



# connecting to place

nature . history . arts

Fall 2018

THE NEWSLETTER OF VAUGHAN WOODS & HISTORIC HOMESTEAD



“There’s a quality of life in Maine which is this singular and unique. I think. It’s absolutely a world unto itself.”

—*Jamie Wyeth*

## The Way Life Should Be *(According to Benjamin Vaughan!)*

The enduring beauty of the natural landscape, the simple elegance of the structures, the tangible sense of history and community . . . for many, Vaughan Woods and Historic Homestead presents an iconic image of Maine. So it won’t be too surprising to learn that, in fact, the earliest vision for the very symbol of Maine, the State Seal, was created at the Homestead by Benjamin Vaughan! Evidence also indicates that his daughter Elizabeth sketched the first draft of the seal.

In an 1820 letter to the state committee to choose the seal, Vaughan lays out what he feels should represent Maine—the northern star, the white pine, the moose, the mariner, and the farmer — exactly what we see on

the seal today. So when we gaze out at the northern star from the Homestead lawn, when we walk in the shade of the majestic white pines in the Woods, and when we gather in the fall to celebrate the harvest, we are living, still today, what Vaughan felt was the quintessential Maine experience. One key element that he suggested, though, the aurora borealis, was ultimately left out of the seal, and we’re not sure why.

In preparation for the state’s Bicentennial in 2020, we have set out to learn more about the story of the seal as well as other Homestead connections to Maine statehood.

What else will we dig up? What happened to the aurora borealis? Stay tuned!



## NATURAL HISTORY MYSTERY

Eels and gray foxes are just two of the many wild animal residents that we had the chance to observe in Vaughan Woods and around the Homestead this summer!



The gray fox family became known to us in June when one was spotted near the coop just minutes after the arrival of our new chickens! In the weeks following, an entire family, two adults and three kits, were observed to be living in the field just below the Homestead.

Elvers, an early developmental stage of eels, were sited in Vaughan Brook throughout July and August.

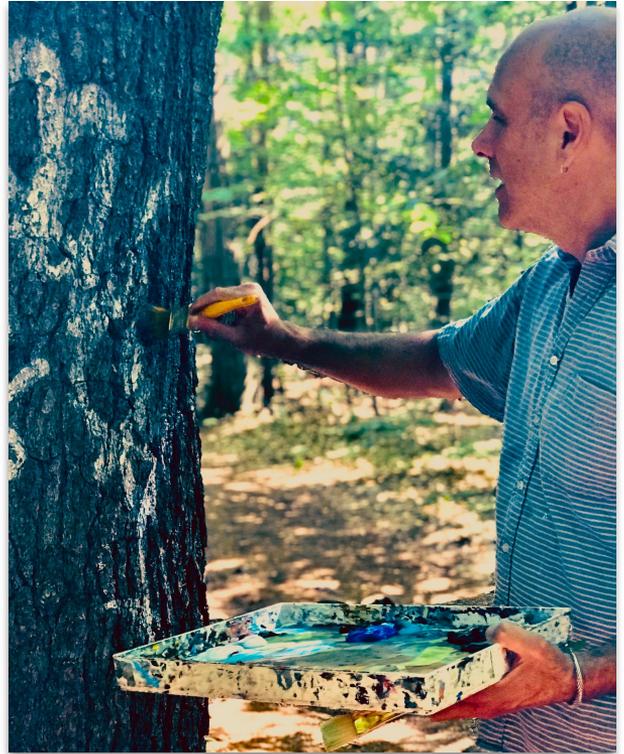
Which of these two animals, eels or gray foxes, can grow to be up to four feet long and can live for more than a quarter of a century?



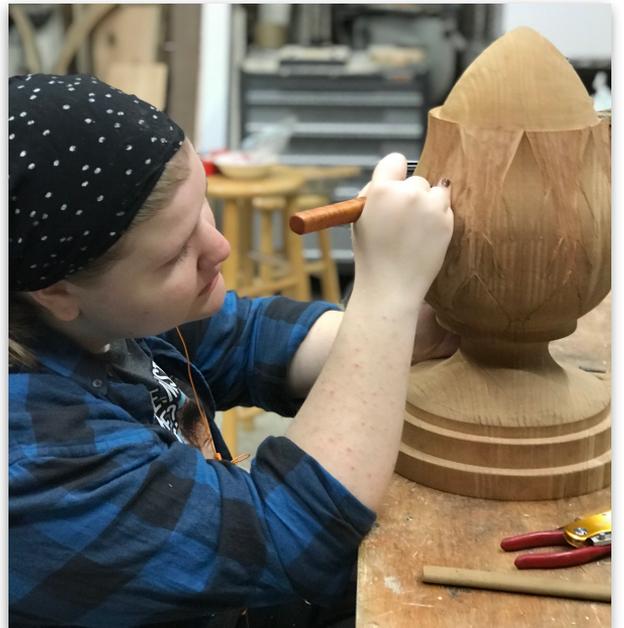
*Samuel and Austin Dix and Oliver and Everett Paisley investigate elvers found in Vaughan Brook*

*Answer: Eels! Yikes!*

## Local Artists Lend A Hand



*Hallowell artist Christ Cart “camouflages” graffiti on a tree located on the Corniche Loop Trail*



*Winthrop resident and Massachusetts College of Art sophomore August Rudy carves new pineapples for the Homestead gateposts*

# Bridges & Trails Restoration: Project Update

In 2015 VWHH set out on a long-term project to systematically restore the bridges and trails of Vaughan Woods. In three years, public support and grant funding have made possible significant progress on the long list of project objectives. While there is still much work on the horizon, let's take a moment to celebrate how far we've come:

## HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

-Obtain Maine Preservation "Endangered Historic Site" status **✓Completed 2015**

## HIGH ARCH BRIDGE (1930)



-Undergo structural repairs to the northern abutment **✓Completed 2017**

-Undergo structural repairs to the southern abutment **✓Completed 2018**

-Build a stone stairway for safe access to the stream **(underway fall 2018)**

-Reconstruct upper access trail **(scheduled spring 2019)**

## DRIVING BRIDGE (1909)



-Replace structural material for long-term stability **(to do)**

## UNCLE SAM'S BRIDGE (1900)



-Partially deconstruct bridge for public safety **✓Completed 2015**

-Better define access trail to reduce bank erosion **✓Completed 2016**

-Reconstruct bridge with a new design to better withstand extreme conditions **(fundraising ongoing)**

## TRAIL BRIDGES (1911)



-Stabilize, reconstruct or replace the upper, middle and lower stone bridges on the main trail **(a planning process for work and funding is to take place in 2019)**

## MEMORIAL BRIDGE (1905) *(built by the Vaughans for the City, now owned by the State)*

-Clear brush to improve the view of the bridge across Cascade Pond

**✓Ongoing since 2016**

-Repair damaged bench **(to do)**

-Apply for National Register of Historic Places protection **(to do)**





## **MANY THANKS TO OUR 2018 BUSINESS SPONSORS & FUNDING PARTNERS**

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**Vaughan Woods &  
Historic Homestead**