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Bulletin: Information for Maine Department of Conservation Employees, January 1993

Maine Department of Conservation

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January
1993

BULLETIN



Information for Maine Department of Conservation Employees

Commissioner's Column

Governor McKernan's budget contains a proposal to merge the Department of Conservation and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife into a new state agency, the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Wildlife.

The governor also proposed the merger of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and several other restructuring ideas.

We issued a management points memorandum on the DOC/IF&W merger proposal prior to the governor's public announcement. Since the merger proposal affects every DOC employee, I will review some of the information in the memorandum.

The proposal does not include a plan for the new agency's structure. Instead, DOC and IF&W are directed to develop an organizational plan that will be submitted to the legislature next January. The plan would be implemented in April of 1994.

Some news reports on the governor's restructuring plan erroneously stated that the DOC would be merged into the DIF&W. This is not the case. The proposal calls for the creation, by merger, of an entirely new department.

The purpose of the merger is to achieve savings, primarily by eliminating administrative positions. Some of the projected savings result from another element of the plan involving the transfer of the administrative functions of the Departments of Environmental Protection, Marine Resources and Agriculture to the new Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Wildlife. The total savings from the five departments is about \$700,000 per year.

Discussions about the restructuring of state government are widespread. There are reports that there are numerous restructuring proposals already filed with the legislature.

In our discussions about the concept of natural resource agency restructuring it was agreed that it is in the interest of our programs for us to be active participants. Any new combination of existing agencies will have advantages and disadvantages. However, there are a number of common elements to all propos-

als, therefore the department advocates that any restructuring process be based on several key principles. Some of these principles are outlined below.

- **Restructuring should be approached as an opportunity to create a stronger foundation for the future management and protection of Maine's natural resources and not just result in the movement of boxes on an organizational chart.**
- **Any new structure should maintain or enhance our capacity to deliver our core services and functions.**
- **Restructuring must address the public's expectation for change, but we must give agencies adequate resources to fulfill their missions.**
- **A new structure should provide opportunity for enhancing coordination between programs and creating a stronger unified voice for sound management of the state's natural resources.**
- **The structure should be designed to support the employees in their efforts to work effectively and include funds and incentives for improving technology and productivity.**
- **Proposals should enhance opportunities for public information and communication with those who rely on our programs and services.**
- **Restructuring should facilitate opportunities to attract financial support from sources outside of state government.**
- **Proposals should also address state administrative rules and streamline those that affect every day working procedures.***

I have expressed these objectives in press reports on the proposal. My comments reflect our desire to have these principles addressed and that there be careful analysis of the effects of any organizational changes.

There are likely to be many variations proposed during this session. We want to ensure that any legislation that is enacted provides the greatest possible opportunity to strengthen the management of the state's natural resources. We will work to ensure

that these principles are incorporated in any restructuring proposal.

We will continue to provide budget and restructuring updates throughout the legislative session.

Ed Meadows

* The work of DOC's Personnel/Payroll Task Force, described in the accompanying article, demonstrates this principle.

DOC Employees Review -Change Administrative Procedures

The Personnel/Payroll Task Force, made up of representatives from all bureaus and administrative services, has met four times to review internal and external procedures used during personnel/payroll actions.

According to DOC Personnel Manager Debra Phillips, the meetings have been productive and a number of changes have already been made. Here is a sample of the kinds of changes the group is making:

- The payroll form has been modified to include furloughs. This allows one form to be eliminated.
- The employee "start-up" form has also been eliminated.
- A handout on procedures for use by staff responsible for various personnel actions has been developed.
- An employee/position routing slip designed to ease processing personnel actions has been prepared.
- The "new hire" process has been streamlined, with a focus on eliminating redundant forms.

Debra says the task force is excited about the progress that has been made and plans additional, forward steps. If you have ideas/suggestions/issues you would like considered by the task force, please contact your bureau representative. They are:

- Parks - **Tom Skolfield & Dalton Kirk**
- Forestry - **Jean Colfer & Jill French** (Fire Control)
- Geology - **Chris Palmer**
- Public Lands - **Alice Bickford**
- LURC - **Donna McLaughlin**
- Administrative Services - **Debra Phillips.**

Conservation Notes

□ The Maine Geological Survey has distributed 130 copies of the "Activity Book for Earth Science Teachers" and continues to receive requests. Curriculum Resources for Earth Science Teachers (CREST) project results were displayed at conferences for middle school science & mathematics teachers held at the Samoset Inn in December and January. **Doug Reusch**, CREST coordinator, made a presentation on Maine's geological evolution at these conferences.

□ **Matthew LaRoche** of BPR and **Gary Morse** of MFS attended the Northern Forest Lands Council's open house in Greenville. The council held four open houses in the state to get public input on its work plan.

□ After four years of building the SERVE/Maine Program, **Libbey Seigars** is leaving the department to become the director of cooperative education and career planning and placement at Unity College. A terrific opportunity for Libbey, it is also a very big loss for SERVE/Maine (a program of the Maine Conservation Corps). The MCC will carry on the best it can to place volunteers in 1993 with an acting capacity replacement for Libbey.

□ **Henry Whittemore** of BPL and **Fred Todd** of LURC attended a Biological Resources Forum sponsored by the Northern Forest Lands Council. The forum brought together a panel of experts to discuss the state of the region's biological resources and how those resources might be best protected for future generations.

□ Forest Rangers **Bruce Small**, **Mark Mayhew**, **John Leavitt** and **Greg Hesslein** spent several hours with Channel 13 WGME-TV on a "stake out" at a southern Maine Christmas tree plantation. The plantation had been hit hard by tree thieves in the past. The feature news segment aired about a week before Christmas.

□ Forest Ranger **Gary Cook** of Brownville and his local hot shot fire fighting unit have raised several hundred dollars for several important projects in Piscataquis County. Their fund raising efforts have benefited severely ill children in the area. Money was also raised to help improve the emergency communication network in the Milo/Brownville area.

□ Forest Rangers **Russ Beauchemin**, **Otis Gray** and **Bruce Reed** had a chance to use their self defense tactics training recently, when they came to the aid of a Greenville game warden

who was physically assaulted by an intoxicated driver. The rangers all agreed that their training definitely paid off and enabled them to help de-escalate the situation and prevent further harm from occurring.

□ Forest Rangers **Jack Ganley**, **Dave York**, **Charlie Platt** and **Sue Myers** attended a three-day wilderness and rescue course, hosted by Baxter State Park. Also participating were 14 Baxter State Park personnel and 10 game wardens. The course was presented by SOLO of Conway, New Hampshire the only full time wilderness and emergency center in the world.

□ **Steve Levesque**, chief planner with the Land Use Regulation Commission, has resigned to accept a position as Director of Development for the City of Lewiston. Steve grew up in the Lewiston/Auburn area.

□ Land Use Regulation Commission Enforcement investigators **Gordon Moore** and **Charles Corliss** have received notice from the Department of Human Services that they have been certified for Rule 80K enforcement. The rule provides a quicker, less formal, and less expensive system for the prosecution of people who violate land use laws without sacrificing the due process protections afforded by existing court procedures.

□ Several Maine Forest Service personnel participated in the Agricultural Trade Show at the Augusta Civic Center in January. **Ancyl Thurston** spoke on the tree growth tax law; **Henry Trial** spoke to Christmas tree growers and wreath producers on the condition of the fir resource; **Peter Lammert** spoke on the marketing for small woodland owners; and **Beth Reed** conducted a training session for tree wardens.

□ The California Conservation Corps (CCC) is looking for MCC corpmembers to work in their Backcountry Trails Project. After a year of not accepting out of state people, the CCC has opened up this wilderness experience again. Based on the performance of MCCer **Jonathan Sleeper** in 1991, the CCC would like to have more people from the MCC. The CCC backcountry teams live in California wilderness areas for five straight months and do heavy trail treadway work. Corpmembers can then continue on with the CCC and have an excellent chance of landing a job with the US Forest Service or National Park Service if they want to continue in trail work.

□ **John Armentrout**, **Park Armstrong** and **Bill Duffy** have accepted limited term, full time positions with the Office of Geographic Information Services (GIS). John and Parker are GIS coordinators and Bill is a programmer/analyst. GIS is providing a variety of products and services to state agencies and to municipalities. GIS services are being used in the E-911 program, the WIC program, radon studies, and forest land inventory. State agencies being served include the Departments of Environmental Protection, Transportation, Conservation, Public Safety and Human Services.

College Conservation Corps of Maine Expands

The College Conservation Corps of Maine (CCCM) added seven new corpmembers to the existing Unity College and USM teams for the spring semester. Alison Hramiec was hired as a new CCCM team leader at USM. Alison is a graduate of Kalamazoo College in Michigan and has a degree in biology. The new USM students moved onto the USM Gorham campus January 18 and began attending classes on January 19.

The CCCM team from Unity and the new team from USM began 1993 with a one week community service project at the Maine Conservation School in Bryant Pond. The Corpmembers and their team leaders laid out and built two new nature trails; cut, split and stacked firewood; dismantled a fish spillway; and, brushed and marked existing trails at the Conservation School. The crew ended the week with a ski trip to Sunday River in Bethel. The trip was sponsored by Sunday River, Port's Sports in Bethel and the Maine Conservation School.

Serve/Maine Directory Available

SERVE/Maine's 1993 Volunteer Directory will be published in mid-February. The directory lists projects available for volunteers with public natural resource agencies.

To receive a directory or for more information call SERVE/Maine at 287-4945.

Deadline for MCC Project Proposals Extended

The deadline for proposals for 1993 MCC projects has been extended to February 3, 1993. Call Ken Spalding at 287-4931 for more information.