



# Pəskehtək<sup>w</sup>ok

## *Joining of The Branches*

Penobscot Indian Nation ~ Department of Natural Resources

Spring 2004 ~ Issue 1

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*Spring is here ... and summer is just around the corner!*

This means that many of the Water Resources staff are getting ready for field work. Jan Paul, Jason Mitchell and Bill Thompson are thinking about whether anything needs to change in their process of taking water samples and measurements out on the river and tributaries. Rhonda Daigle is reviewing and updating laboratory analysis procedures and getting the equipment calibrated. Angie Reed, the new Water Resources Planner, is working with everyone in the program to learn about what they do in order to write a Quality Assurance Project Plan that documents everything. And their fearless leader, Dan Kusnierz, is helping with all of this and more, including reviewing the Old Town landfill proposal.

Over the years the Nation's water quality monitoring efforts

have grown to include sampling over 80 sites on both the main stem of the Penobscot River and 20 rivers and streams who flow into the Penobscot (tributaries). We also sample 17 sites on 9 different lakes. We take 10 measurements of the health of the rivers and streams on a weekly basis and 14 measurements of lake health once every month.

We would love an opportunity to show you the sampling sites, any of the measurements or analyses we do, answer any of your questions, or help you get information that you need. Please stop by or give us a call. Schedule a time to go out in the field with us! And please see Mark Sanborn if you would be interested in working with us through the Summer Youth Program.



*Jason Mitchell with two sets of Penobscot River water samples: above and below Lincoln.*

### *Woliwon*

We are VERY grateful to Gabe Paul for helping us to develop the title of this newsletter. The words symbolize how we try to work in DNR and the river that brings us all together. It is an honor to have a young member share his thoughts.



*Mud season has also arrived!*

And for Russ and Dennis in the Forestry Program this means that all harvesting operations have been shut down. The mud season gates at Alder Stream, Mattamiscontis and Matagamon are either closed or will be closed in the near future. It is expected that they will be opened again prior to Memorial Day weekend.

Summer plans include harvesting operations and roadwork. Harvesting will take place in Alder Stream, Carrabassett Valley and the Mattamiscontis Lake area. Maps of the harvesting areas can be viewed online at - [www.penobscotnation.org/DNR/DNRI.htm](http://www.penobscotnation.org/DNR/DNRI.htm).

Mountain Brook, in the Mattamiscontis Lake area, will get a new bridge. Repairs will make the bridge closed for about a week and there will be signs posted when this is to begin. Other Roadwork will be done in the areas of Alton and Williamsburg.

**Please remember that a permit is needed if you plan on burning brush or have a campfire on trust lands. These permits can be obtained from the Penobscot Nation Fire Department (207) 817-7379.**

**PLEASE SEE REGULATIONS FOR WHERE OPEN-WATER FISHING SEASON HAS BEGUN.**

**ALSO REVIEW THE NATION'S FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY INCLUDED IN THIS PUBLICATION.**

## *Dams, dams and more dams ... being taken out!*

In case you haven't heard – John Banks and Clem Fay are working for the Nation in partnership with American Rivers, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Maine Audubon, Natural Resources Council of Maine, and Trout Unlimited on the Penobscot River Restoration Project (PRRP) – a very large and creative river restoration project! This unprecedented approach to river restoration will remove the Veazie & Great Works hydropower dams, decommission and bypass the Howland dam, and reconfigure the remaining hydropower facilities on the Penobscot River to:

- Improve access to more than 500 miles of habitat for Atlantic salmon and other native sea-run fish
- Enhance the populations of these native species in the Gulf of Maine
- Restore the ecology of the Penobscot River watershed

- Improve water quality and wildlife habitat
- Restore the Penobscot Indian Nation's ability to obtain sustenance, culture and identity from the river
- Foster new economic and community opportunities in the area
- Establish a stable business environment for hydropower on the Penobscot

All while providing the option for the power company to maintain most of its current power production on the second largest river in what is now called New England!

Clem describes this project as “providing the highest level of potential and promise for native species and river ecosystem restoration that we could achieve in today's world of competing demands.”

Check out the web site for more info!

[www.penobscotriver.org](http://www.penobscotriver.org)

## *Grants on the Wild Side*

The Department recently received two grants from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The first, in the amount of \$198,625, will help to fulfill our obligations under the Conceptual Agreement for the PRRP. Specifically the money will be used in the process of reaching a final agreement with the dam owner, implementing a community education initiative, and beginning engineering studies.

The second, in the amount of \$250,000, will employ a professional wildlife manager and technician to develop an applied management strategy for maintaining healthy populations of white-tailed deer and moose on tribal trust lands. This will also give the Nation the capacity to make informed decisions in its forest management planning process and in its fish and game regulations

## *DNR Assessment of the West Old Town Landfill*

No doubt you have heard a lot in the news lately about the West Old Town landfill. The sale of the landfill from Georgia Pacific (GP) to the state provides money to GP to install a biomass boiler. The landfill, previously used for disposal of GP sludge, will now be operated by Casella Waste Services. Casella is planning to greatly increase the landfill's size upward, accept new types of waste, and supply construction and demolition debris (C&D) to burn in GPs boiler.

**Please remember the role that each one of us plays in creating the need for landfills. Reduce, reuse, and recycle!**

Eric Nicolar and Dan Kusnierz in DNR have been very busy reviewing documents related to this controversial project and its potential impact on water and air quality and the health of Penobscot people. Dr. Andrew Reeve, a hydrogeologist from UMaine Orono, provided us with technical assistance on groundwater and geology aspects of the project. DNR staff have attended four public meetings and emphasized the need for government-to-government consultations. On March

23 Tribal Council and DNR staff met with Maine DEP to voice our concerns and ask questions about the landfill.

Our water-related comments made recommendations for 1) a double-liner system, 2) additional testing to better characterize ground water flow and definitively determine the cause of water quality changes, 3) baseline monitoring of drinking water wells of nearby residents, 4) changes to the environmental monitoring plan to better detect leaks and spills, and 5) meaningful involvement of Penobscot DNR in monitoring and operation plans. We also expressed our concern regarding the amount of out-of-state waste that will be accepted at the landfill.

The landfill presents two different air pollution considerations. The largest air emission, methane, will be controlled using a gas flare with a burn rate which is sufficiently high to control health impacts and odors. Non-methane organic compounds have not been addressed yet. But this will require Casella to apply for a Title V air license, ensuring that the landfill complies with air emission limits and concentrations. When the license application draft is made available, the Air Manager will do a thorough review to ensure the tribe's concerns are taken into account.

The GP biomass boiler would represent an addition of a major new source of air emissions close to the Island — a major concern of the Air Program. Eric has been in consultation with GP and the Maine DEP regarding areas of concern in their Title V draft permit. Eric will be reviewing an additional “beneficial use” permit that determines how they will sort the C&D so that large amounts of toxic materials aren't burned in violation of allowable ratios. As a result of this work the plant will no longer be relying on #2 oil for fuel and the boiler will be retrofitted with better controls. Although these improvements will be made and certain air standards met, Eric will continue to assess levels of toxic emissions and communicate any concerns to the regulating agencies.