

ACADIA

The Friends of Acadia Journal WINTER 2021



FACES OF ACADIA

PARK'S PEOPLE
PROFILED IN PHOTOS

A LONG
WINTER'S NAP
ACADIA WILD GARDENS

ACADIA ON ICE
PARK IN WINTER
FAR FROM FROZEN

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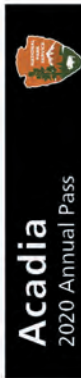
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ACADIA

The Friends of Acadia Journal

WINTER 2021

Volume 26 No. 1

A Magazine about Acadia National Park and Surrounding Communities

Friends of Acadia preserves, protects, and promotes stewardship of the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality, and distinctive cultural resources of Acadia National Park and surrounding communities for the inspiration and enjoyment of current and future generations.

Acadia is published four times a year. Submissions and letters are welcome. See <http://friendsofacadia.org/news-publications/friends-of-acadia-journal/submissions/>

Opinions expressed are the authors'.

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A Bates-Style cairn leads the way to a snow-covered Gilmore Peak on a cold day in December. COVER PHOTO BY ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA.



WILL NEWTON/FOA

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ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

WHERE IN ACADIA?

The blend of woods, waters and mountain peaks is what makes the non-shore landscape at Acadia National Park so sublime. Hundreds of people whiz by this iconic location every day but only those who venture on foot will recognize the exact view. Like many bodies of fresh water on Mount Desert Island, this one does double duty helping slake the thirst of the seasonal swell of visitors in summer. Be sure to include the name of the prominent “peak.”

If you think you can identify the location of this scene email us at editor@friendsofacadia.org and feel free to include a personal story or memory with your answer. We'll print our favorite responses in the next issue of Acadia, and we'll send a Friends of Acadia cap to the first correct respondent.

IN THE FALL ISSUE OF ACADIA

Many, many readers correctly identified the image in the last issue as along the Precipice Trail on Champlain Mountain. While we sadly do not have room to print them all, a wide selection of what folks shared can be found on the next page.

READERS RESPOND TO "WHERE IS IT?"



EMMA FORTHOFFER/FOA

The "Where is it?" photo in the fall issue drew scores of responses from near and far. The following is a sampling of the many wonderful and heartfelt messages we received.

This is clearly the Precipice Trail. I have done it twice. First time with a group of four when the trail was dry. The last time was by myself. I was about 60 years old. In October, I finally achieved my long-time goal of hiking every trail in the park. At 66 years old, I am planning the next goal of hiking all the trails on Schoodic Peninsula. There are no bad trails in Acadia. —*Jeff Meissner, New Gloucester, Maine*

I love the picture of the Precipice Trail on page 3 of the Fall Friends of Acadia Journal. It is my favorite climb and I do it every year in October. Indeed, it's a symbolic hike for me for several reasons. I hike it as a barometer of my fitness. It requires my trust in its designers, and trust is hard earned. And three, it's a metaphor for my marriage. We were married in Southwest Harbor on 10/17/05 and my birthday is 10/18/58. We celebrate both milestones every year on the island. Thank you for the fun. —*Jeanne Hackett (with spouse Paul Toohey), Scarborough, Maine*

It is the Precipice on Champlain Mountain. I am a member of a group that has hiked the Precipice once a year



COURTESY OF KIP WARREN

over the last ten years or so. Members of this group know every inch of the climb and even groom the trail now and then as an FOA/ANP volunteer crew. And the person taking this picture, Kip Warren, helped, along with Mark Munsell, to build the bridge in the picture. —*John H. Hirschenhofer, Hancock, Maine*

It must be either the Beehive or the Precipice, but the hint, "flights of fancy" (nesting falcons) dictates the latter. Here is a photo taken 20 years ago at the very same footbridge, where my son posed with the cocky smile of a twelve-year-old conquering a trail that warns at its base, "Persons... have died on this mountain." —*Rick Smith, Bronxville, New York and Southwest Harbor, Maine*



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICK SMITH

I first hiked The Precipice Trail in 1959, as a senior at Bar Harbor High. The trail did not intimidate me back then, but now at age 78, for some reason, the Precipice intimidates me more than Katahdin's Knife Edge. At least I did that one last year! Love your ever improving Journal. —*Alan Chapman, Bar Harbor*

Your photo is the Precipice Trail which my dear, late husband, John loved to hike. —*Regina Kotchian, Middlebury, CT*

The photos were taken on the Precipice Trail on the east face of Mount Champlain. Once introduced to Acadia, both my sons fell in love with the park and became avid hikers exploring many trails and seascapes. —*Gerry Lachance, Avon, CT*

This must be Precipice. Climbed it with my daughter years ago (most years it's closed when we're in Maine) and it was thrilling, hair raising, and terrifying (in parts) all at the same time. We were so glad we did it. —*John Coyle, Haddonfield, NJ*

Acadia's Future Brightens

As the sun peaked over the shoulder of Cadillac Mountain on my drive into work, marking the end of the longest night of the year and the oh-so-gradual return of the light on this winter solstice, I found myself not wanting to wait until January 1 to declare a new year and brighter days ahead.

Like most of my friends and family, I am more than ready to put 2020 behind me. However, it is also worth reflecting on the factors that allowed Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park to not just survive, but to thrive and grow amidst all the challenges.

First and foremost has been the absolute centrality of Acadia in our lives, as a place of respite, restoration, wellness, and inspiration when so many other things were upended.

Friends of Acadia's members have remained incredibly loyal and generous in the face of economic uncertainty.

Even as we were unable to come together for traditional in-person FOA events or programs, you all found new and creative ways to give back to your park. More people than ever participated virtually in our events, and we had also had a record number of inquiries about including FOA in estate plans and creating a legacy for Acadia.

Our volunteers did extraordinary work under very challenging circumstances; their willingness to be creative and reinvent their roles was remarkable, whether building a bog-walk at Jordan Pond, orienting visitors at the Wild Gardens, or designing a virtual Benefit Auction in a matter of weeks.

As Anne Green attests in her column, the volunteers who serve with her on the FOA Board of Directors provided supportive leadership at every turn.

I am deeply grateful for the commitment and professionalism of the staff at FOA and the National Park Service who truly went above and

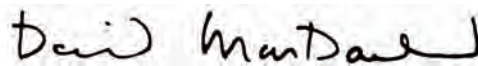
beyond in advancing the long-term mission. Many of these folks work behind the scenes, and their efforts to keep the organization functioning smoothly from remote home offices throughout eastern Maine was essential.

FOA and Acadia increasingly rely on seasonal employees as well—to help care for the park and enhance visitors' experiences. These crews faced additional hurdles around travel, housing, quarantining, training, and orientation. For many, it was a leap of faith to even accept the job.

As it turns out, I am so glad that they did, as their contributions were key to our ability to navigate many program changes and the surprisingly robust visitation this summer and fall—a well-deserved shout-out to our Acadia Digital Media Team, our Recreation Technicians, our Stewardship Crew, our Summit Stewards, and our Wild Gardens of Acadia team.

While plenty of uncertainty remains for the coming year, I am eager for the lengthening days and the chance to build upon and apply all that we have learned through adversity in 2020.

Back on my morning commute, after catching sight of the sun while cresting McFarland Hill, I stopped at Eagle Lake and took in the view from the boat ramp. The lake was flat calm and reflected the domes of Acadia's surrounding mountains. A few pockets of mist dissipated in the warming sun. While I was tempted to view it as a sign of smooth waters ahead for all of us, I knew that the same scene could be stormy and wave-tossed within the hour. And yet I feel optimistic for a bright future for Acadia, knowing that with your involvement FOA will be ready to weather whatever lies ahead. Thank you!

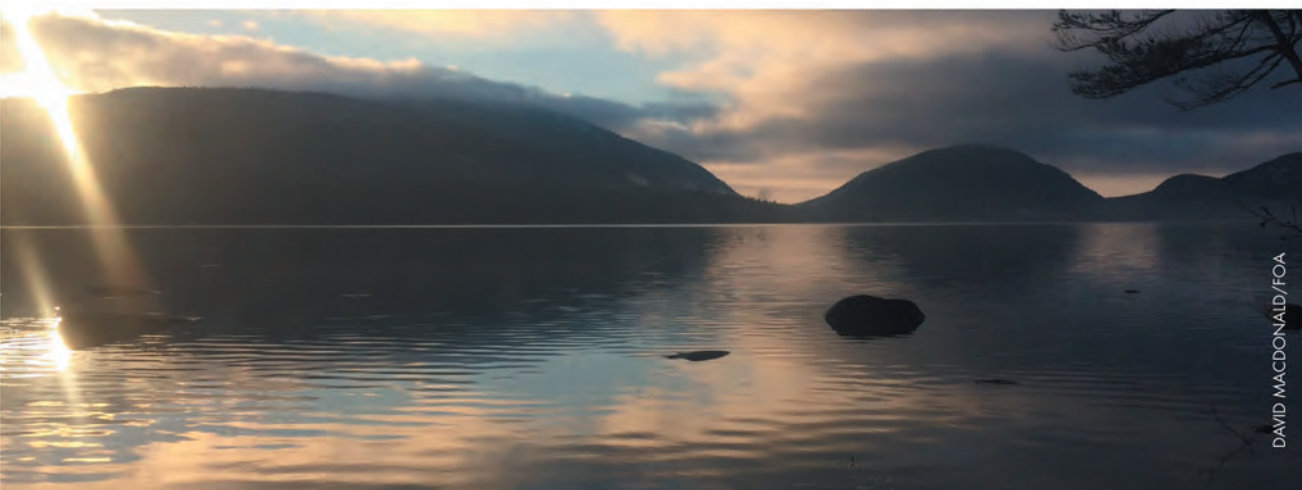


—David MacDonald

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



"Friends of Acadia's members have remained incredibly loyal and generous in the face of economic uncertainty..."



DAVID MACDONALD/FOA

AN EARLY WINTER SUNRISE
over Eagle Lake in
Acadia National Park.

Reservation Test Prompts Changes

BY EARL BRECHLIN

Lessons learned during Acadia National Park's test of a vehicle reservations system for 18 days in October have prompted changes to the initial rollout planned for summer of 2021.

From Oct. 1 through Oct. 18, vehicles seeking access to the summit of Cadillac Mountain and those entering a two-mile Ocean Drive section of the Park Loop Road south of the fee collection station were required to first obtain reservations at recreation.gov.

With minor adjustments to the number of reservations that will be offered, starting times, and frequency, plans call for

"The point of running the pilot was for us to learn...We were surprised that Cadillac went so well, and that Sand Beach went so badly."

the Cadillac Mountain system to begin full time in 2021.

Problems with internet connectivity, confusion on the part of some users and other issues have resulted in a major re-examination of the Ocean Drive program, which will not operate in 2021.

"The point of running the pilot was for us to learn," explains Park Administrative Assistant John Kelly. "We were surprised that Cadillac went so well, and that Sand Beach went so badly," he continues. "The pilot was an extremely valuable thing to do."

Reservations only allowed access to an area during a fixed entry time window and did not guarantee a parking place. Among the adjustments made during the test for both sites were changing the number of available reservations, the length of the access window, and the time when those

windows began. There is no mandatory exit time.

According to Kelly, many visitors were flummoxed over nomenclature referencing Sand Beach on the Ocean Drive segment. "People were confused that they couldn't just drive through as they thought they only needed reservations for Sand Beach," he explains. That resulted in many visitors parking in nearby areas and along the park loop road as far back as the Champlain Overlook and then walking to Ocean Drive. On the Saturday of Columbus Day Weekend, more than 200 cars were parked along the Loop Road from south of the Champlain Overlook, which features a view of the Egg Rock Lighthouse.

In all, approximately 29 percent of visitors pulling up to the entrance station were turned away. Of the 55,000 available reservations, about 79 percent were sold.

Access issues were compounded because the Island Explorer shuttle bus system was suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic.

And, even if online reservations were not sold out on a given day, the lack of cell phone service at the entrance station meant people couldn't use their mobile devices to get one while waiting in line.

The park also received complaints about the increase in traffic on Schooner Head Road from people turned away from the fee station.

"Not doing reservations for the Ocean Drive area in 2021 gives us another year to decide what to do there," Kelly says. "It will allow us to really home in on Cadillac."

At the start of the summit road, where an entrance booth was constructed, there were fewer problems, Kelly explains. Although approximately 36 percent of vehicles there were turned away for not having reservations, the total number of cars is lower, so it reflected fewer disaffected visitors. Turnaround space is better as well.

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Cars line up at the newly installed reservation booth at the bottom of Cadillac Mountain, on the first day of a test of a vehicle reservation program in Acadia National Park in October 2020.



Optimism For The New Year

One early December morning a couple of weeks ago, as I ran along the trail up Connors Nubble and the North Bubble, the rising sun breaking over Acadia's landscape, I found myself immersed in my thoughts about the upcoming workday. An outing in the park, on a trail or a carriage road, always reminds me why I do what I do, and refills my mental gas tank. Through my gasps for breath as I ran up the mountain, the dawn's light symbolized the optimism of a new day that we often associate with winter's turn into a new year.

The New Year, and every new day, continually fill me with optimism and hope for the future. Clearly, 2020 has been an extraordinarily difficult year for our park, our communities, and our nation. I am proud of how Acadia's employees handled the year, despite the incredible challenges we faced. We met our fundamental mission of preserving Acadia, while allowing for visitors to enjoy it and find inspiration and solace from this very special place during a time of great difficulty.

We kept our employees safe, even as we welcomed visitors from across the U.S.

I am also proud of our neighboring communities, who also came together to do everything possible to maximize people's safety and mitigate risk. There were difficult decisions that needed to be made by people at all levels of government and business, and there was tremendous uncertainty – especially early in the pandemic when we did not know as much about COVID-19 as we do now.

And I am proud of the FOA community. FOA members and friends found ways to share the inspiration of the park – be it through the Virtual Paddle Raise, a socially distanced hike, or simply looking at the incredible pictures of the Acadia Digital Media Team on FOA's facebook page. Volunteers did not stop working on the trails – but they did use the best possible safety mitigations to prevent the risk of disease transmission.

As we think about 2021 in Acadia, I remain optimistic. While the deployment of multiple vaccines is promising, we will undoubtedly still need to take COVID-19 into account in our decision-making. As much as we want life to get back to normal, it is going to take time and people will need to be patient.

In 2021, we will be focused on implementing the vehicle reservation system for Cadillac Mountain. We learned a huge amount from the October pilot of the program. While we had been thinking and planning for this for many years, there is nothing like seeing how it works in the field. Still, deploying this for the first full season will nonetheless be an enormous challenge.

We will also be focused on executing projects funded through the Great American Outdoors Act. This law provides much needed funds to cure deferred maintenance over the next five years. Despite this excitement, there is a huge amount of work for our facilities and project management teams to package projects that can compete for funding, write elaborate contracting scopes of work, and otherwise prepare the park for the funding.

Finally, 2020 is also ending with the retirement of FOA Journal editor and director of communications Earl Brechlin. Earl has been a key partner in helping to get the word out about Acadia as we have navigated so many challenging issues. Our team at the park has relied on his sage advice from years in the news business. We will truly miss Earl and thank him for his service to FOA and Acadia National Park!

As we start 2021, I will continue to always see the sun's light and the optimism it brings, and I will continue to be inspired by the majesty of Acadia. I hope you do too.

—Kevin Schneider

SUPERINTENDENT'S VIEW



"We met our fundamental mission of preserving Acadia, while allowing for visitors to enjoy it and find inspiration and solace from this very special place during a time of great difficulty."

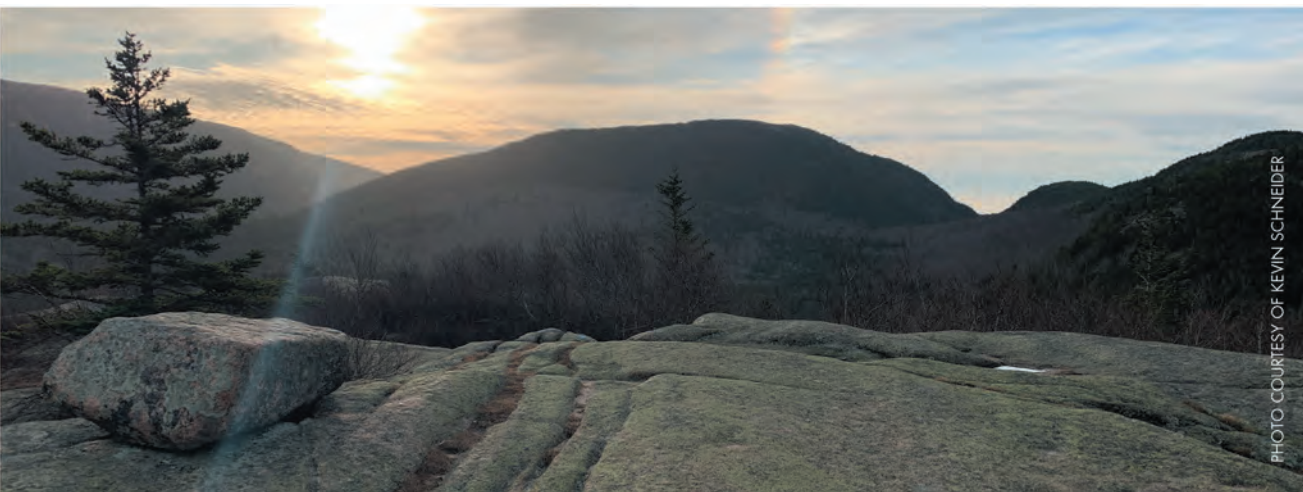


PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN SCHNEIDER

A VIEW to the south from the top of Connors Nubble in Acadia National Park.

Wild Acadia

REIMAGINED

BY STEPHANIE CLEMENT
AND BRIAN HENKEL

DECEMBER FIRST DAWNED THIS YEAR WITH HOWLING WINDS, CRASHING WAVES, AND DRENCHING RAINS — a fall storm that filled Acadia's streams and toppled trees. While weather events such as this happen every year, data from the last century show that the park's climate is changing. Average annual rainfall has increased by 6 inches over the last century, and average annual temperature has increased by 3.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

These changes are not uniform across the year, however. Droughts seem to be more common in summer, followed by significant rain events in fall, and less snowpack in winter. These shifting patterns and environmental stressors will have long-term effects on Acadia's infrastructure, forest composition, and plant, insect, bird, and wildlife populations.

Wild Acadia, a joint program of FOA and ANP focused on park natural resources since 2014, has established a firm foundation for understanding trends and restoring ecological resiliency in key watersheds in Acadia National Park. Over the last five years in the Cromwell Brook and Marshall Brook watersheds, Wild Acadia funds have supported a variety of planning and monitoring projects, as well as on-the-ground activities, such as invasive plant removal and restoration of the former Sieur de Monts septic field to a forested wetland.

This next year will be an exciting time for Wild Acadia, as Friends of Acadia (FOA) and partners analyze the body of data collected at Cromwell Brook to examine how far we have come, how to tweak our monitoring activities, and what other projects we would like to undertake.

However, it is no longer enough to simply try to fix past injuries to the park's natural resources. Acadia National Park Science Coordinator, Abe Miller-Rushing said, "Our forests, wetlands, and streams are dynamic

LEFT, Roger St. Amand, wetland scientist, uses a Munsell color system to compare soil collections in the wetland restoration area at Sieur de Monts in Acadia National Park. BELOW, a crew from John Goodwin Jr. Construction works to install a new culvert on Marshall Brook Road in Southwest Harbor.



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA



WILL NEWTON/FOA

LEFT, a new aquatic culvert that will facilitate the passage of fish and amphibians is installed on Marshall Brook Road in Southwest Harbor. ABOVE, Acadia National Park's invasive plants team works to remove non-native vegetation on Cadillac Mountain. RIGHT, Friends of Acadia's Wild Acadia Project Coordinator Brian Henkel works on taking measurements on Cromwell Brook in Bar Harbor.



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

ecological systems, continuously shifting and adapting because of climate change. We can't stop these changes in the short run, but instead have to manage them to keep our ecosystems healthy. Wild Acadia is helping us address this challenge."

Friends of Acadia recently received a game-changing gift from the BAND Foundation that will advance the work under Wild Acadia to a new, more forward-looking approach for managing the park's natural and cultural resources within the likely conditions that will be here 20, 30, or even 50 years from now.

The next phase — Wild Acadia 2.0 — will utilize what we already know about climate change at Acadia in combination with a range of likely future scenarios to help the National Park Service (NPS) and partners decide whether to resist, accommodate, or direct the anticipated effects of climate change

Wild Acadia 2.0 is an approach to management that no longer replaces failing infrastructure in-kind or restores native ecosystems to past conditions — the traditional approach of NPS and other conservation agencies — but rather to replace and restore such that infrastructure and ecosystems are equipped to handle changing environmental conditions.

"Acadia will be leading the National Park Service with this approach of managing for change," said Rebecca Cole-Will, Chief of Resource Management at Acadia. "This unique partnership with FOA and the BAND Foundation provides Acadia the opportunity to work in a proactive manner"

Over the coming year, FOA will continue its regular Wild Acadia investments — monitoring, coordination, and targeted on-the-

ground improvements — and we will implement Wild Acadia 2.0 with support from the BAND Foundation, focusing on three model projects that address management concerns that are common across national parks.

These three projects (see related story) will be sited at some of the most visible and iconic areas of Acadia National Park. Wild Acadia Coordinator Brian Henkel said, "Seventy-five percent of visitors go to the summit of Cadillac Mountain, and increasingly, visitors stop to take photos along the Park Loop Road at the Great Meadow. These are great locations to introduce the concept of managing for future conditions by seeing what's happening on the ground."

The BAND Foundation grant will greatly increase the capacity for FOA and the park to communicate this new approach to managing park resources outward and upward. A comprehensive communication plan will be completed in 2021 to determine how to share the Wild Acadia 2.0 model more broadly among the national park, science, local, and philanthropic communities. A plan will then be developed on how to share the model with Congress and NPS leadership to encourage more investment in natural resources protection.

"While the concept of managing for change may seem intuitive," said Cole-Will, "it's revolutionary for the national parks, and we're excited to share our work with colleagues. ■"

STEPHANIE CLEMENT is Friends of Acadia's Conservation Director. BRIAN HENKEL is Wild Acadia Project Coordinator for FOA.

Projects Highlight Wild Acadia 2.0

With support from the BAND Foundation, Friends of Acadia (FOA), Acadia National Park, the Schoodic Institute, and partners will focus Wild Acadia 2.0 initiatives on three model projects that will highlight the concepts of managing for change:

ACADIA SUMMITS NATIVE PLANT RESTORATION. Over the last few years, the National Park Service (NPS), Schoodic Institute, and Native Plant Trust have been experimenting at Cadillac with soil amendments, propagation methods, and a variety of plant species to

continued on page 29



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

FACES of ACADIA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY YEHYUN KIM

TEXT BY JULIA WALKER THOMAS



While out in Acadia, visitors interact with park staff working at the visitor's center or providing interpretive services on ranger-led programs. Some may encounter a law enforcement ranger or maintenance worker in their travels.

With divisions that include management, administration, visitor experience and education, maintenance, resource management, and visitor and resource protection, scores of people work behind the scenes to help operate and protect the park, keep programs running, and maintain the infrastructure. Acadia has 90 permanent employees and, during the summer, hires an additional 150 seasonal workers.

In 2018, while a member of Friends of Acadia's Acadia Youth Technology Team (now the Acadia Digital Media Team), Yehyun Kim created a series of portraits of the people that make Acadia possible. A sampling of her work appears on these pages.





Meet Yehyun Kim

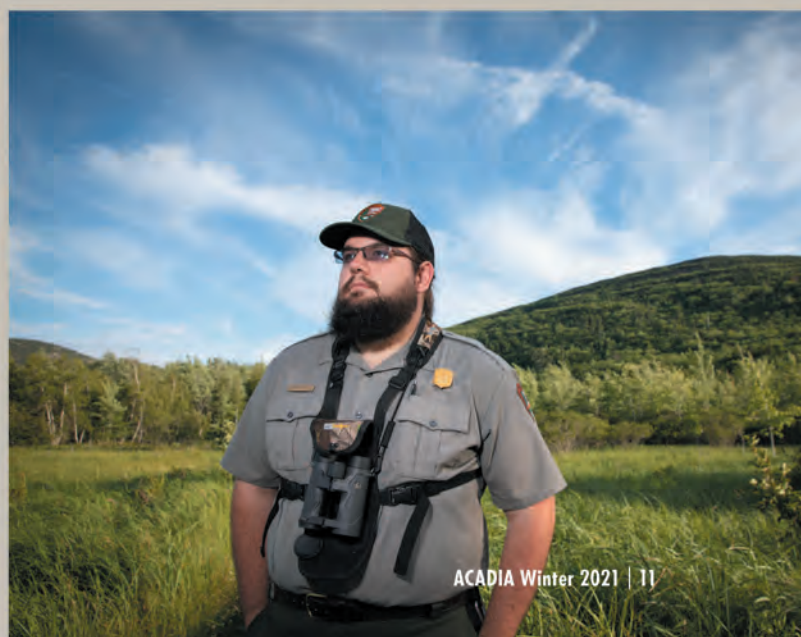
"Before I worked for Friends of Acadia, I had no idea of all the work it takes to maintain a park." Yehyun explains. "It takes so much effort behind the scenes for the park to operate. I wanted to give visitors an inside look so they could stop and think about the level of dedication and passion. I hope this project emotionally moves people as much as I was."

Yehyun's work has been used by the National Park Service on the Acadia National Park website.

After her season with FOA, Yehyun graduated with a master's degree in journalism, focusing on photography, from the University of Missouri. She has worked for *USA Today* and other newspapers. She is now a full-time photojournalist with the *Connecticut Mirror* as a Report for America Corps member.

Yehyun recently won the prestigious title of "College Photographer of the Year" (CPOY), a contest entered by more than 500 students from 120 colleges and universities. As part of the CPOY title, Yehyun has been offered a photography internship with *National Geographic*.

TOP TO BOTTOM: Therese Picard, Chief Ranger; Gail Gladstone, cultural resource program manager; Irene Schlaefer, maintenance worker; Patrick Kark, ornithology ranger. FACING PAGE, LEFT: Kirk Lurvey, park naturalist. FACING PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Alanna McDonough, Friends of Acadia Summit Steward; Chris Heilakka, biological technician; and James Zordan, education ranger.



IN HONOR

September 1, 2020 – October 31, 2020
We gratefully acknowledge gifts received in honor of:

Acadia to Katahdin Virtual Racers
Ann Bickford
Ann and Bart Chase
Courtney Comer
Ricky Harrington*
Lydia Kimball
Geneva Langley
Debby and Jim Lash
Margie and Chris Matlack
Toby Monaco
Pamela Parker and Bryan Stevens
Lili Pew and Carol Bult
Alice and Tony Smith
Jennifer Tomb
Scott Waldrup*
Kim and Finn Wentworth

*Deceased

NEW BUSINESS MEMBERS

September 1, 2020 – October 31, 2020

Natural History Center
Torroco

RESERVATION TEST continued from page 6

In all, the park sold 100 percent of the 2,700 available sunrise reservations during the 18-day test. Sunset was equally popular, while some mid-day slots went unfilled.

One practice that rangers noticed early on was an increasing number of vehicles heading up the mountain hours before the reservations started for sunrise, while the booth was unstaffed. There are about 150 parking spots at the top.

“On the Sunday of Columbus Day, we had 50 cars already there at 4:30 a.m.,” he says. Sunrise wasn’t until 6:45 a.m.

Because the sun rises much earlier in summer, reservations may have to begin at 3 a.m. And rangers may be required to take measures to make sure gate crashers don’t hog spots needed for those with reservations.

According to Kelly, park officials understand that requiring reservations for some areas of the park is akin to squeezing a tube of toothpaste. What doesn’t fit one place may “squeeze out,” in others. Although the number of area closures at the Bass Harbor Head Lighthouse at sunset were up this past fall, Kelly said officials do not believe it was directly tied to access restrictions on Cadillac.

Rangers, including NPS employees from Cape Cod National Seashore detailed to Acadia to bolster staffing during the test, were able to handle the increased numbers of confused visitors including a few who became irate or angry. No law enforcement intervention was needed, Kelly explains.

Rangers did have an interaction with a man who showed up on Cadillac one morning with a forged reservation, something other parks have experienced. The man apparently copied one from several days earlier and then altered it in a computer. What he hadn’t counted on was that the entry parameters for the day he arrived were different. An alert reservation clerk spotted it and did not allow the vehicle through. “I don’t know what people were thinking,” Kelly says. ■

EARL BRECHLIN is Friends of Acadia’s Communications Director.



EMMA FORTHOFER/FOA

Winterberries in Acadia National Park

ACADIA'S 'LIVING FIELD GUIDE'
GETS READY FOR

A Long Winter's Nap

AS EVERY PARENT KNOWS, PUTTING A
CHILD TO BED STARTS WELL BEFORE
OPENING THE BEDROOM DOOR.

When supervisory gardener Geneva Langley describes how the Wild Gardens of Acadia are put to bed for winter, there are echoes of the same step-by-step rituals and even inevitable delays. Like children, the autumn leaves slyly resist, and rakes must patiently wait.

Langley cares for the award-winning garden of 400 indigenous plant species located next to the Sieur de Monts Nature Center in Acadia National Park. It is unique because, in less than an acre, it mimics Acadia's diverse habitats — 13 in all.

"It is wild, but tended," says the College of the Atlantic graduate, who holds a master's degree in ecology and environmental science from the University of Maine. With 13 years of experience working alongside volunteer gardeners from April into November, this consummate list-maker reels off an end-of-the-season routine that may be surprisingly familiar to home gardeners.

The first step in the process begins in mid-September, when the gardens enjoy a fall feeding of compost mixed with leaf duff, the decomposed litterfall rich in nutrients. Year-round, the gardeners collect leaves and other materials, which they turn and sift to create the next year's compost.

In September, they spread the joy.



Supervisory Gardener Geneva Langley

WILL NEWTON/FOA

BY LYNN FANTOM



WILL NEWTON/FOA

ABOVE: Supervisory Gardener Geneva Langley prepares the hardscape of the Wild Gardens of Acadia for winter.

BELOW: Acadia volunteers, from left, Bob Sanderson, Cliff Olson, and Bob Hartley work to repair compost bins.



WILL NEWTON/FOA

They also begin pruning trees and shrubs. Up to this point, “we have been busy looking down,” says Langley. “But fall is a good time to start looking up.”

As the leaves fall and tree structure becomes visible, the gardeners prune both for aesthetics and the health of the plant. They remove dead wood and branches that cross and rub, a particular problem for winterberry, the native holly with bright red berries that brightens the winter landscape.

Gardeners also cut back the tough stalks of large ferns, such as the cinnamon and interrupted ferns. Doing so in the fall rather than during spring clean-up prevents damage to the little fern croziers as they push up out of the ground.

“We add plants to the garden every year,” Langley continues. Late-season planting occurs after the drought stage when it is less stressful for plants to adapt to a new environment.

In fact, the process of adding plants hearkens back to the garden’s history as “a plant propagation experiment,” according to Langley. In 1961, Acadia National Park Superintendent Harold Hubler offered three-quarters of an acre of park land for volunteer gardeners in the community to grow and display wildflowers.

The plot, however, was covered with blackberry bushes and mature red maples damaged by the Great Fire of 1947. The Wild Gardens of Acadia committee began laying out paths and introducing plants — all native to Mount Desert Island.

Paths now link the different areas featuring plants from Acadia’s many habitats. Depending on the time of year, a visitor can see skunk cabbage in the marsh area, columbine and three-toothed cinquefoil on the mountain, and goldenrod and purple aster in the meadow, to name just three of the ecosystems.

Raking the paths interlacing them all is an ongoing fall activity, both to guide visitors and to keep the garden appealing. “But we use all of those leaves,” Langley reminds us. “We tuck them into the beds as insulation. Once they have enough, the leaf piles go to our work area and become the following year’s leaf duff.”

Gardeners must also take care of plants that have been donated and are still in pots. They surround them with mesh fencing, banking them with leaves and straw for protection.

The final steps are familiar to home gardeners. Tools are cleaned and sharpened. Garden ornaments, such as a bird house from the thicket and a lobster pot from the beach, are stored in a shed. The irrigation company comes to drain and blow out waterlines and turn off the system.

And, of course, there’s deer protection. Although the garden is fenced, a rough Maine winter can blow over enclosures and freeze them in place. So, the favorite plants of deer — muskrats and beaver, too — receive the protection of cages.

At the last minute, the meadow is cut down to the ground. “Meadows thrive on disturbance,” Langley says. Reducing it to just “stubble” prevents unwanted shrubs and trees from getting established. It also helps spread seeds.

Other winterization tasks reflect the fact that this is a public garden.



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

Wild Gardens of Acadia Co-Chair Helen Koch places a lock around the gate at the Wild Gardens of Acadia to close the gardens for the season.

For example, signage must be put away. And this year, because paths were roped for one-way traffic as a safety measure due to COVID-19, stakes and ropes had to be removed and stored.

The pandemic also prompted the decision to post greeters at the garden's entrance to ensure counts stayed below restrictions on the size of public gatherings. But these volunteers also oriented visitors to the gardens' layout and answered questions.

Stephanie Clement, conservation director at Friends of Acadia, challenged children to find a flower the color of their shirts or to check out bug "casualties" in the carnivorous pitcher plant and sundew. Hikers who had toured the garden prior to hitting the trails reported back on what plants they now noticed. "That was especially fun," Clement says.

The Wild Gardens of Acadia have been described as a "living field guide." With the help of greeters, gardeners, and ubiquitous labels, visitors learn about Acadia's many different habitats — a special quality of this national park. Mount Desert Island is situated near the boundary of two major biogeographic regions, so it offers a unique mixture of northern and southern plant species.

And with them come the wildlife of that habitat, whether a lightning-fast blue heron spearing a trout or a very hungry swallowtail caterpillar devouring willow leaves. "As a gardener, you look aesthetically, but animals rely on these plants for survival. I think that big picture is important," says Langley.

Even at the end of the season — having checked so many things off her list — Geneva Langley has a hard time controlling her excitement about the Wild Gardens of Acadia. "Look at this plant," she says. "If you hold the seed just right, it explodes.

"Or did you know that a crab spider turns pink when it sits inside a rose so it can ambush bees? It actually catches and eats bees!" And that, in the end, might be her best gardening tip. Coming to the Wild Gardens of Acadia is a way to slow down and really look. ■

LYNN FANTOM is a former NYC marketing executive. Fantom writes about the outdoors and aquaculture, especially in Maine, where she now spends half her time.

Volunteers Make This Garden Grow

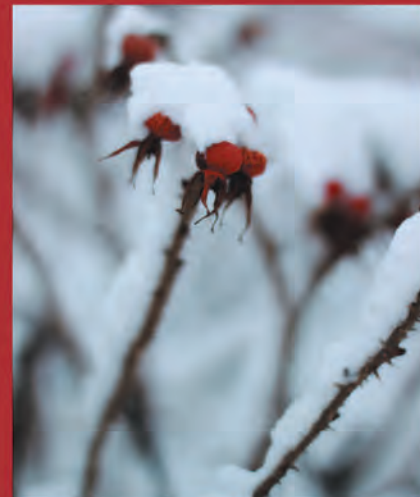
The Wild Gardens of Acadia sit inside Acadia's boundaries but, like so much in this national park, bear the fingerprints of generous individuals. The garden itself was created by volunteers and is primarily maintained by such a cadre today.

"We have amazing volunteers," says supervisory gardener Geneva Langley. They include people who like to get their hands dirty, as well as docents and greeters. A decade ago, the Wild Gardens of Acadia became an official committee of Friends of Acadia, which now sponsors a supervisory gardener and an intern. FOA also helps fund tools, infrastructure repairs, and educational materials.

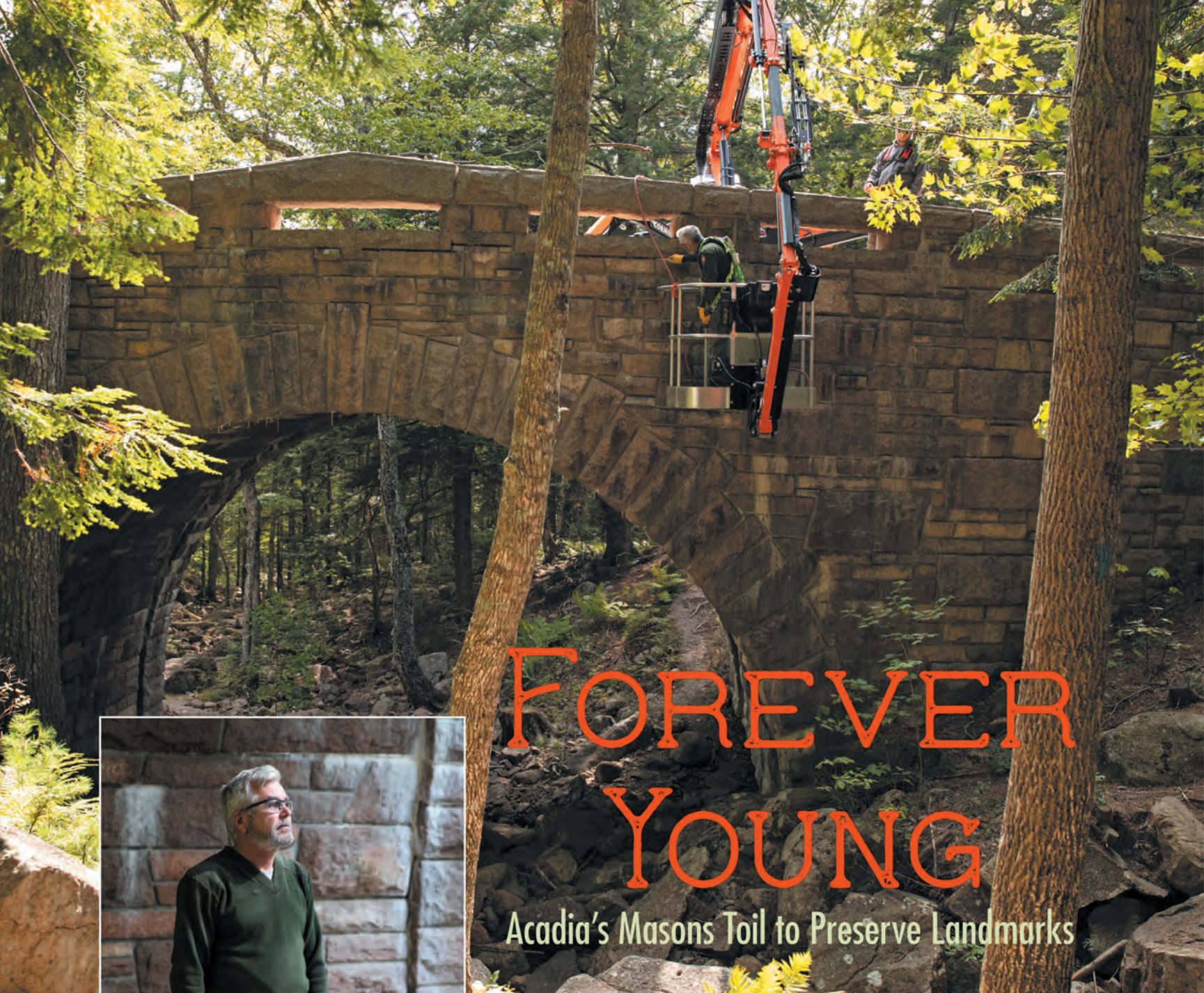
In this way, Friends of Acadia offers stability and assistance to a resource that is a rare asset. Very few national parks have a native plant garden of this size and scope, and the Wild Gardens of Acadia is certainly one of the oldest.

— Lynn Fantom

To support this program, contact Lisa Horsch Clark at 207-288-3340 or lisahorsch@friendsofacadia.org.



See a video of Wild Gardens of Acadia closing for the season available on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/481044358>



FOREVER YOUNG

Acadia's Masons Toil to Preserve Landmarks

BY JULIA WALKER THOMAS

IN ACADIA, NO OTHER HUMAN-MADE STRUCTURES ARE AS ICONIC AS THE HISTORIC BRIDGES ON THE CARRIAGE ROADS.

John D. Rockefeller Jr. financed 16 of the 17 stone-faced bridges, each unique in design, to span streams, waterfalls, roads, and cliffs. The stonecutters and masons who constructed the bridges were experts in their field, artists really. It is said that Rockefeller often requested they avoid cutting the facing too well or the bridges might lose their rustic appeal.

Because local stone was used for the bridges, they appear to emerge from

LEFT, Acadia National Park Master Mason Mike Fitzpatrick. ABOVE, he uses a tack hammer to check the integrity of the mortar on the Amphitheater Bridge.



the landscape itself. The bridges are so impressive in stature that when one bikes, walks, rides, or skis along the carriage roads, and gazes upon these edifices, it is hard to believe they need maintenance and upkeep. But they do, and Acadia National Park employs two full-time masons to help preserve the park's historic stone structures.

Acadia Master Mason Mike Fitzpatrick began working for the National Park Service after a 20-year career in Manhattan with Stone Setter's Union (Local 84.) In New York, he worked on stone exteriors – granite and limestone mostly. He spent much of his time anchoring and weatherproofing buildings, some as high as 55 stories.

Living on Long Island and dealing with traffic and congestion daily began to wear on Fitzpatrick. He decided to move to Tennessee to be closer to family. There, he received an opportunity to work at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park as a part-time mason and was later hired as a full-time “jack-of-all-trades” in addition to his masonry work. Five years ago, he moved to Maine with his family to work in Acadia as the full-time master mason.

**FITZPATRICK
SAYS HE FEELS
CONNECTED TO
THE MASONS
WHO BUILT
THE BRIDGES
MORE THAN 100
YEARS AGO.**

Fitzpatrick says that one of the significant differences between his work for the Park Service and in New York City is the time dedicated to ensuring historical accuracy in restoration projects. “In New York, it was always ‘hurry up and get it done’; it was all about the bottom line. With the Park Service, it’s about taking care to preserve what these bridges are and restore them as closely as possible to what they were originally.”

In 2002, in an effort to preserve and catalog the original mortar, samples were taken from 15 bridges. These samples are permanently stored as part of the park archives. The archiving and cataloging of original building materials ensures that employees performing restoration work will have access to the samples and information in perpetuity to serve as guidelines for historic accuracy in cultural resource restoration projects.

Mortar samples from the bridges were also sent to two engineering firms for chemical testing to determine the makeup and structural properties. The findings showed the sand and stone used in the original mortar was local, and there was minimal degradation to sections shielded from the elements. This was a relief to park staff as it reaffirmed the bridges’ structural soundness. This meant sections of mortar close to the facade were the only areas that might need restoration work.

Acadia’s bridges are most vulnerable to damage near parapets and capstones, which are especially susceptible to snow and ice accumulation. When snow and ice melt at the top of the bridges, the water seeps into cracks. When the water re-freezes, it expands and can further damage mortar and even the stone itself.

According to Fitzpatrick, 99 percent of this damage occurs near the bridges’ exposed tops; the material from the road level down is the original mortar that has not needed repair.

Protocols for bridge maintenance and preservation have changed over the years. When Fitzpatrick first began, the protocol did not include pressure washing the lichen and moss off the bridges. “It doesn’t look like lichen could do

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JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

ABOVE: Acadia National Park Master Mason Mike Fitzpatrick replaces mortar on the Amphitheater Bridge.

BELOW: Master Mason Mike Fitzpatrick and Mason Helper Ryan Meddaugh mix mortar on-site at the Amphitheater Bridge. BELOW BOTTOM: Mason Helper Ryan Meddaugh pressure washes lichen off the stone. Lichen degrades the structure of stone, and over time can cause it to crumble.



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA



TACK HAMMER
Used to sound the joints to test strength, the forked end produces a resonating sound when struck on stone. “Good” joints make a solid sound, weak joints make a hollow sound. Using the tack hammer helps masons determine which joints to repair. Original joints that are protected from the elements, like those under the bridges, are often so solid they will break testing tools. Once a mason strikes a section of grout and it sounds hollow, they will use a compressor or pneumatic chisel to clean out the joint by removing the faulty mortar.

JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA



COPPER TACO
Because the gaps between stones on the bridges are wide, the mortar prepared by the masons is generally drier than every-day joinery mortar. The copper taco’s shape is conducive to holding and troweling in the mortar.

SPONGE
After the mortar is applied, a sponge is used to bring out the grain and texture of the pink granite in the mortar.

To see a video of the Acadia’s masons at work, visit our website: <https://friendsofacadia.org/acadia-bridge-masons/>



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, ACADIA NATIONAL PARK/YARBOROUGH

Original mortar samples from the Acadia National Park Archive.

FOREVER YOUNG continued from page 17

much harm, but over time the lichen will work its way into the granite, and the stone will begin to flake and crumble away,” he says.

Park staff initially considered lichen and moss as part of the bridges’ historic characteristics – almost like a patina. But once it was discovered how much damage could be done, the protocol changed. “The park service is always open to suggestions from the observations of its staff, and because of this, protocols can be changed and updated as time goes on. There wasn’t much collaboration like that when I worked in New York,” Fitzpatrick says “Here it’s a team effort and we have a great team. Everyone works together to save and preserve these bridges and structures.”

To ensure accuracy, masons painstakingly create several “mortar boards” for color and texture. The board that most closely matches the historic mortar sample in the archive determines the ratio of sand, lime, and aggregate. “We give this information to the park, and they keep it on file so that whoever comes to do this when we’re gone will have the information about the exact composition they need to make to keep things historically accurate,” says Fitzpatrick. Inaccurate colors or textures make a repair job stick out from the untouched section of bridge.

Fitzpatrick says he feels connected to the masons who built the bridges more than 100 years ago. “It makes me think about the work I did in New York building new construction; I try to compare it to the work that was done here, and I’m just amazed when I think about it.

“I have a vision of these masons and how rugged and

continued on page 30

Maintenance of the carriage roads is funded by the Friends of Acadia Carriage Road Endowment. The restoration of the carriage road bridges is sponsored in part by donations from the 2019 Friends of Acadia Annual Benefit Paddle Raise.

Remembering Raymond *Raymond E. Strout 1941–2020*

BY LISA HORSCH CLARK

“Hi Raymond. It’s Lisa. I have a map question.”

Friends of Acadia had just received a donation of an antique map at the office and I could not find any information on it. No publisher. No date. Nothing. So, I called Raymond Strout at Ahlblad’s Frame Shop, described the map, and asked if he could help me place it and determine a value.

“Well,” he said in his long, drawn out thinking voice. “Does it have Hamilton Pond on it?” I said “no,” and he asked a few more questions. Finally, he said, “Well, it’s an 1881 Hancock County Atlas map.”

Raymond knew the importance of history and preserving the stories and artifacts of the past. He had a knack for salvaging things that others had cast off...

Raymond and I had met many years before that map conversation. In fact, our first meeting in the early aughts was a bit startling for me. I had taken a woodblock print to the shop tucked away in Bar Harbor and he could tell by my drawl that I was not from Maine. “Where you from?” he asked. I told him Virginia. Then he asked, “Where you living”? And I told him Seal Cove. He said, “Well, you know what they say? You need money to live in Bar Harbor. You need brains to live in Northeast Harbor. You don’t need either to live on the Backside.”

All this transpired in the first five minutes of meeting him.

I did not know then what “the Backside” was and I probably should have been insulted. But I am so very happy I did not take offense. For all the years after, Raymond was my friend. We served on the board of the MDI Historical Society together, we bid against each other at country auctions, and, most important for me in my role at Friends of Acadia, he remained my go-to man for tough questions about the history of Acadia National Park and Mount Desert Island.

In 2005, he sat at the table as an esteemed group of historians met to develop ways to honor the father of Acadia, George B. Dorr. Raymond knew the importance of history and preserving the stories and artifacts of the past. He had a knack for salvaging things that others had cast off and had one of the finest collections of MDI memorabilia anywhere.

He collected maps — maps like you could not believe.

He had slides from when plants from Beatrix Farrand’s Reef Point home in Bar Harbor were moved to Northeast Harbor to help establish the Asticou Azalea Gardens. He had letters and correspondence from the founders of Acadia as they worked as

the Hancock County Trustees of Public Reservations.

His wonderfully cluttered shop, where he regularly held court when not off bidding at auctions or looking through old barns with his sons Peter and Michael, was a treasure trove that always demanded at least an hour to explore, no matter how busy you were. Raymond always wanted to show me “just one more thing” and he had a little bit of it all.

Raymond, who was known affectionately to many as “Framin’ Raymond,” had a gentle but probing way of teaching history. What did the conversation about the 1881 map teach me? Look at the man-made ponds on the map (or lack of them) to be able to date the maps. By doing that, you can eliminate almost all the maps printed after 1900 because they show Hamilton Pond, which was created in the early 1900s.

I was so happy when Raymond and his son, Michael, came to a Friends of Acadia gathering hosted by Susan and Steven Raab at their historic Bar Harbor home, the Kedge, in July of 2019. To once again gather those historians from years ago, after all the success of recognizing Dorr and his park founding colleagues, was like closing the circle on that early project. It was a nod to the founders but also to all historians who like Raymond recognize the need to remember, to document, and to honor the early years of the marvelous enterprise that became Acadia National Park.

There will never be another quite like him. Bless you, Raymond, for all you did for this community, all you did for Friends of Acadia, and especially for being my friend

LISA HORSCH CLARK is Director of Development and Donor Relations for Friends of Acadia.



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

Raymond Strout of Bar Harbor, seated, left, listens to a talk about Acadia co-founder George B. Dorr during an event at the Kedge in Bar Harbor in July of 2019. Seated at right is his son Michael Strout.



Acadia ON ICE

Glistening with an ephemeral veneer of ice and snow, Acadia National Park in winter lies bare and vulnerable, emancipated from the throngs of summer, devoid of autumn's ostentatious adornment.

Ample snow along the Maine Coast may be an unfaithful and fleeting guest but there is no mistaking that cold and ice reign supreme in a timeless realm — its lakes, mountains, forests, and shores imbued with solitude and solace.

On days when the sky proclaims its proudest blue, and the bite of winter wind retreats to the north, the unbounded silence of winter woods reawakens ears gone numb to the inexorable din of civilization. It whispers to eager hearts — come closer, lean in, rediscover the true song of nature.

When storm winds rip the foam from crests of rearing swells along Ocean Drive, the cataclysmic clash between Poseidon's irresistible force and immovable granite seeks an answer to the age-old riddle: Which will prevail? At ocean's edge resides an intangible energy — not seen but rather felt. The boundless power of wildness is telegraphed from the bedrock below through the soles of your feet.

The stark and stunning beauty of Acadia on ice opens an entirely new world yearning to be discovered, explored, shared. Just as it does for those who know where to look in summer, Acadia offers more than just sweeping vistas and spectacular views. There await more sublime and contemplative rewards, the joys of an organic, personal connection with a timeless and special place.

BY EARL BRECHLIN

Like much of the coast of Maine, Acadia National Park too retrenches for the winter. It is a natural reaction to the inexorable advance of cold and darkness. But, just as water still flows beneath an iced-over stream, activity continues in the park, albeit at a less-intense pace.

While the park loop road proper may be closed to cars, it becomes a primary highway for cross-country skiers, snowshoers, snowmobilers, and fat tire bike riders. The single lane that is regularly plowed along the Ocean Drive from the Sand Beach entrance station to the Miller Garden Road at Otter Cliffs is a popular route for photographers, seabird watchers, and those just looking to connect with the park's stunning seascapes while driving on a sunny afternoon.

Granted, the unplowed road to the frigid summit of Cadillac Mountain appeals only to those with a thirst, and the skills, to tackle such an adventure, but there are plenty of less strenuous pursuits to help outdoor enthusiasts beat the winter doldrums.

During the winter, the park staff shrinks, shifting to individual visitors an even greater amount of responsibility for respecting park resources and staying safe.

Still, the rewards far outweigh the risks if visitors stay informed, properly prepare (see related story), and avoid unnecessary risks.

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

Cross-country skiing is unquestionably the most popular winter pursuit in Acadia. The sport adapts well to the constantly changing snow conditions where the surface can be icy and

fast on more shaded sections and wet and sticky where the sun shines brightest. The cost of equipment is modest (rentals are available) and the skills easily learned — even if they take some time to master.

Acadia's motor-free carriage roads provide the perfect canvas for cross-country skiing with their wide, smooth surfaces and gradual grades.

The 45-mile system's 17 distinct stone bridges, along with well-planned vistas, ensure that an excursion is never boring.

FOA's Acadia Winter Trails Association (see related story) grooms some of the more popular routes including the carriage roads around Witch Hole Pond, on the west side of Eagle Lake, and in the Around Mountain area overlooking Northeast Harbor. Although not groomed, carriage roads radiating out from the Jordan Pond House area, the unplowed Park Loop Road, and fire roads on the western side of Mount Desert Island await intrepid skiers.

Skiing on hiking trails is not recommended due to challenging terrain, dense vegetation, and ice.

Information about the carriage road system and recommended ski routes can be found online or at the park's winter information desk in the Chamber of Commerce storefront at the corner of Cottage and Main streets in Bar Harbor.

SNOWSHOEING AND HIKING

When pristine powder snow piles up, snowshoes offer a perfect way to explore the woods and hills of Acadia. Along with the Park Loop Road and carriage roads, any place you can walk or hike in summer is open to those on snowshoes.

Traverse the little-traveled Murphy Lane Trail and sneak across from Schooner Head Road to marvel at the ice formations adorning the sheer face of Champlain Mountain's Precipice. Trek across the Asticou and Jordan Pond Trail or circumnavigate Lower Hadlock Pond.

When it comes to hiking, the park recommends avoiding steep mountain climbs in favor of more gentle options such as Ship Harbor and the Ocean Path.

Beware: whether snowshoeing or bare boot hiking, underlying ice can make steeper slopes or hiking trails hazardous. Many hikers equip themselves with removable traction devices such as Stabilicers or Yaktrax for their boots.

ICE SKATING

With scores of big lakes and small ponds, Acadia provides plenty of places for ice skating. Gliding effortlessly along on a foot of hard, crystal ice in February can be the thrill of a lifetime. Extreme

continued on page 28

Photo opposite page: Ice on Eagle Lake by Bo Greene. Photo below: cross-country skiers on carriage road in Acadia by Julia Walker Thomas.





INFORMATION -
Corner of Cottage
and Main Streets
in Bar Harbor



**CROSS-COUNTRY
SKIING -** Eagle Lake,
Around Mountain, Witch
Hole Pond



SNOWSHOEING -
Beech Mountain,
Jordan Pond House



ICE FISHING -
Eagle Lake,
Long Pond



FAT TIRE BIKING -
Park Loop Road



SNOWMOBILING - Park
Loop Road



ICE SKATING -
Echo Lake, Tarn



BIRD WATCHING -
Ocean Drive, Seawall

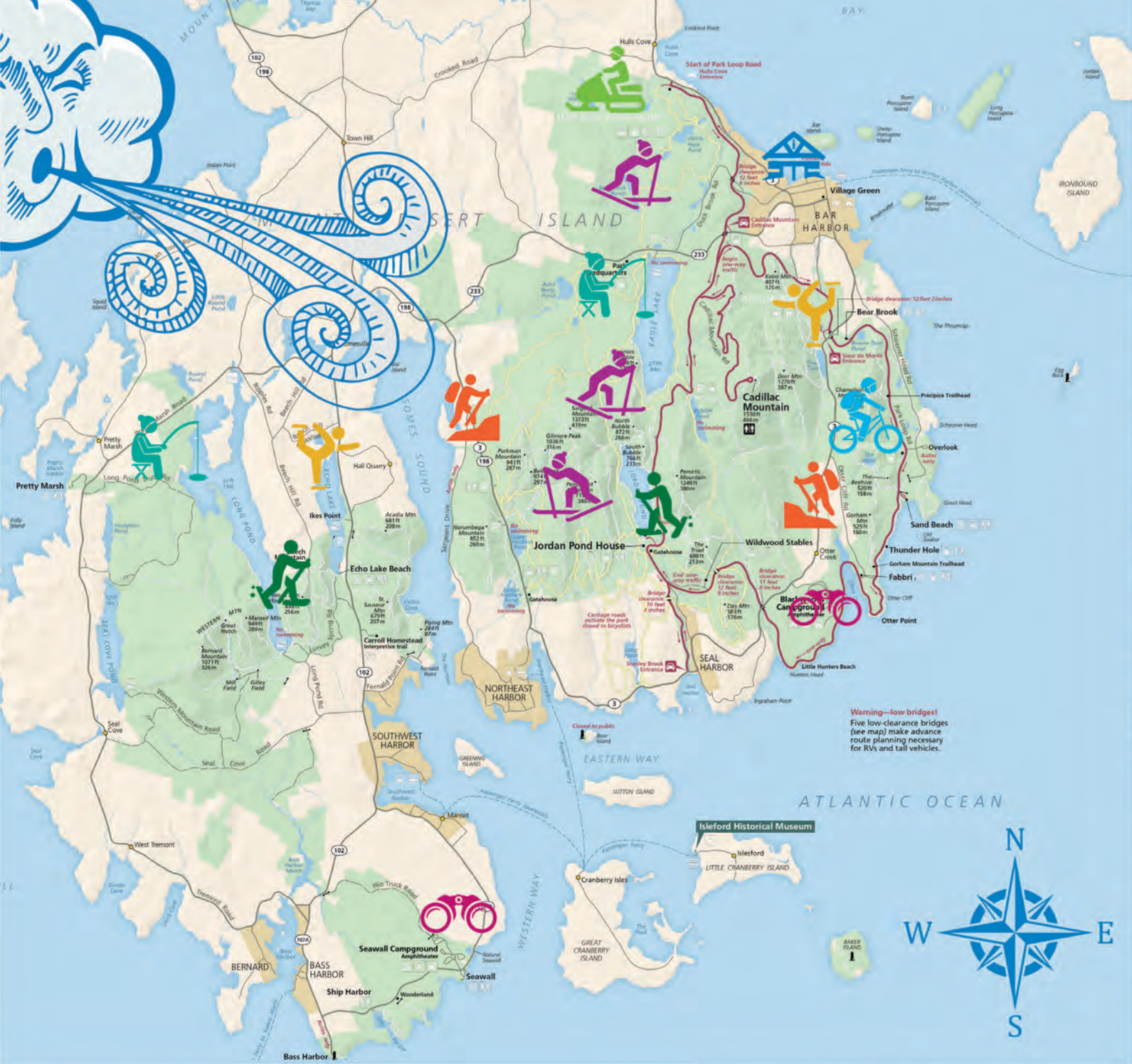


HIKING -
Parkman Mountain,
Gorham Mountain



Photos top to bottom: Hiker navigates the snowy Maple Spring Trail up Sargent Mountain/photo by Ashley L. Conti; ice skaters on Eagle Lake at sunset/photo by Julia Walker Thomas; snowshoers on carriage road intersection near Eagle Lake/photo by Ashley L. Conti; couple walking on snowy Jesup Path/photo by Will Newton; ice fishing on Eagle Lake/photo by Earl Brechlin





ICE FISHING is among the most popular activities in Acadia National Park in winter. Because Maine has jurisdiction over “great ponds”—any body of fresh water more than ten acres in size—rules and regulations enforced by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife are in effect. When safe conditions permit, area residents drag their “Ice Shacks” out on lakes after January 1. Clusters sometimes take on the appearance of a small village as augers are used to make circular holes where spring-loaded tip-ups are set to await the first nibble. Popular spots include Eagle Lake, Jordan Pond, Long Pond, and Seal Cove Pond.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES Park rules ban operating dog sleds, using dog carts, or skijoring with dogs due to the park’s leash requirement and leash length restriction. The operation of ATVs or UTVs is banned except for brief transit to frozen lakes at approved boat launch ramps for ice fishing purposes.

Open fires are only allowed in designated picnic and campsite grates.

The launch or retrieval of aerial drones from park property at any time of year requires a special use permit.

PLAN TO BE SAFE

by Lili Pew

For many of our friends and family, venturing out in the park in winter offers a very different experience than our summer adventures.

With so much fun to look forward to, it is also very important to plan for safe winter outings.

Begin by checking weather conditions and the forecast. Check frequently, and no matter what weather is predicted, prepare for the worst possible conditions. Make a route plan (using a current map) based on everyone's abilities. Plan an alternative route in case of bad weather, injury/illness, or slower than expected progress. Do not hesitate to turn around and try another day if the situation warrants.

Be sure someone at home or a friend knows the plan, names of those involved, where you are parking (and car information), what time you are leaving and expected return time as well as a process to follow and numbers to call if you do not. As a volunteer with MDI Search and Rescue, I am on call 24-7 to assist with search and rescue operations in Acadia and throughout Maine. Having this information can save critical time and helps save lives.

The final planning step involves wearing the right clothing and bringing the right gear for winter conditions. Safety depends on staying warm, dry, hydrated, and fueled. Having the right gear and food makes this possible. Eat and hydrate before your leave to start with a full tank. Bring high energy food and warm liquids (hot tea with honey is good) in a Thermos. Eat and drink before your energy starts to fade.

While there is a universe full of gear for winter adventures, the basics are to layer your clothing to stay warm and dry on the inside and be shielded from the elements on the outside. (See related story.)

Critically important are hiking poles and ice grippers of some sort. Visible ice or ice under snow ground cover, is the primary culprit for falls in the park in winter. Do not leave home without them!

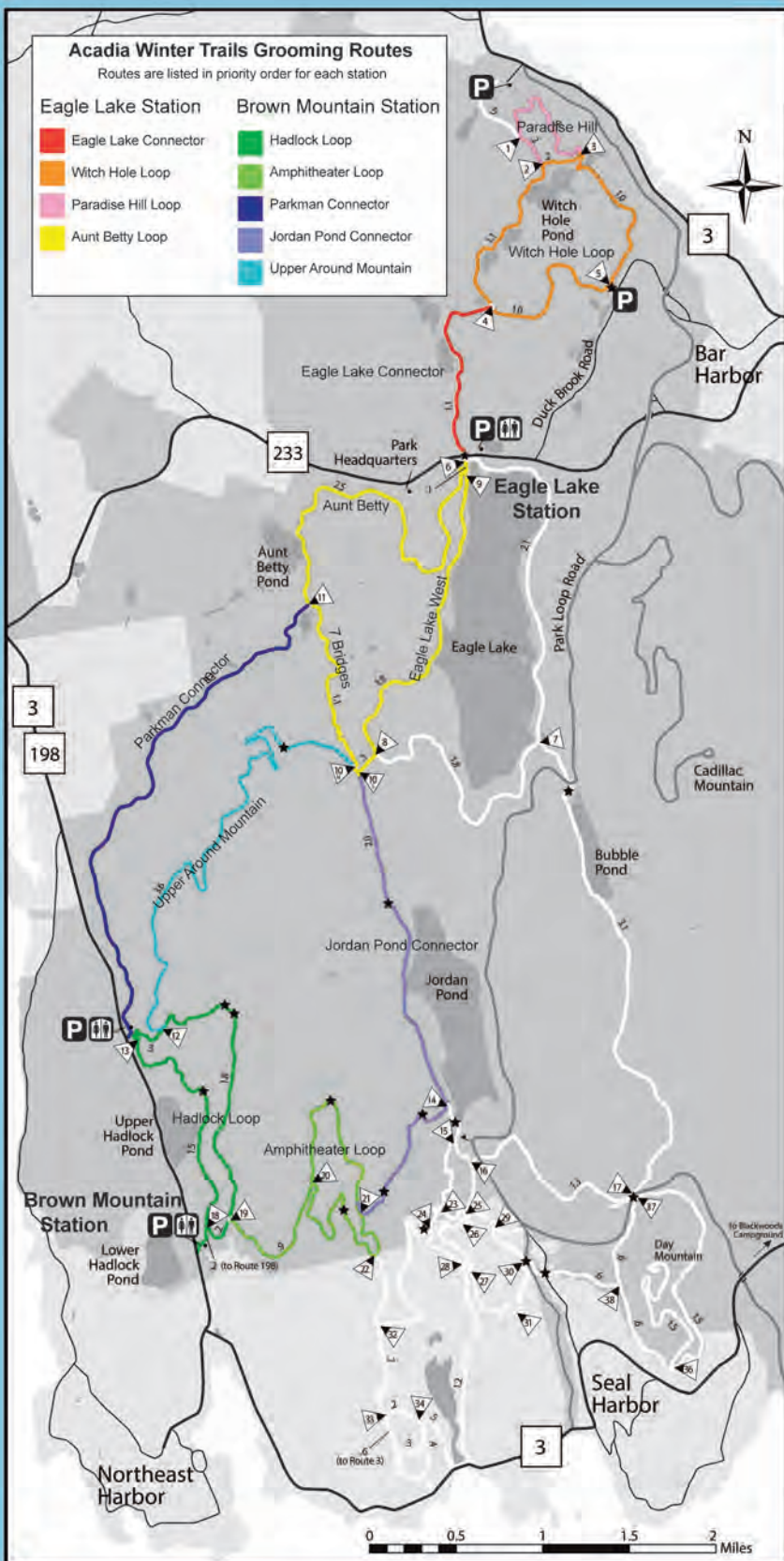
I have long been tagged as overprepared for winter hikes because my backpack contains my gear and enough surplus for others. I believe everyone should carry a high output headlamp with extra batteries, an extra hat, face covering (balaclava) and gloves (mittens are best to warm cold fingers).

I also bring a cell phone battery pack (WARNING: There is no guarantee of service as signals can be spotty in the park), GPS unit, radio, high energy bars/gel packs, a first aid kit (with splints, bandages, tape, warming packs).

When you plan well, and have the right gear and equipment, and keep safety front of mind, you can discover Acadia's winter secrets in comfort, and you will share lifelong memories unmatched by any other time of the year. Stay safe!

LILI PEW is a volunteer for MDI Search and Rescue and a member of the Board of Directors of Friends of Acadia.





Photos opposite page, top to bottom: ice skater on Jordan Pond/photo by Julia Walker Thomas; cross country skiers near the Eagle Lake carriage road entrance/photo by Ashley L. Conti; a volunteer grooms carriage road for skiing and snowshoeing/photo by Julia Walker Thomas; gear for winter hike/photo by Lili Pew

WINTER COURTESY IS COMMON SENSE

Acadia's winter visitors, although fewer in number than in summer, tend to concentrate their activities in a handful of areas, so a dedication to common courtesy can mean fewer potential conflicts and a better experience for all.

Especially on groomed cross-country ski trails, hikers and snowshoers are asked to avoid "post holing," which can destroy the quality of the tracks. That applies not only to humans, but to canine companions as well.

Fat-tire bikes or bikes with studded tires are allowed on motor roads and ungroomed carriage road stretches but prohibited on groomed sections and hiking trails.

Snowmobiles are permitted on closed motor roads and two sections of the carriage roads (to skirt plowed roads): from Wildwood Stables to Jordan Pond, and from Bubble Pond down the east side of Eagle Lake to the North end.

DRESS FOR WINTER WEATHER SUCCESS

Temperatures and conditions in Acadia vary widely during the winter in Acadia. The weather is continually changing, and conditions can be dramatically different even a few miles apart.

In general, daytime high temperatures run in the high 20s to low 30s. Lows hover in the single digits. Sunny spots out of the wind can feel downright balmy.

Wind chills can be a major factor, especially on open summits and along the coast.

"Try to use a layered system using a wool or synthetic base layer, paired with a down, wool, or synthetic insulating mid layer, and a wind and waterproof outer layer," advises Cadillac Mountain Sports manager Matt Servaites.

"And, if you're looking to stay warm and help the planet, choose items containing recycled synthetics, sustainable and ZQ certified merino wool, and humanely sourced down."

VOLUNTEERS GROOM ACADIA'S SKI TRAILS

There is nothing sweeter than the distinctive "swoosh" of cross-country skis on a perfectly groomed trail. At Acadia, a hardy group of volunteers with FOA's Acadia Winter Trails Association works hard each season to make that "swoosh" a reality.

When conditions allow, volunteers use snowmobiles towing groomer sleds, or a custom-built Kubota UTV, to lay down classic parallel tracks and/or a level surface for skate skiers. Before the work can start, the ground has to be well frozen and there needs to be sufficient snow to work with, usually about a foot. Volunteers toil early in the morning and sometimes through the night and must cope with wild temperature swings and the occasional downed tree. Areas groomed include the Around Mountain, Eagle Lake, and Witch Hole carriage roads.

Updates on the latest grooming and ski trail conditions are posted regularly at www.friendsofacadia.org, or on FOA's Facebook page.

ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA



"The first fall of snow is not only an event but it is a magical event. You go to bed in one kind of world and wake up to find yourself in another quite different, and if this is not enchantment, where is it to be found?"

—J. B. PRIESTLY

"Snow was falling, so much like stars filling the dark trees that one could easily imagine its reason for being was nothing more than prettiness."

— MARY OLIVER

ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA





EMMA FORTHOFFER/FOA

WINTER IN ACADIA

ABOVE:
Icicles along the carriage road
at Eagle Lake.

OPPOSITE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Fresh
snow covers the footbridge along
the Hadlock Brook Trail.

The sun penetrates deep woods
along Hadlock Brook.

The Hadlock Brook waterfall is
frozen in time.

BACKGROUND: Sea smoke
engulfs the Porcupine Islands
from Halls Cove.

ACADIA ON ICE continued from page 21

caution is urged, however, as conditions vary widely between storms and a thin layer of snow can hide dangerously thin ice. Checking every 100 feet or so is recommended as thickness is never uniform. A depth of four inches for humans on foot or skates is considered the minimum. Ice skaters, and the occasional ice boater, can often be seen on Eagle Lake, Long Pond and Echo Lake are also popular destinations.

Some winter recreationists have been known to hike up to the Bowl behind the Beehive to skate although ice thickness there varies greatly and should be verified before lacing up.

PICNICKING

When winter winds calm and the sun shines bright there is no beating a picnic in the park. Picnic areas at Seawall in Manset and at Fabbri on Otter Cove are relatively easy to reach in winter. Fueled stoves can be used and fires and charcoal are permitted in the approved pedestal grills. Practice Leave No Trace principles for minimal impact.

For those who want to pack a pre-cooked picnic, many ledges and cobblestone beaches along the shore remain free of snow at times during the winter. Bring a warm blanket, insulating seat pads, and snuggle up in a cozy spot out of the wind.

As always, be sure to pack out everything you pack in.

SNOWMOBILING

There are limited snowmobiling opportunities in Acadia. The sport's adoption of quieter, less-polluting four-stroke sleds in recent years is more in harmony with the visitor experience and Acadia's trail conditions and restrictions make it more amenable to touring than to hard-core riding.

Snowmobiles are allowed on Acadia's Park Loop Road and on certain fire roads on the western side of Mount Desert Island. The two miles of pavement along Ocean Drive are often bare, making a one-way loop impossible.

Sledders can also access the Cadillac Mountain Summit Road although extreme icing conditions and sections bare of snow can make passage impossible.

None of the routes are groomed.

Snowmobiles are permitted on two sections of the carriage roads (to skirt plowed pavement) including the route from Wildwood Stables to Jordan Pond, and from Bubble Pond down the east side of Eagle Lake to the north end.

Off-road use is strictly prohibited. Maine registration and operation rules apply.

A speed limit of 35 miles per hour is in force on paved roads throughout the park. The limit is 25 miles per hour on other roads.

Riders must yield to other park users such as skiers and snowshoers.

To access the Park Loop Road, snowmobilers are encouraged to park and unload at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center in Hulls Cove.

Although ATVs and UTVs modified with tracks fit the state definition of a snowmobile they are prohibited for all non-official uses on park property. ■

EARL BRECHLIN is Friends of Acadia's Communications Director.

Fuel Up



WINTER TRAIL MIX

A tasty winter trail mix is perfect for a winter hike picnic. Pair it with a thermos of hot tea or apple cider.

Ingredients

- 1 cup dry roasted salted pistachios, shelled
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup white chocolate chips (for vegan use these or dark chocolate)
- 1 cup candied or raw almonds
- 1 cup homemade or store-bought granola clusters
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut chips



FOA staff member Lisa Williams enjoys a winter picnic with family and friends near Little Long Pond.

NEW MEMBERS

September 1, 2020 – October 31, 2020

Thomas Allen	Maggie and Ed Hays
Trice Antinoro	Hemmer Family Charitable Fund
Alexandra Arvai	Terri Hodgkins
Roberta Avery	Mary Hollenback
Ann Backman	Therese Huff
Laura Burrell Baxter	Steven Jones
Sheila and David Belyea	Marie and Brian Kacmarsky
Kira Blakeslee	Robert Kacmarsky
Nancy and Howard Bliss	Isabel Keene
Walter Wickes Brewster	Pauline Kelley
Daniel Camino	Robert Keough
Sherry and James Cehonski	Barbara and Warren Kinsman
Julie Chalk	Shelby Kirillin
Michele Chapman	Katharine Kitchel
Andrew Clark	Sandra Knowles
Mary Clarke	Debra Kon
Laura Cline	Kimberly Kriger
Patty Cogswell	Jervanna Krug
Gregory Collins	Peteris Kruze
Connecticut Education Association	Jane Kuesel
Scott Cook	Susan and Theodore Larson
Nathan Crone	Joan Laskowski
Kim Davis	Robert Lehmann
Bryan Delaney	William Linney
Adrienne DeLuca	Samantha Longoria
Heather and Kevin Dropps	Laura MacDonald
Mary and Scott Dziewielin	Jeanne Malicki
Sarah Early	William Mansell
Merle Edwards-Orr	William Martin
John Ehrenhofler	Edward McNulty
Paula Frederick	Marc Mertz
Virginia Gibson	Sharon Morrell
Terry Gordon	Lynn Mortoro
Ellen Gormley	Emily Moses
Jeanne Hackett	Tony Musgrave
Wendy Hall	Catherine Newman
Roslyn Haney	Norfolk Southern Foundation
Jennifer and Rett Hart	Northeast Jeep Organization
	Jared Nutting



KAREN O. ZIMMERMANN

HIKERS on Canon Brook Trail, Cadillac Mountain

Wendy O'Neill	Patrick Shower
Maureen Pepper	Carrie Siegrist
Pat Phillips	Scott Smith
Jacob Pramuk	John Soderlund
Charlotte and Robert Pulitzer	Amy and Karl Swenson
Andre Ragel	Marie Taylor
Vanessa Ragland	Stephen Turan
Katherine Rinfret	Thomas Turan
Molly and Peter Ross	Neil Turner
Vernon Ross	Lisa Walker
Tuua Ruutiainen	Sean Williams
Kathleen Rybarz	Vanda Winakor
Matthew Sable	

WILD ACADIA continued from page 9

see which combinations will create the most resilient plant community on Acadia's summits in light of drier, warmer conditions expected in the coming decades. Lessons learned on Cadillac will be extended to Penobscot and Sargent Mountains. Wild Acadia 2.0 funds will support monitoring and analysis to shape revisions to the restoration methods, as well as support additional communications and public engagement and citizen science.

GREAT MEADOW CULVERT REPLACEMENT AND STREAM AND WETLAND RESTORATION. The NPS will be replacing the Park Loop Road culvert at the outlet of the Great Meadow with a bridge that is intended to improve passage of aquatic organisms and to accommodate seasonal high flows.

Wild Acadia 2.0 funds will supplement the NPS design and construction of the bridge to restore and improve the natural stream channel above and below the bridge. Additionally, grant funds will be used to remove portions of the abandoned roadbed and to plug

legacy ditches in the Great Meadow originally intended to drain the water from the wetland. Recreating the natural wetland hydrology will allow a greater variety of native species to inhabit this iconic wetland complex and will improve the wetland's capacity to mitigate flood flows from intensified precipitation events.

BASS HARBOR MARSH INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL AND RESTORATION.

With contributions from FOA's Wild Acadia funding, Acadia's Invasive Plant Management Team has begun removing invasive plants from a 14-acre site on the Bass Harbor Marsh. While the removal is a good first step, it will leave a several acre site open and vulnerable to re-infestation. Wild Acadia 2.0 funds will be used to plant climate-adapted native species on the impacted site to "direct" the site toward a species composition that is resilient into the future. Funding will also support monitoring, data analysis, and communication.



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

Acadia's Master Mason Mike Fitzpatrick removes old mortar as part of restoration work on the Amphitheater Bridge.

FOREVER YOUNG continued from page 18

tough they must have been. The kind of machinery and equipment we have now is so advanced. They had to build their own scaffolding from scratch on this rough terrain. I don't know how they did it. These were some talented and tough masons," Fitzpatrick comments.

"When people come by and see us restoring the bridges, they usually just assume we are buying a generic bag of mortar mix. They often don't realize it's a whole process. When we explain all the steps we are taking for historic accuracy, we get a lot of compliments and thank-yous.

"People really seem appreciate the work that is being done," he says. "It's gratifying. I love working in Acadia. It's my favorite job by far. Working outside every day isn't for everybody, but I love it, and I'd much rather be here in this park than on 3rd or 2nd Avenue in Manhattan dodging traffic."

About half of Acadia's bridges have been restored, Fitzpatrick says. When preservation work on the final bridge is completed, the team will go back to the first bridge again and start doing inspections to see how well the mortar has held up and if more repairs are needed —the work of an Acadia mason is never done.

Fitzpatrick says that when he's gone, Ryan Meddaugh, the Acadia mason helper, will most likely take over. "He will train the next person who will eventually take over the position," Fitzpatrick explains. "That's what you do, you pass it down, so these beautiful bridges are here forever."

JULIA WALKER THOMAS is Friends of Acadia's Digital Media Manager.

IN MEMORIAM

September 1, 2020 – October 31, 2020

O. Kelley Anderson
 John Banister
 Dorothy and John Brooks
 Francis H. Brooks
 Barbara A. Carlson
 David Caswell
 Barbara E. Choate
 Lois Mary Clement
 Arlon and Muriel Day
 Rossiter T.B. Drake
 Helen P. Ferrell
 Richard W. Haslam
 Heidi Hershberger
 Leo and Dotti Hoffmann
 Susan Howard
 Christopher Robert Howley
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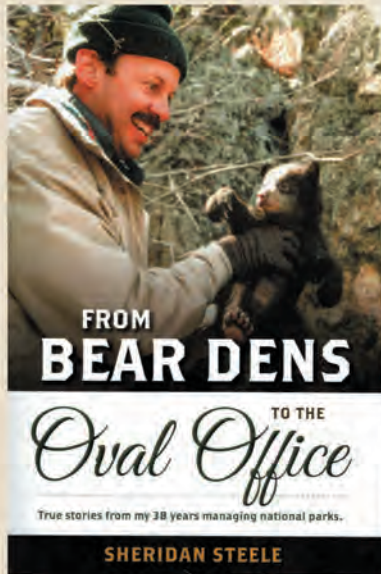
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FOA

A Superintendent's Journey

BY W. KENT OLSON



From Bear Dens to the Oval Office

By Sheridan Steele

262 pages. Paper. Illustrated.

\$19.95

Author proceeds donated to Coalition to Protect America's National Parks

Acadia's recent superintendents — Paul Haertel (1994–2002), Sheridan Steele (2003–2015), and Kevin Schneider (2016–present)—are great leaders all. Steele has come forth with *From Bear Dens to the Oval Office*, an assemblage of warmly written, compact vignettes from a 38-year career of protecting national parks and directing their operations.

He recounts his decades park by park, starting at Fort Scott National Historic Site, in 1988, his first superintendency. He later ran or helped run a handful of others, including, e.g., Rocky Mountain and Black Canyon of the Gunnison. Steele spent a year at National Park Service Headquarters, Washington, DC, training for Senior Executive Service status, a key federal credential for career public servants wanting to ascend the ranks. Landing at Acadia, he was primed to think big and do big work.

The new leader set four goals: acquire or otherwise conserve private lands inside or near park boundaries; improve visitor services; make Schoodic Education and Research Center a success; engage youth in park use, appreciation, and stewardship.

Steele's capstone achievement (encompassing three of his four goal categories) was the addition of 1,500 acres at Schoodic and the creation of Schoodic Woods Campground, brilliantly designed by landscape architect Sam Coplon.

Bear Dens lays out backstories of the extensive, complex actions over two decades that resulted in irrevocable protection for the spectacular peninsula parcel.

The project began in Haertel's superintendency, in critical partnership with Friends of Acadia, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and others. Lyme Timber came in, negotiating the purchase, and the National Park Foundation took temporary title. Steele led all that and, most crucially, worked with a conservation donor whose extraordinary benefactions bought the land and paid the construction costs of Schoodic Woods. Tantalizing other aspects of the Schoodic project remain to be written.

History will say Steele's actions, and Haertel's earlier work, were core inflection points in the stewardship and expansion of Acadia. The progress continues in the

continued on page 32

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(*Thuja occidentalis*)
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(*Tsuga canadensis*)
- _____ Jack Pine
(*Pinus banksiana*)
- _____ Juniper
(*Juniperus*)
- _____ Red Spruce
(*Picea rubens*)
- _____ White Pine
(*Pinus strobus*)



A SUPERINTENDENT'S JOURNEY continued from page 31

same partnership spirit in Schneider's lead. The three superintendents credit their staffs, top to bottom.

Bear Dens is unpretentious, cordial, with illustrative not arty photos. It has fun reads about hosting VIPs — senators, cabinet secretaries, a Pope, the Emperor of Japan, Obama, and so on — and tells how a cumbersome agency gets done the peoples' work.

But the book is mostly about the spirit of the Park Service mission. Steele: "I always try to tell folks that the national parks belong to all Americans, and we park rangers are just the caretakers." ■

KEN OLSON was president and CEO of Friends of Acadia 1995-2006.



CAPTURING THE MOMENT Clouds on Cadillac

BY EDWARD MUENNICH

Acadia National Park is a ceaselessly changing canvas and paying attention to its moods is the first step in getting a great photograph.

Conditions this past June were perfect for low-lying cloud cover to form. There were several days when low clouds crept in during the day obscuring the mountain peaks from below. If you could get high enough, above the cloud layer like on top of Cadillac Mountain, you were rewarded with spectacular sights.

Noticing one intrusion coinciding with sunset, I headed up Cadillac to find a clear vantage of the other peaks and sky to the west. I waited, watching in awe, as clouds surged steadily in from the ocean and the colors grew in intensity. In all, I spent two hours watching and taking photos until it was truly dark. All the while I was thinking: How lucky am I to be experiencing this?

The camera settings for this image were: 1/5 second shutter speed, f18 aperture, with an ISO of 100, shot with a Canon camera with a 24-105mm lens, mounted on a tripod. ■

EDWARD MUENNICH is a carpenter and photographer who lives in Mount Desert. You can see more of his photography at: edwardmuennich.com.

Updates

Visitation Rebound

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, it likely will not surprise folks to learn that visitation to Acadia National Park declined in 2020. However, what was particularly noteworthy was a dramatic change that occurred from mid-April, when there were hardly any visitors, to mid-October, when the park was even busier than during other “normal” years.

Acadia usually opens its gates to visitors from near and far in mid-April. But this year it did not open until June 1, likely prompting many to cancel or delay their trips.

Even once the park opened in June, Acadia’s visitation was unexpectedly low with an unusual pattern of high use on weekend days. This is a deviation from the high weekday volume that Acadia typically sees mid-summer

and suggests more trips being made by people living closer to the park.

Across the board, the park experienced a decrease in monthly visitation figures, but in town, particularly later in the summer, it certainly felt busy. This was because of an increase in personal vehicle use, impacted by suspension of the Island Explorer bus service.

Adam Gibson, Acadia’s social scientist, observed, “It definitely looks like people have taken to their vehicles this summer.” In August the park counted 77,397 vehicles, which exceeded the total in 2019 when visitation was higher.

With bus service and cruise ship landings suspended, park campgrounds closed, and other commercial uses reduced, the park predicted that this decreased visitation

would last all season long.

Surprisingly, however, visitation in October 2020 was up by 10 percent over 2019 (480,859 compared to 436,194 in 2019), Gibson said. “According to our calculations, this corresponded with about a 32 percent increase in personal vehicles along the Ocean Drive corridor.” In reviewing the figures for the end of the year, Gibson noted, “November 2020 visitation was up by approximately 66 percent over 2019 (76,251 compared to 46,011 in 2019). We were finally able to see the full effect of the increase in personal vehicles. This was about a 76 percent increase in traffic to the Sand Beach area.”

Over the last 11 months, visitation on Mount Desert Island and accompanying parcels at Schoodic and Isle Au Haut decreased by 23 percent compared to 2019 (2,647,773 versus 3,424,421).

Use Your RMD To Give Back to FOA

An increasing number of FOA members are using qualified charitable distributions from their IRAs to support the mission of Friends of Acadia.

If you are over 70 1/2 years old and have a traditional IRA, you are required to take a minimum annual distribution from your retirement fund. (The effective age is 72 for those turning 70 1/2 after July 1, 2019.) Generally, such Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) are taxable as ordinary income.

Giving this distribution directly from your IRA to a qualified charity may be a tax-smart way for you to make a gift to Friends of Acadia.

Please note that FOA does not intend this information to be used as tax advice. If you want to see if this is a good way for you to make charitable donations, please contact your financial advisor.

For more information on ways to support FOA’s mission contact Lisa Horsch Clark at lisahorsch@friendsofacadia.org or by calling 207-288-3340.



WILL NEWTON/FOA

Cars clog the Park Loop Road near Sand Beach during a peak time in summer.

Acadia National Park will implement a timed-entry reservation system beginning in 2021 for the Cadillac Summit Road. To understand the process of vehicle reservations, the park conducted a pilot in October. (See related story.) During this period, FOA recreation technicians monitored real-time conditions. Collected data will be used to recommend appropriate management objectives and policy adaptations in 2021. For monthly Acadia National Park visitation reports, please visit: <https://irma.nps.gov/STATS/Reports/Park/ACAD>.

continued on page 36

IN KIND

September 1, 2020 – October 31, 2020

Laura and Bernard Hamilton
Helen Koch
Morgan-Lewis Law Firm

ACADIA WINTER TRAILS ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEERS

Gordon Beck
Brett Binns
Dave Edson
Mark Fernald
Adam Garipey
Rob Gaynor
Matt Gerrish
Phil Lichtenstein
Stephen Linscott
Craig Roebuck
Jeff Roseberry
Zach Soares
Zach Steele
Mia Thompson
Christiaan van Heerden
Adam Wales

ANSWERS to EvergreensIQ quiz on p. 32

1. Juniper
2. White Cedar
3. Balsam Fir
4. Jack Pine
5. Eastern Hemlock
6. Red Spruce
7. White Pine



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UPDATES continued from page 35

Grant Aids Accessibility

Friends of Acadia (FOA) and Acadia National Park are embarking upon a new partnership to plan accessibility improvements in the park. Thanks to a generous grant from the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, FOA will fund the work of the National Center on Accessibility (NCA) at the Epley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University to prepare the accessibility assessment. The goals of the study, outlined by the NCA, are to bolster the culture of inclusion and equity at Acadia National Park, and to identify barriers to participation by individuals with disabilities and establish priorities for barrier removal. Fostering an interdisciplinary awareness of accessibility compliance needs among park management is a goal as well.

The plan will focus first on addressing needs of individuals with physical disabilities, but as park sites are examined, ideas for comprehensive improvements may be identified. The National Park Service will be bringing together an interdisciplinary team to identify the priority locations to be studied.

Unless travel is restricted because of COVID, a team from the NCA will visit

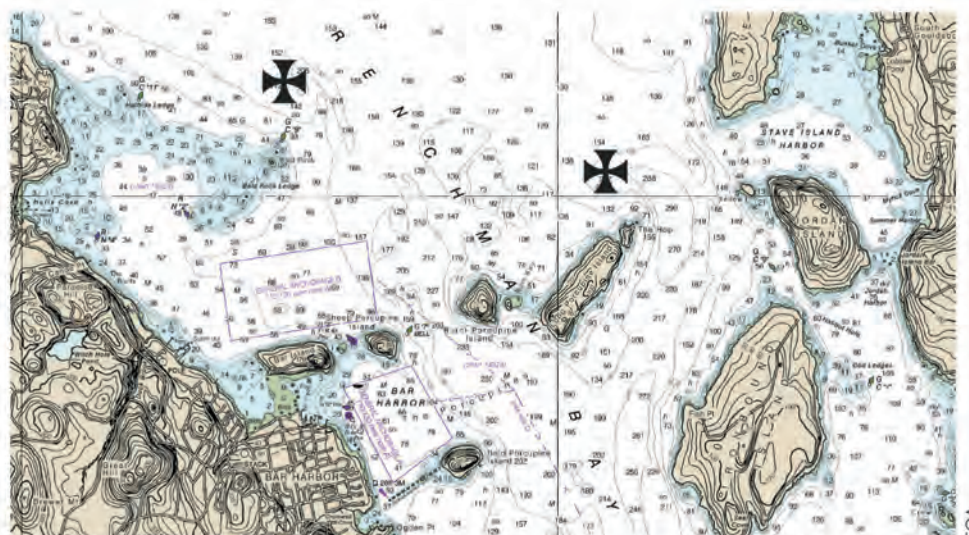
Acadia in the spring to complete on-site evaluation and data collection at the priority locations. After an interactive review process with park staff, the NCA will prepare a draft report with photographic documentation of their findings, action items, and references to best practices and legal requirements. The study is expected to be completed by late summer 2021. The National Park Service will then incorporate the study's recommended improvements into future infrastructure projects.

Salmon Pen Proposal

Friends of Acadia is concerned about a proposal from American Aquafarms to develop two salmon farms in upper Frenchman Bay near Long Porcupine Island and Bald Rock.

Representatives from the company met with FOA Conservation Director Stephanie Clement and Acadia National Park Management Assistant John Kelly via Zoom in November. The proposed lease sites were selected because they offered 150-feet of water depth, were in reasonably sheltered locations, and were at least 1,000 feet from riparian landowners.

American Aquafarms hopes to place 15 semi-enclosed pens and a feed barge at each lease site. Each pen would consist of a rigid aluminum structure,



Two areas of upper Frenchman Bay have been identified as possible locations for large-scale salmon farms.

FOA

about 150 feet in diameter and about a yard in height above the water's surface, topped by a three-foot fence.

Beneath the surface, each pen would have a net containing the fish, surrounded by a polymer fabric. American Aquafarms has been collecting data about existing fishing activity at the site, water quality, marine mammal activity and the benthic environment at each site in preparation for their lease application.

The pens will be visible from the Bluffs along Route 3, and the Park Loop Road, which are part of the Acadia All-American scenic byway. They will also be seen from the Paradise Hill section of the carriage roads and more distant locations such as the top of Cadillac Mountain.

American Aquafarms also proposes to purchase the former Stinson Seafood cannery (now owned by Maine Fair Trade Lobster Co.) in Prospect Harbor to serve as a hatchery and processing plant. The company would use a 45-meter ship to service the salmon farms. They indicated that 15 pens at each lease site would enable them to keep the farm operating six days a week, year-round.


The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) assesses aquaculture lease applications. The DMR commissioner will consider criteria for lighting, noise, visual impact, navigation around the lease site, the source of brood stock, potential interference with other fishing activities, and whether use of the lease site will affect significant wildlife and marine habitat.

When American Aquafarms submits its lease applications, a public hearing will be held. Permits will also be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which will consult with other federal agencies such as the National Park Service. Friends of Acadia is sharing concerns with other

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WILL NEWTON/FOA

Taking Pride ... Alice Noyes, of Franklin, rakes leaves near Day Mountain during Friends of Acadia's 30th Annual Take Pride In Acadia Day, in Acadia National Park. More than 160 volunteers pitched in on Saturday, Nov. 7, to show their love for the park. Socially-distancing pods of volunteers cleared fallen leaves from drainage areas on 12.2 miles of carriage roads in 17 locations. This work reduces costly washouts that occur from rain and ice during the winter and spring. View a gallery of images online at friendsofacadia.smugmug.com.

UPDATES continued from page 37

regional stakeholders, will monitor the application process, and inform members about opportunities to comment.

Eco-Culvert Replacement

Friends of Acadia partnered with the Southwest Harbor Water & Sewer District to improve fish passage on Marshall Brook by replacing an undersized road culvert. The

District, facing a fine from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), chose to develop an in-kind project in place of paying the fine. The District reached out to FOA for ideas for a project that was local to the island and would improve ecological conditions. Working with Wild Acadia Project Coordinator Brian Henkel, the District chose to replace an undersized road culvert with a culvert designed for



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

A beaver enjoys a snack amongst lily pads in a pond in Acadia National Park.

aquatic organism passage.

To see a video of this project, visit:
<https://friendsofacadia.org/new-culvert-southwest-harbor/>

Beaver Deceiver

Beavers play a critical role in healthy ecosystems and Acadia National Park benefits from numerous beaver families in waterways of the park. Beavers create wetland habitat by building a series of dams, which expands their area for foraging for food. Waterfowl, amphibians, reptiles, fish, and other animals, as well as plant species, benefit from these expanded wetlands.

Unfortunately, the damming activity of beavers can sometimes conflict with park infrastructure, particularly culverts and bridges. A recent conflict took place at a Civilian Conservation Corps constructed bridge on the Long Pond Fire Road. The bridge is built of numerous large granite blocks stacked to create a pair of openings for the water from Hodgdon Pond to flow into Seal Cove Pond.

Fencing built by the park to exclude the beavers from the bridge had failed due to age. Without fencing in place, the beavers constructed their dam against the upstream side of the bridge. The location and the height of the beaver dam threatened the integrity of the bridge.

Acadia National Park officials contacted Skip Lisle of Beaver Deceivers International to help devise a system to allow for the beavers to coexist with historic park infrastructure. After removing the existing beaver dam, Lisle built a fence system that precludes the beavers from building a dam at the bridge while also allowing beavers to build a dam just upstream of the bridge.

To see a video of this project, visit:
<https://friendsofacadia.org/beaver-deceiver/>

Mystery Surrounds Hibernating Bats

As they swap out sandals for winter

continued on page 40

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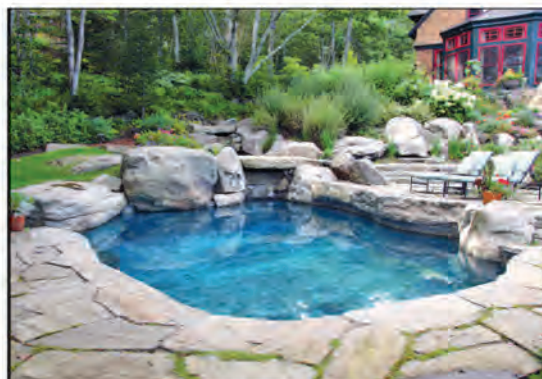


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ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

Chris Heilakka, Acadia National Park wildlife technician, works to carefully untangle an eastern small-footed bat that he and his team trapped in netting on the Carriage Roads near the Jordan Pond Gatehouse.

UPDATES continued from page 39

boots, people might notice familiar winter wildlife in Acadia such as snowshoe hares with fuzzy white coats and deer with snow covered antlers. Barrages of chickadees, nuthatches, and cardinals flock to backyard birdfeeders.

But there's one winter resident folks

probably do not give much thought to — bats. While some migrate south for the winter, like their feather-covered friends (or many of Acadia's seasonal visitors), others stick around.

Like all wildlife that spend the winter in Maine, bats have evolved to survive



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY WLODARSKI

WHAT AN ADVENTURE! ... The Acadia Quest team of BB-8 and Old Aim joined that Friends of Acadia activity for the first time in 2020 and took their enjoyment of it to new heights. Benjamin Ball, age 8, and mom Amy Wlodarski, who hail from Pennsylvania and Northeast Harbor, enjoyed discovering the Acadia Quest locations so much that they expanded their goals to include hiking to the top of every peak in the park. They covered more than 100 miles in their "quest" to reach all 30 peaks. An article about their adventures appeared in the *Bangor Daily News*.

cold temperatures and a reduction in available food. They are among a small group of mammals that are true hibernators, along with woodchucks and jumping meadow mice. Unlike black bears, which go into a partial hibernation and can still arouse quickly if disturbed, true hibernators start in the fall and carry right through until spring, arousing only a few brief times. But how does true hibernation help bats survive the winter?

True hibernation features bouts of torpor, which is when an animal's physiological processes (such as respiration, circulation, and digestion) are slowed down to conserve energy. This means that at first glance, hibernating bats can appear dead! They are very still and can sometimes be covered in tiny, condensed droplets of water on their fur. Arousing from torpor is energy intensive, so healthy bats only arouse a few times during the winter to drink (sometimes lapping the water droplets from their fur) but will then return to a state of torpor in their winter roosts.



So where are these hibernating bats? Biologists at Acadia National Park have been working on the answer. While Acadia does not have typical caves, it does have many talus slopes, which can form cave-like rock jumbles. Some voids might go deep enough that the temperature is constant enough for a hibernating bat — a promising possibility that researchers are actively exploring.

A second possibility is that bats are hibernating in structures such as cellars, attics, bridges, or even dry wells that have constant temperatures. Finally, bats might be hibernating somewhere researchers just do not know about yet!

One certainty is that when it warms up in the spring, bats will emerge from hibernation and be seen hunting for insects in the evening sky again. ■

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Ellen Gellerstedt And JC Camelio

BY EARL BRECHLIN



COURTESY OF ELLEN GELLERSTEDT

JC Camelio and Ellen Gellerstedt

In the annals of retail marketing, a transaction involving “two for the price of one” is considered a very favorable deal. In fact, the only thing sweeter would be two for the price of none.

So, it is no surprise that one area couple’s dedication to putting in hundreds of unpaid hours a year helping to preserve and protect Acadia National Park can be thought of as the gold standard.

FOA members Ellen Gellerstedt and JC Camelio are the real deal when it comes to volunteering for Friends of Acadia and the national park.

Their desire to give back to a place that has been a spiritual touchstone to them for decades drives their dedication and willingness to put in hours of long, hard labor.

Ellen enjoyed a career working as a pediatrician. JC worked in television news at an NBC affiliate in Rochester, New York where the couple met.

Ellen began visiting Islesford regularly in the 1980s and later introduced JC to Downeast Maine. Eventually the couple purchased a home on the island and moved to Maine permanently.

Ellen cared for patients at Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor for 16 years.

While on Islesford JC began volunteering for Friends of Acadia, eventually becoming a volunteer crew leader overseeing drop-ins on the hiking trails and carriage paths. “I really enjoy helping make peoples’ volunteer experiences in the park meaningful,” he says.

In 2013, JC appeared at the park’s Sawtelle Museum on

Islesford and asked how he could help. He was quickly put to work taking care of the building and grounds. Those efforts earned him the nickname “The Lawn Ranger.”

In 2014 he won the William Otis Sawtelle Award, which recognizes dedication to preserving the history of the Cranberry Isles. He has also worked in the park’s sign shop.

Ellen eventually began volunteering at the Wild Gardens of Acadia. “It was really a way for me to get back into biology,” she explains. She also did course and field work to get her certificates as a Maine Master Naturalist and a Maine Master Gardener. JC has also continued to explore new interests, earning a master’s in fine arts in photography at the Maine Media Workshop in Rockport.

During 2020, both focused their attention on the Wild Gardens. In addition to making sure visitors were properly spaced, other duties included raking pathways each morning and helping to schedule other volunteers.

According to both Ellen and JC, volunteering in the park offers invaluable rewards. “It’s the perfect way to stay connected with nature,” Ellen explains. “There’s a shared sense of camaraderie,” says JC. “The work is enormously satisfying. Many of our best friends were made after meeting them volunteering. “It’s all about friendship, mutual interest, and giving back.”

“Friends of Acadia is grateful for the many hours that Ellen and JC have contributed to the Wild Gardens and the stewardship of Acadia’s trails and carriage roads,” says Stephanie Clement, FOA’s Conservation Director. “Their dedication and commitment are exemplary and were a huge help during this pandemic year.”

Both Ellen and JC plan on continuing to volunteer for Friends of Acadia and the park in the future. and Ellen says she may branch out. “I might want to help out on the trails too,” she explains.

According to Ellen, folks don’t need to be experts in any given subject to begin volunteering. In fact, many older volunteers choose to do tasks different from their careers, although management and production skills learned in almost any organization translate well while serving in the park.

“People never know where they will find a new passion,” Ellen notes. “Just pinch your nose and jump!”

EARL BRECHLIN is Friends of Acadia’s Communications Director.

Heartfelt Contributions

Winter greetings in a new year.

Let's face it, 2020 was extraordinary. In reflecting on the year at Friends of Acadia, the toll the last 12 months took on our group of volunteers is obvious. The pandemic lessened the opportunity of volunteers to work in Acadia, frustrating efforts to do what they do best — work together as a group for everyone's benefit. Unfortunately, there is no one size fits all model for how to volunteer safely during a pandemic. We learned as we went along.

I had a chance to talk with Stephanie Clement, Conservation Director at Friends of Acadia, about the 2020 field season and get her reactions. She reported it was an atypical year, yet some projects were more productive and efficient. Many aspects of stewardship volunteer operations were not feasible.

Changes were made to limit group size. People working in the park were required to use their vehicles. FOA staff sanitized the tools, and hours in the field were shifted to avoid park peak usage times.

The weekly drop-in program was suspended. Friends of Acadia's membership table at Jordan Pond House was canceled.

One benefit of the operational change was an increase in productivity at the Jordan Pond bog-walk project. The FOA Stewardship Crew kept a core of regular volunteers supplied with materials. The 4,066-foot bog-walk, a project that began in 2016, was finished in September — earlier than expected. Additionally, Wild Gardens volunteer hours increased as more help was needed greeting people throughout the season at the entrance to the one-way path.

Take Pride in Acadia Day (TPIAD), an annual favorite, did not have to be cancelled. A scaled-back version took place on a glorious

fall day. FOA and Acadia's staff created a plan following CDC guidelines. Participants were limited to groups already within a social "pod." FOA visiting student board member Lundy Stowe participated from Collge of Atlantic.

During 2020, 165 volunteers contributed 578 hours clearing miles of drainages along the carriage roads. TPIAD enjoyed strong support, even without the traditional lunch of chili, cornbread, and cider.

So how did the stewardship volunteer numbers stack up in 2020? In total, 260 stewardship volunteers contributed 1,824 hours to the park. For comparison, in 2019, 594 volunteers logged 6,469 hours. In 2019, 304 hours were spent by the Acadia Winter Trails Association compared to 52 in 2020, mostly due to lack of snow. So, let it snow this season as those volunteers are eager to groom the trails.

The reality is volunteers are a key ingredient and keep our organization thriving. The physical and spiritual benefits of volunteering are many. It is good for the mind and body. Connecting with others is fun and the results of the work provides a tremendous sense of purpose.

I want to give a heartfelt thanks to those who continued to contribute in new and different ways in 2020. Yes, 2020 had its challenges. Still, FOA looks forward to welcoming a full cadre of volunteers back in Acadia this season.

With gratitude,



—Anne Greene

FROM THE CHAIR



"The physical and spiritual benefits of volunteering are many. It is good for the mind and body. Connecting with others is fun and the results of the work provides a tremendous sense of purpose."



ANNE GREEN/FOA

ANNE GREEN and her canine hiking companions.

MY ACADIA



COURTESY OF BEN MOSS

BY BEN MOSS

My daughter's name is Acadia. That may just tip everyone off as to how much I love this national park.

My grandparents acquired a property in Pretty Marsh many decades ago and they are buried there so our ties to this heavenly place run deep.

My love for Acadia has grown deeper and stronger with every one of my 40-plus visits to Mount Desert Island, starting at the age of 1 month.

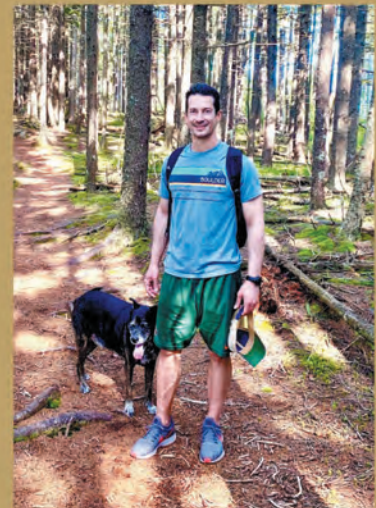
Some of my most memorable conversations with friends and loved ones have occurred along Acadia's paths. It also showed me that the best things in life are free – especially memories created with loved ones in Acadia National Park.

The first trip I took with Christiana, who would become my wife, was to MDI so we could explore the park together. That adventure forged a bond between us that has grown stronger with every visit.

Over the last few years, I have had the pleasure of watching my children explore nature in the park. I know they are falling in love with this magical place.

I carry the spirit of Acadia with me wherever I am in this world. I am so thankful to Friends of Acadia and all the people who have helped make and preserve Acadia so that all of us can continue to enjoy the park's rich legacy for many years to come.

BEN MOSS and his family divide their time between Maine and Miami, Florida.



COURTESY OF BEN MOSS

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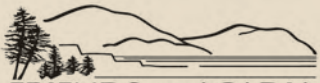


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Boulder Beach in Acadia National Park/photo by Ashley L. Conti





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