

Smile of the Great Spirit Swim

A Double Crossing of Lake Winnepesaukee
as a Fund Raiser for the White Mountain Aquatic Foundation

On September 2-3, 2009 White Mountain Aquatic Foundation Vice President Maury McKinney and an experienced support crew will make an attempt to complete the first double swim crossing of Lake Winnepesaukee. This "Smile of the Great Spirit" swim will span 42 miles and take more than twenty-four hours. McKinney plans to swim continuously with only short breaks for food and water. The team plans to start in Center Harbor at 6:00am on Wednesday 9/2, proceed to Alton Bay and then return to Center Harbor by 9:00am on Thursday 9/3.



Support personnel includes navigator Steve Frechette, swim attendants Bayard Russell and Jamal Lee-Elkin, kayaker Doug Armstrong, photographer Anne Skidmore, writer Ed Parsons, videographer Thom Pollard, along with watercraft operators Tom Mullen and Jim Drummond.

This event is a fundraiser for the White Mountain Aquatic Foundation, a non-profit organization based in North Conway, NH. The mission of the White Mountain Aquatic Foundation is to develop and provide a multi-use, world class aquatic center in the Mt. Washington Valley, which will deliver aquatic education, recreation, safety, competition, fitness and rehabilitative programs. This facility and its services will enhance the quality of life and strengthen the ties of community for our citizens and visitors.

Lake Winnepesaukee is the largest lake in New Hampshire and the third largest in New England after Lake Champlain and Moosehead Lake. It is approximately 21 miles long, from one to nine miles wide, covers 71 square miles and has a maximum depth of 212 feet. The Native American name Winnepesaukee means either "smile of the Great Spirit" or "beautiful water in a high place."

On September 17, 2008 McKinney swam the 21-mile length of Winnepesaukee from Center Harbor to Alton Bay in 12.5 hours. He was the second person to accomplish this feat. A double crossing is a monumental challenge and a serious undertaking. The goal of the "Smile of the Great Spirit Swim" is to raise the money required to commission a feasibility study for the White Mountain Aquatic Foundation.

Just like this unprecedented endurance swim, building an aquatic center is an ambitious and long-term undertaking filled with many challenges. The WMAF feels that a professionally prepared feasibility study is the first step toward achieving their mission.

To that end, McKinney, support personnel and the organization's Board of Directors challenge fifteen residents, businesses and long-time visitors to donate \$2,500 apiece to complete a professionally prepared feasibility study. However, donations of any amount are welcome and can be made online at www.whitemountainaquatic.org or can be sent to PO Box 767, North Conway NH 03860. Questions, concerns and suggestions may also be directed to Board President Jim Soroka at 447-8805.