

Chapter IV: Outdoor Recreation Supply in Maine.

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Key Understandings

Maine has seen growth in public conservation and recreation lands. Conservation easements have been one major source fueling this growth. Nonetheless, Maine still relies heavily on private lands being publicly available for nature-based outdoor recreation.

The relative amount of publicly owned lands vary by county/region. There is a general pattern in which state and (to a lesser degree) federal interests are greater in the less populated regions while land trusts and municipalities play a larger conservation/recreation role in more populated regions.

There are a diverse group of entities providing access to outdoor recreation. At local levels, municipalities and local (vs. statewide) land trusts are significant owners/managers of lands and facilities supporting outdoor recreation. This report recognizes the significance of these resources but is unable to fully quantify them.

Maine's supply of areas supporting outdoor recreation is not self-sustaining. Issues such as urban sprawl, changes in the forest products industry, abuse of private lands, and the demand for second homes continue to create challenges to keeping Maine lands open to the public.

Resources for Outdoor Recreation - Maine's Supply

Land and Water Recreation Resources in Maine

Maine's 20.4 million acres offer a diverse natural environment that supports a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities for residents and visitors. The state's 5,000-mile coast includes miles of sandy beach and rocky headlands, as well as over 3000 islands. In northern and western Maine, the Longfellow Range of the Appalachian Mountains contains more than 100 mountains over 3000 feet, and all of the state's "4000 footers." Maine's inland waters total nearly 1,450 square miles in area and include about 5,800 lakes and ponds and almost 32,000 miles of rivers and streams. Maine also has about 5 million acres of wetlands ranging from small vernal pools to extensive coastal salt marshes. About 90% of the state's land area is forested.

A. Public Recreation & Conservation Lands

Summary

The 2003-2008 Maine SCORP lists Maine's total 2002 public conservation and recreation lands, including easements, at 6% of total acreage. At the end of 2008, Maine's percentage of public conservation and recreation land was just under 8% of the state's total area. This increase in recreation and conservation lands represents a 26 % jump. State-owned recreation and conservation land/easements increased by over 350,000 acres from 2002 to 2008.

When land trust fee lands and easements are added to the figures for public lands/easements, the total conserved area percentage is 17.8% (source: Maine State Planning Office, Land for Maine's Future program). This represents a 37.6% overall increase from 2002.

Federal Lands in Maine Available for Recreation 199,421 acres total

Most federal recreation lands in Maine are administered by three agencies: the US Department of the Interior's National Park Service (NPS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (F&WS); and the US Department of Agriculture's National Forest Service (NFS). Federal military and veterans' agencies also administer some lands available for public recreation. The principal federal recreation lands in Maine are Acadia National Park (35,332 acres owned by the National Park Service and 12,416 acres of privately owned lands under conservation easement); the Evans Notch District of the White Mountain National Forest (49,166 acres); and the National Wildlife Refuges (58,100 acres).

State Lands in Maine Available for Recreation 1,316,575 acres total

73% of the state-held conservation and recreation lands are administered by the Bureau of Parks and Lands as Public Reserved lands and nonreserved public lands; state parks and historic sites and other park lands; trust islands; the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and Penobscot River Corridor; public boating facilities; and multiple use rail trails. Baxter State Park, administered separately, is Maine's largest park and alone accounts for 16% of the state conservation and recreation lands. The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife administers wildlife management areas, fish hatcheries; and

Table 1: State Conservation and Recreation Lands in Maine 2008 (Acres)

State Agency	Fee	Easement	Total
Dept Conservation-Parks & Lands	663,201	302,421	965,622
Dept Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	90,866	13,189	104,055
Baxter State Park	209,751	0	209,751
Dept Agriculture	0	1,355	1,355
Dept Transportation (Rest Areas & related)	370	1	371
University of Maine (School of Forestry & Wildlife)	8,478	0	8,478
BGS (Capital Park)	21	0	21
State Planning (CZM Boat Access Sites)	11	0	11
Total	981,188	335,387	1,316,575

Source: Maine State Planning Office - Land for Maine's Future Program

boat access facilities and holds 8% of the state conservation and recreation lands.

As **Figure 1** (pg. 3) shows, Piscataquis County has the largest proportion of Maine's conservation and recreation acreage, with much of this

Table 2: State Conservation Lands by County

County	% of Total Maine Conservation Lands with State Interest	% of State Area	Ratio*
Androscoggin	<0.5	1.6	Approaching 0
Aroostook	11	21.1	0.52
Cumberland	1	2.7	0.37
Franklin	5	5.4	0.93
Hancock	6	5.3	1.13
Kennebec	1	2.9	0.35
Knox	<.5	1.2	Approaching 0
Lincoln	<.5	1.5	Approaching 0
Oxford	6	6.7	0.9
Penobscot	6	10.9	0.55
Piscataquis	44	13.1	3.56
Sagadahoc	1	0.8	1.25
Somerset	9	12.6	0.71
Waldo	1	2.4	0.42
Washington	7	8.7	0.8
York	2	3.2	0.63

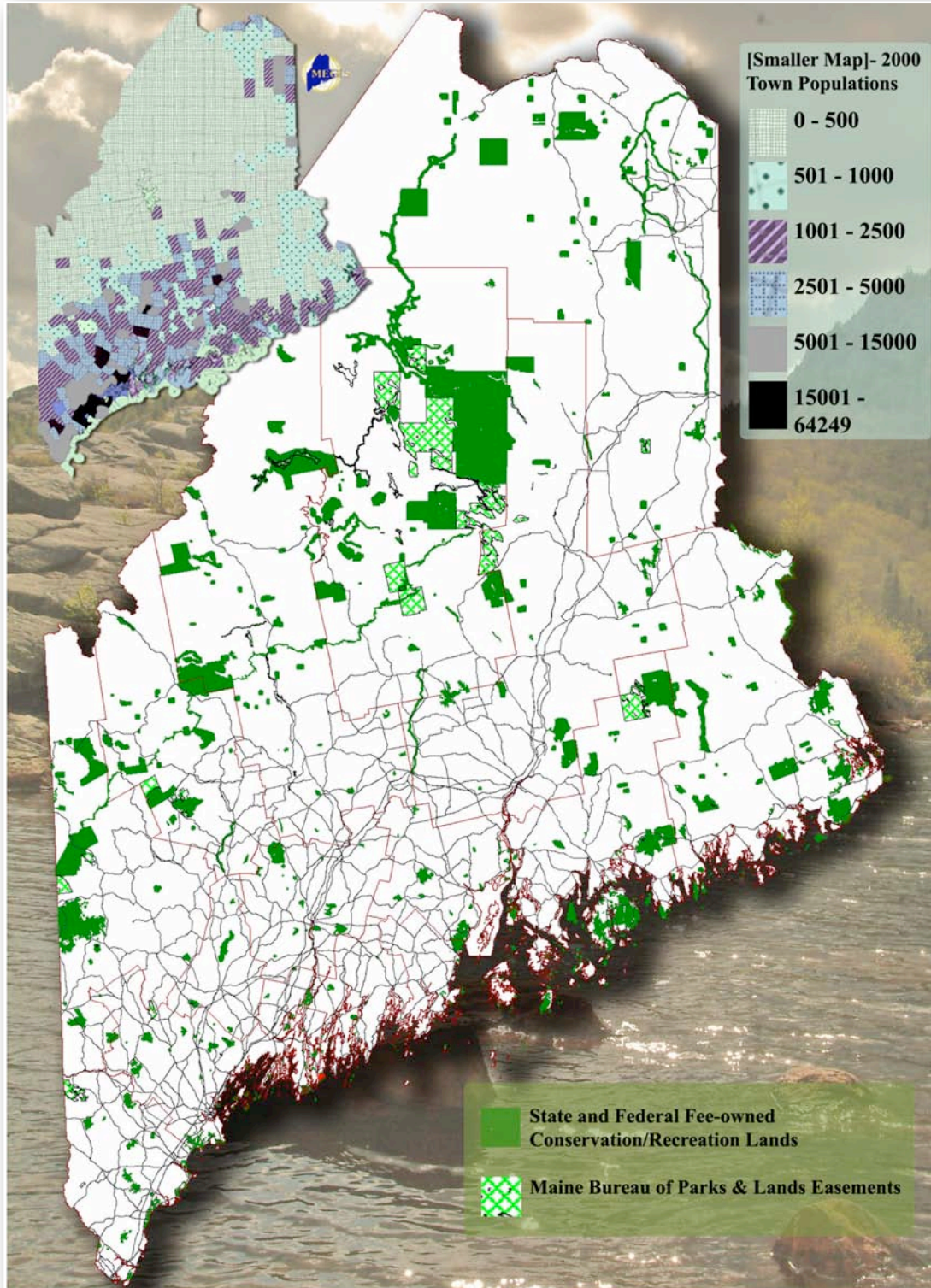
*Ratio = % of state's conservation lands / % of state area. Ratios above 1 indicate a county has a higher percentage of the state's conservation land than its geographic percentage of state land.

located in Baxter State Park. State lands in Maine's most rural counties - Piscataquis, Aroostook, Somerset, Oxford, Hancock, Franklin, and Washington- account for the vast majority of the state-held conservation and recreation lands (when examined by acreage).

Table 2 shows state conservation ownership & interests for all 16 Maine counties. **Table 3** lists Bureau of Parks and Lands Facilities within a) 25 driving miles and b) 50 driving miles of Maine's ten most populated cities. As this table includes only State Parks, Public Reserved Land Units, and State Historic Sites, it should be noted that other outdoor recreation resources are available within those same vicinities. Nonetheless, **Table 3** does give a sense of the "closer to home", state-managed opportunities

available for some of Maine's more populated places.

Figure 1: Combined State and Federal Conservation/Recreation Lands as of 2008 as well as Conservation Easements Held by the Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands. [Inset Map: Maine Town Populations 2000 (Source: US Census/ ME Office of GIS)]



Note: interior lines represent county lines and major road networks.

Table 3: Maine State Parks (SP), Public Lands, and State Historic Sites within 25 and 50 miles of Maine’s 10 most populated cities (some adjacent/nearby cities clustered).

Municipality or Cluster of Municipalities	2007 Population (US Census)	County	BPL Sites w/in 25 miles of one or more listed communities	Additional BPL sites within 25-50 miles of community or cluster
Portland South Portland	62,249 23,324	Cumberland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradbury Mt. SP • Crescent Beach SP • Ferry Beach SP • Mackworth Island • Pinelands Land Unit • Two Lights SP • Wolfe’s Neck Woods SP • Crescent Beach SP • Scarborough Beach SP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range Ponds SP • Reid SP • Sebago Lake SP • Vaughan Woods SP • Fort McClary SHS • John Paul Jones SHS • Androscoggin Riverlands • Eagle Island SHS • Fort Baldwin SHS • Fort Edgecomb SHS • Fort Popham SHS • Peacock Beach SP • Popham Beach SP
Lewiston Auburn	35,690 23,203	Androscoggin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradbury Mt. SP • Pinelands Land Unit • Range Ponds SP • Androscoggin Riverlands* <p>*Park in planning phase, trail use & hunting/fishing available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peacock Beach SP • Popham Beach SP • Reid SP • Scarborough Beach SP • Sebago Lake SP • Two Lights SP • Wolfe’s Neck Woods SP • Mackworth Island • Fort Popham SHS • Fort Edgecomb SHS • Kennebec Highlands • Swans Falls Campground • Colburn House SHS • Dodge Point Public Reserved Land • Whaleback Shell Midden • Whistle Stop Trail • Eagle Island SHS • Fort Baldwin SHS
Bangor	31,853	Penobscot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley Land Unit** <p>** The Bradley Land Unit does not serve a substantial recreational role, though a snowmobile route does pass over it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peaks-Kenny SP • Lagrange - Medford Trail • Four Season Adventure Trail • Penobscot Narrows Observatory • Swan Lake State Park • Donnell Pond Land Unit • Fort Knox SHS • Fort Point SHS • Lamoine SP • Moose Point SP
Brunswick	21,806	Cumberland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eagle Island SHS • Fort Baldwin SHS • Fort Edgecomb SHS • Fort Popham SHS • Peacock Beach SP • Popham Beach SP • Reid SP • Bradbury Mt. SP • Pinelands Land Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crescent Beach SP • Ferry Beach SP • Mackworth Island • Range Ponds SP • Scarborough Beach SP • Two Lights SP • Androscoggin Riverlands • Colonial Pemaquid SHS (Ft. William Henry) • Damariscotta Lake SP • Colburn House SHS • Dodge Point Land Unit • Whaleback Shell Midden
Biddeford Saco Sanford	21,594 16,822 21,252	York	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crescent Beach SP • Ferry Beach SP • Mackworth Island • Two Lights SP • Scarborough Beach SP • Vaughan Woods SP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinelands Land Unit • Fort McClary SHS • John Paul Jones SHS • Sebago Lake SP • Wolfe’s Neck Woods SP • Range Ponds SP • Vaughan Woods SP • Bradbury Mt. SP
Augusta	18,367	Kennebec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Halifax SHS • Damariscotta Lake SP • Colburn House SHS • Lake St. George SP • Peacock Beach SP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonial Pemaquid SHS • Fort Edgecomb SHS • Range Ponds SP • Moose Point SP • Reid SP • Whistle Stop Trail • Whaleback Shell Midden • Kennebec Highlands • Birch Point SP • Camden Hills SP • Moose Point SP • Bradbury Mt. SP • Dodge Point Land Unit • Androscoggin Riverlands

SP = State Park, SHS = State Historic Site. SOURCE: www.maine.gov/doc/parks “Find Parks & Lands” page

Municipal and School Recreation Lands.

Municipal and local school system property represented less than 5% of Maine’s conservation and recreation lands in 2008. State Planning Office figures list 2008 municipal parks, forests, and recreation lands greater than 10 acres to be 112,323 total acres. This does not include school-owned lands, which in 2002 equaled 7,883 acres. Although municipal/school lands represent a small portion of Maine's overall recreation lands (by acre), they serve a large role for recreation in that they are embedded within communities and are often located close to residential dwellings.

B. Private Lands Available to the Public

Private Non-Profit Lands

Conservation and recreation lands held by conservation organizations and land trusts totaled 2,001,158 acres in 2008, a 48% increase since 2002. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of this land is held as conservation easements. Statewide and nationally affiliated organizations hold 93% of the acreage, with the largest proportion consisting of working forest easements primarily in northern Maine held by groups including the New England Forestry Foundation and the Forest Society of Maine. The Nature Conservancy holds over 500,000 acres in fee and easements. Local land trusts hold approximately 136,500 acres around the state.

Table 4 shows the acres of private conservation organization and land trust ownership in Maine.

Table 5 shows the number of local land trusts in each county.

Traditional forest recreation activities like hunting, fishing, boating, camping and hiking are allowed to continue on much of this land, although restrictions do occur from place to place, particularly for motor vehicle and off-road vehicle access.

Table 5 (right): Number of local land trusts working in Maine by county cluster. (Source: www.mlnt.org)

Table 4: Private Conservation Organization and Land Trust Lands in Maine 2008			
(Acres)			
Land Trust/Organization	Fee	Easement	Total
Statewide Organizations/Trusts	338,106	1,526,556	1,864,662
Local Trusts	82,289	53,207	136,496
Total	421,395	1,579,763	2,001,158

SOURCE: Maine State Planning Office - Land for Maine’s Future program

County Clusters	Combined Size (Square Miles)	Combined Population (1000s)	# of Local Land Trusts
York, Cumberland, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc	2551	973	37
Kennebec, Lincoln, Knox, Waldo	2434	234	20
Oxford, Franklin, Somerset	7445	138	14
Hancock, Washington	4050	86	13
Piscataquis, Penobscot	7028	166	7
Aroostook	6453	72	1



Box IV- A: Regional Looks at Threatened Supply of Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Lands

The Mahoosuc Region

In August of 2008, the Open Space Institute published a report on the Conservation issues in the Mahoosuc region, which encompasses 600,000 acres centered on the Mahoosuc Mountain Range and the upper Androscoggin River watershed in Maine and New Hampshire. The report, entitled, *Forestland for Sale: Challenges and Opportunities for Conservation over the Next Ten Years*, presents some startling analysis regarding the pressures on the region. For example:

- ◆The shift from integrated, long-term forest management to frequently turned-over timber investment has "caused fragmentation of large parcels, reduced forest-related jobs, increased harvest rates, expanded posted areas for trespassing, and hastened development of lakefront and river-front properties."
- ◆Forestland in the Northern Forest is selling for two to eight times its timber value, ranging from \$500 to more than \$1,000 per acre."
- ◆40,000 to 150,000 acres (up to 28% of the region's area) is estimated to sell within the next five to ten years.
- ◆\$30 - \$120 million is needed for conservation in this region.

The Lower Kennebec & Lower Penobscot Watersheds

Southern Maine, compared to northern and "downeast" Maine, has seen higher rates of suburbanization and loss of rural, undeveloped land. The private forests southern Maine tend to be owned more by families and are typically smaller in size than private holdings in northern/eastern Maine. Additionally, forests in southern Maine are more likely to be closer to amenities, such as stores, restaurants, and services.

Maine has the highest rate of second home ownership in the nation, helping explain how between 1990 and 2000, housing units in Maine rose 11% while population only rose 4% (White & Mazza, 2008). It is not surprising, then, that the US Forest Service lists the Lower Kennebec and the Lower Penobscot watersheds as two of the fifteen US watersheds to see the greatest increase in housing density on private forests by 2030 (White & Mazza, 2008). The Forest Service report predicts approximately 980 square miles of forest lands in these watersheds will reach urban-ex-urban housing densities within 20 years (White & Mazza, 2008).

The interplay of attractive rural landscapes and reasonable access to amenities and services drives demand for second homes (while simultaneously threatening the natural and cultural character motivating second home ownership in the first place). Though second home development does have an economic influence meriting consideration, it should be recognized that increased home building does have a conservation and recreation cost, especially when allowed to occur without appropriate planning.

Recreation on Private Lands

Slightly under 8% of Maine's lands are held in public ownership (fee), and even when conservation/access easements are included, the percentage of ownership remains under 18%. Given this reality, many of the outdoor recreation opportunities Maine citizens and visitors cherish rely on public access to private lands.

Outdoor recreation on private lands, most notably nature-based recreation, involves landowners of varying scale. While recreational use of and access to small parcels of private land in and around more developed areas can and does have relevance to outdoor recreation in Maine, private landowners of large forest properties are especially significant in their importance to outdoor recreation. For example, approximately 95% of Maine snowmobile trails are on private lands (Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands Off-Road Vehicle Division figures). The robust network of destination snowmobile trails in western, northern, and eastern Maine counties relies heavily on agreements with large landowners. Furthermore, as reported by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, 2006), 90% of Maine resident and non-resident hunters hunt on private lands.

With private forest-lands playing a major role in Maine's range of recreation opportunities, keen interest has been paid to the ownership of vast forest lands. Over recent decades, significant changes have fueled concern about future recreational access to private lands. This uncertainty is driven by changes in forest ownership patterns. As Hagan, Irland, and Whitman (2005) write,

“... in 1994, forest industry [timber companies] owned about 60% (4.6 million acres) of the large tracts (>5000 ac) of timberland and financial investors owned about 3%. By May, 2005, financial investors owned about one-third of the large forest tracts and industry owned only 15.5% (1.8 million acres, mostly in a single ownership).”

Although emerging research by John Daigle at the University of Maine indicates that a majority of large private landowners in Maine continue to allow public recreation on their private lands (Daigle, personal communication), fast-evolving changes in landownership (as opposed to the relative constancy of ownership patterns from decades past) merit ongoing attention relative to recreation access. While there appears to be a general appreciation on the part of large private landowners for allowing public access, trails, etc., it appears unwise to assume the supply of recreation opportunities on private lands will remain steady without monitoring, communication, collaboration, and effort. The Hagan, Irland, and Whitman Manomet study cited above summarizes this uncertainty by writing, “In essence, the recent turnover in land ownership has led to less predictability in the future of the forest”.

Two regional examples of forest change are briefly discussed in **Exhibit A** on page 6.



C. Maine's Range of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Settings

Maine's diversity of landscapes, settings, facilities, recreation providers, and land management approaches give residents and visitors the opportunity to engage in a variety of outdoor activities. One way to look at that diversity is to explore the spectrum of outdoor opportunities available in the state. Taking inspiration from the US Forest Service's "Recreation Opportunity Spectrum" (ROS) concept, it is possible to discuss, in general terms, the range of outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine. For more information on the ROS concept, see Driver et al's (1987), *The ROS planning system: Evolution, basic concepts, and research needed*.

Setting characteristics and associated desired experiences are key elements of the ROS (Hammitt and Cole, 1998). Maine, while generally rural overall, does have highly developed areas where people recreate. On the other end of the spectrum, Maine has significant undeveloped areas. This range of settings drives much of the state's outdoor recreation diversity.

Outdoor Recreation in Developed Settings

Overview

Recreation experienced in a "developed" setting includes activities within a larger developed landscape, such as cities and towns, as well as recreation in areas that are moderately to highly developed for more intensive recreation use, though they may be located in an otherwise undeveloped setting. This would include ski resorts, golf courses, and even managed swim beaches.

Maine's larger cities, such as Portland, Lewiston, and Bangor, are home to certain recreation sites that differ markedly from more rural or backcountry destinations. Likewise, even mid-range and small Maine towns often have developed facilities, such as sports fields, playgrounds, manicured town parks, "pocket parks", skate parks, paved city/town-center walking and bike paths, and other infrastructure-rich facilities to serve the needs of the public in Maine's more developed centers. These close-to-residences facilities are vital to the health and leisure of Mainers and are an important part of Maine communities.

Municipalities tend to own and manage the majority of the relatively highly developed facilities in more urban/suburban/town-center settings. Municipalities and schools provide the vast majority of playing fields, basketball courts, track facilities, and tennis courts.

Skiing and golf are both significant "developed" outdoor recreation activities (2008 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment reported New England participation rates of 13.6% and 17.4% respectively). Maine **downhill ski areas** range

Table 6: Ski Facilities in Maine (2008)

County	# Downhill Ski Trails	Km of Groomed X-Country Ski Trails
Androscoggin	15	17
Aroostook	45	44
Cumberland	0	75
Franklin	225	204
Hancock	0	0**
Kennebec	0	21*
Knox	12	9*
Lincoln	0	0
Oxford	236	193
Penobscot	32	0
Piscataquis	0	33
Sagadahoc	0	0
Somerset	17	45
Waldo	0	0
Washington	0	0
York	3	40

*Additional groomed nordic ski trails in beginning phases
 **70+ km of ungroomed, yet wide carriage roads available for skiing at Acadia N.P.
 Sources: Ski Maine Association, ME Parks & Lands, Northern Timber Cruisers (www.northerntimbercruisers.com)

from a handful of surviving small community hills with rope tows or t-bars that operate occasionally to two of the region’s largest ski resorts, Sunday River and Sugarloaf USA, which were purchased by Boyne Resorts in 2007.

Maine has 18 operating downhill ski areas open to the public that can be characterized as small, medium, and large according to the number of trails and lifts. Sunday River and Sugarloaf USA each have over 130 trails and 15 or more lifts. Medium size areas include Mt Abram, Saddleback, and Shawnee Peak, which have 30-65 trails and 4-5 lifts each. The remaining ski areas have 1-3 lifts and 20 or fewer trails (source: Ski Maine Association). Most ski areas now have some level of snowmaking and designated snowboard areas. The Ski Maine Association reported that Maine's ski & snowboard industry set a new attendance record during the 2007/08 winter season with 1.42 million skier/snowboarder visits.

According to Maine Office of Tourism statistics on the visitmaine.com website, Maine has 147 **golf courses** (with 23 new courses in the last 5 years). The 2003 Maine SCORP asserted that 90% of golf courses were developed by the private sector. The

Maine State Golf Association (www.mesga.org) lists 6 municipal golf courses (Bangor, Dexter, Frye Island, Riverside in Portland, South Portland, and Val Halla in Cumberland). It also lists 13 private clubs, 86 public courses, 7 resort courses, and 14 semi-private courses.

Walking Trails: In recent years there has been an increased interest in walking for health, and trails have been constructed in-town and near to populations, as well as in the outlying areas a short drive from population centers. Many are handicap-accessible. Healthy Maine Walks is an organization that promotes walking trails, and hosts a website where those interested can find walking trails near to them. Most are a mile to three miles in length. **Table 7** documents walks listed on the Healthy Maine Walks website.

Swim Beaches: 15 Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands properties are within no more than 50 miles of one of Maine’s ten most populated cities and provide swimming opportunities. 8 of those parks serve multiple large communities in southern Maine. Of

the 15 swim parks within proximity to Maine’s largest cities, 6 have lifeguards (staffing cuts over past years have reduced lifeguard positions, notably at most freshwater swim facilities).

In addition to state parks, federal, municipal, and private landowners own swim beaches. In particular, municipalities are major providers of swimming opportunities. It is worth noting that the Maine Coastal Program of the State Planning Office lists Maine as having 46 public, coastal beach/recreation sites (of these 46, 37 participate in the Maine Healthy Beaches Program). This listing refers primarily to beaches and does not account per se to the full range of swimming opportunities along the coast.

The 2003 Maine SCORP lists a total of 216,524 feet of swim beaches on Maine’s ocean coastline. It also lists 256,500 feet of freshwater swim beaches available. These figures have not been updated, but should be considered a baseline for available swim areas.

Table 7: Healthy Maine Walks Listed by County (2009)	
County	# Healthy Maine Walks Trails
Androscoggin	16
Aroostook	21
Cumberland	37
Franklin	6
Hancock	28
Kennebec	21
Knox	7
Lincoln	18
Oxford	7
Penobscot	14
Piscataquis	11
Sagadahoc	15
Somerset	32
Waldo	5
Washington	6
York	16

Source: Healthy Maine Walks (www.healthymainewalks.org). Accessed 8/11/09.



Nature-based Recreation Opportunities in the Suburban - Rural Fringe

Overview

There are a multitude of outdoor recreation pursuits in Maine that utilize recreation lands and facilities existing in landscape mosaics made up of residential housing, agriculture, smaller-scale parks and conservation areas, road networks, small

Table 8: Private Campgrounds in Maine by Region	
<i>Region</i>	<i># Private Campgrounds</i>
South Coast	60
Western Lakes & Mountains	43
Kennebec & Moose River Valley	22
Midcoast	24
Downeast & Acadia	35
Sunrise County	7
Aroostook	9
Katahdin & Moosehead	19
Source: Maine Camp Owners Association	

(largely non-industrial) woodlots, lightly-developed shorelines, and commercial enterprises. Often times, these landscapes transition from more developed town or city centers to more rural areas.

Unlike ballfields or other intensively developed facilities (which may also be located in essentially rural areas), nature-based recreation facilities (e.g., trails, campsites, boat launches, etc.) rely primarily on the character of a natural setting to afford recreationists a desired experience. To this end, lands open to the public are the foundation of nature-based activities, regardless of setting.

In Maine, settings ranging from suburban neighborhoods to lightly developed rural communities serve many purposes. Green spaces in these settings, in addition to serving as wildlife habitat and performing ecosystem functions, are recreation resources. It is within this range of settings that state parks and state wildlife management areas begin to take on a more prominent role (versus more urban, developed settings where they are less prominent). In some cases, municipal conservation lands (such as town forests or other conservation lands) are also noteworthy in this intermediate range of land use. Additionally, private conservation, in the form of land trusts, is very significant in the areas where human development and undeveloped natural areas begin to significantly interact (see **Table 4** for land ownership figures for private conservation organizations in Maine).

These “intermediate” Maine landscapes where in-town development lessens and the setting transitions to a robust mix of developed and undeveloped lands provide a diversity of recreation experiences. Hunting, fishing and trapping; gathering wild berries or plants (e.g., picking fiddleheads); paddling; watching wildlife; swimming; and walking/hiking are classic activities undertaken in these settings. Furthermore, snowmobiling and ATV use; jogging; Nordic skiing; mountain biking; horseback riding; snowshoeing; and other outdoor pursuits occur in this setting range.

All of these opportunities rely on access to facilities (e.g., trails, boat launches) as well as natural areas/open space. To this end, lands open to the public are the foundation

of nature-based activities, regardless of setting. State parks and state wildlife management areas begin to take on a more prominent role in this suburban-rural fringe setting between human development and undeveloped natural areas. A few examples of Maine State Parks located in this suburban to semi-rural setting range include parks such as Range Pond, Damariscotta Lake, Two Lights, Bradbury Mountain, and Swan Lake. In some cases, municipal conservation lands (such as town forests or other conservation lands) are also noteworthy in this interface area. Privately held conservation areas, in the form of lands held by land trusts, can also be very significant in this area (see **Table 5** for more on the geography and scope of land trusts in Maine). Lastly, private landowners that voluntarily protect natural resources and allow public use of their lands have always been an important component of the spectrum of opportunities near to but outside of developed areas. Unfortunately, the posting of private land has seen an increase, as reflected by information provided by a survey of Small Woodlot Association of Maine members, in which it was found that between 1991 and 2005, the number of small woodlot owners restricting public access went from 15% to 36% (Levert, 2008). To learn about three recreational areas that exemplify the types of opportunities typically available in this range, see page 13.

Nordic Skiing in Maine

Based on information from Ski Maine Association, Nordic ski facilities (19) in Maine provide over 575 km of trails. Facilities range from “mom and pop” operations to facilities provided by the Nordic Heritage Center (NHC) in Presque Isle. NHC is a world-class venue for cross country skiing, biathlon and mountain biking and includes:

- * 6500 square foot lodge
- * 20 kilometers of ski trail
- * 20 miles of marked mountain bike trails
- * 30-point biathlon range
- * Visitors center with ski rentals
- * 2.5 kms of lighted trail
- * 1-kilometer paved roller ski loop
- * Terrain Park - cross country skiing and mountain biking
- * Wax building with 26 separate wax rooms.

For a geographic listing of Nordic ski facilities, see **Table 6** on pg. 9.

Bicycle and Mountain Bike Trails

Maine Department of Transportation analysis (2009) lists over 500 miles of biking trails in Maine. Over half of those miles represent biking opportunities associated with multi-use (ATV/equestrian/walk/bike), gravel surfaced rail trails. Designated singletrack mt. bike trails are emerging on more lands as riders organize. Maine has chapters of the New England Mt. Bike Association in the Mt. Agamenticus region (York County), central Maine, and mid-coast regions. While to date there is not a full accounting of mt. bike trails in the state, it is worth noting that resources exist or are in development in association with private sites (e.g., Backcountry Excursions in Parsonsfield), municipal



Box IV- B: Conservation Areas in the Suburban-Rural Fringe - Three Examples

Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area - Kennebec Land Trust

The Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area, a combination of fee ownership and easement owned and stewarded by the Kennebec Land Trust, was assembled through donations and purchases beginning in 1998. Located in Wayne and Winthrop (Kennebec County), it is a relatively large undeveloped area of forests and wetlands, streams and ponds, mountain tops and ridges. The trail to the fire tower is a popular local hiking destination and the 730 acres of conserved land at Mt. Pisgah provide space for watching wildlife, hunting, and other low-intensity activities.

Range Ponds State Park - Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

A short drive from one of Maine's major urban areas, Lewiston and Auburn, Range Ponds State Park welcomes visitors who enjoy the wide sandy beach as they swim, picnic and play. Most activity centers on the waterfront, which is easily accessible because of the smooth, surfaced promenade that parallels the pond for 1000 feet immediately next to the beach. A public boat launch site is located at the end of the beach and is limited to 10 horsepower motors. There are two-miles of easy trails along with a new group shelter, and playground. Handicap accessible enhancements have been completed as well.

The Roland Perry City Forest - City of Bangor, Orono Land Trust, & UMaine

The 650 acre Bangor City Forest provides residents in the Bangor area with a trail destination accommodating a diversity of uses throughout Maine's distinct seasons. A wheelchair-accessible bog boardwalk through a raised peatland, as well as walking, primitive hiking, and mt. Biking trails enable trail users to exercise and experience nature – right on the edge of Maine's third largest city. The area was established through collaboration between the Orono Land Trust, the City of Bangor, and the University of Maine's College of Natural Sciences.

lands (e.g., City of Augusta, Bangor City Forest, and Camden Snow Bowl), State Parks (e.g., Bradbury Mt. State Park), and organizations (e.g., Nordic Heritage Center in Presque Isle).

Hiking/Snowshoeing Trails

A complete inventory of hiking and snowshoeing trails across the state is not available at this time. An accounting of trails on Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) properties, based on 2006 data, is available. **Tables 10 & 11** on pg 14 provide this information for all counties. All told, there are over 443 miles of hiking trails/walking paths on BPL lands. It is important to note that lands trusts, Acadia National Park, the White Mountain National Forest, US Fish and Wildlife Refuges, municipalities, and other entities provide hiking opportunities across the state. The Appalachian Trail in Maine, for example, provides 281 miles of hiking, backpacking, and snowshoeing.

Horseback Riding Trails

Horseback riding is a designated use of shared-use roads on Maine public land units. Additionally, trails at Bradbury Mt., Mt. Blue, and Camden Hills State Parks as well as Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands rail trails are available for horesback riding. Certainly, other lands, both public and private, provide access for horseback riding, though a full accounting is unavailable at this time.

Snowmobile and ATV Trails

Snowmobile and ATV trails are important resources in Maine, both in more remote areas and in/between local communities. In the relatively more developed counties (Androscoggin, Cumberland, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Waldo, and York, there are a combined 3,938 miles of funded snowmobile trails (2008 ME Off-Road Vehicle program data). ATV trails funded in those same counties totaled 895 miles. **Figure 2 & Table 11** detail motorized trail expenditures.

Boat Access Facilities

Table 13 lists public boat launches by county as well as by owner. Additionally, it notes tidal vs. freshwater launch sites. It should be noted that the Boating Facilities Division of the Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands is finalizing its “Strategic Plan for Providing Public Access to Maine Waters for Boating and Fishing”. This document, like its predecessor's will list priority water bodies in which greater public access is considered a need.

Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Associated with Large-Scale Contiguous Forest Lands

Over 90% of Maine is forested, yet that forest land is not uniform. There are ecologically diverse forest ecosystems across the state, and an array of forest management approaches. Vast stretches of Maine’s western mountains, northern regions, and eastern interior lands are owned and managed by a mix of public, private conservation, and commercial owners. All told, this combination of forest regions

comprises over 10 million acres and serves as the largest contiguous undeveloped area in the Northeast. Residents and visitors alike place a premium on the unique natural values they find here.

While some areas within these large forest landscapes are managed specifically for remote, quiet, backcountry recreational experiences affording solitude and a sense of unmanaged naturalness, the predominant land management approach is one in which commercial timber management and recreational opportunities overlap. Such **multiple-use areas** occur on both public and private lands and enable a variety of recreational opportunities. As mentioned earlier, approximately 95% of Maine snowmobile trails are on private lands. Private landowners also provide ATV and hiking trails, campsites, access to hunting and fishing destinations, roads over which the public reaches recreation sites, access to undeveloped beaches and shorelines, and a number of other nature-based recreation opportunities.

Tables 9 & 10: Hiking/Backpacking Trails on ME BP&L Lands (2006)					
County	Miles of Backpacking Trails	Miles of Day Hiking Trails	County	Miles of Backpacking Trails	Miles of Day Hiking Trails
Androscoggin	0	15.5	Androscoggin	0	15.5
Aroostook	7	10.3	Aroostook	7	10.3
Cumberland	0	35.7	Cumberland	0	35.7
Franklin/Somerset	20.1	27.2	Franklin/Somerset	20.1	27.2
Hancock/Washington	17.2	49.4	Hancock/Washington	17.2	49.4
Kennebec	0	12.5	Kennebec	0	12.5
Knox/Waldo	5.5	41.7	Knox/Waldo	5.5	41.7
Lincoln	0	5.6	Lincoln	0	5.6
Oxford	20	19.1	Oxford	20	19.1
Penobscot/Piscataquis**	18.9	49	Penobscot/Piscataquis	18.9	49
Sagadahoc	0	3.6	Sagadahoc	0	3.6
York	0	14.1	York	0	14.1
Total	283.7	645	Total	283.7	645

* (Appalachian Trail) - Includes National Park Service corridor on Nahmakanta Unit (Eastern Lands)

**Baxter State Park (not part of BPL) maintains approx. 200 miles of hiking trails.

Source: Final Report of the Governor's Task Force Regarding the Management of Public Lands and Publicly-Held Easements (2008)

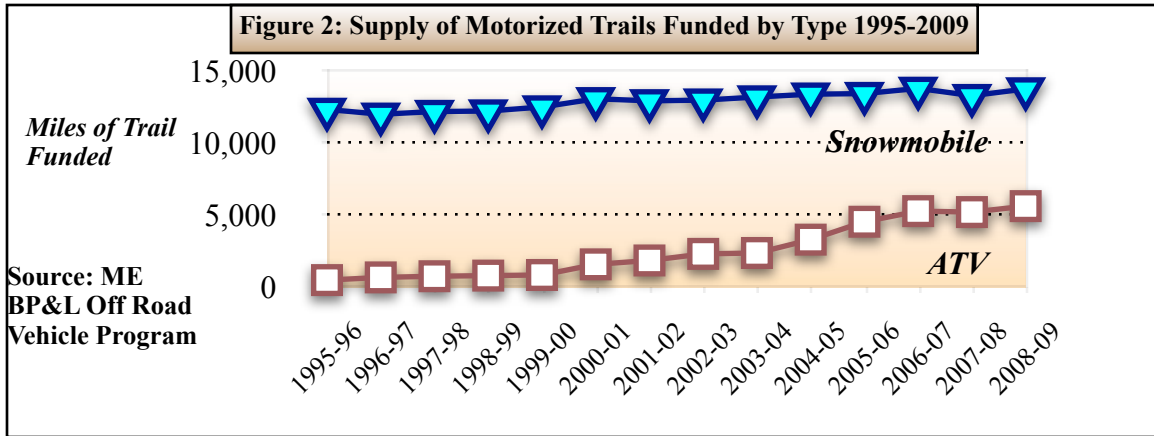


Table 11: Motorized Trails Funded by County (2008)

County	Miles of Snowmobile Trail	Miles of ATV Trails
Androscoggin	660	65
Aroostook	2,339	1202
Cumberland	642	128
Franklin	944	381
Hancock	140	241
Kennebec	838	89
Knox	178	0
Lincoln	222	0
Oxford	1,477	474
Penobscot	2,242	759
Piscataquis	954	414
Sagadahoc	174	73
Somerset	1,496	645
Waldo	534	120
Washington	595	715
York	505	179
State Maintained	180	
Total	14,120	5485

Source: ME BP&L Off Road Vehicle Program

Table 12: Maine Public Boat Launch Sites.
 Note: ME Dept. of Conservation owns 112 sites, ME Dept. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife owns 97, ME Dept. of Transportation owns 3, and 247 are owned at the local level. Of all sites, 17 are tidal sites. Source: BP&L Boating Facilities Division

County	Total # Public Boat Launches	# Hand-carry Sites (vs. Trailerable)
Androscoggin	13	3
Aroostook	40	6
Cumberland	32	5
Franklin	15	4
Hancock	45	7
Kennebec	43	12
Knox	13	3
Lincoln	13	1
Oxford	31	11
Penobscot	35	4
Piscataquis	45	13
Sagadahoc	10	2
Somerset	31	5
Waldo	17	3
Washington	57	12
York	19	1
Total	459	92

Box IV- C: Downeast Sunrise Trail

A multi-use trail resource in eastern Maine where residents and visitors can gather to ride ATV's, snowmobile, walk, bicycle, ski, ride horses, and participate in other recreational trail activities.



History

The Calais Branch railroad corridor is a 127 mile long rail corridor that connects Brewer to Calais in Downeast Maine. It was acquired by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) in 1987 from Maine Central Railroad and has not been used for commercial freight rail or for passenger rail since that time.

Becoming a Trail Asset

On July 15, 2005, Governor Baldacci charged MaineDOT with developing a trail Management and Maintenance Plan for a interim multi-use trail on 87 miles of the Calais Branch Rail Corridor between Ellsworth and Ayers Junction. By constructing and using the trail, the corridor will be repaired and continuously maintained so as to enable the corridor to be available in the future for possible rail return.

MaineDOT formed the Calais Branch Trail Management Committee including the Maine DOC, local trail groups, law enforcement units, National Park Service, municipalities, and regional planning and economic development agencies to develop a management and maintenance plan for rehabilitation of the corridor and construction of the trail.

The plan recommended that the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) be the long term manager of the trail and corridor due to its extensive experience in constructing and managing multi-use trails throughout Maine for over 20 years. MaineDOT and BPL entered into an agreement for BPL to oversee the corridor rehabilitation, trail construction and long term maintenance and in the Spring of 2008 BPL contracted to begin the project.

To date: A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at 9 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 31, at Ayers Junction to acknowledge the opening of the eastern 30 miles of the 85-mile-long Down East Sunrise Trail to winter activities. The trail extension joins the communities from Perry, Pembroke, Dennysville, Marion, to East Machias. Over the course of 2009, many more miles of trail are expected to open.

Other Multi-Use Trail (Rail Trail) Resources Managed by Maine Parks and Lands (BPL)

◆BPL's Off-Road Vehicle Division oversees approximately 200 miles of multi-use trails in addition to the 85-mile Sunrise Trail. These trails run through diverse landscapes in 7 different counties.

Over the last 15 years, dramatic **changes in land owner types** have occurred in the northern forest region. Over 30% of Maine’s land ownership has changed hands and the recreation implications of these changes are significant. Informal agreements as well as use policies on private land can and do change with changes in ownership (for instance, according to the Off-Road Vehicle Program (ME BP&L) approximately 90% of motorized trails agreements on private land are one-year agreements). Thus, the available supply of recreation opportunities in Maine’s large forest landscapes could be argued to be of concern based on the potential for changes in landowner prerogatives that affect public recreation.

One rapidly expanding tool aimed at conserving multiple natural values in Maine (including public recreation) is the purchase of **conservation easements**. In 2002, for instance, the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) held 55,404 easement acres. As of December 2008, BPL held 302,421 easement acres. Of those acres, approximately 90% are located in Aroostook, Franklin, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, and Washington Counties (counties associated with significant commercial forestry areas). Public access is developed into these easements, though specific management details vary. In some cases, BPL obtains recreation management options or rights (along with the grantor). In other cases, the grantor alone retains recreation management rights. The bulk (by acreage) of BPL-held easements are “working forests easements” facilitating public recreational access and enabling landowners to continue to harvest timber.

Nonprofit organizations have also acquired conservation easements in Maine’s northern forest. One example is provided by the Forest Society of Maine (FSM). The Forest Society of Maine, established in 1984, has worked to develop landscape-scale forest land conservation through working forest conservation easements. FSM-led

Box IV - D: North Maine Woods

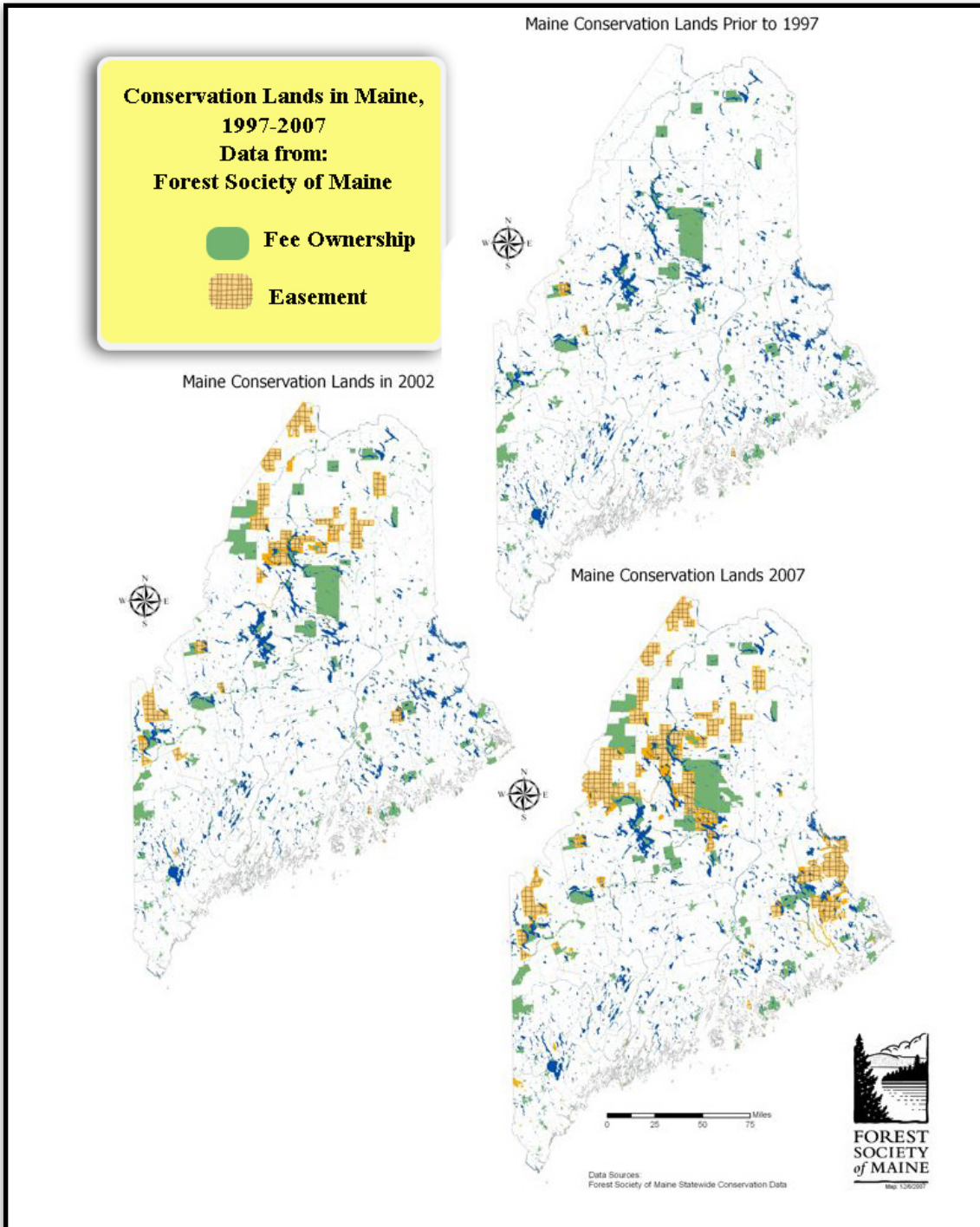
Recreational use of most forest areas is managed by individual owners; however, **North Maine Woods, Inc. (NMW)** oversees recreation on 3.5 million acres of land in northern Maine and on 175,000 acres in the KI Jo-Mary Multiple Use Forest on behalf of a consortium of large and small woodland owners, including the State. In 1996, 44,000 acres on the Nahmakanta Unit of Public Reserved lands were removed from the NMW area, and in 1999, 700,000 acres in the West Branch Penobscot area were added to the NMW management territory. In 2009, over 20,000 acres of the Seboomook Unit of Public Reserved Lands (located in the West Branch of the Penobscot River area) were removed from the NMW system. Access to these lands and facilities is controlled through a system of gates, and users observe fees and regulations. All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and bicycles are not allowed on NMW and KI Jo-Mary lands.



North Maine Woods, Inc.

projects have conserved more than 400,000 acres. **Figure 3** shows the growth of conservation lands (largely through easements) from 1997-2007.

Figure 3: Growth of conservation lands, both fee and easement in Maine. Note: Mapping does not reflect the efforts of local land trusts or municipalities. Source: Forest Society of Maine



Backcountry Recreation Opportunities on Conserved Lands

In Maine, only the White Mountain National Forest (14,000 Wilderness acres) and Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge (2 parcels, one with 4,680 acres and one with 2,712) have federally designated Wilderness falling under the guidance of the 1964 Wilderness Act. However, this does not represent the total availability of opportunities for those who seek the experiences and benefits associated with “wilderness”. Both state and certain private land managers have dedicated areas where management policies have been established to facilitate experience attributes such as self-reliance, closeness to nature, tranquility, self-reliance, and solitude.

The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, through its 2000 Integrated Resource Policy (IRP), allocates management priorities on its public reserved and unreserved lands units. For example, there are 5 recreation-focused allocations (“backcountry non-mechanized” and “backcountry motorized”, “remote recreation”, and “developed recreation class I & developed recreation class II”). Backcountry non-mechanized (BCNM) allocations are intended to provide opportunity to experience superior scenic quality, wild and pristine character, and a sense of solitude. They typically are at least 1,000 contiguous acres in size. Roads, timber management, motorized or mechanized uses, developed (vs. primitive) campsites, trailerable boat ramps, and non-renewable resource extraction are incompatible with BCNM allocations. Five BPL lands units have had backcountry non-mechanized allocations within the time-span following the 2000 adoption of the Integrated Resource Policy.

More discussion of backcountry opportunities is provided in Exhibit D, starting on page 23 of this chapter.

In addition to BCNM allocation process, backcountry recreation opportunities on Maine Public Reserved Lands Units can occur as somewhat of a byproduct to the establishment of Ecological Reserves. Ecological Reserves are state-owned lands specifically set aside to protect and monitor the state's natural ecosystems. As of 2009, Maine has designated approximately 84,000 acres of Ecological Reserves on 16 public land units managed by the Maine Department of Conservation. The original designation was enabled by an act of the Maine Legislature in 2000. Ecological Reserves are a form of “special protection area” in the IRP and take precedence over other (secondary) allocations. Ecological Reserves have stipulations on roads and recreation developments. Timber management and non-renewable resource extraction are not allowed in Ecological Reserves. Although they were not designed to further recreation objectives, Ecological Reserves do have a bearing on the availability of backcountry recreation settings in which nature, not human activities, is intended to be the dominant force shaping the environment.

Another trend within the last decade has been the growth of large blocks of land in Maine held by conservation organizations. It is worth noting that the management approach taken on some of these conservation lands is conducive to remote, backcountry recreation.

D. Summary

The supply of outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine is based largely on the state's diverse natural landscapes. Public and private facilities expand outdoor recreation possibilities. Federal, state, municipal, private conservation, and private landowners all provide recreational access to land. Mainers have access to more large, undeveloped landscapes than do most residents in the eastern United States. However, it should be noted that the state's percent age of public land ownership is relatively low. Private lands of varying sizes and purposes play a large role in outdoor recreation in Maine.

While Maine is known for nature-based outdoor recreation activities and resources, its communities and agencies continue to also provide developed recreation facilities. Ball fields, pools, playgrounds, etc., are elements of an important recreation infrastructure in communities across the state.

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Exhibit A: Backcountry Opportunities Overview

The 2003-2008 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan lists “Wilderness Recreation Opportunities” as one of its six Land and Water Conservation Fund priorities for expenditure. Without fully delving into the often controversial issue of wilderness definition, it is nonetheless valuable to discuss existing resources that could be argued as having at least elements of “wilderness” or “wilderness-like” attributes. In this regard, the term “backcountry” may be of value, in that it connotes the primitive, relatively large-scale and pristine nature of “wilderness” while possibly (and, for discussion’s sake) temporarily side-stepping definitional debates.

In Maine, only the White Mountain National Forest (14,000 Wilderness acres) and Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge (2 parcels, one with 4,680 acres and one with 2,712) have federally designated Wilderness falling under the guidance of the 1964 Wilderness Act. However, this does not represent the total availability of opportunities for those who seek the experiences and benefits associated with “wilderness”.

The resources or destinations discussed below are not necessarily managed under a guiding Wilderness document (i.e. Wilderness Act), but rather have management policies etc. that facilitate their being considered a primitive or backcountry recreation resource with recreation management policies that intend to provide experience attributes such as self-reliance, closeness to nature, tranquility, self-reliance, and solitude.

Additionally, it should be noted that wilderness recreation experiences such as those mentioned above cannot be exclusively attributed to only locations listed below. Rather, the listing is an attempt to document areas where management intentionally provides primitive, remote opportunities with the potential for (primarily non-mechanized) backcountry experiences. Lastly, the list below emphasizes areas that have trail elements (hiking and/or water-based).

A Note About Ecological Reserves:

The Maine Natural Areas Program provides the following overview of ecological reserves:

Ecological Reserves are state-owned lands specifically set aside to protect and monitor the state's natural ecosystems. As of 2009, Maine has designated approximately 84,000 acres of Ecological Reserves on 16 public land units managed by the [Maine Department of Conservation](#). The original designation was enabled by an act of the Maine Legislature in 2000. As specified in the legislation, the purposes of the Reserves are:

- "to maintain one or more natural community types or native ecosystem types in a natural condition and range of variation and contribute to the protection of Maine's biological diversity,"
- "as a benchmark against which biological and environmental change may be measured, as a site for ongoing scientific research, long-term environmental monitoring and education," and...

- "to protect sufficient habitat for those species whose habitat needs are unlikely to be met on lands managed for other purposes" ([Chapter 592, MSRA Section 13076](#)).

As is seen above, ecological reserves were not specifically established to provide recreational experiences. However, their management does have an impact on what recreational activities are allowed to occur in those reserves. The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands' Integrated Resource Policy dictates management policies of ecological reserves on Bureau lands, in coordination with and deference to statute. All recreation facilities and uses are secondary in priority to the natural resource within ecological reserves. Existing public access roads and new trails for motorized recreation must lack any other reasonable alternative, have only a minimal resource impact, and must provide a crucial link in a significant trail system. Primitive non-motorized trails must not conflict with natural resource values. Forest management (harvesting, etc.) is not allowed.

Backcountry Recreation Opportunities

Maine Lakes & Mountains Region

Federal Wilderness Areas

Caribou-Speckled Mt. Wilderness, US Forest Service, White Mountain National Forest:

- This Wilderness area is entirely within the state of Maine. Topography varies from lower hardwood slopes to exposed rocky peaks. The highest point is Speckled Mountain, at 2,906 feet, with Mt. Caribou coming in second at 2,840 feet. 25 miles of maintained hiking trails lie within the 14,000 acre Wilderness.

Non-Federal areas with backcountry recreation attributes

Main Bureau of Parks and Lands

Parks:

Grafton Notch State Park:

- Grafton Notch State Park is located on Route 26 between Newry and Upton, Maine, and offers opportunities for sightseeing, picnicking, and hiking on its 3,000 acres of beautiful natural terrain. While parts of the park are more developed than backcountry recreation discussions merit, it is noteworthy as a portal into adjoining areas such as the Mahoosuc Public Reserved Land Unit and the related Grafton Loop Trail.

Public Reserved Land Units:

The Mahoosuc Public Reserved Land Unit

- The Mahoosuc Unit is located on the New Hampshire border in central Oxford County. Combined with Grafton Notch State Park, the area comprises more than 30,000 acres of rugged mountainous terrain. The Appalachian Trail (AT), the Grafton Loop Trail (which uses a section of the AT), and numerous side trails lead

into and through this predominantly backcountry hiking area. There is a 9,993 acres ecological reserve on the western half of the unit.

Tumbledown Mt. Public Reserved Land Unit:

- The Tumbledown Unit is a relatively new lands unit (with acquisitions occurring from 2002 to 2004) and is located north of Weld, in western Maine. It provides over 10 miles of hiking trails and a total acreage of 22,585 (combined fee and easement). Though renowned for several day hike options into remarkable scenery, it does not currently offer the opportunity for extended, remote, overnight recreation. Additionally, portions of the area, such as popular hiking trails, at times, have numbers of visitors trending somewhat high for wilderness-type experiences.

Four Ponds Public Reserved Land Unit:

- Four Ponds lies just east of Mooselookmeguntic Lake. The Appalachian Trail traverses the length of this 6,000-acre unit with a lean-to at Sabbath Day Pond and a campsite at Little Swift River Pond. Fishing and swimming are popular activities. Winter visitors pass through on snowmobiles on their way from Rangeley to Weld.

Bigelow Preserve:

- Located in western Maine, just east of the village of Stratton about 40 miles north of Farmington, the Bigelow Preserve includes over 36,000 acres of public land. The preserve encompasses the entire Bigelow Range, which includes seven summits. The highest of these at 4,150 feet is West Peak, one of only 10 Maine summits over 4,000 feet in elevation. Bounded on the north by 20,000-acre Flagstaff Lake, the preserve offers many opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- 9,780 acres are allocated as “Bigelow Backcountry Non-Mechanized Recreation” dominant (Flagstaff Region Management Plan, 2007) and 10,540 acres are designated as ecological reserve. 15,315 acres are allocated with Backcountry Non-mechanized as a secondary allocation. Another 11,110 acres (dominant) and 1,075 acres (secondary) are allocated as “Bigelow Backcountry” (which still provides backcountry values but does allow 17.6 miles of Appalachian Trail and 14.8 miles of AT side trails run through the preserve. There are 6 trailheads and 35 camp sites at 6 hike-to camping destinations.

Private/ Public-Private Initiatives

The Grafton Loop Trail

- The Grafton Loop Trail, when hiked in conjunction with a section of the Appalachian Trail is a 38-mile hiking loop bisected by Rt. 26 (Grafton Notch Scenic Byway). There are 7 campsites along the trail.
- Construction of the trail has involved hundreds of volunteers and the dedication of the several organizations and individuals who comprise the Grafton Loop Trail

- Coalition. These include the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, the Appalachian Mountain Club, Maine Conservation Corps, Outward Bound Wilderness, Maine BPL, Creative Conservation LLC, Caribou Recreation Development LLC, and some key landowners. The group's mission is to develop multi-day hiking opportunities as alternatives to heavily used sections of the Appalachian Trail.
- It should be noted that the Grafton Loop Trail traverses both public and private land.

Kennebec and Moose River Valley

Non-Federal areas with backcountry recreation attributes

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

Public Reserved Land Units:

Holeb Public Reserved Land Unit

- A portion of the popular, 34-mile Moose River Bow Trip runs through this 20,000 acre public reserved unit in northwestern Maine. Several class I and II rapids can be either run or portaged, and a spectacular waterfall highlights the trip in this remote area. Camping (32 campsites), fishing, wildlife watching, and hunting are all possible elements of trips to Holeb. Not unlike the Tumbledown Unit, peak recreational use periods can have an affect on the experience of some users or potential users.

Maine Highlands Region

Non-Federal areas with backcountry recreation attributes

Baxter State Park

- Baxter State Park, administered separately from the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (based upon the deeds of former Governor Percival Baxter), is a 209,501 acre wilderness park with approximately 200 miles of hiking trails. The park maintains 8 rustic, vehicle-access campgrounds, 2 hike-in campgrounds, and 6 primitive outlying sites (hike or paddle access only). It is home to Maine's highest mountain, Mt. Katahdin, and in total has 18 peaks in excess of 3,000'. Additionally, numerous lakes, ponds, streams, and wetlands dot the landscape. Approximately 75% of the Park is off limits to hunting and trapping. 14% of the Park is within the Scientific Forest Management Area, an area managed as a showcase of sustainable forestry best practices.

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

Parks:

Penobscot River Corridor

- Located in the heart of Maine's undeveloped forest land, the Penobscot River Corridor (PRC) provides outstanding opportunities for remote canoe trips, fishing excursions, and whitewater rafting (provided by commercial operators). Managed by the Bureau in cooperation with several landowners, the PRC provides water

access recreation along more than 67 miles of river and 70 miles of lake frontage. Major access points in the area are gained from Millinocket or Greenville.

- While not all sections of the corridor would likely be considered as offering wilderness-type recreation opportunities, sections of the corridor do provide river-based recreation with the opportunity for solitude and self-reliance. Additionally, the PRC can be combined with the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, via a choice of two historic portages, to provide an even more extended remote paddling experience. There are numerous primitive campsites along the corridor.

Public Reserved Land Units:

Little Moose Public Reserved Land Unit

- Located just west of Greenville in Piscataquis County, the Little Moose Unit covers more than 15,000 acres in Moosehead Junction and Big Moose townships. The unit also includes most of the Little Moose Mountain Range with its steep slopes, rocky streams, and remote ponds. Visitors enjoy hiking, snowmobiling, fishing, hunting, and camping in this remote setting. There are over 10 miles of hiking trails and 7 primitive campsites on the unit.

The Nahmakanta Public Reserved Land Unit

- Nahmakanta encompasses more than 43,000 acres and is the largest unit in the public reserved lands system. The Appalachian Trail crosses the unit following the shore of Nahmakanta Lake. The roadless Debsconeag backcountry area offers the experienced hiker the opportunity to explore a spectacular complex of low mountains and remote ponds.
- The hiking trail along Turtle Ridge crosses densely wooded terrain with panoramic views of surrounding lands including Mt. Katahdin from open ledges. Vehicle accessible campsites provide convenient access to scenic ponds and hiking trailheads. A popular snowmobile trail crosses the unit linking Millinocket and Greenville.
- 6 primitive, hike-in and/or paddle-to campsites are located on the unit. Over 20 miles of hiking trails, in addition to roughly 9 miles of the Appalachian Trail are found on the unit. There is also an 11,000 acre ecological reserve (BPL's largest) within the Nahmakanta unit.

Private/ Public-Private Initiatives

Maine Woods Initiative

- The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) has embarked on a major land conservation initiative in the 100-mile Wilderness region. This effort, dubbed the Maine Woods Initiative, has substantial recreation implications. Much of the recreation planning and development associated with AMC's efforts surrounds trail opportunities linking a series of traditional sporting camps purchased by AMC. As it stands today, AMC owns and manages 37,000 acres of forestland known as the Katahdin Iron Works tract. As the Maine Woods Initiative moves

forward, it will, as it does today, have relevance concerning the availability of backcountry recreation opportunities.

Debsconeag Lakes Wilderness Area

- The Nature Conservancy owns a 195,000-acre easement bordering Baxter State Park and as well as fee ownership of the 46,271-acre Debsconeag Lakes Wilderness Area. The large Debsconeag parcel is almost exclusively managed as an ecological reserve. Hunting and fishing are allowed. Vehicles are limited to designated roads and snowmobiles are restricted to designated trails. ATVs and bicycles are not allowed. The Appalachian Trail runs through the property and provides backpacking opportunity. Camping is restricted to designated campsites, which do not require a fee or registration.

Downeast & Acadia Region

Federal Wilderness Areas

Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, US Fish & Wildlife Service:

- The two Wilderness Areas contain two lakes and numerous bogs, streams, and beaver flowages. Two small undisturbed islands in Whiting Bay, known as the Birch Islands, are part of the Edmunds Wilderness Area. There are two Wilderness trails for foot travel.

Non-Federal areas with backcountry recreation attributes

The St. Croix International Waterway

- The St. Croix International Waterway, an independent, international body established by the Maine and New Brunswick legislatures, is the planning entity overseeing recreation along the St. Croix River along the Maine-New Brunswick border in far eastern Maine. As the International Management Plan (1993) states: “Good summer flows, safe paddling and a remote setting have led to the upper river’s recognition as one of the Northeast’s best back-country canoe excursions. A 5-month season for novice and intermediate canoeists and shoulder seasons for white water enthusiasts draw users from a wide area. The 33 mi/53 km Vanceboro-Grand Falls section is one of the most heavily used canoe runs in Maine and New Brunswick.”

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

Public Reserved Land Units:

Donnell Pond Public Reserved Land Unit:

- The Donnell Pond Unit includes more than 14,000 acres of remote forested land with crystal clear lakes, secluded ponds, and mountains with panoramic views. Located in Hancock County between Franklin and Cherryfield, this is where visitors can enjoy outdoor recreation in a scenic, remote setting. There are over 15 miles of hiking trails at the Donnell Unit, including 10 mile loop including

remote Rainbow Pond and Caribou Mt. (both within an ecological reserve). There are semi-remote campsites on the shores of Tunk Lake, Donnell Pond, and Spring River Lake. Interested parties are currently discussing opportunities to expand backpacking opportunities at this unit.

- 257 acres are allocated as “Backcountry Non-Mechanized” (IRP) dominant along with over 2,000 acres allocated as Backcountry Non-Mechanized” (secondary allocation). 6,215 combined acres are within two ecological reserves on the unit (ecological reserve designation is a dominant allocation - to which backcountry recreation can be a secondary management scheme).

Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land Unit

- Those seeking a taste of backcountry along Maine's coast enjoy exploring the Cutler Coast Public Lands, a 12,234-acre expanse of blueberry barrens, woodlands and peatlands with 4.5 miles of headlands (interspersed by pocket coves and cobble beaches) overlooking the Bay of Fundy. Hikers can enjoy 10 miles of trails, three remote tent sites and spectacular views from the property's steep cliffs-part of the dramatic "Bold Coast" that extends from Cutler to Lubec.
- 5,216 acres of the Unit is designated as an ecological reserve. Nearly the entire coastal portion of the reserve (below Rt. 191, 2,095 acres) has “backcountry Non-Mechanized” allocation as a secondary use (secondary to the priorities set forth in designation as an ecological reserve).

Aroostook County Region

Non-Federal areas with backcountry recreation attributes

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

Parks:

Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW):

- The AWW is the first state-administered component of the National Wild and Scenic River System. It is a 92-mile-long ribbon of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams winding through the heart of northern Maine's vast commercial forests. The state-owned “restricted zone” is managed for wilderness character. There are 80 authorized campsites along the waterway. In addition to portage trails, approximately 7-8 miles of hiking trails lead to backcountry destinations (note: portions of several of those trails include private property).

Deboullie Public Reserved Land Unit

- Deboullie's low, rugged mountains and scenic remote trout ponds are all available for visitors using the 22,000 acre unit's hiking trails and campsites. Snowmobilers frequently pass through the unit on their way from Eagle Lake to the Allagash.
- Maine BPL manages 29 campsites within the unit; four are backcountry sites accessed only by foot or water. There are slightly over 10 maintained miles of hiking trails, including the popular 3-mile hike to Deboullie Mountain's summit.

Recent trail development has added a loop to this hike, employing trail routing to Black Mountain.

- A 7,253 acre ecological reserve is in place in the Deboullie – Black Mt. area (this area has a secondary “backcountry non-mechanized” allocation).

Private/ Public-Private Initiatives

Saint John River

- The Nature Conservancy owns 185,000 acres bordering 40 miles of the St. John River in the western corner of northern Maine. The river flows for 130 miles without passing a settlement and is considered one of if not the finest wilderness canoe trip in the eastern US. While many acres in the Nature Conservancy’s St. John ownership are managed for sustainable timber production, others are left as forever-wild lands.
- North Maine Woods Inc., a non-profit recreation management group organized to serve a diverse group of landowners in northern Maine, manages recreation along the Nature Conservancy’s St. John River property. All told, North Maine Woods provides 65 campsites along the river.

Statewide Resources of Note:

The Appalachian Trail (AT)

- The AT in Maine is a 281 mile footpath leading across some of Maine’s highest, wildest peaks, through vast forests, and along pristine rivers, streams, and wetlands. It is managed largely by the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, but collaboration between the National Park Service, Maine BPL, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, Baxter State Park, and the Appalachian Mountain Club is vital to continued success.

The Maine Island Trail

- The Maine Island Trail is a 350-mile waterway extending along the Maine coast. The Maine Island Trail Association is a non-profit organization with a mission geared towards managing sustainable recreation on Maine coastal islands. The organization focuses on volunteer effort and collaboration with public and private partners to facilitate the stewardship of islands making up the trail.
- The Maine Island Trail is a collection of public and private islands available for day and, in many cases, overnight use. The predominant use of these islands could be labeled as low-impact. Overnight camping is primitive, with strong promotion of Leave No Trace principles. In 2009, there are 182 properties on the trail. 66 are publicly owned and open to all. The remaining sites are open to MITA members only. 46 islands were added to the Trail between 2005 and 2009.

Northern Forest Canoe Trail

- The Northern Forest Canoe Trail is a 740 mile route across parts of New York State, Vermont, Quebec, New Hampshire, and Maine. There are 347 miles of water trail in Maine. Some portions of the Canoe Trail are managed for wilderness values (e.g., Allagash Wilderness Waterway). However, again, wilderness-type recreation experiences may be found at other places along the route (even in places not specifically managed for such).

