

PURCHASE YOUR PARK PASS!

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

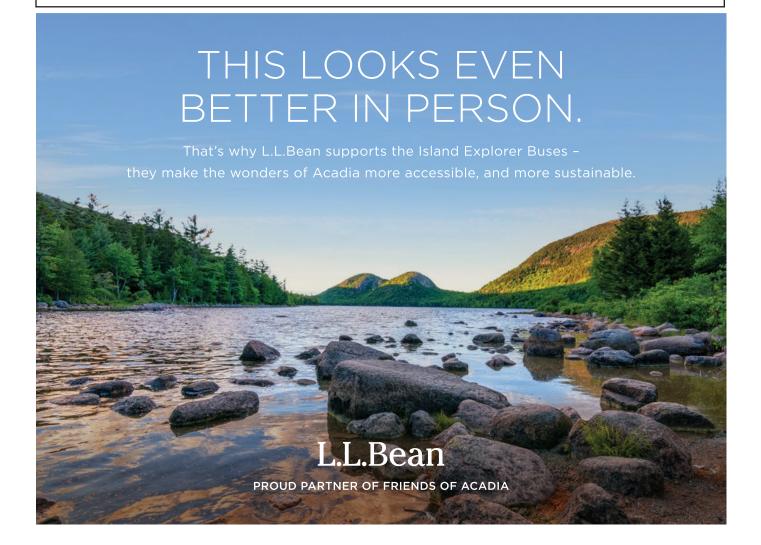


BUY A PASS ONLINE AND PRINT

before you arrive at the park. This allows you to drive directly to a trailhead/parking area & display your pass from your vehicle.

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

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



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ACADIA

The Friends of Acadia Journal

SUMMER 2025

Volume 30 No.2

A Magazine About Acadia National Park and Surrounding Communities

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

Acadia is published three times a year. Submissions and letters are welcome.

Opinions expressed are the authors'.

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A composite image shows the trails of fireflies flickering along the edge of Jordan Pond. AVERY HOWE/FOA



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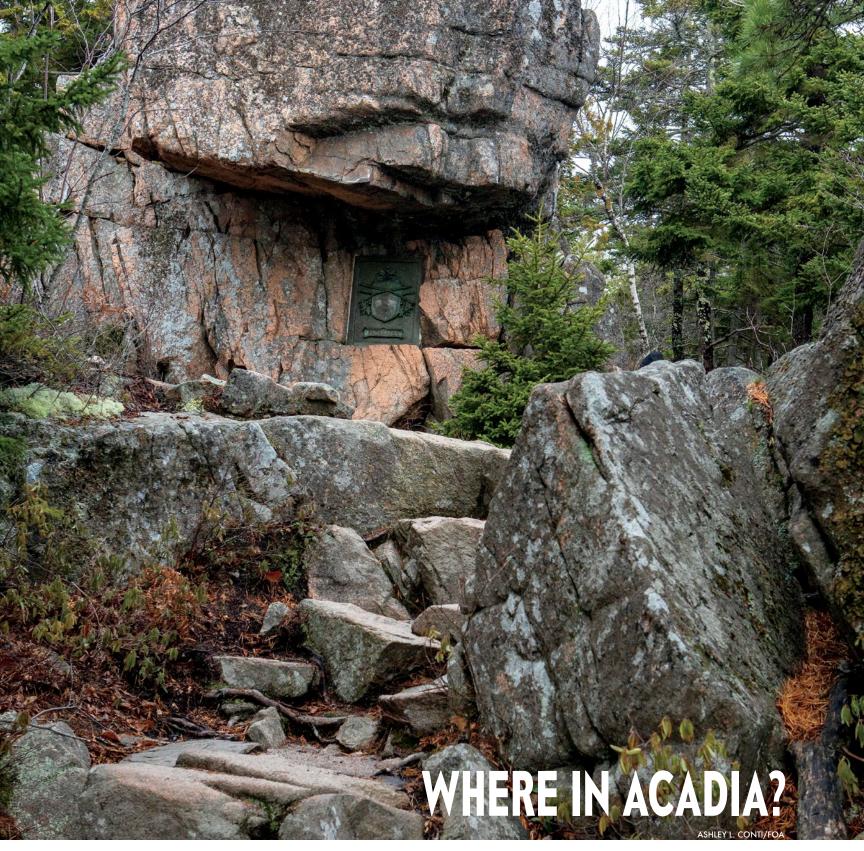
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Upon a mountain, small but grand, Where sea and trees go hand-in-hand, A bronze face watches, weathered and wise, Beneath the cliffs that brush the skies. A tribute stands on the way to peak— A pathmaker's mark, if summit you seek. Named for one who helped guide the way, Can you guess where this plaque might stay? If you think you can identify the location of this scene, email us at editor@friendsofacadia.org and include a personal story or memory with your answer. We'll print our favorite responses in the next issue of Acadia and send a Friends of Acadia hat to a randomly selected correct respondent.

READERS RESPOND TO "WHERE IN ACADIA?"



Great Meadow Wetland

Thanks to the readers who responded to our "Where in Acadia?" question in the spring magazine and correctly identified the location as the Great Meadow Wetland with rhodora (Rhododendron canadense) in bloom. Visitors to the meadow enjoy outstanding views of Kebo, Dorr, and Champlain Mountains and accessible paths with excellent birding opportunities.

Great Meadow Wetland is part of a larger network of wetlands, streams, and ponds in the Cromwell Brook watershed. George B. Dorr focused much of his attention on this area and greatly modified it, adding greenhouses, trails and roads. Coupled with prior modifications, this greatly altered the flow of water through the wetland, impairing its ability to act as a wetland and allowing non-native species to thrive instead of freshwater plants.

Together with partners like Friends of Acadia and Schoodic Institute, Acadia National Park is working to restore natural water flow into the wetlands and remove invasive plants.

We seem to have stumped many readers with this one, as we received only one correct answer. Our admiration to Charlotte Stetson!



"I've taken many similar photos to the one in the winter/ spring 2025 issue of the Friends of Acadia journal. The 'splash of magenta' comes from one of my favorite native plants—rhodora—and I'm quite certain the photo was taken across the Great Meadow."

- Charlotte Stetson, Hancock, ME

A bee hovers over a rhodora shrub (Rhododendron canadense) in Acadia National Park.

Building Strong Foundations for the Future During Times of Change

This summer, once again, the American public is showing just how deeply they cherish our national parks. Across the country, visitation numbers are soaring. Here in Acadia, despite several rainy weekends in June, visits were up 5.4 percent compared to last year—marking the second-highest June visitation on record since modern counting methods were established in 1990.

Yet even as our nation's love for parks grows, the National Park System is facing one of its most challenging chapters in recent history.

In July, the National Parks Conservation Association reported that the National Park Service has lost nearly a quarter of its permanent staff since January. Many have been pushed to resign or retire, and an ongoing hiring freeze has made it nearly impossible to replace these critical roles. Compounding the issue, after mandated hiring delays, parks nationwide are struggling to hire the seasonal staff they depend on during peak months. Only about 4,500 of the 7,700 seasonal positions needed had been filled by peak season—just under 60 percent.

As if that weren't enough, a recent federal budget agreement will rescind \$267 million in Inflation Reduction Act funds earmarked for park staffing—and additional layoffs and departmental restructuring are expected at any time, further threatening the capacity of park professionals who are already stretched thin.

Like at many national parks, rangers at Acadia are doing more with less during what may become one of the busiest seasons ever.

Together with a broad coalition of local park supporters, national park advocacy organizations, fellow Friends groups, community and business leaders, and individuals like you, we have been calling on congressional leaders to stand up for parks. These incredible places belong to all Americans, generate tens of billions of dollars for our gateway communities, and represent a legacy to be passed down to future generations. Our parks, the people who care for them, and the hundreds of millions of visitors deserve better.

But even through these challenging times, there is important work being done that will create transformational positive change in Acadia.

This summer, storm recovery funds, advocated for by Friends of Acadia and secured by Maine's delegation, will begin to make their way to Acadia. These funds will support lasting upgrades to storm-damaged infrastructure, strengthen Acadia's resilience to extreme weather, and improve accessibility so more people can experience the park's most treasured places.

A new park maintenance building, funded by the Legacy Restoration Fund, part of the Great American Outdoors Act, will create a safer, more efficient space for park staff and volunteers to repair equipment and care for Acadia's beloved trails and carriage roads.

And construction is moving forward on a 56-bedroom seasonal employee housing facility at Harden Farm in Bar Harbor, made possible through the support of generous donors matched 2-to-1 by federal funds. This addition, combined with the 58 beds created by Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park for seasonal housing since 2023, will significantly increase the availability of attainable housing for park and partner employees—supporting every aspect of park operations for generations to come.

There is still much work to do—to protect our national parks and support the dedicated public servants who care for them. But I remain hopeful. I am buoyed by the determination of our members and partners, the support of our community, the passion of our volunteers, and the joy I see on the faces of first-time visitors I pass on the trail.

Thank you to everyone who has joined us in support of national parks. Together, we will continue to build strong foundations for the future and raise our voices to protect America's best idea.

With deepest gratitude,



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



"Even as our nation's love for parks grows, the National Park System is facing one of its most challenging chapters in recent history."







VOLUNTEERS from Texas State University summit Sargent Mountain after hauling soil up to restoration sites as part of a Save our Summits hike this spring.

Get HANDS ON and HELP OUT in Acadia This Summer

Be a Soil Hero During a Save our Summits Hike

A summer hike to one of Acadia's stunning summits can help Acadia National Park's efforts to restore native vegetation. During a Save Our Summits hike, you'll stow a bag of soil in your backpack and bring it to the summit of either Penobscot or Sargent Mountain. You'll choose how much soil you'll carry—carrying five pounds (about the size of a large freezer Ziplock bag) is a huge help! This soil is integral to the ongoing summit restoration efforts in Acadia National Park.

Hikes are 8:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every Wednesday and Saturday through September (weather permitting). Registration is required. Learn more: friendsofacadia.org/soilhero

Spend a Half Day Maintaining Acadia's Trails and Carriage Roads

A few hours spent wielding a rake or pulling vegetation helps keep Acadia National Park's trails and carriage roads safe, accessible, and looking sharp. During the Stewardship Volunteer Drop-In Program, you'll help maintain carriage road and trail drainage systems, cut back overgrown vegetation, and work on a cadre of other needed tasks. All tools and guidance are provided.

Projects run 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from now through October (weather permitting). No experience or registration is necessary. Thank you to lead sponsor Chilton Trust for supporting this program. Learn more: friendsofacadia.org/dropin

Parks Are Places for Memory Making

When the seasons shift from spring to summer at Acadia, I can feel it in the air. The breeze goes from crisp to comforting, and the smell of the ocean is suddenly in the air. The energy of visitors, who come from around the world to experience our wonderful park, is felt everywhere.

I occasionally get to take visitors into the park and share all the great work we do. Oftentimes, this is their first time in Acadia, and it is always inspiring to experience the park through someone else's eyes.

A couple of weeks ago, Acadia hosted a particularly important person visiting for the first time.

In late April, we received an email from Wishes & More, a non-profit organization that grants wishes to children with terminal and life-threatening illnesses, providing hopeful hearts, happy memories, and assistance to those who love them. They told us about a lively 3-year-old boy who is courageously battling hepatoblastoma—a very rare liver cancer that impacts one in a million children. Whenever he can, this boy loves exploring and spending time outdoors with his family. The family's number one wish was to visit Acadia National Park.

When Wishes & More called to ask if we could help make this visit a little extra magical, we didn't hesitate. We jumped at the chance to be able to show this family Acadia's many wonders.

I got to meet this brave and energetic young man at Jordan Pond, along with his parents and both sets of grandparents. He and his family had just finished a

horse-drawn carriage ride, sponsored by Friends of Acadia. Most 3-year-olds would be exhausted after that, but he was ready for more.

In the shadow of the Jordan Pond Gatehouse, I swore him in as an official Acadia Junior Ranger. Together we raised our right hands and recited the Junior Ranger pledge, promising to protect Acadia forever. His face lit up when I handed him his Junior Ranger badge.

National parks change lives; they are places of profound inspiration that provide moments for reflection and togetherness. Of all the wishes this family could have chosen, they chose to visit Acadia. Our national parks define our nation, representing our most magnificent landscapes and our greatest achievements, and places where the American ideal has been challenged.

As I sat with this family and watched three generations interacting, I also reflected on how meaningful parks are as places for families to reconnect and to make lifelong memories. Getting to experience Acadia through this family's eyes, during such a personal and meaningful time, was a perfect reminder of why we do what we do.

It takes hard work from our entire team, from long days of working in visitor centers to the back-breaking work of the trail crew, along with the occasional frustrations we all experience, to make it possible for these one-of-a-kind experiences at Acadia to happen.

I left my visit with this family feeling humbled, reinvigorated, and filled with gratitude for this place we get to steward and call home.

-Kevin Schneider

SUPERINTENDENT'S VIEW



"National parks change lives; they are places of profound inspiration that provide moments for reflection and togetherness."



SUNLIGHT FILTERS through morning mist on Acadia Mountain.



Come On In!

Welcoming seasonal workers to new housing made possible by Friends of Acadia.

BY ELIZA WORRICK

A thriving park. A high-quality visitor experience. Protection of Acadia's precious natural resources. A safe and welcoming place that is accessible to all. A cherished sense of community.

These things are all powered by the very best seasonal workforce Acadia National Park and its partners can hire. Unfortunately, in recent years, hiring that seasonal workforce has been hampered by a severe lack of employee housing.

Friends of Acadia responded to this need by launching a multi-faceted housing effort, which included several construction and renovation projects, powered in part by a \$10 million philanthropic investment.

This spring, seasonal employees moved into housing at three

brand-new locations: an eight-bedroom housing complex at Dane Farm in Seal Harbor; two renovated, six-bedroom townhomes off Jordan River Road in Trenton; and a 13-pad RV camp at White Birches Camp in Southwest Harbor.

As the 2025 season kicks off, staff have settled into their new digs across Mount Desert Island and Trenton. We spoke with several of them, including Island Explorer bus drivers, a preventative search and rescue ranger, an interpretive ranger, and the Wild Gardens of Acadia intern, all of whom may not have been able to come to Acadia this summer had it not been for the new seasonal housing opportunities made possible by member support.





OPPOSITE PAGE: Preventative search and rescue (PSAR) ranger Emily Franco stands in front of her seasonal home at Dane Farm in Seal Harbor. The two buildings constructed at Dane Farm are housing eight seasonal staff this summer.

TOP: White Birches Camp, a National Park Service-owned campground supported by Friends of Acadia, serves seasonal employees and volunteers who travel with recreational vehicles.

MIDDLE: The newly completed kitchen at Dane Farm, before the ribbon cutting on Oct. 8, 2024.

BOTTOM: Newly renovated units at Jordan River Road in Trenton.



RICKY AND ANNETTE JACKSON Island Explorer Bus Driver & Ambassador

Housing: Jordan River Road, Trenton

Ricky and Annette Jackson live in Groesbeck, Texas. After Ricky retired from being an insurance company claims adjuster and Annette from a career as a librarian, the couple were drawn to work outdoors. "We'd worked in state parks locally, then one in Colorado, and we discovered that we liked working in parks."

While visiting their grandson who was stationed at Fort Drum in upstate New York, a friend who knew that Ricky had obtained a Commercial Driver's License in retirement suggested they check out Acadia National Park and the fare-free Island Explorer bus system while they were on the East Coast. The Island Explorer needs 100 seasonal employees to operate the bus system, which serves 500,000 riders annually. They got in touch with Jodi Moore, operations manager for Downeast Transportation, and everything fell into place. 2023 was the first year they drove their 23-foot camper to Maine so that Ricky could work as a bus driver and Annette as an ambassador.

That year, the closest the Jacksons could get to Acadia was an hour away. "We tried to get closer, but we ended up in Cherryfield because a fellow driver had camping spots in his backyard. That was a long drive to Acadia."

This year, they were relieved to learn that housing was available at the new Jordan River Road property. "Having the housing is easier for us," they said. "We didn't have to bring our camper 2,500 miles. It did make all the difference in the decision to work at Island Explorer [again], as we might have not been able to come back [otherwise]."

This summer, Ricky will once again be driving visitors throughout the park, and Annette will be helping visitors find the correct bus to reach their destination. "We love that we get to see and work in the beautiful park and explore the area," said Annette.

Both are looking forward to visiting with park explorers. "I like to know where people are from," Annette said. "My first time on the job I enjoyed talking to people from Canada; I liked their accents. Then they'd start yacking it up when they heard my southern accent. Everyone is so polite and in a good mood. Nobody was irritable, even with all of the people and crowds. It's fun to talk to them about where they're from and what they want to see when they're here in Acadia."





EMILY FRANCO

Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR) Ranger Housing: Dane Farm, Seal Harbor

If you need help while in the park, it may be Emily Franco you see coming to your rescue. But an important part of her job, she said, is helping prevent those accidents from happening in the first place.

"My teammates and I respond to emergency medical and search and rescue calls in the park, but more importantly, we try to prevent those situations by getting out on trails and carriage roads, making contact with visitors, and helping them identify and avoid hazards," Emily said. "We want everyone to have a great time in Acadia, whether they're here from Bar Harbor or Bangkok, and twisting an ankle on wet granite can really put a damper on your weekend!"

Emily worked previous summers as a PSAR and education ranger in Denali, Zion, Yosemite, Death Valley, and Theodore Roosevelt National Parks. "There are a lot of big, beautiful parks out West, but living and working right on the ocean this summer has been a thrilling experience," she said. "Acadia's landscape and community have already begun to feel like home to me, and I've truly never been anywhere like it."

This winter, before coming to Acadia, Emily spent the offseason working in an urgent care center in Reno, Nevada. "I would not have been able to work in Acadia this summer if housing had not been available. Moving cross-country seasonally for work with the National Park Service, housing is a tremendous source of stress," she said. "Even when housing is guaranteed, there are so many unknowns. How old will the housing be? Are there mice? Does the heat work? How many people will be sharing a bathroom? Do I need to bring all of my own pots, pans, and even curtains, or is it move-in ready? Often, none of these questions are answered until you arrive, and that's at the end of a multi-day, multi-state road trip with all of your belongings in your car! Moving into Dane Farm has been the best housing experience of my NPS career. The house is clean, bright, and welcoming. It feels like it was designed with care." One of the highlights, she said, is staff staying at Dane Farm have "tons of space to cook and eat together. It feels like a real community is emerging."

MATTIE VANDIVER Wild Gardens of Acadia Intern

Housing: Jordan River Road, Trenton

As the Wild Gardens of Acadia intern, Mattie Vandiver cares for the gardens, gives impromptu visitor tours, and helps organize volunteers. One of the projects she's most excited for: restoring the Wild Garden's bog section.

"I love peatland ecology and the specific plant species that grow in bogs," Mattie said. "I am looking forward to learning more about peatland conservation practices." The bog at the Wild Gardens is open to visitors when the path is not flooded. "Bogs are not fed by groundwater, only from above-ground rain and snowmelt, which allows them to maintain high acidity and lower decomposition," explained Mattie. "Because of the floods, the water in the bog has become less acidic, which makes it challenging for the bog plants that are specifically adapted to that environment to thrive, and easier for other plants like sedges to encroach and take over." Mattie has been clearing out some of the sedges to make more room for bog species like pitcher plants, bog rosemary, false solomon's seal, bog cranberry, and many other beautiful and unique species.

When asked if Mattie has a favorite bog plant, she replied, "I really love the sphagnum mosses. They're so intricate and important to bog ecosystems. They're also fascinating—they have a mutualistic association with nitrogen-fixing bacteria that live inside the cells of the moss and provide the moss with usable nitrogen."

Mattie grew up visiting Acadia often. "As a kid, Acadia felt like a fairy land (and still does). I remember the smells at the tops of peaks and picking blueberries along the trails, running in the waves at Sand Beach, and just the tranquility of the island. It has been wonderful to return here and really get to know the native plant species, and in turn this park, in a new way."

Mattie graduated in May from Vassar College, where she studied biology and worked in greenhouses. "When I was first offered the job and began looking for housing, I was worried by the high rent prices I was seeing on the island," Mattie said. "I was relieved when I was contacted about the available housing. The apartment is so beautiful and spacious, and I am so grateful to be living here."





ALEXIS SILVA

Interpretive Ranger and Communications

Housing: Dane Farm, Seal Harbor

The rugged coastline of Acadia is what draws many folks here. For seasonal Interpretive Ranger Alexis Silva, who recently moved here from the Big Sur region of California, that feature turned out to be pretty personal. "The previous area I lived in was known for its rugged terrain, so being able to have something like that is really nice, especially considering that I don't really have any established connections here, so that physical environment having some resemblance to what I'm familiar with is comforting."

Another factor that made taking the role in Acadia appealing to Alexis was having a place to live at Dane Farm. "Housing in towns near national parks tends to be very expensive, so being able to have that resolved or included as part of the job offer definitely makes logistics easier, especially because park jobs tend to run around six months or less [which can make signing more traditional leases difficult]."

Now that Alexis has moved into Dane Farm, he's really enjoying both the space and its proximity to the Hulls Cove Visitor Center, where he'll be primarily stationed this season to help out at the information desk. "It's one of the nicest, if not the nicest park housing that I've been able to live in. It's been very comfortable, and I feel safe in the space."

When he's not at the information desk, Alexis will be helping with the peregrine falcon interpretive program, which is the part of the job he's most looking forward to. "I haven't taken on a project with birding yet, so I think it'll be a really fun experience that I'll be able to learn something new from alongside visitors."

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



Trail work on the Bubbles Divide—and everywhere in Acadia—melds trail history, natural resources, and a magic touch.

BY SHANNON BRYAN

The Bubbles Divide Trail just got a facelift.

More than 300 granite steps have been set into place along the 0.3-mile section of trail between the Jordan Pond Path and the Bubbles Trail intersection. There are new "check steps," too wooden frames filled with crushed stone and covered in dirt that function like a French drain, deterring erosion.

But even the upgrades have a historic look and feel. Those granite blocks that form the staircase were sourced from closeby quarries right on the Bubbles-the same quarries from which granite was pulled back in the early 1900s. The width and depth of each step mirror the width and depth of the steps laid on this pair of mountains more than 100 years ago.

"We want to match what was there, as far as the look of the trail. We want to keep the same historical and cultural standards," said Dave Schlag, trail crew foreman at Acadia National Park. "Why was the trail here in the beginning, and why are we rebuilding it? We want to honor those parts of it."

Thanks to the trail crews' final touches, from transplanted mosses and plants on a rehabbed trailside to scattered leaves and pine needles on freshly laid steps, even just-completed trail work looks like it's been that way for a century.

That's part of the magic—and hard work—of Acadia's trail crew. There hadn't been much trail work done on the Bubbles Divide since the early 1900s. Some work was done in the 1980s and '90s, Schlag said, but it had largely been untouched.

"It's a talus slope running from the north end of Jordan Pond up the divide between North and South Bubble. It's just pure rock through there," he said. The terrain made it a safety challenge both for hiker injuries and search-and-rescue carry-outs.

At the bottom, the trail was largely dirt surface.

"Being between two mountains, all the water runs through and comes right down the trail," said Schlag. "It had become the classic gouge where everything funnels through."

Over time, the soil eroded, and the trail level dropped. In some areas, water pooled and stretches of mud lingered. In response, hikers often abandoned the muddy trail and took wide alternate paths through the trees.

"People are bugging out everywhere because they don't want to be in the mud. They start taking their own route," Schlag said. "Whatever way they deem safe and stable, they're going to go, which creates this huge series of social paths."

That's not great for the trail or for the hikers. It's also not great for natural resources, Schlag noted. Wider areas of plants get trampled; hikers wander into bat habitat.

Bubbles Divide needed a rethink.

But first things first. As with any trail project in the park, well before a shovel is wielded or a single slab of granite is moved (often years before), Acadia's trail crew goes in to assess.

"We'll look at the conditions of the trail at different parts of the trail," Schlag said. "We look at any damage in the area, whether it's to the trail itself or to the surrounding areas, whether that's storm damage, erosion, or visitor damage."

"We look at whether it's people not using the trail how it's supposed to be used, maybe because the trail is so muddy that nobody wants to step in this section, so they go around," he added. "Or whether the stairs are too small, and they can't accommodate people coming from different directions, so people make their own trail."

On Bubbles Divide, Schlag said, "We had to define the corridor,

make it much more clear from point A to point B."

The particulars on how that should be done required a great deal more planning, conversation, and collaboration.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

Trail work in Acadia involves an interdivisional team that includes staff well-versed in the park's wildlife, resource management, and cultural history. Together, they consider historic and environmental factors. Is the trail near water? Is it in a bat area where bats are raising young?

"During certain times, you can't work on the south face of different slopes and talus fields because of the bats and their mating seasons," said Schlag. Bats roost and hibernate in rock crevices, particularly Acadia's sunny south-facing talus slopes. In the summer months, they pup in the small nooks of partially detached bark on birch trees.

"That might dictate that we can only work there for six weeks and then go work somewhere else."

Before work on Bubbles Divide began, wildlife managers gave Schlag a map showing where all the bat nesting sites are. "Most of the nesting sites were up on the cliffs, and we were working down lower," Schlag said.

Likewise paramount to the trail crew: staying true to the historic look and feel of a trail.

"Back in the day, when they were building the trails—whether it was the village improvement associations, the Civilian Conservation Corps—we try to match those building specifications as far as the size of the rocks we're using. If they were building 26-inch steps, we'll try to do the same thing," said Schlag. "Matching those specs is a big deal for us."

Since early trail builders had varying approaches and styles, Acadia's trail crew endeavors to match them—from where the granite is sourced to how slabs are stacked into stairs. They pay attention to how the stones were cut, too. Are there drill scars? Were the workers using hand chisels and hand bits or were they just using the natural

"If you look at the Emery Path on Dorr Mountain, for example, every step is eight inches, eight inches, eight inches," said Schlag. "That took a lot of planning and a lot of attention to detail."

But over on Beech Mountain's Valley Trail, "they're way more rustic. There are no drill scars on anything because they were just grabbing rocks and sliding them together to build staircases and walls. It's a four-inch rise to a 12-inch rise and then back to a seveninch rise."

When possible, the trail crew sources stone from the same exact quarry or gravel pit the original stones came from—a surefire way to adhere to historic materials.

On the Bubbles Divide Trail, drills left visible scars as the large, bulbous granite was cut on site for the new stairs. But that didn't fit with the historic aesthetic of those trails. So, the trail crew went back with hand chisels and hammers to chisel all the drill scars off.

That's a great deal of extra effort, but it's a testament to the trail crew's dedication to historic accuracy.

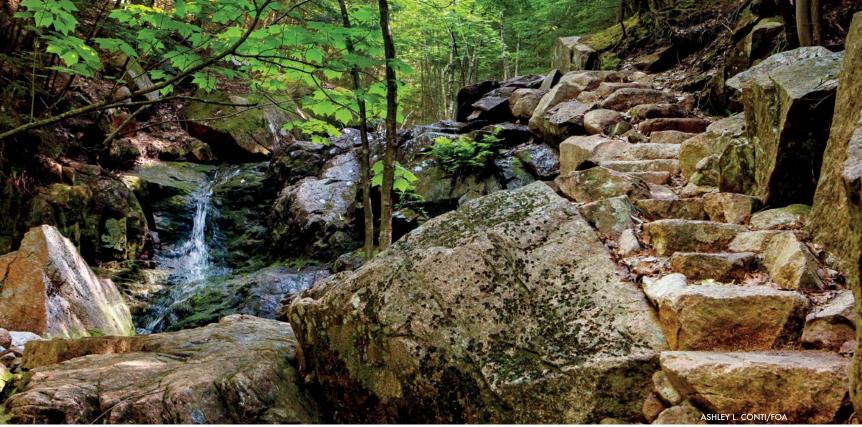
TOP: Acadia National Park's trail crew constructs wooden "check steps" on the Bubbles Divide Trail.

MIDDLE TO BOTTOM: Large blocks of granite are cut and moved into place this summer on Bubbles Divide Trail. More than 300 stone steps were set into place.









GRANITE STEPS follow the natural flow of the gorge on the Gorge Trail towards Dorr Mountain. Acadia's trail crew works hard to maintain the historic look and feel of each trail and its unique styles.

BALANCE OF HISTORY AND TODAY

Acadia's trails see more hikers nowadays than they did a hundred years ago.

Finding a balance between the trail's history and how a trail is used today is an ongoing aspect of trail work in Acadia.

"We want the park to stay the living history that it is, but also accommodate today's visitation," Schlag said. "Are we going to build 26-inch steps or are we going to build four-foot-wide steps, which will change the look of the trail?"

Conversations with Acadia's cultural resources manager helped Schlag settle on a mindful plan.

"We decided the best thing for that area was a stone staircase to the top, mostly following the existing corridor," said Schlag.

Work on the Bubbles Divide Trail began last year, with crews working as long as the freezing ground allowed, right through December. This June, the trail closed again so they could finish up the final 75-or-so yards.

All told, the crew put in roughly 320 steps and 1,000 to 1,500 feet of retaining wall on both sides, which helps stabilize the steps and clearly define the staircase (and keep people on the trail). Check steps were installed near the bottom, where there wasn't much rock and where erosion was having its way with

When trail work involves removing soil or vegetation, the trail crew saves that material to repurpose it later. "We'll cut out the sod, the native grasses, the dirt, we may transplant small trees, shrubs, and moss, and we'll stage all that material," said Schlag. When the trail work is complete, they'll replant.

Those plants help maintain the natural "been-here-for-awhile"

look. The vegetation also serves an important role in keeping that woodwork or stone in place and helping with erosion control. "The roots will take back hold and grow back in and hold everything in place," Schlag said. "A living berm almost."

Sometimes that work is covered with erosion matting for the first year or two as the vegetation retakes root. The matting is made of biodegradable material that eventually rots away.

And if gravel or stone was sourced from nearby, they'll transplant mosses and other vegetation to cover any visible disturbance there, too.

The final touch?

"We call it the naturalization or seamless blending," said Schlag. A couple of crew members call it "the magic fairy dust."

The trail crew gathers up leaves, twigs, and pine needles and scatters them over the newly finished portions of trail.

True, nature will do its own sprinkling in fairly short order, but this extra touch means a hiker on the trail the very next day can walk along, largely unaware of the work that has just been done and instead focus on the marvels of stacked granite slabs and forest canopy.

While hikers familiar with this trail will certainly see the difference, newcomers are likely to believe it's looked this way

"When you can match the building materials and naturalize it, it's amazing when you can come back in a week and be like, 'this looks like it's been here for 100 years," said Schlag. "That's one of the things that I think is so magical."

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





In the Dark

Lighting assessments and replacements in Acadia aim to welcome the dark night sky, helping birds, bats, and fireflies—and humans, too.

BY TREVOR GRANDIN

Acadia at night is an ecological wonder.

As twilight falls, the darkest parts of Acadia's forests become hubs for one of nature's most iconic bioluminescent critters—lightning bugs. These dark-dependent insects hover drowsily amongst the trees in search of mates, and photographer John Putnam is there to document their dazzling displays.

For hours at a time, Putnam and his camera lie in wait, often braving the park's less charismatic mosquitoes for his craft. He takes hundreds of exposures over a single session, stitching them together to create light-filled portraits that showcase these ephemeral insects. Putnam said that equal parts anticipation, childlike wonder, and appreciation for Acadia keep his firefly interest alive.

"I really wanted to take this one love that I had of fireflies and combine that with this other love of Acadia," Putnam said. "I almost don't feel the mosquito bites when I'm out there doing that, because I have the privilege of being able to see both of those things together."

But the twinkling subjects in Putnam's forest portraits could be in danger. Expert opinion and anecdotal evidence suggest populations are declining in many lightning bug species worldwide. Maine boasts 15 species of fireflies—including a winter firefly—according to Firefly Atlas, a collaborative project focused on understanding and conserving the diversity of fireflies in North America.

Although the reasons for these declines vary, light pollution is a threat that persists in both urban and rural environments. Unprotected artificial lights can outshine their glow-in-the-dark communications, and fireflies only flash half as often as they do in natural environments, hampering their ability to mate and reproduce.

But the threat of artificial lights doesn't affect one animal at a time; it pervades entire ecosystems. Insects that are attracted to Acadia's artificial lights are easy pickings for the park's bats, and though these abundant food sources are a boon for nocturnal animals, this buffet has cascading effects. When outdoor lights cause moths and other nighttime pollinators to coalesce in one location, bats and nocturnal birds change their behavior to take advantage of this newly abundant food source. Long-term shifts could change insect populations, pollination rates, and animal interactions, leading to weak plant communities and unsteady food chains. That's where national parks come in.

In 2006, for the first time, the National Park Service explicitly extended its mission to night skies, stating that it will protect the "natural lightscapes of parks" and minimize artificial lighting impacts throughout the National Park System. For Acadia, this means replacing the lights in park campgrounds, mapping light locations, measuring light pollution, and interpretive programs focused on night sky appreciation.

OPPOSITE: Multiple exposures capture an hour of firefly activity along a path near Great Meadow.

Strong partnerships are the backbone of Acadia's night-sky research. In the 2000s, the park worked with the gateway communities of Bar Harbor, Tremont, and Mount Desert to adopt new outdoor lighting standards into their land-use ordinances. The following year, the park partnered with Friends of Acadia, the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce, and others to launch the Acadia Night Sky Festival, which ran from 2009 to 2019. Today, park visitors can attend ranger-led Night Sky programs throughout the season.

Also in 2009, the park received a National Park Foundation grant to inventory and assess all outdoor lighting in Acadia. That assessment led to the replacement of more than 40 non-compliant lights at Blackwoods Campground, made possible by generous donations. Outdoor-lighting company Musco Lighting provided "fully shielded light fixtures," which direct light downward and greatly reduce light pollution. The Yawkey Foundation, through Friends of Acadia, funded their installation.

Since 2013, Worcester Polytechnic Institute's (WPI) "Dark Sky" project has engaged student researchers in a continuous, collaborative project to stem light pollution within the park. Standing atop Cadillac Mountain or within Acadia's forests, WPI students peer at the sky and take measurements using Sky Quality Meters. Through these readings and light inventories, researchers gauge the clarity and overall darkness of the night sky while identifying light fixtures that cause the most harm.

Professor Frederick Bianchi, director of WPI's Bar Harbor Project Center, said that after years of data collection, the next phase of the project is creating a discreet action plan for the park.

"I think it's an important and good problem to work on always, because it is solvable," Bianchi said. "Solvable [to] the extent that we can make the lights compliant. We can. Technology is changing. We can take care of Acadia."

While the bulk of Acadia is dark at night, one lit structure in the park—such as the Cadillac Summit Road entrance station—

has a disproportionate impact than if it were in a fully lit environment, like downtown Bar Harbor.

"One reason I like this project is that the fix is so easy," said Bik Wheeler, lead wildlife biologist at Acadia National Park. "It's either turning off lights or switching them out."

A collaboration between Boise State University, Penn State University, and the Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division of the National Park Service is testing solutions that could make nights

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safer for animals and people alike. Funded by the National Park Foundation, the research project seeks to balance the needs of wildlife conservation with enhancing visitor experiences in national parks, including Acadia, Great Smoky Mountains, and Grand Teton.

In Acadia's forests, researchers installed bat detectors with different colored lights—white, amber, yellow, and red—to better understand how the mammals react to different hues. Red light is considered best for wildlife, and humans can actually see better using red light as well. (Visitors to Grand Teton now have the opportunity to view the Milky Way since the park switched to red-hued lighting.)

Researchers in Acadia installed these variously colored lights at Blackwoods Campground and on Cadillac Mountain and then interviewed visitors about their experiences and thoughts about the new fixtures.

Surveyed visitors were largely in strong support of adjustments to lighting in the park, from changes in the hue and brightness of the light fixtures to reducing the number of lights overall. When they found out the benefits to wildlife, their support increased.

These collaborations aren't just informing Acadia's management; they have the chance to impact decisions in parks across the country.

"If we can find a lighting system that fits all of those different ecological areas and combines social and biological science, then we can change lighting standards service-wide," said Adam Gibson, social scientist at Acadia National Park. "And that's the kind of thing that really excites me, not just about what we're doing in Acadia but potential changes to national parks everywhere."

Some people can trace their appreciation for nature back to a single spark from childhood—climbing trees in local parks, searching for starfish in shallow tide pools, or catching fireflies on still summer evenings. Soon those sparks of appreciation

> grow into roaring fires that last into adulthood. Initiatives like dark sky protection give credence to the park service's mission to leave parks unimpaired for future generations, allowing that spark to catch while looking skyward in wonder or simply marveling at glowing fireflies.

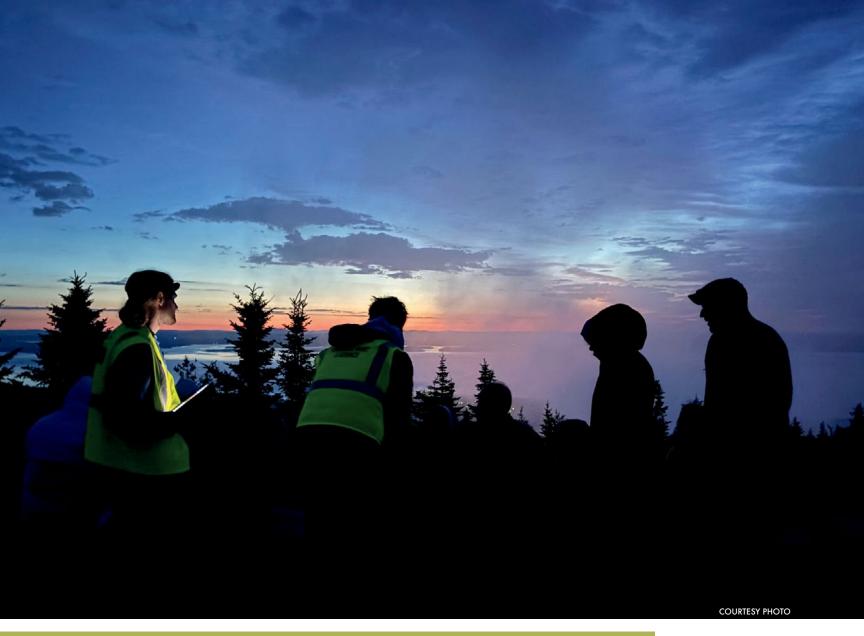
TREVOR GRANDIN is a freelance writer and former Cathy and Jim Gero Acadia Early-Career fellow at Schoodic Institute.











Night Skies in Acadia

Learn more about what's overhead at Acadia during a Night Sky program this summer.

Programs take place on Wednesday and Sunday nights. See the calendar on Acadia National Park's website for more details and registration: www.nps.gov/acad/planyourvisit/calendar.htm

How You Can Be a Night Sky Champion

Some pointers for protecting the night sky while in the park or at home.

- Use the red light on your headlamp when stargazing or otherwise enjoying the outdoors—it's better for preserving night vision than white light.
- When exploring the park after dark, do not idle in parking areas with your car's headlights on (which disrupts wildlife and your fellow night-sky appreciators).
- At home, assess your own lights. If they're not necessary, remove them. If they are, point them downward or put them on a motion or time sensor. You can also swap white light for a warm-colored amber or red light.
- Turn off lights during bird migration. BirdCast has a helpful "lights out" page: birdcast.info/science-to-action/lights-out/

ABOVE: Students from Penn State conduct surveys at the summit of Cadillac Mountain to capture visitor responses to the changing lights.

OPPOSITE TOP: A researcher swaps out lights at the Cadillac Summit Road entrance station during a lighting study in Acadia.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Lights of different hues are tested at the Cadillac Summit Road entrance station during a lighting study that assessed the effect of different lights on wildlife and visitors' experiences.

(Adam Gibson/NPS)



BY JEN BYER

ark your calendars for an unforgettable evening on Saturday, August 9, 2025, as Friends of Acadia hosts our 36th Annual Benefit—this year at a remarkable and brand-new venue: Gate House Farm in Northeast Harbor!

Located near the Brown Mountain Gatehouse, Gate House Farm is the property of longtime Friends of Acadia supporter Rick Savage, whose deep family ties to Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park span generations. This year, Rick is generously offering his open field as the setting for our biggest night of the year. We are thrilled to bring our community of supporters together once again in Northeast Harbor, on land that reflects the Savage family's legacy of stewardship, connection, and love for the park.

This year's live auction will feature a uniquely personal and moving item: a 1974 Mahogany Runabout boat, lovingly restored by Rick and his late son, Tom Savage. In a poignant full-circle moment, Tom's widow donated the boat to the auction—unaware at the time that the Benefit would be held at Gate House Farm. Her generous gift honors Tom's memory and craftsmanship and offers bidders a rare chance to own a piece of history and heart.

And the energy doesn't stop there! DJ June and the Hudson Horns will electrify the evening with live music and dance-worthy beats, blending classic and modern hits to get everyone on their feet. Whether you're sipping a signature cocktail or dancing under the stars, this year's celebration promises to be truly unforgettable.

Get ready to bid early and often—our silent auction is going mobile!

All silent auction items will be beautifully displayed under the tent at Gate House Farm, but bidding opens one week

Presented by CHILTON before the Benefit and will take place entirely online. With mobile bidding, you can browse, bid, and compete for your favorite items from anywhere—whether you're attending in person or supporting from afar. You can also donate to the Paddle Raise online, making it easy for everyone to be part of the action and impact.

At the heart of the evening is our Paddle Raise: Forever Friends for Forever Places.

This year's Paddle Raise will support the restoration and revitalization of the Carroll Homestead in Southwest Harbor, one of Acadia's most cherished cultural heritage sites. Built in the early 1800s and celebrating its 200th anniversary, Carroll Homestead offers a rare and tangible glimpse into the island's past. It has inspired generations of park visitors, educators, and historians. With your support, Friends of Acadia will preserve and protect this historic treasure for future generations to explore and enjoy.

As always, the evening will include a festive cocktail reception—sponsored by Interactive Brokers and complete with an Oyster Bar from Sweet Pea's Farm Kitchen—an elegant three-course dinner prepared by Bar Harbor Catering Company, spirited live and silent auctions, and time to connect with friends old and new—all in support of Acadia National Park.

Our deepest gratitude goes to our presenting sponsor, Chilton Trust, and to our phenomenal co-chairs, Lesley Draper and Jill Hinckley, whose leadership and vision are helping make this year's Benefit the best one yet. We are also immensely grateful to our Benefit Committee for their passion and dedication to this treasured event.

So grab your dancing shoes and get ready to bid on extraordinary experiences, treasures, and opportunities—all while supporting the park you love. Whether you're joining us under the tent or participating from afar, this is your chance to make a meaningful impact and take home something unforgettable. Together, we're building Forever Friendships for a Forever Place.

Let's make history at Gate House Farm!

For additional questions about the Paddle Raise or Annual Benefit, contact Jen Byer, events manager, at 207-370-4910 or jen_byer@friendsofacadia.org.

Scan the QR code to learn more and visit the Benefit Auction site to get tickets, start bidding, and support the Paddle Raise!

JEN BYER is Friends of Acadia's Special Events Manager.



Bid Online at the Benefit or at Home!

This year's live and silent auctions feature stunning original art, unique experiences, one-of-kind jewelry, and beautiful items for the home. And while all silent auction items will be on display under the tent the evening of the Benefit, the silent auction is going mobile! This means you're welcome to bid on items even if you don't attend in person. Scan the QR code to browse them all.



Live Auction: 1974 Mahogany Runabout – Woodcutter

This one-of-a-kind runabout is a dream boat for collectors and boating enthusiasts alike. Woodcutter is a 24-foot mahogany runabout, a stunning example of fine craftsmanship originally designed by Bobby Rich and built by Bass Harbor Boat Co. Her single-layered mahogany planks, applied over oak framing and fastened with marine-grade bronze screws and bolts, showcase timeless elegance.



Unique Experiences

Bid on a host of lively experiences, like "Birds, Binoculars & Beauty," a private birding tour for two with Down East Nature Tours.

There's also "Carve & Create," a bird carving workshop for four at Wendell Gilley Museum;
"Nor'Easter Lobster Bake," a lobster dinner for six at The Nor'Easter; and so much more.

Eye-Catching Jewelery

This stunning Lisa Hall necklace features a beautifully crafted vermeil coin pendant gracefully suspended from a delicate chain.



Alluring Artwork

James Noseworthy's work "Stillness" is painting No. 2 of a surreal Maine landscape series that invites you to peer into the reflective waters and sweeping sky.



FOREVER FRIENDS FOR FOREVER PLACES Paddle Raise for Carroll Homestead

This year's Paddle Raise supports the preservation of Carroll Homestead, an historic farmhouse in Southwest Harbor, built by John Carroll in 1825. John and his wife Rachel raised their family here until 1870 and were followed by two more generations of Carrolls.

Donated to Acadia National Park in 1982, the homestead offers a glimpse into early settler life after Maine became a state (in 1820) and serves as a vital educational

"When the kids come out there, they really step back in time," said Kate Petrie, supervisory park ranger at Acadia National Park.

As soon as fourth graders step off the bus and begin their walk to Carroll Homestead, they're asked to consider what life was like 150-200 years ago. An interpretive ranger guides them backwards through the decades as they walk. What were clothes like? What musical instruments would they be playing? What might they be eating?

"They go back in time until they're imagining themselves in homemade clothing, using a scrub board for laundry, jarring canned goods for food," said Petrie.

At the homestead, they play with wooden toys, experiment with a drop spindle to make yarn, and giggle over chamber pots and the two-seater outhouse.

During the "homestead hunt," they're handed a picture of an implement of the mid-1800s, and they set off to find it (and guess what it was used for).

The students get a hands-on experience that gives shape to what they're learning about in their classrooms, from history and math to science and language arts. Petrie and her team of rangers and volunteers update their programming to align with schools' changing curriculum needs.

The homestead is a wonderful place for locals and adult visitors, too.

"People show up and say 'I've been driving by here for 25 years. It's finally time to stop,'" said Petrie. "We have people who might just be here for the week who pop over for '20 minutes.' Three hours later they're still here making corn husk dolls."

Still others come to quietly wander the property and stand in the open field to scout for hawks and eagles.

It's a cultural and historic resource people can interact with.

"We're not highlighting the Carrolls because of their name, but for being regular settlers in the 1800s," said Petrie. "They attract us because they were average Americans showing how people could thrive, through industry and creativity." But even the well-built Carroll Homestead can't last forever without critical restoration.

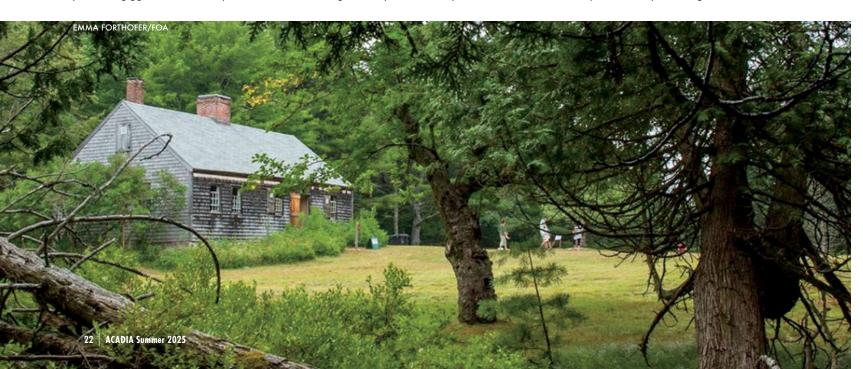
The home is showing centuries of wear. Over the hand-dug cellar, the sides of the home are drooping. Doorway thresholds bend. Park staff regularly sweep up ceiling dust that's fallen through noticeable overhead cracks. While the heavy fireplace was shored up in the 1980s, the beams holding up the kitchen and second floor are 200 years old. Upstairs, daylight is visible through the walls, and wasps have sometimes found their way in.

"Every year, maintenance tries to do what they can," Petrie said. But funding and resources are limited.

The Paddle Raise will fund a full assessment of the property to identify what restoration and repairs are needed, as well as support the preservation and restoration of the property, so it remains a valuable historic and educational resource at Acadia.

This work will help ensure that visitors 100 years from now can still see the dent by the hearth where grandma's rocking chair would occasionally hit the wall and the windowsill where John Carroll carved notches that tracked the sun's movement across the sky, so his family could tell the time even when he—and his watch—were away.

It's a place worth preserving.













2024 Friends of Acadia

IMPACT REPORT

BUILDING A BRIGHT FUTURE



2024 was a year of meaningful progress and significant milestones for Friends of Acadia and our partners at Acadia National Park. Together, we took major steps to address one of the park's most pressing needs: seasonal employee housing.

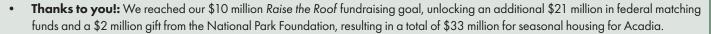
We also marked two major anniversaries: The Island Explorer bus system's 25th year (and 10 millionth rider!), and the 35th year of Acadia's successful invasive plant management program.

You'll find some of our collective accomplishments here on these pages, but please check out our full 2024 Impact Report at friendsofacadia.org/impactreport.

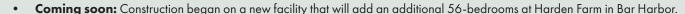
Thank you for helping us make a difference for Acadia! None of this would be possible without the continued support of our community of "friends."

What Member Support Made Possible in 2024

SEASONAL EMPLOYEE HOUSING









WILD ACADIA



- Invasive plant management: Thanks to over 35 years of dedicated management by Acadia, funding from Friends of Acadia, and research by Schoodic Institute, invasive plants now cover less than 1% of the park.
- Summit restoration: 245 volunteers carried more than 4,432 pounds of soil to Acadia's summits to support vegetation restoration.
- Co-stewardship: Friends of Acadia supported the work of the National Park Service to advance projects with Wabanaki experts.
- Water quality monitoring: Funding supported a monitoring buoy at Jordan Pond.

ACADIA EXPERIENCE

- The Island Explorer: The fare-free bus system celebrated 25 years and 10 million cumulative riders. 497,170 passengers rode last year, a 10% increase over 2023.
- Bass Harbor Head Light Station renovations: A new roof went on the historic 1858 lighthouse.
- Summit Stewards: Friends of Acadia's seasonal staff connected with 18,888 visitors on trail safety and Leave No Trace principles.
- Earth Day Roadside Cleanup: 259 volunteers picked up more than 300 bags of trash from communities surrounding the park.



TRAILS AND CARRIAGE ROADS

- **Storm cleanup:** Volunteers and donors helped with cleanups and repairs after winter storms caused extensive damage. Friends of Acadia worked closely with Maine's delegation to secure recovery funds to tackle the remaining work.
- Trail upgrades: Trial endowments funded significant improvements to Bubbles Divide Trail and Great Meadow Loop.
- Carriage road maintenance: Acadia's carriage road crew removed downed trees, repaired washouts, spread 300 tons of crushed stone, and graded 15 miles of carriage roads to maintain safe, high-quality surfaces.
- Essential equipment: Paddle Raise funds purchased a much-needed excavator, two dump trucks, and a diesel tractor.
- Volunteer work: Volunteers donated over 5,580 hours to maintaining and improving Acadia's trails and carriage roads.





TOMORROW'S STEWARDS

- **Schoodic Education Adventure**: 659 middle school students from eight Maine counties participated in immersive, multi-day, field-based programs.
- Virtual learning: 270 ranger-led virtual programs, engaged 14,797 students and teachers across the United State.
- Outdoor classrooms: Funded nine outdoor classrooms where K-12 graders can learn about science and conservation.
- Teacher training: Supported outdoor learning workshops for six Acadia Teacher Fellows from across the U.S. and 15 local teachers.
- Acadia Youth Conservation Corps (AYCC): Eleven high school students worked alongside park staff on trail and conservation projects.

ACADIA FOR ALL

- **Removing barriers:** Supported 13 trips and events, bringing groups from across Maine and around the country to explore Acadia.
- Trail accessibility: Improved accessibility of trails, including the regrading of the Great Meadow Loop.
- Wheelchair accessible horse-drawn carriage: Supported 11 rides on Acadia's carriage roads.





ADVOCACY

- Strengthening our voice for Acadia: Developed our first-ever advocacy strategic plan and made the critical decision to hire a dedicated government affairs lead—one of the first such positions among Friends groups in the nation.
- **Key priorities:** Our work helped secure critical funding for storm recovery repairs, workforce housing, and transportation projects. We also advocated for the renewal of the Great American Outdoors Act to obtain resources for much-needed infrastructure improvements at Acadia and supported co-stewardship initiatives with the Wabanaki Nations, including sweetgrass harvesting.

BY THE NUMBERS

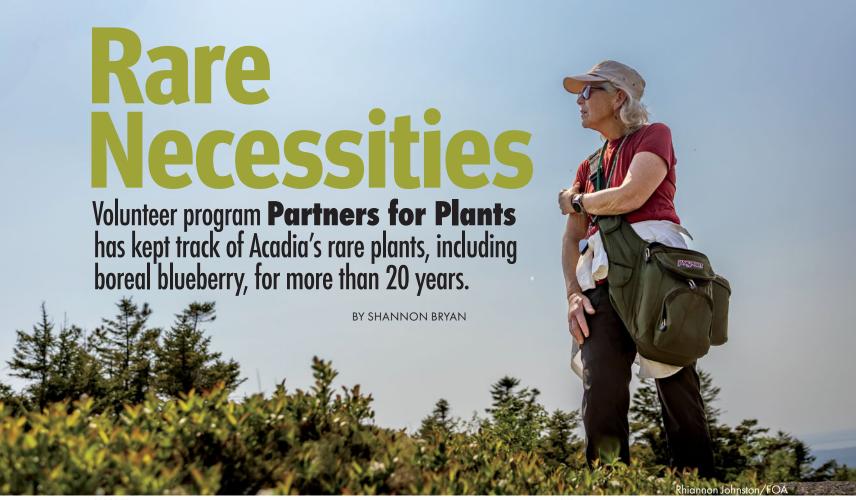
4,354 MEMBERS

9,294 DEDICATED VOLUNTEER HOURS

\$10.2M GRANTED TO THE PARK & COMMUNITIES Read the full IMPACT REPORT here.







OPPOSITE: A close-up view of boreal blueberries beginning to fruit on the summit of Cadillac mountain. ABOVE: Botanist Jill Weber on Cadillac Mountain.

cadia National Park is a "botanically fascinating place," said Jill Weber, consulting botanist. "We have a suite of species that don't get any farther south than right around our island, and we have a suite of species that from the south that don't get any farther north than right around here."

Mount Desert Island-including Acadia-is situated within the overlap of two range limits, making it a captivating place for the plant-curious to explore. The island's terrain adds to the plant diversity: a variety of habitats fill a relatively small geographic space.

"Normally, to go from the ocean to a mountain top, you might have to go 100 miles or more," Weber said. "But on our island, we're going from the intertidal zone to the top of Cadillac in two or three miles. So, we have an incredible amount of diversity."

Weber's career as a consulting field botanist and plant ecologist in Maine spans decades and includes rare plant management in Acadia National Park.

Plants are designated as rare when the total population of a species is limited to a few individuals or their presence is limited to a narrow geographic range. For some rare plants, both of these are true. Acadia's forests and wetlands are home to at least 25 species listed as rare by the state of Maine.

Weber is keenly aware that new discoveries, even in a place you've known for years, could be just around the corner.

As the botanist and ecologist coordinator for the local Partners for Plants program, a volunteer project of the Garden Club of Mount Desert, she and a cadre of volunteers have spent the last 20plus years surveying and monitoring rare plants in the park.

Working in tandem with park staff, they've gathered data on plants like seaside lungwort, Canada mountain ricegrass, mountain firmoss, Wiegand's sedge, mountain sandwort, Nantucket shadbush, and boreal blueberry.

"Around that time, the park did not have a botanist," said Weber, who helped launch the program with the late Sally Rooney. "Even with a botanist, they didn't have time to monitor rare plants in the park."

Jesse Wheeler, Acadia National Park vegetation program manager and biologist, concurs: "Without dedicated volunteers monitoring long-term datasets, like Partners for Plants, NPS managers may not know about species population shifts, and they wouldn't be able to respond in a timely manner," he said.

Early Partners for Plants efforts included invasive plant management and rare plant monitoring. Today, a half-dozen members of the Garden Club of Mount Desert continue to meet in the spring and fall to monitor designated plots of boreal blueberry. Volunteers use one-meter-square sampling frames that are set up in the exact same spot every time, and they make note of what plants are present within the frame in addition to boreal blueberry, as well as their abundance.

"Over time, we can see if blueberry is decreasing, but sheep laurel increasing—is sheep laurel pushing it out?" said Weber. "We can determine if a plant is present in the same area, or if it is popping up in new areas."

While boreal blueberry is the most consistently monitored of Acadia's rare plants over the last two decades, there was a time when Weber wasn't sure it was a real thing.

"Years before I started doing this monitoring, I was on the botanical advisory group for the state of Maine, and we were talking about candidate species to put on the rare plant list," she said. "Somebody suggested boreal blueberry, and I was like, that's not a thing."

At the time, she assumed the diminutive blueberry was simply a lowbush blueberry—merely petite because of its elevated location, as summit plants often grow smaller than their sealevel compatriots.

"And then molecular biology proved me wrong," she said. "It is its own separate species."

(In addition to boreal blueberry, Acadia is home to other species, including lowbush blueberry, highbush blueberry, and velvetleaf blueberry, whose leaves indeed feel velvety. These last three species can be seen together at the Wild Gardens of Acadia.)

Weber is a boreal blueberry fan. "The leaves are just so petite and lovely," she said. "And it's interesting that it looks so much like a lowbush blueberry, but it isn't."

Discoveries like that are a reminder that there's still much to learn about Acadia's plant species —hopefully before they're gone.

"There's diversity out there that you can't detect with your eye," Weber said. "How many other things are out here that we don't know about yet?"

Even the boreal blueberry continues to pop up in unexpected places. The most recently identified plot was stumbled upon a few years ago by a group of consultants—Weber among them—who were on Cadillac's summit to discuss restoration efforts with Acadia National Park staff. They walked out onto open rock near Cadillac's West Lot, and there it was.

Compared to lowbush blueberry, with which park visitors may be quite familiar, boreal blueberry has shorter, more compact

and branched growth and smaller flowers that appear 10-20 days earlier than lowbush flowers. They also have narrower leaves (although lowbush blueberry can also have slender leaves).

While boreal blueberry is often found growing alongside lowbush blueberry, neither one can be pollinated by the other since their bloom times don't overlap.

"You can never have a hybrid between them," Weber said. "The two stay distinct, which kind of makes me slap my thigh and go, 'Well, I'll be. That is kind of cool."

Thanks to funding from the Garden Club of Mount Desert in 2024, analysis of two decades worth of monitoring data began this past winter.

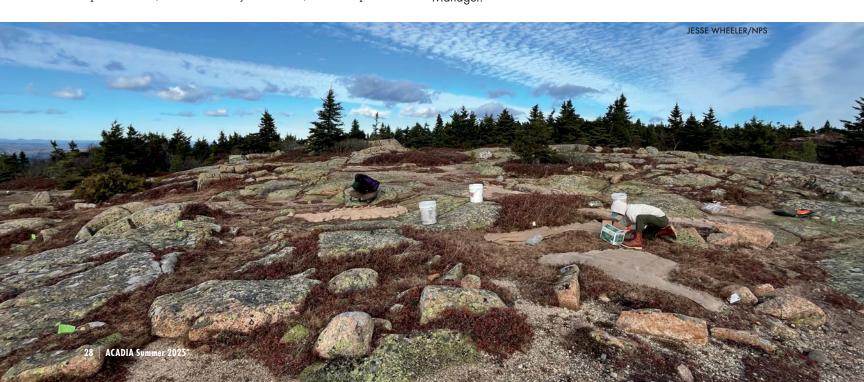
"Initial results show that boreal blueberry is relatively stable on Cadillac Mountain, where it is behind ropes and protected from trampling," said Wheeler. "However, we need to continue monitoring to see if warming temperatures or other stressors lead to declining growth of this alpine plant."

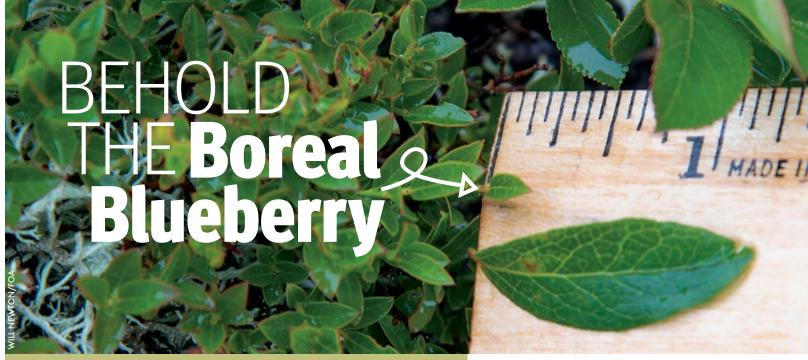
In partnership with the park and Schoodic Institute, Partners for Plants volunteers have also collected seeds from native plants, including juniper, goldenrod, flat-topped aster, green alder, and meadowsweet. Those seeds were passed to Acadia's vegetation crew, who are using them in the experimental vegetation restoration plots on the Cadillac, Sargent, and Penobscot Mountains, where changing environmental conditions and foot traffic have damaged summit plants.

In the meantime, longtime volunteers continue to monitor. It's an effort to which they're dedicated, thanks to an affinity for plants, as well as the opportunity to see things that not every visitor gets to see, Weber said. And perhaps to spot something particularly rare and special.

"I like to say every plant has a story," Weber said. "Whether it's the pollination biology or when it leafs out, what its roots are attached to—every plant has something that makes you go, 'How the heck? How is this even happening, and why has no one ever told me this?" "It makes you want to go back for more."

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





BY CATHERINE SCHMITT

The presence of boreal blueberry on Cadillac Mountain, one of the mostvisited destinations in Acadia, shows that people and such rare plants can co-exist. It also means visitors can experience the landscape of a colder world.

The blueberry is a common and popular plant in Acadia. Most are the "lowbush" species, Vaccinium angustifolium, found on sandy and rocky ground next to lakes and wetlands, along sunny trails, and on mountaintops. On the highest summits grows a similar species, boreal blueberry, Vaccinium boreale, also called northern blueberry, sweet hurts, and alpine blueberry.

A freeze-tolerant shrub more common to the north, boreal blueberry and other boreal plants are fragments of the tundra that once covered the landscape at the end of the most recent Ice Age. They persist in cold, windblown refugia on summits and coastal edges, on alpine ridges and tablelands of Mount Katahdin, the White Mountains, and the Adirondacks—places that are thousands of feet higher in elevation than Acadia.

Because of its rarity, boreal blueberry is considered a species of special concern by the state of Maine, ranked as S2, imperiled: "At high risk of extirpation in the jurisdiction due to restricted range, few populations or occurrences, steep declines, severe threats, or other factors." Boreal blueberry is one of 25 rare, threatened, and endangered plant species in Acadia.

The future of boreal plants is uncertain as temperatures warm, precipitation patterns shift, and increasing numbers of visitors contribute to trampling and erosion. Continued monitoring is essential for informing management, and protecting these plants is one of the motivations for ongoing experiments to learn how best to restore summit vegetation.

Visitors can help protect boreal blueberry by staying on established trails, not stepping on plants, and contributing observations of blueberries to iNaturalist.

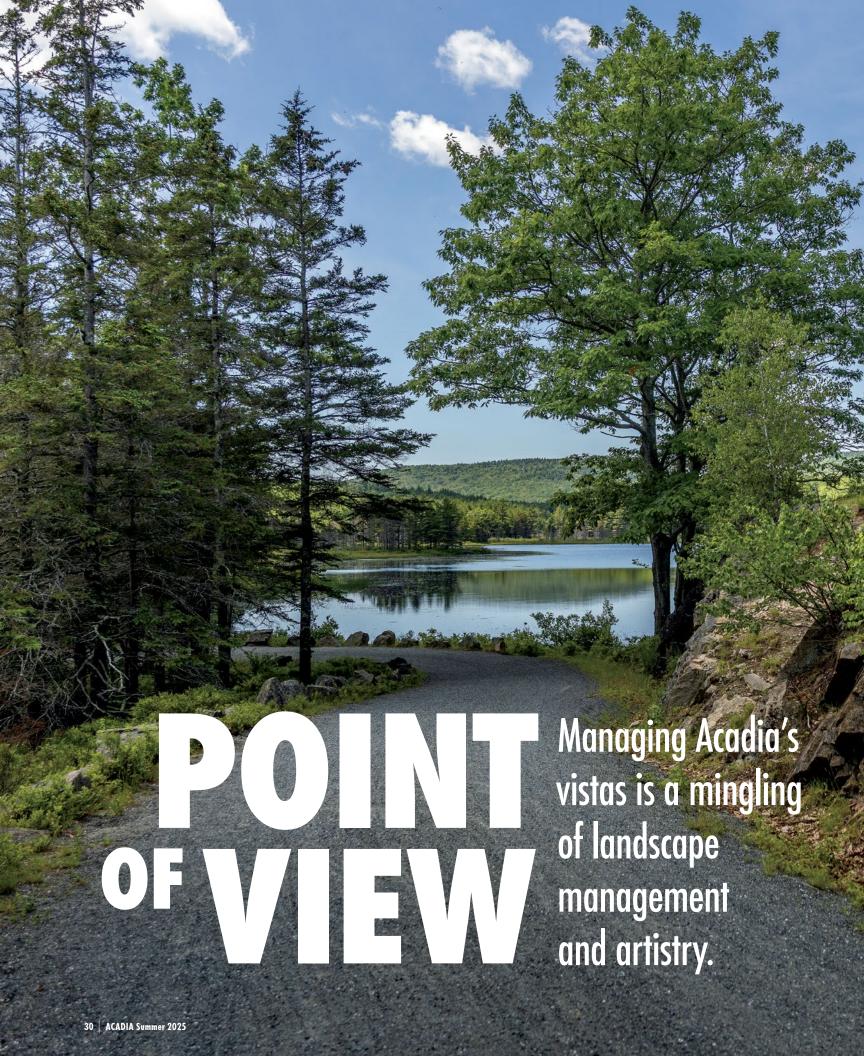
CATHERINE SCHMITT is a Science Communication Specialist at Schoodic Institute.

A BOREAL BLUEBERRY LEAF and lowbush blueberry leaf are compared against a ruler, where it's easy to see how much smaller the boreal blueberry leaf is (top).



VOLUNTEERS with Partners for Plants survey boreal blueberry on Cadillac Mountain.

OPPOSITE PAGE: A view of restoration plots on Cadillac Mountain.







hrough the trees along the Eagle Lake Carriage Road, summer hikers and bike riders can spy the early morning sun reflecting hues of pink and orange across the water. This is vista No. 65.

Farther south, on the Jordan-Sargent Mountain Road, visitors are treated to open views across Jordan Pond toward Pemetic Mountain and beyond, the landscape diving and rising back up with relative drama from shoreline to ridgeline. This is vista No. 101.

These are views that prompt people to stop, mid-ride or mid-stride, to marvel. Acadia National Park has heaps of carriage road vistas like this: 182 of them, in fact, along 45 miles of carriage roads, according to the park's Vista Management Plan for the Historic Carriage Road System. The auto roads boast another 69 historic vistas.

The most recent edition of the Vista Management Plan, published in 2023 by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, is a guidebook for maintenance that honors the historic intent of Acadia's views and offers guidance for their futures.

Like swept-back curtains, some vistas reveal broad views of calm pond waters, a huddle of mountains, or the Atlantic Ocean stretching out to the horizon. Others subtly showcase the rustic stonework of a granite bridge or the wind-waving grasses and wildflowers in a meadow.

"When you think of 'vista,' you're thinking 'I'm up high looking out at a sweeping landscape.' But there are certain vistas that are of a smaller wetland and a specific species of plant," said Emily Owens, laborer at Acadia National Park.

Eagle Lake's vista No. 65, which stretches 692 feet along the carriage road, might not even register to visitors as a vista. But a closer look reveals a delicate thinning of trees, allowing visitors that prolonged peek onto the lake.

Also less obvious: these vistas, as naturally occurring as they feel, require maintenance.

"The carriage road vistas were all intentionally designed," said Gail Gladstone, cultural resource program manager at Acadia. "But because it's landscape, it's dynamic. It changes. It needs to be maintained, or it goes away."

This winter, Owens and Alex Fetgatter, motor vehicle operator at Acadia, began an assessment of Acadia's carriage road vistas to evaluate how those vistas are faring. They dove into vista history and the Vista Management Plan and gleaned a good deal about the nuances of Acadia's landscape and the people whose visions shaped these particular views.

They also learned that each view has its own unique contours; its own diversity of flowers, shrubs, and trees; and its own singular outlook. Getting to know them means getting to know them one by one. As Owens said, "every vista is its own conversation."

VISTA HISTORY

Most of Acadia's carriage road vistas were designed in the 1920s and '30s in tandem with the carriage roads by John D. Rockefeller Jr. and his team of local engineers, architects, and noted landscape architect Beatrix Farrand. He worked with Farrand for nearly 15 years to tailor the vegetation to highlight what he considered to be some of the most beautiful views in the world.

"Farrand valued views of the island's natural features and took care to ensure that nothing of interest would escape the attention of those enjoying a ride in a carriage," the management plan notes, adding that vistas were designed "for the height of the rider as well as for the pedestrian."



With great care to maintain a natural aesthetic, vista edges were artfully blended with sloping transitions between open views and robust forest. Plantings were selectively chosen.

Rockefeller's appreciation for Farrand's time and talent are reflected in his letters to her:

"This is just a note to tell you how pleased I am with the planting in so far as I have seen it. You cannot know what a relief it is to me to have you giving attention to these matters for it had become quite a burden to me to try to keep up with them on all the roads," Rockefeller wrote in a letter to Farrand in the summer of 1931. "Then, too, what you do is so much better done than anything I could do."

Rockefeller funded maintenance of the vistas until his death in 1960. Over the next few decades, though, with the park managing multiple priorities and maintenance funds lacking, the vistas became overgrown.

RECLAIMING THE VIEWS

In the late 1980s, resource studies and park management plans recognized the historical importance of the carriage road system vistas included. And so, in 1994, Acadia National Park Arborist Jeff Grey was tasked with "transforming the existing carriage road vistas into what [he] felt best represented the intention of Mr. Rockefeller's design for Acadia's scenic views," as he wrote in his foreword in the Vista Management Plan.

Grey, who also enjoyed sculpting and drawing, was thrilled to take on the project. "I'm an artist," he told the Acadia on My Mind blog in 2015. "This fulfills some of my talents."

With guidance from Acadia's resource managers and expertise from University of Maine's forestry camp, among many others, Grey and his crew set to rehabilitating Acadia's carriage road vistas.

By 2005, the first 100 vistas were complete. Grey left Acadia for several years, but when he returned in 2012, he picked up where he left off, finishing the remainder by 2018.

This work was funded by a mix of entrance fee dollars, cyclic maintenance funds and other federal appropriations, as well as funds from Friends of Acadia. Volunteers also supported the effort.

"We depended heavily on the FOA [Youth Conservation Corps] crew and the FOA volunteers to assist in bringing cut material up to the roadside for disbursal," Grey wrote in a 2014 carriage road report.

The years-long efforts by Grey and others revitalized the park's carriage road vistas and added a wealth of information to the future vista-management playbooks.

GETTING TO KNOW VIEWS

This past winter, Owens asked if she could dig into the Vista Management Plan and begin assessing the current state of at least some of the park's views. Due to stretched resources at Acadia, the park's vistas have been minimally managed since 2018, when Jeff Grey retired.

While undertaking them all would likely be a multi-year effort, Owens wondered what might be possible more immediately, and how they could plan for the next several years or more. "Every summer we do one section [of carriage road tree work], so it makes sense that this would be part of that, section by section."

The work relies heavily on the knowledge of park staff and the carriage roads' original designers who came before her. It also requires trekking out to every vista and getting acquainted with its singular charm.

"It's so wild how uniquely they were designed," Owens said. "They were designed with someone who was standing right there deciding why this was relevant, which makes it hard nowadays to do these big umbrella projects. You have to go out there and look at each one and then plan that specifically."

THE VIEW AHEAD

The 2023 Vista Management Plan includes 182 vistas (the exact number of vistas has changed since Rockefeller's time, as views were combined or created). Each vista is detailed out with maps and latitude/longitude coordinates, a description of the intended

view, and images taken at the vista's right, left, and center. Descriptions of previous management work are included, as are recommendations for maintaining that vista into the future.

"The subject of CRV 65 was, 'First view across lake to Cadillac and south to the Bubbles. [Beatrix] Farrand remarked on beauty of view. Dense vegetation."

A sticky note from 2013 describes the treatment for vista No. 65 as, "Thin and control evergreen understory, remove hardwood and softwood poles. Prune oaks and promote huckleberry."

Documentation like this removes much of the guesswork Arborist Jeff Grey faced in the '90s. But there's still much to interpret.

"You can't freeze the landscape in time," said Gladstone. "What is maintained is the character of that vista. The vista plan that Olmsted put together identifies those important features. Then people like Emily and Alex can use their own artistic abilities and figure out how to achieve that ephemeral quality of a view."

And the work is done in close collaboration with multiple park departments.

"We've got resource management thinking about the visitor experience and history. We've got biologists thinking about invasive species management," said Owens. And they're regularly in conversation with Gladstone, who was heavily involved in the Olmsted Center's work to document vista history and develop a management plan.

"We're not just making the view for people," said Owens. "We're attempting to have a holistic approach to make sure we're not losing anything else by cutting some trees, and we're not harming our already fragile ecosystem."

As they evaluate, they're identifying low-hanging fruit—vistas where the understory needs a trim, small trees and shrubs can be removed relatively easily, or limbs from larger trees can be taken down. As of mid-July, with the help of summer interns, Owens has assessed 80 vistas.

And vista work is well underway, supported by hardworking volunteers from Friends of Acadia's drop-in stewardship program.

"I think we're going to be able to finish the assessment this year and get more work done with the volunteers," said Owens. She's impressed with how much is being accomplished this season but is also looking to the future.

"We're thinking five years out, 10 years out," said Owens. "If we get the monitoring done, these could be projects that have longer-lasting impact."

THE ART OF A VIEW

"The true craft of vista management is making it look like you weren't there," said Fetgatter, who was a member of Acadia's vegetation crew during Jeff Grey's tenure and helped rehab some of the carriage road vistas.

"We're trying to do it in a way that is as unobtrusive as possible, make it seem like it happened naturally. Sometimes [we] keep that big tree in the view, because it gives a frame of reference," Fetgatter said. "You have the foreground, the middle ground, and you have the mountain way in the distance. The value is enhanced."

It's the same artful thinking Farrand, Rockefeller, and Grey brought to Acadia's vistas.

Fetgatter's favorite: Gilmore Meadow (a.k.a. vista No. 106A). "It seems to be one of the more remote areas of the carriage roads. You've got to hike or bike quite a way," he said. "You don't see as many people, and you get a really nice view of the meadow and the mountains, maybe see some beaver activity. It's a place I feel I can sit for a long time."

That blend of artistry and landscape management is something Jeff Grey wrote about in his foreword in the Vista Management Plan, calling them "two long-standing passions of mine."

Owens agrees. "You are painting a view for the visitor," she said.

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



EMILY OWENS AND ALEX FETGATTER review the Vista Management Plan while looking at vista No. 40A on the north end of Eagle Lake. They're also using digital tools, including ArcGIS, an interactive map that displays spatial data about a geographic location, including structures, roads, drainage systems, and elevation. They view that data on a large tablet they bring into the field as they trek vista to vista, taking a slew of notes.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Photo illustration featuring a view from the Upper Mountain Carriage Road overlooking Somes Sound and Sargent Cove showing how trees and shrubs would obscure the vista of the sound below.



cadia National Park and its partners work hard to monitor and manage invasive plants inside the park. But they can't tackle this problem alone.

Whether hitching a ride on the tread of a hiker's boot, sloshing around in the belly of a robin, or gently floating down Cromwell Harbor, invasive plants have no concept of park boundaries, and they certainly don't stay within them. And ecosystems don't either—from backyards to roadsides, the unique habitats Acadia is known for protecting spill out across all of Mount Desert Island.

That's where you come in.

Backyard Stewards is a community initiative from Friends of Acadia that encourages MDI residents to take action in their own backyards by removing invasive plants and planting native species in their place. Participants sign up to become a Backyard Steward on our website and are encouraged to tell us about what plants they've removed or replaced. By sharing their experiences and key information with park managers, participants can help to inform management decisions and guide future conservation strategies in and around Acadia.

The program focuses on five key invasive species: glossy buckthorn, Asiatic bittersweet, winged euonymus, Morrow's honeysuckle, and Japanese barberry. Though not the only invasive species the park manages, these small shrubs and vines are currently the highest priority to Acadia's resource managers due to their level of pervasiveness. In 2024, glossy buckthorn alone accounted for 60% of the total time Acadia's Invasive Plant Management Team spent actively managing invasive plants.

Using Backyard Stewards' online resources, participants can investigate their own backyards for these species and learn how to remove them. Or phone a friend! Backyard Stewards also includes a directory of landscaping professionals and plant nurseries that have joined the program to help support their community.

By becoming a Backyard Steward, you can help turn the mosaic of park lands and neighboring communities into an opportunity to support a more biodiverse MDI together.

LAUREN KNIERIM is the 2025 Community Volunteer Ambassador at Acadia National Park.











OPPOSITE PAGE: Claire Burnet, 2024 community volunteer ambassador at Acadia, removes berries from cut branches of a burning bush shrub.

ABOVE CLOCKWISE: Evidence of the tight grip of invasive bittersweet is seen on the trunk of a tree • A highbush blueberry is planted to replace an invasive burning bush • Berries are picked from a bittersweet vine during a plant removal.

LEFT: Acadia National Park is embedded among local communities. However well the park manages invasive plants within Acadia's boundaries, plants from neighboring properties won't hesitate to come over. Local Backyard Stewards can have an important impact on the park by removing invasive plants from their yards. (NPS graphic)

Become a Backyard Steward

Check out our Backyard Steward resources online, and sign up to stay apprised of what's happening with the Backyard Stewards program: friendsofacadia.org/backyardstewards

- ID priority invasive species in your yard Learn more about the five invasive species of high concern on Mount Desert Island and how to identify them.
- Tips tor plant removal Learn general methods for removing invasive plants from your property and what to do after they've been removed.
- Local landscaper and nursery directory Check out the directory featuring local companies that can help, from removing invasives and selling great native alternatives to landscape design and ongoing maintenance.
- Share with us! Tell us about which invasive plants are in your yard or that you've removed/replaced.



PERCEPTIVE PERSPECTIVES IN ACADIA

The work of photographers
Mary Louise Pierson and Thomas Blagden, Jr.
is on view this summer at The Gallery at Somes Sound.

BY CARL LITTLE

ith its pink-hued cliffs and island-dotted views, Acadia
National Park has inspired a bounty of memorable
images. This summer, The Gallery at Somes Sound is
featuring work by two photographers dedicated to
Acadia: Mary Louise Pierson (1954-2024) and Thomas
Blagden, Jr. In their individual ways, they highlight aspects of the park
that remind us of our good fortune: to be able to ramble and recreate
in this wondrous place.

Born in Chicago, raised in New York City, Mary Louise Pierson, the granddaughter of Nelson Rockefeller, earned a BFA at the Rhode Island School of Design. She studied photography with Ann Parker (1934-2022), who produced remarkable books on folk art with her husband, writer Avon Neal (1922-2003).

Pierson collaborated with her mother, writer and activist Ann Rockefeller Roberts (1934-2024), on two books, "The Rockefeller Family Home: Kykuit" (1998) and "Mr. Rockefeller's Roads: The Untold Story of Acadia's Carriage Roads and Their Creator" (1990). For the latter volume she contributed color photos for a special section devoted to the park. Along with scenic views, she focused her lens on the bridges and an "artfully constructed" culvert built from hand-cut stones.

Among the works on view this summer are several of the Rockefeller gardens, atmospheric images of intimate spaces. Other photos present Bass Harbor Light and other iconic park vistas. A painter as well as photographer, Pierson knew how to frame a landscape to optimize our experience of it.

Like Pierson, conservation photographer Thomas Blagden, Jr. has a long relationship with Acadia National Park going back to boyhood visits with his great aunt Zelina Blagden (her home is now the site of the Indian Point Blagden Preserve). Over time he has become an eminent chronicler of the park, most notably through "First Light: Acadia National Park and Mount Desert Island," which won the 2006 National Outdoor Book Award, and "Acadia National Park: A Centennial Celebration," published in 2016 (royalties from its sale benefit Friends of Acadia).

Blagden finds beauty everywhere: the spiraling petioles of lily pads on Long Pond, a glacial erratic on Cadillac Mountain, two baby loons perched on a parent's back on Jordan Pond. His sense of light comes to the fore in "Golden Canopy," a brilliant shot of the illuminated tops of trees

In an interview in the Bangor Daily News at the time of his centennial collection's publication, Blagden noted how we can

"PARENTING" Photo by Thomas Blagden, Jr. ABBY ALDRICH ROCKEFELLER GARDEN IN SEAL HARBOR Photo by Mary Louise Pierson.





"GOLDEN CANOPY" Photo by Thomas Blagden, Jr.

lose our sense of wildness "because everybody has become so disengaged with the natural landscape."

Feeling connected, he stated, "makes us feel caring, and that is what drives the most effective conservation, ultimately."

Elsewhere, Blagden has written, "The more finite the area, the better, for that intimacy fosters creativity." The ultimate goal, he explained, is to attempt to know a place so well that, citing writer Barry Lopez, "one wears the landscape like clothing."

Blagden's and Pierson's photographs invite us to don Acadia attire in all its glorious plenitude.

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

BASS HARBOR LIGHT Photo by Mary Louise Pierson.

On View at The Gallery at Somes Sound

"Thomas Blagden, Photographer"...... August 10-31, 2025

The Gallery at Somes Sound is donating a portion of proceeds from all its 2025 shows "to assist in Friends of Acadia's continuing commitment of beautifying and protecting the carriage roads throughout Acadia National Park." Learn more at www.galleryatsomessound.com.



A LASTING LIGHT Remembering Ann Rockefeller Roberts

BY LISA HORSCH CLARK

Kind and soft-spoken, yet mighty in her service to Friends of Acadia and our broader community—that is how I will always remember Ann Rockefeller Roberts. A Friends of Acadia board member, honorary trustee, and tireless volunteer, Ann passed away last December at her home in New York, leaving behind a legacy as enduring as the granite coping stones that line Acadia's carriage roads.

Ann rotated off the board during my first year on staff in 2005, but even in that brief overlap, she made a lasting impression. What began as a professional connection quickly blossomed into a two-decade-long collaboration rooted in shared purpose and mutual respect.

Ann was more than a supporter—she was a steward, a storyteller, and a source of inspiration. She hosted events, gave lectures, offered challenge gifts to rally others, and most meaningfully to me, shared her deep, firsthand knowledge of the park, the carriage roads, and her extraordinary family's role in shaping Acadia and other preserved lands.

Her involvement with Friends of Acadia began in 1989 with a gift to support our operations. Over the years, her generosity touched nearly every corner of our work-from the restoration of the carriage roads to the Acadia Trails Forever initiative (she had a special fondness for the west side trails), the Annual Benefit, and the Second Century Campaign. But it was her willingness to go beyond financial support—to offer her time, wisdom, and personal connections—that truly set her apart.

When Ann published "Mr. Rockefeller's Roads: The Untold Story of Acadia's Carriage Roads and Their Creator" in 1990, she donated the proceeds to Friends of Acadia. She also gifted us copies of a special edition of the book-exquisitely bound and

deeply meaningful—which we share with members as a unique token of appreciation. In everything she did, Ann gave more than was asked, and always with grace.

One of my most cherished memories with Ann was a 2009 celebration honoring members. That day, Ann served as a narrator on one of three horse-drawn carriages that carried guests through

Thanks to her thoughtful planning, the ride ended atop Barr Hill, at the site of her grandfather's home, the Eyrie. There, on the terrace overlooking Seal Harbor and Bracy Cove, we shared a beautiful lunch and listened as Ann spoke with quiet authority about the carriage roads and the importance of protecting Acadia for future generations.

Ann's legacy is etched into the very landscape of Acadia—its trails, its roads, and the community that cherishes them. Her strength, generosity, and unwavering commitment to conservation left an indelible mark not only on Friends of Acadia but on all who had the privilege to know her. Whether guiding a carriage, recounting her grandfather's vision, or inspiring others to give back, Ann did so with humility and a deep love for this place.

As we walk the carriage roads she helped preserve or pause at a west-side trailhead she held dear, we are reminded of her enduring spirit. Ann Rockefeller Roberts was more than a steward of the past—she was a beacon for Acadia's future. Her memory will continue to guide and inspire us, just as surely as the roads she loved continue to wind through the heart of the park.

Thank you, Ann, for everything..

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



NEW MEMBERS

January 1 - May 31, 2025

Anonymous (3) Arthur Adelberg Sarah Adelberg Kerry Alexander Jay Alger Carolyne Allen Chip Allen Alyssa Amarosa

Elissa Ananian and Bob Defeyter

Richard Ananian
Linda Argote
Sandra Barlett
Marjorie Barney
Cynthia Bashore
Maureen Beck
Gail and Scott Beede
Valerie Bennett
Deborah Blake
Bradley Bosserman
Alexandra Boulware

Suzanne and William Broaddus Sarah Buchieri John Burton Jennifer Calderone Edward Calkins

Molly Carr Natalie Chadwell Julie Cheville

Citrus Mopars Car Club Inc.

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Margaret and Frank Connolly Leslie Cooper

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Sophia DeStefano
David Doniger
Joanna Dotts
Benjamin Draper

Liam and Thomas Drury-Wang Diane DuBose

Douglas Ennis
Gail Fanjoy
Lori Fineman
Elise Fischer
Victoria Fitch
Natalie Fournier
Ron Fucci
Elizabeth Fusco
Charles Gershman
Jonathan Gerson
Betsy Giacomazzi Madsen
Stephen Giannetti

Stephen Giannetti
Christos Giotopoulos
Richard Glantz

Richard Glantz Robert Glickman Debbie Gomes Frederick Gracon Cameron Graham Alan Hadfield Carolyn Halsey Chloe Hannan Gregory Hassler

Ann Marie and Stephen Helriegel

Jean Herlihy Marlene Heroux Kate Hoops Cherry Horton Susan Iglehart Molly III

Susan Iglehart
Molly III
Jacqui Ireland
Shelby James
Lise Katz
Nancy Keuffel
Judy Kiddoo
Kristy Knutson
Nathan Koch
Nancy Kopecky

Nancy Kopecky Lilia Lambert Theodore Lawrence Meghan Lee-Hall Rebecca Leeman Shelby Leighton Karen Lendvay Lisa Levite Gina Lord

Christi Lumiere Barbara Magaliff Nora Mann Pat McCoy

Alexsandra McMahan Richard Molzer Jim Montgomery Steve Noble Nathalie Nopakun Joseph O'Brien

Joseph O'Brien
Katherine O'Connor
Robert Ostrander
Betty Ott

Arti Panchal
Dave Pascarella
Victoria Paskett
Meredith Patierno
Amanda Pendleton
Kassia Pereira
Anne Perfall
Ashley Perry
Megan Petrasek
Fran Philip
Sharyn Pohlman
Brett Pairier

Sharryn Pohlman
Brett Poirier
Daedly Potusek
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Kenneth Pyle
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Melissa Slone Mary Smith Cooper Margaret and Park Smith

Paul Smith Ben Snow Katherine Springer Bruce Stephen Evelyn Swan Loralyn Sweet Natalie Szumel Kelly Tate Matthew Taylor Brenton Thurston Sheryl Tishman Alexandra Tyng Kate Unkel Karen and Frank Vannest

Laura Wacker Honor Walesby Peter Westover Whyde Family Richard Wohlstadter Skylyn Worzalla Hope Yusem Nancy Zane

NEW TRAILBLAZERS

January 1 - May 31, 2025

Anonymous (4) Steve Bien Jeanne and Bob Chamberlin Jane Daye Megan Donahue Therese and Raymond Feld Stephen Giannetti Jean Herlihy Susan and Bryan Hetherington Edward Hickey Ann Holzgraf Stacie and Bryce Johnston Kimberly and Gary Labrecque Karen Lendvay Nathalie Nopakun Nanette Notar Donna O'Block Alice and John Randolph Donna and Joseph Sebeika Tyler Shaller Julie and Frank Staggs

IN NOMINE

Wendy and Marc Tardif Honor Walesby

Loralyn Sweet

January 1 - May 31, 2025

We gratefully acknowledge gifts received in honor of

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January 1 - May 31, 2025

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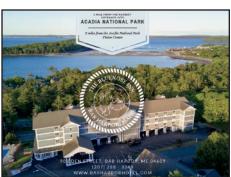
Stella Byer Tish Davies Peg Emple **Bob Hartley** Winifred Hentschel Ashley McLean Tobias McLean











Enraptured by Raptors

Peregrine Falcon Watch in Acadia

Young peregrines are strengthening their wings on the winds over Acadia right now, their practice flights bringing them increasingly farther afield. As adults, peregrine falcons are impressively fast reaching speeds up to 69 mph when pursuing prey in flight and upwards of 200 mph during a hunting dive, a.k.a. "stoop."

While trails near the peregrines' cliffside nesting sites are closed to park visitors this time of year, we're welcome to peek at their progress every weekday morning during the Peregrine Falcon Watch Program.

Held from 9-11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday in the Precipice Trailhead parking lot, the program invites the peregrine-curious to peer through telescopes to spot peregrines on the cliffs. Park

rangers and interns are on hand to help point the scope in the right direction and share their falcon knowledge.

This year, a peregrine pair claimed their spot on the cliff face of Champlain Mountain, right above the Precipice parking lot, and are currently raising up two chicks, a.k.a. "eyasses."

You can also follow how the peregrines are faring on the park's website. Jazmine DeBeauchamp, raptor intern at Acadia, shares weekly updates in View from the Aerie. Scan the QR to read the latest. This year's chicks are nearly ready to fly, so if you miss the Peregrine Falcon Watch this year, be sure to check it out in the future. Later this summer and fall,

you can check out the Cadillac Mountain Hawk Watch!



In the meantime, here's some useful peregrine falcon vocabulary:

Aerie (or eyrie): An aerie can refer to the nest of any large bird of prey, but in the context of peregrine falcons, it specifically refers to their nesting location, since they don't build traditional nests like many other birds do (more on that below).

Eyas: Pronounced "eye-us," it refers to a young, unfledged falcon or hawk still in the nest.

Fledging: This is the stage in a falcon's life (or any flying animal, including bats) when they're becoming capable of flight. Beginning in early July and continuing through August, they'll take practice flights and explore farther afield.

Scrape: "The ledge where they've been spending most of their time," writes Jazmine in the View from the Aerie. "Instead of building what we think of as a bird's 'nest,' peregrine falcons lay their eggs directly on rocky, elevated surfaces to get a good vantage point of prey and protection from predators."

Strikes: Peregrines typically strike in mid-air, knocking their prey to the ground. Less often, they'll strike and grab prey and fly away. "These hungry birds are also voracious predators that can fly up to 15 miles to catch their prey," writes Jazmine.



TOP: Clouds move over Champlain Mountain.

ABOVE: Jazmine DeBeauchamp (left), the raptor intern for the National Park Service, a position funded by Friends of Acadia, and Olivia Hanson (right), an interpretive ranger for the National Park Service, use a scope and binoculars to search for active peregrine falcons on the cliff face of Champlain Mountain.

TEST YOUR ACAD A

Name that Plant

Can you identify these plants of Acadia's summits?

Acadia's summit plants often get overlooked, partly because they tend to be low-growers, but also because most hikers' attentions are focused on the summit sign ahead or understandably distracted by the views.









Harebell • Flat-topped aster • Mountain sandwort • Sheep laurel • Three-toothed cinquefoil



1 ,			
2			
3			
4			
_			

ANSWERS ON PAGE 50



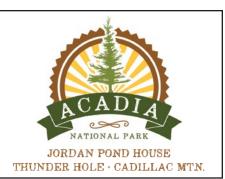
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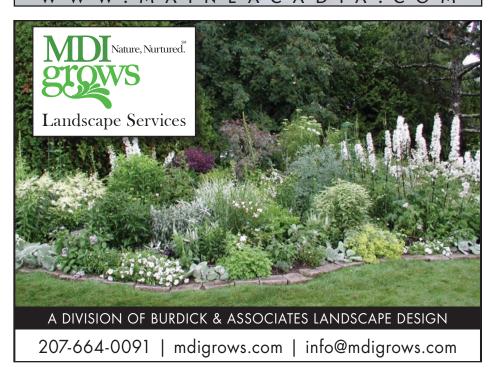
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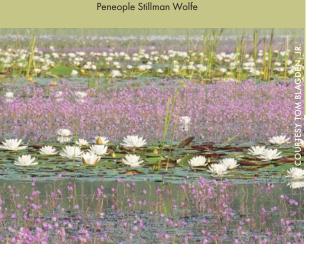
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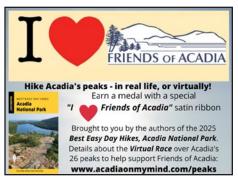
Darrell Whittemore Thomas "Tom" Witt





















Three Apps to Add to Your Summer Gear List

The outdoors is a great place to unplug, but these three apps can help enhance your Acadia experience.

Merlin Bird ID

Acadia is home to 338 bird species, making it a top destination for bird watching—and bird listening. Ever wondered which feathered friend is behind that chirp, churrip, or cheep? The Merlin Bird ID app can help. Its Sound ID feature listens to the songs and calls around you, suggesting matching birds in real time. Once downloaded, the app works offline, making it a handy decoder even on Acadia's most remote trails.



iNaturalist

Using powerful image recognition technology, iNaturalist turns your cellphone camera into a tool for instantly identifying plants and animals. Simply point your lens at any unfamiliar flora or fauna, and the app will suggest an ID using image analysis and your location.

Using iNaturalist in Acadia doesn't just satisfy your curiosity; it also supports National Park Service and Schoodic Institute scientists by helping document and monitor the park's rich biodiversity. Each observation you log helps park resource managers map native species and detect invasive ones. At the Great Meadow Wetlands, for example, volunteers using iNaturalist have helped make more than 3,500 observations of over 600 species.



If you've ever tried to park at Jordan Pond on a summer weekend, you know the value of taking the bus. The fare-free Island Explorer bus system shuttles visitors to popular destinations throughout the park. Spend the day at Sand Beach, climb Beehive, or enjoy a popover without worrying about finding a parking spot. Before you go, download the myStop Mobile app and select "Island Explorer" to see bus locations in real time.









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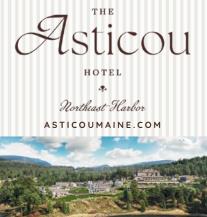


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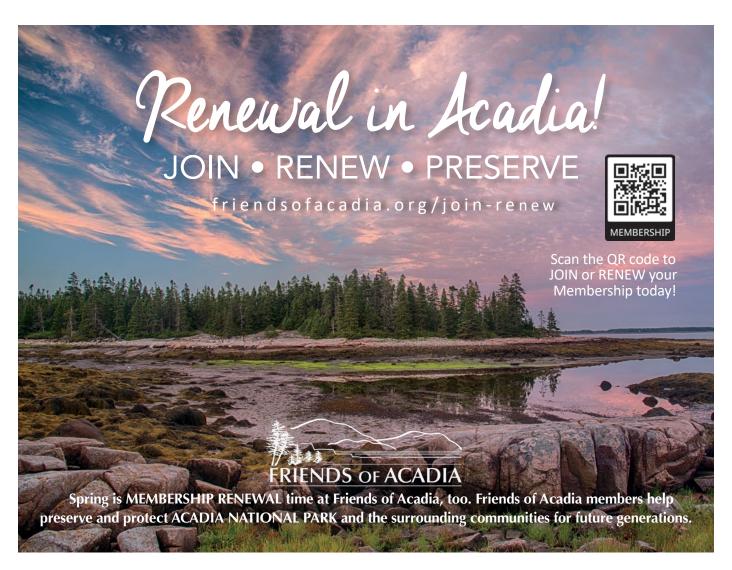
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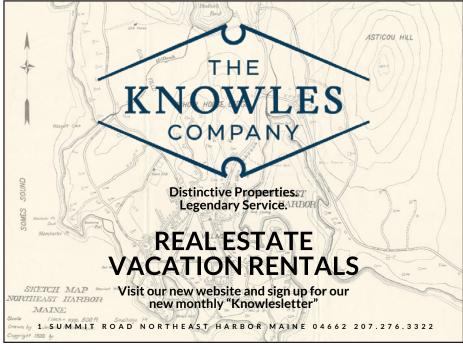
SUPPORTING TRAIL WORK IN ACADIA THROUGH FRIENDS OF ACADIA'S STEWARDSHP VOLUNTEER PROGRAM















Celebrating the Volunteers Who Make Acadia Shine

This July, I had the honor of welcoming more than 300 Friends of Acadia members, volunteers, and partners to our Annual Meeting in Bar Harbor. We came together to celebrate the hard-won accomplishments of the past year and to honor extraordinary individuals who generously gave their time and talents to keep our beloved park thriving.

The gathering was a heartfelt moment of gratitude and resolve. While we acknowledged that the National Park Service is navigating significant staffing shortages and structural upheavals across the country and here at Acadia this summer, we also celebrated how our shared efforts are making real progress on critical issues, including seasonal employee housing, habitat restoration, and the visitor experience.

Each year, Friends of Acadia recognizes individuals whose extraordinary efforts have made a meaningful difference for the park. This year, we were proud to honor five remarkable people who, each in their own way, have made a lasting impact on Acadia.

Excellence in Volunteerism Award – Georgia & Mark Munsell

This year we recognized Georgia and Mark Munsell for outstanding volunteer service. Through her boundless knowledge of Acadia, and tireless leadership at the Friends of Acadia membership table, Georgia has welcomed thousands of new members into our organization and educated countless visitors about the importance of conservation and park stewardship.

Mark Munsell, a legendary trail volunteer and master craftsman, has donated more than 5,000 hours over the last ten years, helping keep Acadia's trails safe, scenic, and structurally sound. Mark has replaced dozens of bridges and rebuilt numerous staircases, fences, and bogwalks on much-loved trails. His work has made Acadia's trails more accessible and better able to withstand the impacts of heavy use and severe weather.

President's Darn Good Work Award – Anne Green & David Katona

Friends of Acadia board members Anne Green and David Katona received the President's Darn Good Work Award for their extraordinary leadership as co-chairs of our Raise the Roof campaign. Together, they helped raise \$10 million in support of seasonal employee housing—a milestone that unlocked \$21 million in federal funding and an additional \$2 million from the National Park Foundation. Thanks to their efforts and the generosity of more than 320 donors, this \$33 million investment is transforming housing for Acadia's seasonal staff.

These funds have already enabled the completion of

Dane Farm, with eight bedrooms in Seal Harbor, and construction is underway on a 56-bedroom complex at Harden Farm in Bar Harbor, ensuring housing for seasonal employees for generations to come.

Marianne Edwards Distinguished Service Award – Hannah Sistare Clark

It was a privilege to present Friends of Acadia's highest honor, the Marianne Edwards Distinguished Service Award, to Hannah Sistare Clark. Hannah stepped down from the Board of Directors this year after 14 years of service including terms as vice chair, advocacy committee chair, and Acadia for All committee member.

Drawing from her distinguished career in Washington, D.C., Hannah guided our organization through complex policy issues and helped shape core policy positions on important topics ranging from salmon farms to air quality to native vegetation. Hannah helped advance key national conservation legislation, including the Great American Outdoors Act and the Native Plant Species Pilot Program Act, and helped us build broad coalitions united in our love for Acadia National Park. We are eternally grateful for Hannah's expertise and dedication to public service and Acadia.

National Recognition for Over 50 Years of Volunteer Service

This year's celebration was made even more meaningful by national recognition for a beloved member of our community. In the same week as our Annual Meeting, The New York Times featured past annual award recipient Anne Kozak in a story highlighting outstanding national park volunteers across the country.

Anne has dedicated over 50 years to the Wild Gardens of Acadia. As co-chair of the Friends of Acadia Wild Gardens committee alongside Helen Koch, she still contributes more than 600 hours each year to organizing volunteers, fundraising, and educating visitors about the garden's 400 native plants. Her decades of commitment have shaped the garden into a place of beauty, learning, and connection to Acadia's unique plants and habitats.

A Message of Gratitude

I am continually inspired by the dedication and spirit of all of Friends of Acadia's volunteers who collectively give more than 9,000 hours each year to planting, raking, repairing, educating, and making our park shine. To each and every one of you: thank you! Your generosity is woven into every trail, every view, and every visitor's experience.

FROM THE **BOARD CHAIR**



"I am continually inspired by the dedication and spirit of all of Friends of Acadia's volunteers who collectively give more than 9,000 hours each year to planting, raking, repairing, educating, and making our park shine."

-Bill Eacho

ANSWERS to Acadia IQ Plant Quiz

on page 43

- 1. Sheep laurel
- 4. Mountain sandwort
- 2. Flat-topped aster 5. Three-toothed cinquefoil
- 3. Harebell





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Welcome to Our 2025 Seasonal Staff!

Friends of Acadia's Stewardship Crew, Recreation Technicians, Summit Stewards, Wild Gardens of Acadia intern, and Communications seasonal employees are doing a range of work in Acadia this summer.

They're helping build and maintain the park's trails and carriage roads and employing social science to monitor how visitors move about the park. They're engaging with park visitors and capturing behind-the-scenes work through images and video.

Our seasonals have an immediate positive impact on Acadia, but they have farreaching ripple effects, too.

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

Welcome to this crew; we know they'll have a rewarding season in Acadia!



BACK ROW (L-R): Matthew Egelberg, Eli Shahan, Lillian Abbott, Luke Fiermonti, Claire Keeley, Nora Marasco, Rhiannon Johnston, Jess Elliott, Mattie Vandiver. Front row (L-R): Molly Bogner, Teagan Lapuk, Kelby Youngberg, Gemma Lurie.



THE 2025 ACADIA TEACHER FELLOWS (L-R):

Caro Woodard, Emily Anderson, Gi Reed, Ashleigh Miller, Sandy Lord, Brenna Trefethen, and Kelley Rush Sanborn.

Learning Outdoors to Teach Outdoors

This year's Acadia Teacher Fellows cohort includes seven teachers from around Maine and the country.

Funded by Friends of Acadia, the Acadia Teacher Fellows program at Acadia National Park provides teachers with the tools to develop lesson plans and curriculum that connects students with the outdoors, science, and Acadia National Park.

Arriving in early July, they're spending several weeks exploring the park and learning about outdoor learning initiatives that they'll take back to their home schools.

They're learning alongside knowledgeable park staff and gaining a behind-the-scenes look into park operations, education, trail maintenance, and more. And the experience extends far beyond fundamentals; it offers space to rejuvenate and explore alongside fellow educators, encouraging new ideas and a sense of community.

When they return to their schools and classrooms in the fall, they'll begin incorporating what they've learned. That might include teaching students how to engage with the outdoors and helping them learn foundational skills like dressing for the weather, creating an outdoor learning space, or connecting their curriculum to the natural environment.

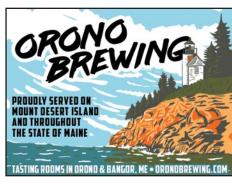




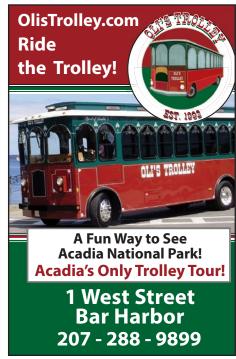














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