



MAINE WILDERNESS GUIDES ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTER

Winter 2006

A Note from the President...

Dear Fellow Maine Wilderness Guides Members,

Our first year as an organization has been a busy one. We currently have 150 members. Thanks to all of you for your support. We are please to publish our first newsletter that will highlight our major achievements and ongoing projects from our first year of service to our mission and membership.

There seems to be a perception in the guiding community that MWGO is a canoe tripping guides organization. Thia is not too surprising since many of the founding members do just that. In reality we represent sporting camp owners, fishing guides, sea kayak guides, hunting guides and rec guides. We need to reach out to all guides. We need to do a better job conveying that we are not anti-hunting, trapping or

opposed to the use of snow machines or ATV's. The Maine Woods is a big place and, just as there should be well designed snowmobile trails, there should be some areas where those that hunt, fish, hike or canoe can do so without the constant buzz of machines. Some MWGO businesses directly depend on having access to trails that are non- motorized or have limited motorized use.

You know that times are changing in Maine. We want MWGO to be a constructive and respectful voice at the table as discussions take place that may impact guiding. There is so much work ahead of us that at times it feels a bit overwhelming. Several things that

Continued on Page 2

The New Guide Board Proposal

by Gil Gilpatrick

In 2005 the Guide Board felt the need to protect children and women from pedophiles and rapists. It was felt that the very nature of the business of taking people into the wild areas of Maine was a made to order opportunity for those detestable individuals. After many hours of debate during several meetings, we came up with a proposal.

The way these things work is that proposals like this are sent to the Attorney General (AG) for approval and recommendations. What came back from the AG was nothing like what we sent up there. The changes resulted in rules that would be nothing short of ridiculous if allowed to go into effect. Some would lose their licenses for traffic violations! Of course none of this was our original intent.

The Board could have changed things back to our liking if we had been given the opportunity. However, for some reason the Commissioner went ahead and scheduled a public hearing on the proposal as it came from the AG's office. No wonder guides all over the state were up in arms. Each board member in turn stood up at the hear-

Continued on Page 3



In This Issue:

Guide Training Workshops	2	Come Fall, and These Migrants	5	Plum Creek's Development Proposal ...	6
MWGO Treasurer's Report	3	Are on the River	5	Economic Impact Study	7
Guide's Rendezvous	4	MWGO Members Volunteer	5	Member Application	9

A Note from the President...

Continued on Page 1

members could do to help our young organization grow would be to:

1. Recruit a friend or two to join MWGO
2. Volunteer to serve on a committee or on the board of directors
3. Come to the January 8 meeting from 3-5PM in Augusta at the Maine State Arboretum.
4. Attend the second Guide Rendezvous in June.

With your help we can easily double our membership base in the upcoming year. Simply tell your friends about MWGO.

Currently, most of the work we've done has been at the board level. Our goal is to have more work done by the board working with members at the committee level. This is your chance to lend a hand. Please consider volunteering to serve on one of the following committees.

Standing Committees

Membership

Lani Cochrane
cochrane@tdstelme.net

Finances

Bo Norris
bo@norihan.com

Member Benefits

Greg Shute
gshute@chewonki.org

Advocacy

Cathy Johnson
cjohnson@nrcm.org

Guides, Guiding

Kevin Slater
info@mahoosuc.com

Working Committees

Guide Rendezvous 2007

Eric Stirling
ecstirling@direcway.com

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, we encourage you to contact one of the current Board members and ask to see a copy of MWGO's Expectations of Board Members to get a better idea of the time and work commitment.

Diversifying our membership base will be a major goal for us in the upcoming year. Your thoughts or ideas on how to achieve this are always welcome. We would like to thank all of our members who contributed their time, energy and ideas to MWGO and our mission over the last year. We hope you will be renewing your membership for 2007, and we hope to see you in Augusta on January 8.

Thanks,

Co-Presidents,
Greg Shute
Kevin Slater



Guide Training Workshops and First Aid Courses

Want to polish your skills at canoe poling or get your Wilderness First Responder certification? If so follow these leads to a more complete set of skills for your guiding business.

The first Sunday in May Chip Cochrane, co-owner of Allagash Canoe Trips will offer a poling clinic on Kenduskeag Stream near Bangor. Contact Chip at 237-3077 or through his business website, www.allagashcanoetrips.com.

For wilderness first aid courses there are several choices. Hulbert Outdoors Center in Fairlee, VT offers Wilderness First Responder on the following dates: December 4-12, April 14-22 and May 21-30. Visit www.alohafoundation.org/hulbert/ for contact info. The Chewonki Foundation in Wiscasset, ME will offer WFR Jan 2-10 and May 30- June 7, WFR recertification Jan 13-15 and Wilderness First Aid June 9-10. Visit www.chewonki.org/Pages/Chewonki_Wilderness/workshops for more info. During the past year Kevin Slater of Mahoosuc Guide Service ran an intensive wilderness river canoe training trip on the East Branch of the Penobscot. In addition, a series of workshops covering topics as varied as Fly-casting for Beginners to Making your Own Gear were offered during the first annual MWGO Rendezvous in June. Stay tuned for more offerings in the future by visiting the MWGO website, calling Eric Stirling at 695-2561 or email ecstirling@hughes.net.

Who should join MWGO...

Any Maine Guide who:

1. Believes in the fair chase hunting ethic
2. Feels it is important to have some large tracts of forest land remain undeveloped for wildlife habitat, fisheries protection; and for guiding to take place in.
3. Enjoys "heritage" hunting, fishing, camping, canoeing etc (heritage being defined as doing any of the above the way your grandparents did, on foot in remote undeveloped areas)

Maine Wilderness Guides Organization

Treasurer's Report

Every non-profit relies on the generosity of its members and the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization is no different. With this newsletter we wanted to give you an idea of how we're spending your money and are pleased to present a summary of our income and expenses to date from 2005 and 2006 to date.

2005

In 2005, the numbers reflect our focus on creating and establishing the organization. Income was mainly in the form of a very generous grant from the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, applied for on our behalf by The Wilderness Society. Legal expenses are primarily associated with the necessary state and federal filings for establishing our 501c(3) status, while organizing costs were devoted to the hiring of a facilitator and consultant to help us in the crafting of our vision and mission statement as well as the creation of our bylaws and governance structure. Membership costs of \$1041 reflect the costs of brochures, letterhead, envelopes and stickers while postage costs of \$247 were dedicated to the mailing of information to members.

2006

In 2006, the numbers to-date show an organization that is beginning to mature. Over 130 members have contributed \$8,400 in support of our work. Membership expenses of \$1,706 were again for brochures, letterhead, envelopes as well as t-shirts for the 2006 Rendezvous. Postage costs are up approximately 67% over last year and reflect the increased volume in membership mailings. Meet-

ing expenses of \$ 2,415 are the costs of the 2006 Rendezvous and consist of tent rental, food, mileage and fees paid to the Birches.

Overall, members should be pleased to know that the Board of Directors of your organization pay very close attention to the bottom-line and are conscious of spending your generous dollars wisely.

	2005	2006 (thru 9/30/06)
Income		
Fundraising - Grants	\$12,000	
Fundraising -Individual	\$600	\$8,400
Interest Earned	\$2	\$8
TOTAL INCOME	\$12,602	\$8,408
Expenses		
Membership	\$1,041	\$1,706
Supplies		\$383
Postage	\$247	\$412
Legal	\$1,431	\$170
Organizing Costs	\$4,400	\$35
Meeting Expenses		\$2,415
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$7,118	\$5,122
Current Cash Balance as of 9/30/06:		\$11,228
Excess of Income over Expenses	\$5,483	\$3,287

The New Guide Board Proposal

Continued from page 1

ing and said that none of this was what we wanted and that we did not support it.

Skip Trask, lobbyist for the Maine Professional Guides Association (MPGA) has written at least two articles in that organization's newsletter raking the board over the coals for making such a proposal even though he knew full well that it was not what the board had proposed. Further, when invited to a recent meeting of the Board to come up with an acceptable pro-

posal, he chose not to attend and didn't even contact the chairman about the meeting. Nearly a dozen others were invited to attend that meeting to offer their input. Only one of those invited attended. It was Kevin Slater, representing MWGO.

The decision at that meeting was to simply target convicted pedophiles and rapists and to leave all other offenses alone, at least for the time being or until one of them becomes a problem. I do not see

how anyone can object to this, but we'll see what happens as the proposal goes to hearing.

Our proposal only applies to new applicants and does not target guides now holding a license. However, if we should discover that a convicted pedophile or rapist holds a license, there is something we can do. Every guide becomes a new applicant every three years when he/she must renew the license.

GUIDES' RENDEZVOUS

by Gil Gilpatrick

On the first weekend of June I attended the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization's (MWGO) first annual rendezvous at the Birches Resort in Rockwood. Don't let the resort thing fool you – it was almost entirely an outdoor affair. John Willard, owner of The Birches (a MWGO member), hosted the affair, providing open space for the encampment as well as other necessities and support.

The weekend was started off with members coming into the encampment from four directions by canoe on Moosehead Lake. Their timing was nearly perfect, and all arrived at just about the appointed time of 9:00 AM. The rest of the morning was filled with welcoming speeches from co-presidents Kevin Slater and Greg Shute and setting up camp. At 11 o'clock many of the participants took time to drive to Greenville and attend the dedication of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.

This might be a good place to mention that it was a rather cold weekend, and it rained constantly. I have been to many outdoor affairs that were rained upon and remember the participants walking around with a long, woe-is-me face and bemoaning

their bad luck. Not this group! These are guides who are used to adverse weather, know how to handle it and know it is their job to keep their guests happy in it. Nothing but smiles, and I don't recall a single soul complaining about the weather.

Saturday afternoon was filled with professional workshops. On the water there were canoe poling and paddling instruction, as well as a fly-casting demonstration and practice. Also, Gary Roberts and George Libby from Audubon led a nature walk entitled "Slowing down Guiding." My wife, Dot, went on this walk and was so impressed that I wish I had gone. Workshops under the tarp included an informative talk about guide's liability insurance and a talk and demonstration on building outdoor gear.

In the late afternoon there was a panel discussion on landowner relations. We were fortunate to have representatives from five different land managers who gave their views. The panel consisted of Sarah Medina from Seven Islands Land Co., Mark Doty from Plumb Creek, Brian Wentzel from Appalachian Mountain Club, Steve Spencer from the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, and Dirk Dewley from The Nature Conservancy.

The evening meal was prepared by several of the guides over open fires, each preparing his own specialty. It was an outdoor gourmet's de-

light! I failed to get the names of the various dishes that were served, but I sampled them all and they were all delicious. Of course, there were baked goods cooked in reflectors and even fresh baked shortcake with strawberries and whipped cream to go with them. This was not exactly roughing it, and I felt like I had died and gone to heaven because it was the first time I had ever had guides cook for me. A rare treat for an old guide!

Our keynote speaker was Barry Dana, former Chief of the Penobscot Nation and noted artist. Barry spoke on the Penobscot traditions and the work he is doing to preserve the language and culture of his people. He noted the similarities in values of wilderness guides and those of the traditional Native Americans.

On Sunday morning the group moved inside for the first time for breakfast in The Birches dining room, and following that, the first annual meeting was held. It was an upbeat meeting, especially the review of the rendezvous. Everyone was enthusiastic about next year's get-together, and a tentative date has been set. This get-together was remarkable when you consider that MWGO has been officially organized for less than a year. Just think what another whole year will lead to!

Gil Gilpatrick is a Master Maine Guide, a life and charter member of the Maine Professional Guides Association, a founding member of the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization, and he has served as a member of the Advisory Board for the Licensing of Guides since 1996. He is a member of the New England Outdoor Writers Association and is the author of seven outdoor-related books. Contact him at gil@gilgilpatrick.com.



Board meeting at West Branch Pond Camps

Late Breaking News...

The last week of November MWGO members Kevin Slater, Greg Shute, Lani Cochrane and Landon Fake met in Augusta with LURC staff to share our views on the Plum Creek Development Proposal. It was a very productive meeting and it is clear that we need to gather more information from guides who operate in the Greenville/Moosehead area. In December we have scheduled a meeting in Greenville to begin to gather information about specific areas that are currently being used by Guides and that may be at risk by the current Plum Creek proposal.

The first week of December, Kevin Slater spoke on behalf of MWGO at the Land for Maine's Future Subcommittee on Conservation Easements, meeting. The meeting was held to gather comments on LMF funding for the purchase of conservation easements on lands owned by the Appalachian Mountain Club in the Greenville/Katahdin Ironworks area. Kevin spoke about the need for balance when planning trails for motorized and human powered experiences.

MWGO Initiates Economic Impact Study

Beginning in January, MWGO, in partnership with the University of Maine Department of Resource Economics and Policy and the Wilderness Society, will conduct a study of the economic impact of human powered guided experiences. Late this fall an online survey will be sent out to guides that offer primarily human powered experiences. The goal of the study is to establish the financial impact of human powered guided trips to the Maine economy.

The Study is a terrific example of a collaboration that benefits several organizations. We are thankful for the help of Ann Ingerson who works on economic issues for the Wilderness Society, the organization that provided support in securing the funds for the study, and to the University of Maine who will conduct the survey.

The end result will be a much better understanding of the impact that guided experiences have on the overall financial health of the State of Maine.

MWGO Members Volunteer Service Project For Allagash Wilderness Waterway

October 10, 11, and 12, MWGO members Alexandra and Garrett Conover joined Ranger Meredith Podgurski to make the bouldery, uneven ground at Lost Popple campsite comfortably inhabitable.

Lost Popple is located on the west shore of Harvey Pond, a short distance upstream of the remains of Long Lake Dam and near the site of the former Harvey Farm.

Due to the remarkably uneven ground and seasonal wetness of the site, it has long been seldom used and was actively avoided by frequent travelers and guides.

The first order of business was to create a few flat but ever-so-slightly sloped (for drainage) tent pads. For the most part this involved digging out boulders and roots and grading the sites. A simple idea, except that in this case the heaps of rocks removed left large enough holes so that simple grading and filling was not so easily accomplished! The solution was to continue providing a few additional buckets of course gravel fill from any of several nearby points just upstream in Long Lake.

A new picnic table was installed and the fireplace reestablished. An old plastic pipeline was removed from the

site as the spring it came from had fallen into dis-use and has not had any flow for several seasons.

The Conovers were excited to find in Meredith, an excellent Ranger with a great work ethic, well developed skills and a real pride in her segment of the Waterway. In the end, four tent pads were established where none had existed, which will make Lost Popple inhabitable by parties seeking the privacy of a single cell site. At those times of year when the river is crowded, this will be a strategic option when the sites at Long Lake Dam fill early in the day.

Plum Creek's Development Proposal

At the same time that guides, conservationists, nature enthusiasts and commercial camp owners were joining together to form the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization (MWGO) in the summer and fall of 2005, members of the new board of directors were expressing their concerns about Plum Creek's proposed development plan to spread 975 house lots, 2 resorts and other development across 421,000 acres surrounding Moosehead Lake.

On September 7, 2005, the group sent a letter to the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) outlining their concerns with the Plum Creek proposal. First on the list of concerns was the fear that the proposed Plum Creek development plan would set a precedent leading to sprawling development across all of Maine's North Woods. Also of great concern was the negative impact the proposed development would have on nature based activities, such as canoeing, camping, hunting, and fishing in remote areas – those activities which are the bread and butter of commercial guides and sporting camp owners. [Read the entire letter at MWGO website: www.mainewildernessguides.org/LURC%20Letter.pdf]

As a result of the public outcry to their proposed development plan, Plum Creek released a "revised" plan in April, 2006. While there are some welcome changes in the new plan, including moving one resort closer to Big Moose Mountain, those aspects of the original plan which caused the greatest concern - the amount and location of proposed development – remain virtually unchanged. Plum Creek still proposes 975 house lots and two resorts scattered all

across the Moosehead Lake region.

In June, 2006, the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization hosted a forum in Greenville to provide our members and the general public with an opportunity to learn more about the revised proposal. Speakers included the Coalition to Preserve and Grow Northern Maine (an organization that supports the proposed Plum Creek development), Ian Burnes of the Northern Forest Alliance, and Moosehead Region Futures Committee, and Luke Muzzy of Plum Creek. Each speaker gave a brief presentation and the audience had the opportunity to ask their questions.

During the summer, the board of the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization solicited the thoughts of the membership about the Plum Creek development proposal, including whether the organization should take a position on the proposal, and, if so, what position. Members of the board also continued evaluating the more than 1000 page proposal.

At the September board meeting, after considering the comments of the members who responded to the survey and their own evaluation of the development proposal, the board voted to intervene in the LURC review process. Intervention will provide the MWGO with the opportunity to present witnesses, cross examine the witnesses presented by Plum Creek and other intervenors, and be full participants in the permitting process.

Despite very serious concerns about the proposed development project, the board also voted in September not to



Plum Creek

take a formal position on the proposal at that time because the application still had not been deemed complete by LURC. Being deemed complete means that Plum Creek has submitted enough information for LURC staff to begin the evaluation process.

On September 21, 2006, LURC sent Plum Creek a letter outlining the current status of the application and listing the additional information Plum Creek still needed to submit. The letter also stated that LURC's current expectation is that the public hearings on this proposal will occur in mid to –late May, 2007 at the earliest. [LURC's letter as well as lots of other information about the Plum Creek proposal can be found at: www.maine.gov/doc/lurc/reference/resourceplans/moosehead.html]

The MWGO continues to have significant concerns about the amount and location of proposed development and the impact that development will have on the forests and waters of the Moosehead region and on the livelihood of wilderness guides. We will continue to evaluate all the information about the proposal submitted by Plum Creek. We will also continue to speak out about our concerns. We encourage all MWGO members to ask questions and speak out about your concerns about this major development proposal.

Pro Purchase Plan

Our Pro Purchase Plan for members continues to grow.

We currently have a very generous pro program with Old Town Canoe that provides close to a 50% discount on selected canoes, kayaks and accessories. We also have similar programs arranged with Cascade Designs, and Mountain Safety Research. Maine businesses, Igas Island and Alder Stream Canvas have also offered discounts to our members. For a specific list of items and prices please contact Greg Shute, gshute@mainewildernessguides.org.



Maine Wilderness Guides Organization

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership type desired (please check one)

MWGO Goals

- Provide a unified voice for wilderness guides
- Advocate for issues that affect guides
- Advocate for wilderness preservation and restoration in Maine
- Provide professional guide development
- Develop relationships with agencies, companies and organizations that control wild areas
- Work to ensure wild space for multi-day people-powered trips

MWGO Benefits

- Professional development workshops
- Web links and marketing opportunities
- Apprentice guide opportunities
- MWGO patch and sticker
- Annual MWGO rendezvous
- Newsletter
- Support of advocacy for wild areas in Maine
- Voting privileges at MWGO board meetings
- More to come!

Contact MWGO:

By Mail:

Maine Wilderness Guides Organization
P.O. Box 37
Greenville, ME 04441

By Phone:

(207) 892-3121

By Email:

info@mainewildernessguides.org

Visit us online at...

www.mainewildernessguides.org

Membership Options:

Professional: Available to guides, camp owners & outfitters.

Professional Family: Available to professionals and their families.

Supporting: Available to individuals who support MWGO.

Business: Available to businesses that support MWGO.

- Professional \$50
- Professional Family \$75
- Life Membership \$500
- Supporting Membership \$25
- Family Supporting Membership \$40
- Business Membership \$300

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Business Name (if any) _____

Guide Classifications Held:

(master, hunting, fishing, recreation, etc.)

Guide Expertise: _____
(Ex: Canoeing, hunting, fishing, etc.)

Make checks payable to Maine Wilderness Guides Organization or MWGO and mail with this application to:

MWGO, Membership
P.O. Box 37
Greenville, ME 04441



P.O. Box 37
Greenville, ME 04441

*Providing a unified voice for the profession of wilderness
guiding and advocating for the preservation of
remote woods and waters.*

