

SAINT JOHN OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS 2023 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORT

Club Coordinating Committee

Through in-person meetings plus other discussions via email or telephone, the committee guided all club functions per our operational guidelines. The Club Committee members carried out their roles so that SJOE continued to offer many outdoor and social events, processed memberships, monitored finances and maintained club communications.

In 2023, the Coordination Committee reviewed the Club's Operational Guidelines, as required every three years, and no changes were deemed necessary.

After fewer gatherings in 2022 due to COVID restrictions, 2023 saw more outdoor and social activities organized than previous years. In 2023, a series of short summer evening hikes were organized. These were very popular, especially for many of our new members, who were working on increasing their fitness level so that they felt more comfortable participating in longer day hikes.

2023 saw a significant increase in our Club's membership. It is felt that this was due to the lifting of Covid restrictions and an increased presence of the Club on Facebook.

2023 also saw the introduction of our new ICE (In case of Emergency) cards. All members were provided with several cards or cards could be downloaded from the SJOE website. Members were asked to carry a completed card with them on all hikes. To protect their cards, plastic pouches were available to purchase at cost from Committee members. This was received well by all members as it helped to eliminate the need for all hike participants to sign waivers prior to every hike.

Also in 2023, three new retailers, Outdoor Elements Sussex, Bikes and Beans Quispamsis and Millennium Cycle Quispamsis, agreed to join River & Trail Rothesay, Green Lee Shoes Saint John and Tommy's Superette Saint John in providing our SJOE members with discounts of 10 - 15 % on selected purchases.

Overall, 2023 was a fantastic year for adventure and SJOE's growth! May the adventures, friendships and the joy of exploring our great province and beyond continue in 2024!!

Outdoor and Outreach Events

When we reported SJOE Club activities for the year 2022, we realized we had enjoyed a very active time. And we sure did. However, 2023 has been "record-breaking". We can say this even though, while we do not track events formally, our tally is pretty close to reality. What an enthusiastic year 2023 has been! The total number of events was much higher, mainly bolstered by two "series" of walks but the number of participants increased significantly as well.

Here is a “ by-the-numbers” look at SJOE’s past year:

- 103 planned and impromptu events** (mostly walks, hikes, snowshoe)
- 1,359 participants** (members & a few guests) (up from 568 in 2022)
- 1,176 kms covered** (# of events x kms)
- 29** different event leaders

The above included:

- 2** “series” of evening walks (26: Renforth Hills & 9: various locations)
 - 4** paddling events
 - 3** cycling events
 - 4** trail or coastal maintenance/clean ups
 - 2** multi-day events (out-of-province hiking & music/camping event)
 - and
 - 9** events which offered fun and social add-ons and/or food
- AGM potluck, prizes & games (Quispamsis), Taste of Sussex, Fundy Parkway Breakfast, St. Patrick’s Day BBQ (Loch Lomond), Music & Chowder night, BBQ, swim & paddle event (Digdeguash), Sea Shanty weekend camping (St. Martins), a combined Club and Member Hosted summer BBQ with paddling, games & prizes (LochLomond) and finally, a seasonal, hotel brunch in December.

Events took place mostly in southern New Brunswick but some members also visited Fredericton and the Gaspé area of Quebec. We returned to many favourite spots such as the Fundy Parkway and the caves and Bullwinkle trails of St. Martins plus Beemer’s Creek in Hampton, Fundy National Park and trails in Musquash and Lorneville were on the list several times too. Some of us enjoyed a “wetlands information day” at the Irving Nature Park - another favourite hiking spot. We tasted and toured in Sussex including the Bluffs, Piccadilly Mountain and Walkers Settlement. In an annual winter highlight we experienced both the Midland Ice Caves and the Parlee Brook “amphitheatre” or “cathedral”. Both sites were spectacular in 2023. Water of all kinds is always a strong draw and SJOE visited many beautiful waterfalls, rivers, streams and beaches which are abundant in our area.

Finally, as a part of our outreach efforts, some members put in work to improve some trails and coastlines. We shared some sweat equity to install a new section of Five Fathom Hole trail, and in an ad hoc way, cleared paths as we went along (some members carry tools in their backpacks!). Since 2012, SJOE has maintained a commitment to monitoring a section of the Fundy Footpath, where blazing and debris-clearing happens annually. Several of our members are also regular participants in similar events organized by Nature Trust NB and Nature Conservancy Canada, a highlight of which is cleaning tons of debris from the Fundy Isles.

As stated in previous reports, members have shown a growing fondness for week day events and the past year also exhibited a strong attraction to weekday evening walks. We enjoyed several of these as urban walks but also covered many kms in the surrounding communities of Rothesay, Quispamsis, Grand-Bay Westfield, Welsford, Hampton and beyond.

To keep these outdoor activities flourishing we rely on members themselves to step up. Many do so regularly for which we remain very grateful. Others offer only one, or a few

events and that is great too. In support of all of this, as the Outdoor Events Coordinator, I kept busy scheduling and “recruiting “ leaders, developing the quarterly planned events calendars, assisting with dozens of impromptu and general information notices, and - where needed - supported leaders with organizing and car pooling. It has been a great personal pleasure to have been so involved with SJOE for the last eight years as President, then Outdoor Events Coordinator. I have gained immeasurably from SJOE and as I step down from the Club’s all-important leadership group, I will continue to be an active member supporting our leaders so that SJOE continues to enthusiastically enjoy outdoor adventures!
Becky Bourdage
Outgoing Outdoor Events Coordinator

Membership

2023 Memberships

Total memberships - 194

Of that amount, there were 81 new memberships issued.

Total members - 261

Of that amount, there are 106 new members that joined the Club.

Total members each year since 2017

2017 - 150

2018 - 151

2019 - 150

2020 - 120

2021 - 175

2022 - 197

2023 - 261

Communications

SJOE members were regularly provided with information from Committee Members and Impromptu Event Leaders via group email. Quarterly Preplanned Events Calendars, monthly At A Glance Reminders of upcoming events and notices of upcoming impromptu events were routinely distributed. Notice of impromptu events were sent to members when the details were made available by the event leaders, giving members a one to two day notice of the event.

In addition, other club information was disseminated to members such as encouraging members to lead events, membership renewal reminders, the implementation of the Club’s new ICE cards and a few specific requests.

The SJOE Facebook page has remained an important tool for the awareness of Club activities for the general public and our members and has been maintained by the Club Coordinator. Photos and details of the Club’s events were posted regularly. The Facebook page generated a lot of interest and attracted new members, as evidenced by frequent inquiries and the significant increase in the Club’s membership this past year.

SJOE's web site was maintained by our Membership Coordinator, with regular updates being made, including postings of our quarterly Preplanned Events Calendar, the monthly At A Glance list and revised documents as relevant.

Financial

SJOE Financial Report

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenues					
Membership Fees	1255	820*	750*	1500	2150
ICE Card Pouches					30
Rental Deposit Return					250
Interest	43	39	17	11	45
Expenses					
Postal Box Rental	199	199	204	204	209
Web Site & Domain Fees	236	234	224	283	283
Bank Charges	43	47	60	47	79
Promo Materials	360				0
Room Rentals	460	100*	-*	587	150
Supplies	440	173*	14*	479	616
Other					150
Revenue-Expenses	-440	105	265	-89	987
SJOE Assets					
Cash Account	2202	2069	2317	2171	3113
Bond	2198	2237	2254	2265	2310
Member Share	5	5	5	5	5
Total	4405	4311	4576	4441	5408

NOTES:

SJOE member fees are collected throughout the year while renewal fees are collected between November and March and reported in the year received.

*Pandemic restrictions 2020-22 meant no annual social or AGM in 2020 plus a decision to not collect Renewal Fees.

Memoriams

Carol Lee Elliot
David Jory

Acknowledgments

For contributions to SJOE in 2023, we thank all Club Committee members, Event Leaders, Trail Maintenance and Social event volunteers! If we have missed any names, rest assured we have not forgotten your efforts and we THANK YOU!

Shokat Keshavarzi, Paul Creamer, Deb Creamer, Mike Maillet, Maryanne Maillet, Becky Bourdage, Paula Bawn, Gordon Elliot, Jane Barefoot, June Hall, Bill Hall, Jerry Martin, Lynda Martin, Chris Kennedy, Tom Cunningham, Brian LeBlanc, Janice Williams, Alan Howes, Marilyn McKay, Trevor Fotheringham, Ruth Alexander, Donnie Alexander, Wayne Arrowsmith, Joy Hall, Michele Banks, Noelle Kennedy, Emilia Sherwood, Jeff Smith, Barbara Marney- Dixon, Nora Elliot, Christina Graves.

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SJOE HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS 1988-2023*

November 28, 1988: Over 30 people met to discuss forming an outdoor enthusiasts club, similar to one which had started the year before in Moncton.

December 7, 1988: A Planning Meeting occurred.

December 11, 1988: The first event - an outdoor hike - was held in Rockwood Park.

January 13, 1989: A cross country ski clinic was offered, also in Rockwood Park.

January 1989: The name, "The Saint John Outdoor Enthusiasts!" was chosen, an executive was elected, an Events Committee was formed and a Newsletter was issued to members and various interest groups. Soon the first Constitution and By Laws were developed.

November 1989: SJOE had 51 members; within a few years it grew to 175 members.

December 2023: Averaging over 80 events yearly. Memberships totalled 260.

Club Leadership

From 1989 to 2023: SJOE has had 13 "executives" (now called coordinating committees).

2020: SJOE adopted new Operational Guidelines and changed leadership to be a Coordinating Committee.

Club Events

TOO many and too many KINDS to list over these 35 years! Weekend and winter camping, canoeing, caving, hiking, biking, white water paddling, canoe races, etc. Groups of members have travelled the world with SJOE friends. "Clinics" (like First Aid, paddling) and pot lucks and camp fires.

Individuals, who have challenged themselves at Mt. Katahdin, the Dobson Trail, Fundy Footpath, and the Appalachian Trail - and so many more!

Club Operations

In early years, volunteers had to meet at length and plan well in advance because they had to print, collate, label, stuff and stamp envelopes, then MAIL all calendars and notices to members. How times have changed! Since about 2016 we set up our web site, Face Book, online membership applications and payments and now, depend on e-mail for our communications.

****Based on notes from: Founding & Honorary Life Member - Art McFadden and Becky Bourdage Past President and Outgoing Events Coordinator.***