



# Sheepscot River

This majestic river, which lies in the heart of the midcoast, has been and continues to be a vital artery for working waterfronts, critical habitat for sea-run fish species such as the endangered Atlantic salmon, and a source of recreation and reflection for the communities it has defined.

# MIDCOAST CONSERVANCY

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**THE MISSION OF MIDCOAST CONSERVANCY IS TO PROTECT AND RESTORE VITAL LANDS AND WATERS ON A SCALE THAT MATTERS.**

**WE ENVISION A WORLD WHERE OUR LANDS AND WATERS ARE HEALTHY AND PROTECTED AND WHERE NATURE OCCUPIES A PLACE OF CENTRAL IMPORTANCE IN EVERY PERSON'S LIFE.**

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Photo: Tim Trumbauer

# A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CONSERVATION IN THE MIDCOAST

By Pete Nichols, Executive Director & Buck O'Herin, Board President

LAND. WATER. COMMUNITY. THE THREE PILLARS THAT ARE AT THE CORE OF OUR MISSION AT MIDCOAST CONSERVANCY AND DEFINE THE APPROACH WE TAKE TOWARD SERVING THE COMMUNITY—BOTH NATURAL AND HUMAN—ON THE MIDCOAST.

The nexus between land and water is a critical consideration that informs the goals of our 30x30 initiative as we work to protect 30,000 acres of the midcoast by 2030. The wild landscapes of this region that shape our quality of life are mere remnants of a broader bioregion that once connected the coastal regions along the Atlantic coast to the boreal forest that stretches from Maine across Canada. What continues to make these systems thrive is the connection between the land and water, which supports the forests, plants, wildlife, fish and other aquatic life that all contribute to a rich and diverse ecosystem.

Land protection, right now, is the most effective way to protect water quality. Protecting riparian buffers along the Sheepscoot River helps to provide shade and regulate the water temperature to ensure cool water for the endangered Atlantic salmon. Protecting upland areas and wetlands conserves seeps and small streams that are cold water inputs into our rivers and helps slow polluted water and sediments from fouling our waters.

The ecosystem services provided by these lands are vital components of keeping our wild spaces, favorite hunting and fishing spots, trails, and swimming holes vibrant and rich with plants, fish, and wildlife. We do our part to assist those natural processes by monitoring the health of our waters and restoring the landscape. We monitor the water quality in the Sheepscoot River, Damariscotta Lake, and Medomak River watersheds, ensuring clean water for fish and shellfish, and supporting our working waterfront community. We fight back invasive aquatic plants, work with landowners to prevent polluted stormwater runoff from their homes, and conduct the science-based research that will protect our valued coastal waters from the impacts of a changing climate.

Land, water, and community are all connected. At Midcoast Conservancy, we work every day to protect and enrich each one of those pillars, and we hope you will join us in our endeavors to maintain our quality of life in midcoast Maine.

# NEW FACES AT MIDCOAST CONSERVANCY



## ANNE READ

### Land Protection Specialist

Anne is from southern Maine, currently residing in Portland. She studied Community Development and Planning at Clark University and was involved in land protection projects in Worcester, MA while receiving her Master's of Arts in 2017. She has experience in land and water conservation efforts through non-profit work in Western North Carolina and Massachusetts.



## MELISSA COTE

### Sheepscot River Watershed Manager

Melissa is originally from Massachusetts, and found a second home in Maine where her grandfather grew up. After obtaining her Master of Science degree in oceanography from the University of Connecticut, she worked for two environmental nonprofits where she found her true passion in conservation work. She made Maine her forever home in January 2020 when she moved to the Midcoast region to work for the Department of Marine Resources, where she monitored water quality for the Bureau of Public Health.



## AMY CAZIER

### MCC Environmental Water Steward

Amy grew up exploring Colorado's Rocky Mountains before heading to Michigan to earn a Bachelor's degree in Biology at Kalamazoo College where her fascination for plants and insects developed. She is serving as the MCC Environmental Steward for Midcoast Conservancy's water team and will be helping to manage volunteers dedicated to protecting the Sheepscot River, Medomak River and Damariscotta Lake watersheds through water quality and invasive plant monitoring. This summer she will engage with young conservationists as she oversees the Youth Conservation Corps.



## MELANIE COLLINS

### MCC Environmental Community Steward

Melanie is serving this year as the MCC Community Environmental Steward, focused primarily on work at Hidden Valley Nature Center in Jefferson. After growing up in Beverly, MA, Melanie earned a BA in Biology from the College of the Holy Cross; her junior year, she studied Wildlife Management through a School for Field Studies program in Kimana, Kenya and Rhotia, Tanzania with a focus on giraffe behavior. Melanie spent a few years in Portland between seasons as a marine science educator in California and a sea kayak guide in Washington.



## SKYE CAHOON

### MCC Environmental Land Steward

Skye joins Midcoast Conservancy as the 2022 MCC Land Environmental Steward. She is tasked with a range of duties centered around land protection including landowner outreach, stewarding conserved lands, and coordinating educational events. Skye grew up in southeastern Massachusetts and received her Bachelor's degree in Zoology and minor in Psychology from the University of Maine, Orono.

# FILL YOUR SUMMER CALENDAR WITH OUR UPCOMING EVENTS!



## TOAST TO THE MIDCOAST FUNDRAISERS

### LINGER BY THE LAKE

Thursday, July 14, 4-6:30 pm

Gather on the shore of Damariscotta Lake at the extraordinary Birkett farm. The iconic red barn is familiar to all who pass by on the water!

### MEDOMAK MIXER

Thursday, July 28, 4-6:30 pm

Mosey down to Round Pond for a special evening on Muscongus Harbor. Get an osprey's eye view of the beautiful bay.

### SHEEPSCOT SOIREE

Wednesday, August 3, 4-6:30 pm

Perched above the serpentine Sheepscot, this home enjoys sweeping views of the water and Trout Brook Preserve!

## LIVE MUSIC, ADVENTURE & MORE!

### VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION & MEMBER PICNIC

Thursday, August 11, 4-6:30 pm

Gather at Hidden Valley Nature Center to celebrate our amazing volunteers and catch up with Midcoast Conservancy friends old and new!

### STATE OF THE LAKE

Tuesday, August 23, 4-6 pm

Join Damariscotta Lake Watershed Manager Patricia Nease at Wavus Camp to learn about the latest trends in water quality and ways you can help protect the lake.

### JAZZ IN THE WOODS

Sunday, August 28, 4-6 pm

Jamie Saft and friends are back for an encore afternoon of world-class jazz in the mellow setting of Hidden Valley Nature Center's Barn. Bring chairs and cocktails for the happiest of hours!

### LIVE EDGE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sunday, September 18, 12-6 pm

Four Maine bands will give you terrific tunes and reasons to dance the day away! Local beers and wood-fired pizza will sustain you for the duration.

### RACE THROUGH THE WOODS

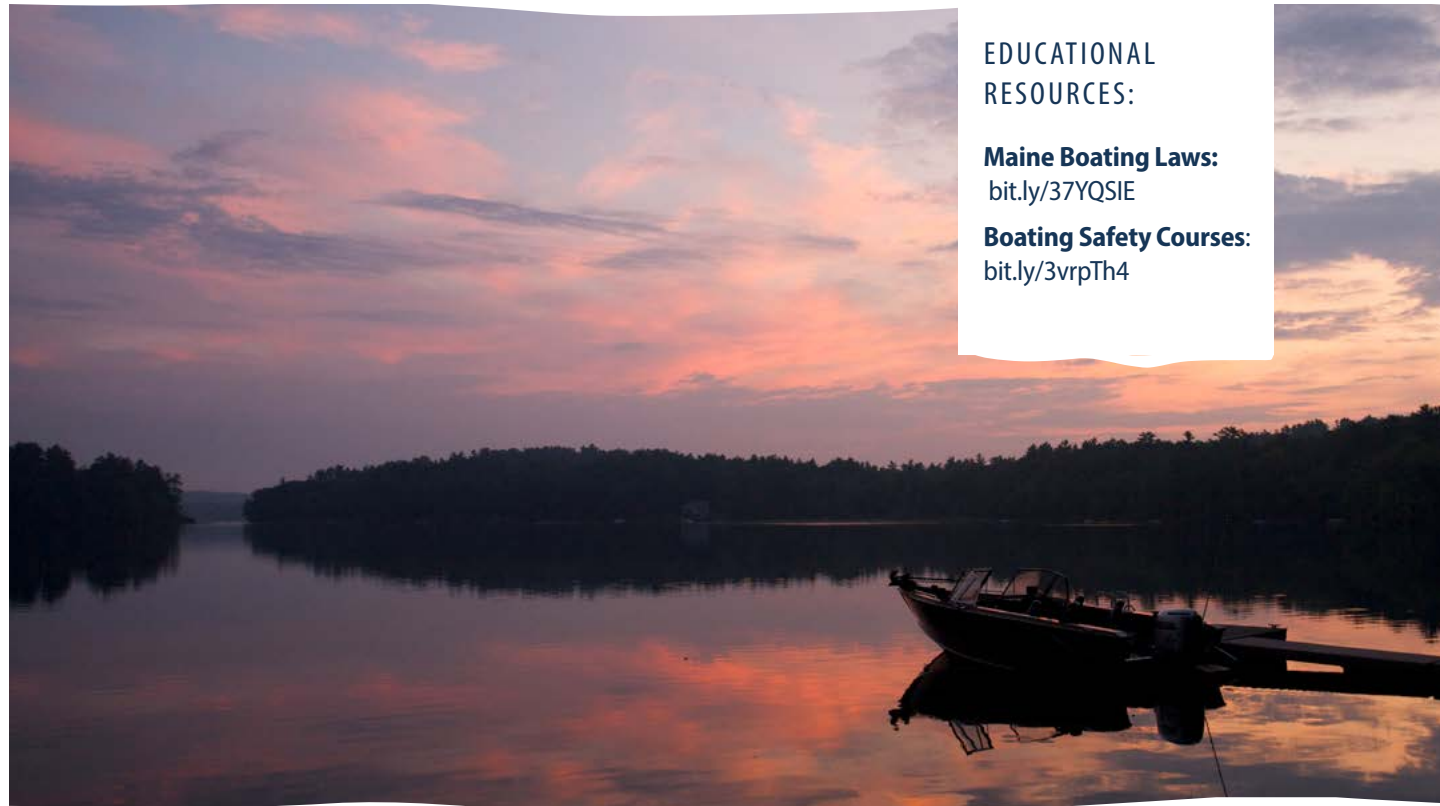
Saturday, September 24

Our annual trail running event is fun-first; all ages and abilities are encouraged to run either the 5-mile or half-marathon races. Prizes, beer, and pretzels will reward your efforts!

### GOOSEPECKER TREKKER

Saturday, October 1, 9 am- 1 pm

Explore the magnificent Northern Headwaters trail system, then gather for beer and lunch from the grill at the Whitten Hill Preserve, served up by Midcoast Conservancy staff and volunteers.



EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES:

**Maine Boating Laws:**  
[bit.ly/37YQSIE](https://bit.ly/37YQSIE)

**Boating Safety Courses:**  
[bit.ly/3vrpTh4](https://bit.ly/3vrpTh4)

Photo: Keith Carver

WHILE WE CELEBRATE SUCCESSFULLY REMOVING HYDRILLA, AND CONTINUE EFFORTS TO PREVENT OTHER INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS AND TO MITIGATE THREATS TO WATER QUALITY IN DAMARISCOTTA LAKE, THERE'S ANOTHER CONCERN FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE LAKE. SINCE THE ONSET OF THE PANDEMIC, MORE PEOPLE HAVE TURNED TO BOATING, ESPECIALLY THOSE SEEKING SAFE OUTDOOR RECREATION. GROWING BOAT TRAFFIC BRINGS THE NEED TO EMPHASIZE BOATER SAFETY AND EDUCATION, AS NEW AND SEASONED BOATERS MUST FOLLOW SAFE BOATING PRINCIPLES.

Safe boating includes using common sense and complying with Maine's boating regulations. Speed and distance-from-shore regulations are especially important on Damariscotta Lake due to its many islands, coves, and ecologically-sensitive areas.

From Maine Boating Laws and Responsibilities:

- Operators must regulate their speed to avoid endangering, injuring, or unnecessarily inconveniencing another watercraft and its occupants, whether anchored or underway.
- Operators must consider the effect of their watercraft's wake on waterfront piers, floats, shoreline or other property.
- You may not operate a watercraft greater than "headway speed" while within 200 feet of any shoreline, including islands.
- "Headway speed" means the slowest speed at which it is still possible to maintain steering and control of the watercraft.

With over 4,600 acres of surface area and more than 45 miles of shoreline, maintaining headway-speed-only within 200 feet of shore is critical to safeguarding those enjoying the waterfront and protecting sensitive habitat for loons and other wildlife. Many navigation markers in

Damariscotta Lake indicate submerged rocks or other hazards, but very few markers delineate no-wake zones. Miles of shoreline and many islands make marking all areas within the no-wake zone impossible. Boaters must take responsibility for operating their watercraft in a safe manner. A boat exceeding headway speed while close to shore is not only at risk to collide with swimmers or paddlers but the wake, even from a small boat, can be a drowning hazard to recreational swimmers, and may cause damage to docks and shoreline. Boat operators failing to maintain headway-speed-only when within 200 feet of shore may not be intentionally violating the law. They may be unaware of how large or impactful their wake is, even at moderate speed. They may be unaware of the law or potential for harm they are creating. This is no excuse for unsafe boating, but recognizing this risk is an opportunity to make boater safety education a priority.

 Damariscotta Lake Watch - Midcoast Conservancy  
 [www.midcoastconservancy.org/damariscotta](http://www.midcoastconservancy.org/damariscotta)



Photo: Tim Trumbauer

THE MEDOMAK VALLEY COUNCIL HAS BIG PLANS FOR THE SUMMER! UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF NEWLY-ELECTED COUNCIL CHAIR BENNETT COLLINS, WE EMBARKED UPON A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS TO PRIORITIZE AND ORGANIZE OUR VOLUNTEER COUNCIL'S EFFORTS FOR THE YEAR.

We recognized the most powerful role for the Council is to engage the local community in our conservation work: to welcome, educate, and inspire our neighbors to help us conserve the vital lands and water of the Medomak region. To do so, we agreed to host one or more public social events to welcome community members, host a shoreline trash clean-up in partnership with the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA), and to pilot a new "Rewilding the Midcoast" program to encourage local property owners to adopt nature-based yard practices. (By the time you read this, our events should be scheduled and posted on our website,

and to learn more about our Rewilding the Midcoast program, see page 23).

Programmatically, we continue to pursue land and water conservation throughout the Medomak Region. In land conservation news, we accepted a newly donated Conservation Easement on more than 120 acres owned by Deb Dean in Washington. The property includes fields, woods, and wetlands stretching down to Hope Brook, Little Medomak Brook, and the Medomak River, providing a variety of habitat types for wildlife. The majority of the property will be forever wild, with no commercial harvest allowed. This will maximize carbon storage on the land, preventing climate change and providing flood control for the Medomak River watershed.

In water conservation news, we recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bremen Shellfish Conservation Committee to conduct a rigorous bacteria pollution study of Broad Cove—an important

clamming area that is threatened by excess bacteria pollution—and we are gearing up for our seasonal water quality monitoring program with our partners at the Maine Coastal Observing Alliance.

To learn more about our events, conservation work, and volunteer opportunities, please make sure you follow our Medomak Valley pages on Facebook and Instagram and visit our website at [www.midcoastconservancy.org](http://www.midcoastconservancy.org) to subscribe to our email list. Thank you for supporting our work, and we hope to see you at one of our local events!

 Medomak Valley - Midcoast Conservancy  
 [www.midcoastconservancy.org/medomak-valley](http://www.midcoastconservancy.org/medomak-valley)



Photo: Glenn Ritch

THE SHEEPSCOT HEADWATERS REGION IS RELATIVELY SPARSELY POPULATED BY HUMANS BUT IS HEAVILY POPULATED BY A TREMENDOUS NUMBER OF WILD CREATURES. IN DISCUSSING THIS REALITY AT A HEADWATERS COUNCIL MEETING A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT MOST OR ALL OF THE MEMBERS CHOSE TO LIVE IN THIS AREA IN LARGE PART DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY CAN ENJOY REGULAR CONTACT WITH THEIR WILD NEIGHBORS. INDEED, IT TURNS OUT THAT SHARING STORIES OF VARIOUS WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS AND ENCOUNTERS IS A REGULAR PASTIME FOR RESIDENTS OF THE HEADWATERS.

Some years ago, as our council was discussing programs for the upcoming year, we came upon the idea of offering wildlife habitat tours in our area. This grew from the fact that a number of people in our group were actively involved in protecting and improving habitat for wild creatures. A short discussion of this issue made it clear that many of us had done a good deal of work on such projects and were beginning to see wildlife respond positively to these efforts.

The logical question arose: Why not share some of these success stories and strategies?

The following summer our council offered three wildlife habitat walks. All were exceptionally well-attended and received. Participants have found that much of what they observed and learned could be duplicated in their own yards and beyond. Given that early success, the Headwaters Council has offered habitat walks every year since and they have seemingly grown in popularity.

We are planning two or three habitat walks during the summer of 2022. At this point, one is set for June 25 and another for August 6. The walks last roughly two hours and there is no charge. Check the events page for full details: <https://bit.ly/3qaOQfr>



Photo: Callie Wronker



 Sheepscoot River - Midcoast Conservancy  
 [www.midcoastconservancy.org/sheepscoot-headwaters](http://www.midcoastconservancy.org/sheepscoot-headwaters)



Photo: Leah Sprague

APRIL SHOWERS BRING A LOT OF THINGS BESIDES MAY FLOWERS. FOR INSTANCE: RUSHING WATERS, CARVING THE RIVERBANKS WITH ICE FLOES AND TURBID FRESHETS; FLASHY MIGRATORY WARBLERS FLITTING THROUGH THE WOODS; AMPHIBIANS AWAKENING FOR THEIR "BIG NIGHT" AND SLITHERING THROUGH THE WOODS TO THEIR VERNAL POOLS FOR MIDNIGHT TRYSTS.

The Sheepscoot River Valley is a dynamic and exciting ecosystem—much like our Sheepscoot Valley Council! From the trails to the river, our council and related staff are engaged in the stewardship, growth, and celebration of the essential work in this watershed.

PASSIONATE ABOUT FISH MIGRATION? You're not alone—well, at least not at our events. Stay tuned to our website's events page and our new Sheepscoot Valley Facebook page for more infor-

mation about exciting happenings we are hosting for Fish Migration Day later in May, as well as our weekly naturalist events on our trails. And once you've soaked in the science, put on your Sunday best and keep your eyes peeled for more information related to our summer soirees and fundraisers.

LIKE TO GET OUT AND ABOUT? Join our council, staff, and volunteers for fun and fulfilling trail workdays in the Valley. We'll be building bridges at Stetser, implementing interpretive trails and exhibits at Bass Falls, and managing invasives along the Sheepscoot at Trout Brook. And later this summer, we anticipate our partners at the WW&F Railway Museum will open a new station at our Trout Brook Preserve—an exciting development which will allow riders of this historic narrow gauge railway to disembark and enjoy a new loop trail through the preserve.

As we slog through the last throes of mud season, there is plenty to look forward to in the Sheepscoot Valley.

Like Atlantic salmon working their way upriver, our hardworking council members, volunteers, and staff are eager to take on challenges—and splash around the river while doing so!



Photo: Midcoast Conservancy



 Sheepscoot River - Midcoast Conservancy  
 [www.midcoastconservancy.org/sheepscoot-valley](http://www.midcoastconservancy.org/sheepscoot-valley)



Photo: Jess Ruhlin Donohoe

THE 2022 CONSTRUCTION SEASON GOT OFF TO AN EARLY START AT HIDDEN VALLEY NATURE CENTER. A NEW OVERFLOW PARKING LOT JUST A LITTLE NORTH OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE HAS BEEN COMPLETED. GONE ARE THE DAYS OF PARKING ON THE ROADWAY OR USING SHUTTLE VANS TO COME AND GO FROM A DISTANT PARKING AREA. A TRAIL CONNECTING THE NEW LOT TO THE ENTRANCE IS UNDERWAY.

Earthwork is also completed for the construction of the Roland S. Barth Welcome Center, which will greet guests near the entrance to HVNC. Roland was a founder of the Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association and a supporter of its successor, Midcoast Conservancy. In honor of Roland and the work he did as an educator and conservationist, the new center will welcome, inform, educate, and inspire visitors and continue HVNC's history of creating community. Rental gear

will also move to the new Welcome Center. The site is prepared, concrete foundation will be poured in early May, the timber frames will be constructed during two timber frame classes at HVNC in May and will be erected in place soon thereafter. Stop in to check it out and say hello. And if you want to see more about the planned Welcome Center, see page 10.

Picnic tables and funky benches, made from HVNC's own timbers, are being built and are for sale at the main office. Each one is unique—come pick yours out now!

Some energetic folks are developing a course for new landowners, with the equally important goal of building community for newcomers to Maine. Three classes will be offered this summer on Trail Building, Forestry, and Encouraging Wildlife.



Nature-based classes fill the calendar at HVNC. Amphibians, bogs, ferns, full moon paddles, mushrooms, sustainable

forestry, chainsaw classes, and more are all on the agenda this summer. The self-guided running trail has been laid out, allowing runners to enjoy a peaceful run in the woods and prep for our fall Race Through the Woods.

Volunteer opportunities abound, including the chance to become a trail steward by adopting a trail at HVNC. You can do this on your own time, alone or with a gang. It's a great reason to take a walk outside!

And be sure to mark your calendars with our annual crowd-pleasing events—Jazz in the Woods, Live Edge, Race Through the Woods and our winter Biathlon. Hope to see you on the trails or on the pond (canoes to rent)!

If you are interested in offering your carpentry skills contact Andy Bezon at [andyb@midcoastconservancy.org](mailto:andyb@midcoastconservancy.org).

 Hidden Valley Nature Center  
 [www.midcoastconservancy.org/hvnc](http://www.midcoastconservancy.org/hvnc)



## ROLAND S. BARTH WELCOME CENTER

By Ali Stevenson,  
Communications & Engagement Manager

THOUSANDS OF VISITORS TAKE TO THE TRAILS AT HIDDEN VALLEY NATURE CENTER EVERY YEAR, AND HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT PERSONALLY WITH AS MANY OF THEM AS POSSIBLE HAS LONG BEEN A GOAL OF OURS. TO THAT END, WE HAVE BEGUN CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROLAND S. BARTH WELCOME CENTER, JUST INSIDE THE GATE TO THE SERVICE ROAD. WE ARE SO EXCITED ABOUT THE MANY WAYS THAT IT WILL ENHANCE EVERYONE'S EXPERIENCE AT HVNC!

As a home base for volunteer “ambassadors” and some staff, the Welcome Center will allow visitors to talk with knowledgeable people, getting recommendations on the best trails for recreational pursuits or directions to a hut or yurt. Educational exhibits,

maps, and membership information will be featured.

Our rental center will be located there as well, allowing for skiers and bikers to get their gear as soon as they arrive, and for expanded hours of operation. The footprint of the main structure is 24' x 32' with gear storage in the back. The building will be constructed by volunteers and participants of a Midcoast Conservancy Timber Frame Class, and erected on site during the course. The building will be on a concrete foundation and will be very energy efficient—100% powered by solar panels on the roof. Internet access will be available, facilitating credit card payments and staff work capacity.

We anticipate completion of the Welcome Center in early fall and hope to hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony in October. Stay tuned!



Photo: Barbara Bauman and Roland Barth

# THE CHANGING CLIMATE OF MIDCOAST WATERS

By Air Rhodes, Deputy Director

WE HAVE ALL SEEN THE CLIMATE CHANGING AROUND US, BUT NONE MORE SO THAN THOSE WHO LIVE UNDER THE WATERS. THE CHANGING AQUATIC WORLD OF THE MIDCOAST REQUIRES US TO UNLOCK NEW LEVELS OF COMPASSION, IMAGINATION, AND HELPING HANDS.

## NOT ENOUGH OXYGEN

If you're feeling brave, imagine not being able to breathe well: perhaps you've experienced this at the top of a high mountain. No matter how deep you breathe, your body needs more oxygen. That's what our fish and mollusk and seaweed neighbors are already experiencing.

Warm water holds less oxygen than cold water, which means that rising temperatures deprive aquatic lifeforms of the oxygen they need. The Gulf of Maine and its tributaries are warming faster than 99% of global oceans. For 29 years Midcoast Conservancy has been monitoring the water on the Sheepscot River, showing the changing habitat there.

## HARMFUL THINGS LOVE CLIMATE CHANGE

While the waters' warming stresses most of its inhabitants, it unfortunately makes a few harmful creatures very happy.

We've already seen algal blooms in Damariscotta Lake and other waters in the region. When algae blooms, normally clear water turns into a cloud of green. Some types of marine algae even produce biotoxins. Algal blooms are likely to increase as Maine's climate continues to shift.

With warmer waters also come plants that are native to warmer places. Hydrilla, or water thyme, is native to Sri Lanka—but took over part of

Damariscotta Lake in 2009. After 13 years of removing truckloads of plants, this year the lake is officially uninfested! But it's just a matter of time until invasive species rear their heads again. We're on patrol.

## ACIDIFYING

One of the key causes of climate change is the increasing amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Water absorbs the carbon dioxide, which acidifies the water. Imagine (and this is horrible) that the air in which you live became acidic. Like limestone melting into vinegar, oyster shells begin to dissolve when the ocean acidifies, and baby oysters' shells grow brittle. By the end of the century, mussels and oysters are expected to grow 25% and 10% less shell. There will come a point where shellfish won't be able to grow shells at all.

Luckily the oyster is a superhero for mitigating climate change. Their shells absorb and store carbon from the environment - an average of eight grams of carbon per oyster! Per acre, oysters can sequester as much carbon as mature trees—and keep it stored longer. Oysters also clean the water: One adult oyster can filter 50 gallons of water a day! Midcoast Conservancy is working to establish oyster reefs to clean and protect our local waters.

## RISING WATERS

Climate change knocks our rainfall all out of whack. Severe storms make

the rivers rise in rushes. My road has washed out twice this year already from the intense rains, and I watched kayakers shoot the rapids of what's usually a dribbling brook. That's not only bad for infrastructure, but also bad for water creatures. Imagine being a tiny baby Atlantic salmon, trying to hide in an eddy behind a rock on the bottom of the roaring Sheepscot after a thunderstorm. It's no wonder only 1 in 40,000 is likely to make it to adulthood—and why we're working so hard to protect them.

I'm sure you know how climate change is melting ice worldwide, which is raising the ocean. Maine Climate Council anticipates that we'll have 1.5' of sea level rise by 2050, and 4' by 2100. Visit [riskfinder.climatecentral.org](http://riskfinder.climatecentral.org) to see what projected seas look like in our area—and why they're raising the Woolwich bridge! Protecting the waters' edges as buffers and sponges has never been more important. Midcoast Conservancy already protects 13.4 miles of Medomak shoreline, nine miles of Sheepscot shoreline, and many acres of wetlands.

## RESTORATIVE FUTURE

Our future lies partly in being able to directly protect and restore habitats for our aquatic neighbors—such as ensuring that baby salmon have shelter in the river. But it also lies in restoring our larger relationship with the climate. I never would have imagined that the smoke coming out of my tailpipe could be dissolving the shells of oysters—the same oysters that might save us. Everything we can do as individuals, as communities, and as a society to roll back the causes of climate change is essential. We are all so dependent on one another. The good news is, if there's one thing that the people of the Midcoast are good at, it's taking care of their neighbors. Thank you for being part of the solution!

Thank you to Cody Bloomfield for contributing to this article.

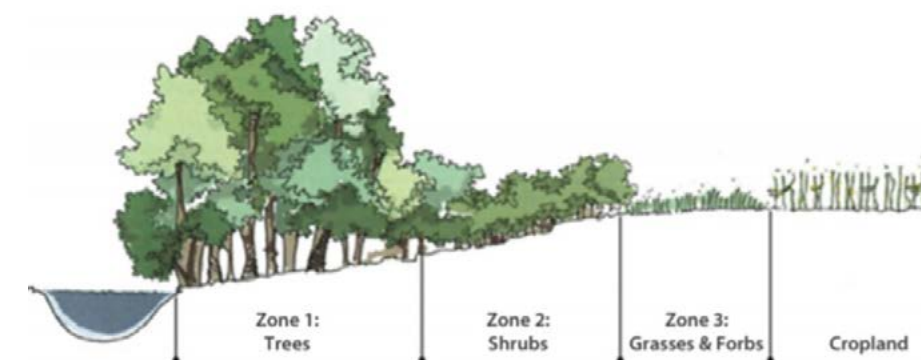
# PROTECT THE LAND, PROTECT THE WATER

By Anne Read, Land Protection Specialist

AS THE ICE BEGINS TO THAW, THE SOIL STARTS TO SOFTEN, AND THE BABY BIRDS BRAVELY PEEK THEIR HEADS OUT OF THEIR WARM NESTS, WE TOO WILL HESITANTLY SHED OUR HEAVIER LAYERS AND LINGER FOR AN EXTRA MOMENT TO ENJOY THE GENEROUS SUNSHINE. AS WE RECREATE IN THESE UPCOMING WARMER MONTHS, WHETHER IT'S PADDLING DOWN THE SHEEPSCOT RIVER, SWIMMING ON DAMARISCOTTA LAKE, OR FISHING ON THE MEDOMAK RIVER, IT'S A TIME TO REFLECT AND OBSERVE THE LAND THAT SURROUNDS THESE SCENIC WATERWAYS.

Protected land, specifically along riparian areas, is essential to maintaining and sustaining water quality that protects the biodiversity of our watershed and encourages community recreation and stewardship. At Midcoast Conservancy we aim to help landowners do more to conserve their land and maximize the conservation benefits which include: wetland protection, preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, and the reduction of sediment in the waterways. Having an undeveloped buffer of land along a waterway allows for natural absorption and filtration of chemicals, stormwater runoff, sediment, and pollution, preventing it from negatively impacting the water quality.

Midcoast Conservancy places importance on the protection of land that includes undeveloped and intact riparian habitats, including wetlands, vernal pools, and island properties. These help us to prioritize projects that could limit development along waterways and by extension benefit the health of the rivers and streams in the communities that we share. The Sheepscot River, a central waterway in our service area, is one of eight Maine rivers that provides crucial spawning grounds for the native Atlantic salmon (EPA). Sediment, failing stream crossings, and a lack of streamside vegetation are all factors that contribute to water pollution and could affect the future of these endangered



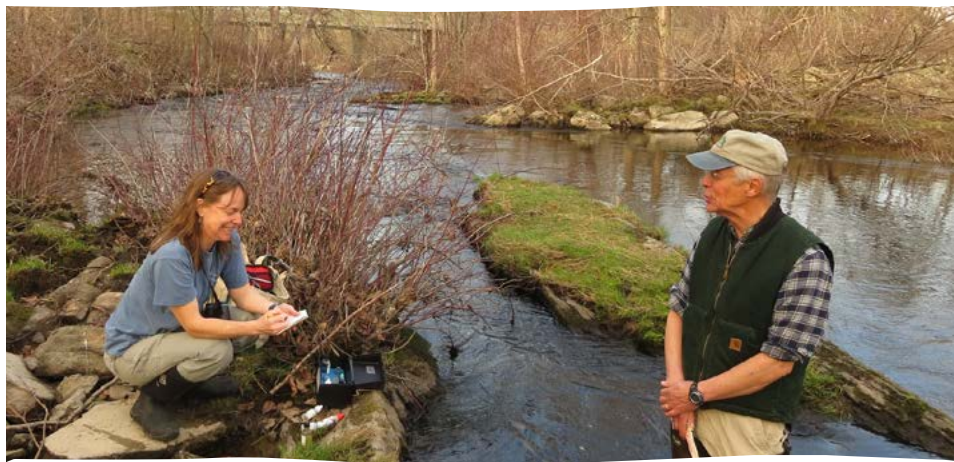
fish, as well as other aquatic plants and animals that are essential to protect. Conservation easements are a great option for landowners to protect the riparian buffer along their property, and to benefit the health of our rivers and streams. So next time you're out on the water, be mindful of the land that you're near: there might be an easement that keeps it protected!

For more information, check out the EPA's Nonpoint Source Success Story: Water Quality Restored in West Branch Sheepscot River: <https://bit.ly/3rM1RFf>

Riparian Buffer Zones  
Source: University of Kentucky College of Agriculture  
Credit: Corey Wilson, Landscape Architecture



Photos: Kids swimming on Spectacle Island, Damariscotta Lake (Tim Trumbauer); Volunteers monitor water quality on the Sheepscot River.



## PROTECTING YOUR RIGHT TO CLEAN WATER

**O**n **Damariscotta Lake** we're starting a new public health monitoring program. We'll collect samples at eight sites distributed throughout the lake, concentrating on high use areas. Samples will be collected from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend on Thursdays so we can have results by Friday afternoons. Those results will be posted to our Damariscotta Lake Watch social media channels, the website, and on a new platform, Swim Guide. Swim Guide has both an app and a web interface that provide weather and water quality information at beaches around the world! This new platform will help spread the word about Midcoast Conservancy and the great work we're doing to protect our waters.

By Patricia Nease, Damariscotta Lake Watershed Manager

EVEN WATERS THAT APPEAR PRISTINE AND CRYSTAL CLEAR CAN HARBOR AN INVISIBLE HARMFUL POLLUTANT THAT PUTS HUMAN HEALTH AT RISK: FECAL BACTERIA. IN EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS, FECAL BACTERIA CAN INCREASE THE RISK OF INFECTION TO SWIMMERS OR ANYONE MAKING CONTACT WITH THE WATER AND CAN RENDER SHELLFISH UNSAFE TO CONSUME. TO FURTHER EVALUATE THESE RISKS AND TO ULTIMATELY IDENTIFY AND MITIGATE POLLUTION SOURCES, WE CREATED A NEW IN-HOUSE FECAL BACTERIA WATER QUALITY MONITORING LAB. AS SUCH, WE HAVE THREE EXCITING PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE—ONE FOR EACH OF OUR WATERSHEDS!

In the **Medomak River Estuary** we'll be working with the Town of Bremen and their Shellfish Conservation Committee to identify sources of bacteria pollution in Broad Cove. Unfortunately, Broad Cove has been identified as having higher levels of bacteria pollution, which is a source of concern for shellfish harvesters and recreational water users alike. This project will include sampling in a variety of locations and conditions to try to identify, and ultimately eliminate, sources of the pollution.

The **Sheepscot River** water quality monitoring program is entering its 29th year of sampling! This program involves collecting temperature, bacteria, and dissolved oxygen measurements throughout the Sheepscot River water-

shed every other Tuesday from May through September. We have historically used the Health and Environmental Testing Lab in Augusta for our bacteria sample analysis; with our new capabilities, we're hoping to be able to run those samples in-house by the 30th sampling year, in 2023. This year we will send all of our samples to Augusta, and run a small subset in-house to determine how closely the two results align.

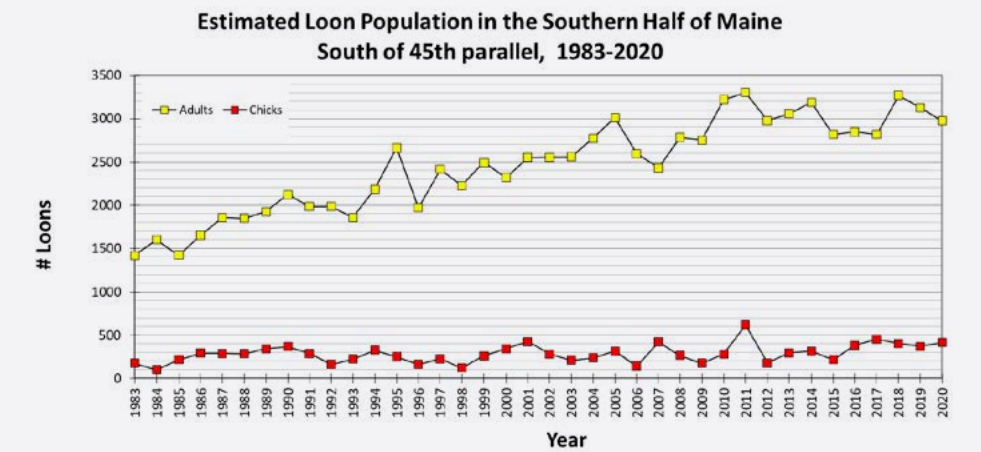
The water team is very excited about our new capacity for analyzing fecal bacteria samples in-house and our ability to chase down sources when we need to. A huge thank you to the generous donors who helped us build our new lab!

## SPIRIT OF THE NORTH: THE COMMON LOON'S STORY OF RECOVERY

By Isobel Curtis, Stewardship Manager

AS DUSK SETTLES OVER DARK WATERS, A CRY RINGS OUT THAT IS AT ONCE BEAUTIFUL AND HAUNTING, ETHEREAL AND MELODIC. IT STIRS SOMETHING IN ALL WHO LISTEN, TAPPING INTO THAT DEEP SENSE OF WONDER RESERVED FOR THE SUB-LIME AND UNEXPECTED. IT IS THE CALL OF THE COMMON LOON (*GAVIA IMMER*).

**T**heir distinctive song is shrouded in myth and thought to represent the wild spirit of the North. While it undoubtedly evokes a sense of wildness, this association is also rooted in truth. Common loons are found in Northern lakes throughout Canada and US border states from Maine to Minnesota. They are very sensitive to human disturbance and require quiet, clear lakes to breed and fish—hence their wildness. Murky waters inhibit underwater hunting visibility, while development and recreation disrupt their vulnerable nests on the lake's edge.



Loons thrived in Northern New England until the 1970s when populations plummeted due to increased disturbance, along with poisoning from lead fishing tackle and mercury contamination from coal-burning plant emissions. In 1983 Maine Audubon launched the “Annual Loon Count,” a citizen science initiative that continues today. On Damariscotta Lake, only 28 loons were observed that first year of monitoring. Thanks to conservation efforts, they have made a steady rebound and now 40-60 loons are typically observed on Damariscotta Lake each summer. The loon population in Maine (in areas monitored) has more than doubled from 1,500 (1983) to 3,446 (2021)—a true conservation success story!

All lake-goers know that loons are remarkable in more than song, however. Their plumage is a striking pattern of black and white checks, stripes, and bands that seems to mimic the water's ripples. They are also an unusually large and long-lived bird, weighing between 5.5-13 pounds and living 20-30 years!

Unbeknownst to the casual observer, loons may have multiple monogamous relationships over their lifetime! How, you ask? Loons are territorial, returning to the same lakes with their partner each spring to breed after overwintering on the coast. Young loons or “floaters” with no territory will challenge established breeders to a duel. If the challenger is successful, the mate of the defeated loon will stay loyal to their territory and re-pair rather than follow their previous partner into exile. While most skirmishes end in a surrender, some loons have been known to fight to the death with their sharp bills. What drama!

Loons capture our attention, and hearts, with their complex social lives and beloved calls. As their neighbors here in the Midcoast, we can help safeguard their population by protecting water quality, giving them their space and not making wakes close to shore while they are nesting, and avoiding the use of lead

What's most fascinating about loons though is their love life. fishing lures. I encourage you all to head out by canoe at dawn or dusk to experience the wild spirit of the North yourselves...

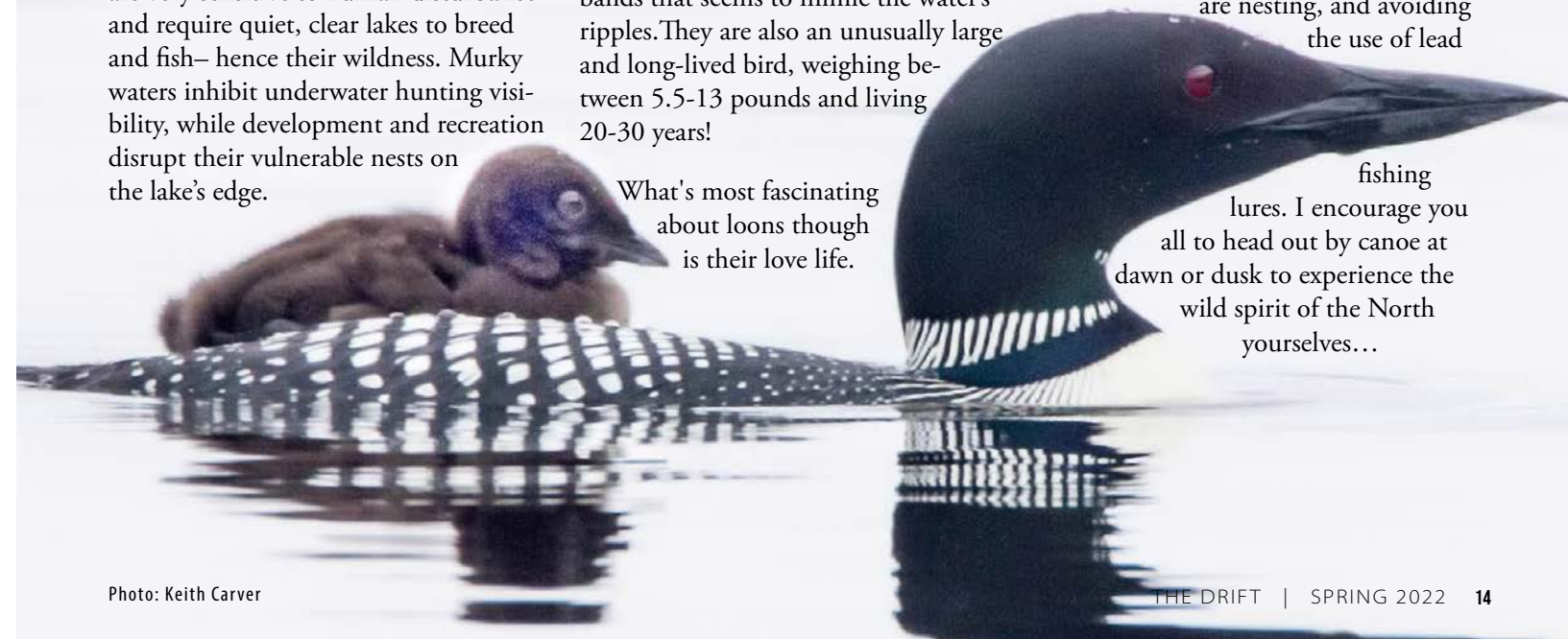


Photo: Keith Carver



# A NEW INITIATIVE TO RESTORE AN ECOLOGICAL, CULTURAL, & ECONOMIC ARTERY OF MIDCOAST MAINE.

By Pete Nichols, Executive Director

Photo: John Lichter  
Healthy alewife run

*Ideas, like large rivers, never have just one source. —Willy Ley*

THE 58-MILE-LONG SHEEPSCOT RIVER EMERGES IN THE LOW UPLANDS BETWEEN THE PENOBSCOT AND KENNEBEC VALLEYS AND FLOWS SOUTHWARD TO THE GULF OF MAINE. FROM WEST MONTVILLE, IT WIDENS INTO SHEEPSCOT POND IN PALERMO, THEN FALLS SWIFTLY OVER ROCKS AND GRAVEL THROUGH THE RURAL WHITEFIELD COUNTRYSIDE TO THE PICTURESQUE VILLAGE OF COOPERS MILLS. FURTHER DOWNSTREAM IT PASSES THROUGH HEAD TIDE TO JOIN WITH THE INCOMING TIDE, FLOWING BY ALNA AND MEANDERING THROUGH SHEEPSCOT VILLAGE, WITH ITS REVERSING FALLS, AND ON INTO NEWCASTLE AND WISCASSET. ON ITS WAY TO THE SEA, THE RIVER BROADENS AS IT PASSES WESTPORT ISLAND, SOUTHPORT, HENDRICKS HEAD LIGHT, AND BOOTHBAY.

At 320 square miles, the Sheepscot watershed contains more than 40 lakes and ponds and about 530 miles of streams; the West Branch of the Sheepscot, which enters in Whitefield, is approximately 15 miles long and holds Branch Pond in its headwaters; portions of 22 towns in four counties fall within the geography of the watershed. Maine's rivers tend to flow over bedrock, boulders, and coarse gravel, rather than fine materials. This makes most of Maine's rivers, including the Sheepscot, very different from rivers in other parts of the country.

The lower Sheepscot supports a lucrative lobster fishery and the river's tidal flats support a significant bait-worm industry. Oysters, marine invertebrates, and rare marine plants are also found in the estuary. Fish and invertebrates attract osprey, eagles, and other mammals that feed on the river's resources. The banks of the Sheepscot provide habitat for moose, white-tailed deer, fishers, otters, minks, and many smaller riparian mammals. The lower Sheepscot has been identified by the State as a Focus

Area of Ecological Significance. The Sheepscot offers such a variety of habitat that it is designated as an Outstanding River Segment and is also one of eight Maine rivers that provide essential spawning grounds for the endangered native Atlantic salmon. Numerous other fish, including striped bass, the endangered short nose sturgeon, American shad, and alewife also migrate between the Gulf of Maine and the Sheepscot River. Brook trout thrive in the river, as do sticklebacks, perch, and shiners.

This majestic river, which lies in the heart of the midcoast, has been and continues to be a vital artery for working waterfronts, critical habitat for sea-run fish species, and a source of recreation and reflection for the communities it has defined. However, like most things, the Sheepscot River and watershed are seeing the impacts of climate change, development pressures, and poorly operated logging and gravel industries. The Sheepscot is in need of care and nurturing to maintain the rich water quality and habitat for the Atlantic salmon, a keystone species in the watershed whose

presence acts as an indicator for the overall ecological integrity of the watershed, from water quality to habitat richness for all fish and wildlife. Midcoast Conservancy works every day to protect the river and the watershed from the impacts that may negatively affect the river and watershed. But, as with many things in life, it takes a community to heal a river—or more accurately in nature, provide opportunities for a river to heal itself. A river is a flowing representation of balance within an ecological system, and while our focus at Midcoast Conservancy is conservation, working landscapes and waterfronts are a vital part of that broader balance.

## SHEEPSCOT RIVER COLLABORATIVE

Midcoast Conservancy has worked with many partners over the years to open up barriers to fish passage, like the modifications of Head Tide Dam in Alna and Coopers Mills Dam, and soon a project at Branch Pond that will increase passage for Atlantic salmon and other species and allow them to return to spawning grounds that have been cut off to them for decades. And all of this hard work is paying off! Removing barriers to fish passage, engaging with landowners to conserve lands within the watershed for required cold-water habitat, and consistent water quality monitoring are the actions we must take to look at systems like the Sheepscot River and its watershed holistically, with ecology and community front of mind.

In the Fall of 2021, Midcoast Conservancy convened the first meeting of the Sheepscot River Collaborative, a multi-stakeholder group working to protect and restore Atlantic salmon and other key species through the creation and protection of high quality in-stream and land-based habitat. This group of State and Federal agencies, non-profits, and Sheepscot watershed residents is working together to ensure the Sheepscot

A river is a flowing representation of balance within an ecological system, and while our focus at Midcoast Conservancy is conservation, working landscapes and waterfronts are a vital part of that broader balance.

River remains the vital and wild river that it has been for millenia and continues to be a resource for all to enjoy. The Collaborative will approach the river and watershed as a whole; our priorities include:

#### LAND PROTECTION

Our land protection strategies allow us to work with landowners along the river to protect key habitat and provide vitally important shade, and work with our partners to restore in-stream habitat that keeps the river cool for fish species to thrive. As part of Midcoast Conservancy's 30x30 Initiative, the Collaborative will be engaging in a significant mapping exercise to identify the critical habitats within the watershed that are in need of protection in order to provide the conditions, such as cold water and forested shorelines, for the Atlantic salmon and other sea-run fish species to survive in this changing climate.



#### FISH PASSAGE

Building on the great success of the fish barrier removals at Head Tide Dam and the Coopers Mills Dam, the Sheepscot Collaborative is working to identify other fish barriers in the watershed that are in need of removal or repair to continue to provide clear passage to spawning grounds and enhance the river's capacity to restore itself.

#### WATER QUALITY MONITORING

For over 25 years, Midcoast Conservancy citizen scientists have been monitoring the water quality all along the river to identify any issues that may be impacting the river. These data help us better understand the condition of the river and develop strategies to address any issues that may arise for the benefit of public health and the overall health of the river. Working with our other partners within the Collaborative, we will be well-situated to identify trends throughout the watershed.



#### OYSTER RESTORATION

The Sheepscot River estuary provides critical habitat for Atlantic salmon, other sea-run species, native oysters, and migratory birds. Protecting the rich diversity of the estuary is a vital component of overall conservation strategies in the Sheepscot River watershed. In addition to the Heafitz Clean Water Demonstration Project, which reveals the incredible benefits of oysters to filter pollutants from the river, we will be creating an experimental oyster reef project to demonstrate the ability of oyster reefs—mimicking historic conditions—to provide coastal resilience and the protection of vital salt marsh habitat from sea level rise.

#### EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Knowledge is power, and in concert

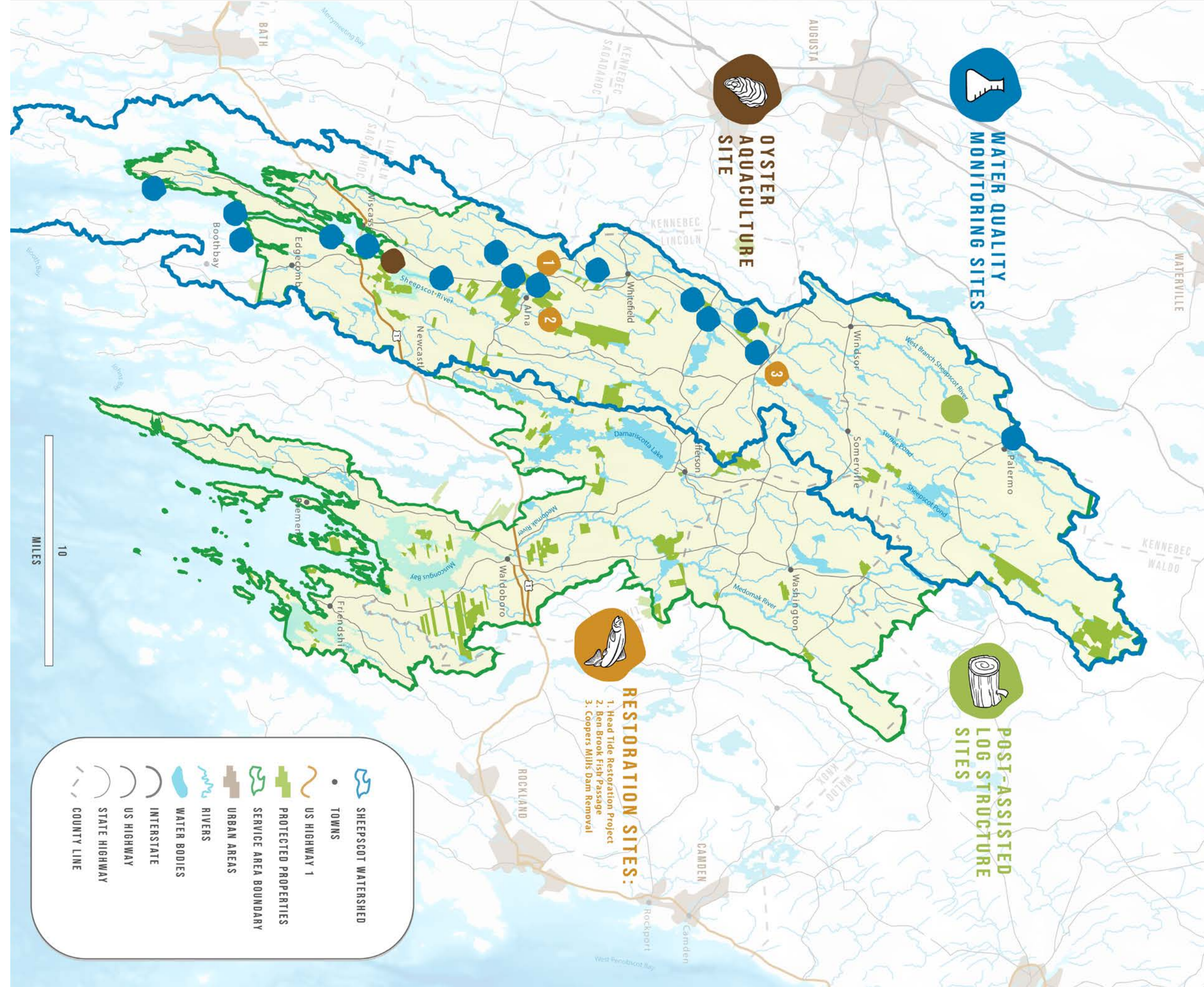
with the Collaborative, Midcoast Conservancy will be providing regular updates to the Sheepscot watershed community, informational town hall meetings, and direct land-owner engagement related to the importance of land protection to the overall health of the river. We will also be providing many opportunities for residents of the watershed to get out in the river to experience the beauty and bounty of the river and engage in the work of Midcoast Conservancy and the Sheepscot Collaborative through volunteer activities.

A river is the barometer of the health of an ecosystem, and a community. The Sheepscot River is no different. We are graced here in Midcoast Maine with an abundance of waterways that sustain us by providing clean waters, recreational opportunities, and a way of life. At Midcoast Conservancy, and with our partners of the Sheepscot Collaborative, we are dedicated to protecting the Sheepscot, and all of our waterways, for the good of the natural world and our communities. The quality of life here in the Midcoast is worth protecting and we urge you to join this journey with us.



Photos (L-R): Kayaker paddling through improved opening at Head Tide Dam in Alna (Jess Ruhlin Donohoe); Oyster project in the Sheepscot (Tim Trumbauer); Salmon egg planting in the Sheepscot (Tim Trumbauer)

MIDCOAST CONSERVANCY 290 Route One, Edgecomb, ME 04556 207.389.5150 info@midcoastconservancy.org



THE SHEEPSCOT RIVER COLLABORATIVE



## FILTER-FEEDING SUPERHEROES

By Melissa Cote, Sheepscot River Watershed Manager

FOUR YEARS AFTER ITS INCEPTION, THE HEAFITZ DEMONSTRATION OYSTER PROJECT HAS FINALLY PRODUCED MARKET-SIZED OYSTERS; THESE BRINY FILTER-FEEDERS ARE READY FOR EATING AND WE CAN'T WAIT TO SHARE THEM WITH YOU! WITH ASSISTANCE FROM GLIDDEN POINT OYSTER FARM, HARVESTING WILL BEGIN THIS JUNE AFTER WE LIFT THE OYSTER CAGES OFF THE BOTTOM OF THE SHEEPSCOT RIVER WHERE THEY'VE BEEN OVERWINTERING. LOOKING FORWARD, WE ARE WORKING ON EXPANDING OUR AQUACULTURE OPERATION TO PRODUCE MORE OYSTERS FOR CONSUMPTION, AND TO CONSTRUCT AN OYSTER REEF AND MONITOR ITS BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE ON THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT.

As a part of our coastal resiliency initiative, we hope to demonstrate how building an oyster reef in the Sheepscot River can improve water quality for aquaculture and estuarine habitat, protect the shoreline from

erosion and storm surge, and provide a complex habitat for many marine organisms. Once the reef is established, we seek to provide guidance to other organizations on how to construct their own oyster reefs, and to educate our

community about oysters' ecological and economic value.

Oyster reefs provide myriad water quality benefits. These filter-feeding superheroes remove bacteria, phytoplankton, and suspended particles from the water. As a result, they improve water clarity and dissolved oxygen, and remove excess nutrients. An adult oyster can filter 50 gallons of water a day, so one acre of oysters can filter more than 4 billion gallons of water each year. Oysters provide cleaner, clearer water, benefitting other marine organisms such as eelgrass beds, which are important nurseries for many invertebrates, including lobsters—Maine's most valuable commercial fishery. Much like coral reefs, oyster reefs arm the shoreline against storm surge and erosion by dampening wave energy. This is especially important now due to an increase in storm intensity and frequency resulting from climate change.

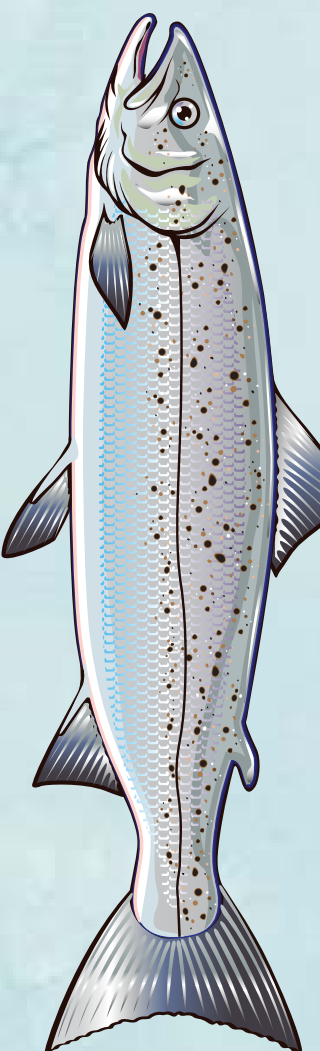
Our oyster reef project aims to mitigate the effects of climate change but will also be enhanced by its effects—specifically warming waters. Historically, oysters in Maine occurred naturally in only a few locations, including the Sheepscot River. Wild populations thrived when a lumber mill dam and tidal gate were constructed near Reversing Falls, causing the water behind the tide gate to warm and bolster natural spawning. After the dam and tidal gate were removed, the water temperature dropped and the oyster population declined. Water temperatures in the Gulf of Maine are increasing due to climate change, promoting natural spawning and faster oyster growth.

At Midcoast Conservancy we're excited about oysters, not only because they're delicious and help us connect to the Sheepscot River but also because of their potential in helping us mitigate the effects of climate change.

Photo: Kelsey Gayle  
Sheepscot River Oysters are grown by Heafitz Farms in collaboration with Glidden Point and Midcoast Conservancy in the Sheepscot River.

## ATLANTIC SALMON

*Salmo salar*



ALSO KNOWN AS: SEA RUN SALMON, KELTIS, BLACK SALMON

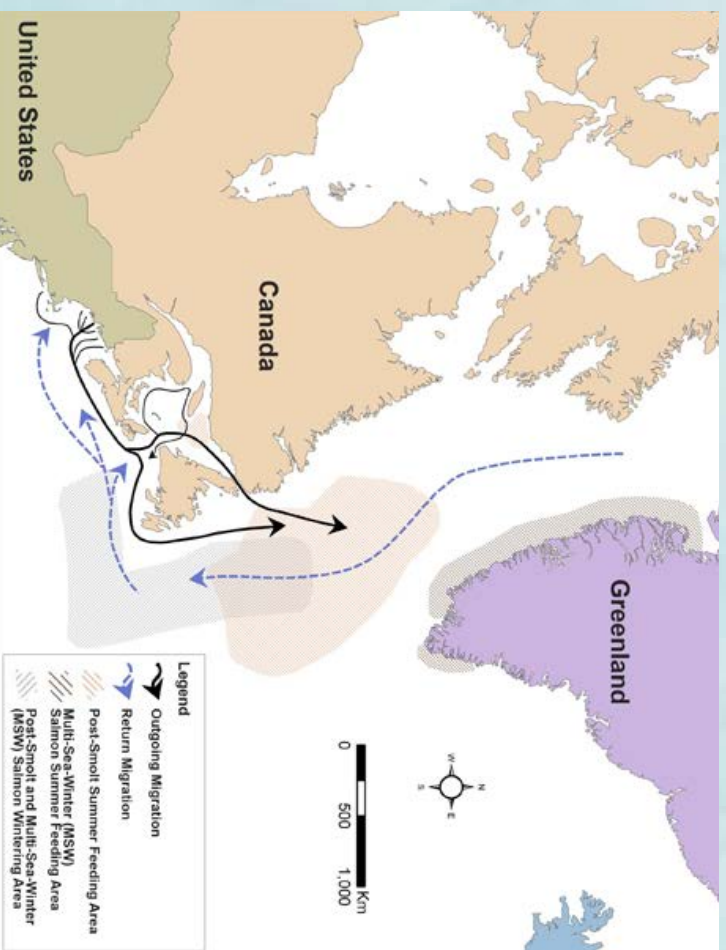


Image source: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/atlantic-salmon>

### QUICK FACTS!

**Protected Status:** ESA Endangered | Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment  
**Weight:** Average 8 to 12 pounds but may reach 30 pounds  
**Life Span:** 3 to 7 years  
**Length:** Adults average 28 to 30 inches  
**Threats:** Climate Change, Dams and culverts that block or impede access to habitats, Foreign fisheries, Habitat degradation, Marine survival  
**Region:** New England/Mid-Atlantic

### POPULATION?

**Historic Estimate of Annual Returns to US Rivers:** 300,000 - 500,000  
**Current (2019) Estimate of Annual Returns to US Rivers:** 1,528

**In the United States, Atlantic salmon were once native to almost every river north of the Hudson River.** Due to the effects of industrial and agricultural development (including habitat destruction, dams, and historic overfishing), most populations native to New England were eradicated. Now, the only native populations of Atlantic salmon in the United States are found in Maine, including the Sheepscot River.<sup>1</sup>

### SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS?

- Atlantic salmon are anadromous — they leave the ocean to return to freshwater streams and rivers to breed.
- Females lay an average of 7,500 eggs in gravel nests, called redds.
- Eggs incubate slowly due to cold winter water temperatures. About 9 to 20 percent of the eggs survive to the fry stage.
- Fry remain buried in the gravel for about 6 weeks and emerge in mid-May.
- They quickly disperse from the redds and develop camouflaging stripes along their sides, entering the parr stage.
- Parr eventually undergo a physiological transformation called smoltification that prepares them for life in a marine habitat. During smoltification, fish imprint on the chemical nature of the stream or river to enable them to find their way back to where they were born. After smoltification is complete in the spring, smolts migrate to the ocean to grow, feed, and mature.
- Unlike the Pacific salmon species, Atlantic salmon do not die after spawning, and adults can repeat the breeding cycle.
- Juvenile Atlantic salmon mostly prey on invertebrates and terrestrial insects while in freshwater and on amphipods (small, shrimp-like crustaceans), krill, and fishes while at sea.
- Larger adult Atlantic salmon mainly prey on fish such as Atlantic herring, alewife, rainbow smelt, capelin, mummichogs, sand lances, flatfish, and small Atlantic mackerel.
- Birds, marine mammals, and fish prey on Atlantic salmon.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Support LD 489, the Pine Tree Amendment, to secure a healthy environment for Atlantic salmon and all Maine species.
- Follow all local fishing regulations.
- Plant, maintain, and protect critical habitat and native plant buffers - naturalized areas help reduce, cool, and clean runoff from rainwater even if you don't live directly on a river.
- Support the work of Midcoast Conservancy, our partners, and other organizations working to save the Atlantic salmon and sea-run fish.



Representatives of Midcoast Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy helped the Maine Department of Marine Resources plant approximately 40,000 salmon eggs in the upper Sheepscot River. Only a few are expected to survive long enough to return as breeding adults.



Midcoast Conservancy and partners through the Sheepscot River Collaborative are restoring Atlantic salmon populations through many conservation projects both in the river and on the surrounding land.



When we protect and restore Atlantic salmon habitat, the resulting clean, cold, free-flowing waters benefit overall river ecology, allowing other species, including brook trout, alewives, and even us humans to thrive.

—MELISSA COTE  
 Midcoast Conservancy's  
 Sheepscot River Watershed Manager

# REWILDING THE MIDCOAST

By Tim Trumbauer  
Director of Water & Communications

OVER THE COURSE OF FIVE YEARS, I CONVERTED A TWO-ACRE PARCEL OF GRASS LAWN TO A NATIVE PLANT MEADOW. WHILE I'D LOVE TO REGALE YOU WITH STORIES ABOUT MY TIRELESS EFFORTS, MY GRIT, AND MY INGENUITY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS MONUMENTAL FEAT, THE TRUTH IS I JUST STOPPED MOWING. IN THE FIRST SEASON, A FEW NATIVE GRASSES AND WILDFLOWERS POPPED UP. TO MY GREAT FORTUNE, A HEALTHY NATIVE SEED BANK WAS PATIENTLY WAITING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE SPARED FROM THE WEEKLY SHAVING OF THE MOWER.

As our meadow flourished we did have to do the occasional light maintenance. For example, often accompanied by my kids (the “weed warriors”), we would remove a pesky multi-flora rose or Bradford pear, but overall our new native meadow flourished on its own. Almost immediately, what was once a sterile monoculture lacking in any biodiversity became a bustling bonanza of life... We had dragonflies, hummingbirds, monarch butterflies, and swarming tree swallows each evening. A great horned owl pair even approved so much that they nested in a towering pine overlooking the meadow.

**SO WHAT EXACTLY IS REWILDING?** Our Rewilding the Midcoast Program seeks to create habitat in balance with nature at any scale. We do so through five primary goals: education and outreach, creation of native habitat, reduction of runoff, removal of invasive

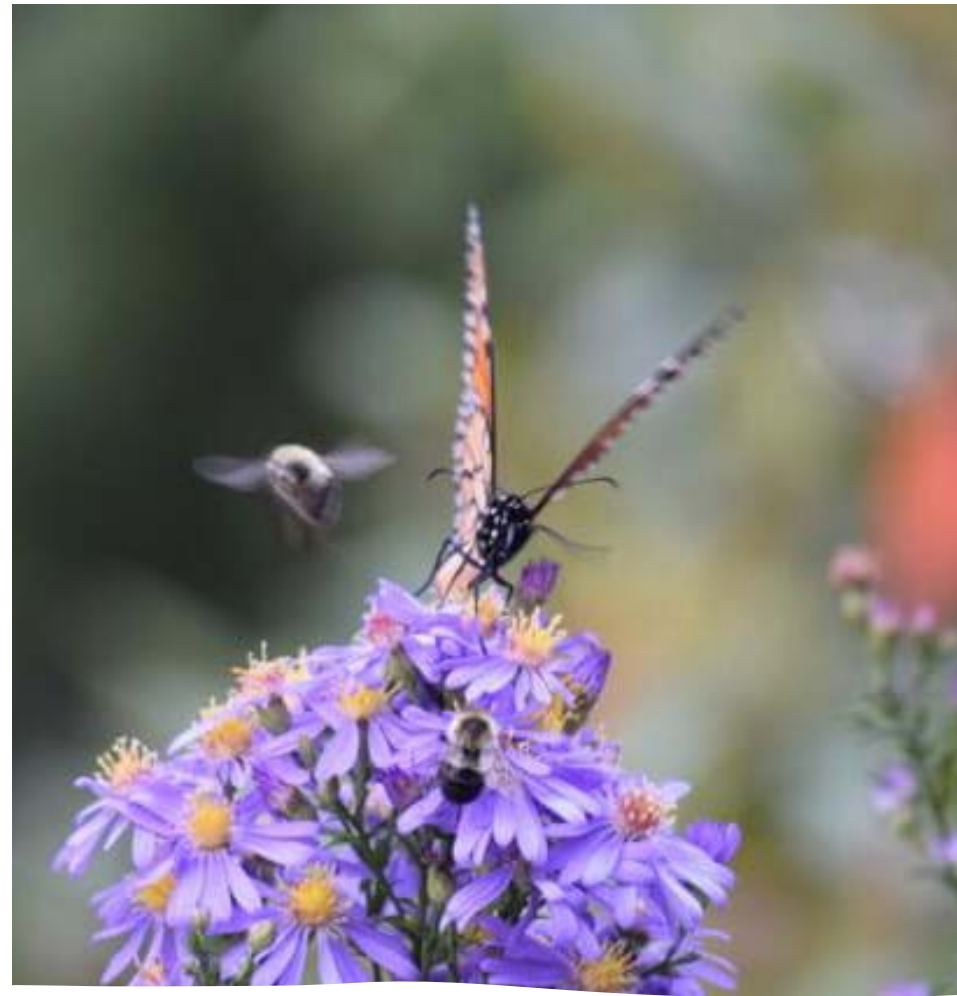


Photo: Lucy Birkett

species, and reduction of chemical use. Natural, native landscapes provide so many benefits. To name a few: increased overall resiliency through biodiversity; food and shelter for insects, birds, and other local species; deep roots of native plants that hold soil in place and help filter runoff; and increased carbon storage (compared to lawns) to combat climate change. But perhaps most importantly, rewilding was good for me. In creating my meadow, I had done something that was both good and beautiful. Rewilding is about creating a hopeful future and empowering each of us to make changes that matter!

In this first season of Rewilding the Midcoast, we are setting some achievable goals. We will be hosting a series of educational events virtually and in person, including a native plant sale, throughout the season to educate property owners about the best rewild-

ing practices. We are also creating demonstration sites, starting with our office in Edgecomb. We have a plan to remove invasive species, replace lawn with native perennial gardens, and plant a few larger native shrubs and trees.

Check <https://bit.ly/3EUjNdc> for more information about our Rewilding the Midcoast program and a list of current rewilding events.

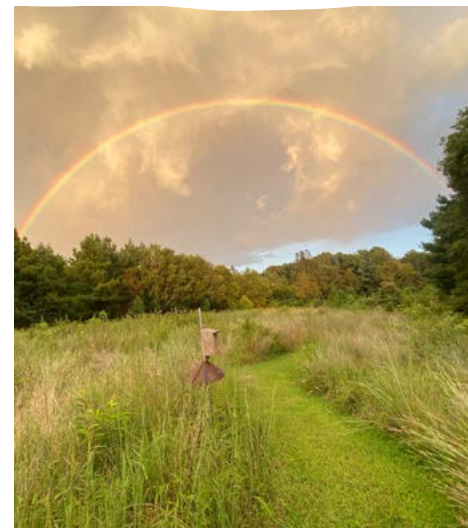


Photo: Tim Trumbauer

## PLANNING FOR WHEN, NOT IF

By Patricia Nease, Damariscotta Lake Watershed Manager

DAMARISCOTTA LAKE IS A RARE SUCCESS STORY FOR INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS. WHEN AN INVASIVE PLANT IS INTRODUCED TO A WATERBODY THE LIKELIHOOD OF ERADICATION IS SLIM. HYDRILLA, A HIGHLY INVASIVE SPECIES, WAS INTRODUCED TO DAMARISCOTTA LAKE AND FIRST IDENTIFIED IN 2009. AFTER MANY, MANY, HOURS OF EFFORT MANAGING THE INFESTATION HYDRILLA HASN'T BEEN SEEN IN FIVE YEARS. AS A RESULT OF THIS EFFORT DAMARISCOTTA LAKE IS BEING TAKEN OFF THE INFESTATION LIST. THIS IS CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION, OF COURSE, BUT IS NOT A SIGN THAT WE CAN EASE UP ON OUR INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANT EFFORTS. DAMARISCOTTA LAKE, AND ALL WATERBODIES IN OUR SERVICE AREA, ARE STILL AT RISK FOR INTRODUCTION OF AN INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANT.

In 2019 (updated from 2004 and 2017 iterations) DEP conducted a vulnerability analysis of Maine Lakes for infestation. This analysis took into account nine variables about each lake, which were grouped into three categories: volume of use, proximity to infestation, and potential for colonization. Each variable was weighted based on its impact to infestation vulnerability, with the highest weighted factors being connectivity to infested waterbody, boat access, proximity to infested waterbody, and population within 30km of the waterbody. Damariscotta Lake was categorized as “highly vulnerable.” Even after being removed from the infested lake list, Damariscotta Lake remains highly vulnerable due to its good public access, high nearby population, and morphological features that are beneficial for aquatic plant growth. As such, we must remain dedicated to our preventative measures.

Preventative measures are not only significantly less costly than management of an infestation, they also are an important component of early

detection and successful management or eradication. This was the case with Damariscotta Lake: Dick Butterfield's early detection led to a rapid response that eventually resulted in eradication of hydrilla. Continued monitoring programs, like Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP), are critical to keep Damariscotta Lake free from invasive aquatics. Without Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) and IPP, Damariscotta Lake could easily rejoin the list of infested waters. This is why it is so important to continue our IPP and CBI programs while developing plans for an infestation response.



Photo: Patricia patrolling for invasives in Davis Stream

### QUICK FACTS:

1219

Courtesy boat inspections conducted at the Bunker Hill & Vannah Road launches last summer

57.75%

of those inspections were from people who had last been in Damariscotta Lake

75

invasive aquatic plants were removed from boats through inspections, across all CBI programs

~\$1 MILLION

was spent on invasive aquatic plant management in the State last year

\$46,632

Average spent per infestation per year

Wellspring Circle Donors

Keystone: Support of \$10,000+

Aldermere Foundation Anonymous Broad Reach Fund of the Maine Community Foundation Davis Conservation Foundation Chuck and Meg Dinsmore Elmina B. Sewall Foundation Georgiana Evans Jordan Fairman and Adrien Rothschild Fields Pond Foundation	Karen Tulle Frazer and Robert Bryan Lewis and Ina Heafitz Paul and Maureen Hoffman Horizon Foundation Jane's Trust Bambi Jones and Tracy Moskovitz Laetitia Kieffer and Todd Allison Kieve Wavus Education, Inc. Jim MacDougall Joseph and Mary Fiore Family Foundation	Maine Coast Heritage Trust Maine Community Foundation Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Brian McDougall Susan and John Morris Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust Lisa Newcomb Onion Foundation Patagonia Environmental Grants Quimby Family Foundation Mary Kate and Bob Reny	Hugh Riddleberger and Louise McIlhenny Honor and Sandy Sage Schwab Charitable David and Paula Swetland Anna Marie and John E. Thron Fund of the Maine Community Foundation Mary Eliza Wengren Wescustogo Foundation
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Guardian: Support of \$5,000–\$9,999

Robert and Sally Butler David Wright and Carole Cifrino Alnoba Cilley Cribstone Capital Management, LLC Leonard Duffy* Elizabeth Ann Leach Foundation Eleanor Goldberg and Malcolm Burson	Betsey B. Hall Bob and Priscilla Horst Laurie Howarth and William Chapman Berry Jones Maine Audubon Maine Department of Environmental Protection Maine Farmland Trust	Margaret E Burnham Charitable Trust Del Merritt Edgar Moody Buck O'Herin National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Debra and Edward Pentaleri William and Judith Silver	Joanne and Robert Steneck George and Holly Stone Priscilla and William Watson John Winslow
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Steward: Support of \$2,500–\$4,999

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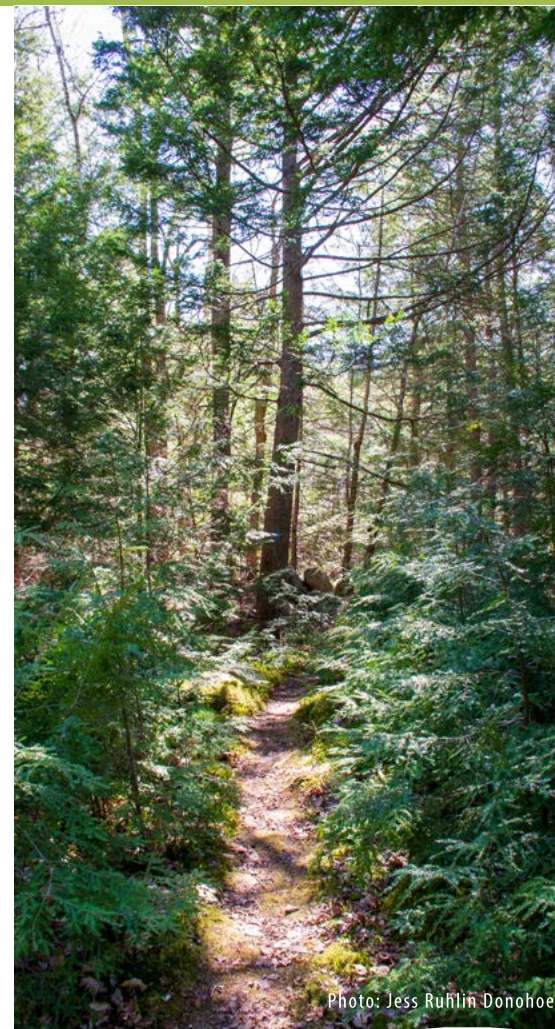


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Warm summer sun,  
 Shine kindly here,  
 Warm southern wind,  
 Blow softly here.  
 Green sod above,  
 Lie light, lie light.  
 Good night, dear heart,  
 Good night, good night.  
 — Walt Whitman

Tribute Gifts

September 17, 2021 to March 24, 2022

Honorary Gifts

**In Honor of Ashley Baldwin and Kyle Markmann**

Lorraine and Peter Baldwin

**In Honor of Eleanor Breckenridge**

Alan Breckenridge

**In Honor of Ruby and Hart Campbell**

Colin Campbell

**In Honor of Dana Getchell**

Maribeth and Bart Hammer

**In Honor of Gordon and Gladys Landon**

Mark Wallner

**In Honor of Elaine Lazarus**

Margery Lazarus

**In Honor of Margery Lazarus**

Elaine Lazarus

**In Honor Midcoast Conservancy's Amazing Staff**

Jody Jones and Jack Witham

**In Honor of Nate and Sadie Leigh**

Clark and Beverly Hering

**In Honor of Jessie McCabe**

Beth McCabe

**In Honor of Molly McCabe**

Terry and Moira McCabe

**In Honor of Terry McCabe**

Beth McCabe

**In Honor of Susan Russell and her Garage-mahal**

Maranda Nemeth

**In Honor of Melliss K. Swenson**

Lisa Williams

**In Honor of Mari Tiwari**

Elizabeth Flanagan

**In Honor of Marty Welt**

Jessica Welt-Betensky

**In Honor of Kirk F. White**

Anonymous

**In Honor of Amanda Widing**

Kathleen Welter

Memorial Gifts

**In Memory of Roland S. Barth**

Davies Allan and Nancy Shaul  
 Meg and Victor Atkins  
 John and Maggie Atwood  
 Ashley Baldwin and Kyle Markmann  
 Joseph Barth and Doreen Conboy  
 Seth Bolduc and Lucy Atkins  
 David and Gail Buczkowski  
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 Alnoba Cilley  
 Vickery Cleaves and Paul Lazarus  
 John Conboy  
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 Elizabeth and Gordon Davis  
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 Deborah Hughes and William Wood  
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 Judy Tunkle  
 Bernard van der Hoeven  
 David and Kathryn Villano  
 David Wright and Carole Cifrino  
 Callie Wronker and Steven Urkowitz

Memorial Gifts continued...



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**In Memory of Harlan Avery Bond**  
Michael Benton

**In Memory of David Boring**  
Marty and Betty Welt

**In Memory of Paul Daiute**  
Mark Johnston

**In Memory of Nancy Ellis Duffy**  
Leonard Duffy  
Brenda Grosse Goth  
Paula and John Hall  
Spring River Horticulture  
Janice and Anthony Kilburn  
Marie Martin  
Marilyn and Glenn Morus  
Sandy and Marc Paulsen  
Lynne Petrillo  
Mary Sheldon  
Martha Sinclair

**In Memory of Mary Louise Faunce**  
Kathleen Wilson and Gretchen Jacobs

**In Memory of Sara "Sally" Catherine Hilton**  
Gretchen Driscoll  
Susan Frawley  
Herb Luther  
Erin and Michael Rodrigues

**In Memory of Faith Howland**  
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**In Memory of Bill and Margaret Judd**  
Paul and Diana Stevens

**In Memory of Lois A. Lindell**  
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**In Memory of Margaret "Peggy" Lord**  
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Barbara Saunders  
Claire and Eric Scott  
Beverly and Ron Smith  
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**In Memory of Frances "Penny" Mistina**  
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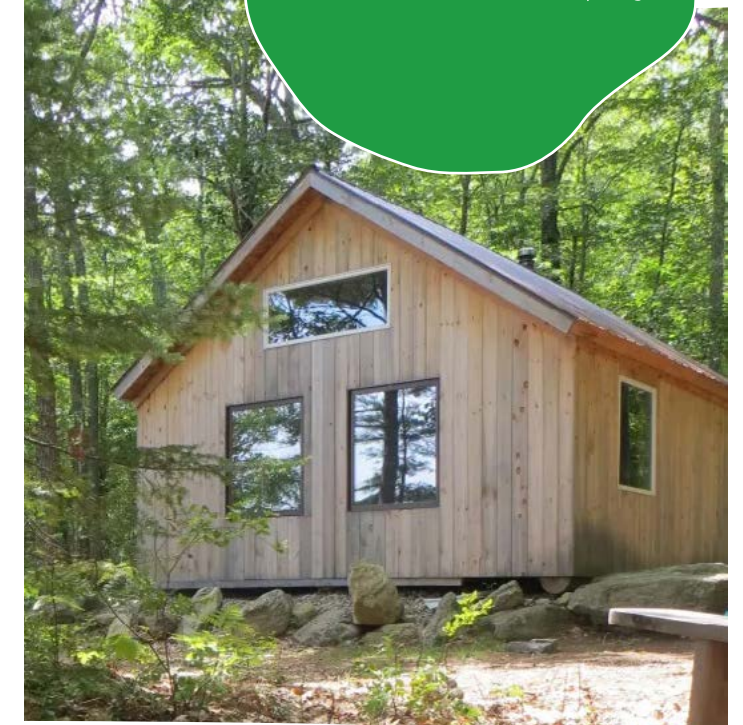
**In Memory of Cliff Russell**  
Sheila Blair  
Mary Gittings Cronin  
Honor and Sandy Sage  
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**In Memory of Richard "Ted" Wengren**  
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# YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS!

HOW DOES THE WORK OF CARING FOR HEALTHY LANDS, HEALTHY WATERS, AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES ACROSS MIDCOAST MAINE HAPPEN? WITH YOUR SUPPORT!

Ready to join the fun?  
Let Ali know at  
[ali@midcoastconservancy.org](mailto:ali@midcoastconservancy.org).



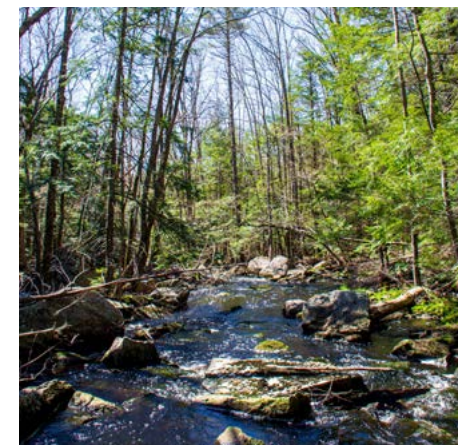
## VOLUNTEER

Lend your time and talent to any of the myriad volunteer opportunities! Our trail crews do the important work of keeping our preserves well maintained, water quality monitors help us keep our rivers and lakes clean, and our invasive plant teams tackle terrestrial invaders. Many hands make light work at our events, which include our Toast to the Midcoast fundraisers, Live Edge music festival, Race Through the Woods trail race and more!

## MEMBERSHIP

Join Midcoast Conservancy to provide monthly or annual donations and enjoy the benefits of membership, including regular communications, The Drift publication twice a year, discounts on workshops and courses, and a whopping 40% off huts and the yurt at Hidden Valley Nature Center!

Visit <https://bit.ly/303qObt> to become a member today!



## WHERE IN THE MIDCOAST?

Do you recognize this beautiful spot? Need a hint? It's next to a newly-conserved property where our Earth Day clean-up recovered over 400 tires in one long, volunteer-powered day! Go to the Newsroom on the website to read about the effort, and get more clues about where this photo was taken. Email [Ali@midcoastconservancy.org](mailto:Ali@midcoastconservancy.org) with your guess, and feel free to share a photo of a mystery spot that we might use to stump future readers!



MIDCOAST  
CONSERVANCY

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PO Box 439  
Edgecomb, ME 04556  
[www.midcoastconservancy.org](http://www.midcoastconservancy.org)

Cover Photo: Sheepscot River in Sheepscot Village  
Photographer: Leah Sprague