

Orono Bog Boardwalk Annual Report 2010

On Sunday, November 28, 2010 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 8th 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, 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: Joan Martin (scheduling and volunteer coordinator); Phil Locke (maintenance coordinator); John Maddaus and Sue Priest (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); and Tracy Willette (City of Bangor representative to the Management Team). 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 we again calculated the total number of hours our volunteers worked at the Boardwalk. Our estimate is 2,490 hours which we feel is fairly accurate. Using the figure of \$16.36/hour as a benchmark value, we will be able to report \$40,736 of in-kind support when completing grant proposals.

Our year at the Boardwalk was very successful in so many ways as can be seen in the sections below. However, this year was the first time that we have had to close for vandalism. Over Labor Day weekend, vandals did much damage to the Boardwalk and our cabin. Because of our electric eye counter we know that 2-3 people entered the Boardwalk between 1-2am and left between 2-3am the morning of Monday, September 6th. Wendall Tremblay opened as usual on Monday and saw that the cabin had been broken into and called Jim Bird as well as the Bangor Police. As we were discussing the damage, one of our regular, everyday visitors, Buster Hansen, who had been out on the Boardwalk that morning after it was opened at 7am said that we should walk the Boardwalk, there is much damage. Here's what the vandals did:

6 of the 7 interpretative stations were torn off their footings and tossed into the bog. Approximately 18 deckboards were broken during the process

All but one benches were torn off their footings and thrown into the bog. Some benches were completely destroyed and some will be able to be put back on without repair. There are approximately 15 benches (plus or minus 1).

The cabin was broken into: door frame damaged. Some of the cabin contents were thrown around the floor. The only item we can determine stolen is a key to the cabin on a lanyard.

Two signs on the cabin were bent

An obscene drawing was on our nature notes whiteboard with a disparaging remark concerning gays,

The hardware for the main gate lock was taken off – that's how they got in. The piece that holds the gate closed is missing. It was put on with Phillips screws and the screws are missing.

Sixteen deck boards were broken

Hand railing and 6 posts near station 3 – broken

Wheelchair turnout – 2'x8' section – broken off and thrown into bog

Four railings were broken (these are railings we put on for safe wheelchair passage)

Because of the dedication of our regular Boardwalk volunteers and other community members, all under the leadership of our maintenance head Phil Locke, we spent 140 person hours over the next 48 hours and we were able to open on Wednesday, September 8th.

The outpouring of community support in the weeks after the vandalism was very gratifying to all of us. We received many monetary contributions including \$1000 from the Bangor Savings Bank. Many others offered their time and talents on the Boardwalk behalf. The publicity we received the first week after the vandalism was extraordinary with two days of coverage above the fold on the first page of the Bangor Daily News along with numerous radio interviews. As a result of this incident, Bryan Wells of Milford, contacted me about video surveillance of the Boardwalk and offered to build us, at cost, night vision, motion-activated video cameras. As a result of the offer, both the City of Bangor through Tracy Willett, Director of Bangor Parks and Recreation and Boardwalk management Team member and University of Maine, College of Natural

Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture Dean Edward Ashworth offered money to purchase one camera. We will have them in place when the Boardwalk opens on May 1, 2011.

Publicity and Events Sponsored or Attended:

This year the Maine Disability Education Association (MDEA) awarded the Boardwalk and its volunteers a certificate of appreciation. This is the first award that the entire Boardwalk volunteer staff has received and we thank Jeremy Libby of the MDEA for this wonderful award.

For the first time all incoming first year students at the University of Maine were required to volunteer time at area non-profits. Six University of Maine incoming students worked at the Boardwalk. The Bangor Daily News selected the Boardwalk for in depth coverage and we had some wonderful publicity. The students did an excellent job spreading the new gravel (Thanks to Tracy Willette for getting it to us) around the cabin area and trimming vegetation. Thanks to John Maddaus for coming out to help supervise the students. Sue Priest and Jim Bird continued to shovel and rake the gravel that day and the week following to get it to where strollers and wheelchairs could pass with ease. Jim Bird wrote a letter to the editor of the Maine Campus newspaper thanking the 6 students and they reprinted the picture of the students with the letter. During the day there were 40 area non-profits helped by this new University of Maine program and ours was the only letter received by the campus newspaper thanking Maine students for their service project.

Boardwalk volunteers held their 7th 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 \$4200 for our Boardwalk endowment fund. Our seven yard sales have raised over \$22,000 for the Boardwalk endowment. This yard sale is just another way that volunteers inform the public about our Boardwalk. Over the years many volunteers have helped with this yard sale. I would like to acknowledge two of them: Jerry Longcore who has co-led all 7 yard sales works many hours helping to pick up the donations before the sale and on the day of the sale is there from 5am to 7:30pm; and Mary Bird who has worked all 7 yard sales and “puts up” with a house full of donations for up to 6 weeks prior to each sale. She also works the 4am-7:30pm the day of each sale. Another “thank you” is in order for Orono resident Bob Sinclair and his sons. We had 2 wood stoves donated to the sale this year and Bob and his sons helped us with pick up and delivery. They also cleaned and refurbished each of the stoves at no cost.

This year, Jim Bird gave a presentation for University of Maine Professor Jessica Leahy’s PRT (Parks Recreation Tourism) 452 class, Environmental Interpretation. Eighteen

students learned about the Boardwalk and how its programs are enhancing the natural history education for people in the greater Bangor area and beyond. Jim also gave a presentation to the Encore Leadership Corps of the University of Maine Senior College. One of the people in attendance, Lynn DeGrenier, was extremely excited about the Boardwalk. The Encore Leadership Corps has 10, \$200 grants available for participants to support their chosen non-profit group. Lynn wrote a grant for the Boardwalk and was awarded \$200. This money will be used by Phil Locke, our maintenance coordinator, to purchase tools and other supplies for the Boardwalk. We are extremely grateful to Lynn for selecting the Boardwalk for her grant application.

For the fourth 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 over \$400 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 in September. This was the 8th 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. This was just days after the major vandalism at the Boardwalk and we were able to make over \$800 for the Boardwalk endowment. This is twice as much as we normally make at this event. The Harvest Moon Deli on Mill Street held a children's game fundraiser and gave the Boardwalk the proceeds. It is wonderful to have their support.

Ron Davis, the Boardwalk's first director and active Boardwalk volunteer, produced a 2010 Boardwalk calendar this year – the Song Birds of Bangor and East-Central Maine Region. 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 8 calendars available, out of 100 printed.

We produced a new Boardwalk hat this year. Working with Advertising Specialists of Bangor and its co-owner Stefani Berkey, our student intern, Sue Priest, designed a pitcher plant logo and we 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 thank Stefani Berkey for working with us and for her company's monetary donation to the Boardwalk.

In the Fall, Jerry Longcore, John Maddaus, Sue Priest, and Jim Bird met to discuss drafting a grant to the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation to support Boardwalk education. Jim Bird took the ideas generated at this meeting and drafted a grant proposal. As a result, we were awarded \$2000 by the Foundation. At this time we have yet to prioritize

our purchases with this money as we had asked for over \$11,000. We are very grateful to the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation for this support.

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. Although this year we did not have any Orono High School service-learning students we will continue to attend this event in the hope that students select the Boardwalk as their project.

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. Some volunteers do much more. Without these volunteers a visit to the OBB would be a much less satisfying experience. We were fortunate to have Joan Martin as our docent calendar schedulers this year. Joan saw that a scheduler was needed and stepped in to fill the position. 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 our wonderful student intern – Sue Priest, a biology undergraduate at the University of Maine. This is Sue's second year as Boardwalk intern. Sue was involved in almost all aspects of Boardwalk operation from being a dedicated docent to helping with maintenance and helping to lead tours.

Guided Group Walks: We have had many school groups and others visit the Boardwalk this year. Thanks to co-leaders John Maddaus and Sue Priest, and all the guides for a successful year. Eight volunteer tour guides provided guided walks for 21 groups this

year. The groups included public schools, private schools, and a home day care group. The students ranged in age from Kindergarten to a science methods college class. A total of 537 people + chaperones participated in Boardwalk guided walks from May to October with May and June the busiest months. In addition to several school groups from the greater Bangor area, school groups came from Deer Isle/Stonington, Enfield, Searsport, Newburgh, Houlton, East Millinocket, and Island Falls. Three non-school groups came for tours, including Envirothon Advisors, All Saints Summer, and the Maine Tree Club. Seven college classes also visited the Boardwalk including two from the University of Maine, four from University College of Bangor, and one from Husson University.

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:

The Spring Migration – 5 walks led by Ron Joseph, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (retired). (45 attending)

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. (2 attending – very rainy day)

Hydrology in bogs and fens – where does the water go? Led by Andy Reeve, Associate Professor of Earth Sciences, University of Maine. (8 attending)

Peat bogs for kids - led by our Boardwalk intern Susan Priest, Undergraduate student, Biology, University of Maine. (2 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. (8 attending)

What’s wrong with that tree? – led by Bill Livingston, Associate Professor of Forest Resources, School of Forest Resources, University of Maine. (7 attending)

Wildflowers of the Bog: Identification and ecology led by Ron Davis, Professor Emeritus of Biology and Quaternary Studies, University of Maine. (7 attending)

This year we added two new nature walks:

Fungi walk – Seanna Annis, Associate Professor Mycology, University of Maine.
(7 attending)

Dragonflies of the Orono Bog – Bronco Quick, independent researcher. (17 attending)

This year we had 113 people participate in these “reservation-only” walks. This is a record number of people attending these walks.

Maintenance, Construction, Replacements: As in other years, work was needed to get the boardwalk ready for opening on May 1, 2010. 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 Rolland F. Perry 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 July. 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 2010 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. Jerry Ellis, a volunteer for many years and the person who led the cabin construction project, re-polyurethaned the interpretative station covers before the start of the season as he has done twice before. Fred Kircheis, a long time Boardwalk volunteer delivered 30, 27” cedar logs to be used to shore up floats along the lawn section of the Boardwalk. Fred also led the painting effort of our benches and railings. Tom Hansen, one of our first Boardwalk volunteers who help build the Boardwalk, donated his talents as a locksmith to replace the locking mechanism and re-keyed the cabin door after the vandalism. Our outhouse must also be thoroughly cleaned every week. We were very fortunate to have Linda Ives volunteer to do this for part of the season. Other outhouse cleaners were Phil

Locke, Jerry Longcore, Sue Priest, and Jim Bird. Their work is greatly appreciated. Many deck boards (and some railings) had to be replaced this season – in some weeks 10+ deck boards were replaced. The decay rate, especially for sections in the shadier areas, seems to have accelerated, which is worrisome.

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.

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Appendix 1: Guided walks information

Date	Group	Number Attending	Grade/Age
April 26-27	Univ. College,	9+1	College
	Bangor. Bio Intro	8+1	
April 28-29	BIO 310, UM	14+2	College
		18+2	
May 7	Hodgdon HS, Houlton	10	Grade 12
May 13	John Bapst HS AP BIO Class	29	Kindergarten
May 14	Caswell Elem School	16	Grades 2-5
May 15	AAUW	28	Adults
May 18	Orono Middle School	50	Grade 7
May 25	E. Millinocket Elem School	28	Grade 2
May 27	Envirothon	20	Adults
June 1	Deer-Isle Stonington Elem School	26+6	Kindergarten
June 3	Bangor Christian	20	Grade 7
June 4 – 2 groups 10:15am and noon	McGraw School	89+13	Grade 2
June 7	Enfield Station School	42+10	Grade 4

June 8 – 2 groups 10:15am and noon	Newburgh School	37+6 41+5	K-1 Grades 2-3
June 9	Helen S. Dunn School, Greenbush	32	Grades 2,5
June 11	Maine Tree Club, UM Coop Ext. Cumberland Co.	7	Adult
June 25	All Saints Summer Camp	7+4	Ages 8-12
July 2	Home day care, Bradley	12	Ages 4-12
July 15	Southern Aroostock Com. School	49	Grades K-7
August 6	ED 316, Science Methods, Husson	10+1	Undergraduates
September 20	Univ. College, Bangor	12+1	Undergraduates
September 21	Univ. College, Bangor	12+1	Undergraduates
October 7	Searsport High School	48+7	Grade 9
October 18	Deer-Isle Stonington Elem. School	21+4	Kindergarten

Appendix 2: Docents and guides

Sue Priest	Ron Joseph	Hope Brogunier	Kathy Burns
Kay Carter	Daryle Carter	Amanda Lusas	Lee Davis
Ron Davis	Lew Allen	Christina Diebold	Donna Dwyer
Kathy Burns	Dick Andren	Barb Guidotti	Linda Ives
Fred Kircheis	Nancy Larson	Jerry Ledwith	Al Larson
Phil Locke	Jerry Longcore	Paul Markson	Joan Martin
Seanna Annis	Libby Norton	John Pickering	
Justin Poland	Andy Reeve	Judy Scholten	
Wendall Tremblay	Joyce Longcore		John Maddaus
Bronco Quick	Bill Glanz	Christa Schwintzer	Jim Bird
Bill Livingston	Brian Olsen		Andy Reeve