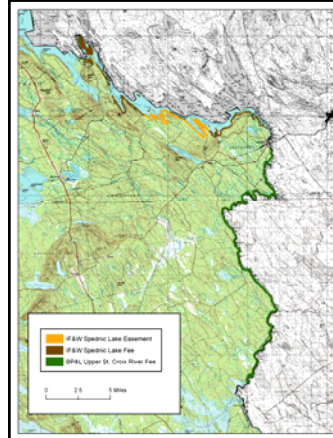


Spednic Lake & Upper St. Croix River Final Draft Management Plan



Public Meeting
May 31, 2011



Planning Area

Approximately 4,300 acres and 69 miles of shoreland on Spednic Lake and the Upper St. Croix River.

51 miles (2,773 acres) of shorefront and islands within Maine's Spednic Lake/Upper St. Croix River corridor acquired by the State of Maine in 2003

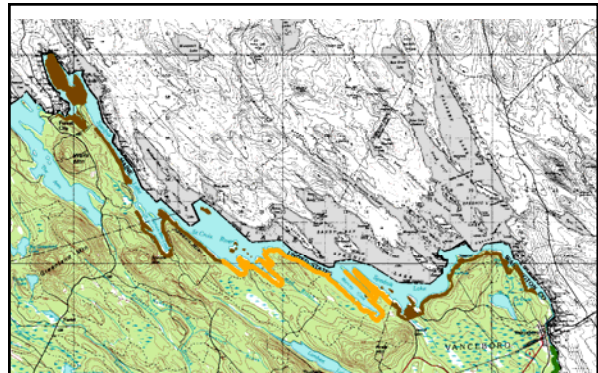
And several additional properties on Spednic Lake owned or managed by the State of Maine:

- an 831-acre conservation easement on 14.4 miles of shoreland
- 12 islands covering 44 acres (including Birch Island)
- 650-acre Booming Grounds Management Area.

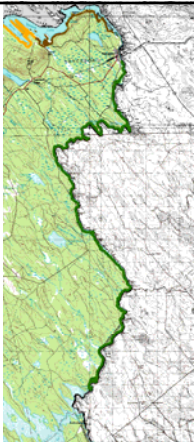
Lands on Spednic Lake are managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and lands on the St. Croix River are managed by the Maine Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks & Lands

Acquisition History

- 1994 – Purchase by the State of Maine of 1) conservation easements on 831 acres, creating a 500-foot wide conservation corridor along over 14 miles of undeveloped shorefront on Spednic Lake and 2) fee ownership of 11 small islands in Spednic Lake totaling 19 acres, in the mid-section of the lake.
- 1996 – WWLT purchases the 25-acre Birch Island and later conveyed the island to the State of Maine (IF&W) with restrictive deed covenants.
- 1998 – Maine purchases 650 acres and four miles of shorefront on Spednic Lake, Mud Lake and Mud Lake Stream, at Forest City, from Georgia-Pacific Corporation, through the Land for Maine's Future Program. IF&W now manages these lands as the Booming Grounds Wildlife Management Area.
- 2003 – Fee purchase by the State of Maine of 51 miles (2,773 acres) of 500-foot shoreland corridor and islands on the lower end of Spednic Lake and the upper St. Croix River. IF&W manages the state's shorelands on Spednic Lake; BPL manages the state's shorelands and islands on the river. Spednic Lake lands were purchased by WLLT and subsequently conveyed to the State of Maine (IF&W) with restrictive deed covenants.



Spednic Lake lands



Upper St. Croix River lands

Planning Context

The plan's purpose is to provide focused, single-country resource and recreational management planning in order to:

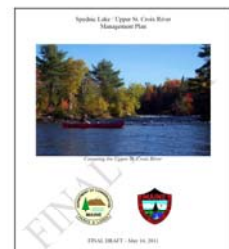
- retain a high quality backcountry experience
- maintain efficiencies in recreation management
- protect the undeveloped character and natural resources of this outstanding corridor

The plan will:

- provide a description of the resources found the properties addressed
- describe management issues identified by members of the public and agency staff
- put forth management recommendations to implemented over the next 15-year period.

Timeline:

- 15 year timeframe
- review at 5 year intervals
- all recommendations may not be accomplish within the Plan period.



Public Participation and the Planning Process

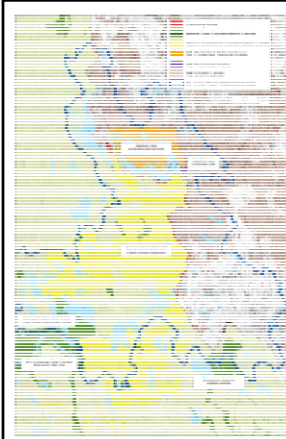
- Research and Analysis
- Issue Identification/Public Scoping Session
 - Public Scoping Session held in Vanceboro on October 27, 2010
 - Stakeholder meetings
- First Draft Plan
 - First Draft Plan was circulated on April 20, 2011.
 - Comment period until May 10, 2011.
- Final Draft Plan
 - Final Draft Management Plan was circulated on May 16, 2011.
 - A Public Meeting in Vanceboro on May 31, 2011.
 - Comment period until June 14th, 2011.
- Review of the Proposed Plan and Plan Adoption



Planning Context: Related plans, studies, and management agreements



Regional Planning Context



- Culture and History of the Region
- Natural and Geological Resources in the Region
- Recreation Resources in the Region
- Other Key Land Managers in the Region
- Conservation Partners
- Regional Conservation Efforts

Vision Statement

The Spednic Lake and Upper St. Croix River corridor lands provide traditional, backcountry recreational experiences in a near-wilderness environment with exceptional scenic, natural, cultural and historic values. Primitive recreational facilities are maintained to an exemplary standard with as little impact as possible on the natural character of the land. Recreational and resource information is available through a variety of means. The lands are efficiently and effectively managed through strong partnerships between state and international management agencies, conservation organizations, adjacent landowners, recreation clubs, local businesses and communities.

Natural Resources

- Geology and Soils
- Hydrology, Water Quality and Quantity
- Natural Communities
- Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat
- Fisheries



Natural Resource

Management Issues and Recommendations

Management Issue	Management Recommendation
Water quantity: Lake level and river flow conditions can have a significant impact on the corridor's natural and recreational resources. Water levels and flows can affect recreation resources through effects on the "floatability" of the river, and ease of access to put-ins, take-outs and campsites on the lake and river. Natural resources can be affected by impacts of flows and water levels on streambank and shoreline erosion, flooding, and effects on fisheries habitat in both the lake and river.	IF&W and BPL should continue dialogue with dam owners in the interest of continuing lake levels and river flows that support traditional backcountry recreation and natural resource conservation.
Bald Eagles: Bald eagle nesting can be impacted by visible or highly audible recreation uses, particularly where eagles are not accustomed to these uses. There are currently two known nest locations within the planning area.	BPL should continue dialogue with IF&W on bald eagle nesting areas and follow National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines for camping areas. These guidelines recommend a 330-foot buffer during the breeding season. No buffer is necessary around nest sites outside the breeding season.

Natural Resource

Management Issues and Recommendations

Management Issue	Management Recommendation
Deer Wintering Area Management: IF&W considers deer wintering area management to be the most pressing habitat concern on the St. Croix River. Because most recreation use on the river occurs during summer there is little conflict between recreational uses and deer wintering habitat. Management of the corridor lands must recognize the dual objectives of protecting the backcountry recreation experience while supporting enhancement of the riparian area for deer habitat.	BPL's management of its river corridor lands should achieve the dual objectives of supporting IF&W's objectives for providing quality deer wintering habitat in this region, and maintaining a natural undisturbed character that protects a high quality backcountry recreation experience. Use of BPL's visual class system would be an appropriate tool to guide this management.

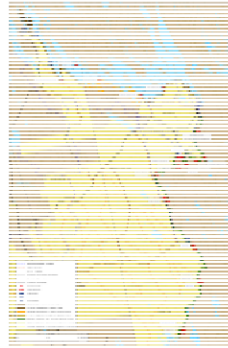
Historical and Cultural Resources

Historic and Cultural Resource Management Issues and Recommendations

Management Issue	Management Recommendation
Archaeological Resources: Very little is known about the archaeology on the Upper St. Croix River; but studies indicate its probable importance as a travel way used by Native Americans for thousands of years.	The development of any new campsites or the expansion of existing campsites should be preceded by an archeological field check.

Recreation Resources

- Border Enforcement
- Water Access
- Campsites
- Lunch Sites
- Portages
- Hunting and Trapping
- Wildlife Watching
- Non-motorized Trails
- Motorized Trails
- Recreation Information and Education
- Recreation Use Surveys



Recreation Resources – Spednic Lake Access



- Forest City Launch (not under state management)
- Castle Road Launch (not under state management)
- Vanceboro Launch

Recreation Resources – Upper St. Croix Access

- Vanceboro (not under state management)
- Little Falls
- Loon Bay
- Grand Falls Flowage (not under state management)



Recreation Resources – Spednic Lake Campsites

- Birch Island
- Spruce Mountain Cove
- Cedar Point
- Squatter's Point
- The Narrows



Recreation Resources – Upper St. Croix River Campsites

- Wingdam Island (not under state management)
- Porter’s Meadows
- Tunnel Rips
- The Cape
- Little Falls (2)
- Lower Little Falls
- Baby’s Grave
- Scott Brook
- Split Rock (2)
- Loon Bay (2)
- Annapurna
- Skutnik
- Kendrick Rips
- Egg Point



Recreation Resource Management Issues and Recommendations

Management Issue	Management Recommendation
Border Enforcement: Increased U.S. enforcement has discontinued the longstanding practice of recreationists using the St. Croix International Waterway having unencumbered access to campsites in both Maine and New Brunswick.	IF&W and BPL should continue to work with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to explore solutions to border enforcement challenges.
Border Enforcement: There is currently no Canadian permitting process that allows recreationists to land on the Canadian side of the St. Croix except at formal road entry points, preventing use of both Maine and New Brunswick campsites.	IF&W and BPL should reach out to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to explore establishing a counterpart to the U.S. I-68 Canadian Border Boating Program for St. Croix users. Perhaps the model used on the Boundary Water Canoe Area on the Minnesota and Ontario border, the CANPASS Remote Area Border Crossing permit system, could be applied to the St. Croix.
Spednic Lake Water Access: Public access is not permanently secured north of the Vanceboro launch. Guaranteed public access to the upper end of Spednic Lake is critical to the lake’s backcountry recreational use and to the sporting guides who maintain the area’s traditional local economy.	BPL and IF&W should work with landowners, WWLT, and other interests to secure permanent public access to the Forest City Landing and the Castle Road Landing with the goal maintaining both sites as a primitive gravel ramps.

Recreation Resource Management Issues and Recommendations

Management Issue	Management Recommendation
Upper St. Croix River Water Access: Public access is not permanently secured at the upper or lower ends of the upper river. The lack of guaranteed access at these two points is a critical recreation issue as they represent the beginning and end of the traditional St. Croix River trip.	BPL should pursue safe and permanent public access to the river at Vanceboro and Grand Falls Flowage. BPL should also work with landowners to formalize long-term public access to the portage route around the Vanceboro dam.
Upper St. Croix River Water Access: The parking area for the Little Falls launch and Loon Bay Landing are sometimes used for car camping or trailer camping.	BPL should enforce policy prohibiting camping in parking areas and clearly indicate authorized camping areas nearby.
Parking: Parking demand can exceed capacity at Little Falls.	This problem can be partially alleviated by enforcing no camping policy in the Little Falls parking area. Additionally, BPL should consider developing additional parking at Little Falls to meet excess demand.

Recreation Resource Management Issues and Recommendations

Management Issue	Management Recommendation
Campsites: Group size limits have not been set for campsites.	IF&W and BPL should establish group size limits of 12. Larger groups may be accommodated at designated sites by special permission.
Campsites: Consistent recreational signage guidelines have not been developed for the state’s lake and river sites. At present, St. Croix BPL sites and the Canadian sites have similar signage.	Campsites on Spednic Lake and the Upper St. Croix River should continue to be marked with uniform, low-impact, site entrance signage. BPL should continue to use uniform low-impact user signage at campsites to encourage appropriate public use. IF&W should adopt similar signage, for uniformity. The number of signs should be kept to a minimum and be designed for minimal visual impact.
Unauthorized Camping known to occur on Spednic Lake at Birch Island, on the St. Croix River by the Grassy Islands and at other locations. Unauthorized campsites fragment the St. Croix’s semi-wilderness character, create fire hazards and degrade shoreland areas through tree removal, shore erosion and left-behind waste.	IF&W and BPL should post unauthorized sites with “no camping signs” which cannot be seen from the water so not to draw unwanted attention. Public information on authorized campsites and camping rules should be made more widely available. Unauthorized sites should be discouraged through enforcement and by dismantling fire rings and naturalizing impacted sites.
Future campsite development: The vision for the St. Croix International Waterway is for a backcountry, semi-wilderness experience. There is concern that the addition of new campsites will degrade this experience. However, use is also anticipated to grow and competition may increase for existing sites.	IF&W and BPL should give primacy to maintaining the St. Croix’s traditional backcountry experience over meeting increased demand. New campsite development should be limited, determined to have a minimal impact on the backcountry experience, and justified by documented increases in demand. Preference should be given to expanding current sites rather than developing new sites. A second site at The Narrows on Spednic Lake is the only identified potential expansion at this time. Employ more active management when needed to limit use to the desired level for maintaining the remote backcountry experience.

Recreation Resource Management Issues and Recommendations

Management Issue	Management Recommendation
Spednic Lake Lunch Sites: There is no formal management regarding guide lunch sites on Spednic Lake.	IF&W should work with the Forest City Guides Association to develop a formal MOU for use of the Spednic Lake lunch sites.
Spednic Lake Lunch Sites: The fire pits have not yet been authorized by the Maine Forest Service.	IF&W should work with the Forest City Guides Association to ensure all lunch site fire pits meet Maine Forest Service guidelines and receive formal authorization.
Spednic Lake Lunch Sites: Unauthorized overnight use of the lunch sites occurs occasionally.	IF&W should work with the Forest City Guides Association to monitor unauthorized overnight use at Spednic Lake lunch sites. At this time, signage is not deemed necessary to discourage unauthorized camping at Spednic Lake lunch sites. If overnight use should begin to increase, appropriate signage may be warranted.
Spednic Lake Lunch Sites: Although intended primarily for guide use, Spednic Lake lunch sites are open to public use. There is currently minimal overlap between local guides and public users at these sites, but conflicts may increase.	If conflicts should increase over time, IF&W should review its lunch site MOU to consider leasing these sites exclusively for guide use.

Recreation Resource Management Issues and Recommendations

Management Issue	Management Recommendation
Upper St. Croix River Portages: Portage trail improvements are needed.	BPL should improve portage trails at Little Falls and Canoose Rips.
Spednic Lake Motorized trails:	IF&W should authorize established motorized trail segments that follow existing woods roads and do not conflict with the primary management goal of maintaining a quiet backcountry wilderness experience along the lake. IF&W should work with the Vanceboro-Lambert Lake Snowmobile Club to investigate the location of the #6 trail in Vanceboro and determine whether it follows existing roads and whether alternative trails provide sufficient access to Spednic Lake in Vanceboro. IF&W should work with the Wagner Forest Management and the Bureau’s Off-road Vehicle Division to investigate the location of ATV trails near Spruce Mountain Cove and explore options to prevent unauthorized access to the Spruce Mountain Cove campsite.
Upper St. Croix River Motorized trails:	BPL should authorize established motorized trail segments that follow existing roads and do not conflict with primary management goal of maintaining a backcountry wilderness experience along the lake. BPL, through its Off-road Vehicles division, should work with the Vanceboro-Lambert Lake Snowmobile Club and Tomah County ATV Riders to monitor unauthorized use within the planning corridor.

**Recreation Resource
Management Issues and Recommendations**

Management Issue	Management Recommendation
Recreation Information and Education: IF&W and BPL do not currently provide public information on recreation facilities or user rules for Spednic Lake or the Upper St. Croix River lands.	IF&W and BPL should work to provide public information on recreational facilities and user rules through BPL's website, printed materials and kiosks at access points.
Recreation Use Survey: The last recreation use survey was conducted on the river in 1991. Additional use information would enhance the ability of the management entities to identify existing and emerging needs and issues.	IF&W and BPL should prioritize and support an updated recreation use survey to provide accurate information on summer use numbers and characteristics to assist with long-range planning. BPL should also gather winter use information through coordination with local snowmobile clubs.
Recreation Use Conflicts: Inappropriate conduct occurs on the river, particularly with prime water levels or holiday weekends.	IF&W and BPL, themselves and through agreements with other agencies, should periodically patrol the planning area to discourage user conduct that negatively affects public safety, the environment and the rights of users to quiet enjoyment of the resource.

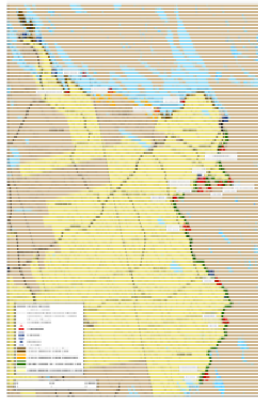
Timber Resources

**Timber and Renewable Resources
Management Issues and Recommendations**

Management Issue or Opportunity	Management Recommendation
Timber Management: The Bureau does not ordinarily manage timber on State Park Lands.	The corridor lands should be retained in an undisturbed, natural state except for approved recreation management areas. Tree cutting should be limited to disease and pest management, enhancement of deer wintering habitat if appropriate and consistent with protecting a backcountry recreation experience, the removal of safety hazards, and minimal cutting for authorized site creation or, on the Upper St. Croix River land, for road maintenance.

**Transportation and
Administrative
Resources**

- Interdepartmental and International Coordination
- Management Agreements
- Roads
- Rules
- User Fees
- Camplot Leases
- Inholdings
- Easement Stewardship



**Transportation and Administrative
Management Issues and Recommendations:**

Management Issue or Opportunity	Management Recommendation
Interdepartmental Coordination	IF&W and BPL should coordinate state recreation and resource management for the St. Croix planning corridor on a long-term basis.
International Coordination	International coordination should be pursued to create management efficiencies and to provide recreational opportunities that function in a complementary manner. IF&W and BPL should establish direct lines of communication and management planning with the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources – Crown Lands Branch for their shared Spednic Lake/Upper St. Croix River corridor obligations. The Waterway Commission will continue to assist with this collaboration, to the extent that its resources allow.
Recreation management agreements: No formal maintenance agreements exist for Spednic Lake. The Waterway Commission is overextended to fulfill BPL management agreement obligations with current resources.	IF&W should continue to work the Forest City Guides Association to ensure stewardship of the lunch sites on Spednic Lake. IF&W should develop maintenance agreements with the Waterway Commission for Spednic Lake campsites. BPL should continue its current formal St. Croix maintenance criteria and schedules, and continue to contract with the Waterway Commission to deliver site maintenance for Upper St. Croix River recreation facilities.

**Transportation and Administrative
Management Issues and Recommendations:**

Management Issue or Opportunity	Management Recommendation
Public Access Roads: The long-term maintenance of these roads will be a management challenge for the Bureau. The Bureau has the right but not the responsibility to maintain these roads for public use.	BPL should continue to work with adjacent private landowners and the Waterway Commission to address road maintenance issues and ensure public access to Little Falls and Loon Bay Landing. The Castle Road, Loon Bay Road, and Salmon Brook Road should be prioritized for future investments.
Other Roads: Several additional roads intersect the planning corridor area.	Roads not mapped as Public Access Roads should be considered management roads and should not be maintained for public use.
Roads: Unauthorized vehicle access	IF&W and BPL should inventory all authorized motorized accesses across their lands. New access should not be permitted. Unauthorized accesses should be monitored and restricted or removed.

**Transportation and Administrative
Management Issues and Recommendations:**

Management Issue or Opportunity	Management Recommendation
Funding: No user fees are currently collected yet recreation management resources are limited.	IF&W and BPL should not institute user fees. It is likely that instituting fees would lead to servicing costs that could exceed revenues, and thus be unproductive. IF&W and BPL should continue to seek funding opportunities through programs such as the Recreational Trails Program, the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund and the Washington County TIF fund. IF&W and BPL should encourage users to make tax-deductible donations to the Waterway Commission in lieu of fees.
Rules: Rules and regulations are not clear or well-communicated.	IF&W and BPL should establish rules and regulations for their Spednic Lake and Upper St. Croix River lands through a public process as has been done for the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and the Penobscot River Corridor. The rules and regulations should be designed to provide traditional, backcountry recreation experiences in a near-wilderness environment. The resulting rules should be published on the Bureau's website and in printed materials.
Camplot Leases:	No new camplot leases will be developed. BPL should continue to manage its leases within the guidelines of its lease program and with the goal of maintaining the semi-wilderness character and backcountry experience on the Upper St. Croix River corridor.
Easement Stewardship:	IF&W should monitor the Baskahegan easement lands annually.

Public Comments on the
Final Draft Management Plan
are due **June 14th, 2011**

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