



Explore MAINE 2025



Hiking the Appalachian Trail, Courtesy of Anya Fetcher

Summer in Maine is famously short. We want to take advantage of every glorious day. In preparation for it, we pull together our *Explore Maine* publication, with the goal of inspiring you to get out and discover new and exciting places in Maine's environment. NRCM staff and members once again did not disappoint, sharing a few of their picks based on opportunities provided by federally protected lands located right here in Maine. We also provide options for your summer reading list, the best part of which is that the books we feature have been written by our own supporters! As always, this year's include everything from an award-winning children's book to home-grown mysteries to conservation success stories to nature-based creative nonfiction—all thoughtfully reviewed by NRCM staff and members. We hope you enjoy this publication as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you. See you outside!

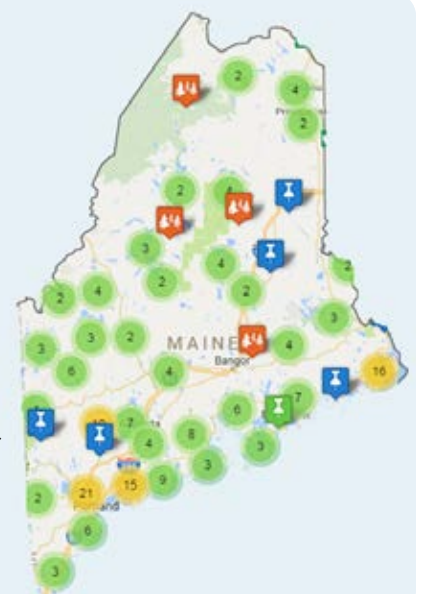
—Allison Wells,
Editor and Senior Director
of Communications



Find Your New Favorite Place

Our online Explore Maine map will help you discover new places and rediscover old favorites. Features more than 100 Land for Maine's Future locations, dozens of Public Reserved Lands, and trails galore! Read staff and member picks, and find trails that are accessible to all. Maine awaits you!

nrcm.org/our-maine/explore-maine-map



NRCM Member Discount! Maine Sporting Camps & Outdoor Recreation Partners

These Maine outdoor recreation businesses offer a discount to NRCM members. (Welcome to the program, Allagash Headwaters Lodge!) Create memories—paddling a pristine lake, fishing with a trained professional, or rowing on Penobscot Bay—that will become long-held traditions! Contact us at (207) 430-0106 or email Beth Comeau at beth@nrcm.org to get your discount voucher, then make your reservation for:

Allagash Headwaters Lodge
NORTHERN PISCATAQUIS COUNTY
www.allagashheadwaterslodge.com

The Birches Resort
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AROOSTOOK COUNTY | (207) 290-1424

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DoryWoman Rowing
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Mahoosuc Guide Service
OXFORD COUNTY, BUT TRAVEL
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AROOSTOOK COUNTY | (207) 435-6000

Spencer Pond Camps
PISCATAQUIS COUNTY | (207) 745-1599

Weatherby's
WASHINGTON COUNTY | (207) 796-5558

Featured Apps!

"I'm so grateful to have Merlin and eBird with me in the field. As a relatively new birder, Merlin has been essential for helping me identify birds—its sound recognition and step-by-step ID tool are incredibly useful and beginner-friendly. I also love that any birds I submit in Merlin are automatically added to my eBird life list. eBird is especially great for group outings. When I go birding with my mom, we use the share function so only one of us needs to log our sightings—and then we can easily send the list to the other afterward. I highly recommend both Merlin and eBird to all birders and encourage everyone to spread the word about these fantastic apps!"

—Kate Phillips, NRCM Advocacy Associate

CornellLab
eBird & Merlin



BWyman/NRCM



Todd Martin



Frances Perkins National Monument

Located on River Road in Newcastle, just a few miles north of the popular Dodge Point Preserve, this site is one of the newest additions to the National Park Service. Designated by President Biden in December 2024, the Monument preserves the family homestead of our nation's

first female cabinet secretary, Frances Perkins, who served as Labor Secretary under FDR. In addition to the historic Brick House, ell, and barn, built in 1837, the site includes 57 acres to explore along the Damariscotta River. With maintained hiking trails open year-round dawn to dusk and traversing through woodlands and fields, the Monument is a great place to mix hiking and history. After parking, walk around the outside of the barn to find a kiosk marking the trailhead. The hike begins through the woods on a wide path, with vibrant green ferns dotting the understory. At about the ¼-mile mark, you'll come to a fork to take either the north or south trail, which form a loop. Soon you'll emerge into a field bursting with purple and white lupin in June and July. During my hikes at the site, I've never failed to see Wild Turkeys and white-tailed deer foraging in the fields. Along the way, you'll see the remnants of an 18-century building foundation as well as a garrison site dating to the 1740s. The north and south trail converge at the southern edge of the field and a rustic trail, the shore path, leads to the remains of a family brickyard at the Damariscotta River. —Todd Martin, NRCM member

Leslie Burhoe



Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument

The Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument (KWW) is one of the jewels of Maine. Not only for its beautiful views, woods, and rivers, but also because of its

history and ALL the peoples its land has hosted and cared for. My first visit to the land that became KWW was in 2012 on a cross-country ski trip to Haskell Hut. It wasn't a monument yet. Our group enjoyed the total quiet, breaking trail to hidden ponds, identifying animal tracks, and watching the mostly frozen East Branch of the Penobscot River. I have been back many times since skiing, hiking, birdwatching, and driving the loop road. I have gone in through the North Entrance and the South, each trip providing something new: The walk in the North Entrance, still closed for mud season in June of 2021, when the mosquitoes were as big as Red-tailed Hawks! The hike to the top of Barnard Mountain to see the fall colors. The ski in the North Entrance in 2023 when the thermometer read minus 30 degrees F. The drive around the Katahdin Loop Road when we watched a black bear lumber off the road. The view of Katahdin. And the many views of the East Branch flowing and frozen. Now that KWW is a National Monument, you can plan your trip from the website. There are more marked trails and campsites, a visitors' center—Tekakapimək Contact Station, created in partnership with the Wabanaki Nations and scheduled to open June 21—and space to wander Maine's North Woods and the glories it contains! —Leslie Burhoe, NRCM member

Explore Maine's Natural, National

Maine's Acadia National Park is a popular hotspot for Mainers and visitors. Make great exploration destinations? Located throughout the state, these are more important than ever to show your support right now for these lands, and share with you here a few favorites. Explore more by checking out the full list of maine. Explore and enjoy!—Allison Wells, Editor

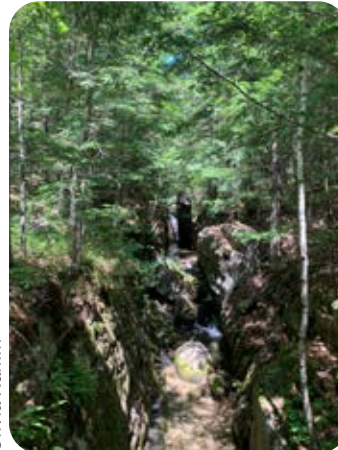
Emmie Theberge



Petit Manan Point (Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge)

During a multi-day sea kayaking trip from Bar Harbor to Machiasport, we paused on Petit Manan Point for a well-earned lunch break. We landed on the sweeping cobblestone beach that wraps around the point and settled atop a rugged berm of cobblestones, which separates Big Pond from the open Atlantic. Though not the most comfortable spot for lounging or a picnic, this wild, stony perch offered dramatic views of Petit Manan Island and its lighthouse—a perfect snapshot of the raw beauty that defines Maine's coastline. Petit Manan Point is shaped by its isolation and harsh maritime climate, which have helped preserve a remarkable diversity of habitats. These include mature woodland groves, freshwater wetlands, estuaries, boreal understory species, coastal bogs, and nearby coastal islands teeming with life. The area has long been recognized as critical breeding habitat for numerous bird species. It's important to note that accessing this area by kayak is recommended only for experienced paddlers. The Maine Island Trail Association Guide designates it as a hazard zone due to its exposure to open water, shifting tides, strong winds, and large waves. —Emmie Theberge, NRCM Outreach Director

Olivia Ruhlin



White Mountain National Forest

The White Mountain National Forest is an extraordinary expanse of protected wilderness stretching across New Hampshire and a portion of western Maine. Managed by the U.S. Forest Service, this national forest is preserved for its ecological value, recreational opportunities, and cultural significance. Home to rugged mountains, scenic trails—including parts of the Appalachian Trail—and diverse wildlife, it plays an important role in conservation, watershed protection, and outdoor recreation. This forest not only supports local

economies through tourism but also protects critical habitats and preserves the natural beauty of the northeastern U.S. for future generations. Growing up in Cornish, I felt lucky to have lived only an hour away from such an exquisite place. I have fond memories of

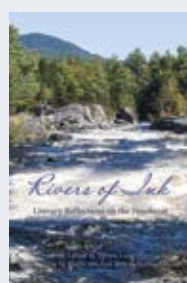
Great Reads:

New & Newly Discovered Books by NRCM Members

Reviewed by NRCM staff and members



Skin and Bones: And Other Mike Bowditch Short Stories, by Paul Doiron (Minotaur Books, 2025) Paul Doiron's latest book is a collection of eight short stories. Each tells new stories involving protagonist Mike Bowditch and Charley Stevens. I especially enjoyed the opening one in which Charley recounts his capture of the notorious hermit of North Pond, whom some readers will recognize as the long-time nemesis of law enforcement in the Belgrade Lakes area. Details from the true story are used to create this account with the young Charley as the hero. In another story, we see Ora, Charley's wife, at a younger age getting involved with one of his cases. Each of the stories is full of the action and the details about nature and the people who live in the remotest parts of our state that we have become accustomed to reading about in Doiron's fiction. —Betty Hartley, NRCM member, Brunswick



Rivers of Ink: Literary Reflections on the Penobscot, edited by Steven Long (12 Willows Press, 2023) On my weekly trips from Rockland along the Penobscot estuary, I was rapt with attention to the state of the ice on ponds, tributaries, and rivers in the transition from winter to spring—eager to be afloat and underway or just enjoying the flows with a pair of waders and a fly rod in hand. *Rivers of Ink* was an antidote for that anticipation. Ordinarily I am a nonfiction nature reader, with little patience for creative pieces that leave me wanting for facts, but *Rivers of Ink* was a delight, and the diversity

of the works kept me coming back for more. The poetry exhibits a remarkable aptitude for mimicking the cascading drops of a river system. When I fish, I most enjoy the vignettes of pools of water created by small waterfalls, so I found the variety of poems to be a perfect parallel to those spilling structures, especially those by Lisa Panepinto, Lee Sands, and James Brasfield. The start-stop staccato of other poems felt aligned with the cadence of the natural world. The erratic rhythms and dramatic lunges of Osprey and salmon come to life in these poems in a way that I now find my tried-and-true nonfiction to be falling short. The other pieces also captivated me, from contemporary to historical, and in breadth from perfect campfire ghost stories, as in Emma G. Rose's "Thus Spoke the River" or Shane Layman's "Something in the Water." Other pieces, such as Karin Spitfire's "Liquidation," speak a direct truth to the chilling reality of Indigenous suppression and erasure. In the end my nonfiction environmental narrative compulsion was satisfied with the likes of nearby neighbor Ret Talbot's "Of Wolves and Sharks." I hope you pick up a copy of *Rivers of Ink* and enjoy the diversity of language and storytelling as much as I did. —Nate Hathaway, NRCM Penobscot Bay-Frenchman Bay Regional Outreach Coordinator

s Federal Lands

onal Treasures

alike. But did you know Maine also hosts other protected federal lands that e federally protected areas are great escapes for a wide range of usage. It's l summer in Maine is a glorious time to do so, NRCM staff and members of federally protected areas at our website at nrcm.org/our-maine/explore-

family hikes, swims, and bike rides—all usually with a dog in tow—in these beautiful woods. —*Olivia Ruhlin, NRCM Franklin County Regional Outreach Coordinator*



Anya Fetcher

Appalachian Trail

My first fall living in Maine, I decided to backpack the 100 Mile Wilderness, a particularly wild, dense, remote section of the Appalachian Trail that (going north) ends just a few miles before Katahdin. Prior to doing so, the majority of my hiking and backpacking experience had been in the West, where the mountains are giant and the views are vast and open. So when

I was met with three days of near-constant rain, dense forests, and thick fog at every summit, I was admittedly a bit disappointed. But as I realized I wasn't going to get much of a view looking up and out, I started to look down and around. What I discovered was the most magical world right at my feet: neon orange fungus crawling over fallen trees; carpets of soft, lush moss; mushrooms sporting all colors of the rainbow—some tiny and delicate, others firm, strong, and bigger than my face. Taking the time to look closely at Maine's natural beauty on a micro scale helped me to slow down and appreciate *all* the aspects of these wild places, and the experience has enhanced my hiking adventures since then. Oh, and I did finally get that big view when I summited Katahdin just a few weeks later! —*Anya Fetcher, NRCM Federal Policy Advocate*



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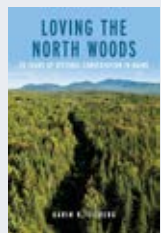
Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge

Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR) is so far Downeast you can almost hop over to Canada from its northernmost section. Established in 1937 as one of the first in the nation, MNWR now holds almost 30,000 acres of wildlife habitat within its two

sections. The refuge has had a long-term priority of managing habitat for American Woodcock and waterfowl, but its more than 50 miles of dirt roads, closed to vehicles, give ample opportunity to see an impressive diversity of birds, mammals, and other creatures. The headquarters is located in the northern section, called the



Goode Vibrations of the Wrestling Place, by Amy Safford (Saco River Books, 2024) Amy Safford skillfully weaves the disgraceful actions associated with Malaga Island in early 20th century Maine history into a novel whose main character, Pennie Goode, learns the details as she researches a real estate development project near the cemetery at the site of the former Maine Home for the Feeble-Minded. Early in the novel, while recovering from a skiing accident, Pennie Goode decides to work for her uncle in his Portland law office. At the same time, she is beginning to have dreams and visions related to Malaga Island, though she doesn't realize that is the source of her dreams until she is sent to the Maine Historical Society to research what happened on Malaga Island in the early 1900s. She and her uncle have become concerned that the road for the development project is too close to the cemetery where people from Malaga are buried. From the very beginning of the novel, the reader has the sense that everything that is happening is related. One must read on to learn how. —*BH*



Loving the North Woods: 25 Years of Historic Conservation in Maine, by Karin R. Tilberg (Down East Books, 2024) "This book is for anyone who loves the North Woods." So begins Karin Tilberg's wonderful chronicle of historic land conservation projects that played out across Maine's North Woods between 1990 and 2015. As one of Maine's most consequential advocates for conserving Maine's North Woods, Karin was centrally involved in so many projects that helped protect millions of acres of Maine's North Woods from fragmentation and development. The book sets the stage by describing the historic and ecological significance of Maine's "Great Vast Forest," then explains the "tectonic shift" in

Baring Division, and is perhaps best known for its marshy wetlands that are great for waterfowl. The southern section, called the Edmunds Division, is located near Cobscook Bay State Park. Its trails are particularly known by birders for the spruce-fir forest habitat that attracts so-called boreal specialty species like Canada Jay, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Cape May and Bay-breasted Warblers. Allison and I always find the bird watching is outstanding, and the refuge is also home to a diversity of mammals including, of course, moose!—*Jeff Wells, NRCM member*



Laura Pope

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge

Eleven protected parcels of land totaling more than 9,000 acres form the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge (RCNWR), a collective of

ecosystems featuring nature trails and observation stations highlighting habitat, flora, and fauna dotting the coastline from Cumberland to Kittery. The RCNWR in Wells features the looping one-mile Carson Interpretive Trail, where a canopy of mixed forest yields cool, dappled light, with the Merriland River flowing alongside. Farther along, the tidal salt marsh appears, culminating in an expansive collective habitat of forest, river, marsh, and sea. One of eleven interpretive observation decks appears at this junction of ecosystems, offering a clear viewpoint of where the Merriland River meets the Little River and together, course eastward to the sea. The full breadth of the salt marsh is a haven for wildlife. On a recent visit, we saw an egret in flight, a group of Canada Geese and ducks, and heard the unmistakable calls of a Belted Kingfisher. As the trail loops back toward the trailhead, the Little River appears on its way to meet the Merriland River. I think of and thank Carson for her enduring legacy of coastal habitat preservation whenever I walk the many trails in the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge. The Carson Trail is an easy walk, perfect for all ages, and is accessible to wheelchair users and strollers. No bicycles are allowed, and pets must be leashed. —*Laura Pope, NRCM member*



Nate Hathaway

Acadia National Park

What we know today as Acadia National Park certainly lives up to the motto: *Geography is Destiny*, with a dramatic central fjord of Somes Sound encircled by the summits like Penobscot, Cadillac, Sargent, and Pemetic Mountains, among others. From the approach to the causeway, which connects the North side of Mount Desert Island to the mainland, the summits rise majestically from Penobscot Bay to the West and Frenchman Bay to the East. This

dramatic, glacial carving of the island has led to some really neat glacial erratics, as well as climbing opportunities for the vertically inclined along Otter Cliffs and farther up Champlain Mountain, among other areas. If you don't have the technical skills but still want the thrills, I highly suggest the Beehive Loop—at 1.4 miles it's no marathon, but the route incorporates some scrambling and ladders that will make you feel like one of the park's Peregrine Falcons, overlooking Sand Beach with excellent views south and east from the summit. For a similar view, but half the effort and risk, try Flying Mountain near Southwest Harbor, and you'll be treated to a view of Somes Sound and smaller (if any) crowds. —*Nate Hathaway, NRCM Penobscot Bay-Frenchman Bay Regional Outreach Coordinator*

land ownership that shook the landscape in the 1990s and early 2000s as paper companies liquidated their timberlands, resulting in an urgent challenge and opportunity for conservation projects at a landscape scale. Fortunately, Maine had the right people and organizations in the right places at the right time to make big projects happen. The book devotes seven chapters to the people who provided the vision and leadership and shines a light on the unsung heroes who helped make these deals happen. This is a book from the heart and includes many of Karin's own North Woods-inspired poems providing a transition between chapters. —*Pete Disdisheim, NRCM Senior Director of Advocacy*



The Art of the Myth: Maine Essays, by Michael D. Burke (Alameda Press, 2024) This collection of essays spans the author's career writing about Maine, blending history, myth, and legend to portray Maine and Mainers as the loveable, ornery, resourceful, and hilarious people we often are. From tales of a game warden to the famous ghost trains of the Allagash, and places and people in between, Burke's work is a fun ride. I particularly enjoyed his essay describing his first foray into a Maine tradition, fiddleheading. At the world's only fiddlehead processing plant, in

Wilton, the proprietor introduces Burke to Colis Blood. Anyone who has spent spring days along a river, bent over fighting blackflies in order to collect fiddleheads, knows this pain well. These essays delightfully tell the stories of Maine and the people who are lucky enough to call it home. While certain tales or stories might meander longer than is completely necessary, all of them have a unique point that is integral to the whole. A great book to take up to camp. —*Ben Wyman, NRCM Administrative & Operations Associate*



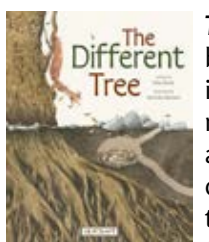
More Great Reads!

Three New Children's Books by Elisa Boxer

I first got to know author Elisa Boxer when she served as a member of NRCM's board of directors, so when I saw that she became a children's book author several years ago, I have awaited eagerly each new book. Elisa's three new books are among my favorites so far!—Beth Comeau, NRCM Web & Communications Manager



Full Circle: Creation, Migration, and Coming Home (Sleeping Bear Press, 2024) There is nothing I like more than a beautifully written and illustrated book for children. This book shares the migratory journeys of several animals, including some of our favorites here in Maine like the Atlantic Puffin and Atlantic salmon. The words help describe the journey of each animal through their layout as waves and circles. And, as with all of Elisa's books, they are written for children but include very scientific details and a "fact card" about each species at the end.



The Different Tree (Reycraft Books, 2024) On the book's back cover, the description includes an important reminder to us all: "The Different Tree is nature's reminder to honor individuality and move at your own pace." The book is about a tree that doesn't drop its leaves in the winter...it waits until the spring, and for good reason, which Elisa shares throughout the story. Vivid illustrations help the reader



understand this tree's uniqueness and the importance and value of being different. It's a book for children...of all ages.

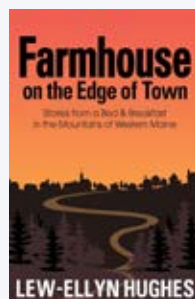


Pine Cone Regrown: How One Species Thrives After Fire (Sleeping Bear Press, 2025) In Elisa's latest, we learn about lodgepole pine trees, whose cones only open after being exposed to a fire. At the end, Elisa shares information about other living creatures and plants that also thrive after fires. While we have all seen the devastation of recent forest fires across the country, this book and its vibrant illustrations and words can help open conversations about those fires with children who may have seen them on TV or known people affected by those fires.

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Thanks to a great partnership, NRCM members receive a 15% discount at the online store of Islandport Press, a leading publisher of Maine-based books. Call (207) 430-0106 or email nrcm@nrcm.org to verify membership and get the discount code. Here are a few recent Islandport favorites:



Farmhouse on the Edge of Town, by Lew-Ellyn Hughes (2024) I had such a wonderful time reading these stories. Lew-Ellyn's humor, bluntness, and thoughtfulness came through each page. Each story paints a beautiful picture of a day in the life at the Diamond Corner Bed and Breakfast season by season. The stories feel like an ode to small town Maine, and a celebration of the little daily joys and silly moments that we often don't take the space to pause and reflect on. Those moments are the ones that define us all the most, and reading this book (especially in the midst of the Maine legislative session!) helped ground me in remembering to enjoy misadventures in the mountains with my loved ones, eat lots of rhubarb this spring, and to have conversations with strangers.—Bronya Lechtman, NRCM Grassroots Outreach Manager



A Full Net: Fishing Stories from Maine and Beyond, by Susan Daignault (2023) I assumed the book would be solely about fishing around New England and in Maine, as the title suggests, but was struck by how much it is about family. The author is very close to hers, including her twin sister, and a lot of their bonding was done during her childhood when they spent summers fishing for stripers on Cape Cod. She also writes about her time in the Coast Guard, which I enjoyed learning about. This book is full of wonderful stories and information about fishing year-round in Maine. They are engaging and well told. I highly recommend this book for anyone who loves fishing, family, and New England. — BC



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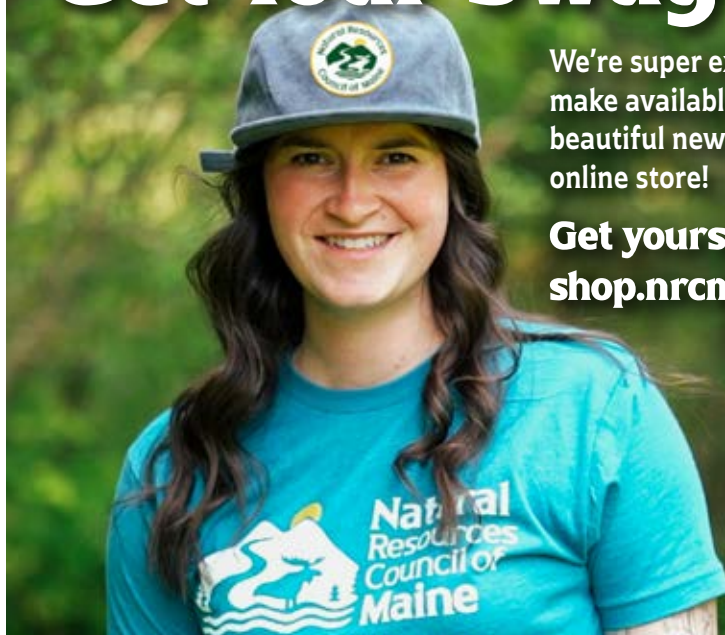
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SUMMER JUMBLE

Unscramble the jumbled words, then arrange the circled letters to solve the puzzle. Here's a clue:

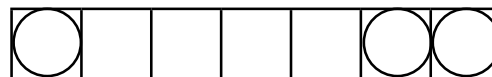
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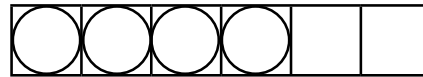
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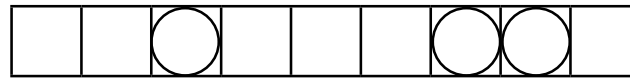
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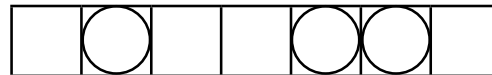
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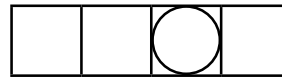
M N E M O T U N S



O F S T R E S



K H E I



"To make a federal case out of protecting these is a good thing!"

Your answer:



Send us your responses to nrcm@nrcm.org! If you've correctly solved all pieces of the Jumble, we'll send you a fun piece of NRCM swag!