



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Week August 14, 2009

State law assigns four core duties to the State Planning Office that include: 1) conducting continuing economic analysis, including economic forecasting, 2) coordinating the development of the State's economy and energy resources with the conservation of its natural resources; 3) providing technical assistance to towns and regions; and 4) providing technical assistance to the Governor and Legislature by undertaking special studies and plans and preparing policy alternatives.

MAINE COASTAL PROGRAM

Outreach begins for ocean energy pilots. As tasked in PL 2009, c. 270, An Act to Facilitate Testing and Demonstration of Renewable Ocean Energy Technology, SPO and DOC are collaborating to identify up to five ocean areas in state waters where wind, tidal and wave energy technology may be tested. The deadline for the formalization of the sites is December 15, 2009. The outreach process for the effort was kicked off this week with three very successful meetings with local fishermen and community leaders in the Downeast and Penobscot Bay areas. The invitation-only meetings were designed to inform attendees about the state's process, to understand their chief concerns and questions and for the state team to learn about the characteristics of local coastal waters. These initial scoping meetings were intended to take the pulse of a few key leaders in preparation for a continuing, robust outreach effort. **CONTACT:** Kathleen Leyden at 287-3144 or kathleen.leyden@maine.gov

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Waste Bytes newsletter released. The July 2009 issue of the waste management and recycling program's newsletter is available on-line at: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/recycle/docs/newsletter/JulytBytesG09%20gm%201.pdf>. This issue contains information on the compost school at Highmoor Farm, intern Sadie Kitchen, reuse opportunities through yard sales, and the green college consortium of Maine. **CONTACT:** Bruce White at 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov

Maine College Dining Summit looks at food security and sustainability. Nearly 100 college dining services personnel, local farmers, local food pantry managers, students and faculty, and town recycling staff gathered at St Joseph's College in Standish on August 4-5 to explore ways to connect campus dining to community resources and needs and to learn from each other.

SPO's waste management and recycling staff joined an afternoon team of presenters to field questions about recycling, composting, and waste reduction for the campus communities. The event was organized by the Maine College Compact, in cooperation with St Joseph's College and Bon Appétit, a food services management company.

CONTACT: Bruce White at 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov.



Recycling display a hit at annual Woolwich Fair.

Congratulations and special thanks go to Wendy Krouse of Woolwich for her tremendous effort in putting together a fabulous display with handouts and pledge sheets for the Solid Waste and Recycling Committee's booth at the Woolwich Days Fair last weekend. Posters, frisbees, coasters, pens and magnets given to them by the Waste Management and Recycling Program at SPO added

to the fun and festivity. The display saw many, many visitors throughout the day.

CONTACT: Sam Morris at 287-8054 or sam.morris@maine.gov

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating oil prices increase. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security's August 10, 2009, oil survey found that the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be \$2.41 per gallon, nine cents higher than last week. The most recent average price of natural gas delivered to Maine consumers compiled is \$11.30 for a thousand cubic feet of gas, or equivalent to heating oil at \$1.53 a gallon.

The average statewide price of gasoline and diesel in Maine as posted by AAA's *Daily Fuel Gauge Report* was \$2.69 per gallon for gasoline, and \$2.70 for diesel fuel. At the time of this release the price of WTI crude oil, a major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil, was \$70.83 per barrel. **CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or ian.burnes@maine.gov**

LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE PROGRAM

The Land for Maine's Future (LMF) program recently completed work on the following projects:

Head of Tide Park, Cathance River, Topsham, Sagadahoc County. The Cathance River is one of six rivers that feed into Merrymeeting Bay. This site, the first public access to the Cathance River in Topsham, was a top priority for conservation following public meetings and visioning sessions for the town's comprehensive plan. It will provide canoe and kayak access around the waterfall that separates the tidal from non-tidal sections of the river. The town plans to install picnic tables and benches and informational kiosks describing the environmental significance of the Merrymeeting Bay ecosystem at this historic mill site.

Heart of the Watershed, Newcastle and Alna, Lincoln County. This 180-acre project was a collaborative effort between the Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association and the Small Woodlot Owners of Maine to protect multiple parcels of property in an area identified by the Maine Natural Areas program as highly significant riparian lands. To



fund this effort, LMF dollars were added to federal, state, and private funds. The outcome protects a three-mile section of undeveloped land along the Sheepscot River in Alna and Newcastle, including significant segments with rare plants, and expands public access by adjoining other parcels already in protection. For more information visit:

<http://www.sheepscot.org/preserves.htm>.

The Land for Maine's Future Program was established to help secure the future economic and social well being of the citizens of Maine by maintaining the quality and availability of productive lands and natural areas including recreation, working farms and forests, hunting, fishing, conservation, wildlife habitat, vital ecological functions,

and scenic beauty. Since 1987 over 230 projects have been completed, with over 350 individual transactions statewide. This work has protected some 498,000 acres with roughly 60% being by easement and 40 % being in fee interest. **CONTACT: Steve Brooke at 287-6736 or [Steve Brooke](#) or Tim Glidden at 287-1487 or [Tim Glidden](#)**

POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

SPO says good-bye to summer interns. Five very talented young people have worked hard and contributed greatly to SPO this summer. They include:

- Chris Keeley, an environmental conservation studies major at the University of New Hampshire, who identified suggested strategies and policies for municipalities to adopt as part of their comprehensive planning to mitigate and adapt to climate change, along with some other tools to help municipalities identify possible responses to climate change. **CONTACT: Kathleen Leyden at 287-3144 or Kathleen.leyden@maine.gov**
- Sadie Kitchen, who will be entering her senior year at Skidmore College, analyzed municipal recycling programs to determine: 1) the success of pay-as-you-throw programs in reducing waste and increasing recycling and 2) the effectiveness of single-stream recycling. She created a new composting guide, updated the municipal recycling facility contact list, and helped the Maine Recycles Week campaign develop their annual donation letters and helped come up with a campaign slogan for the year. **CONTACT: George MacDonald at 287-5759 or george.macdonald@maine.gov**
- Jason Reed, a graduate student at Harvard University, who embarked upon a listening tour by making in-person visits to nine regional planning agencies to gain a deeper knowledge of regional goals, services, and needs while simultaneously obtaining feedback on Maine's growth management objectives and services. SPO's goal is to build more effective partnerships with regional councils moving forward. Findings of this qualitative research effort are currently being analyzed and will be discussed with the regional planners in October.

A big "thank you" to all of the regional agencies who participated, including the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC), Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG), Lincoln

County Board of Commissioners (LCBOC), Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG), Midcoast Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC), Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC), Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC), and the Washington County Council of Governments (WCCOG). Also, an additional “thank you” to Mary Ann Hayes of Maine Rural Partners. **CONTACT: Liz Hertz at 287-8061 or liz.hertz@maine.gov**

- Eliot Russell who conducted research for the Ocean Energy Task Force, exploring different types of wind, tidal, and wave power and the impacts and benefits of each, among other research for the task force. **CONTACT: Matt Nixon at 287-1491 or Matthew.E.Nixon@maine.gov**
- Sprague Kevin Sprague, a master’s candidate in community planning and development at USM, who updated the state’s GIS public lands data layer. Kevin visited sites, took GIS coordinates, and entered the data into the database. He produced a current map showing distribution of all public conserved lands, their primary holder, and their acreages while focusing on lands associated with the *Land for Maine’s Future* Program. **CONTACT: Janet Parker at 287-9981 or janet.parker@maine.gov**