



Mariaville Falls *by Tom Sidar*

Once a vibrant community, now wild woods

Driving north on Route 181, the Mariaville Road, from Ellsworth, it is easy to miss the turn. The road winds through sparsely settled fields, woodlands and a few scattered farmhouses. I've been out here enough to know the turn now, left on the gravel road at telephone pole 19. Drive down about a mile or as far as your vehicle has clearance and walk down to the river. You can hear the roar of the Falls. Follow the shoreline path upriver until you climb to the top of the steep bank above the Falls. You will not see a house or a camp along the way, just woods and water and river rapids. Climb down the steep bank, if you like, and get close to the river. You are standing at the site of what was once a thriving industrial river town.

Five years ago in my first week at FBC, I had the good fortune to take a field trip to Mariaville Falls, led by FBC board member and College of the Atlantic professor Ken Cline. A week later we paddled canoes down the west branch of the Union River from Route 9 in Amherst to Goodwin's Bridge below the Falls. As we portaged around the Falls, we saw two young boys with their jeans rolled up fishing. They held up stringer with three brightly colored trout. Wild

water, canoes, deep woods—after three years in the suburbs of northern Virginia I remember thinking how good it was to be back in Maine.

Before I arrived at FBC, the Board had begun to talk to the Edgecomb

the two of us walked to the Falls. Stories and reminiscences flowed freely. It was clear that the history and the bond between the Edgecomb family and their Falls property was long and deep. The beauty of this



PHOTO KEN CLINE

family about acquiring their river front property on the east and west sides of the Union River at Mariaville Falls. The deal went quiet for a number of years and then came back to the fore when the FBC Land Protection Committee prioritized the acquisition of the land around the Falls.

Following the committee's lead, I met with Gerry Edgecomb. As we sat on chairs in his garage just up the road from the Falls, he relayed the story of his family's long connection to the Falls property. Then

wild river close to the coast strengthened my resolve to do my part for FBC to purchase this property.

The link between this project and FBC's goals of preserving Downeast Maine's clean waters, natural wildlife habitat, and public access to water and woods was very clear. As the months went on, we found a solution that suited the Edgecomb family, added the important element of responsible, sustainable forestry on the large western upland timber acreage and also met FBC's goals. On August 16

"Like" us on Facebook.

Stay in touch with the latest FBC news, or post photos of your friends and family enjoying one of the FBC Preserves or events.



facebook.com/frenchmanbay

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President's Column

a message from our president, Iris Simon

As the new President of the Frenchman Bay Conservancy Board, I look forward to working with all those involved—an energized group of people with a diverse scope of skills. It should prove to be a very good and productive year.

My background involves land as I was raised in a farming community and I own the acreage that my immigrant grandfather homesteaded in North Dakota. That land is far different from the property we own in Maine (which may be the reason I have a real fondness for trees).

Each summer season is busy at FBC but this year especially so. The acquisition of Mariaville Falls certainly was the highlight of the summer. We hosted Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours and the Third Annual Lobster Dinner. We held our first Annual Autumn Trail Race, the course crossing two FBC preserves. The FBC staff, board members and volunteers were the key to making these events successful.

As we look to the coming year we have many goals but increasing membership is primary. After you have completed reading this informative newsletter, please pass it on to a neighbor, friend or relative and urge them to become a member of Frenchman Bay Conservancy. ❖

Mariaville continued from page 1

the heirs of Roland Edgecomb deeded the east shore parcels to FBC and sold the western parcel to Robbins Lumber with an FBC shoreland protection easement. Another chapter in the history of Mariaville Falls begins.

But what were the chapters before? Gerry and others told me that at

“Do you have a history of Mariaville?” I asked at the desk. How fortunate that Mark Honey, the foremost historian of the region and author of *King Pine, Queen Spruce, and Jack Tar* was right there at the library doing research. We sat at a table in the library that look out over the Union

River flowing down from the north, spread out the books, and he began. Here is the story (quoted or paraphrased) as I heard it from Mark Honey and read it in his books:

“Mariaville Falls was a very active, very busy, very vibrant community until the 1830’s.” It was not just a settlement on a river. Investor William Bingham of Philadelphia and his partners at the Baring Brothers Bank of London had invested in

millions of acres in Maine. The income return on their investments in Hancock County was to come from the sale of land that was to create small farming communities, and

timber rights. Mariaville Falls would be the central town of all of their holdings in northern Hancock County. The settlement at the Falls was built in stages: a dam by 1800, a double sawmill by 1801, a gristmill by 1803, and a hemlock bark tannery, boarding house, and store within ten years. General Cobb, the agent for the Bingham Purchase, would build a network of roads with the Falls settlement at the hub. Roads would connect with Eddington to the west, Ellsworth and Gouldsboro to the south and east, and the St. Croix to the east. By 1810, fifty working families were living in the town at Mariaville Falls.

“These men lived in a world of hard labor and careful skill, and their ingenuity was such that they could build such structures with their craft, their simple tools, and the power of oxen. They harnessed the lay of the land, the power of water, and the simple mechanics of gravity to work for them, and the structures they built, simple but rugged, were a reflection of the means and men by which they were built.”

The settlement went into decline in the 1830s with the loss of the saw mill. By that time other nearby communities had developed their own mills, particularly in Ellsworth where Col. John Black had established several.

Incidentally, Mariaville is the only community in Hancock County named for a woman: Maria Bingham, the daughter of William and Ann Bingham, was known for her beauty and charm. She became a famous courtesan in the courts of Europe. Maria is pronounced with a long ‘i’.

Looking out over the wild river into the deep forests at Mariaville Falls, knowing that fifty families once lived here in a thriving river town, it is easy for your thoughts to drift off in wonder. Or if you’d rather...cast a fly out and hope that a trout will rise. The preserve is open to the public and, by next summer, we intend to have a sign in addition to telephone pole 19. ❖



The race begins on the fields of Sumner High School.

Autumn Trail Race

A gray and drizzly Sunday morning was no deterrent for the 34 runners who participated in the Conservancy’s first annual Autumn Trail Race on October 28. The four-plus mile course began at Sumner High School and wound through trails of two of FBC’s wooded preserves in Sullivan. It was a challenging route over narrow paths, rocks, roots, and steep inclines. Andrew Brunton was the overall winner with a time of 35:02, and Desiree Sirois was the first woman to finish at 39:12.



Runners begin to break from the pack before entering the woods.



Desiree Sirois is the first woman to cross the finish line.



Racers navigate a treacherous section of the trail.



Winner Andrew Brunton breaks the tape at 35:02.



Andrew Brunton and runner up Jeremiah Graham congratulate each other.

Mariaville Falls, where there is now only deep forest and free flowing river, there was once a thriving town. That’s why I got into my Jeep and drove to the Ellsworth Public Library.



Volunteer trail crews installed hundreds of feet of cedar bog bridging through the wet areas, cleared brush and blow-down trees and marked the trails with small blue paint blazes.



Find a trail map for each preserve at www.frenchmanbay.org, our Facebook page facebook.com/frenchmanbay, and on mobile devices at frenchman.org/maps.



FBC Board member Randy Ewins installs the new sign at the Old Pond Railway Trail.



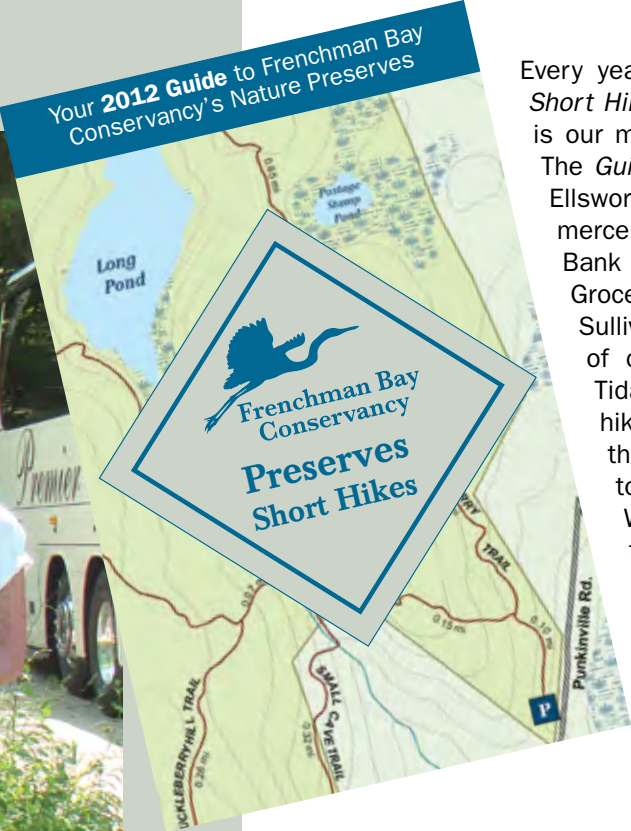
A youth group from Burlington, Vermont, poses after completing the bog bridge installation on the Old Pond Railway Trail.

Fourteen Miles of Hiking Trails

Over the past two years, FBC volunteers have worked hard to improve visitor experience on our trails with new entrance signs, maps, parking lots, bog bridgings, and kiosks.



Volunteers installed beautiful new trail head signs at Long Ledges, Corea Heath and Indian Point, and a new information kiosk at Indian Point.



Every year, our free *Guide to Short Hikes* on FBC Preserves is our most popular handout. The *Guide* is available at the Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce, Camden National Bank in Ellsworth, Hancock Grocery, the Hancock and Sullivan town offices, and of course, our office at Tidal Falls. We list twelve hikes that are open to the public, with more to come in the future. We now offer individual trail maps at www.frenchmanbay.org and facebook.com/frenchmanbay.

Recent trail improvements:

Baker Hill
New kiosk
Internal trail markers

Corea Heath
New parking lot
New sign
Trail brushed out
Bog bridges installed

Indian Point
Improved parking area
New signs at road, turn in, and trail head
Refurbished kiosk
Trail marked and blazed

Long Ledges
Trail brushed, cleared and blazed
Bog bridges installed

Salt Pond
Improved trail loop
Bog bridges installed
Trail marked and blazed

Frances B. Wood
in collaboration with US Fish & Wildlife
New kiosk
Trail rerouted and marked

Old Pond Railway Trail
in collaboration with Town of Hancock, local Eagle Scouts, Crabtree Neck Land Trust, and Maine Coast Heritage Trust
New signs at entrances
Improved parking

Frenchman Bay celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2012



Monday Music Frenchman Bay Conservancy’s popular Monday Music at Tidal Falls featured seven live performances at one of the prettiest open air concert venues in Hancock County.



Annual Lobster Dinner Members and friends enjoyed the Third Annual Lobster Dinner on an idyllic July evening under the big tent at Tidal Falls.

Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours FBC hosted its first Business After Hours in July. Both weather and tide cooperated for a picture perfect setting.



Photography of the Preserves Photo Show The Photo Show took place at the end of summer at Hammond Hall in Winter Harbor. Local photographers featured dramatic vistas and details of wildlife in photos taken at the FBC preserves. Kelly Bellis’s wonderful maps enhanced the presentation.

FBC National Accreditation PUBLIC NOTICE

The Frenchman Bay Conservancy is applying for accreditation. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant’s policies and programs to ensure they meet national standards for excellence in protecting important natural places and working lands forever.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how FBC complies with national standards addressing the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/indicator-practices.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments on FBC’s application will be most useful by March 30, 2013. Comments may be faxed or mailed:

Land Trust Accreditation Commission
Attn: Public Comments
Fax to: 518-587-3183
Mail to: 112 Spring Street, Suite 204
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866



Join us TODAY!

And receive a FREE static cling decal to show you’re a proud member.

Your membership and donations help us protect and preserve the character of this very special place—and we welcome donations at all levels. Members receive a free decal, two editions per year of our newsletter, and the opportunity to be involved by helping out with trail maintenance, easement monitoring, or mailings.

BLUE HERON SOCIETY

If possible, we urge you to consider joining the Blue Heron Society by making a commitment to give \$1000 or more each year for general operating support. You can also support Frenchman Bay Conservancy through a bequest. Remember us in your will or explore other estate planning options with your lawyer.

*Help us get new members.
Consider gift memberships
for your family and friends
this holiday season.*

YES! I want to join Frenchman Bay Conservancy.

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

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MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Please enroll me in the category checked below.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 STUDENT | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ OTHER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 | BLUE HERON SOCIETY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | |

- ☐ My check, payable to FBC, is enclosed.
- ☐ I prefer to remain anonymous in public membership lists.

Please remit form and check to: Frenchman Bay Conservancy
PO Box 150, Hancock, Maine 04640

To pay by credit card, visit our website www.frenchmanbay.org

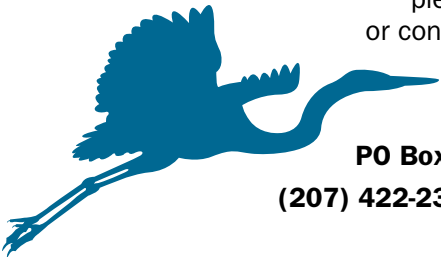
Frenchman Bay Conservancy is recognized as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Thank you!

Frenchman Bay Conservancy

Frenchman Bay Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust founded in 1987. Our mission is to build lasting relationships and commitments that conserve the distinctive landscapes and natural resources of the Frenchman Bay and Union River watersheds.

For more information on the Conservancy, please visit our office at Tidal Falls, or contact us by mail, phone, or e-mail:



Frenchman Bay Conservancy
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(207) 422-2328 tom@frenchmanbay.org
www.frenchmanbay.org

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PHOTOS DEBBIE STAHR



The Eiders of Tidal Falls

This autumn at Tidal Falls, there are hundreds of common eiders swimming in the swift currents and eddies of the Taunton River. In the morning they fly in huge groups just a yard above the surface of the water at nearly 70 miles an hour and move into their prime feeding locations. When a school of herring is in the strong current, the eiders go into a V-formation and roll dive from the front to back with military precision. They seem to work the currents and fish as a team. Their primary foods are mussels and crabs which they swallow whole. After a good feed, they ride the swift current downriver in a single line and flock up in “rafts” behind the island to rest and digest their rough diet. At 6 pounds, strikingly-colored male eiders and subtle brown females are the largest ducks in the northern hemisphere. ❖



In the morning they fly in huge groups just a yard above the surface of the water at nearly 70 miles an hour and move into their prime feeding locations.

