

2-9-2007

Land for Maine's Future : Celebrating 20 Years of Protecting Maine's Natural Heritage and Future Economic Health, 2007

Land for Maine's Future

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalmaine.com/lmf_docs

Recommended Citation

Land for Maine's Future, "Land for Maine's Future : Celebrating 20 Years of Protecting Maine's Natural Heritage and Future Economic Health, 2007" (2007). *Land for Maine's Future*. 17.
http://digitalmaine.com/lmf_docs/17

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry at Maine State Documents. It has been accepted for inclusion in Land for Maine's Future by an authorized administrator of Maine State Documents. For more information, please contact statedocs@maine.gov.

Working Waterfronts - *the pilot*



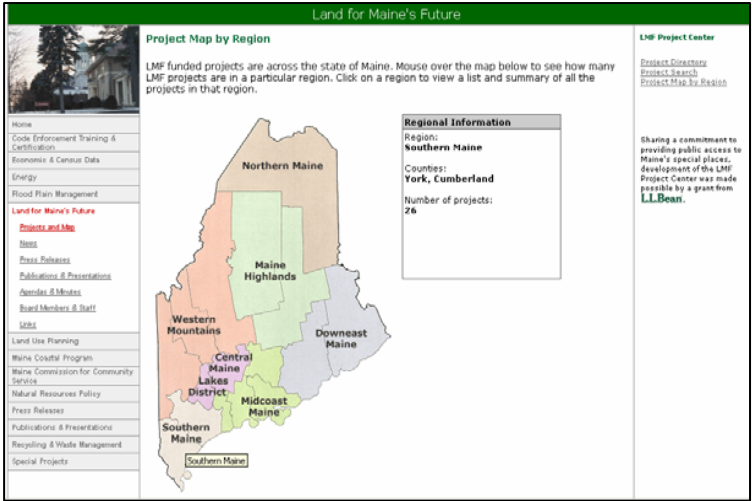
Holbrook's Wharf, Cundy's Harbor, Harpswell

In 2005, voters created a new Working Waterfront Protection pilot program designed to permanently protect working waterfronts and assure that they retain their capacity to support commercial fisheries forever. In January, 2007, the Land for Maine's Future Board selected six successful applicants in the first round of funding for this important effort. Projects include:

- Holbrook's Wharf, historically used to land lobster and tuna and now being marketed to serve new fishermen in the area;
- The Spruce Head Co-op, to buy its currently leased site to support 75 lobstermen and their families;
- Larrabee Cove, to buy a traditional clambers' access site in the Town of Machiasport; and
- Isle au Haut, to guarantee fishing access to the town pier and allow a substantial renovation.

LMF Web-based Project Directory

To get Maine citizens to their lands, the Land for Maine's Future Program created a web-based directory of all its lands and easements, complete with project descriptions, photos, and directions.



About LMF



Skolfield Preserve, near Brunswick

The Land for Maine's Future Fund was suggested in 1986 by the Governor's Special Commission on Outdoor Recreation in Maine, and established in 1987. Voters overwhelmingly approved a \$35 million bond for purchasing lands for recreation and conservation (now expanded to include farms and water access). The Fund is overseen by a Board comprised of six

private citizens and five state agency commissioners. The State Planning Office provides staff support to the Land for Maine's Future Program.

Prepared by:
State Planning Office
38 State House Station
Augusta ME 04333
www.maine.gov/spo

February 2007

Photos used by permission or
taken from program files.

Some information taken from *Land for Maine's Future Program, Increasing the Return on a Sound Public Investment*, Prepared by the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine and the Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy at the University of Maine, January 2004

Printed under appropriation 010-07B-2202-01

Land for Maine's Future



Royal River Preserve, Yarmouth

Celebrating 20 Years of Protecting Maine's Natural Heritage and Future Economic Health

Accomplishments

Over the past 20 years, the Land for Maine's Future program has preserved access for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, boating and swimming. It has conserved lands for tourism, supported rural communities by stabilizing productive natural resource lands, and protected Maine's heritage for future generations. Its successes include:

- 445,000 acres of land conserved
- Over 973 miles of shoreline conserved
- 158 miles of vital snowmobile routes protected
- 30 water access sites acquired
- 15 working farms conserved
- 5 state and regional parks expanded

According to researchers at the Muskie School of Public Service and Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy, the Land for Maine's Future Program is an investment in our future; not an end in itself, but a tool that serves our larger, abiding purposes of sustainable economic development, environmental stewardship, and community building.

LMF has supported the protection of some of Maine's most treasured natural assets including Mount Kineo, Scarborough Beach, the Machias River, and the Nahmakanta Reserve.

Availability of Funding

In 2005, the Legislature and Maine voters approved a \$12 million bond to replenish funds for the Land for Maine's Future Program and to launch a pilot effort to protect working waterfronts. Public interest was high; the Board received proposals totaling twice as much money as was available. The Land for Maine's Future Board has committed virtually all of the available funds. While limited funds are available for water access projects, there are **no funds available** to start new farm or conservation projects.

Public Access for Recreation

Public access continues to be a statewide issue as private lands, once open for public use, are posted or developed for commercial and residential uses. Trails are particularly hard hit as they require continuous corridors of unbroken rights of access as well as expensive infrastructure such as bridges and trestles.



Newport to Dover-Foxcroft Rail Trail

Since 1987, making land available for recreation has been part of the Land for Maine’s Future’s mission. Public access for hunting, fishing, trapping, and recreation is a requirement for every project. Virtually all of Land for Maine’s Future land acquisitions are accessible by vehicle.

Some of the key recreation and trail projects that the program has helped fund include:

- 158 miles of ITS snowmobile trails including the Newport-Dover 4-season Rail Trail and the Aroostook County trails;
- Multiple additions to Camden Hills State Park, one of Maine's most popular tourist destinations; and
- Grand Lake Stream, one Maine’s best salmon fisheries in the heart of a traditional sporting community.

“The trails opened up an economic lifeline to the Town of Washburn. In the last few years, as the use of rail beds for snowmobiling, biking, walking, horseback-riding, and ATVing has increased, so has the economic vitality of Washburn, Maine.”

—Jim Gardner, former
Town Manager, Town of
Washburn

Developing Rural Economies— A Case Study

In Aroostook County, the Land for Maine’s Future Program supported the acquisition of more than 71 miles of trail that make up the major snowmobile routes in Northern Maine. Local residents worked for years to acquire rights-of-way to railways and to convert them to year-round, multiple-use trails. Today, these trails are widely recognized as an economic as well as a recreational resource. They are most well known for helping to attract thousands of snowmobilers to Aroostook County each winter. In the small town of Washburn indicators of economic growth include:

- Griffin’s One Stop in Washburn does one-third to one-half of its winter gas sales to sledders
- Real estate values in the area are up
- A B&B has opened for visitors

These trails have become an integral component of the regional economy and are aiding the County in its economic development.

Protecting Productive Lands

Another key component of the Land for Maine’s Future Program is farm and forestland protection, primarily by acquiring development rights to keep working lands productive. More than half (239,000 acres) of all lands conserved with LMF support are covered by working forest easements which guarantee public access for hunting, fishing, trapping, and outdoor recreation while also allowing sustainable forestry by private landowners. These lands continue to pay taxes and generate substantial economic benefits for the State and the communities around them

In addition, ten percent of all Land for Maine’s Future funds are reserved for farmland conservation. Farm projects supported include:

- Lakeside Orchards, a 189-acre successful apple orchard in Manchester, which markets primarily to Maine consumers;
- A regional effort in Kennebec and Waldo counties of over 1690 acres that involves seven farmers to conserve a critical mass of farms and dairy operations;
- The Sabbathday Lake Farm owned by Maine’s Shaker community, a 1,635-acre property that supports extensive apple orchards under lease to commercial growers while protecting a vital chapter of Maine’s cultural heritage; and

- The Packard-Littlefield Farm in Lisbon, which is expanding farm operations and offering the New American Sustainable Agriculture Program access to cropland.



Jordan’s Farm, Cape Elizabeth

Partnerships

In 1999, the Legislature authorized direct payments to towns and land trusts for conservation acquisitions. These partners, who assist in the protection of lands of regional and local significance, add immeasurable value through their local knowledge, technical expertise, and management capacity. The 55 projects completed to date bring the benefits of land conservation right into the communities they serve.

Examples include:

- The 27,000-acre Downeast Lakes project undertaken by the local land trust of the same name, which has secured lands essential to the jobs of the local guides and crafts people who depend on these woods and lake shores.
- The RiverLink project in Lincoln County, which will create a 1,400-acre wildlife and trail corridor between the Sheepscot and Damariscotta rivers in one the fastest growing areas of the state. Three local land trusts and the Town of Edgecomb are active partners.
- The Devil’s Head project, a partnership between LMF and the City of Calais with the assistance of the St. Croix International Waterway Commission. This 319-acre project on the shores of the St. Croix estuary protects a scenic headland along Route One and the river.



Pocumcus Lake, Washington County

Statewide Context

Land for Maine’s Future funds have supported 189 projects all over the state in the past 20 years. Yet historically, Maine has been well below average in public conservation lands nationally and compared to other New England states and other states with large tourism and forest products sectors. The graph to the left shows the overall amount of conservation land in Maine by ownership category. Today, state ownership of conservation lands and easements just tops 6%. Taken together with federal, municipal, and land trust interests, approximately 16% of Maine is under some form of conservation. LMF has provided support for about one in ten of these conservation acres.

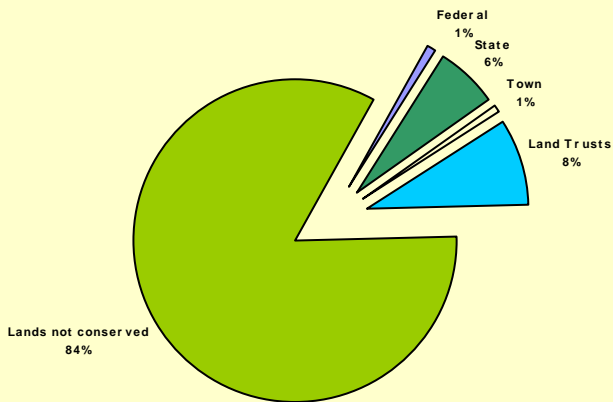
By way of comparison, every other state in the north-eastern US holds more conservation land in public ownership than Maine, based on the most recent national statistics. For a state that is seeking to maintain its brand identity in competitive tourism markets, this position is tenuous.

One of LMF’s core objectives, as defined by the Legislature in 1987, is to maintain the “future social and economic well-being of the citizens of this State,” which the Legislature tied to “the quality and availability of natural areas for recreation, hunting and fishing, conservation, wildlife habitat, vital ecologic functions, and scenic beauty.” LMF was charged, as the public's trustee, to pursue an aggressive and coordinated policy to assure that this Maine heritage is passed on to future generations.

To accomplish this objective, the Land for Maine’s Future Program now pursues four types of projects in partnership with its sister agencies, towns, and land trusts:

- Conservation and recreation - *Emphasizing public access for outdoor recreation*
- Water Access - *Acquiring small parcels for boat ramps and hand-carry launch sites*
- Farming - *Protecting productive farmland on working farms*
- Working Waterfront - *Protecting commercial marine fishing access*

% of State in conservation
by Ownership



“We find that there continues to be urgent need for a state-funded land conservation effort in Maine, for which there is broad support.”

— Land for Maine's
Future Program: A
Sound Investment in
Maine's Future