



Believe in Skowhegan



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Skowhegan is, as its name translates, a place to watch. It's a place that surprises us with its natural beauty, that charms us with more festivals and events than most small towns can dream of, that delights us with its bounty of local foods. It's a place of enormous potential that has seen much progress in recent years.

Here at Main Street Skowhegan, we believe that even though Skowhegan is already a pretty amazing place, its best days are still ahead. Read on to learn what we've been doing—and what we're planning for next year—to help ensure this town's very brightest future.

Top: Sun and fog over the Kennebec on a winter morning, by Maria Landry. Bottom left: Happy attendees at Dinner in the Park, by Jonathan Wheaton. Bottom right: Skowhegan Farmers' Market, by Kristina Cannon. Front cover, clockwise from top left: Monarch butterfly in the Triangle Garden (maintained by Main Street volunteers!), by Marty Kitchen; Skijor Skowhegan, by Maine Mountain Media; Downtown Skowhegan at night, by Jonathan Wheaton. Back cover: Kennebec River in snow, by Maria Landry.

Who We Are

Main Street Skowhegan is focused on the ongoing revitalization of Skowhegan. We are one of 10 nationally accredited Main Street Communities in the state. Our organization is driven by four staff members, three AmeriCorps outdoor recreation coaches, a 16-member board of directors, and more than a hundred amazing volunteers.

Our Mission

Our mission is to celebrate Skowhegan's rich heritage while achieving our brightest future as a thriving economic, cultural, and recreational community where residents enjoy a high quality of life.

Our Vision for Skowhegan

This is what we envision and believe Skowhegan can be: Skowhegan is a destination for visitors from Maine and beyond. It is known for its locally sourced food, beautiful and active riverfront, and vibrant cultural scene. The economy is strong and diverse, and residents are happy and healthy. Skowhegan is a place community members are proud of, youth choose to stay or return to, and visitors never want to leave.

How We're Different

Though we often collaborate with other local organizations, we are different in several ways. Here are some facts about Main Street Skowhegan:

- We are not a membership organization; we support all Skowhegan businesses (see next page).
- We are politically neutral; we don't advocate for or against legislation at the state house.
- We are focused on implementing big-picture initiatives from the Skowhegan Strategic Plan for Community Transformation (see page 6).
- We plan numerous events annually to draw visitors from both near and far (see page 9).
- We are committed to promoting Skowhegan as a local food and outdoor recreation haven, and we spend thousands of dollars each year on Skowhegan marketing initiatives (see page 8).

Main Street Skowhegan staff, board members, and committee members showcase our Guinness World Record certificate for most people moose calling simultaneously (1,054), set during our 2018 Skowhegan Moose Festival and confirmed by Guinness in February.



Supporting *Local* Businesses

We believe in all of our local businesses. In addition to promoting them on social media and in our newsletters, we're here to support them in a number of other ways.

Funding Opportunities

Thanks to our affiliation with National Main Street and the Maine Downtown Center, Skowhegan has access to funding opportunities for historic buildings.

Historic Commercial District Revolving Fund

No-interest loans of \$4,000 to \$10,000 for commercial properties located in the Skowhegan Downtown TIF District.

Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program

\$50,000 to \$100,000 grants for pre-construction or brick-and-mortar projects on buildings in the Skowhegan Historic District or on the National Historic Register.

For both funding opportunities above, projects must follow historic preservation standards best practices. Applications will be available in December 2019. Visit mainstreetskowhegan.org/funding for more details.

New for 2020!

Technical Assistance Grants

Our Business Enhancement Committee is kicking off a technical assistance (TA) grant program for local entrepreneurs. Visit mainstreetskowhegan.org and check out our business support section for more info.



Matt DuBois of The Bankery & Skowhegan Fleuriste draws a lucky #ShopSkowhegan winner.

Shop Local Programs

Small Business Saturday (November 30, 2019)

In Skowhegan we celebrate Small Business Saturday with our Passport to Savings Program that features deals and promotions from 40+ participating local businesses. With each purchase, shoppers can enter to win a \$100 gift card to the local business of their choosing.

#ShopSkowhegan

Our year-round shop-local program is free and open to any locally owned Skowhegan business (just email info@mainstreetskowhegan.org to get involved). For every purchase made at a participating local business, patrons can sign up to win a \$25 gift card, made possible by program sponsor Bangor Savings Bank.

#ShopSkowhegan Facebook Group

We encourage all Skowhegan businesses to join the #ShopSkowhegan Facebook group, a place for merchants to share deals, promotions, and new products with customers.



Profiles of Local Businesses and Organizations

We write and share monthly profiles to help spread the word about our town's many wonderful local businesses and organizations. Those we've done in the past 12 months are represented below. Find all the profiles at mainstreetskowhegan.org/business-profiles.

Top row: Al's Pizza, Whittemore's Real Estate, Shelley's Toy Box. **Second row:** Franklin Savings Bank, Boynton's Greenhouse, Alice & Company. **Third row:** Eaton Mountain, Tessier Farm, Island Dairy Treat. **Bottom row:** Skowhegan History House, Ginny's Natural Corner, Redington Memorial Home.



Ensuring Our *Best* Future with Outdoor Recreation



*Data gathering in
the Kennebec River
this summer*

During the 2016 strategic planning process, many residents expressed that we should capitalize on our natural assets to ensure our community's brightest future. We are doing just that via several projects.

Run of River Whitewater Recreation Area

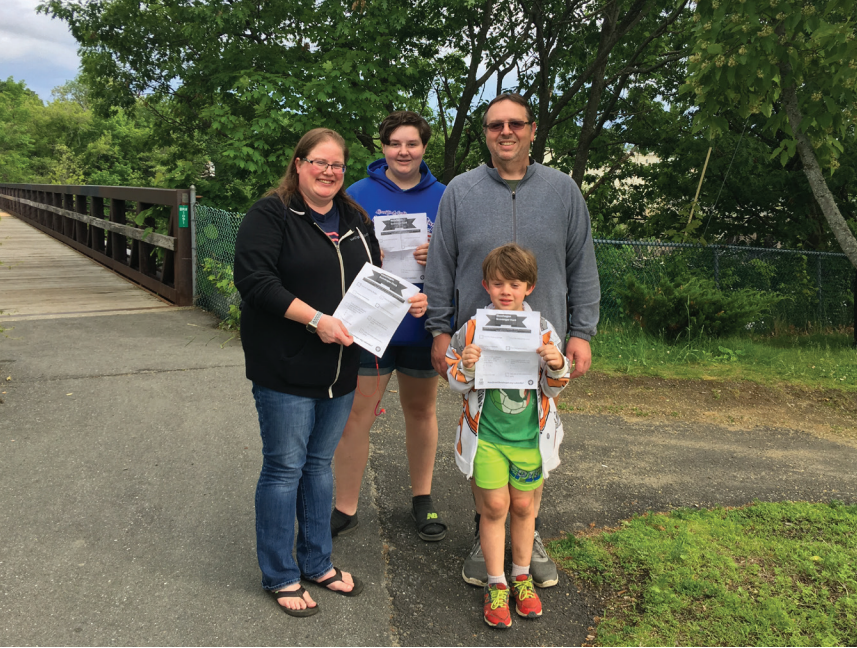
Located in and around the Kennebec River downtown, Run of River will include a whitewater park with wave features for paddling, surfing, tubing, and more; an estimated 50 miles of trails; a two-mile riverfront promenade from downtown to Coburn Park and the boat landing on Route 2; and pristine fishing waters with improved fish habitat. Because we believe in Run of River as a game changer for Skowhegan's future, we have partnered with the town and are leading project management and fundraising. Learn more at runofriver.org.

We've made important progress in the past 12 months:

- Raised \$125,000+ (*total raised in the last two years is approximately \$200,000*)
- Received grants from Quimby Family Foundation, Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, Davis Conservation Foundation, and Somerset County Community Benefits TIF (*thank you!*)
- Applied for 20 grants for Run of River, many of which are still pending
- Finished gathering river data that is necessary for 3D modeling and permitting
- Executive Director Kristina Cannon visited whitewater parks with Town Manager Christine Almand to learn more about economic impacts and adjustable surf waves (river surfing is surging in popularity nationwide!)

Next steps:

- Work with architect on final design options, including an adjustable surf wave
- Work with firm to have 3D models created that are required for permitting
- Create new fundraising packet with additional economic impact data, including anecdotal data from travels to whitewater parks
- Prepare and submit permitting applications



Skowhegan AmeriCorps Outdoor Recreation Program

In May we enrolled three full-time AmeriCorps members who are leading free outdoor recreation activities under our guidance. We'll continue offering these activities for the next few years, with the goal of improving health and wellness and giving residents the skills to enjoy Run of River. We also plan to set up a gear library so residents can borrow outdoor recreation equipment free of charge. Find upcoming events at mainstreetskowhegan.org/calendar.

Skowhegan Trail Enhancements

As a member of the Somerset Trails Collaborative—a group working to improve the regional trail system—and thanks to grant funding, we are building an ADA-accessible, multi-use rail trail (new trailhead at the intersection of Willette and Railroad streets) and a single-track mountain bike trail (access across from the Debe River Walk) in the Philbrick Trails network.

AmeriCorps adventures, clockwise from top: Happy scavenger hunt participants; mountain biking at Lake George; AmeriCorps member Alanna Wacome with dog walk participants; and two community members enjoying one of our paddling excursions.

Some of Our *Free* Activities

- Guided hikes
- Mountain bike rides
- Paddling clinics
- Trail runs
- Kickball games
- Dog walks
- Meditation
- Scavenger hunts
- Snowshoeing
- Cross-country skiing
- And more!



Putting Skowhegan *on the map*

Kennebec on Fire

We're collaborating with the Wesserunsett Arts Council on Kennebec on Fire, which will highlight the arts and Somerset County's greatest natural asset, the Kennebec River, through in-river sculptures and dramatic lighting events.

Inspired by WaterFire in Providence, R.I., Kennebec on Fire will place sculptures with fire braziers in the river seasonally, starting with an array of three to five sculptures in the Big Eddy in Skowhegan.

Earlier this year we received a grant from the Maine Arts Commission to implement this project, with \$50,000 in commissions going to artists. We put out an open call for proposals in late summer with a submission deadline of November 8.

The first sculpture will be installed in the river in the spring of 2020, with additional sculptures to follow.

Guinness World Record

After an eight-month process, in February we received official confirmation that we set a Guinness World Record for the most people moose calling simultaneously—1,054—during the 2018 Skowhegan Moose Festival!

This garnered lots of recognition for our town, from media coverage to 16,000 views of the world record attempt video online.

Skowhegan Visitors' Guide

This past spring we updated the Skowhegan Visitors' Guide, which we first created in 2017. We had 6,000 copies printed this spring for distribution around the state, at events, and upon request from a website we maintain, visitskowhegan.com. So far this year the website has yielded 60+ requests from 19 states and three Canadian provinces.

Marketing Skowhegan

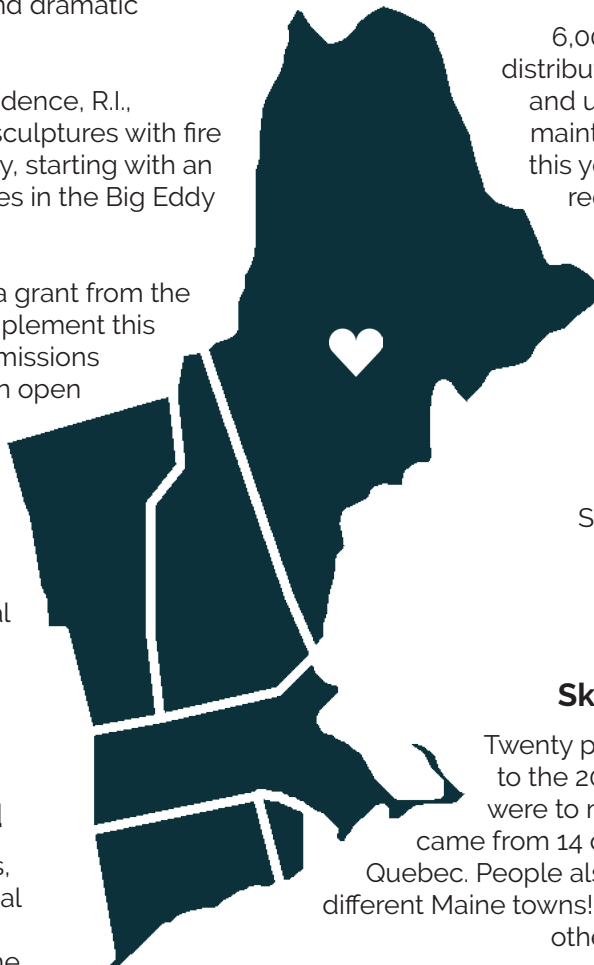
In 2019 Main Street Skowhegan invested more than \$48,000 in Skowhegan marketing initiatives.

Skowhegan Craft Brew Fest

Twenty percent of advanced ticket sales to the 2019 Skowhegan Craft Brew Fest were to non-Maine residents! Attendees came from 14 other states and the province of Quebec. People also came from an astounding 97 different Maine towns! See more on brew fest and our other events on the opposite page.

Whoville Stroll

On Facebook, our Whoville Stroll event—a new part of our annual Holiday Stroll festivities—had more than 8,000 people interested as of the end of October! Interested parties hail from Caribou to Phippsburg and beyond. One commenter summed it up nicely: "This sounds positively enchanting!"





Festivals and Events

Above: Dog sledding at SnowFest. Below, top: Happy festival-goers at the Skowhegan Craft Brew Fest, by Jonathan Wheaton. Middle: Winning boys' Maple Madness team. Bottom: Holiday Stroll parade, by Jonathan Wheaton.



Somerset SnowFest

A new, collaborative event with Lake George Regional Park. **3 days of winter fun**, including Maine's first equestrian skijoring event. **450+ skijoring attendees**, with **visitors from at least 5 states**. *Save the date: February 28-March 1, 2020*

Maple Fest

270 pancake breakfasts served. Hosted our **first-ever Maple Madness Basketball Tournament**, with **11 teams and 350+ game attendees**. *Save the date: March 21-22, 2020*

AgriCulture

A joint effort with the Maine Grain Alliance and WesArts. Drew **visitors from nearby towns, southern Maine, and as far as Vermont** for a food tour showcasing our region's local foods.

River Fest

Organized by several groups, River Fest celebrates life on the river. **New activities included kayak races and community members sharing river tales**. *Save the date: July 29-August 1, 2020*

Dinner in the Park

A whimsical evening in Coburn Park featuring a **locally sourced meal, live music, and fireworks**. Tickets go on sale in June. *Save the date: August 1, 2020*

Skowhegan Craft Brew Fest

Sell-out event with **33 craft breweries from all over Maine and 1,300 attendees** from 97 Maine towns, 14 other states, and the province of Quebec. Tickets for next year go on sale May 1! *Save the date: September 5, 2020*

Holiday Stroll

New activities this year include the **Whoville Stroll** (see opposite page) and the **Kennebec Dip!** *Save the date: December 6-7, 2019*

New for 2020! Operation Maine Outdoors

In partnership with Operation Game Thief, we will bring you an outdoor festival like no other! It will include family activities, contests, clinics, food, music, and more—all revolving around life in the great Maine outdoors. *Save the date: September 26, 2020*

Thank you

We are truly humbled by all who partnered with us this year to help ensure Skowhegan's brightest future. **Whether you volunteered, donated, sponsored an event or program, provided in-kind services or products, or collaborated with us, we can't thank you enough for believing in Skowhegan and our organization!** Here are our biggest financial supporters from Nov. 1, 2018, to Oct. 28, 2019. Thank you—we couldn't do it without you!

—Kennebec River Partners— \$15,000+

Skowhegan Savings Bank
Franklin Savings Bank
Town of Skowhegan
Maine Arts Commission

—Big Eddy Partners— \$10,000+

Redington-Fairview General Hospital
The Betterment Fund

—Flat Iron District Partners— \$7,000+

The Bankery &
Skowhegan Fleuriste
Hight Family of Dealerships

—Coburn Park Partners— \$2,500+

Bangor Savings Bank
Bee Line Cable
Fisher Charitable Foundation
Johnston Family Foundation
Maine Grains
Maine Roof Solutions
Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust
Russakoff Jewelers
Warren's The Paper Klip

—Swinging Bridge Partners— \$1,000+ (continued)

Damon's Beverage Mart
Dirigo Engineering
DuBois Construction
GFWC/Semper Fidelis Club
Hammond Lumber
Holland's Variety Drug
Kennebec Valley Tourism Council
Kyes-Carpenter Insurance
Laney's Pit Stop
MixMaine Media
Nickerson Yard Maintenance
Old Mill Pub
Renys
Sappi
Short Circuit Electric
Somerset Sports & Fitness
The Miller's Table
TNT Glass
Valley Beverage
Warren and Jeanne Shay
Whittemore & Sons

—Philbrick Trail Partners— \$700+

1890 Primitives
Are You Ready to Party??
Computer Improvements
Crooked Face Creamery
Franklin Printing
Key Appliance
Northern Mattress & Furniture
Pure Hairstyling
Quinn Hardware
Randy's Auto
The Maine Meal
The Towne Motel
Whittemore's Real Estate

—Swinging Bridge Partners— \$1,000+

Allen's Coffee Flavored Brandy
Allied Realty
Animal Medical Clinic
AtWork Personnel Services
Bigelow Brewing
Central Maine Septic
Dag's Bait and Tackle

—River Fest Sponsors— \$1,000+

Proceeds from River Fest benefit Run of River. See Run of River grantmakers on page 6.

Skowhegan Savings Bank
Bee Line Cable
Central Maine Pyrotechnics
Franklin Savings Bank
Moxie Outdoor Adventures
Redington-Fairview General Hospital
Franklin-Somerset FCU
Holland's Variety Drug
Kennebec Valley Tourism Council
Skowhegan Rotary Club

Spirit of Giving

From cultivating the Triangle Garden to putting in countless hours at our events, **volunteers** make our organization go 'round. Thank you for your time, energy, and talents! **Below from left:** *Several of the ladies who maintain the downtown Triangle Garden; Volunteer of the Year MacKenzie Cayford; and Board Member of the Year Darryll White.*





2019 Awards and Recognition

Above: Governor Janet Mills presents the Tourism Marketing Award to Executive Director Kristina Cannon, Associate Director Maria Landry, Project Coordinator Mary Haley, and Skowhegan Representative Betty Austin at the 2019 Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Tourism Marketing Award (pictured)

We were recognized by the Maine Office of Tourism for our promotion of Skowhegan and the region during the Skowhegan Moose Festival, an event that attracted 6,000 attendees in June 2018.

Guinness World Record

We received confirmation in February that we set a Guinness World Record for the most people moose calling simultaneously—1,054—during the 2018 Skowhegan Moose Festival.

Best of the Best Award

We were voted the #1 Community Service Organization

in the region, per the *Morning Sentinel/Kennebec Journal* annual Best of the Best Awards.

Redington-Fairview General Hospital Award for an Organization's Commitment to Public Health

We received this award from Somerset Public Health for the work we are doing through our Skowhegan AmeriCorps Outdoor Recreation Program (see page 7).

Mainebiz 2019 NEXT List Honoree

Executive Director Kristina Cannon was honored by Mainebiz as one of 11 business people in the state who are changing Maine's economy for the better.

How *You* Can Make a Difference in Skowhegan



RoundUp lets you round up and donate the change from your credit or debit card purchases. You can even cap the maximum amount you want to donate in a given month!

Simply download the app or use the web version at roundupapp.com. Create an account and choose Main Street Skowhegan as the organization you will support.



Use the enclosed form, or go to mainstreetskowhegan.org/donate.

Other types of giving are more than welcome as well. If you are interested in making a bequest, please check with your attorney. Talk to your financial or tax advisor to find out about making a charitable gift directly from your IRA assets without tax implications.

Every donation helps, and we sincerely appreciate our community's generosity!



Do you shop on Amazon? Use Amazon Smile, and they'll donate a percentage of all eligible purchases!

Just go to smile.amazon.com, sign in with your Amazon login, type "Main Street Skowhegan" under "Pick your own charitable organization," and click "search." Select Main Street Skowhegan and follow additional prompts. Then, each time you shop Amazon, be sure to start at smile.amazon.com!

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