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On the Cover: Travis Levy, 14, of Bellingham, displays a yellow perch he caught while kayaking at the 2022 Massachusetts Junior Conservation Camp (MJCC). The MJCC is a 2-week, resident camp, held in August in Russell. Youth aged 13 to 17 are eligible to attend. To learn more about the camp, how youth can attend for free, and deadlines for registration, visit juniorconservationcamp.org. Photo by Troy Gipps

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A FOUNDATION FOR OUR HERITAGE

BY WAYNE F. MACCALLUM

Last June, the Massachusetts Outdoor Heritage Foundation (Mass Outdoor Heritage) presented a specially commissioned painting to Stephen Quill, in recognition of the substantial donations and unstinting time that he has given to further Mass Outdoor Heritage's mission since its founding over 20 years ago. That mission is to support and facilitate fish and wildlife conservation in Massachusetts by providing needed supplemental funding for MassWildlife's programs and events. Thinking about Steve Quill's legacy here in Massachusetts got me thinking about the people who started it all, all those years ago, and have given decades of effort to helping MassWildlife conserve fish, wildlife, and their habitats for future generations.

Incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit charity in the fall of 2000, Mass Outdoor Heritage was organized solely to benefit the conservation programs of MassWildlife. Over the past

20-plus years, Mass Outdoor Heritage has provided grants for numerous projects and big and small MassWildlife events across the state. Projects and programs funded by Mass Outdoor Heritage run the gamut, from land purchases to terrestrial habitat management and stream habitat improvement for brook trout, to kestrel and wood duck boxes, tern and coastal waterbird nesting protection, and amphibian and reptile restoration,

to public-access improvements on Wildlife Management Areas. The National Archery in the Schools Program was brought to Massachusetts, the Teaching with Trout Program has been introduced in 17 additional schools, and the *Living Waters* guide to protecting biodiversity in Massachusetts was printed, all with Mass Outdoor Heritage funding.

The establishment of a 501(c)3 foundation to partner with the state fish and wildlife agency is not unique to Massachusetts.



The genesis of these partner-foundations goes back to the 1990s, when some of the Western states set up 501(c)(3) foundations to enable donors to claim a deduction on their income taxes because there was – and still is – a lot of interest in and willingness to give donations for fish and wildlife agency conservation programs.

When he learned of the success of these foundations in garnering support for state fish and wildlife agencies, then-chair of the Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife Board George L. Darey spearheaded the formation of what was originally called the Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife Conservation Endowment. He envisioned a vehicle to accept donations and bequests that would work in tandem with Mass-Wildlife, providing both stop-gap and supplemental funding for management, research, and educational and outreach programs that restore or improve habitat for wildlife; enrich citizens' and visitors' experiences of Wildlife Management Areas; and improve access to those resources, both on the ground and with educational materials and programs that enhance people's understanding of and appreciation for the tremendous variety of animals, plants, and habitats we have in Massachusetts. In fact, the change of name in 2003 to the Massachusetts Outdoor Heritage Foundation was a direct response to the founding board of directors' realization that it is the outdoor heritage we've inherited—from our families, from present and past landowners, from the sporting community—that they most wanted to preserve and pass on to future generations.

Founding Directors

The founding directors were 13 women and men who were active in the natural resources and environmental conservation community in Massachusetts. They shared the urgent understanding that 1) open spaces they had grown up hiking, exploring, hunting, and fishing were rapidly being developed and disappearing, while 2) many of those fields, forests, and streams still remain, and can be conserved by a cooperative effort

between MassWildlife, conservation organizations, and individual citizens, all of whom appreciate and want to pass on the outdoor experiences and natural areas—the outdoor heritage—we all enjoy now.

The founding directors came from diverse backgrounds, though most already had a heavy grounding in public service, and brought different life experiences to the board. The founding officers were:

President Ann Hubbard of Berkley, Executive Director of the Natural Resources Trust of Easton.

Vice-president Bradlee Gage of Amherst, President of the Westfield-based U.S. Line and former chair of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board.

Treasurer Stephen Quill of Lancaster, President of Lunenburg-based Ecological Fibers and member of the boards of the Ruffed Grouse Society and the New England Forestry Foundation.

I was the founding clerk as Director of MassWildlife, and lived, as I still do, in Grafton. (The Director has remained the clerk since my retirement, as stipulated in the Mass Outdoor Heritage bylaws, with fellow former Director Jack Buckley and now Director Mark S. Tisa serving in the role.)

The other founding directors were:

Sarah Bell, a Lenox-based attorney and environmental activist;

George Darey, also of Lenox, conservation activist and then-chair of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board;

John DeVillars of Boston, former Massachusetts Secretary of Environmental Affairs;

Bob Durand of Marlborough, former state senator and Secretary of Environmental Affairs;

Marilyn Flor of Rockport, former Director of the Massachusetts Audubon Pleasant Valley Sanctuary and member of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee;

Ernest W. Foster Jr., of Worcester, President of The Foster Companies and member of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board;

Henry (Hank) Frenette of Brockton, principal attorney, Frenette and Associates;

John Phillips of Ipswich, former Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game; and

Joseph Trainor of Chelmsford, former Assistant Secretary in the Executive Office of Administration and Finance and appellate court judge.

Iconic Projects

Having provided a brief overview above of the breadth of MassWildlife projects that Mass Outdoor Heritage has contributed to over the years, I'd like to say a little more about a few of the more iconic ones.

In an exciting habitat-enhancement project, two separate high-priority tracts of prime upland wildlife habitat totaling approximately 100 acres on the roughly 1,600-acre Stafford Hill Wildlife Management Area in Cheshire were restored in 2009 to their pre-1960 early-successional state with a combination of timber harvesting, mowing, and mulching. Monies provided by Mass Outdoor Heritage enabled MassWildlife to extend the original project scope to create a critical open connection to existing fields on contiguous private lands to the north of the WMA that lie between the two Stafford Hill tracts. The wildlife that benefit from this habitat restoration project includes traditional game species such as ruffed grouse, American woodcock, deer, moose, and turkey, as well as shrubland species in long-term decline such as the eastern towhee, chestnut-sided and prairie warblers, brown thrasher, field sparrows, whip-poor-wills, and several species of thrushes.

In 2010–11, Mass Outdoor Heritage undertook a brook trout habitat restoration project at the Gulf Brook Conservation Area, owned by the Town of Pepperell with a conservation restriction held by



MassWildlife. Like most of Mass Outdoor Heritage's projects, the restoration was accomplished in partnership, with engineering and technical assistance from the Town, MassWildlife, and the Department of Fish and Game's Office of Fishing and Boating Access, and with pooled funding from the Frank Nims Family Trust, the Stephen F. Quill Family Foundation, the Squan-a-tissit and Greater Boston chapters of Trout Unlimited, and the Nashua River Watershed Association. The project replaced two pipe culverts along Gulf Brook that were impeding fish passage, and the new three-sided culverts restored connectivity of this wonderful coldwater resource to the Nis-sitissit and Nashua rivers for the eastern brook trout, one of our most charismatic fish species native to Massachusetts. Incidentally, current Director Mark Tisa was instrumental in pulling the many interconnected elements together and pushing this project through to completion in his then-role as Assistant Director of Fisheries.

Another exciting project that Mass Outdoor Heritage is thrilled to be part of is the ongoing eastern spadefoot habitat enhancement work being done at the Southwick Wildlife Management Area in Southwick. MassWildlife herpetologist Jacob Kubel has created breeding pools with the help of Mass Outdoor Heritage funding and a host of enthusiastic Mass-



Photos by: Troy Gippis/fisheries biologists with brown trout; MOHF/Gulf Brook culvert; Bill Byrne/spadefoot toad

Wildlife staff and volunteers to have a breeding population of spadefoots at the site, which otherwise has excellent habitat for them. Introductions of spadefoot larvae in 2017-19 were successful in yielding a good number of adults. In July of 2021, Dr. Kubel reported not only seeing adult individuals for the first time, but actual breeding at multiple locations across the WMA (Demystifying the Eastern Spadefoot, No. 3, 2020, *Massachusetts Wildlife*).

The last project I'd like to highlight is also current and ongoing, with active fundraising in progress now, and was recently reported on by the biologists in charge in the special "Fisheries and Aquatics" issue of *Massachusetts Wildlife* (No. 1, 2022). For that reason, I don't need to say a lot about the Swift River PIT-tag study here, except that Mass Outdoor Heritage is very proud and excited to partner with Trout Unlimited and private individuals to contribute to this cutting-edge project to study the wild brook trout fishery in the Swift River tailwater between Quabbin Reservoir and the Bondsville Dam. Investment in this expensive, sophisticated technology has long-term utility and benefits to other projects of similar design. Mass Outdoor Heritage hopes to complete fundraising for the entire project by the end of Mass-Wildlife's fiscal year.

Like so many small nonprofits, Mass Outdoor Heritage has been fortunate to greatly extend its reach by actively seeking out and partnering with other like-minded philanthropic individuals and organizations that share some of the same goals at different geographic scales. Some specific partners in important projects have been Trout Unlimited and its local chapters, Ducks Unlimited, the Nashua River Watershed Association, the Island Foundation, the Friends of the William River, and the Massachusetts Wildlife Federation. And, not least, a significant percentage of the monies that Mass Outdoor Heritage has raised has come from a loyal cadre of longstanding donors, bequests, and donations made in someone's name or in memory of a friend or loved one who has passed away. Please visit massoutdoorheritage.org for more details of the projects and programs we've funded and find out how you can become a contributor to our work. Truly, our goal is and has always been "Funding the Future of Massachusetts Wildlife." Join us!



About the Author

Wayne F. MacCallum retired in 2015 after 25 years of service as the Director of MassWildlife. He currently serves as the president of the Massachusetts Outdoor Heritage Foundation.

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