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Please consider a gift to our Campaign for CREA's Future.

Your donation, or a contribution through planned giving, will ensure that future generations continue learning to be stewards of our precious earth. Contact: Caroline Eliot, Executive Director at director@creamaine.org for additional planned giving information.

www.creamaine.org

CREA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, your contributions are tax deductible.



CREA SUMMER CAMP

2019 A Summer to Remember!

When was the last time you found a frog at your feet in the river, built a boat with your new best friend, did a solo-hike, or covered yourself in clay from head to toe? Been a while? If so, it's time to come to CREA Camp.

This past summer CREA offered 6 weeks of awesome outdoor exploration, STEM adventures, art creations, nature-based science discovery and most importantly confidence building. Adventures were based at CREA's Ecology Center and Nature Preserve trails. Connecting our campers with nature and fostering future stewards of the environment is our mission and our passion.

110 campers and 15 Counselors-In-Training joined us over the course of the summer. Most came from our own community, but some traveled far to experience CREA. Including Nolan from WA, Alex from NY, and Amelia and Nathan from OH.

Our camp team made all of this magic happen! Zoe Battle joined us prior to starting her freshman year at Macalester College. Zoe was an integral part of implementing our camp science curriculum and creative art lessons. Nick Merrill joined us after completing his freshman year at Bowdoin College. Nick was our fishing guru, nature guide, games-master and an enthusiastic leader.

We are all looking forward to CREA's 2020 Summer Camps which open for registration this winter. Please visit our website for more information www.creamaine.org/camps or email jenny@creamaine.org with your camp questions. Think Camp!

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**"Let nature be your
teacher, let us be
your guide"**



On August 27th, 2019 the dirt road that guides thousands of nature-learners to the CREA Ecology Center was dedicated to CREA co-founder John Rensenbrink.



Puffins & Terns
Restoring Maine's Sea
Bird Population on
Easter Egg Rock

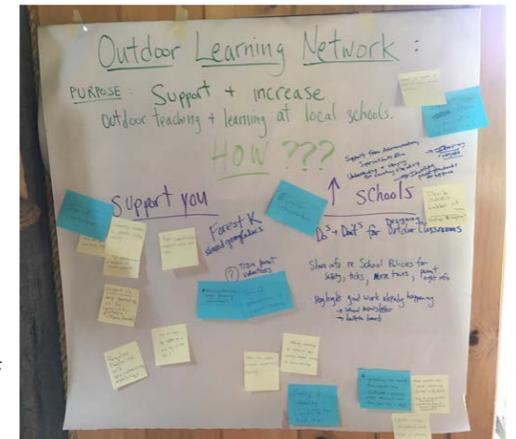
**November 26th
6 - 7pm**

Topsham Public Library

**CREA's OUTDOOR LEARNING NETWORK:
Teachers Take Learning Outdoors**

Let's imagine you're an elementary school teacher, devoted to your students and looking for ways to enhance your teaching. You recognize that traditional classroom teaching methods are less effective for some students. You want to explore new ideas, but you have the demands of your regular school day and meetings. What to do?

The Outdoor Learning Network, conceived of and created by CREA Educators Sarah Rodgers and Carey Truebe, could be just what this teacher needs! Sarah and Carey, who teach nature-based curricula to public school students at the Ecology Center, led a free summer workshop for teachers on how to 'take learning outdoors,' thanks to generous grant support from Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust, Davis Foundation, Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust, and Merrymeeting Bay Trust. At the one-day workshop, Sarah and Carey shared outdoor teaching strategies, core outdoor activities linked to indoor math and literacy lessons, and modeled the 'student discovery' style of teaching.



At this 2019 Teacher Fellows workshop, Sarah and Carey realized that peer to peer sharing was an invaluable part of the day. Teachers crave time to share their experiences and brainstorm ideas about outdoor teaching. Busy with day to day challenges during the school year, they don't get the opportunity to discuss new, innovative ideas – especially with teachers outside their school.

Our team wanted to facilitate interaction between teachers who are using nature-based teaching, so they conceived of the Outdoor Learning Network (OLN). The purpose of the Network is to provide a forum for peer collaboration around outdoor, place-based teaching. Teachers collaborate with other teachers at their grade level, learn about resources for outdoor teaching, and access place-based lesson plans appropriate for their grade. The first OLN meeting took place at CREA's Ecology Center in June with teachers representing almost every elementary school in MSAD 75 and the Brunswick School District.

The OLN plans to meet quarterly, rotating among different elementary schools. In late October, they are meeting at the Bowdoinham Community School where they will tour outdoor spaces used for teaching, view outdoor shelving for student-discovered natural treasures, and review visual aids used to help Forest Kindergartners 'gear up' with outerwear and supplies before heading out for a day of learning in the woods.

The OLN exemplifies the remarkable work our Educators are doing. Not only do they inspire over a thousand public school students every year with their outdoor teaching, but they are working to spread the tools (and benefits) of place-based teaching much more broadly across our school districts through peer-to-peer collaboration. We are grateful for their talents and commitment!



Our Mission: To foster the wise use of the Cathance River Nature Preserve; to deepen ecological awareness through nature-based learning among students, educators, and the public; and to promote environmental stewardship.

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CATHANCE RIVER EDUCATION ALLIANCE

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To our Members and Friends:

As Autumn comes to the Midcoast, so too do buses and buses of students from MSAD 75 and Brunswick School Districts. Students come to the Preserve to study Pond Life, Life Cycles, Earth Systems, Geology, and more in CREA's 'outdoor classroom.'

On a brilliant October day, CREA Educators Sarah Rodgers and Carey Truebe welcomed Mrs. Dedek's fourth grade class from Williams-Cone to study Energy. One group of students measured solar, wind, and water energy outdoors with Carey while Sarah took a group inside to talk about different forms of energy. CREA Educators do not stand and deliver information. They extract information from the students - asking questions, giving everyone a chance to think and participate, and prompting students to think analytically.

Indoors, the conversation ranged from real life examples of energy changing form in ways that are useful to whether the students had used electricity that morning ("Did you have milk with your cereal?" "Yes" "Ah, so when you opened the refrigerator door..." "I used electricity!"). When asked whether the sun's light energy could be used to create heat, students raced out the Ecology Center door in search of 'something dark that converts the sun's energy to heat' on the building. Everyone is engaged and everyone is participating. This is learning at its best. At CREA, students are exposed to practical, real-life applications of abstract energy concepts they have studied back at school.

Like Mrs. Dedek's class, we hope you found time to walk our trails or participate in one of CREA's many fall programs. Fall is one of the loveliest times of year in Maine and certainly one of the loveliest on the Cathance River Nature Preserve.

2019 has been a year of robust programming by CREA. Recently, CREA hosted a nature cruise up the Kennebec in partnership with the Maine Maritime Museum. Add to this our unique work bringing student-directed, nature-based learning to countless K-5 students from MSAD 75 and Brunswick School District, six weeks of exciting, nature-based summer camp, 'Fourth Tuesday' talks at the Topsham Public Library, and walks at the Ecology Center for learners of all ages. Through these, CREA touches the minds and spirits of thousands of friends and neighbors here in the Midcoast.

None of this would be possible without you - our members. Together, we open doors that help people experience the magnificence and significance of the natural world. Membership is the life-blood of our organization. We are a lean organization that does this with an amazing staff of one full-time Director, 2 part-time Educators, and 1 part-time Camp Director/Administrator. **Every membership dollar goes to this invaluable work.**

2020 marks an important milestone for CREA: 20 years of fostering the wise use of the Cathance River Nature Preserve, deepening ecological awareness through nature-based learning among students, educators, and the public; and promoting environmental stewardship. We look to you to keep CREA a vital and valuable resource in our community for the next 20 years, and beyond.

Visit us at the preserve this season, and watch for upcoming programs at www.creamaine.org, on Facebook, Instagram and in e-news. CREA connects people with nature, for the benefit of both!

In gratitude, Ellen Bennett & Caroline Eliot

Welcome our New Board Member

Susan Rae-Reeves' life and work have been motivated by community building, political action, and the spiritual connection afforded by people working for economic and racial justice and preservation of and access to the natural world. After earning a BA in religion at Bates College, Susan left Maine for NYC, pursuing a spiritual quest through study at Union Theological Seminary. Susan worked at Christianity & Crisis Magazine and the New World Foundation where social justice, civil rights and respect for the natural world were shared values and priorities. She earned an MSW at Hunter College School of Social Work and briefly managed a division of programs for homeless and street youth. Coming home to Maine in 2014, Susan is developing a new relationship with the Androscoggin River, small town life, and the outdoors. Susan feels that joining the CREA board in 2019 offers her an opportunity to bring all of the threads together.



CREA Thanks our Sunday Volunteers



CREA Ecology Center

Come experience the building that teaches.
Open Year Round - Sundays, 12pm - 2pm

Some people love their quiet Sundays. But a number of dedicated folks in our community leave their homes on Sundays to benefit all of us.

These are our 'Sunday Volunteers,' who take turns hosting the Ecology Center's open house every Sunday from 12 to 2 pm. We owe a heartfelt 'thank you' to these generous souls who venture down Rensenbrink Way - rain, snow, or shine - to give the public a chance to see the fascinating exhibits and systems of the Ecology Center.

With deep gratitude, we thank: Tom Burrage, Valerie Chow, Rick Diamond, Lisa Durrell and Ann Gardner, Charlie Evans, Glenn Gutsche and Janet Kolkebec, Bob and Kathleen Halliday, Ron and Joann Strand, David Vaughn.

Are you interested in volunteering at the CREA Ecology Center? Training is provided. Please contact our team for more information, crea@creamaine.org.



Students from Woodside, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Bowdoin, and Williams-Cone Elementary Schools are visiting the CREA Ecology Center this fall as part of their school science curriculum. Students learn through hands-on lessons with our Educators. Lessons include: lifecycles- dissecting seeds, and using microscopes to search for organisms in Preserve ponds; Geology- grinding rocks to learn the difference between a rock and a mineral; and Energy - measuring wind, solar and water energy around the Preserve.

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SAVE the DATE

Mt. Ararat Student Research
Presentations

January 28, 2020 | 6-7:30pm
Topsham Public Library

