

Land for Maine's Future Program

Protecting Maine's natural heritage and future economic health

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

*Augusta
July 2007*



Agenda

- Review:
 - LMF statutory objectives
 - Program priorities
 - Project section criteria
- LMF tools – fee and easement
- Land conserved to date



LMF Mission

To secure the future social and economic well-being of the citizens of this State by maintaining the quality and availability of productive lands and natural areas...

(recreation, working farms and forests, hunting, fishing, conservation, wildlife habitat, vital ecological functions and scenic beauty)

Legal criteria

- LMF statute 5 MRSA §6200 et seq.
- All LMF Bonds
 - *See handout*

Types of LMF Projects

- Conservation and recreation
 - *Emphasizing public access for outdoor recreation*
- Water access
 - *Small parcels for boat ramps, hand-carry launch sites and fishing access*
- Farmland protection
 - *purchase of development rights and fee interests in productive farmland*
- Working Waterfront
 - *New pilot program to protect commercial marine fishing access*

History

- Created in 1987 with \$35 million bond issue
- In 1997, new priorities set by the Land Acquisition Priorities Advisory Committee (LAPAC)
- \$50 million bond issue in 1999 rejuvenated the program and amended its charge to allow local ownership
- \$12 million bond in 2005 refunded LMF and created a new Working Waterfront Protection Pilot Program

LAPAC Process 1996-7

- Committee (*18 members*)
- Meetings & hearings statewide
(*14 w/ 7 public comment sessions*)
- Inventory of public lands
- Reviewed public land management
- Recommended new funding sources
- Established “focus areas and priorities”

LAPAC Focus Areas

- Access to Water
- Southern Maine Conservation Lands
- River Systems
- Undeveloped Coastline
- Ecological Reserves

LAPAC Other Priorities

- Trail Systems
- Islands
- Significant Mountains
- Farmland
- Regional Parks
- Additions to existing public lands
- Northern Forest Conservation Lands
- Municipal/Urban Open Space
- Mineral Collecting sites

Public access

- Since 1987, need for “availability” of land for recreation recognized in LMF’s legislative mission
- 1997 LAPAC study and 2004 program evaluation reconfirmed public access as one of several central purposes of LMF
- Public access continues as a statewide issue

Partnerships

- In 1999, the Legislature authorized direct grants to towns and land trusts. These grants are governed by contractual “project agreements”
- Experience with grant recipients continues to be very positive.
- Annual reporting has been smooth.
- 20 new contracts signed with towns and land trusts in '05-06. 55 Contracts in total.

How are lands managed?

- Easements – landowner remains the manager under easement terms.
- Fee – State agency, town or land trust is the land manager. For towns and land trusts, a contract between state and trust guarantees key public interest issues like recreational access.
- On large new projects, State has established stewardship funds to assist in management

Fee example – Aroostook Rails to Trails

- LMF Supported acquisition of 71+ miles of trail – major snowmobile routes
- County trail system has national prominence with major economic benefit
- Griffin's One Stop in Washburn does $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of winter gas sales to sledders
- Real estate values are up
- A B&B has been developed for visitors

Easement example - Leavitt Plantation

- Parsonsfield citizens see looming breakup threat of large ownership that is their economic foundation - more than a third of residents derive income from the forest.
- Town votes to contribute \$50,000 directly and raises a total of \$575,000 locally.
- Partnership between Town of Parsonsfield, Department of Conservation, LMF, The Nature Conservancy, GMO (landowner) and many others
- **Result:** The 8600 acre Leavitt Plantation Forest is conserved for forestry, recreation and wildlife habitat... the land has been resold but the Town is assured that future access to this parcel is protected!

LMF Status

- Since 1987, over 189 projects completed involving over 300 individual transactions statewide
- Since 1987, 445,000 acres conserved (roughly 2/3 easement and 1/3 fee)

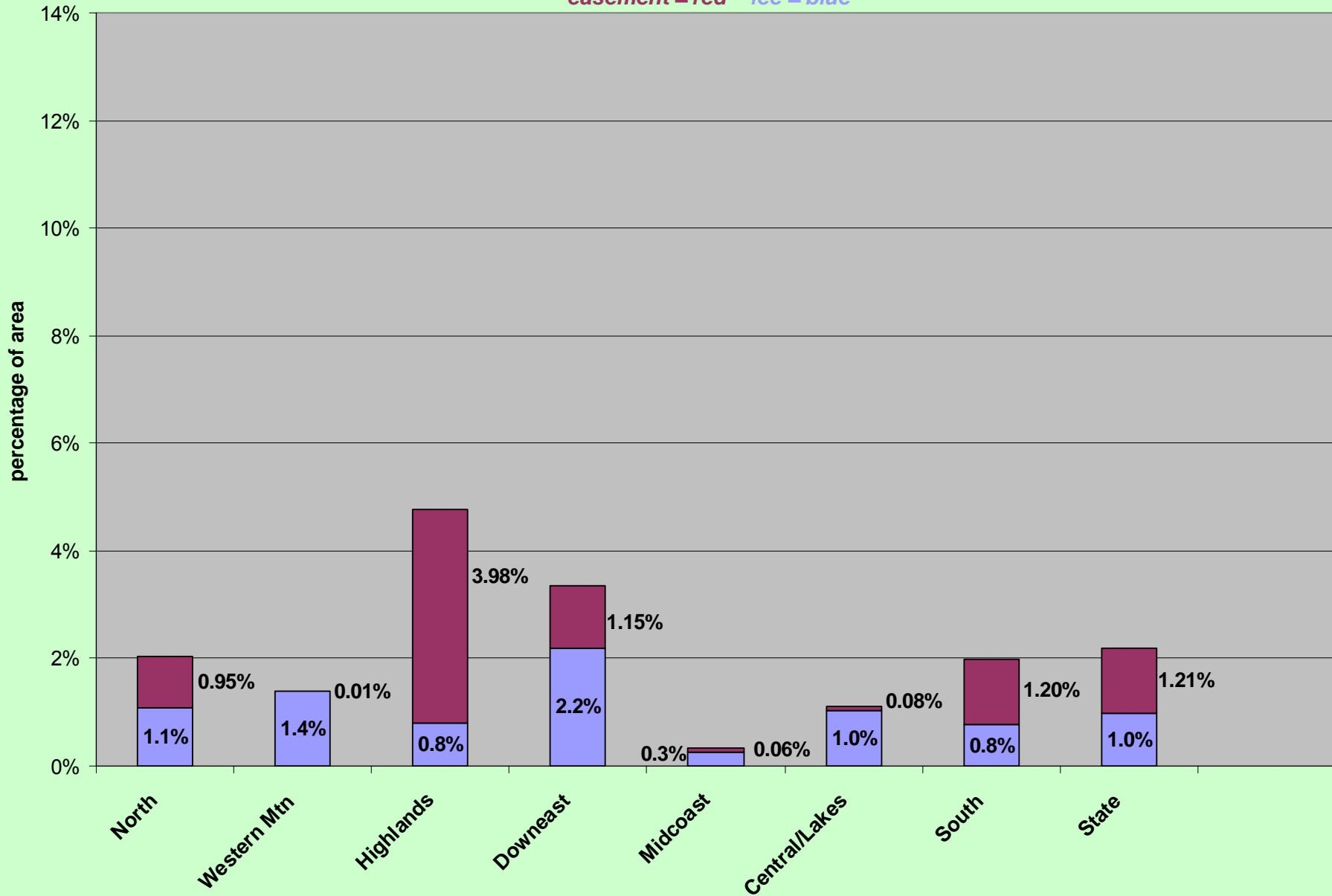
Dollars & acres aren't the full picture...

- Over 973 miles of shoreline conserved
- Many miles of recreational trails protected (including 158 miles of vital snowmobile routes)
- 5 State & regional parks expanded
- 30 water access sites approved
- 15 working farms conserved

LMF Conservation as % of Region and State

1987-2006

easement = red *fee = blue*



Maine by Conservation Category

as % of state

