



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Good afternoon Senator Dill, Representative Hickman and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

I am Representative Thomas Skolfield. I reside in Weld. I represent House District #112 in the 129th Maine Legislature. I am here today sponsoring LD 527, a Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands to re-establish a law enforcement training program for Park managers and certain Bureau staff.

The traditional and common public perception of a Park Ranger is one of an officer who is charged with a number of duties and responsibilities, among them... law enforcement. This perception is well justified. A park ranger encounters countless exchanges with the people they serve. Parks often cover large tracts of land with exceptional and important natural resources, which are visited and enjoyed by millions of people from all over our state, our nation and from abroad. This requires a level of stewardship from personnel who are well trained and equipped.

For over five decades I had the privilege of acquiring first-hand knowledge and experience in this field. When I began my career, senior staff, who were well experienced in dealing with all aspects of park operations, mentored the new recruits, like me, who were joining the ranks. I was fortunate to be mentored by some of the very best. As time passed, that mentoring process was all but eliminated due to personnel reductions. Later, compliance/enforcement issues were becoming more complex. The Department then provided more advanced training, including utilizing the resources of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. I along with several others were graduates of the MCJA. Upon completion we were trained, tested, certified, took the oath and became sworn officers. After this advanced training, Staff never abandoned their other roles within the agency. Law enforcement was and continues to remain one of many hats that Park officers are required to wear. They are trained in first aid, CPR and the use of AED (automatic external defibrillators). They are trained in Hazardous Materials, pesticides, public relations, water safety, grounds/buildings and equipment maintenance, trail construction and maintenance, search and rescue procedures, traffic and crowd control methods, watercraft operation, the trades and numerous other functions; duties too lengthy to list here.. Somehow in all this, the enforcement training, certification and authorization to utilize that training has, over the past decade or so, fallen by the wayside.

I urge the committee to vote to require the Bureau once again to train, equip and designate these devoted and dedicated people, who are charged to protect the resource from the people, protect the people from the resource and protect the people from one another, while at all times, having the tools and the training for protecting themselves

The times we live in have not necessarily become better since this old Park Ranger began my career over fifty years ago. These people need to be trained, equipped and authorized to do the job that the citizens of Maine and her visitors have come to expect and demand.

I will be happy to answer any questions. Thank you for your time and attention.

District 112: Anson, Avon, Carrabassett Valley, Carthage, Kingfield, New Portland, Phillips, Starks, Weld, and Sandy River Plantation, plus the unorganized territories of East Central Franklin County (including Freeman, Madrid and Salem Townships), and Perkins and Washington Townships

February 21, 2019

State Representative Thomas Skolfield  
Maine House of Representative  
Maine House District #112  
Weld, Maine

**RE: L.D. 527.** Bill "Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands to Establish a Law Enforcement Training Program for Park Managers and Certain Bureau Staff" (HP0384).

The above bill carries broad implications for the safety of Park Rangers and all other state and local law enforcement officers, who with increasing frequency, assist one another. We no longer live in a society where we can anticipate compliance with the lawful orders of a person charged with enforcement and administration of rule and regulations. The daily examples of violence, unlawful behaviors, the use of threat, intimidation, and harm are no longer the exception as it occurs daily.

1. The need to assist or be assisted occurs daily across Maine and elsewhere by individuals hired to provide guidance and to maintain enforcement of laws.
2. Calling for assistance requires the responding person to be skilled, knowledgeable, and with the requisite experience to be of credible help. Standards of behavior and commands are learned when personnel are cross-trained in the basic execution of duties.
3. There are generally insufficient personnel on duty and when the call for assistance is made. Those responding need appropriate skills and knowledge to perform their duties and assist another. Consistency is the key to effectiveness.
4. The safety of our enforcement and regulatory personnel must be paramount to other considerations. We live in a society that is prone to violence, harm, and disregard for lawful commands and behavior. Not being prepared increases liability and contributes to harm of the individual who does not have requisite skills.

Sincerely,

Richard

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#### **Additional Resources.**

1. Park Ranger In-Service and Academy Training  
<https://www.parkrangeredu.org/park-ranger-training/>
2. The Importance of Cross-training in Improving Team Performance  
by Devra Gartenstein; Updated January 31, 2019

<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/importance-cross-training-improving-team-performance-33216.html>

3. A Need for Change: The Importance of Continued Training and Education for Modern Day Police Officers.

<https://www.cji.edu/site/assets/files/1921/aneedforchange.pdf>

The following rules and regulations are established by the Bureau of Parks and Lands (Bureau) pursuant to the provisions of the "Maine Revised Statutes Annotated," Title 12, Section 1803, subsection 6.

1. The use of all State Parks and Historic Sites, as defined in the Title 12 MSRA section 1801 (5), (7), shall be limited to the purposes for which they are being preserved and to activities determined by the Bureau to be compatible with the intended use of the facility. Activities which endanger persons or property are prohibited. The removal, molesting, injury or damage of anything natural, physical, prehistorical, or historical within these areas is strictly prohibited except as outlined in section 20 regarding hunting, trapping and firearms.
2. Feeding or touching wild animals found in the parks or historic sites is prohibited. For health and safety reasons, visitors are required to put away food securely and leave picnic areas and campsites clean.
3. Day use areas will be open from 9:00 a.m. to sunset daily, unless posted otherwise due to operational constraints.
4. Use of metal detectors at historic sites is prohibited. Metal detectors are allowed in other areas only by written permit obtained at the park.
5. Intoxicating beverages are not permitted in historic sites, day use areas, or in the common public areas in campgrounds. Disorderly conduct is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, indecent acts, intoxication or coarse language.
6. Open fires are allowed only in grills or fireplaces provided by the Bureau. No fires are allowed on beaches. No fires shall be left unattended.
7. No pets are allowed in the Sebago Lake State Park campground. Pets are not allowed on beaches between April 1 and September 30. Pets must be on a leash under the physical control of the pet handler and must not be left unattended. Pet owners must immediately clean up any fecal deposits left by their pets. Pet owners may be assigned picnic or campsites in a less congested area of the park.
8. Wheeled vehicles including bicycles shall be parked only in places designated for that purpose, conform to posted traffic regulations, be confined to roads and trails specifically designated for their use and otherwise comply with all applicable State laws. Vehicles parked in unauthorized areas may be towed at the vehicle owner's expense.
9. The discharging of wastes, including soaps and detergents, is prohibited except in a receptacle specifically designated for that purpose.
10. All refuse shall be placed in designated containers provided by the Bureau. No refuse shall be deposited in any type of toilet facility. At those areas where the Bureau has a carry in/carry out policy, users shall be responsible for carrying out all their refuse.
11. Soliciting is prohibited.
12. Campsite vacancies will be filled either by the State Park Campsite Reservation System or on a first come, first served basis. All campers must register in person when arriving at a State Park campground.
13. The camping day is from 1:00 p.m. until 11:00 a.m. Camping, at any one park, shall be limited to a cumulative total of fourteen (14) nights from the last Saturday in June through the third Saturday in August. Sites may not be left unattended more than two nights. Absences exceeding two nights require prior approval of the Park Manager or designee. The Bureau may remove unattended equipment at the equipment owner's expense.
14. Campsite occupancy and use is limited to:

- a. A minimum of one (1) adult 18 years of age or older per camping party
- b. A family consisting of up to two (2) adults and any number of their children under 18
- c. A maximum of six (6) individuals including children, except as set forth in 14b.
- d. One (1) motor home, trailer, camper van, or slide-in camper is allowed per campsite
- e. For tent campsites - as many tents as will comfortably fit within the designated site
- f. Not more than two (2) motor vehicles including the visitor's vehicle
- g. Picnic table(s) provided at the site by the Bureau. Moving picnic table(s) from site to site and using one site by several parties is prohibited.

15. Campsite visitors will be allowed as follows:

- a. After 9:00 a.m. by paying the day use fee and leaving before 8:00 p.m. Limit one visiting party to a campsite. The total number of people at the campsite will not exceed ten, and the limit at Sebago Lake State Park not exceed eight.

16. Quiet in camping areas is required between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

17. Trails will be opened and closed by the Bureau as warranted by environmental and safety conditions.

18. The use of chain saws and power equipment is prohibited. Generators may be used between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8 p.m. as long as they do not bother other visitors.

19. The use of floating devices, face masks or snorkels is prohibited at surf beaches. Scuba diving may be allowed by permit obtained at the park.

20. Hunting, trapping and firearms:

- a. All hunting and trapping shall take place in accordance with the laws of the State of Maine, the laws and rules of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and local ordinances.
- b. A concealed handgun may be carried by qualifying individuals consistent with the provisions of 12 M.R.S.A. §1803, (7). Open carry is not permitted under this provision.
- c. The possession and/or use of firearms or weapons is prohibited in all areas between June 1 and Labor Day, except in accordance with 20b above.
- d. Hunting is not permitted at any time at State Historic Sites or Memorials, or at any of the properties listed below:

Andrews Beach State Park; that portion of Bradbury Mountain State Park west of State Route 9; Cobscook Bay State Park; Crescent Beach and Kettle Cove State Parks; Damariscotta Lake State Park; Ferry Beach State Park; Holbrook Island Sanctuary State Park; Mackworth Island; Nickerson Lake State Park; Owls Head Light State Park; that portion of Quoddy Head State Park within 1,000 feet of the lighthouse; Reid State Park; Sebago Lake State Park; Shackford Head State Park; Two Lights State Park; and Wolfe's Neck Woods State Park.

- e. Hunting is not permitted between June 1 and Labor Day at any of the properties listed below: Aroostook State Park; Birch Point Beach State Park; Bradbury Mountain State Park east of Route 9; Camden Hills State Park; Grafton Notch State Park; Mt. Kineo State Park; Lake St. George State Park; Lamoine State Park; Lily Bay State Park; Moose Point State Park; Mount Blue State Park; Moxie Falls State Park; Peaks-Kenny State Park; Popham Beach State Park; Quoddy Head State Park; Range Pond State Park; Rangeley Lake State Park, except that portion posted as part of the Rangeley Lake Game Sanctuary; Roque Bluffs State Park; Swan Lake State Park; Warren Island State Park.
- f. The discharge of any weapon is prohibited from or within 300 feet of any picnic area, camping area or campsite, parking area, building, shelter, boat launch site, posted trail or other developed area.
- g. Trails which are closed to hunting will be posted to that effect at access points. On trails posted as closed to hunting, loaded weapons are not permitted on the tread way except in accordance with 20b above and weapons may not be discharged within 300 feet of the trail.
- h. Work areas and areas with significant public use may be temporarily posted as closed to hunting by park management in the interest of public safety.
- i. Baiting of wildlife for the purpose of hunting is prohibited.

- j. Trapping may take place only in accordance with the laws of the State of Maine, the laws and rules of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and local ordinances. Trapping on state parks or historic sites in organized townships requires the written permission of the Bureau.

In addition to any criminal and civil sanctions imposed by law, the Bureau may evict any person violating these rules or other State laws or regulations. Bureau employees or their representatives in the official conduct of their duties and in accordance with Bureau policy are exempt from the above rules.

Penalties: Violation of any of these rules, that constitutes a criminal offense as designated in Title 12 MRAS §1806 (4) is a Class-E crime.

## **POLICY/STATE LAW:**

**Fireworks are prohibited** on state property managed by the Bureau of Parks & Lands Pursuant to Maine Public Law Chapter 416, Sec 5.8 MRSA § 223-A, sub § 8-B

**Smoking is prohibited.** A person may not smoke tobacco or any other substance in, on or within 20 feet of a beach, playground, snack bar, group picnic shelter, business facility, enclosed area, public place or restroom in a state park or state historic site. Pursuant to the authority of the Maine Revised Statue Title 22 Subtitle 2 Subchapter 2: SMOKING HEADING: PL 1995, C. 470, §11

Please check with Park Staff for designated smoking areas at each facility.

**POLICY - Drone, Unmanned Aircraft (UAS)** - The general use of drones (UAS) is prohibited in Maine State Parks, Historic Sites, or DACF Boat Launches without direct oversight and guidance of an approved law enforcement agency or by the issue of a Special Activity Permit.