

Cobscook Currents

Spring 2023





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This year eight students graduate from Cobscook Experiential Programs.

**Cobscook Currents
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Footprint

Greetings Cobscook Family!

It's with a warm smile that contrasts this frigid Maine morning that I write to you all with a wonderful set of news. First, I would like to introduce myself to the wonderful constellation of caring community members far and wide— you! My name is Colby Soctomah-Lewey and I am one of the Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors at Cobscook Institute. I previously served on the board many seasons ago, and I believe it most appropriate to try to share my enthusiasm for the work that we are doing and what is coming up in the future.

The first set of news: we are thriving. I know our campus has been around for a while now, so that it likely has become a part of the featured landscape of our little neck of the woods. But it is no small feat to continually engage and reimagine how our contributions to this landscape (and beyond) year after year are shaping the world around us. And part of how we do that is by the wonderful interactions we hold with our extended family— you (again).

The second set of news is that we have a wonderful slate of programming and engagement within our surrounding communities coming this year. Most of these are in an actualization of some of the very founding principles this campus was born from. I, for one, am excited for the upcoming graduation of our largest ever high school class. Truly, it is an honor to offer opportunities that align with a student's educational attainment goals.

As I take a breath and look out of the window at the snow falling, I want to report to you all on a personal level as well. I am filled with a deep appreciation as a tribal member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe that many of our community agencies have some form of a relationship with Cobscook Institute. It reminds me of some of our ancient iconography which presents the message 'in solidarity we come together as one'. And I believe fully in this message: this wonderful work would not be possible without engagement from you all. So kci woliwon, thank you very much.



Colby Soctomah Lewey
Board Co-Chair

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*Co-Director &
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Experiential Programs*

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*Cobscook Experiential
Programs Teacher*

Dylan Pardue
*Director of Technology
and Systems*

Sally-Jo Rice
Finance Manager

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*Cobscook Experiential
Programs Teacher &
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Raising a New Roof

When Ryan Cross created the design for our new shirt this past fall, the silhouette of Rice Hall on the hill was instantly recognizable and a fitting emblem for Cobscook as a whole. Since the first days of Cobscook, Rice Hall has been representative of our mission—the materials for the construction were financed by the community, the design included a community learning around timber frame construction, and we kicked off the building with a “barn raising” of the initial frame. In the nearly 18 years since Rice Hall went live, it has served as the nest for staff, students, and community partners all doing the good work of sharing, learning, and building connection.

Since then, we’ve cultivated trails, added the fire circle and Jimmy Soctomah Park, the bandstand and the community garden. All of these changes have been made for the sake of expanding our capacity to bring people together, to facilitate learning, and to build a home place for all the people of our region.

However, 18 years is a long time for a building to see such heavy and sustained use, and recently we’ve been seeing a need for more substantial investment in updates for our beloved Rice Hall. This year brought with it some leakage and water damage as the existing roof began to show its age, and we know our kids deserve better than to go to school under a leaky roof! We were able to engineer a short-term solution to minimize damage as things got cold, but when the snow recedes, roof replacement needs to be a top priority for Rice Hall.

In addition, as programming on campus continues to expand, we’ve come to realize that some of our spaces lack the kind of accessibility that is welcoming for all.



Students and staff meet in Rice Hall with visiting social change-makers Marta Benavides, Jamie Bissonette Lewey, and Keiki Kubo to learn about their peace activism.



The beams of Rice Hall were fashioned as part of a community timber framing class led by Tim Beal in the early 2000s and the frame was raised in April 2004.

To resolve this, we are making some short-term improvements to our campus to enhance wheelchair accessibility for Rice Hall, the Commons, and the Heartwood Lodge, but more substantial improvements are needed to ensure easy year-round access to all buildings and improved access to outdoor spaces such as the bandstand.

As Janna and Sally-Jo Rice, daughters of Rice Hall's namesakes Wayne and Lorraine Rice, said, "Our parents' dedication to creating a safe learning space for all ages was evident to everyone that they work with...the pride that they expressed to us over having that building named after them is the same pride that we feel every time we step foot on the Cobscook Institute campus."

Ongoing support for our general operations and programming is always our highest priority for community giving. However, if you feel called to support our goal of replacing the Rice Hall roof and improving accessibility structures on campus, we would welcome your help in reaching our goal of \$25,000 in campus construction funds by August 15.

Gratitude

Every year, hundreds of individuals and organizations from our community give generously of their time, their skills, their money, or make donations of items or equipment that will sustain Cobscook's mission of strengthening the well-being of our community. Without their gifts, none of what we do would be possible.

We are proud to thank our supporters, including those who wish to remain anonymous, publicly as well as privately for these gifts, and we want to express our profound gratitude for the ongoing generosity and spirit of mutual care that have allowed us to serve Cobscook Bay kids and families for the last twenty-four years.

We look forward to the new opportunities and possibilities that we will imagine together as a community in the decades to come.

Thank you.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can support Cobscook Institute's work in our community, reach out to us at info@cobscookinstitute.org

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can correct it.



Our two new EV (electric vehicle) chargers are on the Northwest corner of Heartwood Lodge.

Now Is the Time for Action

Preventing the worst effects of the climate crisis requires action now. We're positioning ourselves as an innovator in the green energy transition.

By Dylan Pardue & Kara McCrimmon

In March 2023, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its most recent report, reiterating the science from reports they've released over the last few years. The climate crisis is here, and we need to make systemic changes now to avert the worst outcomes. Ultimately, we know that it's long haul work to ensure that Earth can sustain life for human and nonhuman populations equitably in the generations to come. Part of this work involves deep transformational inquiry, reflection, conversation, and education to imagine new ways of being.

However, we also know there are concrete steps we can take right now to lower our carbon emissions as much as possible within our current system, and it's desperately needed. At Cobscook Institute, we are committed to helping address the climate crisis. We are undertaking several steps to improve our campus infrastructure and reduce our own emissions, and positioning ourselves to be a leader in the transition to clean energy.

Meeting global climate change mitigation goals

will mean we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. With 28% of US emissions coming from the transportation sector, and 61% of those emissions being from personal vehicles and light trucks, personal transportation is a major area of focus for emissions reduction. Various studies have shown that electric vehicles (EVs) produce a fraction of the greenhouse gas emissions over their lifecycle compared to internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, even considering emissions from mineral mining, vehicle production, and electricity generation. Studies show that the Earth has plenty of raw materials to support a full transition to green energy, and the emissions from mining those materials would be equivalent to less than one year of emissions from our current fossil fuel burning.

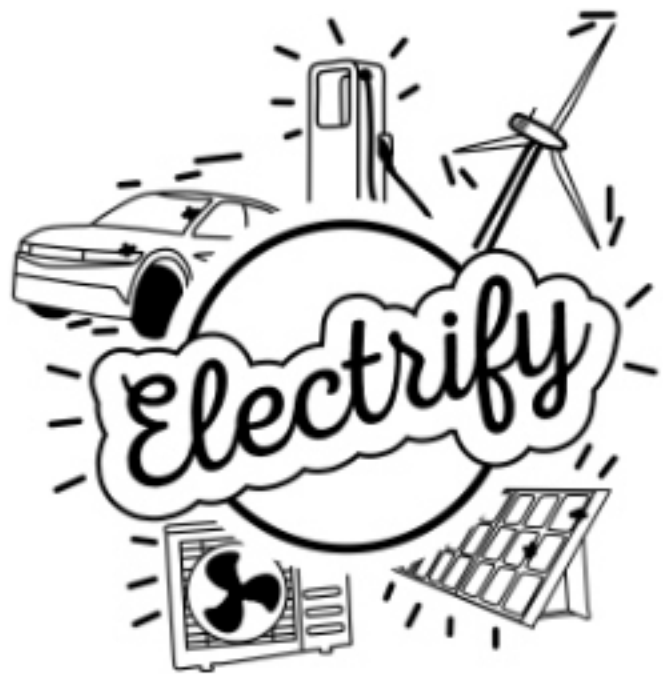
With Maine committed to being a Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) State, tens of thousands of EVs are expected to be on the road in the next several years. We're proud to continue being part of Maine's large public charging network, having installed two new Level 2 chargers in March. We're also exploring ways to continue expanding our charging infrastructure and are in the planning phase of electrifying our vehicle fleet.

Looking at other areas for improvement, last year we replaced our riding lawn mower with an all electric model. A study by the EPA shows that gas powered lawn equipment is a major source of non-road gasoline emissions, between 24-45%, and it shows that pollution from gas lawn equipment is carcinogenic and can have an adverse health effect on workers and members of the public, including children. We're proud to be putting the health of our community and environment first, and looking for more ways to electrify. Our groundskeeper also appreciates the extra performance of electric equipment.

To further reduce our carbon footprint, we are planning to install induction commercial stoves this year to replace our current propane stoves. Induction is different than standard electric stoves, using magnetic induction to heat the pan, making them faster, safer and more efficient. This change will significantly reduce our emissions from cooking. We estimate a 93% reduction in our cooking emissions, preventing over 1,650 pounds of CO2 per year, including from wasteful pilot lights. Induction stoves are safer, with none of the harmful indoor air pollution and VOCs (volatile organic compounds) that studies have linked to various health risks, and are increasingly preferred by professional chefs over gas for their speed and control, making them a win-win solution for both our operations and the environment.

While renewables already account for 79% of the electricity generation in Maine, and these improvements have a large impact even with grid electricity, we are also exploring the possibility of installing solar panels on our campus to meet our energy needs. This project would also include a transition from our efficient wood boiler heating system to a fully electric system, removing the harmful pollution that comes from burning wood. While we are still in the early phases of planning, this project holds the potential to put us on track to be 100% powered by renewables in the near future.

Our new series of Community Conversations have been focusing on climate change and climate justice. The first community conversation last fall was with Peter Dugas from Citizens' Climate Lobby, who joined us to



give a presentation and conversation about state and national policy changes that can help us reach our climate change mitigation goals. In October, Edge Venuti from JustME for JustUS talked about the role of youth in building a just and sustainable Maine. In February, Darren Ranco joined us for a conversation related to Wabanaki Climate Justice. We are currently planning future community outreach and action. The possibilities are exciting, and we are dedicated to finding the best solutions for our campus and our community. At Cobscook Institute, we believe that the future is now, and we are proud to be leading the way in sustainability and climate action.

In addition to the concrete changes on our campus and associated community programming, Cobscook is engaged in this longer-term reflective work to help us imagine the role we can play in the future. Co-Directors Kara McCrimmon and Daphne Loring have joined with representatives from organizations across Maine in an 18-month learning journey, EcologyShifts, intended to be a community learning and change making experience. Sponsored by the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, participants are digging deep together to understand the factors that can help heal and transform unjust systems. As an organization, we look forward to bringing what we learn to our community at large. Cobscook has always believed that by turning to each other in honest inquiry and dialogue, we can find solutions to the problems before us.

Spotlight on Graduating Seniors

Claire Beisel joined Cobscook midway through her junior year. She says, "I am proud of learning new life skills I can use in the future, and I have enjoyed having a community I can be a part of." Claire has been employed by Narrow Escape Coffee Bar in Lubec while in school at Cobscook, and has brought the skills she's learned there - a calm, welcoming demeanor, not to mention home-baked goodies - to the classroom space. Claire plans to attend college in the fall to study environmental and/or earth sciences.

Madison Flynn joined Cobscook in 9th grade after having a positive experience as a rising 9th grader in Cobscook's River Camp program. She's proud "...of all the life changing experiences I've had at Cobscook and discovering interests I never knew I had. This is the most fun someone could have in high school!" Maddy is an incredible drawer and 2-D artist, and has developed exceptional cooking, baking, and kitchen management skills working for her family business, Angie's Comfort Kitchen, Catering, and Everything Nice Bakery. Maddy plans to attend culinary school and hopes to travel and experience new foods.

75% are
graduating
with college
credits

100% have
been
employed
during High
School

Luis "Soy" Gomez-Mitchell joined Cobscook his senior year after moving to the area from Florida. While he's reminded that he doesn't like being cold, he's proud of the friends he's made in Maine during his time here. Soy is a skilled bass player and dungeon master, and has been employed at Whole Life Market. Soy plans to work and travel after high school. He imagines that college may be in his future down the road.

Theo Holm joined Cobscook in 10th grade, and plans to travel and pursue a career in book arts. "I've found myself having lots of real world experiences at Cobscook, building skills that other kids my age might not get to experience, such as guitar making, white water canoeing, skiing, trip packing, and first aid skills. We have also been acquainted with good social skills, how to properly manage money, and how to pursue a job. On the topic of jobs, we have also been trained in doing a good job, doing it responsibly, and most importantly, getting the job done." Theo is also a skilled athlete and worked for Josh Pond Farm.

Daisy Jones joined Cobscook as a 9th grader and plans to go to Washington County Community College after high school to participate in the Outdoor Adventure program. She also hopes to travel the country and continue to hone her artistic abilities. Of her time in high school she says, "I am proud of myself for keeping high grades and getting over obstacles throughout my four years at Cobscook Institute." Daisy is an incredible artist, loves yoga, and worked for Summer Keys in Lubec while in high school.

Owen Leavitt transferred into Cobscook midway through his junior year. He reflects, "I am proud of how much I have developed as a canoer, camper, academic student, and person. I had gone camping before this school, but now my skills associated with it have stepped up to the next level. I specifically am happy with all of the early college classes I was able to get done." Owen is a talented actor and improviser, and worked for Tide Mill Organic Farm and Josh Pond Farm while in high school. Owen has been awarded a Merit Scholarship from the University of Maine at Orono, where he will enter the honors college to study computer science in the fall.

75%
participated
in
Cobscook's
Summer
Camps

100% are
creative and
caring
human
beings

Alan Lund joined Cobscook as a 9th grader. Of his accomplishments he says, “I am proud of my canoe skills. When I first came to Cobscook my canoe skills were poor. I was so scared to even get into a canoe, but now I think I am pretty good at sterning. After high school I plan to go to college for plumbing and electrical.” Alan is an avid fisherman, and has been employed by his family business, Lund Construction, while in high school.

Bella Telesmanick joined Cobscook at the start of her junior year. “What I’m most proud of as a result of my time at Cobscook are the skills I’ve developed and places I’ve grown, specifically: improved people skills, academic achievement, and cross country skiing.” “Cobscook has played a significant role in my goals for the future.” Bella is a mean ice skater, talented singer, and has been employed at Hannaford through her senior year. After high school, Bella plans to take a gap year and work to save for college. She has a goal of going to college for forensic psychology.

June 6, 2023, we celebrate the exceptional young people who chose Cobscook Experiential Programs, offered in partnership with Calais High School, for their high school experience; our largest graduating cohort since the program launched in 2010.

Madison Flynn
East Machias

Claire Beisel
Lubec

Daisy Jones
Trescott

Bella Telesmanick
Machias



Owen Leavitt
Pembroke & Trescott

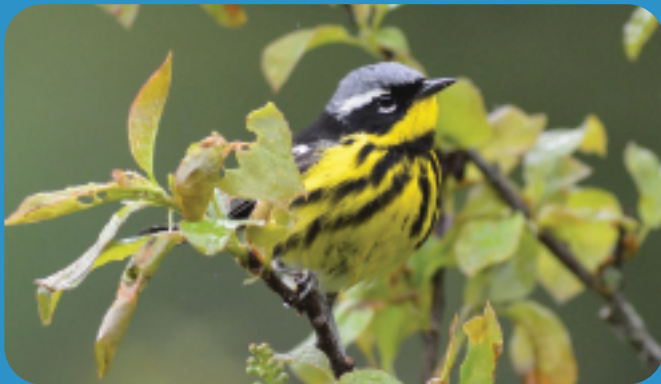
Alan Lund
Pembroke

Luis “Soy” Gomez-Mitchell
East Machias

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Lubec

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For Rising Grades 4-12

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