

GREETINGS TO MAINE

By Austin H. Wilkins, Commissioner
Maine Forest Service

Occasionally an opportunity comes along for one to fulfill a special request. Today is one of them. I have both the honor and privilege to extend an official "Greetings to Maine" to all who are attending this 26th Annual Eastern Snow Conference. Your Welcoming Committee did well in selecting Maine as your host state for the next two days and your timing is perfect. We are sometimes referred to as the Giant Green Thumb of the Northeast because of our vast forests, yet temporarily with our present snow cover one might use a little poetic license and say Giant White Thumb.

Your organization is International with representation from Eastern Canada and Northeastern States. I am impressed by the broad scope of your interests in those factors associated with Ice and Snow especially in the related fields of meteorology, power generation, conservation, engineering, forestry, and others.

I strongly suspect that the word forestry and its economic importance in Maine may have influenced my good friend Hap Hayes to invite me to open this Conference and in my present capacity as Vice Chairman of the New England River Basins Commission; but more especially to point out the unique geographical location of Maine and other physical characteristics. Also, and with considerable pride, the manner in which nature displays the season beauties of Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter.

It is quite proper for me at this time, for the benefit of you "out-of-state people", to cite facts about our state - sort of Chamber of Commerce style. The best approach is like an old college professor of mine who many years ago at the University of Maine taught a popular course on Mapping. At the opening class of each semester he would say:

"There are some things it is nice to know.
There are some things you ought to know, and
There are some things you just got to know."

During your two days here many no doubt will combine all three of these provisions. So we start with a few observations.

Did you know that Maine is the only State in the Country which borders on just one State, New Hampshire of 125 miles. The rest borders on an International line of nearly 700 miles of the Canadian Provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick and 3,500 miles of coastline on the Atlantic Ocean.

It is a State 400 miles long and 200 miles wide.

According to the 1960 Census we have not yet reached the one millionth mark in population. Based on area we have a per capita figure of 18 acres.

There are 5,000 lakes, streams, rivers and ponds forming almost a state-wide perfect network of connecting waterways.

There are only 22,000 miles of public roads.

There are eight major river systems.

The total surface area of Maine - land and water is about 21,000,000 acres: 17,400,000 acres are in forests; 2,000,000 acres in agriculture; 1,600,000 acres in water; and 1,000,000 acres in all other.

We have an average annual rainfall of 40" (total precipitation): - ranging from a low of 30" and a high of 50".

Our number one economy is growing forests and harvesting wood products with an annual product valuation of \$700,000,000 or 36% of State total manufacture. Recreation is 2nd with a \$350,000,000 business.

Over 87% of our State is forested and is the largest in proportion to any State in the Nation.

On the humorous side and to provoke a discussion with our friends from Quebec, we claim as our native son that famous legendary figure - Paul Bunyon and we have a 60' statute in the City of Bangor to prove it.

Now, I should like to touch base on a few points more in keeping with the theme of your snow conference. Today Environmental and Ecological Factors have almost become common household terms. Here in Maine we have nearly all the problems and advantages related to Ice and Snow in the fields of water power, forestry, agriculture, recreation and transportation.

While ice conditions are problems to many it is interesting to note that Ice Harvesting around the period of 1880-1900 was a thriving and prosperous industry in certain sections of Maine. Here are a few excerpts from an old Journal highlighting this business on the Kennebec River.

"There were in that early period 26 large ice companies - some with 15,000 tons icehouse capacity.

There was even a published Ice Trade Journal.

Prices ran 15 cents per hundred for store and shop trade and \$1.25 per month for 10 lbs. daily.

The schooner trade varied from \$1.25 to \$2.00 per ton."

But, those days of ice houses on the banks of rivers, teamsters with their horses, sleds, and ice tools and other equipment are now a matter of history. Competition through technological advances in artificial refrigeration has all but eliminated "ice harvesting."

In my younger days of cruising timber in Quebec and New Brunswick, often on six and seven feet of snow with temperatures well below zero and using dog teams, I developed a deep sense of the strong influence of Ice and Snow as related to forests, logging, and river driving.

This same influence persists today in my capacity as Forest Commissioner with the responsibility of establishing and maintaining protection programs on 17,000,000 acres of forests under a multiple or full-use concept.

The challenge today as I see it is for us to become more knowledgeable on available research information and apply it to the situations at hand. For example, studies on snow melt and runoff can be an important factor in timber management from the time trees are severed at the stump to delivery to the mills.

In looking through some of our forestry professional Journals, I was surprised to find a number of publications on research work on Watershed Management and techniques used. All are useful to land managers.

A number of years ago I visited the well known Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory of the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station. This same basic data can also be applied to other areas such as agriculture, water power, and now more recently to recreation.

We are interested in cloud seeding research and results to produce rain to stimulate forest growth, relieve drought stricken areas, and help put out forest fires.

We work closely with the Environmental Science Service Administration - Department of Commerce - the Weather Bureau in fire weather forecasting. Fire Control officers place a high value on these reports in fire control work all over the Country.

I would be remiss if I didn't refer to Ice and Snow as related to the rapidly growing 2nd home concept by enterprising land developers. The necessary ingredient is snow coupled with climate, terrain, scenic beauty and we have all of them here in Maine. It is amazing to see the growth of winter ski resorts and more recently is the craze of ski-dos or snow traveling vehicles. Back roads and trails are being opened up. Summer lodges on lakes are now being used to accomodate people for snowmobile recreation. In a release just received from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, U. S. Forest Service, I note that National Ski Week has been proclaimed as well as a revision of a publication "Snow Avalanches" to protect skiers from "white death." All this adds up to what we can call "meeting the outdoor needs for megalopolis."

I could talk longer but, in these somewhat brief but mixed observations, I have attempted to point out that all of us are basically concerned about People, Land, and Water in relation to the environment in which we all live. Your program for the next two days indicates a wide range of interesting papers by distinguished people. Again, we Welcome you to Maine and hope you will enjoy yourselves during this Eastern Snow Conference. Thank you for the opportunity of joining you.