



Fall Report

Acadia still at risk

Fight for the park's protection continues

In July, Congress dropped the ball and failed to even temporarily fix the Land and Water Conservation Fund—a program that helps protect Acadia National Park and other special American lands. Instead, Congress will be able to continue to drain this critical source of conservation funding and use it for unrelated purposes, which starves Acadia of needed resources.

1,000 acres in Acadia at risk of development

At Acadia, families and friends have a unique opportunity to experience Maine's most striking natural beauty—from taking in the views of Frenchman's Bay atop Cadillac Mountain to biking on the 45 miles of carriage roads to exploring trails like the Precipice and Beehive.

Yet, Acadia is scattered with “holes”—about 130 tracts of land within the park that are privately owned and at risk of being developed. When people who own this land want to sell it to the park so it's permanently protected, they can't—because the park doesn't have the resources to purchase it.

As a result, 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 forests that support an array of coastal species, including the Bald Eagle. Development on the islands would threaten the unique ecosystem and be highly visible from the park. Unfortunately, with funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund at



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▲ Land at Acadia National Park is vulnerable to development.

record lows, it's too easy to picture treasured pieces of Maine's natural heritage being sold off to the highest bidder.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was established nearly 50 years ago to protect our most treasured land. But, in order for the Fund to work, Congress must stop raiding the funds every year and devote them, as intended, to conservation.

An opportunity for Sen. Snowe

Environment Maine has been calling on Sen. Olympia Snowe to lead the charge to fix the Land and Water Conservation Fund before she retires at the end of the year. Over the course of the summer, Environment Maine staff talked with 18,080 Mainers about the threat to Acadia and encouraged them to get involved. We collected 4,265 messages to Sen. Snowe asking her to protect the park.



Talk Radio News Service

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◀ Visit our website to encourage Sen. Snowe to take a stand for Acadia.

www.EnvironmentMaine.org



To our members

As November's elections approach, so much is on the line when it comes to protecting Maine's environment.

We should expect our elected officials at the local, state and federal levels to work to protect Maine's special places, clean up our air and water, move us to clean, made-in-Maine energy and champion the environmental values that so many of us share. But too often, our public officials instead do the bidding of powerful polluters, developers and other special interests.

It's so important to find out where the candidates running to represent you stand on the environment. Better yet, let the candidates know that the environment is important to you and ask them to take specific positions on the issues you care about the most.

And, most importantly, please get out there on Election Day to vote, volunteer and encourage your friends and family to vote.

Emily Figdor
State Director

Recent action

Report documents beach water contamination

During the height of the summer, Environment Maine released new beach water safety data and called on state officials to better inform the public when pollution levels violate the state's health standard.

In 2011, 9 percent of water samples taken from Maine's public access beaches violated the health standard for bacteria, which is slightly higher than the average contamination rate nationwide. Beaches in Penobscot Bay and York County had the highest rates of violations.

High levels of bacteria in beach water can cause a range of health problems, from skin rashes to ear and eye infections to more serious problems.

Because polluted runoff is one of the biggest sources of beach water contamination, Environment Maine urged state and local officials to adopt green infrastructure—such as rain barrels, rain gardens, and pervious concrete—to naturally absorb runoff before it causes problems.

Joining Maine moms to ban BPA

It's hard to believe that some of the food on Maine's store shelves for babies and young kids contains the toxic chemical BPA.

BPA seeps into our children's food from the tops of jars and linings of metal cans, exposing them—even in the first months of life—to a chemical with very serious health effects, including the early onset of puberty, obesity and cancer.

Environment Maine has joined Maine moms and the Alliance for a Clean & Healthy Maine to petition the state to phase out the use of BPA in baby and toddler food. While Gov. Paul LePage has once again dismissed the threat and seems intent on opposing our citizens' petition, we're confident we can win—but it will take hard work and the continued support of Mainers across the state.



▲ Environment Maine's Nora Graubard discusses the dangers of contaminated beach water on Maine Watch.

Extreme downpours, snowstorms up 74 percent in Maine

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This past summer, shortly after heavy rains led to record flooding that devastated Brownville and surrounding towns, Environment Maine released a new report documenting that extreme rainstorms and snowstorms have been happening 74 percent more frequently in Maine since 1948.

Storms bigger and more frequent

“When it rains, it pours—especially in recent years, as bigger storms have hit Maine more often,” Environment Maine’s Ben Seel told the media at a news conference at Portland’s City Hall. The report received widespread media coverage across the state.

The report, “When It Rains, It Pours,” examines trends in the frequency of and the total amount of precipitation produced by extreme rain and snow storms across the contiguous United States from 1948 to 2011.

The report analyzed state data from the National Climatic Data Center to find that heavy downpours or snowstorms that used to happen once every 12 months on average now happen every 6.9 months. Moreover, the biggest storms are getting bigger. The largest annual storms in Maine now produce 23 percent more precipitation, on average, than they did 65 years ago.

Scientists link trend to global warming

Scientists have concluded that the rise in the frequency and severity of heavy rainstorms and snowstorms is linked to global warming. Warming increases evaporation and enables the atmosphere to hold more water, providing more fuel for extreme rainstorms and heavy snowstorms.

Seel pointed to the rainstorm that hit Brownville in late June as an illustration of what more extreme rainstorms could mean for the state.

That rainstorm, which dumped more than six inches of rain on the area, led to an estimated \$4 million in damages.

U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree, State Sen. Justin Alford, John Jemison of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and Dr. Johan Erikson, professor of environmental science at St. Joseph’s College of Maine, joined us at the news conference to release the report.

Pollution cuts needed

How serious heavy precipitation and extreme weather becomes is largely within our control—but only if we act boldly to reduce the pollution that fuels global warming.

One of the most important steps Maine can take is to strengthen the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. RGGI has been a key part of our state’s strategy to reduce pollution and shift to clean energy.

In August, Environment Maine and our allies delivered a letter from more than 300 organizations, businesses and local officials urging lawmakers to tighten RGGI’s pollution limits. We expect state officials across the Northeast to make a decision late this fall.



“When It Rains, It Pours”

Environment Maine’s Ben Seel at a news conference to release the report. To read more, visit us at www.EnvironmentMaine.org/reports.

Green Future Fund

A new way to honor supporters

Environment Maine is proud to announce the establishment of our Green Future Fund.

The Green Future Fund will honor a special group of our donors: those who are ensuring a greener future by remembering Environment Maine or our sister group, Environment Maine Research & Policy Center, in their wills, life insurance policies or retirement accounts.

These legacy donors are helping to ensure that Environment Maine will continue to flourish—protecting the places we love and the values we share—for years to come. “We appreciate all of our supporters,” said Environment Maine’s Emily Figdor. “I feel a special gratitude toward those members who have the vision and generosity to plan a gift that will protect our state’s environment beyond their own lifetimes.”

Establishing a legacy gift also offers donors a few advantages. Some supporters wish they could give more but can’t right now. Including Environment Maine in your estate plan costs nothing today, while ensuring support for our mission in the future. Legacy gifts may also offer tax benefits. (Your professional advisor can help you determine any tax advantage.)

As a Green Future Fund donor, with your permission, we’ll recognize your gift in our annual report and other publications, helping to inspire other members to make their own legacy gifts. Of course, you may also choose to give anonymously. Either way, any specific details you choose to provide about your gift will remain confidential.

If you’d like to become a member of the Green Future Fund, or if you just have questions, contact our planned giving coordinator, Marilyn Tesauro, at 1-800-841-7299 or PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMaine.org.

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PERMIT NO. 430



Fall Report

VOLUME 10 | NO. 1 | 2012

Environment Maine

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Maine. We focus exclusively on protecting Maine's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Mercury standards defended

In a major victory, we helped defend a landmark new Environmental Protection Agency rule that will reduce mercury emissions from power plants by more than 90 percent, after it came under attack in Congress.

Power plants are the largest U.S. source of mercury emissions, and mercury from the plants ends up in the fish we eat. Mercury is a neurotoxin that is especially dangerous to babies and young children, since it can affect their memory, attention, language and more.

Environment Maine worked for more than 10 years—here in Maine and with our colleagues at Environment America in Washington, D.C.—to pass the EPA rule. And we successfully defended it when Sen. James Inhofe of Oklahoma tried to block it.

We also worked to build support for historic new EPA standards to reduce carbon pollution from vehicles and power plants.



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Mercury emissions from power plants end up in the fish we eat, posing a major health threat.



To learn more and get involved, go to www.EnvironmentMaine.org