



SKY LODGE

END OF YEAR REVIEW
GOALS &
ACHIEVEMENTS

2023-2024

About Sky Lodge

Sky Lodge is a historic cabin resort and campus situated on more than 150 acres in **Moose River Valley, Maine**. In 2018 Elaine and John Couri gifted it to **Unity Environmental University**. It was originally built in 1929 as a hunting and fishing getaway and renamed "Sky Lodge" by two former WWII airmen in the 1940s, it has been known by that name ever since.

Sky Lodge features a restaurant, conference center, contemporary cabins for rental, the Elaine and John Couri Welcome Center and the Moose River Valley Center, as well as year-round recreational trails. Outdoor activities nearby include hiking, golfing, biking, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, whitewater rafting, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling.

Unity Environmental University's Sky Lodge provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate new possibilities for the outdoor adventure traveler and for those who travel with purpose. Sky Lodge embodies the mission of Unity Environmental University by providing students and guests the ability to enjoy the environment and its natural resources while embracing sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. It also offers Unity students a place to immerse themselves in learning about sustainable tourism, hospitality, adventure careers, wildlife conservation, biology and more.

Sky Lodge is an integral part of the local economy in the **Moose River Valley and the greater Jackman, Maine area**, and together, we are laying the foundation for Unity students to experience a real-world manifestation of their curriculum within a strong business environment which has varied revenue streams and opportunities for learning.



Dear Elaine and John,

I want to thank you for the gift of Sky Lodge. It is hard to believe it's been six years since it became a part of the Unity Environmental University portfolio, and we remain committed to making it a destination for our students and the public. The 2023-24 year has been a busy one for Sky Lodge, including our biggest investments to date in the property itself.



On April 8, 2024, Sky Lodge had the privilege of being in the path of totality for the total solar eclipse and it welcomed Unity students, faculty and some staff as well as the general public to watch this amazing natural phenomenon. I hope you enjoy reading more about it later in the document. We were also able to keep some local traditions alive during the 2023-24 year by once again hosting the Forest Hills Consolidated School's National Honor Society Induction Ceremony at the Historic Lodge, as well as providing space for 21 local seniors to participate in crafts and other social activities at the Elaine and John Couri Welcome Center weekly. We also hosted Atlantic Partners EMS Wilderness EMT Training course in October.

In the fall of 2023, we began renovations to the property, resulting in an over \$900,000.00 investment, however in order to minimize disruption and ensure the safest possible environment during construction, we made the difficult decision to pause operations in November until the work was complete. Staffing continues to be a challenge, however over the winter we were able to hire a dedicated caretaker for the property and our Director of Facilities has been actively engaged in managing the renovations.

I am confident that these investments, including the new state of the art Hy-Flex classroom in the Moose River Valley Center funded by the USDA TEACH Grant, will allow the property to thrive going forward serving not just Unity Environmental University students but guests and local residents for years to come.

With pride,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melik Khoury'.

Dr. Melik Peter Khoury President/CEO, Unity Environmental University



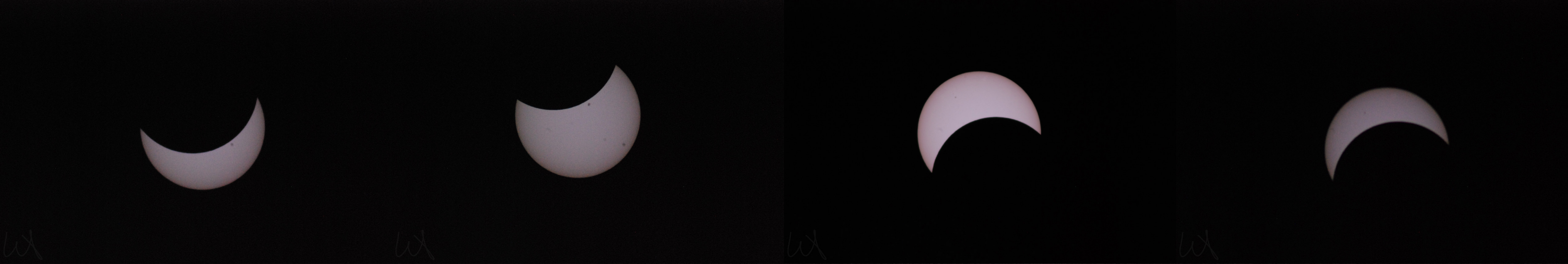
Atlantic Partners EMS Wilderness EMT Training

20 Students attended Atlantic Partners EMS Wilderness EMT training at Sky Lodge

In October of 2023, Atlantic Partners EMS selected Sky Lodge as its training site for their coveted Wilderness EMT course. Atlantic Partners EMS and its students spent the week eating, sleeping, and learning throughout the Unity Sky Lodge campus.

The rural nature of Sky Lodge, its 150-acre campus and access to onsite lodging and dining made it the ideal place to host the intensive course. The students participated in 50-60 hours of course work which combined high level didactic sessions, hands on training and practice, and field exercises. The drills which students participated in allowed them to practice the fundamental principles of wilderness EMS within an organized system. **The onsite helicopter rescue training was the highlight of the week!**





The Eclipse

For this first time in over fifty years, a total solar eclipse passed over the Sky Lodge campus. On April 8, 2024, the Great American eclipse and its path of totality passed through the Jackman/ Moose River Valley. Sky Lodge visitors and guests experienced full totality occurring at 3:28pm and lasting until 3:35pm.

The property was fully sold out and had a waiting list for lodging accommodations. In addition to out-of-town guests, Unity staff and students were also present. 23 Unity students from Dr. Aly McKnight’s Conservation Biology Course started their April term off with a once-in-a-lifetime event at Sky Lodge. The class started the day with a lecture from Dr. McKnight and a tour from Dr. Tara J. Konya before they enjoyed lunch in the Historic Lodge Dining Room.

To prepare for the total body experience of the eclipse, students spread out throughout the Sky Lodge campus. Unity staff overheard a student saying that it “was one of, if not the best, academic experiences that he has been a part of in his academic career.”

A hobby of mine is astrophotography, and getting an opportunity to be in the path of totality and being able to get a photograph the sun’s corona has been a dream of mine. It’s got to be one of the coolest things I’ve seen.

— Winter Anton, Hybrid Learning Student



photos taken by: Winter Anton

National Honor Society Induction ceremony for Forest Hills Consolidated School

Forest Hills Consolidated School conducted their annual National Honor Society Induction Ceremony at the Historic Lodge Dining Room. Four students received the honor this year.

Pictured from left to right:
Carroll Frigon, Allison Dunning, Addison Chaisson and
Connor Achey.



Seniors and the Elaine and John Couri Welcome Center

21 local members participated in social events including crafting, quilting and painting classes available at the Moose River Valley Center and later located at the Elaine and John Couri Welcome Center which is open Tuesday through Thursday.

Teach Grant

Funds from the USDA TEACH Grant were used to build out a state-of-the-art Hy-Flex classroom in the Moose River Valley Center. During the 2023-24 fiscal year we resolved some of the remaining technical challenges regarding the final design and moved forward with the installation of the updated classroom.

A Hy-Flex classroom integrates virtual and augmented reality technology to help individuals in rural areas interact with others from here in Maine, across the country, and even across the globe. This investment included a conference integration kit, conference cameras, microphones, speakers, SMART podium, digital flipchart displays, and table speakerphones. To finalize the space, we also invested in modern classroom furniture as well as new flooring and a fresh coat of paint throughout the building.

The updated classroom space will be utilized by Unity students and will be available for organizations wishing to hold seminars and training at Sky Lodge. Our students and the Moose River/Jackman community will be able to connect in a way that was never before possible. It is a tremendous asset to the local region, and we are grateful to be able to have it as part of our portfolio.

Ameri-Corps Grant

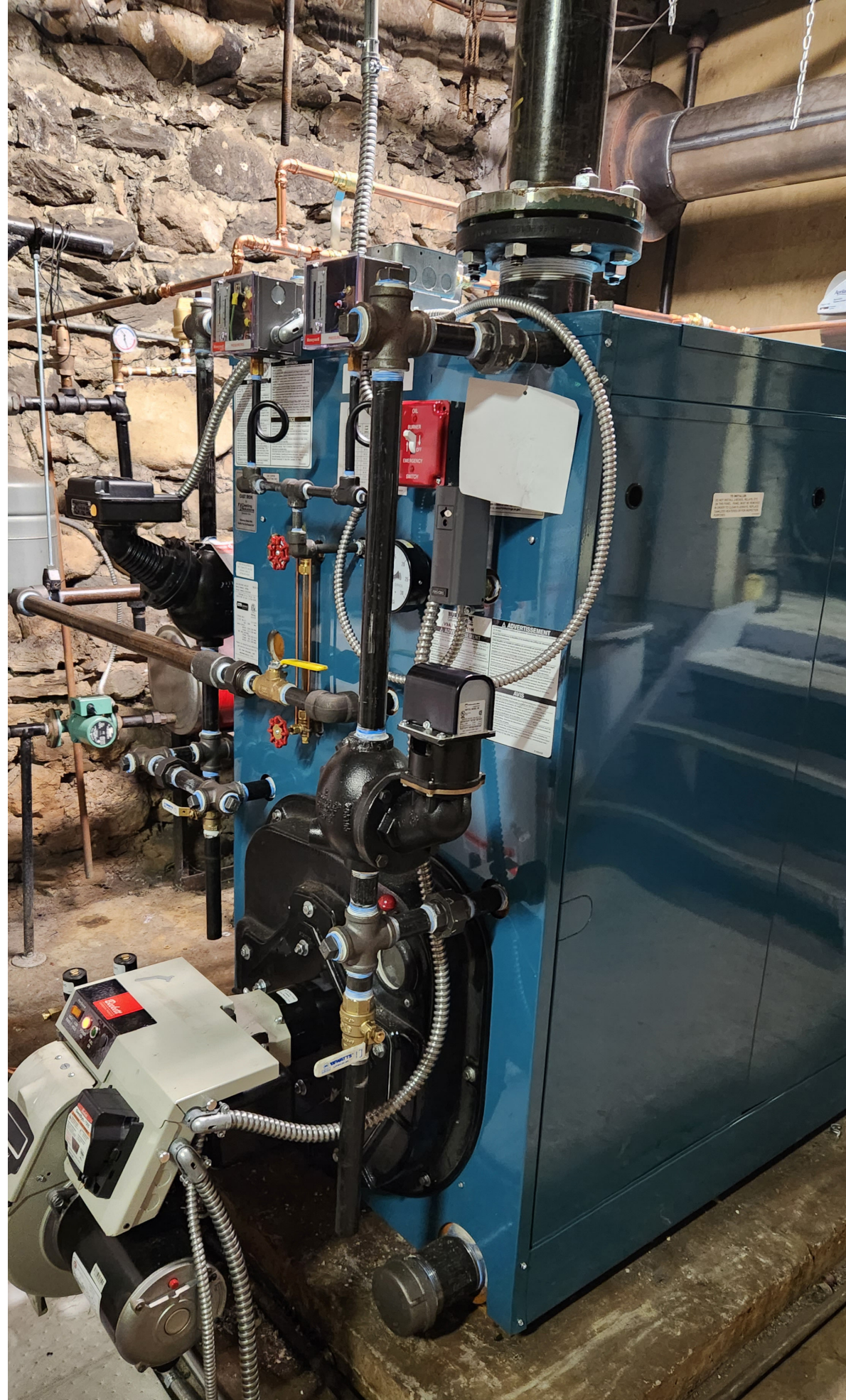
In 2023 Unity received an AmeriCorps Planning Grant to develop programming aimed at improving the lives of those served by Unity Environmental University and the Moose River Valley Center at Sky Lodge. We completed the initial phase of the grant and plan to apply for the second phase of the AmeriCorps Program Grant, which is designed to direct service activities focused on healthy futures to meet the needs of the Jackman/Moose River Valley, once our new director is in place.



Investing in Sky Lodge

In November of 2023 Unity Environmental University made the decision to close Sky Lodge and the Moose River Valley Center (MRVC) to the public so they could undergo extensive renovations designed to both enhance our students' educational experience and also secure the legacy of the property for generations to come.

The seniors who participated in events at the MRVC were transitioned to the Elaine and John Couri Welcome Center for the duration of the renovations.



RENOVATIONS

- Boiler replacement in the Historic Lodge
 - 4 radiators were replaced
 - Steam pipes and insulation were replaced
- Electrical Systems replacement, with an emphasis on circuits and wiring
 - Electrical was brought up to modern codes both inside and outside
 - Ceiling and kitchen lighting upgrades were made
- Windows in the Historic Lodge, three cabins (Aspen, Birch, and Cedar) and the Country House were replaced ensuring the historical aesthetic of the property is maintained
- Asbestos removal was completed in the Historic Lodge
- Plumbing and bathroom upgrades were completed in the Historic Lodge including in some guest rooms and the kitchen
 - The Historic Lodge received a backflow prevention device as a part of bringing the building up to modern building code compliance
- The Country House is currently getting new flooring, bathroom repairs and upgrades, along with new ceiling tiles in the downstairs bathroom
- Hyflex classroom technology was installed in the Moose River Valley Center with the funding from the USDA TEACH Grant Unity was awarded
- Internet upgrades were completed in June of 2023
- This classroom can now be used for Unity Students as well as being available for rentals

ECONOMIC IMPACT

We don't exist in a bubble: at **Unity Environmental University**, we know that what we do impacts those around us. Our presence must demonstrate our role as responsible stewards of our fiscal resources, the environment, and the areas where we live and work. Here is a snapshot of how we do that.

\$207,449
Revenue

\$538,807
Expenses

\$331,358
Institutional
Commitment

LOCAL AREA IMPACT

As members of the region, it is important that we use our resources for the betterment of the local area, and the Moose River Valley Center is an integral part of this.

\$1,527
Average Spent Per
Reservation

48
Guest Reservations

21
Seniors participate in
events at the Moose River
Valley Center (MRVC) and/
or the Elaine and John
Couri Welcome Center

21
Hours per week the
Welcome Center is open
to seniors

STUDENT IMPACT

Giving our students hands on experience and a positive memory of the area so they will return for many more visits.

1
Unity Environmental
University: Hybrid
Learning course was
integrated into the
Sky Lodge campus

23
Unity Environmental
University: Hybrid
Learning students spent
time at Sky Lodge

EMPLOYMENT IMPACT

For our employees that live in the Moose River Valley and Jackman area, making sure they have the financial resources they need to participate in the area both socially and economically.

\$155,597
Annual payroll and benefits
(includes Unity and
contracted employees
dedicated to Sky Lodge)

5
Employees (includes full-
time; part-time and
contracted employees)

MAINE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Shopping locally is critical to the local economy; it reduces our environmental impact and enhances both economic and environmental sustainability.

88.4% Spent with Maine Vendors for a total of \$1,125,000

\$908,245 Investments in facilities and construction
through capital improvements

\$160,486 Received in grants and donations

- New hyflex classroom in the MRVC
- Plan for Ameri-Corps volunteers to help enhance the regional economy

UPCOMING INVESTMENTS IN THE GIFT

Additional Planned Renovations

- Attic insulation in the Historic Lodge
- Chimney masonry repair and flue replacement throughout the campus
- Historic Lodge Dining Room flooring replacement
- Refresh interior wood and wood trim
- Refinish wood floors
- Refurbished entrance doors to the Historic Lodge
- Fresh paint in all accommodations
- Repair rot, seal logs, stain, and paint the cabins and Historic Lodge, as needed
- Repair step cracks on the right exterior corners of the stone foundation of Mountain View
- Repairs to crawl space under the gift shop and Sky View rooms
- Replace bathroom fixtures and sinks as needed throughout all accommodations
- Address water intrusion issues, including sump pump, associated enclosure, and regrading of all driveways
- Fire Safety Improvements, including hard wired fire alarms, CO systems, and sprinklers



Vision Statement

"A multifaceted organization recognized as the thought leader in global ecological, economic, and societal solutions."

Mission Statement

"We are dedicated to delivering quality education and experiences that produce outstanding environmentally competent professionals and inspire individuals from all walks of life to steward sustainable ecosystems."



