

**Summary of Advisory Committee Comments and Parks and Public Lands Responses
on the Downeast Management Plan 5-Year Review for 2012
Comment Period July 2 - July 17, 2013**

(Does not include typographical, grammatical, or formatting comments)

Comment	Response
<i>From: Jim Fisher, Hancock County Planning Commission</i>	
<p>Regarding Donnell Pond Unit:</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the five year review. It has been a pleasure working with the Division of Parks and Public Lands, particularly as we have made some very significant improvements in the Donnell-Tunk unit over the last five years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would be interested in pressing ahead with a trail that crosses north of Spring River Lake, connecting Tunk Mountain with the Tunk Stream camp site, eventually reaching Round Pond Mountain and the Sunrise Trail. This section would be less often used than the more mountainous portion, but would create a significant (25+ mile) multi-day loop. There are many challenges to creating this loop, including easements to cross private property. <p>Specific Comments Page 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trails to Tunk summit, Hidden Ponds, Catherine Mountain and Caribou Mountain are complete. <p>Page 3/4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new trailhead and parking area for Tunk Mtn and trailhead on Dynamite Brook Road for Catherine Mountain and Caribou Mountain; <p>Tunk Lake Boat Ramp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPPL pooled resource with IF&W to maintain sanitation at this location. Ongoing challenge has been excess trash deposited in trash receptacle, recycling receptacle and vault privy. There is an ongoing challenge of vandalism to privy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 5-Year Review indicates that next steps in trail development will include planning for one or more multi-day backpacking routes and associated campsites (Review p 2). Earlier staff field investigations toward developing a portion of the route mentioned revealed some of its challenges: crossings of private property and wetlands and questionable quality/suitability of some potential segments for a backpacking experience. The considerable planning required for one or more multi-day routes should begin in the near future. Corrected to read: "Trails to Tunk summit, Hidden Ponds and Caribou Mountain are complete." Catherine Mountain is on private property and will not be included in the list. Corrected to read: "A new trailhead and parking area for Tunk Mtn and trailhead on Dynamite Brook Road for Caribou Mountain;" Catherine Mountain is on private property and will not be included in the list. The boat ramp is owned by IF&W. The plan notes that the Division needs to coordinate with IF&W on management of this site (Plan p 32), which the Division does. In 2013 the Division and IF&W jointly funded a Blackwoods Steward to assist

<p>Tunk Mountain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Nature Conservancy has upgraded one or more culverts to natural bottoms – allowing improved fish passage. They have also participated in outreach efforts such as the <u>Great Maine Outdoor Weekends</u>. <p>There have also been some changes that merit additional consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large wind power generators have been installed immediately north of the Donnell-Tunk Unit. These towers provide significant revenues to Hancock County government. Hancock County recently hired a UT manager and allocated a portion of their revenues to recreational development in the Hancock County UT. Future coordination with Hancock and Washington County government for recreational development is encouraged. 	<p>with maintenance of facilities along the Blackwoods Byway (Route 182), which has improved conditions at the Tunk Lake boat ramp. The Division hopes to expand the position’s scope of work next year. MDOT also assists in maintaining Byway facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TNC is a valued partner in managing and promoting appreciation of these lands, and a TNC representative serves on the plan Advisory Committee. The Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC) and the Washington County Council of Governments (COG) serve on the Downeast plan Advisory Committee. Representatives of each county serve on the governing boards of these agencies. The Division’s Eastern Region Manager attended an initial meeting about these funds and continues to follow the program.
<p>From: Ashby D. Bladen, Friends of Tunk/Blackwoods Steward</p>	
<p>Regarding Donnell Pond Unit:</p> <p>I would like to comment on the five year review for the Downeast Management Plan. In the past I was leader of the Friends of Tunk Watershed and now am the Blackwoods Steward. I will try to respond to each bullet in order.</p> <p>Donnell Pond - Special Protection Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To date no way has been found to mark the boundaries of the eco-reserves. There are many abandoned and broken boats at Little Long Pond. 	<p>Note: Conditions observed in the field should be brought directly to the Regional Manager for immediate discussion, rather than waiting for the five-year review. (See items below with “Referred to Eastern Region office for follow-up.”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Division does not routinely mark ecoreserve boundaries on the ground, except when it is about to conduct management activities that might impact the reserve. (See IRP, p 13.) Referred to Eastern Region office for follow-up. This is being examined region-wide as abandoned boats occur in other locations as well.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATVs continue to access Tilden Pond from Spring River Lake in the winter. <p>Backcountry Recreation Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-day backpacking opportunity has not been created because the campsites are water access and not on the hiking trails. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logging has damaged many of the existing trails. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Blackwoods Steward has only just been hired and it is not at all clear that the job includes time for trail maintenance or improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date the state has not been able to coordinate with the owners of the other conservation lands in the area. <p>Wildlife Management Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last round of logging came close to and left a skid trail to the Spring River Lake eagle nest. <p>Remote Recreation Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain biking trails would be a great idea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to Eastern Region office for follow-up. The long-established pattern of ATV travel from Spring River Lake to Tilden Pond for ice fishing will take some time to alter. (Note: A number of Special Use Permit holders have permission to access camp lots on Anderson Pond and east of Tilden Pond by ATV.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed. Trail work to date has focused on improved day hiking opportunities. However, some of the improved trail segments will become components of a multi-day route. A number of trail linkages still need to be established to create a long-distance, multi-day route that warrants trailside campsites. It is a work in progress. (Note: Hikers of the Caribou Mountain loop can choose to access campsites on Donnell Pond via trails that lead from the loop to the pond.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to Eastern Region office for follow-up. We do not believe that logging has damaged any designated trails. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to Eastern Region office for follow-up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Division routinely coordinates with abutting conservation owners, including DIF&W and TNC. We also coordinate with MDOT and the Blackwoods Byway Committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The logging took place in winter to avoid the nesting season, as required. The Forest Certification team visited this site and approved the work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan recommends exploring biking trails on the Unit as demand warrants (Plan p 42), and the Division has met with the New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA). Although a new Penobscot Region Chapter of NEMBA has recently been formed, no specific
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<p>Developed Recreation Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The boat launch at Spring River Lake still needs to be built. <p>Timber Management Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent cutting in the Spring River Lake and Shillelagh Pond areas left behind skidder ruts that were not up to best management practices. <p>Transportation and Administrative Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing has been done about the erosion from the road to the lease campsite on Spring River Lake. • The T-10 boundary was worked on, but the boundary lines with the McCollom, Ward, and Farnsworth lots have not been touched. 	<p>proposals have emerged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new boat launch at Spring River Lake is currently under construction. • Referred to Eastern Region office for follow-up. • Referred to Eastern Region office for follow-up. • Referred to Eastern Region office for follow-up.
<p>From: Richard Bard, Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife</p>	
<p>Thank you for the opportunity to read and comment on the 5-year review of the Downeast Region Management Plan. I have no comments or recommendations to make on the progress of the plan thus far. Looks like very good progress is being made on many important fronts. Great job!</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>
<p>From: Eliza Donoghue, Natural Resources Council of Maine</p>	
<p>Regarding the Donnell Pond Unit:</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to review the Natural Resources Council of Maine's (NRCM) comments on the first Five-Year Review of the 2007 Downeast Region Management Plan covering the period from 2007 through 2012.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is our understanding that we, as members of the Downeast Plan Advisory Committee, may identify any new issues or circumstances that we feel warrant Committee input or action. Such issues or circumstances may, in our opinion as Committee members, require an amendment to the plan or should be discussed with the Committee prior to the 	

<p>Division taking action without amending the plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRCM is concerned about the continued violations and unauthorized use of motorized vehicles in the Donnell Pond Unit. We believe that this circumstance should be discussed with the Committee prior to the Division taking action without amending the plan. We do not believe an amendment is necessary because the issue is recognized in the plan. However, efforts by the Division to curb such use since plan adoption have not been successful and warrant further discussion by the Committee. The Five-Year review provides that as a result of improving the road from the Downeast Sunrise Trail motorized traffic (particularly ATV) has gained easier access to Schoodic Nubble and Mountain. According to the review the improvement stopped at the ledge area, which was blocked with large boulders to impede vehicle traffic. The boulders were moved within days of being placed. This is of great concern to NRCM because the Maine Natural Areas Program has identified rare plants and an “exemplary Low Summit Bald community” on the summit of Schoodic Mountain, including two species of rare sandworts. The summit is classified as having Special Protection as its dominant use. ATV and other motorized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The historic use of motorized vehicles on the Donnell Pond Unit was discussed extensively with the Advisory Committee during plan development, and the plan includes recommendations to prevent unauthorized use in Special Protection, Remote Recreation and Developed Recreation Areas. As reported in the Five-Year Review, efforts to prevent unauthorized use have included improved signage, placement of barricades, extra law enforcement patrols, monitoring with trail cameras, direct contact with visitors and violators, presentations to user groups, and creating or directing motorized users to opportunities for authorized use. However, it may be unrealistic to believe that 100% exclusion is achievable. The Division expects to continue and expand these efforts and believes they will be increasingly successful over time. Regarding further discussion by the committee, the Committee was asked to identify new issues or circumstances that were <u>not addressed in the plan</u>. The issue of unauthorized motorized use at Donnell Pond is fully discussed in the management plan. The Division improved an existing road from the Down East Sunrise Trail north through the blueberry barren towards Little Pond, ending the road with a barricade to prevent unauthorized use of the road system in the Fiery Mountain/Little Pond area. The barricade was removed and will be replaced and fortified. While the road improvements may make it easier for ATV traffic to access Schoodic Mountain, there is no evidence of increased unauthorized ATV use as a result of the better road conditions. The western side of Schoodic Mountain summit, including a portion of the “exemplary Low Summit Bald community” summit is located on private land and is not subject to the management plan. Most
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<p>recreational vehicle use on the summit of Schoodic Mountain will have (and like has had) significant adverse impact on this community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is but one example of unauthorized use of motorized vehicles in the Donnell Pond Unit. The review states that there has also been increased use on Schoodic Beach and in the Fiery Mountain/Little Pond area. • While NRCM respects the efforts of the Division to curb this use and the difficulties of enforcement, we believe that this is a circumstance that warrants discussion on the part of the Committee to perhaps establish new approaches to combating this destructive use. 	<p>ATVs and other vehicles that climb the mountain do so from the west via a number of old routes. The review notes that unauthorized “use still occurs, but levels seem a bit lower,” possibly because the Down East Sunrise Trail is providing an alternative opportunity for riding (Review, p.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eastern side of the summit, including most of the “exemplary Low Summit Bald community,” is located on the Donnell Pond unit and is classified as a Special Protection Area under the plan. Authorized access from the east is by hiking trail only from the Schoodic Beach trailhead. • The review states that “occasional ATV law violations occur” at Schoodic Beach (Review, p. 3), and that Down East Sunrise Trail use MAY contribute to increased ATV use on Schoodic Beach, but no direct connection can be determined .” (See Review, p.4.) The review also states that “prevention of [unauthorized motorized use on the road system in the Little Pond/Fiery Mountain area] is very difficult because access is uncontrollable, [and] there is a long-established history of vehicle use....” (See Review, p.3.) The review did not find that there was an increase in unauthorized use of motor vehicles in this area. • The role of the Advisory Committee is to advise the Division on issues to be addressed in the Management Plan for the public lands in the Downeast region, including Donnell Pond, Rocky Lake, Cutler Coast, Great Heath and several smaller lots; and for the 5-year reviews, to note any <u>new issues</u> that may require amendment to the plan. The Committee provided considerable input on the issue of unauthorized motorized use at Donnell Pond during preparation of the 2007 plan and provided the Division with broad latitude to develop ways of combating this use. The Division has employed a number of approaches to date and will continue to employ multiple strategies to reduce unauthorized use. Unauthorized ATV use is not a new issue, and for purposes of the
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	<p>5-year review, DPPL has determined that no amendments to the plan are needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In summary, the Division's efforts have alerted the public to new limitations on motorized use resulting from the plan and exposed visitor's to a variety of methods that will be used in to prevent unauthorized use. Because unauthorized use continues to occur, these efforts will continue to be a management priority, with the expectation that the unauthorized use will decline over time as a result.
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