

SPORTSMAN'S ALLIANCE OF MAINE

NEWS



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www.samofmaine.org

SAM at 50: Mission Accomplished

by Virginia Thompson and Gerry Lavigne

In 1975 our founding fathers declared this to be SAM's mission: to promote conservation of Maine's wildlife resources and to be an advocate for hunters, anglers, trappers and gun owners throughout the state." SAM remains as committed to that mission as our founders were when they organized over 50 years ago at the Augusta Armory. We've been following the SAM journey along a timeline of separate achievements and challenges as they unfolded. In this final chapter of SAM at 50, we highlight the milestones viewed through a different lens; paths of accomplishments. More like a roadmap, this allows us to see the big picture of our organization, and how it all works together towards not one, but many, destinations. Simply put, in words that speak to the heart of every sportsman Gerry Lavigne stated: "SAM's

efforts all focus to provide the *best experiences* for sportsmen. It's important to ensure we can provide *all opportunities the resources can bear* without overtaxing those resources." This is the essence of SAM's purpose that drives every goal, every strategy, and every plan. SAM's pathways include:

- Solvency
- Protecting Second Amendment Rights
- Deer Recovery and Land Conservation
- Youth Education
- Policy Development
- SAM News

Solvency

Today SAM's solvency is rock solid. But it wasn't always so. Through the years there had been many ups and downs,

but the alliance had always persevered. The foundation of solvency reflects the financial picture, but is interconnected with leadership. Following George Smith's 2009 retirement, SAM had turbulent years with leadership changes and board turnover. By 2010 SAM was unable to meet its financial obligations; books were in the red with a \$75,000 shortfall of expenses compared to income. It was a dire situation. "SAM was circling the bowl", Matt Dunlap's words, interim executive director, tells it like it is. The building mortgage was \$650,000, and maintenance was bleeding funds. Life Membership discounts turned out to be a bad decision. Expectations of rent-paying tenants had not panned out, and memberships were down. When David Trahan became executive director in October 2011 it seemed like he had inherited a sinking ship. But failure was not an option. Not on his watch. With unbridled enthusiasm that is his trademark, he made decisions and changes that put SAM on the right course. SAM's survival depended on it.

For two years Trahan worked part time, often without taking pay. All maintenance was now done in house, and by volunteers. He renegotiated the property tax, securing an abatement after a realtor's assessment lowered the state's valuation. Revitalizing the network of Fish & Game clubs provided additional financial support. He signed on two tenants; the Maine Snowmobile Association and Lisa's Catering. Lisa's Catering is still a tenant. SAM's Endowment Fund was not accessible; it was \$180,000, and a \$250,000 balance was required to access funds. It was essential to get the building mortgage paid off. In 2018 an anonymous donor came forward with a challenge to provide matching funds to pay off the mortgage. Membership and supporters stepped up and made "Burn the Mortgage" a reality. In 2021 as the fear of Covid gripped the whole world, SAM's activities slowed, but did not stop. The Legislature was using Zoom for public



Jeff Zimba, a staunch defender of our second amendment rights consulted for SAM on this issue.

meetings, essentially cutting out input at public hearings. Trahan continued working without pay, and staff continued on a part-time basis.

Today SAM is officially debt free. Our organization has grown and made structural changes. The Endowment Fund is now at \$650,000 producing \$1,500 income each month. All financial obligations are met each month and SAM's financial footing is the best it's ever been. Solvency isn't just about money. It's more about what the decision-makers are doing about the money.

Protecting the Second Amendment

Every year SAM beats back between 25 and 30 bills that aim to take away our second amendment rights. David recalled when he became executive director he held the board to a promise: "Never ask me to lobby against the second amendment." His passion for this fundamental right has never lagged, battling against the gun control left who are relentless in their legislative efforts.

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David Trahan is flanked by Gerry Lavigne (left) and Bob Noonan at a coyote education seminar in 2012.

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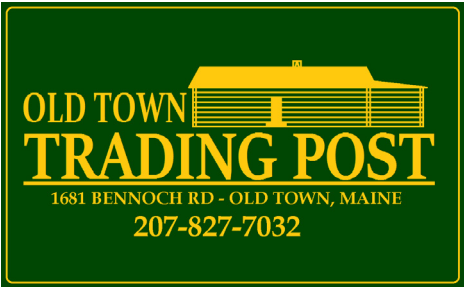
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The Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine (SAM) is a non-profit corporation founded in 1975 to promote conservation of Maine’s wildlife resources and to be an advocate for hunters, anglers, trappers and gun owners throughout the state.

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THE FOUNDERS OF S.A.M.
In the fall of 1975, CBS News ran a one hour TV show entitled, “The Guns of Autumn”. It was an openly blatant attack on hunting traditions and guns in general. Ed Armstrong of Hampden watched that show and was incensed by its content. The next morning Ed called Bud Leavitt, sports editor of the Bangor Daily News and told him that Maine needed a statewide active organization to protect hunting and gun owners’ rights. Bud gave him the telephone number of “Doc” Garcelon, an Augusta dentist who was then on the Board of Directors of the National Rifle Association (NRA). Ed called Doc, and they met the following week with the following individuals who, over the course of several months, formed the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine. The rest is history!

Ed Armstrong - Hampden
Maynard Connors - Franklin
Oscar Cronk - Wiscasset
“Doc” Garcelon - Augusta
“Mac” Herrick - Blue Hill
Tieche Shelton - Augusta
Harry Vanderweide - Augusta



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Executive Director’s Report

by David Trahan

Our State Elections are Finally Dead – They Are Now Run by a Handful of Wealthy Individuals – Former Second Amendment Supporter Troy Jackson Is Cashing In.

As you read through the SAM-ILA grades and endorsements, you will notice a glaring absence of Democrats seeking an endorsement or grade. Only one Democrat, Senator Craig Hickman-D Winthrop received the SAM-ILA endorsement. He is the last of a disappearing breed of candidates who will not compromise his principles for political expediency. Sen. Hickman is termed out, which means the traditional “Blue Dog Maine Democrat” will soon be extinct. One might ask, how did this happen? Maine is still rural; we hunt and like our firearm rights. The answer: Michael Bloomberg designed it to happen this way.

In April 2013, following the defeat of Congressional legislation to expand background checks, billionaire, and former New York City Mayor, Michael Bloomberg in a fit of anger, created the ultimate doomsday formula for all liberal billionaires to follow. He proclaimed that, he would “target” the four Democrats who voted against the legislation. Bloomberg and his surrogate funding organizations sent hundreds of letters to Democrat donors imploring them to withhold funds. They complied. And the message was clear: “You want money to run for office? Pledge your allegiance and kiss the ring.” Worse, they knew they could defeat these pro-gun “Blue Dog Democrats” in a primary. Far fewer voters, single minded liberals unimpeded by Republicans and unenrolled where their millions could punish anyone who resisted. That is exactly what happened.

Other issues followed suit. Planned Parenthood received money from

Michael Bloomberg (\$11 million), Warren Buffet (\$300 million), and MacKenzie Scott (\$275 million). In less than a decade, Planned Parenthood wiped out most pro-life Democrats. Leftist, pro-open-border immigration policy was successfully funded by George Soros (\$500 million), along with Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, and Sheldon Adelson. And the list of progressive billionaires with special agendas rolls on.

Fast forward to the miraculous transformation and lurch to the left of former state Senator, Troy Jackson, from the tiny northern Maine town of Allagash (population 237). The once staunch pro-life, antiabortion, pro-second amendment champion activist, anti-foreign labor lawmaker is now the Democrat opponent selected by Democrat Party elites to unseat Susan Collins. Jackson made a calculated decision to sell out all of his principles in exchange for financial support from the far-left followers of disgraced candidate, Graham Platner. Now you know why: There is no room in



Senator Craig Hickman - D Winthrop

the supposed “big tent” for any elected Democrat to disagree with the leftist Oligarchs and billionaires who now control Maine’s elections. Ironically, Troy Jackson is running on the platform of fighting these same Oligarchs and billionaires — all while abandoning his former principles to cash in on their money.

MAINE KNOWS HOWE



Maine Knows Howe is a Maine podcast featuring the adventures & stories of Master Maine Guide Bob Howe & his son Wyatt. For over 40 years Bob has operated a lodge in Maine and has given away outdoor healing opportunities to veterans, first responders and law enforcement through Pine Grove Programs. Meet the real people of Maine who have given back to those who have given the most.

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SAM at 50

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It takes extraordinary time, money and staff to successfully defend against the efforts of the gun control lobby which outspends SAM to wage their war on our rights. Each week during the legislative session, Trahan devotes hours and days researching and preparing testimony for hearings. He is the ever-present face of SAM in the halls of Augusta conversing with legislators, policy advisors and staffers, sought out by the governor’s office for consultation, unpacking the surface language of the bills and determining what are the consequences, why it will or won’t work. Early on, life mem-

ber Jeff Zimba had been SAM’s Firearms Policy Consultant, assisting in providing testimony on firearm bills, speaking and writing about the important work of defending this right.

Much legislation was enacted during this timeframe. In 2013 the Concealed Carry Loophole was Closed when SAM members led a stunning victory in passing LD 345 An Act to Ensure Confidentiality of Concealed Weapons Permit Holders Information. After the Sandy Hook School Shooting, a New York News outlet requested and received names/addresses of Concealed Carry permit holders through the Freedom of Information Act. BDN also requested this info, but SAM and organizations throughout Maine rallied on behalf of public safety and personal defense.

The 2016 Miracle on Question 3: SAM

defeats a referendum act to require background checks for private gun sales through phenomenal efforts by SAM and supporters. It was a battle against dark money and fraudulent signature gathering, won because the passion and drive of our side prevailed against all odds. Reform was necessary and SAM acted swiftly in proposing LD 742 in 2017, an amendment to Maine’s constitution requiring signatures on petitions to come from *both* of Maine’s two congressional districts, instead of the urban areas. “Give the citizen’s initiative back to Maine people.” said Trahan. Although LD 742 didn’t pass, several other SAM-proposed referendum reforms did.

In 2017, SAM introduced LD 1228 Act to prohibit the Creation of a Firearm Owner Registry. Now law, it was critical to enact this legislation as a registry was considered the “holy grail” as a stepping stone to further gun-control activities.

In 2019 Maine’s Red Flag law was defeated, replaced by SAM’s 2018 Yellow Flag Law LD 1811 An Act to Enhance Personal and Public Safety by Evaluations of and Judicial hearings for Persons in Protective Custody Regarding Risk of Harm and Restricting Access to Dangerous Weapons. Gov. Mills had sought Trahan’s help to work out an alternative solution to address gun control advocates’ Red Flag law. SAM had developed a good working relationship with Gov. Mills, enabling them to work together to defend our firearms community. Yellow Flag LD 1811 provided strong interventions for mental health patients while preserving individual liberties. LD 1811 had received bi-partisan support in the Legislature enabling its passage into law.

The tragic shootings in Lewiston during October 2023 re-ignited aggressive gun control activity, resulting in citizen’s Referendum Question 2, a separate “Red Flag” statute, promoted by the national gun control groups. This ini-

tiative passed during the 2025 election. This Red Flag statute does not replace or nullify the Yellow Flag law (LD 1811) created by SAM. Instead, Red Flag represents a separate path for effecting firearms confiscation from individuals perceived to be dangerous to themselves or others. Reckless and potentially devastating, this new Red Flag law was a setback for Maine and SAM. Lack of support from national gun rights organizations, difficulty raising campaign funds to fight Question 2, and a slanted and misleading wording on the ballot by Secretary of State Shenna Bellows on the ballot question led to that outcome. Referendum Question 2 was opposed by police organizations as a safety threat, yet voters ignored this guidance from law enforcement.

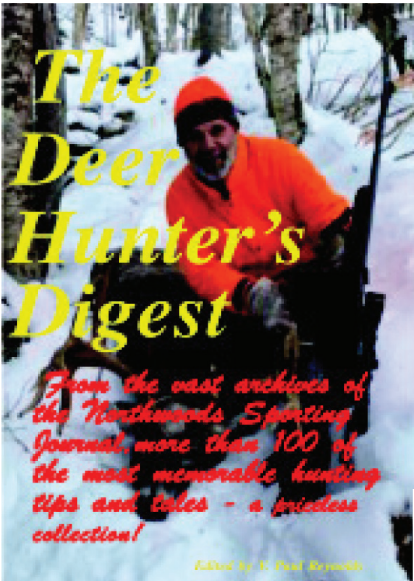
In 2024, SAM was unsuccessful opposing a proposed bill for a 72-hour waiting period to purchase a firearm. SAM continues to fight this, and has filed a lawsuit at the US Supreme Court, with the National Shooting Sports Foundation and Gun Owners of Maine as partners.

Deer Recovery and Land Conservation

As stewards of the land, SAM’s mission is to protect this precious resource, the foundation upon which everything rests. Conservation is always a tenuous balance between the interests of economic development and the responsibility to protect our wild spaces for recreation and to ensure suitable habitat for the wildlife we enjoy. SAM drafts legislation to put programs and funding in place, and has an active role in shaping policy in forestry, waterways and shorelines, fisheries and hatcheries, land use, and all wildlife.

Created by SAM in 1987, the Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) fund is Maine’s premier program to conserve land for natural, recreational and cultural val-

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-V. Paul Reynolds



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Field Notes from the Biologist

by Gerry Lavigne

Lonely and Confused

It was 10:30 am on the 5th of June and I was sitting at the kitchen table. I happened to glance out the window along a row of apple trees near the barn when I saw movement. It was a moose, only 20 yards behind the barn! I rushed (a relative term for a 75-year-old with bad knees) upstairs to get a better view from my office window.

I caught sight of the moose ambling through my 3-acre field. She was not feeding, nor was she moving purposefully. She seemed uneasy as she angled across toward my coyote bait in the northeast corner of the field. Wanting to get a closer look, I left the house and made my way to the field edge behind the barn. The young moose was still in the field, wandering slowly along the edge of the woods. Twice, she started to enter the woods, only to back out and continue to walk along the field edge. All this time, she seemed to be unable to decide where to go. Strange behavior. Eventually, she reached the entrance of my tote road. Hesitating briefly, she slipped from view into my woodlot.

My property abuts thousands of acres of timber company land in the Unorganized Territories, so moose sightings are not rare. But she was definitely acting off somehow. While near my bait, she posed for a picture. This moose was a yearling cow — last year’s calf. This incident brought to mind another strange encounter with a yearling cow moose a half century earlier.

I was a lean and fit 20-something, newly hired as DIFW’s deer research and management biologist. In the 70’s, long

before the internet era, DIFW biologists actually did field work. When this moose encounter occurred, I was doing a deer population survey in the vicinity of the Dead River in Maine’s Western Mountain region, some 20+ miles from any human habitation. This area had been the research site for my Master’s degree at UMO.

There is a technique to estimate deer populations involving sampling the number of pellet groups (deer poop) over a large area. Sounds weird, but it works! Starting at a randomly-chosen location on a logging road, I walked in a half mile along a compass bearing, turned 90 degrees and walked another half mile, then turned 90 degrees again back to the road (hopefully). At specified intervals along this transect, I recorded pellet groups in a 3-foot circle and moved on. All along, I recorded any remains of dead deer that I can see on each side of me.

These surveys were conducted on study areas encompassing about 100 square miles. We did them in spring just after snowmelt and before the woods “green up.” During the course of a survey, I had typically cruised over 50 miles through woods, swamps and cuttings. In the 1970s, I surveyed the Dead River area and another site in Waldo County each year. Definitely young man’s work. Over the course of my career at DIFW, I had conducted one or two of these population/mortality surveys annually from my grad student days in 1973 to near retirement in 2005. (Perhaps that’s why my knees are wrecked today!)

OK back to the moose. In late May

[M]oose calves spend every moment under the guidance and protection of their mother. They learn to be moose from her: where to go, what to eat, where to find water, how to avoid danger, everything.



This yearling cow moose wandered aimlessly around my farm in late May, 2026. She probably was recently separated from her mother, as the adult cow prepared to birth its next set of calves.

1977, I was in the midst of doing this survey on the slopes of Basin Mtn. in Pierce Pond TWP. I was about a quarter mile in from the logging road, cruising along in mature hardwoods counting deer poops when I heard a moose bleating behind me. I stopped as she approached plaintively bleating: bah, bah, bah. She walked to within 10 feet of me, occasionally bleating. She was small and she seemed gangly and thin. But then all moose look this way when shedding their winter coat. I took her to be a yearling and I wondered at the time if the adult cow was nearby. I’d been run up a tree by a protective cow moose in this area a few years prior to this encounter. But no adult moose appeared this time. I continued along my compass bearing, and for a few hundred yards, this little cow tagged along, occasionally bleating. Eventually, we parted ways.

What could have prompted this odd behavior? Was she orphaned, spending the winter without other moose around? Mind you, this was 3 years before Maine’s first moose hunting season. Also, it is possible this youngster had never seen a human before, since we were more than 20 miles from any human residences. Maybe she didn’t know enough to fear people. But why the bleating and uneasy behavior? I thought of brainworm, the deer parasite that is often fatal in moose. But I’d seen brainworm sick moose before and since, and the symptoms just didn’t fit. At the time, I chalked it up to an anomaly. But now,

I think this incident and the one at my home last May have a logical biological explanation.

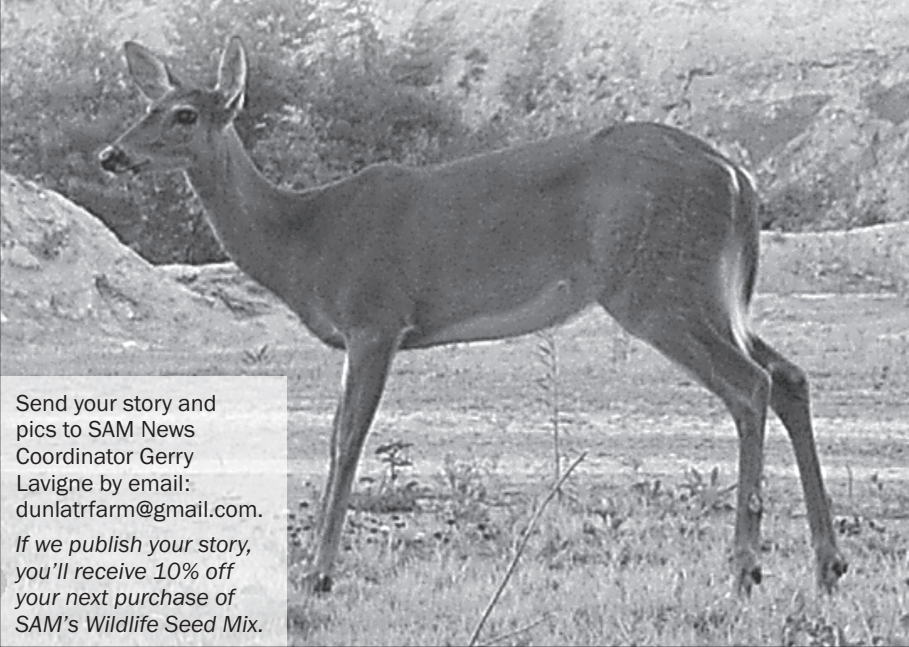
These youngsters could have been exhibiting some sort of separation anxiety. Since birth, moose calves spend every moment under the guidance and protection of their mother. They learn to be moose from her: where to go, what to eat, where to find water, how to avoid danger, everything. Now, just as they turn a year old, the cow moose drives them off just prior to birthing the next set of calves in late May or early June. The mother does this to devote full care and attention to the survival of her newborn offspring. Forced to live by its own wits for the first time, it is understandable if these yearlings seem a bit lonely and confused. Fortunately for them, yearling cow moose often are able to reunite with their mother after a month or so of isolation. Yearling bulls, however are more likely to wander and sometimes associate with other bulls.

This separation phase poses some risks for yearling moose. In wolf country, unwary yearlings may be vulnerable to predation, until they develop tactics to avoid attacks. In people country, wandering yearlings are at greater risk of collisions with vehicles. Also, during June and early July a yearling bull or two always seems to make the evening news as they wander into downtown Bangor, and other Maine cities.

Fortunately for us all, yearling moose eventually “get over it.” ●

Sam Seed Stories

Got a food plot planted with SAM’s Wildlife Seed Mix? Got some cool pics of deer or other wildlife using your plot? Harvest a deer or turkey on your plot? Drop us a line and let us know how it’s working out for you.



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Recreational Safety at DIFW

by Ron Fournier,
DIFW Recreational Safety Supervisor

Too Many Mishaps

With summer nearly in the rear-view mirror, it’s hard to believe that we’ll be in full swing with fall hunting seasons so soon. Each year seems to fly by quicker than the last. This summer has been exceptionally busy with programming, and we’ve introduced several new opportunities that were well attended. A new partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation resulted in a program called J.A.K.E.S, which stands for Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics, and Skills. We had 80 folks join us for a full slate of hunting focused topics, boater education, trapping, archery, and angling and the smiles and feedback were outstanding. Young and old enjoyed learning new skills and we focused on pathways for new hunters to get started in hunting and highlighted the additional youth hunting as new opportunities. I anticipate that this will be an annual program offered and the goal is to host this in various parts of the state. We also offered several new Next Steps programs specific to bear hunting and bear trapping. These 4-hour sessions covered every aspect of getting started, including tactics and techniques, as well as safety, tree stand use, ethics, and understanding of this important species and Maine’s conservation efforts around black bears.

Camp Northwoods was another large program that takes place at the University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Bryant Pond. This was the 11th year of Camp Northwoods, and it continues to be the highlight of the year for many. Department personnel from Maine Wardens, Wildlife and Fisheries, Information and Education, including Recreational Safety all contributed to the program alongside the talented staff at Bryant Pond. This unique program is packed full of outdoors skills, safety lessons, conservation education, and fun! One hundred youth ages 10-14 participate each year, earning their hunter education and ATV safety certification while there. I want to thank all involved in making this camp so successful and a special thank you to the team at Bryant Pond 4-H for the strong partnership that stems over the past 11 years with the program.

Lost Your Certification? Each year, as the various seasons approach, we start to see an increase in inquiries from folks looking for their hunter safety certificate or their numbers. It spikes just prior to antlerless deer permit applications, and moose permits being issued, as well as from folks traveling to other states. Whether you took hunter education, bowhunter safety, trapper education, boater education, or ATV safety, if you lost your card, or took the course but never got started, do not be discour-

aged- we are here to help! Simply email jaime.berard@maine.gov, or [Ronald.fournier@maine.gov](mailto:fournier@maine.gov) and provide your full name and date of birth and we will reissue your card or provide you with your certification numbers.

Take a course, but never got started? Give us a shout and we’ll get you back on track. We have Next Steps workshops available, and you are always welcome to sit in on a course as a refresher as well. Don’t let life get in the way of getting outdoors, enjoying Maine’s woods and waters, whether it’s in a boat, on an ATV, or with a bow or firearms in tow. We are here to serve you. Traveling out of state? You very likely will need a copy of your hunter safety or bowhunter safety card with you. Plan now and avoid the last-minute panic on your next trip abroad.

Recent Concerns: Despite all the great work our volunteers and staff are doing to provide safety course instruction and enrichment programs, as well as our online resources, I feel I need to address this spring/ summer and a growing list of concerns. First, I’d like to take a moment to acknowledge the folks that we’ve lost this season while they were participating in activities in the woods, on the trails, and on the water. Every single accident and fatality is of great loss. Not only do we lose that person, but the family, friends, and coworkers that lose a loved one are left with that hole in their lives. Our unit is focused on safety, guidance, best practices, and creating a culture of safe and responsible enjoyment of the outdoors. Many of the outdoors activities that we all love and enjoy participating in also have risks and those risks changes frequently. Sometimes the variables are due to weather, terrain, operation, or others, but there are things that are in our control and ways that we can reduce risk.

We have recently had several fatalities on ATV’s and UTV’s and each is devastating. This past weekend we lost a 15-year-old and a 20-year-old, and earlier in the year we had four other fatalities ranging in ages from 40-75 years old. Just this morning we had another young rider struck by a motor vehicle while crossing a road. This is something that we take very seriously and while we see an increasing use of ATV’s and UTV’s and other offroad vehicles, we must continue to educate and inform. One of the common factors in serious accidents resulting in injury or death continues to be excessive speed for the conditions, failure to wear an appropriate helmet, and in the instance of UTV’s or side-by-sides, wearing a safety belt or harness system. Many of the vehicles in this class have doors or safety netting,

but without the use of seatbelts, operators are frequently ejected or partially ejected, resulting in a rollover/crushing injury. It’s devastating and seemingly more common. When folks think of excessive speed they typically think of high speed, but it can be as simple as driving just a bit too fast to negotiate a turn, a wayward rock or obstruction that presents itself, a washed-out culvert, or a stopped vehicle just around the corner. UTV’s also increase the risk due to multiple passengers, adding to the complexity and potential risk.

One thing that can help to reduce risk is to simply speak up; if you see someone getting ready to ride, regardless of age, encourage them to always wear their helmet and buckle up every time in a UTV. It’s hard sometimes for folks to speak up, but it can and will help to save lives. Driving with a friend or family member and feel like you’re going too fast? Speak up! It’s easy to say but can be hard to do as it can be seen as “uncool” especially for our younger folks, but it’s important. When we convince ourselves “it won’t happen to me...” we are headed down the wrong path. We’ve all made mistakes along the way and maybe did not heed the safety warnings each time, but it’s important that we don’t take our future for granted. Too many people want YOU to enjoy the ride and return home safely.

We have also seen a high number of land-owner-related complaints from folks that have graciously allowed riding on their land, which unfortunately is resulting in even more of an uphill battle to gain access. We discuss this at length in our courses about respecting landowners as well as the trails maintained by all of the dedicated clubs in the state, yet it’s disheartening to see increased abuse, disrespect, and complete disregard for private landowners in various areas. One person can make a positive impact, or a very negative impact. This is another area where some self-policing can really be effective. This concern will continue to be addressed, but to be honest, I’m not sure what it’s going to take to get to the folks that need to hear this. I want to thank the private landowners who continue to provide access and opportunity to people and understanding that a few bad apples shouldn’t spoil it for all. I’m one of those landowners, and luckily, I’ve had more good expe-

riences than bad so far — and my land remains unposted.

Another concern this summer has been boating and on the water activities. Maine attracts a wide range of activities from swimming and small craft, to angling, watersports, and so on. For a fairly small state, we have a high percentage of water-based activities on the rivers, lakes, and ponds. So many of the fatalities and serious injuries are preventable if people of all ages consistently wore an appropriate life jacket. We’ve witnessed several paddleboard incidents where a PFD could have prevented drowning, and similar in kayaks and canoes and small craft. PFDs now come is so many choices and options that are comfortable to wear, and they really can make the difference between a survivable near miss or a fatality.

This is another area that I believe peer-to-peer self-policing can help to change the culture of disregarding wearing a life vest, regardless of age. While we don’t provide swimming instruction, it is strongly recommended that anyone who enjoys being on or near the water, even on a dock, or riverbank, have basic swimming ability, wear a PFD, or seek a safer place to enjoy a day of fishing or wading. A quick misstep on a dock or pier can be the same as falling out of a boat, and with cold water or current or other obstacles, injury or worse can result. It’s not just small children - people of any age can have an accident. Other ways to minimize risk in areas where fishing from shore, docks, or piers is occurring; having a throwable device, a throw bag used for water rescue, or a pole nearby can help, but moving water and current presents additional risk.

In closing, please look out for the folks around you, your family, friends, the neighbor’s kid, and even folks you don’t know, and if you see something that your gut instinct tells you is risky, step in and say something. Encourage safer behavior, and rather than being heavy, take a positive approach. In the end, we all need to look out for each other. Maine has so many great opportunities for outdoor recreation, and just as many risks that are associated with them.

Yours in conservation,
Ronald Fournier ronald.fournier@maine.gov or 207-441-6562.

Calendar of Events

- October**

3 Long Gong Rifle Match at SCARBOROUGH FISH & GAME ASSOC. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$20 using .22lr rifles only at 300 yards. For more info visit: www.scarfg.org

4-11 Fryeburg Fair in Fryeburg. Come see us at the SAM Booth. Stop by, say hello, and check out our merchandise, memberships, and raffles!

10 Hunter Safety Class at SCARBOROUGH FISH & GAME ASSOC. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more info visit: www.scarfg.org

10-11 NRA Registered 3 x 600 Downeast Challenge at SCARBOROUGH FISH & GAME ASSOC. Two-day F-Class rifle match. For more info visit: www.scarfg.org
- 17** Annual Hunter’s Rifle Sight-In Day at SCARBOROUGH FISH & GAME ASSOC. from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. We will help you get your rifle sighted in and ready for the hunt. For more info visit: www.scarfg.org

24 Open Rifle Shoot 600 yards at SCARBOROUGH FISH & GAME ASSOC. from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$20. For more info visit: www.scarfg.org

24 Youth Day Hunter’s Breakfast at MONTICELLO FISH & GAME CLUB. From 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. The cost is \$10.

November

15 Trapshooting Annual Turkey Shoot at SCARBOROUGH FISH & GAME ASSOC. All day event. Bring your shotgun, win a turkey and enjoy camaraderie and free lunch. Rain date is 11/22. For more info visit: www.scarfg.org



President’s Corner

by Mike Parker

Ballot Box Tips

When was the last time you heard somebody naturally say “Ayuh” in a strong Maine accent? How about hearing someone look at a newborn baby and say, “Ain’t he cunnin’?” I bet it’s been a while. Ask the same question twenty years ago and the answers would be much different. Remember when everyone ate baked beans on Saturday nights and served brown bread from a can (except for the Saturdays when there was a community bean “suppah,” of course)? Then everyone headed to the church or Grange Hall and got a yeast roll as an added bonus. How about when the first day of deer season felt like a holiday, whether you were a hunter or not? Everyone attended a hunter’s breakfast at 4 a.m. on opening morning before heading out at first light. Recently, I pulled up an old Tim Sample routine on YouTube for my family. While I was cracking up, my kids were scratching their heads, wondering why Dad found it so funny. That’s concerning.

None of those things disappeared overnight, yet it feels like they vanished pretty fast. Their disappearance was never expected or even considered. It was simply the way of life we knew, so nobody thought about preserving it. That’s how traditions disappear.

The political divide in our state is increasingly cultural. More and more, decisions affecting rural communities are being made by people who have never lived a rural life. People who have never spent a week at hunting camp or cut firewood for the winter. People who have never experienced the camaraderie of neighbors who may disagree on plenty of things but still find reasons to get along without believing the other side is evil.

As a rural Mainer, I often feel like I’m being talked down to rather than listened to. Old-time Mainers were known for listening more than they spoke. That seems to be disappearing too.

Recently, in my own town, a controversial project was proposed by someone from a Boston suburb. He was looking to develop a tract of blueberry land that local people had enjoyed, worked, and used for generations. His project may ultimately have proven successful and benefited the community. However, when he stood in front of a room full of bearded, Carhartt-and-flannel-wearing Mainers who had arrived in pickup trucks, he spent more time telling us why we wanted it and explaining why we didn’t understand its importance than he did explaining how it would benefit the town. He didn’t seek input from the community or ask questions about our concerns. The message wasn’t, “Help me understand your apprehension.” The message was, “I know better than you what you want, need, and value.” That battle was won. The town pulled

together, the project was scrapped, and the land is now up for sale, good hunting land, I might add.

Too often, though, the attitude that Maine’s way of life is outdated and needs to be replaced with something more exciting, more urban, and more modern ends up winning.

The people who use our land and waters for recreation and employment know them best. Sportsmen, guides, loggers, farmers, and rural families have been stewards of these places for generations. Most don’t want to lose their way of life.

But local knowledge is increasingly being replaced by outside opinions. Decisions are more frequently driven by people and organizations with little understanding of the communities they affect. The 2014 bear referendum demonstrated just how willing outside groups were to spend heavily trying to influence a tradition they neither practiced nor fully understood. How did they gain support? By offering money, influence, and promises to some locals who were willing to cast aside traditions they had grown up respecting. Or by newcomers from away who had never experienced rural Maine traditions.

So, what will rural Maine look like in the future? Will it be shaped by people who live here, work here, raise families here, and respect those who choose to live a little differently from the rest of the country? Or will it be shaped by progressives who see rural communities as places that need to be remade into a homogenized, one size fits all culture?

If you don’t want that future, then you need to get involved. You need to get out and vote. The way of life many of us value will not survive on its own. It survives only when each generation respects what the previous generation built and understands why it is worth preserving. That’s where I recognized my own failure while watching that old Tim Sample routine from 1985.

This November, as we choose the leaders who will shape Maine’s future, we should ask two simple questions: First, do they respect the traditions, values, and rural way of life that helped make Maine what it is? And second, have they ever had, or even heard of, brown bread in a can?

The answer ought to be “Yessah” to both. Because once a tradition disappears, it doesn’t come back. ●

The way of life many of us value will not survive on its own. It survives only when each generation respects what the previous generation built and understands why it is worth preserving.



SPORTSMAN’S ALLIANCE OF MAINE - INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

SPORTSMAN’S ALLIANCE OF MAINE – INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION – “SAM-ILA”

President: Dennis Keschl Vice President: Butch Moore
Clerk: Lynn Madison Treasurer: Mike Shaw
Nick Archer Christi Elliott Gary Lamb Joseph LoPorto Brian Smith

Address: 205 Church Hill Road, Suite 3, Augusta, Maine 04330
Telephone: 207-623-4589 Website: www.samila.org
Facebook: Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine Institute for Legislative Action

GENERAL PURPOSE.
The Corporation is organized and operated for the purpose of preserving Maine’s Outdoor Heritage, including but not limited to hunting, fishing, trapping, and 2nd Amendment rights and will work within the meaning of 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (as amended) or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations which are recognized as exempt from tax under such 501(c)(4).

MISSION STATEMENT:
» To influence public policy to preserve Maine’s Outdoor Heritage, including but not limited to hunting, fishing, trapping, and 2nd Amendment rights.
» Develop and provide information on wildlife resources, field sports and conservation programs that will benefit such resources, sports and programs.
» Educate the public concerning the American heritage of hunting, trapping and fishing.
» Initiate and participate in litigation in the courts when necessary to protect the beneficial pursuits of hunting, trapping, fishing, and scientific wildlife management practices.
» Promote and explain field sports, wildlife conservation and scientific wildlife management practices through literature, films, the press, television, and radio.
» Provide organizations throughout the state with financial and management assistance to achieve these purposes.
» Defend and protect the right of individuals to keep, use, and bear firearms.

Legislative Report

by David Trahan, Executive Director SAM-ILA

Seventy-Two Hour Waiting Period Law has been Appealed

Filed by attorneys at Clement & Murphy and financially backed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, lawyers have now officially filed what is called Petition for Writ of Certiorari, leap-frogging the lower court and going directly to the US Supreme Court. It was filed on August 25, 2026.

The Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine, flanked by Gun Owners of Maine (GOME) and the National Shooting Sports Foundation filed the initial challenge and after SAM and Gome raised nearly \$200,000 filed in Bangor Federal Court and won an injunction and two additional court actions. The Appeals court in Boston rescinded the injunction and forced our lawyers to appeal to the US Supreme Court. The National Shooting Sports Foundation has taken the lead. Now the Supreme Court must decide whether to take up the appeal. We will keep you posted.

Supporting the SAM-ILA

If you are interested in donating to the SAM-ILA, please fill out the form below and mail to SAM-ILA, 205 Church Hill Road, Suite 3, Augusta, ME 04330, or make a donation online at www.samila.org

Please note that the SAM-ILA is a 501(c)4 organization and donations are NOT tax deductible as charitable donations.

Yes, I want to support the SAM-ILA!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Amount: _____

Please send this form and check to: SAM-ILA, 205 Church Hill Road, Suite 3, Augusta, ME 04330. Electronic donations can be made by going to www.samila.org.

SAM-ILA is a 501(c)(4); donations are NOT tax deductible as charitable donations for federal tax purposes.

SAM-ILA 2026 Election Guide

2026 SAM-ILA Grading and Endorsements

The Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine-Institute for Legislative Action (SAM-ILA) is once again grading and endorsing candidates for public office in Maine. The candidate ratings are shaped in part by the results of our Annual Member Surveys and current legislative priorities. Many of the grades reflect the damaging legislation driven by national special interests.

Candidates are evaluated through questionnaires, voting records, leadership history, public statements, and, when appropriate, interviews. Endorsements generally go to incumbents with demonstrated support for outdoor issues. Exceptions may be made for well-known former legislators, outdoor community leaders, or other candidates with strong records, questionnaires and public support.

A+ Grades and Endorsements

As a general rule, only incumbents with strong pro-sportsmen and women voting records are eligible for an **A+ grade and endorsement**.

The Board may make exceptions when:

- An incumbent legislator is running for a different chamber or an open seat.
- Neither candidate is an incumbent, but one is well known to SAM-ILA.
- A candidate has an established record as a former legislator, Fish and Game Club leader, SAM member, or recognized friend of the outdoor community.

These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis by the SAM-ILA Board of Directors. This policy exists because some candidates without established records have provided favorable questionnaire responses but later changed their position.

For candidates with no known history, **A+Q** is the highest possible grade and is based solely on the questionnaire.

Issues and Mission

During legislative sessions, SAM-ILA tracks proposals affecting its members and Maine’s outdoor community, including:

- Hunting, fishing, and trapping
- Firearm rights

- Land conservation
- Referendum reform
- State rulemaking and municipal ordinances
- Federal legislation

Unlike organizations focused on a single issue, SAM-ILA’s priorities may vary from year to year. **Firearm rights and hunting receive the greatest weight** in determining grades and endorsements. The Board of Directors make all final decisions.

Candidate Interviews

At its discretion, the Board interviews candidates for higher offices, including governor, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House. The Executive Director may also contact candidates to clarify their positions.

Roll-Call Votes

Candidates’ own voting records are an important part of evaluating incumbents. The Executive Director tracks these votes, while the Board determines which roll calls will be used for grading.

2026 Candidate Grades

SAM-ILA works to maintain a fair and transparent grading system that iden-

tifies candidates whose positions generally align with the priorities of SAM members.

Grading Key:

Incumbent: *
Did Not Submit Questionnaire: ?
Grade based solely on Questionnaire: Q
Grade based solely on Voting Record: VR
Grade based on Voting Record and Questionnaire: VRQ
Endorsed by SAM-ILA: END
Candidate is Endorsed by Gun Sense: CEGSC

Political races are increasingly influenced by out-of-state money, special interests, and misleading negative advertising. SAM-ILA provides voters with dependable information based on firsthand legislative experience. We work directly with lawmakers, negotiate policy, and help shape laws affecting Maine’s outdoor community.

We do not tell anyone how to vote. Voting is a personal decision. Our goal is to explain the issues and candidates’ positions so voters can make informed choices. We are committed to conducting this work with integrity.

United States House of Representatives

First District



Chellie Pingree Democrat , Incumbent

Grade-F

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree is seeking her 10th term in the U.S. House of Representatives. She has always been a pro-gun control Democrat and has never received a SAM-ILA grade above an F.



Ronald Russell Republican

Grade-?

Ron Russell did not return his SAM-ILA questionnaire. From his website: “Ron Russell is a West Point graduate who served 30 years in the United States Army. I am an Airborne Ranger Green Beret, who is looking to continue that service as your representative to the United States Congress.”

Second District



Mathew Dunlap Democrat, Former State Representative, Secretary of State, State Auditor

Grade A+*

Mathew Dunlap is a long-time friend of sportsmen and women, the SAM- ILA included. He once served as House Chair of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee where he helped pass legislation to create Lifetime licenses, a Lifetime license endowment fund, the expanded archery season and supported the Land for Maine’s Future program. He served for a short time as SAM’s Executive Director (just prior to the current Executive Director), and he often writes for the SAM newsletter. Matt is well known to the outdoor community. Matt received a perfect grade on his SAM-ILA questionnaire and has a strong record on conservation and firearm rights. Matt also helped create the Youth Fish and Game Club in Milford.



Paul LePage Republican, Former Governor

Grade A+*

Former Governor Paul LePage received the grade of A+ on his SAM-ILA Questionnaire. Governor LePage has always been an unmovable force in support of the Second Amendment. During his tenure as Governor, Constitutional Carry was passed with his strong support. In addition, when newspaper outlets were using concealed carry permit data for political purposes, the SAM-ILA introduced legislation to make concealed carry data confidential. Rep. Corey Wilson sponsored the legislation, and it passed and was signed by Governor LePage. Governor LePage also vetoed earlier Red Flag legislation that ultimately passed the legislature during Governor Mills’ administration.

Governor Paul LePage also supported repeal of Maine’s controversial saltwater fishing license. The legislation to repeal the license was a SAM-ILA bill, sponsored by then Senator, David Trahan, R-Lincoln County. Governor LePage cleared the way for the repeal and then signed the bill.

LePage’s answers on our questionnaire related to conservation were very good and supportive of all of our outdoor issues.

Footnote: The Second Congressional District race is among the most closely watched in the nation. We recognize that this contest has generated strong interest and that no assessment will satisfy every candidate’s supporters. Although neither candidate has held public office in recent years, we believe both would represent our interests well in Washington D.C.

*Grades are based solely on the 2026 SAM-ILA questionnaire.

NAME	US HOUSE DISTRICT	INCUMBENT	PARTY	SAM QUESTIONNAIRE	SAM VOTING RECORD GRADE	SAM COMBINED GRADE	SAM ENDORSED	GUN SENSE ENDORSED (pro gun control)
CHELLIE PINGREE	1	YES	D		F	F		YES
RONALD RUSSELL	1	NO	R			?		
MATT DUNLAP	2	NO	D	A+		A+		
PAUL LEPAGE	2	NO	R	A+		A+		

LEGEND: F (Failed) = Sup/Opp bill
P (Passed) = Sup/Opp bill
BLUE = SAM GRADE AND/OR ENDORSEMENT

Election Day 2026:
Tuesday, November 3

United States Senate



Susan Collins Republican, Incumbent

Grade A+ Endorsed

The Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine Institute for Legislative Action endorses Senator Susan Collins for reelection to the United States Senate.

The contrast between the remaining candidate in this race could not be more stark. Senator Collins understands the tremendous responsibility that comes with serving in the United States Senate. She is humble, thoughtful in researching issues, willing to engage with interested parties, and consistently carries herself with dignity.

No Senator in the U.S. Senate or member of the U.S. House of Representatives has a stronger record on conservation or a more consistent commitment to the interests of those who care about hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation than Senator Collins.

When PFAS chemicals were discovered in Maine waters and farmlands, we called Senator Collins and asked for help funding the expansion of Maine laboratories to accelerate the removal of these dangerous chemicals from our wildlife and food supplies. She delivered.

When we learned that more than half of Maine’s hatcheries exceeded their Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Environmental Protection Agency effluent discharge licenses, Senator Collins helped secure federal funding for a desperately needed new hatchery and additional funding to upgrade several existing hatcheries.

Senator Collins understands that our political discourse has devolved into an angry and, at times, dangerous free-for-all shaped by demagogues who seek to divide our state and nation. We need statesmanship, not rhetoric that deepens division. We need leaders who recognize after elections, they represent all Maine people and who conduct themselves with integrity, self-control, moral clarity, and a commitment to help bring a fractured nation back together.

Definitions

Statesman – “The art or practice of conducting governmental affairs; political leadership characterized by wisdom, breadth of vision, and regard for the general welfare rather than partisan interest.”

Demagogue – “A political leader who gains power by exploiting people’s emotions, fears, and prejudices rather than using rational arguments. Demagogues often make false claims, pit groups against one another, and use charismatic rhetoric to manipulate the public for personal or political gain.”

Susan Collins: Conservation & Outdoor Recreation Record

Born and raised in Aroostook County, Senator Collins has long been a strong voice for Maine’s sportsmen and women and has worked to protect the recreational spaces that sustain Maine’s outdoor heritage and traditions.

Senator Collins has been a longtime defender of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), our nation’s most successful conservation program, and has led efforts to advance federal legislation protecting natural spaces in Maine and across the country.

As Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Collins has defended Maine’s national parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, and estuaries against proposed budget cuts. She has also used her leadership position to secure millions of dollars for conservation and outdoor recreation projects throughout Maine.

Key Legislative Victories and Ongoing Efforts

- Original cosponsor of the landmark Great American Outdoors Act, which provided permanent, full funding for the LWCF at \$900 million annually. This funding has expanded access for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation; supported working forests and ranches; protected critical lands in national parks, wildlife refuges, and national

Troy Jackson Democrat

Troy Jackson did not send in a SAM-ILA questionnaire. He is not endorsed by “Gun Sense” but he is endorsed by “Maine Gun Safety Coalition” and “Moms Demand Action.”

Grade of F

Troy Jackson is a replacement candidate for his friend Graham Platner. In past years’ elections leading up to his race for Governor, (came in third) Troy Jackson, who came from Allagash, was supported by groups like the NRA and SAM-ILA. Like a light switch, when he decided to run for Governor and then the U.S. Senate, he completely reversed his positions on many issues to align with national progressive organizations. Jackson went from pro-Second Amendment to “all in” on gun control. In what can only be described as self-serving and hypocritical, “Maine Gun Safety Coalition” and “Moms Demand Action” endorsed Jackson.

In addition to turning his back on the Second Amendment, when Troy Jackson served as Maine Senate President, he helped to orchestrate the “pairing of votes” a bait and switch type obscure maneuver that allowed the three-day



waiting period law to go into effect. In other words, when the law failed to pass, he allowed four Democrat Senators, two that were not present in the Senate Chamber to void their votes. By doing so it allowed a failing vote to pass.

Senator Jackson also tried to scuttle the SAM-ILA’s highly successful deer yard initiative, (10,000 acres of deer yards protected, mostly in Aroostook County). He attempted to refer the legislation back to committee where it would die. Only after reaching out to the Aroostook County Conservation Association and SAM members were we able to overcome his opposition. This initiative started as a request from sportsmen in Northern, Eastern and Western Maine where deer have nearly disappeared.

NAME	OFFICE	INCUMBENT	PARTY	SAM QUESTIONNAIRE	SAM VOTING RECORD GRADE	SAM COMBINED GRADE	SAM ENDORSED	ENDORSED by pro gun control groups
SUSAN COLLINS	US SENATE	YES	R	A+			YES	
TROY JACKSON	US SENATE	NO	D		F	F		YES

LEGEND: F (Failed) = Sup/Opp bill
P (Passed) = Sup/Opp bill
BLUE = SAM GRADE AND/OR ENDORSEMENT

forests; and funded state and local recreation projects, from ballparks to trail systems. The law also incorporated the Restore Our Parks Act, which provided \$9.5 billion for critical repairs and maintenance at national parks, including Acadia National Park.

- Cosponsored the John D. Dingell Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, which permanently reauthorized the LWCF. The law included provisions from the bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act, including establishing a national “Open Until Closed” policy; dedicating 3% of LWCF funds to additional public access for sportsmen and women; authorizing funding for shooting sports facilities; reauthorizing wildlife conservation programs; and allowing permitting and leasing of public lands for shooting and target ranges.
- Cosponsored legislation enacted in 2022 that designated the York River as part of the National Park Service’s Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- Cosponsored the Outdoors for All Act, which expanded outdoor recreational opportunities in low-income communities and codified the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program, which funds new trails and green spaces.
- Cosponsored the America the Beautiful Act, which continues the work of the Great American

Outdoors Act by reauthorizing the Legacy Restoration Fund to address maintenance backlogs in national parks and public lands.

Protecting Maine’s Natural Resources Against PFAS

Senator Collins has secured millions of dollars through her leadership on the Senate Appropriations Committee to protect Mainers, wildlife, agriculture, and the environment from PFAS “forever chemicals” while helping position Maine as a national leader in PFAS research.

Clean Water and Land

Since 2021, Senator Collins has secured \$155 million for 82 drinking water and wastewater projects across Maine. Many of these infrastructure improvements have helped reduce PFAS contamination affecting water supplies, farms, wildlife, and natural resources.

Leading Research

Senator Collins secured \$18 million to establish a PFAS Center of Excellence at the USDA New England Plant, Soil, and Water Research Laboratory at the University of Maine. The center is now at the forefront of PFAS testing, public education, and outreach to communities impacted by contamination.

She has also directed an additional \$23 million to support the center and its ongoing research.

Governor of Maine

Two candidates running for Governor took the time to fill out the SAM-ILA Questionnaire. Hannah Pingree-D did not. She is endorsed by Gun Sense and should be viewed as supporting new gun control measures.

“Gun Sense” is Moms Demand Action and Everytown for Gun Safety. Both organizations are funded in part by former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Their agenda includes Universal Background Checks, Red Flag Laws, banning high-capacity magazines, repealing liability protections for firearm manufacturers, banning some semi-automatic firearms, so-called Ghost guns, banning “Glock switches,” just for some examples.

Sen. Rick Bennett-I and Bobby Charles-R, received A+ grades on their SAM-ILA questionnaires. Sen. Rick Bennett-I, had a voting record grade of A from the last legislative session. Because both candidates were nearly identical on the issues we asked them to write up their history and experience on firearms, conservation and outdoor issues.

Bobby Charles Republican

SAM-ILA Questionnaire-Grade A+

The following writeup was provided by the candidate:

Statement to the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine

Growing up in Wayne, Maine, my connection to our state’s outdoors began at an early age. In those formative years, I spent my time target shooting and fishing our local lakes and streams alongside good friends, later taking to the woods to hunt as I grew older. Those early experiences taught me the deep traditions of conservation, self-reliance, and respect for nature that define our state. That passion for stewardship was further forged through scouting, where I earned the rank of Eagle Scout, a foundational milestone that reinforced my commitment to community, leadership, and preserving Maine’s outdoor heritage for future generations.

My dedication to firearm safety and responsible gun ownership started when I earned my NRA Safe Hunter certification at the age of 12. A lifetime of recreational shooting and outdoor sports, combined with my service as a Naval Intelligence Officer and federal investigator, has given me an uncompromising perspective on our constitutional rights. As your candidate for Governor, I stand as a vocal defender of law-abiding gun owners and strongly oppose unconstitutional measures like Maine’s red flag laws. Vague confiscation mandates undermine due process and directly infringe upon our Second Amendment rights, penalizing responsible citizens rather than focusing on real public safety solutions.



I am a deep supporter of the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine because SAM serves as the vital voice in protecting our outdoor heritage, defending constitutional rights, and advocating for sensible land and wildlife management.

My connection to SAM’s mission was also shaped by my long friendship with the late George Smith, SAM’s admired former executive director of 18 years, with whom I shared a deep love for Maine’s outdoor and conservation values. George was kind enough to write a warm review of my book Eagles and Evergreens, a collection celebrating Maine’s rural roots alongside my work in Cherish America.

One of the primary reasons I stand behind SAM is your commitment to passing these values to the next generation through initiatives like the SAM Outdoor Education Center and your youth programs. SAM remains an indispensable partner in keeping kids’ active outdoors, and I look forward to working side-by-side with you to protect hunter access and safeguard Maine’s way of life.

Robert “Bobby” Charles

Sen. Richard Bennett Independent

SAM-ILA Questionnaire, Grade A+

Voting Record from 2025-26 legislative session, Grade of A

This writeup was provided by the candidate:

“Rick has been endorsed by Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine in every one of his elections and has been a SAM member for decades. His support for SAM has been longstanding, consistent, and impactful.

“Rick has been endorsed by SAM not just because of his answers in a survey, but because of his long record of supporting SAM’s work. Maine sporting heritage has been part of Rick’s lived experience since he was a kid out in the woods with his dad while his dad was hunting, and then Rick has been hunting since he was old enough. Ever since Rick was old enough to hunt, he has been hunting regularly with my family, mostly at their hunting camp in Greenwood Maine,

“His father, Dean Bennett, wrote Ghost Buck: One Man’s Family and Their Hunting Traditions, a tribute to their family’s hunting traditions back to the 1800s in Western Maine—using the in-depth records from the family hunting journal.

“Rick has long supported the Land for Maine’s Future program, includ-



ing cosponsoring a bill to replenish the program through a general fund bond. And Rick is a strong supporter of the 2nd amendment.

“Sportsmen are used to people who fly into politics and maybe say the right things. But Rick has actually shown up and has a record. Not only is he a friend of sportsmen, but he is also a sportsman.”

Hannah Pingree Democrat

Pingree did not respond to the SAM-ILA Questionnaire. Grade-F, Voting Record-?

Overall Grade of F



Election Day 2026:
Tuesday, November 3

Are you
registered
to vote?

NAME	OFFICE	DISTRICT	INCUMBENT	PARTY	1109 - Mag Ban	1126 - Ghost Gun	1120 - Safe Storage	1364 - Lead Ammo	1821 - FFL	SAM QUESTIONNAIRE	SAM VOTING RECORD GRADE	SAM COMBINED GRADE	SAM ENDORSED	GUN SENSE ENDORSED (pro gun control)
RICHARD BENNETT	GOVERNOR	STATEWIDE	NO	I	P	P	P	P		A+	A+	A+		
ROBERT CHARLES	GOVERNOR	STATEWIDE	NO	R						A+		A+		
HANNAH PINGREE	GOVERNOR	STATEWIDE	NO	D								F		YES

LEGEND: F (Failed) = Sup/Opp bill P (Passed) = Sup/Opp bill BLUE = SAM GRADE AND/OR ENDORSEMENT

Maine Senate

NAME	DISTRICT	INCUMBENT	PARTY	1109 - Mag Ban	1126 - Ghost Gun	1120 - Safe Storage	1364 - Lead Ammo	1821 - FFL	SAM QUESTIONNAIRE	SAM VOTING RECORD GRADE	SAM COMBINED GRADE	SAM ENDORSED	GUN SENSE ENDORSED (pro gun control)
LUCIEN J.B. DAIGLE	1	No	R	P	P	P	P		A+	A+	A+	YES	
VAUGHN J. MCLAUGHLIN	1	No	D										
HAROLD L. “TREY” STEWART	2	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
HAROLD S. HULL	2	No	D										
STANLEY B. SHORT	3	No	D										
JOEL R. STETKIS	3	No	R						A-		A-		
CHAD R. PERKINS	4	No	R	P	P	P	P		A+	A+	A+	YES	
LISA G. KALP	4	No	D							F	F		
ELIZABETH M. CARUSO	5	No	R	P	P	P	P		A+	A+	A+	YES	
ROBERT F. SULLEBARGER	5	No	D										
BILLY BOB FAULKINGHAM	6	No	R	P	P	P	P		A	A+	A	YES	
NICOLE C. GROHOSKI	7	Yes	D	P	F	P	P	P	INC	B-	B-		
CHERYL A. HEWES	7	No	R						A+		A+		
MICHAEL TIPPING	8	Yes	D	F	F	F	P	P		F	F		
LEO C. KENNEY	8	No	R						A+		A+		
AMY J. ROEDER	9	No	D	F	F	F	F			F	F		
STEPHEN CAREY	9	No	I										
DAVID G. HAGGAN	10	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+	YES	
KEVIN J.M. O’CONNELL	10	No	D										
GLENN “CHIP” CURRY	11	Yes	D	P	F	P	P	P		B-	B-		
RYAN C. OTIS	11	No	R						A+		A		
ANN H. MATLACK	12	No	D	F	F	F	F			F	F		
CAMERON RENY	13	Yes	D	P	F	F	P	P		D	D		
EDWIN MITCHELL	13	No	I						A-		A-		
CRAIG V. HICKMAN	14	Yes	D	P	P	P	P	P	A	A+	A+	YES	
STEVEN A. MCGEE	14	No	R						B		B		
AMANDA A. HEATH	15	No	D						A+		A+		
KATI MCCORMICK	15	No	R						A+		A+		
SCOTT W. CYRWAY	16	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
PATRIC A. MOORE	16	No	D										
RICHARD G. MASON	17	No	R	P	P	P	P		A+	A+	A+	YES	
JO-JEAN C. KELLER	17	No	D										
ELIZABETH D. BOSWORTH	18	No	D										
JOHN E. ANDREWS	18	No	R						A+		A+	YES	
JOSEPH E. MARTIN	19	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
PETER J. SOUTHAM	19	No	D										
BRUCE A. BICKFORD	20	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
MICHAEL R. SCOTT	20	No	D						B		B		
SHANNA COX	21	No	D										YES
KIMBERLY J. POMERLEAU	22	No	R	P	P	P	P		A+	A+	A+	YES	
NATHAN BURNETT	22	No	D										
MATTHEA E. DAUGHTRY	23	Yes	D	F	F	F	P	F		F	F		
BERNARD PORTER	23	No	R										
DENISE TEPLER	24	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	P		F	F		YES
TERESA S. PIERCE	25	Yes	D	F	F	F	P	F		F	F		
TIMOTHY E. NANGLE	26	Yes	D	F	F	F	P	F		F	F		
KENNETH CIANCHETTE	26	No	R										
JILL C. DUSON	27	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
RACHEL TALBOT-ROSS	28	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
ANNE M. CARNEY	29	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
VINCENT A. MAIETTA	29	No	R						A+		A+		
SOPHIA B. WARREN	30	No	D	F	F	P	F			D	D		
HARRY J. WHITE	30	No	R										
DONNA BAILEY	31	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	P		F	F		
GARRETT PLUMMER	31	No	R										
HENRY L. INGWERSEN	32	Yes	D	F	F	F	P	F		F	F		
JASON LITALIEN	32	No	I						A+		A+		
MATTHEW A. HARRINGTON	33	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
MARK H. VIGLIOTTA	33	No	D						D		D		
DANIEL R. SAYRE	34	No	D	F	F	F	F			F	F		YES
JONATHAN R. FALLON	34	No	R										
MICHELE MEYER	35	No	D										YES
JULIE N. RAKIC	35	No	R										

Maine House of Representatives

NAME	DISTRICT	INCUMBENT	PARTY	1109 - Mag Ban	1126 - Ghost Gun	1120 - Safe Storage	1364 - Lead Ammo	1821 - FFL	SAM QUESTIONNAIRE	SAM VOTING RECORD GRADE	SAM FINAL GRADE	SAM ENDORSED	GUN SENSE ENDORSED (pro gun control)
DANA M. APPLEBY	1	No	D										
AUSTIN THERIAULT	1	No	R						A+		A+	YES	
ROGER C. ALBERT	2	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P			A	YES	
ROLAND D. MARTIN	2	No	D						A+		A+		
DAVID H. MCCREA	3	No	D										
SUSAN BERNARD	3	No	R	P	P	P	P		A+		A+	YES	
TIMOTHY C. GUERRETTE	4	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+		A+	YES	
DOUGLAS C. CARLISLE	5	No	R										
DONALD J. ARDELL	6	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+		A+		
MELANIE TOMPKINS	6	No	D										
MATTHEW J. RUSH	7	No	D										
JANTZEN S. CRAINE	7	No	R										
TRACY L. QUINT	8	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+		
ARTHUR K. MINGO	9	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+		
NICOLE N. RICHARDS	9	No	D										
WILLIAM R. TUELL	10	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A	A+	A	YES	
GENEVIEVE M. LEMIRE	10	No	D										
TIFFANY STROUT	11	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A	A+	A+	YES	
KEITH A. NEWMAN	11	No	D										
ROY GOTT	12	No	I										YES
THOMAS HART	12	No	R										
RUSSELL P. WHITE	13	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM	13	No	D										YES
GARY R. FRIEDMANN	14	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
JEAN M. DONOVAN	14	No	R										
HOLLY R. EATON	15	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	P		F	F		
NINA MILLIKEN	16	Yes	D	P	F	P	F	P		D	D		
ERIC M. WHITE	16	No	R										
STEVEN M. BISHOP	17	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A	A		
RONALD B. RUSSELL	17	No	D										
MATHEW D. MCINTYRE	18	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
JONATHAN C. GOBLE	18	No	D										
RICHARD H. CAMPBELL	19	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+		
DAVID ULRICH	19	No	D										
DANI O'HALLORAN	20	Yes	D	F	F	F	P	P		C	C		
PATRICK A. JUDE	20	No	R						A+		A+		
AMBUREEN RANA	21	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
FRANK J. CASELLA	21	No	R						A+		A+		
LAURA D. SUPICA	22	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
COLLEEN T. O'NEAL	22	No	R										
VICTORIA P. KORNFELD	23	No	D										YES
BRIAN A. AMES	23	No	R										
SEAN F. FAIRCLOTH	24	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
LAURIE OSHER	25	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
ANTHONY M. WEAVER	25	No	R										
JAMES F. DILL	26	Yes	D	P	F	P	F	P		B	B		
EDWARD L. PARADIS	26	No	R										
DEVAN C. ARNOLD	27	No	D										
DAVID GILES	27	No	R						A+		A+		
IRENE A. GIFFORD	28	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+		
GORDON P. STREET	28	No	D										
NANCY M. MCDOWELL	29	No	D										YES
NANCY J. THERIAULT	29	No	R						A+		A+		
JAMES L. WHITE (GUILFORD)	30	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A-	A+	A	YES	
JOHN J. CONTRENI	30	No	D										
ERIC J BOOTHROYD	31	No	D										YES
ANDREW R. TORBETT	31	No	R						A+		A+		
SHAWN L. LANCASTER	32	No	R										
KENNETH W. FREDETTE	33	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+	YES	
MICHAEL A. BRAYSON	33	No	D										
JAMES P. MCCLYMER	34	No	D										
STACEY K. GUERIN	34	No	R	P	P	P	P		A+	A+	A+	YES	
JAMES E. THORNE	35	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
DEBORA S. FARNHAM	35	No	D										
KIMBERLY M. HAGGAN	36	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+		
CLIFTON G. FOSTER	36	No	D										

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REAGAN L. PAUL	37	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
ALAN L. ORCUTT	37	No	D										
BENJAMIN C. HYMES	38	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+		
KAYLA M.T. MILLER	38	No	D										
MADISON COOK	39	No	D										
MICHAEL J. NICHOLSON	39	No	R						A+		A+		
D. MICHAEL RAY	40	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
JOSEPH M. MCCLAUGHLIN	40	No	R										
JOSHUA D. GERRITSEN	41	No	D										
CORY C. RAYMOND	41	No	R										
VALLI D. GEIGER	42	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
MELISSA J. BYER	42	No	R										
RHIANNON C. HAMPSON	43	No	D										
CHRISTOPHER P. AUSTIN	43	No	R						A+		A+		
RAY A. THOMBS	44	No	R										
REBECCA M. STEPHENS	45	No	R										
JENNIFER F. MAYHER	46	No	D										
WAYNE K. FARRIN	47	Yes	D	P	F	P	F	P		C	C		
CHESTER B. GROVER	47	No	R						A+		A+		
CHARLOTTE NUTT	48	No	D										
ERIK D. HOBSON	48	No	R										
TRENT E. VELLELLA	49	No	D						A+		A+		
SUZANNE R. ANDRESEN	49	No	R						A+		A+		
DAVID A. SINCLAIR	50	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
JEDEDIAH J. RICE	50	No	R										
RAFAEL MACIAS	51	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
ANNALYSE O. SARVINAS	51	No	R										
SALLY J. CLUCHEY	52	Yes	D	P	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
DAVID W. GUILMETTE	52	No	R						B		B		YES
MICHAEL H. LEMELIN	53	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A	A		
RICHARD M. GOLDMAN	53	No	D										
KAREN L. MONTELL	54	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
MICHELLE M. TUCKER	54	No	R										
MAUREEN AUCOIN	55	No	D						INC		INC		
CHARLES L. HIPPLER	55	No	R										
RANDALL A. GREENWOOD	56	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A		A	YES	
ROBIN L. UPTON-SUKEFORTH	56	No	D										
TAVIS R. HASENFUS	57	Yes	D	P	F	P	F	P	D	D	F		YES
DAVID R. POTVIN	57	No	R										
SHARON FROST	58	Yes	I	P	F	P	P	P	B	B	B		
DEXTER E. BRIDGES	58	No	R										
KATRINA COUCH RAY-SAULIS	59	No	D										
JOHN RENY	59	No	R						A+		A+		
WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO	60	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
WYATT A. BEAULIEU	60	No	R										
ALICIA C. COLLINS	61	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+		
ROBIN G. CRAWLEY	61	No	D										
KATRINA J. SMITH	62	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
PAMELA J. SWIFT	62	No	D										
PAUL R. FLYNN	63	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
TAYLOR M. WEST	63	No	D						C		C		
FLAVIA M. DEBRITO	64	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
SHAWN M. PACKARD	64	No	R						A+		A+		
CASSIE L. JULIA	65	Yes	D	P	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
JEREMY MCARTHUR	65	No	R						A+		A+		
MICHAEL D. PERKINS	66	No	R										
MATTHEW C. TOWNSEND	67	No	D						A+		A+		
SHAWN M. DIXON	67	No	R						A		A		
AMANDA N. COLLAMORE	68	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+		
DEAN A. CRAY	69	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
JESSICA B. BLANCHARD	69	No	D										
JENNIFER L. POIRIER	70	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
JOSEPH R. ALMAND	70	No	D										
JOHN E. DUCHARME	71	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
ALLISON M. PERKINS	71	No	D										
CYNTHIA J. SOMA-HERNANDEZ	72	No	D										
DOUGLAS A. THOMAS	72	No	R						A+		A+		
MICHAEL SOBOLESKI	73	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
DANIEL J. SIMONDS	73	No	D										

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AMY D. KUHN	111	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
SEAN M. MAHONEY	112	No	D						INC		INC		
LAUREN CHELSEA JONES	112	No	R										
GRAYSON B. LOOKNER	113	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
LISA M. NELTHROPP	113	No	R										
APRIL D. FOURNIER	114	No	D										
ANDREW J. ZARRO	115	No	D										
SAMUEL L. ZAGER	116	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
MATTHEW MOONEN	117	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
YUSUF M. YUSUF	118	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
MICHAEL P. DIXON	119	No	D										
JACOB M. WAKEM	119	No	R										
JASON J. SHEDLOCK	120	No	D										
MICHAEL J. DOUGHERTY	120	No	R										
ROBERT CAMERON	121	No	D										
MEAGAN J. SMITH	121	No	R										
MATTHEW D. BECK	122	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
MICHELLE N. BOYER	123	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
ANNIE CHRISTY	123	No	R										
ERIC J. NATHANSON	124	No	D										
SCOTT W. DOHERTY	124	No	R										
MARY LINDSTROM	124		I						INC		INC		
KELLY NOONAN MURPHY	125	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F			F		YES
ANDREW GATTINE	126	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F			F		
ETHAN E. MONGUE	126	No	R						A+		A+		
MORGAN J. RIELLY	127	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
SUZANNE M. SALISBURY	128	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
MARSHALL F. ARCHER	129	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F		
LYNN HOLLAND COPELAND	130	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
ROBERT J. KELLY	131	No	D										YES
KENNETH BLOW	131		I						A+		A+		
RYAN FECTEAU	132	Yes	D	P	F	F	F	P		F	F		
MARC G. MALON	133	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
TRACI GERE	134	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		
SCOTT CRAIG	134		I										
ALLEN DAGGETT	134		I						A+		A+		
LISA J. PRATT	135	No	D										YES
JOHN EDER	136	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
MICHELLE K. CONNERS	136	No	D										
NATHAN M CARLOW	137	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P		A+	A+		
CHARLES TILBURG	137	No	D										
OLIVER D. MCAVOY	138	No	D						F		F		
JONATHAN L. KINNEY	138	No	R						A+		A+	YES	
DEAN P. LEPAGE	139	No	D										
JAMIE K. NEWTON	139	No	R										
WAYNE R. PARRY	140	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A+	A+	A+	YES	
KIRSTAN L. WATSON	140	No	D								INC		
REBECCA L. FLOOD ANDREWS	141	No	D						F		F		YES
MARC A. BOISSE	141	No	R										
DAVID R. MONGEAU	141		I						INC		INC		
AYN M. HANSELMANN	142	No	D										
DOMINGO TORRES	142	No	R										
JOHN R. HENKELMAN	143	No	D										
MELISSA SIMPSON	143	No	R										
KAREN GERRISH	144	No	R						A+		A+	YES	
CORINNA COLE	144	No	I								F		
KRISTIN T. DAVIS	145	No	D										
CALEB J. CHASE	145	No	R						A+		A+		
WALTER G. RUNTE	146	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
BRADLEY S. MOULTON	146	No	R										
HOLLY T. SARGENT	147	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	P		F	F		
THOMAS A. LAVIGNE	148	Yes	R	P	P	P	P	P	A	A+	A	YES	
MARGARET A. WHEELER	148	No	D										
MALLORY A. COOK	149	No	D										YES
TIMOTHY R. TOWNE	149	No	R										
ALEXANDROS ORESTIS	150	No	D										
MARK F. ZIMMER	150	No	R						A+		A+		
KRISTI M. MATHIESON	151	Yes	D	F	F	F	F	F		F	F		YES
SUZANNE JOHNSON	151	No	R						F		F		

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Matt’s Musings

by Matt Dunlap

A Fun Discipline



Like most incredibly busy people, I sometimes catch myself looking at the calendar and feeling a little startled at how fast the season is whipping by. We all do it, I suppose; we tie flies all winter, prep rods and reels and get brook fishing gear in order along with trolling setups, and then when prime fishing sets in, we get busy with our kids’ games, yard work, and a hundred other things — and then it’s time for bass fishing. We get out a few times, and the calendar silently yells at us that hunting season is just around the corner.

Of all the outdoor skills that we compile, the most fleeting has to be marksmanship. In the years I regularly tend to my duties at the shooting range, I step into the woods with the attendant confidence that I can put a bullet where I need to in the moment of truth. Having that confidence from practice is critical to success.

A friend of mine told me some years back that not paying his dues in punching paper cost him a long track when he took a shot at a bounding deer and wounded it. He said the good news was that it only took him a couple of hours to track the wounded buck — luckily, he said, because he had a bit of tracking snow so the blood trail was easy to follow — but it made for a long drag out of the woods when he was able to finish the job. “Never did that again,” he allowed. “It was tough on me, but tougher on the deer. I owed that critter a better shot.”

Along that line, this year I’ve made a point to get to the range on a regular rotation. I only take my hunting rifle out for the last training; using a .22 rifle doesn’t build a flinch into my shooting, and it also gives me time to pick out the rifle I plan on using depending on whether I’m planning on using a stand, sitting at the base of a certain old white birch in central Hancock County, or hunting a familiar ridge in Penobscot County where I might need a longer shot. To those ends, I can pick from a sporterized SMLE Model 4 Mark I in .303 British, a Savage in .308 Winchester, a Weatherby Vanguard in .30-’06, or a Marlin lever action in .35 Remington. Hey, it’s good to have choices — but the prep with a .22 at a hundred yards makes them all so much more reliable.

When my daughter was home, we would jazz up range training by making it a bit of a competition. We would practice three shots at 25, 50 and 75 yards, and then we would take three shots apiece at 100 yards kneeling, sitting, and standing. We excluded prone positions because, really, who shoots from a prone position in the woods? Of course, no matter who had the higher score, it was always Dad who paid for the ice cream on the way home.

The long and short of it is that for those of us who love to shoot, adding a

little fun to the afternoon just further incentivizes us to get the time in. It makes the best use of the flying calendar of the summer season when it’s too hot to fish, and when the moment of truth comes, we are able to give that critter the good shot it deserves.

Being a conservationist is a responsibility, to be sure, but man, it’s also a lot of fun.

Matt Dunlap is a sportsman from Old Town, and among many other things, is a life member of SAM.

The North Zone contains an abundance of wild and native coldwater fish populations.

The South Zone contains predominately stocked and/or warmwater fisheries.

Did You Know? Maine Fishing Zones

NORTH ZONE COUNTIES

- 1 Aroostook
- 2 Penobscot north of Route 11 & 157
- 3 Piscataquis
- 4 Somerset
- 5 Franklin
- 6 Oxford north of the Androscoggin River

SOUTH ZONE COUNTIES

- 7 Oxford south of the Androscoggin River
- 8 York
- 9 Cumberland
- 10 Androscoggin
- 11 Kennebec
- 12 Sagadahoc
- 13 Lincoln
- 14 Waldo
- 15 Knox
- 16 Penobscot south of Route 11 & 157
- 17 Hancock
- 18 Washington

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HAYMOCK TWO STAY IS GOOD FOR FOUR DAYS/ THREE NIGHTS IN THE MONTHS OF JULY OR AUGUST (2027) FOR UP TO 12 PEOPLE.



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The Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine (SAM) is a 501(c) (3) organization founded in 1975 to promote conservation of Maine’s wildlife resources and advocate for hunters, anglers, trappers, and gun owners. Raffle winners are responsible for any taxes and transfer fees.

The Salty Side Increased Opportunity for Saltwater Anglers

by Bob Humphrey

Another fall is upon us and while hunters are looking forward, saltwater anglers are looking back on what was hopefully a successful season. Things were relatively calm this year, which is always a good thing on the ocean. Nonetheless, SAM was vigilant in keeping our pulse on the “other” fishery.

In May, the Maine Department of Marine Resources issued three Notice of Agency Rulemaking Proposals. Chapter 43 – Bluefish Recreational Bag Limit proposed to increase the bluefish possession limit from 3 fish to 5 fish. Chapter 52 – Mackerel Recreational Bag Limit proposed an increase in the mackerel possession limit from 20 fish to 25 fish. Chapter 34.06 – Haddock Recreational Size Limit would decrease the recreational haddock minimum size limit from 18 inches to 17 inches.

These modifications were intended to align state regulations with changes adopted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). They were based on the best available science and would allow additional fishing opportunity while maintaining catch limits within management plan objectives. SAM provided comment supporting all three actions, which were ultimately approved.

All three should be viewed as positive signs. The overall goal of marine fisheries management is to maximize sustainable yield—allowing the maximum level of harvest that can occur without negatively impacting production or population goals. Part of the process in determining allowable catch levels is a stock assessment. As recent assessment for all three species indicated that stocks were increasing, the agencies felt comfortable increasing total allowable catch.

SAM also has a voice through representation on the ASMFC Atlantic



Big stripers were abundant along the coast of Maine this year but recruitment rates remain low.



Bluefish stocks appear to be recovering but the species remains rare in Maine waters.

Striped Bass Advisory Panel. The stock is currently considered overfished but not experiencing overfishing. Through Addendum II to Amendment 7 of the Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan, ASMFC reduced commercial quota by 7%, retained the 28”-31” slot limit and allowed for filleting at sea provided racks are retained, among other things.

Recreational harvest and recreational release mortality have declined significantly since 2022. Specifically, anglers harvested 1.4 million fish (11.2 million pounds) in 2025. This decreased

by 17% from 2024 by number, but increased 27% by due to more larger fish and fewer small fish in the population. Anglers released alive 11.7 million fish in 2025, a decrease of 39% from 2024. Of these, 1.0 million fish are assumed to have died.

Recruitment is an important variable in stock assessment and most recent analysis shows low recruitment continues to be the case. The spawning stock biomass—adult breeding-age fish—appears to be healthy, but they just aren’t producing enough young to replace themselves in the population.

Biologists are studying how variables like water temperature, salinity, pollution and others might be impacting recruitment.

Capt. Bob Humphrey operates Sport-Ventures charters, is President of the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza tuna tournament and serves on NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel and ASMFC Striped Bass Advisory Panel.

SAM Fish & Game Club Network

SAM’s Fish & Game Club Network enables clubs to work with SAM on communication, partnerships, and sharing information on current events. We are proud to have these important partners and appreciate the work they do in their communities.

- ATV Maine**
- Androscoggin Cty Fish & Game Assoc.** – Auburn
- Arnold Trail Sportsman’s Association** – Sydney *Arnold Trail is a “Shotgun Only” Club, open to the public every Sunday from 10am to 1pm. Celebrating 90 years of shotgun sports!*
- Aroostook County Conservation Association** – New Sweden
- Big Pine Gun Club** – Guilford *For information, visit www.bigpinegunclub.org*
- Boothbay Fish & Game Club** – Boothbay
- Bowmantown Association** – Topsham
- Bucks Mills Rod & Gun Club** – Bucksport
- Calais Rod & Gun Club** – Charlotte
- Capital City Rifle & Pistol Club** – Augusta
- Carrabassett Valley Trappers** – North Anson
- Cumberland Rifle & Pistol Club** – No. Yarmouth
- Durham Rod & Gun Club** – Durham *Open all year from 9AM to Sunset to members and guests. Trap and skeet ranges; Pistol Ranges at 25 & 50 yards; Rifle Ranges at 50, 100 and 200 yards. Fish pond and 3D Archery Range.*

- Falmouth Rod & Gun Club** – Falmouth *Bring your shotgun and Try Trap Shooting at FR&GC. Open to all skill levels. Sundays at 10AM. Contact Bill at falmouthtrap7@gmail.com*
- Fryeburg Fish & Game** – Fryeburg
- George T. Files Post 20 Brunswick American Legion** – Brunswick
- Kennebunk Fish & Game Club** – Kennebunk
- Knox County Fish & Game** – Hope
- Lake Thompson Fish & Game, Oxford**
- Lisbon Fish & Game Association**
- Maine Trappers Association**
- Maine Youth Fish & Game Association**
- Monmouth Fish & Game Association** – Monmouth
- NAVHDA, Sebasticook Chapter**
- No. Berwick Rod & Gun** – N. Berwick
- Norway F&G** – Norway *Contact for more information: nptg1970@gmail.com*
- Penobscot County Conservation Assoc.** – Brewer
- Phippsburg Sportsmen’s Association** – Phippsburg

- Pine Tree Rod and Gun Club** – Westbrook
- Pleasant River Fish & Game, Columbia**
- Presque Isle Fish & Game** – Presque Isle
- Rangeley Region Guides & Sportsmen’s Assoc.** – Rangeley
- Richmond Sportsman Association** – Richmond
- Royal River Rod & Gun Club** – Gray *Meetings every 3rd Wednesday at 7PM.*
- Scarborough Fish & Game** – Scarborough *The new **Tactical Games** focuses on accuracy, efficiency, and decision-making skills while under physical stress. Competitors engage in functional fitness challenges and exercise their practical marksmanship skills with a pistol and/or a rifle. Training and practice sessions are open to men and women and are held on Sundays from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. rain or shine. **Archery** is back after a bit of an absence. The archery ranges are being tidied up and matches are being planned. More information is coming soon. **Shotgun Sports** (new shooters welcome) - Trapshooting is open Saturdays 9 – 2 and Thursdays 4 – 8 pm and two Sundays a month, Skeet Shooting is open Sundays from 10 – 3, Sporting Clays is open Sundays 9 – 2*

- and Wednesdays 2 – 4. Check out our website and calendar at www.scarfg.org for more information and contact numbers.*
- Sebago Lake Anglers Association - Naples**
- Skowhegan Sportsman’s Club** – Skowhegan *For information, visit: www.skowhegansportsmansclub.org*
- So. Berwick Rod & Gun Club** – So. Berwick
- Southern Maine Fish & Game** – Kittery
- Spurwink Rod & Gun Club** – Cape Elizabeth
- Standish Fish & Game - Standish**
- Waterford Fish & Game - Waterford**
- Waterville Beagle Club**
- West Gardiner Rod & Gun Club - W. Gardiner**
- Western Maine Fish & Game** – Harrison
- Wilton Fish & Game Association** – 256 US Rt. 2 West, Wilton *Monthly Meetings every 3rd Sunday.*
- Wiscasset Rod & Gun Club** – Wiscasset
- York County Fish & Game Club** – Lyman
- New York Houndsmen Conservation Association** – Red Creek, NY
- Woodville Rod & Gun Club** – Woodville, MA
- Vermont Trappers Association** – Vernon, VT

Androscoggin Lake and the 30 Mile River Watershed

by Lloyd C. Irland and Matt Scott

Androscoggin Lake compels attention now for one reason: algae. It is the largest lake-wide algae bloom in the State. The lake was green three out of the four most recent years. One year it was green until early December.

The name has many meanings. One scholar counts 60 different spellings. One meaning is “place where you smoke fish”. Another is “place where the river runs smooth after rocks.” It is said that Governor Andros, of the Plymouth Council gave it its name in the 17th century. The lake was settled at an early date, with Wayne settled before the Revolution, and incorporated by 1798. The town has six neighboring towns, the largest sharing a lake boundary being Leeds, which lies on the west side of the lake, with about 2,400 population to Wayne’s 1,100.

Androscoggin Lake, at 4,020 acres, is the largest and most southerly of the lakes which form a continuous watershed along the aptly named 30 Mile River chain. The lakes include Kimball, Flying, Parker and David Ponds, Echo Lake, Lovejoy Pond, and Pocasset. Several northern ponds are deep and provide good fishing for cold-water fish. Androscoggin now hosts five or more bass rodeos a year. Catches of brook or brown trout are now a rarity, believed to come down from above, because Androscoggin has no trout habitat. The lake is shallow, in contrast to other

lakes upstream. Also, it has a very small watershed compared to its surface area.

In 1940, Gerald Cooper, University of Maine Professor, in the first Survey of Androscoggin Lake, found it to be a marginal trout and salmon lake. Instead, it was a two-story fishery, warmwater and coldwater.

In my (Matt’s) early work in 1963, I experienced the high-water levels and monitored the 1963 smelt runs. I saw how the high-water levels from the River influenced these small fish. They were spawning in the flooded shoreline vegetation, and eggs would hatch early. The fish would then recede as the water level dropped. Anglers were abundant, dipping the fish for bait. As most folks know, smelts are excellent bait for salmon and trout. Androscoggin Lake was the very first lake in Maine where freshwater jellyfish were documented. I made a full report of the discovery in the Spring 1963 issue of Maine Fish and Wildlife magazine. Since then, other lakes have made discoveries of the species. A very curious organism that is harmless to humans. They feed on very small plankton.

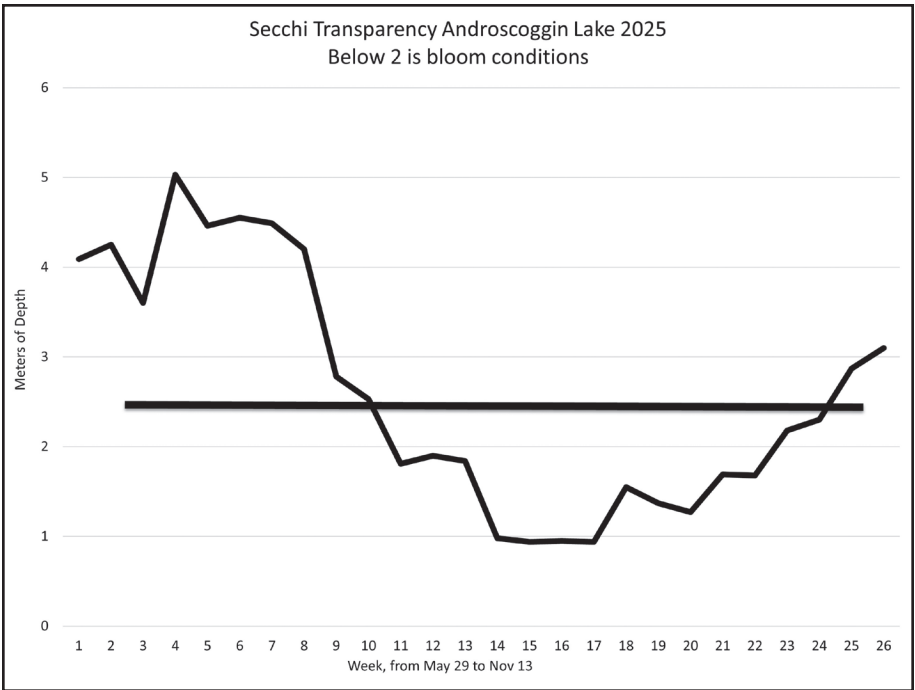
The Dams

The key to the lake is its connection with the Androscoggin River. It is the only lake in Maine that has a reversing falls on its river. The mainstem was one of the most industrialized streams of the latter 19th century. It was also until recently

home to a series of major paper mills. In 1930, a dam was built on the Dead River, which connects the lake to the river. This was because of an unusual feature: when the river is high, it flows into the lake, and when the river is low, it flows out of the lake. This dam was not built for flood control but simply to control the massive dose of pollution which came every spring. The aroma was intense. In fact, you could argue that the Lake was

the flood control reservoir for Lewiston/ Auburn.

At one time, the 30-mile river provided employment in small factories powered by dams at the outlet of each lake. Most of the industrial developments above the confluence of the Dead River and the Lake and the river have disappeared, and this includes most of the paper mills. Rumford, owned by



Source: 30 Mile River Association per DEP

MAINE OPERATION GAME THIEF (OGT)

Maine OGT is a program that asks the public to report known or suspected poaching violations.

Maine OGT works very closely with the Maine Warden Service, the Maine Marine Patrol, and International Wildlife Crimestoppers. Covering the entire state is a big job, so these agencies request the public to also be eyes and ears for poaching wildlife activity. Violations or suspicious activity should be reported to **1-800-ALERT-US (1-800-253-7887)**.

Poaching is a serious and costly crime. Poaching robs sportsmen and sportswomen of fish and game, robs Maine businesses and taxpayers of hunting and fishing revenues, and robs all of us of the beauty of Maine’s wildlife. Also, the illegal introduction of non-native fish species in Maine has had, and will continue to have, disastrous effects on our native fisheries. Poachers also take endangered, threatened, and non-game species.

To **confidentially report** acts of poaching, call the OGT Hotline, toll-free within Maine, at 1-800-253-7887. (From out of state, call 207-287-6057.) Calls are received 24/7. It is important to note that **callers do not have to reveal their names or testify in court.** If a conviction results, a reward is available if previously requested. Rewards vary from \$500 to \$1,000, more in serious cases. All reward monies come from donations and fundraising. Often, a reward is not requested – most fish and wildlife enthusiasts just want the criminals caught!

How effective is Maine OGT? Do phone calls from the public lead to convictions?

In addition to the numerous callers who did not want a reward, **Maine OGT has paid thousands of dollars in rewards!** Do the math! Your reports **absolutely** help Maine OGT’s mission of **“Protecting All of Maine’s Natural Resources.”**

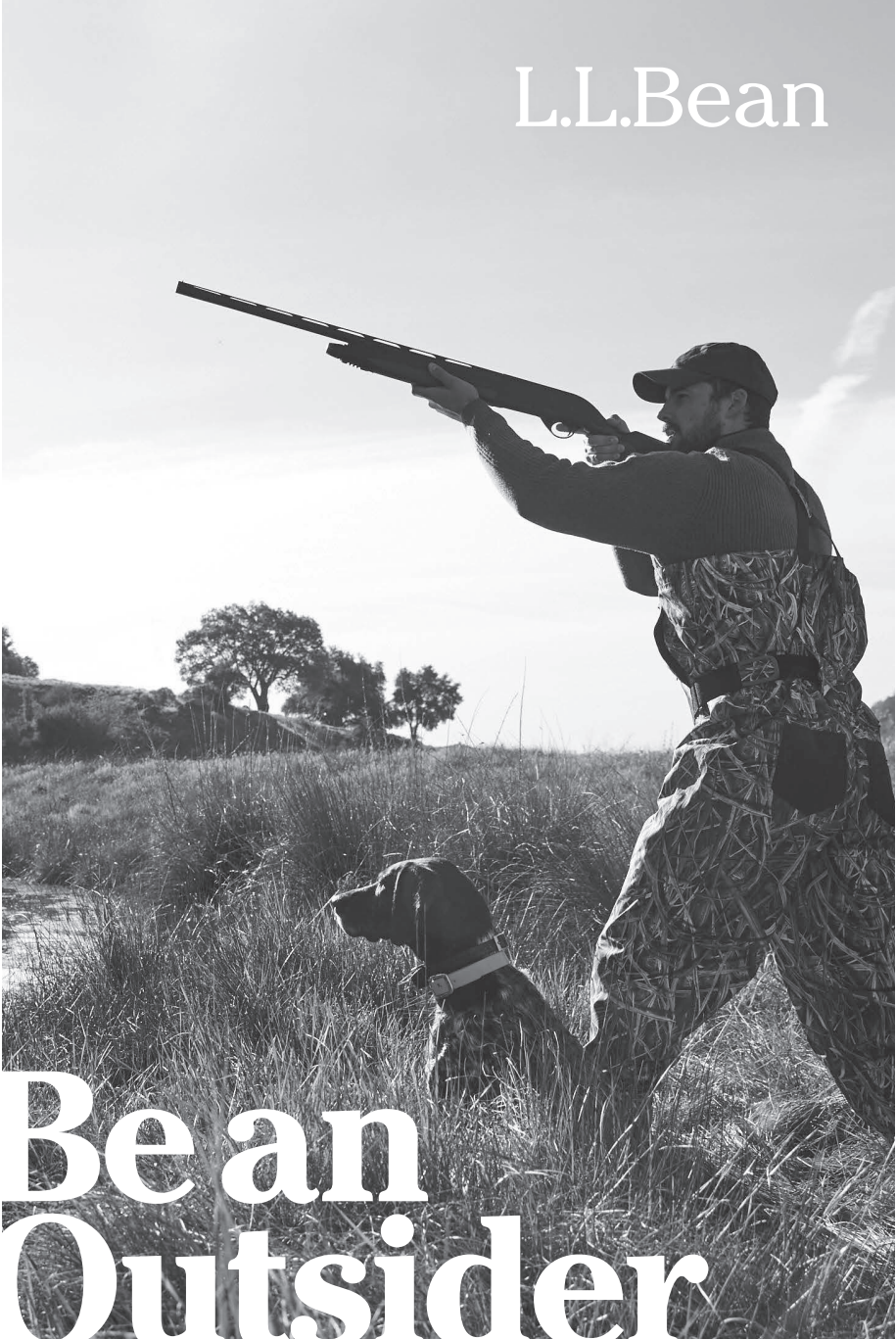


Note from Greg Sirpis, Chairman of the Maine OGT Board of Directors:

I want to thank our incredible team, the OGT family. This group of dedicated volunteers consists of Board members, Unity students, Resource Council members, and others. I also want to thank the men and women of the Maine Warden Service and the Maine Marine Patrol. With your service and dedication to duty, you are the true heroes of the Maine outdoors. If you have any questions about our mission please email me at gregsirpis@roadrunner.com

www.maineogt.org







Androscoggin Lake and Pocasset Lake, Summer 2025. This condition caused loss of swimming and other water-related uses, and cost owners of rental properties their rents for a month or more. Other lakes are on the brink. Source: Androscoggin Lake Improvement Association.

Water Quality

The 30 Mile River Watershed Association now has a small staff engaged in lake water monitoring, invasive plant survey and management, and public education. Especially, it works with local lake groups and property owners to reduce their impact on water quality. Due to the longer ice-free season, warm weather, and minimal inflows from the Dead River, in recent years the lake has endured severe algae blooms. In 2024, visibility was down to a minimum of one meter. This was especially concerning as there was little or no blooming in nearby lakes. Also, several nearby lakes improved markedly in the same period. Year 2025 was illustrative: the bloom lasted from Aug 5 to Nov 23. The level of 2.0 is the definition of a bloom. The 30 Mile Association is cooperating with several local jurisdictions to conduct a detailed study of the lake and its quality problems. This is funded by several grants.

There are no two lakes alike in Maine, and Androscoggin Lake remains as an example. The lake is unique and problematic, having three sources of water-laden inputs: (1) The lake has a very large drainage system with a flushing rate of one and one-half times per year. (2) It has an immediate shoreline drainage which is rather small. This makes runoff from non-point source pollution from immediate shoreline development and from inadequate septage systems more important, and (3) Annual flooding of the Androscoggin River that backs up into the lake with river-laden nutrients. The lake's deep basin of 36 feet has served as a sink of nutrients for centuries and now has reached its tipping point for

algal blooms. Up until 2022, the Secchi Disk annual average for transparency was well below two meters (over 6 feet). Sediment core data reveals that the lake is prone to the release of phosphorus from the bottom sediments when it is anoxic due to hot weather, making it available to the invasive algal species. The water quality needs significant repair to bring the lake back to the quality it had before 2022. The Town of Wayne has established a Task Force to make residents aware of what has and is happening. Also, to coordinate with the 30 Mile River Association and the State. With cooperation from landowners for reducing phosphorus levels, then perhaps an Alum treatment of just the deep basin area of the lake would provide some rehabilitation.

The association has installed a monitoring buoy that tracks a number of variables at extremely fine time resolution and reports the data to the Association promptly. This is not uncommon in Maine but is a major asset for Androscoggin.

Land Use

Wayne and Leeds grew when they prospered during the time of agricultural prosperity. Farming was fairly intense

for the time but low in yields. Wayne's population grew until the 1920s to about double the current level today. A good deal of the land was farmed by 1880, and as manure began to be used on the farms, it became a hazard to water quality. This is because much of the terrain is low and rolling. After about 1880, farming declined, and soon enough, the population did as well. Today only a few farms remain. Old maps and paintings show there was little shoreline development. But by the early 70s, most of the buildable shoreline was lined with cottages. It is fortunate for water quality that a considerable portion of the lakefront is marsh or otherwise unbuildable.

The watershed has finally been found by invasive plants. A stubborn occurrence of milfoil in the north cove was discovered and was treated in summer 2026 with herbicides. This was an extraordinary measure, as herbicide is a last-ditch approach. The herbicide application followed several years of professional survey and removal.

Land Conservation

Maine's land use laws came along too late to this region as most of the developable land was built up by 1980. This created the anomalous situation that the remaining tag ends of waterfront had to meet much larger lot sizes and use more costly means of waste disposal. It also

means that public ownership and access is limited, and public ownership of lands is also limited. Several land units of local importance are found around the lakes, but in fact very little of shoreline is in conservation holdings now. The Kennebec Land Trust does valiant duty, with small tracts scattered throughout the watershed. A gift to the Kennebec Land Trust of 100 acres in the Delta is important. The Highlands Land Trust also holds a significant parcel in the headwaters.

Conclusion

Androscoggin is one of the lakes in which eutrophication is most advanced. It is surprising as the blooms of the 2020s capped a period of steady, if slow, improvement in water quality. Several nearby lakes which were notorious for their poor quality actually improved significantly. How much is due to inadequate town management of camp roads and old septic systems remains to be determined, but it is one thing that the various towns can address. The DEP list of threatened lakes now contains 170 lakes. The Androscoggin experience shows that one cannot be too careful. It is troublesome that the land in the watershed is part of 6 towns, none of which has the capacity to handle the land use and septic regulation burdens that this problem of algae blooms in Androscoggin Lake presents. ●



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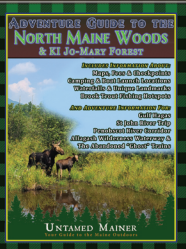
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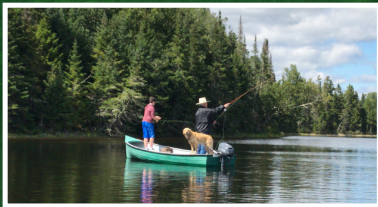
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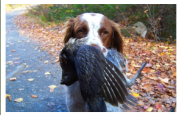
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Youth Hunting and Fishing Gallery



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1. Everett (8) with his first ever American Shad, caught on a fly he tied that morning!
2. Oliver (6) catching smallmouth bass while we were out removing old tires from polluting Maine's river. River restoration and catching fish!
3. Alice's catch on the Androscoggin River.
4. Keegan on Damariscotta Lake in David's boat.
5. Letty Sue with her biggest haul out of the Androscoggin river in Turner.
6. On a hot July day while fishing in Long Pond (Belgrade), Benjamin caught this nearly 7-pound bass on a peanut butter jelly senko.

Got Photos?

Do you have any great photos of your kids hunting and fishing in Maine's great outdoors? We'd love to share them with other SAM members. Send them to us at members@samofmaine.org. **Photo Guidelines:** Photos should be as big as possible. (We can always make them smaller, but making them bigger often reduces the quality so far that they are unprintable.) Please include your child's name and age, where and when the photo was taken, and any story behind the photo. *Thank You!*

