



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Ryan Gerry (from left), Kyle Duckworth and Gabor Degre clear a fallen tree from the Souadabscook Stream in Hampden on Saturday in preparation for the upcoming paddling season. Such trees can pose a very real danger of trapping a boater underwater, that is why people attempt to remove the debris when it is possible to do so safely.

## Racing

Continued from Page C1

than the others. It's a whole new challenge. It's more technical."

That doesn't mean, however, that the race will be a breeze. Cross went fishing on a lake recently and said the water temperature was 36 degrees. Paddlers will be faced with similar water temperatures, and should be prepared.

"It's still cold, I can tell you," Cross said. "If you're not cold enough, roll around in the snow for a while before you jump in [your boat]."

Not that you should really do that. But you get the point.

Cross cautioned that those looking to get an early look at the Passagassawakeag River should hold off for a few more days.

The river is not clogged with ice, but it is full of fallen trees.

"We had a lot of brush [in the Passagassawakeag] last year ... we had that fall [of 2014] storm that brought down a lot of trees," Cross said. "We're still cleaning those trees out. That river, right now, is still blocked with trees. I've got to get into it later this week and early next week, but practice runs on the Passy are going to be pretty limited."

Cross said he has learned to be flexible, and to prepare for anything Mother Nature may dish out.

"What happens with the rivers is, every year's different," Cross said. "I've been [directing] the St. George for 37 years and I don't think there's ever been one year that's been just like the next."

The St. George River Race will begin at 11 a.m. Registration will be held from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Searsmont Methodist Church on Route 131 in Searsmont. The entry fee is \$20 per paddler.

The time schedule is the same for the Passagassawakeag River Race on April 2. Registration will take place at Littlefield Farm on Savage Road in Waldo.

Other early races:

— April 9, Souadabscook Stream Race, Hampden.

— April 10, Marsh Stream Race and Marsh Stream Sprints, Frankfort.

— April 15, Kenduskeag Stream Sprint, Bangor.

— April 16, 50th Kenduskeag Stream Race, Kenduskeag and Bangor.

— April 23, 44th Kiwanis Piscataquis River Race, Guilford and Dover-Foxcroft.

A more complete schedule is available at the Maine Canoe and Kayak Racing Organization website.

## Holyoke

Continued from Page C1

cover it had originally been hiding in. That predictability can aid the hunters, who set up — or "post" — in spots along that line of travel.

On this day, Warner and I got several chances to post, as Chum kept up a steady track (and low-speed pursuit) of a hare for about three hours.

There were a few intermittent breaks in the barking when we began to wonder what was going on, but each time, before long, Chum picked up a fresh scent and began barking anew.

After a few laps around the hunting grounds, Fahey said, the scent trail gets muddled; Chum may cross over a patch of old scent that the hare left 15 minutes earlier and get a bit confused.

When confronted with that complex scent problem, Fahey said the dog doesn't tend to barge on and hope for the best.

Instead, Chum tends to stop, regroup, and try to figure things out on his own.

And figure things out, he did ... eventually.

Both Warner and I had fleeting glimpses of hopping hares during the chase, but



JIM FAHEY

BDN assistant sports editor Pete Warner (left) and BDN outdoors editor John Holyoke pose with Chum the beagle after an afternoon of snowshoe hare hunting with guide Jim Fahey.

neither of us got off a shot until much later.

Still, the flash of white fur — hares are just beginning to return to their summer brown coats — provided

both of us some much-needed encouragement.

At the end of an afternoon of posting and waiting, Chum circled in front of me, not visible, but fairly close.

Fahey smiled, repositioned me a short distance away and showed me the GPS tracker in his hand.

"He's chased the hare through here three times already. Chum crossed this path right here each time," he said.

About 100 yards away, Warner stood on another path that the hare-and-hound combo had crossed multiple times.

"This could be good," Fahey said, before vanishing back into the woods to check on Warner.

About five minutes later, as I listened to Chum's barking continue, a shotgun blast rang out. The hare had finally made a mistake, and Warner was in the proper spot to take advantage. Then, on cue, Chum showed up at the downed hare to receive his hard-earned rewards.

Chum took center stage in the ensuing celebration. Praise was handed out. Photos were taken. And Chum was the star of the show.

That was only proper, of course: He, after all, had done all of the hard work.

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