



## NRCM Takes State Leadership to Local Level with New “Sustainable Maine” Project by Pete Didisheim

This year NRCM launched our new “Sustainable Maine” project with the goal of expanding community sustainability initiatives in Maine to save energy, boost renewable energy, increase recycling, reduce solid waste, and promote land conservation and stewardship efforts. This new initiative is working to highlight the importance of personal and local efforts to protect Maine’s environment by fostering sustainable activities.

Maine has adopted many groundbreaking state policies over the last 40 years. The time has come for effective community-level sustainability initiatives, too, to help protect our environment and boost our economy.

Cities and towns around the world are showing leadership through sustainability initiatives that reduce toxic chemicals and carbon pollution, increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, and make communities more livable. As you might suspect, large cities like Seattle, San Francisco, and Portland (OR) have been recognized as among the “greenest” in the nation. So, too, have cities like Madison (WI), Rochester (NY), Laredo (TX), Wichita (KS), and Omaha (NE). Each of these communities is pursuing initiatives that make them more environment-friendly while also helping them become more attractive places to live and work. That’s what we want here in Maine.

### Early Focus on Portland

NRCM believes Portland could become one of the “greenest” cities in the nation by adopting sustainability measures that save energy, reduce waste, and curb impacts to our land, air, water, and wildlife. Many exciting efforts already are underway, and NRCM’s Sustainable Maine project leader, Sarah Lakeman, has been working hard to help those efforts gain momentum.

Earlier this year, for example, Portland became one of the first cities to adopt ordinances that



NRCM Sustainable Maine Project Director Sarah Lakeman (right) with Portland City Councilor Jill Duson. Sarah worked with the Portland City Council to pass a single-use bag fee and a ban on polystyrene earlier in the spring.

will ban polystyrene containers for food and establish a 5-cent avoidable fee on plastic and paper bags to promote reusable ones. (Bring your reusable bags, and you won’t have to pay the 5 cents per bag.) Sarah worked closely with members of the Portland City Council to craft the final language of these ordinances, which go into effect April 15, 2015.

Both measures are big wins for the environment and people. Polystyrene food containers are a persistent source of pollution in Casco Bay, where they can be lethal when ingested by fish and other wildlife. And single-use bags distributed by the hundreds of thousands are easily replaced with reusable

shopping bags. Cities across the country that have already instituted fees on plastic and paper bags have seen great results. In those cities, these bags are no longer clogging storm drains, jamming recycling equipment, getting tangled in trees, and floating out to sea. Most importantly, millions of plastic and paper bags have been replaced by bags that can be used over and over again.

Freeport was the first community to adopt a polystyrene container ban, back in 1990. Now, other communities in Maine are considering following Portland’s lead with bag ordinances of their own. That’s what we’re hoping for with our Sustainable Maine project: demonstrating progress in one community, then helping others follow the lead.

NRCM also helped organize Portland Greenfest 2014, which took place in September and attracted thousands of people to Portland’s Monument Square. They visited educational booths, saw demonstrations, enjoyed great live music, and participated in a range of fun activities. Sarah and NRCM Outreach Coordinator Todd Martin played big roles helping organize Portland Greenfest 2014, which we hope will be an annual event—as is Boston Greenfest, our inspiration for the Portland event.

Sarah also has been working with residents in Gorham and Falmouth

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## NRCM Rising Kicks Off with a Bang!

In September, the Natural Resources Council of Maine launched a new group—NRCM Rising—for Mainers in their 20s and 30s to meet-up, connect, and get involved with issues facing our air, land, water, and wildlife. NRCM Rising, led by NRCM’s young professional staffers, will host fun outdoor trips, engaging presentations on issues facing Maine’s environment, social networking opportunities, a State House action day, and other ways for young Mainers to work together and with NRCM to find solutions that will protect Maine’s environment for generations to come.

For more than 55 years, NRCM has been connecting people like you who care about Maine’s special places and the environment we love and depend on for our way of life. Now, we are helping to connect the next generation of people who love Maine. During our kick-off week, we were thrilled to meet with 150 young Mainers in four days—in Belfast, Portland, Lewiston, and Bangor—and hear about how to make sure NRCM Rising works for them. From their feedback, we have already started lining up events for the coming months.

Do you know people in their 20s or 30s who might be interested? If so, please encourage them to sign-up at [www.nrcmrising.org](http://www.nrcmrising.org). Together, we can ensure that the next generation is better prepared to protect and enhance the nature of Maine. —Emmie Theberge, NRCM Outreach Manager and Clean Energy Policy Advocate





## • THE BIG PICTURE •

### Best Tool in the Toolkit

by Lisa Pohlmann, NRCM Executive Director

As we head into the fast-approaching legislative session, with newly elected officials and so much work to be done to protect Maine's lands and waters, I have been thinking about our various strategies to ensure success in the coming year.

We are always in the process of reviewing the research, identifying emerging threats and opportunities, and working with coalitions and policy makers to identify the next best paths and places to push to achieve success on our shared goals. We are constantly working out our communications plans so that we can explain our issues clearly and get people excited and engaged in the projects and campaigns coming up. And the one constant we rely upon year after year—the best tool in our tool kit—is the passion of NRCM members.



COURTESY PHOTO

It has been a pleasure to meet personally with so many of you this summer and fall at our Allagash Award and Conservation Leadership Award events; at music festivals, Rotary Club meetings, and churches; and in living rooms and coffee shops from Portland to Ellsworth and beyond. The entire NRCM staff has been crisscrossing the state, too, and I know many of you have had the opportunity to talk with us at Bangor Greendrinks, NRCM Rising kick-off events, and Portland Greenfest. We even had a

presence at the People's Climate March in New York City, as NRCM staffer Cathy Johnson marched with 300,000 people (and many of you!) to send a loud-and-clear message to the United Nations' Climate Summit that it is high time for action.

You are key to our success. Your advocacy (testimony, letters to the editor, and calls to your representatives), your many emails with your thoughts and encouragement, and your financial support keep us strong, focused, and ready to face the challenges ahead.

As I head to the office down Route 17 from Jefferson most mornings, my mind is always buzzing with our conversations. I'll be carrying you with me when I head to the State House or speak at the next conference or spend time enjoying the beautiful nature of Maine. Together we make a world of difference.

## Congratulations to Our 2014 Conservation Leadership Award Winners

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014, NRCM honored nine individuals with our 2014 Conservation Leadership Awards, at Maple Hill Farm Inn, in Hallowell. About 100 people joined us for the reception, which was followed by congratulatory remarks by Executive Director Lisa Pohlmann and Board Vice President Russ Pierce. The highlight was hearing from the recipients themselves. Congratulations to this year's recipients! View photos and read the citations at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org). Special thanks to *Maine* magazine, sponsor of this great event.



Front row from left: Alice Bolstridge, Lorette Adams, Gail Maynard, Shelly Mountain  
Back row from left: NRCM Executive Director Lisa Pohlmann, Robert Godfrey, Peter Lowell, Jim Wellehan, Kathy Wellehan, Peter Kallin, NRCM Board Vice President Russ Pierce

- ★ **Jim and Kathy Wellehan** (Auburn), *Lifetime Achievement*, for showing that what's good for the environment is good for business
- ★ **Lorette Adams** (Easton), **Alice Bolstridge** (Presque Isle), **Gail Maynard** (Woodland), and **Shelly Mountain** (Mapleton), for their unwavering determination to ensure that Maine implements strong, commonsense regulations to protect our waters, wildlife, and citizens from dangerous mining pollution
- ★ **Peter Kallin** (Rome) and **Peter Lowell** (Bridgton), for their tireless efforts to protect the water quality of Maine's lakes
- ★ **Robert Godfrey** (Eastport), *People's Choice Award winner*, for his perseverance in protecting the beauty and heritage of Downeast Maine by leading the grassroots organization, *Save Passamaquoddy Bay*

## Sustainable Maine - Continued from page 1

on sustainability measures, and has been participating in Portland Mayor Mike Brennan's Initiative for Healthy Sustainable Food Systems. We are pursuing some of these efforts as members of the Greater Portland Sustainability Council (GPSC), a group that is tracking and promoting sustainability projects in Portland and surrounding communities. NRCM will be working during the year ahead to catalogue, document, and help implement many of the group's efforts and to help spread the word to other cities and towns.

### Moving to Other Communities

NRCM firmly believes that Maine is poised to move to a higher level of sustainability, with so many complementary efforts underway. As Maine's leading statewide environmental organization, NRCM will be bringing our skills, expertise, and "people power" to these efforts, and will help take them statewide. During the year ahead, our new Sustainable Maine project will connect with more communities and provide additional resources to people working to demonstrate leadership at the local level.

—Pete Didisheim, NRCM Senior Director of Advocacy

**Are there initiatives underway in your community? Please tell us about them in an email to [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org).**



NRCM's Todd Martin takes the stage at Portland Greenfest.

## DON'T WASTE MAINE

In 1989, NRCM played a lead role in passing Maine's ground-breaking recycling and solid waste law that set a state goal of recycling 50 percent of our state's garbage by 1994. Now, 25 years later, according to a recent analysis from the Department of Environmental Protection, Maine is stuck at about 40 percent. We could exceed the 50 percent goal by redoubling our efforts. Maine's Solid Waste Management law created a waste management hierarchy favoring reduction, re-use, recycling, composting, and waste reduction. Landfilling should be the last disposal option. We've made big progress since 1989, when 90 percent of our solid waste went to landfills—and when Maine looked like an attractive dumping ground for out-of-state waste. Since then, many small, harmful landfills have been closed, and the flow of out-of-state waste has been significantly curbed through the law's ban on private landfill ownership. But Maine is falling short in other regards. Here are some things that need to be done:

 **Increase Recycling at Home** Think first, before throwing materials in the trash. Far too much clothing is being thrown away, so are newspapers and other recyclables.

 **Recycle Organics** Nearly 40 percent of municipal solid waste is organic material—mostly food waste—that can be composted. If you don't have a compost system, please consider creating one. More towns should adopt programs like the private business Garbage to Gardens in Portland, which provides curbside organic waste pick-up for a fee, with composted soil returned to customers to use in their gardens.

 **No New Landfills** New landfills undermine municipal efforts to reduce solid waste through recycling initiatives. NRCM this summer testified against a proposed new landfill that would have been located on the banks of the Penobscot River near Argyle or Greenbush. We are pleased that DEP rejected the proposal.

 **Pay-As-You-Throw** Maine could cut its trash in half over the next five years through expansion of pay-as-you-throw programs that charge households based on the amount of waste they throw away. Those who throw away more pay more through bag fees. This creates a financial incentive for people to "reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost." Towns with good PAYT programs reduce trash by 30 to 50 percent, and recycling rates greatly increase.

 **Increase Public Education** Maine needs a much bigger education campaign about the importance of recycling. The State Planning Office (SPO) used to be involved in this work, but the LePage Administration dismantled SPO. The DEP should be the lead in communicating to the public through an advertising campaign.

# Deep Connections: Meet Tony and Beth Owens

A love of family, a commitment to community, and a deep connection to the natural world: these three characteristics define long-time members Beth and Tony Owens of Cape Elizabeth. Tony sat down with me recently to talk about the couple's history, their journey to Maine, and their decision to leave a bequest to NRCM.—Gretta J. Wark, Senior Director of Development



As a boy growing up in the 1950s, Tony Owens spent every waking minute possible outside. He lived in an inland community in Delaware, surrounded by farms and woods. Tony and his best friend Mike would explore Mike's family farm, learning about

birds, plants, and the seasons from firsthand observation.

A brief move to urban New Jersey interrupted this idyll, but the following summer, Tony had another opportunity to explore the outdoors during the family's extended vacation in the Poconos. Five-year-old Tony was ecstatic. Even a major East Coast hurricane could not dampen his enthusiasm. But something else did.

After the storm passed, the Owens and the other guests at their resort were advised not to drink the water. "Maybe I was too young, maybe I was already questioning authority," says Tony. "In either case, I drank the water."

Ten days later he woke up with a terrible fever. The next day he was paralyzed. Tony had polio. "I was lucky," he says. "I recovered fully, and I haven't developed any of the symptoms that many polio survivors experience later in life. But for 18 months I spent a great deal of time with doctors and other medical professionals. It is the main reason why I became a doctor."

Today, America's polio epidemic seems a distant memory. But at the time, it was a health threat that parents took very seriously. In the summer, many families took their children to the Catskills, the Poconos, and, of course, Maine. "People packed up their kids and went to the country," Tony recalls. "My wife, Beth, lived outside of Boston as a child, and her family spent summers near Blue Hill." The family still has a home there.

Tony's love of the outdoors was solidified when he attended Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Dartmouth's proximity to the mountains offered ample opportunities for skiing in the winter and hiking in the warmer months. He also met Beth in Hanover. A nutrition student at Simmons College, she had a practicum at a nearby hospital. After he graduated, Tony and Beth married and headed to Ohio for him to attend medical school. It was just a matter of time before the couple returned to New England.

"I was so happy when I was matched with what is now Maine Medical Center in Portland." The inquisitive and high-energy Tony was soon drawn to emergency medicine, with its quick pace and changing roster of patients and presenting conditions. He has been at Maine Med ever since. As a Registered Dietitian, Beth worked in the outpatient clinic at Maine Medical Center and

then started a private practice in nutrition consulting.

The busy couple settled in Cape Elizabeth, raised four children, and found time to pursue non-work interests. "Volunteering is just part of being a good citizen," says Tony. He has served as an alumni advisor for Dartmouth, helped build an outdoor classroom for a local organization, and served on the boards of Hurricane Island Outward Bound, the Nature Conservancy, and NRCM.

After a mandatory one-year hiatus, Tony is returning to NRCM's board this fall (see below). "I am especially focused on engaging students and young professionals in NRCM's efforts to protect Maine," he says. Beth retired a few years ago from the nutrition world. She took a Master Gardening Course through the Cooperative Extension and started working in the elementary schools, teaching students about gardening. In the fall the students harvest their produce and with her guidance, they provide produce and make flower arrangements for a harvest luncheon at the school. The goal is to have the students connect locally grown produce and good food choices. "More than anything, these activities help them to be respectful of their schoolyard environment," Beth says. "The students have proven themselves to be good stewards."

Along that line, Beth volunteers with a produce pantry in her town, helping to provide fresh fruit and vegetables to area families and individuals who face food insecurity. She also serves as a docent at the Portland Museum of Art, working with school groups. "I guess I just like to work with kids," she says.

Now that their children are having children, Tony and Beth embrace every opportunity to share their love of the outdoors with a new generation of family. The arrival of grandchildren also made them realize that it was time to update their estate plans. That led to some thoughtful discussions about how to best help their family and the place they love, Maine.

"We made a bequest to charity in an earlier will, but the entire Owens family would have had to die in the same plane crash for any of the money to go to charity," Tony jokes. "This time around, Beth and I felt we could leave some money outright. It was more a matter of deciding where we felt our money would have the most impact. As a small group with an outsized track-record of achievement, NRCM is one of the groups we chose to support."

An outsized track-record of achievement? We could say the same about Tony and Beth Owens, who deliberately and selflessly have worked to create a better community, a greener Maine, and an effective NRCM.

**Create a legacy for Maine** with a bequest, beneficiary designation for a 401(k), or other gifts through your estate. Contact Gretta Wark, NRCM Senior Director of Development, at (207) 430-0108 for a confidential conversation.

## Welcome, New NRCM Board Members

At its August meeting, the board of directors re-elected eight board members and welcomed four new members. Re-elected are **Tom Tietenberg** (Waterville), to a fourth term (one year); **Elisa Boxer** (Scarborough), **Marion Freeman** (Freeport), **Jeanne Gulnick** (Peaks Island), **Susan MacKenzie** (Waterville), and **Kate Rush** (Newport), all to a third term (three years); and **Phil Bartlett** (Gorham) and **Stephen Mulkey** (Unity), for a second term (three years). The four new board members will serve for one year, subject to re-election. They are:

**Tony Owens, MD** (Cape Elizabeth) Tony rejoins the board of directors after a mandatory one-year hiatus, during which he served as a member of NRCM's National Advisory Board. During his tenure on the board, Tony served as vice president and then president. He also chaired NRCM's search for a new executive director in 2010. He has been an effective advocate for Maine's wildlife and natural resources, testifying at hearings, writing opinion pieces, and communicating with his elected representatives. Tony is an emergency room doctor at Maine Medical Center.



**Sally Oldham** (Portland) "Mostly retired," Sally is an architectural historian with extensive experience in the fields of historic preservation, scenic conservation, and transportation policy. She has served in a board or advisory role for Greater Portland Landmarks, Maine Preservation, and the Western Prom Neighborhood Association. Prior to moving to Maine in 2005 from the Washington, D.C.

area, Sally served as president of Scenic America, a national non-profit environmental organization whose mission is to preserve and enhance the scenic character of America's communities and countryside.



**Tom Carr** (Harpswell) Tom has lived in Harpswell year-round since he retired from running his family business in New Jersey several years ago. A lifelong outdoorsman and environmentalist, Tom has dedicated countless hours to trail and stewardship work for the Maine Island Trail Association, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and groups in New Jersey. He is a prolific nature photographer: every hike, paddle, backcountry ski trip, or ramble with his dogs has him on the lookout for photogenic flora and fauna. Since moving to Maine, he has shared his focus between land and sea and became a Registered Maine Sea Kayak Guide.



**Marian McCue** (Portland) Marian is the former owner and editor of the Forecaster group of newspapers. She has lent her skills as a communications specialist and a fundraiser to numerous important causes, including the Maine Civil Liberties Union, Shalom House, and the 2012 Marriage Equality campaign. A native of Yarmouth, Marian spent summers at her family's camp on a lake on Mount Desert Island. As a result, she developed a deep and lasting appreciation for the beauty and diversity of Maine's natural resources.

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Earn bragging rights while helping us raise awareness about climate change and funds in support of our work to keep Maine a special place! 5K "warm up" run around Portland's Back Cove trail: 11:00 a.m. (registration starts at 9:00, Back Cove parking lot, across from Hannaford) Polar Bear Dip into Casco Bay: noon (registration at 11:00 a.m. and not necessary for race participants). Shuttle will return participants to Back Cove parking lot after dip.



Cool prizes from local businesses for 5k winners by age class, and also for best costume, top fundraisers, and team spirit! After party at the GreatLostBear! Learn more and sign up at <http://nrcm.kintera.org/dipdash>. Be BOLD in the COLD! Help protect Maine's environment!

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## New in the NRCM Blogosphere

Visit our blog to read the latest posts:

- **At the Core of Beauty and Peace: Paddling the Debsconeags** NRCM Board member Karen Herold shares her end-of-summer paddle and camping on the Debsconeag Lakes, a remote area of Maine's North Woods, with Lisa Pohlmann and others. Photos by Elaine Isakson.
- **A River of People** Read Senior Staff Attorney and North Woods Project Director Cathy Johnson's first-hand account of her trip to New York City to march along with more than 300,000 others to bring attention to the need for climate change action by world leaders that gathered for the United Nations' general assembly.
- **NRCM Bike Ride at the Proposed Katahdin Woods & Waters National Park** Guest blogger and NRCM member Paul Corrigan of Millinocket shares his experience at NRCM's mountain biking event on the lands proposed for a National Park and National Recreation Area east of Baxter State Park.

## Maine Environment

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Maine Environment is provided five times a year to more than 16,000 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 \$35/year. Join online at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org). Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Maine Environment is printed on processed chlorine-free, post-consumer recycled paper.

## Special Memberships Given August 1 to October 31, 2014

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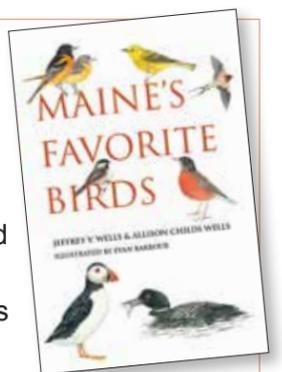
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Karen Ryla in honor of Robin and John Neal  
Boothbay Region Garden Club in honor of Pete Didisheim  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Belfast in honor of Lisa Pohlmann

New members of PARTNERS IN MAINE'S FUTURE Program, our monthly giving club. Members' automatic donations help us save on administrative costs, including paper. Special thanks to these members!

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For every NRCM gift membership you give, you or your recipient will receive the book, *Maine's Favorite Birds*, by NRCM's own Allison Wells and her husband, Jeff, FREE. Call or send in your payment with the code "Newsletter Favorite Birds 2014." Now through January 31, 2015.



## My Maine This Week



"This guy glided across the trail only feet in front of me at Plymouth Bog, a Maine Wildlife Management Area. It gave me quite a start. It landed on a branch perhaps 10 yards into the woods and 15 feet high. As I bobbed around trying to get a shot, the owl seemed also to be bobbing its head around trying to get a clear look at me. All's fair, I guess. Isn't Maine a great place?"

—Photo of Barred Owl by NRCM member Dave Small of Old Town, Maine

Send Us Your "My Maine This Week" Do you have a photograph of Maine you'd like to share? A short poem? Send your submissions to [beth@nrcm.org](mailto:beth@nrcm.org). Visit "My Maine This Week" online at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org).

## Green Tip of the Day



**New Life to Old Sweaters** Does that old sweater have sentimental value? Unravel the yarn and use it to knit a new hat or scarf. Or remove the arms and fashion them into colorful leggings. Repurposing items like these can be fun, saves you money, and protects natural resources. For a green tip of the day every day, visit NRCM's website at [www.nrcm.org](http://www.nrcm.org). And tune in to WCLZ 98.9 FM on your radio dial (or web stream) to hear a new Maine Green Minute, every week day, four times a day!



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