

Appendix E

LAPAC Definitions - Land Acquisition Focus Areas and Other Important Priorities

In 1996 the Land Acquisition Priorities Advisory Committee (**LAPAC**) convened. The Committee's final report outlined a comprehensive set of goals and recommendations to guide future public land acquisitions and other conservation strategies. Subsequently the LMF Board adopted these recommendations for use in scoring proposals as the **LAPC Multiplier** dividing the recommendations between four **focus areas** and four **other important land acquisition priorities**.

Focus Areas

Please note: Not all of the original "Focus Areas" or "Other Important Priorities" are reflected in the LAPAC Multiplier on PAGE 27 because they are addressed in other parts of the scoring system.

The following four categories qualify for a LAPAC multiplier of 2x

Southern Maine Conservation Lands: The southern portion of the state (south of Bangor) is richest in biological diversity. It is also the part of the state where development threats to plant and wildlife resources are the greatest and where existing public land holdings are most limited, particularly larger holdings. There are opportunities to acquire significant public lands protecting natural resources while also providing Maine's largest population centers with greater access to expanded recreation opportunities closer to home.

Ecological Reserves: Maine is a state of enormous natural variety. In order to establish an ecological reserve system that protects all of the natural communities and species found in the State, special attention should be given to those areas that include rare species, as well as unique or exemplary natural communities. Ecological reserves should serve as benchmarks which will provide important information about changes to our environment. These sites should be used for scientific research, long-term environmental monitoring, education, and in most cases may also provide important outdoor recreation opportunities.

To qualify for this multiplier, the project must state that the applicants intend to actively seek designation as an ecological reserve or to be added to an existing ecological reserve, and to manage the project property as such in perpetuity. Ecological reserve as defined by MRS 12 Chap. 220 Subchapter 1 section 1805.

River Systems: Maine possesses some of the finest river systems in the Eastern United States, many of which remain largely undeveloped. These rivers are important fisheries, possess critical riparian habitat, and provide unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities. Future acquisition efforts should protect extended corridors on the state's most valued river systems. To qualify for this multiplier, the project must provide documentation that the project lands will enhance the protection and integrity of the proposed river segment by fostering an upgrade in water quality, or preventing further degradation of water quality, increasing critical riparian habitat for fish and waterfowl, fish passage, and recreational opportunities. It's the intent of this category that the property include frontage on water course.

Undeveloped Coastline: Maine is famous for its coastline. However, only a small percentage of the coast is in conservation ownership. In particular, there are significant undeveloped stretches of shore, including coastal wetlands and estuaries that provide critical habitat to many species of wildlife and offer opportunities for expanded coastal recreation. It is important to take advantage of remaining opportunities before large ownerships become fragmented. To qualify for this multiplier, the land must be on tidal water and the proposal must provide documentation that the project lands are undeveloped and will provide critical habitat to many species of wildlife and offer opportunities for expanded coastal recreation.

Other Important Land Acquisition Priorities

The following four categories qualify for a LAPAC multiplier of 1.5x

Northern Forest Conservation Lands: The expanse of undeveloped forest, rivers, lakes, mountains and wetlands that comprise the north woods of Maine is truly unique, providing a sense of wildness and remoteness that is becoming increasingly rare in today's world. It is the part of the State where many of the region's finest natural treasures and recreational lands have been maintained in private ownership. Some of these areas, most notably the shorelines of lakes and ponds, are coming under increasing development pressures.

The future of the north woods is the subject of great public interest that will likely increase in the years to come. Several large-scale acquisition proposals put forward by conservation groups have precipitated a debate over the appropriate role for public land acquisition in the northern forest. The State has both the opportunity, and the responsibility, to work cooperatively with forest landowners and other interests to develop workable acquisition and/or protection models that protect the economic, ecological and recreational values of this region. Working Forest and conservation easements can play an important role in this effort.

State conservation efforts should seek to identify these priorities and to develop successful conservation strategies that could then be utilized in these areas and elsewhere. If large northern forest tracts come on to the market, LMF Board should evaluate both the threat

and opportunity presented by the land sale, and respond accordingly. To acquire, even conservation easements, over large tracts of northern forest land will likely require federal funding assistance. The Forest Legacy program is well suited to Maine's working forest landscape and allows for state control over acquisition projects. This program, and other appropriate federal funding opportunities, should be actively pursued to achieve the state's northern forest goals.

To qualify for this multiplier, the project must provide documentation that the project lands:

- possess a high concentration of wildlife;
- recreation;
- scenic values;
- most threatened with fragmentation and development;
- maintain their natural character;
- Managed timber resources in a sustainable manner;
- preserve public recreation opportunities, and;
- protect important habitat especially deer habitat.

Trail Systems: A number of trail development efforts in Maine--including the State snowmobile trail network, the Appalachian Trail, and the island trail network have proven very successful. However, there are additional recreational trail needs and opportunities that require attention including the development of extended loop hiking trails (2-5 days), as well as the creation of extended interconnected multi-use trail systems for uses such as hiking, biking, skiing, and snowmobiling and ATV riding. In particular, acquisition efforts should focus on opportunities to link existing public land holdings by trail corridors and to acquire trail corridors such as abandoned railroad beds. To qualify for this multiplier, the project must provide documentation of the trail attributes.

Islands: Maine's coastal and inland islands are one of the state's most unique and threatened resources. Islands, particularly coastal islands, have become increasingly sought after for development, threatening bird nesting habitat and other sensitive ecological values. The State, private conservation organizations, and the federal government have successfully protected many valuable islands in recent years. However, additional acquisition efforts are needed to protect those islands identified as having important resource values that remain vulnerable to development and habitat loss. To qualify for this multiplier, the project must provide documentation of the island attributes.

Significant Mountains: While many of the state's highest peaks are currently in the public domain, there are still a number of significant mountains in private hands that are worthy of public acquisition. Acquisition efforts should focus on those mountain areas with outstanding vistas, established recreational uses, or significant ecological values, as well as those that are in close proximity to population centers. To qualify for this multiplier, the project must provide documentation of the significant mountain attributes.