



# Maine Sierran

Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club

Spring 2014

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*Outings, workshops, and retreats will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act.*

## Let's Celebrate the Wild!

Sierra Club Maine is about to begin a very special birthday celebration that will extend from spring to fall. The Wilderness Act turns 50 on September 3, 2014, and events and gatherings around Maine and the country will mark this major American cultural and environmental achievement. This is our year to "Celebrate the Wild."

Sierra Club, other wilderness groups, and federal wilderness managing agencies have been organizing for the 50th anniversary over the past months. In Maine, a steering committee under the leadership of Sierra Club activist and College of the Atlantic professor Ken Cline have coordinated a Maine version of the national celebration. Sierra Club Maine is taking the lead in the process. Our goal is to expand appreciation and awareness of our natural heritage so that the public becomes more knowledgeable and supportive about the concept and benefits of wilderness and wild places.

In the coming months, we'll be having celebrations, outings, and numerous other activities in communities and wild places throughout Maine. A centerpiece of the celebration is a special Sierra Club Maine annual dinner and gathering at Maple Hill Farm Inn in Hallowell on September 5. The theme of the evening will be celebrating Maine's wild places.



We're especially excited about our featured speaker, Congressman Mike Michaud, who will share his experiences as an advocate for protecting the state's rivers and forests. He will also present his vision for public land and the protection of our environment if

elected governor in November.

Other exciting activities include two wilderness writing workshops, a yoga/meditation wilderness retreat, canoe trips, hikes, and several film series.

*-Continued on page 7*

## Riding the Rails to a Cleaner, More Prosperous Future for Maine



Tony Donovan is passionate about trains. No, not in the sense of collecting models or other railroad memorabilia, or waxing nostalgic about railroad history. Tony's passion isn't for rail's past, it's for its future—a future that he and his fellow Sierra Club Maine transportation team members believe is an important component in reducing carbon emissions and promoting clean economic growth for the state of Maine.

And Tony's passion can be infectious. When he gives a presentation about the benefits of developing rail in Maine, his optimism, enthusiasm, and expertise generate interest— from students to senior citizens.

It was listening to Tony promote funding for rail expansion rather than a highway widening project that spurred Joan Saxe to recruit him to the Sierra Club back in 2005.

"I got up to speak against widening Route 295 and for funding the Downeaster," Tony remembers. "When I got back to my seat, a woman seated behind me was tugging at my sleeve. 'We have to talk,' she said. That woman was Joan."

He soon joined Joan and Chapter volunteers Paul Weiss and Ann Adams on the Sierra Club Maine transportation team.

*-Continued on page 2*



Maple Hill Farm Inn, Hallowell

### *You're Invited*

To a Very Special Sierra Club Maine Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act

*Maple Hill Farm Inn, Hallowell*

*Friday, September 5*

Come celebrate this historic anniversary of the Wilderness Act with fellow Sierra Club members and friends. The evening will include a wonderful Maple Hill Farm dinner, annual Sierra Club Maine award presentations, and an important talk by Congressman Mike Michaud on his goals for public lands and the environment.



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## The Devastating Effects of Tars Sands Extraction

*Powerful "Tar Sands Exposed" presentation tours Maine.*



**First Nation's Eriel Deranger speaking in Portland.**

People who wonder why environmentalists vehemently oppose the Keystone XL pipeline would understand if they had attended "Canada's Tar Sands Exposed" presentation February 1 at the University of Maine in Orono or the previous day at the University of Southern Maine in Portland. Canadian photographer Garth Lenz showed "before" pictures of verdant, bird-filled boreal forest and "after" pictures of lifeless, desolate landscape as far as the eye can see, traversed by trucks as big as houses. The images by the National Geographic photographer were both magnificent and disturbing.

Lenz noted that the Alberta tar sands project is the largest the world has known, "an epic undertaking," in the words of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. There are two main methods of extracting the bitumen. The first is open-pit mining (there are already six mines, with land leases to increase the footprint at least tenfold, Lenz said). However most of the tar sands oil is too deep for traditional mining. A widely used method to extract the deeper oil is steam injection, which Lenz calls "fracking on steroids." It uses a huge quantity of water that ends up in enormous, toxic

tailings ponds. Shockingly, the ponds are unlined.

Eriel Deranger, a member of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, gave an extremely powerful, first-hand account of the devastating health, ecological, and social effects tars sands extraction is having on her people, noting that the Athabasca River system has been polluted by tailings ponds.

"People can't drink or bathe in the water," she said. "They've never done monitoring. There are no baselines, so the government says the level of contamination is natural." She added that thousands of migrating birds landed in a tailings pond and died. "All of our traditional food is being contaminated," she said, and cited a 30 percent increase in bile duct cancers. Her tribe is suing the Canadian government for its abrogation of treaty rights and environmental protection, with the case going to the Supreme Court.

Sherri Mitchell, a Penobscot, has had first-hand experience with the "continuous and unrelenting attack on the rights of indigenous people" in her work with Wabanaki tribes in Maine and the Maritimes. "We can't fight the system, it's too big," she concluded. "We need to abandon it. We need to be able to pool resources and be a community again. We have to be willing to act."

The pipeline would enable continued extraction of tar sands oil by making its transportation cheaper and easier. It would set us on an infrastructure path of long-term carbon exploitation that is the opposite of the path we should be taking—decreasing fossil fuel use as rapidly as possible. That's why environmentalists are increasingly willing to act.

*by Christina Diebold*



### *Rallies Around Maine Call for Rejection of Keystone Pipeline*

On February 3, more than 175 people braved a brisk night in Portland's Monument Square to send a strong message that Mainers want President Obama to reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.

Sierra Club Maine helped to organize the event, part of a wave of anti-Keystone rallies around the country, including rallies in Belfast, Brunswick and Bangor. Our activists were out in full force with signs and enthusiasm, and Chapter Director Glen Brand led the Portland rally with a fiery speech and spirited chants ("Barack Obama, Yes You Can! Stop the Dirty Pipeline Plan!" and "Maine Must Stand, Against Tar Sands")

Sierra Club is part of a national coalition fighting dirty tar sands oil because the mining and transporting of dirty tar sands from Canada threatens our climate with more carbon pollution, and endangers our communities and clean water with toxic tar sands spills from pipeline and trains. We are also continuing our work to prevent tar sands oil from being pumped through Maine to Casco Bay for shipping to world markets. For more information and to get involved in our campaign to keep Maine tar sands-free, see the chapter website or email [maine.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:maine.chapter@sierraclub.org).

### *Rail, continued from page 1*

"It's a good group," Tony says. "I'm glad Joan tugged on my sleeve that day and I'm glad to be part of Sierra Club's work." Recently, he was also elected to the Chapter's executive committee.

Tony, who has a master's in urban planning from the University of Southern Maine and a certificate in economic development from Indiana University, first began to recognize the great value of developing rail in the mid 1990s, when he was employed as the Lincoln County planner. At the time the state was buying railroads, there was anticipation that Amtrak was coming to Maine, and regional transportation committees were being formed.

During those years, Tony was at the table for every meeting or event in Southern Maine that involved rail. As Amtrak service to Portland came closer to becoming a reality, the idea emerged for running passenger service over the existing rail from Portland to Auburn. That was about 2000-2001.

Work on the Portland/Auburn plan progressed steadily until 2005 when the guidelines for federal transportation funding changed under the Bush administration. The folks working on the Portland/Auburn project applied for a grant and received funding to study public transportation north of Portland.

"The drawback under the new study guidelines was that we had to analyze highway transport as well as rail," Tony notes. "Since the highways were already there, under the analysis rules running a bus was cheaper than a train because you had to include the cost of upgrading the rail line."

Despite the setback, the Portland/Auburn project stayed alive. Sierra Club Maine contributed money for a study and Tony, a realtor, received additional funding from the National Association of Realtors Smart Growth Program.



**Tony Donovan recently met with Senator Susan Collins to discuss the Maine Rail Coalition's ideas for expanding rail in Maine.**

"We issued a report in 2013 that recommended rail service between Portland and Auburn and showed how to pay for it," Tony explains. "Then we teamed up with the Maine Rail Transit Coalition (Tony was one of the founders of the coalition which is seeking transit solutions to dependence on oil and roads) and got a bill passed in the legislature to fund the final engineering/environmental analysis for the proposal. That's where we're at right now."

The train service would utilize the existing state-owned rail line, beginning on India Street at the Portland waterfront and running to the Auburn Airport. There would be four stops along the route, New Gloucester, Pownal, Yarmouth, and Falmouth.

Estimates are that up to 1,600 people a day would use the service, which would include 22 round trips a day. The projected travel time utilizing modern DMU Railcars (Diesel Multiple Units), traveling 60 MPH, is 50 minutes.

The service would also introduce a fleet of modern passenger cars offering customer amenities such as internet service, bike racks, and bistro services.

And the Maine Rail Transit Coalition doesn't want the rail line to end at Auburn. Once the Portland/Auburn run can demonstrate the feasibility of rail, they will be pushing to revive service all along the corridor to Bethel. That service would likely include six round-trips a day and would make stops at several towns along the route.

The plan for Portland-to-Auburn-to-Bethel service would cost an estimated \$138 million and take two years to complete.

"That's for the Cadillac version," Tony says. "It could be done for less."

The bigger vision for the group is to revive rail service throughout the state of Maine.

"We're using this project as an example of what can happen across the state," explains Tony's fellow transportation team member Paul Weiss. "That would include service from Brunswick to Rockland, and to Augusta—even to Waterville and Bangor. The long-term vision is electrification of rail throughout the state, eventually utilizing clean wind energy as a source and creating the most efficient and least polluting form of transportation available."

Tony Donovan stresses that investment in rail is good for the economy as well as the environment.

"It costs a million a mile to put in a road, and you have to rebuild in 10 years," he says. "It costs a million a mile for rail too, but it lasts for 100 years."

And he doesn't agree with those who say rail in low-density areas isn't feasible.

"We not only think it can work, we believe it will reduce sprawl and bring new economic opportunities and vitality to Maine's less-populated areas."

*Sierra Club Maine gives the second district congressman its enthusiastic support for governor.*

## Mike Michaud Will Make the Environment a Priority

It might just be the earliest political endorsement Sierra Club Maine ever made. In November, a full year before the election, the Chapter's executive committee voted to support Second District Congressman Mike Michaud in the 2014 race for Maine governor. The early endorsement was a reflection of both Michaud's outstanding commitment to environmental quality and the Chapter leadership's strong desire to replace the current anti-environmental administration in Augusta.

"Unlike the current governor, Mike Michaud understands that protecting our precious environment and public health is critical to Maine's identity and economic vitality," said Sierra Club Maine political committee chair Melissa Walsh Innes in a *Bangor Daily News* op-ed.

"His pro-environmental record is in stark contrast to the LePage administration's unprecedented assault on our state's environmental laws and policies."

The political committee did interview and give serious consideration to independent candidate Eliot Cutler. But in the end, Michaud's record on the environment and his positions on Maine's most pressing issues made him the clear choice.

Michaud's commitment to the environment is a long-standing one. A former mill worker, decades ago he led the fight against the pollution the mill was creating in the Penobscot River.

"Mike entered the Maine Legislature with a goal of protecting the Penobscot from polluters," noted former Maine Conservation Commissioner Pat McGowan, who served with Michaud in the legislature. "He was a leader in helping to protect over a thousand miles of rivers in our state. And he helped me greatly in passing the Land for Maine's Future bill which is now closing in on a million acres of protected land in Maine."

During his time in the legislature, Michaud served as a member and chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He helped pass the state's first comprehensive solid waste bill as well as



Congressman Mike Michaud thanks Sierra Club Maine for its support at a press conference in Portland. To Michaud's right are Chapter political team members Melissa Walsh Innes and Paul Machlin.

a smart growth land-use planning bill.

Michaud's pro-environment record continued during his years in the U.S. Congress. In Washington, he has supported clean energy, stronger federal fuel standards, water protection, mercury regulation, and ending taxpayer subsidies for oil companies. He's also consistently supported weatherization funding for Mainers. And he sponsored both the Acadia Park Improvement Act and the Maine Coastal Islands Wilderness Act, which designates 13 islands as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

In terms of the pressing environmental/energy issues now facing Maine, Michaud's positions are close to those of the Sierra Club, including his opposition to a tar sands pipeline through Maine and the proposed east/west highway (see below for a com-

plete list of Michaud's positions).

If elected governor, Michaud would set an ambitious goal of cutting Maine's reliance on oil for home heating by half—from 70 percent to 35 percent by 2030.

"It's a bold goal, but I know we can do it," Michaud said. "We have a responsibility to our children and grandchildren to do it. We'll start by investing in alternative energy like tidal, solar, and biomass as well as investing in energy efficiency. To move Maine forward, we have to think big and be willing to set aggressive goals—That's what I'm going to do as governor."

On another issue important to the Sierra Club, Michaud is a strong supporter of expanding rail service in Maine—both freight and passenger. In particular, he wants to see a top-grade, state-owned east/west rail corridor across the state. To help with

the cost, he proposes much of the work be done by the Army National Guard.

Perhaps most importantly, a Michaud administration would restore leadership and vision to protecting the Maine environment and guiding the state to a prosperous, clean energy future.

"Mike Michaud shares Mainers' conservation values and he understands that protecting our precious environment and public health is critical to Maine's economic vitality," Innes noted.

Pat McGowan agrees.

"He's a man of the people and for the environment. No one can question the work he's done to enhance our conservation efforts and protect our environment. Mike stands with us shoulder to shoulder on these values."

### *LePage Expresses Support for Keystone Pipeline*

In a recent letter to Secretary of State John Kerry, Governor Paul LePage endorsed the application for the Keystone Pipeline which would transport tars sands oil from Canada through the U.S.

In his letter LePage limited his support to Keystone and did not specifically discuss the potential for a pipeline that could bring tars sands oil through Maine to South Portland. Rather, he emphasized the importance of trade relations and Maine's ties to the Canadian economy.

"It's not surprising that the governor would be on the side of big oil on this issue," said Sierra Club Maine Director Glen Brand. "But what causes us more concern is that it sounds like he's suggesting to bring tar sands oil through northern New England, including Maine."

Brand questioned why LePage has not publicly stated his position on bringing tars sands oil through the existing pipeline in Maine.

"That should cause concern for the thousands of people in Maine who would be affected by it," he said.

In an interview with the *Bangor Daily News*, the governor's director of the Office of Energy Independence stated that LePage "supports proposals for any economic development, but then you have to weigh the energy benefits and environmental costs when that project is proposed."

The Obama administration is expected to make a decision on the Keystone Pipeline sometime in the coming months.

## Why We Like Mike

*Congressman Michaud's positions on the issues of importance to Sierrans*

### He Supports:

- Investment in energy efficiency programs to help Mainers get off oil and gas
- Increasing the state's renewable energy standards
- Appropriately sited on-shore and off-shore wind projects
- An ambitious plan to support solar energy in Maine
- Strengthening our clean water and air standards
- Increasing funding for the Land for Maine's Future Program
- Passenger rail service from Portland to Auburn
- Upgrading Maine's rail system for more and faster freight transport
- An economic study for the proposed national park in the Maine Woods
- Restoring the integrity of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection

### He Opposes:

- Pumping tar sands oil through Maine to Casco Bay
- The proposed east/west highway
- Oil and gas drilling off the coast of Maine

*For more on Michaud's record visit [michaud.house.gov/issue/environment](http://michaud.house.gov/issue/environment)*

**Maine Partners  
for Clean Energy**



**Promoting Efficiency &  
Smart Energy Solutions**

## Green Team Collaborates with the Sacopec-Ossipee Regional Heating Assistance Alliance (SORHA)

Green Team members Lyn Sudlow and Joan Saxe have collaborated with the SORHA Alliance that operates in the Kezar Falls, Porter area of Maine, located in northern York County and southern Oxford County to promote residential energy efficiency. SORHA's mission is to provide heating assistance for those who do not qualify for other programs but are still in dire need. In addition, this group has been known to help families weatherize their homes to reduce heating fuel use. It is a perfect organization for the Green Team to collaborate with since our objective is also to reduce the amount of heating fuel used.

Members of both the Green Team and SORHA participated in an energy audit of an older home in the late fall under the guidance of energy auditor Nate Howe from Horizon Residential Energy Services of South Portland. The group is in the process of planning for a fall 2014 energy forum in conjunction with a special "Energy Day." The event will demonstrate the successes of the air-sealing and weatherization work following the audit of the home.

We are now pursuing the possibility of the Green Team working with students at Sacopec Valley High School to provide training and assistance in building low-cost but effective storm windows for selected homes while at the same time teaching students about the importance of energy efficiency.

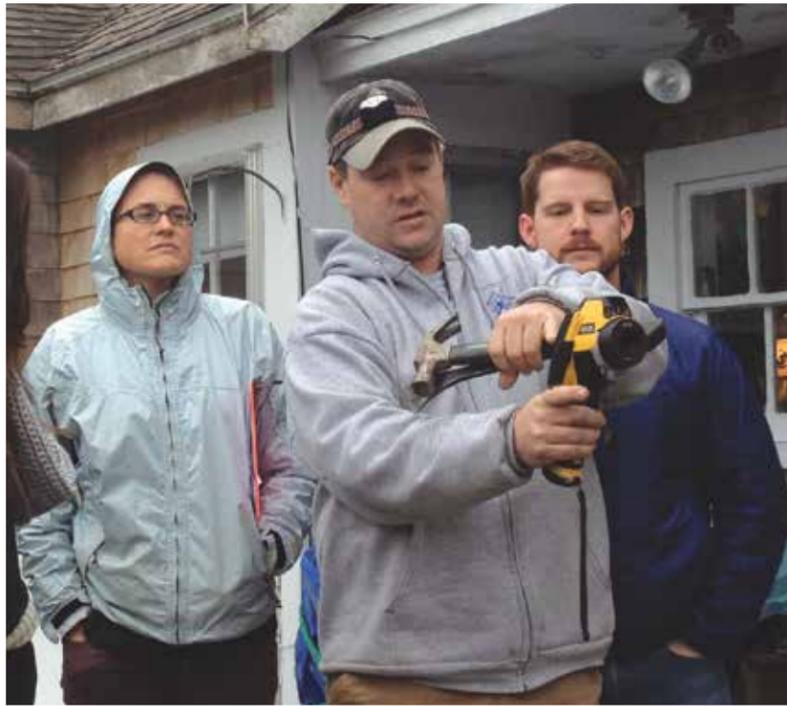
## Green Teens Study Energy Efficiency and Weatherization on North Haven

Prior to the deep freeze that started in December, Green Teens on North Haven Island spent two weeks learning the critical role weatherization has in making homes comfortable and energy efficient. They then applied their knowledge directly to the needs of the community. The students called it the Green November!

To promote awareness about energy efficiency in residential housing, students first attended a home walk-thru audit with professional auditor Keith McPherson of Home Energy Answers. They then participated in building interior storm windows for multiple elderly residents.

Kirsten McGovern's Island School sophomore math class learned the benefits of understanding the math and science behind energy-efficient housing and how it directly affects heating costs, health, the environment and daily comfort. Then McPherson gave them on-the-ground-training using the blower door and infrared camera to help identify air leaks and walls lacking insulation. Over a two-week period with the help of Louis Carrier's science class and shop teacher Terry Goodhue, the students worked diligently to learn the construction of interior storm windows. Working in teams, they measured windows, sawed and stapled wood for frames, then stretched, taped and shrink-wrapped plastic onto the frames. The final installed products were clean and affordable tight-fitting windows, preventing drafts and delighting homeowners.

Students and teachers were totally pleased with



**Kristen McGovern (left), Keith McPherson (center), and Brooks Winner helped North Haven students learn about residential energy efficiency late last fall.**

the Green November project, sighting its benefits on many levels. No only did students put their math and budgeting skills to work, they took pride in working with business leaders, other community groups, and residents in helping their neighbors.

## Walk-Thru Audit Training in Rockland

The Mid Coast Advisory Team conducted a volunteer home walk-thru training at the Rockland office of Evergreen Home Performance. Evergreen's Brian Robertson led the training which will help our Walk-Thru Team volunteers have a better un-

derstanding of whole house energy systems. The group is hopeful that they can draw more members to their team to help local homeowners identify the "low hanging fruit" in their drafty homes and move toward important next steps to retrofit their homes and enjoy the comfort energy efficiency provides.

## Student Green Teams Opportunities

Middle and high school teachers and parents: If you're interested in having your students participate in a Green Sneakers' Green Teams Building Science and Energy Efficiency Project that embraces all aspects of science, technology, engineering, and math call 761-5616 to set up a program for 2014.

The project educates future homeowners and community leaders about energy efficiency and building science, while putting students in a helpful position within their families and community. They will also gain the experience of addressing global issues by acting locally. The program offers training and resources to area high school students and upper-level middle schoolers provided by experienced, professional energy auditors. Students learn the basics of building science and energy efficiency and then lead their families in conducting home walk-thru energy-efficiency audits in their own homes.

## Sierra Club Maine Partners With ReVision Energy

Sierra Club Maine and the state's leading solar company, ReVision Energy, recently announced a new partnership to promote the use of solar energy in Maine. The partnership includes a unique referral program whereby ReVision Energy will make a donation of \$300 to \$500 to Sierra Club Maine for each solar energy system (depending on the size of the system) purchased by a Sierra Club supporter. To schedule a free solar energy system estimate for your home or business, go to our link at [maine.sierraclub.org](http://maine.sierraclub.org).

"We're proud to be working with one of Maine's most successful green businesses, and grateful to ReVision Energy for their support of our work to scale up clean, renewable solar energy," said Becky Bartovics, Sierra Club Maine Chapter co-chair. "Solar energy is key to reducing global warming pollution and fossil fuel dependence, and transitioning Maine to a cleaner energy economy." Despite its pristine environmental reputation, the fact is that Maine has the highest per capita carbon pollution in New England.

"The good news is that Maine has an abundant, underutilized solar resource that is capable of providing 100 percent of household electricity needs and 80 percent of domestic hot water demand," noted Phil Coupe, ReVision Energy co-founder. "Today's solar technology is robust and reliable enough for our northern climate and solar costs have come down so dramatically that homeowners today can earn an 8 percent to 10 percent annual return on their investment."

Since 2003, Maine-based ReVision Energy has installed more than 4,000 solar energy systems. As Northern New England's leading installer of grid-tied solar electric and solar hot water systems, ReVision is a full-service company offering in-house design, engineering, installation and service with a professional, highly trained staff of licensed and insured technicians. For more information about the Sierra Club/ReVision partnership, please contact [maine.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:maine.chapter@sierraclub.org).



**Among the many solar energy systems installed by ReVision Energy is the one at the home of Chapter executive committee member Claudia King in Falmouth. Claudia and her husband recently hosted an open house which drew over 20 interested people. More open houses are planned in the coming months.**

2014 focus will be on Celebrate the Wild activities

## Maine Woods Team Reorganizes as All-Volunteer Group

There are some changes in the Maine Woods team that we think will energize the Sierra Club's on-the-ground advocacy for Maine wilderness.

Karen Woodsum, our long-time Maine Woods staffer has retired, but we are very pleased to announce that she will continue on as a volunteer leader on our Maine Woods team.

Karen's skill and dedication during the past 12 years elevated Sierra Club Maine to a position of being a leading advocate for the Maine Woods. She was instrumental in the work to develop the 100-mile Wilderness, and more recently led the Chapter's effective effort against the east/west highway.

Karen also built an effective network of Maine Woods activists. Those activists have been and will continue to be an integral part of Sierra Club Maine success in protecting the state's natural treasures

Along with the change in staffing, our all-volunteer team is currently in the process of becoming a Sierra Club Grassroots Network. We're excited about this reorganization, which will allow the team the flexibility and resources needed to continue the next phase of its important work in protecting the Maine Woods. The grassroots/activist network will be a nationally supported project. As such, we will work collaboratively with the Maine Chapter leadership to put forth a clear and cohesive effort.

For 2014 we are gearing up for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the historic Wilderness Act,



Maine Woods team members at their summer retreat at West Branch Pond Camps. Left to right are: Jayne Lello, Jim Frick, Deb Loftus, Carole Haas, Karen Woodsum, Heather Rorer, and Ken Cline. Not in photo is Scott Bahr.

as well as the 150th anniversary of the publication of Thoreau's *The Maine Woods*. A list of upcoming events are included on Page 8 and will also appear on the Sierra Club Maine website.

We hope you'll be able to join us in our Celebrate the Wild activities throughout the year. If you'd

like to get involved in the Wilderness Act celebration please contact Ken Cline at 207-288-3381. If you would like to continue in the fight against the east/west highway contact [maine.chaper@sierraclub.org](mailto:maine.chaper@sierraclub.org) or 207-761-5616. For other questions regarding our team contact Carole Haas at [cshaas7@gmail.com](mailto:cshaas7@gmail.com).

Sierra Club Maine leaders and activists struggle with the issues surrounding land-based wind proposals in the state.

## Difficult Decisions

Wind power is a vitally important component in the effort to get society off fossil fuels and moving toward a carbon-free future. Both the national Sierra Club and Sierra Club Maine are pushing for greater development of all clean energy systems, including wind.

But wind power projects, particularly the siting of land-based wind projects, has stirred a fair amount of disagreement and controversy within the environmental community—even in the ranks of our own Sierra Club leaders and volunteers.

While there is widespread support within the Chapter for off-shore, agricultural land, and community-based wind, deliberations about industrialized projects proposed in areas of the Maine Woods have proven to be less than harmonious.

The disagreement is not over the Chapter's wind siting policy (you can read it at our website, [maine.sierraclub.org](http://maine.sierraclub.org)), but more about the interpretation of that policy.

Two recent wind proposals by First Wind, Bowers and Bingham, reflect the different thinking occurring within the Chapter about wind-siting.

The application for the Bowers project, proposed for Carroll Plantation in the Downeast Lakes Region, was turned down by the Department of Environmental Protection late last summer. First Wind has since submitted an appeal to the state.

Sierra Club Maine's executive committee, along with other groups such as the American Lung Association, the Maine Sportsman's Alliance, and Environment Maine, endorsed the Bowers Project which could generate up to 48 megawatts.

"Not only will this project help our environment by creating renewable, cleaner energy, but it's a site that our organization believes strikes the right balance," the Chapter noted in its letter of support.

But others, including the Maine Guides Association, the Partnership of the Downeast Lakes Watershed, and members of the Chapter's own Maine Woods Team had a different perspective.

"Those of us on the Maine Woods team couldn't support Bowers because it's too close to important

conservation areas and it compromises a very important ecological, scenic, and recreational resource," explained Maine Woods team member Ken Cline.

In the case of the Bingham wind project (located in Bingham, Mayfield Township, and Kingsbury Plantation), an ad hoc committee appointed by the Chapter's executive committee carefully and thoroughly examined all the potential impacts and benefits of the project. That examination resulted in different assessments from members and the ad hoc committee ended up not making a recommendation to the executive committee.

The Bingham proposal calls for 62-turbines which could produce up to 191 megawatts of energy. It would involve construction of 17 miles of transmission lines and a number of miles of new road.

Bingham committee members who supported the project felt it was very much in line with the chapters wind-siting guidelines as well as the Sierra Club's priority focus of reducing carbon emissions. Although not perfect, they felt it would have minimal harm to the environment.

"The site appears to be as good as it might be for such a project," noted Claudia King who chaired the committee. "It's relatively flat, already disturbed (logging) and visually distant from most vantage points."

Other ad hoc committee members, however, believed that Bingham is not compatible with the Chapter's guidelines. In particular they cited the section of those guidelines that stresses the Chapter's strong preference for wind projects that are off-shore, on agricultural lands, are community-scale, and near existing transmission lines.

"The Bingham project doesn't fit into any of those



categories," notes Maine Woods team leader, Carole Haas, who adds that the team recommended that the Chapter take "no position" on the project.

And while Haas and other Maine Woods team members agree that Bingham is not in a pristine area, they have concerns about its possible impact on maintaining an unfragmented, contiguous forest—an important priority for the Chapter.

As the executive committee struggles with a decision on Bingham and future proposals, it is weighing the critical need to move aggressively with clean energy development against possibly compromising the integrity of the Maine Woods.

Climate change is upon us, and the Sierra Club is embarked on the ambitious goal of helping America get off fossil fuel by 2030. Wind energy will be an important part of reaching that goal.

On the other hand, the Sierra Club has made the protection of the Maine Woods, the largest expanse of contiguous northern forest east of the Mississippi, one of its highest national conservation priorities.

Does the need to reduce carbon and promote clean energy require supporting projects in the Maine Woods? Or does the goal of maintaining an unfragmented forest mean we should limit our support to off-shore, community-scale, and agricultural land wind siting? And can restricting siting to those areas fulfill our clean energy goals?

There are no easy answers and no clear right or wrong. Advocates for the Maine Woods support the Club's carbon reduction goal. And Chapter leaders who are supporting projects like Bowers and Bingham want to protect the Maine Woods.

The Chapter will be moving forward in the coming months to further clarify where on-land wind development would be acceptable. That will include developing a map of Maine that indicates where development is appropriate and also looking into conservation easements and mitigation as an important part of any project planned for the Maine Woods.

-By Jim Frick

We welcome your input on this issue. Send your thoughts to [maine.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:maine.chapter@sierraclub.org).

*Sierra Club Maine joins the call for a full environmental impact statement.*

## Concerns about Searsport Dredging Proposal Need to be Addressed

Just a day after the grassroots victory that led to the withdrawal of the Duke Conoco Philips 22-million-gallon storage tank proposal in Searsport, the Army Corps of Engineers posted an application from the Maine Department of Transportation for an “improvement” dredge of Searsport Harbor in conjunction with the overdue maintenance of that harbor.

The “improvement” dredge would deepen the harbor by five feet overall and expand the footprint by more than a third to increase the turning basin. It would amount to almost a million cubic yards of dredge spoils. While Sierra Club Maine is not opposed to existing harbor depth maintenance dredge operations, the Chapter expects that any large scale “improvement” dredge would follow Army Corps guidelines that require a full environmental impact statement (EIS). Preliminary assessment has indicated excessive levels of mercury and many other toxins including PAH, arsenic, etc.

During the Public Comment period concerned groups and citizens have requested a full EIS and public hearings on the application to address these questions: What is the toxicity of the dredge spoils? What is the impact such an operation would have on Searsport Harbor and on the dump site? What is the impact on the lobster industry and on the economy of the local region?

Working in conjunction with Thanks but No Tank, and with Islesboro Island Trust, Sierra Club Maine has communicated with our congressional delegation and with local state legislators. Representative Pingree has written to the Army Corps supporting our request. Representative Michaud has stated that such dredge operations are expensive and damaging, suggesting that naturally deep harbors are more desirable for port development. In November, 31 local legislators signed on to a letter by Representative Walter Kumiega to the Army Corps as well. As of mid-February 10 Penobscot Bay towns had written to the Corps expressing their strong conviction that a regional impact on our industries, lobster, and tourism are at risk and everything possible should be done to weigh that risk prior to any permitting of such a dredge operation.

Meanwhile, a flawed application from Sprague Energy at Mack Point was posted by the Army Corps to some towns in that area to dredge alongside the piers. There was conflicting information about the dump site for that dredge operation. Kim Tucker, an attorney for Thanks But No Tank and Sierra Club Maine uncovered a 2002 memo from the Maine Representative of the Army Corps stating



There was standing room only at the February 24 public hearing in Bangor on the application for large-scale dredging in Searsport Harbor.

that the pier dredge was so laden with toxins that it would not be appropriate to dispose of the spoils in the ocean. The Sprague application has been withdrawn for the present.

There has been no direct response to our requests regarding the larger dredge application, however on February 14<sup>th</sup>, notice was received in some area towns about a public meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup> in Bangor. A standing-room-only crowd repeatedly requested an EIS and expressed grave concerns about further toxic pollution in Penobscot Bay. Sierra Club Maine and others formally requested a rescheduling of that meeting as it was contrary to Corps and DEP procedures and didn't give enough notice to allow fishermen from the islands and Penobscot Bay to attend. As a result a new public information meeting will be held at noon, March 26<sup>th</sup> at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast. The next steps will include an application for a Water Quality Certification from Maine DEP and congressional approval of funds to complete the dredging.

The Chapter urges members in the area to attend all meetings to express our concerns that an environmental impact statement must be completed (including the economic impacts) and fully evaluated prior to any permitting. In light of the February 2014 two-year closure of the mouth of the Penobscot River to lobster and crab fishing due to excessive mercury in the muscle tissue, we urgently need to pursue an EIS.

-By *Becky Bartovics*

### HOPE Festival in Orono on April 26

The Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine will be holding their annual HOPE Festival on Saturday, April 27 from 11 to 4 at the New Balance Student Fitness and Recreation Center in Orono.

The festival provides an opportunity for the public to learn about the activities of more than 60 groups and organizations working for peace, justice, and the environment. As always, Sierra Club Maine will be one of the participating groups.

The featured speaker at this year's HOPE Festival will be Sherri Mitchell, a tireless and highly effective advocate for indigenous rights and the health of the planet.



Sherri Mitchell

Sherri was raised on Indian Island and later graduated magna cum laude from the University of Maine. She went on to earn her law degree from the University of Arizona. In 2009, her work on nation-state complicity with indigenous

human rights earned her the Maloney-Dunn International Human Rights and Humanitarian Award. She returned to Maine in 2012 and became involved with the Idle No More Movement, resisting Canada's dismantling of the rights of First Nation people. She also works with the Wabanaki Confederacy and is the director of the Land Peace Foundation.

Since college, Sherri has been battling governments and transnational corporations in the name of justice and the environment. Her legal training, her eloquence, and her passion make her a powerful voice in the struggle.

This winter, she was part of Canada's Tar Sands Exposed bus tour (see story on page 2).

“We have to look at the way we live,” she said in the Peace and Justice Center newsletter. “We have to be willing to stop using fossil fuel, to create food sources in local communities, to make uncomfortable personal sacrifices....We can't keep shaking our fist at the beast when we're consuming everything it's providing.”

The festival will also feature the Hope Festival Singers, Zachery Fields, Devon Cole and his songs for Mother Earth, and the Inanna Sisters in Rhythm. There will also be sustainability demonstrations throughout the day.

More information is available at the Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine website.

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Sierra Club Maine executive committee member Claudia King talks with students at the Climate Change Expo in Augusta on March 12.

## March 12 Expo in Augusta Focuses on Climate Solutions

With a goal of encouraging positive and effective action to start solving climate change, environmental groups, educators, students, farmers, and businessmen came together on March 12 to participate in the Climate Solutions Expo at the Augusta Civic Center. Among the participating groups was Sierra Club Maine.

The event included exhibits, displays, break-out sessions, and panel discussions. One panel brought together Maine college presidents discussing higher education's role in mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the state.

Participants also took part in a discussion with Speaker of the Maine House Mark Eves and Senate President Justin Alford that included the prospects for climate legislation in the 126th legislative session.

Fred Horch, an independent candidate for the Maine Senate, who helped to organize the event, expressed disappointment that more state leaders didn't make attending the Expo a priority.

Speaker Eves also said he had hoped more lawmakers would attend, but noted that the legislature was in session during the events.

## Celebrate the Wild, continued from page 1

More details about Celebrate the Wild activities in Maine appear on page 8.

Signed into law in 1964, the Wilderness Act established our National Wilderness Preservation System. The initial 9.1 million acres set aside in 1964 have now grown to over 100 million acres nationwide. Wilderness designation is the strongest protection from development that our laws offer for federal public lands.

Sierra Club has played a major role in the wilderness effort from the start. Not only did the Club, under the leadership of the legendary David Brower, work hard getting the original 1964 bill passed, but volunteers in the Sierra Club along with dedicated Club staffers have convinced Congress to add many million acres of federal lands to the national system. At present, Maine has three wilderness areas—the Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness in the White Mountains National Forest near Bethel and two wilderness areas in Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge near Calais. Designated Wilderness areas include wild places in national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and Bureau of Land Management lands. But in addition to this “big W” wilderness, there are many places in Maine that are managed for their “wild” character—the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, Baxter State Park, Isle au Haut in Acadia National Park, and some of the ecological reserves on state lands as well.

The momentum of the Wilderness Act helped to foster a new sensibility about the future of our public lands and protecting our natural treasures.

If you love the wilderness please be part of our celebration! In 2014 let's rededicate ourselves to the Sierra Club's motto—“to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth.”

Links to more information about the Wilderness Act and the national 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration are available by visiting [maine.sierraclub.org](http://maine.sierraclub.org).

## Reject and Protect Cowboy/Indian Alliance Encampment April 27, Washington, D.C.

Join tribal communities, ranchers, farmers, Canada's First Nations, environmental groups, and communities along the Keystone XL Pipeline route. For more information go to [rejectandprotect.org](http://rejectandprotect.org)

There will also be a same-day (April 27) rally in Portland supporting the Washington, D.C. encampment. Get details at [maine.sierraclub.org](http://maine.sierraclub.org)

## Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club

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### Statement of Purpose of the Sierra Club

“To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the Earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the Earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.”

## THANK YOU SIERRA CLUB MAINE VOLUNTEERS!

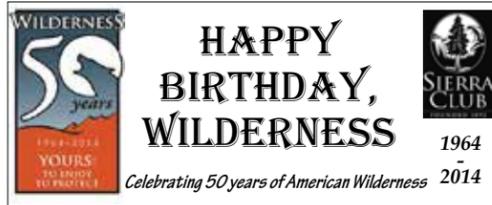
Being a Sierra Club volunteer is fun and rewarding! Just contact Molly at [maine.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:maine.chapter@sierraclub.org)

## Be Sure to Visit us on Facebook



A great way to keep up with Maine environmental issues and Sierra Club activities.

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## Celebrate the Wild With Sierra Club Maine

### Calendar of Events for 2014

#### Outings, Retreats, and Gatherings

Sears Island Walk—May 31, 2-4 pm

Voices for the Wilderness Writing Nature Workshops  
Hurricane Island— June 13-15

Canoeing Outing—Lobster Lake  
July 11-13 (see bottom of page)

Camping/Hiking/Service Outing—Acadia National Park  
June 19-22

Thoreau Wabanaki Festival—Greenville – July 25-27

100-Mile Wilderness Celebration  
West Branch Pond Camps  
August 8-10 \$250 per person (includes meals)

Yoga Retreat - Camp Michauma, Winthrop August 22 -24

Sierra Club Maine Annual Dinner and Gathering  
September 5—Maple Hill Farm Inn, Hallowell (see page 1)

Women's Voices Writing Nature Retreat  
Lunksoos Camps—October 3-5

#### Bar Harbor Summer Wilderness Film Series

Reel Pizza, downtown Bar Harbor  
Free admission

June 22—2 pm

**Greenfire:** A 2011 film highlighting Aldo Leopold and the history of the environmental movement. All the great leaders, including Sierra Club icons David Brower and John Muir are featured.



Robert Redford

July 20—2 pm

**Forever Wild, Celebrating America's Wilderness:** With Robert Redford and readings by Terry Tempest Williams. The movie highlights the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, which marks the first time in human history that a society created a law to protect the wildest public lands from exploitation. The movie captures the glory of undeveloped, wild places through stunning images and the passionate tales of America's modern wilderness heroes.

August 17: To Be Announced



Michael Webster photo

September 21—2 pm

**Ocean Frontiers, Dawn of a New Era in Ocean Stewardship:** This film is about a voyage to seaports and watersheds across United States. Unlikely allies, including biologists, and farmers, wetland ecologists, sport and commercial fishermen, port operators, snorkelers, and others all embark on a new course of cooperation to sustain our ocean economies. The film is beautiful and inspiring.

*There will also be a film series in Belfast, Damariscotta, and Kennebunk as well as a showing of the film, Meaning of the Wild, on North Haven on August 13. For more information on these and all events visit [maine.sierraclub.org](http://maine.sierraclub.org)*



A canoeist watches a moose in the pond in front of West Branch Pond Camps

#### Celebrate the 100-Mile Wilderness

Join original 100-Mile Wilderness Campaign partners August 8 to 10 at West Branch Pond Camps to celebrate and enjoy the rich natural bounty of this true Maine wilderness. You will be transported back in time as you take in the beauty, peace and wildlife activity from a canoe or kayak, or the porch of your fourth-generation-owned cabin by the shore of West Branch Pond. The camp is 30 miles northeast of Greenville. There will be plenty of hiking, fishing, swimming, birding, and moose watching. Sit around the camp stove in the evening with conservation leaders, the Maine Sierra Club's wilderness team, local sporting camp owners, guides, and storytellers—maybe even a few of the original funders of this historic collaborative conservation effort. And the camp's food is outstanding!



#### Canoe on Lobster Lake

Lobster Lake will be the site of a Women's Voices canoe outing July 11-13. Participants will meet in Greenville and proceed north to the Golden Road to where Lobster Lake Stream meets the West Branch of the Penobscot River. This is a journey not only of exploration, but also of contemplation and introspection. Journeying on this gentle flowing stream into Lobster Lake gives its own sense of both timelessness and a link with the past, when rivers were the roads for both Native Americans and early settlers.

#### Explore Sears Island

Enjoy a spring walk (easy to moderate pace) around Sears Island—the jewel in Penobscot Bay. Sierra Club Maine and Friends of Sears Island will cohost the walk, led by Sierra Club Outings Leaders Linda Murray and Bill Briggs, from 2-4 p.m. on Saturday May 31st. Parking and access is at the causeway at the end of Sears Island Road off of Route 1 in Searsport. Sears Island offers a wonderful opportunity for an easily accessible island experience, with abundant botanic and geological features to explore.

Celebrate nature and wildness, as well as some of the history of Sears Island, which the Sierra Club, Friends of Sears Island and others have worked for over 30 years to protect. Advance registration is not required. For more information, contact Linda Murray at 207-205-4467 or [loonsong207@gmail.com](mailto:loonsong207@gmail.com).