

9-1-1997

# What's Up, Doc? September 1997

Maine Department of Conservation

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## Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Conservation, "What's Up, Doc? September 1997" (1997). *Conservation Newsletters*. 179.  
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# What's Up, DOC?



Issue 9

A Newsletter for Department of Conservation Employees

September 1997

## Commissioner's Column

First, thank you Fire Control Rangers for keeping the state safe from fire when conditions started to get dicey in late July and August. Your measured response and public education was professional and appropriate.

Second, LURC staff have done an incredible job keeping up the the huge permit load and several contentious issues before the Commission. You have responded with energy and reasoned review to provide excellent customer service. **Sara Brusila** earns particular mention for her fine work on the Cranberry farm permits.

**Susan Benson** is away for the writing of the newsletter--so we can talk about her. What an outstanding job she has done to "bring good things to life!" The number of front page coverage's of DOC events and facilities is unequalled. And have you seen the fall foliage page on the Internet? Breathtaking and dynamic! I compared our site with one of our "competitors" whom I won't mention by name (the initials are VT) and I judge we've won that by a full length. Special thanks to **Marc Loiselle** and **John Poisson** of NRIMC for tremendous technical assistance. This is also the place to thank "Leaf Lady II" **Gale Ross**, for holding the fall foliage program together for two weeks while Susan becomes Mrs. "Leaf Lady." Gale also completely edited and published this newsletter.

(continued on page three)

## LIBRARY USE ONLY

### Rebuilding Churchill Dam in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway

Leigh Hoar

The annual runoff that once passed through the seven sluiceways of Churchill Dam now courses quietly through a diversion channel cutting across the north approach road. A 25' deep hole in the ground is all that remains where, for 29 years, the green timbers of the dam had stood. A freshly-poured concrete slab, visible at the bottom of the hole, bristles with steel rebar like the quills of a porcupine. Although the old timber crib structure so familiar to hundreds of thousands of visitors is history, a new concrete and steel structure with a wood bridge deck, is expected to be completed by late October.

Planning for the current construction began last summer in anticipation of the \$1.4 million bond issue to be voted on in November, 1996. If the bond failed, the work would provide the basis for future engineering, as it was acknowledged that the dam would have to be replaced soon. The existing dam had been constructed in 1968 with a 15-20 year life span, and was deteriorating badly. Its life had been extended by occasional repairs and closure of the dam bridge to all but passenger vehicle traffic.

Kleinschmidt Associates were selected as consulting engineers. They prepared a site survey, reviewed plans for the existing structure, and because flowage regimes are important for fisheries management as well as canoeing, conducted a site meeting with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Passage of the bond issue resulted in a decision to proceed with construction in 1997. By January 1997 preliminary drawings of the new dam had been prepared, along with a geotechnical design for the soils.

In June, following competitive bidding, a construction contract was awarded to Reed & Reed of Woolwich; the LURC Permit was approved on June 19.

The construction crew began to arrive at the dam site on June 23. Although heavy equipment did not arrive for another week because of wet roads, the crew busied itself renovating the old boarding house as a work camp for the project. The boarding house, constructed in 1925 to house loggers and river drivers of that era, was made available to the contractor since the nearest camp facilities for construction personnel was 50 minutes driving time away. The renovations included removal of old paint and repainting, replacing windows and screens, new plumbing and electric service, and installation of a kitchen. These improvements resulted in a warm, dry building, capable of housing and feeding sufficient personnel to complete the project.

(continued on page two)



## Giving is the Maine Thing

Gale Ross

September 22 is the kickoff date for the Maine State Employees Combined Charitable Appeal campaign. The department's goal this year is \$6,500. Last year we exceed our goal by 13%--a great showing! Ron always encourages financial perspective, so here it is: \$6,500 equals \$.71 per pay period for 350 employees. Contributor's Guides and pledge forms will be mailed to each individual shortly. The raffle prizes this year include a pair of Portland Pirate Tickets, a pair of 1998 Portland Seadogs tickets, mouse pads, memo boards, and my favorite raffle prize, one week of parking in the Commissioner's parking spot for a Harlow Building employee!

I hope all my co-workers will join me this year and demonstrate the dedication and generosity of Department of Conservation employees.



### DOC Anniversaries

15 Years

Jay Bernard

25 Years

George Bourassa

30 Years

Roger Stanley

40 Years

Richard Skinner

(continued from page one)

## Rebuilding Churchill Dam in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway

The construction process began June 30, with hauling material and installation of cofferdams. Cofferdam construction and opening of the diversion channel was completed on July 21, allowing further work on removal of the old dam to proceed with a dry site. Cofferdams completely encircle the construction site, maintaining a dry floor with only minimal pumping, and no loss of debris into the Allagash River. The old dam was constructed with a bottom elevation only 14' below the surface of Heron Lake, the water body created by construction of dams at this location beginning in the 1840's. Construction of the new dam required excavation of an additional 6.5 feet over the full width and length of the new structure, in order to reach a stable footing. Trenching an additional 4.5 feet was then required in order to key the new dam to the former river bottom.

Removal of the old dam began almost as soon as cofferdam construction was started. The old timbers were thoroughly rotted, except those in the base of the structure. Consequently, much time was spent loading and hauling small pieces of wood to an abandoned gravel pit, where the old timbers were buried.

When trenching began, a decision was made to place concrete in each day's excavation in order to minimize water seepage. Concrete is being mixed on site with a portable batching plant and three trucks. Pouring of concrete began on August 14, and has been nearly an everyday event since that date.

Along with excavation and construction, an immense amount of time has been spent assuring compliance with erosion and sedimentation reduction requirements. Silt fence and turbidity screens have been placed everywhere. Seepage pumped from within the site is filtered through a stone dam and silt screen before it is dispersed through the woods. Cofferdam banks and the diversion ditch, both exposed to river water, have been lined with a plastic membrane to prevent sedimentation of the water downstream.

Dick Cousens, Project Superintendent for Reed & Reed, said "The public doesn't realize the amount of preparatory work needed for a project like this. We've removed thousands of yards of excavation, hundreds of tons of rock, and a half million feet of timber, just to get to the point where we can begin to build up again."

Waterway visitors have been very supportive of the construction effort, even though the low water has hampered canoeing in the river. The summer on the Allagash River has been very dry, and this, coupled with the run of the river water conditions which reduced normal flow, have made for poor canoeing North of Churchill Dam. Many people have used the reduced canoeing opportunity to travel into Churchill and Eagle Lake, rather than struggle with the shallow water downstream.

An information board showing plans for construction of the new dam has been placed at the canoe landing on the north side of the construction area. In addition, a safe and excellent view of the operation is afforded from the vantage of the upstream cofferdam. At times a dozen or more visitors have gathered at this point to watch the work, and have talked with crew members about the operation. Donne McBreaity, a Reed & Reed crew member from St. Francis, said, "I have spent much of my life in the St. John and Allagash country. I thought this was just going to be another construction job. It has been great to have an opportunity to talk with the visitors to the Waterway; I never talked to so many of them before."



## Safety Report

Deb Phillipss

Over the past few years, the statistics we have charted have shown that we have an increase in employee injuries during the summer months. Generally beginning in April, we can see a steady increase in reports through September when injuries start to decline. These trends can be directly associated with our field season, as we gear up around March/April and start to wind down in September/October. We are generally fortunate and injuries do not tend to be overly severe or life threatening.

We thought we were going to break the trend this year as July's statistics pointed to a marked decline in reported injuries. We suffered a major set back in August, however, as injuries reached the highest level charted for the entire year to date. This does not infer that our employees were not working in an unsafe manner, causing harm to themselves. In fact, a number of these situations were unavoidable and some in response to emergency situations. Our employees through their work continue to show how dedicated they are to their jobs, and that can only reflect well on the rest of us!



(continued from page one)

## Commissioner's Column

The DOC "Augusta branch and surrounding locations" had a great picnic at Damariscotta Lake State Park. The Governor came hungry and had a special time visiting with our Park's Reservations staff and one on one with many others. I got to visit with Assistant Park Manager, **John White** and Lifeguard, **Jamie Takatsu**. Damariscotta staff gave us a great welcome and had the park in tiptop shape.

I also visited **Tom Holz** in the LURC Moscow office on a hot day and found out why the offices away from Augusta are sought after. On that same day, I snaked west and found Forest Ranger, **Kendall Knowles** hard at work in Kingfield. We spent time discussing forestry and ranger related issues while we watched kids in the Carrabassett River swimming hole.

When I visited Rangeley Lake State Park it was one of those weekends when we were completely full. Customers seemed to accept graciously and were pleased when Rangeley referred them to Mt. Blue State Park only 18 miles away. Full parks also happened when I visited Sebago and Cobscook Bay. Either I bring them luck or I pick great days to go to the field.

I was really impressed with the beach, park grounds and lake at Range Pond State Park and had a great chance to talk to **Ruth Howarth**, **Sue Leiter**, **Amy Morin** and **Melissa Baker**. I had never been to Range Pond and it was a real treat, probably one of the best beaches on an inland state park.

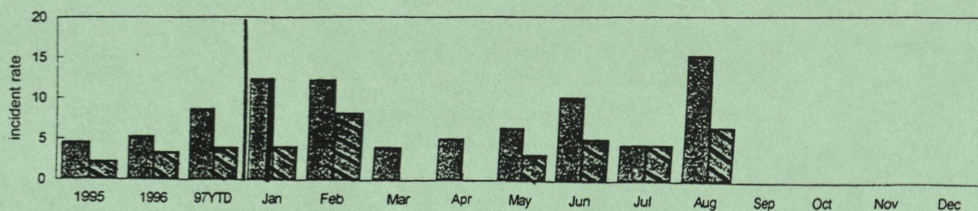
Our parks and lands are a great way to relieve stress and they're a much healthier alternative to Mylanta-Plus. A couple of picnic suppers at "Reid-by-the-sea" with my family showed me that. **Dan Bell's** a little gun shy now (pardon the pun)--he never knows when I'll show up. But it does give him something to add to his weekly reports.

I stopped at the LURC office in Rangeley and **Lisa Dalrymple** ran out the back door when I was going in the front. I parked next to her truck, went to the front door and found the office locked. I went back to the parking lot and found her truck gone--what was I to think?

(continued on page four)

### Department of Conservation

OSHA Recordable Incidents/ Safety Report



Current as of: August 31, 1997



2A Panoramic V  
Portland, Maine  
June 7, 1997

Att: Mrs. Clark  
Manager  
Moose Point State Park  
Searsport, Maine 04974

Dear Mrs. Clark:

I am sending this letter to you to let you know that my husband and I stopped off at Moose Point State Park, Searsport, Maine on May 29th, 1997 and found the park a delightful and scenic spot at which to stop and enjoy, if only briefly.

We were on a return trip from Mount Desert Island where my husband was born and reared. We make the trip two to three times a year and do it all in one day each time.

It's nice to know that there is a nice scenic spot, clean and protected where one can use clean outhouse facilities and take a short stroll without fearing being approached. The facts of life being that one must be aware of one's surroundings at all times in these days of violence.

Noticing an attendant on duty gave us a real sense of security. We felt at ease in taking a short stroll and using the outhouse facilities. The grounds were free of cigarette butts, candy wrappers etc.. That is amazing, in that 600 school children had just left the park, according to the attendant.

We had a very enjoyable chat with the attendant whose name we learned was Mr. Clark and his wife is the manager.

I noticed Customer Survey Cards in a card-holder and took one to fill out and mail in.

We are senior citizens and love Maine for vacations and trips. We have a camp in Long Pond Plantation and that's where we spend our leisure time, fishing, hunting and just enjoying nature. It overlooks the mountains and is on the lake. The vast quiet is unsurpassable.

Moose Point State Park is a special spot where we can feel safe and comfortable while enjoying nature. It's our stop-off when we are in the area, thanks to our state for providing this gem and to you and your husband for keeping it so well-polished.

A copy of this letter to you will be mailed along with the Customer's Survey Card, to the Bureau of Parks and Lands, 22 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04330-9940.

*Thank you very much!  
Thank you Mr. Nice!*

*Catherine Varney,  
(Mrs. Charles H.)  
Searsport, Maine 04974*

TOTAL P.

Menotomy Consulting and Development, Inc.

John P. Smith  
October farm  
Menotomy Road  
Fryeburg, Maine 04037

July 9, 1997

Department of Conservation  
Ronald B. Lovaglio, Commissioner  
22 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0022

Dear Commissioner Lovaglio,

I am writing this letter to you to let you know that a member of the Land Use Regulation Commission does an outstanding job in representing your department.

This individual's name is Catherine Varney. I have had several opportunities recently to deal with Catherine Varney, over the telephone, concerning matters related to a permit that The Passamaquoddy Tribe has pending before LURC.

Whenever I've called this department and spoken with Catherine Varney, I have been very impressed with her professionalism, her patience in fielding questions and her willingness to explain procedures.....in general, she has been very, very helpful and I must say that I'm impressed!

It is unusual in the bureaucracy of government today to encounter someone as pleasant and helpful as Catherine Varney and after hanging up the telephone today, after a long conversation, I simply decided to drop you a note, to say that I was very impressed with the way that I was treated.

Sincerely,

*John P. Smith*  
John P. Smith



THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

Honorable August S. King, Jr.  
Governor of Maine  
1 State House Station  
August, Maine 04333

Dear Governor King:

Last year was one of the most devastating fire seasons in recent history. Over 6 million acres of private, State, tribal, and Federal lands were blackened by wildfire and over 800 homes and structures burned. Miraculously, no one lost his or her life. Without the efforts of thousands of firefighters, like those from your State, many more homes and acres would have been destroyed and the toll in personal injuries may have been worse.

The job of protecting property, rangeland, and forests is an enormous undertaking. No single agency can shoulder the entire load. The partnership and cooperative spirit among the Federal, State, and local agencies is never more evident than in our efforts to combat wildfire. These firefighting resources were critical to getting the job done safely and efficiently.

We jointly express a heartfelt thanks to you, your State firefighting agency, and all the firefighters who tackled this job. We also express our thanks to those firefighters who stayed behind to perform critical resource management services at home.

We are entering a new era, where the management and wise use of fire to reduce risks of catastrophic fire and to improve and maintain healthy forests and ranges must have the same importance and priority as the suppression of unwanted fires. We are committed to undertaking an integrated and comprehensive approach to wildland fire management. We welcome your cooperation and partnership in that approach, just as we have worked so well together on fire suppression.

The 1997 fire season is upon us. There is no way to know what the season will bring, but we know your fire organization will be ready. The safety of our Nation's people, resources, and public and private property are dependent upon our continued cooperation.

Sincerely,

*Dan Glickman*  
DAN GLICKMAN  
Secretary  
Department of Agriculture

*Bruce Babbitt*  
BRUCE BABBITT  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior

...And just in case you're  
still not convinced that  
DOC employees are the best!

RECEIVED

JUL 10 1997

DEPT. OF CONSERVATION  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE



## Commissioner's Column

District Ranger **Kenny Wing** is almost a one person welcome committee. You can count on a remarkably friendly reception at Oquossoc. **Rudy Davis** was cleaning a truck like he was going to put it in a parade and **Harry Higgins** keeps the shop the neatest I have seen.

Over Labor Day weekend I went east for a fabulous "downeast vacation" on some of Maine's most scenic roads and trails. Base camp was Cobscook and **Stu Wagner's** team provided outstanding hospitality. The tent-lean-to combination lets you get through any weather. Lunch and a walk on the beach at Roque Bluff was followed by a hike into the Cutler coast land unit. An absolutely breathtaking scenic coastal trail--don't miss it--put it on your "must do" list.

After a visit to a neighboring nations park at Campobello, **John Smith** showed my family and me Quoddy Head lighthouse and park. We purchased *Outdoor Heritage* lighthouse scratch tickets to scratch at the lighthouse--hoping the rays of light would shine down from the beacon into the tickets and bring us luck because we were "scratching at the source." Well...all we did was reduce the 5:1 ticket odds to 4:1. In other words we spent \$4.00 and won \$1.00.

Finally, I paid my first visit to Swan Lake State Park. Picture perfect and immaculate. I walked the beach and spoke with people sitting in the sun reading. **Joe Hurley** showed me the group area after I wandered the beach and picnic area alone--speaking with a few of the guests along the way. As I was leaving the park to go to another appointment I thought, this is my "gem of the month." Put Swan Lake on your "must do" list one warm summer or fall day.

During my "escapes from Augusta," I had some great conversations with employees. I found morale high; the dedication to serve extraordinary; the facilities immaculate (I really mean that--the cleanliness was perfect); and the ability to make needed improvements because of loon plate money and other funds, welcomed. You all did Maine an extraordinary service this summer--thank you for your time.

Rm

### How We Can Be Even Better...

From my conversations with employees I have some messages for managers at all places in the organization to consider:

- 1) If you have people using chainsaws and other mechanized tools, make sure they have solid and appropriate training. Don't assume they know all the proper ways even if they say they know it.
- 2) Put some "personal" space in the newsletter like a "swap or sell" column or a place where employees can "talk to each other."
- 3) Help employees gain access to computers and the information shared on them. If you have the only computer at a facility and it is on your desk, others don't feel its accessible. Try to locate that computer in a "neutral" place so others feel comfortable to "go on line."
- 4) Examine how your employees are kept informed below the supervisor level. Line employees without access to computers have some feeling that they are "out of the loop." Let's make an extra effort to see that employees get a sense of the "goings on" in the Department of Conservation.
- 5) If I summarized employee concerns it would be communication and training. Both of which are in management's control to dramatically improve.