

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

MINUTES

July 25, 2007

9:00 – 4:00 pm

Bolton Hill Facility

Department of Conservation

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
Jon Lund – Maine Sportsman
Sally Stockwell – Maine Audubon
Alan Hutchinson - The Forest Society of Maine
Raymond Wotton – Landowner
Bob Meyers - Maine Snowmobile Association
Mac Hunter – University of Maine, Dept. of Wildlife

Legislative Members Present

Rep. Donald Marean of Hollis
Rep. Thomas Watson

Task Force & Legislative Members Absent

George Smith, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine
Jon Fitzgerald – Maine Huts & Trails
Senator Bruce Bryant of Oxford County
Rep. Jackie Lundeen of Presque Isle
Senator Kevin Raye of Washington County

Others Present

Paul Davis, Former State Senator, SAM
Bill Patterson, The Nature Conservancy
John Daigle, Colby College
James Cote, Eaton Peabody
Bryan Wentzle, The Appalachian Mountain Club
Kevin Miller, The Bangor Daily News
Emma Glidden, The Appalachian Mountain Club
Phil Savignano, Office of Tourism

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
Cindy Bastey, - Bureau of Parks & Lands
John Titus, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Malcom Burson, Department of Environmental Protection
Mark Stadler, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Gene Dumont, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Ryan Robichaud, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

- I. Introductions – Chairman Jacques opened the meeting and invited those present to introduce themselves and offer their hope for the scope of work and issues to be addressed by the Task Force.

Summary of Comments

It is the hope of the Task Force members that by accomplishing the directives set forth in the Executive Order, their work will benefit the economy and people of Maine. They wish to dig in and move forward in a positive manner. And although the members of the Task Force represent diverse interest groups, it is their hope that they can form a cohesive partnership, focusing on commonalities, in a way that benefits sound land conservation initiatives and serves the people of Maine by providing the widest variety of recreational opportunities. Through this effort they hope to gain a better understanding of the concerns of the various groups, fostering a higher level of tolerance, a low level seems to exist today, moving past the us vs. them attitude.

Recognizing that open space is at a premium, the outcome of their work will also benefit the Land for Maine's Future program by providing direction and building the support of the public to support the LMF bond.

The impact to and importance of Maine's timber economy should not be forgotten, nor should the different needs of the northern and southern regions of the State.

The legislative members stand ready to marshal legislation that may result from the work of the Task Force.

The motorized community wants to continue to foster relationships with the conservation groups and would like others to know that it is not their belief that ATV's belong everywhere, and would like to identify those areas where they do belong

The work of the Task Force should also assist agencies and tax payers in the decision making process, possibly addressing management and staff distribution. Declining use of public lands should also be addressed.

Recreational trail networks should be identified and co-operation of all is needed for expansion of various multi use trails.

- II. Agency Presentations regarding public lands inventory and land management

a. DOC

- i. Power Point Presentation of Parks and Lands units – Close to 1 Million Acres of management responsibility for DOC/BPL. (Power Point presentation available on the web and will be distributed to Task Force members.)
- ii. SCORP overview (See handout)
- iii. Management Planning Process overview (See handout)
- iv. Request for hiking, ATC, Snowmobile, backcountry and cross-country ski trails. The AMC has estimates of various trail mileages.
- v. Management Plans, the Integrated Resource Policy and general information regarding State Parks and Public Lands is available on the DOC/BPL website.
- vi. Commissioner McGowan stated that in general the Departments approach to acquisition has been fee ownership in the southern region and conservation easements in the northern region so as to protect working forests and the timber economy.
- vii. Acknowledgement of the State's project partners on the various units was made along with the ratio of private to public funds, the private donations raised by the conservation partners far outweighing the public funds. Conservation partners include TNC, FSM, MCHT, TPL, FSM, TCF, ASC, ATC, RLHT and many other local land trusts. It was stated that future projects

should include other partners and broaden the range of funds that are raised, which may create an opportunity for others groups to work together.

b. IFW

- i. 130,000 acres in IFW ownership, 500,000 licenses.
- ii. Ownership accounts for 10% of public ownership in Maine.
- iii. Landowner relations are critical. Essence of IFW operations is recognition of these relationships.
- iv. WMA's???

c. SPO/LMFB

- i. LMF's website includes description of and driving directions to each project area.
- ii. LMF is a state funding program – single largest pool of State public funds. These funds have enabled the leverage of additional State, Federal and private funds, particularly after the 1999 bond. All LMF bonds passed with a 65% margin with the support of all 16 counties.
- iii. The award of LMF funds is often viewed as the State's blessing on projects.
- iv. LMF acquisition criteria is described in LMF statute.
- v. The report of Governor King's Land Acquisition Priority Advisory Committee (LAPAC) lead to the 1999 bond. LAPAC priorities were:
 1. Access to Water
 2. Southern Maine Conservation Lands
 3. River Systems
 4. Undeveloped Coastline
 5. Ecological Reserves
- vi. The conservation landscape changed after the 1999 bond by the regular sale of million dollar parcels.
- vii. Public Access is the key element to all LMF projects and the Board works hard to the diverse needs on every parcel.

III. Discussion Regarding Direction for Next Meeting of the Task Force

- a. Chairman Jacques asked the members what they envisioned as topics and what the public envisions as problems and issues to be addressed by the Task Force.
- b. Consensus that 90% of the first two tasks laid out in the Executive Order have been accomplished, as inventory and rules and statutes have been addressed.

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.

- i. Packets will be put together for members that contain a complete set of rules and statutes for the land management agencies. It was noted that before having a discussion regarding conflict the Task Force should ensure that complete other tasks such as trends and inventory.
- ii. Task #3 will involve more work and task #4 will involve the most work.

- c. Landowner Relations – A land owner relations position will be hired to work within the natural resource agencies enabling these agencies to be productive at a higher level when it comes to landowner relations. It will help facilitate relationships between private landowners and the State and increase the comfort level for landowners to enter into agreements with the State, i.e., obtaining conservation easements.
- d. Additional member comments:
 - i. 4 Key issues that brought about the creation of the Task Force – seeking the creation of snowmobile, ATV, backcountry networks across the State and access for hunting and fishing.
 - ii. Also need to collectively, (as strength of the group is it's diversity), address ecological reserves (ER's) and the conservation of large tracts and identify the tensions.
 - iii. ER's and backcountry overlap but they are different and that distinction needs to be made. If subgroups are formed to look at a particular user group or issue there would need to be follow up to look at conflicts. Groups should not work in isolation.
 - iv. Issue of trails – loss of existing ATV and snowmobile trails would be devastating (cutting into existing networks) but unable to maintain additional trails.
 - v. Focus on value and qualities instead of flaws. By identifying project criteria value it would allow the Task Force to identify the type of project that appeals to the State. In order to do you must identify criteria first.
 - vi. Don't lose track of conflict and the productive ways to resolve conflict.
 - vii. Need to address the issues that brought "us to logger heads" and identify the issues that are it core of these conflicts. Task Force members should determine what they agree about what the issues are that brought about conflict. Using case studies of recent projects that created conflicts may help us to understand where the issues arose from and present solutions for future projects. Case studies could include private and public projects that created conflicts.
- e. The Task Force should help determine the goals and objectives of the Administration by looking forward and not rehashing the past
- f. The next meeting will be facilitated by Malcom Burson of DEP and he will use the comments heard during this meeting to structure the August 29 meeting.
- g. August 29 meeting will be held in Orono at the Penobscot Conservation Association facility. Directions and meeting specifics will be sent prior to the meeting.