

4-1-1991

Bulletin: Information for Maine Department of Conservation Employees, April 1991

Maine Department of Conservation

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Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Conservation, "Bulletin: Information for Maine Department of Conservation Employees, April 1991" (1991). *Conservation Newsletters*. 24.
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April
1991

BULLETIN

Information for Maine Department of Conservation Employees

Commissioner's Column

Since our last *Bulletin* a great deal has happened that affects the budget plans proposed by the department. These events require some changes to the plans we have discussed with you.

The FY 91 supplemental budget was adopted in March. Several positions which had been proposed for elimination were reinstated by the Legislature. Most of these are seasonal positions in Forestry and Parks. The department is now in the process of reinstating employees who were scheduled for layoff. These positions are now funded through the end of this fiscal year in June. However, a number of them remain slated for elimination in FY 92 in order to meet our budget target for the next fiscal year.

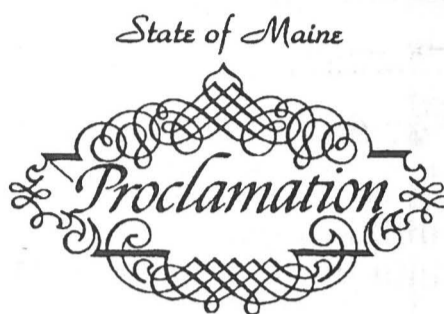
All departments were recently notified of a change in the procedure for layoffs scheduled in FY 92. Those layoffs will now be rescinded until the FY 92/93 budget has been passed. This change affects all departments, not only Conservation. The Administration has determined that due to the many changes in the FY 91 budget and the likelihood of additional changes in the FY 92/93 budget it is better to delay formal action on layoffs until the budget is decided. Once the budget is passed, new notices will be sent and the layoffs will occur unless funding is restored for affected positions. Any position funding changes that do occur may affect bumping options. Employees directly affected by this policy will receive additional information.

As we have indicated, some uncertainty will continue over the next few months until the budget is enacted. We recognize it makes planning and staffing for the field season more challenging. There may be additional changes that cannot be anticipated at this time. We remain committed to providing you the best information we have as changes occur and to give everyone the advantage of as much advance notice as possible in order to make decisions. Our goal to minimize the effects on people and programs in the department remains intact. Everyone is encouraged to raise questions or concerns with your supervisor or the Employee Information Task Force members.

The Appropriations Committee has begun hearings on the FY 92/93 budget. The hearing on our budget was held March 20. The hearings this year include much more detailed examination of accounts and are expected to last several more weeks. The committee expressed significant interest in the department and understanding of the impact the cuts will have on our programs. We will work with the committee members to create the best approach that meets the department's needs while living within the limits of available funding.

Even though in these times it has been necessary for us to focus so much on vital budget matters, many other important activities are taking place. Last week LURC and DEP held joint public hearings on proposed rules for mining. These rules are the result of nearly two years of hard work by many agencies, including LURC and Geology. Adoption of these rules will be a significant milestone for the state, achieving the difficult but essential task of balancing sound mining activities for public benefit. *Commissioner's Column continues on reverse side*

Governor's Proclamation Honors Maine Forest Service for a Century of Dedicated Professional Service



WHEREAS, in 1991 the Maine Forest Service proudly celebrates its 100th year of leadership in forest conservation; and

WHEREAS, for a century the men and women of the Maine Forest Service have been steadfast advocates of forest stewardship and have dedicated themselves to the protection of Maine's woodlands from destruction by fire, insects and disease; and

WHEREAS, the economic well-being of Maine people and the quality of life in this, the nation's most heavily forested state, are enhanced by Maine Forest Service teamwork and professionalism in the effort to sustain the health and productivity of Maine's 17 million acre forest; and

WHEREAS, *An Act Creating a Forest Commissioner and for the Protection of Forests* was approved by Maine's legislature on March 25, 1891,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN R. McKERNAN, JR., Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim March 25, 1991 as

Maine Forest Service Day

throughout the State of Maine, in honor of the Maine Forest Service centennial and the beginning of a second century of excellence in forest resource conservation and professional service to the people of Maine.

In testimony whereof, I have caused the Great Seal of the State of Maine to be hereunto affixed GIVEN under my hand at Augusta this twenty-second day of March in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninty-One.

(signed)
JOHN R. McKERNAN, JR.
Governor

Commissioner's Column continued from front page

with the desire to ensure adequate protection for the environment.

Many thanks to those of you who volunteered to provide information about the department during the recent sportsman's shows in Orono and Augusta. You helped present our message to thousands of people who attended. The large attendance at these shows demonstrates continuing strong interest in Maine's outdoors and the importance of the department's work and your part in it.

The days are getting longer now—rejuvenating energy and enthusiasm for the coming summer. April means spring meetings for many department programs—the true beginning of a new field season. It's exciting! We look forward to seeing you at the meetings.

Ed Meadows

FY 91 Budget Bill Enacted

L.D. 274, the budget reduction bill for the second half of FY 91, was passed by the legislature in March. This bill makes some significant changes in the Department of Conservation's original FY 91 budget proposal. Our total FY 91 budget reduction is \$801,108, which is 29% less than the amount we were required to submit.

There were three important changes made by the legislature. Forestry had proposed closing 27 firetowers as part of its reductions. The legislature restored 22 of these. However, these towers are funded only through the end of FY 91; they are still proposed to be closed in FY 92 unless additional funding is provided.

A second change by the legislature was to restore 75% of the proposed \$220,000 cut in the Bureau of Parks and Recreation budget. Nineteen positions proposed for elimination were restored. Some of these restored funds were due to an increase in park fees which went into effect March 1. The legislature approved using the income from increased fees to offset some of the bureau's budget reduction. Again, most of these positions are still slated to be eliminated in FY 92.

The third change was to restore two Environmental Specialist II positions in LURC that had been part of the reduction. These positions are for processing of applications. They will be eliminated in FY 92 if funding is not provided.

In the appropriations section of the bill, LURC received approval and funding for an Environmental Specialist III position to process mining permit applications. The cost of this position will be partly offset by mining permit application fees. LURC also received headcount for an Environmental Specialist III position that had been funded but had inadvertently not been given headcount. Funding for both of these positions has been requested in the FY 92/93 budget.

Using funding granted to the state from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the legislature also approved a half-time temporary position in LURC to assist in monitoring best management practices to reduce pollution.

Conservation Notebook

□ Hats off to **Jim Kelly, Brady Scott, and Norma Scott** who have recently completed the arduous task of surveying, blazing and installing corner posts along 20,800 feet of boundary from Chamberlain Lake to Round Pond in the Allagash wilderness Waterway. The boundary marking work, which the crew has worked on intermittently since March 1990, was done in cooperation with Seven Islands Land Co.

Conservation Notebook continued on next column

Conservation Notebook continued

□ **Joe Kelley, Bob Marvinney, and Woody Thompson** gave presentations on Maine Geological Survey research at the The Geological Society of Maine spring meeting on April 5th. Former MGS hydrogeologist **John Williams** spoke on the "Geopolitical Aspects of Site Selection for Low Level Radioactive Waste Disposal in Maine."

□ No Foolin'! April 1st brought the traditional rush of people to Sebago Lake State Park to try their luck on the state's first day of the open water fishing season. According to **Tom Hall and Phil Mayo**, the boat launch facility at the park exceeded its parking capacity before 5:00 a.m., and by 6:00 a.m. there were well over one hundred rigs parked at the site and along park roadways. The use was heavy but not unexpected, given that other boat access sites on the popular lake are still closed by ice. Use is expected to decline after the excitement of opening day, but the area will remain busy throughout the season.

□ SERVE/Maine volunteers **Gary Stelpflug**, who has over 18 years trail development experience with Acadia National Park, and **June LaCombe**, a Pownal resident with an extensive background in environmental studies, volunteered as Trails and Interpretive Advisors assisting **Dan Bell**, Bradbury Mountain Park Manager, in preparation of a proposed "Plan for Necessary Access Improvements" on the 100 acre addition to the park acquired through the Land for Maine's Future Board (LMFB). The plan is an application for additional funds from the LMFB for access development on the property.

Corpsmembers go to California

Two members of the Maine Conservation Corps have been selected to participate in the California Conservation Corps' Backcountry Trails Project. This project puts five teams of 18 people into backcountry areas of California for a five month period beginning April 23. The intensive trail work done during the five months in the wilderness makes the corpsmembers some of the best trained trail workers in the country.

Kevin Raiten of Surry and Jonathan Sleeper of Lewiston were notified of their selection on March 25. Only four other people outside of California were selected for induction into the elite Backcountry Trails Project.

Both Maine corpsmembers were part of the MCC's 1990 team which worked on the Appalachian Trail in Maine for one month and in Yellowstone National Park for a month. Jon Sleeper was also on the 1988 MCC Casco Bay team and selected for the 1988 MCC All Star Team. Jon will spend his first month with the CCC in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park and the next four months in the Stanislaus National Forest. Kevin Raiten was assistant team leader of the MCC's Yellowstone team and will be working for the CCC in Yosemite National Park.

Phone (Centrex) Network Changes

The state Centrex phone network can only be used to make calls between state offices in Presque Isle, Augusta, Lewiston, Rockland and Portland. **It can no longer be used to make calls to non-state telephones in towns near these areas.**

Dial the Centrex prefix number assigned to the area and the last four digits of the number you are calling. For example, dial 81-3100 or 3116 to reach department offices in **Old Town**. Other DOC Centrex phone numbers are: **Augusta**, dial 88 plus the last four digits of phone numbers with a 289 prefix; **Presque Isle**, dial 84-2033 (BPL); 84-2053 (LURC); 84-2034 (MFS); 84-2040 (BPR); **Rockland** (BPR), dial 87-2253.