



## 'It's an adventure'



### Maine women flock to new snowshoeing group for beginners

BY AISLINN SARNACKI  
BDN STAFF

"Never in a million years did I think these would be on my feet," Tara Greenberg said, looking down at the pair of snowshoes strapped onto her winter boots. Greenberg moved to Portland about a year ago. Before then, she lived in New York and Massachusetts. She's no stranger to snow, but before Saturday she had never taken an interest in winter sports. "I hibernate all winter," she said with a smile. "So this is amazing, that after 41

years I'm out here." Standing on a thin layer of crunchy snow outside Pineland Farms Outdoor Center in New Gloucester, Greenberg was surrounded by more than 30 other Maine women. For many of them, it was their first time on snowshoes. All of the women are members of the new "Maine Beginner Hiking/Snowshoeing Meetup for Women," an online group organized by Kendra Wheeler, a 25-year-old health coach from the Lewiston area. Wheeler created the group in late October. It's free to join. So far, more than 240 women have signed up. "It surprised me because obviously this is a niche — a

need," Wheeler said. "Women need this and they want it, and I think it's because it hits on so many things — social, mental and physical." The group is hosted by Meetup, which claims to be the largest network of local organizations in the world. Since Meetup's inception in 2002, it has attracted more than 24 million members from 178 countries, and these members have formed more than 200,000 Meetup groups geared toward a wide array of interests, from stock market investing to wine tasting. "Outdoors & Adventure" is one of the three largest Meetup communities. See *Snowshoe*, Page C4



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Kendra Wheeler of Greene talks with members of a Meetup group she created while on a group snowshoe Saturday on the trails at Pineland Farms in New Gloucester. Wheeler created the online group "Maine Beginner Hiking/Snowshoeing Meetup for Women" in October on Meetup.com, and so far, more than 240 people have joined the group. Just more than 30 members of the group attended the planned snowshoe trip at Pineland Farms recently.

### 1-Minute Hike: Pineland Farms in New Gloucester



AISLINN SARNACKI | BDN

A group snowshoes on the trails of Pineland Farms, a 5,000-acre property that is home to a vast trail network groomed for skiing, snowshoeing and fat-tire biking in the winter. The public also enjoys a sledding hill and skating pond on the property.

Difficulty: Easy to strenuous, depending on the trails you choose to explore and the time of year. Trail difficulty is labeled on the Pineland Farms trail maps for summer and winter recreation, which are available online and in print at the Pineland Farms Outdoor Center.



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**How to get there:** Pineland Farms Welcome Center is located at 15 Farm View Drive in New Gloucester. To get

there from the Maine Turnpike (Interstate 95) take Exit 63 and bear right after the toll booth, toward the center of Grey Village. Stay in the right lane. At the first intersection, go straight through the light

**Watch the video**  
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onto Route 115. Continue on Route 115 for 1.6 miles, then turn left onto Depot Road. Drive 2.8 miles, and you'll reach a stop sign. Turn left onto Route 231 (Intervale Road), then left again onto Morse Road. Turn right into the Pineland Campus. The Pineland Welcome Center and Outdoor Center is the first

building on the right. **Information:** Consisting of more than 5,000 acres of fields and forests in southern Maine, Pineland Farms includes working farms, a campus of businesses and education buildings, and a network of more than 18 miles of well-maintained trails that are open to the public year-round. These trails vary in difficulty from easy to strenuous and are labeled as such on the Pineland Farms summer and winter trail maps. In the winter, more than half the trails in the network are groomed for classic cross-country skiing and skate skiing, while the remaining trails

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### Unusual fishing derby has variety of choices

BY JOHN HOLYOKE  
BDN STAFF

BANGOR — Over the course of an ice fishing season, dozens of derbies are held around the state. In most cases, all you've got to do to participate is choose one, make sure it's being held within a reasonable drive of your home, is on a lake you'd like to fish and features a species of fish that you know how to catch. Then there's the fishing tournament Wes Ashe and his pals dreamed up back in 2011. It's got a simple name — this year it's the 6th Annual Ice Fishin' Derby — and even simpler rules. And if it sounds like the kind of thing a bunch of college guys thought up while they were sitting around fishing ... that's what it should sound like. "When I developed it, I was at UMaine, and we had all these people that loved to go to all of these different



COURTESY OF WES ASHE

The fishing conditions on Swan Lake weren't perfect on opening day, but determined anglers were able to drill a hole or two.

waters all over the state," Ashe explained. "They're just these crazy fishermen. So I started this derby, and it's really unlike any other derby." What sets it apart? Well, everything. Basic rules: Any fish. Any water. Any time.

"It takes place from Dec. 1 to March 31, and it takes place on any water in the state of Maine that's open to ice fishing," Ashe said. "And you can fish for any species of fish. You can fish for pickerel or pike or brook

trout or white perch, whatever you want. That's just a partial list: Ashe said that his semi-official list of approved species includes 28 different kinds of fish, including some, like the rainbow smelt and golden shiner, that most people think of as bait. The derby essentials: — Anyone can enter the derby by sending \$10 to Wes Ashe at 60 Fern St., Apt. 2, Bangor, 04401. — All fish entries are submitted via email. Anglers take a photo of the fish they caught beside a ruler (to show length), and the derby card that proves the angler actually caught it and is a derby participant. — Any other information can be obtained by sending Ashe an email at icefishderby@gmail.com. Typically, between 20 and 40 anglers participate in a given year. At the end of the season, the longest fish in

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### Snowmobilers gearing up for tri-state weekend

Maine businesses and snowmobile clubs are preparing to roll out the red carpet for out-of-state riders this weekend, as enthusiasts from Vermont and New Hampshire head to the state to try out the trails for free. Mainer are offered the same opportunity in those states Jan. 29-31. The weekend is the first of two "free" opportunities on tap for this season; the second comes Feb. 12-14, when Canadian riders from New Brunswick will be welcomed to the state, and Maine riders can cross the border to visit

our neighbors to the north. On the surface, it's a good deal for the state: Showcasing Maine's 14,000 miles of interconnected trails, which are groomed by members of local snowmobile clubs, ought to lead to repeat visitors in the future. That's the hope, at least. Bonnie Holding, the director of information and education for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, said the free weekends are pretty straight-forward. "The goal [this weekend] is to get more people to come to the state of Maine and look at our snowmobile trails, because we do have some great riding," Holding said. "It also helps the other states — Vermont and New Hampshire — for us to go there." See *Holyoke*, Page C4



JOHN HOLYOKE