

An Update From Our Chapter Chair & Vice Chair

Dear friends,

We are writing this after just returning home from Sierra Club Maine’s annual chapter retreat. After spending two and a half days surrounded by an inspiring group of Sierra Club leaders, volunteers, and staff, it’s impossible not to be reminded of the incredible growth and changes happening at the Maine Chapter. Every year our organization is growing in new and exciting ways, providing unique opportunities to build upon our 40+ year legacy of successful environmental advocacy in the State of Maine. This year in particular we’ve made incredible strides to become one of the most influential environmental organizations in the state.

In 2023, thanks to the diligent, hard work of our volunteers and staff, Sierra Club Maine was able to influence dozens of key decisions across an amazingly broad array of environmental issues. From submitting testimony on 80+ bills before the legislature in Augusta to creating new opportunities for young people to get involved in the climate movement, our impact has grown tremendously. Here are just a few of the key issues we’ve weighed in on these last 12 months:

- Worked towards a vision of permanently protecting 30 percent of Maine’s lands and waters by 2030 by building relationships, including in BIPOC communities, to implement creative solutions that center justice and equity in conservation practices

- Lobbied at federal and state level to protect Maine farms and residents from toxic pollution like PFAS and improve food security for all Mainers
- Advocated for low-cost, emission-free transportation solutions like e-bikes and electric vehicle rebates
- Focused on coalition building and legislative solutions to stop deleterious impacts of large-scale finfish farm operations
- Proposed balancing building clean, efficient renewable energy generation with protecting Maine’s natural environment

And across our various campaigns, we’ve been able to build stronger relationships with allied organizations and local leaders alike, reinforcing our ability to impact critical events statewide.

We’re proud of the growth and changes that are happening at the Sierra Club. While we continue to welcome new friends into the organization, we inevitably must say goodbye to a few old ones. Sarah Leighton, who fearlessly led Sierra Club Maine as Chapter Director since 2020, has moved into a new role at Sierra Club’s national office, supporting chapters across the country to raise the funds they need to be successful. Although we look forward to working with her in her new capacity, we’re excited to bring on board a new Chapter Director later this year.*

As we prepare to embark on the next step of our journey, it’s vital to give thanks to the people who make our work possible: our members. Sierra Club is truly a people-powered organization and nothing we do would be possible without members like you. Thank you for continuing to believe in and support the work of Sierra Club Maine.

Sincerely,



Sue Levene
SUE LEVENE
Chair



Jacob Stern
JACOB STERN
Vice Chair

*Check our website for the latest news!
www.sierraclub.org/maine



Sierra Club Maine Welcomes New Philanthropy Officer

We are excited to announce our Chapter’s new Philanthropy Officer—Jane Brekke! Jane comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience. She holds a master’s degree in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, and is passionate about the outdoors. As the Philanthropy Officer, Jane will work closely with staff and volunteer leaders to implement effective fundraising strategies and programs that actively center equity, justice, and inclusion.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE SIERRA CLUB?

JB: Environmental stewardship has been at the heart of my professional calling for the past 20 years. Most recently I’ve been working for a local land trust in Southern Maine. I’ve loved working with my surrounding communities, but am also drawn to larger state efforts. My first organizational membership was to the Sierra Club in 8th grade! I’ve been so happy to see that we have an active and successful chapter in Maine—and I feel beyond lucky to be a part of it.

WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?

JB: I believe that people will protect the things they love. I’m most concerned about people breaking away from their connections to land and water—and how that ultimately shapes their thoughts, actions, and attitudes towards saving their environment. Helping to connect people to natural places, to in turn create environmental stewards, is vitally important to me. I am also driven by my personal passion to show my daughter that you CAN make a difference in saving the planet and you CAN be a part of the solution.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME WHEN YOU’RE NOT WORKING?

JB: I enjoy all types of outdoor recreation with my family and friends, the work I do on my local town’s conservation commission, working with medical herbs, and reading good books when I can fit it in.

Want to talk to Jane about how you can support Sierra Club Maine’s mission? Email her at Jane.Brekke@sierraclub.org.



Photo by Eric Schade

30x30 (& Beyond)

A little over a year ago, our 30x30 team started to advocate in earnest around the goal of conserving 30% of Maine's land and waters by 2030. Over the intervening months, two facts have become apparent: 1) Maine is well on its way to conserving 30% of our land area by 2030, and 2) in some ways, the more important question is what we plan to do about the other 70%. Imagine, for a moment, what an ideal State of Maine would look like in 2050. Perhaps 50% of our landscape is set aside as some form of conserved wildlands, meeting the aspirational target set forth in E.O. Wilson's book *Half-Earth*. Another 30% lies in protected woodlands, where timber companies have adopted sustainable management practices that allow forests to mature. Changes to zoning and town planning policies have allowed towns and cities to build innovative housing that combines density with access to greenspace, both addressing existing housing needs and accommodating population growth from so-called "climate migration." Yes, the winters are warmer, droughts come more often, and invasive species continue to threaten our native ecosystems, but both our human and natural communities have the resources they need to respond to a changing climate.

What can we do to bring such a vision into reality?

The 30x30 team has grappled with this idea over the past few months. We met with advocates for affordable housing, hoping to better understand how environmental organizations can help support policies that reduce sprawl and mitigate the environmental cost of development while meeting the real needs of our communities. We assisted students at the College of the Atlantic in developing legislation to support wildlife migration and corridors. We developed a dialogue with the New England Forest Foundation, with whom we hope to play a part in establishing new sustainable economic models for forestry. We advocated for tribal sovereignty, maintaining our belief that a just, sustainable future involves returning legal and economic power to the Wabanaki tribes.

In the coming months, we hope to work with our growing list of partners to turn some of these ideas into concrete goals, educational programs, perhaps even policy and legislation. As we do so, we will continue to need volunteers interested in taking on leadership roles.

Stay updated on our 30x30 work at sierraclub.org/maine/30x30.
We're working on a public education series, including podcasts and webinars this fall and into 2024!



DONATE YOUR OLD CAR, BOAT, MOTORCYCLE, OR RV

Donating an old car, boat, motorcycle, or RV to Sierra Club Maine has a lasting impact on our work advancing climate solutions, fighting for clean air and water, and keeping our wild places wild.

Donating is easy and someone will come to you to pick up your donation for free. Simply call 855-337-4377 or visit online at www.sierraclubfoundation.careasy.org and make sure to designate your donation to "Sierra Club Maine."

Vote for Open 2023 Sierra Club Maine Exec. Committee Member Positions

Sierra Club Maine's Executive Committee, composed of up to 11 volunteers, sets the long-term goals and strategies for the Chapter's critical climate justice work here in Maine. There are currently five open positions for two-year terms starting in 2024.

Voting for Executive Committee positions will occur between Sept. 15th and Oct. 15th and can be done online by visiting: www.sierraclub.org/maine/chapter-elections or by calling 207-761-5616.

30 by 30 BIPOC Coalition

The BIPOC coalition was initiated by inviting members of the BIPOC community, community organizers, and organizations led by Black, Brown, or Indigenous communities, or heavily involved in serving and working with these communities. The goal was to create a platform for open dialogue and collaboration. Monthly two-hour meetings were held to discuss conservation in relation to Black and Brown communities and how they could be prioritized in the 30 by 30 campaign. The 30x30 initiative prioritizes the environmental needs of frontline communities for the future, requiring collaboration and co-creation of strategies with diverse groups and individuals.

The 30 by 30 campaign encompasses various areas of focus, such as smart growth, renewable housing cooperatives, land reclamation, sustainable forestry practices, water resources, cooperative equitable housing and land trusts, restorative/regenerative agriculture, environmental education, environmental access, and community autonomy with the land. It is important to note that historically, BIPOC communities have been excluded from land acquisition programs unless explicit demands are made for resources. The BIPOC coalition's mission is to address the gaps in collective organizing, with the Sierra Club having the opportunity and resources to facilitate collaborative space while centering the leadership and guidance of climate-impacted communities. Our initial meetings saw significant attendance, including prominent figures such as Senator Craig Hickman, Tori Pelletier, Counselor Pelletier, Lokotah Sanborn, Anthony Jackson, Amara Ifeji and more. These gatherings fostered active and engaging conversations, enabling us to deconstruct and challenge the modern model of conservation and its impact on our communities. Our vision encompassed various aspects of equity, including housing, land movements, food justice, and environmental education.

The coalition successfully contributed to supporting Senator Craig Hickman's LD 1274 bill, testifying in favor of the legislation and engaging in conversations about land reparation and equitable land distribution. Recognizing the need for understanding, resources, time, and relationship building, the coalition acknowledged the barriers faced by Black and Brown communities and emphasized the importance of building trust and ensuring their full participation. To address these challenges, alongside the coalition, a needs assessment was conducted to gather insights directly from community members and organizations involved in the coalition. This approach aimed to gather information about specific needs, resources, and how the nonprofit organization, like Sierra Club, could best support their environmental justice work. The coalition and needs assessment are long-term endeavors, with a focus on creating a space where genuine movement building can thrive, respecting the individual paces of participants and cultivating a sense of comfort and representation within the organization.

The needs assessment report, developed in collaboration with Maine Environmental Ed. Association, will provide further insights into community experiences and help guide future actions. Despite some recent challenges in participation, the coalition sees great potential in the space and remains committed to fostering authentic relationships and facilitating meaningful progress. Although recent participation levels have waned, we believe the BIPOC coalition has significant potential to cultivate genuine movement building. Our emphasis remains on allowing individuals to engage at their own pace and ensuring our organization genuinely represents and supports the needs of these communities.

Clean Vehicle Standards a Must

Over the years, the Maine Chapter has been focused on improving public and multimodal transportation in Maine. More recently, we have worked with rural communities on electric vehicle expansion, per the Maine Climate Action Plan. Additionally, we have been active with GrowSmart Maine and Build Maine's Policy summit to focus on the intersectional gaps, like improving state and regional planning, creating village centers and density, and improving active transportation. We will continue to focus on transportation, but we welcome more volunteers to support our efforts. Please reach out to Matt Cannon if you are interested: matthew.cannon@sierraclub.org.

With support from the national Transportation for All Campaign, we have been focused on adopting critical clean vehicle standards in Maine: Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) and Advanced Clean Trucks 2 (ACT2). We have worked with allies (like Conservation Law Foundation and Natural Resources Council of Maine) for years on trying to ensure their adoption. ACT was already proposed a few years ago, but was not adopted because of misinformation and because public comments were limited to in person during the pandemic. Now, we are more organized and are working alongside even more supporters,

including from industry. We hope Maine and the Board of Environmental Protection (BEP) adopt these critical rules to meet our greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions and achieve the goals from our Climate Action Plan.

The ACT rule is a critical step towards electrifying medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (Class 2b-8). The rule requires that vehicle manufacturers sell an increasing percentage of new zero-emission trucks and school buses through 2035. It would also require companies and fleets to report on their operations to inform future MHD electrification strategies. The ACT rule will help transform the entire freight industry to reduce pollution harm to our communities and create high-quality green jobs in the process.

By adopting the full Advanced Clean Cars program (ACC II), which requires automakers to steadily and gradually increase their sales of new EVs, Maine can again help make our households and our economy less dependent on volatile and costly gasoline and make deep cuts in harmful tailpipe pollution that will save lives.

The August 17th public hearing brought hundreds of supporters, and we expect Maine to adopt both rules by the end of the year. Learn more by visiting tinyurl.com/CleanVehicleStandards.



Photo by Saga Hart

Sierra Club Maine Partners with JustME for JustUS

Sierra Club Maine has engaged in an exciting new partnership with JustME for JustUS (JMJU), a youth-led organization advancing accessible climate justice and civic engagement opportunities for youth in rural Maine. Together, we provided fellowships this past summer to youth organizers in rural Maine with the goal of both expanding our reach in more rural areas and inspiring the next generation of climate activists. We provided technical support, training, and guidance as fellows embarked on projects specific to their communities and individual passions. We look forward to continuing our partnership with JMJU and working with more youth in rural Maine.



Intergenerational Climate Action

By Anna Siegel, Maine Youth for Climate Justice Core Member and Sierra Club Maine Executive Committee Member and John Hagan, President of Our Climate Common, Former President of Manomet, Former Chair of Maine Climate Table

A gap between the generations is a given due to ever-evolving pop culture, newfangled technology, and the inherent need for every generation to explore and pursue its vision for the future. Yet today there is a new tension between youth and adults. We're facing a problem that is global in scale, that disproportionately will impact youth, and that adults mostly created: the climate crisis.

Efforts at adult contrition, such as "I'm so sorry my generation messed this up. You're the future! It's up to you to fix this," often backfire. While this framing may seem apologetic and deferential, it instead makes youth even more resentful and places the fate of the world on their shoulders. At the same time, youth sometimes convey an analogous message—"You caused this. Just get out of our way." Neither narrative is helpful.

What is helpful, then? First, one must understand that our methods of communication differ. At a simple operational level, part of the generational divide stems from the fact that our generations prefer different methods of communication.

We need to open communication channels with each other. This can be done by asking for help from one another or offering support.

Each generation should be respected, embraced, and appreciated for the different assets each brings to the table. Youth passion should be combined with elder pragmatism, youth energy should be combined with elder knowledge. A concrete example of combining these intergenerational assets is the intentional cross-pollination of membership in different climate groups.

Each generation needs to marshal the courage to seek out the other generation. Do not wait for the other to come to you—go to them. Relationships come first, and it takes time and courage to build them. Relationships of trust and mutual respect are often all that is needed to work together successfully, a lesson that could be applied to many of our societal divides today.

While seeking out these relationships, one must also be aware of self-created obstacles. If elders

want to be a positive force for intergenerational work, they need to be deliberate about creating space for youth to lead with their voice and their actions. At the same time, youth need to be willing to occupy the space as adults learn how to yield their power and leadership. Special care needs to be taken by older generations to avoid tokenism. Adults can avoid isolating and silencing youth in decision-making spaces by integrating many young people at every level of work rather than choosing one young person to speak for all youth.

We do not interact intergenerationally for all kinds of reasons, including communication barriers, intimidation, power differentials, and laziness. However, everyone should reach out to someone of a different generation and start a dialogue. The climate crisis requires the mobilization of every sector, including every generation. With a strong commitment to intergenerational action and an abandonment of narratives that blame the "other" generation for the world's problems, solutions can be fought for together.

SIERRA CLUB MAINE ENDORSES PINE TREE POWER

The Time for Energy Democracy Is Now

In order to create a world that is grounded in climate justice, we must have energy democracy. In Maine, where big energy monopolies CMP and Versant continue to centralize their business model on profits and fossil fuels at the expense of citizens, energy democratization will shift the power to the people. It is for these reasons that Sierra Club Maine has endorsed Question 3 to create the consumer-owned Pine Tree Power.

“Energy democracy” is the restructuring of power to put working people, low-income communities, communities of color, and their allies in the driver’s seat when it comes to our energy resources. It means decentralization of our energy system and encouraging com-

munity-based control and ownership of energy resources in order to protect ratepayers and ensure our communities are cared for.

Question 3 isn’t just vital to lower Mainer’s utility bills, it’s also critical to meeting our climate and clean energy goals. The current Maine investor-owned utilities, CMP and Versant, have failed to respond to the climate crisis, fighting clean power at every turn and leaving Maine with the least reliable grid in the nation and some of the highest rates in the nation. They have shown that they will fight the growth of locally-owned clean energy in order to preserve profits and centralized control of fossil fuels.

In contrast, Pine Tree Power will be mandated to create a new paradigm for our grid. With labor, climate, and equity mandates written into the law, we can trust that we will be voting for system change and energy democratization.

A win for Pine Tree Power would be the single largest transition to consumer-owned or public power that the nation has ever seen. Maine can transform the indifference and climate denialism of our investor-owned utilities into a model of energy democracy and climate action to inspire other states and municipalities. As it’s been said: as Maine goes, so goes the nation.

IT’S COMING! Sierra Club Maine’s 2023

ANNUAL CELEBRATION

Stay updated at sierraclub.org/maine/annual-celebration

Guide to Ballot Initiatives

Do you have a plan to vote yet? State and local elections will take place on Tuesday, November 7th. You can request an absentee ballot online now! Need help finding your polling place or registering to vote? Visit tinyurl.com/MEVoterInfo or email us at maine.chapter@sierraclub.org.

There are eight questions on the ballot this November, and your vote will be critical to ensuring progress in Maine. Here is your one-stop shop for Sierra Club Maine’s ballot question positions:

NO ON QUESTION 1

Do you want to bar some quasi-governmental entities and all consumer-owned electric utilities from taking on more than \$1 billion in debt unless they get statewide voter approval?

Question 1 was written and submitted by CMP and Versant in order to stall consumer owned utilities, should Question 3 pass. It will slow progress and create more opportunity for misinformation. In order to ensure a swift transition to a consumer owned utility, vote ‘no’ on question 1.

YES ON QUESTION 2

Do you want to ban foreign governments and entities that they own, control, or influence from making campaign contributions or financing communications for or against candidates or ballot questions?

We believe that political campaigns should be run by and for the people, not by corporations or the wealthy. To ensure that future initiatives and politicians will be accountable to Maine people, please join us in voting ‘yes’ on question 2.

YES ON QUESTION 3

Do you want to create a new power company governed by an elected board to acquire and operate existing for-profit electricity transmission and distribution facilities in Maine?

A win for Pine Tree Power would be the single largest transition to consumer-owned or public power that the nation has ever seen. Maine can transform the indifference and climate denialism of our investor-owned utilities into a model of energy democracy and climate action to inspire other states and municipalities by voting ‘yes’ on question 3. You can read more about energy democracy and Pine Tree Power in the article above.

YES ON QUESTION 6

Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to require that all of the provisions of the Constitution be included in the official printed copies of the Constitution prepared by the Secretary of State?

Currently, the Maine Constitution is printed without Sections 1, 2, and 5 of Article X. Section 5 in particular outlines Maine’s treaty obligations to the Wabanaki Nations. In order to ensure the full printing of the Maine constitution, and provide transparency in the state’s obligations, please vote ‘yes’ on question 6.



YES ON QUESTION 8

Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to remove a provision prohibiting a person under guardianship for reasons of mental illness from voting for Governor, Senators and Representatives, which the United States District Court for the District of Maine found violates the United States Constitution and federal law?

This ballot initiative aims to amend the Maine Constitution to make it possible for those under guardianship because of mental illnesses to vote in the State of Maine. In order to right the wrong of a sad piece of Maine history, and will better our democratic process, please vote ‘yes’ on question 8.

Renewable Energy Future Possible With Offshore Wind

As Mainers, Americans, and people on earth, we need to act systemically and swiftly to address our climate crisis.

As we make very important, difficult decisions that will impact future generations, we must get this right. Siting considerations for renewable energy will be one of the most contentious tasks of our time, requiring thoughtful planning and community engagement. We will need new infrastructure to offset fossil fuel infrastructure plus more as we electrify everything.

Thus, we need to adjust our mentality to infrastructure for our renewable energy future. It will require some visual impacts to the landscape, some construction noise, etc. in some places. But, much can and should be avoided or mitigated. We don't need to concede intact habitat or critical recreational and cultural areas to future infrastructure, especially if viable, practicable alternatives exist.¹

While the Sierra Club strongly supports the development of substantial wind resources for electricity generation*, we have also been staunch advocates to protect and preserve Sears Island*. As we build a robust and just renewable energy economy, we will face difficult choices that force us to balance speed, equity, and long-term impacts. We must also minimize effects on wildlife and ecosystems to the greatest extent possible to avoid accelerating the ongoing biodiversity crisis. Environmentally-responsible offshore wind energy projects can spur economic development, create jobs in coastal communities, improve energy security, and dramatically cut pollution. We believe the best precedent for this transition is to construct the new wind port on the industrial site, Mack Point, while fully utilizing all federal funds available to offset the financial costs.

We want to remind folks of Sierra Club's involvement in preserving Sears Island, alongside many other community activists over the years. See more online at tinyurl.com/SearsIsland.

Maine's offshore wind development must follow the policy outlined by the Maine Climate Council and develop renewable energy with minimal disruption to the natural systems. Part of the plan* focuses on conservation and enhancement of coastal ecosystems for adaptation and mitigation in keeping with conserving 30% of lands and coastal waters by the year 2030, or "30x30." A haven for migratory birds and waterfowl, Sears Island is surrounded by eelgrass beds, essential habitat for juvenile lobster, flounder, crab, cod, etc. Only 15% of coastal ecosystems remain nationwide*. They are essential carbon sinks and provide important sea level rise mitigation ecosystems as highlighted by Maine Won't Wait*.

By comparison, Mack Point is already developed. It has an essential rail line, shuttered oil tanks, and adjacent available acreage on site and along the rail spur at the former GAC plant. It also has a very willing landowner. As Maine continues to experience development pressure, more use of natural resources, and an intensifying climate crisis, it is incumbent upon us to value all undeveloped land and protect intact habitats whenever possible, even if they are owned by MDOT.

The 2007 Sears Island Planning Initiative Consensus Agreement* and the subsequent executive order in 2009* stated that 'Mack Point shall be given preference as an alternative port to development on Sears Island.' Considering it



Photo by Dennis Schroeder, National Renewable Energy Laboratory 40389

is one thing, but preference means "the act, fact, or principle of giving advantages to some over others." Environmental law requires that the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative does not prioritize financial cost. Even if Mack Point were more expensive, we should try to make it work.² Particularly, we suspect there are federal funds available that might make the cost issue mute. We need to fully vet all potential mitigation, funding opportunities, and more to fully evaluate Mack Point as the preferred alternative.

For next steps, we will mobilize public comments for the federal permitting process once a site is identified, so stay tuned for action through our AddUp campaign.

1. Climate resilient development is enabled when governments, civil society and the private sector make inclusive development choices that prioritize risk reduction, equity and justice, and when decision-making processes, finance and actions are integrated across governance levels, sectors, and timeframes (very high confidence). https://www.google.com/url?q=https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1687711092835033&us-g=A0vVawij6ffOPvqhMlvCy8Kp_6-o

2. There is of course a line of what is feasible, even in relation to the consensus agreement, but the availability of federal funds should allow for a more even weight for monetary cost. Additionally, the cost benefit analysis formula is currently being rewritten at the federal level that could more accurately reflect loss of habitat/lands. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/DraftCircularA-4.pdf>

*For clickable links visit tinyurl.com/OffshoreWindUpdate

Energy Profile and Goals for Maine

By David von Seggern, Co-lead, Clean Energy Team, Sierra Club Maine

The effort to make an energy transition that will forestall climate change has largely fallen to state and local governments insofar as legislation to reach certain goals while the role of the federal government has been to supply needed research, guidance, monitoring, and funding. With no uniform federal standards for the whole nation, states have developed a wide range of goals through legislation; and local counties or municipalities have often established more ambitious goals through local statutes.

In previous years, one could compare states on the basis of what is known as Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) which set specific goals for how much of electricity production should be met by renewable sources. But more recently states have legislated Clean Energy Standards (CES) which cover the entire spectrum of energy consumption. Maine has in fact both an RPS and a CES. These two approaches will work together as we electrify everything over the next few decades.

Where does Maine stand among the states? Maine's recent CES ('21) is spelled out in statute Title 38: §576-A* Greenhouse gas emissions reductions. It calls for "carbon neutrality" in 2045 and for 80% reduction by 2050 in annual GHG emissions relative to the 1990 level.

These are among the most aggressive goals of all US states. Maine's latest RPS (2019) is defined in Title 35-A: §3210* Renewable Resources. It calls for 80% of retail electricity sales in 2030 to come from renewable generation sources and 100% by 2050. Again, these are aggressive goals, with the full 100% RPS only matched by a few other states.

A recent report by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory* attempts to make sense of all the goals across all the states, with various statutes having different definitions of "renewable" generation sources, different years and percentages of attainment, different approaches to carbon budgeting, and so forth. Add to this the fact that sometimes power generated in one state is consumed in another, and the picture gets rather murky. Maine is not exempt from these uncertainties. According to the LBNL report, as of 2021, Maine has reached 46% attainment of its 100% RPS goal. Continue reading and *view clickable links at tinyurl.com/MEEnergy.



Photo by by 3D Animation Production Company



Advocating to the Board of Directors

Every year our Chapter has the opportunity to send resolutions to the Council of Club Leaders, which if enacted, are forwarded to the national Board of Directors. This year Sierra Club Maine proposed two resolutions:

1. Advocate for a greenhouse gas (GHG) removal policy. GHG removal policies are already being piloted in states like Washington and California to help nature eliminate methane, sequester carbon dioxide, and remove other GHG pollutants from the atmosphere. Reducing GHG means slowing global warming and cleaner, more breathable air.
2. Advocate for restoring and improving the National Environmental Policy Act and Endangered Species Act to ensure that we assess the biological and environmental impact of any proposed government action. This will also help make sure we understand all alternatives to choose a plan that will not reduce, but rather enhance environmental quality.

Sierra Club Maine hosted four interns this year. Their contributions to the Maine Chapter and the environmental movement were immense. We thoroughly enjoyed working with them and look forward to seeing great things from them in the future! We invite you to read about their experiences below.

Nasreen Sheikh–Yousef, 30x30 Campaign Planning Intern



As a community organizer interested in political and social policy, my internship at the Sierra Club is a big step to experience working on environmental justice and climate change. I got experience in local government and activists by attending city hall hearings, rallies, and community activist training. I bring all that experience to push the work that the Sierra Club in Maine does with the 30x30 campaign. I am so

excited to be part of the 30x30 campaign to conserve 30% of Maine's lands, waters, and oceans by 2030. In my short time here, I've worked on the importance of grassroots organizing and how it can empower BIPOC communities to engage in environmental work. I am contributing to many different projects ranging from work on BIPOC Coalition, Community & Climate Action Team Outreach (alternate ideas), and starting a podcast about the 30x30 Initiative.

To build connections with BIPOC and frontline community organizations to better understand interests and needs as it pertains to 30x30 work. I also have the privilege to learn about the environmental issues and political landscape of the state of Maine. I gained so much experiential knowledge in grassroots environmental activism and policy that I never could have learned in community organizing. I'm so glad I applied for an internship at the Sierra Club and look forward to continuing to do the work stated by other environmental organizers.

I met with my intern supervisor, Nyalat, to coordinate the coalition space to create a goal/tactic-specific campaign plan that centers emerging BIPOC/frontline coalition voices.

Grace Deng, 30x30 Campaign Planning Intern



As a campaign planning intern at Sierra Club Maine, I had the opportunity to be a part of a passionate and dedicated team working towards environmental sustainability. From day one, I was immersed in the organization's mission, gaining a deep understanding of the pressing issues our planet faces and the strategies employed to address them.

My first couple of weeks I immersed myself in the work, learning the necessary terms, policies, and current environmental events going on in the country. Because this is my first time professionally working in an environmental

organization, I had to get myself more familiar with how things work and to fully understand my role and responsibilities. My team gave me the necessary resources to get educated by providing me the organization's training, notifying me of current or new policies/events, and more.

As I grew more comfortable in my position, I began understanding more about the work. I participated in larger team meetings, where I had the opportunity to engage with the broader team and other like-minded individuals and raise awareness about our campaign. These experiences honed my skills in writing and reinforced my passion for environmental activism.

Throughout my internship, I actively contributed to the development of campaign materials, including educational resources, power mapping, and centering BIPOC voices. I learned how to

effectively communicate our message to different audiences, tailoring it to resonate with diverse stakeholders. This hands-on experience strengthened my writing skills and improved my ability to craft compelling narratives.

As I continue my internship, I continue reflecting on the significant progress I had made during my time at Sierra Club Maine. Not only did I enhance my knowledge of environmental issues, but I also developed practical skills in research, communication, and campaign management. This work continues to grow my inspiration and motivation to continue advocating for a greener and more sustainable future.

Philip Mathieu, 30x30 Intern



This spring I took on a part-time internship for Sierra Club Maine. My work focused on finding ways to utilize GIS—that is, computer based mapping software and data—to help guide our conservation mission. The most exciting project I worked on involved modeling access to conservation land across Maine.

I started by downloading a file from the US Census Bureau that shows where Mainers live on a street-by-street, block-by-block level. I also downloaded

a map of conservation land from the Maine DEP. Then, for each block, I used data from OpenStreetMap to calculate walking time to the nearest conservation property. (If you're interested in the technical details, you can learn more at my project website, philipmathieu.github.io/access.)

The initial takeaway from this project was that only 25% of Mainers live within a 10-minute walk of conservation land (a goal proposed by the Trust For Public Land to help quantify "access" on a community scale). Additionally, Mainers who live in "disadvantaged" communities—communities meeting one or more environmental, economic, or demographic

thresholds established by the Biden administration that may indicate historic or present inequity—were even less likely to have access to conservation land, whether it be within a 10-minute walk or a 60-minute walk.

Ultimately, this kind of analysis is just a first step towards understanding the contours of conservation in Maine today so that we can better guide our conservation-related advocacy in the future. I am looking forward to continuing to work on this and other projects even as my formal internship comes to an end and I return to my volunteer role.

Idey Abdi, Building Electrification Intern



As a Building Electrification Intern a significant portion of my time is dedicated to researching various programs across the United States that aim to empower marginalized communities in their fight against environmental challenges. Through this research we will see what we can implement in Maine that will be beneficial to our target communities.

My passion lies in educating and involving residents from low-income communities in the climate change movement. Having grown up in Lewiston, I am well aware of the challenging conditions tenants endure due to limited options. It reinforces my belief that disadvantaged communities must understand the underlying reasons for their struggles to effectively address the issues and advocate for safer and more affordable living conditions.

I had the opportunity to meet with two individuals from the Portland Sustainability Office. This in-person meeting provided invaluable

insights into the remarkable work they are doing for the city, especially their future projects tailored to renters. The meeting was informative and inspiring, fueling my determination to contribute meaningfully to this cause.

For the remainder of my internship, I plan to further my research efforts while concentrating on outreach and building connections with individuals and organizations. I hope my research and networking will aid in the creation of a program that benefits low-income renters where they can live in communities powered by clean energy and without financial burdens.

Legislative Accomplishments

2023 brought the 131st session of the Maine Legislature. Amidst raging wildfires bringing dangerous air quality to Maine, record rainfall, and one of the hottest years on record, the legislative team continued to advocate for addressing the climate crisis and social injustices through policy. The session came with some wins and some disappointments, but our goals remained steadfast—we need transformational and justice-centered policy change to create a Maine that is livable for all.

This session, over twenty volunteers met regularly to discuss policy, write testimony, and lobby our elected officials. The team wrote 86 pieces of testimony on behalf of the Maine Chapter, and catalyzed other Sierra Club members and supporters to get engaged. We worked tirelessly as a team to advocate for our priorities, writing numerous opinion letters in Maine newspapers appearing in over twenty written articles.

We were able to push forward environmental priorities this year, thanks to the tireless work of advocates. Some highlights included:

- LD 1895: *An Act Regarding the Procurement of Energy from Offshore Wind Resources*, will generate not only a historic investment in affordable and reliable clean energy to power Maine’s homes, businesses, and transportation; but also an investment in the working Mainers needed to make it a reality.
- LD 71: *Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 171: Control of Petroleum Storage Facilities, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Environmental Protection*—A bill that will ensure that the ground-breaking fenceline monitoring around all tank farms in Maine that was passed through legislation in the 130th session will happen beginning in 2024, and will be paid for by the oil companies.



• LD 1246: *An Act to Include Endangered and Threatened Species Habitat in the Definition of “Significant Wildlife Habitat” Under the Natural Resources Protection Act*, will preserve biodiversity by minimizing development impacts to endangered and threatened species habitat in Maine.

We also faced major losses this year, despite holding a ‘democratic trifecta’ in Augusta—with Democratic majorities in the House, Senate, and Governor’s Office—which normally bodes well for environmental and justice issues. We saw threats to community solar and municipal control of energy sources, unbalanced influence of fossil fuel and corporate lobbyists, and the possibility of nuclear infrastructure coming to Maine. We and the broader environmental community were able to stop these threats, but on others we were not so lucky. We saw Governor Mills veto key legislation for justice for the Wabanaki Nations (LD 2004), and key bills on transportation, aquaculture, greenhouse gas removal, and equity get watered down and ultimately not pass. Despite these losses, we must never give up on our vision for climate justice, and we are committed to continuing our work forward.

The legislature adjourned late this summer, and will return in January for the “short session” of the 131st legislature. The legislative team will continue to work to push for our priorities, and we hope you will join us in advocating for a just and livable future for all who call Maine home. View all of our testimony and priorities at sierraclub.org/maine/legislative.

Sustainable Aquaculture Work Continues



Several years ago, local activists in Jonesport asked Sierra Club to step in and ensure Kingfish Company was not degrading our waters through its proposed finfish aquaculture facility. As a national organization based on grassroots involvement, we empower, train, and work with local advocates in impacted communities. Local advocates represent our power as Sierra Club, and in many cases represent Sierra Club as members and supporters. Working in a gray area of internal policy, as there is no food or aquaculture campaign and there are different grassroots network teams looking at these issues, we as the Maine Chapter had to lead the Sierra Club in how to address this new, large industry threatening to forever change our water quality and food security.

We did appeal in the early permits for Kingfish, but unfortunately, we didn’t have enough resources/capacity to adequately participate in the regulatory process and were denied standing. After this, we started a volunteer team with members from all impacted communities from large-scale finfish farms to investigate this new technology. Through our efforts, we focused around a few policy issue areas, wrote a white paper, and filed another appeal. Then, this year, we focused on legislative action and worked alongside other coalition partners to support a sustainable future. While unsuccessful, we look forward to continuing to build partnerships with less impactful farmers, and support Maine’s burgeoning sustainable aquaculture industry.

This is a complex issue that requires substantial education and organizing. There are evolving technologies, climate change, food demand change, corporate influence, etc. that make this extremely challenging.

There is still much to do. We are excited to have a new organizer to help with this work as well as new partnerships with Friends of Harriet Hartley and others to ensure Maine’s people and environment are protected.

Stay updated on our aquaculture efforts online at sierraclub.org/maine/aquaculture.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Sierra Club Maine has been working with communities across the state for over 40 years.

As a grassroots organization **we believe in the power of people working together to make change happen.** That’s why we need your help! Your passion, skills, and experiences will help us continue to:

- Fight the climate crisis
- Promote clean air & renewable energy
- Elect pro-environment candidates
- Hold public officials accountable
- Protect Maine’s woods & waters
- Ensure a clean & just economy

Volunteers of all levels are encouraged to join! No experience necessary.

To get started please complete our interest form at sierraclub.org/maine/volunteer. Once complete, someone will follow up with you for next steps. Feel free to contact us with any questions: maine.chapter@sierraclub.org • 207-761-5616.



“From climate change, to biodiversity loss, to threats to our democracy, to the accumulation of toxic chemicals in our environment; we face daunting problems in the world today. It is easy to feel helpless in the face of challenges of this magnitude.

Volunteering with the Sierra Club has provided me the support and structure to make a real difference on these issues in Maine. Come volunteer with us! Together we can have an even bigger impact.”

—Patricia Rubert-Nason, Volunteer

Get the **latest updates** and **take action** by following Sierra Club Maine on social media:

Instagram: @mesierraclub

Facebook: @SierraClubMaine

Twitter: @SierraClubMaine

YouTube: Sierra Club Maine

Get news sent straight to your inbox by visiting tinyurl.com/SCMEnews to sign up for our **monthly newsletter**.

Maine's Environment Needs You

There's a lot that needs to be done to protect Maine's environment, but there's one thing you can do today to **make a lasting impact**.

When you donate to Sierra Club Maine, your gift immediately goes to work to **protect wildlife and wild places, ensure clean air and water for all, and fight for environmental justice**.

Join us in protecting our home by making a donation today.

100% of your gift stays local and will be applied where it's most urgently needed. Learn more about the ways you can give by visiting sierraclub.org/maine/ways-give or scanning the QR code below.

You can also send a check made out to "Sierra Club Maine" directly to **PO Box 3760, Portland, ME 04104**.

Thank you for being an environmental champion by donating today!



MAINE SIERRAN is published by Sierra Club Maine. Articles may be reprinted with credit to MAINE SIERRAN. We welcome your input. If you have suggestions or are interested in contributing articles or photographs, please email us at maine.chapter@sierraclub.org.

SIERRA CLUB STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

"To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the Earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the Earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives."

Sierra Club Maine

PO Box 3760, Portland, ME 04104
207-761-5616 • maine.chapter@sierraclub.org
www.sierraclub.org/maine

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Corrine Adamowicz | Falmouth | maine.chapter@sierraclub.org |
| John Fitzgerald | Sedgwick | greenknights.law@gmail.com |
| Jonathan Fulford (Vice Chair) | Belfast | jonathan.fulford@gmail.com |
| Gary Friedmann | Bar Harbor | gary@garyfriedmann.com |
| David Gibson | Morrill | davidgibson1@gmail.com |
| Kelsey Halliday Johnson (Sec.) | Cape Elizabeth | maine.chapter@sierraclub.org |
| Sue Levene (Chair) | Phippsburg | suelevene@gmail.com |
| Jim Merkel | Belfast | jimimerkel@gmail.com |
| Patricia Rubert-Nason | Fort Kent | maine.chapter@sierraclub.org |
| Julia St. Clair | S. Portland | maine.chapter@sierraclub.org |
| Jacob Stern | Pownal | jacobstern2@gmail.com |

STAFF

Marena Bach, Communications & Outreach Manager
marena.bach@sierraclub.org

Nyalat Biliew, Grassroots Organizer
nyalat.biliew@sierraclub.org

Matt Cannon, State Conservation & Energy Director
matthew.cannon@sierraclub.org

Sarah Leighton, Chapter Director
sarah.leighton@sierraclub.org

Ania Wright, Legislative & Political Specialist
ania.wright@sierraclub.org

VOLUNTEER TEAM LEADERS & STAFF

30x30 TEAM

Minot Weld: minotweld@mac.com

Philip Mathieu: philip.eng.mathieu@gmail.com

Matt Cannon: matthew.cannon@sierraclub.org*

ADVANCEMENT TEAM

Corrine Adamowicz: maine.chapter@sierraclub.org

Sarah Leighton: sarah.leighton@sierraclub.org*

AQUACULTURE TEAM

Matt Cannon: matthew.cannon@sierraclub.org*

BUILDING ELECTRIFICATION TEAM

David Von Seggern: vonseg1@sbcglobal.net

Matt Cannon: matthew.cannon@sierraclub.org*

CLEAN ENERGY TEAM

Matt Cannon: matthew.cannon@sierraclub.org*

CLEAN TRANSPORTATION TEAM

Patricia Rubert-Nason: maine.chapter@sierraclub.org

Matt Cannon: matthew.cannon@sierraclub.org*

COMMUNITY & CLIMATE ACTION TEAMS

Becky Bartovics: bbartovics@gmail.com

Nyalat Biliew: nyalat.biliew@sierraclub.org*

EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE TEAM

Kelsey Halliday Johnson: maine.chapter@sierraclub.org

Ania Wright: ania.wright@sierraclub.org*

EVENTS TEAM

Megan Giakas: megangiakas@gmail.com

Sarah Leighton: sarah.leighton@sierraclub.org*

LEGISLATIVE TEAM

Jonathan Fulford: jonathan.fulford@gmail.com

Ania Wright: ania.wright@sierraclub.org*

OUTINGS TEAM

Sue Levene: suelevene@gmail.com

Matt Cannon: matthew.cannon@sierraclub.org*

POLITICAL TEAM

Claudia King: seekingcking@gmail.com

Ania Wright: ania.wright@sierraclub.org*

COUNCIL OF LEADERS REPRESENTATIVE

Philip Mathieu: philip.eng.mathieu@gmail.com

*Staff Support