



Orange River Campsite

Introducing New DCC Campsites

Without a doubt, one of the best ways to experience the pristine beauty of Downeast Maine is remote camping. We are thrilled to announce that DCC has expanded our recreational offerings to include water-access, primitive campsites! With generous funding support from Davis Conservation Foundation and our partners at Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), DCC's stewardship team and volunteers have built five new campsites that are excellent outdoor recreation options for local residents and visitors alike.

Free to the general public and

offered "first-come, first-served," these sites are located at Orange River Conservation Area (two sites), Gilman Dam, Vining Lake Community Preserve, and Tibbett Island (South Addison). Each of the sites contains a picnic table, DCC signage, a box privy, and a firepit. No registration is necessary, but campers are required to obtain camp fire permits for the site they are using by calling the Maine Forest Service in advance of their stay. Fires at Tibbett Island are permitted, but only below the high-water mark and all fires must be extinguished and dispersed.

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Celebrating Land Trust Alliance Accreditation

A note from our Executive Director

We humans love instant gratification. Inherently, we enjoy seeing positive results from the fruits of our collective labors. Conservation, however, is firmly rooted in long-term perspectives, with the daily efforts of staff and volunteers often not seeing those immediate impacts. Land protection and stewardship efforts are intended to benefit future generations yet to come, largely without everyday acclaim and recognition.

This fall, we are celebrating a very important achievement – DCC’s accreditation has been renewed by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission! An independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, this status was first awarded to DCC in 2017 and is now renewed for an additional five-year period. The application process is a thorough audit of DCC’s operations in governance, finance, land transactions, fundraising, and stewardship. Accreditation is a mark of distinction, recognizing land trusts that meet the national quality standards established by the land conservation community. This status shows our supporters and the wider land trust community that Downeast Coastal Conservancy operates at the highest level of professionalism in all facets of conservation work.

However, we are not here just to toast ourselves... We are celebrating this achievement as a moment of recognition of everyone within the greater DCC family. Board members, volunteer-led committees, financial supporters and donors, partner organizations, stewardship volunteers, foundation funders, community leaders, and local businesses are all crucial to carrying out DCC’s mission. Non-profit conservation work simply can not happen without a broad network of ardent supporters and volunteers. The list of contributors to DCC’s conservation successes is far too long to list here, which shows this achievement is one to be celebrated in the many communities of coastal Washington County and beyond.

If you are reading this – thank you for helping us along the way, and for supporting the many conservation successes of Downeast Coastal Conservancy!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin Brown".

Colin Brown
Executive Director



DOWNEAST COASTAL CONSERVANCY

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New Board Members and Staff Join DCC's Conservation Mission



Ben Edwards, born and raised in Machias, recently returned to operate Schoppee Farm, a 200-year-old farm that has been in his family for 9 generations. While away Ben spent about 15 years living in Providence, NYC, LA, Moscow, London, and Paris running a few small technology companies and working for an investment bank and then private equity companies as a business and technology consultant. Ben is passionate about combining preservation with the continued commercial use of the land and hopes to help facilitate a better relationship with DCC and the area it serves.

Dave Wimberly grew up in Southwestern CT, earned a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from MIT in 1989 and moved to western Massachusetts for a 34 year career in the materials industry. He and his partner, Michael, sold early American antiques on the side for many years and made frequent buying trips to coastal Maine where they fell in love with the rugged shore and undeveloped land Downeast, putting down roots in Addison in 2001. Now working remotely in business development, they are living full time in Addison and wish to contribute to the local community. As an outdoor enthusiast, enjoying paddling, hiking, camping and basically anything relating to the beautiful wilderness we enjoy here, Dave is excited to apply his strategy and planning skills to the success of DCC.



Kate Jans, a lifelong resident of Whiting and Trescott, joins the DCC Board with former experience on the Quoddy Regional Land Trust board in the 1990s and current experience as a board member of Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Lubec Memorial Library. She is passionate about our Downeast region and been active in tourism discussions, as well as consulting on the proposal for the National Heritage Area. In addition to being an employee of Cobscook Shores and a professional private cook, Kate finds time to explore the outdoors through swimming and hiking.

Emily Guirl joins DCC as our new Administrative Manager! Emily moved Downeast in 2010 to work at a goat dairy and soon realized she'd stumbled onto a special piece of the planet. She grew up in the Midwest, graduated with a B.A. in Sociology from Oberlin College, and has worked in environmental education, education administration, agriculture, and operations. Her family tends a small farm in Whiting. Emily loves walking her cattle dog on the local trails and watching her kiddo make discoveries outside.



Sustaining the Gift of Sweetgrass

By DCC Board President Robin Pinto



Suzanne Greenlaw, amid a clump of sweet grass, points out the blade's shiny face and strong midrib, characteristic features of this species.

We found an abundance of sweetgrass, *Anthoxanthum nitens*, just below the intersection of forest and marshland. Sweetgrass is a beautiful, shiny, perennial herb that spreads through rhizomes in both fresh and saltwater margin environments. Sweetgrass is prized for its perfume, readily appreciated when dried, burned in ceremonies, or woven into sweet-smelling baskets.

Suzanne Greenlaw, a Maliseet and a PhD candidate in Forest Resources at UMaine at Orono, demonstrated to our group how to harvest respectfully the marshland's resources. Each gatherer made a small offering of tobacco, another sacred plant, in exchange for receiving their gift from the marshland – a small bundle of sweetgrass.

Wabanaki harvesters have gathered this plant sustainably for thousands of years on their traditional lands – including those now managed and owned by the Downeast Coastal Conservancy. European settlement and development of lands have separated tribal members from their heritage and from their cultural resources. Through improving access and learning proper management techniques from harvesters, we hope to better inform long-term management of sweetgrass and other culturally significant resources.

DCC is excited to continue to build relationships with Wabanaki harvesters through listening and dialog. We are working with members to develop co-management strategies in order that they always have ready access to the traditional plants of their homelands.

Early August, DCC invited members of the Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship, as well as staff from local land trusts, to investigate the availability of sweetgrass at one of our coastal properties in Harrington. Citizens from the Penobscot, Mi'kmaq, and Maliseet tribes joined board president, Robin Pinto, to explore that site and to share their knowledge and stories of this resource that holds significant cultural and spiritual values.



Through the act of respectful harvest, each visitor learns the beauty and feel of sweet grass.



Jennifer Neptune, a Penobscot and member of the Wabanaki Commission, with her bundle of sweet grass to carry home.

A Closer Look: Interning with DCC

By MCC Environmental Steward Martha Ross



My name is Martha Ross and I am serving a term with the Maine Conservation Corps as an Environmental Steward with Downeast Coastal Conservancy (DCC). I recently graduated from the College of William and Mary with a degree in Biology and Environmental Science and a minor in Data Science.

My dad took me on my first backpacking trip when I was eight years old. Ever since then I have spent most of my free time outdoors - hiking, backpacking, kayaking, or simply reading in my hammock. I was interested in serving as an Environmental Steward and learning more about stewardship activities because it is a great way to combine my personal passion for outdoor recreation and my academic interest in natural resource management.



One of my favorite things about my role with DCC is the diversity of projects that the Stewardship team tackles. I've had the opportunity to build campsites, install signs, paint picnic tables, monitor preserves and easements, and complete countless hours of trail maintenance using a weed wacker and chainsaw at DCC's 16 preserves (my favorite is Ingersoll Point). Essentially, I spend most of my time outside enjoying the summer weather, snacking on blueberries, raspberries, and the occasional huckleberry, and exploring Downeast Maine.

As an Environmental Steward I also have the opportunity to assist Cathy, DCC's Outreach Director, to lead hikes and accompany her on paddling trips at DCC's preserves. Participating in these programs allows me to interact with many of DCC's supporters and board members. Additionally, I am able to engage with volunteers at different events throughout the summer. It is always exciting to get to know our volunteers, each of whom always brings enthusiasm and dedication to the project at hand. From island cleanups to pulling invasive Japanese knotweed, our volunteers always have a great attitude and are eager to lend a hand.

I want to thank all of the staff, volunteers, and board members who make DCC possible. I have had an incredible time working with DCC this summer and getting to know the amazing staff and I cannot wait to see what experiences I will have this fall!

To learn more about the Maine Conservation Corps program visit https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/get_involved/conservation_corps/



Current Conservation Projects

DCC staff are hard at work finalizing three new land protection projects, all of which will be completed this fall. Each project has unique ecological significance and protects exemplary wildlife habitat in coastal Washington County.

Dowling Easement – generously donated by Marilyn Dowling, this conservation easement includes more than 50 acres of upland forest habitat and stream frontage on Bean Brook, a tidal stream that flows into Chandler Bay, in Jonesboro.



Herr Donation – a long-held DCC easement, this 69-acre parcel is being generously donated in fee by Charlie Herr. The parcel includes dense spruce-fir forest and more than 25 acres of pristine saltmarsh on the Pleasant River in Columbia Falls.



Yoho Creek – generously donated in fee by Dr. Frank Schumann, this 52-acre parcel includes upland forest, 1,950 feet of shoreline, and tidal saltmarsh habitat on the West Branch of Little Kennebec Bay in Machias.

Campsites continued from page 1

The site at Tibbett Island and the current campsite at Sheep Island will receive ongoing stewardship help from our partners at the Maine Island Trail Association.

“By expanding DCC’s camping opportunities, we hope to leverage conserved lands to support the growing industry of outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism in Downeast Maine,” said DCC Executive Director Colin Brown. “These campsites offer a free option for local residents and seasonal visitors to explore DCC preserves and help expand paddling destinations in Washington County.”

The Orange River campsites are part of the larger Orange River Water Trail, a Passamaquoddy paddling route that once connected Cobscook and Machias Bays. DCC is working with MCHT and other area partners on building recreational amenities for this trail. In addition, the other freshwater campsites allow excellent paddle-in options at 27-acre Vining Lake and along the Dennys River at the former Gilman Dam area. To learn more about DCC’s camping opportunities and campsite regulations, please visit our website, and click on the “Camping” link.



Connecting Youth to the Forest

This July, we hosted our 2nd annual Forest Camp where 9 youth, ages 10-13, trekked down the trails at Machias River Preserve for four full days of nature exploration.

After two days of meeting our nature neighbors and observing nature connections through games, hiking, journaling, and hands-on activities, we spent the latter half of camp centered around stewardship and conservation. One activity we did with the campers was a guided visualization activity to learn more about land trusts and the benefits of conserving land in greater detail. Breaking into small groups, the youth were asked to assume the role of creating their own land trust and brainstormed a conservation priority for their new organization – *Did they want to protect rivers or lands? Wildlife? Historic values or cultural sites? Perhaps create new recreation access?*



Camper making nature observations

One group formed the “Native Maine Species Conservancy” with the conservation priorities to protect endangered species and native plants and animals. *“We hope to conserve land properties that are close to the water with important sensitive habitat”* mentioned camper Bernadette.

The “East Mushroom Camping Trails” was envisioned by another group who had a deep passion for mushrooms but still wanted to provide recreation opportunities like camping. *“On our lands the number one priority is the safety of the mushrooms,”* noted camper Kayleigh *“and the obvious rules include camping in designated locations and not stomping on the mushrooms.”*



Campers proudly reached Munson's Pitch overlook

After two days of exploring the forested landscape, our campers began to understand this landscape more fully. People protect what they understand and look to preserve what they love. The best thing we can do to help foster the next generation of stewards is to have them experience nature, build a relationship with it, and develop their own reasons for conserving it. Forest Camp is doing just that!

We are engaging youth in the forest ecosystem through hands-on activities and games, providing the campers the opportunity to connect with each other and the natural world. Forest Camp is not only a time to building hiking skills as we trek down the trail, but it becomes place for discovery as we engage in thoughtful dialogue and hands-on lessons that spark imaginations while encouraging critical thinking.

Forest Camp is co-led by Hazel Stark from Maine Outdoor School and Cathy Lookabaugh, DCC's Outreach and Education Director. DCC received a grant from Healthy Acadia's Partnership for Success Program to provide this opportunity.

Landscapes of Inspiration



Featured painting by Barbara Snapp

Landscapes of Inspiration is a new initiative to hear from DCC members. It is a program for you to share your voice and passion through a creative medium of your choice. After featuring Valerie Lawson’s poem “In Geologic Time” in our recent newsletter – which was inspired by Reversing Falls Preserve – a longtime supporter of DCC, Barbara Snapp, felt moved to share her own work inspired by a DCC landscape. Thus, this new idea of Inspiration was born!

Members and supporters are invited to spend time outdoors: strolling along riverbanks, hiking forested trails, and exploring the sights and sounds of nature, reflecting upon what makes Downeast Coastal Conservancy’s preserves special to you. We are looking for short expressions that share the emotion and connections you feel with the landscape.

We welcome submissions of original poems of any style, art of any media, drawings by kids and adults alike, even recipes inspired by the landscape. Oh, boy! I would love to find a recipe for a Pigeon Hill Pie! Selected submissions will be showcased in DCC media: our printed newsletter, social media, and website. Submissions will be accepted throughout the year and can be sent to cathy@downeastcoastalconservancy.org. Share your voice, your passion, and help us highlight the special places of Downeast Maine.



Pigeon Hill

*old woods line the path
leading to a bold summit
worth the hard, steep climb
a wide coastal view
blueberries shadow hidden
sun sets, moon rises
immersed in nature
encompassed by its grandeur
feeling so alive*

Barbara Snapp



Nature Note

Our favorite ecosystem engineer, the beaver, spends his fall busy as (dare-we-say-it...) *busy as a beaver*, chomping down trees and intensely harvesting in preparation for winter. Families begin to concentrate on repairing and building up dams and the lodge before their watery homes begin to freeze over. At the first sign of snow, they will shelter in their lodge protected from cold and predators. They pass the days eating cached food stored under the winter ice and enjoying a rustic and romantic winter stay during this long-anticipated cold season.

Thank you to our 2023 Community Partners in Conservation!

Middle River Park

The generosity of all of our supporters is vital to preserving these spectacular places that we love! Our Community Partners in Conservation are local businesses who are likewise passionate about conserving our natural areas that make Downeast Maine special. They aid our stewardship efforts, support educational programs to engage local youth and families, and sponsor large community events for residents and visitors alike. DCC could not succeed without them. Please help us thank our partners by giving them your support!



Cathance Lake Association



Special Thanks to our Silent Auction Donors:

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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 #GIVING TUESDAY™ NOVEMBER 28TH

Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving. This year, when you donate online to DCC your dollar will go further! **DCC's Board of Directors have generously offered to match donations up to \$25,000.** DOUBLE your impact for community-led conservation and contribute to DCC on Giving Tuesday by visiting our website.

www.downeastcoastalconservancy.org/donate