Merrymeeting News

Winter 2009 VOLUME XIX, No. 1

The Newsletter of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay • Box 233 • Richmond Maine 04357 • www.friendsofmerrymeetingbay.org

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.

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See our 2008 Accomplishments on page 4

Going [a long way] with the Flow

In 2008, having completed the high flow portion of our multi-year current study there are several important things to report. The spring freshet does not have much impact in the smaller tributaries. *How's that??* Two years ago in medium flows, we ground-truthed remote drifter data by actually following drifters up and down the various rivers for complete tide cycles. We would ride the tide up from the mouth of a river and then back towards the Bay and from the head of tide we would ride the outgoing flow and then come back upstream.

US Geologic Survey staff using acoustic doppler current profiling to measure tidal flow levels.

While on the Kennebec and to a lesser extent, the lower mouth of the Androscoggin there was substantial net downstream movement, on the four small tributaries we ended up usually within a hundred yards or so of where we started.

Traditional thinking might indicate in high spring flows we would pick up more net downstream movement even on the smaller rivers. However, with further thought we hypothesized the Bay-proper might control flows in these tributaries. In fact, this is what we found. Despite high flow inputs to the Cathance and Abbagadassett [the Eastern and Muddy don't have high volume inputs], after twelve hours on the water, we still ended up close to where we began.

Levels of inflow on the tributaries were no match for higher water levels in the Bay, raised largely from Kennebec flows. High levels in the Bay appear to dampen tributary outflow since water seeks its own level. This result confirms our thoughts based on earlier work at lower flows.

Residence time of water in the tributaries is substantial although it does move back and forth. Limited exchange means greater sensitivity and vulnerability to harmful inputs whether wastewater from overboard discharges, petroleum or other pollutants from increasing marina activity or sedimentation from forestry, agricultural or development activities without adequate vegetated buffers in the riparian zones.

This year's ground-truthing efforts are animated on our web site. Of special note in the upper Kennebec animation is the dramatic increase in river speed just below Hallowell in the reach running down to Farmingdale.

One of the unique features of the Bay are "reversing tides", really a function of river water backing up in the vicinity of the Chops and Thorne Head in the face of a rising tide from the lower Kennebec. We found reversing flows ceased at the Chops when flows at our N. Sidney reference point were somewhere between 33,000 cubic feet per second [cfs] and 38,000cfs. At levels above this point there was no inflow on incoming tides. According to people on the river frequently in the Bath area, below Thorne Head the river current always reverses with the tide regardless of flow. There appears to be a level where a rising tide come up through Thorne Head into the lower Bay but does not have the strength to overcome high flows still pouring through the Chops where waters do not reverse. A net result is an abundance of flotsam and jetsam in this lower section around Lines Island as water flows in from the north on "high and low" tides but can only get by Thorne Head on an outgoing tide.

At 70,000cfs our outgoing deployment from the Chops sent two drifters as far as Cape Cod. We also retrieved a number of drifters in Casco Bay and one down the Sasanoa River near Lower Hell's Gate. Unfortunately, after couple of years without use, internal batteries in many of our GPS units failed while they appeared to be working, so no location data were recorded enroute. Using our receiver and transmitter system we were able to recover all but one

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Going with the Flow

drifter in Maine. Helpful citizens in Massachusetts recovered the two in Cape Cod Bay. Of twenty-four drifters, one remains at large.

Acoustic doppler profiles made on several transects between Abbagadassett Pt. and Lines Island when reference flows were at 38,000cfs confirmed outgoing flows to full depth at all tide stages. During this time, water levels in the Bay continued to rise indicating even when the tide was ebbing, inflow exceeded capacity of the Chops to exhaust the high volumes.

In the interest of full disclosure, it needs be said the Androscoggin also contributes substantial flow to the Bay although much less volume than the Kennebec. The closest USGS Androscoggin river gauge to the Bay is in the Auburn area. Because there are five dams influencing flows from not far above Auburn to the Bay, discharges can and do fluctuate wildly making the Auburn gauge unreliable as a reference point.

Extremely high flows and large amounts of debris in the river are two physical challenges any power generating facility located at the Chops would have to withstand. Because below a certain volume, but still at very high flows, waters in the Chops do reverse, any structures here would be subject to multiple exposures and likely suffer cumulative effects of these natural and sometimes anthropogenic forces.

— Ed Friedman

Special thanks to those that went with the flow:

Intern Simon Beirne, volunteers Tom Walling, Kathleen McGee, Jim Gillies, Mary Earle Rogers, Odin Anderson, Peter & Noreen Ryan, Norman Anderson, Steve Dexter, and Ed Friedman. For acoustic doppler current profiling, thanks to the folks at US Geologic Survey in Augusta: Bob Lent, Greg Stewart and especially field crew Laura Flight and Charlie Culbertson. Thanks also to Point of View Helicopter Services, Ben Magro of Coastal Helicopters for helping us out of a jam, Marinna Martini of USGS-Woods Hole, Peter Milholland & Friends of Casco Bay, and especially to Scott Allen of DeLorme for his troubleshooting and technical expertise and to Geno Carpentier of Stantec for his animations. Project funding thanks to the Merrymeeting Bay Trust.

While using a helicopter (note the copter in the background of this photo) to track the errant drifters used in our tidal flow studies FOMB volunteers found a dead minke whale near Small Point in Casco Bay.

Sears Island Oops

Forget for a minute the world-wide economic depression. Forget for a minute the Baltic Dry Index [an index of cargo shipping] shows global shipping of goods near an all time low. In their zest to turn one-third of Sears Island, the East Coast's largest undeveloped island, into a deepwater cargo port, Governor John Baldacci, the Maine Department of Transportation [MDOT] and the Joint Legislative Committee on Transportation went ahead with a deal to split the island. About 300 acres are to be set aside for cargo port development and about 600 acres "protected" under a conservation easement held by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust that will allow substantial recreation/ education development.

Just one problem: everyone forgot (or more than likely ignored) the law. Maine has a statute known as the Sensible Transportation Policy Act or STPA. The Act is in place to protect Mainers from just the sort of executive boondoggle the Sears Island plan appears to be. Last used for the Turnpike widening, the STPA requires extensive public review of a proposed project and a thorough review of alternatives, before a dime is spent on the proposal.

Ooops, didn't happen.

Sears Island activist Ron Huber of Penobscot Bay Watch noticed the gaff. He and Doug Watts are two individuals who have filed suit in Superior Court to nullify the conservation easement. The easement is needed for an Umbrella Wetlands Mitigation Bank the MDOT and US Army Corps of Engineers are trying desperately to establish in the state. In the mitigation bank scheme, protected wetlands in one area can be credited against the destruction [often in MDOT projects] of wetlands elsewhere. Mitigation banking has been tried in several parts of the country and does not have a very successful environmental track record. Without an easement, there is no "bank deposit." The easement language directly ties "protection" to a mitigation bank and cargo port so the complaint essentially clouds title to the island for purposes of establishing a mitigation bank deposit.

Perhaps a judge will decide the executive branch is not always above the law.

—Ed Friedman

February

Last night I dreamt of a great flock of bohemian waxwings roosting atop a towering white oak. This image conjured, from many sightings this week of puffed up robins flitting across roadways from tree to tree in search of sustenance. I imagined the painted beauties of my dreams, having flown in from some exotic place of wintry splendor as harbingers of spring. It is this dream that gets me thinking about the Bay on this February morning.

Just about a year ago I rose early one Saturday morning and was treated to a real discovery of cedar and bohemian waxwings flocking to the small crabapple at the landing in Richmond. There had been great groups of both here that week. There was still quite a snow pack and no food on the ground so the fruit was quite a draw. The birds flew suddenly across the Kennebec and landed in an oak of considerable size along the shores of Swan Island. It is for this reason I decided to try to walk across the ice that morning to the shore of the island. Normally I would think of this as foolhardy in this particular spot, but the lure of the birds was too great. We wouldn't have good ice much longer, and the warm rays of the sun would soon bring out the ticks despite the snow. So, I took the first steps across the tide line. For me, this is the scariest and most difficult act when negotiating ice in the river.

The Kennebec is, of course, tidal here with an average rise and fall of three to five feet. The tide appeared to be slack, the most opportune state in which to cross any river, frozen or not. I move slowly across to the middle of the channel. It is only about 400 feet from the mainland to the island, but somehow out here in the middle, a lone human feels very vulnerable knowing the strength of the current and the fickle nature of tidal ice. However, this is good ice; some say the best in the world. Kennebec ice was prized and was shipped to the far corners of the globe before the invention of refrigeration. Nothing remains of the great industry but fading memories and old foundation pilings covered in mud visible in the spring. That year, the ice was fine and would have made the residents of the former Perkins Township proud and wealthy for the year.

As I approached the tide line at the edge of the island, I recalled watching a pair of fox the year before at this time. It was sunset and the full moon was rising. The lengthening pink light illuminated the fur of a robust male fox crossing the ice. He impatiently waited for his smaller and more timid and wise consort to negotiate the great barrier of snow at the tide line of the island. This snow pack rises and falls with the tide like a great, heavy skirt around the land. Twice a day this enormous petticoat cracks and groans as it buckles around rocks and shore. There are places where a fox, or a human, could fall into a crevasse and wedge tight. Proper footing is paramount at the tide line. I decide to pick my way home with my ski pole instead of up and over the ice onto the island. Being a nimble quadruped, the fox could skillfully bound over the last obstacle and I could not.

On my way back to the shore I look east toward Dresden and old Pownalborough, the former Lincoln County seat of government and the jumping off point for the human settlement of the upper Kennebec Valley. The day is sunny, but cool, the breeze now

A Friend of Merrymeeting Bay plays in February waters, with pressure ridges towering in the background.

coming with the tide up river. I stand at river's edge and look out at the green cans frozen in the 3 foot ice that mark the old breakwater which once served as a landing point for early settlers. It is here in the summer that great schools of striper feed voraciously. One day in June, I thought my seaworthy kayak would be swamped by the roiling behavior of these toothy feeders at this very spot. It is here that I see the occasional wayward seal riding the tide advantageously feeding on the various types of anadromous fish. I have been told that in the 1940's, a 4oo pound sturgeon was caught just up river at "Striper Hole," Now it seems you might have to wait a lifetime to witness a 6 foot Atlantic sturgeon breach. I catch sight of something down river. A group of eagles hunkered over like dwarves haggling over some bloody prize. Last year I counted a group of eight mature and immature eagles keeping the ravens at bay as they argued over bait left by ice fishermen. The eagles are the sentinels of the island.

I can see the goldfinches brightening and the cardinals dulling down and I know it will soon be time for the ice to start rotting and falling away. It is during this time of year that the island seems like a fortress. There is no safe ice to cross and there is no sure spot to disembark from, nor a safe place to land because of the swift moving water, but it won't be long before the channel to the island is completely open and I might row easily to the shores. The river will race to the sea, brown from the rain and melt. It will hastily usher the last of the great bergs downstream, sweeping them aside to make way for the spring. Soon enough the landing will be busy again with all manner of folks who crave the liquid stage of the river. People will flock here as soon as the floats go in. Big Bayliner cruise boats will start to appear at the moorings. Every year more and more go in. These moorings provide us rowers with an interesting sort of obstacle course to negotiate.

As I think about another season on the Bay, I am hopeful interest in the ecological and historical preservation of this 10,000 acre

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2008 Accomplishments: How We Protected Merrymeeting Bay

Media

- **Print:** Approximately 13 print articles: Education, Atlantic Salmon Endangered Species Proposal, Fish Passage, Androscoggin Upgrade Proposal, Water Quality, Outings, Chops Hydro Project
- **Television:** Local Cable (Biddeford and Brunswick): safe fish passage and Atlantic salmon
- **Radio:** Maine Public Radio, WBOR & WMPG: safe passage and Atlantic salmon

Volunteers

- Minimum 3500 volunteer hours (438 days)
- 120 volunteers

Membership

- 443 members (20 new members)
- Speaker Series: 208 people
- Outside 2008 (Paddle Series & Walks): 60 people
- Newsletters: 4

Funds Leveraged and Grants

- $1,281,000 for Kennebec River Estuary Project
- $46,700 for staffing, general operations, fish passage, and aerial vegetation & land use study 10 year update

Outreach Presentations

- DMR Spring Running, Augusta
- Richmond Days
- F.W. Horch, Brunswick
- Topsham Garden Club
- Peace Action Maine
- Radio & T.V: Safe fish passage and Atlantic salmon

Education

- Two Bay Days: 352 students
- Hall-Dale on the Bay: 80 students
- School Visits: 23 (20 critter visits, 834 students, 34 teachers, 12 schools)
- Web site updates-extensive additions to Cybrary & Friends of Merrymeeting Bay links

Research

- Finished final phase of Circulation Study
- Assisted MDIF&W with bald eagle breeding surveys
- Began 10 year update of Aerial vegetation and land use study
- Water Quality Monitoring – 26 sites

Conservation and Stewardship

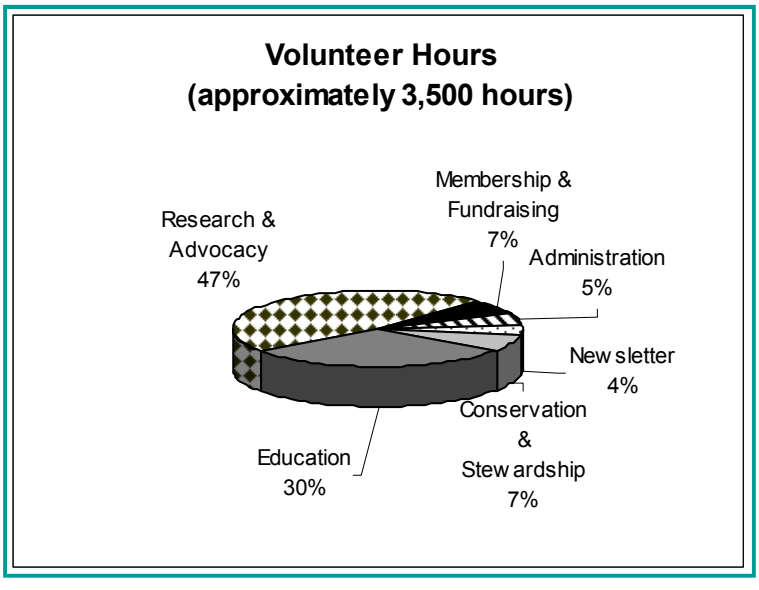
- Total Protected in 2008: 733 acres
- Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition – 720 acres Kennebec River Estuary Project:-LMF
- Conservation Easements - 13 acres in Richmond -1700'water frontage
- Stewardship- All easements monitored

Advocacy (postings, letters, testimony, etc)

- Merrymeeting Bay Wildlife Sanctuary signs
- Appeals to Superior and Maine Supreme Court: fish passage
- Filed ESA salmon lawsuit in Federal Court
- ESA Salmon proposal and critical habitat comments
- Stop development of Maine's top prehistoric archeological site
- Land for Maine's Future
- Chops Hydro Project: FOMB intervener
- Presumpscot River accord illegal
- American eel protection
- Water rights (Wells, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport)
- Sears Island/ umbrella mitigation bank
- Plum Creek
- Submitted water quality upgrade on the Androscoggin River
- Fish Consumption Advisories

Additional Accomplishments

- Hire new Executive Coordinator: Misty Gorski
- Received Peacemaker Award from Peace Action Maine



From the Chair

2008 was literally a watershed year for FOMB. Some of our important projects addressed issues far beyond the area and scope of the immediate Bay shores and waters while affecting them just the same. From clean water to species extinction and protecting the right to appeal, we worked to ensure what many of us believe are issues and certainly privileges and rights inherent in our society and democracy.

In 1972, largely due to the work of Maine Senator Ed Muskie, Congress passed the Clean Water Act with its broad goal of restoring and maintaining the "chemical, physical, and biological integrity" of the nation's waters to support "the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water." Inspiration for Muskie and poster child for the Act, was the filthy Androscoggin River flowing into Merrymeeting Bay. The EPA was given responsibility to ensure all water bodies were "fishable and swimmable" by 1983, and by 1985, all discharges of toxic pollutants to our nation's waters were to cease. Flash forward to 2008 and here we are, cleaner but with chemical discharges and physical barriers still preventing required "chemical, physical, and biological integrity."

Based on up to six years of data collected by our well trained volunteer water quality monitors, we are able to show the lower Androscoggin River is actually meeting a higher classification [B] than its current classification [C]. As the controlling statute 38 M.R.S.A. § 464 (F) (4) states: *"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."* Even if our data didn't quite show attainment with Class B standards, DEP submission guidelines specify: "*When proposing an upgrade in classification, recommend waters that either presently attain or with reasonable application of improved treatment or Best Management Practices (BMPs), could reasonably be expected to attain, the standards and criteria of a higher proposed class*." Certainly the data show us close.

Our testing methodologies are supported by EPA quality assurance plans. Despite support from the municipalities of Brunswick, Topsham, Durham and Lewiston as well as a broad constituency of interested groups, the DEP chose to oppose our upgrade proposal. We are working with the legislature, DEP and Androscoggin River Alliance to move the possibility of this upgrade forward.

In 2005, FOMB and the Maine Toxics Action Coalition joined river activists Doug and Tim Watts in filing a citizen's petition to list the Kennebec population of Atlantic salmon under the Endangered Species Act [ESA]. Salmon on eight small Maine rivers had previously been listed under the ESA [2000] but large rivers, where salmon actually still survived, were not included. The feds found our petition had scientific merit and in 2006 their published status review offered a scathing indictment of dams and the regulations that govern them.

The review suggested salmon on not only the Kennebec but also the Androscoggin and Penobscot Rivers were at great risk of extinction. If the National Marine Fisheries Service and US Fish & Wildlife Service find a petition has merit, they have one year in which to make a decision on whether or not to list a proposed species. With no action to this end by 2008, we joined with the Center for Biological Diversity and Doug Watts in filing a lawsuit [our first!] against the Services to compel a listing decision. Shortly thereafter, federal agencies came out with their proposal for an expanded listing to include salmon populations in all three rivers as endangered and to establish Critical Habitat for the salmon in association with the listing. The public comment period has passed and by court order, the agencies must reach a decision by the end of April. The government paid our attorney fees. Next to eels, salmon ascend highest on our rivers. If we protect salmon, other species too, will reap the benefits.

After several years working through the state regulatory system to gain safe and effective migratory fish passage around hydroelectric dams, we ended up in Superior Court appealing several Board of Environmental Protection decisions against us. We were defeated here largely based on the Court's interpretation that since agency decisions were not "final orders" we had no right to an appeal and therefore the Court had no jurisdiction. With support in the form of amicus briefs filed by Peace Action Maine, Friends of Sebago Lake, Forest Ecology Network and Penobscot Bay Watch, we appealed this decision to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. While the Law Court ultimately ruled against us because they felt the BEP had unlimited discretion, they did affirm the decisions in question were final agency actions and agreed, hollow as it was, we had the right to appeal.

Other accomplishments of note included direct contact with well over 1,000 students both in the field and in the class. We continue years of education efforts aimed at bringing hands-on Bay experiences to elementary school children. The public perception and effort is catching up as to much acclaim, Richard Louv's book ***Last Child in the Woods*** was published and distributed. We are now a member of the recently formed *No Child Left Inside Coalition*.

Weather conditions this year provided high river flows at a time we could take advantage of to finish field work on our Current Study [see expanded article in this issue]. Investigating spatial and temporal circulation patterns in the Bay and tributaries has already provided valuable information much of it quantified for the first time. Results have real-world applications as we evaluate for example, proposed tidal energy projects or expanded development of homes or marinas in the Shoreland Zone. Animations of drifter movements can be viewed on our web site.

In 2008 we completed one conservation easement in Richmond protecting highly desirable fields and flowage. As part of the Maine Wetland Protection Coalition, we leveraged $1,281,000 protecting about 700 acres in the area through the Kennebec River Estuary Project funded by the Land for Maine's Future program. We continue to partner and work collaboratively with an extensive array of groups and agencies.

Unique among many environmental organizations is the breath of our work. The issues we face, from health care to tax reform to environmental sustainability are intimately tied together. In a world of collapsing economy and controversial funding of aggressive acts

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Essex River, Massachusetts February 1974, 5PM…

We sit in a smelt shack built by my father and his close friend, Jesse Fuller, a retired Massachusetts marine warden cum fisherman extraordinaire. The smelt shack was a tidy affair built with great care and attention to detail. Its green canvas walls held the heat in and gave off a faint, sweet odor of wet hay and jute twine. The frame, made of 1"x3" wood was a study in simple and symmetrical design. The walls, roof and floor were all held together by hook and eye hasps so the shack could be disassembled and removed from the ice with little effort. An occasional groan from the ice on the Essex River reverberated through the shack. We had arrived at the top of the tide and the quarter waxing moon had just risen above the salt marsh to the east. To the west the day lay failing in deep purple and red. A few stars shown overhead. The Coleman lanterns hooked to the ceiling cast ample light and heat.

Intently, we all stare down at the recycled fly-fishing lines waiting for a bite. The fly-lines are easier to handle than the braided Dacron more commonly found in shacks. They don't tangle like the other lines do. This is an advanced smelt camp filled with advanced fishermen. There are a dozen lines. Four of us occupy the tent. Shoulder to shoulder, my brother Chip, my father, Jesse Fuller and myself. Each of us perched on small wooden box seats hunched over the race hole. We are meat fishing for money. Fresh smelts bring a buck a pound at the local restaurant. Good money. The last week we had caught over fifty pounds.

Tonight was my night. . . .

At the ripe age of eight I was a commercial fisherman. Heady stuff for a born and raised Gloucester-man! Clamming seemed so simple compared to smelting. Smelting required finesse, a certain knack and skill set. This was not my first foray in smelt fishing. I had been at least a dozen times before. I knew the small #8 hooks were sharp and I knew the worms could bite! And a buck a pound!

At three lines a piece the fishing should be simple for one experienced angler to handle. Each line is separated by a half foot or so of water. Four of us side by side stare raptly at the black water in the race, the Colemans hissing overhead. The tide has turned and whirling eddies shift the lines nervously below. My hooks are all baited with fresh sand worm dredged in corn meal. My father leans forward a little and we all pay attention. One of his lines twitches and then goes slack. He leans back saying nothing. We all turn our eyes back to our own lines. Jesse's hand flips out and snatches his center line and a small silver flash of fish leaps from the hole. Jesse releases his catch into a waiting pail while simultaneously releasing his hook, line and sinker back down the race hole, bait intact. This is a study in measured perfection amongst smelters in the know.

Another of Jesse's lines leaps around the race and he repeats the performance. I am nearly overwhelmed with excitement. Lines began jigging wildly around the race hole, a flurry of hands grabbing them. Immediately I find my own lines whizzing around and had landed several smelt when the unthinkable happened: A tangle of epic proportions. While tending one line another was hit, twisting it firmly on a third. Not noticing this I dropped the line in hand and in a flash all were braided together. I think welded is a better term. My commercial fishing days had come to an abrupt, inglorious end. Or had they? Without a word my father reaches over and deftly cuts my lines off the main pole and draws them cleanly from the water with a smelt still attached. He pulls one of his lines off the pole and puts it in front of me.

A whole mess of smelts.

Meanwhile, Jesse and Chip are both experiencing my fate. Lines twisted mercilessly together. More lines are cut and only four lines remain. One for each of us, for that is all that is required. We'll deal with the tangled lines later. The fishing is so fast that two large pails are nearly full in a two hour flurry of fishing never again repeated in my life. The tally for the night? Ninety six pounds.

Thirty four years later both my brothers and I sit at a smelt camp operation in Randolph, Maine. Smelts are still a buck a pound at the supermarket. The familiar black race hole in the tent yawns back at us. Both Jesse Fuller and my father are gone now. The Essex River smelt run a distant pleasant memory. Jess and dad re-established that run on the Essex River using burlap bags coated with smelt eggs from a donor river in Maine whose name I've long since forgotten. The rigs at these smelt camps are coarse affairs. Ropes with sash weights and dull hooks, they are designed for the novice. We ignore the rigs and produce our own fly-line rigs. Lines baited and in the water we reminisce on some great smelting trips until the first line twitches. . . .

—Nate Gray

New look at an olde fried smelt recipe

Ingredients:

- One mess of smelts, headed and gutted
- Flour
- Enough cooking oil of choice to fill medium pan up about 1/8" to 1/4"
- One beaten egg
- Corn meal
- Panko (a Japanese breadcrumb available at Hannaford or Shaw's)

Dredge smelts in flour first. This will give the eggs something to stick to. Combine Panko and cornmeal on cutting board. Dip floured smelts in egg and then dredge in Panko-cornmeal mixture. Fry until golden brown. Enjoy!

—Nate Gray

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 Alewive ❑ $20 Smelt ❑ Other

Name

RR# or Street Address

Town/State/Zip

Phone Email

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

❍ Renewal ❍ New Member ❍ Send me information about volunteer opportunities.

Thanks to Will Everitt for design and layout of this newsletter edition.

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February

mingling of waters will exponentially increase from year to year, for we must constantly adjust our actions as humans to maintain the fragile balance of myriad fauna and flora of which we are part. In these days of declining fish populations, PCB's, dioxins, mercury, dams and foreign hitchhiking plants, not least the general effects of climate change; all that complicated by the downturn in our economy, how are we to decide where to put our energies? Economic realities may heavily influence and control our very existence and quite possibly predict just what gets saved. I am also hopeful we will each find ways to work toward achieving balance to preserve this unique and diverse gathering of rivers and tides so all species may continue to access the Bay. Let us all imagine what we can do.

—Sarah Cowperthwaite

From the Chair *continued from page 5*

around the world [by all sides], it is a good time to remember the immortal words of John Donne: "*No man is an island, entire of itself...any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."*

In these trying times it is encouraging to know our organization continues operations in large part thanks to volunteer efforts and that individual financial contributions continue at past levels. As grant funding dries up, membership investment becomes more critical.

Thanks so much for your continued support.

Respectfully,
—Ed Friedman

Our Primary Partners

Friends of Casco Bay
Friends of Sebago Lake
Penobscot Bay Watch
Forest Ecology Network
Center for Biological Diversity
Friends of Kennebec Salmon
Peace Action Maine
Chop Pt. School
Bowdoin College Environmental Studies
Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of Marine Resources
Maine Toxics Action Coalition
Endangered Species Coalition
Androscoggin River Alliance
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition
Patagonia Outlet, Freeport
Maine ECO
The Nature Conservancy
SAD 75
Brunswick TV 3
Stantec

FOMB staff Misty Gorski and volunteer Bill Milam attending Friends of Casco Bay's annual water quality training.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
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Treasurer's Report

FOMB improved its financial position in 2008 by realizing $124,000 of cash inflows against $78,000 of cash outlays. Liquid assets increased to approximately $250,000 from $220,000 a year ago, despite $17,000 decline in market value of mutual funds. At the end of 2008 FOMB held $33,000 in mutual funds, comprising only 13% of overall liquid assets and continues to be nothing more than a 'passive' investor (i.e. all of the equity positions resulted from in-kind stock donations). Roughly $55,000 of FOMB's liquid assets are restricted to protect conservation easements of or projects tied to grants. Most of these assets earn interest in local CD's or money market funds; the mutual funds are invested in a social investment account [Calvert]. $57,000 or 46% of 2008 receipts came from grants or restricted donations; $44,000 or 36% came from unrestricted donations (most of this deriving from the generous $37,000 bequest of the John Linehan Trust), and; $18,000 or 14% derived from membership dues, both renewals and new memberships.

Most of FOMB's 2008 outlays went directly towards benefiting the Bay – only 5% of total expenses went towards Membership and Fundraising (which includes the newsletter and postage for the annual appeal). A major use of funds in 2008, $16,000 or 21%, went towards legal costs in our safe fish passage campaign, which achieved solid results last year. $18,000 or 23% was invested in studying the Bay by way of the Current Study and Aerial Photography initiatives. Staffing was the largest single component of expenditures at 35%, but should rightfully be considered part of the programs that benefited from the efforts of our staff, such as Bay Day and outreach initiatives.

—Respectfully submitted by Vance Stephenson