

ONGOING WORKSHOPS and DISPLAYS

For in-between workshop time, we have a few informational workshops and vendor displays.

Alder Stream Canvas

Jane Barron

Alder Stream Canvas specializes in high quality canvas outdoor accessories, in both classic and modern styles, all made in Maine. Designed and manufactured for over 25 years by Registered Maine Guide Jane Barron with durability and hard use in mind. Jane's designs are based on her experiences canoeing and hiking in Maine, Labrador, Alaska and the Yukon and while guiding wilderness trips in Maine and Minnesota.

Paddle Carving

Gerry Saunders & Ken Wise

Stop by and join Gerry and Ken for this all-day, drop-in demonstration of paddle-carving!

Basket Making - Wood Thrush Wilderness

Jessica Steele

Jes will demonstrate her basket making - from fishing creels, pack baskets, foraging baskets made with various natural materials such as reed, ash, or birch bark.

Canoe Poles

Matt Hopkinson

A limited number of competition spec 12 ft aluminum poles for sale. The one piece poles weigh about 3 pounds and have a point on each end. The 2 piece poles aren't generally used for competition and weigh a few ounces more but are easier to store in the boat. 1- piece poles are \$100, 2-piece are \$125.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

These are workshops or talks that we want you to pay special attention to.

Kids and Parents Orientation Meeting

Junior Program Instructors

We will cover info and expectations you will want to know including safety and security. We have multiple offerings at many time slots for a variety of choices and time to paddle, play, and swim. We always offer different activities for the older and younger kids to do separately and for parents and children to do together. We welcome additional adults if you would like to assist with activities. Or, please come and participate in some of these fun activities with your children for your own enjoyment.

Friday and Saturday Evening Campfire

Event Staff

One of the highlights for many each year is the Saturday evening campfire. Held immediately after the evening program, this evening celebration features spontaneous stories, camp songs and great memories. Often accompanied by loons, this is a great experience to really appreciate the camaraderie of the Symposium.

Kids' Program: MaCKRO Canoes

This program is for kids only...and that is because no adult would ever fit into these kid-sized canoes! This workshop takes place in sheltered water and is perfect for any kid. It's always a big hit, but we'll let a long-time MCS participant sell it: "The funnest ride is the MaCKRO canoes because they are tiny and you get to go by yourself and you can go anywhere you want." - Homer D., age 9

Star Gazing / Night Paddle

John Meader

If the skies are clear after the evening presentation, John (a professional planetarium director for more than 30 years) will lead a late-night paddle. We will paddle out into the lake far enough to get a good open view of the skies. From there, we will faft together, lie back and do some star gazing. Come learn a few early summer constellations, see the visible planets, a shooting star, and perhaps even contemplate the meaning of the universe! The late-night paddle is weather-dependent, will be limited to John's discretion and everyone must bring a flashlight, paddle, and a PFD.

Voyageur Canoe Race

All are Welcome!!!

Part of the annual closing ceremonies for the Symposium is the voyageur canoe race, featuring a couple of Camp Caribou's beautiful 25-foot wood/canvas voyageur canoes. Competition is fierce, rivalries grow with time, and everyone has fun. Come join the fun, cheer the teams and see which captain will earn the Golden Paddle.

Why Canoes in the Old Town, Maine area?

Benson Gray

We'll trace the rich canoe building history of the Old Town Maine area, starting with traditional Native American designs and moving thru the many companies (Gerrish, Thatcher, Morris, Carleton, White, Old Town, Penobscot, etc.) that called Old Town home. We'll primarily focus on the iconic Old Town Canoe Company, with its long history and wealth of information available.

Presentation: Flyfishing Labrador

Kate Farnham

Kate's presentation chronicles a couple of fly fishing trips she took to the Labrador, baked in are images of beautiful scenery, amazing fish and info about gear, wildlife, weather.....etc all the stuff a crazy person addicted to fly fishing would yammer on about!

Presentation: East Machias Loop Trip

Matt Hopkinson

Join expert canoeist and wild river poler Matt Hopkinson for a report of a recent loop trip poling up the East Machias and snubbing down the Machias.

ON-WATER WORKSHOPS

Water workshops have capacity limits and must be registered ahead of time during the scheduled registration period. Workshops are first-come-first-serve and we will make every attempt to allow for a fair and equitable registration process. A waitlist will be provided and if there is enough interest we may take the overflow and offer a repeat at a later session block.

Introduction to Canoe Poling

Kevin Silliker

Come and learn to canoe pole! This beginner workshop introduces the fundamentals of canoe poling using traditional spruce poles. Participants will gain experience in using the pole to propel their canoe forward and backward, how to pivot their canoe, how to make turns with a canoe, and (importantly) how to stop their canoe. Guaranteed to be fun and educational, and you will learn some valuable skills.

Sculling - Controlling Sideways Movement

Mike DeHart

Learn the coordinated skill of the sculling draw. A very useful skill when navigating and controlling a canoe dockside or when skillfully negotiating a tricky rapid. This is beyond basic skill, it's recommended to have a good working knowledge of forward and reverse strokes.

Tandem Canoeing Fundamentals

David Butler

Intro Paddling will give you the basic skills needed to propel a boat where you want it to go. You will learn how to get into and back out of a canoe – and stay dry in the process! You'll cover the strokes that form the foundation of canoeing. You will learn how to move your boat forward and also how to turn and spin it. Additional topics; Learn the lingo of a paddler, fitting a PFD, paddle selection and sizing, why there are so many paddling strokes, and more. Even if you've paddled a canoe before, the Intro class will help you brush up on what you know before taking a more advanced class, correct a bad habit, or even teach you something new. Come learn a little and have some fun too!

Intro to Solo Canoeing

Rory Matchett

This session focuses on some of the differences in paddling solo—where it's all up to you. We'll spend a few minutes talking about differences between paddling a solo canoe and soloing a tandem boat, and how soloing impacts things like launching and landing, paddling position, and maintaining boat stability. On the water, we'll go through basic strokes and how to adjust to not having another paddler in the boat. Back on land, and depending on time, we'll go over some basics of rigging for solo paddling, including ballast, seat height/angle, and other aspects. Bring your own solo canoe or use one of the camp's tandems.

Northwoods Canoe Stroke - Tandem

Jane Barron

A variation on the “slicing J” (or “Canadian” stroke in Bill Mason’s lexicon), true Northwoods paddling uses a narrow-bladed beavertail paddle at a fast stroke-rate, a slight bob to the torso to engage the abdominal muscles, and a slicing underwater recovery to cover a lot of miles with less effort. Take the class to learn a traditional paddling stroke used by Maine Guides to paddle all day and not get tired. A working knowledge of the J-stroke is helpful but not necessary.

Women’s Canoe Poling

Jean Gerber

In a small class of five, learn the basics of choosing a boat and pole, where to stand, and very basic maneuvering. We will learn how to turn right and left, push off nice and straight, how to stop and sideslip. Women teaching women! Learn from someone with your sized arms, your upper body strength, and plus I know how your brain works! We're not building a rocket ship, just having a blast on the water, so come and play.

Tandem Canoeing Skill-Building for Women

Leah Titcomb

In this course, we will go over parts of the paddle and canoe, and learn basic paddling strokes in the bow and stern. We will practice sideslips, turning, and paddling in a straight line. Come learn in a supportive environment!

J-Stroke Clinic

David Butler & Ben Meader

In this session we will work on corrective strokes. Techniques will be covered to help you make it easier for you to learn and make it more effective. We will also try a few of "the many variations" of the J.

English Gates - Canoe Skills Course

Keith Attenborough

This workshop will introduce you to English Gates, a training tool for solo and tandem paddlers consisting of two buoys and four sets of patterns for working on strokes and maneuvers. For beginners, the Gates encourage you to work on building basic stroke skills and on blending strokes. For folks with more experience, the Gates provide an opportunity to fine tune strokes and even invent new patterns to up the challenge. Progress is easily measured objectively by tracking the time to complete the pattern and subjectively by how smooth the strokes and turns feel. The segmented patterns let you choose which set of strokes you want to work on at any given time, and the Gates are simple enough to be created using household items. During the workshop you’ll get to run through the patterns, and you’ll leave with pattern sheets and simple instructions on how to make your own Gates. Limit to five boats (tandem or single) notes on adding a competitive aspect.

Swim Time OR Tandem Canoeing

Kids' Program

A lifeguard will be on-duty. Children have the option to swim or to practice their skills with a partner in full size tandem canoes.

Canoe Safety & Recovery

Rory Matchett & Kevin Silliker

Canoe safety is important to all paddlers. This workshop is always fun and a great way to learn, (or re-learn) and to practice skills that will enhance your enjoyment of paddling. Getting wet is optional in this workshop except for Kevin and Rory, who will definitely be getting in the water. Participants will get hands-on experience in use of throw ropes, proper fitment of PFDs, how to react when a capsize happens, how to take charge and perform canoe rescues, and other items as time permits. The only prerequisite for this workshop is for you to bring your smiles. We will take care of the rest.

Women in the Stern

Polly Mahoney

Women make great stern paddlers! And men are great bow paddlers! Sit & Switch paddling is ideally suited to put the strongest member of the canoe pair in the bow, where (his) muscles can motor you through the water and the woman in the stern can finesse and fine-tune the course direction. Come learn more about bow and stern responsibilities, tandem teamwork, and why, for many couples, this arrangement makes the most efficient and pleasant paddling.

Tandem Canoe Intermediate

Monica Schnitger & Shawn Burke

This session will focus on bow/stern coordination, emphasizing boat control and smooth paddling. Course content will vary depending on your needs and interests: Precision boat handling, spins and turns, dock turns, improving your tandem paddling efficiency, etc. Course Prerequisite: Attendees must have least one full season of paddling under their belt prior to taking this workshop, and have a good grasp of the forward stroke, draws, pries, and the J-stroke.

Intro to Style Canoeing

Rory Matchett

Style Canoeing follows in the footsteps of Omer Stringer, Bill Mason, Becky Mason, and others paddling in a classic Canadian form also called "Omering", Canadian Style, or Classic Solo Canoeing. This is a solo workshop (one participant in each canoe). Participants will be introduced to paddling a heeled canoe, basic forward and reverse paddling. Students will obtain skills in pivoting their canoe, and cool maneuvers like one-handed pry turns and circle strokes. This workshop is limited to six (6) solo paddlers.

Canoe Poling - Skills Development

Jean Gerber & Matt Hopkinson

Jean and Matt have both poled thousands of miles on wild rivers all over New England and Canada. This is a great opportunity to work on technique and form and to get individualized coaching. Beginners are welcome, but it is recommended that you've taken an Intro to Poling workshop.

Pattee Pond Canoe Tour - Group Paddle

Dave Lewis & Jane Barron

If you are looking to simply paddle around and explore Pattee Pond, and maybe learn a tidbit or two about controlling your canoe, this is the workshop for you! In this session, we will lead a group around Pattee Pond, and help with your paddling skills if you like. Bring a tandem canoe and a partner, paddles, and PFDs, and let's go paddling!

Finding Balance in Your Canoe

Leah Titcomb

This is a water-based session to learn about body alignment in your canoe to feel balanced and centered while you paddle, pole, pass the snacks, or get rocked by a wave. Learn paddle techniques and body positioning, and play around with balancing.

Voyager Canoe Paddle

TBD

All ages welcome to join us as we take out one or two voyageur canoes for a paddle around Pattee Pond. It's a great opportunity to experience the easy flow and comradeship of voyageur canoe travel.

ON-LAND WORKSHOPS

Mindfulness for Paddlers

Shawn Burke

Mindfulness connects us with present-moment experience in an open and non-judgmental way. We'll apply it to paddling using a few simple hands-on exercises. Mindfulness can be employed to better understand our stroke and boat handling. Or it can simply make paddling a more enriching and joyful experience. I invite you to join me and find out for yourself.

Staying Found - Sourcing and Reading Maps

Ben Meader

Join paddler and cartographer Ben Meader for an interactive discussion of maps. Ben makes map reading easy and accessible. Learn what separates good paddling maps from poor ones and what you should look for when planning your next outing.

Intro to Canoeing for Kids

Kids' Program

We'll cover all the basics to safety and effectively have a great day on the water.

Poling, Paddling, Portaging - Gearing up for Adventure

Matt Hopkinson

Master the art of canoe camping! Learn how to set up your canoe for paddling, poling, portaging, and maybe even sailing. Plus, I'll show you how to arrange your gear in the boat and on your back for a comfortable and efficient journey. This class is perfect for anyone who wants to experience the beauty and adventure of canoe camping.

Campfire Cooking

David Lewis

A fireside workshop, we will discuss campfire baking with a reflector oven. We will analyze the various designs of available ovens, fire-making strategies, and share some favorite recipes. We use an oven that is based on models refined in the early 1800s, and we would like to share our experiences of baking with such an oven. Typically, we will have a baked dessert and bread each day on our canoe trips and would like to share our ideas with you.

Photography Wanderabout

John Meader

Join photographer John Meader for a *wander-about* with our cameras, whether a fancy DSLR or cell phone, it doesn't matter. We'll cover lighting, silhouettes, action, form, composition, and typical problems taking pictures on trips and in canoes.

Dehydrating and Packaging Backcountry Food

Monica Schnitger

When you're on a backcountry trip, you want food that tastes good and fuels your

activity. This workshop will help you plan your trip meals and snacks, cover the basics of dehydrating, give you some ideas for packing it all efficiently and cooking outdoors. Come sample--and bring something if you'd like to share!

Sketching - Capturing Moments in Nature

Jean Gerber

This workshop is simple and geared to anyone ready to sketch! For a drawing device, we will use a simple twig sharpened to make a "pen," for use with ink. Participants will make their own simple folded sketch pads, and on them we will sketch small pictures of different scenes. This workshop is guaranteed to relax, sit back, and enjoy the nature around us.

Ropes & Knots for Canoe Outfitting

Jeff DeHart

This workshop will focus on ropes and knots specific to canoeing, including bowlines, figure eight, daisy chains, and coiling painter lines, as well as throw-ropes, using, and packing as time permits. We will review tips for having ditty lines on the thwart or yolk, and go over the hazards of loose or unsecured rope.

Canoe Sailing - Practical Rigging for Canoe Trips

Benson Gray

This workshop will be a broad overview of how to rig a canoe for sailing with an emphasis of making sails with commonly available materials on a camping trip.

Star Stories for Camping Trips

John Meader

John will be retelling a few memorable night-sky inspired stories that you can put in your back-pocket for your next wilderness adventure.

Fly Fishing Casting Lesson

Kate Farnham

This session will focus on the fundamentals of fly casting. We will learn the four-part cast, false casting, and the roll cast. We will begin on grass, then move to a dock with an emphasis on fly fishing from a canoe. All equipment will be provided. Please bring a pair of sunglasses or eye protection.

Getting Started with Trip Journaling

Allison Donohue

Keeping a trip or nature journal is a great way to remember details of your journeys, learn more about the environment you paddle in, and create a wonderful keepsake of your travels. It can also be very overwhelming trying to figure out where to start! Maine Master Naturalist and paddler Allison Donohue will share some simple tricks for keeping a nature oriented trip journal, and you'll get a chance to try them out on the beautiful shores of Bryant Pond. No previous journaling experience required!

Game Stations: Tomahawk Throwing, Reel Casting, & More

Kids' Program

Our kids' program leaders have a bunch of fun games and activities planned.

Morning Yoga for Paddlers

Leah Titcomb

Prevent injuries and paddle longer! This will be a yoga class where we specifically address the stretches needed for paddlers. Bring a towel as a portion of your time will be spent laying on the ground, no prior yoga experience or flexibility needed to participate.

Canoe Hulls - Choosing Your Next Canoe

Keith Attenborough

Thinking about buying a canoe? This session will walk through the process - starting with understanding the different types of canoes and hulls and which will best meet your needs, then finding resources to help narrow the selection of boats in that category, locating boats to try, and what makes a good test paddle. Sitting in on this workshop will help you find the canoe that will put a smile on your face.

Quick and Effective Tarps and Shelters

Jeff DeHart

Learn how to rig a kitchen tarp on a canoe trip quickly enough to beat a fast-moving weather front. Learn how to make a really effective canoe shelter and a tarp setup that ruled the day from the French and Indian War through the Civil War—a setup that you NEVER see today.

Campfire Donuts

Andrew Dawson

An old Maine logging & sporting camp tradition. When you're burning thousands of calories from paddling, portaging, and just keeping warm, it's ok to eat a few dozen donuts... right?

Campfire Donuts & Camp Cooking

Kids' Program

The Kids' program will tag along and we'll use this time to talk about campfire safety, how kids can help grown-ups find dry sticks and kindling. The importance of keeping camp clean and picked up to keep our furry wild friends safely away from camp. And best of all, help 'clean-up' the donuts.

Cartopping & Canoe Transport

David Lewis

Canoes are remarkably graceful in flight, and it is easy to damage a canoe during transport, either by trailer or on a car top. However, we want to avoid both of those scenarios. We'll discuss a few effective ways to make sure that your canoe(s) do not take unintended trips through the air. We'll discuss trailers, trailer design and car-top transport. We'll also look at the various forces that act on your canoes during transport, and how to address them.

Science of Paddling

Shawn Burke

Why does a canoe float? Why does it go forward when you paddle rather than backwards or up into the air? Why are some canoes more tippy than others? Why isn't a tandem canoe twice as fast as a solo canoe? Come celebrate your inner canoe geek and explore the underlying science behind why canoes and paddles do what they do.

Throw Bags, Ropes, Webbing, Carabiners, & other Hardware

Ben Meader

Ever wonder what all that extra boating gear is for? It's more than just fancy clips and colorful ropes! Ditch the confusion and join us for an unforgettable knot-your-average canoeing adventure!

This workshop will take you beyond basic knots and show you how to turn your kit into a Swiss Army Knife of adventure. We'll ditch the fear of tangled webbing and mysterious carabiners, and instead, learn how to:

Anchor like a pro: No more worries about your boat becoming flotsam and jetsam!

Harness the power of physics: We'll play with pulleys and ropes to lift objects with ease (think hoisting coolers full of snacks!).

Become a throw bag ninja: Master the art of this life-saving tool and be ready to assist fellow boaters in distress.

MCS Mission Statement

Established in 1986, the Maine Canoe Symposium is a volunteer-run, nonprofit weekend event held annually at Camp Caribou on Pattee Pond in Winslow, Maine.

The Symposium encourages participants of all ages to develop an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of North American canoeing heritage and to develop canoeing and related skills through educational workshops, presentations, and hands-on instruction.