



**Frenchman Bay  
Conservancy**

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**SPRING NEWSLETTER  
MAY 2024**



# IN THIS ISSUE

**On The Cover:**

FBC members met up for a hike at Taft Point Preserve in Gouldsboro, ME. The coastal trail is a great option for families, with a beach to explore at low tide. A reminder that almost all FBC trails are dog-friendly, but please be mindful of leash rules.

**02**

President's Letter  
*Paul Parshley, Board President*

**03**

Protecting Partridge Cove  
*Aaron Dority, Executive Director*

**06**

Herb Hodgkins Monday Music  
Concert Series Poster

**07**

Upcoming Events:  
Outdoor Fun for All!

**09**

Honorary Giving

**10**

Restoring Resilience at the Jordan River  
Preserve, *Ellie Ezekiel, Dir. of Communications*

**12**

Volunteer Appreciation

**13**

Ecology Trivia! (Are You Smarter Than a 5th  
Grader?)

**14**

Support Our Work: This Is Our Watershed  
Moment, From the Forest to the Sea

*This newsletter is sponsored by Elizabeth's Fine Goods. Their generous support enables us to share our message and to continue protecting the land you love in Downeast Maine. You can visit their store in downtown Ellsworth at 124 Main Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605.*

# President's Letter

MAY 2024

Dear FBC Members and Friends,

By all measures, this indeed has been a “watershed” moment for Frenchman Bay Conservancy (FBC) with major achievements in land protection, stewardship, community engagement and fundraising. These successes were made possible by your overwhelming response to FBC’s From the Forest to the Sea capital campaign that surpassed the \$10 million target over a year ahead of schedule. We are forever grateful for your continuing generous support and encouragement.

Highlighting the year’s land protection achievements so far was our purchase of the Partridge Cove property in Lamoine this April -- a direct result of the capital campaign’s early success. You might recall Partridge Cove was to be the site of a controversial ‘glamp’-ground that was soundly rejected last year by public referendum. FBC used its new financial flexibility to act swiftly to purchase the site, with public support from the town and community. We are now fundraising for stewardship costs associated with the property – an estimated \$146,500 -- because immediate improvements are needed to allow safe public access.

Other recent land protection achievements include the acquisition of the Jordan River Preserve in Trenton last September and the Whitney Forest in Ellsworth last January. With your help FBC has now protected over 16,000 acres of critical forest, watershed, and coastal lands in eastern Hancock County.

FBC has been growing its stewardship capabilities in tandem with the inventory of conserved land. In the past year, major trail repairs have been made at Baker Hill in Sullivan and a beautiful new trail system at the Frenchman Bay Community Forest in Hancock should be ready for a grand opening this year. One of the biggest stewardship challenges to be undertaken by FBC is a salt marsh restoration project at the Jordan River Preserve, which is expected to cost almost \$1.5 million for Phase 1. Recognizing the need to engage the community and build broader understanding of the magnitude and importance of this project, FBC, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy in Maine, recently hosted a webinar on salt marsh restoration. The webinar describes how marshes protect against rising sea levels while sequestering large amounts of carbon. FBC’s plans for salt marsh restoration at Jordan River and a link to the webinar are provided later in the newsletter. If you haven’t already seen the webinar, I highly recommend it.

Also in the following pages you can learn more details about the many activities FBC has planned for the coming summer months. Headlining those events will be another season of the Herb Hodgkin’s Monday Music concert series at Tidal Falls.

Finally, on behalf of the board I would like to thank the great FBC team -- Aaron Dority, Thomasina DiBiase, Ellie Ezekiel, Garrett Black, Erin Witham, Austin Schuver, Kat Deely, Abigail Hansen, and our newest addition, Jane Parlee -- for their dedication and tireless work during the past year. Without them and YOU, none of these successes would have been possible.

Best regards,



Paul Parshley, FBC Board President









# PROTECTING PARTRIDGE COVE

Aaron Dority, FBC Executive Director

On a mid-April morning with the shining sun *almost* overpowering the chilly breeze, five of us walked the newly-acquired Partridge Cove property along the woods road that almost became a primary thoroughfare for a 90-site “glamping” campground. But, on this particular day, Frenchman Bay Conservancy staff were showing the property to Maine state agency employees as part of our funding application to the Land for Maine’s Future Program.

After only a short walk from Partridge Cove Road, we no longer heard any vehicle noise, and we could easily carry on a conversation while listening to the earliest Spring songbirds. We stopped briefly in a section of mature forest near the property’s namesake, on the southern section of that minimally-developed cove. The red maple trees’ flower buds were just beginning to open, creating a red hue in the canopy interspersed with spruce and pine. Garrett, FBC’s Stewardship Manager, spoke up at that moment, and pointed up at a pine with a perfectly crafted perch about fifty feet off the ground. Nestled comfortably in that spot, a porcupine was dozing, its dark coat of quills absorbing the warm sunshine. I could imagine how good it must feel to take a nap in the sun’s warm rays, surrounded by a tranquil forest and a quiet cove.



Thankfully, we were able to protect this stretch of undeveloped shoreline, with 228 acres of intact forest, and all of its tranquility for current and future generations to enjoy. Like many land conservation projects, the path to this outcome meandered between optimism, disappointment, and back again. We had our sights on this parcel in 2021 after the landowners had recently harvested timber, improved the road, and listed the property for sale. I drove the road at that time with Tom Nelson, Vice President of Woodlot Management Services with Prentiss & Carlisle, who oversaw the harvest. He explained how this active management would take a small volume of timber while allowing the remaining trees to grow - an example of timberland harvest as land stewardship. His wife, Tammy Nelson, was the seller's real estate agent at the time, and she had just represented the seller of a property that we acquired in Gouldsboro. A talented team, they were knowledgeable and helpful, and it seemed that we were off to a good start.

However, as often happens in real estate, our negotiations for the property didn't result in a signed contract at that time. Then, in the hot real estate market, an out-of-state developer went under contract on the land, with plans to develop 90 sites, and 103 dome structures, including space for staff lodging, a laundromat, and a wedding venue. It appeared that one of Lamoine's largest remaining forested parcels was about to be transformed into a jumping-off point for thousands of visitors annually to Acadia National Park.

However, local residents weren't ready to accept that fate for their community. Having completed a thoughtful comprehensive plan only a few years prior, a small, dedicated group of individuals under the banner of "Growing Lamoine Responsibly" hired an attorney and fought back. Finally, at a special town meeting attended by hundreds of local residents, the Town voted overwhelmingly to establish a moratorium on such developments, ending

the prospect of the proposed glampground.

When the property came back on the market, we again attempted to purchase it. FBC's Land Protection Manager for the Frenchman Bay region, Erin Witham, was the project lead, pursuing title examination, appraisal and other due diligence, along with writing a funding proposal to the Land for Maine's Future program.

Typically, we secure a property with a purchase and sale contract and then we take several months to raise the funds to purchase it. That was our approach with Whitney Community Forest in Ellsworth, the Jordan River Preserve in Trenton, and many others. However, in this instance, we needed an accelerated timeline, and the details of our contract remained confidential until we closed, roughly 45 days after signing. Instead of the conventional approach, we pursued a pay-it-forward approach. We used cash that we raised during our capital campaign, while continuing to fundraise for the stewardship costs associated with this property. Additional support for our campaign will fund this project as well as allow FBC to take advantage of other time-sensitive opportunities to conserve vital properties like this one in the future.

Now, we're looking forward to working with the Lamoine Conservation Commission, FBC members, friends and neighbors to develop our management plan for the land, including trail building. We're grateful for everyone who has contributed to our Watershed Moment capital campaign so far. Projects like this one are the reason that we launched our \$10 million fundraising venture. We'll continue fundraising for the campaign through the summer.

*If you haven't already,  
please consider making  
your gift to our Watershed  
Moment campaign.  
Together, we can protect  
more of Downeast Maine's  
open space before it  
disappears forever.*







HERB HODGKINS

# MONDAY MUSIC 2024

Live Music & Food Trucks  
Tidal Falls Preserve | 6 pm

Featuring:

**The Hot Suppers | July 15**

**Lazers in the Jungle | July 22**

**Ryan Blotnik Group with  
Mali Obomsawin | July 29**

**Caroline Cotter Band | Aug 5**



# UPCOMING EVENTS

*Guided naturalist hikes & outdoor fun for all!*

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**23**  
MAY

## Community Hike at Schoodic Bog Preserve

Join FBC volunteers on a group hike at Schoodic Bog Preserve in Sullivan. The 500-acre Schoodic Bog Preserve sits at the foot of the southern slope of Schoodic Mountain, and includes a 150-acre bog and surrounding upland that connects to the Donnell Pond Public Reserved Land. The purpose of this hike is to visit one of FBC's longest trails, a 4+ mile loop.

**01**  
JUNE

## Lady Slipper Orchids at Day Ridges Preserve

Located on Route 1 in Gouldsboro, the Day Ridges Preserve offers two miles of hiking trails. Extensive bog bridging allows hikers to explore a cedar swamp and wind around impressive boulders, also known as glacial erratics. This hike will be focused on scouting out spring ephemerals, namely, the beautiful Lady Slipper orchids that bloom in the area each spring.

**15**  
JUNE

## Gardening for Pollinators: How to Create a Pollinator-Friendly Habitat Garden

Come sit a spell in the FBC native plant garden and learn all about pollinators and how to create your own pollinator habitat! Led by Lauren Landers, a gardening writer and active Master Gardener volunteer, this talk will teach you tips for transforming your yard. Whether you want to help bees or simply attract beneficial insects for a healthier vegetable garden, this talk will teach you what you need to know!

**22**  
JUNE

## Fern ID Walk at Simon Trail Preserve

The fern walk is back! Local fern enthusiast and FBC volunteer Harold Peachey will be leading a fern walk at the beautiful Simon Trail Preserve. Harold will focus on teaching participants the fundamentals of fern identification.

**27**  
JUNE

## Ellsworth Naturalist Hike at Jordan Homestead Preserve

You don't have to travel far for a dose of nature! Join FBC for an early summer hike at Jordan Homestead Preserve in Ellsworth. A commonly visited trail, prepare for a deep dive into both the natural and historical knowledge of this property. The hike will be led by Lamoine resident and Maine Master Naturalist, Carolyn Ackerman.

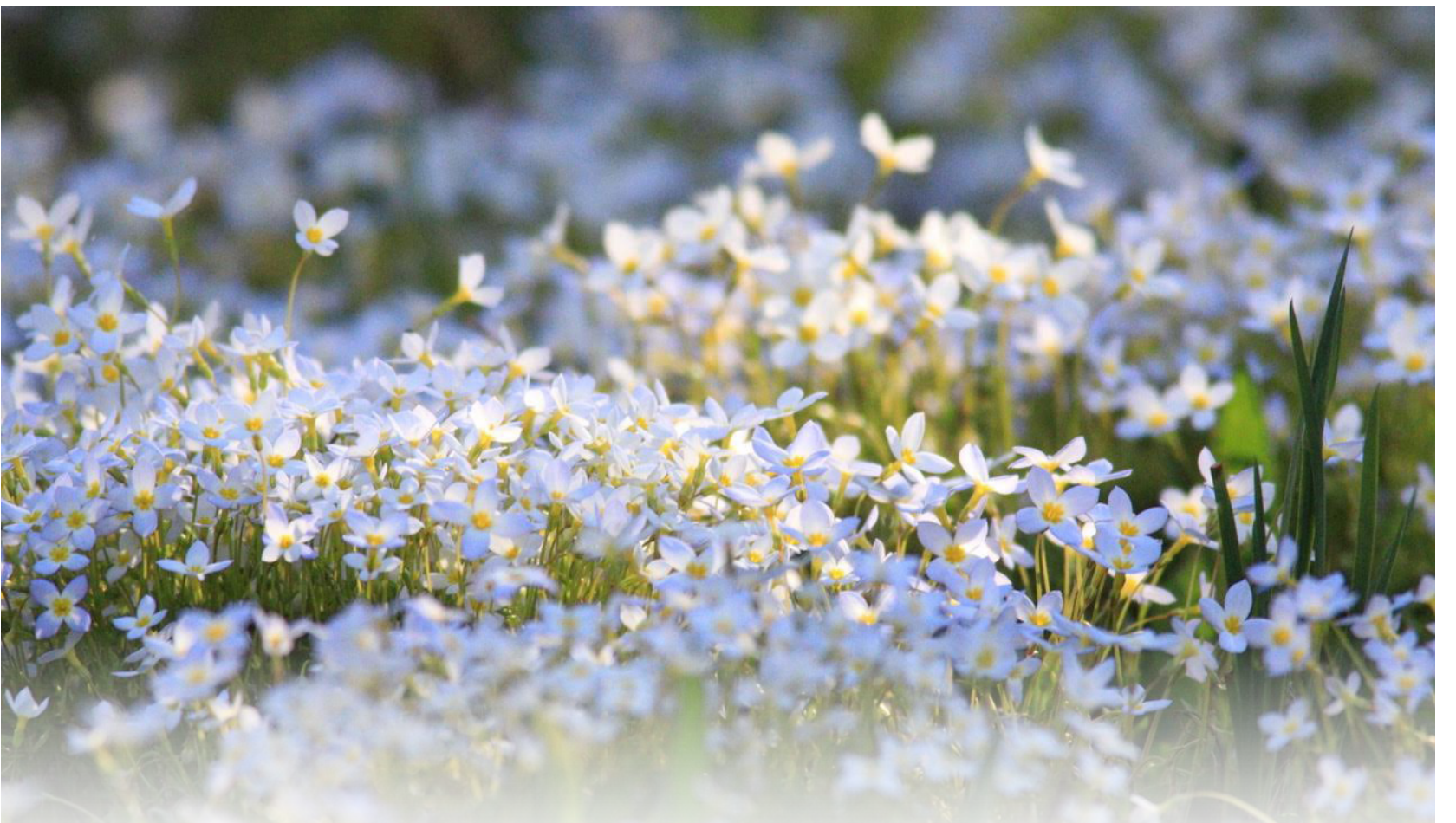
*Register today at [FrenchmanBay.Org/Event/](https://FrenchmanBay.Org/Event/)*





*Scenes from an FBC field trip. In late April, FBC members gathered together to visit vernal pools in Ellsworth, learning about wood frogs, salamanders, and looking for the ever elusive fairy shrimp. Guided hikes offer naturalist skills to curious minds of all ages. Plus, they give you skills to impress your friends and family with!*





# HONORARY GIVING

FBC would like to recognize honorary gifts given in memoriam or in honor of with our sincerest thanks.

## **In Memoriam**

*Adina Back  
Rick Beckjord  
Clio Chafee  
Richard Chafee  
Steve Crabtree  
Oliver & Eleanor Crosby  
Casey Mayzel Eakes  
Rebecca Janenda*

*Hank Lescynski  
Curtiss Martin  
Jim Patterson  
David Robinson  
Billy Smith  
Helen S. Thomsen  
Stephen Weber  
Virginia Wright*

## **In Honor Of**

*Peter & Janet Burnett  
Eleanor & Lee Fairbanks  
Lisa Heyward  
Nancy Patterson*

*Stuart & Linda Thomsen  
Richard & Christine Wellman  
Zabriskie Family*



# RESTORING RESILIENCE *at the* JORDAN RIVER PRESERVE

**Ellie Ezekiel, Director of Communications & Community Engagement**

In September 2023, Frenchman Bay Conservancy closed on the purchase of the former Bar Harbor Golf Course in Trenton, ME off of Jordan River Road. The 186-acre property is a valuable stretch of undeveloped coastline -- a diminishing resource in our region. The property's history as a golf course and manicured outdoor space has allowed for a broad spectrum of ecosystems to exist on this site. It includes areas of tidal and freshwater wetlands, small stream corridors, open fields, and forests, following the general form of a coast in Hancock County.

The on-going threat of development and privatization of the coastline has made properties such as this one increasingly rare -- and increasingly expensive -- so FBC worked quickly to take advantage of this conservation opportunity while it was available.

Upon closing on the property, we knew that the biggest challenge would be restoring the natural ecosystem on the site which has been manipulated to function as a golf course. Examples of changes made to the property include the burying of streams and installation of culverts, as well as damming the tidal salt marsh to create a freshwater pond feature.

While FBC has taken on restoration projects in the past, such as replacing a culvert along Jellison Brook to ensure safe fish passage, the scope and scale of this project is a first for our organization.

We contracted with an ecosystem engineering firm, Inter-Fluve, that has a local Maine office and is familiar with our region, to complete a preliminary assessment of the restoration opportunities and associated costs.

Their findings came back that the aforementioned dam, or earthen berm, that was installed to create the freshwater pond represents the most acute impairment on the site, as it, "...blocks organism passage, eliminates tidal exchange, inundates a former tidal salt marsh, and prevents future marsh migration." Furthermore, their preliminary report stated that, "Removal of the earthen berm presents the most impactful and manageable restoration opportunity at this site."

Supported by the results from the study, FBC has now committed to the removal of the earthen berm, but it isn't as easy as just breaching the dam. Our ultimate goal for this restoration project is to restore the historic ecological function of this site by allowing for full tidal flow and maintaining healthy salt marsh. We'd like to restore the resilience of this property to benefit both the ecosystem and our communities. And that means careful planning, permitting, patience, and persistence. I've included a high-level overview of the process in the bullet points on the following page.



## **Dam Removal Process:**

- 1. Detailed Site Survey.** *The preliminary report captured baseline information about the status of the earthen berm, the depth of the pond, and sediment within the pond, to inform decision-making, but a more thorough site survey will provide needed specifics.*
- 2. Sampling Accumulated Sediment.** *The property's history as a golf course means there was likely high use of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizer on the property. With the site's proximity to a healthy mudflat and mussel seed bed, sediment analysis is a necessary precaution to inform how sediment will be handled.*
- 3. Data Collection on Water Levels.** *Deploying data loggers to monitor the water levels within the pond, the river, and the existing tidal wetlands on the property.*
- 4. Vegetation Monitoring & Management Plan.** *The preliminary report included an assessment of the plant species present on the site. Additional monitoring is needed to inform invasive species management and impact on current habitat.*
- 5. Restoration Analysis & Designs.** *Once data collection is complete, a more formal analysis will be completed along with designs for restoration.*

- 6. Project Permitting & Oversight.** *We will be working closely with all necessary local, state, and federal agencies as we move forward, so the project will have informed decision-making and appropriate oversight.*
- 7. Restoration Construction Begins!** *With your support, FBC staff dedication, and a smooth permitting process, we hope to begin in 2025.*

## **Community Involvement:**

This is a project that we expect to take years to accomplish. We want to make sure that our friends and neighbors are with us along the way -- for the ups, the downs, the data collection, and the ultimate success story. We partnered with The Nature Conservancy in Maine to put together a webinar on the value of salt marshes for our ecosystem and community, as well as more information about our restoration plans, and we hope you'll consider watching it to learn more. Scan the QR code below with your smartphone to access the recording, and use passcode: EGC+JY0+. If you have trouble accessing, or you do not have a smartphone, you can email [Ellie@FrenchmanBay.Org](mailto:Ellie@FrenchmanBay.Org).

Stayed tuned as we continue to work on plans for trails, access, and educational opportunities for all.







# VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

*Thank you for all that you do!*

Every year, we rely on an incredible team of volunteers to help us care for the land that we love here in eastern Hancock County. Our diverse crew of volunteers - all different ages, professions, backgrounds, and experiences - come together with a shared passion to take care of our preserves and trails.

Whether you're a trail crew member that has helped carry heavy bog-bridging along a muddy trail, a guided hike leader that has shared their birding knowledge with budding naturalists, or a caring community member that choose to spend their Saturday morning helping to clean up Card Brook, we sincerely appreciate your time and dedication.

Volunteer opportunities will be posted on our website over the next few months, and we hope to see you there. If you ever have any questions about how to get involved, you can reach out to [Info@FrenchmanBay.org](mailto:Info@FrenchmanBay.org) or call (207) 422-2328.







# ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A 5TH GRADER?

In April, FBC participated in a non-profit trivia fundraiser at Fogtown Brewing Company's Ellsworth Taproom. Inspired by our program sponsoring outdoor education in all 10 public elementary schools in our service area, we thought it would be fun to test the teams on their 5th grade ecology knowledge.

**Now it's your turn!** Do your best to answer the following 10 questions. Good luck!

1. What is the tallest species of tree in Maine?
2. Transpiration is the part of what natural cycle?
3. What is a group of porcupines called?
4. What type of organism gets nutrients by eating waste or dead organisms?
5. Temperature, light, air, and water are all \_\_\_\_\_ parts of the environment?
6. A biome is an area that consists of similar plants, fungi, animals, and \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Primary producers are the foundation of what system?
8. What is a beaver's home called?
9. What are the four main components of a habitat?
10. What watershed is Fogtown's Ellsworth Beer Garden?



# This is our watershed moment, from the forest to the sea.

*Together we can protect vulnerable ecosystems across eastern Hancock County - landscapes that help store planet-warming carbon, safeguard our fisheries, and defend us against the impacts of floods and storms.*

*Our organization relies on donations from supporters like you. Please consider making a donation to support our mission to protect the land you love today.*

## **ONLINE GIVING**

Visit [secure.donationpay.org/frenchmanbay/](https://secure.donationpay.org/frenchmanbay/) to give online. You can become a part of the **FBC Sustainer's Circle** by making a monthly recurring donation that ensures FBC receives your support throughout the year. Choose "Repeat this gift every month" when you make your donation.

## **GIFT MEMBERSHIP**

Give the gift of an FBC membership to your favorite conservation enthusiast. Recipients will receive a welcome letter, FBC trail guide, and a full year of FBC printed & digital publications.

## **GIVE BY MAIL**

Gifts can be sent by mail to Frenchman Bay Conservancy, PO Box 150, Hancock, ME 04640.

## **SECURITIES**

Speak with your tax advisor about donating appreciated securities to Frenchman Bay Conservancy. If you wish to donate stock, please contact Director of Development Thomasina DiBiase at [thomasina@frenchmanbay.org](mailto:thomasina@frenchmanbay.org); (207) 422-2328 for transfer instructions.

## **PLANNED GIVING**

Communicating with FBC about your plans to remember the organization in your estate can help us plan for the future. If you're interested, contact Thomasina DiBiase at [thomasina@frenchmanbay.org](mailto:thomasina@frenchmanbay.org); (207) 422-2328.





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**Austin Schuver**, *Land Protection Manager*

**Erin Witham**, *Land Protection Manager*

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