

## NWSJ July column

### Recent Letters

In addition to writing monthly columns, we have other writing responsibilities too. Here are a few letters you may find of interest.

Letter from Mr. McD:

I contacted your office to see if anything has been done on the Telos Road and was told the NMW's had nothing to do with the roads, this was the landowner's responsibility. I told the person I was talking with that I am not one to complain, but for the money the sportspeople are spending at the gates it seems that a grader could be run over the roads at least one time. The person informed me that the money (collected at the gate) did not go towards maintenance of the roads but to maintaining the check points. This leads me to ask if the checkpoints are just a job creator if that is where all the money is going? This year is my 22 year of going into the north Maine woods system and I usually average 4-5 trips per year. I love the north country but, speaking personally, I can not justify tearing up my equipment for a little enjoyment.

Response:

Dear Mr. McD,

You received the correct information from our staff. North Maine Woods is only responsible for managing public access and none of the user fees collected is used for road maintenance. We are more than a job creator- if checkpoints were not in place so we could keep track of who is on the lands within this region, a majority of this area and the road system would not be open to public use. Our job is to keep track of who enters to minimize problems related to theft, vandalism and arson.

The cost of maintaining private roads is significant. With the current economy and very few markets to sell wood, landowners are scrutinizing all costs related to landownership. It does not appear that much wood will be moving over the Telos road or other main roads this summer so they may not be improved beyond their current condition. As long as roads are passable for forest fire access and other management needs, they may not get much additional attention.

If you do not travel into this area this summer because the roads are in poor condition and you do not want to damage your vehicle- that is your decision and probably a wise one.

Although we wish that all roads were in better shape to accommodate you, the current situation does help educate everyone about the direct relationship between harvesting wood and road upkeep. If the landowners in the area are unable to harvest and sell wood, then public access by road will certainly suffer.

(By coincidence we were informed that the Telos Road was being graded as this exchange took place and is in good condition now.)

Another letter.

Dear Mr. A:

We were informed this week by checkpoint staff that someone stole your tackle box from the back of your pick up truck on Sunday afternoon while your truck was parked at Malcolm Branch and you were fishing.

While we'll keep our eyes and ears open, I do not have much hope of recovering it. I will say that we don't hear of incidents of theft very often and I am extremely disappointed that someone took something that did not belong to them.

Should we ever find out who did this, in addition to any criminal charges for theft, they won't be welcome in the North Maine Woods region ever again.

And here's a third letter:

Dear Mr. B,

I'm writing as I believe you and your passengers were responsible for depositing litter along the roadway leading into DeBoullie Township.

When I came upon the mess of French fries, ripped up lottery tickets, hot dog wrappers, empty drink cups, an ATM receipt, I also found three other receipts with Fort Fairfield addresses. In checking our files, you were the only people from Fort Fairfield who entered North Maine Woods who would have traveled the DeBoullie Road this week. I have considered checking with the bank to see if the ATM receipt and account number matched your account, but felt it might prove to be more beneficial if I could talk with you first?

I ask that you please contact me to let me know why this material was left along side the road? If I don't hear from you, I may deliver the materials to the enforcement officer for this region who can then investigate this as a littering case and he can contact the bank.

The response- Mr. B called to say it was certainly his ATM receipt, but he could not understand how it got mixed up with the litter left along the road. We concluded that the written and oral communication with us would likely result in a positive change in future behavior.

End of column tag

Al has been employed by North Maine Woods employee for over 30 years. His goal in writing this column is to inform sportsmen about issues related to access and use of the Maine woods. If you have questions or suggestions for future columns, please contact him at P.O. Box 425, Ashland, ME 04732, by telephone at 435-6213 or via email at [al@northmainewoods.org](mailto:al@northmainewoods.org).

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