

October 8, 2020



An article in this week's Ellsworth American ("Better plan for songbirds sought at proposed wind farm project in Clifton") reports on an opinion from Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) that a proposed wind power project in Clifton, known as Silver Maple Wind, should do more to protect migratory songbirds. We are commenting on this article as it pertains to Frenchman Bay Conservancy (FBC).

We strongly agree with the need for developers to meaningfully mitigate their impacts, and we believe that conserving Frenchman Bay Community Forest is one of the best ways to protect migratory songbirds. For this reason, FBC has agreed to accept a \$100,000 contribution from Silver Maple Wind toward the purchase of these 1400 acres in Hancock.

One question expressed in the Ellsworth American's article is that of the best approach to protect wildlife habitat, and whether simply allowing former timberland to regenerate is beneficial for migratory songbirds, or whether people need to intervene by actively managing the land—planting fruit-bearing shrubs, or selectively logging to promote a variety of habitat types for different bird species.

At Frenchman Bay Conservancy, we firmly believe that our conservation of this former forestland with a "forever wild" approach—meaning that it will not be logged in the future—is the best approach for Frenchman Bay Community Forest for several reasons.

First, mature forests are exceptionally scarce in Maine. Only 1% of Maine's forests contain trees over 150 years old, according to Maine Audubon's Forestry for Maine Birds. That's why Maine Audubon recommends the conservation of mature forests.

Second, decades and even centuries from now, when the Frenchman Bay Community Forest is "mature," it will always have enough variability in forest structure to support a diversity of migratory bird species. Large trees will die and leave openings in the canopy. Beavers will create dams and create large openings with beneficial edge effects. Even the extensive frontage on the Downeast Sunrise Trail will create a variety of habitat types for different species.

Finally, our partner in this project, New England Forestry Foundation, will protect the neighboring 3100 acres of land to the north of the Downeast Sunrise Trail. That organization will periodically harvest timber on their property, though they will manage to the highest standards and promote a more mature and healthy forest than what exists there today. The comparison between our two properties will provide more insight in the coming decades on the best long-term approach to protect habitat for wildlife, including migratory songbirds.

We appreciate the outpouring of support from all of you for this project. We are approaching our fundraising goal, and we look forward to sharing more information on this project in the coming weeks. For further questions about FBC's commitment to our communities and to wildlife habitat conservation, please reach out to us at [info@frenchmanbay.org](mailto:info@frenchmanbay.org).



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