



Annual Report

2018



*Photo by
Jonathan Wheaton*

Who We Are

Main Street Skowhegan is a nonprofit focused on the ongoing revitalization of historic Skowhegan, Maine.

Our mission is to grow a vibrant, inviting town by encouraging innovation and economic development.

We spearhead collaborative efforts to support business and diversify the economy, stimulate tourism, and tell Skowhegan's story.



Cover: The third annual Skowhegan Craft Brew Festival.
Opposite: Vibrant autumn on the Kennebec in downtown Skowhegan. **Above:** Winter afternoon at Coburn Park. **Top right:** Detail of Football/Scrimmage, one of more than 20 Bernard Langlais sculptures in town. **Bottom right:** Tulips in the Triangle Garden, planted by Main Street volunteers.

A Few of Our Favorite Things

We're proud of what we've been able to accomplish in 2018—with the help of so many wonderful partners, sponsors, collaborators, and donors. While we're eager to tackle more projects in 2019, first we'd like to share some highlights of this year's achievements.

Economic Development

Business Profiles

Wrote and promoted monthly profiles of businesses and organizations in Skowhegan. These profiles are among our most-visited website pages—find them at MainStreetSkowhegan.org/business-profiles.

Main Street Skowhegan Savings Entrepreneur Challenge

Selected Amanda Leigh Clark, LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker) as the winner of the \$23,000+ incentive package. Amanda opened River Trail



Above, our first #ShopSkowhegan gift card winner, at River Roads Artisans Gallery.

#ShopSkowhegan

Kicked off a year-round shop local program that is free and open to any Skowhegan business. For every purchase at a participating local business, patrons can sign up to win a \$25 gift card. Learn more and find deals—join the #ShopSkowhegan Facebook group!

Counseling & Wellness Center in Skowhegan this summer.

Youth Entrepreneurial Development

Provided feedback on business plans created by Jobs for Maine Graduate students.

Brand/Marketing Expertise

Provided web design, graphic design, and marketing services to local businesses and organizations.

Economic Development, *continued*

Small Business Saturday

Coordinated our fourth annual Passport to Savings program, which took place on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 24. Shoppers who make a purchase at a participating local business are entered into a drawing for a gift card to a locally owned business of their choice!

Business Seminars

Hosted two seminars in November to help retailers gear up for the holiday shopping season.

>> Up Next >> Economic Development Projects in the Works for 2019

- Business seminars to support local merchants
- Education/speaker series with inspiring community and state leaders
- Fee-for-service marketing assistance for local businesses

Opposite, Main Street Executive Director Kristina Cannon delivers balloons to businesses participating in our Passport to Savings program on Small Business Saturday.





Tourism Product Development

Events to Attract Visitors

Planned and executed several major events that drew thousands of visitors to Skowhegan.

Skowhegan Moose Festival, June 8-10

With an estimated 6,000 people from all over the Northeast, the moose festival at the Skowhegan Fairgrounds drew record-breaking attendance compared to past moose lottery drawing events.

Visitors stayed in local lodging, shopped in local stores, and ate in local restaurants. We hope they enjoyed their experience and will come back.

We believe we set the Guinness World Record for the most people moose calling simultaneously (waiting on official word from Guinness)!

Left, Guinness record attempt, led by Master Maine Guide Roger Lambert. Photo by Jonathan Wheaton.

Tourism, *continued*

River Fest, August 1-4

Celebrated life on the Kennebec and promoted Run of River (see next spread); in collaboration with the Run of River Committee, Skowhegan Parks & Rec, and the Skowhegan Chamber.

Photo by Jonathan Wheaton



Skowhegan Craft Brew Festival, September 1

In its third year, drew 1,200 people to town—from all over Maine, all five of the other New England states, Canada, and states around the country including New York, Texas, and the Carolinas.

Fame ... and Perhaps Fortune to Follow?

As a result of media outreach from our moose fest PR firm, *Smithsonian Magazine* named Skowhegan one of the 20 Best Small Towns to Visit in 2018!

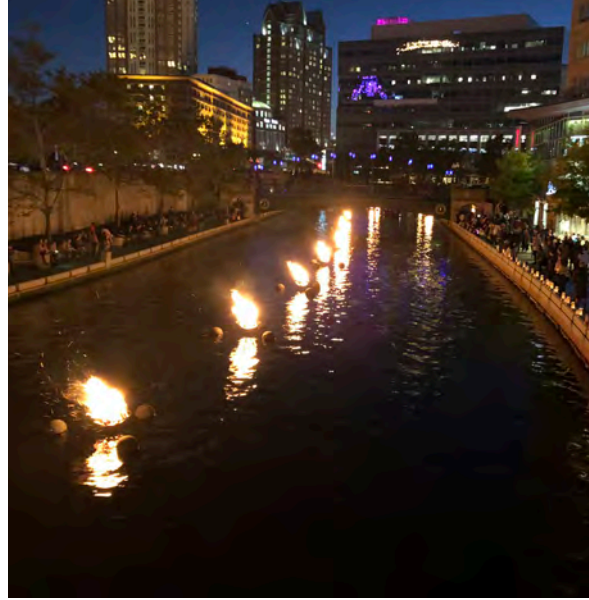


*Image courtesy Smithsonian.com
Photo by Pancho Valladolid/Discover Kodiak*

Tourism, *continued*

Run of River Whitewater Recreation Area

In collaboration with the Run of River Committee, raised \$93,000 for the whitewater park and \$10,000 for downtown trail development, with other grants pending.



Kennebec on Fire

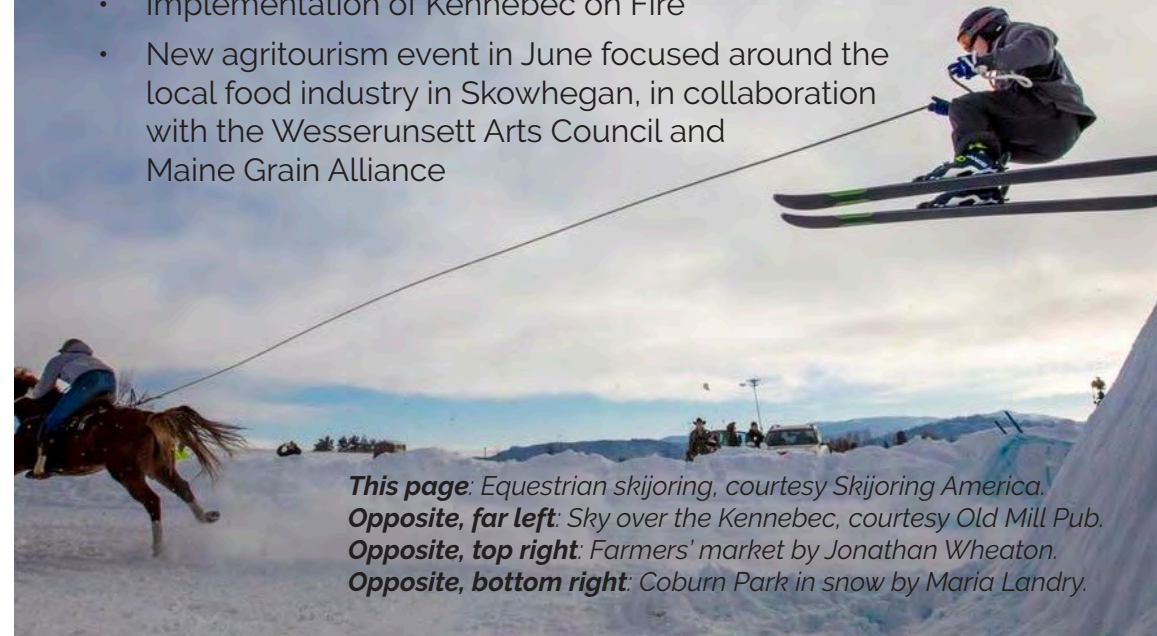
Submitted a grant application, in collaboration with the Wesserunsett Arts Council, for this project that will place sculptures with fire braziers in the river, similar to WaterFire in Providence, R.I. Sculptures will be lit during festivals and events. If received, the majority of this grant funding will be used for artist commissions. Our intention is to give preference to local artists.

Above left: The Big Eddy in Skowhegan is the proposed site of the first sculpture array for Kennebec on Fire. **Above center:** Lit braziers at WaterFire are a compelling sight. Lighting festivals draw thousands and significantly impact the local economy. **Above right:** An artist's rendering of the Run of River Whitewater Recreation Area, with terraced seating along the river bank.



>> Up Next >> Tourism Projects in the Works for 2019

- Continued fundraising and project management for Run of River
- Somerset SnowFest and Skijor Skowhegan event in collaboration with Lake George Regional Park (see SomersetSnowFest.org)
- Implementation of Kennebec on Fire
- New agritourism event in June focused around the local food industry in Skowhegan, in collaboration with the Wesserunsett Arts Council and Maine Grain Alliance



*This page: Equestrian skijoring, courtesy Skijoring America.
Opposite, far left: Sky over the Kennebec, courtesy Old Mill Pub.
Opposite, top right: Farmers' market by Jonathan Wheaton.
Opposite, bottom right: Coburn Park in snow by Maria Landry.*

Marketing Communications Initiatives

Videos to Promote the Region

As a Kennebec Valley Tourism Council member, directed six days of filming to create a series of videos to promote visitation to the region and Skowhegan.

Skowhegan-Themed Merchandise

Selling Skowhegan-themed postcards, note cards, holiday greeting cards, playing cards, and cribbage boards (limited supply) for the holiday season! Find them on our website or at the Skowhegan Fleuriste. All proceeds benefit Skowhegan revitalization projects.



*Above: Skowhegan is beautiful year-round, evidenced by these holiday cards we're selling. **Opposite, far right:** Fireworks during River Fest. Photo by Brandie Burrill. **Opposite:** Kennebec River and dam postcard. Photo by Jonathan Wheaton.*



40
Skowhegan Visitors' Guide requests via our new online form from
16
states as close as New Hampshire and as far as California, and
2
countries (United Kingdom and Canada)



3,500+

Skowhegan postcards created, printed, and distributed, including to local lodging during the summer and to brew fest VIP attendees

Purchased, with the chamber, a four-page ad spread in the 2018 Kennebec Explorer Vacation Planner, with

20,000

copies distributed throughout the Northeast

>> Up Next >> Marketing Communications Projects in the Works for 2019

- New banners for street light poles
- Updated version of the Skowhegan Visitors' Guide
- Four-page spread in the 2019 Kennebec Explorer Vacation Planner that includes events, information, and business ads

Community Events and Programs

Outdoor Sport Institute (OSI) Community Partnership

On Skowhegan's behalf, we applied for and were accepted as an OSI Community Partner. Main Street is leading the development and implementation of an action plan for engaging local residents in outdoor activities, from walking to whitewater paddling. OSI will help provide training, programming, and free gear for community members to borrow.

Maple Festival, March 23-24

Best attended Maple Fest in event history! This is likely due to new activities including a Sap & Syrup Shuttle and chainsaw carving.

Dinner in the Park, August 4

Farm-to-table fundraiser dinner under the stars in beloved Coburn Park.

Holiday Stroll, November 30-December 1

Cherished holiday event in its 26th year, featuring breakfast with Santa, elf scavenger hunt, carols, cocoa, hula hooping, kids' activities, and more.

Above right: Our first Dinner in the Park was a rousing success—it sold out! **Below right:** New in 2018, a shuttle offered rides to sap houses during Maple Fest.

Both photos by Jonathan Wheaton.





We Invite You to Join Us

At Main Street Skowhegan, we help our supporters effect the change they want to see in the community. Do you want to help position Skowhegan for future success and prosperity? Join us and help ensure this town we love fulfills its incredible potential as an amazing place to live, work, play, and visit.

Photo by Sam Horine, samhorine.com

Yes, I want to make a difference in Skowhegan!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$750 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: \$ |

Please make checks payable to Main Street Skowhegan, or visit MainStreetSkowhegan.org/donate to give online.

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

- I would like to learn more. Please add me to your email list.
- I am interested in volunteer opportunities.



We need you!

Join us on the journey to ensure Skowhegan's brightest future. Please see previous page for how you can help.

Before You Go ...

Wondering who's who at Main Street and what's new with us? Read on!

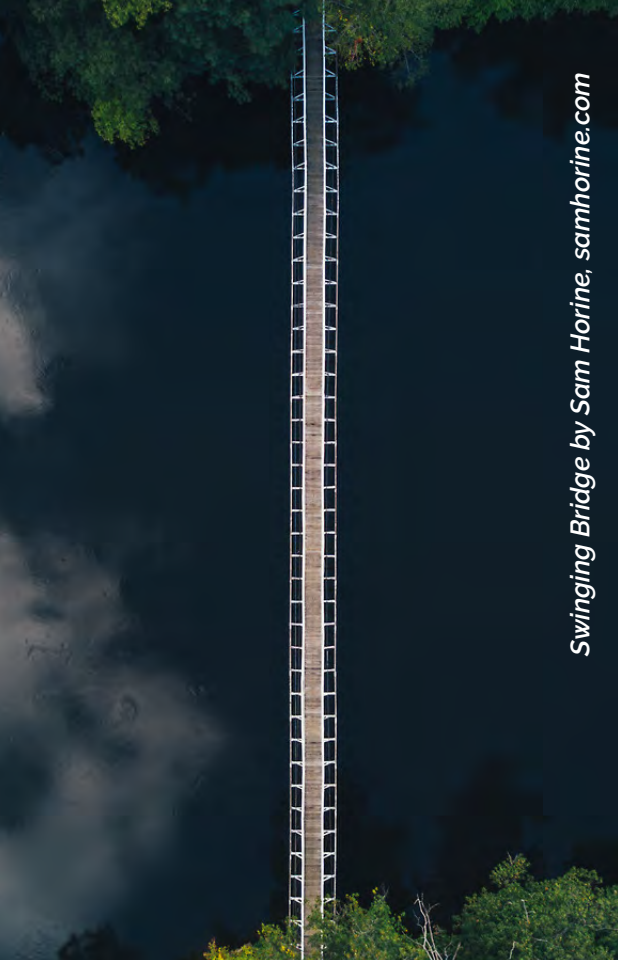
Executive Director Kristina Cannon focuses on big-picture planning and is the driving force behind Run of River; **Associate Director Maria Landry** designs websites and print materials in addition to writing grants, business profiles, and more; and **Project Coordinator Mary Haley**, a shared employee with the Wesserunsett Arts Council, spearheads events for Main Street and leads projects for WesArts. **Office Volunteer Tim Sirois** helps with everything from answering phones to managing our database.

This summer, **Mary was selected for a Creative Community Fellowship**. She has traveled to VT and MA to take part in a creative think tank with other fellows as she works on making Kennebec on Fire a reality.

We've moved to 48 Court Street! With offices to house our larger staff and storage space for our ever-increasing event supplies, this location is a perfect fit.



From left, Maria, Mary, and Kristina



Swinging Bridge by Sam Horine, samhorine.com



48 Court Street
Skowhegan, ME 04976