



# MAINE WILDERNESS GUIDE



Newsletter

## MWGO Mission

Providing a unified voice for Maine’s professional wilderness guides as they work to sustain a historic way of life and conserve and protect remote woods and waters for future generations.

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Photo by Eric Krieger

## Sled Dogs and Search & Rescue

### A profile of Caroline Blair-Smith

By Andrea Lani

**Caroline Blair-Smith** operates Mornington Crescent Sled Dogs out of Albany, Maine with her husband, Andy Bartleet. The couple runs full- and half-day tours throughout the winter, primarily in White Mountain National Forest and in the timberlands between Grafton Notch State Park and the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge. Blair-Smith and Bartleet take out clients of all ages, individualizing trips based on clients’ goals and abilities. Morning Crescent is a small operation by sled dog kennel standards, with 28 Alaskan huskies. The dogs aren’t a standardized, Kennel Club breed, meaning, Blair-Smith says, there’s no standard for coat color or texture, symmetry of markings, or ear appearance. Rather they’re bred for the ability to pull, run, and thrive doing it.

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## Maine Wilderness Guides Organization

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### Board of Directors

Nick Leadley, President  
Vice-president - vacant  
Mac Davis, Secretary  
Jon Wight, Treasurer  
Kevin Slater  
Cathy Johnson  
Lynn Zimmerman  
Bryan Courtois  
John Willard  
Reid Anderson  
Jeanne Christie

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Roger Milliken Jr.  
Ray "Bucky" Owen  
Ted Rodman  
Karen Tilberg

### Membership Coordinator

Annette Mclaggan

### Newsletter Coordinator

Andrea Lani

### Treasurer's Report

MWGO's balance as of 12/23/19:  
\$16,282.03  
John L. Wight, Treasurer

## A Message from the President



As my three-year term as president of this organization comes to an end, I am genuinely excited about the future of the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization.

With the addition of two very qualified members, the MWGO board of directors is turning a focused eye to the future. With that goal in mind, we are starting the process of drafting a strategic plan to guide MWGO in its goals while keeping in mind the core values of our mission statement. As the progress moves forward, we will do our best to keep the membership informed of the progress and during the process welcome input.

Also, we are launching an effort to find a part-time executive director. If any member feels they have the necessary qualifications or knows of someone who might fit the bill, please contact MWGO for a job description.

Later in the newsletter, you will find brief introductions of our newest board members. Please support them and the current board members all you can in the coming years.

As always, we did the best we could to represent MWGO's membership in the critical political and environmental issues of the past year. All our activities on that front are covered in the advocacy report.

As with other volunteer non-profit organizations, MWGO needs members willing to serve on the board of directors. The board currently meets every three months with the annual meeting held in October.

It has been an honor to serve as president of this exceptional organization and work with the dedicated members of the board.

Sincerely,

Nick Leadley  
President

## MWGO Membership Rates

Registered Maine Guide: \$50/year or \$500 lifetime  
Sporting Camp Owner/Outfitter: \$100/year or \$500 lifetime  
Corporate Sponsor: \$200/year or \$2000 lifetime  
Friend of MWGO: \$35/year or \$250 lifetime  
Join or renew online at [www.mwgo.org](http://www.mwgo.org)

Member benefits include professional development workshops, MWGO patch and decal, MWGO website marketing opportunities, annual meeting, and pro deals.

# Welcome New Board Members



## Reid Anderson

Originally from the Main Line of the Philadelphia suburbs, Reid attended Hamilton College in NY before becoming a teacher at Pomfret School in CT. Having been a camper at Camp Kieve as a child, a counselor while in college, and a director in the summers while teaching, Reid and his wife Jess moved to Maine full time in 2010 where they live in Dresden with their son Peter.

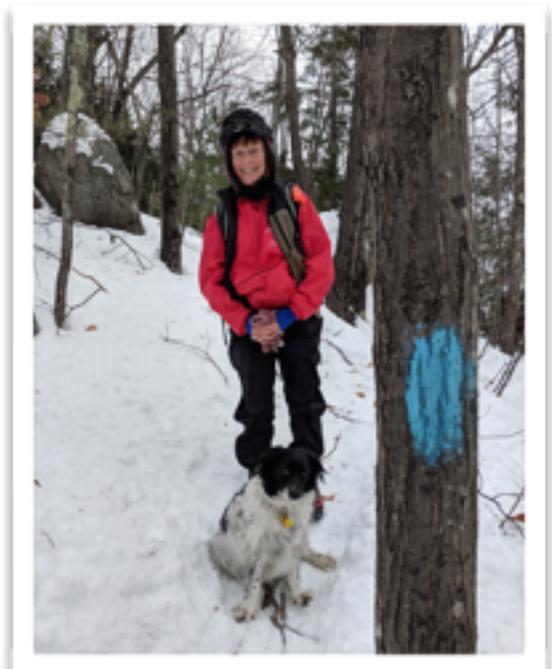
Reid and Jess both work full time at Kieve Wavus Education, Inc., where he is the Director of Logistics and Risk Management. He is a Registered Maine Guide with Wilderness Advanced First Aid (WAFA) certification, a Maine Youth Camp Trip Leader and Camp Trip Leader Safety Course Instructor, an American Canoe Association L3 Canoe Instructor and avid whitewater paddler, an NRA Range Safety Officer, an Archery Instructor, and a general outdoor enthusiast and self-proclaimed gear junkie. Reid utilizes his Firefighter I certification volunteering with the Dresden Fire Department where he is the Training Officer and he is the Trail Master for the Dresden Sno-Valley Riders snowmobile club.

## Jeanne Christie

Jeanne led her first backcountry trip at age 17, a two-week canoe trip leading seven Girl Scouts into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Minnesota and Quetico Provincial Park in Canada. It was June. It was cold. It rained every day. There were bugs, portages, and an encounter with a black bear. It was an amazing trip.

Over the years she led trips with the Wilderness Education Association in Idaho, Horizons for Youth, and the Appalachian Mountain Club in Massachusetts. She worked on water resources/wildlife science and policy for state and federal agencies and stayed sane and grounded by heading outside and encouraging others to join her. She was race director for a half marathon trail run for women for many years in Northern Virginia.

In 2003 she returned to Maine and became a trip leader with the Maine Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. Until September 2018 she was Executive Director of the Association of State Wetland Managers. In her spare time, she became a Maine Master Gardener, a Maine Master Naturalist, a Certified Natural Interpreter and a Certified Forest Therapy guide. In 2018 she became a Registered Maine Guide and established Connect to Wilderness, LCC. Find out more about Jeanne at [www.connecttowilderness.com](http://www.connecttowilderness.com).



## Guide Profile: Caroline Blair-Smith

### Mornington Crescent Sled Dogs and Mahousic Mountain Rescue Team

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The business's website, [www.sledpets.com](http://www.sledpets.com), reflects the couple's view of their dogs as both "beloved pets and hardworking dogs." Blair-Smith adds that she always tells clients at the beginning of a tour to forget for the day whatever they've learned about not touching or distracting working dogs such as police dogs or guide dogs. "When it's time it's time to pull, the sled dogs will think of nothing else, and when it's not time to pull, at the beginning or end of the day or when we stop by the side of the trail to take a break, give them as much attention as you want, and it won't make them any less happy to go to work when it's time to do that."

The company averages three days of tours per week through the season, while Blair-Smith and Bartleet work the rest of their time at their day jobs. "The way we've set up this guiding operation,"

Blair-Smith says, "is the dogs do not work to make a living for us, we work to make a living for the dogs."

Blair-Smith got her start guiding while still in college, as sailing instructor at the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School. Over the years, she worked her way up the ranks of the organization and is now

Outward Bound is also where Blair-Smith became involved in search and rescue 25 years ago, when she and other staff members, who are trained in Wilderness First Aid and are comfortable traveling in the back country and taking care of others, were often called upon to flesh out the ranks of the volunteer search and rescue teams.

Today Blair-Smith is a search team member for Mahousic Mountain Rescue Team, one of three regional technical search and rescue teams in Maine. Technical teams are called in for rescues in difficult terrain. Most team members have extensive experience in the backcountry and are comfortable navigating off-trail, and many are rock climbers and can set up rescues in steep terrain.

Search team member is the basic certification level for ground searchers offered by the Maine Association for Search and Rescue. The member's role, Blair-Smith says, is to reach the patient, assess the situation, and work with the warden, sheriff, or ambulance crew to make a decision about how best to care for the patient. "Sometimes it makes sense to move slowly and stabilize, and sometimes time is

more important and making decisions quickly and acting on them quickly is in the best interests of the patient. It depends very much on what we find when we get there," Blair-Smith says.

There are two categories of search. The first takes place when the warden receives a call from the person who is lost or injured and can call out but doesn't know where they are. The call, Blair-Smith says, is a significant help in locating the person.

More challenging, she says, is the missing person scenario, where a hunter, elderly person, or child vanishes into the woods. Often in those cases the Maine Search and Rescue Dogs team will be called out before ground searchers, to avoid confusing the dogs with the smells of other people.



Photo by Chris Cox

Blair-Smith's own dogs have only been involved in one "search and rescue" operation when, on the way back to the trailhead, she came upon a skier who had fallen and gave her a ride to the road. "A dog team and sled make a pretty good evacuation vehicle," Blair-Smith says. "A sled would be a good place to keep somebody stable and warm, but the reality is that snowmobiles with specially outfitted trailers do the job better than a dog team, and of course they can get there more quickly, even if they have to go slowly coming out."

Blair-Smith estimates that the Mahousic Mountain Rescue Team gets called out 10 to 15 times per year. Every search and rescue situation is different, she says, and though there are scenarios where people take on more than their experience, their equipment, or their knowledge warrants, those types of situations by no means constitute all search and rescue events.

"It would be easy to assume that when folks who get lost or injured in the woods, it happens to them because they weren't careful enough," Blair-Smith says. "But nine times out of ten, we get out there and the thought in the back of all our minds is 'that could have been me.'"

The team takes time back at the trailhead, once the ambulance has taken over the care of the patient, to talk about what team members observed, what they can do better next time, and what they might need more training on. The leaders of Mahousic Mountain Rescue Team, Bob Baribeau and Chris Hayward are, Blair-Smith says, "wonderfully collaborative. They get the most out of their team by involving the brains and ideas of everybody."

For anyone who wants to become involved in search and rescue, Blair-Smith recommends joining a team. "There are a lot of search and rescue operations that just require willing hands," she says. Though every aspect of search and rescue requires some training, Blair-Smith says, ground searches in urban settings, which often involve missing toddlers or Alzheimer's sufferers, are a little more straightforward: "Basically, they've disappeared from suburbia. They can't be that far, but nobody knows where they are. A good briefing by a qualified person can provide the training for at least some of the crew."

Search and rescue operations in wilderness settings, however, involve more training, knowledge, and experience. "Everyone needs to know enough to ensure they're part of the solution and don't become a second victim," Blair-Smith cautions. This includes good coordination, the ability to handle different types of terrain, and a good fitness level. Engaging in wilderness activity gives volunteers relevant experience before they start on a team.



Photo by Eric Krieger

All search and rescue teams offer a certain amount of training, Blair-Smith says, though they aren't able to do as much as they'd like, which means that it takes time to go from an entry-level helper to search team member to search team leader. Blair-Smith recommends that search and rescue volunteers be patient. "Folks who are committed and enjoy the work and the process will stick with it," she says. The Maine Association for Search and Rescue lists 16 certified search and rescue units and provides information on training and volunteering at [mainesearchandrescue.org](http://mainesearchandrescue.org).

Summer is the busy season for the search and rescue team, Blair-Smith says. "In the back of my mind, whenever there's a popular summer weekend around Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, or Labor Day, I think, *I might get a call-out this weekend.*" There are more people in the woods in general on those weekends, and, she adds, "It's also the time when people who don't spend a lot of time in the woods will take that opportunity. Which I fully support. Time outside, time in nature, and any time spent in Maine's undeveloped spaces is time in which people learn to value it. It's important that that happens. We'd just like everybody to have the day that they planned."

## Advocacy Report:

# Working to Protect Maine's North Woods

By Cathy Johnson

MWGO has been very busy speaking up for wilderness values and wilderness guiding in three different proceedings this past year.

## Opposing Proposed CMP Transmission Line

MWGO has continued to participate in the Department of Environmental Protection's permitting process in opposition to Central Maine Power's proposed New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) transmission corridor that would cut a new 53 mile corridor 150 feet wide from the Canadian border to the Forks.

CMP recently proposed to reroute a one-mile section of the corridor but that rerouting will not resolve the significant harm caused by the line by fragmenting Maine's North Woods, a globally significant forest, and causing major negative impacts on brook trout streams, deer yards, habitat for species that need mature forests, and the recreation economy in the region.

The public record is now closed and the DEP is likely to make its decision early in 2020. In addition to a permit from the DEP, the CMP line needs additional permits from the Maine Land Use Planning Commission and the federal government.

MWGO is supporting the proposed citizen referendum to reject the NECEC project. Signatures are currently being gathered in anticipation of a vote. Members are encouraged to help gather signatures.

## Protecting the North Woods from Sprawl

Despite the efforts of MWGO and many like-minded organizations, the Legislature and administration declined to postpone adoption of harmful new rules regarding the location of development in the unorganized townships.

The new adjacency rules, which target 1 million acres and an unknown number of lakes for future commercial and large scale residential development, went into effect on June 17, 2019. MWGO opposed these rules because of the negative impact this sprawling development will have on wilderness guiding. MWGO will continue to work with other organizations to seek ways to limit the negative impact of these new rules.

## Planning the future of KWW

The National Park Service is nearing the end of the first phase of planning for the future of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. MWGO joined other organizations on a letter recommending actions for recreational use and protection of the wilderness character of the monument and sent a supplementary letter.

We met with the superintendent and the planners drafting the framework document to share our thoughts. While the plan is generally headed in the right direction, there are opportunities for improvement. There will likely be a final round of public meetings in early 2020. We encourage members to attend a meeting and share your thoughts about future management of the monument.



# You Alone in the Maine Woods Revisions

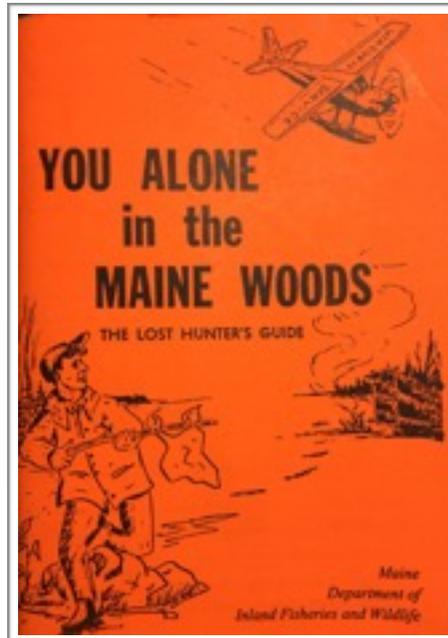
By Bryan Courtois

Earlier this year a committee was tasked with updating the *You Alone in the Maine Woods: The Lost Hunter's Guide*. The committee was composed of: Brad Rounds, former Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) education director, team leader for the Wilderness Rescue Team, retired lead training specialist for safety programs for the Red Cross in Northern New England, Master Recreation Guide, and MWGO member; Mike Richard, long-time chief instructor for the Maine Hunter Safety program and an instructor of Map & Compass and Wilderness Survival for the program since 1991; and Bryan Courtois, current MASAR education director, president of Pine Tree Search and Rescue, and MWGO board member.

The Maine Warden Service (MWS) has an exemplary track record for finding lost people, with about 98% being found within 24 hours and the rest being found within 48 hours with a few exceptions. *You Are Alone* provides hunters and other outdoorspeople advice on preparation for heading out into the Maine woods and what to do if lost or injured.

Around since 1972, the publication has gone through several revisions over the years, evolving to keep up with current best practices and advances in techniques and technology. There was a time when the publication advised woodsmen to include a spare pack of cigarettes in their kit and if they became lost to sit down and have a smoke.

Changes in the new revision include cautions on the use of GPS technology and emphasizing that lost people do what they can to make themselves easier to find and to stay put. Sections on wild edibles and first aid were either removed or changed as those topics



could not be adequately be covered in the space provided.

The previous version had advised a lost outdoorsperson: "If a plane of the Maine Warden Service spots you, and conditions permit, the pilot will cut his

engine and fly over low and attempt to give you directions. If there is a road, river, or pole line nearby, he will fly over low in a direct route toward it. He will then circle and repeat this several times so that you can seek your own way out." This has been changed to advise lost people to just stay put.

The section on navigation was enhanced to be both a training aid and a tool to be used in the woods with additions of graphics to more closely follow what is taught in the hunter safety course. The focus of the pamphlet was expanded to be more comprehensive to cover outdoor activities other than hunting, and revisions were made to include newer fabrics and clothing and footwear options and encouraging people going into the woods or onto the water to be prepared and plan ahead to avoid getting lost.

The newest revision will be available in print form with an online version with links to other resources, color graphics, and other enhancements that would not be possible in the small pamphlet format.

## Wilderness First Aid Scholarships

Continuing a program started two years ago, Maine Wilderness Guides Organization is again offering scholarships for Wilderness First Aid classes.

Any professional member in good standing will receive \$100 upon completion of a Wilderness First Aid class. Proof of completion must be provided from any course taught by SOLO, NOLS or WMA. Limit is 10 scholarships annually.

For more information contact Maine Wilderness Guides Organization through our website at [www.mwgo.org](http://www.mwgo.org).

MAINE WILDERNESS  
**GUIDES**  
ORGANIZATION

126 Western Ave. #155  
Augusta, ME 04330

## Katahdin Woods and Waters Draft Management Plan Update

By Kevin Slater

In the summer of 2019, I attended two meetings on behalf of Maine Wilderness Guides Organization to provide a guide's perspective input into the draft management plan for Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. The first meeting was composed of conservation-oriented groups to discuss the current draft plan and offer feedback on the project.

Monument Superintendent Tim Hudson and representatives of the Musson Group, the agency contracted by the National Park Service to help develop the management plan, attended the second meeting in August.

My feedback emphasized the importance of managing the river corridor to maintain maximum wilderness characteristics for multi-day canoe trips by limiting parking at the north end at the monument boundary. I also emphasized the importance of the East Branch of the Penobscot River and its spring-fed tributaries as native brook trout and landlocked salmon habitat and fishery. Allowing vehicles into this part of the river would increase pressure on the fish populations.

There is excellent potential for winter guiding in the national monument. Currently there are two cabins available for public use at no charge. Possibilities for snowshoe and toboggan trips are limitless, however, national monument policies would need to allow for these uses.

I proposed winter use to allow primitive camping anywhere in the backcountry areas and cutting dead standing trees for firewood and bough picking, since these are traditional uses.

Currently, guides are required to have a commercial use permit to work within Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. The license is valid for two years and costs a reasonable \$150.00.

The current draft of the management plan is available on the Katahdin Woods and Waters website at: [www.nps.gov/kaww/getinvolved/planning.htm](http://www.nps.gov/kaww/getinvolved/planning.htm).

Please feel free to contact me at 824-2073 or [info@mahoosuc.com](mailto:info@mahoosuc.com) if you have any questions or suggestions regarding the Katahdin Woods and Waters management plan. Once it is approved, it will not be reviewed or changed for ten years.