

MSC Receives \$10,000 Grant for JMG Camperships

Maine Summer Camps has announced that a \$10,000 grant from the Maine Timberlands Charitable Trust will fund camp scholarships for ten aspiring Junior Maine Guides this summer.

Ten \$1,000 awards will support camp tuition at two camps where recipients will train for and seek certification as Junior Maine Guides. The University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Bryant Pond, a co-ed camp in Bryant Pond, and Camp Natarswi, a Girl Scout camp at the base of Mt. Katahdin in Millinocket, will each offer five camp scholarships to youngsters ages 14-18 seeking to attend camp for three weeks of JMG preparation, and then participate in the five-day JMG testing encampment held at the Stephen Phillips Memorial Preserve in Oquossoc at the end of July.

“We were absolutely thrilled and excited” about the grant, said Camp Natarswi Director Treasa Wheeler. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to offer to five girls.”

Girl Scouts of Maine Chief of Outdoor Operations Mary Ellen Deschenes pointed out the “long history” Girl Scouts have with the JMG program. “We are very excited. The kinds of things JMG teaches are consistent with the Girl Scouts.”

The scholarships give the JMG opportunity to youngsters whose families that might not be able to afford four weeks of camp, she said.

Ronald Fournier, conservation education director at the University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Bryant Pond, calls the scholarships “a really great opportunity,” for Maine youngsters seeking JMG certification. The camp offers 12-15 JMG slots each summer, he said. Many of those campers are there thanks to scholarship help, he said.



Since created by an act of the Maine legislature in 1937, the Junior Maine Guide (JMG) program has been a joint initiative of Maine’s Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Maine Summer Camps (formerly known as the Maine Youth Camping Foundation). With training and testing provided by Maine Summer Camps, the organizations have taught outdoor leadership and living skills to youth between the ages of 14 and 18, preparing and testing them for Junior Maine Guide certification. That certification confirms mastery of a broad range of skills, including: canoeing; fire-building in wet and dry conditions; emergency shelter; first aid; cooking; map and compass skills; and identification of flora and fauna.

Since its inception, the program has certified approximately 2500 youngsters as JMG’s. Maine is known for its “licensed Maine Guides,” a coveted certification for adults trained to lead others in wilderness living and adventures. The JMG program gives youngsters the opportunity to not only appreciate the wilderness but master a level of leadership and outdoor skills that might steer them toward becoming future Maine

Guides, or trip leaders, or, at a very minimum, instill a broad knowledge of, and spirit of stewardship toward, the wild environment.



Youngsters interested in obtaining a scholarship from either camp in order to pursue Junior Maine Guide certification are asked to contact the two camps directly. Information from Camp Natarswi can be obtained at www.girlscoutsofmaine.org or by calling the camp directly at 207-989-7474 or 207-299-0089. Campers interested in the Bryant Pond 4-H camp may access its website at www.umaine.edu/bryantpond/ or may call the camp at 207-665-2068.