

## FOMB Protects Maine's Premier Archaeology Site

7,000 years ago, Goodwin Narrows on the Kennebec in Dresden was about as far upstream as the tide could reach. Opposite the north end of Little Swan Island, this bit of ledge also probably slowed migratory fish on their way to upstream spawning habitat. Any fisherman knows the fishing can be pretty good at a dam blocking or slowing anadromous species like salmon, alewives and sturgeon.

Land conservation is one of the most effective tools we can use to protect water quality, working farms and wildlife around Merrymeeting Bay; to date, FOMB has successfully facilitated the permanent protection of over 1,300 acres and 11 miles of shoreline around the Bay. The Houdlette Conservation Project will permanently protect an incredibly important series of parcels on the shore of Merrymeeting Bay in Dresden, Maine. This FOMB project prevents poorly planned growth, protects water quality of the Bay, provides recreational opportunities, and conserves both extremely high value wildlife habitat and one of



*two adze type heads and a gouge*

the most important archaeological sites in New England.

Bruce Bourque, Chief Archaeologist at the Maine State Museum writes: *"I can think of no site that remotely approaches its importance for the study of this early period (5,000-8,500 years ago) of Maine's prehistory."* The project area, once at head of tide, is theorized to have been a Native American fishing village with supporting artifacts dating over 7,000 years old. Bourque and co-authors Cox and Lewis in their book **The Archaic of the Far Northeast** published by the Maine State Museum also say: *"While the sampling strategy employed at this site has been far from ideal, [there has never been a formal dig] it is clear that it has produced Early and Middle Archaic points in quantities an order of magnitude higher than any other known site in Southern Maine."* Protecting this historically important site provides a unique opportunity for citizens to learn more about the environment and history of the area.



*three points and half of a 1793 Spanish silver Reale*

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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**

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*Thanks to David Hansen for layout  
and design of this issue.*

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identifies this area as highest value wildlife habitat; the project area contains forested wetland, upland grassland nesting habitat, tidal wetlands and undisturbed shoreline along a section of the Kennebec classified by the state an “*outstanding river segment.*” The project area is also in close proximity to large areas of already protected land, thus increasing connectivity in this Bay-side habitat brimming with rare and endangered species.

Our work began on the parcel known as the *Houdlette Complex*, two years ago when FOMB grassroots efforts halted an illegal subdivision planned for the site by a new owner. For the last two years FOMB has been working behind the scenes supporting Land for Maine’s Future efforts to partially protect the site (some funding resulted but acquisition attempt failed). Working recently through a “bridge buyer” we have been able to put the entire core parcel into friendly hands and negotiate a purchase option for part of one adjacent property. Both of these opportunities are time-limited.

To make the Houdlette Conservation Project a reality we have partnered with land owners, community members, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, The Archaeological Conservancy, Dresden Conservation Commission and The Maine Archaeological Society and are actively building additional support. Your special contributions are needed to save these parcels.

To protect these critically important parcels about \$600,000 is needed. So far the Maine Historic Preservation Commission has secured about \$235,000 from the Land for Maine’s Future and The Archaeology Conservancy has promised \$75,000, both only towards the archaeology components of the project. FOMB has committed to raise a substantial portion of the \$290,000 balance through grants and member donations. Rarely will you have an opportunity to help protect such a resource.

Please write “Dresden” in the memo section of your very large check and send it to FOMB, P.O. Box 233, Richmond, ME 04357.