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Land for Maine's Future Program : Protecting Maine's Natural Heritage and Future Economic Health (2009 Biennial Report)

Land for Maine's Future

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Land for Maine's Future Program

Protecting Maine's natural heritage and future economic health

*The 2009 Biennial Report to the Joint Standing Committee on
Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry*

*Augusta
February 2009*



Agenda

- Board Chair's remarks
 - Program overview
 - Program status
 - Challenges & opportunities
-
- Need more? Visit www.maine.gov/spo/lmf



LMF Mission

To secure the future social and economic well-being of the citizens of this State by maintaining the quality and availability of productive lands and natural areas...

(recreation, working farms and forests, hunting, fishing, conservation, wildlife habitat, vital ecological functions and scenic beauty)

Types of LMF Projects

- Conservation and recreation
 - *Emphasizing public access for outdoor recreation*
- Water access
 - *Small parcels for boat ramps, hand-carry launch sites, swimming and fishing access*
- Farmland protection
 - *purchase of development rights and fee interests in productive farmland*
- Working Waterfront
 - *Pilot program now in third year to protect commercial marine fishing access*

History

- Created in 1987 with \$35 million bond issue
- In 1997, new priorities set by a commission of Maine citizens
- \$50 million bond issue in 1999 rejuvenated the program and amended its charge to allow local ownership
- Since then two bonds (2005 & 2007) totaling \$27 million (w/ additional \$5 million for Working Waterfront Protection Pilot Program)

Structure

- 11 member board (5 agencies & 6 public)
- All confirmed by Legislature
- Committees:
 - *Appraisal*
 - *Scoring*
 - *Nomination*
 - *Easement* (large-scale forest)

General Principles

- Hunting, fishing, trapping and public access are sought on all conservation projects
- 'Willing seller only' -- Board policy
- $\geq 1/3$ Match required to leverage LMF funds
- The State holds lands of statewide significance; towns and land trusts may hold properties of local and regional significance

Public notice & input

- Notice sent to host municipalities & legislators when applications received and when project finalists designated
- Notice sent to legislators and municipal officials prior to final board votes
- Public notice and comment session prior to final board vote on any project
- All Board meetings publicized and open
- Agenda, Minutes & news on website
- Call for new proposals is open to all

Independently evaluated

FINDINGS:

- Continues to be an urgent need for a state-funded land conservation effort
- There is broad public support
- LMF should continue for the foreseeable future
- New funding is needed

Conducted by the Margaret Chase Smith Center (UM) and the New England Environmental Finance Center (USM) 2004

Governor's Quality of Place Council 2008

Public access

- Since 1987, need for “availability” of land for recreation recognized in LMF’s legislative mission
- 1997 LAPAC study and 2004 program evaluation reconfirmed public access as a central purpose of LMF
- Public access continues as a statewide issue
- Virtually all LMF mainland acquisitions are accessible by vehicle
- Access to public waters also targeted with 10% reserve

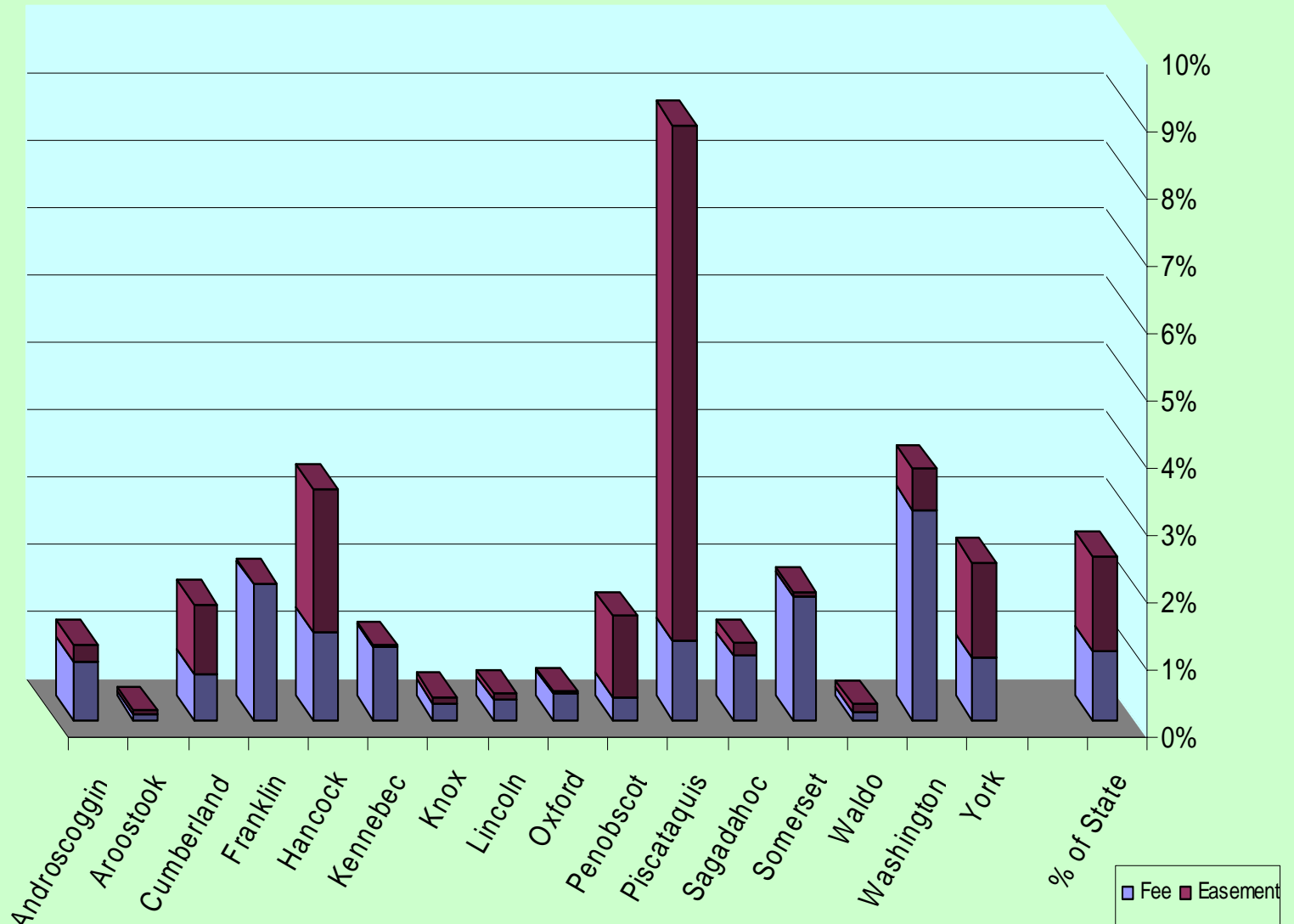
Farmland Protection

- Earliest farm project completed 1990
- Legislature reserved “up to 10%” for farms in 1999.
- At least 10% has been spent on farmland since then - \$7.7 million of farm reserves plus additional conservation funds on dual projects
- 25 farmland projects now completed with 8 underway

LMF Status

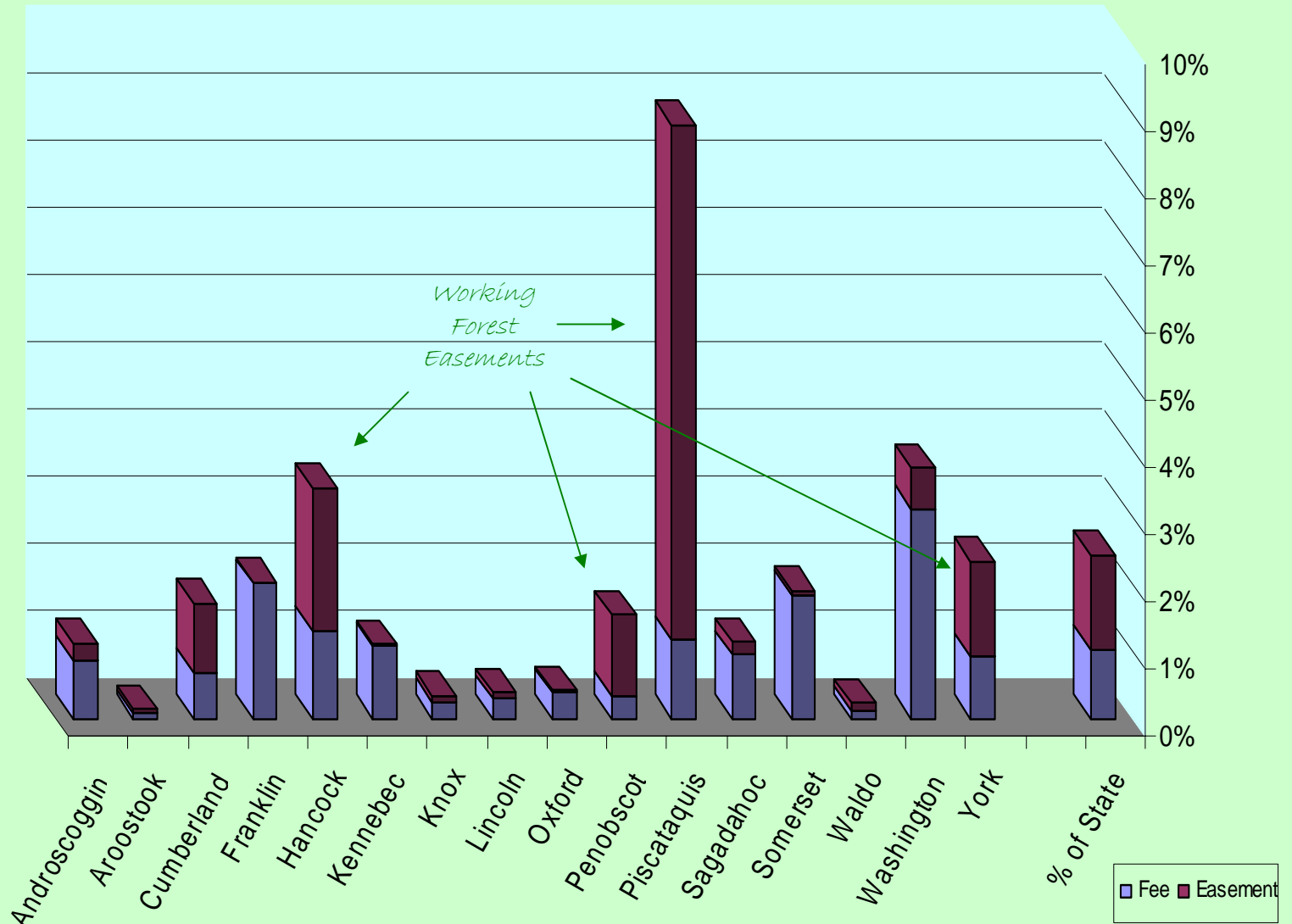
- Since 1987, over 230 projects completed with over 350 individual transactions statewide
- 56 transactions on 47 projects in the last two years
- Since 1987, 498,000 acres conserved
(roughly 60% easement and 40% fee)
- 65 projects underway
(including over 100 separate transactions)
- Virtually all LMF funds have now been committed:
no new farm or conservation projects can be started

% of County and State Conserved with LMF Support 1987-2008



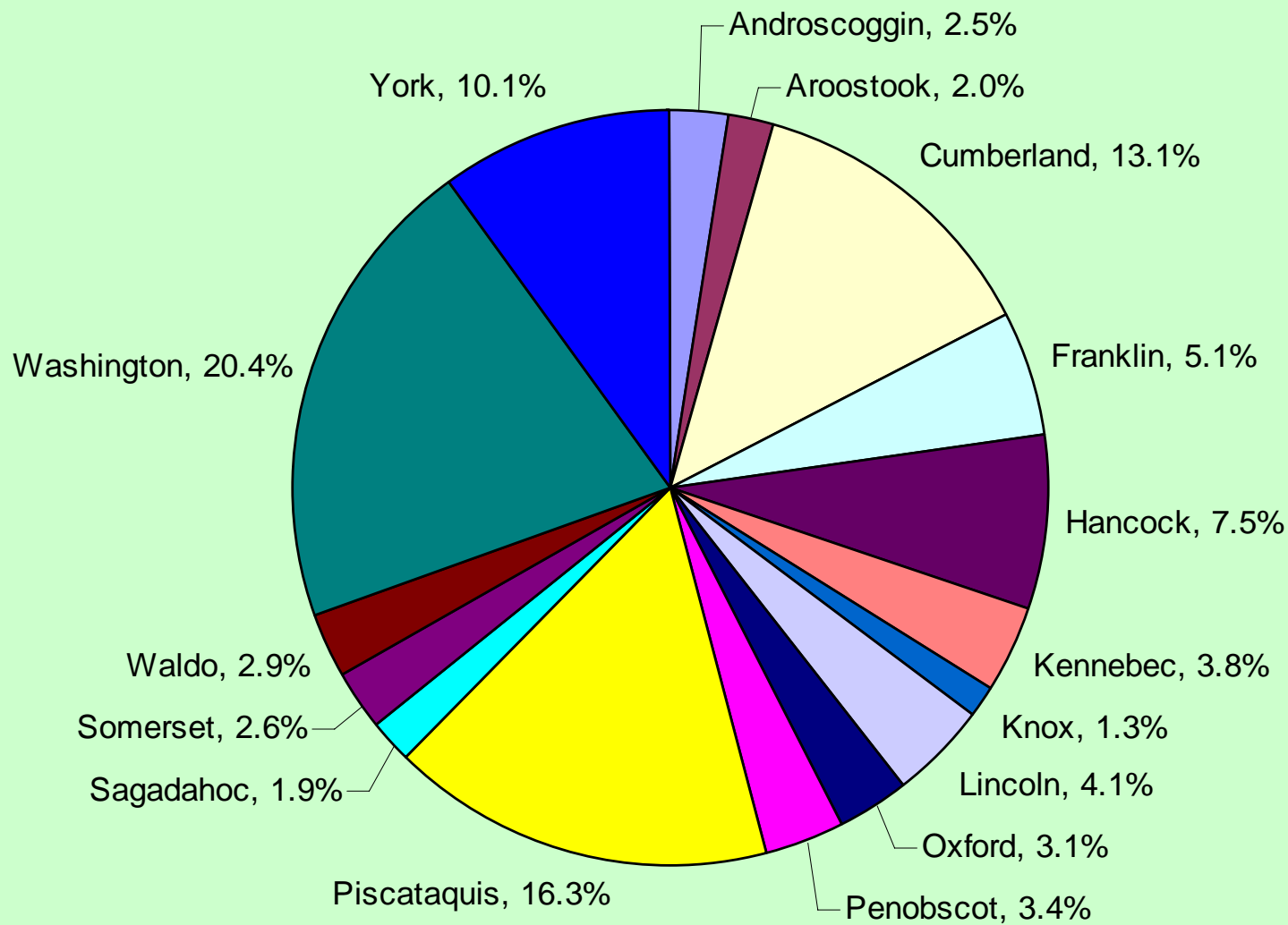
Note: Best available information; current through 12/31/08

% of County and State Conserved with LMF Support 1987-2008

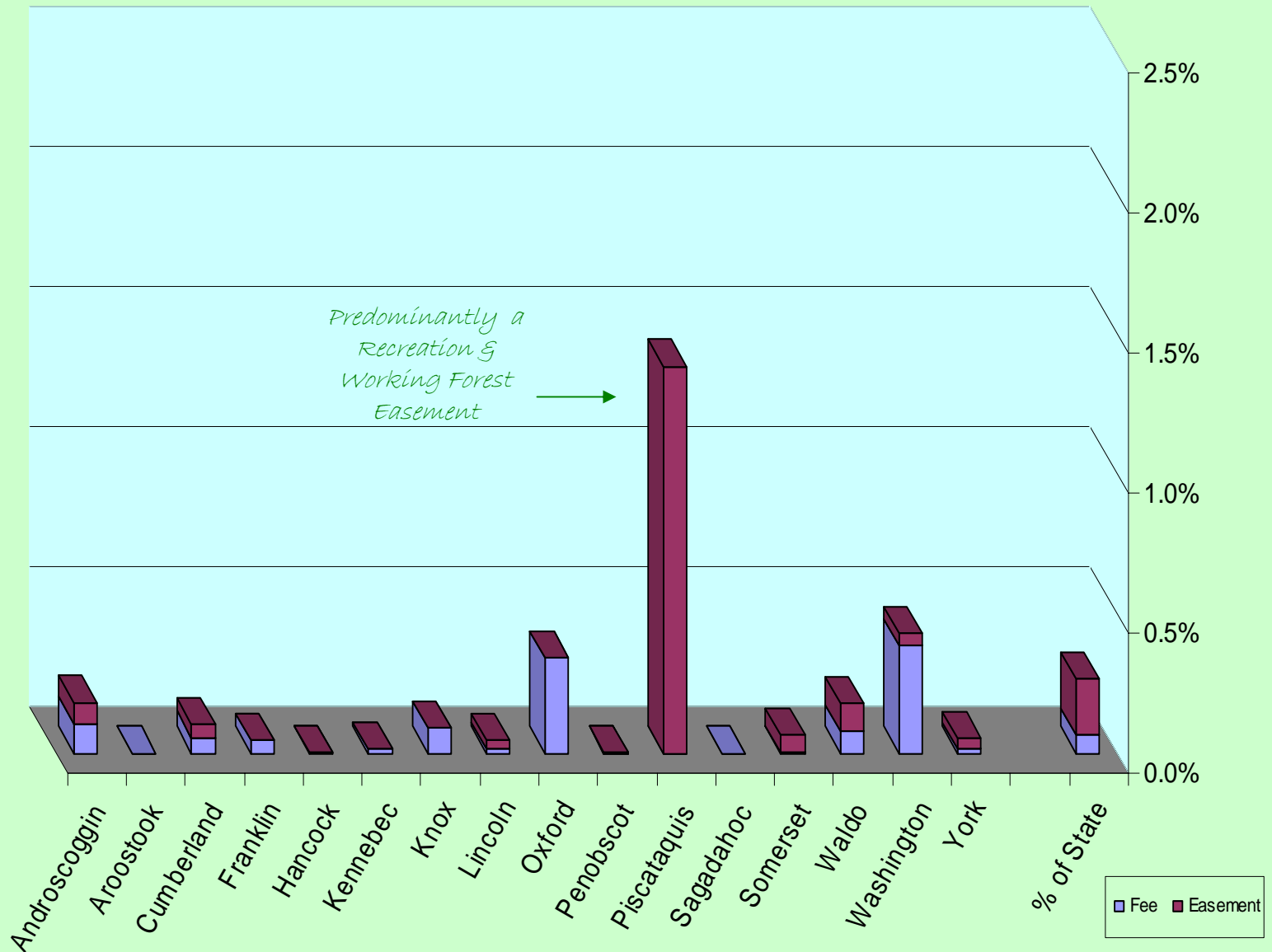


Note: Best available information; current through 12/31/08

LMF Expenditures by County 1987-2008

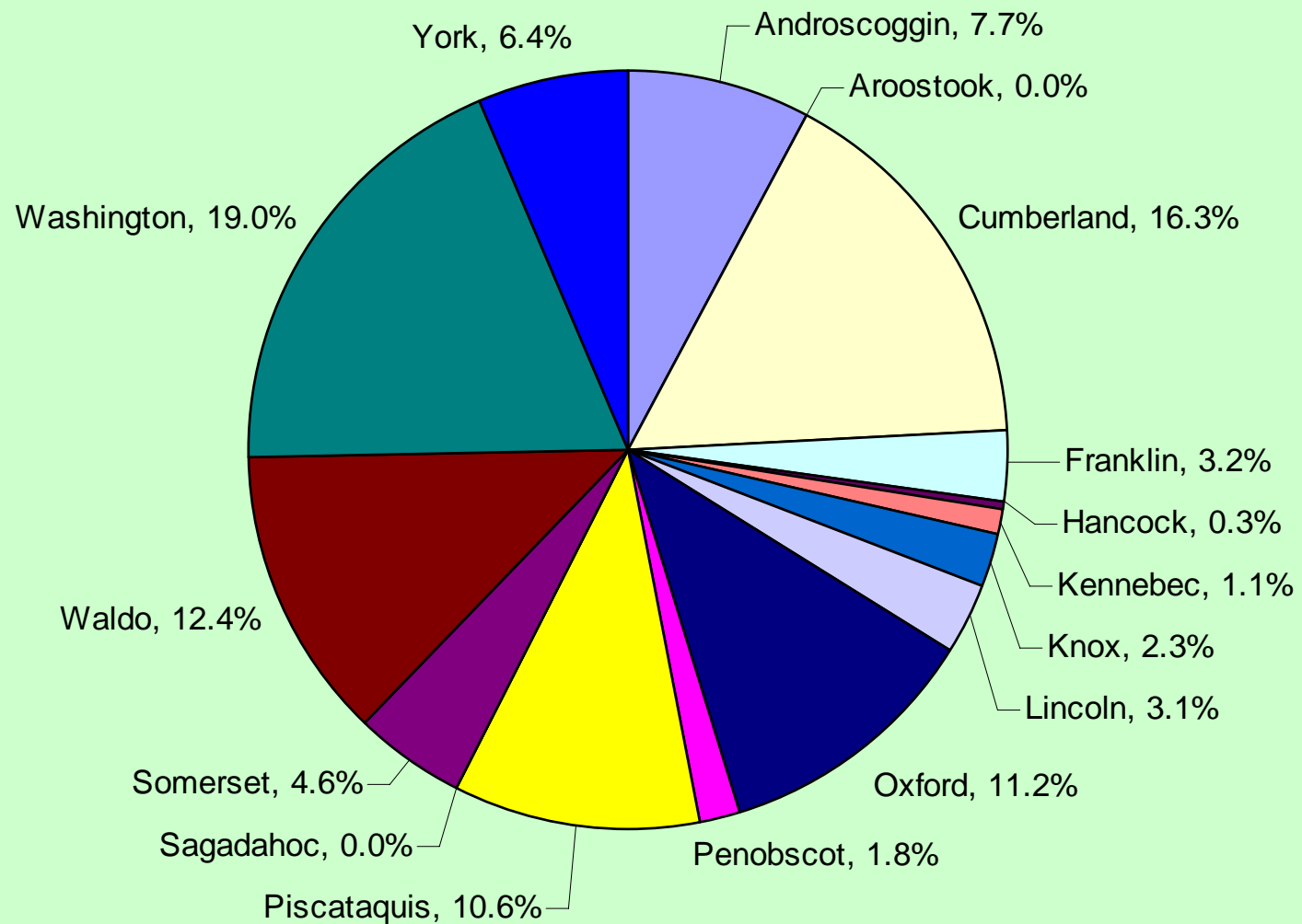


% County and State Conserved with LMF Support 2007-8



Note: Best available information; current through 12/31/08

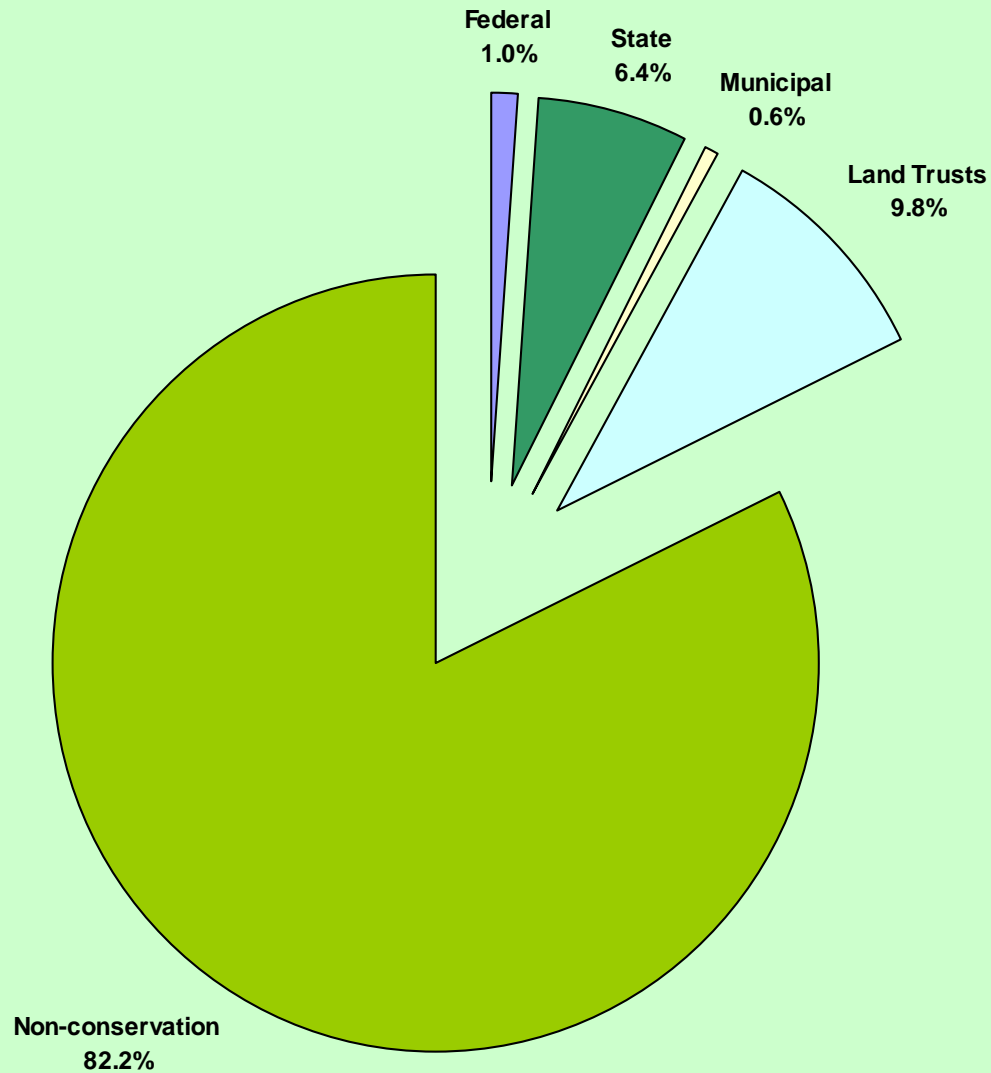
LMF Expenditures by County 2007-8



Note: Best available information; current through 12/31/08

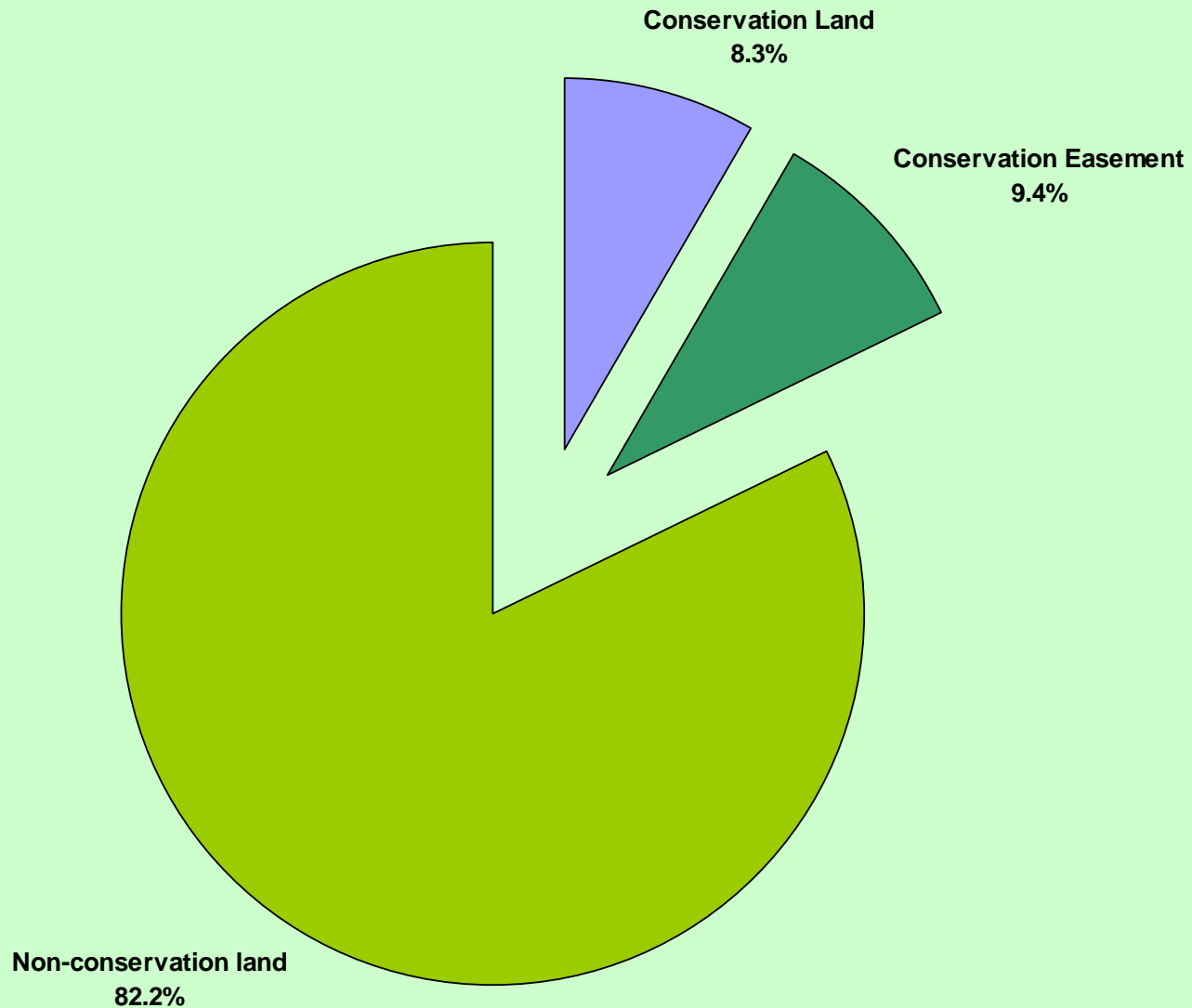
Conservation land by Ownership

as % of state



Conservation Land by Category

as % of state



Dollars & acres aren't the full picture...

- 1,100 miles of shoreline conserved
- Many miles of recreational trails protected (including 158 miles of vital snowmobile routes)
- 7 State & regional park expansions
- 41 water access sites approved
- 25 working farm holdings conserved
- 3 working waterfront sites conserved

Partnerships

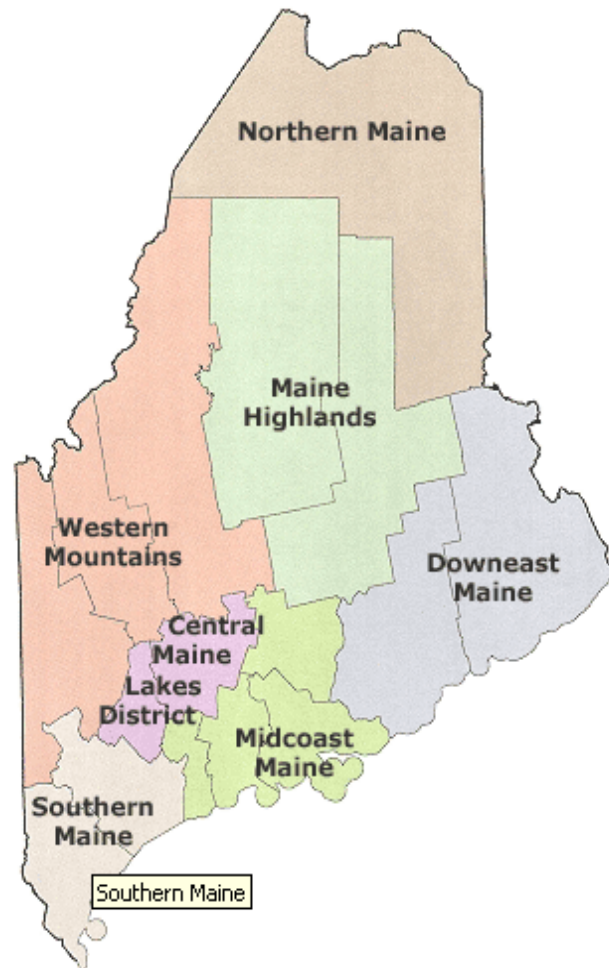
- In 1999, the Legislature authorized direct grants to towns and land trusts. These grants are governed by contractual “project agreements”
- Experience with grant recipients continues to be very positive.
- Annual reporting has been smooth.
- 35 new contracts signed with towns and land trusts in '07-08. 90 Contracts in total.

Land for Maine's Future



Project Map by Region

LMF funded projects are across the state of Maine. Mouse over the map below to see how many LMF projects are in a particular region. Click on a region to view a list and summary of all the projects in that region.



Regional Information

Region:
Southern Maine

Counties:
York, Cumberland

Number of projects:
26

LMF Project Center

[Project Directory](#)
[Project Search](#)
[Project Map by Region](#)

Sharing a commitment to providing public access to Maine's special places, development of the LMF Project Center was made possible by a grant from **LL.Bean**.

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Jordan Farm

[Guidelines for Use of LMF Properties](#)



Project Description

The William Jordan family has been operating their farm in Cape Elizabeth for more than half a century, with much of their extended family still involved in agricultural operations. The Jordans sell vegetables wholesale and through a farm stand, and run a popular pick-your-own strawberry operation. The farm's success is due to the family's hard work, the land's productive soils, and the fact that Cape Elizabeth has the longest growing season in Maine (due to the coast's moderating influence). Area residents cherish this local landmark where they come to buy fresh produce and enjoy scenic vistas out over the farmfields to Spurwink Marsh and the historic Spurwink Church. Each fall, busloads of local schoolchildren arrive to pick pumpkins, feed the chickens and sample the farm's wares. [Jordan Farm](#) also supplies two local food pantries and provides low-income seniors with fresh produce through the State's Farm-Share Program. The Jordan family wanted to maintain this farming tradition, but as area land values soared, the pressures to sell for development increased. Three nearby farms all sold and were built out, the most recent one into a 97-lot subdivision. The Jordans chose another path, offering to sell development rights on key portions of their farm (a strategy that lowers the property value, making it more affordable to keep land in productive use). With support from the family and the [Cape Elizabeth Land Trust](#) and funding from the Land for Maine's Future Program, and the USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust acquired an easement on Jordan Farm that prevents future subdivision or development and promotes its continued farming. Jordan Farm abuts Spurwink Marsh (part of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge), providing important wildlife habitat as well as local produce. Hay is cut late in the season to protect threatened birds such as bobolinks and eastern meadowlarks that nest in the fields. Please note: On private farms protected with Land for Maine's Future Program support, public access is by landowner permission only. Please see the icons to determine allowed uses and follow any guidance posted on the property. For more information on how to obtain landowner permission, contact [Stephanie Gilbert](#) at the Maine Department of Agriculture.



[Click to enlarge](#)



Closest Town
Cape Elizabeth

Region
Southern Maine - York,
Cumberland

Acres
47

Directions from closest town

DeLorme Maine Atlas and Gazetteer Map 3, A-4. From Broadway in South Portland, take Route 77 toward Cape Elizabeth, turning right in 2 miles onto Scott Dyer Road. At the intersection with Spurwink Road (in 1 mile) go straight onto Wells Road. The farmstand is on the right less than one-tenth mile from the intersection of the Spurwink and Wells Roads.

LMF Project Center

Conservation Easement Registry

- Legislation to strengthen Maine's conservation easement statutes adopted in Sept 2007
- SPO directed to establish a statewide registry for conservation easements
- Registry will launch later this spring
- Will apply to all conservation easement holders (public & nonprofit)

Working Waterfronts

- 3 projects completed
- 7 underway; 3 new applications under review
- Pilot project issues
 - Restrictive covenant design
 - Appraisals
 - Substantial outreach/education effort

How have Maine citizens benefited?

- **Improved Public Access** *to outdoor recreation opportunities*
- **Tourism** *enhanced with conserved lands*
- **Rural enterprises** *supported by stabilizing land base (tourism, agriculture, forestry, working waterfront)*
- **Natural heritage** *protected for future generations*



Bradbury Pineland Corridor



Crystal Spring Farm



Merrymeeting Bay & Lower Kennebec



Bald & Ragged Mtn Preserve



Camden Hills SP



Port Clyde Fisherman's Coop



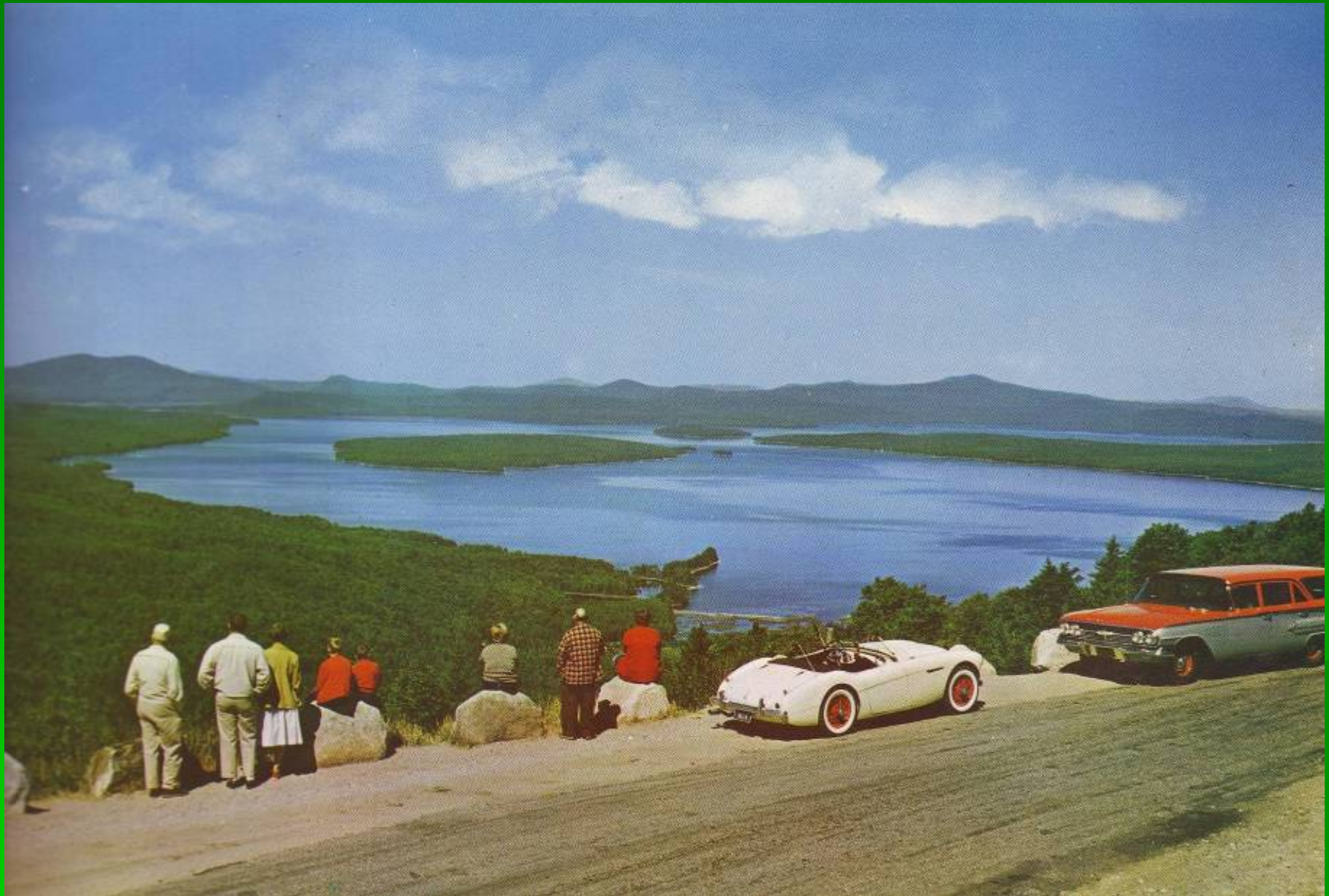
Jasper Beach



Wabassus Lake



Dead River Trail



Height of Land



Grafton Notch



Rumford Whitecap



Androscoggin River Park (Lewiston)



Mitchell Ledge Farm

