



**Frenchman Bay
Conservancy**

**2023 ANNUAL REPORT &
CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER**

IN THIS ISSUE

On The Cover:

A wild stretch of the Union River in Mariaville, featuring deep pools and rapid cascades called Mariaville Falls. Mariaville Falls Preserve was protected by FBC in 2012. Aerial photography by Mike Perlman.

- 02 President's Letter
Paul Parshley, Board President
- 03 Campaign Timeline: 'A Watershed Moment for Frenchman Bay - From the Forest to the Sea'
- 05 Protecting Harvester Access in Maine's Coastal Communities, *Aaron Dority, Executive Director*
- 07 Fiscal Year 2023 Financials
July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023
- 09 Regional Conservation Highlights:
Frenchman Bay, Union River, & Schoodic
- 10 Welcoming New FBC Board Members:
Cora Hilts, John Cochran, & Sarah Hooper
- 11 Campaign Committee Member Feature:
Jon Stein, Owner of Fogtown Brewing Co.
- 12 Honorary Giving
- 13 Community Conservation: Jordan Homestead
Urban Tree Nursery
- 14 Support Our Work: This Is Our Watershed
Moment, From the Forest to the Sea

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

DECEMBER 2023

Dear FBC Members and Friends,

As Frenchman Bay Conservancy celebrates its 36th year, I am pleased to report that the organization has never been stronger or had a brighter future. We are financially sound, and membership now tops 1,000 for the first time in FBC's history. Executive Director Aaron Dority has built a small and talented team, and the Board has been strengthened by the addition of three impressive new Members.

This past year has been a very exciting time for FBC. As many of you now know, in May 2022, FBC launched a 3-year capital campaign with the target of raising \$10 million by January 2025. The "*Watershed Moment for Frenchman Bay: From the Forest to the Sea*" campaign has three major goals. First, to permanently protect 10,000 new acres of land in critical areas and prevent damaging development of Frenchman Bay. Second, to enhance long-term stewardship of our preserves and trails to improve safety, access, and enjoyment. And finally, to expand nature-based education programming in all public elementary schools in our region and provide outdoor opportunities for all.

It is my privilege to report that as of December 1, 2023, the campaign has raised over \$9 million in gifts, pledges, and grant awards from private and institutional sources! The generosity and support from our community has been inspiring, and I'd like to share my sincere thanks to everyone that has contributed so far. While there is still much work to be done, our current position gives me great confidence that we will achieve our campaign goals. Our success to date provides a compelling endorsement of FBC's mission and capabilities.

The reports and stories included in this newsletter provide more details and thoughtful insights into FBC's work and future plans, including a campaign timeline on page 3. I hope you'll take the time to review the progress we've made this year, including, but certainly not limited to: the conservation of the former Bar Harbor Golf Course, which is set to become the future Jordan River Preserve, the protection of two properties for the purpose of securing shoreline access for harvesters, and the planting of over 250 trees in collaboration with the Ellsworth Garden Club at the urban tree nursery at Jordan Homestead Preserve.

Thank you again for your generous support which makes our work possible. I hope you and your loved ones have a happy and healthy holiday season and a joyous 2024.

Best regards,



Paul Parshley, President of the Board

CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

In May 2022, we launched our ‘Watershed Moment’ Campaign to protect land, sea, and livelihoods in Downeast Maine.

This timeline provides an overview of a few of the major campaign milestones in land protection, stewardship, & community engagement.



**CONSERVED WHALESBACK: 3,223 ACRES
IN AURORA ALONG UNION RIVER**

248

**PUBLIC ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS
REACHED THROUGH
FBC PARTNERSHIP WITH
MAINE OUTDOOR SCHOOL**

MAY '22

JUNE '22

JULY '22

AUG '22

SEPT '22

OCT '22

NOV '22

DEC '22

JAN '23

FEB '23

**REACHED CAMPAIGN
MILESTONE: \$2.5 M**

TRAIL GRAND OPENING: ELLSWORTH RIVERWALK



**AWARDED \$283K LAND FOR MAINE'S
FUTURE GRANT FOR WHITNEY FOREST
IN ELLSWORTH**

**COMPLETED NEW GRANITE STAIRS AT
BAKER HILL & LONG LEDGES PRESERVE**





CONSERVED 186-ACRE (FORMER) BAR HARBOR GOLF COURSE, TO BECOME FUTURE JORDAN RIVER PRESERVE IN TRENTON

FBC WAS AWARDED
\$293K
 COMMUNITY FOREST GRANT
 FROM THE U.S. FOREST
 SERVICE FOR WHITNEY
 FOREST IN ELLSWORTH

REACHED CAMPAIGN
 MILESTONE: \$5 M

REACHED CAMPAIGN
 MILESTONE: \$9 M

MAR '23 APR '23 MAY '23 JUNE '23 JULY '23 AUG '23 SEPT '23 OCT '23 NOV '23 DEC '23 JAN '24



270 TREES PLANTED
 IN ELLSWORTH

REACHED CAMPAIGN
 MILESTONE: \$7.5 M

THE OFFICAL CAMPAIGN
 PUBLIC LAUNCH!



LOOKING AHEAD

WITH YOUR SUPPORT,
 WE WILL:

- CONSERVE WHITNEY FOREST IN ELLSWORTH;
- OPEN A NEW TRAIL SYSTEM AT FRENCHMAN BAY COMMUNITY FOREST IN HANCOCK;
- PROVIDE OUTDOOR EDUCATION TO ALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN OUR REGION;
- & MORE!

**MEMBERSHIP MILESTONE:
 1,000+ ACTIVE MEMBERS**



Protecting Harvester Access In Maine's Coastal Communities

By: Aaron Dority, Executive Director

Downeast Maine is known for its iconic rugged coast and fresh, locally-sourced seafood. This isn't surprising for a state that boasts over 5,000 miles of coastline, and where seafood remains one of the largest industries. Last year, Maine's seafood harvesters earned \$574 million, with nearly \$17 million of that going to clam diggers all along Maine's coastline, including from the small towns across the Frenchman Bay region. Yet despite these figures, less than 20 miles are protected as working waterfront for the people who harvest seafood like lobster, clams, scallops, and other products.

Without protected access, harvesters who rely on traditional access routes across private land are at risk of losing their income when properties change hands, and new owners decide to no longer allow access. With an influx of new faces to the State driven by the pandemic, climate change, and an aging population, this is a growing concern. When access is lost, jobs disappear and an integral part of the Maine coast's social fabric begins to fray, generating a significant risk to our communities and to our local economy. This is why FBC named protecting shoreline access for

Maine's seafood harvesters as one of the land protection goals of our '*Watershed Moment for Frenchman Bay - From the Forest to the Sea*' capital campaign.

As a land trust, we share a unique connection to place with the local harvesting communities, and our shared values of stewardship and conservation are at the heart of our relationship. FBC's work protects the health of the watersheds that ensure productive fisheries, and in return, we have a vibrant local harvesting community and economy.

Although operating in separate industries, we share a commitment and understanding that we must care for the environment today in order to prepare for the future. Just as clammers, who are limited to narrowly defined shellfish districts, don't have the luxury to overharvest and move on, FBC must also be ready to conserve critical wildlife habitat before it is too late. There is no "somewhere else." Together, we hope that by protecting healthy ecosystems, and in turn, healthy fisheries, we can ensure jobs for Maine's young people and opportunities for our small coastal communities to thrive.

“Land trusts help local harvesters by protecting our watersheds and preserving public access. Harvesters aren’t looking for more access, but we need help protecting what we currently have.” - Joe Porada, Hancock Resident & Clam Digger

Our commitment to ensuring that harvesters have the access they need to Maine’s coastline and mudflats is not new. Protecting public shorelines has been a core piece of FBC’s conservation work, largely thanks to generous landowners who understand and appreciate the need for harvester access. They work with FBC to make their informal agreements with harvesters official, which can be accomplished by donating land to FBC or choosing to place a conservation easement on their property. A great example of this type of collaboration is when Jeremy Strater donated Taft Point in Gouldsboro to FBC in 2015. He was clear that along with allowing FBC to maintain trails through the forest, he wanted clambers and wormers to be able to access Jones Cove across his property, even allowing them to park close to the water so that they didn’t have to carry their catch across an unnecessarily long distance.

This year we have had a handful of successes for shoreline conservation. In Sullivan and Gouldsboro, FBC partnered with Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) to protect access. MCHT brokered the conversations with landowners, and even donated the funds to FBC to purchase the Sullivan property. FBC raised the money for long-term stewardship in both instances. At the Sullivan, Long Cove property, we will remove dilapidated buildings and then convey the property to the Town with a deed restriction. Both properties will be open to local harvesters in perpetuity. In Trenton, we conserved the former Bar Harbor Golf Course, protecting over 1 mile of undeveloped shoreline and access to the mudflats, which have been mapped by Maine’s Department of Marine Resources as a seed mussel conservation area. The Jordan River Bay includes over 1,200 acres of productive softshell clam and blue mussel beds.

We continue to look for new opportunities to protect the working waterfront within the Union River, Frenchman Bay, and Schoodic regions. We will need to raise funds from private individuals and foundations, as well as grants from sources like the Land for Maine’s Future program to protect these places that are so important in our communities. ♦



FY2023 FINANCIALS

Giving by the Numbers

*A look at FBC's growth in Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)
compared to Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022).*

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

867 people gave to FBC between July 1, 2022 & June 30, 2023, an increase of **5%** over the prior year.

The **FBC SUSTAINER'S CIRCLE**, our group of online monthly donors, grew by **11%**.

FBC received awards from **5 NEW GRANT FUNDERS**.

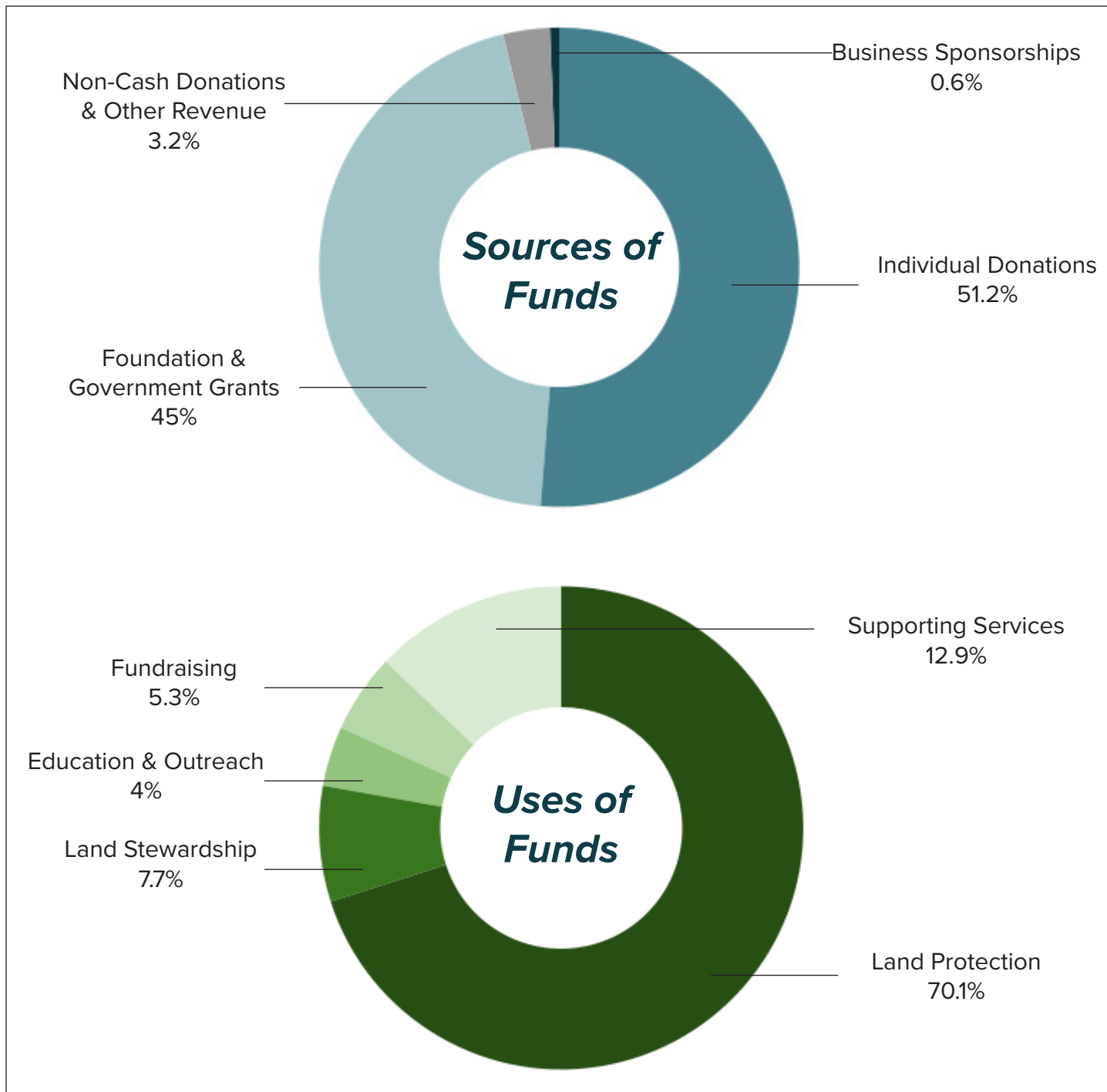
Grant awards totaled **\$3,242,195**.

248 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 to "A Watershed Moment: From the Forest to the Sea" Comprehensive Campaign totaled **\$3,009,870**.





\$3,242,195 raised from grants in FY2023! Thank you to our supporters:

The Ram Island Fund at Maine Community Foundation • The Schoodic Community Fund at Maine Community Foundation • Bangor Savings Bank Foundation • Tegna Foundation • Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust • Fisher Charitable Trust • Mary Dexter Chafee Fund • Morton-Kelly Charitable Fund • Elmina B. Sewall Foundation • Anahata Foundation • Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund • Machias Savings Bank • Bar Harbor Bank & Trust Community Giving • Fund for Maine Land Conservation at Maine Community Foundation • Davis Conservation Foundation • John Sage Foundation • U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service • U.S. Dept. of the Interior NAWCA Program

FBC follows a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year. The above information has been prepared based on audited financial statements for Fiscal Year 2023. The financial statements and related notes are available from FBC upon request.



REGIONAL CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

**16,000 ACRES
CONSERVED &
COUNTING,
THANKS TO
MEMBERS
LIKE YOU!**

FRENCHMAN BAY WATERSHED

Frenchman Bay is a vast, iconic body of water off of Maine's coast. The health of the Bay, and the industries that rely on it, depend upon both the health of the tributaries that feed into it, and the availability of public shoreline access. At the close of 2023, we have conserved approximately 4,200 acres in the Frenchman Bay region. This year, our key project in the watershed was the conservation of the 186-acre former Bar Harbor Golf Course in Trenton. The property features over 1 mile of undeveloped coastline that we will restore into healthy tidal salt marsh, while also protecting harvester access and creating new opportunities for accessible outdoor recreation. We also protected two additional harvester access properties, one in Sullivan along Long Cove, and another along Jones Cove in Gouldsboro. To learn more, read the feature article on page 5.

UNION RIVER WATERSHED

Time is growing short to protect the extensive, unfragmented forests of the Upper Union River watershed, which deliver numerous critical benefits including storing carbon and sheltering wildlife. Along the Lower Union, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create unbroken greenways close to downtown Ellsworth. In 2023, FBC was awarded a \$293k Community Forest grant from the U.S. Forest Service to support the acquisition and stewardship of the 370-acre Whitney Forest in Ellsworth. We plan to close on the property, which surrounds the Ellsworth High School and provides a potential greenway connection to the downtown, in January 2024. We are also partnering with the City of Ellsworth to expand Branch Lake Public Forest, which protects the City's drinking water source. Both projects have grant support from the Land for Maine's Future program. Along the Upper Union, we continue to pursue properties with shoreline frontage.

SCHOODIC TO SCHOODIC CORRIDOR

FBC continues to pursue land protection opportunities around Lower & Upper West Bay Pond, creating a link between the Schoodic Peninsula and Schoodic Mountain on Donnell Pond Public Reserved Land. By conserving connected landscapes, we can protect a critical pathway that allows species to move in response to the changing environmental conditions expected as a result of climate change. Day Ridges Preserve provides public access to a small portion of the corridor. To date, we have conserved approximately 6,100 acres within this corridor, including a mix of both fee-owned properties and conservation easements. We often work with land trust partners like Maine Coast Heritage Trust to identify and secure new opportunities.

WELCOMING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Each year, Frenchman Bay Conservancy's Board of Directors commits vital time and capacity to sustain and grow the organization. This year we are excited to announce three new Board Members, who will join the Board in setting the trajectory of Frenchman Bay Conservancy's vision, values, and purpose. Their support for FBC's "*A Watershed Moment for Frenchman Bay - From the Forest to the Sea*" campaign has been essential to the organization, and we are so grateful for their continued volunteer efforts.



Cora Hilts | Hancock, ME

Cora is the Co-Founder & CEO of Rêve En Vert, a female-forward company, which has established itself as the premier online e-tailer of honest sustainable luxury, fashion, beauty and lifestyle. She has returned to Hancock, Maine after 15 years away, and is looking forward to supporting local, community driven enterprises, like FBC, to make sure Maine's coastline stays intact and thriving for generations to come.



John Cochran | Bar Harbor, ME

John is a descendent of Hancock resident Captain Agreen Crabtree (1739-1808). He's retired after a 40-year career in construction trades and construction management, but remains a Colorado Professional Engineer and a life long builder. He's a family man, outdoorsman, fly fisherman, and recreational boater with a passion for all things Maine and its storied history.



Sarah Hooper | Prospect Harbor, ME

Sarah is currently a teacher at the Charles M. Sumner Learning campus in Sullivan. Along with her teaching experience, she also spent 15 years as a wildlife biologist, and has been involved in numerous outdoor and environmental programs. Through her career she had gained practical knowledge of place-based and project-based learning, community science, and interdisciplinary teaching which she looks forward to bringing to FBC.

MEMBER FEATURE

Campaign Committee Member Feature: Jon Stein, Owner of Fogtown Brewing Co.



In Summer 2023, FBC celebrated the launch of our campaign at Fogtown Brewing Company in Ellsworth. Community members, local business owners, city employees, and more joined together to celebrate our commitment to raising \$10 million for 10,000 new acres. Jon Stein, owner of Fogtown Brewing Company, an Ellsworth City Councilor, and member of the Lower Union River Campaign Committee, spoke at the event, and we've adapted his speech for you to read below.

My first introduction to Frenchman Bay Conservancy was about 7 years ago. I'd just moved to Ellsworth, and I was looking for a place to walk my dog, a rescue mutt named Sarah. A friend recommended I check out a local trail that led down to the river, located on Indian Point Preserve. I remember being confused by the housing development at first, wondering if I'd made a wrong turn, before I found the nature trail nestled between residential driveways. The short out and back trail was exactly the respite into nature Sarah & I were looking for.

Since that day, Indian Point Preserve, and other FBC preserves, have played an essential role in building and growing my business, Fogtown Brewing Company. During the early days of starting the company I could get so bogged down in the licensing and permitting, the plumbing and electrical work, that I'd forget I was in beautiful Downeast Maine. Then Sarah Dog would give me the "you better take me out soon" look and I'd oblige, taking her down to the river. We'd hang out and meet folks at the picnic table, watch the boats come in and out, bald eagles overhead and seals in the water. While she chased sticks, I read the informational signs and checked out the little fairy houses in the underbrush and would return to work refreshed.

It wasn't until Fogtown offered to sponsor an FBC program several years ago that I ventured out to many other FBC preserves. Fogtown offered beer to those who got their trail guides marked with the stamps found at various FBC trailheads. I set out to find all these trails and get my own guide stamped, and was blown away at the epic beauty of these diverse preserves. I became a huge FBC fan. We have continued partnering over the years in different ways, such as joining forces to harvest 20 pounds of huckleberries for a collaborative beer called Adventures of Huckleberry Ale.

Being a local Ellsworth business owner, it wasn't long before I became interested in the inner workings of City Hall, as well as the dynamics between different non-profits and the City. I started to see and truly appreciate the value of the big-picture visions that organizations like FBC had for our area, and how they could collaborate with one another to achieve greater successes than they could on their own. I saw Aaron speak, rather compellingly, at city council meetings, advocating for land acquisition and protection. These days, I see FBC as a resource that City Hall goes to when issues of conservation and land-use come up.

Now, as a city councilor, I can see our city growing - I can see that we have to be intentional now more than ever in how we grow: housing, watershed protection & infrastructure to protect against the effects of climate change. We need experts and advocates, stewards and ecologists. We need organizations who will not only protect our lands, but make them accessible to all. That's why I think the Watershed Moment campaign is so important: its focus not only on land conservation, but on stewardship and education.

Years after my first stroll down to the river on Indian Point Preserve, Sarah has a good amount of gray on her snout, and the business has continued growing bit by bit. I still head over to the Indian Point Preserve, where I drive past the builders who are lifting trusses by crane and putting up additional housing units, one by one. I think how lucky we are to live in a place that values both conservation and development. Yes, we need housing! But what a boon that there is also land, that there's an organization protecting the banks of the Union River and its watershed, offering respite from the summer heat, and a place for the children who grow up here to explore the woods and learn about the plants and animals that live there.◆

Article adapted from a speech given by Jon Stein at a Campaign Launch Party held at Fogtown Brewing Company in Ellsworth on September 19, 2023.



Honorary Giving

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

In Memoriam

*Ralph Bates
Clio Chafee
Anne & Lyall Dean
Hugo, Sr. & Helen Smith*

In Honor Of

*Peter & Janet Burnett
Malcolm Hunter & Aram Calhoun
Lisa Heyward & Jock Crothers
Doug Greenwood
Mel Jackson
Garry & Rosemary Levin
Nancy Patterson*

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION



“You’re not going to believe this. I’ve found, like, over 50 worms!”

It’s a sunny day in May, and volunteers are gathered at the Jordan Homestead Preserve in Ellsworth, shovels in hand, prepping holes to plant young saplings. A local Ellsworth first grade class is helping to clear away the clay-heavy soil, and are elated to find a healthy population of wiggling, pink earthworms. Their excitement for discovering worms is bringing a new level of passion to the task for the day: planting 80 new trees in the Urban Tree Nursery.

The nursery, established in 2021, is a partnership between Frenchman Bay Conservancy and the Ellsworth Garden Club. The purpose of the nursery is to provide the space to grow and naturalize small trees which will then be replanted within the City of Ellsworth when they reach the appropriate size. By creating a nursery, we’re able to purchase smaller, more affordable trees, as well as increase their chances of surviving by allowing them the time (3-5 years) to acclimate to living conditions here in Downeast Maine. Many of the trees will go on to become street trees, restoring the City’s tree canopy and providing shade to help mitigate rising heat levels.

The species planted are a mixture of native trees, disease-resistant hybrids, and other hardy trees that are well-suited to life in Ellsworth. Natives trees are a critical component of this project because they will support the region’s biodiversity by providing food and shelter to insects, birds, and other local species. This year, Ellsworth Garden Club also partnered with the American Chestnut Foundation to plant seedlings as a part of efforts to restore the population in Maine.

The nursery has the capacity to hold 500 trees, and to date we have planted approximately 270 trees. If you’d like to participate in a tree planting, keep an eye on our events page. We co-host a tree planting with the Ellsworth Garden Club each spring. ♦

This is our watershed moment, from the forest to the sea.

Together we can 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 Sustainer's 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 Director of Development 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

Paul Parshley, *President*

Lisa Heyward, *Vice President*

Bob Noddin, *Treasurer*

Mary Brennan, *Secretary*

Ann Amstutz-Hayes

John Cochran

Lee Fairbanks

Nathaniel Hanson

Cora Hilts

Sarah Hooper

David Manski

Becky O'Keefe

Rebecca Sargent

Iris Simon

Linda Welch

FBC Staff

Aaron Dority, *Executive Director*

Thomasina DiBiase, *Director of Development*

Ellerie Ezekiel, *Director of Communications &
Community Engagement*

Austin Schuver, *Land Protection Manager*

Erin Witham, *Land Protection Manager*

Kat Deely, *Special Projects Manager*

Garrett Black, *Stewardship Manager*

Abigail Hanson, *Development & Operations Assistant*

Sam Pensiero, *Seasonal Land Steward*

Michael Monaco-Vavrik, *Outreach & Education Intern*



**Frenchman Bay
Conservancy**

**PO Box 150
Hancock, ME 04640**

**(207) 422-2328
info@frenchmanbay.org**

