

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

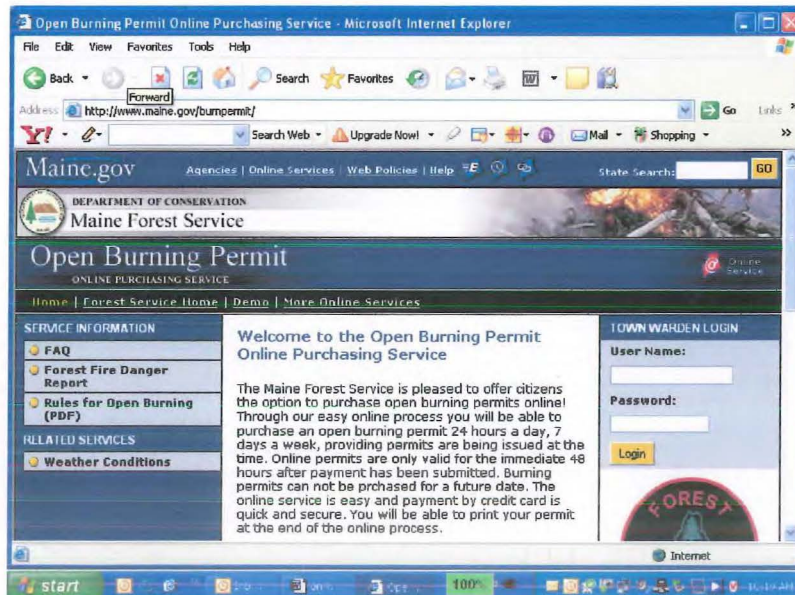
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Maine Forest Service Forest Protection Division

Report on the Pilot Project for issuing burn permits electronically



January 21, 2007



Introduction

The Maine Forest Service's statutory responsibility (see appendix A for details)

- Title 12, section 8002, proclaims “the Maine Forest Service has the responsibility for the control of forest fires in all areas of the State.”
- Burn permits are issued under the authority of the Director of the Maine Forest Service. Title 12, section 9326, describes the pilot project for issuing permits electronically.
- Title 12, section 9324-5 states “no person, firm or corporation may burn out-of-doors without a permit from a Town Forest Fire Warden or Forest Ranger...”
- Town Fire Wardens are the primary contact for Forest Rangers in the organized towns and receive an annual stipend of \$100.00 to issue burn permits and perform other duties.

History and background of online burn permit system

- In 2004, the Governors Budget Bill for 2006 – 2007 requested the Maine Forest Service implement a program to charge for open burning permits.
- In early 2005, the first hearing took place and the Maine Forest Service proposed charging \$5 for all open burning permits statewide.
- In late February 2005, the second hearing occurred and the plan was modified to charge \$7 for online burn permits, while still allowing written burn permits to be issued for free. Online burn permits were only to be issued in organized towns in the Maine Forest Service's Southern Region and in unorganized towns statewide.

Although conventional written burn permits have been used in Maine for decades, the online burn permit system only became operational on July 1, 2005. The concept of obtaining burn permits electronically began in 2003 as a means of addressing the budget shortfall and providing consistent safety requirements when issuing burn permits. The MFS also wanted to modernize and update its burn permit system. By developing an online burn permit system, the MFS would also be able to track active burn permits instantly and provide a convenient method of compiling year-end reports. The online burn permit system would also provide a convenient means for the public to obtain burn permits and reduce the workload for Maine's Town Fire Wardens.

In 2003, the Maine Forest Service, Forest Protection Division lost eleven Forest Ranger positions due to budget cuts. The 2004 -05 biennium budget faced similar challenges with a significant deficit that could have resulted in non-sustainable cuts to the Forest Protection Division. To help avoid these potential cuts, including layoffs, the MFS proposed revenue enhancements.

The first hearing on the subject of online burn permits occurred during early winter of 2005. Due to bad weather, turnout was low, but the Maine Forest Service was able to outline its plan to charge a \$5 dollar fee for all open burning permits statewide. Based on historical numbers of permits issued annually, the potential revenue to the State's general fund would be approximately \$800,000 annually or \$1,600,000 over the upcoming biennium. This plan also included the creation of an electronic system whereby permits could be obtained online.

Based on strong interest, a second hearing occurred on February 23, 2005. The Legislature's Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee voted 11-0 in favor of a two-tiered system. This modified plan was a compromise reached by the ACF Committee members in an attempt to satisfy the concerns of all members.

The proposed system would charge a fee of \$7 per online burn permit, yet still allow continued issuance of written burn permits, free of charge. InforME, who designed and currently maintains the online burn permit system, would make \$1 for each online burn permit and the rest of the revenue would go to the State's general fund. The test area for the online burn permit would be limited to the Maine Forest Service's Southern region (roughly south of Newport and west of Bucksport to the New Hampshire state line) for organized towns and statewide for unorganized towns (see appendix B for map of test area).

The desired outcome of the system was to provide revenue for the MFS, convenience for the public and reduce the workload for the town offices and Town Fire Wardens that currently issue thousands of hand written burn permits. The Maine Forest Service also wanted to standardize the specific open-burning requirements listed on burn permits. The requirements on the online burn permits represent the first time in history that pre-set conditions / criteria have been utilized statewide. This would reduce the amount of escaped debris burn fires and utilize modern technology to make outdoor burning safer for Maine's citizens.

Since the on line burn permit system started in July 2005, the MFS has made dozens of minor changes in the website based on comments from Town Forest Fire Wardens and users of the site. We have also held numerous meetings with Fire Chiefs and gathered feedback which has helped us improve the system.



Current status

- Over 5000 permits have been issued between July 1 & Dec 20, 2006 generating \$30,000* in revenue. (approx. 4777 from organized towns and approx 197 from unorganized townships and plantations).

**It should be noted that restrictions placed on the on line burn permit system by the 122nd Maine State Legislature (i.e., allowing written burn permits to remain free of charge) reduced revenue significantly.*

- The number of permits issued electronically as a % of total permits in the pilot region = 3%

(169,122 handwritten permits / 5,000 online permits)

**please note that the anticipated number of handwritten permits for 2006 only slightly exceeded the predicted amount of 160,000 stated at the first Legislative hearing in early 2005 (i.e., the number of these permits should be considered constant from year to year).*

- Associated costs –
 - In June, July and August 2005, approx \$10,000 (Federal grant funds) was spent on the initial advertising of the online burn permit program. Since then, no money has been spent directly on advertising the online burn permit system.
 - InforMe earns \$1 for every online burn permit sold and has spent countless hours developing and maintaining the website.
- Current participation – based on a report run on Jan 12, 2007
 - Within the MFS Southern Region test area, two-thirds of Town Fire Wardens have actively participated* in the on line burn permit system. Nearly all of their email notifications for the Unorganized Townships and Plantations have been entered.

**By “actively participating” in the system, Town Fire Wardens (or someone representing their interests) have accessed the website and entered one or more of the following:*

1. Email notification information.
 2. Unauthorized user information.
 3. Set restrictions on how many permits can be issued each day.
- Forty Town Fire Wardens have used the “unauthorized user” list to prevent certain citizens (with a history of disregarding the open burning laws) from using the on line burn permit system.

- Only one or two Town Fire Wardens have been known to consistently set restrictions for the number of permits allowed, which essentially shuts down the system for their towns. The system only allows the restrictions to be set for three days at a time.
- Fourteen towns have entered cell phone notification information, which allows the Town Fire Wardens to receive text messages instantly when an online burn permit has been issued.



Positive aspects of system from the Maine Forest Service perspective:
(see appendix C for summary of the benefits of the system)

The advantages of using computer technology – verses handwritten permits

- The online burn permit system offers a quick and easy way to track active burn permits by District / Region. Summary information only takes minutes to complete. With the conventional burn permit system, hundreds of packs of paper burn permits have to be distributed and then collected by Forest Rangers. Once the permits are collected, they must be counted by hand.
- Summary information from the conventional open burning permits is limited to the total number of burn permits for each town or unorganized township. In contrast, summary information from online burn permits can provide more useful information (such as the number of Town Fire Wardens actively using the system, and the number of active permits at any given time) and takes much less effort to gather.

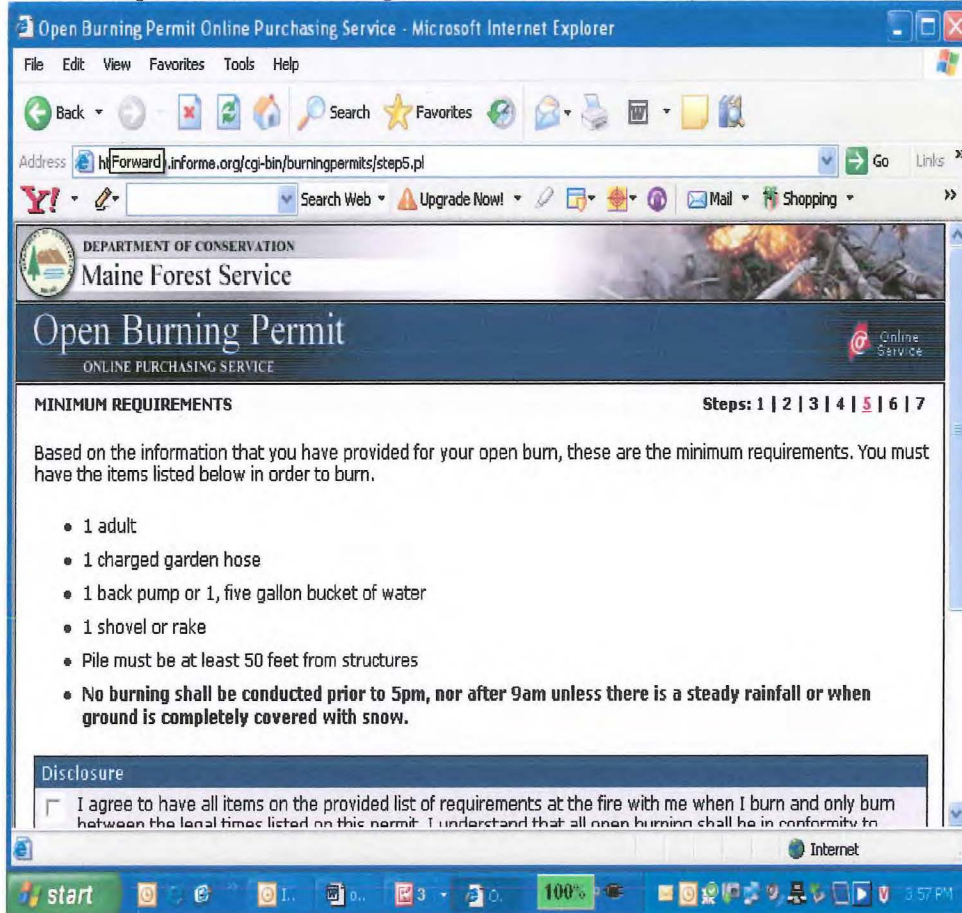


A safer means of burning out of doors

- The online burn permit system only allows citizens to purchase burn permits on class 1 or 2 days when the fire danger is low to moderate. Between March 26 and May 9, 2006 (Maine's unofficial spring fire season) the on line burn permit system was automatically shut down for 31 days in the Southern Region test area. This was due to the predicted fire danger being class 3 (high fire danger) or higher.

- In an effort to eliminate open burning during the hottest and driest part of the day (also the period likely to have increasing winds), on line burn permits are only valid between 5pm and 9am. This also corresponds to when most volunteer firefighters are home from work and more readily available to respond to a wildfire.
- The ability to obtain online burn permits can be shut down instantly. This is an excellent advantage compared to the written burn permit system, which would require hundreds of phone calls to “shut down” and not allow burn permits to be issued. This also assumes all Town Fire Wardens and their Deputy Wardens are reachable by phone at any given time. In the event of a statewide moratorium on open burning, the on line system could be shut down within minutes.
- During a dry period in the Spring of 2006, the Maine Forest Service voluntarily shut down the on line system between March 17 and 20, 2006. Even though the predicted class day was class 2 (moderate) for the Augusta area during that time, the decision was made to shut down the system in anticipation of predicted fire danger for the upcoming weekend. Shutting it down only took a few minutes.
- Town Fire Wardens can also set restrictions and / or shut down the online burn permit system in their town. Options for reasons to restrict the amount of permits include:
 - limited firefighting resources.
 - special event (such as a town parade, fire dept. training, funerals, etc).
 - limited access (blocked roads due to construction or wet conditions).
- To minimize the chance of an online burn permit fire escaping and causing a wildfire, the Maine Forest Service has created minimum safety requirements for each type of fire, based on fire activity and fire weather data over several years. These requirements are listed in figure 1 and are based on analyses of fire weather data and years of fire fighting experience, not based on personal matters that don't apply to preventing fires. Types of fires range from grass fires (for burning fields), brush pile /lumber pile fires to agricultural burns (e.g., blueberry fields or prescribed fires for hazardous fuels reduction / habitat improvement).

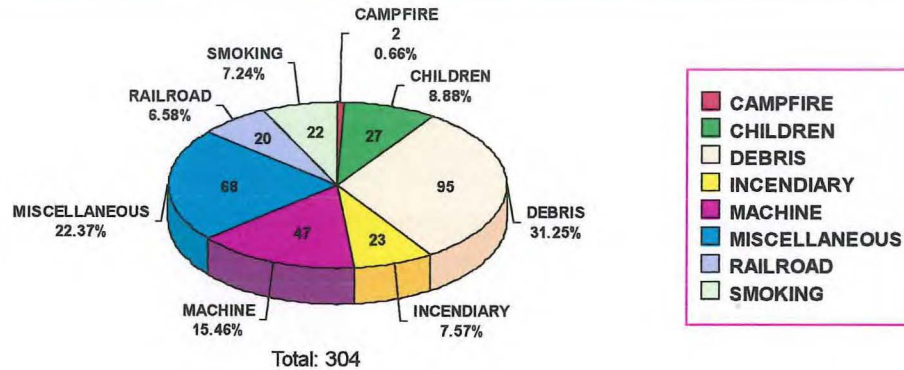
Figure 1. An example of the minimum requirements needed to lawfully burn a 10' x 10' brush pile.



- It should be noted that we have had several calls from citizens attempting to use the on line system who complain that they can't meet the burn requirements. After explaining the reasons and basis for the safety precautions / burn requirements, we refund their \$7.
- In some cases, conventional burn permits are issued out of the local town office. While this may be convenient for the person requesting a burn permit, it is uncertain whether the person issuing the permit is always knowledgeable of the current predicted class day and/ or any restrictions that should be written on the permit. (Note: see Appendix E for a comparison of an online burn permit and a hand written burn permit).

Figure 2. The leading cause of wildfires in Southern Maine is due to escaped debris burns.

Number of Forest Fires by Cause - 2006 - Southern Region



- As a result of imposing minimum requirements with the online burn permit system, coupled with several rainy fire seasons (and the fact that you can only obtain these online burn permits on class 1 or 2 days and burn after 5pm), the amount of escaped fires from permitted burns has been reduced by 37% between 2004 and 2006.



An online system that encourages Fire Prevention and places the responsibility of burning on an *informed* citizen

- The system allows a pro-active approach to fire prevention by requiring the user to become familiar with the Fire Danger Rating System and the predicted class day, which is posted and updated on line daily. For example, if a permit is purchased on a class 2 day, but the user decides to use it on the following day, he/she must first verify that the predicted class day is still 2 or less (note: all online burn permits are only valid within 48 hours of the time of issuance).
- Fire Danger Rating System – based on current and predicted weather and forest fuel conditions.
 - Class day 1 = low fire danger
 - Class day 2 = moderate fire danger
 - Class day 3 = high fire danger
 - Class day 4 = very high fire danger
 - Class day 5 = extreme fire danger

The advantages of obtaining online burn permits rather than handwritten permits

- During the 18 month test phase, the Maine Forest Service received over 210 email requests for online burn permit access from outside of pilot region (see appendix B). It should also be noted that all counties outside of the test area were represented. Users of the system comments are listed in Appendix F. In general, users of the system found it:
 - **Convenient** – The user can obtain an online burn permit 24 hours a day as long as the class day is 2 or less.
 - **Saves gas and time** previously spent locating down Town Fire Wardens / Forest Rangers for handwritten burn permits.



- Many Town Fire Wardens and Fire Chiefs approve of the system– see appendix G for a selection of comments. In general, they found the online burn permit system:
 - **Saves the town money** by not having to pay firefighters to work at the station to issue burn permits at a certain time (usually Saturday mornings).
 - **Eliminates liability and invasion of privacy** associated with citizens coming to Town Fire Warden’s homes to obtain conventional paper burn permits. It should be noted that several Town Fire Wardens have expressed interest in eliminating handwritten burn permits altogether.



- Several Regional Communication Centers (see appendix H) also approve using the online burn permit system because:
 - **Use of the system reduces dispatching Fire Department resources** during “report of smoke” calls.
 - **The system keeps dispatchers informed** of permitted burns within their area.
- Ten Regional Communication Centers have been allowed “read only” access to the online burn permit system, so they can view all the active online burn permits within their county or towns within a few minutes. If they do find a permit near where the smoke has been reported, their dispatchers can read valuable (and often very detailed) information which describes the location of the permitted burn. Other contact information such as email and phone numbers are also available.

Figure 3. An example of a detailed description of a brush pile fire on an online burn permit.

Permit Number	Permittee's Name	Location	Burn Type	Burn Dates
06-000004956	sturtz, robert	South of barn at 18 Picnic Hill Road; next to well and hydrant; pruned apple and highbush cranberry stems; fire will be less than 10'x10' at all times, Albany twp, ME	Residential	12/14/06 - 12/16/06

Figure 4. An example of a descriptive narrative in the location section of an online burn permit.

06-000004990	Rolfe, Alan	196 Puddledock Rd.....just up the road from Longfellow's Green House....opposite side of the road...red house with red garage, snowmobile trailer in driveway, Manchester, ME	Residential	12/19/06 - 12/21/06
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Concerns about the online burn permit system:

(see appendix D for summary of the complaints associated with the system)



- **Open burning violations** associated with the on line system which occurred during the 18 month test phase:
 1. **Title 12 S9321-1 “ Burning outside the criteria”**
 - Only one known escaped fire occurred from online burn permit system (fire code 06-230-002). On Feb 21, 2006 a landowner in Woolwich allowed his permitted brush pile to escape into a nearby grass field and burn 2.6 acres. The on line burn permit stated that “no burning shall be conducted prior to 5pm,” but the landowner started his burn at 1pm. The landowner was summonsed for violating Title 12 S9321-1 and paid \$100 fine and \$565 for restitution to the Fire Dept. It should also be noted that several conventional written burn permits had been issued from the Woolwich Town office that same afternoon, without any restrictions on allowable burn times.
 - Complaint # 06-4210-308. On Augusta 7, 2006 a landowner in Newry was summonsed for violating Title 12 S9321-1. The landowner was burning at 3pm (the fire had been started around 1pm) while the online burn permit clearly stated “no burning shall be conducted prior to 5pm.”
 2. **Title 12 S9324-7 “Burning prohibited materials”**
 - Complaint # 05-4230-239. On August 25, 2005, a landowner in Palmyra was summonsed for violating title 12 S9324-7. He was burning cardboard boxes, metal box springs and a dresser, which are prohibited items.

- **Perceived “loss of local control”**

- Several Town Fire Wardens and Fire Chiefs have expressed dislike of the online burn permit system and claimed they have lost “local control.” The MFS disagrees with this statement and has made every effort to make the online burn permit system similar to the conventional paper burn permit system. We realize the importance of allowing the Town Fire Warden local control.
- A few Town Fire Wardens who monitor the system daily have requested the ability to allow citizens to burn during daylight hours, especially on weekends. While the Maine Forest Service has considered many options to develop this concept, the system is currently not set up to allow this flexibility. However, if a citizen insists on burning their brush before 5pm on a weekend, they have the following options:
 1. obtain a hand written burn permit from the Town Fire Warden.
 2. wait and burn on a rainy day or when the ground is completely covered with snow.
- At any given time, the Town Fire Warden can restrict the amount of on line burn permits to a small number or even zero, if the Fire Department resources are not available.
- They can also enter names in the “unauthorized user” list, to prevent citizens with known open burning violations from obtaining permits online.

- **Minor confusion over place names**

We’ve had a few instances of citizens selecting the wrong location when purchasing an online burn permit. Some examples include:

- Eagle Lake Twp was used to purchase a permit in the organized town of Eagle Lake (which is not within the MFS Southern Region test area).
- Maine also has two separate unorganized townships with the same name of Perkins Township. In response to this minor problem, we added the county names after each listing of Perkins.

We are also looking into listing towns and unorganized townships by county, rather than the current alphabetical list, sorted by organized town and unorganized territory.

- **Problems receiving email notification**

- Normally, once Town Fire Wardens enter their email addresses in the notification section, they are able to receive email notification as shown below:

An Online Fire Permit has been issued in your town:

Name: robert sturtz

Burn Location: South of barn at 18 Picnic Hill Road; next to well and hydrant; pruned apple and highbush cranberry stems; fire will be less than 10'x10' at all times

View the permit:

<http://www.informe.org/cgi-bin/burningpermits/viewpermit.pl?i=000004956&c=Fp14aF&e=bobsturtz@megalin.net>

- On several occasions, Town Fire Wardens have called to complain that they have not been able to receive email notification from the on line burn permit system. After contacting the website developer (InforME), we have concluded that the Town Fire Warden's internet service provider (ISP) is often inadvertently blocking the notification email. Once the Town Fire Warden contacts their ISP, the problem is fixed easily.

Improvements made to the online burn permit system

- Based on input from Town Fire Wardens:
 - **Eliminate sending valuable resources to a reported fire, only to find out it is a legitimate on line burn permit** – When departments are called out on a “report of smoke” call, they don't have time to check the online burn permit system. To overcome this issue, the Maine Forest Service set up 10 Regional Communication Centers with “read-only” access (see page 8).
 - Counties set up: Somerset, York, Lincoln, Cumberland, Penobscot, Knox, Androscoggin (partial) and Oxford.
 - Regional Comm. centers set up: Naples Comm. Center and Augusta Regional Comm. Center.
 - **Allow more flexible burn times** – Mt. Vernon requested they be able to change the allowable burn times to better reflect how they write their written permits. We have made it possible for them to select 6pm instead of 5pm and 12am instead of 9am.

- **Increase the number of email notifications from 3 to 6** – This improvement increased the chance of a Town Fire Warden or Deputy Town Fire Warden receiving email notification of an active on line burn permit. It was suggested by Manchester, but incorporated into the entire system.
 - **Shut down the on line burn permit system during periods where written permits are not being issued.** Some Town Fire Wardens have specific situations where they do not issue written permits, regardless of the predicted class day. An example is a town in Somerset County that has access problems on gravel roads with their heavy fire trucks during mud season. The Maine Forest Service has agreed to shut down the system for their town for the month of May each year.
 - **Limit on line burn permits to certain geographical areas of towns** – Based on several requests, the Maine Forest Service developed a passcode system that requires citizens to call the local Fire Dept. before obtaining an online burn permit. The cities of Augusta, Gardiner, and Kennebunkport have requested this based on locations that they don't allow open burning due to smoke nuisance problems (i.e., near hospitals or retirement homes). This passcode system is also used so Town Fire Wardens can inspect brush piles before they are ignited, to ensure they don't contain prohibited materials.
- Based on input from refunds and the website, specific wording was changed:
 - **To reduce the amount of refunds based on obtaining permits in advance of 48 hours** - Written permits have traditionally been issued for several days or weeks when there is snow on the ground. The on line burn permit system is not designed for allowing permits to be valid more than 48 hours.
 - **To reduce confusion concerning electronic campfire permits** – dozens of citizens attempted to use the on line burn permit system to obtain campfire permits for authorized campsites in the Unorganized Townships. At present, it does not have that capability.
- Many Town Fire Wardens have shown support of the system:
 - **By providing links to the MFS site from their Fire Dept. websites** (10 so far).
 - **By setting up specific email addresses** at their fire depts. or town offices for this system (numerous).

- **By entering their work and their personal email addresses into the system.**
- **By *not* issuing conventional written permits at all.**



Recommendations

- Expand online burn permit system statewide, keeping as a pilot program (conventional hand-written open burning permits would still be available at no cost, unless revenue sharing is approved).
- Share revenue from on line burn permits with Town Fire Wardens. By splitting the revenue (\$5 to general fund, \$1 to InforME and \$1 to the Towns), more support will be gained.
- Allow towns to charge citizens for hand-written burn permits. Several towns have requested the ability to do this. One possibility for handling this is for the Maine Forest Service to sell an annual supply of “fee” permits to each town for \$3 each. Then, the town could either absorb the fee and distribute them to citizens without charge or charge \$3 each (or they could charge more than \$3 if they wanted to generate revenue).
- Allow the system to be used for campfire permits in the unorganized territories.

Appendices

- A. Enabling Legislation
- B. Map of Participating Towns and Unorganized Townships and locations where email comments originated.
- C. Summary of the benefits of the on line burn permit system.
- D. Summary of complaints associated with the on line burn permit system.
- E. Examples of an online burn permit and handwritten permits.
- F. Comments summary
- G. Comments from citizens outside the test area
- H. Comments from citizens inside the test area
- I. Comments from Town Fire Wardens / Fire Chiefs.
- J. Comments from Regional Communication Centers.

Prev: [Chapter 807 §9325](#)Next: [Chapter 807 §9331](#)**Title 12: CONSERVATION****Part 11: FORESTRY****Chapter 807: FOREST FIRE CONTROL****Subchapter 4: REGULATION OF OPEN BURNING****Article 2: OUT-OF-DOOR FIRES**[Download Chapter 807](#)[PDF](#), [Word \(RTF\)](#)[Download Section 9326](#)[PDF](#), [Word \(RTF\)](#)**§9326. Pilot project for issuing permits electronically**[Statute Search](#)[List of Titles](#)[Maine Law](#)[Disclaimer](#)[Revisor's Office](#)[Maine Legislature](#)

The Director of the Bureau of Forestry shall develop or cause to be developed a system to electronically issue permits for burning using a publicly accessible site on the Internet. Beginning July 1, 2005, the director may issue permits electronically for burning within the unorganized territory and within the southernmost region of the 3 geographic regions of the State established in accordance with section 8906. For the purposes of this section, the unorganized territory and the southernmost region are referred to as "the pilot region." [2005, c. 12, Pt. U, §2 (new).]

The system developed under this section for electronically issuing permits must provide a fire warden with the ability to change the criteria for issuing a permit in a municipality except for times when the director imposes more restrictive criteria or a ban on the issuance of permits. [2005, c. 12, Pt. U, §2 (new).]

Beginning July 1, 2005, a person may apply for a permit to burn within the pilot region using the Internet or as otherwise provided in this article. When a person applies for and is issued a permit electronically using the Internet, a fee of \$7 must be paid. From the \$7 fee, \$6 must be deposited in the General Fund and the remainder of \$1 must be used to cover administrative costs. [2005, c. 12, Pt. U, §2 (new).]

Section History:

PL 2005, Ch. 12, §U2 (NEW).

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7 State House Station

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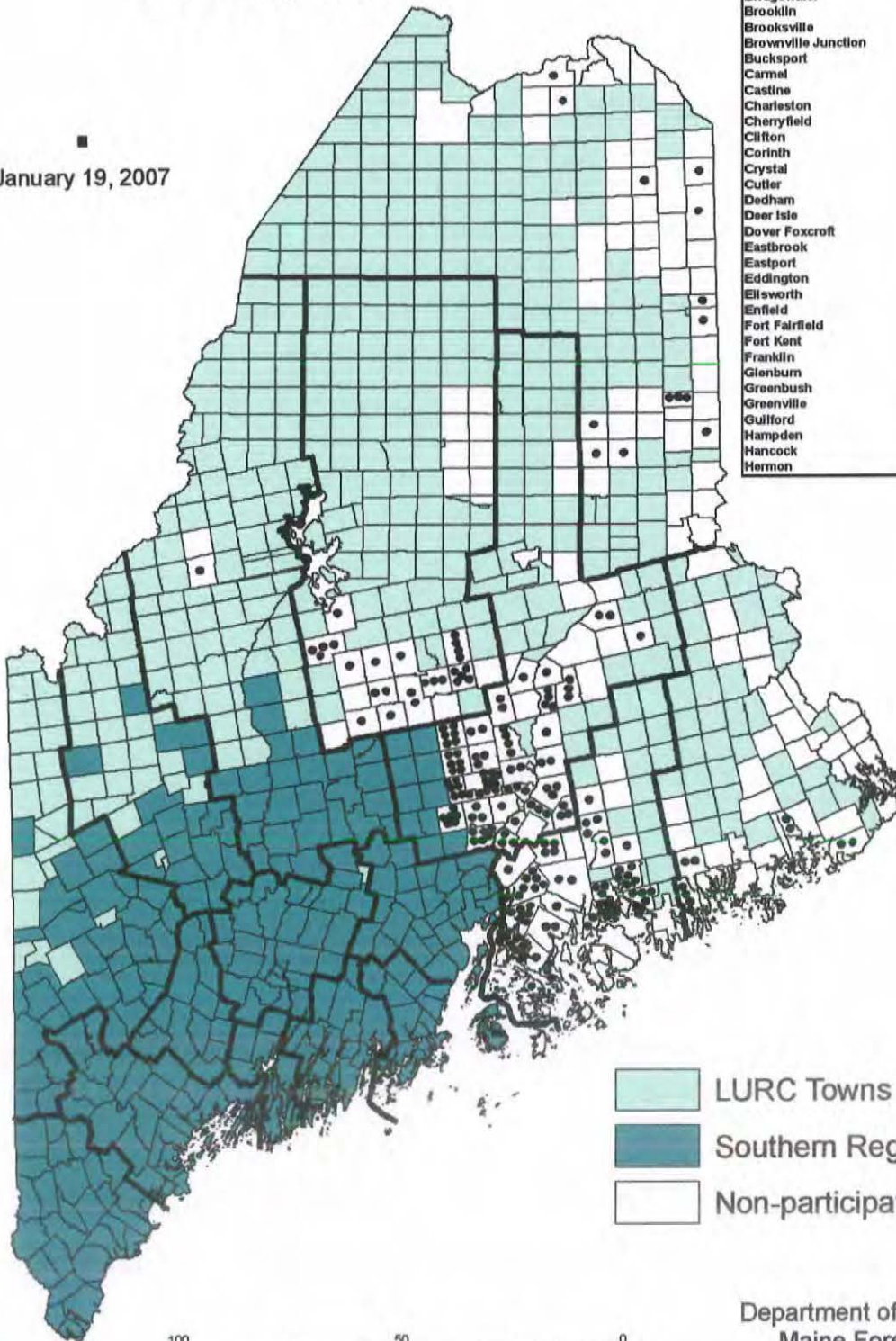
Augusta, Maine 04333-0007

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Electronic Inquiries Via The Website Outside Test Area

Online Burning Permits Report to the ACF Committee February 2007

January 19, 2007



Town	Count	Town	Count
Allon	4	Harsey	1
Amherst	1	Hodgdon	1
Bangor	1	Howland	1
Blaine	1	Hudson	3
Blue Hill	2	Island Falls	1
Bowenbank	1	Jackman	1
Bradford	2	Lagrange	2
Bradley	3	Lamoine	7
Brewer	1	Levant	7
Bridgewater	1	Limestone	1
Brooklin	3	Lowell	3
Brooksville	5	Ludlow	3
Brownville Junction	4	Maraville	3
Bucksport	1	Marshfield	2
Carmel	6	Millford	2
Castine	5	Milo	5
Charleston	6	Monson	1
Cherryfield	2	New Canada	1
Clifton	3	Old Town	2
Corinth	6	Orland	7
Crystal	1	Orono	3
Cutter	2	Orrington	3
Dedham	4	Parkman	1
Deer Isle	1	Passadumkeag	4
Dover Foxcroft	2	Penobscot	6
Eastbrook	1	Roque Bluffs	1
Eastport	1	Sangerville	1
Eddington	3	Sebec	3
Ellsworth	2	Sedgwick	1
Enfield	1	Shirley	4
Fort Fairfield	1	Springfield	1
Fort Kent	1	Steuben	4
Franklin	6	Sullivan	4
Glenburn	10	Surry	1
Greenbush	1	Trenton	2
Greenville	1	Verona Island	1
Guilford	2	Waltham	2
Hampden	6	Willimantic	1
Hancock	3	Winn	2
Hermon	3	Woodland	1

Total 210

- LURC Towns (457)
- Southern Region Test Area (257)
- Non-participating Towns (201)

100 50 0 Miles

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Department of Conservation
Maine Forest Service
Forest Protection Division



Benefits of using the on line burn permit system

- The system is **safe** and designed to reduce the risk of a wildfire. The system will only allow a permit to be issued when:
 1. The predicted fire danger (i.e., “class day”) is class 1 or 2 and there is only a low to moderate fire danger rating.
 2. The user has provided detailed information on the location of the burn, agreed to follow a list a detailed safety requirements and checked a box stating that they have not had a previous open burning violation in Maine within the last 3 years.
 3. The Maine Forest Service and / or the local Town Forest Fire Warden have decided that it is safe to issue burn permits at the time of the request. Both have access to the system and can shut it down temporarily.

Other measures of safety are built into the system:

1. The permits are only valid after 5pm. This is based on:
 - a. Our statistics indicate that most wildfires occur during the early to mid afternoon when the weather conditions are more conducive to burning.
 - b. Most volunteer firefighters work away from the towns where their fire departments serve and are more readily available after 5pm.
 2. The ability to obtain on line burn permits can be shut down instantly by individual town or throughout the entire state.
- The system is **convenient** for users and can be accessed 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Not only does it save time and gas, it also reduces the workload and liability for Town Forest Fire Wardens who issue hundreds of hand-written burn permits annually (many from their private residences).
 - The system also **saves money** for towns who pay their firefighters to be available to issue burn permits at a given time each week.
 - Depending on the success of the system, it has the potential to **generate revenue** for the Maine Forest Service and perhaps Town Fire Wardens.
 - The system offers a **quick and easy way to track active burn permits** by:
 1. Maine Forest Service Forest Ranger patrol area, Ranger District or Region.
 2. Municipality, plantation or unorganized township.
 - **Summary information can be obtained accurately** and with much less effort than conventional written burn permits.

Complaints concerning the on line burn permit system

- **Perceived loss of local control** for Town Forest Fire Wardens. Several don't understand how safe the on line burn permit system is and are reluctant to change the existing system of using hand-written burn permits.
- **Lack of computer, internet access or sufficient skills / desire** to use the system to check to see if on line permits have been issued.
- **Not enough flexibility** for allowable burn times.
- **No ability to eliminate people who live in restricted geographical areas** (i.e., near hospitals, etc.) from obtaining on line burn permits.
- **At present, the system does not allow revenue for towns.**

1567380

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Canary copy to permittee

Maine Forest Service
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
OPEN BURNING PERMIT

Telephone Number 824-0300

Permission is hereby granted to: Kenneth Robertson, P. Box 524, Bethel
Permittee Address

To kindle: CAMPFIRE SLASH BRUSH GRASS & PASTURE BLUEBERRY LAND
 OTHER _____ Date of Burn: 12/15/06 Hours to Burn: _____

Location of Open Burning: 1197 Hunts Corner Rd., Albany Twp.

Means of Travel: _____ Boat or Registration (Required for Campfire Permit) Number in Party: _____

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Specific Number: ADULTS 2 PORTABLE PUMP & HOSE _____ CHARGED GARDEN HOSE yes
BACK PUMP _____ HAND TOOLS shovels OTHER: _____
Specify

KEEP CONSTANT WATCH ON FIRE AND MAKE SURE THAT IT IS COMPLETELY EXTINGUISHED BEFORE LEAVING

This permit is granted in the good faith that the fire is carefully watched and controlled by a sufficient force of adults and adequate equipment. You shall be liable for suppression costs if the fire escapes due to negligence or not following the safety requirements listed above. All open burning shall be in conformity to existing laws and regulations of the Maine Forest Service, Department of Environmental Protection and local municipal ordinances. In accordance with Title 12 statutes, the out-of-door burning of plastic, rubber, Styrofoam, metals, food wastes, chemicals, treated wood or other solid wastes, except for wood wastes, is prohibited in all areas of the State. Any person who engages in out of door burning or who fails to comply with any stated permit condition or restriction commits a Class E crime.

Countersigned by: _____ Time Issued: 1147 AM PM Authority: Director
Town Warden or Forest Ranger _____ Maine Forest Service
Signature of Permittee 12/15/06 Jill French Signature of Person Issuing Permit

FCP001 07/02

STATE LAW REQUIRES PERMIT IN HAND DURING BURNING
IN ORGANIZED TOWNS, VILLAGES AND PLANTATIONS

1640382

White copy retained
Canary copy to permittee

Maine Forest Service
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
OPEN BURNING PERMIT

Telephone Number 467-9079

Permission is hereby granted to: Jeff Smith, P.O. Box 395, W. Kennebunk, Me. 04094
Permittee Address

To kindle: CAMPFIRE SLASH BRUSH GRASS & PASTURE BLUEBERRY LAND
 OTHER _____ Date of Burn: 12/21/06 Hours to Burn: after 5:00 PM

Location of Open Burning: 52 So. Shore Dr. Albany Twp.

Means of Travel: _____ Boat or Registration (Required for Campfire Permit) Number in Party: _____

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Specific Number: ADULTS 2 PORTABLE PUMP & HOSE _____ CHARGED GARDEN HOSE yes
BACK PUMP _____ HAND TOOLS rakes, shovels OTHER: _____
Specify

KEEP CONSTANT WATCH ON FIRE AND MAKE SURE THAT IT IS COMPLETELY EXTINGUISHED BEFORE LEAVING

This permit is granted in the good faith that the fire is carefully watched and controlled by a sufficient force of adults and adequate equipment. You shall be liable for suppression costs if the fire escapes due to negligence or not following the safety requirements listed above. All open burning shall be in conformity to existing laws and regulations of the Maine Forest Service, Department of Environmental Protection and local municipal ordinances. In accordance with Title 12 statutes, the out-of-door burning of plastic, rubber, Styrofoam, metals, food wastes, chemicals, treated wood or other solid wastes, except for wood wastes, is prohibited in all areas of the State. Any person who engages in out of door burning or who fails to comply with any stated permit condition or restriction commits a Class E crime.

Countersigned by: _____ Time Issued: 1052 AM PM Authority: Director
Town Warden or Forest Ranger _____ Maine Forest Service
Signature of Permittee 12/21/06 Jill French Signature of Person Issuing Permit

FCP001 07/02

STATE LAW REQUIRES PERMIT IN HAND DURING BURNING

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

OPEN BURNING PERMIT

Telephone Number 864-5249

White copy retained
Canary copy to permittee

Permission is hereby granted to: Ron Pay, 960 Wilsons Mills Rd., Oquossac
Permittee Address

To kindle: CAMPFIRE SLASH BRUSH GRASS & PASTURE BLUEBERRY LAND

OTHER Construction debris Date of Burn: 11/29/06 Hours to Burn: _____

Location of Open Burning: 960 Wilsons Mills Rd (next to M75)

Means of Travel: _____ Number in Party: _____
Boat or Registration (Required for Campfire Permit)

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Specific Number: ADULTS 2 PORTABLE PUMP & HOSE _____ CHARGED GARDEN HOSE Yes

BACK PUMP _____ HAND TOOLS _____ OTHER: Backhoe

lean wood only, no pressure treated, no shingles, no wire Specify

KEEP CONSTANT WATCH ON FIRE AND MAKE SURE THAT IT IS COMPLETELY EXTINGUISHED BEFORE LEAVING

This permit is granted in the good faith that the fire is carefully watched and controlled by a sufficient force of adults and adequate equipment. You shall be liable for suppression costs if the fire escapes due to negligence or not following the safety requirements listed above. All open burning shall be in conformity to existing laws and regulations of the Maine Forest Service, Department of Environmental Protection and local municipal ordinances. In accordance with Title 12 statutes, the out-of-door burning of plastic, rubber, Styrofoam, metals, food wastes, chemicals, treated wood or other solid wastes, except for wood wastes, is prohibited in all areas of the State. Any person who engages in out of door burning or who fails to comply with any stated permit condition or restriction commits a Class E crime.

Countersigned by: _____ Time Issued: 0902 AM PM Authority: _____
Town Warden or Forest Ranger Director
Maine Forest Service
Signature of Permittee: _____ Date Issued: 11/29/06 Signature of Person Issuing Permit: Jim French Per 9220

FCP001 07/02

STATE LAW REQUIRES PERMIT IN HAND DURING BURNING
IN ORGANIZED TOWNS, VILLAGES AND PLANTATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

OPEN BURNING PERMIT

Telephone Number 779-9000
C-778-1449 1640374

White copy retained
Canary copy to permittee

Permission is hereby granted to: Adrian Harris, Po B 309, Farmington
Permittee Address

To kindle: CAMPFIRE SLASH BRUSH GRASS & PASTURE BLUEBERRY LAND

OTHER _____ Date of Burn: 12/12/06 Hours to Burn: _____

Location of Open Burning: Indian Stream Sup-Plan #1, Lot 3, 700 VET RD.

Means of Travel: _____ Number in Party: _____
Boat or Registration (Required for Campfire Permit)

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Specific Number: ADULTS 3 PORTABLE PUMP & HOSE _____ CHARGED GARDEN HOSE _____

BACK PUMP _____ HAND TOOLS Shovels, rakes OTHER: Two Buckets

Specify

KEEP CONSTANT WATCH ON FIRE AND MAKE SURE THAT IT IS COMPLETELY EXTINGUISHED BEFORE LEAVING

This permit is granted in the good faith that the fire is carefully watched and controlled by a sufficient force of adults and adequate equipment. You shall be liable for suppression costs if the fire escapes due to negligence or not following the safety requirements listed above. All open burning shall be in conformity to existing laws and regulations of the Maine Forest Service, Department of Environmental Protection and local municipal ordinances. In accordance with Title 12 statutes, the out-of-door burning of plastic, rubber, Styrofoam, metals, food wastes, chemicals, treated wood or other solid wastes, except for wood wastes, is prohibited in all areas of the State. Any person who engages in out of door burning or who fails to comply with any stated permit condition or restriction commits a Class E crime.

Countersigned by: _____ Time Issued: _____ AM PM Authority: _____
Town Warden or Forest Ranger Director
Maine Forest Service
Signature of Permittee: _____ Date Issued: _____ Signature of Person Issuing Permit: Jim French

STATE LAW REQUIRES PERMIT IN HAND DURING BURNING

Comments from citizens about the on line system

How email comments and contact info were obtained, initially:

- On the second page of the website, all the participating towns are listed. If you couldn't find your town or it wasn't listed, you were prompted to respond to the question, "your municipality is not listed below?"
- On the bottom of each webpage, people could respond to the following:
Questions about this Service? Contact the Maine Forest Service at: (800) 750-9777 or Email:maine.forestranger@maine.gov

Once people sent in emails, the Maine Forest Service contacted them by phone or email as listed below:

PHONE REQUEST

It shows in our records that you have visited our online burn permit website. In the upcoming Legislative session, we will be reporting on how the online burn permit system has worked for the test area and where we should go from here. Your comments could help the committee to make that decision. Would you be willing to send us your comments in writing either via email or by mail?

PHONE MESSAGE EMAIL BACKUP REQUEST

This is a follow up to the voice mail message I left on your machine. What the Maine Forest Service is looking for, are comments from the public in regards to where we go from here with the online burn permit system to present to the Legislature. If and why you would like it to go statewide, etc. Feel free to reply with comments or you can send them by mail at the following address. Please call me if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Maine Forest Service
22 SHS
Augusta ME 04333

EMAIL REQUEST

It shows in our records that you have visited our online burn permit website. In the upcoming Legislative session, we will be reporting on how the online burn permit system has worked for the test area and where we should go from here. Your comments could help the committee to make that decision. Whether you think this program will work statewide and why, etc. Would you be willing to send us your comments in writing either via email or by mail? If so, you can reply to this message with your comments or send them to the address below. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Cheri Bellavance
Maine Forest Service
22 SHS
Augusta ME 04333

Comments from Town Wardens/Regional Communication Centers were made based on available time to call and number of on line burn permits which had been issued for each Town/RCC.

G. Comments
from outside test
area

Bellavance, Cheri R.

From: burnpermit@informe.org
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2007 9:38 AM
To: tiffany@informe.org; Bellavance, Cheri R.; Williams, Bill; Nelson, Kent; Johnston, Alan
Subject: Burn Permit Town Request (Eastbrook)

Name: Cliff Olson
Email: kcolson@verizon.net
Town: Eastbrook
Phone: 2072765459
Comments: difficult to obtain permit when needed

Bellavance, Cheri R.

From: burnpermit@informe.org
Sent: Saturday, January 06, 2007 9:31 AM
To: tiffany@informe.org; Bellavance, Cheri R.; Williams, Bill; Nelson, Kent; Johnston, Alan
Subject: Burn Permit Town Request (Alton)

Name: Harry Sanborn
Email: hlsanborn@aol.com
Town: Alton
Phone: 394-4401

Comments: I have tried twice to get a permit. Online would be easier and simple. When my schedule changed today, it would allow me to purchase a permit and burn while it was raining.

Bellavance, Cheri R.

From: burnpermit@informe.org
Sent: Wednesday, January 03, 2007 7:13 PM
To: tiffany@informe.org; Bellavance, Cheri R.; Williams, Bill; Nelson, Kent; Johnston, Alan
Subject: Burn Permit Town Request (cherryfield)

Name: kirby davis
Email: kirbyd@midmaine.com
Town: cherryfield
Phone: 207-546-2492

Comments: I was unaware that this was just a pilot project and did not encompass the entire state. it seems like an obvious alternative to tracking down a forest ranger.

Bellavance, Cheri R.

From: burnpermit@informe.org
Sent: Sunday, December 31, 2006 11:00 AM
To: tiffany@informe.org; Bellavance, Cheri R.; Williams, Bill; Nelson, Kent; Johnston, Alan
Subject: Burn Permit Town Request (bradley)

Name: peter nadeau
Email: ptroutn@yahoo.com
Town: bradley
Phone: 207-827-4108

Comments: most of the time i am not able to get to the town office or the fire department to get a permit during regular business hours. is it possible that bradley could be added to this list? thank you.

Bellavance, Cheri R.

From: burnpermit@informe.org
Sent: Thursday, December 28, 2006 1:36 PM
To: tiffany@informe.org; Bellavance, Cheri R.; Williams, Bill; Nelson, Kent; Johnston, Alan
Subject: Burn Permit Town Request (Brownville)

Name: Dan Gray

Email: graydg@kynd.com

Town: Brownville

Phone:

Comments: I'd like to see Brownville added to the online service Dan,,

-----Original Message-----

From: elcojonathan@aol.com [mailto:elcojonathan@aol.com]

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2006 11:06 AM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit

Cheri,

I think the program would be great if it were statewide. I live in Hampden and it's such a hassle to get a burn permit that I simply do not bother with even trying anymore. If you try and call the Hampden Fire Dept. you get routed to the Penobscot County Emergency Dispatch Center. If you physically go to the Hampden Fire Department they advise you that they need to do a site inspection for a first time fire, and never come out. The last time I attempted to get a permit after what I want to say was atleast 5 times over a one year period I decided to not even bother.

I think more people would prefer to do the right thing and get a permit before burning if we had a uniformed system for obtaining one statewide.

If you would like me to give you a more detailed explanation of all my unsuccessful attempts to apply for a burn permit in my municipality than I would be happy to provide that information to you.

Jonathan Philbrick, Estimation
ELCO Electric
311 Perry Rd.
Bangor, ME 04401
TEL: (207) 942-4659
FAX:(207) 942-1349

Hampden

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Kirby [mailto:Mike.Kirby@jax.org]

Sent: Friday, September 08, 2006 12:00 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit system

Cheri- thank you for the opportunity to give feedback.

I have not been able to take advantage of the online burn permit system, but I greatly look forward to the program being expanded to my area (Sullivan, Maine).

I think this program is particularly of benefit to the rural areas of Maine, where small towns have one or two people who can issue burn permits. In our area, it is always a chore to track down the person who can issue permits, as our fire department is volunteer, and he is usually unavailable by phone. I have gotten one burn permit in my 6 years living in Maine, usually I wait and see when my neighbor is burning, and I piggyback on his burn permit (our yards are close enough that we just have one fire).

I hope this feedback helps expand this program-- please let me know if Sullivan gets added to the list of participants!

Regards,

Mike Kirby
resident of Sullivan Maine



STATE OF MAINE
 DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
 MAINE FOREST SERVICE
 22 STATE HOUSE STATION
 AUGUSTA, MAINE
 04333-0022

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
 GOVERNOR

PATRICK MCGOWAN
 COMMISSIONER

September 8, 2006

This is a follow up to our phone conversation we had regarding the online burn permit system and how your comments could help the Legislative Committee decide on where we go from here. Please send us your comments in the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope. If you have any questions, please call me at 207-287-4990. Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Cheri Bellavance

Cheri Bellavance
 Secretary, Maine Forest Service

*Cheri, 9/11 I remember from the online service
 was I couldn't get my permit online, had to go to Burn
 Fire Warden. Service should be state wide, or not
 at all.*

David Wilbur

MAINE FOREST SERVICE
 ALEC GIFFEN, DIRECTOR

PHONE: (207) 287-2791 OR 1-800-367-0223

FAX: (207) 287-8422

TTY: (888) 557-6690

www.maineforestservice.org

We help you make informed decisions about Maine's forests

Verona Island

-----Original Message-----

From: Cammie and Jason Lepper [mailto:calepper@gwi.net]

Sent: Friday, September 08, 2006 11:17 AM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit

I think the online service for burn permits is great. In rural areas such as Brooksville, we can only get permits one evening a week and I think the 24 hour availability would encourage more people to get permits and burn legally. I am a volunteer firefighter and Deputy Sheriff as well and I think anything that encourages safety and makes the law easier for the public to follow is a great idea. Thanks, Jason Lepper

-----Original Message-----

From: Corey McAlpine [mailto:camrahguy@yahoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2006 9:41 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit

The online open burning permit website is a very valueable tool. The unfortunate thing is that it does not apply for my town. (Levant) I think it would be a very good idea to have it possible to get a permit in any town with a fire department, volunteer or otherwise. The biggest benefit would be that in Levant, if nobody is at the station you have to track the chief down or you don't get the permit, whether they are issuing or not. It would save a lot of people a lot of running around. The important part is that the fire department be aware that a permit has been issued. This is an absolute necessity as they need not be surprised should something go wrong. So my opinion is that it is a great program and could only get better with more departments coming on board. Thank you.
Corey McAlpine

Levant

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: markgregory@adelphia.net
subject: RE: online burn permit

-----Original Message-----

From: markgregory@adelphia.net [mailto:markgregory@adelphia.net]
Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2006 1:56 PM
To: Bellavance, Cheri R.
Subject: Re: online burn permit

Hi Cheri,

Thanks for writing...

I feel that in my hometown of Dedham, we cannot get a permit to burn on the weekends unless we can track down one of several fire wardens/officers. You have to go to their house, wonder if they'll be there etc. For instance, this spring it was the first good burning weekend we'd had in a month, and not one of 3 officials could be found to issue a permit. Hey if it is raining we ought to be able to burn.

I think an on line permit system would be a great. Anyone could go on and register anytime, and then any fire official could see that permission was obtained. If the conditions don't permit it, just update the website as to whether or not it is ok. This leaves the responsibility of the burn with the applicant.

Anything would be better than not being able to get one or chasing people around to find one...Don't get me wrong, as I don't blame our local officials, why should they be bothered on a weekend? I think it is the current system that can be updated, and going on line would really make it simple.

Thank you...

MG

Department of Conservation,

Per my conversation with Cheri Bellavance, I would like to submit my comments on the online burn permits. I think that Milford; Maine lacks several of the online resources that other communities have, like, dog licensing, online burn permits and online vehicle registrations. I would like to see these services provided to the town of Milford. There have been occasions when we would like to have a small fire at our home, but can't get a burn permit because there was no one available at the office to give us one, what a convenience it would be to just go online and get one.

Thanks,

Karen Sawyer

Bellavance, Cheri R.

From: wight526@netzero.net
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2006 8:58 AM
To: Bellavance, Cheri R.
Subject: Re: online burn permit

Thanks Cheri for the opportunity to comment. I would very much like to see the on-line system go state wide. It is not available in Orland and, despite what the fire department says about how easy it is to find someone to give you a permit, getting one is major a pain in the neck. You can't get them at the town office so you have to go to someone's house and hope they're there. If they'r not you end up calling and chasing all over town trying to locate a person to give a permit. The agrument has been made (in Orland at least) "yes, but you have to PAY for it when you get it on-line whereas it's FREE when you get it from the fire department..." My response is that it's well worth the nominal fee that's charged to eliminate the hassle of trying to track someone down, especially if you're relatively new in town and don't know anyone who's in the fire department. I would also argue that it's likely safer to offer on-line permits. After chasing all around, trying to get a permit, it's tempting to say the heck with it and just do the burn without a permit. Another argument I've heard is that anyone who gets an on-line permit will not obey the rules because there wasn't a firefighter who was asked for the permit who could say "No permit today...the conditions aren't right." Balony. Getting a permit in person doesn't mean that the individual getting it in person will follow the rules any differently from someone getting it on-line. The liability is the same. Well, that's my two cents worth. Thanks again for the opportunity to input.

Orland

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: John Noll

Subject: RE: Online burn permit site

From: John Noll [mailto:JNoll@emdc.org]

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2006 3:26 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: RE: Online burn permit site

Wow. I almost forgot about this. Thank you for getting back to me. I do not remember exactly what I had written in my initial comments but I think the following captures most of it:

Obtaining a burn permit in my town (Penobscot) can be very time consuming and inconvenient because I have to chase down the fire chief....if he is even available. He may be at home or maybe the dump....or maybe the fire station....or somewhere else. Since we can only burn after 5:00PM or weekends, obtaining a burn permit is dependent upon the chief's schedule and I have to use valuable and limited weekend time hunting him down. I have gone ahead and burned brush without a permit on several occasions because he was not available and I was not going to spend most of the morning looking for the assistant fire-chief who lives ten miles away. On-line burn permits would be a huge time saver and, I believe, will result in more legal burns.

Thank you,
John

John E. Noll
Efr Maine Development Corporation
ow Street
gor, Maine 04401

Telephone (207) 942-6389
email: jnoll@emdc.org / fax(207) 942-3548

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: Brian Friedmann

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: Brian Friedmann [mailto:bff66mrk@charter.net]

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 7:45 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit website

It sounded like a great idea to me as I am out of state and it is frequently hard to connect with the town fire warden (fire captain in my case) in order to get some burning in on a short or 3-day weekend. Unfortunately, Franklin was not on the list of participating towns. Not sure why Franklin is not on the list. Perhaps because it is an all volunteer fire station. The fire station does have a fire danger sign that appears to be kept up daily so if a permit could be had over the internet requiring the burner to check the sign and to abide by common sense (that could be spelled out in the permit), it would work well for me and lessen the work for the fire captain. Perhaps the fire captain/station could have a recorded message, besides the fire danger sign, advising burners whether it really was permissible to burn given current conditions that might have changed since the on-line permit was issued.

Thanks and I hope you can implement it statewide.

Brian Friedmann

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: robert friedlander

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: robert friedlander [mailto:rbrtfriedlander@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 6:38 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

yes

"Bellavance, Cheri R." <Cheri.R.Bellavance@maine.gov> wrote:

thanks for the reply, would you like to see Legislation pass is so that this program go statewide?

From: robert friedlander [mailto:rbrtfriedlander@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 2:33 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit website

I like the idea of online burn permit but since it was not available in Castine, it didn't do me much good
RM Friedlander

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: Ms Patricia Perry

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: Ms Patricia Perry [mailto:p50perry@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 6:07 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit website

Since my area, "Waltham", does not have this service available I am not able to comment on this service. I wish that our town would offer this service.

Bellavance, Cheri R.

From: Marjorie White
Subject: RE: online burn permit website

-----Original Message-----

From: Marjorie White [mailto:magicmom4@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 9:06 PM
To: Bellavance, Cheri R.
Subject: RE: online burn permit website

Dear Ms. Bellavance,

Unfortunately, I live in an area that does not participate in the online burn permit program. I think it is a great idea, and look forward to the time that Corinth is online. I would hope that anybody responsible to get a permit online would be responsible enough to take the necessary precautions.

Perhaps a good thing would be to have a way of notifying the local fire marshall who has obtained a permit in their area for each day, so they would at least be aware that there was some burning taking place. Good luck!

Marge White

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: Laurie Tierney

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: Laurie Tierney [mailto:lanewell@pivot.net]

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 7:42 AM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit website

I think being able to get a burn permit on-line would be awesome. A lot easier than trying to track down people to get one in person. I hope that my town will be included soon. Thank you Laurie Tierney Crystal

|

Bellavance, Cheri R.

); Fred Beck
Subject: RE: online burn permit website

-----Original Message-----

From: Fred Beck [mailto:fmbeck@fmbeck.net]
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 4:49 PM
To: Bellavance, Cheri R.
Subject: Re: online burn permit website

Dear Cheri,

Yes, I used the online burn permit opportunity a number of times, both in 2005 and 2006. I found it to be a very convenient and time saving service in our situation, which is in Harpswell. We can only obtain town-issued burn permits from the town office (which is not open on weekends) and on Saturday's from the manager of the recycling center. We can only burn on Sundays by using the State online permit option. Some Saturdays the town dump is not open or the manager is away and no Saturday permits can be obtained from the town. Since I work during the week, weekends are the only time I have for burning.

Secondly, we live about 15 minutes from the town hall and recycling center. By using the online system, we save several dollars in gas money and of course also by driving less, we help the environment. So, yes, I hope the online system can be continued and expanded to those towns which aren't included in the current test area. For example, we have a second home in Brooksville. It takes 20 minutes to drive to the Fire Chief's home to get a permit, provided he is home. Often he isn't home and we can't burn on those days, despite the favorable burning conditions. I suspect that the difficulty in getting permits in Brooksville is repeated in many other towns as well. And I would guess that this leads to unpermitted burning in some cases. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Very truly yours, Fred Beck

Bellavance, Cheri R.

o: sunnycat@surfglobal.net
Subject: RE: online burn permit website

-----Original Message-----

From: sunnycat@surfglobal.net [mailto:sunnycat@surfglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 1:30 PM
To: Bellavance, Cheri R.
Subject: Re: online burn permit website

> to be quite truthful, i think the current system is very flawed. i

> live

in a very small town (passadumkeag); either my fiance or myself has contacted the town office, which is open a combined 12hrs/wk, no less than three seperate occasions about obtaining a burning permit. twice, from two different gentlemen, we've been told that it would be dropped off in the mailbox or in the door. neither has happened. my fiance constructed a block firepit, mason quality, specifically for this purpose. when these attempts failed, we checked out the website. it appeared to me that most of the areas that could use the website were densely populated areas where people probably wouldn't burn anyway. a lot of rural areas, where people tend to burn frequently, were not on the list. now, we will no longer try to obtain permits; we'll just go ahead and burn like everybody else does. we wanted and tried to follow the rules. the rules have failed us. good luck with this website. if it's anything like the rest of maine/local gov., it will fail miserably.
thank you for your time.

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: Peter Briggs

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: Peter Briggs [mailto:pbriggs@fairpoint.net]

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 5:51 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

I think the burn permit system is great. I have used it a number of times. I believe it helps to reduce illegal burns by giving people a way to legally obtain a permit. I never had very good luck finding someone in town on a Saturday morning to help me with a burn permit. I also think it is a great way to raise a little money. Most people would be glad to pay the \$7 rather than spend a day on the phone or running around trying to find someone from the town office or fire department that can do a burn permit. Keep the system, it is great. If it is under utilized, beef up the advertising.

Stockton Springs

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: Brian Hartery

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: Brian Hartery [mailto:brian.hartery@yahoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 6:37 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit website

Ms. Bellavance

Thanks for writing this letter to me. I guess the reason that I am interested in online burn permits is because last year when I went to my town hall in Clifton there was some confusion as to where to get the permit from. The clerk at the town hall thought that one of the local residents herein Clifton who works as a fire fighter was handing them out and when I contacted him he told me I had to get it from the town hall. I went back to the town hall to tell her what I was told. She looked at me like I was some sort of moron for a minute then she called up the person she told me I had to contact and they got into a little spat on the phone. In the end the clerk wrote up my permit and I was on my way. If I was able to get my permit online then, what took me about an hour and a half, the joy of feeling stupid and getting to listen to two grown adults argue over the phone, I could have had my permit in just a few minutes and everyone would have been happy. I don't know if this happens all over the state of Maine but even if it doesn't I am sure that everyone would at least like to have the convenience of being able to flick on their computer and in less than ten minutes be out the door and starting to get their burn project on the way.

Thanks.

Brian Hartery

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: Cindy

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: Cindy [mailto:cindylucy@verizon.net]

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 7:12 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit website

Cheri,

Thank you for writing, I would be interested in filling out any information. If you could just send it to me via email that would be great. With the hrs the fire department is available it is hard to get a permit when you want one. Online would just be a quick easy way to burn brush or just to have a family fire without planning 3 days in advance.

Thank you

Cindy Coulombe

Dalhan

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: Nellie Hedstrom

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: Nellie Hedstrom [mailto:nellieh@umext.maine.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2006 1:14 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

Hi Cheri,

For your information, I found the "online burn permit website" easy to access, review and manage. The only limiting factor was the Orono did not have the necessary link. I would like to see all the towns, districts, etc listed to make obtaining a permit easy for the populace. I suggest that the 9 a.m. time for accessing a permit is too late in the day. Most Mainers want to manage the work that they do earlier in the day. We are busy and have little time to do the things that need to be done. Make the time for permit 7 a.m. or earlier.

Thanks,
Nellie Hedstrom

Nellie G. Hedstrom, MS. RD.

20 Forest Ave.

Canaan, ME 04473

Extension Professor Emerita of Nutrition

nellieh@umext.maine.edu

hedstrom@maine.edu

207.866.3586

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: matthew slater

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: matthew slater [mailto:brickcircle@hotmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2006 6:40 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

I think it would be a great service to small towns in Maine if you extended the fire burning permit through the internet. My town only allows one evening to get the required permit. which makes you plan far in advance to make a simple burn. It is decided on the weather and Maine is notorious for having changing wheather conditions. Please keep me informed. I am very intrested in this matter

sincerely,

matt slater brooksville

Brickcircle@hotmail.com

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: Shari Kinnison

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: Shari Kinnison [mailto:slmichaud@yahoo.com]

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2006 8:46 AM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit website

I think this website would be very useful statewide as it would take some of the hassle out of getting burn permits. I was very frustrated to find that the towns where I own property do not participate (Orono and Lowell). I would like to see them do so.

Shari Kinnison

165 Forest Avenue

Orono, ME 04473

⌋ (207)866-3032

Cell: (207) 299-8568

"Speak Your Mind, Even If Your Voice Shakes" -Eileen Jarvik

All-new Yahoo! Mail - Fire up a more powerful email and get things done faster.

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: harris3006@aol.com

Subject: RE: Online burn permit website

From: harris3006@aol.com [mailto:harris3006@aol.com]

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2006 1:25 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: Online burn permit website

Good day to Whom it may concern at the state house :-

The program in which you have been testing using the online burn permit website is just one of the many very convenient and cost saving ideas to come out in recent years - I believe in the years to come most things should be converted to online although you will not be able to get rid of a paper system in town offices but in our state where much of it is spread way out north of augusta it makes sense to down size town offices/schools and combine these resources in centralized locations with more hours of operation but with less overhead- This burn permit option was/is great because it is extremely difficult to find/locate a person or establishment who's open when you need one and as accurate and upto date with burn warnings ect.

PLEASE DO NOT do away with this and PLEASE expand this program atleast to all of Northern/Eastern Maine.

thanks for your time and my two cents

Ted Harris

Carmel

Bellavance, Cheri R.

From: Kilpatcin@aol.com
Sent: Friday, November 03, 2006 5:32 PM
To: Bellavance, Cheri R.
Subject: Re: Online burn permit website

I live in a small town named Glenburn. We can not get burn permits from our fire department nor can they be issued from our town hall. We must go to one of two private residences to get a burn permit.

This means that if the private party is on vacation or not home we do not get a burn permit. Being able to have the burn permit issued on line would be of significant benefit. It would mean that residences would have the ability to receive a burn permit when they need one & not when ever the private residence is occupied and able to issue one.

Many times we have needed to burn from clearing land and were unable to do so. Or we could only get it for one day versus three days. Making the land clearing a long and tedious process.

With high wind storms and toppled trees, it would be much more convenient to apply on line for a permit to burn the debris from storms on our schedule not some other private persons schedule. This is my home not someone elses, my schedule is different from the people that issue permits. I do not feel I should have to put off what I need to get done before winter, after winter or any other season, just because the people that issue permits are not around. I do not have time to drive all over this town to find someone home to issue me a permit. It is a waste of time, effort, and fuel.

Sincerely,

Cindy G. Kilpatrick
dent
Glenburn, Maine

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: John L Adams

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: John L Adams [mailto:jladams@rivah.net]

Sent: Saturday, November 04, 2006 7:11 AM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

Cheri,
Thank you for an opportunity to voice my opinion.

I believe that a centrally located listing of burn permits makes sense. Any level of the Fire Department should be able to find this information quickly. If there is only one guy that has the burn permit book, and he is gone to the store for bread, at church,... how does anyone else know if the burn (smoke) they are seeing is permitted?

From a personal perspective, I would love the convenience of getting my burn permit online. I am an early riser, I'd love to be able to get a permit at 5am and get my brush pile taken care of early. However, it would clearly be inappropriate to call the Fire Chief up this early on a weekend...or any day I suppose.

Thanks again
John L Adams

Manaville

-----Original Message-----

From: Arthur Adolphsen [mailto:adolphsn@midcoast.com]

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2006 6:53 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit

I remember leaving the message on what I *thought* was the Dept of Motor Veh.. asking if we could register from Hope, I see no reason why we should not be able to use the internet to do our town or state business.

Most any location we live at in Hope is 6 to 8 miles from the town office, and the office is only open for 3 days a week, during the working hours, thus, any thing that can save travel and money will help.

It looks like to me, that any work that can be transfered to automation, via the web would be cost savings in both town and state offices, for example, in Rockland there is a very slow operation in the Registration Office most of the time it takes no less then 1.5 hours to get a 2 minute paper or registration taken care of, plus the travel distance and cost of getting there and back. So it is not just the town, but the state also. As an example: 8 miles to the town office then 16 miles to Rockland, and 12 return if you need plates or something the town can not provide, probably most of Maine has the same problem, except those who live near the cities.

As far as the on line burn permit, that is a must, we go get a permit off of the town check also, she has no idea what is going on, just that we need the permit to burn, if we were getting them off the fire chief, I could understand, but a volunteer fire department sometimes it's hard to find the right person.

I asked the town clerk *once*, why we are not doing business on the net, and she snapped back "Not as long as I'm here".

All this probably will not help you much.
Thanks for checking.
Arthur

Hope

-----Original Message-----

From: Rick Diamond [mailto:rickdiamond99@hotmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2006 3:28 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: RE: online burn permit

Hi Cheri. This service is not currently available in Litchfield, where I live. Burn permits are available on weekdays at the Litchfield town office. However, since I work workdays, it is always on weekends that I need a permit. This means getting to the fire station between 8:00 and 9:00 AM, which is inconvenient. Once, I got there only to find a note on the door directing me to go to someone's house. It gave an address but no directions. When I finally found it, I was greeted by a snarling dog who was not tied up. So I would prefer the online service, even if I have to pay the seven bucks, although free would be even better. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: Fletcher, Rhonda

Subject: RE: Online burn permit website

From: Fletcher, Rhonda

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 10:48 AM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: RE: Online burn permit website

It worked fine. I would just like to get a permit on line during the day, not just the hours shown.

Rhonda

Litchfield

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: David H. Brown
Subject: RE: Online burn permit site

From: David H. Brown [mailto:dbrown@harriman.com]
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2006 4:38 PM
To: Bellavance, Cheri R.
Subject: Re: Online burn permit site

Cheri,

Thanks for the call earlier. I'll respond the best I can. Fire safety is important to me, but at the same time I think it's necessary for most of us in Maine to be able to burn outdoors on occasion. I'm glad that the State understands that need. I think many more developed places restrict burning on the basis of safety and pollution, to the point that disposal of debris is a costly burden. Living on land that's covered with plants rather than concrete, we naturally have a constant source of burnable material to dispose of. Composting is a good solution for much of it, but not always practical.

I've tried this site today (stopping just short of the credit card payment). I liked that when I input my info, the site gave me a clear list of the requirements for my selected type and size of burn pile. I've never found the standard State conditions to be that clear. Before I had to pay, I knew whether I had the right equipment and helpers to burn today, and whether the fire danger was low enough.

I haven't actually ever obtained a permit from the website, as far as I can remember. I couldn't find Raymond on the site the last time I checked, although today I found it with your hint that there are 2 lists side by side.

But the town of Raymond itself is very restrictive on giving out permits. I've lived there since 1999. In that time I've only had a couple of permits, even though I've tried many more times. I have a 5-acre wooded house lot which had a lot of debris from "ice storm '98", and I continue to generate a lot of cut brush and debris. Some examples about Raymond:

At one point they stopped giving out permits except on weekends, because volunteerism for the fire department had stopped.

They have a cable channel, which displays fire conditions and an ad reminding you that burn permits are the law. This runs 24/7.

One time it was soaking wet and drizzling out, but they said the wind might pick up later that day, so no permit.

Another time there was deep snow, and I had friends over to burn a pile, but the Sebago Lake ice fishing derby was going on with the volunteers, so no permit that day.

They built a new fire station, and moved the dispatch office from the center of town all the way to the edge of town, opposite end from where I live. So now it's 1/2 hour or more round trip to get a permit in person.

Because of the travel time to this remote dispatch office, I do think the online permits are a great idea. And soon many towns will likely consolidate their dispatch services into county-wide 911 centers to save costs, so the drive for many people will be even longer. In the small town of Appleton where I grew up, you can go to the home of the town clerk if you want a permit, but I doubt this is possible in most towns.

So I think it's great to be able to check the latest weather and fire danger conditions at the same website where the

Bellavance, Cheri R.

From: Harry Nelson [hnelson2@maine.rr.com]
Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2006 10:06 AM
To: Nelson, Kent; Bellavance, Cheri R.
Subject: Comments on On Line Permitting

Greetings -

I think it is great that you can apply for a burn permit on-line, but I find it not at all useful at this time of year that the permit is only valid after 5 PM. On a day like today - Sunday, October 15 - where there is very little wind and after the hard rain we had here in North Yarmouth on Thursday, I would think the conditions are very favorable for safe burning.

I understand that this is an experimental program and I hope that for the future you consider relaxing your rules and take into consideration the current burning conditions so that on safe days you could get a permit on-line that would allow you to burn during the day.

Thanks.

Harry Nelson
North Yarmouth

Bellavance, Cheri R.

o: Jeffrey Kurkul
subject: RE: online burn permit website

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeffrey Kurkul [mailto:jkurkul@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2006 3:53 PM
To: Bellavance, Cheri R.
Subject: RE: online burn permit website

Cheri,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. Firstly, I think online permits are a great idea, especially for landowners who have new property and are burning brush frequently. I personally am not going to pay for an online permit, or at least not as much as is currently charged. If the Maine Forest Service were to charge an agent fee (? \$2), like hunting licenses, your participation would increase greatly. Best of luck with this project.

Jeffrey Kurkul

Dayton

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: dlibby@commfac.com

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: Dave Libby [mailto:dlibby@commfac.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2006 11:27 AM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

Cheri,
Thanks very much for your request.
I live in Falmouth and have a camp in Rangeley Plantation.

In Rangeley Plantation it has been extremely difficult to find the local Fire Warden and the local State Forest Ranger will not issue BP's if the municipality has a Fire Warden. I have not needed a permit since you've instituted this web site, but anticipate using it once this fall and again in the spring. Paying the fee FAR outweighs my wasted time tracking the Fire Warden!

As far as Falmouth goes, I like the web site automation as a point for more effective government, but the bottom line is that a citizen can go to the Town's dispatch center and obtain a BP for free opposed to the State web site for \$7.00. In addition, the State web site issued permit only allows burning after 5pm.

It might be the best if the State no longer allows locally issued permits and allow each municipality to turn on and off that issuing for the authority (which I think they can do now?) This should be able to be done electronically by the Municipal officer (FC Officer, etc.) or dispatch on the authority of the Officer.

I know Falmouth has had to add extra staffing at dispatch in the past to handle the onslaught of permit requesters in the spring time. Certainly, this idea would help.

Cons: Those that do not have internet access...

Thanks,
Dave Libby

Bellavance, Cheri R.

To: oaxacax@aol.com

Subject: RE: online burn permit website

From: oaxacax@aol.com [mailto:oaxacax@aol.com]

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2006 2:39 PM

To: Bellavance, Cheri R.

Subject: Re: online burn permit website

Cheri,

The online burning permit service is very convenient and helpful. We live in a rural town and prefer not to drive any distance to get the permit. I also prefer not bothering the volunteer firemen by interfering in their day. I imagine people who have great distances to drive would greatly benefit from this system.

Anne Martin

Minot

Nelson, Kent

From: Chief St. Michel [durhamchief@suscom-maine.net]
Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2006 3:49 PM
To: Nelson, Kent
Subject: Re: MFS on-line burn permit system

Good Afternoon,

Earlier this year we had a problem where a 2 day permit was issued and the class day on the second day went to a class three. At that time there was nothing on the system saying the permittee needed to check the class day before burning the second day. That has changed. Other than that we have had no problems with the system.

I wouldn't mind seeing all permits whether issued at the station or to individuals be electronic. I think the argument of not having a computer or internet access could be overcome at a local level. We currently issue paper permits from the station, somebody is here weekdays, and we bring in the duty officer on weekends for two hours a day to issue permits. I assume the paper is a tremendous expense for the State and the labor on our end is expensive. I see a single system as being more efficient and if it is an electronic system I see it as being a money saver. I do feel that if local wardens and departments stay in the burning permit business they should either not be a collection agency or there should be an agent fee.

Thanks for the opportunity for input!

Chief St. Michel
Durham Fire & Rescue
615 Hallowell Rd.
Durham, Maine 04222
207 353-2473 Ext 21
Fax 207 353-8917

Nelson, Kent wrote:

Hi Chief Michel,

The Maine Forest Service is in the process of evaluating the on-line burn permit system in an effort to prepare for the 2007 Legislative session. We are looking for feedback from Fire Chiefs and Town Fire Wardens on how the system has worked since its inception in July 2005. If you have a few minutes, I would appreciate a short letter or email describing how the system has benefited your department. Any constructive criticism is welcome as well.

Thanks very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Kent Nelson
Fire Prevention Specialist
Forest Protection Division
Maine Forest Service
SHS 22
Augusta, ME 04333
207-287-4989 / 4990

Nelson, Kent

From: Terry Bell [tbell@farmington-maine.org]
Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 1:58 PM
To: Nelson, Kent
Subject: RE: On-line burn permit system

Hello Mr. Nelson,

One of the ways, the calls to my home and my Deputy's on weekends has been less, over this passed year I've had no calls before 10am and maybe 5 or 6 calls in all and that is a big plus, we use to get them all day long. I wished that they would ether give the Towns some of the \$7.00 or make everyone go on line to get the Permits. Fire permits are the worst part of my job, people think it's a right to have a fire permit and it's not. We give out around 500 permits a year. I do like the system and has benefited Farmington fire. Hope this helps.

Sincerely your
Fire Chief Terry S. Bell, Sr.

From: Nelson, Kent [mailto:Kent.Nelson@maine.gov]
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2006 1:31 PM
To: Fire Dept; On; thardy@fncome.com
Subject: On-line burn permit system

Hello Chief Bell,

The Maine Forest Service is in the process of evaluating the on-line burn permit system in an effort to prepare for the 2007 Legislative session. We are looking for feedback from Fire Chiefs and Town Fire Wardens on how the system has worked since it's inception in July 2005. If you have a few minutes, I would appreciate a short letter or email describing how the system has benefited your department. Any constructive criticism is welcome as well.

Thanks very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Kent Nelson
Fire Prevention Specialist
Forest Protection Division
Maine Forest Service
207-287-4989 / 4990

Nelson, Kent

From: Steve Nichols [snichols@kennebunk.maine.org]
Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 8:10 AM
To: Nelson, Kent
Subject: RE: Maine Forest Service on-line burn permit system

Good Morning Kent,

27 permits is only a small percentage of the permits issued here in Kennebunk. If you are looking for numbers to increase revenue I would suggest doing away with the town issued permits and force it through the online system. I think controls that the Fire Chief/Town Warden could put on the system and make it so the controls could stay on rather than have to do it every few days would help, such as limit the amount of permits, one day permits, burning on class 1 & 2 days only and after 5pm until 1100pm and all day burning on rainy days. At the present time there is only a few that use the online system in Kennebunk, and it seems that these few use it when we are not issuing at the fire station for some reason. I do not have the time to go in and put restrictions on the system, especially on weekends when I am not in the office.

I would be interested in comments from the other towns should be putting a report together.
Chief Nichols

-----Original Message-----

From: Nelson, Kent [mailto:Kent.Nelson@maine.gov]
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 4:39 PM
To: fc@kennebunk.maine.org
Subject: Maine Forest Service on-line burn permit system

Hi Chief Nichols,

As the administrator for the on-line burn permit system, I would like to inform you that 27 on-line burn permits have been issued in Kennebunk since the program began in July of 2005. Recently, we have set up York County Dispatch so they can view all active on-line burn permits at a glance.

The Maine Forest Service is in the process of evaluating the on-line burn permit system in an effort to prepare for the 2007 Legislative session. We are looking for feedback from Fire Chiefs and Town Fire Wardens on how the system has worked since its inception in July 2005. If you have a few minutes, I would appreciate a short letter or email describing how the system has benefited your department. Any constructive criticism is welcome as well.

Thanks very much for your time.
Sincerely,

Kent

Kent Nelson
Fire Prevention Specialist
Forest Protection Division
Maine Forest Service
207-287-4989 / 4990

Nelson, Kent

From: Stepfrench@aol.com
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 10:58 PM
To: Nelson, Kent
Subject: Re: Maine Forest Service on-line burn permit system

October 23, 2006

Kent,

As one that "fought like hell" to preserve the fire towers, and quickly realized that the aircraft were a good alternative, I'm happy to respond on the subject of on-line burning permits.

I explained to you during our phone conversation that my mother lived in an apartment in my house and handled burning permits for the Town of Minot. She kept track of the class day and provided a valuable service to the townspeople as she was rarely away from home. Time caught up with her late last winter and she passed on. This left the town with a void in the way we handled our permits. Yes there were a few of us scattered around town that could issue permits, if you could catch up with us!

So when the opportunity to issue permits on-line was available, as skeptical as I can be, I thought we would give the system a chance. We promoted it heavily throughout town and I didn't think it was working until I was told by a resident that he had received an on-line permit. It turns out that we had an e-mail address issue. As soon as that was corrected we started receiving reports of on-line permits, with no false chasing smoke I might add!

I understand that to date there has been 95 on-line permits issued in Minot. That calculates to \$665. Your people were very up front about this being a money making scheme for the state. It was refreshing to hear the truth right up front! If I'm correct you get a fixed amount from the general fund rather than a portion of the proceeds. Hard numbers, good for you!

We have had a fair share of our residents that grumble about the \$7 fee, and some that don't have access to a computer. We have promoted going to the town office for assistance in processing their application. I think only one person has done that. Some towns allow their Town Office staff to issue burning permits. I don't wish to start this practice as there is certain protocols to follow, the on-line permit takes the responsibilities away from the office staff.

So to summarize, This system came along at a perfect time for Minot with the passing of my mother. The system works fine for the citizens who choose to use it, and those that do don't seem to mind the fee. Please feel free to count me as a supporter of the concept.

Respectfully

Stephen French, Chief

Nelson, Kent

From: THardy@fncome.com
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 11:09 AM
To: Nelson, Kent
Subject: Re: On-line burn permit system

Hi Kent , As I indicated in our phone conversation we are trying to encourage folks to use the online system, this takes some of the burden off from us . such as people calling or showing up at our homes nights and weekends. I think more people would use the system if there was not a fee for the service , as long as they can get a written permit for free they will continue to do so. I do realize that there is a cost to you folks for providing this service , It may just take educating the public on the importance and safety of using this system. If we can be of any assistance please call.

Tim Hardy
Deputy Chief Farmington Fire
Director Franklin County EMA
778-5892 office 491-47636 cell

10/23/2006

Nelson, Kent

From: Andy A Noyes YorkCC [aanoyes@co.york.me.us]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2006 4:23 PM
To: Nelson, Kent
Subject: Re: Follow up on on-line burn permit system

Mr. Nelson,

It is working great so far. It has saved us a few times from sending the guys on wild goose chases. Thanks again for making this possible.

~ Andrew

Dispatcher Andrew Noyes
York County Communications
Alfred, Maine 04002

P- 207-459-2337
F- 207-324-1299
C- 207-651-1834

-----Original Message-----

From: "Nelson, Kent" <Kent.Nelson@maine.gov>
To: <aanoyes@co.york.me.us>
Date: Thu, 14 Sep 2006 15:57:37 -0400
Subject: Follow up on on-line burn permit system

Hi Andrew,

How is the read only access working out for you at your regional comm center? Is there anything we can do to improve the system from your perspective? Have you needed to use it much lately?

Thanks very much for your input.

Sincerely,

Kent

Kent Nelson

Fire Prevention Specialist

Forest Protection Division

Maine Forest Service

207-287-4989 / 4990

Nelson, Kent

From: Andrew Noyes [webmaster@lebanonmefire.org]
ent: Sunday, October 01, 2006 10:29 PM
To: Nelson, Kent
Subject: Re: Thanks from the Maine Forest Service

Kent,

We really enjoy the new system it is making our job a little easier. The biggest concern was being dispatched to permitted burns which has slowed down since our dispatch center now has the ability to look at state on-line permits. As you may have noticed I am also a dispatcher at York County and have been in contact with you that way as well which being in both positions has made this process easy. Thank you for your feedback on our website, if there is any more information we can add to help let us know. We are averaging 35 views a day.

Do you know where we maybe able to get some forest fire prevention posters to post at the schools and in our station?

Thanks for your time and keep up the good work.

Andrew Noyes
Firefighter/ Webmaster
Lebanon, Maine Volunteer Fire Department

On Tue, September 19, 2006 11:12 am, Nelson, Kent wrote:

> Hello Lebanon Fire Dept,
> Thanks very much for posting information about the Maine Forest
> Service on your webpage. We really appreciate you taking the time to
> do that and provide a link to our class day information and the
> on-line burn permit system. As the administrator of the on-line burn
> permit system, I am also curious about you and your Fire Chief's opinion of the system.
> Please let me know how the on-line burn permit system has worked for
> your town and perhaps what we could do to improve it in the future.
> Thanks very much,
> Kent
>
> P.S. Where you have our Rangers names listed, I would like to suggest
> a more appropriate link to our Division webpage:
> <http://www.state.me.us/doc/mfs/ffchome.htm>
> Thanks
>
> Kent Nelson
> Fire Prevention Specialist
> Forest Protection Division
> Maine Forest Service
> 207-287-4989 / 4990
>
>

Lebanon, Maine Fire Department

Nelson, Kent

From: Mike Smith [mike.smith@somersetcounty-me.org]
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2006 2:19 PM
To: Nelson, Kent
Subject: RE: Maine Forest Service on-line burn permit system

Kent,

I think the system will be a great asset to all of the departments in the county as well as the Comm Center. I will ask dispatch to try and notify when someone inquires about the online information.

Maine NENA does have a website (we are currently working on upgrading and expanding it) and it can be reached by going to www.nena.org/maine and the national website is www.nena.org

If you should be available sometime to make a presentation at a future meeting please let me know. We meet every other month at different Comm Ctrs around the state. The next meeting is at CMRCC in Augusta on Sept 19 with a presentation from the state co-ordinator of 2-1-1 but we would be happy to have a presentation at the November meeting if you would like to share some information from the Forest Service with us.

NENA is the National Emergency Number Association promoting the goals and achievements of 9-1-1 nationwide. We currently have over 100 members in Maine and one of our main missions is to sponsor training for 9-1-1 personnel. We do have an annual conference in April and are always looking for other agencies to do 1 hour breakout sessions on their agency. I would be happy to suggest a possible breakout session from the Forest Service...let me know what you think...we are just in the beginning stages of planning next year's agenda.

Thanks

Mike

-----Original Message-----

From: Nelson, Kent [mailto:Kent.Nelson@maine.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2006 9:01 AM
To: Mike Smith
Subject: RE: Maine Forest Service on-line burn permit system

Hi Mike,

Thanks for your email response and interest in helping the Maine Forest Service make improvements to the on-line burn permit system. My apologies for not getting back to you sooner, but I have been out of the office for 6 days. Yes, we would like to have you mention our interest in providing "read-only" access to Regional Comm Centers at your next meeting. It is our goal to offer this service to all comm centers within the test area for the program (roughly from Dexter south). Please mention I am the contact person and can be reached at 287-4989 or through email or the website. If you like, I can provide a "generic" email document similar to the one I sent you to distribute amongst the members. Also, does NENA have a website so I can learn about the organization? If not, could you give me an idea of the mission and what members participate?

Since your Comm center is the first to have this service, can you let me know approximately how often you receive radio calls requesting info? I will try to get the word out to the Fire Departments to use the system,

9/12/2006

Nelson, Kent

From: Mike Smith [mike.smith@somersetcounty-me.org]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2006 7:14 AM
To: Nelson, Kent
Subject: RE: Follow up on access to on-line burn permit system

Good Morning Kent,

The read only has been working out great so far. At this point in time I have not heard any issues from the dispatchers in reference to using the system. I have to be honest though and tell you that I do not have much of a handle on how often they have used it lately. I know that each dispatcher has it saved to their favorites so that they have very quick access to the information. I have been in the dispatch room a couple of times when they have checked it so I am quite confident that they are comfortable and familiar with what the system has to offer them.

As I had told you in a past email, we now have our in-house mail server up and running. It is my intention to get with all of the Fire Chiefs (at least the ones that are active with the County Fire Chief's Assoc) and make them aware of what we have and get them to resubmit the list of email contacts to your agency for notification of the online permit applications so that we will also get notified when the permits are issued. Currently, each day, we open a complaint with Burn Permit information and log each of them for the day so that all shifts have the information. We will do the same once we start getting them by email and the first person to read the email will add that one to the list so that all will have it on subsequent shifts.

Thanks

Mike

-----Original Message-----

From: Nelson, Kent [mailto:Kent.Nelson@maine.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2006 2:56 PM
To: mike.smith@somersetcounty-me.org
Subject: Follow up on access to on-line burn permit system

Hi Mike,

How is the read only access working out for you at your regional comm center? Is there anything we can do to improve the system from your perspective? Have you needed to use it much lately?

Thanks very much for your input.

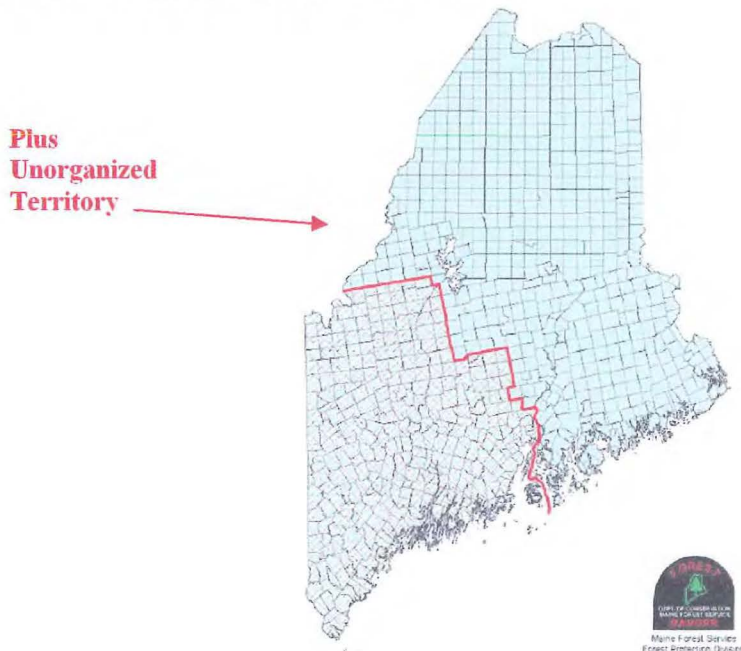
Sincerely,
Kent

Kent Nelson
Fire Prevention Specialist
Forest Protection Division
Maine Forest Service
207-287-4989 / 4990

**Preliminary Report
PL 2005, Chapter 12
Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee
Online Open Burning Permit Program
2005/2006**

As directed by the Maine Legislature, the Maine Forest Service implemented the Online Burning Permit Program on July 1, 2005. A significant effort was made to publicize this new program. MFS contracted with 4 television stations, 10 radio stations and in newspaper supplements across the state.

At the direction of the Legislature, the final version of the program the Maine Forest Service had prepared allowed the selling of burning permits online in southern Maine towns and unorganized areas of the state only, and also allowed people to get permits locally at their fire department, town office or through the local town warden.



The measures of success during this portion of the pilot program were:

- Safety of the system
- Interest in the system
- Ease of use for fire officials and the general public
- Revenue

To date there have been 1342 permits issued since July 1, 2005. Interestingly, there has been an increase in activity on the site since the first of the year. There were no reported safety issues and no burning that was permitted through the online system resulted in escaped fires. This is in contrast to 42 fires in the Southern Region that escaped from 95,776 locally written permits.

The online system has proven to be a safe means of issuing permits as they are issued only on Class 1 and 2 days and after 5 pm unless raining. The only caveat to this statement is that since

the system has only been operational during the summer and fall seasons, it has yet to be tested during the spring fire season. The spring fire season occurs during the months of March, April and May and is typically when most fires occur. The system test must be conducted during this time to be considered complete.

The number of permits issued during the initial 7 months would indicate a fairly high interest in the program. Although acquiring permits online does not suit everyone, the program does appeal to people who live a significant distance from their town office, fire department or town warden, and who are comfortable using their computer to do business. Given the limited coverage of the pilot program to southern Maine and unorganized towns only, and that people could continue to get burning permits free of charge from town fire officials, I consider the number of permits issued to be a reasonable number for this first phase of the pilot program.

In terms of ease of use, the Maine Forest Service and InforMe have been very responsive to the needs of the general public and town wardens input and feedback. Numerous changes have been made in the program since its inception to accommodate the needs of those providing input. Some sample changes in the program were changes in wording for what constitutes periods of rain, greater flexibility in the burn restrictions available to town wardens including limiting burns to after 6 pm as well as after 5 pm, and other specific accommodations to towns that demonstrate unique circumstances. The Maine Forest Service will continue to solicit input from cooperators and the general public to make improvements in the program where necessary.

The last measure of success is the revenue generated from the issuance of permits online at a net \$6.00 per permit. Revenue generated to date falls far short of that originally anticipated. There were however changes made to the original proposal that affected the revenue. The original proposal would have required a fee for all burning permits issued, whether through the online system or for those permits issued locally by the town warden, fire department or town office. The program was originally intended to be implemented statewide and revenue figures were based on the total average number of permits issued annually statewide. The original revenue numbers were based on \$5.00 per permit anticipating 160,000 permits issued, generating \$800,000 annually.

Given these changes to the original proposal, the safety record, ease of use and interest, I consider the program to be successful at providing a means for some people to acquire permits online.

During this test phase of the online program, MFS received many positive comments from those using the system as well as those who would like to see the system available to their communities in areas outside the test area. Below find a sampling of those comments exactly as they were written:

It seems to me that Hancock County is not participating in this pilot project which is totally unsat. As I said before, volunteer fire departments are a great asset but are not manned full time makin it difficult to obtain permits. why is it that this county is not participating and what can we do to make that happen. tks

Obtaining a permit to burn in Orland on the weekend is an extremely frustrating experience. The town office is closed, no one at the fire dept and no one knows who issues permits.

Our town office is open for 2-3hrs a day, and those hours are during working hours. Getting to the forest ranger is also difficult. I work a split shift, usually until 7:30-8:00. This online burn permit would be very beneficial to me. Thank you very much.

It would be much easier for me to get burn permits on-line than trying to track down the fire warden.

Dedham is a bedroom community and it is hard to get a permit because of my work schedule.

The site was very easy and seems to be working out well Thanks Chief Jandreau

This sounds like a great project. Hopefully the revenues raised are going to the Maine Forest Service and not used to boost up the State's financial debts.

Currently burn permits are difficult to get during weekends. On-line permits would be helpful.

I think North Berwick should join this program it is a great idea.

I would like to be able to get a burn permit via the internet. The current system of only being able to get a permit on the day you need it is impossible. Our town office is not open on weekends, afternoons and so forth. If you can't catch someone at home you are out of luck. The current system in Stockton Springs sounds safe on paper, but from what I see it leads to more frustration and illegal burning then anything else.

How do residents obtain a permit if we are not listed and our local fire department is not available?

I am interested in applying for burn permits in Sebec.

Please encourage Monson to participate.

I would like to express my interest in having the ability to acquire an open burning permit for the town of CHARLESTON

thank you

I feel Bradley should be able to purchase burning permits online, since it is VERY inconvenient to get to the town office during working hours and the fire chief is not willing to hand them out if the town office is closed!

There is no online burning permit option. All you get is red lettering that says-limited firefighting resources-which is totally absurd! We have a great firefighting squad. It's the fire chief thats the problem.

I would like to recommend this idea to our town officers

It is very difficult to obtain a burning permit from the town office. I work the same time that the office is open and the only time that I have to burn is on the weekends when there is no one to get a permit from.

Why would permits only be available in southern towns

I really do wish Sullivan would participate in this program, as like most volunteer fire departments it is often difficult to obtain a permit. I urge you have them put this on the list. Tks

Obtaining a permit to burn in Orland on the weekend is an extremely frustrating experience. The town office is closed, no one at the fire dept and no one knows who issues permits.

I was glad to discover this service because it is extremely difficult to reach anyone to get a permit in my area. It was a big disappointment to find that I was unable to purchase one after accessing the site.

This should be available for all Towns, especially the smaller ones where you can never get ahold of anyone to issue a fire permit in a timely manner.

Unable to get permit during the week due to work. Town office closed on Saturday. Would like to burn on Saturday and online permit would allow and be very convenient.