ACADIA

The Friends of Acadia Journal FALL 2025

ACADIA'S APPLES
SWEET REMINDERS OF EARLY ORCHARDS CAN STILL BE SEEN TODAY

BELOW THE SURFACE
DIVER ED & THE LEAGUE OF UNDERWATER SUPERHEROES

PARK ARCHIVES
CURATOR MARIE YARBOROUGH ENSURES ACADIA'S ARCHIVES ARE PRESERVED

PURCHASE YOUR **PARK PASS!**

Whether walking, bicycling, riding the Island Explorer, or driving through the park, we all must obtain a park pass. Eighty percent of all fees paid in Acadia National Park stay in Acadia, to be used for projects that directly benefit park visitors and resources.

BUY A PASS ONLINE AND PRINT before you arrive at the park. This allows you to drive directly to a trailhead/parking area & display your pass from your vehicle.

Acadia National Park passes are available online:
www.recreation.gov/sitepass/74271

Annual park passes are also available at certain Acadia-area town offices and local chambers of commerce. Visit www.nps.gov/acad/planyourvisit/fees.htm

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ACADIA

The Friends of Acadia Journal

FALL 2025

Volume 30 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'.

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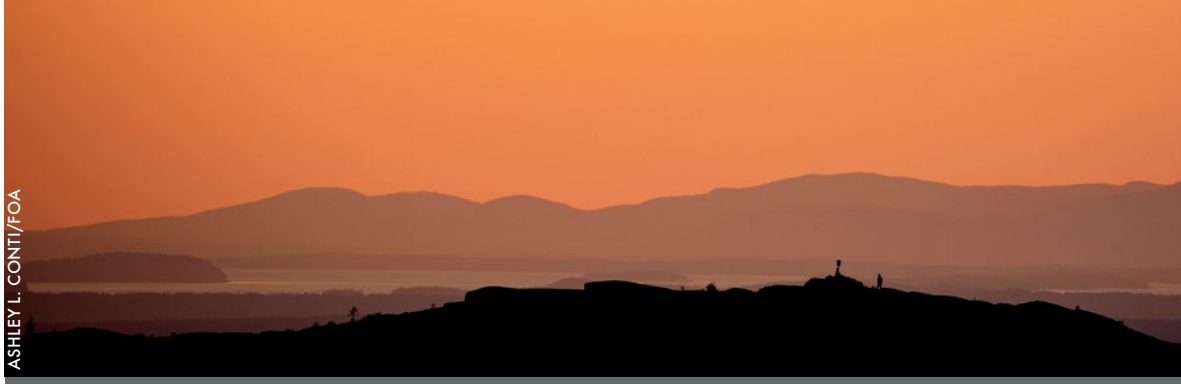
A pre-civil war apple tree continues to thrive near the Jordan Pond House.
RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

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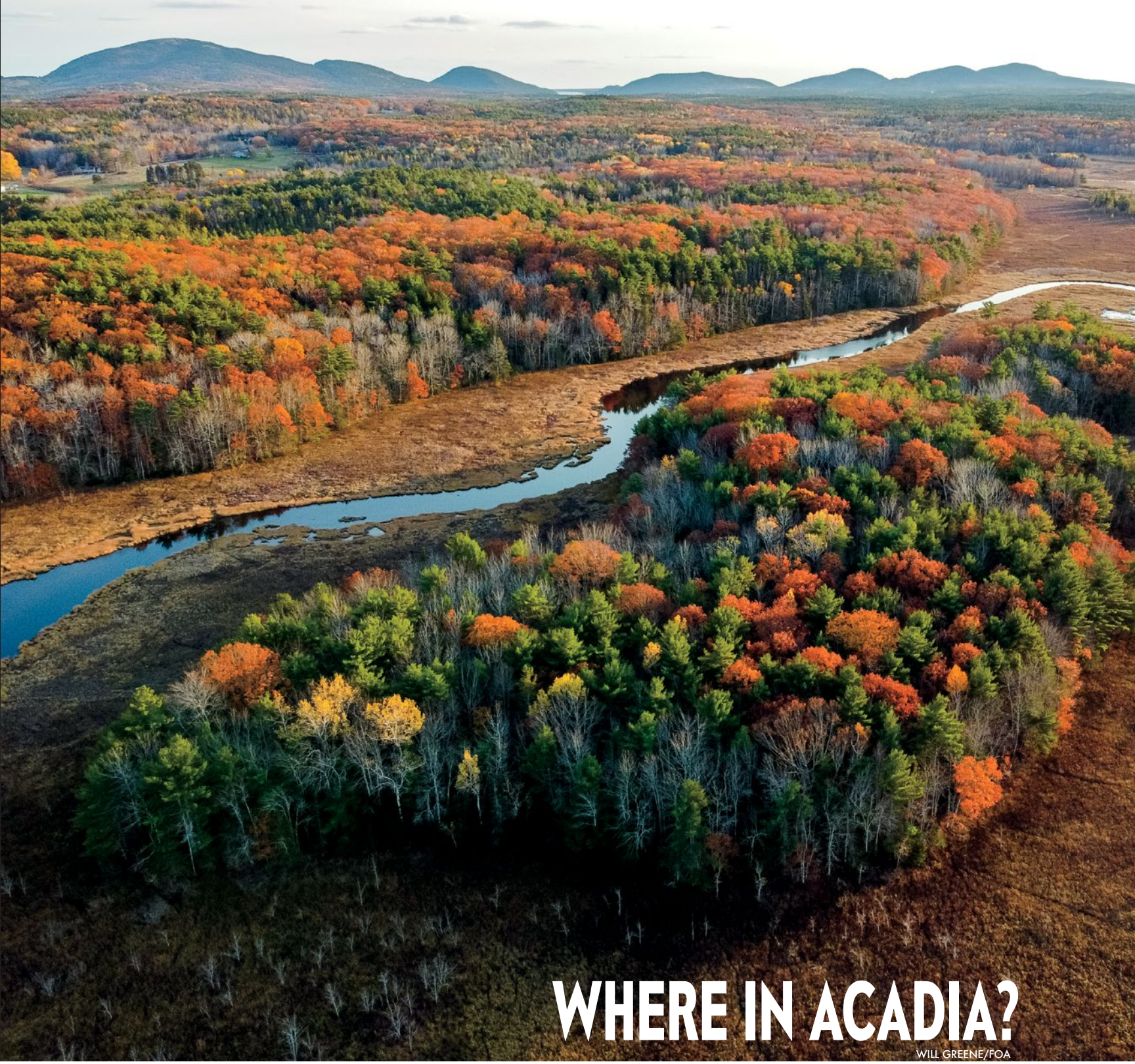


WHERE IN ACADIA?

WILL GREENE/FOA

I wind through woods where deer may peek,
A hidden gem, serene and sleek.
With paddle in hand, you glide my thread,
Past floating fruit in crimson red.
Where colors blaze bold collage,
Photographers seek fall's vibrant visage.
Though not all park that draws fame,
I touch its lands, I share its name.

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?"

ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

Waldron Bates Pathmaker plaque on the Gorham Mountain Trail.

Thanks to the readers who responded to our "Where in Acadia?" question in the summer magazine and correctly identified the Waldron Bates Pathmaker plaque on the Gorham Mountain Trail.

Hailing from Boston, Waldron Bates began exploring Mount Desert Island in the 1880s during family trips and soon fell in love with the place. From 1900 to 1909, he was chairman of the Path Committee of the Bar Harbor Village Improvement Association (VIA), and 25 miles of trails were added under his leadership, including Giant Slide, Canon Brook, Gorham Mountain, and Cadillac Cliffs Trails. The hiking map you use today is a direct descendant of the very first comprehensive island path map published in 1896; the lead author of that map was Waldron Bates.

For many hikers, though, his legacy is best embodied by the Bates-style cairns that still mark Acadia's trails to this day.

Below are a few of the correct responses that we received from members (and we received a lot—thank you to all who wrote in!).

"This one was easy for me, as I've probably climbed Gorham Mountain 50 times! The plaque honors Waldron Bates, trail builder and namesake of the iconic Bates cairns, which dot trails across the island. ... I've climbed Gorham so often in large part because it's a great mountain to take visitors with moderate hiking abilities. It offers perhaps the best bang for the hiking buck on a sunny day, with views out over Sand Beach, Otter Cliffs, some of the islands, as well as Schoodic Peninsula. There are, of course, many other remarkable trails in Acadia, and we have people like Waldron Bates to thank for that."

- David Rice, Mill Valley, CA and Southwest Harbor, ME

"I am certain this is the plaque commemorating Waldron Bates that is located at the intersection of Gorham Mountain Trail and Cadillac Cliffs Trail on a boulder. ... I remember seeing the plaque several summers ago during our annual family vacation to MDI when my middle son wanted to take the Cadillac Cliffs Trail on the way up. It involved scrambling over many large boulders—beyond what I anticipated or remembered. That night, I could not walk up the stairs as my quads were in severe spasm! I will not soon forget the mini adventure."

- Kim Gordon, Douglas, MA

"The Summer 2025 'Where in Acadia' photo is at the Waldron Bates plaque on the Gorham Mountain Trail. This trail is special to me because it was the first hike I ever took in Acadia! While my wife and I have hiked it many times since, it was back in July 1991 that my wife convinced me to vacation on MDI for the first time. We did the classic loop going from Sand Beach to the Bowl to Gorham and then back along the Ocean Path. We were hooked and have been back annually to Acadia since!"

- John Celenza, Bedford, MA

"This bronze plaque is definitely placed on Gorham Mountain! ... I have a picture of my daughter standing near the plaque. I have been blessed to have been visiting the island nearly every single summer since 1991! Whether you stumble across a plaque in a granite wall (on Gorham Mountain!) or a spiderweb on a foggy hike up Beehive or a plane wreck site near the top of Cedar Swamp or starfish on 'The Bar'... Mount Desert Island is chock full of endless treasures!"

- Jenny Lange Poon, Spokane, WA

"I saw the 'Where in Acadia?'—which I don't usually recognize but this time I did. The circular loop along Ocean Drive, up Gorham Mountain, and down to Sand Beach was a favorite of my father, Frank Ramseyer, until the fire of 1947. I never climbed Gorham until many years later (sometime in the late 1960s) when we 'discovered' the hike and the trees had grown back to provide some shade. The Gorham Mountain hike became one of our favorites on MDI.... Now, at age 87, when we come for the month of September on MDI, I can only manage a walk along Ocean Drive and a few other walks mostly 'on the level."

- Hélène "Lanie" Ramseyer Dickel, Albuquerque, New Mexico

"The picture is of course part way up the Gorham Mountain Trail, going northbound. It is easy to spot going northbound, but you can slide right past it if you're coming down going southbound. Gorham is one of our 'go to' hikes. Great views!"

- John and Kathy Rachow, Medina, OH

Gratitude to the Seasonal Staff Who Chose Acadia

One of my favorite days of the year is the annual fall presentation by Friends of Acadia's seasonal staff. Since its early years, Friends of Acadia has welcomed early-career professionals into the fields of conservation and park resource management through internships and seasonal roles. Each summer, our seasonal staff members work under the guidance of experts, gaining hands-on experience, engaging with visitors, and making lasting contributions to the park's trails, programs, and research projects.

In many ways, this year was like no other during my tenure. It was a year of rapid change within the National Park Service—change marked by staffing declines, uncertainty, and unexpected challenges. When this year's seasonal presentation took place, we were 17 days into a government shutdown that has since become the longest in our nation's history, and many chairs were empty as our park colleagues were furloughed.

And yet, as I listened to our seasonal staff share their stories—their accomplishments, passion, and commitment—I was filled with deep gratitude and hope at a time when the latter was sorely needed.

This season, our team of Summit Stewards spent thousands of hours connecting with more than 34,000 park visitors, teaching Leave No Trace principles, explaining habitat restoration efforts, assisting with search-and-rescue operations, and repairing confusing or unsafe social trails. Recreation Technicians gathered important data on trail and carriage road use, helping park managers understand shifting visitor patterns that will guide future decisions. And Stewardship Assistants built bogwalks, reclaimed historic vistas, and cleared critical drainage features, working with an incredible group of dedicated and generous volunteers who donated more than 4,330 hours to caring for our park's beloved trails and carriage roads.

I hope you'll read more about these teams' accomplishments on page 30 and join me in thanking them for an extraordinary season of work.

To all the seasonal staff who supported the park this year—whether with the National Park Service, Friends of Acadia, Schoodic Institute, or other partner organizations—thank you for choosing Acadia and for choosing to serve our national parks. Now more than ever, we need future park and conservation leaders who will keep Acadia, and all public lands, thriving amid new pressures from rising visitation, rapid change, and aging infrastructure. Addressing these issues will require creativity, collaboration, and a deep commitment to stewardship. The next generation of leaders—those gaining hands-on experience in Acadia today—will carry forward the knowledge, passion, and sense of responsibility that ensure our parks remain places of wonder, learning, and renewal for all.

With deepest gratitude,

Eric

—Eric Stiles

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"The next generation of leaders—those gaining hands-on experience in Acadia today—will carry forward the knowledge, passion, and sense of responsibility that ensure our parks remain places of wonder, learning, and renewal for all."

WILL NEWTON/FOA

LEAVES OF A BLUEBERRY BUSH turn red as the season changes.

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

CHILTON TRUST EMPLOYEES, including Friends of Acadia Board Member Charlotte Chilton, joined Acadia National Park Superintendent Kevin Schneider, Friends of Acadia President & CEO Eric Stiles, and Drop-in Stewardship Program Manager Nikki Burtis for volunteer "brushing" along the park's carriage roads.

Thank You FOR DROPPING IN!

Acadia's carriage roads, trails, and vistas benefited greatly from the many volunteers who dropped in to help out during the 2025 Drop-in Stewardship Volunteer season.

While Acadia's crews work hard to maintain the trails and carriage roads we enjoy walking, hiking, and biking on, volunteers bolster those efforts greatly by pitching in with loppers, rakes, and shovels.

The Drop-in Stewardship Volunteer Program runs three days a week from June through October. Led by our 18 amazing Volunteer Crew Leaders, volunteers help with important work like cutting back vegetation, clearing drainage features, building bogwalk, resurfacing, and other tasks. Some come once; others return regularly all season. We're grateful for them all.

This year, volunteers built new bogwalk on Hadlock Pond Loop, resurfaced Great Meadow Loop, and cleared drainage along miles of trails and carriage roads. They also accomplished a great deal of "brushing" and "flossing," a.k.a., trimming branches along trails and clearing vegetation around carriage road coping stones. Volunteers also assisted park staff with vista clearing on the carriage roads—trimming back vegetation to maintain the park's treasured views. All in all, they worked more than 4,330 hours of volunteer time.

This season's volunteers also included service groups from 26 different organizations, including the Sierra Club, North Star 4-H, and My Peak Challenge.

Special thanks to our presenting sponsor, Chilton Trust, for their support of the drop-in program and for joining us this summer for a volunteer day on the carriage roads! This program helps volunteers see a new side of Acadia, feel a deeper connection to the park, and leave this national treasure a little better than they found it. Thank you, Chilton Trust, for investing in Acadia's future! ■

A Deep Connection to the Resources We Steward

Why do we feel so connected to national parks?

That's not a rhetorical question. It's a question I think about often. Yes, they are beautiful. They are public places in which we all have a vested interest. They preserve some of America's most important histories. But I think most people who visit national parks would agree there is some "power" these places hold: an intangible, majestic quality that we feel in our cores every time we look out from the Cadillac Mountain summit or across Jordan Pond.

On one of my many long runs on the carriage roads (I tend to get my best ideas there), I really began to ask myself, "What is it about this place? What is it that builds a strong connection between people and nature?"

Some of my first experiences in nature were in national parks. As a high school student, I joined the Youth Conservation Corps and spent a month working and playing in the backcountry of North Cascades National Park. This work experience was transformational, and it helped set me up for a career in America's national parks. Working the following summers in Glacier and Rocky Mountain National Parks, I spent as much time as possible recreating in the park on my weekends.

These days were some of the most important, foundational experiences I had as a young adult. I deepened my commitment to our national parks, learned about resilience, the relationships between nature and people, and my motives for pursuing a career in conservation.

Ultimately, the biggest lesson I took away from that summer was the more you play in our national parks, the greater the appreciation you have for them. It's the human experiences in national parks that give them their power.

Finding time to play in the park has become a cornerstone of my management approach. I think it's really important for me to "sample the product," so to speak. I want to have an understanding of the visitor experience, but even more, I need to feel a deep connection to the resources I'm stewarding. Thus, I spend as much time as I can in Acadia in the role of a visitor.

I have a deep understanding of the power this place has to take your breath away. I know how important it is that we protect Acadia National Park. That core belief derives from every stride I take on the carriage roads, every laugh that erupts from my kids as we picnic at Seawall, and every sunrise I witness from Cadillac's summit. It makes it a lot easier to give your all at work when you really believe in the work you are doing.

As you play in the park this fall, really take a moment to make some memories and bask in the power of this place. I know I will.

—Kevin Schneider

SUPERINTENDENT'S VIEW

"The more you play in our national parks, the greater the appreciation you have for them. It's the human experiences in national parks that give them their power."

COURTESY TOM BLAGDEN, JR.

FOG ROLLS OUT at dawn over Seal Cove Pond.

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

Acadia's ENDURING Apple Trees

Early European settlers to Mount Desert Island planted apple trees, a sweet and symbolic sustenance at first, and then a cultural phenomenon. Reminders of those early orchards can still be seen—and eaten—in Acadia today.

BY CATHERINE SCHMITT

Late September, the Jordan Pond House is crowded. People wait for the Island Explorer bus while others drive in circles trying to find a parking space. Groups of hikers gather at trailheads, families wait for tables in the restaurant, and tourists browse the gift shop and hustle to and from the restrooms.

In the lawn surrounded by this busy scene stand two large apple trees, largely unnoticed by the crowds, perhaps perceived as just another tree in a park that is mostly forest. But unlike most of Acadia's trees, which have been here for thousands of years, apples are recent arrivals, here for only a few hundred years. But just like the rest of Acadia's trees, apples are remarkable.

Their story is intertwined with the human story of relationships with trees, land, and one another. They are the most obvious reminder that, as it says on a park wayside at Frazer Point, there have been *footsteps before you*.

The apple's story starts in the mountains of Central Asia. There grew a tree so full of life that every single one of its seeds had a unique genetic inheritance. Arranged in a five-pointed star and embedded within a megafauna-friendly fleshy fruit, the seeds that sprouted would not "come true" and have the same characteristics as their parent. Instead, seeds yield pomes of their own size, shape, color, and flavor.

Like humans, every single apple tree is one of a kind.

An apple can, however, make more of its kind if a twig grafts to the trunk of a different apple tree, drawing nutrients and water from an established rootstock while the fused twig exercises its own DNA to make fruit. This was a miraculous composite, fostered into being

GEORGE AND JOHN JORDAN built the original Jordan Pond House in 1847, also establishing a small orchard that can still be seen today.

JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

some four thousand years ago by people living in the Tian Shan mountains of western Asia—around the same time Wabanaki people, having found rich beds of shellfish, decided to stay for a while at Frazer Point, now part of Acadia National Park.

There may not have been apple trees here then, but there were spruce and fir and birch, chokecherries and blueberries, huckleberries and acorn-bearing oaks, enhanced and facilitated through burning and other methods.

The apple trees came later, grown from seeds and scions carried by waves of colonists across an ocean. Those who arrived after Wabanaki communities had been decimated by war and disease perceived not a cultivated garden but a forest primeval. Cutting down the forest became the actual and metaphorical task of the settler, and apple trees, like sawmills, were among the many marks of possession.

Apples rooted in their new ground, but they did not take over, did not become "invasive." The apple's easy adaptation to local soils and climate, their seeming naturalness in the new land, their tendency to go wild (but not too wild), became a metaphor for Americans themselves.

Across Acadia, people planted apples on their claims. Apples were a sweet and symbolic sustenance at first, and then a cultural phenomenon. New apple varieties proliferated as 19th-century farmers identified promising seedlings, gave them names, and then gave them away, said historian and College of the Atlantic professor Todd Little-Siebold. "More than one thousand named apple varieties were being grown in the state of Maine alone, with tens of thousands across the United States," he said.

Some apples were for eating fresh, others for cooking or storing, and still others for cider, despite efforts of the temperance movement. Sustained by tourists and summer communities, orchards at Beech Hill and the foothills of Cadillac Mountain grew Pewaukees, Baldwins, Fameuses, Wolf Rivers, and Kings. Farmers began showing their apples at agricultural fairs. Exhibitors at the Eden Fair displayed over sixty varieties, and several were unique to Mount Desert Island. Those apples probably extended the economic viability of farms by a couple generations, said Little-Siebold, who is still searching for the golden-hued Jacobs Sweet apple reportedly planted by the Carrolls at their "mountain house."

But most residents could not survive on fruit alone.

"This is a crazy place to farm," said Little-Siebold. As with land and lumber and economic opportunity, apple supplies shifted south and west. In addition, farmers' preferences for what to grow changed to satisfy market demand in Europe, as well as at home. Apples had become an industry. In 1917, Mount Desert Nurseries had 14 different varieties for sale, but the market demanded large quantities of "first class fruit," apples uniformly perfect in size, shape, and color. The industrialization of apples contributed to the decline of local farms as well as a loss of diversity—and memory.

Yet reminders of Acadia's agricultural past are everywhere, in the apple trees that today grow along roadsides, in old fields, and outside former homes, estates, and tea houses.

Outside the Jordan Pond House in the fall of 2024, Todd Little-Siebold walked around the trees, looking for graft lines, inspecting

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/ FOA

Reminders of Acadia's agricultural past are everywhere, in the apple trees that today grow along roadsides, in old fields, and outside former homes, estates, and tea houses.

their bark riddled with sapsucker holes. Cultivated trees tend to have a Y or V shape from heavy pruning, as horizontal branches make more fruit. One tree was sprouting branches from the base of the old rootstock, and one larger branch bore different apples than the rest of the tree.

"These trees were planted before the Civil War," he said. "There are very few trees that old on this island. They are probably one of the most significant elements of the past agricultural landscape that survives in the park."

"The story of apples and the story of the park are both about abandonment," he continued. "Why is it that the park can become a park? Why was there nobody here? Acadia is presented as sort of like a human-free environment. And it is not that. There have been people here for a long time."

Conservation of lands that became Acadia National Park preserved apples associated with cultural landscapes like Jordan Pond House, Carroll Homestead, and Frazer Point.

Conservation also preserved fragments of ancient forest and allowed forest that had been cleared for farms or cut for lumber to grow back. The old apple trees sent forth their thousands of seeds into the spreading woods, where they sprouted in sunlit clearings and roadsides, exercising their unique DNA, continuing a legacy of relations between people and land, perhaps to become heirlooms in their own right.

Little-Siebold has been collaborating with fellow heirloom apple expert John Bunker, of Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association and Fedco Trees, to locate old orchards, identify and document fruit varieties, and connect the history of apples to the history of the region and state. He has also been collecting DNA samples from trees in Acadia to learn what variety (and era) they may have descended from.

He reached up into branches drooping with fruit, pulled down a yellow apple from the branch retained by the old rootstock.

"This apple is the only one of its kind in the universe," he said, holding up the fruit. "Do the math. I'm holding this little apple, and there may be 10 seeds in here, 10 new unique apples...and on this little tree, there may be 400 or 500 little pieces of fruit. Times 10 means 4,000 to 5,000 potential apples on each tree. There are 20 trees in this corner of Acadia National Park. Every year they produce fruit, a new 5,000 next year, and then a new 5,000 the year after." According to Little-Siebold, Maine may have one of the highest levels of apple diversity in North America. The National Park Service recognizes that apples are part of Acadia's ecology and culture.

There beside the Jordan Pond House, old-growth trees dropped their ancient, edible fruit onto the lawn. For Little-Siebold and others seeking to protect the trees of Acadia, the apples are a windfall of biological diversity—and human history. ■

CATHERINE SCHMITT is a Science Communication Specialist at Schoodic Institute.


CATHERINE SCHMITT/SCHOODIC INSTITUTE

OPPOSITE: Different varieties of apples are lined up on display under the Maine Heritage Orchard (MHO) tent at the annual Common Ground Country Fair in September.

RIGHT: Todd Little-Siebold harvests apples from Acadia National Park.

Yes, You Can Pick Apples in Acadia!

Ever spotted an apple tree in Acadia and wondered whether it was okay to pick some? It is!

While we're all big proponents of Leave No Trace principles—particularly leaving things as we found them—it is okay to pick apples from Acadia's apple trees. The park allows for 10 dry gallons per person per day.

Keep Your Eyes Peeled for These Apple Trees:

Some likely spots to locate apple trees in Acadia National Park (but by no means a comprehensive list) include the parking lot at Jordan Pond House (as noted in this story), Fabbri Picnic Area and Memorial off Park Loop Road, Otter Creek, Great Meadow Wetland, Carroll Homestead in Southwest Harbor, and Frazer Point Picnic Area on the Schoodic Peninsula.

Near Sand Beach, Louisa Morgan Satterlee, the daughter of J. Pierpont Morgan, planted Northern Spy (also known as Northern Pie) apple trees, which were part of the agricultural fields of the Satterlee compound there. The orchard survived the great fire of 1947, unlike much of the rest of the Satterlee's many buildings and gardens.

On Baker Island, apple trees probably planted by the Gilley and Stanley families, who settled the island in the early 1800s, still bear fruit.

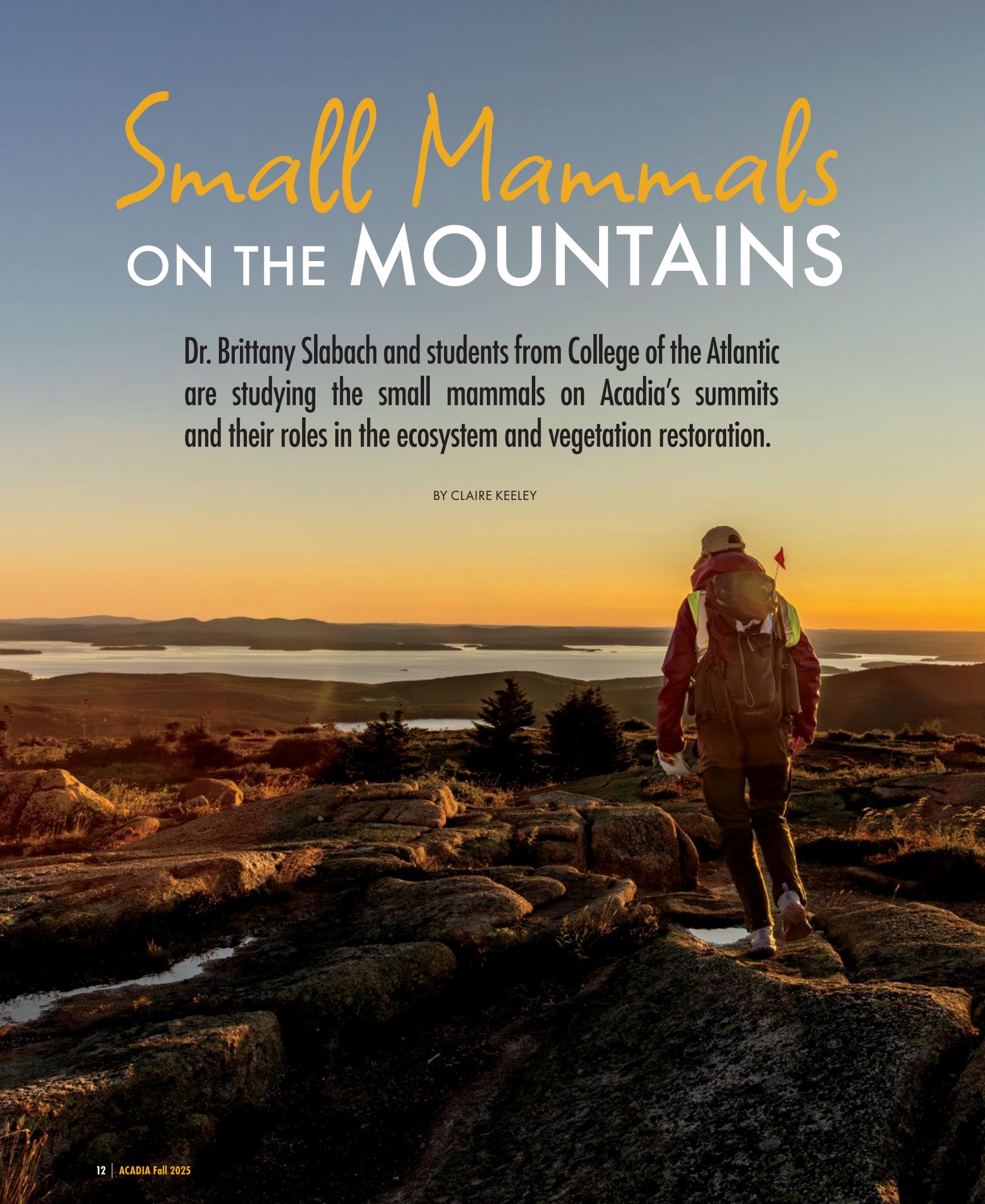
Read more about Acadia's forgotten agricultural landscapes in a story from Friends of Acadia's 2013 journal: friendsofacadia.org/apples

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This article was excerpted with permission from Catherine Schmitt's upcoming book,* "Trees of Acadia: The Past, Present, and Future of Park Forests," *which will be published in Spring 2026 and is now available for pre-order at bookshop.org.*

Small Mammals ON THE MOUNTAINS

Dr. Brittany Slabach and students from College of the Atlantic are studying the small mammals on Acadia's summits and their roles in the ecosystem and vegetation restoration.

BY CLAIRE KEELEY



What if you were told that on Acadia National Park's summits, nestled among the rock faces and patches of three-toothed cinquefoil, there lies a chain of grocery stores?

Not just one store, but multiple, where consumers are provided with resources that help them restock and refuel after long days of traversing the park's rugged landscapes.

It would seem hard to believe, yet visitors come from near and far to experience what each store has to offer.

Squirreling throughout the aisles, those who visit search for fibrous meals or stash highly sought-after items in their pouches for later. Some may even be observed stuffing their cheeks with free samples before scurrying out of sight.

Each hub functions as a cornerstone for the community that it serves. By supplying locally sourced items, these stores have the potential to boost the community's productivity, resilience, and overall health.

And it is all happening right under our noses…and our feet.

This is the secret, bustling world of the small furry creatures hidden within the vegetation restoration plots located on the summits of some of Acadia's tallest mountains.

Acadia's summit vegetation restoration efforts date back as early as 2015, but recently park management has accelerated that work with the help of Schoodic Institute and Friends of Acadia. These efforts are helping to restore low-lying vegetation in areas damaged by inadvertent trampling, social path usage, and more frequent weather events.

Throughout the summer, park staff and volunteers haul soil to the tops of Acadia's peaks, and each October a selection of test plots are planted with native seeds. The hope is that reestablishing native plants on Acadia's summits will benefit entire ecosystems.

"I refer to [the restoration plots] as grocery stores," explains Dr. Brittany Slabach, professor of terrestrial biology at College of the Atlantic, "because once they put the seeds out in October, mammals, birds—all kinds of things—come up and eat them."

Though the plots can serve as a buffet for many organisms, small mammals caught Slabach's eye and became the focus of her 2023 Second Century Stewardship research, a fellowship led by Schoodic Institute aimed at advancing conservation science within Acadia National Park.

Small mammals are regarded as good indicators of ecological health. Aside from the surplus of ecological benefits they provide, such as soil aeration and seed dispersal, "one of the best things about small mammals is that everything eats them," Slabach said.

As a result, these tiny creatures have a significant ecological impact despite their size. With this in mind, Slabach set off to understand how restoring Acadia's peaks might impact these small mammal communities.

TOP TO BOTTOM: Dr. Brittany Slabach points out which part of a deer mouse College of the Atlantic Shaw Fellow Colleen Nelsen (right) should measure to collect accurate data as part of Slabach's small mammal research project. • College of the Atlantic Shaw Fellow Z Packard measures the ear of a deer mouse. • Dr. Slabach sets small metal box traps filled with balled-up oats and peanut butter on the summit of Sargent Mountain.

UNCHARTED TERRITORY

In 2023 Slabach received a call from Bik Wheeler, Acadia National Park's Wildlife Biologist, notifying her that restoration efforts would begin later that season on Sargent Mountain.

Slabach and her team of undergraduate researchers jumped at the chance to "understand the potential indirect effects of restoration on other aspects of community ecology" in real time.

They first needed baseline data—beginning with a simple question: which small mammal species are up there?

"No one had ever done a live capture on Acadia's summits before to see what was there," explained Slabach.

During that initial field season, the team became the first to live trap a small mammal on Acadia's summits, using Sherman traps baited with peanut butter, birdseed, and mealworms and insulated with Poly-fil, a synthetic bedding.

"It was just a *Peromyscus*," Slabach said, reflecting on her team's first-ever capture. *Peromyscus*, a genus of rodents, are highly adaptable generalists, allowing them to thrive just about anywhere and everywhere—including in Slabach's traps.

The next capture was another mouse, and then another. But that itself was interesting. To the naked eye, it seemed like each trap was capturing the same species, but on a genetic level, a different story was being told.

"With *Peromyscus*, they phenotypically converge," Slabach explained, a phenomenon that occurs when lineages of organisms evolve to be more similar in traits than their ancestors.

On Acadia's summits, *Peromyscus leucopus* (white-footed mice) and *Peromyscus maniculatus* (Eastern deer mice) have developed similar physical traits across evolutionary time. The only way to tell the species apart is through genetic testing. Slabach's team collected small ear tissue samples, a standard field technique for small mammal research, to confirm which of the two *Peromyscus* species they had captured.

Early in the team's research, it felt like *Peromyscus* were the only small mammals on the summit. But then one day they opened a trap to find something that changed their perception of what called the mountaintops home.

"I don't think we've ever been so excited," shared Slabach, reliving the moment. "We [trapped] this big, beautiful male meadow vole... It was finally something different, but it made us think, why are you here?"

To Slabach's surprise, her team discovered a resident population of Eastern meadow voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*). Known for living in meadows, lowland fields, and grassy marshes, it seemed out of place on the rugged, subalpine peak of Acadia's second tallest mountain.

"[The summits are] not what we refer to as 'traditional' meadow vole habitat. It is not like a meadow, but in many ways, it is,"

according to Slabach, referring to the habitat as an "elevation meadow." "The grassy moss [on Sargent] is really great [habitat] for meadow voles to tunnel down into," moving efficiently across the landscape and evading predators.

In stark contrast with the generalist *Peromyscus*, meadow voles are specialists, occupying very specific niches in their surrounding environment. "One of the things I am really curious about is the relationship between when you have a generalist that can do really well in all kinds of environments and you have a more specialist species ... what are the competitive interactions there?"

"If we are thinking about changing climates and resilience, we want to understand this from a community [ecology] aspect. To me, it is important to know what is there. And, it might just be a bunch of deer mice, and that is okay."

Slabach's team trapped 33 *Peromyscus* and two eastern meadow voles in their first field season, giving researchers a first look at what was living on Sargent before restoration work began. "If we are thinking about changing climates and resilience, we want to understand this from a community [ecology] aspect. To me, it is important to know what is there," explained Slabach, and even the smallest pieces of information can be vital. "It might just be a bunch of deer mice, and that is okay, but that tells us something, right?"

BROADENING HORIZONS

With Sargent Mountain, pre-restoration, serving as a baseline, Slabach and her team decided to expand their research to new summits to contextualize their findings, adding Cadillac and Pemetic Mountains to the mix for the 2024 season.

"Cadillac has had some restoration on it; Sargent is [currently] getting restored, and Pemetic has not been restored," explained Slabach. Adding Pemetic gave the research team an unrestored peak to compare to, providing their expanding field research with a control group. "Is Sargent an outlier? Are the restored mountains outliers?" questioned Slabach, "Or are we seeing the same thing across Acadia's summits?"

Simultaneously, the team launched a secondary focus to observe if restoration plots influenced overall movement of small mammals through the usage of tiny tracking collars. This allowed Slabach to track home ranges, observe competitive interactions, and observe movements in and around each restoration plot.

By the end of their second field season in 2024, Slabach's team captured 94 unique individuals, representing *Peromyscus* and two other species: Eastern meadow voles and Northern short-tailed shrews. (Though not harmful to humans, the Northern short-tailed shrew, *Blarina brevicauda*, is notably one of only a handful of mammals in the world known to be venomous.)

Slabach's team found that *Peromyscus* populations nearly doubled on restored summits from 2023 to 2024. In addition, although species diversity was low overall, it appeared to be higher on the restored summits.

Now, the research is in its third field season, and Slabach's team has hit their stride.

Hiking a cumulative 250+ miles in the 2025 field season alone, Slabach and her team continue to assess the distribution, biodiversity, and population size of small mammals on Sargent and Cadillac Mountain. In addition, they have added two unrestored peaks, Parkman Mountain and Bald Peak, in lieu of Pemetic Mountain.

The team has also begun to collect data on vegetation types at each capture site to further understand the influence of vegetation on capture rate. The team hopes to create a statistical model that can provide the capture probability at a specific trapping site based on the vegetation type nearby, as well as the capture probability based on species. This could help explain why the team sees certain species more often on some summits versus others.

Through each passing year, Slabach and her team have built upon their knowledge of the small mammal communities, unlocking new pieces of an even larger, complex puzzle.

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

Since the project's inception, Acadia's summits have turned into outdoor classrooms for Slabach's undergraduate students who help with Slabach's research.

"I have a pretty good crew," Slabach shared. A smile spread across her face as she observed this year's College of the Atlantic Shaw Fellow undergraduate researchers Z Packard, small mammal lead, and Colleen Nelsen, vegetation lead, "running the show," as they conducted research in the field.

"The work is hard," explained Slabach. "I get why people have not done [live captures]. It is lots of early mornings and late nights."

However, a multitude of rewarding opportunities stem from it, such as Slabach observing her two mentees growing into budding field ecologists right before her eyes.

It has also deepened Slabach's understanding of the park.

"None of Acadia's summits are the same," Slabach shared, "and that, in many ways, is what makes them wonderful."

Results from the 2025 season are currently being analyzed, but previous results suggest that restoration efforts may be influencing small mammal assemblages on Acadia's mountaintops. Slabach has begun to identify emerging trends from baseline biodiversity data that indicate species richness and abundance appear to be higher on restored summits.

For Slabach and her team, each result leads to new, interesting questions:

"You've got all these seeds you put out, and most of these small mammals are seed predators, known as granivores. In some ways, this might be a benefit if they are helping disperse [the seeds]," Slabach said, "but if the goal is to re-vegetate something and small mammals are eating the seeds, then it may be influencing your goal."

Each new question, Slabach said, eyes lighting up, "makes me want to trap on more summits." ■

CLAIRE KEELEY is Friends of Acadia's Digital Content Creator.

ALL PHOTOS BY RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

ACADIA'S ARCHIVES

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

The William Otis Sawtelle Collections and Research Center houses approximately 285,000 cataloged objects and collections that reflect the history of Acadia. Curator Marie Yarborough ensures those objects, and the stories that they hold, are preserved.

BY ELIZA WORRICK

For as long as she can remember, Marie Yarborough has been drawn to historical objects and the stories behind them.

"I've always loved museums," said Yarborough, who grew up in Connecticut. "My grandmother used to take me to museums, and I have early memories of going to the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, so I always wanted to work in museums."

Her first job, beyond babysitting and a paper route, was in a museum café. "I thought, well, I can't work in the museum because I'm not qualified because I'm a teenager, but I can work in the café. I was always really interested in museums and objects and the people who made them."

That teenage café employee eventually made her way to college, and while browsing the course catalogue came across something new yet deeply familiar. "I opened the book and of course 'A' was first, and I saw 'Anthropology,' and I read the description and thought, 'Oh my God, this is what I've wanted to study my whole life,' although I didn't even know that it existed! This is so amazing." Yarborough's determination followed her to Acadia National Park, where she spent summers working at the Jordan Pond House to earn money during college. One day, during a drive along the Park Loop Road with a friend, she stumbled upon the Abbe Museum's original, trailside location at Sieur de Monts. Intrigued by a museum nestled in a national park, Yarborough poked around and quickly decided, "I am going to work at this place. I called them up and said, 'I waitress six days a week, but I have a day off, can I volunteer for you?' and they said, 'Sure!'"

Following that formative summer, Yarborough went back to college, then graduate school, where she eventually earned a

JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

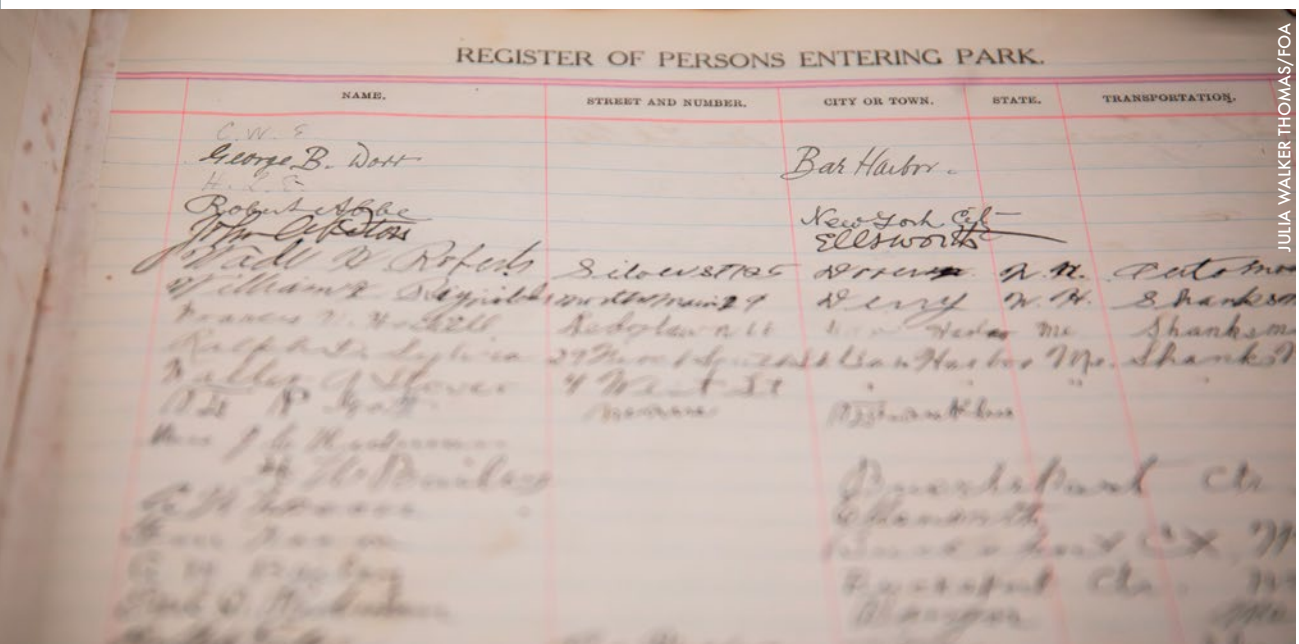
MASONRY SAMPLES FROM HISTORIC BRIDGES AND BUILDINGS ACROSS ACADIA. "An important collection that we keep is samples of historic fabric of buildings and structures we maintain," Yarborough explained. These are often studied during rehabilitation projects to ensure historical accuracy and consistency. "By preserving original samples of the historic materials, we can better preserve or rebuild what makes those buildings so special to begin with."

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

EARLY CARRIAGE ROAD SIGN: This early hand-carved and hand-painted sign was likely built by John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s staff for the carriage roads surrounding the family's estate in Seal Harbor, adjacent to where Rockefeller began carriage road construction for Acadia in 1917. In 2016, this sign hung in the Smithsonian as part of an exhibit on the history of the Rockefeller family's legacy of philanthropy.

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

TAXIDERMIED BARRED OWL. This is one of Acadia's original natural history specimens: Before this owl found its way into the collection, Yarborough believes it was acquired and on display in the 1932-1933 "temporary Naturalist Museum" located at the back of Acadia's original headquarters building in downtown Bar Harbor. What makes her think this? A last name next to "Park Office" is scrawled in pencil on the underside of the owl's base, likely denoting the collector and designated storage location for the specimen.


REGISTER OF PERSONS ENTERING PARK.

NAME.	STREET AND NUMBER.	CITY OR TOWN.	STATE.	TRANSPORTATION.
George B. Dorr		Bar Harbor		
		New York & Ellsworth		

JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

REGISTER OF VISITORS ENTERING LAFAYETTE NATIONAL PARK FROM 1919: While one might assume that the first "visitor" would be George B. Dorr, it was one of the park's other founders, Charles W. Eliot.

THE WILLIAM OTIS SAWTELLE COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH CENTER HOUSES HISTORIC ARTIFACTS, archival documents, and specimens related to the natural, cultural, and administrative history of Acadia National Park and Saint Croix Island International Historic Site in Calais, Maine, as well as the Town of Cranberry Isles. Some artifacts are kept in climate-controlled storage to prevent deterioration. The Research Center is not open to the public due to the fragile nature of the artifacts, but is accessible to researchers. **OPPOSITE PAGE: TOP TO BOTTOM:** Yarborough opens a drawer filled with artifacts. • Painting of "The Bubbles." This painting was created by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp artist Hugh Hegh at the McFarland Hill camp in 1934. The artist gave the work to Solon Conner, the camp's superintendent at the time. Solon Conner's son, Theodore, donated the painting to Acadia in 2009. • Yarborough returns an object to a box in the archival storage area.

"People always ask me what my favorite object is here, and I always say I have a new favorite object every day."

master's degree in American History. Her first job out of school? "I was the very first education coordinator at the Abbe Museum's downtown Bar Harbor location."

After spending many happy years at the Abbe, Yarborough and her family left Maine for a brief stint.

"We were trying to get back quickly because we missed Maine so much, and a job at Acadia opened in the interpretation division. They wanted someone that had a background in cultural anthropology and had an interest in and experience working with Native people and teaching about Native people and Northeastern Native American history, which of course I had."

Yarborough landed the job, which began as a seasonal ranger position for the summer, but she was picked up for that winter and the following spring by the new Chief of Interpretation, Lynne Dominy, who had a background in working with Native people and Indigenous groups at other parks and wanted to bring that same collaboration to Acadia.

Eventually, Yarborough became the writer/editor for Acadia National Park, which included managing a major wayside exhibit (those signs you see installed along roadways providing context for a particular view) project stretching more than five years. As that project was winding down, a curator position in the William Otis Sawtelle Collections and Research Center became available. This job would allow her to work with objects and their histories once again, so she jumped at the opportunity to apply.

That was 10 years ago, and Marie is still thrilled by the archives daily.

"People always ask me what my favorite object is here, and I always say I have a new favorite object every day," she said. "It really depends on when I learn something more about an object, or when I discover something exciting about it and learn its history."

Seeing the collection in person, locked away in a climate-controlled facility at park headquarters among expanding shelves reminiscent of a college library, it's easy to understand why choosing a favorite item is so difficult. The facility houses about 285,000 cataloged objects, along with archival collections that reflect the history of Acadia. "We have a wide depth and breadth of the types of objects and artifacts that we care for. We have objects made of wood, of metal. We have furniture. We have textiles. We have natural history specimens, which are important to mark and understand the science of Acadia over the past 100 years."

"What makes any object important is not what it is, but rather what it means about the people who made it, or held it, or loved it, or cared for it, or saved it. And those are the kinds of stories that we, the National Park Service, want to tell people, and that's why we're here—to help people see themselves in the history of this country, specifically right here at Acadia National Park."

To ensure that Acadia's archives are truly the best place for an item, Yarborough has thoughtful but strict protocols for how, when, and if she can accept it. Accessioning an item, the formal process of bringing it into a collection, comes with the obligation to keep the item in perpetuity. Marie works with a collections advisory committee comprised of other park staff and regional curators. Together they determine whether they have the resources to properly care for an item and if it fits within the scope of Acadia's history. If a piece isn't the right fit for Acadia's archives, Yarborough usually knows where it might belong instead.

"We have this vast network of these other cultural institutions that maybe don't have the [NPS] arrowhead hanging behind their desks, but they are filled with really passionate people who have really beautiful collections that are capturing these things in a way that's different than us, and they have different ways that they can do that. They may have more flexibility, and maybe that's the right place for those things, and that's okay. That's what we're here for."

This deep care and dedication to historical objects is clearly as important to Yarborough as an adult as it was to her when she was young. "There are pieces of history [in this collection] that belong to all of us. I never want to look back and say, 'We have these things that used to be someplace else, in somebody else's control, and we ruined them.' I want to say, 'We have these things, and we've done good by them.' Because it's not the objects, it's really about the stories that they hold and the connections to the people whose lives they represent, or whose hands held them—that's really what it's all about." ■

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

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

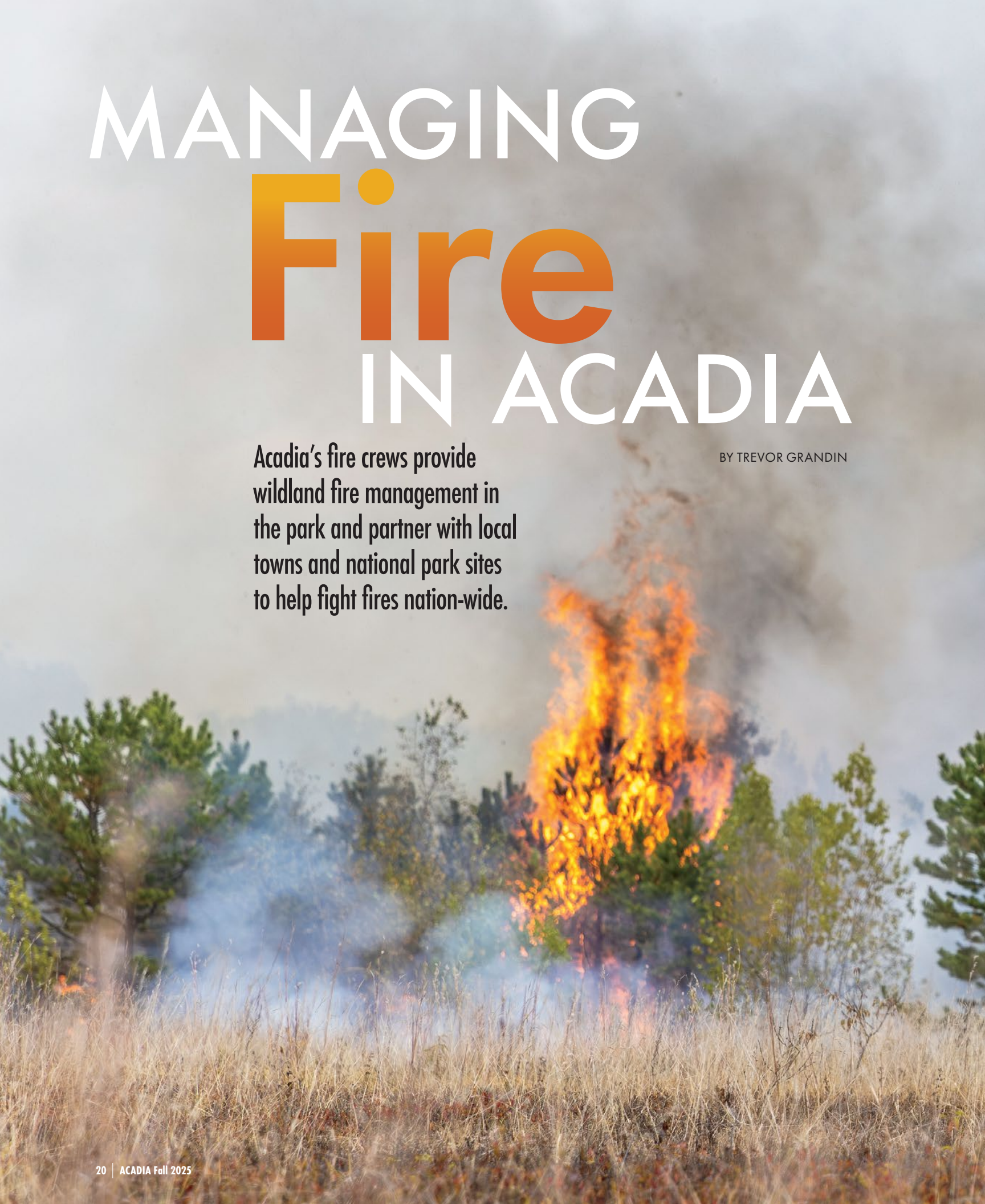
JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

"Like all folks who work in the National Park Service and work at Acadia ... We care deeply about what we do. Indigenous people, French ancestry, the folks who live in Otter Creek, the folks who live on Islesford, all those folks, our history is their history. ... Stewarding that is a huge responsibility, but it's also really rewarding."

MANAGING Fire IN ACADIA

Acadia's fire crews provide wildland fire management in the park and partner with local towns and national park sites to help fight fires nation-wide.

BY TREVOR GRANDIN



On October 26, 1947, the voice of Maine State Forest Commissioner Raymond E. Rendall crackled over the air on WLBZ. He called for volunteers from around Maine to help fight the fire on Mount Desert Island, which had been burning for more than a week. After nine continuous days, those fighting the blaze in Bar Harbor were exhausted.

"Every fire line must be patrolled or under watch day and night," Rendall said. "We can and must not slip up on this extremely important job."

Firefighters from across Maine heeded Rendall's call, and help poured onto the island.

It was the collaboration of firefighters and townspeople from throughout Maine that ultimately subdued the blaze, which burned 17,188 acres on Mount Desert Island, with more than 10,000 acres in Acadia National Park. After the blaze died down, the lasting effects of those partnerships remained.

Today, Acadia is part of the New England Fire Management Zone—a region that spans six states from Connecticut to Maine.

The zone's fire crew is stationed here in Acadia National Park. Although crew size fluctuates by time of year—growing during peak fire season and dry spells and shrinking in the rainy season—a year-round crew is regularly on hand to provide aid to Acadia and the 22 other national park sites within the zone.

Matthew Carroll leads the crew as the zone's fire management officer. Although he might be fresh on the job, having joined the crew earlier this year, he's far from a new face in Acadia. Carroll was the assistant fire management officer in the park from 2017 to 2020, and his roots on MDI stretch even farther.

"I've been living in Bar Harbor for 10 years now. I went to College of the Atlantic before that. I met my wife here," Carroll said. "This is my home."

Carroll's familiarity with Acadia gives him a head start on the community-building process, and that's integral in a state like Maine, where many volunteer and municipal fire teams rely on each other for assistance. The crew has mutual aid agreements with fire departments across the island and throughout the state, pledging their help whenever needed. That relationship flows both ways, with the New England crew able to call on surrounding departments for assistance, be that extra personnel or equipment.

"It really is because we rely on our partners," Carroll said. "If I go out on a fire and another one starts, I need someone else to be able to go and provide leadership there."

WHAT'S IN A FIRE?

During Acadia's rainy season, New England's fire crew is scattered throughout the United States, fighting fires in hotspot regions like Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. They also deploy to named wildfires, like the Dragon Bravo Fire that burned nearly 150,000 acres of the Grand Canyon's north rim this summer, making it one of the most destructive fires in the history of Grand Canyon National Park.

It's through this out-of-state deployment that the crew can maintain their qualifications, get valuable experience, and create relationships

KAMERON CULBERTSON, A MEMBER OF THE ACADIA NATIONAL PARK FIRE CREW, ignites a prescribed burn on the Wells Barrens Preserve in Wells, Maine. The burn was part of the 2025 Maine Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX), which included Acadia National Park Fire Management Team Members as well as participants from more than a dozen states and Tribal Nations from the US and Canada.

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA


RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA


COURTESY MARTY HUYSMAN

TOP LEFT: Firefighter A.J. Balduman-Gerrity examines pitch pine needles during a training in Wells, Maine. In fire ecology, the phenomenon where needles and leaves "freeze" after a fire is described as a fire pattern indicator. This indicates the direction of the fire, as the frozen foliage can be swept by the wind to reflect a certain direction and it is fixed by desiccation, revealing the wind's path at the time of the fire passage. This characteristic is part of a broader understanding of how fire affects plants, their response to fire intensity, and ecosystem dynamics. **TOP RIGHT:** Wildland firefighters Erik Ahlquist, a Maine forest ranger, and Matt Grant (right), part of the Acadia National Park trail crew, provide initial attack efforts to a tree that was struck by lightning in Hat Creek Wilderness in northern California in late July 2025. **OPPOSITE:** Fire Management Officer Matthew Carroll poses for a portrait with his pulaski, a tool named after U.S. Forest Service ranger Edward "Ed" Pulaski, during a prescribed burn and training in Wells, Maine earlier this season.

with other skilled fire teams. Engine Captain Bryan Daigle has been with the New England crew for 18 years and said that it's important for their crew to go out west to stay good at their jobs. "When we make those decisions to go out west, we don't make them lightly," Daigle said.

That experience comes in handy when predicting the likelihood of a fire. Wildfire behavior is determined by an alignment of three factors, Carroll said—fuel, weather, and topography. First, a wildfire needs an abundance of fuel. While some might peer into Acadia's forests and bristle at the thought of its fallen trees and dead vegetation contributing to the next great fire, fuel is only one part of a larger equation.

Second, the weather needs to be right. Wildfires are born from situations of low humidity and high winds, but Maine's frequent rains and high relative humidity make their spread difficult. Even a short rain shower could set back the creation of burnable fuel, soaking vegetation that was once primed to burn.

Finally, a fire's location helps determine how it behaves, with blazes moving quicker up steep slopes and slower along rockier surfaces. These three factors, when in alignment, create dangerous situations—and that's why coordination and partnerships are so important to fire management.

ON THE JOB IN ACADIA

When the crew arrived at a call this summer, the result of a lightning strike near Aunt Betty Pond, the smell of smoke was already in the air. Responding at night and unable to see the fire through the trees, they started the gridding process, where firefighters line up and sweep a given area for signs of fire. After it was found smoldering under the duff (the layer of decaying leaves, needles, twigs, and branches on a forest floor), the crew made quick work removing fuel from the equation, cutting down hazardous trees and digging out organic material nearest to the embers.

"We just remove the fuel, let it burn out to the edges, and then we do what we call 'mop-up,'" Carroll said.

Mop-up looks exactly like it sounds, with crews crawling around searching for stray embers that may continue to smolder under the organic layer. After this manual process, around 2,000 gallons of water are dumped on the site for good measure, putting out any sparks that may be unreachable.

When Acadia's crew isn't putting out fires, they're completing projects in the field, tending to the park, and proactively lowering the risk of spread in the event of a blaze. This includes limbing and cutting down trees, removing excess vegetation, and balancing sun exposure to prevent dry conditions around park structures. These defensible spaces lower the risk of a fire spreading and give the crew easily accessible staging areas should a fire start.

Prescribed fires are also performed in Acadia to reduce "fuel load," i.e., areas where dense shrubs or trees are at heightened fire risk, and to protect cultural landscapes by perpetuating open fields. A prescribed fire at the lower field at Jordan Pond House last spring is a good example. Careful planning goes into those fires, and a specific set of conditions must be met before the fire is ignited. Once burning, the fire is carefully monitored.

Fire plays a vital role in nature. It clears out mature growth, creating space for sun-loving plants that provide food for wildlife and regenerating forests as a whole. Pitch pine trees, which are native to Maine, require fire for successful reproduction. Their cones are serotinous, meaning the heat from a fire is required to melt the waxy resin that holds the seeds in the cone, allowing them to be released. Young seedlings are sensitive to shade and need open, sunny conditions to grow, which fire also provides.

Though fears of another great fire follow close behind every dry summer, western eruption, or blanket of smoke thrown over the state, Maine is better prepared for the threat of wildfire than it was in 1947.

Firefighting looks different now—from forecasting improvements to advancements in technology—but two things have stayed the same: the importance of strong relationships and a willingness to help.

For Daigle, that's what's most rewarding: putting in the work and taking steps to prevent the next great fire. "I like to help," he said, "and that's my way of trying to help." ■

TREVOR GRANDIN is a freelance writer and former Cathy and Jim Gero Acadia Early-Career fellow at Schoodic Institute.

When the New England crew isn't actively fighting fires, they're out in the field, completing project work, like maintaining defensible space around park structures.

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

ACADIA'S FORESTS AFTER THE FIRE OF '47

Following the fire of 1947, Acadia's forests regrew naturally. Seeds, carried by the wind, settled into burned areas. Some deciduous trees regenerated by stump sprouts or suckers —shoots that grow from the roots or the base of a tree's trunk. But the forest we see today is different than the forest that grew before the fire. While spruce and fir trees reigned before the fire, birch and aspen were the first to pop up afterward. Sun-loving and fast growing, these deciduous trees continue to grow and shade out the forest floor, providing a nursery for the shade-loving spruce and fir that may eventually reclaim the territory.

The fire of 1947 increased diversity in the composition and age of the park's forests. It even enhanced the scenery: today, instead of one uniform evergreen forest, we are treated to a brilliant mix of red, yellow, and orange supplied by the new diverse deciduous forests.

"All Safe. Home Gone" Symphonic Poem

Oberlin College & Conservatory student Matthew Thomas Brown wrote a "symphonic poem" inspired by his 2023 visit to Acadia National Park, where he learned about the fire of 1947.

"'All safe. Home gone.' progresses from a lamentation of the landscape lost to a rehashing of the nightmare and the emergence of a new vision," Brown writes on his website. "The final melody... is my recollection and exaltation of the pristine view from the top of Sargent Mountain."

The title is an abbreviated message the American Red Cross used in the wake of the fire to quickly catalog the condition and needs of those affected.

Learn more and hear the Oberlin Orchestra's performance: mtbrownmusic.com/allsafe

MORNING LIGHT SHINES on fall foliage as seen from the Gorham Mountain Trail in Acadia National Park.

MYSTERIOUS **SCULPTURES** ON THE LANDSCAPE

These behemoth boulders add geological gravity –and sculptural stoicism–to the park landscape.

BY CARL LITTLE

I have been hiking in Acadia National Park for more than 40 years now, and in my perambulations up and down mountains, through woods, alongside streams, lakes, and ponds, I have made friends, if you will, with a number of glacial erratics, those large boulders that rest in shade and sun, unmoving yet moving.

Many are landmarks, as individual as cairns: stern, rounded, amiable, at times Buddha-like. Some of my favorites have features: a half smile, a generous nose, lichen tattoos. I look forward to revisiting them, being in their presence, as they while away their centuries.

In his booklet *Erratica: Boulder Poems*, Robert Chute (1926-2021) paid tribute to these mighty masses of stone. Noting that German geologists named them *Fundlinge*, "the lost children of the Pleistocene," Chute, who taught biology at Bates College, acknowledged their benevolent presence:

> **Not ignored but left alone to dream**
> **of the roaring, rumbling, tumbling times**
> **that brought them here to be**
> **good New England neighbors.**

Mount Desert Island boasts some exemplary glacial erratics. One thinks immediately of Bubble Rock in the park and Balance Rock in Bar Harbor, both renowned for their breadth and girth. How many (mostly young) hikers have posed pretending to tip over the former or had their photo taken in front of the latter, as if the boulder were a family member?

And how many of us have hiked through "the Grotto," that section of the Valley Trail beneath the cliffs of Beech Mountain that features massive erratics, and felt like we had discovered the ruins of some ancient civilization? Those gigantic rocks, some sporting Appalachian polypody, aka rockcap fern, never fail to awe those passing through.

These shapely and misshapen boulders have attracted their share of photographers. Longtime acquaintanceship with an erratic on Bakers Island led photographer Jack Ledbetter to take his camera to the site one summer evening. The enormous boulder plays a starring role in his stunning sunset view of Mount Desert Island.

Photographer Pamela Cobb returned to Acadia this past summer after a nearly 20-year absence and rediscovered her passion for those slumbering giants, what she calls "mysterious sculptures in the landscape." The boulders' "mere existence," she writes, "stretches the imagination—to another era and a different world, distances of time and space that are unfathomable."

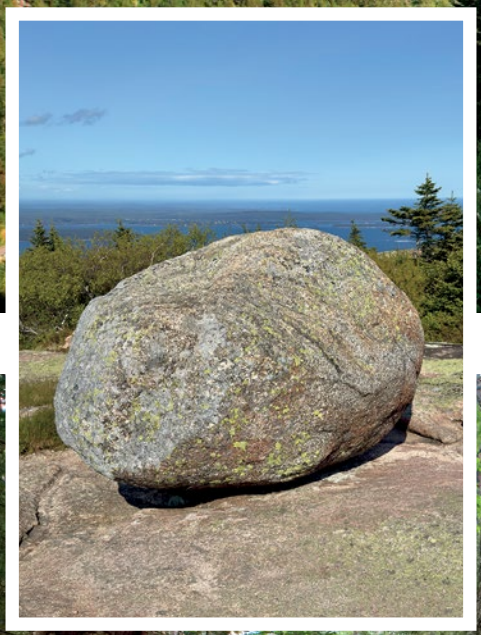
Duane and Ruth Braun have devoted a better part of the last several decades educating the public about the geology of Mount Desert Island, and that includes the glacial erratics in our midst. In their newly revised "Guide to the Geology of Mount Desert Island, the Schoodic Peninsula and Acadia National Park," the Brauns make note of some noteworthy erratics, including the bulky hunk of Lucerne granite on the Bar Harbor shore path, which was carried by the Laurentide Ice Sheet and deposited some 16,000 years ago.

When I asked Duane Braun what glacial erratics reveal about the geology of Mount Desert Island during a talk he and Ruth presented at the Southwest Harbor Library in August, he answered, "They can tell us where the ice came from." Writing about the cluster of erratics at Bass Harbor Head, the Brauns reveal their multiple origins. Some are the "foliated Ellsworth schist," others come from the "layered gabbro-diorite-granite zone," which stretches along the coast of Maine between Bar Harbor and Machias, and another group of Lucerne granite boulders traveled by ice express "from the hills 35 miles northwest of here between Ellsworth and Bangor." These millennial movements bring to mind an archaic meaning of erratic: "nomadic."

These slumbering giants help us understand the origins of our island, but they also represent a kind of natural sculpture garden spread across hill and dale. Let us celebrate, in poet Robert Chute's words, these "great, gray silent strangers," each one "an errant vagrant moved by chance / yet immutably here and now / touching the ground." ■

CARL LITTLE, of Somesville, received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his art writing from the Dorothea and Leo Rabkin Foundation in 2021. His latest publications are *Blanket of the Night: Poems* and *John Moore: Portals*. He curated "Quarries: Muse & Material" for the Monson Arts Gallery in 2025.

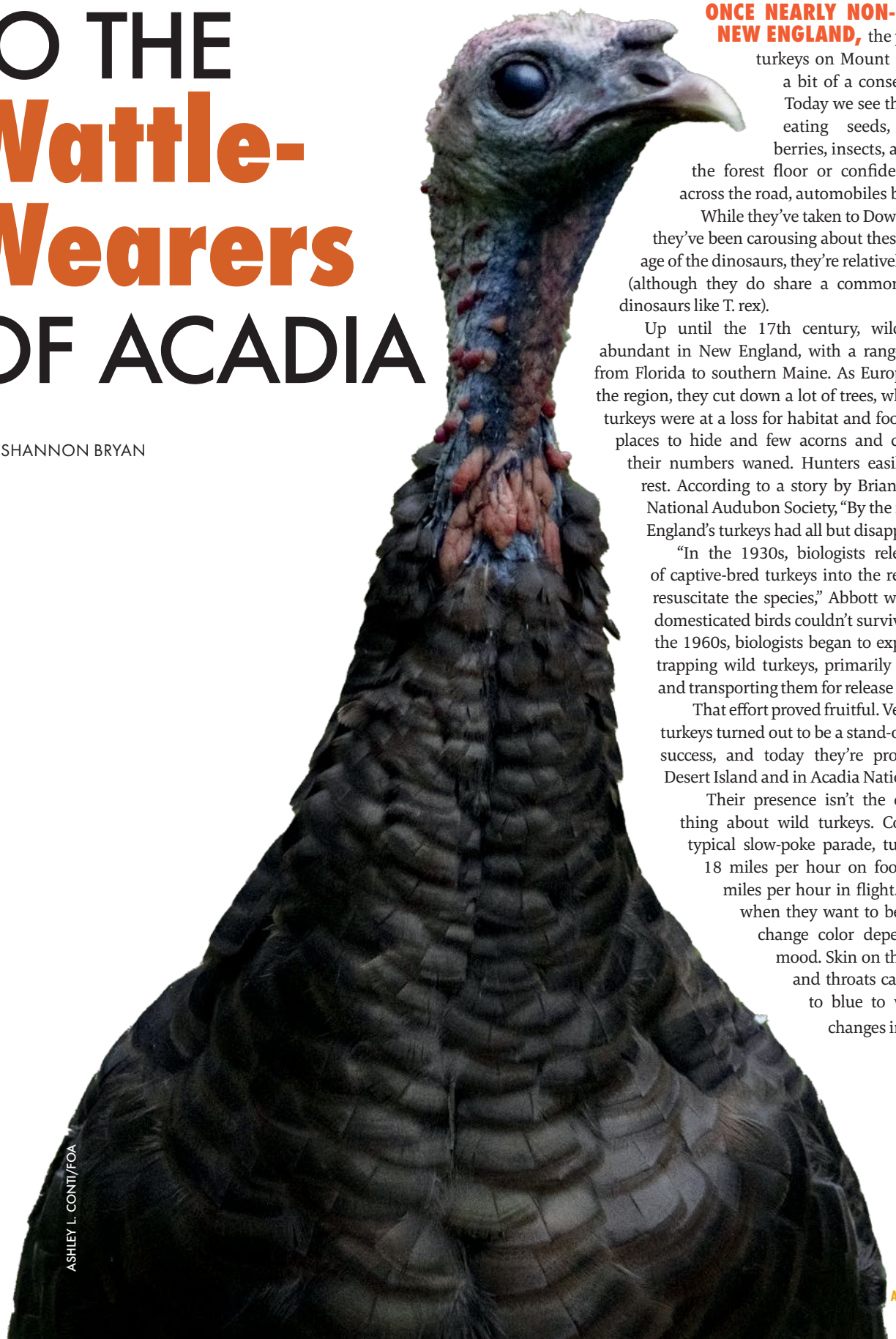
OPPOSITE: A glacial erratic sits on the shore of Baker Island as the sun sets behind Little Cranberry Island and, farther back, Mount Desert Island.
COURTESY JACK LEDBETTER



LEFT: *Cadillac Erratic*. COURTESY PAMELA COBB PHOTOGRAPHY. ABOVE: Bubble Rock on South Bubble. JOSEPH PHILIPSON/FOA.
BELOW: Glacial erratic boulders line the Valley Trail. ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA.

A NOD TO THE Wattle-Wearers OF ACADIA

BY SHANNON BRYAN



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

ONCE NEARLY NON-EXISTENT IN NEW ENGLAND, the presence of wild turkeys on Mount Desert Island is a bit of a conservation marvel. Today we see them everywhere, eating seeds, nuts, acorns, berries, insects, and worms from the forest floor or confidently sauntering across the road, automobiles be darned.

While they've taken to Downeast Maine like they've been carousing about these parts since the age of the dinosaurs, they're relatively recent arrivals (although they do share a common ancestor with dinosaurs like T. rex).

Up until the 17th century, wild turkeys were abundant in New England, with a range that stretched from Florida to southern Maine. As Europeans colonized the region, they cut down a lot of trees, which meant wild turkeys were at a loss for habitat and food. Left with few places to hide and few acorns and chestnuts to eat, their numbers waned. Hunters easily took out the rest. According to a story by Brianna Abbott from National Audubon Society, "By the mid-1850s, New England's turkeys had all but disappeared."

"In the 1930s, biologists released hundreds of captive-bred turkeys into the region to try and resuscitate the species," Abbott writes, "but these domesticated birds couldn't survive in the wild. In the 1960s, biologists began to explore the idea of trapping wild turkeys, primarily from New York, and transporting them for release in New England."

That effort proved fruitful. Very fruitful. Wild turkeys turned out to be a stand-out conservation success, and today they're prolific on Mount Desert Island and in Acadia National Park.

Their presence isn't the only impressive thing about wild turkeys. Contrary to their typical slow-poke parade, turkeys can clock 18 miles per hour on foot and up to 50 miles per hour in flight. They're speedy when they want to be. They can also change color depending on their mood. Skin on their heads, necks, and throats can shift from red to blue to white based on changes in blood flow. ■

JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

HUGE THANKS to Our 2025 Seasonal Staff!

Our seasonal staff did 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 engaged with park visitors and captured the work—and the lively season—through images and video. They also happened to be a hard-working and enthusiastic crew of early career professionals who brought great talent and care to their work.

While the October government shutdown prompted some late-season pivoting, they switched gears and helped maintain community trails, shared messaging about closures in the park, and continued data-driven social science.

Here are highlights of this year's accomplishments:

SUMMIT STEWARDS

Summit Stewards spent thousands of hours on Acadia's summits and trails educating visitors about Leave No Trace ethics, conducting basic trail maintenance, and responding to emergencies. Led by Summit Steward Manager Stephanie Ley, this year's crew was Teagan Lapuk, Matthew Egelberg, Lillian Abbott, Eli Shahan, Kelby Youngberg, and Molly Bogner.

Over the season, this crew had 34,195 visitor contacts. Those interactions ran the gamut, from helping park visitors be more thoughtful stewards of the park to helping point them in the right direction to a trailhead. The Summit Stewards also rebuilt 822 cairns and assisted with 35 hours of search-and-rescue (SAR) and 84 visitor assists (which includes things like providing extra water to a hiker, helping with basic first aid, or assisting a visitor who's lost).

This season, they also brought solutions to the Beehive and Bowl Trails, where extensive social trails were causing confusion for visitors and adding to vegetation trampling. To deter visitors from unwittingly following those errant paths, the crew added ropes and used branches to hide the social trails.

RECREATION TECHNICIANS

Recreation Technicians worked in the park gathering data about how visitors move about the park. This valuable data informs future decisions made by the park's resource managers. Led by Recreation Technician Manager Becca Stanley, this year's seasonal recreation technicians were Luke Fiermonti and Jess Elliott.

Recreation Technicians used technology to support their work, including traffic and trail counters. They also regularly validated that data in the field, counting visitors on a trail, road, or carriage road to confirm the counters' numbers.

They conducted a good deal of research at targeted areas, too. This year, that included the newly opened Acadia Gateway Center, Beehive Trail, Eagle Lake boat launch, Fabbri Picnic Area, peregrine-closure areas, and Day Mountain. They captured visitor numbers, how long people stayed in a given area, multi-use tracking on the carriage roads, and so much more.

They also collaborated with visiting researchers, like the Department of Transportation and Worcester Polytechnic Institute, to study a range of things, like parking issues at Jordan Pond and E-bike use on the carriage roads.

STEWARDSHIP CREW

Our Stewardship Crew did important hands-on work on Acadia's trails and carriage roads. They welcomed loads of volunteers to help out each season, too. This year's Stewardship Crew was again led by Stewardship Manager Nikki Burtis with Stewardship Assistants Nora Marasco and Gemma Lurie.

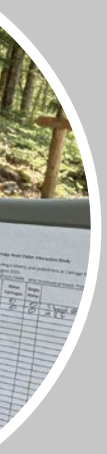
The Drop-in Volunteer Stewardship program completed 4,338 hours of work, which included fence building, trail and carriage road drainage clearing, brushing in trails to deter the use of social trails, and brushing out (i.e., trimming back vegetation to keep the path easy to see and navigate).

New this year was helping park staff clear Acadia's carriage road vistas—trimming branches and cutting back foliage to keep those stunning park views we all swoon over. They also built a new bogwalk at Hadlock Ponds.

Helping these projects run smoothly were the Volunteer Crew Leaders (VCLs). Four new VCLs came on board this year, for a total of 18.

The Stewardship Crew also welcomed 26 service groups from Maine and across the country, including 4-H clubs from Texas and Maine, university students, the Sierra Club, Groundwork Bridgeport, summer camps, and local groups.

COMMUNICATIONS



Our communications team worked hard to tell the stories of Acadia and to help educate the public on conservation issues. This year's communications seasonals, Claire Keeley and Rhiannon Johnston, brought their storytelling talents to Acadia to capture all the goings on in video and photos.

Claire Keeley was in the field capturing a good deal of vertical video for social media and creating engaging posts and reels. The reach of those efforts was big: more than 1.3 million unique engagements between Facebook and Instagram. That's 1.3 million opportunities for people to learn more about who we are, how essential the work of park staff is, and how they can get involved.

Rhiannon Johnston captured stunning images in the park this season. From breathtaking sunsets to Acadia's hardworking trail crew rebuilding trail on The Bubbles, her work captured all we love about Acadia (and highlighted so much of the work that people don't even realize takes place). She also shot and edited videos for several of our campaigns, including our Paddle Raise for Carroll Homestead.

WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA INTERN

The Wild Gardens of Acadia features more than 400 plant species representing plant communities found within Acadia National Park. This year's intern, Mattie Vandiver, worked alongside the Wild Garden's dedicated volunteers to accomplish a good deal of plant tasks this season: weeding, watering, transplanting, pruning, raking paths, and turning compost, while also greeting visitors. She was instrumental in the clean-up and prep work involved to get the bog habitat open for the first time since 2019 and helped to reset stones and edgings along the paths. With Wild Gardens of Acadia Co-Director Helen Koch, Mattie field-checked and updated the Wild Gardens plant species list and helped to identify several mosses.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AMBASSADOR

Lauren Knierim was the 2025 Community Volunteer Ambassador in Acadia. While her role is funded through a partnership between the National Park Service, Conservation Legacy, and AmeriCorps, she played an important role with Friends of Acadia this summer. Lauren's work to engage with the community helped amplify Wild Acadia projects in the park.

Lauren helped pilot the Backyard Stewards and Backyard Scientists programs. The programs encourage Mount Desert Islanders to look at the plants in their own backyards to identify and remove invasive species. (Invasive plants don't respect park boundaries, so removing them from nearby property helps keep them from proliferating in Acadia.)

Lauren also led our Save Our Summits (SOS) hikes this year, which took place on Wednesdays and Saturdays from June to mid-September. Volunteers helped carry soil to the summits of Penobscot and Sargent Mountains. This soil is integral to the ongoing summit restoration efforts in Acadia National Park. This season, 292 volunteers carried a whopping 5,049 pounds up to the summits!

BELOW THE SURFACE

Diver Ed and the League of Underwater Superheroes explore and clean up the waters of Mount Desert Island.

BY SHANNON BRYAN

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

It's a rare person who scans the shallow waters spilling out of Mount Desert Island's culverts on a chilly spring morning and thinks, "I'd like to snorkel that."

But Ed Monat is a rare person.

Known as Diver Ed by locals and the thousands of Mount Desert Island visitors who've boarded his boat, Starfish Enterprise, to learn about what lies beneath the surface of our coastal waters, Monat is a singular blend of boisterous curiosity, underwater expertise, and straight-up silliness. He's a dedicated community builder and sea-life advocate. He also likes to fill his dry suit with air until he's swelled up like Veruca Salt from "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory."

His enthusiasm for Maine's waters (and those further afield) is contagious.

Monat makes lugging muck-covered debris from a harbor feel like a spectacular time. In fact, he's got a cadre of fellow divers and shore support who delight in the escapades he comes up with, be it a harbor cleanup in Manset, diving for ghost traps off Sutton Island, ice diving in Echo Lake, or explorations in Hall Quarry. And when he shares his excitement for exploring the area's culverts, you bet other divers want to join him.

"There's always something about every dive," said Monat. "I love it. I like diving around here, but I also love seeing other places and seeing different sea creatures and environments. There's always something that's awe inspiring."

Monat's life is dedicated to the water. His career is a mix of marine education and mooring repair. He champions a dive club and leads underwater cleanups. And he has a darn good time while he's at it.

"Growing up fishing and learning to dive and realizing how amazing everything is underwater, I enjoyed learning about what's there," Monat said. "I've been doing that my whole life, trying to get people excited about sea creatures and hoping that some people will eventually work their way into trying to help."

He does that expertly with his popular Dive-in Theater, where he and his wife Edna (aka Captain Evil) welcome visitors aboard Starfish Enterprise to regale them with lobster lore, anemones, urchins, and the possible opportunity to kiss a sea cucumber.

He's also the ringleader of the League of Underwater Superheroes, a dive club he started decades ago.

The name "League of Underwater Superheroes" is a reference first used to describe Monat in the early 2000s by writer Francesca Robinson, author of "Song of the Seal," a children's book about the "adventures and wholesome fun of underwater superhero Diver Ed."

League members don patches and are given superhero names like Rocket Man or The Walrus. They dive for the pure enjoyment of it, of course, but they also do underwater cleanups in the harbors of Mount Desert Island.

Divers pull a range of debris from the water—lost lobster traps and sunken lines, overboard sunglasses and cellphones, and errant household trash. On shore, volunteers schlep trash from the water and pick up more buoys and bottles, food wrappers, and footwear.

"When we do cleanups in Bar Harbor, we have tons of families with their kids down at the shore," Monat said. "It's fun for the kids who show up. They get to see all the cool stuff, and they get to help with the dive. We get a lot of people who just come and hang out because they're interested in what we're doing, even if they don't dive."

For League divers, it's an opportunity to do good for the community (both human and marine). They also relish the prospect of underwater treasures.

> "I've been doing that my whole life, trying to get people excited about sea creatures and hoping that some people will eventually work their way into trying to help."

COURTESY EDWARD MONAT

OPPOSITE: Diver Ed poses in his full dry suit at Eagle Lake. Diver Ed and his League of Underwater Superheroes have historically been granted permission to dive in Eagle Lake to help clean up and protect its ecosystem.

LEFT: League of Underwater Superheroes pose for a portrait after a successful cleanup at the Bar Harbor Town dock.

"It is exciting for us because we wouldn't just find all junk; we also find a lot of cool artifacts like clay pipes and glass bottles and stuff like that," said Monat, who also has a penchant for finding a particular kind of porcelain sculpture: "For some reason, I'm the only one that finds toilets," he said. "I don't know why. I'm used to working commercially, so I usually end up gravitating to stuff that's more challenging."

Last fall, the League of Underwater Superheroes did a cleanup dive at Eagle Lake—a large freshwater lake within the boundaries of Acadia National Park. Visitors on the Eagle Lake Carriage Road know its early morning reflectiveness and midday glint. They might also know that swimming or paddleboarding are not allowed (nor is scuba diving, ordinarily, although that sport isn't included on the lakeside sign). That's because Eagle Lake is the source of Bar Harbor's drinking water and requires strict watershed protection.

The town of Bar Harbor works with the National Park Service to protect the Eagle Lake watershed to maintain water quality. Similar partnerships exist for Jordan Pond, Bubble Pond, Long Pond, and Upper and Lower Hadlock Ponds, which are all drinking water sources for towns and villages on Mount Desert Island. Thus, the sight of a dozen or so geared-up divers making their masked way into the waters of Eagle Lake is an exception (read: please don't dive in Eagle Lake).

That cleanup dive was approved by the town of Bar Harbor because of Monat's longstanding work relationship with the town—he's hired to dive on the drinking water intake pipe, cleaning it and doing whatever maintenance is needed. The League's dive in Eagle Lake was permitted with the stipulation that they'd wear dry suits and stay in an agreed-upon area of the lake near the boat launch.

"Culvert Operations"

Monat's culvert snorkeling started a decade ago during a bitterly cold winter, the same winter he committed to dive every day during the month of February.

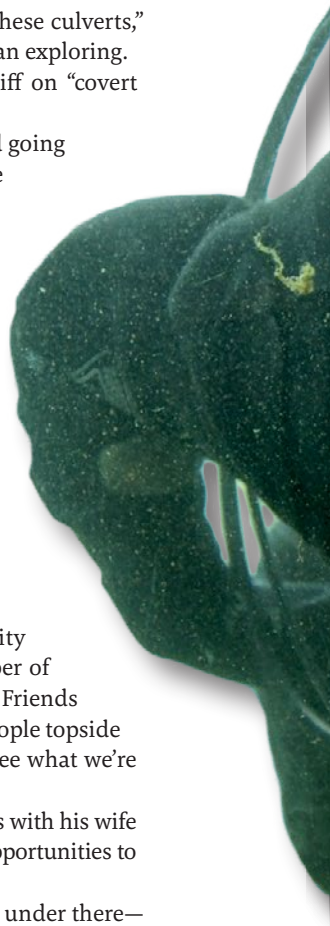
Some days, Monat said, open water close to shore was hard to come by. "The only open water I could find was in these culverts," he said. So he pulled on a snorkel and mask and began exploring.

He jokingly called them "culvert operations," a riff on "covert operations."

"It was cool crawling around underneath roads and going down through these waterways where people have never been," he said.

This spring, he turned the League of Underwater Superheroes on to the idea.

They snorkeled through the cement culvert under Route 102. They snorkeled Otter Cove, from the Fish House Road parking area, riding the tide under all three arches of the causeway, then onto Otter Creek landing and through the Grover Avenue culverts. They "snorkeled and crawled" Stanley Brook, through 10 culverts, and eventually ended up in the ocean.



So Much More Than Scuba

"I love that it's not just a diving club. We are a community club; everyone is invited," said John Bench, a member of the League of Underwater Superheroes who is also Friends of Acadia's office and facilities manager. "We need people topside too, and Eddie tries to get other people involved to see what we're doing; he's so community-minded that way."

For Bench, who first started diving in warmer waters with his wife while they were traveling, the League has given him opportunities to explore the underwater worlds of his own backyard.

"For me, it's the stories and seeing everything that's under there—the sea cucumbers, crabs, lobsters, and sculpin," he said. Bench also appreciates all the cool underwater formations, like one near Sand Beach. "There's a cave under water, a giant crack that goes

BELOW: The League of Underwater Superheroes enters Eagle Lake for a cleanup dive in fall 2024. OPPOSITE TOP: Diver Ed, as seen underwater in full scuba gear. OPPOSITE LEFT: Underwater invertebrates captured on video during a recent Underwater Superheroes dive trip to Les Escoumins, Quebec. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Diver Ed kisses a Jonah crab after a dive.

SHANNON BRYAN/FOA

into the granite. There's a sandy bottom and these boulders that are perfectly round like bowling balls, from rolling in and out of the cave."

"Eddie does an amazing job. He sets up meetings, monthly dinners; he's setting up dives almost every two weeks," said Bench. "He's generous with his time and equipment. He's super generous with his boat, so we don't always have to do shore dives. We're going out to Egg Rock, Mount Desert Rock."

Monat is quick to recognize that, while he's the gregarious and goofy personality people recognize, his wife is an invaluable "fixer" for all of it.

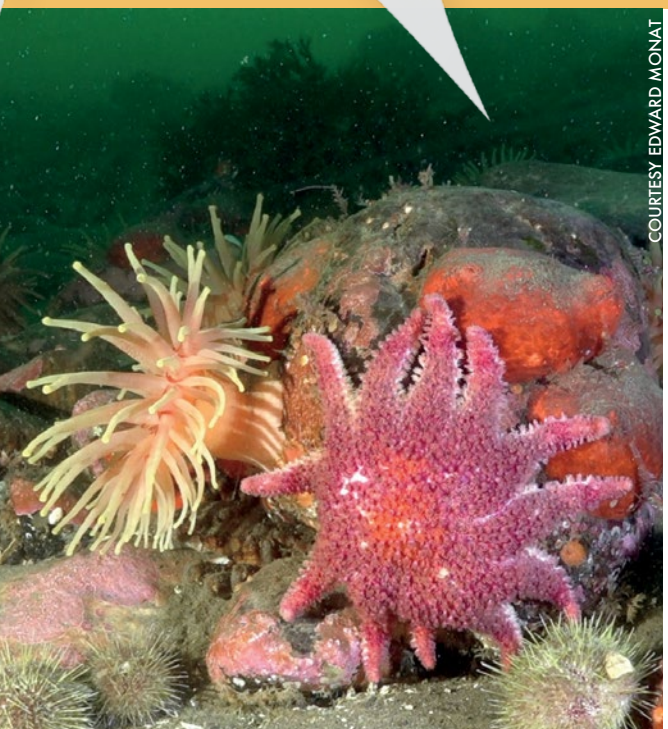
"She's captain on the Dive-In Theater. She does the narration," said Monat. "She's the dive supervisor on all my commercial dives. She's on all our recreational dives. She runs everything when we do dive charters. She organizes stuff when we're doing trips. She's really the powerhouse."

The group also travels around the state—and the world—to dive in other locations. This past winter they traveled to St. Eustatius, a small Dutch island in the Caribbean.

Monat has plenty of underwater work keeping him busy, too. In addition to water intake maintenance, he does salvage dives and mooring inspections. He cleans the pontoons on the Bar Harbor ferry terminal and does work on a tidal turbine in Cobscook Bay. He's also a scallop fisherman.

"There's nothing like being in the water," he said. "It's not just the weightless part of it, but it's a completely different environment and world. It's not silent; it's loud because of your bubbles and stuff like that. But it's what you want to hear. It's not like the world around us now. We're down there, there's no Facebook, there are no phones, there's no nothing. It's just you." ■

SHANNON BRYAN is Friends of Acadia's Content and Website Manager.



COURTESY EDWARD MONAT

COURTESY EDWARD MONAT

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF ACADIA

BY VERONICA TORRES

From the historic stone bridges of the carriage roads to the summit road on Cadillac Mountain, infrastructure forms the quiet backbone of Acadia. But like the park itself, this backbone requires ongoing care and renewal.

One of the most significant examples of this renewal is Acadia's new maintenance facility, funded by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). Passed in 2020, GAOA created the Legacy Restoration Fund, the largest investment in public lands in a century. At Acadia, the facility will replace outdated and unsafe structures, some dating back to the 1940s. This is not just a building, but a hub of stewardship. Groundbreaking on the site took place in 2023, and the facility is expected to open in spring 2026.

The new facility represents far more than new walls and equipment bays. Once completed, it will support more than 150 employees and volunteers, providing modern space for everything from offices and equipment storage to vehicle repair and workshops. These behind-the-scenes jobs are essential to keeping Acadia's iconic landscapes safe, functional, and accessible. And the need was urgent. The previous facility had a crack in the masonry running the length of the building, crumbling cinder blocks, and insufficient restrooms for park employees and volunteers. Now, workers will have safe, efficient space and properly designed workstations, allowing them to do their jobs effectively.

Park staff helped shape the design by advising on details such as large garage bays to accommodate heavy equipment, some of which was donated by Friends of Acadia.

The new building will also enhance the visitor experience. The former facility, visible from the summit of Cadillac Mountain, detracted from the park's most iconic view. By relocating operations across McFarland Hill, the project restores that treasured vista for millions of annual visitors.

The benefits of this federal investment in Acadia extend beyond park boundaries. Over the course of the project, the National Park Service estimates it supported more than 425 local jobs and contributed $92 million to the regional economy.

Advocacy in Action

Projects of this scale do not happen on their own. They are the result of years of education and advocacy by citizens, organizations, and elected officials working together to secure the resources our national parks and public lands need. Senator Angus King, for instance, a longtime champion of Acadia, has led bipartisan efforts to reauthorize the Legacy Restoration Fund through the America the Beautiful Act, underscoring that repairing park infrastructure is among the smartest uses of taxpayer dollars.

Friends of Acadia is playing a central role in this advocacy as well. By engaging policymakers, mobilizing members, and elevating the park's needs, Friends of Acadia is ensuring that the park's voice is heard in Washington, D.C. and Augusta.

Looking Ahead

Across the National Park System, the Great American Outdoors Act and Legacy Restoration Fund have supported more than a thousand projects, from repairing bridges and roads to modernizing visitor centers and utilities. Yet many projects remain. Extreme weather and surging visitation are putting added pressure on aging facilities. Without reauthorization of the LRF, the maintenance backlog within national parks will only continue to grow.

From George Dorr's early vision to today's park advocates, Acadia has always been shaped by those who cared enough to act. By sustaining the systems that sustain the park, we ensure that Acadia's future remains vibrant and welcoming to visitors and a safe working environment for park staff. ■

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

THE NEW MAINTENANCE FACILITY IS 27,000 SQ FT with three outbuildings and features new campus-wide septic, underground utilities, and additional parking. Unlike the previous campus, comprised of many disparate buildings and trailers, the new facility consolidates park management and operations to one structure, designed for 150 people. This includes permanent and seasonal employees, volunteers, and several Friends of Acadia employees who work closely with park staff.

EVERY SPACE IS DESIGNED TO MEET MODERN SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS and is designed around each program's workflow to improve efficiencies. This includes the Volunteer Drop-in Program, a collaboration between Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park. The new space allows for convenient storage of equipment, welcoming space for up to 40 volunteers, and enough parking to accommodate everyone. Office areas are heated and cooled by efficient heat pumps, and shops have passive cooling systems.

THE NEW FACILITY IS BUILT OUT OF THE VIEWSHED OF CADILLAC MOUNTAIN, meaning it cannot be seen from the mountain as the old campus can be. It's likewise out of the watershed of Eagle Lake. Roof assembly and electrical utilities are right-sized to be plug-and-play ready for solar panels, which will be installed next year. Friends of Acadia helped secure a $500,000 grant from the National Park Foundation for the solar project, which will generate direct energy cost savings of about $61,000 a year.

THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE ENTIRE CAMPUS included a goal to improve employee satisfaction and retention. Toward that aim, employees shared feedback and ideas that would help their day-to-day work be completed more efficiently, and those ideas were incorporated into the design. A common area includes a kitchenette, natural light, communications ports, as well as soundproof dividers that allow the space to be divided.

ACADIA HAS MORE THAN 100 VEHICLES AND LARGE MACHINES that require service—and fuel. The new facility enables the park to service those vehicles on campus, rather than overwhelming service stations and garages in Bar Harbor.

ALL PHOTOS BY RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

Friends of Acadia's 36th Annual Benefit Raises Funds to Restore the Carroll Homestead in Acadia National Park

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

MORE THAN 430 PEOPLE GATHERED UNDER A FULL MOON to celebrate and support Acadia National Park at Gate House Farm in Northeast Harbor on Saturday, August 9 for Friends of Acadia's 36th Annual Benefit.

A highlight of the evening was raising more than $200,000 to date to support the restoration and revitalization of the Carroll Homestead in Southwest Harbor, one of Acadia's most cherished cultural heritage sites. Acadia National Park will match these donor funds with an additional $250,000 from entrance fees to support needed repairs.

Built by John Carroll in 1825, the farm was home to three generations of Carrolls. Donated to Acadia National Park in 1982, the homestead has inspired generations of park visitors, students, educators, and historians.

"The Carroll Homestead offers a rare and tangible glimpse into the island's past and is an important educational resource for the many fourth graders in the area who visit each year as part of school curriculums," said Eric Stiles, Friends of Acadia CEO and president. "We are grateful to the many generous donors, sponsors, and our hosts, for helping us preserve and protect this historic treasure for future generations to explore and enjoy."

The Benefit evening began with a festive cocktail hour and silent auction where guests bid on items ranging from original art, unique experiences, one-of-a-kind jewelry, beautiful items for the home, and accessories for adventures into the park. Guests then enjoyed an elegant dinner catered by Bar Harbor Catering Company. The spirited live auction featured a three-night stay at Corcovado Wilderness Lodge in Costa Rica, a dinner for 12 with Martha Stewart and Wabanaki leaders at Skylands, an original landscape painting by renowned plein air painter Emily Buchanan, and a 1974 custom-built mahogany runabout boat, donated by Meghan Savage and daughters in memory of Tom Savage.

The evening continued with dancing to the music of DJ June and the Hudson Horns.

The 2025 Benefit Committee, led by Lesley Draper and Jill Hinckley, worked tirelessly throughout the year, leading to an extraordinary night of fun and fundraising for the park.

"This year's Benefit was truly remarkable—from our record ticket sales to the amazing turnout of guests of all ages," said Jen Byer, Friends of Acadia special events manager. "The energy was palpable, especially with the dance floor packed all night long thanks to the incredible band. It was a joy to see so many supporters, old and new, come together to ensure Acadia National Park's future."

"A special thanks to our presenting sponsor, Chilton Trust, who has supported the Annual Benefit for 12 years in a row, and to our cocktail tent sponsor, Interactive Brokers," Byer continued. "A heartfelt thank you to the Savage family for hosting us on their beautiful farm, and to all the businesses, artists, craftspeople, and individuals who donated incredible auction items to help Acadia National Park."

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

NEW MEMBERS

June 1 - August 31, 2025

Anonymous (3)
Hartley Jeffries and Brandon Adkins
Anil Akturk
Ingrid Amols
Amorphous Studio Landscape Architecture
Michael Anderson
Valerie Andrews
Elizabeth Angelbeck
Sabin Antony
Julian Armstrong
Lisa Au
Ed Auger
Judy Augustine
John Avella
Allison Ayers
Nancy Barnes
Chelsea Beck
Chiori Beck
Jodi Berg
Linda Berger
Adele Bernhard
Hayden Bernhardt
Marisa Tandy and Michael Bertenthal
Robin Bibber
Deborah Block
Joy Blumenreich
Zachary Bodner
Dorothy Botelho
Patricia Bowers
David Bowman
Andrew Boyle
Todd Bradley
Stephen Brazeau
Holly Breault
Christine Breen
Sheila Brocki
Alexander Brown
Kaitlyn Brown
Patty and Peter Brown
Laurie Browning
Michelle Brzezowki
Margaret Buchan
Sissy and Sandy Buck
Andy Bulgerin
Elan Burman
Brad Burns
Vincie Burr
Patricia Byram
Donna Cakert
Allyson Callahan
Jane Campino
Kevin Canty
Katherine Carroll
Dawn and Wes Carroll
Priscilla Cash
Colleen Casparian
Emily Charpentier
Faye Charpentier
Judy Chaves
Eva Chen
Lisa Cherrier
Maria Chnapko
Lorrayne Chu
Lynne Church
Gabby and Cameron Cline
Ashlyn Coble
Adam Cohan
Tracy and Bryan Cole
Mitchell Cole
John Coleman
Patrick Combs
Meghan Condry
Catherine Constantino
Lane Conville-Canney
Theresa Cook
Jodi and Kevin Cooper
Rebecca Cooper
George Corse
Megan Cullity
Michael Cuttitta
Carolyn Daffron
Micheline and Michael Dahlgren
Genevieve Davis
Tracy Davis
Julie Dawson
Mariah and Joseph Dawson
Linda Deaderick
Lauri Degrazia
Mark Demaesschalck
Cameron DePaola
Karen Derrick
Rupert Dese
Julie DiNapoli
David Dinatale
Anthony DiNino
Sirrah Dobbert
Jessica Donnelly
Susanne Drennan
Thomas Drummond
Tim Dwinal
Jacob Dworkin
Laurence Easa
Wendy Eaton
Stephanie and Jason Edie
Sarah Egan
Jeffrey Ehrenberg
William Erb
Kimberly Erickson
Rose Everitt
Zach Farrell
Min Feng
Sarah Fennessey
Alan Finnecy
Ralph Flatau
Cheryl Forbes
Tyrone Ford
Nancy Fox
Emily Freeburn
Jane Freeman
Alan French
Heather French
Ashleigh Gaines
Jennifer Gannon
Bonita Gardino
Patricia Gathman
Kate Geisen
Lynn Gibb
Kevin Gibbons
Cheryl Gigliotti
Elisabeth Glass
Eva Gnam
Doris Gnauck
Thomas Goeller
Shawn Gorman
Debra Gottschalk
Stacey Grabman
Brett Graff
James Graves
Douglas Green
Jonathan Green

Sara Greene
Thomas Griffin
Karolyn Grotyohann
Kellie and Mike Guarino
Lisa Gunnigle
Carol Gurney
Karen Hall
Nora Hanson
Harper House Foundation
Amy Harris Wrenn
Barbara Harris
Mary Harris
Wanda Harris
Jennifer Harvey
Lisa Hastings
Terry Hayamizu
Kristin and Richard Haynes
Stephen Healy
Raymond Hebert
Edith and Jim Hedrick
Jane and James Helvey
Sarah Henniker
Lisa Henries
David Hermanson
Alexandra Hicks
Madeline Hilyard
Holliss Hirsch
Nicole Hisey
Shannon Hitchcock
Theresa Hixson
Brian Hoffmann
Scott Hogan
Richard Hollis
Rebecca Horner
Kendall Hubert
Betsy Hutcheson
Jenny Hutchinson
Christopher Hyland
Ike Nizam Foundation
Erica Iman
Don Iorio
Melissa Ireland
Karen Isky
Reva Jaffe-Walter and Gideon Walter
Chiara Jeanfils
Bethany Johnson
Cate Johnson
Eric Johnson
Norma Johnson
Heidi Jones
Linda Jorgenson
Robert Kagan
Eben Kaplan
David Karabinas
Thomas Karnofsky
Patricia Kay
Jordan Keefe
Ann Kennedy
Alyssa Ketcham
Jennifer Killion
Andrew Kimball
James King
Lauren Kirkpatrick
Ronald Kirkpatrick
Amanda Knapp and Thomas Jones
Elizabeth Knauft
Kevin Koegel
John Koepke
Tammy Koontz
Roger Korey
Yvette Kovats and Tony Detre
Colleen Kydd-Sumberg
Carroll LaHaye
Zachary Lambert
Carol Lancaster
Anna Latta
Pamela Lawrason
Leslie Leathersich
Edward Lee
Richard Lei
Madeline Lesniak
Sarah Levan
Justin Leveillee
Debbie Levin and Marv Schwartz
Tammy Lincolnhunt
Angela Lipovsky
Brian Lisowski
Jessica Lister
Scott Lister
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continued on page 42

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continued from page 41

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June 1 - August 31, 2025

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.

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IN NOMINE

June 1 - August 31, 2025

We gratefully acknowledge gifts received in honor of:

Acadia National Park
the Acadia to Katahdin Virtual Racers
the birthday of Beth Winkelstein
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Julia Walker Thomas
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IN MEMORIAM

June 1 - August 31, 2025

We gratefully acknowledge gifts received in memory of:

Dorothy "Dottie" Abbott
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Marilyn Wiberley
Charles D. Wilson

**Deceased*

TEST YOUR
ACADIA IQ

Name that Small Mammal

Can you identify these small mammals of Acadia?

These small creatures are a big part of Acadia's habitats. They help pollinate plants and disperse seeds. Those that burrow improve soil health through aeration and nutrient cycling. And they're a primary food source for predators, contributing to food chain stability.

EXTRA CREDIT:
Can you identify this small mammal?

Deer mouse • Meadow vole • Northern flying squirrel • Northern short-tailed shrew • Red squirrel

1 _____ 2 _____
3 _____ 4 _____
5 _____ EC _____

ANSWERS ON PAGE 50

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September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025

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Summer 2025

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Update

Friends of Acadia at the Friends Alliance Fall Meeting

St. Louis' Gateway Arch National Park and the Gateway Arch Park Foundation hosted this year's Friends Alliance Fall Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri. More than 350 park champions came together to strengthen support for our national parks and public lands, including several Friends of Acadia staff and board members, as well as colleagues from Acadia National Park and Schoodic Institute.

Friends of Acadia staff and board members were proud to lead and moderate sessions during the meeting, and Government Affairs Manager Veronica Torres helped launch a new Government Relations Working Group.

Attendees learned more about community-driven conservation, public-private collaboration, and inclusive storytelling. They attended energizing Learning Circles and sessions on capital campaigns, tourism, and AI. The final day focused on equity and engagement in parks, gaining practical tools and insights.

And, of course, the Fall Meeting is an incredible opportunity to build and grow meaningful connections with partners from across the country.

BACK ROW (L-R): Friends of Acadia (FOA) board member Mark Amstutz, Acadia National Park Superintendent Kevin Schneider, FOA VP of Communications and Marketing Perrin Doniger, Schoodic Institute (SI) Development Director Lisa Frazell, SI President and CEO Nick Fisichelli, FOA Government Affairs Manager Veronica Torres, and Executive Director of Friends of Katahdin Woods & Waters Brian Hinrichs. FRONT ROW: FOA board member Elizabeth Williams. (Not pictured but also in attendance: FOA President and CEO Eric Stiles and FOA VP of Development Lisa Horsch Clark.)

Update

Acadia for All Supports Explorations in Acadia

COURTESY GIRL SCOUTS OF MAINE

GIRL SCOUTS and their families in Acadia during Expedition Acadia.

In late September, more than 200 Girl Scouts and their families spent the day canoeing in Long Pond, hiking Acadia Mountain, and oohing at the coastline aboard *Sea Dawg*. A Girl Scouts of Maine event, Expedition Acadia invited families from around the state to learn and explore in Acadia. With Camp Beech Cliff as their home base, they watched for eagles at Jordan Pond, learned about Maine lighthouses and coastal wildlife, rock climbed at Otter Cliff, and explored the park's historic carriage roads.

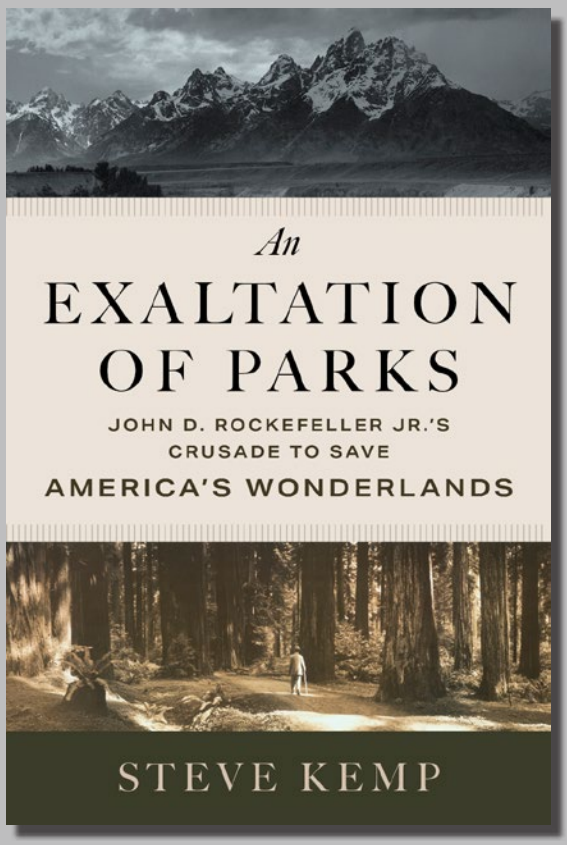
Friends of Acadia helped support the event with an Acadia for All grant. These grants lower barriers to better welcome communities from all backgrounds—including Girl Scouts and their families from Maine's rural counties.

This summer, Acadia for All grants also supported visits by Teens Take on Climate, a Chicago-based nonprofit that inspires, energizes, and amplifies teen climate action; Groundwork Bridgeport, which engages young adults in environmental and community projects in Bridgeport, Connecticut; students from Tuskegee University, many of whom are studying environmental sciences; and sponsored the Indigenous Peoples' Day events at the Abbe Museum.

Through grants and partnerships like these, Friends of Acadia helps open doors to Acadia for all Americans.

My Happy Life In MR. ROCKEFELLER'S PARKS

BY STEVE KEMP



It was fairly late in my career working in national parks that I realized most of the happiest moments of my life had unfolded in parks that John D. Rockefeller Jr. either helped create or enhanced in a significant way.

My life in the parks began fortuitously at age 18 working at a concessionaire's lodge on Jackson Lake in the Grand Tetons. Every morning, I looked across that crystal-clear lake at the magnificent mountains on the other side and every day the scenery seemed too gorgeous to be real. I eventually became a seasonal ranger in Yellowstone and went on to work the bulk of my career as a writer and editor in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I met my wife in the Smokies, and we got married in a grove of old-growth forest (likely saved by Rockefeller) deep in the park. We honeymooned in Acadia, where we rode bicycles for miles on Rockefeller's famous carriage roads. And while the name John D. Rockefeller Jr. popped up now and then in my readings and ramblings, what I knew about the person could have been summarized on one side of a 3" x 5" card.

As my gratitude to John D. Rockefeller Jr. eventually increased, and I finally had the time and means to dig into his story, I realized right off that the reason I had learned so little about such a remarkable national parks conservationist was his almost incomprehensible modesty. Throughout Rockefeller's long philanthropic career he deflected credit and accolades the way a tennis player returns a serve. This fact greatly increased my interest in the story and foretold that important parts of it had gone untold. When I learned he was willing to endure the scorn of his wealthy peers to create public parks for the benefit of ordinary folk like me, I was hooked.

Although John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s name appears briefly in other histories of national parks, nothing had been written that traced the entire arc of his epic conservation crusade. I came to believe that only by looking at his whole life—while staying focused on national park projects—could one identify the conservationist's genuine motives and inspirations.

Something else I learned definitively along the way is that Rockefeller's transformation from lord of private estates to public lands superhero occurred in one magical place he loved with all his heart: Mount Desert Island. It was here he melded with the National Park Service and was converted to the agency's mission of preserving America's most beautiful places, not for the solace of a privileged few, but for the "benefit and enjoyment of the people." And I can assert with confidence and gratitude that Acadia was the springboard that propelled him to rescue a dozen other parks, from the Great Smoky Mountains to the redwoods of California.

Steve Kemp is the author of "An Exaltation of Parks: John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s Crusade to Save America's Wonderlands"

Pick up a copy in Maine at Sherman's Maine Coast Book Sellers or order through your local bookstore or online.

BOOK REVIEW: "An Exaltation of Parks: John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s Crusade to Save America's Wonderlands"

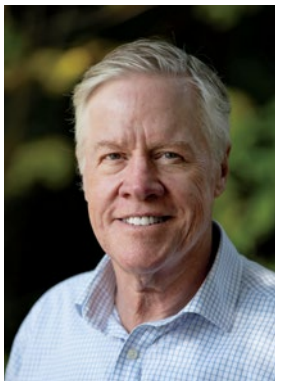
BY EILEEN R. GROWALD, *GRANDDAUGHTER OF JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER JR.*

Steve Kemp's book, "An Exaltation of Parks: John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s Crusade to Save America's Wonderlands," is an extraordinary accomplishment of a story that might have seemed overwhelming but instead reads like a novel. Steve's writing is beautiful and his characterization of Junior (as Steve refers to him) is personal and empathic without being saccharine. The magnitude and expansiveness of Junior's philanthropy is described as thoughtful, strategic, and persistent.

As his granddaughter, the story of John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s philanthropy makes me proud. If you are a lover of national parks, an aspiring philanthropist, or simply a person curious about how wealthy people can leave the world better than how they found it, this is the book for you. It is a blueprint for how to make a difference in the world. My grandfather was lucky to find his passion, following it with careful consideration, and completing it with persistence. I cannot recommend "An Exaltation of Parks" highly enough.

Navigating Through the Government Shutdown

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



"This has been a disheartening end to the season. But in times like these, I am buoyed by the strength and compassion of our community."

As I write this message, the longest government shutdown in our nation's history has just come to an end. This prolonged closure has impacted communities and families nationwide, and my thoughts are with everyone who continues to feel its strain.

Here at Acadia, the shutdown hit at a particularly challenging time. Fall is one of the park's most beautiful and busiest seasons, drawing visitors from around the world to experience our forests' vibrant colors. The Department of the Interior directed national parks to remain mostly open, while operating with a fraction of their normal staff. Here at Acadia, that meant open trails, roads, and carriage roads—but with significantly reduced services, closed visitor centers, and canceled programs.

First-time visitors looking for guidance navigating the park encountered locked doors at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center. Ranger-led activities and educational programs for local schools were canceled. Trail and carriage road maintenance came to a stop, volunteer programs within the park were suspended, and important conservation management projects, including invasive species monitoring and removal, were put on hold.

In the park, a skeleton crew of National Park Service employees continued working through the shutdown, doing their best to protect public health and safety while most of their colleagues were furloughed—separated from the work they love and uncertain when they'd receive their next paycheck. The shutdown occurred at the end of a year when park staff had already been asked to do more with less. The National Park Service has lost a quarter of its full-time staff since January, and a hiring freeze remains in place.

During the shutdown, the park was also unable to sell park passes or collect entrance fees, creating new financial challenges. We estimate Acadia lost more than $1.5 million in fee revenue in October—funds the park depends on to support next year's operations. At the same time, national parks, including Acadia, were required to draw from current-year entrance fee funds to sustain basic operations typically supported by federal appropriations, putting strain on both current and future resources.

This has been a disheartening end to the season. But in times like these, I am buoyed by the strength and compassion of our community.

The few remaining National Park Service staff in the field navigated the busiest weekends of the year with fortitude and professionalism.

Dedicated trail crew volunteers kept showing up, working outside park boundaries to maintain community trails, including the Giant Slide Trail in Mount Desert, the Trenton Community Trail in Trenton, and the Duck Brook Connector Trail in Bar Harbor.

And local businesses and community members worked with us to create and promote an Entrance Fee Donation program to give visitors who were unable to purchase a park pass due to the shutdown a way to support Acadia by donating the value of an entrance fee. I am incredibly grateful to every visitor who chose to help sustain Acadia in this way, and for the outpouring of support from everyone in our community who posted flyers, talked with visitors, and shared information online to help spread the word. Together, we raised more than $30,000 for the park. While this is only a small fraction of the park's lost revenue, every dollar makes a difference.

I am thankful that all of Acadia's rangers are now able to return and carry out the important work of preparing the park for winter. Together with a broad coalition of park supporters in Maine and across the country, we will continue to call on Congress to fully fund and fully staff the parks we love. To all of you, our park service colleagues, our members, and friends: thank you. Your partnership makes it possible for us to protect Acadia during these times of uncertainty and for generations to come.

With deepest gratitude,

Bill

—Bill Eacho

COURTESY TOM BLAGDEN, JR.

STAR TRAILS OVER Jordan Pond with Sargent Mountain, The Bubbles, and Pemetic Mountain.

ANSWERS to Acadia IQ Small Mammal Quiz on page 43

1. Red squirrel
2. Meadow Vole
3. Deer mouse
4. Northern short-tailed shrew
5. Norther flying squirrel

EC. Tricky one! This is a **melanistic red squirrel**. It has a rare genetic mutation causing it to have dark or black fur instead of the typical reddish-brown color.

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Summer 2025

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Summer 2025

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Leave a legacy
for Acadia National Park

Members and friends who have documented provisions for Friends of Acadia in their estate plans are recognized through the George B. Dorr Society.

The society honors George B. Dorr, whose dedication to preserving Mount Desert Island helped create Acadia National Park.

To learn more about planned gifts and estate planning, contact Lisa Horsch Clark, VP of Development and Donor Relations.
lisahorsch@friendsofacadia.org
207-370-4926 • friendsofacadia.org/GBD

FRIENDS OF ACADIA

Joan Jordan Grant, a descendant of John Carroll and author of "Lydia Stories," gives a presentation about the Carroll Homestead at the 2025 George B. Dorr Society event at Terramor Outdoor Resort in Bar Harbor. RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

FRIENDS OF ACADIA

MISSION 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.

THE WARM LIGHT OF SUNSET is cast over a forest of evergreens surrounding the Baker Island Light Station.

RHIANNON JOHNSTON/FOA

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