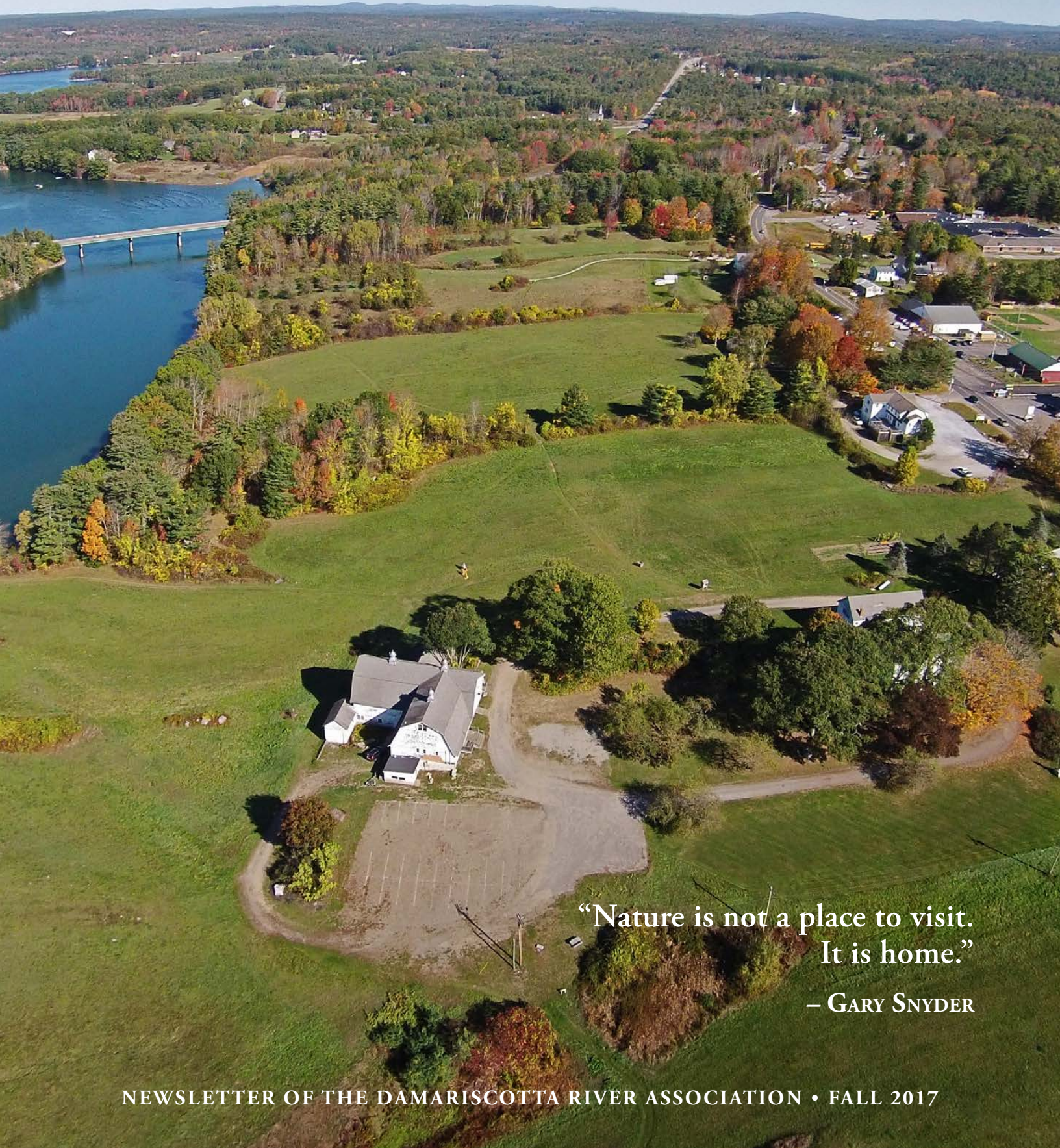




# RIVER TIDINGS

Caring for the land and the river you love



“Nature is not a place to visit.  
It is home.”

— GARY SNYDER





The mission of the Damariscotta River Association is to preserve and promote the natural, cultural and historical heritage of the Damariscotta River and adjacent areas for the benefit of all.

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# On the hunt for a moose

## Letter from the Executive Director



On a warm October Saturday just a few weeks ago, my daughter and I were hiking at Dodge Point when she announced, “Dad, I’m a Maine girl and I’ve never seen a moose.”

“Do you want to see a moose?” I replied, asking the obvious. Turns out she’s wanted badly to see one for years, but never shared this sincere wish.

Though Dodge Point on a busy day isn’t great moose “hunting” ground, we started looking right away, making up for lost time. As expected, no dice. A long face. “But here’s the good news,” I told her. “Right on this peninsula we can find moose highways wide as sidewalks, lots of moose scat, and maybe one of these days an actual moose.”

I think the moose scat sold her! We made our next hiking date, a trip to the new DRA Barrows-Louderback Preserve. It’s a 178-acre property at the center of the River ~ Link trail and wildlife corridor. Huge wetlands, quiet forest – moose paradise! I think we have a shot. And for that I’m grateful.

Moose need room to roam, and so do many other critters. Thanks to our generous community, we’re conserving large, connected natural places where wildlife can thrive. Our lives are richer for it. I know my life is richer when I can take my family out in the woods with the chance of seeing a moose, not only in Baxter State Park, but also just a few miles from home.

Thank you for making wildlife a priority!

*Steven*  
Steven Hufnagel

P.S. I’d love to hear about any wildlife sightings you’d like to share. Give me a shout at [shufnagel@damariscottariver.org](mailto:shufnagel@damariscottariver.org). Thanks!



Mike Lockhart

On the cover: an aerial view of Round Top Farms. Photo by Tom Field



Above: An assortment of freshly harvested produce from Twin Villages Foodbank Farm, all grown using organic farming practices. Below: Farm Manager Sara Cawthon, ready for business at the Ecumenical Food Pantry in Newcastle.

## Giving thanks for fresh, local food

With your help, Twin Villages Foodbank Farm delivers loads of garden-grown goodness to Lincoln County food pantries every week – along with a healthy dose of hope.

With no facilities for storing perishable food, the Jefferson food pantry usually stocks only canned vegetables. Pantry representative Aaron Greene stresses what a difference it makes for her clients to be able to take home nutritious produce from TVFF. As she shared with supporters at a gathering in August, “the farm is meeting a critical need.”

Imagine how having choices and a selection of premium, fresh-picked vegetables gives dignity and a boost of self-

confidence to people who may feel a stigma associated with using the food pantry.

“Many folks accessing the food pantry are *us*,” asserts TVFF cofounder Megan Taft. “Many times they can be us minus a job – whether the result of the economy changing, a difficult family dynamic, or other unforeseen circumstance.”

Taft and her partner, Farm Manager Sara Cawthon, are passionate about ensuring everyone has access to healthy food. “Food is a basic need,” Taft points out, “and once that need is met, people can begin to pursue other goals.”

*Twin Villages Foodbank Farm partners with DRA, farming two acres at DRA Great Salt Bay Farm using organic practices. All produce is grown for donation to Lincoln County food pantries and low-income programs. Learn more at [twinvillagesfarm.org](http://twinvillagesfarm.org).*





# Reconnecting Round Top Farms: Growing a hub for conservation and community

The purchase of two properties adjacent to DRA Round Top Farms reunites pieces of the historic farm, while work has begun on an accessible trail that will safely connect

Round Top, GSB School, and the town sidewalk system.

New and wonderful possibilities will soon open up for people coming from the downtown area to Round Top and a new trail that will span a long stretch of



Dairy herd at Round Top Farms, mid-twentieth century

Courtesy of Marjorie Dodge



Plowing the new student garden at Round Top last spring

Michael Sevon



conserved land along the upper river.

The 6 to 8' wide trail, with a surface of finely crushed compacted rock, will easily accommodate strollers, wheelchairs, bikes, and those with mobility limitations.

The town has committed to extending the Church Street sidewalk all the way to the east end of the street, across from McDonald's, by 2020. DRA plans to construct a short section of sidewalk that will pick up where the town sidewalk leaves off and safely deliver pedestrians to Round Top and the trails beyond.

On the other side of Round Top, the new trail will greatly expand the reach of Great Salt Bay (GSB)

School's outdoor programming, from visiting the oyster shell middens at Whaleback State Historic Site, to exploring biodiversity at the River's edge, to gardening and accessing other programs at Round Top Farms.

With an increased focus on outdoor learning, GSB is quickly outgrowing its physical bounds. Classes visit the Farmers' Market at Round Top Farm as part of their math curriculum. Margaret Coleman's gardening program, with no suitable space available on school grounds, has partnered with Twin Villages Foodbank Farm and DRA to create a garden plot behind the old ice cream shack at Round Top.

The addition of a crosswalk and flashing light where

the students cross Business Route 1 will make it much safer to reach the trail.

A connected gateway to the river, accessible to all. An open invitation to explore, however one navigates the trail. Stronger outdoor education programs in our local schools. And we couldn't do it without you.

Thank you!

Above: An aerial view of Round Top Farms looking east, with GSB School, the CLC YMCA, and the Round Top Farmhouse visible along Business Route 1. The route of the planned accessible trail is shown in yellow.

Boundaries are approximate







This pump-out station, free for users, is just a short distance from the Damariscotta town landing.

# Our members keep things “pumping!” – On cleaner water, oysters and a raft full of sewage

The productive Damariscotta River Estuary sustains a majority of Maine’s oyster farming, as well as a diverse abundance of aquatic life. Yet like all water bodies, its well-being depends on care of the lands around it and attention to what flows into it, whether directly or indirectly.

A constant concern in our River, as in many others, is bacterial pollution. This not only harms wildlife and people directly, but also causes a host of problems indirectly, by contaminating seafood, particularly clams and oysters.

That’s why the Department of Marine Resources carefully monitors for bacterial pollution, and DRA has played a central role in that monitoring effort. Member and volunteer support has helped close overboard discharges from camps and homes, supported septic system upgrades, and opened new clam flats for harvest, also paving the way for greater oyster production.

Along with members of the Newcastle-Damariscotta Harbor Committee, DRA recently recognized another probable source of bacterial pollution: sewage entering the river via overboard discharge from boats. The discharge in



DAMARISCOTTA RIVER ASSOCIATION

this case would include not only the sewage itself, but the harmful chemicals that accompany it, from deodorizers to disinfectants.

As a result, DRA members and supporters partnered with the Harbor Committee and the two towns to secure a pump-out barge, where boaters could dispose their sewage at no charge. We can attest that it’s being used. A gauge shows how full it is, and the barge rides lower as it is filled. DRA helps the town to move the barge to the town dock as needed, where it is pumped into a truck and taken away for treatment.

Not only is this a win for oyster growers and clammers, but also for swimmers and wildlife on the river. It makes the town more welcoming to boaters, whether residents or visitors, sending a signal that we care about our clean water as well as the recreation, business and quality of life it generates.

Looking ahead, with the help of our members and funding from Sustainable Ecological Aquaculture Network (SEANET), we have launched a new water quality analysis lab at Great Salt Bay Heritage Center, which will help us track down further sources of harmful bacteria. Best of all, this new lab will be run with the help of Lincoln Academy students. You’ll be hearing more soon about how your support is keeping the river clean.



From left: Campers of all ages dissect owl pellets, enjoy *plein air* watercolor painting, and explore the seashore on a field trip to Witch Island.

## Sharing adventures across generations

For those who love the idea of nature-based adventures with their grandkids, or are inspired to rescue them from summer screen time, there is a new game in town.

Seven intrepid grandparents experienced the magic of Camp Mummichog during the first-ever session of “Grandparents and Kids Camp” this past July. The three-day program was what Education Director Sarah Gladu describes as a “best of Camp Mummichog” sampler.

While learning about birds, campers used wind socks to explore Bernoulli’s principle. They went for nature walk to observe birds and insects, spent time nature journaling, and

even got to dissect owl pellets.

In the salt marsh, young and old studied horseshoe crabs and mysid shrimp. They talked about evolution and together created “Bob, the ultimate muck creature.”

The highlight of the week, however, was a perfect summer day spent on DRA-owned Witch Island in South Bristol. There campers roamed the island, painting, looking under rocks on the shore, and playing “onion trail.” This memorable game challenges participants to use their noses to find someone who has left a scent trail of cut onion rubbed on tree trunks and rocks.

Ready to sign up? “Grandparents and Kids Camp” will be offered again next summer, so stay tuned!

## Your gift can conserve... and inspire



With a planned gift, you can ensure our clean river, wildlife, and natural spaces are here for generations to come.

A planned gift is a wonderful way to take care of your family while reducing estate taxes and making a lasting difference in conservation. For example, you can:

- Leave a gift in your will.** No amount is too small, and it all makes a difference.
- Create a trust** that will take care of your spouse and then transfer to DRA.
- Make a gift of real estate** that we either keep for conservation or sell to help conserve other land and establish programs. This can be a home, business, or rural property.

There are many options to choose from, and we are happy to help you find an option that feels right for you. If you are interested in making a planned gift, please contact Steven at DRA. All conversations are confidential.





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## You're invited to step outside and explore...

### Nature trails

Over 35 miles of them, through woods, fields, and marsh, and along the shore. Waiting for you.

Experience the solace of nature. Look for animal tracks in the snow. Go snowshoeing with a friend. Take the kids sledding at DRA's Great Salt Bay Farm. Fly a kite. Have a picnic. Whatever your motivation for getting outside, there's a DRA trail or preserve with your name on it.

Find a trail at [damariscottariver.org/public-access-map](http://damariscottariver.org/public-access-map).

### The community ice rink

Free, open to the public, and right downtown.

We couldn't keep the rink going without the committed **volunteers** who put the rink together in the fall, take it apart again in the spring, and keep the ice shoveled off all winter long – or the **Massasoit Engine Co.** that fills it – or the generosity of **countless businesses and individuals** who donate equipment, services and funds to make it happen.

Learn more online at [bit.ly/dra-ice-rink](http://bit.ly/dra-ice-rink).



## We can do so much more because of you.

See this short video online for a sampling of the many ways your support made a difference this year.

[damariscottariver.org/thank-you-from-dra](http://damariscottariver.org/thank-you-from-dra)

Find out about new projects, community events, and family-friendly programs and hikes.



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