for a new national monument. And don't forget to download our app (see page 7). As always, you'll also find books, blogs, sporting camps—this year, even sporting gear!—and more ways to celebrate Maine. Be sure to start your planning now, and enjoy all of what Maine's summer has to offer.—Allison Childs Wells, Editor

**Are you an author? Artist? Musician? Nature-based business owner?** If so, we invite you to send us information about your work so we can make it available on our website and perhaps feature it in next year's edition of *Explore Maine*.

### WHAT'S INSIDE:



Maine's National  
Wildlife Refuges  
& Wilderness  
Areas

Protecting the  
Allagash



Sporting Camp  
Discounts for  
NRCM Members

Hand-crafted  
Passamaquoddy  
Baskets



### Get Outdoors with NRCM Active Apparel!»»»»

We've partnered with Atayne, an outdoor active apparel company committed to sustainability that is the brainchild of NRCM Rising member Jeremy Litchfield. Visit our customized online store to choose your t-shirt style, then your design, color, and outdoor activity: "Explore Maine," "Hike Maine," "Paddle Maine," or "SUP Maine." Your very own custom NRCM t-shirt will be on its way! **Just launched: NRCM bicycling jerseys (at right)!** All products are made from recycled materials, and \$5 from every purchase is donated to NRCM. Order your customized NRCM outdoor apparel today at <http://nrcm.atayne.com>



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# Exploring Maine's Spectacular Federal Lands

Recently, a young man told me that he, his wife, and two kids live in a small house on a small lot in the midcoast. He loves to get outside and said, "Public lands are all I've got." At NRCM, we recognize the importance of quality time spent outside. Local land trust areas, state parks, and Public Reserved Lands all provide exceptional opportunities. Our work to establish a new national monument here in Maine, coupled with Acadia National Park's 100th anniversary, has inspired us to put the focus on the spectacular federal lands found here in our state. From the southern coast to Aroostook County, they offer fantastic opportunities to enjoy the natural beauty, and peace and quiet, that make Maine such a special place. —*Lisa Pohlmann, NRCM Executive Director*



Acadia National Park  
by Beth Comeau

## ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

Acadia is a dream world of tidal pools, rocky cliffs, quiet ponds, and sweet-smelling forests. Despite its popularity, there are plenty of hikes where you will see few people, even on the busiest summer days. I have several favorite spots. The first is "Wonderland," a shoreline path on the quiet side of Acadia, near the Seawall Campground. A short hike through this fairyland forest brings you to the kind of rocky coast that makes Maine famous, with plenty of places to sit on a granite shelf, enjoy a quiet lunch, and take in scenic ocean views. Then there are the Carriage Trails where I have cross-country skied when the summer crowds were gone and all that surrounded me was the still whiteness of snow. Last October I spent a gorgeous fall day with friends, biking those crushed gravel paths through forests, past secluded ponds and bubbling streams, and under stone archway bridges. And of course Thunder Hole, right off Park Loop Road, is a must-not-be-missed example of the powerful Atlantic when she rolls into this naturally formed inlet, sending up a rumbling roar and spume of water that can be 40 feet high, splashing and thrilling viewers. Acadia generates more than \$200 million in economic benefit for communities surrounding the park and supports more than 3,000 jobs in the local area. It is a wonderful reminder of why national parks are America's best idea.

—*Lisa Pohlmann, NRCM Executive Director*



Middle Barn Meadow,  
Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge,  
by B. Comeau/NRCM

## AROOSTOOK COUNTY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE & MOOSEHORN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

As a 32-veteran of the Maine Park Service that included duties at Aroostook State Park in Aroostook County and Cobscook Bay State Park in Washington County, I have been privileged to experience the outstanding natural resources at the Aroostook National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Limestone and the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge

in Baring and Edmunds. Aroostook NWR, only four miles west of Limestone, is reclaimed from a former Air Force base. It provides valuable forest and grassland wildlife habitat among a surrounding landscape of plowed fields and agricultural crops. Ponds and streams offer a home to a variety of migratory birds, though the majority of the refuge is forested upland habitat where moose thrive and migratory songbirds breed. The grassland sections are home to a population of state-threatened Upland Sandpipers; the refuge also hosts boreal specialty species like Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay, Mourning Warbler, and others.

Aroostook is a sister refuge to Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge and is located southwest of Calais. It also has a unit near Cobscook Bay State Park, 20 miles east of Machias. The area supports many wildlife species, and it is common to see nesting Bald Eagles in both the Baring and Edmunds units. About a third of Moosehorn is designated wilderness with a hands-off approach to management. Such philosophy allows the areas to develop into old-growth climax forests that support special species such as Cape May and Bay-breasted warblers, Spruce Grouse, and White-winged Crossbills. I've enjoyed hiking the Weir and South trails in Edmunds and early-morning fly fishing trips on Hobart Steam, not to mention many nights sitting quietly during a spring evening and listening to the mating song of the American Woodcock, known to many as the "timberdoodle." Nothing compares to sitting in the twilight and hearing that brief "preent, preent" call and watching the bird spiral into the air. At 250-300 feet up, he begins a sky dance, descending in a motion as gentle as a falling leaf, until he lands near the spot from which he launched, all with the goal of attracting a mate. Given busy lifestyles, a visit to a refuge is a great way to rejuvenate, refresh, and return home, physically and psychologically healed. Several years ago I was speaking at a nursing home and at



Aroostook National Wildlife Refuge,  
by Bill Sheehan

the end of my presentation an old gentleman hobbled up on sore knees and said, "You know, Tim, my legs are weak and I can't wander our refuges much anymore, but lord, it does my heart good to know they are there."

—*Tim Caverly, NRCM member, Millinocket*



Speck Pond, near the top of  
Old Speck Mountain,  
by Linda Woods

## APPALACHIAN TRAIL: MAHOOSUCS TO OLD SPECK

On a June weekend years ago, I hiked the Mahoosucs from south to north to Speck Pond, with a good friend of mine. The Mahoosucs are south of Old Speck, which is more directly reached from ME Route 26, the Grafton Notch area. We drove around to New Hampshire and found the trailhead off NH Route 16 and up some logging roads. We loaded up our packs and hiked up the two miles to the intersection

with the Appalachian Trail (AT) without seeing a single soul. It was sunny but still cool, as only June can be, and the hiking was lovely. We reached the AT and the Notch just shy of noon, using every muscle. A stunning, glacier-carved gorge wound through granite cliffs, pockets of snow and ice still hidden among the crevices, and water bubbled somewhere down there, too. The views were stunning, and we stopped frequently to look back at where we had been. The greens were the fresh greens of spring, the balsams still showing their young, green tips. By the time we made it to Speck Pond we were sweaty and tired. After a dip in the pond, we set up our tent on a platform not far off the trail and almost immediately the blackflies came out. We couldn't get in the tent fast enough! We rose early the next morning and headed down the Speck Pond Trail to the road and back to our car. All in all, a nice woodland hike and an experience I will always remember.

—*Leslie Burhoe, NRCM Executive Assistant*



Showy Lady's Slipper,  
by Pam Wells

## SUNKHAZE MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

In early July, I set off on one of my annual quests. Off the trail, off the beaten path, deep into the forest toward a boggy area of Sunkhaze, I am in search of showy lady's slippers. They and a few yellow slipper friends have adopted this region of the refuge. Dark and damp, it has the necessary habitat that the showy lady's slippers require in order to survive. Showy lady's slippers are but a small taste of what

Sunkhaze Meadows National Wildlife Refuge provides to visitors. At 11,485 acres, Sunkhaze offers a variety of visitor activities that include hunting, fishing, paddling, and wildlife viewing as well as a plethora of photography opportunities. Moose, deer, amphibians, and reptiles routinely use Sunkhaze as their home each year. More than 200 species of birds have been documented here; as spring migrants return, the refuge becomes an avian hotspot where one can listen to warblers and a host of other feathered singers. Parking areas and trails allow visitors easy access. Off County Road in Milford, Carter Meadow Road, Oak Point Trail, and the Johnson Brook Trail system are open for visitors. Each offers a different sort of forest environment, with Oak Point and Carter Meadow trails taking you to the edge of Sunkhaze bog. On the Studmill Road side, visitors can visit using the Ash Landing Trail and the McLaughlin Road access point. While Ash Landing gets you quite quickly to Sunkhaze Stream, McLaughlin Road provides several options for off-the-main-road trails.

As I near the mile mark, I see my stunning orchid quest ahead. Despite the sloshing and crawling over fallen rotted trees, this yearly adventure is always worth the effort. We are fortunate to have this diverse, large national wildlife refuge in our backyard. While it doesn't boast the quantity of visitors that many other refuges experience, Sunkhaze is a wild, untamed place that is well worth the adventure for those who love the outdoors.—*Pam Wells, NRCM member, Old Town*





Morrison Brook, Caribou-Speckled Wilderness Area, by Tony Marple

### CARIBOU-SPECKLED WILDERNESS AREA

A hike up East and West Baldpate followed by a swim at Screw Auger Falls on Route 26 is an annual ritual of mine. A few years ago, I was looking for a new hiking adventure in western Maine. I was pleasantly surprised to find Speckled Mountain in the Caribou-Speckled Wilderness Area, on the Maine side of the White Mountain National Forest. To find the trailhead for Speckled Mountain from Route 202 in Gilead, travel south on bucolic Route 113 for 10 miles to the parking area at the Brickett Place. From Route 302 in Fryeburg, travel north on Route 113 for 19 miles to the Brickett Place. Speckled Mountain boasts a six-mile loop trail with nice views from its expansive, “bald,” 2,877-foot summit. From the Brickett Place parking area, I

recommend starting your loop hike on the Bickford Trail. The trail meanders past gurgling waterfalls and flumes that beg to be photographed. The falls run well into autumn and are truly spectacular. In addition to the summit, the numerous waterfalls, natural waterslides, and chutes are the highlight of the hike. The trail continues with modest elevation gains for another three miles on the Blueberry Ridge and Bickford trails to the summit. Looking west toward New Hampshire, several mountains in the Presidential Range lay before your eyes, including a glimpse of Mount Washington. Looking east across Maine, you’ll notice picturesque Kezar Lake spread out before you. After taking in the views, continue on the loop trail by following the rock cairns and descend via the Bickford Trail. The trail is steep and muddy in places so use extra caution. For the last mile, the trail follows scenic Bickford Brook back to the parking lot. Happy trails! —Todd Martin, NRCM Grassroots Outreach Coordinator



Timber Point, Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, Kennebunkport, by Allison Wells

### RACHEL CARSON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Some of the best birding locations in southern Maine are parts of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge (RCNWR), made up of at least 11 separate land parcels that stretch along 50 miles of coastline from Cape Elizabeth south to Kittery. The northernmost section is at Spurwink Marsh in Cape Elizabeth. The marsh and brushy edges can be viewed from a number of access

points where herons, egrets, ducks, and shorebirds may be seen. Another hotspot is Biddeford Pool, with coastline and saltmarsh surrounding the large tidal pool for which it is named. Biddeford Pool is famous among birders for hosting an abundance and diversity of shorebirds, especially from mid-July through October. A trail that skirts the edge of the private parking lot across from the entrance is a favorite among birders to get to the edge of the marsh to scope for shorebirds, especially just before or after high tide when the birds are more concentrated. A new addition to the refuge lies just south at Timber Point, where a trail along the Little River leads to a point with an overlook of Goose Rocks Beach in Kennebunkport. This trail can be rich with landbird migrants in spring and fall; in summer, terns feed at the mouth of the river, and herons and egrets feed in the salt marsh. Parking is available at the end of Granite Point Road in Biddeford, where the 1.25-mile trail begins.

The headquarters of RCNWR is in Wells on Route 9 about a half-mile north of the intersection with Route 1. Here, a mile-long trail leads through pine forests where Pine Warblers trill throughout the summer; at the salt marshes, listen for nesting Willets giving their loud “pill-will-willet” calls. One last favorite refuge access spot is along the short road to Wells Harbor, near the fire

station along Route 1 in Wells. Pull off along the road to scope for Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows, herons and egrets, sandpipers and other shorebirds in the salt pans. Behind the municipal parking lot and playground near the harbor, there is a short trail through a narrow strip of woodland where migrant songbirds can sometimes be found and that provides more views of the marsh. In winter, the harbor itself might allow nice looks at Common Loons, Horned Grebes, and a variety of wintering bay and sea ducks. One year a rare King Eider appeared here, to the delight of many birders. Good birding!

—Jeff Wells, NRCM member, Gardiner



Orin Falls, accessible from the IAT, by E. Theberge/NRCM

### THE INTERNATIONAL APPALACHIAN TRAIL EAST OF BAXTER STATE PARK

The International Appalachian Trail (IAT) passes through the lands proposed as a new National Monument/National Park, east of Baxter State Park and west of the East Branch of the Penobscot River. Elliottsville Plantation, Inc. (EPI) proposes to donate 87,500 acres to the American people as a National Monument, as a first

step to a National Park and Recreation Area. These lands include many beautiful places and recreational opportunities including hiking, biking, fishing, wildlife watching, and paddling in the summer, and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter. Spectacular views of mountains, forests stretching to the horizon, huge trees, gorgeous waterfalls, raspberries and more raspberries—these were some of the highlights of the 4-day, 25-mile hike my husband and I took in August on the IAT, 35 miles of which run through the proposed National Monument/National Park. On the lower slopes of Deasey Mountain we saw some of the biggest hemlock trees I have seen in Maine. The undergrowth was sparse, having been shaded out by the magnificent hemlocks. Along tiny rivulets, every rock was thick and soft with moss. Side trails allow you to climb Barnard Mountain for a great view of Katahdin. Hike upstream to Orin Falls on Wassataquoik Stream, which flows out of the heart of Baxter State Park. There you can climb on boulders or cool your feet in the pristine, fast-flowing water.

We hope this area will be designated a National Monument in 2016, the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. A National Monument is similar to a National Park, but it can be created by the President of the United States, rather than by an Act of Congress. A National Monument would provide generally the same level of protection and recreational opportunities that a National Park does.

You can hike the IAT either south to north, or north to south. A good starting place in the south is where the trail leaves the scenic Katahdin Loop Road on the EPI land. On the north end, you can start (or end) at the gate on the Messer Pond Road, or where the trail crosses the Grand Lake Road heading in to Baxter’s north gate. Many outfitters in the region will be happy to shuttle your vehicle from one end of the trail to the other. Happy hiking!

—Cathy Johnson, NRCM Forests and Wildlife Director

### UMBAGOG NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Umbagog is a preserve of wetlands, forest, and a seven-mile-long lake on the Maine-New Hampshire border, northwest of Bethel. With campsites widely spaced along the lake and on islands, Umbagog is a perfect destination for a relaxed and gorgeous canoe trip. A combination of holdings by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Maine, and the State of New Hampshire protects shoreline along Lake Umbagog and the Androscoggin, Magalloway, and Rapid rivers nearby. Reserve a lake campsite through the New Hampshire State Parks. Launch at the campground on Route 26 just over the state line. The lake paddle gives you long views of forested hills and undeveloped shoreline. Though having a reservation makes the paddling relaxed, the long reach of the lake can make for big waves in wind. Another approach is to start the trip on the Magalloway River. Sixteen miles of flatwater begins at the Route 16 bridge in Wilson’s Mills, though you can put in at points farther down for a shorter trip. Gliding down the winding river, through the marsh, and then onto Lake Umbagog offers a day of varied paddling. It’s a good idea to reserve a campsite close to the Magalloway’s

continued on page 8



Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge by Karen Herold



# The Push for Protection: S

Conservation of the Allagash River is what brought together the founders of the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM), at a time when the river was threatened by dams. Since its founding in 1959, NRCM has continued to be at the forefront of efforts to preserve the unspoiled wilderness character of the Allagash River watershed. “Like Katahdin and Acadia, the Allagash is one of Maine’s exceptional natural treasures, and creating the Allagash Wilderness Waterway is one of NRCM’s most important and enduring achievements,” says Brownie Carson, who was executive director of NRCM for 26 years. He adds, “I love paddling the Waterway and knowing that it will be there for generations to come.”

On November 9, 1966, the *Bangor Daily News* reported, “Maine people gave a booming vote of approval to a unique plan to place a wild river under state control forever, for the recreational use of the public—the fabled Allagash ... The money for the Allagash bond issue will be spent mostly to buy a narrow strip of land along the shores of the various lakes and riverways in a 100-mile-long corridor near the upper St. John River, not far from the site of the controversial Dickey-Lincoln School hydroelectric project. The State Parks & Recreation Commission will govern the ‘Allagash Wilderness Waterway,’ controlling access to its lakes and streams to preserve its forest, its fishing and its unspoiled beauty.” The article goes on to describe a plan that had been developed over several years by many conservationists and sportsmen, who became the founders of the Natural Resources Council of Maine. The final act was drafted by a legislative committee and shepherded through the Legislature by Democratic State Senator Elmer H. Violette.

NRCM led efforts to convince the Legislature to create the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, through the vote and bond issue. In 1962, the organization hired experts to undertake a thorough analysis of the value of protecting the area. The results of this study boosted support for protection, and, in 1963, the Maine Legislature established the Allagash River Authority to create a plan for conserving this special region.

## A Different Time

In 1857, when Thoreau wrote about his canoe trip down the Allagash, the outlets of its big lakes were blocked and flooded by log driving dams, which caused acres of dead trees (“dri-ki”) to make tangled, windblown masses along the submerged sand beaches. Wolves were nearly gone; moose and caribou were on their way out. Most of the sentinel white pines had been cut down. A century later the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed to turn the entire Allagash River into a long, snaky, shallow, weedy reservoir via a dam at a spot called Rankins Rapids.

At the time when Maine voters cast ballots to issue the \$1.5 million bond to purchase the waterway and permanently protect the wilderness character of the Allagash, the front page of the November 9, 1966 *Bangor Daily News* featured an ad for rubber pack boots on sale for \$3.29 at Schiro’s Shoes—and shared the news, “Bay State Negro Elected Senator.” Whatever else may have



State-protected Allagash River becomes federally designated wild and scenic river. Photo taken July 1970. Senator Ed Muskie is on the right.

been happening around the state, Maine people showed strong support for the referendum authorizing the State to issue the bond. The statewide margin on the vote was 60:40 in favor. Even in Aroostook County, “yes” beat “no” 21,709 to 19,530. In 1970, the waterway became part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Left unstated in the news stories of the time was that some people suggested that preservation of the Allagash River should be a *quid pro quo* for consent to damming and flooding its companion river, the upper Saint John. While Maine voters approved saving the Allagash River, the newly elected governor, Kenneth Curtis, had campaigned on a platform of damming the entire upper St. John River as “vital to Maine’s future.”

Lost in old headlines on microfilm is that the damming of that section of the St. John River upstream of the confluence with the Allagash was a near *fait accompli*. One of NRCM’s founders, Clinton “Bill” Townsend, recalls one of Senator Edmund Muskie’s staff members suggesting that if NRCM would not oppose damming the upper St. John River, the Allagash would be spared. “We refused it,” Townsend

**“The 1966 Allagash referendum also provides valuable lessons that can be applied today. Get organized, figure out exactly what you want, and be persistent.”**

—Bill Townsend, one of NRCM’s founders

says. Putting the pieces together to preserve the Allagash from dams took NRCM and its partners nearly a decade. Townsend credits another NRCM founder, Bob Patterson of Mt. Desert Island, and Maine Senator James Ezra Briggs of Caribou as key leaders of the effort, which culminated in the November 1966 referendum vote. “The National Park Service wanted to preserve the Allagash, but the forest owners hated it,” Townsend said.

Long-time NRCM member John McKee, a professor at Bowdoin College in the mid-1960s, adds, “The only option for citizens at the time was to slow the process down.” At this time, no federal environmental laws existed; entire rivers could be dammed by administrative or legislative fiat. McKee recalls a mid-summer meeting by the Army Corps that took place around 1965. “It was a hot day in August. The man from the Army Corps talked about campsites on the new lake they would make where you could catch yellow perch. We asked the Corps to study the issue some more. They said they had already studied it to death. We told them, ‘You studied the wrong stuff.’ We believed the sheer economics of the project would make it fall apart.”

Over the years, cost estimates for the project escalated to \$900 million, and support among Maine’s elected officials eroded. In 1978, Governor James Longley told President Jimmy Carter, “We do not have a right, in this generation, to commit a significant portion of our valuable wilderness land to a project based solely on the fact that it will temporarily stimulate the economy by a construction boom ...” In the fall of 1984, after a battle that lasted two decades, the Dickey-Lincoln Dam project was finally killed by a vote in the U.S. Congress.

## What Remains

In some ways the Allagash is both less and more explored than it was 50

“I’ve canoed the Allagash River twice — so far — and it is a paddler’s dream. There are few places in the eastern U.S. where I can disappear for days on a river that winds through nothing but trees and lakes, with mountains on the horizon, and nothing to distract me except a moose in the morning or loons at night. On the Allagash I’ve experienced glorious sunshine as my pals and I stopped for lunch and swam with the current. I have endured slashing rain bursts that had us huddled, laughing and shivering on the shoreline. I’ve looked up at the dark night sky full of stars and pondered our place on this precious planet. I am honored to now be leading the organization—NRCM—whose founders got together to protect this very special river, and then kept right on going to engage in countless campaigns to protect the environment across the state. The Allagash River would not be the same without the guardianship of the citizens and staff who made up NRCM back then. In fact, the entire state of Maine would not be the same without the role that NRCM has played for the last 57 years.”

—Lisa Pohlmann, Executive Director, NRCM



Photo by Elaine Isakson



# Saving the Allagash

by Doug Watts



Allagash River  
by B. Carson/NRCM

years ago. Logging roads now follow it for miles; it is now possible to drive to the Allagash in a way that had not been possible in years past. Satellite phones now allow relatively quick and easy access to a Life-Flight helicopter in cases of injuries incurred while paddling. GPS innovation means explorers no longer have to rely totally on topographical maps to get an idea as to where they are. And satellite technology lets anyone scan the entire Allagash down to the resolution of a canoe; in doing so, they can see that what is just outside the 500-foot strip of land bought by the voters of Maine more resembles a jig-saw cornfield of young trees than a trackless, forested wilderness—the global economic forces that turned the giant pines of the Allagash into stumps in the 1840s are as relentless today.

Since the moment of its conception by NRCM founders and later, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway has been knotted in a messy debate about what the words “wilderness” and “waterway” should mean. But these issues miss a larger point: in 2016, on its 50th anniversary, despite harvesting and logging roads, the Allagash remains one of the wildest places in the United States east of the Mississippi. No paved roads go near it; there are no interstate highways in the vicinity, nor are there outlet malls or vacation resorts. There are no cities or towns in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway or even the tiniest village. Given that the debate from 1955 to 1966 was whether the Allagash River would be drowned, latter-day debates about boat-launches and dirt-road access to the river seem small until you realize that wilderness character can easily be eroded by a series of seemingly insignificant decisions. Nobody would argue that the character of Mount Katahdin would not be irrevocably changed if a two-lane auto road were built up its spine.

The tensions today in the Allagash have changed little over the course of time. What *has* changed is that a state law led by citizens was put in place in 1966 and a federal law added further protection in 1970. Both remain in place today, to protect the primary public value of the Allagash and the preservation of its wild character for now and for future generations.

*Writer Douglas Watts of Augusta is a lifelong river-lover who worked with NRCM early in the campaign to remove the Edwards Dam to restore the Kennebec River's fisheries.*



Photo by Laurie Haag

## A Wilderness Girl and Her Wilderness Waterway



Photo by  
B. Carson/NRCM

Alexandra Conover Bennett grew up in the once rural, apple-orchard town of Stow, Massachusetts, with cousins in Cutler, Maine. By 19 she was looking for “inland” canoeing adventures. A girlfriend's mother said on a lark, “Go up to the Allagash.” This was in 1972 and Alexandra did—her first trip by snowshoe along the wintry waterway. By the early 1980s, Alexandra and her partner Garrett Conover were premier guides on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, making three to four full-length trips per year (summer by canoe, winter by snowshoe) for 30 years

When asked what changes she has noticed most on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, Alexandra says, “The two changes I've noticed most in the past 40 years are that there is now a labyrinth of roads along the Allagash, and that ice out is much earlier and ice-in is much later. We can't do snowshoeing trips now where and when we could 20 years ago because it is freezing up much later and river ice is unpredictable.”

A diligent diarist, Alexandra has kept copious field notes for every canoe trip down the Allagash. One observation, she said, led to the discovery of a previously unknown variant of a wildflower in the St. Johnswort family, which she noticed by an unusual, spicy smell from one small spot along the Allagash banks. “Every time we paddled by this place, we noticed a peculiar fragrance. After several years of noticing it, we finally pulled ashore to see what plant was making it,” she said.

A second revelation required simple but repeated diary entries every snowshoeing season for 30 years: coyote tracks in the snow. “My notes going back to 1980 show that the size of coyote tracks and the stride length has gotten bigger over time,” she said.

Alexandra and Garrett Conover have taken hundreds of people from all over the world down the Allagash. “I have watched white-collar, high-level businesspeople go through a change during one trip,” she said. “They've told me they feel alive and real. After a trip, I'll tell people that once they get back, there is going to be a transition, and it might feel odd for a few days.” She adds, “This is a place that heals humans. You grow very fond of it, probably because of all it gives.”

When asked what she could say or hope for the next 50 years on the Allagash River, she related a story about bringing a native and lifelong resident of Allagash Village to a public hearing in Augusta about the future of the Allagash. “His name is Wilmer Hafford. Once arriving at Augusta from the very long drive, Hafford gave laconic testimony. He told the legislative committee, ‘Do what's best for the river. The river knows best.’”

She adds, “It's taken me a long time to really understand what Wilmer meant. I think what he said is that if we take care of every bit of river, then it can take care of us.” —Doug Watts



# A Humble Basket. A Humbled Developer.

Save Passamaquoddy Bay 3-Nation Alliance formed in 2004 to combat a succession of well-funded natural gas developers with their sights set on Passamaquoddy Bay. The plan? To build large, liquefied natural gas terminals in one of the most beautiful, ecologically rich, and turbulent bays in the world.

“Passamaquoddy Bay has suffered over the years from the arrival of powerful interests promising to create untold wealth and jobs for local people,” says Bob Godfrey of Eastport, one of the founding members of Save Passamaquoddy Bay. “These promises also have meant the degradation of places we love and of natural resources on which thousands of existing jobs rely.”

Passamaquoddy Bay is fed by the Bay of Fundy and has some of the highest tides in the world. This turbulence creates the Old Sow Whirlpool and stirs up rich nutrients that feed a wide variety of marine plants and animals. The bay provides important habitat for several whale species, including the endangered North Atlantic right whale.

The bay is also the spiritual home and namesake of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, an inspiration to anyone who lives in or visits the area, and the foundation of the local economy.

Local citizens, members of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and neighboring New Brunswick, Canada, communities joined forces to defeat these powerful developers. The grassroots group faced years of expensive organizing, research, and legal proceedings. To date, the developers have spent at least \$80 million of venture capital.

“Then Billy walked in the door,” recalls Linda Godfrey, another founding member of Save Passamaquoddy Bay. The part-time fisherman from Jonesport and two of his buddies, Bimbo and Buzz, had taken over the wharf and warehouse owned by well-known area fisherman Oscar Look. Mr. Look had died, and among the items he left behind were 800 herring scale baskets. Hand-crafted by skilled Passamaquoddy basket weavers, the sturdy ash baskets dated from the 1960s and had never been used.

Anyone involved in the herring fishery knows that, when harvested from the iconic herring weirs that dotted the Downeast shores, the trapped herring shed their scales by the millions. Local fishermen collected the scales and hauled them in scale baskets to companies where their shiny coating was made into pearl essence for nail polish, lipstick, and other commercial



applications. Plastic baskets and the eventual demise of the local sardine industry put an end to the Passamaquoddy hand-crafted fish scale basket trade.

Billy was on a mission to sell the 800 ash scale baskets that he, Bimbo, and Buzz now owned. Billy explained that there were enough baskets that it would take a loaded semi truck to move them. Perhaps Save Passamaquoddy Bay could sell the baskets to help fund its legal expenses? A generous couple, loyal to the Save Passamaquoddy Bay cause, funded the project. A deal was struck. The 800 baskets arrived and to date, Save Passamaquoddy Bay has sold 600 of the vintage baskets.

“Picture this: We are in week-long Bureau of Environmental Protection hearings, the LNG developers are surrounded by about 30 high-priced lawyers and costly consultants,” says Linda. “Their companies were backed by the likes of Credit Suisse, Goldman Sachs, and other big venture capital funders. We have two or three lawyers, a big group of committed volunteers, and the proceeds from the sale of herring scale baskets. How could we possibly lose?”

They haven’t yet. Save Passamaquoddy Bay has defeated two developers completely. The third lost at the state level, but is still actively seeking a permit at the federal level. “We won’t stop until this plan dies in Washington, D.C., before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission,” says Bob, who received NRCM’s 2014 People’s Choice Award for his leadership and efforts on behalf of the feisty and steadfast group.

NRCM is partnering with Save Passamaquoddy Bay to sell the final 200 baskets. You can own a piece of Downeast history and help Save Passamaquoddy Bay by ordering one today. We are selling the baskets for \$200 each, with an additional \$11 for tax and \$25 for shipping and handling.

A portion stays with NRCM, but the majority of each sale supports Save Passamaquoddy Bay’s work. This is a rare opportunity to support two environmental groups, own a piece of Native American history, and be part of saving glorious and abundant Passamaquoddy Bay. Visit the NRCM store today at [www.nrcm.org/membership/nrcm-t-shirts-totes-caps](http://www.nrcm.org/membership/nrcm-t-shirts-totes-caps), or call Joyce Gracie at (207) 430-0128.

“Protect What You Love,” wrote Jacques Cousteau. His words have supported Save Passamaquoddy Bay every step of their extraordinary journey. His words and a humble basket.

—Gretta Wark, NRCM Senior Director of Philanthropy

## Take a Cruise with Hardy Boat Cruises Owned and Operated by an NRCM Member

A cruise aboard the Hardy Boat provides a breathtaking view of Maine’s beautiful coastline and is a great way to view our state’s famous puffins and other ocean wildlife. It’s also a reminder of how our iconic coast hangs in the balance. No one is more aware of this than Hardy Boat owner and NRCM member Stacia Crocetti: “Climate change is real. The abuse of our environment is real. Toxic and other pollution permeating our earth, lakes, rivers, and oceans are real. As concerned individuals and as ecotourism operators, it is imperative that we protect Maine’s natural resources, to ensure quality of life for the people who live here and as an economic driver. Maine has a wonderful history of providing top-quality wilderness experiences to outdoors enthusiasts. Our environment has been the basis for the economy of this state. It is imperative that we have good people, like those at NRCM, that are willing to roll up their sleeves and do the hard political work that is necessary to preserve and protect this beautiful state we live in. Thank you, NRCM!!” —Stacia Crocetti, owner Hardy Boat Cruises

**Join us & Dr. Stephen Kress aboard the Hardy Boat to see puffins!  
July 22, 7:00pm – 8:30pm. For more information, visit [nrcm.org](http://nrcm.org).**



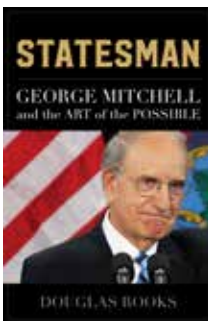


## BOOKS BY OUR MEMBERS

NRCM members are prolific writers whose books span a range of topics. Most focus on the environment; one covers an important public figure, and another connects consumers to environmentally friendly Maine businesses and much more. If you're an author who writes about Maine's environment or related topics, I invite you to send them along in time for next year's Explore Maine.—Allison Childs Wells, Editor



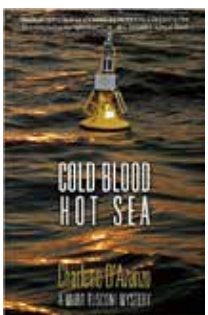
**Bogs & Fens: A Guide to the Peatland Plants of the Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada (University Press of New England, 2016), by Ronald B. Davis, Ph.D.** Nature enthusiasts will appreciate this guide to 78 northeastern peatlands by University of Maine Professor Emeritus and one NRCM's earliest members. Davis, winner of an NRCM Conservation Leadership Award, helped establish the Orono Bog Boardwalk. The book provides more than 300 photos and includes trees, shrubs, and wildflowers found in bog habitats as well as an introduction to the ecology of bogs and fens across the region.



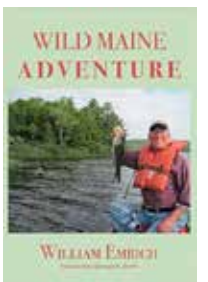
**STATESMAN: George Mitchell and the Art of What is Possible (Down East Books, forthcoming 2016), by Douglas Rooks** Written by veteran Maine journalist Rooks, this is the first full-length biography of one of Maine's most notable citizens. In the U.S. Senate, and then as Majority Leader, George Mitchell was principal architect of the Clean Water Act of 1987 and the Clean Air Act of 1990. *Statesman* traces Mitchell's fascinating life, from his humble beginnings in Waterville through his early years in politics, as U.S. attorney and federal judge, his 15-year Senate career, author of the Good Friday Agreement bringing peace to Northern Ireland, Middle East negotiator, and chairman of the world's largest law firm.



**The Once and Future Ocean: Notes Toward a New Hydraulic Society (Leete's Island Press, 2016), by Peter Neill** In his new book, Neill provides a strong foundation about the importance of water for all functions of society, going back centuries. His knowledge of innovations—to harness water, and to purify and protect it—runs deep. Just as important are his descriptions of the cultural significance of the world's oceans and threats posed by oil extraction, mining, and other economic drivers. Neill makes his case for a “new hydraulic system,” one in which society must evolve around the sustainable use—and reuse—of water that starts by insisting on a revolutionary change in political will.



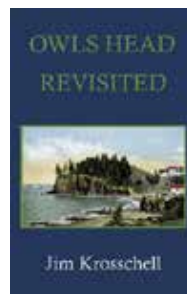
**Cold Blood Hot Sea (Torrey House, June 2016), by Charlene D'Avanzo** This “cli-fi” novel entertains while exploring the issue of climate change. The plot pits climate activists against Big Energy conspirators, with the heroes' own scientific research—and lives—on the line if they don't heed warnings to discontinue that research. D'Avanzo is a marine ecologist who has witnessed for herself the devastating effects of climate change. Add to that her knack for story-telling as a college professor, and the result is a compelling thriller that will also reach new audiences with a powerful environmental message.



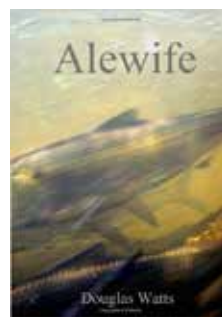
**Wild Maine Adventure (Haley's, 2016), by William Emrich** In 1999, Emrich bought land on a pond in midcoast Maine, sight unseen, while living in Florida with his wife and young daughter. A decade later, he retired and began his journey to create a home on this remote parcel, to enjoy the peace and quiet of a simple life. In a welcoming, conversational style, Emrich describes the challenges of his endeavor, from acquiring permits to building the structure to getting insurance, all on a shoestring budget. His deep love of Maine's great outdoors radiates through, leaving no doubt that every frustration he faces is well worth it in order to make his dream come true.



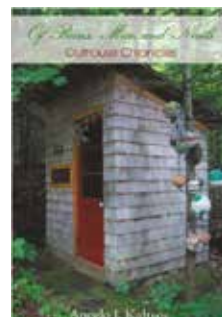
**Uncle Sam and Mother Earth: Shaping the Nation's Environmental Path (CreateSpace, 2015), by Jake Plante** Plante does a wonderful job providing a historic overview of the environmental movement and a description of our nation's most significant environmental laws. The heart of the book draws from Dr. Plante's three decades of work on environmental and energy issues. He provides an “insider” perspective on decision-making at the local and national levels, revealing the challenges and interagency tensions that arise as agencies approach our environmental laws from different perspectives. He describes both successes and failures of the federal government to make progress in protecting our environment. The book achieves its goal of explaining the role of government and individuals in national environmental policy.



**Owls Head Revisited (North Country Press, 2015), by Jim Krosschell** Krosschell describes how his view of the “magically ordinary” place of Owls Head was transformed following his retirement and subsequent ability to spend more time there. He walked every road and trail, explored undeveloped woods and salt marshes, and strolled the ocean shores. This book captures his enlightenment about a place he thought he'd known for 20 years but had only recently “discovered.” Enthusiasts of Maine's coast will enjoy this book, especially those who, like Jim, only *thought* they knew Owls Head.



**Alewife (lulu.com, 2012), by Douglas Watts** Former NRCM staff member Doug Watts wrote this personal documentary history of the alewife river herring. *Alewife* reviews this native fish species' natural history in Maine and Massachusetts from 5,000 B.C. to present. NRCM's Judy Berk says, “In an inimitable, quirky way, Doug weaves jokes, observations, anecdotes, and historical documents into his loving account of this critical keystone species.” For example: “Trying to be helpful, a human guest might ask an alewife, ‘Why not just choose between fresh and salt water?’ to which an alewife might answer ‘Why not just chose between a house and a job?’” Read this book to smile, learn, and become engaged in the struggle to see this species thrive once again.



**Of Bears, Mice, and Nails: Outhouse Chronicles (iUniverse, 2009), by Angelo J. Kaltsos** Decades ago, Kaltsos was hiking the Appalachian Trail and was so taken by the mountains of western Maine that he decided to make his home there, purchasing and refurbishing a 100-year-old old hunting camp using only hand tools. In this book he shares his experience living without electricity and indoor plumbing, and how he learned to tend tree, vegetables, and plants. One element readers will particularly enjoy are the comments by his “outhouse guests,” who share the enjoyment they experienced living rustically alongside nature, in the heart of Maine's beautiful environment.



**SunriseGuide** This publication is Maine's resource and coupon book for healthy, earth-friendly living. It's packed with articles and tips that keep you informed, plus hundreds of coupons to local businesses—restaurants, garden supplies, health & fitness, and more. Publisher Heather Chandler is a great supporter of NRCM. “We are so lucky to have an organization like NRCM in Maine, and I am grateful for the important work that you do on behalf of us all.” Look for the 2016 edition (filled with more than \$4,500 in coupons) at natural food stores, book stores, and other retail outlets, or purchase it at <http://thesunriseguide.com/>. Look for the NRCM ad inside!



**Allagash Tails, by Tim Caverly** In 1999, Tim Caverly retired from a 32-year career with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and now devotes his time to writing and presentations. A resident of Millinocket, Tim's favorite topics continue to include the Allagash. From this passion Tim created AllagashTails.com, home to his blog and event schedule. He describes his latest project, *The Ranger and The Reporter*, as “a celebration of the Allagash River's status as a wild and scenic waterway.” Tim has long been an enthusiastic NRCM supporter. “I first learned about NRCM and its leadership in protecting the Allagash River Corridor as a young park manager at Aroostook State Park and continued to follow their work while I was at Cobscook Bay State Park. In 1981 I became regional supervisor of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway for the DOC, and it soon became evident that if the Allagash was to remain a world-class wild canoeing area, then NRCM needed to be involved. NRCM has helped ensure the Allagash remains the world-class experience it is today.” Tim hopes to adapt his latest project into an audio book, as an outreach tool for assisted living communities, where many residents have experienced vision loss. He has set up a giving opportunity at [gofundme.com/dxwyyw9r](http://gofundme.com/dxwyyw9r). Learn more at [www.AllagashTails.com](http://www.AllagashTails.com).



entrance to Lake Umbagog because the day can be long, and you will want to save time for swimming. Greedy to experience it all, I ran out of time on my first trip to Umbagog. After the time-sink of setting up a shuttle and figuring out the put-in, we enjoyed the long paddle on Magalloway and the eagles overseeing the marsh before the lake. Dusk was setting in as we looked for our campsite. Any site would have been lovely, but we didn't want to land somewhere and find out later that we had set up on someone else's territory. All was well, however, and all worries washed away with the first plunge into the lake. A day trip once you've set up on an Umbagog campsite could involve a visit to the Rapid River, which enters the lake on the eastern side. Bring a fly rod! —Karen Herold, NRCM board member



Evan's Notch, by Beth Comeau

### WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL FOREST

I am often surprised by how many people do not know that the White Mountain National Forest extends into Maine. In fact, about 40,000 beautiful acres of the 800,000 National Forest can be found just southeast of Bethel. Among my favorite hikes on the "Maine side" of the Whites is Blueberry Mountain. From the Bickford Brook

trailhead on Route 113, I recommend combining the Blueberry Ridge and the Bickford Brook trails to form a somewhat leisurely 7.6-mile loop. This is a great fall hike, with multiple views of Evan's Notch and into the Whites from the trail's rocky ledges. In the winter, my family and I love to ski Route 113, which is closed in the winter to cars. The route takes you gradually up into Evan's Notch. Route 113 is gradual enough to not require skins or super-human effort, but steep enough for a very fun, rewarding ski when you double-back to your car at the end of the day. We enjoy this ski trip because it is accessible, perfect for a shorter day, and great in early winter—it only takes 6 to 8 inches of accumulated snow for the Route to be skiable. The White Mountain National Forest was formed under the Weeks Act of 1911, in which the U.S. Congress authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to purchase lands deemed necessary to protect headwaters in the eastern United States. Evan's Notch is drained by the Cold River and eventually leads to the Saco River and flows into the Gulf of Maine. —Eliza Donoghue, NRCM Forests and Wildlife Policy Advocate and Outreach Coordinator



Halifax Island, by Emmie Theberge

### MAINE COASTAL ISLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, INCLUDING HALIFAX ISLAND

The Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge is made up of more than 50 remote islands and mainland sites. The area spans the length of Maine's coastline, including several special places Downeast. These lands are vital nesting grounds for seabirds, wading birds, and Bald Eagles; the inland sites support migratory songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and other wildlife. In the summer of 2013, I had the great pleasure of sea kayaking from Bar Harbor to Machiasport and was able to enjoy many of these special places along the way, including Petit Manan, Bois Bubert Island, Brothers Island, and my favorite, Halifax Island, an outer island in the Roque Archipelago in Englishman Bay. This publically owned island is managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and is also along the Maine Island Trail. The best way to enjoy Halifax Island, like most of the Maine Coastal Islands, is by boat! The mainland sites are all Downeast and can be accessed by car.

Halifax Island will always be a special place for me. My partner and I spent the night on Halifax at the end of a seven-day sea kayak paddle from Bar Harbor. After paddling for a week along the Downeast coast, this tranquil island was a stunning place to spend our last night. After arriving, we set up camp, took a quick swim, then walked around the entire island as the sun was setting. A ringlet of fog laced the nearby islands, and the water was calm. Like many wild islands in Maine, Halifax is ecologically unique and an important habitat, so we took great care as we walked. You can access Halifax from Roque Bluffs State Park or from other boat landings nearby. This public island is open for careful day use all year. Primitive, leave-no-trace camping is permitted with prior permission, but please be prepared to carry out all waste. This island is yours and mine to protect for future generations and is precious habitat for Maine's iconic seabirds. Enjoy! —Emmie Theberge, NRCM Rising Director and Clean Energy Policy Advocate



Chandler Lake Camps, Aroostook County

## GET YOUR NRCM MEMBER Maine Sporting Camp Discount

Enjoy a Great Maine Tradition

Each year around March 1, I look forward to warmer spring temperatures. I think about summer evenings sitting by a beautiful Maine lake, listening to loons call across the water. Anticipating sunny days and quiet evenings out in Maine's great outdoors always reminds me of the great discounts NRCM members get at Maine's sporting camps. We partner with these sporting camp owners as a way to thank our members for supporting our work protecting the nature of Maine while at the same time promoting local Maine businesses that care about Maine's outdoors. To receive a discount voucher, please email me [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org) or call me (207) 430-0106. For more information, visit [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org). Note that to receive the discount, you'll need a voucher upon your arrival. Questions? Feel free to contact me.

—Beth Comeau, Public Affairs and eCommunications Manager

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## Explore Maine!

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Memberships start at \$35 annually and include many great benefits, including sporting camp discounts, *Maine Environment* newsletter, our *Nature of Maine* wall calendar featuring beautiful Maine photos, and much more. Join online at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org) or by calling (800) 287-2345.