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DOC News End of Year Wrap-up, 1985,

Maine Department of Conservation

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DOC NEWS

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End-of-the-Year Wrap-Up

I've really enjoyed being Commissioner of the Department of Conservation again during 1984. I want to take this opportunity to thank every single member of the Department of Conservation for their enthusiasm, dedication, and support of this Department during the past year. It's been a year where we've continued to improve on old projects and began some exciting new ones.

In the old project category, I mention the following:

- We continued to aggressively develop programs to protect Maine's outstanding rivers. The Land Use Regulation Commission worked diligently through the year to PR-R zone all of those "A" rivers that are located in the unorganized territories, and the Bureau of Parks & Recreation, through their consultant and the Easement and Access Advisory Committee, produced a new study recommending actions to be taken to preserve access and develop and manage orderly public use of these "A" rivers. The LURC zoning has been accomplished, but the "A" and "B" rivers management program is only beginning and certainly will be a major focus of Department of Conservation activities in 1985.

- With a lot of your help, we completed a Comprehensive Inventory of Forest Campsites and were able to put together funding packages to upgrade two of our most heavily used forest campsites in eastern Maine.

- We completed and won legislative approval of a spectacular land trade and consolidation proposal for our public lands in the unorganized territories. These consolidations and trades bring the total land under management by the Bureau of Public Lands to over 450,000 acres. Also, in 1984, the Bureau of Public Lands continued to employ a game biologist to work with their foresters to assure that game management is a key component of their land management operations.

- The Maine Geological Survey, after many years of diligent work, completed their inventory of commercial grade peat deposits in the State of Maine. Those publications have been recently published. Geology also is in the final stages of production of a new bedrock geology map and a new surficial geology map, both of which should be available early in 1985.

- In a continuing effort to promote forestry education, the Maine Forest Service instituted a new program centered around "Project Learning Tree," a curriculum designed to teach Maine school children about the Maine forest. This project has received a great deal of praise and school districts throughout the state have enthusiastically received it.

- The Department of Conservation's new Wood Marketing & Assessment Program got off the ground in 1984 to a great start, playing a key role in encouraging Ultrapower to build a \$40 million wood-fired power plant in Enfield, Maine. During 1984, Ultrapower received a permit from the BEP and that project is presently under construction. Other wood-fired power plant projects will certainly come to fruition in 1985.

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- The decennial inventory of the Maine forest became a reality in 1984 with the publication of all the data in table form. It has become a best seller in the few months since it was released. That publication will be followed by several more publications relating to the forest inventory during 1985.

- The Maine Conservation Corps was another tremendously successful Department of Conservation initiative begun in 1984 and one in which a great number of widely scattered Department of Conservation employees participated.

- From an administrative point of view, we won legislative approval to establish a new Division in the Department of Conservation--the Real Property Division, which has set about the task of helping all the Bureaus upgrade the quality of their real property holdings.

- Our fire control efforts were tremendously successful. We had only 820 fires, burning 4,369 acres. Both numbers are well within our targets.

- The Bureau of Public Lands continued to function smoothly and effectively on dedicated revenues and has gotten off to a great start on its program to publicize the Public Land so that people can see and enjoy them.

- The Bureau of Parks & Recreation attendance was over 2 million, surpassed only by the banner year of 1983.

- The Spruce Budworm Program was again successfully completed and the per-acre cost of the spray program was significantly reduced.

- Members of the Maine Geological Survey continued their high level of technical excellence and presented many papers and publications in 1984.

- With all the things I've mentioned above, I feel that probably nothing else that we did in 1984 will have a bigger impact on the long-term functioning of this Department than the centralized computerization that was accomplished in 1984 by a team of representatives from each Bureau. This program was several years in the planning and even though it's only a few months old, it is already having major impacts on all the programs of the Department of Conservation.

I could go on, but let me just thank all of you who made the extra effort, who put in the extra time, those of you who are committed to the wise use of Maine's natural resources, for doing an outstanding job in 1984 and for producing an outstanding record of accomplishment. I consider it an honor to have had the opportunity to be your Commissioner in 1984 and will do my best to lead the Department of Conservation, with your help, through another successful year in 1985.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you.

Dick Anderson