



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay 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 by Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB), and is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay.

For more information call:
Ed Friedman
Chair of Steering Committee
666-3372



www.friendsofmerrymeetingbay.org

See our
2009 Accomplishments
on page 4

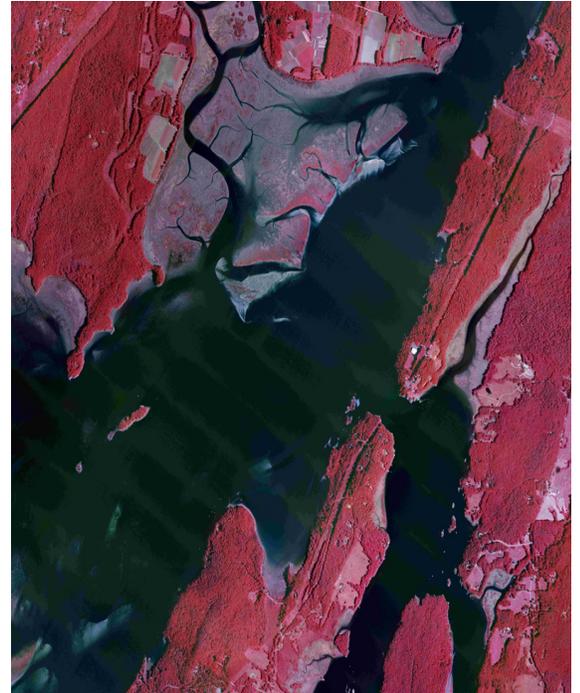
From the Chair: 2009 in Review

In 2009, FOMB's considerable efforts resulted in major accomplishments in all areas of our work due, in large part, to tremendous volunteer participation [120 volunteers over 4,000 hours]. Chiefly, as a result of pressure brought to bear by FOMB working with Doug Watts and the Center for Biological Diversity, endangered species status for the Atlantic salmon was expanded to the Kennebec, Androscoggin and Penobscot rivers. We continue to have problems with the accompanying Critical Habitat designation and continued "take" [a political euphemism for species mortality through a variety of intentional and unintentional means] at unscreened turbines in hydroelectric dams. We will continue to hold feet of the federal wildlife services and those of dam owners to the fire.

Faced with an unprecedented attempt several years ago to block up the Chops with a field of up to fifty large underwater turbines, FOMB was the only intervener at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission with the guts to say this was a bad idea for such a critical location. Without a forceful response we could easily have spent years in a prolonged fight over this. Early in 2009 the applicant surrendered their permit citing, for the federal record, environmental sensitivities of the site but in press coverage also mentioning local opposition. Falling oil prices surely had a lot to do with the economics of the project but we had the science behind us and were vocal in our opposition to this project which would have adversely affected every one of the millions of migratory fish, and other species, using the Chops passage.

Begun in 2005, our Current Study was completed this year. While field work finished up in 2008, it took some time to animate, analyze and report data. Results are posted on the web site and governmental agencies, NGOs and interested parties may also request a copy of the study on DVD. Highlights of the study include lengthy residence times [perhaps over 2 months] water particles may have in the Bays four smaller tributaries quantification of mixing between rivers, and the difficulty water particles have in getting out of the Bay for good. A couple of our Chops-deployed drifters went as far as Cape Cod and others were picked up as far upstream as the north end of Little Swan Island.

In 2008 we rehired the James W. Sewall Company to perform a 10-year update of our 1998 study which examined changes in both aquatic vegetation and land use in and around the Bay between 1956 and 1998. The study used aerial photography and geographic information systems [GIS] to document and compare these two items from



2009 Sewall color infra-red photograph of Merrymeeting Bay. Part of FOMB's 10-year update of aerial vegetation and land use study

the different years. It was the first study of its kind in the state. Unfortunately in 2008 year the photography flight was flown at midday and the resultant image glare made a lot of the vegetation ID impossible. Flights call for a difficult nexus of conditions: low tide, peak or near peak vegetation, excellent weather with no clouds below 6,000 feet and a relatively low sun angle. These factors limit the flight options to basically several days during two alternative weeks in the summer. The Bay was re-flown this last summer and the report is nearing completion.

Last year our efforts to upgrade the lower Androscoggin stalled in the legislature while the DEP urged the legislative Natural Resources Committee to require more than the over 6 years of data [far more than the statute requires] we supplied backing our proposal. This past summer our hard-core volunteer monitors were on the river before 8 am every 2 weeks from April-mid October. Along with increased frequency of data gathering, we increased our sites from 3 to 10 and followed more restrictive protocols. So far it appears our 2009 data validate those of past years and support an upgrade. We will take our findings back to the BEP, DEP and legislature during the present session. Without the sustained efforts of

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Water Quality Monitoring is Addictive; Beware!

I am connected to a place. I am connected to a place coated with quiet magic and cigarette butts. This is a boat launch on the Eastern River, one quarter of an inch north of Route 27 on Map 13. Monthly, I surreptitiously slipped some of her water into my testing kit, and she surreptitiously stole my heart. She inexorably knit me into the fabric of her tangled, erosion-exposed roots and rocks, her trash-infested poison ivy, and her proudly-winged owls and eagles. Due to work constraints, I am not going back, but I cannot leave her any more than these words, once printed, can leave this page. Mark my words: water quality monitoring is addictive; beware.

Misty Gorski connected me with Bill Milam when she understood my interest in gaining scientific field experience. Bill assigned me to a water quality monitoring site on the Eastern River in Dresden, upstream of its confluence with Merrymeeting Bay. Like the dozen other volunteers on the Bay's five other tributaries, I would test the river's water quality on one designated weekend per month from April to October 2009. (In fact, some dedicated volunteers test more often.) Our conversation ended like this:

"So, how do I find this place?" I asked Bill. *I'm not from around here*, I added silently. "It looks like it's on Map 13..." Bill explained reasonably. This is when I learned that DeLorme's Gazetteer is functionally the second official language of Maine. "O-kay." I reluctantly agreed. "I think I can find it."

And I did.

That first magical, sunset visit in May shocked me. A Cambodian family from Portland, smoking endless cigarettes and drinking endless Coronas on the bank, had fished a five gallon bucket of carp and cat fish from the river. I thought no one knew about this place! I continued quietly up the bank, and as I crouched to toss my first sampling bucket into the river, a huge, well-camouflaged bird flew away from me. A Great-Horned Owl! And as I watched its path downriver, a Bald Eagle wheeled around the bend and over the bordering trees. I was flabbergasted. This heavily impacted, slow-moving, shallow river with trash-laden banks was teeming with charismatic fauna and people.

Nearly every time I returned to my site, I met someone different. It became clear this site was well-known locally. Visitors included a high school boy fishing, two others just hanging out in their truck, my Cambodian friends again, and my roommate and I canoeing. Together we formed an interesting cross-section of Maine demographics connected by this one place: we were the



Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator Kermit Smyth practices using DO meters on the Cathance River

Community of the boat launch off Route 27 on the Eastern River in Dresden, ME. Does this place even have a name?

It was not always convenient for me to return to my sampling site on the designated weekend every month, but I had a responsibility to fulfill, so I persevered. This eventually confirmed a principle I have always found to be true: circumstances associated with repetition, especially challenging repetition, become nostalgic, even dear, to us. How many of us feel a wistful fondness for our high school desks, merely because we sat in them often and were challenged with hard work? Similarly, I feel a fond connection to the land, plants, animals and water at the boat launch, simply because I went there a lot and sometimes it was difficult to do it. Mere repetition connected me to this place, and a little hardship strengthened the bond.

Though it is filled with fondness, my sense of that place is much more than nostalgia. I feel responsible to and for the Eastern River. Yes, I spent regular time there, but what was I doing? I was *studying* her in order to take care of her and make sure others took care of her, too. I was *responsible* for ensuring we all understand her accurately. Sometimes, water quality testing can appear to be passive—even blasé—observation. Yet it requires at least one person (me) to commit to action once a month to accomplish it. Furthermore, its results, like a sword and shield, can be wielded actively and effectively in defense of the river. Indeed, I became a Protector of the Eastern River—*my* river. I found myself picking up the trash, monofilament, and plastic bags infesting her banks. I took my roommate canoeing and fishing from my sampling site. I always look for the Eastern on a map or in the newspaper, and I crane my neck to inspect her as I drive across her bridges. And be certain I am watching for how my data are used in policy decisions affecting the Eastern River and Merrymeeting Bay.

Perhaps Misty and Bill knew this would happen, but my time as a water quality monitoring volunteer for FOMB gave me much more than scientific field experience: it gave me a place and with it, new roles: I am a member of the Community of the Boat Launch, a Fond Friend of My Sampling Site, and a Protector of the Eastern River. It all happened slowly and inexorably. Every time I set foot there—even when I merely thought about it—the intimacy, immediacy, consistency, in a word, the magic, of the river stitched more of my heart into her tapestry. Part of me will never leave her. Watch out; it might very well happen to you, too.

~ Bethany Laursen

Bethany monitored the Eastern River for the 2009 season and analyzed water quality data from 2006-2008 for FOMB. She works for The Chewonki Foundation in Wiscasset, ME, as an Outdoor Classroom Instructor, inspiring children to care for their own local places as far away as China. If you are interested in becoming a Water Quality Monitor for FOMB, please contact Misty Gorski at fomb@suscom-maine.net.

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our field and lab volunteers, this intensive effort would not be possible.

2009 also saw the start of Healthy Rivers Healthy Gulf, our outreach effort aimed at raising awareness and activism levels around the vital relationships between riparian ecosystems, riverside communities and the biological and economic aspects of the Gulf of Maine. The health and well-being of inland and offshore communities is largely dependent on the free flow of migratory fish and clean rivers. If we learn to think of healthy rivers as vital arteries, the comparisons with human health become clear. At year's end after interviewing a number of candidates for the position, we have hired long-time organizer and former Steering Committee member Kathleen McGee for the half-time position of HRHG Outreach Coordinator. We are excited to up the ante on our program by taking this important step.

While we closed no deals for land protection during 2009, we have been extremely busy behind the scenes working to protect some of the most valuable land around the Bay and indeed, in the state. Outreach and negotiations are a constant when it comes to land protection and often times these efforts take years to bear fruit. As is remarked in Misty Gorski's article: "you can't find land on a department store shelf, they just don't make it anymore." In an era of increasing development, sale of valuable land to the highest bidder can be difficult for some to resist. Those individuals who decide to protect their land in perpetuity deserve our eternal gratitude.

Perpetuity brings me to future generations, those who will inherit the earth. While Native Americans typically thought in terms of seven generations, we often have trouble getting past next quarter profits. But our children are the future and pretty much fated with what we leave them. One good thing we can do for them is provide a stimulating look at the natural world around them and the animals with who they share it. Reaching well over 1,500 children through our in-school and in the field programs, we hope to have positive impact on future generations. As Gandhi said: "If we are to *teach* real peace in this world..we shall have to begin with the *children*."

In these economic times of uncertainty, foundation support has become especially scarce. We appreciate all FOMB members do to support our work and now, more than ever, I ask you to dig deep in support. Here at the local level, we give you a really extraordinary value for your contributions.

Respect fully Submitted,
Ed Friedman, Chair



Release of Avian Haven's rehabilitated bald eagle at FOMB member Eleanor Everson's farm

Speaking For The River, Acting For The Salmon

All my life I've lived in the Kennebec Watershed. I was born less than a mile from the river and as a kid I rode the big yellow bus along its banks to school. Later, as a rafting guide, I hurtled down class IV rapids and spent my evenings fly-fishing for trout in it's eddies. Today I find myself paddling around Swan Island and sharing the tide races with the seals by Popham Beach. The river has always been a touchstone for me, part of who I am. I've slept, cried, loved, sang, danced, told bad jokes, and escaped with my life along that river.

I always took those waters for granted until one summer a few years back when I floated Alaska's Copper River, which has one of the biggest salmon runs on the planet. As I watched massive herds of salmon jostle their way up the Copper like hell-bent shoppers fighting over the last Nintendo game at a mall, I wondered why there aren't more salmon in the Kennebec. When I got back to Maine, I learned about the condition of the Atlantic salmon fishery, which led me to learn about the condition of the eel population, and the eagles, and dioxins and water quality and fish ladders... I realized that it was time that I give something back to my home river. But how?

My friend Dune Lankard, an Alaskan Eyak native who has saved 700,000 acres of coastal rain forest along Prince William Sound, once told me that we have to be "formless warriors": warriors who will assume any form to get the job done. This may be writing legislation, fundraising, research, educating, doing community art projects, or taking people out to see the natural

wonders of where they live. All of these are forms of advocacy: speaking out on behalf of the community (human and non-human) of which we're a part. Because the salmon, the eagles and the snapping turtles can't speak for themselves, we have to advocate for them. Just as the Friends of Merrymeeting Bay has been doing for years.

And that advocacy makes a difference. While it may sometimes seem impossible to change national policies, we can definitely change water quality policies, endangered species status, and land use laws here in our home place. In Maine, where politics happen on a smaller scale, our officials will listen to us if we raise our collective voice. Just look at what FOMB has already achieved: successful petitions to modify water quality, conservations easements, legislation to protect different species... the list goes on and on. But there is so much more to do.

The species and places we love face a myriad of threats. If we don't speak up, no one will. It is up to us to compile data, gather petitions, educate families, protest, talk to our neighbors, and share the beauty of our watershed with others. It is up to every one of us to find what we love and to fiercely protect it. For me, I think of those salmon, muscling up the Kennebec, against the current, hopping up fish ladders, dodging predators, and surviving against all odds to spawn the next generation. If they can do that, the least I can do is help.

~ Ian Ramsey

2009 Accomplishments: How We Protected Merrymeeting Bay

Media

- Print: Outings, Speaker Series, Androscoggin River Reclaim, Thwing's Point Dig, Patagonia Voice Your Choice, Salmon ESA listing, Chops Hydro Project, Coyotes
- Television: Speaker Series on Local Cable (Brunswick)
- Video: MSN/Kashi Documentary on FOMB (about 2,500 views by 12/4)



Fourth graders and FOMB volunteer Nate Gray investigate a beach seine catch at Bay Day

Volunteers

- Approximately 4036 volunteer hours (505 days)
- 120 volunteers

Membership

- 434 members (13 new members)
- Speaker Series - 193 people
- Outside 2009 (Paddle Series & Walks -68 people)
- Newsletters - 3

Grants

- \$22,500: staffing & Healthy Rivers/Healthy Gulf initiative (HRHG)

Outreach Presentations

- DMR Spring Running, Augusta
- Richmond Days
- Celebrate Bowdoinham
- Wildlife Appreciation Day at the State House
- Patagonia Voice Your Choice
- Merrymeeting Arts Center
- Ducks Unlimited

Conservation and Stewardship

- Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition
- Continuous Landowner Outreach
- Ongoing Stewardship Activities

Education

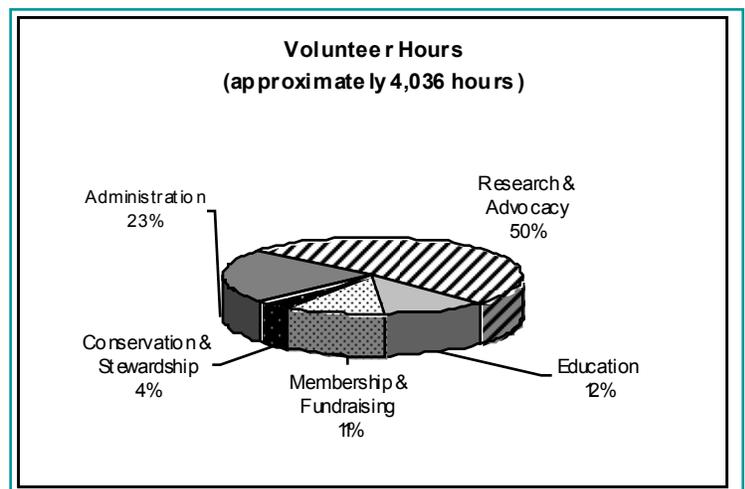
- Two Bay Days (280 students)
- Hall-Dale on the Bay (80 students)
- School Visits (20 visits, 840 students, 37 teachers, 13 schools)
- Brunswick Naval Air Station Kid Fest (150 students)
- The DaVinci Experience- Summer Camp (45 students)
- Bowdoinham Library (20 participants)
- Celebrate Bowdoinham- educational activities
- Web site updates-extensive additions to Cybrary & Friends of Merrymeeting Bay links

Research

- Final Report- Circulation Study
- Web Posting- Circulation Study
- Thwing's Point archaeology dig
- Phragmites removal project on the Abbagadasset River
- Assisted MDIF&W with bald eagle breeding surveys
- Completed field portion 10 year update of aerial vegetation and land use study

Advocacy (postings, letters, testimony, etc)

- Chops Hydro Project defeated
- Successfully expanded Atlantic salmon ESA listing
- Expanded salmon critical habitat designation
- Two Fish Passage bills submitted (hydro & non hydro dams)
- Healthy Rivers/Healthy Gulf promoting safe fish passage
- Merrymeeting Bay Wildlife Sanctuary Signs
- Land for Maine's Future
- American Eel Protection
- Sears Island
- Testimony and comments on the Androscoggin River upgrade
- Resolve enacted on Androscoggin reclass
- Fish Consumption Advisories posted
- Co-sponsor Pharmaceutical Disposal legislation- LD 821
- Coyotes



You can't find land on a department store shelf; they just don't make it anymore.

Growing up, my folks offered many forms of advice; some appreciated and others not so much. One piece of advice I honored most, even then, was to always value open land since once gone, it was gone forever. "Once gone, you can never get it back", they often reminded, pointing out the many natural services open spaces provided should never be taken for granted since "you can't find them [or land] on a department store shelf, they're not being made anymore."

The Quabbin Reservoir and surrounding area in Central Mass was my childhood stomping ground. Rural communities rich in natural resources, history, and a strong sense of community made it a true hidden gem. Adventuring throughout the forested land around us, searching for signs of farms and homesteads long forgotten, my parents shared their insights to the true value of these natural areas. My father's intimate knowledge of the land is one of a true sportsman. His detailed understanding of the terrain, animal behavior, and intricate connections between each organism could only come from a strong respect for our natural world and many hours patiently observing each relationship unfolding. My mother complimented his experiences with her attention to beauty and rich history of the area.

Natural or environmental services are qualitative functions of natural non-produced assets of land, water and air (including related ecosystem) and their biota. There are three basic types of natural services:

1. disposal services which reflect the functions of the natural environment as an absorptive sink for residuals,
2. productive services which reflect the economic functions of providing natural resource inputs and space for production and consumption, and
3. consumer or consumption services which provide for physiological as well as recreational and related needs of human beings.

These services include the provision of raw materials and energy used to produce goods and services, the absorption of waste from human activities, and the basic roles in life support and the provision of other amenities such as landscape.¹

Traveling throughout the forest my parents identified

distinctive natural services occurring around us. Each spring wetlands swelled as winter's snow departed. Intuitively, one can identify a relationship between departing winter and rejuvenating wetland communities. But as I learned, there was a deeper relationship unfolding, benefiting us and other organisms. As winter snow melts and spring rains commence, the land becomes overwhelmed with moisture causing water to runoff toward

lowland points. Helping prevent residential flooding, excess water is stored in wetland areas until it can be distributed into the ground or surface waterways. In addition to flood storage, wetlands benefit us by filtering water as it enters surface and sub-surface drinking water sources. This unique filtration process traps sediment, retains nutrients and removes heavy metals and other pollutants. An abundance of wetland areas within our community helped the town financially by preventing a need for building flood storage areas or water treatment facilities.

Residents profited from the land in other ways, too. Folks benefited from timber for firewood and industry, farming provided food for families and neighbors while orchards and a small vineyard attracted people to the quiet town. Hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities supplemented household incomes and leisure time throughout the changing seasons; profit from the land bolstered people's wallets and hearts. Unfortunately, many disregarded the holistic value land provided and we began losing it parcel by parcel.

Our road was far removed from the petite town center. Only



Maplewood Conservation Easement, Richmond

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1. Glossary of Environment Statistics, Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 67, United Nations, New York, 1997.

Our Primary Partners

Friends of Casco Bay
 Friends of Sebago Lake
 Penobscot Bay Watch
 Friends of Kennebec Salmon
 Bowdoin College Environmental Studies
 Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
 ME Historic Preservation Commission
 Dept. of Environmental Protection

Center for Biological Diversity
 US Fish and Wildlife Service
 Dept. of Marine Resources
 Maine Toxics Action Coalition
 Endangered Species Coalition
 Androscoggin River Alliance
 Kashi-MSN
 Brunswick Naval Air Station
 Forest Ecology Network

USGS-Augusta
 Maine Coast Heritage Trust
 ME Wetlands Protection Coalition
 Patagonia Outlet, Freeport
 SAD 75
 Stantec
 Chops Point School
 Brunswick TV 3
 Bowdoinham Public Library

Healthy Rivers/Healthy Gulf

As a society we tend to segregate the economy from the environment, fish passage from water extraction, land conservation from toxic use reduction, and so on.

Finding the commonality and growing power through understanding that all these matters are connected, is critical to long-term progress on issues that are the underpinnings of overall health of our planet.

While in the short-term it may make sense to specialize, we can no longer afford to separate tax reform from the peace movement, the peace movement from environmental movement or budget, or campaign finance reform or fair labor practices, etc. It is precisely this bifurcation that has created vast gulfs between so much of the work being done, and not being done.

Where do we start? Rivers are the arteries of this planet. They provide us with ecological, economic and physical health. Without these vital water bodies we'd be up the proverbial creek. Rivers give us the perfect starting place to be more holistic in our approach to problem solving.

It is in everyone's best interest to have a vibrant Gulf of Maine fishery. Inherent in that concept are some basic requirements that include, but are not limited to:

- * Sustainable harvests [we must address over-fishing of all catches including bait fish]
- * Protected and healthy nursery habitat for all the species that contribute to the health of the Gulf
- * Considering economic benefits including:
 - Commercial fishing jobs
 - Recreational jobs
 - Tourism
 - Overall Community health
- * Unfettered access to and from spawning areas for all contributing fish species
- * Pollution issues
- * Physical health including the benefits of eating healthy, wild fish
- * Access to fishing, clamming, worming
- * Facing difficulties with state and federal agencies
- * Impacts of various industries including dams, paper mills, aquaculture, trawling, etc.
- * State and federal budgets and tax codes that unfairly reward some and undermine others [Budget and tax choices reflect who we are as a society. We've largely forgotten that]

The Gulf of Maine is a resource that has provided sustenance and economic benefit for people around the world for thousands of years. Rethinking [and (re-)acting] our relationship with this resource, and other traditional industries such as forestry and agriculture [so important to the socio-economic fabric of Maine] is critical to the long-term health of humans and the earth.

FOMB has vast experience using research, advocacy, legal actions, coalition building, legislative measures, educational outreach, volunteer training, community organizing to accelerate long-term solutions to what is now an untenable, unsustainable environment in Maine's rivers and the Gulf of Maine.

With between 650 and 900 dams in Maine we have clogged the arteries feeding into the Gulf of Maine and beyond.



Webber Pond Alewife Harvest

These dams impact regeneration of multiple species utilizing our rivers and the Gulf of Maine. Many species cannot get upriver to spawn and, we slice and dice many species through the turbines of hydro dams during outmigration thereby undermining their chance to repopulate the Gulf of Maine.

We also hurt local commercial fisheries and recreational fisheries further negatively impacting economic health. The slaughtering of alewives and other forage species not only hurts the lobster industry, but also eliminates a primary food source for larger fish species in our rivers and the Gulf of Maine. While over-fishing is a huge contributor to the decline of a multitude of species, we are burning the candle at both ends when we overfish on one end and Cuisinart fish going to and from their spawning habitat on the other.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay has mobilized thousands of citizens to express support for safe fish passage to the Governor and legislature through media, presentations, a post card campaign, educating the public and various legislative measures, not to mention our vast work in area schools. Healthy Rivers/Healthy Gulf expands those efforts even further. We believe our success with issues ranging from expanding endangered species status to Atlantic salmon on the Kennebec, Androscoggin and Penobscot rivers, to pushing back an ill-conceived hydro project at the Chops, to upgrading water quality status and more, will be further enhanced by Healthy Rivers/Healthy Gulf efforts.

We are excited by the prospect of working with people in communities around the state to assure fish passage and biodiversity in our rivers and, consequently, beyond Merrymeeting Bay.

~Kathleen McGee

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay · Box 233 · Richmond, Maine 04357

Membership Levels

- \$1,000+ Sturgeon
- \$750 American Eel
- \$500 Wild Salmon
- \$250 Striped Bass
- \$100 Shad
- \$50 Alewife
- \$20 Smelt
- Other

Name _____

RR# or Street Address _____

Town/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

- Renewal
- New Member
- Send me information about volunteer opportunities.

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

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay

Steering Committee

- Ed Friedman, Chair (Bowdoinham)
- Nate Gray, Secretary (Freeport)
- Vance Stephenson, Treasurer (Wilmington, NC)
- Tom Walling (Bowdoinham)
- Sarah Cowperthwaite (Topsham)

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Kathleen McGee 666-3598 email: kmcgee@gwi.net

Thanks to Misty Gorski for design and layout of this newsletter edition.

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bravest friends and family ventured to our home for visits. But, as all things happen, change and progress were fated for our quiet street too. It started with the road being paved- a blessing to most who lost a car or two in the vast chasms we called potholes. Then we received cable. Next came one new house; multiplying shortly thereafter into dozens of prefabs, further fragmenting the land and my forested playground.

As our street slowly caught up with the concluding century we experienced many unanticipated developments forever changing the community we knew. In hindsight, I've considered it childhood ignorance to have thought the land across from us would always be a forested playground. Truthfully, it wasn't only my childhood ignorance or innocence but a common ignorance shared among our neighbors.

My town was unique because of its rural character, rich natural resource base, and close proximity to two major cities. After years of believing we were removed just enough from the pressures of development, the town was eventually hit hard and changed forever. Losses of natural resources caused financial misfortune to the town, residents, and local economy. Fragmented housing developments created distance between neighbors and sense of community was weakened. Communities around Merrymeeting Bay share a similar combination of unique attributes as my childhood home. While at least by Massachusetts standards most areas around the Bay remain lightly impacted by development pressures, it is shockingly easy for the private and public benefits of open land to imperceptibly slip away.

Our undeveloped lands provide countless essential services benefiting our community that can never be gained back once lost. Growth and development are historically seen by most as inevitable paths we must travel. Leaving aside the discussion of whether we "must" travel this way, or "choose" to, creating a future honoring our quality of life, strong communities, and generous natural resource base remains essential for survival. As a community we have the ability to protect our special places while they are still special. Proactive Conservation Commissions and

Planning Boards play critical roles in the future development of a town as do Codes Enforcement Officers. Municipal ordinances, comprehensive, and land use plans are strong indicators of the direction a community will grow. Beyond municipal directives, other tools like conservation easements protect valuable natural resources and recreation lands in perpetuity without harmful effects to the tax base and community. Conservation easements can even enhance property values!

Local organizations, like FOMB, are an essential resource to communities around Merrymeeting Bay. Generous support from individuals enables resource protection in your community. Economic downturns provide ideal opportunities for conservation groups to protect special places before developers profit from rising market values. Additional support from individuals during downturns is critical to protecting special places before they are lost. Working together through difficult times will yield stronger communities, protected natural services and a sustainable, prosperous future for Merrymeeting Bay.

Long gone from my childhood home are many of the trees and open fields that once defined the neighborhood. My parents, too, have moved on to another community. I still visit my hometown when travels take me close, but the feeling of home is long gone as well. I carry my childhood memories, along with this lesson on the fate of open spaces to help further land protection efforts where I go. As I settle into the Merrymeeting Bay area and make it my home I am pleased to be working for an organization and with volunteers dedicated to protecting our local resources and investing in protecting our quality of life because, just like land, quality of life can't be purchased off a department store shelf.

~ Misty Gorski

As part of their mission to protect the Bay, FOMB is actively working with land owners, NGOs, State & Federal Agencies protecting critical land resources around Merrymeeting Bay. To date, FOMB has helped protect over 1300 acres and 59,000 ft of shoreline frontage. To learn more about the benefits of conserving your land please contact FOMB.



Friends of Merymeeting Bay
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 ORGANIZATION
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Treasurer's Report

FOMB exemplified a responsible non-profit organization in 2010 by spending only slightly more than it took in. Income totaled roughly \$65K versus outlays of \$66K and bank accounts declined by about one thousand dollars in sympathy with operating results. Our overall cash position remains sound with \$208K in bank accounts. \$41K of this amount is restricted for use in protecting conservation easements.

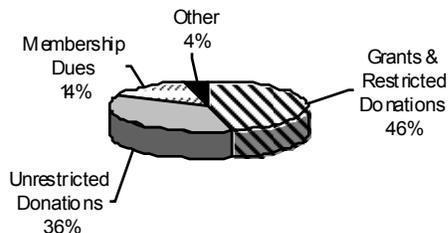
Beyond cash in the bank, FOMB has an additional \$50K of liquid assets on account with Wells Fargo: \$40K of equities plus \$10K in money market funds. FOMB continues to be nothing more than a 'passive' investor (i.e., all of the equity positions resulted from in-kind stock donations). Our equity portfolio actually appreciated in market value during 2009 and these funds now constitute 16% of FOMB's liquid assets (up from 13% at the end of 2008). The entire equity portfolio is placed in an assortment of Calvert social investment mutual funds. Added to bank accounts, FOMB ended 2009 with \$258K of liquid assets.

Driving 2009 income was \$23K of unrestricted donations (\$14K of this from an additional bequest from the John Linehan trust) and \$22.5K in grants. FOMB received \$12.5K from four different grants to fund the Healthy Rivers, Healthy Gulf initiative. A further \$14K was realized from renewal and new memberships, down from \$18K in 2008 – ask your friends to join today!

The agenda for FOMB remains dedicated to benefiting the Bay – only 8% of total expenses went towards Membership & Fundraising (which includes the newsletter and postage for the annual appeal). Half of 2009 expenses were for staffing, and that offers the opportunity to thank Misty Gorski and our membership. In lean economic times, it is nothing short of remarkable this community effort can fund a full-time advocate. Misty's competence and dedication breaths life into Bay Day and so many other projects that protect and preserve Merymeeting Bay. The largest project expense of the year was \$9K for aerial photography supporting our habitat assessment of the Bay.

—Respectfully submitted by Vance Stephenson

2009 Income



2009 Expenses

