

2-1-1991

## Bulletin: Information for Maine Department of Conservation Employees, February 1991

Maine Department of Conservation

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### Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Conservation, "Bulletin: Information for Maine Department of Conservation Employees, February 1991" (1991). *Conservation Newsletters*. 23.  
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### Commissioner's Column

The employee meetings held last month provided good information to help us respond in the best way possible to employees affected by budget cuts. The department's employee information task force is following up on the questions and recommendations you presented. Some questions are answered in this *Bulletin*. The task force has passed your suggestions to the state transition team charged with working on the impact of budget cuts on the entire state work force. The meetings were worthwhile. Thank you for your participation.

When this column was written, the legislature had not agreed on a budget bill for FY 91. The Appropriations Committee produced two separate bills to be considered in the House and Senate. Both bills contain the changes in our department's budget that we discussed with you. Included in both are proposals to keep 23 fire towers operational and use the proposed increase in park fees to offset cuts in the Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

The plan to defer payments to the retirement system has changed significantly. The retirement system announced a surplus of \$49 million in three special trust funds that provide disability, survivor, and accidental death benefits. The trustees of the system authorized use of the excess funds this year. That action will save the general fund \$49 million in FY 91. This will replace the proposal to defer payments into the state employee retirement fund. The trustees, the governor and legislators all expressed support for legislation to strengthen protection for retirement funds.

We have no new information on temporary furlough days.

An important way each of us can help reduce expenses (and save funds to support our programs) is to be aware of the need to save energy. With the large number of vehicles and buildings DOC operates, energy usage is a costly item, presenting an opportunity to save considerable dollars and fuel. We can all do a great deal to help-- whether it is by turning off lights and equipment when not in use, car pooling or being fuel conscious when driving. All departments have received an executive order setting target objectives for energy conservation. Fred Bartlett will lead a department team of representatives from each bureau to implement the executive order. We encourage all to be mindful of the economic and environmental importance of reducing energy use. This is an area where each individual can make a difference. You will be hearing more about how you can do your part to save money.

Over the last few months all of us have devoted an unusual amount of time and attention to the budget. Despite this focus, it is important to prepare for the challenges that are ahead.

Even though it is only February, plans are underway in every division to prepare for spring and summer operations. There is a growing feeling of anticipation as we look toward the time when the budget is finalized and we can direct full attention to program operations.

We look forward to sharing with you the satisfaction, enjoyment, accomplishment, and pride in the work you do to make our programs successful.  
**Ed Meadows**

### DOC Employee Information Task Force

The answers to questions asked at employee meetings and other information related to layoffs will be published each month in the *Bulletin*.

#### Definitions of commonly used terms related to layoffs.

- Organizational unit: the organizational unit for the Department of Conservation is the Department of Conservation.

- Unit division: a unit division refers to a geographical unit. The department is divided into 18 unit divisions. Unit division maps are available through Personnel.

- Lower related classes: Lower related classes are determined by the Bureau of Human Resources. Lower related classes are classes which logically form a career path. Will Harris and transition team members have a listing of lower related classes for the department.

- Classes previously held: job in state government which an employee has held. The position must have been a "statused" position. Project positions and acting capacity positions are not considered "statused".

#### Q. If I am laid off, may I withdraw my retirement fund contributions?

If you are laid off, you are allowed to withdraw the funds that you have paid into the retirement fund without resigning. However, if you wish to purchase that time back, there will be an interest charge.

#### Q. If I opt for layoff instead of an option, am I eligible for unemployment?

Yes. If you are laid off with no displacement options (bumping), or if you choose layoff instead of bumping, you will be given a **Lack of Work Separation Notice** at the time of your layoff date to present to the Department of Labor. The notice tells them that you are eligible for unemployment.

Arrangements have been made with the Department of Labor for laid off state workers to be handled as follows:

Call your local office of Employment Security and make an appointment to meet with them on a Thursday or a Friday; this will eliminate the need for you to stand in line to sign up.

**Employees will retain their layoff rights to a position in their class for three years. If they select another position in another unit or demote to a lower related or previously held class and an opening comes up in the class they were laid off from, it will be offered to laid off employees in order of seniority.**

**If employees return to work within three years, their seniority will include the layoff period.**

**Any employee who has been notified of layoff or displacement may open any register at the Bureau of Human Services for which they are qualified.**

**We will notify employees at once of any changes in the status of positions being abolished.**

**If you have any unanswered questions, please feel free to call Will Harris, 289-4925; Kim Pierce, 289-4926; or Barbara McGee, 289-4944.**



## Conservation Notes

- The Department of Conservation Geographic Information System and the Office of Information Services organized a teleconference in early February on "Land Records Modernization and Geographic Information Systems Planning." The conference originated at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and was delivered via satellite to the University of Maine at Augusta. According to **Dan Walters**, GIS manager, the teleconference attracted 45 participants who learned about GIS technology, terminology, planning and implementation, and cost/benefit analysis.
- **Scott Ramsay** recently made a presentation in Presque Isle to the directors of the Maine Snowmobile Association. Topics included landowner liability, permits and other aspects of BPR's off-road vehicle program. Scott traveled 460 miles by snowmobile to attend the meeting and inspected portions of 14 grant-in-aid trail maintenance projects en route.
- **Outward Bound** has enthusiastically agreed to cosponsor another MCC/ BPL work camp on Goose Eye Mountain this August.
- **Wimpy Burnham** retires on February 22 following 35 years of state service. Wimpy has worked at many state parks and historic sites and has been a regional park supervisor since 1970.
- **Richard Dearborn**, MFS entomologist, will conduct a forest entomology seminar at the Eagle Hill Wildlife Research Station in Stueben during June. This is the fifth year the independent, non-profit institution has presented a series of natural history seminars.
- **Joseph Kelley**, Maine Geological Survey marine geologist, presented a talk at Duke University on "Sea-Level Change and the Geology of Maine's Continental Shelf." Joe, who was the guest of Duke University, also spent two days examining developed beaches in North and South Carolina that were damaged by Hurricane Hugo.
- The Department of Conservation GIS will be sponsoring ARC/INFO workshops between February 27 and May 15 that utilize self-study materials. The training workshops cover the GIS computer operating system, and the design and completion of a GIS project. Contact **Diane Hankinson** or **Dan Walters** at 289-3897.
- **Don Ouellette** of the Insect and Disease Management Division will serve as Project Learning Tree Coordinator until the natural resources coordinator position is filled. According to Don, PLT teacher workshops were conducted in Westbrook, Rumford and Ashland during January.
- A 21-foot "Grand Laker" style canoe built by students at the Skowhegan Regional Vocational Center will be delivered this week to **Tim Caverly**, Allagash Wilderness Waterway supervisor. The cedar-strip canoe was built as a vocational project by students in the Outdoor Resources program with materials purchased by BPR. The working canoe will be used on Eagle Lake. **Gil Gilpatrick**, who regularly canoes and guides on the Allagash, is the Outdoor Resources program instructor.
- BPL has conducted its annual calendar year planning session to plan and coordinate activities for the upcoming field season and to set priorities for 1991 and 1992.
- The Bureau of Parks and Recreation is offering a program called "Parks in the Schools" to grades 3-5 throughout the state. The program uses slides, a recycling race and role playing to teach environmentally responsible behavior. **Pat Bailey**, is coordinating the outreach project.

## MCC Prepares for Spring and Summer Projects

Preparations for spring and summer Maine Conservation Corps projects are underway. Seven projects proposed by Department of Conservation agencies have been accepted for 1991.

In the spring an MCC team will work with GIS to digitize maps, and at Lily Bay State Park to restore a self guided interpretive trail and plant trees.

Summer MCC teams will be established for three Bureau of Public Lands projects. One team will spend a third season establishing a trail up Goose Eye Mt. on the Mahoosuc Management Unit. Another will add to the Little Squaw Management Unit trail system previously created by MCC teams. The third team will reconstruct the Round Barn Campground in the Bigelow Preserve.

On the Allagash waterway an MCC team will stabilize the shoreline and re-landscape at campsites. The MCC will provide a trail crew at Camden Hills State Park to clear trails and repair bridges, stone steps and water bars. A third state park project to build trails on newly acquired land at Bradbury Mt. State Park is dependent upon receiving a grant from the Land for Maine's Future Board.

In addition to the 7 projects garnered by the DOC, the MCC will cosponsor 20 projects with other agencies as follows: State - 4, international - 2, national - 3, municipal - 3, higher education - 2, private non-profit - 6.

### 1991 SERVE/Maine Volunteer Directories Mailed



Over 600 SERVE/Maine Volunteer Directories have been mailed to past and present SERVE/Maine volunteers, all Maine public libraries, all colleges, and many environmental organizations and service clubs.

The 1991 Volunteer Directory contains over 90 projects submitted by 13 natural resource agencies. Volunteers are being sought to undertake a history research project on Meeting House Eddy for BPR, as plover/tern endangered species monitors to volunteer at Reid and Popham Beach state parks, trail stewards to "adopt" BPL's Wright Trail and accomplish the annual maintenance, interns to assist at LURC's regional offices, adopt a campsite volunteers to help the MFS maintain campsites on Moosehead Lake, and as a volunteer coordinator to work with trail maintenance volunteers at Camden Hills State Park.

**A Pocket Guide to Cross-Country Skiing on Maine State Parks and Public Reserved Lands** has been revised by the Planning and Program Services Division and published by the Bureau of Public Lands. It is available from Public Lands or Parks and Recreation.



### Bulletin Correspondents

The *Bulletin* is published every month except July and December. Give contributions of information to your bureau correspondent who is: Admin. Services, Judy Andrews; MFS, Tom Wood; BPR, Sheila McDonald; LURC, Gloria LeVasseur; BPL, Pat Simard; and MGS, Woody Thompson.