Maine Conservation Connection July, 2015

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Maine Conservation Connection
Second Quarter Newsletter

July, 2015

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2015 Legislative Awareness Day

On May 12th the Maine Conservation Corps participated in the 2015 Maine Legislative Awareness Day. Legislative Awareness Day is an event organized by the Maine Commission for Community Service, in which service organizations from all over the State of Maine came together in the Hall of Flags at the Maine State House, Augusta. In attendance
representing the MCC were MCC Director, Jo Orlando; Environmental Steward and Community Leader Program Coordinator, Krista Rogers; and AmeriCorps Member and Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, Dylan Cookson.

Between legislative sessions, Maine's State Senators and Representatives came to the Hall of Flags to visit the displays and speak with representatives of Maine's service community. In all, we spoke with over a dozen representatives and senators as well as several officials, visitors and employees of the Maine State House. All of them were interested in hearing about the Maine Conservation Corps' mission and what we have accomplished in their respective districts.

The Maine Conservation Corps' mission is to serve the people of the State of Maine by accomplishing conservation projects, engaging conservation volunteers, and providing outreach and education. For our continued success it is important for Maine people, and those that represent them, to be aware of the important work done by our members every year. We would like to thank those that stopped to speak to us on Legislative Awareness Day, and look forward to continuing to serve the greater Maine community for years to come.

**Trail Teams Begin the 2015 Field Season**

May brought us the sun, the rain, and the bugs. It brought long hikes and beautiful vistas. It brought the flowers, the budding tree branches and the bonding of our teams.

Being a part of the MCC is always a gripping experience. Every year we have new smiling faces prepared for a summer of service that they will not forget. This season we have nine returning members, six of which are Team Leaders and the remaining three are Assistant Team Leaders. Even more exciting is our 45 new members; about half from Maine and half from around the country.

This term of service gives them a chance to give back to their state or nation, while exploring themselves and pushing their limits. Personal growth in our members is always notable and this season will be no different with a fantastic line up of projects.

What’s new this year? Four teams in Baxter State Park for twelve weeks each. Two teams will be covering park-wide maintenance while the remaining two teams begin the relocation of the famous Abol Trail.

We also have two teams spending six weeks each on the historic Appalachian Trail working to perform stone stair re-routes in two heavily eroded stretches of trail (Beamis Mountain and Saddleback Jr. to Poplar Ridge).
Looking forward, we have another great season waiting to unfold. In the coming weeks our teams will hit full stride and embrace their experiences. For now we must enjoy the beginning of another great thing.

May the trails be with you.

Ryan W. MacGlashing; Senior Team Leader & AmeriCorps Alumnus

**Environmental Stewards**

Our summer term Environmental Stewards have joined us and are already hard at work at their respective host sites.

Rebecca Pratt of Cornville, Maine is serving 900 hours at the Bureau of Parks and Land’s Sebago Lake State Park in Casco. Rebecca is a 2015 graduate of the University of Southern Maine, where she studied Environmental Planning and Policy.

James Grecenko of Litchfield, Maine is serving 900 hours at the Bureau of Parks and Land’s Bradbury Mountain State Park in Pownal. James is a 2013 graduate of Pikes Peak Community College, where he studied Liberal and Culinary Arts.

Jordan Tate of Auburn, Maine is serving 900 hours at Bureau of Parks and Land’s Wolfe's Neck Woods and Ferry Beoch State Parks. Jordan is a 2015 graduate of the University of New England, where she studied Environmental Science.

Julie Winzler of Stafford Springs, Connecticut is serving 900 hours at
the Bigelow Preserve. Julie is a 2003 graduate of the East Catholic High School in Manchester, Connecticut.

Ling Rao of La Canada, California is serving 900 hours at the Department of Environmental Protection's Portland Watershed Unit. Ling is a 2015 graduate of the University of Rochester, where she studied Environmental Studies.

Lucien Langlois of New Vineyard, Maine is serving 900 hours with the Department of Environmental Protection's Augusta Biological Monitoring Unit. Lucien is a 2015 graduate of the University of Maine, where he studied Ecology, Environmental Science, and Anthropology.

Kelley Reardon of Scarborough, Maine is serving 900 hours at the Department of Environmental Protection's Bio-monitoring program in Portland. Kelley is a 2015 graduate of Stonehill College, with degrees in Environmental Studies and Chinese Language and Culture.

Nina Lawonn of Ellsworth, Maine is serving 900 hours at the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District. Nina is a 2015
graduate of the University of Southern Maine, where she studied biology.

Alumni Spotlight

The Maine Conservation Corps’ Alumni are spread far and wide and often continue to work in conservation long after their time with us is done. Recently the MCC heard from Michelle DiMeglio whose life has been shaped by the MCC in many positive ways. Michelle currently works as a Youth Program Assistant for The Corps Network in partnership with the National Park Service. Her program works to expand opportunities for youth in National Parks.

Michelle was first drawn to the MCC due to its Trail Training Program. Having previously served with trail crews in California and Arizona, she wanted to gain more experience as a leader. The MCC’s training program prepared her for work with chainsaws, griphoist equipment, and the dynamics of leading a field crew. She was also certified as a Wilderness First Responder. She came away from the program with the skills and confidence to lead.

Michelle first came to Maine in 2010 for the Trail Training Program, returned in 2011 as a Field Team Leader and Senior Team Leader, and as a Senior Team Leader in 2013 and 2014. She has worked for the Student Conservation Association and the Southwest Conservation Corps on trails throughout the country, including the Pacific Crest Trail in California, the Sawtooth Mountains in Idaho, and locations throughout Arizona and New Mexico.

During her time with the MCC, Michelle discovered how time on the trail can bring people together: “I loved leading my first crew with the MCC. They were an awesome group. We had lots of fun and grew really close by the end of the summer.” Michelle found herself working all over the state of Maine visiting many beautiful places. At Quoddy Head State Park, her crew worked by the sea everyday. They completed a number of projects including a log ladder, bog bridging, and stone steps. She also has fond memories of working with several crews in Baxter State Park as a Senior Team Leader.

Since her time with the MCC Michelle has continued to benefit from the confidence and leadership skills she acquired and has maintained lasting friendships with her fellow MCC members. She currently has ambitions for owning land where she intends to employ her skills
in the construction of a house and homestead.

For current and future MCC members she offers the following advice: “Follow your heart and your interests. Don’t worry about the “career path” – if you do what you love, the opportunities will keep coming to you. When I started with AmeriCorps back in 2009, I was doing it for fun, to spend time in the wilderness, and to try something new. I had no idea that it would lead to awesome work opportunities, and that I’d be able to earn a living doing what I love.”

In the months to come we will be hearing from other Maine Conservation Corps Alumni with their own stories to tell. If you are an alumnus or alumna and want to have your story featured in the MCC Newsletter or Blog, please contact Dylan Cookson at dylan.cookson@maine.gov.

**Volunteer Opportunities**

As the Maine Conservation Corps starts another field season we continue to search for volunteers who are interested in getting their hands dirty on Maine’s trail system. We regularly update our volunteer opportunities on [Maine.gov](http://maine.gov), Volunteer Maine, and through a monthly [GovDelivery Bulletin](http://maine.gov).

Some upcoming opportunities include:

**Environmental Stewards and Community Leaders:**

- [Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge](http://maine.gov)
- [MDI Biological Laboratory](http://maine.gov)
- [Hancock County Conservation District](http://maine.gov)

**Field Team Projects:**

- [Baxter State Park, General Trail Maintenance](http://maine.gov)
- [Baxter State Park, Abol Trail Relocation](http://maine.gov)
- [Appalachian Trail, Bemis Mountain](http://maine.gov)
- [Appalachian Trail, Poplar Ridge](http://maine.gov)
- [Scopan Public Lands](http://maine.gov)
- [Plum Creek](http://maine.gov)
- [Little Moose Public Lands](http://maine.gov)
- [The MCC office in Hallowell, Maine](http://maine.gov)

If you are interested in volunteering with the Maine Conservation Corps please Contact Dylan Cookson at (207) 624-6092 or by E-mail at dylan.cookson@maine.gov.
Blogging about Conservation

The Maine Conservation Corps now has a Blog!

Blogs are increasingly a significant part of modern media. Even traditional, mainstream news outlets like the Bangor Daily News and MPBN have online Blogs and Podcasts that contribute to their content. This May, the Maine Conservation Corps has launched a Blog through WordPress.com! Updates happen every Tuesday and feature alumni spotlights, volunteer of the month announcements, news about MCC members and partners, interpretive articles about natural science in Maine, and helpful advice about outdoor recreation.

Current MCC members, alumni, and partners are invited to contribute.

Contact Maine Conservation Corps

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