**Minutes**

**Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network**

**Board Call**

**Wednesday, March 13, 2024**

**7:00-8:30 PM**

Members Participating:

John Haile, President

Glen Gordon, Vice President

Cathy Kimball

Ellen Gluckman

Nananda Col

Suzanne Blackburn

Tom Allen

Greg Fergin, Recording Secretary

The Board call commenced at 7:12 p.m.

1. Welcome.
2. Approval of minutes from 2/7/2024 meeting: The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the February 7, 2024 Board call.
3. Ongoing business.
   1. Financial update: No update, as Chip was unable to attend the Board call.
   2. Pool session philosophy: Glen summarized the Skills Committee’s discussion of this topic as follows:
   * the committee was not happy with evening pool sessions, though they understood the circumstances that made evening sessions necessary this year;
   * members noted that SMSKN is the only organization that offers pool sessions free of charge (others charge $10-15 per person per session);
   * the committee would prefer longer sessions (three hours) where participants could take turns being in the pool, and socialize with others when not in the pool (Nananda observed that only one-hour sessions are possible at Bath pool).

John directed Glen to ask Skills Committee chair Sieg Siegfried to write up the Committee’s conclusions and send them to the Board.

* 1. Pool session coverage: Nananda volunteered to manage the April 14 Bath pool session.
  2. Financial Priorities: deferred to April 3 Board call.

1. New Business.
   1. Georges River Land Paddle. John noted that the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) had passed on a request from the Georges River Land Trust for a volunteer to lead a flat-water paddle on the Georges River on July 20. The volunteer needs to be a Registered Maine Guide. No Board members volunteered. John said he would tell MITA that he couldn’t find someone available to lead the trip.
   2. Janet’s Liability Framework for Paddling Trips. John reported that former SMSKN President Janet Robinson has been working on guidelines for acceptable kayaks for SMSKN ocean paddling trips, to assist trip organizers in organizing safe trips and managing SMSKN’s liability risk. Suzanne worked with Janet on this, and in place of a minimum length requirement for sea kayaks, suggested that the guidelines specify that “recreational” kayaks are not allowed. This would eliminate kayaks that do not have good deck lines, strong sealed bulkheads, skirtable cockpits, and are not in good repair or condition. Suzanne said these criteria would give trip organizers grounds to deny permission to paddle to participants who show up with recreational kayaks. In response to the concern that trip organizers wouldn’t enforce these requirements, Glen observed that we have to accept that the trip organizer’s role is to exercise this responsibility. Cathy pointed out that the requirement for deck lines would prevent paddlers from using Portland Paddle’s whitewater boats (which have handles but not deck lines). John asked Suzanne to get back to Janet with the Board’s feedback on the liability framework.
   3. Skills Committee Update. Program with International Coach? Glen said the committee had discussed the idea of hiring internationally renowned sea kayaking coach Simon Osborne to come do a seminar for SMSKN. Skills committee member Cheri Perry knows Osborne, and said he would require airfare from the UK for himself, his wife, and son. Perhaps SMSKN could work with another club to share costs. If the seminar were held over a weekend, it might begin with an informal Friday night potluck free to club members. Board members said they were willing to consider the concept but wanted to look at the cost and details. They questioned the need to bring in an international coach when there are excellent coaches available in the region without the same degree of expense as an international coach, and wondered how many SMSKN members would be able to benefit from the experience. Suzanne suggested as an alternative that SMSKN organize a weekend session {“Kayak rodeo”) where different SMSKN members offer peer-to-peer coaching. John asked Board members who are also Skills Committee members to convey to the committee the Board’s thoughts. He also proposed that the Board discuss the kayak rodeo idea at its next Board call.
   4. Gay island: John reported that the lodge is going to be closed for renovation this coming summer, but the owner has offered to allow a SMSKN group to camp on the island, not just in the tent platform area. John said he will post on Meetup a weekend camping trip at some point.
   5. Conflict between MASKGI training day and “Stone Soup” Event June 8. The Maine Association of Sea Kayaking Guides and Instructors (MASKGI) conveyed to John its concern that the two events are on the same day. Board members saw the two events as being distinctly different events with largely different audiences, and did not see a need to reschedule the SMSKN “Stone Soup” event. John said he would convey that conclusion to Rose Warnock.
   6. Mission statement: John asked Board members if they thought it would be valuable for SMSKN to have a mission statement. Board members thought so. Suzanne, Greg Glen, and Nananda volunteered to work on a statement and report back to the Board at the next Board call.
2. Monthly Meeting Programs for 2024:
   1. What next?

* Wednesday, March 27 @ 7:00 PM (In person at MITA Office) Mike Moloney (Paddlecraft Safety Team Coordinator for the US Coast Guard Auxiliary Casco Bay Flotilla) Basic Sea Kayak Safety and Etiquette (Suzanne is Board organizer).
* Wednesday, April 24 @ 7:00 PM (in person) jointly with Kennebec Estuary Land Trust: Marine Mammals (Nananda is Board organizer.)
* Kayak repair: (Joe Gugliemetti is willing to do this, with a tentative date in May. Maybe paired with Harley Lewin? John will talk to Joe.

1. Closure and Action Items
   * + Two big items for April board call: kayak rodeo idea and SMSKN financial priorities.

* Skills committee to provide the board with a brief write-up about how the pool sessions should be run for 2024-2025.
* Nananda to be in charge of the 4/14 Bath pool session.
* John to get back to the Georges River Land Trust on its request for a paddle trip leader.
* Suzanne and Janet to craft a statement to be added to our participant agreement (or placed in some other appropriate place) about boats allowed on SMSKN paddles.
* The "mission statement subcommittee" (Suzanne--chair; Greg, Glen, Nananda) will draft a mission (and perhaps a vision) statement for the board to approve.

The Board call concluded at 8:10pm.

**Next Call: Wednesday, April 3 at 7:00pm.**