



Frenchman Bay
Conservancy

A WATERSHED MOMENT FOR FRENCHMAN BAY

From the Forest to the Sea

2024 ANNUAL REPORT
& CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER

In This Issue

On The Cover:

A bird's-eye-view of the Union River as it flows through Mariaville Falls, with Mount Desert Island (MDI) outlined clearly on the horizon. This illustrates Frenchman Bay Conservancy's watershed-based land protection efforts, and our recent campaign to protect the land we love in Downeast Maine "*From the Forest to the Sea.*"

- 02 **President's Letter**
Paul Parshley, Board President
- 03 **Campaign Overview**
- 05 **Goal 1: Land Protection**
Conservation Wins From the Forest to the Sea
- 08 **Conservation Connections**
Downeast Conservation Network's Intertidal Access Summit
- 09 **Goal 2: Stewardship**
Benefits for Nature & People
- 11 **Goal 3: Outdoor Education**
Increasing Opportunities for Outdoor Learning
- 13 **Fiscal Year 2024 Financials**
July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024
- 15 **Giving Feature**
A Family Tradition
- 17 **Honorary Giving**
- 18 **Ways to Support FBC**
Become a Member Today

President's Letter

December 2024

Dear FBC Members and Friends,

We did it! Thanks to your generosity and unwavering support, 2024 was Frenchman Bay Conservancy's most successful year yet. A major highlight was completion of our 3-year "Watershed Moment for Frenchman Bay" capital campaign six months ahead of schedule and 40% above the \$10 million target. This fundraising success already has enabled FBC to put your gifts to work and make significant progress on the campaign's three main goals, outlined below.

1. Permanently protect 10,000 new acres in critical areas and prevent damaging development of Frenchman Bay.

In 2024, FBC protected an additional 2,600 acres, bringing our total conserved lands to over 19,000 acres. The new additions include the 470-acre Whitney Community Forest in Ellsworth, the largest remaining tract of undeveloped woodlands within walking distance of downtown. We acquired a 230-acre Partridge Cove property in Lamoine to conserve what otherwise would have been a large contested "glamp"-ground. In November FBC bought the 1,900 acre Holland property in Ellsworth -- a critical habitat between Green and Branch Lakes.

2. Enhance long-term stewardship of our preserves and trails to improve safety, access, and enjoyment.

As the amount of land protected in eastern Hancock County grows, so does the responsibility of FBC to maintain the capacity and skills necessary to steward those preserves and trails. I'm happy to report FBC has met this challenge in 2024 with the addition of Garrett Black as full-time Stewardship Manager and tireless efforts from our "Maintenance Mondays" and "Workday Wednesdays" volunteers -- we can't thank you enough. Noteworthy accomplishments include extensive clean-up of coastal preserves damaged by winter storms, initiating a complex salt marsh restoration at the Jordan River Preserve, upgrading and repairing the popular Baker Hill trails, and formally opening the Frenchman Bay Community Forest.

3. Expand outdoor education in our schools and outdoor opportunities for all.

Our partnership with Maine Outdoor School, launched in 2020, has grown and flourished. During the 2024-25 school year over 400 elementary and middle students in all eleven eastern Hancock County public schools are participating in weekly curriculum based outdoor learning -- reviews from students, teachers, and parents could not be more positive. I doubt there's a better way to inspire the next generation of conservationists.

While challenges like climate change and development pressures remain, your steadfast support empowers FBC to tackle them head-on. Thanks again for making FBC's work possible. I hope you have a happy and healthy holiday season and a joyous 2025.

Best regards,



Paul Parshley, President of the Board

Campaign Overview

In 2022, FBC set out with a plan to protect land, sea, & livelihoods in Downeast Maine.

We launched a \$10 million, 3-year comprehensive campaign to seize urgent opportunities to protect land sea and water from the Union River and Frenchman Bay watersheds, east to the Hancock County line.

**Thanks to our generous supporters,
we raised over \$14 million and made
progress towards our three goals:**



**Permanently protect 10,000 new acres in critical
areas and prevent damaging development of
Frenchman Bay.**



**Enhance long-term stewardship of our preserves
and trails to improve safety, access, and
enjoyment.**



**Expand outdoor education in our schools and
outdoor opportunities for all.**

*Continue reading to see learn how your support for our
Watershed Moment campaign has helped to protect and care
for vulnerable ecosystems across eastern Hancock County
and provided opportunities that teach and inspire the next
generation of land stewards.*

Goal 1: Land Protection

Conservation Wins: *From the Forest to the Sea*

When we imagine ourselves in nature, what comes to mind? Probably not vast parking lots or the sounds of traffic. No, we want forests and fields, coastline and ridgeline, with ample opportunity to hear the birds or to see the bright stars in the evening sky with the Milky Way stretching from one horizon to the other. The built environment has its place, and it has become inseparable from our modern lives. But, nature is essential. Those forests, fields, hills and coastline rejuvenate our minds and feed our souls.

Thankfully, Frenchman Bay Conservancy is in the business of nature. Only a few short years ago, we set out to raise four times more money in a single campaign than we ever had before, with most of that money going toward the acquisition of land. We know that our landscape is changing. The climate is changing. The green spaces around us are being transformed, often at the expense of wildlife habitat. Political will for conservation ebbs and flows.

Frenchman Bay Conservancy has remained a constant force for conservation for 37 years, and we sought to raise the funds to conserve 10,000 additional acres of land now, while building a more resilient organization to address current and future challenges. You responded with generous, emphatic support to protect the places here in Downeast Maine that we all cherish. So, here's a recap of how we've leveraged your thoughtful contributions to protect these special places.

Green Lake Preserve, Ellsworth

This 1,920 acre property represents a strategic stepping stone in a wildlife corridor. To the southwest of the property is Branch Lake, Ellsworth's public drinking water source which is conserved by FBC and our conservation partners. The north side of the property has significant frontage on Green Lake, home to a National Fish Hatchery that supports endangered Atlantic salmon. The extensive wetlands on this property support native brook trout populations and connect to the Union River watershed. Though the nearby conserved lands on Branch Lake are not yet contiguous with the new Green Lake property, we intend to work with willing landowners in the future to establish a protected corridor of conserved lands between these two important water bodies.





Whitney Community Forest, Ellsworth

Frenchman Bay Conservancy (FBC) purchased 370 acres of forests and fields surrounding the Ellsworth High School in January of this year for permanent conservation, plus another 35 acres now reserved for future development. The property will be branded as an FBC Preserve in 2025, and will continue to be open to all for walking, biking, horseback riding, skiing, and for outdoor education for Ellsworth students. The trails on this land can be accessed by the adjacent Ellsworth Trail, a paved bike and pedestrian multi-use trail that has the potential to connect to the Downeast Sunrise Trail in the future. The walking trails are used by the Ellsworth High School athletic teams and the local community. Whitney Community Forest acquisition and conservation by Frenchman Bay Conservancy was supported by Ellsworth's State Representative, Ellsworth's former State Senator, the Ellsworth High School Principal, the former Ellsworth City Manager, Heart of Ellsworth, Ellsworth Garden Club, local businesses and other local community partners.

When the neighboring landowner Barry Jordan and his son, Ben, learned about FBC's plans to conserve the Whitney Community Forest, the Jordans worked with FBC to sell and permanently conserve their 62-acre property bordered on two sides by the Whitney property, thus expanding the Whitney Community Forest.

Jordan River Preserve, Trenton

With the purchase of the former Bar Harbor Golf Course in Trenton, FBC conserved the largest unprotected coastal property in both the Town of Trenton and on neighboring Mount Desert Island. The project site was a 216-acre portion of a larger parent parcel acquired by FBC. The property includes 75 acres of intertidal wetlands along 10,733 feet of saltwater shore frontage on Jordan River. A core strength of the project is its outstanding wetland values and importance as a marsh migration site. Conserving uplands where salt marsh can migrate prevents development and shoreline hardening and provides future habitat for marsh-dependent species. Wetlands on the property provide high value ecological functions, including mitigating floods and stabilizing shorelines along the Jordan River.

The Jordan River Preserve will be open to the public for low-impact recreational opportunities carefully balanced with protection of native habitat and wildlife. We're ensuring foot access to productive intertidal shellfish beds for local harvesters. Limited walking trails will be sited away from sensitive habitat and dogs will be prohibited on at least portions of the property to prevent disturbance of ground-nesting birds. FBC has begun planning for a \$1.6 million restoration initiative to restore the coastal wetlands by removing a 50-year-old earthen berm and daylighting several streams.

Long Cove, Sullivan

FBC purchased a one-acre property along Route 1 in Sullivan, just west of the East Side Road into Sorrento, with support from Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund. This property now offers safe and convenient access for marine harvesters to the mud flats of Long Cove. FBC removed two derelict buildings on the property this past summer. We plan to convey the land to the Town of Sullivan while retaining a conservation easement to ensure habitat conservation and public access in perpetuity.

Jones Cove, Gouldsboro

Landowners David and Elin Poneman generously donated four acres of land between Route 186 in Gouldsboro and Jones Cove to Frenchman Bay Conservancy to ensure that local harvesters will have access permanently to the mud flats of Jones Cove.

Anthony's Woods, Hancock

Toni and Fred Smalley donated 33 acres to Frenchman Bay Conservancy in memory of their son, Anthony, who loved the natural landscape surrounding his home. Frenchman Bay Conservancy will hold this property with the intent over the next few years to establish a connection between the Frenchman Bay Community Forest and the Washington Junction Road intersection with Route 1.

Partridge Cove, Lamoine

When a developer proposed a 90-unit, domed building “glamp-ground,” Lamoine residents responded by passing a moratorium on developments such as this one to protect the rural character of their community and ensure growth

at the appropriate scale, aligned with the Town’s comprehensive plan.

Following the town vote, Frenchman Bay Conservancy purchased the 228-acre property with extensive frontage on Partridge Cove. By protecting this undeveloped shoreline in a Maine Beginning With Habitat Focus Area, FBC will protect tidal wading bird and waterfowl habitat. FBC has not created any new trails on the property, though the public is welcome to park at the new parking lot and walk the existing woods road.

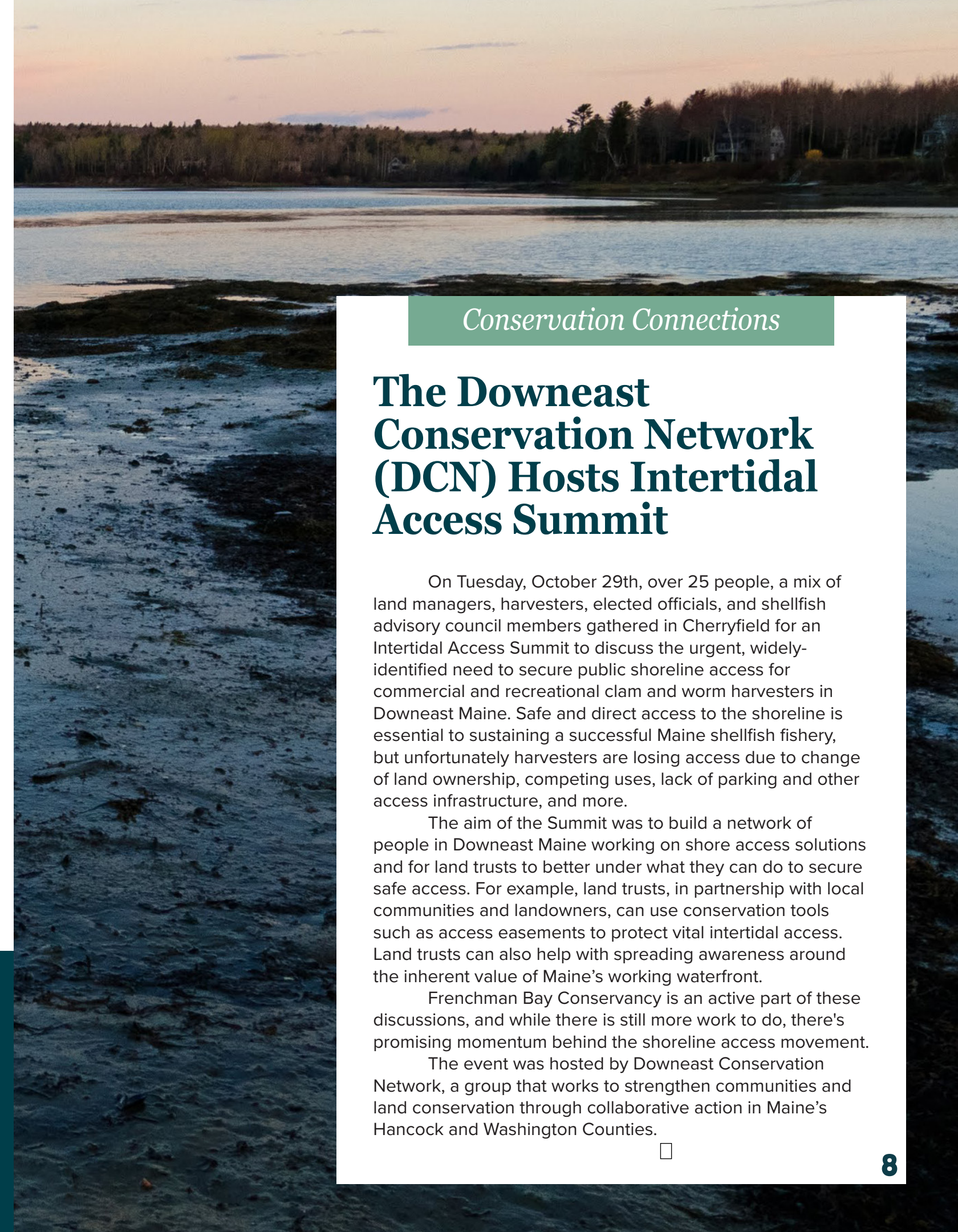
Merkel Property, Gouldsboro

Landowners Joe and Donna Merkel donated their 15-acre property with 1,700 feet of frontage on Lower West Bay Pond to Frenchman Bay Conservancy, allowing FBC to build on the 2,000-plus acres of our West Bay Pond Complex. The Merkel property will provide additional shoreline access while contributing another piece of the puzzle to a much larger wildlife corridor.

Schoodic Forest, Gouldsboro (Owned by Maine Coast Heritage Trust)

Maine Coast Heritage Trust worked tirelessly for years to protect this 1,700-acre property that was once slated to become a sprawling development before it was permanently protected by MCHT in 2021. MCHT later donated a conservation easement on this property to Frenchman Bay Conservancy in 2023 as a back-up conservation plan. FBC members may recall that our two organizations have prioritized conservation of the region from the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park through the Tunk and Donnell Pond Maine Public Reserve land. Schoodic Forest is a substantial contribution to this landscape scale conservation success story.

*The acquisition of the above 10 properties is a remarkable testament to the generosity of over 1,000 people who made financial contributions, and generous landowners, including those who sold their land at a bargain or donated the land outright to FBC. Looking ahead, FBC staff and our numerous volunteers will steward this land in perpetuity. **Together with all of you, we provide the enduring conservation of nature for people, and nature for nature’s sake, now and forever. ■***



Conservation Connections

The Downeast Conservation Network (DCN) Hosts Intertidal Access Summit

On Tuesday, October 29th, over 25 people, a mix of land managers, harvesters, elected officials, and shellfish advisory council members gathered in Cherryfield for an Intertidal Access Summit to discuss the urgent, widely-identified need to secure public shoreline access for commercial and recreational clam and worm harvesters in Downeast Maine. Safe and direct access to the shoreline is essential to sustaining a successful Maine shellfish fishery, but unfortunately harvesters are losing access due to change of land ownership, competing uses, lack of parking and other access infrastructure, and more.

The aim of the Summit was to build a network of people in Downeast Maine working on shore access solutions and for land trusts to better understand what they can do to secure safe access. For example, land trusts, in partnership with local communities and landowners, can use conservation tools such as access easements to protect vital intertidal access. Land trusts can also help with spreading awareness around the inherent value of Maine's working waterfront.

Frenchman Bay Conservancy is an active part of these discussions, and while there is still more work to do, there's promising momentum behind the shoreline access movement.

The event was hosted by Downeast Conservation Network, a group that works to strengthen communities and land conservation through collaborative action in Maine's Hancock and Washington Counties.



Goal 2: Stewardship

Caring for the Land: Benefits for Nature *and for People*

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our supporters, the success of this campaign marks a transformative chapter for FBC's stewardship program. We have expanded our land management team, ensuring it grows hand in hand with our increased portfolio of conserved acres. With your help, we've taken bold steps to hire and retain skilled land stewards, care for and enhance cherished trail networks like Baker Hill, make plans to restore vital wetland habitat, and expand access to nature for all, including plans for accessible trails built to Americans with Disabilities Act standards. This collective achievement underscores our shared commitment to protecting and stewarding these lands forever—for conservation, for community, and for generations to come.

As a land trust, it is our responsibility to care for the land we help protect. Conservation is not only about preventing harmful development but also about ensuring that vital ecosystems remain healthy or are restored through deliberate care, planning, and management.

Thanks to the success of the "Watershed Moment" campaign, Frenchman Bay Conservancy (FBC) has expanded its total conserved acreage to over 19,000. These thousands of new acres require FBC's dedicated attention and land management expertise. Your generous contributions have made it possible for our stewardship department to grow in tandem, particularly by enhancing staff capacity.

This campaign secured funding to establish a new position at FBC: Stewardship Manager. We were thrilled to promote Garrett Black, a long-time FBC Land Steward, to this role. As FBC's first year-round Stewardship Manager, Garrett has excelled in advancing our stewardship projects. We are excited to see the program flourish under his leadership.

Additionally, we were able to hire a seasonal land steward, Matt Kelley, whose background in conservation made him an invaluable addition to the team. Matt was a tremendous asset to the organization, contributing significantly to various projects, including the completion of one of FBC's newest trail networks: the Frenchman Bay Community Forest.

The Frenchman Bay Community Forest, located in Hancock off Route 182, is part of a nearly 25,000-acre undeveloped habitat block—one of the largest remaining in Hancock County within a mile of the coast, representing a critical refuge for wildlife. Accessible from the Downeast Sunrise Trail and just minutes from downtown Ellsworth, this property was conserved in 2021. Since then, stewardship staff, contractors, and dedicated volunteers have been hard at work clearing trails, hauling bog bridging, and installing wayfinding signage.

The next chapter of this land's history will include regrowing big trees, ensuring valuable habitat for Maine's wildlife, and creating new

opportunities for outdoor recreation. Free and open to the public, the Frenchman Bay Community Forest provides opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, and snowshoeing through an extensive network of trails.

Together, these efforts ensure that the land we protect remains vibrant, accessible, and resilient for generations to come.

Upcoming stewardship ventures include restoration of the salt marsh and planning for an accessible trail at the Jordan River Preserve in Trenton, as well as formalizing a trail network at the Whitney Community Forest in Ellsworth -- though that's just a glimpse of the stewardship work ahead. When it comes to stewarding the land, there's always more work to do. Thank you for your unwavering support in making this work possible. □

If you haven't visited the new Frenchman Bay Community Forest Preserve yet, we hope you'll check it out soon! Scan the QR code for the trail description and to download a copy of the trail map.



Goal 3: Outdoor Education

Connecting to Nature: Increasing Opportunities for Outdoor Learning

Together, we've expanded our partnerships with local public schools, working closely with Maine Outdoor School to bring more nature-based education to area youth. Your contributions have also allowed us to continue offering outdoor events and activities that invite people of all ages to learn, grow, and build community while exploring Maine's natural beauty. These successes ensure that future generations will form lasting connections with the land we protect, fostering a love for the outdoors that will endure for years to come.

At Frenchman Bay Conservancy (FBC), we believe in the transformative power of connecting young people with nature. Thanks to the unwavering support of our donors, we've been able to offer outdoor education programs that inspire the next generation to learn from, protect, and cherish the land around them. Together, we are making a lasting impact on the students, teachers, and communities of eastern Hancock County.

This past year, over 400 students from 11 public elementary and middle schools across eastern Hancock County and southern Washington County benefited from FBC's Outdoor Education program. These opportunities were made possible through generous contributions from individual donors and charitable foundations, whose support allowed students to engage in nature-based learning despite challenges like



budget restrictions, staffing shortages, and the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through our partnership with Maine Outdoor School (MOS), students took part in weekly lessons and immersive field trips on conserved lands like the Jordan Homestead Preserve in Ellsworth. Here, nature became the classroom, and lessons were carefully aligned with state-mandated education standards. Teachers expressed profound gratitude for the program, with 100% of survey respondents agreeing that the lessons met their expectations and integrated seamlessly into their curriculum. Over 75% of teachers “strongly agreed” with these statements, and no respondents were neutral or dissatisfied.

The positive outcomes were undeniable: 83% of teachers observed meaningful improvements in their students’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. As one teacher shared, “Outdoor Education serves as a platform to foster curiosity for the outdoors—for teachers and students alike. I believe with all of my heart that it is this curiosity that will lead to a generation of people who enjoy, appreciate, and protect the environment.” Another remarked, “After feeling stuck and on the verge of giving up on the teaching profession, MOS and FBC came along, reigniting my spark for the natural world and helping me to experience how it feels to get students learning outdoors.”

The program is tailored to meet the unique needs of each school, with most students participating in twenty 75-minute sessions and two field trips throughout the academic year. MOS’s experienced outdoor educators take the lead, easing the burden on teachers while equipping them with the tools and confidence to incorporate outdoor learning into their regular curriculum. As a result, outdoor education is becoming a sustainable and lasting component of these schools’ educational offerings.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to continue this vital work with the support of our community. Because of you, hundreds of students each year will continue to have the chance to explore, learn, and grow through outdoor education, fostering a lifelong connection to the natural beauty of Downeast Maine.



“Outdoor Education serves as a platform to foster curiosity for the outdoors—for teachers and students alike. I believe with all of my heart that it is this curiosity that will lead to a generation of people who enjoy, appreciate, and protect the environment.”

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors. Your contributions are not just supporting education; they are nurturing a love for the environment, empowering educators, and ensuring that future generations are equipped to care for the world around them.

On behalf of all the students and teachers whose lives have been enriched, we thank you for making this incredible journey possible. □

Maine Outdoor School connects learners and adventurers of all ages with the outdoors. Their mission is to serve as an educational catalyst for personal and community resilience in Downeast Maine through the lenses of economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and social equity. Learn more at maineoutdoorschool.org.

Fiscal Year 2024 Financials

Giving by the Numbers

FBC's "A Watershed Moment: From the Forest to the Sea" Comprehensive Campaign spanned two fiscal years, 2023 and 2024. Below is a look at FBC's growth in Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024) compared to Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023).

916 people gave to FBC between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, increasing the number of individual donors by **6%**.

142 people gave to FBC for the first time - **WELCOME TO FBC!**

The **FBC SUSTAINERS CIRCLE**, online monthly donors, grew by **8%**.

Grant awards totaled **\$1,746,725**.

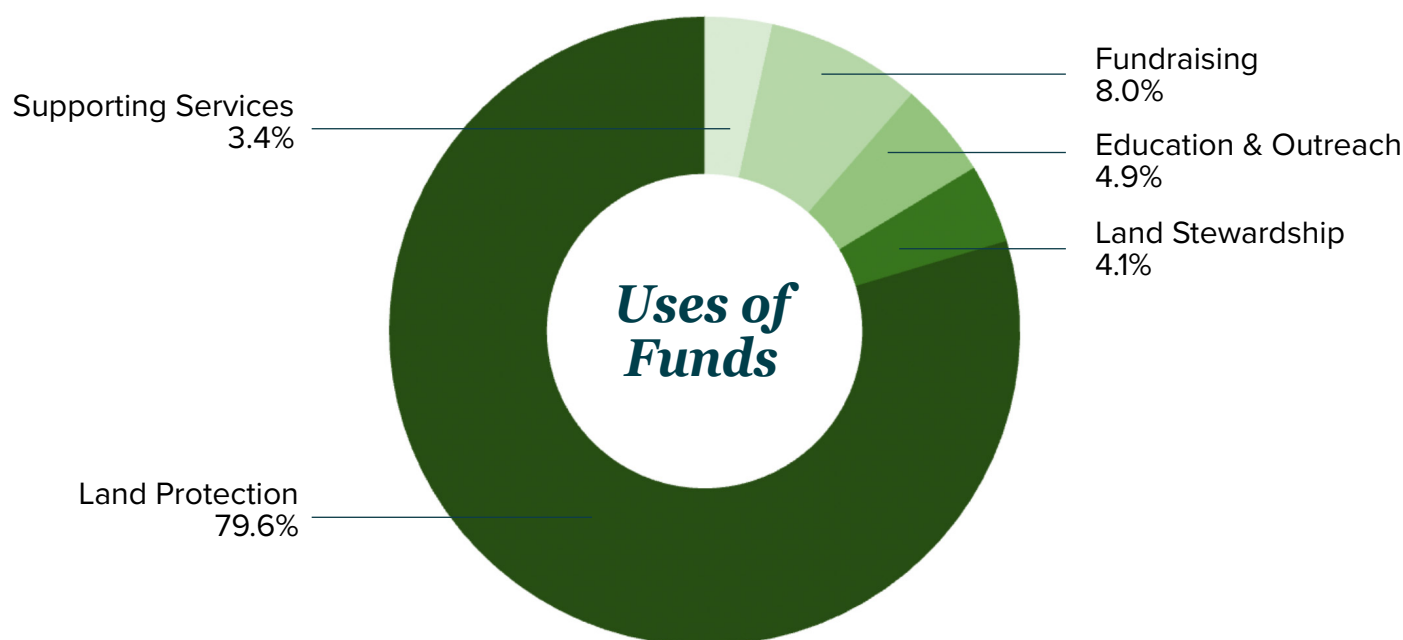
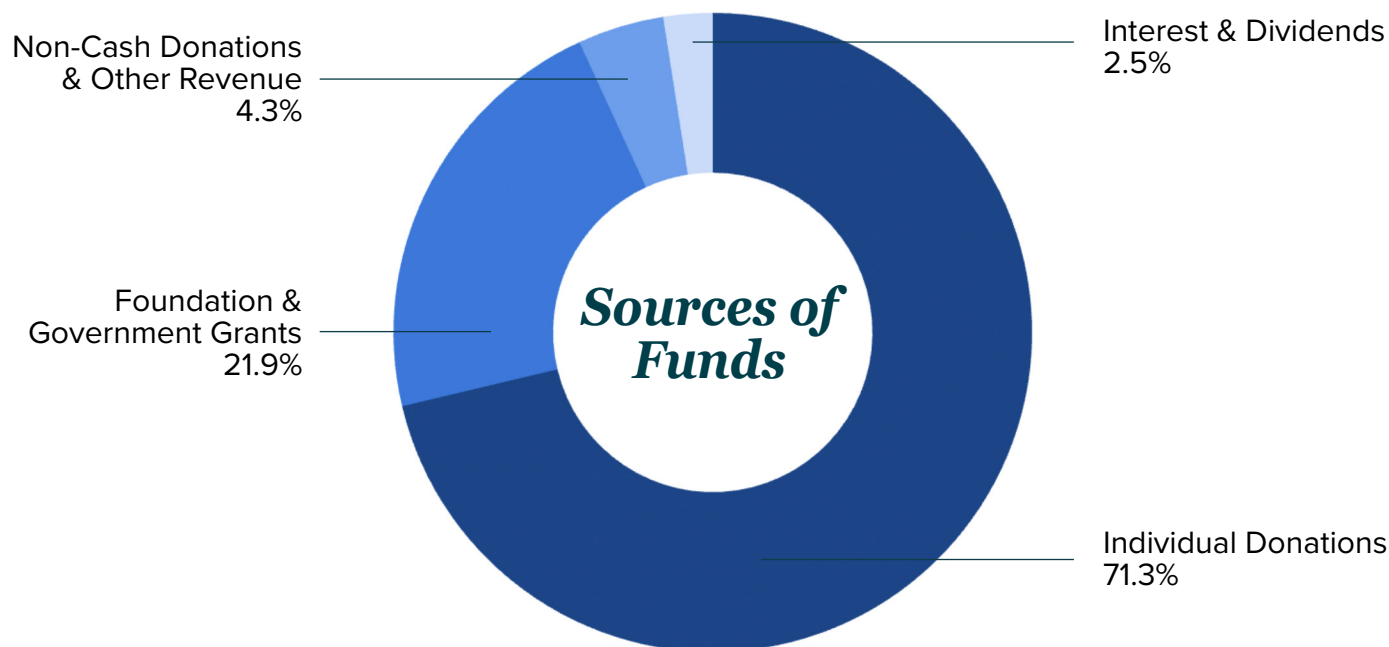
422 students in our public schools participated in FBC's **OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM** - thanks to FBC members!

The number of annual unrestricted operating gifts grew by **8%**.

Individual gifts totaled **\$1,586,900**.

Total cash and non-cash gifts from May 2022 to September 2024 to the "A Watershed Moment: From the Forest to the Sea" Comprehensive Campaign totaled **\$14,269,521**.





Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust • Mary Dexter Chafee Fund • Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust
 • Quimby Family Foundation • Anahata Foundation • Momentum Conservation • Athletic Brewing
 Company, Two for the Trails • Broad Reach Fund of Maine Community Foundation
 • Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program

FBC's "A Watershed Moment: From the Forest to the Sea" Comprehensive Campaign spanned two fiscal years, 2023 and 2024. The charts above depict sources and uses of funds from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. FBC follows a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year. The above information has been prepared based on audited financial statements for Fiscal Year 2024. The financial statements and related notes are available from FBC upon request.

Giving Spotlight

A Family Tradition: Multi-Generational Giving in Maine

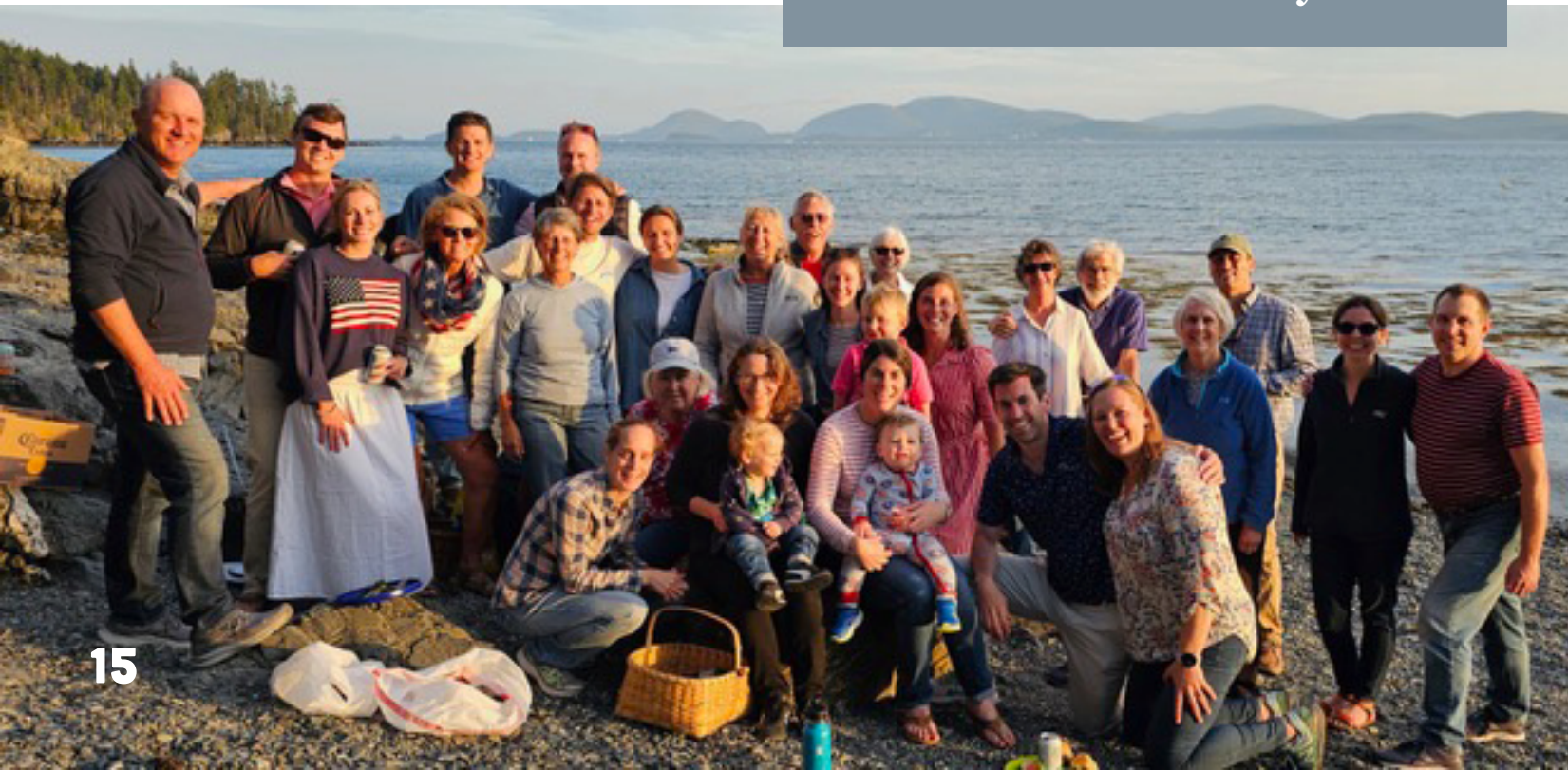
“My mom and dad each started coming to Sorrento with their families when they were teenagers. Dad in 1936 and Mom in 1937”, Hetty Nerod said as she explained her family’s history with the Frenchman Bay town of Sorrento. “My mother’s family was looking for something more low-key than places like Bar Harbor or Northeast Harbor, and my father’s family was looking for a place to sail.” Sorrento was the perfect match.

After their marriage in 1949, Hugo and Helen Smith continued their annual visits to Sorrento. They brought their five children, Louisa, Polly, Harriet, Hugo and Hetty year after year. Today their nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, with two more on the way, come

from all over the United States to visit Sorrento every summer. The Smiths instilled a deep love for both the woods and waters of the Frenchman Bay area in their family. Hugo Sr. loved to sail in Frenchman Bay and his family continues his beloved pastime. “My mom loved to hike the mountains and be in the woods with the moss and ferns”, Hetty Nerod told us.

“I think all 9 grandchildren have been coming to Sorrento since birth and only miss time if jobs get in the way.”

-Hetty Nerod





When Frenchman Bay Conservancy began the “Watershed Moment: From the Forest to the Sea” comprehensive campaign in 2022, Hetty Nerod graciously agreed to volunteer her time to the campaign. Hetty helped FBC’s staff and board get the word out about the goals of the campaign while encouraging her family and friends to financially support the campaign. We quickly learned that the members of the Smith family are a team!

Hetty and her sister, Harriet, were excited to learn that FBC was using campaign outreach to engage younger members. We were thinking about the future and the next generation of members. The sisters decided to create a family challenge. Hetty and Harriet challenged their three siblings and their spouses to give what they could to the “Watershed Moment” campaign in honor of their parents. They also challenged all nine of Hugo and Helen’s grandchildren to give to the campaign, and they agreed to match every grandchild’s gift!

“It feels fitting that I’m sending you my campaign pledge form today on what was my grandmother’s birthday”

- Rob Mygatt, Hugo Sr & Helen’s oldest grandchild

Pledges, gifts of stock and monthly Sustainers Circle gifts began to roll in from members of the Smith family in September 2023. Most gifts were accompanied by an email or a note saying, “In memory of my grandmother” or “Because you don’t say no to Aunt Harriet”.

By the end of 2023, all 14 of Hugo and Helen Smith’s children and grandchildren had made a gift or pledged their support to Frenchman Bay Conservancy. And we couldn’t be more grateful! The Smith family is creating a family legacy to protect the land and water they love. Places like Bean Island, the Long Ledges Preserve, and the Tidal Falls Preserve - for all of us and for generations to come. □



Honorary Giving

FBC would like to recognize honorary gifts given in memoriam or in honor of with our sincerest thanks.

In Memoriam

Virginia Wight
Adina Back
Margaret Dolan
Clio Chafee
Billy Smith
Eleanor & Joseph Simpson
Stephen Weber

In Honor Of

Jock Crothers
Alex & Susan David
Garry & Rosemary Levin
Nancy Patterson
Karen Schwartz
The Brown & Moldower families

Thank you for supporting our watershed moment, from the forest to the sea.

Together we protect vulnerable ecosystems across eastern Hancock County - landscapes that help store planet-warming carbon, safeguard our fisheries, and defend us against the impacts of floods and storms.

Our organization relies on donations from supporters like you. Please consider making a donation to support our mission to protect the land you love today.

ONLINE GIVING

Visit secure.donationpay.org/frenchmanbay/ to give online. You can become a part of the **FBC Sustainers Circle** by making a monthly recurring donation that ensures FBC receives your support throughout the year. Choose "Repeat this gift every month" when you make your donation.

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Give the gift of an FBC membership to your favorite conservation enthusiast. Recipients will receive a welcome letter, FBC trail guide, and a full year of FBC printed & digital publications.

GIVE BY MAIL

Gifts can be sent by mail to Frenchman Bay Conservancy, PO Box 150, Hancock, ME 04640.

SECURITIES

Speak with your tax advisor about donating appreciated securities to Frenchman Bay Conservancy. If you wish to donate stock, please contact Thomasina DiBiase at thomasina@frenchmanbay.org; (207) 422-2328 for transfer instructions.

PLANNED GIVING

Communicating with FBC about your plans to remember the organization in your estate can help us plan for the future. If you're interested, contact Thomasina DiBiase at thomasina@frenchmanbay.org; (207) 422-2328.



Board of Directors

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Sarah Hooper

David Manski

Hetty Nerod

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Austin Schuver, *Land Protection Manager*

Erin Witham, *Land Protection Manager*

Kat Deely, *Special Projects Manager*

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