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# Maine Department of Conservation Memo to Employees: February 22, 1995

Maine Department of Conservation

C Edwin Meadows Jr

*Maine Department of Conservation*

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Angus S. King, Jr.  
Governor

C. Edwin Meadows, Jr.  
Acting Commissioner

## DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Telephone (207) 287-2211  
FAX # (207) 287-2400

February 22, 1995

Dear Fellow Employees:

I am writing to express my deep appreciation for the support and assistance you have provided to me during my 7½ years at the department. It has been a time of great change during which we have shared both great excitement as well as significant challenge. During this period the insight, creativity, professionalism and dedication of department employees was inspiring as we worked to redefine our mission and programs.

I am writing this letter since it will not be possible to see and thank each of you in person.

A great deal has changed since I joined the department in June, 1987 as director of the Bureau of Public Lands. Those indeed were heady times; the economy was booming and land conservation was a top issue. We acquired Donnell Pond, increased wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities, helped create a vision for the department and successfully saw passage of the Land for Maine's Future program. Just sixteen months later, in October, 1988, the governor asked me to become commissioner. At my confirmation hearing I spoke on two primary points: The quality of the employees in the department and the crucial role of natural resources in our state economy. Today I believe in both points even more strongly.

Just three weeks following that hearing, we received the first request to cut our budget, the first of over a dozen such requests between December, 1988 and June, 1994. This began a difficult time for us all when forces completely outside our control made it frustrating and difficult to operate our programs and deliver services in the quality fashion we are accustomed to doing. My hat is off to you all for the patience and grace you showed during this time, while continuing to maintain professionalism and quality public service.

I'm sure you share with me the pleasure that the Governor King has supported our Part I request. The challenge for the department now is to generate support for the governor's proposed budget for natural resource programs as other programs are being cut. The governor understands that we have undergone disproportionately large reductions in the past; however, the key will be to convey this understanding to new legislators and those concerned about reductions in other programs.

My time as commissioner has been a time of great personal growth and achievement, despite the difficulties. I recall with pride some of the many things we have achieved together:

- ▶ The outstanding land acquisitions we made via public lands, parks and the Land for Maine's Future program, all of which are too numerous to list.
- ▶ Implementation of the state's Geographic Information System.
- ▶ Stopping the public outcry over the backlog at LURC and obtaining new resources to



address permitting and enforcement needs, including the regional field offices.

- ▶ Implementation of the Forest Practices Act, which we knew at the time would not address all the concerns but does form the basis for continuing improvements in harvesting practices in the future.
- ▶ Creation of "Friends" groups and "working smarter" techniques to help us manage parks and historic sites with ridiculously few resources.
- ▶ Quantum leaps in the department's computer system and communications networks. (When I came to DOC in 1987 each bureau had one terminal and payroll was handled on index cards.)
- ▶ Cooperative projects with USGS, NSF and the university for geologic assessments and teacher education.
- ▶ And the many other achievements outlined in the paper entitled "Jobs and Maine's Economy: Moving to the Future with our Natural Resources" which was distributed recently to the department's management points.

We have accomplished so much together--a fact sometimes overshadowed by the difficulties we faced. As we now face yet another transition, it is important to focus on the future and use these experiences as a strength from which to build.

I am optimistic with the support we are now seeing and with the opportunities natural resources will provide our state for the future. However, we face many challenges and the department must play a key role in helping address those issues. Among them is the fact that our constituent groups are deeply divided over many of the fundamental forestry, access and regulatory questions. You possess the tools and information needed to bring professional resource management to bear to resolve these issues.

A word about TQM: I am a believer in TQM and see it as providing new opportunities for every employee. It is difficult to start a new way of thinking and working, especially in an organization as complex as state government. At times, TQM processes may appear slow, cumbersome and confusing. We recognize this is the perception as we go through the process of developing councils, establishing vision statements, etc. The key point is to create a firm foundation so every employee has full opportunity to make suggestions on how the work procedures you deal with can be improved.

Thank you once again for the support, cooperation and encouragement you have provided to me. You can be sure I will remain a strong supporter of DOC and an advocate for the sound management of our state's natural resources. Best wishes to each of you in the future.

Sincerely,



C. Edwin Meadows, Jr.  
(Acting) Commissioner