

WATERSHED NEWS

Pen Bay Stewards Are Back: Notes from the Field

by Monica Morris, Pen Bay Stewards, Class of 2022



I'd barely been living in Belfast for a few weeks when I met a woman who would become known to me and my family and friends as my first real friend in Belfast. One of her many great suggestions for actively engaging in the Belfast community was to join the Pen Bay Stewards program. My friend participated in the program a few years back and she could not say enough about the gifts the program had given her, from the friends she made to the things she learned. She gushed about how the spring and summer spent in the program connected her to the town, its people and the local issues of the day. I held my friend in high regard and decided right then and there that, as soon as Covid permitted, I would join in. I had my opportunity in the spring of 2022 when the program reconvened after a two-year hiatus. (Continued on page 4)

WOW! What a Trip!

Troy Howard Middle School Students Explore Hurricane Island

David Wessels

Teacher, Troy Howard Middle School

On June 22, 14 middle school students, Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition (BBWC) board member Noah Gilchrist, and I embarked on an incredible educational adventure thanks to Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership and the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition.



Early in the morning, the sleepy students boarded the ferry to Vinalhaven. For some students, it was their first time on a boat; others came from fishing families so they had knowledge to share. As we boarded our second vessel, the *Sunny*, in Vinalhaven, the excitement grew. The morning fog had lifted, and we flew across the water, drinking up that good crisp air.

By the time we reached the island, the kids were ready to explore. We walked along the beautiful island trails with Liv and Alex, gracious hosts who were knowledgeable, flexible and sensitive to the needs of the group. They achieved a perfect balance between structured and unstructured time, allowing ample time for the kids to explore. Someone found an enormous beached lion's mane jelly-fish, which everyone enjoyed jiggling. Liv and Alex then gathered us back for lessons on the history of the island.



On the dock, we learned about the aquaculture research conducted on Hurricane Island. Pulling lantern nets filled with mature scallops out of the bay, we learned how scallops grow and how they are raised for food. The students had many great questions and were eager to get their hands in the water and in the nets. Next, we collected plankton and took our samples back to the lab where students identified different species of zooplankton and phytoplankton.



Back down to the dock, we examined spat bags freshly retrieved from the sea, cataloged the different species of scallops and gathered the young scallops as seed for the next generation. Students counted and measured the more than 300 baby scallops, while delighting in the various lifeforms that populated the bags. They found sea squirts which, to their delight, could be aimed and squirted at friends. They discovered skeleton shrimp, arctic boring clams, and even a young nudibranch (a colorful soft-bodied mollusk).

At the lab, we dissected adult scallops gathered from the lantern nets. Students sketched scallop anatomy, learning more about the inner workings of these miraculous creatures. Even though the students were tired, they were reluctant to hop back on the *Sunny* to make the long voyage home. They had many questions about how one finds their way back to Hurricane Island to live, work, and play. None of us wanted to leave! (Continued on page 3)

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

What A Trip, continued from page 2

I am always amazed to see how groups transform when placed in different contexts. This group was a diverse one from different grades, cliques, and social classes. They were not necessarily friends and would not have hung out at school, but by the end of the day, they were happily chatting, collaborating, teaching, and supporting one another. At lunch, several kids offered to help with the enormous pile of lunch dishes, and, despite my efforts to drag them away, they insisted on finishing the whole stack. Some struggled with climbing over the steep granite domes; others were squeamish about the slimy spat bags. But, in a supportive environment, these challenges became opportunities to work across differences and to discover what they could do on their own and with others. The instructors on Hurricane Island held this space with a light touch, allowing kids to struggle a bit, to form their own questions, choose their own challenges, find their own strengths, and support one another in the work. Sometimes the real teacher is a nudibranch, sometimes a granite dome, sometimes a stack of dishes. With the leash off, kids have an uncanny knack for finding the teachers they need.

Many thanks to the BBWC for organizing and supporting this rewarding day. We're looking forward to

next year!



If you would like to support this amazing opportunity for students, send a check to BBWC earmarked "Hurricane Island."

Update: All of Belfast Climate Dialogue

BBWC is a participating member of the All of Belfast Climate Dialogue (ABCD), a project of the Belfast Free Library. Newsletter readers will want to check the ABCD programs for the fall of 2022 and the winter of 2023 by clicking to https://belfastlibrary.org/abcd-events/. Brenda Harrington and her teammates, Sarah Kirn and Misty Mallar, are organizing climate-relevant presentations and activities along a wide range of topics.

Emerging in early 2020, ABCD has facilitated conversations about diverse aspects of climate change in the community and has also recorded and collected these discussions which can be found at https://abcdbelfast.omeka.net/items/browse. ABCD also has preserved the recording of the community dialog on the Belfast Climate Plan as well as the presentations given at the shoreline property owners' meeting in summer, 2022. On the ABCD site, readers can browse topics of interest to them.. And to delight the eye, readers will find the 1st and 2nd place winning photos of the 2022 ABCD Photo Contest

1st Place Winner in the Placees Category: Misty Morning

Daniel Hanscombe





1st Place Winner: in the Play Category: Walking the Beach

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Pen Bay Stewards, continued from page 1

I showed up for the orientation meeting where we got to hear from some of the steering committee members about the goals of the program and the adventures ahead. As the day progressed and I listened to the speakers and the questions from my fellow stewards, I knew that this impressive group of people could teach me much about environmental issues. As the first day ended, I knew I was in for an adventure that would at least change my view of the world, and maybe even change the course of my daily life.

Our outings included a trip to the Bagaduce River to learn about the impact of dams on the alewife population. We visited the Brooksville Alewife runs that were built to bypass the dam and allow the fish to return to their ancestral habitat for spawning. We also visited an oyster farm and learned about the challenges the farmer faces, including market price negotiations (which we witnessed when the owner of the farm took a call from a distributor).

We visited the Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge, a group that works to protect migratory birds, that is focusing on restoring terms as their populations are now particularly low. On another outing, we talked with a lobster fisherman about the challenges facing this local industry due to new regulations around the rigging of the lobster traps designed to protect whales from entanglement. On a visit with a local fisherman who grows kelp, he pulled in his boat and showed us his harvest for the day. We got to hear his wonderful stories and were treated to a taste of his product! Our last trip was a day at the Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership, where we learned about the quarrying history of this beautiful island, its past use as an Outward Bound training center and its current use as a environmental leadership center and research facility for scallop farming.

My fellow Stewards and I are nearing the end of our journey together with only one trip left. It saddens me that I will no longer be getting together on a regular basis with all the new friends I have made. However, I am grateful for the program for giving me a new understanding of midcoast Maine, its environmental challenges, and its people and history, along with a desire to see how I fit in with this continuing story of change in my new home. I also look forward to deepening the relationships with my Pen Bay Stewards friends as we continue to collaborate on environmental issues. Being a Pen Bay Steward has been an enormous honor that I will carry with me always. Thank you, Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition and the people that make this program happen!

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Drinkwater School Hits the Trail

On June 7, 21 students from 7th and 8th grade at Drinkwater School in Northport took a 6.5 mile hike on the Hills to Sea Trail in Unity. It was a perfect day with sunshine and cool breezes that kept away the bugs. Students led the way by following blue blazes painted on trees and sign posts, across the campus of Unity College, through forests and fields. They took time to splash and cool off in Sandy Stream before crossing to the other side and hiking on to visit Northern Solstice Alpaca Farm along the trail. The hike ended at MOFGA, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners, where their bus picked them up.

The hike begins a tradition of Drinkwater-Hills-to-Sea, to be hiked in increments each year until the school completes the 47 mile trail and makes it to Belfast. Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition volunteers assisted Drinkwater teachers in planning the hike.







Summer Fun Fest Engages Families

On June 21, the Belfast Free Library held a Family Fun Fest at the Belfast Boat House. Twelve local organizations sponsored tables enticing children and their parents to learn and create. The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition's table, staffed by BBWC Board Member Cloe Chunn and teen volunteer Lavinia Welch, was well attended. Children and parents picked up fossil rocks and drank chilled peppermint tea. The most popular place on the table was the microscope, where kids looked at insects, Queen Anne's Lace, lichens, moss, and petrified wood. Several children returned for more viewings. Children went home with BBWC Summer Activity Kits to continue to explore the nature around them and a stalk of peppermint leaves to make their own tea.







www.belfastbaywatershed.org
Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915
info@belfastbaywatershed.org
Find us on Facebook

Belfast Birders Take to the Trails during Cathy Morgan Bird Week

Between May 14 and 21, during BBWC's Cathy Morgan Bird Week, Belfast area birders took to the trails. They were led through a variety of habitats, including Sears Island, Head of Tide Preserve and Ducktrap River Preserve (both part of Coastal Mountains Land Trust), a farm in Swanville, "The Muck" in Belfast, and the Hills to Sea Trail, by knowledgeable and experienced birders.

BBWC organizes Cathy Morgan Bird Week each May in honor of former board member and avid birder, the late Cathy Morgan. For several years, each May, Cathy organized Belfast Bird Day with a full day of activities for families and children at Captain Albert Stevens School. BBWC has honored her memory and carried on her legacy with a series of bird walks each morning for a week.

A total of 86 of species of birds were observed during the week. Some of the "Wow" sightings included Blackpoll Warblers, Canada Warblers, Bay-breasted Warblers, Blackburnian Warblers, Northern Waterthrush, Green Herons, and Wood Thrush. It was exciting to see so many migrants returning to court, breed, and raise their young along with our faithful year-round resident birds.

In addition to birds, walkers were also were treated to wildflowers in bloom, trees in blossom, and newly hatched insects. It was a week of good weather, longed-for sights, sweetest of songs, and renewed friendships among bird watchers.



Students Learn About Trees and Take One Home

On Arbor Day, May 25, eighty-six White Spruce seedlings found new homes. Marianne McKinney and Tom King of the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition distributed tree seedlings to all the students in third grade in four local schools - Nickerson School in Swanville, Captain Albert Stevens Elementary and Cornerspring Montessori in Belfast, and Drinkwater School in Northport.

Students were delighted to receive a living friend to take home, plant, and nurture. By the time the lively children finished asking questions, they knew all about tree planting and care.

The Maine Forest Service supplies seedlings to any organization wanting to observe Arbor Day. Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition has a yearly tradition of ordering and picking up the seedlings for local students to take home.

Tom King and Marianne McKinney with students at Cornerspring Montessori

www.belfastbaywatershed.org Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915 info@belfastbaywatershed.org Find us on Facebook

Paddling the Passagassawakeag with BBWC



Gef Flimlin harnesses wind power to help him on his way.

In July, the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition offered a group paddle up the Passagassawakeag River. The three hour group paddle took advantage of the tide from the Belfast Boat House to Head of Tide, and returned again with the tide. They had a great turnout, including a couple on a pedal kayak who outpaced the rest of the group. (Who knew a pedal kayak would be faster than a traditional one!) The group was

treated to a beautiful summer day on the river and they enjoyed the natural wonders - including a soaring eagle and an osprey nest - along the way.

The next trip is scheduled for September 10 with a rain date of September 11. (See "Outings" on page 11.) If you'd like to join please contact Tom or Debbie Murphy at debsta97@aol.com, or Membersis@aol.com.

BBWC on the Street:

Hi All!

I went out this morning with my new butt picker-upper to clear the road before the rain. While I was down by the parking lot, a young woman got out of her car and told me she had a present for me in thanks for my work. She handed me a gift bag of flowers, a candle, a Dunkin Donuts gift card, and a card in which she wrote "This is a reminder to keep pushing no matter what life throws at you. You're beautiful and can do anything. 'Make today great' - Stranger

Isn't that wonderful? Picked up the butts (198 today) with joy in my steps as I carried the bag home!



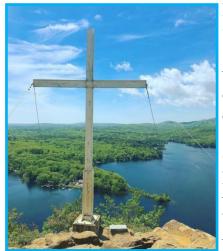
Kate Hanson is an alumni of the Pen Bay Stewards Class of 2022

Kate

Ramblings:

Maiden Cliff Trail, Camden Hills State Park

by Monica Morris



I woke to a brilliant sun reflecting off the Passagassawakeag River and through my bedroom windows. It was a beautiful summer day in Belfast, and we decided it would be a good day to commune with nature via a short hike somewhere local. Where to go? Something with a destination and a view would be nice. We decided to check out Camden Hills State Park.

Online I went and, after a little research, my husband and I decided to hike the Maiden Cliff Trail, so named to commemorate the young girl who lost her life there in the 1800s chasing a hat that the wind had blown off her head. It was a mile-long trek up 800 feet of elevation, with the promise of a stunning view at the top. It did not disappoint! The panoramic view of Megunticook Lake and its surround-

ings was breathtaking. Standing at the edge of the hill, you could see the lake below with all its shoreline ins and outs. We also met some interesting people along the way (mostly while they passed us going up), including a couple that was training to hike Mount Katahdin - a mere 5,269 feet elevation! We saw a young man carrying his two young children up the hill, reminding us of our earlier days hiking with our young children. I'll admit the heat of the day and the steep and root-filled path was a bit of a challenge for a novice hiker like me, but with enough breaks to dry my brow and rehydrate, we made it to the top.

Down was far easier than up and we found our way back to the car. That's when I saw a sign for Barrett's Cove Public Beach. Without a second thought and, to the surprise of my husband, I pointed the car towards the beach, not able to think of anything other than how good it would feel to jump in the water. I sat by the shore, removed my hiking boots and socks, and in true Maine fashion, dove in the water fully clothed, - something I never would've done in New Jersey! We finished the trip off with a delicious bacon cheeseburger from the Lincolnville General Store, satisfying another Maine bucket list item.



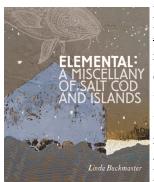
Westrich, Greg. 2015. Best Easy Day Hikes Camden; A Falcon Guide. Roman & Littlefield, Guilford, Connecticut.

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

What We're Reading:

Elemental: A Miscellany of Salt Cod and Islands

by Linda Buckmaster



Linda Buckmaster's latest book, <u>Elemental</u>: A <u>Miscellany of Salt Cod and Islands</u>, is about salt cod, the fish that has been central to Maine history, but it is no dry treatise. An author-published book, <u>Elemental</u> is woven from a mix of essay, poetry, oral history, short fiction, and memoir that allows Buckmaster to explore not only the elements of ocean, rock, wind and sky, but also to tell the stories of the fishermen and of the women who 'made' the fish, drying it on beaches and wharves before it could be packed and shipped. The poorest grade of salt cod was sent to the West Indies to feed slaves working in sugar plantations. The better grades were sent to Europe. This web of

fishing, salting, and shipping filled the pockets of rich merchants but left most of the working people in poverty. In <u>Elemental</u>, the voices of these working men and women come alive.

A former Gulf and Atlantic editor for <u>National Fisherman</u>, Buckmaster knows about fish and fisheries. But in this book, her project expands to what Harry Gilonis, a Scottish poet, describes as 'proper engagement.' Buckmaster is a traveler, her curiosity leading her from Maine islands to Newfoundland, Labrador, and Scotland, and whether she is drinking whiskey at the local pub, hiking a steep trail, or wandering through a maritime museum, she is intent on finding something about the place that is human and real.

Buckmaster didn't set out to write a book about cod, but over the past years, her many interests coalesced: different forms of writing, travel, fisheries, geography, labor issues, and women's voices. Using a variety of texts, she unfolds these stories. A glossary of salt cod classification terms turns into a prose poem. Quotations from working women in the industry bring their voices alive. One piece of fiction offers a folk tale and another a tragic story, but always she is interested in the emotional life of people.

Elemental is a pleasurable book to read. A collaboration between Buckmaster and Lori Harley, a Maine book designer, the book has smooth ivory pages featuring vintage photographs from the Penobscot Marine Museum. A graceful timeline from the Vikings to the 1992 cod moratorium trails along the bottom of many of the pages, a graphic way to track the history. A map and a handful of historical and current photographs bring the Maine islands and the salt cod trade to life. A collage of a Leslie Moore drawing and a painting by Sheep Jones, both Maine artists, creates the cover image.

Maine is more than scenic views and lobster rolls, but often people travel through so quickly that they miss much of what is authentic about the state. Buckmaster tells some of those stories, reanimating a way of life that has passed. She encourages all of us to pay attention to other stories of this region that are not easily or often told.

Reviewed by Jennifer Craig

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Fall Outings

Saturday, September 10 - 10:00am - Paddle the Passagassawakeag River

Ride the rising tide on the Passagassawakeag in your canoe or kayak. We'll check the progress of the fledgling eagles near Head of Tide and, when the tide turns, we'll let it take us back down to Belfast. Meet your trip guide, Tom Murphy, at the Belfast Boat House. Bring your boat, paddle PFD, water, lunch, protection from rain, sun and wind. Binoculars are optional. Rain date will be September 11. This trip is limited to 12 boats. Please call Tom to register: 603-528-4777

Saturday, September 24 - 10:00am - Tree Identification Walk on the Belfast Rail Trail

Walk with Cloe Chunn along the Rail Trail to make friends with the trees and plants (and the humans of course) along the way. The walk will begin at the Center Parking Lot on High Street (Upper Bridge Parking Lot). Bring water, rain/sun gear, pencil and an old phone book or notebook for collecting leaves to review afterward.

The walk will last two hours after which anyone who would like can drive or walk into town for lunch together on the deck at the Nautilus. FMI: Cloe at 207-338-1147

Saturday, October 15 - 10:00am - Fall Foliage Walk on Sears Island

Enjoy Fall foliage on Sears Island in Searsport. Meet at the end of the causeway near the gate. Spend about 3 hours walking and then enjoy your lunch. Expect to return at before 3:00. Bring water, a snack or lunch, a warm layer, and rain gear. FMI: Cloe at 207- 338-1147.

Sunday, November 13 - 10:00am - Geology Walk at Head of Tide Preserve

Walk the trail at Head of Tide Preserve in Belfast with geologist Brooks McKinney. Sunday hiking avoids hunters during deer hunting season; nevertheless, wearing orange clothing is wise. Bring water, a snack, a warm layer, and rain gear. FMI: Cloe at 207-338-1147

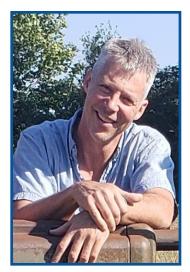
Saturday, December 10 - 6:00am - Sunrise Walk on Belfast Beach

Walk and watch the sunrise on Belfast Beach. Meet at the Belfast Boathouse and carpool to City Park to start a meditative ramble into the sunrise, ending back at the Boathouse (a distance of about 1 mile). Wear warm layers and shoes suitable for a rocky beach. FMI: Cloe at 207-338-1147.

To find more listings of Outings, please visit www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Fall Programs at the Belfast Library

Thursday, September 15, 6:30pm - The Who, What, Where and Whys of PFAS - Abbott Room Belfast Public Library



Andrew Carpenter, certified soil scientist and founder of Northern Tilth LLC, will discuss PFAS, where they are in our environment, how we can test for them., and what can be done to mitigate them. The talk will be held in the Abbott Room in the Belfast Library.

Andrew received an M.S. in Plant, Soil and Environmental Science at the University of Maine, and founded his environmental consulting firm in 2003. He is currently a Board Member of the Compost Research and Education Foundation.

Thursday, October 20th, 6:30pm - Belfast Bay Water Monitoring Program - Abbott Room in the Belfast Public Library

John Tipping has coordinated BBWC's water quality testing program for over 4 years. He will discuss the health of Belfast Bay and the life in and around it. He will describe how water is sampled, how each sample is measured, and what it means to us and to the health of the Bay.

A biologist and taxonomist at Lotic, Inc. with more than 25 years of experience identifying aquatic macroinvertebrates, John is responsible for providing ecological assessments of surface waters, using aquatic macroinvertebrates as indicators of ecological impairments. In addition to laboratory operations, he is also involved in the field aspects of these evaluations and is proficient with both state and federal sampling and analysis techniques. He founded Lotic, Inc in 1997.



Rick Fitz takes readings on Belfast Bay

New Members Invited!

Jump on board and help expand and strengthen our work in the community and watershed. Visit our website or email us at info@belfastbaywatershed.org.

Volunteer Opportunities Available

The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition is looking for committed individuals who are interested in the health of the Belfast Bay watershed and have time and energy to donate. Work with a great group of people, have fun, and make a positive impact on our environment. At this time, we are looking for:

Water Quality Volunteers: Help monitor the quality of water in Belfast Bay. Learn how to take and assess samples of bay water and how to interpret results.

Trail Crew and Organizer for Little River Trail: Trail Crews maintain the Little River Community Trail in Belfast and the Davis Bog Trail in Morrill. Crew members take a stretch of trail to hike and assess. The Trail Crew Organizer calls the crew together when work is needed on the trail. This work is fun, friendly, and very important to our community.

BBWC Board of Directors

Greg Biddinger, President Tom King, VP Gene Randall, Treasurer David Bond Cloe Chunn Noah Gilchrist Pat Gladding Ann Kennedy Marianne McKinney Debbie Murphy Dave Thomas John Tipping Karin Wittmann Staff

Jenni Judkins, Natural Literacy Educator Nicolle Littrell. Publicity and Website Ann Kennedy, Newsletter Editor

Mission: The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition works to support conservation and stewardship of natural, scenic and public access resources of the Belfast Bay through research, community building and education.

Subscribe on-line to this newsletter and monthly reminders of our activities. Subscribe at www.belfastbaywatershed.org or send an email to info@belfastbaywatershed.org. Please visit our website Calendar for updates on outings and programs that did not make it into this newsletter.

BBWC wishes to thank all our individual members and our granting organizations: Leonard C. and Mildred F. Ferguson Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, Onion Foundation.

Happy 20th Year to the BBWC Newsletter!

www.belfastbaywatershed.org