

## **Orono Bog Boardwalk Annual Report 2009**

On Sunday, November 29, 2009 the Orono Bog Boardwalk closed the gate on another successful season of serving as the premier nature destination for those living in the Greater Bangor Area. This marked the end of our 7<sup>th</sup> season. Although we do not yet have the total number of visits to the Boardwalk this year, we feel confident it was over 30,000. In the sections below we provide detailed information about publicity and events attended, docents and student intern, Boardwalk finances, service learning students, guided group walks, nature walks, and maintenance. We feel fortunate to have a core group of volunteers that have stayed active over the years. However, we realize that as with any volunteer-run organization, it is important to increase our volunteer base. That will be our focus in the coming year.

As Director I would like to thank the many individuals that have volunteered their time this past year. I would like to thank the group leaders and Management Team for all of their hard work: Jean Berry and Libby Norton (scheduling); Phil Locke (maintenance coordinator); John Maddaus and Wendall Tremblay (guided tours coordinators); Jerry Longcore (Orono Land Trust representative to the Management Team, fund raising coordinator); John Daigle (University of Maine representative to the Management Team, student intern coordinator); Tracy Willette (City of Bangor representative to the Management Team); and Joan Martin (volunteer coordinator). I would like to thank all of the docents and guides who have contributed greatly to the operation and mission of the Boardwalk. A complete list of these dedicated volunteers can be found in Appendix 2 at this end of this report. This year for the first time we calculated the total number of hours our volunteers worked at the Boardwalk. Our estimate is 1,800 hours which we feel is fairly accurate. Using the figure of \$16/hour as a benchmark value, we will be able to report \$28,800 of in-kind support when completing grant proposals.

### **Publicity and Events Sponsored or Attended:**

Every year Orono High School holds a service-learning fair for students to become acquainted with area opportunities for their required service-learning project during their junior year. This year a number of students picked up information about the Boardwalk and volunteers explained volunteering opportunities available to them. This year we were fortunate to have 3 students sign up to do their service learning project at the Boardwalk (see below under Docents, Student Intern, and Service Learning Students).

For the third year Boardwalk volunteers attended the University of Maine Volunteer Opportunity Fair. At our information table, students learned of the many volunteer

opportunities available at the Boardwalk. Unfortunately, as in previous years, we were unable to secure any volunteers.

Boardwalk volunteers held their 6<sup>th</sup> annual Orono Bog Boardwalk Yard Sale in June. This yearly event typically attracts hundreds of “yard salers” to look for bargains. This year we had over 30 families donate items to the sale and our first customer arrived at 5:30am! Twelve volunteers helped set up and staff the yard sale throughout the day and the result was over \$2700 for our Boardwalk endowment fund. Our six yard sales have raised over \$18,000 for the Boardwalk endowment. This yard sale is just another way that volunteers inform the public about our Boardwalk.

For the first time a course at the University of Maine featured the Orono Bog Boardwalk as a focal point for student education. Students in PRT (Parks Recreation Tourism) 452, Environmental Interpretation taught in the fall 2009 semester by Mary Bird, spent a good part of the semester working on Boardwalk curriculum. Their semester long projects culminated in a late October “Bogfest” for families in the Bangor region. On October 30<sup>th</sup>, PRT 452 students and their instructor came to the Boardwalk and using the curriculum they developed, “staffed” the Boardwalk, talking and doing activities with scores of children and adults concerning Bog ecology. The event was very well publicized and consequently was very well attended. Because of the hard work of the PRT 452 students we now have several Bog ecology interpretation posters that we can use for our own nature walks. We really appreciate the work of all PRT 452 students and their instructor for adopting the Boardwalk and leaving us with some very good educational material.

For the third year, Boardwalk volunteers staffed a table at the University of Maine Page Farm and Home Museum Holiday Shoppe. This is a great opportunity to talk with visitors about the Boardwalk. We were able to make \$320 for the Boardwalk endowment through the sale of Boardwalk merchandise. We thank Patricia Henner, Director of the Page Farm and Home Museum for hosting this annual event and look forward to next year’s holiday shoppe.

Boardwalk volunteers also staffed an informational and merchandise sale table at the annual Orono Festival Days. This was the 7<sup>th</sup> time the Boardwalk has been present at the Orono Festival Days. We were able to talk with scores of people that stopped by our booth and were able to make over \$400 for the Boardwalk endowment.

Ron Davis, the Boardwalk’s first director and active Boardwalk volunteer, produced a 2010 Boardwalk calendar this year – the Birds of the Orono Bog. The calendar was very well done with excellent photographs of a variety of species of Bog birds. The Boardwalk paid for the printing of 50 calendars and Ron Davis paid for printing 50. Ron generously donated the net proceeds of the sale of his 50 to the Boardwalk. As of this writing, there are 7 calendars available, out of 100 printed.

For years the Boardwalk Management team has discussed Boardwalk hats, feeling that these would be very popular with Boardwalk visitors. Working with Advertising Specialists of Bangor and its co-owner Stefani Berkey, we designed a leopard frog (logo) hat and had 144 made, 72 one color, and 72, 2-colors. These hats have proven to be popular and we have sold over half of our inventory. We plan on have a new design next year, the pitcher plant, and our student intern, Sue Priest, is now working on a drawing so that we will be able to have new hats when we open on May 1, 2010. Along with the Boardwalk hats we had new t-shirts printed utilizing the original design. We thank Stefani Berkey for working with us and for her company's monetary donation to the Boardwalk.

The Orono Bog Boardwalk color booklet was reprinted this year. We were able to have 2,000 printed which should last us for at least two more years. The booklet did not undergo an extensive edit however we were able to correct the address of the University of Maine Foundation as well as the directions to the Boardwalk.

This year we were able to replace our money box with a new, permanently mounted plexi-glass money box. We are now able to leave our money box out 24 hours/day. Donations are collected at the end of each day.

The Orono Bog Boardwalk website ([www.oronobogwalk.com](http://www.oronobogwalk.com)) was moved to a new host last year: Rainstorm Consulting in Orono. This has allowed us to have more control of our site as we can now make updates quickly.

We realize that the Boardwalk and its events (see below) have to be better publicized to attract visiting groups to the Boardwalk. In the coming year we will be working on ways to increase the Boardwalk's visibility.

### **Financial Information:**

**Docents, Student Intern, and Service Learning Students:** Docents are the people who daily open and close the boardwalk gate, greet visitors, inform users of boardwalk rules, maintain the appearance of the cabin and boardwalk, answer visitor's questions about bog natural history, sell boardwalk t-shirts, hats, treasure trays, and other items, provide local area information and insight, and generally oversee the day-to-day workings of the boardwalk. They are typically asked to volunteer 1 or 2, 3-hour shifts per month in peak season, less so in the fall. Without these volunteers a visit to the OBB would be a much less satisfying experience. We were fortunate to have Jean Berry and Libby Norton as our docent calendar schedulers this year. This year, for the first time since the Boardwalk opened, we did not have a regular docent trainer. This is a position is very important to

the smooth operation of the Boardwalk and we will be actively looking for someone to take this position for next year's season. Additionally, a seasonal Student Intern, who is paid, provides critical assistance when needed most, and he / she receives on-the-job experience, which is usually related to their chosen field of study, often that of park management and outdoor recreation or ecology/biology. This year we were very fortunate to have hired a wonderful student intern – Sue Priest, a biology undergraduate at the University of Maine. Sue was involved in almost all aspects of Boardwalk operation from being a dedicated docent to helping with maintenance and helping to lead tours.

As noted above, this year we were fortunate to have three Orono High School students select the Boardwalk for their Service Learning Project. The students, Paul Robinson, Alex Introne, and Nikolai Renado, each completed 30 hours of volunteer work which included section leveling, sweeping, re-numbering sections, and clearing vegetation. They also were able to attend two of our nature walks: What's wrong with that tree? and How some plants survive where most plants would perish. The Boardwalk Management Committee would like to thank these three students for their hard work.

**Guided Group Walks:** \_\_\_ volunteer tour guides provided guided walks for 21 groups this year. The groups included public schools, private schools, and a home-schooling group. The students ranged in age from Kindergarten to a science methods college class. A total of 493 children and 82 adults (teachers and parent chaperones) participated in these school tours, with June and October the busiest months. In addition to several school groups from the greater Bangor area, school groups came from Deer Isle, Enfield, Searsport, and Pittsfield. Three non-school youth groups came for tours, including one Girl Scout troop, and one Cub Scout Den, and a summer recreation program group (49 participants plus 11 chaperones). Ten adult groups also visited the boardwalk. These included nine college classes, four from the University of Maine, four from University College of Bangor, one from Husson University. The other adult group was a fall garden study group. In all, 8 tours took place in April-May (special arrangements were made to open the Boardwalk for the April tours), 6 tours in June, 1 tour in August, and 15 tours took place between September and early November.

As a consequence of the downturn in the U.S. economy and concern over equine encephalitis, some school systems have announced that they are curtailing field trips for the coming year. Because of the economic downturn, there may be fewer requests for school tours of the Orono Bog Boardwalk in the future. We need to consider other ways of sharing the unique environment of the Orono Bog with school classes. This might include enhancing the information available through the web site (video clips illustrating and describing various species? sets of photos showing selected species at different times of the year? increased information about bog origins, hydrology, and other physical features?) Another possibility is to offer presenters and illustrated presentations at

schools. We could also do more to publicize the boardwalk for non-school youth and adult groups. See Appendix 1 for a complete list of guided walks.

**Nature Walks:** Typically, the management committee of the Boardwalk arranges for a variety of “by reservation-only” nature walks led by experts in particular areas. In March or early April, potential leaders are contacted to see if they would like to lead a nature walk on their area of interest. This year we were fortunate to have the following walks:

Short distance migrant birds of the Orono Bog - led by Jerry Longcore, United States Fish and Wildlife Biologist, retired and Bill Glanz, Associate Professor of Zoology, School of Biology & Ecology, University of Maine. (10 attending)

The sparrows of Orono Bog - led by Brian Olsen, Research Assistant Professor, School of Biology & Ecology, University of Maine. (17 attending)

Hydrology in bogs and fens – where does the water go? Led by Andy Reeve, Associate Professor of Earth Sciences, University of Maine. (2 attending)

Peat bogs for kids - led by our Boardwalk intern Susan Priest, Undergraduate student, Biology, University of Maine. (8 attending)

How some plants survive where most plants would perish - led by Professor Christa Schwintzer, Professor of Botany, School of Biology & Ecology, University of Maine. (6 attending)

What’s wrong with that tree? – led by Bill Livingston, Associate Professor of Forest Resources, School of Forest Resources, University of Maine. (5 attending)

Wildflowers of the Bog: Identification and ecology led by Ron Davis, Professor Emeritus of Biology and Quaternary Studies, University of Maine. (4 attending)

The beauty is in the details: Meditating on the natural world with cameras – led by Bill Kuykendall, Senior Lecturer, New Media, University of Maine. This was our first guided tour that included a pre-tour workshop. (7 attending)

This year we had 57 people participate in these “reservation-only” walks.

**Drop-In Walking Tours:** Because of lack of volunteer staff we did not host our drop-in walks of the Boardwalk this year. We hope to reinstitute this program next year. The drop-in walks would be scheduled the second and third Saturdays of the month so that visitors could just show up at the Boardwalk for a guided nature walk.

**Maintenance, Construction, Replacements:** As in other years, work was needed to get the boardwalk ready for opening on May 1, 2009. Work started in the first part of April with the maintenance team lead by Phil Locke.

Activities included sweeping the entire boardwalk, removing vegetation from crevices, removing the interpretative station covers and the kiosk sign cover and cleaning the signs, putting up boardwalk signs at the start of the boardwalk and at the Bangor City Forest parking lot, checking the entire boardwalk for broken deck boards and railings, checking to see that all nails were flush with the boards, positioning the water gauge at station 6, checking the level of the boardwalk, and checking maintenance supplies and purchasing what was necessary. The leveling of the entire boardwalk was completed by the end of June. This is typically our most time-consuming activity as we have to check level on each of the 509 sections, making sure that the boardwalk conforms to ADA requirements.

Throughout the 2009 season maintenance activities also included on an ongoing basis: trimming overhanging vegetation and making sure that the trees along the boardwalk were stable, trimming vegetation along the boardwalk so that water is not wicked up to the boardwalk sections, which would hasten their deterioration, checking the status of each of the 509 section numbers and replacing as necessary, replacing damaged deck boards and railings, and checking level on many sections and re-leveling when necessary. Our outhouse must also be thoroughly cleaned every week. We were very fortunate to have Linda Ives and Latona Torrey volunteer to do this and their work is greatly appreciated. We bought some extra-wide (6 inch) deck boards for bridging gaps between sections -- these seem to work fairly well. Many deck boards (and some railings) had to be replaced this season. The decay rate, especially for sections in the shadier areas, seems to have accelerated, which is worrisome.

For years we have wanted a new picnic table to replace the one that we have had for 7 years and which beginning to deteriorate. Phil Locke researched plans for making an octagonal picnic table, drew up blueprints, purchased the material, and made a new picnic table for us. It is a wonderful table and was well used the second half of the season. Thanks to Phil for this addition to the Boardwalk and thanks to Sue Priest for helping Phil by helping to dismantle the old picnic table and helping to paint the new one.

Over the years, our interpretative station signs have faded and are becoming pocked marked. Ron Davis contacted the company who fabricated the signs and told them of the problem. It turns out that there was a production problem at the company where the signs were made and that it is probable that we will be able to get new signs at no cost. We hope that by the time the Boardwalk re-opens on May 1<sup>st</sup> we will have new interpretative signs in place.

Boardwalk volunteers have accomplished much this year. I look forward to our next season, expanding our volunteer base and increasing our educational outreach to area

schools and other groups. It is a pleasure to serve as Director of the Orono Bog Boardwalk.

Jim Bird

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## Appendix 1: Guided walks information

Date	Group	Number Attending	Grade/Age
April 22-23	UM Bio 310	19+2 14+2	College
April 27-28	Univ. College, Bangor. Intro to Biology	9+1 8+1	College
May 5	Private School	7+1	Ages 6-14
May 28	Deer Isle Stonington Ele.	27+6	Kindergarten
May 29 10:15am and noon	McGraw School, Hampden SAD22	85+10	Grade 2
June 1	Bangor High School	37+?	Grade 9?
June 2	Bangor Christian School	17+?	Grade 7
June 3	Penobscot Community School	33+8	Grades 3-4
June 4	Hammond St. Senior Ctr	?	Senior Citizens
June 8	Enfield Station School	50+10	Grade 4
June 26	Husson Sci Methods Class	10+1	College
August 5	Summer Rec.	2+2	Ages 7-10
Sept. 21-22	Univ. College Bangor	2 groups	College



Sept. 23	Lewis Libby School Milford	30+6	Grade 3
Sept. 27	Maine Central Inst. Pittsfield, ME	14-6	Grades 9-11
Sept. 30-Oct. 1	UM Bio 205	11+2 11+2	College
Oct. 2	Fall Gardening Study Class	20-30+?	Adult
Oct. 5	Searsport District High School	46+7	Grade 9
Date	Group	Number Attending	Grade/Age
Oct. 13	Deer Isle Stonington Ele.	25+6	Kindergarten
Oct. 16 9:30am and 10:45am	Fruit Street School, Bangor	43+? 43+?	Grade 2
Oct. 18	Cub Scout Wolf Den 5	8+8	Ages 7-8
Oct. 21	Old Town Ele. School	25+6	Grade 2
Nov. 4	Homeschool Group	4+2	Ages 10-12
Nov. 4	Girl Scout Troop 856 Brewer	16+?	?

## Appendix 2: Docents and guides

Sue Priest	Nancy Andrews	Hope Brogunier	Kathy Burns
Kay Carter	Daryle Carter	Carol Clift	Lee Davis
Ron Davis	Debbie Dettor	Christina Diebold	Donna Dwyer
Shirley Ellis	Maxine Ewankow	Barb Guidotti	Linda Ives
Fred Kircheis	Nancy Larson	Jerry Ledwith	Al Larson
Phil Locke	Jerry Longcore	Paul Markson	Joan Martin
Pam Nelon	Libby Norton	Latona Torrey	John Pickering
Justin Poland	Andy Reeve	Judy Scholten	
Wendall Tremblay	Joyce Longcore	Rae Wren	John Maddaus
Jean Barry	Bill Glanz	Christa Schwintzer	Jim Bird
Bill Livingston	Brian Olsen	Bill Kuykendall	Andy Reeve