

# ACADIA

**The Friends of Acadia Journal** WINTER/SPRING 2024



**TAKEN BY STORM**  
EXTREME WEATHER EVIDENT AS  
CLIMATE CHANGES

**SEIZE THE SKI**  
SPORADIC SNOWFALL MEANS CROSS-  
COUNTRY SKIERS NEED TO CARPE SKI

**THE POWER OF  
VOLUNTEERS**

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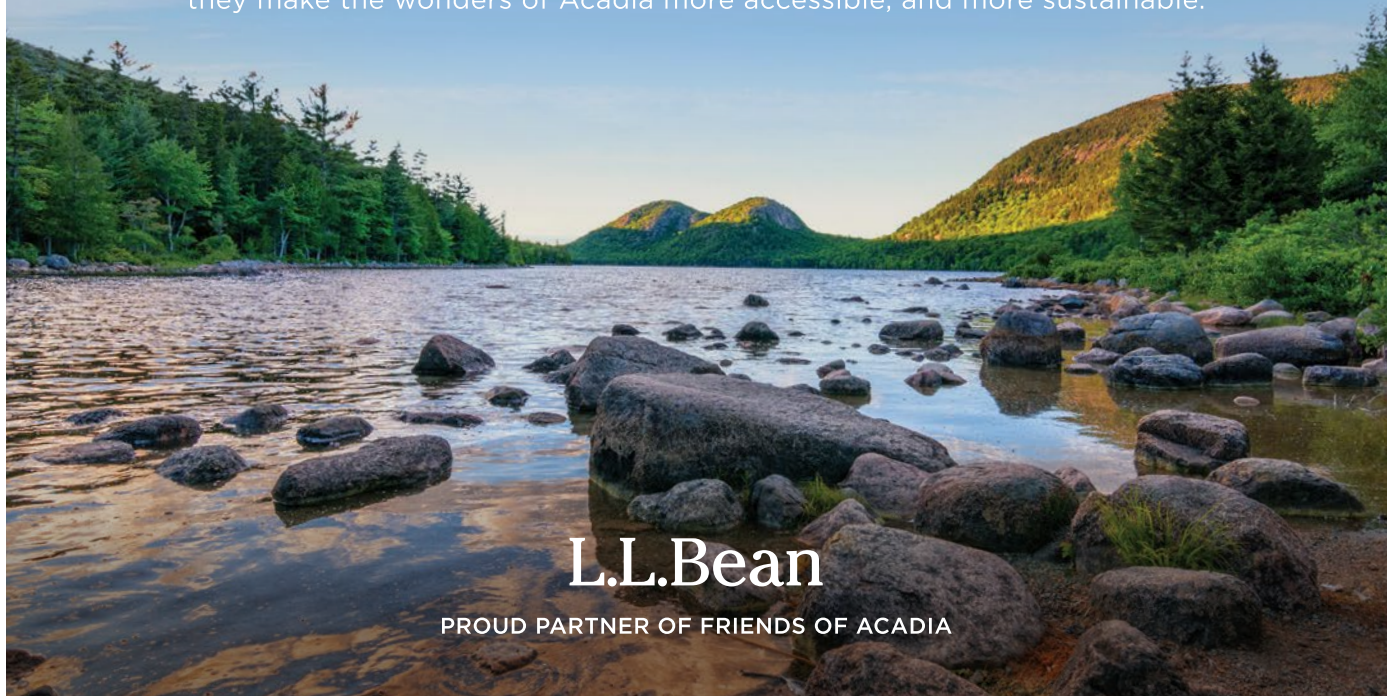
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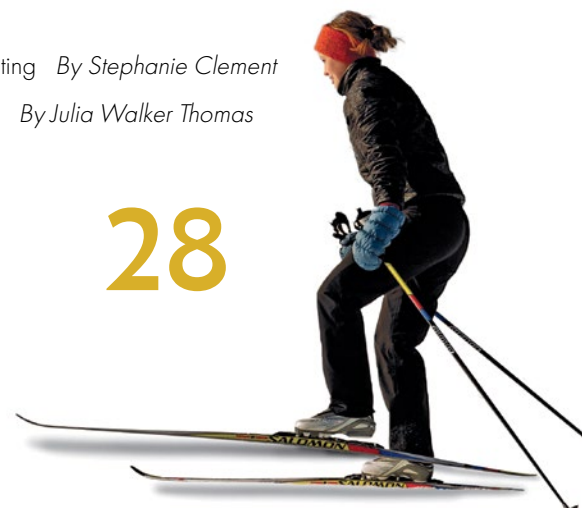
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# ACADIA

The Friends of Acadia Journal

WINTER/SPRING 2024

Volume 29 No.1

*A Magazine about Acadia National Park  
and Surrounding Communities*

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

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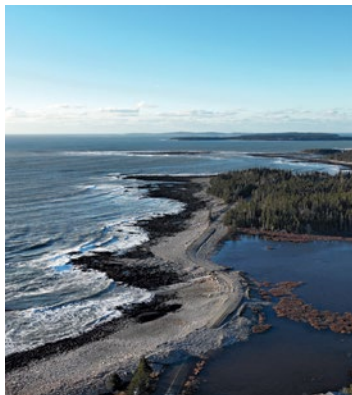
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Aerial view of damage to the Seawall Road after a storm on January 13, taken by drone operated legally outside of the park boundary. KIP WING/AERIAL AESTHETIC/FRIENDS OF ACADIA



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# WHERE IN ACADIA?

ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA

You might see a member of the Cervidae family or someone driving six white horses near this bridge, and with several routes available to provide a visit, it won't be hard to miss. The water flowing under this stony span feeds into one of the "clearest lakes in Maine."

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

# READERS RESPOND TO "WHERE IN ACADIA?"



WILL GREENE/FOA

## South Wall Climbers Area of the Precipice

Thanks to the readers who responded to our "Where in Acadia?" question in the fall magazine and correctly identified the location as the South Wall Climbers Area of the Precipice on Champlain Mountain—more specifically the "Chicken by the Sea" climbing route.

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

In each issue of Acadia magazine, we post a photo and clues to help readers identify the location. If you think you can correctly identify the location of the photo, email [editor@friendsofacadia.org](mailto:editor@friendsofacadia.org).

We'll run a few of the correct responses in the forthcoming issue, and we love it when you send photos and stories to accompany your answers. Thanks to all of our readers who play along!

"The picture is taken from the overlook on the abandoned southern section of the Orange and Black Path just before the trail plunges down the Hanging Steps. There was once a network of trails in this area, which I have spent many happy hours exploring and mapping. The Echo Point Trail went over the top of Echo Point and offered more wonderful views. It started by crossing the rockslide visible in the lower right side of your photo on a beautifully constructed stone causeway. Unfortunately, this was destroyed by a landslide in about 1992.

- David Goodrich

"I believe this photograph to be taken from or near the Hanging Steps on the east face of Champlain Mountain looking due south with the Park Loop Road, Oak Hill, and Great Head in the distance. This is where rock climbers love to climb and the abandoned Orange and Black Path lies. My first experience with this seldom-seen vantage point came in the summer of 2018 when I determined to drag my sister and parents off the beaten track to hunt down the legendary Hanging Steps, following vague directions found online. It was a success, and we proceeded to have a very nice lunch at the top of the steps constructed by Rudolph Brunnow, once considered one of the engineering marvels of Acadia's trail system!

- Douglas Orenstein, Long Island, NY



COURTESY DAVID GOODRICH

"I think 'Where in Acadia?' is a view from the wild and crazy Precipice Trail towards Great Head over the open ocean. There seems to be a void of cleared land, which was one of the main clues I used. I've been rock climbing and hiking in Acadia for more than 30 years. The Precipice, to me, seems like an easy rock climb, but for a hike, one of the most difficult in New England."

- Herb Stillman, Gloucester, MA

# Raising the Roof for Acadia's Seasonal Workforce

On a beautiful day in mid-December 2023, Acadia Superintendent Kevin Schneider, Friends of Acadia board members Lili Pew and Margaret Jeffrey, Friends of Acadia Chief Financial Officer Jason Irwin, and I gathered at the Dane Farm property in Seal Harbor for a ceremonial groundbreaking to kick off the construction of housing for Acadia's seasonal employees.

This was a significant moment in Friends of Acadia's history.

The property (which used to be a gravel pit used for equipment and storage) is located within Acadia's boundary. Friends of Acadia purchased the land last fall from Seal Harbor Properties, LLC, to add critical housing for Acadia's seasonal workforce.

As we celebrated this milestone, it occurred to me that by the time the park hires its 2025 seasonal staff next year, eight more of Acadia's seasonal employees will have housing!

Even more exciting, if you add those eight units at Dane Farm (available in the summer 2025) to the 13 bedrooms we added in 2023, plus the seven RV pads we're renting for the park short-term, when the 2025 season kicks off, at least 28 more seasonal employees will have housing!

Friends of Acadia doubled down on the challenge of helping to create seasonal workforce housing for the talented men and women who work at Acadia National Park in 2023. But this momentum would not be possible without the foundational work that came before.

## Laying the Foundation

For several years, the lack of affordable seasonal workforce housing on Mount Desert Island and surrounding communities has been a key factor in Acadia's inability to fill its seasonal positions. And now, a tight labor market on top of the housing crisis is making it even worse.

The work to plan and assess how best to address Acadia's seasonal housing crisis began in the fall of 2020 when the Friends of Acadia board and staff established the Seasonal Workforce Housing Task Force. The task force worked to better understand the challenges, to explore what role Friends of Acadia might take to support the park, and how our efforts could complement the work of others.

In 2022, we developed a comprehensive housing strategy with the goal of adding 130 bedrooms for Acadia and its partners over the next decade. The plan called for short-, mid-, and long-term actions, such as renovating existing park units; purchasing commercial facilities like B&Bs or motels; constructing new housing on carefully selected sites within park boundaries; and adding more RV trailer pads to Acadia's campgrounds.

In March of 2023, Friends of Acadia funded the renovation of three bedrooms in existing park housing, and also purchased the Kingsleigh Inn—formerly a B&B in Southwest Harbor—to provide an additional 10 bedrooms. We acquired the Dane Farm parcel in September and, prior to that, worked with residents of the Seal Harbor community to answer questions and get input on project design.

This progress over the years has taken commitment, resolve, and resilience. It involves our great partners at Acadia National Park, our dedicated staff and board, community partners, support from congressional leaders, and, of course, Friends of Acadia members and donors.

By helping solve the seasonal housing crisis, we are providing places for people who work in the park to live—an essential commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce.

Together, we are raising the roof and making a difference, one bedroom, one park ranger at a time.



—Eric Stiles

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**"...by the time the park hires its 2025 seasonal staff next year, eight more of Acadia's seasonal employees will have housing!"**



SHANNON BRYAN/FOA

CONSTRUCTION OF SEASONAL WORKFORCE HOUSING began in December 2023 with a ceremonial groundbreaking at the Dane Farm site.

# Acadia's 2023 Visitation is the Third Highest Ever

## Weather is a Strong Predictor of Visitation

BY ADAM GIBSON

Though Acadia National Park annual visitation numbers are not yet official, it appears 2023 will record the third highest visitation ever for the park, with a less than 3 percent decrease from 2022.

Cool and rainy early season weather likely kept visitation slightly lower than 2021 and 2022 numbers. For example, in June 2021 the average temperature was 66 degrees and there were four rainy days, while in June 2023 the average temperature was 53 degrees and there were 11 rainy days.

Weather is a strong predictor of visitation to the Mount Desert Island portion of Acadia, so an extra week of poor weather was likely the cause of the decreased visitation in June 2023 when compared to years prior: about a 6 percent decrease from 2022 and about a 15 percent decrease from 2021.

Interestingly, visitation to the Schoodic district of Acadia was not affected by the early season rainy weather suggesting visitation to that portion of the park may not be as strongly related to weather. June 2023 visitation to Schoodic was about the same as June 2022 and 2021 (less than a 1 percent increase). The stability of visitation to Schoodic despite the poor weather could indicate visitors are participating in weather-proof activities such as car touring more often when compared to Mount Desert Island.

One positive outcome from visitation numbers in 2023 was an increase in ridership for the Island Explorer. In 2023, ridership increased by 9 percent compared to 2022, and 64 percent when compared to 2021 (the Island Explorer did not run in 2020). While ridership is still down significantly from pre-2020 levels (2023 ridership was about 30 percent lower than 2019 ridership), the increase in ridership is a trend we hope continues.

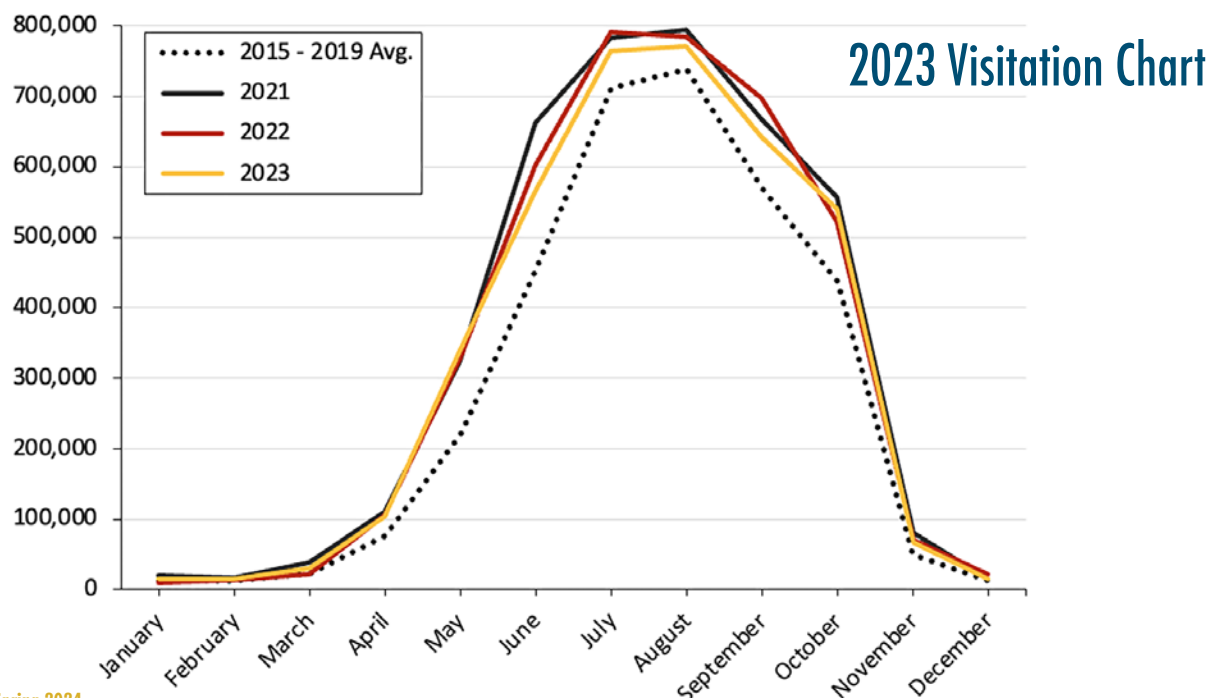
### What Could Next Year Bring?

Acadia National Park still appears to be in a post-2020 visitation boom, and it's likely 2024 will continue this heightened pattern, especially during spring and fall seasons where visitation has increased rapidly.

Depending on early season weather patterns, Acadia could be in for another big year.

It's great that so many people get to experience this wonderful park each year, but it can get a bit overwhelming at times. On busy days, the key to an enjoyable visit is having a backup plan to that hike you had in mind. Luckily in Acadia, there's no shortage of amazing options! ■

DR. ADAM GIBSON manages the Social Science Program at Acadia National Park.



# Together We'll Weather the Storms

In January, back-to-back storms descended on Acadia National Park. These were not typical winter storms bringing welcome snow, instead they were near hurricane events. They brought 70 mph wind gusts, three inches of rain, and a storm surge that has never been seen before in Maine. And they occurred within three days of one another.

After the weather subsided, I went out into the park to see how it had fared during the extreme weather. What I saw was nothing short of staggering. The news of the storms' impacts to the community and state were equally sobering.

Sporadic sections of the park suffered extraordinary damage. As I'm writing this, we know that about 1,000 feet of Ocean Path has been completely washed out. Seawall campground has an inordinate number of downed trees. Seawall Picnic Area is covered in up to three feet of cobbles and suffered the total loss of part of its shoreline.

Sections of Schoodic Loop Road were undermined by the storm surge, and the roof of historic Rockefeller Hall is leaking. Park teams are still working diligently to assess damage throughout the park—and it may be weeks before we know and understand the true extent of impacts.

Events like these, which none of us have seen in Maine, are hard to wrestle with. What is even more humbling is that storms like these are a larger part of our future. The reality of climate change means the park and its stewards are going to need to reckon with more frequent, and more severe, weather events.

They also provoke us to think about how we respond. While we will seek emergency funding

to repair damage caused by these storms, we also need to consider how we rebuild. We need to make sure our investments consider this climate future to the extent we can.

The National Park Service framework of Resist, Accept, and Direct (RAD) provides a structure for our management actions in the context of a rapidly changing climate.

With a future filled with such turbulence, it's even more important to lean on each other. Acadia is strong because of our dedicated workforce, our community, and our partners.

Acadia National Park has a timeless, enduring ability to bring people together. It will not be surprising to any of you that all the park's field crews carried on critical operations throughout the storm events. This includes our roads and trail crews, buildings and utilities, custodians, protection rangers, dispatchers, and our interpreters providing timely safety information to our visitors.

It is these same crews that are beginning the long process of assessing the damage and cleaning up. We have had an outpouring of people offering to volunteer their time and support our staff with whatever they need.

And of course, in times of need, Friends of Acadia is always here to support Acadia National Park. Each of you reading this is part of that community of park supporters. You are what will ensure the magic of Acadia is sustained into the future, even if that future is one of a rapidly changing climate.

We need all of you now more than ever.

With our workforce, community, and partners, I know the power of this place will help us weather every storm.



—Kevin Schneider

## SUPERINTENDENT'S VIEW



**"With our workforce, community, and partners, I know the power of this place will help us weather every storm."**



A BATES CAIRN points the way down the Pemetic South Ridge Trail.

ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA



# TAKEN BY STORM

EXTREME WEATHER IS EVIDENT AS CLIMATE CHANGES, AND ACADIA IS FACED WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER TO REPAIR AND REBUILD—AND HOW.

BY SHANNON BRYAN

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This story was written in mid-January, just following the storms. As a complete assessment of the storm's impact requires weeks of inspection and data gathering by park staff—some even needing to wait until spring for a full understanding—the damage noted here is what was known or understood to be true at the time.

**S**and Beach temporarily disappeared under roiling Atlantic waters. Persistent winds buckled trees. Powerful waves pummeled the coastline, dismantling sections of the Ocean Path. As the tide retreated, it left a mess of rocks and debris scattered across the Otter Cove causeway on the Park Loop Road and Seawall Picnic Area.

Back-to-back storms on January 10 and 13 wreaked havoc on the coast of Maine. In Acadia National Park, several locations experienced significant damage. While Maine is no stranger to winter storms (there have been four in the last two months), this duo packed an extraordinary punch.

“These were the most impactful storms on the coast since 1978,” said Rebecca Cole-Will, chief of resource management at Acadia National Park. “They’re probably more significant than that ’78 storm was because there’s so much more coastal infrastructure now than there was at that time.”

In more recent memory, a storm in June 2021 brought intense rainfall to Acadia, causing flooding and erosion to areas of the park, including extensive damage to 10 miles of carriage roads and the beloved Maple Spring Trail.

These January storms pounded the coast with intense winds and extremely high tides. And whereas Maine’s winter storms typically blow in from the northeast (commonly referred to as “nor’easters”), the January storms came from the southeast. On Isle au Haut, which hosts a section of Acadia, a 95-mile-per-hour wind gust was recorded, according to the National Weather Service.

These storms are the most recent examples of extreme weather events that are expected in greater frequency and intensity as the planet warms.

Sea level rise is another factor, making storm surges that much higher. The storm surge on January 10 raised the height of the sea four feet above the average high tide, or about the level predicted for sea level rise by the year 2100. (Read more in “The Future (Sea Level) Is Here” by Catherine Schmitt on page 12.)

## DIRECT IMPACTS TO THE PARK

Among the early damage identified at Acadia are two sections of the popular Ocean Path. “The storm removed over 1,000 feet of trail. It’s just gone,” said Keith Johnston, chief of maintenance at Acadia National Park. “That’s also exposed the oceanside shoulder of the Park Loop Road; there will be significant stabilization efforts there to try to stop the road from getting worse over the coming weeks.”

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Aerial view of damage to the Seawall Road after a storm on January 13, taken by drone operated legally outside of the park boundary. PHOTO: KIP WING/AERIAL AESTHETIC/FOA

**RIGHT T-B:** Extreme erosion from the early January storms to the Ocean Path hiking trail • Damage to the Seawall Road • Waves wash over the road at Seawall on January 13.



The Schoodic Loop Road was also significantly undermined, he said, but more exploration is needed to understand the extent of damage.

Another big hit was felt at Seawall Campground and Picnic Area. “The Seawall Picnic Area is by far the most eye-opening place I have seen where the seawall was pushed inland,” Keith said. Down the road, Ship Harbor Trail lost a lot of bog walk from out on the point, where the vigorous wave action broke it apart. “I found bog walk from the Ship Harbor Trail in the Seawall Picnic Area,” Keith said. “So that went out to sea around Wonderland and back onto the beach at Seawall Picnic Area.”

On the park portion of Little Cranberry Island, siding came off the Blue Duck—a former ship’s chandlery built in 1853 that currently serves as home to Islesford Boatworks—and there’s a hole in the building’s foundation.

The Otter Cove causeway has likely suffered structural damage, and the water line along the causeway was fully exposed and may also be damaged. “That’s all tangled up in ocean debris,” said Keith. “We won’t know if that water line is viable until we pressurize it, which we can’t do until winter’s near over.”

Park crews were out immediately following the storms to begin surveying and tracking the impact. In fact, they were out right after the winds calmed on January 10, and their efforts to shore up some areas likely prevented additional damage from the second storm a few days later.

Straight away, Keith said, crews were in the park assessing the damage and stabilizing the unstable. “You have to prioritize. What are you going to fix first? What’s most important? What has critical life, health, safety issues?”

But understanding the full breadth of the storms’ impacts will take time.

## WHAT NEXT?

“It’ll be weeks in terms of gathering all the data we need and then formalizing the plan for developing cost estimates, developing the GIS data and mapping data to show where the damage is, the quantity of damage, and materials costs,” Keith said. In some places, snow cover inhibits crews from seeing the scope of impact, so the true extent of damage won’t be completely understood until spring.

Following the assessment, Keith said, the park will connect with the regional and Washington offices of the National Park Service to devise a plan for addressing the damage. That may include assistance from trail crews from other national parks or outside incident management teams. There is also separate potential funding for federal roads. Those plans will begin to take shape in the months ahead.

## HOW TO REBUILD WITH THE FUTURE IN MIND

How does the park repair or rebuild in preparation for the unknown?

“We are having challenges predicting what the future climate scenarios are going to look like for wind, waves, rain, snow,” said Keith. “Our weather forecasters are challenged with this, too. We just have to roll with it and try to make smart decisions.”

Those smart decisions are born out of a framework Acadia uses known as Resist-Accept-Direct (RAD). This framework is designed to help resource managers consider different options in the face of a changing climate. Where does it make sense to “hold the line” and try to prevent change from happening? Where is it wise to accept those changes and let nature take its course? And where do they want to encourage things in a new direction?

**BELOW L-R:** Debris and sand washed over the road and into the parking lot at Seal Harbor Beach, located outside of Acadia National Park.

**OPPOSITE PAGE T-B:** The National Park Service has brought in engineers to help assess what is likely structural damage to the Otter Cove Causeway. • Keith Johnston, chief of facility management, Matt Outhier, chief of project management, Kevin Schneider, park superintendent, and Brandon Bies, deputy superintendent, survey damage to the Otter Cove Causeway. • The Blue Duck, built in 1853, sustained damage during the January storms.



“That’s a lot of what our work entails—trying to figure out what to do with limited park resources given these kinds of impacts going forward,” said Rebecca. “The response isn’t just one thing. We’re thinking across a really broad spectrum of potential responses, and that’s where the RAD approach is most useful.”

“Thunder Hole used to have a really nice granite facade on the exterior and every time a tiny storm hit, it’d knock all the granite off,” Keith said. “We found ourselves constantly patching masonry to keep that granite aesthetic. In the long run, we ended up removing all the aesthetic stones but putting reinforced concrete that’s tinted pink to match the landscape in its place. And we haven’t had to go back and repair that since.”

The January storms were much bigger, and the waves reached further onshore and undermined the top portion of the walkway at Thunder Hole. But areas with the modified concrete held up—an example of accepting change while improving resilience.

“The rebuild is gesturing to the recognition that this area has changed,” said Rebecca. “It’s not like we’re going to resist the change and make it look just the way it did in 1916. As we make decisions around rebuilding and rehabbing, there are also opportunities to consider whether there is something else we can do here that will also create a little more resiliency the next time.”

## CLIMATE-SMART RESTORATION IS THE WAY FORWARD

This approach is not necessarily new.

Friends of Acadia has partnered with the park and Schoodic Institute for more than a decade to help park ecosystems be resilient to the anticipated changes.

Thoughtful science, forward-thinking management, organizational collaboration, and strategic investments at Cadillac Mountain, Great Meadow Wetland, and Bass Harbor Marsh have positioned Acadia as a leader in climate-smart restoration. And with funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law last year, the work was scaled up for even greater impact.

“Dramatic weather events like those we have experienced this winter create great anxiety and sadness as we witness the damage and understand that we are vulnerable to nature’s fury,” said Stephanie Clement, Friends of Acadia’s vice president of conservation. “Acadia’s use of the RAD approach restores a semblance of control—that we can observe the changes happening here and work together toward desired future conditions.”

“The way I look at it, the park’s going to be here in 100 years, in 200 years, in 500 years,” said John Kelly, management assistant at Acadia National Park. “We don’t know what specific elements will be present, or what shape they’ll take. But if we continue to care for the park, it will be here.” ■

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





# THE FUTURE (Sea Level) IS HERE

DEC. 25  
2022

COURTESY CATHERINE SCHMITT/SCHOODIC INSTITUTE

BY CATHERINE SCHMITT

**W**ater levels at Bar Harbor reached a record height during high tide in a storm on January 10, and then again on January 13. These were the highest water levels recorded in Bar Harbor since the tide gauge was installed and monitoring began in 1947.

This was not unexpected. We've been paying close attention to tides, and working with the Mount Desert Island Historical Society and others to illustrate future sea levels. The idea is that by documenting the highest astronomical tides of the year, sometimes called "king tides," we can imagine the average tides of the future, identify vulnerable locations, and prepare.

We no longer need to imagine. The storm surge on January 10 raised the height of the sea four feet above the average high tide, or about the level predicted for sea level rise by the year 2100. Suddenly, it seems, the future is here.

But this is not the future we have been preparing for. Our sea level work began with a focus on Nor'easters, the winter storms with northeasterly winds that historically have been the most damaging to Acadia and other coastal parks in the region.

The recent storms, the second of which arrived at the same

time as a king tide, had southeasterly winds blowing directly at ocean-facing shorelines. Wind toppled trees and piled water into surging waves that eroded sand and pushed the cobble dunes known as "seawalls" onto roads and into the woods, creating new pathways for water to rush in.

Those January storms came in the wake of back-to-back storms in December that brought intense rain, wind, and flooding, all fueled by warmer air and water. Add more frequent and intense storms on top of a higher and more rapidly rising sea and, well, the future is here.

According to Peter Slovinsky of the Maine Geological Survey, mean sea level at Bar Harbor has been trending six to ten inches above the long-term average all year, setting records month after month. In part, this is because tide predictions are based on a 1991 average.

"At Bar Harbor, we've seen almost six inches of sea level rise since 1991. So this deviation automatically makes the observations slightly higher than the predictions," said Slovinsky, who noted that NOAA is working on updating their baseline. It also makes the storm surge seem greater than reality.



**JAN.13  
2024**

COURTESY STEVE BOUCHER

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Sand Beach after a nor'easter on December 23-24, 2022, which similarly eroded the beach, but not as severely as the January 2024 southeaster. **ABOVE:** High tide inundates the Sand Beach staircase in Acadia National Park during a winter storm in January 2024.

However, mean sea levels have been trending especially high in 2023, a phenomenon known as a "sea level anomaly." A similar anomaly last occurred in 2010. Then, sea levels were elevated all along the East Coast, and especially in the Gulf of Maine, and were eventually attributed to a combination of a slower Gulf Stream and atmospheric pressure systems that caused a steady flow of onshore winds, piling water toward the coast and setting up conditions for consecutive Nor'easters.

### **THE CURRENT PATTERN IS DIFFERENT, AND THE CAUSE IS STILL UNCLEAR.**

What is clear is a pattern of unpredictable and consequential weather. By repeatedly overwhelming waterways, flooding low-lying areas, re-shaping the shoreline, and uprooting trees, these storms have changed Acadia, a place that was originally protected so it wouldn't change. Today, the National Park Service recognizes that natural processes and species are evolving, and management policies allow for this ongoing change.

Staff at Acadia are still assessing the damage. Recovery will take months, and likely years.

In the meantime, because it is protected, Acadia is a place where we can study change, learning lessons that can be applied well beyond park boundaries. With Friends of Acadia, Schoodic Institute is helping the National Park Service make decisions about whether and how to resist, accept, or direct the impacts of the next storm.

Sea level data are informing models of potential response actions, which are in development by researchers at University of Rhode Island. We are collaborating with the park and partners to understand and monitor the health of Acadia's intertidal zone.

And our Coast Lines project to illustrate king tides and flood heights with the Mount Desert Island Historical Society and other community partners is inspiring conversations about how to live in a landscape of change. Because it won't be long until the record-high water levels of the future are here again. ■

CATHERINE SCHMITT is the Science Communication Specialist at Schoodic Institute.



# ACADIA IMPRESSIONS

## Howie Motenko Captures Acadia Using the Japanese Philosophy of Godai

BY JULIA WALKER THOMAS

**F**or photographer Howie Motenko, Acadia National Park is his backyard. Living in Seal Harbor with wife Brenda, they spend most of their spare time in the park.

"Being in the park takes me back to childhood—when you are a little kid, you want to go out and explore your backyard, looking for new ways to use your imagination," Motenko describes.

In the winter of 2021, Motenko was in search of inspiration and community. He found both in an online workshop that explored the Japanese philosophy of Godai through photography.

Rooted deeply in ancient Japanese thought and spirituality, Godai encapsulates a profound understanding of the fundamental elements that constitute the natural world and human existence. Derived from Buddhist and Shinto traditions, Godai represents the five elements—

### **Earth (Chi), Water (Sui), Fire (Ka), Wind (Fu), and Void (Ku)**

—each symbolizing distinct qualities and aspects of life, both tangible and intangible.

Motenko applied the philosophy to create a captivating look at Acadia National Park in winter by emphasizing the interplay of its elemental principles. The elements are present in their physical form not only in images, but they are also represented symbolically through the flow and balance running through each image.

Earth is symbolized by the tangible subjects and landscapes captured, grounding images in physical reality. Water is

evoked through the fluidity and emotional depth conveyed through compositions, reflecting the ever-changing nature of the visual appearance of the park. Fire is represented by dramatic contrasts to evoke emotion and intrigue. Wind is symbolized through movement, rhythm, flow, and submersion, guiding the viewer's eye and creating dynamic tension. Void, often associated with emptiness and space, is embraced through negative space, silence, and the unseen, allowing room for interpretation and contemplation.

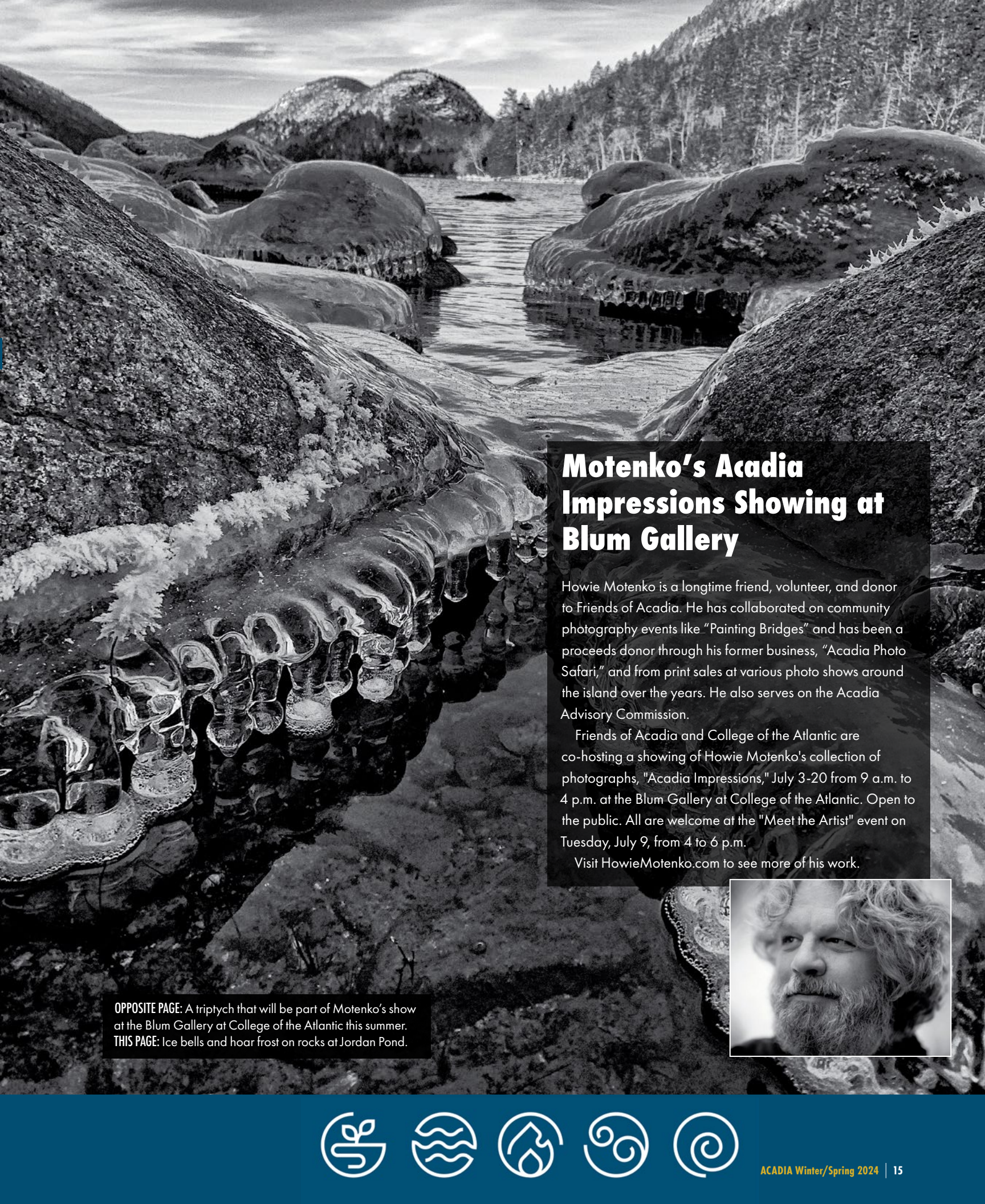
This summer, while attending a printing workshop, Motenko was inspired to find juxtaposition between his black and white Godai images to pair them as diptychs and triptychs.

"I paired photos that have similar feelings," he described. "Some shapes and flow reflect each other; others have similar textures and feelings." Playing in abstraction and realism, Motenko hopes to offer the viewer self-exploration and quiet contemplation about the park and their relationship with it.

By integrating the principles of Godai, he has cultivated a holistic and nuanced approach to capturing the park, exploring the elemental balance, harmony, and interconnectedness inherent in capturing moments frozen in time during Acadia's "quiet season."

"Like as a child, I still enjoy exploration," Motenko said. "Now, instead of just adventuring in Acadia, I am also thinking meditatively about what the feeling I get from the park means and how I can interpret it through the still image." ■

JULIA WALKER THOMAS is Friends of Acadia's Visual Storytelling and Creative Projects Manager.



## Motenko's Acadia Impressions Showing at Blum Gallery

Howie Motenko is a longtime friend, volunteer, and donor to Friends of Acadia. He has collaborated on community photography events like "Painting Bridges" and has been a proceeds donor through his former business, "Acadia Photo Safari," and from print sales at various photo shows around the island over the years. He also serves on the Acadia Advisory Commission.

Friends of Acadia and College of the Atlantic are co-hosting a showing of Howie Motenko's collection of photographs, "Acadia Impressions," July 3-20 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Blum Gallery at College of the Atlantic. Open to the public. All are welcome at the "Meet the Artist" event on Tuesday, July 9, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Visit [HowieMotenko.com](http://HowieMotenko.com) to see more of his work.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** A triptych that will be part of Motenko's show at the Blum Gallery at College of the Atlantic this summer.  
**THIS PAGE:** Ice bells and hoar frost on rocks at Jordan Pond.





WILL NEWTON/FOA

# WINTER'S WORK

## There's Plenty of Work Happening During Acadia's "Quiet Season."

BY SHANNON BRYAN

**T**he Hulls Cove Visitor Center is sound asleep, and the upcoming season's popovers are months away from rising at Jordan Pond House.

But despite the relative hush on the park's trails and carriage roads, there's plenty happening at the park in the winter. The "quiet season" is a time to get work done that's challenging to accomplish in the busier months, like tree cutting and equipment repairs. It's also when much of the recruitment and planning for the season ahead happens.

Plus, winter brings with it a host of its own needs: snow removal at park facilities, roads, and trailheads, and cleanup and repairs following winter storms (of which this winter's had more than its fair share).

"A lot of people think, 'it must be really easy for you in the wintertime, you don't have anything to do,'" said Kathy Grant, visitor experience operations lead at Acadia National Park. "It's still busy. It's just a different busy."

While the visitor center might not be swarming with enthusiastic park visitors, park guides are still dispensing guidance and answering questions that run the gamut. Only

this time of year, they're working out of the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce storefront in downtown Bar Harbor—space the chamber shares with the park in the winter season.

They help in-person visitors with tips for their winter visit, but the bulk of their visitor interactions are behind the scenes managing the park's incoming information communications: answering phones and responding to mail and emails.

"People call all winter long to have us help plan their vacations for summer," said Grant. "They ask questions about camping, park passes, and reservations." When a big storm hits, like the two in early January, the curious and concerned reach out about that, too.

The park's "snail mail" box is never empty, either.

"In the winter we get a lot of mail from schoolkids from all over the country working on projects with their class," Grant said. And good ol' Flat Stanley is still traveling the world—he visits the park often in winter—and it's a park guide who'll show him around and take his photo in a scenic place in the park.



**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Acadia National Park Trail Crew supervisor Chris Barter blows snow off a trail at Sieur de Monts to begin a project to re-route the trail due to erosion near the spring.

**TOP:** Flat Stanley poses in front of a snowy Eagle Lake.

**BOTTOM:** Jake McCamic, engineering equipment operator at Acadia National Park, works to clear and chip branches and trees at Blackwoods Campground.

## Staff Recruitment and Hiring

Winter is also seasonal staff recruitment time at Acadia. The process of hiring this coming peak season's contingent of park rangers, park guides, maintenance staff, and trails crew is in full swing by January.

As anyone who's ever been a part of a hiring process can attest, "there's a lot that goes into that process," said Grant. As she hires park guides and rangers for the Visitor Experience and Education Division, she begins with a robust list of candidates who've applied via [usajobs.gov](https://usajobs.gov) and already gone through the first round of vetting from the National Park Service. From those lists, which include hundreds of names, she'll fill 12-20 positions, depending on that year's budget. Getting there involves a host of email exchanges, interviews, and reference checks. And seasonal staff being able to secure housing is also a big part of the equation.

## Branching Out

Wintertime is when the park's tree-cutting crew, led by a staff arborist, removes hazard trees and trims overhanging branches.

Up until several years ago, tree cutting was done in warmer months, said Heather Cooney, administrative support clerk in the park's maintenance division. The work was moved to the winter to help protect the park's bat populations. Between May and mid-October, bats roost during the day in rock crevices, buildings, and—you guessed it—trees, where they'll tuck into small cavities or under loose bark. But they don't hibernate in trees during the winter.

Removing dead or dying trees that might pose a risk to a park visitor—or the spread of an invasive pest—is part of the regular rhythm of park maintenance. Another benefit to doing this work in the winter: the cutting crew is largely comprised of permanent employees with the right skills who work in other departments in the peak season, such as carriage roads and trails, and who'd normally be furloughed in the winter.

That's true for the crew that plows snow from the park roads that remain open in the winter, as well as facility and housing parking lots. "They have the skills—they're truck drivers and engineering equipment operators," said Cooney. "They're very valuable in the winter."

## Buildings

Acadia's buildings and utilities crew focuses on visitor-facing facilities in the summer months, but in the winter, they turn their attention to facilities like park housing. "It's hard to get in there and do anything substantial when people are living there,"



said Cooney. “Once our seasonal staff are out of the housing units, we can do more in-depth projects, like replace flooring or work on heating, lighting, electricity.”

While many of the park’s facilities were closed and winterized late last year, some buildings—like the Jordan Pond Gatehouse and Brown Mountain gatehouse—need to be heated all winter because of the historic nature of the buildings and materials.

And with so many historical structures and buildings within the park, extra care is taken whenever work is being done on those facilities.

“If we’re going to repair or replace anything, it must be done along strict rules,” said Cooney. “We work closely with the cultural resource program manager at Acadia.”

The list of projects is ongoing, and the wintertime allows for some of those projects to be tackled throughout the season. A couple of years ago, the crew restored a large window on the Islesford museum building. Another winter, they matched, ordered, and prepped clay tiles for the spring house at Sieur de Monts..

Among their many projects this year, the maintenance crew built new wooden picnic tables (the previous ones had metal frames, which filled with water and froze in the winter, damaging them).

“The park always has projects like that,” said Cooney. “We’ve always got roofs to replace, ditching that needs to be done. Cyclic stuff that we know needs to happen.”

Of course, when bad weather hits, all those project plans get put on hold.

“Everybody responds for a storm,” she said. “It’s all hands on deck.” ■

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



**TOP:** Acadia National Park ranger Alison Richardson clears trees and brush near Loop A at Blackwoods Campground.

**MIDDLE:** Jordan Pond Gate House.

**BOTTOM:** From Left: Darrell Hurd, Motor Vehicle Operator, Kyle Cipollone, Engineering Equipment Operator, Ron Hardison, Engineering Equipment Operator, and Chris Cipollone, Engineering Equipment Operator Lead, build picnic tables.



# Taking the Lead

## New Operators are Familiar Faces at Wildwood Stables

BY EARL BRECHLIN

**T**he new operators of Wildwood Stables in Acadia National Park are likely to be familiar faces to those who've enjoyed a horse-drawn carriage ride on the park's scenic carriage roads in the past.

James Bartick and Kari Goraj of Orland have worked at the stables previously. In December, their company, Acadia by Carriage, LLC, was awarded a 10-year concession contract by the National Park Service (NPS).

In a recent interview, the couple pledged to offer similar excursions and equestrian camping services, but to also bolster customer service with the ability to make online reservations and contact the business the telephone. "Having worked there before, we saw what worked and what didn't," Goraj explained. "We also want to make things a little greener."

Acadia by Carriage plans to purchase a plug-in electric utility vehicle for use on daily trips along the carriage roads to clean up any manure. She added they also hope to coordinate trip departure times with the Island Explorer shuttle bus system to make accessing the stables easier via that option.

The company will offer six daily trips in horse-drawn carriages along the park's historic network of gravel roads, which were built in the early years of the last century by Acadia's biggest benefactor, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Trips include viewing several of the system's unique and graceful granite arch bridges.

Although the stables currently have one carriage that can accommodate a wheelchair, Acadia by Carriage plans to purchase a second one that can handle two wheelchairs at once.

"It will allow for two at once and one of them can be by the driver," Goraj said.

The contract also includes management of the nine-site equestrian campground adjacent to the stables.

"The concession operations at Wildwood Stables provide impactful services for park visitors, providing visitors the opportunity to join a narrated horse-drawn carriage tour. The concession operations also provide equestrian services such as horse boarding," a NPS press release states. "The new concessioner was selected through a competitive selection process," it adds.

The previous stable operator was former Maine Attorney General Michael Carpenter of Houlton. In 2009 he formed Carriages of Acadia and operated Wildwood until last season. The stable concession contract was put out to bid in 2019 but



**TOP:** James Bartick, right, and Kari Goraj of Acadia by Carriage, LLC, are the new operators of Wildwood Stables. **BOTTOM:** Wildwood Stables.

an award was postponed due to the COVID epidemic, and Carriages of Acadia was granted extensions. The bid process was reopened last year.

"The current concession contractor, Carriages of Acadia, Inc., has provided outstanding service at Wildwood Stables since 2009. The NPS plans to work with both concessioners to ensure a smooth transition," the NPS release says.

Currently, Goraj and Bartick live off the grid in their homestead in Orland. Goraj's work with horses goes back more than three decades. "I guess I'm just guilty by association," Bartick joked. The couple have three horses of their own and plan to use their deep connections with farms throughout the northeast to source the even-tempered draft horses needed for the operations. ■

EARL BRECHLIN is a Registered Maine Guide, former journalist, and award-winning Maine author.

# The **POWER** of **VOLUNTEERS**



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

BY LYNN FANTOM

When Alan Rosenquist greets visitors to the Wild Gardens of Acadia, he says, “You have two choices. You can walk right through and see everything—all the plants are labeled—or I can give you the one- to two-minute overview.”

Just about everybody wants to hear his spiel, as the retired neuroscientist from Philadelphia describes it. So, standing beside a map, he continues, “If you don’t have the time or inclination to walk all the wonderful trails in Acadia National Park, you can get a good sense of the 13 key plant communities in the park by taking a leisurely stroll here through the Wild Gardens.”

Rosenquist’s ability to put people at ease and add a personal touch to a learning experience encapsulates the special power of volunteers.

As Friends of Acadia celebrates National Volunteer Week

(April 14-20), the spotlight is on those who freely give their time and talents not only to getting things done but also to helping people re-connect with nature—and each other.

Through an array of annual events, drop-in programs, and committees, “volunteers accomplish a huge amount that the park’s paid professional staff isn’t able to get to,” says Friends of Acadia Vice President of Conservation Stephanie Clement.

What’s more, their impact extends into the social realm. As technology today is redefining human connection, volunteers are bridging the isolation inflicted by social media and reclaiming conversation with questions as simple as, “Where are you from?”

## Membership Has Its Rewards

Jill and Todd Brown from Maryland volunteer at the membership table at the Jordan Pond House, where park

visitors can join or renew their membership in Friends of Acadia.

“The thing that I like best is talking to people about their love for the park and finding out what motivates new visitors to come and what they’re interested in,” says Jill, who began volunteering in 2013 when her son was working for the Acadia Youth Conservation Corps.

The Browns started spending time in Acadia when their boys, now in their twenties, were five and seven. “We kind of raised our kids on MDI, so we have suggestions for families with younger children, middle schoolers, high schoolers, adult children,” says Jill.

Her husband Todd began volunteering himself last summer and also enjoys talking to people. “You’ve got that instant connection with people at a very uncomplicated level, which is really just about the beauty of the place,” he says.

### Keeping Things Going and Growing

“Even with the incredible diversity of our visitors, we’re part of the same club—people really interested in plants and the natural environment,” says Rosenquist, now a Southwest Harbor resident who began volunteering at the Wild Gardens of Acadia about eight years ago.

“What probably means the most to me is to see kids who aren’t walking around like zombies with an iPhone but are really engaged and want to go see the carnivorous plant or the frogs in the pond,” he adds.

Created in 1961, the gardens showcase 400 plant species, all indigenous, displayed in habitats that represent Acadia’s plant communities such as mountain, heath, seaside, and coniferous forest. A group of volunteers, joined by two Friends of Acadia staff, “keeps the garden going and growing,” Rosenquist notes.

“And we see our visitors extremely engaged, from the young to the old. The garden is nice and shady, a very calm, relaxing place. People like being there.

“For me, meeting people from all over the country—really all over the world—is fun,” he continues. “You can tell when people want to talk and linger. It’s fun to engage and make them feel like a person, like a valued visitor.”

### New Experiences

“I also really enjoy meeting other volunteers—there’s such an interesting array of people from so many different places,” says

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Volunteer Group Leaders Doug and Becky Heden carry leaves off the carriage road during the 2023 Take Pride in Acadia Day in Acadia National Park.

**RIGHT T-B:** Wild Gardens of Acadia Volunteer Alan Rosenquist • Membership Table Volunteers Todd and Jill Brown • Stewardship Volunteer Rachel Faith (center in purple) poses for a photo with other stewardship volunteers and crew leaders after a cleanup on Isle au Haut last summer.



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA



COURTESY THE BROWNS



NIKKI BURKIS/FOA



ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

**ABOVE T-B:** Sierra Sheehan (left), 10, and Caroline van Dongen, 10, of Girl Scout Troop 760, work to collect trash from the side of the road during Friends of Acadia's Earth Day Roadside Cleanup in 2022 • Members of the Kappa Alpha Kappa Sorority at the University of Maine Machias stop for a photo during the 2023 Take Pride in Acadia Day.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Acadia National Park Volunteer Coordinator Dianna Sproul and Friends of Acadia Stewardship Coordinator Nikki Burtis keep things running smoothly at Park Headquarters during the 2023 Take Pride in Acadia Day.

Rachel Faith. Last summer she was a regular at Friends of Acadia's Drop-in Stewardship Volunteer Program, which helps maintain Acadia's carriage roads and trails.

"I learned a lot about trimming brush and the best way to go about it, considering both hikers and the plants themselves. I helped build a split-rail fence, which was a new experience for me," says Faith, who is a freelance translator.

A Maine native, she grew up enjoying Acadia with family and friends. "I love the opportunity to explore the park while helping to maintain it. I was able to leave the trails and paths definitively better than I found them," she says.

"And I'm glad I can help Acadia mitigate some of the erosion and damage caused by the new severe weather events we've been experiencing," she says, adding, "I also love that some of the work we do in the park helps make it more physically accessible to a broader range of people."

## Giving Back

"People want to give back to this park, whether by financial contributions, specific talents, or donating volunteer time," says Clement. "The beauty is that Friends of Acadia is able to facilitate that."

In 2023, volunteers dedicated 9,458 hours to Friends of Acadia, which was founded as a volunteer-powered organization in 1986. Those hours included time spent volunteering in the park and in Friends of Acadia's Bar Harbor office, performing essential duties such as assisting with mailings and assembling membership packets.

Friends of Acadia offers a depth and breadth of volunteer programs in partnership with Acadia National Park, emphasizes Lori Schaefer, who oversees communications and marketing. Two big annual ones have now become Friends of Acadia signature events: welcoming spring with the Earth Day Roadside Cleanup in April and helping to prepare the park for its winter rest with the Take Pride in Acadia Day in November.

The park itself also offers direct volunteer opportunities, both short- and long-term. (See sidebar on page 23.) But whether through Friends of Acadia or the National Park Service, volunteers make a big difference.

Says Dianna Sproul, Volunteer Coordinator of Acadia National Park, "These people are stewardship actualized. They're conservation in action. They represent not only tangible benefits to the park through the work they do, but they pass on the message of stewardship and inspire others."

For more information about Friends of Acadia volunteer programs, visit [friendsofacadia.org](https://friendsofacadia.org) and click on the Volunteer tab. ■

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



## ACADIA NATIONAL PARK *Volunteer Opportunities*

Acadia National Park offers many direct volunteer opportunities in addition to its partnership programs with Friends of Acadia. For the latest information, visit the park website and click on Get Involved, Volunteer. Here's a brief overview of some of those opportunities.

### What's New?

Acadia is on the lookout for photographers, performers, and artists who are interested in donating their time and talent towards preservation efforts and enhanced visitor understanding of this special place. We welcome any amount of time you are interested in donating, whether that is an hour, a day, or a week!

A new historic preservation volunteer program is starting this spring: "The Plaque Preservationists". Acadia is recruiting four local volunteers, who are willing to commit two years to the program and assist with the cyclical maintenance and preservation of our historic bronze and stone plaques in the park.

If you are interested, email [volunteeracadia@nps.gov](mailto:volunteeracadia@nps.gov), or call (207)288-8716.

### Help Us Spread the Word

During the month of August, on [volunteer.gov](http://volunteer.gov), the park will be recruiting and accepting applications for all 2025 seasonal volunteer positions. This includes:

- **Campground Hosts**
- **Bass Harbor Head Light Volunteers**
- **Visitor Services Volunteers**
- **Education Volunteers**

To learn more about these positions, other opportunities, and our volunteer impact, please visit: [www.nps.gov/acad/getinvolved/volunteer.htm](http://www.nps.gov/acad/getinvolved/volunteer.htm)

# Soil *at* Work

Restoration has begun on Sargent and Penobscot Mountains thanks to volunteers who hiked up a critical component: *the* SOIL.

BY LAUREN GIBSON

On a bright and sunny day last June, 72 volunteers hiked to the tops of Sargent and Penobscot Mountains in Acadia National Park with bags of soil in their backpacks. By the end of the day, they'd carried up 1,500 pounds of soil, dropping them off at piles on each summit.

Those volunteers were taking part in the first-ever Save our Summits event, hosted by Friends of Acadia, Acadia National Park, and Schoodic Institute. And that soil had an important role to play in vegetation restoration on the summits.

Perhaps you carried soil that day. Perhaps you've been wondering what happened to that 5, 10, or 15-pound bag of soil you carried. Well, it's currently hard at work.

Jesse Wheeler, vegetation program manager for Acadia National Park, and Chris Nadeau, climate change adaptation scientist at Schoodic Institute, had a plan for that soil even before it ever made it to the top of the mountains.

Summit restoration has been taking place on nearby Cadillac Mountain as part of phase one of active restoration, and Acadia's Resource Management Team and partners were ready to implement active summit restoration in new areas. The only problem was how to get enough soil up to sites that don't have roads going straight to them (as Cadillac Mountain does). That's where volunteers from the Save our Summits event and subsequent volunteer groups throughout the summer helped. All in, a total of 3,765 pounds of soil was carried through people-power to the mountain tops last year.

Once scientists knew the exact amount of soil that was ready to be used for summit restoration, they put their plan into action and mapped out the precise locations for the restoration plots. The restoration team decided to focus efforts on social trails—footpaths off official trails that are formed over time by errant hikers.

When choosing which particular social trails to utilize, they selected areas that were non-sloping (to prevent erosion) and were absent of most vegetation—but did have vegetation adjacent to them (to hold soil in and encourage existing vegetation to spread into the restoration plot).

The team turned 29 social trails into restoration plots last fall: 19 on Sargent and 10 on Penobscot.

Applying learnings gathered from phase one (namely that soil, erosion fabric, and time are all restoration essentials), scientists and research technicians went to work. They started by spreading 4 cm of soil over the social trails. After that, half of the plots were seeded—seed was broadcast over the soil—and half were not. Time will tell whether those plots will be seeded naturally.

If results show there is no difference between the plots, and thus seeding is not required, this will greatly reduce the cost of future restoration. A biodegradable erosion fabric was placed on top and held in place using stakes and burlap bags. Now, we all optimistically watch as nature takes over and monitoring begins.



SAM MALLON/FOA  
EDWARD MUENNICH/FOA





EDWARD MUENICH/FOA  
SAM MALLON/FOA

### What does success look like for these newly established plots?

“We’re partly there!” said Nadeau. “Hundreds of volunteers moved soil to the summit and we’re thankful for that.”

He’s hopeful that, as these sites are monitored over time, vegetation will become established, grow, and spread, preventing further soil erosion. He’s also excited to be able to share these restoration techniques with others. While Acadia is not alone in seeing vegetation disappear from summits, learning-based summit restoration is not happening elsewhere, according to Nadeau.

Climate change isn’t the only challenge scientists face when attempting to keep—and restore—vegetation on summits. Fewer than 24 hours after restoration plots were established on Sargent Mountain, a footprint was observed in one. People,

their behavior, and how they interact with these plots will also determine their success.

“Will people understand what these plots are, why they are here, and will they respect them?” Wheeler wonders. “Our job now is to communicate responsible stewardship on this landscape.”

It’s imperative to observe Leave No Trace principles—follow official trails and walk only on bedrock (do the rock walk!)—when experiencing Acadia’s summits.

What does the future look like for this learning-based restoration project? Only time will tell.

Stay tuned as we watch what this soil can really do. ■

LAUREN GIBSON is Friends of Acadia's Wild Acadia Coordinator.

**OPPOSITE PAGE L-R:** Heidi Serman, left, Acadia's volunteer program assistant, and Molly Bogner, right, Friends of Acadia Summit Steward, organize bags of soil. • Soil and protective signs along plots on Penobscot Mountain.

**ABOVE L-R:** Emma Lanning, Acadia National Park biological science technician, and Beth Jaufmann, Student Conservation Association intern, place burlap over a freshly restored plot on Sargent Mountain. • Chris Nadeau, climate adaptation scientist at the Schoodic Institute, drops off a bag of soil at the summit of Sargent Mountain.

**BELOW L-R:** Jesse Wheeler, Acadia National Park vegetation program manager, and Lundy Stowe, biological science technician, measure and map areas of erosion on Sargent Mountain. • NPS and Schoodic Institute staff, and NPS Academy Intern Geondica Stryker, pose for a photo after mapping areas of erosion on Sargent Mountain.



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA

JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOA



# CREATING Co-Stewardship

## Gathering with Wabanaki Nations

WILL NEWTON/FOA

BY REBECCA COLE-WILL

In late December 2023, Acadia National Park marked a milestone for ongoing work with the Wabanaki Nations.

We began a formal planning process for an Environmental Assessment (EA) for plant gathering within Acadia National Park. This step marked the “end” of the first phase of work that began in 2015.

The Plant Gathering Rule in the federal code of regulations for the National Park Service (NPS), 36 CFR 2.6, was finalized in 2016. It marked an effort by the NPS to address the issue of Tribal access and rights to gatherer plants and plant parts in national parks. At Acadia, for example, existing regulations do not allow for any plant gathering. Anyone can pick a few blueberries and apples, but no one is allowed to gather any plants, hunt, or any other consumptive activity.

The Plant Gathering regulation has four basic steps. Federally recognized Tribes with affiliation to a national park may request to gather. They are required to provide information about the plants they wish to gather and for what purpose they would use the plant within a traditional cultural context.

The park superintendent, through consultation, would

then begin a process to “negotiate” an agreement that would identify the plants, the areas within the park where gathering would occur, how much would be gathered, the season of gathering, and who the Tribal members would be. The park

must use that information and other data to conduct an analysis of the potential impact of the activity on park resources, following National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations. If there is a “finding of no significant impact” (FONSI), the regional director of the NPS signs off on the proposed activity, and the superintendent can then issue a Special Use Permit to the Tribe who would then issue permits to their citizens.

If this process sounds burdensome and problematic, it is. To date, only three parks have completed agreements with affiliated Tribes. Currently, NPS is consulting with Tribes to understand the barriers and address them.

At Acadia, we began consultations with the Wabanaki Tribes in 2012 and received funding to begin research in 2015, even before the new rule was promulgated. When we first asked, “What plants would be of interest to you in Acadia?,” a common answer was: “How would we know? We have been excluded

**Listening to the Wabanaki, they quickly learned that sweetgrass is a plant of great cultural significance and concern. Since it grows in salt marshes along the coast, Acadia might be a place where it would be important.**

from this homeland territory for a hundred years or more!”

On the recommendation of Shari Venno, environmental planner for the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Dr. Michelle Baumflek, now a research scientist with the US Forest Service, came on as principal investigator. Michelle quickly enlisted Suzanne Greenlaw, then a PhD candidate in Forestry at the University of Maine and a Maliseet citizen, to co-lead the work with her. Both Michelle and Suzanne had experience working with the Tribes on research about culturally significant plants.

Listening to Wabanaki representatives, they quickly learned that sweetgrass is a plant of great cultural significance and concern. Since it grows in salt marshes along the coast, Acadia might be a place where it would be important.

All along the coast of Maine, Wabanaki people have been excluded from access to traditional harvesting locations. The coast is largely now private property. Wabanaki tell of traumatic encounters with landowners who have threatened them with guns and dogs and denied access. So, the opportunity to have safe access and gathering rights within Acadia is significant.

A botanical survey by Glen Mittelhauser documented that sweetgrass was present in several park salt marshes. He developed a monitoring plan adopted from standard botanical surveys to assess abundance and distribution. Gatherers were asked to harvest in plots along predefined transects that would be monitored after harvest. Control plots would be left unharvested as a comparison. What Suzanne and Michelle quickly learned from the gatherers, however, was that plant gathering doesn't work that way.

Gatherers, with generations of knowledge about the plant, salt marshes, and the cultural act of gathering, have a deep understanding of how, when, and where to harvest. Plant gathering is rooted in culture. We needed to figure out a whole new methodology that prioritized Indigenous knowledge and how to integrate that with Western science.

Suzanne and Michelle did just that. Working closely with the advisory group of gatherers, they “let” them choose preferred locations for harvesting and used semi-structured interviews to learn about individual preferences for harvesting, location, the length of grass they chose, and the many meanings and significance of gathering. This approach underscored that harvesting is good both for the sweetgrass and for people.

The gatherers are the experts and make decisions about the research agenda. Dr. Jane Anderson worked with us to co-create a statement of rights—Sweetgrass Cultural Protocol: Advice for Good Relations with a Culturally Significant Relative and a documentary film is in development that features the voices and stories of gatherers.

Acadia and the Wabanaki Nations have worked together now for eight years. The end of one phase of the “project” is leading into the next, where integration of Indigenous knowledge and collaboration with Wabanaki experts is the way we always work to expand the meaning and practice of co-stewardship in Acadia National Park. ■

REBECCA COLE-WILL is the Chief of Resource Management for Acadia National Park.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** A member of the Wabanaki Tribes harvests sweetgrass in Acadia.

**BELOW:** Suzanne Greenlaw (left) and Michelle Baumflek harvesting sweetgrass.



# SEIZE the Ski

Sporadic snowfall in recent years means cross-country skiers need to **CARPE SKI** on Acadia's carriage roads.

BY SHANNON BRYAN

Snow days are rare gifts when we're kids. The magical lure of foot-deep snow drifts and the blissfully insulated outdoors—no pop quizzes or homework in sight—is a winter-long fantasy.

For cross-country skiers on Mount Desert Island, the longing for snow still feels just like that.

It's no wonder; skiing Acadia National Park's carriage roads is a unique winter's delight for many locals and park visitors. So, when the forecast teases incoming snow, skiers get understandably eager.

But recent winters look a little different than many of us remember. Cold temperatures are slower to arrive, snowfall is more sporadic and often followed by rain and warmer temps. Good snow days aren't a sure thing, which means we've got to seize the skiing while we can.

"We have visited Acadia for many years, and it was a bucket list item to be able to ski on the carriage roads," said visitor Jen Grant, who finally got her chance a couple winters back. "The timing and weather made for a magical experience."

"We love it there. We go every chance we get, but that dang work thing gets in the way sometimes," joked Tony McChesney. "So fortunate to live only a 45-minute drive from the park."

The carriage roads welcome winter revelers of all varieties—permitted recreational uses include walking, running, bicycling, snowshoeing, and skiing—but skiers are especially lucky in Acadia National Park. When conditions are right, portions of the park's carriage roads are groomed by National Park Service volunteers from the Acadia Winter Trails Association (AWTA).

The AWTA was started by a small group of local skiers in the late 1980s who groomed the carriage roads with creative homemade setups like bed springs and cinder blocks. In 1990, the AWTA formally partnered with Friends of Acadia, who provided financial and fundraising assistance, and

Acadia National Park, who provided maintenance and other support. Gradually, those homemade rigs were replaced with specialized equipment.

The program was further bolstered in 2005 when the family of Elizabeth R. "Leila" Bright established an equipment fund and an endowment in her memory. Leila loved skiing in Acadia, and those funds enable the purchase and maintenance of grooming equipment, fuel, volunteer and staff training and support, and other needs—in perpetuity.

Today, the AWTA boasts eight active volunteers. When the snow falls and conditions are right, they'll spend hours grooming the trails, often in the dark hours of night, taking full advantage of Mount Desert Island's unpredictable snow season.

This volunteer effort is something all cross-country skiers can enjoy in Acadia. And while appreciation and eagerness abound every time the forecast hints at snow, there are some requirements before grooming can begin.

Volunteers can groom the carriage roads if new snow exceeds six inches, and the roadbed is frozen (meaning at least five days of freezing temperatures). Grooming must be done at times that are both convenient and safe, too.

This approach helps ensure the carriage roads remain in top-notch condition, since shallow snow depth and warmer weather/wet conditions soften the carriage roads and make them susceptible to damage. That said, when the temperature is too warm or the snow depth doesn't reach six inches, skiers are always welcome to set their own tracks.

And in years where snow days are rare, we'll seize the snow when it's here. ■

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

# Readers Share Their SKIING EXPERIENCES



**"MY WIFE SHARON AND I HAVE VISITED ACADIA IN WINTER FOUR TIMES SINCE 2019 AND WE'VE BEEN LUCKY TO HAVE HAD GOOD SKI CONDITIONS THREE TIMES.** In March 2023 we arrived to great snow...After a few days of great skiing...a storm that night wasn't expected to hit MDI so when we woke up the next day to almost six inches of snow we were very excited. We decided to be adventurous and ski the east side of Eagle Lake. It was wild!"  
– Scot Holt



**"IN ADDITION TO MANY SPRING, SUMMER AND FALL TRIPS TO ACADIA WE HEAD THERE EACH WINTER TO SKI THE CARRIAGE ROADS.** There is nothing better than to be out in the winter beauty that only Acadia offers."  
– Linda Simonsen



**"IN THE LAST DECADE OR TWO, THE GROOMING HAS BEEN JUST FANTASTIC.** Thank you to all the volunteers. Twenty-five years ago, pre-organized grooming there were two private snowmobiles. When the snow turned icy we would drag a set of bed springs with yours truly and a few cinder blocks riding on the bed spring for 'drag.'" – Charles Wray  
(PHOTO CREDIT: ASHLEY L. CONTI/FOA)



**"I ADORE SKIING IN ACADIA AND I LOVE WINTER BIKING THERE AS WELL."**  
– Fred Harris

**"YOU NEED TO GO SKI WHEN THE SNOWFALL GIVES US AN OPPORTUNITY** because it is too short lived. It's one of my favorite things to do in the winter that I look forward to. Thanks to all the volunteers who make and maintain the ski trails."  
– Tim Lounder



**"WE GOT LUCKY DURING OUR VISIT LAST WINTER AND BROUGHT OUR XC SKIS!** Been to Acadia many times but this was our first time on skis in the park! Hoping for some more snow for our visit next month!" – Amy Braham



**"ACADIA CERTAINLY OFFERS SOME OF THE BEST SKIING EXPERIENCES I HAVE FOUND ANYWHERE.** I have been a Nordic skier for 50 years. I have skied from Maine to California and in many parts of the U.S. Acadia National Park is definitely on the top of the list."  
– Michael Lessard



# Research Explores Potential Roadblocks to Use of the Island Explorer Bus Service

## Majority of First-Time Park Visitors are Unfamiliar with the Island Explorer

BY LAUREL SHANKS

**F**or nearly 25 years, the Island Explorer bus service has served Acadia's visitors and surrounding communities by providing high-quality, fare-free public transportation around Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula.

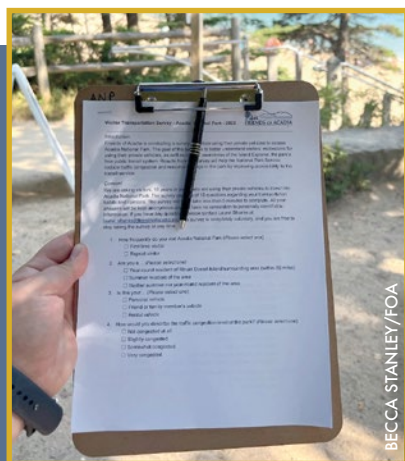
Developed as a response to increasing traffic and parking congestion, the Island Explorer has played a key role in reducing air pollution, mitigating traffic congestion, and improving visitors' overall experiences.

Since its launch in 1999, more than nine million visitors have relied on the Island Explorer to access the park leading

to a record-high annual ridership of 647,000 in 2019.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent suspension of the bus service in 2020 interrupted this trend. Ridership has yet to rebound to pre-pandemic levels even two years after the Island Explorer resumed its full service, and a greater proportion of park visitors are now driving their personal vehicles into the park instead.

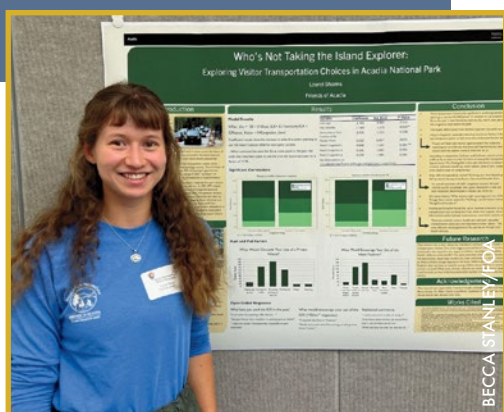
Acadia wanted to better understand the decline in ridership and explore potential roadblocks to Island Explorer use.



BECCA STANLEY/FOA



BECCA STANLEY/FOA



BECCA STANLEY/FOA

**OPPOSITE PAGE TOP:** Theresa and her daughter Mercy, of Virginia, ride the Island Explorer shuttle from the Halls Cove Visitor Center to Sand Beach.

**OPPOSITE PAGE L-R:** Sisters Jubilee, left, and Mercy, of Virginia, wait with their family for the Island Explorer shuttle at the Halls Cove Visitor Center. • Island Explorer shuttle leaves the Jordan Pond House after picking up visitors.

**ABOVE T-B:** Island Explorer survey and research conducted by Recreation Technician Laurel Shanks during the 2023 season. • Shanks checks a trail counter. • Shanks presents her findings at the Science Symposium.

## Surveying Visitors Arriving in Cars

As Friends of Acadia's Seasonal Recreation Technician, I designed and administered a survey to Acadia visitors arriving in vehicles at 10 locations throughout the park in August 2023. There were 119 total responses to the one-month study, and visitors were asked a variety of questions about their transportation decision-making and potential barriers to Island Explorer bus use.

The survey results revealed a considerable knowledge and usage gap, especially among first-time park visitors who learned about the bus service too late in their trips—or not at all. More than 80 percent of first-time park visitors rated themselves “unfamiliar” with the Island Explorer fare-free bus service, and 30 percent had never heard of the Island Explorer before taking the survey.

The survey also found that familiarity with the Island Explorer was a significant factor in determining whether a visitor was likely to use the service in the future. Visitors frequently remarked that they did not feel confident enough to use the bus service on their trips.

To that end, several visitors surveyed reported being “stranded” in the park without transportation. This could indicate that better signage, wider publication of the bus schedule, and other user-focused tools might be necessary to boost comfort and trust with the bus service.

Many visitors lacked awareness of the park's traffic congestion and consequently struggled to make informed transportation decisions. First-time visitors were both less likely to rate the park as “congested” and less likely to plan on using the Island Explorer bus service.

On the other hand, those visitors who viewed the park as more congested also stated that they have often used the bus to avoid that congestion.

Finally, several factors related to bus operations, such as long travel time and indirect routes, can prevent access to the Island Explorer, especially for families traveling with young children or the many visitors who generally feel pressured to make the most of their limited vacation time. Reducing the wait time associated with using the bus was the most highly valued factor amongst the surveyed population.

Overall, this research underlines the critical role of knowledge and experience in helping visitors make informed transportation choices. It offers a foundation to better understand Acadia's visitors – and how the Island Explorer can best help them enjoy Acadia. ■

LAUREL SHANKS was a 2023 Recreation Technician with Friends of Acadia. Her study aimed to enhance knowledge of the public transportation behaviors of Acadia visitors, particularly in the context of constructing the Acadia Gateway Center, which is expected to open May 2025. The full report can be found at [irma.nps.gov](http://irma.nps.gov).

# FRONT & CENTER

*In this series, we're spotlighting the talented and dedicated staff of Acadia National Park who deliver an incredible visitor experience day after day. Whether working directly with park visitors or behind the scenes, seasonally or year-round, these are the people who make the park hum. They work hard and wear many hats, keeping the park in incredible shape, keeping park visitors safe, and rising to the occasion as visitation has reached peak levels in recent years. We at Friends of Acadia appreciate them and the work they do. Thank you!*



## MEET BRITTANY ASHCRAFT ACADIA NATIONAL PARK PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCHER

BY SHANNON BRYAN

Every time she answers the phone, Acadia National Park public safety dispatcher Brittany Ashcraft is ready to help whoever might be on the other end.

It could be a park visitor who's absent-mindedly locked themselves out of their car. Or it could be a hiker whose partner has just suffered a serious injury on a trail.

With every call, Brittany becomes a critical connection between a caller who needs help and the park resources that can provide it.

"I receive calls for service," she said. "Somebody calls me and says, 'Hey, I've got this going on,' and I work through the specifics of that call. What is it they need? What is the nature of the call? And then I dispatch the responders."

Most calls are low level—a park visitor who misplaced their cell phone while enjoying the views from Dorr Mountain or a person who got separated from the rest of their family while exploring around Jordan Pond and needs help reuniting with them.

But sometimes the calls are high intensity. Those calls include fatalities, traumatic injuries, motor vehicle accidents, and callers who might be suicidal. The callers may be highly stressed, and the situation is urgent. Dispatchers like Brittany need to quickly ascertain crucial information and dispatch the appropriate help.

"You never know what the next call is going to be,"

Brittany said. "As a dispatcher, maintaining a readiness to respond is key because you never know if that next call is going to be a lockout or a traumatic injury."

Dispatchers also need to be able to multitask efficiently, she said. "We use various computer programs and mapping systems to work through calls," she said. "We have an interagency communications channel that we're talking on, and we work very collaboratively and closely with other outside responders."

"At any given point, we've got all these various computer systems open, and we're working through all these different programs to manage whatever that specific call is."

It's a lot to navigate all at once, but it's a role Brittany's proud to be in.

"As a first responder, my whole modus operandi is just trying to do good and to help," she said. And working for the National Park Service had been a lifelong goal.

Brittany grew up just outside Indiana Dunes National Park in Northwest Indiana, where she made memories in the woods behind her parents' house and learned about dune ecology from an NPS ranger. But life first led her into hospitality, where she worked for nearly a decade before deciding to pursue a path toward the National Park Service.

She first worked for the Cincinnati Park Board, then in

June 2021 was hired as a seasonal dispatcher at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. “I instantly fell in love with that job and with everybody there,” she said. “And the culture of the National Park Service—I was just absolutely blown away.”

Brittany landed in Acadia in the fall of 2021 in a permanent position. Since then, she’s helped people in ways that reach well beyond her role as dispatcher.

She’s one of Acadia’s wellness coordinators, helping connect park employees to wellness resources, as well as a peer-support specialist, part of an NPS-wide team whose purpose is to provide support to NPS peers experiencing a personal emergency.

For her, there’s a key skill necessary to assisting those who need help.

“This job is all about compassion,” she said.

“Understanding that we are in the business of interacting with other humans who are potentially going through one of their worst and darkest moments.”

If a caller is panicking or in a lot of pain, Brittany’s aim is to calm them. “Whether they’re lost or injured, I try to create that sense of confidence. I’m on this phone with them right now and we are here together, and we are going to work through this.”

In several cases, Brittany’s been able to walk out a lost hiker over the phone (editor’s note: many areas of Acadia do not have cell coverage, so visitors shouldn’t rely on their phones). That’s a testament to Brittany’s dedication to her role. When she first came to Acadia, she made a point of learning the park’s layout and trail system by studying maps and getting out into the park and experiencing it herself.

“That’s one thing that I say when I’m training new dispatchers: You’ve got to know your park, you’ve got to get out, see it, and know what its challenges are,” she said.

Sometimes, she’s able to provide more critical assistance.

“I am a certified emergency medical dispatcher, which means I can provide life-saving instructions over the phone to callers, such as CPR. I will be teaching CPR to park staff this spring,” she said.

Emergency medical dispatchers also provide instructions on how to recognize signs of a stroke, deploy aspirin for suspected heart attacks, epinephrine for severe allergic reactions, and naloxone in the event on a suspected overdose. In rare cases, they can instruct the caller on how to deliver a baby.

Whatever the need, Acadia’s dispatchers will answer the call.

“We’re the calm voice on the other end of the line to get you through arguably what might be the hardest day in your life,” Brittany said. “So that’s what we’re here to do.” ■

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

## 3 WAYS PARK VISITORS CAN EASE THE BURDEN ON HARDWORKING PARK STAFF

### 1 Do Your Research and Know Your Limits

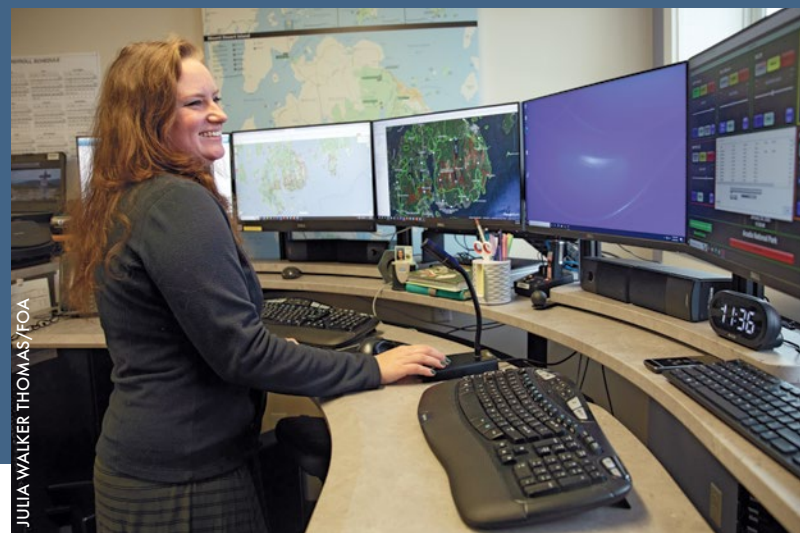
If there are trails you want to explore, research their ruggedness and elevation gain before you go (apps like AllTrails are helpful for this). Many trails in Acadia feature boulders and terrain that requires specific footwear or traction and are more hazardous in certain conditions.

### 2 Always Have a Map

Have a paper map on hand to help you navigate the trails or figure out where you are should you discover you’re lost. Many areas of Acadia don’t have cell service, so a paper map will help you find your way.

### 3 Tell Someone Where You’re Going

Communicate with a friend or family member where you’re going and when you plan to be back. If you don’t turn up, they’ll be able to reach out to responders for help and the responders will know where to look for you. Have a plan for your hiking group, too. If someone gets separated, have a plan on where to meet up.



PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCHER BRITTANY ASHCRAFT in the dispatch office at Acadia National Park headquarters.

# Anatomy of a Government Shutdown

## The Disruptive Effects of Up-to-the-Deadline Budgeting



WILL NEWTON/FOA

BY STEPHANIE CLEMENT

**M**any of us raised in the 1970s think fondly of the Schoolhouse Rock animated short educational videos that aired during Saturday morning cartoons. A favorite was the song “I’m just a bill,” where a scroll of paper—a bill—is discovered on the steps of the Capitol, and he relates to a young person the process by which a bill becomes a law.

While the process remains the same, perhaps we need a more nuanced version of the song to teach kids about the modern realities of continuing resolutions, government shutdowns, and political wrangling.

Congress has until October 1, the beginning of the new fiscal year (FY), to pass appropriations bills that fund federal agencies. If they don’t make the deadline, federal agencies that are not funded will shut down. Alternatively, Congress can pass a continuing resolution (CR) specifying agency activities that are funded, the length of time for which the CR applies, and the rates or funding levels at which agencies can spend.

According to the Congressional Research Service, there have only been three years since FY 1977 where Congress and the President have successfully managed to pass and approve all appropriations bills.

Continuing resolutions seem to be the new normal. Negotiations among lawmakers about appropriations bills or the details of CRs frequently carry right up to the deadline

for funding to run out, causing great disruption of agency activities, including at Acadia and other national parks, as employees prepare for potential shutdowns.

### What Happens at the Park When the Government Shuts Down?

Just days before each shutdown, park superintendents and senior managers must decipher national guidance or “contingency plans,” make decisions at the local level about which staff will be asked to continue working, and communicate with partners, contractors, and the visiting public what to expect.

Park staff are given just a few hours to wrap up their job duties, sign off from e-mail, and then face an uncertain time without a paycheck. The only good news is that under the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-1), they must be paid in full once the shutdown concludes, but that also creates inequities, as some employees worked during the shutdown and others were sent home.

Government shutdowns can have negative effects on facilities, research projects, hiring, and contracts. Water leaks or building damage may not be noticed as quickly if staff are not working. Field work ceases, which is especially difficult for research projects with specific research windows. Hiring is delayed, which can create challenges for parks in preparing

for their busy visitor seasons. The issuance of contracts is also stopped, which causes delays in on-the-ground projects, perhaps leading to more deferred maintenance. And when the shutdown concludes, it takes time for staff to re-engage with work, reschedule meetings, pay the bills, and assess new funding levels/budgets.

## Timing of the Shutdown Can Make It Extra Challenging

Federal contingency plans for government shutdowns may be updated periodically as administrations in Washington change. The contingency plan released last fall prior to the potential October 1 shutdown was concerning to Friends of Acadia because it requested that areas such as roads, campgrounds, and trails that are generally not closed overnight be left open and accessible to the public.

Also, concessions and commercial services in leased facilities that did not require NPS resources to operate would have continued. A porous park like Acadia, with many entrances and exits, would have essentially been required to remain open, but with only a skeleton staff for the provision of critical health and safety purposes.

Visitation would have continued at great rates, but with no visitor information services, fee collection, traffic management, or natural and cultural resource protection.

Friends of Acadia reached out to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland to share our thoughts and recommend changes. We shared that we thought it was unfair that commercial services would likely have continued in the park, but partners such as the Schoodic Institute and Downeast Transportation might have to close because they operate under cooperative agreements and receive funding from the National Park Service.

Middle-school children would have been denied their multi-day, in-depth outdoor education experiences taught by NPS rangers at the Schoodic Education Adventure, but tourists would have been allowed to continue recreating unabated. We supported the idea that park partners (e.g. states or non-profits) could keep parks open with funding, but only if all park operations were funded.

The Hill reports that the federal government has experienced at least a partial government shutdown 21 times since FY 1977. The length of these shutdowns has varied, with the longest one in recent memory occurring for 35 days, from December 2018 to January 2019.

While continuing resolutions are helpful as stop-gap measures to avoid government shutdowns, they are also problematic because funding for significant programs is released gradually or up to a certain percentage until the full Department of the Interior appropriations bill passes or last year's appropriation levels are reached.



**VISKI ISKI**, Acadia National Park education technician, helps sixth graders from Hancock Grammar School with a lesson about maps during outdoor science programming with the Schoodic Education Adventure program.

Acadia and other national parks submit projects to these programs several years in advance and compete at the national level for funding. If that funding is not fully released until six months into the fiscal year, national parks may not be able to execute big projects because the timeframe for executing contracts has been compressed and contracting staff are in high demand. Acadia's workplan gets thrown into chaos.

Acadia faces many uncertainties—from large storms to travel trends to continuing resolutions or government shutdowns.

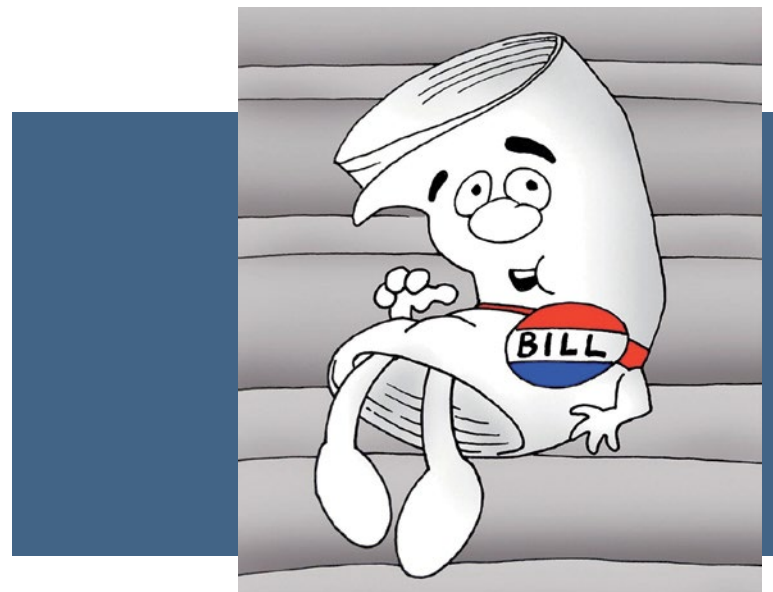
Let's hope that little scroll of paper sitting on the Capitol Hill steps in future years makes it through the budget process in a timely fashion.

Sing with me...

*"Well, now I'm stuck in Committee, and I'll sit here and wait, while a few key Congressmen discuss and debate whether they should let me be a law. How, I hope and pray that they will, but today I am still just a bill..."* ■

**STEPHANIE CLEMENT** is Friends of Acadia's Vice President of Conservation.

Schoolhouse Rock **I'M JUST A BILL FROM CAPITOL HILL.**





COURTESY KAREEM A. DIENG

A GROUP OF YOUTH FROM THE GROUNDWORKS BRIDGEPORT PROGRAM paddle Frenchman Bay. They were one of 10 youth groups to visit Acadia in 2023 with support from Friends of Acadia's Urban & Diverse Youth Grant program.

## ACADIA FOR ALL: Shared Learning & Program Growth

BY PAIGE STEELE

The Acadia for All initiatives at Friends of Acadia wrapped up a dynamic year in December, marking milestones in our journey to welcome visitors of all backgrounds to Acadia National Park.

Friends of Acadia supported the park in hosting 10 Urban and Diverse Youth groups in 2023, up 400% from when the program launched in 2017 with two groups. This sends a strong message that new visitors are excited to explore the park when the space feels accepting, enabling communities to engage in fun recreation and meaningful experiences in Acadia.

The Outdoor Classroom Grants is another program equitably increasing stewardship values around the state. We issued a record 10 Outdoor Classroom Grants to Maine schools in 2023 to help build outdoor learning spaces on school campuses. These grants get students outside and connecting to Acadia via lessons without the cost of transportation.

The Acadia for All Task Force, a group composed of Friends of Acadia staff, board members, and partners, was also busy in 2023, meeting six times to continue dialogue around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) within the Acadia National Park community.

To bolster these dialogues, Task Force leaders embarked on a listening tour around the country to hear about DEIA initiatives at other national parks. Tour stops included Great Smoky Mountains National Park, as well as the local MDI Wheelers, who make Acadia's carriage roads more accessible to people with mobility challenges. In addition, several staff and board expanded their Tribal knowledge through the NPS Tribal Consultation Series and the First Light Learning Journey.

Last summer, the Acadia for All Task Force successfully conducted a consultant search to deepen our understanding and vision of DEIA at Friends of Acadia, hiring the OSIYO

Group—an American Indian, women-owned professional-services firm, which works with all levels of municipalities, Tribal governments, non-profits, businesses, and more. OSIYO means “hello” in Cherokee, and this group is as welcoming as they come.

Friends of Acadia hired the OSIYO Group because they truly understand the complexity of our many partnerships, and they use an appreciative-inquiry model to evaluate and then build upon our existing strengths. The OSIYO Group began work in September with Phase 1: Assessment of where we are currently as an organization. Their findings will inform Phase 2: Creating an Action Plan to be completed later in 2024.

Finally, DEIA successes at Acadia were shared at the National Park Friends Alliance meeting last October in Cuyahoga Valley National Park, where Paige Steele presented on the growth of the Urban and Diverse Youth Grant Program during a plenary session with approximately 300 national park staff and partners. Acadia's Chief of Resource Management Rebecca Cole-Will also presented her team's phenomenal Tribal co-stewardship work during a plenary.

As Cassius Cash, superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains, said, “The work of welcoming visitors of diverse backgrounds to the most visited parks in the country starts with the leadership who support their staff in helping to make parks more welcoming to all.”

At Friends of Acadia, we have those leaders, and we look forward to what the DEIA journey brings in 2024, including supporting accessible trails and hiring a more inclusive workforce in Acadia. ■

PAIGE STEELE is Friends of Acadia's Conservation Projects Manager.

## NEW MEMBERS

September 1 - December 31, 2023

Anonymous (1)  
Carole Allen  
John Axtell  
Debra Baida  
Karen Baldwin  
Christopher Bannon  
Yoland Bator  
Kait Becker and Brooks Willis  
Laura Bedford  
Reggie Benjamin  
Jayant Bhattacharya  
Robyn Blais  
Maureen Bonner  
John Brett  
Kathleen Brodi  
Julia Brown  
Hillary Buchanan  
Allison Burson and Eric Sofen  
Laura Campbell  
Jean Caraccilo  
Renida Carter  
Jennifer and William Champlin  
Sarah Chandler  
Luke Cicchinelli  
Marty Clark  
Andrew Claster  
Cheri and Olga Collins  
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation  
Ashley Coulson  
Jesse Cousins  
Lawrence Cozzens  
Nancy Cummings  
Yvonne and Guy Cutler  
Carol Davis  
Kim Davis  
Malcolm Dilley  
Cindy and Mark Dodd  
Christine Donoghue  
Corinne Doud  
Andrew Dupee  
Meg and John Dwyer  
Brad Eflin  
Richard Espinoza  
W. Grant Evans  
Gabe Ewing del Rio  
Angela Faeth  
Jessica Feth  
Kim and Drew Fine  
Pat Finnigan  
Dana Flanders-Turman  
Michelle Fleetwood  
Josh Flory  
Jill Frank  
Leigh Fraser Roberts

Friends of Highland Square  
Laura Frizzell  
Melissa Gaherty  
Jill Gardosik  
Craig Gariepy  
Alyssa and Graham Gera-Foster  
Charlotte Gill  
David Gill  
Louise Gillespie  
James Goalder  
Emery Goodman  
Claire Gorman and Jack Hanly  
Sharon Graff-Radell  
Brenda Graham  
Kathryn Gustafson  
Babette Gwynn  
Kath Hachigian  
Michael Hagenbuch  
Faye Hall  
Margot and Craig Hammon  
Kim Harsch  
Daniel Hayes-Patterson  
Kimberly Haynes  
Dana Heimbach  
Melissa Herrera  
Alison and Max Hershenow  
Rebekah Hess  
Martha Higgins  
Art Holtfreter  
Stacy Holzbauer  
Daniel Hudgens  
Gretchen and Craig Hunter  
Kirsten Ismail  
Lauri Johnson  
Nicholas Johnson  
David Joo  
Ellen Kanuck  
Gavin Kerr  
John Kiely  
Ann Kilgore  
Trisha Kiliany  
Lina and Michael Konikov  
Susan Kossler-Drew  
Roxie and Ted Krausser  
Colton Laferriere  
Susan Lambeth  
Lea and Don Landis  
Donald Larson  
Marci and Robert Lash  
Susan Lear  
Kerry and Kelsey Lederman  
Emma Lichtenstein  
Rodie Lloyd  
Elaine Loehmann  
John Loehmann  
Christina Godfrey and Nick Loizeaux  
Jeremy Luers  
Pamela MacEwan

Rachel Mack  
Teddy Madara  
Scott Mahoney  
Anthea Malone and Timothy Kau  
Suzanne and Bruce Manger  
Karen Manning  
Robert Marino  
Ann Martin  
Frank Matrone  
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# Fostering Future PARK LEADERS

NPS Academy Interns  
Gain Career Opportunity  
Experience in the Park Service

BY JULIA WALKER THOMAS

**D**eveloping a workforce that better reflects the rich mosaic of the American public is one of the National Park Service's highest priorities.

That's why, in 2011, the National Park Service and its partners developed the NPS Academy—an immersive internship program designed to introduce diverse young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 to career opportunities within the NPS.

Through the combination of rigorous training, practical work experiences, and teamwork, NPS Academy participants deepen their dedication to conservation, expand their intercultural awareness, and refine their professional capabilities. They graduate with a thorough understanding of the NPS's mission and the competencies foundational to all NPS roles.

This mission excited leaders at Acadia. In 2022, Park Superintendent Kevin Schneider, Vegetation Program Manager Jesse Wheeler, and Friends of Acadia's Conservation Projects Manager Paige Steele met with NPS Academy coordinator Deidre Goodwin to develop a plan to expand the program at Acadia.

The following year, Acadia hosted four NPS Academy interns, supported by funding from Friends of Acadia. Interns joined the Acadia Youth Conservation Corps, vegetation crew, trail crew, and visitor experience and education program.

Wheeler, who is passionate about the mission of NPS Academy, enthusiastically spearheaded program coordination in its first year. He arranged housing for interns, helped them navigate their arrival in Maine, and helped guide his intern, Chanti Max.

A junior at Florida State University majoring in environmental science, Max says the program helped her make the leap into NPS employment after a seasonal job outside Zion National Park ignited her passion for parks.

During her internship, she assisted with Schoodic Institute's glossy buckthorn suppression research, contributing to



research plots by building fences and planting native shrubs. She also helped the park manage invasive species like garlic mustard, glossy buckthorn, bush honeysuckle, barberry, and purple loosestrife.

"Through my work, I learned about the different tools, methods, and times of year to treat these species," Max said. "With the knowledge I gained, I was even able to get my Maine pesticide applicator license!"

Max also assisted with the "Save Our Summits" restoration efforts at Sargent and Penobscot peaks this summer, helping to organize restoration supplies and collaborating with volunteer groups to hike bags of soil up for restoration efforts. Through these projects and work, Max says she developed her teamwork and communication skills, and "really appreciated the NPS and my team's emphasis on safety and creating a positive working environment."

In addition to their direct supervisors, Academy interns are each assigned a mentor to give feedback, help build community, and be another professional contact within the NPS. Interns are also given opportunities to shadow other programs and initiatives within the park.

"My mentor, Bik Wheeler, Acadia's lead wildlife biologist, played a crucial role in my summer experience," Max said. "His

expertise and willingness to help gave me clarity and answered my many questions about careers in resource management and the park service. Thanks to Bik, I had the opportunity to join his team for a night of bat mist netting and witnessed the surveying and tagging of four bats."

Jesse Wheeler says mentors try to learn where a person's interests lie and then provide them with first-hand experiences in different positions at the park within the umbrella of that interest.

Spencer Morgan, the first intern to pilot a position in the NPS Academy Alumni program, joined Acadia's visitor education and experience team this fall. Despite arriving in the middle of the K-8 field trip season, he quickly jumped in, learning program operations and helping in the field.

"Spencer settled in as a team member right away and brought a lot of energy to the team," said Kate Petrie, Acadia National Park education coordinator and Spencer's supervisor. "He contributed technical expertise with the software we use to create lesson plans and virtual activities for teachers. He also has diverse urban experiences that broadened our ability to relate to school groups nationwide."

Morgan said the experience helped him not only further develop important skills in lesson planning and facilitating, but also "gain important perspective on the welcoming culture of more rural communities."

## Seasonal Housing Helped

As a residency program, a vital part of NPS Academy is

ensuring the interns feel supported by a community of peers. It's a requirement of the program that there be at least two people from the cohort at each participating park.

Since housing is provided, interns were able to build camaraderie by living together at the Storm Beach House. "We know it can feel isolating to arrive at a park and not know anyone, especially when you are the only program participant in a division. Ensuring that they all live in the same housing unit helps provide a built-in community during the internship," Wheeler said.

With more seasonal housing available on the horizon, the park hopes to expand the number of Academy positions available in future years.

Friends of Acadia provided support and funding for the interns as part of its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and its goal of developing tomorrow's stewards.

"When visitors come to national parks, it's essential for them to see staff representing their communities and backgrounds," said Friends of Acadia's Paige Steele. "With the aid of seasonal housing, there will be more opportunities for diverse staff to work in Acadia. Housing access makes innovation in seasonal positions possible."■

JULIA WALKER THOMAS is Friends of Acadia's Visual Storytelling and Creative Projects Manager.

## THE 4 MAIN GOALS OF NPS ACADEMY

- 1 **Connect a diverse group of young adults sharing a passion and curiosity for careers within the NPS.**
- 2 **Deepen participants' knowledge of and personal network within the NPS by fostering NPS mentorship relationships.**
- 3 **Develop a network of emerging conservation and park leaders by building ambassadorship, storytelling, and leadership skills.**
- 4 **Create a more inclusive and representative future for public lands.**

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Chanti Max, a plant technician with the Acadia National Park vegetation program through the NPS Academy, hand pulls glossy buckthorn, an invasive plant species, within a research plot in the Great Meadow.

**LEFT:** Spencer Morgan, an NPS Academy Alumni program member, spent this fall and winter at Acadia working in Visitor Education.



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FDA

# Brian Robertson

## Survey Says: Brian Robertson Gives Back with Analytical Expertise

BY LORI SCHAEFER

Brian Robertson loves America's national parks, and it's no mystery why. He grew up playing in them.

"I got to grow up in all the amazing places that many people simply get to spend a couple of days in, if they're lucky," Brian said.

"My dad was working for the National Park Service in Zion National Park when I was born. We moved from Zion to Olympic National Park, and from there to Dinosaur National Monument, then Glacier National Park, and from there to Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park."

When a job opportunity brought Brian to Maine in 2000, he made a special point to visit Acadia National Park. He instantly felt right at home.

"I remember thinking, 'wow, I remember this type of place. This is like the place I grew up in,'" Brian said.

Brian's favorite past-time is hiking, and he loves to go on hiking vacations with his brother David. He has visited Acadia frequently over the years, sometimes six or seven times a year.

On one of those visits to Acadia in the early 2000s, Brian recalled coming across the Friends of Acadia Membership Table at Jordon Pond House. He signed up as a member that day.

Brian's charitable giving centers around conservation and protecting our natural resources, so joining Friends of Acadia was a natural and easy choice. He is also a member of the Nature Conservancy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Appalachian Mountain Club, and other land trusts.

After he joined Friends of Acadia, Brian mentioned to Lisa Horsch Clark, vice president of development and donor relations, that if the organization ever needed help with research, he would love to help—this was his area of professional expertise, after all.

As vice president of research for Market Decisions Research in Falmouth, Maine, Brian provides technical leadership including research design, data collection methods, and analysis for the company and its largest contracts. The firm works nationally with businesses, nonprofits, and government organizations of all sizes, and specializes in public health, environmental studies, judicial performance, and insurance.

Naturally, Lisa took Brian up on his offer.

In 2009, Brian helped Friends of Acadia design and analyze a series of surveys for members and donors, local residents, and businesses. He assisted again in 2019 with the Friends of Acadia member survey. And this past year, Brian donated more than 40 hours of his professional time to help plan and analyze a comprehensive set of stakeholder surveys, followed by focus groups.

It's important to Friends of Acadia to invite feedback from members and donors about the ways in which we help the park address its most pressing challenges. Brian gets that and has shared his professional expertise in those endeavors for more than 13 years.

"I'm pleased that Friends of Acadia really looks at the information and tries to do something with it," Brian said. "They seem to really listen and take the feedback to heart, factoring it in to what they decide to do. That makes what I do more rewarding."

Brian has translated his love of national parks and passion for research into an amazing in-kind contribution to Friends of Acadia, and we are better for it.

Thank you, Brian! ■

LORI SCHAEFER is Friends of Acadia's Vice President of Communications.

**BRIAN ROBERTSON** has hiked in all seasons and just about every peak in Acadia. Penobscot Mountain is one of his favorites.



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*Continued on page 43*

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**ABOVE:** Aerial photo of the Hulls Cove area near Cover Farm. **RIGHT:** Garden at Cover Farms.

## 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Moves to Historic Property Overlooking Frenchman Bay

BY JENNIFER BYER

Guests of Friends of Acadia's 35th Annual Benefit are in for a treat.

This year's celebration will take place Saturday, Aug. 10, at Cover Farm, a stunning 26-acre property overlooking Frenchman Bay. It's been a few decades since the Annual Benefit embraced a new location, and Cover Farm is sure to provide the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable evening.

Steeped in history dating back to 1792, the Cover Farm farmhouse has roots reaching back to the early settlement of Mount Desert Island. It's first known proprietor was Antoine de la Mothe, Sieur de Cadillac, for whom Cadillac Mountain is named.

In 1922, the property found its way into the hands of its current family, and it has been a cherished part of their legacy ever since. The grounds are adorned with an apple orchard, planted circa 1917, and an enchanting walled garden—a true jewel of the past.

This year's Annual Benefit continues our tradition of revelry with live and silent auctions featuring incredible artwork, jewelry, multi-day trips, and memorable experiences in Acadia and beyond. Additionally, take part in our Paddle Raise—an opportunity to have a direct impact on Friends of Acadia's preservation efforts.

Don't miss this momentous occasion celebrating the 35th year of our Annual Benefit and the enchantment of Cover Farm. This is a rare opportunity to be steeped in Island history while helping to preserve the beauty of Acadia National Park. It will be a night of jubilation, community, and the dawn of a new chapter for our cherished tradition. ■

JENNIFER BYER is Friends of Acadia's Special Events Coordinator.

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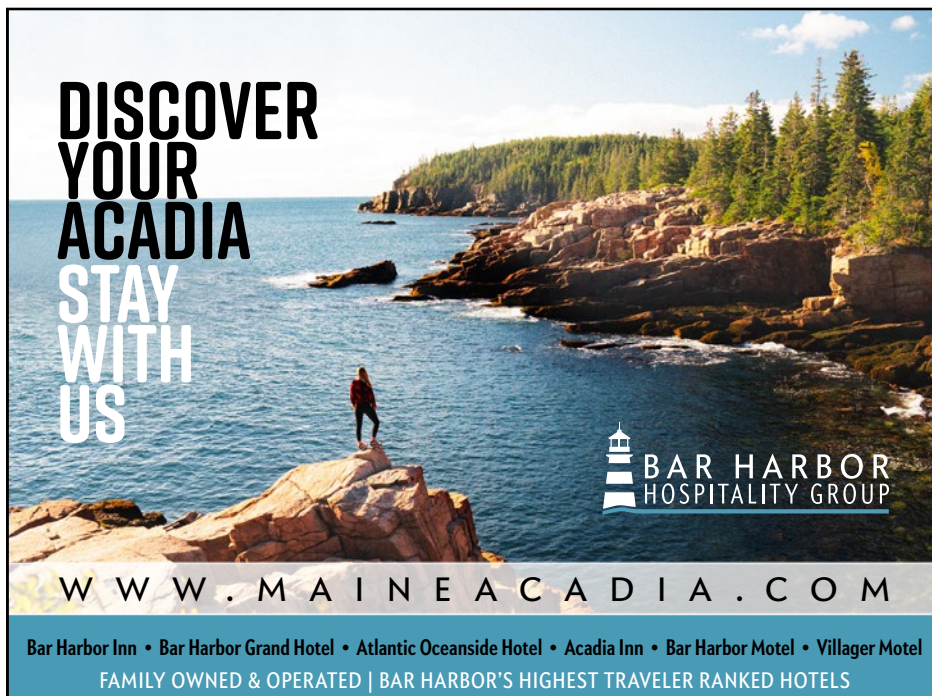


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## Updates

### Save the Date for the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual George B. Dorr Society Event



ACADIA'S SCIENCE COORDINATOR ABE MILLER-RUSHING speaks at the 2023 George B. Dorr Society event.

The George B. Dorr Society for Planned Giving recognizes members and friends who have documented bequests or other provisions for Friends of Acadia in their estate plans. The society was established in 2005 with 18 founding members and has grown to 129 member families.

Each year, the society gathers at an annual appreciation luncheon event. This year, the 20th annual event will be held Monday, July 29 at the historic Hulls Cove Schoolhouse and on Zoom. Please mark your calendars and save the date.

If you have made provisions for Friends of Acadia in your estate plans or would like information about joining the George B. Dorr Society, please contact Lisa Horsch Clark, vice president of development and donor relations, at 207-370-4926 or [lisahorsch@friendsofacadia.org](mailto:lisahorsch@friendsofacadia.org).



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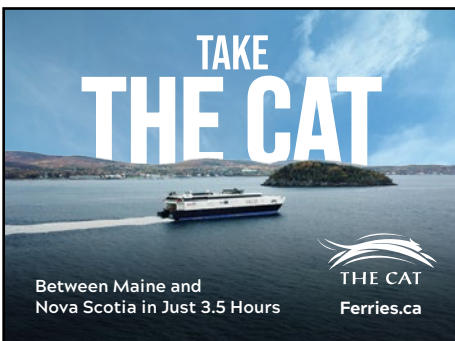
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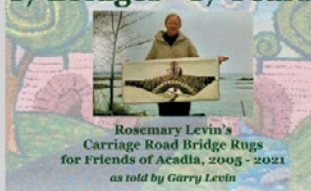
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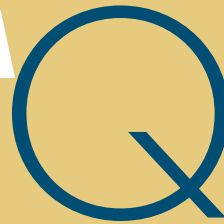
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Rosemary Levin's  
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# TEST YOUR ACADIA



Can you identify these  
**WINTER ANIMAL TRACKS**



- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Choices: Beaver - Coyote - Crow -Fox  
Otter - Turkey - White Tail Deer

ANSWERS ON PAGE 50

# Updates

## Acadia Gets \$1.5 million for Solar & EV Projects

A federal grant and support from Friends of Acadia will help cost savings and reduce the carbon footprint of Acadia National Park's new maintenance building.

Acadia received a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to help install rooftop solar panels and 12 electric vehicle charging stations at park headquarters. Friends of Acadia secured a \$500K grant from the National Park Foundation to add to the \$1 million for solar power at the maintenance building.

Friends of Acadia will also be buying two electric vehicles for the park as our philanthropic match to the DOE's \$1 million grant. Those funds will likely come from the 2021 Annual Benefit Paddle Raise, Greening Acadia, which raised \$330K to help Acadia become more climate friendly and energy smart.

The solar panels will be installed atop the park's 32,000-square-foot maintenance building, which is currently under construction, and are expected to generate more than 50 percent of the energy used by the new building. They will generate direct energy cost savings of about \$61,000 a year.

"Friends of Acadia is thrilled to provide philanthropic support to help the park lower its carbon footprint and model climate-responsible solutions," said Eric Stiles, Friends of Acadia's president and CEO.

"This project also allows the National Park Service to reinvest the savings in the park. Climate change is a top threat to Acadia National Park, and we need to think globally and act locally. We thank the Maine congressional delegation for their leadership and support."



**ABOVE:** Graphic depiction of the future Acadia National Park Maintenance Facility—Office Side.

**RIGHT:** Graphic depiction of the future Acadia National Park Maintenance Facility—Entry.





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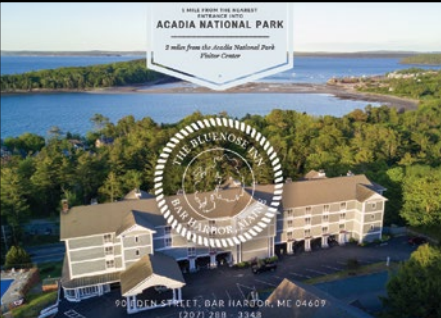
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# Updates



## Rehabilitation of Acadia's Historic Bridges

Acadia's historic bridges will undergo rehabilitation work over the next decade or so to help maintain their structural integrity. The Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), in partnership with the National Park Service, will begin rehabilitation of Jordan Pond Road bridge this March.

The historic bridge is in the village of Seal Harbor (Town of Mount Desert) and carries Jordan Pond Road over the park's carriage road between Day Mountain and Stanley Brook Bridge.

During construction, traffic will be detoured through the park via Stanley Brook Road until Memorial Day weekend when alternating one-way traffic on Jordan Pond Road will be possible. Vehicles exceeding 10 feet 4 inches in height will be detoured along other routes.

The next bridge to be rehabilitated will be the Wildwood Entrance bridge, which is pending funding. This bridge carries

the Park Loop Road over an abandoned carriage road in the park near Wildwood Stables.

### WHY THE REHAB?

The bridges have a concrete substructure with granite facing. Over time, cracks develop in the joints of the bridge, which allow water to seep inside the structure. This causes the interior concrete structure and drainage system to deteriorate over time.

The work will involve removing the granite facing to expose the substructure and coating it with waterproof sealant. The rehabilitation will help maintain the structural integrity of the bridges for decades to come.

FHWA is funding the project through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law").

# We Get by With a Little Help From Our Friends

The Beatles said in their hit song that we get by with a little help from our friends. Indeed, that was the spirit that prevailed at the 2023 National Park Friends Alliance Fall Meeting held last October in Cleveland, Ohio.

I joined eight other representatives from Acadia National Park, including Friends of Acadia President Eric Stiles, Park Superintendent Kevin Schneider, and Schoodic Institute President Nick Fisichelli, and we were hosted in Cleveland by the excellent team at the Conservancy of Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

The National Park Friends Alliance is a community of park partners focused on enhancing support for national parks by creating space for collaboration, creativity, and philanthropic partnerships between the National Park Service and their official nonprofits.

The fall meeting of the Friends Alliance offered time for friends groups and park partners to come together to network in person, share ideas, and learn best practices for partnerships, visitor engagement, education, and stewardship of our national parks.

In addition to the excellent panels, workshops, and plenary sessions, the four-day event included a variety of well-curated field trips and social and networking events. One of my favorites was a bike tour of Cuyahoga Valley National Park where we learned about volunteerism in this park and many of Cuyahoga's transportation initiatives.

It was inspirational and enlightening to hear from those leading the way on key challenges our national parks face such as the rapid pace of climate change, making our parks welcoming and accessible to all, and co-stewardship with Indigenous Tribes.

Acadia was well represented in leading these discussions, and it made me incredibly proud to see our work presented as leading the way on so many fronts.

Conservation Projects Manager Paige Steele presented Friends of Acadia's work to expand access and welcome urban and diverse youth to Acadia,

highlighting the 400% growth in the program since it started in 2017. The program is currently being replicated by Greater Basin National Park and others (see story page 36).

Acadia National Park's Chief of Resource Management Rebecca Cole-Will and Nation-to-Nation Co-Stewardship Thought Leader Dr. Suzanne Greenlaw spoke on a panel exploring models of co-leadership with Indigenous communities. They shared work that began at Acadia in 2012 in consultation with the Wabanaki Tribes exploring plant gathering in the park (see full story page 26-27).

Nick Fisichelli represented Acadia in a discussion on Sustainability and Science, which focused on how best to support the science that parks need amidst rapid environmental change. Paige and Nick also shared Acadia's outdoor classroom educational programs in a conversation on outdoor education.

Friends of Acadia's Vice President of Communications Lori Schaefer hosted an informal session with parks interested in strategic communications planning and finding ways to better connect with park visitors and other audiences. And several of us from Acadia initiated an informal discussion about creating affordable workforce housing for parks. That session had to be moved to a bigger room because so many signed up!

As the Chair of the Friends of Acadia Board of Directors, it was a delight to be immersed among such national talent and creative energy, and to see the passion that exists collectively for ensuring that our national parks are protected for generations to come.

It left me feeling proud and hopeful. I hope that as you read this issue of *Acadia* magazine and learn more about some of our cutting-edge work, that you'll take pride in our collective accomplishments and know you are a key part of all we do for Acadia.



—Bill Eacho

## FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



**"It was a delight to be immersed among such national talent and creative energy and to see the passion that exists for protecting our parks."**



WILL GREENE/FOA

**A NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER** sings from an apple tree in springtime.

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## Updates

### Government Affairs Manager Veronica Torres Joins Team

Veronica Torres joined Friends of Acadia in February as government affairs manager. In this role, Veronica



supports our policy and advocacy efforts, and she works closely with federal and local governmental partners.

Veronica served as a career diplomat with the U.S. Department of State for 14 years with various overseas and domestic assignments. In that role, she advanced U.S. foreign policy objectives and economic priorities. Most recently, Veronica was a policy program manager for Meta, engaging policymakers, legislators, and tech industry stakeholders on telecommunications issues. Veronica earned her M.A. degree in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service and a B.A. degree in Political Science from DePaul University. She lives on Mount Desert Island with her husband and daughter, all of whom enjoy spending time on Acadia's storied carriage roads and trails.

#### ANSWERS to Winter Animal Tracks IQ Quiz on page 46

1. Fox
2. Otter
3. Crow
4. Coyote
5. White Tail Deer
6. Turkey
7. Beaver

# Updates

## Education Experiences Reach Thousands of Students

Schoodic Education Adventure (SEA)—Acadia’s multi-day education program for middle school students—was a huge success in 2023.

Last year, the program’s education rangers, Schoodic Institute teaching assistants, and interns served 710 students from seven Maine counties and three other states. Students hailed from 28 schools and represented multiple classes.

Programs center on hands-on learning and include an invasive crab survey, offered with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, and a program on phenology, offered with Nature’s Notebook. Each visiting school chooses a theme to focus on during their experience, and most schools last year selected climate change in the park.

“My favorite part of SEA was looking for creatures in the ocean with Ranger Carlie,” one student shared. “I caught a lot of crabs and had a lot of fun, even though I got smelly. Ranger Carlie knew a lot about the animals and plants and helped us identify and handle them carefully.”

Another student wrote, “I really enjoyed the whole thing because you get to be outdoors a lot and enjoy nature.”

Acadia’s education team also conducted 353 virtual programs, which reached

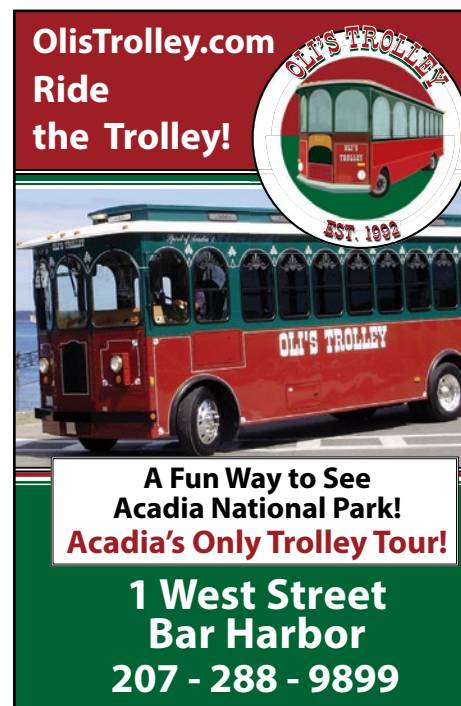
22,556 students across the U.S., and they piloted a new summer school outreach model, which offered eight programs that reached 236 local students at four schools.

The team led 23 Junior Ranger and Junior Angler programs that reached 983 people visiting the park over the summer. They also led a variety of teacher workshops and supported the Acadia Teacher Fellows and Teacher Collaboratory programs, providing logistics and content expertise for 59 teachers.

The season ended with a popular live-stream broadcast from the tidepools at Schoodic Institute with Expeditions in Education, Inc featuring the famous Dr. Drizzle, an internationally recognized educator who travels the country inspiring teachers to integrate STEM into everyday instruction. This single event was watched by 97 classrooms and reached 1,650 students.

These educational experiences, whether in person or virtual, help students connect what they learn in the classroom with the real world around them and grow their awareness of their own impact on their environments. Acadia’s education team is influencing tomorrow’s stewards in an incredible way.

**SCHOODIC EDUCATION ADVENTURE** teaching assistants Julia Tamlyn and Emily Renkey explain how the rocks and the coast were formed to Hancock Grammar School sixth graders during a geology class as part of the Schoodic Education Adventure program.



# THE REMAINS OF THE TAY



ZACH HUNT/NPS



JULIA WALKER THOMAS/FOX

## Intense Storms Revealed Shipwreck at Sand Beach, Then Broke it Further Apart. Now we Can Track What Remains.

As high tide retreated from Sand Beach during an exceptionally powerful winter storm on January 10, it carried off with it a good deal of sand. In the process, it uncovered the remains of the sailing schooner Tay, which wrecked on Sand Beach in 1911.

The energetic waters at Sand Beach spirit a good deal of sand away most winters, only to return it months later. It's a seasonal cycle that most summer visitors aren't aware of. But the appearance of the Tay—its remnants jutting out from the beach like the wooden ribcage of some ancient seafaring beast—is less common.

The Tay grabbed the attention of locals and park visitors who wandered onto the beach to see it for themselves. National news outlets wrote about it. On social media, people shared memories of seeing it years ago, with one woman reminiscing about how she and her family once hung their towels on the remains when they went down for a swim.

The Tay was headed to Boston from New Brunswick on July 28, 1911, in a heavy southwest gale. Around midnight, the schooner struck a ledge off Mount Desert Island and broke into pieces.

The crew clung to the Tay's broken mast until the tide went

out, and they could hasten to the safety of Sand Beach.

What was left of the wrecked schooner was eventually overcome by sand and buried out of sight, only to be alternately uncovered and recovered over the last 112 years.

No doubt, the Tay would have been buried again following the January 10 storm. But a second storm arrived on January 13. The high tide waters tugged at the Tay, eventually dragging it out into the surf. The next high tide deposited it back on the beach, where it broke further apart as the tides continued to flood and ebb.

### WHAT WILL COME OF WHAT IS LEFT? WE CAN PLAY A ROLE IN FINDING OUT.

Rebecca Cole-Will, chief of resource management at Acadia National Park, tagged what remained of the Tay with Shipwreck Tagging Archaeological Management Program QR code tags. When scanned, the tags send the user to an information page about the history of the wreck. Users can also share location information and images to help track where the individual pieces move over time.

It's a neat blend of history and citizen science. It's also a good example of how climate change is changing the way we interact with some aspects of the park.

**THE TAY UNCOVERED** after the January 10 storm.

**INSERT:** Rebecca Cole-Will, Acadia's chief of resource management, and Catherine Schmitt, Schoodic Institute, tag the remains of the Tay with QR code labels.

# Renewal in Acadia!

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**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.

WAVES CREATE icy  
froth on the rocks  
of Boulder Beach.



COURTESY HOWIE MOTENKO