

Summer 2012 Newsletter

Mahoosuc Guide Service and Mahoosuc Mountain Lodge

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Finally we are having a cooler rainy day to sit and write this newsletter. This summer has been busy as usual here at Mahoosuc with two new litters of puppies and many canoe trips.

More new arrivals!

Megan and Cormac had a beautiful litter of seven puppies on May 3. We kept two females and one male. Two puppies went to a mushing kennel in Vermont, one to a kennel in northern Maine, and another as an active pet in coastal Maine.

On July 1, Maura & Donal had a nice litter of seven girls and two boys. A picture of one of their puppies is on the left. We plan to keep four, and the rest are going to mushing homes in Vermont and Austria, and as an active pet in Massachusetts.

It's difficult to get much work done with puppies around to play with!!!

We found homes for Brianna, Connor, and Dougal, who didn't really want to be sled dogs, but they're very happy being pets in Maine and New Hampshire.

Sinead, pictured on the right, passed on July 12 after nearly 14 years. She lived a good life and gave birth to three litters of puppies. Many of our dogs are her offspring. We miss her...



Upcoming Events at Mahoosuc Mountain Lodge

- September 7-9—Spiritual Retreat with Sapokniona Whitefeather
- October 13-15—Wilderness First Aid Course and Wilderness First Responder Refresher courses
- November 17—Bluegrass Concert with Tricky Britches
- December 7-9—Tracking Workshop with Susan Morse of Keeping Track

For more information about all of these events, go to our [Facebook page](#). And while you're there, don't forget to "Like" us if you haven't already.

Canews

After 30 years, Kevin finally made it back to Alaska. He visited several kennels and many friends. Two of his most memorable highlights are fly fishing in Denali National Park and visiting The Museum of the North at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

In late June, Kevin helped guide a great fly fishing trip for Atlantic salmon on the Miramichi River in New Brunswick. Everyone had a good trip despite the rain, and some landed salmon.

We felt fortunate to guide another canoeing/hiking trip with Casey Family Services. This will be the last trip, as they are closing their offices in Portland. This organization does great work with foster teens by helping them to become adopted. This is very rewarding work.

Polly just returned from a great trip on the Allagash River. The water was very low due to lack of rain, so it was perfect conditions to learn to pole. Our whole group LOVED poling, swimming in the 78 degree water at every opportunity, enjoying the sunshine every day, and playing silly card games or singing at night. Thanks, fellow guide, Sue Szwed, for her expertise on the river.



On September 25-30, we are offering our annual fall foliage trip on the Allagash. This is a gorgeous time of year to be on the river with the fall colors, no bugs and very few, if any, other people.

The Green River in Utah is on the calendar for October 10-20. This is a remote river in the Southwest with beautiful scenery and nice side hikes up the canyons.

Special appreciation for our special helpers!

This summer we welcomed some helpers who have come to learn how to care for the dogs; assist in guiding canoe trips; maintain the kennel, grounds, buildings, and, of course, the fun part, playing with our puppies! Tom, from the United Kingdom, has been a great help and learned a lot while he was here. Among his favorite memories: making his own ash paddle under Kevin's instruction. Thank-you, Tom, Jasper from Virginia, Nicole from Massachusetts, and Eliot from Maine!

Please contact us if you are interested in an apprenticeship for this fall and/or winter season.



Before long, we will be getting out the ATVs to start training the dogs on the local trails. Now the dogs are DREAMING about cooler temperatures, snow, and life on the trail. We are taking bookings for the 2012/13 winter season.

Hope to see some of you on a canoe trip this fall, at an event at our Mahoosuc Mountain Lodge, or on a dogsledding adventure this winter!

Happy trails!
Polly, Kevin, and all the doggies

From the Mailbox

Dear Polly and Kevin,

Thanks...for all that you have done and a special thanks for letting me hold the puppies. I am happy you guys were our guides and teachers. You are great kinds of people. Hope we can do it again. I especially loved the story of Sesu, the otter. I would do it all over again if I could. Thanks Kevin for being a good person. I love you guys and your dogs.

Patrick
Casey Family Services
Maine



Dear Kevin and Polly,

Aviva talks almost every day about wanting to go dogsledding with you guys again next winter. In fact, she is very clear that she wants to go twice next winter...a day trip, and a 3-day trip. I hope so! And I, perhaps predictably, have developed a hankering to return to the far north with you. Our day trip with you was a highlight of our winter. Not only was the experience memorable, but spending time in the presence of your quiet, respectful strength is a welcome life lesson.

Sharon
Massachusetts

Dear Kevin,

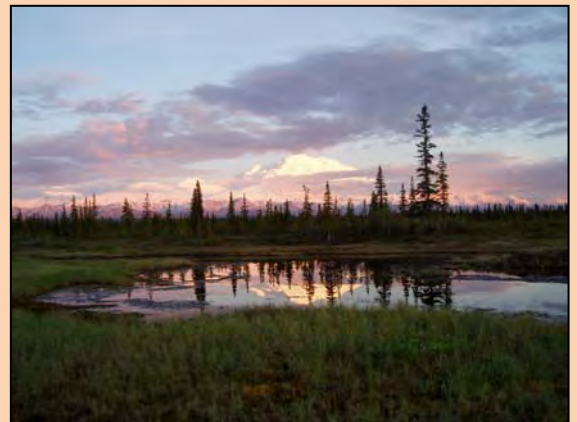
I think about both of you often and it seems each time I do I am filled with more and more gratitude towards you. I really feel I have both of you and what you taught and the experience I had throughout the winter are responsible for me being here with this amazing opportunity ahead of me.

Apprentice Alana
Maine

Dear Polly,

Thanks for your writing of how our lives are one big circle blessed by our love for each other. No love no existence and you are so right that our dogs seem not (to) understand death. They just leave which is what I hope to learn as one of many gifts the dogs that have shared my life have shown me when I am paying attention. Loved my time with Kevin he has such a kind spirit. Your dogs are really strong and friendly with each other.

Glenn
Maine





Saying Good-bye

by Polly Mahoney

"Tighten up! Let's go!" Hang on as the jolt of the dogsled moving forward suddenly joins the silence of my surroundings and all I hear is the dogs panting and the sound of the runners on the snow. Even after 28 years, I get an adrenalin rush every time I hook up my excited Yukon huskies to a sled and travel off into the wilds of Maine or wide expanse of a frozen lake or frozen bog of northern Quebec. It gets in your blood and the bond between musher and dog is very profound. The communication is great and with many good dogs can be done without words, through thoughts and intention. Raising my dogs from puppies, doing all the training, and keeping them until they die, I feel a very close connection with each one individually.

Saying good-bye to a devoted canine friend is one of the more difficult parts of my profession. I have 39 Yukon huskies that I share my days with—all with their own personalities, strengths and weaknesses. They are working sled dogs, and I make my living with them giving tours. They are such a part of my life from the time I awake in the morning until I go to bed at night.

The days after retirement when they move into the comforts of our house are a special time for getting more

individual attention. They love the constant monitored temperature, no bugs, comfortable soft beds, and medication, when needed.

Making the decision to put a dog to sleep is a very hard thing to do. You would think it would get easier as time goes on and owning so many but it never does. Each dog has its own attributes, and everyone has different ailments in their twilight years.

Knowing when the pain and discomfort is too great and to make the decision, I call on my intuition to guide me, along with a good vet who can assure me it is time.

I think part of what makes it easier for me than some is my belief our spirits travel on. We honor each dog for who they are and look for signs when they have "had enough," and it is that tough time to say good-bye. I don't think dogs fear death.

Holding my dear friends in their passing is an amazing experience. I often get signals of true thanks with a look deep into my eye or a sigh or a gentle nudge of a nose or paw saying it is okay to say good-bye.

We have a dog graveyard. Each dog's grave has its own marker and some sayings that remind us of its true essence. It is nice to visit and give thanks to these special creatures for being in my life!

As I am writing this, I am sitting next to Bridget, one of my very devoted retired dogs. Last week, she was diagnosed with lymphoma and only has days to live. We are keeping her comfortable with some medication and special diet for as long as we can. She has always been my steady personality, who accompanied me on many trips to the vet with other dogs who needed to be put to sleep. She acted as an anchor—a reassurance that everything is all right and life goes on without this loved one. Now her turn has come, and she will let me know when she is ready to travel on to her next journey and I'll have to say good-bye...

