SustainME Spring Skills Program
May 17th, 2020

Session I:

- **Becoming a Hunter:** This workshop is focused on a comprehensive approach for folks new to hunting or that simply want insight on how to get started. Many of our workshops cover various topics on specific hunting focuses or activities, but this workshop will set the stage for success in getting started! Each participant will learn how to navigate through hunter safety, connect to existing conservation opportunities, and learn about the various types of hunting, equipment, and skills involved. Part of the workshop will be spent outdoors learning how to read the forest, scout for signs of wildlife and explore the various tactics used in stand hunting, still hunting, ground blinds and other methods. All participants will leave with information on registering for a hunter or bowhunter course. Folks will also have a direct link and continued support to help in guiding them towards choosing equipment, finding places to hunt, and other information.

- **Large and Smallmouth Bass Fishing:** Maine may be considered a “sleeper state” in the world of bass fishing, but the truth is that Maine has some amazing bass fisheries! Explore the ecology and habits of these prized sportfish from selecting the appropriate rod and tackle to filleting your catch. This workshop will provide a chance to practice new skills and learn from experienced anglers on how to enjoy this growing activity.

- **Survive the Wild: What to do when you are lost:** This workshop will take you through the steps and stages of actually getting lost, and what to do next. We'll focus a great deal of prevention and preparedness, moving right into specific key skills that will give you the best odds at survival in the backcountry. Fire building will be one major focus with lots of hands on practice in various scenarios.

- **Shotgun Shooting Skills:** Breaking clays and honing in your “wing shootings” skills is a great way to spend the day! We'll work on safe gun handling and basic shotgun shooting. and then we'll take it to the sporting clays range for some high-flying clay target shooting! Learn proper stance, follow through, and point and shoot techniques from certified instructors, and have a chance to shoot different types of 12 and 20 gauge shotguns. Ear and eye protection is supplied.

- **Finding and Using Chaga Mushroom:** The Chaga mushroom grows on birch trees throughout the northern hemisphere. It resembles a dark clump of dirt more than a mushroom, but is distinguished from other growths by its orange tissue. The health benefits and medicinal uses continue to be learned, but one thing for sure is that this powerful, nutrient packed mushroom can be found year-round and it thrives here in our climate! Learn how to find, harvest, prepare and utilize Chaga for maximum benefits, including teas, tinctures, and other uses.

- **Foraging for Fiddleheads:** Fiddleheads, an early spring delicacy throughout the Northeast and Canadian Maritime Provinces, are the young coiled fronds of the ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*). Nearly all ferns have fiddleheads, but not all fiddleheads are edible. The Ostrich fern fiddleheads are edible, and can be identified by the brown, papery scale-like covering on the uncoiled fern. Learn how to locate, clean, and prepare them for eating. Fiddleheads are just one more available food source readily available in many parts of Maine and the Northeast!
Session I continued:

- **Seasonal Forest Foraging:** Start your own seasonal foraging calendar and learn to identify, harvest, process, store and use plants found at their different seasonal stages. You have to be ready with time, tools, and materials or the harvest may pass you by. We’ll introduce you to field guides and resource books as well as time outdoors exploring. Try some foraged samples that will help develop a list of tasty plants that you will want to eat or preserve for later. We’ll focus on: nettles, acorns, apples, and wild rice for starters.

- **Raising Chickens:** There’s nothing more iconic in the backyard farm than chickens pecking and scurrying about! Whether for meat or eggs, we will cover the basics of selecting, raising, and caring for this farmyard classic and you will have several resources for starting your very own flock.

- **Soil Management:** A garden is only as good as its soil. We will cover the basics of soil testing, soil management and how and when to use fertilizers, limes, and other organic additives.

- **Garden Planning:** Whether you have 40 acres or very little space at all, you’ll learn how to maximize what you do have, prepare your soil, and choose the right things to plant, how to prune and maximize growth, and soon, you’ll be ready to start your garden this summer!

Session II:

- **Talking Turkey:** Maine’s Turkey hunting opportunities continue to grow in both the numbers of people that seek the challenge, and in the numbers of birds statewide. Wild turkey is a wonderful food source and a great challenge, but to get started, there are some tricks to become successful. We’ll cover habits and habitats, hunting tactics, ground blinds and calling, and much more in this comprehensive workshop.

- **Advanced Shotgun:** Take your shotgun skills to the next level! Shoot Sporting clays from various positions and presentations and learn about choke selection and how to pattern a shotgun. You’ll be able to shoot 20 and 12-gauge pump and semi-auto shotguns, and shoot single and double clays.

- **Saltwater Fishing—Surfcasting Basics:** Maine is home to more coastline than almost any other state in the US due to the rocky shoreline and numerous islands. This provides the backdrop of some excellent surfcasting opportunities! Striped bass are usually the targeted species and this workshop will introduce you to various ways to fish for them, including equipment, casting, and rods and tackle. You’ll leave with the confidence to join the growing number of anglers that seek stripers and await their migratory arrival each spring and summer!

- **Bowhunting Skills:** Bowhunting has steadily grown in popularity in Maine and to be successful there’s many things to consider. In this workshop, we’ll cover equipment selection and proper shooting form, use of tree stands and ground blinds. We will focus on shot placement, judging distance, blood tracking and even laws and regulations. By the end of the workshop, you will be ready to begin preparations for your next season!

- **Finding Sustenance—Scouting and Harvesting:** We’ll Incorporate scouting for animals and other critters during your plant harvests or scouting for plants during your next hunt! You’ll soon be maximizing your time in the woods or on the water. We will take an ecological approach to tracking and learn to create seasonal maps and movement patterns for the game and plants you are seeking. Skills covered clear print id, measurement, and other animal sign, and tracking skills.
Session II continued:

- **Spring Smelting:** Bryant Pond (Lake Christopher is renowned for the abundant population of Rainbow Smelts; small baitfish that are sought for delicious table fare as well as bait for cold water species. Here, we’ll focus on where and when to find smelts, dipping techniques, and rules and regulations. If we’re lucky, we may still be able to catch some during the workshop if the spawning cycle is still underway!

- **Wild Edibles: Seeking Nature’s Bounty:** There’s such a bounty to be had right here in the forests of Maine, all you have to do is look in the right places! In this class, you will gain awareness and learn how to find and identify various wild edible plants and other useful components in nature.

- **Raising your own pig:** Want to know where your fresh meat comes from? Would you like to reduce your food and garden waste? Raising a pig is fairly easy and very rewarding, but before you commit to starting your first piglet, you’ll need to do a little planning and preparation to be ready. This workshop will focus on various breeds and animal care, tips to keep your swine healthy, and how to prepare for getting your pig to the butcher for processing.

- **Wild game Cooking with a modern twist:** In a day of busy lifestyles, we sometimes need to adapt our meal preparation, or, maybe you’re looking for new ways to make tender savory dishes with bear, deer, or moose or other game. Using an *Instapot* (pressure cooker) can be intimidating but it’s super easy and the opportunities are endless! We’ll make several neat dishes and we’ll share our creations with others at lunch time!

- **Dehydrating Fruits and Veggies:** Properly storing your harvest is the best way to ensure you will enjoy it all year long. Dehydrating is an effective way to preserve fruits and veggies as well as fish and meats. In this workshop, we will explore how to dehydrate herbs, fruits, veggies, and how to make fruit leather and chewy dried snacks.

Session III:

- **Archer Shooting Skills:** This workshop will focus on improving form and shooting technique and you will have the advantage of adding a sight to your bow to improve accuracy and precision. We’ll shoot at various distances and learn how to compensate for added yardage. You do not need archery experience prior to this, but we’ll move quickly beyond the basics.

- **Black Bears 101:** Dispel the myths, and learn the facts on humane hunting and trapping, including laws and ethics regarding black bears. We’ll take an in-depth look at Maine’s growing bear population and learn the habits and habitats of bears, how they fit into our ecosystem, and how we are managing them. We’ll cover several types of hunting and trapping methods with hands on experience with setting up a bait site and foot snare.

- **Treestands and Ground Blinds:** Hunting techniques vary for everyone, and here, you’ll have a chance to learn how to safely use and install tree stands and blinds, and blend into your environment. We’ll also cover the laws and regulations that go with each. We’ll set up ladder and hang on stands and practice climbing and strapping in as well as bringing gear up and down with you.

- **Basic Wilderness Survival:** Every outdoor enthusiast should be equipped with basic survival skills such as fire building, shelter building, and basic first aid. Put together a small survival kit using items from around the house and leave with confidence and the skills to survive a night in the Maine woods. This workshop will cover many topics including the Order of Survival. Other similar workshops will build upon these basic skills, set up various stands and practice safe climbing practices on various models commonly used today.
Session III continued:

- **Cold Water Fishing - Trolling for Salmon and Trout**: Traditional to Maine and the northern regions of the US, trolling is a fun and exciting way to fish and Lake Christopher is a great place to learn the techniques of fishing for these prized salmonids. Cold water species can be tricky to catch and trolling spoons and flies can be very effective in producing big fish. This workshop will teach you about some of the gear and methods needed to be successful and safe on the water.

- **Rifle Shooting**: Looking to hone your target shooting skills or are you considering a hunting rifle in the near future? Step onto the range and after a brief safety talk, you'll be learning how to shoot various action types, and how to install and sight in a scope for the first time. There will be plenty of time for shooting and we'll also discuss common hunting cartridges and the various uses for hunting scenarios.

- **Preparing Brook Trout for the table - Cleaning and cooking Maine's favorite fish**: The brook trout is highly sought after and is considered a true delicacy. We will cook locally caught brook trout using different methods and recipes. Whether in the field or the kitchen, learn how to prepare and cook this delicious fish! No cooking (or fishing) skills required!

- **Seasonal Forest Foraging**: Start your own seasonal foraging calendar and learn to identify, harvest, process, store and use plants found at their different seasonal stages. You have to be ready with time, tools, and materials or the harvest may pass you by. We’ll introduce you to field guides and resource books as well as time outdoors exploring. Try some foraged samples that will help develop a list of tasty plants that you will want to eat or preserve for later. We'll focus on: nettles, acorns, apples, and wild rice for starters.

- **Map and Compass Skills**: We'll begin with compass basics and how they work, and apply that to our map. You'll learn how to take bearings, orient a map, and plot a course of travel. You'll also learn topographical map symbols and important features. This workshop blends classroom time with outdoor hands on skills.

- **Composting the Right Way**: Learn the basics of composting and how to turn kitchen scraps into rich, high quality soil that will nourish your plants all season long. Composting is easy but there’s a right way and a wrong way to do it right. Done properly, you can compost ALL food scraps including meat, dairy, and vegetable scraps. Learn the science behind it and get ready to get your hands dirty!