

Rich Knox



Alana Preston

Residents of Lubec now enjoy and help to maintain 48 acres of shorefront land at Mowry Beach (adjoining the Lubec Consolidated School) that was conserved as an outdoor classroom through the collaborative efforts of Quoddy Regional Land Trust, Cobscook Community Learning Center, the Land for Maine's Future Program, and Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

Conserving Lands that Teach and Sustain

“Place-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach... subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students’ appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens.”

– David Sobel
Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities

A growing body of research confirms the importance of children spending ample time playing and learning outdoors in nature – for the physical, psychological and spiritual benefits it affords.

The high quality of life that Maine residents enjoy is due – in large measure – to the state’s spectacular scenery and abundant recreational opportunities. Many coastal communities recognize that their future depends on maintaining these natural assets and connecting people with the land. By protecting local parks and preserves, and engaging residents in their care, communities can sustain their vitality for generations to come.

Schools that have access to local natural areas can use these habitats as living classrooms, which often results in greater student motivation and improved test scores. When community members work alongside students on local stewardship projects, everyone involved gains a deeper appreciation for place.



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“Whatever else we teach our children, we owe them an ecological education. We need to give them time outdoors, where they can meet and savor the world that humans have not made.... Such contact gives promise of a lifelong joy in the presence of nature.”

– Scott Russell Sanders, “A Conservationist’s Manifesto” in *Coming to Land in a Troubled World*

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“Now that we’re working to improve access and build a trail at Mowry Beach, more and more people are turning out to help. Best of all, what was once seen by some as unimportant is now being revealed for the jewel it is—bringing a new sense of stewardship and pride to a neglected corner of town.”

– Alan Brooks, Executive Director
Quoddy Regional Land Trust

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- ✓ **Educate community members about the importance of having intown parks, preserves and trails** – for public health, wildlife, and quality of life. Enlist the support of community health advocates.
- ✓ **Identify undeveloped areas in your community** that could be preserved and contact landowners to discuss conservation options.
- ✓ **Work with schools and environmental organizations** to make local preserves and parks accessible for outdoor education and play. Involve students in making trails and signage.
- ✓ **Seek out funders to support your work.** Places to begin looking include the Land for Maine’s Future Program and the Maine Community Foundation.
- ✓ **Pool resources to hire a part-time environmental educator** who can visit classrooms, organize field trips and assist teachers.
- ✓ **Explore possibilities for “schoolground greening,”** which involve students, parents and teachers in projects such as gardening and landscaping for wildlife.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Quoddy Regional Land Trust (www.qrlt.org); Cobscook Community Learning Center (www.thecccl.org)
- *Place-based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities*, by David Sobel (Orion Society, 2004)
- *Last Child in the Woods*, by Richard Louv (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005).
- The Children and Nature Network (www.cnaturenet.org)
- *The Sense of Wonder*, by Rachel Carson (Harper & Row, 1965).
- *KIDS as Planners: A Guide to Strengthening Students, Schools and Communities through Service-Learning* (Second Edition), KIDS Consortium, Lewiston, ME, 2005.
- Land for Maine’s Future Program (www.maine.gov/spo/lmf/) 207-287-1487

More information about this project and the Maine Coast Protection Initiative can be found at www.protectcoastmaine.org.



Chewonki Foundation

“These projects help expand the learning spaces in schools from classrooms and labs to trails, beaches, woodlands and wetlands. Studying outdoors increases the opportunities students have to fall in love with learning, and to grow into adults who share that love with others and take action to protect the places they love.”

– Kara McCrimmon, Curriculum and Program Director, Cobscook Community Learning Center