**An Act To Promote Outdoor Recreational Opportunities for Maine Students**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec.** **1. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§49-D** is enacted to read:

**49-D.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Inland Fisheries and Wildlife  | Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits  | Not Authorized  |  12 MRSA §12864 |

**Sec.** **2. 12 MRSA §1806, sub-§4, ¶H,** as amended by PL 2009, c. 211, Pt. B, §3, is further amended to read:

H. Violates the requirements for a youth camp trip leader permit issued under section 12860; ~~or~~

**Sec.** **3. 12 MRSA §1806, sub-§4, ¶I,** as enacted by PL 2001, c. 604, §6, is amended to read:

I. Enters land or waters to which access has been restricted under section 1804~~.~~; or

**Sec.** **4. 12 MRSA §1806, sub-§4, ¶J** is enacted to read:

J. Violates the requirements for an educational trip leader permit issued under section 12863.

**Sec.** **5. 12 MRSA c. 927 title** is amended to read:

**CHAPTER** **927**

**GUIDES** **~~AND~~****, YOUTH CAMP TRIP LEADERS** **AND EDUCATIONAL TRIP** **LEADERS**

**Sec.** **6. 12 MRSA §12852,** as amended by PL 2009, c. 211, Pt. B, §§8 to 10, is further amended to read:

**§****12852.** **Rule violations; licensed guides and trip leaders**

The following penalties apply to violations of rules regulating licensed guides ~~or~~, youth camp trip leaders, educational trip leaders and course instructor certificates.

**1.** **Civil.**  Notwithstanding section 10650, a person who violates a rule regulating licensed guides ~~or~~, youth camp trip leaders ~~and~~, educational trip leaders or course instructor certificates commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than $100 nor more than $500 may be adjudged.

**2.** **Criminal.**  A person who violates a rule regulating licensed guides ~~or~~, youth camp trip leaders, educational trip leaders and course instructor certificates after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.

**Sec.** **7. 12 MRSA §12853,** as amended by PL 2017, c. 441, §§1 and 2 and affected by §3, is further amended by amending the section headnote to read:

**§****12853.** **License, fees and requirements; youth camp trip leader** **~~exception~~** **and** **educational trip leader exceptions**

**Sec.** **8. 12 MRSA §12853, sub-§3,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 and affected by c. 614, §9, is amended to read:

**3.** **New applications.**  A person ~~wishing~~ seeking to be licensed as a guide shall submit an application to the commissioner.

A. The commissioner shall provide application forms that request all relevant information the commissioner considers necessary.

B. Failure or refusal to satisfactorily answer any question in the application is a basis for the commissioner not to accept the application.

C. The commissioner shall decide whether the application is acceptable within 5 working days of receipt.

D. The commissioner shall notify each applicant at least 2 weeks prior to the examination required under section 12855.

**Sec.** **9. 12 MRSA §12853, sub-§7,** as amended by PL 2009, c. 211, Pt. B, §11, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

**7.** **Exceptions.**  The following exceptions apply to the requirement for a guide license.

A. A person holding a youth camp trip leader permit under section 12860 may, without a guide license, conduct trips including adults under the auspices of the youth camp that employs those adults, subject to all the requirements of section 12860.

B. A person holding an educational trip leader permit under section 12863 may, without a guide license, conduct trips including adults under the auspices of the educational institution that employs those adults, subject to the requirements of section 12863.

C. Notwithstanding section 12863, subsection 2, an employee or a student of an educational institution in this State may, without a guide license, conduct outdoor recreation trips as part of the educational institution's programming as long as:

(1) The educational institution's programming prior to the effective date of this paragraph included conducting outdoor recreation trips; and

(2) Any outdoor recreation trip conducted by the educational institution does not include fishing, hunting, trapping, whitewater rafting or the use of snowmobiles, motorboats or all-terrain vehicles.

This paragraph is repealed October 1, 2022.

For purposes of this subsection, "educational institution" means a public school or private school, as those terms are defined in Title 20-A, section 1, or a postsecondary educational institution.

**Sec.** **10. 12 MRSA §12863** is enacted to read:

**§****12863.** **Educational trip leader permit for schools and postsecondary educational** **institutions**

**1.** **When permit required.**  An educational institution conducting overnight camping in a primitive camping area in the State shall provide for every 12 trip participants at least one educational trip leader permitted pursuant to this section who is associated with the educational institution or a person who holds a guide license issued under this chapter. For purposes of this subsection, "educational institution" means a public school or private school, as those terms are defined in Title 20-A, section 1, or a postsecondary educational institution.

**2.** **Prohibition.**  A person who does not hold a guide license issued under this chapter may not conduct overnight camping under subsection 1 without an educational trip leader permit issued under this section. Each day a person violates this subsection, that person commits a Class E crime for which a minimum fine of $50 and an amount equal to twice the applicable license fee must be imposed.

**3.** **Application.**  A person seeking an educational trip leader permit must submit an application on forms provided by the commissioner and pay the application fee.

**4.** **Qualifications.**  To qualify for an educational trip leader permit, an applicant must:

A. Be at least 18 years of age;

B. Show successful completion of an approved educational trip leader course created pursuant to a curriculum adopted pursuant to subsection 6 or complete an application provided by the commissioner outlining in detail the applicant's experience and training that qualifies that person to become an educational trip leader; and

C. Meet any other requirements established by the commissioner. The commissioner, in establishing requirements pursuant to this paragraph, shall take into consideration the advice of the Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits pursuant to section 12864, subsection 2.

**5.** **Special waiver.**  The commissioner, who shall take into consideration the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits under section 12864, subsection 2, may grant a waiver of the course requirement under subsection 4, paragraph B on the basis of the applicant's experience after payment of the application fee under subsection 7.

**6.** **Curriculum.**  The commissioner, who shall take into consideration the advice of the Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits pursuant to section 12864, subsection 2, shall adopt an educational trip leader course curriculum and examinations. The educational trip leader course curriculum must include at a minimum instruction in the following areas:

A. Wilderness first aid;

B. Water safety, including lifesaving techniques, as appropriate, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation;

C. Group management and facilitation;

D. Risk management;

E. Wilderness traveling and camping;

F. Camping, including practice in related activities; and

G. The State's outdoor industry.

The commissioner shall publish the curriculum and a current list of courses, with the approved curriculum, by course name and address where the course is offered.

**7.** **Fee.**  The initial qualifying fee for a 5-year educational trip leader permit is $20. The permit may be renewed upon payment of $15 if requirements of the department are met.

**8.** **Enforcement.**  Wardens of the department, the rangers of the Bureau of Forestry and rangers of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands may enforce this section and may terminate any trip that is considered unsafe or in violation of this section. The commissioner, who shall take into consideration the advice of the Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits under section 12864, subsection 2, shall establish standards for what is considered an unsafe trip and shall consider previous violations of this section when issuing or reissuing educational trip leader permits.

**Sec.** **11. 12 MRSA §12864** is enacted to read:

**§****12864.** **Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits**

**1.** **Committee established.** The Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits, referred to in this section as "the committee," is established.

A. The committee consists of 7 members appointed by the commissioner:

(1) One employee of the department;

(2) One person with a guide license issued pursuant to this chapter with educational trip leader experience;

(3) One educational trip leader course instructor representing public postsecondary educational institutions;

(4) One educational trip leader course instructor representing private nonprofit postsecondary educational institutions;

(5) One educational trip leader course instructor representing kindergarten to grade 12 public schools;

(6) One educational trip leader course instructor representing kindergarten to grade 12 private schools; and

(7) One educational trip leader course instructor representing a camp trip leader permit committee.

B. The committee shall elect a chair and secretary from among its members.

C. Members of the committee serve for 5 years. A member continues serving until a successor is duly appointed. A member may not serve more than 2 consecutive 5-year terms. In the case of a vacancy, the commissioner shall fill the vacancy by appointing a member representing the same interest as the member who vacated the committee and that member serves for the remainder of the term.

D. Five members of the committee constitute a quorum.

E. The committee shall meet at least twice each year.

**2.** **Committee responsibilities.** This subsection governs the responsibilities of the committee.

A. The committee shall provide advice to the commissioner and shall:

(1) Propose minimum qualifications for educational trip leaders and set minimum qualifications for educational trip leader course instructors;

(2) Propose an educational trip leader course curriculum;

(3) Propose the examination questions and process for testing educational trip leaders and set the examination questions and process for testing educational trip leader course instructors;

(4) Propose standards for what is considered an unsafe trip;

(5) Review, approve and deny applications for educational trip leader course instructor certifications;

(6) Review and propose updates for the educational trip leader and educational trip leader course instructor curricula every 3 years;

(7) Review and provide recommendations regarding special waivers under section 12863, subsection 5;

(8) Review complaints against educational trip leader course instructors and educational trip leader permit holders; and

(9) Propose criteria for refusing to renew an educational trip leader permit based on previous enforcement actions under or violations of section 12863, subsection 8.

B. The committee shall provide advice to the commissioner regarding the educational trip leader course curriculum under section 12863, subsection 6.

**Sec.** **12. 12 MRSA §12904,** as amended by PL 2011, c. 253, §35, is further amended to read:

**§****12904.** **Exceptions**

This chapter does not apply to the operation of canoes or kayaks. This chapter does not apply to guides ~~or~~, youth camp trip leaders or educational trip leaders licensed under chapter 927 or motorboat operators licensed under chapter 935, unless those persons are in the business of conducting commercial whitewater trips.

**Sec.** **13. Initial members of the Advisory Committee for Educational Trip** **Leader Permits.** Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 12864, subsection 1, paragraph C, of the initial members of the Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits, the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall appoint 2 members for one year, 2 members for 3 years and 3 members for 5 years. Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 12864, subsection 1, paragraph A, the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife may appoint as initial members of the Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits persons who are not certified as educational trip leader course instructors pursuant to Title 12, section 12864, subsection 2, paragraph A.

**SUMMARY**

This bill creates a pathway for public and private elementary and secondary schools and postsecondary educational institutions to safely conduct overnight camping trips to primitive camping areas in the State for students and adults associated with those institutions by establishing an educational trip leader permit in the laws governing guides and youth camp trip leaders, using the youth camp trip leader permit as a model. Schools currently conducting these trips as part of their programming have until October 1, 2022 to comply with the new permit process. It requires camping trips to be led by persons who have obtained educational trip leader permits. It also establishes the Advisory Committee for Educational Trip Leader Permits to provide advice to the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife regarding the permit and to regulate educational trip leader instructors.