



Photo: Martin Neptune

Pəskehtək^wok

Joining of the Branches

Fall 2004 ~ Issue 1

Penobscot Indian Nation
Department of Natural Resources

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The Latest Word on ...

As many of you will remember, we sent out a survey this summer asking your thoughts on the future of the pond on the Island. We were pleased to get 33 responses and appreciate your comments.

While DNR continues to look at options we wanted to share a summary of the feedback we have received thus far. Twenty-five (25) people wanted to restore the health of the pond, six (6) people would prefer to drain the pond and one (1) person suggested a combination of these two options - all for a variety of reasons. There were a few suggestions on how to improve the health of the pond as well as the implications of draining it.

Our next step is to discuss this with council. We will continue to keep you posted on our progress. Please feel free to continue to provide us with input on your thoughts on this matter.

Art: James Francis



A Day at Conservation Camp

The Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District holds a Conservation Camp every year to make learning fun and give children ages seven to 14 an opportunity to explore the natural resources of the region.

On the first day of the camp our own Dan Kusnierz spoke about water quality and the kinds of critters that live in and near water. He taught the children about the adaptations that aquatic insects have for living in the habitat where they are found and how these critters can be used as indicators of water quality. Nearly the entire session was spent outdoors where children had an opportunity to dip (and get wet!) for insects first at a wetland and then in a flowing river to see firsthand how aquatic insects from the two habitats differ. Dan shares of his experience "It is a treasure to watch the transformation that takes place in children as they learn about the natural world around them. Children that were initially timid and concerned about "gross bugs" or the possibility of getting wet or muddy became little scientists excitedly charging through the water, turning over rocks, picking up insects in their bare hands and yelling "Cool. Come check this one out!"

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...the Pond

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Other scientists also donated their time to the camp, including:

- Ron Olson, Soil Scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), taught the kids how to dig a soil pit in the forest.
- Entomologist Clay Kirby presented a slide show about insects and how to capture them and let the kids handle the various specimens he brought with him.
- Gordon Moore and Geneva Duncan-Frost of the Maine Forest Service, taught the kids how to measure trees to estimate their age and how to identify various species.



Dan Kusnierz out in the Piscataquis River collecting insects with the kids.
Inset: Dan helping one of the students identify an insect.



CONGRATULATIONS!



DNR is pleased to have Bill Thompson joining our staff on a permanent basis. Bill will be working with Eric as the new Air Quality Technician.

Although the Water Resources staff will miss having a more frequent connection to Bill, he will be available to help us in the field when necessary. Bill has worked hard to develop his skills in natural resource assessment and will be an asset to the department in whatever capacity he is serving.

Art: James Francis

- Doug Kane with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife taught the kids about wildlife and took them out to explore habitat.

The second week of camp featured farm tours. Participants visited a fallow deer and buffalo farm, watched horses at Isaac Royal Farm, helped to pick new crops at Stutzman's Farm, learned about cows, calves and milking at Gilrock Dairy Farm, and learned about raising game birds at the Estes Farm in Milo.

The district was able to offer the camp for free to so many children this year due to a wide variety of support. If you think your child might be interested in attending this 1-2 week long conservation day camp next summer, please contact Sheila Grant at Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District at 564-2321 for more information.



Joining of the Branches in Houlton, Maine

This year's northeast regional conference of the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society (NAFWS - www.nafws.org) was sponsored by the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians. The NAFWS is a non-profit membership organization that exists for the protection, conservation and enhancement of Native American fish & wildlife resources. The Society's purposes are charitable, educational, scientific and cultural. PIN DNR staff were well-represented by our Director, three Wardens, Fisheries Biologist and two Water Resources staff. John Banks helped to form the northeast region of the NAFWS in the 1980s and Tim Gould is the Regional Director. Topics of presentations and workshops included:



Josh with the rifle he won.

- US Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement firearm shoot
- Penobscot River Restoration Project (given, in part, by John Banks and Clem Fay),
- Sediment, bacterial source tracking, and fish habitat studies done in the Meduxnekeag River watershed,
- Fish habitat restoration in western Maine,
- American Chestnut restoration in the northeast,
- Passamaquoddy carnivore population survey,
- Partners for amphibian and reptile conservation
- Wampanoag's lyme disease control program
- Chronic wasting disease
- Narragansett's west Nile virus monitoring program
- Human conflicts with animals: beaver, bear and cormorants
- Response options for oil spills in Indian waters



Jim learning to samples for chronic wasting disease.

PIN's Josh Loring won Top Gun for the region - which means he was the best shot with a hand gun, scoring an average of approximately 590 out of 600 possible points. Josh's skill has made him a perfect candidate for the training he is receiving this week. Josh is participating in a Methods of Instruction class given by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. This class is the first step in becoming the first ever Certified Firearms Instructor in the Department of Natural Resources. And because of the great work being done by Tim and his staff, they received a grant for \$415,000 to cover an additional two years of salary and equipment for two Wardens.

DNR is working with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to obtain funds to conduct a survey on the presence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer and moose populations on Trust Lands. CWD is a fatal, neurological disease of primarily farmed and wild deer and elk. But as we learned at this conference, it has now been found in moose. Clinical signs in affected animals include loss of body condition, behavioral changes, excessive salivation, increased drinking and urination, depression, and eventual death. CWD is always fatal. There is no known treatment, vaccine, or live animal test for CWD. Currently, CWD is diagnosed by examining brain and lymphoid tissue (lymph nodes and tonsils) from a dead animal. More information on CWD can be found at the APHIS website: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahps/cwd/>. We will continue to keep you posted on the progress of this survey and all results we obtain.

REMINDER:

There have been a few minor changes in the hunting regulations. See Cookie in the DNR office for a copy of the 2004 PIN rules titled Chapter VII: Inland Fish and Game.

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The bridges in Mattamiscontis are done!

Currently, Birch Stream Road in Alton is being repaired.

