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Golden’s ‘progressive conservatism’

Democratic representative touts success in red district

By STEVE COLLINS
SUN JOURNAL

LEWISTON — There isn’t another congressional Democrat in the country who has managed to win more races in Trump territory than U.S. Rep. Jared Golden of Lewiston.

Though Republican Donald Trump has cruised to easy wins in Maine’s hardscrabble 2nd Congressional District three times in a row – brushing aside Hillary Clinton in 2016, Joe Biden in 2020 and Kamala Harris in 2024 — Golden has succeeded in holding a district eyed hungrily by the GOP.

It’s a startling enough outcome that Politico proclaimed that Golden is “on the cusp of becoming a power broker” akin to retiring U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin of West

Virginia, who has touted Golden as the person he calls “to get some sanity back” on Capitol Hill.

This year, in one of the costliest races in the land, Golden “just barely threaded the needle” to squirm past Republican Austin Theriault to claim the seat in a fourth straight election cycle, as Karl Trautman, a political science instructor at Central Maine Community College, put it.

For Golden, the narrow win is a confirmation of a strategy he announced last summer in a speech that most clearly laid out his view of politics.

“We can be proud progressive conservatives, defying the laws of physics in D.C. politics and forming a covenant with the true



U.S. Rep. Jared Golden, a Lewiston Democrat, is seen Nov. 6 shortly before addressing the media during a post-Election Day news conference in his campaign office in Lewiston.

RUSS DILLINGHAM/
SUN JOURNAL FILE

MORE INSIDE
Trump and Republicans in Congress eye an ambitious 100-day agenda, starting with tax cuts. **Page A2**

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TRIPP POND IN POLAND

STATE SAYS IT WON’T INTERVENE



Gradient rock ledges, seen Nov. 7, were installed to allow a continuous flow of water throughout the year, but beaver dams have stopped nearly all the water flowing from Hogan and Whitney ponds into the Little Androscoggin River in Oxford.

RUSS DILLINGHAM/SUN JOURNAL



An aerial view Nov. 7 looking south to Tripp Pond in Poland from Hogan Pond in Oxford. Water flows from Tripp Pond to Winterbrook Stream, seen at left.

RUSS DILLINGHAM/SUN JOURNAL

Damage from flooding in 2022 and 2023, caused by artificial bladders authorized by Maine DEP, is estimated at \$100,000

By CHRISTOPHER WHELOCK
SUN JOURNAL

POLAND — It was another summer of discontent for residents of Tripp Pond that is stretching into winter.

But unlike the summers of 2022 and 2023, when the water level was so high it caused severe flooding and \$100,000 or more in estimated and real property damage, there was little to no flow this past summer.

It’s partly due to a lack of rain in June, July and August, down 7 inches from the same period in 2023, which contributed to a lack of water flow through the pond. The other factor — the beavers are back, or at least they were.

Now there are questions about whether humans may have enhanced the beaver dam by creating a beaver dam ana-

log in order to artificially raise the water level in the pond.

Resident and Tripp Pond advocate Shellie Howe and her partner, Jeff Hughes, discovered a new structure in early July, when new drone photos revealed what appeared to be a beaver dam.

“Most of the stuff was really old,” Hughes said after inspecting the outlet. “If it had beaver chews most of it was just real old material.” Hughes said he didn’t know it at the time but learned that beavers can build with rocks.

“These rocks that I was looking at — two of them in particular — were like 30 and 35 pounds and a whole bunch of them weighed more than 10 pounds, and they were in a perfectly straight line

See **TRIPP** Page A6

Snow could disrupt travel, football

By CAROLYN THOMPSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Black Friday was giving way to a white weekend in parts of New York state, with the first big snow of the season threatening to bury towns along lakes Erie and Ontario during a hectic holiday travel and shopping weekend.

As flakes began flying Friday, forecasters warned 4 to 6 feet of blow-

ing and drifting snow could fall in Watertown and other areas east of Lake Ontario through Monday.

After an unusually mild fall, as much as 2 to 3 feet of snow were possible along Lake Erie and south of Buffalo from lake-effect bands notorious for pummeling the region with snowfall rates of 2 to 4 inches (5 to 10 centimeters) per hour. Lake-effect snow happens when warm moist

air rising from a body of water mixes with cold dry air overhead.

“The lake is 50 degrees. We’re about six degrees above where we should be this time of year, that’s why we’re seeing these heavy lake-effect events,” Erie County Public Works Commissioner William Geary said. “The outlook for the next two weeks into December, we’ll probably

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In this photo from last January, a Buffalo Bills fan sits amongst snow covered seats in Buffalo, N.Y., while waiting for the start a game between the Bills and the Pittsburgh Steelers.

ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

GOLDEN

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American majority,” he told a gathering in the nation’s capital called WelcomeFest.

“Our success will depend on two things: First is our commitment to place-based politics, which transcends partisanship and defeats extremism. Second is by rejecting the unnatural left-right political spectrum that stokes division and polarization,” Golden said.

Putting those principles into practice, though, is tough in the supercharged political environment in which both Golden and Trump operate.

After all, the two men were both successful in Maine’s 2nd District with wildly different approaches on the campaign trail.

Trump is an outsized personality, bombastic and sometimes crude, always craving attention and demanding loyalty.

Golden is, well, nothing like that.

Put Trump in a crowded room and he will grab the spotlight and start talking. Do the same with Golden and he might just stand in a corner, watching quietly and listening carefully, barely noticeable in a flannel shirt.

Yet despite his stylistic and policy differences from Trump, Golden’s approach worked. He won over enough Trump voters to keep his job.

The root of Golden’s victory “is the same as the secret to success of many elected officials over the years: he understands his constituents and his district,” University of Maine professor Mark Brewer said.

“He read the room,” Trautman said.

Brewer, who teaches political science, said Golden “strongly advocates for his constituents’ interests and positions on the issues that really matter to them, and he has earned their trust.”

“While this may seem like a simple formula, it is difficult to successfully pull off,” especially in such a closely-divided district, Brewer said.

But, he said, Golden has shown “a willingness to act in a bipartisan manner and has developed a record and a persona that set himself (apart) from the stereotypical national Democrat.”

“Nothing delivers a message quite like winning does,” Mario Moretto, Golden’s communications director, said.

Rooted in community

Golden’s ancestors lived in Lewiston, a place he described as “an industrial town that for generations was dominated by textile mills and shoe factories but lost those jobs to globalization.”

As a result, his father’s family moved to Winthrop. By the time Golden was born 42 years ago, his parents ran a small golf course in Leeds, which Golden remembered as “a dairy farm town back then but today the cows are mostly gone.”

As a child, he said, “I couldn’t tell you which of the farmers in town were Republicans or Democrats, or whether my parents’ customers voted Red or Blue.”

“In fact, most of them weren’t either,” Golden told WelcomeFest. He pointed out that when he was 10 “a guy with big ears named Ross Perot won the town I grew up in” and almost won the 2nd District, too.

Perot, a presidential contender for the Reform Party who warned about exploding federal spending and deficits, “made a lot of good points,” Golden added.

In any case, Golden said, “what bound everyone together when I was growing up in Leeds wasn’t a political identity. It was the hours and years working together, and spending time together. The time spent in diner booths, church pews, on stumps around a fire and school gymnasium bleachers. What connected us was the place, the people, and the way of life. It was our cul-

ture — our local culture.”

For Golden, any successful politics must be rooted in that same sense of community.

“I have always run as a Democrat,” the lawmaker said. “I believe in the power and necessity of unions, in equality and civil rights.”

“But I won a lot of votes from Republicans and independents, too, and from Democrats who no longer feel much in common with the Democratic Party,” Golden observed.

“I believe they vote for me because they know I’m one of them. I’m from where they’re from. I live like them, talk like them. Always have.”

A ‘progressive conservative’

Golden insists he is not a liberal, not a conservative and, perhaps most telling, not a moderate.

He said the “constant narrative telling us the political spectrum” is a form of shorthand he believes “is far more harmful than illuminating.”

“The political spectrum does not exist in nature,” Golden said. “There’s nothing real and tangible” about it “because it’s a construct of the human mind, and it is in constant flux, constant change, and it means different things place to place, country to country, and era to era.”

Golden said the incessant effort to divide politics into right and left merely encourages polarization and rhetoric that “gets hotter and hotter” to the point where it feels like there’s an existential split.

As a result, he said, it turns people “with whom you had good faith disagreements into sworn enemies” and can splinter lifelong friendships, even families.

But, Golden said, “left-right politics ignore the complexities of actual voters.”

“Each of us has progressive and conservative impulses alike,” the lawmaker said. “These are not in tension — and building a political system that puts them in opposition to each other is a recipe for disaster.”

His own answer is to call his politics “progressive conservatism,” a way to span the divide or split the difference.

Golden offered an example of his progressive conservatism: “I have told voters for years that I believe we should raise taxes on the wealthy to help cut the deficit. When I discuss this with voters, most of them agree” it’s a sound, mainstream policy.

But a partisan political system “doesn’t know what to do with a proposal like this,” Golden said.

“Progressives who normally favor raising taxes on the rich would reject it, convinced that any concern with the deficit is a dog whistle for cuts to social insurance programs for the poor,” he said.

Conservatives, on the other hand, “would oppose it because their devotion to fiscal responsibility ends at raising taxes on the wealthy even to balance the budget and save the nation from fiscal ruin.”

‘Progressive economics, cultural conservatism’

Golden said his position, distilled to a phrase, is “progressive economics, cultural conservatism.”

The progressive economics piece is straightforward, to Golden: “Tax the rich to cut the deficit. Pro-business and antitrust. Corporate welfare is bad, direct payments to families are good. Financialization of the economy is sometimes bad, protective tariffs are sometimes good.”

But “cultural conservatism” is a little tougher to grasp.

“What I am referring to is a political fault line I believe most Democrats don’t even know exists,” Golden said.

He pointed out as examples, “the backlash among my constituents to climate change policies, like elec-

tric vehicle mandates and higher energy prices,” student debt, concerns about crime and worries about immigration across “an unsecured southern border.”

Golden said some Democrats say they “aren’t real issues” and people shouldn’t be so concerned about them. But, he said, that’s the wrong approach.

“Populist energy comes from the vast majority of Americans who don’t fit neatly on the political spectrum,” he said, and “is expressed in alternating waves of rage, disgust and despair toward the centers of power in Washington and Wall Street.”

Golden said, “Populism is the public’s disdain of an elite consensus that seems stacked in favor of the powerful and wealthy — regardless of party or ideology — at the expense of everyone else — regardless of party or ideology.”

“It’s rage at trade policies championed by Democrats and Republicans alike that shipped jobs or entire industries overseas, putting our trade sheets in deficit in service of CEO and shareholder profits,” he said, and “disgust with politicians who leverage their public service to land seven-figure lobbying jobs within days of losing an election.”

“It is despair that even after dutifully voting in every election they are told is the most important one of their lives, they are still facing the same challenges in their day-to-day lives,” Golden added.

“Populism will always be a force aimed at the powerful. Our job isn’t to harness populism. It’s to feel it, and to use our power as elected officials to chip away at the consensus that so many Americans feel is rigged against them,” Golden said.

Rejecting partisanship and recognizing the “anger and frustration” that voters feel can overcome polarization, he said.

“That the promise of progressive conservatism,” Golden said.

Golden’s success has other factors, too

James Melcher, a professor of political science at the University of Maine at Farmington, said Golden benefits from the longstanding willingness of independent-minded Mainers to split their votes.

He said the big wins racked up in 2008 by both Democratic presidential contender Barack Obama and Republican U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, who each led their opponent by double digits, are a solid example of a pattern that helped Golden as well.

Melcher said Golden this year “went out of his way to be much more critical” of President Joe Biden during the campaign than he was toward Trump, a man he once voted to impeach.

Melcher also pointed out that Theriault, the GOP candidate Golden defeated, wasn’t well-known heading into the race. That allowed negative advertising to define him for many voters.

That Golden is a veteran who served in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan is also “a real plus” in a district with many veterans, Melcher said.

In addition, he said, it’s possible some voters backed Trump because they were hesitant to vote for a woman for the nation’s top job, a bias that would not have kept them from casting a ballot for Golden.

Trautman said Golden opted to vote with the Republicans on a good many symbolic measures that stood little chance of becoming law, the kind of political skirmishes meant to provide ammunition on the campaign trail.

Golden figured that liberals wouldn’t like his decisions on some of those types of bills, Trautman said, but ultimately would vote for him anyway because they dislike the GOP candidate even more.

It worked, Trautman said.

“The proof is in the pudding. He got over the line,” he said.

TRIPP

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going across the creek on top of a bunch of debris.”

According to his research, Hughes said the biggest beavers can move rocks that weigh 8.5-10 pounds. Most adult beavers weigh between 40 and 60 pounds.

But he added that trying to convince the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife that it may not actually be beavers building up the dam has been a challenge.

“When they’ve gone out there they look at the top of the dam and they see real beaver activity,” he said. “The problem is they don’t probe, they don’t look, they don’t take apart anything, so they haven’t looked. In my opinion, they don’t want to.”

Hughes points out that regardless of whether it is beavers or human activity, the end result is the same — either flooding or reduced flow and restricted access for spawning and migratory fish.

Howe and Hughes said the lack of water flow has negatively affected the health of the pond and its water quality. Algae blooms degraded and discolored the water, blocking the sunlight and eventually consuming oxygen as the algae decomposed. Howe has long argued that without sufficient flow to flush out the dead algae, it will grow back even stronger next year.

There is, once again, division on the cause of the low flow through the pond’s only outlet at Winterbrook Stream.

Return of the beavers in 2024

Aerial photos of the only outlet on Tripp Pond — also known as Tripp Lake — from April show a free-flowing and clear outlet. The water level was considered in a natural flow state.

A few months later it was a very different scenario. Quarterly aerial photos, taken July 2, showed a new beaver dam across the outlet in the same spot they had built years before, leading to the removal and dismantling of the dam in late 2022 under Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife supervision.

In June 2023, months after a group of beavers was removed under the supervision of state wildlife biologists, members of the Tripp Lake Improvement Association installed bright yellow bladders, the largest being 12 feet long, 20 inches wide and 12 inches high, at the outlet. The installation required permission from the landowner, Kruger Energy Inc., based in Montreal, Quebec, which the lake association did not have.

After the Maine Department of Environmental Protection learned that information the group pro-

vided to them was erroneous and that installation of the bladders by the Tripp Lake Improvement Association was in violation of the Natural Resources Protection Act, the DEP ordered the bladders removed.

In September 2022, the Maine Department of the Secretary of State administratively dissolved the group’s incorporation for not filing its annual report or paying associated fees in 2020 and 2022. It was re-instated in July. The Tripp Lake Improvement Association is listed as a Maine nonprofit corporation.

Hogan and Whitney ponds are part of the equation

Just north of Tripp Pond lie Hogan and Whitney ponds, which have a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization financed and run by residents. Like many bodies of water in Maine, they are interconnected — in this case with Tripp Pond — and rely on water flow from Tripp Pond to keep water levels stable in both ponds.

The Hogan-Whitney Pond Association’s stated mission is “to protect the water quality in Hogan and Whitney ponds for use by future generations through education, monitoring, community engagement, and problem remediation.”

The association takes a proactive approach to protecting the bodies of water through water quality data collection, removal of millfoil, identification of invasive plants and fundraising to address soil erosion. They have a number of projects that are ongoing.

But Hogan and Whitney ponds also have beavers and blockages in Winterbrook Stream affecting the water flow and water quality. This year’s lack of flow from Tripp Pond is keeping Hogan and Whitney water levels below where they should be, too.

The town of Oxford just wrapped up a \$500,000 grade control project to stabilize water levels and eliminate the need for the Welchville Dam on the Little Androscoggin River. The structure has been deteriorating and ineffective for years. The grade controls were funded with a \$800,000 federal grant obtained through the help of U.S. Sen. Susan Collins’ office.

If successful, the additional \$300,000 would go toward removal of the Welchville Dam next to Route 26. But low water levels appear to render the grade control project ineffective for now.

There are actually two dams connected to Hogan and Whitney ponds, both owned and controlled by Oxford. Tom Donovan is president of the Hogan-Whitney Pond Association and Bruce Wilson is vice president. In an interview Nov. 5, the pair explained the dynamics of dealing with two dams that create separate water level

issues for the ponds.

Thompson Lake is connected to Hogan and Whitney ponds through the Little Androscoggin River. During periods of heavy rain, a dam at Thompson Lake releases large volumes of water which backflows into the adjacent ponds and contributes to flooding.

“This is predominantly why our water level goes way up even with the gates closed,” Donovan said, “and the dam there, it can’t keep up with the amount of flow.” That flow elevated the ponds by up to 8 feet last December, flooding portions of the lakeside and making the road impassable for months.

“So, that’s why ideally we have the grade controls in now,” Donovan added, noting they will be monitored for the next three years. “If they’re working, ideally they’re going to take the dam out, so that will eliminate that backflow. We should really never see that again.”

Donovan and Wilson point to one of their biggest successes as an organization has been working with other groups and agencies and communicating with association members.

That means local lake associations, watershed experts and statewide organizations such as Lake Stewards of Maine, Maine Lakes and Ecological Instincts, as well as governmental agencies such as the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the Oxford County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Since last summer, they’ve been working closely with Shellie Howe who reached out to them to collaborate and learn. Howe started a private Facebook group called Friends of Tripp Lake, which has 135 members. She’s been trying to educate residents on Tripp Pond about issues like water flow and water quality, erosion and algae blooms and what causes them.

Asked why she and residents of Tripp Pond should care about Hogan and Whitney ponds, her response was straightforward. “Because they are our neighbors. There is an entire ecosystem between us that relies on the natural flow of water. Hogan depends on our water to help replenish their pond the same way we depend on Meadowbrook and our other inlets to help replenish ours.”

Wilson, who has lived on Whitney Pond for 22 years, said he applauds Howe for her efforts, offering up his advice. “And that’s to educate people and continue. It’s a hard, uphill battle. It’s a battle for us just to educate the people on our two ponds about the need to stop raking all the pine needles that fall on the ground. People rake them and throw them in the trash. They should be leaving them because they help absorb the water” from running into the ponds.

See **TRIPP** Page A8

SNOW

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see some more.”

Gov. Kathy Hochul declared a disaster emergency for the targeted counties, allowing state agencies to mobilize resources. Rapidly deteriorating conditions Friday caused closures along Interstate 90, and tandem and commercial vehicles were banned from Interstate 86 in western New York and much of state Route 219 beginning Friday afternoon.

“There’s a considerable number of vehicles going off the road on the 219 currently,” Gregory Butcher, Erie County’s deputy director for preparedness and homeland security, said at an afternoon briefing.

He said ATVs and snowmobiles were being placed around the county to help first responders if necessary. The Buffalo Bills called for volunteers potential-

ly willing to shovel snow at Highmark Stadium, where over 2 feet of snow was possible before Sunday night’s game against the San Francisco 49ers. Earlier this year, a major lake-effect storm forced the NFL to push back the Bills wild-card playoff home game against Pittsburgh from Jan. 14 to Jan. 15.

“It’s going to be slow going, there’s no doubt about that,” Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said, adding the heaviest snow is expected to be over by kickoff.

The team, meanwhile, was preparing to play in any conditions.

“We’re trying to stay on top of it,” coach Sean McDermott said on Friday.

“You guys know things change around here quickly with the weather coming off the lake and everything. So we do the best we can,” he added.

The Bills are 9-2, their best start since 1992, and

with a win Sunday, they would clinch their fifth straight AFC East title.

Lake-effect snow also covered parts of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula in a system that is expected to last through the weekend.

The area was blanketed in snow by Friday afternoon, with some places already measuring more than a foot of snow.

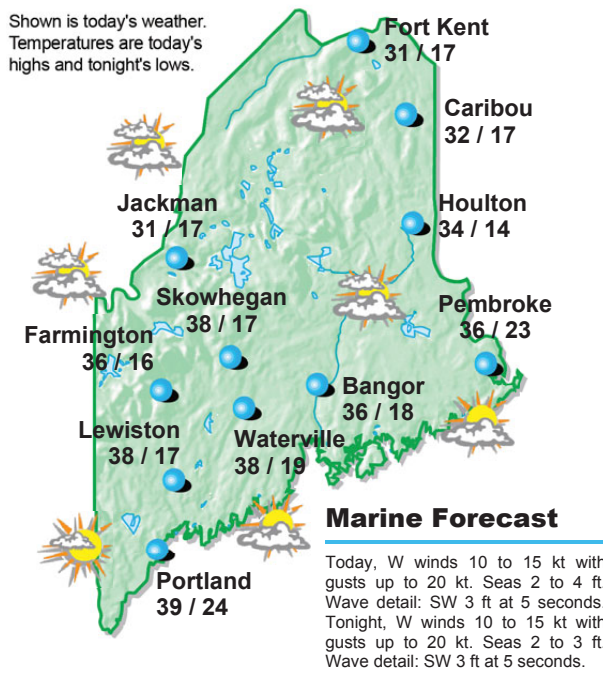
“We’ve got this westerly, northwesterly flow regime and this chilly air mass over the U.P.,” National Weather Service meteorologist Lily Chapman said. “So it’s a pretty good setup for this long duration lake-effect snowfall event.”

Heavy lake-effect snow in parts of northern Michigan was expected to continue into the weekend, according to the weather service’s Gaylord office. Some areas of the Upper Peninsula could see up to 3 feet of snow Sunday night through to Monday, Chapman said.

Six Day Forecast For Lewiston

Today	Monday	Tuesday
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
38° 17°	35° 18°	34° 13°
Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Mostly Cloudy	Scattered Snow	Few Snow Showers
33° 20°	36° 16°	28° 11°

Today's State Weather Forecast



In-Depth Local Forecast

Today we will see partly cloudy skies, high of 38°, humidity of 55%. Southwest wind 5 to 8 mph. The record high for today is 60° set in 2001. Expect mostly clear skies tonight, overnight low of 17°. West southwest wind 1 to 6 mph. The wind chill for tonight could reach 15°. The record low for tonight is 5° set in 1989.

Almanac

Temperatures (Yesterday)	
High Temperature	39
Low Temperature	25
Normal High/Low	40/25
Record High	61 in 1963
Record Low	7 in 1958
Precipitation (Friday)	
Precipitation	Trace
Month to Date	2.05"
Since Jan. 1	45.90"
Snowfall (Friday)	
Snowfall	0.0"
Month to Date	1.1"
Season to Date	1.1"
Last Season to Date	0.1"
Current Snow Depth	1"
Degree Days (Friday)	
Heating	29
Month to Date	637
Season to Date	1192
Last Season to Date	1268

Sun and Moon

Sunrise	6:56 a.m.
Sunset	4:03 p.m.
Day's length	9 hr, 6 min, 3 sec
Decrease (Jun 21	6 hr, 22 min, 20 sec
Moonrise	7:39 a.m.
Moonsset	3:56 p.m.
Sunrise tomorrow	6:57 a.m.
Sunset tomorrow	4:03 p.m.



UV Index

UV Index for 3 periods of the day.	
8 a.m.	0
Noon	1
4 p.m.	0
0-2: Minimal	The higher the UV index, the higher the need for eye and skin protection.
3-4: Low	
5-6: Moderate	
7-9: High	
10+: Very High	

Local Tides

Site	Today			
	High	Low	High	Low
Augusta	2:58 am	10:24 am	3:15 pm	11:03 pm
Bath	11:33 am	5:33 am	None	6:13 pm
Old Orchard Bch	10:44 am	4:25 am	11:26 pm	5:04 pm
Rockland	10:34 am	4:24 am	11:15 pm	5:02 pm
Wiscasset	11:00 am	4:35 am	11:42 pm	5:14 pm

Site	Monday			
	High	Low	High	Low
Augusta	3:42 am	11:06 am	3:58 pm	11:45 pm
Bath	12:08 am	6:10 am	12:11 pm	6:52 pm
Old Orchard Bch	11:21 am	5:02 am	None	5:42 pm
Rockland	11:07 am	5:01 am	11:51 pm	5:40 pm
Wiscasset	11:37 am	5:12 am	None	5:52 pm

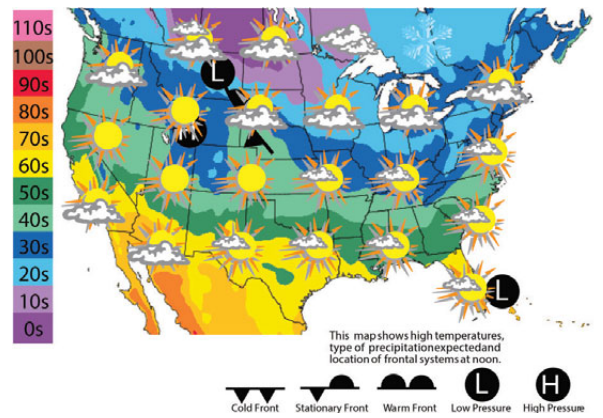
Around Our State

City	Today		Monday	
	Hi/Lo	Wx	Hi/Lo	Wx
Auburn	37/17	pc	35/18	pc
Augusta	37/21	pc	36/22	pc
Bangor	36/18	pc	35/19	pc
Biddeford	40/22	s	39/23	s
Brunswick	39/20	s	38/21	s
Caribou	32/17	mc	31/18	mc
Falmouth	39/21	s	38/22	s
Farmington	36/16	pc	33/17	pc
Gorham	39/20	s	38/21	s
Jackman	31/17	mc	27/18	mc
Lisbon	39/18	pc	36/19	pc
Portland	39/24	s	37/25	s
Sanford	37/20	s	36/21	s
Skowhegan	38/17	pc	34/18	pc
Waterville	38/19	pc	35/20	pc
Windham	38/19	s	36/20	s
Wells	38/21	s	39/22	s
York	38/26	s	37/27	s

Across The Nation

City	Today		Monday	
	Hi/Lo	Wx	Hi/Lo	Wx
Anchorage	16/6	mc	20/13	mc
Atlanta	54/28	s	48/29	s
Boston	40/27	s	39/28	s
Chicago	27/13	s	30/14	mc
Dallas	61/38	s	62/39	s
Denver	51/24	s	50/25	s
Detroit	35/26	pc	38/27	pc
Honolulu	84/70	s	83/71	pc
Las Vegas	65/43	pc	67/44	s
Los Angeles	74/49	s	73/50	pc
Miami	79/61	mc	76/62	s
New York	38/29	pc	40/30	s
Orlando	70/46	s	66/47	s
Phoenix	80/53	s	81/54	s
Pittsburgh	31/22	pc	30/23	mc
San Fran.	65/47	pc	64/48	s
Seattle	48/35	pc	47/36	pc
Wash. DC	45/29	mc	41/30	s

National Weather Map



TRIPP

Continued from Page A6

Two state agencies weigh in via an open letter

Howe and Jeff Hughes have also been communicating with officials at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife asking for assistance dealing with the beavers and what they suspect is human interference to artificially build up the beaver dam to restrict the flow of water out of Tripp Pond.

Both state agencies issued a rare joint statement Oct. 25 on Tripp Pond, stating the purpose is “to clarify permitting requirements for activities that may be occurring in the outlet stream of Tripp Lake; and to provide guidance on potentially permissible solutions to control water levels at Tripp Lake.”

The letter goes on to state, “MDIFW is not prepared to authorize preemptive removal of beavers in the outlet stream, unless beavers or their dam are causing property damage or, based on a professional assessment by our staff, are likely to do so in the future.”

The statement seems to conflict with damage to properties that occurred in 2022 and 2023, partly as a re-

sult of allowing artificial bladders to be placed in the outlet. About a dozen camp owners on Tripp Pond reported damage from flooding, some of it so severe it rendered the camps unusable.

Camp owner Don Lee remains concerned about flooding inundating his septic system and polluting the lake.

Patrick Kneeland was among those with the worst damage.

Other camp owners are also worried about more flooding, but don’t want to speak out for fear of being ostracized by one side or the other.

Some said the possibility of a lawsuit remains an option.

The letter from the MDOT and MDIFW offers a possible solution, but there’s a catch: “If lake residents come to consensus on the appropriate water level for the lake, a third option may be to propose a modest amount of contained fill — for example, a row of rocks 1-2 feet high — in the outlet stream. Such a proposal would help prevent the lowest water levels in Tripp Lake.”

It does not define consensus, nor does it state how it will monitor water levels, as there are no known flow meters installed anywhere in the lake or the outlet.

Reaction to the letter

from Howe is both complimentary and blunt. She said it’s helpful information regarding the permitting process, “but it doesn’t address the needs of the lake.”

Howe said, “We know after several years of experience that when our water flow is restricted by any means, our water quality declines rapidly regardless of water level. DEP and IFW could easily unite this community by providing education on why natural state and natural water flow is most beneficial for the health of the lake.”

The Sun Journal reached out to the owner of the property which includes the outlet — Kruger Energy Inc., based in Montreal, Quebec — for comment on finding a solution to the water level issue, reaction to the DEP/IFW letter, and the beaver issues.

JJ Davis, vice president of operations and asset management at Kruger Energy, issued the following statement:

“Kruger Energy is always committed to being a responsible corporate citizen and partner within the communities in which it operates, while respecting the environment and the regulatory agencies that oversee this responsibility.

We are aware that there are differing perspectives

on the desired water levels for Tripp Lake. As such, Kruger would like to see a solution that meets the needs of all surrounding landowners and follows the guidance of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.”

Kruger acquired the property and associated flow rights in a 2009 purchase of the Mechanic Falls hydroelectric dam.

Finally, there is historical perspective on Tripp Pond water levels, as written by West Poland resident and Bates graduate Dwight E. Libby in a March 4, 1922, article in the Lewiston Journal Illustrated Magazine.

It reads, in part, “The influence of man on the geology of this beautiful body of water is as yet relatively insignificant. No attempt has ever been made to alter the drainage, and the lake of the water continues to rise and fall subject to the influence of climate as it has been doing for time immemorial.”

The article continues, “There is a certain peculiarity about the location of the lake that makes it unique from a geological standpoint. How many other lakes are there in Maine that do not have any outlet when the lake is too high or too low?”

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RECIPE

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Bacon Roasted Brussels Sprouts

Serves: 6 Prep Time: 10 Minutes Cook: 20 Minutes

Ingredients:

1.5 lbs brussels sprouts trimmed and halved

1 Tablespoon olive oil

salt and pepper to taste

6-8 slices thick cut bacon chopped

1 Tablespoon chopped parsley

cooking spray

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Coat a sheet pan with cooking spray. Place the brussels sprouts in a single layer on the sheet pan. Drizzle with olive oil and season generously with salt and pepper. Scatter the bacon pieces around the pan. Bake for 20 minutes or until bacon is crispy and sprouts are browned. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

Variations:

Add a sprinkle of grated parmesan, white cheddar or mozzarella during the last 5 minutes of the baking time. Add or swap out the parsley for: chives, basil, thyme or green onions. Add more veggies: red onion wedges, halved mushrooms, green beans or broccoli. Stir in to the finished dish: toasted pine nuts, kalamata olives or sun dried tomatoes.

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