HBMI Natural Resources Department Natural Resources Department

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2005 Brenda Commander - Tribal Chief Susan Young - Editor

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come they did. The 90 nest boxes that David Lombard and summer techs Joe Tomah and Phil Quint Jr. erected last summer on tribal lands were a huge success.



As part of this year's field season, David and his techs Alex London and Melinda Moran, conducted routine maintenance on these nest boxes. Each nest box was numbered and located using our global positioning system equipment (GPS). The GPS data will enable us to include the nest boxes and other data on future mapping projects. This year each nest box was opened to check for nesting activity, to remove used nesting materials and replace with new material if needed.

We are extremely pleased with our initial success with this project. 30% (3 of 10) of the kestrel boxes had active nests, with 4 young each. (see photo).



In the coming weeks, Dave Joseph

at 532-4273 ext. 215.

will begin contacting tribal households in Aroostook County to conduct a survey that will help us estimate the amounts of fish, game and seafood our tribal households eat in an average year. From this information we can develop educational and outreach materials that will help us safely preserve and/or enhance our traditional hunting and gathering practices. We especially need to talk to the primary cook of the household and the primary person in the household who hunts or fishes for food. If you live outside Aroostook County, your household will receive a survey in the mail. For more information please call Sharri



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Home Sweet Nestbox

As said in the movie *Field of* Dreams, "If you build it they will come." And



(above) Adult tree swallow (right) young swallows in nest box

In addition to the kestrel nests, there were signs of a chickadee nest (lots of tightly packed mosses) in one box and an active hornet nest in another.

In the bluebird boxes we had a 36% (18 out of 50) use rate. However, the boxes were used not by bluebirds but by tree swallows. David and his crew found signs of 16 single nests and one failed nest amongst the nest boxes. They were also treated to signs of one double clutch, meaning that two sets of young were hatched and reared, one after the other, in a single nest box. The second batch of young were still in the nest. (see photo). Four of the bluebird boxes also had active hornet nests in them.

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A Fond Farewell

Dave Joseph, Water Resources Technician and one of the original members of HBMI's Water Resources program, has left us to return to school. In his 10 years with HBMI, Dave has been a integral part of this program and his presence will definitely be missed. Luckily though, Dave will continue working on the dietary assessment project we started a while back before moving on. Please join us in wishing Dave all the best for the future.



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Home Sweet Nestbox (cont'd)

Apparently tree swallows love to line their nests with a lot of duck feathers as seen here.

Inspection of the 30 wood duck boxes was cut short due to the high incidence of active hornet and bumble bee nests. Inspection of the remaining boxes will resume once we have had a number of hard frosts later this fall or early winter to help ensure the safety of the inspectors. Unfortunately, none of the wood duck boxes that were inspected, showed any signs of activity.

Once the weather turns sharply colder and the hornets are less active, David will finish cleaning out the nest boxes for next year's residents. As this is an on going project, we'll keep you updated on our success in upcoming newsletters.



Tree swallow nest lined with duck feathers



Irving Oil Stops Spreading Contaminated Soil Near Tribal Lands

At a general membership meeting on Sunday August, 14, several tribal members living at Maliseet Riverside Village reported smelling gas fumes and seeing trucks transporting loads of soil down the farm road of a neighboring field. They voiced their concerns about the possible environmental and health affects of this activity. The next morning, Monday August 15, Chief Commander asked HBMI's Natural Resources department to investigate.

Having been alerted late the previous week that crews had begun removing soil from the Irving site, members of the Natural Resources staff were already working to get answers from Maine Department of Environmental been approved by them, and was legal. Protection (MeDEP). We knew the contaminated soil At the insistence of Chief Commander, MDEP got was coming from an oil spill site at Irving Oil's bulk Irving Oil Co. and Albert Fitzpatrick to stop spreading plant on Sugarloaf Street. MeDEP contacted our Natuoil contaminated soil on a neighboring field. It took ral Resources Department earlier this summer to discuss some strong words from Chief Commander to change possible ways to handle the contaminated soil, but then their minds. Later that day Irving Oil Company's failed to inform us of their decisions on how and where consultant verbally agreed to institute a long term to spread the contaminated soil. When we contacted monitoring program to keep track of contaminants in MeDEP about the site they had chosen for the spreadthe soil and will continue monitoring the site until no ing and why we had not been notified, the MeDEP staff contaminants are detected. apologized for this oversight and agreed to meet the The field in question is approximately one tenth of a following day to discuss our concerns and hear our mile from tribal land and three tenths of a mile from request that the land spreading stop. the nearest tribal home (see inset map)

During our meeting, MDEP staff were not keen to intervene in stopping the land spreading. They stated the site chosen for land spreading met their criteria, had

Meduxnekeag River Gage Station



No, it's not an alien phone booth, or a Homeland Security surveillance system, it's a gage station. This summer in a joint project with HBMI, the USGS (US Geological Survey) installed a gage station at the Lowery Bridge on the Meduxnekeag River. This station is one of thousands across the United States used to measure a variety of water parameters in the rivers on which they are installed.

Our new station measures water depth, rate of discharge, water temperature, dissolved oxygen, % saturation of dissolved oxygen, and pH. To see the gage station in action with real time data, log onto http://waterdata.usgs.gov/me/nwis/uv?01018035

If you have questions about the gage station please call Cara at 532-4273 ext 212.

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We will keep you informed with more details in our next newsletter!



The "Trail of Tears" documentary that was partially filmed on tribal lands in April of this year is finally nearing completion. The filming is complete and it is currently in post production. The film's expected release date is late fall 2005.

You can pre-order a copy of this DVD for \$34.95 plus \$5.00 shipping by contacting Rich Heape Films at 1-888-600-2922 or by logging on to www.richheape.com.

We'll keep you posted as more information becomes available.

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Summer Means Flowers All Around

As summer comes to a close, we are treated to many flowers adorning our homes, businesses and countryside. Did you know that some of the flowers that we see growing along the roadsides, fields, rivers and streams, even in household gardens are invasive, squeezing out native plants and harming the ecosystem? How can a healthy living plant hurt an ecosystem you might ask? That and many other questions were discussed earlier this summer when Linda Gregory, Botanist at Acadia National Park came to meet with Natural Resources personnel. Along with Linda Gregory, Suzanne Greenlaw (HBMI tribal member and park employee) discussed many invasive plants and how they are handled within Acadia National Park and gave suggestions on how to identify, catalog and address invasive plants on tribal lands. Some of the plants considered most invasive here in Maine are Purple Loosestrife, Japanese Barberry, Multiflora Rose, Garlic Mustard, Oriental Bittersweet, Japanese Knotweed, Smooth & Common Buckthorn, non-native honeysuckles and even the beloved Lupine! While there is a native lupine, the plant that covers our roadsides is actually an invasive.

So just what is a non-native plant species and why should I care if they are taking over our landscape? By definition, native plant species are those that originated here or arrived in Maine without human intervention. By contrast, non-native species were often brought here intentionally for horticultural or other uses and sometimes they were introduced accidentally in ship ballasts, crops, seeds or soil.

Since the non-native plants are usually immune to local diseases and predators, they are able to take over an area rather quickly. One of the long term effects of these invasive species is they choke out native vegetation and diminish the availability of food plants for wildlife. They can also alter behavior of native animals such as

Beavers Deceived - Again!

A number of years ago a beaver deceiver was installed near the pond parcel property to help maintain the access road. This device has been very successful at keeping the beaver from plugging the culvert, raising the water level and washing out the road. This spring, however, the beaver burrowed under the wire mesh (concrete reinforcement), plugged the culvert, and threatened the road. David Lombard and summer techs Alex London and Melinda Moran, jumped right in to repair the structure. After repairing the mesh and reattaching it, Bill Tomah and John Flewelling of our maintenance department took turns bringing in a small backhoe to pull the dam materials from the culvert. After a couple more failed attempts to plug the culvert, the beaver have begun to pile mud and sticks outside the deceiver to help stop the water flow through the culvert.



Clockwise - Purple Loosestrife, Honeysuckle berries, Japanese Barberry, Multiflora rose

Which plant above is a non-native plant in Maine?

They all are!

bees and other pollinators, plant eating insects, and fruit eating birds. Maine's Nati Non-native plants, if left unchecked, Landscape: Plants to Use and Plants to Avoid can contribute to the extinction of other plant and animal species. The State of Maine Natural Areas Program has published. *Gardening* to Conserve Maine's Native Landscape: Plants to Use and MAINE Plants to Avoid. This publication provides the public with a list of na-

tive plant recommendations to help create and maintain native habitats. This publication is available free of charge by calling the Maine Natural Areas Program at 207-287-8044.



Clockwise - Beaver deceiver before, Water level raised due to plugged culvert. Backhoe removing plug from culvert.

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Mercury Around the House



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Mercury is a naturally occurring element found throughout our environment. It can be in liquid or gaseous form. In its gaseous state mercury has no smell and no color. Mercury is also highly toxic to humans and wildlife. Long term exposure to mercury may cause kidney, brain or lung damage. While brief exposure

has been known to cause a number of symptoms including - nausea, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, loss of appetite, fatigue, eye irritation, insomnia, weight loss, muscle tremors and skin rashes.

Mercury is also found throughout our homes and businesses. By knowing which products contain mercury and how to properly handle or dispose of them, you can help protect yourself, your family and the environment.

So just where is mercury found throughout the house? It is found in :

- Glass thermometers
- Some metallic jewelry
- Some older light switches
- Children's shoes (with flickering lights)
- Clothing irons
- Older household thermostats
- Some toys with flashing lights
- Older oil-based paints
- Button batteries (*watch-type batteries*)
- Fluorescent light bulbs

Using Florescent and High-Intensity Discharge lamps (HID) are great ways to reduce your electrical usage. They last longer and use only about 25% as much energy as standard bulbs. Just remember they must be disposed of properly through your local household hazardous waste facility, not simply tossed in the trash.

Once again the summer has flown by and our summer techs have left to return to school. Please join us in wishing Rhonda Jewell, Alex London and Melinda Moran all the best as they continue their education.

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We are pleased to announce that Ryan Greenlaw has been promoted from his intern position in the Water Resources Department to the position of Water Resources Technician. Ryan has become a valued member of the Natural Resources Team.



Remember

Turn your clocks back 1 hour on Sunday October 30, 2005



- Mercury salts are used in some skin-lightening creams, antiseptic creams and ointments
- 41 states including Maine and California have issued fish-consumption advisories due to mercury contamination.
- A broken thermostat is the most common cause of mercury exposure.
- In it's gaseous state, mercury is odorless and colorless.
- Larger fish have higher mercury concentrations than smaller fish.
- Mercury is a naturally occurring metal.
- Liquid mercury is sometimes called quicksilver.
- Hundreds of holiday gifts and decorations contain mercury in the form of miniature batteries that power blinking lights and musical novelties.
- Two tablespoons of Mercury weigh about one pound.

All Spills are Not Alike - How to Handle a Mercury Spill

In handling a mercury spill You Should NEVER

Never - Use a broom to sweep up mercury, It will break up the mercury and spread it further.

Never - Use a vacuum to clean up mercury. It will put mercury into the air and increase exposure. The vacuum cleaner will then be contaminated by mercury and will need to be disposed of.

Never - Pour Mercury down the drain. It may become lodged in the plumbing and cause problems with future plumbing repairs. The mercury going down the drain will also contaminate your septic tank or sewage treatment plant.

Never - wash mercury contaminated items in the washing machine. It may contaminate the machine and the wastewater.

Never - walk around if your shoes or socks are contaminated with mercury. Contaminated clothing can also spread mercury around.

Be Sure To Remove everyone from the area of the spill. Shut door to affected area. Turn off ventilation system. Do not allow assistance from children. Remove children and pets from the area. Remember Mercury can be easily cleaned up from wood, linoleum, tile and other hard surfaces. If spills occur on carpet, curtains, upholstery or similar surfaces, these items should be thrown away as directed by your local health or fire department. Cut and remove only the affected portion of the contaminated carpet for disposal.

When handling a mercury spill

Open windows and turn on fans after sucessfully cleaning up the spill.

Maine School of Science & Mathematics Summer Camp

Isaac St. John, son of Cathy and Scott St. John, attended a week long camp at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM) located in Limestone, Maine this summer. The MSSM Summer Camps are held to provide young students with an opportunity to explore math, science, and technology, with new and exciting chances to explore these fields with hands on activities. The MSSM Summer camps hope to excite students about pursuing careers in math and science fields.

Some of the sessions Isaac attended included Digital **Memories** where he created a digital yearbook using iMovie Software. His work was then put on display with that of other campers as they ended the week with a camp-wide showing of their memory masterpieces. In Lift-OFF! Isaac engineered, built and launched his own rocket into the troposphere! On launch day, he and his classmates worked together to measure how high the rockets flew. Finally, Isaac created his own web page in Workin' the Web. In this session he learned how to create his web page using Hypertext Markup Language

(HTML). His page is posted on the internet where he can continue to work on it now that camp has ended. If you'd like to learn more about this camp, Isaac would be happy to talk with you. Or go to www.mssm.org for more information about the camp and the school in general.



Isaac St. John poses in front of MSSM sign while attending MSSM Summer Camp.

Cleanup Instructions For Small Mercury Spills less than or equal to the amount in a thermometer

1. Put on Rubber or Latex Gloves.

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- 2. Pick up pieces of broken glass or sharp objects with care. Place all pieces on a paper towel. Fold the paper towel and place it in a zip lock bag. Secure the bag and label as directed by the local health or fire department.
- inspect the entire room.
- cal health or fire department.
- by you local health or fire department.
- ment.
- accordance with local, state and federal laws.

Mercury Clean Up Kit 4 to 5 zip-lock type bags Trash bags (2 to 6 mm thick) Rubber or Latex gloves Paper towels Cardboard or squeegee Evedropper Duct tape or shaving cream & paint brush Flashlight



3. Locate visible mercury beads. Use a squeegee or cardboard to gather mercury beads. Use slow sweeping motions to keep mercury from becoming uncontrollable. Take a flashlight, hold it at a low angle close to the floor in a darkened room to look for glistening beads of mercury that may be stuck on the surface or hiding in small crack areas on the surface. Mercury can move surprising distances on hard flat surfaces, so be sure to

4. Use an eyedropper to collect or draw up mercury beads. Slowly and carefully squeeze the mercury into a damp paper towel. Place the paper towel in a zip lock bag and secure. Label the bag as directed by your lo-

5. After you remove larger beads, put shaving cream on the top of a small paint brush and gently dot the affected area to pick up smaller, hard to see beads. You can also use duct tape to collect smaller hard to see beads. Place the paint brush, or duct tape in a zip lock bag and secure. Be sure to label the bag as directed

6. Place all materials used with the cleanup including gloves in a trash bag. Place all mercury beads and objects in the trash bag as well. Secure the trash bag and label it as directed by your local health or fire depart-

7. Contact your local health department, municipal waste authority or local fire department for proper disposal in

8. Remember to keep the area well-ventilated to the outside (windows open and fans running for at least 24) hours after your successful cleanup). Continue to keep pets and children out of the cleanup area for at least 24 hours. If sickness occurs, seek medical attention immediately. If there are young children or pregnant women in the house, seek additional advice from your local or state health or environmental agency.

