



# RIVER TIDINGS

FALL 2014

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## Land Purchase Expands Dodge Point, Fulfills a Dream

Did you know that Dodge Point straddles River Road? Most people visit the shoreward portion, but about a quarter of the land lies west of River Road.

This spring the Damariscotta River Association (DRA) purchased from Alida Busby 93 acres of elevated forestland right next to that inland portion of Dodge Point, connecting Dodge Point all the way to Lynch Road.

The new DRA Davidson Preserve (see River-Link map, page 7) will add to Dodge Point and connect to several other River-Link properties. While sold to

DRA by Alida Busby, it is named after her husband Louis J. Busby Jr.'s mother's family. The Davidsons inhabited the land for generations and many of them are buried in the cemetery right next door.

The property is not only next to beloved public land, but it is also loaded with vernal pools vital to salamanders and wood frogs, and is part of a large area of uninterrupted forest important to larger animals like deer, bobcat, and moose.

It presents future opportunities for  
*continued on page seven*



Alida Busby and Executive Director Steven Hufnagel, with the Davidson Preserve beyond.



Representatives of newly accredited land trusts gathered in Rhode Island to be recognized at the national conference of the Land Trust Alliance. There's Steven!

## DRA Awarded National Land Trust Accreditation

Land Trust Accreditation. It's a stamp of approval from our industry, a peer-review of our practices. It demonstrates that we are following the highest standards as a land trust. It's a benchmark for enduring conservation work.

We are pleased to announce that in late August, after a rigorous process lasting more than a year, DRA was officially recognized as an Accredited Land Trust by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission. DRA was one of 25 land

trusts to receive this designation in the latest round of awards.

"We take the promise of perpetuity – that we will care for our conservation lands 'forever' – very seriously," notes DRA Executive Director Steven Hufnagel.



An award of Accreditation suggests we are taking the necessary steps to make sure we are up to that challenge and we couldn't be more pleased to be recognized as a peer by and with the best in the business.

For our community, this means the lands we have conserved and made available to all have the best chance of standing the test of time – so they can be here for generations to come.

Out of more than 1,800 land trusts nationwide, just 280 are now accredited, yet accredited land trusts hold more than 75% of the acreage conserved by all land trusts. DRA is proud to join this group of industry leaders.



Steven Hufnagel, Executive Director, accepting Chamber of Commerce Community Service Organization Award

Dear Members and Friends,

We feel so fortunate to have so much good news to report that it's hard to fit in the pages of this newsletter. We've made Sarah Gladu full time, support-

### A View From the Farm

ing our blossoming education and environmental monitoring programs. This spring the Chamber of Commerce named DRA "Community Service Organization of the Year" for our efforts to improve quality of life in the region. In August we became an accredited land trust. Trail Tamers keep building and improving our trail system, now featured on our new website. And we've added land to Dodge Point, honoring a

family's stewardship legacy and protecting places for wildlife. What does it all mean when you put it together? Enduring conservation involving all generations, deepening our connection to this place we love. Please read on to learn more, knowing that all of these accomplishments are possible because you've chosen to support DRA and the river.

Thank you!





# *Snapshots of Summer*



Annual Meeting at Darrows Barn



Joe Gallant and the Transit open the Mallett Brothers evening in style



Exploring at Camp Mummichog

The **Annual Meeting** this year was held in the Darrows Barn at Round Top Farm on July 30 and was attended by more than 100 members. Featured were the new Seal Cove video and DRA website, along with highlights of the past year.

All three shows of our annual **Midcoast Music Fest** in the Darrows Barn sold out once again, raising the roof . . . and awareness about DRA and the river with new segments of the community. Audiences raved not only about the acclaimed headliners – Jason Spooner Band, David Mallett, and The Mallett Brothers Band – but about the opening acts as well.

Ten sessions of **Camp Mummichog summer day camp** were held this year for children and teens 5 to 16, continuing to get kids outside and connected with nature and the river. These are the future stewards of the Damariscotta River.

This year we ran three full **River Council cruises** aboard the River Tripper on the upper river for River Council and Life Members.



The Mallett Brothers perform to a full house



Campers kayaking in Great Salt Bay



Teen Institute installing wood duck boxes



Life members Mark and Jane Biscoe and Board President Bruce Lutsik



Rick and Lisa Hagen take in the sights on a river cruise



## Glady's Promotion Supports Growing Education and Science Programs



**Sarah Gladu, pictured here during the Native American Program, has a gift for connecting with audiences of all ages.**

We're thrilled to announce that Sarah Gladu has been promoted, from part time Education Coordinator to full time Education Director! Her new title is Director of Education and Environmental Monitoring.

This move is part of DRA's strategic plan. It recognizes the growing success of DRA's education programs for adults and youth, and it reflects an increasing demand for these opportunities.

It will allow more chances for kids to experience a wild island for the first time. More classes for adults. More hands-on programs in schools and on our lands about Native American history and culture. A deeper understanding of the Damariscotta River.

Sarah's expanded role also ties to our increased environmental monitoring work throughout the Damariscotta River Estuary: water quality, horseshoe crabs, invasive species.

Camp Mummichog summer day camp offered more sessions and served more children than ever this past summer. Partnerships with groups like Salt Bay Chamberfest have opened new doors to learning in nature through music and the arts.

Programs for adults, like Oyster Gardening and Midcoast Stewards, continue to expand along with workshops from seaweed to mushrooms. Home-school and school-based programs are on the rise.

The Damariscotta Estuary Education Program (DEEP), once a successful pilot in Great Salt Bay and Bristol Schools, is now expanding thanks to our partnership with University of Maine Darling Marine Center and several key grants.

DRA is grateful to be able to make the commitment to support these programs in a deeper way thanks to the support of members and friends like you!

### DEEP: Damariscotta Estuary Education Program

In its second year, DEEP was again offered to area schools, and approximately 100 kids in grades four through seven from Damariscotta Montessori, Great Salt Bay and Bristol Consolidated Schools participated. The program is taught in collaboration with the Darling Marine Center's K-12 program which enables the program students to use the Center's lab equipment and for groups to go out on the Ira C., a University of Maine research vessel.

DEEP was designed to provide students with an introduction to estuarine ecology, help them develop their own questions about life in the estuary and then conduct hands-on research to answer those questions. Some of the topics students have chosen include: "In what micro-habitats are green crabs found most frequently?" and, "How does light change plankton distribution?"





## Water Quality Monitoring

In partnership with the University of Maine Darling Marine Center, DRA has developed a new estuary monitoring program based in part on the work of Tidewater Watch, the DRA's former monitoring effort. Currently, trained citizen volunteers are monitoring seven locations in the estuary between Fort

Island and Great Salt Bay.

Data is gathered twice monthly April through October, and includes dissolved oxygen, salinity, temperature, transparency and total nitrogen. This data will be used to inform land-use policy, marine industry activities and DRA land stewardship projects.

## Focus on the Estuary: Marine Programs Provide Key Data and New Experiences

The Damariscotta River Association was founded in large part because of public concern for the health of the Damariscotta River, to protect water quality and critical habitats of the estuary. This remains a primary focus for DRA. Water quality monitoring, horseshoe crab monitoring, Oyster Gardening and DEEP (Damariscotta Estuarine Education Program) are key components of DRA's efforts to gather quality-assured data and provide hands-on education about the estuary to people of all ages. Good data and engaged citizens can help to drive better policies and planning to ensure the river's health.

**Below: Intern Andrew Goode and a young assistant measure a horseshoe crab.**



## Oyster Gardening

The students of the two-year Oyster Gardening program make their way through six weeks of course work, take field trips, build the necessary gear and then grow oysters for their own consumption on the DRA aquaculture lease site. This year seven intrepid students participated, and their oysters are reported to be growing very well. It takes two years to grow the oysters to table-size.

## Horseshoe Crab Monitoring

From late April through mid-June, DRA citizen volunteers monitored horseshoe crabs in two locations, at the Mills and near Miles Hospital. Volunteers counted, sexed and measured horseshoe crabs every day at high tide.

The data has been compiled, along with the data that has been gathered by DRA volunteers over the past ten years at these sites, by an intern hired jointly by the DRA and the Darling Marine Center. The intern, Andrew Goode of Boothbay (pictured at left), is a young lobsterman and a student at the University of Maine School of Marine Sciences. Goode's analysis of the data and related conclusions will be available in November.



## Stewards Expand Trail Systems by Land and Sea

A successful stewardship season has added new trails to existing DRA preserves and a number of DRA islands to the Maine Island Trail.

Approximately a dozen volunteer Trail Tamers, sometimes as many as 16, joined each monthly work party with their chain saws, loppers and work gloves, ready to tackle the job of the day planned by DRA Stewardship Director Steve “Spence” Spencer and the Stewardship Committee. This year that included building many new trails, in addition to maintaining the existing ones. **Baker Forest, O’Brien Preserve, Plummer Point, Rutherford Island, Salt Bay Preserve Heritage Trail, Sproul Preserve, Tracy Shore, and Walpole Woods** were among the nine preserves where work days were held this year.

A much-anticipated and long-awaited trail on **Rutherford Island** was completed and dedicated on National Trails Day in June. DRA purchased the 15 acres several years ago, and this is the first and only public access trail on the island. DRA Executive Director Steven Hufnagel commented on the birth of the trail. “DRA’s goal,” he said, “is to connect public access to the shore all along the river. Rutherford Island has been a missing link in this goal, and we are grateful to the MacKenzie family for opening up an access trail extending from DRA’s new Rutherford Island

Preserve across their land and down to the shore, allowing walkers to enjoy scenic river views.” Visit the trail by parking at the trailhead on Atlantic Avenue.

The Trail Tamer crew made short work of another new trail this fall at **Sproul Preserve**, one that allows access to Boyd’s Pond, adding to the loop created

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*“DRA’s goal is to connect public access to the shore all along the river.”*

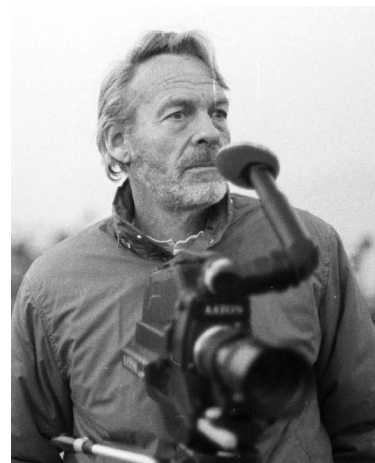
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last year along Ross Pond. This gem of a preserve in Bristol was made possible by a gift of land by Laura Sproul Stubbs.

In 2014 DRA added four preserves with water access to the Maine Island Trail: **Huston Landing, Plummer Point, Swanson Preserve and Witch Island**. (Incidentally, this summer bald eagle twins were observed on Witch Island and were reported to have succeeded.) DRA was the first land trust in Maine to partner with the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) in the late 1980’s with Stratton Island and later with Big Huckleberry/Carlisle Island. Now a 375-mile recreation waterway, the Maine Island Trail spans the entire coast of Maine.

We’re immensely grateful to this talented group of volunteers and all of our friends who support this work with their gifts of time, expertise and funds.

**Trail Tamer crew at work on the Rutherford Island Trail**



## DRA Dedicates Seal Cove Video to Robert Gardner

With the help of exceptional volunteers, videographer Peter MacDougall produced a short video about the Seal Cove Preserve Trail in South Bristol, highlighting the multiple roles that conserved lands play in the community. The video is featured on our website at [damariscottariver.org](http://damariscottariver.org).

The inscription reads, “The Staff and Trustees of the Damariscotta River Association dedicate this video in memory of Robert G. Gardner (1925-2014), ‘intrepid filmmaker,’ lover of trails, and friend of the Damariscotta River, who, along with his family, played a central role in protecting Seal Cove Shore Preserve.”



*continued from page one*

carefully sited trails, but most of all serves to connect and buffer Dodge Point from encroaching development.

“This purchase would not have been possible without our loyal members and supporters,” notes DRA Executive Director Steven Hufnagel. “Nor would it have been possible without the partnership of Maine Coast Heritage Trust [MCHT] and the support of the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program [MNRCP] managed by The Nature Conservancy for the Depart-

*“I couldn’t be happier knowing that this land my husband so carefully stewarded, and that had been in his family for over a hundred years, will be in the care of the DRA and conserved forever, a haven for wildlife.”*

ment of Environmental Protection and Army Corps of Engineers.”

“Steve Walker of MCHT helped to assess the property and wrote the grant, and we couldn’t be more grateful,” Hufnagel explained. “The MNRCP grant [\$107,000] paid for the property in its entirety and helped to fund some transaction costs as well. And of course we are deeply grateful to Alida Busby for allowing us the time to secure the funding so we could purchase this important land that had been in her husband’s family for generations.”

Alida Busby commented, “I couldn’t be happier knowing that this land my husband so carefully stewarded, and that had been in his family for over a hundred years, will be in the care of the DRA and conserved forever, a haven for wildlife.”

RIVER TIDINGS

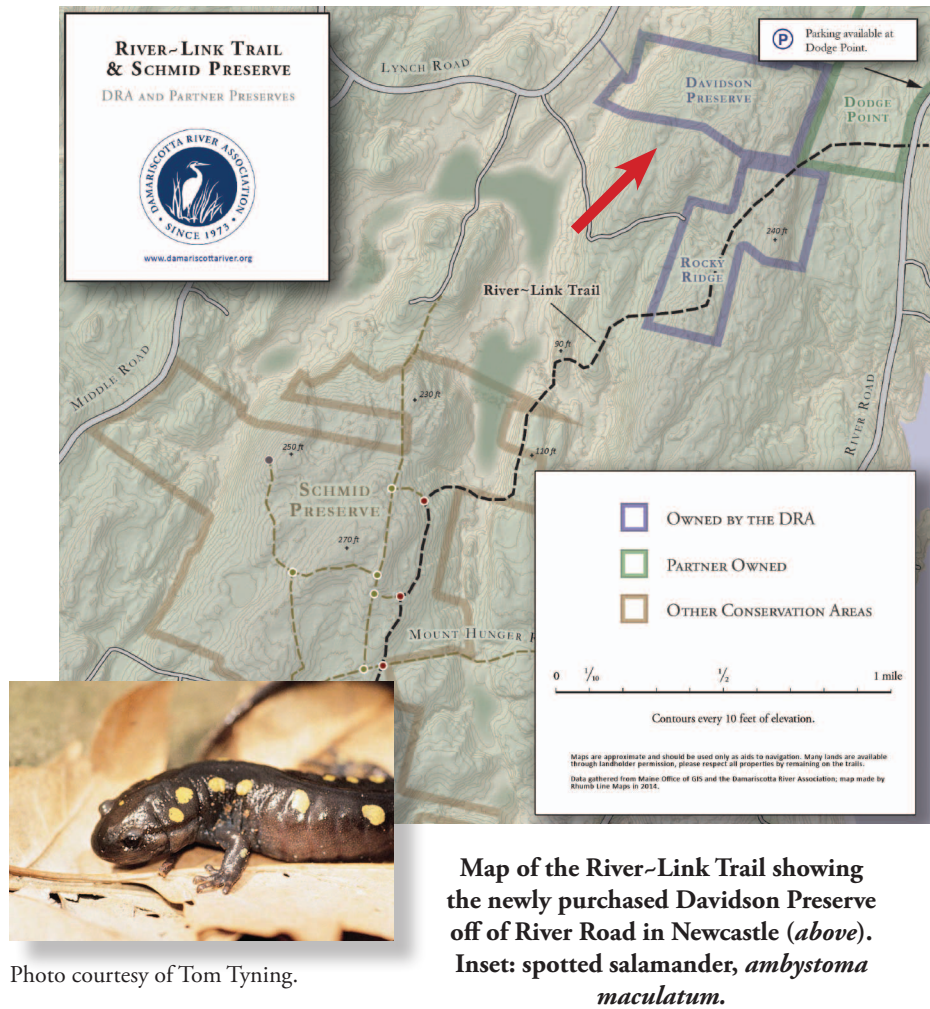


Photo courtesy of Tom Tynning.

## New Trustees

Three new trustees were elected to the DRA board at our annual meeting on July 30. Pictured below, from left, are Robert Barkalow, Peter McKinley and Joel Russ. Full bios of all trustees may be found on our website at [www.damariscottariver.org](http://www.damariscottariver.org).



In addition to these three gentlemen, our current Board of Trustees includes President Bruce Lusk, Vice President Emily MacKenzie, Treasurer Normand Saucier, Secretary Carolyn McKeon, Tom Arter, Rebecca Brown, William Coyne, Susan Dale, James Donovan, Joseph Guttentag, Robert Hunold, Alden McFarland, Tenley Seiders and Priscilla Ulin.





**Damariscotta River Association**

P.O. Box 333

Damariscotta, ME 04543

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## *Contact Us*

**Steven Hufnagel**, *Executive Director*  
shufnagel@damariscottariver.org

**Sarah Gladu**, *Director of Education  
and Environmental Monitoring*  
sgladu@damariscottariver.org

**Steve Spencer**, *Stewardship Director*  
sspencer@damariscottariver.org

**Darryn Kaymen**, *Office Manager*  
dra@damariscottariver.org

(207) 563-1393  
Open Monday–Friday, 9–4:30

*[www.damariscottariver.org](http://www.damariscottariver.org)*

## Season's Successes

- ➔ DRA has a **brand new website** at [www.damariscottariver.org](http://www.damariscottariver.org), created by Jason Spooner Design, highlighting our trails and programs. We invite you to explore the site and launch a new adventure!
- ➔ DRA was featured in the cover story and **made the cover of *Saving Land* magazine**, the national publication of the Land Trust Alliance (pictured at right). A link to the full article and photos may be found on our website.
- ➔ Thanks to DRA friends Gordon and Sheila Morrell, we were able to print **three colorful new brochures** with exceptional maps (by Paul Mirto) for Tracy Shore/Library Park, Plummer Point and Seal Cove Shore. Copies are available at kiosks, at the DRA office and the South Bristol Town Office.
- ➔ Land for Maine's Future awarded us a **grant of \$75,000 toward the purchase of Crow Island**, taking us within \$10,000 of our campaign goal!



This Spring, the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce presented DRA with its **Community Service Organization of the Year Award**, “For enhancing the community by adding to the well-being and quality of life in the region.” We couldn’t be prouder of all that your support makes possible for the river and the community. Read the full text of Steven’s acceptance speech on our website.