

Acadia Senior College Schoodic to Schoodic course -- PDF #2

by Ben Emory (bemory770@gmail.com)

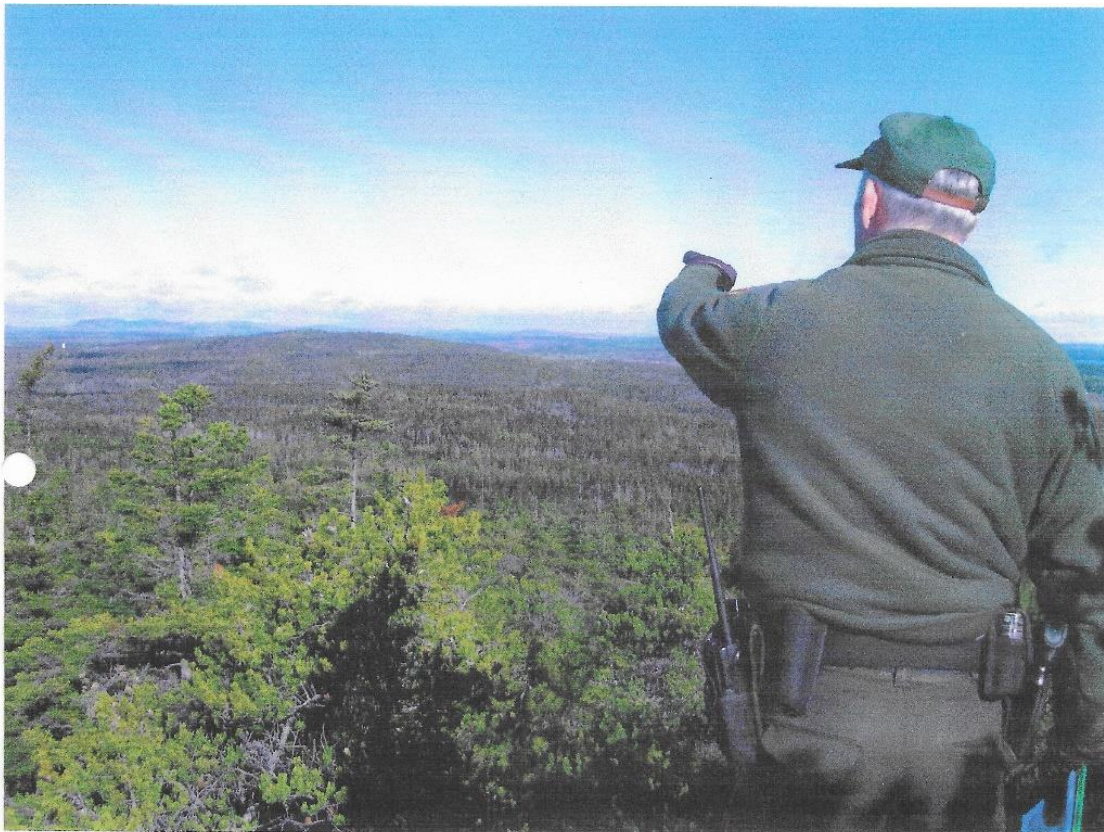
Spring 2020

Since PDF #1's distribution last week several responses worth mentioning have arrived. Zack Klyver, long-time chief naturalist of the Bar Harbor Whale Watch, wrote, "Biodiversity and Climate Change are intricately connected and thank you for bringing that point forward." Indeed, it is worth underscoring.

People who enjoy exploring websites and would like to learn about land conservation in a totally different type of geography may find interesting Dan Poteet's suggestion to look at the website of the Arizona Land and Water Trust, which focusses on the Sonoran Desert area of southern Arizona (a place with a fascinating ecology where Dianna and I have hugely enjoyed hiking).

Remember that the organizations mentioned in these PDFs have websites. Those of you wanting more immersion can learn much from the websites that can't be covered in these missives.

The southern S2S "bookend" – Acadia National Park's Schoodic District:



Looking north from Acadia's Schoodic Head over 2015 Schoodic Woods gift
to Acadia, toward Schoodic Mountain and Donnell Pond Unit

S2S land conservation began way back in 1927 when George Dorr secured the gift of Schoodic Point to the Hancock County Trustees of Reservations, the first step in its becoming part of Acadia National Park. Of course, no one was thinking of a protected corridor to the north then. The gift of Schoodic Point typified conservation of that time, protecting “special places.” Theodore Roosevelt was one who focused on the preservation of special places, his thinking exemplified by his stating, “A grove of giant redwood or sequoias should be kept as we keep a great and beautiful cathedral.” Important as it is to protect special places (Schoodic Point certainly being one), in 2020 we have moved far beyond that way of thinking. To quote a recent newsletter of the New England Forestry Foundation, “[Many species] need landscape-scale protection, not just special places. Climate change also increases the need for a landscape-scale approach.” Now the special place Schoodic Point is just a piece of the landscape-scale conservation effort that is S2S.

Vital to the preservation of Schoodic Point was native Mainer John G. Moore, born in Steuben, the town abutting Gouldsboro to the east. Bright and ambitious, he became a wealthy New York financier deeply engaged in Winter Harbor while summering there on Grindstone Neck. In 1897 he began buying land that was to become years later the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park. Allen K. Workman’s fine book *Schoodic Point: History on the Edge of Acadia National Park* quotes Moore as saying, “I bought these mountains and this land for a number of good reasons, just as other people buy pictures or pieces of china or diamonds or fancy horses. I bought them because I admired them as a boy, and it is a great pleasure to feel that they are mine.” Parts of the Schoodic Point lands Moore bought had had during prior generations residential use by local fishermen and farmers, cutting of timber, and pasturage of sheep, but the rough terrain with thin soils was losing its appeal for such uses by late in the nineteenth century. Dying at age 51 Moore’s plans for some summer resort development on the land never came to fruition. Eventually, after long, complex negotiations George Dorr, who also did so much to launch Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island, succeeded in having Moore’s heirs gift the land for preservation.

Prior to 2015 the Schoodic District of Acadia consisted of 2,366 acres. The National Park Service’s *Schoodic: Draft General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement* of 2004 succinctly describes the geology and topography: “The Schoodic Peninsula is a product of geological upheavals, glacial scouring, and inundation by the sea. The bedrock of the Schoodic Peninsula . . . consists of fine-grained pinkish granite. Huge fractures have occurred in the granite along the shoreline . . . Within some of these fractures are black basalt dikes, which are the product of intrusive, solidified magma.” Brief elaboration on

the volcanic history is provided by Duane and Ruth Braun in their *Guide to the Geology of Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park* after discussion of Mount Desert Island volcanic activity: “To the east across Frenchman Bay on what is now the Schoodic Peninsula, another volcano was also active at the same time [420 million years ago].”

The Schoodic Peninsula with Schoodic Point at its southerly tip is generally considered to be the land south of State Route 186, the east-west road connecting the village of Winter Harbor to, on the other side of the peninsula, Birch Harbor village. It is the southern portion of the larger landmass south of Route 1 sometimes referred to as the Gouldsboro Peninsula, especially in Louise Dickinson Rich’s iconic book about the area, *The Peninsula*, published in 1958. Rich calls this land “thirty thousand acres of granite, heath, and shallow topsoil.” Her book is a magnificently written portrayal of the beautiful but challenging landscape, its history, the natural resources, and hard-working, multi-talented people.

In Rich’s Chapter 5, entitled “The Face of the Land,” she wonderfully describes for lay readers the evolution of the peninsula following the glacier. Writes Rich, “When the glacier finally retreated and the enormous pressure was relieved, the resilient crust of the earth responded by rising slightly . . . Some of the submerged territory . . . including the Peninsula, did regain the open air to become what geologists term a *drowned coastline*. . . The higher, central parts of the land rose from the sea first and were ready to start their regeneration centuries before the fringe areas had achieved the light of day. Therefore, they were well advanced, probably supporting full-grown pines, fir and spruces, while other parts were fathoms under water. That is what makes the Peninsula so fascinating. You can see for yourself . . . every step of the evolution from barren rock to shady wood and flowering meadow.”

The great sloping rocks of the very end of the point, last of the land to rise from the sea, have bewitched visitors for generations. What a place to watch the brutality of the Gulf of Maine when at its angriest! Off these rocks often bob seabirds in substantial numbers. In winter this is a site to watch Harlequin ducks as they dive into the surf for marine invertebrates. They are known for the spectacular coloring of the males but during nesting season are far north in Labrador and beyond.

Inshore from the surf and rocks is rough, hilly land important enough to be a Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance of the Maine Natural Areas Program. This program identifies one of the area’s most outstanding ecological features as the jack pine woodlands, which grow “on dry, acidic sites that are shallow to bedrock.” Schoodic Point is one of only a few places in Maine where jack pines thrive, stunted and of irregular form though they may be. Red spruce and white cedar are other dominant trees in Acadia’s Schoodic forests, and

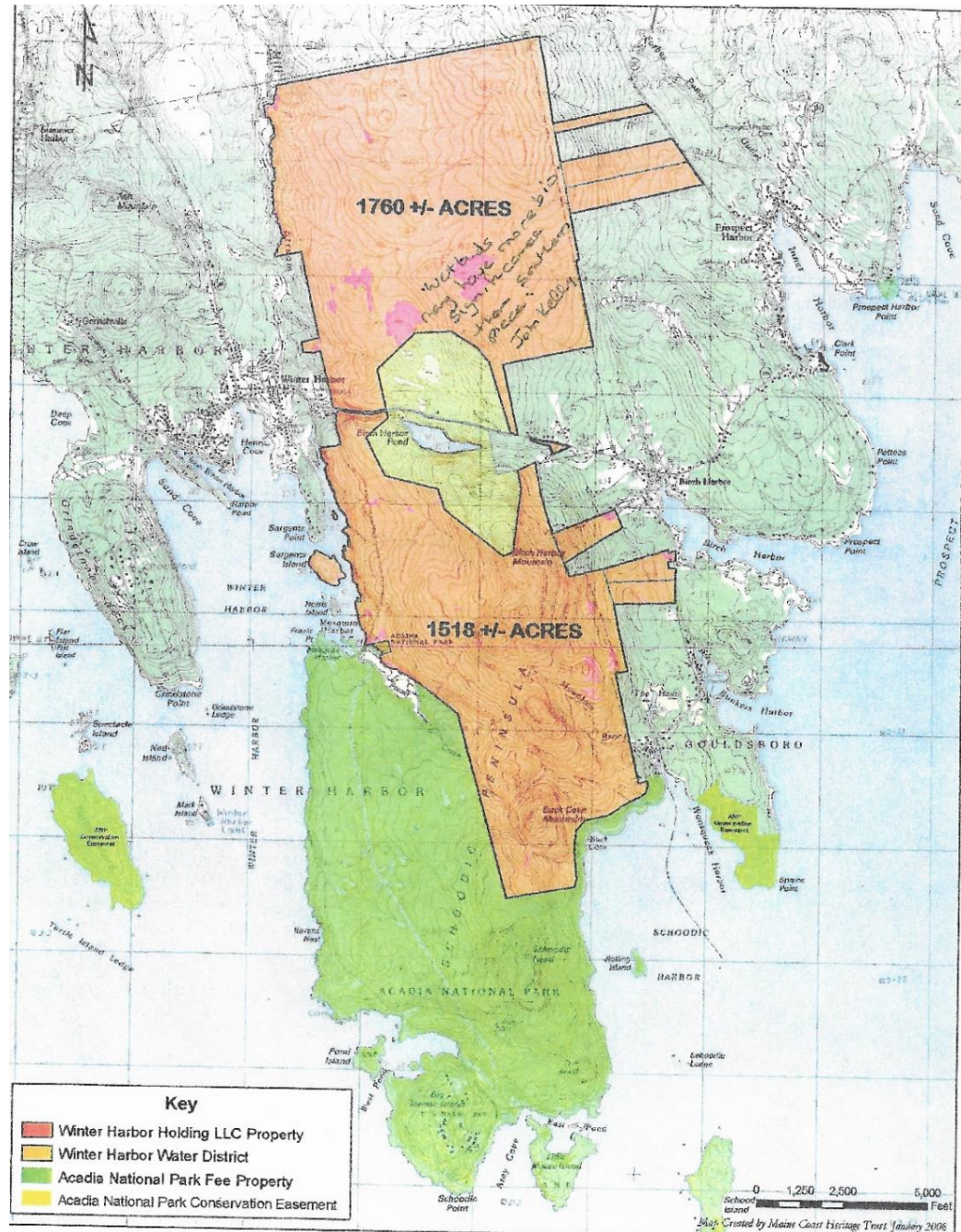
common too are paper birch and white spruce. All of Acadia National Park lies in a transition zone between southern deciduous and northern coniferous forests. Says the park's *Draft General Management Plan Amendment*, "The combination of the climate and varied topography has resulted in rich species diversity at Schoodic." The species diversity includes rare plants.



Mill Stream, Schoodic District, Acadia National Park. Far shore and Sargent Island, from which photo taken, gifted to park in 2015. Park entrance road parallels shore short distance inland.

The twenty-first century has seen the park rid itself of what former Superintendent Sheridan Steele called "a dagger to the heart of Acadia." When Sheridan arrived at Acadia in 2003, the park's then lands manager, Michael Blaney, did an outstanding job of immediately educating Sheridan to the fact that the biggest threat to Acadia National Park was approximately 3,300 acres abutting the northern boundary of the Schoodic District. The entrance road to the park passed through it; the exit road was within feet of this non-park land; and the view north from the park's Schoodic Head was over the forest of this parcel (see photo on page 1). Bought anonymously by the Modena family of Milan, Italy, at the beginning of the 1980s as one of three investment properties in Hancock County, the land was hard cut for its timber about fifteen years later. The identity of the owners was discovered at that time, and then the owners put forth plans for a major "eco-resort" including hotels, villas, a golf course in wetlands, an airstrip in the forest, and an "aquacenter" on unspoiled, wild 15-acre Sargent Island. Years of energetic effort by the conservation community ensued in a concerted effort to persuade the Modenas to sell. In the end, Sheridan Steele found an anonymous

conservation buyer who was willing to tackle preserving the property and at a scale reminiscent of what John D. Rockefeller, Jr., had done for Acadia on Mount Desert Island. The Modenas, perhaps thinking differently after the Great Recession, sold in 2011.



Reddish parcel of the Winter Harbor Holding Company was the land of the Modena family. Bought by anonymous conservation buyers, the southern half, 1,518 acres, is now part of Acadia National Park. The northern half also will be permanently preserved and for several years has been used for forestry research plots by Schoodic Institute and Acadia National Park. The Winter Harbor Water District land, the light green “hole in the donut,” is under conservation easement to Maine Coast Heritage Trust, an easement that protects the town’s back-up water supply and allows for public trails

State Route 186 between Birch Harbor and Winter Harbor cuts the property into almost equal halves. On the southern half the new owners converted the timber harvest roads to bike paths similar to Mount Desert's famed carriage roads and constructed the now very popular Schoodic Woods campground. Complete with these amenities and in an act of extraordinary generosity, the owners then gifted the land south of Route 186 to the National Park Foundation, which transferred title to the United States in 2015. (More will be said about the parcel north of Route 186 later.) The size of the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park increased by 60% to a new total of about 3,766 acres.



Main building at new Schoodic Woods campground, part of expansion of Acadia's Schoodic District

The expansion of the Schoodic District, while applauded, did trigger some concerns. First was whether the Park had the legal authority to accept the gift without an Act of Congress. It took some time, but thanks to the good work of the Maine Congressional Delegation, Congress confirmed the legality of the gift. Another concern has been whether all the publicity about the expanded park, the new bike paths, and the new campground would greatly increase tourist visitation. While local businesses welcomed more dollars, many business people and other residents alike feared losing the relatively quiet and off-the-beaten-path character of Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro. Most people abhor the thought of Schoodic's becoming another Bar Harbor in July and August. In some quarters there were criticisms that the park was ignoring its own General Management Plan. The transfer to the park in 2002 of the Navy base, which was wholly surrounded by park land, and its conversion to what is now the home of the Schoodic Institute at

Acadia National Park occasioned the afore-mentioned *Draft General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement* of 2004. This document specifically says, “Acadia’s *General Management Plan* states that NPS will manage the Schoodic District to retain opportunities for low-density recreation, current (1992) use levels and parking lot capacities, and the existing naturalness and solitude. In addition, the plan states that NPS will not actively promote the Schoodic District or add facilities to the area.” Whether Acadia National Park has paid adequate heed to its own stated intentions not to promote the Schoodic District remains a worry in some quarters. Personally, I give great credit to current Acadia Superintendent Kevin Schneider and his fine staff for recognizing this issue and for being excellent listeners to local concerns as park staff try to balance the needs of the park and of residents.

Before moving on from Acadia’s Schoodic District, note Spruce Point, the small peninsula northeast of Schoodic Point and also shown in green on above map. A conservation easement held by Acadia National Park preserves the scenic wooded qualities of privately owned Spruce Point and the lovely view of it from the road as one exits the park. Only on the Schoodic Peninsula, considered by the National Park Service to be the land south of Route 186, does Acadia have authority to hold conservation easements on privately owned land on the mainland. Originally, Acadia had authority to hold conservation easements on the mainland anywhere in Hancock County and in Knox County south and east of the steamship channel up West Penobscot Bay. After passage by Congress of the Master Plan legislation of 1986 Acadia no longer has had authority to acquire conservation easements on the mainland of Hancock County except on the Schoodic Peninsula. It still has authority to accept conservation easements on islands (except for losing the authority within the Town of Isle au Haut).

This may be a good place to be sure everyone understands what a conservation easement is and the national significance of Acadia’s conservation easement program, exemplified so well at Spruce Point. In a conservation easement a private landowner voluntarily deeds away development rights that he or she thinks never should be exercised. A conservation easement is a flexible tool tailored to the characteristics of the particular parcel of land and the needs and wishes of the owners but having to meet the criteria of the conservation agency to which it is granted. The restrictions may forbid all development or may allow some development subject to the limitations set forth in the easement. Conservation easements may also allow for public access, and many newer ones do. Once executed by the landowners and accepted by the conservation agency that will enforce the provisions, an easement runs in perpetuity regardless of who may own the land in the future.

Acadia National Park was the first conservation agency in Maine to begin acquiring easements after the Maine legislature passed enabling legislation in 1970. Maine Coast Heritage Trust was founded that year for the sole initial purpose of promoting and negotiating conservation easements on behalf of Acadia. Although the conservation easement technique had been used sporadically in a few other parts of the country in earlier decades, it remained little known. It is no exaggeration to say that Acadia National Park in partnership with Maine Coast Heritage Trust lit a spark that caused this particular land conservation technique to become widely popular among conservationists across the country and in other nations in subsequent years.

(Anyone interested in more elaboration on the Acadia National Park conservation easement program should feel free to ask me to email my 2018 unpublished article *A Proud Accomplishment – Acadia’s Conservation Easement Program*).

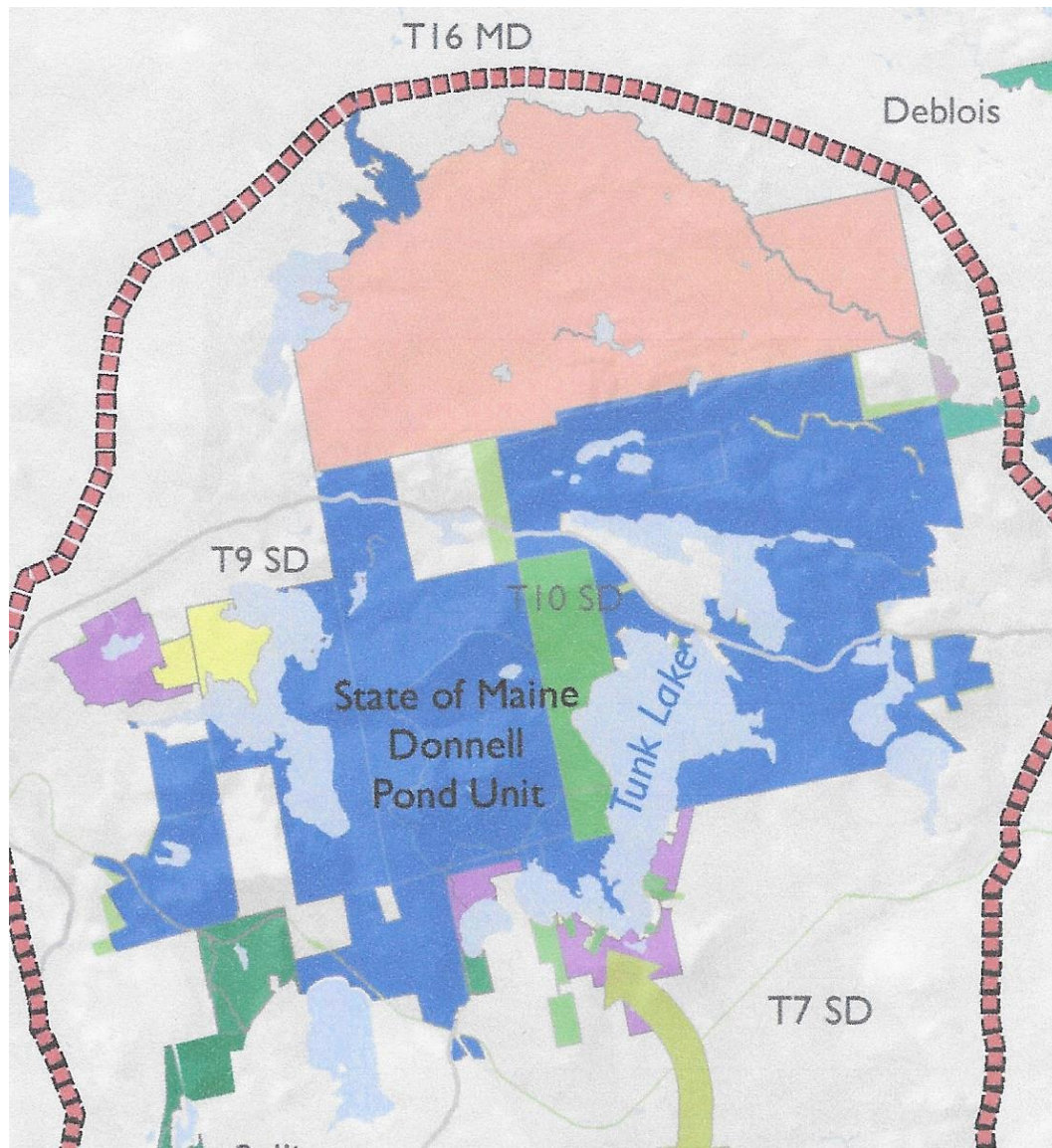
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The northern S2S “bookend” – State of Maine’s Public Reserved Lands Donnell Pond Unit and surrounding conserved lands:



Let’s now jump to the north end of S2S, the Donnell Pond Unit of the State’s Public Reserved Lands and surrounding conserved lands. The Donnell Pond Unit, belonging to us, the people of Maine, is far larger at 15,384 acres than Acadia’s Schoodic District. The land includes parts of the towns of Franklin and Sullivan as well as of Townships 7, 9, and 10. Adding to this land owned by the State of Maine are conservation easements on abutting and nearby lands, some of which are held by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry and some by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Additionally, and very

importantly, The Nature Conservancy, Frenchman Bay Conservancy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and Lyme Timber have conserved abutting and nearby lands, about which more will be said.



Northern portion of S2S. Blue shows State of Maine's Donnell Pond Unit; green on west shore of Tunk Lake shows conservation easement held by Dept of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; darker green in southwest part of map includes Frenchman Bay Conservancy's Schoodic Bog property; pink to north is The Nature Conservancy's Spring River Lake Preserve (more to be said about that in PDF #4); other colors and parcels all part of S2S "quilt" of conserved lands. (Map courtesy Maine Coast Heritage Trust)

Like the southern bookend of S2S, this northern bookend lies within a Maine Natural Areas Program Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance. Says the write-up for the "Tunk Lake Focus Area," "The mountains and lakes formed by the Tunk Mountain pluton (a broad intrusion of igneous rock) constitute one of the

most distinctive landmarks and natural areas in Downeast Maine. The focus area includes the picturesque mid-elevation (approx. 1,000 foot) summits of Schoodic Mountain, Tunk Mountain, Black Mountain, Caribou Mountain, and Catherine Mountain as well as numerous undeveloped or sparsely developed lakes and ponds, including Tunk Lake, Spring River Lake, and Donnell Pond.”



State's boat launch at Tunk Lake, next to State Route 182

The preservation of this area has taken place in multiple stages beginning in 1976 and has involved the State of Maine, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Frenchman Bay Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Lyme Timber, timberland owners including Prentiss and Carlisle, Diamond Occidental Corporation, and various individuals and families. Notable, in particular, has been the Bryan family, but before saying more about the Bryans, let me quote from an email a few days ago from Lyme Timber's Peter Stein, who is receiving these PDFs: “. . . you should recall Lyme's first efforts in this geography in the mid-1990s which were the lands at the western end of Donnell Pond, of approximately 1,600 acres that we acquired. Then with great assistance from Maine Coast Heritage Trust, sold portions to the State, easements to the State and then sold the easement encumbered lands to 2 neighboring landowners. Caroline Pryor then at Maine Coast Heritage Trust was our lead conservation partner and Ralph Knoll was the State agency rep we worked with.”

Peter's comments help illuminate the complexities of some land conservation projects and the vital role of partnerships. These PDFs will not go deeply into the technicalities of land conservation or of particular land deals, but they strive to give an overview and flavor of what is involved in preserving natural lands.

Turning to the Bryan family, it is worth quoting at some length from the late Bob Bryan's wonderful book of personal hard work and adventure *Robert Bryan: The Flying Parson of Labrador and the Real Story Behind Bert and I* (Downeast Books 2014): "My desire to explore nature was fulfilled each summer at Tunk Lake in Maine. My grandfather Benjamin Bryan began fishing in Maine around 1912 . . . He learned about Tunk Lake on a trip to an estate near Bar Harbor. Tunk Lake is a large, pristine body of crystal clear water just north of Bar Harbor . . . One of the deepest lakes in Maine, it is four miles long and two miles wide and is flanked by 1,100-foot mountains. The lake is only 200 feet above sea level; its most southern end is just 5 miles from the saltwater in Frenchman Bay. Benjamin Bryan discovered that the fishing, particularly for landlocked salmon and lake trout, was excellent. Every October, up to 10,000 black ducks stopped at Tunk Lake as part of their fall migration from the Maritimes. In the mid-1920s . . . my grandfather decided to build a sporting camp and lodge on the lake to cater to families. He set up a corporation with about twenty colleagues, mostly Wall Street friends, called the Wickyup Club.

"Grandfather Benjamin B. Bryan built the lodge and our family camp, The Boulders. Clifford Hemphill, a New York investment banker, was building the second camp when a messenger arrived waving a telegram on October 30, 1929, shouting, 'Stop!' It was the day after the Crash . . . The Crash effectively ended further development of the lake . . . Eight years after the Crash, the state seized the Wickyup Lodge for back taxes and sold it to polar explorer Admiral Richard E. Byrd. Our family, however, managed to hang onto our camp."

Bob goes on about Admiral Byrd's heirs selling the property in 1983 to a developer who planned to build condominiums. The new owner was hampered by the lodge's being on the National Register of Historic Places, and following the lodge's burning to the ground in 1984, the new owner ended up in prison for arson after increasing the insurance on the building. Bob Bryan concludes his Afterword, "My brother Jim and I kept close tabs on all development plans for Tunk Lake and immersed ourselves in the task of preservation with passion and perseverance. Back in 1976, my sister and brother-in-law Hazel and Ernie Tracy had granted a conservation easement on their six-acre shorefront lot to the State of Maine. Their action began years of family effort that led to agreements between individuals, the state, and non-profit institutions that eventually protected Tunk Lake forever."

See pages 17-18 of this PDF for a piece from the Fall 2019 newsletter of Frenchman Bay Conservancy elaborating on Bob Bryan and the extended Bryan family's preservation efforts at Tunk Lake. Several times I have enjoyed visiting the campsite at Tunk of Bob's niece and nephew-in-law, who come from San Diego to camp for weeks at a time on beloved Tunk Lake shorefront. On one visit they told me the origin of the name "Tunk," told to them by what they called a credible source. After the Civil War, veterans reportedly gathered at Tunk Lake, chilling their beer by putting the bottles in barrels in the lake. Tunk, tunk went the bottles! True??

My last personal memory of Episcopal minister Bob Bryan was of his presiding at the memorial service in Brooklin, Maine, of Maine Coast Heritage Trust board member Alan Bemis. Bob had his seaplane tied to the Bemis float in Eggemoggin Reach. At the end of the religious service he quickly announced he had to get across the St. Lawrence River before dark, tore out of the tent pulling his white minister's robe over his head as he ran down the hill and onto the float, flung open the plane door, threw in his white robe, cast off, climbed in, revved the engine, and lifted off the water, banking sharply toward Quebec's north shore.

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Between the bookends:

I will not delve into details about all the many parcels that have been conserved and are possibilities for future conservation between Acadia's Schoodic District and the State of Maine's Donnell Pond Unit. Some have already been mentioned – Frenchman Bay Conservancy's parcel between Route 1 and Lower West Bay Pond discussed in the *Northern Woodlands* article (appended to PDF #1), the Gouldsboro Unit of Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge and abutting Frances Wood Preserve of Frenchman Bay Conservancy described and in photos in PDF #1, and the former Modena land north of Route 186 in Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro, the 1,760 acres shown on the map on page 4 above.

In regard to the latter parcel, the effort by the anonymous conservation buyer to remove "the dagger to the heart of Acadia" by buying all of the Modena holdings north and south of Route 186 was importantly assisted by other players working on S2S. Lyme Timber directly assisted the buyer with various aspects of a complex transaction. Also deeply involved were Friends of Acadia and Maine Coast Heritage Trust. With the land south of Route 186 now part of Acadia National Park, the land north of Route 186 -- not to be part of Acadia because park expansion is capped at Route 186 -- is a vital piece of the corridor north from Acadia. Ecologically, this so-called northern parcel may be even more important

than the land added to Acadia because it has more wetland acreage. It, as well as the abutting “hole in the donut” Birch Harbor Pond parcel mentioned in the caption under map on page 5 above, are identified by the Maine Natural Areas Program as important and sizeable Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat. The final details about the future of the northern parcel of former Modena land are being worked out by several partnering organizations.

A stepping stone in S2S of particular importance is Forbes Pond, clearly shown on the S2S map about half-way between Acadia and Route 1. In its 2017 annual report Maine Coast Heritage Trust said about this pond, “Working with conservation-minded landowners, in 2017 and January 2018 MCHT protected 485 acres on the northern and western shores of Forbes Pond, permanently protecting critical wildlife habitat and creating a new preserve in Gouldsboro. With 430 acres on the eastern shore of the pond protected in 2016, the pond’s shoreline is now almost entirely protected.” Some of the land around the pond is owned by Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Some is in private ownership subject to conservation easements held by Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Stretching north from Forbes Pond toward Route 1 are extensive wetlands. Although, they are not now permanently conserved, they have little potential for development. Maine Coast Heritage Trust deserves great credit for negotiating the protection of Forbes Pond and finding the financial resources to do it (more will be said about sources of dollars for S2S land conservation in PDF #3). Also deserving credit is Frenchman Bay Conservancy. Years earlier the Frenchman Bay Conservancy board and staff identified the high priority of Forbes Pond and opened communication channels with landowners, trying to create a preservation opportunity even as it was unknown from where necessary funds might come. By the time the opportunity was ripe, both organizations agreed that Maine Coast Heritage Trust was best equipped to proceed. Again, we can see how effective have been the working relationships between conservation partners in the S2S story.



Forbes Pond field trip led by Maine Coast Heritage Trust’s Bob DeForrest.



Forbes Pond looking northwest toward Jones Pond and Flanders Bay

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More on land conservation techniques:

Various illustrations have been presented of the two primary land conservation techniques of government and nonprofit conservation agencies and organizations – (1) outright ownership (known as “fee simple”) and (2) holding and enforcing conservation easements on privately owned land. As has been made clear, the S2S bookends -- Acadia National Park’s Schoodic District and the Donnell Pond Unit of Maine’s Public Reserved Lands -- are owned respectively by the federal government and the state government. Among other land also mentioned have been parcels owned outright by the Frenchman Bay Conservancy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and The Nature Conservancy.

An especially significant conservation easement within S2S, the one preserving privately owned Spruce Point, was described above, and explanation was provided of just what is a conservation easement. To reiterate, Maine law permits government and nonprofit conservation entities to accept the responsibility in perpetuity to hold and enforce conservation easements granted by private

landowners willing to impose development restrictions on their land. Conservation easements bind all future owners of land so restricted.

Other forms of land conservation are regulatory – federal environmental laws related to land, state land use laws such as shoreland zoning, and other zoning where such exists, whether municipal or, for the unorganized territories of Maine, which include parts of S2S, zoning by Maine’s Land Use Planning Commission. Town comprehensive plans are important documents too, guiding town planning board decision-making. For the purposes of this course it should be enough just to remind readers of the role of government regulation in protecting land.

Current use assessment or, in other words, assessing the value of land for property taxes at its current use, not at its financially most valuable use, has also helped keep land from being overdeveloped. Maine has both a Tree Growth Tax Law and a Farm and Open Space Tax Law. Within the S2S geography are considerable acreages of managed timberlands. The Tree Growth Tax Law is important in minimizing property tax pressures on the owners. Deterring them from developing is their being subject to a financial penalty if land so classified has its use changed. The effectiveness of this deterrent is limited, however, if the financial rewards of developing appear to far outweigh the penalty. Similarly, the Farm and Open Space Tax Law can provide reduced property taxes to owners whose land meets detailed criteria related to public benefit. Here it is enough just to point out that current use assessment can help landowners keep their land in an undeveloped state, but in no way does current use assessment provide permanent conservation protection.

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Lilac glory at preserve of Maine Coast Heritage Trust on Stave Island, a S2S stepping stone

Next week's missive will go on to commentary about sources of money for land conservation including for stewardship of conserved land, and then to the human benefits from S2S and to education and scientific research within S2S.

The following two pages from a recent Frenchman Bay Conservancy newsletter elaborate on Bob Bryan and conservation at and around the Donnell Pond Unit and Tunk Lake, the northern S2S bookend.

A CONSERVATION LEGACY

CELEBRATING ROBERT "BOB" BRYAN

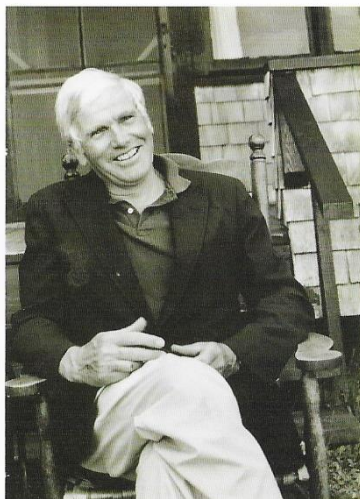
On December 12th of last year, land conservation champion, Robert "Bob" Bryan, passed away. News stories of his life and death at the time centered on his highly-successful *Bert and I* comedy sketch that he started with Marshall Dodge in 1958, or his founding of the Quebec-Labrador Foundation, or even his extensive flight experience and his ministry to rural Acadian fishing communities. Bob Bryan lived a truly remarkable life! Perhaps the Bob Bryan story most relevant to Hancock County, however, is the impact that he and his family had in conserving thousands of acres of land around Tunk Lake and Donnell Pond.

Today, the children and grandchildren of Bob Bryan and his siblings continue to own land surrounding Tunk Lake. Much of this land is under conservation easement, to Frenchman Bay Conservancy on the southern shore of the lake, and another to the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands surrounding Catherine Mountain. Many thousands of visitors hike the trails on and surrounding land that Bob Bryan and his family helped conserve. It's hard to imagine today that this beautiful, pristine land that is also highly ecologically valuable was once at extreme risk of exploitation and development. This story is well captured in a report produced by Harvard Forest in collaboration with Highstead. Excerpts from this report are copied below.

One of the historical starting points for the conservation efforts that arose here centers around the Wickyup Club on Tunk Lake. In 1927, Benjamin ("Ben") Bryan and a group of twenty-seven other men, most of whom worked on Wall Street in New York, formed a sportsman's club and bought 25,000 acres surrounding the lake. These men and their families planned to spend their summers at this location. This elite club was formed with the intention of providing its members pristine surroundings

and exceptional recreational options. Documents show that the plans for this club were extensive and left very little to be desired.

Of all the members, the only person to complete a modest camp (that is, a rough cabin in the woods) was Ben Bryan. Before any of the other grand plans could come to fruition, the owners of the Wickyup Club were halted by the stock market crash of 1929. The sportsman's club that included Ben Bryan and his associates went bankrupt and the state took most of the land for taxes. This financial calamity, although crippling to these families and many others, saved this area from the plans to transform the woods into an exclusive enclave of 500 to 1,000 palatial lakeshore cottages.



[Over the next several decades], a number of Ben Bryan's grandchildren, including James ("Jim"), Robert ("Bob") and William ("Bill"), along with their sisters Hazel Bryan Tracy, Ruth Bryan Colgrove, and Joy Bryan Bacon, had managed to hold on to relatively small parcels of property at Tunk Lake. Active conservation efforts in the area were initiated in 1975 by Hazel Bryan Tracy, who granted a conservation easement on her six-acre shorefront lot to the State of Maine with the help of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. This was the first use at Tunk Lake of a new tool in the

conservation toolbox—the conservation easement. Since Hazel's easement, several thousand acres around Tunk Lake and Donnell Pond have been similarly protected.

In 1983, a larger parcel became available that was quite attractive to developers interested in building summer homes. Jim and Bob Bryan were given a three-day window to make a decision on whether or not they wanted to purchase an 850-acre parcel on the northern end of Tunk Lake. The parcel was being offered at a price of \$300,000. Bob and Jim Bryan were able to combine personal savings, loans from the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, timber rights sales, and assistance from family members to meet the deadline and buy the parcel. They then granted a conservation easement to the state to prevent

development of the property. Critical to the completion of the deal was: the family's willingness to invest; MCHT's role as an interim financier and negotiator; and the ability of Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to accept an easement. This was one of the first solid examples of creative conservation financing leveraged to ensure that the protection of a lakefront parcel in the area. The 850 acres parcel was a key piece of the puzzle that ultimately included 1,215 acres, featuring 8,000 feet of Tunk Lake shoreline, the natural sand beaches of Big and Little Sand Coves, the summit of Catherine Mountain and the outlet stream of Rainbow Pond.

To date, over 44,000 acres of land have been conserved between Schoodic Point and the upper

Narraguagus watershed to the north of the Blackwoods Road. Numerous partners worked with private landowners over a period of decades to conserve this vast landscape, including Frenchman Bay Conservancy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Acadia National Park, The Nature Conservancy, Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands, Maine Department of Conservation, and numerous private families and landowners throughout the region. The Bryan family's land conservation comprised a pivotal early chapter in a story that continues today as conservation organizations now focus on protecting this region as a landscape that will remain resilient as our climate changes.

MAINE CONSERVATION CORPS MAKEOVER LITTLE TUNK TRAIL

This summer, a Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) crew spent nine weeks working to make major improvements to the trail at Little Tunk pond. During this time, the crew camped at Tidal Falls Preserve around the FBC offices.

Previously, the trail at Little Tunk was full of trip hazards and prone to flooding. Thanks to the hard work of the MCC crew, the trail is now beautifully regraded and built to last.



BEFORE



AFTER