



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to preserve, protect, and improve the unique ecosystems of the Bay through:

Education

Conservation & Stewardship

Research & Advocacy

Member Events

Support comes from members' tax-deductible donations and gifts.

Merrymeeting News is published seasonally and is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay.

For more information, contact:

Kathleen McGee
Coordinator/Organizer
207-666-1118
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2015 - A YEAR IN REVIEW

Our 40th year was relatively quiet with ever-popular education programs, Bay Days and in-school visits, continuing their success reaching over 2000 children [300 Bay Day, 1810 school outreach]. All of our conservation easements were of course monitored and a new one is under negotiation. FOMB was pivotal in the protection of a 186 acre parcel of farmland and woods in Bowdoinham stretching between the Abbagadasset and Kennebec rivers with frontage on each. We had a good relationship with the land owners here going back many years. Thanks to the Maine Farmland Trust for responding to our call for assistance and with an assortment of other partners, making protection possible. We went back to Thwings Pt. again this year hoping to determine dimensions of the two cellar holes there but while we made progress with an industrious group of volunteer archaeologists, were unsuccessful in completing our task. Overall, our organization continues to be a model for volunteer participation [with 169 volunteers, 4,364 volunteer hours representing 545.5 workdays!]. That's over 20% member participation!! And, it is this participation that enables our great breadth of work.

Noteworthy in a negative way, was our final judicial defeat in attempts to protect Atlantic salmon and shad from turbine mortality. Our persistent Clean Water Act lawsuit against dams on the lower Kennebec was finally dismissed. Last year our ESA lawsuit including Kennebec and Androscoggin dams had been dismissed. The monthly publication, Fishermen's Voice had this to say:

"In the face of undisputed evidence (cited in his opinion) that dam owner Brookfield Asset Management knows up to 99% of adult salmon attempt to pass its dams by swimming through the rapidly spinning blades of hydropower turbines – and that Brookfield still does not shut the turbines down during fish migrations – Judge George Z. Singal nonetheless ruled, there is an "absence of evidence" dam owners "desire" their turbines serve as a means of downstream fish passage."

They also included my comment:

"Judge Singal has swallowed the corporate fish story; hook, line and sinker" said Friends of Merrymeeting Bay Chairman, Ed Friedman. "On the heels of Singal's dismissal in our Endangered Species Act claim, his current Clean Water Act decision proves justice from the law rare as the endangered salmon and shad refused his protection."

It's easy to get discouraged by legal opinions like this or the recent Maine Supreme Court decision against citizens concerned with smart meter safety. In a model of clarity the Court stated:

"It's one thing to make a finding that evidence is credible regarding potential harm and quite another to find there is a legally credible threat of harm-that a credible threat of harm is in fact credible: likely and probable to result in harm."

Report on 2015 Archaeological Excavations
At Thwings Point, Woolwich, Maine



Leon Cranmer
Historical Archaeologist
January, 2016

2015 - REVIEW (CONTINUED)

That's not a misprint. So why do we persevere? Last spring's redux of an attack on St. Croix alewives is the reason. While an attempt to close 1/3 of the watershed to river herring was beaten back, MDIF&W continues to this day, working behind the scenes to keep out native migratory fish in favor of introduced species. FOMB and Kennebec Reborn are the only two organizations working to stop this. Minding the store as it is. Ditto for Androscoggin salmon. On the Kennebec, the Atlantic Salmon Federation and Trout Unlimited have built upon our two lawsuits and are taking the legal fight to another level, something impossible without our work. Eternal vigilance and action are all that stand between a healthy ecosystem and a quickening race to the bottom.

Thanks to our Steering Committee, and all of our members and friends that help make this possible.

Respectfully, Ed Friedman, Chair

2015 PRELIMINARY FINANCIALS

Staffing (most of which is directed to programs) leads our expense at 40% while direct program expense was 38%. As always, FOMB maintained focus on projects directly benefiting the Bay and limited our outlays for fundraising. Members continue to get a big bang for the buck supporting us. Membership & Fundraising expenses (which includes postage for the annual appeal) represent and remain just 3% of overall spending while Administration costs were 6%.

Cash Income \$ 59,889 up from \$44,242 in 2014

Grants...37% @ \$22,546, up 68% from 2014. Five grants (Education, research, staffing)
Membership Dues...25% @ \$15,225
Unrestricted Donations...35% @ \$20,860 up 5% from 2014
Other (interest income, dividend income and event

Cash Expenses \$47,399 down from \$75,818 in 2014

Event Expenses...2% @ \$1,013
Insurance...3% @ \$1,465
Staffing...40% @ \$19,093
Programs... [Education, Research, Advocacy, Land Conservation (Newsletter, Water quality, carp, archaeological digs, Bay Day)]...38% @ \$17,963
Administration... (PO Box & bulk permit, supplies, tax prep, state filing fees)...6% @ \$2,831
Office Rent.....7% @ \$3,514
Membership & Fundraising...3% @ \$1,520

Respectfully submitted,
Nate Gray, Treasurer

FRIENDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Media

Print: (Over 11 articles-US & Canada) Atlantic salmon, Outings, Archaeology, St. Croix Alewives, Education, Speaker Series

Volunteers

Approximately 4,364 volunteer hours (545.5 days)
169 volunteers

Membership

410 households
Speaker Series – (400 people)
Outside 2015 (Paddle Series & Walks – 125 people.

Newsletters – 4

FOMB ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)

Grants

\$22,546: Education, Research, Staffing

Outreach Presentations

Maine Maritime Museum Cruises & Paddles (181 participants)

Education

Two Bay Days (300) students) 8 schools (plus Morse students as chaperones)

School Visits (80 visits, 1810 students, 63 teachers, 14 schools)

Non-School Visits (97 people)

Web site updates

Conservation and Stewardship

Additional easements in progress

Continuous landowner outreach

Ongoing stewardship activities

Monitor all easement & fee properties

Research

Water Quality Monitoring – 24 sites

Thwings Pt. Archaeology Dig

Carp Tagging Study

Advocacy (postings, letters, testimony, etc.)

Lawsuit-Atlantic salmon CWA

Healthy Rivers/Healthy Gulf promoting safe fish passage

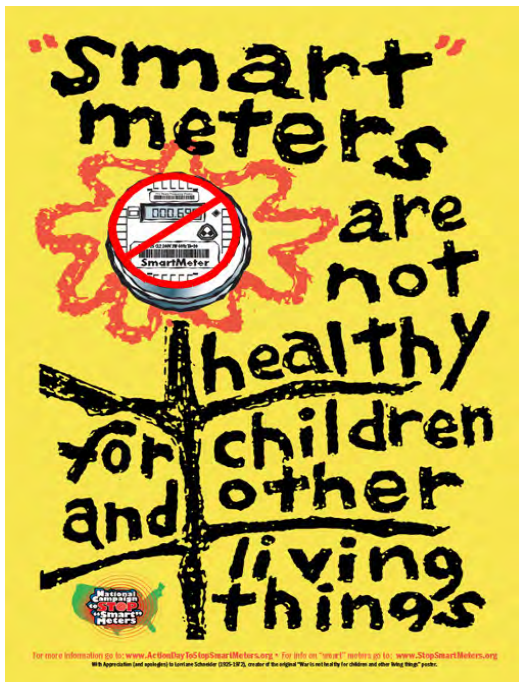
Smart Meters

Posting Fish Consumption Advisories

St. Croix Alewives

Primary Partners

Friends of Casco Bay National Environmental Law Center The Archaeological Conservancy Kennebec Reborn Avian Haven Maine Coalition to Stop Smart Meters Bowdoin College Environmental Studies Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Maine Maritime Museum Department of Marine Resources Bowdoinham Public Library Maine Historic Preservation Commission Maine Land Trust Network Department of Environmental Protection Patagonia Outlet, Freeport Chops Point School Brunswick TV 3 Merrymeeting Arts Center



Eagle Release - Pork Point; Terry Heitz, Avian Haven



Muddy River Carp Country - Ed Friedman

FLYING FISH (CARP) UPDATE

Carp helicopter flight today (January 17, 2016) with exciting news-located 10 of our 12 transmitters today! 9 had been our total until now although never all in one outing. All together now, 11 of the 12 have been relocated at one time or another.

One of our 2 Abby fish had gone over to the West Branch of the Cathance late 2015 (after the fall newsletter was sent out with carp article). I could pick up a strong signal from the Rte. 24 Twin Bridges until a couple of weeks ago. This fish is now approximately ½ mile downstream out of range from the road and near the site of River Bend Smelt camps.

Other Abby fish had stayed near the one-lane bridge long after its buddy had left. Then signals moved and became fainter moving downstream or east towards Abby Pt. I'd pick up signals between the bridge and turnoff to the Point for a while and intermittently. This fish is now in the main channel downstream of where the old Warden's camp is off the Centers Pt. Rd. near the mouth of the Abby.

An Androscoggin fish caught at tip of Pleasant Pt., moved upstream to the Brunswick/Topsham bypass last winter and not found since, was found between Centers Pt. and Brick Island.

The two Cathance fish remain by the Green Metal Bridge and upstream of the Twin Bridges on the West Branch.

One Muddy river fish remains about ½ mile above the Foreside Rd. Bridge.

The other Muddy fish never relocated after tagging was picked up today with a faint signal in the Kennebec main stem at Days Ferry. Fainter perhaps because of the river depth and salinity.

One Eastern fish continues to be about a mile above the Dresden Mills bridge. Last winter it was below the bridge opposite the Bridge Academy.

The other Eastern fish never firmly relocated since capture and release above the Dresden Mills bridge but emitting a very faint signal once soon after from Butler Cove in N. Bath, was picked up loud and clear today on the SW end of Lines Island between the Chops and Thorne Head.

One Kennebec fish was picked up in its original point of capture in the gut between Swan Island and Little Swan.

Not found despite searching from the Richmond Bridge to Brunswick and down to Doubling Pt. below Bath were the second Kennebec [Swan Island] fish [initially found back in the gut but not heard from since] and the second [sort of] Androscoggin fish captured and released in Butler Cove. This fish has never been relocated.

The Nature of Time

Oh, my back! Stiff as a board. My knees ache. I slowly stand erect and water pours off my shorts. The rushing water masks all other noise. The stream is dappled in brilliant sunlight. The verdant plant life on the high banks leans for the water. The beauty here is astounding. Even in its challenged state it “screams nature.” This place is alive. You can feel it and see it. You stand here long enough it will come to you in many forms. The water urgently whispers past to the lengthening shadows. I suddenly get that weird electric neck feeling. I’m being watched. I glance around expectant. The beauty is all still here. This place is conscious. It knows I’m here. Minnows nibble my ankles as I glance around this mending wilderness. A Great Blue Heron wings overhead, legs dangling, neck stretched, wings curled in landing. The heron freezes in pose as it stares at me. With a squawk, it launches away, upstream to less crowded fishing grounds.



Projectile Point - Ed Friedman

I look down at the object in my hand again. I’ve pulled it from the stream bottom. It is a perfectly formed stone blade about four and half inches long. A finer example I’ve never seen. I place the blade on a log on shore. The log is covered in artifacts consisting of decorated pottery, arrow heads, pecking stones, and hundreds of flakes of rhyolite. Some of the stone flakes are not from Mt.Kineo but from Pennsylvania and northern Maine. The objects just kept coming up from the cool depths of the stream. The most prevalent objects are the pieces of fire cracked stone. This was a hearth. A cooking spot. At some point in the past this was dry ground. A shelter stood here. This was home for someone. Then the stream changed its course and slowly ate this place away exposing its story scattered on the streambed.

A short distance away a train trestle marks the time when that mode of transportation ruled the continent. Beneath the trestle lie the remains of a timber crib dam. It is an old one by the looks of it, mid to late 18th century. Treenails were used in its construction. The underpinning logs are massive

and disappear into the opposite banks. The pegs holding the dam together are still readily visible. Upstream a short ways is yet another dam. This one built of earth and stone with wooden flumes long since collapsed to ruin. While not as old, this dam still dates from the mid-19th century. The slab wood readily visible, protruding from the streambank, gives the dams purpose away. There are layers of peoples here spanning millennia.

For thousands of years the Abnaki peoples occupied this site. Perhaps just stopping by for a time but eventually settling right down. A fine spot. Close to easy transportation in the mighty Kennebec and the villages above and below. Rich and fertile soils and a plethora of fish, particularly in the spring and fall, are available here. The arrival of river herring in their millions during late spring and the secretive departure of adult eels in the late fall made for good eating. Lowland hunting grounds surround this area. Again, a fine spot to live.

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continued on page 6

THE NATURE OF TIME (CONTINUED)

Our arrival as Europeans in the early 17th century marked the eventual demise of this Abenaki home ground. They hung on for a while but within 150 years the jig was up and they moved north along the Kennebec, and, eventually right out of the basin into what is today Quebec Province. Thinking on this, I imagine it was a sad day when the last Abenaki's loaded their belongings, paddled away, never to return. And they were not the only ones to leave. Not long after, the eels left, the alewives left, stripers, eagles, osprey, minks, otters, sturgeon, lamprey, kingfishers and great blue heron left too. Unlike the Abenaki's, they had no place else to go. Even their memories left....mostly.

Strangely, the other marks of man here have met the same fate as the Abenaki's. Both dams have been derelict for at least 165 years. The homes that once dotted the shore are but barely visible cellar holes. The ringing of the saw blade silenced. Even the train makes less than frequent forays on this neglected reach of rail. I'm the only human soul here right now.... in corporeal form. In twenty years I've seen five people in this exact spot. I know them all by name.

Slowly, inexorably, Mother Nature is removing the traces of man from this place. In five hundred years you'd struggle, perhaps, to know there were people here at all. I find some comfort in this thought. Places can heal. Nature pushes back. Come in May and see the stream thronged with river herring. The osprey doing what they do best.

The herons are doing it even better while the eagles look on expectantly. River otter, raccoons, stripers, and mink are all taking part in feast. The late night eels of fall slip downstream to the black depths of the Kennebec on their way to the Sargasso Sea. Above the eels are the progeny of the spring river herring, the millions upon millions of young pouring downstream like a silver scaled avalanche to the Atlantic. I know why the Abenaki were here. I know why the colonists were here. The richness of this place is....astounding.

I slowly kneel again in the stream bed. The present fades into the rushing whisper of the stream for another hour. The shadows lengthen. My stomach rumbles and I'm off for home.

Nate Gray



*Dentate rocker stamped pottery sherd
- Ed Friedman*

THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS*

Thwings Pt. Archaeology

Claire Robinson, Michael Robinson, Ted Batutis, Susan Batutis, Ed Murphy, Mary Perkins, Hilary Warner-Evans, Terri Parker, Aurora Aken, Diane Dietrich, Jennifer Ciejka, Paul Ciejka, Deborah Connors, Linda Heller, Ed Friedman, Janet Booth, Wendy Rose, Tom Walling, Alesha Coffin, Mark Coffin

Water Quality

Tom Walling, Tom Gilbert, David Whittlesey, Heather Cox, Colleen Moore, Steve Eagles, Kathie Duncan, Bill Milam, Kathleen McGee, Delia Guzman, Rebecca Bowes, Helen Watts, Kermit Smyth, Jeff Sebell, Ed Friedman, Ruth Innes

Trip Leaders/Coordinators

Piers & Gerry Beirne, Ed Friedman, Warren Whitney, Andy Cutko, Lee Cranmer, Kathy Bridge, Jay Robbins, Jim Bridge, Will Broussard, Tom Walling, Kathleen McGee

continued next page

WE NEED YOU! PLEASE SUPPORT OUR IMPORTANT WORK

FOMB Leadership

Our accomplishments are due to the hard work of dedicated volunteers, especially those who serve on our committees. If you want to get involved and serve, please contact the committee chair or Kathleen McGee. We always welcome member input and we'd love for you to join us!

Steering Committee

Ed Friedman, Chair (Bowdoinham)
Nate Gray, Treasurer (Freeport)
Tom Walling, Secretary (Bowdoinham)
Steve Musica (Richmond)

Education Committee

Betsy Steen, Co-Chair, 666-3468
Tom Walling, Co-Chair, 666-5837

Conservation and Stewardship Committee

Chair Vacancy

Membership and Fundraising Committee

Nate Gray, Chair, 446-8870

Research and Advocacy Committee

Ed Friedman, Chair, 666-3372

Coordinator/Organizer

Kathleen McGee, 666-1118

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay • PO Box 233 • Richmond, Maine 04357

Membership Levels

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000+ Sturgeon | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Striped Bass | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Smelt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$750 American Eel | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Shad | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Wild Salmon | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Alewife | |

Name

Address

Town/State/Zip

Phone

Email

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> Send information about volunteer opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> I would like a sticker |

\$7 Enclosed (optional) for a copy of *Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Land Owners* [\$5 for book, \$2 for postage].



Thanks to Will Zell and Zellous.org for newsletter layout.

Mailings

Carole Sargent, Tina Phillips, Linda Hornbeck, Petey Ambrose, Ed Friedman, Kathleen McGee, Steve Musica

Easement Monitoring

Kent Cooper, Colleen Moore, Warren Whitney, Betsy Ham, Bob Weggel, Monique Lucarelli, Steve Eagles, Ed Friedman, Steve Musica, Tom Gilbert

Website, Video, "The Books" & Newsletter

Stan Moody, Martin McDonough, Martha Spiess, Vance Stephenson, Will Zell

Education

Betsy Steen, Kathleen McGee, Tom Walling, Priscilla Seimer, Steve Musica, Ed Friedman

Steering Committee

Ed Friedman, Nate Gray, Steve Musica, Tom Walling

*Bay Day volunteers have been acknowledged after each event.



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
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ORGANIZATION

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The Shad Business



American Shad- Ed Friedman

Everyone employed in the Shad business is reaping a bountiful harvest. There are six or eight large weirs in the river, in the Bay or down by Abbagadasset Point. From the weirs near the village, heaped up boatloads are taken to the wharf where they are taken by the cart load and packed in ice for shipment. Even those using drift nets at night catch one or two hundred fish on each tide, giving them \$10 or \$20 as Shad sell right now (10 cents each). Two or three thousand fish are shipped from here by train each day and a large number is also shipped from the station at Harwood's (East Bowdoinham).

- Bowdoinham Advertiser, May 23, 1885