



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Land for Maine's Future Board Selects Stunning Conservation and Farm Projects Across Maine**

*Grants to help support conservation of more than 36,000 of  
Maine's best natural, recreational, and farm resources*

AUGUSTA – Using funds approved by voters last fall, the Land for Maine's Future Board voted today to give approval to 46 land conservation projects across the entire state, including 8 farms. In all, the projects, which range from the Middle Intervale Farm in Bethel to a key parcel inside the Colonial Pemaquid Historic Site in Bristol, will protect recreational opportunities, conserve wildlife habitat, and secure productive farmlands on over 36,000 acres. Twenty of these projects include coastal and shorefront properties. Several protect essential elements of important snowmobile routes and most include extensive hiking opportunities. In total, the Board allocated \$17 million including \$15 million for conservation and recreation projects and \$2 million for farmland protection projects. With this action, the LMF Board has committed virtually all of its available funds for conservation and farmland protection.

"Land for Maine's Future continues to serve a valuable role in the state by preserving some of our most treasured natural resources," said Governor Baldacci. "The latest list of projects selected for conservation shows the importance of investing in and enhancing Maine's competitive economic advantage, which is characterized by our Quality of Place. Land for Maine's Future is part of our overall strategy to maintain our outstanding assets and qualities that will grow Maine's economy now and into the future."

"The real story here is the creativity and problem-solving skills of Maine citizens all over the State who are working for a better future in their communities", said LMF Board Chairman George Lapointe. "The projects represent partnerships with local sporting groups, community endowments, towns, land trusts, and many others. They all understand and value the special relationship Mainers have with the wonderful working and wild lands of this state. I'm proud that this administration was able to advocate for a new LMF bond which Maine voters approved so decisively last fall."

"Funding for new rail trail projects in Belfast and Piscataquis County build on the remarkable success of rail trails across the state", said Martha Freeman, Board member and State Planning Office Director. "The Land for Maine's Future program is a great tool to build trails that get people outside and keep Maine people healthy and fit, while providing fresh new destinations for tourists. The

Governor's Quality of Place Council recently called for more trail development statewide. We're making that real today."

Today's finalists, located in all 16 Maine counties, include an addition to the State's holdings in the Grafton Notch area that will protect a key portion of the new Grafton Loop Trail that has been drawing new visitors to the Western Mountains. The Board also voted to support the efforts of the Four Seasons Trail Association in Madawaska which has been developing a cross-country ski, snowshoeing, mountain biking, and running center in this northern Maine town. Wildlife habitat will also get a boost with planned expansions of eight state-owned wildlife management areas and significant additions to ongoing efforts in the Kennebec River/Merrymeeting Bay estuary.

"These projects represent strategic investments in Maine's future", said public board member Leon Gorman. "In addition to conserving important aspects of the State's natural heritage, many of these projects will also contribute to Maine's economic health. With tourism such a big and growing part of Maine's businesses, these conserved lands are a part of the State's economic infrastructure right along with its roads, bridges and power grid." As an example, the Wabassus Lake project will protect miles of shoreline in the heart of the internationally famous Grand Lake Stream community of hunting and fishing guides, craftsmen and sporting camp owners.

More than three quarters of the new projects are located in southern and coastal Maine towns, many of which are struggling with mounting development pressures and sprawl.

Patrick McGowan, Commissioner, Maine Department of Conservation and Board member said, "LMF funding to expand the Kennebec Highlands between the Belgrade Lakes and Farmington adds momentum to the Bureau of Parks & Lands efforts to provide landscape-scale conservation of Maine's most special places. Future generations will thank us for protecting these gems."

Further north, LMF funding for the Millinocket Forest project provides financial momentum for the recent groundbreaking agreement between the state, snowmobile groups, local sportsmen, and private landowners northeast of Millinocket. This project conserves large blocks of economically important timberland which will remain open for hunting, while also permanently protecting key north-south snowmobile trails.

Eight farmland protection projects will help to conserve 1,300 acres of excellent farmland enabling these farmers to continue as important parts of their communities' economy and cultural heritage.

**[See attached list of Projects sorted by COUNTY for those of interest to your readers]**

Responding to total requests that exceeded available funds by 60%, the LMF Board was challenged to meet the conservation needs of the State. "The Board understands that it is taking a calculated risk", said Tim Glidden, LMF director. "It is possible that some of these projects may struggle due to reduced funding but we hope that the strong partnerships supporting these projects will prevail. We also need to remember that there are many more farm projects and emerging conservation needs beyond those the Board has supported today. The Board will not be able to address these new and emerging needs without additional funds."

The Land for Maine's Future Program was created in 1987 in response to concerns over the loss of critical natural areas and wildlife habitat along with traditional access to undeveloped lands for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. To date, the Land for Maine's Future Program has protected over 490,000 acres of Maine's best recreational and natural areas. The Program also seeks to protect farmlands through the purchase of development rights and public access to water for fishing boating and commercial marine activities. Working with other state agencies, numerous local governments and charitable nonprofit groups, the Land for Maine's Future Board adheres to a "willing seller only" policy. A series of previous bond issues, overwhelmingly approved by Maine voters, provides funding for these projects. With today's action virtually all of the farm and conservation funds have been committed. Limited funding remains available for water access protection.