



## Blind moose led warden to dream job

BY JOHN HOLYOKE  
BDN STAFF

WINSLOW — Tom McKenney didn't take a traditional path into a career as a Maine game warden. In fact, if it hadn't been for a blind moose, he might never have donned the green uniform of the state's fish and wildlife law enforcement agency.

But on Thursday, the 46-year-old McKenney, a 10-year warden service veteran who patrols the Norridgewock area, was named the state's warden of the year at the 136th annual awards ceremony, held in Winslow.

"I've always had a love for the outdoors," said McKenney, who grew up in Harmony and graduated from Dexter High School before attending college in West Vir-

ginia. "When I returned to the state in '95, I took the warden test, made it to the end, and didn't get hired. I had to get working, so I took a job with a credit card bank and kind of forgot about [the warden service]."

Then, a moose changed everything.

"I found a blind moose one hunting season, and I went out of the woods, came back the next morning and it was in the same spot, next to a swamp," McKenney said.

The cow moose tripped over a log and fell down, and McKenney later saw that its eyes were gray and glazed over.

"I called the warden service, and [Warden] Dan Carroll came. We got talking and I told him I kind of envied him for what he

did, and I told him I'd taken the test before. He said, 'Why don't you do it again?'"

McKenney did, and a year later began the career he'd always wanted.

"Long story short, it worked out," he said.

McKenney credited Carroll for opening the door to a new career. Carroll not only advised him to take the test, he also gave McKenney his business card and told him to call if he wanted to ride along with the veteran warden on patrols to see what the job was like.

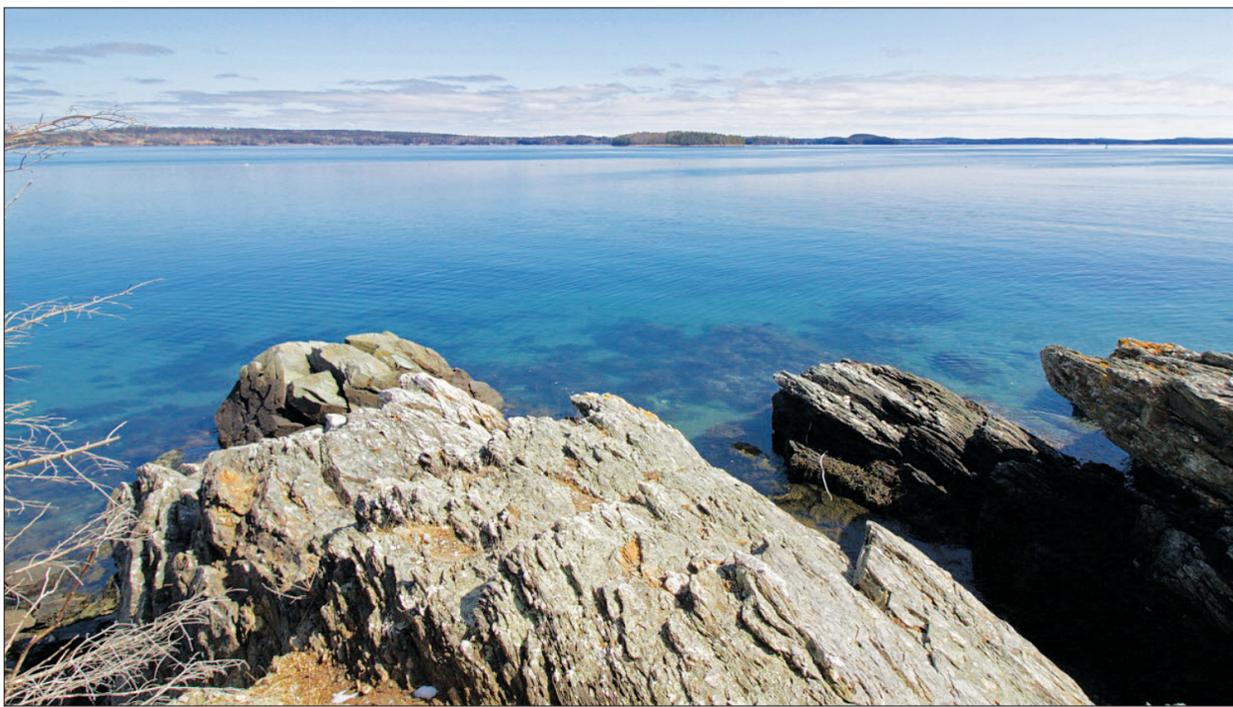
"It meant a lot that he saw something in an outdoorsman that he'd just met, and thought I might make a good warden," McKenney said.

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Maj. Chris Cloutier (left) and Col. Joel Wilkinson (right) congratulate Warden Tom McKenney after McKenney was named Maine Game Warden of the Year at the 136th Maine Warden Service awards ceremony in Winslow on Thursday.



AISLINN SARNACKI | BDN

Sunlight shines through the water, illuminating submerged seaweed and rocks of the ocean, near Salt Pond Preserve recently.

## Get your outdoor licenses on the go

One Saturday in November 2015, a hunting buddy who will remain nameless arrived at our favorite spot early in the morning, ready to fill his deer tag.

Then he realized that he'd left an important piece of equipment — his hunting license — back home, about 25 miles away.

For about five minutes, we chatted about the situation. My buddy said that if a game warden did stop by, he'd be able to prove that he had a license by pulling out his phone and showing a copy of it, or the online receipt that was emailed to him after buying it.



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"Would that be good enough?" we wondered.

We decided it might not pass a warden's muster. On the bottom of our paper licenses, after all, are a few ominous words: "License is not valid until signed by licensee."

And since these were online copies, he'd not signed them.

In the end, my buddy hopped back in his truck, headed home and retrieved his license before joining the hunt more than an hour later.

This year, according to a press release issued by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, a similar situation won't cause the same angst.

The department announced that the Maine Online Sportsman's Electronic System — often called MOSES — is now faster and (finally) fully mobile.

Among other things, that means you can purchase a license from your phone or tablet.

So, say you're at a buddy's camp, and you decide, at the last minute, that you'd really like to go fishing. He's got rods and lures you can borrow.

But you haven't bought your license yet.

No worry: Just head to [mefish-wildlife.com](http://mefish-wildlife.com) and tap into the MOSES link, and you can have a digital license in just minutes.

And if you happen to forget your license at home like my buddy did, the DIF&W release says it's now OK to hunt or fish without a paper license in hand, and to simply display it on your phone.

That will certainly be handy. I've also scrambled around in the past, trying to deal with balky printers, or the lack of a printer, when purchasing my license, and a few times have had to drive home, or to the office, in order to print out a license before heading into the woods.

The DIF&W said the improvements are a response to requests by customers.

"We're changing with the times and basically trying to provide a better service for our customers," said department spokesman Mark Latti. "This allows someone with the improvements to the online buying system, being able to utilize it on a mobile phone to purchase a license and go fishing almost immediately without having to print out a paper license."

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## 1-Minute Hike: Salt Pond Preserve

**Difficulty:** Easy. The trail leading through the preserve is just 0.5 mile long and travels over a fairly even forest floor and a few narrow bog bridges. However, the suggested parking area for preserve visitors is about 0.5 mile away from the trailhead on a quiet, coastal road lined with private homes and a beautiful evergreen forest. Therefore, out and back, the walk is about 2 miles.

**How to get there:** The Frenchman Bay Conservancy asks visitors to Salt Pond Preserve to park near the Hancock Point boat house and wharf on Bay Avenue in Hancock. To get there from Route 1 in Hancock, turn onto

Point Road near the Hancock town office and drive 4.4 miles, then turn left onto Haskins Road. Drive 0.2 mile to the end of Haskins Road and turn right onto Bay Avenue. The boat house and wharf is in a few hundred feet on your left.

After parking, walk north on Bay Avenue (back to the intersection with Haskins Road) and continue walking along Carter's Beach Road, following the shore. The Salt Pond Preserve

Watch the video  
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trailhead is located in about 0.5 mile, at the end of Carter's Beach Road. Marked with blue blazes, the trail enters the woods on the left just before the salt pond.

**Information:** Salt Pond Preserve is a narrow strip of forestland on Hancock Point that has been conserved by the Frenchman Bay Conservancy for public recreation. A 0.5-mile walking path, marked with blue painted blazes, winds through the 18-acre property, spanning from a cobble beach to Hancock Point Road.

The preserve is named after a salt pond that is located at one end of the trail, separated from the ocean by a cobble beach littered with rocks, seashells, driftwood and seaweed.

A coastal salt pond marsh is "a wetland lying beyond the upper reach of spring tides but periodically infused with salt water during storm events," according to the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands.

Whether they contain ponds or not, salt marshes "provide rich habitat to a great diversity of plants, invertebrates, fish, birds and mammals," according to "The Volunteer's Handbook for Monitoring Maine Salt

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A simple map is posted along the trail of Salt Pond Preserve on Sunday, helping hikers decide which direction to turn.

## Retired engineer tackles big kayaking problem

BY JOHN HOLYOKE  
BDN STAFF

BANGOR — For the past few years, Douglas Marchio has made the rounds of outdoors shows, pitching a sit-on-top fishing kayak he markets here in Maine. The boat, a NuCanoe, is ultrastable, he said. In fact, it's virtually impossible to tip over.

The keyword here is virtually. Marchio learned a valuable lesson last summer, and he reacted the way you might expect a retired mechanical engineer to react: He invented a product to respond to the need.

"Up until last year, I didn't

think I could flip this," the 71-year-old inventor said, pointing at a display NuCanoe during the Eastern Maine Sportsmen's Show earlier this month. "I did."

Marchio took his boat onto a lake when 30 mph winds were blowing and found it was, in fact, possible to tip over.

Then, while he floated in the water next to his overturned craft, he learned another lesson.

"I found out it was equally as hard to get it back upright," Marchio said. "I didn't even think about that before — dumb engineer."

Marchio said a friend eventually helped right the 42-inch-wide boat by grabbing onto the shaft of the attached trolling motor, which was sticking up in the air, and using it as a lever. Although it worked, that method was not optimal, Marchio said.

Then he started thinking. After collaborating with a friend, chemical engineer David Cassidy, they developed a product designed to right overturned kayaks — especially wide, stable ones.

Marchio calls the resulting product RightSider, and in a quick demonstration he showed how simple its use is.

The RightSider essentially is a ladder made out of the kind of strapping you might find on a backpack. It's enclosed in a bag and firmly attached to the inside of a kayak.

If the boat overturns, the paddler simply pulls the RightSider out of the bag, tosses it to the other side of the kayak and starts climbing the ladder.

"It's a series of loops, because I wanted it to fit any boat," he said. "You put your foot in the bottom loop like a stirrup, reach up and grab one of the upper loops, and that combined action allows you to be able to easily turn [the boat] over."

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