

Merrymeeting News

The Newsletter of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay • P.O. Box 233 • Richmond Maine 04357

SPRING/SUMMER 1994

To Preserve, Protect and Improve the Natural Ecosystems of Merrymeeting Bay.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay was formed in 1975 for people who care about the Bay's future. FOMB was revitalized in 1991 and re-incorporated as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization. FOMB's interests are diverse: scientific, educational, literary and historical. FOMB is also a Land Trust that accepts donations of land and provides stewardship for conservation easements. FOMB depends upon on volunteers and an active membership.

FOMB COMMITTEES:

Water Quality

Ed Benedikt, Brunswick
Tom Benn, Whitefield
Peter Vickery, Richmond

Wildlife & Fisheries

Marilyn Cole, Bath
Ed Friedman, Bowdoinham
Steve Pelletier, Richmond

Property Protection & Stewardship

Nancy Churchill, Dresden
Esther Lacognata, Topsham
Joe Trafton, Topsham

Membership, Fund raising & Endowment

Tad Hunter, Topsham
Bill Jewell, Woolwich

Special Events

Jean Parker, Woolwich

Newsletter

Tim Nason, Dresden

MERRYMEETING BAY WATER QUALITY RESOURCE PROGRAM



LAST FALL, the FOMB Water Quality Committee drew up a four-part plan to publicize and evaluate existing research on water quality in the Bay and to focus public attention on water quality issues in general. The total budget for the program is \$14,650.

The four parts of the program are as follows:

1. A comprehensive bibliography of the water quality and natural resource studies that focus on Merrymeeting Bay and its immediate tributaries. These documents are currently scattered in file cabinets and storage boxes at several state agency offices. We will obtain copies of these and make them available through Bowdoin College. This work is being done (as of mid-June) by a Bowdoin College student, Richard Shim, under the auspices of the college's Environmental Studies Program, and under the supervision of our Water Quality Committee chairman, Ed Benedikt, and Tom Benn of Whitefield. FOMB and Bowdoin College have each dedicated \$500 to bibliography expenses.

2. A biologist to evaluate and enter raw data from all existing (and useful) water quality studies into a data base. Compiling existing data into one resource will enable further comparisons and evaluations, and will show us where additional research is needed. Once our biologist has entered the data and assessed what factors have been examined (and which ones have not), a layman's summary will be published by FOMB. In addition, an overall assessment of the water quality in Merrymeeting Bay will be published, based on the research the biologist has examined. This assessment will be distributed to town officials, libraries, schools and interested members of the public. Our budget for this aspect of the program is \$12,100. In November, 1993, we received a \$7,500 grant from the Davis Conservation Foundation to help fund the biologist. Through a mailing to FOMB members and interested friends, we have raised an additional \$1,800.

3. A brief slide show and narrative about water quality as it pertains to the Bay, which will be presented to schools, business groups and civic organizations. A guest speaker will be invited to address a specific aspect of water quality at each presentation. The main purpose will be to explain what water quality really is, and to show the many ways it can be adversely affected. Our budget for production and distribution of the slide show is \$600. We received a grant of \$500 from the Shore Stewards Trust toward this amount.

4. A conference to develop a high profile advisory group to help guide FOMB's research. The conference would focus public attention on the Bay's water quality, and establish FOMB as the logical clearinghouse for Bay research and related activities. We have budgeted \$700 for the conference.

Through the Program we are also requesting a small amount of money to seed a Merrymeeting Bay Research Fund. We are hopeful the fund will one day provide support for research on Merrymeeting done by area schools, colleges, activist groups, state agencies and private laboratories.

Those interested in knowing more about our Merrymeeting Bay Water Quality Resource Program should write to us or call Ed Benedikt (442-0445).

If you would like to make a donation to the Water Quality Resources Program, we encourage you to do so. Donations of \$25 or more are especially welcome.

And to those who have donated to the Program already: **thank you!**

FOMB'S RING AROUND THE BAY FAMILY BIKE-A-THON

With the cooperation and (wary) enthusiasm of the Steering Committee, the May 28th first annual FOMB Bike-a-Thon was a success! Thank you to all the members and participants for their help and good spirits throughout the day.

Bob Dale, my husband and the organizer of the bike-a-thon, intended it to be a fund raiser and a fun day. We managed to raise \$829 in pledges from the bicyclists, kept expenses low (for brochures, posters, mailings and a wonderful 1st-prize mountain bike sold to us at cost) and sold new FOMB t-shirts to raise additional money (\$120).

Several people deserve special thanks: **Bath Cycle & Ski, Brunswick Cycle** and **Richmond Sauna**, who gave prizes; **Richard Jarvi**, owner of Richmond Sauna, who let us use his spacious lawns as the bike-a-thon start and finish (and where we had our post-event picnic and swam in the pool); the **FOMB Steering Committee** who put together a wonderful picnic lunch for everyone; and the following true friends of Merrymeeting Bay — **Bill King**, who gave us access to his boat landing in Woolwich, **Troy Herson**, who gave us access to his landing at Abbagadasset Point, **Joe Trafton** and **Ed Friedman**, who ferried participants and bicycles across the Bay, **Mark Rideout**, who monitored the Bay

by short wave radio, **Phil Beck** of Bath Cycle & Ski, who led the mountain bike part of the bike-a-thon, and **Tom Legere**, who led the 50-milers around the entire Bay.

— *Jean Parker, Woolwich*



A PERFECT CYCLING DAY

It was clear, cool and calm as about 30 Leager pedallers gathered on the lawn under the bright blue FOMB banner at Richmond Corner Sauna on Memorial Saturday, May 28th. Led by Tom Legere, president of Merrymeeting Wheelers, the 50-milers streaked out of sight immediately. Families, including our own Nancy Churchill with her two youngsters in tow (literally), headed for Richmond and Woolwich at a slower pace, while a couple of hardier types with Phil Beck of Bath Cycle & Ski in the lead, took to the woods on their mountain bikes.

Meanwhile, back at Richard Jarvi's

sauna, your Friends relaxed, set up for the picnic lunch or shepherded the progress of the groups on wheels. The long-distance cyclists passed by Chopp's Point; the others turned off there to cross Bill King's new-mown fields to the shore where Joe Trafton and Ed Friedman waited to boat them across the Bay on a nearly dead-low tide. Here they were monitored by Mark Rideout (son of our venerable member Linwood) with his amateur radio club's walkie-talkies, and were assisted at Abbagadasset Point by Troy Herson.

The first starving cyclists began showing up back at the sauna about 3¹/₂ hours after departing and soon they were stretched out on the lawn, munching out, or were in the pool.

Tickets for the drawing (one chance per each \$25 pledged) were plucked from a jar by the youngest Friends present. First prize, a mountain bike donated by Bath Cycle & Ski, was won by Steven Bradley of Brunswick. A thrilled Freddie Hageny won the 2nd prize child's mountain bike from Center St. Cycle in Brunswick, and Dana Thibeault won an overnight for two at Richmond Sauna Bed & Breakfast.

We had a great time and, thanks to those mentioned and to many other Friends behind the scenes, we managed to bring in more than \$900 to help us protect Merrymeeting Bay. See you next year!

— *Bob Dale, Woolwich*



SPRING/SUMMER 1994
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Merrymeeting News

is the newsletter of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, P.O. Box 233, Richmond, Maine 04357, published in the winter, spring, summer and autumn. *Merrymeeting News* is sent to all FOMB members (\$10 annually). For information call Tim Nason, Black Spruce Type/Graphics, Dresden (737-4282). FOMB welcomes donations to help pay for the cost of production and mailing.

MESSAGE FROM NANCY CHURCHILL

It was four years ago in April that I sat with the Board of Selectmen in Richmond and discussed the need for a citizen organization to spearhead an effort to protect Merrymeeting Bay. Their response was to volunteer to serve as interim officers and start the organization while my responsibility was to mobilize the community and identify permanent officers and members. We've come a long way since that meeting.

Today, we have a solid membership. Active committees are addressing many problems and working collaboratively on behalf of Merrymeeting Bay: Water Quality, Property Protection, Fisheries & Wildlife, Membership & Fund Raising, Special Events, Newsletter, various special committees and a new Eastern River

Committee. Each of these committees enjoys the volunteer leadership of a very capable and dedicated group of people who have a vision for the future of the Bay.

It is now time to acknowledge their leadership and know, with confidence, that FOMB will move forward. In addition, I have been eager to increase my participation on property protection and trails development. Thus, it is with a combination of satisfaction and eagerness to get on with my own work that led me not to pursue re-election as Chairman.

To all of you, my sincerest thanks for your support and work throughout our formative years. You've made FOMB a successful organization with a respected reputation. I look forward to being part of your continued growth and working with you all.



Pickerel
Frog

FOMB EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES

FOMB HELPED HOST Earth Day activities on May 5 and 6 at Abbagadasset Point as part of the Beacon School Science Project.

Co-sponsored by Brunswick Naval Air Station, the day's events took students from Longfellow Elementary, Central Bowdoinham JHS, Mt. Ararat HS and Brunswick HS through a series of activities relating to earth stewardship.

My wife, Ruth, and I, along with Kelly, a high school senior, conducted a program for some 250-300 students from grades 3 through 7.

The children performed dissolved oxygen tests as we explained the importance of oxygen to marine life. And with the aid of traps loaned by Linwood Rideout, we showed the students how eel traps work and how ducks nest in Merrymeeting Bay.

Comments the students later wrote about the project clearly showed their interest and enthusiasm.

A follow-up meeting with the organizers allowed us a chance to make suggestions for future events. We also made up a "lesson plan" so others can use our format under similar settings.

— Ed Benedikt, Brunswick



Wild
Rice

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY. Several times this year, we have felt as though our principal reason for being was to raise money. However, fund raising, often a "labor of love," is fun and invigorating when the cause is right and the support is there. Merrymeeting Bay is the right cause; the support has been tremendous.

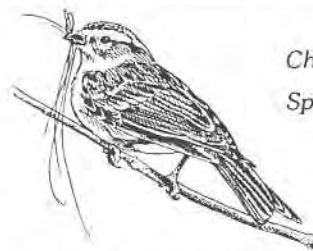
One way or another, through memberships and donations, FOMB members and friends have contributed more than \$4,000 in 1994 to the protection of Merrymeeting Bay.

In addition, we have received additional pledges and grants totalling more than \$8,500 over the past year.

These amounts may seem small, but so is the Kennebec watershed at its source: a brief trickle of rain in Beattie Township.

Affluence is not our goal. Money is a tool that helps us fulfill our mission. We will not lose sight of that.

Other tools that help us fulfill our mission are a steady membership base and activities that motivate us, inspire us and give us momentum. By initiating the Sightings project, by inviting Linwood Rideout to speak to



Chipping
Sparrow

us, by having well-informed speakers at our annual meetings, by sponsoring the Ring Around the Bay Bike-a-Thon (complete with ferry ride across the Bay at Abbagadasset Point) and by putting on the Summer Picnic on Swan Island this August, we hope to motivate, inspire and gain momentum.

In isolation, each of these events might seem small, but so is the Androscoggin watershed at its upper reaches: a few drops of melting snow in Seven Ponds Township.

Our mission is almost as complex and large as the watersheds that flow into Merrymeeting Bay. Fulfilling it will require many little bits of money, creativity, inspiration and enthusiasm.

The cause is right: rivers filled with salmon and striped bass, healthy eagles, herons and ospreys, dioxin-free water, a huge and unique tidal freshwater ecosystem taken care of as if it were someplace special.

— Tim Nason, Dresden

P.S. Send donations to FOMB, P.O. Box 233, Richmond, ME 04357.

FOMB JOINS WITH LOWER KENNEBEC LAND TRUST AT BATH HERITAGE DAYS

FOMB, SHARING ITS BOOTH with the Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust, held a new location at Library Park for the Bath Heritage Days Festival on July 2, 3 and 4, 1994. The weather was magnificent, the music from the bandstand was delightful, the air was full of the sounds of laughing children who visited the petting zoo and took pony rides. It was a happy and enjoyable weekend.

Many people, including Gov. John McKernan and his wife, Rep. Olympia Snowe, stopped by our booth to chat

and add their names to our mailing list.

It was particularly enlightening to talk to so many visitors "from away" who share a common interest in preserving and protecting what is in their "own back yard" — whether it's Merrymeeting Bay or a small pond in Virginia or whatever! Most of us are willing to be stewards of the earth.

Many thanks to our FOMB and LKRLT volunteers: Bill Blaiklock, Linwood Rideout, Esther Lacognata, Don & Joan Lipfert, Tom Barrington, Bill & Alice Jewell, John Doane, Ann Besham, Ed Benedikt, Don Seckal, Natalie & Fritz Kempner, Maria Morgan, Tom & Marilyn Cole and Tad Hunter.

FOMB is pleased to have this opportunity to meet and share.

— Jean Parker, Woolwich

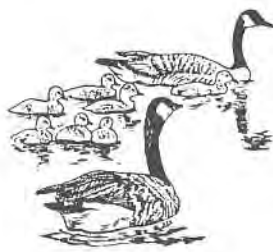
BRUNSWICK - TOPSHAM BYPASS: A LOCAL MODEL OF MITIGATION

AT THE FOMB ANNUAL meeting, held in Dresden on April 16, Andy Hendrickson and Brad Foley, Project Managers with the Department of Transportation, spoke to an interested and attentive group about the plans for the Brunswick-Topsham Bypass. The purpose of the bypass is to reduce congestion on Pleasant and Mill streets in Brunswick and on Main Street in Topsham and to provide safer, easier access to Route 1 from Route 95.

Andy and Brad showed us the history of the project and the many options that were considered before the present route was selected. The planned route will have eastbound drivers exit at the Topsham Mall exit. They will continue eastward on Route 196 up to the intersection of Route 201. At this point, a new road will be constructed behind the Topsham Fairgrounds and which parallels the rail bridge over the Androscoggin. The connection with Route 1 will be made approximately where the railway passes over Route 1 in Brunswick (approximately 1/2 mile from the Route 24 overpass and 3 miles before the Cook's Corner exit on Route 1).

Some of the exciting information Andy and Brad shared with us was that the new bridge over the Androscoggin will have a pedestrian walkway and shoulders for bike transportation. They also talked about the environmental concerns related to the project, including wetlands restoration and fisheries concerns. From observations and data gathered in the area, it is not expected that the bridge construction over the Androscoggin will affect sturgeon nurseries. As for wetlands restoration, the project has a minimal impact on wetlands, those being an old clear cut area behind the Topsham fairground. However, D.O.T. is working with D.E.P. on a mediation plan that will solve a major tire dump problem and restore a more critical area upriver on the Androscoggin.

Everyone was impressed by Andy and Brad's ability to read their notes in the dark and by their willingness to take time off during the weekend to share their work with us. The Bypass should be completed in 1997.



Canada Geese

A MAP OF MERRYMEETING BAY?

There might be a map in Merrymeeting Bay's future. Bob BaRoss, FOMB member from Cape Elizabeth is leading an effort to determine what kind of map would be most useful and how much it would cost.

Our first goal is to produce a map of the whole Bay on a single sheet. Such a map would emphasize the natural features of the Bay area and be attractive enough to use for fund raising and gifts. The map should also have enough detail to be

useful to a wide variety of interests, such as walkers, cyclists, boaters, hunters, fishing enthusiasts, students, teachers, history buffs and others.

Tall order, yes. Impossible? No. If anyone would like to help Bob with this, please give him a call at 799-1338, or write to FOMB.

Sebago Lake Map a Good Example to Follow

On the subject of mapping, Linwood Rideout showed us a nice one of Sebago Lake. The map shows water depths and connecting waterways, and includes articles about the lake's geology, water quality, physical and hydrologic characteristics, watershed facts, fisheries and more. The map was produced by the Portland Water District and S.D. Warren Co., in cooperation of the Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, the Maine Warden Service and Tewhey Associates. For a free copy, call the Portland Water District in Standish (892-5680) or S.D. Warren in Westbrook, ME 04098 (856-4000).

— *Tim Nason, Dresden*

FISH AND WILDLIFE IN MERRYMEETING BAY AND THE LOWER KENNEBEC

Stewart Fefer, Project Leader for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gulf of Maine Coastal and Estuary Project also spoke with us at the annual meeting. Stew has been working for several years now on an extensive mapping project which shows primarily the critical resources which require protection in Merrymeeting Bay. The work was prepared in response to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan whose purpose it is to provide environments for waterfowl species.

Stew emphasized that Merrymeeting Bay is an ecological jewel which requires our protection. His maps clearly showed numerous high value habitats that need protection, including a significant number along the Eastern River. The Eastern River is an area where FOMB has been concentrating its property protection efforts over the past year.

Stew spoke also about the various fish, amphibian and botanical species in the Bay, particularly those that are endangered. Of particular interest were the large-scale maps he displayed. It was easy for many property owners to locate their land and throughout the night there was a constant stream of people looking and learning more about the value of the Bay's resources.

Of interest to the group was the fact that there are significant matching monies available through the North American Waterfowl Conservation Act. In order to obtain these monies, matching resources need to be made available. For example, donations of conservation easements, bargain sale of property or conservation rights or property donations would all provide value which could be matched through the Act. Stew emphasized the importance of increasing property protection in key areas, particularly the Eastern River.

Stew is a dynamic and informative speaker and was kind enough to be with us during his weekend.

— *Nancy Churchill, Dresden*

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay *invites you to our 1st annual* **Swan Island Summer Picnic**

Saturday • August 27, 1994 • Rain or Shine

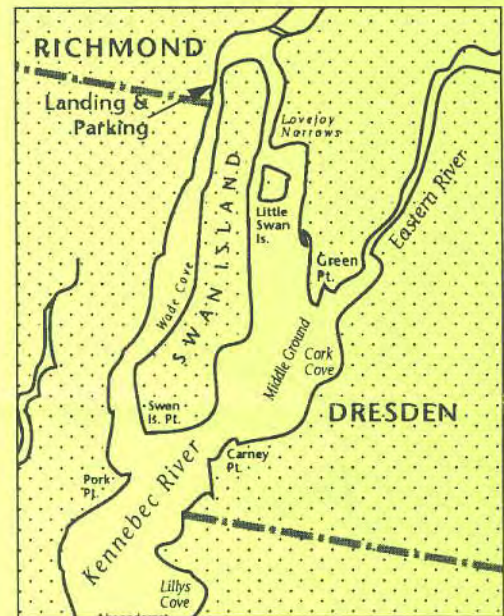
Advance Registration Required – \$5. Family registration \$15.

Visit Swan Island, "home of the eagles." Help protect Merrymeeting Bay by making a donation at our 1st annual fund raising picnic.

We'll have fun and relaxation, a tour of the island, a little history, a nature program and more. Plus, by very special arrangement, FOMB members and friends will be allowed to bring their own *non-motorized* boats across the river to the picnic site for exploration of the island's shore and surrounding marshes.

Advance registration is required and must be received by August 24. Only 60 visitors are allowed on the island at a time. We will all meet at the Swan Island landing in Richmond to receive name tags, a schedule of activities and a map. Those who do not bring their own *non-motorized* boat will be taken across the river on the Swan Island barge.

Our goal for this event is to raise \$1,000. Donations are requested to help us cover the cost of the picnic and meet ongoing expenses. Donors may give to our general account, or may earmark their gift to our Swan Island account, or to our Water Quality Resources Program. FOMB t-shirts will be on sale at the picnic at \$15 each. Four sizes are available.



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, P.O. Box 233, Richmond, Maine 04357

Yes, I would like to attend the FOMB Swan Island Summer Picnic.

Registrations must be received by Aug. 24

I enclose \$5 for each person registered: \$ _____ for _____ person(s).

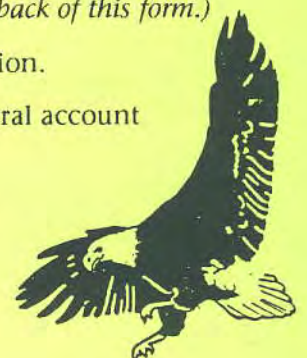
I enclose \$15 to register my family: \$ _____ for _____ people. *(Please put names on the back of this form.)*

I also enclose \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____ as a tax-deductible contribution.

Please apply my donation to Water Quality Program Swan Island account general account

NAME _____
 RR#/STREET ADDRESS _____
 TOWN / STATE / ZIP _____
 PHONE _____

Please make checks payable to Friends of Merrymeeting Bay. Thank you!



SIGN UP FOR OUR 1ST ANNUAL SWAN ISLAND SUMMER PICNIC

We are very excited to announce that we will be hosting a Swan Island Summer Picnic on August 27, 1994! So, bring your lunch and have a great day meeting friends and seeing the natural beauty of Swan Island.

There'll be fun and relaxation, a tour of the island, a little history, a nature program and more. Plus, by very special arrangement, FOMB members and friends will be allowed to bring their own *non-motorized* boats across for exploration of the island's shore and surrounding marshes.

Advance registration is required because only 60 visitors are allowed on the island at a time. The registration fee is \$5.00. Families with children may register for \$15.00.

FOMB t-shirts will be on sale, and donations will be requested to help us cover the cost of the picnic and help us meet on-going expenses. Our use of the island for the day will cost \$90. Other expenses include postage, printing and phone calls. Our goal is to raise \$1,000. Donors could earmark their gifts to our Swan Island account, to our Water Quality Resources Program or to our general expense account. All donations would be greatly appreciated.

Please send in your registrations as soon as possible.

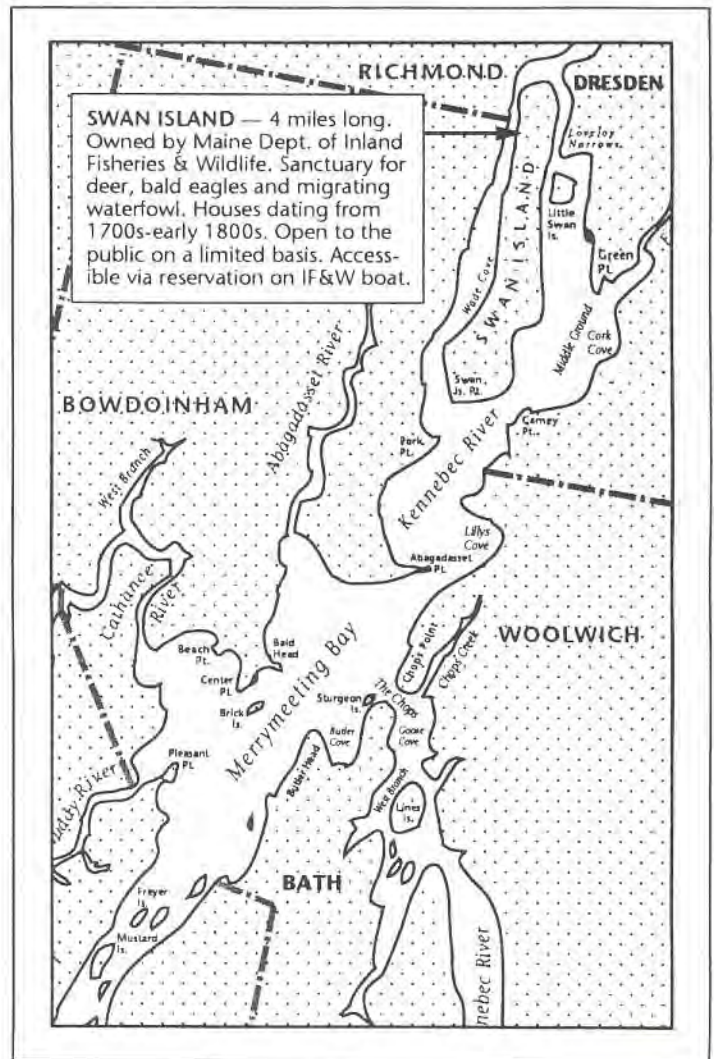
SWAN ISLAND: SOME HISTORY

Swan Island is located in the Kennebec River at the northern end of Merrymeeting Bay. Once a farming community known as Perkins Township and the site of large warehouses run by the ice industry at the turn of the century, Swan Island was purchased farm by farm during the 1940s and '50s by the State of Maine to be used as a game reserve. Since that time, the island has been taken care of by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and is known as the Steve Powell Wildlife Management Area. The area's jurisdiction includes Little Swan Island and several hundred acres of adjoining freshwater tidal flats. Swan Island is open to the public on a regulated basis and overnight camping is permitted with advance reservation.

For more than 10,000 years, Native Americans lived on Merrymeeting Bay and considered Swan Island a special place. Early records show that in 1607 members of the Popham Colony paid a visit. Capt. John Smith stopped by in 1614. A Christopher Lawson bought the island in 1665, but somehow another man, Humphrey Davie, bought the island too, in 1667, from Chief Abbagadasset. Benedict Arnold stopped there on his way to Quebec in 1755. It was during that same stop at Swan Island that Aaron Burr fell in love with a beautiful Indian princess, Jacataqua.

The island takes its name from "swango," an ancient Abenaki word for "home of the eagles."

Sadly, from the late 1940s through the mid-'70s, no reproduction of eagles occurred on the island. Throughout Merrymeeting Bay, Bald Eagle eggs were found to be paper thin and infertile because of pesticides. An egg taken from a Swan Island nest in the mid-'70s held the national record for worst contamination. DDT, a principal cause of eagle poisoning, was



banned in 1972, and clean water legislation was passed at this time. Hatchlings from Wisconsin were introduced into eagles' nests on Swan Island in 1976. Not until 1979 were naturally viable eggs discovered in a nest on the island, thus heralding the eagles' long, slow climb back from complete reproductive failure. Toxic substances, such as mercury, PCBs, dioxin, lead and cadmium, are still found in eagles in very high amounts.

Swan Island could be called the "spiritual home" of FOMB, because our own revitalization in 1991 came about when it appeared that the Maine legislature might not support the island's continued maintenance.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED:

To help with the **Swan Island Summer Picnic** on August 27 and to help staff our booth at the three-day **Common Ground Country Fair** in Windsor, September 23, 24 & 25. Three volunteers will be needed at the Fair per day. Each volunteer will get a one-day free pass (a great way to see the Fair and help FOMB at the same time). We will also need volunteers to help plan our **December Christmas Party**.

Please call our Special Events coordinator, Jean Parker (443-0982), or any of our Steering Committee members, and tell them what you would like to work on.

EASTERN RIVER CHAPTER OF FOMB

EFFORTS ARE STILL UNDER WAY to form an Eastern River chapter of FOMB. Some 60 people in the area have expressed interest in such a chapter. The group would focus educational and conservation efforts in the towns of Dresden, Pittston, Whitefield and Alna, all of which are in the river's watershed. Interests include monitoring the river for change, protecting its natural resources, encouraging low-impact recreational use on the river, and communicating nature sightings to FOMB. The group also plans to promote conservation easements and provide stewardship for protected lands. The Dresden Conservation Commission, which initiated this effort, has turned over its leadership responsibilities to a good core group representing each town in the river's watershed. We invite more members to become

actively involved. Please call Tim Nason (737-4282).

EASTERN RIVER GREENWAY

DO TRAILS help protect natural resources? Should trails come to the Eastern River?

One way to encourage low impact use the river corridor and increase awareness of its value is through the creation of a trails network. Trails bring people to an area in a managed way. As such, use and appreciation of the resource are increased. We also suspect that people who are involved in the creation, maintenance and use of trails will be more likely to understand the importance of managed growth in the area.

To help foster the creation of a trail network, several members of FOMB will be working on a collaborative venture with the Dresden Sno-Valley Riders, the

local snowmobile club. They will be looking to establish snowmobile trails along existing rights of way in Dresden. These trails can serve wonderfully as hiking trails in the summer or as feeder trails to hiking, cross country and other non-motorized trails. One exciting prospect is that snowmobile trail money is available through the Department of Conservation that could benefit us all.

If you are interested in working on this project, please call Don Gleason (737-2817) or Nancy Churchill (737-2005).



American Shad

IS THE EASTERN RIVER THE TOP ANADROMOUS FISH HATCHERY IN MERRYMEETING BAY?

The Eastern River supports nurseries of all the anadromous fish species in Merrymeeting Bay. Anadromous species are salt water fish that spawn in freshwater. These include smelts, shad, alewives and other herring, sturgeon and striped bass. The juveniles are hatched in the Eastern and later move out to the Bay and the ocean. Shad fry have been taken from the Eastern to replenish stocks in the Medomak River hatchery. According to the National Salmon Federation, even salmon fry have been identified in the river. Though the water is quite silty, much of the river has a gravel or cobble bottom, which is essential for spawning, and scouring at the Lower and Upper bridges creates additional sites.

Smelt fishing is ever-popular on the Eastern River, and the river supports a small commercial eel fishery. Eels spawn in the Sargasso Sea and then return to the Eastern River. Apparently, small eels taken from the Eastern River are sold to Japan, not to be eaten there, where eel is a delicacy, but to diversify the gene pool in Japanese eel hatcheries.

Apparently, no other tributary of Merrymeeting Bay has such a diversity of fish. In addition, perhaps because of these fisheries, we continue to see a large bald eagle population in the Dresden area. This past winter, it was not uncommon to see six to sixteen bald eagles feeding on the ice.

FRIENDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY

Please call the following steering committee members if you have a question or would like to work with Friends of Merrymeeting Bay. All of our committees welcome your assistance in developing programs. Don't be shy, call today — we are very friendly people!

PROPERTY PROTECTION & STEWARDSHIP

Nancy Churchill, RR 1 Box 77, Dresden 04342 737-2005
 Esther Lacognata, 19 Elm Street, Topsham 04086 729-4088
 Joe Trafton, Pleasant Point, Topsham 04086 729-1734 **Vice Chair**

WATER QUALITY

Ed Benedikt, 5559 Harding Rd. Ext., Brunswick 04011 442-0445 **Treasurer**
 Tom Cole, 8 Eagle Pt. Rd., Bath 04530 443-9675

WILDLIFE & FISHERIES

Sightings

Marilyn Cole, 8 Eagle Point Rd., Bath 04530 443-9675

Natural Resources Inventory

Steve Pelletier, RR 1 Box 385, Richmond 04357 ... 737-8407
 Don Gleason, RR 1 Box 12, Dresden 04342 737-2817
 Ed Friedman, RR 1 Box 1186, Bowdoinham 04008 666-3372

MEMBERSHIP, FUND RAISING & ENDOWMENT

Tad Hunter, Foreside Rd., Topsham 04086 729-1544
 Bill Jewell, RR 1 Box 475, Woolwich 04579 443-6520

NEWSLETTER

Tim Nason, 15 Alexander Rd., Dresden 04342 737-4282 **Chairman**

SPECIAL EVENTS

Jean Parker, Hockomock Island, Woolwich 04579 442-0982

CONSERVATION OPTIONS: A GUIDE FOR MAINE LANDOWNERS

WE HAVE COPIES ON HAND of the new, revised edition of *Conservation Options*, published by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. **We urge landowners to ask us for this excellent booklet.** It will explain everything you need to know if you are considering a conservation option on your property. FOMB believes that permanent property conservation by private landowners is the most viable, long-term way to protect Merrymeeting Bay.

Easements are complex and raise many questions. The following is a good introduction:

"The conservation easement is a flexible tool that protects land while leaving it in private ownership. The easement, a legal document, guides future uses of a property regardless of ownership. A landowner gen-

erally donates the easement to a qualified conservation organization or government agency which ensures that the conditions of the easement are met over time. In a few instances, landowners have been able to sell conservation easements to public agencies in Maine.

"Conservation easements provide numerous benefits:

- Landowners retain title to their property and may continue to live on it, or pass it on to heirs, knowing that it will always be protected.
- Easements may eliminate or greatly reduce estate taxes, preventing the forced sale of properties. Easements can also provide landowners with income tax and property tax reductions by eliminating unwanted development value.
- Easements are flexible, adapted to the particular needs of the landowner and the resources of the property.
- Easements can reduce the potential for disagreement when lands are passed on to the next generation.
- Easements offer permanent protection, applying to all future landowners. A land trust or government agency ensures that restrictions are followed in perpetuity."

— from *Conservation Options:
A Guide for Maine Landowners*

PRESERVING FAMILY LANDS

STEPHEN J. SMALL'S *Preserving Family Lands, Essential Tax Strategies for the Landowner (Revised 2nd Edition)*, is available from FOMB. Please call Nancy Churchill for details, or write to FOMB at P.O. Box 233, Richmond, ME 04357.

Primarily about tax strategies, the book covers conservation easements, gifts of remainder interest, testamentary gifts, direct gifts to family members, cash sales and limited development, and includes sources of help, estate tax tables and more. Once the terms and issues are understood, landowners can ask a financial advisor or lawyer how to implement the most appropriate options.

This book is very useful to landowners who are concerned about passing land to their children and the tax problems this can create.

The book is also a good introduction to conservation easements and their benefits in estate and inheritance plans.



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