



Moosehead Lake region by Warren Cooke

FALL & WINTER 2020

MAINE Environment

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DECEMBER 27–JANUARY 3

See page 3 for more info!



Inspiring Hope: Three Mainers Share Their Climate Action Stories BY KATIE MOODY

Acting on climate presents an exciting opportunity to grow Maine’s economy and help Mainers across the state save money and lead healthier lives. The new statewide Climate Action Plan being developed by the Maine Climate Council and due at the Legislature on December 1, 2020, will include recommended actions and policies to jump start the clean energy economy and give people tools to become more independent. We profile here Maine people who have successfully implemented climate solutions that, if replicated on a larger scale, hold great promise for reducing pollution, creating good-paying jobs, and increasing resilience. If you have a story to share with us, please contact colin@nrcm.org.



WMTS now runs a bus line from Farmington to Lewiston.

Case Study #1: Connecting Rural Communities with Transit

Valerie Hastings was a bus driver for Western Maine Transportation Services (WMTS) in the 1990s. On Tuesdays, her bus filled with senior citizens from Rangeley out for their weekly shopping. On Wednesdays and Fridays, she drove clients to dialysis in Lewiston. Valerie took pride in the company’s reliability. “We had to get them to the stores and get them to their medicine,” she says. At the time, there were no other transportation options in the area, so when the company discontinued the Rangeley line in 1998, many of her riders found themselves cut off from basic services. Valerie’s verdict on public transportation in the region: “They need it!”

Western Maine may be on the brink of a public transit revival. In 2019, WMTS re-established a bus route connecting Farmington to Lewiston, the first regular bus route along Route 4 in more than 50 years. Craig Zurhost, Community Relations Director at WMTS, says pre-pandemic, the route’s ridership was growing. The Lewiston-Bath route, designed as a work-transit program, has seen consistent ridership even during the pandemic, although the buses are currently operating at 50 percent capacity to allow riders to socially distance. WMTS is interested in further regionalizing transit; a study commissioned by the company in 2017 prompted the creation of a Rangeley-Farmington route as well as the Sugarloaf Express, and explored funding options.

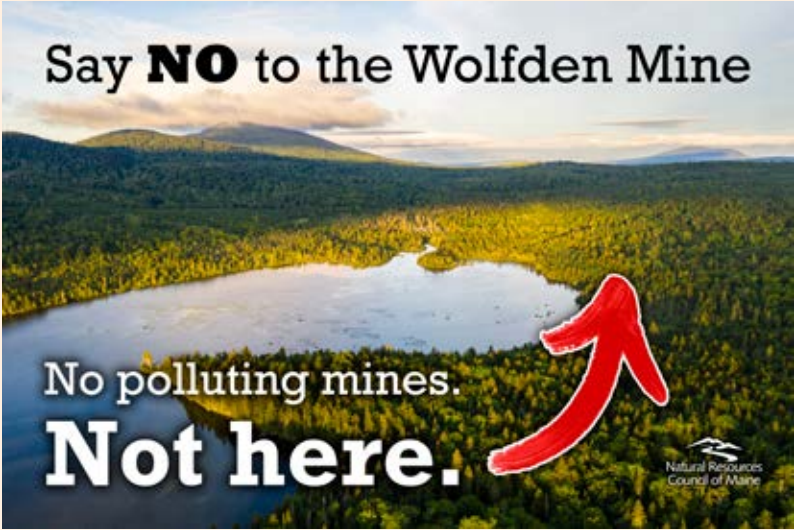
Vermont spends \$12 per capita on public transit. The State of Maine spends less than 82 cents per capita on public transportation, one of the lowest rates in the nation. The Maine Climate Council is considering a recommendation to increase this to \$5 per capita by 2025 so that people of all ages and abilities have access to affordable, reliable transit service.

Story continued on page 2

Help Us Oppose Maine’s Latest Mining Threat

NRCM is leading opposition to the proposal from Wolfden Resources to operate a metal mine at Pickett Mountain on 528 acres near Mount Chase, not far from Baxter State Park and the Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument. We are very concerned because the company has no prospects of being able to operate its proposed mine without seriously damaging Maine’s environment and burdening taxpayers. Staff Scientist Nick Bennett detailed serious questions about the company’s petition in a June letter sent to the Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC). Wolfden has failed to prove it can treat polluted wastewater adequately, has proposed disposing of mine waste in violation of Maine’s mining law, and has not documented sufficient financial capacity to operate a mine of this type. The LUPC recently denied an attempt by Wolfden’s lawyers to bypass rezoning rules that are in place to protect the health of Maine’s people and natural environment. Dozens of local residents, sporting camp owners, representatives from Maine’s native tribes, and other conservation organizations have raised major concerns to the LUPC as well. Join us in telling the LUPC that it should reject Wolfden’s application. Contact them at Wolfdenrezoning.LUPC@maine.gov and learn more at our mining web page.

—Colin Durrant, Advocacy Communications Director



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Three Questions for Maria Gallace *Meet NRCM's New Board President*



The Natural Resources Council of Maine is pleased to welcome Maria Gallace as our new Board President. Maria is Charitable Giving Director for East Brown Cow Management, Inc., a family-owned, Portland-based commercial real estate development company. She's a graduate of Wesleyan University, holds an advanced degree in education from Harvard, and has worked professionally and as a volunteer in schools in the Boston area and Maine. In addition to the NRCM board, Maria also serves on the board of Maine Public. She lives in Cape Elizabeth with her husband, two sons, and three cats. To help you learn a little more about Maria's love for Maine, we've asked her three questions:

What are your favorite Maine places?

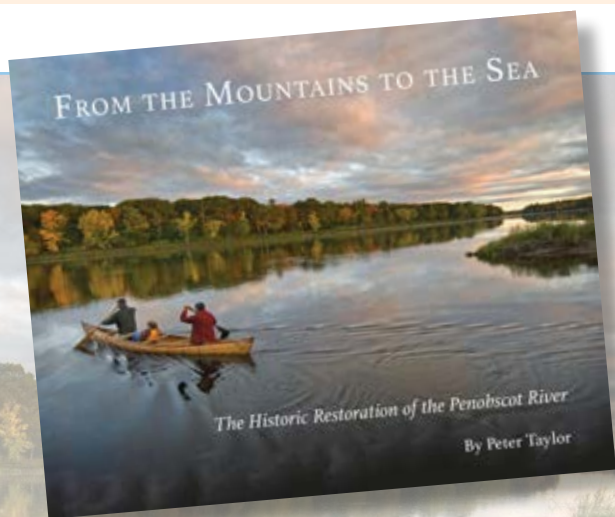
I'm a product of the coast, having grown up in Camden and now living in Cape Elizabeth. The rise and fall of the tides, the pounding of the waves, the cackling of crows and gulls, the scents of salt and seaweed, all now reside deep within me. The areas around Penobscot and Casco Bays have sustained me for as long as I can remember.

What do you consider to be NRCM's unique role in helping protect Maine's environment?

We're lucky to have a number of great environmental nonprofits here in Maine that are working to conserve our natural world. NRCM is special, though, in that it has the largest and arguably most dedicated and knowledgeable staff around, as well as the financial wherewithal to provide a comprehensive statewide advocacy program. For me, NRCM's long-proven record of speaking out for our woods, waters, and wildlife makes it a clear leader in Maine's environmental community.

If you had one piece of advice for someone who wants to make a difference in the world (and Maine), what would it be and why?

There's so much important work to be done to protect the natural world these days that it can be overwhelming. I think it's important to focus on those things that not only make an outward difference but also feed your own interior. When my husband and I made the decision to switch to electric vehicles, I was jazzed to be taking what felt like an important step to combat climate change, even though at first I was one of the only EVs on the road. Now I see more EVs around every day and it shows that even first, feeble steps can lead to something quite powerful if you believe in them. Likewise, serving on NRCM's board is energizing. The staff at NRCM are such amazing advocates. It's a privilege to support them any way I can.



NRCM and our partners in the Penobscot River Restoration Trust have published a new book. *From the Mountains to the Sea* tells the inside story of how an unlikely alliance of groups came together to acquire and remove dams to allow Maine's greatest river to once again carry Atlantic salmon and other native fish to their upriver spawning grounds—for the first time in almost two centuries. The book draws on interviews with more than 50 people and features before and after dam removal photos plus spectacular riverscapes and wildlife photos, including many by NRCM members. Watch for more information coming soon. Order your copy now, and one for a friend, at www.islandportpress.com/product-page/from-the-mountains-to-the-sea.

Climate Stories - from Page 1

The pandemic has underscored the need for accessible public transportation, especially in rural areas. Public transit fills transportation gaps; provides good-paying jobs; serves essential workers, students, and older residents; bolsters the regional economy, and can help lift children out of poverty. As we build back from this pandemic, investing in public transportation—in rural areas as well as urban—is a key component of reducing pollution from cars and trucks while transitioning Maine to a more sustainable economy.

Case Study #2: Activating Heat Pumps in Aroostook

Newman Gallagher hopes it will be a snowy winter in Presque Isle. The snow



makes for good rabbit hunting, and, banked against the foundation, the snow will help insulate his house through the cold season in Aroostook County. He's also looking forward to heating his home with a new electric heat pump, installed last January through the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) offered by the Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP). The program provides assistance to low-income homeowners and renters to help cover heating costs.

Heat pumps are an increasingly popular energy-efficient heating and cooling solution that facilitates the transfer of air between the indoors and outdoors to achieve a desired temperature. Newman Gallagher's house is small, and with the heat pump, he can run his furnace less often and at a lower temperature. He is now saving 40 to 50 percent on heating costs. "It's a wonderful program," Gallagher says. "The heat pump takes the dampness off."

HEAP provides energy assistance through weatherization, central heating system improvement, and fuel assistance programs. ACAP installed 95 heat pumps this past winter, and the current wait list is approaching 400 households. In a county larger than Connecticut, it can be difficult finding vendors to complete installations and challenging to stay within their funding limits. Newman Gallagher added that while a heat pump works well for him, efficacy depends on the set-up of the home. In places like Aroostook, heat pumps can be an effective complement to a primary heat source, and with opportunities from HEAP and the Efficiency Maine rebates, they are now accessible to a wider range of Mainers. At least for a growing number in Aroostook County, heat pumps are helping take the edge off winter.

Case Study #3: Bright Solar Opportunities Downeast

"It's odd when we get something that works the way it's supposed to," reflects Sunrise Opportunities Executive Director Tom Michaud. He's talking about his organization's new solar installations, which are funded by an Efficiency Maine grant.

Sunrise Opportunities is a social services nonprofit that supports adults and children with disabilities in Washington County through a diverse array of services, including the only homeless housing program in the county. Faced with the costs of resident services, full capacity in their subsidized housing, and unstable funding, Sunrise hoped to reduce overhead on electric by applying for an Efficiency Maine grant. In 2018, they received grants for solar installations at two housing sites: the Milbridge Harbor Apartments and Dennysville Housing. Two years later, the apartments have no electric bill, which is helping Sunrise deliver on other services to residents. They are seeing a four-year return on their solar investment, and, as Tom points out, given that the life expectancy of the equipment is 20 years, they will benefit from more than a decade of free electricity."

As part of the grant, Sunrise hosted an open house to share their solar project with the public. The installations garnered significant community interest, from individuals as well as from larger institutions like the local community college. Tom is now looking into other energy projects to bring to Sunrise Opportunities and is considering installing more solar panels. In 2019, a new law expanded access to solar for local businesses, towns, and Maine residents. The Maine Climate Council is considering recommendations to increase the adoption of cost-effective solar with funding programs that help organizations like Sunrise benefit from clean energy so they can focus their resources on their primary mission of serving people. Tom is optimistic about the future of solar energy in Maine. "The trend is heading in the right direction," he says. "People will vouch for it being the real deal."

Katie Moody, from Appleton and a recent Dartmouth College grad, is interning at NRCM before heading to Appalachia on a fellowship to study energy transition issues.

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Congratulations to Our 2020 Conservation Leadership Award Recipients

At a special event held October 22 via Zoom, we honored a University of Maine ecologist, a solar energy entrepreneur, a local CMP corridor activist, and a forceful advocate for Maine's North Woods. "It's always so inspiring to celebrate the good work of our Conservation Leadership Award winners," says NRCM CEO Lisa Pohlmann. Congratulations to this year's recipients:

Eric Sherman, People's Choice Award, for incredible work on the No CMP Corridor campaign ranging from gathering petition signatures to delivering signs to fundraising and keeping others informed, and for his dedication and hard work for the greater good of Maine's North Woods.

Vaughan Woodruff, for his tireless efforts, at the Legislature and throughout Maine, to move our state toward a clean energy future, create clean energy jobs for Maine people, and protect western Maine from the CMP corridor.

Aram Calhoun, for her leadership and expertise in the effort to protect Maine's vernal pools, including as a scientific expert supporting our work to stop the CMP corridor project.

Cathy Johnson, Lifetime Achievement Award, for her decades of advocacy in defense of Maine's North Woods, and, as NRCM's Forest & Wildlife Director (now retired) for her ability to inspire and galvanize support for wild places among NRCM members, coalition partners, and communities across Maine.

You can watch the video of the event, including the inspiring words of our recipients, at www.nrcm.org/events/conservation-leadership-awards.

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NOW WITH MORE OPTIONS TO DIP, DASH, OR BOTH!

YOU DECIDE

- where and when between December 27 and January 3 to dip, dash or both.
- Choose your own site or choose from our scenic options.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

- Statewide challenges
- Live leaderboards
- Themed activities
- Cheering sections (safely distanced)
- Prizes!

The funds you raise support NRCM's work fighting climate change in Maine!

Learn more and register today at
www.nrcm.org/events/polar-bear-dip-dash/

NRCM is grateful to the many Dip & Dash sponsors who have extended their support in this unusual year.

SPECIAL SHOUT OUT TO OUR CHAMPION SPONSORS:

Welcome New NRCM Board Members

At its September 2020 meeting, NRCM's Board of Directors elected the following new members. Their one-year terms will begin at the November meeting:



Michael Catania (Portland) recently retired as executive director of Duke Farms in New Jersey. Previously, he was founder, president, and general counsel of the New Jersey-based nonprofit Conservation Resources Inc. (CRI). Michael began his career with the nonpartisan New Jersey Legislative Services Agency, where he drafted many of the state's landmark environmental laws. He has served as a VP

with The Nature Conservancy in New Jersey and as Deputy Commissioner of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. He currently serves as Chair of the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust and as Trustee and Environment Committee Chair of the Victoria Foundation.



Seana Cullinan (Portland) owns Larkspur Design, a design/build landscape company that re-introduces native plants into developed landscapes. After a horticulture internship at Stonecrop Gardens in Cold Spring, NY, she ran her own landscape and garden design business before enrolling in The Conway School, receiving her Master's Degree in Sustainable Landscape Planning and Design. She moved to

Maine in 2013 and started Larkspur with the goal of growing a network that will weave its way through southern Maine and beyond, providing food, cover, and connectivity for the insects, birds, and animals of New England.



Francesca Galluccio-Steele (Portland) is a retired elementary school principal. Throughout her career, she also served as an educational researcher and a lobbyist for the National PTA and the National Education Association in Washington, DC. Prior to moving to Maine, she and her family lived in many parts of the country, enjoying the natural world each place offered. She has served on the Maine Audubon

Board and is currently on the Boards of Greater Portland Landmarks and Sea Change Yoga. An award-winning photographer, avid gardener, and inveterate world traveler, her passions include preserving the natural world and working to limit climate change.



Amy Scott (Greenwood) is director of CORE, a community development organization located in Bethel that serves Maine's rural communities. She brings expertise in facilitation and community engagement to her work, drawing on her experience with nonprofits including College of the Atlantic, Northern Forest Center, Western Mountains Alliance, and the Bethel Area Nonprofit

Collaborative, CORE's predecessor. She worked as an associate with Good Group Decisions in Brunswick for several years. Amy believes in the power of authentic relationships and the theory that "we are better together." She is a Maine Network Partners Fellow and actively applies network theory to her work with communities.



Ben Whalen (Windham) is co-owner with his wife and another couple of the eight-acre Bumbleroot Organic Farm in Windham. Originally from Massachusetts, Ben gained an interest in agriculture working on a cattle ranch in California and farms in other states. At Bumbleroot, Ben does everything from seeding greens to weeding and harvesting, and he handles all of the fence-building and accounting,

too. On his days off, you can find him building a house for his wife Melissa and his dog Bowie—or playing video games. He prefers his guitar turned up to 11 and loves the scent of lavender. He is involved with MOFGA, Maine Farmland Trust, and the Young Farmer's Coalition.

The Board of Directors also re-elected the following:

First three-year term

Emily Beck
Kathy Olmstead
Ed Simmons
Stephanie Smith

Second three-year term

Dennis King
Bill Meserve
Sarah Short

Retired from the Board of Directors this fall:

Patricia Hager
Karen Herold



A Clean, Beautiful Maine Environment is the Perfect Gift

If you're looking for extra special gift ideas this year, consider giving a gift membership to NRCM! Your special someone will receive one of our beautiful Nature of Maine wall calendars showcasing the beauty of

Maine's environment, plus important dates in environmental history, moon phases, and much more. The perfect gift for anyone who loves Maine!

New at the Blog

→ **Working Together to Protect the Nature of Maine: A Post-election Message** from CEO Lisa Pohlmann



→ **Maine's Must-Visit State Parks**, by NRCM Rising members Ray and Danielle Ruby

→ **Nature-based Climate Solutions Help Birds**, the latest "Birding with Jeff and Allison" post by NRCM's bird experts

→ **5 Reasons Why We're Not Crazy about Compostable Food Ware**, by Sustainable Maine Outreach Coordinator Chrissy Adamowicz

→ **Critter Chatter: Critter Release Part II**, by NRCM member Jayne Winters

→ **Listening to Migratory Birds for a Deeper Connection to the Natural World**, by Forests & Wildlife Director Melanie Sturm



→ **A Conversation with Michael Vermette**, Allagash Visiting Artist, by Melanie Sturm



Tip of the Day

GREEN TIP OF THE MONTH As the temperatures get cooler it's time to request our "Bright Ideas" brochure of tips to save money and energy while protecting Maine's environment. Download or request a copy at www.nrcm.org/our-maine/publications. For more green tips, visit NRCM's website at www.nrcm.org.



MY MAINE THIS WEEK

Bold Coast Trail, Cutler by NRCM member Zack Porter In

August, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the creation of Maine's Ecological Reserve System, which was created to serve as a benchmark for environmental and biological change over time; to protect habitat for wildlife, and to function as a site for research and education. To commemorate the occasion, NRCM member Zack Porter shared this photo and wrote, "There is nothing else like the Cutler Coast on the entire Atlantic seaboard of the US, much less in Maine. I'm grateful to NRCM for protecting the Cutler Coast as an Ecological Reserve, and for working to protect other wild areas across Maine."

Do you have a photograph of Maine you'd like to share? A short poem? Send your submissions to beth@nrcm.org. Visit "My Maine This Week" online at www.nrcm.org for guidelines and more photos.

Honoraria • MAY 1, 2020 TO OCT 31, 2020

Suzanne Coffee In honor of Deborah Lord
Caitlin McMahon In honor of Joan M. Speyer
Austin Schofield In memory of Tyler Paul Carnese
Edith Tompkins In honor of Deborah Lord
Nicole Aldieri In memory of Deborah Lord
Margaret S. Brownell In memory of Deborah Lord
Kevin Call In memory of Deborah Lord
Sue Crawford In memory of Gretta to TKY
Jill And Hank Croft In memory of Deborah Lord
Chet and Patricia Dawson In memory of Deborah Lord
Lois Downey In memory of Deborah Lord
Robert and Nancy B. Ellsworth In memory of Nancy Forgette
Catherine Friedman In memory of Deborah Lord
Clare Gallogly In memory of Deborah Lord
Irene Giman In memory of Deborah Lord
Saren Goldner In memory of Scraper
Bob, Sheri, Devin and Dillon Gorsen In memory of Deborah Lord
Jeff and Sue Grant In memory of Deborah Lord
Peter & Sara Haley In memory of Deborah Lord
Bill And Ruth Hannum In memory of Deborah Lord
Nichole Hawk In memory of Deborah Lord

Nancy Hubley In memory of Ben Hubley
Victor A. Kordish In memory of Dennis Kordish
Ronald G. and M. Elaine Kurtz In memory of Deborah Lord
Lisa and Delaney Ridgway and Peggy Womer In memory of Deborah Lord
Fred and Lori Longo In memory of Deborah Lord
Margaret Masterton In memory of Deborah Lord
Joe and Diane Montana In memory of Deborah Lord
Brian Moody In memory of Deborah Lord
Bonnie Prizer In memory of Deborah Lord
Edward Sanderson In memory of Deborah Lord
Daniel Steinberg In memory of Deborah Lord
David Steinberg In memory of Deborah Lord
James C. Thurston, Peter Thurston, and Hope Carter In memory of Ann McKendry
Megan Tsai In memory of Pat Cullen
Robert G. and Sandra C. Vandal In memory of Deborah Lord
Linda Veblen In memory of Deborah Lord
Tracey Whitesell In memory of Deborah Lord
Jason Wilson In memory of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Conant

Gift Memberships • MAY 1, 2020 TO OCT 31, 2020

Lorine Harr by Ashleigh Moore
Nathaniel H. Smith by Jonathan Smith
Anna Nellis Smith by Jonathan Smith

Ms. Kristi Niedermann by Thelma N. Dodge
Helen Balgooyen by Warren Balgooyen

New Partners in Maine's Future • MAY 1, 2020 TO OCT 31, 2020

Larry Douglas
Christopher Kenaley
Zack Porter
Harry Ripley

David and Joan L. Shapiro
Jeffrey and Karen Toothaker
David Zachow and Anne Guppy

Staff Updates

Thank You, Gretta Wark and Joyce Gracie



This summer, Gretta Wark said farewell to her role heading up NRCM's philanthropy team. After 19 years, we'll miss Gretta's know-how, camaraderie, and amazing laugh as she enjoys her retirement. Also making the move to

retirement: Joyce Gracie, who for nearly 25 years processed mailings, entered data, and generally kept things moving, literally, in and out of our office headquarters. Best wishes to our esteemed colleagues on this wonderful new phase of their lives!

NEW FACES AT NRCM



Marlisa Simonson has hit the ground running as she succeeds Gretta Wark as our new Senior Director of Philanthropy. Marlisa has always sought to bring people together and to connect personal passions with philanthropic missions. Prior to NRCM, she worked with corporate sponsors and individual community members

to generate revenue on behalf of the Travelers Championship, a PGA Tour professional golf tournament and charitable engine to nonprofit organizations. Before that, she held positions at the University of Hartford, Wesleyan University, and Middlebury College. Marlisa is a Maine native and currently lives in Harpswell.



Codi Riley does a lot of behind-the-scenes work that helps keep the membership department running smoothly, including keeping NRCM member records up to date, processing gifts, and updating data. She helps with mailings and fulfills information requests. Prior to joining NRCM, Codi was part of the development team

at Colby College. Codi received a B.S. in business administration from the University of New England. Originally from Pennsylvania, Codi has lived Maine for the past 11 years, and currently resides in Augusta with her husband and dog, Penny.

Read more about Marlisa and Codi on our website at nrcm.org.

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BANNER IMAGE / Fall foliage, Moosehead Lake, a My Maine This Week photo by NRCM member Warren Cooke

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