

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Whitewater Boating Program



2020 Annual
Report

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Whitewater Boating Specialist

2020 Annual Report on:
Maine Warden Service Whitewater Boating Program
Commercial Rafting Industry

130th Legislature – First Regular Session

Dated: January 1, 2021

- In Maine, there are approximately 20 licensed Commercial Whitewater Outfitters providing whitewater boating trips among our 6 Rapidly Flowing Rivers. The rivers include stretches of the upper Kennebec River, West Branch of the Penobscot River, South Branch of the Penobscot River, Dead River, Rapid River and the Magalloway River.
- In Maine, the commercial whitewater industry provided professional services to approximately 24,639 commercial rafting passengers during the 2020 rafting season (January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020). The low numbers reflect COVID-19 pandemic concerns and restrictions in early spring. The Commercial industry did not receive state approval to operate until the first week in June. The outfitters reported significant cancelations in the spring, which affected commercial numbers throughout the season.
- The commercial whitewater rafting industry continues to be a tremendous economic asset to the State of Maine. The industry is complex and requires a significant investment of time by the Department to fulfill the responsibilities required by the State. In 1999, the Department hired a full-time Game Warden to work as a Whitewater Boating Specialist to enforce whitewater rafting rules and regulations and manage the administrative duties associated with the whitewater rafting industry.
- Title 12, section 10259-B; states that all money from the Whitewater Rafting Fund shall be expended solely for purposes related to river recreation, with primary emphasis on those activities that relate to whitewater trips, including, but not limited to, administration, regulation, safety education, enforcement, mitigation of environmental and safety problems and mitigation of any adverse effect on competing use of the river. The fund may not be used to pay the cost of administering the whitewater outfitters' license program or the guide license program.
- During the whitewater rafting season, the Department's Whitewater Boating Specialist spends most of their time at the Dead, Kennebec, and West Branch of the Penobscot Rivers enforcing whitewater rafting rules and regulations, working with whitewater outfitters, guides, private boaters, and Brookfield Renewable Partners. Recently, the Rapid, Magalloway and South Branch of the Penobscot Rivers have

seen an increase in rafting traffic, which requires additional enforcement efforts and administrative duties. In addition to river enforcement, the specialist must spend a portion of time dealing with administrative responsibilities out of the Whitewater Boating Office, located in Augusta. During the off-season, the specialist contributes approximately 40 hours a week on administrative duties. These include communicating with whitewater outfitters, working directly with Advisory Board for the Licensing of Whitewater Guides, completing financial and safety reports, and other tasks associated with Whitewater Boating Program.

WHITEWATER FUND AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fund Established Title 12 Sections 10259-1

The Whitewater Rafting Fund, referred to in this section as the “fund” is established to be used by the Department, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands and the affected counties and municipalities to fund activities related to river recreation with primary emphasis on those activities which relate to whitewater trips.

Justification Statement

The Whitewater Rafting Fund is intended to mitigate environmental problems and any adverse affection on competing uses of rivers promoting safety, education, and enforcement on the rivers. This program dedicates sixty-five percent of the revenue to remain with the Department for administration and enforcement of the whitewater rafting laws and rules, twenty-five percent is dedicated to the Department of Conservation and ten percent to the affected counties. *(Executive Order 41 suspended the collection of outfitter user fees for each commercial passenger until July 31, 2020, as well as the annual 2020 allocations fees for the whitewater outfitters).*

Income Report Calendar Year

Year	Revenue	Counties 10%	Dept. of Conservation 25%	Dept. of IF&W 65%
2016	\$138,646.0	\$13,864.60	\$34,661.50	\$90,119.90
2017	\$147,842.0	\$14,784.22	\$36,960.50	\$96,097.31
2018	\$124,699.9	\$12,469.99	\$31,174.98	\$81,054.94
2019	\$120,202.2	\$9,054.20	\$30,050.57	\$78,131.48
2020	\$34,212.50	\$3,421.25	\$8,553.13	\$22,238.13

2020 TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL RAFT PASSENGERS AND REPORTABLE ACCIDENTS PER RIVER

- **Dead River**
Total Passengers: **1,002**
Total Reported Accidents: **0**
- **Kennebec River**
Total Passengers: **17,637**
Total Reported Accidents: **2**
- **Magalloway River**
Total Passengers: **0**
Total Reported Accidents: **0**
- **Rapid River**
Total Passengers: **0**
Total Reported Accidents: **0**
- **South Branch of the Penobscot River**
Total Passengers: **58**
Total Reported Accidents: **0**
- **West Branch of the Penobscot River**
Total Passengers: **5,942**
Total Reportable Accidents: **2**

2020 COMMERCIAL PASSENGERS CARRIED BY LICENSED OUTFITTERS

- **Adventure River Expeditions-Total Passengers: 0**
 - Dead River: 0
 - Kennebec River: 0
 - Magalloway River: 0
 - Rapid River: 0
 - South Branch Penobscot River: 0
 - West Branch Penobscot River: 0
- **Crabapple Whitewater-Total Passengers: 3** (closed due COVID-19 concerns)
 - Dead River: 0
 - Kennebec River: 3
 - Magalloway River: 0
 - Rapid River: 0
 - South Branch Penobscot River: 0
 - West Branch Penobscot River: 0
- **Downeast Rafting DBA Adventure Bound-Total Passengers: 440**
 - Dead River: 0
 - Kennebec River: 440
 - Magalloway River: 0
 - Rapid River: 0
 - South Branch Penobscot: 0
 - West Branch Penobscot: 0
- **Magic Falls Rafting-Total Passengers: 2,589**
 - Dead River: 191
 - Kennebec River: 2,398
 - Magalloway River: 0

Rapid River: 0
South Branch Penobscot River: 0
West Branch Penobscot River: 0

- **Maine Rafting Expeditions-Total Passengers: 0** (Closed for the season due COVID-19 concerns)

Dead River: 0
Kennebec River: 0
Magalloway River: 0
Rapid River: 0
South Branch Penobscot River: 0
West Branch Penobscot River: 0

2020 COMMERCIAL PASSENGERS CARRIED BY EACH LICENSED OUTFITTER CONTINUED

- **Maine Whitewater-Total Passengers: 248**

Dead River: 45
Kennebec River: 203
Magalloway River: 0
Rapid River: 0
South Branch Penobscot River: 0
West Branch Penobscot River: 0

- **Moxie Outdoor Adventures-Total Passengers: 1,127**

Dead River: 35
Kennebec River: 1,092
Magalloway River: 0
Rapid River: 0
South Branch Penobscot River: 0
West Branch Penobscot River: 0

- **New England Whitewater Center-Total Passengers: 1,254**

Dead River: 0
Kennebec River: 0
Magalloway River: 0
Rapid River: 0
South Branch Penobscot River: 0
West Branch Penobscot River: 1,254

- **North Country Rivers-Total Passengers: 6,606**

Dead River: 186
Kennebec River: 4,757
Magalloway Rivers: 0
Rapid River: 0
South Branch Penobscot River: 0
West Branch Penobscot River: 1,663

- **Northeast Whitewater-Total Passengers: 1,689**
Dead River: **0**
Kennebec River: **1,268**
Magalloway River: **0**
Rapid River: **0**
South Branch Penobscot River: **58**
West Branch Penobscot River: **363**

2020 COMMERCIAL PASSENGERS CARRIED BY EACH LICENSED OUTFITTER CONTINUED

- **Northern Outdoors-Total Passengers: 4,963**
Dead River: **203**
Kennebec River: **4,104**
Magalloway River: **0**
Rapid River: **0**
South Branch Penobscot River: **0**
West Branch Penobscot River: **656**
- **Penobscot Adventures II-Total Passengers: 722**
Dead River: **0**
Kennebec River: **0**
Magalloway River: **0**
Rapid River: **0**
South Branch Penobscot River: **0**
West Branch Penobscot River: **722**
- **Raft New Hampshire-Total Passengers: 0** (Did not operate due to COVID-19 concerns)
Dead River: **0**
Kennebec River: **0**
Magalloway River: **0**
Rapid River: **0**
South Branch Penobscot River: **0**
West Branch Penobscot River: **0**
- **Three Rivers Whitewater-Total Passengers: 4,963**
Dead River: **210**
Kennebec River: **2,790**
Magalloway River: **0**
Rapid River: **0**
South Branch Penobscot River: **0**
West Branch Penobscot River: **1,284**

- **US Rafting-Total Passengers: 664**
 Dead River: **82**
 Kennebec River: **582**
 Magalloway River: **0**
 Rapid River: **0**
 South Branch Penobscot River: **0**
 West Branch Penobscot River: **0**
- **Unicorn Wilderness Expeditions-Total Passengers: 50**
 Dead River: **50**
 Kennebec River: **0**
 Magalloway River: **0**
 West Branch Penobscot River: **0**

2020 SAFETY ACCIDENTS BY OUTFITTER AND FLOW RATES IN CUBIC FEET PER SECOND

Reported Incidents by Commercial Outfitters

Note: Could Have Multiple Causes Per Incident

A Safety Incident (reportable accident) is defined in Chapter 14.06 (F) as any accident occurring in connection with a commercial whitewater trip or whitewater guide training that results in the death of a person, a person losing consciousness or receiving professional medical treatment, a person becoming disabled for more than 24 hours, a person disappearance from a watercraft under circumstances indicating dead or injury or damage to the watercraft or other property of more than \$1,000.00.

- **Magic Falls Rafting: 2**
 1. Date: 6-13-2020
 Location: Magic Falls and House Wave, Kennebec River
 Primary Cause of Incident: Capsize
 Secondary Cause: Hit by Raft
 Reported Injury: Possible Concussion Head
 CFS Water Flow: 8,800 CFS
 2. Date: 7-11-2020
 Location: Goodbye Hole, Kennebec River
 Primary Cause of Incident: Drowning
 Secondary Cause: Unknown
 Reported Injury: Fatal
 CFS Water Flow: 5,000 CFS
- **Northern Outdoors: 1**
 Date: 8-08-2020
 Location: 2nd Drop Big Amberjackmockamus Falls, West Branch Penobscot River
 Primary Cause of Incident: Capsize

Secondary Cause: Collision with Object
Reported injury: Laceration of Bridge of Nose
CFS Water Flow: 2,300 CFS

- **Penobscot Adventures II: 1**
Date: 8-10-2020
Location: Nesowadnehunk Falls
Primary Cause of Incident: Fall in Raft
Secondary Cause: Unknown
Reported Injury: Sprain or Strain of ankle
CFS Water Flow: 2,300 CFS

2020 WHITEWATER BOATING CHECKS AND NUMBER PRIVATE BOATERS ON UPPER KENNEBEC RIVER

- Number of safety checks by Wardens on Commercial Whitewater Outfitters: **1,400+ watercrafts**
- Number of safety checks by Wardens on private whitewater boaters: **1,700+ watercrafts**
- Number of private rafters that registered at Harris Station upper Kennebec River: **8,515**
- Number of kayakers that registered at Harris Station upper Kennebec River: **1,634**
- The Department tested over **45** Whitewater Guide Applicants