



Professional Guide

The Official Newsletter of the Maine Professional Guides Association

February 2008

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President's Report

Rick Hill, President

Well, it is that time of year again and the activities in the halls of justice are ramping up to full speed for guides and the guiding industry.

So far there are three bills that I am aware of that will require our close attention. LD 2089 speaks to what constitutes guiding. LD 1957 opens fish-ways to allow alewives into the Grand Lakes watershed, and potentially harming the bass fishery guides depend on. And LD 2173 is all about the agency consolidation to save money. This one has the potential of destroying The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as we know it.

Skip Trask has been deeply involved in all these and will give you more details in his report. Bottom line...we WILL be impacted.

In my 31 years of being in this business, I have never known a winter legislative session where we have not had to go down and fight for what we believe in and do...and the ability to continue to do it.

Some battles are bigger than others. The bear referendum comes to mind. That one pulled us all together, and look what we were able to accomplish by all getting involved!

But they all affect us. We have to be present to maintain our place in the scheme of things and try to the best of our ability to represent member interests.

Consider for a minute where you might be if we weren't there. Would you have a business? Would you make a living doing what you want to do? Or would you be content to just let others call the shots, make the rules or decide for you what you will be allowed to do or not do?

I would like you to seriously think about that and then ask yourself, "Why did I join this organization anyway? What's in it for me?"

What have we done for You, Our Members?

Your Board of Directors has worked very hard over the last 12 months to get information to you. You can now access our newsletters on line, and if you need to play catch up, I would suggest you go to the website and review what we have done on your behalf.

Our Executive Director, John Rust, has made huge accomplishments at meetings representing our interests and has been a major force in the fight to maintain our philosophy and way of life and the activities we are involved in.

Skip Trask has brought our thoughts and beliefs to the legislature for years and has been the major player in keeping our heritages and traditions in tact.

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Be Informed – Get Involved

Our board meetings are listed in the newsletter and all members are invited to attend. If you have issues you would like addressed, this is the place to do it. We cannot act on issues that are not brought to our attention.

Each of our directors represents a different constituency of members. It is your responsibility to bring your concerns and issues to the Board so that we can act on them on your behalf. If you can't attend meetings, then call or email an officer or board member and express your concerns.

Our annual banquet will be coming up in April. This is a great opportunity to get informed about current issues affecting our businesses and have a good time and a great meal as well.

For now, we are involved in the process, and we are making a difference. But sustaining that effort and presence requires involvement and support from our members and friends.

A few dedicated people are carrying the load. If you don't do your part, we can't do ours. The option is yours! You decide.

Rick

Super Super Raffle

Bert Goodman
Super Raffle Committee Chairman

Be a player – Be a winner – Support your MPGA

The Super Raffle is one of our primary sources of income. As we all know, our cultural and traditional outdoor sporting activities are under constant attack by individuals and organizations whose ultimate goal is to change our way of life.

Environmental preservationists are accelerating their efforts to secure large tracks of land that will prohibit hunting, trapping, fishing, snowmobiling and other traditional uses.

MPGA must be in this fight! And, to be effective we must raise money!

Do you remember the 2004 referendum that would have prohibited the taking of bear with the use of traps, bait and hounds? Or the lawsuit last year that would have ended all trapping in northern Maine? You bet – we all do.

Well, these people have not gone away. The Humane Society of the United States, Animal Protection Institute and others are well aware that we defeated them by very narrow margins.

Don't forget, they are watching Maine and waiting for another opportunity to trample all over our cultural and traditional outdoor activities.

The price tag to defeat the anti's in 2004 was \$1,700,000, and the MPGA's share of that bill was \$240,000.

We must raise money. Without money the MPGA is just another voice in the wilderness. The Super Raffle is a significant source of our income.

2007 Super Success

This past year the MPGA Super Raffle was a tremendous success. Total ticket sales exceeded \$31,000 – Surpassing our 2006 sales by \$19,000!

Fourteen of our Super Raffle “Super Sellers” will be presented with a Marlin 45/70 Guides rifle personalized with the MPGA logo. These rifles will be presented to their proud owners at our 2008 Annual Banquet in April.

In addition to the rifles, many of our members have already received \$100 and \$200 LL Bean Gift Certificates in recognition of their great effort.

So, if you have been a supporter of the Super Raffle, please continue to be. If you have not yet been a supporter, start now.

Get on board, be a player and help protect Maine's guiding and outdoor traditions.

Be a Trip Donor

The Super Raffle's success depends on offering desirable outdoor experiences as prizes. As you know, the raffle offers 10 prize choices for every person who purchases a ticket. Each prize category has several donated trips for the winner to choose from. Every trip is donated by a member.

Prize categories are:

1. Freshwater Fishing
2. Black Bear Hunt over Bait
3. Saltwater Fishing
4. Whitetail Deer Hunt
5. Paddling Adventure
6. Bobcat Hunt with Hounds
7. Vacation Package (snowmobiles, etc.)
8. Black Bear Hunt with Hounds
9. Upland Game Hunt
10. Automatic Bonus Draw – a 5 Day Alaska Fishing Trip for two persons

Your Participation is Vital

In the past, many of you have supported this effort by donating outdoor trips as prizes for the Super Raffle. For continued success of the raffle, it is absolutely necessary that guides and outfitters continue in this effort.

Support MPGA – Be a Trip Donor

The Super Raffle is a significant source of our income. If you have been a past supporter of the Super Raffle, please continue to be. If you have not been a supporter, then become one. Get on board, be a player and help protect Maine's outdoor traditions.

For information about donating a trip or selling tickets for the 2008 Super Raffle, contact:

Bert Goodman
P.O. Box 323
Patten, ME 04765
(207) 528-2320
Email: info@northcountrylodge.com

“You win – MPGA wins – Guides win”

ProPlan

Still there. Still a great deal. But when we change from a lengthy magazine format to this rapid response newsletter format, something had to give. And one thing will be the regular listing of ProPlan offerings.

But not to worry! ProPlan sponsors are currently being renewed and info will soon be published in two forms: 1) a webpage will soon be available on the Association website; and 2) full information will be included in our new Professional Guide “Annual” Edition that will be available next January.

Meanwhile, if you have any questions or want to place a LL Bean order, just contact Bob Parker, our ProPlan Coordinator. Contact Bob Parker at 778-4077, or send an email to: info@maineguides.org

Legislative Report

By
Skip Trask, Legislative Liaison

Bill to Introduce Alewives Threatens Down-East Guiding Industry

A bill sponsored by Senator Dennis Damon of Hancock on behalf of the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) could be devastating to the guiding industry in Washington County.

World-class bass fishing in the upper reaches of the St Croix River drainage attracts anglers from throughout North America and beyond. Local guides derive a

major portion of their livelihood from this fishery. It's one of the few ways to make a living in perhaps the most economically depressed area of the state.

Fishing guides in that region may be forced out of business if the DMR is successful in their attempts to allow sea-run alewives to invade the fragile ecosystem that currently produces some of the best bass fishing in the northeast.

One down-east guide recently told me that allowing alewives into the upper St Croix drainage poses as big a threat to local guides as the 2004 bear referendum!

Concern about alewives in the St Croix watershed led to passage of a law more than a decade ago mandating the closure of the fish passage facilities at the Woodland and Grand Falls dams during the annual alewife migration.

LD 1957, An Act to Restore Diadromous Fish in the St. Croix River

This bill requires that these fish-ways be reopened to the passage of alewives. This bill is scheduled for a public hearing at the Augusta Civic Center on March 3rd at 10:00 AM.

In 2001, the DMR made a similar attempt to restore alewife runs to the upper St Croix. They got a lot of support from environmental groups and federal fishery agencies both in the U.S. and Canada. None of them seemed very concerned about the potential impacts of "native" alewives on an "exotic species" (bass) or the potential damage to local guides.

The 2001 bill was defeated. Now they are going to try again. Another battle is looming, and it will be every bit as contentious as it was seven years ago – perhaps more so!

MPGA has teamed up with the Grand Lake Stream Guides Association, and our organizations will do everything possible to defeat this legislation.

Killing the bill may be more difficult this time around than it was in 2001. Growing numbers of environmental extremists are obsessed with attempting to bring back the past, whether it makes sense or not and regardless of the consequences.

Many within the current Administration are more in tune

with protectionism than with conservation. State fishery biologists who personally oppose the bill may be forced to testify in support of it. At the very least, they'll probably be ordered to stay out of the discussions.

There is, however, a bit of good news – a retired fishery biologist who is intimately familiar with the St Croix River system can no longer be muzzled. He is ready, willing and able to share his expertise and extensive biological data as we fight to protect the down-east guiding industry.

Alewives Pose a Threat to Many Species

I remember a sporting camp operator coming into my office in the mid-1980's (when I was Deputy Commissioner of F&W) and complaining that something was wrong with the bass at Spednik Lake. I remember him saying that there were still a lot

of big bass but no little ones.

His concerns prompted a study by the Department which showed that bass fry were being hatched, were sharing the habitat with large schools of young alewives and were then disappearing.

It was the professional opinion of the fishery biologists conducting the study that the young bass were not able to compete with the stronger, more aggressive young alewives.

Smelt & Salmon at Risk Too!

It's not just the bass fishery we're worried about. Two state fishery biologists, with more than 50 years combined experience in the St. Croix region, have compiled a considerable amount of evidence that large numbers of young-of-the-year alewives can out-compete young-of-the-year smelts, causing a decline in smelt abundance.

After 1991, when alewives were blocked at Grand Falls, there was a noticeable increase in smelt abundance in Big Lake and the growth-rate and general condition of the landlocked salmon in the lake improved considerably.

What's in store for the excellent smelt-supported salmon fishery in Big Lake when the alewives return?

To further complicate matters, landlocked alewives have become established in the watershed, causing the Fish and Wildlife Department to permanently shut off fish passage into West Grand Lake, one of the finest salmon lakes in the State.

No one knows how plentiful these landlocked alewives have become, or what impact they will have on the bass, the smelts and the landlocked salmon.

No one knows how the landlocked alewives will interact with sea-run alewives or whether the combined reproductive efforts of these fish will totally dominate the watershed.

How many times have you heard fishery biologists testify that they wouldn't consider implementing a regulation change on a body of water without the data necessary to support it?

...Legislative Report continued on page 4

Bass population in
Spednik Lake declined
when alewives were
allowed in, and then
bass recovered when
the alewife runs
were closed off.

I've heard it plenty of times! And yet, in 2001, just about every state and federal fishery management agency in North America with an interest in the St Croix River testified in support of opening the St. Croix fish-ways to the passage of alewives with little or no biological data about the potential impact on other species.

I expect they'll all be back to try again this year when LD 1957 is given a public hearing. See my report in the next newsletter to learn the fate of this bill.

Concept Legislation Would Impact Guiding Activities

I expect that most of you have already heard about LD 2089.

The bill is currently being considered by the Fish and Wildlife Committee. It is supposed to help clarify the definition of a hunting guide.

The bill, sponsored by Committee Chair Representative Troy Jackson of Allagash, is entitled "An Act To Allow Certain Assistance to Bear Hunters." The bill has six co-sponsors - Senators Bryant of Oxford, Martin of Aroostook, Perry of Penobscot and Representatives Brautigam of Falmouth, Patrick of Rumford and Saviello of Wilton.

This legislation was submitted as a "concept bill" which means that although it is supposed to accomplish a certain goal, the details have not yet been worked out. This is all that the actual bill says:

"This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would amend the hunting laws that regulate the practice and profession of guiding. Specifically, this bill would allow individuals who are not licensed as guides to provide certain services and assistance to bear hunters, such as providing transportation."

Bill Prompted By Change in Enforcement Policy

If you are wondering what prompted this bill, all I can provide is hearsay information that was relayed to the Committee at the time the bill received a public hearing.

Allegedly, this is a case of different wardens interpreting the laws differently, something that is not uncommon.

In defense of the wardens, and as a longtime warden myself, let me just say that the fish and wildlife rules are extremely complex and sometimes vague. Even though these regulations fill several hundred pages, they could never possibly provide clear answers to every situation that takes place in our fields and forests and on our waters.

In this particular case, some wardens have apparently been allowing people to transport bear hunters without a guide license as long as these "bus drivers" didn't accompany or assist the client in activities directly related to hunting.

Other wardens don't see things that way and have been insisting that anyone being compensated to transport hunters must be licensed as a hunting guide.

LD 2089 apparently came into play when a new warden moved into an area and implemented a policy that was different from that of the previous warden. He informed the "bus drivers" that they could no longer operate without a guide license and produced a 1999 memo from an assistant Attorney General that appeared to reinforce his interpretation.

This is my ninth year lobbying for the MPGA. Prior to that, as most of you know, I was the Deputy Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife for 12 years and, before that I was a game warden for 16 years.

For nearly 40 years I have been very involved with guides and guiding related issues, and, as far back as I can remember, there has been a lot of controversy about what activities require, or should require, a guide license.

Current Definition of Guide

You wouldn't think it would be that complicated. The fish and wildlife laws define a "guide" as any person who receives any form of remuneration for his or her services "in accompanying or assisting a person in the fields or forests or on the waters or ice within the jurisdiction of the State while hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, snowmobiling or camping at a primitive camping area."

LD 2089, as originally submitted, only deals with bear hunting. So, using the definition of guide that I spelled out in the previous paragraph, a person must have a guide license in the hunting classification if he or she is compensated for accompanying or assisting another person in the fields or forests while that person is bear hunting.

The question raised by LD 2089 is whether a guide license is required, or should be required, if the person's only service to the hunter is providing transportation from the lodge to the start of the trail leading to a bait site that the hunter has previously been taken to by a licensed guide.

When Does The "Bus Driver" Become A Guide?

Is a person guiding if his or her only involvement is driving a vehicle?

Based on my experience, I could probably make a good argument either way, but where do you draw the line?

A lot of the hunting that takes place in the "big woods" is done directly from a motor vehicle. While it is illegal to shoot from or have a loaded firearm in a motor vehicle, it is not illegal to hunt from that vehicle.

How do you determine whether a hunter in a motor vehicle is hunting or only being transported? It's a tough issue and almost impossible to enforce.

I've received feedback on this bill from quite a few MPGA members – some hate it and others think it's a great idea.

I'd be the first to agree that there is a difference between a person transporting a group of bear hunters to their stands (a "bus driver") and a person driving a moose hunter around on logging roads all day long in hopes of getting a crack at a moose.

How do you determine whether a hunter in a motor vehicle is hunting, or only being transported?

But, what happens when the "bus driver" stops to pick up the bear hunter at the end of the day and the hunter needs help looking for a wounded bear? At what point do you go from being a "bus driver" to being a guide?

Guiding without a license has become a common practice throughout Maine. It's a violation that is very difficult to prove.

These unscrupulous people offer cheap hunts, provide inferior services and are seldom held accountable for their actions. They tarnish the image of our entire guiding industry.

Sometimes the only connection that a warden is able to make between unlicensed guides and their clients is when the clients are being dropped off at a hunting location.

It is critical, in trying to make things easier for hunters and guides, that we don't create loopholes that will compromise the efforts of our wardens to catch and prosecute violators.

It is also important that we don't "water down" the legal definition of "guide".

Legislators Inclined To Enact Some Version of LD 2089

LD 2089 was given a public hearing by the Fish and Wildlife Committee on January 17th. I testified against the bill on behalf of the MPGA and was the only one to oppose it.

All testimony in support of the bill came from legislators on behalf of their constituents. The Department took a "neither for nor against" position.

After the hearing, in talking with several legislators about the bill, it became obvious to me that there was a lot of support to make some changes. I immediately started putting together some language that I hoped our members would be able to support or at least tolerate.

I learned a long time ago that if the legislature is intent on passing a bill, it's much safer to suggest language you can live with rather than have the legislative analyst draft language on the basis of committee discussions.

I worked on this project for several hours, getting feedback from MPGA Board members on some of my ideas.

After creating a wastebasket full of words that didn't seem to work, I finally settled on the language underlined below. I'm not completely happy with it, but I don't think it will cause us too much grief.

You will note that it applies to all hunting, not just bear hunting – something that several of our members felt strongly about. It does not, however, include other guided activities as some of my early attempts did.

The reason is that all the other activities currently requiring a guide license (fishing, trapping, boating, snowmobiling and primitive camping) take place in a different environment than the transportation that gets them there.

Fishing, canoeing and whitewater rafting are never conducted from inside a conventional motor vehicle as hunting often is, and transportation to the locations where those other

activities take place has never been much of an issue.

In fact, people are compensated all the time for transporting people to and from guided canoe trips, and I don't recall every hearing it suggested that those "bus drivers" needed a guide license in the recreational classification. That's why my language only talks about hunting, and the wording is as follows:

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 10001, subsection 28, a person licensed to guide hunters under this chapter may employ the services of a person not licensed as a guide to transport hunters along a public or private road in a conventional motor vehicle for the sole purpose of delivering those hunters to a pre-determined destination prior to or at the conclusion of the time those hunters are engaged in hunting. A person, while transporting hunters pursuant to this paragraph, may not:

1. Engage in hunting;
2. Transport personally owned or controlled hunting equipment unless that hunting equipment is fastened in a case; or
3. Accompany hunters into the fields or forests or provide any other hunting related services.

A person who violates this paragraph commits a Class E crime. Any time a person is convicted of violating this paragraph, the guide employing that person must be issued a warning by a law enforcement officer, as defined in Title 25, section 2801-A, subsection 5. A guide who receives 3 or more such warnings within the previous 5-year period commits a civil violation, and, upon adjudication, the commissioner may suspend or revoke that person's guide license for a period of one year.

Guiding without a license is a violation that is very difficult to prove. It is critical, in trying to make things easier for hunters and guides, that we don't create loopholes that will compromise the efforts of our wardens to catch and prosecute violators.

The Fish and Wildlife Committee got to see this language for the first time at a work session on January 31st. Their reaction seemed to be favorable, but they asked several questions, made some suggestions and then tabled the bill to give the legislative analyst time to resolve some possible legal issues (such as whether being compensated for providing transportation requires a chauffeur's permit).

I don't know how this will all play out. The Committee could decide to go with the language I offered; they could decide to go with something completely different (which I think is quite unlikely); or they could decide to leave things as they are now (which is also unlikely).

Whatever they do, I have a commitment from them that if they change the law, they will include a 2-year sunset provision. That means that the new law "self-destructs" in 2 years and has to be enacted all over again to remain in effect. (See my report in the next MPGA newsletter to learn the final outcome.)

Governor Proposes Consolidation of Natural Resource Agencies

In my newsletter report this past December I told you that rumors were flying rampant about a possible plan by the Baldacci Administration to consolidate several natural resource agencies.

At that time it was all rumor – nobody was sure that such a plan existed.

In fact, during the month of November (while I was out trapping and having fun – seems like a long time ago!) several members of our Natural Resources Network met with a high ranking official within the Administration and were told that, although discussions were taking place about improved efficiencies within the natural resource agencies, *“consolidation of these agencies would not be included in the Governor’s supplemental budget.”*

Then on January 9th, I received a call from Commissioner Martin’s secretary asking if I could participate in a conference call with the Commissioner at 4:30 PM that same day. I participated in that call, along with George Smith (SAM) and Bob Myers (Maine Snowmobile Association).

During that call, we were officially informed for the first time that the Governor, in his televised State of the State

speech (scheduled to take place in about two hours), would make the announcement that the supplemental budget he was about to submit to the legislature would include a directive that four natural resource agencies be merged into “not more than two” larger departments. The four agencies were Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Marine Resources, Conservation and Agriculture

Even though I’d been hearing these rumors for days, I was still surprised and felt really betrayed.

In 2006, when Governor Baldacci was preparing to run for his second term, he told the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine in their gubernatorial candidate survey that he would oppose such a merger.

SAM’s survey question asked:

“Will you oppose any proposal to merge the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife into a large natural resource department?”

Governor Baldacci responded:

“Yes I will oppose such a merger. I have said repeatedly over the past four years that departments like Inland Fisheries and Wildlife may be small by comparison to other state agencies, but they serve large and distinct constituencies that deserve, and have reason to expect, that they will have an agency whose focus is on their interests and needs.”

Little more than a year into his second term and the

Governor has apparently forgotten his promise.

Don’t misunderstand my criticism - I don’t for one minute believe that this proposed merger originated with the Governor. Someone else has convinced him that the current structure of our natural resource agencies is not adequate to meet the needs of Maine’s future.

I suspect that this merger is being orchestrated by one or two individuals within the Administration who are thinking mostly about their own political futures.

Even so, for the Governor to oppose such a merger and then, in less than two years, include the merger in his budget is cause for concern.

It raises questions about future policy changes that could have a huge impact on life in rural Maine.

Overwhelming Opposition to Governor’s Proposed Merger!

The Governor’s merger language was given a public hearing by the Appropriations Committee on the afternoon of January 30th.

Prior to the hearing, the Natural Resources Network held a press conference in the Hall of Flags to express our united opposition to the consolidation of these four agencies. We were joined in our presentations by several legislators.

After the press conference we all attended the public hearing and testified in opposition.

There was not one person who testified in support of the merger other than the Commissioner of Marine Resources, George Lapointe, who made a presentation on behalf of the Administration and tried, unsuccessfully, to defend the merger.

To the Governor’s credit, he had instructed Commissioner Lapointe to tell the Appropriations Committee that a merger of the four agencies is not the only option he’d be willing to accept.

Perhaps, even before the public hearing, the Governor was beginning to realize he might have made a mistake. (Maybe he remembered the promise he had made.)

About halfway through the list of the fifty, or so, people who signed up to testify in opposition to the merger, it became quite obvious to me that the people of rural

Maine will not allow this merger to take place.

My guess is that there will be an effort to improve efficiency in the way these agencies deliver services and that could include the consolidation of a few programs.

As for the merger, however, my bet is that these agencies will all still be in existence when Governor Baldacci leaves office.

Included below is the testimony I presented on behalf of the MPGA and the Maine Trappers Association (MTA) in opposition to the merger. (Those of us who testified on behalf of the various sporting interests coordinated our testimony to ensure that certain points were covered and to avoid repetition.)

...Legislative Report continued on page 7

“Yes I will oppose such a merger” –
Governor Baldacci in response to SAM’s survey about agency consolidation.
Why has the Governor forgotten his promise?

“Good afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Fischer and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I’m Skip Trask. I live in Winthrop, and I’m proud to be here today speaking on behalf of the Maine Professional Guides Association and the Maine Trappers Association. We are adamantly opposed to the provision contained in this supplemental budget that would merge four existing natural resource agencies, and we respectfully request that you remove that language.

I recently saw a copy of a January 10th memo sent to all Fish and Wildlife employees from the Governor and Commissioner Martin justifying the proposed merger of Fish and Wildlife, Agriculture, Conservation and Marine Resources. It brought back very vividly my concern as a young game warden in the early 1970s when then Governor Ken Curtis announced intentions to reorganize state government. That was during a period when many bureaucrats and politicians had become convinced that bigger was better, and the creation of Natural Resource Super Agencies was under way in several states. At the time I remember worrying that I might lose my job. Dedicated state employees are wondering the same thing today, and if you endorse this merger as part of this supplemental budget you’ll be keeping that threat hanging over their heads for at least the next couple of years. Employees that have this kind of axe hanging over their heads are not very productive.

In the memo I mentioned earlier, Governor Curtis was credited with “a major reorganization of state government which resulted in the creation of these agencies”. The memo goes on to say that “the manner in which we organized our natural resource agencies 30 years ago will not meet the needs of Maine’s future”. That memo is a bit misleading. The reorganization that took place in the 70s was relatively minor and did not create the agencies we are discussing here today. Three of those agencies were already in place and had been for a very long time. The plan was to create a super agency and put all the natural resource departments under one umbrella. That didn’t happen. The reason it didn’t happen is that the people of Maine wouldn’t allow it. I’m pretty certain they won’t allow it this time around either. Many Mainers have a strong feeling of ownership and closeness with the small natural resource agencies that oversee and protect their outdoor interests.

Maine’s Fish and Wildlife Department is a unique part of an outdoor heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation of trappers, guides and other outdoor enthusiasts. The groups that I represent are outraged that Fisheries and Wildlife has been tossed into this melting pot – jeopardizing its existence as a Cabinet Level agency, and threatening to make it an obscure bureau in a big agency with conflicting interests. Go to sportsmen and sportswomen in

other states that have already merged their small fish and game departments into large natural resource agencies and ask them how things have worked out. They’ll tell you about increased bureaucracy, less opportunity to deal directly with people that understand and appreciate their concerns and, in the long term, little or no cost savings. In many instances, following such mergers, there has been far less emphasis placed on the management and protection of fisheries and wildlife and a reduced level of funding to pay for those programs.

The groups I represent are proud of the fact that hunting, trapping, guiding and fishing still play a critical role in the happiness and financial well-being of our citizens. We’re proud of the fact that the management and protection of our fish and wildlife resources have always been considered important enough to warrant a “voice” in the Governor’s cabinet room. We’re proud of the fact that hunting, fishing, guiding and trapping are activities that garner enough respect in this state to justify a Joint Standing Committee of the Legislature just to deal with our issues. We’re proud of the fact that Section 22 of Article IX of the Maine Constitution ensures that our license fees will only be used to manage and

protect the things we love. We’re proud of the fact that our Fish and Wildlife Commissioner is required by law to support and understand the basics of fisheries and wildlife management and be experienced in hunting, fishing or trapping”. We welcome change, but we insist on change that places more emphasis on our precious fish and wildlife resources, not less. We will only support change that allows the Fish and Wildlife Department to improve, grow and fulfill its mission. We are adamantly opposed to having our department demoted to a bureau level operation controlled by a commissioner who may be more interested in promoting cross-country skiing than in protecting deer wintering areas.

Our fish and wildlife resources pump more than a billion dollars annually into our economy. At the same time, these resources are under

much more pressure than they ever have been. These resources are not only struggling to satisfy the increasing demands of various user groups, but they are fighting a constant battle against development and habitat alteration. It is critical that we focus more attention on the needs of our fish and wildlife and find new sources of revenue to manage and protect those resources. You need to strengthen our Fish and Wildlife Department, not force it into a back room at the Department of Conservation. Please remove this merger language from the budget. Thank you.”

Is the agency merger proposal being orchestrated by one or two individuals within the Administration who are thinking mostly about their own political futures?

Skip Trask
Legislative Liaison

Conspiracy Theories?

Paul Jacques presents Legislature with Final Report of Public Lands Task Force

Task Force Chairman Paul Jacques (aka Deputy Commissioner of IF&W) and Conservation Commissioner Pat McGowan met jointly with the Legislature’s Fish & Wildlife and Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry Committees on February 7th to brief them on the Task Force’s final report.

The “Governor’s Task Force Regarding the Management of Public Lands and Publicly-Held Easements” was created as a result of concerns that public lands were not being properly managed, and that certain recreational uses were being favored to the detriment of others.

One of the bills held over pending the Task Force’s report is commonly called the “no net loss” bill (LD 648) as it requires the state to maintain hunting opportunities by opening additional hunting areas to compensate for areas where the state would close opportunities. The Legislative Committees reviewed the bill after hearing from the Task Force.

Signatories

After several rounds of analysis, comments and revisions, MPGA signed on to support the final report.

Actually, all sixteen public members of the Task Force signed up, including: John Rust (MPGA), Bob Meyers (MSA), George Smith (SAM), Dan Mitchell (ATV), Marcia McKeague (Katahdin Timberlands), Al Cowperthwaite (North Maine Woods), Raymond Wotton (Landowner), Greg Shute (Chewonki), Jon Fitzgerald (Western Mountains Foundation), Karen Woodsum (Sierra Club), Bruce Kidman (Nature Conservancy), Walter Graff (AMC), Jon Lund (Maine Sportsman), Alan Hutchinson (Forest Society of Maine), Sally Stockwell (Maine Audubon), and Mac Hunter (U Maine).

One of the goals these signors agreed on is to recognize that public lands have different values for different users, and that we will actively seek out opportunities to respectfully discuss with one another our understandings, values and needs, knowing that differences need not keep us from working toward common goals.

Recommendations

The final report has been much improved, but the basic recommendations covered in MPGA’s December newsletter are essentially the same. The final report may be downloaded from the state’s website:

<http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/taskforce/>

As covered in the December newsletter, the Task Force’s recommendations include:

1. First and foremost, the most important recommendation is to form a Recreational Access and Conservation Forum

comprised of the major groups including environmentalists, conservationists, sportsmen, and outdoor recreationists.

2. Creating a scientific review panel to review and monitor Maine’s ecological reserve system, including a review of currently allowed uses and access on existing reserves.

3. Improving public information about existing backcountry (non-motorized) recreation opportunities, and helping recreation groups to initiate the development of a long-distance network of hiking and remote backcountry trails, much like private groups have done for snowmobiling and ATV trails.

4. An initiative to improve access to Maine’s moving waters.

Concerns, Conspiracies & Clarifications

Although MPGA signed the Report, we still have some concerns about how some of the final recommendations might be interpreted. Are there hidden agendas buried in the report? Who knows. The report contains something for everyone, and maybe that is as far as any conspiracy theory goes.

There are continuing differences of interpretation among agencies and user groups as to the meaning and usefulness of the terms, “wilderness,” “remote,” and “backcountry.” For example, the Department of Conservation uses “non-mechanized backcountry recreation areas” in its planning process to designate those areas without motorized uses that have wilderness qualities, and avoids the use of the term “wilderness” when labeling a specific area. There are similar

differences surrounding the words “motorized” and “mechanized.” The Task Force recognizes this as a matter that it was unable to resolve to everyone’s satisfaction.

Additional comments were not included as part of the report, so to clarify our position, we offer these thoughts:

1. Many issues were barely touched upon and certainly not resolved due to the limited time frame for the Task Force. Yet the wording of some “understandings” and “recommendations” might imply more factual certainty than actually exists. We repeatedly objected to language that led to conclusive statements when no conclusions were actually agreed upon. Fortunately, most statements of this type were revised to be more neutral in the final report.

2. MPGA interprets the recommendation to develop more non-motorized backcountry areas to mean that the state must first better inform these users about the vast opportunities currently being provided on public, and private, lands. Then the “Forum” and state agencies can continue this discussion and gain a better understanding of the actual needs before resources are spent acquiring and developing these areas.

3. The Task Force was directed to review the management of public lands, not to advocate for buying more of it. While

...Public Lands Task Force continued on page 9

The Recreational Access & Conservation Forum may be the most important outcome from this Task Force

private lands were considered vital to outdoor recreation, there was only one major landowner involved in the discussions. It is vital that more private landowners, large and small, be included in future discussions.

4. Little progress was made on developing ways to make the various recreational activities more compatible, despite much time spent getting everyone to work better together.
5. The Task Force failed to “Collect information regarding the trends in recreational use in Maine, the adequacy of supply in relation to demand; and the gain or loss of access by recreational use on private land that may have a relation to recreational use on public land.” This task was really beyond the time and resources available, but it is crucial that this information be better understood in order for future policy decisions to be successful.
6. The Task Force failed to “Identify strategies and resources necessary to reduce conflicts regarding recreational use on and access to public lands and to adequately plan for existing and future needs for the broad array of recreational activities in Maine.” This task is also beyond the Task Force’s time limits, but it is crucial for the “Forum” to continue toward completing the task.

Deer Task Force Releases Final Report

The Deer Task Force has released its final report, entitled “Recommendations to the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for Increasing the Deer Herd in Northern and Downeast Maine.”

The report contains short term strategies for everything from improved habitat to predator control to deer yard research.

Matt Libby chaired the Task Force. Two additional guides and MPGA members participated on the Task Force – Don Kleiner (representing the Maine Bowhunters Association) and Don Dudley (representing the Maine Trappers Association).

Other Task Force participating groups included Maine Audubon, Maine Forest Products Council, Small Woodlot Owners of Maine, SAM and IF&W’s wildlife biologists.

For an overview of the recommendations, read Matt Libby’s article in the December 2007 issue of MPGA’s “Professional Guide” newsletter, which is available on the MPGA website’s “news” page.

The full 157 page report is available on IF&W’s “Wildlife Surveys & Reports” web page:

http://www.state.me.us/ifw/wildlife/surveys_reports/index.htm

The report has been presented to the Legislature’s Fish & Wildlife Committee. What happens next is unknown. As Matt said in our last newsletter, “It will be up to guides to be a one of the watch dogs and not let any one group, whether it be landowners or biologists, get us in a hole again.”

LURC Concludes Plum Creek Hearings

After eight more days of hearings in January, LURC has concluded the hearings on Plum Creek’s Moosehead Lake Concept Plan.

January hearing topics included wildlife impacts, the details of the conservation easements to be held by the Forest Society of Maine and the Nature Conservancy, and the qualifications of these easement holders. Transcripts from all the hearings should be available on LURC’s website by mid February.

Conservation Framework

“Our discussion has always been about the whole conservation. And the reason for that is that’s what the plan proposed as it stands right now. We have no doubt that that can happen. If the parties involved have the credibility with us that brings out our concerns – as you heard our concerns about the Roach Ponds – we wouldn’t be concerned if we weren’t totally confident that those folks would pull that deal through.” – John Rust, when asked would we support the plan if only part of the conservation occurred.

It is clear that the Nature Conservancy is ready willing and financially able to immediately complete their purchase of an easement on 266,000 acres and to outright purchase 75,000 more acres around Number 5 Bog and the upper Roach Ponds. In fact, the Nature Conservancy’s national board has authorized a loan to their Maine chapter to expedite the transactions.

More Public Hearings?

Time will tell. It will be quite some time for LURC’s staff to review all the testimony and present a final recommendation to the Commissioners. The Chairman has directed LURC staff to evaluate amendments that would address issues raised during the hearings. They will present options to the Commission as soon as March 5th. Meanwhile, LURC will continue to accept public comments until further notice.

It could be that LURC will ask Plum Creek for additional revisions to their plans. Should that happen, it is possible that LURC will have to re-open the comment period to allow intervenors and the public to make comments.

It is also possible that Plum Creek will reject any such revision requests, withdraw their application, and proceed immediately with subdivision and development plans that are possible within the current LURC rules. This could include building lots in areas that Plum Creek has currently agreed to not develop.

More Information

For info on the entire plan, visit these websites:

www.plumcreekplanmaine.com
www.maine.gov/doc/lurc/

Deer Yards vs Development

LURC Re-Opens Review of Huts & Trails Lodge at Grand Falls

LURC re-opened the Western Mountain Foundation’s application to build a 40-bed lodge within a deer yard on the Dead River at Grand Falls following what appeared to be IF&W’s support for it.

MPGA continues to support the overall Huts & Trails project. We believe they are striving to develop new recreational opportunities in addition to, without limitations on, or displacement of, other traditional uses in the area. We presume this includes deer hunting and wildlife conservation. The Western Mountain Foundation has shown us a willingness to follow through with their goal of not limiting other existing traditional users, and hope they continue to do so.

MPGA Comments on Plan

In our comments to LURC, we urged the Commission to carefully consider the needs of the deer in the Grand Falls wintering area, the effects of human activity at a lodge and on a ski trail within the yard, and the potential for over predation by coyotes that would be facilitated by the packed ski trail through the yard.

We encouraged the Western Mountain Foundation and the Commissions to do their utmost to relocate the Grand Falls lodge and the ski trail outside of the deer wintering area.

We also urged LURC to get the biologists' scientific opinion before proceeding.

In a December 18 letter from Ken Elowe, representing IF&W, it appeared that the Department supported approving the construction project despite acknowledging the continuing impacts on the deer.

However, expert whitetail deer biologist Gerry Levine's August testimony presented a 30 year professional involvement with precisely this yard, and his conclusion is to not build the lodge and trail in this yard, or deer will die.

So LURC is presented with a difference of opinion between deer biology experts.

MPGA related our concern that the Department’s recommendation appears to contradict their ongoing position and recommendation about protecting deer yards, and that approving the construction of the lodge and ski trail within the yard will not only seriously impact the area’s deer population, further, approving this project will set a precedent whereby LURC will be forced out of fairness to allow development within other deer yards – all at the same time that IF&W is petitioning you to rezone additional yards.

MPGA urged the Commission to carefully consider the needs of the deer in the Grand Falls wintering area

Deer Population Concerns

The deer population in Maine’s northern and western mountain regions has declined significantly. MPGA is very concerned with the health and size of Maine’s deer population. We have participated in the year-long task force to review deer population issues regarding the disturbingly low populations now surviving in northern and eastern Maine. We are also concerned that factors leading to low deer populations in those areas also exist in Maine’s western mountains.

For a year now, we have heard repeatedly from IF&W about the importance of deer yards. It seemed that the biologists at IF&W place a very high emphasis on protecting Maine’s deer yards as a way to protect and rebuild deer population.

On January 28, Ken Elowe responded to concerns about their position this project, adding that IF&W “would like to make clear that the mitigation proposals by the Foundation are not in alignment with the statements of the MDIFW [December 18] letter.”

Lodge to be Re-located

To their credit, the Western Mountain Foundation recognizes the serious public concerns about the deer yard, and has been working with LURC and neighboring landowners to find a solution. They are now proposing to relocate the lodge 700 feet further from the yard, and to revise some of the access trails. The actual route of the main trail might now be the only remaining concern, and it appears that the Foundation is trying to find a workable solution.

Next Steps

LURC’s staff has not yet made a recommendation, nor scheduled a review with the Commissioners. The application and public comments, including those of MPGA and IF&W, are available on LURC’s website.

<http://www.maine.gov/doc/lurc/updates.shtml>

Annual Banquet

April 12th

See Page 14 for Tickets

Answers to your Question

“Why did MPGA support having non-residents buy a bear tag in November?”

Our 2007 bill, LD 728, entitled “An Act to Enhance the Wise Use and Sound Management of Maine’s Wildlife Resources” was passed by the Legislature last spring and became effective on January 1st of this year.

This bill makes it illegal to intentionally or negligently waste wildlife that has been taken by hunting or trapping. It requires hunters to make every reasonable effort to retrieve wounded game, and would allow hunting guides the option of tracking and dispatching wounded big game animals for their clients outside legal shooting hours.

The bill we proposed also required that persons obtain a permit before taking a bear by hunting or trapping at any time during the open season. This provision was changed by the Legislature, so that only non-residents are required to buy a late season bear tag for hunting bear in November.

Why did MPGA sponsor this, and why did the Legislature make its change?

The answer to why only non-residents must buy a tag is simple – since the Brookings Report was released in late 2006, the administration and the Legislature has been more than happy to make non-residents pay more. This led to proposals to increase sales taxes on meals and lodging for instance.

In addition, Legislators were reluctant to require their own voters to pay more. This is not always the case, as we have seen many license fee increases in recent years, and the Legislature as a whole continues to squeeze more taxes and fees out of Maine’s hard working citizens.

So why did MPGA propose this new bear tag requirement?

Bear Policies

Several factors led to this proposal, including:

- The 2004 Bear Referendum
- Continuing anti-hunting pressures
- Lack of current research information
- IF&W’s repeated concerns about taking too many bear each year
- Giving black bear the same respect and management resources as our other major game like moose and turkeys

In the aftermath of the 2004 Bear referendum, MPGA and others sought to head off additional attacks on bear hunting and trapping. During the Legislature’s 2005 session the anti’s submitted numerous bills to achieve what the referendum failed to do – stop bear baiting and trapping.

One of the factors that kept these bills at bay was the agreement that interested parties, including MPGA, bear trappers and IF&W, would review the situation and voluntarily consider potential changes.

In 2006, MPGA participated in this IF&W committee to review bear hunting and trapping policies. One of the primary functions of this committee was to get a better handle on the

various bear harvesting methods utilized by our members and to solicit feedback on what our Association could do to make things better for guides as well as to protect the future of the bear guiding industry.

Hunting Pressure & Bear Permit Lottery

One discovery was that IF&W lacked the much needed information about the pressure currently being placed on Maine’s valuable black bear resource. This is mainly due to the unrestricted November hunt. Kills are accounted for, but not hunting pressure.

Year after year, IF&W had expressed concerns to MPGA that perhaps too many bear were being killed. Not knowing what happens in November was a big part of their concern.

IF&W was concerned enough that options like a permit lottery were even considered. MPGA supported some fee increases as a way to avoid going to a lottery system.

Scientific Information is Vital

The referendum made us keenly aware that scientific information could sway the non-hunting public’s opinion. We want that information to be as current and thorough as possible, so we can use it to protect our hunting privileges.

Unfortunately, IF&W not only lacked certain vital information, they had no resources to get it either. MPGA’s bill was aimed at providing information on hunting pressure, and to furthering IF&W’s research on bear.

The additional funds generated by these permits will be used to finance studies related to black bears that were recommended by the IF&W Committee in 2006 following the year-long review of Maine’s bear harvesting methods.

Bear trappers will also be required to purchase a bear permit just like hunters are required to. These new bear trapping fees, along with the fees from the new permit for non-residents who wish to take a bear during the deer-hunting season, will go into a special non-lapsing account to pay for projects that will enhance black bear management.

These changes were suggested by our own Bear Committee, endorsed by the MPGA Board of Directors and included in the bill we were able to get enacted into law last winter (LD728).

Maine’s Bear are Valuable Big Game Animals that Deserves equal Respect

Maine’s bear hunting is a truly world-class opportunity. Bear are no longer treated as nuisance animals like they were forty years ago. The sport, and the guiding industry, grew into the respected economic sector we now know.

Most of Maine’s big hunting attractions like moose, turkeys and sea ducks all require a special tag. This highlights their value to hunters, and provides a funding mechanism for research and resource protection.

MPGA’s bill sought to give bear the same respect and protections as those other world-class game animals.

Who Actually Pays for Wildlife Conservation?

Hunters and sport shooters contributed \$3 Billion to wildlife conservation since 1991 through the payment of a federal excise tax on their purchases of firearms and ammunition.

The excise tax is a primary source of wildlife conservation funding in the United States. Since the inception of the excise tax in 1937, more than \$5 billion dollars has been collected.

America's firearms and ammunition manufacturers recently marked this important milestone in the industry's longstanding support of wildlife conservation.

In recognition of this milestone, a commemorative check for \$3 billion dollars was presented to H. Dale Hall, the director of U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and Matt Hogan, the executive director of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), by key firearms industry leaders at the annual membership meeting of the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) – the industry's trade association.

"Our industry is proud of its leading role in financially supporting wildlife conservation and protecting habitat," said Doug Painter, NSSF president and chief executive officer. "We are especially proud that our industry stepped up to the plate for America's wildlife and natural resources decades before 'environmentalism' became a popular movement."

The federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition products (11 percent on long guns and ammunition and 10 percent on handguns), is collected by the U.S. Treasury, Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) and given to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) where it is deposited into the Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund, commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Trust Fund. These taxes are the major source of conservation funding in the United States.

In just the past 12 months, the firearms and ammunition industry has contributed more than \$280 million to conservation via the Firearms and Ammunition Excise Tax (FAET). This amount of money demonstrates a 41 percent increase over the last five years. The complete amount collected through federal excise tax payments, a number which includes payments from the archery and fishing industries, tops \$1 billion a year.

"For over 70 years, state fish and wildlife agencies have used the revenue from the Pittman-Robertson program to build the most successful wildlife conservation model the world has ever known," said Hogan. "One needs only look at the return of species like the whitetail deer, wild turkey, pronghorn antelope and the wood duck, to name a few, to see that this money has been well spent for the benefit of all Americans."

NRN Opposes Consolidation of Natural Resource Agencies

"Sec. YY-2. Merger. The Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, Department of Conservation, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Department of Marine Resources shall merge into not more than 2 natural resources departments in accordance with this section." - from the agency consolidation bill LD 2173.

"They are all important to our state economy and our state soul. It is who we are,"

– Baldacci's point man, Marine Resources Commissioner George Lapointe, as he presented the Governor's plan to consolidate resource agencies.

Then why mess things up?

Sen. Karl Turner, R-Cumberland, asked at the Legislative hearing if there was evidence from other states showing that it saves money to consolidate natural resource agencies. LaPointe said Maine has yet to research that question! But George Smith of SAM has, and his findings are that budgets were not reduced, services were not improved, and constituents became less supportive of agency programs and funding (ie fees).

NRN's Position

The Natural Resources Network (NRN) is strongly opposing Governor Baldacci's plan to consolidate the Departments of Agriculture, Conservation, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Marine

Resources, for the following reasons.

These departments play critical roles in Maine's natural resource economy, have been recognized as especially important to rural economies, receive little or almost no support from General Fund taxes and consequently cannot offer any significant tax relief through a merger, serve large and distinct constituencies, offer a broad range of services and functions that will only be diminished in a single large department, and would not be strengthened by consolidation.

We are committed to working with the Legislature to establish a process outside of the difficult budget process to achieve this goal. We have many ideas, some of which we have suggested in the past, that could achieve these goals. However we strongly object to the Governor's insistence that the only possible outcome of this process was consolidation of these agencies into one or two larger agencies.

From the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resources to GrowSmart Maine's report of the Brookings Institution, these departments have been recognized for their importance to Maine's economy, for their potential to expand that economy especially in rural areas, for their efficiency, and for their need for additional investment.

A research paper prepared for the GrowSmart report by the University of Maine examined 21 different segments of

...Continued on next page

Maine's budget and concluded, "Compared to other rural states, Maine does not appear to have higher-than-normal costs in this (natural resources) state service category."

These important departments have had the life squeezed out of them already, with reductions in funding and staff and consolidations of administrative and other functions and services, and there is simply no way they can achieve their missions if this trend continues, as it would if the Governor's proposed merger is implemented.

This consolidation will also diminish the standing and influence of these departments in the administration and at the legislature, removing any hope that they will be able to achieve the investments needed to help stimulate and grow our natural resources economy.

Status Quo

The NRN does not defend the status quo. It recognizes that these important departments are struggling each day to fulfill their missions. It recognizes that each department must be more efficient and effective and look forward to working with the legislature and governor to improve the effectiveness of these agencies that are such an important part of our future.

Note – See page 6 for more news from Skip Trask about the agency consolidation plans.

LURC Workshops Postponed to April

Is LURC giving us a break between hearings, or is LURC really concerned about opposition?

Why have the public workshops on LURC's draft of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), originally scheduled for February, been postponed to at least April?

LURC staff had planned to hold these sessions in February, then to possibly revise the CLUP again before holding public hearings and finally being voted on by the Commissioners.

There are two possible reasons for this delay. One, expressed by LURC Director Catherine Carroll, is that LURC staff, the Commissioners, and all the interested parties need a break to review the CLUP now that the Plum Creek hearings have concluded.

The other possibility, is that the Administration started to realize that there is a firestorm of opposition rising up to fight the CLUP revisions. Likely, both these scenarios are accurate.

Mounting Opposition

There are major concerns about this CLUP as it has been revised. Landowners are especially alarmed at what they see as having a potentially devastating effect on their land value and therefore see many changes as a "taking" of their property.

There is also some potential trouble for guides, so paying attention to this is of utmost importance. We must be certain that our activities are protected, including the ability to gain access to these private lands.

For the many guides depending on the unorganized area of the State as a base for part of their business activities, the draft CLUP could have serious implications. MPGA has been involved in reviewing the document, but we need you to let us know exactly how your individual situation and location will be impacted. Only with that info from you can we be most effective at providing comments and suggestions to LURC.

Issues

MPGA's December newsletter also included a briefing on the pertinent issues, which include:

1. Increased focus on "primitive pursuits" which don't include motorized activities such as motor vehicle access and snowmobiling.
2. More regulatory control over trail development. Trails are quite necessary for many businesses including snowmobiling, bear baiting, deer hunting, fishing and boat launching.
3. Proposal to limit the size of camps. Our clients now demand more amenities than can be packed into a small single floor cabin having very limited floor space.
4. For those of you who own land, there are special issues. Currently a landowner can sell a parcel of land for a camp in specified LURC zones once in five years. The draft proposes that this could only occur in areas pre-approved by LURC and must also go through the expensive subdivision process.

Info

The draft CLUP is a huge document but is worth reading and commenting on by guides. The draft can be found online at LURC's website:

www.maine.gov/doc/lurc/reference/cluprev/PublicWorkshop

If time isn't available to read the whole document, then the Vision, Recreation and Development sections would be good for you to review.

Membership Questions?

Got a question about your membership, dues, or website directory listing? Contact Bob Parker:

Bob Parker
778-4077
Email: info@maineguides.org

...or write to the Association:

Maine Professional Guides Association
PO Box 336
Augusta, ME 04332-0336

26th Annual Banquet & Membership Meeting

Tickets

Tickets are \$35 each, \$60 per couple, or you may purchase an entire table of eight for \$240.

Reservations

We very much need for you to make reservations and order tickets early, so *send in this form early, with your check*, so we can get an accurate head count. We will still take money at the door for those who get an opportunity to come at the last minute.

For your Convenience, Copy or Cut Out this Form (or include the same info with your check) then Mail it in. Note: we do accept VISA and MasterCard. See above.

Our Annual Banquet is approaching fast. This is our 26th Annual Banquet. Imagine that!

We look forward to another great evening with fellow guides, guests, families, our Board and Officers. The evening will include an Annual Meeting with reports of the officers, a legislative update, and the annual election of Directors.

There will also be guests and speakers from IF&W, the Legislature, our network partners and even our national partners such as the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

Auction Bargains Galore!

Don't miss our Annual Auction of items donated by board members, members at large, friends and sponsors. We will have many, many, special items to auction that will tempt everyone. Whose bid will win? Will you be a winner? It gets cut-throat at times, so only time will tell. Bring lots of money to bid, buy and have fun.

Auction Donations

Bring an item for our auction, bid on other items, and take a chance on the 50-50 Raffle. It all adds up! Your help is vital to keep MPGA ready to meet the challenge of keeping up with legislative and agency activities. Items donated to the auction could be tax deductible – call Jeff for info.

Remember this Date:

- April 12, 2008
- 4:00 PM Happy Hour
- 6:00 PM Welcome
- Elections
- Speakers & Guests
- Door Prizes
- Silent Auction
- Live Auction
- \$35 per person - \$60 per couple - \$240 per table

Held at Jeff's Catering on Coffin Ave. (Take I-395 Exit 5 "Parkway South"), Brewer, Maine.

Yes! Please Reserve My Seat At the 26th Annual MPGA Banquet!!!!

Please reserve my seats at the 26th Annual MPGA Banquet on April 12th at Jeff's Catering in Brewer.

Name: _____ Number in Party: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ (Please enclose \$35.00 per single, \$60.00 per couple, \$240.00 per table of 8)

Please Charge My Credit Card Type: ___ Visa / ___ MasterCard

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Make your Check payable to "MPGA" and Mail with this Reservation Form **Before March 31st** to:

Jeff Bellmore, 1384 Atlantic Highway, Warren, ME 04864

For Additional Information, call Jeff Bellmore at 273-3818

Make a Choice

The Maine Guides Education Fund was created in response to concerns about the future of Maine's outdoor heritage and traditions, and the effect of diminishing public access to our natural resources resulting from recent trends in land and wildlife management policies.

Your Donation is Vital

Your donation is needed right now. These funds will get the ball rolling and will keep guides in the game. Please give what you can, and don't wait.

If we can keep getting out our messages about recreation, land use, and wildlife policies, we might not have to face more gates and doors shutting us out!

Free Subscription to the Northwoods Sporting Journal

The first one hundred members who donate \$100 or more to the campaign will receive a free subscription to the Northwoods Sporting Journal.

This bonus, worth \$22.95, is given by the Journal's Publishers, V. Paul Reynolds and Vic Morin. They recognize the significance of this new fight to preserve our traditions, and offer this huge incentive for other members to make donations.

Donations are Tax Deductible

Please use the form below, and send what you can. All donations help, but remember, only the first 100 who give at least \$100 will receive a free donation to the North Woods Sporting Journal!

Officers & Directors

If you have a question and need answers, please call one of your Board of Directors or Officers.

- Chairman – Don Dudley, Patten, 446-6170
- President – Rick Hill, Mt. Chase, 528-2183
- Vice President, Executive Director – John Rust – Hampden, 207-337-5858
- Treasurer – Bob Parker; ProPlan Coordinator – Wilton, 778-4077
- Secretary – Bert Goodman; Raffle Committee Chair – Patten, 528-2320
- Tom Aasbo – Oxbow, 435-6140
- Jeff Bellmore; Banquet Committee Chair – Warren, 273-3818
- Wayne Bosowicz – Sebec, 564-3404
- Mike Carver – Bingham, 672-5551
- Doug Denico – Madison, 474-8309
- Hank Goodman – Patten, 528-2320
- Paul Laney; Show Committee Chair – Grand Lake Stream, 796-5068
- Matt Libby – Ashland, 435-8274
- Steve Norris – Princeton, 557-7463
- Dave Tobey – Grand Lake Stream, 796-2684

The first 100 donors of \$100 or more will receive a Free Subscription to the Northwoods Sporting Journal worth \$22.95, thanks to V. Paul Reynolds & Vic Morin

Please Accept my Donation to the "Maine Guides Education Fund"

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Make your check payable to "Maine Guides Education Fund" and Mail with this form to:

John Rust, PO Box 336, Augusta, ME 04332-0336

The "Maine Guides Education Fund" is a 501(c)3 charity – Donations are tax deductible.

Hot News

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- Alewives vs Bass Guides – Page 3
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- November Bear Tag Facts – Page 11

Visit: www.MaineGuides.org

MPGA Contributor Scorecard

Special thanks to the following for their generous leadership donations made in recent month.

\$100 to \$499:

Paul Beauregard *
Leo Hill *
Steve Kruszewski, MA *
Richard & Lorna Laney *
Steven Markley, PA *
Steve Norris *
Karen Pease/Narrow Gauge Realty *
Hartwell & Pauline Prince *
Libby Rust/Rust Communications Group

Others:

James & Gail Bernardin *
James Dumond *
Richard Bryan, VT

(* donations to the “Maine Guides Education Fund”)

***Annual Banquet
Reservations***

See Page 14

MPGA Meeting Schedule

February 24th – Board of Directors meeting, 9:00 AM (open to all members). Holiday Inn on Odlin Road, Bangor.

March 30th – Board of Directors meeting, 1:00 PM (open to all members). Augusta Civic Center, Augusta.

April 12th – Annual Membership Meeting and Banquet, 4:00 PM (open to all members). Jeff’s Catering, Brewer.

MPGA Show Schedule

March 14th thru 16th – Sportsman Show, UMO Field House, Orono.

March 15th & 16th – Fishing Expo, LL Bean Fishing & Hunting Store, Freeport.

March 21st thru 23rd – Sportsman Show, Wilton.

March 28th thru March 30th – Maine Sportsman Show, Augusta Civic Center, Augusta.

April 5th & 6th – Sportsman Show, Presque Isle Fish & Game, Presque Isle.