

Landmarks

The Newsletter of the Downeast Coastal Conservancy



DOWNEAST
COASTAL
CONSERVANCY

Spring
2020



Vining Lake: A New Community Preserve!

On March 12, Downeast Coastal Conservancy acquired more than 400 acres as our newest Preserve. Vining Lake, itself 26 acres in size, is located approximately 21 miles north of Machias, off route 191 in the Cooper and Cathance Township. This acquisition was our first step in establishing DCC's Vining Lake Community Preserve. This conservation-based property is being set aside so that the public can enjoy forever its many educational and recreational attractions such as hiking, fishing, and other low-impact activities.

DCC acquired the land in a bargain sale from owners Jonathan and Melinda Jaques of Dennysville. The Jaques have been assembling the pieces of this property over several years. They believed that this remarkable lake and its surrounding lands should remain undeveloped and available for use by the

local communities. A small number of generous private donors, DCC's Board of Directors, as well as grants from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund and the Davis Conservation Foundation provided the capital to purchase the land. Just as importantly, these funds were sufficient to establish an endowment that will provide stewardship for the Preserve into the future.

The Vining Lake Community Preserve is host to a variety of important habitats, from its pristine lake to its mixed woodlands rich in songbirds, reptiles and amphibians, and mammals such as moose, black bear, otter, and beaver. Along the lakeside, there are extensive granite outcroppings. The Preserve contains meadows and wetlands that support a variety of plants and berries. Vining Lake is part of the headwaters of the East Machias River and provides outstanding waters for one

of the last remaining Atlantic salmon populations in the United States. With its stands of white pine and other native trees, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has described the forest habitat as possessing high value for rare and declining species of birds and fish. Maine's Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department rates Vining Lake among the top 12 brook trout habitats in New England.

Vining Lake has been a recreational resource for families in the surrounding communities for decades. The lake is stocked with brook trout annually and is widely used for ice fishing during the winter. DCC will continue to encourage low-impact, recreational activities on the property while, at the same time, protecting all of its habitats. Boating on the lake will be limited to hand-carried, non-motorized craft.

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Notes in the Age of Corona

by Executive Director Jon Southern

As we move forward into summer, we would like to reflect on a truly exciting 2019 season for DCC – one that achieved success in several remarkable projects. Yet, like you, we – Cathy, Kyle, and I – are almost feeling overwhelmed by this global upheaval. Just a few weeks ago, we were planning for an exciting year ahead – our only concern, then, was insufficient snow for skiing or snowshoeing! Now, suddenly, we are facing a crisis of enormous health and economic proportions.

Nonetheless, I am sure that you are more than ready to hear the positive. I am happy to celebrate great achievements made this year in our collective conservation efforts. We have brought to fruition some impressive projects in the past few weeks, despite the current challenges. With great pride, DCC announces its new flagship preserve in Cooper/Cathance Township. The Vining Lake Community Preserve contains a stunning, pristine lake, the perimeter of which is entirely undeveloped.

For so many throughout the Downeast region, its protection as a community resource has been a ray of sunshine, especially now when unclouded news is hard to come by.

The preserve will protect outstanding trout habitat and outdoor recreational opportunities. This remarkable acquisition was made possible by the overwhelming generosity of the previous landowners, Jonathan and Melinda Jaques, and through the financial support of our members. The positive attention that this acquisition has garnered is heartwarming for us. For so many throughout the Downeast region, its protection as a community resource has been a ray of sunshine, especially now when unclouded news is hard to

come by. This new preserve will reflect community conservation at its finest.

Other Important DCC Acquisitions!

- Cathy Lookabaugh – our new Outreach and Membership Director! Undeterred by the current challenges of social distancing, Cathy is already developing innovative ways to keep our communities engaged in COVID-customized outdoor activities.
- Indian River Conservation Area in Addison represents an important addition to our salt marsh migration and protection projects and conserves wetland habitat that supports rare plants, animals and migratory birds.
- Smalls Cove Conservation Easement in Pembroke will protect important shorebird habitat, clammer access to tidal flats, and a truly stunning part of the Pembroke coastline that is under increasing pressure for development.

Our preserves are seeing record use now as parents take their children out into quality natural environments. Our landscapes lend themselves to responsible social distancing practices and provide the positive stimulation needed for mental and physical well-being. From this crisis, people are becoming more aware than ever of the beauty and the emotional value of their natural environments and the importance of conservation achievements across the Downeast region.

Operations at DCC continue to be “business as unusual.” All of us are working from home and visiting the office on an as-need basis. Kyle is still in the field since Maine guidelines deem stewardship functions as essential. My primary concern is the welfare of our staff; we are working closely (but at a

distance) to ensure that common sense, safe practices are followed.

Our current situation fosters outside-the-box thinking, a stronger-than-ever focus on our mission, and the use of innovative ways to get things done.

We understand that our members, partners, and volunteers are facing uncertain conditions and difficult times. Yet the continuing encouragement from our membership and determination of our volunteers drive us forward through these many challenges. We must not lose our sense of bearing. From our 35 years of protecting strategic lands, we know that this conservation community, like the Downeast region, is determined and resilient. Our current situation fosters outside-the-box thinking, a stronger-than-ever focus on our mission, and the use of innovative ways to get things done. As a member of DCC, you are a critical part of our team that has achieved, and continues to achieve, amazing conservation results. We thank you for your ongoing support.

I wish you the best of health and look forward to seeing everyone Downeast as soon as Maine guidelines allow for restoration of normal activities and interactions. I always welcome your questions, concerns, or comments at (207) 214-5860 or at jon@downeastcoastalconservancy.org.



Staff Spotlight: Cathy Lookabaugh

Cathy Lookabaugh recently joined our team as the Outreach and Membership Director. Cathy is originally from New Jersey and first moved to the state to attend the University of Maine in Orono. She found her way to Lubec in the summer of 2019, as her husband Ian was ready to move back to his hometown and work at the family store, Lubec Hardware.

Cathy has served in various environmental roles including Crew Member for the Maryland Conservation Corps, Field Supervisor for a Sea Turtle Recovery Project, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator for the Maine Conservation Corps, and Volunteer and Administration Coordinator for a youth non-profit called Trekkers.

What influenced your decision to join our team?

I love that DCC is a small dedicated team focused on conserving the natural resources that make Downeast Maine special. The community-inspired work is something I believe in and something I am excited to be a part of. I have experienced numerous recreation areas across the United States, but nothing compares to the beauty of our region. I am thrilled to help preserve this unique area and I am happy to be able to call it my forever home!

What inspires you most about this work?

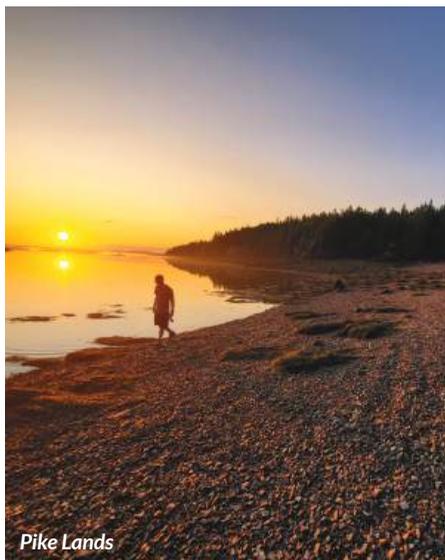
I am most inspired to know that DCC is a community made up of passionate individuals who are looking to share their strengths and learn from one another to become the best possible stewards of the land. It is inspiring to be part of a team working together to not only protect natural habitats today, but create a lasting impact for our community and for generations to come.



What is your favorite DCC hiking trail?

My favorite DCC hiking trail is Pike Lands in Lubec. The hiking trails traverse through a variety of forested habitats leading to the rocky shore of Huckins Beach where I have watched numerous beautiful sunsets. The beach is often so peaceful, feeling like your own private spot, with the only interruption being sounds of seals barking from a distance rock out in the water!

Contact Cathy by email at cathy@downeastcoastalconservancy.org.



Pike Lands



Downeast Coastal Conservancy

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Cathy Lookabaugh

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Salt Marsh Migration in the Indian River Conservation Area

By Roger Clapp, DCC Board member

On January 30, 2020, DCC acquired the Indian River Conservation Area (IRCA), approximately 265 acres in Addison with approximately 8,500 feet of frontage on the Indian River and more than 2,900 feet along interior streams. The entire property of the IRCA and \$12,500 in related stewardship funding were given to DCC by Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation (PRWF). DCC is deeply grateful to PRWF for these gifts.

The IRCA lies east of Route 187 (Indian River Road) between Route 187 and the Indian River, which forms the property's entire eastern and southern boundary. The access driveway to the IRCA is located on the east side of Route 187 about 6.5 miles south of Route 1 and about .4 mile north of the Jonesport town line and about 100 feet north of where Basin Road intersects Route 187. At that intersection there is a gravel area where a vehicle may be parked before crossing Route 187 to the access drive; there is no developed parking on the IRCA.

Two-thirds of commercial fish, shellfish and bait species landed in the Gulf of Maine depend on tidal estuaries and coastal salt marsh habitat at some point in their life cycles.

The IRCA is a salt marsh migration project which advances DCC's strategic objective to mitigate and manage, to the extent feasible, the impacts of climate changes to the tidal flats and saltwater marshes and to the ecosystems of the rivers and their associated riparian zones and forests in DCC's

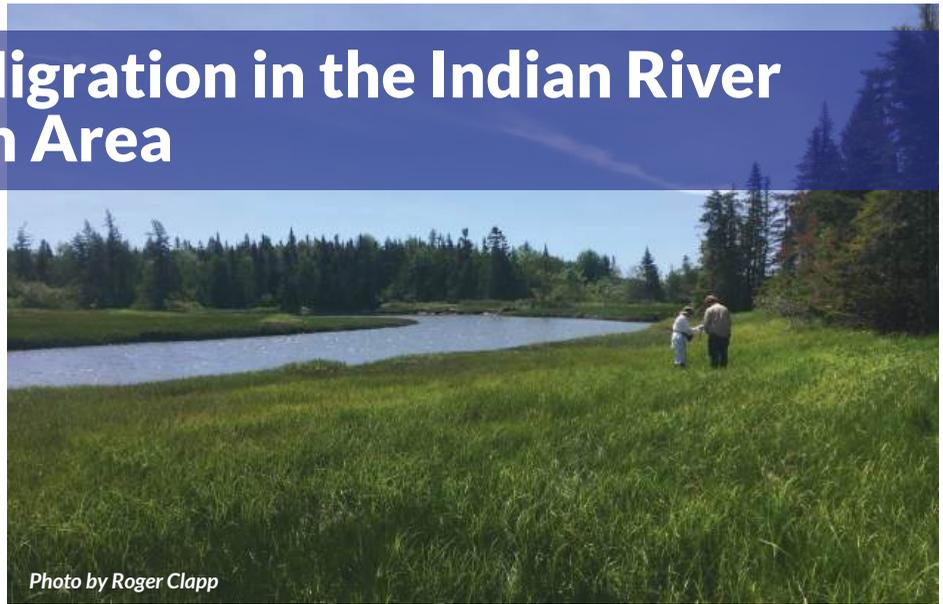


Photo by Roger Clapp

service region. In 2017 DCC's Board adopted DCC's climate change land acquisition strategy. See DCC's website under "About" click "DCC's Climate Change Policy for Land Acquisition". DCC has identified enabling salt marsh migration as an effective way to advance DCC's climate change strategy. The IRCA is an outstanding property to advance this strategy because it is located in the Indian River area of coastal Maine which has been identified as the single largest salt marsh migration area in coastal Maine and one of the two most significant climate change focus areas in coastal Maine.

The primary conservation value DCC seeks to protect in the IRCA is the protection of undeveloped upland buffer next to salt marshes. Research has shown that, in addition to keeping coastal waters clean and providing habitat for rare plants and migratory birds, the ecological functions of salt marshes provide tremendous economic value by providing critical habitat for fish and shellfish, including the commercially important species our coastal communities depend on. Two-thirds of commercial fish, shellfish and bait species landed in the Gulf of Maine depend on tidal estuaries and coastal salt marsh habitat at some point in their life cycles. Tidal

exchange stimulates plant growth in the marsh and carries out organic material that feeds fish and other coastal organisms. With the projected rise of global sea level of between three and six feet over the next 100 years the productivity of the estuary and coastal salt marshes will potentially be drowned and destroyed. By protecting upland areas where salt marshes can migrate the negative impacts of rising sea level caused by climate change can be reduced.

Another overarching long-term conservation goal for DCC in the IRCA is habitat protection since the IRCA has a high degree of biological significance and its conservation will support significant native plant diversity and critical habitat. The IRCA is relatively flat land with saturated and very hummocky ground and Sphagnum moss growing throughout. About 60% of the IRCA is estimated to be forested/scrub shrub wetland and generally appears to be a mix of hardwoods and softwoods with a very open canopy and correspondingly heavy shrub understorey, the result of logging and land clearing over the years. The western boundary of the central part of the IRCA crosses through forested wetland and abuts a large beaver wetland.

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Save the
Date!

2020 Community Outreach Calendar

We are thrilled that in the near future we will once again be able to explore the trails together! Starting in June we are excited to offer a full-calendar of outreach events. Our priority has been to create small group events that will keep us all physically and mentally healthy. We are asking everyone to please pre-register for all events to ensure we can maintain a healthy group size and adhere to social distancing guidelines. If you are feeling up for an adventure, please join us for an event that is close to home.

Events may be cancelled or postponed due to Maine's state restrictions or inclement weather. Sign up for email newsblasts or follow us on Facebook and Instagram for the latest updates. To register for events or receive more information please visit our website or email info@downeastcoastalconservancy.org.

May

28th – Educational Series: All we Need is Love Part 2: Turtles by Maine Master Naturalist Paul Powers

June

3rd – Klondike Mountain Sunset & Moon Walk

6th – DCC Annual Plant Sale

Starting **June 10th**, join us for **Wednesday Walks** – a weekly 30 min walk around the trails!

15th – Basic Kayak Clinic with Sunrise Canoe *Limited Spots - Register Early*

20th – Summer Solstice Hike & Beach Yoga with Sam Williams

23rd – All we Need is Love Part 3: Salamanders by Maine Master Naturalist Paul Powers

26th – Marsh Island Beach Cleanup

28th – Guided Walk & Talk: Nature Exploration with naturalists Walt and Carol Muth

July

Every Week – Wednesday Walkers Group

13th – Guided Walk & Talk: Wild Flowers & Tree ID with Dr. Sherrie Sprangers

17th – Rodger's Island Beach Cleanup (*Inclement Weather date 7/22*)

24th – Orange River Paddle & Estey Mountain Hike

Orange River Foliage Paddle



Ingersoll Point Preserve by Paul Powers

23rd – Fairy Festival

25th – All we Need is Love Part 4: Snakes by Maine Master Naturalist Paul Powers

30th – Pigeon Hill Nearly Full Moon Sunset Hike with Craig Snapp

TBN – Browney's Island Beach Cleanup

September

Every Week – Wednesday Walkers Group

13th – Orange River Paddle & Estey Mountain Hike

19th – Applefest with Healthy Acadia

21st – Pikes Lands Beach Cleanup

28th – Guided Walk & Talk: Middle River History

TBN – Guided Walk & Talk: Night Sky with Charlie Sawyer

October

4th – Bad Little Trail Run & Fallfest Day

17th – Fall Foliage Paddle

Klondike Mountain by Amanda Manship



August

Every Week – Wednesday Walkers Group

1st – Wildlife Photography Workshop with Photographer Paul Powers *Limited Spots - Register Early*

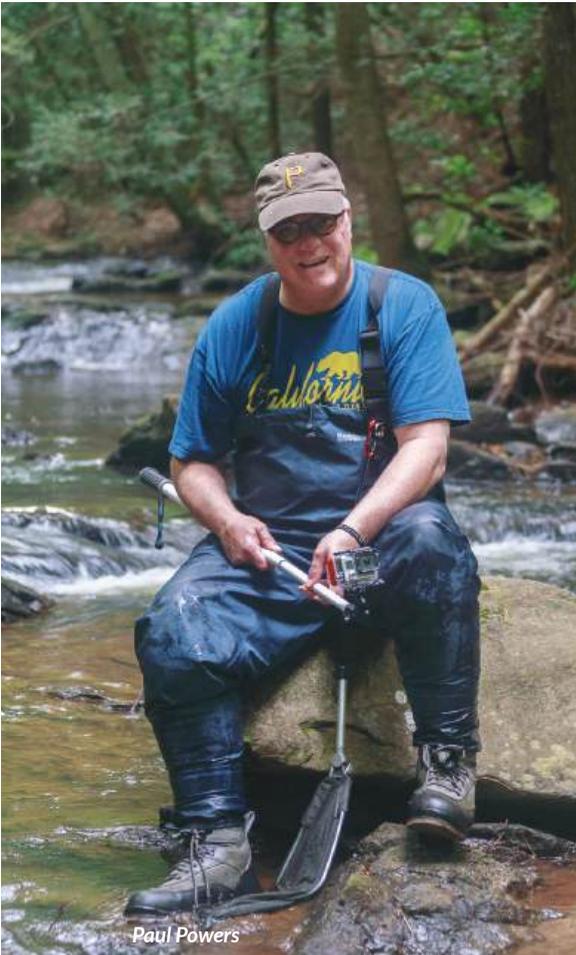
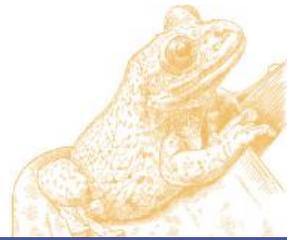
8th – Guided Walk & Talk: Climate Change with Dominic Winski

Week of August 10th – Photo Contest Voting: Help us choose the "People's Choice" Winner by **voting online**

21st – Middle River Paddle

A short interview with Maine Master Naturalist Paul Powers

What is “Big Night” for amphibians and why should we care?



Paul Powers



American Toad

What is “Big Night”?

Big Night” is defined as the first warm, rainy night in late winter or early spring when temperatures hover around 40 to 45 degrees Fahrenheit. This is when Maine’s amphibians (frogs, toads & salamanders) will make a mass exodus from their winter habitats (under twigs and leaves, beneath rocks and out from their burrows) and make their way to vernal pools to mate and lay eggs. The warm, soft rain helps protect their fragile skin and the darkness helps protect them from predators.

The term “Big Night” might be somewhat miss leading as it is not just one night but several nights when the weather conditions are just right in early spring to migrate to the vernal pools.

Why should we care?

“Big Night” is crucial to the survival of many Maine species of amphibians. So why should we care?

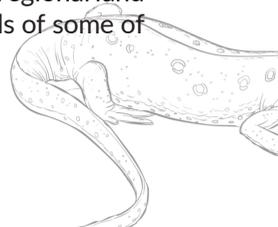
1. Amphibians play a key role in reducing the number of insects that destroy crops and transmit diseases.
2. Amphibian larva can reduce algae, insects and zooplankton in aquatic environments.
3. They are also a food source for larger mammals. Tadpoles are also consumed by fish, snakes, turtles, birds and other wildlife.
4. Finally amphibians are indicators of environmental health and their contribution to humanity. Amphibians profoundly enhance our lives and our world in countless ways. They provide vital biomedicines, including compounds that are being refined for analgesics, antibiotics, stimulants for heart attack victims, and treatments for diverse diseases including depression, stroke, seizures, Alzheimer’s, and cancer.

What can we do?

According to Greg LeClair, Maine’s Amphibian Migration Monitoring Project Coordinator, amphibians crossing roads typically experience mortality rates of around 20% amphibians. Noting a mortality rate above 10% could lead to extirpations in species like the spotted salamander.

According to Maine’s Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife here are a few suggestions we can do to ensure their safety.

1. Protect vernal pools (a vernal pool is a seasonal pool of water). These small wetlands provide a unique habitat for specialized amphibians, invertebrates and other wildlife.
2. Become a citizen scientist in Maine Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project (MARAP) and help document populations of reptiles (turtles & snakes) and amphibians (frogs, toads, & salamanders) across the state.
3. Join or support local or regional land trust. They are stewards of some of

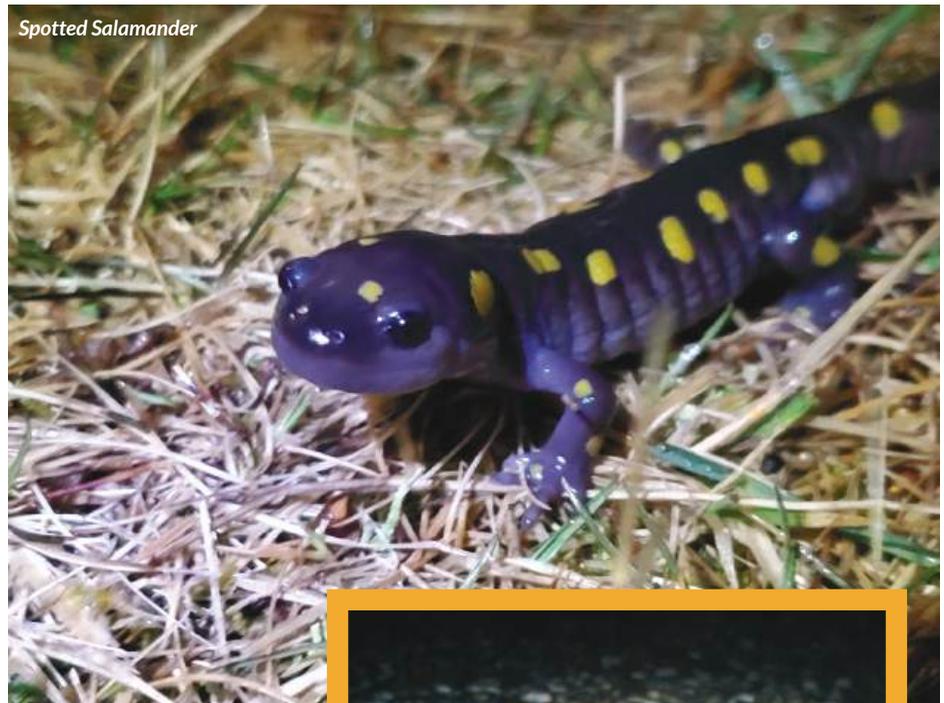


Maine's most special places.

4. If you happen to have a vernal pool or wetland on your property allow a wider vegetation buffer to grow up around the shoreline.
5. Watch for frogs and salamanders crossing on warm, rainy nights as they make their way to breeding pools – Slow Down.

Finally the star of the “Big Night” amphibians is the Spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*). They are approximately 6” long, black with orange-yellow spots. Chances are you haven't seen one before, because though they can live to be 20 years old, they spend 95% of their life underground. Let me know if you see one!

By conserving lands, DCC is helping to protect Maine's amphibians and



Spotted Salamander



Wood frog

By conserving lands, DCC is helping to protect Maine's amphibians and reptiles. It is vital to preserve not only vernal pools but also the surrounding uplands where these vernal pool breeding species spend the remainder of their lifetime.



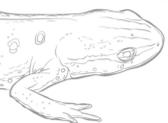
Spotted Salamander

reptiles. It is vital to preserve not only vernal pools but also the surrounding uplands where these vernal pool breeding species spend the remainder of their lifetime. It is also part of our mission to provide environmental education to youth and members of the public to help them become stewards of the land and learn more about these unique species. For more information on Maine's amphibians and reptiles please join us for Paul's presentation series: All We Need is Love. Through a series of presentations Paul explores the life cycles of amphibians and rep-

tiles, fun facts about these animals, their seasonal activities, the State Status on Maine's native species and what we can do to live in balance with our native friends. His next presentation with DCC will be May 28th via Zoom with a focus on Maine's native turtles. Please visit DCC's website for more information. If you have any questions concerning MARAP (Maine Citizen Scientist forms) or general comments feel free to contact Cathy at cathy@downeastcoastalconservancy.org.



Red-backed Salamander



Stewarding Land



By Kyle Winslow, Stewardship Director.

This has certainly been a spring of change in many ways as we all grapple with current situations; global, national, and our own personal situations we find ourselves navigating. One thing that has not changed is our undivided attention to protecting the land we have committed to protect, and keeping all the wonderful public access preserves we have protected over the years open and accessible to everyone. On a personal note, the conserved lands Washington County Maine has to offer has been a saving grace. My family and I have been so grateful to have these remarkable preserves and the incredible organizations behind them; organizations that are working hard to offer not just a physical place to safely get outdoors, but are also creating unique experiences for people of all ages to connect to these special places.

We are not meant to stay cooped up inside. We are meant to explore and wander, to get lost (maybe not literally) in

the expanse and verdant beauty of the woods at Ingersoll Point Preserve, marvel at the views from the top of Pigeon Hill - one of the most beautiful spots in Steuben, and enjoy the ocean at Pike Lands Preserve or Mowry Beach. This being the case, we have seen an increase in use across all of our preserves over the last several months. In light of all that is happening in our world that is bad, it is great to see people connecting with their local preserves, exploring new places, and safely keeping healthy - mentally and physically - by keeping their social distance through getting outside and being among nature. As the Stewardship Director for DCC, it has been my priority to keep these preserves accessible and safe for you to enjoy, especially now when these places are needed most. It has almost been business as usual in terms of field work this time of year. There is always a lot of cleanup to do following winter storms and high spring water, and we are staying on top of it with the help of some wonderful volunteers who have helped



Ingersoll Point

keep trails open while out enjoying them themselves. We have a new parking area at our Klondike Mountain Preserve and we are excited to be working on new projects as well, expanding our public access preserves and hiking trails to offer more opportunities for everyone to get out on a trail and enjoy the outdoors. Stay safe, keep exploring, and keep in touch - while adhering to social distancing guidelines, of course!



Middle River Park



Pike Lands



Homestead Trail

Vining Lake continued from page 1

There are no buildings on the shoreline of Vining Lake and DCC intends to preserve that absence of structural development. During this year, DCC will begin the layout of trails and other low-impact improvements that gently enhance public access and protect the

rich habitat. The property will play an important role in DCC's environmental education programs and will highlight the importance of protecting such sensitive habitats and developing key conservation values. DCC is working with local schools, colleges, and youth organizations to encourage use of the

Preserve as a nature study site.

We encourage you to come visit the Preserve later this summer! To learn more about the Vining Lake Community Preserve and its progress you can check in at our Facebook, website or sign-up for Constant Contact email news.

New Conservation Easement in Pembroke

By Kyle Winslow, Stewardship Director.

This past March, DCC acquired a new easement in Pembroke, ME. Robin Hadlock Seeley and Tom Seeley made a generous gift of a Conservation Easement over a portion of their property in Pembroke. This easement protects the intertidal zone from any future rockweed harvesting and ensures access by licensed harvesters of shellfish and worms. Along with the adjacent Smalls Island (now protected by Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife) and Hersey Cove and Coggins Head (by The Nature Conservancy), the easement will augment preservation of important estuarine habitats in the Pennamaquan River. We'd like to thank Robin and Tom for their generous gift and effort they put in to making this easement happen!



Smalls Island

Salt Marsh Migration continued from page 4

The Indian River originates north of the IRCA and flows south on the outgoing tide along the eastern and southern edges of the IRCA, eventually flowing southwest into Indian River Bay over one mile below the IRCA. There is a long narrow strip of upland close to the Indian River. Along Steele Meadow Brook, which flows into the Indian River from the north, there is a large coastal plateau bog ecosystem. The Indian River is tidal along the edges of the IRCA, transitioning to more brackish conditions at the northernmost part of the IRCA.

Again, DCC thanks PRWF for its outstanding support as a partner in land conservation and for advancing DCC's climate change strategy with its generous gift to DCC of this important marsh migration property.

Inspired by Nature

Downeast Coastal Conservancy is pleased to host its "Inspired by Nature" photo contest! Celebrate the natural beauty of coastal Washington County and help inspire the continued protection of the landscapes you love by sharing your best photos with us.

With the support of its members, DCC has conserved some of the most treasured and beautiful places in our area. From its rocky shorelines and colorful countryside, to the forests filled with wildlife and the people that call it home, it is difficult to demonstrate what makes this area so special in just one photo. With that in mind, we've created 4 categories to help narrow it down: landscapes, wildlife, flora, and community. Send us your photos by the submission deadline of August 3rd, 2020. For more information and the contest rules please visit our website.

2017 Landscape - Orange River Sunset (Kate Keeton)

Thank you to our 2019 Donors!

The generosity of all our members is vital to preserving the spectacular areas of Downeast Maine that we all love. We are thrilled to welcome new members who joined us in 2019. Please join us by welcoming new members listed in bold.

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We would like to recognize Hugh Macgill as a long-term supporter of Downeast Coastal Conservancy. We are immensely grateful that Hugh's support and passion for the outdoors has continued through generous memorial donations in his honor. These meaningful gifts will carry Hugh's legacy forward and protect future lands for generations to come.

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 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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Annual Members Meeting Notice

In accordance with the Maine Governor's Stay-at-Home and Social Distancing guidelines for the COVID-19 Pandemic, DCC, at this time, cannot confirm a date for our annual members' meeting. DCC's Board of Directors is currently reviewing several options for holding this meeting – a meeting required by DCC's Bylaws – that will still protect our members from undue risk. We continue to monitor conditions and will notify members as early as possible of potential options and dates, either through email or, if we do not have your email address, through USPS-delivered correspondence.

We are still planning a series of exciting events this summer! We look forward to hosting each of those as soon as specific conditions are deemed safe to do so. Please sign up for Constant Contact notification at our website, or at info@downeastcoastalconservancy.org or follow us on Facebook, for updates regarding COVID-19 news, events, and outreach activities.

