

## Orono Bog Boardwalk Annual Report 2020

As you all know, the Boardwalk was closed during the 2020 season due to the pandemic. Although we were closed, there was still much happening concerning the OBB. In a departure from previous annual reports I've arranged this one by month.

### January:

A friend of Tony Sohns (co-owner of the Rock and Art Shop) contacted us. Mr. Sohns passed away on February 6, 2019. A group of friends of Tony Sohns started the Tony Sohns Memorial Fund and, because of his love of the outdoors and the Boardwalk, wanted to support the OBB in the form of donated funds to support a OBB docent or an internship. They asked for a proposal from the OBB. A proposal was written for funds to help support a docent, and the proposal was accepted. However, because of the pandemic this project was put on hold. The memorial fund directors will be contacted in 2021, to see if the funds will still be available at some point in 2021 when we might be ready to hire a student intern.

### February:

The annual OBB social was held at the Church of Universal Fellowship in Orono in February. The social was well attended with 30+ volunteers enjoying a wonderful array of delicious foods. Donna Dwyer put together a slide show of her photographs of all things OBB. Great photos!! As we have done for the past few years, the OBB Management Committee selected some volunteers for an award (plaque with grass pink orchard photo), thanking them for their volunteer work at the OBB. Congratulations to Dave Easler, Dick McClay, Steve McKay, and Donna and Gerry Dwyer! Jim Bird gave a brief Boardwalk update. Thanks to Trudy Tremblay for arranging for us to meet at the church.

Jim Bird nominated our student intern Kimberly Stoddard for the annual UM Student Employee of the Year award. Unfortunately the award ceremony and reception were cancelled due to the pandemic.

Conor Bergin, an undergraduate student of UM Prof. John Daigle contacted Jim about doing a senior project involving the OBB. Jim met with Conor and John to discuss possibilities. We agreed that an oral history of the OBB from a volunteer perspective would be appropriate. Conor would interview a group of OBB volunteers and produce an oral history of their involvement at the OBB. Conor was in the process of setting up interviews with selected volunteers when everything closed down due to the pandemic. Since Conor has now graduated from UM, John Daigle will be contacted in 2021 to see if at some point another UM Parks and Recreation undergraduate can pick up the project.

### March:

After three years of work, [The Bog Walker's Companion - A Guide to the Orono Bog Boardwalk](#), edited by Jerry Longcore, James Bird, and Robert Klose with a preface by Bernd Heinrich was published by the University of Maine Press. The price is \$28. We had hoped to host a publication reception and to sell the book at the Boardwalk in 2020. Unfortunately this was not possible. We have copies of the book for Boardwalk volunteers at \$20. If you haven't already got a copy and would like one, please contact Jim (james.bird@maine.edu) to arrange for pick up or mailing.

April:

Al and Nancy Larsen walked the OBB to assess any damage from high winds. They reported that there were problems with Interpretive Stations 5 & 6. Jim and Dick McClay went out to the OBB to assess damage and found that both of these stations were blown into the bog. It looked like the stations were not properly secured to the decking. After consulting with Jerry, Jim contacted Tracy Willette to see if he could send a city crew out to retrieve the Interpretation Stations from the bog so that they would not be damaged by water. Tracy's crew went out on April 29th and put the stations back on the OBB. Thanks, Tracy and crew.

The OBB Management Committee met to discuss the OBB in relation to the pandemic. After much discussion we decided to keep the OBB closed and reassess the situation on a monthly basis.

Jim contacted our honorary OBB opener, Bernd Heinrich, to tell him that we would not be opening on May 1st. We hope to have Professor Heinrich as our honorary opener when we open at some point during 2021. We will, however, have to wait to see how things go with the pandemic.

Both Jerry and Jim gave interviews to local TV stations about the Boardwalk and the fact that we would be closed. Jerry's interview was via zoom and Jim's was live at the Tripp Dr. parking lot gate.

May:

Jim sent out Bog Walker's Companion book announcement postcards to 160 long-time OBB supporters. Several book sales resulted.

Jim was contacted by an APHIS/USDA specialists to see if we would like the Emerald Ash Borer purple trap put up near Interpretive Station #1. Jim told her of the OBB status and said "no" to the trap for this year. We told her to contact the city of Bangor about putting up a purple trap in the City Forest.

July:

We received our interest rollover from the OBB Endowment Fund at the University of Maine Foundation. We typically divide the money between the OBB Endowment Fund and the OBB Operations Fund. The OBB Management Committee decided to put all of the money in the OBB Endowment Fund in 2020.

September:

In mid-month Al and Nancy Larson walked the OBB to assess tree damage as a result of high winds. They reported that several trees were down and that one tree at Interpretive Station #4 was leaning right over the station. Jim, Jerry, Dave Easler, and Dick McClay went out to inspect the Station 4 tree and found that it was too dangerous for us to take down. Jim contacted Keith Kanoti, UM forest manager, to see if he could remove the tree. He sent someone to take a look. This person suggested that we get a licensed arborist to remove. Jim contacted James Zuhlke who specializes in removing dangerous trees. James came out with Jim to inspect the situation. James gave us a price of \$400 to remove the tree and several others that were leaning over the OBB. Since the trees were on UM property Jim contact UM NSFA Acting Dean Mario Teisl to see if the University would pay. Jim explained in a letter to Dean Teisl the University's role in OBB Management. Dean Teisl agreed to pay for the tree

removal and James Zuhlke and crew came out soon after to remove the dangerous tree and several others. Note: The downed trees were left in the bog.

Jim gave a zoom presentation to UM Professor John Daigle's class - SFR 434 - Recreation Site Planning and Management. Jim gave the presentation to 15 students and John Daigle. The presentation was well received and resulted in many student questions.

November:

For the past several years we have sent out a one-page OBB update to 300-400 OBB donors. This year we sent out 360 letters that focussed on the fact that we had been closed during the 2020 season and that our book The Bog Walker's Companion was available. The letter was illustrated with 5 wonderful photographs by Dave Easler, Jerry Longcore, and Donna Dwyer. Thank you all! The letter resulted in many donations as well as some book sales.

Throughout the year:

Ron Davis has authored a wonderful report entitled: An Illustrated Memoir and Historical Account of the Creation of the Orono Bog Boardwalk. It is something that everyone interested in the Boardwalk should read. If you'd like to obtain a pdf of the report please email Ron directly at [rondavis@maine.edu](mailto:rondavis@maine.edu). Please put "Boardwalk memoir" in the subject line when emailing.

We continued to receive donations to the UM Foundation OBB accounts: Endowment, Operations, and Education & Outreach. We receive a monthly update listing donors and donation amount. Jim wrote thank you notes to all.

Jim worked on a Boardwalk Director's Manual. As of 3/2021 it is almost completed.

Jerry completed an annual maintenance review of the OBB which includes activities that should be completed annually to ensure the safety of the OBB.

Since the OBB was not open in 2020, the City of Bangor maintained the outhouse. Thank you to Tracy and Bangor City crew.

The Boardwalk Facebook page was updated on a regular basis throughout the year. Thanks to Donna Dwyer!

The OBB annual report usually contains OBB income/expense statements compiled by Jerry. Jerry has not yet received the numbers from UM NSFA. When they are completed we will send them to everyone.

Thanks all and stay safe.

Jim Bird  
Director, Orono Bog Boardwalk  
March 2021

