



VRC Outlook

A Voice for Sustainable Tourism Down East

#1, October 2009

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THIS WEEK!

VRC is hosting "Downeast Tourism Breakfasts" for our local legislators. What issues should we cover with them? [Let us know](#) by Monday October 19, 2009.

From the Cockpit

(Notes from our Chair)

For our honeymoon in 2003, my husband Rich and I sea kayaked from the Bar Harbor low tide sand bar to Helen's Restaurant in Machias, both great spots on many a Down East travel itinerary. Along the way, we watched lobstermen haul dozens of traps and razorbill auks plunge to catch lunch. We paddled by offshore lighthouses and up riverine estuaries, and stayed in campgrounds and on offshore islands. We delighted in our environment. Before the trip, people asked "why don't you go explore somewhere new for your honeymoon?" Well that is just the thing. Every time I venture into the wilds of Down East Maine, it is always something new. Every time I paddle the waterways, hike the miles of protected lands, visit a historic site, or an artist studio, or chat with a fisherman at the wharf, I find myself catching yet another glimpse of what this place is about. And I just can't seem to get enough.

The [Vacationland Resources Committee](#) (VRC) is a group of folks who share my passion for this place. The VRC strives for tourism that protects land and sea, respects residents, and engages local organizations, businesses and individuals in decision-making about the future of our communities.

VRC members have met many of you through the events and programs that we have helped implement. Over the years, we have heard one thing over and over again: people of DownEast Maine need a vehicle for communication and information-sharing about tourism in our region. And so, we bring you the first issue of *VRC Outlook*.

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform you, the reader, but just as important, it is to inform all of us about the issues of concern to those involved in tourism Down East. Each issue (roughly four a year) will include questions for feedback from you (see at left for questions regarding our legislature and your training needs). Your responses will help the VRC and our partners craft projects that are relevant, timely, and sure to net a positive impact. Our database is growing to more than a 1000 people, mostly in the two counties but some outside, so we expect this newsletter will become a great way to get the word out. We'll highlight our partners and the work they (you) do, present in depth exploration of initiatives, issues, or research results; and we'll throw in some tips from the field for greening your business.

We welcome your feedback at any time, and invite your ideas for future issues, particularly for ways to make this newsletter a forum for conversation among the many voices in our region.

Safe Travels!

[Natalie Springuel](#)

[Maine Sea Grant](#) and [VRC](#) Chair

Your Training Needs?

[Let us know!](#)

The VRC Training Committee is putting together a training calendar for 2010. You have told us you want more information on business basics, packaging and collaboration and website/online marketing and credit card use. Are these still valid? What else would help you? What is your top priority regarding training? Please be as specific as possible and [send us](#) your ideas. website

Quick Links

[Resource Guide for Sustainable Tourism](#)
[Downeast RC&D VRC website](#)

News from Hancock and Washington Counties

WC: Maine Woods Tourism Training Initiative

The Maine Woods Tourism Training Initiative is a strategy to identify existing training needs in the tourism industry and to meet those high priority needs with existing training resources by developing networks of training outlets and using effective delivery approaches. Washington, Franklin, and Piscataquis Counties are the 3 prototype training networks in the Maine Woods. Stay tuned for an upcoming survey of tourism training needs! This initiative was funded by a Rural Business Enterprises Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Betterment Fund through the [Maine Woods Consortium](#) Tourism Investment Committee. For more info about the initiative in Washington County, contact [Sunrise County Economic Council](#) at scec@sunrisecounty.org.

HC: Tourism Business Listening Session

The VRC is pleased to join with [CentTRO](#) (UMaine's Center for Tourism Research and Outreach) and the [Down East Business Alliance](#) as they listen to the owners of tourism-related businesses discuss what their needs are for enhancing their businesses, and how CentTRO and the VRC can help them achieve their goals. If you own or operate a tourism related business in Hancock County, we invite you to join us on **November 10 at 1 pm**, at the **Ellsworth** City Hall Auditorium for a group discussion of tourism and hospitality in Maine. This is also a chance for you to learn about CentTRO initiatives to support Maine's tourism industry and how they might help you and your business, as well as to make suggestions as to what the VRC and Down East Business Alliance can do to assist you in your efforts. For more information, call Sarah Nugent at 664-2424 ext 4495 or email snugent@whcacap.org. To register, call Sarah Joy Salagala at 664-2424 ext 4460 or email sjsalagala@whcacap.org.

Downeast Fisheries Trail Funded!

The Downeast Fisheries Trail was created in 2000 as an educational trail that showcases active and historic fisheries heritage sites, such as fish hatcheries, aquaculture facilities, fishing harbors, clam flats, processing plants and other related public places in an effort to educate residents and visitors about the importance of the region's maritime heritage and the role of marine resources to the area's economy. While the original Trail focused exclusively on Washington County fisheries heritage at sites from Milbridge to Eastport, a new effort (funded in part by the [Maine Community Foundation](#) and [Maine Sea Grant](#), and supported by the VRC) is forming to revive and extend the Downeast Fisheries Trail into a bi-county educational product that preserves the region's rich natural and human heritage while tapping into the growing market for tourism that truly connects visitors to place.

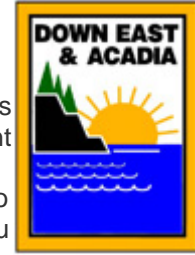


In the coming months, we'll be seeking feedback on potential Trail sites and ideas for educational content of outreach materials. In Hancock County, meetings will be held where members of the public can help inventory and assess new sites for the Trail and develop companion educational materials. In Washington County, existing sites will be inventoried for needed improvements and updated materials. [Contact us](#) for more info and to get involved!

Partner Profile

Downeast and Acadia Regional Tourism (DART)

[DownEast & Acadia Regional Tourism](#), also known as DART, has recently upgraded its website through a technology sharing arrangement with the Maine Office of Tourism. DART's site, which is designed specifically for tourism promotion, offers free listings for tourism businesses in Hancock and Washington counties, along with packages and specials. Additionally, businesses, chambers, event organizers and individuals can enter and update events that are happening here. Your information is also sent to the Maine Office of Tourism's site, so one entry gets you listings on two relevant websites -- all for free.



To enter your information, go to www.downeastacadia.com, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on "tourism partners". The system will walk you through the process or you can also call DART at 546-3600 and DART will gladly help you. It not only helps your business, but adds to the attractiveness of the whole region if we can collectively show all there is to see and do here. Please spread the word about this **free tourism marketing opportunity**.

DART is a non-profit organization promoting tourism in Hancock and Washington counties. It is located at 87 Milbridge Road, P. O. Box 4, Cherryfield, ME 04622. The telephone number is (207) 546-3600 and email is info@downeastacadia.com.

Green Tips from the Field

This issue's green ideas come from:

Captain Bill Baker of [Old Quarry Ocean Adventures](#) in Stonington

1. Campgrounds generally have outside lighting. We decided when we started not to install outside lighting other than the light over the outside wash sink. This has worked just fine. People bring their flash lights.
2. We recently started to sort campground waste, including sorting out glass, all metals, cardboard, returnables, newspaper and magazines as well as #2 plastics.
3. We have changed out most of our light bulbs to compact fluorescents.
4. Lights are shut off when not needed.
5. Our errand trips are all done together which includes the dump, bank, grocery store, and post office.
6. We will be putting up signage for next season to prohibit campers from leaving their car motors running when they check in and out.

Do you have green idea to share? [Let us know!](#)

The mission of the VRC is to promote sustainable tourism practices in Down East, Maine. VRC meetings and membership are always open! For more information or to join the VRC, please [contact us!](#)

The VRC is a committee of
[Down East Resource Conservation and Development Council.](#)

The VRC logo was designed locally by Deborah Bailey at [Barnstormer Design Group](#), 207-497-5446.