



Runners Kate and Rachel Keeton are all smiles as they head towards the finish line. Photo by Marianne Marshall

Off to the Races: DCC Hosts Inaugural Bad Little Trail Run



by Rich Bard

On a gorgeous early fall Sunday morning, 69 runners and walkers took part in the first-ever Bad Little Trail Run with a choice of 2.5 mile and 6 mile course options through DCC's Machias River Preserve (more on those distances later). The route began in the village of Whitneyville and took participants over the Machias River on a historic railroad bridge, around a 65-acre marsh, through a long-abandoned tree plantation and homestead farm, on portions of the Down East Sunrise Trail, along the shores of the Machias River for nearly 4 miles (on the 6 mile course), and ended back in Whitneyville. These hearty adventurers braved a hornet nest along the trail, skipped across the top of a beaver dam, and navigated

countless rocks, roots, and squishy sections to make it across the finish line.

Smiles and high-fives were everywhere as the finishers gathered to compare notes and congratulate one another. Right away, I heard a couple of people talking about how far off we were in our estimates of the trail length, so I started asking people with GPS watches how long it was. Unbelievably, the "6 mile" course was somewhere between 6.9 and 7.1 miles, while the "2.5 mile" course was closer to 2.7 miles. I braced myself for some backlash from the runners, but instead, participants were amazed that they pulled off a much longer run than they expected! I chalk that up to the brilliantly sunny

but cool weather and the high spirits of everyone involved with the run.

The Bad Little Trail Run was a true community effort. DCC worked very closely with the Sunrise Athletic Club to plan the logistics of the event. Financial sponsorship came from Down East Community Hospital (our lead sponsor, which also provided a First Aid tent) as well as Camden National Bank, Whitney Wreath, and EBS Building Supplies. The Machias River Brewing Company set up a beer tent near the finish line to show off their new seasonal brew, "Fall Run." Warren Gay, a Machias selectman and neighbor of the Preserve, provided ATV transportation for logistics and

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A Note from the Executive Director

by Rich Bard

My time with Downeast Coastal Conservancy has been the highlight of my professional career, but the time has come for a transition. By the time this newsletter is in your hands, I will be in southern Maine preparing for my new role as Executive Director of Scarborough Land Trust. After nearly 14 years living and working in Washington County, my impending departure has surely made the October sunsets look a little extra colorful, the chill of the first frosty mornings feel a little more invigorating and the smell of the forest seem a little extra rich and inviting. It is always like this before a major transition, as we drink in the familiar sights and sounds to hold on to as we adjust to a new reality post-transition.

It is a testament to the strength of DCC that such changes in leadership are but a bump in the road. This organization, which has thrived for 30 years, will make a minor course correction as the new Executive Director exerts his or her influence but will undoubtedly continue to conserve and care for critical wild places as it always has. I'm very pleased to say that DCC has never been stronger or in a better position to take on new challenges. By February, DCC is expected to achieve national accreditation through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This can assure you, our members and supporters, that we operate at the very highest standards of transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. Getting to this point required years of tightening our policies, ensuring that our conserved lands were managed properly, and making sure that



funding is in place to carry us through a rainy day. As nearly every other accredited land trust has reported, this was one of the hardest and best things we have ever done. You should feel proud that your donations have created a world-class land trust in rural Washington County, Maine.

As I prepare to leave Washington County, I can't help but think about what makes this area, and this land trust in particular, unique. Downeast Maine always needs more people who aren't afraid to speak up about the value of wild places, whether for wildlife habitat, public recreation, economic development through tourism, or simply for nourishing people's souls. I can't think of a higher purpose for us all to join in than keeping some of the best places in Washington County natural and open to all. Keep up the good work!



Left - BLTR Winners. Right - BLTR runners. Photos by Bill Kitchen

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emergencies. After the run, everyone walked across town to the Hillgrove Community Hall where the Whitneyville Library Committee served a delicious lunch while the awards were presented. In all, over 30 volunteers helped pull this event off, to the accolades of everyone involved.

If you missed this year's Bad Little Trail Run, don't worry. We have every intention of making this an annual event. While we can't guarantee the crystal clear blue sky and hint of fall colors we enjoyed this year, we promise to have a better idea of just how long the trail is and will do our best to wrangle the hornets under control before the starting gun. Hope to see you there!

Winter Wonders at Tide Mill Creek

By Matt D. Scaccia, DCC Land Steward

Typically, after the first snowfall of the season, even the most avid outdoor enthusiasts begin to burrow down for the long winter and eagerly wait for spring. Everyone has their own strategy for making the best of the long Downeast winter, but what can you try this year if you are seeking to discover something new?



DCC's 225-acre Tide Mill Creek Preserve in Jonesboro is an ideal winter destination which features about 2.5 miles of trails that are excellent for hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing (more than a mile of old roadbed is ideal for back-country skiing).

If you are looking to expand your knowledge and appreciation of nature in its winter form, Tide Mill Creek

offers plenty of opportunities for interesting nature study. Sizable flocks of black ducks and scoters congregate at the mouth of the creek throughout the winter to protect themselves from the harsh winter elements. Mammals such as moose, deer, coyote, foxes, and

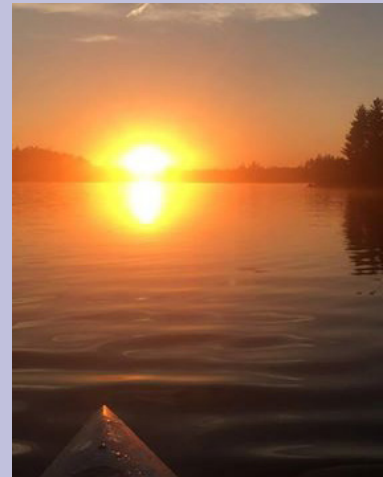
others leave behind their tracks in the snow waiting to be identified. The view through the leafless forest provides a unique perspective of the topography of the wild landscape

If you have not been to Tide Mill Creek before, winter is certainly among the best times of year for a first visit.

making it easier to imagine the forces and processes that shaped it. The forest is dominated by spruce and fir which is well-suited for spotting spruce grouse throughout the season.

If you have not been to Tide Mill Creek before, winter is certainly among the best times of year for a first visit. If the preserve is already familiar to you, plan a winter visit this year. Either way, a winter outing there will undoubtedly reveal hidden wonders that are waiting to be discovered.

"Orange River Sunset" takes home People's Choice Award



Congratulations to Kate Keeton, winner of DCC's 2nd Annual Inspired by Nature Photo Contest. Kate's winning photo perfectly captured both the tranquility and dynamic brilliance of watching the sunset from the seat of a kayak on the Orange River. To view all the 2017 photo contest finalists, visit www.DowneastCoastalConservancy.org/2017-inspired-by-nature-photo-contest.



Machias River Preserve. Photo by Michelle Czapiga.

\$25,000 Challenge Grant: Double Your Impact Today!

Earlier this year DCC received a \$25,000 challenge grant from an anonymous donor who pledged to match dollar-for-dollar all new or increased gifts made to DCC by December 31, 2017. So far our members and new members have helped raise nearly half the funds to meet the match. Thank you! With 2 months still to go, we need your help to reach the full \$25,000 potential of the grant. Please consider increasing your annual gift or giving an additional gift by the end of the year. Your matched gift will strengthen DCC's ability to effectively steward our existing and future protected lands, advocate for sustainable resource management, and respond to conservation opportunities in 2018.

A Walk through Machias History at Middle River Park

By David Dowley, Two Rivers Conservation Area Co-Chair

Last month I invited my friend Robin Pinto to take a walk with me in Middle River Park. Robin is a Landscape Historian who summers in Roque Bluffs with permanent residence in Tucson AZ. Robin has studied the evolution of landscapes in the national parks in the Southwest as part of her doctoral thesis completed just last year.

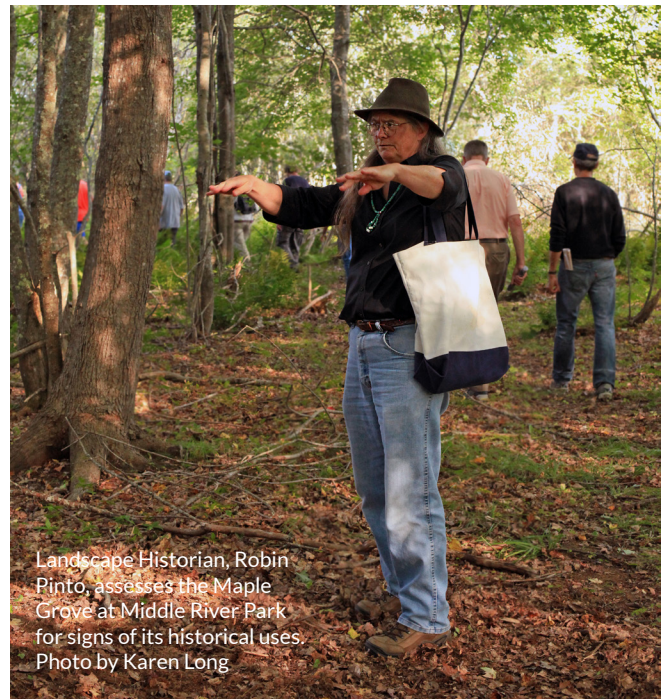
Middle River Park is an exciting property. It is steeped in local history, with a remarkable topography and stunning views of the Machias Valley. September 1st was the date we settled on. I stopped by the office earlier that week and discovered Robin had been in the office researching documents related to the park. In addition, I learned Robin had interviewed local historians Valdine Atwood, Lyman Holmes and Nate Pennell. In short, Robin had been doing her homework.

In her presentation to 15 attendees that Friday afternoon, we learned that even though the English ultimately prevailed over the French in their control of the region in the early 1600's, the French tradition of land property division (the Long Lot) continued in the area. The Long Lot not only allowed property owners to gain access to the river for water and transportation but also access to lowlands for farming and uplands for timber. Robin provided an 1832 map that showed that these property delineations were present in Machias.

We stopped at the upland section of the park commonly referred to as the Maple Grove. On one side, we found a series of iron fence posts imbedded in rocks that appear to outline an old field or pasture. Faint undulations on the ground, we surmised, may indicate former agricultural activity. The maple trees appear to be only 40-60 years old suggesting the section had been cleared in the recent past. Was this once part of an old Long Lot?

Robin emphasized the importance of salt hay to the settlement of the Machias Valley and other Downeast communities. In the 1760's a severe drought in Scarborough, ME led to scarcity of hay for livestock. Approximately 80 settlers chose to resettle in the Machias region as they sought to take advantage of the abundance of salt hay within the Middle River marshlands.

To improve the marsh area for agriculture, early settlers constructed earthen dikes that would restrict the influx of salt water into the marshlands. Robin brought a copy of



Landscape Historian, Robin Pinto, assesses the Maple Grove at Middle River Park for signs of its historical uses. Photo by Karen Long

an early 1800's map that illustrated the locations of those dikes along Middle River. I was dying to show Robin the recently revealed "berm" along the west side of the river and upstream of Machias. UMM recreation management students under the direction of Professor Karen Beefink and DCC Land Steward Matt Scaccia had volunteered to clear a path to a linear mound of earth and clay that parallels the river. We are convinced this linear feature is the remnant of one of those manmade dikes. Walking on this berm causes you to reflect on the effort required to construct it that many years ago. It's chilling. And exciting, too, to be standing on the results of our early ancestors and their labors as they worked hard to make a living from this landscape almost 200 years ago!

The history of Middle River is a story of continued efforts to restrict the flow into the estuary that would alter the resources dependent on a tidal ecosystem to survive. In 1866, the State Legislature granted the Town of Machias the authority to erect a bridge. In 1920, the current tide gates were installed; today, they are showing signs of wear. The DOT and EPA are currently evaluating the controversial subject of replacing or removing these gates. Removal, while potentially returning the river to a more natural state, would have a profound impact on the lands of bordering owners.

Twelve of the 15 hikers that joined in the excursion had come to the Middle River Park for the first time. I was thrilled that the occasion of Robin's presentation on its history was the catalyst for their first visit. The next time you're in the Shire Town with 45 minutes to spare, take a walk in Middle River Park. You won't regret it.

In the Works

By Matt D. Scaccia, DCC Land Steward

2017 proved to be an exciting year for new projects as well as ongoing improvements across DCC's public access properties. If you are planning to take a visit to one of our lands, check out some of the improvements we have been working on.

In Lubec: Members of the Boundless Way Zen Downeast group—under the direction of Wes Burnett— have become the Chief Stewards of **Mowry Beach** and have taken a very active role in maintaining and improving the property for the public to enjoy. They have lead efforts to maintain



Pike Lands
Shore Cleanup

the wooden boardwalk there and keep the beach looking beautiful. A dedicated group of volunteers lead by Alan Meade and Steve Hoppin lead multiple volunteer workdays throughout the summer at the **Klondike Mountain Preserve** to complete their vision for a memorial arboretum along the beginning of the hiking path. Some of the new donated tree seedlings that were planted included American chestnut, horse chestnut, red oak, black locust, and bur oak. At the **Pike Lands**, DCC staff and volunteers collaborated with the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) to clean the shoreline along Huckins Beach leaving it in a nearly pristine condition. The gnarly grass along the Huckins Beach trail has been brushed back making the hike in much more enjoyable.



Machias River
Preserve. Photo
by Michelle
Czapiga

In Machias and Whitneyville:

Major improvements have been ongoing throughout the year at the **Machias River Preserve**. The trail network now features a complete series of foot bridges and many of the generally wet areas within the trail now have stepping stones. A new segment of trail was also created near the Whitneyville trestle bridge to serve as a reroute around the steep slope along the river next to the bridge. This will help limit erosion next to the bridge while still providing scenic access next to the river. The dense grass growing into the Hemlock and Homestead trails has been thoroughly brushed out making the path very clear to follow. A series of interpretive signs are also being installed along the Heritage trail that will feature information on a diverse array of topics including the nearby colonial-era Atusville Settlement, deer wintering areas, the Machias River Watershed, Atlantic salmon habitat, riparian ecology, local logging history, and the fish species of the Machias River. At **Middle River Park** a group of UMM student volunteers

helped create a new trail that extends along the historic berm offering a splendid new view along a quiet section of the river within the park.

In Jonesboro: Tide Mill Creek was officially 'reopened' this past summer after several years of beaver activity which had periodically made the preserve inaccessible due to flooding. There appears to be no beaver activity on the property currently and an interpretive sign has been installed that highlights the ecological influence the beavers have had there. Trail clearing and other improvements have also been ongoing throughout the preserve and upgrades to the Honeypot trail have been planned to address areas that are often wet. A new trail brochure has been created for Tide Mill Creek which is available at the DCC office and online.



Tamarack at TideMill Creek by Carol Muth

In Beals: Volunteers with MITA stopped by one of DCC's coastal islands in Beals where they filled two skiffs with debris they had found that had washed ashore.

In addition to the projects highlighted here; we certainly have more work being done across all of our other properties including general maintenance and monitoring. Keep an eye out for any scheduled volunteer work days and consider taking some time to come join us!

Reflections on my Internship with DCC

By Trent Stevens



Trent Stevens at Reversing Falls

Many of you are already aware that the Downeast Coastal Conservancy (DCC) offers an abundance of opportunities for people interested in their conservation lands through their educational programs, fun public events, and volunteer work. However, you may not realize the extent of the work they really do. Before joining DCC as their 2017 intern I was mostly unfamiliar with the organization and their work. By working behind the scenes with Matt Scaccia—their Land Steward—I was really able to understand DCC’s mission. I had the opportunity to become involved in so many ways with them this year. Some of the highlights included monitoring preserves such as the Orange River Conservation Area while exploring the extremely beautiful view on top of Estey Mountain, enjoying a hard day’s work planting trees and fixing up the trail on the Klondike Mountain Preserve, co-hosting a paddling event on the Pleasant River, and having the chance to monitor many DCC easements around Washington County which many don’t have the opportunity to see. Working in the

field with Matt has given me a new appreciation for the land available to the public that is within Machias and the surrounding areas.

Through participating in this internship I was able to absorb and apply a large amount of interesting information on the conservation legalities of easement and preserves which has helped me think deeper about how I would like to focus my career in the future. As I anticipate graduating from the University of Maine at Machias (UMM) in 2019 I will bring this experience with me as I look forward to applying to work with the Maine Warden Service. Throughout my internship experience I met many like-minded people focused on the conservation of important historic, scenic, and unique areas around Machias and I hope to continue working with others in the future that have the same interest and dedication to conservation as DCC. I would highly recommend for anyone to stop in and meet the wonderful staff and volunteers at DCC who share my passion and interest in conserving Maine lands.

Downeast Coastal Conservancy

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- Craig Snapp, Steuben

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- Rich Bard, Executive Director (until 10/31/17)
- Holly Byers, Outreach Director
- Matt Scaccia, Land Steward
- Cat Cannon, Accreditation Coordinator



2017 Community Partners in Conservation

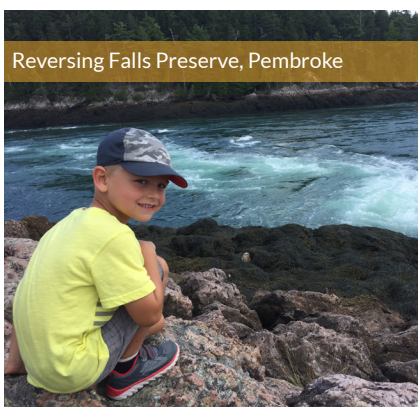


Volunteers from our Community Partner, Down East Community Hospital, staff the first aid tent at the Bad Little Trail Run. Photo by Marianne Marshall

As a member of DCC's Community Partners in Conservation program, these businesses are helping to protect the natural landscapes and wild places that make Downeast Maine such a special place to live, work and visit. Their commitment towards the betterment of our local communities through conservation will create a lasting impact for generations to come. Please help us in thanking each one of these business owners and organizations for their generous support!

Camden National Bank
Cohill's Inn
Down East Community Hospital
EBS Building Supplies
Froese Title Research, LLC
Helen's Restaurant
Kennedy Marine Engineering
Lubec Brewing Company
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Peacock House Bed & Breakfast
Phillips Investments
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Tom Hitchins Architecture
Viking, Inc.
Water Street Tavern
West Falls Surveying
The Wharf on Johnson's Bay
Whitney Originals, Inc.



Reversing Falls Preserve, Pembroke



Eagle at Pigeon Hill by Megan Humphrey

Spotlight on the Peacock House Bed & Breakfast

Gracious. That's quite possibly the best way to describe the delightful innkeeper of the Peacock House Bed & Breakfast, Mary Beth Hoffman. Mary Beth's hospitable and humble nature led her to ownership of the Peacock House in 2015, and shortly thereafter she signed the B&B up as a charter member of DCC's Community Partners in Conservation program. Located in the picturesque fishing village of Lubec, the Peacock House is a quick walk from one of DCC's most beloved properties, Mowry Beach. It is also just a short drive to two other standout DCC properties, Klondike Mountain and the Pike Lands, as well as several more parks and trails. As a business owner in the tourism industry, Mary Beth appreciates that for many visitors the appeal to travel Downeast is to take in its rugged landscape, rocky coastlines and abundance of wild places. DCC's conserved lands ensure that these natural highlights will remain forever accessible to everyone. Fortunately, for all the inspired travelers to Lubec, they're also able to find a cozy "home away from home" at the Peacock House Bed & Breakfast. To learn more visit www.PeacockHouse.com.

The winner of DCC's New Member Drive raffle will receive a 2-night stay at the Peacock House. If you're not a current member of DCC, now is definitely the time to join!





DOWNEAST COASTAL CONSERVANCY

PO Box 760
Machias, ME 04654

www.DowneastCoastalConservancy.org

info@DowneastCoastalConservancy.org

Telephone: (207) 255-4500

Facebook: facebook.com/DowneastCoastalConservancy

The mission of the Downeast Coastal Conservancy is the conservation of the natural habitats and resources of the coastal watersheds, islands and communities of Washington County, Maine, for present and future generations.

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