



Skowhegan's Return to the River

ME Outdoor Economy Summit 2022

**Kristina Cannon
Executive Director, Main Street Skowhegan**

Community Transformation through Outdoor Recreation

- +Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure**
- +Outdoor Programming and Skills Clinics**
- +Gear and Equipment**
- ALL FREE**



Outdoor Rec Infrastructure

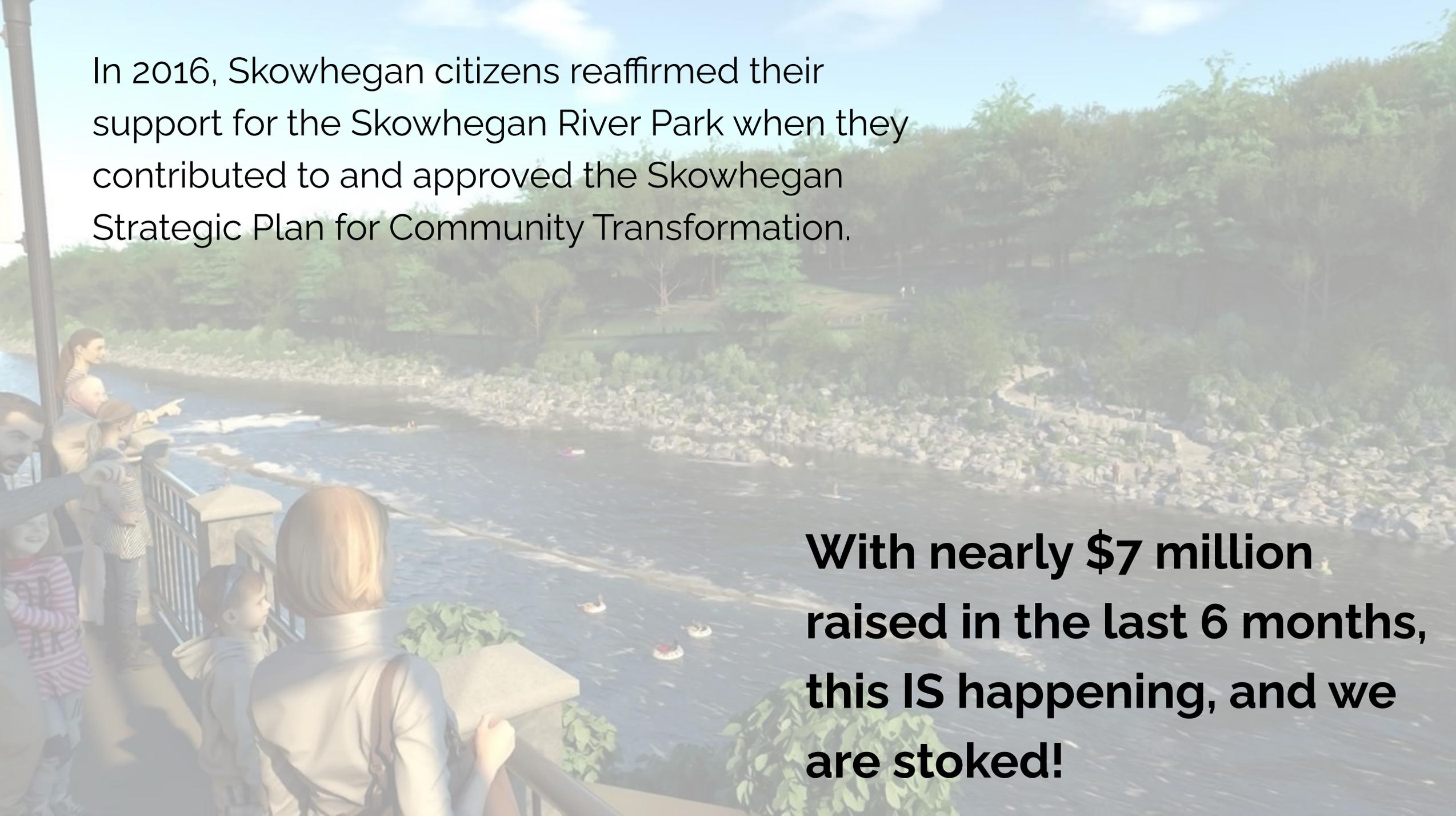
The Skowhegan River Park will redevelop an industrial downtown river corridor into an accessible outdoor recreation asset with an expanded trail network and enhanced whitewater.

The river park will not only benefit community members through improved river access and free recreation opportunities, but it will also bolster the regional economy by attracting visitors, businesses, and new residents.



Skowhegan River Park

- A more welcoming riverfront in the heart of Skowhegan
- A riverfront promenade that will connect Skowhegan's historic downtown to the river and offer scenic river views
- Improved river access from both river banks
- Enhanced whitewater waves for kayaking, surfing, stand-up paddle boarding, and body boarding; infrastructure needed to host freestyle whitewater events
- Natural fish channel on river left for tubing
- Estimated 50 miles of four-season trails—including single track for mountain biking—accessible via downtown

A group of people, including children and adults, are standing on a bridge or walkway overlooking a river. The river has a dam and rapids, with several people in inflatable tubes floating down. The background shows a lush, green forested hillside under a blue sky with light clouds. The scene is bright and sunny.

In 2016, Skowhegan citizens reaffirmed their support for the Skowhegan River Park when they contributed to and approved the Skowhegan Strategic Plan for Community Transformation.

With nearly \$7 million raised in the last 6 months, this IS happening, and we are stoked!

**ENHANCED INDUSTRIAL RIVER CORRIDOR
FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND
COMMUNITY BENEFIT**





REDEVELOPED DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT



NORTH SIDE (DOWNTOWN) RIVER ACCESS STAIRS



NORTH SIDE (DOWNTOWN) VIEWING AREAS

DESIGN CONCEPTS (AUG PUBLIC MEETINGS)





**DESIGN CONCEPTS
(AUG PUBLIC MEETINGS)**

SOUTH SIDE RIVER ACCESS STAIRS & ADA RAMP (NOT PICTURED)





FEATURE 1: KAYAK WAVE

EXAMPLE: BUENA VISTA, COLORADO





PARK & PLAY CONCEPT

The kayak wave will be perfect for learning to whitewater playboat in a kayak. With reliable and predictable features designed to perform at all flow levels, the park will provide an excellent setting for trainings and whitewater programming.

FEATURE 1: KAYAK WAVE

PARK & PLAY IN ACTION: SHERIDAN, COLORADO





FEATURE 2: SURF WAVE

**ONLY ADJUSTABLE RIVER
SURF WAVE IN THE
NORTHEASTERN U.S.**



EXAMPLE: SHERIDAN, COLORADO





TUBING AND NATURAL FISH CHANNEL



FREE AND OPEN TO ALL



FEATURE 3: KAYAK WAVE



EXPANDED TRAIL NETWORK ACCESSIBLE FROM DOWNTOWN



Downtown
Skowhegan

Surf Wave
Operations

Surf Wave
Signage

Surf Wave

South River Bank
Access Walkway

Kayak Wave

North River Bank
Access Stairs

Walking
Bridge

Kayak Wave
Signage

RIVER FEST
- RUN RIVER -

Economic Development

The river park will increase spending locally and statewide by an anticipated \$6 million in the base year and up to \$19 million in year 10, which will in turn bolster wages and profits.

Economic Impact, Base Year

Metric	Maine	Somerset County
Annual Sales/Spending	\$5.9 million	\$4.6 million
Permanent Employment (FTE)	54 jobs	43 jobs
Annual Labor Income	\$1.5 million	\$1 million

Source: Economic Impact of Proposed Run of River Whitewater Park, 2016

Annual State and Local Tax and Fee Revenue Generated

Category	Operations
Individual and Corporate Income Taxes	\$46,700
Sales Taxes	\$122,500
Property Taxes	\$154,900
Other Taxes & Fees	\$39,100
Total State & Local Tax Revenue	\$363,200

Source: Economic Impact of Proposed Run of River Whitewater Park, 2016

Community Investment: EDA Data

Intended private investment and anticipated job growth as a result of the river park:

Total intended investment = \$39,750,000

New Jobs = 73

As reported by local business owners and developers who currently own properties and intend to invest money and add jobs in order to grow their businesses. [Spring 2022]

Economic Transformation Underway

- 7 Island Avenue: Bigelow Brewing, three floors of housing
- 151 Water Street: Renovated retail space, future AirBnB units
- 181 Water Street: Redeveloped community center with a pool for kayak rolling clinics
- 185 Water Street: Recently purchased, currently renovating
- 24 Court Street: Mixed-use development adjacent to Maine Grains that will expand the town's burgeoning food hub
- 31 Court Street: Recently renovated AirBnB units
- 7 Joyce Street: Property recently purchased to offer visitors short-term riverside accommodations
- Whit's End Grill & Bar (123 Madison Ave): Recently purchased; future home of new Brickyard Hollow location
- 65 Water Street: Recently purchased; future expanded home of our gear library and a new coffee shop



Fundraising Goals

Skowhegan River Park - Construction Phase 1 Fundraising Goal = \$8.6 million



South Shore River Access

Access trail, shoreline path, and
ADA ramp



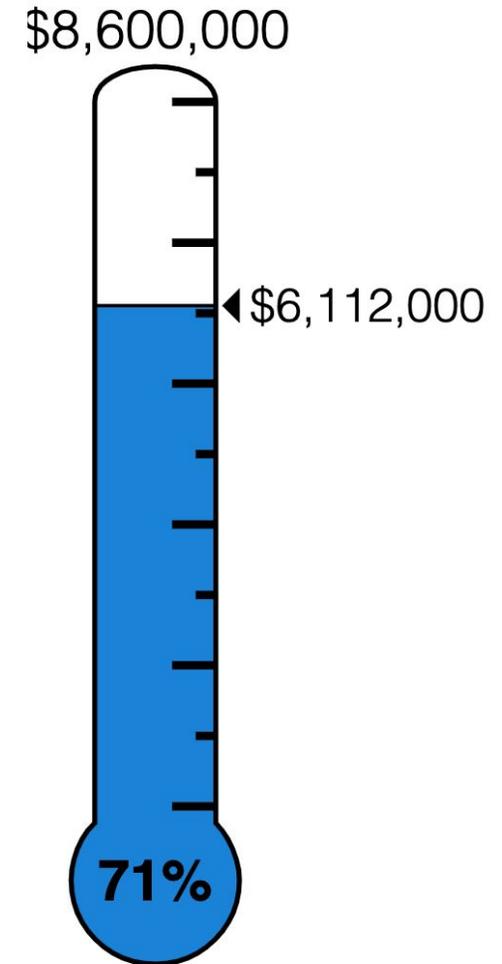
Two Wave Features

Enhanced whitewater for paddling
& surfing, including the Northeast's
first adjustable wave



Viewing Areas

Places to linger while watching
action in the river



Includes recently awarded \$4.89 million EDA Grant

Fundraising Goals

Skowhegan River Park - Construction Phase 2

Goal = \$4.3 million



North Shore River Access

North bank stairs (from downtown)



Downtown Riverfront Promenade

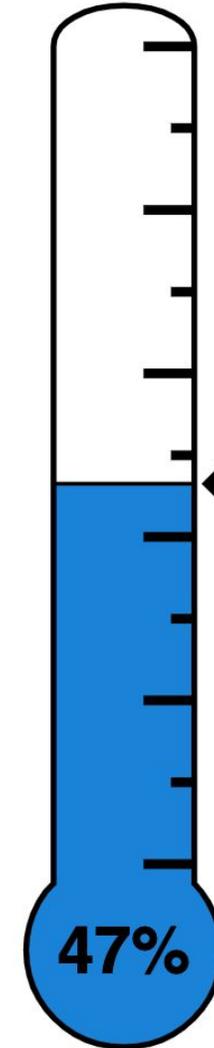
Riverside walkway from the Old Mill Pub to the Municipal Building



Additional Viewing Areas

Places to linger while watching action in the river, including a potential deck wrapped around the side of The S.P.A.C.E. on the River

\$4,300,000



\$2,000,000

47%

\$2 million Earmark/Congressionally Designated Spending (CDS) funding awarded in March

Project Timeline

- Environmental Permitting (currently underway)
- Fundraising (ongoing)
- Final Design (Winter 2023)
- Construction (Summer 2023 / 2024)



You build it and they will come ...
but will your community use it?

2019: Outdoor Programming, Clinics, Gear



Lake George
Regional Park
lakegeorgepark.org



SKOWHEGAN
OUTDOORS



Volunteer Maine
Maine Commission for Community Service



Skowhegan Outdoors

- Five trained AmeriCorps members serving as Outdoor Rec Facilitators
- Free, guided programs 3x/week
 - Kids/family activities
 - Skills clinics
 - Regular programs: yoga/canoe meetups/ducky paddles
- After school programs/outing clubs
- Summer rec camp activities
- 180+ items in gear library (free to borrow)
 - Moving to larger space in February!





FREE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

SPONSORED BY:



AUSTIN ASSOCIATE
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

OCTOBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>skowheganoutdoors.com or facebook.com/skowheganoutdoors 207-612-2571</p> <p>Please preregister for activities to hold your spot.</p>						<p>Mosquito Mtn/ Moxie Falls meet at 48 Court St at 9 a.m.</p> <p>Garlic Fest at Lake George Regional Park</p>
	<p>Forest Therapy Walk at Coburn Woods 5-7 p.m.</p>		<p>Canoe Meet Up at Marti Stevens Learning Center 4:30-6 p.m.</p> <p>REACH afterschool program</p>	<p>REACH afterschool program</p>		<p>Autumn Festival at the Riverfront Greenspace 2-4 p.m.</p>
			<p>Tree ID Hike at Robbins Hill Scenic Overlook 5:30-7 p.m.</p> <p>REACH afterschool program</p>	<p>REACH afterschool program</p>	<p>Geocaching at Coburn Park 5-6 p.m.</p>	
	<p>Forest Therapy Walk Lake George Regional Park 5-7 p.m.</p>		<p>REACH afterschool program</p>	<p>REACH afterschool program</p>		<p>Tumbledown meet at MSS Office (48 Court St) 9-4 p.m..</p>
<p>Pumpkin Painting with REACH at Riverfront Greenspace 1-3 p.m.</p>	<p>Yoga at the SPACE by the River 10-11 a.m.</p>		<p>Costume Kickball at SAMS 5-6 p.m.</p> <p>REACH afterschool program</p>	<p>REACH afterschool program</p>	<p>Halloween Movie at the Riverfront Greenspace (151 Water St) 7-10 p.m.</p>	
<p>Costume Hike with REACH Yankee Woodlot 1-2 p.m and 6-7 p.m.</p>	<p>Halloween</p>					

"THANK YOU FOR THE INTERESTING WALK. I FEEL THAT THE MORE THAT PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF THE INVASIVE INSECTS AND PLANTS THAT MAYBE THERE IS HOPE THAT WE CAN STOP FUTURE THREATS. SO THANK YOU FOR SPREADING THE WORD."



*Nature walk led by partners
Somerset Woods Trustees*

**Community Partners
and Supporters**

Austin & Associates
Hight Family of Dealerships
Lake George Regional Park
Outdoor Sport Institute
Jim Browne Foundation/Lakewood Golf
REACH After School Program
Redington-Fairview General Hospital

Skowhegan Fire Department
Skowhegan High School Outing Club
Somerset Public Health
Somerset Woods Trustees
SCTC Outdoor Leadership Program
Whittemore & Sons

2021 By the Numbers



150 outdoor programs executed by AmeriCorps members



830+ participants attended Skowhegan Outdoors activities



46 volunteers dedicated 325+ hours



\$75,000+ in community investment



180+ items in our gear library available to the community for FREE

"THANKS MARA! I HAVE NOT WINTER CAMPED BEFORE BUT IT IS ON MY TO DO LIST AND CLOSER TO ACTUALLY HAPPENING THANKS TO YOUR TIPS"



13 *Winter camping clinic*



Inflatable kayaks on the Kennebec in Skowhegan - photo Down-River Expeditions

Skowhegan Outdoors Gear Library

Borrow - for free! - any of the following items:

- Canoes
- Standup paddle boards
- Inflatable duckies (kayaks)
- Life jackets/PFDs
- Fly fishing rods/reels
- Sleeping bags/pads
- Cook stoves/pots
- Assorted camp cookware
- Compression/dry sacks
- X-country skis/boots/poles
- Microspikes
- Mountain bikes
- Bike helmets
- Yoga mats/blocks
- Hiking backpacks
- Tents
- Binoculars
- Snowshoes
- Headlamps



9/11 FLAG HIKE

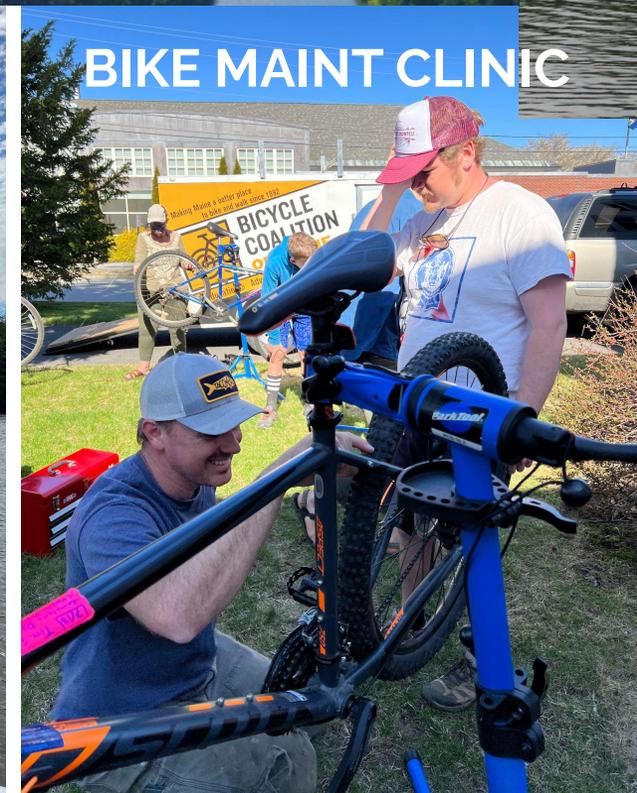
FLAG HIKE



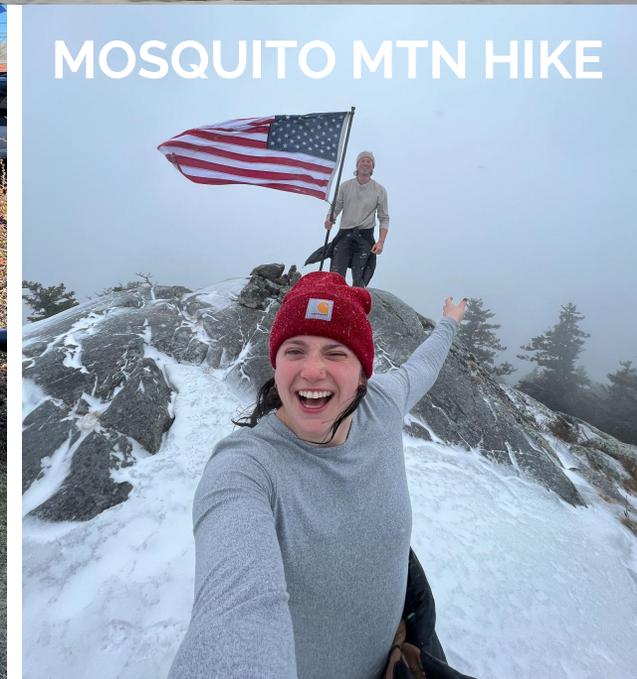
WW KAYAK CLINIC



STAND-UP PADDLE BOARDING CLINIC



BIKE MAINT CLINIC



MOSQUITO MTN HIKE



SUNSET HIKE AT ROBBINS HILL

COMMUNITY HIKE



GLOW STICK PADDLE



MOXIE FALLS SNOWSHOE



Associated Projects Underway

Trail Master Plan

Adding new singletrack trails and focusing on trail connectivity

Riverfront Redevelopment

BuildSkowhegan.com to check out design concepts and take survey

Village Partnership Initiative

Town working with DOT to make our village (downtown) area safer for bikes and pedestrians



Takeaways

1. Get your community involved
2. Prioritize outdoor recreation access for all
 - a. Focus on engaging people new to OR
 - b. Help overcome barriers (cost, transportation, lack of knowledge)
3. Be tenacious



For More Information

- SkowheganRiverPark.com
- SkowheganOutdoors.com
- BuildSkowhegan.com
- MainStreetSkowhegan.org

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