



OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 27 FY 06/07
DATE February 20, 2007

**AN ORDER CREATING THE TASK FORCE REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF
PUBLIC LANDS AND PUBLICLY-HELD EASEMENTS IN MAINE**

WHEREAS, the State of Maine, through the Department of Conservation and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, owns and manages over one million acres of state parks, public reserved and non-reserved land, and wildlife management areas; and owns, manages and funds boat ramps, snowmobile, ATV, hiking, equestrian, biking, interpretive and cross-country ski trails and easements on private lands; and other state agencies own and manage small amounts of land and easements that provide public recreational benefits; and

WHEREAS, 97% of all Department of Conservation-managed lands is open to hunting, fishing and trapping and 99% of all Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife-managed lands is open to hunting, fishing and trapping; and

WHEREAS, there are nearly 500 miles of multi-use trails and shared-use roads on Bureau of Parks and Lands holdings open to snowmobiles and ATV users; more than 13,400 miles of snowmobile trails, 4,414 miles of ATV trails, and 294 miles of state park and public reserved lands hiking trails throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, there are 279 campsites on public reserved lands that have motorized access (boat/vehicle) and 42 campsites that have non-motorized access; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Conservation owns or manages 336 boat launch sites and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife owns or manages 117 boat launch sites; and

WHEREAS, the State manages a total 82,299 acres as ecological reserves on Department of Conservation managed lands which comprise 14.23% of the reserved/non-reserved fee acres in Bureau of Parks and Lands ownership; and

WHEREAS, the State manages approximately 4,700 acres as ecological reserves on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife lands; and

WHEREAS, in the last 4 years more than 750,000 acres of land in Maine has been conserved and made permanently available for public access and recreation through public and private partnerships; and

WHEREAS, in July, 2003 the Maine Department of Conservation published the “Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2003-2008” that documents the supply of and demand for outdoor recreation facilities and how the need for these facilities might be met (12 MRSA 1817) and which the Department of Conservation has been endeavoring to implement; and

WHEREAS, the level and diversity of recreation demand is increasing rapidly, reflecting its growing role as an important contributor to the future economic well-being of Maine citizens; and

WHEREAS, the nature of and changes in the patterns of land ownership and management throughout the state in the last decade have resulted in uncertainty regarding recreational use on private land and have placed added pressure to meet recreation needs on public lands; and

WHEREAS, the State natural resource agencies are in the process of collaborating on GIS mapping that will result in more precise information regarding management of and recreational use on public lands; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to create a factual accounting of the types of recreational opportunities and accesses that are available in specific locations of public lands; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to examine the management of public lands in the broader context of recreational opportunities on private, municipal and federal lands; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for better land management information regarding public lands and improved planning processes to make decisions about management allocations of public lands;

WHEREAS, conflicts and competition between recreational users of public lands – especially focused on motorized versus non-motorized uses and access – must be resolved;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor’s Task Force Regarding the Management of Public Lands and Publicly-Held Easements in Maine (hereinafter “Task Force”).

Purpose

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.

In conducting its work, the Task Force shall utilize information from private citizens, economic development and regional planning entities, land conservation organizations, recreational user groups, businesses, landowners, Indian tribal governments, government agencies and Maine's federal delegation.

The Task Force shall take public comment and shall conduct at least two listening sessions to receive this input.

Membership

The Governor shall appoint sixteen members to the Task Force, who will serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Nine members shall represent recreational interests; four members shall represent landowners of different size and from different parts of the state who provide for public recreation on their lands; one member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation, or his designee; one member shall be the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, or his designee; one member shall be the Director of the Lands for Maine's Future Program. Members shall serve without compensation.

The President of the Senate may appoint two members of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House may appoint three members of the House of Representatives. Members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

The Governor shall appoint the chair of the task force from among the members.

Staff

The Departments of Conservation and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the State Planning Office and the Land for Maine's Future Program shall provide all necessary staff, from existing resources.

Report

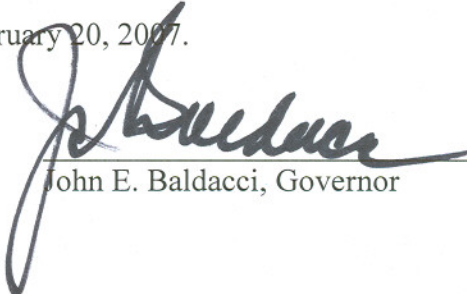
The Task Force shall submit its recommendations to the Governor no later than December 1, 2007, after which the Task Force will dissolve.

Meetings

The Task Force shall meet as often as necessary to complete the assigned duties. All meetings shall be open to the public and held in locations determined by the Task Force.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is February 20, 2007.



John E. Baldacci, Governor