



Completion of Mariaville Falls Preserve

by Tom Sidar

Linda Coleman has a vivid memory of fishing at Mariaville Falls with her father when she was five or six years old. “I remember catching eleven fish and being so proud.”

“Were they brook trout?” I asked.

“They were spring suckers. But it didn’t matter to me. I was just so excited that I caught them.” We talked about how important it is for kids to have memorable outdoor experiences at an early age and how it “imprints” them with a love of the great outdoors that stays with them for the rest of their lives.

On February 18, 2014, Linda Grover Coleman sold 50 acres of land with almost 1,000 feet of frontage on the West Branch of the Union River to Frenchman Bay Conservancy. This new FBC land, combined with the 73-acre parcel that FBC purchased from the heirs of Roland Edgecomb

the rich, riparian wildlife habitat of this exceptionally wild and clean river and assures access for the public.

It took Linda some time to get used to selling her 50 acres on the West Branch of the Union River to FBC. Her bond to this land is strong. She lives in California now, but her

With the acquisition of the Coleman property, FBC now owns an unbroken route to Mariaville Falls.

in 2012 and the 17-acre conservation easement along the west shore of the river rounds out the protection of nearly three quarters of a mile of the Union River on both sides, including the islands in the middle. This guarantees the permanent protection of

Maine roots—her Mariaville roots—go back to the early 1800’s. The story of the Grover family at Mariaville Falls goes back to Grover’s store at the original settlement village in 1810. William Bingham of Philadelphia, backed by Barings Bank of London,

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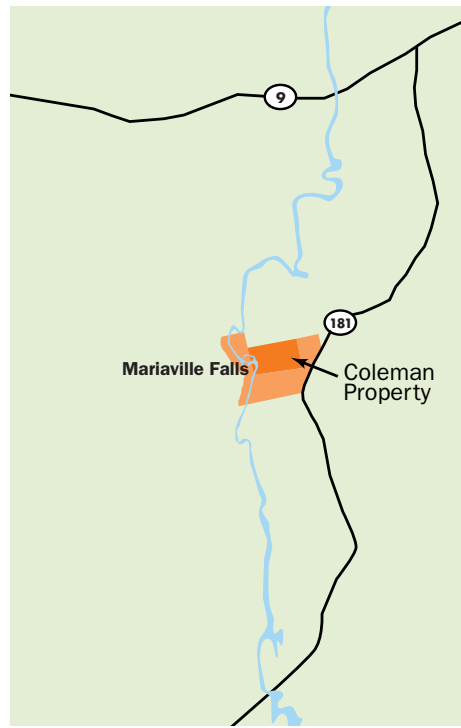


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purchased millions of acres in Maine. The return on his investment came from the sale of timber for ship building and then from the sale of the cleared land to hard-working farmers and their families centered around an idyllic agrarian village at Mariaville Falls. Bingham hired General Cobb to build a road through the wilderness to the site of the planned new town of Mariaville on the West Branch of the Union River. The road ran from Gouldsboro to Eddington with Mariaville at the center. Mariaville thrived for nearly thirty years on the milling of the abundant white pines, and the bark of hemlock trees that was used in the leather tanning mill. Zelotus Grover, Linda's direct-line ancestor, ran the store selling supplies to the village families that lived at the Falls. After 1830, the tall pines were gone, the hemlock bark was used up and as it turned out, the soil at the Falls wasn't suitable for farming. Families moved away. Buildings were flooded or burned, rotted away and sank into the soil. There is no sign of a village or a structure at Mariaville Falls today. The Grovers stayed in the region moving to farms with better soil in the towns nearby—Aurora, Amherst, Eddington—but they held onto their property in Mariaville. Linda remembers that her grandfather,



Roscoe John Grover held the deed to the land around the Falls.

That was more family history than Linda knew growing up. After serving in the Army Air Corps during WWII, Linda's father, Roscoe John Grover Jr., returned to Maine and established a law practice in Bangor. Like many WWII veterans, he would do what it takes to live his post-war years at peace, with his growing family under the roof of their own home. He came back to their land in Mariaville and cut the timbers for their house in

Brewer. The Campbell and Williams Mill in Clifton milled the timbers and her father built their house from that lumber. Her father passed away 24 years ago. Her mother lived in the house built from Mariaville timbers until she died in 2012.

Linda pauses in reflection. "Mariaville Falls will always be preserved. I feel good about that." Roots run long and deep and the land and the river honor people who honor the land and the river.

I asked Linda what she'd like to see on our Mariaville Falls Preserve when she returns. "I'd like to see a trail to the Falls for people who may not be as agile as they once were." I had heard that before from visitors to the Falls. With the acquisition of the Coleman property, FBC now owns an unbroken route to the Falls, including the back land. It was time to explore the land to find a gentler path to the Falls.

Paul Haertel, chair of the FBC Stewardship Committee, and I drove out to Mariaville and began the route finding. It usually takes about four or five trips with preliminary flagging to find the best route. It is important to avoid the possibility of erosion, to find the most gently sloping grade and to have good soil structure for the tread underfoot. With Gerry Edgecomb's help, the first section of the new trail route, an old graded skidder road, was easy to find. From there it gets more difficult, with stream crossings and acres and acres of thick second-growth tree cover along steep stream banks. After a few tries, we found an excellent location for the stream crossings and a gentle sloping grade down the side of the stream for walkers. Of course, we'll go back again a few times with loppers and saws, but now we have a vision of the new trail. It will take more planning and a lot more work, but we'll find a way to get it done. After all, we'd like people of all ages and abilities to be able to get out and appreciate beautiful, historic Mariaville Falls. ❖



Location for the stream crossing



Painted Trillium



Nodding Trillium



Red Trillium

MIDDLE, RIGHT PHOTOS PAUL BREEDEN

Three Trilliums of Mariaville by Tom Sidar

In early spring, along the banks of the West Branch of the Union River at Mariaville Falls and down on the shores of Graham Lake you can usually find three members of the Trillium wildflower genus. The Painted Trillium, *Trillium undulatum* with its white petals, "painted" with crimson at the center, is considered to be one of the most beautiful wildflowers of North America. When you spot it, first emerging and then flowering, it is a discovery, something beautiful and precious that you can only observe during its brief, blossoming moment. Take a photograph. It's easy.

More subtle, the Nodding Trillium, *Trillium cernuum*, can almost escape notice. The drooping flower of the nodding trillium hangs low under the whorl of its three broad tapered leaves, almost hidden from the eyes of the casual passersby. As you walk the "fisherman's path" to the Falls, keep an eye out for the three-leafed canopy

over these subtle flowers. For photographers up to the challenge, it is worth getting your blue jeans dirty and doing a few yoga contortions to get the right vantage point. Perhaps you'll get that one-in-a-hundred shot that captures the spirit of this riverside beauty.

The Red Trillium, *Trillium erectum*, is found in the same moist, rich woodland soil as the other two. This species has a showy, purplish-red flower. And you might say, it has a more interesting story. Painted and Nodding Trilliums, like most pretty wildflowers, use their attractive color, shape and scent to attract bees and butterflies for pollination. Not so, the red trillium. The flower is the bearer of many nicknames referring to its distinctively non-floral odor: "ill scented wakerobin", "stinking Benjamin", and "wet dog trillium" to name a few. It seems that somewhere in the evolutionary progression of this species, *Trillium erectum* turned away from attracting butterflies and bees for

pollination. The red meat color of the flower and its distinctive putrid flesh odor may cause bees and butterflies to move on, but evolution can take some strange and mysterious turns. The theory of Clarence Moores Weed states that this flower's carrion color and odor, "resembling a raw beefsteak of uncertain age" are sure to attract common green flesh flies, *Lucilia carnicina* and insure the pollination of this nectarless trillium.

As you walk the trails of FBC's Mariaville preserves and you learn the characteristics of these three species of Trilliums, experience will tell when to get **close, really close, or not close at all.** ❖

Sources

The Book of Wildflowers, National Geographic Society. Washington, DC, 1933.

The Secrets of Wildflowers, by Jack Sanders, The Lyons Press, 2003.

Wildflowers, by Neltje Blanchan, Nelson Doubleday Inc., 1922.



The Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission awarded Frenchman Bay Conservancy the certificate of national accreditation on December 19, 2013. We are proud to be one of eleven accredited land trusts in Maine. There are 254 land trusts nationwide with this distinction.

Rick Beckjord: Artist and Steward of Baker Hill

A tribute by Tom Sidar



They have been described as the “footprints of the deer and the porcupines and Rick Beckjord.” Rick’s connection to land and water and trails was personal and individualistic. Early on he didn’t like to mark trails at all, certainly not in the usual way, with orange flagging. According to Clint, he had a schedule that included hiking at night. He liked to explore and discover new places. “He was generally back by 9:30, then he would listen to the Red Sox on his AM radio. But he could get turned around sometimes. His method of marking the woods for his nighttime explorations was to paint a bottle cap blue and hang it by a string from a tree branch. There are still a few hanging over on Baker Hill.”

Three miles into our Long Ledges hike, after listening to Clint and Eleanor Ritchie’s remembrances of Rick Beckjord, I paused on the trail and attempted to express a thought running through my head.

Rick shared his discovered places with friends, but he gave purposely vague directions. When Clint and Eleanor finally came upon the ridge covered with pitch pines that Rick called “Bonsai Ridge”, they told him about it. He smiled. As Eleanor said,

and his views on how natural places should look influenced the evolution of FBC’s trail work and signage. As the Baker Hill and Long Ledges trails became more popular and people were getting lost or confused, FBC responded by marking the trail network with blue flagging, FBC trail markers and temporary directional signs. Rick was not pleased...and thus the beginning of the Friends of Long Ledges and many lively discussions. He bought a router and began crafting the rustic numbered and lettered signs aligned with a trailhead map that now guide hikers on the preserves. Rick’s sign project is unfinished, but the spirit and style of the project is clear for our future work.

For several years, a stone sculpture-in-the-works took shape on the lawn of Rick’s house across from Baker Hill. When I asked Clint about it, he told me that it was modeled after a neighbor’s ram named Max. “Rick would sit for hours and hours sketching Max. At first, Rick sculpted



Remembering Rick

by Jamie Brown
former FBC Conservation Director

Many people knew Rick simply as a blur as they sped by him while he was riding his bike along Route 1. Others may have known him as the quiet and thin wisp of a man that they passed by while hiking on the trails along Baker Hill. For those who were lucky enough to actually know Rick, they knew him as a very individual-minded but kind man. He did things his own way, but at the same time quietly and humbly cared about people.

Rick donated an easement on his land in Sullivan without fanfare or financial benefit, wanting to ensure that people could forever enjoy the trails and beautiful views of Schoodic Bay that his property provided. He would show up late at night to deliver canned vegetables to his friends. Though he often wandered the woods by himself, Rick was never alone, as he was an integral part of the community. He will be forever remembered for his kindness.

and friends around. He filled balloons with water, and when all the reading and ceremony was over, the kids threw the balloons at the ram for the christening. The kids loved it.”

Now on the lawn in front of Rick’s house, a block of square granite stands on wooden blocks. As we walked back on the Long Ledges

trail, I asked Clint what Rick had planned for that block. “We asked him. He just smiled. Then I asked him if he was waiting for the rock to tell him what to do. He just smiled again and said, ‘No, the rock isn’t going to tell me what to do.’”

Rick followed his own path as an artist, a trail blazer and a steward

of the land. Looking at his finished work brings us joy. Looking at his unfinished works brings sadness and but also inspiration for the future. ❖



The signs Rick carefully crafted are a constant reminder of his love of the Maine natural world. — Eleanor Ritchie

“Rick had a philosophy, but he wasn’t a philosopher.”

Clint’s response was, “I think that’s right. He didn’t share his thoughts directly, but you always had the impression that he was thinking deeply. It came out in indirect ways.”

The early trails through Long Ledges and Baker Hill were indirect.

“He didn’t often show his emotions outwardly, but when he smiled his whole face would light up. You felt something.”

Along with his independent spirit, Rick had the eyes, the hands, the skills, the inspiration and the accomplishments of a successful sculptor in wood and stone. His artist’s eye

form of the ram with great detail. The fleece was so real it curled. Then Rick took it down. I thought he had ruined it, but he was just taking it in different direction. It’s the one installed at Sorrento Point. I’ve never seen Ricky so social and joyous as he was at the christening of that ram sculpture with so many of his family



Frenchman Bay Conservancy Events



Monday Music at Tidal Falls 2014 Schedule

- July 7** Alice French & Frank Fredenburgh
- July 14** Jazz Time 99
- July 21** Impartial Crowd
- July 28** Chris Ross
- Aug 4** Him & Her
- Aug 11** Shades of Blue
- Aug 18** Fletcher's Landing Philharmonic Orchestra

All Monday Music Concerts are 6:30–8:00pm
All our free concerts are weather permitting, no rain dates. **Cancellations will be posted at www.facebook.com/frenchmanbay.** Don't forget to Like Us. Bring a picnic or get something from the retail food cart.

Annual Meeting

July 16, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
Moore Auditorium at SERC
Speaker: Dr. Joseph T. Kelley, University of Maine
Sea-Level Rise and its Past Impacts on Frenchman Bay
Join Us! Visit the FBC website or FaceBook nearer to the date for more information.



Autumn Trail Race Sundays October 26 and November 2, 2014

Join Frenchman Bay Conservancy and Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust for two trail races this fall in Orland and Sullivan. Get more information and pre-register on our website.

Call to Volunteers from President Iris Simon

Frenchman Bay Conservancy holds 6,320 acres of protected conservation lands. We are fortunate to have staff, board members, and volunteers who spend countless hours on our 14 miles of trails assuring that hikers and visitors to FBC's preserves have an enjoyable and safe experience. In addition, FBC volunteers help monitor our 31 easements every year.

When you are in Maine this summer, we hope that you will consider volunteering for FBC trail work or easement monitoring. We can accommodate many skill levels. As a bonus, you will be working in the beautiful natural surroundings of FBC's conserved lands.

Honorary Gifts

IN MEMORIAM

Rick Beckjord
Allen Buurma
John & Taso Dundas
Barbara Kent
Henry L. Milo
Phil Reidy

IN NOMINE

Tom & Kathy Frost
Lisa Heyward
Nancy Patterson
Annette Nash



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.



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and join Frenchman Bay Conservancy from your smart phone with a credit card.

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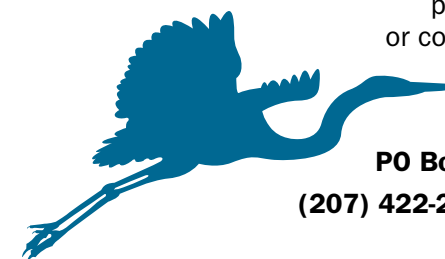
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Thank you!

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
PO Box 150 Hancock, Maine 04640
(207) 422-2328 tom@frenchmanbay.org
www.frenchmanbay.org

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at Tidal Falls
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Serving 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Rain or Shine

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BYOB

