



MASKGI Meeting
South Freeport, Maine
Host: Thornton Ring

November 12, 2016

In attendance:

- 13 MASKGI members: Tom Bergh, Jim Bowler, Tom Carr, Joe Dupont, Sam Frankel, Maria Jenness, Al Johnson, Humphrey Johnson, Liz Johnson, Travis Journagan, Brescian Lander, Thornton Ring, Chris Strout.
- Commander Andy Meyers - US Coast Guard.
- Officer Clint Thompson - Maine Marine Patrol; Sea Kayaking Guide Board Examiner.

MORNING SESSION

Meeting called to order by Chris Strout.

April meeting minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report given by Liz Johnson (in absence of Joe Guglielmetti) and approved:

- Account has \$6744, representing an increase of \$613 from 1/1/2016.
- Membership totals 48. *Memberships are good for a calendar year, so need to be renewed soon.*
- Winter Pool Sessions will resume at Riverton Pool. *(These sessions are discounted for MASKGI members.)*

2017 Officers voted in:

- President - Maria Jenness
- Vice President - Chris Strout
- Treasurer - Joe Guglielmetti
- Secretary - Liz Johnson

Commander Andy Meyers (USCG) spoke on issues, including:

- Statistics regarding boating fatalities: decreasing overall, but increasing involving paddlecraft.
- Coast Guard struggles with promoting safety messages: "The press likes to talk after the fact."
- USCG is launching new Paddlecraft Safety Initiative.
- They would like to coordinate with MASKGI.
- Also discussed: the possibility of multiple events at different stations. Andy named South Portland, Boothbay Harbor, and Southwest Harbor. More events would require a greater commitment, but would offer more opportunities for MASKGI members to get involved at more local levels.

Officer Clint Thompson (Maine Marine Patrol) spoke on issues, including:

- Operation Game Thief, for reporting situations, including guiding without license. Numbers to call: 800-253-7887; out-of-state 207-287-6057.
- Guide Exams: “Our job is licensing people who are safe.” Estimated the exam has a 50% failure rate, mostly on survival scenarios, also on chart and compass. Suggested that candidates take exam in January or February, rather than waiting until just before the season so if they need to re-take it they have time before the season starts. The state is struggling with the SUP issue as it relates to licensing. As with all categories of guide testing, they “try to avoid [being] activity specific”.
- Question arose (as was brought up with Jim Fahey during conference calls last summer) regarding on-water skills assessments. Guide Board is considering issue and plans to continue to pursue it, although Clint noted the obstacles to implementing such an assessment for the State.
- Question arose whether information regarding incidents (such as Corea) is accessible, as it would be useful for guides to be able to study and learn from reports. Clint responded that he will find out if information can be made more readily available.
- PFD education for paddleboards: Marine Patrol supplies loaner life jackets through Cabela’s. They rarely issue summons; enforcement and education are the issues.

Chris initiated discussion on Conference Calls:

- Extended thanks to Natalie Springuel for hosting calls.
- It was noted that many people on calls spoke out about wanting action, yet most of those people were not present at the meeting.
- Discussion during calls included educational outreach about safe boating, PFD wear, and cold water safety: via newspapers, social and other media, and events.
- MASKGI could consider a “media game plan”. In past, MASKGI had a media liaison/ coordinator.
- MASKGI could be more proactive about passing along information and exhibit better communication, e.g. via press release in Spring. Possible topics: VHF use; PFDs in paddlesports.
- There was a recognition that MASKGI shouldn’t take on more than it has the capacity for given limited member engagement and participation presently, but there are opportunities to get folks more engaged

Liz suggested MASKGI concentrate on 2 events in 2017:

1. US Coast Guard Paddlesports Safety Initiative.
2. Wilderness Risk Management Conference sponsored by Wilderness Medicine Institute (NOLS) scheduled for November 1-3, 2017 in Portland, Maine. Proposals for presentations will be accepted during the early part of 2017.

Discussion ensued, regarding:

- Locations/venues for USCG and/or other events.
- Re-instituting PaddleSmart events.
- Continuing education.
- Setting a realistic agenda for MASKGI involvement, given limited assets, resources, and people.
- Our mission as a Guide organization, emphasizing and focusing on the judgmental level.

Al Johnson spoke:

- Related his experience with CDC: “What can we do to prevent drownings?”

- Press releases on safety; Operation PaddleSmart; stickers, including orange stickers now used by USCG and ACA.
- Between 2008 and 2015, statistics showed a 42% reduction in paddling fatalities.

Maria will continue the important work that Chris has done of centralizing MASKGI's documents, which greatly helps in leadership transitions.

Other suggestions included:

- Updating Store to Shore brochure.
- Launch signs: Where are they? Where should they go?

Motion to assign at least \$500 to sign project was passed.

It was noted there should be a committee to take on the launch ramp sign project. If anyone is interested, contact Maria.

Clint suggested approaching the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund for a grant to help with cost of launch signs. Liz agreed to follow up.

AFTERNOON SESSION

During the last conference call, Jim Fahey had requested a write-up of best practices and equipment:

- Discussion on MASKGI focusing on standards for guides: best industry practices/standards.
- Chris agreed to draft list for Jim.
- Maria said she would contact Jim to find out more specifically what he and the Guide Board is looking for.

Question arose whether practices should also incorporate rental outfits as "educational outreach":

Should MASKGI take an active role with rental outfits?

How would such outreach be implemented?

Is it a "guide issue"?

Will it advance the re-growth of MASKGI?

Suggested that MASKGI promote resources that already exist, e.g. America Outdoors Association and US Coast Guard, and keep our assets working toward where we can make a difference.

Brescian Lander introduced subject of continuing education courses for guides, specifically a course in Marine Weather.

Discussion regarding:

- Other possible courses, e.g. WFR, WFA.
- MASKGI continuing education fund/discount/subsidy.
- Tom Bergh suggested that we pick one: Meteorology. All agreed.
- Humphrey Johnson said he would contact Meteorologist Paul Cousins (MPBN) about the possibility of offering such a course.

- Thornton Ring offered his assistance in finding a venue.

In progress (from previous meetings):

- Brescian - \$ allocated toward educational materials.
- Travis Journagan - Liaison with State.

Al followed up on idea of participation in Wilderness Risk Management Conference:

- It would be important publicity for MASKGI.
- Highly recommended: Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why, by Laurence Gonzales.
- Tom Bergh suggested we propose a presentation of Marine Related Scenarios, including real on-water demonstrations.
- Tom and Liz agreed to write the proposal.

Huge thank you to Chris Strout for his leadership as President of MASKGI during 2016.

NEXT MEETING: APRIL 29, 2017, location TBD

TO MEMBERS FROM MARIA:

I would like to solicit feedback from members as to whether the present venue works well, or if we should consider other options. If the location is a barrier to folks attending, I would encourage them to provide that feedback and suggest a general area that might work. (I would be happy to work on identifying a location if I know the general region/ town that would work best.)

You can email Maria at: maskgimail@gmail.com