



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

Education

Conservation & Stewardship

Research & Advocacy

Member Events

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

Merrymeeting News is published seasonally and is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay. Article hyperlinks and color images are available online at: www.fomb.org

For more information, contact:

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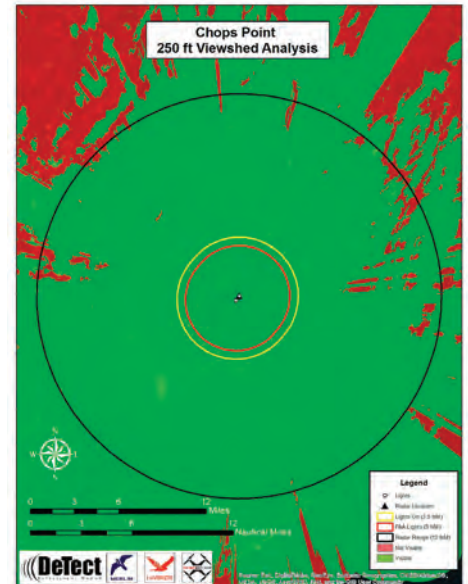
CMP's Chops Pt. Radar Transmitter Will Microwave 1809 Square Miles

In response to well-deserved area outrage over flashing red and white lights installed without community hearings or state review, CMP is continuing with plans for an active aircraft detection lighting system (AADLS) that will use radar to detect aircraft within 3.5 nautical miles (nm) of the Chops and only turn the lights on then. The X-band radar transmits at about 9.5 GHz with an effective radiated power (ERP) of 188 watts and a vertical beam angle of 12.5 degrees. According to the FCC, the majority of cellular sites in urban and suburban areas operate at an ERP of 100 watts or less per channel and actual power is typically between 5 and 20 watts. Smart meters and cell phones transmit at approximately 1 watt.

Range of the radar for wingtip to wingtip aircraft coverage is up to 24 nm, saturating an area of 1809 square miles with harmful microwave transmissions 24/7. On the accompanying image, the innermost circle around the Chops represents the FAA 3 mile recommended minimum for light activation. The next small circle represents the contractor design parameter with .5 nm buffer. The black line at a 12 mile radius from the Chops shows the area of high quality radar imagery covering an area of 452 square miles. The tower lights are clearly visible at 700' above ground level from Oxford, Maine, 35 miles away.

Microwaves are a subset of radiofrequency radiation (RFR). The entire RFR range has been classified a possible human carcinogen (World Health Organization, 2011) and the US National Toxicology Program in 2018 found frequencies typical of cell phones to show "clear evidence" of causing cancerous heart tumors and "some evidence" of causing brain and adrenal gland tumors along with DNA damage. These are the NTP's two highest certainty levels.

Marking and lighting advisories from the FAA are only recommendations, making both new lights and estimated \$500K AADLS purely discretionary on the part of CMP who continues this heavy-handed tragedy, despite virtually 100% opposition from Bay communities. A significant portion of CMP's investment will be passed on to ratepayers and recouped with 10-14% interest. CMP will not budge from their position despite 80 years of precedent for unmarked towers and wires at the site and virtually no air traffic. Tower lighting and microwave radiation are harmful to Bay wildlife, local residents and even those out of sight of the lights but within radar range. Radar and lighting are unnecessary egregious false choices. You can help support FOMB's escalating regulatory and legal efforts to pull the plug on both hazards. Please note "CMP" on the memo line of your check and if you feel you are being personally harmed, please call Ed Friedman at 666-3372.



Once in a Lifetime

Once in a lifetime a conservation opportunity like protecting Centers Pt. comes around. Well, actually, this one has come around a couple of times but only now borne fruit.

In 2000, FOMB started working on a conservation easement with then-owner Bob Patenaude Sr., and though family issues interrupted the process, Bob came back to us in 2006 to restart the easement proceedings. Sadly, shortly thereafter he passed away.

In 2019 when the property went on the market FOMB immediately began efforts to acquire and protect this gem. Still unsold in the fall, we had the property appraised and ultimately the owners agreed to sell it to our primary project partner Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) at the appraised fair market value, which is all state and federal funding will support.

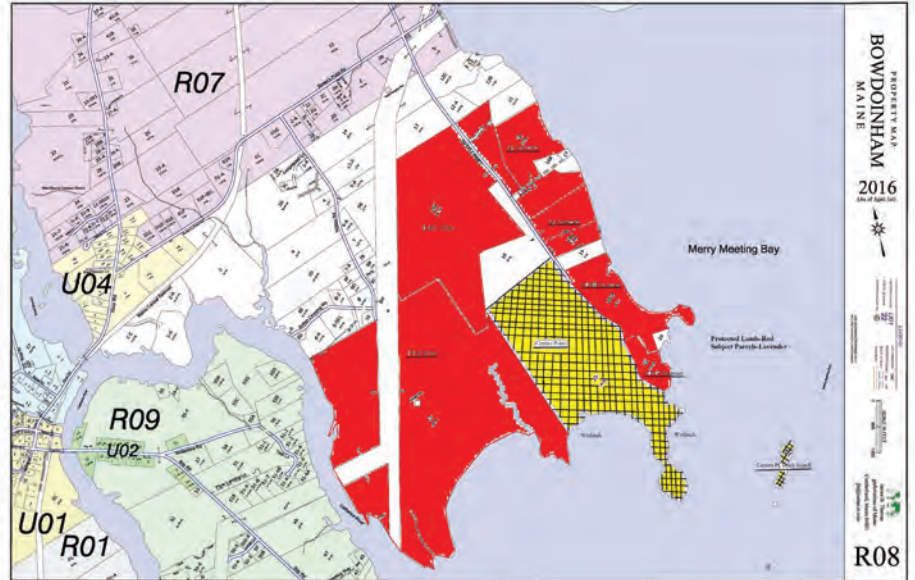
The immense conservation value of the property is evident from the Bowdoinham Tax Map, where you can see the yellow (in the online newsletter) cross-hatched parcel and the extensive surrounding already protected lands in red. Aside from

“filling in the gap,” Centers Pt. was the largest piece of mostly undeveloped unprotected property left on the Bay. The parcel comprises about 125 acres of wooded upland and wetland on the mainland, about 61 acres of highest value tidal wetland full of rare plants, and 3-acre Brick Island complete with perennially active bald eagle nest. There are approximately 6,000 feet of waterfront.

Centers Point was the site of the first European settlers in Bowdoinham (the McFaddens in 1718) who, from the Point they called Somersett, watched many vessels engaged in an early commercial sturgeon fishery. Unfortunately for the McFaddens, they fell victims to The Drummer’s War (1722-1725) and from an evacuated position at the Job Lewis Blockhouse on East Chops Pt., watched as Indians burned their homestead just a few years after they settled there.

Not only is the Point a significant historical archaeology location but it’s full of prehistoric sites as well.

Today the Point provides exceptional recreational and conservation values and is commonly used by hikers, dog walkers, skiers, and horseback riders. Access has been limited somewhat since the former owners took possession, and we look forward to restoring unrestrained non-motorized availability. It is the desire of FOMB to see the actual Point restored to its natural state.



Photos: Point of View Helicopter Services

Alex Wetmore: Ahead of His Time

Alexander Wetmore (1886-1978), intellectually and physically, was a giant among men. His prodigious energy, innovative views, and steadfast determination enabled him to rise from the ranks of field biologist to the highest levels of American ornithology and science.



Photo: Smithsonian Institution

He served as president of the American Ornithologist's Union and later was awarded the title of honorary president on his 90th birthday. His professional and administrative capabilities eventually led to his appointment as Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, perhaps America's most prestigious scientific position. He held that post with great distinction until eventually requesting he be permitted to resume his beloved ornithological duties at the Smithsonian. Author of hundreds of scientific and popular articles, about 2 years before his death, his wife Beatrice lamented that Alex's daily output had declined to but a half dozen pages of scientific manuscript.

In his classic report *Lead Poisoning in Waterfowl*, published in 1919 as USDA Bulletin No. 793, Wetmore wrote:

“Lead poisoning in various species of wild ducks and other waterfowl has recently attracted attention among persons interested in game birds in the United States. Though for a number of years this disease has been reported in periodicals devoted to sport, and from other sources, it is little recognized and understood and few sportsmen have knowledge of it. Already it has caused the loss of considerable number of waterfowl each year, and there is no doubt that as time goes on it will assume greater importance. Lead poisoning in waterfowl has its origin in the large quantity of expended shot that from year to year is deposited in the mud about shooting points and blinds in marshes, shallow bays and lakes. Many birds find and swallow these leaden pellets while searching for food, and become seriously affected by the poison thus taken. Present knowledge indicates that the mallard, canvasback and pintail ducks, and whistling swans have suffered most, but a number of other species will probably be included in the list when the matter is more fully investigated.”

The account above was written by Harry M. Reeves and appears in *Flyways, Pioneering Waterfowl Management in North America*, US Department of the Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service. Ed. A.S. Hawkins, R.C. Hanson, H.K. Nelson & H.M. Reeves. 1984

Ed. note: Due to opposition from sportsman, despite data showing steel and other non-toxic shot nearly as efficient as lead, toxic lead shot was not banned in Maine and the rest of the U.S. until 1991.

Punt Guns (Speaking of Lead)

Designed to be fired from a punt (a small, usually square-ended, low-profile boat), punt guns were intended to kill large numbers of waterfowl as efficiently as possible for “sport” and market. In the early 1800s the mass hunting of waterfowl to supply commercial markets became a widely accepted practice until about 1918 when the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed. Women's fashion added a major demand for feathers to adorn hats. Professional hunters custom-built extremely large shotguns (bore diameters up to 2”) that would fire over a pound of shot (today's 12-gauge loads weigh about 1 oz). The recoil of the 100-125 pound guns could propel the punt backwards 40'.

Market hunting was legal—a respected profession of watermen who made their living on tidewater bays, fishing



A punt and punt gun. c. 1910

Photo: Sydney Harold Smith (or collaborators on his behalf),
Image: York Museums Trust

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A True Cobbossee Story

Summer 1981

Formative events in your life are identified after the fact. Only looking back do we recognize these events for what they are, or at least were. The events settle into your mind and begin to replay again and again. That's when you know something formative has happened. Sometimes the event is punctuated like a fire or a car wreck. Other times the events are far more subtle.

In 1980 my parents sold off the family home in Gloucester, Massachusetts. My siblings, all older than I, had fled the nest in advance of the sale. Being a minor, I had no choice. I moved to Mystic, Connecticut with my mother to attend school. My father headed north, back to his home State of Maine. When summer rolled around, I was unceremoniously shipped north to my father. I was very distraught over this arrangement. The family I had grown up with and loved had dissolved in an adolescent instant.

The summer of 1981 saw me living with my father in an apartment on Water Street in downtown Gardiner, Maine. He had taken a job with the Gardiner Water District. Dad had what basically amounted to a PhD in municipal water works, having essentially replumbed Boston, Providence, Hartford, and several other municipalities in the New England area. He knew his drinking water.

During the day, I free-ranged around Gardiner. Cobbossee Stream became my go-to place for exploration. And explore I did. Beneath the bridges, along the banks, I spent hours. A fishing rod was my constant companion. I had shown up in June and immediately noticed there were a lot of people engaged in fishing activity along the banks of the stream. They were not using poles however. They were using nets. They would scoop up lots of little silvery fish I had seen but had been unable to hook. It turns out these were river herring. Folks had 5-gallon pails, trash barrels, dish-washing basins, and more, filled to the top with river herring. Some were being sorted by sex. The curious mind of a 14-year old wanted to know more. Turns out that folks liked to eat the eggs, also called *roe*, of these fish. My father and I tried some for supper one night fried up with corn meal in bacon grease. Truth be told I liked the bacon most of all. The eggs were edible but neither one of us went back for seconds.

I loved the freedom of that summer. I had a 10-speed bike I cruised around on. My adventures carried me further afield as my familiarity with the territory increased. I found the remnants of industry scattered all along the banks of the stream. There were several dams I encountered. Each spot had its own uniqueness. The first full dam I discovered was the Yorktown Paper dam, first complete blockage upstream from the Kennebec. Old industrial buildings crowded the stream on the South bank while on the North bank there was little in the way of buildings.



Gardiner Paperboard Dam, Winter

Photo: Point of View Helicopter Services

There HAD been buildings on the North side but they had either been demolished and salvaged or just plain crumbled. All that remained were foundations of brick and granite peeking out of the ground amongst the trees crowding back in. That dam was fascinating to me. I would sit and watch for hours as the water cascaded over the top and plunged down the apron below in a foaming white sheet.

Then it happened. As I watched the water pour off the apron, a large dark object shot from the pool below up on to the apron. A fish! A big fish! That fish swam like the dickens up to the base of the apron and was then blown back

downstream by the water. I stared transfixed at where the fish had been. The fish had to be 3 feet long! My rod was back at the apartment. The hour was getting late so I pedaled my way home to Water Street for supper with dad.

No sooner had I gotten home then I told dad about the fish as only a fourteen-year old can do. “It was huge”! I exclaimed. “I’m going to try and catch it tomorrow.” And dad answered as only a father can, “You be careful around that stream”. The next day was the weekend. Out of the blue, my oldest sibling Chip showed up. Turns out he’d been offered a job at Air California after completing his studies, top of the class, at East Coast Aero Tech. He was stopping by to say his farewells as he headed off to his new life as an airline mechanic. I told him about the fish I’d seen at the dam. How big it was. He asked me what kind of fish it was. I shrugged. I had no clue what kind of fish it was but I did know one thing. It was big!

No sooner did I point, when a dark flash of fish emerged from the pool and swam up the apron. It was 3 feet long. My brother stared. My father stared. We all stared at the fish as it swam against that cascade of water.

It bears mentioning here, I grew up in a family of fishermen. Training began at an early age. The course: Fly fishing. You were allowed to do any kind of fishing you wanted as long as you mastered casting a fly first. Mastery is a highly subjective term. I’ve been fly fishing for forty plus years now. What I’ve found is, fly fishing doesn’t take long to figure out. In fact, the act is quite simple. Understand a few basics and you’re fly fishing. Mastery of fly fishing is a whole other animal. Mastery equates to enlightenment in the Buddhist faith. Millions will try, few if any will succeed. The good news is you never run out of “stuff” to learn about fly fishing, or any fishing for that matter.

On Saturday morning we jumped in the Scout and headed up Cobbossee to New Mills dam at the outlet of Pleasant Pond, took a right, and headed back down stream again. We parked along side of the road and I lead the way down to the stream through the woods along the dam impoundment. I kept recounting my fish tale as we went. Soon we stood at the base of the dam where I had sat the day before. The water still poured across the apron into the pool below. I pointed to where the fish had emerged from the pool to ascend the apron. No sooner did I point when a dark flash of fish emerged from the pool and swam up the apron. It was three feet long. My brother stared. My father stared. We all stared at the fish as it swam against that cascade of water. The fish was very powerful but not as powerful as the water coming over the dam. The fishes advance faltered. It spun downstream into the pool below. No one spoke. As we watched, another fish leapt onto the apron and swam up. And another. Then a third fish. We stared hard at those fish.



Photo: Gwent Angling Society

Chip couldn’t stand it. With his boots on he stepped into the water. A few short strides later he was on the apron. Rooster tails of white water shot from his feet as he faced downstream. One of the monster fish was only a few feet away. He called back over the roar of the water “It looks like a salmon”! Soon, all three of us were on the apron. The salmon kept swimming up and falling off the apron. That image of us standing on the apron with salmon shooting past our feet will be with me forever. I never did try to catch one of those fish. None of us did. It was a secret.

Thirty-nine years later: Gardiner Paper Board is still right where it was in 1981. The apron is still there too. Same dam, different name, serving no useful purpose anymore. What I haven’t seen are those salmon as of late. My father has

passed on, and my brother’s career as an airframe and power plant mechanic has changed to that of an inn keeper. Cobbossee Stream still flows down to the mighty Kennebec. In the spring, river herring, eels, striped bass, and an occasional sturgeon still try to ascend the stream. They will keep on trying.

Looking back, I would have never guessed my career would span three decades of fisheries restoration work. And I believe the day is coming when those fish will be able to swim as they once did to the headwaters of the Cobbossee system.

Nate Gray

Lower Androscoggin Upgrade

Another round of proposed triennial river classification upgrades was due at the DEP in May. Thanks to lots of cheerleading from Peter Rubins of [Grow L+A](#), FOMB rallied to submit in partnership with Grow L+A, yet another proposal to codify existing Class B conditions on the river between Durham (at least) and the Bay. State law is quite specific:

38 M.R.S.A. § 464 (F) (4)

“When the actual quality of any classified water exceeds the minimum standards of the next highest classification, that higher water quality must be maintained and protected. The board shall recommend to the Legislature that water be reclassified in the next higher classification.”

For years the DEP has refused to recommend an upgrade to the Board of Environmental Protection and to the legislature, which is the only body authorized to classify state waters. The Department continues to conflate the discharge licensing statute with the nondiscretionary classification statute. Without locking in ambient water quality when it exceeds the current classification (in this case C), quality may be significantly degraded.

New in this year’s proposal, besides additional years of supporting data from FOMB volunteer monitors, are cumulative combined sewage overflow (CSO) data from Lewiston and Auburn (see Page 8), DEP low-water data from the L/A vicinity, a second legal opinion, plus new and renewed widespread NGO and municipal support. Our entire proposal, with 39 exhibits, can be found at the third plus sign down on our [Cybrary’s “Chemical” page](#).

Thanks to supporters, who thus far include the cities of Lewiston and Auburn and the town of Brunswick, Trout Unlimited-Maine Council, Friends of Casco Bay, Downeast Salmon Federation, Androscoggin Land Trust, Friends of Sebago Lake, Native Fish Coalition-Maine Chapter, and Atlantic Salmon Federation.

Special thanks to Rachel Doughty at [Greenfire Law!](#)

Getting Outside, an Essential Activity, Bay Day or Not!

Because of the Covid 19 outbreak, we will not be scheduling our Outside Series this summer, but the same recommendations apply as below. Please get out, have fun, keep a respectful distance, and check for unwanted hitchhikers!

FOMB sent the following note accompanied by activity and site lists to area teachers just prior to Bay Day:

Hi Teachers,

So the bad news, as you are undoubtedly aware, is that there will be no Bay Day, Tuesday May 12.

The good news, however, and news we hope you will take advantage of with your students, is that every day can be a Bay Day! There are no shortages of online aids to environmental education, but our children already spend far too much time online. We ask you to consider, in lieu of Bay Day if for no other reason, setting up some assignments for your students that get them outside, having fun and getting dirty, while at the same time learning something. They can report back to you and to classmates via the internet if they have the connection.

There are quite a few accessible properties where students can access Merrymeeting Bay or one of the tributaries leading into it. If these areas are too far away for students to easily reach, there is generally plenty to discover in their own back yards or neighborhoods. In addition to the sites listed in our very old attached Site Directory, I have listed some additional access points and attached a supplementary directory providing some details on each.

Meanwhile, getting outside and getting some exercise are essential activities, help strengthen the immune system,



Bay Day Shall Return!

Photo: Ed Friedman

Continued on next page

Bay Day, continued from page 6

and can help make every day a Bay Day! Ask your students to get out there, enjoy, learn from nature, and keep a respectful distance when and if they run into others. Make sure they check frequently for ticks and are wearing knee-high rubber boots, tucking pants into socks, and or checking bare skin (<https://umaine.edu/forestticksurvey/>).

Punt Guns, continued from page 3

and crabbing in season. These men would hunt during the water-fowling months; and many of them guided sport hunters by day and then market hunted at night. Night hunting, however, was illegal. And because punt gunning required carefully approaching a large raft of ducks, it was most effective just at last light, when the gunner would silently slip into range.

Records exist of more than 90 birds being killed at once when the guns were used in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Besides direct carnage, including many lost and crippled birds, large shot loads must have contributed greatly to the legacy left from historic lead toxicity.



Chief United States Game Warden, George A. Lawyer, with an illegal 10' 9" shotgun weighing 250 pounds, which was used for duck hunting. c. 1920.
Image: Henry Miller News Picture Service/FPG/Archive Photos/Getty Images

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 Ed Friedman. We always welcome member input and we'd love for you to join us!

Steering Committee

- Ed Friedman, Chair (Bowdoinham)
- Vance Stephenson, Treasurer (Kettering, OH)
- Tom Walling, Secretary (Bowdoinham)
- Simon Beirne (Gardiner)
- Becky Bowes (Brunswick)
- Phil Brzozowski (Pittston)
- Nate Gray (Vassalboro)

Education Committee

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

Conservation and Stewardship Committee

Chair Vacancy

Membership and Fundraising Committee

Nate Gray, Chair, 446-8870

Research and Advocacy Committee

Ed Friedman, Chair, 666-3372

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

Membership Levels

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

Name

Address

Town/State/Zip

Phone

Email

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

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



Thanks to Rebecca Bowes for newsletter layout.



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
 P.O. Box 233
 Richmond, ME 04357

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Thanks to Auburn & Lewiston for their terrific success in virtually eliminating combined sewer overflows from reaching the Androscoggin

Section 3 CSO Improvements - Nineteen Years of Progress (2000-2018)

Tighe&Bond

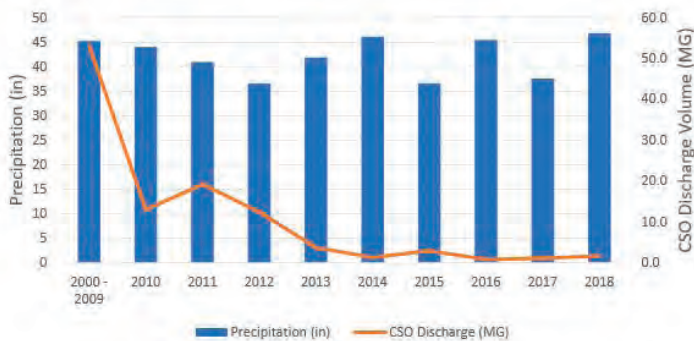


FIGURE 3-6 Auburn Sewer District 2000-2018 Precipitation vs. CSO Discharge

Section 3 CSO Improvements - Nineteen Years of Progress (2000-2018)

Tighe&Bond



FIGURE 3-13 City of Lewiston 2000-2018 Precipitation vs. CSO Discharge

