

Spring MASKGI Meeting 10am – Ecole Francais du Maine. 4/30/2016

Meeting convened at 10:15am by president Chris Strout. Opened by welcoming everyone and thanking Thornton Ring for providing the venue and setting up refreshments.

Present at the meeting: Andy Meyers, USCG; Charles Tetreau, Marine Patrol; Chris Strout, President; Brescian Lander, Vice-President; Al Johnson, Travis Journagan, Liz Johnson, Humphrey Johnson, Julie Fryer, Joe Guglielmetti, Thornton Ring, Zach Anchors, Craig Carscallen, Andrew Shiland, Tom Bergh.

Motion: Approve the minutes of last meeting: approved unanimously.

Treasure's Report: We have \$6529.89 before meeting expenses

Membership Report: Membership is up to 40. An increase from last year.

Report on Winter Pool Sessions: Treasurer/Secretary Joe G took the lead in setting up pool sessions in the Portland area this past winter. They went well and helped expand membership since we gave a discount for members on the price of the session.

Presentation and discussion led by USCG Chief, Andy Myers who is in charge of the Prevention Department and is responsible recreational boating safety education for Sector Northern New England. He emphasized the importance of safety stickers on kayaks and said that in 2015 there were 55-60 reports of unmanned drifters. When this happens the CG has to treat it like a missing person and launch resources. Stickers make it much easier to keep search costs down. It was mentioned that stickers often come off and maybe the adhesive needs to be better. It was then suggested that if stickers come off a good solution is to write contact information with permanent marker. The CG is also hoping that manufacturers will start putting something inside boats for identification purposes. Tom B. commented that as an importer he always kept track of serial numbers of the boats he sold.

Chief Myers also discussed cruise ship security zones. 100 yards aside and astern of any moving vessel. 200 yards in front. LPG ships have a half mile security zone. This applies to ships with over 500 person capacity. The ferry to Nova Scotia has the same security zones as cruise ships. For areas where ships are docked close to other boats like in Portland Harbor some common sense discretion is allowed.

We also had a discussion of mariner activated signals on light houses. Many fog horns have been moved off automation and switched to be activated by VHF radio. If you key Channel 83 5 times in one minute it will activate fog horns in the area for one hour. Currently there are 26 of 68 lighthouses using this system. Pranking the system has not really been a problem although there was an instance with some locals trying to annoy and out of state home owner in Kennebunk.

The Coast Guard Open House will be May 21 st from 10am -3pm at 259 High St. in South Portland. They would like MASKGI to be there for some demonstrations. They will also be doing flare shoots so people can fire off expired flares. The organization will need volunteers to be present. It was decided that those interested should help take the lead on getting things set up. There has been precedent and those who have been in the past are a good resource. Tom B.

commented that the media should definitely have presence and that our demos should be concise.

Final discussion on search and rescue. Encouraged to use VHF instead of phones for emergencies. There is some frustration from local communities because CG personnel changes often and it seems that they often don't use local resources to maximal efficiency before going to classic box searches. Chief Myers commented that they do try to use local resources but that they default to sending rescue. They can always be called off if situations are resolved before they arrive on the scene.

Marine Patrol Officer, Charles Tetreau spoke about how the marine patrol is currently short handed especially in Southern Maine due to a higher cost of living at the same pay rate as those in the North. They are not always on the water this time of year. When they are most resources are spent monitoring commercial activity. With recreational boaters the focus is mostly on education . This is especially true for paddle boarders wearing life jackets.

Chris Strout then led a discussion about how last year the only discussion was whether MASKGI going to exist in 6 months last time. In the end a few people volunteered to step up into leadership to keep the organization alive. However, the process of changing leadership is difficult in MASKGI. The organizational knowledge base is not housed in any one place. Most of the collective knowledge over the years is kept on personal computers on inside people's heads. As a result it is difficult to keep track of things like renewals, event dates, and membership lists. This winter leadership spent time trying to streamline things.

The result is that the organization now has its own dedicated email: maskgimail@gmail.com With the Gmail account it also gives us a Google Drive account. With that we now have a central location for documents, email lists and other things of importance. It allows the organization to pass the torch from one leader to the next easily. Now it is as simple as passing along a few logins and passwords. Members are encouraged to use the official email when possible to convey information and questions. This doesn't negate the importance of past members being useful as resources.

Al Johnson discussed the success of old events like Paddle Smart which often had over 150 people in attendance and how it would be nice to be able to organize events like that again. Attracting speakers and others in the boating community could be a big draw. Tom B then mentioned that there is no need to re-invent the wheel when it comes to knowing what works and what doesn't with events. Events in the past had much more involvement. It may take time to get back to that. In the mean time it was decided that if there are events that members care about such as Kittery, Jersey Paddler, or Paddle Smart, the members who really care should be the ones spearheading the logistics. We also need members to communicate better to leadership and others about events they think MASKGI should have a presence at. This goes back to the idea that many members have a list of things in their heads and just assume that everyone else has that list in their heads as well. It was suggested by Thornton R. that we discuss next meeting a possible mid winter meeting for those interested in planning for some of the events.

Thornton R: Rack card status? Tourist Bureau membership? It was decided at the last meeting that for 2016 brochures would not be printed as they were an ineffective use of MASKGI funds. However we can revisit this issue on the November agenda as a small minority still cares about

it. Getting rid of them lowered our business membership costs by \$30. Thornton Ring tasked to do his research and present a plan for a cost effective way to print the rack cards.

The website to be updated after this meeting. So it was last call for business memberships for this year. Guide members and business members will have listings on the website with the business page providing more than a basic listing. The organization also wants to promote members' activities through social media. If you're offering something, bigger events, we can help promote. Let us know what to promote. Email blast. Facebook group, MASKGI home page, etc.

Break For Lunch:

Brescian: Discussion on pamphlet on how to spread info to clients about environmental issues. The goal is to create a guide that can be distributed to members. Many guides could benefit from having something that explains the science and provides talking points and way in which the subjects can be discussed with clients. Possible topics for the guide include: ocean acidification, pollutants, beach access, etc. Brescian L. volunteered to spearhead the project and agreed to use resources such as Natalie S. with the Maine Sea Grant and other organizations that have already produced the material.

Motion to allocate up to \$300 to enroll in necessary memberships with interpretation organizations that could provide the necessary information so we don't have to re-invent the wheel. Motion seconded and approved unanimously.

Should the organization have an official stand on some environmental issues? It was decided that at the Fall meeting there should be time allotted for members to present on topics they feel we could vote on.

State Exam updates:

Travis J:

Spoke with Maryanne at IF&W. She reiterated what we already know. The written exam is the same for kayaking or tidewater fishing. They still have a bank of 12 catastrophic style scenarios that are being used.

Chart work remains the same. However, guides going in for the Sea Kayak exam will be asked how they plan to use their license. If they state that it is more for SUP, questions on the oral will center more on SUP than kayaking. Much of the discussion revolved around SUP and how it was being handled. It was stated that under the current system where SUP guides need multiple licenses to guide fresh or saltwater, it is prohibitive to entry into the profession. The way in which SUP has been classified was a result of a need to apply a quick solution to something that wasn't being regulated. However, it may have been a band-aid type solution rather than a one that works on a practical basis. There is also some grey area that is factored into the license with respect to instruction rather than guiding. If you are instructing close to shore (within a few hundred yards) you do not technically need a license. This makes things like SUP yoga or basic lessons okay for non-guides.

However, the point at which one could cross from teaching to guiding is blurred once you begin to move away from the shoreline.

There are several ideas about how the license could change. One idea is separate classifications for SUP.

Another was changing the sea kayak classification so that it included some provision for fresh water guiding.

There was a general consensus at that a sea kayak guide is more than qualified to guide on flat freshwater.

However, there was debate about moving water up to class 2. It was pointed out that any inclusion of freshwater in the license could evoke push back from the Rec. Guide community even though it wouldn't necessarily affect their license at all. Whitewater SUP is included in the Rec. License so the idea is not that something be removed from the Rec. license but rather added to the Sea Kayak License. It was also pointed out that some changes to the test are administrative but that others require changes at the legislative level.

Most decisions are made by the guide board. It was not known by anyone at the meeting who is currently on the guide board but it was suggested that maybe MASKGI needed to push to get someone on the guide board who could represent the impartial interests of the organization. It was decided that we develop some comprehensive proposals for how things might change at the next meeting. Anyone with a suggestion is encouraged to present his or her idea.

In the meantime there was a motion made that the organization should take a basic stance that the sea kayak guides should also be allowed to guide on freshwater as well. There was debate as mentioned before about the specifics of what "freshwater" should entail as well as if it was appropriate to take a vote on this issue at this time. The motion was approved 9-3 Due to the glacial pace of working with the state, Travis J was tasked to begin to network with members of the state legislature to get the process started.

The meeting was concluded with a presentation on paddling in the Everglades by new member Craig Carscallen.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:15pm