

**FY 2018 ANNUAL REPORT**  
to  
the JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE  
on AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY  
**MAINE PUBLIC RESERVED, NONRESERVED,  
AND SUBMERGED LANDS**



Old stone wall at Dodge Point Public Land in Newcastle

**MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION  
AND FORESTRY  
Bureau of Parks and Lands**

**March 1, 2019**



FY 2018 ANNUAL REPORT  
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
Bureau of Parks and Lands

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Cover Photo: Old stone wall at Dodge Point Public Land, Newcastle - Jim Vogel, BPL



## I. INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) is responsible for the management and administration of Maine's Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands, Submerged Lands, Coastal Islands, conservation easement lands, and other lands as provided by law.

This report constitutes required annual reporting pursuant to:

- 12 MRSA §1853, 1839 and elsewhere
- 12 MRSA §1850(1) and 1836(1) and elsewhere related to vehicular access to Bureau lands
- 12 MRSA §1805 and 1853 related to ecological reserves on Bureau lands.

The report is submitted by March 1st of each year to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ACF). It provides an overview of the scope of the Bureau's responsibilities and information on the Bureau's management activities during fiscal year 2018 (FY 2018). As required, the report includes information on gates and barriers that prevent public vehicle access to Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands (Public Lands), recreation facility fees charged for the use of these lands, and a status report on Ecological Reserves. Also included in the report is information on timber, recreation and wildlife management carried out on Public Lands during the fiscal year. A review of FY 2019 highlights is also provided.

Income and expenditure information is provided for fiscal year FY 2018 and a report is also included for the upcoming FY 2020 budget. The ACF Committee has the obligation to report by March 15th to the Appropriations Committee on the Bureau's Public Lands upcoming FY 2020 budget.

The "Public Lands" division of the Bureau is a dedicated revenue component of the agency, funding almost all of its administrative, planning, management and operational activities from revenue generated from the land base, with some additional sources of funds provided through various grant programs.

The management of Public Lands is directed by statute. Title 12 MRSA §1833 and §1847 direct the Bureau to manage the Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands (632,468 acres in FY 2018) *"under the principles of multiple land use to produce a sustained yield of products and services in*

*accordance with both prudent and fair business practices and the principle of sound planning."* In addition, management of Public Reserved Lands, the majority of Public Lands, must *"demonstrate exemplary land management practices, including silvicultural, wildlife and recreation management"* (Title 12 MRSA §1847).

The Bureau's Public Lands management activities are directed by 15-year, multiple-use plans for the major properties. Benefits from the wise management of these lands include:

- *Production of forest products*
- *Public access to recreational opportunities*
- *Enhancement of wildlife habitat*
- *Protection of unique natural and cultural resources*

The Bureau also has responsibility for managing and reporting to the ACF Committee public trust rights to Submerged Lands and Coastal Islands. When granting leases for the use of Submerged Lands, the Bureau includes conditions to maintain customary and traditional public access, navigation, and commercial marine uses.

## II. HIGHLIGHTS – FY 2018 & FY 2019 (to date)

### FY 2018

**Forest Certification.** Since 2002, the Bureau's forest management activities have been certified as sustainable under two independent certification systems: the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) and Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI®). Each year the Bureau's forestry operations and overall forest management system are "audited" by these two certification systems, with all criteria addressed over a period of three years for SFI certification and a "full" audit for FSC conducted once every five years.

In FY 2018 (Oct. 2017), the Bureau had annual surveillance audits under both the FSC and SFI programs. The auditors working with our certification agency, Bureau Veritas, visited 16 separate sites on six different townships in the Bureau's North Region, viewing exemplary timber harvests, high quality roadbuilding in challenging terrain, diverse wildlife management practices, and well-planned recreation management. They particularly noted the thinning of immature stands and diversity of wildlife habitat.

The Bureau intends to conduct forest management in compliance with the 2010-2014 certification standards, principles, and criteria of the FSC program, and the 2015-2019 update for the SFI program, for all upcoming audits, transitioning to other updates of each program as required.

**Outcome Based Forestry (OBF).** “Outcome Based Forestry” refers to a section of Maine’s Forest Practices Act that offers land managers added flexibility for timber management in exchange for up-front planning and expert review. The Bureau has conducted harvests under OBF in each of its three regions. Activities in FY 2018 included completion of harvesting under OBF in the West, and monitoring of success in the North and East.

**Timber Management Program.** In FY 2018, timber harvests from inventory on Bureau-managed lands totaled 134,000 cords, a 7% increase from FY 2017. The increase took advantage of much improved markets for spruce and fir sawlogs, while demand for softwood pulpwood and for all hemlock products remained weak to sometimes non-existent. Major thaws in January and February caused few issues, thanks to the intense cold earlier in winter. The Bureau and its contractors supplied wood to over 40 mills statewide in FY 2018. Prescriptions were completed on over 13,000 acres during FY 2018.

**Sugar Bush Leases.** The Lands Western Region currently has three sugar maple lease agreements, one at Bald Mountain Unit in Rangeley and two in Sandy Bay Township. The Bald Mountain operation covers about 40 acres while those in Sandy Bay cover about 400 acres. See page 19 for more information.

**Wildlife Management.** The Bureau manages about 35,800 acres of deer wintering areas (DWAs) on Public Lands, and a 23,000-acre lynx habitat area at Seboomook managed under a MOU with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Expansion of several DWAs is in progress.

**Recreation.** The Bureau's Lands division is responsible for over 420 campsites, over 225 miles of day hiking and backpacking trails (excluding 71 miles of Appalachian Trail located on state-owned lands), 56 trailered and hand-carry boat launching sites, and several hundred miles of public access roads (includes forest management roads maintained for public access as well as public use

road, generally maintained for travel by 2WD vehicles with reasonable ground clearance).

The Bureau has a long history of working with recreation and conservation partners, and supplements funds received from timber sales with federal *Recreational Trails Program (RTP)* grants. RTP funds totaling approximately \$88,000 from federal allocations were awarded for trails projects on Public Lands in FY 2018; also, some projects funded in previous years were completed.

Recreational trails work in FY 2018 focused on some of the Bureau’s most popular trail destinations across the State including:

- continued work on development of the “Great Circle Trail” on the Nahmakanta Unit in Piscataquis County, a backcountry loop connecting with the Appalachian Trail;
- continued rehabilitation and upgrading of trails on the remote Deboullie Unit in Aroostook County;
- re-routing of 1.2 miles of trail at the Cutler Coast Unit, part of the scenic loop trail accessing popular seaside campsites.

A total of 2.4 miles of trail was constructed and about 1.5 miles were rehabilitated or improved.

Other notable recreation facility work accomplished in FY 2018 includes:

- Continued upgrading of campsites, portage trails, and signage on the Holeb Unit Moose River Bow Loop canoe trip;
- Completion of additional repairs to the Deboullie Mountain fire warden’s cabin, in addition to new sanitary facilities in the Unit;
- Removal of the Wadleigh Mountain fire tower at the Nahmakanta Unit, which posed a safety hazard to recreation visitors.

Moosehead Region Trails Planning and Construction: In FY 2018 the Bureau continued working with funds from the Weyerhaeuser Company (formerly Plum Creek), supplemented with RTP funds, to plan and develop an enhanced non-motorized trail system in the Moosehead Lake Region. The initiative is a result of the terms of the Land Use Planning Commission-approved Moosehead Lake Region Concept Plan. This is an unprecedented trails opportunity involving a public-private partnership. These new trail corridor easements on Weyerhaeuser lands fall under the management of Public Lands (Western Region).

FY 2018 saw substantial progress on miles of new trail construction along the Blue Ridge Trail

in Bowdoin College Grant West TWP. Trail crews from the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) and Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) continue to clear and developed what is now over 10 miles of hiking, trail running, and advanced mountain biking trail (primitive conditions and substantial climbing for biking). Other FY 2018 project work included the completion of the 1.5-mile Williams Mountain Trail (Misery TWP). The work referenced above is in addition to prior project work adding notable trail resources for the public. More details on the Moosehead Lake Region trail project can be found at: <http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mooseheadtrails>.

**Land Management Planning.** During FY 2018, the Bureau completed a draft of the Upper Kennebec Region Management Plan, covering over 43,000 acres of public lands in the Western Region, and held a meeting with the Advisory Committee to discuss the Draft. The Final Draft Plan has been completed and will be presented to the public in early 2019. The Bureau also initiated the public process for the St. John Uplands Region Plan, hosting a public scoping meeting to gather input and holding an Advisory Committee meeting to discuss plan issues. That Plan will address four major and seven smaller management units totaling over 63,000 acres. Work on a Draft Plan is near completion.

In addition, the second Five-Year Plan Reviews were completed for the Downeast, Flagstaff, Seboomook, and Northern Aroostook Region Plans, all of which were adopted in 2007. A five-year plan review involves a status report on implementation of plan recommendations, and identifying any new issues that might require a plan amendment. The Flagstaff and Northern Aroostook Plans were amended to allow for new or modified recreational facilities on three management units; the Seboomook Plan was amended to revise resource allocations in alignment with lynx habitat and deer wintering area management at Seboomook Lake.

**Submerged Lands & Coastal Islands Program.** Submerged lands (all land from the mean low-water mark out to the three mile territorial limit) are managed under the Public Trust Doctrine to ensure protection of the public trust rights of fishing, waterfowl hunting, navigation, and recreation. The Submerged Lands Program plays an important role in maintaining a balance among competing uses of submerged lands and resolving conflicts between public trust rights and the demand for private and

commercial uses of these lands. Lease fees support shore and harbor management activities and improve public access.

The Bureau is responsible for managing coastal islands under public ownership. Funds from the submerged lands leases helped to support the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) (\$70,000 in FY 2018), which manages recreation on public and private islands that are part of the Maine Island Trail. In FY 2018 MITA and the Bureau celebrated 28 years of partnership on the management of this island trail. The Trail system now extends 375 miles and consists of over 200 islands and mainland sites for day visits or overnight camping.

The Bureau's brochure "Your Islands and Parks on the Coast" shows the location of approximately 40 State-owned islands suitable for recreational use and explains the visiting, camping, and resource protection policies.

Funds from the Submerged Lands program also support a position in the Department of Marine Resources within its Public Health Division shellfish program by transferring \$80,000 to DMR each year.

#### FY 2019 (to date)

**Forest Certification.** The audits conducted in the East Region in mid-October of 2018 included annual surveillance audits for both SFI and FSC. Auditors visited 20 separate sites on eight different townships, inspecting roadwork, campsites, bridge construction, and both completed and active timber harvests. The broad extent and investment in recreational infrastructure was especially noted by the auditors.

**Timber Management Program.** Timber harvest volume for FY 2019 was at 57,000 cords through November 20, with most operations shut down for fall mud season, though the early snow and cold offers hope that frozen-ground harvests can begin soon. Estimated total volume for all of FY 2019 is 140,000 cords. Prescriptions completed to date cover about 5,000 acres, with much of that work often done during the spring mud season while harvest operations are inactive.

**Recreation Facilities and Transportation.** In the Northern Region, concrete footings on the Round Pond Fire Tower were replaced (part of the first phase of the tower's restoration), and drainage and tent improvements were completed on 11 campsites

at Deboullie. Also, a trailhead parking area was constructed and a privy installed for the new tramway trail constructed at Chamberlain in FY 2018. Transportation work has included 11 miles of new summer management road, and maintenance on nearly 100 miles of summer road.

In the Eastern Region, work was completed to rebuild the trailer boat launch at Seboeis Lake, with expanded paved parking. The improvements also include an ADA-compliant vault toilet and a specially designed ramp for ADA boat entry/egress. Also, at the Cutler Coast Unit most of the hiking trail bog bridging was replaced between the trailhead and the ocean.

In the Western Region, recreation facility improvements included installation of two new vault toilets at the Cold Stream Forest Unit's Lone Jack Campground, and additional road work and drainage improvements to protect water quality. Also, a section of hiking trail at Dodge Point Public Land was relocated with the assistance of the Damariscotta River Association to minimize conflicts with timber management and to link the existing trail system to a planned new trailhead. The Northern Forest Canoe Trail organization worked for a third consecutive year on the Moose River Bow Trip, completing improvements to the Holeb Falls portage trail and campsites, along with seasonal maintenance at numerous other campsites.

Also in the Western Region, the Bureau continued its Moosehead Lake Region trails work with the Weyerhaeuser Company by completing several trail construction projects while continuing to make progress on others. Notably, trail construction linking the emerging Blue Ridge Trail system with the Appalachian Trail via the 3.6-mile Vaughn Stream Trail took place as did construction of the one-mile Prong Pond Trail in Beaver Cove TWP. Both trail projects require minor enhancements as well as construction of trailhead facilities before being fully functional. The linkage to the Appalachian Trail will, via connections, help create a new regional backpacking opportunity over 30 miles in length. Though final work still remains to get many trail resources up and running for full public value, progress is close to producing a major new set of opportunities to explore the Moosehead Lake Region via human-powered trails.

**Ecological Reserves.** At the Wassataquoik Lot, the Bureau designated an additional 1,387 acres as Ecological Reserve (the remainder of the lot) based on reconnaissance by Bureau foresters and on

public input. The entire 2,162 acre tract was identified as potential Ecological Reserve prior to the original 2001 reserve designations.

**Other Real Estate, Planning and Wildlife Highlights.** The Northern Region has completed efforts to consolidate all the common and undivided parcels within T10 R4 WELS (Scopan Unit) with Prentiss & Carlisle. As part of those transactions, the Bureau gained 100% ownership of two large parcels in the existing Scopan Unit in which the State held majority interest, as well as 628 acres on two abutting parcels in which the State held minority interest, and 174 fee acres adjacent to the public lot in T13 R5. Work continues to consolidate the parcels in the T11 R4 portion of Scopan.

In the area of management planning, the Final Draft Upper Kennebec Region Management Plan has been completed and will be released to the public in early 2019. Also, work has continued on a draft of the St. John Uplands Region Management Plan. In addition, Plan amendments resulting from the second Five-Year Plan Reviews of the Northern Aroostook and Seboomook Region Plans were approved.

In the area of wildlife resources, the Northern Region mowed nine acres of field to enhance wildlife habitat at Eagle Lake, and conducted timber stand improvement (TSI) on 240 acres at Round Pond to accelerate crown closure for deer habitat. The Western Region mowed 60 acres of field at Days Academy.

### III. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Bureau of Parks and Lands is responsible for management of Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands, State Parks and Historic Sites, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW), the Penobscot River Corridor (PRC), submerged lands and state-held coastal islands (see Appendix A).

In addition, the Bureau is responsible for protecting public rights and public values on certain lands. These include the public trust rights of fishing, waterfowl hunting, navigation, and recreation on submerged lands beneath coastal waters from mean low tide to the 3-mile territorial limit, on tidal portions of rivers, under natural Great Ponds, and under international boundary rivers. This responsibility also includes protecting public rights and values acquired from private landowners through conservation and public access easements donated



to or purchased by the Bureau.

Maine statute authorizes the Bureau to acquire lands and interests in lands. Easements that provide for protection of public interests become a public trust responsibility for the Bureau which is supported by donated stewardship endowments and revenues from Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands. Finally, the Bureau has an oversight role for public values associated with lands acquired by municipalities and local land trusts through the Land for Maine's Future Program with Bureau sponsorship.

In FY 2018, lands under the Bureau's ownership, management or oversight included:

- 632,468 acres of Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands held in fee;
- 380,203 acres of conservation and recreation easements;
- 9,815 acres of Forest Legacy conservation easements delegated to the Bureau for enforcement by the US Forest Service;
- 378,140 acres of third-party conservation easements (the Bureau is a back-up Holder);
- 602,423 acres of public access rights granted by easement by three large private landowners;
- 85,306 acres of fee lands held as Parks, Historic Sites or Boat Access Sites;
- 2.3 million acres of marine and freshwater submerged lands and 1,095 acres in publicly held coastal islands;
- 968 acres of lands leased from or under agreement from others for management as Parks lands; and
- 53,503 acres of lands acquired by local interests through the Land for Maine's Future Program with Bureau sponsorship.

Beyond the Bureau's land management responsibilities, several programs within the Bureau support public recreational access and trails. These include the Boating Facilities program, which builds boat access sites on state lands and funds municipal boat access sites; the Snowmobile and ATV programs which provide grants to local clubs to build and maintain trails on both public and private lands; the Grants and Community Recreation Program, which distributes federal grant funds for state and local recreation projects; and the Maine

Conservation Corps (MCC), which provides trail crews to construct or rehabilitate recreational trails using federal AmeriCorps funds and fees charged for MCC services. MCC trail crews are commonly used to improve trails on Bureau lands.

## IV. LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The Bureau manages 157 Public Reserved Land units and 14 Nonreserved Public Land units. The number of actively managed reserved and nonreserved units (not including lands leased to or managed by others, small islands, and lands with a minority common and undivided interest), is 154. These range in size from 60 acres to 47,440 acres.

The Bureau is statutorily mandated to manage Reserved and Nonreserved Lands for multiple public values. Land management planning is also a required element of forest certification. Bureau staff involved in managing Reserved and Nonreserved Lands include specialists in planning, forest transportation, wildlife, recreation, and field forestry. All collaborate to ensure a balanced approach to the management of the various resources on these lands.

The Bureau's ***Integrated Resource Policy*** (IRP), adopted in 1985 and revised in 2000, guides resource management decisions and governs management planning for all Public Reserved and Nonreserved lands. Management Plans are prepared consistent with the IRP and taking into consideration comments received from a defined public process. The planning process allocates areas for specific uses including:

- *Special Protection (Natural/Historic)*
- *Wildlife*
- *Recreation*
- *Timber*

These areas often overlap, creating zones where management is designed to accommodate a variety of uses. The relative impact of one use upon another is carefully weighed to establish a hierarchy of resource management that protects the most sensitive resources and uses, while allowing other management to continue. For example, planned timber harvests in deeryards can provide a sustained yield of forest products and deer browse, while maintaining the winter shelter value of these areas.

Management plans are prepared regionally for a period of 15 years, with five-year reviews. The Plans address all the Reserved and Nonreserved lands within a planning region. The Bureau's

responsibilities for management of the Public Reserved Lands are divided among Northern, Eastern, and Western Regions (see Appendix B). The status of the management plans for each of the major Public Reserved Lands Units is provided in the table below, by management region. The five-year review process provides an update on progress in implementing the Plan recommendations, and addresses any changing conditions that may warrant amendments to the Plan.

#### MANAGEMENT PLAN STATUS (MAJOR UNITS)

|    | Northern Region                     |                         |
|----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Chamberlain <sup>10</sup>           | To do                   |
| 2  | Deboullie <sup>1</sup>              | Adopted June 2007       |
| 3  | Eagle Lake <sup>1</sup>             | Adopted June 2007       |
| 4  | Gero Is./Chesuncook <sup>10</sup>   | Adopted 1980            |
| 5  | Round Pond <sup>10</sup>            | Adopted 1992            |
| 6  | Salmon Brk Lake Bog <sup>1</sup>    | Adopted June 2007       |
| 7  | Scraggly Lake <sup>2</sup>          | Adopted August 2009     |
| 8  | Scopan <sup>2</sup>                 | Adopted August 2009     |
| 9  | Telos <sup>10</sup>                 | Adopted 1990            |
|    | Eastern Region                      |                         |
| 10 | Amherst Forest <sup>3</sup>         | Adopted Dec. 2010       |
| 11 | Bradley <sup>3</sup>                | Adopted July 2009       |
| 12 | Cutler Coast <sup>4</sup>           | Adopted March 2007      |
| 13 | Donnell Pond <sup>4</sup>           | Adopted March 2007      |
| 14 | Duck Lake <sup>3</sup>              | Adopted July 2009       |
| 15 | East Grand Orient                   | To do (new acquisition) |
| 16 | East Turner Mtn <sup>5</sup>        | Adopted May 2014        |
| 17 | Great Heath <sup>4</sup>            | Adopted March 2007      |
| 18 | Machias River <sup>4</sup>          | Adopted July 2009       |
| 19 | Millinocket Forest <sup>5</sup>     | Adopted May 2014        |
| 20 | Nahmakanta <sup>5</sup>             | Adopted May 2014        |
| 21 | Rocky Lake <sup>4</sup>             | Adopted March 2007      |
| 22 | Seboeis <sup>5</sup>                | Adopted May 2014        |
| 23 | Wassataquoik <sup>5</sup>           | Adopted May 2014        |
|    | Western Region                      |                         |
| 24 | Bald Mountain <sup>6</sup>          | Adopted Jan. 2011       |
| 25 | Bigelow Preserve <sup>7</sup>       | Adopted June 2007       |
| 26 | Chain of Ponds <sup>7</sup>         | Adopted June 2007       |
| 27 | Cold Stream Forest <sup>9</sup>     | To do (new acquisition) |
| 28 | Crocker Mountain <sup>7</sup>       | Adopted April 2015      |
| 29 | Days Academy <sup>8</sup>           | Adopted Feb. 2017       |
| 30 | Dead River/Spring Lake <sup>7</sup> | Adopted June 2007       |
| 31 | Dodge Point                         | Adopted 1991            |
| 32 | Four Ponds <sup>6</sup>             | Adopted Jan. 2011       |
| 33 | Holeb <sup>9</sup>                  | Adopted 1989            |
| 34 | Kennebec Highlands                  | Adopted Oct. 2011       |
| 35 | Little Moose <sup>8</sup>           | Adopted Feb. 2017       |
| 36 | Mahoosuc <sup>6</sup>               | Adopted June 2007       |
| 37 | Mount Abraham <sup>7</sup>          | Adopted Jan. 2011       |
| 38 | Pineland                            | Adopted Jan. 2011       |

|    |                           |                    |
|----|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 39 | Richardson <sup>6</sup>   | Adopted Jan. 2011  |
| 40 | Seboomook                 | Adopted March 2007 |
| 41 | Sugar Island <sup>8</sup> | Adopted Feb. 2017  |
| 42 | Tumbledown Mtn.           | To do              |

<sup>1</sup> Northern Aroostook Region  
<sup>2</sup> Aroostook Hills Region  
<sup>3</sup> Eastern Interior Region  
<sup>4</sup> Downeast Region  
<sup>5</sup> Central Penobscot Region  
<sup>6</sup> Western Mountains Region

<sup>7</sup> Flagstaff Region  
<sup>8</sup> Moosehead Region  
<sup>9</sup> Upper Kennebec Region  
(Plan in-progress)  
<sup>10</sup> St. John Uplands Region  
(Plan in-progress)

Regional management plans are developed with robust public involvement. For each plan, a Public Advisory Committee is established representing local, regional, and statewide interests. These committees serve as forums for discussion of draft plans. Public meetings are held providing interested parties an opportunity to provide input on management issues and to comment on plan drafts. After considering these comments, the Bureau submits the final Plan to the Commissioner, upon recommendation by its Director, and the Plan is effective upon the Commissioner's approval.

In FY 2018, the Bureau completed a draft of the Upper Kennebec Region Management Plan, which address over 43,000 acres of public lands. Second Five-Year Reviews were completed for four Plans adopted in 2007, addressing the Downeast, Seboomook, Flagstaff and Northern Aroostook Regions. The Flagstaff, Seboomook and Northern Aroostook Region reviews resulted in amendments to the Plans.

Also, in FY 2019 to date, the Bureau worked on a Draft of the St. John Uplands Region Plan, which will address about 63,000 acres of public lands.

## V. NATURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCES

### NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORIES (NRI's)

The Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) conducts inventories of natural resources on lands managed by BPL under a Memorandum of Understanding. In general, inventories are done in advance of management planning to provide up-to-date information for development of Plans.

***NRI work completed in FY 2018.*** MNAP staff completed field work and drafted an NRI report for Public Lands in the St. John Uplands region in FY 2018 in association with management planning

underway. Examples of completed NRI reports and associated management plans are available at the Bureau of Parks and Lands website at [www.parksandlands.com](http://www.parksandlands.com).

## ECOLOGICAL RESERVES

**History and Status Related to Statutory Acres Limits.** Ecological Reserves are designated areas containing representative native ecosystem types managed as special protection areas. They serve as benchmarks against which to measure changes in both managed and unmanaged ecosystems, to provide habitat unlikely to occur in managed forests, and to serve as sites for long term scientific research, monitoring, and education. This annual report includes the status of these reserves, and the results of monitoring, scientific research and other activities related to the reserves (12 MRSA §1839 and §1853).

The Bureau is also required to notify the Committee when a management plan proposes designation of an ecological reserve (12 MRSA §1805). This section of the report addresses this requirement. The Director may designate Ecological Reserves on Bureau lands included in "An Ecological Reserves System Inventory: Potential Ecological Reserves on Maine's Existing Public and Private Conservation Lands" (Maine Biodiversity Project, July 1998). The Director may designate additional reserves in conjunction with the adoption of a management plan, when that process includes public review and comment on the plan, and with notification to the Committee.

Since 2007, the Bureau has had an informal policy of deferring any additions to the ecological reserve system other than those required by the terms of the acquisition (and if recommended by the Ecological Reserves Scientific Advisory Committee), until management plans for all Public Reserved Lands have been updated under the 2000 IRP. As discussed below, the Bureau is constrained by statute on the number of acres that can be designated as an ecological reserve. Presently the Bureau is within 4,756 acres of that limit. Some areas have been noted in recent management plans as potential additions to the ecological reserve system.

**Original Reserves and Changes.** In 2001, the Director designated thirteen Ecological Reserves totaling 68,975 acres on public reserved lands included in the above-referenced inventory (see

table below). In 2007, changes were adopted to four reserves in the Downeast and Northern Aroostook Regions due to land acquisition, deed conditions, and field work.

| <b>Original Ecological Reserves Designated in 2001 and Modifications Adopted in 2007</b> |                            |                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Name</i>                                                                              | <i>Original 2001 Acres</i> | <i>Changes adopted in 2007</i> |
| 1. Bigelow ER                                                                            | 10,540                     |                                |
| 2. Chamberlain ER                                                                        | 2,890                      |                                |
| 3. Cutler Coast ER                                                                       | 5,216                      | +5                             |
| 4. Deboullie ER                                                                          | 7,253                      | -336                           |
| 5. Donnell/Tunk ER                                                                       | 5,950                      | +274                           |
| 6. Duck Lake ER                                                                          | 3,870                      |                                |
| 7. Gero Island ER                                                                        | 3,175                      |                                |
| 8. Great Heath ER                                                                        | 5,681                      | -40                            |
| 9. Mahoosucs ER                                                                          | 9,974                      |                                |
| 10. Nahmakanta ER                                                                        | 11,082                     |                                |
| 11. Rocky Lake ER                                                                        | 1,516                      |                                |
| 12. Salmon Brk Lake ER                                                                   | 1,053                      |                                |
| 13. Wassataquoik ER                                                                      | 775                        |                                |
| Original Total Acres                                                                     | 68,975                     | -97                            |
| Adjusted Total Acres                                                                     | 68,878                     |                                |

**Additions Based on Acquisition Conditions:** Between 2002 and 2013 the Bureau designated six Ecological Reserves (see table below). These areas were acquired with the condition that they be, in part or in whole, designated Ecological Reserves.

| <b>Ecological Reserves Designated as a Result of Acquisition Conditions</b> |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Name</i>                                                                 | <i>Acres</i> |
| 1. Big Spencer ER (2007)                                                    | 4,242        |
| 2. Mount Abraham ER (2007)                                                  | 5,186        |
| 3. St. John Ponds ER (2007)                                                 | 3,917        |
| 4. Fourth & Fifth Machias Lakes ER (2009)*                                  | 2,780        |
| 5. Number 5 Bog ER (2009)                                                   | 4,809        |
| 6. Crocker Mountain ER (2013)                                               | 4,000        |
| Total Reserves acquired through acquisition terms                           | 24,934       |

\* Added to Duck Lake Ecological Reserve

**Statutory Limits:** By statute, the total land acreage designated as Ecological Reserves may not exceed 15% of the total acreage under Bureau jurisdiction or 100,000 acres, whichever is less. In addition, no more than 6% of the operable timberland on public lands may be designated as Ecological Reserves. Lands acquired after the effective date of the statute (2000) with a condition that the donated or acquired

land be designated as an ecological reserve are not included when calculating acreage limits.

Presently, Bureau fee lands, including Parks, Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands, and Boating Facility lands, total 718,888 acres. The 15% limit would then be applied to the total acres less 24,934 acquired with deed restrictions; or 104,093 acres. This means that 100,000 acres is presently the actual upper limit with regard to the first statutory condition.

| <b>Ecological Reserves as a Proportion of Total Acres Under Bureau Jurisdiction in FY 2018*</b> |                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Land Type</i>                                                                                | <i>Total Fee acres</i> |
| State Park Lands                                                                                | 84,770                 |
| Boat Access Lands                                                                               | 555                    |
| Public Reserved Lands                                                                           | 628,804                |
| Nonreserved Public Lands                                                                        | 3,664                  |
| Unregistered Coastal Islands                                                                    | 1,095                  |
| Subtotal                                                                                        | 718,888                |
| Land acquired on condition of ecological reserve designation                                    | -24,934                |
| Total                                                                                           | 693,954                |
| Lesser of 15% of Lands under Bureau Jurisdiction or 100,000                                     | 100,000                |

Regarding the 6% rule, there are approximately 427,600 acres of operable timberland on Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands, with approximately 20,900 acres of these located in qualifying reserves. This is roughly 4,756 acres below the 6% limit set in statute, and is the maximum operable acreage that could be added under the current landholdings.<sup>1</sup>

**Ecological Reserve Monitoring.** An annual Memorandum of Understanding with MNAP enables the collection of baseline ecological data for the Bureau's Reserve inventory. This monitoring fulfills two key purposes of the enabling legislation for Ecological Reserves: that they serve as a "*benchmark against which biological and environmental change may be measured*", and that they serve as sites for "*ongoing scientific research, long term environmental monitoring and education*". These surveys are conducted in accordance with established monitoring guidelines. This ongoing effort will provide information necessary for

measuring ecological changes on Reserves over time. In 2019, MNAP will be establishing baseline ecological reserve monitoring plots within the Machias River (5<sup>th</sup> Machias Lake) and Crocker Mountain Ecological Reserves.

| <b>Ecological Reserves as a Proportion of Operable Timberland Acres on Public Lands in FY 2018*</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Land Type</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Operable Timberland Acres</i> |
| Total Operable Lands                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 427,600                          |
| 6% of Operable Lands                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 25,656                           |
| Operable in Qualifying Reserves                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 20,900                           |
| Net available operable acres for ER designation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 4,756                            |
| *Operable timberland acres are on lands held in fee, not including Ecol. Reserves designated as a condition of the acquisition. The total includes an estimate of 9,000 acres for the newly acquired Cold Stream Forest and East Grand Orient Units, for which field data is not yet available. Operable acres on Ecological Reserves include modifications adopted in 2007(see previous table). |                                  |

In FY 2018, MNAP conducted its sixth year of the 10-year re-sampling effort by revisiting the long-term forest monitoring plots that were first established beginning in 2002. These forest monitoring plots were established to complement the sampling plots used by the US Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program. There are 540 FIA-like permanent plots across 19 State Reserves. Adapting a protocol similar to FIA allows MNAP to compare results with those generated by the Maine Forest Service for Maine and by USFS for the broader region. During FY 2018 MNAP revisited 45 permanent monitoring plots in the Chamberlain Lake Ecological Reserve. As of summer 2018, MNAP has completed the 10 year 're-sampling' on 448 plots. Also during FY 2018, University of Maine researchers under contract with MNAP completed an analysis of the data for plots where monitoring has been completed twice. The resulting report has been provided to BPL, and a "Data Paper" based on the work has been published in the journal Ecology (Kuehne et al. 2018).

Ecological Reserve Monitoring reports may be found at MNAP's website at the Bureau of Natural Resource Information and Land Use Planning within the Department's website: [www.maine.gov/dacf](http://www.maine.gov/dacf).

<sup>1</sup> In December 2018, the Bureau designated the remainder of the Wassataquoik Lot (1,387 acres) as Ecological Reserve.

The effect of this addition on the statutory limits will be included in the FY 2019 report.

**Ecological Reserves Scientific Advisory Committee.** An Ecological Reserves Scientific Advisory Committee was established in the mid-1990s to provide guidance regarding the inventory and assessment of a potential Ecological Reserve system in Maine. Once the Reserve system was established in 2000, the committee was maintained to provide guidance for monitoring and other future research within the system. The committee produced a status report on Ecological Reserves in 2009 (*“Ecological Reserves in Maine: A Status Report on Designation, Monitoring, and Uses”*), available at MNAP via the website cited above.

The role of the Committee includes reviewing potential Ecological Reserve additions according to science-based criteria that new Ecological Reserves must meet, and to review any research project proposed and conducted by third parties such as professors and students from regional colleges and universities.

**Research on Ecological Reserves.** State Ecological Reserves have been used for more than 15 ecological research and sampling projects, and researchers include staff from eight universities, ranging from the University of Maine at Presque Isle to the University of Missouri, and research institutions ranging from the New York State Museum to the National Institutes of Health.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Bureau's 15-year Management Plans include information on the history of BPL parcels included in the Plan. This information is taken from historic reports, input from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) and the public process for Plan development. The MHPC is the lead agency in identifying and protecting significant historic resources requiring preservation on the State's ownership, including designating historically sensitive areas for special protection. The Eastern Region is reviewing a book in progress about the history of lumbering and sporting camps at Nahmakanta.

## **VI. WILDLIFE RESOURCES**

A key component of the Bureau's integrated resource management program is coordinating land management activities with fisheries and wildlife habitat enhancement. Since 1984 a wildlife biologist

from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) has been assigned to the Bureau through a cooperative agreement between the two agencies. The primary responsibility of the biologist has been to develop and implement a habitat management program for Bureau-managed lands. Wildlife management activities conducted in FY 2018 on lands managed by the Bureau were as follows:

**Habitat Management.** One hundred thirty-seven (137) waterfowl nesting boxes were maintained by regional staff, with several new boxes installed in the Scapan Unit. Invasive plant surveys and/or control was conducted on 22 Public Lands units across the state. Field mowing activities were performed at several sites in the Western and Northern Regions, totaling approximately 111 acres. Contracts for routine beaver control activities were developed by BPL regional offices. Bureau staff completed work to reclaim a historic 9-acre apple orchard in Hebron that had been overtaken by invasive plants, including planting new heritage apples trees to replace those that had died over the years (the project was begun in FY 2017 and completed in the first quarter of FY 2018).

**Seeding Program.** Approximately 180 acres of herbaceous seeding was established on Public Lands parcels for wildlife forage and erosion control. The Bureau also began testing several new seed mixes to investigate whether they may be viable alternatives to the standard mix in certain soil types.

**Deer Wintering Areas (DWAs).** The Bureau monitors and assesses DWAs on public lands as part of its management strategy. Aerial and ground surveys for deer activity are conducted on BPL managed lands when travel conditions for deer are restrictive using IF&W protocols. This information is used to delineate cooperative winter habitat management areas for deer and other softwood dependent wildlife. In FY 2018 the BPL staff biologist conducted reconnaissance aerial surveys for deer on 17 Public Lands Units in collaboration with the Maine Forest Service, focusing on areas of softwood cover with historic deer use. Aerial surveys were supplemented with ground surveys to further delineate deer use on the Scraggly and Telos units. The BPL staff wildlife biologist also conducted a statewide review of historic deer use and current DWA habitat condition on the BPL landbase, which will be used to inform

management activities in the future. A forest inventory was conducted in the Cold Stream Unit to identify current deer wintering habitat and inform a long-term deer shelter management plan, which is currently in development. In FY 2018 the BPL staff biologist reviewed harvest plans on several hundred acres of DWA with IF&W, and initiated conversations with both IF&W and BPL regarding new Habitat Management Agreements for deer shelter on several BPL units. Despite our best efforts, only two Public Lands Units appear to be supporting relatively robust, self-sustaining winter deer herds. An outbreak of spruce beetle on the Round Pond Unit necessitated regeneration harvests of some stands to promote future deer shelter, which were conducted in close collaboration with MDIFW.



White-tailed Deer

**Lynx Habitat Management.** Bureau staff continued implementation of a forest management plan for a large portion of the Seboomook Unit as part of a MOU with IF&W to manage a ~22,000 acre area for lynx. Timber harvests to generate lynx habitat began continued throughout FY 2018.



Canada Lynx – photo by Dorothy Fescke

**Harvest Prescriptions.** The wildlife specialist reviewed timber harvest plans covering 2,987 acres (out of ~13,000 acres prescribed) to ensure fish and wildlife habitat compatibility, and routinely discussed

potential habitat enhancements and protective measures for wildlife with Bureau foresters.

**Research Requests.** Special activity permits for several research projects on BPL managed lands were issued.

**Forest Certification.** The biologist assigned to BPL participated in the concurrent Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) annual audit in October 2017 (FY 2018) in the Northern Region. Planning and administration for fisheries, wildlife, invasive plant management and biodiversity issues related to forest certification conditions were addressed as required.

**Wildlife Surveys.** Surveys for waterfowl, grassland birds, high-elevation birds, and lynx were completed on Public Lands units across the state.

## VII. RECREATION RESOURCES

The Bureau's Public Lands Division is responsible for over 420 campsites, over 225 miles of day hiking and backpacking trails (excluding 71 miles of Appalachian Trail located on state-owned lands), 56 trailer accessible and hand-carry boat launching sites, and several hundred miles of public access road (including public use roads, generally maintained for travel by 2WD vehicles with reasonable ground clearance, and forest management roads maintained for public access).

### FY 2018 PROJECTS

In accordance with management plan commitments, and in response to public demand, the Bureau continued to develop or make upgrades to recreation facilities on its lands. One new campsite was constructed. In addition, about 3.3 miles of hiking trail were constructed and about 2.5 miles rehabilitated. Maintenance was conducted on an additional 33 miles of trail. A summary of FY 2018 projects follows.

**Western Region:** In FY 2018, this Region maintained about 220 campsites and 50 miles of hiking trails, worked with ATV and snowmobile clubs with trails on Public Lands, and continued its partnerships with organizations assisting BPL in managing public recreation facilities, including the Damariscotta River Association, Belgrade Region



Conservation Alliance, Mahoosuc Land Trust, Parker Pond Association, New England Mountain Biking Association, Maine Appalachian Trail Club, and Northern Forest Canoe Trail (see PARTNERSHIPS on page 15). In addition to routine maintenance, a number of rehabilitation and improvement projects were undertaken or continued in the Western Region (projects often are implemented over two or more years). The Region was assisted by AmeriCorps Environmental Stewards placed at the Bigelow Preserve and Tumbledown Public Lands, and by MCC crews for several projects. Projects completed include:

- 3 new privies/outhouses installed
- 0.4 mile of trail constructed
- 1 mile of hiking trail rehabilitated
- 2 portage trails improved

Holeb Unit. The Northern Forest Canoe Trail organization continued work under contract with the Bureau to rehabilitate primarily boat access campsites and related amenities on the 34-mile Moose River Bow Trip, one of the most popular multiple-day paddling routes in the state. Work in FY 2018 included new bog bridging on the Attean-Holeb portage trail, installation of numerous campsites signs and table ridge poles and several new outhouses/privies, along with seasonal maintenance of the campsites.

Tumbledown Mountain. In FY 2018 BPL once again had an AmeriCorps seasonal position, split with nearby Mount Blue State Park, at Tumbledown to assist with maintenance of the trail system and provide Bureau presence at this very popular and heavily visited site.

Kennebec Highlands. Work continued to improve recently developed single-track bicycle/hiking trails originating at the Round Top trailhead. Labor from the Central Maine Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association continued work on two miles of bike trail.

Little Moose. Staff and an MCC crew constructed a foot bridge and about 0.4 mile of hiking trail to Inlet Pond, the first segment of a planned connector trail linking the Big Moose Mountain trail to the Little Moose Mountain trail network. Staff and volunteers also worked to clear and rehabilitate portions of the Notch Pond trail and constructed two foot bridges.

### Winter Trailhead Maintenance

The Bureau maintained plowed parking areas at trailheads to popular winter trail destinations including the East Outlet of Moosehead Lake, Range Trail on the Bigelow Preserve, Dodge Point Unit in Newcastle, two trailheads on Kennebec Highlands, and the Big Moose Mountain trailhead on the Little Moose Unit near Greenville.



**New footbridge constructed at Little Moose, in the BPL Western Region.**

### Special Use Permits

The Western Region issued a number of permits for special events such as the Maine Forest Rally (car race on gravel roads), Carrabassett Backcountry Cycle Challenge (mountain bike race), Western Maine Mountains Jeepers trail ride, and an AT hiker support event. Most of these events reoccur each year. Individual permits were issued for fir tipping, mineral collecting, and ATV use (handicapped access off the designated trail network).

***Eastern Region:*** In FY 2018 the Eastern Region maintained 133 campsites and over 100 miles of hiking trail; worked with snowmobile and ATV clubs with trails on Public Lands and with a number of other partners on maintenance of public recreation facilities, including Nahmakanta Lake Camp to maintain water access campsites, Seboeis Lake campowners in controlling water levels with the Bureau-owned dam, the Town of Amherst on the Amherst Community Forest, and the Donnell Pond Campowners Association on plowing to the boat launch. Projects completed include:

- 1.2 miles of new hiking trail constructed
- 1.2 miles of hiking trail rerouted
- 1 new campsite constructed

Nahmakanta. FY 2018 was the third year of a three-year contract to finish the Great Circle Trail, which will enhance Nahmakanta as a backcountry hiking destination. Begun in 2009, when complete this project will connect over 30 miles of trail in the Unit.

Donnell Unit. A new vault toilet was installed at Tunk Mountain trailhead.

Cutler Coast. To address problems with beaver flooding, 1.2 miles of rerouted trail was constructed on the popular and scenic coastal trail.

#### Winter Use Trailhead Maintenance

The Bureau plowed the parking lot at the boat launch at Donnell Pond to facilitate winter activities on the lake and the Unit.

#### Special Use Permits

The Eastern Region issued 10 permits for ATV use (access off the designated trail network, typically to campplots), and six permits related to hunting and trapping. Also, six fir tipping permits were issued, and a permit was issued to Maine Tourism to film a TV commercial at the Cutler Unit.

***Northern Region:*** In FY 2018 this Region maintained 70 campsites and 38 miles of hiking trails; collaborated with 6 motorized trail clubs; and provided access to numerous water bodies. The Northern Region continues to partner with North Maine Woods, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, the Penobscot River Corridor, and Baxter State Park to manage recreation. Projects completed include:

- 0.9 mile new hiking trail constructed
- 1.5 miles of hiking trail rehabilitated/improved
- 1 vault toilet and 1 privy constructed

Deboullie. Repairs were completed on the Deboullie Mountain fire warden's cabin with construction of a new front porch. An MCC crew rehabilitated and upgraded 1.5 additional miles of hiking trail, and cleared blowdowns on 33 miles of trail, using funding from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). In addition, a vault toilet was installed at Crater Pond trailhead and a new privy was installed at the Crater Pond Outlet campsite.

Scraggly Lake. A new picnic table shelter was installed at the boat landing.

Chamberlain. In cooperation with the abutting landowner, a new 0.85-mile hiking trail to the historic tramway was completed, replacing a sub-standard user-created trail. The first 0.25 mile of the trail is on the abutting private parcel, as is the half mile of gravel road that was also improved to access a new trailhead/parking area for the trail.

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION

During FY 2018, the Bureau continued to develop, revise, and distribute information on the location of hiking trails, campsites, and other recreation facilities and opportunities available on Bureau lands. This was accomplished primarily via the Bureau website and new brochures in the color Guide & Map series.

***Bureau Website.*** The Bureau continues to use its website ([www.parksandlands.com](http://www.parksandlands.com)) to provide photos, maps, and facility information for most of its Parks, Historic Sites and Lands. As resources allow, enhancements are added to increase its usefulness to visitors and to the broader conservation and environmental education communities.

#### ***New in FY 2018:***

##### Off-Road Vehicle Trail Notices and News

- ORV staff were trained to use the Trail Notices and News features for both ATV and snowmobile for text and email alerts.

##### Continued Website Improvements

- Submerged Lands program: Harbor Management and Access Grant Applications online as fillable forms ([www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/about/coastal\\_island\\_registrysubmerged\\_lands.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/about/coastal_island_registrysubmerged_lands.shtml)).
- Maine Conservation Corps pages continued improvements: slide show updates and additional photos placed, as well as expanded use of Blog, Facebook and Newsletter features ([www.maine.gov/dacf/mcc](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mcc)).
- Hunting & Bear Bait Webpage: Receive continued improvement; site map improvements planned for 2019 ([www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/hunting\\_fishing/hunting.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/hunting_fishing/hunting.shtml)).

Guide & Map Brochures. The Bureau continues to develop a series of in-depth brochures to post online and make available in printed form:



([www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/publications\\_maps/index.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/publications_maps/index.shtml)).

- During FY 2018: Dodge Point Public Lands brochure was updated in conjunction with trail changes and timber harvest operations.
- Work continues on nine new guides for public lands for release in 2019: Amherst Mts. Community Forest, Duck Lake, Kennebec Highlands, Little Moose, Pineland, Salmon Brook Lake Bog, Scopan, Scraggly Lake, and Donnell Pond.

**Bureau Newsletter.** An e-newsletter that features Bureau news and events is sent out monthly to over 7,800 e-mail and text alert subscribers; an increased distribution of 1,300 subscribers from last year. Sign-up is through the State GovDelivery system (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MEDACF/subscriber/new>) or by contacting BPL's Interpretive Specialist and Webmaster at [Jocelyn.Hubbell@maine.gov](mailto:Jocelyn.Hubbell@maine.gov).

#### **Collaborations with Other Organizations.**

Information about non-motorized trails on Parks and Lands may be found on the Maine Trail Finder website ([www.mainetrailfinder.com](http://www.mainetrailfinder.com)), operated by the nonprofit Center for Community GIS in Farmington. The Bureau works with the Center to develop online trail descriptions and interactive maps, which are then posted on the website. To date, 40 trails or trail systems located on Maine Public Lands and 57 trails/systems at State Parks and Historic Sites appear on the website. Additionally, with support from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund and the Recreational Trails Program, the Bureau has worked with the Center to expand trail listings on the website, adding trails managed by other groups such as land trusts, municipalities and the National Park Service.

#### **RECREATION MANAGEMENT STAFFING**

One year-round and five seasonal rangers were involved in recreation management activities in FY 2018. The seasonal rangers were responsible for recreation facilities maintenance and construction, and informing visitors about Bureau rules. The Western Lands Region continued its Volunteer Campground Host program at two Bureau-owned campgrounds on Moosehead Lake, Cowan's Cove and Spencer Bay, as well as at Big Eddy campground below Flagstaff Lake and at the new Cold Stream Forest Unit. These campgrounds

are free to the public, and like all Bureau campsites, stay is limited to 14 days in a 45-day period. The volunteers oversee these campgrounds in return for extended stays at the campground. A volunteer has also been installed at Kennebec Highlands to assist the Bureau with management of the trails and trailheads on the Unit.

Also in FY 2018, the Western Lands Region utilized the AmeriCorps Environmental Steward program and Recreational Trail Program grants to provide a resident staff person at Bigelow Preserve to assist with recreational duties. In cooperation with Mt. Blue State Park, the Bureau also utilized an Environmental Steward at the Tumbledown Public Lands.

#### **FEES**

Fees are generally not charged on Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands managed by the Bureau. However, in some circumstances fees are charged because these lands are within or accessed through private recreation management systems (North Maine Woods and KI-Jo Mary); or because the Bureau has contracted the management with nearby recreation providers having similar management objectives (South Arm Campground and Baxter State Park). Fees charged in FY 2018 on Public Reserved Lands are described below.

***North Maine Woods (NMW) Recreation Management.*** This is a privately-operated system involving 3 million acres of primarily private lands where public recreation is allowed subject to fees collected at a series of checkpoints. Approximately 95,500 acres of Public Reserved Lands managed by the Bureau, including Baker Lake, Deboullie, Round Pond, Chamberlain, Telos, Gero Island, and the North Branch, South Branch and Canada Falls portions of Seboomook are within the North Maine Woods (NMW) system. To access these lands, the public passes through NMW checkpoints, where fees are paid for day use and camping. (NMW camping fees apply, except for campsites on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and the Penobscot River Corridor, where Parks fees set for those campsites apply.) Visitors then travel over roads on private land within the NMW system.

In FY 2018, NMW day use fees were \$10.00/person for residents and \$15.00/person for nonresidents. Camping fees were \$12.00/ person/ night for Maine residents and \$15.00/person/night for nonresidents. These fees increased \$2-3 in 2018

in line with the voter-approved increase in the state minimum wage. Fees are retained by NMW for facility maintenance and development, except that the camping fees are returned to the Bureau when the Bureau assumes maintenance responsibilities, as at Deboullie. The NMW Committee has implemented a Public Lands proposal to raise the age at which fees are charged from 15 to 18, and to reduce camping fees at Deboullie by half.

**Penobscot River Corridor.** The Penobscot River Corridor (PRC), managed by the Bureau's Parks division, includes campsites on Public Reserved Lands on Gero Island on Chesuncook Lake, and on a portion of the Seboomook Unit (Seboomook Lake, South and West Branches of the Penobscot River, and Canada Falls Lake). PRC staff maintain the campsites at these locations, and charge Bureau-set camping fees. In FY 2018, PRC camping fees were \$6.54/person/night for residents and \$13.08/person/night for nonresidents, including a 9% Maine Lodging Tax. When these areas are accessed via a NMW Checkpoint, NMW day use fees (\$10.00 and \$15.00 per person respectively for residents and nonresidents) are also charged for the day traveled in and the day traveled out and retained by North Maine Woods to cover operating costs for the checkpoint system. If the trip involves passing through only one NMW checkpoint, a single day use fee is charged (as in trips originating at Seboomook and ending at the takeout on lower Chesuncook Lake).

An exception to this general rule is that the NMW day use fee is charged for all trip days for access to the PRC sites on the South Branch, North Branch, and Canada Falls Lake as these allow vehicular access to the entire NMW system.

Camping fees at sites operated by the PRC on Seboomook are collected onsite by a ranger or with "iron ranger" collection boxes. However, visitors to these areas that pass through checkpoints operated by North Maine Woods, Inc. pay camping fees at the checkpoints, which are then paid to the Bureau (a portion of the fees is retained by NMW to cover administrative costs).

#### ***KI-Jo Mary Recreation Management System.***

Similar to the NMW system, this is a privately operated gated system involving 175,000 acres of primarily private lands (the KI-Jo Mary Forest) where public recreation is allowed subject to fees. About 2,200 acres of Public Reserved Land in Bowdoin College Grant East lies within this system.

Day use fees (\$9/person/day resident and \$14/person/day nonresident) are charged at checkpoints in Katahdin Ironworks and West Bowdoin College Grant for access to this property and other lands within the system. Camping is \$12/person/night for both residents and nonresidents. Public access to the Nahmakanta Unit, which abuts the KI-Jo Mary System, is free from the west, but if accessed from the south via the KI-Jo Mary System, a day use fee for the day-in and day-out applies. Exit from Nahmakanta through the south will also involve a fee, if access was gained from the west. As with the NMW, the age at which fees are charged has been raised from 15 to 18 for the KI-Jo Mary Forest.

**South Arm Campground.** The Bureau leases boat-access campsites on Richardson Lakes (Upper Richardson Lake) to South Arm Campground, a privately-owned facility on adjoining private land. In FY 2018, the campground owner charged \$15.00 (including tax) per night per site. The campground retains a portion of this fee to cover its costs for maintenance of the 12 campsites and the Mill Brook public boat launch facility at the north end of lake.

**Baxter State Park.** Management of campsites at the west end of Webster Lake at Telos has been assigned by mutual agreement to the Baxter State Park Authority (BSPA), and the sites are subject to BSPA rules and policies. Most use of Webster Lake is connected with the Webster Stream canoe trip, which traverses the northern end of Baxter State Park.

**Bear Bait Permit Program.** By state rule (04-059-Chapter 54), a permit from the Bureau is required before placing bait for bear on Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands that are not managed jointly with another entity. The permit program is administered by the Bureau's three regional offices. Since 2006, the annual permit fee has been \$30 for a personal bait site and \$65 for a commercial bait site. In FY 2018, the Bureau issued 383 bear bait permits, 173 for personal sites and 210 for commercial sites, with permit revenues totaling \$18,840.

#### **PARTNERSHIPS**

For some properties, the Bureau has entered into partnership agreements with other organizations to assist in managing recreational use.

Noteworthy examples of partnerships in place in FY 2018 are described below.

**Appalachian Trail (AT).** The Bureau continued its partnership with the Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC) to accomplish stewardship and trail maintenance along 43 miles of the AT corridor in the Bigelow Preserve, the Mahoosuc, Four Ponds, Bald Mountain, and Nahmakanta Units and a designated AT side trail at Mt. Abram. The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) also provides stewardship and maintenance of the AT in the Mahoosuc Unit. An additional 28 miles of the AT is located on lands within state parks or on lands subject to Bureau-held conservation easements.

**Bigelow Preserve.** In addition to providing trail maintenance of the AT on the Bigelow Preserve, an agreement is in place with the MATC to ensure a summer staff presence at the more heavily used areas of the Appalachian Trail; in particular, the Horns Pond campsite near the center of the Bigelow Range. The local chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) provides mountain bike trail support.

**Coastal Islands.** The Bureau continued its partnership with the Maine Island Trail Association for the management of certain state-held islands along the coast of Maine that are part of the Maine Island Trail.

**Dodge Point.** An ongoing arrangement is in place with the Damariscotta River Association (DRA) to assist with the maintenance of trails and facilities.

**Frenchman's Hole, Mahoosuc.** A partnership is in place with the Mahoosuc Land Trust to assist in the maintenance of this day use area.

**Grafton Loop Trail.** The Bureau continues to be an active member of a coalition of nonprofit organizations and private landowners that developed this 39-mile hiking trail in the Mahoosuc Mountains. The trail branches off from the Appalachian Trail in the Mahoosuc public lands and continues east over private land to Puzzle Mountain, where it rejoins the Appalachian Trail.

**Kennebec Highlands.** This property is managed in part through a partnership with the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance. The local chapter of NEMBA continues to work with the Bureau to

construct and improve mountain bike trails on the Unit.

**Machias River Corridor.** The Bureau cooperates with the Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA, Project SHARE and local watershed councils to protect and enhance Atlantic salmon habitat in this area.

**Maine Huts and Trails (MH&T).** In 2007, the Bureau worked with MH&T to facilitate the development of a network of large huts connected by trails. The Bureau holds a conservation easement over portions of the trail, and as authorized by the legislature, a short section of the trail crosses over the Bigelow Preserve. Since 2009, the Bureau and MH&T have cooperated on a connector trail from the Flagstaff Lake Hut to trail systems on the Bigelow Preserve and through to the Poplar Stream Falls Hut south of the Preserve. The Stratton Brook Hut's connector trail passes through Bureau land in the Town of Carrabassett Valley. The growth of the Huts and Trails network will require ongoing cooperation between the Bureau and MH&T.

**Maine National Guard.** The National Guard has assisted the Northern Region on transportation improvement projects (road and bridges) during the past several years. These projects benefit the Bureau and the recreating public as well as assist the Guard in meeting their training goals.

**Nahmakanta Lake Camps.** The Bureau has an agreement with Nahmakanta Lake Camps for maintenance of water access campsites within the Nahmakanta Unit.

**Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT).** The Bureau has an ongoing relationship with the multi-state NFCT, which promotes canoe and kayak trips and stewardship across many public and private properties in Maine. This includes a multiple-year contract for rehabilitation and maintenance of campsites and signage on the Moose River Bow Trip.

**Parker Pond.** The Parker Pond Association provides stewardship of several Bureau-owned islands in the pond.

**Weyerhaeuser.** As part of the Moosehead Lake Region Concept Plan, Weyerhaeuser Company (formerly Plum Creek) and the Bureau are now

working cooperatively to implement a provision by which the Bureau is granted the right, through easements, to establish a non-motorized trail system in the Moosehead Region on Weyerhaeuser and/or Bureau lands. Up to 121.8 acres of trail easements may be developed (potentially resulting in up to 40 or 50 miles of trail, depending on the width) and a fund has been established by Weyerhaeuser for trail planning and construction, which is nearly complete. (Funds have been depleted at this time; until additional funds are available, future work will be curtailed.)

## VIII. TIMBER RESOURCES

The Bureau manages the natural resources on the lands under its care through a carefully planned multiple use program that balances timber management with all other resource values. Timber revenues support the Bureau's Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands management costs, including provision of recreation facilities and opportunities, and wildlife management. Other public benefits include contribution to the local economy through employment opportunities for contractors and supply of raw materials to area mills, provision of low-cost firewood through the Bureau's firewood harvest permit program, and demonstration of exemplary multi-aged management focused primarily on mature quality timber.

### TIMBER INVENTORY

An important facet of the timber management program is examination and inventory of the forest resource. Benchmark field data acquired in 1999 provided detailed timber, site, and natural resource measurements. This inventory was fully updated in 2011 and again in 2016, and continues to be important for both forest management planning, and third-party forest certification auditors. The inventories are conducted on the regulated acres portion of the landbase under the Bureau's management, that portion on which net growth and annual allowable cut (AAC) are calculated. Though forest inventories are only a sampling of the trees, the total volume estimates are quite reliable. (If twenty similar inventories were conducted, nineteen should result in a volume within five percent of what is reported here.)

**Status of Current Inventory and Annual Allowable Cut (AAC).** The landbase-wide inventory completed during the autumn of 2011 showed that the total merchantable timber volume on just over 400,000 acres was about 9.3 million cords, an average of about 23 cords per acre. This was an increase of about two cords per acre since 1999. The 2016 inventory (actually in FY 2017) revealed a further increase of about 0.8 cords per acre on those lands sampled in both 2011 and 2016. Compared to the 1999 and 2011 volumes per acre, the current inventory shows that most softwood species have increased, especially spruce and white pine. Among hardwoods, aspen had the largest decrease in volume while most other hardwoods remained about the same. The drop in aspen comes both from the mortality of overmature stems on this relatively short-lived species, and Bureau harvests targeting it because of that overmaturity.

The table below shows the changes in AAC for FY 2009 through FY 2018. When both the inventory increase and the harvest volumes during the previous twelve years are considered, the net growth rate on the Bureau's Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands is 18 percent higher than that for Maine's forests as a whole. As a result, the yield curves from which the AAC was calculated have been reworked using the new and greater stocking levels. This resulted in the AAC being increased for FY 2013 and beyond by about 20%, from 115,000 to 141,500 cords (as previously reported for CY 2012). Inclusion of 27,565 acres of operable land in recent acquisitions warranted a recalculated AAC of 149,000 cords per year in FY 2016. (Volume

| Fiscal Year | AAC Cords | Rationale, Support for Changes*      |
|-------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| 2009        | 114,860   | Model 2006                           |
| 2010        | 114,860   | Model 2006                           |
| 2011        | 114,860   | Model 2006                           |
| 2012        | 114,860   | Model 2006                           |
| 2013        | 141,500   | Model 2012, 15% discount             |
| 2014        | 141,500   | Model 2012, 15% discount             |
| 2015        | 141,500   | Model 2012, 15% discount             |
| 2016        | 149,000   | Included 27,565 "new" acres          |
| 2017        | 157,500   | 2016 inventory warrants 10% discount |
| 2018        | 159,000   | Small addition to acreage            |
| 2014-18     | 149,700   | Avg. harvest: 134,923 cords          |

\* "Discount" is net growth impractical to harvest, due to access costs or low volumes per acre.

averaged just 16.4 cords per acre on those new acres, where little if any Bureau timber management has occurred to-date.)

As part of the 2015 budget document, the legislature included the following: "...timber harvesting on public reserved lands and nonreserved public lands may not exceed in total an average of 160,000 cords per year over any 3-year period." The language also mandated that any change of harvest levels must be implemented through the State's rulemaking process.

The updated inventory conducted late in 2016 provides a statistically rigorous look at how the increased harvest levels during the five years FY 2012 through FY 2016 impacted the stocking of the managed forest. Harvesting for those five years averaged 131,400 cords per year, and volume on those lands sampled in both 2011 and 2016 increased by 3.5 percent.

For a number of years, the Bureau has discounted (reduced) the calculated annual gross growth by 15% to determine AAC because not all growth occurs on acres with sufficient volume to harvest economically or is feasibly accessible. This rate was applied to intentionally increase stocking levels until new inventory information was obtained. With new inventory information now available the discount rate has been adjusted to 10%, which might limit future increases in timber inventory across the landbase, while adding 8,350 cords to the AAC. Expansion of the road system and commercial thinning in younger age class stands more capable of responding should further increase the AAC.

Carrying higher levels of inventory does come with the risk of higher levels of mortality and 2006 MFS data indicates that the level of mortality on public lands was 13% higher than that on total forest ownership surveyed. However, net growth on public lands was also higher than the state average by 18%.

Regarding the risk of losses from a spruce budworm outbreak, that defoliator insect has historically become epidemic throughout northern New England and eastern Canada every 30 to 40 years. Populations are building to our north, and it seems likely that this major threat to the State's fir and spruce resource will arrive in large numbers sometime in the near future. Shifts in harvest areas and targeting fir and white spruce will continue.

As harvest levels are increased, they will be guided by more up-to-date timber typing and a spatially explicit forest model. These tools will allow

the Bureau to identify the most appropriate places to consider for achieving the increased harvest.

Late in FY 2014 the Bureau sought proposals for a project to fully update the timber typing of the forestland, which had last been done landbase-wide in the mid-1990s. A contract was awarded and work begun on this project early in FY 2015. This re-typing, now completed, is an important resource for Bureau field staff when examining and prescribing management activities in the forest, and will be employed along with the data from the 2011 inventory to create an updated forest growth model based on timber types updated in 2016. It is anticipated that modeling will be completed late in FY 2019.

## PRESCRIPTIONS

Planning for the timber management of Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands is a two-step process:

- A management plan for the unit as a whole is prepared and adopted providing broad management direction and allocating lands to their dominant uses;
- More detailed plans for discrete areas between 500-2,000 acres (known as compartments) are then developed for the unit.

Compartments are examined on a 15-year cycle to identify timber and wildlife resources and recreational opportunities. Based on the field examination and the information collected, work plans called "prescriptions" are developed to ensure adequate protection of special resources and a sustained yield of forest goods and services, which include timber, wildlife, and appropriate recreational uses.

***Prescriptions in FY 2018.*** Bureau staff examined and prescribed 15 compartments totaling 13,111 acres for a wide range of resource management activities.

## TIMBER SALES

If a timber harvest is prescribed in a compartment, a timber sale is developed. The majority of timber sales are put out to competitive bid (highest responsive bid), following State rules and procedures governing the sale of State property and purchase of services. Occasionally sales are negotiated when no bids are received, for special circumstances, and for small volumes to allow new

contractors to gain experience working on Bureau lands to Bureau standards.

Prior to 2012, most timber was sold as stumpage. Under this system, the contractor agrees to pay the Bureau a bid price per unit for each type of forest product harvested. Occasionally timber was sold using contracts for logging services (CLS). Under this system, the Bureau pays the contractor to harvest timber and deliver it to specified mills; these mills then pay the Bureau directly for these products. The Bureau has increasingly used this option over the past several fiscal years (see discussion below).



**Timber harvested from  
Day's Academy Grant**

Once the timber contracts are awarded, Bureau foresters and forest technicians work closely with contractors to ensure contract compliance, and that timber management objectives are met.

Bureau staff closely supervise each harvest by providing loggers with strict harvesting criteria. These criteria specify which trees are to be harvested. In some cases, the Bureau will mark individual trees for removal, such as when there are high value stands, or other high value resources in special management areas having specific Bureau harvest protocols such as riparian areas or deer wintering areas. Also, when working with a new contractor, the Bureau may do sample marking for each area. The development of accurate electronic tracking devices mounted in harvest machinery has often allowed Bureau field staff to precisely target areas to be treated without having to individually mark the trees. All harvest operations are inspected by Bureau staff on a weekly basis, more often when individual situations warrant.

**Contract Logging Services (CLS) Project.** Since FY 2015, the Northern Region implemented CLS on

all harvests except the individual firewood permits. CLS sales were also conducted in each of the other regions, making up 80-85% of harvest volume in those regions and 90% of the total FY 2018 volume. Objectives for CLS are three-fold: 1) to improve stability in achieving harvest goals, 2) to enhance Bureau timber revenues, and 3) to have logging roads built under contract rather than being part of the stumpage permit, thus better ensuring that roads are of high quality. Where CLS has been utilized, the feedback from the mills and contractors has been positive. The mills prefer working directly with the landowner versus multiple small contractors. In Northern Maine, most logging contractors are used to working under CLS contracts, not stumpage contracts. CLS projects require increased up-front costs, especially for road building (while increasing the quality of construction), which in turn will require a higher level of cash reserves to be maintained in order to be successful with this initiative.

**Summary of Timber Sales in FY 2018.** The implementation of prescriptions in FY 2018 is summarized below.

- A total of 141,700 cord equivalents was harvested from 12,240 acres. After deducting the portion of biomass that came from tops and limbs (thus not included in AAC calculation), the harvest was 134,000 cords, significantly below the 2018 AAC of 159,000 cords, keeping the ten-year BPL harvest at about 10 percent below the total allowable cut for 2009 through 2018.
- A total of 45 operations were ongoing in FY 2018. These operations are a combination of newly established sales, and sales carried over from previous years, and do not include permits for firewood sales issued to individuals (see below).
- In concert with the Bureau's contractors, wood was marketed to over 40 mills statewide.

**Firewood Permit Program.** Individual firewood permits totaling 125 cords were issued by the Bureau in FY 2018, a 19% reduction from last year's volume. Firewood harvests by logging contractors also were similar to the year before, with 924 cords of firewood supplied by these contractors from lands managed by the Bureau.

**Sugar Bush Leases.** The Lands Western Region currently has three sugar bush lease agreements,

one at Bald Mountain Unit in Rangeley and two in Sandy Bay Township. The 40-acre Bald Mountain operation consists of approximately 2,200 taps, and includes a tap system and a collection tank. The sap is processed off site. The Sandy Bay Township operations, when fully utilized, will include approximately 34,000 taps on up to 400 acres. This includes two full service sugar houses to produce finished maple syrup, one serving 14,000 taps and the other 20,000 taps. Currently, the two Sandy Bay leases are at about 50% and 25% of full utilization, respectively, with plans to add taps each season. 2016 was the first year of production for the older of the two leases; 2017 was the first year of production for the newer lease.

In FY 2017, the Northern Region bid out the first commercial sugar bush lease on the Scapan Unit, for 5,000 taps. The sole bidder requested 10,000 taps; therefore, the Bureau is currently re-evaluating options, while pursuing more details on the potential sugarbush, and considering a rebid at the higher tap number. All regions continue to consider sugar bush lease opportunities.

***FY 2018 Harvest and Market Analysis.*** Timber harvested in FY 2018 on Bureau lands from inventory totaled 134,000 cords (141,700 cords including biomass). The FY 2018 figure is 16% below the 2016 Bureau-established “allowable cut” of 159,000 cords. Significantly weaker markets for certain products had a major effect on harvests, even though winter conditions were about average, resulting in harvest volumes well below AAC.

For FY 2018, the average price paid to the Bureau per cord rose 16% compared to that in FY 2017. Part of that increase came as a result of the CLS portion of the harvest rising to 90% and some came from changes in product prices. The more valuable (on average) softwood products had about the same share of overall volume as the year before. Mill-delivered prices increased significantly for spruce and fir sawlogs and studwood, while other species and products showed only minor changes. The hardwood harvest was 55% of total volume, compared to those species’ 43% of inventory, thus conforming to the Bureau objective of increasing the proportion of softwoods by preferentially harvesting hardwoods: the current yield curves show softwoods producing 62% of net growth and hardwoods just 38% of that growth. Since only 8% of the hardwood harvest volume came from sawlogs and veneer while the inventory showed that 18% of hardwood volume was in those products, these harvests are

also increasing overall resource quality and value by targeting the poorer quality and over-mature stems.

As part of its multiple use management, the Bureau will continue to emphasize maintaining the multi-year harvest volume at a sustainable level, while continuing to practice the highest quality silviculture. However, operational issues and natural events can affect harvest volumes both negatively and positively.

## HARVEST OPERATION CHALLENGES

In the recent past, the Northern Region had difficulties in securing contracts for harvests, especially for winter harvests. The winter is often the preferred time to harvest wood and often when land managers conduct most of their harvesting, such that logging contractors have more than enough work. Since 2011, the Bureau has significantly increased the proportion of CLS contracts for timber harvest operations to create more stability for both the Bureau and contractors. To further increase this stability, the Bureau has invested in upgrading/constructing many miles of logging road to summer road standards, such that more harvests are spread out over the summer and fall seasons than winter. Contractors find this very attractive, as they can more easily continue operations throughout the year. This program requires the Bureau to build roads ahead of time to minimize costs and maximize market opportunities. Implementation of CLS has enabled the Bureau to better match scheduling with markets and with the availability of harvest equipment.

To address the threat of a spruce budworm outbreak, the Bureau has for decades discriminated against the more budworm-susceptible balsam fir when harvesting, resulting in a spruce-to-fir ratio much higher than for the state as a whole. The Bureau-managed forest holds nearly 3 cords of spruce for each cord of fir, while the overall Maine forest has 1.6 cords of spruce per cord of fir. Going forward, this fir-targeting practice will be intensified, both by taking the otherwise healthy younger fir that might have been retained in the absence of budworm, and in some alteration of harvest plans to focus on areas with higher fir components.

## BOUNDARY LINES

The Bureau progressed on the maintenance of boundary lines, with about 40 miles maintained in FY 2018. This is an area that can use

more attention as additional resources become available.

### EXEMPLARY MANAGEMENT MANDATE

By Maine Statute (12 MRSA § 1847) the Bureau must manage Public Reserved Lands “to demonstrate exemplary land management practices, including silvicultural, wildlife and recreation management practices.” Towards this, the Bureau’s forest management is guided by dual third party certification - the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) programs; a Silvicultural Advisory Committee, and participation in the Cooperative Forest Research Unit (CFRU)

**Forest Certification.** The Bureau was awarded certification of its forestlands under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) programs in 2002. These third-party audits were conducted to determine if these lands were being managed on a sustainable basis. The Bureau underwent the two audit programs simultaneously, a rigorous and unique process. The audit included a field analysis of forest management practices at selected sites around the state, and an analysis of the Bureau's financial, personnel, policy development, and record-keeping systems.

Successful completion of the FSC/SFI systems qualified the Bureau to enter into the “chain of custody” program to market its “green-certified” wood. Since 2003, green-certified wood has been marketed from Bureau managed lands.

Following its initial certification, a Bureau-wide certification team was implemented to address “conditions” and “minor non-conformances” stipulated in the audit reports, including: significant enhancements to forest inventory data; development of a computerized forest-modeling program; a timeline for updating management plans for the entire land base; improvements in the use of Best Management Practices to protect water quality; and new commitments to public outreach and education programs. The Bureau is required to meet these conditions within certain timeframes in order to keep its certification status in good standing over the five-year certification period.

**Certification Accomplishments:** In FY 2018 (Oct. 2017) the Bureau underwent annual surveillance audits under both FSC and SFI, as required to maintain certification between full audits. The audit

was done by Bureau Veritas, grantor of the Bureau’s certificates. Their auditors visited sites throughout the North Region. Accompanied by the appropriate Bureau field staff, auditors looked at harvest areas on about sixteen separate operations and features within the Bureau-managed landbase. Auditors were especially complimentary toward the condition of recently harvested stands, several roads recently constructed on challenging terrain, and recreation management -- particularly aesthetics. They did find one area of concern: the Bureau stakeholder list needed to be updated, as the lead auditor was unable to contact many of the listed people. The list was revised shortly after the audit, and re-revised prior to the October 2018 audit, thus allowing the non-conformance to be closed.

**Silvicultural Advisory Committee.** In 1986, the Bureau established a Silvicultural Advisory Committee with representatives from environmental groups, academia, and forest managers from public and private landowners, to review and critique forest management policies and practices on public lands. Each year the Bureau sponsors a field trip on which the Committee examines work the Bureau has completed or is planning, providing valuable input to staff through on-site dialogue.

**Committee Tour:** The FY 2018 field tour was held during August of 2017 in the Northern Region, visiting the Eagle Lake and Deboullie Units. Themes covered included initial commercial thinning in fir and spruce stands (some having been precommercially thinned), partial cuts and patchcuts in hardwood and mixedwood stands, managing scarce (on BPL lands) open fields for wildlife diversity, and recent precommercial thinning in stands older than the usual for PCT. The Bureau is conducting more patchcuts in hardwoods as a means to limit beech dominance in the regeneration, and those observed appear to be accomplishing that objective.

**Cooperative Forest Research Unit (CFRU).** The Bureau participates in a research cooperative, originally formed in 1975 in response to the spruce budworm outbreak at that time. Membership includes forest landowners (BPL and 26 private landowners representing 8.3 million managed forest land acres), representatives of two wood processors, and 6 corporate/individual members. Together, contributions amount to approximately



\$500,000 per year to support research projects of interest to the members. With the threat of another spruce budworm outbreak, research is again focused on that issue. The Bureau contributes proportionate to acres in managed timberland, approximately \$24,000/yr.

## **DEMONSTRATION FORESTS**

As a means to display the benefits of woodland ownership, the Bureau of Parks and Lands partnered with the Maine Forest Service to develop “Demonstration Forests” on two separate parcels owned and managed by Public Lands, beginning in 2016. Keeping forests as forests in Southern Maine’s rapidly changing environment is one of the most challenging efforts for those involved in land conservation today. Thousands of woodland owners throughout our state all have their own legitimate reasons for owning and managing their woodlands. The future of these continuous forest blocks cannot be secured by focusing on these landowners alone.

The Hebron public lot, also known as the Ernest Rand Memorial Forest, is on the site of the former Western Maine Sanatorium, and has been in state ownership since 1915. Once the sanatorium was closed, through a series of conveyances, the lot came under the management of the Maine Forest Service in 1966 for the explicit purpose of becoming a State Forest Demonstration and Research area. Many experimental plots were established on the lot throughout the 1960’s and ‘70’s, but the concept of a Demonstration Forest on-site was never fully realized, and management of the parcel was transferred to Public Lands in 1976 along with all other State Forests. In 2016, Public Lands in partnership with the Maine Forest Service re-established this goal, upgrading access to the site, installing a kiosk for display materials, and continued efforts to control the many invasive plants impeding forest growth. Restoration of the 8-acre apple orchard was accomplished in 2017. Future work will include development of interpretive materials for the range of silvicultural treatments used on the lot.

The Skowhegan Public Lands have a similar origin, having been part of the former Women’s Correctional Center. The management of these parcels was assigned to the Bureau of Public Lands in 1976. In 1982, the Department assumed a cooperative role with the Yankee

Woodlot Demonstration Program – an informal effort of several organizations to provide public education in small woodlot management. The cooperative nature of management on this lot still exists, and in 2016 the Maine Forest Service assumed responsibility to oversee the management alongside BPL and the Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District. A series of forestry workshops on site concluded in May 2017, and were centered around a timber harvest occurring on the property. The workshops were designed to educate woodland owners (current and future) with their own management activities.

The first timber harvest following the establishment of the Yankee Woodlot took place in the early 1990s, and the second began on frozen ground early in 2017, covering about half the planned harvest area and yielding a bit more than 1,000 cords. Revenue from this volume, and the completion of the harvest in early 2018, will allow improvement of the infrastructure that’s vital to the tract’s function as a demonstration forest.

Funding for the development of these demonstration forests is supported through several federal and state grants. Timber harvesting revenue on the Skowhegan lot is deposited to a special Yankee Woodlot account held by the Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District, and supports the ongoing management of the Yankee Woodlot. Continued support for these projects is through the Maine Forest Service.

## **IX. TRANSPORTATION**

The Bureau continued to improve road access within its public lands, focusing primarily on recreational needs and implementation of its timber management program. There are currently about 269 miles of public access roads on Public Lands.

### **BRIDGES**

In FY 2018, the Bureau’s Eastern Region rehabilitated three bridges at the Nahmakanta Unit, two at the Machias River Unit, and one at Amherst Forest. The Western Region built one new bridge at the Bigelow Preserve, rehabilitated two bridges at the Cold Stream Forest Unit, and redecked one bridge at the Moosehead Lake East Shore Unit. A six-foot concrete culvert was also installed on another public access road in the Bigelow Preserve.

The Northern Region rehabilitated the 220 ft. Henderson Bridge in the Round Pond Unit, as well as an ATV bridge at Scopan. The region also completed the purchase of the Chamberlain Bridge in T6 R11 (Telos Unit) and purchased one steel portable skidder bridge.



*Rehabbed Henderson bridge over the Allagash River, BPL Northern Region*

## ROADS & ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

**Timber Management Road Construction.** To facilitate both summer and winter timber harvesting activities across the state, approximately 32 miles of road were constructed or reconstructed in FY 2017, and a number of temporary wood and concrete bridges were installed. All three regions have purchased and are deploying folding steel temporary truck bridges. In addition, 34 miles of management road were maintained in the Northern Region under road maintenance contracts (the region keeps most management roads open to the public; therefore, periodic maintenance has a public benefit and reduces long-term future road expenses).

**Public/Shared Use Roads.** Each year the Bureau contracts for maintenance services for grading and brushwork on public use roads and shared use roads.<sup>2</sup> In FY 2018, approximately 50 miles of public use roads were maintained under contract in the Northern region, 92 miles in the Western Region, and 95 miles in the Eastern region. In addition, 125 miles of management roads designated for shared ATV use in the Eastern Region, and 7.8 miles of management road used for public access in the Western Region, were maintained; thus, a total of about 400 miles of public use/shared use road and

management road open to the public were maintained under contract. Roadside vegetation control was conducted on 14 miles of public/shared use roads in the Eastern Region, 16 miles in the Northern Region, and 16 miles in the Western Region.

## **X. PUBLIC ACCESS**

Eighty four percent of the Public Reserved Lands were accessible by motor vehicle to the public without fee or special arrangements in FY 2018. There are a few circumstances where public vehicle access is limited or restricted. The following is a report of barriers that affect primary motor vehicle access as required in 12 MRSA § 1853.

### EXTERNAL GATES TO PUBLIC LANDS

**North Maine Woods Checkpoints.** There are seven checkpoints, staffed seasonally, controlling primary access from Maine points to 95,000 acres of Public Reserved Land within the nearly three million acre North Maine Woods area, including Deboullie, Round Pond, Chamberlain, Telos, and portions of Seboomook. These checkpoints are all on private land and facilitate management of recreational use on both public and private land. See also discussion on fees on pages 15-16.

**KI/Jo-Mary Checkpoints.** The Katahdin Iron Works checkpoint controls access to the 960-acre public lot in Bowdoin College Grant East. A gate has been funded and operated by the Bureau at the border between Nahmakanta and the KI/Jo-Mary system at Henderson Brook. This controls access from Nahmakanta into the KI/Jo-Mary system. In 2009 the checkpoint was converted to an electronic gate, which is operated remotely from the Route 11 Checkpoint. See also discussion on fees on pages 12-13.

**Cary Plantation, Aroostook County.** A locked cable gate on private land restricts access to this 230-acre parcel.

**Magalloway Plantation, Oxford County.** A locked metal gate on private land restricts access to this 1,000-acre parcel.

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<sup>2</sup> As defined in the IRP, public use roads are all-weather roads designed to facilitate access to recreation facilities; shared use

roads are those that are open to ATVs, horses and/or bikes in addition to passenger vehicles.

**Cupsuptic Gate, Franklin County.** A staffed gate leased by the Kennebago Camp Owners' Association on private lands limits access to the 62-acre public lot in Stetsontown Twp. on Kennebago Lake. A public access agreement with the Association allows up to three vehicles at any one time to access the lake via the public lot, and to park at the Grants Camps lease site located on the lot.

**Davis Township Lot, Franklin County.** A locked gate on the private road north of the Dallas Plantation Public Lot was added in 2010, restricting use of the Loon Lake Road out of Rangeley to access the Bureau's Davis Twp. Lot on Kennebago Lake. However, this lot can still be accessed via the Bridge Road off Route 16 in Langtown Mill (Lang Twp).

**Seboeis Plantation Lot, Penobscot County.** A new external gate was installed on a private road by the camp owners' association, after repeated vandalism of private camps, limiting vehicular access to the 1,136-acre Seboeis Plantation lot.

**Wassataquoik Lot, Penobscot County.** Per a Road Use Agreement with the abutting landowner, the Bureau installed a temporary gate on the primary road accessing the 2,100-acre lot. The gate will be removed when the abutting landowner has completed harvesting.

## INTERNAL GATES

The Bureau maintains 27 internal gates for safety purposes, to protect sensitive areas, to limit vehicle traffic on service roads, or to control certain recreational uses. One new gate was installed at the Eagle Lake Public Lands in FY 2018. None of the barricades restrict foot traffic into these areas. Many of these barriers are left open during the winter season to allow safe passage by snowmobiles. Some temporary gates are used by BPL contractors for security during harvest operations.

## LAND OPEN TO HUNTING

Public Law, Chapter 564 of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, amending 12 MRSA § 1847 sub-§ 4 (Public Reserved Lands Statute), requires that lands open to hunting on Public Reserved Lands include at least the acreage open to hunting on January 1,

2008. Since 2008, no land has been removed from the acreage available for hunting at that time.

The law also requires the Bureau to report annually to the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee the acreage of Public Reserved Lands available for hunting, and any changes from the January 1, 2008 levels. There were 587,184 acres of Public Reserved Lands on January 1, 2008; of which 586,505 were available for hunting (excludes three small game preserves). For FY 2016, the Bureau reported total acreage available for hunting as 626,787 acres. In FY 2017 the Bureau acquired a total of 1,262 acres at Gulf Hags (details on this acquisition is provided in the next section), bringing the total available for hunting to 628,049 (over 99% of Public Reserved Lands). There were no changes in FY 2018.

# **XI. LAND TRANSACTIONS**

## ACQUISITIONS

There were no fee acquisitions of land, and no conservation or public access easements acquired in FY 2018. Adding to similar easements acquired each year since 2014, the Bureau acquired by donation several hiking trail easements in the Moosehead Region during this period, as part of the partnership effort with Weyerhaeuser pursuant to a requirement of its Moosehead Region Concept Plan (see Recreation Highlights on page 3).

The Big Six Forest Project, has been approved for Forest Legacy grant funding. The \$3.8 million federal grant was approved in August 2016. Upon completion, this project would result in a working forest conservation easement on 23,600 acres in northern Somerset County, on Maine's western boundary with Canada. The lands include a major segment of the state's maple sugaring industry, with eight maple sugar leases. (Acquisition of the easement is expected to close in early 2019.)

## IMPACTS TO VEHICULAR ACCESS

Pursuant to various sections of law, "if an acquisition is made that does not include guaranteed public vehicular access; the Bureau shall describe the acquisition (in this report) and the justification for that acquisition."

There were no fee acquisitions in FY 2018, and no easement acquisitions for which public vehicular access is not guaranteed. The

Moosehead Region hiking trail easements acquired in FY 2018 are associated with road easements required under the Moosehead Region Concept Plan.

## DISPOSITIONS

The only dispositions of Public Lands in FY 2018 were the sale of the Bureau's minority interest in two 2-acre camplots on Scopan Lake. Those transactions were part of a larger series of transactions completed in September 2018 by which the Bureau consolidated common/undivided interests in T10 R4 WELS (Scopan Unit), as reported on page 3.

## **XII. SUBMERGED LANDS**

These lands are managed under the Public Trust Doctrine to ensure protection of the public trust rights of fishing, waterfowl hunting, navigation, and recreation. The Submerged Lands Program plays an important role in maintaining a balance among competing uses of submerged lands and resolving conflicts between public trust rights and the demand for private and commercial uses of these lands.

**Project/Permit Applications.** The SLP received 166 applications for new coastal development projects. Of these, 68 were determined to be exempt from the leasing requirements under the program rules, and 25 new lease and easement documents were prepared and completed. SLP staff undertook a 2015 coastal inventory to identify any new or existing structures that have not been brought into compliance with the SLP. As a result of the inventory effort, in FY 2018 staff processed 34 applications for new leases and easements for structures that were in non-compliance. Staff also received and completed 39 requests for conveyance renewals, amendments, and transfers.

**Inventory of Existing Structures.** The Program continues to research information on constructive easements (structures in existence prior to October 1, 1975) and post-1975 structures to identify those that may require a submerged lands conveyance. The Bureau currently has 2,237 active leases and easements.

**Sunken Logs.** One new applications to recover sunken logs from public submerged lands was

received in FY 2018. (The application was approved in FY 2019.)

**Water Quality Monitoring.** In 2009, the legislature authorized funding from the submerged lands leasing program be provided to support water quality monitoring efforts at the Department of Marine Resources shellfish program. Funding at \$80,000 per year has been extended through FY 2018.

**Tidal Energy Pilot Project.** In 2012, the first tidal energy pilot project was installed on the seafloor at Cobscook Bay with testing and environmental monitoring continuing through FY 2017. Power generated by the facility connects to the grid by a submarine cable to the shore at Lubec. Eighty percent of the lease revenue is directed to the Renewable Ocean Energy Trust Fund and is utilized by the Department of Marine Resources for fisheries research and mitigation efforts associated with offshore energy projects.

## **XIII. SHORE AND HARBOR MANAGEMENT FUND**

In 1991, the Legislature created the Shore and Harbor Management Fund in anticipation that annual revenues from the Submerged Lands Program would exceed operating costs. These funds could then be used to support shore and harbor management activities and improve public access.

In FY 2018, funds were provided to the Bureau of Parks and Lands for:

- continued pier reconstruction at Lamoine State Park;
- pier rehabilitation at Fort Point State Park;
- engineering and permitting for reconstruction of boat launch facilities on the Kennebec River in Hallowell and on Moosehead Lake at Lily Bay State Park;
- repairs to the Rockwood boat launch facility;
- Maine Coastal Program's Shore and Harbor Planning Grant Program to fund municipal harbor management planning and engineering projects and to develop policy recommendations that addresses abandoned and derelict vessels and floating homes and camps;
- Maine IFW to construct a new state of the art ADA boat launch and water access facility at Togus Pond; and

- Maine Island Trail Association in support of our continuing partnership for ongoing recreation management of State owned coastal islands.

SLP also launched the Harbor Management and Access (HMA) grant program. HMA is targeted at municipal water access facilities with small grants of \$15,000 and under. SLP awarded HMA grants to nineteen towns statewide from St. Agatha to Kennebunkport. Projects ranged from engineering studies to construction of new and existing water access facilities located on Great Ponds and coastal waters.

## **XIV. COASTAL ISLAND PROGRAM**

### **OVERVIEW**

Maine's Coastal Island Registry was created in 1973 by the 106th Legislature as a means of clarifying title to 3,166 coastal islands by establishing and registering ownership. Most island owners have registered their islands. The Program continues to receive periodic requests to register an island or make changes in existing registrations (address or ownership changes). There are also many requests for ownership information from persons with a general interest in Maine islands.

The Maine Island Trail is a water trail extending along the entire coast of Maine and includes both publicly and privately owned islands. The Bureau continues its partnership with the Maine Island Trail Association in the management and oversight of the State-owned islands on the Trail. In addition, the Bureau provides a brochure "Your Islands and Parks on the Coast" showing the location of approximately 40 State-owned islands suitable for recreational use and explaining the Bureau's visiting, camping, and resource protection policies.

## **XV. ADMINISTRATION**

### **LEASES**

**Camplot Leases.** The Bureau administers a Camplot Leasing Program for 287 residential camplots and 10 commercial sporting camps and campgrounds across the state. In FY 2018, the Bureau was at the end of a five-year term (2013-2017) for camplot leases; January 2018 was the beginning of a new five-year term (2018-2022) for

residential camplot leases as well as most commercial sporting camps and campgrounds. New fee schedules were developed in 2017 with updated tax-assessed values for the next 5-year lease term. The Bureau has a statutory requirement to charge lease fees based on these values. The camplot program also administers seven tent site rental agreements.

**Other Leases.** The Bureau administers 65 leases on public lands for a variety of purposes, as shown below. These leases have terms that range from 5 to 25 years. Twenty-nine include annual lease payment provisions, and the remainder involve no payment or payment of a one-time administrative fee to the Bureau. Leases in FY 2018 included:

- 18 utility leases
- 10 agricultural leases
- 5 telecommunication facility leases
- 20 miscellaneous leases
  - 1 dam lease
  - 1 boat access lease
  - 4 warden camp leases
  - 1 university camp lease
  - 2 university seismic research leases
  - 3 sugarbush leases

The no-rent leases include state lands leased to communities; recreation associations such as the Capital Area Recreation Association (CARA) ball fields in Augusta; nonprofit environmental organizations such as the Viles Arboretum in Augusta; municipal utilities for waterlines and pumping stations; and the Maine Warden Service for staff housing in remote locations. All no-rent leases either allow public access or are providing a public service.

## XVI. INCOME AND EXPENDITURES ACCOUNTING – FY 2018

### OVERVIEW

The Public Lands Program (Lands Program or Program) has several different accounts established for specific purposes with statutory restrictions on their use. The Program is funded entirely from dedicated fund sources with no General Fund support. **The revised statutes require that financial summaries be prepared on a fiscal year basis instead of the previous calendar year summaries.** The figures presented below may not compare to those reported in previous years **on a calendar year basis.**

#### **Public Reserved Lands Management Account (014.01A.Z239.22)**

This account is restricted to uses related to the management of lands that have Public Reserved Lands status, which includes the original public lots, land acquired through trading Public Reserved Lands, and other lands designated as Public Reserved Lands. Sources of income to this account include revenue generated from the harvest of forest products, camplot leases and other special leases on the Reserved Lands, and interest on the account balance. In FY 2018, the Lands Program conducted timber harvests that yielded 134,000 cords.

Expenses for personnel services, vehicle operations, information technology, and management costs for non-revenue generating activities have decreased. Income for fiscal year 2018 was \$6,550,580 with expenditures of \$6,046,194. Because the Program's largest source of revenue is timber, income fluctuates from year to year in response to the amount of wood harvested and economic conditions that affect timber markets. The cash balance accumulates when revenues exceed expenses. The cash balance as of June 30, 2018 was \$6,993,001.

Income from the Reserved Lands Account supports most of the administrative, planning, timber, transportation, recreation, and wildlife management activities on the land base. The revenue described above will support the increased cash balances needed for contracted logging services, and the Bureau's overall ability to support the Lands management program.

Included in the income or expenditure figures above are the portion of monies received from camplot leases and timber sales that are shared with towns and plantations pursuant to 12 MRSA §1854. Based on the income received in calendar year 2017 (payable in 2018), the Lands Program revenue sharing amounts total \$183,718.90 paid to 16 towns and plantations.

The Bureau anticipates that an additional \$200,000 in capital allotment will be required for continued operations through fiscal year 2019.

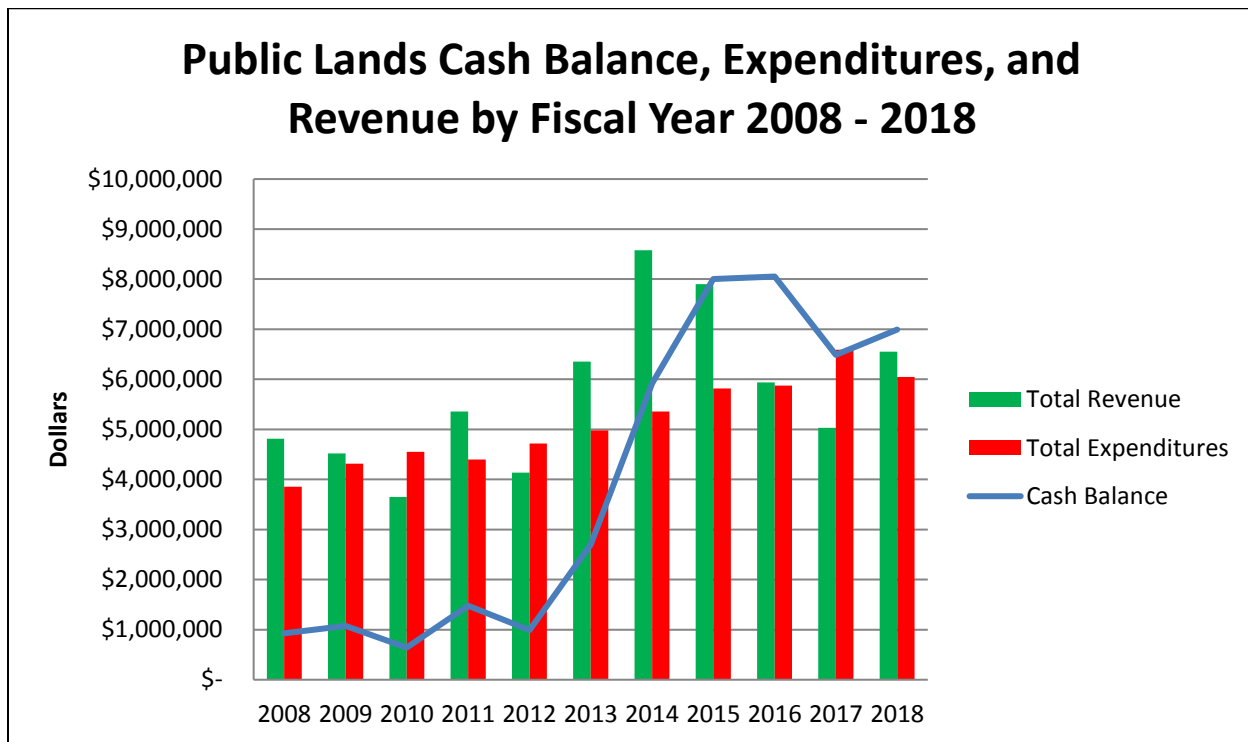
**Public Reserved Lands Management Account (014.01A.Z239.22)**

| <b>Income</b>                    |                    | <b>Expenses</b>       |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Earnings on Investments          | \$85,086           | Personal Services     | \$2,966,297        |
| Rent of Lands*                   | \$1,042,170        | All Other             | \$1,696,804        |
| Grants from State Agencies       | \$52,514           | Capital               | \$1,199,996        |
| Camp lot Leases*                 | \$457,903          |                       |                    |
| Misc. Rents & Leases             | \$11,123           |                       |                    |
| Recreational Use of Lands        | \$16,096           |                       |                    |
| Registration Fees                | \$19,925           |                       |                    |
| Sale of Stumpage *               | \$5,513,048        |                       |                    |
| Sale of Forest Products *        | \$0                |                       |                    |
| Sale Timber/Gravel/Grass         | \$510              |                       |                    |
| Recovered Cost                   | \$45,571           |                       |                    |
| Reg Transfer Personal Svcs       | \$0                |                       |                    |
| Legis Transfer of Revenue        | (\$72,397)         |                       |                    |
| DICAP**                          | (\$582,894)        | STACAP                | \$183,097          |
| Trust & Private Contributions    | \$78,786           |                       |                    |
| Service & Late Fees Misc. income | (\$111,392)        |                       |                    |
| Legal Services Rendered          | \$0                |                       |                    |
| Adj. To Balance Forward          | (\$5,469)          |                       |                    |
| <b>Total Income</b>              | <b>\$6,550,580</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b> | <b>\$6,046,194</b> |

\* Represents the major components of the Division's income stream.

\*\* Consistent with state accounting practices, DICAP is shown as a "revenue debit," although it is actually an expenditure.

The Chart below shows the total revenue, the total expenditures, and the cash balance for the Public Reserved Lands Management Account for the period 2008 – 2018.



#### **Public Nonreserved Lands Management Account (014.01A.Z239.23)**

This account is used for the management of lands not in the Public Reserved Lands System. These Nonreserved Public Lands include institutional lands (those lands considered surplus by other State agencies) assigned to the Bureau's Lands Program for natural resource management, and coastal islands. Income is primarily derived from agricultural leases, though the sale of timber contributes occasionally when timber harvests are completed on Nonreserved Lands. Income for fiscal year 2018 was \$1,087 with no expenditures. The ending cash balance was \$9,005. The cash balance is drawn down when expenses exceed revenues. The Lands Program plans its expenditures for each fiscal year based on a level of income it projects to receive from its various revenue sources. If projected income is not sufficient, then the Program determines whether the balance in its contingency fund is sufficient to carry it through until additional revenues are received. If both revenue projections and contingency funds are insufficient, then the Program postpones planned expenditures until revenue returns to an adequate level.

| Income              |                | Expenses                         |            |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| Rent of Lands       | \$1,087        | All Other (not including STACAP) | \$0        |
|                     |                | Capital                          | \$0        |
|                     |                | STACAP                           | \$0        |
| <b>Total Income</b> | <b>\$1,087</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>            | <b>\$0</b> |



**Land Acquisition Fund (014.01A.Z239.24)**

Funds from this account are restricted by statute and the constitution to the acquisition of conservation lands, and acquisition-related costs. These funds cannot be used for operation or maintenance of existing land, and therefore, expenditures do not take place on a regular basis. Income that accrues as a result of sales, trades, or interest is carried forward until needed for future acquisitions. Income for fiscal year 2018 was \$25,781 against expenditures of \$10,220. Balance at the end of the fiscal year was \$674,760.

Income this year was derived from interest earned on the account balance. Expenses included various acquisition-related costs such as surveys and appraisals. In all cases, funds were expended in conjunction with other funding sources outside of the Bureau. Funds from this account are restricted by constitutional amendment (Article IX, Section 23) to the acquisition of lands having significant conservation and recreation value in the same county in which the sale of lands generating the funds took place.

| Income                  |                 | Expenses              |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Earnings on Investments | \$8,600         | All Other             | \$9,834         |
| Sale of Land            | \$18,290        | Capital               |                 |
| DICAP**                 | (\$1,109)       | STACAP                | \$386           |
| <b>Total Income</b>     | <b>\$25,781</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b> | <b>\$10,220</b> |

**Nonreserved Land Acquisition Fund (014.01A.Z239.37)**

This account was established to receive revenue from the sale of Public Nonreserved Lands. There were no expenses or revenue for 2018. The balance at the end of the fiscal year was \$295,060. Funds from this account are restricted by constitutional amendment (Article IX, Section 23) to the acquisition of lands having significant conservation and recreation value in the same county in which the sale of lands generating the funds took place.

| Income                  |            | Expenses                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| Earnings on Investments | \$0        | All Other (not including STACAP) | \$0        |
| DICAP**                 | (\$0)      | STACAP                           | \$0        |
| <b>Total Income</b>     | <b>\$0</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>            | <b>\$0</b> |

**Forest Legacy Fund (013.01A.Z239.35)**

This account was established to receive grant revenue from the federal USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program for purchase of unique valuable land and interests in land. Land acquisition projects are reviewed and approved at the national level. We also receive annual administrative grants that support the pre-acquisition costs for the Forest Legacy land purchases. Land for Maine's Future funds are typically used as match for these Forest Legacy grants to purchase land and interests in land. Total acquisition expenses in fiscal year 2018 were \$117,754 which included \$17,083 in administrative grant expenses. Total Forest Legacy revenues in fiscal year 2018 were \$120,953. At the end of fiscal year 2018 the account had a balance of \$0.

| Income              |                  | Expenses                         |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
|                     |                  | Personal Services                | \$0              |
| Federal Grants      | \$124,062        | All Other (not including STACAP) | \$17,083         |
|                     | \$0              | Capital                          | \$100,000        |
| DICAP**             | (\$3,109)        | STACAP                           | \$671            |
| <b>Total Income</b> | <b>\$120,953</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>            | <b>\$117,754</b> |

## **XVII. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FY 2020**

### **OVERVIEW**

Pursuant to Title 12 M.R.S.A., Sections 1839 and 1853 the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry must review allocations for the Bureau of Parks and Lands dedicated funds and revenue accounts pertaining to Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands for the upcoming fiscal year, and submit a written report to the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs by March 15th. To assist in the preparation of that report, the Bureau is submitting information regarding Bureau income, expenditures, and management of the following five dedicated accounts:

- ***Public Reserved Lands Management Fund***
- ***Public Lands Management Fund (Nonreserved Public Lands)***
- ***Public Reserved Lands Acquisition Fund***
- ***Public Nonreserved Lands Acquisition Fund***
- ***Forest Legacy Fund***

The FY20 account summaries of Department initiatives are generated from the State of Maine Budget & Financial Management System (BFMS). The Department is hopeful these initiatives will align with the Governor's budget and will be approved after legislative review. These accounts derive revenue from the sale of forest products, from lease fees, from interest on cash balances, and from the sale of land. Programs funded by these accounts receive no support from the State's General Fund. The dedicated revenues in these accounts, supplemented by grants and other outside sources of revenue, must cover all operating expenses. The Bureau plans its expenditures for each fiscal year in part based on a level of income it projects to receive from its various revenue sources. If projected income is not sufficient, then the Bureau determines whether the balance in its contingency fund is sufficient to carry it through until additional revenues are received. If both revenue projections and contingency funds are insufficient, then the Bureau postpones planned expenditures until revenue returns to an adequate level. The Bureau has established internal financial management procedures to accomplish this process and reviews budgetary matters on a monthly and quarterly basis.

The Bureau continues to manage the State-owned Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands (the "Public Lands Program") to produce timber on a sustained yield basis and within established levels for allowable harvest to generate revenue to support resource protection, wildlife, and recreation programs. The addition of new lands and management responsibilities places increasing demand on the Bureau. Recent increases in revenue in the Public Reserved Lands Management Fund are used to meet these additional responsibilities. Presented below are the FY 2020 budget allocations proposed for each of the five dedicated accounts within the Bureau's Public Lands Program. These allocations represent the limits within which the Bureau must operate.

## FY 2020 BUDGET SUMMARIES

### **1. Public Reserved Lands Management Fund Account # 014.01A.Z239.22**

| <b>Income</b>              |                    | <b>Expenses</b>                  |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Earnings on Investments    | \$42,000           | Personal Services                | \$3,427,897        |
| Grants from State Agencies | \$253,067          | All Other (not including STACAP) | \$2,133,256        |
| Rent of Lands*             | \$1,100,000        | Capital                          |                    |
| Camp lot Leases*           | \$400,000          |                                  |                    |
| Recreational Use of Lands  | \$14,000           |                                  |                    |
| Misc. Rents & Leases       | \$12,000           |                                  |                    |
| Registration Fees          | \$25,000           |                                  |                    |
| Sale of Stumpage           | \$2,231,074        |                                  |                    |
| Sale of Forest Products *  | \$2,535,985        |                                  |                    |
| Sale Timber/Gravel/Grass   | \$2,400            |                                  |                    |
| Misc Income                | \$20,829           |                                  |                    |
| Recovered Cost             | \$40,000           |                                  |                    |
| Reg Transfer Unallocated   | (\$111,482)        |                                  |                    |
| DICAP**                    | (\$805,621)        | STACAP                           | \$198,099          |
| <b>Total Income</b>        | <b>\$5,759,252</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>            | <b>\$5,759,252</b> |

\* Represents the major components of the Division's income stream.

\*\* Consistent with state accounting practices, DICAP is shown as a "revenue debit," although it is actually an expenditure.

The Public Lands Program, as of June 30, 2018, had an account balance of \$6,993,001 in the Public Reserved Lands Management Fund which serves as its contingency fund. Because most of the Program's timber harvesting took place during the winter, there was a significant seasonal fluctuation in income. This seasonal fluctuation is expected to even out over the next couple years. The contingency fund enables the Program to operate during the first half of the fiscal year when income is low and expenses are relatively constant. It also serves as a buffer to cover operating costs when expenses exceed revenues.

Increases in annual allowable cut (AAC) and transition from stumpage sales to contract logging services have resulted in increased revenue per harvest unit, and a need for increased cash balances to support contract logging services. Increased revenues will also support increased costs for personnel services, vehicle operations, information technology, management costs for non-revenue generating activities such as conservation easement monitoring, as well as deferred maintenance, development and installation of a periodic forest inventory system, and commitments to develop or expand recreational facilities.

The Public Lands Program anticipates harvesting 133,000 cords of wood which will generate around \$4.2 million in revenue. Concurrently the Public Lands Program anticipates spending over \$2 million on roads, bridges, and maintenance.

**Requested New Initiative**

| Dedicated Revenue | Income              | Requested for 2020   | Expenses            |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Sale of Stumpage  | \$11,000,000        | Capital Expenditures | \$11,000,000        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$11,000,000</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>\$11,000,000</b> |

This initiative provides funding for capital construction materials, capital improvements to bridges and roads through Contract Logging Services (CLS) and other improvements to recreational trails and sites used by the public.

**Requested New Initiative**

| Dedicated Revenue | Income             | Requested for 2020   | Expenses           |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
|                   |                    | All Other            | \$386,000          |
| Sale of Stumpage  | \$2,957,900        | Capital Expenditures | \$2,500,000        |
| DICAP             | (\$57,900)         | STACAP               | \$14,000           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$2,900,000</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>\$2,900,000</b> |

This initiative provides funding for capital construction materials, capital improvements to bridges and roads, and other improvements to recreational trails and sites used by the public.

**Requested New Initiative**

| Dedicated Revenue | Income          | Requested for 2020 | Expenses        |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Sale of Stumpage  | \$14,867        | All Other          | \$12,778        |
| DICAP             | (\$1,667)       | STACAP             | \$422           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$13,200</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$13,200</b> |

This initiative provides funding to lease equipment.

**Requested New Initiative**

| Dedicated Revenue | Income          | Requested for 2020   | Expenses        |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Sale of Stumpage  | \$12,000        | Capital Expenditures | \$12,000        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$12,000</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>\$12,000</b> |

This initiative provides funding to replace a utility trailer.

**Requested New Initiative**

| Dedicated Revenue | Income          | Requested for 2020 | Expenses        |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Camp Leases       | \$9,866         |                    |                 |
| Sale of Stumpage  | \$4,384         | Personal Services  | \$13,556        |
| DICAP             | (\$554)         | STACAP             | \$140           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$13,696</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$13,696</b> |

This initiative provides funding for the approved reclassification of one Planning and Research Associate II position to a Senior Planner position as approved by the Bureau of Human Resources effective April 27, 2016.

**Requested New Initiative**

| Dedicated Revenue | Income          | Requested for 2020 | Expenses        |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Camp Leases       | \$2,177         |                    |                 |
| Sale of Stumpage  | \$19,418        | Personal Services  | \$21,756        |
| DICAP             | (\$2,452)       | STACAP             | \$620           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$19,143</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$22,376</b> |

This initiative provides allocation for the approved reclassification of one Resource Management Coordinator position to a Public Service Manager II position as approved by the Bureau of Human Resources effective August 30, 2017.

**Requested New Initiative**

| Dedicated Revenue | Income         | Requested for 2020 | Expenses       |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Misc. Income      | \$9,084        | Personal Services  | \$9,084        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$9,084</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$9,084</b> |

This initiative provides allocation for the approved reclassification of one Outdoor Recreation Planner to one Senior Planner position as approved by the Bureau of Human Resources effective April 25, 2016.

**Requested New Initiative**

| Dedicated Revenue | Income          | Requested for 2020 | Expenses        |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Misc. Income      | \$16,609        | Personal Services  | \$16,609        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$16,609</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$16,609</b> |

This initiative provides allocation for the approved reclassification of one Planning and Research Associate I to a Planning and Research Associate II position as approved by the Bureau of Human Resources effective June 22, 2017.

### Requested New Initiative

| Dedicated Revenue | Income         | Requested for 2020 | Expenses       |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Camp Leases       | \$3,364        | Personal Services  | \$3,364        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$3,364</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$3,364</b> |

This initiative provides allocation for the approved reclassification of one Secretary position to an Office Associate II position as approved by the Bureau of Human Resources on January 29, 2018.

### Requested New Initiative

| Dedicated Revenue | Income         | Requested for 2020 | Expenses       |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Camp Leases       | \$8,233        | Personal Services  | \$8,233        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$8,233</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$8,233</b> |

This initiative provides allocation for the approved reclassification of one Office Associate II position to an Office Specialist I position as approved by the Bureau of Human Resources on April 5, 2018.

## 2. Public Nonreserved Lands Management Fund Account # 014.01A.Z239.23

| Income                      |                 | Expenses                         |                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Earnings on Investments     |                 | All Other (not including STACAP) | \$32,761        |
| Rent on Lands and Buildings | \$2,500         | Capital                          |                 |
| Recreational Use of Parks   | \$700           |                                  |                 |
| Sale of Stumpage            | \$33,580        | STACAP                           | \$761           |
| DICAP**                     | (\$2,951)       |                                  |                 |
| <b>Total Income</b>         | <b>\$33,829</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>            | <b>\$33,522</b> |

\*\* Consistent with state accounting practices, DICAP is shown as a "revenue debit", although it is actually an expenditure.

The account has a balance of \$9,005 at the end of fiscal year 2018, which is used as a contingency fund to cover expenses that occur between the relatively small and infrequent timber harvests on these lands.

### 3. Public Reserved Lands Acquisition Fund Account # 014.01A.Z239.24

| Income                  |                  | Expenses                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Earnings on Investments | \$3,400          | All Other (not including STACAP) | \$201,816        |
| Sale of Land            | \$236,326        | Capital                          |                  |
| DICAP**                 | (\$30,251)       | STACAP                           | \$7,659          |
| <b>Total Income</b>     | <b>\$209,475</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>            | <b>\$209,475</b> |

\*\* Consistent with state accounting practices, DICAP is shown as a "revenue debit", although it is actually an expenditure.

By statute, the money in this account is used only for purposes related to the acquisition of interest in land. Lands purchased with the funds from this account have Public Reserved Land status. These funds are necessary to acquire rights-of-ways, in-holdings, conservation easements, and additions to the existing land base. As in most years, it is difficult to predict the timing, income, and expenditures involved in potential land transactions. This budget allows the Bureau, if the opportunity arises, to acquire land or other interests within the available allocation. The "All Other" expenses are used to cover the cost of legal assistance for title searches, drafting deeds, appraisals, and related items. At the end of fiscal year 2018 this account had a balance of \$674,760. Funds generated from sales of properties may only be used for land acquisitions in the same county as required by the Constitution. This limits the Bureau's ability to use this fund to pursue acquisition projects in counties without funds.

### 4. Public Nonreserved Lands Acquisition Fund Account # 014.01A.Z239.37

| Income              |                 | Expenses                         |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Sale of Land        | \$72,000        | All Other (not including STACAP) | \$60,542        |
| DICAP**             | (\$9,081)       | STACAP                           | \$2,342         |
| <b>Total Income</b> | <b>\$62,919</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>            | <b>\$62,884</b> |

\*\* Consistent with state accounting practices, DICAP is shown as a "revenue debit", although it is actually an expenditure.

The money in this account is used only for purposes related to the acquisition of interest in non-reserved land. Lands purchased with the funds from this account have Public Non-Reserved Land status. These funds are necessary to acquire rights-of-ways, in-holdings, conservation easements, and additions to the existing land base. As in most years, it is difficult to predict the timing, income, and expenditures involved in potential land transactions. This budget allows the Bureau, if the opportunity arises, to acquire land or other interests within the available allocation. The "All Other" expenses are used to cover the cost of legal assistance for title searches, drafting deeds, appraisals, and related items. At the end of fiscal year 2018 this account had a balance of \$295,060.



## 5. Forest Legacy Fund # 013.01A.Z239.35

| Income              |                 | Expenses                         |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
|                     |                 | Personal Services                |                 |
| Federal Grants      | \$42,981        | All Other (not including STACAP) | 36,158          |
|                     |                 | Capital                          | 0               |
| DICAP**             | (\$5,424)       | STACAP                           | 1,399           |
| <b>Total Income</b> | <b>\$37,557</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>            | <b>\$37,557</b> |

\*\* Consistent with state accounting practices, DICAP is shown as a “revenue debit”, although it is actually an expenditure.

This account is used for USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program grant expenses related to the acquisition of nationally approved Forest Legacy land parcels and any associated pre-acquisition costs. The figures above represent the All Other pre-acquisition budget. For the land acquisitions, financial orders are sent to the Governor for signature and to establish the capital needed for the land purchase. Land for Maine’s Future funds are typically used as match for these Forest Legacy grants to purchase land. At the end of fiscal year 2018 the account had a balance of \$0.

## **XVIII. CONCLUSION**

Maine Public Lands has continued this year to provide a multitude of benefits to the public while performing “exemplary” forest management.

Increased revenues resulting from the transition to Contract Logging Services has enabled Public Lands to increase investments in recreational infrastructure, wildlife habitat, precommercial thinning, control of invasive species, beech control, boundary line establishment and maintenance, roadside brush control and access to these properties for the public.

Markets for wood products in Maine currently seem to be going in a positive direction, increasing the opportunity to sell products like spruce/fir and hemlock pulp to help aid Public Lands with their silvicultural goals. However, given that markets are constantly changing and always subject to volatility, Public Lands needs to continue to be flexible with timber management planning and constant maintenance of road infrastructure networks to meet market changes.

BPL staff has experienced an unprecedented turnover in this last year due to three long-term employees retiring. These retirees take with them over 100 combined years of institutional knowledge that will be hard to replace.

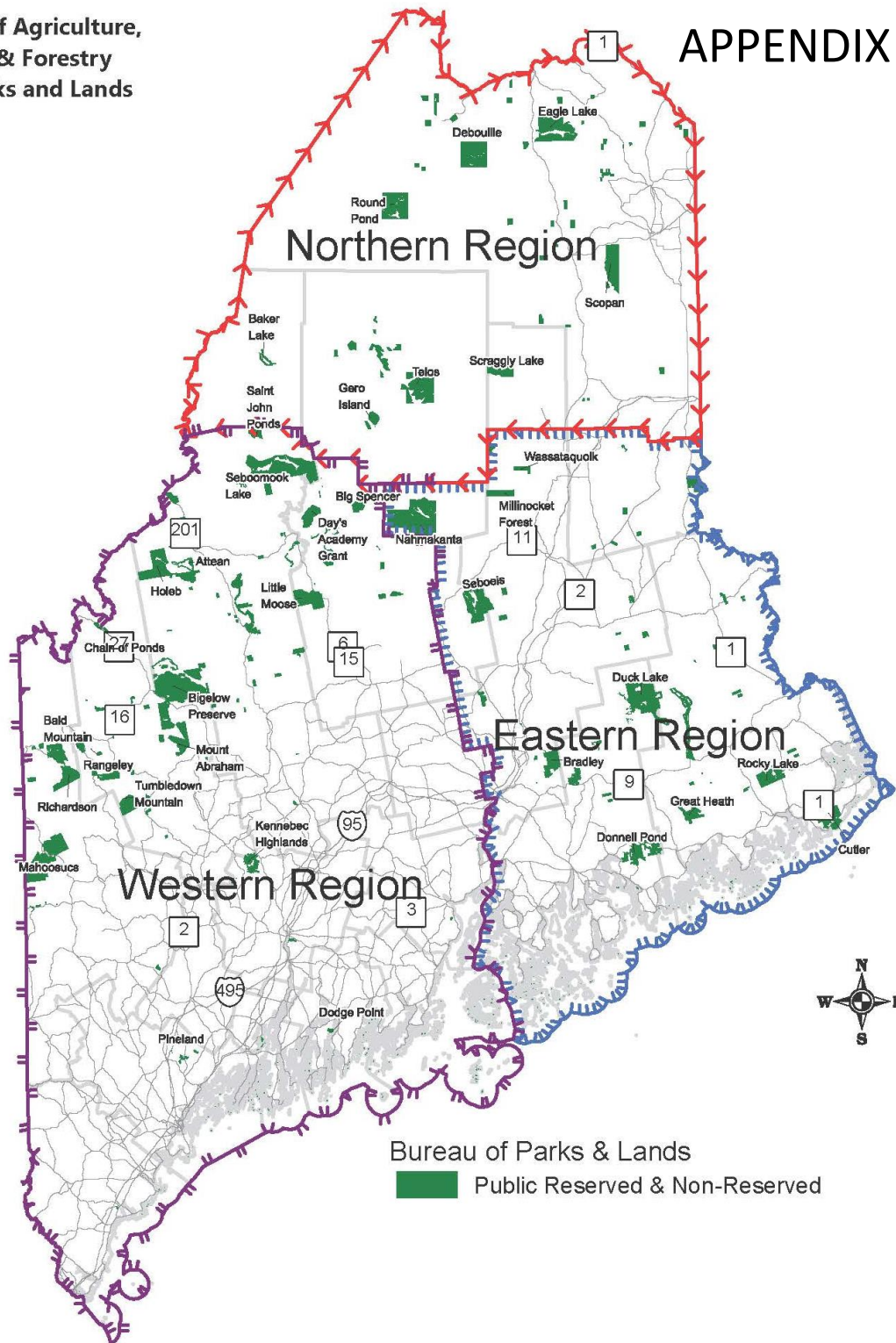
Continued demands regarding conservation easements and recent acquisitions with a focus on recreation and ecological values create more demands on the current BPL staff along with their other responsibilities of managing recreational and timber management needs. With more additions to state ownership staffing levels will need to continually be assessed to make sure BPL maintains the level of excellence that the public has come to expect.

The new forest model currently being developed will also be an extremely useful tool for BPL staff. This model, along with the statewide expansion of new technology such as LIDAR, will be able to help monitor and predict future forest conditions using different scenarios and constraints. This will help BPL learn how the decisions they make in the present will affect the landbase in the future.

Respectfully submitted,  
Doug Reed, Deputy Director, Maine Public Lands

## APPENDIX A







## APPENDIX C

| <b>BPL Public Lands Harvest Data</b><br><b>Total Harvest, Comparison to Sustainable Harvest Level (SHL)</b><br><b>FY 2009 – FY 2018</b> |                 |                                   |                                |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Fiscal Year                                                                                                                             | Regulated Acres | Sustainable Harvest Level (cords) | Harvest from Inventory (cords) | SHL minus harvest from inventory * (cords) |
| 2009                                                                                                                                    | 395,695         | 114,860                           | <b>88,885</b>                  | 25,975                                     |
| 2010                                                                                                                                    | 395,695         | 114,860                           | <b>109,444</b>                 | 5,416                                      |
| 2011                                                                                                                                    | 395,695         | 114,860                           | <b>130,563</b>                 | -15,703                                    |
| 2012                                                                                                                                    | 395,695         | 114,860                           | <b>101,669</b>                 | 13,191                                     |
| 2013                                                                                                                                    | 396,447         | 141,500                           | <b>139,798</b>                 | 1,702                                      |
| 2014                                                                                                                                    | 396,447         | 141,500                           | <b>164,011</b>                 | -22,511                                    |
| 2015                                                                                                                                    | 396,447         | 141,500                           | <b>139,896</b>                 | 1,604                                      |
| 2016                                                                                                                                    | 418,572         | 149,000                           | <b>120,629</b>                 | 28,371                                     |
| 2017                                                                                                                                    | 418,572         | 159,000                           | <b>124,612</b>                 | 34,388                                     |
| 2018                                                                                                                                    | 418,572         | 159,000                           | <b>133,970</b>                 | 25,030                                     |
|                                                                                                                                         |                 |                                   |                                |                                            |
| <b>10 Year Totals</b>                                                                                                                   |                 | <b>1,350,940</b>                  | <b>1,253,477</b>               | <b>97,463</b>                              |
|                                                                                                                                         |                 |                                   |                                |                                            |
| <b>Annual average</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>402,784</b>  | <b>135,094</b>                    | <b>125,348</b>                 | <b>9,746</b>                               |
|                                                                                                                                         |                 |                                   |                                |                                            |

\* Negative numbers = exceeded SHL