



# VRC Outlook

A Voice for Sustainable Tourism Down East

#2, January 2010

## In This Issue

[Tourism Training Initiative](#)

[Interpretation Training at WCCC](#)

[New Downeast Itinerary Map](#)

[Partner Profile: Down East Business Alliance](#)

[Green Tips](#)

## THIS WEEK!

### Winter Family Fun Day

Feb 6, 2010  
at Moosehorn National  
Wildlife Refuge.  
For more information:  
[www.wccc.me.edu/oac](http://www.wccc.me.edu/oac)

## Collaboration?

[Let us know!](#)

### How can the VRC help you collaborate?

Please be as specific as possible and [send us](#) your ideas.

## Job Announcement

The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands is hiring an AmeriCorps Environmental Educator to assist with recreation planning and management projects in the Downeast Region. Visit [www.maine.gov/doc/parks/mcc/](http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/mcc/) and click on "Environmental Educator Positions" for more

## From the Cockpit

(Notes from our Chair)

At a recent meeting of tourism providers in Hancock County, I was struck by the collaborative nature of businesses in our region. The competition was identified not as a nearby business but as regions (Southern Maine, Nova Scotia), or anything accessible via the internet, or even locals outside the industry who oppose tourism on principle. According to this group of 15 or so people, a tourism business down the street, even if it offers similar products, brings in more people to the region which is good for all businesses Down East. As participant Tina Scheer of the Great Maine Lumberjack Show put it, "You don't have to worry about your piece of the pie as long as the pie grows." The way these folks were talking, the importance of regional identity, or even of Maine identity, was the most important factor that unified what is traditionally viewed as "the competition." Such an approach builds on the values and assets that make our two counties so appealing to visitors, and so compelling a place to live, work, and play.

Enjoy this second newsletter of the *VRC Outlook*, and as always, we welcome your comments and suggestions on this and all our projects.

Safe Travels!

[Natalie Springuel](#)

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

## Tourism Training Initiative

Thank you to the Washington County businesses that responded to the [Maine Woods Consortium](#) electronic survey on the training needs of tourism related businesses. The top training needs are:

1. Regional destination training for frontline staff
2. Customer service training for management
3. Customer service training for frontline staff
4. Interpretation skills for frontline staff
5. Marketing and sales for management
6. Accounting for management

The Consortium is now creating its strategic plan to bring at least the top three trainings to our area of the state. For more information contact VRC member and Downeast representative on this project Jennifer Peters, Sunrise County Economic Council: [scec@sunrisecounty.org](mailto:scec@sunrisecounty.org)

Thank you also to everyone who participated in the CenTRO (UMaine [Center for Tourism Research and Outreach](#)) focus group in November 2009 regarding training needs in Hancock County. CenTRO is using the results to develop a statewide tourism training program and will report back soon.

## WCCC to Train Interpreters!

Washington County Community College in Calais is now offering a certification course in interpretation. Through a course entitled Environmental Interpretation, students can be eligible to become Certified Interpretive Guides (CIG) from the [National Association for](#)

information. Deadline is March 7th!

#### Quick Links

[Resource Guide for Sustainable Tourism](#)

[Downeast RC&D](#)

[VRC website](#)

[Interpretation](#) (NAI). The course is required within the Adventure Recreation and Tourism program. With the help of funding from the Vacationland Resources Committee, Julia Berry, Stephanie Allard, and [Scott Fraser](#) attended an instructor certification training last September that was hosted by the [Schoodic Education and Research Center](#) in Winter Harbor. WCCC intends to work with local businesses and individuals to deliver the training to tourism operators, guides, and outfitters in the hopes of helping them provide a high quality interpretive experience for visitors. Businesses or individuals who are interested in receiving the training should contact the [Outdoor Adventure Center at WCCC](#) at 454-1060. More information on the NAI Certified Interpretive Guide certification program is available at [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com).

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### Downeast Itinerary Mapping for "Experiential Tourists"

Recent surveys tell us what visitors want - natural, cultural, heritage and hospitality assets. A significant first step in getting the word out to visitors about those assets is a new "You Are Here" poster sized map entitled *Discover Downeast & Acadia* completed by the [Washington County Council of Governments](#) with financial support from the [Maine Department of Transportation](#) and [DownEast & Acadia Regional Tourism](#) (DART). The map depicts Hancock and Washington Counties and is intended to lure more of Acadia/Bar Harbor's 2 million annual visitors farther Downeast. The map is on display throughout the region where visitors are making decisions about what to do next, which route to travel, what attractions to choose. It highlights the cultural features - lighthouses, museums and cultural attractions - as well as the natural assets - parks, camping, boating. It also directs the traveler to information centers, Scenic Byways and the many thematic trails that interpret our natural and cultural landscape; the [Ice Age Trail](#), the [Downeast Sunrise Trail](#), the [Downeast Fisheries Trail](#). Visitors can get their bearings and find more information from the web sites displayed on the legend or pick up more detailed trail maps from visitor information centers. The map can be viewed at [www.downeastrcd.com/vrc.htm](http://www.downeastrcd.com/vrc.htm)

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### Partner Profile: Down East Business Alliance

The mission of the Down East Business Alliance is to help create jobs in eastern Maine by helping people start and grow small businesses. They provide workshops, one-on-one business counseling, and networking opportunities to businesses that qualify. Tourism is an important segment of the local economy and largely consists of small businesses, especially in our region of the state. Because of this, the Down East Business Alliance has worked a lot with tourism businesses and has been a member of VRC for the past 4 years. They are integral to VRC's training initiatives and to helping ensure that the needs of small businesses are met. Sarah Nugent, Business Development Manager sums up by saying "For 25 years, DBA has been working with small business owners in Washington and Hancock counties. We understand some of the trials and tribulations of doing business here. Tourism is our biggest industry these days, so our work with the VRC is very important to us as we work to make local businesses stronger." To learn more about their programs and how they can help your small business, visit their website at [www.downeastbiz.org](http://www.downeastbiz.org) or give them a call at 207-664-2424.

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### Green Tips from the Field

This issue's green ideas come from:

[Blue Hill Inn](#)

The Blue Hill Inn keeps coffee to-go cups out of sight and only offers them by request. This encourages guests to use the ceramic mugs (made by a local potter, from local clay) to take coffee back to their room or to the garden. They also offer a pitcher of ice water and glasses, instead of bottled water. If four people every morning had taken a to-go cup (conservative estimate) x 160 days x cost per cup and lid, minus cost of washing mug and the cost of the mugs, if applicable, plus the great feeling of using a real mug plus not adding to the trash stream = priceless!

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

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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.