



Bangor native James Kaiser, who wrote "Acadia: The Complete Guide," stands with his camera atop Beech Mountain recently while photographing scenes for his guidebook.

Beagle steals the show in hare hunt

On a chilly Friday afternoon, we gathered outside of Jim Fahey's pickup truck as he strapped a tracking collar to his dog, Chum, and explained the plan of action.

We'd walk down a grassy path for a bit, he said, and eventually arrive at a thicket of young evergreen trees.

"It's thick in there," the affable part-time guide said. "So thick that we'd have a hard time walking through it."

Then he glanced knowingly at the low-slung beagle at his feet.

"That's where we'll start Chum," he said.

For six months of the year, Chum is a wonderful house pet who gets along well with everyone, Fahey told us. But for the other six months — from October through the end of March — Chum looks forward to days like this, when he's invited to tag along and put his world-class nose to work hunting snowshoe hares.

In a hare hunt, Fahey said, the dog does much of the work. That's Fahey's story, at least: After observing Fahey during the hunt, friend Pete Warner and I quickly realized that the dog-owner also expends a lot of energy at times, redirecting the dog and making sure it's not getting into areas it shouldn't.

And us hunters? We stood where Fahey told us to stand and waited for a hare to show up. And waited ... and waited. As dogs go, Chum is neither the most energetic nor the speediest you'll find. His gait is shambling, and he gingerly hops, rather than vaults, over fallen trees.

But he's a good-natured fellow, and has a grade-A nose. And as we learned, he's absolutely tenacious (in a decidedly deliberate way) when he's on the scent of a hare.

Fahey took us to a spot not far from his Bangor home, released Chum, and before long, the dog began to bark.

If you've never hunted snowshoe hares behind a dog before, barking is good. It means the beagle has found the scent of a hare. The pitch and frequency of that barking, Fahey told us, can tell him whether the scent is fresh, or older. And when Chum is truly on a fresh scent, there's no mistaking the eagerness in his voice.

There's a common misconception among those who haven't hunted hares, and some who have, Fahey said. Many think that the dog actually herds the fleeing hare back toward the hunters. "That's not what happens," he said. "All the dog is doing is following the scent, wherever it goes."

The hare, however, will often circle back to the patch of heavy

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JOHN HOLYOKE

The essential guide to Acadia

Bangor native celebrating park's 100th year with donations through fourth edition of book

BY AISLINN SARNACKI
BDN STAFF

A good guidebook can really make a difference. It can save a vacation. It can give a person confidence to venture somewhere new, perhaps even off the beaten path. And a truly great guidebook can go one step further, elevating an enjoyable trip to an educational, even life-changing experience.

That's why James Kaiser, a Bangor native, created and self-published his first guidebook "Acadia: The Complete Guide" in 2000 and has continued to improve it in subsequent editions over the years.

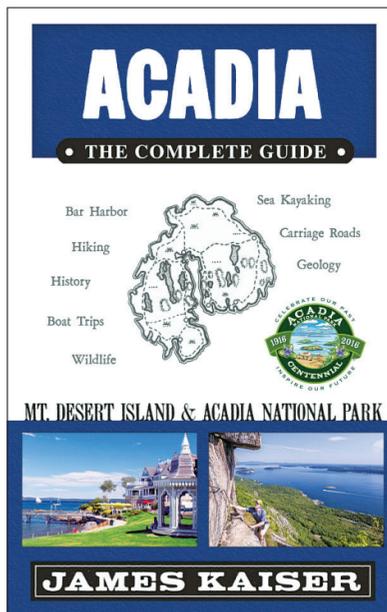
"When I travel, I don't just travel to have a good time," Kaiser explained. "I do have a good time, but that's not all. To me, travel is also about education, learning new things about new places. I consider it to be as valu-

able a part of life education as going to school. And that's where a good guidebook can come in and really bring your vacation to the next level."

In celebration of Acadia National Park's 100th anniversary, Kaiser is publishing the fourth edition of "Acadia: The Complete Guide" this month, and he's donating 5 percent of book sales to the park as an Acadia Centennial Partner.

The book, retailing at \$19.99, contains 287 pages of useful and fascinating information about Acadia National Park and Mount Desert Island. The writing is polished and succinct, broken up by stunning color photographs, detailed maps and interesting graphics. From hiking trails to historic events, Kaiser covers a wide range of topics, providing readers with just enough detail to spark their curiosity, then providing the resources they might need to dig deeper into any given topic.

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1-Minute Hike: South Ridge Trail on Cadillac Mountain

BY AISLINN SARNACKI
BDN STAFF

Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous because of the length of the trail. South Ridge Trail climbs gradually and steadily up Cadillac Mountain for 3.5 miles, making for an out-and-back hike of 7 miles. You can shorten the hike by catching a ride on a bus or trolley at the summit of Cadillac or descending the mountain on



AISLINN SARNACKI

not stop at the summit of Cadillac Mountain. This year, the Is-

land Explorer will run June 23 through Columbus Day.

How to get there: There is no official parking area for South Ridge Trailhead, but the gravel shoulders of Route 3 near the trailhead is wide enough to fit parked vehicles on both sides. To get there, drive across the causeway onto Mount Desert Island, and at the fork in the road, stay straight on Route 3 toward Bar Harbor. Drive about 10.5

miles on Route 3 and you'll reach downtown Bar Harbor, where you'll come to a few intersections. Simply stay on Route 3, passing out of downtown Bar Harbor and past Jackson Laboratory and the village of Otter Creek. At about 16 miles (measured from the fork after the causeway), you'll see the wooden post marking the trailhead to Cadillac Mountain's South Ridge

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Whitewater racing season returns

BY JOHN HOLYOKE
BDN STAFF

BELFAST — A year ago, during a seemingly endless winter that brought Maine piles of snow several feet deep, Dale Cross visited one local river in late March — just as paddling season was scheduled to begin — and was amazed at what he found.

"I was literally able to cross the [St. George River] on ice," said Cross, the longtime race director of the region's first two whitewater canoe and kayak races.

Ice and canoe-racing don't necessarily mix that well, and the late thaw led to races being postponed.

Saturday marks the scheduled date for the 37th St. George River Race, and Cross said ice isn't a problem this time around, as winter never really showed up at all this year.

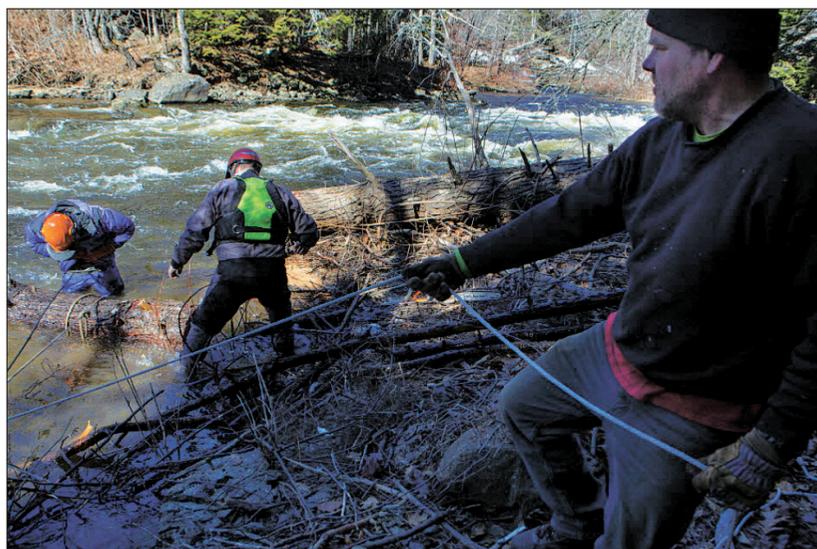
"It's a totally different scene, that's for sure," Cross said. "Last

year we were holding the race off for another week for the St. George and two weeks for the [Passagassawakeag, which is set for April 2]."

Cross said that paddlers were practicing on the St. George two or three weeks ago, and said that neither the St. George nor the "Passy" froze solid all winter long.

Of course, as a race director, Cross said that there are always other factors that he can focus on, even when the rivers are running with water instead of clogged with ice.

"As soon as you think, 'This is going to be great, spring is coming early,' and you think about paddling early, the next thought is — and I'm a little bit of a worrier — 'Oh, no. We're not going to have enough water for the race,'" Cross said, explaining that river levels can drop a bit each day when no rain falls, eventually turning a stream into a rocky ob-



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Kyle Duckworth (from left), Ryan Gerry and Gabor Degre work to clear a fallen tree from the Souadabscook Stream in Hampden recently in preparation for the upcoming paddling season.

stacle course, or worse.

That won't be the case on the St. George, Cross said, but with no significant rainstorm in the forecast, neither will the river be frothing and wild, as some thrill-seeking paddlers would prefer.

"It's going to be a little bit low," he said. "I think we're going to get some wet weather at the end of

this week, and that may help the St. George. It's not at a high level, but it's definitely doable, so that's good."

Cross paddled the St. George a week ago and got down through safely, although he did hit a few rocks. Those rocks likely will pose the biggest challenges for participants at this year's race.

"This year the challenge will not be the big waves and missing some of that stuff," Cross said. "It will be to really navigate and miss the rocks. Paddlers who are really good at reading the whitewater and reading what's in front of them, those are the people who are going to do the river faster

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