

Do the Allagash, No Sweat

V. Paul Reynolds piece of April 15th “Solutions Still Elusive for the Allagash Waterway” misdiagnosed the debate around traditional use.

I agree that the Department of Conservation has often reacted to problems on the Allagash only when political fires erupted. However for Mr. Reynolds to give credence to those lamenting a loss of “traditional use” is misleading.

There is plenty of access to the River. What really is desired is to drive to the waters edge in four-wheel drive trucks, climb directly into a motorized watercraft and ride around this classified Wild River. Such a trip requires little effort nor provides much challenge.

National statistics show that our children are inactive, overweight and spend too much time on video games and television. Shouldn't parents be encouraging them to get outdoors and be active by teaching skills such as paddling and poling a canoe, hiking and fishing?

In my thirty-five years around the Allagash, it was with pride when my family safely paddled the Waterways, but it required physical effort and knowledge to do so. My most pleasurable experiences was teaching my daughter the skills to successfully paddle, hike and camp at remote places such as Allagash Lake. It was those trips that gave her the confidence and resourcefulness to be successful.

Societies failure to pass on physical techniques and outdoor knowledge only rationalizes an increase in graveled motorized access points. It will be a sad day if our proudest claim for a trip into the North Woods is, “We were able to drive down the Allagash”.

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