



LANDSCAPE SCALE CONSERVATION IN THE SCHOODIC TO SCHOODIC REGION OF DOWNEAST MAINE

Karena Mahung, Isabella Gambill and James Levitt; October 2015
Updated by Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler; July 2018

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Cover photo: The view from Schoodic Mountain, by Karena Mahung

Table of Contents

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Table of Contents	
Acknowledgements	
About the Authors	
Introduction: Conservation Innovation in Downeast Maine.....	1
A Rich and Varied Mosaic of Land and People.....	6
Landscape.....	6
People and Culture.....	9
The History and Current Trends of Land Protection in the Region	12
The Schoodic District of Acadia National Park	12
Tunk Lake/ Donnell Pond Area.....	15
Connecting Schoodic Point to Schoodic Mountain.....	19
Schoodic Woods.....	20
Birch Harbor Pond.....	22
West Bay Ponds, Taft Pond, Forbes Pond.....	22
Opportunities and Challenges Going Forward.....	25
Epilogue.....	29
References.....	30

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Introduction: Conservation Innovation in Downeast Maine

Innovators in North America have long pioneered landmark conservation efforts, which “have proven to be genuinely significant over time, shaping the use of land and waterscapes, our relationship with biodiversity, and the practice of conservation in North America. Furthermore, such innovations have, in several cases, proved to be so exemplary that they have substantially influenced conservation practice around the globe” (Levitt, 2002).

Each landmark conservation innovation shares all (or most of) five important criteria: “novelty or creativity in conception; political or strategic significance; measurable effectiveness; transferability to separate organizations, jurisdictions, and nations; and, particularly significant in the field of conservation, the ability to endure” (ibid.). These criteria have been used to identify and analyze conservation initiatives deemed to be landmark conservation innovations, not only in North America, but also in other regions of the world.

Several American landmark conservation innovations were shaped, in part, by early experiences in the region around what is now Acadia National Park in the United States. Frederic Church’s paintings of the area in the 1850s drew attention to the bold and scenic coast, attracting families like that of Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard, to build summer homes on the Island in the several decades after the American Civil War. President Eliot’s son, also named Charles, organized extensive natural history explorations of the Island with Harvard undergraduate classmates in the early 1880s. Known as the “Captain” of the self-named Champlain Society of explorers, the younger Eliot wrote in 1883-84: “The scenery of Mount Desert is so beautiful and remarkable that no pains should be spared to save it from injury - to the end that many generations may receive all possible benefit and enjoyment from it” (Eliot, 1883-1884).

The younger Eliot’s vision for the perpetual protection of Acadia’s wondrous land and seascapes was finally realized some two decades after his untimely death in 1897. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson made the place a National Monument, soon to become the first National Park established in the Eastern United States, as well as the first US National Park created from private lands.

The park in the early 21st century has three districts, located on: Mount Desert Island, which is also home to the well-known tourist town of Bar Harbor; Isle au Haut, a relatively small island to the south and west of Mount Desert; and on the Schoodic Peninsula on the mainland, in and near the town of Winter Harbor, to the northeast of Mount Desert Island (see Figure 1).

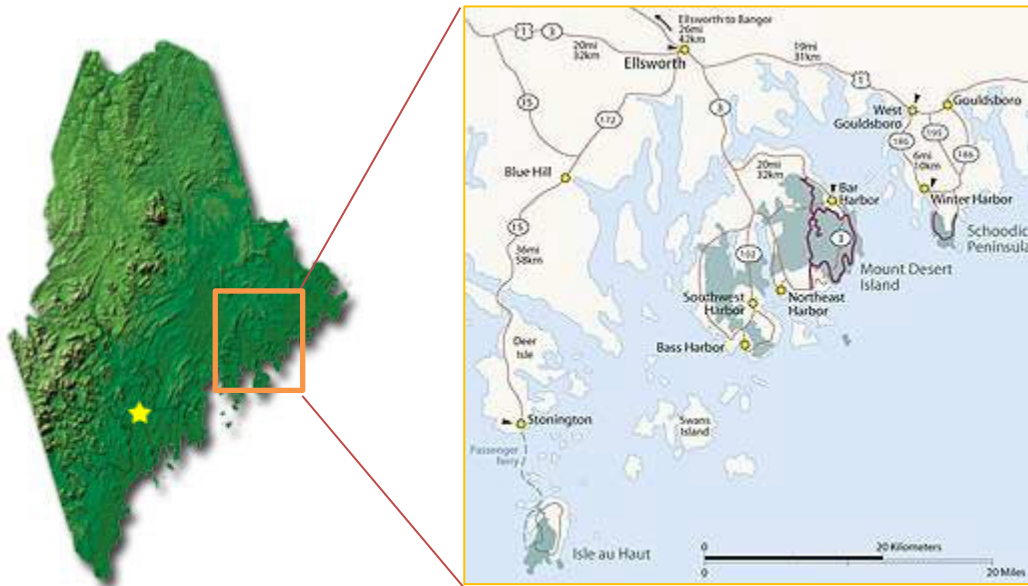


Figure 1: Overview Map of Acadia National Park in Maine, USA (outline map from USGS; Map of Acadia National Park from US National Park Service)

Today, following the novel precedent set at Acadia to establish a National Park from private land, there are hundreds of properties protected by the National Park Service in the eastern United States, the vast majority of which were created from formerly private lands. Acadia alone helps to create hundreds of millions of dollars of income each year for businesses along the Maine Coast (Kelly, 2014), and has inspired the creation of similar public local, state and federal parks around the world. The Park, now nearing its centennial as land protected by the Federal government, appears to have a very long life ahead. Its creation has proved to be novel, measurably effective, strategically significant, transferable and enduring.

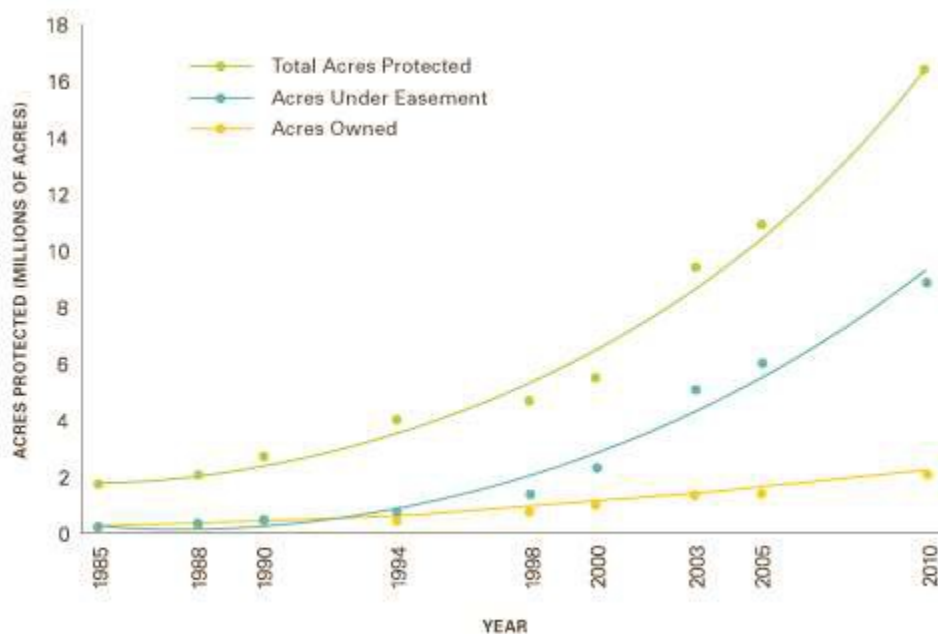
Many of the parcels that came to be included in the Mount Desert Island District of Acadia National Park were first acquired in the early 1900s by one of the nation's first active regional land trusts, the Hancock County Trustees of Public Reservations (HCTPR). Created in 1901, HCTPR's charter and mission were largely based on the model set a decade earlier, in 1891, during the creation of the world's first regional land trust, the Massachusetts-based Trustees of Public Reservations (today known as The Trustees of Reservations, or TTOR).

The creators of the Hancock County Trustees included Harvard President Charles Eliot, who was trying to do honor to the memory of his recently-deceased son, who had died of spinal meningitis in 1897. It had been the younger Eliot, organizer of the Champlain Society in the 1880s, who had also spearheaded the creation of TTOR in Massachusetts. By following through with the conservation ideas articulated by the younger Eliot and amassing much of the land that became the core of Acadia National Park, the HCTPR itself set an important precedent, acquiring as a civic (non-profit) organization land that would eventually become part of a National Park. That idea has been emulated many times in the twentieth century by such prominent organizations as: the Trust for Public Land, created in California in the 1970s, which led drives to protect, as a civic organization, hundreds of thousands

of acres of land that have subsequently has been integrated into National Parks, National Forests and other protected land systems in the United States; and by The Nature Conservancy, which in the first decade of the twenty-first century used a similar model to protect land that has become integrated into a National Park and an adjacent protected expanse of forest land held by the non-profit on the Valdivian Coast of Chile.

One of the elder Charles Eliot's key allies in the fight to protect land on Mount Desert Island was John D. Rockefeller Jr., whose family has today summered on the island and made substantial investments in land protection for more than a century. It was Peggy Rockefeller, wife of David Rockefeller (grandson of John) who helped to fund early legal work that set a key precedent for the use of tax-deductible conservation easements on both Bartlett and Buckle Islands, just west and southwest of Mount Desert Island. Peggy Rockefeller also helped to found the Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) in 1970, an early and prominent promoter of conservation easements to Acadia National Park, and later, easement user in the land trust community. MCHT was one of the earliest organizational members of the national Land Trust Alliance in the United States, which has now grown to more than 1,100 land trust members engaged in private land conservation activity.

Figure 2: Private Land Conservation by State and Local Land Trusts from 1985 to 2010
(Source: 2010 National Land Trust Census Report, Land Trust Alliance)

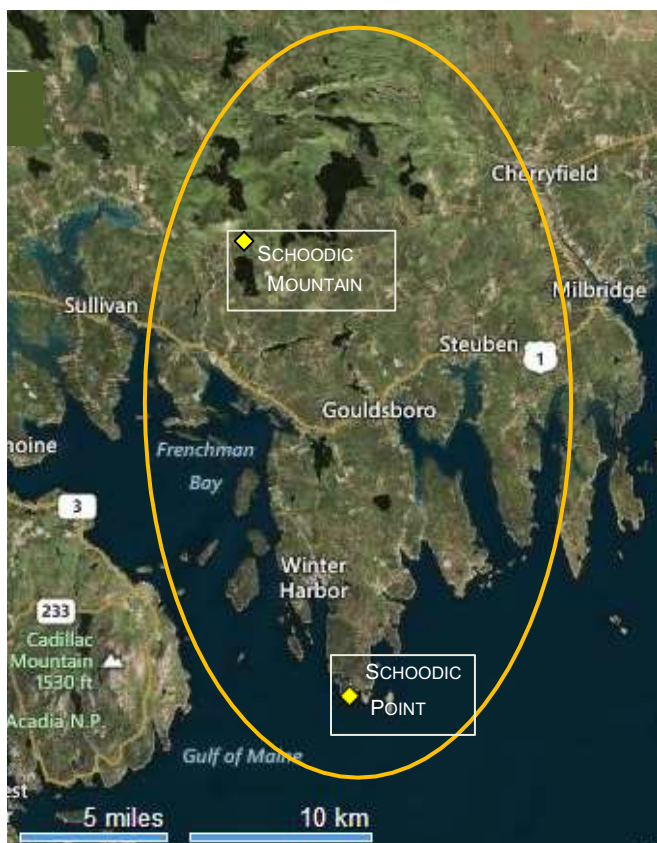


The practice of having non-profit land trusts hold conservation easements in the United States has grown dramatically over the past two decades. That practice is now the leading method for conserving private lands in the US (Korngold, 2011). According to the 2010 National Land Trust Census released by the Land Trust Alliance, the total acreage conserved by state and local land trusts held under conservation easements in 2000 was approximately 2.3 million and by 2010 had grown to 8.8 million (see Figure 2) (Chang, 2011). Like the creation of the first eastern national park, the emergence of land trusts and tax deductible conservation easements along the coast of Downeast Maine has proven to be novel, significant, effective, transferable and a practice that will endure not only in this nation, but also in places as distant as Kenya and Costa Rica.

In the early twenty-first century, yet another innovative conservation practice is emerging on the coast of Maine, in the vicinity of Acadia National Park (and at many other sites around the world), that may also prove to be a landmark in conservation innovation. That is the practice of large landscape conservation - assembling and sustainably managing mosaics of land owned by local, state and federal governments, non-profit conservation organizations, private landowners, and institutions such as schools, universities and hospitals, to form corridors of open space. These “large landscape” assemblages, being created in Maine and in many other places around the world, may play a critical role in human efforts, and the efforts of diverse species of plants and animals, to adapt to climate change.

In this report we consider the case of the “Schoodic to Schoodic” region (see Figure 3), an emerging large landscape of protected properties that reaches from Schoodic Point on the shore of the Atlantic Ocean to lands in the vicinity of Schoodic Mountain to the north, and beyond.

Figure 3: Overview Map of Schoodic to Schoodic Area (made using Bing Maps)



This emerging large landscape of protected properties encompasses: public lands either owned in fee or protected under conservation easement by the Federal government and the State of Maine; lands owned in fee by local

conservation organizations (including the Frenchman Bay Conservancy, or FBC); and private lands protected with conservation easements held by FBC, Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Also engaged in the study of this area are several universities and research institutes (including the Schoodic Institute, the Harvard Forest, the University of Maine at Orono, the University of Southern Maine, and the Acadian Program in Regional Conservation and Stewardship) that are advancing these land conservation efforts through field science, geographic analysis and management studies, as well as conferences and student projects. Given its cross-parcel, cross-sectoral composition, the emergence of a large landscape corridor in the Schoodic-to-Schoodic area may be seen as one of many important examples of innovative conservation in the early twenty-first-century.

The measurable impact of the effort is indicated by the total amount of land protected by civic, private and public landowners and managers in the Schoodic to Schoodic area, presently exceeding 40,000 acres (including the 2,366 acres comprising the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park). Surprisingly, the roughly 40,000 acres protected on the Schoodic to Schoodic area actually exceeds the 30,300-acre size of Acadia National Park district on Mount Desert Island.

The ecological significance of the Schoodic to Schoodic area is considerable, given that fact that it is one of the only open space corridors that could be permanently protected on the eastern seaboard of the United States, from Maine to Florida. If protected along its length, the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor could offer scientists and citizens a rare chance to study and appreciate a nearly uninterrupted transect, from salt water to inland forest, over a relatively long-term time horizon.

Will the example set in the Schoodic to Schoodic area prove to be transferable and enduring? It is still early days - indeed, while many of the necessary elements are in place, no continuous corridor of protected lands has yet been established from Schoodic Point to Schoodic Mountain. Still, students who have recently come to the Schoodic Institute to learn about the conservation achievements made to date in the Schoodic to Schoodic area leave impressed and ready to work on similar initiatives in their home regions. It will take many decades before we will be able to know if their efforts to catalyze large landscape initiatives on their home turf - from Australia to Zimbabwe - will bear fruit.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the more than century-long history of land protection in the Schoodic to Schoodic area, and the prospect for advancing land protection in the region and beyond. Note please, that this is not the first paper to examine the history and prospects for the Schoodic to Schoodic idea. Misha Mytar, working closely with Ben Emory and others, did an excellent review nearly a decade ago (Mytar 2007). This review does, however, add some detail, additional perspective, and brings the recent record of land protection up to date.

A Rich and Varied Mosaic of Land and People

Landscape

This report focuses on an area that is a microcosm of Maine in its breathtaking natural form and historic human settlement. The area is replete with bold rocky coasts, expansive forests, homes far out in the woods and small town and village centers. Bounded by rocky coasts overlooking the Atlantic and estuarine bays, the landscape quickly transitions from island vistas of the open ocean to relatively uninterrupted horizons of forest and woodland. Dotting the landscape are picturesque lakes, ponds, wetlands and marshes that create even greater layers of scenic and biological diversity, as well as prominent church spires and clusters of homes and businesses - the signs of longstanding human presence in the area. The area of focus is primarily in eastern portions of Hancock County, extending into western portions of Washington County, Maine.

Figure 4: Schoodic Point (Source: Larry Morris, Quebec-Labrador Foundation)

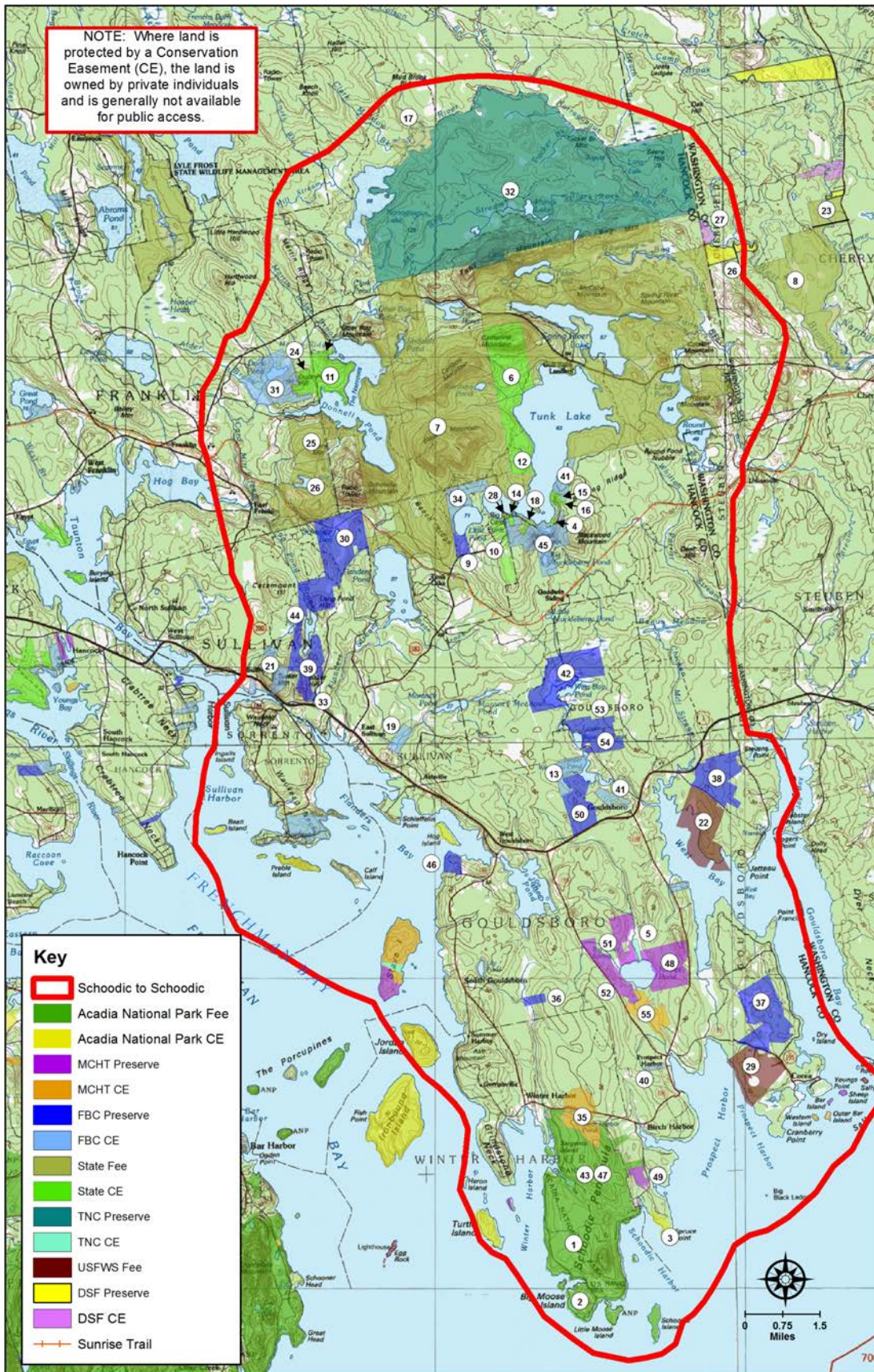


Within the Schoodic to Schoodic area of interest there is a nearly continuous corridor of undeveloped landscape. The corridor spans the length of Schoodic Peninsula and continues onward into the inland forest. The southern anchor of the area of focus is the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park. This area is a mostly undeveloped green band of forest of over 2,000 acres, ringed by bold granite shores and breathtaking views of Atlantic waves that hit the Point head-on. The northern anchor is the mostly state-owned Tunk Lake/ Donnell Pond region,

dominated by wild ponds, mountains and forests of oak and spruce. These undeveloped lands are adjacent to or nearby the towns of Winter Harbor, Gouldsboro, Sullivan, Franklin, Steuben and Cherryfield, which each have well-articulated town governments that help to regulate land use; nearby are unincorporated townships whose land use is primarily regulated by the State of Maine. While there are town government structures that carry out permitting functions, there is little comprehensive planning in the area. Long-term land conservation strategies in the area will require innovative conservation finance in combination with regulatory oversight to achieve landscape scale conservation aspirations.

Over the past century, a considerable number of parcels in the focus area have been given permanent, protected legal status by landowners and land managers in the public, private and non-profit sectors. An overview of those protected areas follows below, as does a summary chart listing key characteristics of each parcel. Following sections of this report will detail how many of these parcels came to be protected.

Figure 5: Map and Chart of the Protected Areas in the Schoodic to Schoodic Region 2018 (Source: Bob DeForrest, MCHT)



	NAME OF PROTECTED AREA	Type	Year	Acres	Owner	Protected by
1	Acadia National Park - Schoodic District	Fee	1929	2,366	USNPS	US NPS
2	SERC and the Schoodic Institute	Fee	1929	--	USNPS	US NPS
3	Spruce Point	CE	1975	78	Private Owner	US NPS
4	Wickup I (Tracey Easement)	CE	1975	6	Private Owner	State of Maine
5	Forbes Pond	CE	1981	25	Town of Gouldsboro	TNC
6	Catherine Mtn - Tunk Lake	CE	1983	1,215	Private Owner	MDIFW
7	Donnell Pond Unit (Public Res'd Land)	Fee	1986	15,384	State of Maine	MDACF
8	Narraguagus Wildlife Management Area	Fee	1987	1,651	State of Maine	MDFIW
9	Little Tunk Pond Preserve	Fee +CE CE)	1988	55	Gifted to FBC from MCHT	FBC
10	Bunker's Landing	CE	1988	14	Private Owner	MDIFW
11	Donnell Pond CE	CE	1988	343	Private Owner	MDACF
12	Tunk Lake - Bluff Ledges	CE	1988	126	Private Owner	MDIFW
13	Lower West Bay Pond	CE	1990	136	Private Owner	FBC
14	Wickup II	CE	1991	14	Private Owner	MDIFW
15	Wickup Property III (Southwestern Shore Lot)	CE	1992	15	Private Owner	MDIFW
16	Wickup Property IV (Colgrove Lot)	CE	1993	19	Private Owner	MDIFW
17	Spring River Wildlife Management Area	Fee	1993	400	State of Maine	MDIFW
18	Petit Manan NWR Gouldsboro Bay Div.	Fee	'94-98	623	USFWS	US FWS
19	Wickup V	CE	1996	14	Private Owner	MDIFW
20	Wexler Woods (Morancy Stream)	CE	1996	90	Private Owner	FBC
21	Tucker Mountain	CE	1998	121	Private Owner	FBC
22	Duck Pond Hill	CE	1998	126	Private Owner	MDACF
23	Little Falls	Fee	2000	221	State of Maine	MDIFW
24	Fiery Mountain	CE	2001		Private Owner	MDIFW
25	Little Pond	FEE	2001		Private Owner	MDIFW
26	Sprague's Falls	Fee	2002	117	DRLT	DRLT
27	Sprague's Falls 3	CE	2003	54	Private Owner	DRLT
28	Gannett Property	Fee	2004	5	State of Maine	MDACF
29	Corea Heath	Fee	2005	431	USFWS	
30	Schoodic Bog	Fee	2005	500	FBC	USFWS (NAWCA) & LMF P.A.
31	Duck Pond	CE	2005	567	Private Owner	FBC
32	Spring River	Fee	2005	11,682	The Nature Conservancy	The Nature Conservancy
33	Baker Hill Preserve	CE	2006	58	Private Owner	FBC
34	Two Rock Beach, Levitt Cove	CE	2007	175	Private Owner	FBC, MCHT
35	Birch Harbor Pond	CE	2008	366	Winter Harbor Water District	MCHT
36	Mitchell Preserve	Fee	2008	15	FBC	
37	Northern Corea Heath	Fee	2008	600	FBC	USFWS (NAWCA)

	NAME OF PROTECTED AREA	Type	Year	Acres	Owner	Protected by
38	Long Ledges	Fee	2009	253	FBC	LMF Project Agreement
39	Wood Preserve	Fee	2009	420	FBC	FBC
40	Peninsula School	CE	2010	3	Regional School Unit 24	FBC
41	Peninsula School Mitigation Lot	CE	2010	16	Town of Gouldsboro	FBC
42	Upper West Bay Pond	Fee	2011	576	FBC	MDEP Mitigation Lands
43	Schoodic Woods (South)	CE	2013	1,419	Schoodic Woods LLC	US NPS
44	Dunbar Land (Long Ledges North)	Fee	2013	65	FBC	LMF Project Agreement
45	Bryan Easement (Big Muckleberry Pond)	CE	2014	573	Private Owner	FBC
46	Taft Point	Fee	2014	68	FBC	USFWS (NAWCA Grant)
47	Schoodic Woods (South) FEE	Fee	2015	1,498	USDOJ	US NPS
48	Forbes Pond East	Fee	2016	430	MCHT	USFWS (NAWCA Grant)
49	Schoodic Woods East	Fee	2016	69	MCHT	USFWS (NAWCA Grant)
50	Lower West Bay Pond Connector	Fee	2016	300	FBC	USFWS (NAWCA Grant)
51	Forbes Pond North	Fee	2017	337	MCHT	USFWS (NAWCA Grant)
52	Forbes Pond West	Fee	2018	149	MCHT	USFWS (NAWCA Grant)
53	West Bay Pond (Golden)	Fee	2018	144	FBC	USFWS (NAWCA Grant)
54	Lower West Bay Pond (Cunningham)	Fee	2018	204	FBC	USFWS (NAWCA Grant)
55	Forbes Pond South	CE	2018	233	Fisher	MCHT

LEGEND

(*)	Some discrepancy in reported number
CE	Conservation Easement
DRLT	Downeast River Land Trust
FBC	Frenchman Bay Conservancy
HCTR	Hancock County Trustees of Reservations
LMF	Lands for Maine's Future
MCHT	Maine Coast Heritage Trust
MDACF	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
MDIFW	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
SERC	Schoodic Education and Research Center (now Schoodic Institute)
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USDOI	United States Department of the Interior
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USFS	United States Forest Service
USNPS	United States National Park Service

People and Culture

Both the landscape and seascape of the region have drawn a variety of human settlers, both long-term and short-term, as convenience allowed. Though they came from a variety of different cultures, they have all been attracted to the area for seasonal access to natural resources and amenities, or the claiming of territory for conquest. Throughout its inhabited history, the region's residents, from Native Americans to immigrants from abroad, have shaped the landscape, land use patterns, and land protection initiatives that emerged.

The earliest settlers of this region were Native Americans who seasonally accessed the lands for the gathering of shellfish and other marine resources, as evidenced by 'middens', or archaeological refuse heaps. The Schoodic to Schoodic area is part of a region that was the homeland of the Wabanaki Indians (also known as People of the Dawnland). As it is used today, the term Wabanaki collectively refers to four tribes: the Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot. These peoples' homelands historically ranged from Newfoundland, Canada, to the Merrimac River Valley in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The Wabanaki accessed land and water resources for food. They engaged in hunting, fishing, picking sweet grass, gathering berries, harvesting clams and other shellfish, and trading with other native people. In the nineteenth century, they would come to the towns established by European settlers to sell their homemade ash and birch bark baskets (Abbe Museum). The appeal of abundant food and natural resources to sustain them, along with the availability of remarkably beautiful places to live, was a key driver of attraction of this region to the Native Americans. The same elements attracted many

groups of settlers that came afterwards.

The first of the European settlers, the French, came to Acadia as part of a 1604 expedition, some sixteen years before the Pilgrims landed at Plimouth (now spelled Plymouth). Accordingly, the area came to be known as New France. Following the subsequent arrival of the English, the territory was hotly disputed (Hornsby, 2004). For nearly a hundred years, until the 1770s, the hostility between the French and English effectively discouraged any new settlement by people of European descent. By the end of this period, the dominant presence in the region became the English, and so the territory came to be part of New England (a name given by John Smith in the early 1600s to what is now a six-state region of the United States). During the period from 1770 to 1850, settlement of the area began taking place with relatively little conflict between the English and French settlers. Families from the new United States migrated north and east to settle along the coast (Judd, 1995).

The first recorded non-Native American settler in the Schoodic Peninsula was a black man by the name of Thomas Frazer. He is believed to have settled in the area in the late 1700s. By 1790, Frazer established a salt works near the mouth of Frazer Creek, an area that eventually developed into a small fishing community inhabited by fifty people. Communities grew with a local economy based on fishing, logging and agriculture. Alternative agricultural crops such as cranberries and orchard fruits, along with meat and dairy products, were later established.

The 1880s, a time defined by wealth on an unprecedented scale for a select handful of families, saw the rapid development of summer residences in the region. With Maine becoming more accessible because of the establishment of the railway and steamship systems, the region opened up to city folk from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and other east coast cities seeking to escape summer heat and unsanitary conditions. Extremely affluent families including the Rockefellers, Morgans, Fords and Vanderbilts, chose to spend their summers in this region, particularly on Mount Desert Island. Additional “cottages” were built by well-heeled summer residents on the Island, as well as in Frenchman Bay in the towns of Winter Harbor, Sorrento and Hancock. Particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the wealthy and their luxurious lifestyle significantly influenced the culture and development of the area. From this social stratum came key individuals, including members of the Eliot, Dorr and Rockefeller families, who had a profound influence on the conservation movement and the preservation of the landscape.

As reported in *The State of Downeast Maine* (Hassan, et al., 2011), the economic foundation of Hancock and Washington counties is today built on the forestry, fishing and tourism industries. Washington County has some of the lowest level of per-capita income and the highest unemployment rates in the state of Maine. The forestry and fishing industries are in decline for several reasons, including a variety of natural and man-made pressures on natural resources, as well as the closing of several large plants processing fish as well as pulp and paper processing plants. Consequently, the trend that has been observed since the 1980s has been one of declining employment in natural resource-based industries, with growth in employment in the tourism and service sectors. Finally, the closure of the naval base on Schoodic Point in 2002 dealt a severe economic blow to the local community, in contributing to lower school populations and vacant housing in the area.

The History and Current Trends of Conservation in the Region

Conservation history in Downeast Maine spans many lifetimes, and involves a great many well-known and less prominent individuals. In this report, we focus on the portion of that history that is directly relevant to ongoing efforts to protect the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor. The stories of several key land protection efforts which anchor this emerging corridor are considered below, including: the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park; the Tunk Lake/Donnell Pond Unit protected by the State of Maine in collaboration with private landowners and several civic land conservation organizations; the Schoodic Woods project just north of the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park, a work-in-progress at the time of this writing; and the ongoing assemblage of smaller parcels in the area by state and local land trusts, including the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Frenchman Bay Conservancy.

The Corridor’s Southern Anchor: Schoodic District of Acadia National Park

Viewed as an area of sparse and unpromising resources, explorers and settlers were slow to reach Schoodic, thus granting it an unusually long reprieve from development (Workman, 2014). In the early 1890s, John G. Moore, a Wall Street financier and native of the town of Steuben, assembled the ownership of a majority of the land now known as the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park. He purchased this land in response to the demand for summer cottages by the increasing numbers of wealthy summer residents. In preparation for development of the area, he built a scenic road. However, John Moore died in 1899 at the age of 51, before he could start development on the property. Moore’s ownership and the circumstances that led to the property not being developed ultimately allowed the land to retain its natural state for an extended period of time.

Following Moore’s passing, there was a major turning point in the region’s conservation history. In the early 1900s, industrialization was on the rise. Railways were the major form of transportation across the continental US. Ships were busier than ever transporting goods and passengers from port to port. Steel companies became integrated engines of economic growth.

North America, post-slavery and pre-World War I, had entered a new era of stability. Advances in medicine enabled people to live longer, causing a rapid growth in population. In the context of this burgeoning prosperity, Charles W. Eliot, Harvard’s longest serving president, was moved during this period of unprecedented prosperity to honor his deceased son’s ambitions

Summary Points:
Schoodic District of Acadia National Park

Established	1929
Coverage (acres)	2,366
Management	National Park Service
Finance Tools	Donated to Hancock Reservations by heirs of John G. Moore; later donated to the U.S. National Park Service

to protect land in a relatively natural state. Prior to his death, the younger Eliot had argued in print that: *“It is time decisive action was taken, and if the state of Maine should by suitable legislation encourage the formation of associations for the purpose of preserving chosen parts of her coast scenery, she would not only do herself honor, but would secure for the future an important element in her material prosperity”* (Charles W. Eliot, 1902).

To advance these conservation objectives, the elder Eliot was one of several leaders in the effort to establish the Hancock County Trustees of Public Reservations (HCTPR), modeled on the Massachusetts group that had been established a decade earlier. The Hancock County group, officially established on September 12, 1901, was formed for the purpose of *‘acquiring, owning and holding lands and other property in Hancock County for free public use.’* Although this group’s formation was not an entirely novel idea, it was immensely effective. HCTPR set a highly important precedent in Maine, showing how a civic organization can be used to maintain the natural integrity of several thousand acres of land.

Another key individual in this particular group, and in the national conservation movement, was George Dorr. Dorr spent the greater part of forty-three years and the bulk of his family fortune to protect the Acadian landscape. His enthusiasm for Acadia was kindled with his first visit to Mount Desert Island on a family vacation in 1868. He subsequently decided to make the island his primary home. It was Dorr who did the groundwork to establish the special legal status for the Hancock County Trustees, securing from the Maine legislature on January 1, 1903 a charter and tax-exempt status for the new group with the following statement of purpose: *“...to acquire, by devise, gift or purchase, and to own, arrange, hold, maintain or improve for public use lands in Hancock County, Maine, which by reason of scenic beauty, historical interest, sanitary advantage, or other like reasons may become available for such purpose”* (Dorr, 1914).

The idea of the establishment of a National Park in the Acadian region stemmed from a challenge that sought to slow or reverse the early work of the group to conserve parcels of Mount Desert Island. A group of Maine legislators, by the early 1910s, began working to revoke the group’s tax-exempt status in the State of Maine. Although Dorr used his contacts and skill as a lobbyist to head off the revocation, he knew that higher and more permanent forms of protection would be required. *“It is here the story of our National Park begins, borne of the attack upon our Public Reservations chapter,”* he noted (Dorr, 1914).

Following tireless advocacy at the Federal level by Dorr, President Woodrow Wilson in 1916 signed a proclamation declaring the establishment of Sieur de Monts National Monument on Mount Desert Island. Dorr and the Trustees knew this would only temporarily stall the threat of development, and continued their efforts to have the area be declared a National Park. It was not until 1919 that a bill in Congress was passed to establish the first National Park east of the Mississippi River, re-designating the Sieur de Monts National Monument as the Lafayette National Park. With his ultimate goal accomplished, Dorr wrote with satisfaction, *“The task I had set myself to do six years before was done.”* His infectious vision and passion, coupled with the act of donating his own land for preservation, inspired several others to donate areas of land of their own, ensuring that they would be set aside and protected for generations to come. *“Saved to future generations as it has been to us, in the wild primeval beauty of the nature it exhibits, of*

ancient rocks and still more ancient sea, with infinite detail of life and landscape interest between,” reasoned Dorr, *“the spirit and mind of man will surely find in it in the years and centuries to come an inspiration and a means of growth as essential to them ever and anon as are fresh air and sunshine to the body.”* (Dorr, cited in National Park Service, profile, undated).

Dorr’s philosophy, along with the work of the Hancock County Trustees on Mount Desert Island, extended its reach to Schoodic Peninsula in 1927. Across Frenchman’s Bay, the land owned by John G. Moore since the 1890’s came into the hands of the Trustees through a donation by Moore’s heirs to the Hancock County Trustees of Public Reservations. This donation was made in 1927 under the stipulation that the land be used as a public park including the “promotion of biological and scientific research.” Two years later, approximately 2,050 acres of this land on Schoodic Peninsula were donated by the Trustees to the National Park Service to expand the newly renamed Acadia National Park. George Dorr was appointed its first superintendent (National Park Service, undated).

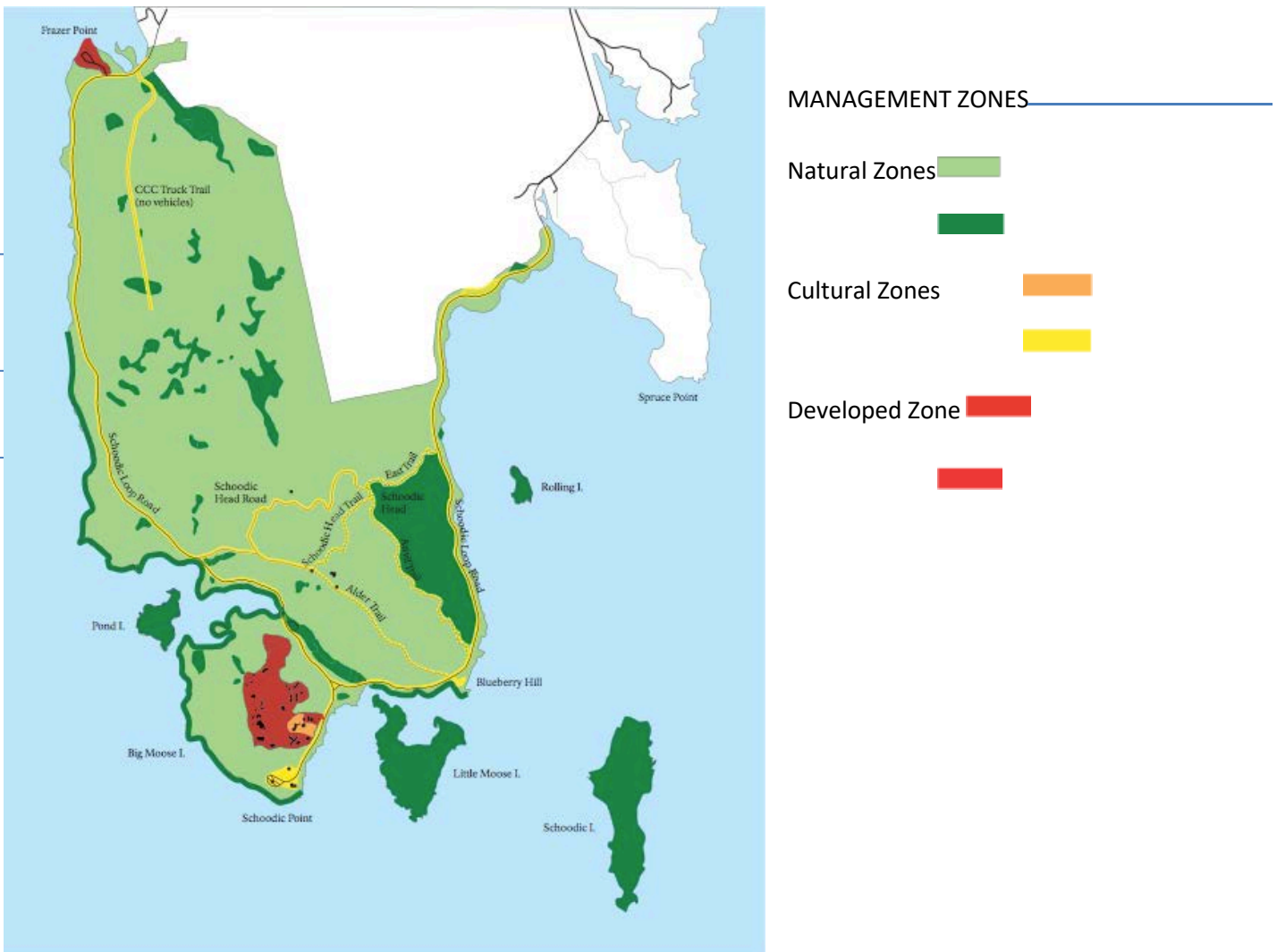
In the 1930’s, donations again significantly influenced the initial development and use of the parklands on Schoodic Peninsula. This initial development began largely at the behest of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. who had undertaken the building of the Park Loop Road on Mount Desert Island. In order for the road to be completed according to plan it was necessary to relocate a U.S. Navy Base on Mount Desert Island’s Otter Point. Rockefeller offered to build the Navy a radio transmission station headquarters building on Schoodic Point if the station could be moved there. An agreement was reached, the beautiful Tudor-style headquarters building was built near Schoodic Point, and the radio communications station operated on Schoodic Point, within the boundary of the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park in 1935. Near the close of the twentieth century, with the advent of satellite-based transmissions, the Navy decided it no longer needed to maintain a radio communications site at Schoodic. It closed the operation and turned the property back over to the National Park Service (NPS) on July 1, 2002.

After an extensive planning and public consultation process, the Park Service announced its intention to develop the former radio communications site into the Schoodic Education and Research Center (SERC) as part of a nationwide initiative, the NPS Natural Resource Challenge. SERC and its non-profit partner organization, the SERC Institute (created in 2004, and recently renamed the Schoodic Institute) would serve as a model center promoting research that: contributes to science-based decision-making within the park; helps build our national understanding of ongoing changes in the broader environment; and provides professional development for primary and secondary school teachers.

The initial activities that resulted in the formation of Acadia National Park and the protection of lands on both Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula set an important precedent and standard for the conservation movement. They were instrumental in contributing to the development of a culture of conservation in this region. Evident from these early conservation efforts was: a determination to protect in perpetuity the wild, rustic and natural integrity of both the coastline and interior; grit and perseverance to carry on in the face of strident opposition; and a determination, coming from both Mainers and summer visitors, to stick to long term conservation objectives over the course of decades. The influence of highly educated and influential individuals such as Charles Eliot, George Dorr and John D. Rockefeller Jr., among others, was a distinctive feature of these initial conservation efforts. Eliot provided a relatively novel organizational structure to facilitate land protection. Dorr was an exemplary advocate who secured

legislative critical support from local, state and federal decision-makers, as well as key private citizens. And Rockefeller brought personal passion and ample resources to the task of building a rustic infrastructure that has charmed millions of visitors over the course of more than a century. It is now the responsibility of new generations to carry on and expand upon their work.

Figure 6: Map of Schoodic Unit of Acadia National Park
 (Source: Schoodic General Management Plan Amendment, 2006)



The Corridor’s Northern Anchor: Tunk Lake/Donnell Pond Protected Lands

Anchoring the Schoodic-to-Schoodic area to the north is the Tunk Lake/ Donnell Pond area, an expansive territory characterized by mountains, forests and lakes preserved for their scenic, ecological and recreational value (see picture on the front cover of this report). Situated primarily in eastern Hancock County, with adjacent protected parcels extending into western Washington County, the region boasts: more than 26,600 acres that are owned in fee by the state of Maine, TNC and FBC; and an additional 2,400 acres of preserved landscape under conservation easements which prohibit any future development. Note that these surface areas exclude the expanses covered by

areas of, Donnell Pond, Tunk Lake, Little Tunk Pond and Spring River Lake that cover nearly 4,000 acres under state management. This area provides a fascinating look into what can be accomplished through public-private partnerships, innovative conservation financing and unwavering determination by local families to preserve the integrity of a pristine region of Maine.

One of the historical starting points for the conservation efforts that arose here centers around the Wickyup Club on Tunk Lake. In 1927, Benjamin (“Ben”) Bryan and a group of twenty-seven other men, most of whom worked on Wall Street in New York, formed a sportsman’s club and bought 25,000 acres surrounding the lake. These men and their families planned to spend their summers at this location. This elite club was formed with the intention of providing its members pristine surroundings and exceptional recreational options. Documents show that the plans for this club were extensive and left very little to be desired.

Of all the members, the only person to complete a modest camp (that is, a rough cabin in the woods) was Ben Bryan. Before any of the other grand plans could come to fruition, the owners of the Wickyup Club were halted by the stock market crash of 1929. The sportsman’s club that included Ben Bryan and his associates went bankrupt and the state took most of the land for taxes. This financial calamity, although crippling to these families and many others, saved this area from the plans to transform the woods into an exclusive enclave of 500 to 1,000 palatial lakeshore cottages.

In 1937, a portion of the area later came under the ownership of Antarctic explorer Admiral Richard Byrd. He bought approximately 1,500 acres at the “heel” of Tunk Lake (that is, if you imagine Tunk Lake to be in the shape of a boot). Admiral Byrd spent his last twenty summers on the shores of Tunk Lake, writing several very well-read books and enjoying his collection of antique cars. When Byrd died in 1957, a dispute among heirs of the estate erupted and ensued for several years. The protection offered by Byrd’s ownership of the property had been broken. The parcel went up for sale, and was sought out by developers interested in building summer homes.

Throughout the period, a number of Ben Bryan’s grandchildren, including James (“Jim”), Robert (“Bob”) and William (“Bill”), along with their sisters Hazel Bryan Tracey, Ruth Bryan Colgrove, and Joy Bryan Bacon, had managed to hold on to relatively small parcels of property at Tunk Lake. Active conservation efforts in the area were initiated in 1975 by Hazel Bryan Tracy, who granted a conservation easement on her six-acre shorefront lot to the State of Maine (parcel #4 on Figure 5), with the help of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. This was the first use at Tunk Lake of a new tool in the conservation toolbox - the conservation easement. Since Hazel’s easement, several thousand acres around Tunk Lake and Donnell Pond have been similarly protected.

In 1983, a larger parcel became available that was quite attractive to developers interested in building summer homes. Jim and Bob Bryan were given a three-day window to make a decision on whether or not they wanted to purchase an 850-acre parcel on the northern end of Tunk Lake. The parcel was being offered at a price of \$300,000. Bob and Jim Bryan were able to combine personal savings, loans from the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, timber rights sales, and assistance from family members to meet the deadline and buy the parcel. They then granted a conservation easement to the state to prevent development of the property. Critical to the completion of the deal was: the family’s willingness to invest; MCHT’s role as an interim financier and negotiator; and the ability of Maine’s

Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to accept an easement. This was one of the first solid examples of creative conservation financing leveraged to ensure that the protection of a lakefront parcel in the area. The 850 acres parcel was a key piece of the puzzle that ultimately included 1,215 acres (parcel #6), featuring 8,000 feet of Tunk Lake shorefront, the natural sand beaches of Big and Little Sand Coves, the summit of Catherine Mountain and the outlet stream of Rainbow Pond.

The next project Jim and Bob Bryan turned their attention to was the Wickyup property that had been owned by the family of explorer Admiral Byrd. After a long and complicated period involving an owner who was eventually convicted for arson, the former Byrd property on Tunk Lake was purchased for \$450,000 in 1986. The deal was again completed with the assistance of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, which provided a mortgage loan from their Land Conservation Fund. Subsequently, between 1991 and 1996, landowners on Tunk Lake granted a series of more than 60 acres of easements to the state (parcels #14, 15, 16 and 19) associated with the former Wickyup property.

Just a year later Donnell Pond faced even more intense development threats as Patten Corp acquired rights to Donnell Pond shoreline from Prentiss and Carlisle, a Bangor based timberland management firm. Patten acquired the property with the intention of pursuing intensive development on the site. These circumstances caused a storm of protest from residents who valued the 2,010 acre lake's unspoiled beauty and sandy beaches. After several promising starts, negotiations between the State, Patten and Prentiss and Carlisle regarding ways to protect the property from development came to an impasse. Patten persisted in its efforts to make a profit by reselling the land. The State, which had already attempted to buy the property from Prentiss and Carlisle, was unable to meet Patten's asking price. Eventually, the Maine Bureau of Public Lands asked The Nature Conservancy to act as an intermediary. With the involvement of The Nature Conservancy, it became apparent that Donnell Pond was only one piece of a much larger puzzle involving Patten, Prentiss & Carlisle, Diamond Occidental Corporation, the Bryan Family and other private landowners in the area. The Donnell Pond parcel became the keystone in the puzzle, alongside additional wild and scenic blocks that encompassed Black and Caribou mountains and additional sections of the Tunk Lake shoreline.

Through tremendous amounts of energy and time, and a team including representatives of The Nature Conservancy, Maine Bureau of Public Lands Director Ed Meadows and his assistant Tom Doak, Maine Department of Conservation Commissioner Robert LaBonta and Maine Governor John McKernan, a deal covering some 14,000 acres of open space (parcel #7) was struck in 1988. Substantial financing for the deal came from the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) Program, and the Donnell Pond parcel's protection remains as one of LMF's landmark projects thus far. The deal, remarkably, worked to the benefit of all stakeholders involved, demonstrating the innovative use of several conservation finance tools, including: conservation easements, bargain deals, fee acquisitions, land trades and funds provided by private conservation buyers (private buyers interested in protecting, say, more than 90% or 95% of the acreage they acquired, leaving available, say, only 5% or 10% of the parcel open for vacation home construction).

The precedent set by this group of stakeholders helped to catalyze further growth of the mosaic of conserved lands near Tunk Lake and Donnell Pond in the years to come, including the 343 acre Donnell Pond Conservation Easement acquired by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry in 1998 (parcel #11), and the 126 acre Bluff Ledges Conservation Easement acquired by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in the same year (parcel #12).

In total, conservation activity surrounding Donnell Pond encompasses 15,384 acres located in the towns of Franklin and Sullivan, Maine. Stemming from the original staggering five-way land trade and purchase transaction, the State of Maine has accrued an impressive amount of land in the area in fee by appealing to a variety of stakeholders. In 1994, the Bureau acquired 6,915 additional acres from the Pierce family, followed by separate transactions in 1998 and 2001 with the Noyes family and the Fiery Mountain Trust, a 274-acre transaction with International Paper in 2003 known as the “Tilden Block”, as well as a 4.5 acre parcel acquired from the Guy P. Gannet Trust. Alongside fee lands, there are two Bureau of Parks and Lands-held conservation easements that contribute to the Donnell Pond larger unit totaling 468 acres, which include approximately 3.4 miles of frontage on Donnell Pond (Maine Department of Conservation, 2007).

In 2014, the Bryan family extended its remarkable record of conservation in the area with the granting of a 573 acre easement granted to the Frenchman Bay Conservancy in 2014, completed nearly four decades after Hazel Bryan Tracey granted the family’s first conservation easement to MCHT in 1974. The 2014 easement (parcel #45) provides 3,935 feet of frontage on Big Tunk Lake, and provides a key piece towards the completion of the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor. It provides watershed protection and wildlife habitat, as well as limited public access. Tom Sidar, Executive Director of the Frenchman Bay Conservancy, reports that the latest Bryan easement may have some of the highest conservation value level of any parcel ever protected by his organization (Sidar, 2014).

In addition to the conservation project in which the Bryans were directly involved, nearly 13,000 acres of land have been conserved on or adjacent to the Tunk Lake/Donnell Pond region beginning in the late 1980s. These include the following:

- The Frenchman Bay Conservancy was gifted its first “reserve” property (property which it holds in fee) on Little Tunk Pond in December of 1988. The 55 acres (parcel #9) of woodland and sand beach was given to FBC by the MCHT, in yet another deal initiated by Jim and Bob Bryan, financed in part by a conservation donor with longstanding ties to the region, Bayard Ewing. To this day, FBC’s reserve is a favorite haunt of swimmers who like to make the long-distance journey across the breadth of Little Tunk Pond.
- In 1988, a private landowner granted a 14 acre conservation easement to the MDIFW on an area known as Bunker’s Landing to the southwest of Tunk Lake (parcel #10).
- In 1993 the MDIFW acquired a 400 acre Spring River Wildlife Management area (parcel #17). In addition to providing habitat for fresh water fish and birds that thrive in freshwater wetlands, the parcel offers public access to the area along Route 182 (also known as the Blackwoods Scenic Byway). Funding for the access point, including a small parking lot, was provided by the Maine Department of Conservation in the mid-1990s (Hancock County Planning Commission and Washington County Council of Governments, 2005).
- In 2005, The Nature Conservancy made a major addition to the conservation corridor with the fee acquisition of the Spring River Lake parcel (#32), covering 11,682 acres parcel of wetlands, lake frontage and forestland, representing more than a quarter of the currently conserved land in the Schoodic to Schoodic area. Upon initial

acquisition, TNC found that many streams in the Spring River Lake parcel were too warm and acidic to support trout, as a result of a legacy of log-driving dams that had impounded streams, and poorly designed stream culverts creating significant barriers to fish passage. More recently, TNC has heralded Spring River Lake as an example of successful river restoration, working with contractors to replace undersized culverts at four locations in the parcel with new bridges or large, open-bottom arches that span the entire width of the river, allowing fish and other species to pass through a less obstructed environment. The improved connectivity witnessed at Spring River Lake has benefitted local wildlife and people alike (The Nature Conservancy, 2006).

- In 2005 FBC acquired the 500 acre Schoodic Bog property at the base of the southern slope of Schoodic Mountain (parcel #30). This includes a 150-acre bog and surrounding upland. Originally preserved with a grant from Land for Maine's Future and additional matching funds, the Schoodic Bog's trails connect with the trail system on the State of Maine's Donnell Pond Unit, contributing to the larger matrix of accessible conserved land in the area.
- Over a two year period, James and Jane Levitt donated to FBC two separate easements associated with Little Tunk Pond and Tunk Lake (parcel #34). The Levitts had acquired the land, as conservation buyers, from Jim and Bob Bryan and their spouses. The first of the Levitt easements was at Two Rock Beach, and was completed at the end of 2006. That was followed by the Levitt Cove easement completed in the second half of 2007. Together, the two Levitt easements protect nearly 175 acres of forested uplands, some 4,500 feet of Little Tunk Pond shorefront, and over 5,000 feet of Tunk Lake's shorefront. The easements are adjacent to the Little Tunk reserve that came into FBC's portfolio in 1988. Together, the three parcels conserved in 1988, 2006 and 2007 protect in perpetuity the western two-thirds of Little Tunk Pond shore land (Brown, 2007).

While a considerable amount of land protection activity has occurred in the Tunk Lake/Donnell Pond area in the past several decades, additional conservation opportunities remain. Of particular interest are opportunities that might leverage funds available from federal and state land conservation programs that could be used to protect the extensive wetlands that run like arteries through the region.

Connecting Schoodic Point to Schoodic Mountain in the Early 21st Century

Between the Tunk/Donnell Pond region to the north (where Schoodic Mountain is located) and the Schoodic district of Acadia National Park (the site of Schoodic Point), there are several key parcels of land that have been protected since the turn of the twenty-first century. These "stepping stones" in effect are the first links in a chain of properties that can physically connect protected lands from Schoodic Point to Schoodic Mountain and beyond. Several of the transactions consummated to protect these properties were inventive, using relatively novel financing and organizational methods. They are described here.

Schoodic Woods

Schoodic Woods consists of 3,200 undeveloped acres on the Schoodic Peninsula in Maine. The property features one mile of coastal shore frontage, including a fifteen-acre island - Sargent's Island. It also has two miles of shared boundary with Acadia National Park, both north and east of the Park.

Several reasons contributed to the importance of getting this particular parcel under protection. The primary reason had to do with the fact that it was a large parcel bordering Acadia National Park; any development of that parcel, which was already perceived by visitors to be a part of the park, would directly impact the amenity value of the park itself. Secondly, the Schoodic Woods parcel shares the same ecological values as the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park, including an undeveloped shorefront and an abundance of wetlands and other prime habitat for endemic flora and fauna. The placement of a large development in the area could degrade the ecosystem value of the park. Thirdly, in acting as a filtration system for groundwater, the Schoodic Woods property influences the watershed that provides the town of Winter Harbor its backup water supply. Schoodic Woods abuts a 366-acre parcel owned by the Winter Harbor Water District (parcel #35) and protected with a conservation easement held by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Development in the vicinity of the Water District land could threaten the integrity of the town's water supply. Acadia National Park Superintendent Sheridan Steele described the risk of major development on Schoodic Peninsula -- particularly the Schoodic Woods parcel -- to be "the largest single threat facing Acadia National Park" at the time (Bangor Daily News editorial, 2011).

The Schoodic Woods property had been owned for several decades by members of the Modena family. The family had seen the property up for sale in the 1980s while visiting the region from their home in Italy, and made a quick decision to buy it as for investment purposes. The land had been of interest to conservation groups since the early 1990s. Concern was expressed by conservationists at organization such as Friends of Acadia every time the Modena group discussed or proposed one of several development plans.

In 1996, the owners had a major timber harvest conducted on the land. Friends of Acadia challenged the harvest as being a heavy and unsustainable forestry practice. MCHT and Lyme Timber Company intervened to discuss the harvest with the family. A representative of Lyme Timber Company, a private timberland investment management organization, established contact with the Modena family in the mid-1990s, but didn't have much success discovering their intentions for the property. The end result of these discussions was an agreement that the visual impact of the logging from the park was to be minimized.

In the mid-2000's, the Modenas began pursuing plans for a massive 'eco-resort', which would include hundreds of housing units, two hotels, and extensive infrastructure. This development would be prominently visible from the highest point on Acadia National Park, Cadillac Mountain, and would degrade the integrity of the natural landscape that had been maintained for centuries. The owners proved to be difficult to contact, and discussions of a potential land purchase transaction prior to 2010 were drawn out and unproductive. Finally in 2010, the Park Superintendent was able to establish direct contact with the Modenas through their representatives for the eco-resort. Together with the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and The Conservation Fund, the Superintendent began discussions of whether the owners would be willing to sell the property to the US Government, allowing the parcel

to be added to the existing Schoodic District of the Acadia National Park. Although some progress was made, in 2011 the Modenas decided that they were not interested in the lengthy, bureaucratic process that would be involved in such a transaction. As a result, these conversations came to an end.

At this point, Acadia National Park Superintendent Sheridan Steele reached out to Lyme Timber Company, knowing that they were familiar with the property. A representative of Lyme Timber met with a representative of the family. Through a series of discussions, a tentative agreement was finally reached that would allow Lyme to acquire the property.

The offer that the owners placed on the table was that the land was to be sold at a premium, and only if the buyer could close in a matter of weeks. In October 2011, Lyme put the property under contract for \$12 million, with closing scheduled for December 2011. Due to the complex nature of the deal, Lyme formed a company called Schoodic Woods LLC to act as a special purpose vehicle in the deal. The deal involved the following:

- MCHT would make an option payment equal to 20% of the purchase price
- MCHT would make a low-interest loan to Lyme for 30% of the purchase price
- MCHT would then have 3-5 years to raise the balance of the funds in order to exercise the option, with Lyme complying with the terms of the contemplated easement in the meantime.

To the surprise of the players involved in the proposed deal, the situation quickly changed with the introduction of a new player - an anonymous conservation buyer. It is important to note that these lands were well known to be an important conservation target by a number of families and local foundations with a vested interest in the area. In mid-December 2011, Lyme Timber Company was invited to flip the deal so that the land would be sold instead to a private, anonymous foundation that would make appropriate improvements on the property, with the potential that the foundation would eventually donate the land to the US government. This anonymous buyer offered to purchase Lyme's contract and independently conserve the lands. The deal ultimately closed with the anonymous conservation buyer loaning Schoodic Woods LLC \$12 million. Schoodic Woods LLC bought the land with these funds. The acquiring company's ownership was then transferred back to the anonymous conservation buyer, thereby cancelling out the loan. Lyme Timber purchased the property from Winter Harbor Holdings with a loan from an anonymous conservation buyer. MCHT then entered into an option with Lyme timber for a price of \$1 million. The conservation buyer forgave the debt when the fee ownership was transferred to them subject to an option held by MCHT. Once ownership of both Schoodic Woods LLC and the lands were in the hands of the anonymous buyer, MCHT paid the sum of \$1 million dollars for an option to purchase an easement on the southern portion of the parcel. This placed MCHT in a position to assure that the property remained protected, and Lyme Timber received the funds that enabled it to give its investors a respectable return on the company's efforts. In September 2013, Schoodic Woods LLC donated a conservation easement to the National Park Service which limited major development to a 132-acre area away from important coastal and wetland habitat and gave Acadia National Park the right to manage the property for recreational and educational use by the general public.

As of the time of this writing, a park-appropriate infrastructure for the southern portion of the Schoodic Woods property is being planned and built. It will include a visitor's welcome center, extensive hiking and multi-use trails, as well as more than 100 sites for tent camping and short-term recreational vehicle stays on the property. The future of

the northern portion of the site is also being discussed that may involve sustainable forestry and long term ecological research, but no definitive agreement has been reached on its use (Schoodic Woods, LLC, 2013).

Birch Harbor Pond

Birch Harbor Pond (parcel #35, cited above) became a key protected parcel in the region in 2008 with the help of Maine Coast Heritage Trust in cooperation with the Winter Harbor Water District. As stated by Bob Deforrest of MCHT, “this is an extremely beautiful area with pristine natural resources and sensitive wildlife habitat. We’re thrilled to be working with the Water District and other partners to assure its permanent protection” (Maine Coast Heritage Trust, 2008). Birch Harbor Pond serves as the Water District’s back-up water supply. Historically, the local community has used its surrounding land for extensive outdoor recreational purposes. Therefore, public access for low-impact recreation such as hiking, hunting, and fishing was seen as essential component in this particular easement acquisition.

The conservation of the Birch Harbor Pond parcel was fairly unconventional in that the land was owned by the Winter Harbor Water District, an entity governed by the Town of Winter Harbor. Accordingly, the conservation proposal needed to gain approval by the Town of Winter Harbor’s Board of Selectmen. Fortunately, the Town waived its right of first refusal on the property and approved the purchase of a conservation easement on the 366 acre parcel by MCHT. The \$290,000 easement purchase price was raised through a multi- pronged fundraising effort. Donations came in from neighbors and local families alongside partnership contributions from the Frenchman Bay Conservancy and Friends of Acadia. The conservation easement with MCHT allows the land to remain under the Water District’s ownership, with MCHT in charge of monitoring and upholding the conservation terms that prohibit adverse development on the land over time as the holder of the easement. The conservation easement was favorable for both MCHT and the Water District, since it allows the District to maintain its ability to use the land for its back-up water supply while allowing access for the public. The District also expects that the proceeds from the easement sale will help to stabilize rates from community members, as well as support anticipated water system maintenance over time (Maine Coast Heritage Trust, 2008).

West Bay Ponds, the Downeast Reliability Project, the Downeast Sunrise Trail, and on

The Upper West Bay Pond (parcel #42) conservation deal accomplished in 2011 set an important precedent as a Maine Department of Environmental Protection mitigation deal, and speaks to the creativity and innovative potential of recent additions to the Schoodic to Schoodic conservation corridor.

Frequented by locals as an ideal spot for kayaking and canoeing, this 576-acre property is comprised largely of bogs and marsh, creating an essential filter for the Bay, in addition to providing key wildlife habitat. The property stretches along the Pond’s western shore and part of the eastern shore, with private owners and timber companies owning the remaining shoreline. It is considered prime habitat for various duck species, river otters, moose, and various bird species.

The property was initially purchased by Bangor Hydro as part of the company’s Downeast Reliability Project, which includes 43 miles of new electric power transmission line between Ellsworth and Columbia Falls that was to pass

through wetlands, vernal pools, and habitat for wading birds. The transmission lines were deemed necessary to provide improved reliability and capacity to the electrical grid, despite expectations of adverse ecosystem impacts. Bangor Hydro was required under state and federal guidelines to offset environmental impacts associated with the transmission line through “compensatory mitigation” - in this case, protecting wetlands and critical habitat elsewhere in Maine. To do so, Bangor Hydro purchased and donated more than 1,000 acres to the Frenchman Bay Conservancy, the Downeast Salmon Federation, and the State of Maine for several conservation projects, of which the Upper West Bay Pond property donated to FBC was the largest.

In addition to funding the purchase of conservation land, Bangor Hydro (now part of Emera) has also contributed to the construction and maintenance of the Downeast Sunrise Trail, an 87 mile multi-use recreational trail created from the right of way of an abandoned railroad track that runs from Ellsworth in the west to Ayers Junction in the east, not far from near the Canadian border. Along its path and adjacent to the Downeast Reliability Project power line, the Sunrise Trail runs just to the south of Schoodic Mountain and the Tunk Lake area, offering easy public access through the middle of the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor. Serving as an example of how a large company can advance alongside conservation efforts, Bangor Hydro released the following written statement:

While fulfilling the environmental requirements, we also wanted the outcome to be as beneficial to the Down East community as possible. Bangor Hydro is very pleased to develop this important new transmission line to serve the Down East Region, while also working collaboratively with these excellent organizations to achieve environmental compliance in a meaningful way (Bangor Daily News, 2011)

The Conservancy will keep the property open to paddlers, fishermen, hunters, and other visitors. With the collaboration of a local land trust (FBC) and electric utility (Bangor Hydro) working towards a mutually beneficial end goal, the Upper West Bay Pond represents a key addition to the Schoodic to Schoodic Corridor puzzle, as various entities continue efforts to fill in the gaps between the Schoodic Point and Tunk/Donnell Pond sections of the corridor (Bangor Daily News, 2011).

In 2015, Frenchman Bay Conservancy preserved another piece of land on Lower West Bay Pond via the acquisition of the Day Trust Property from the Daniel O. Day Trust, as well as an easement on an adjacent piece of land from the Bryan family (parcel #48). The purchased parcel was one of the first made with funding from a nearly \$1 million grant received through North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) to conserve land along the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor.

According to Frenchman Bay Conservancy Executive Director Aaron Dority, “the abundant signs of wildlife illustrate just how valuable this property is as a connector between the Gouldsboro peninsula to the south, and the forestland stretching to the [Donnell Pond reserve owned by the state] to the north, and from there on into Maine’s infamous north woods” (Frenchman Bay Conservancy, Spring 2017). Parts of the land had been harvested for timber as recently as a few years ago but still show signs of moose, deer, and porcupine residing on it today.

On the eastern side of the pond, opposite the Day Ridges and West Bay pond parcels, FBC acquired another

piece of land for conservation in 2018 from Gerry Golden and Geoff Manifold (parcel #53) using funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The parcel includes 144 acres in total, including a half mile along the Upper West Bay pond and “45 acres of wetlands that provide critical habitat for rare or declining species, including American Bittern, Black Duck, and numerous warbler species” (Frenchman Bay Conservancy, Spring 2018). Including this parcel, Frenchman Bay Conservancy has preserved approximately 1,200 acres in total along the West Bay ponds, from the Upper West Bay Pond Preserve in the north to the Day Ridges Preserve in the south.

Taft Point

The Taft Point parcel within the town Gouldsboro town boundaries (parcel #46) was added as a protected area in the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor in 2014 when the Frenchman Bay Conservancy acquired the parcel as a gift from the parcel’s owner, who had inherited it from his family. Taft Point includes a half-mile of coast along Jones Cove and Flanders Bay as well as views of many of the mountains on Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula and Stave and Calf Islands. The 65-acre Taft Point also provides public access to the ocean and is notable as one of the only protected parcels on the northwestern coast of the Schoodic Peninsula in Gouldsboro.

Frenchman Bay Conservancy has built two trails on the property that are open to the public: a three-quarters mile trail along Flanders Bay and a half-mile trail with views of Jones Cove. At low-tide, hikers can make a loop of the two trails by walking along the beach where the water has receded. As FBC states in their description of the parcel’s significance, “Eider ducks raft up on the rocks just off shore and shorebirds work the rack line of the extensive rockweed colony along the shore.” (Frenchman Bay Conservancy website).

The property was acquired as a fee simple gift to the Frenchman Bay Conservancy on October 24, 2014. Taft Point’s owner, Jeremy Strater, opted not to develop the 65 acres property beyond the cottage which was built decades ago and will remain on the property.

Forbes Pond West

The west section of land surrounding Forbes Pond, which is located in the southern portion of the town of Gouldsboro, was officially conserved on January 23, 2018 via the signing of a conservation easement. The parcel (parcel #50 in the chart above) includes miles of hiking trails as well as recreational access to the pond for fishing.

The easement will be held by Maine Coast Heritage Trust, which has protected the rest of the pond via acquisitions of other parcels held in fee simple ownership, bringing the total acreage protected on Forbes Pond via the deal to 148.5 acres. The easement includes a 1000-foot buffer to the pond to protect waterfowl and wading bird habitat (Maine Coast Heritage Trust).

The project was funded in part by a nearly \$1 million dollar grant that MCHT received together with Frenchman Bay Conservancy from a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Proposal submitted in 2015. The proposal was aimed specifically at conserving land on the peninsula within the target area of the Schoodic to Schoodic initiative and included more than \$2 million in matching from MCHT, FBC, and other local partners The Conservation Fund and The Nature Conservancy. (Schoodic Mtn to Peninsula Coastal Maine Partnership NAWCA Proposal)

Opportunities and Challenges Going Forward

In many ways, the evolving story of the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor has reflected the remarkable progress in private land conservation over time, and the instrumental role that the Schoodic Region of Maine has played in that historical progression in particular. Two hundred years ago, in 1814, America was largely unaware of the striking beauty of Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula. It was not until the 1850s that several Frederic Church paintings of the spectacular coastline became popularized, opening the eyes of the public to beautiful Downeast scenery. Consider, for example, Church's painting of the Schoodic Peninsula from Mount Desert (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Schoodic Peninsula from Mount Desert at Sunrise, by Frederic Church, painted from 1850 to 1855
(Source: Wikimedia Commons, public domain)



One hundred fifty years ago, in 1864, there was no protected land - or anyone advocating for land protection - on Mount Desert Island or on the Schoodic Peninsula. It was not until the early 1880s that young Charles Eliot wrote that “the scenery of Mount Desert is so beautiful and remarkable that no pains should be spared to save it from injury - to the end that many generations may receive all possible benefit and enjoyment from it,” and not until 1901 that his father spearheaded the formation of the Hancock County Trustees of Public Reservations (HCTPR) to acquire a substantial portion of the land that became Acadia National Park.

One hundred years ago, in 1914, Maine legislators threatened to revoke HCTPR's tax exempt status. Such revocation could have slowed land protection efforts in the area for years. Spurred by that threat, George Dorr in 1916 was able to convince President Woodrow Wilson to declare the land protected by HCTPR on Mount Desert Island as a National Monument, the first step in its becoming the nation's first eastern National Park.

Fifty years ago, in 1964, the use of tax deductible conservation easements had not yet become common practice. No state had enacted the Uniform Conservation Easement Act, and guidelines regarding the tax deductibility of conservation easements had been incorporated into the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code. It was not until 1970 when the Maine Coast Heritage Trust was formed with the help of innovators like Peggy Rockefeller and Tom Cabot that the use of conservation easements in the Schoodic Region began to proliferate; not until several years later that Peggy and David Rockefeller launched the effort to protect Bartlett Island (just west of Mount Desert) with a creatively crafted, innovative easement; not until 1975 that the Maine Coast Heritage Trust helped Hazel Bryan Tracey and her husband Ernie donate the first conservation easement in the Tunk Lake Region; and finally, it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that Uniform Conservation Easement Acts were adopted by every state in the Union and the IRS Code included direction regarding conservation easements.

Twenty-five years ago, in 1989, the Frenchman Bay Conservancy had only recently been born. MCHT had helped create the new entity, in the hopes that FBC could advance local land conservation efforts. To get FBC going, MCHT in 1988, working with the Bryan family and local donors, gifted FBC a long sand beach and adjacent property on Little Tunk Pond. Only the most visionary of FBC's founders, including Bayard Ewing, could have imagined that this little entity might have such a substantial impact connecting conserved lands from Schoodic Point to Schoodic Mountain, and from the tiny seacoast town of Corea in the east to Ellsworth, to the west.

So where do we go from here to build on: the conservation vision expressed by Charles Eliot 130 years ago that led to the creation of the first national park in the eastern United States; the ingenuity of Peggy Rockefeller that led to the establishment of an important conservation easement precedent in the 1970s; or the determination of the Bryan family over the past four decades to spearhead land protection efforts around Tunk Lake? How can we sustain and build upon the culture of conservation that has taken hold in the region for more than a century?

We are well advised to start, as Eliot did, by consulting the most advanced science of our day, by leveraging highly sophisticated technological and financial tools and techniques, and by bringing the best talent available to the job. Fortunately, we have some measure of each element available to us through the public, civic and non-profit, private and academic organizations that have already engaged in the protection of this landscape.

Consider, for example, the newly-created “flow maps” created by Mark Anderson and his team at The Nature Conservancy, showing in shades of red those areas that are likely to contribute most to regional resiliency in the wake of ongoing climate change. A localized version of Anderson’s work shows that protected Schoodic to Schoodic corridor could be a critical area for wildlife habitat adaptation and migration in decades to come (see Figure 8).

Consider also how we might use innovative financial mechanisms, such as the mitigation techniques used to protect the Upper West Bay parcel. Think about how such lands might contribute to a bright economic future for one of Maine’s least economically prosperous areas. And ponder how we might capitalize on the institutions already present in the area to pitch in to the effort. Leveraging the talent at the Schoodic Institute, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the Frenchman Bay

Conservancy, as well as multiple universities, private companies and philanthropies, will be essential to future conservation success in the area. Fortunately, each of these institutions is already staffed by a wealth of competent and creative individuals who have a deep affection for the region.

Figure 8: “Flow” Map of the Schoodic to Schoodic Area
 (Sources: The Nature Conservancy and Bob DeForrest, MCHT)

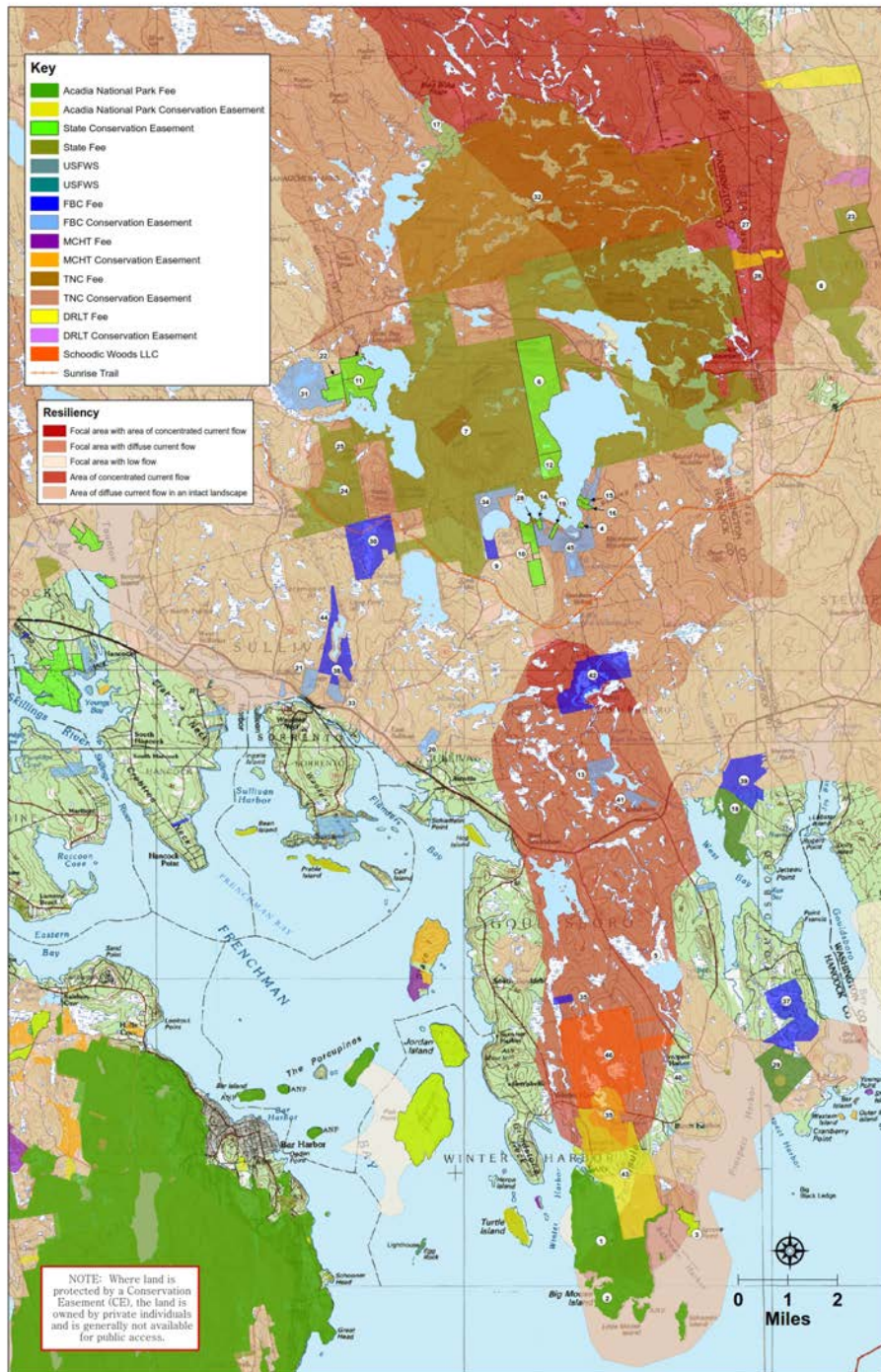


Figure 9: Map of the Acadian Region in the United States and Canada
 (Source: Center for Community GIS, Quebec-Labrador Foundation)



With perseverance and pluck, who knows what tales might be told 100 years hence by those chronicling the establishment of protected land along the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor, and across the more expansive Acadian Region stretching from the Penobscot River in the west, across the Canadian border to the Saint John River in the east (see Figure 9). If realized, the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor may become one of the few contiguous mosaics of protected land from the Atlantic coast to the interior forests of Maine and New Brunswick. The stepping-stones are already in place, from Schoodic Point and Tunk Lake to the Narraguagus watershed, Grand Lake Stream, and the vast expanses of Crown Land in the Canadian province of New Brunswick, beyond.

Epilogue

A nearly completed draft of this study was circulated to key players and information sources in the fall of 2014. One of the co-authors, Jim Levitt, was able to have telephone conversations with several of these individuals. He found that enthusiasm for moving ahead to protect properties along the Schoodic-to-Schoodic corridor was high, in part due to the perspective offered by this overview account of conservation in the region over more than a century.

Bob DeForrest of MCHT was able to build on the mapping of the Schoodic-to-Schoodic region that he had done, in part, to prepare figures used in this report (see, for example, Figures 5 and 8, above). DeForrest, working in close collaboration with Jeremy Gabrielson, the newly hired Conservation and Community Planner at MCHT, helped to prepare new maps and documentation showing how there was a potential to pursue a “stepping stone” land protection strategy that would begin to make the connection between Schoodic Point and Schoodic Mountain.

MCHT senior management, including the organization’s President Tim Glidden, considered and endorsed the proposed strategy and presented it to the MCHT Board of Directors for approval in the spring of 2015. The board subsequently approved the strategy. MCHT reached an understanding with the Frenchman Bay Conservancy and its new director Aaron Dority, as well as The Conservation Fund and its local representative Tom Boutureira, to work together towards its implementation. The organizations have recently applied to several non-profit and public sources for substantial funding to begin the work. In August 2015, Aaron Dority of the Frenchman Bay Conservancy, Tom Boutureira of The Conservation Fund, and Bob DeForrest of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust jointly presented the new strategy to the Frenchman Bay Conservancy Annual Meeting held at the Moore Auditorium on the Schoodic Education and Research Center campus.

In addition to the formation of a Schoodic-to-Schoodic task force headed by Ben Emory under the auspices of the Frenchman Bay Conservancy in the early 2000s, and a 2007 study authored by Misha Mytar in collaboration with Ben Emory (Emory, 2017), the preparation of the report you are now reading served as one of several catalytic agents that has helped to move this chain of events forward. Having the narrative of the history and present state of land protection in the area helped “frame the issue” for conservation professionals and volunteers who are now advancing further land protection efforts -- in effect, writing new chapters in the story. As Mark Berry, President and CEO of the Schoodic Institute recently noted, “attention to the Schoodic to Schoodic corridor by researchers at Harvard Forest - including Karena Mahung, a former participant in the Acadian Internship program here at Schoodic Institute, and Isabella Gambill, an Acadian Internship staffer -- has helped highlight the area’s unique conservation values, including its importance to Acadia National Park. This may help spur significant funding to conserve key tracts in the corridor” (Berry, 2015).

Our hope is that other students and young professionals become inspired to serve as catalysts for large-landscape conservation initiative across North America and beyond, from South American and Europe to Africa, Asia and Oceania. As the saying goes, “Great oaks from little acorns grow.”

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