

# KAYAKING CLASSES

Kayak Country Paddlesports in Andover is hosting "Intro to Kayaking Class" Sundays in April and May. This general paddle skills class teaches efficient paddle skills and covers basic safety issues as well. Classes run from 1 to 2:30 PM. Call 735-5000 for more information.

Saturday, May 26 and Sunday, May 27, Kayak Country is sponsoring the "Moose is Loose Festival." On Saturday, Mooseman Rick Libbey is presenting the program "Wildlife Photog-

raphy Clinic from your Kayak" from 10 AM to 12 PM. Attendance costs \$10. Also on Saturday is a "Try Kayaking" class, which includes rentals (on-site, on the Blackwater River). This class is from 1 to 2:30 PM.

On Sunday the program "Fishing from your Kayak" is being presented by Matt Yablonowski. Check out the latest equipment ideas and tips at this free clinic from 1 to 3 PM. For more information call 735-5000 or visit KayakCountry.com



At the Tucker Mountain Maple Co-op's annual Open House are (l-r) Eric Johnson, Mark Cowdrey, and Ed Hiller. Photo: Lea Ayers

## Camper Scholarships For Barry Conservation Camp

Summer is around the corner and the 2007 camping season is almost here. Are you looking for a way to send your child to University of New Hampshire 4-H camp?

The Elkins Fish and Game Club is ready to provide camperships to Barry Conservation Camp to area youth. These camps provide inclusive, co-ed programs for youth ages 10 to 16. Membership in 4-H or the Elkins Fish and Game Club or financial need is not necessary.

Barry Conservation Camp hosts 35 campers for one-week (Sunday-Friday) sessions in the White Mountains. Camperships for the following programs are available:

- July 8-13: Let's Go Fishing – ages 10 to 16
- July 15-20: Advanced Shooting Sports – ages 10 to 16
- July 22-27: Hunter Safety and Certification – ages 12 to 16

The Elkins Fish and Game Club is New Hampshire's oldest fish and game club, founded in 1894. Monthly club meetings are held at the Wilmot Public Library on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM.

For more information on Barry Conservation Camp visit Extension.UNH.edu. To apply for a campership, contact Carla Marshall at dmarsh@tds.net or 526-2648.

## Another Strange Year For Maple Sugaring

By Eric Johnson  
Tucker Mountain Maple Co-op

When Charlie gives me an April 15 deadline for writing the maple sugaring article for the *Beacon*, it's typically a few weeks after the season has ended. This year that is not the case.

Here in East Andover, Tucker Mountain Maple Co-op finally pulled its buckets and taps on April 15 – a full two weeks later than any of our previous seasons. In fact, for us, the limiting factor was that we had run out of wood to fire our evaporator rather than we had run out of sap to boil. We burned more than six cords of wood, including a mix of softwood scraps from a local sawmill.

Weather plays a huge role in the type of maple sugaring season we have. While this season started pretty much on schedule in late February, the slow spring warm-up made for some ideal sugaring into the beginning of April.

Some of the most consistent daily runs occurred during the stretch from April 5 to April 14. This was the first time for us at Tucker Mountain Maple Co-op to be doing anything other than cleaning buckets in April.

The general observation from folks across the maple industry is that this year was a year where the crop was down between 10 to 25 percent from years past. It would seem that some of the local producers defied this trend and made about the same or slightly more syrup than in years past. In addition, more of the syrup this year made by larger producers was of the darker grades.

Some maple producers and county foresters speculate that the warmer-than-normal January meant that some of the trees moved sap in January rather than waiting till late February when the first sap flows are normally expected.

The following is a summary of the maple season from some local producers:

**Dave Bates** from Andover manages a 600 tap sugarbush on the side of Mount Kearsarge in Wilmot. (A "tap" is one hole and bucket or tubing set up for collecting sap. Some larger trees may have

more than one tap in them, while smaller trees may only carry one tap.)

His operation, Twin Brooks Sugarhouse, had a season similar in production to 2006. He produced 65 gallons of Grade A syrup, plus approximately 15 gallons of syrup that will be wholesaled and turned into a granulated sweetener used in a variety of foods.

Dave noted that his total may change, as he still has his taps in. This is several weeks later than he sugared last year.

**David Pilla**, woodlands manager for Proctor Academy, produced 35 gallons of Grade A syrup from a little over 300 taps on Proctor lands. This total was up by almost 10 gallons over last year.

The majority of Proctor's taps are on the north-facing hillside adjacent to the Blackwater Ski Area. In addition, the school hangs 20 to 30 buckets on some of the larger, more mature maples around campus. Dave utilizes student help in gathering the sap from these buckets, sometimes emptying the buckets twice a day during good runs of sap.

Dave observed that this year's season lacked the runs of sap that were ultra-sweet. This sweeter sap generally makes some very light and buttery flavored syrup.

**Everett Jones** runs the 315-tap Taunton Hill Farm on Maple Street in East Andover. His production of 33 gallons this year was down from his 41.5 gallons made last year. Everett noted that the majority of his production was of the medium and dark grades.

**Parker Rowe** from North Road in Salisbury runs Maple Creek Sugarhouse. A little more than half of his 2,000 taps are in East Andover, including a large sugarbush on Route 11 just past Dyer's Crossing.

This year he made a bit over 400 gallons of syrup, up from last year's total of 335 gallons. He did this while setting out 200 fewer taps. Parker also took advantage of the good April sugaring weather to produce almost half of his season total.

See Maple on page 18

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