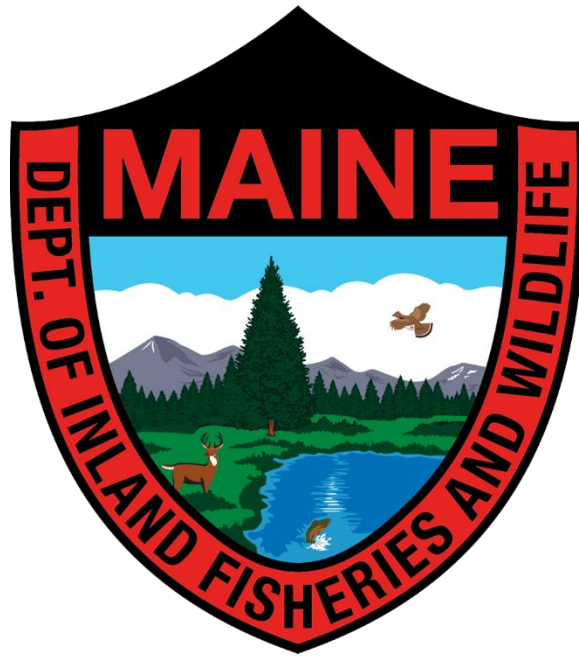


Report from the Department of
Inland Fisheries & Wildlife



2020 Annual Report on:
Landowner Relations Program

130th Legislature – First Regular Session

Title 12 Section 10107-A

Dated: January 1, 2021

2020 Annual Report

Warden Corporals Rick LaFlamme & David Chabot
Landowner Relations Specialists

WARDEN CORPORALS / RICK LAFLAMME & DAVID CHABOT
LANDOWNER RELATIONS SPECIALIST

LANDOWNER RELATIONS PROGRAM FOCUS AND MISSION

WOW, another year has gone by and 2020 has been quite a year for the Landowner Relations Program. January came with the usual snowmobile / landowner issues that are usually resolved or rerouted. Landowner specific details were organized and things were running smoothly. The calendar / schedule was filling with speaking engagements and meetings. The ATV Task Force and Legislative process promised new hope to help Maine's booming ATV industry and protection for the landowners. The program was finally properly funded by the generosity of the Legislature and Governor. This was possible only by the support received by outside interest groups, the people of the State and the support of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The success of the program was having a positive impact.

Then COVID hit. We saw a tremendous increase in private land use by recreationalist like hikers, bikers, horseback riders and all users in between. This resulted in an unforeseen burden on landowners and the LOR Program, the likes of which we had not experienced in the past. We were dealing with user groups that were not familiar with the expectations of Maine's landowners. Trail hiking maps / apps were directing people to places that were not open to the public. Land trust and public lands were being overburdened, resulting in closures. The public still wanted to be outside; so, they sought alternate areas to recreate and conflict resulted. The Landowner Relations Program and IF&W I/E Department stepped up with a marketing campaign to address such issues and educate the general public. We will continue to do so; because it is obvious people have discovered Maine's outdoors and what it has to offer.

The important role Maine's landowners play in regard to recreational opportunities and the State of Maine's economy is unprecedented and shall not be taken for granted. Both Rick and I are proud to represent the Department of IF&W with this endeavor. Most importantly we are honored to be the voice for Maine's landowners. Thank you for trusting us to deliver the message which is a benefit to all that recreate in Maine's outdoors.

Landowner Specialist Rick LaFlamme and David Chabot field many calls from the public, department biologists, warden staff, DACF staff, ATV / Snowmobile clubs and private landowners. The calls are handled or vetted to the appropriate personnel or advice is given to remedy a problem. There are times where the complaint is handled in house and special attention is given to the complainant, which is usually a landowner. The following bullet points are just a few examples of work done by Specialists LaFlamme and Chabot.

Landowner Relations Program Mission Statement 2020

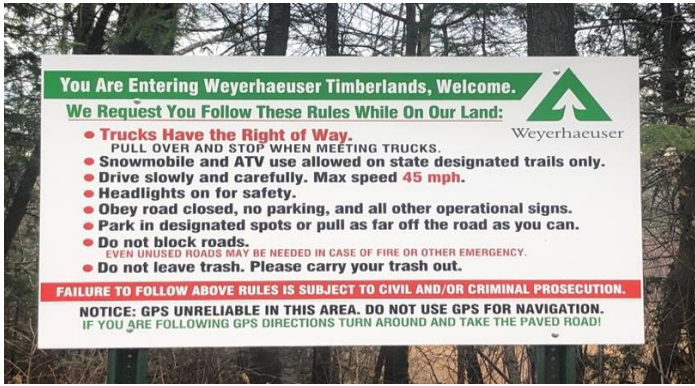
“Prioritize and address Maine’s landowner concerns by quickly responding with assistance and enforcement while continuing to educate and bring awareness to all land users.”

2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: CORPORAL RICK LAFLAMME

- Discussions with Penobscot tribal wardens over land closure, and abuse in the Carrabassett Valley region, and offered assistance to them with signs and information, meetings with DACF staff for major trails
- Meetings with Garland landowners, ATV group, DACF Brian Bronson regarding extreme usage this year, discontinued town roads and what we can offer
- Meeting with Western Maine Alliance in the Forks to discuss future of the area, and what partnership can be built
- Meetings with warden staff in Greenville, DACF staff Brian Bronson and major landowner Bruce Linkletter to address landowner issues with ATV abuse, develop enforcement plan and organize several enforcement and education details, met with DOT in Anson to help with signage on Linkletter property
- Meetings with Auburn Land Trust staff, for opening lands to hunting, recommendations and provide materials to them, permission slips, signs, and plans



- Provided AFM with custom “no camping in this area” signs, Wardens Scott Stevens and Jake Voter to install them and work landowner abuse detail in the Flagstaff region, on AFM and Wagner land base
 - Discussions with AFM senior staff about amount of land abuse this past summer and continue discussions on their bear program, provide warden staff with all their permit holders for enforcement purposes
 - Meeting with ATV club and landowners in Denmark to discuss property issues and re-routing trail system
 - Meetings with ATV clubs in the KI, Jo-Mary region to come up with plans for improving trail network and BMP plans for trail maintenance
 - Checked in with Chief Nipawset Sabattus, of the Passamaquoddy tribe wardens to see if we could assist with any issue on their land base, and see how his summer went with abuse
 - Assistance to Mahoosuc Land Trust, Kirk Seigel president, with closing one area because of overuse and abuse issues
 - Finish fencing project in Newry, for major landowner Keith Durgin and install custom sign
 - Meeting with large landowner in Industry, John Prentiss and land manager to help deal with deer damage to maple sugar plantation and operations, advised of fencing small hybrid trees,
 - Surveyed the property for deer, developed a youth hunt plan and provided list for upcoming hunting season on this private property. Made contact with parents of the list and linked them to land manager for allowing them access to hunt
 - Zoom meetings with Beginning with Habitat group several times to discuss landowners view of what program offers
 - Assisted with hiring board and process of new Beginning with Habitat Biologist position, several zoom meetings, phone discussions and e-mail correspondence
 - Meeting with Maine Forest Service Chief Hamilton, discussions on future partnering plans, updated their equipment for Landowner gear bags, replacing with new cameras and signs
-



- Meetings with Weyerhaeuser staff to develop new signs for their land base, advise our staff of new signage and discuss action plan.
- Organize, plan and execute September Landowner Appreciation Day. Secure sponsorships with Kittery Trading

Post, via phone conferences, discussions with sponsors, Waste Management and BDS tire. Work with the MFS Chief Bill Hamilton and Director Patty Cormier. Deploy trailers, gloves, hats, bags and misc. equipment to all regional staff. Considering we are in a pandemic, I would say another huge success, by everyone that was involved.

2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: CORPORAL DAVID CHABOT

- Assigned and authorized Landowner related details – Hunting and ATV
- ATV Task Force and legislative recommendations for the IF&W Committee
- Statewide MOSES Training with Angela – explanation of the benefits of the OPP program and answered questions from a Warden point of view
- Agriculture Show and speaking engagement
- Podcast with Katie Yates – LOR discussion
- Met with Bill Johnson organic Apple farmer in Hiram.
- Developed and implemented a plan for Mr. Johnson’s apple orchard. It was the worst



deer damage I had ever seen. The LOR Program worked with Wellscroft fencing for a design and purchased a deer fence to fence in 10 acres of priceless organic ground.

- Madison Snowmobile club meeting
- Winthrop Lakes Chamber of Commerce breakfast
- Unity ATV club meeting
- Edward Little High School speaking engagement

- Class portion for UMO Amanda Cross' class
- Assisted Warden Fowlie with ice shack removal from a landowner's shoreline
- Disposed of three abandon boats left on private and state boat launches
- Weyerhaeuser Meeting
- Assisted with Access Strategic Planning Committee
- Assisted working group regarding LOR Biologist
- Litter pickup with Department staff at WMA in Fryeburg
- Cleaned up illegal dumping site with Warden Latti and Richardson – removed 2.5 tons of marijuana growing refuge
- Meeting with Wagner Forester ref ATV issues
- Virtual SWOAM meetings / webinars
- Provided information and points of support for Waste Management Public hearing
- SAM youth committee
- Worked on Androscoggin Lake mooring issue
- Checked into houseboat issue on Rangeley lake
- Obtained signage for Rangeley Heritage Trust and the Magalloway River access point
- Worked with Department staff and Mt. Blue water district for access to Mt. Blue Pond – trying to establish a parking area
- Worked with Brookfield and Department staff to obtain a piece of property in the town of Greene for a boat launch and fishing area
- LSRAB meetings
- Various landowner meetings and assistance given
- Worked with Biologist on expanded archery boundaries {Lewiston/Auburn area}
- Continued meetings regarding ATV Task Force initiatives
- Guides Boards and meetings
- K9 Trainings / searches / evidence detection



Landowner Relations Program

- Warden Division meetings
- 4 ½ months as acting Sergeant in Division A
- Meeting with Conservation regarding a new outreach program
- Organized LOR Clean up event with Wardens in Section 2

STABLE FUNDING ESTABLISHED FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The use and access to private lands is unique to the Northeast and is of extreme importance to the State of Maine. The open and free access has been a longstanding tradition. It has been an accepted and welcomed practice amongst most landowners with the beneficiaries being land users. The historical practice of public access to private lands has been acknowledged by the State.

The initial creation of the Landowner Relations Program was a direct result of the Legislature understanding the importance of the free access given graciously by Maine's private landowners and how it relates to Maine's heritage and economy. In 2018, the Department of IF&W – Warden Service with support of the Landowner Sportsman Relations Advisory Board added another Landowner Specialist position to the program. In 2019, the Legislature approved an additional \$150,000 of General Fund to go towards the Landowner Relations Program. This additional funding along with Outdoor Partners contributions and the Support Wildlife motor vehicle registration plate; will ensure the mission of the program will continue well into the future and provide benefits to the landowners and land users of the State of Maine.

Expenses since July 1, 2020

FY	Dept	Fund	Approp	Object Group	Object Group Name	Expended Amount
2021	09A	010	Z14001	42	TRAVEL EXPENSES, IN STATE	535.00
2021	09A	010	Z14001	44	STATE VEHICLES OPERATION	417.46
2021	09A	010	Z14001	47	REPAIRS	355.45
2021	09A	010	Z14001	49	GENERAL OPERATIONS	24,978.83
2021	09A	010	Z14001	52	COMMODITIES - FUEL	310.94
2021	09A	010	Z14001	55	EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY	10,861.58
2021	09A	010	Z14001	56	OFFICE & OTHER SUPPLIES	12,803.68
2021	09A	010	Z14001	58	HIGHWAY MATERIALS	79.10
2021	09A	010	Z14001	90	CHARGES TO ASSETS AND LIAB.	4,712.80

Landowner Relations Program

						55,054.84
FY	Dept	Fund	Approp	Object Group	Object Group Name	Expended Amount
2021	09A	014	Z14001	31	SALARIES AND WAGES	1,720.72
2021	09A	014	Z14001	36	SALARIES AND WAGES	15,425.53
2021	09A	014	Z14001	39	FRINGE BENEFITS	7,680.28
2021	09A	014	Z14001	42	TRAVEL EXPENSES, IN STATE	103.50
2021	09A	014	Z14001	49	GENERAL OPERATIONS	1,178.40
2021	09A	014	Z14001	55	EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY	3,406.76
2021	09A	014	Z14001	85	TRANSFERS	671.11
						30,186.30

Revenues 2020/2021

2021	014	09A	Z14001	1589	SPORTSMAN PLATE	(75,514.50)
2021	014	09A	Z14001	2631	REGISTRATION FEES	(3,800.00)
2021	014	09A	Z14001	2686	MISC-INCOME	(9,081.50)
2021	014	09A	Z14001	2978	DICAP TRANSFER	1,588.96
						(86,807.04)

Account Balances

010: (All Other)

	BFY	Department	Appr Unit	Fund	Obj Class	Period	Current Allotment	Unobligated
✓	2021	09A	Z14001	010	2	1	\$109,116.76	\$50,576.42
	2021	09A	Z14001	010	2	2	\$35,000.00	\$30,052.77
	2021	09A	Z14001	010	2	3	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
	2021	09A	Z14001	010	2	4	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00

Landowner Relations Program

014: (Personnel Services) So we'll need to do a financial order for this at some point to correct the negative balances

	BFY	Department	Appr Unit	Fund	Obj Class	Period	Current Allotment	Unobligated
✓	2021	09A	Z14001	014	1	1	\$2,370.00	(\$17,449.84)
	2021	09A	Z14001	014	1	2	\$2,074.00	(\$2,932.69)
	2021	09A	Z14001	014	1	3	\$2,369.00	\$2,369.00
	2021	09A	Z14001	014	1	4	\$1,984.00	\$1,984.00

014: (All Other)

	BFY	Department	Appr Unit	Fund	Obj Class	Period	Current Allotment	Unobligated
	2021	09A	Z14001	014	2	1	\$64,360.00	\$59,856.90
✓	2021	09A	Z14001	014	2	2	\$16,320.00	\$15,463.33
	2021	09A	Z14001	014	2	3	\$9,270.00	\$9,270.00
	2021	09A	Z14001	014	2	4	\$8,264.00	\$8,264.00

Current cash balance in the 014 account is \$328,398.

Outdoor Partners Program 2020 totals thus far:

1574 have been sold through MOSES.

80 memberships through the online store

33 hats and 10 decals sold

KEEP MAINE CLEAN PROGRAM

The Keep Maine Program was established and placed within the Landowner Relations Program of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The sole purpose is to provide relief and assistance to Maine's landowners with illegal dumping {littering} issues. These illegal acts are a main reason for the POSTING of private property.

With the assistance and partnerships of the Maine Forest Service, BDS Tire and Waste Management the annual Landowner Appreciation Day which occurred on September 13th was a success even during a pandemic. This litter is no longer on Maine's landscape thanks to the program and the volunteers.



The Keep Maine Clean Program is essential for Landowner Relations and shall continue as an integral part of the program. Nearly a dozen large dumpsters were filled statewide, with illegally dumped items. Not to mention the tire totals listed below, which was taken by BDS tire disposal company in Norridgewock Maine, for absolutely free!

Jonesboro & Dennysville - 300 tires
Greenville - 40 tires
East Millinocket – 50 tires

Ashland – 60 tires
Gray - 100 tires
Sidney – 50 tires
Strong – 50 tires
Bangor - 100 tires

Top four clubs received prizes for most truckloads of trash.

Gift Cards

graciously donated by Kittery Trading Post!

Dennysville snowmobile & ATV club, 29+loads	\$ 1000 gift card
Bucksport Fire crew, 19 loads	\$ 750 gift card
Wilton Fish & Game, 14 loads	\$ 500 gift card
Cold Stream snow riders, 10 loads	\$ 250 gift card

LANDOWNER AND SPORTSMEN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD

The Landowner Sportsman Relations Advisory Board {LSRAB} is an advisory board to the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

- Expand education to promote respect and appreciation for landowners.
- Continue support for nuisance wildlife damage issues on private property, especially farms
- Ensure the importance of landowner relations and its program mission is delivered to the public
- Continued coordination and cooperation between government agencies and landowners
- Recognize non-traditional use is growing rapidly (hiking, biking, kayaking, over-landing with vehicles, back country snowmobile riding) especially during pandemic times



- Acknowledge public access to private property is rapidly declining, due to lack of respect and abuse by users (litter, destruction of property, etc.)

Advisory Board Members:

Don Kleiner (Maine Professional Guides Assoc) - Chair
Jessica Leahy (Univ. of Maine Orono) – Co-Chair

Tom Doak (Woodland Owners of Maine)
Al Swett (MSA)
Clark Granger (Maine Farm Bureau)
Hannah Stevens (Seven Islands)
Kara Hodgkin (Maine Sporting Dogs Assoc.)
Real Deschaine (Maine ATV)
David Trahan (Sportsman's Alliance of Maine)
David Montague (Down east Land Trust)
Daniel Grenier (The Nature Conservancy)
Rick Laflamme (Landowner Relations – IF&W)
David Chabot (Landowner Relations – IF&W)

OUTDOOR PARTNERS PROGRAM



The Outdoor Partners program provides an opportunity for the outdoor enthusiast to donate to the Landowner relations Program. It is a \$15 yearly contribution and is available through the Department of IF&W online store or at the time of license purchase. We had 1574 participants in 2020, which is a slight increase from 2019.

The list of companies below provided discounts to products, memberships or monetarily with services. These relationships have been established with outdoor retailers, trash/tire disposal companies and organized clubs & associations to promote and provide an invaluable support system for Maine's Landowners and the Landowner Relations Program.

OUTDOOR PARTNERS SUPPORTERS

Waste Management

BDS Tire

Mac's Trading Post

Ben's Trading Post

Indian Hill Trading Post

Northwoods Sporting Journal

Maine Sportsman

North Maine Woods

Fort Kent Ski Doo

Kittery Trading Post

LL Bean

Cabela's

Landowner Relations Program

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Nature Conservancy | Maine Professional Guides |
| Small Woodland Owners of Maine | Operation Game Thief |
| Poland Spring | Maine Trappers Association |
| Sportsman Alliance of Maine | Maine Farm Bureau |
| Maine Snowmobile Association | University of Maine |
| ATV Maine | Various Large Landowner Corporations |
| | Various Land Trust |

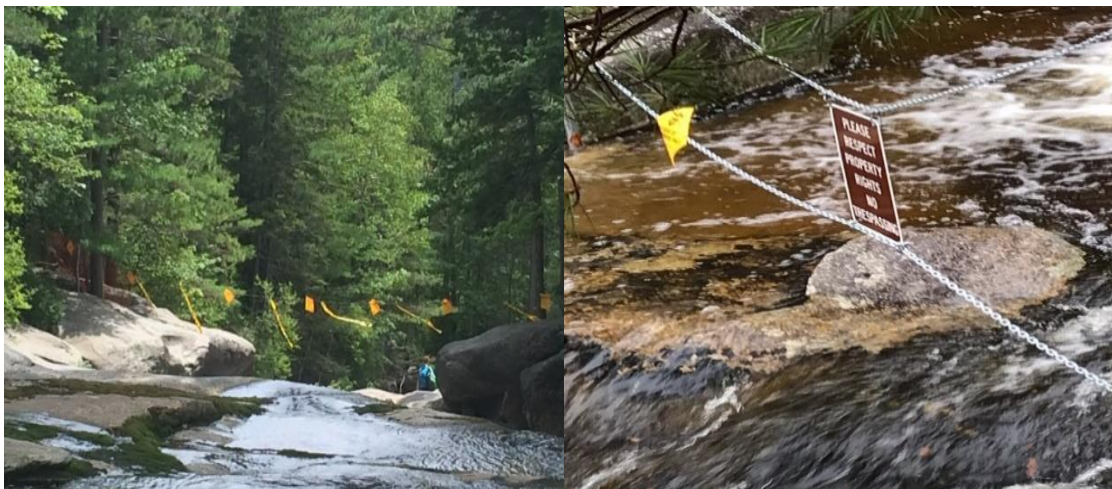
2020 Honorable Mentions

Landowner Relations and the Department’s I&E worked together to have more of a social media presence to address issues surrounding land use by non-traditional users. The selling and mailing of signs and merchandise increased dramatically.

Governor’s ATV TASK FORCE addressing landowner needs
Landowner Specialist – Corporal David Chabot represented the LOR Program



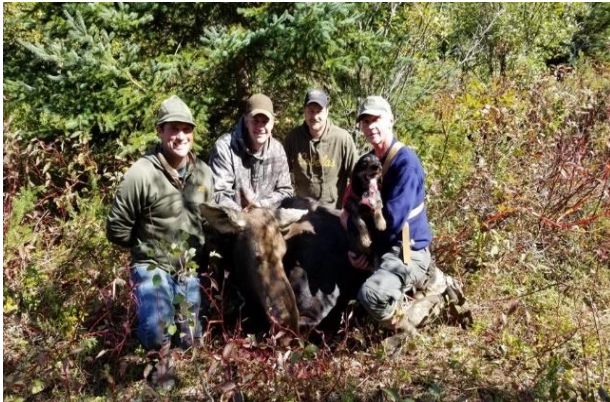
Landowner Relations Specialist Rick LaFlamme assisting a Landowner in Newry



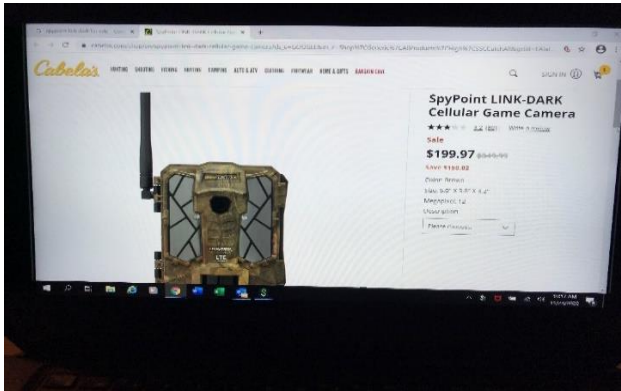
before

after

LOR Program / Warden Service - 2020 Veterans controlled moose, deer and turkey hunts



New Technology used by the Landowner Relations Program



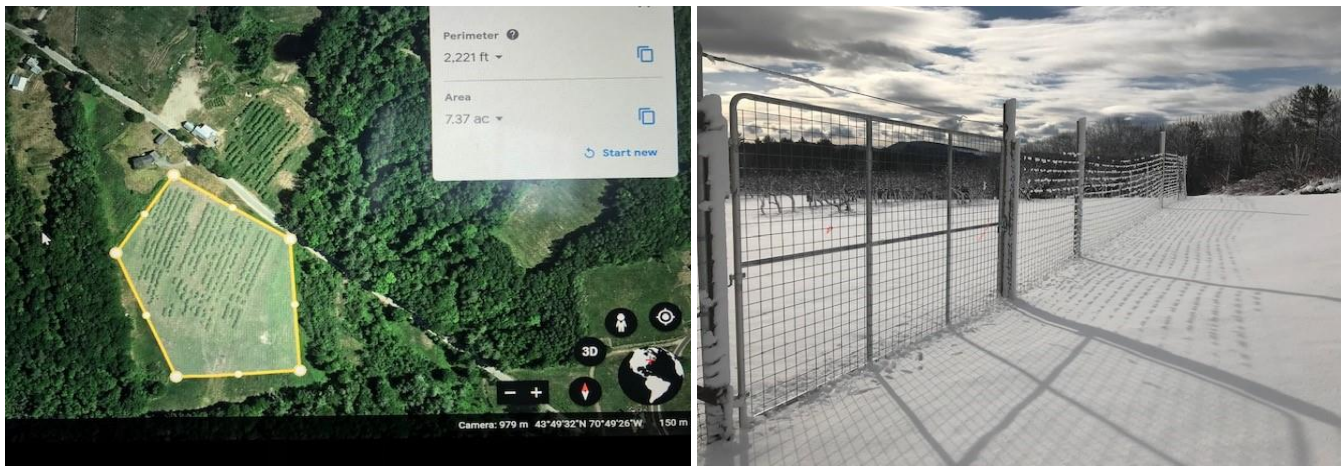
Cellular Cameras



Propane Cannons

Landowner Specialist David Chabot worked with an organic farmer in Hiram on a fencing project – 9 acres was fenced out of 150 acres. These 9 acres were certified prime organic ground and was needed to produce organic apples and future organic crops.

Landowner Relations Program



Maine Warden Service Landowner Related Calls for Service

- General trespass - 242
- Snowmobile trespass - 68
- ATV trespass - 229
- Hunting trespass - 205
- Fishing trespass - 17
- Trapping trespass - 3
- Hunting dog trespass - 15
- Littering / Dumping - 110
- Nuisance Bear - 785
- Nuisance Deer - 236
- Nuisance Beaver - 232
- Nuisance Coyote - 173
- Nuisance Fox - 982
- Nuisance Turkey - 30
- Nuisance Moose - 53

Maine Warden Service Landowner Related Summonses

- Snowmobile civil – 516
- Snowmobile criminal – 11
- Snowmobile OUI – 18
- ATV civil – 568
- ATV criminal – 18
- ATV OUI – 29
- Hunting civil – 21
- Hunting criminal – 460
- Fishing civil – 85
- Fishing criminal – 256
- Trapping civil – 9
- Trapping criminal – 30

Reminder to Support Maine's Landowners by:

- Being an advocate for responsible and ethical use of private and public lands
- Becoming an Outdoor Partner
- Purchasing a support wildlife vehicle registration
- Donating to Landowner Relations
- Purchasing Outdoor Partner hats or stickers

Accessing private land: there's the law, and then there's the unwritten rule.

The law - Unlike most other states, Maine operates under an implied permission structure, meaning that if land is not posted, it is legal to use the land.

The unwritten rule - *Always* ask permission. Hunting, fishing, or otherwise using private land without the owner's permission is a careless move that puts everyone's future access at risk.

When venturing into the Maine woods, follow the unwritten rule.

Ways to be a good land user

Landowners who permit you to use their land for outdoor recreational activities are not only doing you a favor, they are placing their trust in you. Here are some ways you can prove their trust is not misplaced:

- **Always ask for permission**, whether or not there are signs on the property requesting that you do so, and regardless of who owns it (a private individual or a business). If you have identified a land area, you'd like to access but you're not sure who owns it, you should be able to find that information at the municipality's Town Hall. Then, look up the person or business's contact information, and give them a call. With a little resourcefulness and a Google search bar, you shouldn't have any problem navigating this process. When mapping out where you'd like to go, keep in mind that railroad and utility corridors are not public rights of way and still require landowner permission. Also, don't be afraid to reach out to landowners who have posted their land. You may be pleasantly surprised at how many of them will allow access to someone who has the courtesy to ask first.
 - **Learn what matters most to the landowner** and abide by all special requests they make, including where you can or cannot drive or park a vehicle, and which specific activities are allowed. Some landowners may require permits for certain activities. If so, respect that request. Look at any such requests from the landowner's point of view, and act with their best interests in mind whenever you use the land. Some landowners dread various seasons of the year, believing the associated activities limit their use of their own property. It's your job to make sure whoever owns the land you're using never feels that way. If we as a recreational community can't respect landowners' wishes, we can only expect more private land to be closed to public use.
 - **Provide detailed information.** If requested, give the landowner your name, address, phone number and vehicle description, and consider using pre-printed [Landowner/Land user Courtesy Cards \(PDF\)](#). Good, thorough communication is a great way to build mutual respect.
 - **Know your boundaries.** Learn the geographic property boundaries of the land you have permission to use and stay within them. There is no excuse for trespassing — it's a crime enforceable by all state, county, and municipal law enforcement officers, and if convicted, you may lose any license issued by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.
 - **Keep it clean.** Remember that you are a guest. Always leave the land as you found it, if not better. If you see trash that someone else left, pick it up.
 - **Keep it legal.** Always obey the law, be safe and ethical, and report any land abuse that you witness. Land abuse is a very serious problem in Maine, and each year, access to private property is lost because of it. Put yourself in the landowner's shoes and help ensure that violators are prosecuted. If you see a violation occurring, contact Operation Game Thief at 1(800) ALERT-US [1(800) 253-7887].
 - **Say thank you.** Thank the landowner for the opportunity to use their property for recreation. They'll love hearing that you enjoyed it, and that you recognize and appreciate their generosity.
 - **Show your support.** Become an Outdoor Partner or volunteer for a Keep Maine Clean event!
-

“Together we can keep Maine’s traditions alive and well by caring and respecting our Landowners”