

watermark

PUBLISHED BY LAUDHOLM TRUST IN SUPPORT OF WELLS NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

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the more things change

In a college philosophy class nearly 25 years ago, I debated a Norwegian museum's restoration of an 11th-century Viking longship. "How many deck boards and timbers can be replaced before it is no longer the original ship?" asked our patient professor. Answers, impertinent and earnest, burst from each of the seven students seated at the long wooden table. "Exactly a bit less than half." "99 44/100%?" "Not one!" Rapidly, definitions of "original" and "ship" were put forward, challenged, and revised. I remain cursed, and blessed, to this day by that liberal arts degree: I haven't been satisfied with just one answer to anything since.

I'm often reminded of the Viking ship question here at the Wells Reserve. We replaced the cedar shingle roof on the Visitor Center this past April. Is it still the same Visitor Center? The wooden boardwalk trails, first laid in the 1990s, will soon need a new generation of planks. How does a place stay the same, for decades, and yet also continuously change? Like all natural things, it adapts: gradually, incrementally, culling the least and investing in its best. The Little River mouth and Laudholm Beach shift each season, old buildings take on new uses, even a newsletter evolves to full color.

Maybe it's not *the* Viking longship, but it's still *a* Viking longship? What's the "original" Wells Reserve, or is it always the original Wells Reserve? Perhaps the answer has a parallel in the idea of home: no matter where you live, you make it a home. The Wells Reserve is the physical place of historic buildings on beautiful lands and also the motive force dedicated to coastal research, education, and conservation. Like the dynamic mix of saltwater and fresh in an estuary, the Wells Reserve is both place and mission, buildings and people, history and future. Both/and, not either/or, always the same place and also always different. And we keep it in reserve for you, with an open invitation to visit any time so you can see for yourself what's old and what's new.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nik Charov'.

Nik Charov
President, Laudholm Trust
Chairman, Wells Reserve Management Authority

COVER PHOTO: WEBHANNET MARSH BY JULIO AGUILAR, JR.
BACK COVER PHOTO: FOXES BY KARL RAMSDELL

tracking blue crabs

BY LAURA CRANE

Is the recent irruption of blue crabs into southern Maine a permanent range expansion or is this warmwater crustacean here for just a short-term stay? To find out, reserve researchers kicked off a third year of blue crab monitoring in Wells this spring.

Last year, from April to November, the research team of staff, interns, and volunteers caught 28 individual blue crabs in the Little River estuary



CIARA DONEGAN AND HANNAH CRAFT, TWO NOAA HOLLINGS SCHOLARS WORKING IN RESEARCH LAST SUMMER, SHOW OFF A BLUE CRAB TRAPPED IN A LITTLE RIVER SALT MARSH POOL.

and 20 in the Webhannet, with the longer days of May through July corresponding to better trapping success. Most crabs were males measuring 4 to 8 inches across.

For 2022, the crew will be checking 12 traps every week and some trapped crabs will get acoustic telemetry tags that will help biologists track their movements. We expect the tags to help determine how long crabs stay in a particular salt marsh pool, how often they move, and where they go when they leave. One key question is: Where do blue crabs spend the winter, when much of the estuary becomes too cold for them to survive?

The search for blue crabs also expands north this summer. Research Associate Jeremy Miller has recruited a group of volunteers who are already involved with invasive species monitoring at nine locations around Casco Bay. Researchers at the reserve and UMaine will train these volunteers to survey for blue crab larvae, adults, and environmental DNA.



THIS BLUE CRAB WAS FITTED WITH A TRACKING DEVICE SO POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW BEN GUTZLER COULD RECOVER THE INDIVIDUAL BY SCUBA DIVING.

Project Funders

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership:
to support surveys in Casco Bay

Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund:
for acoustic telemetry tags

THE RESERVE'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAUL DEST, TOSSES A TRAP INTO A SALT MARSH POOL IN THE LITTLE RIVER ESTUARY TO HELP GET BLUE CRAB MONITORING STARTED IN EARLY APRIL 2022.



getting a lift from volunteers

BY LYNNE BENOIT-VACHON AND KAREN STATHOPILOS

Little Bits Add Up



For Nan Graves, the reserve's access road is a journey to calm. In the parking lot, she takes a deep breath and begins to relax in a place she finds both beautiful and vital. Nan volunteers at the reception desk, sharing her winning smile, positive attitude, and diverse knowledge with visitors lucky enough to stop by.

"The reserve is a small snapshot of what we need to be doing on a large scale in terms of protecting our environment. Each volunteer here is doing their little bit, and the volume of work that gets done is incredible."

Seeing the Positives



Steve Podsiadlo is a lifelong learner with a natural curiosity and a love of reading, qualities that make him a wonderful docent. Four years ago, Steve stopped by on a cold March day and met Caryn Beiter. Today, he is leading public tours and introducing visitors to the wonders of the reserve.

"Sea level rise, climate change, the environment are all in the news. People are motivated. They are interested in the environment, they have a spark about it, and now they have someone to talk with. I see goodness in that."

A Pearl Beyond Price



Quietly effervescent with a deep love for Laudholm, Rhoda Frederick has played many key roles here. Not only has she been a beloved volunteer for many, many years, she has been a faithful member from the very beginning.

"We have the whole world right here."

Read the complete profiles on [The Wrack](https://wellsreserve.org/blog), wellsreserve.org/blog.

mta2c marks 20 years

BY PAUL DEST

The Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative celebrates two decades of ambitious effort to protect open space in parts of South Berwick, York, Ogunquit, Wells, Kittery, and Eliot. The MtA2C coalition of local, regional, and federal organizations has worked together to conserve more than 5,200 acres in 20 years. The Wells Reserve was a founding partner and remains an active participant.

From the top of Mount A to the Gulf of Maine, the 48,000-acre focus area hosts the greatest diversity of plants and animals in Maine, including many sensitive species. The area provides drinking water to thousands of people across three towns and encompasses more than 60

miles of trails used for hiking, skiing, hunting, and other recreational activities.

When established in 2002, the coalition was among the first regional conservation collaborations in New England, with a unique capacity to leverage the strengths of multiple organizations toward shared objectives. That collaborative approach has paid off. The 5,200 protected acres represent more than 100 land transactions, each requiring close work with individual owners. Through the deliberate and strategic efforts to protect land with high quality wildlife habitat and public access, these efforts have conserved some of York County's most popular places for hiking and nature appreciation.

"The entrance to the beach at the end of Island Beach Road has always been one of my favorite places to watch the sunrise. I've used this narrow path lots of times—often with friends or family on evening walks to the Little River. In the evening, this is the perfect place to unwind and appreciate the natural beauty of Drakes."



moody and drakes residents find a photovoice

This selection of photographs and accompanying narratives are by Photovoice participants who responded to the prompt "When it comes to [this place], what do you care about most?"



"I'm reminded with the ever more frequent high tides that flood the estuary marshes along Drakes Island Road, that access is everything."

"We gather as a family on the back deck for late night gatherings and can enjoy the most amazing light show! We have said as a group many times how lucky we are. We have been enjoying scenes of the "Marsh" as we call it for the last 20 years. The Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge is a place that we treasure and want to protect from any further erosion."



"This picture captures two extraordinary elements of Moody. First, the tidal difference. Where else on earth does one get a "new beach", hundreds of yards wide, a (mostly)



hard and flat playground, twice a day? While tides elsewhere in Maine exceed the 9.5 foot average at Moody, nowhere north of Portland can match the beaches of Wells/Ogunquit/York for this extraordinary natural phenomenon. And second: Moody provides weather and sky watching vistas, constantly changing. Soothes my soul!"

BY JESSICA BRUNACINI

My research explores how people feel connected to coastal places and why that matters for decision-making. "Place attachment" shapes the way we understand and value a place, how we experience change, how we perceive risk, and how we decide what is important to protect for future generations.

To understand these dynamics, I used a research method called Photovoice to engage with members of two nearby communities—Drakes Island and Moody Beach. I asked participants to take photographs in response to the question, "When it comes to [this place], what do you care about most?" They wrote brief narratives about each photograph, then took part in a group process of image sharing, reflection, and knowledge building.

Several themes emerged from their contributions, including recognition that relationships with place span multiple generations, considerations about access, appreciation of the dynamic natural beauty of these places, and concerns about the impacts of sea level rise.

Photovoice selections will be on display in the CEC exhibit space in July. I talked about this project at the Beaches Conference and will present at the NERRS annual meeting in Seattle this fall.



mosquitoes

BY SCOTT RICHARDSON

PHOTO: PHOTOCHEMPA, CC BY-SA 2.0, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

On a warmish day in February, a mosquito clung to my office wall. The overwinterer was delicate, unobtrusive, not at all threatening, and lucky it picked late winter to appear, a good four months after the last of its kindred waned away. If it had been August I would have dispatched the fly with malice. Instead I let it live.

I'm thankful we're free of these pesky insects for more than half the year. Then it warms and rains and summer's certainties roll around—families come for a walk, campers frolic, trail rangers roam, couples embrace, interns deploy, and mosquitoes home in on them all.

"A nice spot, but we got absolutely destroyed by mosquitoes."

— Evan T. via [Google Reviews](#)

The mosquitoes were punishing last summer. Even hardened researchers, quite accustomed to field work's unpleasantries, were vexed by the bloodsuckers: "They're insane. Never

seen 'em this bad." Reserve scientists bolstered their defenses, donning head nets to forestall madness while going about their salt marsh routines.



MALE MOSQUITO, 4TH PLACE WINNER FROM THE NIKON SMALL WORLD 2019 PHOTOMICROGRAPHY COMPETITION. PHOTO: JAN ROSENBLUM.

The population explosion went beyond Wells. I checked with long-time reserve advisor Chuck Lubelczyk, whose mosquito investigations with the Maine Medical Center Research Institute cover a lot of Maine's coast. He concurred: Mosquitoes were "atrocious and thirsty" from Kittery to

Rockland last summer. One species, Chuck said, was "very abundant" and another enjoyed its own population boom.

"The bugs on the trail out to the beach were OUT OF CONTROL. And we are total outdoors people."

— starchixx325 via [Tripadvisor](#)

Our volunteer rangers, stalwart trail patrollers between May and October, logged their first mosquitoes of 2021 on July 3, though a "buggy" entry was made on June 19. By mid July, though, there were "lots of bugs" on the Farley, "tons" on the Muskie, and "massive mosquitoes" along the Barrier Beach Trail.

It went back and forth for a few weeks—"not so buggy," "too buggy," "not bad," "very buggy." Sometimes, at least, a breeze blew them away. August ended with "hardly any mosquitoes if you keep walking," but come September bugs were "bad on most trails" again. After that, insect comments dwindled until

early October, when one volunteer reported “Very few mosquitoes... yay!” Finally, gloriously, on 10/8: “No bugs!”

“Bring bug spray (these are not regular mosquitos!!)”

– John H. via [Tripadvisor](#)

Whether my absolved office mate was a regular mosquito or some other kind I’ll never know. The *Site Profile of the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve* lists 32 species as occurring here. That’s out of Maine’s 48 and Earth’s 3,600. Not all of them bite humans but, of those here that do, the most reviled is likely the eastern salt marsh mosquito (*Aedes sollicitans*), which breeds around salt marsh pools. Its cousin, the brown salt marsh mosquito (*Aedes cantator*), thrives in brackish habitats. Those are the two that exploded last summer.

“Simply tons of mosquitoes by the waterside!”

– K.B. via [Google Reviews](#)

Salt marsh mosquitoes often lay their eggs in moist depressions. When water levels rise on the salt marsh surface—especially during twice-monthly “spring” tides—those depressions become inundated, eggs are submerged, and larvae soon hatch en masse. When it’s

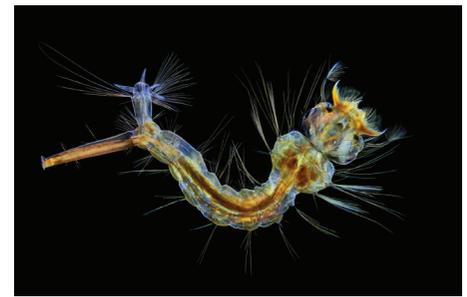
warm and wet, a mosquito can grow from hatchling to adulthood in just 5 days. With such rapid maturation, some mosquitoes have time to produce several generations in a single season.

Of course, mosquitoes need more than moisture to multiply. If it weren’t for the female’s essential blood meal, we could more easily appreciate the massive food supply that *Aedes* eggs, larvae, pupae, and adults represent to mummichogs, dragonflies, bats, and birds. Alas, that protein boost is a reproductive necessity.

“We got to walk only 5 minutes before swarms of 20 mosquitos per person came out.”

–K.P. via [Google Reviews](#)

With our world warming, will our mosquito season start sooner and end later? The little biters don’t do well below 50°. Let’s hope our springs and falls keep their chill.



MOSQUITO LARVA, 12TH PLACE WINNER FROM THE NIKON SMALL WORLD 2019 PHOTOMICROGRAPHY COMPETITION. PHOTO: ANNE ALGAR.

MOSQUITOES LISTED IN THE WELLS NERR SITE PROFILE

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Aedes cinereus</i> | <i>Culiseta minnesotae</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus japonicus</i> |
| <i>Aedes vexans</i> | <i>Culiseta morsitans</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus provocans</i> |
| <i>Anopheles punctipennis</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus abserratus</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus punctor</i> |
| <i>Anopheles quadrimaculatus</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus atropalpus</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus sollicitans</i> |
| <i>Anopheles walkeri</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus canadensis</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus sticticus</i> |
| <i>Coquillettidia perturbans</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus cantator</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus stimulans</i> |
| <i>Culex pipiens</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus diantaeus</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus triseriatus</i> |
| <i>Culex restuans</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus communis</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus trivittatus</i> |
| <i>Culex salinarius</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus excrucians</i> | <i>Psorophora ferox</i> |
| <i>Culex territans</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus fitchii</i> | <i>Uranotaenia sapphirina</i> |
| <i>Culiseta melanura</i> | <i>Ochlerotatus intrudens</i> | |

The Site Profile was completed soon after entomologists began using *Ochlerotatus* as a genus, a change that generated some controversy. The traditional genus name, *Aedes*, is also broadly accepted for these species. *Aedes* is from the Ancient Greek ἀήδης meaning “unpleasant” or “odious.”



maine's first cubesat has an estuary mission

BY SCOTT RICHARDSON

Maine's first small satellite is destined for space this year and one of its science missions has a Wells Reserve connection.

MESAT1 is a 3-unit CubeSat, a short stack of 4-inch cubes carrying three experiments proposed by Maine middle- and high-school students. For one of those experiments, the satellite will take pictures of coastal areas that students will use for assessing turbidity and phytoplankton concentrations in estuaries. Students and teachers at Fryeburg Academy developed the concept



with guidance from Dr. Jason Goldstein, the reserve's research director.

NASA is providing the opportunity through

MESAT1 PROJECT LEAD JOSEPH PATTON, A DOCTORAL CANDIDATE AT UMAINE, POINTS OUT A FEATURE OF MAINE'S FIRST CUBESAT TO DR. JASON GOLDSTEIN.



DR. JASON GOLDSTEIN SHOWS OFF A TEST MODEL OF THE MESAT1 IMAGING MODULE. ITS FOUR LENSES ARE FITTED WITH FILTERS DESIGNED TO CAPTURE IMAGES FROM SPECIFIC PORTIONS OF THE COLOR SPECTRUM REQUIRED BY THE THREE STUDENT EXPERIMENTS ON THE SATELLITE. PHOTO: REBECCA KIBLER

its CubeSat Launch Initiative and Educational Launch of Nanosatellites (ELaNa) program. The Maine Space Grant Consortium sponsored design and development and a trio of UMaine graduate students built and programmed the satellite. MESAT1 is manifested on ELaNa mission 43, to be released from a Firefly Aerospace "Alpha" rocket launching from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.

flotsam

PEOPLE

The Laudholm Trust board welcomed three new directors since we last wrote. Welcome **Mark Balfantz**, **Bill Bradley**, and **Sue Rioux**.

In June, educators **Suzanne Kahn** and **Caryn Beiter** led a Certified Interpretive Guide training for 24 park employees from the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.

Helen Cheng, Ph.D. candidate at Northeastern University, begins a 2-year stint in August as the reserve's second Margaret A. Davidson Graduate Fellow. She will focus on interactions between range-expanding species (black sea bass, blue crab) and American lobster.

Long-time reserve accountant **Scott Rocray** packed up his printing calculator to explore fresh sets of numbers.

Laudholm Trust President **Nik Charov** obtained his Maine Kayak Guide credentials.



PLACES

This summer the K/K/W Water District will install a new **waterline along Laudholm Farm Road**. We're hoping it won't be too disruptive.

In the fall, the reserve's entry road, parking lot, and campus pavement will be redone, with improvements to **stormwater runoff**.

THINGS

New England reserves hosted a regional **Social Coast Forum** virtually in March when the national in-person event was reconfigured due to the pandemic. The forum drew 115 practitioners.



Through solar power, heating-system upgrades, efficient appliances, and smart operations, the reserve met the two goals, set 10 years ago, of its **Conserve and Convert Initiative**: Meet 100% of our electrical energy needs through site-based renewable solar energy, and reduce fossil fuel and electrical energy use by 20%.

The **Discovery Backpacks** program has returned, with an updated *Water Wonders* book ready for families and groups. After 14 years, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program grant from USDA NRCS has run its course. The WHIP grant supported many projects aimed at increasing and enhancing early-successional habitats for cottontails and other shrub-scrub species.



wellsreserve
at **laudholm**
Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

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The Wells National
Estuarine Research
Reserve is one of 30
reserve sites throughout



the country. All reserves require local funding to match federal grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Wells Reserve is the only reserve that receives its match from a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Each year, Laudholm Trust contributes private funds and in-kind services to support Wells Reserve operations and capital improvements.



© JAY ARBELO

Have a Seat

so others may also sit

Reserve your seat (or a tree for sitting under) by making a celebratory or memorial gift to Laudholm Trust. Honor a loved one, mark a moment, or share your thoughts. We'll mount a plaque to carry your message.

Stone Bench	\$7,500
Wooden Bench	\$5,000
Picnic Table	\$4,000
Adirondack Double	\$3,000
Adirondack Chair	\$2,000
Native Tree	\$1,000

Alternatives for recognition include boardwalk planks, walkway bricks, and sections of trail.

To learn more or to get started, please contact:
Nik Charov 207-646-4521 ext 144 nik@laudholm.org

wellsreserve at laudholm

A PLACE TO DISCOVER

thank you to our donors

In kind gift

Hal & Karen Muller for a Honda snow blower

In honor of

Christine & Al Azevedo
Dennis Byrd
Nik Charov
Brenda Maloy-Fiorini
Karen Stathoplos
Linda Stathoplos
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In memory of

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Leah & Andrew Yerre
Derek Yorks

wells reserve mission:

To understand, protect, and restore coastal ecosystems of the Gulf of Maine through integrated research, stewardship, environmental learning, and community partnerships.

laudholm trust mission:

To raise financial and community support for the Wells Reserve at Laudholm and Maine's coastal environment.

events & exhibits

wellsreserve.org/calendar



JUN/JUL

**Various Artists:
Nikon Small World**
Microscopic Imagery



JUL

**Various Contributors:
Photovoice Project**
A Coastal
Community Cares



JUL/AUG

Daisy Braun: DR/FT
Fabricated Plankton
at Human Scale



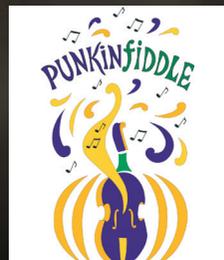
SEP/OCT

**B.A. "Tony" King:
Honoring Trees**
A Rooted
Retrospective



SEP 10-11

**Laudholm Nature
Crafts Festival**



OCT 1

**Punkinfiddle
Family Festival**