

Part Two

# Forest and Natural Resource Primer for Planners

Before the actual inventory and analysis phase begins, a research phase may be necessary to broaden the knowledge base of those involved in the comprehensive planning process. Background information on tree and forest management at the town level, forestry and forest management issues, ecological fundamentals and other issues facing Maine landowners will make the inventory and analysis stages of the comprehensive plan process easier and more effective.

This section is presented as a resource primer to aid in the research process. Any unusual terms are defined in the glossary at the back of the guide. See the Additional Resources section in the back of the guide for directions on how to find more information on specific topics.

## Community Tree Management and Forest Management at the Municipal Level

### Community Forestry

The first town common in our state was created 200 years ago in Union as a place for people to gather, exchange information and graze livestock. The importance of green spaces within a community hasn't dwindled over the centuries, even as land use changed. Today, many municipalities throughout the state set aside green spaces for public benefit. Interest in actively managing these spaces for downtown parks or town forests has grown in recent years and is likely to increase as more is known about the wide range of benefits offered by community forestry resources.

Trees, vegetation and other nat-

ural resources tend to be overlooked as integral components of community infrastructure. The important contributions they provide should be recognized during the planning stage of community development as well as in daily municipal operations. It is much easier, and far more economical, to protect and manage existing natural areas than to restore degraded ones.

Community Forestry has advanced beyond street tree planting and management to address the stewardship of natural resources located in and around communities. Assistance is available from the Maine Forest Service Community Forestry Program, which helps municipalities develop local street and shade tree programs.

### Why are Trees Important to the Community?

*Increase property values by as much as 20%.*

*Reduce surface water runoff: rate and volume are lower in forested areas than in developed areas.*

*Trees increase recharge of groundwater while reducing the amount of pollutants reaching streams and other waterways.*

*Proper tree planting provides summer shade and reduces winter winds. Savings can be as much as 20% in heating and cooling costs.*

*Trees help filter air pollution, absorb CO2 and absorb other greenhouse gasses.*

*Reduce noise pollution. Trees create a quieter environment by absorbing sound.*

*Trees can screen different land use areas and hide undesirable views.*

— *Community Forestry and Urban Growth, Washington State of Natural Resources, Dec. 1994.*

### Aesthetics

Maine is the most forested state in the country. According to David B. Field, Giddings Professor of Forest Policy at the University of Maine, over 90% of the land surface of Maine is covered with forest, and more of it is privately owned (95%) than in any other state. The visual appeal of the forested landscape contributes to the historical and contemporary character and identity of the state. Whether in the wildness of the northern regions or the settled landscape of southern Maine, sustaining the visual quality of the forest is important to our quality of life.

Maine citizens often express concerns about the health and integrity of the forest based on how it looks. How a forest "looks" is not always the best assessment for whether a property is being well managed from an ecological or environmental point of view, but timber harvesting that minimizes the most visually offensive aspects of logging can avoid creating conditions that communicate wastefulness, sloppiness and site destruction to the general public.

### **Timber Harvest Practices**

Forest practices in Maine have generated debate and controversy since the middle of the 19th century. Although clearcutting has generated the most controversy, other timber harvest methods account for more than 90% of all harvesting in the state. How timber harvests are conducted affects the continuous flow of wood products and other values from Maine's forests. Different harvest practices are used in different circumstances, but professional foresters recognize three scientifically based harvesting methods; which one is used depends on the landowner's objectives, the forest type and the condition of the forest on a particular property.

*Selection harvests* remove some trees of all sizes (*trees more or less of the same size are grouped together in what is known as a size class*). Trees are removed either singly or in small groups with the goal of encouraging new trees to grow (*a process known as regeneration*). A selection harvest maintains a forest stand with trees of different size classes. This is typically referred to as a multi-aged stand structure.

*Shelterwood harvests* remove trees from a forest stand in two or more stages. The initial harvest removes most of the mature trees, leaving enough trees to serve as a seed source and to provide the right amount of shade to produce a new generation of trees.

*Clearcut harvests* remove most or all trees in one timber harvest. Regeneration of the next stand occurs from natural seeding by nearby trees, planting seedlings, from stumps that sprout new trees, or from seedlings already growing in the understory.

*Intensive Forest Management Practices* or "high-yield" forest practices are used by some landowners in order to improve the growth and future timber yield of young forest stands. The goal of high tree growth is reached by favoring a limited number of individual trees. These forest practices resemble crop agriculture more than any other.

Two non-scientifically based timber harvesting methods are high grading and liquidation harvesting. They are not favored by forestry professionals, since they do not create sustainable forest conditions or enhance forest ecology.

*High-grading* is the harvesting of higher value, better growing trees while leaving inferior trees behind to occupy the land. Repeated high-grading can slowly, almost imperceptibly, degrade the quality of a stand. This is often mistakenly referred to as a "selective cut" by those who practice it or by those who do not recognize the difference between the scientifically sound selection harvest method (*which leaves healthy trees with diverse ages*) and high grading (*which takes the best and leaves weak, diseased or economically undesirable trees*).

*Liquidation harvesting* is generally viewed as inconsistent with accepted scientifically based forest management. It is often a speculative practice preceding hasty subdivision of land, and is characterized by a lack of regard for the continued long-term use of a property as productive forest land.

Both high-grading and liquidation harvesting fail to meet any definition of good forest practices. Their use reduces both the quality and productivity of the forest for

long periods of time — often several decades. The resilience of Maine's forests prevent such practices from having a permanent impact on forest productivity and quality, but the periods during which the forest is degraded has biological, aesthetic and environmental costs and may have economic costs as a result.

### **Wildfire Prevention**

Forest fires can be devastating. Forest fire potential is higher in areas with many standing dead trees (*particularly conifers*) and in places frequented by human activity, such as near developments and along transportation networks. National fire prevention guidelines for wide expanses of lawn between houses and woods, however, are less important in Maine than in other parts of the country. It is more important, overall, to manage for a healthy, well-balanced forest and to have proper access routes for emergency vehicles than it is to create large, cleared fuel breaks which may compromise water quality and wildlife habitat.

Residential development in forested areas should include an assessment of forest fire potential, and incorporate fire prevention into house design and home site location. For example, a house located down a narrow driveway in a spruce and fir forest would be at risk for two reasons: (1) evergreen conifer trees are more likely to carry a fire due to the flammability of their resin, and (2) if a fire did start, emergency vehicle access would be difficult or impossible due to the narrow driveway. Guidelines for incorporating fire safety into real estate development are available from the Maine Forest Service.

## Ecological Considerations for Municipalities

### Water Quality

Water quality is a key indicator of forest ecosystem health and forest sustainability. Forests adjacent to waterways moderate water temperatures, filter sediments and contaminants, stabilize shorelines and contribute nutrients to support aquatic food webs. In the last thirty years, Maine developed a strong public policy framework for protecting

#### What can the towns do to protect water quality?

*Let the forest grow. Consider not mowing the grass right up to the water's edge.*

*Control point source pollution.*

*Maintain riparian forested buffers wide enough to filter sediment from surface runoff.*

*Encourage landowners to let tree canopies grow over the stream banks, thus maintaining natural stream temperatures.*

*Leave woody debris of natural origin in streams.*

water quality from degradation by all uses, including forest management. Landowners and municipalities should familiarize themselves with applicable policies, including: the Natural Resources Protection Act, mandatory Shoreland Zoning in organized towns and voluntary Best Management Practices for timber harvesting and logging road construction.

Well planned forest management activities not only protect water quality, but enhance it. The link between forest management and water quality has been a basic foundation of scientific forestry for over a hundred years. Substantial progress has been made over the last two decades to improve road construction techniques and timber harvesting technology. In spite of this progress, improvements to protect water quality are still necessary. Forest management activities around all surface water, including small brooks and streams, should be conducted in accordance with Best Management Practices and similar approaches to water quality protection.

### Riparian Forest Buffers

It is important that those involved in town planning are aware of the importance of riparian zones, since proper management can protect water quality and reduce stormwater run-off. Located adjacent to water bodies and wetlands, riparian zones are the gradual transition zones from the mid-stream area to dry upland areas. Overall, riparian zones frequently contain the highest numbers of plant and animal species found in the forest.

Riparian buffers, a component of the larger riparian zone, are the vegetated areas beside streams, brooks, rivers and other wetlands. The plants, trees, shrubs and tall grasses growing in these areas buffer water from eroded soil, fertilizers, or toxic chemicals. Some pesticides can be transformed into nontoxic forms during the filtering process provided by buffer vegetation. Roots of buffer vegetation also help stabilize soil and absorb water.

In addition, riparian forest buffers regulate water temperature,

provide critical nesting habitat and travel corridors for wildlife, and provide food for fish and other aquatic life. As much as 75% of the food base in small, well-shaded streams is supplied by dissolved organic debris derived from fruit, limbs, leaves and insects that fall from the forest canopy of the riparian buffer into the water.

### Wildlife Habitat and Biological Diversity

Until the last decade, wildlife conservation efforts concentrated on conserving specific wildlife habitat areas for game species (such as deer) and for endangered species (such as bald eagles). The focus on protecting or managing an area for one species shifted in the last few years towards protection and management for biodiversity values. The emphasis on biodiversity means that wildlife management tends to focus on conserving habitats for a variety of species.

#### What is Biodiversity?

*Biodiversity represents a broad range of ecological values, including ecological processes as well as different species and habitats.*

*Biodiversity management favors the overall ecosystem instead of favoring particular species or habitats.*

*Managing for biodiversity protects many species (including those that are obscure, unknown, or inadequately studied) before they become threatened or endangered.*

*Effectively maintaining biodiversity includes taking environmental values such as air and water quality into account.*

*Larger geographic areas need to be considered in order to effectively manage ecological processes. Green travel corridors, for example, are important for wildlife that need larger habitats; they can use the corridors to travel between isolated habitat areas.*

— *Biodiversity in the Forests of Maine: Guidelines for Land Management. 1999.*

The Shifting Mosaic Project, a model for managing industrial forest land for both economic and ecological goals, was established by the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences in 1995. As the project grew, partnerships were developed with the University of Maine, state natural resource agencies, conservation organizations and other entities across the country. A team of independent scientists and foresters are working in two study sites to test new ways to integrate the economic goal of sustained wood supply and the ecological goal of sustaining populations of all plant and animal species in the working forest.

There is an opportunity to incorporate new knowledge into day-to-day forest management activities as new understanding of forest dynamics emerge. Both timber management and habitat management are built on natural changes that the forest undergoes — trees grow and habitats change when they do. Together, landowners and forest and wildlife managers

are working to find the common threads of protecting habitat while promoting timber productivity.

### **Soil Productivity**

Protecting and, where needed, increasing soil productivity is important in maintaining healthy associations of soil flora and soil fauna. Soil is the foundation of the forest and the millions of invertebrates and fungi play an understated but crucial role in the flow of nutrients that lead to healthy trees and forests. Sustaining soil productivity requires maintaining proper soil structure, texture, organic matter and adequate soil nutrient levels. Improper timber harvesting significantly affects soil properties, including nutrient cycles and soil structure, while forest management practices that maintain soil nutrient cycles and structure also protect other natural resource values.

Healthy soil can be maintained by minimizing erosion into waterways during timber harvests, minimizing soil compaction by using logging equipment when the ground is hard or frozen, and leaving woody debris (*like logging slash*) on the forest floor to decompose back into organic soil matter.

### **Issues Facing Private and Municipal Forest Land Owners**

#### **Forest Fragmentation**

Breaking up of sizable blocks of forest, or forest fragmentation, occurs due to residential development in the woods and from timber harvest practices that divide forested landscapes into smaller isolated habitats. Fragmentation is an issue of statewide concern in the public discussions about suburban sprawl, forest practices and conversion of shore frontage.

Many people now choose to live on forested parcels with the intention of having their forest land serve as an aesthetic backdrop to their residence. Two, three, even five acre lot sizes contribute to forest fragmentation. It is difficult to manage a woodlot less than 25 acres in size for timber values. Smaller blocks of forest, no matter how attractive, also tend to provide inadequate habitat for many species of wildlife with large territories or specific habitat requirements.

### **Forest Fragmentation in Maine:**

*The average acreage size of privately owned woodlots is steadily declining.*

*Forest management opportunities tend to decline as woodlot sizes decrease.*

*Public values such as traditional recreation access, biological diversity, forest productivity and forest-based employment suffer as woodlot sizes decrease.*

### **Access for Public Recreation**

Maine's private landowners have a long history of providing forest recreation opportunities to the public. Nearly all of the large industrial and non-industrial forest lands remain open to traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, snowmobiling, camping and birdwatching, as well as newer activities like mountain biking and ecotourism. This tradition of free and open public access continues, despite pressures to generate revenue to lower the annual

carrying costs of owning forest land. Many of the smaller forest ownerships remain open to responsible recreation, although changing landowner attitudes have led to a decline in public access in the southern half of the state.

State and private programs and policies designed to encourage landowners to keep their lands open and available for public recreation are generally regarded as success stories that other states could do well to copy. These success stories include the Great Ponds Act, landowner liability laws, and the Tree Growth and Farm and Open Space tax laws (*which allow for, but do not require, public access*).

The challenge for the future will be to maintain an ongoing dialogue between forest landowners, forest users, municipalities and public agencies, with coordinated actions designed to reduce conflicts and maintain the long tradition of reasonable public access to private lands.

### **State Laws to Know Before Cutting Trees**

State conservation laws are designed to protect water quality and forest health. Laws change occasionally, so it is a good idea to call the Department of Environmental Protection, the Land Use Regulation Commission and the Maine Forest Service to get updates on current changes before cutting trees or moving soil. Local forestry, street tree and conservation ordinances may exist and can be stricter than state laws. If no local regulations exist, then state laws still apply. It is useful for municipal officers to be informed about these laws and to provide information about them to interested citizens. A booklet titled *A Field Guide to Laws*

*Pertaining to Timber Harvests in Organized Areas of Maine (available from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection or from the Maine Forest Service)* outlines the five laws in more detail. A booklet titled *Best Management Practices: Field Handbook (available from the Maine Forest Service)* is a how-to guide for on-site erosion control.

### **Five State Laws**

#### ***Protection and Improvement of Waters Law (Title 38 MRSA, Chapter 3)***

Protects waterways from pollution by soil runoff that can occur during home construction, road construction, logging, or any similar activity that have potential for causing erosion.

#### ***Erosion and Sedimentation Control Law (Title 38 MRSA, Chapter 3, Subchapter 1, Article 2)***

Regulates moving, filling, or exposing soil. Forest activities, such as road building, must comply with Land Use Regulation Commission standards. Alternatively, use and maintenance of proper erosion control devices during times of soil disturbance and permanent soil stabilization afterwards is permissible. This law is enforced by the Department of Environmental Protection and can be enforced by the local Code Enforcement Officer.

#### ***Natural Resources Protection Act (Title 38 MRSA, Chapter 3, Subchapter 1, Article 5-A)***

Regulates any work done in, over, and next to any body of water and other protected natural resources (*including dunes, marshes, tidal areas and other wetlands*) that

involves disturbing soil, placing fill or building permanent structures. Also applies to mountain areas over 2,700 feet in elevation.

#### ***Shoreland Zoning (Title 38 MRSA, Chapter 3, Subchapter 1, Article 2-B)***

Regulates activities within 75 feet of streams and within 250 feet of ponds, lakes, rivers, tidal areas and freshwater wetlands. Town zoning may be even more restrictive than state regulations. All areas of the state are subject to shoreland zoning. Code enforcement officers usually enforce shoreland zoning locally, but contact the Department of Environmental Protection for guidelines if it is difficult to obtain information from local sources. A law that took effect in January 2000 directs the Maine Forest Service to develop consistent statewide rules regulating timber harvesting in shoreland areas by January 2002. The rules must be approved by the Legislature before they take effect. The law also authorizes the Legislature to propose modifications to consolidate, clarify and resolve inconsistencies in the water quality and shoreland zoning laws. Contact the Maine Forest Service for up-to-date information on these changes.

#### ***Forest Practices Act (Title 12 MRSA, Chapter 805, Subchapter 111-A)***

Regulates the size, arrangement, management and regrowth of clearcuts.

## More About Maine's Forest Practices Act

Maine's Forest Practices Act (FPA) was enacted in 1989. The Maine Forest Service developed and implemented regulations to enforce the FPA. The law is organized into three broad areas: (a) regulation of clearcutting, (b) reporting requirements and forest assessment and (c) technical assistance.

### *Relationship to municipal rules and regulations*

Municipalities may adopt their own timber harvesting regulations. The Forest Practices Act requires that municipalities use definitions for forestry terms that are consistent with definitions in the Forest Practices Act. Contact the Maine Forest Service for a complete definitions list. A municipality must also follow the process outlined in the Forest Practices Act for developing and adopting a timber harvesting ordinance.

### *Reporting requirements and forest assessment*

Under authorization of the Forest Practices Act, the Maine Forest Service collects annual data on timber harvesting, other forest management activities, and the import/export of forest products. This data is used by the Maine Forest Service to provide reliable and timely information about the condition of Maine's forest resources and how they are used.

### *Landowner Notifications:*

Landowners must notify the Maine Forest Service before starting timber harvesting operations. Information provided by the

landowner includes location of harvest, dates of harvest and anticipated acreage to be harvested. A landowner is exempt from the notification requirement if he or she is harvesting timber for their own personal use, or is harvesting a small acreage (*less than 2 acres if a clearcut, and less than 5 acres if not a clearcut*).

Information in the Forest Operations Notification, which includes the location of the harvest and its estimated acreage, is useful to the Maine Forest Service in enforcing the Forest Practices Act and other environmental regulations. Notifications are provided to all municipal clerks. Some municipal code enforcement officers use them to determine where timber is being harvested in the municipality.

### *Landowner Reports - Confidential Report of Timber Harvest:*

Any landowner who conducts a commercial timber harvest must report to the Maine Forest Service the following: species harvested, the volume harvested, stumpage prices received, location and size of harvest and timber harvesting methods used.

**Wood Processors and Importer/Exporters:** Sawmills, paper mills and other manufacturers that process timber must submit annual reports to the Maine Forest Service that detail the amount of timber processed (*broken down by species*) and the county where the timber was harvested. In addition, any individual or firm that imports or exports forest products must provide an annual report on the origin of the forest products and their destination.

The Maine Forest Service

## Regulation of clearcutting

*The Maine Forest Service regulates the size, placement and management of clearcuts. The general requirements are:*

*Landowners must prepare a harvest plan for any clearcut larger than 20 acres. The plan must be signed by a Maine Licensed Professional Forester. Clearcuts can only be conducted for silvicultural or wildlife habitat reasons.*

*For clearcuts larger than 75 acres, a landowner and the Maine Forest Service must conduct an on-site review of the harvest plan and the Maine Forest Service must make a written determination before the harvest begins.*

*Clearcuts may not be larger than 250 acres.*

*Adjacent clearcuts must be separated from each other by at least 250 feet.*

*Clearcuts over 20 acres must have a separation zone equal in area to the clearcut.*

*Landowners must ensure adequate regeneration (new tree growth) within 5 years of clearcutting.*

*Landowners who own less than 100 acres are exempt from the rules on clearcut size, placement, and harvest plans, but are still responsible for meeting regeneration and reporting requirements. Due to the complexity of the rules, private and municipal landowners should consult with a Maine Licensed Professional Forester before creating a clearcut. Contact the Maine Forest Service for more information.*

compiles timber harvest data to produce reports on annual volume of timber harvests in the state to determine average statewide stumpage prices for trees “on the stump”. The information is also used to analyze timber supplies, future demands for forest resources, trends in how forest resources are used and other special reports. Information reported by landowners and wood processors is confidential.

The Maine Forest Service is able to provide information on wood harvesting trends to individual towns on request. Some towns have used this information in their comprehensive planning process.

### ***Technical Assistance***

Maine Forest Service field foresters and specialists are available to provide technical assistance to municipalities, forest landowners and individuals. Assistance is provided through workshops, field demonstrations, media presentations and through participation in grant programs (*including Forest Stewardship, Community Forestry and Rural Development through Forestry*).

### **Tracking Conditions and Changes in the Maine Forest**

The Maine Legislature authorized and funded annual forest inventories and forest assessments. Data collection combines remote

sensing and on-the-ground inventory of forest study plots. In partnership with the USDA Forest Service’s Forest Inventory and Analysis program, twenty percent of Maine’s forest will be inventoried annually, with a full assessment cycle completed every five years. The first full assessment is due in 2004. The forest assessment program significantly improves scientific knowledge of natural changes and timber harvest activities — information that will provide future guidance to those involved in natural resource management decision making at the municipal level.

## Land Conservation and Protection Options for Private Landowners

Climbing real estate prices and property tax assessments in recent years make it increasingly difficult for landowners to hold onto family woodlots. As a result, many landowners are forced to sell their property because of high taxes or other economic pressures. Several conservation strategies that are available to help landowners conserve precious green spaces also make economic sense for municipalities.

### Current Use Property Tax Programs

Maine's Current Use Tax programs include the Tree Growth Tax Law and the Farm and Open Space Tax Law. These programs help landowners retain ownership by assessing the land for current use (*e.g., growing trees or farming*) instead of for development potential. In many cases, the difference between taxes owed under current use assessment versus fair market is so great that current use assessment allows landowners to retain ownership of property they would otherwise not be able to keep. Municipalities are reimbursed by the state for the difference in tax revenue.

#### *Tree Growth Tax Law*

Any Maine landowner who owns ten or more acres of forested land is eligible to enroll in the Maine Tree Growth program if the land is classified as forest land. Under the program, landowners must manage the forest on a "commercial" basis. Since land is being valued on a forest land basis, tax savings may be substantial for the landowner.

While the valuation of the land is based on the productivity of that land for growing timber, each town uses its own tax rate to determine the amount of taxes owed on the property. The valuations per acre are set by the State Tax Assessor's office by county and are based on the value of timber sold in the county during the previous three years and on the locally determined rates of tree growth.

If timber harvesting is recommended by the licensed professional forester who drew up the forest management plan for the property, then harvesting is necessary to participate in the program. There are no requirements that a certain percentage of a woodlot be harvested annually, or that a minimum number of cords or board feet be harvested. If a recommended harvest is not con-

ducted, however, landowners participating in the program run the very real risk of having their land removed from Tree Growth Tax classification and paying a tax penalty that can be substantial.

For more information, contact the Maine Forest Service: 1-800-367-0223

#### *Farm and Open Space Tax Law*

The Farm and Open Space program allows for the valuation of land based on its current use as farmland or open space, rather than its potential fair market value.

#### *Farm Land*

Similar to the Tree Growth program, this law values farm land based on soil types, commodity values, farmland rentals, topography and other factors. The minimum size for enrollment is five contiguous acres and the land must be used for farming, agriculture, or horticultural activities, but woodlands may be included within the farm unit.

For more information, contact Maine Bureau of Revenue Services. (207) 287-2011

#### *Open Space*

The Open Space program reduces property taxes on properties that offer public benefit. Public benefits include preservation of scenic vistas, wildlife habitat protection, or public recreation. There are no minimum acreage requirements. Assessed values are reduced by set percentages depending upon the degree of permanent protection easements and the benefit to the municipality.

#### *Rate reductions:*

- ▶ Ordinary open space is eligible for a 20% reduction in assessed value.
- ▶ Permanently protected open space is eligible for an additional 30% reduction in assessed value, or 50% off the standard value.
- ▶ Forever wild open space is eligible for an additional 20% reduction in assessed value, or 70% off the standard value.
- ▶ Public access open space land is eligible for an additional 25% reduction in assessed value, or 95% off the standard value.

For more information, contact Maine Bureau of Revenue Services. (207) 287-2011

### Conservation Easements

Conservation easements allow landowners to permanently protect natural and scenic resources while retaining ownership and control of their properties. An easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and an easement holder (*such as a land trust*), that is tailored to fit a particular property. It is legally binding for the present landowner and all future owners, and is recorded in the county courthouse as a legal document. A key component of conservation easements is that the landowner retains ownership with the right to control and manage the property within the guidelines of the easement.

#### *Key Features of Conservation Easements:*

- ▶ Landowners often qualify for tax benefits.
- ▶ It is not a requirement to allow public access.
- ▶ Landowners retain the title to their property.
- ▶ Each easement is specifically tailored to reflect the conservation goals of the landowner and the holder of the easement.
- ▶ Conservation easements are given in perpetuity and become a permanent part of the title to the land, regardless of future ownership.
- ▶ Activities allowed depend on the landowner's wishes and the characteristics of the property.
- ▶ Conservation easements may be designed to cover all of the property or only a portion of it.

For more information, see the Additional Resources section at the back of this guide.

### Land for Maine's Future Program

The Land for Maine's Future (*LMF*) program was established when Maine voters approved a bond for purchasing lands for recreation and conservation purposes. The program allows for public acquisition of private land at fair market value in order to protect natural and recreation values. Lands that provide public access to water are a high priority in the program, but other lands are eligible. The land may either be purchased outright by the state, or development rights may be purchased and held in a conservation easement. Any individual, municipality, or group can submit a proposal to the LMF Board, but the proposal will only be considered if the landowner is willing to participate. Purchased LMF lands may be managed by the municipality under LMF program guidelines.

The LMF program also mandates the protection of farmland from development by purchasing development rights from farm owners. Individual farms may apply.

For more information, contact the Land for Maine's Future Program at (207) 287-3261, or on the internet at [www.state.me.us/spollmf](http://www.state.me.us/spollmf).