

Understanding public access to private working forests in Maine



“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.”

– James M. Acheson, Professor of Anthropology, University of Maine, Maine Policy Review



General Categories of Large Land Owners In Maine 2019

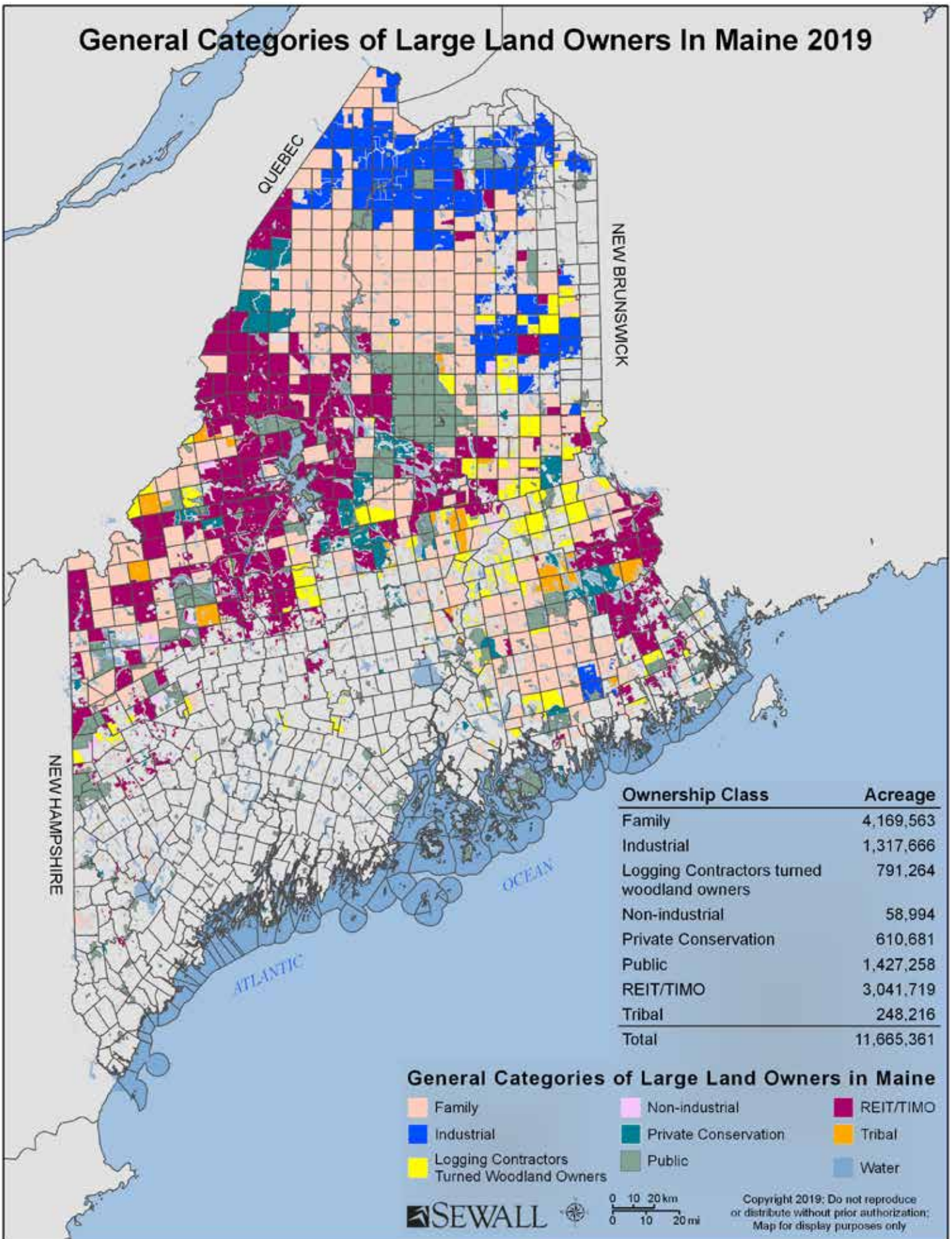


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This report was produced by the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC), a not-for-profit, membership-supported trade association formed in 1961. MFPC represents several hundred companies from all segments of the forest industry, including logging contractors, sawmills, paper mills, biomass energy facilities, wood manufacturers and the owners of about eight million acres of commercial forestland in Maine. Our thanks to Jake Metzler, Forest Society of Maine, for the map of Maine Conservation Lands on Page 1. Cover photos courtesy of the Maine Snowmobile Association; North Maine Woods; Lonnie Jandreau, Prentiss & Carlisle, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Maine Conservation Lands 2019

Legend

-  Conservation Easement
-  Conservation Fee Ownership
-  Conservation Fee Ownership with Easement as well

CONSERVATION OWNERSHIP

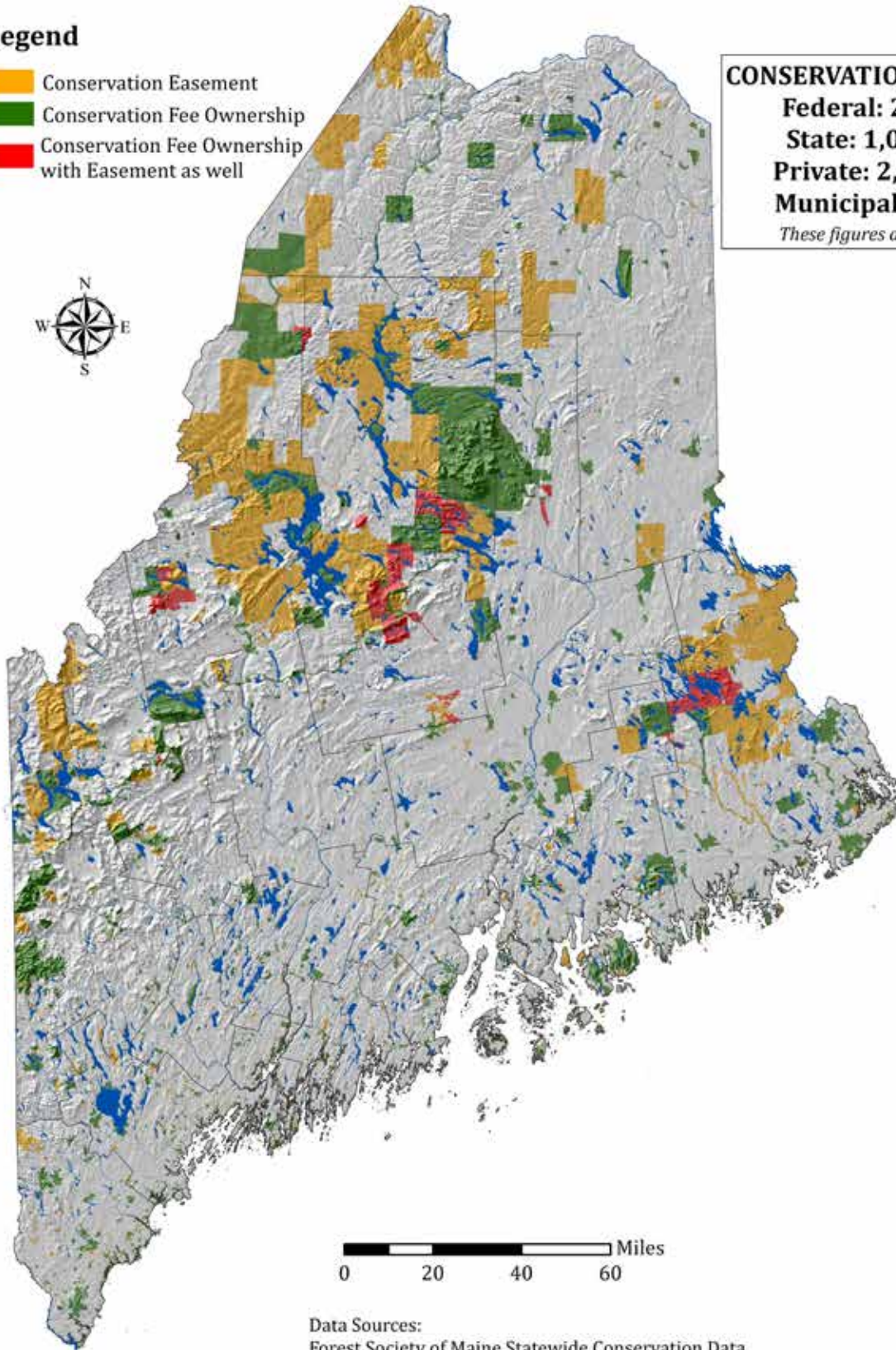
Federal: 273,000 ac

State: 1,076,000 ac

Private: 2,578,000 ac

Municipal: 57,000 ac

These figures are approximate.



Data Sources:
Forest Society of Maine Statewide Conservation Data
Maine Office of GIS



**FOREST
SOCIETY
of MAINE**

Map: 1/8/2019

Let's work together to preserve access to private land

Hi, neighbor! Maine has a lot of great traditions, but there's a very special one – unique in our nation – that binds us all together into one big community. Maine landowners have traditionally allowed the public to use their properties for recreational activities, while in other states access to private land is often severely restricted.

This tradition is especially important because Maine is 89 percent forested – the nation's largest percentage – including the largest contiguous block of undeveloped forestland east of the Mississippi. Of Maine's 17.6 million forested acres, 15.9 million acres are private commercial forestland. So if you love the outdoors, you've probably hiked, biked, fished, hunted, ridden a snowmobile or ATV, or just enjoyed the beautiful scenery in our working forests.

This report is designed to tell you about the variety of ways that landowners not only try to be neighborly, but also to be good stewards of our forests. You might know Maine's forest products industry has an \$8.5 billion economic impact. You or a family member may even be one of more than 33,000 Mainers who work directly or indirectly in our industry. But some information here still may be a surprise. For example, did you know Maine has about 4 millions of acres of conserved lands? That's more acres than Yellowstone (2,219,791) and Everglades (1,507,850) national parks combined.

We also want to reach out to our neighbors about some concerns. Recently, we've noticed some disturbing themes in the media, in public comments on land issues, and even at the Maine Legislature. People are speaking and writing about our forestlands as if they owned them. They are saying "our access roads," and "these are not just roads for logging trucks to use." Some refer to working forests as "pristine wilderness." Some complain about the sights and sounds of our people doing their jobs and some even insist, "the land is our heritage, and it should belong to all Maine residents."

Such comments show a serious misunderstanding of the nature of a working forest and the tradition of public access. So we just want to set the record straight.

Although landowners have traditionally allowed public access, the type and extent of recreational use allowed is at the discretion of the landowner. Uses must be safe and compatible with timber harvesting. Landowners



Patrick Strauch

Executive Director,

Maine Forest Products Council

make access decisions based on their own policies and activities, the land's location, and the history of public behavior on their property. Compatible uses might range from none, to non-motorized, to unrestricted.

Logging roads and bridges are private infrastructure, paid for and maintained by landowners to facilitate the movement of forest products to mills. Roads are built and maintained for timber harvesting and it costs a lot of money to keep them ready for logging trucks. Recreational use of these roads is a secondary benefit, not a design purpose. At the very least, anyone using a logging road should understand that logging trucks have the right of way.

Our fundamental concern is that the rights of private landowners not be limited in order to fulfill the desires or meet the demands of recreational visitors seeking a "wilderness experience." It is wrong to impose a visual and land use regime on the working forest landscape, because that would limit landowners' opportunities and their willingness to allow public access.

Fortunately, many recreational users do understand that public use of private land is a privilege and not a right, so they are working more closely with landowners. They recognize and respect the sights and sounds of sustainable forest management. They also understand the forest products industry is crucial to our state's economy.

Landowners also recognize the importance to our economy and quality of life of keeping private land open for public recreational use. With 90 percent of Maine's forestland in private hands, it would be a small world for all if we could only hike, hunt, ride recreational vehicles, take photos or watch wildlife on our own property.

Even though growing and harvesting timber is the primary objective on these forestlands, landowners strongly support many other compatible uses, including protecting wildlife habitat, allowing recreation and encouraging renewable energy. We hope those who enjoy recreational access to working forests will work with us to make sure it can be preserved.

Recreational access is a byproduct of working forests

A few years ago I was renting a car at the Salt Lake City airport, and when the agent saw my driver's license, he immediately started asking me questions about things he had "heard" about Maine. It turned out he was a hunter, and had heard what he thought were unbelievable stories about people being able to take advantage of virtually unlimited access to private land for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. I was equally amazed when he started talking about paying to access land, waiting lists and permits, and bemoaning the fact that he would likely never be able to afford to pay for access to prime hunting areas.

Those of us who have lived in Maine most of our lives tend to take for granted Maine's remarkable tradition of unfettered public recreational access on private land in our state. That tradition, however, is the basis for an outdoor recreation industry that generates over a billion dollars in economic activity every year and sustains thousands of jobs.

A 14,000-mile web of snowmobile trails covers the state from Sanford to Allagash. A 6,000-mile all-terrain vehicle trail system is attempting to do the same. About 95 percent of those trails are located on private land.

Hunters, trappers and fishermen rely on a system of woods roads to reach far-flung areas of the state. Again, most of those roads are on private land. Creating this access was fairly easy as it evolved over generations, but maintaining it is increasingly complex and requires the cooperation not only of the beneficiaries of the tradition, but the landowners as well.

First, recreationists need to always be aware that whatever they are doing is secondary to the primary management goals of any particular piece of land. That beautiful snowmobile trail through the forest is likely a tote road that could be opened at any time to accommodate a logging operation. Snowmobile clubs respect and prepare for possible trail relocations at any time. Ditto for the agricultural lands where trails are located. This is particularly important with ATV use, where operators can unwittingly spread crop diseases between potato fields.

Second, **respect** is the guiding principle for all interactions between land users and land owners. There's a cost



Bob Meyers

Director, Maine Snowmobile Association, and Public Member of Land for Maine's Future Board

to landowners for providing recreational access on their property and, at the very least, land users should do whatever they can to mitigate those costs. This would include cleaning up after yourself, never cutting trees without permission and observing whatever usage rules a landowner has on their land.

That beautiful old pine might make a great support for a tree stand, but sooner or later it will be headed to the mill where its value could be greatly diminished by screws or bolts that had been driven into it. A log yard at the side of a road may be empty when you park your truck and trailer before you head out for a day of fun, but there could be truckloads of logs on their way there under a tight schedule.



Bob Meyers enjoying access to the northern forest.



Maine's tradition is the basis of an outdoor recreation industry that generates more than a billion dollars in economic activity every year and sustains thousands of jobs.

It's not your place to question temporary posted or no hunting signs or gates. Just because a hunter hasn't seen anyone in an hour doesn't mean nothing is going on out there. Usually there is.

Third, we have a responsibility to be stewards of the land on which we're recreating. Maine forest landowners are serious stewards of the land they own. That can be seen in lands that sustain harvests for generations. Even with the outstanding care they take with their property, landowners are also subject to endless rules and laws which are intended to keep Maine's high level of environmental quality.

Folks heading out for a trip in the woods cannot decide that it's also an opportunity to get rid of that old refrigerator or bald tires that have been sitting out behind the garage. Illegal dumping on private land has become an epidemic in recent years. In spite of organized clean-up efforts by recreation groups, landowners are often faced with significant costs in removing someone else's trash from their property. Every little bit helps (or hurts). This includes beer cans, cigarette butts and candy wrappers. You wouldn't throw them on your yard, would you?

It can even be taken a step further. Many snowmobile clubs are now learning best practices for bridges and

stream crossings with the help of the forest products industry. A lot of forestland in Maine is certified by third parties and certification is subject to every activity taking place on that land. If it's good enough for the landowners, it's certainly good enough for land users.

And finally, get involved. People across the state are working on an almost daily basis to promote good relations. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife now has two full-time Landowner Relations coordinators, and every warden in the state has a "triage" bag in his or her vehicle that allows them to respond quickly and take immediate action to help landowners protect their property.

The Landowner Relations Program and organized user groups have distributed tens of thousands of bright orange trash bags to people heading out to recreate on private land. Everyone should carry one with them in the outdoors. And after you pick up your trash, don't forget to grab what some slob left behind.

I had an old friend who would look out on places when we were in the woods and always turn to me and say, "Aren't you glad for where you live?"

Yes, I am. Yes, we are. We all need to work to keep it that way.

How certification benefits sustainable forestry

By Gordon Gamble, Wagner Forest Management,
President, Maine Forest Products Council

From the start, it struck me as more than just another forestry initiative. There was more enthusiasm and energy at the ground level about striving to improve practices. Now, decades later, some may be asking, “How has certification benefited sustainable forestry in Maine?” Fair question, let’s consider it.

First, some background. What is meant by sustainable forestry or sustainable forest management? Most point back to United Nations Earth Summit in 1992 for a definition, “[a] dynamic and evolving concept [that] aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations.” In other words, forest management conducted in a manner that meets the forest resource needs of today without endangering the needs of future generations. Arising out of these discussions the idea for a mechanism to further define and verify the implementation of sustainable management (forest certification) was born.

The Maine Forest Service defines forest certification as follows: “Forest certification evaluates if forestry management is environmentally and ecologically responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable. While certification is voluntary, landowners and manufacturers see it as a way to stay efficient, find new markets, remain credible, and identify areas for improvement.”

Following the Earth Summit, a group of global environmentalists, timber producers and indigenous peoples developed the Forest Stewardship Council. They established an international certification program, regional standards and a verification process that included third-party auditing on a set periodic schedule. Shortly afterward, in North America, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) was developed by timber producers. It evolved into a North American standard in 1998, incorporating third-party certification the following year.

However, the concept of public recognition for good forest management in the U.S. was actually conceived and implemented 50 years prior to the Earth Summit by the American Tree Farm System (ATFS). Focused on

2018 Maine forestland certified as sustainably managed by SFI, FSC, dual, and ATFS	
Certifying organization	Acres*
Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)	7,214,648
Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)	4,864,869
American Tree Farm System (ATFS)	503,003
Non-duplication Maine grand total	8,348,230
* Includes acres certified by both SFI and FSC. Sources: ATFS 11/28/2018; SFI Maine 11/28/2018; FSC 11/29/2018 (Huber Resources data amended, 11/30/2018).	

small woodlot owners, it was recognized internationally as a forest certification program in 2008 after it revised its standard and included third-party certification.

Members of Maine’s landowner community were among the first in the nation to voluntarily embrace the concept of certification of their forest management to a set of specific sustainability standards. This was for a variety of reasons, but for most it is to gain market access and/or maintain their “social license” to practice forest management. Maine ranks No. 2 in the nation (slightly behind Minnesota) for most certified acres by state, with 47 percent of its forests certified to one of the three standards. Further illustrating the level of commitment of Maine landowners to sustainability, only 11 percent of the world’s forests are now certified. Maine’s landowners account for nearly 1 percent of the total global certified acreage.

Landowners can choose the certification program that best meets their needs, but all are internationally recognized as adhering to sustainability principles. In 2008, the National Association of State Foresters stated “...the ATFS, FSC, and SFI systems include the fundamental elements of credibility and make positive contributions to forest sustainability.”

Certification requires participant’s support and implementation of Best Management Practices for water quality, regeneration of forests, professional logger training, efficient use of harvested resources, wildlife management, conservation of biodiversity, forest research, recreation, continuing education and public outreach. The participation of Maine landowners in forest certification has been essential in maintaining our forests resiliency.

Thus, certified landowners are helping ensure that future generations can count on productive forests, clean water and wildlife habitat.

Despite changing landowners, working forest thrives

“Kingdoms for sale” read the Portland Press Herald’s front page headline on June 10, 2001. There was much concern then that wealthy buyers who were “less interested in feeding the mills than nourishing their souls or their wallets” would change northern Maine.

While much of the working timberland in central and southern Maine is composed of smaller woodlots owned by families, individuals and farmers, much of Maine’s northern timberlands are held in very large tracts by a variety of commercial owners. From the 1980s through 1990s, most timberland owned by paper companies was sold to private investors. These investors represent pension funds, other institutional investors, and wealthy individuals. Many firms have fixed investment periods that require a sale to capture return on investment.

Although investment firms were initially hailed as an alternative to industrial owners, this fixed investment length created suspicion in some circles, with predictions of fragmenting ownerships, increased development and poor silviculture.

In the early 2000s, another ownership class emerged. Very wealthy individuals and families purchased large tracts of forestland, mostly for long-term appreciation. Like the large family ownerships that have been in Maine for many decades, these owners are usually more interested in creating a legacy of timberland wealth than in current income. Some observers fretted that they would cease harvesting timber, and perhaps restrict access.

It’s been nearly three decades since these ownership changes took place, and while some still claim things have changed for the worse, the facts say otherwise. When one looks at the heart of the industrial forest of the unorganized territories – a mile beyond an organized town or a paved public road – the average rate of development as measured by LURC/LUPC permits for new dwellings is **about one dwelling per township per decade. That’s 10 new dwellings per 24,000 acres per century.** Many townships in the unorganized townships have seen **no development in the past 50 years.**

Unorganized territory development peaked in the late 1980s, well before all the paper company land was sold. It’s been dropping steadily ever since, and as of the last five years is 90 percent less than the peak.



Peter Triandafillou
Vice President, Woodlands
Huber Resources

During this period, new and traditional landowners sold conservation easements on about 2.25 million acres statewide. Development is no longer allowed and the ability to subdivide is very limited. These are not the actions of entities seeking non-forestry uses of forestland. The lands that were sold remain working forests that supply wood to consuming mills. Many were sold with supply agreements that run for decades and most are actively managed.

Other facts bear this out. The acres enrolled in Maine’s Tree Growth program remains essentially unchanged over the past two decades. The peak acreage occurred in 1990 at 7,586,723 acres and the low in 1997 at 7,525,312 acres. The acreage reported for 2017 is only a few thousand acres – about 0.04 percent – less than 1990. Landowners constantly make choices to drop out or join and annual changes over the period range from a loss of 42,999 acres to a gain of 36,000 acres. The change in average parcel size in the unorganized territory reflects increases in the number of landowners. It has dropped from 3,500 acres in 1988, to 1,490 acres in 2017. Having more landowners in the Tree Growth program is good for forestry and conservation.

Some raised the specter of reduced access, claiming new owners would “lock the gates” for themselves or paying customers. However, there has been no significant change in access policy throughout the north woods. The public is still welcome to recreate on this vast landscape. North Maine Woods, a non-profit, landowner-owned recreation management organization, continues its nearly 50-year tradition of providing campsites, maps and other facilities for recreation visitors on 3.5 million acres of the north woods. (See Pages 13-14.)

There is no doubt that a lot of timberland in northern Maine was sold by paper companies to other owners in the 1980s and 1990s. However, many of the forest managers remain in place and the vast majority of properties remain working forests that are open to the public. Maine’s unique mix of job-creating, working forests with public access remains alive and well.

Managed forestlands provide many diverse values

It is important to recognize all the values that managed forestlands provide to the State of Maine. In addition to the economic values associated with forest products, our forests provide clean air, clean water, floodwater attenuation, carbon sequestration and extensive fish and wildlife habitat which, in turn, provides lands for high quality outdoor recreation.

The forests of Maine provide the highest water quality and the strongest refuge for the native Eastern brook trout in the northeast. Our forests also support some of the largest populations of such iconic wildlife as moose, black bear, Canada lynx, bald eagles, spruce grouse and ruffed grouse.

None of this is totally by accident. Private landowners, state agencies and conservation landowners have created conservation easements on millions of acres in Maine, which preserves future forest management, but prohibits or limits development.

Forestry certification mandates compliance with envi-



Barry Burgason
*Retired Wildlife Biologist,
MFPC Wildlife Committee*

ronmental laws and Best Management Practices (BMPs) as well as consideration of endangered species, special wildlife habitats such as vernal pools, deer wintering areas, eagle nests, and protection for rare and endangered plants. The two most prominent certification systems are the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which cover more than 7.8 million acres in Maine.

When combined with 503,003 acres certified by the American Tree Farm System, the statewide total is more than 8.3 million acres, one of the highest totals in the nation. Compliance is verified by third-party auditors.

Some landowners go above and beyond and have negotiated cooperative deer wintering area management agreements with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) or offer monetary rewards to the public for helping identify bald eagle nest sites.

SFI's Fisheries Improvement Network (FIN) promotes landowners voluntarily working with Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy and others, to identify and upgrade outdated stream crossings and improve up and downstream fish passage. (*See Page 11*)

This is accomplished through data collection, field trips and frequent meetings to share information and stream crossing techniques that are cost effective and meet the "Stream Smart Principles." Brook trout and anadromous fish such as the endangered Atlantic salmon greatly benefit from the program.

In 2016, MFPC collaborated with Maine Forest Service and the Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU) at the University of Maine to write *Coming Spruce Budworm Outbreak: Initial Risk Assessment and Preparation & Response Recommendations for Maine's Forestry Community*. Spruce budworm is a native insect that periodically increases to epidemic numbers and can have eco-



Forestry certification mandates compliance with environmental laws and BMPs, as well as consideration of endangered species, vernal pools, deer wintering areas, eagle nests, and rare and endangered plants.



Lynx and hare habitat in northern Maine is a result of active land management to produce forest products.

Photo by Lonnie Jandreau, Prentiss & Carlisle.

conomic and ecologic impacts on northern Maine's forests. The document includes considerations for landowners, state agencies and policy makers, including planning for wildlife and fisheries impacts and mitigation.

Funded primarily by landowners for the past 40 years, the CFRU has connected Maine's forestry community with the University of Maine. CFRU scientists conduct applied research that provides Maine's forest landowners, forestry community, and policy makers with the information needed to ensure both sustainable forestry practices and science-based forest policy.

The CFRU has shaped the evolution of Maine's forest practices and advanced the principles of sustainable management. Recent CFRU wildlife research includes:

- **Canada lynx and snowshoe hares.** Lynx and hare habitat in northern Maine is a result of the active management of the lands to produce forest products. Since the time the lynx was listed as a threatened species, and critical habitat was designated, sustainable timber management has continued with little or no loss of habitat to development or other land uses detrimental to lynx.

- **Deer wintering areas**
- **Moose browsing effects on forest stands**
- **American marten**
- **Acadian forest song bird populations**
- **Spruce grouse populations and breeding success in relation to forest practices.**

The Maine Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology at the University of Maine also conduct research that often involves forests, wildlife and fisheries. While not a direct financial contributor in most projects, landowners often provide access to their lands as well as providing maps, forest stand data and logistics help.

Forest management in Maine consists of much more than just building roads, cutting trees and getting them to the mills. Protecting water quality, managing the plants, fish and wildlife are all part of the equation that makes the private lands of Maine so unique and valuable.

FIN: Solving problems for rivers, fish, road networks

Fish may seem to live in one place, but most range around many dozens of stream miles with access to many different habitat types. They move toward food or forested headwaters for spawning. They move to avoid predators, to find warmer or colder water depending on the season, to find sheltered headwaters when mainstems are flooded or, conversely, deeper habitat when tributaries run dry. When fish lack access to a broad network of stream habitats, they become stunted, and produce fewer young. Entire populations can blink out.

While planning for restoration of Maine's Penobscot River, I found out how little is known about fish access from mainstem rivers into forested headwater habitat. There wasn't data on where small dams, natural falls, and problematic road crossings created barriers to wildlife movement. Working with partners from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maine Department of Marine Resources, and the Maine Forest Service, we developed a strategy to evaluate Penobscot road-stream crossings to focus restoration on the most critical places.

I quickly learned, thanks to landowners we already work with, that information on road networks, especially around streams, can be politically sensitive. To get stream network information, I needed to find a way that protected landowners from potential misuse of their roads information.

Pat Sirois, Maine SFI coordinator, suggested I help him and his Wildlife Committee develop a forum where landowners can have conversations with river professionals, share information on what creates problems for fish or foresters at road crossings, and find solutions to replace road-stream crossings with barriers with fish-friendly ones. That forum became the Fisheries Improvement Network – FIN.

FIN helped develop key messages, such as don't pinch/narrow the stream; maintain a natural stream bottom, and maintain the natural slope and some stream bank through the structure. Larger, open-bottom structures are less prone to flooding by beaver or debris jams, improve transportation safety and are more durable. Less scour means longer-lasting metal culverts and less soil erosion, which improves water quality.



Joshua Royte

Conservation Scientist
The Nature Conservancy



Now, with landowner permissions and data confidentiality, crews trained and managed by TNC fan out across Maine measuring bridges, culverts, nearby dams and natural falls. The information – 25,000 data points and growing – is fed into a comprehensive database. The public data is available online, and private data is shared one-on-one with landowners.

This enormous effort would not be possible without the trust, support and – crucially – the permission of Maine's large forest landowners, who collectively manage more than 11 million acres of the highest-value aquatic habitat. TNC's long history of working respectfully with landowners was essential to establishing these relationships.

Today, with more than 90 percent of the state's road-stream crossings assessed, the data shows that in general, 40 percent of culverts are *barriers to fish and other aquatic life*, with fewer on private timberlands. Another 52 percent are probable barriers that deserve a closer look. As the data accrues, we realized most of the developed world would benefit from similar information.

FIN put in place one large part of a solution. The group shares innovations and new information, practical and affordable construction techniques, and even funding sources. It is now second nature for SFI land managers to replace problem culverts with waste block bridges, temporary bridge crossings, or large, bottomless arched culverts, including the Dirigo concrete modular arch introduced to our FIN group and now used by many.

The solutions developed on dirt roads and shared at FIN meetings have informed and inspired smaller private landowners, as well as town and state road managers. More than 500 road stream crossings have been improved since we started this work, creating and extending healthy stream networks for the nation's most important Eastern brook trout and Atlantic salmon populations.

Thanks to good partnerships, Maine's best streams will continue to grow more and better fish into the future.

Landowners' concerns are IFW program's top priority

By Rick LaFlamme

Landowner Relations Specialist

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Bureau of Warden Service

The mission of the Landowner Relations Program, within the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW), is to prioritize the landowners' concerns, and address their issues quickly, through assistance, enforcement, education and awareness.

The primary focus of the Landowner Relations Program is to assist private landowners with illegal dumping and littering, misuse, property damage, nuisance wildlife, and also educate all user groups about landowners' expectations.

We have developed a *Keep Maine Clean Program* by partnering with the Maine Forest Service, corporate sponsors such as Kittery Trading Post, Waste Management, BDS Tire Disposal Company, and hundreds of volunteers through organized clubs. Within the last five years, we have collectively cleaned up more than a million pounds of illegally dumped trash from private and public property.

We developed and deployed a standardized landowner relations relief kit to all Warden Service and Maine Forest Service staff. This kit consists of equipment to deal with misuse and illegal activity immediately.

We continue to work with all departmental staff, and have developed partnerships with other state and federal agencies, to make the process of dealing with nuisance wildlife more landowner friendly.

We developed a standardized education component delivered through our departmental safety and education classes. We have deployed six landowner relations educational training kits, located at each divisional headquarters, which all staff can access for use in schools and for public talks or lectures.

As the seasons change, so do the user groups, from traditional anglers and hunters, to kayakers and hikers, to ATV and snowmobiles riders, to other outdoor enthusiasts. Participation levels also change, which can be seen (at right) in the general statistics and landowner relations calls for service. But one thing is constant, they all rely on private property, one way or another.

Maine Warden Service Landowner Relations calls for service 2018		
Trespass	133	
Littering/illegal dumping	128	
Landowner property damage	27	
Hunting violations	993	
Trapping	86	
ATV violations	686	
Snowmobile violations	649	
Public lectures/talks	449	
General information on Landowner Relations	298	
Total	3,449	
Actions for violations	Summons	Warnings
Abuse of property general	13	8
All ATV	601	392
Causing a projectile to enter illegally	28	11
Littering or illegal dumping	53	10
Shooting a weapon over a paved way	26	11
Shooting from a motor vehicle	55	1
Shooting too close to a dwelling	26	9
Snowmobile noise level	220	59
Snowmobile other	311	152
Trespass (criminal)	45	38
Total	1,378	681
<i>Source: Maine Warden Service, 12-11-2018</i>		

North Maine Woods celebrates 48th anniversary

This year the North Maine Woods organization (NMW) is celebrating 48 years of operation. The program is a cooperative effort by many private landowners in northwestern Maine to keep 3.5 million acres of forestland open to public use.

The cooperative relationship between forest landowners began as unsettled townships in Maine were sold to investors beginning in the 1820s. Logs were floated to saw mills. Sawmills, textile mills and others relied on water power, so landowners and mill owners collaborated on the construction of water storage dams in the headwaters. Locating and maintaining property boundary lines is shared by adjacent owners to this day.

The Maine Forest Service was a successor to the private landowners' collaborative effort to construct fire towers and run telephone lines through the woods to report fires and organize fire-fighting efforts.

As trucks came into use and log drives waned, landowners collaborated on road construction and maintenance. The road-building era required much cooperation to coordinate construction and maintenance of roads across multiple ownerships. Landowners developed a toll system based upon cords of wood per mile of travel, which they pay to each other through an honor system to offset costs of maintenance and bridges.

As roads were built by landowners, sportsmen discovered opportunities to camp, fish and hunt. When public use started to conflict with forest management, forest landowners again worked cooperatively to create the



Al Cowperthwaite

Executive Director

North Maine Woods

North Maine Woods management system in 1971. From the onset landowners established the following goals for the organization:

- **Manage public use in concert with timber production.** While managing and harvesting forest products is the main reason for owning tracts of commercial forest land, public recreational use is compatible if done in an organized manner. Road safety has always been an important issue. Visitors are educated about driving on the extensive private gravel road system to avoid crashes and being stranded in remote locations. In the interest of road safety, ATVs, oversized camper trailers, motorcycles and horseback riding are prohibited.
- **Provide opportunities for high quality, traditional recreation.** Campsites are provided and maintained with the basic amenities for primitive camping – outhouse, fire ring and sheltered picnic tables. They are often associated with prime fishing, hunting, canoeing and scenic locations. Traditionally, this has meant not advertising to increase use to the point of overcrowding, plus avoiding activities that detract from traditional uses.
- **Standardize and simplify visitor land use policies on multiple ownerships.** If there had not been an effort to standardize visitor use policies 48 years ago – when there were only 19 landowners and managers – it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the public to comply with land use requirements of the more than 35 different landowners today. The landownership acreage now consists of:

Family groups, 39 percent;

Corporations, 33 percent;

Institutional investors, 17 percent;

Conservation organizations, 5 percent, and

State of Maine, 6 percent.

Representatives from all of these entities serve on the NMW Board of Directors.



NMW visitor days by purpose by year

Year	Camping	Fishing	Hunting	Canoeing	Hiking	Guiding	Visiting	Other	Totals
2008	21,388	19,936	42,540	5,870	420	109	66,200	16,672	173,135
2009	21,889	23,361	39,891	6,138	654	176	66,052	14,725	172,886
2010	21,989	19,254	38,016	5,500	809	198	64,152	12,619	162,537
2011	21,250	19,187	42,659	6,104	519	308	56,056	12,895	158,978
2012	20,782	17,263	45,800	4,755	683	160	57,541	13,916	160,900
2013	21,108	17,536	54,648	5,124	848	288	59,945	17,370	176,867
2014	21,323	18,744	49,188	4,946	860	421	51,569	15,212	162,263
2015	20,879	18,868	53,660	5,011	890	250	58,218	13,381	171,157
2016	19,467	20,591	46,278	5,712	1,516	692	55,261	13,391	162,908
2017	15,826	12,365	33,391	5,972	2,575	469	64,241	14,643	149,482
Change 2016-2017	-3,641	-8,226	-12,887	260	1059	-223	8,980	1,252	-13,426
% Change	-18.7%	-39.9%	-27.8%	4.6%	69.9%	-32.2%	16.3%	9.3%	-8.2%
% Of all use	10.6%	8.3%	22.3%	4.0%	1.7%	0.3%	43.0%	9.8%	100.0%

- **Operate on a financially self-sustaining basis.** As with all of the other shared agreements – road use tolls, and fire suppression self-assessments – managing public use had to have a mechanism to pay for itself. Visitors, camp owners and guides pay fees that are relative to the costs for accommodating them on private land within the NMW. Under NMW’s non-profit corporate structure, none of the fees paid by the public can be passed on to landowners.

Over the past 48 years North Maine Woods has had many successes:

- There have only been a few reports of forest fires starting from public camping.
- There are few problems related to littering or illegal dumping.
- With checkpoint receptionists recording the names of everyone who enters, there are few problems related to theft, vandalism and arson for landowners and private camp owners.

Landowners also work closely with state agencies including the Maine Forest Service, Bureau of Parks and Lands, Land Use Planning Commission, Maine Warden Service, and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department.

NMW has a staff of four year-round managers and 45 seasonal staff. They welcome the public and explain visitor use policies; track people entering and leaving, which results in fewer problems for landowners, wood harvesting contractors and private camp owners; maintain 350 campsites for public use, and manage placement of bear bait sites to benefit landowners and guides.

In the last decade, the organization has taken advantage of new technologies to keep management costs reasonable and land use problems to a minimum. Satellite internet service, high resolution security cameras and improvements in cell phone equipment allowed installation of remotely operated, automated checkpoints that eliminated the need (and costs) of employees living on site.

NMW has been recognized for its efforts to keep millions of acres of private forest land open to the public. In 1996, NMW was named one of the nation’s most exemplary private conservation organizations by President Reagan’s Council on Environmental Quality. In 2000, NMW was invited to serve on a congressional panel on Forests and Forest Health. In 2014, NMW was honored to receive Maine’s “Large Landowner of the Year Award” from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

For more information on NMW, please check online at www.northmainewoods.org or call 207-435-6213.

Where Maine's wood goes

In 2017, 12.3 million green tons of wood was harvested from the forests of Maine. It was converted into:



Sawlogs 34.1% *(for lumber)*



Pulpwood 44.7% *(for paper, packaging and tissue)*



Biomass 19.1% *(for electricity)*



Firewood & pellets 2.1% *(to heat homes)*

Source: Maine Forest Service

