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## Clipped from **Musing from Maine**

Down East's editors discuss *Somes Sound*, lightning strikes, UMaine yearbooks, and more.

### **Perseverance Pays**

*Conservationists reach a multimillion-dollar milestone in Washington County.*

It took longer than anyone expected and required nerves of steel to complete, but the Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership, recipient of the 2006 Down East Environmental Award, has concluded one of the largest land conservation projects in the state of Maine. In May the partnership finished raising the \$34.8 million needed to finance the conservation of 342,000 acres of eastern Maine wilderness.

The deal includes nearly two thousand miles of water frontage, notes Mark Berry of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust in Grand Lake Stream. "Who would have thought?" he says, noting that the project began as a conversation around a picnic table nine years ago among local people concerned about the impact of development on the traditional outdoor industries of Grand Lake Stream. The campaign came close to failure in 2005 when a looming deadline ran up against a lack of funds. The New England Forestry Foundation saved the day by providing a six-million-dollar bridge loan financed with a mortgage on its oldest property.

The land trust already has its next project under way, a campaign to raise \$3.2 million by November 1 to purchase 6,644 acres around Wabassus Lake in central Washington County next to the 27,080-acre Farm Cove Community Forest.

The Down East conservationists say that there are still opportunities in Maine for landscape-scale conservation efforts, despite the increasing fragmentation of North Woods ownership. "We're not done yet," Berry says.