



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2026

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New Balance Foundation Commits \$1 Million to Skowhegan River Park as Boardwalk Construction Begins

Public invited to June 29 groundbreaking; future phases gain funding support

JUNE 23, 2026 | SKOWHEGAN, Maine—Main Street Skowhegan announced a transformational \$1 million naming gift from New Balance Foundation to the Skowhegan River Park, alongside the start of construction on Phase 1 of the project's riverfront boardwalk. The community is invited to celebrate these milestones at a public groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, June 29, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. on Skowhegan's downtown riverfront.

New Balance Foundation's investment represents one of the largest private gifts ever made toward the Skowhegan River Park vision and will support a range of community recreation assets, including naming rights for the New Balance Foundation Boardwalk and the New Balance Foundation Basecamp Gear Library. Together, these investments will help advance a once-in-a-generation effort to reconnect downtown Skowhegan to the Kennebec River through recreation, public access, community building, and economic opportunity.

"The New Balance Foundation is committed to investing in vibrant communities and bright futures through sport," said Molly Santry, Director of the New Balance Foundation. "This innovative River Park project along the Kennebec River will more fully connect people to all that the river has to offer—from river sports to outdoor entrepreneurship and education. New Balance and the New Balance Foundation have been part of the Central Maine community for more than 40 years, and we are proud to support this transformational opportunity to help more people, residents and visitors alike, get outdoors and stay active."

The groundbreaking ceremony will celebrate the start of construction on Phase 1 of the

riverfront boardwalk, a \$2.3 million project that includes 4,187 square feet of ADA-accessible northern white cedar decking along Skowhegan's downtown riverfront. Construction is scheduled to begin the week of June 22, with completion anticipated by December 2026.

Funding for Phase 1 was made possible through a combination of public and private investments, including a \$2 million federal Community Project Funding grant championed by Senator Susan Collins and Senator Angus King, along with a \$334,000 contribution from the Expedia Trail Fund, stewarded through Main Street Skowhegan's partnership with The Conservation Fund.

Momentum continues to build for the Skowhegan River Park vision. Last week, Main Street Skowhegan secured a \$2.5 million Timber for Transit grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission to fund construction of Phase 2 of the boardwalk, which is scheduled to begin in spring 2027. Looking ahead, Senator Angus King has championed a \$5.6 million Community Project Funding request to support construction of Phase 1 of the whitewater park, including the project's signature adjustable surf and kayak wave. The request is currently moving through the federal appropriations process for consideration as part of the Fiscal Year 2027 federal budget. Together with a transformational \$1 million naming gift from the New Balance Foundation and approximately \$1.4 million in additional philanthropic and corporate commitments pledged, these developments represent more than \$10 million in funding secured or advanced for the Skowhegan River Park in the last few months.

Together, these investments reflect growing momentum behind a project that will reconnect downtown Skowhegan to the Kennebec River while creating new opportunities for recreation, tourism, and economic growth.

"The start of boardwalk construction, New Balance Foundation's transformational investment, and the momentum we've built for future phases of the Skowhegan River Park all point to the same thing: this vision is becoming reality," said Kristina Cannon, President & CEO of Main Street Skowhegan. "After nearly three decades of planning and community engagement, we're about to see the first physical pieces of the project take shape. At the same time, we're continuing to advance the next phases—from additional boardwalk infrastructure to the adjustable surf and kayak wave that will make Skowhegan a nationally recognized river recreation destination."

The boardwalk is a key component of the broader Skowhegan River Park vision, which combines recreation infrastructure, public access, community programming, and outdoor amenities to reconnect downtown Skowhegan to the Kennebec River. The initiative includes the Northeast's first adjustable whitewater wave, expanded river access, trails, public gathering spaces, and the New Balance Foundation Basecamp Gear Library, helping ensure that residents and visitors alike can access and enjoy the river. Through its \$1 million investment, the New Balance Foundation is supporting both the physical infrastructure and community assets that will bring this vision to life. According to a 2025 economic impact study by Fourth Economy, the completed project is projected to generate \$16.6 million in

annual economic impact and support 137 permanent jobs throughout the region.

Phase 2 of the boardwalk and promenade, which will add an additional 7,235 square feet of riverfront infrastructure, is currently planned to begin in spring 2027.

The June 29 groundbreaking celebration is open to the public and will bring together community members, downtown business owners, project partners, funders, and local, state, and federal elected officials. Members of the media are encouraged to attend and will have access to interview opportunities, project visuals, and real-time event photography and video.

About the New Balance Foundation

Since 1981, New Balance Foundation invests in vibrant communities where associates live and work, supporting community-led initiatives rooted in health, education, and sport to drive opportunity—building brighter futures for every family. Grantmaking focuses on community- led, outcomes-driven initiatives that promote access to sport, educational support, career readiness and overall well-being. They have granted funds to more than 95 trail-blazing non-profits across the 12 countries. For more information, please visit www.newbalancefoundation.org.

About Main Street Skowhegan

Founded in 2005, Main Street Skowhegan is a nationally accredited Main Street America program and rural revitalization organization focused on strengthening the Skowhegan area through entrepreneurship, outdoor recreation, workforce development, placemaking, and regional collaboration. Since 2015, the organization has helped leverage more than \$17 million in investment to support economic development, infrastructure improvements, small business growth, and community vitality in Skowhegan and across central Maine. Through initiatives like Skowhegan Outdoors, the Skowhegan River Park, and the Kitchen at 185, Main Street Skowhegan works to create a vibrant, resilient, and inclusive future for the region.