

42nd Annual International Seaplane Fly-In Sept 10-13

International Seaplane Fly-In isn't just for pilots

by Mike Lange
GREENVILLE — Around 17,000 families within a half hour or so of the 42nd Annual International Seaplane Fly-In can conveniently make it home for the evening.

But anyone looking for overnight accommodations in Greenville had better act soon.

As of last week, nearly every motel room and bed and breakfast in town was booked solid, according to Angela Arno, executive director of the Moosehead Lake Region Chamber of Commerce. "There are a handful of cabins available, which is really a bargain if you're bringing the whole family," she said. "It looks like another banner weekend."

This year's event runs from Thursday, September 10 through Sunday, September 13.

The International Seaplane Fly-In started in the 1970s by veteran pilots like Jack Hofbauer, Duane Lander and Max Folsom as a way to extend the Moosehead Lake tourist season. It's now the biggest single weekend attraction in the region, even surpassing Fourth of July.

While it draws around 350 aircraft of all types, the fly-in also brings thousands of people to Greenville who have no connection to the aviation community.

"There's nothing like this in the country," Arno said. "You can watch the competition all along the shoreline. People of all ages really like the bush pilot races and water bomb drops. And it's all free."

Liz Cannell, the executive director of the Moosehead Marine Museum, agrees. "This is an ideal mini-vacation for families," she said. "They can get close-up look at the planes before they go on the water and just have an enjoyable day."

The Moosehead Marine Museum also operates the steamship Katahdin and the cruise schedules are modified on the Saturday of Fly-In weekend, Cannell said. "We run three one-hour and 15 minute cruises that day," she said. "This way, it gives people an opportunity to see the action from a different perspective than watching from shore."

On the first night of Fly-In weekend, there's a special dinner cruise on the Katahdin for registered pilots, and around 150 showed up last year, according to Darralyn Gauvin, secretary of the fly-in committee. "We're getting calls regularly," Gauvin said. "Every year it seems to get a little bigger and better."

There will also be entertainment by comedian Lee Southard on the Katahdin dinner cruise and music by John Brown at the municipal hangar on Friday night during a lobster and steak cook-out.

The guest speaker for this year's Saturday night pilot awards banquet, also at the municipal airport, will be Bill Coleman, author of "Floatplane Odyssey." The book is about pilot Tom Casey, the first person to make a trip around the world landing and taking off only on water. It took him 188 days with more than 75 takeoffs and landings in 20 countries.

The contests take place Saturday starting at 10 a.m. at Stobie Seaplane Base next to the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife headquarters. There's a public breakfast at the Masonic Lodge on Pritham Avenue, and the American Legion

Post, a short distance away, will be serving food during the day.

Many other nonprofit organizations like the Moosehead Lake Kiwanis, C.A. Dean Hospital Auxiliary and the Greenville Fire Department will have refreshment booths at the site. The order of the contests will be determined by the weather and number of participants.

The timed canoe race is one of the most popular and challenging events. One member of the team has to paddle a canoe to the docked seaplane and lash it to a pontoon. Then the plane has to maneuver between a set of buoys, take off and land back at the starting point.

As expected, Greenville retailers and restaurants are expecting huge crowds. Cheri Goodspeed, the owner of the Moosehead Lake Indian Store and the eclectic Kamp antique shop, said that the Fly-In is not only her biggest sales week, but brings in a different type of clientele. "People who shop here on that weekend are more laid-back and patient," she said. "They seem to understand that they may have to wait a little for service if we're busy."

Goodspeed said that the Fly-In also get a lot more "day-trippers



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT - Two aircraft take off at last year's International Seaplane Fly-In in Greenville. (Angela Arno photo)

than the holiday weekends. But that's been the case almost all year. We have a lot of people who live an hour or hour-and-a-half away and come to Greenville on a regular basis."

Parking and traffic is traditionally heavy on Fly-In weekend, but there will be shuttle service from the municipal airport to the Stobie site all day Saturday, Gauvin said. "You can avoid walking six or eight blocks if you park at the

airport," she said.

Police Chief Jeff Pomerleau has also requested temporary, portable traffic lights for the intersection of Lily Bay Road and Pritham Avenue, the "main drag" in town. "We've had them for the past three years," he said. "With fingers crossed, we're praying they arrive in time for this one."

For more information, the complete event schedule and updates, visit www.seaplanefly-in.org.



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Friday, September 11

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Stobie.

Poker Run.

6 PM Steak and Lobster

Cook-Out at the Airport.

Saturday, September 12

7 - 9 AM

Public Breakfast at the Masonic Temple, Pritham Avenue.

American Legion, Pritham Avenue, will be serving food during the day.

The Craft Fair will be held in Downtown Greenville on Saturday and Sunday.

10 AM-All Day

Activities at the Greenville Municipal Airport and the Seaplane Base will be taking place. The order of the contests is determined by weather and numbers of participants.

6 PM

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Public Breakfast at the American Legion Hall, Pritham Avenue
10 AM

Completion of contests not done on Saturday
12 - 1 PM

50/50 Raffle Drawing and Gift Basket Drawings

Contests

**Bush Pilot's Canoe Race • Bomb Drop
Spot Landing • Take-Off Contest
Taxi Slalom**

Events

The Poker Run on Friday can start anytime after 8AM. The destinations will be listed at the Registration Desk at Stobie where the entry form may be picked up and returned at the end of the day.

The best Poker hand will win!

International Seaplane

Fly-In

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