

Fall 2011 Newsletter

Mahoosuc Guide Service and Mahoosuc Mountain Lodge

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Greetings!

Fall is slipping by slowly. The leaves have fallen from the trees. The dogs are getting more excited as the season is shifting to cool temperatures. They are anticipating runs in the woods, lots of new smells, and new views at every turn of the trail. Our young pups, now yearlings from last year's litter, have grown into nice leggy dogs with beautiful, friendly personalities who are excited about greeting our eager clients.



We will start fall training with the motorless ATVs soon, training leaders on our network of trails. The older dogs patiently teaching the youngsters "the ropes" of being a sled dog. It is one of the great joys of mushing to see this interaction, knowledge, and good behavior being passed from generation to generation. This is also one of Polly and Kevin's favorite times of year getting to work with each of their dogs and teams.

We have been mushing dogs for over 30 years with a family line of "Yukon Huskies." This fall, we are introducing some new blood into our line with two puppies being flown down from the remote area of the Yukon River in Alaska. They come from a hearty hard working kennel in the bush and will be a great addition to our business.

We are now taking bookings for our winter season. Mahoosuc Guide Service is starting its twenty-second year in business. Our most popular trips in the



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spectacular Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge area range from one to five days in length. For overnight trips, we camp in spacious canvas wall tents heated by woodstoves with the floor covered by fragrant fir boughs bringing memories of Christmas every time you enter the tent.

We have a five day Cabin to Cabin trip in northern Maine in the Greenville area, where we travel from camp to camp each night, dining in the luxury of the AMC-owned wilderness cabins.

Over the years, we have established close friendships with Cree guides, David and Anna Bosum, of Ouje-Bougoumou; and Quebec and

Inuit guide, Allen Gordon, of Kuujjuaq, Quebec (Ungava Bay, Nunavik). These are rare cultural experiences into the bush and on the land of these areas. Unfortunately, the younger generation is not showing much interest in carrying on the tradition of guiding, so we feel any time with these outstanding guides is very special as we learn about the Native cultures of the north.

Three new apprentices have arrived for the winter season to learn what we have to teach about dogsledding, traditional winter camping, and what it takes to run a small family business. Welcome Jessica, Renee, and Darin!

Kevin enjoyed a beautiful fall foliage canoe trip on the Allagash with returning and faithful client Larry Merrill and his family. The colors were at their peak and the water level high, which covered many of the rocks and made for an easy paddle.



Polly just returned from helping to guide a Waldorf School on Lake Champlain for eight days with Kroka Expeditons, based in NH. We had some super sailing with winds at our back!

This fall, we hosted another wedding at our Mahoosuc Mountain Lodge (www.mahoosucmountainlodge.com). It was a very memorable day! The backdrop of the Mahoosuc Mountains and feeling of “being held” in the strong energy of this area was felt by everyone. Thank you, Deborah and Ryan, for choosing our lodge for your special day!

Mahoosuc Guide Service is proud to have been listed as #4 on the top 10 “Best Family Adventures” for Orbitz travel in October 2011, thanks to writer Steve Jermanok. See www.familyvacationcritic.com/10-best-family-adventures/art/.

What are Mahoosuc’s philosophies?

Find out by watching the five-minute video on our home page at www.mahoosuc.com.

Polly took a dream holiday in early September to northern Yosemite National Park with Frontier Pack Trips for an eight-day horsepacking trip. Riding horses in the mountains is another of Polly's passions! It was a super trip and, as always, she fell "in love" with her horse. It was sad to say good-bye.

Kevin enjoyed a recon trip to Loon Lodge (www.loonlodgemaine.com), next to Allagash Lake in northern Maine. We are planning to offer trips there next year. It is a secluded area of the state with lots of wildlife and very few visitors. Kevin was happy to "talk" with a curious otter he encountered while paddling in a nearby lake.

Polly and Kevin joined Susan Morse from Keeping Track (www.keepingtrack.org) in northern Vermont for a one-day tracking workshop in October. She is a wealth of knowledge about animal sign, behavior, habitat, etc. We are honored to be hosting a weekend workshop with her in our lodge in April 2012.

Hoping to see many of you on the trail this winter!

Until next time,
Polly, Kevin, and all the doggies



Upcoming events at Mahoosuc

- October 29-30— Wilderness First Aid course, plus CPR, taught by SOLO
- November 19— Bluegrass Concert with Tricky Britches (<http://trickybritches.com/about/>)
- December 15-18— Winter Guide Training with Mahoosuc Guide Service
- April 27-29, 2012— Tracking Workshop with Susan Morse of Keeping Track (www.keepingtrack.org)

From the Mailbox

Dear Kevin and Polly,

Dogsledding—it's 20 below zero. Snow is falling. Silent except for the swish of the dogsled on the trail, huskies running, quiet, ears back joyously waiting for the next command. This fills my heart and brings tears to my eyes.

Imagine, warm in a sleeping bag, listening to the huskies sing on a snowy moonlit night. I can't think of anything better after a joyous day of dogsledding with Polly and Kevin.

*Judy Melcher-King
Maine*



Polly and Kevin are two of the warmest, deeply grounded, spirited and wise people you could ever meet. Our wedding was like a gentle dream. This beautiful valley, the warm wood and hand built lodge and its owners seemed to hold everyone in its warmth and peace. Guests arrived and soon melted into the energy with a look of awe. Our very laid back, low stress ceremony and connection with the outdoors was perfectly in tune with this place. No one wanted to leave.

We had a bonfire the night before with excellent food from The Good Food Store and a sacred wedding prayer around the fire. A wonderful way to set the tone for the wedding and put us to sleep with a starlit night above. In the morning, the mountains and the low clouds provided an awesome backdrop for the outdoor ceremony, and we could have easily shifted inside if needed. The Good Food Store provided the dinner, and everyone raved about that too.

Given that 40 working sled dogs also reside on this property, you might expect they would make a ruckus at all the wrong moments. Instead, it was entirely magical how they responded at only a few high energy moments with perfect song that made us shiver in recognition...how deeply connected they are to Polly and Kevin, and how quiet they were the rest of the time. Our guests enjoyed their contribution, loved visiting afterwards to learn more about them. After the tour of the canoe making workshop, Ryan is scheming on getting back there to learn the nearly lost art of wooden canoe making with Kevin. Other guests will return for trips with them and I love that these connections were made. Everyone seemed to fill up on something they needed before leaving.

We are so happy to have chosen this special place for our wedding. No commercial building, or posh hotel could have provided such warmth and peace. It is the perfect place for anyone seeking such a feeling for their event.

*Deborah Carlton
Maine*

