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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Northern Forest Lands Council Discusses Taxes, Biological Resources**

CONCORD, NH The Northern Forest Lands Council will hold its regular bimonthly meeting Wednesday, April 21 at the Sugarloaf Inn in Carrabassett Valley, Maine from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. The Council is examining ways to reinforce the traditional patterns of ownership and uses for 26 million acres of land across northern Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. It will recommend strategies to the four states' governors and Congressional delegations to conserve important public and private values in the region's forest land.

"Maine is pleased to host this meeting. The Council's work is important to the future of Maine's forest lands and the people who use them. Because of this, the Council is very interested in hearing from local residents. I hope that Mainers will attend and discuss their needs and concerns," stressed Maine Council member and Conservation Commissioner C. Edwin Meadows, Jr. All Council meetings are open to the public and the audience is encouraged to participate during an open public comment period.

"Council subcommittees are researching a number of issues which influence long-term land ownership and management. Their research is drawing to a close, and they will soon be identifying major study findings. These findings

(over)

will form the foundation for the Council's recommendations. This meeting will set the stage for these critical efforts," commented Council Chairman Robert L. Bendick, Jr., Deputy Commissioner for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

At the meeting, the subcommittees will discuss their latest work on the issues of land conversion, property taxes, state/federal taxes, local forest based economy, biological resources, recreation/tourism and conservation strategies. The subcommittees have studied most of these issues for over a year. This June, they will identify and distribute the major findings from their research. In August, they will use the findings to discuss the range of recommendation options which are reasonable and appropriate for the full Council to consider.

The Council will also discuss its fiscal year 1994 budget, the status of its resource inventory project and whether to conduct a public opinion survey at the meeting.

The Council was created in 1990, following the sale of nearly 500,000 acres of land by the former Diamond International Corporation. The sale sparked fears that these lands, which were historically available for uses like hunting, fishing, canoeing and timber harvesting, would be developed or converted to other uses which would no longer provide these values.

For more information, call the Council office at (603) 224-6590 or Maine Northern Forest Lands Coordinator Donald Mansius at (207) 287-4906.

The Northern Forest Lands Council is a 17-member advisory, non-regulatory organization with four members appointed by each of the Governors of Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont, and an ex officio member from the USDA Forest Service. The Council follows the work of the Governors' Task Force on Northern Forest Lands and the Northern Forest Lands Study. Its purpose is to (1) advise the states and federal government on forest land conservation and natural resource based economic development within the 26 million acre Northern Forest area and (2) seek and recommend a comprehensive set of strategies to reinforce traditional patterns of land ownership and use, while sustaining the region's communities and forest resources. The Council's anticipated lifespan is through September 1994.