



INSIDE!  
NRCM  
RISING

Presumpscot River Preserve by Mary Zambello, Land for Maine's Future Photo Contest Winner

FALL 2017

# MAINE Environment



## How Much Food Is Your School Wasting?

**To find out:** Multiply the number of students by 36.5 to gauge the number of pounds of organic waste coming out of the school lunch, breakfast, and snack programs annually. It doesn't matter what grades, rural or urban, affluent or not, this average is remarkably consistent. In Maine alone, the number could reach seven million pounds in a single year!



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## Taking a Bite Out of Food Waste

Tackling climate change, food insecurity, and economic waste one meal at a time

BY RYAN PARKER, NRCM SUSTAINABLE MAINE POLICY ADVOCATE

Licia Goodridge knows just how expensive food waste is. Since food is mostly water, which weighs eight pounds per gallon, and hauling contracts are based on weight, she knew her school district was wasting money transporting something to the dump that could be put to a higher use. Licia, RSU 19 Facilities Manager, had been trying, unsuccessfully, to make this point to superintendents for years. When RSU 19 hired a new superintendent in 2016, Licia figured, "What the heck, I'll try again."

Mike Hammer needed little convincing. His reaction, according to Licia, was, "Food is heavy; let's get it out of there!" Thrilled, Licia contacted NRCM.

RSU 19 is one of Maine's largest school districts, covering Corinna, Dixmont, Etna, Hartland, Newport, Palmyra, Plymouth, and St. Albans and totaling nearly 2,000 students plus staff. That's a lot of food waste, and a lot of expense for the schools.

RSU 19's decision to tackle food waste has tremendous benefits for the schools and the environment, which is why NRCM's Sustainable Maine project staff already had begun working on the issue when Licia Goodridge called. We had been learning about the issue and sharing information at events, including 14 screenings of the food waste documentary, "Just Eat It." People were responding, and we realized we were scratching the surface of something huge.

### Universal Challenges

Roughly 40 percent of the food produced annually for human consumption in the United States is wasted. To put this into perspective, imagine buying a bag of 10 apples and throwing 4 of them straight into the garbage. Now imagine doing that with 40 percent of all the food you purchase. This waste costs the average family of four \$1,500 per year. Ninety-seven percent of food waste goes into the landfill, representing the largest component of our municipal waste and costing Maine property tax payers hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. It gets worse: Food waste in landfills creates millions of pounds of methane gas, affecting the earth's climate even more than CO<sub>2</sub>, which also, ironically, is making it harder for farmers to produce food. This doesn't even account for the staggering amount of land, water, energy, and infrastructure wasted when we throw away the food those resources produced.

Contrary to popular perception, the majority of this waste comes not from farms, restaurants, grocery stores, or other institutions, including schools. It comes from households. At just the moment when NRCM was trying to figure out how to tackle this problem, Licia called. NRCM helped RSU 19 create and facilitate a steering committee of teachers, custodial and dining services staff, the superintendent, several principals, local farmers, community members, and students.

As work got underway we began to recognize patterns and wondered if other school districts faced the same challenges to

*Continued on page 2*

**"To put [food waste] into perspective, imagine buying a bag of 10 apples and throwing 4 of them straight into the garbage. Now imagine doing that with 40 percent of all the food you purchase."**

**—NRCM's "Food Guy" Ryan Parker**



## Washington Watch

The Trump Administration continues to threaten Maine with budget cuts, staff cuts, rollbacks, and appointments that put our water, air, climate, and public lands at risk. NRCM's new Federal Project has been on the frontlines, defending Maine and keeping you informed. Recently, the U.S. House passed its version of the EPA budget that would cut the agency by \$528 million and included many anti-environment amendments. The U.S. Senate has yet to pass its version. We need to keep up the pressure before the current short-term budget expires December 8. Please sign on to tell Maine's Senators you support a fully funded EPA ([nrcm.salsalabs.org/epa](http://nrcm.salsalabs.org/epa)). The Trump Administration has also proposed repealing the Clean Power Plan, which would reduce climate-changing carbon pollution from power plants. The Administration wants to gut fuel-efficiency standards for cars, which would create more air pollution and make us spend more on fuel, too. Thankfully, Maine's Senators Susan Collins and Angus King realize how climate change threatens our health, environment, and economy in Maine. Senator Collins recently stood up on the floor of the U.S. Senate and said that ignoring climate change is "simply not a solution." Now we need our Senators to lead on federal climate action. In addition, the Trump Administration and House Republicans are working to gut the nation's Clean Water Rule, a part of the Clean Water Act that protects smaller streams and wetlands.

Thank you for being on the frontlines with us. We need your support and action now more than ever. Together, we are making a difference! —Emmie Theberge, Federal Director





## • THE BIG PICTURE • New Interactions Reveal What We Share

It's more important than ever these days to reach out and find common ground with new people. At NRCM, we recognize that the power of our 20,000 current supporters helps us achieve many of our objectives, but we must get even more people involved to continue to protect Maine's air, land, and water.

NRCM staff members are now working with groups in many Maine towns to improve community sustainability practices, like reducing the amount of plastic bags and polystyrene containers that residents use. We are talking with leaders in more than 30 schools about how they can reduce the amount of food wasted in their cafeterias. We offer small grants to middle school teachers who want to undertake environmental projects with their students. Our NRCM Rising initiative continues to attract 20-40 year olds through outdoor and policy-focused events designed for them. Throughout the year, we have local college interns helping on our advocacy initiatives, and learning as they do so. We continue to work with and meet new small businesses to pass solar legislation and defend Maine's new Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. And as the leading environmental voice in Maine, this past year alone, more than 10,000 people heard our staff speaking at events and on the radio. Many who heard us for the first time have followed up to learn and share more.

Each of these activities helps us meet new people, form new partnerships, and work toward shared goals. Some of these folks may not consider themselves "environmentalists," and that's okay. We all want to protect what we value: the special, natural qualities of Maine and the quality of life we enjoy here.

The conversations we have are honest and fruitful. Listening to people whose perspectives may differ from that of NRCM staff or board members helps us keep our balance. And, in the end, it also helps us reach our goal of protecting the nature of Maine.

Thank you to our supporters for all of the ways you are participating in this crucial task of reaching out, whether it's to your neighbor, relative, or local legislator. Your voice matters, and theirs does, too. These interactions remind us of what we share, not what keeps us apart. We can—and must—keep working to find common ground on renewable energy, public lands, waste reduction, fisheries restoration, coastal protections, and so much more if we are to be even better stewards of this special place we call home. —Lisa Pohlmann, Executive Director

## Food Waste - from Page 1



Sebasticook Middle School students prepare raised beds during a school garden revitalization project led by NRCM's Ryan Parker (back row, walking). The principal and garden club advisor are now working with NRCM to turn food scraps from the cafeteria into compost for the raised beds and three new hoop houses.

reducing food waste. We began to reach out to, and hear from, other schools around Maine and realized the challenges to reducing food waste in schools are nearly universal. So, too, are the statistics and reasons behind food waste in educational settings. Our research indicates this consistency holds across the country.

### "Wasting" the Climate

It has been a little over a year since NRCM began working with RSU 19. We are now in discussions with more than 30 schools around the state. We help

schools look at every opportunity within the food recovery hierarchy. Schools have a lot of options, from creating share tables (where uneaten food can be returned and used by other students), feeding waste to livestock, setting up on-site composting, and school garden programs. They often just need a little help navigating and implementing these programs.

In addition to our expanding work with schools, NRCM continues to support efforts to help reduce food waste throughout the state. We strongly support LD 1534, which would help create tax credits for small farmers that donate food, strengthen liability protections for donors, and establish a study commission to make additional policy recommendations. NRCM is part of the working group that developed as a result of LD 1534. We are tasked with researching legislative policies that could reduce food waste in Maine. We are also founding members of the Food Recovery Coalition and worked with the Maine Gleaning Network to establish the first-ever Maine Gleaning Week, which rescued more than 14,000 pounds of produce and provided 66,000 servings of food to Maine people through distribution partners like Wayside Food Programs. This is against the backdrop of skyrocketing food insecurity.

One in four Maine children, and 16.4 percent of Maine's overall population, is food insecure. Reducing food waste by 20 percent, through initiatives like gleaning and school share tables, could provide enough food for 454 million people annually.

Aside from the ethics of throwing away nearly half of our food while our neighbors go hungry, food waste is killing the climate, contributing the equivalent of 4.4 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Reducing food waste by 50 percent would result in avoided emissions equal to 26.2 gigatons by 2050. This is why Paul Hawken's book, *Drawdown*, indicates eight of the top twenty, and three of the top five, steps we can take to reverse climate change relate to food.

Number three in that book? Reduce food waste.

If your school or other facility is interested in reducing food waste, contact NRCM's "Food Guy" Ryan Parker at [rparker@nrcm.org](mailto:rparker@nrcm.org) or (207) 430-0144.

## NRCM Board Updates

At its September 2017 meeting, NRCM's Board of Directors elected six new members. The new members will begin one-year terms effective with the November meeting. Our new board members are:



**Maria Gallace** (Cape Elizabeth) is Events and Charitable Giving Director for East Brown Cow Management, Inc., commercial real estate developers in Portland. She holds an advanced degree in education and has worked professionally and as a volunteer in schools in the Boston area and Maine. She also serves on the board of Maine Public.



**Marcia Harrington** (Brunswick) is a survey research director who specializes in evaluating program effectiveness for government, private, and nonprofit organizations. Now at the Altarum Institute, Marcia assesses the effectiveness of food and nutrition programs. She is a co-founder of Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB) Midcoast, which successfully got ordinances passed in Brunswick and Topsham that restrict polystyrene foam foodware and single-use bags. She loves all things outdoors, volleyball, and, now, pickleball!



**Norton H. (Buzz) Lamb** (New Gloucester) returns for his third stint on the NRCM board, after reaching his term limit last year. A former computer consultant, Buzz has served on numerous nonprofit boards but still finds time to work several hundred acres of woods and fields. He also shelters horses for an equine abuse center and raises heritage chickens, turkeys, and bees.



**Peter Millard** (Belfast) is a family physician and epidemiologist. He grew up in Windham and spent many years working in the Bangor area. He worked for eight years in southern Africa (Zimbabwe and Mozambique), and is currently medical director of Seaport Community Health Center in Belfast. He is on the boards of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine and Physicians for Social Responsibility. In another lifetime, Peter competed in the U.S. Olympic Trials in the marathon and now enjoys biking, cross-country skiing, swimming, and anything else that gets him outdoors.



**Liz Rettenmaier** (Bangor) has more than 20 years of policy development, facilitation, and communications experience focusing on environmental and natural resources management and land use. She is a federal consultant to the U.S. EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Liz spends any winter weekend she can skiing, works from Boothbay Harbor for the summers, and enjoys exploring

local hiking trails in the spring and fall. She currently sits on the Bangor Historic Preservation Commission and the Boothbay Harbor Yacht Club board of directors.



**Bonnie Wood** (Brunswick) is Professor Emerita of Biology at the University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI). While at UMPI, Bonnie focused on reforming science pedagogy and coined the term "lecture-free teaching" to describe a classroom style that engages students fully in their classroom experience. In retirement, Bonnie enjoys road cycling, cross-country skiing, swimming, and gardening.

### The Board of Directors also re-elected the following:

#### First three-year term

David Kallin, Dresden

Annie Winchester, Pemaquid

#### Second three-year term

Phil Bartlett, Gorham

#### Retiring from the Board of Directors this fall:

Elisa Boxer, Scarborough

Marion Freeman, Freeport

Jeanne Gulnick, Peaks Island

Susan MacKenzie, Waterville

Jeff Pidot, Brunswick

Kate Rush, Newport



## Congratulations to Our 2017 Conservation Leadership Award Recipients



(Photo, clockwise starting back left: Martha Spiess, Lainey Randall, Addie Farmer, Tony Giambro, Travis Ritchie, David Courtemanch, Lisa Pohlmann)

It was our pleasure to present our 2017 Conservation Leadership Award to six outstanding individuals who are doing extraordinary work protecting Maine's land, air, waters, and wildlife. On October 19<sup>th</sup>, we gathered at the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath to honor them.

"We are very excited to acknowledge the good efforts of hard-working and dedicated individuals with our Conservation Leadership Award," says Natural Resources Council of Maine Executive Director Lisa Pohlmann. "Each of their contributions is so important, and the positive impacts extend across Maine and far beyond."

Read their citations and their comments at our website [nrcm.org](http://nrcm.org). Special thanks to *Maine* magazine, media sponsor of this event. Recipients:

**David Courtemanch (Mt. Vernon), Lifetime Achievement** for his deep knowledge of and dedication to protecting Maine's waters

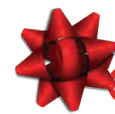
**Tony Giambro and Travis Ritchie (Paris Autobarn, South Paris), Conservation Leadership Award** for their outstanding citizen and business leadership on climate and energy issues

**Martha Spiess (Freeport) Conservation Leadership Award** for her work as a citizen activist/videographer volunteering hundreds of hours of video production for environmental protection

**Addie Farmer and Lainey Randall (Portland), People's Choice Award** for their work to keep plastics and other pollution out of Casco Bay

### SAVE THE DATE: January 19th & 20th, 2018 Women in Harmony's All the Wild Wonders

The Natural Resources Council of Maine is partnering with Women in Harmony choral group for two January 2018 concerts that celebrates nature in all its aspects— flora, fauna, earth, wind, water, and sky—with an eye toward stewardship of the earth's precious resources. The program will include such songs as "All the Wild Wonders" by the Australian vocal ensemble Coco's Lunch, "La Lune (the moon)" by Maggie Furtak, "The Peace of Wild Things" by Joan Szymko, and Eleanor Daley's setting of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree". The events will take place at the Maine Girls' Academy, 631 Stevens Avenue, in Portland at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 20, and 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 21. Tickets for these events can be purchased online at [wihmaine.org](http://wihmaine.org).



### Give the Gift of a Clean, Beautiful Maine Environment

You share our values and trust NRCM to protect Maine's treasured natural resources. This holiday season, please remember the nature of Maine with a tax-deductible year-end donation. There is no greater gift, now and for the future, than clean air, clean water, vibrant forests, and thriving wildlife. Donate at [nrcm.org](http://nrcm.org) or use the enclosed envelope. **Thank you!**



## Ten Years Running – Plunging!

**Dippers & dashers, past and present:  
Join us on East End Beach for a special reunion photo!**

December 31<sup>st</sup> will mark 10 years of NRCM's Polar Bear Dip & Dash! Whether you've dipped and/or dashed in the past or this is your first time, join us at East End Beach for a special reunion photo! To mark the occasion, we're sharing some fun trivia—and holding a contest! Everyone who enters gets a free NRCM decal. The person with the most correct answers will receive a polar bear mug hand-crafted by a Maine potter. Send in your answers by December 10<sup>th</sup>! Here's some trivia to warm you up:

#### MOST ENTREPRENEURIAL:

Beth Comeau  
(raised \$1,455 in 2011)



#### YOUNGEST CUB:

Lydianna Debiegun  
(3 years old)



#### ELDEST CUB:

Bob Pratt (77 years old)



#### BEST POLAR BEAR COSTUME:

Kate Shavel  
(2011)



#### NEVER GRADUATED:

Pete Didisheim (has participated every year. Go, Pete!)





### NRCM POLAR BEAR DIP & DASH

**DECEMBER 31, 2017**

**5K "Warm Up" Run:** Portland's Back Cove Trail  
Meet at 11:00, Back Cove parking lot

**Polar Bear Dip:** Noon, East End Beach

**And here are three questions to give you a head start – get all three correct and we'll enter you into a drawing for a free NRCM tote!**

- 1 How many people total have participated in the Polar Bear Dip & Dash?
- 2 How much money total has the Dip & Dash raised for our clean energy work?
- 3 What was the coldest temperature at a Dip & Dash?

Find all questions on our website at [nrcm.org](http://nrcm.org). Remember to send in your answers by December 10<sup>th</sup>! [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org) or mail to Dip & Dash, NRCM, 3 Wade St., Augusta, ME 04330.

Special thanks to these lead sponsors: 98.9FM WLCZ, Clynk, East Brown Cow, Lee Auto Malls, *Maine* magazine, SunriseGuide, and W&CO.



# National Monument: A Very Successful Start



Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument (KWWNM) has had a very successful first summer and early fall season. About 4,000 vehicles entered the Katahdin Loop Road with another 1,000 each on the north and east entrances. Just think how many there might have been if Governor LePage had let the National Park Service put up signs to the Monument! Businesses in the region report increased customers, and the downtowns of both Millinocket and Patten looked notably livelier than in recent years. The National Park Service has been smoothing out the gravel roads and fixing culverts to prevent floods after heavy rains, an ongoing project. As president of Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters, I'm pleased to share that the group has produced a nice interpretive guide to the Loop Road. Contact them at [info@friendsofkatahdinwoodsandwater.org](mailto:info@friendsofkatahdinwoodsandwater.org) to join and to get a copy. Reports from hikers in the Monument continue to be positive!

We are still awaiting a final decision from President Trump about the future of the Monument. Although 99.9% of the 260,000+ comments submitted about KWWNM were supportive, a leaked version of Secretary of the Interior Zinke's report included recommendations for potentially damaging changes to management of the lands. It remains to be seen whether President Trump will accept those recommendations and, if so, what they will mean on the ground, or whether he will propose something even more damaging. Stay tuned—we'll continue to keep you informed! —Cathy Johnson, NRCM Forests and Wildlife Project Director



**CONNECT TO PROTECT** Be a part of Maine's most effective and exciting "social scene" of people like you who care about our land, air, waters, and wildlife— like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram to stay up to date on the latest news and events.

## Thank You for Your Support!

**NRCM's work is a reflection of you.** You support it. You partner with the staff and board to make it possible. With great sincerity, we thank you. You share in the credit we received from NRCM members just like you:

"I am very thankful for the courage and strength NRCM has provided in their mission to protect and retain the natural beauty and resources of Maine." —**Ruth Cyr, Greenville**

"I appreciate your informed, assertive activism in standing up for the protection of our environment." —**Anita Jones, Portland**

"I believe NRCM is the leading environmental advocate in Maine. I want to see all that I hold dear in Maine protected for my future and for those who come to Maine after me. NRCM is creative, passionate, dedicated, innovative, and intelligent about pursuing its goals. I appreciate all they do for those who live in and vacation in Maine." —**Anne Rankin-Kotchek, Rockville, MD**

"My deepest thanks for the terrific work all of you do at NRCM. Having spent seven years on the Board, I am always impressed and grateful for the vital advocacy, educational outreach, development, coalition and relationship-building work you carry out in order to protect the nature of Maine." —**Lois Winter, Portland**

"Grateful for your doggedness protecting Maine's North Woods." —**Peter Zack, Porter**

"I am grateful a group with integrity and in-the-know is out there as our environmental watchdog guiding legislation and implementation of critical state, local and national interests. Thank you!" —**Dr. Priscilla Skerry (N.D.), Portland**

### Gift Memberships • MAY 1, 2017 TO OCT 31, 2017

David Anderson and Jasmine Inglesmith by Shannon Anderson  
Kendell Gregware by Judith Brown  
Danielle Conway by Gail Balch  
Shirley LeSuer by Lorrie Ferrari and Tony Scucci

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Darryl Hunt by Alton Hunt  
Justin Pidot from Jeff and Mary Pidot

### Honorarium and Memorial Gifts • MAY 1, 2017 TO OCT 31, 2017

Alan E. and Susan K. Clone in memory of Cynthia Cartwright  
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Saren Goldner in memory of Scraper  
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Ann Gullinger in honor of Rebecca Kowaloff & John Gullinger's wedding  
James Fuller in honor of Rebecca Kowaloff & John Gullinger's wedding  
Noah Kowaloff in honor of Rebecca Kowaloff & John Gullinger's wedding  
Katherine Letourneau in honor of Rebecca Kowaloff & John Gullinger's wedding  
Caitlin Wood in honor of Rebecca Kowaloff & John Gullinger's wedding  
Rachel Ostrow in honor of Rebecca Kowaloff & John Gullinger's wedding  
Meghan O. and Peter Dichiara in honor of Tony Owens

### New Partners in Maine's Future • APRIL 1, 2017 TO OCT 31, 2017

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### 2018 Nature of Maine Calendars Make Great Gifts!

Our one-of-a-kind calendar makes great gifts! Contact us at [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org) if you'd like more for the holidays. What a unique way to share the beauty of Maine's environment every day!

### 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 remodel it into a tote bag 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).



### MY MAINE THIS WEEK

"Here's a view looking northwest from Cranberry Peak (Bigelow range) over Flagstaff Lake." —NRCM member Peter Simmons of Brunswick, Maine

**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) for guidelines and more photos.**

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