
Discovery and interpretation of the human history of the region, including historical and present-day Native American sites and traditions, and the logging heritage from river drives to modern paper-making. A new Maine Woods National Monument east of Baxter State Park has something for everyone.

More than 1,100 people from across the state helped make that point at a public hearing with National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis on May 16. The event, sponsored by Senator Angus King, packed the Collins Center for the Arts at the University of Maine in Orono, with some 1,400 people attending. Senator King and Director Jarvis held the meeting to help gauge public opinion about the possibility of a Maine Woods National Monument.

They got their answer, with over 80 percent of those attending expressing support. Some 218 people arrived on buses from all over Maine, including 39 people on a bus from Patten and Medway. The other 900+ supporters came for the Arts at the University of Maine in Orono, with some 1,400 people attending. Senator King and Director Jarvis held the meeting to help gauge public opinion about the possibility of a Maine Woods National Monument.

This year, 2016, is the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service Act of 1906. They do not require Congressional action. On the other hand, a National Monument can be an important step forward in the effort to create a new National Park east of Baxter.

"Polls taken in the second Congressional district covering northern, western, and eastern Maine indicate that 67 percent of residents in those areas support the creation of a new National Park east of Baxter." — Cathy Johnson, NRCM

Maine does not currently have any National Monuments. But it did at one time. Acadia National Park began as Sieur de Monts National Monument. Like the National Park Service, Sieur de Monts National Monument was established in 1916 so its successor, Acadia National Park, is also celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

The U.S. currently has 121 National Monuments protecting natural, historical, and cultural sites in 30 states, plus the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Minor Outlying Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands. President Theodore Roosevelt established the first National Monument, Devils Tower in Wyoming, on September 24, 1906. Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah, the Statue of Liberty in New York, Fort Sumter in South Carolina, and Muir Woods in California are some of our current National Monuments.

Sixty previously designated National Monuments are no longer National Monuments. Many, like Acadia, the Grand Canyon, Zion, Bryce Canyon, Carlsbad Caverns, Denali, Death Valley, and Joshua Tree, have become National Parks. Others have become National Wildlife Refuges, National Battlefields, or National Historical Parks.

President Obama has created 23 National Monuments, the most of any President, recently surpassing Theodore Roosevelt and Bill Clinton. The National Monuments created by President Obama range from the 1.6 million-acre Mohave Trail National Monument in the California desert to the Belmot-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument, an historic house in Washington, D.C. Designation of a Maine Woods National Monument would be an important step forward in the effort to create a new National Park and Recreation Area in Maine’s North Woods. National Monuments can be created by the President using the authority granted under the Antiquities Act of 1906. They do not require Congressional action. On the other hand, a
Standing Tall
by Lisa Pohlmann, NRCM Executive Director

I am often asked, “How do you do the work you do?” People inquire because they know NRCM’s work to protect our woods, water, air, and wildlife is tough. They know we effectively lead the charge, no matter how difficult the task. Most of you know by now that Governor LePage began publicly attacking NRCM this year, calling it a “threat” and vowing to “wipe a little dirt” against us. We all recognize that it’s a badge of honor to be called out for so effectively stopping the governor’s unprecedented anti-environmental agenda for the last five years. Trying to discredit one’s opponents is not a new tactic, but such targeted, aggressive public behavior is foreign to Maine. It’s a desperate move, and we can’t let his rants distract us from our mission of protecting Maine’s environment for future generations.

A healthy environment is the foundation of Maine’s economy. Think of the thousands of jobs and millions of dollars that flow to Maine because of our natural resources. Meanwhile, Governor LePage has actively detailed opportunities to build more good jobs creating clean, renewable homegrown energy; has diverted funding away from energy efficiency improvements that would employ Maine people and save Mainer’s money, too, and has undermined land conservation efforts that bring us all enormous economic and recreational returns.

NRCM has been working cooperatively with utility companies, the solar industry, and the public advocates to create 800 new solar jobs. We have worked with weatherization and efficiency professionals, and with major businesses seeking to remain competitive, to defend and boost efficiency opportunities for Maine homes and businesses.

And we are working hard to create a new national monument in northern Maine with the support of scores of local people, including the Katahdin Region Chamber of Commerce, who want to diversify and grow their local economy. Groups like the Maine Inkeepers Association also support the proposal, knowing that there will be economic benefits for the entire state.

The governor wants us to go away, but, of course, we are not going anywhere. We have a powerful 57-year history of achievements that have ensured that Maine is the special place you love and will be proud to leave your grandchildren. NRCM was founded in 1959 by Maine people and now represents more than 16,000 supporters from almost every legislative district in the state. Our members come from both political parties, from all socio-economic backgrounds, and from rural and urban communities. We are lifelong Mainers and transplants alike. NRCM’s work is fully financially supported by our members and foundations; we take no government funding. We have been around through the administrations of seven governors previous to Paul LePage, and we will be around for many more to come.

There will always be a need for the Natural Resources Council of Maine, the watchdog at the gate, a guardian making sure that we balance the protection of our resources with the economic vitality of our communities.

NRCM is real you. Our staff team of scientific, legal, and policy experts works for you. An attack on NRCM is an attack on the people of Maine who care enough to call their legislators, testify at hearings, and write letters to the papers. You are the reason we exist, why we are so successful, and why no one’s threats will stop us.

I believe in our power, and I am confident we will continue to find ways forward here in Maine, by bringing together even more people who want to ensure we protect and sustain our clean air, clean water, and the habitats that nourish us and our wildlife.

I appreciate that you are standing tall with me right now. Let’s keep our eyes on our goals; share stories of positive actions with our neighbors and friends; call our decision makers when we need to, and stay connected. We stand on the shoulders of the giants who came before us, and we are the giants who will carry this legacy forward.

Restoring the Penobscot: the End is in Sight
Great news for fish, communities, and the entire Penobscot River ecosystem: The Penobscot River Restoration Project is nearing completion, which is expected this June. As a result, salmon, shad, and other sea-run fish will regain access to 1,000 miles of their historic habitat on the Penobscot River for the first time since dams were built almost 200 years ago.

NRCM is proud to be a founding member of this project, working on these efforts from 2000 to this day. The Penobscot is Maine’s largest river, connecting Maine’s great North Woods with the Atlantic Ocean. The opening of a new river channel around the old dam in Howland marks the final step in this initiative, the largest river restoration project in the country. Reopening the river to the sea will increase numbers of sea-run fish, help members of the Penobscot Indian Nation practice their treaty rights to sustenance fishing, and boost populations of wildlife including Bald Eagles, Osprey, mink, and otter. Restoring historic sea-run fish is also critical to bringing back halibut, cod, and other groundfish to the Gulf of Maine because groundfish eat sea-run fish.

NRCM is very proud of the Penobscot River Restoration Project’s success. We are grateful to its hard-working staff and its other member organizations: the Penobscot Indian Nation, American Rivers, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, Maine Audubon, Trout Unlimited, and The Nature Conservancy.

It’s a historic opportunity we should seize.
—Cathy Johnson is NRCM’s Forests and Wildlife Project Director

National Monument - Continued from page 1
National Park and Recreation Area can only be established by an Act of Congress.

For several years, NRCM has been working to build support for a new National Park and Recreation Area east of Baxter State Park on land owned by Eliotville Plantation, Inc. EPI currently owns 87,500 acres in the Katahdin region and that is the land that would become the National Monument. EPI proposes to donate the land, along with a substantial endowment that would help pay for operating costs of the National Monument.

In late March, Senator King invited the National Park Service to come to Maine and hold a public meeting to hear what Maine residents think about the proposed National Monument. The standing ovation that the audience in the packed Collins Center gave to Lucas St. Clair after he presented the proposal could not have been a clearer signal that Maine people overwhelmingly support a National Monument.

Supporters of the Monument include many residents of the Katahdin region. The Katahdin Area Chamber of Commerce, representing 140 businesses in Millinocket, East Millinocket, Medway, Lincoln, Sherman, Brownville, Patten, and surrounding unorganized townships, endorsed the National Park and Recreation Area proposal, as has the Katahdin Rotary Club. The Houlton Chamber of Commerce, the Bangor City Council, and the Maine Inkeepers Association have also endorsed the proposal, recognizing that the substantial economic benefits the adjacent communities will experience once the National Monument/Park is established will flow as well to the region, and indeed, the entire state.

Many residents whose families have lived and worked in the Katahdin region for generations support the proposal because they see the downward economic spiral that has overtaken their communities as one mill after another has closed. Schools are struggling, home prices have plummeted, and food pantries and thrift stores have replaced vibrant businesses. The public and private sector jobs that will be created after the establishment of a new National Monument could be an important piece of a more diverse future economy for the region.

But change is hard for any community, and there remain those in the Katahdin region who oppose the proposal. Some don’t trust the federal government; others fear that it would harm their prospects for future forest products-related industry. However, as other National Parks around the country have shown, there is no need to choose between a forest products-based economy and a National Park. They can and do successfully co-exist.

Many National Parks faced local opposition when they were initially created. However, without exception, every National Monument and National Park across the country has provided substantial benefits to neighboring communities and eventually have been embraced by them.

Polls taken in the second Congressional district covering northern, western, and eastern Maine indicate that 67 percent of residents in those areas support the creation of a new National Park east of Baxter. Polls in the southern part of the state, not surprisingly, show even stronger support.

With the closure of five paper mills in the last two years, northern Maine is in a time of change. The possibility of a new National Monument, and ultimately a new National Park and Recreation Area, is a historic opportunity for the Katahdin region and for the entire state. It is a chance to protect and introduce the world to all of the natural beauty, wildlife, and recreational opportunities that Maine’s North Woods offers while providing an economic boost for struggling communities.

It’s a historic opportunity we should seize.
—Judy Berk, Advocacy Communications Director

Howland dam bypass construction September 2015

Bald Mountain from Haskell Rock

R.PARKER/NRCM

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2016 ALLAGASH AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Natural Resources Council of Maine is honored that you have chosen us to help protect Maine’s environment. This year, nearly 100 of you will mark your 20th anniversary as members of NRCM. We will celebrate your commitment to Maine’s environment at the Allagash Awards on Thursday, July 14, at the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath. We invite current and previous Allagash Award recipients to join us at 5 p.m. for refreshments, entertainment, and a great view of the Kennebec River. Allagash Award recipients are also invited to come early to tour the museum, which celebrates Maine’s shipbuilding history. Invitations to follow.

Linda Newcomb & Buck O’Herin, Montville
Long-time members Buck O’Herin and Lisa Newcomb share a love of nature. Buck, especially, can be found outdoors, hiking and paddling the lands and waters for which he has been a great advocate.

What issue first caught your attention and led you to join NRCM?
The Big A dam first caught my attention before I joined as a member. I probably joined when forestry issues and land conservation were at the forefront, and because of your advocacy in Augusta.

Allagash Awardees are recognized for 20 years of support. What NRCM moment do you most remember from the last 20 years?
I think the decision to back the National Park near Millinocket is a really big one. NRCM was also a big supporter of the Penobscot River Restoration Project, which has been really important. Another one that impressed me was the fight against the AES coal-fired plant in Bucksport in the late 80s. NRCM really stepped up to the plate on that. It was a grassroots efforts, and the [local opponents] approached NRCM and said your support would help stop it. And the plant was defeated. At that time it was a little bit of a risk for NRCM to support that effort.

What has kept you supporting NRCM for the last 20 years?
I feel as though your work has stayed vital and right at the heart of protecting our way of life. Now, we are helping to connect the next generation of people who love Maine, too.

Paul Cousins, Falmouth
Meteorologist Paul Cousins is well known to most Maine people, thanks to his chosen profession. At NRCM, we know him as a twenty-year member, one of nearly 100 members who will receive NRCM’s Allagash Award this summer in recognition of his long-time support of our work.

Can you share what area of our work first attracted you to become an NRCM member?
I’ve been a member for many years, but I first joined in 1993. I’m thankful to previous generations of NRCM members interested in joining NRCM Rising?
Because there will always be important and challenging work to do to protect Maine. Twenty years is a long time, and much has happened in Maine’s environmental history during those two decades. Is there a particular issue you remember particularly well?
A challenging selection to decide upon.....the removal of the Edwards Dam? Please don’t make me choose!!

Being an Allagash Award means you have been supporting NRCM for the last 20 years. What is it about our work that inspires you to stay with us?
NRCM is an champion for clean air and water, healthy rivers, Land for Maine’s Future—you name it. NRCM is also working on climate change. As a decade-long homeowner of solar thermal and PV arrays, I share NRCM’s commitment to renewable energy as one of many important steps to addressing global warming.

In September 2014, the Natural Resources Council of Maine launched a new program—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 six young professional staffers, hosts fun outdoor trips, engaging presentations on issues facing Maine’s environment, 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. Over the past year and a half, NRCM Rising has held nearly 20 events around Maine from Portland to Mt. Chase, and Lewiston to Belfast. We have an active base of more than 300 young Mainers and continue to grow each year. In 2016, we added an eight-person Leadership Team. These Leaders have provided ideas, energy, and momentum to NRCM Rising, and bring diverse skills and experience to the team.

For 57 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, too.

Do you know people in their 20s or 30s who might be interested in joining NRCM Rising?
If so, please encourage them to sign up at www.nrcmrising.org!
Thanks for NYO 5K!

More than 50 participants joined us May 15th in Augusta for our Not Your Ordinary 5k. Participants and sponsors raised $3,000 for our work to protect Maine’s environment—thank you! Top fundraiser was Aislynn Cruz, first fundraising team was Lisa Super Athletic, and the first team to cross the finish line was the Buffalo Squad. Nice job! Don’t worry thanks Jon Berry, LMT for providing massages at the event. Lakes Region Timing Management for providing race timing, Maine Primitive Skills for providing a fan-favorite challenge station, and to Lamay Websheam, SunriseGuise and Tibury Publishing for providing prizes. Also, a huge thank you to Allevys-Biscon EyeCare, The Breathable Home, Cribstone Capital Management, Dingis Capital Advisors, Kennedy Savings Bank, and the Millhouse for their generous business sponsorships. Visit our Facebook page to see more photos from this fun event!

JOIN US! Friday, July 22, 7:00-8:30 p.m
Hardy Boat Puffin Cruise with Dr. Steve Kress

Puffin Watch to Eastern Egg Rock Aboard the Hardy Boat, leaving out of New Harbor Join NRCM for an hour-and-a-half cruise out of New Harbor to Eastern Egg Rock aboard the Hardy Boat for an up-close look at some of Maine’s favorite coastal summer residents, Atlantic Puffins. Mid-July is the perfect time to see the puffins as well as other seabirds and wildlife. We’ll be joined by Dr. Stephen Kress, founder and director of Project Puffin, who will give an overview of the puffin project and answer your questions. NRCM’s Allison Wells and her husband, Jeff, lifelong birders and authors of Maine’s Favorite Birds, will also be on board to help you see and identify birds and other wildlife. Space is limited so sign up today at www.nrcm.kintera.org/puffins2016.

Congratulations, Emmie!

NRCM Climate and Clean Energy Policy Advocate Emmie Theberge was given a 2016 Bates-Morse Mountain Award for Environmental Stewardship. Way to go, Emmie!

New NRCM Blog

Quest for Protection: The Headwaters of Maine’s North Woods—Erika Zambello, a former NRCM intern, is spending part of each season this year in Maine’s North Woods, traveling the headwaters of five major rivers. Erika’s photos and stories will transport you to the beauty and solitude of Maine’s North Woods. Read her posts here: http://www.nrcm.org/category/blogs-of-nrcm/quest-for-protection/

New at our Nature of Maine blog:

► Just Eat It: My Food Waste Story: NRCM’s Gretta Wark, inspired by the “Just Eat It” food waste documentary, shares her month-long quest to use food sitting in her cupboard while saving money on her grocery bill.

► Reuse—Recycle—Remember NRCM member Leda Beth Gray shares memories of her dad and the steps he inspired her to take in her own life to reduce and reuse items.

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Protecting the Nature of Maine