

THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF
PUBLIC LANDS AND PUBLICLY-HELD EASEMENTS

June 6, 2007
1:00 – 3:00 pm
Governor's Cabinet Room
Maine State House

Task Force Members Present

Bruce Kidman – The Nature Conservancy
Greg Chute – The Chewonki Foundation
John Rust – Maine Professional Guides Association
Al Coperthwaite – North Maine Woods
Karen Woodsum – The Sierra Club Maine Chapter
Dan Mitchell – ATV Maine
Walter Graff – Appalachian Mountain Club
Marcia McKeague – Katahdin Timberlands
George Smith – Sportsman's Alliance of Maine
Sally Stockwell – Maine Audubon
Alan Hutchinson - The Forest Society of Maine
Jon Fitzgerald – Maine Huts & Trails
Raymond Wotton – Landowner
Bob Meyers - Maine Snowmobile Association
Mac Hunter – University of Maine, Dept. of Wildlife

Legislative Members Present

Senator Bruce Bryant of Oxford County
Rep. Donald Marean of Hollis
Rep. Jackie Lundeen of Presque Isle

Task Force Members Absent

Jon Lund – Maine Sportsman, Outdoor Writer
Senator Kevin Raye of Washington County

Staff

Paul Jacques (Chair) – Deputy Commissioner, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Karin Tilberg – Office of the Governor
Tim Glidden – Director, Land for Maine's Future Program
Patrick McGowan – Commissioner, Department of Conservation
Will Harris – Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Bob Duplessie - Department of Conservation
Mackenzi Keliher – Bureau of Parks & Lands

Overview of Task Force Objectives and Action Items

The purpose of the Task Force is to develop recommendations to improve the accuracy and availability of information regarding management of public lands in Maine and to ensure that decisions regarding management of public lands are made in a fair manner that meets the full array of recreational interests in Maine now and into the future. In conducting its work, the Task Force should:

1. create a baseline inventory of the existing management and recreational uses and types of access on public lands in Maine and in the context of private, municipal and federal lands;
2. review and document the statutes, rules and guidelines that direct decisions regarding the management of and recreational uses on public lands in Maine;
3. collect information regarding the trends in recreational use in Maine, the adequacy of supply in relation to demand; and the gain or loss of access by recreational use on private land that may have a relation to recreational use on public land; and
4. identify strategies and resources necessary to reduce conflicts regarding recreational use on and access to public lands and to adequately plan for existing and future needs for the broad array of recreational activities in Maine.

Minutes

- I. Introductions - Chairman Jacques opened the meeting, and on behalf of Governor Baldacci, thanked members for serving and bringing their individual expertise and knowledge. Karin Tilberg echoed Jacques appreciation on behalf of the Governor.

- II. Chairman Jacques outlined the goals of the Task Force, beginning with task no. 1, described in the Executive Order –“*create a baseline inventory of the existing management and recreational uses and types of access on public lands in Maine and in the context of private, municipal and federal lands*”. The initial discussion on this task focused on mapping and GIS. It was stated that the intent is to create a statewide map identifying ownership of public lands unit. An accompanying master index will be created indicating the management and purpose of each. The final product could be shared with the public.
 - a. Tim Glidden outlined ongoing efforts of an existing Technical Working Group, made up of various state agencies and organizations, to track conservation ownership. Tracked ownership includes state, federal and land trust ownership, if information is available. An LMF conservation map was shared.
 - b. An important aspect of the inventory to be created by the Task Force will be the identification of needs and options for existing lands.
 - c. Glidden’s hope is that the Task Force can guide the mission of the Technical Working Group.
 - d. The data provided by both will provide better public information.
 - e. Glidden also pointed out two pending pieces of legislation that will impact the tracking of this type of data:
 - i. LD 1737 “An Act To Amend Conservation Easement Laws” (Rep. Piotti) –legislation would require SPO to track all easements and regular monitoring by the easement holder; and
 - ii. LD 277 “An Act To Require Mapping of Conservation Easements, Purchases and Gifts” (Senator Raye) – legislation would require SPO to generate a map of conservation lands to be included in LMFB’s biennial report. Intent is to inform the public of the status of conservation lands in the State.
 - f. The availability of existing DOC maps indicating public access and whether they were available on line was discussed. The Bureau of Parks & Lands *Outdoors in Maine* brochure and various management plans were pointed out as existing resources.
 - g. BPL and SPO work together to create a spreadsheet of existing conservation acreage on an annual basis.
 - h. The issue of adding trails as a data layer to the inventory map was discussed. It was pointed out that accuracy is often dependent on scale, but that existing information could be used to show major routes and connectors – as shown on the statewide ATV and snowmobile maps.
 - i. The DIFW and MDOC have entered into a MOU prohibiting the production of maps showing trails on private land without landowner consent.
 - i. The Chairman solicited suggestions for performing outreach to other organizations that may hold public land, i.e, counties, utility districts (which may pick up trail corridors), municipalities and federal government.
 - i. The Chairman will work with DOC, IFW and SPO to contact the aforementioned organizations and solicit data.
 - ii. Other potential resources for the inventory may include municipal comprehensive plans, Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the Association of County Commissioners (Chairman will contact), and any other specific research already conducted by the various agencies
 - j. The potential for addressing private land by the Task Forces was discussed. It was stated that if it is in the public’s interest, than it should be considered.

- III. The agreed upon approach and timeline to meet the objectives set forth by the Executive Order is as follows:
 - a. The next meeting (July 25 from 9:00 - 4:00 pm) will focus on action items 1 and 2.
 - i. The first half of the meeting will be devoted to the presentations by DOC, IFW and SPO/LMF on existing State of Maine public lands as well as guiding statutes, policies and rules pertaining to the management of those lands.

- ii. Any additional information that is acquired from other agencies and organizations pertaining to the public land inventory will also be presented.
 - iii. Cindy Bastey will be invited to present information on SCORP, DOC/BPL's Integrated Resource Policy (IRP) and potentially its application to the management planning process, potentially using Kennebec Highlands as an example.
 - iv. The second half of the July 25 meeting will be devoted to 2 hours of break-out sessions and 45 minutes of group discussion. Focus of the break-out groups will be determined by the suggestions given during this meeting and provided to the chair by email. (Please see section IV – Additional Action Items and Items for Consideration.)
- b. Logistics for the September and October meetings will be addressed by Task Force chair and support staff. Coordination with Task Force members will be done via email, and will happen in advance of the next meeting. All suggestions for conducting the coordination will be taken into account.
- i. The September and October meetings will likely be held in conjunction with the regional public meetings.
 - ii. The September meeting will likely focus on task no. 3 – trends.
 - iii. The October/November meeting will likely focus on task no. 4 – strategy for reducing conflicts and planning for existing and future needs.
 - iv. Offers for help by experts, John Hagan of Manomet, Jonathan Meld of Colby College and John Daigle of the University of Maine will be considered. Their expertise and help will be incorporated into the Task Force meetings where appropriate.

IV. Additional Action Items / Items for Consideration and/or Discussion

- a. Ideas for discussion topics and break-out sessions as well as questions regarding statues, policies and rules pertaining to management of public lands should be sent to via email in advance of the meetings.
- b. Create an inventory of ATV, Snowmobile and Fish & Game clubs statewide.
- c. LMF is interested in addressing the regional needs for conservation, i.e., assessing the loss of lands open to hunting in Southern Maine and using data to determine needs for future acquisition.
- d. A brief, one to two sentence objective/ priority should be submitted by each member of the Task Force in advance of the next meeting. The objective should relate to each member / organizations' objective for the Task Force.
- e. Representation of potential acquisitions made possible through the Katahdin Lake project.
- f. Each member should brainstorm trends, cause and effect and usage issues prior to the discussions. Thought provoking questions will be sent prior to meetings with the agenda.
- g. The topic of addressing conflicts will be the focus of one or more meetings and discussions.
- h. Loss of recreational access to private lands, the change in ownership of private lands and trends pertaining to private land usage will be incorporated into the Task Force discussions where appropriate. The Task Force could potentially make suggestions on how to quantify access loss.
- i. Public interest should be accounted for when determining the scope of the Task Force's work and discussions.
- j. Sub-groups or technical sub-committees will be created to facilitate discussion and draw upon expertise and knowledge of individual Task Force members when appropriate.
- k. The possibilities of organizing a field tour (to the Kennebec Highlands and/or a facilitated retreat (to Little Lyford) to address the issue of conflicts and provoke discussion will be explored.