



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit 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 by FOMB seasonally and is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay.

For more information, contact:

Dup Crosson
Coordinator/Organizer
207-666-1118
fomb@comcast.net



BAY DAY REFLECTIONS:
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ANNOUNCING WINTER SPEAKER SERIES 2013-2014

All events are at 7:00PM at Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick, unless noted.

- OCTOBER 9:** *Take Back Your Power*— ME Film Premiere
Directed by Josh del Sol
- NOVEMBER 13:** **Col. John Allen: Revolutionary War Hero**
Chris Groden, Historian (Bridge Academy, Dresden)
- DECEMBER 11:** **A River Lost & Found: The Androscoggin in Time and Place**
Mike Kolster, Photographer, & Matt Klinge, Environmental Historian (Bowdoinham Town Offices)
- JANUARY 8:** **The Swordfish Hunters**
Bruce Bourque, Archaeologist, Maine State Museum
Annual Board Meeting and Potluck: 6:00PM, Public welcome!
(Cram Alumni Hall, Bowdoin College)
- FEBRUARY 12:** **Mining in Maine: Open for Business?**
Pete Didisheim, NRCM
- MARCH 12:** **Tar Sands Oil: Alberta to Androscoggin**
Bob Klotz, 350maine.org
- APRIL 9:** **Wind Over Wings – Raptor Rehab**
Hope Douglass, Wildlife Rehabilitator
- MAY 14:** **Forestry in Maine: State and Local Perspectives**
Kevin Doran, Natural Science Educator, MFS, and Jack Witham, Associate Scientist, Holt Research Forest (Bath City Hall)

Don't forget: All
Speaker Series
events are FREE!



FOMB WELCOMES NEW ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR/ORGANIZER

My name's Dup Crosson, and I'm pleased to be the most recent addition to Friends of Merrymeeting Bay as their new Coordinator/Organizer. Although I grew up right on the Androscoggin River in Topsham, it's taken me 10 years to cycle through school and many travels to return to the Midcoast area.

In my youth, the lower Androscoggin and Merrymeeting Bay served as my classroom, playground, and laboratory. My father is an avid fisherman and fostered a love of water between my brother and I from an early age, and living directly on the river allowed us to swim and fish to our heart's content. I graduated from Mt. Ararat in 2003 and settled in Asheville, NC. Being an avid songwriter and performer, I initially studied music at the University of North Carolina–Asheville, but soon devoted my studies to environmental work after doing a short fundraising stint with MASSPIRG in Boston, MA. It was there that my passion for activism was sparked.

In Asheville, I found a loving community of artists and activists which proved too good to leave for many years, despite my homesickness for Maine. After graduating with a B.S. in Environmental Management in 2008, I spent several years working at Mountain Glass Arts and focusing on my musical project, Saint Solitude, through the recording of several albums and touring the U.S. with my trusty (and now two-tone) Saturn.

I returned to Maine in 2012, coming back to my roots to reinvigorate my interest in land and water conservation. During this search, I was a top fundraiser for the Yes On 1 campaign and other Equality Maine issues. I also volunteered at Portland Trails and tabled at events for Food and Water Watch and 350.org. After a long search of applying to land trusts and nonprofits across the state, I couldn't be happier to have landed a position with FOMB working to protect my homeland and home waters. As the new contact for the organization, I'm ecstatic to put my grassroots fundraising and organizing skills to work while learning more about the advocacy and policy development that drives our mission. I'm excited to meet the members of our community and network with professionals and lawmakers to bridge new connections for the future.

As I reconnect with the Bay area again, you'll find me up and down the Coast on a kayak or canoe, fishing rod in hand, and probably ready for a swim. I hope to meet you all soon!

HISTORIC FILM PREMIERES AT FOMB WINTER SPEAKER SERIES

Our 17th annual Winter Speaker Series got off to a great start on October 9th with the Maine premiere of the newly released feature film, *Take Back Your Power*, presented in cooperation with the Maine Coalition to Stop Smart Meters. The thought-provoking film investigates major issues associated with smart meters including health and safety, privacy, cyber-security, fires, and over-billing, and was produced and directed by independent Vancouver filmmaker Josh del Sol.

Why should this matter to FOMB members? Smart meters are radio-frequency (RF) radiation emitting devices whose mandated and untested deployment are unprecedented. Many compare our time lag in knowledge of adverse RF effects to the time it took to understand the dangers of tobacco smoke and asbestos. An increasing population of individuals sensitive to RF is emerging (our coal-mine canaries?) as is a population of EMF/RF refugees. These folks must seek out, with increasing difficulty, areas devoid of or with minimal levels of *electro smog*, where they might live without pain or disability.

Not only does RF microwave radiation from meters affect the health of us all, but it also affects wildlife, and in some cases, vegetation. FOMB has a long history of activism on toxics issues and a long history of bringing lesser known, but nevertheless important issues to the attention of our membership. Many consider this the most critical toxics issue of our time. Not since the aerial spraying of DDT has there been such a massive deployment of a toxic substance. Both DDT and low level RF radiation are classified by the World Health Organization as Class 2B possible carcinogens.



"A so-called 'smart grid' that is as vulnerable as what we've got is not smart at all. It's a really, really stupid grid." - Former CIA Director James Woolsey

WATER QUALITY UPDATE

Another season of water monitoring has been completed at various points in and around the Bay area. Without dedicated volunteers rising early in the morning and taking careful measurements, it couldn't happen.

Thanks to: Tom Walling, Andrew Fiori, Dave Whittlesey, Helen Watts, Ed Friedman, Sarah Cowperthwaite, Kathleen McGee, Bill Milam, Kathie Duncan, Melinda and Ken Emerson, Ed Benedikt and Ted Wolfe. In the lab, data were analyzed by Kermit Smyth, Ed Friedman, Jeff Sebell and Ruth Innes.

Thanks to John Lichter at Bowdoin College for the lab space, and to Patagonia-Freeport for funding Androscoggin upgrade efforts. Special thanks to Kathleen McGee and Kermit Smyth for coordinating this year's efforts and to Sarah Cowperthwaite and Ruth Innes who covered for Ed and Kathleen much of the summer.



Kermit Smyth gets ready to grab a newly-sealed *E. coli* sample ready for incubation. Photo: Ed Friedman.

Around the world, corporate utilities and governments are racing to replace electricity, gas, and water meters with new-generation surveillance-capable 'smart' meters, quietly spending billions in taxpayer funds in the process. But at what cost to human rights, finances, security, and health? With compelling insight from insiders, government representatives, whistle-blowers, lawyers, doctors, and environmentalists, *Take Back Your Power* investigates claimed benefits and emerging risks of this ubiquitous 'smart' grid program affecting all of us in Maine.

What del Sol uncovers surprises, unsettles and inspires. After two years of interviews and post-production, *Take Back Your Power* is a documentary film that both deeply shocks and inspires audiences. The issues uncovered here are of critical importance, directly affecting our lives, wallets, privacy, health, security, and even basic rights to life. An array of experts raise credible questions about a widespread risk to public health, quite possibly covered up intentionally by utility and telecommunication companies. The accelerated unveiling of truth is activating people everywhere, who are asking questions such as, "What's truly going on here?" and "What can we do?" In making this film, del Sol and his partners found firsthand this is a *uniting* issue, where people from all walks of life agree something dangerous is happening. In this film, it's exposed for the first time.

Filmmaker del Sol has a vision for a more equitable and transparent social structure, with foundational values which honor the sanctity of life and human rights. Josh finds inspiration in those of courage who speak truth to power, from a place of non-violence and vision, laying the foundation for necessary solutions.

FOMB will distribute the film to local libraries in the next month or so. For more information, visit www.takebackyourpower.net and www.mainecoalitiontostopsmartmeters.org

ATLANTIC SALMON: LEGAL UPDATE

By virtue of inclusion in the Kennebec Hydro Developers Group agreement signed at the removal of Edwards Dam, language persists, enforceable under the Clean Water Act, prohibiting adult salmon and shad in lower Kennebec dam impoundments until site-specific turbine mortality studies have been completed. Which they have not. While Judge Singal ruled against our ESA claim applying to both the Androscoggin and Kennebec, the Kennebec claim persists under the CWA. One of our attorneys provides this brief update:

"Our initial briefings in the appeals of the NextEra (now Brookfield) and Brookfield Clean Water Act cases were completed on September 9th. The Defendants submitted their answering brief on October 9th. We will be filing one more brief by October 23rd to respond to points made by Defendants in their brief. All sides asked for oral argument, but the Appeals Court won't let us know about that until after October 23rd. It's impossible to predict when the Court of Appeals will render a decision on the appeals." - David Nicholas, Esq., 10/10/13

BAY DAY REFLECTIONS AND IMAGES by Greg Emerson, Woolwich Central Teacher

First of all, I would like to extend our thanks to the members of the Friends of Merrymeeting Bay for not only the work they do to protect this rare and precious ecosystem in our backyard, but also for putting on this day, and even covering the cost of the bus transportation (not to mention the free towing service out of the mud!) Dave Whittlesey was our guide for the day and he mixed history, culture, and facts with humor in escorting us from activity to activity.

I would be remiss if I did not take the time to recognize the *Above and Beyond Award* for the chaperones from our class, including Mr. Pesce, Mrs. Ryan, and Mrs. Behnke. They were awesome and braved the back of the bus, which I admit I do not have the stomach for.

It was an interesting day for me. There was a sort of timeline of my life on those Bowdoinham fields. First there was our guide, Mr. Whittlesey, who was an English teacher and hockey coach when I was in high school. Although I did not have any of his classes, I clearly remember him as a creative and popular educator.

Next came the instructor for the edible plants, which you will read about below in the student narratives. Jason Chandler was a talented student in my sixth grade class 17 years ago. Now he is a talented teacher.

And of course when I gazed all around me I could see my current batch of talented students. I mused with some of them if I would bring a future class to a session that they would be leading. They started doing the math and then they seemed a little skeptical at that prospect.

We traveled to Bowdoinham and Bay Day was held at the Merrymeeting Bay Wildlife Management Area at the end of the Wildes Road. There were 12 stations with a variety of topics and activities. The common themes were:

- The Merrymeeting Bay area is a rare and vulnerable resource.
- There are humans and other living creatures that share the space in a variety of ways.
- The resource needs to be protected for it to thrive and survive.
- Part of stewardship of the bay area includes the involvement and education of the youth to help carry this work into the future.

Prior to leaving I assigned a writing piece that blended the format we have been working on for constructed responses with our adventure for the day. The stage was set for some great

writing. Here are a few pieces (edited and spell-checked by Greg Emerson).



Trying a natural salad.

Mud Mapping

by C.A.

The most interesting experience was Mud Mapping. It was called mud mapping because you got to put the labels together and it made a big map with mud. You had to outline the spaces and places where you had to paint the mud. It was really dirty. The mud was really cold and it was really raining. It was fun and I really liked it. It was an interesting experience.

Wild Plants and Fire-starting

by L.P.

The most interesting experience I had at Bay Day was wild plants and fire-starting. First, we tried eating some really tasty plants that I did not know were edible! Some of the plants tasted really good. Then we picked milkweed plants to spread milkweed seeds so there would be lots of milkweed. We iced lots of milkweed and ran through the field letting them fly through the wind. Now, that was fun!

Finally, we started searching for wild carrots. Now most people would say, "That's boring!" Well, boy, are they wrong. You want to know why? Well I will tell you. We would get down on our knees and actually search the ground for carrots. Once we found carrots we would go to the pond and wash them off so they were not dirty when we ate them. They were really good!

You're not going to believe what we did next! We made a fire! First, we had to gather dead grass, leaves, and even milkweed seeds. Jason (our leader) used a bow to create the fire! Then



Hiding behind Red Clover!

we saw smoke! Then he picked up the burning pile with bare hands! Then we saw a small flame, but it started to rain! Not pouring, but enough to put out a flame. Sadly, we did not have enough time to make another one.

Well, now you know just one of the three interesting events I was included in on Bay Day.

Wild Plants and Fire Starting

by A.V/D.W.

The most interesting experience that I thought was the wild plants and fire starting. I loved when we got to try all kinds of plants that we didn't know we could eat. I thought that was awesome. I also loved how we got to learn how to start a fire. Some people knew how to start a fire but I didn't so I loved it. I even liked when we got to pull wild carrots out of the ground. I had a really good time at Bay Day. All of the people were really nice and I hope we can go again sometime.

Duck Dog

by G.F.

The most interesting experience that I had at Bay Day was the duck dog. What I thought was interesting about it was that they taught me about a little bit of Merrymeeting Bay and also hunting ducks with the retrievers Lark and Katie.

I got to hear what a starting pistol sounds like (Bill used blanks). I also got to carry a duck around for Lark to track its



Using farm-raised ducks for training of conservation canines.

scent. He told us how many ducks we can shoot a day, which is four. Did you know that six rivers feed into the bay? Their names are the Kennebec, Androscoggin, Muddy, Cathance, Abagadasset (the Abby) and the Eastern. And that was what I thought was interesting about Bay Day!

BAY DAY THANKS

As always, we couldn't have had such a successful day without our dedicated volunteers. Thanks to our Guides Tom Weddle, Steve Eagles, Megan McCuller, Kathleen McGee, Kent Cooper, Jason Chandler, Nate Gray, Betsy Steen, Steve Musica, Leslie Anderson, Anne Hammond, Liz Handlewich, Bill Clark, Ryan Dougherty, Kerry Hardy, Helen Watts, Tobey Bonney and Craig King.

And to our Chaperones Tom Hughes, David Whittlesey, Tina Goodman, Dana Cary, Joan Llorente, Andrew Fiori, Carole Sargent, Bert Singer, Tom Walling, Martha Spiess, Bill Heaphy, Kristen Stanley, Colleen Moore, Jeff Sebell and David Hammond.

Special thanks to Wild Oats Bakery for their delicious wraps, to Mary-ellen Dennis, MDEP for loan of NPS and macro-invertebrate kits, to our new staff person Dup Crosson for jumping in with both feet, and especially to Kathleen McGee for organizing the day.

Our Spring Bay Day will take place at Chop Point School in Woolwich. See you then!

We're always looking for chaperones and guides to participate in our biannual Bay Days! Please contact Dup Crosson, Coordinator/Organizer, at 666-1118 or fomb@comcast.net for more information.

BEING THE TALE OF BOATS ON THE WATER IN THE MERRYMEETING LAKE

Arrived at Butler Cove at 8:45AM and slid two Surge kayaks off my car – one for me and one for a friend from Somerville, MA who signed up to paddle last June. Fog in the morning was burning off so my compass points for Brick Island, Abby Wetland and Sturgeon Island, set for 5:00AM, would not be necessary. Who, besides me, would want to navigate in the fog?

Tina, my back up paddler, had suffered a car breakdown on her way back from Gulf Hags, so my barn tenant, Brandon Riva, took her place. I figured his expertise and youth might be helpful if a tip-over occurred. His Old Town kayak was borrowed for the run.

Other compatriots arrived in short order, all quite athletic and in good condition, except for one woman who had recently been scraping her house and had not kayaked lately. We decided constant house-scraping motions would be enough to limber the body. Her shoulder eventually did ache, but she refused a tow several times.

There was Ann, a Mt. Blue mountain climber from Bowdoinham, and Elizabeth, a chauffeur in the diplomatic circle of Boston. Scott, coming from Dresden, had most recently been an IT professor at Earlham. Kate, a 63-year-old grandmother from Gardiner, had been taking care of her young grandchildren for the last year and a half, which makes one amenable to anything. Every one of them was full of stories of their lives and ready to share.

The weather forecast called for SW winds with thunder



Bald Head, dead ahead. Photo: Brandon Riva.

storms in the afternoon. As it happened, we were before the winds. In fact, except for a few breaths, there was no wind at all. Merrymeeting lake conditions.

I quoted Barry Dana after he finished his Penobscot run,



Elizabeth wrote later, "I liked paddling through the channels in the tall wild rice, and the eagle swooping down in front of us." Photo: Brandon Riva.

65 miles up the river: "After the run, we missed the flow of the earth." The Bay was our chance for contact with the earth – our Garden of Eden. I took out my map, courtesy of Beginning with Habitat, showing rare and natural species on the Bay. I pointed out *Zizania aquatica*, basis of the primary food chain in the Bay, and noted our route.

Sturgeon Island, the seat of sturgeon roe stripping for years, was first. We paddled around the three islets while I spoke of the change in one generation; tales of Hayden Temple's adventures bringing a friend's farm produce from Merrymeeting Fields in exchange for fish, and rowing his skiff to Bowdoinham for the few things people did not have on the farm. Bath was too far away, but a swift paddle to the Cathance was perfect for a young boy, now 80.

I pointed out the place in the Kennebec where striped bass spawn. Tide was rising; I noted the surface and took the edge to Abby marsh. With no wind, the four miles seemed like a beginner's trip. We lazed along, enjoying it all. Distance, what was that?

The water was a great mirror reflecting the puffy clouds.

We were in between, a flock of humans gathered for protection, but alone in our boat space. It was so hot. A swim would have felt good, but The Sands were not on the itinerary.

Brandon found a guzzle and brought in all six of us, which was fine except for getting out. Was the grass thinner? We were so busy looking we made no decision.

A black duck sat on a cedar stump. Several flocks of teals flew overhead, maybe 12 to 24 birds. Four black ducks flew by. Where were the hunters' flocks?

Inside the Abby, Elizabeth saw a striper jump. A wading heron turned out to be a root on the sand. The eagle's nest on Centers Point did not appear, but the eagle was roused from a ledge a few feet from the point. We were close when he flapped off, startling everyone. Two ospreys were sighted soaring overhead.

Finally, we set off for Brick Island, where we had lunch. In fact, we got so into our "rolling conversation," we didn't want to leave. The whole trip took four and a half hours, spilling over the planned three.

Our luck with the weather was extraordinary. We struggled for an hour last year to return to Butler Cove! Today was a summer's idyll, a blip in the weather's trajectory.

Anne Hammond, Leader

FOMB offers a variety of summer outings each year. Anne has been a trip leader of ours for many years. Outings are free and open to the public.

WE NEED YOU! PLEASE SUPPORT OUR IMPORTANT WORK

FOMB Leadership

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

Steering Committee

Ed Friedman, Chair (Bowdoinham)
 Sarah Cowperthwaite, Secretary (Topsham)
 Nate Gray, Treasurer (Freeport)
 Tom Walling (Bowdoinham)

Education Committee

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

Conservation and Stewardship Committee

Monique Lucarelli, Chair, 443-8477

Membership and Fundraising Committee

Nate Gray, Chair, 865-9377

Research and Advocacy Committee

Ed Friedman, Chair, 666-3372

Coordinator/Organizer

Dup Crosson (Brunswick), 666-1118

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

Membership Levels

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

Name _____

Street Address _____

Town/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Renewal New Member Send information about volunteer opportunities.

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





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

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ORGANIZATION

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SIX STRINGS WRITING FOR THE BAY

six strings of singing silver, six strings of fiery gold,
six nets within each river, she hauls upstreamers home
rock-weeded blind giver, she beads the redds of roe
with the swirl of every finger
she feels open eyes she knows
she speaks their names in whispers
and she takes the gem from out of their bones

in one basket goes the silver
in one goes the gold
she weaves the two together
in the roe-of-ruby hold
her edges open gills
and she foams fresh sails inside
with one breath all she kills
resurrects within the tides.

Sungila O'Donnell, 9/8/12

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL DINOSAURS!

Below, Jason Bartlett & Josh Noll of DMR support a recent visitor to Richmond caught during a sturgeon population study in the Kennebec River.



Collected under NMFS permit 16526. Photo: MDMR.