



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay

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

Education

Conservation & Stewardship

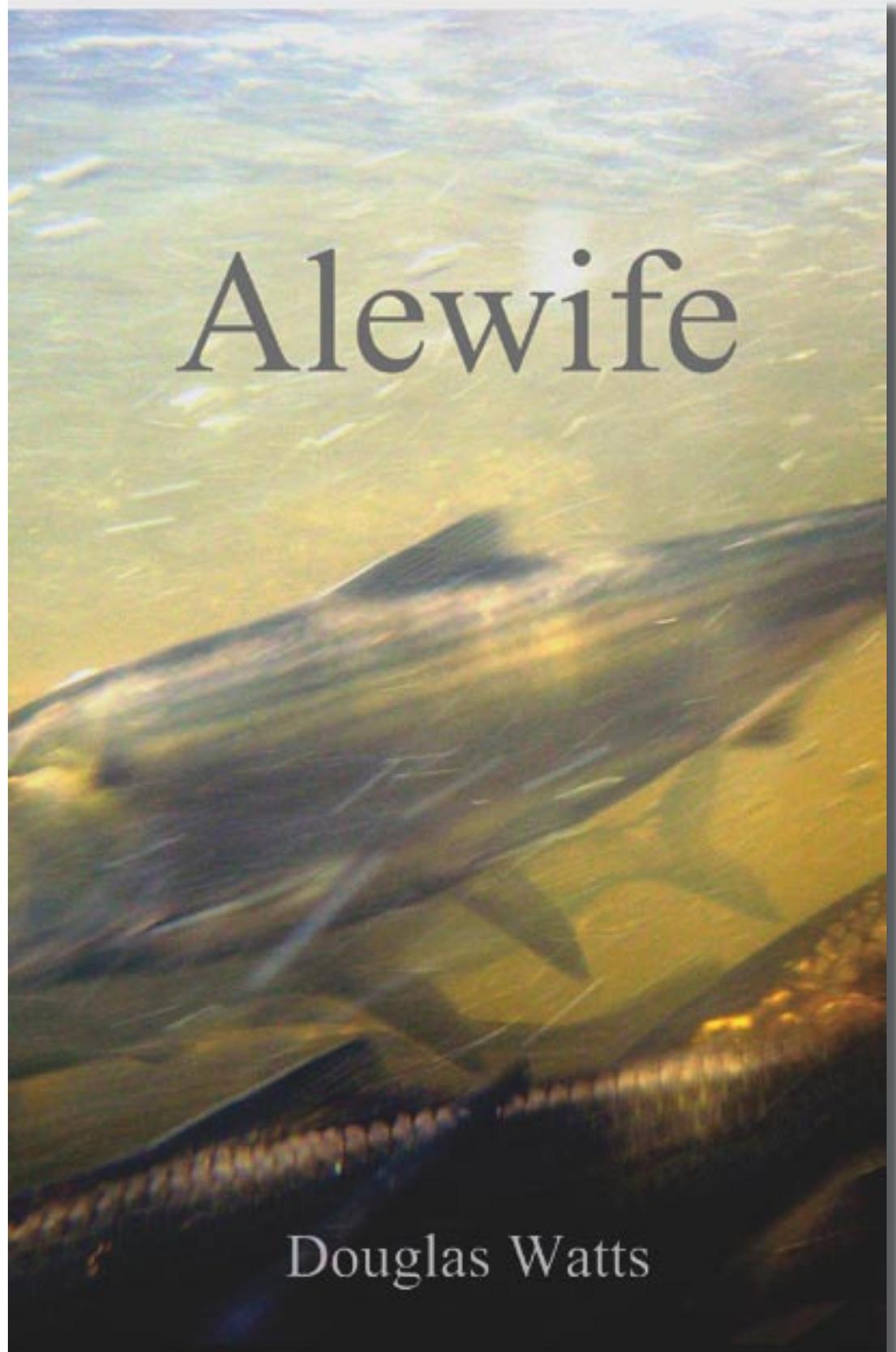
Research & Advocacy

Member Events

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

Merrymeeting News is published seasonally by Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB), and is sent to FOMB Members and other friends of the Bay.

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



Androscoggin Upgrade

Despite two more years of water quality showing without exception, the lower Androscoggin more than meets Class B requirements; the legislature under the boot heel of a particular Senator and continued resistance from the DEP, would not support an upgrade from the existing minimum classification of C.

However, for the first time ever our legislation to upgrade the lower Androscoggin from Worumbo Dam in Lisbon Falls to the Bay was voted out of the Energy & Natural Resources Committee. Only two members, Representatives Ben Chipman and Paul McGowen voted “ought to pass.” We owe them a great deal of thanks for standing up to the pressure of the rest of the committee; a committee embarrassingly cowed by former committee chair and retired career employee at the former International Paper mill, Sen. Tom Saviello.

Many thanks to Brunswick Rep. Mattie Daughtry sponsor of the bill who also had a floor speech planned for when the bill came to the House Chamber for a full vote. Unfortunately Democratic leadership [Seth Berry] brought the bill to the floor without telling her it was coming and the bill was killed under the hammer. Neither Daughtry nor any other supporter in the legislature, were given an opportunity to argue for it. We also did not have a chance to get informational handouts out to legislators before it was killed in both chambers. Had Mattie alerted Seth, this might not have happened but she is a freshman and is still learning the tricks. Sen. Margaret Craven deserves our thanks for being ready to sponsor the handout distribution in the Senate.

FOMB takes some responsibility for not spending a lot of time at the state house lobbying on this but still, local elected representatives like Stan Gerzofsky, Seth Berry and Seth Goodall were totally missing in action despite requests to co-sponsor this hometown clean water legislation, a bill they were familiar with from last session. Regretfully they get a thumbs-down on this no-brainer legislation.

Thanks to Androscoggin monitors Sarah Cowperthwaite, Ed Friedman, Kathleen McGee, Nancy Murphy, Helen Watts, Diane and Douglas Richmond and to lab volunteers Ed Friedman, Ruth Innes, Jeff Sebell and Kermit Smyth. Special thanks to John Lichter at Bowdoin College for use of his lab space.



Spring Bay Day: Marine Mammals of ME instructs how to help marine mammals in distress.

Alewife

As the Bangor Daily News puts it:

“Alewives as a meal for Mainers themselves? Not so much. At least not anymore. Once a dinner-table staple in Maine, alewives are now more likely to be chopped up for lobster bait.

In addition to osprey and bald eagles, which have perfected dive-bombing fishing techniques in feasting upon the annual spring run of “river herring,” alewives are prey for a long list of critters. Alewife predators include not only raptors, but other fish, among them bass, bluefish, tuna, cod, haddock, halibut, eel, trout, landlocked salmon, pickerel, pike and perch. Other predators include great blue heron, gulls, terns, cormorants, seals, whales, otter, mink, fox, raccoon, skunk, weasel, fisher and turtles. Maybe even bears.

An 1852 history of Kennebec County recounts that in Gardiner and Pittston “alewives were so plentiful at the time the country was settled that bears, and later swine, fed on them in the water. They were crowded ashore by the thousands.”

Before the 20th century advent of refrigeration, which allowed a wide variety of fish species as options for dinner entrees, alewives were popular because they kept well when smoked or packed in salt. They were also plentiful, as each May and June hundreds of thousands of the 10-inch silver fish migrated from the sea into virtually all of Maine’s freshwater rivers and streams to spawn. Alewives were also cheap, as in free for the taking.

For thousands of years Native Americans and, centuries later, Maine’s early European settlers relied heavily on alewives for subsistence. So did the poor, according to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service history of alewife migration. When one Maine river town built a dam that blocked the fish from their spawning habitat, settlers upstream were outraged.

“It was difficult to persuade the aggrieved people to forbear using violence to open a passage for ye fish,” one report of the incident relates. “The cry of the poor every

year for want of the fish ... is enough to move the bowels of compassion in any man that hath not a heart of stone.”

Among Maine’s resident experts on alewives is Doug Watts of Augusta. Quite literally, Watts wrote the book on river herring. Simply titled “Alewife,” his 2012 book traces the complexity and history of the alewife migration cycle in Maine and Massachusetts.”

Doug has been Maine’s leading voice for migratory fish restoration and few if any can match his encyclopedic knowledge of diadromous fish species and their nexus with law and history. He has been the impetus for many of FOMB’s legal efforts in this area. Read his book! Available from www.lulu.com or www.Amazon.com .

Line in the Clay

**Somebody dug a hole in the estuary
And carried that hole into the forest
Where a couple Old Pines fell through.**

**Under the sag of a falling pier
Ropes noose to unraveling ends
Waters spill their sediments.**

**Out in the clay,
Under the white-bellied gulls
The hermit crab draws a line.**

And just keeps going.

**Joshua O'Donnell
11/21/12**

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2013

LEARNING ABOUT THE BAY

I did something different today which was nice for a change. I was asked to volunteer at the Spring Bay Day held by the Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB) - a local environmental group that I belong to.

They hold this event each year for local school kids to come and learn about the interconnected web of life that lives in and around the Merrymeeting Bay that is in our part of Maine. Over 250 fourth graders were brought to the dynamic inlet/outlet of the Bay on East Chop Pt. and I served as a chaperone for one of the groups from nearby Phippsburg. There were three sessions where the kids were taken to different environmental topic areas and leading ecologists used very creative interactive exercises to teach them about their particular specialty. It rained slightly for the first hour or so but we all kept going and had a great day.

I learned a lot watching the kids play in the mud, marvel at live eels, learn about some edible plants, and come to grips with the impact of toxins on the food chain. Besides being cold and wet, the kids were quite well behaved which made my job much easier.



Jason Bartlett helps kids practice beach seining on land first.

Six rivers flow into Merrymeeting Bay which at one time was teeming with more life than now. One of the session leaders told us a story about 14 foot sturgeon that used to be in huge supply - their eggs were harvested and sent to Russia for caviar. These days the fish are a protected species and don't get nearly as big but they are often seen leaping into the air from the Bay.

Ed Friedman is the chair of FOMB and I've had him on my public access TV show a couple of times over the years to talk about his work. It's a great group and I was happy that I could be of some use to them for once. Twenty-one Bay Day activities were offered included archaeology, watershed modeling, beach seining, anadromous fish printing, environmental art, marine mammal stranding and an assortment of walks including birds, geology and general ecology. If you've not yet volunteered for Bay Day, consider answering the call!



Sarah Cowperthwaite tries to get fish drying on a damp day.

Bruce Gagnon

What the Students Thought:

Dear FOMB,

Thank you for setting up these fun activities that we did. My favorite part was when we did the coyote thing where we found the water, food, a den, territory and we had four people in a group. There was a mom a dad and two pups.

I had a great time. I hope you do it again next year.

*Sincerely,
Boden*

Dear FOMB,

Thank you very much for volunteering, that's very nice of you to do this with our school. You guys just stopped what you were doing and did this for us. You did all kinds of activities with us. That was fun!

*Sincerely,
Julian*

Dear FOMB,

It was really cool to see all the volunteers there. It shows how much so many people care about letting us know how to do many things we didn't know before. It was really cool to see and learn about a dolphin and a seal. I now know what to do in case they have an emergency. Everybody was very nice and welcoming to us. Thank you very much!

*Sincerely,
Emily*

Dear FOMB,

Thank you for letting us come so we could learn about Merrymeeting Bay! My favorite activity was the fish printing. I learned there are lots of big fish and lots of small fish in Merrymeeting Bay. Thank you for taking the time and planning all of the activities! I learned that a red maple leaf has 5 points. I really enjoyed everything though it was a little wet! I hope you all do it again next year! It was lots of fun! Again, thanks for everything!

*From,
Chelsea*

Bay Day Thanks

Bay Day can't happen without the help of many. Thanks to:

Chaperones: Martha Spiess, Carole Sargent, Dianne Wilkins, Bert Singer, David Whittlesey, Tom Walling, Colleen Moore, Bob Fesler, Barbara & Jim O'Hare, David Hammond, Orman Hines, Jeff Sebell, Bruce Gagnon, Tom Hughes, Joan Llorente, Tina Goodwin, Chet Gillis, Monty & Moe Kalloch, Dana Cary, Ruth Innes, Jen Jones, Charlie Ipcar; and

Guides: Leith Smith, Jay Robbins, Steve Eagles, Kent Cooper, Kathleen McGee, Sarah Cowperthwaite, George Sergeant, Tom Weddle, Tom Hoerth, Josh Royte, Dan Coker, Jason Chandler, Kerry Hardy, Jamie Silvestri, Jason Bartlett, Lynda Doughty, Helen Watts, Betsy Steen, Leslie Anderson, Amy Hamilton Vailea, Patrick Keenan, Geri Vistein, Cathy Reynolds, Jason Wright

Thanks also to: Chopp Pt. School, Wild Oats Bakery and Ed Friedman. Special thanks to Kathleen McGee for coordinating the day!



Examining the seine haul.

Leon Ogrodnik Will be Sorely Missed

Leon Ogrodnik, long-time FOMB supporter, Board member and participant passed away on May 15 at 77, in Harpswell.

Leon was a man with a passion for nature. He never saw a pond, a river, a lake, or a coastline he didn't love. Paddling a canoe or camping on a shore was heaven on earth for Leon. His deep respect for the Spirit of creation and for God's earth, and his sense of duty and responsibility to protect that creation, shone from him. He took it personally and it inspired him.

In the early 1980s Leon, a sport fisherman, was dismayed to see fish stocks depleted and knew that he had to do something. From that time on he worked tirelessly to improve the environment. Leon became an agent for change. He believed that democracy works and that each citizen has a responsibility to improve our country. As a private citizen he organized the collection of data to show the effect of acid rain in the fresh water of Massachusetts where he lived, and he successfully lobbied the United States Congress for landmark acid rain legislation. Leon believed anyone can be instrumental in saving the environment, if one puts forth the effort. He made a huge difference locally and nationally in environmental awareness and preservation. He worked tirelessly for organizations dedicated to preserving our water, including recent service on the boards of the Friends of Merrymeeting Bay and the Androscoggin River Watershed Council. There was a sense in Leon that Nature is proof enough of Divine Love.

Leon was born in Brooklyn, New York, on February 13, 1936 and grew up in Ossining where his childhood revolved around baseball and fishing. As a teen he worked as a professional minor-league umpire. After attending Albany State Teacher's College, he served his country as a soldier in Korea. Leon's career included running television transmitters on Mt. Greylock for stations in Albany, on the Empire State Building for stations in New York City, and being studio engineer for the David Susskind Show, among others, at WETA, the PBS station in Washington, DC. In 1986, Leon moved to Maine, eventually settling in Harpswell, a town he loved. He was an active citizen in its democracy. Leon had a genuine interest in people and



Leon Ogrodnik (center) at Water Monitor Training

their stories, and brought a sense of righteousness and social justice to every situation.

In the 1990's Leon joined the FOMB board for a number of years until stepping down, as it turned out temporarily due to health reasons and then to put energy into fighting the LNG terminal proposed for Harpswell. When Leon was with us in those years he was instrumental in building coalition support for our successful effort to upgrade the lower Kennebec from Class C to Class B. He was a firm voice for advocacy in our mission and brought his many years of water monitoring and community organizing to the table. As an avid sportsman, he could liaise especially well with sportsman's groups. Leon came back on our board in 2011 bringing his out of the box thinking and fierce advocacy to focus on the Androscoggin, a river he was particularly fond of and that continues as the poor step-child in terms of state efforts to clean up Maine's major rivers.

Leon loved Dixieland jazz and his passing was remembered by a joyful jazz concert in Harpswell featuring Bob Modr and the Moose Mountain Jazz Band

Leon loved young people and supported their learning to care for our environment. He was so pleased with the creation of the Harpswell Coastal Academy, P.O. Box 404, Harpswell, Maine, 04079. He believed it would further what he knew would improve our world. He would love to know it will be supported through memorial contributions in his name. Of course FOMB will also accept memorial contributions in his memory.

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.]

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. Please join us!

- Steering Committee**
Ed Friedman, Chair (Bowdoinham)
Andrew Fiori, Vice 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 & Stewardship Committee**
Monique Lucarelli 443-8477
- Membership & Fundraising Committee**
Nate Gray, Chair (Freeport)
- Research and Advocacy**
Ed Friedman 666-3372

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

Atlantic Salmon, Dead in the Water

In May, single-handedly, retiring district court Judge John Singal denied our Motion for a Preliminary Injunction which would have selectively shut down FPLE’s Androscoggin and Kennebec dam turbines this spring to allow the outmigration of the most genetically diverse and numerous smolt population in recent years. This decision terminates our multi-year lawsuit with Environment Maine targeting dam owners on both Androscoggin and Kennebec rivers under the Endangered Species Act for illegal take. It’s clear neither rivers nor fish in them will see justice from Singal. One of the dams affected by this is Brunswick-Topsham where the only downstream passage besides through the multiple turbines, is an 18 inch round hole right next to them.

The Kennebec dams are subject to Clean Water Act language stating there can be no adult salmon inhabiting the impoundments until turbine mortality studies show turbine passage, if desired, is safe. These conditions, part of the Kennebec Hydro Developer’s Agreement [KHDG] signed when Edwards Dam was removed, were made a part of the water quality certificate of each dam’s license so are subject to enforcement under the CWA. FOMB attorneys are appealing the Hydro Kennebec Incidental Take Permit under the Clean Water Act in the Federal Appeals court in Boston. Other Kennebec dams to follow. The Andro will not be included, again, since there are no CWA claims here and Judge Singal killed the ESA efforts.

Thanks to continued efforts by FOMB & National Environmental Laws Center (Environment Maine) for their great work on behalf of the fish.



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
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No longer are there any great blue heronries in the Bay area perhaps as a result of the recovered eagle population. Further up the watershed in some pines on the west side of Cobbosseecontee Lake is however one of the largest heronries in the state with approximately 45 nests.

*Photo courtesy:
www.mainimaging.com & www.pointofviewhelicopters.com*