

Waterfront Concerts erects new cedar fence around concert venue

BY NICK MCCREA
OF THE NEWS STAFF

The chain-link fence and torn blue canvas screens surrounding Bangor's Waterfront Concerts venue are coming down this week.

A crew was hard at work last Tuesday putting up a permanent barrier -- an 8-foot-tall cedar board fence that will surround the venue, preventing anyone outside from looking in.

Waterfront Concerts promoter Alex Gray said his staff and the city have fielded complaints in past concert seasons about the chain-link fence and the

blue screening that lined Darling's Waterfront Pavilion.

Each season, the screen was slashed by people outside the venue hoping to get a peek at the concerts for free. Sections needed to be patched or replaced between shows, and the fence was seen as an eyesore by concertgoers and concert officials alike.

"We disliked it as much, and now that the city's work on Main Street is complete we can move forward with the original plan that city staff and WFC conceived a number of years ago and the council recently approved," Gray said in

an email last week.

The city has been in the midst of a major overhaul of Main Street, expanding sidewalks, installing new lighting and more. That construction work could have damaged the wooden fence had it been installed earlier.

Gray declined to say how much the fence cost Waterfront Concerts, saying only "it's not cheap."

ADA Fence Co. of Palmyra is installing the fence, Gray added.

Waterfront Concerts plans to have the fence up in advance of the first outdoor concert of the season June 4, featuring country star Dierks Bentley.



MICKY BEDELL/BDN
The chainlink fence and torn blue canvas screens surrounding Bangor's Waterfront Concerts venue started coming down last week, replaced by a light wooden fence.

Inaugural Penobscot County Big Tree Contest kicks off this month

This summer, people will be seeking out special, extra-large trees all over Penobscot County for the first ever Penobscot County Big Tree Contest, a friendly countywide competition sponsored by the Maine Forest Service (MFS) and Penobscot County Soil and Water Conservation District (PCSWCD).

"It's open to anyone. If you're out in the middle of the woods and you see a tree, you can nominate it," Amy Polyot, district manager for the PCSWCD, said.

Running from May 15 to Sept. 15, the contest tasks the public with finding the largest trees of 66 native and naturalized species of trees in Penobscot County.

"We'll have one grand champ, but we could possibly have 66 winners, depending on how many people nominate trees," Polyot said.

Each person who nominates a winning tree will receive a "Penobscot County Biggest Tree" T-shirt, provided by the PCSWCD. The owner of the tree will receive a certificate for their tree, as well as a "Forest Trees of Maine" book produced and

provided by the MFS. The owner of the tree also will be invited to attend the PCSWCD annual banquet in the fall.

"I think it's something people will get behind and get excited about, something kind of fun to do for the summer," said MFS district forester Terri Coolong.

People searching for and documenting "big trees" in the United States dates back to 1940 with the establishment of the National Big Tree Program by American Forests, which claims to be the oldest national nonprofit conservation organization in the country. This national big trees register -- officially called the American Forests Champion Trees national register -- contains 781 national champions for different tree species living in the country.

The Maine Register of Big Trees started in 1958 is produced by the Maine Department of Conservation, MFS in cooperation with the Pine Tree State Arboretum.

"Typically we find that most really big trees are lawn trees that people have had growing near their houses for years and years and kind of taken care of," Coolong said. "When they're measured, a big part of it is the crown

spread. If the tree is in the forest, the crown is crowded in [by other trees]. If it's on a lawn, there's a lot of room for those leaves."

While everyone knows a big tree when they see it, determining if a tree is actually a "champion tree" is a technical thing. Each nominated tree is given a point value derived from a "big tree" formula that is used nationally, though nominators will not have to do any math. All you need to do is take a few pictures of the tree and fill out a one-page nomination form with the species of tree, location (GPS coordinates) and the contact information of the nominator. And, if the tree is not on your personal property, you must also acquire permission from the landowner to nominate their tree, then provide the landowner's contact information on the form so the MFS can follow up with them.

Sometimes the landowner requests that the exact location of the tree not be publicized, and the MFS complies with their wishes, publicizing only the town in which the tree was found.

All nominations for Penobscot County big trees will be sent to Coolong, who will visit each tree to take measurements and

determine whether it's a champion tree for the county. This is the first time Penobscot County has held the contest.

To learn more about the contest and download the Maine big tree nomination form, visit the Facebook page for the PCSWCD at facebook.com/penobscotswcd or call Amy Polyot at 947-6622, ext. 3, or email her at amy.polyot@penobscotswcd.org, and she will email you a nomination form.

Dept. of Agriculture honors tree heroes in Maine

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry recognized the importance of trees in urban settings and the dedication of Maine communities to caring for those trees during its 2016 Maine Arbor Week Celebration.

Held on Tuesday, May 17, from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Keith Anderson Community Building in Orono, the celebration, sponsored by the Maine Forest Service (MFS), its urban forestry program, Project Canopy and GrowSmart Maine, honored the civic devotion of several notable Maine residents.

During the event, participants learned about

state and local efforts to educate citizens about the Maine woods, and improve our forest products industry. Additionally, attendees were introduced to two new recognition programs offered by the Arbor Day Foundation: Tree Line USA and Tree Campus USA, of which Maine has its first two recipients, Central Maine Power Company and Kennebec Valley Community College, respectively.

This year's recipients of the award, Orono Tree Board members and volunteers Pat and Dave Thompson, were honored by Maine Forest Service Director Doug Denico, who was a University of Maine classmate of theirs. The award is named for the late tree warden of Yarmouth, Frank Knight, who served the community for over 50 years, and was caretaker to the New England champion American elm called "Herbie," along with many other champion trees and outstanding specimens.

Participants received seedlings donated by Cedarworks of Rockland, Irving Woodlands, LLC and Central Maine Power Co. In addition, the following municipalities were recognized for their participation in the Tree City USA program, supporting

urban and community forests:

Auburn - 13 years
Lewiston - 13 years
Augusta - 22 years
Orono - 20 years
Bangor - 11 years
Bath - 19 years
Portland - 36 years
Camden - 21 years
Saco - 6 years
Castine - 7 years
South Portland - 36 years
Dover-Foxcroft - 4 years
Veazie - 3 years
Farmington - 39 years
Waterville - 18 years
Hallowell - 14 years
Westbrook - 39 years
Kennebunkport - 39 years

Yarmouth - 37 years
For more information about Project Canopy, go to: <http://www.projectcanopy.me>

For more information about the Maine Forest Service, go to: <http://www.maineforestservice.gov>

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