

## TrekKers Informational Packet 2026

The following information is provided to acquaint you with TrekKers by answering some of the most frequently asked questions about the program.

### What is TrekKers?

TrekKers is a non-profit youth mentoring organization. Its programs are rooted in outdoor and travel experiences, and include expeditionary learning, community service, cross-cultural opportunities and adventure-based education. Teams include TrekKers staff and caring adult volunteers from the community, which help connect students to mentors, role models, and guides during their middle and high school years.

### When was it started? Who does it serve?

TrekKers first began serving middle school students attending Thomaston Grammar School in 1994. Over time, the service area expanded to include Rockland, Thomaston, South Thomaston, St George, Cushing, and Owls Head. The program is a unique combination of long-term mentoring and experiential education. Data has shown that the TrekKers program helps students build social-emotional skills, lasting connections, and an inner compass for identifying their own strengths, challenges, life goals, and strategies. TrekKers has operated for over 30 years and several of our current program staff members are TrekKers alums!

### What is the application process?

This year, TrekKers has 20 openings for seventh graders. 7<sup>th</sup> grade applicants are invited to attend our Community Meeting. If a student cannot attend the Community Meeting, families can contact TrekKers to schedule a time to learn about the program and receive the application at the TrekKers office or by email. **Applications are due by February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

If TrekKers receives more than 20 applications by the deadline, a lottery system will be used to select the students. The lottery is designed to produce a group of 20 students balanced by sending school and gender identity.

**\*Note:** If a lottery is required, students who were not selected will be put on a waiting list in the order their names are drawn. If a student applies after the deadline, they will be put at the bottom of the waiting list in order of the date the application was postmarked. All families will be notified of the lottery results by phone or email on March 6, as well as next steps.

### Are students automatically enrolled again after each grade?

Eligible\* students who **complete** the 7th grade program will be invited to participate the next year as long as they are enrolled in an eligible, state-recognized form of education. Once invited back, **families must re-enroll at the beginning of each school year (see below payment and scholarship information)**. If a student is accepted into TrekKers and chooses to opt-out of 7<sup>th</sup> grade programming, they will be put at the bottom of the waiting list.

**\*Note:** Students must live in one of the six towns (Cushing, South Thomaston, Owls Head, Rockland, St. George or Thomaston) or attend St. George School or an RSU13 school via a superintendents' agreement to maintain

eligibility. If a student moves out of the six towns, the student may only continue in the program if they are not taking the place of another student on the waiting list who lives in one of the six towns.

### **How does the waiting list work?**

At the beginning of each program year, Trekkers will ensure the team starts with 20 students. If a student withdraws from the program during the school year, another student will be added to the team and removed from the waitlist if there is an appropriate amount of time left in the program year AND doing so would maintain healthy and safe group dynamics.

### **Who funds Trekkers?**

Student dues account for approximately 10% of the cost to run Trekkers. To maintain the quality and quantity of programming, Trekkers is supported financially by individual contributors, businesses, municipalities, state and federal grants and private foundations. Trekkers seeks donations all year to help offset the cost of the programs and to keep student dues as low as possible.

### **How much does the program cost?**

Program dues are estimated based on this year's programs and are subject to change. The following are the estimated program dues for 2026.

7th Grade Acadia Adventure	\$100
8th Grade Northeast Traverse	\$875
9th Grade Urban Expedition	\$875
10th Grade Cross America	\$875
11th Grade True North	\$875
12th Grade Rites of Passage	\$875
Student Leadership (Optional, 11-12 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	\$100
Rural Exchange (Optional, 10-12 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	\$125

### **Payment and Scholarship Information**

8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade programs: In August before the school year starts, families will be asked to re-enroll in Trekkers for the year. At that time, we will have families fill out a Program Agreement, which includes payment set up information, as well as information about our tiered dues structure. Once enrolled, medical forms and waivers will be due before a student participates on their first trip.

To make programs accessible and affordable, a tiered payment scale is available for all families. We encourage families to pay what they can so we can continue to offer affordable programs to all students.

### **Gender Policy**

Gender identity is a core aspect of personal identity, and Trekkers bases its policies on the knowledge that only an individual determines their gender identity. Trekkers staff will recognize each individual's gender identity, which may not be the identity that is known or supported by everyone in an individual's life.



Trekking understands and respects that individuals may choose to use different names and pronouns with different groups of people. Trekking will make every attempt to support these requests (for example, one set of pronouns within a cohort setting and a different set for communication with family). Trekking recognizes that gender identity is not always static and how a person identifies and the pronouns that correspond to their identification may change over time.

Individuals will have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Any individual who is uncomfortable using a shared gender-segregated facility, regardless of the reason, shall, upon request, be provided with a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative. To access alternative accommodations, an individual will need to make a request to their Program Manager. Transgender or gender nonconforming individuals will not be required to use separate spaces against their wishes. No one will be required to use gender-segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity.

### **Who runs the organization?**

#### STAFF:

Stephanie Welch – Executive Director  
Nicole Pomeroy – Development Director  
TJ Morris – Principal Program Manager  
Mitchell Del Frate\* – Program Manager  
Ryker Weaver\* – Program Manager  
Diane Sternberg – Programs and Training Director  
Tess Valdepeñas – Communications & Impact Manager  
Lauren Lewis\*\* – Administrative Coordinator  
Jamie Fullerton – Finance Assistant  
Moe Mitchell\* – AmeriCorps Intern

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Jessie Davis\*\* – President  
Pete Rand – Treasurer  
Alyssa Landrith\* – Secretary  
Makaila Hickey\*  
Laura Miller\*\*  
Melissa Carr  
Jesse Rutter\*\*  
Yvonne Thomas  
Zoe Hufnagel – Student Member  
Evan Riley – Student Member

*\*Alumni of Trekkers.*

*\*\* Parent/Guardian of Trekkers Student or Alumni.*

### **Volunteers:**

Over 100 adult and peer mentors in and around the Midcoast area volunteer with Trekkers throughout the year. They help facilitate outdoor and educational experiences, spend time one-on-one with students, and provide much needed technical support to the program. Caring adults and peer mentors are essential to our efforts in bringing forth positive change within the lives of young people. All adult volunteers go through background checks, interview processes and orientation/training to work with us, ensuring a safe, welcoming community for all involved.

### **Want more information? Visit us at [www.trekkers.org](http://www.trekkers.org).**

To read about our program or learn more about the organization, please visit our website at [www.trekkers.org](http://www.trekkers.org). If you have questions, please call Diane Sternberg, Trekkers' Training and Program Director, at 594-5095 or [email diane@trekkers.org](mailto:diane@trekkers.org).



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## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Application

Applications must be hand delivered or postmarked by **Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026**. TrekKers will contact you by March 6th about the outcome of the lottery selection process. If you do not have an email address, you will receive a phone call.

Please fill out the entire application and return to: **TrekKers, 325 Old County Road, Rockland, ME 04841**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender Identity: \_\_\_\_\_

What School Do You Attend? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Adult T-shirt size (circle one): S   M   L   XL

Parent(s)/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent(s) Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please have the student who is applying to TrekKers answer the following questions in the spaces provided below:*

1. Explain why you are interested in participating in TrekKers.

2. What do you hope to gain from participating in Trekkers?

3. Please describe a favorite memory in the outdoors.

### *Trekkers Agreement*

**Trekkers Partnership with the Schools:** Trekkers works in partnership with local schools to support students academically, socially, and emotionally. When challenges arise, communication between Trekkers, families, and school personnel allows us to respond quickly and provide coordinated support.

By signing below, the parent/guardian gives permission for Trekkers to communicate with their student's teachers, school administrators, and guidance or counseling staff at RSU #13, MSAD #40, Camden Hills Regional High School/Five Town CSD, Lincoln Academy, and/or the St. George Municipal School Unit. This permission includes discussing academic, behavioral, and emotional concerns and reviewing relevant student records, when appropriate, in order to support my child's well-being and success.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student

*If you have any questions about the application process, please call Diane Sternberg, Trekkers' Training and Program Director, at 594-5095 or [email diane@trekkers.org](mailto:diane@trekkers.org).*