

Building the trail



New Trail

New Hiking Trail at Machias River Preserve

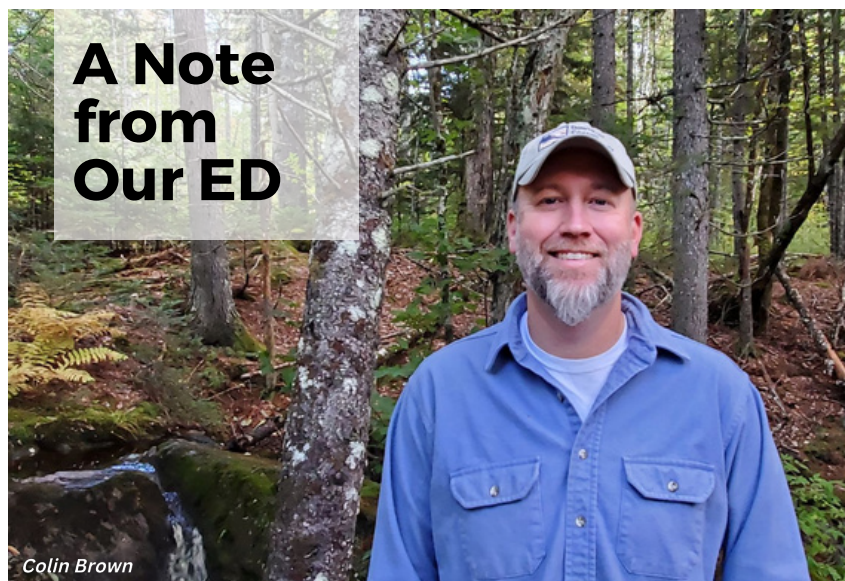
Downeast Coastal Conservancy has opened a brand new hiking trail at Machias River Preserve, named the "Munson Pitch Trail". The creation of this trail was executed by DCC's hardworking volunteers, interns, and stewardship staff. Beginning at the Heritage Trail parking lot in Machias, the trail winds through spruce-fir forests for just under two miles. It also follows the historic Munson Pitch Road for a short distance until its connection with the Heritage Trail.

The Munson Pitch trail was created in order to provide visitors with a shorter loop trail, beginning and ending at the Heritage Trail parking lot. When hiking along the Heritage or Munson Pitch Trail, hikers can now loop back to the parking lot in less than five miles. Prior to the trail's development, the shortest loop leading to the parking lot was from the Heritage Trail to the Sunrise Trail, at a total of eight miles. Next time you see yellow blazes branching off the Heritage Trail or from the parking lot, give the new Munson Pitch Trail a try!

Inside This Edition

- 2 Note from our ED
- 3 Notes From a Pond
- 4 In Geologic Time
- 5 Landscape Amnesia on a Changing Coast
- 7 A Closer Look: Interning with DCC
- 8 Education & Outreach Programs
- 10 Thank you to our 2022 Donors

A Note from Our ED



Colin Brown

Spring always seems to arrive in waves to Downeast Maine, with pleasant reminders of the Earth's slow awakening. Warm(ish) days with longer light, melting snowbanks, tree buds and small streams swelling, dwindling firewood piles, and no shortage of dooryard mud puddles for the kids to stomp around in, as little kids should. But the true harbinger of spring is the return of the birds...

American woodcock are some of the earliest to arrive in late March, usually in the midst of my third or fourth boil-down of maple syrup. The cacophony of red-winged blackbirds and grackles, fighting for elbow room beneath the feeders. Robins, singing their "cheerio-cheerily" song in the foggy mornings of April. Canada geese pairing up in the marsh. Eastern phoebes buzzily grabbing at early flies, and song sparrows flitting in and out of the brush piles. I could go on and on! In the woods of coastal Downeast Maine, this often-chilly, damp, and fleeting time of year is warmed by our feathered friends.

Prior to arriving at DCC, I have served for many years as a volunteer guide and planning committee member of the Down East Spring Birding Festival. Hosted by Cobscook Institute in Trescott, ME, this annual festival is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year with an exciting lineup of birding walks, boat trips, dinners, and educational programs on Memorial Day weekend (May 26-29). This festival is truly community-driven by a large group of volunteers, conservation organizations, large landowners, state and federal agencies, and local businesses. Whether you are a seasoned birder or just casually interested, the festival has something for all ages and abilities.

This year, I'm thrilled to have Downeast Coastal Conservancy as a leading collaborator for the festival. DCC Board Member Chris Bartlett, Membership & Outreach Director Cathy Lookabaugh, and myself are all involved with the planning committee and will lead several events, including programs at

some of your favorite DCC preserves such as Mowry Beach, Klondike Mountain, and Orange River Conservation Area. Birders and naturalists from all over the country flock to Washington County for this festival, not only to explore miles of hiking trails, thousands of acres of conserved lands, and exemplary wildlife habitat, but also to help give the local economy a serious boost at the start of summer. As an organization, we are constantly seeking for more ways to leverage these beloved DCC preserves for local benefits, and working with the Down East Spring Birding Festival is an excellent example of that type of community conservation.

If you can't make it to this year's birding festival, there are numerous other DCC outreach and education events happening all summer long (see page 9 for details). Please be sure to RSVP to DCC's Annual Meeting at Middle River Park (July 14th) or stop by our booth at the Machias Wild Blueberry Festival (August 19th and 20th) to say hello and catch up on all the latest news from Downeast Coastal Conservancy. See you on the trails!

Colin Brown
Executive Director



If you are interested in registering for the Down East Spring Birding Festival please visit:

<https://cobscookinstitute.org/birdfest>

Notes From a Pond

By DCC Board President Anne Baker

I'm a small backyard pond, maybe two meters by two meters, and it's amazing how much goes on in my little space in the spring. I don't have any fish and this makes me an especially good place for amphibians (frogs and salamanders) to breed, as fish are very fond of amphibian eggs. Early in the spring, wood frogs emerge from their winter homes under leaf litter or in shallow crevices and move into my water. Males arrive first and make a great racket, chorusing together loudly to attract females to my pond. But collaboration goes only so far. Once females enter my pond it's every male for himself as the males compete to attract a mate. Fertilization is external and shortly after mating egg masses about the size of a golf ball begin to appear, often attached to submerged tree branches or vegetation at the water's surface. These egg masses contain hundreds of eggs and quickly swell to the size of a baseball as they take on water. Somewhere between a week to a month, depending on temperatures, the eggs hatch and hundreds of tiny tadpoles start swimming around, feeding on algae as they grow and eventually metamorphose into little froglets. When fully metamorphosed the froglets leave my pond and begin to forage on insects and small invertebrates on the forest floor.

Wood Frog



Wood frogs are very noisy while they're mating. Spotted salamanders are much more discrete. They begin their migration to my pond at night, during the first spring rains after the snow melts. Males respond more quickly to the rain and move faster than do the females, therefore they arrive first. Once in my pond, they litter my bottom with conical sperm capsules, appropriately called spermatophores. A few days later the females arrive, pick up the spermatophores with their cloacas to internally fertilize eggs, and lay between 30 and 150 eggs together on submerged vegetation near the bottom. A month or so later the eggs hatch into larvae. The larvae have external gills and front legs, distinguishing them from frog tadpoles. Salamander larvae are predatory, frequently snacking on the tiny wood frog tadpoles. In a couple of months, the aquatic larvae transform into terrestrial adults and leave me, finding refuge in animal burrows and under logs and rocks close by. Adult spotted salamanders are quite sedentary, only moving as far as necessary to find food and cool moist refuges underground, but when they're ready to breed, they usually return to my pond, the one in which they hatched.

Spotted Salamander



Unlike the transient wood frogs and spotted salamanders, eastern newt (also a salamander) spends its entire adult life in my pond. Newts begins to breed somewhat later than the wood frogs and spotted salamanders. Similar to the spotted salamander, the male newt deposits spermatophores on my bottom. These are picked up by the female, who then lays between 200-400 eggs in a mass attached to submerged branches or leaf litter. Eggs hatch into larvae a month or more later, depending on temperature. Larvae spend the summer in my pond, leaving in the fall as bright red-orange juveniles called eft. Although the efts will spend anywhere between 2 - 5 years in the forest leaf litter, they return to my pond as adult. All stages, larvae, eft and adult are carnivorous and will eat the eggs and larvae of other amphibians in my pond.

Eastern Newt (eft stage)



Later in the spring and into the summer, green frogs begin calling and breeding from their permanent homes in my pond and from the surrounding vegetation. Green frogs are bigger than wood frogs and a female green frog can lay thousands of egg; the larger the female, the greater number of eggs. Tadpoles feed in my pond throughout the summer and in Maine most overwinter in the leaf litter on my bottom, completing their transition to adult the following spring. Although in rainy weather the young toadlets may venture into woods and meadows to forage, green frogs are closely tied my aquatic habitat.

I'm a very busy place in the spring and summer. Things quiet down in the fall after wood frogs and spotted salamanders have left and the green frogs and newts begin to settle into their winter homes under the leaf litter on my bottom. It will be very quiet over the winter, but next spring, the cycle will begin all over.

In Geologic Time

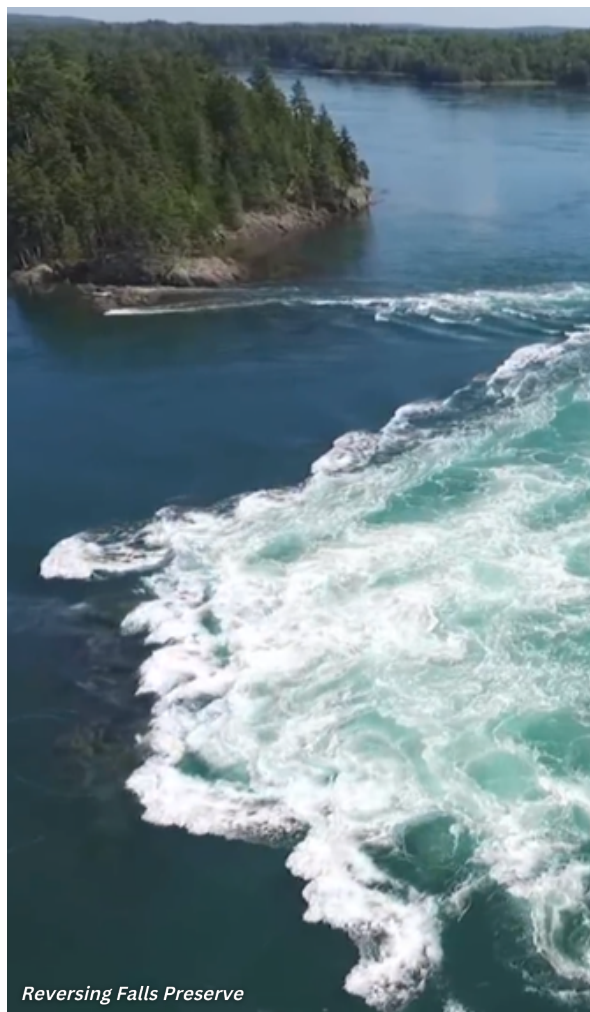
By Valerie Lawson

*You hear the falls before you see them,
like a high wind sweeping through pine and fir.
Water cascades over the rock ledge, eddies swirl
on the surface, kapskuk, Passamaquoddy
for this place of boiling water anglicized to Cobscook.*

*Here wind and water are verbs, earth the object.
In geologic time, the terrain is new, shaping
and shaped. How does this land not break?
As we navigate the trail, there is something
about the tree roots underfoot, the knuckling hold
in the thin soil of the rocky ledges, the bleached bones
of a weathered cedar arcing gracefully, a final
arabesque before tumbling onto the shingle beach.
Each falling tree releases itself to the next generation:
nest snag, nurse log, seedling compost.*

*It is all connected, trees, water, wind, the rock we stand on,
the seals working the seams of water for fish, loons
in the lane beyond, we are all stitched together, convened
within the cupped hands of a protected space
holding the beating heart of this tidal engine.*

*The pack-in pack-out trail embraces a quiet cove.
The online comments encourage you to return,
to understand differently, to bring a picnic.
High and low tides change things. So do light and season.
There is nothing here to take away but contemplation,
your sense of wonder renewed. Dogs and kids welcome, too.*



Valerie's poem is inspired by DCC's Reversing Falls Preserve in Pembroke. Her poem along with two others are published in **Writing The Land: Maine**, an anthology hosting 13 Maine land trusts and the 27 poets inspired by their adopted lands. In addition to wonderful poetry, the anthology includes information about the land trusts and their properties.

Poet Valerie Lawson has published her work in numerous journals, anthologies, and online. Lawson co-edited Off the Coast journal and her Resolute Bear Press has published Maine Literary Award-winning books including 3 Nations Anthology: Native, Canadian & New England Writers.



New DCC Gear

Get your own Downeast Coastal Conservancy gear! New DCC merchandise will be available this summer with an additional donation to our organization. We will have hats, neck gaiters, and tote bags. These items make excellent gifts, and are a great way to further support our land trust's mission. Please note that all items are available for pick-only from our office in Machias, 6 Colonial Way Suite 3 Machias, or from staff at an in-person event. Shipping not available at this time.

Landscape Amnesia on a Changing Coast

By Charlie Foster

The rain came quickly to Roque Bluffs on that day in June 2021. I checked the rain gauge on my home weather station and did a double take when I saw the reading: 5.3 inches of rain had fallen before most people had even roused for work. In a typical year, June would bring an average of 2.3 inches of rain to this area of coastal Maine - for the entire month.

Amid the deluge, the two main roads that lead into town were both impassable, their underlying culverts were gone and the streams that once flowed through them were now torrents of water that bisected the pavement. I took the opportunity to do a little impromptu surveying.

I stopped by the first culvert in my neighborhood: a black, plastic tube that ferries water back and forth from the tides each day under a dirt road that leads to a few houses perched on a picturesque cove. To my surprise, this one was intact. The tannin-soaked water from the salt marsh was rushing through to the bay and the dirt road was holding its own. The intact culvert owed its continued existence to the adjacent salt marsh, whose floodplain gave the water a place to spread out before exiting the estuary. This would not be the case at the next several crossings. At each one, where small tributaries of the Englishman River typically flow like babbling brooks, I found a washed-out roadway and the roadbed strewn hundreds of feet downstream.

Eventually, road crews were assembled and did a fantastic job of restoring access to town. Shortly after that, we all continued about our business. The roads were fixed, and the sun was out. It ended as a banner June day for our beautiful community. As the sun set, the dark evergreen fir and spruce trees were backlit by a spectrum of pastels. Everyone will remember that day, but I'm afraid few are aware of its context.

Our climate is changing and that has consequences for those of us on the coast. It's virtually impossible to attribute one rain event to the greater alarm bell of climate change, but the proof could lie in the anecdotal pudding. We have an aging population in our part of the country. Many of the folks here make their living off the land or water and have done so for decades. All the people I spoke with about this event said the same thing: "That's never happened here before." And it's not just our town's flooding event that evokes that statement. Across the region, other events that may never have happened before are now occurring with regularity.

In Addison, there is a culvert that carries water underneath the East Side Road at a place called Knowles Brook. There, a sign has been erected to indicate to a passing motorist the potential for up to six feet of water on the roadway. On the day I visited, it was a normal tide, and the water was gently lapping up against the pavement. You can delineate the floodplain of Knowles Brook (a beautiful coastal stream home to sea-run brook trout and rainbow smelt) by noting the change in topography as you traverse the East Side Road. The road slopes down from a hill and continues for about 1,000 feet, until it meanders up the next hill. In the ... *(continues on next page)*



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center of that dip is the culvert. It was installed in 1993, just three years after evidence of climate change and accelerated sea level rise were mentioned in the first IPCC report.

Since the culvert at Knowles Brook was installed, the long-term average sea level at that location has risen about seven inches. While an old-timer from Addison may have once said “That’s never happened here before,” they would now say “This is the second or third time it’s happened this year.”

We refer to these events, where areas along the coast are inundated even on sunny days, as “nuisance flooding.” This is typical human behavior, to downplay the slow destruction of critical infrastructure as a “nuisance.” Under the current projections, these nuisances will be occurring 10 times more frequently than they had even a decade ago.

In human psychology, there is a process called creeping normality, also known as landscape amnesia. Landscape amnesia is “a process by which a major change can be accepted as normal and acceptable if it happens slowly through small, often unnoticeable, increments of change.”

You might know the process of landscape amnesia better as “death by a thousand cuts.” In many parts of our region, the cuts have already begun. Low-lying roads are being bisected and entire towns are being temporarily cut off. We must act now by upgrading our infrastructure to withstand the next hundred years of tiny cuts, before they add up to gaping wounds. We must create more resilient communities, built to be as durable as the old-timer who once watched as the trickles of water came in over the road for the first time ever, and then for the third time this year.

Charlie Foster is the Associate Director for the Downeast Salmon Federation. Earlier versions of this story appeared in the Machias Valley News Observer and the Working Waterfront Newspaper.

New Commemorative Bench Program



We all have a deep connection to natural places where we go to rest, reflect, and recharge. Whether perched on a granite bluff overlooking the rugged coastline or nestled in a moss-covered spruce glade, many of these special spots can be found at DCC preserves. Everyone who is passionate about land conservation and enjoys the many recreation opportunities in Washington County was introduced to the outdoors by someone who came before them – someone who mentored or nurtured these deep connections.

DCC is pleased to introduce the Commemorative Bench Program - a new stewardship and development project to honor the many people who have instilled a passion for the natural world in all of us. Commemorative benches allow you to honor the special people you love, and your donated contribution will be a great addition to DCC’s preserves. For a minimum \$2,000 donation, your request will place a bench with a dedicated plaque at a pre-determined location at one of DCC’s public preserves for a five-year period. After five years, you will have the opportunity to renew this wonderful gift to your honoree.

A functional and classic design, these ubiquitous outdoor benches are attributed to Aldo Leopold, one of land conservation’s great thinkers and writers. The memorial plaque will be placed at the center of the bench at a prominent location on the landscape. These benches will provide DCC preserve visitors with an excellent option for rest and reflection upon the Downeast landscape – an aspect of outdoor recreation that Mr. Leopold found essential for a true connection to nature.

To learn more about this program, please visit our website, or contact DCC Executive Director Colin Brown to discuss how you can donate to this exciting new initiative.

A Closer Look: Interning with DCC

By DCC's Vice President Robin Pinto

DCC is blessed with an energetic board and a highly capable staff in Colin Brown, Ryan Mola and Cathy Lookabaugh. Nonetheless, we often call on our community partners for their support and assistance. The University of Maine at Machias is one of our oldest partners. In the past, UMM students have volunteered for trail work, completed GIS mapping projects, and accomplished semester-long research – all of which have significantly benefited DCC. However, one of our longest running relationships is with the Outdoor Recreation and Leadership Program (OR&L) and its Co-op classes.



Often, DCC hosts one senior majoring in OR&L as a Co-op intern each Spring. These interns work with Ryan, DCC's Stewardship Director. Ryan, himself a graduate of UMM, can speak to the value of these internships. *"It can be difficult to gain local experience in your field while in college. This partnership between the University and DCC provides students with this essential opportunity. With the wide range of jobs involved in stewarding DCC lands, Co-op students gain both skills and knowledge that will be important as they move into their own careers."*

Jo Dee White is DCC's present intern. For the past 10 weeks, she has worked with Ryan on important spring chores preparing our lands and trails for summer recreationists. This year's winter storms in December and January left most of our trails in a nasty tangle of blow-downs and snapped limbs. Jo Dee and Ryan spent weeks in the woods wielding chainsaws and clearing slash in all weather conditions. Other intern tasks included tool maintenance, repair and painting of wooden benches and tables, pruning apple trees, monitoring conservation easements, and analyzing recreation data.



Not all the assigned tasks were so easy. An important part of the Co-op experience is to push students out of their comfort zone. Despite the strenuous labor and challenges, Jo Dee says, *"I've had a real ball working with Ryan and really enjoyed every aspect of my work!"*

Jo Dee will be graduating in early May with a degree in Community-based Recreation Management. She is looking forward to taking her newly gained skills to begin work elsewhere as a land trust steward or perhaps to start her own business as an outdoor adventure and hunting guide. We thank Jo Dee for her enthusiasm, positive spirit, and hard work; we wish her well on her next adventure of her own making.

Volunteering with DCC

Help care for the places you love! Our volunteers can be anyone passionate about DCC trails, responsible trail use, and spreading the word about conservation. These workdays are a fun and impactful way to meet new people and engage with the local community. No prior experience is necessary; we will provide all the training, information, and materials you need!

The dates listed below are subject to change due to weather conditions visit our website for more information.

- August 24th: Mowry Beach Knotweed Pull
- September 5th: Deer Wintering Area Management Day
- October 12th: Tide Mill Creek Bog Bridging
- October 26th: Klondike Mountain Bog Bridging



Education & Programming Accomplishments

It has been a busy winter, with a full roster of programs to fulfill the land trust's goal of educating the public about the value of our preserved open space and the importance of environmental conservation. Here a few highlights our programming so far this year:



Winter Family Fun Day

On Saturday February 25th, over 50 participants braved the negative cold temperatures and windy conditions to join us for our Annual Winter Family Fun Day. We had 12 sledders ready to take part in the annual cardboard box sled contest! Quickly the "Mud Mower" captained by Noah and Saphira, ages 13 & 8, took off down the hill – earning the prize of "Furthest Sled". The sled named most creative, "The Stegosaurus" by Aerland, age 5, was an impressive dino sled capturing the attention of the all as we enjoyed the warm fire and s'mores on this cold winter morning.

New Indoor & Outdoor Workshops



One of our goals this year was to spread the word about opportunities conserved land can offer. Throughout the winter we offered varying workshops to new and experienced recreation users alike. Having the opportunity to hone in skills at a kayaking or map and compass workshop prior to summer season can be vital to user's health and safety when exploring; and learning more about winter botany and plant identification from a local and experienced naturalist can help everyone and enhance biodiversity in their own back yards and our entire region.

Spring Camp

In mid-April, DCC hosted a four day mini camp for youth aged 7-10. On our first day, participants quickly became friends through hands-on games and activities. Throughout the week we learned how to make observations and what it means to be a naturalist and stewards of the land through nature exploration. Campers searched the preserve for insects, birds, and species inhabiting vernal pools, all while nature journaling, respecting nature, and having fun. Camp showcased our area and in some cases, taught this younger generation that adventure can be located right in their own backyard. Funding for this exciting kids camp was made possible by a grant from Downeast Wind.



Upcoming Events

May

- 13 Blueberries and Beyond
Vining Lake Community Preserve
- 18 Marsh Birding Trip with DSF
Schoppee Marsh
- 19 Nature Exploration Walk
Tide Mill Creek Preserve
- 25 Historic Apples & Arboretum
Pike Lands Preserve



26-29
Bird Fest 2023
<https://cobscookinstitute.org/birdfest>

- 29 Spring Popup Camp
Machias River Preserve

June

- 3 Annual Plant Sale
DCC Office, Machias
- 10 Wildflowers Walk
Vining Lake Community Preserve
- 16 Intro to Canoeing
Vining Lake Community Preserve
- 21 Summer Solstice Sunset
Pike Lands Preserve
- 25 Medicinal Plants
Middle River Park
- 28 Magical Woods
Middle River Park

ANNUAL ONLINE FUNDRAISING AUCTION

Save the date: June 12th – June 29th. We are excited to offer our 3rd Annual Online Auction featuring local artwork, gift baskets, weekend getaways, boat trips, and more! You won't want to miss out! Visit the DCC website for more information and to sign up for our monthly emails to stay up to date.

July

- 8 Insects
Tide Mill Creek
- 14 Summer Cookout & Annual Meeting
Middle River Park
- 17 Forest Camp
Machias River Park
- 26 Our Underground World
Middle River Park
- 28 Salt Marshes
Middle River Park

August

- 11 Hike & Paddle
Orange River Conservation Area
- 18 Mosses of the Forest
Ingersoll Point Preserve



19-20
Machias Wild
Blueberry Festival

- 27 Annual Full Moon Hike
Pigeon Hill Preserve

September

- 3 Nature Printing Workshop
CETL
- 9 Liking Lichens
Klondike Mountain Preserve

October

- 1 Bad Little Trail Run
Machias River Preserve

To register for events or receive more information please visit our website or email cathy@downeastcoastalconservancy.org. Events may be canceled or postponed due to inclement weather.

Thank you to our 2022 Donors!

The generosity of all of our members is vital to preserving the spectacular areas of Downeast Maine that we love. We are thrilled to welcome our newest members, highlighted in bold, who joined us in 2022.

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Matthew Mandino

Michael and Bonnie Coplon

Michael and Sissy Leonard

Mike Buskirk

Nancy and Kevin McGinnis

Nancy Burroughs

Nancy Chamberlin

Nancy Neuman

Nancy Rankin

Nancy Saunders

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 Tom Reeves
 Tracy and Barbara Lyman
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 William and Noreen Blaiklock
 William Walsh

We have made every effort to make this listing as accurate as possible. Please contact us at (207) 255-4500 if you have any questions or corrections.

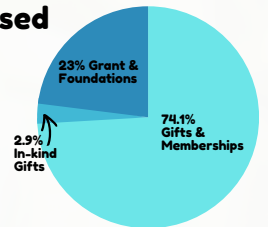
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The mission of the Downeast Coastal Conservancy is to conserve essential ecological habitats, engage the local community, and foster an environment where wildlife and people thrive in coastal Washington County, Maine.

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SAVE THE DATE SUMMER COOKOUT & ANNUAL MEETING

FRIDAY, JULY 14TH

Our Annual Meeting will kickoff at 3pm and include a presentation by Bob Duchesne on the importance of conservation in relation to birds. Burgers, hot dogs, veggie options, and summer salads will be served around 4pm. Come hang out for as long as you can and hear what is new with DCC. Members and guests will also have the chance to meet staff and board members. All are welcome! RSVP encouraged, please visit our website.

