



CURRENTS AND COMMUNITIES

The NFCT Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2008



An historic 740-mile waterway through New York, Vermont, Québec, New Hampshire and Maine

Very Adventurous

Navigating through class II rapids. Exploring the flora and fauna inhabiting a lake shore. Cooking a delicious camp meal. Getting to know the lake that sits right outside the classroom window.

These experiences and so many more were among the moments that defined NFCT's first Northern Forest Explorer Program trips. NFCT piloted this new program in western Maine in summer 2008, thanks to lead funding from the Horizon Foundation. We ran three separate week-long programs for 5th-8th graders from the communities of Rangeley, Stratton-Eustis, and Jackman. Students paddled with peers and neighbors on segments of our Trail that pass through their communities, camping and learning a wide range of skills from paddling, to campsite set up, to leadership.

We launched this program because we believed there to be a gap in the outdoor experiences available to rural youth. In many areas that are considered destinations for recreational travelers, resident youth don't have the opportunity to get out in their own backyards. Our mission in this program, which we plan to roll out across the length of our Trail, is to give rural youth a chance to become connected to and expert in their special outdoor places. Paddling provides the hook and the mode of travel, but as we learned in talking with the kids involved and reading their evaluations, they learned much more.



Preparing to launch! Photo: Travis Quetel

Reflection from 2008 Northern Forest Explorers Program participant:

"When the trip was over I thought it was very adventurous. I am glad I took advantage of this life experience."

As in so much that NFCT does, this program was successful because of the strength of the partnerships that supported it. Our heartfelt and enthusiastic thanks to:

- ◆ The Natural Resource Education Center (Greenville, ME)
- ◆ Adventure Bound (The Forks, ME)
- ◆ Jackman School
- ◆ Rangeley School
- ◆ Stratton/Eustis Summer Recreation Program
- ◆ NFCT Intern Travis Quetel



A hot day in the bow. Photo: Travis Quetel

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NORTHERN FOREST CANOE

TRAIL MISSION: To celebrate the rich human heritage and diverse natural environment of the Northern Forest by establishing and stewarding a water trail tracing historic Native American travel routes across New York, Vermont, Québec, New Hampshire, and Maine.

OUR APPROACH: In the context of partnering with local communities, honoring Native American culture, and conserving the human and natural heritage of the region, we will serve travelers and benefit neighboring communities by:

- Encouraging canoe/kayak travel and recreation
- Stimulating economic development by attracting a wide range of visitors to the region's communities
- Improving local access to regional waterways — rivers, streams and lakes
- Enabling travelers to experience the Northern Forest's full range of diverse landscapes, from working cities to towns to farms, forests and mountains
- Supporting community-based services and local arts, education and environmental programs that educate and inspire residents and visitors alike
- Enhancing quality of life by creating opportunities for people to reconnect with place

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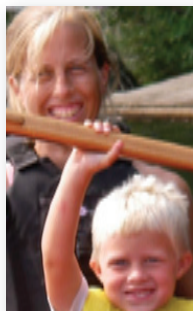
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From the Executive Director



Dear Members, Supporters, and Friends,



This world we get to call home has done a lot of changing in recent months — big elections, big financial crises, record numbers of home foreclosures, significant climactic events worldwide, and piracy at sea. And while it seems standard practice to describe these changes in sweeping terms, using the passive voice, the reality of these changes is local and intimate. I'm glad about that, because I believe that hope and action are also local and intimate.

As so many of you know, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail is not only a watery link across a region. It is also a resilient network of local community partners who, through our shared passion for the waterways that define our communities, join together on a range of issues from tourism development to rural youth programming to stewardship of rivers, lakes, and streams. With these partners, NFCT is creating hope and action that shines brightly even in these difficult times.

Read on to learn about new initiatives, inspiring partners, opportunities to get involved, and the stuff that keeps us optimistic and fired up. In so many ways, NFCT has done a lot of changing in recent months too, as we welcome new staff members and new program investments. We head into 2009 with gratitude for the supporters and friends who believe — with us — in such lasting values as public access to natural places, neighborliness in carrying out our work, and the vibrancy and potential of this forested landscape through which our Trail is a dynamic connector.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kate".

Kate Williams, Executive Director

P.S. Lest we forget the real value of purely having fun, we offer this quote from dear old Ratty: "Believe me, there is nothing — absolutely nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing around in boats."
(Kenneth Grahame, *Wind in the Willows*)

NFCT's 4th Annual Online Auction

www.TheCanoeTrailAuction.cmarket.com

THANK YOU! NFCT Auction 2008 was our most successful ever! Thanks to our fabulous donors and bidders we raised \$22,000 beating our goal and creating an invaluable fund to support our important work to care for and connect people to our Trail and the wonderful places it flows through.

SEND AUCTION QUESTIONS TO:
Kate@NorthernForestCanoeTrail.org

Thanks Go Out to These Supporting Foundations

Davis Conservation Foundation
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Quimby Family Foundation
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Tillotson Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation
USDA Rural Development
Vermont Recreational Trails Grant Program
Please see the back page for more supporters.



Making It All Happen...



Welcome to our new staff members, Eve and Walter

Eve Komosa, Program Director (NFCT's first new position in more than five years). With a B.S. from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Eve is passionate about the natural world, and has worked in the fields of conservation and environmental education for the past fifteen years. Prior to working for NFCT, she served as Education Director for Olbrich Botanical Gardens, a public garden in Madison, Wisconsin, as a philanthropy manager for The Nature Conservancy of Illinois, and as a Naturalist for Chicago's North Park Village Nature Center. She also spent four years teaching paddling with Rutabaga Outdoor Programs in Madison, Wisconsin. Eve's husband, Darrin Kimbler, completed a solo NFCT through-paddle in October of 2007. Together, Eve and Darrin enjoy numerous outdoor adventures, and have moved to Vermont both for NFCT, as well as to pursue a more rural lifestyle and start their own small farm.



A Hearty Welcome to our New Board Member!

Frank Hugelmeyer has joined our Board of Directors as of November 2008. Frank is president & CEO of Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), the premiere outdoor trade group in the U.S. Frank is a twenty-two year outdoor industry veteran with extensive experience in global retail, distribution and manufacturing. He is a co-founder and director of The Outdoor Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to inspiring and growing future generations of outdoor enthusiasts; a former board director for the National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity; and he currently serves on The National Forum on Children and Nature which is chaired by Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne and author Richard Louv. An avid outdoorsman, Mr. Hugelmeyer has extensively scaled and explored the great mountain ranges of North America and Europe and spends his spare time introducing his thirteen year old son to the joys and benefits of camping, cycling, mountaineering, hiking, paddling, fly-fishing and skiing.



Walter Opuszynski, Trail Director. With a B.S. from Unity

College in Unity, Maine, Walter has been devoted to the idea of helping to foster people's interactions with the outdoors for as long as he can remember. It all started at a young age, as the oldest of four children, growing up in the middle of a small oak forest in Connecticut. He brought the desire to understand and share the outdoors to Unity College in Maine, where a deeper understanding of the environment was explored through earth science courses. Walter went on to work for the Maine Conservation Corps and the Vermont Department of Forest Parks and Recreation, where he gained both broad and deep experience in trail building and volunteer management. Most recently, he has been sole proprietor of a trails and timber management company he started, True to the Land, LLC. Walter currently lives in Adamant, Vermont, with his wife Christy and two dogs, Scout and Chloe.



In Memoriam: Clyde Smith 1931–2008

On June 4, 2008, NFCT friend and mentor Clyde H. Smith passed away while surrounded by his family. Less than a year before that, he was balancing on rocks along the shores of Flagstaff Lake to capture just the right image, or paddling down the Connecticut River with his wife Elizabeth, to fill some gaps in his photography for *Northeast Passage*, the photo book he conceived and delivered for us in late fall 2007. He was vital to the end, and we will miss his unfailing cheer and encouragement. We imagine him paddling through the clouds somewhere out there, having himself a grand old time.



Work Projects Along the Trail



Undeterred by the torrential rains, NFCT interns and volunteers accomplished a great deal during summer 2008. From planting seedlings to constructing island campsites, our combination of three stewardship interns and four waterway work trips in each of our Trail states improved access and upgraded recreational facilities. Our thanks to all who pitched in, whether by working with us or providing showers (and dry spaces) for the interns.

New York

- Brown's Tract Inlet Carry, NY: Assisted NY DEC with bog bridge replacement
- Franklin Falls Pond, NY: Campsite improvement, closure, and revegetation

Vermont/Québec

- Missisquoi River, VT: Highgate river access erosion control and step construction
- Missisquoi River, VT: Doe and Lussier campsite improvements
- Missisquoi River, VT: Worked with Northern Vermont RC&D Council, adjacent landowners, municipalities of Highgate and Swanton, VT Agency of Natural Resources, the Missisquoi River Basin Association, and VT State Rep Albert Perry to post warning signs on a dangerous dam abutment in the Missisquoi River near East Highgate. We continue to pursue removal of the remains, which is the safest long term solution.

New Hampshire

- Upper Ammonoosuc River, NH: Development of Normandeau campsite and river access

Maine

- Moose River, ME: Demo Road portage extension and enhancement
- Moosehead Lake, ME: Construction of two new campsites on Sugar Island
- Moosehead Lake, ME: Improvement of Brassua Island and Baker Brook campsites
- Flagstaff Lake, ME: Installed kiosk at Eustis Boat Landing, as part of Family Fun Days June 2008.



Huge thanks to former Trail Director Jen Lamphere. She moved on to new adventures at the end of the summer, but her commitment to high quality, her warm spirit, and her creativity in developing excellent stewardship programs will continue to be part of NFCT for many years to come. Thank you, Jen, and bon voyage as you slip into another current.



MIDDLE COLUMN: Interns prep the ground for steps, Missisquoi River, VT; interns and volunteers transporting trees, Franklin Falls Pond, NY; advance work on an outhouse, out of the rain on Moosehead Lake, ME.

RIGHT COLUMN: Final touches on portage trail steps, Missisquoi River, VT; warning placement on dam remains, Missisquoi River, VT; installation of warning sign upstream of East Highgate dam remains, Missisquoi River, VT; Flagstaff Lake kiosk installation, ME; if it doesn't rain, you don't get a rainbow, Moosehead Lake, ME.



Hot on the Trail!



Interns & Waterway Work Trips

Our 2008 Stewardship Interns proved to be as hardy a lot as we could have hoped for. And their good cheer was never dampened. Despite the rains, they reported back to us on the beautiful rainbow over Moosehead Lake. Despite the many miles of rutted roads that challenged their cars, they reported back to us on how much they loved the opportunities to paddle that these roads led them to. And through it all, they accomplished a great deal. Both on their own and through their leadership of our four Waterway Work Trips, the interns improved our Trail in significant and tangible ways:

- 3 interns, 6 weeks of work
- 20 trees planted to stabilize stream banks
- 3 campsites built, including picnic tables, outhouse facilities, and register boxes
- 1 paddler access installed
- 2 portage trails constructed
- 4 volunteer work trips organized and led, one in each Trail state: New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

Program & Youth Interns

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Program Intern Jen Hushaw, aka JJ, kept us organized, in order, and in good cheer, and Youth Intern Travis Quetel demonstrated the qualities that made him a favorite with the youngsters.

JJ organized all of our photos and slides (a huge task), and assisted with the many tasks of running a small non-profit. It made us feel good that she actually liked the work, and we've heard from her this fall that her experiences with us have been meaningful as she embarks on her Master's of Environmental Management at Duke University.

Youth Intern Travis Quetel, always humming a tune, was mostly in the field with the kiddoes in western Maine, but also spent some time in our hallowed halls prepping and debriefing year one of the youth program. We couldn't have done it without him!

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Stewardship Interns in clean white shirts with Jen Lamphere, before they hit the Trail; Stewardship Interns and Field Coordinator Noah Pollock taking a rest on their handiwork; Jesse Fefer demonstrating good technique with a hammer and chisel; JJ smiling despite the heat and thousands of images she is sorting; Travis Quetel practicing his youth leadership skills.



The Northern Forest Canoe Trail's 2009 Event Calendar Visit our website for current information as dates may change.

Month	Day	Event	Location
March	5	NFCT Presentation at Sterling College	Craftsbury, Vermont
	7	Quiet Water Symposium	Lansing, Michigan
	6-8	Northeast Paddlesports and Outdoor Expo	Saratoga Springs, New York
	13-15	Canoecopia	Madison, Wisconsin
	19	NFCT Presentation at Arsenal Gallery in Central Park	Central Park, New York
	27-29	Paddlesport 2008	Somerset, New Jersey
April	3-5	New England Paddlesports Show	Durham, New Hampshire
	17	Northern Forest Paddle Film Fest	Lake Placid, New York
May	15-17	Adirondack Paddlefest	Old Forge, New York
	TBD	Northern Forest Paddle Film Fest	Portland, Maine
	TBD	Northern Forest Paddle Film Fest	Burlington, Vermont

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Trail Connections

Member Survey Summary

Do Members Think NFCT Is On Course?

Last October we emailed a request to our membership to participate in our first online member survey. Thirty percent, or 168, of our active supporters for whom we have email addresses responded by completing a 34-question survey.

Our goals were to discover why members join, what benefits they value, and how well NFCT is serving its members. We also gathered member recreational habits and their input regarding NFCT's mission.

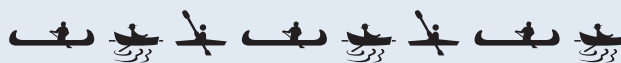
What We Learned

When asked to rate by importance NFCT program initiatives, a hefty 87% of respondents chose stewardship — caring for the Trail — as the most important focus for the organization. This was closely followed by 75% who chose to make the current NFCT the best that it can be.

Sixty percent of respondents want NFCT to remain focused on the existing trail as opposed to managing a broader network of water trails.

We were pleased to find out that 80% of respondents have visited our website for paddling information. We also received a tremendous amount of advice on how we might be able to improve the website, including our Trip Planner.

paddLism



OLD SCHOOL: Paddlers who started their waterborne adventures in Grumman's. If two old schoolers are present one will claim to have started in a wood and canvas Chestnut. If three old schoolers are present one will harken back to birch bark. Four gets you back to a hand-hewn dugout. A collection of more than four old schoolers indicates that the bus from the Sunset Community Center made a wrong turn on the way to bingo. (*A Dictionary of Paddling Terms*, keelhauler.org, 25 Nov 2008 http://www.keelhauler.org/khcc/Paddling_Dictionary.htm)

Do you have a favorite paddlism to share? Send your submission to *Currents and Communities*, NFCT, PO Box 565, Waitsfield, VT 05673; Sandy@NorthernForestCanoeTrail.org.

Member Profile

- Members tend to be male.
- Members are frequent paddlers.
- They own several watercraft of various types.
- 88% read all or some part of the newsletter.
- 70% ranked supporting the mission as their top choice for being a member.

When we asked the question how do you describe the NFCT to your friends, members provided us with a rich array of responses. We're still blushing.

Here are just a few...

- "As an excellent way to get outdoors and visit new places. It has provided me with a goal for me and the family to strive for. We also have great adventure and learning experiences

with our children that they will remember forever."

- "Aside from a nice trail itself, it's a great window into our continent's history and a great escape from the rigors of the modern world. I can be Cartier, Raddison or Champlain in my canoe, my biggest worry is to stay dry and warm and a small fire to cook my fish."
- "It's like a backpacking trip but you get to put your gear in the canoe instead of on your back. Campsites are beautiful. Portages make you work so you feel like you are earning it!"
- "The most valuable paddling resource available in the Northeast. A way to connect communities and their rivers."
- "Try it, you'll love it!"

All members who took our survey were eligible to enter a drawing for an NFCT Crazy Creek chair. Congratulations to Faye O'Leary Hafford for being the winner! Faye is an author of northern Maine history and folklore books.

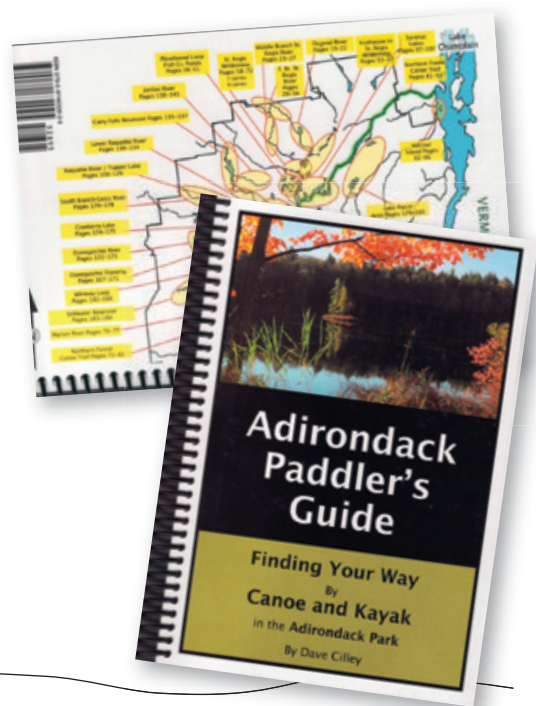


Member News

New Paddler's Guide for the Adirondacks

Last summer, our friend Dave Cilley of St. Regis Canoe Outfitters published the *Adirondack Paddler's Guide*. A companion to the *Adirondack Paddler's Map*, the guide provides indispensable details for canoeing and kayaking in the Adirondack Park, including the

New York section of the NFCT. This spiral bound, 6"x 9", 195-page guidebook provides mileages, paddling times, suggested ability levels, and route descriptions accumulated by Cilley during his thirty-some years as an Adirondack guide. Retail: \$28.95. (518) 891-1838; www.canoeoutfitters.com.



Our Forest Home

Sustainable Economy Initiative

Did you know that NFCT runs through the heart of the biggest ecosystem east of the Mississippi River? Yep — spanning two countries and four states, a forested ecoregion covers 80 million acres, from the Tug Hill Plateau to the Gaspé Peninsula. About 30 million acres of this forested system lie south of the Canadian border and surround our Trail: the Northern Forest Region.



In June 2008, the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative (SEI) Steering Committee released a set of recommendations for revitalizing the economy of the four-state Northern Forest Region. This committee, hosted by the Northern Forest Center, and including NFCT Co-Founder Kay Henry and NFCT Board Vice President Ross Whaley, as well as numerous partners and colleagues, worked for two years to develop a compelling regional vision and a set of action steps to move us toward this vision.

NFCT is playing an active role as the SEI initiative moves from recommendation to action. Specifically we are coordinating the *Rural Destination Tourism*

Network to develop tourism as a more vital part of a diverse regional economy.

It is exciting work for us, as we see our involvement as a way to enhance the experiences available on our Trail, to bring value to our community partners, and to create some new models for working toward shared outcomes.

For more information:

- Northern Forest Center's web summary: www.nfsei.net
- Two Countries One Forest with a trans-border perspective: www.2c1Forest.org

Moosehead Magic

By Jym St. Pierre, Summer 2008

At the last minute, I had the chance to join journalist Paul Heintz and his through-paddling partner Jonathan Hancock, as well as an old colleague of mine, Steve Blackmer, for a night on Moosehead Lake. We met at The Birches in Rockwood just before sunset. After friendly introductions, we loaded our boats and skimmed across glass-flat Moosehead Lake at its narrow waist. On Hardscrabble Point at the north end of Kineo, we set up tents. An orange slice of a moon hung as if from a Calder mobile above the western shore. An owl hooted. A loon wailed.

I awoke at 4:30am and assembled my fly rod. After a few fishless casts, I focused instead on photographing the sun burning through the mist behind Shaw and Little Kineo Mountains to the east. By 6am, my companions were rousing, and we found a trail that skirts the eastern shore of Kineo, then climbs steeply above the sheer east face of the hill to the summit. The old fire tower provided a bird's-eye view of water, woods and wonder in all directions.



Historic postcard depicting canoe race on Moosehead Lake with Mt. Kineo in the background.

Reluctantly, we left the throne of the gods and climbed down a precipitous path overlooking the southern reach of the lake, we then followed an old carriage trail on the west shore back to our campsite. We swam off the perspiration of the hike, packed, slipped our three small boats into the crystal water of the big lake, and paddled due north.

We crossed the same wide bay Henry David Thoreau traversed when he came to the area in the 1850s, skirting Farm Island to the west as he had done. We glided into calm water behind Moose Brook Islands to the log home of a couple of friends. Over lunch on the shore, they spoke eloquently of their many trips to the Allagash and other wilderness rivers, why they had left city life to settle on the edge of the wildish Maine Woods, and lessons learned from their experiences.

How many places in this world can one go where the landscape has changed so much and yet so little in the past century and a half? As usual, Thoreau said it best: "It was a perfect lake of the woods." So it is.

78% of members said member support is important. Please consider contributing to help sustain this incredible ecosystem. Contact Kate for more information (802) 496-2285



Membership Matters!

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Vermont Canoe
Wekanu

Recently you may have received in your mailbox NFCT's annual end-of-year appeal. The Mission Fund supports the important behind-the-scenes work necessary to help us reach our goals. No gift is too small, and greater per supporter participation is key! **All gifts postmarked by Dec. 31 will be entered into a drawing for an NFCT 13-map set.** Recycled your form? Visit us online and give to the Mission Fund. All donations are tax-deductible.

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