

SustainME Winter Skills Program

February 19th, 2022

Session I: 9 am -12 pm

Introduction to Ice Fishing:

Learn the basics of ice fishing. Learn how to use a power auger, set traps, and use different types of fishing equipment, and most importantly how to hook and catch a fish! You'll also learn fish I.D. and bait selection. There will be plenty of time to try different equipment and learn specific tactics for catching fish. This year, we'll actually be cooking lunch right there on the ice, because let's face it, eating is the best part of fishing on the ice! (Heated ice shacks provided.)

Shotgun Shooting:

Breaking clays over fresh snow is a great way to spend the day! We'll work on safe gun handling and basic shotgunning 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.

Introduction to Trapping:

Trapping helps to keep wildlife populations stable and healthy, protects property and habitat, and also provides wildlife biologists with valuable data to help prevent and manage disease and predict population trends. It's an exciting way to spend time outdoors, while learning the habits and habitats of various species of furbearers. Learn about the biology and identification of Maine's furbearers, types of traps and best management practices of trapping techniques and equipment. Learn where to trap, skinning and fur handling, and we will provide information on getting your trapping safety certificate and trapping license.

Maple Sugaring:

One of the most readily available and sought after delicacies of the forest-maple syrup can be produced in almost all reaches of our state! Whether you have a few maple trees in the front yard, or a woodlot full of sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) this workshop will teach you how to make your own syrup. We'll cover tree identification, collection techniques, how to boil, and how to tell when your syrup is ready! This workshop will focus on using basic equipment readily available to most, and we'll cover ways that you can increase your production and input if you desire. Some of our time will be spent on snowshoes, surveying our woodlot and identifying suitable trees, and planning our collection process, followed by time around the woodstove and evaporator, getting some first-hand experience in boiling down our sap. This workshop will prepare you to return home and tap your trees this season!

Wild Game Cooking:

There's a growing number of folks returning to wild game choices for healthy, sustainable table fare. Plus, the wild game is delicious! Explore new ways to prepare wild game meat for your table using recipes that are easy to follow and do at home. You'll leave with recipes and new ideas and a deeper connection to where your food comes from.

Session II: 1 pm - 4 pm

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Rifle Shooting:

Need to sight in that new deer rifle, or learn the art of "plinking?" With this workshop, you will learn safe gun handling, caliber selection, shooting positions, and much more. You'll be able to shoot .22 rifles, focusing on marksmanship and safety with plenty of shooting time!

Introduction to Trapping: Beaver and Muskrat:

Join us for an in depth look at the habits and habitats of beaver and muskrats, both of which are abundant in Maine, and learn best management practices for trapping them safely and effectively. We'll take a closer look at water sets and various configurations of traps and equipment, as well as how to be safe and prepared for winter trapping seasons. Trapping is an important component in wildlife management, and is highly regulated and managed through scientifically-based regulations.

Snowshoeing/Wildlife Tracking:

There's nothing better than hitting the powder on snowshoes in the Maine woods in February! But once you've begun your journey, you soon realize that other living creatures have already been there...What crossed my path? Who was here before me? What does that mark in the snow reveal? Learn tracking and wildlife identification along the way, and see some amazing forest features too. Bring the camera, because you may just catch a glimpse of just who left those tracks ahead!

Winter Survival:

Are you prepared to survive an unexpected night in the wilderness? Lost in a snowstorm after what was to be a short snowshoeing hike or trip in the woods? Learn how to be prepared for the unexpected, including how to dress, make shelter, build fire, signal for help, and more.