



FRIENDS OF THE
ROYAL RIVER

CURRENTS

Fall/Winter 2004 Newsletter

ROYAL RIVER YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS COMPLETES 20 PROJECTS IN THE WATERSHED

The Royal River Youth Conservation Corps (RRYCC) wrapped up its first season in mid-August. In just seven weeks, the team of seven local high school students, led by the energetic and capable crew leader, Moriah Bedard, completed 20 erosion control and pollution prevention projects in the Royal River Watershed.

- In Pownal, the YCC improved ditches and built sediment traps to keep soil out of streams.

- In Yarmouth, they stenciled 270 storm drains and improved trails in the Royal River Park.

- On Crystal and Sabbathday Lakes, they planted buffers and made lakefront properties more eco-friendly. The group also stabilized several town and private roads in other parts of Gray and New Gloucester.

By the end of the summer the RRYCC had planted 149 plants, moved 45 cubic yards of mulch, hand-placed 25 cubic yards of rock, dug more than 126 feet of ditches by hand, and moved more than 22 cubic yards of sediment out of sediment traps.

Friends of the Royal River sponsored the program this past summer aided by a steering committee of partner organizations. Many thanks to the Sabbathday Lake Association, Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Casco Bay Estuary Project, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Town of New Gloucester, *cont'd, P. 2*



The Royal River YCC Team (left-right) — Moriah Bedard (crew leader), David Miklovich (New Gloucester), Nate Reimensnyder (New Gloucester), Caly Doran (Yarmouth), Dan Cruz (New Gloucester), Mary Cloutier (Auburn), Duncan Fowler (New Gloucester), and Nate Johnson (New Gloucester). Absent: Betty Williams (YCC Technical Director, Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District).

Help Wanted

Friends of the Royal River is seeking a volunteer to help with updating our membership database. If you are interested in devoting a couple of hours a week for a few weeks this fall and have some computer experience, please call Henry Nichols at 847-9399.

FORR also needs volunteers to monitor our conserved lands. If you're interested, please come by the office or call.

Board of Directors

Friends of the Royal River

Christopher Ayres, *President*

Jane Arbuckle, *Vice-President*

Caroline Hyde, *Treasurer*

Dave Platt, *Secretary*

Tom Armstrong, Jr. • Gil Birney

Gro Flatebo • Bill Hancock

Sharon McHold • Gordy Scannell

Henry Nichols, *Executive Director*

RRYCC (cont'd from P. 1)

Crystal Lake Association, Gray Public Works and Pownal Public Works also provided invaluable assistance and program support.

The Royal River Youth Conservation Corps plans to be back in action next summer, doing similar projects to protect and improve habitat and water quality in the Royal River Watershed. Contact Friends of the Royal River to get involved or nominate sites for the 2005 season.

— Wendy Garland, Maine DEP

RIVER VIEW

by **Henry Nichols**, Executive Director, FORR



Dear Friends,

When the Friends of the Royal River decided to take on the three projects that are highlighted in this newsletter, I had no idea that the personal reward would be so fulfilling. Surely, I understood that if we were successful, we would conserve habitat, improve water quality, create recreational opportunities and draw people to our goal of protecting and connecting important places throughout the Royal River watershed — all valuable outcomes we have realized.

But it is the relationships I've developed during the planning and execution of the projects I find most gratifying. I have had the good fortune of working with two dozen talented people, youthful and seasoned, volunteer and professional, each one of them devoting time, energy and conviction to the Royal River Estuary Project, the Royal River Youth Conservation Corps, or the Chandler Brook Project. It is their humor combined with their passion about protecting a natural legacy of our corner of Maine that is most endearing. If laughter is an elixir, then hard, thoughtful work for a worthy cause is nourishment.

We honor all the workers of these projects by dedicating this issue of Currents to them. Each person should pocket a measure of pride knowing that they have made a difference for our communities. Thank you for your support, inspiration and friendship.

With fondness, *Henry*

FROM THE PRESIDENT • *Chris Ayres*

Friends of the Royal River is a local community organization with great promise. With your participation we have the opportunity to support our neighbors, ourselves, our land and future generations. We have a simple message and a simple task: to sustain and protect a landscape and a quality of life that is truly special and critical for all our well-being. This is our responsibility and our duty as well as our privilege and our joy! This is our chance to celebrate what is best about our lives. I thank all of you for joining in this endeavor. Together we will make a difference.

— Chris Ayres

FRIENDS HELP PROTECT CRITICAL RIVERFRONT PARCEL

On Oct. 4 town, state, federal and local officials gathered on the new Bayview Estuary Preserve with local conservationists to celebrate the permanent protection of this incredible coastal property in Yarmouth. The wonderful occasion marked the end of a successful effort to secure one of the

Royal River's last remaining large estuarine properties. At the mid morning ceremony, Congressman Tom Allen

FORR Board members Sharon McHold and Jane Arbuckle identifying plant



joined representatives of U.S. Senators Snowe and Collins, the Friends of the Royal River, the Trust for Public Land, the Maine Department of Conservation, the Land for Maine's Future program, the National Atmospheric and Oceanographic Administration and

cont'd, P. 4



Stewardship of these properties, for FORR, means taking seriously our moral and legal responsibility to the land and to the public. As holders of the conservation easements that protect and restrict these lands, FORR will work with the landowners to make sure that the intent of the easements and the specific restrictions on land uses are respected, in perpetuity. That's a long time, and a big responsibility. We will visit the properties, review any plans for changes, and make sure that the guaranteed public access occurs in ways that benefit the land and the community.

— Jane Arbuckle,
Chair,
Lands Committee

CHANDLER BROOK PRESERVE ESTABLISHED

Last month North Yarmouth Selectman David Perkins stood in the lower field of the Chandler Brook Preserve addressing a distinguished group of people celebrating that town's most recent acquisition. "It is not often that our town gets the opportunity to set aside such a spectacular property for present and future generations as this one," he said. "This successful project is the result of hard work and vision by townspeople and the Friends of the Royal River. I hope we will continue to partner with the Friends of the Royal River to uncover gems like this one that will provide immediate public benefit and protect our rural heritage."

Working with the Town of North Yarmouth's Future Land Committee, the Friends of the Royal River

cont'd, P. 4



Sam Ristich of North Yarmouth celebrates with FORR Board member Gil Birney



ROYAL RIVER STREAM GAGE, 1949-2004

The U.S. Geological Survey closed down its stream gage on the Royal River in Yarmouth on Oct. 1, 2004 due to lack of local cost sharing funds. The Town of Yarmouth used to pay for 50 percent of the annual costs of running the gage. This gage has provided stream flow data continuously since Oct. 1, 1949.

CHANDLER *(cont'd from P. 3)*

(FORR) engineered the bargain sale of the 63-acre parcel with two miles of frontage on Chandler Brook with the former landowner, Karl Hawkes. "We are especially grateful to Karl for selling this wonderful property to the town," acknowledged Gil Birney, a North Yarmouth resident and FORR trustee. "Conserving this land fits with our strategic goals and the Town's 2004 Comprehensive Plan for protecting stream corridors."

At North Yarmouth's Town Meeting last March, townspeople overwhelmingly agreed to help fund a portion of the project. Following that boost, FORR then found other partners including the Maine Department of Conservation and the Casco Bay Estuary Project. With the help of an inspired team of volunteer fundraisers, FORR raised the remaining dollars needed from over 30 generous households.

The State of Maine and the Friends of the Royal River hold a conservation easement on the property ensuring that it will never be developed and will remain accessible to the public and all types of wildlife. The Chandler Brook Preserve contains two large meadows, a hemlock forest, and a network of walking trails that offer glimpses of Chandler Brook.

BAYVIEW *(cont'd from P. 3)*

the Town of Yarmouth to mark the occasion.

"I am very proud that I was able, with my colleagues, to secure \$1.6 million in earmarked federal funds in last year's Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill for this important conservation project," Rep. Allen said. "This 35-acre acquisition will be a tremendous asset for people in Yarmouth and throughout Maine who value the parcel's habitat, forests and fresh and saltwater wetlands. My thanks and congratulations to the Friends of the Royal River, the Town of Yarmouth, the Trust for Public Land and everyone who has worked so hard to make this acquisition possible."

Over a year ago FORR teamed up with the Town of Yarmouth and the Trust for Public Land to raise the funds necessary to purchase the riverfront parcel, which boasts a freshwater pond, nearly a mile of shoreline, ready-made trails and significant saltwater marsh habitat. In May the Trust for Public Land (TPL) purchased the property from longtime owner Geoff Spear. TPL transferred title in August to the Town of Yarmouth, which in turn granted a conservation easement to the Friends of the Royal River. Under the terms of the easement, the property will remain undeveloped, accessible to the public, and a place for wildlife to thrive. FORR will work with the Town and local volunteers to maintain the property's conservation values while improving pedestrian access.

"Because of the outstanding efforts of the Trust for Public Land, Sens. Snowe and Collins, Rep. Allen, the Town of Yarmouth and many local conservationists, this prominent estuarine property will be available for wildlife and visitors for generations, said Henry Nichols, Executive Director of the Friends of the Royal River. "We are very pleased to add this to the Friends of the Royal River's growing portfolio of conserved lands in the region."

IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY, PLEASE JOIN US TODAY! SUGGESTED DONATION: \$25



PO Box 90
Yarmouth, Maine 04096