

Center of Gravity

2023 Annual Report



INLAND
WOODS+TRAILS



Dear Friends of Inland Woods + Trails,

In 2023, Inland Woods + Trails navigated the sometimes-treacherous waters of wet and wild swings in weather, but the organization's resilience in the face of change is where we thrive. The challenges were also about setting us up for success. Much of the work we have done lays the groundwork for the future:

- We hired two new staff members to coordinate development, communications, and research.
- Our team set about, well before December 18, to assess and implement a trail rehabilitation plan, preparing us to face a changing climate and ensuring resiliency in our trail construction.
- We worked with students from Telstar and University Maine Farmington on building and cataloging trails, so that recreationalists know what type of features can be found, and where, on our trails.
- We unveiled the IMBA Main St to the Mountains plan and received support for it from the Northern Border Regional Commission. Years of collaboration and planning positioned us to receive an unprecedented \$1 million grant for implementing the first parts of the IMBA plan but also to help four other organizations in Oxford County rehabilitate and develop new trails. This grant award speaks to our ability to see trails as a service throughout Oxford County. *(See page 7 for more about grants.)*
- Last May, we acquired a 28-acre parcel adjacent to the Bethel Community Forest with an eye toward a future home for the organization. The land came up for sale suddenly, and we were able to move quickly to secure its purchase.

In addition to stewarding the land, we also steward relationships with landowners, town officials, and outdoor enthusiasts. The synergy created by these connections are the catalyst that spurs crucial community growth and economic development. Without it, we could not serve our community.

In that same vein, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our volunteers and supporters for helping us in 2023. Thanks to the ongoing support of our local, state-wide, and regional communities, we connect people to communities in Western Maine through the sustainable management of high quality, durable trails and woods for all seasons

**With gratitude,
Gabe Perkins, Executive Director**



Some highlights from our work last year:

Conservation

- Purchased 28 acres adjoining the Bethel Community Forest (Alpine Meadows) in August, bringing the total to 1,528 acres.
- Began work on 446-acre Rumford Community Forest in partnership with Trust for Public Land and the Northern Forest Center.

New Trails

- Completed 3-mile loop trail at Jordan Mountain at Sunday River
- Added .3 miles of single-track to Gulley-Verse Travels in the Bethel Community Forest.
- Started a mile to the Community Access Trail System [CATS] from North Road trailhead to the Bethel Community Forest.

- Created .3 miles of single-track (“Kitty Litter”) accessible from the North Road entrance of the Bethel Community Forest.

Trail Maintenance

- Maintained 85+ miles of hiking, biking, and skiing corridors, thanks to hundreds of volunteers who donated thousands of hours.



Some highlights from our work this year:

Staffing

- Hired a full-time Development + Communications Coordinator
- Hired an additional part-time Recreation Technician
- Employed a part-time intern for a mountain bike trail accessibility inventory
- Launched the inaugural Woods + Trails Teen Team (WT3), hiring two teenagers from Telstar for summer trail work.

Development + Communications

- Hosted the inaugural Bethel Community Forest Day
- Started a monthly E-Newsletter
- Awarded a \$1 million Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Grant in collaboration with four Oxford County land trusts.
- Purchased and created the IWT Events Trailer and manned it on several weekends over the summer at the Bethel Community Forest parking lot and various events, providing information and laughs.

3,500 volunteer

250 Donors

89 miles of trails
maintained

HOOPS
3,200 followers on Instagram

10,474 acres conserved

350 winter trail passes sold

5 miles of new trail

52 members

(program launched in 2023)

3,200 followers on Facebook

12,654 trail visits to IWT properties

16,000 hits to our website

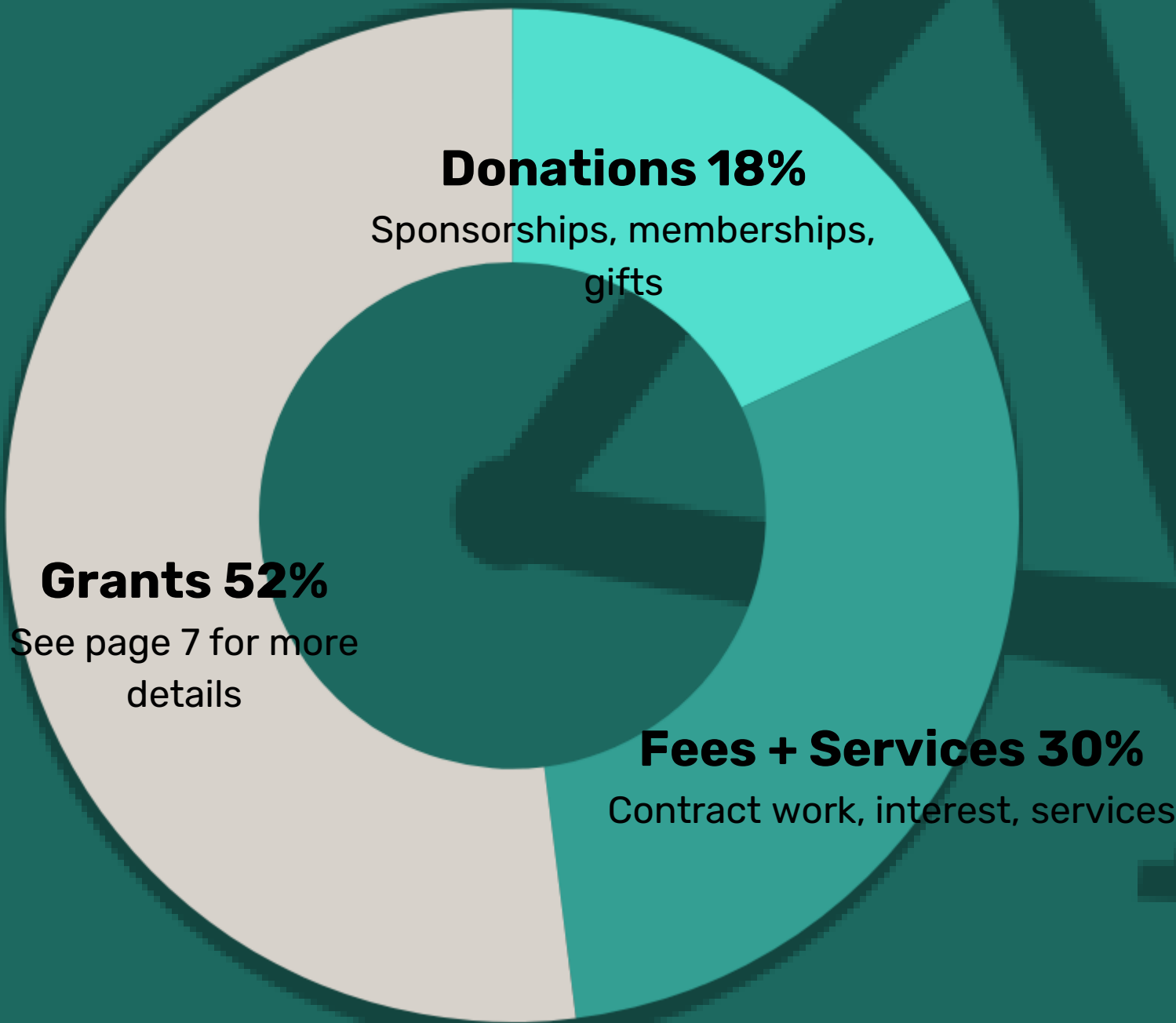


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2023 Financials at a Glance

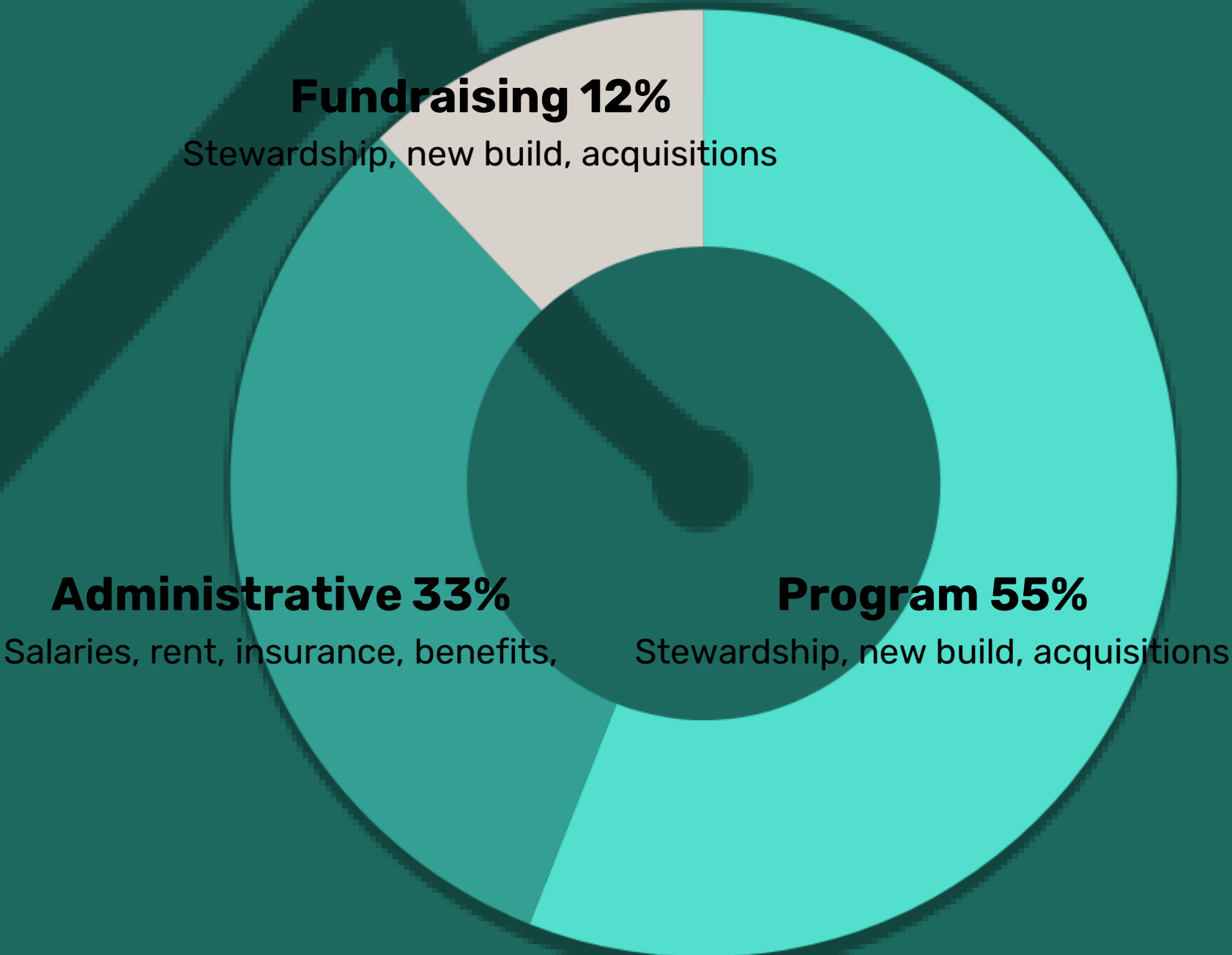
Income

Inland Woods + Trails Staff and Board are grateful for the generous support from individuals and businesses making up 48% of the \$521,127 total 2023 revenue including donations, sponsorships, contract trail work, and winter passes. We continue to build and strengthen relationships with private foundations and public institutions that provide 52% of revenue necessary for operations and specific projects. A negative net income (\$53,766) in 2023 is a result of spending restricted project funds received in 2022.



Expenses

More than half of the \$574,893 total expenditures were program related, reflecting IWT’s commitment to stewardship of trails and forests. Program include stewardship (77%), new trail builds (18%), and acquisitions (5%). Fundraising (12%) and Administrative (33%) include staff and support expenses used to strengthen the organization through donor development, operational efficiency, and constructive collaboration.



2023 Grants Received

- **Athletic Brewing Company** - Two for the Trails, Rumford Community Forest
- **Bangor Savings Bank** - Operational support
- **Community Health Options** - Wellness Grant for Rumford Community Forest public planning process
- **Davis Conservation Foundation** - New trail build
- **Fields Pond Foundation** - Bingham Forest hiking trails
- **Maine Community Foundation** - New trail build
- **Maine Mountain Bike Fund** - Mountain bike trails in the Bethel Community Forest
- **Maine Trails Coalition** - Operational support
- **Maine West** - Operational support
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service** - Land Improvements
- **Northern Border Regional Commission** Catalyst Program - Western Maine Trails Investment Partnership
- **Northern Oxford County Grant Program** - Land acquisition (Alpine Meadows)
- **Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative Land Trust** - Operational support
- **The Trust for Public Land** - Rumford Community Forest
- **Quimby Family Foundation** - Operational support

Thank You To Our Sponsors and Partners



*From one of our
Top Partners*

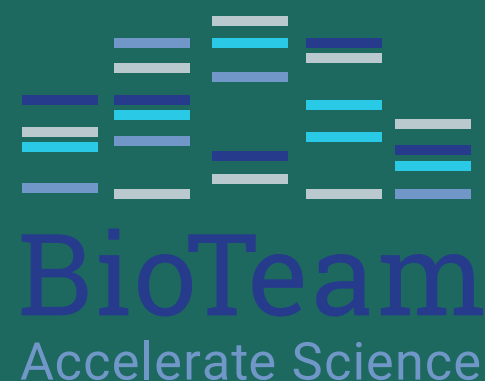
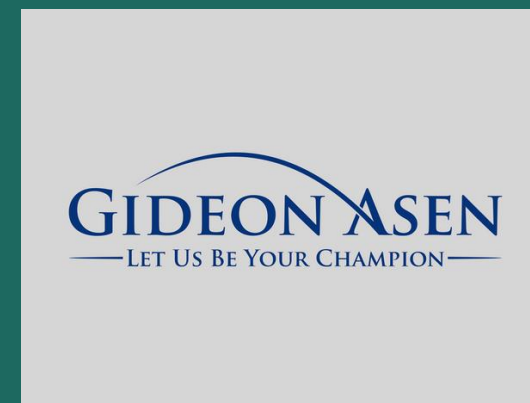
Maine Beer Company



Do what's right.

"One of Maine Beer Company's core beliefs is that everyone should be able to experience the great outdoors. Inland Woods + Trails is doing the work to preserve, develop and maintain trails -- and to ensure that all are welcome to experience outdoor recreation in Western Maine."

Colleen Croteau and Zach DeWitt-Maine Beer Company



2023 Volunteer Report



Unusually wet conditions made for increased maintenance needs. In early November, as the trails were about to close, volunteers headed out to gather data on trail issues. More than 100 points were logged, which we will use to kick start our maintenance before the trails open this year. —Andy Bartleet, Trail Steward

Rake and Ride: Trails opened for the season in the **Bethel Community Forest** on Saturday, May 13, when 16 volunteers helped with maintenance and repairs on the trails.

Tuesday Night Trail Builds: Four Tuesday evenings were spent clearing “**Kitty Litter**,” a new 1/3-mile bike trail at the North Road parking lot. Three groups from the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School helped with the work to finish clearing the tread on Kitty Litter trail, for a total of 36 people and about 110 hours of work with about 500 feet of trail cleared.

Saturday Morning Downhill: Six Saturday mornings were spent working on a new intermediate downhill trail from the IMBA plan in the **Bethel Community Forest**, near Humerus and ending at the Summit Access Road.

Parks Bennet Trail: A group worked on the first 500 feet of the new western loop from the parking lot toward the western stream.

Jordan Mountain Trail: Much appreciated volunteer help was provided by a group of 10 teenagers and two staff members from the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School. They moved the lumber for the observation deck and log bridges on the Jordan Mountain Trail, ¼ of a mile from the ski trail to near the summit, saving the trail crew a few days of back breaking work.

Storage Shed: Volunteers from Drummond Woodsum law firm helped lay the floor and raise the walls for a shed in the **Bethel Community Forest**.

Individual efforts: Volunteers did a variety of trail work tasks—early season trail checks, leaf blowing, raking, trail clearing, water bar clearing and undergrowth lopping, as well as letting us know where things needed our attention. Percolator ski trail was adapted for mountain biking, continuing to push the connection of the **Bethel Village summer trails** to the **winter trails**.

Our local Telstar trail technicians brought energy for summer trail work to a new level. These three young people understood our vision and were willing to work hard, through rain and mud, to complete projects and maintenance during one of the wettest summers we’ve had. The highlights for me were seeing their skill sets, these transferable job skills, grow each week. Their excitement in wanting to share completed trail segments or maintenance projects with a friend or family member was heartening. Hiring and training local teenagers, who will one day be adult recreationalists and supporters, is a foundational step in further connecting us to the community. —Eliza Hazen, Recreation Technician



What you said about Bethel Village Winter Trails...



What an excellent location and beautiful day. Thanks!



I am always so impressed by the groomers' abilities to revive the trails after rain and warm temps. Thankful for all the days of super conditions.

Very friendly, knowledgeable staff.

Conditions today were the best of the year! I loved the deep tracks.

Very friendly. Trails were in great shape.

Terrific grooming!



Thanks for the help choosing the right skis!

Beautifully groomed trails. Staff very helpful

Thanks for a great season.

2023 Staff Updates: Welcome to the Team!



Ian Hathaway

Recreation Technician

A Maine native from the town of Harpswell, Ian earned his Bachelors degree in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management as well as a Masters in Forest Resources from the University of Maine in Orono. After working for the Forest Service in Butte, Montana, Ian returned to New England to pursue a career in the outdoors. In his free time, Ian enjoys hiking, camping, snowboarding, and playing guitar.



Karla Leandri Rider

Development + Communications Coordinator

Karla comes to IWT with over 20 years of experience in non-profit management and development with a variety of grass-roots organizations in Maine. Originally from Connecticut, Karla moved to Maine after graduating from Boston University and subsequently received her master's degree at the University of Southern Maine. An avid mountain biker and hiker, Karla is excited to be part of Maine's rapidly expanding outdoor recreation economy. She lives in Gorham, NH with her husband, Erik, and their four cats and two chihuahuas.

Woods + Trails + YOU!



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Board of Directors

Ed Easter, President

Jeff Sloan, Vice-President

Jonathan Goldberg, Secretary

Shawn McGowan, Treasurer

Rusty Partridge

Julie Reiff

Peter Southam

Jim Tasse

Karen Wilson

Robin Zinchuk



A photograph of two people cross-country skiing on a snowy trail in a forest. The image is overlaid with a teal color filter. The person in the foreground is wearing a dark jacket and a beanie, and is looking towards the camera. The person in the background is also wearing a dark jacket and a beanie, and is looking away from the camera. The trail is marked with tracks from previous skiers. The background is a dense forest of tall, thin trees.

Thank You

Connecting people to communities in Western
Maine through the sustainable management of high
quality, durable trails and woods for all seasons