Balancing Outdoor Recreation and a Revitalizing Forest Products Industry

Maine Woods Recreation Forum

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Welcome!

Keeping Maine’s Forests provides the perfect forum for our conversation today because KMF’s purpose is to advance these common goals:

• Maintain a stable or increasing flow of wood fiber;

• Promote healthy forests – sustainably managed;

• Safeguard key natural resources, particularly water resources;

• Conserve and enhance key fish and wildlife habitats;

• Provide abundant recreational opportunities; and,

• Sustain local economies.
Who we are

Since 1961, the Maine Forest Products Council has been the voice of our forest economy. Our members include loggers, truckers, paper mills, tree farmers, foresters, sawmills, secondary wood manufacturers, bankers, lawyers, insurance executives and the owners of 8 million acres of commercial forestland. We feel we represent anyone who has an interest in seeing the Maine woods remain a viable, sustainable resource.
Economic impact

About 1 out of every 24 jobs in Maine.

About $1 out of every $20 of Maine’s GDP.
An ‘economic crisis’ in Maine’s paper industry

Maine’s once-strong paper mills continued skid in 2015

Another blow to Maine paper industry

Shutdown of Madison mill is state’s fifth in two years

Maine paper mill closings take their toll
Now our situation – and the headlines – have changed

Verso to restart paper machine in Jay, bringing back 120 jobs
Sappi mill on a roll with $200M investment
ND Paper adds to its Maine holdings, buying Old Town mill for undisclosed sum
Maine’s paper industry ‘positioned to have a revitalization’

Our View: Economy’s future remains linked to Maine’s forests
FOR/MAINE

A statewide coalition has identified ways to diversify wood products business, seize on innovative market opportunities, and strengthen rural economies.

GOAL 1

Grow Maine’s $8.5 billion forest products economy to $12 billion by 2025.

More information: www.formaine.org
Forest land ownership

- 17.6 million forested acres, 89 percent of Maine’s total land
- 15.9 million acres is privately owned.
- Largest contiguous block of private commercial forestland in the U.S.
“Maine has a land-use tradition that is unique in the nation. In Maine, landowners have traditionally allowed members of the public to use their property for a wide variety of recreational activities free of charge.”

NMW is a good example of how Maine landowners honor this tradition.

The concept of North Maine Woods, a region of more than 3.5 million acres of top quality commercial that also includes the St. John and Allagash rivers, evolved from a landowner committee. Landowners — large, small, corporations, individuals and families — work in partnership with Maine's natural resource agencies.
The importance of keeping private land open for public recreational use can be demonstrated with four simple facts.
• About 91 percent of Maine’s land is in private hands.
• The majority of Maine’s population enjoys outdoor recreation, from backcountry adventures to walks in the woods.
• Landowners also are land users. With so much of the state in private hands, it would be a small world indeed if Mainers could only hike, hunt, ride recreational vehicles, take photos or watch wildlife on their own property.
• Much of Maine’s economy as well as its quality of life depends on access to the outdoors.
The relationship between landowners and land users is fragile.

It can be gradually worn away by small abuses or sharply damaged by high-profile events or controversial issues that make landowners fear they’re losing control of their property.
Landowners allowed public use

Movement to establish as a national Trail

Not all landowners interested in selling

Eminent domain powers used.
• Corridors established with access restrictions for crossing.

• Scenic vantage points begin to regulate uses for the landscape of surrounding landowners.
Down East Magazine’s Great Maine Scavenger Hunt

40 events, including:

• Hike to Moxie Falls
• Soak up Gulf Hagas
• Climb Deboullie Mountain
• Crash Site in Greenville
• Landowners received complaints about the condition of their road to access an event they were unaware of and are expected to invest in improvements for.
Landowners view recreation as compatible with the *working forest* model, but not as replacement.
Private roads have a host of issues with public use

- Safety – Logging trucks vs. Priuses
- Landowners need to meet environmental standards, but not public transportation standards.
- Bridge washouts and landowner determination of whether to rebuild. When the Aldrich Brook Bridge washed out (right), the proposed Oxford County budget initially included $200,000 to replace it even though the bridge would have been on private land in unorganized territory.
• Winter roads and/or seasonal closings, yet damage occurs.

• 4-wheelers – Not allowed in most North Maine Woods areas.

• Internally charging use tolls for upkeep.

• Gates generally deter seasonal road damage, vandalism, trash.
Visual quality regulations

• Landowners fear scenic vistas
• Visual regulations have been discussed before wind farm siting. CLUP in the LUPC jurisdiction: “Continue to regulate timber harvesting activities in important recreational and scenic areas to protect aesthetic qualities.”
• Land comes with a set of opportunities that create value. A landowner may not be interested in developing land for uses other than forest management, but may want to maximize the future value of a conservation easement.
New uses and users bring new concerns, such as back country snowmobiling

Message for snowmobilers from Bob Meyers, Maine Snowmobile Association:

• Stay out of tree plantations
• Stay off plowed roads
• Don’t park in log yards

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9FaZwIwm_w
Our challenge

Find ways to address the recreational pressures in the north woods that:

• Minimize environmental impacts to land.
• Minimize economic impacts to landowners.
• Honor traditional uses.
• Allow for regional economic development.
Thanks!

We appreciate all of you joining in this discussion as we work toward a common understanding of these important issues.