

**INSIDE!
EXPLORE
MAINE**

Deboullie Public Reserved Land Ecological Reserve by NRCM supporter Noah Oppenheim

SUMMER 2022

MAINE Environment

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Maine's Ecological Reserves: A Vision for "Saving all the Pieces"

BY MELANIE STURM, FORESTS & WILDLIFE DIRECTOR AND ARTWORK BY ZOE KELLER

Maine's natural environment provides us with so much: healthy air, clean water, flood control, crop pollination, carbon sequestration, inspiration, recreation, and much more. Though our scientific knowledge grows every year, there are species and relationships in nature we know little about or haven't even discovered.

Maine's ecological reserve system was created by the Legislature in 2000 to conserve the state's rich array of plant and animal life, and to protect effective examples of all the habitat types found in Maine. Today, the role of ecological reserves in supporting long-term scientific research, protecting biodiversity, and helping mitigate climate change is more critical than ever.

I was first introduced to Maine's ecological reserves when I hiked Old Speck at the Mahoosuc Unit. On that cloudy, summer day we could easily make out the layers of mountains in the distance that created a gradient of blue, blending in with the sky. That same year we toted our canoe up to Deboullie, where we were wowed again by the beauty of the mossy forests and undeveloped ponds.

These special places are protected by ecological reserves and include some of Maine's most stunning public lands, including St. John Ponds, Cutler Coast, and the Bigelow Range. They also include lesser known lands that harbor rare or unique plant and animal species that need protecting. In addition to 19 ecological reserves designated by the Bureau of Parks and Lands, Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as well as private organizations manage 50 ecological reserves across the state.

Maine's ecological reserve system started as an idea in the 1980s, supported by conservationists and industry alike, to "save all the pieces" by conserving Maine's unique biodiversity. Today, it's an essential conservation tool.

Compounding Threats to Maine's Wildlands

As Maine's environment faces growing threats from development, pollution, invasive species, biodiversity loss, and climate change, it is more important than ever to protect at-risk animals and plants, and to ensure ecosystems remain intact. Climate change and biodiversity are interlinked global challenges driven by human activity. Worldwide, one million species are vulnerable

Story continued on page 2



Blue flag iris (*Iris versicolor*) and Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Bold Coast at Cutler Preserve, Washington County

Planning for a Clean Energy Future

The biggest climate win of this year's short legislative session was a new law that will, for the first time, tie electric grid planning to Maine's ambitious climate goals. It was a hard-fought victory for NRCM's advocates who worked with lawmakers and experts to strengthen a bill first filed by Governor Janet Mills. LD 1959 will require Maine's utilities to plan for a clean energy future by developing a reliable electric grid that supports more renewable energy sources like solar and offshore wind, at the lowest possible cost to Maine people. Utilities will be required to account for the increased demand for electricity as we shift how we power our homes, cars, and trucks away from polluting fossil fuels, and encourage innovative technologies to store energy and reduce demand through increased energy efficiency.

"This important climate planning work will be overseen by the Public Utilities Commission, and NRCM's climate & clean energy advocates will be closely watching as the new law is implemented to ensure that it brings the greatest benefit to Maine people, environment, and communities," says Climate & Clean Energy Director Jack Shapiro. "Requiring our utilities to conduct integrated grid planning is about creating a climate-resilient future that works for all Mainers—a future where a modern electric grid and leading-edge technologies power our homes, businesses, and transportation with reliable and affordable clean energy produced here in Maine."—Colin Durrant, Advocacy Communications Director



S. Bierschwale/NRCM



Thanks for Always Being There

Anyone who loves summer in Maine knows that it is always too short. There's never enough time to participate in the wonderful activities the summer months allow, or to explore the bounty of Maine's great outdoor places.

With that in mind, I made the decision to retire in July. As you may recall from my email to you in March, my decision to stop working for such a wonderful organization was one I put a tremendous amount of thought into. But it was the right decision.

I have likewise given much thought to the timing of my departure. After discussions involving board leadership and my colleagues on the senior leadership team, my official retirement date is July 8.

With the arrival of warm weather, I have felt the growing pull of opportunities—including more time in the garden, kayaking, travel around the country, and spending time with family and friends.

The organization is in excellent shape for the leadership transition process currently in progress. The work of a search firm is well underway, and the Search Committee is in full swing. I am so excited to be able to retire in time to enjoy Maine's glorious summer.

Until the new CEO is on board, Pete Didisheim has agreed to serve as Interim CEO starting July 9, which the Board has approved. Pete, our Senior Director of Advocacy, is a 26-year NRCM veteran and will be strongly supported by the other members of the organization's leadership team.

I appreciate the special moments we have shared together, from member hikes and paddles to Citizen Action Days and Conservation Leadership Award celebrations, and much more. It has been a pleasure working with each and every one of you over the years as we have undertaken the difficult but rewarding work of protecting the nature of Maine. I am so pleased to be stepping down following another highly successful legislative session together, and know there will be many more victories to come. —Lisa Pohlmann, CEO

NRCM invites you to participate in the celebration of Lisa's retirement by offering notes, stories, and/or pictures to a memory book we will be creating for her. Digital submissions to www.newlywords.com/lisa-pohlmann-s-retirement will be formatted into a physical book presented later this year. Your contributions are enthusiastically welcomed by September 2, 2022.

Ecological Reserves - from Page 1

to extinction,¹ and one-third of terrestrial species in the U.S. are threatened with extinction.^{2,3}

Climate change is increasing the intensity and frequency of storms and average annual temperatures,⁴ which will affect Maine's forests, watersheds, and the wildlife that inhabit them over the coming decades. For fish and wildlife, scientists predict that changes to habitat will force most species to retreat northward or to higher elevations, or otherwise find refuge to survive.



Bull moose (*Alces americanus*) and beaked sedge (*Carex rostrata*), St. John Pond, Somerset County

Development pressure is one of the biggest threats to wildlife habitat in Maine, a state that contains globally significant bird habitat and the largest contiguous temperate broadleaf forest in the world. Southern and coastal Maine had higher rates of conversion of open space to development than northern and western Maine.

Rising to the Challenge of Saving All the Pieces

Ecological reserves provide many benefits to Maine people. On average, ecological reserves store 30% more above-ground carbon than other lands in Maine on a per-acre basis. They also serve as long-term research sites, providing scientific research opportunities to enhance our understanding of environmental change on the landscape. Ecological reserves also protect both common and at-risk species in Maine, including some of the few old growth forest stands in the state, a vanishing resource that is very important as wildlife habitat.

However, the promise of the ecological reserve system to save all the pieces has not fully been met. Only a portion of all habitat types are under conservation, leaving many important habitats and the species they support vulnerable, especially in southern Maine. New ecological reserves in southern Maine, where there are relatively high rates of rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species, would also create accessible recreation opportunities in the part of the state where the majority of the population lives.

In 2022, NRCM worked with partners to pass a law that will allow the Bureau of Parks and Lands to expand existing ecological reserves and designate new ones across Maine. It also includes a provision that adds the gathering of materials by members of federally recognized Wabanaki tribes to the list of allowable activities on ecological reserves.

By taking action to protect Maine's biodiversity strongholds, we can increase resilience to climate change and provide critical habitat for wildlife that live in and migrate through Maine. We also can enhance the management of forests, farms, fisheries, outdoor recreation, and natural resources.

Expanding ecological reserves across Maine is needed to open the door to greater protection of biodiversity and wildlife habitat, which will benefit current and future generations and create a more livable environment.

About the Artist:

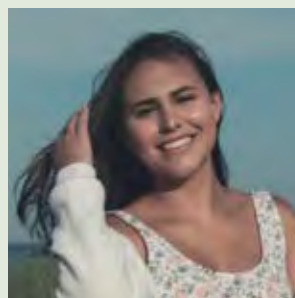
Placing a special focus on at-risk species and wildlands, artist Zoe Keller weaves drawings that explore the interconnectedness of fragile, vanishing ecosystems. By highlighting the biodiversity at risk in an era of human-driven mass extinction their work aims to inspire reverence for the natural world and action to defend what we have left. View Zoe's work on Instagram @zoekellerart

1 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>
 2 https://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs_journals/2020/rmrs_2020_dietz_m001.pdf
 3 https://www.manomet.org/wp-content/uploads/old-files/BwHSummary_021914.pdf
 4 https://nas-national-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/briefs_me_final.pdf



NRCM Honors Six Inspiring Young People with 2022 Brookie Awards

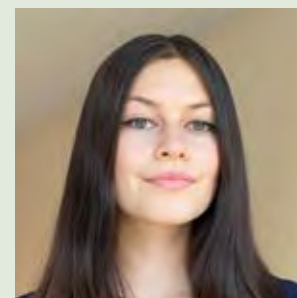
Across Maine, young people are taking bold action for our climate and our environment. We believe that passion deserves to be celebrated, rewarded, and fostered into lifelong advocacy. This is why, in 2019, we created the Brookie Awards. Every two years, we honor six young changemakers who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, creativity, and collaboration, and who have made a significant positive impact in Maine's environmental movement. This year, we are thrilled to celebrate our second class of Brookie Award winners who are leading advocates for clean water, climate education, fossil fuel divestment, renewable energy, and more. You can learn more about our 2022 winners by visiting www.brookieawards.org/2022winners.



Noela Altvater

19 • she/her
Washington County Community College • Sipayik

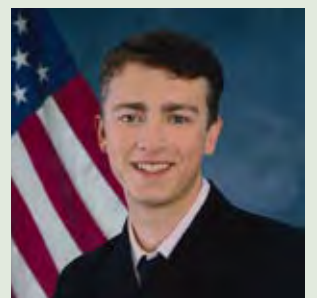
Bringing attention to the drinking water crisis on her reservation by amplifying the voices and stories from her community



Kiara Frischkorn

20 • she/her
University of New England Biddeford

President of campus environmental club and elevating sustainability and DEIJ issues as a member of student government



Lucas Healy

22 • he/him
Maine Maritime Academy Castine

Advocating for renewable energy curriculum to prepare students for careers in the offshore wind industry



Member Reflections: Tony and Beth Owens

NRCM's work is sustained by our members and supporters. Tony Owens is one of our most recognizable members, and he and his wife Beth embody the generosity and involvement that inspire us to keep fighting to protect and conserve Maine's environment. On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of

the Clean Water Act, we asked Tony to share his thoughts with us about why clean water is so important to his family and how NRCM's work has remained relevant over 35 years of membership.—*Marlisa Simonson, Senior Director, Philanthropy*

Q: What did the passing of the Clean Water Act mean to you?

A: I was in college in New Hampshire at the time, and my best friend and I enjoyed participating in outdoor activities together. A year after the Act was passed, we selected the Allagash for a canoe trip together. Neither of us was that familiar with Maine, but the reputation of the Allagash as one of the most formidable rivers in the Northeast made the decision easy. Taking that trip in the early days of the Clean Water Act was a catalyst in what has turned into a lifelong friendship steeped in the appreciation of natural resources.

Q: Among the rich diversity of natural resources in Maine, water is omnipresent. What are some other ways you enjoy Maine's waters?

A: Canoeing and fishing are at the top of the list for me. But I even enjoy water when it's frozen. Some of my favorite winter memories are snowshoeing on the Penobscot and St. John Rivers. Beth and I also enjoy sailing the Maine coast. Around the time I was beginning my NRCM board service in 2005, Beth and I were fortunate to take a wonderful trip to Debsconeag Lake (the accompanying picture is from that trip). It was impactful to see such a beautiful area and know that organizations like NRCM were working so hard to protect places like that.

Q: You mentioned you served on NRCM's board. You may be even better known for how much you champion NRCM's Polar Bear Dip & Dash. This event benefits NRCM's Climate & Clean Energy program but also includes a water component with a plunge into frigid Maine waters in December. What is it about this event that speaks to you so strongly?

A: It is just so much fun! In emergency medicine, teamwork is integral to caring for patients, and the way I like to work as a physician is well-suited to the teamwork aspects of the Dip & Dash. The opportunity to have a team and recruit people provides an easy reason to have a conversation about NRCM. Plus, I love the competitive aspect, too!

Q: You've seen a lot in your 35 years of NRCM membership. In your opinion, what is still to be done?

A: The current work on the Kennebec is enormously important. With FERC only reviewing every 40 years or so, this is the last chance in my lifetime to make essential changes. It breaks my heart to know that Atlantic salmon are endangered, but it gives me hope that NRCM is on the frontlines of restoration efforts that could save them. Also, I also appreciate that NRCM is prioritizing so many specific tactics for addressing climate change. Winters are feeling shorter and less cold—just last year I had to cancel a backcountry ski trip because there wasn't enough snow. As a physician, I see how environmental degradation affects my patients suffering with asthma, health conditions resulting from toxic pollution, and illnesses such as Lyme disease. I love introducing NRCM to new people because no matter what that person's interests are, there's always something relevant to them among the work NRCM is doing.



Kosis Ifeji

17

Bangor High School • Bangor

Advocating for dedicated climate change education funding for Maine's public school students and teachers



Greg LeClair

26 • he/him

University of Maine • Waterville

Founder of Maine Big Night, a volunteer-led citizen science project assisting amphibians in crossing Maine roadways



Anna Siegel

15 • she/her

Waynflete • Yarmouth

Lead organizer of Maine Youth for Climate Justice's effort to pass LD 99 to divest Maine's public employee retirement system from fossil fuels

Spring 2022 Tribute Gifts

Among gifts received from November 1, 2021-April 30, 2022

IN HONOR OF:

Maryanne, Steve and Ray from Allen C. Myers
Joyce Bailey from Anonymous
Emily Barker from Jonathan Bossie
Judy Berk from Kate and Mark Campbell
Suzanne Blackburn from Ellis Ivy
Philip and Linda Drew from Jennifer Miller
Sarah T. Farrand from David C. and Tyler H. Farrand
Abby E. Huntoon from Elena Brandt
Berto Marquina from David and Betsy Gardiner
Crozer W. Martin from Jack and Sally Ijams
William G. Meserve from The Bingham Program
Helen and David Miller from Jay R. Miller
Ann Nye from Rev. William R. Nye
Tony Owens from Anonymous
Lisa Pohlmann from Jackson W. Robinson
Lisa Pohlmann from James W. Wilson
Ian Ryan from Jason and Carrie Cianchette
Oskar Scholz from Eric Lupfer
Marlisa Simonson from Michelle Dube
Melanie Sturm from Daniel S. Oppenheim and Layne W. Gregory
Ellen Tully from Bill and Susan Stuart

IN MEMORY OF:

Charles Acker from:

Margo J. Bailey
Rodney M. and Catherine J. Bailey
Scott B. and Patricia M. Bullock
Irene J. Forster
Stanley L. Larson
Deborah J. Maddi
Joseph M. O'Donnell and Joan G. Price
Linda Williams

Joel Cartwright from:

Paul Cartwright
Steve Cartwright

Susanne P. Colson from:

Martha Allen

Paul V. Crawford from:

Sue Crawford

Patricia Perkins Flagg from:

Tina M. Flagg

Hazel Anne Houghton from:

Andrew Helman

Deborah G. Lord from:

Lisa Galloway Evrard

Samuel S. McKeeman from:

Albert C. Hubbard

Bob Mittel from:

Louise Davis

Mike Monahan from:

John McCall

Rita Nichols from:

Estelle Dearborn
Roger O. and Betty L. Desmarais
Alphonse P. and Claire D. Diccico
Ellen M. Fuller
Marcia LaMontagne
William Lundberg
Louise W. McIlhenny
Buck H. O'Herin and Lisa Newcomb
Randall and Mary A. Nichols
Maine Principals' Association
Ali B. Stevenson
Michael Wimsatt

Michael S. Porder from:

Anonymous
Debbie Bamberger
Judith Katz
Pam and Mark Laquidara
Brigitte Reid
Elizabeth Reese

Scraper from:

Saren Goldner

Irwin E. Spalding from:

Barbara Spalding

John Tamaro from:

Ricardo Faillace & colleagues at Corpay - Emerging Markets
Cynthia C. O'Rourke
Spinnaker Trust

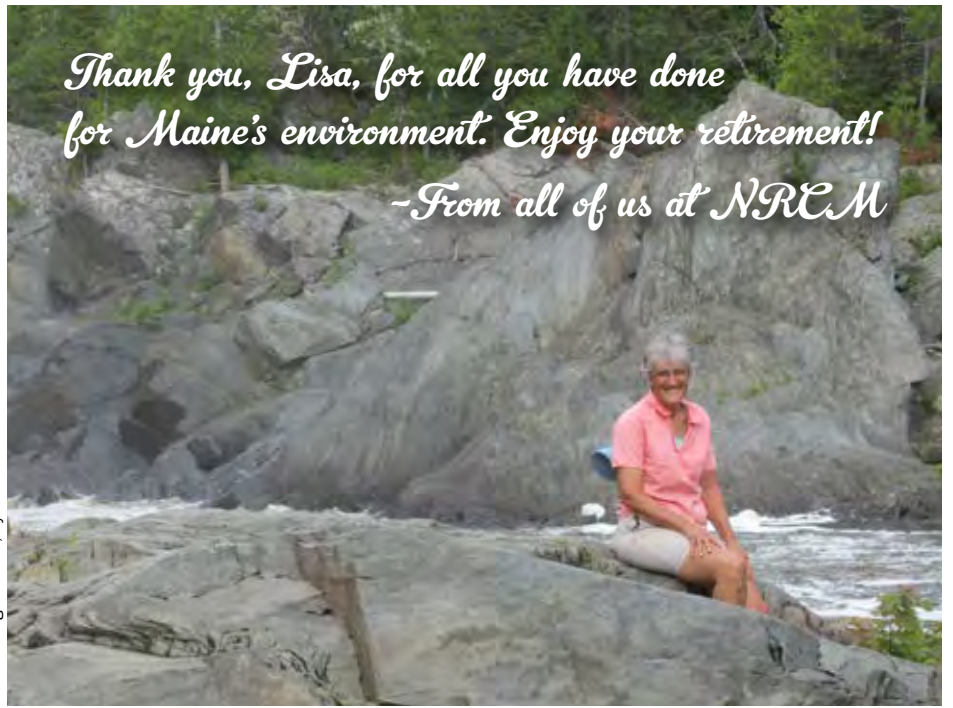
Charles W. Tidd from:

Paulette S. Tidd

Would you like to honor or memorialize someone with your next gift? Include "In honor of" or "In memory of" alongside their name in the check memo line or online gift notes.

The Journey to Less Wasteful Packaging

Passing Maine's first-in-the-nation Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging law was a historic victory for our environment and for holding corporate polluters accountable. In 2022, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is kicking off implementation of this exciting new law. The first step is a public process, called rulemaking, to determine the details of the new program. They'll be looking at issues like how to set annual fees for companies that produce wasteful packaging, and how cities and towns will be reimbursed. After the rulemaking is completed, DEP will create an independent stewardship organization to administer the program. According to Maine DEP, municipalities should receive the first payments by 2027 at the latest, but NRCM will work hard to push for a faster implementation timeline so we can bring long-overdue relief to Maine's cities and towns sooner, and address the flood of wasteful packaging entering Maine. We know that big corporations and plastic manufacturers will try to weaken the law as it's implemented. NRCM's Sustainable Maine team will be tracking it every step of the way.—CD



Lisa at Allagash Falls, by Elaine Isakson

Thank you, Lisa, for all you have done for Maine's environment. Enjoy your retirement!
-From all of us at NRCM

SAVE THE DATE!

NRCM 2022 CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARDS
 Wednesday, October 26 • Maple Hill Farm, Hallowell

NRCM Wins eco-Excellence Award



V.Berry/NRCM

NRCM recently received an ecomaine eco-Excellence Award for our work to pass the first-in-the-nation Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Law in 2021. Our Sustainable Maine team worked with so many of our members, activists, and others to get this law passed. NRCM Sustainable Maine Director Sarah Nichols and former staffer Chrissy Adamowicz are featured in a video highlighting the work

that ensured passage of this landmark recycling bill. View that video at tinyurl.com/eprvideo. More good news! Now, other states are following our lead. Oregon and Colorado have since passed similar laws, and many other states are considering one. We just created an online guide to share with others to help them pave their own path to victory in other states. Find it at nrcm.org.

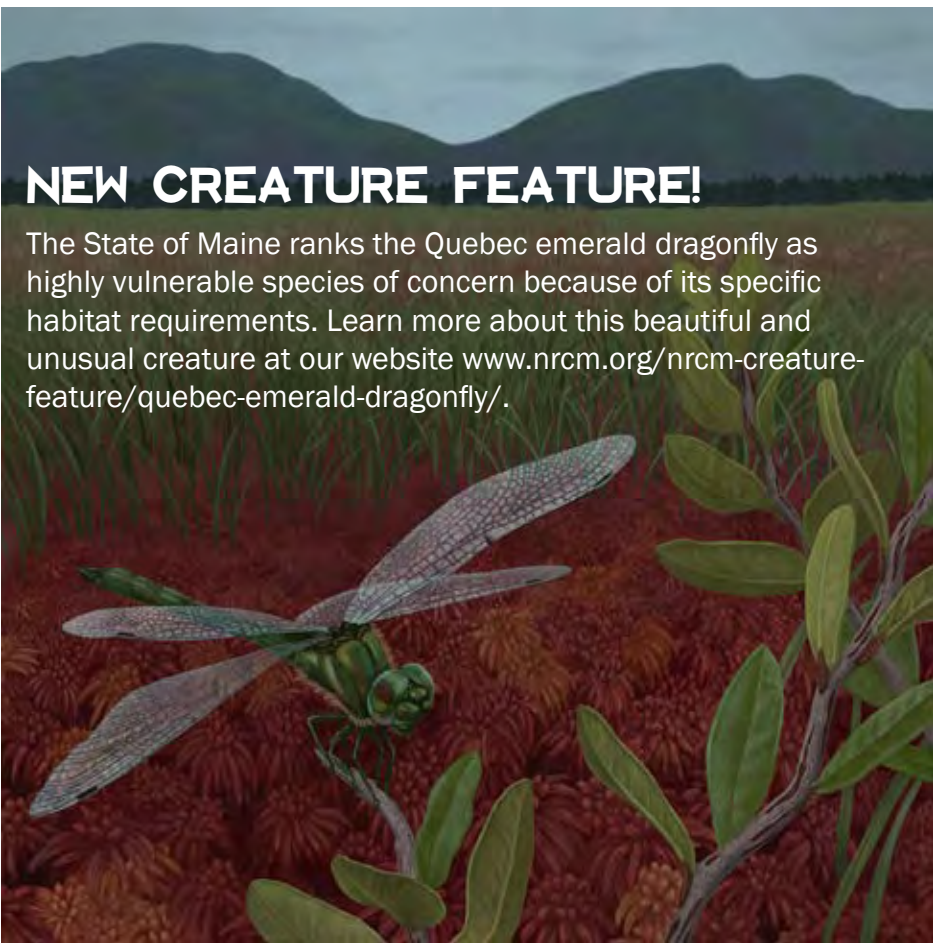
Green Tip of the Month

DRY YOUR CLOTHES OUTSIDE Take advantage of the warm weather by skipping the dryer and drying your clothes outside. No place for a clothesline? Use a drying rack instead. Bonus: it can easily be picked up and brought inside if the weather changes unexpectedly. For more money-saving tips to reduce your energy use, download or request a copy of our brochure, *Bright Ideas: Tips for Home Energy Savings* www.nrcm.org/our-maine/publications.

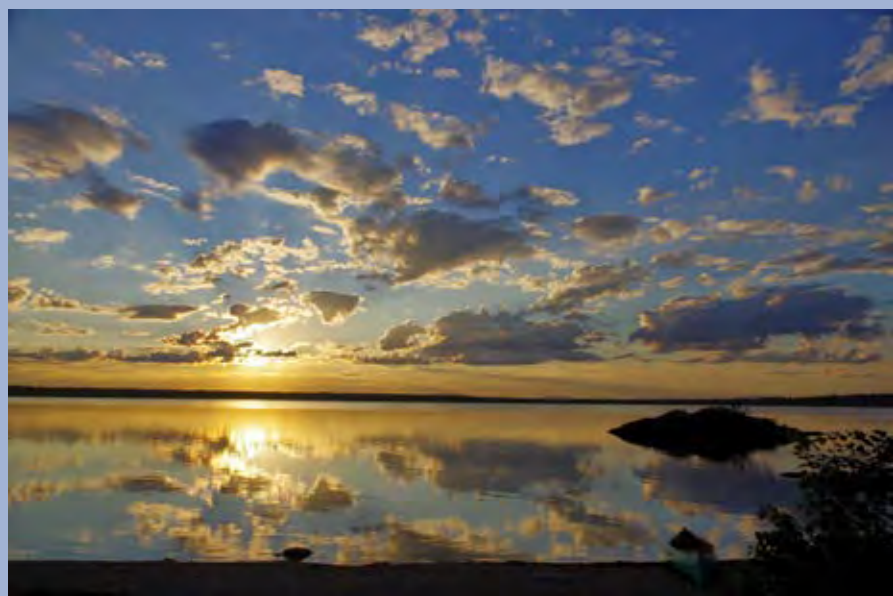


NEW CREATURE FEATURE!

The State of Maine ranks the Quebec emerald dragonfly as highly vulnerable species of concern because of its specific habitat requirements. Learn more about this beautiful and unusual creature at our website www.nrcm.org/nrcm-creature-feature/quebec-emerald-dragonfly/.



Zoe Keller



John Neal

MY MAINE THIS WEEK

This stunning photo of Lobster Lake, part of the Penobscot watershed, was taken by NRCM member John Neal of Greene, Maine. It's a beautiful reminder that 2022 is the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Visit our website to learn more about what this important legislation has meant for Maine's environment.

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.

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