

11-1-1988

# The Bulletin: Prepared for the Employees of the Maine Department of Conservation, November 1988

Maine Department of Conservation

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## Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Conservation, "The Bulletin: Prepared for the Employees of the Maine Department of Conservation, November 1988" (1988). *Conservation Newsletters*. 2.  
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# THE BULLETIN

Prepared for the Employees of the Maine Department of Conservation  
November 1988

## Commissioner's Column

*EDITORS NOTE: The following is taken from comments made by Ed Meadows to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy and Natural Resources during the hearing on his nomination as Commissioner.*

.....In sixteen months as Director of the Bureau of Public Lands and during the time I have been Acting Commissioner, two things in particular about the Department of Conservation have impressed me:

- the diversity of the programs and responsibilities that DOC has; and
- most especially, the dedication and professionalism of DOC employees in their commitment to those responsibilities.

The world seems to get smaller each day. You feel this everyday in our Department as we respond to ever growing demands, not only on Maine's resources, but also in the needs the public expresses to us. Just a few examples:

- towns and cities want help with natural resource planning, forestry, recreation, ground water, coastal development, and public access as they grapple with growth management;
- mills and contractors want advice on wood supply. They look to the Maine Forest Service for assistance;
- public use of State parks is growing and park facilities are getting older. These twin demands, demand action;
- research in the Gulf of Maine and sound decisions by DEP on depend on the work of the Maine Geological Survey, to keep pace with growth and development in the State.

These are just some of the items that affect every Bureau and DOC program.

DOC involvement stretches from the bottom of the ocean to the mountain tops. We do everything from deep drilling in the Gulf of Maine to aerial inventory high above the landscape. We do active management of lands and provide facilities in State parks and on public lands. And we provide services to thousands of citizens. We are in the natural resource business, but our job is customer service.

More and more we are looked to for help and leadership. And we are intricately connected to other agencies which rely on our resource based, expertise to assist them—Departments of Environmental Protection, Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Marine Resources, Economic and Community Development, Agriculture, the State Planning Office and others. We're involved

in rural development, resource protection, forest management, public recreation, and habitat. It's the quality of life business. We're involved in what Maine is all about.

We are responsible in part for the condition and quality of the forests, but we don't own them. We can promote good ideas, proper utilization, and marketing opportunities but we're not a sales and promotion agency. We can enforce certain environmental laws, but we are not really a law enforcement agency.

DOC's mission involves what Maine is all about—the ocean, the forests, and the coast and the natural resource industries that provide the basis for much of our state's economy and recreational opportunities for our people. The task gets bigger and more complicated all the time. We recognize the vital concerns of all those whose interest and livelihoods depend on the future and the quality of those resources. We hope to do what we can to help make the natural resource pie bigger, even as it seems the dish keeps getting smaller. The pie indeed can be made bigger—and hopefully better—through wise use and sound management.

**Ed Meadows**

**Acting Commissioner**

(The challenges we see ahead will be addressed in the winter issue of Forests Parks and Lands.)

## DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION FOREST CAMPSITE PROGRAM

For 60 years, forest campsites have been integral features of Maine's diverse recreational opportunities. Scattered throughout the sparsely populated areas of Maine are more than 1100 sites. The system is managed in pieces by three separate bureaus and several private landowners.

In the 1920's, the prevalence of forest fires due to carelessness with campfires was significant. The State began a program in the Maine Forest Service to limit campfire-building to certain fire safe areas. In its role in fire prevention, the agency managed the campsites and developed new sites as need demanded.

Forty years past; the Maine economy grew, stimulated especially by the expansion of Maine's largest industry, pulp and paper. The accompanying construction of miles of new roads to bring trees from the woods to the mills also opened previously inaccessible areas for camping. The popularity of the forestcampsite program likewise grew.

From 1961 to 1970, a Campsite Coordinator

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managed the program, whose goals were to establish new, and maintain existing fire safe areas. When the goals had been met, the decision was made to maintain, but not expand, the number of forest campsites. Furthermore, the program's purpose had become more recreational than fire control, and the funding from the Maine Forestry District Tax was no longer justified. The position of Campsite Coordinator was deemed unnecessary, and Forest rangers were given campsite maintenance responsibilities.

In the meantime, The Bureaus of Parks and Recreation and Public Lands had each initiated their own forest campsite development and management programs; North Maine Woods, a recreation cooperative of major private forest landowners, assumed management of many sites formerly the responsibility of the Maine Forest Service. This situation has continued today; but numerous problems have resulted, which it appears can be resolved by centralized coordination.

Rules and policies for fees, use, and overall management differ among the several managing entities. Accurate, consistent information on forest campsites is usually unavailable. Some forest campsites are overcrowded; have unsanitary facilities; are littered; or have been vandalized. Private landowners view the program as poorly managed.

With growth in recreation and increased tourism publicity, demand for more campsites in every region of the State has risen. Understanding all of the problems with the current forest campsite program, and also recognizing the opportunities an effective, consistent, responsive program could offer, former Commissioner LaBonta appointed a departmental task force to review the present program and make recommendations for improvement. The Task Force is composed of representatives of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation: Herb Hartman, Chairman; Matt LaRoche, Craig Ten Broeck, and Jan Selser; the Bureau of Public Lands: Steve Spencer; and the Bureau of Forestry: Harry Doughty, Dave Wight, and Roger Milligan.

The consensus of the Task Force is that central coordination is the most important element for increasing the program's effectiveness. A Campsite Coordinator in the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, the agency whose chief responsibility is outdoor recreation, will combine organizational and management responsibilities with landowner relations. The Coordinator would maintain an inventory of all sites; establish consistent standards, rules, permits, and fee structures for State-maintained sites; evaluate work, equipment, staffing and funding needs; enter into private contractual agreements for maintenance and management when this seems expeditious; optimize management effectiveness by the various bureaus

through coordination; develop and disseminate informational materials; and prepare an annual report for participating landowners and the Department of Conservation.

The Task Force's recommendations were approved by the Commissioner and the proposal has been requested of the Governor for inclusion in his budget.

The Task Force also stressed that the forest campsite program should not operate independently, but rather with direction from a Forest Campsite Coordinating Group composed of the Directors of the Bureaus of Parks and Recreation, Public Lands, and Forestry, and the Land Use Regulation Commission, with the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation as permanent chairperson.

**Jan Selser**

**Resource Administrator**

#### **MSECCA CAMPAIGN**

The Maine State Employees Combined Charitable Appeal is underway until November 12th. The Department of Conservation has raised 75% of its assigned goal to date. PLEASE, if you are going to make a contribution to this very worthy effort, make it now. Many agencies have already exceeded their goals. Help us ensure that Conservation does not fall short. Appliances and gift certificates will be raffled among donors. The big prize however, is the good feelings you will have knowing you have helped those who need a hand. That's the true spirit of giving during this holiday season. Contact your Bureau's representative listed below to make a donation or sign up for a payroll deduction. Thank you.

**Herb Hartman, DOC Coordinator for MSECCA, Andrea Perron; Administrative Services, Judy Andrews, Forestry; Mike Foley, Geology; Donna McLaughlin, LURC; Marie Drew, Parks; Leigh Hoar, Public Lands.**

#### **BULLETIN MAILINGS**

Seasonal employees may receive The Bulletin by mail during seasonal layoff. Send your mailing address to Gale Ross, Commissioner's Office, Department of Conservation, Station 22, Augusta, ME 04333.

THE BULLETIN is prepared for the employees of the Maine Department of Conservation. It will be distributed with paychecks each month to keep you informed about our department.