

ACADIA

The Friends of Acadia Journal FALL 2024

A ROUTE
FORWARD

ISLAND EXPLORER'S 25TH YEAR

CENTENNIAL
MILESTONES

1924: QUITE A YEAR FOR THE PARK

OPENING (OUT)
DOORS

MAKING EXPERIENCES
IN ACADIA POSSIBLE

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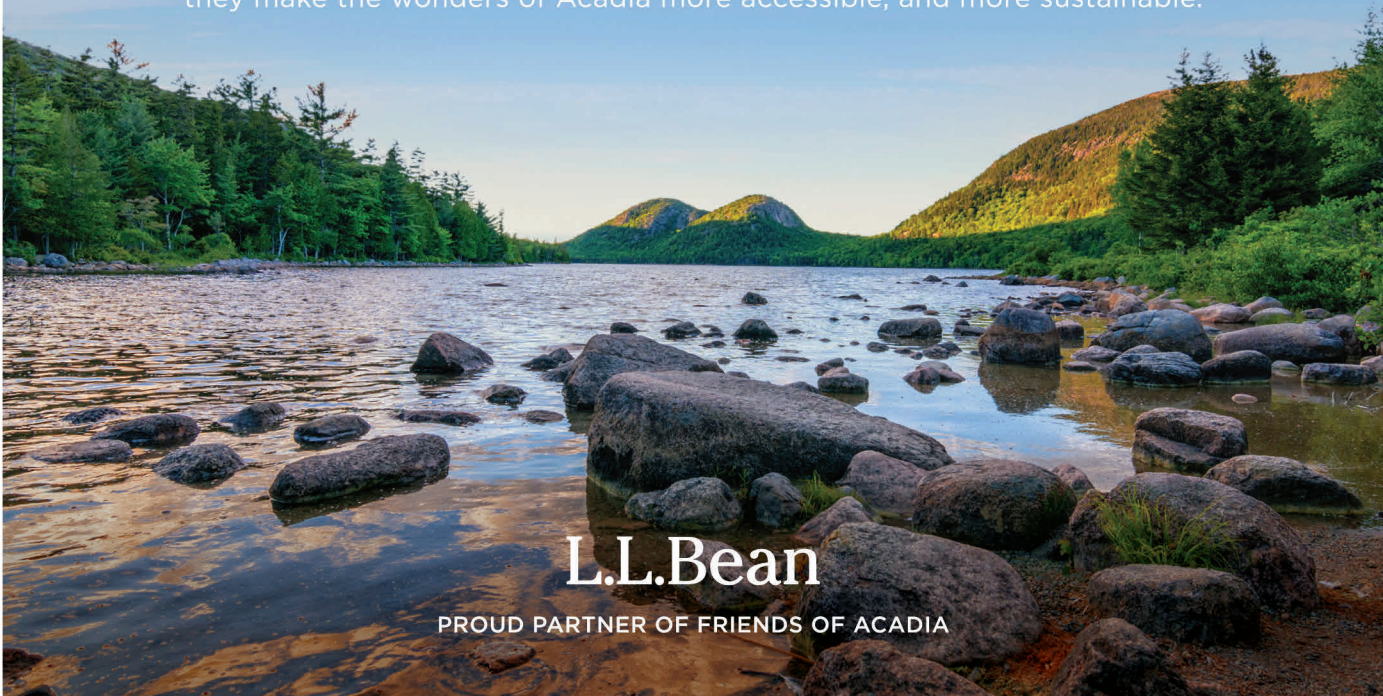
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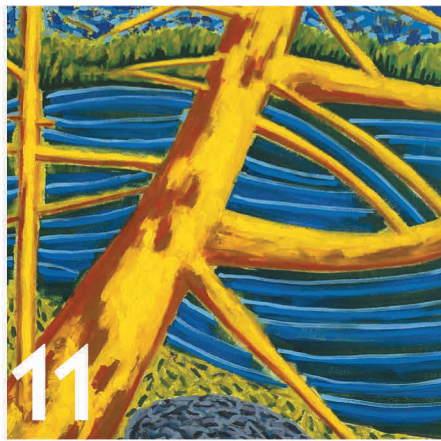
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ACADIA

The Friends of Acadia Journal

FALL 2024

Volume 29 No.3

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 three times a year. Submissions and letters are welcome.

Opinions expressed are the authors'.

EDITOR

Shannon Bryan

PHOTO EDITOR

Julia Walker Thomas

DESIGN

Lise Williams/Indigo Art Design

PRINTING

Penmor Lithographers

PUBLISHER

Eric Stiles



Northern lights (aurora borealis) illuminate the night sky over Jordan Pond and the Bubbles.

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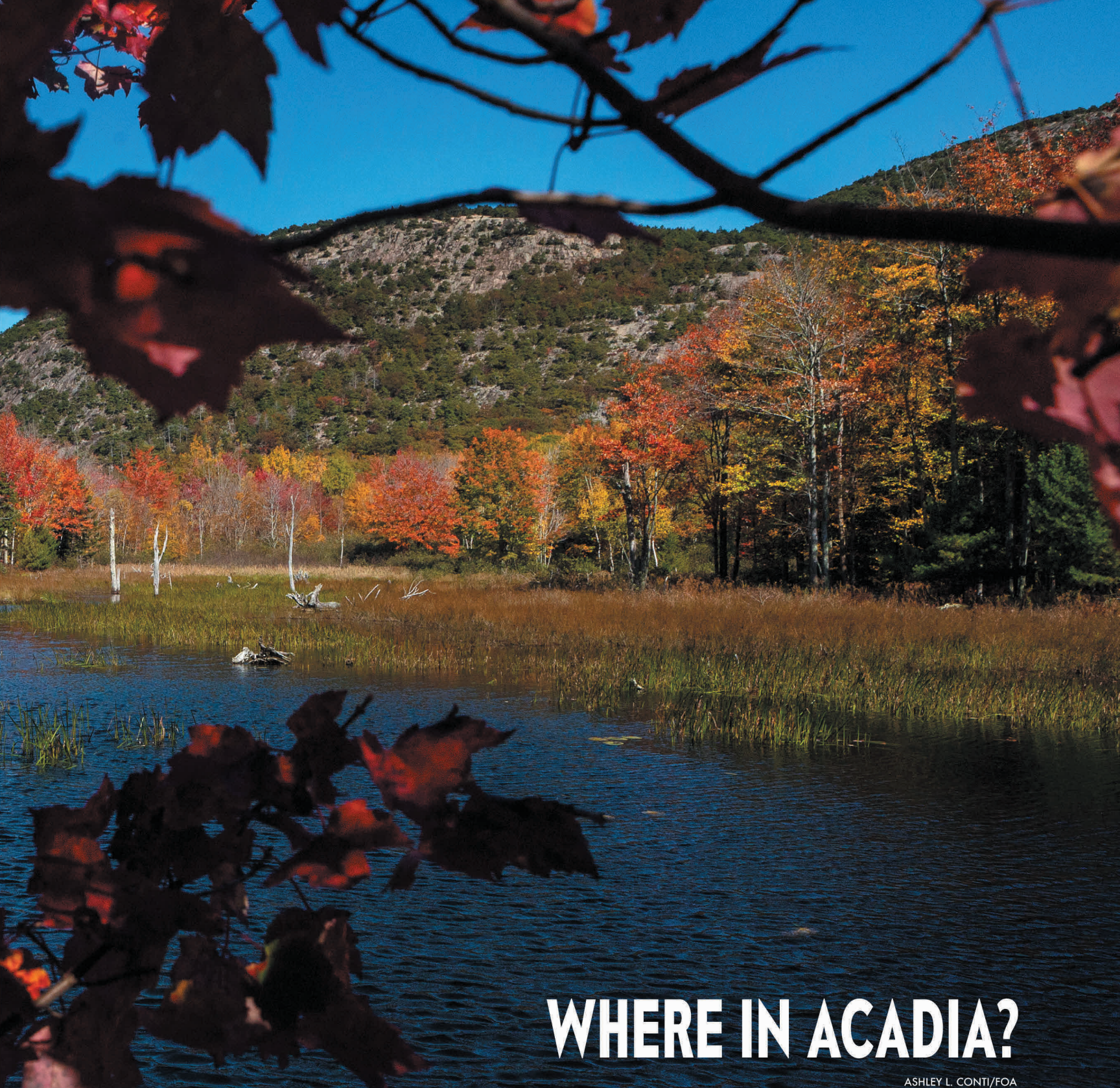
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WHERE IN ACADIA?

ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

Although it may only look like a round hill, this promontory was named for a Protestant explorer by the "Father of Acadia."

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

READERS RESPOND TO "WHERE IN ACADIA?"



WILL GREENE/FOA

Bogwalk along the Goat Trail on Isle au Haut

Thanks to the readers who responded to our "Where in Acadia?" question in the summer magazine and correctly identified the location as the bogwalk along the Goat Trail in the section of Acadia National Park on Isle au Haut. As the clue indicated, this trail shares its name with another Goat Trail on Norumbega Mountain. The Isle au Haut trail is less well known, given its location, and leads hikers through marsh, on the edge of cliffs, and overlooking harbors and coves.

Below are a few of the correct responses that we received from members.

In each issue of Acadia magazine, we post a photo and clues to help readers identify the location. If you think you can correctly identify the location of the photo, email editor@friendsofacadia.org. We'll run a few of the correct responses in the forthcoming issue, and we love it when you send photos and stories to accompany your answers. Thanks to all of our readers who play along!

"More than 40 years ago, three generations of our family—including cousins, aunts, uncles, siblings and grandmother plus close friends—spent a glorious long weekend at the Duck Harbor lean-tos. We repeated this biannual ritual over the next 20 years. The first two visits, the lean-tos were on the Eben's Head side. Our adventures included sunsets at Eben's Head, fascination while viewing the bioluminescence at the water's edge, and exploring Isle Haut trails including the Goat trail. The wildness, the quiet, and the sense of wonder of it all are still vividly recalled at our family gatherings."

- Sandy Smallidge, Winter Harbor, ME

"I believe the answer to Where in Acadia in the new summer issue is the Goat Trail on Isle au Haut. I was fortunate to spend a night at Duck Harbor with my wife back in June. It was a foggy weekend, but the views were spectacular. I only saw a bit of the Goat Trail before opting to summit Duck Harbor Mountain. There's something truly special about how remote and quiet this part of the park is. I'm looking forward to returning to see the trails of the northern half very soon!"

- Tom Tash, Augusta, ME

"The summer 'Where in Acadia' photo is the Goat Trail on Isle au Haut. Coming 50 years to the island has culminated with us becoming year-round residents. The Goat Trail is our go-to hike, and the marsh changes through the seasons are a thing to see. The photo is near the Merchant Cove gravel bar, which is our favorite beach cleanup location."

- Mike Fedosh, Isle au Haut, ME

"The Goat Trail on Isle au Haut. I haven't been out there in a few years, but on my last trip out I was trying to run all the trails in the park before the last ferry departed. I didn't quite get them all in, but I did run this one."

- Jennifer Britz, Bar Harbor, ME

"Although that looks like some other boardwalks in Acadia, my best guess is that it is on the Goat Trail on Isle Au Haut. We try to go there once a year or so. The mail boat ride is fun, and the trails are great. They are a little more rugged than those on MDI. The coves are beautiful."

- David & Mo Dowd, Needham, MA

Seeds Planted Decades Ago Continue to Grow

Friends of Acadia was born from a singular mission: to support Acadia National Park.

Nearly 40 years ago, Hulls Cove resident Marianne Edwards and a group of park volunteers and enthusiasts began fleshing out the idea of a citizen organization that could help with maintenance on Acadia's trails. Years of federal underfunding in the early '80s meant Acadia's trails were in a state of disrepair, and local volunteers—Marianne among them—were already lending hands.

With an initial contribution of \$50, Friends of Acadia was officially incorporated in 1986.

Among our founders' earliest priorities were Acadia's carriage roads. Between 1992 and 1995, an extensive rehabilitation of the carriage roads was financed by federal construction funds along with matching private funds from Friends of Acadia. Those funds created the Carriage Road Endowment.

A few years later, in 2000, Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park embarked upon the Acadia Trails Forever partnership to restore and maintain the park's historic 158-mile hiking trail system—and creating the first endowed trail system in the country. That model has since been adapted by other national parks and their partners to preserve their trail systems.

The trail and carriage road restorations were Friends of Acadia's first major achievements, but certainly not our last.

Over the decades, we've worked in partnership with managers at Acadia to identify park needs—critical areas where federal dollars don't stretch. We've also recognized the power of collaborative relationships with other area organizations to amplify our efforts towards shared goals.

Among the many highlights is the Island Explorer bus system.

In 1999, Friends of Acadia joined 19 organizations in signing a project agreement to build a regional

public transportation system for Acadia and the surrounding communities. That year, eight fare-free, propane-powered buses began carrying passengers. This fall, the Island Explorer celebrated its 10 millionth passenger and its 25th anniversary. Now we're looking ahead to an all-electric fleet (read more about the Island Explorer's history and future on page 15).

We're also thrilled to see the Acadia Gateway Center coming to life just off Route 3 in Trenton. This regional transit hub and park visitor welcome center has been in the transportation plans since the beginning of the project. Friends of Acadia purchased 369 acres in Trenton in 2007 and sold 152 acres to MaineDOT for the center. In May 2023, ground was finally broken, and the Acadia Gateway Center is scheduled to open next spring.

Developing tomorrow's stewards has been a focus for Friends of Acadia since the 1990s, when the Ridge Runners program was first established. It would later be combined with the Cadillac Summit Steward program to become today's Summit Stewards. Today, Summit Stewards work in the field engaging and educating park visitors on how to be better stewards of the park with more than 20,000 visitor interactions each season (read more on page 26).

In 2017, Friends of Acadia partnered with Park Journeys to bring urban youth organizations to Acadia National Park. Since then, our Urban and Diverse Youth Grants have continued to grow. In 2023, Friends of Acadia welcomed 10 groups to the park—and will exceed that in 2024 (read more about these grants on page 34).

We've come a long way since 1986, expanding our team and our reach, collaborating with dedicated partners and volunteers, but our mission has not wavered. Friends of Acadia is dedicated to preserving and protecting Acadia National Park.



—Eric Stiles

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



"Over the decades, we've worked to identify park needs—critical areas where federal dollars don't stretch. We've also recognized the power of collaborative relationships with other area organizations..."



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

TAKE PRIDE IN ACADIA DAY attracts enthusiastic volunteers of all ages to help "put the carriage roads to bed for the winter."



The Remarkable Story of John Carroll and his Mountain House

BY LISA HORSCH CLARK

"Lydia Stories: The Carroll Family History from Borrisoleigh to Southwest Harbor – 1761-1917"

"Lydia Stories" is a unique and compelling narrative that spans six generations of the Carroll family, tracing their journey from Ireland to the United States. Authored by Joan Jordan Grant, a direct descendant of John Carroll and Rachel Lurvey Carroll, the book skillfully blends historical fact and creative storytelling, guided by Lydia, a cloth doll, who narrates their rich history. Drawing from diaries, letters, and recorded memories, Grant vividly captures the family's legacy of courage and resilience as they establish and live at their Mountain House at base of Dog Mountain on Mount Desert Island. This unique presentation makes the book both informative and deeply engaging for history lovers.

Available for purchase at the Southwest Harbor Public Library, Carroll's Drug Store, and from the author. \$60 hardcover/\$35 softcover.

The mere fact that John Carroll survived his early years long enough to establish a family and homestead is a miracle. He faced dangerous ocean crossings, false arrests, and multiple near-death experiences as a young man.

John Carroll was born in Borrisoleigh, County Tipperary, Ireland on October 8, 1790. In an act of protest against taxes, he was charged with treason against the king and relocated to St. John's, Newfoundland where he had extended family and a prospect of work. He would never return to Ireland or see his immediate family again.

An early job John worked—seal hunting—was dangerous and, on one occasion, he and several companions found themselves stranded for four days on an ice floe. A changing wind came to their rescue, pushing them back to the safety of their boat. Once safe, John vowed to never seal hunt again.



JOAN JORDAN GRANT holds the original Lydia doll and a copy of her book, "Lydia Stories," while serving as a volunteer interpreter at the Carroll Homestead.

Instead, he and friend Michael Bulger sailed south in 1820 towards Washington D.C. which needed rebuilding after its burning in 1814. On the sail south their two ships stopped on Great Cranberry Island to unload supplies, where John and Michael were wrongly accused of stealing one of the ships.

They were shipped to Portland, the capital of the newly formed state of Maine, to stand trial. After an investigation and acquittal, the men returned to their ship on Great Cranberry but found it was too late in the fall to travel south due to hurricane season.

When the nearby and growing town of Southwest Harbor heard there were men skilled in masonry (John) and carpentry (Michael), the two were quickly recruited to build that fall. As winter approached, they shifted work to timber harvesting for building projects in the spring.

While cutting wood at the base of Beech Mountain, John's saw slipped, cutting him gravely.

One of the local men working the woods with him—Enoch Lurvey—quickly brought him to his nearby family home on what is now Lurvey Spring Road to wait for Dr. Kendall Kittridge to come from Somesville. While waiting for the doctor, Enoch's sister Rachel cared for John.

On doctor's orders, John stayed on at the Lurvey home for several weeks to recuperate from his injury with Rachel at his side. They quickly fell in love, married, and agreed to make their home in Southwest Harbor, abandoning his plans to move to and build in Washington.

John and Rachel found 50 plus acres of land, two miles north of Southwest Harbor at the base of Dog Mountain (now known as St. Sauveur Mountain) to build their home.

They picked the land not because it was close to town, had access roads, had fit grazing or growing fields, or was close to family. It had none of those features. What it did have was a water view of the rocky coast that reminded John of his childhood years in Ireland.

This is the start of what we today know as Carroll Homestead, affectionately called Mountain House by the family, housing four generations of Carroll descendants.

continued on page 44

What will Acadia look like in 100 years?

Your electric flying car whisks you to Hulls Cove Transit Center before valeting itself into an underground parking garage. A cool breeze hits your face as a silent, electric zero-emission Island Explorer train pulls in front of you to whisk you around a traffic-free Park Loop Road, depositing you close to your desired trailhead. When you get lost on your hike, you whip out your Holodeck, which summons the reincarnated Park Ranger George B. Dorr, who then fearlessly guides you to safety.

Though that version of “future Acadia” is likely a little outlandish, I think about the future of Acadia a lot.

It's probably fair to say that, in 100 years, Acadia will look very different than it does now, much as the park has changed in the last 100 years.

Our world is facing a series of unprecedented challenges and rapid changes, many of which will impact Acadia. Some of these forces will bring around positive change for the park and its stewards. For example, as we are able to automate tasks like reservation and fee collection, our talented staff will have more time to serve our visitors. But I'd be lying if I didn't say that issues like climate change, nature-deficit disorder among young people, and a very challenging fiscal environment didn't concern me.

On those particularly difficult days, one of the things that brings me solace is the reality that the lands we now call Acadia have always been here, and thanks to our community of stewards, the park will still be here 100 years from now.

These lands we are tasked with preserving and protecting for future generations will continue

to inspire people for generations to come. That's why it's all the more important that we, as stewards of these beautiful public lands, make sure that future generations have the tools and resources available to them to carry on the NPS's legacy. We would not be able to do this without the support of partners like Friends of Acadia.

Our dedication to youth programming like the Schoodic Education Adventure program allows young people who may have never had the opportunity to come to Acadia to soak themselves in its beauty and become inspired.

Our volunteer programs give everyone the chance to give back and deepen their connection with the park.

Our partnership with Schoodic Institute generates the science we need to confront future challenges, while also providing an immersive place for learning.

Thanks to Friends of Acadia's dedication to seasonal workforce housing, we will be able to offer housing to the next generation of National Park Service leaders. Housing allows individuals who want to build a career in the park service to get their foot in the door.

While it is an entertaining thought experiment to envision Acadia 100 years from now, I often remind myself that my job as superintendent is not to think about today, but about tomorrow.

That time horizon may be more realistically 5-20 years out—and within that frame, I can't wait to see at least zero-emission electric Island Explorer buses navigating through a new transit center at Hulls Cove!



—Kevin Schneider

SUPERINTENDENT'S VIEW

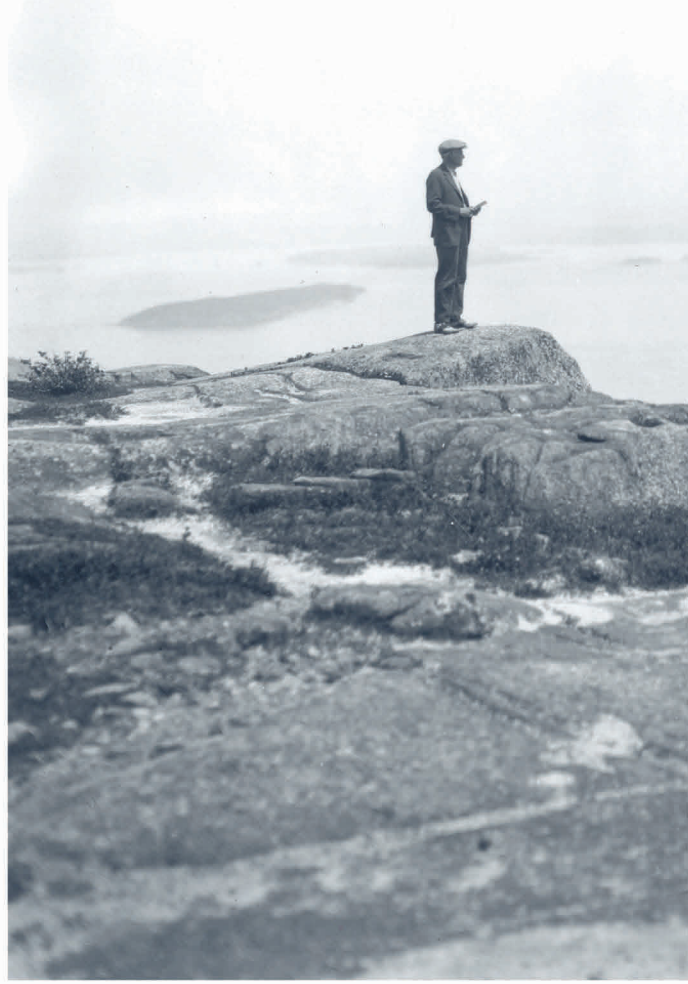


“While it is an entertaining thought experiment to envision Acadia 100 years from now, I often remind myself that my job as superintendent is not to think about today, but about tomorrow.”



FALL FOLIAGE surrounds Hadlock Falls near the Waterfall Bridge.

ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA



CENTENNIAL MILESTONES

1924 turned out to be quite a year for the park and the genesis of a few notable area institutions.

BY RONALD H. EPP

The first full assessment of “Dorr’s Park” was published in 1924, eight years after the establishment of Sieur de Monts National Monument and five years since its elevation to Lafayette National Park.

“An Analysis of Lafayette National Park” remained underappreciated over the decades, although it received an uplifting review in *The New York Times*. It was authored by the nationally renowned New York journalist, editor, and publisher Robert Sterling Yard (1861-1945). In 1915, Stephen Mather, assistant to the Interior Department Secretary, tasked Yard with directing the first national parks public relations campaign.

Yard’s impressive publication is one of four Mount Desert milestones from 1924 that deserve renewed attention.

World War I (1914-1918) disrupted adventure travel from America to Europe, creating an opportunity to promote the superlative natural wonders of our western states. To that end, during the war years Yard collected and distributed massive

numbers of national park articles, pamphlets, photographs, statistics, and maps.

With Mather at his side, Yard repeatedly crisscrossed this territory, gathering firsthand park experience for his 260-page lavishly illustrated and eloquently written “National Park Portfolio.”

This celebration of park landscapes and pristine wilderness was sent in a media blitz to 275,000 legislators, civic groups, and chambers of commerce immediately before passage of the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, which established the National Park Service (NPS).

Yard, Mather, and NPS Assistant Director Horace M. Albright aggressively applied the “See America First” railway brand to the park service mission, targeting support from industry, politics, publishing, and land conservation leaders for the scant funds available during the war years.

When Yard left his position, Mather financially kickstarted the



LEFT TO RIGHT: Stephen Mather and Robert Sterling Yard, first and second from left, and Horace M. Albright, far right, during the 1915 dedication of Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. • Stephen Mather stands on the summit of Champlain Mountain in Acadia, with the Porcupine Islands in the background, in June 1922. • George B. Dorr and Charles W. Eliot at Jordan Pond. (photos courtesy NPS)

formation of the National Parks Association in 1919 (it is today known as National Parks Conservation Association). As its executive secretary, Bob Yard led this nonprofit in publicizing and defending the National Park System.

It quickly became clear, however, that the National Parks Association was not just an NPS mouthpiece, as it argued against what it perceived as overzealous park service promotion of road development and motorized access.

The most dramatic impact of these landscape threats arose when, in 1920, representatives of 12 western states formed the National Park Touring Association. They set in motion the National Park-to-Park Highway Tour, a 5,600-mile loop motorized excursion through nine national parks.

Capitalizing on his NPS/NPA experience, in 1923 Yard and his family vacationed in Southwest Harbor and later for 10 days at Dorr's Oldfarm estate. There he was provided with nearly two dozen *Sieur de Monts Publications* written by scholars of wide renown on the cultural, historic, and natural distinctiveness of Mount Desert. From these, Yard expanded, unified, and composed "An Analysis of Lafayette National Park."

The NPA Bulletin published his derivative article on "Gift Parks: the Coming National Parks Danger," which had appeared

in the October 31, 1923 Bar Harbor Times. Yard claimed without reservation that east of the Mississippi the nation now possessed the "quite perfect" park. Lafayette National Park was his standard bearer park, an "American masterpiece."

Whereas Dorr argued in the *Sieur de Monts Publications* for federal acquisition of tracts of land known for their beauty and their proximity to important cultural centers, Yard was distressed by the rising support for eastern-park inclusion of sites that lacked comparable pristine scenic qualities.

His arguments to "protect the [NPS] trademark" were not well received by the NPS and so it is not surprising that a decade before his death Yard co-founded the Wilderness Society, further championing the merits of "unimpaired" public sanctuaries. This goal was also the foremost concern of those who challenged Dorr's park management in the unprecedented March 1924 Interior Department hearings before Secretary Hubert Work.

Protests surfaced in Northeast Harbor regarding alleged abuse in the development of the park's motor and carriage roads. U.S. Senator and summer resident George Pepper fronted claims that the privacy of the wildest portions of the new park were being sacrificed by the ambitions of Dorr and John D. Rockefeller Jr.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Abbe Museum at Sieur de Monts • Oldfarm • Horace M. Albright. (photos courtesy NPS)

World War I
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In response, there was no shortage of prominent citizens who spoke on behalf of the work being done in the park. Dorr later explained that the effect of an inadequate defense would have “spelt disaster” for the park.

Most fortunately, during that summer of 1924, park inspection trips by Mather and Secretary Work authorized both road and carriage road development.

Before Secretary Work left the island, Dorr brought him to Brook End to meet New York surgeon Dr. Robert Abbe. There Abbe showed Work local indigenous stone artifacts that he thought might be the nucleus for a local museum.

This news of a local archaeological collection resonated with Work, who disclosed that the National Park Service had just received funding from the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial to establish a museum for a similar park collection at Yellowstone.

Two years later, her son donated \$15,000 for Lafayette National Park’s Museum of Stone Age Antiquities, which was dedicated in August 1928, just five months after Abbe’s death. In pioneering national park museums, Dorr and Abbe sought to expand the NPS mission into interdisciplinary public education.

The final 1924 milestone took place a half mile from Oldfarm. In late spring, University of Maine students had been given permission to set up the rudiments of a biological research station. Dorr owned this 13-acre parcel but agreed

with University of Maine president and geneticist Clarence Little, that scientific inquiry actually served both the university and the park.

Six months later Dorr wrote to Charles W. Eliot that he was already convinced that the lab “is destined to grow into one of [Mount Desert’s] most interesting and valuable features.”

Such belief was grounded in decisions made a decade earlier when Dorr and Abbe raised funds to purchase a 14.5-acre Salisbury Cove parcel to honor physician and novelist S. Weir Mitchell. In time, The Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory became that living memorial. Similarly, in memory of his parents, Dorr formally donated the parcel within view of Oldfarm as the foundation for the Jackson Laboratory.

Quite a year for the park and the institutions that it spawned. ■

Author’s note: This article reflects research undertaken since publication in 2016 of Epp’s “Creating Acadia National Park.” It aims at reviving interest in Yard’s 1924 publication and its reliance on the earlier studies that Dorr authored and edited. “An Analysis of Lafayette National Park” can be downloaded from the DigitalCommons at the University of Maine.

RONALD H. EPP is the author of “Creating Acadia National Park: The Biography of George Bucknam Dorr.”



THE ARTIST'S EYE

PAINTING LITTLE LONG POND

BY CARL LITTLE

The Little Long Pond tract within the Land and Garden Preserve, adjacent to Acadia National Park, includes 17 acres of meadows, 12 of marsh, and nearly 1,000 of forest, plus a bog and streams, according to the preserve's website. The site boasts, "On a one-hour walk a visitor can potentially hear the croak of a frog, watch an osprey fish, spot a pileated woodpecker, and take in breathtaking views of surrounding mountains."

And, we might add, find a subject to paint. Artists have been drawn to the pond at least since Frederic Church (1826-1900) found inspiration there in 1850. *Lake Scene in Mount Desert* is among Church's most romantic and eye-pleasing images of Mount Desert

Island, capturing the grandeur of the vista: the verdant, wild landscape with Jordan Cliffs and Penobscot Mountain in the distance.

In his groundbreaking 1995 book "The Artist's Mount Desert," the late art historian John Wilmerding noted how the turbulent twilight sky and the man rowing the boat in Church's painting do not appear in his original drawing of the subject. These details, Wilmerding wrote, "lend a powerful emotional and anecdotal content to the finished painting."

FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH, *Lake Scene in Mount Desert (Little Long Pond and Jordan Cliffs)*, 1851, oil on canvas, 20³/₄ x 30 7/8 in. Private collection. Photo courtesy Hirsch and Adler Galleries, NY.

In recent times, the pond has served as muse to a number of painters. Kaitlyn Miller discovered the pond on a trip from her home on Little Cranberry Island in October 2014. With her infant son in a backpack, she relished the fall colors, the “crisp, clean air and dancing breeze through the leaves,” and the beauty of the sky, trees, and mountains reflected in the pond. The walk reflected “the new path of parenthood” she was on.

Painting the scene for Miller became a record of the awe she felt at the “convergence of multitudes” as seen at the base of Little Long Pond. “Sitting amidst such diversity in landscape and beauty, limitless moments of changing light, bird song and gentle breezes,” she writes, “one feels you could spend a lifetime there and paint something different each day.”



KAITLYN MILLER, *Little Long Pond*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 18 x 24 in. Photo courtesy the artist.



STEFAN ELLIOTT, *Bouquet II, Queen Anne's Lace, Little Long Pond*, oil on canvas, 36 x 36 in. Collection of Jim and Judy Marcogliese. Photo courtesy the artist.

While living and painting in Costa Rica in 2009, Stefan Elliott was invited by a friend to visit him on Mount Desert Island in the fall. They rented a house in Seal Harbor. "I found myself walking and wandering around Little Long Pond," he recalls, "and with the leaves turning color, I was hooked."

Elliott chose a similar view to Miller's, "the most iconic classic view" of the pond. "I can't help but paint it over and over again, a little absurdly, maybe like Cézanne and his mountain," he writes. Whether early morning, late evening, or the middle of the day, sunny or foggy, he states, "There's always a treasure of atmosphere."

Richard Keen, who lives in Dresden, Maine, remembers first visiting in 2015, taken there by his future wife Heather Martin, a College of the Atlantic graduate who “knew about all the magical places in and around Acadia.” At the time, they had four dogs between them, so Little Long Pond, which allows unleashed canines, was a favorite go-to spot.

Keen has painted several perspectives of the pond as seen through trees. Little Long Pond No. 2 was prompted by the “striking light and shadows” in photos made from a side-of-the-pond vantage point. “Color-driven,” he likes to juxtapose natural hues against amplified ones in ways that visually excite him.

Financier and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr. purchased the land around Little Long Pond in the 1910s. The property was owned by his

family until 2015 when his son David Rockefeller Sr., in celebration of his 100th birthday, donated the property to the Land and Garden Preserve.

Samuel Eliot’s and John Rivers’ 2017 book “Little Long Pond: A Field Guide to Four Seasons,” a “labor of love,” looks beyond its innate picturesqueness to its ecology—and the need to preserve it for future generations. Painters play a role in that mission, heightening our appreciation of a very special place. ■

CARL LITTLE, of Somesville, received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his art writing from the Dorothea and Leo Rabkin Foundation in 2021. He and his brother David Little’s “Art of Acadia” came out in paperback this year. Their latest, “Art of Penobscot Bay,” is available from Islandport Press.



RICHARD KEEN, *Little Long Pond No.2*, 2021, acrylic and oil on canvas, 44 x 38 in. Photo courtesy Sunne Savage Gallery.



A ROUTE FORWARD ▶

In its 25th year, the **ISLAND EXPLORER** continues to show how national parks can cope with their growing popularity.

BY LYNN FANTOM

Before 1999, the Island Explorer ran one route, basically from local campgrounds near the head of Mount Desert Island, through downtown Bar Harbor and out to Sand Beach. It cost \$2 a ride, according to Paul Murphy, executive director of Downeast Transportation, which still operates the service.

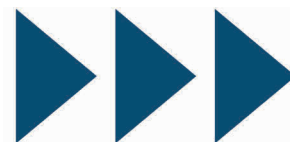
“We approached Friends of Acadia with an idea: if we could eliminate the fare, it would increase ridership. Friends of Acadia agreed to grant us \$6,000 and ridership increased by 600 percent,” Murphy said. “We figured we were onto something.”

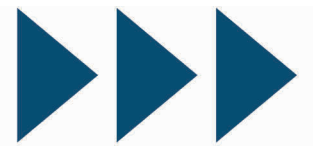
In fact, they had lift off, and in 1999 eight fare-free, propane-powered buses took off, thanks to a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Nine more buses hit the road the following year.

Now, as Island Explorer operates for the 25th season, it is entering a new era with plans to convert most of the bus fleet from propane to electric power and a realm of possibilities offered by the Acadia Gateway Center, which will open next spring. But its mission remains the same: to provide an alternative transportation system that serves residents, commuters, and visitors to Acadia National Park and its surrounding communities.

Introducing Change

The Island Explorer has been clocking impressive numbers. In 2023, ridership exceeded 450,000, eliminating over 160,000 car visits and preventing an estimated 1,600 tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. The reduction





in the number of autos has also meant better air quality for people with conditions like asthma.

On any given day from June to October, an Island Explorer bus might carry a family to a hiking trail or a summer resident to her job or a couple to the Bar Harbor farmers market to mosey around without having to worry about parking. Teens get to the beach without having to pester mom or dad for a ride.

“Just one of the 11 routes is solely within the park, so the Island Explorer not only serves tourists, it also significantly serves the community and the businesses around the park,” said John Kelly, management assistant at Acadia National Park.

In annual surveys, passengers praise the clean buses, helpful drivers, on-time service, and routes to the right destinations. This level of satisfaction was not easy to anticipate, though, especially among local residents.

“In the beginning, there was huge skepticism. People questioned, ‘All these buses rolling around the island; who’s gonna ride ‘em?’ It was just foreign to the community,” said Murphy. “But over the course of 25 years, that question has been turned on its head. And the question now is, ‘What would we do without that bus system?’”

Innovating From the Start

The vision for an island-wide transportation system actually dates back to 1992 and Acadia National Park’s general management plan. Said Kelly, “Acadia was one of the first national parks to identify the need for an alternative transportation system.”

If there was ever a “Father of the Island Explorer,” he continued, it was the late Len Bobinchock. As deputy superintendent of the park at the time, Bobinchock not only committed to using clean energy from the start but also conceived of a unique system design.

Instead of asking people to drive to centralized parking lots, he came up with the idea to pick them up where they were already parked—at their campgrounds and hotels. This “front-door service” increased the appeal of bus ridership, provided private funding from the hospitality businesses, and further reduced congestion.

Along with Bobinchock, Ken Olson was a driver of innovation, particularly by magnifying the private component to the funding model. In 2001, as president of Friends of Acadia, he approached L.L.Bean about a sponsorship. He wanted to go big, and the next year the outdoor retailer pledged \$1 million, spread over a period of years.

▼ **BETH GEARHART, THE ISLAND EXPLORER’S 10 MILLIONTH PASSENGER**, is greeted by Lisa Horsch Clark, vice president of development at Friends of Acadia, as she steps off the bus. “We celebrate Beth for her smart decision to ride the Island Explorer,” said Horsch Clark.



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA INC.



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA

▲ AN ACADIA NATIONAL PARK VISITOR looks at the Island Explorer bus schedule and map while riding the Island Explorer bus. “Some people call us the L.L.Bean buses. And we’re quite happy with that. They’re a terrific organization to be associated with,” says Paul Murphy of Downeast Transportation. Since 2002, L.L.Bean’s contributions and pledges have totaled \$5.5 million.

Currently, Downeast Transportation derives 60 to 70 percent of Island Explorer’s annual operating budget from a portion of the park’s entry fees, \$300,000 annually from the L.L.Bean grant, and the balance from the Federal Transit Administration, Maine Department of Transportation, local municipalities, businesses, and on-board donations from riders.

“The National Park Services derives all of its operational funding for the Island Explorer from park entrance fees rather than federal taxes,” Kelly said.

The year 2002 also marked another innovation: the test of an intelligent transportation system, including global positioning technology, real-time departure signs, and passenger counting. Acadia was selected for the trial by the U.S. Departments of Transportation and the Interior, which had been working together on transit systems in national parks since 1997.

The new technology “contributed to a positive visitor experience and increased visitors’ willingness to use transit rather than their own vehicles,” according to an expert evaluation in 2003.

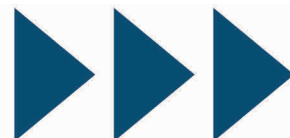
“It’s a fabulous tool,” said Murphy. No doubt it has helped make the Island Explorer “one of the most lauded transit systems—if not the most—in the national park system,” Kelly added.

Exciting Milestones Around the Bend

“Where’s the entrance to Acadia?” is a common refrain among first-time visitors who don’t realize that this national park was created through private donations of land interspersed among Mount Desert Island’s existing villages. But the new Acadia Gateway Center, scheduled to open in Trenton in the spring of 2025, will provide “a sense of arrival to the park,” said Kelly.

“By virtue of its architecture, this is not a building that visitors are going to pass,” Kelly said. Inside, they can get advice, find maps and books about Acadia and other destinations in Maine, and buy entrance passes. If visitors would like to leave their cars and board a bus, almost 300 parking spots will accommodate them. Plus, there will be electric vehicle chargers.

Planners envisioned the Acadia Gateway Center as a place with parking and a bus boarding facility that allows day-use



visitors, commuters, and local residents to leave their cars and ride the Island Explorer. Maybe even more importantly, they see the opportunity to increase awareness of the Island Explorer's convenience so visitors will use it once they're settled in.

The location on Route 3 will also be the home base for a new fleet of 23 electric buses and charging stations—a major milestone resulting from a \$23.5 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity program grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation last June. The grant is matched with \$5.6 million from the National Park Service and \$300,000 from Friends of Acadia to replace the propane buses and install bus charging stations, likely starting in 2027.

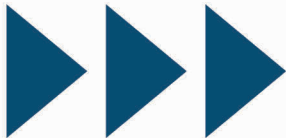
Though significant challenges limit the potential of Island Explorer—a shortage of bus drivers currently chief among them—generous financial support, evolving community attitudes, and lots of creativity are helping address them.

As the Island Explorer picked up its 10 millionth rider in September, Friends of Acadia Vice President Stephanie Clement takes stock of the last 25 years. “To me, the bus system is the best way to help people visit Acadia National Park—both to reduce the headaches of traffic and circling parking lots without finding spaces and also to reduce air pollutant emissions,” she said.

“I don't know what this park will look like in 50 years, but public transportation is going to have to play a bigger role. And so, I've been thrilled with the investment that we've made throughout our current history and sure hope those who follow will do even more.” Stephanie said.

“It's all about the future.” ■

LYNN FANTOM is a former New York advertising executive who has embraced her second career as a freelance writer in Maine.



JOHN KELLY/NPS

◀◀◀ **LEFT:** The 40-foot ceilings and open timber interior of the Acadia Gateway Center will draw in travelers along Route 3. Construction of the building will cost \$27.7 million. Friends of Acadia is contributing \$1.25 million and also purchased the property itself in 2004.

▼ **BELOW:** The Acadia Gateway Center exterior is still under construction but drawing nearer to completion. Island Explorer's 25 years are marked with innovative sponsorships and leading-edge technology. The seasonal transit system is operated by Downeast Transportation, which also manages a year-round commuter bus service in Hancock County.



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

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COUNTING FOR CONSERVATION

Enhancing visitor experience and protecting Acadia's resources through data collection

BY BECCA STANLEY

BECCA STANLEY/FOA





BECCA STANLEY/FOA



EVIE LINANTH/FOA

FORMER PAGE: Katie Laska, Friends of Acadia Recreation Technician, assists with the installation of the Schoodic Peninsula traffic counter. **LEFT:** Laska replaces batteries in equipment at the Schoodic Peninsula. **RIGHT:** Dr. Adam Gibson, Acadia National Park's Social Science program manager, and Friends of Acadia Rec Techs plan an experiment at Great Meadow.

Acadia National Park is one of the most popular national parks in the country, with about 4 million visits annually. This popularity is a bit of a double-edged sword: it's wonderful to share the park with so many visitors, but a challenge to effectively manage park ecosystems while maintaining high-quality visitor experiences.

To help with this constant struggle, Acadia uses manual and automated counting methods including electronic trail, pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic counters, as well as in-person observations and surveys. This monitoring system allows the park to analyze specific visitor patterns, which assists park managers in making informed decisions.

LEGACY OF COUNTING

Acadia has a rich history of counting and monitoring visitor use. In the early 1900s, park staff tallied vehicles entering locations like Sieur de Mont Springs and Cadillac Mountain Summit Road by hand. Since then, Acadia has changed the way it counts visits by incorporating automated counting devices, also known as "counters."

Counters are a vital tool in understanding visitation and preserving natural resources.

CASE STUDY 1 Cadillac Mountain

At 1,530 feet, Cadillac Mountain is the highest peak in Acadia National Park.

As part of the 2019 Transportation Management Plan, the park implemented a timed-entry reservation system (TERS) for vehicles driving the Cadillac Summit Road from May to October. Visitors entering on foot or bike don't require a reservation.

To monitor approaches to Cadillac's summit by foot, trail counters were placed on Cadillac Mountain trails. These devices count the number of ascending and descending hikers. Using these data, park managers can assess the magnitude and timing of Cadillac Mountain trail use, improving the understanding of visitation trends, particularly as they may be affected by the reservation system.

CASE STUDY 2 Sargent and Penobscot Mountain

Sargent and Penobscot Mountain summits face significant challenges related to vegetation loss and degradation, which may be caused by increased foot traffic, among other factors.

In response, Acadia National Park, Schoodic Institute, Friends of Acadia, and University of Maine researchers initiated a multi-component restoration project in 2023. To evaluate the success





TOP: Recreation Technician Ella Skolfield talks to visitors on the carriage road as part of her research. **BOTTOM:** Becca Stanley makes notes as she plans an experiment at Great Meadow.

of restoration efforts, researchers combine data from trail counters, cameras, and in-person surveys.

By tracking visitor numbers, behavior, and survey responses, park managers can develop a strategy for better protecting these fragile summits.

CASE STUDY 3 Champlain Mountain & Other Peregrine Closure Areas

During peregrine falcon nesting season, parts of Champlain Mountain (Precipice trail), Penobscot Mountain (Jordan Cliffs trail), and Valley Cove (Valley Cove trail) are closed to protect the birds and their potential offspring.

Trail counters are deployed as a non-invasive way to monitor visitor use within wildlife closure areas. If results indicate visitors are entering restricted areas, park staff can intervene and improve signage or further restrict access (e.g., close parking lots) to better protect the falcons.

CASE STUDY 4 Carriage Roads

Acadia's historic carriage roads offer a unique way to experience park landscapes. At certain times of the year, especially during peak times of the day, the carriage roads can become crowded. Carriage road counters can detect pedestrians and bicyclists, allowing park rangers to recommend alternate routes to visitors if certain places and times are expected to be crowded. This simultaneously allows Acadia's managers to better protect the historic carriage roads and provides visitors a more enjoyable experience.

Acadia's use of trail, bicycle, and traffic counters demonstrates how technology can enhance the management of the park's natural spaces. By providing accurate data on visitor numbers and behaviors, counters help park managers make informed decisions that protect the park's resources while ensuring a high-quality experience for visitors.

As visitation continues to grow, Acadia's commitment to data-driven management will be crucial in preserving this beloved park for future generations. ■

BECCA STANLEY is Friends of Acadia's Recreation Technician Coordinator.



PETS IN THE PARK

Exploring Pet-Friendly Policies in Acadia

BY ELLA SKOLFIELD

LILY LAREGINA/IFOA

ABOVE: Lisa Davis, Marc Gendron, and their dog Stella watch the fog float over Jordan Pond from the South Bubble. **OPPOSITE PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM:** Champ, an 11-year-old American Brittany, is seen during peak foliage near the Jesup Trail. • Two dogs sit in a bike basket at Eagle Lake Carriage Road. • Larry, a cat, rides in a backpack on his owner Ashton Garner near the Jordan Pond House. • Park visitors Taylor Thompson and Russell Bloom wrap themselves and their dog Chloe in a blanket to stay warm while waiting for the sunrise on top of Cadillac mountain.

Acadia National Park's pet policy is rare within the National Park Service. Only 34% of national parks in the United States allow dogs to travel on more than five trails. Acadia only limits pet access at specific lakes, ponds, buildings, and trails that feature iron rungs and ladders.

The pet policy outlines some additional requirements: Pet owners must collect and dispose properly of animal waste in designated trash receptacles and they should not leave their pets unattended, including at campsites or in cars. Federal law also requires that all pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet at all times.

There is a great deal that Acadia does not know about how visitors and their pets enjoy the park, and some visitors, locals, and resource managers are increasingly concerned about pet policy compliance.

Friends of Acadia's Recreation Technicians wanted to better understand visitation characteristics related to visitors and their pets. The park and Friends of Acadia carried out an in-

the-field study this summer to try and answer questions such as, what portion of visitors bring their pets to Acadia? Are pet owners choosing Acadia because of the permissive dog policy? What transportation do visitors with dogs use to travel around the park? These questions and others were asked to better understand visitors and their furry friends.

Gathering Dog Data

We formulated and conducted a survey with a variety of questions, prompting respondents to share their experience bringing pets to Acadia, including how they traveled with their pets and where the pets went. There were 240 responses to the survey across 11 locations from June to August 2024.

Observational data was collected in addition to surveys to gather more general information on dogs and if their owners were complying with Acadia's pet policy. We wanted to see if the dogs were properly leashed, if any dog waste was found at the location, and what percentage of visitation came from dogs.



Results

We found that 68% of the people who brought dogs to Acadia chose this park specifically because of the pet policy. The Bark Ranger program is a fun way to ensure pet owners are properly visiting a National Park with their pet. B.A.R.K stands for Bag your poop, Always wear a leash, Respect wildlife, and Know where to go. Respondents from the survey indicated that 30% of dog owners knew about this program, and only 5% had their dog(s) sworn in as Bark Rangers. Increasing education of this program may help with policy compliance.

Another element of the visitor experience in Acadia is getting around via the fare-free bus, the Island Explorer. This service helps limit vehicle congestion from June to October each year. In this study, 11% of respondents used the Island Explorer with their dog.

Off-leash dogs were observed considerably more on mountains than in congested areas in the park. We also found that dog waste was more often abandoned at the trailheads of less trafficked hikes. For example, seven waste bags were observed at the Flying Mountain trailhead over four visits. Visitors might have been more likely to disobey the rules and abandon dog waste at less-visited trailheads because no one is watching. Since mountain trails see less traffic, visitors may feel less concern and peer pressure for compliance.

Conclusion

Gaining a further understanding of dog visitation within Acadia helps park staff educate dog owners in the future. If owners are educated about the Island Explorer bus and the Bark Ranger program, we can decrease vehicle congestion and increase policy compliance, encouraging a better visitor experience for everyone.

In addition, it is valuable for visitors and staff to know the high and low use areas that dogs frequent. Visitors opting for fewer dog interactions will know where to go, and staff wishing to educate on these policies can visit highly trafficked spots. ■

ELLA SKOLFIELD is a seasonal Recreation Technician with Friends of Acadia.

THE BEST PET EXPERIENCE

To have the best visitor experience for you, your pet, and others, make sure your pet's leash is six feet long or less, ensure pet waste is collected and disposed of properly, and know where pets are allowed to go in Acadia.

Learn more at nps.gov/acad/planyourvisit/pets.htm



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA

HIKING SOIL TO THE SUMMITS

More than 200 people – and a handful of dogs – participated in this season’s Save Our Summits (SOS) hikes, which ran weekly from June through September. The hikes invited volunteers to carry bags of soil in their backpacks (as much or as little as each felt comfortable carrying) and deposit the soil on the summits of Sargent and Penobscot Mountains. That soil is integral to the ongoing summit restoration efforts in Acadia National Park.

The hikes were led by Claire Burnet, Climate Community Volunteer Ambassador at Acadia National Park, with help from seasonal employees at Friends of Acadia, Schoodic Institute, and Acadia National Park. By mid-September, volunteers had carried 4,338 pounds of soil to the summits.

Near the end of the season, Burnet also led Bark Ranger SOS hikes that welcomed volunteers to bring their dogs, too. Four dogs joined their owners for the trek (one even carried some soil).

“It was such a joy to lead Save Our Summits hikes this summer,” said Burnet. “I wasn’t sure if we would be able to meet our goals, but we were met with an outpouring of support and enthusiasm. Volunteers from all over the country hiked up soil, from 6 to 80 years old. If you joined a hike this summer, thank you!” ■



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA

ABOVE: Participants in the Bark Ranger SOS hike with Claire Burnet, third human from left • Some of the Bark Rangers carried small bags of soil in their own packs to the summit.



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA

CLOCKWISE: Luis Mendoza unloads a bag of soil at a soil restoration site on the Sargent Mountain summit. • Volunteers Tawnia Pacheco and Tamira Montorsi pose for a photo before a soil restoration hike up Sargent Mountain. • Volunteers pose for a photo on the summit of Sargent Mountain during a soil restoration hike. • Members of the Wabanaki Youth in Science group carried 166 pounds of soil to the summit to help soil restoration efforts.

A Family Affair

Summit Steward Luke Fiermonti first explored Acadia with his grandmother Maureen Fournier, a former Park Ranger, when he was a kid. He's spent the last three summers helping visitors love it, too.

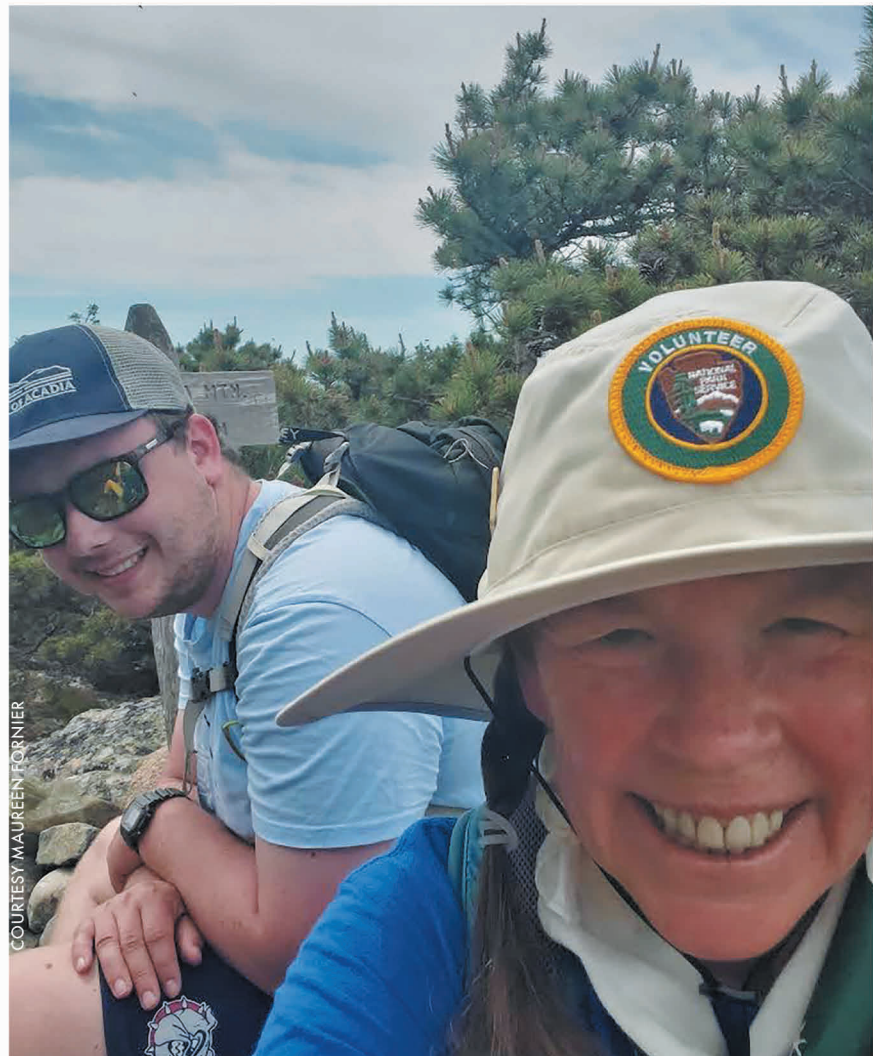
BY SHANNON BRYAN

RIGHT: Luke Fiermonti poses for a selfie with his grandmother, a former Park Ranger (now NPS volunteer), Maureen Fournier.

OPPOSITE: Friends of Acadia Summit Steward Luke Fiermonti talks to park visitors on the summit of Cadillac Mountain.



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA



COURTESY MAUREEN FOURNIER

W

hen Luke Fiermonti was 9 years old, he was sworn in as a Junior Ranger at Acadia National Park. He was sworn in by Park Ranger Maureen Fournier, who also happened to be his grandmother—and who still has

Luke's paper Junior Ranger badge as a memento of the occasion

That wasn't the first time Luke was sworn in—nor the last. "I think I've sworn in Luke and [his younger brother] Joey as Junior Rangers at least three times," Maureen said. Swearing kids in was her favorite part of being a park ranger at Acadia, a "dream job" she held for 10 years.

When Luke, Joey, and their parents travelled to other national parks, he'd get sworn in there, too. He got a kick out of it.

Growing up in Durham, New Hampshire, Luke says his family spent a good deal of time outdoors—hiking, swimming, road and mountain biking. Over summers, when Luke came up to Maine to visit his grandparents, Maureen and Gerry, they spent the bulk of their time outside, too.

"My whole family knows, when they come here, we're going to be outside," Maureen said. "I can remember one of his first trips up here with his parents...Luke was 4 years old. I took him up Beech Mountain to the fire tower. He came home and painted a picture of Beech Mountain."

Most summers after that, Luke and Joey would return to Maine to visit their Nana and Pop Pop and spend a week exploring trails, reveling in summit views, and being immersed in nature.

"Luke took to it right away," Maureen said. And while she adores all six of her grandkids, she said, "Luke and I always have the strongest connection to Acadia. He loves it here."

One of those annual visits Luke fondly recalls was the year Maureen suggested they all participate in Acadia Quest, a family-friendly scavenger hunt that gets kids engaged in the park. Managed by Friends of Acadia, the scavenger hunt leads participants to interesting corners of the park to complete fun activities and learn neat things about each location.

Luke loved it.



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA

EVIE LINANTUD/FOA



“We did the quest and became enthralled with the park even more,” Luke said. “It opened our eyes to so many more activities you can do in and around MDI.”

Fast forward a decade and a half later and Luke is still spending summers in Acadia—sometimes back on Beech Mountain—working seasonally as one of Friends of Acadia’s Summit Stewards.

This past summer was his third year.

Summit Stewards work in the field on Acadia’s summits and trails, engaging with visitors to both answer questions and help those visitors be better stewards of the park by following Leave No Trace principles.

They also conduct basic trail maintenance, repair cairns, respond to emergencies, communicate with park managers, collect social science data—and swear in Junior Rangers.

It’s work that suits Luke well.

“Acadia holds a very special place in my heart,” he said. “I can help educate visitors about Acadia’s natural and cultural history.”

One of his favorite places to engage visitors is at the foot of Beehive, right at the intersection of the Bowl and Beehive Trails. It’s an apt place to talk to hikers about proper footwear, slippery conditions, and whether walking along ledges and climbing iron rungs feels within their comfort level (and, if not, to suggest alternate routes). But Luke additionally loves that location because he can mingle in some Acadia education in favorite subject area: geology.

“I talk about why it’s called Beehive. We can look straight up from there and see that beehive shape,” he said. “I usually tell them that, 16,000 to 17,000 years ago, the Laurentide ice sheet took all those chunks of cliff away and deposited them in the ocean.”

All that rock makes for an easy segue into talking about durable surfaces, too, and why walking on durable surfaces—and not trampling fragile vegetation—is so important. That’s one of the seven Leave No Trace principles.

Another of Luke’s favorite park locations is Bubble Rock. “It’s a glacial erratic. It’s a different kind of granite than everywhere else,” Luke said. “It’s Lucerne granite from 40 miles north. A glacier carried it 40 miles and dropped it there atop Cadillac Mountain pink granite.”

He’ll point out areas with glacial polishing or striations. On the Cadillac Cliffs Trail on Gorham Mountain, hikers pass the remnants of an old sea cave. “I explain to visitors that’s where sea level used to be, which they really enjoy learning,” he said.

Luke and his fellow Summit Stewards also engage visitors on the summit of Cadillac Mountain. With so many visitors enjoying the views there, it’s a prime opportunity to talk about the important collaborative work happening on Acadia’s summits to restore subalpine vegetation. When visitors pause to read tripod signs describing the work, Luke might strike up a conversation about the importance of protecting our native species, preventing soil erosion, and how this work has expanded to other summits in the park.

“I find a lot of people are interested in talking more in depth,” he said. And those conversations add up—Summit Stewards have upwards of 20,000 visitor interactions a season—leading to a more knowledgeable visitorship.

As a Summit Steward, Luke educates visitors; in the process, his knowledge of the park has deepened, too. Despite being well versed in the park’s trails and captivating features, its human and geological history—and even leveling up his plant identification—he still gets visitor questions he doesn’t know the answer to. He’ll Google those later, learn the answer, and be prepared for the next time the question comes up.

“It’s just such an interesting and diverse place,” he said.

Luke headed back to his senior year at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington this fall. After he graduates, he’d like to get into hands-on field research.

“I had the opportunity to go out with the park’s vegetation crew; we sprayed herbicide on glossy buckthorn, one of the most problematic invasives shrubs that we have in the park,” he said. “That

really stuck with me. I think something similar, field-research-wise, is what I’d like to pursue in the future...something that’s a blend of field research and still interacting with visitors.”

Whatever shape his future takes, he’s sure to carry forward his love for the outdoors and Acadia—a connection he’ll forever share with his grandmother.

For Maureen’s part, she’s still walking Acadia’s trails. Two years ago, her husband Gerry passed away after battling Alzheimer’s disease. While he was sick, she and Gerry continued to walk Acadia’s trails. Gerry also volunteered on the park’s sign crew.

“It gave Gerry joy, and it gave me joy. But even more, we just love this place. We were out on the trails every day that we could. I think it kept him alive a little bit longer.”

When she’s on the trails now, walking those familiar paths she used to walk with Gerry, she still talks to him. “It restores

Fast forward
a decade and
a half later
and Luke is
still spending
summers in
Acadia.

me. When things are tough, there's where I head," she said. "That's the other thing about this park. There's healing."

She's also staying connected with the park as a Waldron's Warriors volunteer. A crew of 15 or so volunteers monitor the park's trails, doing light maintenance and cairn rebuilding and reporting more significant issues back to Dianna Sproul, volunteer coordinator at Acadia National Park, and Steph Ley, Summit Steward coordinator at Friends of Acadia.

It's work that keeps her tangibly engaged with the park. The influence that's harder to quantify, but so incredibly impactful, is the legacy she's passed on to her family and to each of the visitors she met as a park ranger—especially all those kids she swore in as Junior Rangers. They are the stewards of tomorrow.

"It's a continuum," she said. "It gives me hope, when everything is chaos, you have these young people. You can see the beauty that is part of our world, that they see and want to continue.

She sees that in her grandson, Luke.

"Speaking as his grandmother, it makes me very proud," she said. "He gets it, he sees it." ■

SHANNON BRYAN is Friends of Acadia's Interim Vice President of Communications.

RIGHT: As a Friends of Acadia Summit Steward, Luke rebuilds Bates cairns on the summit of Cadillac Mountain.

BELOW: Summit Stewards Chiara Jeanfils and Luke give each other high-fives while posting about the Leave No Trace Seven Principles on the Jordan Pond Path.



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA



LILY LAREGINA/FOA



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA

MEMBERS OF THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB PROFESSIONAL TRAIL CREW work on a trail in the Great Meadow area in Acadia National Park.

TEAMWORK MAKES THE TRAIL WORK!

AMC's Professional Trail Crew Helps Tackle Park Projects

BY SHANNON BRYAN

An Appalachian Mountain Club trail crew is working hard on Acadia's trails this fall. In fact, they do it every year.

For more than a century, the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) has offered professional trail crews who maintain and construct trails throughout the Northeast.

For the last decade, they've come to Acadia for eight to nine weeks each fall to support park crews and tackle important park projects.

While Acadia National Park has a hard-working trails crew of its own, the work of the AMC crew helps get more done, from building drainage ditches, brushing back vegetation, or elevating trail tread.

This year, the six-person crew is spending those two months doing trail work on the Great Meadow Loop. The

work will enhance recreation by making the trails safer, more accessible, and better able to endure climate change impacts.

"The crew really enjoys being here," said Ellie Pelletier, AMC Professional Trail Crew Supervisor. "The crew can see the park and work on really impressive trails, and they see the importance of accessible trails in a park like this."

One member of the crew, AMC's Director of Trails Alex Delucia, is a former Ridge Runner (the precursor to today's Summit Stewards) and helped build the section of the Great Meadow Loop in 2001 that the crew is helping rebuild this year.

Thanks to the AMC professional trail crew for their hard work! ■

SHANNON BRYAN is Friends of Acadia's Interim Vice President of Communications.



NEW HEAVY EQUIPMENT FOR ACADIA THANKS TO A SUCCESSFUL 35th Annual Friends of Acadia Benefit



LEFT: The Annual Benefit was held at Cover Farm in Halls Cove. **MIDDLE:** Table settings in the dinner tent. **RIGHT:** A 2003 Morgan Plus 8 Special Edition was an offering during the live auction. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** This year's Benefit was a beautiful evening with plenty of enthusiasm for our biggest fundraiser of the year!

The stars aligned and the rain clouds parted for a celebratory summer evening to support Acadia National Park. Four hundred people joined together under the tents at beautiful Cover Farm in Halls Cove this August for Friends of Acadia's 35th Annual Benefit.

A highlight of the evening was raising more than \$300K to refresh the park's aging fleet of heavy equipment.

The regular care and maintenance of Acadia National Park demands significant effort and heavy equipment such as dump trucks, excavators, graders, and loaders. Much of the current fleet of heavy machinery was acquired in the early to mid-90s as a part of the Carriage Road Campaign and is nearing the end of its useful life. This year's paddle raise will fund the purchase of equipment that will last for the next 30 years.

"Thanks to many generous donors and our hosts, Friends of Acadia's paddle

raise secured over \$300K to replace aging heavy equipment at Acadia National Park," said Eric Stiles, Friends of Acadia CEO and president. "The machinery is essential for maintaining Acadia's beloved carriage roads and trails, as well as responding to and recovering from damage caused by more frequent and intense storms, as we saw this past winter."

The Benefit evening began with a cocktail hour and silent auction, where guests bid on 65 items including original art, unique experiences, one-of-kind jewelry, and beautiful items for the home. Following an elegant dinner catered by Bar Harbor Catering Company, auctioneer Lydia Fenet led a spirited live auction that included a three-night stay at Canyon Ranch, a one-week Antarctica expedition, and a week-long Caribbean charter. Local Tim Harrington offered the highest bid on a 2003 Morgan Plus 8 Special Edition.

Another evening highlight was the enthusiastic live auction for a custom dress by New York-based designer Lesea Berry, which raised more than \$14,000 toward the paddle raise.

The lively evening was closed out with dancing to the Sultans of Swing band.

"The shared love and appreciation for Acadia National Park was palpable throughout the evening, and it was marvelous to have guests who spanned generations raising money to support the park now and well into the future," said Jen Byer, Friends of Acadia special events coordinator. "Many thanks to our presenting sponsor, Chilton Trust, who supported the Annual Benefit for the 11th year in a row. A heartfelt thank you to the owners of Cover Farm for sharing their beautiful space, and to all the businesses, artists, craftspeople, and individuals who donated amazing auction items to help our magnificent park." ■



FRIENDSHIP IN ACTION

The Paddle Raise at last year's Benefit raised funds to purchase a new work boat for Acadia National Park. That boat, aptly named *Friendship*, was put right into service this summer.

The new watercraft is a safer and more functional replacement for two aging and inefficient boats the park had been using. Its landing craft design allows park staff and equipment to land directly on the shore to access remote islands for maintenance, resource management, and law enforcement purposes.

This feature is especially important because Acadia National Park includes fee-owned and conservation easement lands on more than 90 islands that stretch across 50 miles of coastline.

The boat will continue to make a critical impact on improving the park's ability to reach and manage these locations effectively.

Thanks a boat-load to the donors who made this possible!



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

OPENING (OUT) DOORS

Urban and Diverse Youth Grants help make experiences in Acadia possible.

PAIGE STEELE/FOA



PAIGE STEELE/FOA

STUDENTS FROM TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY practice teamwork on a low-ropes course at Camp Beech Cliff. • Participants and volunteers from Juneteenth Downeast's "Weekend on the Water" prepare to sea kayak alongside Acadia National Park.

BY ELIZA WORRICK

Many of us might take our ability to access Acadia National Park for granted. Having the resources, geographical proximity, and comfort level to be able to go for a hike, camp in a campground, or bike along a carriage road are not a given for everyone. This can be especially true for youth from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities who grew up in cities like Chicago, Illinois or Charlotte, North Carolina, where exploring the outdoors might not feel as possible. Fortunately, organizations like Park Journeys, Inc. (PJI) exist

to build up young peoples' comfort levels in the outdoors through experiences that eventually culminate in a trip to a national park. Since 2012, PJI has been bringing participants to Yellowstone National Park. While this had been very successful, they were eager to expand to Acadia because of its east coast location and increased accessibility through Acadia's multiple entry points.

PJI's director Michael Solot first approached Friends of Acadia's Conservation Projects Manager Paige Steele to see if he could bring a group to Acadia. Their conversation led to

Friends of Acadia's first Urban and Diverse Youth Grant.

This first group was made up of youth from Charlotte, North Carolina who had spent the summer building up comfort in the outdoors closer to home.

"After school and summer are the most vulnerable times for students to get into really serious trouble," said Paige. "Having these kinds of programs available during these windows of time is critical for their well-being and development."

When the group arrived in Acadia, Paige checked in with them to make sure they were having a positive experience. "At the time, Friends of Acadia was in the backseat; I met with them once, handed out Friends of Acadia hats, and wrote the grant check—that was the extent of it," said Paige.

She quickly saw this as an opportunity to go beyond the traditional grant model by co-creating the experience with the next group, Groundworks Bridgeport from Connecticut.

"Every group is different, so it's about meeting them where they're at," said Paige. "Some folks show up expertly prepared for the outdoor activity, and others may arrive wearing flip flops and a faux fur coat. If that is the case, we need to be prepared with gear. We need to be ready with a variety of options for where they want to lodge, what they want to eat, etc. so that they feel supported."

Support also comes through sensitivity and validation.

"Some groups include black youth whose parents are from the global south where mosquitos carry diseases," said Paige. "When they get swarmed by these insects in Maine and panic, the local group leader shouldn't dismiss their discomfort. Even though mosquitos in Maine don't generally carry disease, program participants may have family members who were afflicted by malaria or something similar, and calming their worries is an important step towards them relaxing in the outdoors and enjoying Acadia."

When building new connections between organizations, Paige always asks, "Who's around to be a bridge builder?"

For instance, when Groundworks Bridgeport first arrived, Paige connected them with Acadia National Park Ranger and Bridgeport native Christie Anastasia. "This showed participants that there are rangers from their hometown," said Paige.

Paige also looks beyond the park to build up these community liaisons. Kareem A. Dieng, a local Maine guide and the Director of Outdoor Education at Camp Beech Cliff, meets as many groups as he can with members from the black community to take them out hiking, kayaking, and more.

"Kareem's outdoor leadership has been invaluable to building relationships and meaningful experiences with new groups visiting Acadia," Paige said. "It truly makes a difference when youth see a part of themselves in their trip leader."

The growth of the program has been intentionally slow to build quality relationships with new partners, and to be mindful of Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park staff capacity. But even with the brake pedal partially applied, the initiative has experienced a phenomenal 400% growth since 2017.

In 2023, Friends of Acadia welcomed 10 groups to the park—and will exceed that in 2024. This shows there is a huge appetite from various communities to visit Acadia when they

feel that the park is accessible.

One highlight from 2024 was the arrival of a group from Tuskegee University in September, marking the first time that a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) was officially welcomed to Acadia.

The grant program has mostly focused on participants who identify as BIPOC, including Wabanaki groups, "but we just launched a new relationship with Queerly Maine, who plan to visit Acadia next year," said Paige.

She also cited a possible expansion to work with local organizations dedicated to supporting neurodiverse

individuals, Latino populations, veterans with disabilities, and more.

While many of the grant participants have been younger, Paige is excited about the intergenerational groups who have come up to Acadia. Members of Full STEAM Forward, a New York City-based organization that provides free after-school Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) programming to young girls of color from underserved communities, brought their parents with them to Acadia. Paige emphasized that young people who bring an adult relative with them "have a higher chance of returning to a natural space near their home when they have that intergenerational support."

While 2017 through 2021 were focused on relationship and culture building, and this program paused during Covid, Paige is thrilled to carry the strong momentum from 2022 forward.

"Acadia National Park belongs to all Americans, and all Americans should feel welcome visiting here," she said. "My colleagues and I have been pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones to help open Acadia to new communities and it is working, which is really exciting." ■

ELIZA WORRICK is Friends of Acadia's Digital Marketing Manager.

Many of us
might take
our ability to
access Acadia
National Park
for granted.



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

BENEFIT COMMITTEE AND BENEFIT VOLUNTEERS

Summer 2024

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Jill Hinckley
Lydia Kimball

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Charlotte Aukamp
Bob Bell
Allison Bourke
Sharon Bradley
Antoinette Brewster
Ellie Buchanan
Charlotte Chilton
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Susan Ferrante-Collier
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Christina Godrey
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Maggie Kelley
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Jada Louit
Elizabeth Martinez
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Charles Merriman
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Liz Samek-O'Malley
Meg Samek-Smith
Laura Scott
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Ariane Wellin
Kim Wentworth
Lynne Wheat
Louise Hartwell White
Lynne Williams
Sydney Winthrop
Diana Wister
Effie Wister
Anna Woodward

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Grace Clark
Marshall Ginn
Becky Heden
Doug Heden
Dee Lustusky
Tony Palumbo
Elisabeth Pepper
Adrienne Redhair
Judy Rynkiewicz
Lynne Staggs
Mike Staggs
Lisa Williams
Sara Yeterian
Diane Zito
Frank Zito

THANKS FOR THIS FALL TRADITION and for those who volunteer in Take Pride in Acadia Day!

Acadia's carriage roads are put to bed for the winter each fall!

Always held on the first Saturday of November, Take Pride in Acadia Day brings out enthusiastic volunteers of all ages to rake leaves and clear drainage ditches along miles of carriage roads in preparation for the cold weather.

The volunteer effort focuses on areas where clogged drainage ditches and culverts could result in significant damage to road surfaces during the freeze-and-thaw cycles of a coastal Maine winter. (It's not just raking for raking's sake. This important work reduces costly washouts that occur from rain and ice during the winter and spring.)

Whether a seasoned raker or first time, everyone is welcome

to participate. While volunteers get a lot done, it's also a lively and easy-going day in the park on what is typically a splendid fall day.

Groups go out in the field to assigned work sites and then all come together in the afternoon for the popular "four Cs" lunch of chili, cider, cornbread, and cake.

This event makes for fast raking friends with fellow volunteers. Equipment is provided (including rakes, snacks, and water) and volunteers are also treated to a bit of Take Pride in Acadia Day swag.

For more photos and information, go to friendsofacadia.org/takepride.

CLOCKWISE: A volunteer from the Husson University Student Nurses' Association works to rake leaves during the annual Take Pride in Acadia Day • Students from the University of Maine, Orono pose for a photo • Kappa Alpha Kappa member from the University of Maine Machias rakes leaves near Witch Hole Pond. • Girl Scout members work to clear leaves from the carriage roads on Take Pride in Acadia Day. • University of Maine, Orono Students working hard to remove leaves from the carriage road near Duck Brook.



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA



SPOTLIGHT ON: SOREN

This engaging 10-year-old is making a difference in the world

—AND NOW AS A FRIENDS OF ACADIA MEMBER

BY JOANNE WOOD

10-year-old **SOREN GASKIN BENNETT** and his sister, 9-year-old Saskia, after Soren made a donation to Friends of Acadia at the membership table at Jordan Pond House this summer.



COURTESY MARY GALPERIN

This summer at the Friends of Acadia membership table, we had many wonderful encounters with visitors. A special one that stands out to us is 10-year-old Soren Gaskin Bennett, visiting from Syracuse, New York with his parents and little sister, Saskia.

When Soren approached the membership table, he chatted with our volunteers Phil and Mary Galperin about the work we do to preserve and protect Acadia National Park. That was all he needed to hear to then tell his parents that he wanted to become a member.

Like many kids, Soren and his 9-year-old sister are given an allowance. They're also encouraged to set some money aside for savings as well as for giving to causes they think are important.

The family has always enjoyed their visits to the park, and with Soren's love of the outdoors and natural places, he knew that becoming a Friends of Acadia member was the right decision for him.

His mother Leah said, "Like a lot of families, we just want our kids to appreciate that, even though they are young, what they do in the world matters, and they can make a difference through their actions and words. We do our best to involve them in volunteer activities to give some of their time to others and their community."

As well as a love for the outdoors, Soren enjoys camping, soccer, playing violin, and has helped organize school food drives, as well as gathering hats, mittens, and gloves instead of gifts at his birthday parties to donate to kids at a local homeless shelter.

Soren, it was an honor meeting you this summer and making us realize that giving and compassion comes in all shapes, sizes—and ages! ■

JOANNE WOOD is Friends of Acadia's Development Manager.

NEW MEMBERS

June 1 - August 31, 2024

Anonymous (8)
Gerard Aiken
Paul Amendt
Sarah Anderson
Bonnie Andrews and John Bustard
Kalim Armstrong
Kari Armstrong
Amy Artman
Susan Aseltine and Kevin Case
Lawrence Astin
Neal Atlow
Barbara August
Frank Ays
Debbie Babson
Mike Balulescu
Cynthia Bauer
Staci Beck
Shawna Bellaud and Kayla Bellaud
Raney and John Bench
Jessica Bensinger
Chelsey Berlin
Paget Berry
Arlene Bisson
Lucy Blake
Robert Blake
Abigail Blomstrom and Mark Manuszak
Jeanie Bourke
Claudette Bourque
Jackie and Marcel Bourque
Alicia Boyce
Michael Breis
Ward Briggs
Erika and Brian Budzynski
Lottie and Paul Bump
Daniel Campbell
Debbie and Lon Cardon
M. Carmichael
Emily Carr
Karen Chapman and Bo Jensen
Teresa Cheng
Martha Cheston
Sargent Collier
Eleanor Combs and Pierce Hewes
Selena Comette
Paula Conti
Cynthia Cooke
Sarah Cooper and Eric Mahl
Adam Cox
Kinsey Crowley
George Daniel
Karen Davis
Alex Day
Mark Deleon
Wayne DelloRusso
Sally DeWees
Alison and Chris DiMatteo
Paul Doughty
Kathleen and Tom Dubel
Emma Durand
Christie E. Emigh
Janet Evola-Tate
Shane Farnsworth
Marshall Field V
Judith Foil
Samantha Clevenger and Jordan Frederick

Alli Franzaglia
Kathryn Garrity
Lauren Gifford
Lauria Giles
Chris Gillis
Jacqueline Gilmore
Eileen Gleason Barrett
John Golder
Leslie Goodwin
Kathleen Goolsby and Evan Clayton
Belinda Gordon
Stephanie and Jeff Gordon
Marcia Grant
Kathryn Graven
Moo and Andy Green
Jessica Greenblatt
Maureen and Rob Griffin
Robert Guarnieri
Amy Gustavson
Suzanne Hackett
Dustin Haines
Nancy Hall
Pete Hamm
Sally Hannum
Stephen Hansen
Marianne Harris and Daniel Eagan
Katie Harrison
James Headd
Michele Henry and Gary Lickle
Olivia Herron
Kenneth Hersey
Peter Hesslein
Martha and French Hill
Katherine Hinds
Amy Hodgson
Lou Holcomb
Hoopes Family
Lindsay Howell
Rob Hudson
Dan Hughes
Jennifer Hurst
Amber Jackson
Pooja and Ankit Jain
Chris Jeanigan
Leigh Jemma
Gigi Jervis
Lauren Johnson
Sarah and Michael Johnson
Cathy and Paul Johnson
Michael Jolley
Colleen Joyce
Leah Kaufman
Thomas and Ruth Kay
Reilly Keating
Chuck Kelly
Lynne Kelly
Lisa Kenison
Samantha Kent and Mike Merryman
Roxana Kiss and Gray Ferris
Martha Kolker
Paul Kozak Stonework
Brooke Kraftson
Brienne Kreitman
Jennifer and Jonathan Krueger
Ed Kulback
Joni Laney and Billy Vaughan
Peter Lauzze
Erik Lavington
Mike Lee
Nicole Lee and Justin White
Anne and Bob Lehmann

Glenn Leisure
Rafael Leyva
Sophie Liberatore
David Liscinsky
Katherine Lodes
Kathryn Loeffler
Stephanie Long
Michael MacDaniels
Kathy Mangan
Michael Manor
Anne and Robert Marcovich
Eloise Marcus Schultz
Cindy and David Martin
Anna and Samuel Masinter
Robin and Heath Massey
Ashley and Sean McCarthy
Kerriann McDermott
Linda McIntire
James McKay
Drew Mennella
Tom Middleton
Kathy and Jerry Miller
Scott Milton
Mark Mogensen
Becky Montgomery
Stephen Moore
Jane Morgan
Samantha Morse
Javier Mouviz
Julie Muellejans
Anthony Mullane
Aidan Murphy
Andrew Murray
Crystal and Sean Murray
Chris Nadeau
Diana and George Nicholson
Andreas Nonnenmacher
Margaret O'Connor
Anne and Henry Ogilby
Robyn O'Keefe
Ivick Olek
Teddy Oster
Stephanie and Matt Outhier
Evan Owens
Summer and Alex Parker
Margaret Parks
Kimberly Phillips
Marie Phillips
Amy Plemmons
Wanda Plentl
Elizabeth and Chris Pohle
John Pokorny
Ralph Pokuls
Marcia and John Pomeroy
Patricia Pope and Robert Vignold
David Porter
Julie Potter
Barbara and Richard Powlowsky
Todd Pride
Diane Punska
Kris Rafferty
Janet Rankin and Brian Sheldon
Matt Reda
Shirley Rengifo
Lori Ritzenhaler
Lauren Robinson
Marcia Rodriguez
Kenneth Roth
Paul Rudolf
Robert Sadler
Ricardo Santana

Mary Savage and Robert Neuman
Joy and Stewart Scharfman
Douglas Schmidt
Abbie Schultz
Cordelia Scott
Daidai Shen
Andrea Vizoso and Andrew Short
Rebecca Shuster
Tonya and Keith Smith
Patti and Mark Soucie
Dan Spitzberg
Rachel Stansbury
Rodnell Stimpson
Leslie Sturzenberger
Katherine Sullivan
Charles Teeple
Sarah Than
Erik Thoen
Judimarie Thomas
Becky Thompson
Brooks Thompson
Charlotte Toogood
Linda and Eric Uberseder
Shawn Varney
Haley Walsh
Ryan Walters
Daniel Waxman
Jason Weisberger
Doris Wells
David White
Ken Winikur
Charlie Wise
Kimberly Wolfe
Brittney Yetka
Kevin Young
Robert Zuercher

NEW TRAILBLAZERS

June 1 - August 31, 2024

Anonymous (3)
Sarah Anderson
Sally and Bill Arata
Lawrence Astin
Cynthia Bauer
Raney and John Bench
Emily Carr
Michael Didio
Katie Fowler
Kathleen Goolsby and Evan Clayton
Sally Hannum
Christopher Higgins
Peter Hynson
Lisa Kenison
Mark Mogensen
Maryjean Mucciarone
Robyn O'Keefe
Lori Ritzenhaler
Daidai Shen
Joseph Shepard
Judimarie Thomas
Ann Worrick

Trailblazers at Friends of Acadia are donors who have set up a monthly, quarterly, or annually auto-renewing gift. Auto-renewing gifts make your support effortless and sustainable. To learn more, visit friendsofacadia.org/trailblazer.



LISA HORSCH CLARK/FOA

SPECIAL PERSON

GEORGIA MUNSELL (right) and JOANNE WOOD

Honoring a Dedicated Volunteer

Georgia Munsell retires after 18 years of service

BY JOANNE WOOD

After nearly two decades of volunteering at the Friends of Acadia membership table at the Jordan Pond House, Georgia Munsell, one of our most active and dedicated volunteers, is hanging up her volunteering hat and retiring.

Georgia's journey with Friends of Acadia began in 2007 when she and her husband Mark were visiting Acadia National Park for the first time. They saw our ad in the hiking guidebook "A Walk in the Park" by Tom St. Germain and signed up as members immediately.

When they later became summer residents, Georgia got involved with the membership table. She helped organize and shape the membership table program over the years, as well as mentor and train many new volunteers.

"It's always a pleasure to meet new people, share our love for the park, and offer them the opportunity to support the park and become a member," Georgia said. "After 18 years, I have many fond memories of encounters with young and old as well as new and longtime visitors."

Georgia will still be involved with Friends of Acadia in many ways, including continuing to serve on our Development Committee, but she will now spend more of her free time with her husband Mark on their boat, going on hiking and biking adventures, entertaining family and friends, and traveling.

Her impact has been profound and far-reaching, and she leaves behind a legacy of service and leadership. Thank you, Georgia, for all you do for Friends of Acadia and for Acadia National Park.

If you would like to be a part of the membership table for the 2025 season, please get in touch with JoAnne Wood at joanne@friendsofacadia.org. ■

JOANNE WOOD is Friends of Acadia's Development Manager.

IN MEMORIAM

June 1 - August 31, 2024

We gratefully acknowledge gifts received in memory of:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Vicky Bhe | Howard Katz |
| Norman Bridges | Dr. John King |
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| Christopher Robert Howley | Ziggy |
| Peter Jackson | |

IN NOMINE

June 1 - August 31, 2024

We gratefully acknowledge gifts received in honor of:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mr. and Mrs. Robert Barski | Margaret Marr |
| Norman Phillip Bridges* | Anna and Samuel Masinter's marriage |
| Dr. Douglas Dunsmore Daye* | Bonnie McCartin* |
| Holden DeSteffano* | Brian McGrory |
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| Nancy and Randall FitzGerald | Megan and Kelly |
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| Anne Green | Laura Rubin |
| Lee Herron | Rachel and Dana Smith |
| Jake and Olivia | Mike Sprowls |
| Jack Kelley | George and Dolores Yetka |
| Rob Leary | |
| Robert Marcovich | * deceased |

COURTESY CORI BROOKS



THAT'S A WRAP FOR OUR SEASONAL TEAMS!

Friends of Acadia's Stewardship Crew, Recreation Technicians, Summit Stewards, Wild Gardens of Acadia intern, and Communications seasonals just wrapped up their tenures in Acadia. And wow, did they accomplish a lot.

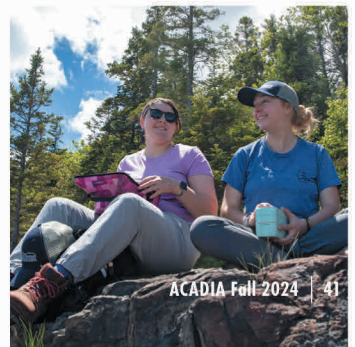
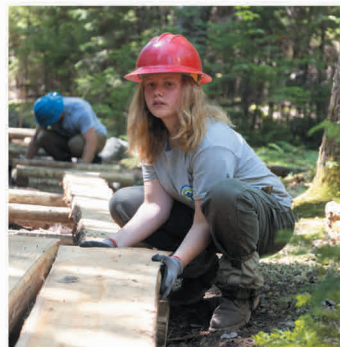
Our seasonal staff does a range of work in the field, from helping build and maintain the park's trails and carriage roads to employing social science to monitor how visitors move about the park. They engage with park visitors and capture the work—and the lively season—through images and video.

This work has an immediate positive impact on Acadia, but it has

far-reaching ripple effects, too. Visitors who learn about Leave No Trace from a Summit Steward will be wiser and more thoughtful users of public lands. Bogwalk and fences built by the Stewardship Crew and program volunteers will guide visitors and protect fragile vegetation for decades to come. Data gathered by Recreation Technicians helps resource managers make future decisions in Acadia. And images and video help tell the stories of the incredible work happening in the park.

Many thanks to our 2024 seasonal staff!

Here's a snapshot of their work in 2024, captured by Friends of Acadia's seasonal photographer/videographer Evie Linantud.





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TEST YOUR ACADIA Q

As we all admire
the changing colors
of fall leaves in Acadia,
**how many leaves
can you identify?**



Bigtooth Aspen • Blueberry • Huckleberry
Red Maple • Red Oak • Striped Maple

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

ANSWERS ON PAGE 51

Updates



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA

Friends of Acadia's Eliza Worrick wears a listening device at the summit of Cadillac.

Now Hear This!

Assistive listening devices are available for all scheduled ranger walks, talks, and campground programs.

Whether you're hard of hearing, hearing impaired, or often find yourself at the back of the group and not able to hear all the wise and insightful things the park ranger is saying (they are known for saying wise and insightful things), anyone is welcome to make use of these handy devices!

The listening device fits comfortably over your ear and includes a lightweight receiver on a lanyard.

If you'd like to make use of them, please contact Acadia National Park at 207-288-8807 to make a reservation.



EVIE LINANTUD/FOA

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Carroll Homestead *continued from page 6*

John and his family cleared the land by hand and with oxen, cut nearby trees, and harvested rock to lay a foundation for a house that would provide a home for the family for the next 92 years.

On their subsistence farm, the Carroll family kept chickens, cows, and sheep, which provided eggs, milk, butter, and wool. They also grew an array of crops, including potatoes, beans, peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, lettuce, rhubarb, apples, and hay.

Everyone in the family had jobs and the farm provided almost all that was needed. What they couldn't grow, build, or make, they either purchased in town or did without.

The original 63 acres would grow to more than 100 acres, providing a year-round home to more than 30 family members over the years, well past John's death in 1867. In 1917, the last of the Carroll descendants moved to a more modern home in Southwest Harbor.

The rustic Mountain House never had indoor plumbing or electricity but remained furnished and stocked to serve as a gathering place for family celebrations and out-of-town family to stay for summer visits.

Mountain House would stay in Carroll family ownership until 1982 when it was donated to Acadia National Park for permanent protection.

Today, 43 acres of the original farm are open to the public for touring. The house has interpreters, including Joan Jordan Grant, a descendant of John Carroll, who narrate the story of the Carroll family and teach about 19th century subsistence farming along the coast of Maine. Carroll Homestead offers a look back to one part of Mount Desert Island's nuanced history.

To learn more about Carroll Homestead, visit www.nsp.gov/places/carroll-homestead.htm or read "Lydia's Stories" (2023) by Joan Jordan Grant or "Four Generations in Maine" (1993) by Henry Raup. ■

LISA HORSCH CLARK is Friends of Acadia's Vice President of Development and Donor Relations.

Updates

Building Our Advocacy Capacity

BY VERONICA TORRES

Since June, Friends of Acadia has been collaborating with consultants from New Fundamentals, a consulting firm specializing in membership-based organizations, to develop our first-ever advocacy strategic plan. This effort arose from our recent overall strategic plan “refresh,” which highlighted the need for a more focused and intentional advocacy framework to address pressing challenges facing Acadia National Park and its surrounding communities.

The plan is being developed through a stakeholder engagement process, gathering insights from Acadia National Park leadership; Friends of Acadia staff and board members; and local and national partners.

More than 40 individuals have contributed through interviews and workshops, with key takeaways emphasizing Friends of Acadia’s role as a trusted leader and the necessity to expand relationships with decision-makers at the local, state, and federal levels.

Expected to be finalized by the end of the year, the three-year advocacy strategic plan will guide Friends of Acadia’s efforts in addressing climate change, strengthening strategic partnerships, and enhancing its effectiveness in securing federal appropriations for the National Park Service. A special thank you to those who have contributed to shaping this process, especially Advocacy Committee Chair Julie Banzhaf-Stone and members.

VERONICA TORRES is Friends of Acadia’s Government Affairs Manager.

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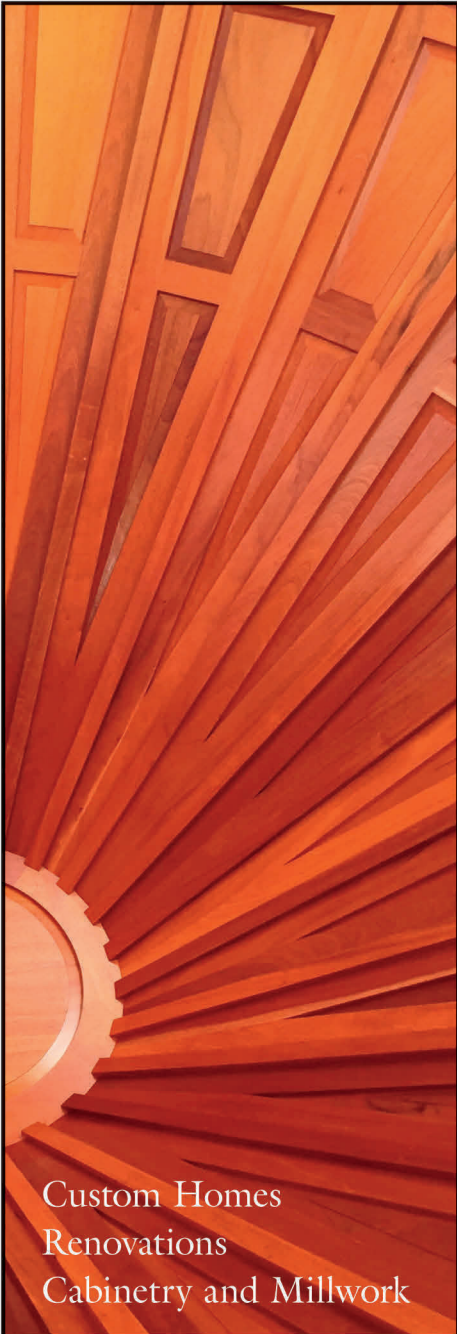
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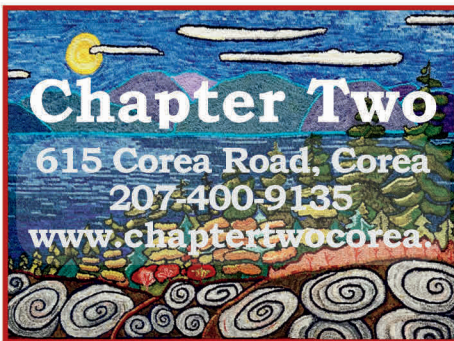
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ACADIA NATIONAL PARK Superintendent Kevin Schneider and Senator Angus King cut the Dane Farm housing ribbon.

CELEBRATING A MILESTONE IN EMPLOYEE HOUSING

Friends of Acadia hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 8 to celebrate the completion of Dane Farm. This marks a significant milestone in our collaborative efforts with the park to address a severe lack of seasonal employee housing.

The event heralded Friends of Acadia's completion of eight bedrooms on a 4-acre parcel at Dane Farm in Seal Harbor. Speakers, including Senator Angus King Jr. and National Park Service Deputy Director Lena McDowell, emphasized that housing options are essential to attract and retain employees dedicated to the ongoing preservation, protection, and enjoyment of the park for current and future visitors.

"We are so grateful for everyone who has so graciously donated to these housing projects through Friends of Acadia as well as the incredibly generous support from the National Park Foundation," said Acadia National Park Superintendent Kevin Schneider. "The park and park visitors rely on the services of skilled employees and these new housing options strengthen our ability to recruit and retain a quality workforce."

Additionally worth celebrating, Schneider announced at the ribbon

cutting the start of another project—the construction of 28 bedrooms at Harden Farm in Bar Harbor.

Friends of Acadia's President and CEO Eric Stiles noted the importance of the donors and partnerships that make these projects possible.

"Every donor, every dollar counts. Our long-term success in tackling this immense challenge is dependent on both public and private funding. Together, we're making a difference, one bedroom, one park ranger at a time," said Stiles. "The dynamic partnership between the park and Friends of Acadia allows us to tackle the housing crisis head on. This effort will have a 100-year impact on the park and unlock opportunities for people to establish and continue incredible careers in the park service that help to preserve and protect these cherished places."

Dane Farm and Harden Farm are made possible by Friends of Acadia's Raise the Roof campaign, part of an ongoing and collaborative effort to help catalyze both near-term and long-term solutions to workforce housing challenges at Acadia National Park.

Learn more and join the campaign at friendsofacadia.org/raisetherooft/



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The Foundations We Lay Today

This coming spring, eight of Acadia National Park's seasonal employees will call Dane Farm home.

The two newly constructed buildings in Seal Harbor are a place for hardworking park staff to make meals, rest, and enjoy the camaraderie of their peers during a memorable and busy summer. They're also a milestone for Friends of Acadia with a long-lasting impact.

All we love at Acadia requires talented staff who need (and currently can't find) places to live.

Two years ago, Friends of Acadia committed to partnering with the park to find solutions to seasonal workforce housing challenges.

We recognized from the start that a multi-pronged approach—one that included repurposing commercial and residential facilities as well as renovating some existing park units to add beds—was essential. We also knew that constructing new housing units on carefully selected sites within park boundaries was an integral part of the solution.

To that end, Friends of Acadia acquired the four-acre parcel known as Dane Farm, which is within Acadia National Park's legislative boundary, in the fall of 2023.

In early October, Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of Dane Farm as well as a tremendous win toward our shared goal of adding new beds to accommodate the park's seasonal staff.

Acadia National Park Superintendent Kevin Schneider additionally announced the award of a nearly \$10 million contract to build additional workforce housing at Harden Farm in Bar Harbor (read more about the ribbon cutting on page 47).

Dane Farm and Harden Farm are possible thanks to funds raised through our continuing Raise the Roof campaign. Both projects help ease

the housing challenge burden in the near future. They're also built to last, providing welcome seasonal homes to staff decade after decade.

That forward-thinking approach is the foundation of all we do at Friends of Acadia.

Whether it's seasonal workforce housing or programming that helps grow today's youth into tomorrow's stewards, our dedication today is a commitment to Acadia's tomorrow.

We're dedicated to helping protect the park in the face of climate change and other environmental impacts, including increased visitation.

We're dedicated to increasing accessibility in the park, ensuring Acadia is vibrant and welcoming for all.

We're dedicated to Acadia National Park, and we want to see it thrive. Friends of Acadia helps address some of those needs while at the same time advocating for an appropriate level of support for these irreplaceable resources at the federal level.

I'm proud of what we're accomplishing together today. This work is the foundation for the next century.

We're also closing in on our phase one goal for the \$10 million Raise the Roof campaign to build seasonal workforce housing. To help propel us toward that goal, Kate and Andrew Davis have generously offered to match all donations up to \$1 million. We're grateful to everyone who has already supported this effort. If you have not yet made a gift to this important campaign, we hope you will make a gift today.

Your impact on the park will resonate for decades to come.

For more information or to donate to the Raise the Roof campaign: friendsofacadia.org/raisetherooft/



—Bill Eacho

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



"Whether it's seasonal workforce housing or programming that helps grow today's youth into tomorrow's stewards, our dedication today is a commitment to Acadia's tomorrow."



PHOTOGRAPHERS capture Acadia's fall scenery from the summit of Beehive.

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Updates

Two New Faces on the Friends of Acadia Team

John Bench is the new office and facilities manager for Friends of Acadia, providing back-of-house support to the entire team, ensuring the smooth day-to-day operations of our



office in Bar Harbor. He also works with our vendors and contractors, providing project management support to our off-site projects and facilities. Prior to Friends of Acadia, John spent 13 years managing retail stores on Main Street in Bar Harbor. John, his wife, and their two sons live in Southwest Harbor. He can often be found hiking his favorite trails on the "backside" of Acadia with his four-legged friend, Pearl, or honing his BBQ skills as a professional pitmaster.



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Caroline Walther came on board as Friends of Acadia's development coordinator. She works directly with donors, members, and volunteers and assists in fundraising and



managing donations. She collaborates with both the finance and development teams and helps process all gifts and acknowledgements. Caroline has had a variety of positions, including conservation roles with NJ Fish and Wildlife and The Warren Conservation Commission. In her free time, she can be found hiking, swimming, exploring Maine's coast, and skiing in the wintertime.

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NEW BUSINESS AND NONPROFIT MEMBERS

June 1 - August 31, 2024

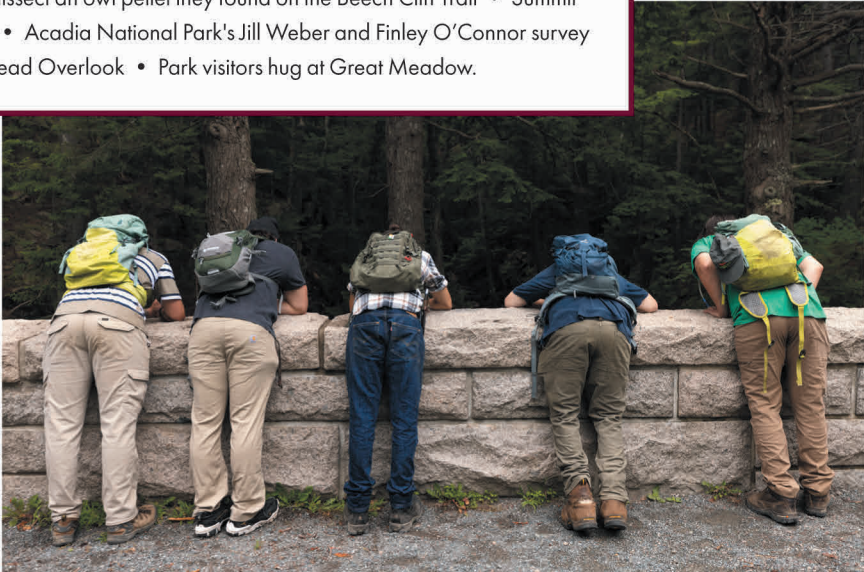
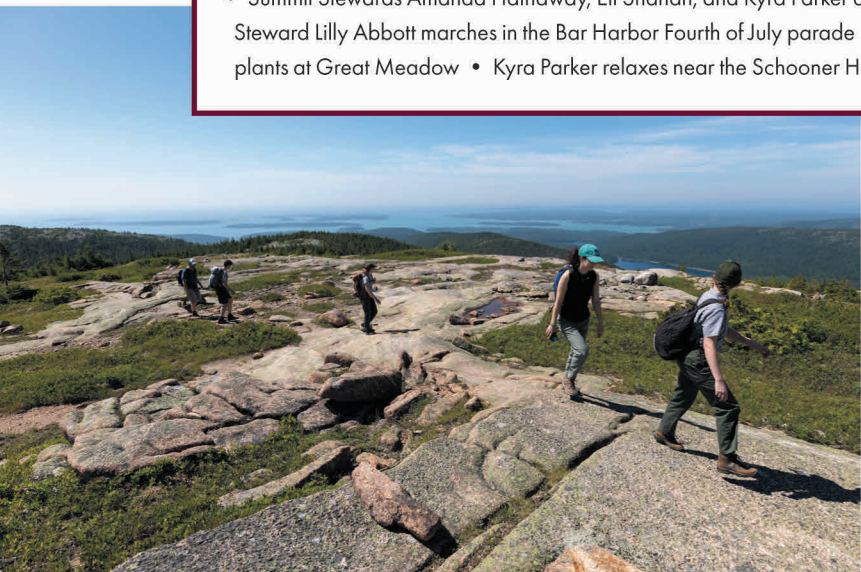
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ANSWERS to Fall Leaves IQ Quiz on page 40

1. Huckleberry
2. Red Oak
3. Blueberry
4. Bigtooth Aspen
5. Striped Maple
6. Red Maple

Evie's Eye View: Captures by Seasonal Photographer Evie Linantud

CLOCKWISE: Volunteers hike with soil in their bags during a soil restoration hike up Sargent Mountain on the Sargent Mountain South Ridge Trail • Members of the Wabanaki Youth in Science group carried 166 pounds of soil to the summit to help soil restoration efforts • Summit Stewards Amanda Hathaway, Eli Shahan, and Kyra Parker dissect an owl pellet they found on the Beech Cliff Trail • Summit Steward Lilly Abbott marches in the Bar Harbor Fourth of July parade • Acadia National Park's Jill Weber and Finley O'Connor survey plants at Great Meadow • Kyra Parker relaxes near the Schooner Head Overlook • Park visitors hug at Great Meadow.



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