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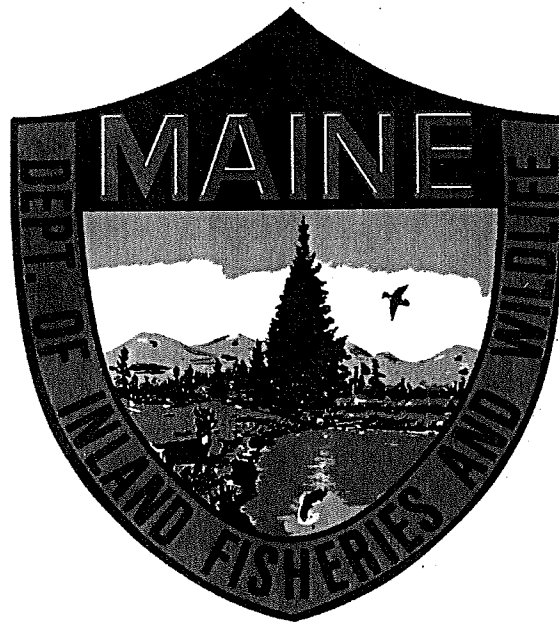
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Maine Department of
Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

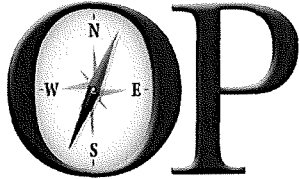


Report on
Outdoor Partners Program

Title 12 Section 10108

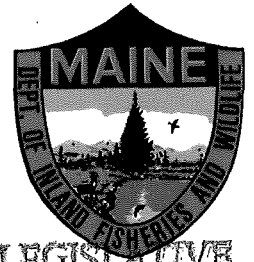
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2013

126th Legislature – First Session



OUTDOOR PARTNERS

Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Landowner Relations Program



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Access is the key to Maine's outdoor heritage and traditions, as well as our outdoor recreational economy. The Department sells over half a million licenses and registrations each year, and the bulk of these activities occur on private land. Over 90% of the state is privately owned, and continued loss of access will threaten both our natural resource-based economy, and our outdoor sporting heritage.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Landowner Relations Program works to create a more conscientious recreational user; as well as work with landowners and landusers to address issues associated with access before they become larger problems. The Outdoor Partners program recognizes the importance of access to private land and works to preserve and enhance access as well as improve relations with landowners.

Outdoor Partners Program

The Outdoor Partners program replaces the old "Supersport" program. The Outdoor Partners program is based upon legislation passed last session, entitled "An Act To Strengthen the Relationship between Land Users and Landowners." This new law directs the landowner relations program to encourage landowners to allow access, foster good relations between landowners and outdoor recreationists, and promote high standards of courtesy and respect among users.

Members who join the Outdoor Partners Program are asked to abide by a code of ethics that include: respect the land and the landowner; respect fish, wildlife and the environment; respect the law; respect all outdoor users; and pledge to assist a landowner in the upcoming year. Cost for the program is \$15.00, \$5.00 less the old program. Benefits for the program have also increased, with Cabela's, DeLorme, and L.L. Bean committing to support the Outdoor Partners program.

Sign Program

The Landowner Relations Sign Program is designed to offer landowners alternatives to posting their land with "no trespassing" signs. In the past year, the program distributed over 40,000 signs. The most popular sign is the "Access By Permission Only" sign. Last year, we sold 28,524 of these signs.

The number of signs sold, by subject and in order of popularity are:

- Access By Permission Only – 28,524
- Safety Zone – Residence Nearby – 4,604
- Hunting By Permission Only – 4,507
- Access May Become Limited – 1,692
- No Vehicles Beyond This Point – 1,583
- Foot Traffic Only – 1,456
- No Dumping – 808
- Access Permitted – 628
- School Safety Zone – 321

-more-

OCT 09 2013

Stop Please Use Designated Public Access – 262
Bowhunters Please Retrieve Your Arrows – 145
Attention Anglers Access Permitted – 230
Shooting Range Safety Zone – 78

Each sign costs approximately \$.29 to purchase. The “Access By Permission Only” and “Hunting By Permission Only” signs are sold for \$.50, all others are free. Over the next year, plans are to standardize the sign program as we order new signs. We are also exploring possible corporate donations to lower the cost of the “Access By Permission Only” signs.

Education

Creating a more conscientious user is done through education. Landowner Relations is an integral part of the department’s recreational safety courses, and the landowner relations coordinator takes part as a speaker during instructor certification and the department ethics course.

The Outdoor Partners Program also features an electronic newsletter that will be sent periodically to members of the program. The newsletter will feature insight from outdoor experts and organizations such as the Maine Professional Guides, the Maine Snowmobile Association, SWOAM, and department staff. The goal of the newsletter is to provide useful, insider information to outdoor partners.

Outreach

Over the past year, the landowner relations website was move to the IFW site and updated with the Outdoor Partner program information. A new brochure is complete and will be sent to license agents shortly. Updated brochures on the landowner liability law and access are planned for early this year.

The landowner relations coordinator represents the commissioner on the Governor’s Landowner Sportsman’s Relations Advisory Board, and the Sportsmen’s Forest Landowner Alliance. Both groups are comprised of landowners and sportsman’s groups. The two groups meet regularly discuss relevant issues and prevent problems before they arise.

Over the past year, the landowner relations coordinator has met and/or presented at meetings with the Maine Snowmobile Association, Small Woodlands Association of Maine, the Maine Farm Bureau, the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine, Maine Professional Guides Association, Maine Marine Patrol, Maine Forest Rangers, North Maine Woods Directors, the Nature Conservancy, The Land for Maine’s Future, The Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Franklin County Community Coalition, municipalities, rod and gun clubs, and snowmobile clubs as well as companies such as Wagner Forest Resources, Plum Creek, Irving Woodlands, Seven Islands, Huber Resources Corporation, and Central Maine Power.

Landowner Appreciation Cleanup Day was also a success. The Maine Forest Service Rangers spearheaded the event in 2011, and the landowner relations coordinator worked with the Forest Service to promote and help with the 2012 event. Utilizing the Maine Forest Service Rangers Incident command system and a network of volunteers, over 120 dumping sites throughout the state were cleaned up. The total list included over 72,000 pounds of refuse, 1,219 tires, 110 televisions, 13 batteries, 27 appliances and 63 pieces of furniture. These items all were disposed of properly at local landfills and transfer stations. Over 200 volunteers took part in this year’s event, and both the Maine Forest Service and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife look forward to growing the program with even more volunteers next year.

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