



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

A discarded refrigerator waits to be removed Saturday from an Alton landowner's property used for snowmobiling and bear hunting. The cleanup was part of a landowner appreciation cleanup day held by the Maine Warden Service and the Maine Forest Service.

Cleanup

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After working a couple of hours, the Alton crew filled three pickup trucks and a trailer with debris, which was taken to a dumpster at the Maine Forest Service's Old Town facility. That effort was replicated across the state, with clubs cleaning up predetermined sites where illegal dump sites had been documented.

The Maine Forest Service has conducted similar cleanups in the past, but this year Warden Rick LaFlamme of the Maine Warden Service approached several sponsors to fund a cleanup contest, with the clubs and organizations that collect the most trash winning prizes.

On Monday, LaFlamme, the MWS's landowner relations specialist, said actual winners of the contest had not been determined, but several interesting statistics had emerged

Here are some of the numbers:

— In one day, contest participants collected 100,000 pounds of trash, filling 30 of the 30-cubic-yard bins that were provided. That trash, according to LaFlamme, would cover a football field with a layer 3 feet thick.

— A total of 250 volunteers from 21 organized clubs and 10 other noncompetitive groups participated in the contest.

— Ninety game wardens and 20 Maine Forest Service staffers oversaw the effort.

— Between 150 and 200 sites were cleaned up.

— The tentative winner of the contest collected 26 truckloads of debris.

In Alton, Fahey said his crew's effort was representative of the effort taking place in other spots around the state: A landowner who allows access to forested property had a problem, and the groups that benefit from that landowner's generosity took action to help.

"These last couple of hours have been ideal," he said. "You've got a single landowner that accommodates a snowmobile trail and accommodates bear-hunting activity, and we've



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John Morgan (center) works to clean up a landowner's property in Alton on Saturday.

taken about three truckloads off that one landowner's property. He'll be pleased, and everyone benefits."

Participants were happy to pitch in but wished the problem didn't exist in the first place.

Bruce Roberts of Lagrange was a police officer in Rhode Island for 30 years. A decade ago, he moved to Maine and looked forward to spending as much time outdoors as he could.

Now the president of the LA Sledgers, Roberts shook his head Saturday as he looked at a pile of tires that had been discarded next to a snowmobile trail his club accesses.

"That's a shame," he said. "You get trash pickup beside the road once a week, and [some people] feel like they've gotta go out and throw stuff in the woods."

Bob Leland of Alton, who serves as trailmaster for the LA Sledgers, said he spends a lot of time addressing the concerns of landowners who allow snowmobile trails to cross their land.

One disgruntled landowner can shut down an entire trail system, Leland said, and when people begin using another person's land as their own personal landfill, everyone who accesses that land stands to suffer.

"This [event] is real valuable, because if [landowners] have another problem, if you tell them this is going to be a yearly thing, [it helps]," Leland said. "Not only that, if the landowner ... finds a mess, he will just call one of us or the warden service and

identify that site for the next year, if they know it's happening."

George Feero of Old Town, who owns Red Oak Outfitters and guides bear hunters on the land the crew was cleaning, said that even though he doubts snowmobile club members or guides are the ones leaving the trash, it's important for those groups to pitch in to help the landowners.

"Sometimes us guides get the reputation that it's us just throwing the stuff out, throwing our trash everywhere," Feero said, standing beside his pickup, which was heaped high with tires and trash taken from one site. "It makes us look bad, even though we had no part in it. But we do have a part in trying to clean it up and trying to make the land look good for everyone and keeping on good terms with the landowners."

Fahey said the Maine Warden Service required every game warden in the state this year to participate, bolstering the forces that the Maine Forest Service has annually provided in its own cleanup effort. Fahey said he thought this year's cleanup contest was a success and hopes the program will continue in the future. And while it was easy to identify sites to clean this year, he hopes it will become more difficult as years pass and more sites are cleaned.

"I hope that in a few years, we'll really be scratching to identify a half-day's work," Fahey said. "That would be a success. That's what I hope will come from this."

Holyoke

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"Just wanted to give everyone a heads up," Obrey said in an email. "We will be increasing the flow on the Roach River to 250 [cubic feet per second from 205 cfs] on Tuesday morning. You can expect the flow on the Moose River below Brassua Dam to increase from 400 cfs to around 1,000 cfs on Tuesday."

In addition, Obrey said an increase in flow at Dole Pond would increase the amount of water in the North Branch of the Penobscot River.

"These flows should help move some fish around," Obrey said. "The warm temperatures [during the day] aren't helping us and a cooldown isn't predicted until the middle of the week."

Guess what? It's the middle of the week.

And maybe it's time to grab a fly rod and head to the Moosehead Lake area.

Salmon count at 727

Finally, it's time for an update on Atlantic salmon returns to the Penobscot

River. As is typically the case, very few fish have returned to the river in recent weeks, according to Mitch Simpson of the Maine Department of Marine Resources.

As of Sept. 14, a total of 727 salmon have returned to the river, Simpson reported.

Since Simpson's last report on Sept. 1, only one

salmon was counted at the Milford facility.

This year's run has been modest but is still the highest total recorded in the last four years.

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