



**Celebrating 15 Years**

**An historic 740-mile water trail through New York, Vermont, Québec, New Hampshire, and Maine**

### Northern Forest Canoe Trail Mission

We protect and steward our water trail and foster community vitality to promote inspiring outdoor experiences in the Northern Forest Region.

### Our Vision

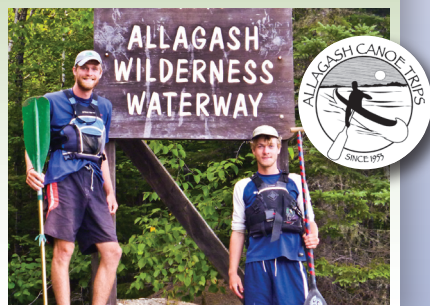
As the best water trail in North America, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail provides access to the natural beauty of our region and route. Through quality management and collaborative community partnerships, our trail contributes to the economic resilience of the region and promotes the health of its lands and waters.



## Still time to win a 7-day trip on Maine's Allagash

We've extended the deadline to 1/15/16.

**See inside for details!**



# CURRENTS & COMMUNITIES

**2016 Winter Newsletter**



## Maine and New York State Outreach Coordinators Hired



Jeff McCabe

We welcome two part-time staff to the Northern Forest Canoe Trail: Jeff McCabe of Skowhegan, Maine and Mike Lynch of Saranac Lake, New York. Neither are strangers to the trail, and we consider ourselves very fortunate to have them on board.

**"I remember reading about the NFCT as it was forming and how I thought the potential was huge," reminisces McCabe.**

Jeff McCabe is finishing up as director of Lake George Regional Park, a 320-acre park in Canaan and Skowhegan, Maine. He will work half-time for NFCT spearheading outreach efforts in Maine as well as being our representative to the Maine Outdoor Coalition, Maine Woods Discovery, and the High Peaks Initiative.

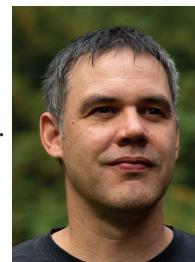
"I remember reading about the NFCT as it was forming and how I thought the potential was huge," reminisces McCabe. "Being able to promote the trail across the region is going to open doors in sections of rural Maine. The state has great things going on for eco-tourism and I am excited that my new role will allow for weaving them together and growing partnerships."

Jeff is currently the House Majority Leader serving his fourth term in the Maine House of Representatives. He is a registered Maine guide, and lives in central Maine with his wife Sara and two children.

Mike Lynch is an award-winning outdoors writer and photographer who through-paddled the trail in 2011 while working for the *Adirondack Daily Enterprise*. He is currently a part-time staffer for the *Adirondack Explorer* and contributor to *Canoe and Kayak Magazine*. He previously worked for Mac's Canoe Livery, which organizes a series of canoe and kayak races, including the 90-Miler.

"The Adirondack region has always had a strong paddling tradition," shares Lynch. "My goal is to support that tradition and help new people become connected to our woods and waters. I expect this job to be a lot of fun. I'm excited to get started!"

Mike is a licensed wilderness guide and lives in the Adirondack Park with his wife Ariel and their daughter. He will work part-time leading outreach efforts in New York including helping to organize NFCT's Freshet Fest this coming spring.



Mike Lynch

**"The Adirondack region has always had a strong paddling tradition," shares Lynch. "My goal is to support that tradition and help new people become connected to our woods and waters."**

"We are thrilled to have Jeff and Mike join our team. Hiring coordinators to work specifically in Maine and the Adirondacks represents a new investment in making deeper connections with people and communities along the trail," said executive director Karrie Thomas.

The new outreach coordinator positions will supplement coordinators in neighboring states. Phoebe Backler continues to represent NFCT in northern New Hampshire, and Noah Pollock continues to provide dual support for outreach and trail work in northern Vermont.

With NFCT's office based in Vermont, a local presence in our bookend states will have immediate benefits for our ability to provide access and inspiration to people looking to connect with the natural wonders of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. We look forward to expanding our outreach in Maine and New York, and are thrilled to have Jeff and Mike help paddle us into a new river of possibilities. 🌿



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Ron Canter**, *NFCT Route Researcher*  
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**Rob Center**, *NFCT Co-Founder*  
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**Kay Henry**, *NFCT Co-Founder*  
Harpwell, Maine

## STAFF

**Karrie Thomas**, *Executive Director*

**Phoebe Backler**, *New Hampshire Outreach Coordinator*

**Mike Lynch**, *New York Outreach Coordinator*

**Jeff McCabe**, *Maine Outreach Coordinator*

**Walter Opuszynski**, *Trail Director*

**Marthe Peterson**, *Office Assistant*

**Noah Pollock**, *Vermont Outreach Coordinator*

**Sandy Tarburton**, *Membership & Communications Director*

### Northern Forest Canoe Trail

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[info@northernforestcanoetrail.org](mailto:info@northernforestcanoetrail.org)

[www.northernforestcanoetrail.org](http://www.northernforestcanoetrail.org)

Find us on 

## From the Executive Director



Dear Members, Supporters, and Friends,

How many times have you paddled a river or hiked a portage trail and thought about how the put-in or stone steps came to be there? Maybe you considered the blisters an intern or volunteer earned in the course of construction, but that was likely the final step in a long journey.

For five years trail director Walter Opuszynski has thoughtfully, and at times agonizingly, ushered our final field project of the 2015 season: An access ramp on the Upper Ammonoosuc River in Stark, New Hampshire. In a dance of meetings determining the landowner, seeking permission to do the project with the Town of Stark, applying for funding from the New Hampshire Recreational Trails Program, getting additional funding from Fields Pond Foundation, doing surveying work, getting a grant extension, doing more surveying, and applying for a wetlands permit that pushed the project to the very end of its window of opportunity...Walter finally got the go ahead.

Thanks to key volunteers and mild weather, the access was installed this December. I am in awe of and grateful for Walter's vision and dogged determination to bring this project to fruition. After all that, constructing the access ramp was the easy part!

I had several opportunities with family and friends last summer to enjoy Walter's hard work throughout the trail. Being intimate with the full breadth of the trail stewardship process as I now am has made me appreciate every stone staircase, every directional sign and every campsite that much more.

Thank YOU for your generous support that allowed us to tackle so many projects in 2015. As we welcome Jeff McCabe and Mike Lynch and invest in our outreach capacity, I am excited to make more people aware about how the Northern Forest Canoe Trail—and its unassuming amenities—can influence their lives for the better.

Happy New Year,

Karrie Thomas, Executive Director

## ENORMOUS THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Foundation

American Canoe Association

Betterment Fund

Davis Conservation Fund

Elmina B. Sewall Foundation

Fields Pond Foundation

Hamill Family Foundation

H. King & Jean Cummings Charitable Fund

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Leonard C. & Mildred F. Ferguson Foundation

Maine Community Foundation

National Park Service

Tillotson Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

Norcross Wildlife Foundation

Outdoor Foundation

REI

Vermont Community Foundation





Will Madison, the great-great-great grandson of Nessmuk. Credit: Mike Lynch for *Adirondack Explorer*.

## Nessmuk: History Revisited by Mike Lynch

In the 19th century, outdoors writer George Washington Sears—best known as Nessmuk—helped popularize both paddling in the Adirondacks and lightweight canoes that are so common today.

The most recent person to be inspired by Nessmuk was his great-great-great grandson Will Madison, who retraced much of Nessmuk's famous 1883 canoe trip through the Adirondacks last fall.

Madison, a 22-year-old St. Lawrence University graduate, spent three weeks paddling from Old Forge to Lower St. Regis Lake and back. The roughly 200-mile trip started on September 11 and finished on October 1.

For the trip, Madison used a white-cedar canoe lent to him by Jim Frenette, a well-known paddler from Tupper Lake. The boat was built in 1981 by Jim's son Rob Frenette, who owns Raquette River Outfitters with his partner Anne Fleck. Their shop is located in Long Lake and Tupper Lake. Madison also spent the past summer working at Raquette River Outfitters.

Much of the route that Nessmuk (and Madison) paddled is now part of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. An exhibit detailing Nessmuk's achievements can be found at Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake.

Nessmuk used a 10.5 lb. 9' canoe made by J. Henry Rushton of Canton, New York on his 1883 journey.

A full article about Madison's trip can be found in the November 2015 issue of the *Adirondack Explorer*. 🌲



### Thanks to our Celebrate the Missisquoi partners!

American Canoe Association  
Ben & Jerry's Foundation  
Crescent Design  
Franklin County Dairy Promotion  
Friends of Northern Lake Champlain  
Lake Champlain Basin Program  
L.L.Bean  
Missisquoi River Basin Association  
Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail  
National Park Service  
Northwest Regional Planning Commission  
Northern Tier Center for Health  
Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council  
Riverbank Media  
The Jay Cloud  
Thule  
Upper Missisquoi & Trout River Wild & Scenic Committee  
Wenonah

## Welcome New Board Members

**Nicole Grohoski** (Ellsworth, ME) is a cartographer and GIS specialist with the Center for Community GIS. Nicole was the first female to through paddle the NFCT by canoe in 2006, and she was an NFCT intern on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway in 2011. When not mapping or paddling, Nicole enjoys bike touring, backpacking, skiing, sailing, yoga, meditation, and scheming adventures with friends. She is looking forward to rowing a raft down the Grand Canyon in January!



**Eric Plaskonos** (Fairfield, CT) is the founder of Plaskonos Brand Advocacy. He has more than 25 years of experience in advertising and marketing, and is known for his digital marketing expertise helping companies like Philips, HP and Harman maximize their brand portfolio. Eric spends most of his free time fishing on Vermont's Clyde River, and is looking forward to helping NFCT grow awareness and visibility for its work.



## Staff Updates



**Kevin Mack** has moved on after 4 1/2 years as Director of Partnerships & Marketing. Kevin garnered support from our business and paddle industry partners to help promote NFCT programs and special projects. He helped secure grants, added value to our strategic planning process in 2014, and helped shape our Trail Experiences program.

We will miss his analytical insights in the office and his capacity as a naturalist on the water. Kevin is currently working closer to home for Q Burke Mountain Resort as Base Operations Director, and continues to follow his passion for birding as an Audubon Vermont board member.



**Marthe Peterson** joined our staff last spring as Office Assistant. She was instrumental in helping maintain donor data during our CRM transition last summer. She has taken on handling daily accounting tasks, fulfilling book and map orders, and assisting with membership mailings and special projects. Marthe also managed our recent online auction. After living in Bermuda for eight years, Marthe now lives in Warren, Vermont with her husband and two children. Welcome, Marthe!





# Trail Project Highlights for 2015

Last summer, our interns, staff and volunteers dedicated a combined 4,875 hours to trail work. From special projects to annual maintenance, our team makes sure that campsites and carries are primed and trail markers well-placed. Our work is accomplished thanks to donations to our Trail Fund, grants, contracts, materials in-kind, and support from land managers.



Waterway Work Trip volunteers helped staff complete six projects last summer including this new privy at Halfway House Lean-to.



Interns **Jared Cooper-Vespa** (shown) and **Paul Sullivan** spent seven weeks working in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.



We were thrilled to have past intern Audrey Burns (third from left) bring friends to help interns create Alex's Lean-to site on the Clyde River.

## NEW YORK

- **Plattsburg:** Improved Treadwell Mills Carry and added a primitive campsite on the Saranac River.

## VERMONT

- **Newport:** Cleared the Yaledale Portage around a section of the lower Clyde River. Added a privy, picnic table and a lean-to floor to new campsite (paddlers can camp there now). Alex's Lean-to will be completed in 2016.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

- **Stark:** Installed a log ladder, improved privies, and built a new access ramp on the Upper Ammonoosuc River.

## MAINE

- **Rangeley:** Installed a composting privy at Halfway House Lean-to located between Haley Pond and the **Maine Forestry Museum**.
- **Allagash Wilderness Waterway:** Churchill Lake: Built a stone staircase at Churchill Dam campsite, and stabilized 100 ft. of bank at High Bank campsite to preserve the site for continued use. Umsaskis Lake: Built a stone staircase at Meadows campsite to reduce erosion and improve access.

## Demo "Short" Portage Created

Last summer, staff and volunteers worked on the Moose River in Maine to create a shorter portage option around the Demo Bridge—located between Long Pond and Brassua Lake—to enable skilled paddlers more time on the water and less on land.

Thanks to our work alongside the **Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands**, paddlers can now choose between the pre-existing 3.5-mile portage that bypasses all of the rapids, or the new 800-foot portage that still bypasses the potential Class IV rapids just under the bridge but puts-in at a spot that offers up to 2 miles of Class II rapids to run depending on water levels.

For six years, NFCT has worked with landowner **Plum Creek**, and more recently Maine BP&L, to establish this shorter carry around the bridge. The timber company's new long-term management plan for its Moosehead Lake holdings of nearly 400,000 acres of forest creates the opportunity to conserve access and improve recreational corridors throughout the management area.

We thank interns **Megan Connelly**, **Matt Gerjol** and **Evan Tirey** for organizing volunteers on this plus eight other trail projects last summer.



Members of the **Maine Conservation Corps** spent a day working with interns to build the Demo Short Portage.



The completed stone staircase provides safer access to skirt around occasional Class IV rapids beneath Demo Bridge.





## Yaledale Portage Added to Clyde River

Thanks to private landowners **Allen and Kathleen Yale**, NFCT got a new campsite and portage in Derby Center, Vermont last summer. The trail between Salem Lake and Clyde Pond can be challenging to navigate, especially for through paddlers heading upstream. The Yaledale Tree Farm provides a portage option around the most difficult part of the river, as well as an overnight site.



Allen Yale demonstrates milling lumber to NFCT and Northwoods Stewardship Center interns.

The new portage access is river right below the Rte. 5A bridge, and follows Bridge Street for 5,000 feet west to the tree farm. Directional signs mark the trail down to the river, just upstream from the Interstate 91 overpass. A picnic table, privy and lean-to floor were installed last summer. Alex's Lean-to will be completed in 2016.

Thank you to the Yales for making this carry and campsite available to paddlers! 🌲

## Flagstaff Lake Sites Rehabilitated

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail was contracted by **Brookfield Renewable Energy Group** to improve 10 campsites on Maine's Flagstaff Lake this past fall.

With our summer interns back in college, Regional Field Coordinators **Noah Pollock** and **Jack Powell** built 9 new privies, 15 picnic tables, and 16 fire rings. Work occurred at the Boom Camp Campsite, Ferry Farm, Hurricane Island, Long Falls, Parson Brook, Savage Farm, Schoolhouse Point, State Campsite, Trout Brook East, and Trout Brook West.

These sites will be managed by the **Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands** for the use of the general public. The 20,000-acre lake was created when the Dead River was dammed in 1950. Today, Long Falls Dam is owned by Brookfield Renewable. With the addition of their new trailered boat launch at the dam, NFCT paddlers can enjoy the upgraded trail infrastructure on Flagstaff Lake for many years to come.



Improved outhouses, fire rings and picnic tables on Flagstaff Lake.



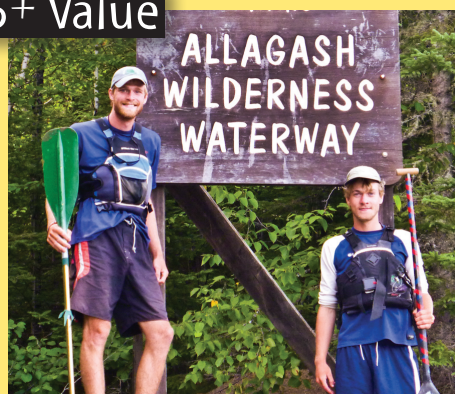
We thank **John Willard**, owner of Moosehead Lake's **Birches Resort**, for loaning us a motorboat to make the late season project more efficient. 🌲

## We Thank Our Field Season 2015 Supporters

- Androscoggin River Committee
- American Canoe Association
- Brookfield Renewable Energy
- Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership
- Davis Conservation Fund
- Enel Green Energy-North America
- Fields Pond Foundation
- Franklin Watershed Committee
- Great Bay Hydro
- Lake Champlain Basin Program
- Lincoln Canoe & Kayak
- L.L.Bean
- Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
- Maine Forestry Museum
- New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission
- New Hampshire Recreation Trails Program
- North Country Union High School
- Outdoor Gear Exchange
- REI
- Vermont River Conservancy
- Wenonah Canoe



**\$945+ Value**



## Win a Weeklong Canoe Trip on the Allagash

Maine's Allagash Wilderness Waterway is a bucket-list adventure! Join or renew your membership and you will be entered into our drawing for this **FREE** guided trip courtesy of Allagash Canoe Trips. Highlights: Allagash Falls, lakes-rapids-meandering flatwater, the Tramway, swimming, wilderness campsites and moose!

Visit [NorthernForestCanoeTrail.org](http://NorthernForestCanoeTrail.org) for more details.  
Pay dues online or use the reverse side to mail-in your payment.

### TRIP FOR ONE INCLUDES:

- All meals during 7-day trip
- Transport during trip to and from Greenville, ME
- All camping and permit fees

Drawing and notification to winner will take place in January 2016.





## From Start to Finish

More than 80 people are on our list for having paddled the entire Northern Forest Canoe Trail in one trip or in sections. While the average NFCT paddler gets on the trail for a day or several each summer, the adventure of a long-distance canoe or kayak trip captures our imagination.

Last spring, we held our first Freshet Fest, an opportunity for through-paddler hopefuls to meet alumni. The event included a Q&A session in which through paddlers **Skip Ciccarelli, Katina Daanen, Nicole Grohoski** and **Paul Heintz** shared their best, worst and most memorable moments.

Members of the audience included a young family from France temporarily living in the United States. **Bryce Bognet** and **Gabrielle Mutel** decided to tackle the trail...with their 4-year old son **Malo**. The family paddled a 16' Esquif Avalon canoe purchased at St. Regis Canoe Outfitters. Read more at [northernforestcanoetrail.wordpress.com](http://northernforestcanoetrail.wordpress.com).

After paddling the Maine section in 2011, **Laurie Chandler** was inspired to



At age 4, Malo gets "the youngest kid to be through paddled" certificate.

come back and canoe the entire trail. Accompanied by her dad for 200 miles, she successfully landed in Fort Kent, Maine in August in a 13' Wenonah Fusion Kevlar canoe, and hopes to be approved to be the first female solo canoeist in the self-propelled category. Blog: [lauriesadventures.wordpress.com](http://lauriesadventures.wordpress.com).

Volunteer **Russ Ford** has made NFCT a life-long adventure having helped create our Vermont maps, maintaining sections of the Missisquoi River (and scouting many others), and guiding paddling trips. Now he can add "completed section paddling the trail" to his list, which he did using 19 different boats.

We congratulate the many other paddlers who completed the trail this summer including **Chris Burnham, Michael Frederick, Nick Gowens, Will Jeffries, Jeff Knaus, John Mautner, Julie and Patrick McCauley, Mike Peabody, Jim Sausville, and Mack Traux.** 🍷

## Northern Forest Explorers

Last summer, 80 kids went on one of nine trips across the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Some were canoe camping for the first time, while others were returnees. All helped each other to learn new things.

With a local guide and an NFCT intern, participants spent five days paddling, camping and some hiking. Aged 10-14, kids learned about environmental ecology and group dynamics.

One participant shared, "I learned that there are lots of shiners in the river, trash floats downstream, and that kingfishers have a huge wingspan."



Northern Forest Explorers goof off on the Connecticut River trip.

Another one commented, "I learned how to identify trees and how to do the J and C strokes."

In September, program fan and school teacher **Sue Norris** of Raquette Lake, New York spoke at an NFCT dinner, "This program is changing lives, giving opportunities and hope by getting local kids out into the woods." This year the program was opened to non-trailside residents too and the resulting friendships are fantastic.

Our partners help make the program a success by handling logistics, gear, and trip leadership. We thank **Adventure Bound, Great Glen Outfitters, Montgomery Adventures, Northwoods Stewardship Center, Raquette River Outfitters, and Rippleffect.**

High-fives to our youth program interns **Elliot Diana** and **Alex Sanguily** who shared their passion for the outdoors and were all-around exceptional role models for the kids.

This year's Northern Forest Explorers Program was generously funded by **Colden Canoe, Community National Bank, Cummings Trust, National Parks Service, Long Lake Lions Club, Northstar Canoes, Rotary Club of Lake Placid**, along with several individual benefactors. 🍷

Be a Member of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail and Give a Gift Membership  
Respond by ~~12/31/15~~ **1/15/16** to have your gift recipient entered into the Allagash Trip Giveaway!

### Your Membership

Please check one: ☐ \$35 Member ☐ \$50 Household

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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### Gift Membership

Friend's Dues: ☐ \$35 Member ☐ \$50 Household

FRIEND'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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Send a complimentary gift? ☐ NFCT Map # \_\_\_\_ with \$35 ☐ NFCT Water Bottle with \$50

Total Payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Make checks payable to: **Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Donations are tax deductible.**

**SEND TO: Northern Forest Canoe Trail, PO Box 565, Waitsfield, VT 05673**





## Supporter News

### REI Supports Trail Projects

Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from outdoor retailer REI, we added trail features in two states last summer. In Vermont, funding helped create the Yaledale Portage and campsite on the Clyde River in Newport, and the installation of a new take-out ramp on the Missisquoi River in Richford. In Maine, the grant supported the addition of a privy at Halfway House Lean-to in Rangeley. Visit [rei.com](http://rei.com).



### Wenonah Creates Cownoe

Thanks to Wenonah Canoe and graphic designer Sparky Potter for re-imagining a Champlain 18' Kevlar canoe. The Cownoe raised \$3,100 for paddler access work on Vermont's Missisquoi River. We also raffled canoes donated by Lincoln Canoe & Kayak and Northstar Canoes. Total proceeds for those two boats was \$6,300. Thanks to everyone who participated in all three raffles! Visit [wenonah.com](http://wenonah.com).



### Ibex Donates Tees

Our thanks go to Ibex for donating 70 of their popular wool, short-sleeve T-shirts with a canoe-n-kayak graphic design. We added NFCT's map to the back and are giving them away to donors of \$125 or more to our Mission Fund. This soft and light-weight wool is a superb insulator for paddlers. Visit [ibex.com](http://ibex.com).



## Thanks to Our Business Partners



Adirondack Explorer  
Adventure Bound  
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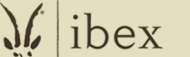
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Maine Island Trail Association  
Maine Kayak  
Memphremagog Watershed Association  
Nansen Ski Club  
Newport Natural Market & Café  
Pelletier's Campground

Percy Lodge & Campground  
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Sierra Sage  
Simon the Tanner  
Swanton Motel  
Ted's Market  
The Great Outdoors  
Turtle Fur  
Vacasa  
Verilux  
Yankee Magazine  
Yipes! Studio

NFCT's 11th Annual Auction Raised \$14,700! Thanks to lead sponsor [paddling.net](http://paddling.net) and our many auction donors for supporting our mission with in-kind gifts. Thank you especially to all of our bidders!



## Thanks to Our Corporate Supporters







P.O. Box 565  
Waitsfield, VT 05673

## Time to Plan Next Summer's Adventure!



**Members Receive 15% off  
NFCT Publications**

[www.northernforestcanoetrail.org](http://www.northernforestcanoetrail.org)



### Northern Forest Canoe Trail MISSION FUND *Help Us Meet a \$20,000 Goal!*

Protecting and providing access to the 740-mile trail is a group effort. Your support enables us to publish maps, maintain campsites, and inspire people of all ages to get outside in a boat.

Please, make an end-of-year donation to the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.

**THANK YOU!**

