

10-1-1997

## What's Up, Doc? October 1997

Maine Department of Conservation

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalmaine.com/conservation\\_newsletters](https://digitalmaine.com/conservation_newsletters)

---

### Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Conservation, "What's Up, Doc? October 1997" (1997). *Conservation Newsletters*. 180.  
[https://digitalmaine.com/conservation\\_newsletters/180](https://digitalmaine.com/conservation_newsletters/180)

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry at Digital Maine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Conservation Newsletters by an authorized administrator of Digital Maine. For more information, please contact [statedocs@maine.gov](mailto:statedocs@maine.gov).





# What's Up, DOC?



Issue 10

A Newsletter for Department of Conservation Employees

October 1997

## Commissioner's Column

Congratulations! -- to everyone for one of our best summers ever. Stop for a moment, take a deep breath, and reflect on what you personally accomplished this year so far. The DOC delivered professionally and as a team. I know, judging by the good responses in the press, letters, and comments, that people noticed what we have done.

At the same time that we started two major capital projects, that can stress an organization's ability to do the little things, we delivered to the people of Maine, and other guests, an extraordinary season of fire protection and positive visits to parks and lands throughout the state. Our geologists also have accomplished much field work that is now ready to convert into maps over the winter. Furthermore, **Bob Marvinney** and **Joe Kelley** have been deeply involved helping the Town of Wells define a harbor configuration that is acceptable to the Corps of Engineers, Maine Audubon and the DEP. This project is two parts and involves a dredge of the harbor and separately, but coordinated, a replacement of sand on the beaches of Wells.

As you can see from the *feature* article this month our entomologists have had a number of challenging projects.

LURC has overcome a huge permit load by sheer hard work and reduced the backlog to the lowest ever. In addition they had several important big projects like the Downeast cranberry permit and the Albany bingo parlor.

(continued on page four)

## DOC Tackles Declining Spruce on the Coast

Dave Struble

LIBRARY USE ONLY

Declining spruce stands on Maine's coastal islands and headlands have created some interesting challenges for DOC staff. MFS and LURC staff have worked during the past year to identify declining spruce stands and to mitigate the impacts of this decline on landowners and the coastal forest resource. This effort has resulted in numerous contacts and the creation of partnerships with private landowners, town officials, land trusts including the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Island Institute, Acadia National Park, consulting foresters and loggers, and Maine's forest industry.

The coastal spruce decline problem is literally rooted in the extremely shallow and rocky soils of the Maine coast. Most current stands regenerated on lands used for agricultural, residential, or industrial uses during the 1800's but were abandoned in the early 1900's and allowed to revert to spruce forest. These stands are even-aged (60 to 80 years old), are now overmature, and are growing extremely slowly on poor sites. These sites can no longer support the large trees now present. Most current stands have not been managed to promote more vigorous tree growth.

Slow growing and under significant stress, coastal spruce is now ripe for attack by several damaging pests and climatological factors. In 1994 the Insect and Disease Management staff identified a rapidly expanding infestation of "spruce beetle", a lethal bark beetle predominantly attacking stands of large (greater than 15") spruce on islands and the immediate coast. Surveys and evaluations of the spruce beetle outbreak for 1994 to the present have shown a consistent pattern of expansion and intensification of the infestation. Many island and mainland coastal stands in the Penobscot Bay area have now lost more than 50% of their spruce over 15" in diameter, and the outbreak shows no sign of collapse. I&DM coastal surveys also revealed a significant problem with eastern dwarf mistletoe (a parasitic plant) that is attacking, weakening, and in many cases killing white and red spruce in coastal stands. Mistletoe while not as damaging as spruce beetle, is causing significant losses-- predominantly in stands west of Penobscot Bay. Another serious pest, hemlock looper, a defoliator of white spruce and fir, attacked and weakened or killed spruce and fir trees in many coastal areas from 1989 through 1992. In addition to losses from these pests, mature and weakened coastal spruce are now succumbing to the severe drought conditions experienced in 1995 and severe wind storms in 1991 and 1996.

(continued on page two)



### Here Comes the Bride

It's not uncommon for weddings to take place in Maine State Parks and Historic Sites given the unusual beauty at many locations. But it's another thing to get your wedding taped for broadcast on national TV. That's just what happened recently at Fort Point State Park, where parts of a wedding were taped for inclusion in an upcoming PBS documentary on Maine Lighthouses. You may now kiss the bride, (Action!)



### Friends at Work

With roof repairs well underway at Fort Knox, the attention of the Friends of Fort Knox is being turned to future projects and development of the famous historic site. Interest continues to grow in the development of a visitor center in the building currently used as the park maintenance shop. So far, the Friends have awarded two contracts to study site and building design options. Liaison between the Friends and Parks & Lands is maintained by park manager **Mike Wilusz**, Assistant Regional Manager **Mike Leighton**, and Historian **Sheila McDonald**.

(continued from page one)

### DOC Tackles Declining Spruce on the coast

Faced with significant and mounting damage on their coastal properties, landowners sought and were provided assistance by DOC staff. Even though the most dramatic losses appeared to be occurring from direct attack by pest species, I&DM and FP&M Divisions were quick to realize that the real problems of stand overmaturity and the lack of stand management could not be addressed in the long term by an assault on the pests involved. The only viable recommendations for mistletoe and spruce beetle infestations are oriented toward management alternatives ranging from allowing stands to decline without intervention to heavy salvage harvests. Timber harvest and salvage operation in coastal areas often require zoning variances from LURC or from town governments and often cause discontent with other landowners or visitors to sensitive areas. The forest management orientation of the coastal spruce problem dictated that FP&M should take the lead in contacting and assisting landowners. I&DM survey and evaluation information was provided to the FP&M and foresters in affected areas were familiarized with spruce beetle and mistletoe symptoms and evaluation methods.

Landowners with seriously impacted stands that required immediate stand evaluations and recommendations were visited by FP&M foresters and I&DM staff. Many affected stands on islands involve coastal protection zones within LURC jurisdiction and LURC staff have been extremely helpful in visiting areas with Forestry personnel and advising owners. Recommendations were given, and as a result several landowners were put in contact with consulting foresters and loggers and salvage operations were begun.

In Islesboro an association of 12 landowners were assisted with spruce beetle salvage on 160 acres of heavily damaged spruce. FP&M in association with the Island Institute, The Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the towns of Stonington and Vinal Haven arranged informational meetings designed to reach and inform affected landowners. Meetings held in Stonington, Vinal Haven, and Bremen to discuss spruce decline were well attended and resulted in numerous contacts. Staff from all three MFS divisions and LURC continue to meet with and advise landowners. Mailings by coastal groups, numerous newspaper reports, and four one page information sheets prepared by I&DM, FP&M, and Fire Control have contributed to the effort to reach landowners. Many landowners have been faced with difficult decisions that will result in significant changes in their property.

Visits to declining spruce stands invariably in the same landowner question. "Do these problems cause a severe fire hazard? And if so, how do I protect myself?" To address this issue, the MFS has embarked on a joint project on Great Cranberry Island, spearheaded by Urban & Community Forestry and Fire Control, to develop a municipal fire management plan. This effort will serve as a demonstration project for this process, and will provide a model for other communities.



**1997 Employee Recognition Service Awards**

**The William Twarog Memorial Manager of the Year Recipient:**

Dennis Brown  
Park Manger

Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site

**The Departmental Employee of the Year Recipient:**

Peter Lammert  
Marketing & Utilization Forester  
Maine Forest Service

**Governor's Special Teamwork Recipients:  
Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

Susan Burns  
Caroline Eliot  
Will Johnston  
Fred Todd

Land Use Regulation Commission

*Congratulations  
to All!*

**Career Public Service Award  
Recipients**

**25 Years**

George Bourassa  
Steve Curtis  
Doug Getchell  
Ron Hunt  
Bonnie Michaud  
Jeannine Plourde  
Dennis Preston  
John Scott, Jr.  
Fred Todd

**30 Years**

Betty Barry  
Tim Caverly  
William Getchell  
Jim McMullen  
Richard Morse  
Tom Skolfield  
Roger Stanley  
Doug Tyler  
Ben Wilson  
Scott Woodruff  
Ron Wright

**35 Years**

John Hinkley

**40 Years**

Richard Skinner

**Transitions**

**Melissa Winchenbach** joined the Department of Conservation as our new Business Manager on September 15. Melissa comes to us from the Department of Labor. Welcome Melissa!

**Don Mansius** began his new position as Director of Forest Policy & Management on September 15. Best wishes to Don in his new position!

**Susan Benson**, Director of Public Information married Scott Thompkins on September 13.

**Susan Daniel**, Off Road Vehicle Division in the Bureau of Parks & Lands married Bill Steward on September 27.

*Congrats to Susan and Susan!*

**Safety**

Ron Lovaglio

As you can see below, August was not a good month for us but we did make some improvement in September. Our incident rate has almost doubled from last year, but there is some comfort that the lost time rate didn't go up with the incident rate.

We have got to stop hurting ourselves on the job. I am encouraged by our safety committee and the State Safety Summit held recently in Portland. We are starting to put the processes in place that will lead to true change. But each one of us need to make it our personal cause to review our environment, habits and behavior constantly to neutralize the events that cause us injury. Our injury rate is just plain unacceptable.



**DOC Anniversaries**

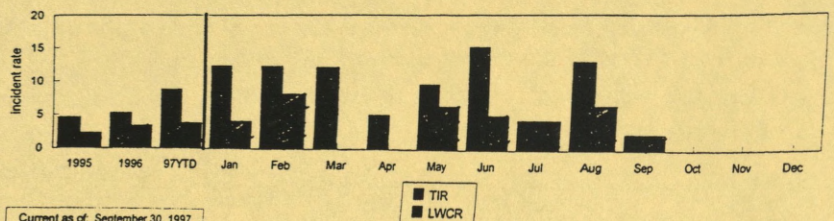
**20 years**

Merle Ring

**30 Years**

Leigh Hoar, Jr.

Department of Conservation  
OSHA Recordable Incidents/ Safety Report





11 Ridge Hill Rd.  
Sudbury, Mass. 01776  
Sept. 12, 1997

Managing Supervisor for Allagash Waterway  
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife  
State House Station 41  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Sir:

Not being a resident, although I wish I were, I'm not sure if my comments carry any weight, but let me throw my two-cents in anyway.  
I have just returned from a week trip along the Allagash. It was without a doubt one of the best outdoor experiences I have ever had. Your truly have a gem in the waterway, and I have nothing but compliments on how you are managing it, and for the professionalism of the Rangers I met along the way.

I am very concerned about the allowing of boat motors on the waterway. It seems to me that nearly all those who make the trip are doing so for the uniqueness of the river, and particularly for the quiet and solitude it offers. If anyone is too lazy to canoe, let them find somewhere else-why spoil the overall quality of the experience to be gained on the Allagash? This would be true for fisherman, of which I count myself, also. It would be heartbreaking if in a few years you begin to see jet-ski boats, water skiing, etc., on the larger lakes.

Restricting it to only canoes (except for Ranger usage) seems to me to be in keeping with the overall spirit, as well as the intention of the waterway.  
Thank you for accepting this "vote" for attempting to keep it at least moderately as a wilderness area.

Sincerely,

*Robert M. Rose*  
Robert M. Rose

KUDOS!

Vicki L. Stuart  
6 Libby Street  
Lisbon Falls, Maine 04252

Bureau of Parks and Lands  
22 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04330-9840

September 7, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

My eight year old nieces from Massachusetts visit us several times each year during school vacations. We frequently visit Fort McClary, Bradbury Mountain State Park and the Gray Animal Farm. Whether we're feeding the deer at the Gray Animal Farm, exploring Fort McClary, or hiking to the Summit of Bradbury Mountain for a picnic, we find these to be fun-filled family excursions. It is nice to live in a state where there are many affordable parks to visit with children.

I would like to thank the staff at these facilities for their efforts in maintaining the parks. Each time we encounter the people who staff the parks they are pleasant, knowledgeable, and helpful. Please extend my appreciation for their hard work. We look forward to many years of continued visits.

Sincerely,

*Vicki L. Stuart*  
Vicki L. Stuart

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

Dear Ron:

Thank you for your kind words both in the letter of September 10 and at the employee recognition ceremony on September 18. The compliments were a little embarrassing but were also greatly appreciated.

Although I will treasure the manager's award, I don't feel that I can take sole credit for it. Many people have contributed to the well being of Colonial Pemaquid and thus deserve a share in the award. I have received tremendous support from all six staff members at the Southern Region office and from Sheila McDonald. Every time I have called for help, it has been cheerfully given. Certain people from the town, including the selectmen, the Olde Bristol Days committee, and especially the Friends of Pemaquid, have also been very supportive. Unlike the people in most towns containing state parks, the people of Bristol consider Colonial Pemaquid as much "their park" as the State's. This attitude sometimes creates diplomacy problems, but overall it has been a positive factor. Finally and most important, the award belongs to the five other staff members at Colonial Pemaquid as much, if not more, than to me. I don't think that I would be exaggerating by stating that I have the best park crew in the state. Everyone gets along well with each other, and all go out of their way to help, not only each other, but also the overall operation of the park. In spite of being short term, seasonal employees, they really care about the place, take a great deal of pride in it, and act accordingly.

Since I am not sure who they all are, would you please pass along my thanks and gratitude to those responsible for selecting me for the award. The recognition was appreciated.

Sincerely,

*Dennis L. Brown*

Dennis L. Brown, Manager  
Colonial Pemaquid

Colonial Pemaquid  
P.O. Box 117  
New Harbor, ME 04554  
September 22, 1997

RECEIVED

SEP 24 1997

DEPT. OF CONSERVATION  
COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE



(continued from page one)  
**Commissioner's Column**

Our computer group has been challenged with our most ambitious year as we put more computers in the field than ever and now have approximately 250 all over the state to service. We've doubled our computer capacity with the same number of staff we had before. Moreover, they have installed the state's first telephone, modem and computer that uses a satellite at Churchill Dam--and it works! Our radio group teamed with the computer group to make this a joint project. Look what we can accomplish when we work together. While we all know these things need constant tinkering, stop and say thanks to those guys--they deserve it and we usually only call when we have a problem. By the way field people told me this summer that we had the best radio service ever.

Certainly, the work to replace Churchill Dam is especially noteworthy for the magnitude of the job. How often is a dam built in Maine? For a major project to be accomplished well, someone has to take primary responsibility for managing the details, coordinating all the work, contractors, supplies, and communication and to see that the engineering specifications are carried out. This is not a place to make mistakes. **Leigh Hoar** has been our person on site that lives with those details every day and has made the success of this endeavor his personal mission. We need that passion to make the big ticket items come together. And behind Leigh are many employees in all parts of the DOC that have dropped everything when he needed a hand. Leigh's on the point but there is a tremendous team behind him, including the AWW staff that help every day to keep this project on schedule. The last I heard, they expected to pass water at the end of this month with the final touches throughout November. Next spring we will have the dedication of the Dam.

Finally, have you seen our internet foliage page? Wow! Last year we had 4700 hits to the page and this year we have over 40,000 already. **Susan Benson** has done a fantastic job! She has received national recognition by *USA Today* and another group that overlooks web pages in addition to articles in all the state's major papers and the *Wall Street Journal*. Our Leaf Lady has been greatly assisted by **Gale Ross** (Leaf Lady II).

And speaking of press and public visibility, have you ever seen a year when the DOC has gotten more front page coverage? Wow! We also have had excellent TV and radio coverage because so many of you have been willing to go on shows and represent your work and DOC. Again, we get more accomplished with a team approach.

So I guess that sets the stage for my next column--using our past successes to launch us foreword. I plan the next column to be around our strategic plan and goals. We've had a great season and year so far. It's time to get ready for winter and start thinking of next year.

*Ron*

#### LEAVE IT TO BEAVER

Staff at Aroostook State Park are working to control problems caused by beavers at the outlet of Echo Lake. Despite a protective mesh at the outlet, the pesky critters have managed to nearly clog the outlet pipe with their handiwork. Maintenance of the outlet is important to protect several homes around the lake from floods. Park Manager **Frank Appleby** is working with local officials to keep things moving along.

#### LIGHTING THE WAY

It's application time for the proposed acquisition of two lighthouses declared as surplus property by the U.S. Coast Guard. The lighthouses, located at Quoddy Head State Park and Fort Point State Park, are already under lease by the Bureau of Parks & Lands, and serve as important features of their respective parks. Parks & Lands Historian **Sheila McDonald** is busy on the project, with assistance from park managers **Terry Cole** and **John Smith**, and from regional staff including **Mike Leighton**, **Ron Cyr**, and **Tim Hall**. If the applications are approved, title to the lighthouses will be transferred to the state, along with responsibilities for maintenance and public interpretation.