

Merrymeeting Bay

A Self-Guided Nature Tour of Merrymeeting Bay

Terry Porter
Midcoast Senior College
Fall 2025



Today's Agenda

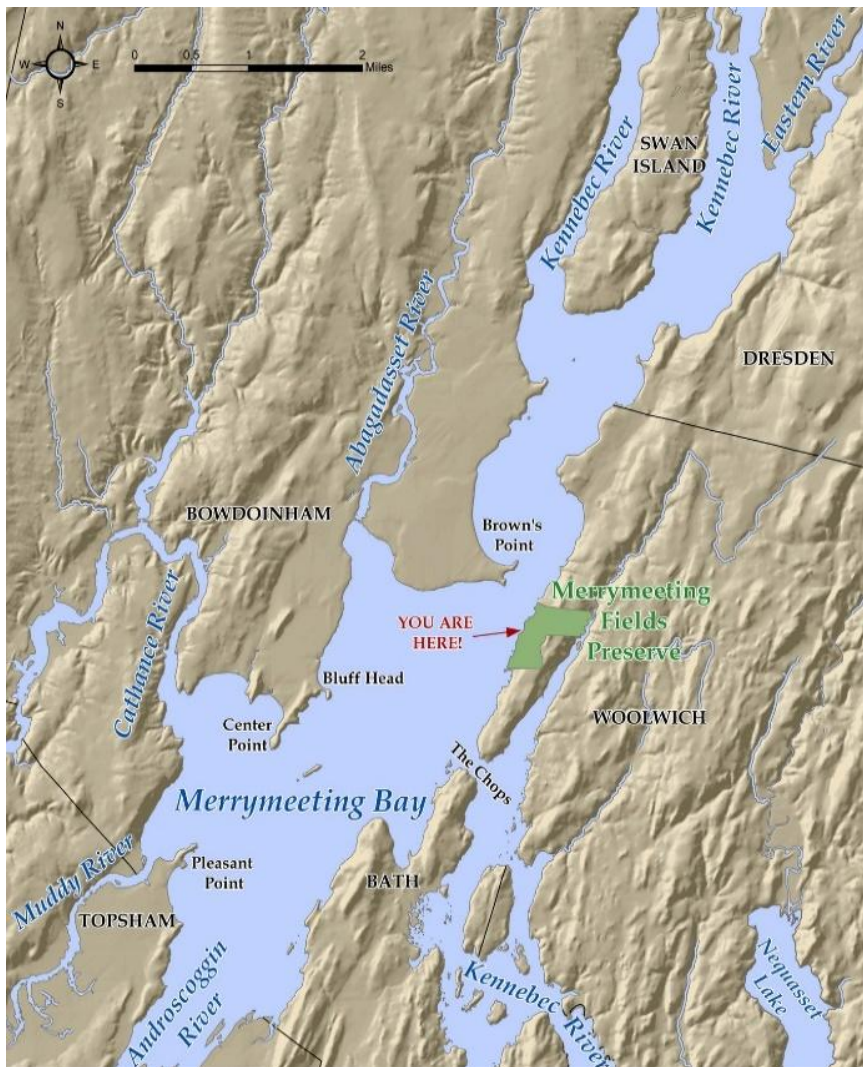
- Merrymeeting Fields Preserve
 - Management by KELT, Kennebec Estuary Land Trust
- Natural Communities at Merrymeeting Fields
 - Mixed woods
 - Open fields
 - Waterfront on Merrymeeting Bay
- Ecological Aspects
 - Habitats, communities, ecosystems
 - Wolf trees
 - Succession
- Ferns

Merrymeeting Fields Preserve Woolwich

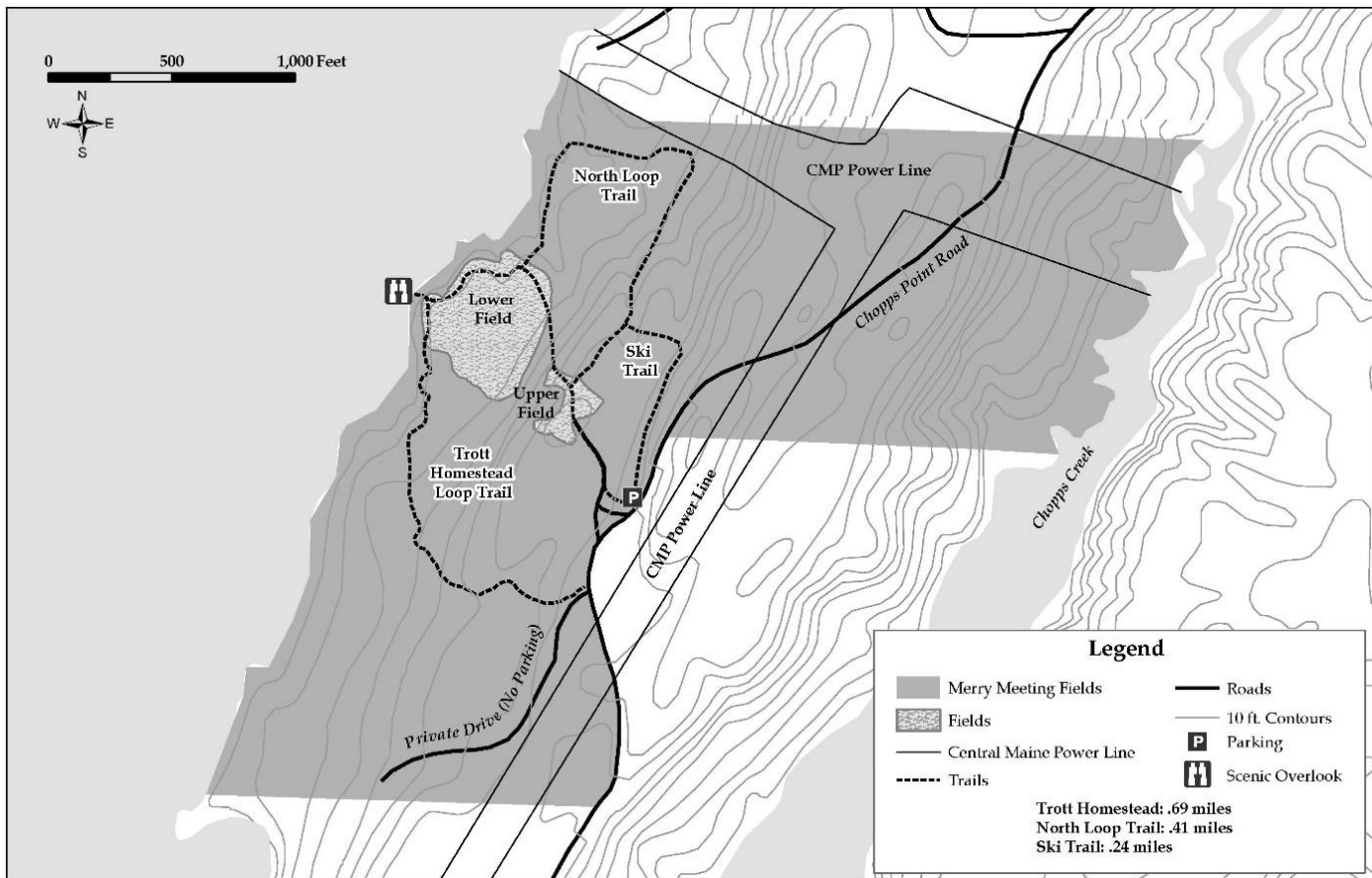


Merrymeeting Fields Directions

Take Route 1 North to Route 127 (just across Bath bridge on the left). Take North on 127 to Route 128 and turn left. Follow about 6 miles to Chopps Point Road, turn left. Follow 0.9 miles to parking lot and kiosk on right. [View Website](#).



Merrymeeting Fields Trail Map



Staghorn Sumac: A Pioneer Species



Reading the Forested Landscape by Tom Wessels

Wolf Trees



Lower field, Merrymeeting Fields preserve

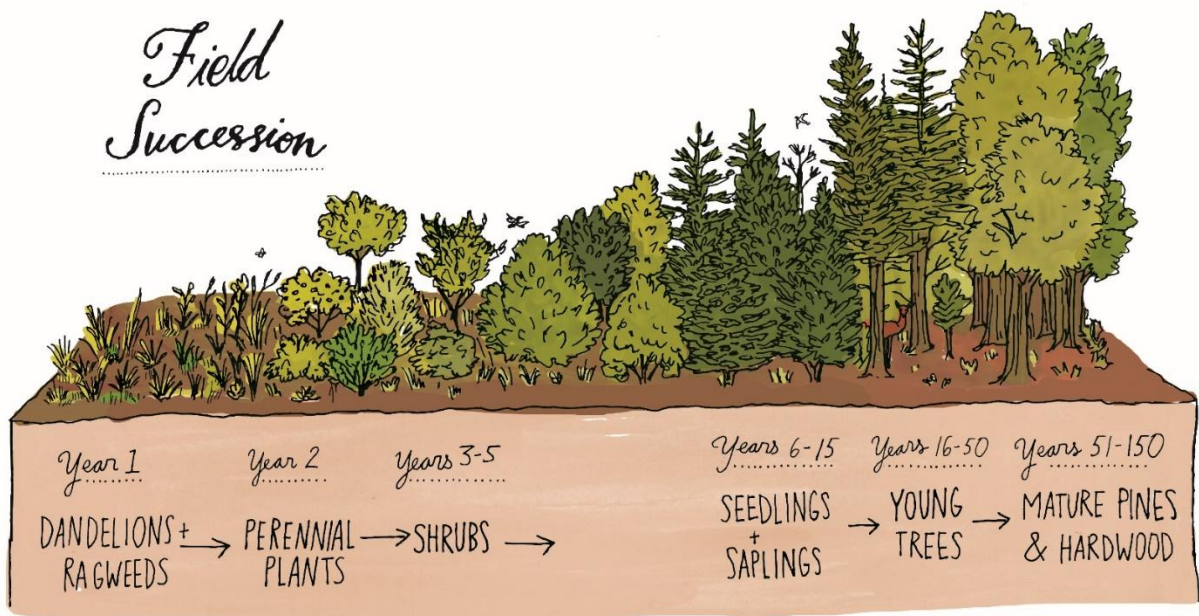


Habitats, Communities, Ecosystems

Ecological Succession

Succession is the pattern of biological community evolution in one place over time:

- Primary succession – beginning in an essentially lifeless area.
- Secondary succession – in areas where a previous community has been disturbed but not eradicated.



Questions:

- Are the life stages of a human being equivalent to succession?
- Is there a good comparison in the animal kingdom to ecological succession?

Ecological Succession

What kind of disturbances create “arrested succession”
in Maine upland forests?



Riverside Kiosk: Merrymeeting Fields preserve



View SW towards the Chops, Riverside kiosk



CMP Powerlines and Merrymeeting Fields

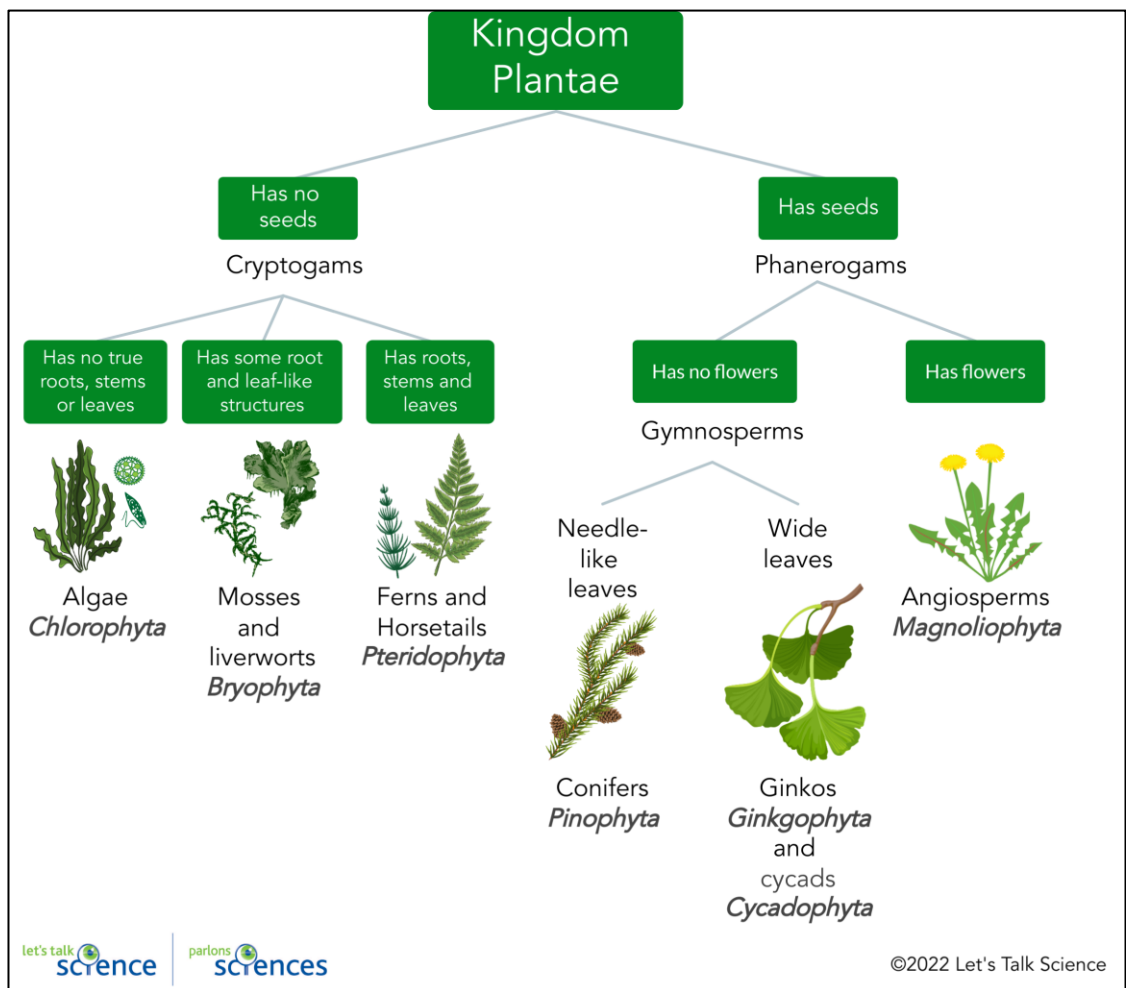


Ferns: An Ancient Life Form



- **Ancient & Primitive:** Ferns are among Earth's oldest plant groups, having evolved before flowering plants, 300 million years ago.
- **Their fossilized remains** contributed to the coal and natural gas deposits we use today.
- **Vascular:** They possess vascular tissue for transporting water and nutrients, allowing them to grow roots, stems, and leaves.
- **Ferns reproduce via spores** that are carried by the wind, rather than through seeds and flowers.
- **Fronds**, or fern leaves, are a defining feature. The Ostrich Fern is our edible fiddlehead.

The Plant Kingdom



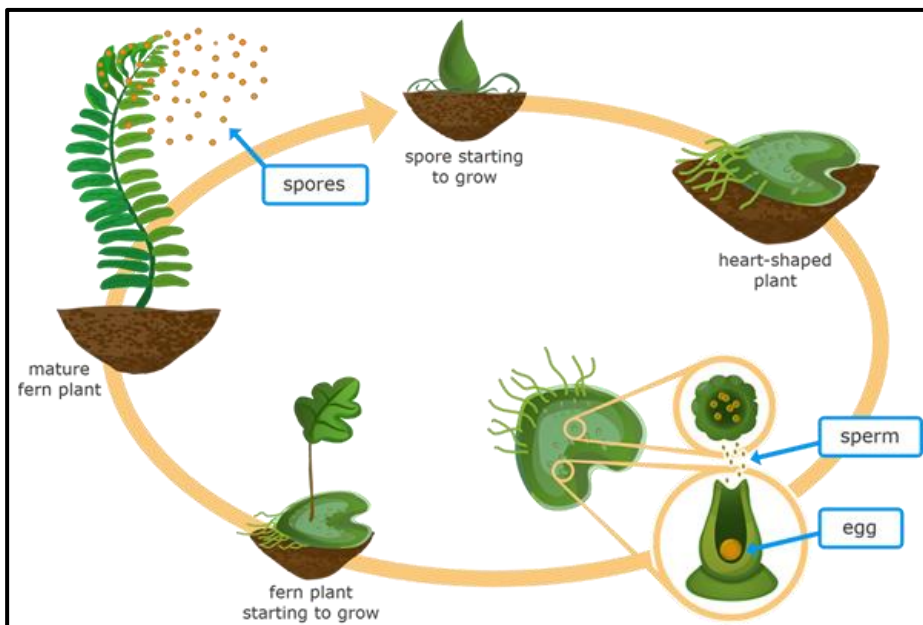
Some Ferns at Merrymeeting Fields



Clockwise from above:
Bracken fern,
Christmas fern,
Ostrich fern,
Sensitive fern.



Fern Lifecycle



Fern Lore: Searching the Fern

