

## Trek across Maine and Support American Lung Association



**MAINE (June 2, 2023)** – Join the American Lung Association for the 39th annual Trek Across Maine on Father’s Day Weekend - June 16–18, 2023. Choose our traditional 3 day-180 mile option, or do it on your own virtually! The Start and Finish Line location is located at Thomas Point Beach and Campground in Brunswick, with overnight stops at Bates College in Lewiston and Saint Joseph’s College in Standish! This ride is fully supported by volunteers and local and state law enforcement, including support vehicles along the route and three rest stops daily.

-Virtual Option for those that can’t get away, but still want to raise money and support the American Lung Association! Record your miles virtually and raise your minimum by June 30, 2023 to earn your commemorative t-shirt and medal!

**VOLUNTEER WITH US!** We are always looking for volunteers to help us support the Trek Across Maine. We have many volunteer opportunities available. Please contact Gale at 207.624.0302 or Gale.Auclair@Lung.org for more information.

**ROUTE OPTIONS:** The Regular Route- Covid-19 Vaccination Required

Day 1: Thomas Point Beach and Campground to Bates College in Lewiston (approx. 60 mi) - 3 rest stops located on route

Day 2: Bates to Saint Joseph’s College in Standish (approx. 60 mi) - 3 rest stops located on route & 1 water stop

Day 3: Saint Joseph’s College to Thomas Point Beach and Campground (approx. 60 mi) - 3 rest stops located on route & last mile staging stop

**NOTE:** Although we try to be consistent, mileage may vary from year to year depending on local and state construction projects.

**VIRTUAL OPTION**

Date: Through June 30, 2023

Mileage: Choose your own mileage challenge

Location: Ride in your community and join the Trek tradition...virtually!

Fundraising Minimum: \$250 due by June 30, 2023

Age Limit: 7 years and Up

**FEES & FUNDRAISING:**

Registration is \$40 registration fee. This is non-refundable & non-transferable. Registration fee does not count toward fundraising minimum.

3 Day Fundraising: \$550 per person (\$400 for ages 7 - 17)\*\*

Virtual Fundraising: \$250 per person (including ages 7-17)\*\*\*

\*\* Fundraising must be submitted before the start of the ride or you will not be able allowed to ride\*\*

\*\*\*Fundraising must be submitted before June 30 or you will not receive your commemorative t-shirt and medal\*\*\*

For more information, visit: <http://www.trekacrossmaine.org> email [TrekAcrossMaine@Lung.org](mailto:TrekAcrossMaine@Lung.org) call: 207-624-0312

## Cumberland County among New Conservation Projects

**AUGUSTA, ME (June 2, 2023)** – Governor Janet Mills today announced funding for nine new Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) conservation projects across Maine, advancing the State of Maine’s commitment to preserve precious natural resources, protect wildlife habitats, and ensure public access to lakes, rivers, scenic views, and mountain vistas.

“These nine projects will preserve thousands of acres of land for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations,” said Governor Janet Mills. “I am proud that, through actions taken by the Legislature and my Administration, we are continuing to protect more and more of our cherished natural resources.”

“These projects represent another example of Maine’s strong and enduring commitment to protecting our valuable natural resources, wildlife habitat, and wilderness areas,” said Patrick Keliher, Land for Maine’s Future Chairman and Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources.

“Broad support for the Land’s For Maine’s Future program has enabled important ongoing work to protect land for the benefit of all who recreate in Maine, ensuring lasting benefits for our state and local communities both now and for future generations,” said Amanda Beal, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

“Reinvigorated with \$40 million through the leadership of Governor Mills, the Land For Maine’s Future program continues to preserve, protect and enhance many of Maine’s most valuable and pristine natural areas, ensuring Mainers and visitors alike will always be able to enjoy the way life should be,” said Judy Camuso, Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Since the Governor proposed and the Legislature overwhelmingly approved \$40 million to reinvigorate LMF, the LMF Board has approved 46 new projects, totaling \$5.19 million. These projects are expected to leverage an additional \$6.7 million in private and Federal funds.

The newly approved projects announced today include:

*See Projects, page 11*

## June Fun at Gorham’s Baxter Memorial Library

**GORHAM, ME (June 2, 2023)** -- Family Discovery Story Time—Monday, June 26th 10am—Join us on the library lawn for Family Storytime! This multi-age program (ages 2-5) will feature books, music, movement and a hands-on activity! Please bring your own chair or blanket. In the event of inclement weather, we will be in the Youth Services program room.

Crafty Quest Gaming Workshop—

Tuesday, June 27th 3pm—Join master storyteller and gamer Michael Best as he walks young players through the basics of role playing games (RPGs). Using his game-master skills along with crafts, participants will learn to create a character and a back story and will play a short RPG adventure. For fans of table-top games or those who would like to learn more about them. Registration is required. (ages 6-12)

Big Blue Block Building Day— Wednesday, June 28 10-11am—Join us for some creative construction on the Library green. (All ages)

Art in the Park—Thursday, June 29th 10-11:30am—Bring your snacks and a blanket as we enjoy art in the park together. We supply the paints and paper, and you supply the creativity. This is one of our most popular summer events. (All ages)

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Stunning Auburn Home 25 minutes from Portland and Augusta. This is an immaculate four-bedroom, 2.5 bath custom-built colonial home located in a highly desirable Auburn neighborhood. The property boasts beautiful curb appeal, with a welcoming porch and a large, landscaped yard spanning 2.86 acres. The home features hardwood floors, granite countertops, and an open concept kitchen leading to a formal dining room and an oversized deck. The living room area is filled with warmth from a large gas fireplace and a wall of windows and doors offering lots of natural light. The cozy den is ready for relaxation or quiet media enjoyment. The primary suite with jet tub and three additional bedrooms are located on the second level. The finished daylight basement includes plenty of space for recreation with a large office and extra storage. The double sliding doors lead to a private backyard oasis perfect for entertaining on your patio with an 18 x 36 heated pool. Attached two-car garage with direct entry into the home and two sheds for additional storage. This property is conveniently located near I-95, schools, shopping, outdoor recreation, and more. Don't miss out on this rare opportunity to own a beautiful home in a fantastic location. Be sure to schedule your private showing today by calling 207-754-4998. Listed by Michelle Gosselin Ervin and Elizabeth Splane of Hearth and Key Realty.

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## An Update from Augusta

By Sen. Peggy Rotundo

The Legislature is now in full swing. Bills are still being debated in policy committees and more and more of those bills are coming to the floor of the Senate and House of Representatives, where sessions are getting later. Many of my own bills have been the subject of public hearings and work sessions lately. Additionally, the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, which I chair, is now in possession of the Governor's change package and will be negotiating the second part of the state budget in the coming weeks. I thought it would be a good time to update you on our agenda now that we are getting near the end of the session.

Recently, my legislation to study the feasibility of bringing passenger rail to Lewiston and Auburn, LD 880, was heard by the Transportation Committee. The bill has since been combined with my colleague Sen. Joe Baldacci's bill, LD 860, to bring train service to Bangor through Lewiston. His bill will be discussed further by the Committee in the coming weeks. The Lewiston/Auburn metro area is home to over 100,000 people, a great many of whom would benefit from affordable, fast train service. These commuters would save time, reduce their use of fossil fuels, and free up income for any number of other priorities. I will be tracking Sen. Baldacci's bill with great interest.

My bill to help ensure early detection of breast cancer for individuals who are at an increased risk due to their genetic backgrounds, LD 1665, was heard on May 9 by

the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. I was happy to bring this bill forward with encouragement from breast cancer survivor and Heart of Hope Charitable Fund founder Carlene Sperry. While the bill was not successful, in part because there are currently statutory provisions for the coverage of genetic consultation and treatment, I was pleased to give Carlene a platform for raising awareness about this important issue.

In order to address the educator shortage that is affecting Lewiston Public Schools and the entire State of Maine, I introduced a bill, LD 1217, to develop pilot projects designed to provide alternative pathways to teacher and education technician certification. As a former public school teacher, I think it is important to explore possibilities that can help address the immediate shortage of educators in our classrooms without compromising standards. This bill is still being debated by the Committee of Education and Cultural Affairs.

Additionally, I was very pleased to bring forward LD 1473 to create protection for Lake Auburn and other sensitive drinking water sources in Maine that face development pressure. We are very fortunate to have pristine drinking water sources in our state. Of the 40 bodies of water in the United States that enjoy Environmental Protection Agency filtration waivers because of their exceptional water quality, 10 are located in Maine. We must protect these sources of municipal drinking water from the kind of high density development that could

jeopardize the quality of the water as well as the filtration waivers and the water rate savings that come through having a filtration waiver. This bill received a favorable vote from the Environment and Natural Resources Committee and will head to the full Legislature for a vote in the coming weeks.

Finally, Gov. Mills released details of her change package, the amendment to her proposed biennial budget, LD 258, earlier this month. You can go to the Bureau of the Budget's web page, [maine.gov/budget](http://maine.gov/budget), to read the contents of the amendment. In the coming weeks, the Appropriations Committee will hold many work sessions on the change package. I look forward to working with my Republican and Democratic colleagues to make sure we take care to spend Mainer's hard-earned money responsibly.

If you would like to discuss my bills, the biennial budget or any other legislative matter, please don't hesitate to email me at [Peggy.Rotundo@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Peggy.Rotundo@legislature.maine.gov) or call me at the State House at 207-287-1515.

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## Auburn: Curbside Recycling Ending

**AUBURN, ME (June 2, 2023)** – Curbside recycling collection will end on Wednesday, June 28 in Auburn. Beginning that same day, Auburn residents will be able to drop their recyclable items off at Auburn Public Works at 296 Gracelawn Road. The recycling container will be available to residents 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. It will be

located near the resident sand shed and brush drop-off area.

There will also be compost bins available for those who wish to drop off compostable food waste. Recycling will still be "single sort," meaning residents can mix all their recyclable items together. Recyclable items must be clean, and include clear & colored glass, #1-7 plas-

tic, tin/aluminum cans, cardboard (boxes should be flattened), newspapers & magazines, and mixed paper. Compostable items include all food scraps, coffee grounds, filters & tea bags, dairy products, meat & bones, egg & seafood shells, fats, oils & salad dressing, paper bags & paper plates, napkins/paper towels, newspaper, and flowers & potting soil.

## Gender-Affirming Care Available at Planned Parenthood



**PORTLAND, ME (June 2, 2023)** – As we celebrate Pride month this June, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE) wants to remind the communities we serve that we provide gender-affirming care at all 15 of our health centers in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont --- and there is a fund to help provide these services to those who seek this care.

PPNNE's Gender-Affirming Care Fund provides high-quality, non-judgmental care to transgender and gender non-conforming patients, regardless of ability to pay. Many private and federal insurance programs

do not include coverage for gender-affirming care, which is why PPNNE started this fund in 2017 as a way to reduce those barriers to care.

PPNNE was one of the first Planned Parenthood affiliates in the country to offer this funding.

PPNNE offers a full spectrum of inclusive sexual and reproductive health care services to people of all genders and identities. Services include gender-affirming hormone therapy, PrEP and PEP, STI testing and treatment, birth control, well person check-ups and more. For more information visit our site.

One patient who came to PPNNE for gender-affirming hormone therapy

said, "I am able to be who I was meant to be with help from PPNNE." Another noted, "I am no longer at war with my own body every day."

Statement from Nicole Clegg, Acting CEO, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England:

"Planned Parenthood believes everyone deserves high quality, compassionate health care — no matter your gender identity or sexual orientation. We are proud to offer a safe space to all of our patients. As we celebrate Pride month, we also celebrate the LGBTQ+ communities we serve. We are stronger together, and the Gender-Affirming Care Fund is a critical way to support our mission of delivering reproductive health care to all of our patients in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont."

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## HART Celebrates March Meowness Success in Cumberland

**CUMBERLAND, ME (May 31, 2023)** -- The Homeless Animal Rescue Team (HART) of Maine, an adoption center & shelter for cats in Cumberland, is thrilled to announce that this year's March Meowness benefit fundraiser raised \$6,088.84: Just under \$2,000 more than last year's event.

\$2,511.84 of the proceeds will help pay for food, litter, and medications for the 80+ cats they have in their care at any one time: both at the shelter and in foster homes. \$3,577 will go to The Burt Fund, which supports restoring and maintaining the health of injured stray cats that come into HART's care with extensive medical needs.

The 2023 March Meowness Champion is Panda. Panda beat out 113 other 'Cat-Testants' (12 more than last year) for a year's worth of bragging

rights, and Panda's family receives championship hoodies.

Andy Hanna, HART's Operations Director, was thrilled with the success of this year's event, noting, "Each year, we see the enthusiasm and participation grow, and we are very appreciative of everyone's involvement."

Janine Giustina, HART volunteer Development Committee Co-Chair, and Board Member, added, "Our sincere thanks goes out to Nate Hicks, who started this benefit on behalf of HART four years ago. There's so much that goes into organizing this tournament, and Nate's work within the local community to elevate HART's mission by drumming up involvement and donations among HART's supporters and area businesses is so valued by our organization."

HART CELEBRATES



Left to right, Marty, the official March Meowness mascot; Andy Hanna, HART's Operations Director, holding Norma Jean; and Tom Godsoe, HART Volunteer. Photo Credit: Janine Giustina

BRATES

To celebrate this milestone, Mr. Hicks and the official March Meowness mascot, Marty, stopped by

the HART shelter at 302 Range Road in Cumberland on Saturday to present the proceeds to Mr. Hanna and HART volunteers.

MORE WORK TO DO  
March Meowness helped jumpstart HART's 2023 fundraising efforts,

and now, HART's Spring Fundraising campaign is in full swing, with a goal to raise \$50,000 by mid-June. The objective is to continue the organization's work, sheltering and caring for cats in need, especially their longer-term residents with more complex and expensive medical needs, compounded by recent inflationary pressures.

Donations to HART's Spring Fundraising Campaign can be made on HART's website: hartofme.org. Checks are also accepted by mail, payable to HART of Maine. PO Box 351 Cumberland, ME 04021.

Homeless Animal Rescue Team of Maine Mailing Address: PO Box 351, Cumberland, ME 04021

Shelter Address: 302 Range Rd, Cumberland, ME 04021 207-829-4116 | info@hartofme.org | HARTofME.org

## Gorham Senior Property Tax Assistance Applications Available



**GORHAM, ME (June 2, 2023)** -- Applications are now available for the Town of Gorham Senior Property Tax Assistance Program. This program was established to provide property tax

assistance to persons 65 years of age and over who reside in the Town of Gorham. Under this program, the Town of Gorham will provide refund payments to those individuals who maintain a homestead in

the Town of Gorham and meet the criteria established by this article.

To obtain an application, please visit the Town Clerk's Office at the Gorham Municipal Center (75 South Street), or see the Town's website.

Completed applications can be submitted to the Town Clerk's Office now through the deadline of August 1, 2023. If you have questions and/or need assistance completing your application, email seniorrebate@gorham.me.us, or call 222-1671.

## Spring into Summer Reading Kick Off with Baxter Memorial Library


**GORHAM, ME (June 2, 2023)** -- Wednesday, June 21 from 2-6pm, join Baxter Memorial Library for our Spring into Summer Reading kick-off event from 2-6pm. Our summer reading theme is POWER UP. We invite

you to DRESS LIKE A SUPERHERO! During the event you can: sign up for summer reading, take superhero photo ops, enjoy live music, grab food and drink, play in the bubble machine, and have a picture drawn for you by some

talented GHS students! (all ages)

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

### Author Event: Shannon Bowring



Shannon Bowring  
**The Road to Dalton**

Join us for a reading and conversation with Shannon Bowring, a Maine author whose debut novel is *The Road to Dalton*. Richard Russo calls it "The kind of book that too often flies under the literary radar these days; measured, wise, beautiful."

The book, inspired by the tiny town where she grew up in Aroostook County, takes place in 1990 and examines the ways a small community is left reeling after one young mother makes an unthinkable decision. In the aftermath, their problems, both small and large, reveal a deeper understanding of the lives of their neighbors, and remind us that no one is exactly who you think they are.



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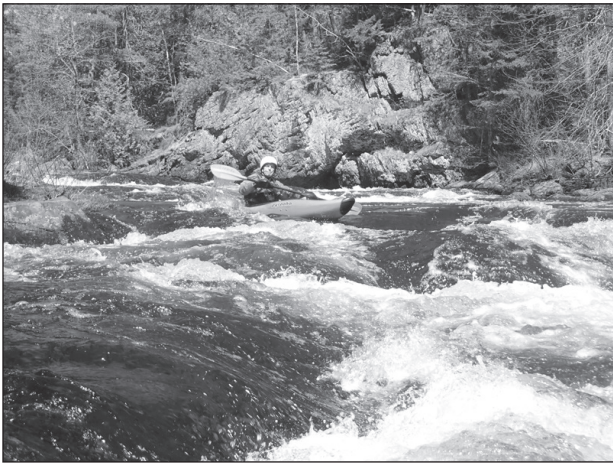
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## Seniors Not Acting Their Age

# Exciting Adventures on Seboeis River Part I – Tiger Rips to Snowshoe Lodge



A kayaker descends one of many ledge drops on upper Seboeis River



Tiger Rips is a long section of continuous demanding whitewater



Snowshoe Lodge was damaged by a fallen tree but still habitable

By Ron Chase

Forty years ago, my wife, Nancy, and I paddled the iconic Seboeis River canoe trip from Grand Lake Road west of Shin Pond to Whetstone Falls on the East Branch of the Penobscot with our friends John and Diane Stokinger. Twenty years later, I descended the turbulent upper Seboeis to Grand Lake Road with a group of whitewater boaters.

The two trips are distinctly different river adventures. The upper is about five miles of almost continuous technical

Class III/IV whitewater that would be difficult to navigate in a loaded canoe or kayak. Below Grand Lake Road, the Seboeis is the quintessential tripping experience consisting of easy rapids and quick water until reaching Class III Whetstone Falls.

For the last several years, a group of friends and I have completed a northern Maine canoe/kayak trip in May. This year, I suggested a combination whitewater and tripping excursion on the Seboeis. Everyone seemed enthusiastic about the idea. Per-

haps they were just humoring an old man since there were only three of us at final count.

A dual Seboeis trip is a logistical challenge. Small whitewater boats are preferable on the upper whereas larger tripping vessels are needed for the remainder. Therefore, two separate shuttles are necessary. I needed help and the folks at Matagam Campground were the answer. When I spoke with one of the owners, he confirmed they could transport our vehicles from both launches to Hay Brook

Kayak/Canoe Facility in Grindstone. He further suggested using Matagam on Tote Road to access the upper.

A plan was in place. Three of us would take six boats on three vehicles to the Grand Lake Road put-in where we would leave our tripping vessels on two vehicles and transport three whitewater boats to the launch for the upper on the third. Once the upper was completed, we would exchange crafts, load gear, and begin the river trip. Yes, it's confusing.

We selected three outstanding spring weather days for our early May excursion. It was sunny and breezy when we arrived at the boat launch on Grand Lake Road. Negotiating the Matagam Tote Road to a snowmobile bridge over the upper was an ordeal. Five recent blowdowns had to be dislodged, one required towing. The bridge was a welcome sight.

Rousing Tiger Rips, a long section of continuous demanding whitewater that required precise maneuvering, began almost immediately. It was a delight.

We alternated running probe while navigating a succession of abrupt turns, complicated ledge drops, and boulder-strewn descents. Tumbling from eddy to eddy, we boat

scouted down the steep narrow freshet while remaining alert for Godfrey Pitch, the most difficult falls on the river.

As we entered an attenuated gorge, exploding waves below a horizon line marked our arrival at the pitch. After catching a tiny eddy on river right, we carefully scouted the cataract. Consisting of three precipitous ledges, the second formed a menacing hydraulic. We carried around the hydraulic and plunged over the final ledge. More exhilarating rapids continued to Grand Lake Road.

We stopped at the landing to switch boats and load gear. Sawtelle Stream enters the Seboeis at this location and it becomes a more substantial body of water.

Easy rapids followed for a mile to Grand Pitch, an impassable gorge. A prominent sign marked the beginning of the portage trail on the left. Upgrades made by Butler Conservation Trust (BCT) when it constructed the Seboeis Riverside Trail have substantially improved the carry.

More rapids continued for another mile to Snowshoe Lodge recently built by BCT. Open to hikers and paddlers on a first-come-first-serve basis, we toted our gear to the hut. To our chagrin, another

blowdown had wreaked havoc. A sizeable tree recently fell on the cabin tearing off the chimney. The sturdy structure was able to withstand further damage and we enjoyed luxurious accommodations for the night.

A clear night, stargazing was exceptional. Plans were discussed for the coming days. A primary topic of conversation was the anticipated water level on of the East Branch of the Penobscot. It had been flowing at about 5,000 cubic feet per second, more than three times the highest level any of us had experienced. Whetstone Falls was going to be cranking.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates nine more exciting whitewater outings in Maine.

Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, *"Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine"* is available at [www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco](http://www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco) or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are *"The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery"* and *"Mountains for Mortals – New England."* Visit his website at [www.ronchase-outdoors.com](http://www.ronchase-outdoors.com) or he can be reached at [ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net](mailto:ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net).

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# Gov. Mills Kicks-Off Maine Dairy Month

**AUGUSTA, ME (June 1, 2023)** – Governor Janet Mills today kicked-off the annual celebration of Maine Dairy Month at the Blaine House in Augusta.

The event celebrated the vital contributions of Maine dairy farmers to our economy and featured remarks from Governor Mills, Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Amanda Beal, and dairy farmers and food producers from across Maine.

The attendees raised a glass of milk as a toast to celebrate Maine’s dairy industry, and the Governor declared June as Dairy Month in Maine.

“Dairy farms are a cornerstone of Maine’s agricultural industry, of our rural communities, and of our economy as a whole,” said Governor Janet Mills. “Whether you prefer milk, ice cream cheese, or yogurt, there’s a delicious Maine dairy product for every-

one. I encourage all Maine people to join me in celebrating the contributions of Maine’s dairy industry during Dairy Month and throughout the year.”

“Today, we express our heartfelt appreciation for the efforts and valuable contributions of Maine’s dairy industry,” said Amanda Beal, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. “Maine family farms and the dairy industry are a source of pride and strength, sustaining livelihoods and driving growth in related sectors.”

“Celebrating June Dairy Month is an opportunity to recognize the people, their practices, their cows, and their delicious products that make up Maine’s dairy industry, an industry that endeavors to provide high quality, nutrient-dense, and environmentally sustainable food to its communities,” said Sarah Littlefield, Executive Director of the Maine Dairy Promotion Board

and Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council.

“Dairying matters to Maine because our dairies are the backbone of our rural communities, and the stewards of the agricultural landscape we all hold so dear,” said Annie Watson, President of the Maine Dairy Industry Association.

“As the proud executive director of the Maine Cheese Guild, I am pleased to invite everyone to celebrate June Dairy Month! Enjoy the creamy delights of Maine dairy during June and always savor the artistry and richness that locally made cheese brings to our lives,” said Ron Dyer, Executive Director of the Maine Cheese Guild.

Maine is home to more than 200 dairy farms that care for herds of dairy cows, goats, and sheep and that steward 700,000 acres of farmlands. Because of their work, the state boasts award winning cheeses, yogurt, ice cream, and butter made exclusively with

Maine milk and cream. Maine also benefits from dairy processors that bottle and sell milk year-round at retail locations statewide. In addition to agricultural products, farms provide numerous public benefits, such as scenic open spaces that enrich local communities.

Maine dairy farmers and creameries are estimated to provide 4,733 direct and 10,201 indirect jobs and generate \$904 million in direct economic impact and \$1 billion in indirect economic impact. Dairy farms contribute to the economy by supporting small businesses, creating indirect and direct employment opportunities, and bolstering essential farm and food system enterprises such as farm supply stores, transportation companies, and veterinary services. Maine’s dairy farms also serve as a source of delicious and nutritious foods and beverages for various food outlets, including restaurants,



Governor Mills leads attendees in a toast of Maine milk in celebration of Maine’s dairy industry.

schools, grocery stores, cafes, and ice cream shops. Since 1939, June has been designated as Dairy Month in the United States, celebrating the abundance of dairy products and paying tribute to the indispensable role of dairy farmers in agriculture.

# Over 370,000 Meals to Feed Mainers

**PORTLAND / BANGOR, ME (June 1, 2023)** – NEWS CENTER Maine, along with our partner Good Shepherd Food Bank, held NEWS CENTER Maine’s sixth annual Feed Maine Telethon on May 4 to raise more than \$185,000 to help feed Mainers in need. During the NEWS CENTER Maine’s Feed Maine Telethon volunteers received hundreds of pledge calls to help feed fellow Mainers.

To date, this Feed Maine Telethon has raised \$185,934 to help provide meals to Mainers. That number includes Hannaford’s Matching Mainers hour where Hannaford matched donations

up to \$25,000. There was also a donation from Reny’s Charitable Foundation. All funds raised from this telethon will provide food for 371,868 meals.

NEWS CENTER Maine and its viewers have helped provide 3,891,559 meals to Mainers in need. The demand to help hungry Mainers still exists. There is a meal gap of more than 30 million meals missing from the plates of Mainers each year which is why NEWS CENTER Maine’s Feed Maine campaign runs all year long. The Good Shepherd Food Bank and its community partners anticipate distributing more than 24 million meals in

**NEWS CENTER MAINE**  
**feed maine**

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- **\$550 DONATION CAN PROVIDE A YEAR OF HEALTHY MEALS FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR EXPERIENCING HUNGER.**
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- **\$25 PROVIDES 50 HEALTHY MEALS FOR A MAINER**
- **\$1=2 MEALS FOR A MAINER IN NEED**

Maine this year. Much of that distribution happens at local food pantries in communities throughout

the state. “Nutrition is just the foundation for what they need to have to live a qual-

ity life,” stated Dwayne Hopkins, executive director of the South Portland Food Cupboard.

The opportunity to donate and help feed a Mainer in need is still open at FeedMaine.com.

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## Clothes Galore at Gorham's Mission of Hope Clothes Closet

**GORHAM, ME (April 29, 2023)** -- The FREE Clothes Closet at Cressey Road Church (Mission of Hope Clothes Closet) is open to all who need Fellowship,

Friendship and Clothes. We are located at 81 Cressey Road, Gorham, and we are open on the FIRST and THIRD Saturday of each month from 9 o'clock AM to 12

Noon. We focus on clothes and accessories (gloves, scarves, hats, etc.) and welcome your donations during our operating hours. Clean clothes in

good shape help the most, as they go right out to help people locally or in nearby communities. An attempt is made to have season appropriate clothes available to you. After we

have displayed them for a time, they are donated to serve the people in need in Ukraine.

In addition to helping folks find clothes, we want to spend time with you!

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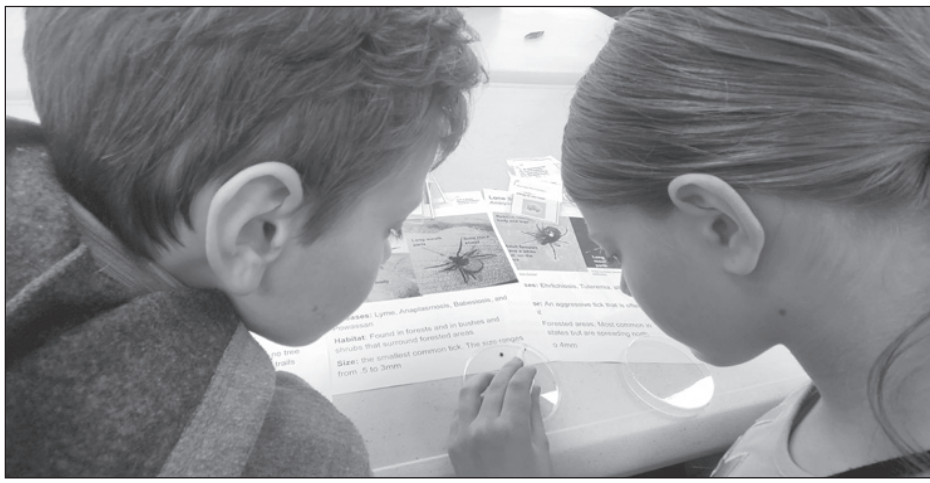
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# 4-H Ticks Project to Teach Kids about Ecosystems, Public Health



**ORONO, ME (June 2, 2023)** — University of Maine Cooperative Extension recently launched its new 4-H Tick Project, a community science program where youth collect, identify and learn about ticks while contributing to university research.

The project provides children and teenagers an opportunity to explore ticks and tick-borne diseases and understand the connections between climate, ecosystem change and public health. Led by 4-H professionals in Hancock County, the program is open to K–12 youth across the state.

Registration is rolling and will be open for the next several months. Currently, nearly 1,400 youth in 11 counties are involved in the program, with 24 educators leading projects.

These are a mix of formal classroom teachers, 4-H volunteers, informal educators (such as land trust staff and camp counselors) and homeschool parents/educators.

Project-based learning initiatives like the 4-H Tick Project allow youth to build knowledge and skills through active, hands-on participation. This experiential learning approach promotes a deep understanding of the subject matter and helps develop practical skills that can be transferred to other areas of life.

“A ‘learning by doing’ philosophy is at the heart of all 4-H projects,” says Carla Scocchi, 4-H professional and project lead. “Authentic learning happens when we connect kids with a real-world project that is meaningful for

them and their communities.”

“Doing the tick project made me feel more comfortable going outside and safe in my yard. Now I know which ticks can be really bad, and I can identify them,” says Alexis M., Hancock County 4-H member.

Youth involved in the project collect tick specimens in their local area and submit them to the UMaine Extension Tick Lab for identification and disease testing.

“By engaging youth participants in tick collection and identification, we are able to gather valuable data that helps us better understand tick populations and the distribution of their associated pathogens,” says Tick Lab Coordinator Griffin Dill.

Data collected also

contributes to the Maine Forest Tick Survey, a multi-year, multidisciplinary research project led by faculty in the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture to determine how forest land management practices impact tick populations and disease risk across the state.

The project is a collaborative effort with 4-H, the UMaine Extension Tick Lab, the Maine Forestry Tick Survey and Learning Ecosystems Northeast, a NASA-sponsored partnership focused on building the climate and data literacy youth need to become the next generation of climate stewards.

“This is a wonderful example of collaboration across the university and beyond,” says Hannah Carter, associate provost of online and continuing education and dean of UMaine Extension. “Through these partnerships, we can engage more students in a broader learning community where they can connect with diverse perspectives and build the skills needed to become tomorrow’s leaders.”

For more information about the 4-H Tick Project, please visit the project website or contact Carla Scocchi at 207.667.8212 or [carla.scocchi@maine.edu](mailto:carla.scocchi@maine.edu).



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# Fish Migration through Mill Brook Preserve Has Begun



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**MAINE (June 2, 2023)** -- The largest fish migration from Casco Bay has begun with thousands of alewife fish swimming through Mill Brook Preserve now. The fish will migrate along Mill Brook for about 1-3 weeks, this varies annually. The fish are always moving from pool to pool, we hope you catch a glimpse of this incredible wildlife phenomenon, and you can be a part of ensuring the success of this migration.

For the health of this fish migration, we have roped off the fish viewing pools; please do not cross the ropes. The ropes support the extremely difficult migration for these alewife fish. The ropes have been added to:

help ensure all people and pets stay out of the

water stop soil eroding into the stream make it clear fishing and collecting fish are not allowed

The migration is very stressful for the Alewives; any extra work in that process like avoiding people or pets can cause too much stress and they may not make it to the lake to spawn.

What is the Land Trust's role in the fish migration, and how can I help?

As the stewards of the largest fish migration from Casco Bay, we have over 50 volunteers involved in supporting this fish migration who are counting the fish as they arrive at Highland Lake to spawn and/or welcoming visitors at the fish viewing pools - thank

you volunteers. Member support is what makes this happen; if you are already a member, thank you, if not, please consider taking a minute to JOIN NOW ONLINE, and you too can be a part of supporting this incredible migration.

Want to learn more about this fish migration?

Check out our Nature Education webpage and scroll to Fish Migration to learn the history and science behind this fish migration.

Parking and how to get to the fish viewing pools in Mill Brook Preserve

You can see fish migrating along the Mill Brook Preserve trails from every trailhead click here for the trail map. Trailheads on Perry Court and just north of 789 Methodist Road are the shortest hikes to the southern fish viewing pool (please park safely off the road and completely off the pavement along Methodist Road). The southern fish viewing pool is the more likely place to see fish. The northern fish viewing pool is more remote, and if the timing is right, you can watch multiple fish ascending the waterfall at once. All trailheads have limited parking; please be sure not to block driveways or park on neighbors' lawns, and please try and visit during off-peak hours.

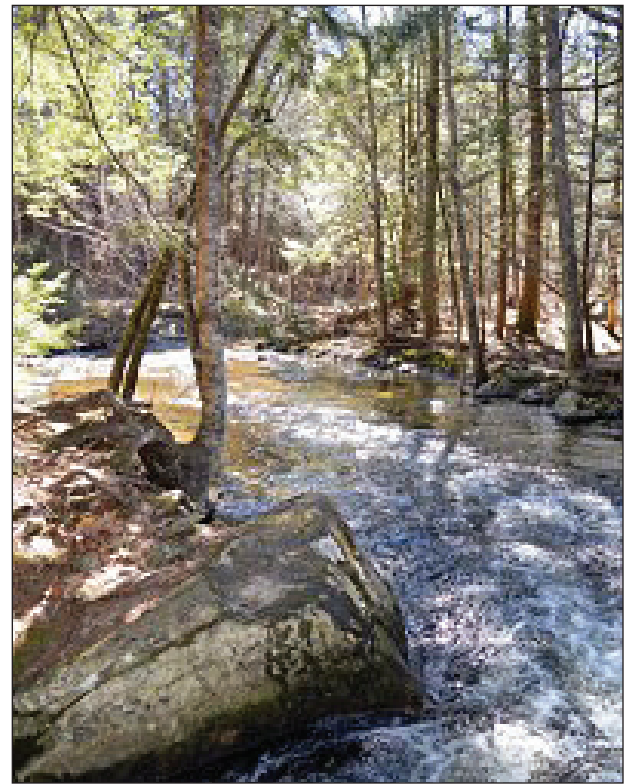
Is visiting the fish migration a family-friendly activity?

Yes, if your children are five or older (or younger if you can carry them) we recommend the 2-mile hiking loop that crosses two bridges, includes nature scavenger hunt cards along the trail, and has a fairy and gnome village. The 2-mile loop can be accessed from the two southern trailheads.

What are the trail conditions?

These are hiking trails with steep slopes, so please wear solid footwear. These trails follow a beautiful forested valley. Since spring is in full swing, you may want to bring bug spray.

We hope you can get out and enjoy one of the most incredible wildlife wonders in Greater Portland.



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# Dirigo Reads to Add Schools for 2023-2024 School Year

**BANGOR, ME (June 2, 2023)** – Dirigo Reads, a program that aims to put a book in the hands of every Maine first grader each month during the school year by 2025, is looking to increase the number of schools that will participate in the program during the next school year. Dirigo Reads co-founder Dan Cashman says that a final call for new schools to be considered for the 2023-2024 school year is happening now.

“Of the dozens of schools currently involved in this program, we have

heard nothing but great feedback,” said Cashman. “This is all about fostering a love for reading, and improving literacy rates in the process. Teachers, parents, and kids have reached out over the years expressing their love for this program, and we believe it’s making a difference.”

Dirigo Reads’ mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of children in Maine through literacy and share a little optimism along the way. This is accomplished by giving first graders in participating schools a brand new book

to keep during every month of the school year. Eighty-five schools spread over all 16 counties are currently a part of Dirigo Reads. By the time the school year is finished, first graders in each of these communities will have ten new books to add to – or start – their own home library. For this school year, Dirigo Reads distributed nearly 29,000 books to first graders in Maine. Over four school years, Dirigo Reads has distributed about 55,000 books to first graders in participating schools.

“This year, we have

spent the last several months making some structural, behind-the-scenes changes to the program, to ensure it is sustainable for many years to come,” said Cashman. “So, while we are planning to add schools for the next school year, it will be a slightly more competitive year to get in. I would encourage any school that wants to be a part of this program to apply on our website as soon as possible, as we’ll be announcing additional schools very soon.”

Dirigo Reads has been operationally supported by United Way of East-

ern Maine, and the founding Dirigo Star partner is Machias Savings Bank.

Additional partners of Dirigo Reads include Sutherland Weston, Bangor Savings Bank, the James and Betty Jacobs Charitable Trust, Casella, Northern Light Health, PCHC, Cross Insurance, Changing Seasons Federal Credit Union, Woodlands Senior Living, Hannaford, Versant, and The First.

“The partners involved with Dirigo Reads have made a difference in the lives of first graders,” said Cashman. “Support

from partners in the business community is an absolute must for this program to continue to serve first graders in Maine.”

There are about 11,600 first graders enrolled in Maine public schools. Currently, Dirigo Reads is providing books to about 25.3% of this population.

Schools and businesses interested in being a part of Dirigo Reads should visit [www.DirigoReads.org](http://www.DirigoReads.org) and click on “Contact,” where a form is available to submit all necessary information.

# Catholic Charities Volunteers Earn Roll of Honor Recognition

**MAINE (June 2, 2023)** -- Eight volunteers from Catholic Charities Maine (CCM) have been recognized with Maine Roll of Honor awards sponsored by Volunteer Maine and Governor Janet Mill’s office. All of the honorees completed more than 500 hours of volunteer service last year.

Two volunteers donate their services in the Aroostook County area, where thrift stores contribute to CCM’s Hunger and Relief services. Freda Watkins is a volunteer at our Threads of Hope thrift store in Caribou, Maine, and has contributed 815.25 hours. She loves to be in the store supporting the staff and customers. She keeps the staff area clean and tidy, makes lunch, brings in snacks, and goes “above and beyond” to help, Kelly Day, Director of Volunteer Services reported. Carol Hartt is a volun-

teer at our Hope Chest Boutique in the Presque Isle Mall, which features antiques and gently used goods. Carol dedicated 537.5 hours and makes the store sparkle, and “oh so organized,” according to Day.

Five of the honorees contributed their time and skills to the SEARCH (Seek Elderly Alone Renew Courage & Hope) program. Four of those volunteers, Susan English, Lorraine Barre, Barbara Hughes, and Betty Bates, spent hundreds of hours knitting and crocheting clothing and blankets for distribution to those in need throughout the state. The fifth, Anne Skelton, is a Visitation Volunteer and assists those who are unable to drive by providing rides to appointments and errands. She also checks in on isolated seniors who need companionship.

Susan English of



Wales, Maine, volunteered 682 hours knitting sweaters, hats, mittens, and baby clothing. She has been knitting all her life and joined CCM’s volunteer efforts in 2017. “I enjoy every minute of it,” English said. “And I think it’s great that so many people donate their yarn for us to knit and crochet.” She is a parishioner of Wales Presbyterian Church, where donors provide yarn for her projects.

Lorraine Barre of Rumford, Maine, has been crocheting and knit-

ting for CCM since 2020. Last year she dedicated 960 hours making baby blankets, lap robes, hats, and shawls and enjoys doing so three or four hours daily while watching television. “It’s fun and it helps me stay awake while watching TV,” she explained. “I also appreciate that our Holy Savior Church parishioners donate lots of yarn, as well.”

Barbara Hughes of Lewiston, Maine, has been knitting since the 1960s when she was taught needle crafts by a friend of her mother. She

has been volunteering for CCM since 2010. “It’s fun to make lap robes, and a friend helps by sewing them together,” Hughes said. She volunteered 1,440 hours last year.

Betty Bates, who lived in Auburn, Maine, and died last March, dedicated 835 hours of her time knitting last year. She spent many years contributing hundreds of hours knitting for those in need and earned her place on the Roll of Honor for several years. CCM is deeply grateful for the work she did.

Anne Skelton, also of Auburn, Maine, helps more than ten clients each weekday by driving them to doctors’ appointments, shopping trips, or other errands. “I love to be able to volunteer,” Skelton said. She started volunteering with CCM after she met Wendy Russell, aging services director for Catholic Charities.

The two were swimming together in a water fitness program at the YWCA pool in Lewiston. She has dedicated hundreds of hours each year and 949 last year alone. “You never know what you can do as a volunteer until you talk to people who do it,” Skelton said.

Russell reports that CCM is proud to have nearly 500 volunteers serving more than 55,000 Mainers. “Of course, we are always looking for more!” she remarked. If you are interested, please learn more and apply at [www.ccmaine.org/volunteer](http://www.ccmaine.org/volunteer). CCM has opportunities all over the state.

“We feel blessed by our wonderful volunteers at CCM. The Roll of Honor award and ceremony is a chance to recognize these amazing volunteers who care deeply to serve others. We are so glad they are a part of our team,” Day said.

# Farm Fresh Rewards Has New Benefits for SNAP/EBT Shoppers

**STATEWIDE, MAINE (June 2, 2023)** -- Farm Fresh Rewards, a program of Good Shepherd Food Bank, transitioned from paper vouchers to a discount at the checkout, making it easier to use rewards. SNAP/EBT shoppers will receive a 50% point-of-purchase discount on a wider variety of eligible fruits, veggies, legumes, and seedlings.

Farm Fresh Rewards is a nutrition incentives program designed to stretch budgets and im-

prove fresh food access for thousands of enrolled Mainers.

### NEW BENEFITS:

- No need to remember paper vouchers
- Easy sign-up for rewards
- Wider variety of eligible fresh foods
- Participating Retail Stores:
  - Belfast Co-op 123 High Street, Belfast
  - Berry Fruit Farm, Market & Bakery 54 Main Street, Livermore Falls

- Blackie’s Farm Fresh Produce 966 Minot Ave, Auburn
- Blue Hill Co-op 70 South Street, Blue Hill
- Fare Share Food Co-op 443 Main Street, Norway
- Ginny’s Natural Corner 217 North Avenue, Skowhegan
- Good Tern Co-op 750 Main Street, Rockland
- Jordan’s Farm



- 21 Wells Road, Cape Elizabeth
- Machias Marketplace

- 76 US-1, Machias
- Marsh River Co-op 5 Veterans Highway, Brooks
- Portland Food Co-op 290 Congress Street, Portland
- Rising Tide Community Market 323 Main Street, Damariscotta
- Rosemont Market Munjoy Hill
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Road, Whitefiled

These local retailers provide a vital access point for more Maine farmers to benefit from nutrition incentives. When more Mainers can buy more local food, everyone wins: families can make healthier choices, farmers and local food outlets gain new customers, and local economies thrive.

To learn more about Farm Fresh Rewards, please visit [www.Farm-FreshRewards.org](http://www.Farm-FreshRewards.org).

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**Projects**

*Continued from page 1*

**Lexington Deer Wintering Area:** A 1,452-acre parcel in Lexington Twp, Somerset County, to be acquired by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. It encompasses high-value deer wintering habitat, freshwater wetlands, significant inland-wading bird and waterfowl habitat, and miles of freshwater streams.

**Branch Lake Expansion (Ellsworth, Hancock County):** A 279-acre fee acquisition by the City of Ellsworth, expanding and connecting existing City Forest greenspace while safeguarding the public drinking water supply.

**Haystack Mountain (Montville, Waldo County):** Presented by the Friends of Haystack Mountain and to be acquired by Midcoast Conservancy. This property features blueberry fields, walking trails, snowmobile trails, and breathtaking panoramic views from the 840' summit.

**Eastern Trail and Cottontails (Wells, York County):** The Town of Wells will acquire this 155-acre property, allowing the development of access to a new section of the Eastern Trail and preserving the ideal New England Cottontail habitat.

**Maquoit Bay - Sherwood (Brunswick, Cumberland County):** This 32-acre property, to be acquired by the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust, encompasses upland and intertidal areas within the Maquoit Bay and Middle Bay Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance, including shoreline and a Wetland of Special Significance.

**Rumford Community Forest (Rumford, Oxford County):** A 446-acre project presented by the Trust for Public Land and acquired by Inland Woods and Trails. It is between downtown Rumford and Black Mountain, with easily accessible trails forming a local and regional trail network.

**Salmon Falls Tidal Wetland (South Berwick, York County):** A 79-acre project presented by the Town of South Berwick jointly with the Great Works Regional Land Trust, protecting the Salmon Falls River shore frontage and saltmarsh of special significance, including upland and intertidal areas within a cottontail focal area.

**Kezar River South (Lovell, Oxford County):** The Greater Lovell Land Trust will acquire this 1,377-acre property, expanding on previously protected lands with LMF funding in 2022. It boasts 4.5 miles of river

frontage, wetlands, and upland forest.

**High Peaks Orbeton Keystones (Madrid, Mt. Abram, Salem Twps, Franklin County):** A 2,666-acre property to be acquired by the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL), improving access to existing BPL lands adjacent to the Appalachian Trail. It includes snowmobile and hiking trails and scenic sections of Orbeton and Perham Streams.

The Land for Maine's Future Program, established in 1987 through a \$35 million bond approved by Maine citizens, is the State's primary method of conserving land for its natural and recreational value. Recognizing the importance of working lands and public access to

these lands in preserving Maine's quality of life, the program has conserved over 624,000 acres of land, including 333,425 acres of working land.

This remarkable work includes the establishment of 70 water access sites, providing over 67 miles of shoreline on rivers, lakes, and ponds, the preservation of 41 farms and 9,884 acres of farmland, the conservation of 30 working waterfront properties, the conversion of 158 miles of former railroad corridors into recreational trails, and the creation of over 69 miles of coastal access.

For more information about the LMF program and the conservation projects, please visit <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lmf>.

# FEMA Awards Almost \$16M to Eastern Maine Medical Center



**MAINE (May 1, 2023)** -- The Federal Emergency Management Agency will be sending nearly \$16 million to the State of Maine to reimburse Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center for the cost of hiring temporary staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The \$15,736,284 in Public Assistance grants will reimburse the 411-bed hospital and Level II trauma center in Bangor for hiring temporary medical and nursing staff to deal with increased patient loads between September 2021 and May 2022.

Eastern Maine Maine

Medical Center contracted with Freedom Healthcare Staffing, SimpliFi, Medical Solutions, O'Grady Peyton and Health Carousel Staffing to provide Registered Nurses (RN), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), and Tele/MS Tele Telemetry Nurses to assist in the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

"FEMA is pleased to be able to assist Eastern Maine Medical Center with these costs," said FEMA Region 1 Regional Administrator Lori Ehrlich. "Providing resources

for our partners on the front lines of the pandemic fight is critical to their success, and to our success as a nation."

So far, FEMA has provided more than \$270 million in Public Assistance grants to Maine to reimburse the state for pandemic-related expenses.

Additional information about FEMA's Public Assistance program is available at <https://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit>. To learn more about the COVID-19 response in Maine, please visit <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4522>.

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**Check-in @ 5: 00pm**, bags fly at 6:00pm  
**Where:** Simard-Payne Park Lewiston  
**Cost:** Social Division: \$40.00 per team (2 players)  
 Competitive Division: \$60.00 per team (2 Players)  
 Each player receives one \$5.00 Beer Ticket with registration.  
 Round Robin Format with Playoff Bracket  
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# \$1M in Jobs & Recovery Plan Including for L/A Transportation

**AUGUSTA, ME (June 2, 2023)** – Governor Janet Mills today announced nearly \$1 million in Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan grants for innovative workforce transportation projects aimed at supporting employers in York and Oxford counties, as well as enhancing existing transportation options for workers in Lewiston-Auburn.

The grants, administered by the Maine Department of Transportation, are part of the Workforce Transportation Pilot Program, an initiative of Governor Mills’ Jobs Plan that supports local and regional pilot projects that connect workers to employers through ridesharing, vanpools, and other transit options.

The three grants announced today were awarded to the Kennebunk-Kennebunkport-Arundel Chamber of Commerce, Western Maine Transportation Services, and Maine West, a part of the University of Maine System. Prior workforce transportation grants have been awarded to Bath Iron Works, Gagne

Foods in Bath, Timber HP in Madison, Robbins Lumber in Searsmont, and Sunday River in Newry.

“Lack of transportation shouldn’t be a barrier that keeps anyone who can work from holding a job—especially at a time when Maine businesses desperately need workers,” said Governor Janet Mills. “These investments from my Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan will support innovative projects that help to connect workers with the Maine businesses that need them.”

“We are proud to keep working to help Maine employers find solutions to their workforce challenges,” said Bruce Van Note, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation. “Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan funding continues to fill specific transportation needs and help support economic opportunities in our state.”

With an award of \$476,000, the Kennebunk-Kennebunkport-Arundel Chamber of Commerce will develop a

new transit service from the Biddeford and Sanford areas to downtown Kennebunk and provide local transportation connections for workers to employers in Kennebunk’s Lower Village and in Kennebunkport.

“We are thrilled for the opportunity to use this grant to create new employment opportunities for businesses in Kennebunk, Sanford, and Biddeford,” said Laura Dolce, Executive Director of the Kennebunk-Kennebunkport-Arundel Chamber of Commerce. “We know that many potential employees face transportation challenges, and this new route, served by Biddeford-Saco-OOB Transit and with last-mile service by Ride-Maine, will be a game changer. We are very grateful to the towns of Kennebunk, Sanford and Kennebunkport and our diverse group of business partners for supporting this effort.”

With an award of \$283,000, the University of Maine System in collaboration with MaineWest, a partnership of organiza-

tions in Oxford County, will support the purchase of vehicles to connect students in four school districts to opportunities in the outdoor recreation field, including on-the-job training, work experience, skill-building, and mentorship to help create foundations for successful employment.

“This generous funding will contribute to building workforce opportunities in the Maine West region,” said Elizabeth Clarke, Maine West Education Director. “The challenges our teenagers face are multi-faceted, and the project will provide them with much-needed mentoring and workforce training while addressing the transportation barrier that so often limits opportunity.”

With an award of \$225,000, Western Maine Transportation Services will work to extend existing service hours and review potential route adjustments to better accommodate the needs of workers and employers in the Lewiston-Auburn region.

“Western Maine

Transportation Services is excited to use this grant to remove transportation as a barrier for current and future employees living and working in Lewiston and Auburn,” said Sandy Buchanan, General Manager of Western Maine Transportation Services. “The need for additional transportation beyond the scope of present transit services will be beneficial to employers and employees alike. This pilot will provide valuable information to develop sustainable transit options to address the need going forward.”

The Workforce Transportation Pilot aligns with strategies from Maine Won’t Wait, the state’s four-year plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in part by promoting public transportation, to combat climate change.

Applications for the Workforce Transportation Pilot program are open. There is no application deadline, but applicants are encouraged to submit projects as soon as possible. With these new awards, approximately \$2 million

remains to be awarded through the program. For more information on how to apply, please visit its website.

The Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan is the Governor’s plan, approved by the Legislature, to invest nearly \$1 billion in Federal American Rescue Plan funds to improve the lives of Maine people and families, help businesses, create good-paying jobs, and build an economy poised for future prosperity.

Since the Jobs Plan took effect in October 2021, the Mills Administration has delivered direct economic relief to nearly 1,000 Maine small businesses, supported more than 100 infrastructure projects around the state to create jobs and revitalize communities, and invested in workforce programs estimated to offer apprenticeship, career and education advancement, and job training opportunities to 22,000 Maine people.

For more about Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, visit [maine.gov/jobspan](http://maine.gov/jobspan).

# Daughtry, Cloutier Paid Family and Medical Leave Bill Advances

**AUGUSTA, ME (June 1, 2023)** – On Thursday, the Legislature’s Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing voted in favor a bill from Sen. Mattie Daughtry, D-Brunswick, and Rep. Kristen Cloutier, D-Lewiston, that would create a statewide paid family and medical leave program. An amended version of LD 1964, “An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program,” received a vote of 8-5.

“It’s an incredible feeling to see years of hard work pay off. We are now closer than we have ever been to passing a paid family and medical leave program created by Mainers, for Mainers. This is a great

example of what we can do when we build things together,” said Sen. Daughtry. “I’m grateful to the Labor and Housing Committee for listening intently, and for their careful consideration of this bill. I’m looking forward to finally seeing this bill cross the finish line.”

“With today’s committee vote, Maine is now one step closer to joining every other state in New England by enacting a paid family and medical leave program,” said Rep. Cloutier. “This compromise plan is the result of years of work to determine the best way to implement an equitable and inclusive program that is tailored to our state. At its core, this legislation is designed to support both Maine workers and businesses. It will help Main-

ers balance caring for their children and sick and aging family members, while at the same time helping our employers attract and retain workers that are desperately needed.”

As amended by committee, employees and employers would split a wage contribution, equal to 1% or less of the employee’s wage. Employers with 15 or fewer workers would not have to pay the contribution, but their employees would still be eligible. Employers who offer comparable or more comprehensive paid leave plans may opt out. Once an employee hits a certain contribution benchmark, they would be able to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave each year for qualifying life events. If the worker has been with their employer

for at least 120 days, their job would be protected until they returned from leave.

Employees would be able to take time off for:

The birth, adoption, or fostering of a child.

Supporting a sick or dying loved one.

Caring for an older family member.

Recovery from surgery, an accident, substance use disorder, or other health challenges.

Prepping for/transitioning back from a family member’s military deployment.

Managing immediate safety needs if you or a family member are a victim of domestic or sexual violence.

The worker’s wages would be replaced at a tiered rate, based on their average weekly income. Under the committee amendment, the benefit amount would be equal to 90% of a worker’s wages for income earned up to half of Maine’s av-

erage weekly wage, which is currently \$1,036. That means the first \$518 of a worker’s average weekly income would be replaced at 90%, which is \$466.20. For income earned above that amount, the wage replacement would be 66% of earned pay. The total benefit cannot exceed the state average weekly wage.

Only 15 percent of American workers have access to any sort of paid leave, and fewer than 60 percent of the workforce has access to unpaid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act. Nationally, one in four women takes fewer than 11 days of parental leave after giving birth despite a recommended six- to eight-week recovery period. Eleven other states and the District of Columbia have instituted a statewide paid family and medical leave program, including every other state in New England.

Sen. Daughtry and

Rep. Cloutier served as co-chairs of the bipartisan Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program. The commission was formed in the 130th Legislature by LD 1559, “Resolve, To Create the Commission To Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program,” which was sponsored by Sen. Daughtry and co-sponsored by Rep. Cloutier. After two years of work, the commission issued its final report earlier this year.

LD 1964, which has over 100 co-sponsors, is supported by Small Business Majority, Maine Council on Aging, Maine AFL-CIO, Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, and AARP Maine.

The Department of Labor estimates the start-up cost for the program to be \$12 million.

The bill now faces votes before the Senate and House.



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# Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

## June 8

**AUBURN** -- Androscoggin County Republican Committee Meets monthly, the second Thursday of the month, at Auburn City Hall, 60 Court St, Community Room, 2nd Floor, Auburn, ME 04210 at 6:30 pm

All Registered Republicans are encouraged to attend!

## June 8

**LEWISTON** -- Thursday June 8th the Southern Maine Squadron Sampson AFBVA will be having a get together at noon time at the Governors Restaurant in Lewiston. During the Korean War era, those who chose the Air Force went to Sampson AFB, on the East Shore of Seneca Lake near Geneva NY, for basic training before going on to Tech Schools. Now some of these veterans, and folks with a connection to Sampson AFB, gather monthly through the summer months for lunch and share stories and memories. Veterans and their guests of all branches are welcome to join.

FMI call 657-4909 or e-mail [wmtkwkr1933@gmail.com](mailto:wmtkwkr1933@gmail.com)

Bob Sawyer Sampson AFB 1953

## June 10

**AUBURN** -- Books for \$1/bag! Auburn Public Library's popular "Buck-a-Bag" clearance sale is back! The sale hours

are Friday, June 9 from 1:00-5:00, and Saturday, June 10 from 9:30-4:00. Fill a bag or two and be all set for summer reading.

## June 15-25

**AUBURN** -- Community Little Theatre presents the Steve Martin comedy Picasso at the Lapin Agile. Young men Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso meet and discuss art, the universe, and everything in between along with some colorful characters who add wit, humor, and wry perspectives. Show dates are June 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, & 24 at 7:30 p.m., and June 18 & 25 at 2:00 p.m. All performances at CLT on 30 Academy Street in Auburn. Tickets and more information at [www.lact.com/picasso-at-lapin-agile-2023](http://www.lact.com/picasso-at-lapin-agile-2023)

## June 17

**MINOT** -- Church Auction at Minot United Methodist Church, 142 Minot Ave, Minot, Maine 04258

Our church will be holding an Auction on June 17th 2023 at 6 p.m. This is a Benefit for our Kitchen Renovation Project. Admission is free

## June 20

**LEWISTON** -- Outdoor Hiring Event on

Tuesday, June 20th from 10:00am-noon at the Lewiston CareerCenter, 5 Mol-lison Way, Lewiston. Bring your best self and speak with multiple employers all offering great job opportunities! The event is free, open to the public and will be held rain or shine. For a list of participating employers, visit: <https://www.mainecareercenter.com/locations/jobfair.shtml?id=10945557>

## Every 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday

**LEWISTON** -- PROGRAMS FOR HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES, held the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Monday 11:15am-12:30pm starting March 6th, 2023 at the Lewiston Public Library Children's Department

Homeschool families, are you looking for opportunities to have fun and socialize with other homeschool families? LPL will be offering activities for homeschool families in the Children's Department the first three Mondays of each month from 11:15am-12:30pm. The activities will be a Homeschool Video Game Social on March 6th, a Homeschool Lego Club and Curriculum Swap on March 13th, and a Homeschool Storytime

and Craft on March 20th.

This program is free and recommended for homeschool families with children of all ages. No registration is required. Contact info. 513-3133, [LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov](mailto:LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov)

## Second and fourth Thursdays

**LEWISTON** -- YOUTH TRADING CARD GAME CLUB held from 4 PM to 5 PM at the Lewiston Public Library. Join the Youth Trading Card Game Club to play, learn, trade, and compete with your peers! Games include Pokémon, Magic: the Gathering, and more. All skill levels are welcome. Library staff and volunteers will be available to teach new players and coach developing ones. Free. For kids & teens ages 8-18. 513-3135; [www.LPLonline.org](http://www.LPLonline.org)

## Wednesdays

**LEWISTON** -- Knitting Group, Dates: Wednesdays, Time: 4:30-7:30 p.m., Facilitator: SeniorsPlus Staff, Location: Education Center, 8 Falcon Road, Lewiston

Join our knitting group to work on your own project, learn from others, and socialize. Classes are free, unless noted. SeniorsPlus is fully accessible. Hearing assistive equipment is available upon request. For more information or to register, call us

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## Every second Monday

**LEWISTON** -- Care-giver Support Groups,

Date: Monday, January 9 (every second Monday); Time: 5:30-7 p.m. Facilitator: Dana Morrell, SW. Location: SeniorsPlus, 8 Falcon Road, Lewiston.

## Androscoggin Republicans Invited to Meet in Auburn

**AUBURN, ME (June 1, 2023)** -- Dear Fellow Republicans in Androscoggin County,

Are you FED UP? Are you CONCERNED?? Are you AFRAID for your kids and grandkids FUTURE??? Do you hope and pray that Maine and the United States can survive the degradation we've been enduring??

If so, we need YOU - to join us! Help us to prepare, starting NOW, for the upcoming elections in 2024. There is NO TIME to lose!!! If we do nothing, we have OURSELVES to blame!

The Androscoggin County Republicans meet on the 2nd Thursday of every month, currently at Auburn City Hall, in the Community Room, 2nd Floor, 6:30-8:30, and we hope YOU will JOIN US, to MAKE A DIFFERENCE in your Town, City, County, State and COUNTRY!!!!

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

# GORHAM LITTLE LEAGUE

## *Field Funding Campaign*

The Gorham Youth Baseball & Softball Association is making a large capital investment to provide updates and add fields to accommodate practice and game schedules:

- Develop 2 fields at White Rock
- Purchase seasonal fence for Shaw Park
- Repair dugouts and fencing, build storage centers
- Add infield mix and relevel current fields
- Acquire tarps and field maintenance equipment
- Add scoreboards

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# Affordable Homes Available in South Portland!

picture yourself as a homeowner

Habitat for Humanity Greater Portland

**PORTLAND, ME (June 2, 2023)** -- Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland is seeking families for two new homes on Sunset Avenue. Habitat homes are affordable, energy-efficient and for people who never thought they could own a home!

Think you don't qualify? A family of four can earn up to \$77,675!

Future homeowners

must make no more than 65% of the area median income and demonstrate a need for affordable housing, an ability to pay a low-interest mortgage, and a willingness to partner with Habitat. For more information, visit our site.

**How to Apply:**

Download an application or request a mailed copy online at [habitatportlandme.org/apply](http://habitatportlandme.org/apply) OR pick it up

at 659 Warren Avenue, Portland, ME

Ask questions and get help filling out your application – email [molly@habitatme.org](mailto:molly@habitatme.org) to set up an appointment.

Completed applications due by 5:00 pm on June 22, 2023.

Questions? Email Family Services Director, Molly, at [molly@habitatme.org](mailto:molly@habitatme.org) or call 207-772-2151 x 104.

## Own a Home in South Portland!



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For more details, visit [habitatportlandme.org/homeownership](http://habitatportlandme.org/homeownership) or scan the QR code.



### To apply:

- Get an application:
  - Download it or request a mailed copy online at [habitatportlandme.org/apply](http://habitatportlandme.org/apply)
  - OR pick it up at 659 Warren Ave, Portland, ME
- Ask questions & get help filling out your application
  - reach out to [Molly@habitatme.org](mailto:Molly@habitatme.org)
- Completed applications due by Thursday, June 22 at 5 PM



Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland is an equal housing opportunity organization

Questions? Contact Molly at [molly@habitatme.org](mailto:molly@habitatme.org) or 207-772-2151 x 104

### What do you think?

We strongly encourage Letters to the Editor, Op/Eds, columns or any other submissions from our readers.

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Email all submissions, including name, address and phone number, to the editor.

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