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What's Up, Doc? February 1997

Maine Department of Conservation

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What's Up, DOC?



Issue 2

A Newsletter for Department of Conservation Employees February 1997

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Commissioner's Column

Enclosed in this newsletter is an abridged version of my testimony to the Appropriations Committee for the Department's budget for the next two years. Many employees never get to hear budget or bill testimony so we're trying to use the newsletter to make these remarks more visible to you.

LATE BREAKING NEWS: Since that was presented January 29, we have met with our Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry oversight committee and they voted to recommend to Appropriations that we not close the MFS mechanical shop and that the funding for the shop come from other savings in the General Fund outside of the DOC.

It is comforting to see the support the Department gets from the Legislature. There is continued high praise for what we accomplish and recognition that we have done good things with diminishing resources. While they have a delicate act to balance the budget the DOC gets high marks for fiscal integrity and a clear desire that we have more resources in the future. "It's nice to know we're loved."

Ron Lovaglio

DOC Legislative Report:

The 118th Session is Underway!

- Shippen Bright

Now that the Legislature has been in session, I'd like to take a few minutes to let you know that this session is substantively different than previous ones.

The Legislature has budgeted themselves until the end of May in an effort to instill pressure to adjourn by the end of that month. By statute they have until June 18, but they want to save taxpayer money and adjourn earlier. Whether or not they will meet that goal has been the source of skepticism by many experienced legislative observers. However, that skepticism has changed in the last few weeks and everyone is impressed by the resolve and seriousness that the Legislature has in obtaining this goal.

The only thing I can compare it to is that the beginning of this session is more like the LAST few weeks of the other sessions. Bills are already scheduled for hearing WITHOUT the customary two weeks advertised notice. In the 117th, we went

(continued on page 2)

The Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee

SENATE

Marge L. Kilkelly

Judy Paradie

R. Leo Kieffer

Chair: D-Lincoln

D-Aroostook

R-Aroostook

HOUSE

George H. Bunker, Jr.

Roland B. Samson

David C. Shiah

Paul Volenik

John L. Baker

Linda Rogers McKee

Ruel P. Cross

Edward L. Dexter

Walter R. Gooley

Priscilla Lane

Chair: D-KossuthTownship

D-Jay

D-Bowdoinham

D-Brooklin

D-Dixfield

D-Wayne

R-Dover-Foxcroft

R-Kingfield

R-Farmington

R-Enfield

ACF Committee (cont.)

before Appropriations March 15, and they worked on the budget through the end of June. This year we went before them on January 29 and they want the budget DONE by March 31.

We presented the ACF Committee our department presentation on January 21 when we introduced new committee members to the DOC as well as seasoned veterans.

So, from your legislative liaison team of: Judy Andrews, Jean Colfer, Effie Fraser, Herb Hartman, Ron Lovaglio, Don Mansius, Dave Mercier, Gale Ross, Tom Weddle, Ruth Willette, the bureau directors and myself, we'll try and keep you updated as possible. ❖

Federal Excess Property

- Harry Doughty

The latest US Government report shows Maine has \$23,430,000 worth of Federal excess property which is substantially more than any other state in the northeastern area. Other states picking up excess property include: Pennsylvania with \$7.1 million; Minnesota with \$4.1 million and Missouri registering \$3.8 million.

Federal Excess Property Specialist Billy Getchell is doing an excellent job of keeping us current with inventory, disposal and reporting requirements. Great job, Bill! ❖

Campsite Reservations: \$25K Increase over '96

"The first week of January we confirmed 919 park reservations and to date we've got 1,324," said Maine State Park Reservation System Supervisor Charlene Daniels. "That shows you how busy we were!"

Within the first three days, \$53,200 in campsite reservations were made - exceeding last year's three day total of \$41,561.

According to Charlene the fax machine was a big factor in the increased reservations. "We'd come in and there would be stacks of



faxes!" People would either use forms from last year or would write their requests by hand.

Veteran Reservation Clerk Elaine Pepler stated this has been the best year ever. And she should know - she's been with Reservations when it started in 1988! January closed out with a total dollar amount of \$148,455.97 - a \$25,373.41 increase over last year's total.

Elaine attributed the staff, attention to customer service and additional hours and equipment as factors leading to the increase.

"People like it when you take the time to chat. It goes a long way," commented the newest member of the team, Rebecca Hinton.

Elaine summed it up: "This is better than Megabucks! With a ticket, you dream about winning. But when you get your Maine State Park Reservation, you know you're going!"

NRIMC News

Natural Resources Information and Mapping Center released The April 1996 Rockland Landslide report which has generated quite a bit of attention in the press. Bureau Director Robert Marvinney has been interviewed by Maine Public Radio as well as several television stations throughout the state. The report is available to the public and interested people can order through the mail, by phone or from the bureau's web home page.

And speaking of the Internet, Bob Tucker invites browsers to visit the NRIMC's updated pages. New to the page is the User Satisfaction Survey where surfers are asked to rate NRIMC's pages, what they will use the information for, and whether or not the links worked. Respondents can send additional comments and suggestions as well. The survey is a result of the Performance Based Budgeting and NRIMC will use this as one of their performance indicators.

While you're surfing, check out:

The Geologic Site of the Month:

Each month a different location will be highlighted. January featured Mt. Katahdin. Check out February: you can find this from the Maine Geological Survey's page.

Site map: Surfers can access a site map which expands and charts the hot links from pages. Visit-

<http://www.state.me.us/doc/nrimc/nrimc.htm> ❖

Commissioners meet at DOC's First Summit

Coined by Austin Wilkins as the First Annual Summit of Conservation Commissioners, the January 23 meeting at the Blaine House was well received and attended. Former commissioners who were able to attend included

comprehensive Land Use Plan and oversaw the acquisition of the Bigelow Preserve; and **Richard Anderson**, appointed by the Brennan Administration, served from March of 1981 to 1986. During Mr. Anderson's career at

Ron hosted the meeting which recognized the commissioners and their contributions to the department. "This was truly an historic meeting and I was honored to be in their company," remarked Ron. "I welcomed the opportunity to express appreciation for the tremendous contribution and personal sacrifice these men have made for the state of Maine and the Department of Conservation." ❖

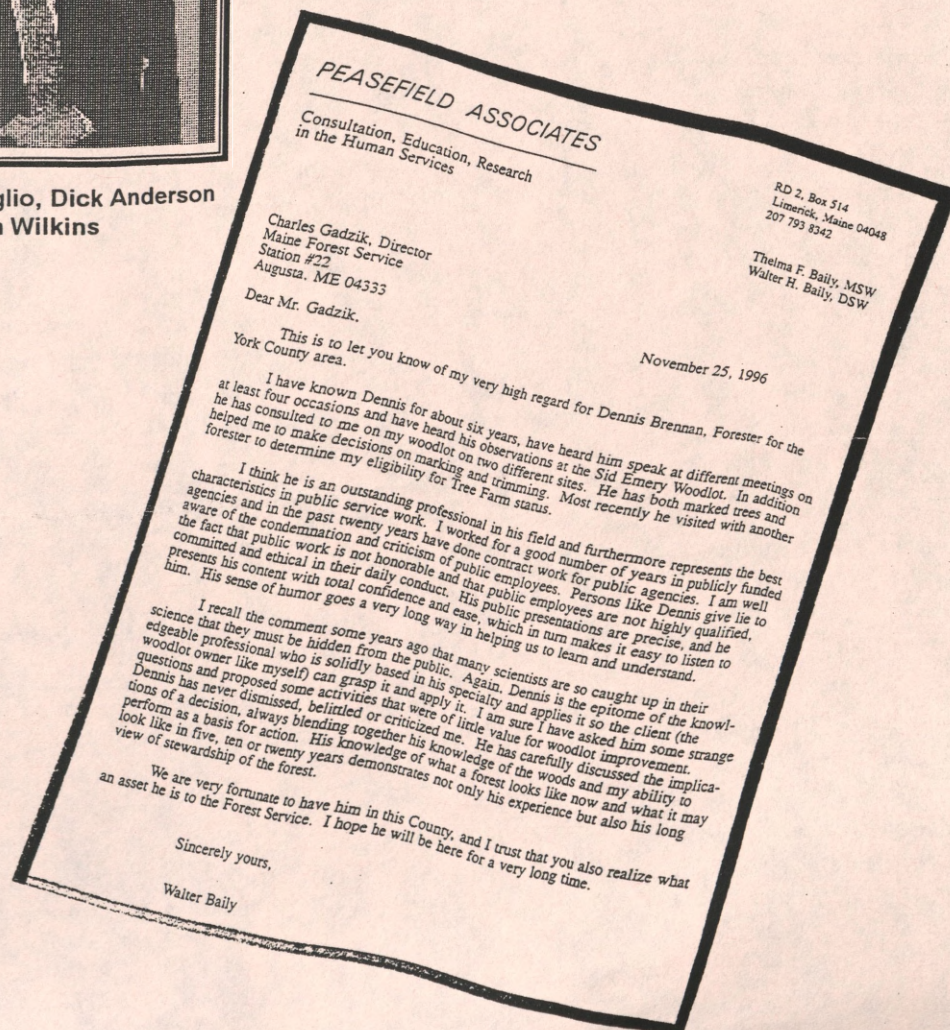
(Editor's note: Ed Meadows works at the Department of Natural Resources in Michigan and was not able to attend the meeting.)



Back row: Richard Barringer, Ron Lovaglio, Dick Anderson
Front row: Don Koons, Austin Wilkins

Austin Wilkins who served as Forestry Commissioner from 1958 to 1972. Austin worked during the infamous 1947 fires which ravaged the state of Maine; **Donaldson Koons** who was the first commissioner appointed when DOC was created in 1973 and he served under the Curtis Administration. During his tenure Dr. Koons established the Bureau of Public Lands, incorporated the Maine Geological Survey into the department and brought together the Land Use Regulation Commission; **Richard Barringer**, appointed under the Longley administration, served from 1975 until 1981. While commissioner, Dr. Barringer created LURC's first

DOC, he set up the Maine Conservation Corps, and worked to draft legislation for the Land for Maine's Future Program.



Allagash Winter Camping - Tim Caverly

December's registration for the winter campsites at Chamberlain Parking Lot went exceedingly well. Thanks to Ranger Jim Kelly and volunteers Bud Young and Glenda Kelly, we were able to register parties for 45 campsites in 50 minutes.

In order to assure a place in line parties started lining up Friday night at 9:00 p.m. Campground host Bud Young handed out letters outlining registration procedures, and signed people up on a waiting list.

Volunteer Glenda Kelly had coffee and donuts ready for the people while they waited for the registration process as well as helping to organize the event.

There were seven new campers to the area and 29 parties paid for the winter. Parties were from all over the State - as far north as Fort Kent and as far south as Connecticut.

Ranger Kim Lynch and I helped with the process and by noon most of the campers were set up in their winter lots.

I wish to express my appreciation to everyone that helped make the yearly registration process go so smoothly. ❖

Harlow Move-correction:

Please note the following fax number corrections:

Fax machine: #287-3823 is located near Ruth Willette's desk at the South End of Harlow.

Fax machine: #287-8111 is located near Liz Cody's desk at the North End of the building.

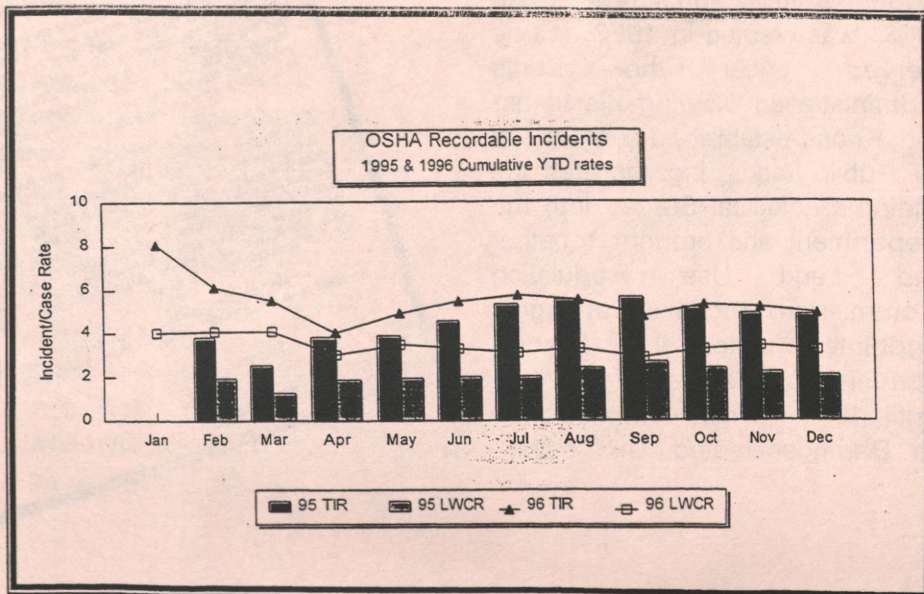
LURC's Moscow Office

LURC employees Tom Holz and Bob McKee will staff the sixth LURC field office located in the Moscow Town Hall. Office hours are: Tuesdays and Thursdays 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
other times by appointment
Address information:

LURC
Route 201
P.O. Box 42
Bingham, ME 04920
(207) 672-3539

December's Safety Report -Deb Phillips

We ended 1996 with better statistics than we started the year with, but our trend of OSHA recordable injuries shows that we still above where we were in 1995. We made some good strides in closing out the year. Not only did we have no OSHA recordable incidents in December, we had no new injury reports at all! In 1997 the information you receive in the newsletter regarding safety statistics will be in a different format. You'll be able to see how 1997 is comparing to 1995 and 1996, as well as knowing how we are doing on a monthly basis. ❖



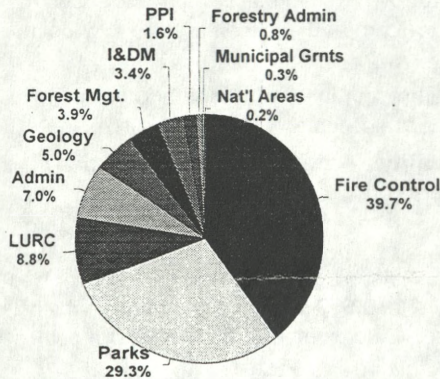
Testimony of Ronald Lovaglio before the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Wednesday, January 29, 1997

(Editor's note: This is the abridged version of Ron's testimony)

This budget for the upcoming biennium continues our decade trend of reducing our budget to deal with state financial issues. We have taken considerable reductions in our programs and staffing over the past seven years. **In the past three bienniums we have eliminated 180 positions. We lost 65 positions and 33 people in 1995 alone.**

DOC General Fund



Under the 1995 Productivity Realization Task Force we implemented the most sweeping reorganization of the Department since it was formed in 1973.

As a result of the PRTF the **Bureau of Parks and Lands** emerged through the consolidation of the bureaus of Parks and Recreation with Public Lands; the **Natural Resources Information and Mapping Center** combined the Maine Geological Survey and the Maine Natural Areas Program; and the Forest Policy and Management Division was created through consolidating two divisions in the Maine Forest Service. In addition, Administrative Services Division was reorganized with the creation of the **ACE Service Center** to handle all of the financial, payroll and personnel processing for the three departments of Agriculture, Conservation and Environmental Protection.

We continue to do our share to hold down spending while providing a wide array of services to the people of Maine. Our proposed budget decreases our proportion of the total State's general fund from 1.1% in the current fiscal year, to .9% in FY 99.

This is the **lowest proportion since the department was formed 24 years ago**. Our total biennial general fund request is less than our current appropriation for the existing biennium. We are now less than a penny on the dollar.

Our final budget submission was reduced by **\$773,755 over the biennium to help balance the Governor's budget**. To develop our list of reductions we took pains to prioritize programs and functions and reduce those that had to become a lower priority.

Accounts

Administrative Services:

During our reorganization we renamed this division **General Services**.

This account also funds our portion of the ACE Service Center which processes all of our bills, payrolls and personnel actions. The final budget submission for this account was reduced by **\$6,000** per year in all other. These savings will come from reductions in printing, mailing and supplies due to technology advances.

Forestry Administration:

Within this account is the Director of the Maine Forest Service. The Office directs the activities of the three line divisions of the bureau: **Forest Policy and Management, Insect and Disease Management, and Forest Fire Control**.

Forest Fire Control Municipal Assistance Grants:

This is the account from which all of the state's municipal fire wardens are paid their annual stipends; 510 Town Wardens statewide; and \$100 annual stipend has not increased for over 20 years.

Forest Fire Control:

This is the largest Division within the Bureau of Forestry, it accounts for about 40% of the Department's budget. In our budget submission we have made a reduction of **\$95,852** per year by eliminating 2.5 positions in Fire Control and **\$105,226** per year in all other to meet our budget target. The proposed position reductions are in the Old Town shop and consist of an Automotive Mechanic Supervisor, an Automotive Mechanic and a seasonal Laborer. These positions worked on the development of specialized fire equipment. To make these reductions we looked across the Department and reviewed all our priorities.

DOC Budget Breakdown

	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99
Personal Services	\$14,002,828	\$13,624,319	\$13,989,513
All Other	\$4,429,892	\$4,487,622	\$4,603,740
Capital	<u>\$553,834</u>	<u>\$394,050</u>	<u>\$366,550</u>
Total Budget	\$18,986,554	\$18,505,991	\$18,959,803

Testimony of Ronald Lovaglio before the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Wednesday, January 29, 1997

Forest Policy and Management:

Under our 1995 reorganization we combined the divisions of Forest Management and Utilization and Policy Planning and Information into one division of Forest Policy and Management.

Issues:

- **Forest Practices:** This issue remains very prominent due to the recent referendum. The future holds another vote on the Forest Compact and more public debate on forest policy. Specific issues are: the health of the Maine Forest, information about forest practices, and enforcement abilities and resources.
- **Timber Theft:** Timber theft has emerged as a major issue for the State's small woodlot owners. Our ability to conduct investigations and support prosecutions as well as our position on appropriate policy tools to address theft are the key points. These are not easy cases to win and take due diligence.
- **Forest Education:** The needs of our agency to support public education to school children, adults, and woodlot owners is huge. How we balance these needs with our resources is a major subject of internal and external debate.
- **Finally, if we have one glaring weakness it is in our analytic and inventory capability.** For a state with a forest of our size, we should have a larger division with personnel of strong credentials devoted to this agenda

Insect and Disease Management:

This Division is responsible for information about and the protection of the forest as well as shade and ornamental trees from significant insect and disease damage. This budget request reduces this account by **\$118,653** over the biennium which is one Entomologist III. It is our intention to have this work done **on federal funds** and we have submitted a request to establish an Entomologist II under federal funding.

Land Use Regulation Commission:

Over the upcoming biennium the Commission will: **process** about 2,000 permit applications for building and construction activities in the unorganized territory; **conduct** over 1,800 site inspections to assist landowners to comply with financial requirements; **increase** public awareness of the Commission's land use standards, planning programs and permitting procedures through an active Public Education and Outreach Program working directly with landowners, developers, professional associations and plantation officials; **prepare** a new base map series for the 460 townships in the Commission's jurisdiction; and **identify**, evaluate and rank natural features such as lakes and remote ponds for their fisheries, wildlife, cultural, geological and other natural resource value and significance, and development potential.

We have reduced this account by **\$12,000** per year in all other from our original department submission. The savings will come from reduced contracting for services.

Natural Resources Information and Planning:

The primary role of the Center is to inventory, map, assess, and interpret Maine's geology and the ecology of the State's plants, animals, and natural communities.

Issues:

- **Economic Geology:** Maine's has great potential for economic mineral deposits. However, a widely held business view is that a project cannot be permitted in this State. As a consequence of this perspective, little new exploration work is being conducted in Maine.
- **Beach Systems:** Southern Maine's sandy beaches are the underpinning of the region's tourist economy. Unwise prior development in combination with sea-level rise of about a foot per century is now seriously affecting the equality of Maine's beach systems. Action must be taken to address this problem.
- **Proactive Permitting Process:** MNAP provides data to state agencies such as the Departments of Transportation and Environmental Protection, so that those applying for various permits learn early in the process whether projects will adversely affect state significant natural features, thereby heading off costly conflicts.

Parks General Operations:

Consolidation of the Bureaus statutes to integrate policies and programs has been submitted and will be considered this session.

The Bureau oversees the administration and management of some of Maine's key natural resources and recreation lands, which are summarized below: Allagash Wilderness Waterway - 22,840 acres/92 miles; State Parks and Historic Sites - 61,201 acres; and the West Branch Penobscot Corridor - 8,000 acres/79 miles.

Our final budget submission reduces the Parks and Lands all other and capital budget by **\$108,000** per year. This will mean deferring some equipment purchases that were programmed to be replaced this biennium unless other funding sources can be found.