

MAINE BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS (BPL)
Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
22 State House Station - Augusta, Maine 04333-0022

MINUTES

**CENTRAL PENOBSCOT REGION (CPR) MANAGEMENT PLAN
PUBLIC MEETING**
Milo, Maine
December 4, 2013
6:00 PM

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

See attached Sign-In Sheet

BPL STAFF PRESENT

Jim Vogel, Management Plan Coordinator
Chuck Simpson, Lands Manager Eastern Region
Doug Reed, Forester - Seboeis Unit
Scott Ramsey, ORV Program Supervisor
Joe Wiley, MDIFW Wildlife Biologist assigned to BPL

Kathy Eickenberg, Chief of Planning
Jay Hall, Forester - Nahmakanta Unit
Rex Turner, Recreation Planner
Tom Morrison, Director of Operations

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made by members of the public and BPL staff, followed by a brief statement of the meeting's objectives and goals (i.e., to review the highlights of the Draft CPR Plan, with emphasis on the resource allocations, and management issues/recommendations for each Reserved Land Unit addressed by the Plan, and for the Bureau to listen to comments and take questions) by the Plan Coordinator. A meeting agenda (attached) was provided to attendees.

The Plan Coordinator provided a brief review of the purpose and objectives of the 15 year management plan, particularly regarding the intent to provide a balanced spectrum of resource-based opportunities assessed within a regional context, and to provide guidance to Bureau staff with a degree of flexibility in meeting the plan's objectives.

NAHMAKANTA UNIT ALLOCATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nahmakanta Unit presentation began with reviewing the **vision** and proposed **resource allocations** for the Unit, including Special Protection, Backcountry Recreation, Wildlife, Developed Recreation, Remote Recreation, and Timber Management uses. Resource Allocations were described with the aid of a large print of the Resource Allocations Map. No comments were made.

Review of the proposed recommendations began with a review of proposed continuation of and changes to motorized uses in the Ecological Reserve, as guided by State law and policy. The remainder of the review focused on a number of the more complex and/or more contentious items. These included: increased BPL oversight of unofficial trails constructed to remote ponds and other locations, preservation of the Wadleigh Mountain fire tower as a view site, as has been proposed in writing by the Friends of Wadleigh group, storage of boats at ponds within the unit, and development of a signage plan for the unit.

SEBOEIS UNIT ALLOCATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The **vision** for the Seboeis Unit and the proposed **dominant resource allocations** (Special Protection, Wildlife, Developed Recreation and Remote Recreation) for the Unit were reviewed, the latter with the aid of a large print of the Resource Allocations Map. No comments were made.

As with the Nahmakanta Unit, the Plan Coordinator reviewed many of the **proposed recommendations** for the Seboeis Unit. In particular, the review covered recommendations related to development of non-motorized trails in the unit, potential improvements to and expansion of both hand-carry and trailered boat facilities, and hike-to/water-access campsites. Also highlighted was existing limitations on deeded right-of-way for vehicle access on the west side of the unit (Railroad Bed Road).

SMALLER LOTS ALLOCATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Review of the allocations and recommendations for the Smaller Lots (no Vision statements were drafted for the individual small lots) began with **East Turner Mountain**, and proceeded to the **Wassataquoik Lot, Millinocket Forest Lot, Seboeis Plantation Lot, Grey Ledge Deadwater Lot**, and lastly the **Bradford/LaGrange Lot**. During review of the **East Turner Mountain, Wassataquoik, Seboeis Plantation and Grey Ledge Deadwater Lots**, it was highlighted that no deeded road access exists (due to a bridge wash-out, in the case of Wassataquoik), or no road access of any kind (in the case of East Turner Mountain). Review of the **Seboeis Plantation and Grey Ledge Deadwater** also highlighted that there is only limited access for timber management.

No comments were made about the proposed resource allocations or management recommendations (the smaller lots generally have few proposed recommendations).

PROPOSED WADLEIGH MOUNTAIN FIRE TOWER RESTORATION

At the conclusion of the discussion of planning unit resource allocations and recommendations, meeting attendee Roger Merchant requested to speak in support of the Friends of Wadleigh proposal to restore the Wadleigh Mountain fire tower. Mr. Merchant highlighted the historical value and rarity of the fire tower, noting that many such towers in the region and state have been lost, and the group's strong commitment and desire to work with the Bureau on a plan to restore the tower and make it safe for public use as a lookout. Mr. Merchant also submitted letters from himself and David Merchant, with Friends of Wadleigh, both of which appeal to the Bureau to work with the group to implement the proposed restoration plan, and concluded with a request for continued dialog with the Bureau on this topic.

PROPOSED CHANGES IN SYSTEMWIDE FORESTRY OPERATIONS

Tom Morrison provided a 15-minute explanation of proposed changes in BPL's system wide forest harvest goals which would reduce the average stocking levels on the Bureau's managed lands from 23 cords per acre to 21.5 cords per acre over the next 20 years. Tom's presentation highlighted the history behind the proposal, and some of the factors driving the change including new forest inventory data indicating an increase in stocking levels since the previous inventory and a variety of concerns about those levels, including mortality levels and future insect and disease problems. Also mentioned were the Bureau's intent to conduct regular review of the effect of any changes implemented on the full range of land uses and management objectives (including wildlife and recreation) and issues that the Bureau will need to address in order to implement the proposed changes (particularly a need for increased staffing). A few questions were asked and responded to by Tom regarding net annual forest growth per acre on Bureau forest lands, the potential for increase in roads with increased harvest, the Bureau's confidence in its inventory data, and related topics.

CLOSING COMMENTS

The Plan Coordinator mentioned that comments on the Draft Plan would continue to be accepted through December 18 (two weeks), and that the email and U.S. mail address for comments was provided on bottom of the meeting agenda. The next steps toward completion of the plan were described, including consideration of comments received and any resulting revisions to the Plan, followed by review of the Final Plan by the BPL Director, and the eventual recommendation by the Director to the DACF Commissioner for plan approval and adoption.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Jim Vogel*