



Shoreline view toward Bois Bubert Island

Pigeon Hill Preserve is now Sea to the Summit thanks to Generous Land Donation

John T. Bullitt of Steuben has been a generous supporter of DCC land conservation for many years. This year, John donated a wonderful 10-acre wooded parcel that allows the popular Pigeon Hill Preserve to connect to the shore of Pigeon Hill Bay. Now this preserve provides a “Sea to the Summit” hiking opportunity! The trailhead for the new Shore Section begins directly across Pigeon Hill Rd from the parking area for the existing 175-acre Hill Section. The Google Map aerial image to the right shows the heavily wooded terrain

and the new Shore Trail (in blue) going from the existing parking area to the shore.

The Shore Trail winds through a beautiful mixed wood before reaching the shore of Pigeon Hill Bay for a view of Bois Bubert Island and the distant Petit Manan Lighthouse. It was designed by first using Google Earth to understand the terrain and locate open ledges and fields. A preliminary GPS route was created, and the entire parcel explored by DCC staff and several volunteers to identify interesting features. A practical path for the trail bed was then finalized and blazed with orange tape. A merry band of local volunteers was assembled, and

the trail cut through from Pigeon Hill Rd to the shore. Fine tuning, “swamping” to remove brush and limbs, and signage quickly followed before opening the new trail to the public. Word of mouth quickly made the new Shore Section very popular with those folks looking for an easy hike through interesting woods to the stunning shore of Pigeon Hill Bay.



Volunteer Trail Crew at 1st Limb Cutting Ceremony



A Challenging, yet Still Busy Year in Conservation

Jon Southern, Executive Director



As 2020 winds toward the holiday seasons and the onset of winter, I reflect back on what, for many of us, has been one of the most challenging years. I never imagined, when planning for the 2020 season, what we would be facing. There was no model for how DCC's conservation work should proceed during a pandemic. We had little time to prepare as we, in Downeast Maine and the world, confronted the challenges ahead.

While I have never doubted the value of DCC's purpose, I never imagined just how important our conservation work would become to the quality of life for so many. Usage of DCC preserves has skyrocketed. To escape the 'madness without end,' people turned to our conserved lands, our outreach activities and outdoor projects for relief. Overnight, our user demographics changed; while tourists have been fewer in number, local families and children have been and



Lily at Middle River Park spring 2020

continue to be out on our trails. Many find refuge from the deluge of bad news in the safety of our open spaces and the tranquility that only comes with being outdoors. DCC's conservation efforts, its preserves and outreach activities bring light to these gray days. This joy for so many is only possible because of your support.

DCC has refused to let Covid-19 stop our forward motion! (See the accompanying articles.) With your support, DCC has had one of the most successful years in our 36-year history. Through the help of the Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation, DCC has added the 256-acre, wildlife-rich Indian River Wildlife Area Preserve in Addison. One of our most amazing new preserves this year is the 406-acre, undeveloped Vining Lake. This highly regarded pristine lake with mixed woodland and wetland habitats offers a true community preserve for the Cooper communities. Finally, DCC added land to our flagship Pigeon Hill Preserve. This gift has created a critical hiking link from the Pigeon Hill Bay shoreline and now provides a sea-to-summit experience in a truly stunning area in Steuben.

This spring, Cathy Lookabaugh joined DCC as Outreach Director just as the pandemic started. But, this hasn't slowed her down! She burst out with an amazing range of popular Outreach activities. To the disappointment of some of our members, her COVID-limited programs filled up immediately. Thanks to the determination and efforts of Kyle Winslow, our stewardship director, we have kept pace with the significant increase in visitors to our preserves; our trails remain open and well-maintained.

This year, we bid farewell to long-term Board members, Ellen Hostert and Roger Clapp, both of whom have given many years of extraordinary service and commitment to DCC. Both Ellen and Roger were influential in the merger of Great

Auk and Quoddy Regional Land Trusts and the creation of DCC in 2009. Roger, as head of the Lands committee and Ellen as President and chair of Stewardship, have been at the forefront of our success and growth as an organization. While they will be missed in their Board capacities, we look forward to them continuing to be active in DCC's future.

To escape the 'madness without end,' people turned to our conserved lands, our outreach activities and outdoor projects for relief.

Anne Baker and Robin Pinto have now stepped into our Board leadership roles. Anne, a nationally known zoologist, brings a sure and steadying hand as Board President. Robin, historian and landscape architect, will take over as Vice President.

As we continue to move forward, we face one of the biggest impacts of Covid-19 to our region – the rising rate of development that threatens our open lands. Property sales in this region have surged in the past few months. As many seek the greater security of life and community in rural areas, our coast and near-coast lands are experiencing increased construction and growth. Our work to preserve the most ecologically valuable habitats and their resources is more important than ever.

I finish this missive with sincere thanks to DCC's amazing staff for powering through these challenging times, to our supportive Board and committee members, to our volunteers who care for our lands, and especially to our members who make all of this possible through their continued generosity. Without a doubt, you make a difference in people's lives. Stay safe and I wish you the best in the holiday season and the New Year.

New Board Member Spotlight



Dominic Winski

Dom grew up in Trescott, Maine where he spent his childhood exploring the spectacular landscape of Downeast Maine; he even volunteering at Quoddy Regional Land Trust events. Inspired by this amazing natural world, Dom pursued a career to understand and protect it. He completed his B.A. in Environmental Earth Sciences at Dartmouth College in 2009, his M.S. in Quaternary and Climate Studies at the University of Maine in 2011 and his PhD in Earth

Sciences at Dartmouth College in 2018. Dom is currently a research assistant professor at the University of Maine. His research focuses on understanding patterns of climate change in specific regions and how they respond to global-scale shifts such as we are presently experiencing. Dom specializes in using ice cores from alpine and polar regions as archives of past climate change, particularly as a means of reconstructing temperature, precipitation and wind patterns. Dom enthusiastically spends time hiking, camping and paddling with his wife, son, and dog as much as possible. Now splitting his time between Old Town and Jonesport, Maine, Dom is deeply committed to conservation efforts in Downeast Maine, which he believes are essential for the future ecological, economic, and cultural prosperity of the region.



Karen Beeftink

Karen is the coordinator for the Recreation and Tourism Management program at the University of Maine at Machias. She teaches courses focused on nature-based tourism, sustainable tourism, outdoor recreation, leisure programming, experiential education, and recreation and wellness. Her most

recent research focuses on visitor experiences and management in protected areas, with an emphasis on the role of soundscapes. She is also active with the Downeast Youth Soccer Association, and helps coordinate the Washington County Special Olympics. Karen has previously worked as an adventure educator, a wilderness trip leader, a conservation crew leader, a rock-climbing instructor, and a gymnastics coach. Originally hailing from the Chicago area, Karen developed an early love for the outdoors. She has traveled extensively throughout the U.S., engaging in hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, road biking, rock-climbing, canoeing, and kayaking. She is a registered Maine Recreation Guide, registered Maine Sea Kayak Guide, and a Leave No Trace Master Educator. Karen and her husband and son moved to Machias in 2011, and love exploring the trails, rivers, lakes, and beaches in the area.



Downeast Coastal Conservancy

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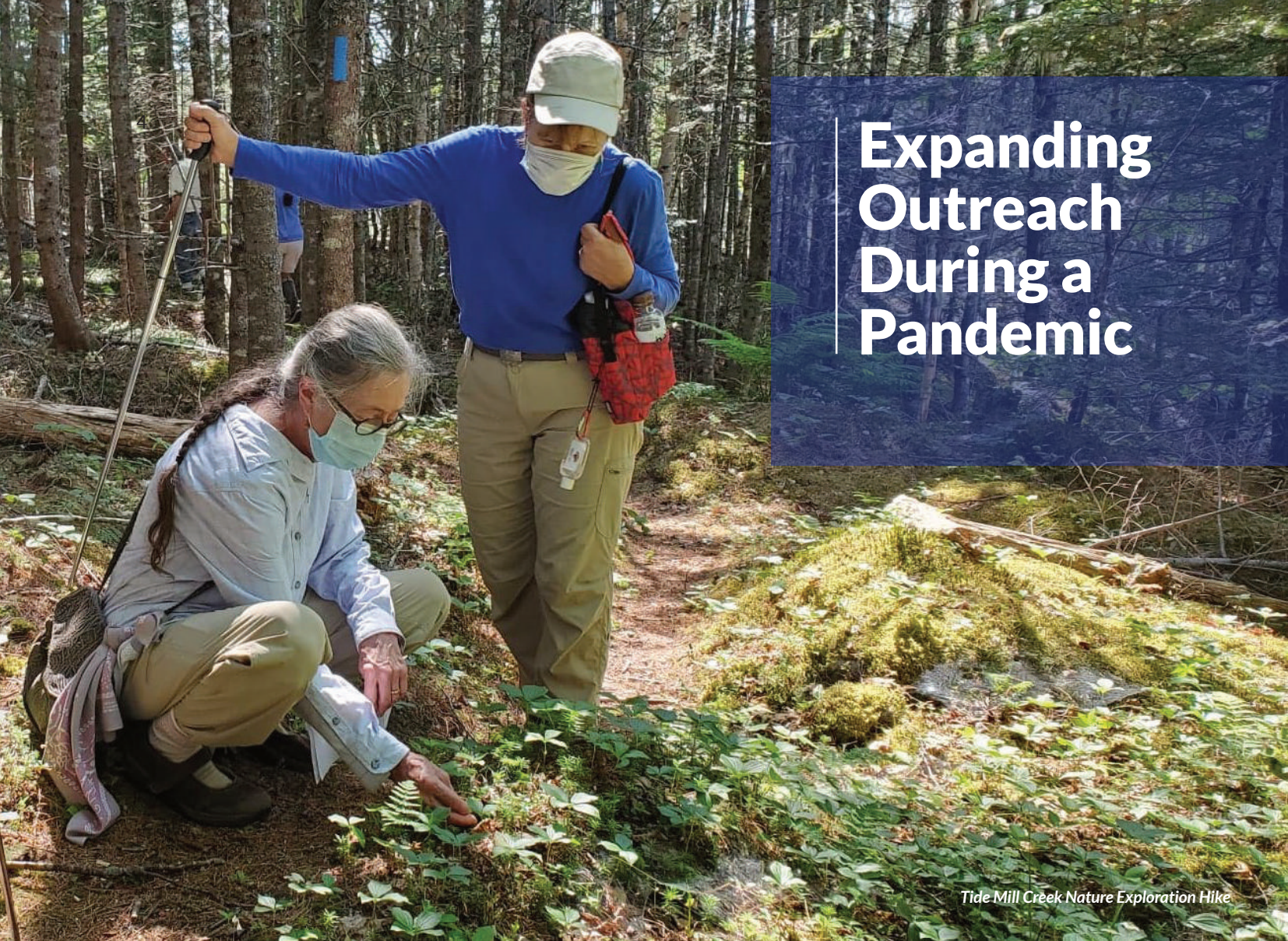
Executive Director, Perry

Kyle Winslow

Stewardship Director, Whiting

Cathy Lookabaugh

Outreach and Membership Director, Lubec



Expanding Outreach During a Pandemic

Tide Mill Creek Nature Exploration Hike

The wide range of visitors and participants that came to enjoy DCC's preserves this year, despite the current COVID challenges, is a credit to the resilience of our volunteers and the communities we serve. This year, DCC hosted 18 programs and events to enhance our outreach and environmental education efforts. Our goal was to collaborate with local volunteers to get the communities engaged outdoors in a safe and socially distanced manner. "It feels good to offer opportunities for people to recreate outside in fun and engaging ways" notes DCC's Outreach Director, Cathy. This year, more than 175 community members learned more about local flora and fauna, natural history, and outdoor recreation through the conservancy's talks and events.

"We've really been concentrating on getting people in Washington Coun-

ty outdoors to teach them all about what conservation can offer," Cathy said. In-person events were hosted with COVID-19 protocols in place and included registration limits to ensure healthy group sizes. Events varied from guided walks and talks, to basic skills workshops, to fun outdoor recreation events. Participants raved about the opportunities to be outside and learn

"We've really been concentrating on getting people in Washington County outdoors to teach them all about what conservation can offer."

with others. They commented on such highlights as "the considerate helpfulness and knowledge of the leaders" and "the fantastic introduction to a preserve I have not visited before."

In addition to the small group events, 55 runners and walkers took part in the 4th Annual Bad Little Trail Run hosted by DCC and Bold Coast Runners on a gorgeous fall morning. Runners had the choice to wind through the woods and along the river on a 2.5 mile or 7-mile course. These runners braved the roots and rocks, traversed over bog bridges, skipped across the top of a beaver dam, and navigated possible wet holes in an effort to make it across the finish line. This event is truly a community effort coming together to celebrate conservation and help raise awareness of the need for the protection of Downeast Maine's wild places. Cathy noted, "a big effort went into the planning of this event; ensuring health and safety was our top priority. I am thankful for the 16 volunteers who donated their time on an early Sunday morning." DCC is grateful to the Bold Coast Runners who

organize the logistics of the event. Financial sponsorship came from Machias Savings Bank, Downeast Community Hospital, Mark Wright Disposal, Peter Knowles Chiropractic, and the Machias Hannaford. Special acknowledgments to Paramedic Walker from the Machias Ambulance for providing first aid, David Kennedy for taking photos of the day, and the Machias Rotary for sending a team of volunteers to help with everything from parking to course sweeping to ensure no runners were left behind!

We at DCC are dedicated to creating diverse educational programming that will increase community involvement in our conservation efforts and next year will be no different. We're always exploring new ways to involve the community!

Note: All upcoming events will be posted on our website and Facebook page. Please visit those sites for more information.

Winner of the U12 2.5 mile trail run - Photo by David Kennedy



Klondike Mountain Climate Change Walk



Estey Mountain Hike



Middle River Wildflower ID Walk

The Art of Conservation and Getting To ‘Yes’

Robin L Pinto

Over the last 11 years, DCC’s Landmarks newsletter has shared with you numerous announcements of exciting property acquisitions and new conservation easements. Have you ever wondered how those come to pass? Many projects

require years of work and patience before DCC can get to “Yes” and a finished agreement. These projects involve complex and often interconnected issues: assessing conservation values, clarifying ownership, objectives and boundaries, negotiating terms with owners and attorneys, and cooperating with other nonprofits, state, and federal agencies

for organizational and financial support.

The quiet, hard-working, and intensely focused individual who has made all these projects come to fruition is Roger Clapp, chair of DCC’s Lands Committee. Roger after 14 years, first with Great Auk Land Trust and later with Downeast Coastal Conservancy, is stepping down from that essential leadership role and retiring to Vermont this month. Over the last ten months, Roger has finalized seven important land transactions including a conservation easement on Rodgers Island, a critical bird habitat in Lubec; the Vining Lake Community Preserve in Cooper; and Pigeon Hill Preserve’s addition linking the Steuben hill to its shoreline. However, before he departs, we want to share with you other highlights of his roles at DCC, his accomplishments, and his thoughts on our challenges ahead.

Roger spent his early years in New Jersey, but he did not discover his true love of the outdoors and the landscapes of Maine until he spent a summer canoeing the Allagash under the tutelage of the famous old river guide, Willard Jalbert. Before moving to Maine, Roger with his wife, Judy, spent 25 years as ‘gentlemen farmers’ in rural New Jersey. Judy was the real farmer; Roger, as he mischievously describes his role in that partnership, was the assistant who “rolled rocks and cut trees.”

However, it was as municipal attorney for New Jersey communities that Roger discovered his own passion for the Art of Conservation. Urban growth and residential development during the 1990s were rapidly consuming his beloved farm landscapes. “The most fun I was having in my legal practice at that point – and I did all kinds of things for the towns – was the preservation of beautiful places and wild places!”



Roger and his wife Judy

Roger and his municipalities worked with owners, town officers, state agencies, and land trusts to conserve working farms and open space. As farm owners, Roger and Judy put their own land into farmland preservation by selling the development rights to the county and state. After moving to Maine full-time, Roger and Judy placed most of their property into the Pleasant Bay Wildlife Management Area. The area, under the management of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, now protects almost 2000 acres of significant coastal and inland habitats. The Land for Maine's Future, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and other funders provided essential financial support for that growing conservation effort.

In 2007, Roger joined the Great Auk Land Trust. "My business with conservation, my personal life into conservation, and my personal feelings about conservation were all coming together!" Great Auk and Quoddy Regional Land Trusts had just begun serious discussions regarding their potential merger. Both trusts were too small; both had insufficient manpower and finances. Here, Roger's knowledge of conservation issues and persistent negotiation skills shined. "This tremendous sword hangs over all small nonprofits. Can they be sustainable; do they have the capacity to accomplish their mission? There is strength; there is synergy in the merger of small nonprofits. That was the reason and the guiding principle (for the merger)." Despite personality differences in both land trusts, Roger's quiet but persistent diplomacy helped to resolve those tensions. The birth of Downeast Coastal Conservancy in 2009 was the result!

Roger, in another example of tenacity and focus, led DCC's arduous accreditation process completed in 2018. This three-year effort required hundreds of hours of documentation that demonstrated DCC's commitment to maintaining national-level standards of best practices and policies, finance,



DCC's Roger Clapp. Never afraid to get wet or dirty in the cause of Conservation!

stewardship of properties, governance and ethical conduct. "Accreditation is our 'Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.' It proves to our funders, to our members and donors, and the public that we are a quality, well-run, good land trust. But, that's not what it's really about. Accreditation is about running an organization the way it should be run and living up to those policies and practices that are good."

As Roger exhorts all of us, DCC needs to continue to live up to those approved policies and standards and to find new ways of being a better land trust!

Roger points to the Two Rivers project in Machias as another milestone in DCC's history and first 'Community Conservation' effort. When the Middle River and Machias River properties became available, DCC was "waking up to the fact that land trusts have to put people over land and that people are more important than the land. A land trust's land is the starting point for the trust's good work in so-

ciety - it is the canvas on which a land trust paints. Good conservation puts the interests of and benefits to the community at the forefront of doing that conservation. It is no longer good conservation to simply buy a piece of property, protected it, locked it up and throw the key away." Has DCC realized its goals of community conservation? According to Roger, "Not yet. It's still a work in progress." But, says Roger, that opportunity is still there. Our newest property at Vining Lake will be another chance to integrate the people of Cooper and their needs into DCC's conservation actions."

"One of the happiest things that I have realized in recent years is that DCC can do it all in the land trust work. The diversity of our lands portfolio is one of DCC's outstanding attributes. We can do habitat protection! We can do recreation protection and get people out on the land for their health and well-being! We can do climate change resiliency projects, so when sea level rises, it will have a place to go! And we can do community conservation! DCC can and should do all of these kinds of land projects for the benefit our communities!"

As Roger retires from DCC's Board, we will miss his brilliance and can-do attitude, his willingness to pitch in and "get things done." He has assured us that, even though at a distance, he will 'Zoom' in as part of the Lands Committee. DCC will continue to be blessed - still - with his heart and mind!

DCC always welcomes anyone who wishes to volunteer their time or skills or passions to help us conserve better, think more broadly, or work smarter. If you would like to become more involved, you can contact Jon Southern, Executive Director, at jon@downeastcoastalconservancy.org, or Kyle Winslow, Stewardship Director at kyle@downeastcoastalconservancy.org, or Cathy Lookabaugh, Membership and Outreach Director at cathy@downeastcoastalconservancy.org.

Thanks to our Volunteers!



We have so much to be thankful for this year. In spite of all the challenges, a bright spot this year has been the help from our volunteers and their commitment to helping DCC move forward with our mission.

This past year was a big one for stewardship across our conserved lands. We completed six beach cleanups, including removing another 20 yards of trash from Browney Island (we removed 30 yards of trash in 2019). The Maine Island Trail Association even went back to Browney Island to remove a number of destroyed lobster traps. UMaine Machias students organized a beach cleanup at Bailey's Mistake in Lubec and removed over 500 lbs of trash in just a couple of hours. Other beach cleanup efforts included Marsh Island in Addison, the beach at the Pike Lands, Rodgers Island in Lubec, and Denbow Point. The Maine Island Trail Association was a great partner in both the Rodgers Island and Browney Island cleanup efforts, offering volunteers, boats, and helping with organization. Maine Coast Heritage Trust, who holds a Conservation Easement on Browney Island, was a great partner on the Browney Island clean up effort as well. These beach cleanup efforts would not be possible without the help from our partners, and especially the volunteers.

We have created more than two miles of new trails across four preserves this past year. A new loop trail at our Beaver

Dam Stream Preserve in Wesley is cut and ready for foot traffic (signage to come!); a new loop trail at the homestead on the Homestead Trail at the Machias River Preserve will take you on a tour of an old homestead and tree plantings (read more about this in the "Homestead Improvements" article); a new loop trail at the Pigeon Hill Preserve allows you to make a sea to summit trek (read more about this on the cover article); and the trail at Vining Lake should be ready for hiking by spring (read more about this in the "Vining Lake Update" article). All of these efforts were completed with the help of many volunteers, and in the case of the Pigeon Hill addition, almost entirely led and completed by volunteers.

On top of all of this is the necessary work of monitoring our properties, updating management plans, writing monitoring reports, and simply keeping an eye on the properties we've committed to protect. We want to thank all of our volunteers who not only make the big projects possible, but also the volunteers who are out there walking our trails and reporting trail conditions to us, the volunteers who take time to serve on our committees and help guide the work we do, the volunteers who are out there monitoring our properties, writing reports, and making the effort to actively steward land that means so much to them, to us, and to our community. We couldn't do it without our volunteers, and we deeply appreciate all of you!



UMM Students work on the Money Island Trail



Beach Cleanup on Rodger's Island



UMM Students work on Money Island Trail



Beach Cleanup on Marsh Island



UMM Students complete a beach cleanup in Lubec

Special Thanks to UMM

We wanted to give special thanks to the University of Maine at Machias (UMM) for their efforts this past year, especially this fall. UMM students were a huge help in helping to improve several spots on the Money Island Trail at the Machias River Preserve. They helped clean up an old homestead site at the Homestead Trail on the Machias River Preserve, and they also organized a beach cleanup at a property DCC holds an easement on in Lubec, removing over 500 lbs of trash in a couple of hours. UMM students have put in over 70 hours of volunteer time, just this fall. DCC would like to thank the students and faculty at UMM for their efforts!



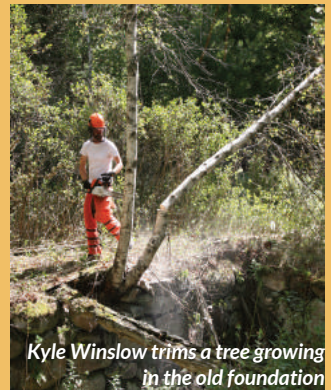
2020 Membership Drive



This year, DCC Member and local artist, Robert Miller, is donating two of his paintings to support our annual appeal efforts. Any current member who brings in a new member will be entered in a drawing for one of his framed paintings. All new members will be entered in a drawing for the second framed painting. Gifts to DCC make a positive contribution to conservation and community well-being.

Homestead Improvements

The Homestead Trail at the Machias River Preserve is so named because of the remains and structures of an old farm that once occupied a portion of the 900 acre preserve. With the help of many volunteers, the homestead area has been receiving a bit of grounds maintenance it hasn't seen in a very long time. In an effort to learn more about the area and offer a historic interpretive walk around the homestead site, we have cut a trail around a portion of the homestead and exposed three old dwelling cellar holes. The trail tours the historic stone foundations, meanders through a tree plantation that was established after the homestead was abandoned, and captures unique features - including a three and a half foot diameter American Elm! Over the winter, we will continue to gather information about the homestead and will be installing interpretive signage next year.



Update at Vining Lake Community Preserve



Vining Lake Stream

Earlier this year, DCC acquired the 407-acre Vining Lake Community Preserve. Since the spring, we have been hard at work adding trails, improving parking, and creating signage. We have installed a 10-car parking area at the preserve, that will not only allow for more vehicles to park and enjoy the property, but will help keep vehicle traffic away from sensitive areas as well. A seasonal dock installed at the preserve offers easier access to the 26-acre Vining Lake, a beautiful, well protected lake ideal for easy paddling. Our other big effort at Vining Lake has been creating a trail system around the lake. Pete Coleman, trail designer at Acadia National Park, has worked with DCC staff and volunteers to create a two-mile trail that extends around the lake, offering a loop through the property with views of the lake and a tour through the Vining forest. The trail is roughed out and will be marked by winter 2020/2021, with ground work and trail improvements continuing into the spring of 2021. We are installing a kiosk at the property and will be working over the winter to complete signage to be installed in the spring of 2021. DCC extends a warm thank you to all those who have supported this great acquisition and have helped to complete these improvements this past year.



Aerial view of Vining Lake

amazonsmile

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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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DCC's Annual Photo Contest Inspired by Nature



People's Choice Winner Great Blue Heron at Mowry Beach, Ralph Fletcher



Wildlife Finalist White-tailed Deer, Middle River Park, Mikki Van Hoose



Flora Finalist Reversing Falls Preserve, Robin Hadlock Seeley



Community Finalist Sunset, Klondike Mountain, Angelica Underhill



Flora Finalist Indian Pipes, Pigeon Hill, Ian Lookabaugh



Community Finalist Running with Excitement, Pike Lands Preserve, Brittany Foster



Landscape Finalist Reversing Falls Preserve, Robin Hadlock Seeley



Landscape Finalist Moon over Tibbett Island, Marc Chalufour