



May 2017

To our Members and Friends:

Our 2016 Spring Newsletter reported on an initiative that would have allowed FOCP to manage Colonial Pemaquid. Unfortunately, that possibility was thwarted by Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands which offered resistance where there might have been cooperation. Most site revenue which would have paid operational costs was denied us, and we were pressured to sign a Citizens' Support Agreement even though we had operated for nearly a quarter-century without one and had just sent an amended version to the Bureau in July 2015, for which an answer was never received.

Meanwhile, we solicited letters of support from Bristol, South Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, The Lincoln County Commissioners, and the Chamber of Commerce, while discussing with the Bureau possible changes to the Agreement which we were told had to be signed before lease negotiations could resume. Governor LePage then stated that we would be banned from Colonial Pemaquid unless we signed the Agreement. We did so, though we had concerns about some of the conditions, including the censoring of our newsletter before it could be distributed to the public at the site – hence this letter is separate from our calendar and will be sent only to members.

We then requested our legislators to schedule a meeting with the Governor so we could ask him to permit us to resume lease negotiations. We were optimistic since the Governor took the lease 'off the table' because the Agreement had not been signed. Two setbacks then occurred.

Despite his initial support, state Senator Dana Dow decided he did not want to get involved in trying to arrange a meeting for us with the Governor. Further, one of LePage's advisors informed the Senator's legislative aide that the Governor was not willing to allow FOCP to negotiate a lease even though we'd signed the Agreement. I was then told of these developments. Our hope now is to focus on an approach that would permit local, not-for-profits like The Friends to manage a state property in ways that would expand its potential and benefit local communities.

In the meantime, we will continue to work with the state as best we can, but it's been a difficult and seemingly endless journey, replete with bureaucratic obstacles, and a Governor who supported our efforts at first then withdrew that support and would not meet with us or respond to our letters. We are discouraged but not defeated, and will continue to serve the public and our members by sponsoring the traditional programs that they've come to expect.

As we look toward to the future, we thank you for your interest and ongoing support.

Sincerely,  
Don Loprieno  
President

