

Policy: Bees, Wasps, and Hornets

(Authors: Frederick Faller, Rebecca FitzPatrick)

This policy acknowledges that the Monhegan Associates Bylaws are the governing document for all Monhegan Associates activities. With that in mind, this policy supersedes all prior policies or statements specifically related to the contents of this document.

Objective

The purpose of this policy is to examine and define the Monhegan Associates management of bees, wasps, and hornets in the wildlands of Monhegan Island. In the attempt to preserve the biotic communities in the wildlands, every attempt should be made to leave **bees** and their nest undisturbed. However, in a situation where the presence of **bees** can create a hazard to **ordinary hikers** on MAI maintained trails, the trails and ecology committees may take steps to mitigate the danger to ordinary hikers. (See [Rationale](#), below)

Scope

The scope of this policy covers all issues related to the presence of bees, wasps and hornets on Wildlands on Monhegan.

It does not cover such insects on other private property.

It is subject to review and change at any time with a vote of the current trustees.

It may include the appropriate use of signs unique to the policy which would be considered supplementary to the MAI signage policy, that is, if unique signage (warnings or cautions) are deemed necessary by the trails committee, these signs can be defined and implemented by the trails committee outside the scope of the MAI Signage Policy.

Policy

Definitions:

- **MAI** - Monhegan Associates, Inc.
- **Wildlands** - All land owned and managed by MAI
- **Bees** - for the purpose of this policy, this term will include wasps and hornets

- **Ordinary hiker** - those walking on the MAI trails and possibly stepping off the trails to allow the passage of other hikers. They would not include bushwackers, hikers off the maintained trails or meddling with the presence of **bees**.

Implementation

Appendix

Internal References

These internal references are among the Monhegan Associates' documents that have been consulted when writing this policy:

Certificate of Organization, Monhegan Associates Bylaws:

<https://monheganassociates.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/bylaws2008-complete.pdf>

Monhegan Associates Signage Policy

<https://monheganassociates.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/MAI-Signage-Policy.pdf>

External References

These internal references are among the Monhegan Associates' documents that have been consulted when writing this policy:

CDC/ National Institute for Occupational Safety and health:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/insects/beeswasphornets.html>

Concerning PPE equipment for safely working around **bees**:

[https://protect.iu.edu/environmental-health/occupational-safety/beekeeping.html#:~:text=Personal%20Protective%20Equipment%20\(PPE\),toe%2Fclosed%2Dheel%20shoes.](https://protect.iu.edu/environmental-health/occupational-safety/beekeeping.html#:~:text=Personal%20Protective%20Equipment%20(PPE),toe%2Fclosed%2Dheel%20shoes.)

Maine State resources for handling honey **bee** swarms:

<https://mainebeekeepers.org/beekeeping-resources/honey-bee-swarm-removal-service/>

Rationale

Monhegan Associates is entrusted with the preservation of the Island's wildlands. People entering Monhegan Associates' property should understand that they entail some risk by walking on wildlands trails. They should behave with appropriate caution and respect for all creatures, including bees, wasps, and hornets, whose natural home is the wildlands.

Ordinarily, the stance of MAI is to simply let the natural presence of flora and fauna on its lands be what it is. This would include leaving bees and their nests undisturbed.

However, where the presence of bees near or on the **Monhegan Associates** trails, pose a hazard to **ordinary hikers**, minimal mitigation may be applied.

By maintaining trails in the **wildlands**, **MAI** is allowing visitors to use its lands for hiking on these trails. It is known that for certain individuals, the sting of a single bee or multiple bees, can pose a life threatening risk.

Most hikers who know they are at such a risk, carry epi pens and mitigative measures, but this is not always true. It is also true that a person may have been stung multiple times in their lives with no effect and a single sting will suddenly trigger a reaction that is life threatening.

While mitigative measures do exist on the island, they may not be readily accessible to a hiker in the wildlands and the time it may take to find and get back to a person who is stung may be longer than the survival time of the individual with an allergic reaction to a **bee**.

These conditions should allow for pre-emptive activities by the trails committee to minimize this risk by the removal of the bees or appropriate signage to reduce this risk.

Example:

A hiker reported a bee sting while crossing a wetlands bridge on the south end of the island. The Wildlands coordinator and the Trails Committee Chair and one other individual investigated and determined that there was an active yellow jacket's nest under the middle of the bridge. Shrouded in deep marsh grass it would be very difficult to pinpoint and eradicate. Because it was a wetlands crossing, it was not deemed reasonable to temporarily reroute the trail.

One of the investigators, suited in personal protective equipment suitable for bees, walked across the bridge ten times, checking to see if a gentle walk would incite the yellow jackets. It did not. He then ran across the bridge, causing the bridge to bounce. Each time the yellow jackets emerged and flew around the area for about a minute, before they went back into the nest.

He then walked four more times across the bridge at a normal pace. The yellow jackets were not incited.

In keeping with this policy, a special sign was created that read:

Caution:

Wasps nesting in ground under bridge

- PROCEED WITH CAUTION:
 - WALK GENTLY
 - ONE PERSON AT A TIME ON BRIDGE.
 - DO NOT JUMP, BOUNCE, RUN OR STOP ON BRIDGE.

This sign was printed, laminated and posted at each end of the bridge.

Note: Be aware that the first hiker in a party may stir up bees and that the second, third, fourth, etc. hiker passing through may be the one who actually gets stung. Care should be taken to time investigations so they do not harm someone using the same trail soon after.