



MDOC

Week of
April 20, 2009

From the Field

Conserving Maine's Special Places for Maine People

22 State House Station, 18 Elkins Lane, Harlow Building, Augusta, Maine 04333 <http://www.maine.gov/doc>

New AWW Superintendent Appointed

A veteran Bureau of Parks and Lands staffer has been appointed the first superintendent of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

Matt LaRoche, Penobscot River Corridor park manager and AWW acting manager, has been named the AWW superintendent. The position is the first superintendency in the state parks system, and LaRoche is the first person to fill such a position. LaRoche is a 32-year veteran with the Bureau of Parks and Lands.



LaRoche

The AWW is a 92-mile-long corridor of lakes, ponds, rivers and streams winding through the northern Maine forest, comprising about 23,000 acres. It starts at Telos Lake and ends a few miles south of Allagash Village, which is located at the confluence of the Allagash and St. John rivers.

The AWW superintendency was created based on a recommendation from the Governor's Task Force on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. The new position has more responsibility than a park manager and reports directly to the Parks operations director.

LaRoche, who will begin immediately, is expected to maintain and improve the infrastructure of the AWW. He will supervise 12 full-time and seasonal employees. In addition to having oversight of all the waterway operations, the superintendent will work closely with the seven-member AWW advisory council on the waterway management plan and on the development of an endowment fund.

LaRoche has canoed, boated or driven a snowmobile on every section of the AWW several times.

For more information about the AWW, go to: <http://maine.gov/allagash>

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Listed as Top Adventure Site

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway is featured this month as one of the top five "Man vs. Wild" adventure trips in "Outside" magazine, a national publication that reaches more than 2 million outdoor readers each month.



The 92-mile-long AWW is listed as one of five "ready-to-roll" itineraries in the 2009 Adventure Issue.

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway officially was established by the Maine Legislature in 1966 to protect the unique area. In 1970, it was named the first state-administered component of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

An entire trip of the AWW can be done between three to seven days. A long weekend in late May or June offers excellent fishing on Chamberlain, Allagash and Eagle lakes.

The magazine recommends having advanced canoeing skills and some camping experience. It also recommends carrying a copy of Henry David Thoreau's "The Maine Woods."

"[G]o slow and quote Thoreau—every story about this river does," the article states. It also states that the best time of year to do the AWW trip is early fall.

First-timers should get an outfitter to help with them with equipment and transportation. While this time of year is a quiet one, fishing will pick up around mid to late May, when ice-out is expected to occur. Canoeists doing the full trip usually will start around mid-May.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.maine.gov/allagash>

Or contact Matt LaRoche, AWW interim superintendent, (207) 605-3721, ext. 4, or email:

matt.laroche@maine.gov

Or <http://outside.away.com>

For outfitting information, go to: <http://northmainewoods.org/>

Peary's North Pole Expedition Commemorated

History and North Pole cake were served up Tuesday, April 7, during a ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of Admiral Robert E. Peary's expedition to the North Pole.



Peary

History buffs, school children and state legislators met at the Maine State Museum atrium to recall the historic event completed in 1909 by Peary, who was raised and educated in Maine and also spent summers in the state.

The Bureau of Parks Lands owns Peary's summer home, Eagle Island State Historic Park, given to the state in 1955 by the Peary family and recently repaired from damage caused by the 2007 Patriot's Day storm. It is one of the historic sites managed by the BPL.

The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island, established in 1992 as a non-profit and all volunteer organization, works very closely with BPL to maintain the Island and

Peary's house in a historically accurate manner. The Friends, who attended the anniversary event, also work to make Eagle Island as accessible and instructive as possible to visitors each summer.

Peary bought the island for \$200 in 1881 and built his summer home, situating it to appear like the prow of a ship. About 6,000 people annually visit the island, which is accessible only by boat.

Peary was "a bold visionary, a great explorer with a temperament of steel, and best of all, a Maine man," MDOC Commissioner Patrick McGowan said during the brief ceremony.



Commissioner McGowan and Deputy Commissioner Eliza Townsend study the Peary exhibit at the Maine State Museum.

After several failed attempts, Peary, his African-American companion, Matthew Henson, and four Inuit men reached the North Pole on April 6, 1909, raised an American flag and stayed there for 30 hours. They had spent a month of arduous travel, using five 14-foot-long sledges, over the frozen Arctic ice.

Peary claimed to be the first to reach the North Pole, though that claim has been challenged through the years.



Rep. Herb Adams of Portland reads a legislative sentiment honoring Peary.

The Maine Department of Conservation and the Maine State Museum collaborated to commemorate Peary's expedition with the afternoon event.

The Friends, represented by Admiral Harry Rich, and the museum were honored with copies of a legislative sentiment put forth by Rep. Leila Percy and read by Rep. Herb Adams during the ceremony.



Rep. Leila Percy of Phippsburg, Admiral Harry Rich, Joseph R. Phillips, Maine State Museum director, and Rep. Adams pose after the ceremony.

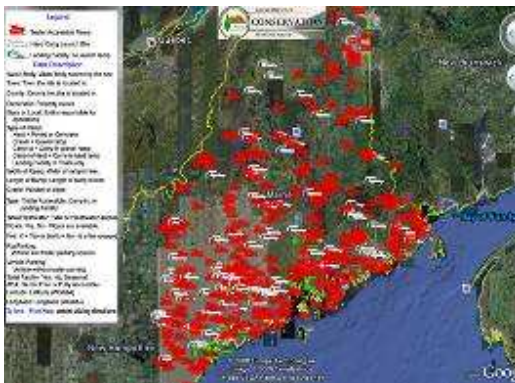
The state museum has numerous items from the explorer in its Peary Collection, currently on display in an exhibit, *Robert E. Peary: A Maine Man in the Arctic*. The exhibit will be on view in the museum's lobby through August 2009.

For more information, go to:

- <http://www.maine.gov/eagleisland>
- <http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/parksinfo/eagleisland/photo.html>
- <http://www.state.me.us/museum/>
- <http://www.pearyeagleisland.org/>

Boat Facilities/Google Earth Website Makes a Big Splash!

The new Bureau of Parks & Lands Boat Facilities/Google Earth website was – pardon the pun – launched officially on Saturday, March 21, during the Spring Fishing Expo at L.L.Bean's flagship store in Freeport.



Screenshot of the website

The new website, which uses Google Earth technology, features every state-funded, public recreational boating facility – owned locally, by MDOC and by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife – in the state of Maine.

Users can zoom in on any landing, find out important information about the boating facility, and get directions to the location. One journalist later wrote that the site was “almost magical” in providing what any boat owner would need to get their boat in the water.



(L to r) George Powell, Rep. David Webster of Freeport, John Oliver of L.L.Bean, Commissioner McGowan, former MDOC Commissioner Dick Anderson, IF&W Deputy Commissioner Paul Jacques, and IF&W biologist John Boland pose after the event.

The site originally was suggested by John Oliver, L.L.Bean vice president. The project also was done in cooperation with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The Spring Expo event was well attended by dignitaries and sportsmen, and numerous visitors also checked out the MDOC booth for maps and other recreational information.

To get to the website, go to: <http://www.maine.gov/doc> and follow the link.

Land and Water Conservation Funding and Recreation Trail Funding Available

Applications for both Recreational Trail Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund now are available from the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.

Under the Recreational Trail Program, funds are available to municipalities and nonprofit trail organizations for construction and maintenance projects. The program will provide up to \$35,000 in funds and up to \$5,000 for projects to promote trail safety or environmental education.

Applications must be received by the Bureau on or before the Nov. 6 deadline to be considered for funding.

Land and Water Conservation Fund monies are made available to BPL through the fiscal year 2010 National Park Service budget. Municipalities can apply for assistance of up to 50 percent funding with a maximum of \$50,000 in federal assistance for any one project.

A fully completed application must be submitted on or before Aug. 23. A pre-approval site inspection by a BPL representative must be made to qualify the proposed site for funding. Requests for site inspections should be made before June 23.

Applications for both grants are available online at:
<http://www.state.me.us/doc/parks/programs/community/index.html>

For further information or a printed application, contact Mick Rogers, BPL supervisor of outdoor recreation, at 287-4962.

2009 Active Communities Conference Set

In a related matter, MDOC is one of four sponsors of the upcoming 2009 Active Communities Conference on May 12 at the Harraseeket Inn, Freeport. The theme is "Walking, Biking, Physical Activity and the Built Environment."

The conference primarily is for municipal officials who want to learn more about creating communities that encourage residents to be more active. The featured speaker is Todd Litman, founder and executive director of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, British Columbia, Canada, who has written guides and manuals dealing with transportation and land use issues.

Mick Rogers will speak on both the RTP and LWCF funding programs. The conference is free and lunch will be provided.

TO REGISTER, go to:
<http://www.mcdregistration.org/currentregistrations.asp?CAT=STATE&STATUS=ACTIVE>

Or visit www.mcdregistration.org and click "Statewide Conferences and Events"

Maine Geologists Present at Geological Society of America Section Meeting

The Northeastern Section Geological Society of America held its annual section meeting March 22-24 in Portland, and MDOC Maine Geological Survey geologists attended and made presentations. About 1,100 people attended the event.



Slovinsky discusses the site

Dr. Steve Dickson and Peter Slovinsky, with colleagues from the University of Maine, took participants on a day-long field trip focusing on coastal storms, sediment budgets, and mitigating engineering in Saco Bay.

The trip took professionals from Saco through Old Orchard Beach to Scarborough, hiking over dunes and viewing the bay area firsthand. Participants examined various forms of coastal engineering, such as jetties and seawalls, which over the last 140 years have led to significant changes in shoreline positions and sediment budgets. These shoreline shifts have included the loss of property and increased flood hazards to coastal communities.



On the dunes

Participants saw shoreline protection in the form of a geotube-cored dune on Surf Street in Saco as well as various sizes and locations of restored and natural primary frontal dunes. They discussed the impacts of the 2007 Patriot's Day Storm and future sea-level rise in the context of the resiliency of both natural and developed landscapes. This summer a related field trip guide will be posted on the MGS web site so others can take a self-guided tour of Saco Bay.

Check out the GSA here: <http://www.geosociety.org/>

Geologist Helps Set Dune Fence

MGS marine geologist Stephen Dickson last month helped negotiate a solution to a two-year-old dune fencing stalemate at Ogunquit Beach. Agreement was reached with the town of Ogunquit's Conservation Commission, municipal officials, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



At stake, literally and figuratively, was where and what kind of fence should be placed along Ogunquit Beach next to the dunes. After the Patriots' Day Storm in April 2007, the town received a grant to replace damaged fencing along the dune. Funds were held until an agreement could be reached that would provide a section of beach with minimal fencing and beach "cleaning" by equipment in order to create ideal natural habitat for the state-endangered piping plovers and least terns.

This highly visited public beach needs to have sections of the dune protected from foot traffic in order for American beach grass to thrive and create a healthy dune. In addition, sand (snow) fence can trap wind-blown beach sand and help the dunes recover from large erosion events such as the Patriots' Day Storm.

In the agreement, areas of the beach were divided for intensive human recreation use and for a more natural beach-dune area where the natural processes would foster ideal habitat for shorebirds.

On March 31, MGS literally set a stake line for the new fences based on geological characteristics of the beach and dune. The new fence will be at the seaward toe of an eolian (wind-blown) ramp that is about 20 feet seaward of the

frontal dune. This location is still at a tidal elevation of at or above 12 feet, so the fence will not be subject to the highest annual tides. As the summer beach profile gains sand from offshore, a wider dry beach -- primary beach blanket space -- will form seaward of the fence and provide ample recreation space.

Given the arrival of the piping plover, seen on March 31 at the beach, it looks like a good fencing plan will be just in time for bird nesting season and the arrival of tourists this year.

First Hawks and Now Plovers ...

Speaking of plovers, Joe Wiley, Inland Fisheries & Wildlife biologist administratively assigned to BPL, reports that the plovers, those migratory shore birds that nest along Atlantic coast all the way up into the Maritimes, are in fact back in Maine.



“They arrive in April, they set up housekeeping and then the hordes descend in June,” Wiley said. The diminutive birds winter in Central America, fly up north to nest and usually have two or three eggs per nest, he said.

On the endangered list, plovers like to nest on sand beaches in the sparsely vegetated fore dune area, the biologist said. Unfortunately, interference by people and predators, as well as high moon tides, can wipe them out. Predators include gulls, crows, raccoons, skunks and foxes.

A plover on the beach

Maine’s four state-owned beaches – Reid, Popham, Crescent and Scarborough – are all summer homes to the plovers. Reid and Popham get the most, though the numbers are low. Last year, there

were 32 breeding pairs, the lowest number since the state began keeping track of them, Wiley said.

So how many are there this year? “It’s still too early to tell,” the biologist said. “The birds are still establishing territories and nesting areas, which change year to year.”

The plovers are back, however, as Wiley’s photograph of one bird at Reid shows. In the coming months, beachgoers may see cages protecting the nests, as well as stringed fencing to guide folks away from the nesting habitat.

Wiley asks that all beachgoers keep the beaches clean of food items -- the dropped hot dog or popcorn – to keep predators from being attracted to the nesting sites. Dog owners also aren’t allowed to walk their pets on the beach so the nesting birds won’t be disturbed.



State park sign explaining plover habitat

And Ospreys ...

The public is invited to welcome the recently returned ospreys to their nest on Googins Island on Sunday, April 26, at Wolfe’s Neck Woods State Park in Freeport. The one hour-guided nature program will include a short walk to the shore opposite Googins Island to view the ospreys through a spotting scope while learning their life story.



An osprey lands at its nest (photo courtesy of Terry Chick).

Visitors should meet at 2 p.m. at the benches by the second parking lot, weather permitting. No reservations needed, except for group programs. Those who want to attend should call the park at (207) 865-4465 the day of the program, after 10 a.m., for updates on the program.

The program is free with park admission, which is \$1.50 for ages 12 – 64.

And even MORE Birds!

Birding, in fact, is the fastest-growing, nature-based tourism activity in the country, and Maine has plenty to offer, from puffins to woodcock to spruce grouse.



Aroostook State Park, which is Maine’s first state park, will be the site of a major birding event 5 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, June 13. The event is perfect for the first-time birder or for someone who already has been out a few times.

This birding festival combines bird walks, bird-banding demonstrations, a live bird exhibit, educational programs, and friendly people who will create a wonderful outdoor-wildlife experience at the park. The wooded hiking trails and lake shoreline offers attractive bird habitat, where more than 100 different bird species have been seen, a great opportunity to extend one’s life list. The state park has been home to waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, gulls, owls, flycatchers, thrushes, warblers and sparrows, and especially woodpeckers. Hair, downy, pileated, three toed and black-back wood peckers have been located at Aroostook.

Several top birders will be on hand as well to offer their expertise, including:

- Bill Sheehan, one of the top birders in Northern Maine. <http://northernmainebirds.blogspot.com/>
- Jason Johnston, an assistant professor of wildlife ecology at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, who instructs an ornithology course and is federally certified to band wild birds.
- Arthur Howell, CEO of the A.E. Howell Wildlife Conservation Center and Spruce Acres Refuge, in North Amity, Me., which rehabilitates injured birds and wildlife and returns them to their natural habitat. He is bringing some live birds to display and will be there to answer any question about the birds or anything regarding wildlife conservation. <http://www.spruceacresrefuge.com>
- Dave Kelso: professional outdoorsman and freelance writer, author and photographer. <http://www.davidkelso.com/>

Park Manager Scott Thompson also says, “We are planning to have a parabolic microphone, which will be used to help people identify birds by their songs, and spotting scopes to help spot some of the shy birds that will be off in the distance.”

The fee is \$2 for adults, and the event will take place rain or shine. Find more information at this website:

<http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/parksinfo/aroostook/aroostookbirdingfestival.html>

Landowner Relations Lauded

LOR Director Bob Duplessie reports that the new LOR website is getting important notice, and more requests for information are coming through that online venue. The website is designed to help foster good relations between landowners and land users.



Duplessie also has received several positive responses. The first one was in response to a question about land owner liability and the second one in response to proper methods to post land against trespassing.

“Any time someone wants to post their land, I try to narrow the root cause down and encourage them to do only what they feel is necessary so as to not penalize all who may use the land,” Duplessie says. “Usually, this is acceptable, such as no ATVs or no hunting, and then other uses are still allowed. There have been a few times when, after I’ve discussed the problem with them, they actually reconsider. A few bad apples should not spoil it for everyone.”

The comments:

--- Robert, Thank you for getting back to us, we appreciate your help very much. We were thinking about coverage and did not know what to do about it. Sincerely, Mark and Sue (future residents)

---Bob, Excellent job with the website. It had exactly what I was looking for. I found it very informative and well done. I appreciate the help. Kristen

For help or more information, go to: www.maine.gov/lor

MCC Welcomes New Senior Team Leader

The Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) in March welcomed Ben Clark of Greenville as a senior team leader for the 2009 season. Clark, originally from Rangeley, now lives in Greenville with his wife, Lucy.



Clark

This is his fourth stint with the MCC: he was a team member in 2001 and a team leader in 2002 and 2005. In addition, Clark led trail crews for the Appalachian Mountain Club in 2003 and 2004, studied wildlife biology at the University of Maine and Unity College, and served three years in the Peace Corps in Cameroon before returning to Maine.

MFS promotes “Wildfire Awareness Week” April 19 – 25, 2009

MFS Forest Ranger Wes Hatch was interviewed Monday, April 20, by Jason Gross of WLBZ, Channel 2 in Old Town to help promote “Wildfire Awareness Week,” Kent Nelson, MFS fire prevention specialist reports.



Hatch is interviewed about “Wildfire Awareness Week.”

Traditionally, the third week in April has been declared “Wildfire Awareness Week” by Gov. John Baldacci to help promote awareness of the dangers of wildfires during this time of year. To date, forest rangers have responded to or investigated more than 130 fires which have consumed nearly 120 acres. That is an increase of approximately 30 acres compared to 2008, Nelson says.

“Please be careful with all outdoors fires during this time of year and make sure they are completely out before leaving the area,” Nelson reminds everyone.

Maine Forest Service train students for the Maine Envirothon

The Maine Envirothon program recently held its annual forestry training workshop for students registered for the regional Envirothon competitions at Unity College. Unity has been a strong supporter of the Envirothon program for many years.

District Foresters Merle Ring and Mort Moesswilde and Stewardship Forester Pete Lammert, along with Society of American Foresters volunteers, taught 98 high school students plus advisers from 11 schools, as well as home school programs, basic forestry topics, such as tree identification, using a compass, basic silviculture, using

forestry tools and community forestry. This training day has grown in popularity each year with the kids. Last year, the workshop hosted 9 schools and 75 students.

Envirothon is a natural resource problem-solving competition for grades nine through 12. In an outdoor setting, students are tested in five natural resource areas: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and a current national environmental issue. Maine Forest Service has been heavily involved in Maine Envirothon since it first came to Maine in the late 1980s.

Landowner Outreach meetings a success

Andy Shultz, MFS landowner outreach forester, recently completed a series of meetings for family forest landowners across the state. A total of 250 landowners, foresters and interested residents attended 13 sessions from Madawaska to Buxton. The meetings were a collaborative effort, hosted by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and co-led by MFS and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Sponsorship came from funds provided by NRCS, MFS and the Small Woodlot Owners Association (SWOAM).



Shultz addresses one of the recent meetings.

Local NRCS conservationists explained how the provisions of the federal 2008 Farm Bill provided financial and technical assistance to non-industrial forest landowners through a variety of conservation programs, most notably the Environmental Quality Incentives program (EQIP). Shultz reviewed the WoodsWISE Incentives program, which provides cost-share assistance for Forest Stewardship Plans. Stewardship Plans are a pre-requisite for landowners wishing to apply for EQIP. There was ample time for questions and answers and for landowners to speak informally with local consulting foresters and agency representatives.

Shultz reports that he has seen a rise in applications for WoodsWISE as a direct result of the meetings. NRCS District offices also report a great deal of interest generated by the events, as landowners call and make appointments to fill out the necessary paperwork for EQIP.

For more information about WoodsWISE, EQIP, and forest management in general, contact Andy Shultz at 287-8430.

Remember Those Fire Towers?

Throughout 2009, the Maine Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association is putting out the call for donations of historical items related to Maine fire towers. The chapter maintains an archive of historical items, largely photos, and information on Maine fire towers.

Bob Cobb, chapter director, asks that you look for any of the following items to donate:

- Photos of Maine fire towers and watchman's cabins
- Stories and accounts from former watchman
- Old maps of tower locations and trails
- Old items from towers including maps
- Any books and/or magazines that mention Maine fire towers



If you have any of the above items or know anyone that does, please consider donating or sharing copies of them with the Maine Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association. The archive is stored at the Forest History Society in Durham, North Carolina.

“Maine’s Fire Towers were discontinued forever in 1991, but their history and lore can live on forever if we strive to save it,” Cobb writes. “Put out the call to anyone you know that can help so we can preserve Maine’s fire detection history!”



To donate or for more information, contact Cobb at:

Bill Cobb, 17 Greenwood Road, Northborough, MA 01532

Email – cobbw@charter.net

Phone– 508-351-9373 (leave message)

News from the Social Networking Front

We have a small, but growing community on Facebook of folks who like to stay in touch about all our activities.

We’re using Facebook to display lots of photos and to tell everyone about upcoming events in which the department is involved. Our page features activities for all the divisions. Fans also can review their favorite places, including parks and historic sites.



This newsletter and our Facebook site, as well as our MDOC home web page, share much of the same information, but there are differences. Facebook provides a more immediate connection, while our web page home is an important portal to all the

information that our department can provide to Maine residents and out-of-staters. The newsletter is a summary of information.

These are all very important ways that we try to stay in touch with the people who own some of the most valuable and special resources in Maine. Find the site here: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Maine-Department-of-Conservation/57426456796>

And here’s a new affiliated site: Penobscot Narrows Observatory-Fort Knox State Historic Site at <http://www.facebook.com/business/dashboard/#/pages/The-Penobscot-Narrows-Observatory-Fort-Knox-State-Historic-Site/989002480>

Sign Up Now
for
**First-Time
Campers!**
Coming soon:
Take A Hike!

Go To: <http://www.take-it-outside.com>

For more information on the Maine Department of Conservation, check out: <http://maine.gov/doc>
If you would like to get this newsletter, please send an email to: Jeanne.curran@maine.gov