



Maine Environment

Natural Resources Council of Maine

Summer 2010

Penobscot River Restoration Leaps Ahead *By Cheryl Daigle*

Last October, I had the good fortune to join University of Maine researchers on the Penobscot River to help document endangered shortnose sturgeon preparing to overwinter in the lower river. Decked in bright orange safety suits and wearing rubber gloves, we cruised out to a large marker indicating one end of a gillnet laid out hours earlier. It took all my strength to help hoist it over the boat railing.

The first sturgeon emerged tail first from the river's surface, and in a moment it was in my hands. We had to work quickly to disentangle the fish from the net. There were many more waiting below, and each one would have to be carefully deposited in the holding pen and weighed and measured before release.

As I worked, wonder filled me at the feel of the sandpaper-like skin, the sharp definition of scutes that lined the sturgeon's body, and this up-close look at seemingly ageless eyes. The fish were surprisingly docile, the cool waters of the season keeping them subdued. All told, we caught 55 shortnose sturgeon that day—new fish were tagged and added to what amounted to over 400 fish since the research project began in 2006. On an evolutionary scale, shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon are among the oldest of creatures inhabiting the Penobscot River, and among 11 sea-run fish species whose numbers plummeted as a result of two centuries of industrial use of the river and overfishing. The presence of so many sturgeon in the river now indicates efforts to clean up the river since the Clean Water Act of 1972 have succeeded—sturgeon are bottom feeders and are especially susceptible to pollutants.

Improving Access

Today, a major challenge for sturgeon and other sea-run species using the Penobscot River is access to spawning and juvenile rearing habitat. While researchers now take a close look at spawning behavior and new data on migrations between river systems and within the watershed, the Penobscot River Restoration Project's large-scale effort to open up 100 percent of historic habitat for sturgeon, striped bass, tomcod, and rainbow smelt on the river, and improve access to nearly 1,000 miles of habitat for American shad, Atlantic salmon, and four other species, is leaping forward.



The author with an endangered shortnose sturgeon she helped pull out of the Penobscot as part of research efforts to document the river's health.

In June of 2004, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) gave the go ahead for partners in the Penobscot Project, which includes NRCM, to proceed with their unprecedented plan to restore 11 species of migratory fish to the watershed while maintaining at least the same level of energy generation capacity. The plan: purchase and decommission three dams on the Penobscot River, remove the two lowermost dams, build a bypass around a third, and support increased energy production on six other dams with additional fish passage improvements. Success means a healthier watershed for fish, wildlife, and people, and ensures revitalization of cultural traditions while renewing and sustaining recreation and economic opportunities well inland to the sea.

Six years later, partners in the project can celebrate numerous milestones. Intensive engineering work and research to prepare permit applications was well underway when the Penobscot Trust exercised the option on the dams in 2008. Once completed, and in concert with formal

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Best Time to Save on Energy Upgrades? Now!

NRCM has assembled Maine's best online resource for information about rebates, tax credits, and other incentives now available to help Mainers weatherize their homes and businesses and purchase higher-efficiency appliances. With a brand new weatherization program from Efficiency Maine, and sizable tax credits available through the end of 2010, there has never been a better time to get your home ready for the heating season!

Gretta Wark, our development director, is saving an average of 20 percent on her monthly electric bill since replacing her old refrigerator with the help of an Efficiency Maine rebate. To further jumpstart your efficiency improvement plans, NRCM has teamed up with participating members of the Maine Association of Building Efficiency Professionals to provide NRCM members a \$75 discount on an energy audit, which is the first step to maximizing energy efficiency and cost savings in your home. Visit our brand-new web pages at www.nrcm.org/home_energy_savings.asp to see how you can start saving money right away.

Added incentive: success will breed success. The Efficiency Maine Trust's three-year plan was recently approved by the Public Utilities Commission, but still requires support from the Legislature. The success of our legislative efforts next year will depend in part on the success of programs like the new weatherization program available now. That's just one more reason to get your energy audit and weatherization work done this summer!



Top 5 Reasons to Get an Energy Audit This Summer

- 1. Big Cash and Tax Credit Incentives through December.** Remember, you need an energy audit to qualify for the Efficiency Maine Home Energy Savings Program.
- 2. Make Your Home More Comfortable & Healthy.** Need we say more?
- 3. Save Money** on your energy bills for years to come.
- 4. Reduce Pollution.** Every gallon of heating oil you burn generates about 20 pounds of global warming pollution—plus sulfur and other pollutants.
- 5. Help Promote Good Energy Policy.** Using these programs this year will help support long-term energy efficiency programs in Maine.

Visit NRCM's Online Energy Resource Guide today! www.nrcm.org/home_energy_savings.asp

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Please call NRCM with
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or duplicate mailings!

Clean Energy Legislation: Insist On It

As I write, our country is facing the worst environmental disaster in its history. The explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig took the lives of 11 people and gushed millions of gallons of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico. The impact on the intricate thread of life in the Gulf ecosystem is immeasurable—and almost unimaginable. The pictures of birds dying, their wings soaked with oil, are tragic symbols of all that has been and will be lost.



Almost forgotten is the Upper Big Branch Mine explosion, which killed 29 West Virginia miners in April. Pollution from giant, coal-fired power plants is comparatively invisible compared to the Gulf disaster, but it is there, fouling our nation's air and poisoning the lungs of our children. And American people spend \$1 billion each day for oil from unstable, often hostile, regions of the world.

What kind of an energy policy is this? What does it portend for our environment and our national security? We, the citizens of this country, can—we *must*—insist on meaningful change to our energy policy. Congress has been in gridlock on energy for too long. Oil, electric, and coal companies have wielded enormous influence and managed to keep their own interests ahead of the public's for decades. Even in the face of today's Gulf catastrophe, powerful oil state senators are pushing for incentives for more offshore drilling. Coal state senators defend their parochial interests. It is time for the public's interest to be paramount.

We, the people of Maine, have succeeded in putting the public good ahead of special interests many times. We defeated the proposal for an oil refinery at Eastport. We stopped a large coal-fired power plant from being built in Bucksport. We persuaded the Board of Environmental Protection to dramatically cut air pollution from the oil-fired Wyman Station in Yarmouth. NRCM was a leader in each of these cases, and we are again deeply involved in the campaign to create a sensible, forward-looking energy policy for our country.

Maine's two senators, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, have the opportunity to help craft a bill that will serve the national interest. The stakes are high for the people of this state—and for the planet. Our senators must act, and I fear that they won't unless we raise our voices louder than the lobbyists who are working so hard to protect their self-interests.

I recently wrote to you, explaining why I will be stepping down as executive director of NRCM this winter. I plan to spend time with my family enjoying Maine's spectacular outdoors, but I also intend to become more active on federal climate and energy issues. I won't accept that this country must rely on energy sources that put our nation's oceans at risk, destroy local economies, and result in global climate change. I won't stand by as entire mountaintops are pushed into adjacent valleys for coal, destroying local habitat and ruining the lives of residents, all for fuel that pollutes our air and water.

There has never been a more urgent time than right now for us to take a stand for Maine, the nation, and the planet. Please, add your voices to the call for Senators Snowe and Collins to help pass a meaningful energy and climate bill. So much depends on it. —*Brownie Carson, Executive Director*

Give to NRCM through MaineShare

MaineShare makes it easy for you to donate to statewide progressive organizations through workplace giving. MaineShare receives year-round payroll deductions that provide groups like NRCM, who are working everyday to make Maine a better place to live, with a steady flow of income to keep important programs going. Sign up to give to NRCM through MaineShare at your workplace today!



MaineShare

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Penobscot - Continued from page 1

outreach sessions, permit applications were submitted to FERC, Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).

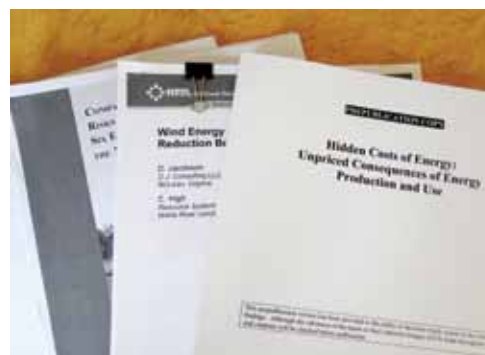
Restoring Integrity

After intense scrutiny and public comment opportunities, FERC released the Final Environmental Assessment for the project this past May, and their Final Order in favor of the project on June 16th. Next, the DEP took public comments on the Penobscot Trust's permits to decommission the three dams, remove Veazie and Great Works and construct a fish bypass in Howland, as well as Water Quality Certification for the three projects. Again with overwhelmingly supportive public comments, DEP issued Final Permits for the three projects in mid-July. The Penobscot Trust expects the ACOE permit to soon follow. Once all permits are in hand, the project can begin the groundwork necessary for removal of the Great Works Dam within the next year.

Restoring the integrity and resilience of a large river system is not easy, and there is little time to pause and celebrate each milestone. While staff and partners may be inspired by images of shad or river herring underwater, wispy clouds of morning mist around a salmon angler, or dramatic sunsets behind paddlers, reality is that getting out on the habitat being restored is all too rare. Sitting in meetings, typing away at the computer, giving presentations to community groups, or staffing exhibits is more the norm as we work to revitalize Maine's largest river. Yet, once in awhile the stars align, and an opportunity to get out on the river and see firsthand the fish whose population we are working to restore becomes reality. This is where the truest inspiration may be found, holding a prehistoric fish in one's hands, knowing the future of its species rests in the collective hands of all of us, and that yes, indeed, it is possible to bring a river back to life, and to allow these fish who have been here for millennia to thrive far into the future.

Cheryl Daigle is the community liaison and outreach coordinator for the Penobscot River Restoration Trust. FMI, visit www.nrcm.org.

Visit Our Online Energy "Library"



Maine faces tremendous energy challenges stemming from our dependence on fossil fuels: air pollution, health and environmental impacts from climate change, heating oil dependency, high energy costs, and more. To meet these challenges, energy efficiency must be Maine's top energy priority, which is why NRCM is working so

hard to ensure success in improving the efficiency of Maine's oil, gas, coal, and electricity use.

In addition to improving our energy efficiency, Maine must also clean up our energy supply by replacing fossil fuel generation with clean, renewable power. Maine and the region must make difficult energy choices by carefully examining the pros and cons of all forms of energy, as there is no single silver-bullet solution, and it is increasingly obvious that we cannot continue the status quo.

Currently, land-based wind power is the most abundant and affordable renewable energy resource available in Maine. We know that it comes with trade-offs, which is why we look painstakingly at every major wind project proposal—we must balance the urgent need for clean, renewable power with our North Woods conservation goals, for example. We pore over the latest scientific and other findings regarding threats to wildlife, protection of scenic resources, noise impacts, and details regarding how, and how much, each wind power project would displace dirty fossil fuels.

We invite you to review for yourself the reports and studies that inform NRCM's positions on energy, including wind. To make it easy for you to do so, we've created an Online Energy Library, which you can view at www.nrcm.org/renewable_library.asp. This library will begin with an initial collection of wind power issues and will continue to expand over time. We encourage you to bookmark this page and visit it often.

Maine Environment

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Maine Environment is provided four times a year to more than 12,000 members and supporters of the Natural Resources Council of Maine. NRCM is a Maine-based nonprofit membership organization working to protect, conserve, and restore our land, air, wildlife, and water, now and for future generations. Membership starts at \$28/year. Join online at www.nrcm.org.

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• GUBERNATORIAL FORUM AND NRCM ANNUAL MEETING •

Thursday, October 21, 2010 University of Southern Maine, Portland

Save the date for a Gubernatorial Forum co-hosted by the Natural Resources Council of Maine and other environmental groups, tentatively scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in Hannaford Auditorium at the University of Southern Maine. The forum will be preceded by NRCM's Annual Meeting of the Membership, tentatively scheduled from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. at nearby Glickman Library. More information to follow. As part of annual meeting, NRCM members will vote on the following outstanding board candidates:

Nominated for a one-year term:

Elisa Boxer-Cook, Scarborough. Elisa is an Emmy award-winning journalist and a vocal environmental health advocate. Elisa received an Environmental Award from NRCM in 2008, after months of research and testimony that helped to pass several laws promoting safer chemical policies in Maine.

Marion Freeman, Freeport. Marion is a businesswoman, former Dean, professor, and coach at Yale University, and experienced board member. Most recently, she has served on the boards of the Portland Museum of Art and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute.

Jeanne Gulnick, Peaks Island. A marine scientist, Jeanne Gulnick has been on the faculty at Saint Joseph's College since 2000. Jeanne serves on the board of Oceanside Conservation Trust.

Dennis King, Freeport. Dennis is the CEO of Spring Harbor Hospital in Westbrook and Maine Mental Health Partners in South Portland, both of which provide mental health services. He serves on the boards of Maine Community College System and the University of Maine Foundation.

Jennifer Nolan, Falmouth. A freelance writer, Jennifer has written and edited numerous articles and books, most recently *Sharks Up Close* and the soon-to-be-released *Sea Turtles Up Close* and *The Secret of Pig Island*. She is president of RockHopp LLC, a small company that develops innovative ideas for the marketplace, with a focus on education, children, and the environment.

Jeffrey Pidot, Hallowell. From 1990 to 2007, Jeff served as head of the Natural Resources Division of the Maine Attorney General's Office. Jeff was honored with an Environmental Award from NRCM in 2007 for his extraordinary contributions to protecting the state's natural resources. He serves on the boards of several non-profits.

Kate Rush, Newport. Kate is a partner in Evolo Home Center and Evolo Energy Solutions, which specialize in construction and renewable energy systems for residents, municipal, non-profit, and commercial applications. She is active in Maine business groups and the Maine Women's Lobby.

Nominated for first 3-year term:

- Eileen Carey, Presque Isle**
- Victoria Devlin, South Freeport**
- Maroulla Gleaton, M.D., Palermo**
- Henry Heyburn, Brunswick**
- Norton Lamb, New Gloucester**
- Stewart Strawbridge, South Portland**
- Lois Ann Winter, Portland**

Nominated for second 3-year term:

- Adam Lee, Cumberland**
- Rondi Nelson, Mount Vernon**



Protect Your Nest Egg While Protecting Theirs

Your support of the Natural Resources Council of Maine helps protect Maine's wild creatures from pollution and loss of habitat. Through a Charitable Gift Annuity, you can make a gift that provides income for your retirement, and at the same time supports our mission to protect Maine's environment.

A Charitable Gift Annuity allows you to make a significant gift of cash or securities to NRCM. In return, you or your spouse receive fixed payments for life.

Tax savings on a Charitable Gift Annuity can be significant. Part of the asset you donate is tax deductible in the year you make the gift. Funding an annuity with securities can lower your capital gains taxes. And a portion of the payments you receive will be tax-free or taxed at a lower rate for a number of years.

A Charitable Gift Annuity will also give you the satisfaction of knowing that you have played a critical part in protecting the wild places and creatures that make Maine special.

And it's easy to do! To find out more about setting up a Charitable Gift Annuity and to receive a personalized illustration of how an annuity can fit your needs, please contact:

Gretta Wark, Director of Development
(207) 430-0108 or (800) 287-2345 ext. 208 • gwark@nrcm.org

Sample rates for single life Charitable Gift Annuities through the Natural Resources Council of Maine:

Age	Rate
65	5.5%
70	5.8%
75	6.4%
80	7.2%
85	8.1%
90	9.5%



WASHINGTON WATCH: Climate and Energy Legislation— Failure Not an Option

Senate leaders have announced that they will not move forward with comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation this summer, but there is still every change that they can pursue such legislation in the fall and succeed. We must keep up the fight! Failure is not an option. The Obama Administration, Senate leadership, and Republicans like Senator Snowe and Senator Collins can *and must* get us to the finish line this year.

The signs of our failed energy system surround us. The BP oil spill has devastated wildlife and economies in the South. Temperatures have soared to record highs in the Northeast. The connections between burning fossil fuels, environmental degradation and climate change are ever more visible.

The National Academy of Sciences just issued one of the most comprehensive scientific assessments yet, concluding that climate change "poses serious, wide-ranging threats to human societies and natural ecosystems around the world." The report concludes that "there is an urgent need for U.S. action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, foremost by adopting an economy-wide carbon pricing system."

Maine's senators understand this. Senator Collins has a bipartisan climate



bill in play. Senator Snowe announced at a White House meeting in July that she supports curbing carbon pollution from power plants as a start. This approach is modeled after the successful Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) that NRCM helped establish in the Northeast. Since power plants are the largest emitters, this would be a significant step forward if applied nationwide. We need our Senators to publicly state their commitment to move climate legislation to the Senate floor this fall.

Polls since the BP oil disaster indicate that Americans, including Maine people, increasingly support energy efficiency and clean electricity, limits on global warming pollution, and accountability for BP. In Maine this month, a majority (61 percent) of small business owners surveyed said they supported the climate legislation currently being developed in the Senate.

We have to stay the course! Visit our website often or sign up to receive the latest news on federal energy legislation, at www.nrcm.org.

—Lisa Pohlmann, Deputy Director

Join NRCM at these Upcoming Events!

Product Stewardship State Legislative Forum

Tuesday, August 17, 2:15-5:15 p.m

Holiday Inn By the Bay, Spring Street, Portland

Learn how business and states are "turning today's trash into tomorrow's products." Join legislators, government officials, business representatives, solid waste officials, and advocates to find out about product stewardship and what it means for you, your state, business, local solid waste district, and our environment. Co-sponsored by NRCM, Council of State Governments, and the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. Register online today at www.nrcm.org or contact Matt Prindiville FMI at mprindiville@nrcm.org or (207) 430-0144.

Gubernatorial Forum and NRCM Annual Meeting

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The Art of Local Food

Sunday, October 24,
5:00-7:00 p.m

The Summit at Point Look-out, Ducktrap Mountain, Northport

Watch the moon rise over Penobscot Bay from the top of Ducktrap Mountain at our tasting party to benefit the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

Local farms, restaurants, and suppliers are teaming up to dish out the best treats, with all proceeds going to NRCM's work to protect Maine's environment. FMI, sign up at <http://www.nrcm.org/attendanevent.asp>.

"Bold in the Cold" Polar Plunge

Friday, December 31, 2010

Noon, East End Beach, Portland

You, your friends, and your family can support NRCM's energy work by pledging our plunge (raise a minimum of \$50) while raising awareness about global warming and what NRCM is doing right here in



Maine to curb it. For added fun, sign up to plunge with us! FMI, contact Stacie Haines, shaines@nrcm.org or (207) 430-0127.

NOW SHOWING AT THE NRCM INSIDER

Check out these recent YouTube videos, produced by our staff for the NRCM Insider:



Gulf Voices – Hear first-hand experiences about the BP oil spill from four Gulf Coast residents who came to Maine to share their story.

Climate Change & a Maine Beach – A fun and relaxing vacation reminds us of what could be lost unless we take action to stop climate change.

Five Days on the Allagash with NRCM – A small group of NRCM members joined Brownie Carson for a fun-filled adventure on this national landmark waterway.

Open Mic Night with NRCM – musicians and music lovers joined NRCM for music inspired by the environment. Great fun!

What a Long, Strange Fish It's Been – a 1 1/2-minute glimpse at Maine's sea lamprey migration in the Sheepscot River.

Make Your (People's) Choice! – Thanks to everyone who sent in People's Choice nominations! On August 10, we'll be announcing our finalists, when you'll also be able to vote for your favorite candidate. Bookmark your browser and mark your calendar today! Watch a video testimonial from last year's winner, Evelyn Dunphy of Bath, at our NRCM Insider at <http://www.nrcm.typepad.com/nrcminsider/page/3/>.

Special Memberships Given April 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010

Honoraria and Memorial Gifts

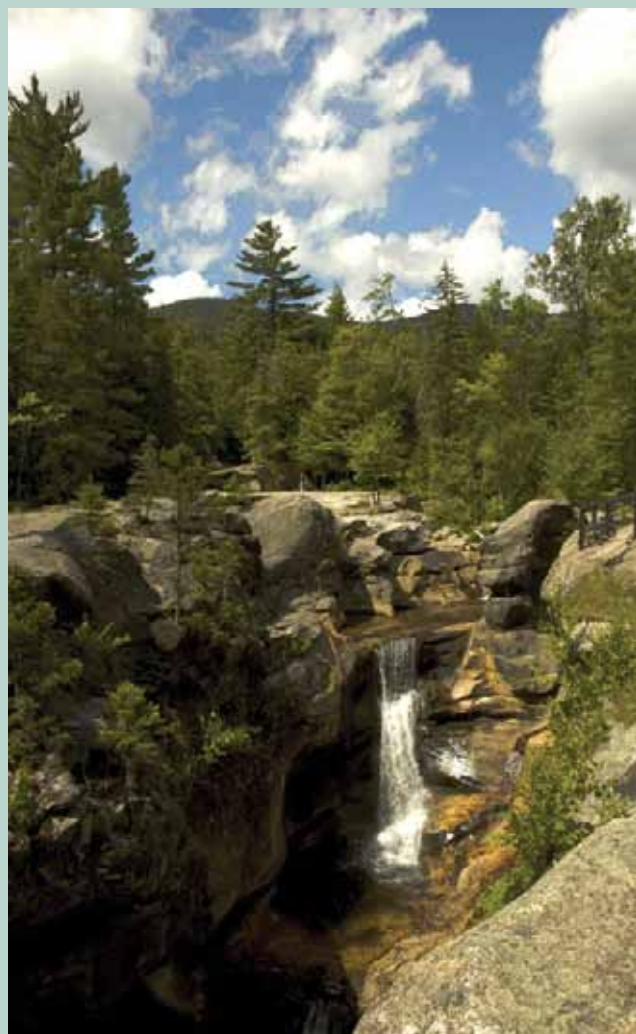
Sven R. Peterson in honor of Brownie Carson
Catherine Carswell in honor of Brownie Carson
Dr. and Mrs. John D. Constable in honor of Brownie Carson
Murray and Anne T. Gartner in honor of Brownie Carson
Louise K. Lee in memory of Helen Lee
Gene Meacham in memory of Patricia Shaver
Margaret Meacham Smith in memory of Patricia Shaver
Bernard and Rosemary Lambe in memory of Patricia Shaver
Bangor Daily News in memory of Truman P. Young Jr.

New members of **PARTNERS IN MAINE'S FUTURE** Program, our monthly giving club. Members' automatic donations help us save on administrative costs, including paper. Special thanks to these members!

Elizabeth W. Avery
Louise F. Bennett
Jacquelyn K. Cressy
Richard M. Culgin
Jeanne Gulnick
Russell Heath

Joan W. Leslie
Mary McVey
Kenneth J. Reese
John E. and Rebecca B. Richardson
Lila Wolan-Jedziniak

Send Us Your "My Maine This Week"



"Summer in Grafton Notch State Park just north of Newry in Western Maine. Coming from the south, Screw Auger Falls will be your first stop."
—Tony Nazar, Wilton, Maine

Do you have a photograph of Maine you'd like to share? A poem? Send your submissions to beth@nrcm.org. Visit "My Maine This Week" online at www.nrcm.org.

My Maine This Week Traveling Exhibit

Our "My Maine This Week" traveling photo exhibit is at the Maine Coast Welcome Center on Route 1 in Belfast until August 20th. Stop in to view these beautiful photos!

Support Land Conservation: Vote "Yes" on Question 3 November 2nd

This year's \$9.7 million land bond would be matched by \$9.2M in federal and other funds and would be used to buy land for public use—including recreation, wildlife habitat, hunting, and hiking, and to protect farms and working waterfronts. Vote "Yes" in November.



Tip of the Day

That "Fresh Paint" Smell. Look for paints free of VOCs (volatile organic compounds), which are harmful and can linger long after the paint dries.

For a Tip of the Day every day, visit our website at www.nrcm.org. Have our tips sent directly to your home page through our RSS feed!

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