Annual Report
A recap of our work for our members in 2010
Dear Environment Maine member,

In July, I started as the new director of Environment Maine. I moved from our office in Washington, D.C., where I spent almost a decade advancing policies through Congress and the Environmental Protection Agency, in an effort to improve air quality, fight global warming, and jump-start America’s clean energy economy.

Yet, I grew up climbing on the rocks on Maine’s coast and hiking in the North Woods—some of the most spectacular landscapes in the country. So I jumped at the opportunity to return to Maine with my husband, our 3-year-old daughter and a baby on the way to raise our family in such a special place.

When I moved to Maine, I didn’t anticipate that I’d be fighting so soon to preserve Maine’s environmental protections. But I’m determined to protect Maine’s wild places—from Acadia to the North Woods and everywhere in between and champion the environmental values so many of us share. Thanks for making all our work possible.

Sincerely,

Emily Figdor
Environment Maine Staff Director

To our members

“I’m determined to protect Maine’s wild places—from Acadia to the North Woods and everywhere in between…”

Getting Maine off oil

As the fourth most oil-dependent state in the country, Maine must take steps to reduce our oil consumption—for the sake of our environment, our health, and our budgets. Making our cars go farther on a gallon of gas is a key first step toward getting Maine off oil.

Maine paved the way for cleaner cars

Maine is less dependent on dirty oil, thanks to emissions standards we helped pass to make our cars and trucks more efficient. Thirteen other states also passed the standards, which set the stage for President Barack Obama to adopt them nationally in April 2010. The standards will reduce oil consumption by 57 million gallons per year—the equivalent of taking 105,550 cars off the road.

But we’re not stopping there—Environment Maine is working to pass even more ambitious standards.

• We have the technology to produce cars that get 60 miles per gallon, and in the fall we built a coalition and released research showing the benefits.

• According to research released by Environment Maine, ultra-efficient cars could cut Maine’s oil use by 179 million gallons and save consumers $427 million annually at the gas pump by 2030.

Emily Figdor released a report on the costs of America’s oil dependence.
Maine is home to the last wild Atlantic salmon populations in the United States, but the endangered fish are nearly extinct in the Kennebec and Androscoggin rivers, which provide key spawning habitat and migration routes. In 2010, our staff turned to the courts to protect the salmon and our natural heritage.

Unprotected dams push salmon to the brink

The Kennebec and Androscoggin Rivers once teemed with salmon runs of 100,000 or more—but now almost no Atlantic salmon return to the rivers each year. In 2010, only five adult salmon returned to the Kennebec, and 10 returned to the Androscoggin.

• The National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that unprotected turbines at dams along the rivers are “among the leading causes” of the declining salmon populations and “remain a direct and significant threat to Atlantic salmon.”

• The dams kill and injure migrating salmon when they attempt to pass through the dams’ rotating turbine blades—akin to having fish swim through the rotating blades of a giant window fan.

Environment Maine sues to save salmon

In late 2010, Environment Maine and Friends of Merrymeeting Bay informed multiple dam owners and operators on the rivers that we were prepared to sue them for failing to take simple, inexpensive measures to protect the salmon.

• Since the salmon populations in both rivers are on the Endangered Species List, the dam owners’ negligence violates federal law.

• Dam owners have refused to implement simple protection measures—such as installing effective devices to divert salmon from turbines—that have been successfully adopted elsewhere. With the number of Atlantic salmon perilously low, the need for action to protect the fish and their habitat is urgent.

“Forty years ago, there were no Bald Eagles in this part of Maine. Now, there are hundreds. Atlantic salmon recovery can’t begin until the dam owners act to prevent salmon from swimming into spinning turbine blades.”

- Douglas Watts, president of Friends of Kennebec Salmon and long-time advocate for Atlantic salmon restoration
Protecting Acadia National Park

Our national parks have been called “America’s best idea,” and Acadia is living proof. Acadia offers a unique opportunity to experience Maine’s striking natural beauty—from breathtaking views of Frenchman Bay atop Cadillac Mountain, to trails like the Beehive and the Precipice. We’re working to ensure future generations can enjoy Acadia just as we have.

Park lacks funds to protect all of Acadia

Acadia is scattered with “holes”—more than 130 parcels of land within Acadia’s boundaries that are privately owned. When people who own this land want to sell it to the park, they can’t, because the park doesn’t have the resources to purchase it—leaving our prized park vulnerable to development.

Iconic places like Burnt Porcupine Island and Rum Key are not permanently protected. These gorgeous undeveloped islands are covered with shingle beaches, steep cliffs, and coniferous and deciduous forests that support an array of coastal species, including the Bald Eagle. If houses were built on the islands, they would threaten these unique ecosystems and be highly visible from the park.

Campaign for Acadia reached 1 in 10 Mainers

Environment Maine launched a major campaign in 2010 to urge the government to give Acadia the funding it needs to protect all the land within its boundaries, after President Obama announced his America’s Great Outdoors Initiative. The initiative is designed to strengthen protections for our nation’s most beloved places.

• Throughout 2010, Environment Maine staff spoke to more than one out of every 10 Mainers and mobilized thousands of people to urge the federal government to protect Acadia National Park from development.

• Our staff also worked to advance legislation in Congress to support Acadia, which was passed by the House but ultimately languished in the Senate.

• In early 2011, in a major victory, the Obama administration announced a plan to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a leading federal conservation program that provides resources for land acquisition at Acadia.

Nearly 1,000 acres of land within Acadia’s boundaries are privately owned. The areas most at risk of development are highlighted above. Map source: National Park Service, 2010.

Defending the Clean Air Act

Maine has made progress to reduce air pollution, but much more needs to be done—especially to cut the pollution fueling global warming. To minimize the impacts of global warming and protect future generations, Maine must transition to clean energy sources that don’t harm the environment, never run out, and create new jobs.

Maine’s senators voted with polluters

Environment Maine has been working to defend the Clean Air Act from attacks by polluters. Despite the law’s 40-year track record of success, Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins voted in 2010 to undercut its ability to fight global warming.

- Even after we rallied Mainers to speak out for the Clean Air Act, Maine’s senators supported a far-reaching amendment to block the law’s limits on global warming pollution—including new clean car rules that our staff helped pass (see page 2).

- The Senate ultimately rejected the measure, but polluters continue to fight cleanup requirements.

- After the vote, we ran a TV ad to hold them accountable. Then, we redoubled our efforts to convince the senators to side with the Clean Air Act in future votes by raising the visibility of the threat in the media, building a coalition of public health officials, and mobilizing Mainers across the state.

Banning BPA in children’s products

Bisphenol-A (BPA) is one of the most pervasive chemicals in modern life. It has been widely used in baby bottles, food storage containers and food cans, including some infant formula cans. BPA can leach from these containers into our food and drinks.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found the chemical in 93 percent of Americans, including pregnant women and newborns.

- Hundreds of independent, peer-reviewed studies have linked BPA to numerous adverse health effects, like the early onset of puberty, breast and prostate cancer, and heart disease.

- In December 2010, the Maine Board of Environmental Protection voted unanimously to ban BPA in baby bottles and sippy cups, and require manufacturers of infant formula and baby food to report on safer alternatives. Environment Maine is urging the Legislature to let the ban go into effect.

Building a toxic-free future

Mainers have a right to a toxic-free future. But almost every day, we read about a new, toxic threat in our households or environment—threats associated with a wide range of health impacts, including developmental disorders, reproductive problems, obesity and cancer. Environment Maine is pushing to replace dangerous chemicals with safer alternatives.

Maine’s oil dependence

by raising oil use 2 million gallons per year by 2016, and boosting costs at the pump by $6 million.

America’s oil dependence

by increasing America’s annual oil use by 455 million barrels, just by blocking the clean cars rule alone.
2010 Annual Report

Address service requested