

5-1-1994

Maine Department of Conservation Employee News and Information Bulletin, May 1994

Maine Department of Conservation

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Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Conservation, "Maine Department of Conservation Employee News and Information Bulletin, May 1994" (1994). *Conservation Newsletters*. 54.
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Maine Department of Conservation Employee News and Information May 1994

BULLETIN

FORESTRY GEOLOGY LAND USE REGULATION PARKS AND RECREATION PUBLIC LANDS

Commissioner's Column

Once again field season is in full blossom. Throughout the department, employees are preparing to carry out one of our major functions: the delivery of quality programs and services to Maine residents and visitors who are our customers.

The legislature has adjourned with few budget revisions or major changes to our programs. For the first time in years, there were no additional reductions in our budget. A brief summary of legislative activity affecting us is included in this *Bulletin*.

As I travel throughout the state I get a feeling that, while people remain concerned about the economy, they are also looking to the future. I also hear growing recognition of our natural resources and the role they play in our state. Each of us can use this interest as an opportunity to help those we are in contact with to have a greater appreciation for the importance of Maine's natural resources and the contribution they—and our programs—make to Maine.

There are other encouraging signs for our programs as well. We continue to make good progress at DOC. Here are just a few of the latest examples:

- The loon license plates are increasingly evident, showing visible support throughout the state for parks and wildlife.
- The recent department computer system upgrade provides greater capability to communicate and support field programs.
- Public response to the Northern Forest Lands report has been very positive, including strong agreement on the need for better support of existing conservation programs and enhanced management of state lands and facilities.

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Nearly 5,000 Conservation Registrations Sold

At April's end, nearly 5,000 motorists had supported state parks and endangered wildlife by choosing conservation registration (CR) plates for their vehicles. With the approval of the legislature, some Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Bureau of Parks and Recreation vehicles also display the attractive "loon" plates.

The plates are available for \$20 in addition to regular registration fee at all state motor vehicle branch offices and at many town offices. Ten dollars of each plate's \$20 purchase price is tax deductible. Vanity plates are available for an additional \$15.

Corrections Aids DOC

Discussions between Conservation Commissioner Ed Meadows and Department of Corrections Commissioner Don Allen have led to renewed efforts by Corrections staff to work with prisoners to assist Conservation programs. The assistance will be in a wide variety of forms, depending on the facility and availability of prisoners with specialized skills. Some of the projects are described here.

- Four sets of 20' X 4'-5" hemlock skidder bridges weighing about two tons per set are being constructed for the Bureau of Public Lands. According to Leigh Hoar, the reusable bridges will provide an environmentally superior method of passage for skidders over small streams and wet areas.
- BPL picnic tables, wood duck nest boxes, outhouses and sign

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Forest Resurvey Planned

The U.S. Forest Service, in cooperation with the Maine Forest Service, will soon begin the third resurvey of Maine's forest resource according to Ancyl Thurston, MFS coordinator for the project.

Ten to twelve field crews will begin the survey in northern Maine and will progress throughout the state. Field work will be completed either late this year or early next year.

Initially, the crews will be stationed at MFS facilities in Portage, Island Falls and Old Town. They will also be using facilities from Baxter Park in Millinocket.

About 3,000 field plots measured during previous surveys will be remeasured, and about 200 new field plots will be established.

Ancyl has obtained field stations for the crews and is coordinating plot locations for some

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Conservation Notes

■ **Steve Oliveri** presented a workshop on submerged lands and state mooring laws at the annual training session of the Maine Harbormasters Association in Castine. The workshop was presented in cooperation with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service. Harbormasters from throughout the state attended.

■ BPL participated in the L.L. Bean Earth Day Celebration at the Freeport store. **Steve Spencer** and **Craig Ten Broeck** staffed a photographic display explaining how Maine's Public Lands are managed to provide public recreation, forest products, and fish and wildlife resources.

■ Geologist **Steve Dickson** and CREST Education Coordinator **Patricia Millette** staffed a MGS exhibit booth at Maine Earth Day 1994 at USM-Portland. Over 5,000 people attended the fair. CREST videos and other MGS publications were very popular with exhibit visitors.

■ **Steve Swatling**, BPL, and **Jim Rea**, DOC Systems Analyst, attended MapWorld '94, an exciting conference which drew 350 people from around the globe to Albany, NY to share applications and experiences utilizing MapInfo desktop mapping software. In addition to networking with other users, receiving hands on training and reviewing the many products designed to run seamless with MapInfo, Steve and Jim also had the opportunity to test out the latest version of MapInfo 3.0 to be released in June. The revisions seemed to be tailored to our needs. The potential for MapInfo to help the department serve its customers, both internal and external, appears greater than anyone previously thought. Jim and Steve are entertaining the idea of establishing a Maine users group to participate in MapInfo's user group network. If interested, please call the BPL in Farmington 778-4111.

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Legislature Completes Work

During the session, the Department of Conservation tracked over 120 bills and offered testimony on over 15 of these bills. Here is a brief summary of bills that have a significant impact on the department.

LD 1487, An Act to Improve Environmental Protection and Support Economic Development under the State's Land Use Laws.

This bill was from the first legislative session and was awaiting the recommendations of a study committee that LURC participated in. Commonly referred to as the "Land Use Alliance Bill," this bill sought major changes to environmental regulations, especially the Natural Resources Protection Act and zoning ordinances.

LD 1636, An Act to Modify the Manufacture of Motor Vehicle Registration Plates. This bill allowed the further marketing of our loon license plate design for other products, such as hats and T-shirts, with proceeds going to the environmental trust fund that currently receives the revenue from the sale of the loon license plate.

LD 1687, An Act to Correct an Error in the Sand Dune Laws. This act closed a loophole in the Natural Resource Protection Act. Geology also was active in the defeat of a bill that would have allowed a seawall to be built in Biddeford which would have had a negative effect on beach erosion.

LD 1764, An Act to Preserve Productive Forests. This bill directed and provided funding to the MFS to study the impacts that the rules of the Forest Practices Act have had on forest management activities since 1991. Four project positions were authorized and funded: Enforcement Coordinator, Chief Planner, Clerk Typist III, and a one-year Forester II. It also directed MFS to form a study committee that would look at current and anticipated pressures on Maine's forest resources.

LD 1815, An Act to Amend the Tree Growth Tax and Open Space Voluntary Withdrawal laws. The tree growth tax law was amended to give owners of 100 acres or less an extra year (until April 1, 1995) to either transfer to the open space program or exit the program by paying five years of back taxes and interest. Owners of less than 100 acres who manage their land for commercial purposes are unaffected.

LD 1853, An Act to Amend the Growth Management Laws Concerning Dimensional Variances. The final version of this bill protects the setback standards for water bodies and wetlands.

LD 1951, An Act Conforming with the Provisions of the Texas Low Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact. This act authorizes the creation of a new low level radioactive waste commission to address the pertinent issues of the compact between Maine and Texas.

LD 1953, An Act to Designate Certain Lands under the Constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 23. This bill provides additional protection for our state owned lands by requiring a two-thirds vote of the legislature to either sell or materially alter the use of the lands. This affects both the BPL and BPR. They were successful in withholding certain parcels of land from special protection designation, thus allowing BPL to trade lands in the future without having to obtain the necessary two-thirds vote of the legislature.

The Budget. In contrast to the budgets of the past few years, there were no reductions in force in the FY 95 supplemental budget that begins on July 1. The department did not propose any new or expanded programs. However, the budget expanded the enforcement, data collecting and reporting portions of the Forest Practices Act resulting in three new full time positions and one project position. These positions resulted from proposed forest practices legislation. The supplemental budget enabled BPL to upgrade and reinstate positions that allow the bureau to move forward with recreation, wildlife and land base records management initiatives. Legislative action and a recent court decision regarding rent for Long Falls Dam may, in the future, provide additional revenues to BPL.

Ship Bright et al.

CMP Rent Appeal Denied

The Maine Supreme Judicial Court has rejected Central Maine Power Company's claim that it owns water rights to the Dead River which flows through public land the company leases at Flagstaff Lake. CMP claimed that the value of those rights should not have been included in the rental assessment for Long Falls Dam.

CMP had asked the full court to set aside the ruling of one of its members establishing an annual rental fee of \$527,858. CMP had been paying the state (BPL) an annual rental fee of \$25,000.

According to Associated Press writer Jerry Harkavy, CMP acquired the lease to the public lots in 1940 and built the dam at Long Falls in the early 1940s and 50s. That dam created Flagstaff Lake, whose nine downstream electricity generating plants produce a total of 83 million kilowatt-hours a year.

The legislature has appropriated all but \$25,000 of the new annual rental assessment to the Department of Education during this biennium. BPL's share remains at \$25,000 annually.

DOC Employees Contribute To New Watchable Wildlife Guide

Many DOC employees contributed information during the year-long effort by the staff of *Maine Fish and Wildlife* magazine and volunteer naturalists and photographers to produce *On Water, On Wings, In The Woods - A Guide For Maine Wildlife Watchers*.

The 64-page pocket guide contains more than two dozen full color wildlife photographs and describes 63 great places to go in search of that once-in-a-lifetime wildlife photograph. All of the sites are open to the public and most are on publicly-owned land-much of it managed by the Bureau of Public Lands and the Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

The guide may be ordered by sending a check or money order for \$4.95 plus \$1 for shipping and handling to IF&W, 284 State Street, Station 41, Augusta, Maine 04333.

Forest Fire Prevention News

R E M E M B E R...



SMOKEY HAS FOR FIFTY YEARS

■ The Maine Forest Service and the Lewiston and Auburn fire departments hosted a 50th Anniversary Celebration for Smokey Bear in April at the Lewiston Armory. Forest Service Director Sue Bell and Fire Control Supervisor Tom Parent presented Lewiston and Auburn fire prevention officials with plaques for their efforts in helping put on the event attended by an estimated 2,500 people. Smokey received an eight-foot birthday cake topped with more than thirty-pounds of delicious frosting.

■ Sue Bell and Tom Parent have presented WABI-TV and WLBZ-TV of Bangor with the Bronze Smokey Award for outstanding contributions to forest fire prevention and education. Maine was the only state to receive two awards. This is only the fourth time in the thirty-year history of this program that the Smokey Awards have been presented to Maine organizations. The award is given annually by the National Advertising Council, National Association of State Foresters and the United States Forest Service.

■ During the first annual Forest Fire Awareness Week, Smokey Bear and rangers toured the state visiting children in hospitals in Presque Isle, Bangor and Portland. Rangers plan to make the hospital visits an annual tradition.

TQM Emphasized At Park Managers Meeting

The Bureau of Parks and Recreation recently held its annual managers' meeting and training session to prepare for the summer park use season. The week-long training was held in Augusta at Camp Keyes and was organized by BPR's training committee. Many of the sessions involved various BPR and DOC staff members presenting workshops on specific subjects relating to park planning, operations, maintenance, management and training.

A major emphasis of this year's training session was the state's total quality management initiative, with workshops on TQM tools, principles and PATs. In addition, BPR used the training period to plan for the formation of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation's quality management council and future efforts to implement TQM.

Steve Curtis provided an overview of new initiatives for the coming season including merchandise sales, loon license plates, the park system's policy on hunting and BPR's efforts to conduct a self-evaluation regarding access to state parks and historic sites for people with disabilities. Ron Hunt spoke on the bureau's plans for expenditure of bond issue monies. Mike Leighton presented information on signs. Ken Wiley discussed the bureau's new expanded iron ranger program and Tom Skolfield spoke on a newly designed employee awards program. In addition, John Titus spoke on training related to bloodborne pathogens and the Maine Volunteers in Parks program. Scott Woodruff discussed training regarding hazardous materials and brought the field staff up to date on the video series that will be used to orient and train new employees. Tim Hall spoke on revisions to the operations manual and new policies. Tom Cieslinski, Cindy Bastey, Patty Bailey, and Sheila McDonald each conducted workshops or provided information regarding natural and cultural resource management.

In addition to BPR staff, DOC administrative services staff members Will Harris, Debbie Phillips, Karen Michaud, Barbara Kimball, Mary Ann Sargent, Ellen Blair and Debbie Veilleux were available for presentations and information regarding personnel and accounting procedures.

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- LURC will soon expand services to the public in western Maine with a new office in Rangeley.
- The Department of Corrections has renewed its commitment to provide assistance.
- Passage of legislation directing our department to analyze the results of the Forest Practices Act before further changes to the law and rules are made is a statement of support for our implementation of this law.
- Teachers, students and parents have responded positively to MFS and BPR poster contests.
- Plans to implement TQM in our bureau programs proceed apace.

I look forward to the new season and to sharing thoughts on how we can best work together to provide the best possible service to the public and the natural resources in our care.

Ed Meadows

Corrections continued from page 1

- boards are being built.
- Canoe carriers, equipment boxes and shelves are being made for the Maine Forest Service;
- About 1,500 MFS forest fire hand tools will be repaired.
- A forestry garage will be rewired to meet electrical codes, including installation of lights.
- Continued assistance to Peaks Kenny State Park will be provided including clearance of roadsides and maintenance.

Resurvey continued from page 1

plots on which old aerial photographs have been lost. Mike Devine, Mike Skinner, Grayln Smith, Jody Connor, and Everett Cram, all of MFS's Insect and Disease Management Division, helped with plot locations.

According to Ancyl, many crew members are unfamiliar with Maine's forests and will appreciate an offer of assistance from DOC personnel.

"If you see these crews, please stop, introduce yourself and offer your assistance."

Conservation Notes continued from page 2

■ With the department's shift from the Burroughs computer system to a personal computer network, many DOC staff have participated in training sessions for new software. **Ruth Willette** and **Nancy Dodge** from BPR and most LURC staff attended a recent session on Wordperfect 6.0. In addition, several BPR staff have been attending monthly training sessions on all aspects of word processing and spreadsheet, and network use. The BPR Augusta office has established an informal user group, under the coordination of **Ruth Willette**, to provide support for use of Wordperfect 6.0 and Lotus.

■ **Donald Cote**, **Tim Spahr** and **Gordon Moore**, Land Use Regulation Commission enforcement investigators, have been presenting training programs on the commission's timber harvesting and road construction standards for logging contractors and operators as part of the Certified Logging Professional program sponsored by the Maine Tree Foundation.

■ **Marilyn Daily** recently worked as a dispatcher during a Michigan forest fire. Marilyn is a Forest Fire Control Division storekeeper at Bolton Hill.

■ **Gordon Moore** of the Land Use Regulation Commission's Greenville office represented the commission at the annual meeting of commercial outfitters held at The Forks Plantation.

■ **Charles Corliss** of the Land Use Regulation Commission's Old Town regional office gave a presentation to University of Maine forest engineering students. Charles spoke on the commission's standards and permit requirements for timber harvesting and road construction in the unorganized areas of the state.

■ Fire Prevention Specialist **Jim Downie** thanks all rangers who helped make Maine's first Forest Fire Awareness Week a success.

LURC Expands Services In Western Maine

The Land Use Regulation Commission will open a regional office in Rangeley on Thursday, May 12. The full-time office will be located on Main Street in Rangeley Village and will serve people who live or work in the unorganized townships and plantations in Franklin County and portions of Oxford and Somerset Counties.

Environmental Specialist **Tim Spahr** will staff the office. Tim's duties include on-site inspections, complaint investigations, compliance, and assistance to permit applicants, land managers and loggers.

Allagash Guide to Natural History Published

Park volunteers **Dean** and **Sheila Bennett** of Mt. Vernon have written and contributed a field guide to the natural history of the Allagash River to the Bureau of Parks and Recreation. The illustrated, 24-page guide is based on years of experience and direct observation of plants, animals, geology and other waterway natural history features.

The Bennetts, both University of Maine system teachers, are dedicated naturalists who devoted uncounted hours during a period of years to complete the guide. To obtain a photograph of a rare plant when it was in bloom, they arranged to have word sent to their home when the flowers appeared. The Bennetts traveled by car and canoe to reach the spot on the Allagash where they knew the New England violets grew - a distance well over 200 miles - and made a photograph for the guide.

The field guide, *Allagash Wilderness Waterway: A Natural History Guide*, will be sold by the Bureau of Parks and Recreation this year. All proceeds go to the bureau. **Pat Bailey**, **Tim Caverly**, **Steve Curtis**, **Herb Hartman**, **Sheila McDonald** and **Dave Milligan** assisted with the project.

Dean Bennett is also the author of a new book, *Allagash: Maine's Wild and Scenic River*, expected in book stores this year.