

COASTAL RIVERS
CONSERVATION TRUST

RIVER TIDINGS

What's white, round,
and holds a classroom
full of kids?
Find out inside!

COASTAL RIVERS CONSERVATION TRUST

Coastal Rivers’ mission is to preserve and promote the natural, cultural and historical heritage of the Damariscotta-Pemaquid region for the benefit of all.

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coastalrivers.org



Together, making great strides



Letter from the Executive Director

I’m often asked how it’s going now that DRA and PWA have become Coastal Rivers.

I’m pleased to answer that we are making great strides, thanks in no small part to the generous support of committed members, donors, and volunteers like you.

As soon as DRA and PWA memberships voted to unify the two organizations in September of 2018, our staffs began working in tandem on programs and future planning.

The boards completed formal legal unification effective April 1, 2019. On that date we officially became **Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust**, with a single combined board.

In mid-April we moved our headquarters to the newly-completed Denny Conservation & Education Center at Round Top Farm. We sold the former PWA office this past December. And we recently welcomed two new staff members: Joan Ray, Director of Land Conservation, and Education Assistant Angela DesVeaux (p. 11).

During this time of great changes and challenges, we didn’t miss a beat in our water quality work, land conservation, trail building, or education programming. In fact, by many measures, **it was one of our best years ever.**

That’s all due to the monumental (and unified!) efforts of staff and volunteers, along with the backing of friends like you. **Thank you!**

I invite you to read more about a few of these successes in the pages that follow: from the recently acquired Tipping Rock Preserve (p. 4), to expanded water quality programs (p. 9), to the new yurt at Great Salt Bay Community School (p. 10).

Looking ahead, there’s still much to be done: accelerating the conservation of our region’s most treasured natural areas and creating further trail and wildlife connections – all the more essential as climate disruption becomes more rapid and pervasive; doing more to protect our fragile water resources; growing the reach of our environmental education programs.

As always, I’m so grateful to have you with us on the journey.

Warm regards,

Steven Hufnagel

On the cover: A young volunteer helps build the yurt at Great Salt Bay School (story, page 10.)

Photo: Jill Davis



Walt Barrows

WILD PLACES

p. 4-5

Protecting water quality and conserving places where wildlife can thrive, through

- Donated or purchased properties
- Voluntary landowner agreements, also called *conservation easements*



TRAILS & PUBLIC ACCESS

p. 6-7

Connecting people to the outdoors with

- Hiking trails
- An accessible River Trail
- Access to lakes, ponds, rivers and estuaries for paddlers
- A community skating rink
- Working farms
- Places for bird and wildlife viewing



CLEAN WATER

p. 9

Ensuring healthy waterways and vibrant communities by enlisting citizen scientists, who

- Monitor fresh & salt water quality
- Maintain a water quality lab
- Administer LakeSmart certification for landowners
- Tackle invasive aquatic species
- Monitor changes to shell middens
- Track horseshoe crab populations



EDUCATION

p. 10-11

Growing the community of people who care about our lands and waters with

- Workshops, classes, & guided hikes
- Camp Mummichog summer day camp
- Beachcombers’ Rest Nature Center
- School programs
- After-school program
- The Wabanaki program
- Midcoast Stewards program
- Oyster Gardening

Building toward Climate Resilience and Connectivity:

The Tipping Rock Preserve

When you're a moose, bigger really is better. Especially when it comes to habitat. Your survival depends on lots of connected forest and wetlands. Room to roam, to feed, to find a mate.

The same is true for other creatures, from bobcats to bears and birds of all kinds. That's why we're celebrating the purchase of 91 acres of forest and wetland just north of the River~Link wildlife corridor, adjacent to Baker Forest.

River~Link is a permanently conserved natural area reaching from the Damariscotta River at Dodge Point west to the Schmid Preserve in Edgecomb and south down the Boothbay Peninsula. Forever forest.

Picture hushed hemlock groves with meandering streams, high ridges crowned with oaks, open meadows where beavers once engineered dams, porcupine dens along rugged rocky bluffs . . . and a trail more than five miles long connecting them all. River~Link gives a sense of the North Woods in our backyard, wildness in the midst of the increasingly developed peninsulas of the Midcoast.

The new property is known as the Tipping Rock Preserve. Its conservation was made possible by the on-going support of members like you, along with the generosity of Tom Arter, who sold it to us at a greatly discounted price.

That discount in turn attracted funding from the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program (MNRCP) to support our purchase.



Top: The new preserve's namesake, the Tipping Rock, is a large boulder at a high point on the land. It is thought to be the largest glacial erratic in Lincoln County, adding another unique feature to the many natural and geologic wonders of River~Link. Right: The property is characterized by dense woods, rich wetlands and meandering streams.

The Tipping Rock Preserve not only keeps wildlife corridors open, but it also includes prime habitat. Rich in wetlands and lush with forest, and varied in its topography, the property provides a broad range of conditions and microclimates.

This is especially important in view of a changing climate. It offers room for plant and animal populations to shift upslope, for example, or to a wetter or more shaded area if conditions in a given location are no longer suitable. And of course it provides all the good things that wetlands and forests do – see facing page!

But we can't stop here. With your help, we are working with local landowners to permanently conserve several more properties in the River~Link neighborhood, to make sure these habitats and natural connections remain whole.

River~Link gives a sense of the North Woods in our backyard, wildness in the midst of the increasingly developed peninsulas of the Midcoast.



Wild woods and wetlands at work for you

Go ahead and hug a tree – we'll understand.

During photosynthesis, trees take in carbon dioxide (CO₂) and give off oxygen. Depending on its size, a tree can store 15 to 800 pounds of CO₂ per year.

Trees cool the air through the process of evapotranspiration, and cool the earth by casting shade and keeping moisture in the ground.

Trees and plants filter particles of dust, ozone, carbon monoxide, and other pollutants from the air.

Woods and wetlands support diverse wildlife.

Undisturbed plant roots hold soil in place, preventing erosion.

Talk to us about conserving your land!

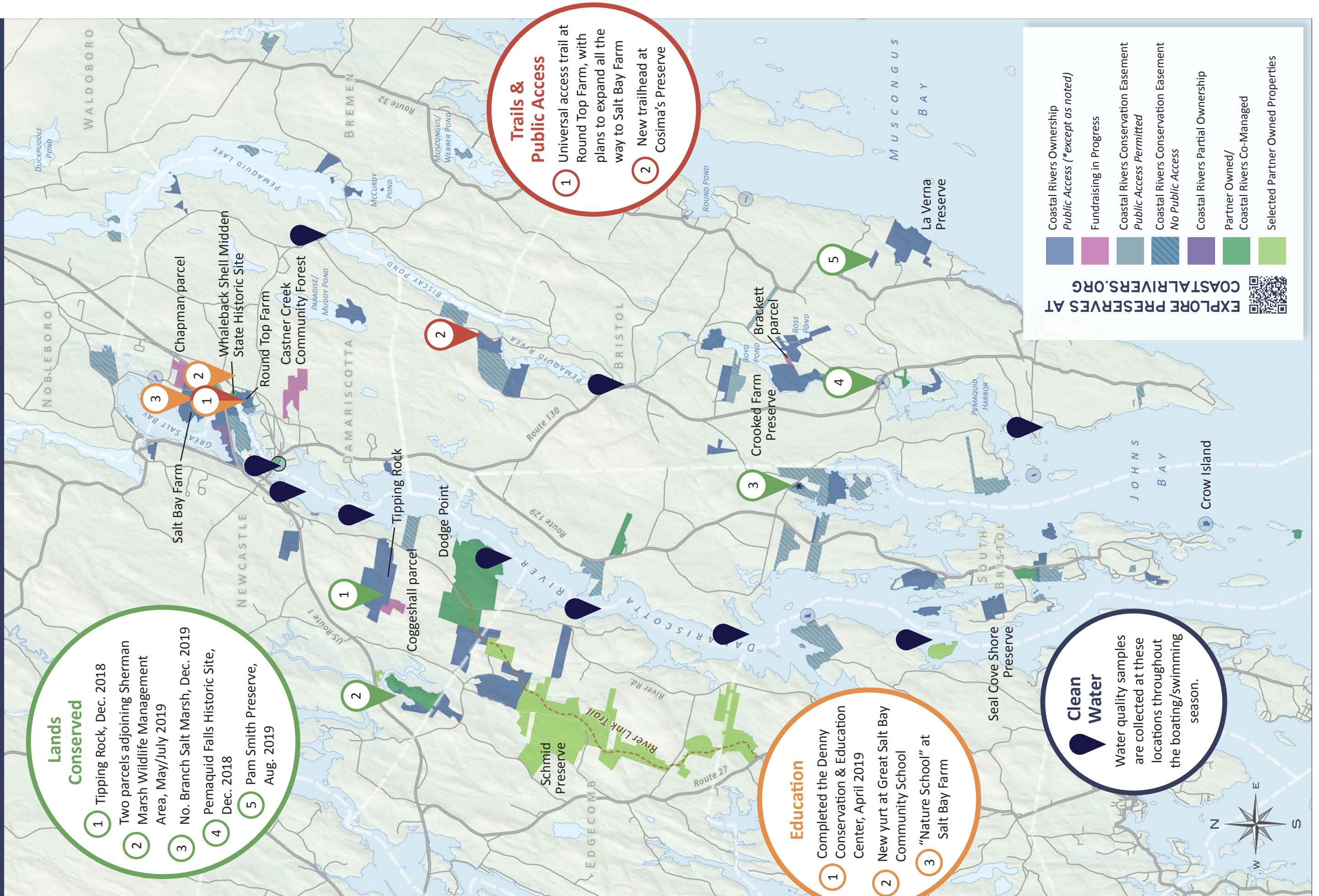
Contact Joan at 207-563-1393

Wetlands act as sponges, slowing the flow of water, recharging stores of groundwater and preventing floods.

Streams and wetlands filter out sediments, pollutants and nutrients.

COASTAL RIVERS CONSERVATION TRUST

Thank you for helping to put a great year on the map!



Sweet, sweet labor

by Barnaby Porter

My first real job working for someone outside the family was a good one that left a sweet taste in my mouth for the pleasures to be derived from physical labor as well as a collection of vivid impressions to color my memories from those carefree days when the need for pocket money was one of the driving forces in my life.

A friend of my parents who knew I must be getting into my teens, called up one day to see if I'd be interested in a little work after school and on Saturdays. He needed help with his maple syrup operation. It sounded good to me. He told me to bring an ax if I had one. It so happened I did have an ax and even figured I was pretty handy with it, so I was only too happy to bring it along on my first day on the job. And I soon found out why I would need it.

My new boss started out by explaining to me the whole process of how you get syrup from maple trees. He then showed me the big fire boxes under the evaporating pans in the sugarhouse with the remark that supplying the fuel wood for those fires was a job for 10 men and a boy, but since his was a part-time operation, one man and a boy ought to be able to keep up with it. I certainly was not about to argue the point, for I was out to prove I was up to the task. Besides, I don't think there was any edible delight I craved more than a great dripping spoonful of real maple syrup, and I couldn't wait to get my fingers into the stuff. But because it took 40 gallons of maple sap to get one gallon of maple syrup, we needed fuel wood first, and a lot of it.

The boss always did his boiling-off on the weekends, so during the week, after school, I toiled away with my ax and a bow saw he provided me with, cleaning up the dead wood in his woodlot. Some of it was standing trees, some was trees he had dropped the year before. Even though it was four-foot wood we were after, it went slowly; not everyone had chainsaws at that time, the boss included, and at 14, I certainly didn't have one.

Every once in a while, he came jouncing along in his banged-up old Jeep truck to see how I was making out, and whenever I had enough for a load, we stacked it on the back for the rough trip to the sugarhouse. Being early March, there was enough snow still in the woods to make the going messy as the truck wallowed in ruts and lurched over stumps.

Sometimes the boss worked with me at chopping wood, but mostly he left me on my own, which was fine too. That arrangement afforded me a good measure of the tranquility of late winter in the woods, and I liked working alone. Pitting me against myself, I tried to have enough fuel wood cut for a worthwhile load before the boss appeared again, and as the blows of my ax echoed through the woods, I did my damndest to strike another blow before each last echo died out. Employing those two tricks alone, I managed to put up a fair pile of wood in my first week on the job, enough to fire the stoves that Saturday morning, when we were to boil off all the maple sap the boss had collected during the week and had dumped into the big holding tank upslope of the sugarhouse.

Saturday came. We lit the fires. Slowly, ever so slowly, the sap in the great square evaporating pans began to give off nearly invisible wisps of steam. Then it sent forth steam in earnest, until eventually the weathered old sugar house was filled with sticky sweet vapor so thick the boss and I could barely see each other. The morning sun beamed in under the eaves and turned the maple-laden air to a warm, golden mist. All my senses, my clothes, even my hair were saturated with it, and I was in heaven.

"Stoke the fires," said the boss.

Happily, I stoked away.

At last, maple sap became maple syrup, by eye and by instrument, and the boss opened a valve to run off a batch. It flowed in a fabulous stream into a cone-shaped filter made of thick, white felt, and out of that it streamed into big pitchers to be poured into shiny, one-gallon tin cans.

"Try some," said the boss, handing me a big spoon.

"Yes sir!" I said, and while he filled a glass bottle and held it up to the light to compare against his test vials, I spooned up a mouthful of that hot, sweet maple syrup and just let it run over my tongue and down my throat. Never in this world had anything tasted so pure and sweet. Never. I had definitely got the hang of my job.

"Grade A Fancy," said the boss, still holding the bottle up to the light.

"Yup," I said. "Sure tastes like it to me."

Coastal Rivers Trustee, artist and author Barnaby Porter lives in Damariscotta with his wife Susan. Read Barnaby's blog at coastalrivers.org.

Keeping it clean

Your support puts Coastal Rivers' citizen scientists on the front lines in our lakes, ponds, rivers and estuaries:



Monitoring water quality

Citizen scientists monitor water quality at seven locations along the Damariscotta River estuary, Pemaquid Beach, and two fresh water swim beaches all summer long.



Offering Courtesy Boat Inspections

Friendly volunteers cover shifts at three area boat ramps to keep invasive aquatic plants from entering our lakes and ponds.



Patrolling for invasive plants

By boat and from shore, volunteers keep an eye out for invasive aquatic plants in area lakes and ponds. Anything that looks suspicious is collected for identification.



Helping landowners get LakeSmart

Trained volunteers coach lakefront landowners on managing landscapes in ways that protect water quality.

Find out more about these and other programs and volunteer opportunities at coastalrivers.org.



Above: Volunteers and staff from the school and from Coastal Rivers assemble the yurt near the school playground.

Bringing school outdoors with the new yurt at GSB School

Jill Davis will be the first to tell you that being outdoors in nature is critical for students' mental and physical health and well-being.

As the School Counselor at Great Salt Bay Community School (GSB), she might also point out that engaging students in the natural world has been shown to improve learning outcomes as well.

This is why GSB places a high priority on getting kids outside.

And as it turns out, this goal aligns closely with Coastal Rivers' long-standing efforts to connect people of all ages with the outdoors, especially kids. "Through experiences in the woods, wetlands, fields and shores of this area, kids develop a strong sense of place and learn to care about our natural resources," Executive Director Steven Hufnagel explains. "They are our next generation of land and water stewards!"

Coastal Rivers has collaborated with GSB to provide outdoor education for years. New this fall, however, is a beautiful outdoor gathering space, in the form of a 24-foot diameter yurt, a gift from Coastal Rivers.

A circular, tent-like structure, the yurt features an

oiled wood frame, double insulation, and windows, and will have electricity and heat once complete.

The project arose out of the need for space to support the school's growing outdoor and environmental education programming. GSB and Coastal Rivers view the yurt as an ideal launchpad for outdoor education.

Davis said teachers are already asking about reserving the space for their classes once it's completed. While outdoor programming will take priority, teachers have also expressed interest in using the space for reading and art classes.

The circular structure, with natural wood accents, is bright and welcoming. "It's a beautiful, comforting space for learning," said Davis.

Adam Maltese of A. Maltese Design donated many hours of design and drafting services, and, along with Jim Grenier of Coastal Rivers, coordinated construction of the yurt. Under their guidance, a team of parents and staff from GSB, as well as staff and volunteers from Coastal Rivers, spent three days assembling the structure.

It's your generosity that made this gift to the school possible. Thank you!

Nature School: A few of my favorite things

Fifth-graders from both Nobleboro Central and Great Salt Bay Community Schools recently had the opportunity to spend a week at "Nature School" with Coastal Rivers, in the forest, fields and marshes at Salt Bay Farm.

Kids spent hours outside every day, learning survival skills, building shelters, journaling, exploring, writing forest management plans, conducting experiments on carbon sequestration, counting species, playing, painting, and more.

Who's new at Coastal Rivers?



Angela DesVeaux
Education Assistant

A graduate of Willamette University in Oregon, Angela majored in both Anthropology and Biology. Her previous experience includes serving as a Conservation Crew member with AmeriCorps, acting as

an Urban Forestry Unit intern, and canvassing for The Nature Conservancy.

Knowledgeable, cheerful and capable, Angela enjoys working with people of all ages and abilities. We are thrilled to have her on the team!



Joan Ray
Director of Land Conservation

Joan is a native of Damariscotta. A Colby College grad, she has an MBA from Boston University and is certified as a Maine Master Naturalist. She comes to us with a ten-year background in land stewardship and

conservation and an intimate knowledge of the area.

Joan's happy place is outdoors: traveling, hiking, mountain climbing, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and playing with her dogs. She fits right in at Coastal Rivers.



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...and much much more!



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