

Androscoggin River/ Merrymeeting Bay Environment

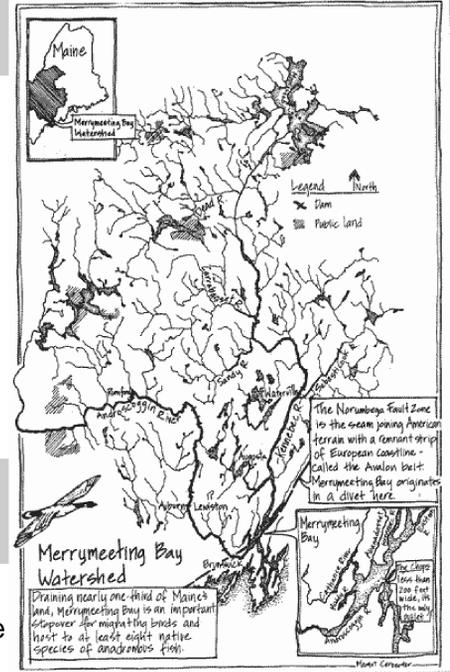
Explore



Ecology

Merrymeeting Bay and the lower Androscoggin River provide habitat for bald eagles, waterfowl, more than 50 species of freshwater fish and at least 8 of Maine's migratory fish species (including Atlantic salmon, shortnosed sturgeon, shad, and alewives). The region supports thousands of ducks, geese, rails, wading birds and other water-dependent species during the annual spring and fall migration periods. In addition to providing

habitat for breeding and wintering, the area is frequented by every species of waterfowl that use the Atlantic Flyway. This tidal freshwater bay and river also offers unique conditions for many globally rare species of plants which are specially adapted for this environment.



Inquire

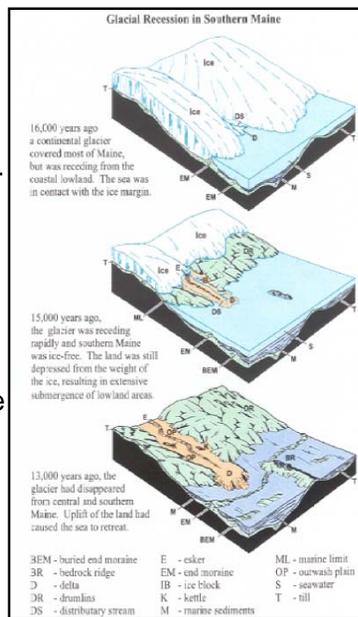


Geology

Near the end of the last great ice age, retreating glaciers reached the present-day coast of Maine. The weight of glaciers compressed the earth's crust and combined with glacial melt waters raised water levels

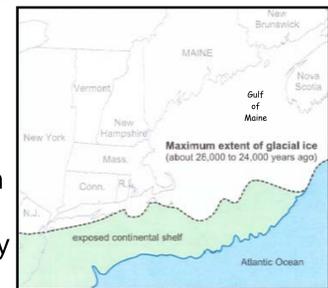
to the glacier's edge. As land was freed from heavy ice cover, it began to rise to its former position and emerged from the sea. About 14,500 years ago a strong pulse of glacial melt water was released, causing sea level to rise even more rapidly. Sea level in this region rose at the same rate as the earth's crust was rising.

A period of equilibrium resulted in the ancestral Androscoggin River depositing a layer of fine sand, commonly known as a delta,



now known as the Brunswick-Topsham sand

plain, into the sea. In Topsham, the elevation of this delta can be seen at the Riverside upper playing field and extends to the north almost to the Cathance head of tide area. As the rise of sea level slowed and the land continued to emerge, the Androscoggin began to cut down into the delta surface. The Riverside lower playing fields sit on terraces cut by the river. Based on archaeological studies in this area, the terraces were cut approximately 9,500 years ago.



Discover Archaeology



The lower Androscoggin River is uniquely rich with pre historic artifacts. There are a number of archaeological dig sites on both sides of the river out to the bay. The archeological period is known as the Archaic Period, which has dated artifacts to 9,500 years old. Typical digs unearth evidence of encampments, leading to the idea that this area was well suited for foraging in pre-historic times. The archaeological, geologic, and ecologic evidence all point to the fact that this area was a great river delta teeming with life of all kinds.