



Land for Maine's Future Program
Minutes of the Meeting
November 9, 2010

Baxter Conference Room
19 Union Street, Augusta, Maine

Board Members Present:

Commissioner George Lapointe (via phone)
Commissioner Eliza Townsend, Act. Chair
Commissioner Seth Bradstreet
Tim Glidden, Act. SPO Director

Jeff Thaler
Ben Emory
Bucky Owen

Don Marean
Leon Gorman
Diane Doyle

Board Members Absent:

Commissioner Danny Martin

LMF Staff Members Present:

Steve Brooke
Aline Lachance

R. Collin Therrien

Jim Connors

Others

Norman Gosline, Appraiser
Keith Bisson, Coastal Interprises, Inc.
Ian Stewart, Coastal Mountains Land Trust
Jerry Bley, Creative Conservation
Stacy Gambrel, Maine Farmland Trust
Jeff Romano, Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Stephanie Gilbert, Dept. Agriculture, Food & Rural Resources
John Boland, Dept. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
Alan Stearns, DOC, Bureau of Parks & Lands

Minutes of the Meeting

A motion was made by Ben Emory and seconded by Jeff Thaler to accept the September 14, 2010 Minutes of the Meeting as amended [*on page 9, title should read "Report of the sub-committee on Bangor Hydro ~~taking~~ acquisition of LMF lands" and on page 10, 1st line should read in the Spring of ~~2009~~ 2010*]. Vote was unanimous with Tim Glidden abstaining.

- FARMLAND -

→ **Kents Hill Orchard**, Readfield, Kennebec County, 91.6 acres of agricultural conservation easement to be held by the Maine Farmland Trust under a project agreement with the Maine Dept. of Agriculture Food & Rural Resources.

- Public Notice

On October 22, 2010 published in the Kennebec Journal.

- Appraisal Review Committee Recommendation

The ARC recommends accepting an appraisal value of \$100,000 and further recommends LMF funding of \$50,000 farmland funds (not including all other costs).

Note: MFT is seeking 50% of the purchase cost in LMF funds to match federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) funds allocated.

- Public Comments

At the request of a client, who wishes to remain anonymous, Mr. Norman Gosline (*Gosline & Company*) submitted a letter which was distributed to the Board relating to comparable sales of properties. Tim stated that the recent appraisal done (*by the Paton Agency*) and reviewed by the Appraisal Review Committee has been accepted by the Federal Review Appraiser.

Board members felt comfortable accepting the Appraisal Review Committee's recommendation and felt no further action was needed.

Also distributed was a letter from the Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) stating that the anticipated buyer for the Kents Hill Orchard withdrew from the contract. They continue to show the property and are hopeful that another buyer will step forward. MFT will continue to seek qualified easement holders and plan to close by March 31, 2011, the deadline for matching federal funds.

- Vote to Support Acquisition

A motion was made by Jeff Thaler and seconded by Commissioner Bradstreet to move forward with the project contingent upon the 'capacity' of the easement holder to follow through with the project. If the easement holder is not well known, Jeff Thaler asked that staff confirm with the Board on proceeding forward. Vote was unanimous with Tim Glidden abstaining.

- 5 % FARMLAND GRANT PROPOSALS -

Note: After a brief overview of each of the following projects, it was decided by the Board to combine the vote into one motion in order to fund the following capital improvement grants.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bradstreet and seconded by Ben Emory to fund the amounts requested by each applicant. Vote was unanimous with Tim Glidden abstaining.

Highlights below:

LOVER'S BROOK FARM, South Berwick, York County, 83.7 ± acres of agricultural conservation easement held by Great Works Regional Land Trust under a Project Agreement with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food & Rural Resources.

The landowners are requesting a 5 % Business Planning and Capital Improvements Grant in the amount of \$13,825 to fund a 5 year business plan as well as clearing a 4-acre wooded area that is underlain by some of the farm's best farmland soils in order to bring it into dry bean and vegetable production.

FIELDS AND FORESTS FOREVER, Smith-Dutton Farm, Unity, Waldo County, 218± acres of agricultural conservation easement held by Sebasticook Regional Land Trust under a Project Agreement with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food & Rural Resources.

The landowners are requesting a 5% Business Planning Grant in the amount of \$5,650 to develop their written business plan and begin necessary land improvements.

FIELDS AND FORESTS FOREVER, Albion Bread Farm, Albion, Kennebec County, 235± acres of agricultural conservation easement held by Sebasticook Regional Land Trust under a Project Agreement with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food & Rural Resources.

The landowners are requesting a 5% Business Planning Grant in the amount of \$1,630 to develop a 5 year business plan to increase grain production and resurrect the Albion Bread Company on the farm. The business plan will also serve as a guide with tools and strategies for initiating a successful farm endeavor.

KELLEY FARM, Bowdoinham, Sagadahoc County, 83.5 ± acres of agricultural conservation easement held by Maine Farmland Trust under a Project Agreement with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources.

The landowners are requesting a 5 % Business Planning & Capital Improvements Grant in the amount of \$25,000 to develop a comprehensive written business plan that accounts for the

current lease and sub-lease of farmlands to multiple farmers. The grant will also support one-time capital improvements to the land to install erosion control on field roads, improve field irrigation, install grass-lined waterways for drainage diversions, and begin to establish the first 50' buffer along Merrymeeting Bay as required by the terms of the Ecological Conservation Management Plan and the Agricultural Conservation Easement.

- PROJECT AMENDMENT -

- ➔ **BALD AND RAGGED MOUNTAINS**, Brown parcel, Rockport, Knox County, 113 + acres in fee to the Coastal Mountains Land Trust under a Project Agreement with the Maine Department of Conservation.

Proposal

The Coastal Mountains Land Trust is proposing a land exchange between the trust and an abutting landowner for the purpose of consolidating the organization's Ragged Mountain Preserve by acquiring a key in-holding parcel which if developed would significantly impact the scenic, recreational and ecological values of the Preserve.

The specifics of CMLT land exchange are as follows:

- The land trust will trade 7.63 acres of the existing Brown tract, funded with LMF support, in exchange for a 9.12 acre in holding parcel that sits in the center of the existing Ragged Mountain Preserve.
- Through the transfer, the land trust will maintain the right to bring the public across the parcel to be traded in order to ensure that the public access goals of the land trust and LMF Program are permanent guaranteed.

Report of the Scoring Committee

The Scoring Committee was unanimous that the exchange would provide superior LMF scoring values as well as eliminating the threat of development in the conservation lands. The Committee recommends full Board support for the land exchange.

Note: After reviewing both the Department of Conservation and LMF statute, it now appears that both LMF Board and Legislative approval is required before the transfer can be made. With board approval, the exchange proposal would be forwarded on for legislative approval by inclusion in the Department of Conservation sponsored legislation for the upcoming session.

Vote

A motion was made by Bucky Owen and seconded by Ben Emory to approve the amendment. Vote was unanimous with Tim Glidden abstaining.

- OTHER BUSINESS -

→ Supporting Rural Economies through Land Conservation in Maine

The findings and recommendations of this report are to better understand and identify opportunities to integrate economic development and land conservation. The LMF Board is looking at how it can attract land conservation projects that have direct economic benefits for their surrounding communities.

The Board does not want to replace LMF's traditional conservation work but to sensitively leverage it to enhance the economic interests of the State. It is looking to evaluate a project's potential economic benefit in its proposed scoring and to integrate these considerations within its existing evaluation system. The board is not looking to establish new threshold requirements.

Distributed to Board members were letters from Lucy Quimby, Bangor Land Trust, and Scott Dickerson, Coastal Mountains Land Trust. While both see the value of incorporating economic values they flagged two issues. One problem might be the way we might "define the divide between direct economic impact and indirect economic benefits" placing urban land trusts at a disadvantage. Second, it could be difficult for applicants to document how their conservation project "will advance economic development objectives, whether qualitatively or quantitatively".

Tim Glidden stated that we are looking to refine our 'core' recommendations and see this as part of a learning curve as we examine economic values of future projects.

Board members suggested:

Include in the Scoring Section of the Proposal Workbook a small bonus (*not to exceed 5 points*) and require applicant(s) submit letter(s) of support from the surrounding community or communities and or local businesses. Board members requested that staff submit a draft of the Scoring Criteria to them for review.

Hold workshop addressing economic impacts of projects.

Be clear and concise in the language used in our application

Appendix A of the report was only a 1st draft. After hearing from board members it will be refined.

Maybe include new term 'Ecological Services'

→ Election Results

The bond coalition campaign did an excellent job and as a result, the Conservation Bond, Question 3, passed. Percentage was roughly 60% to 40%. We received good newspaper coverage and great TV spots. Voters in 13 Maine counties supported the bond, however, in Washington, Penobscot, and Somerset counties, voters did not approve it.

Board memberships will also be changing as a result of the election. Tim believes that elected Governor LePage will announce his selection for agency commissioners by the end of December. Tim thanked the present Commissioners for their dedication and solid contribution to the Board.

Tim will be holding an informational session for members of the 125th Legislative Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry Committee during the first month or tow of the session.

→ Balance of funds remaining

The Board reviewed the program's remaining financial obligations stemming from previous projects commitments.

After having looked at past expenses pertaining to the 5 % access improvement account, staff identified and presented to the Board for consideration the option of reallocating roughly \$436,361 of water access funds to conservation and recreational projects with strong water access components. The Board declined to do so.

→ 2011 Board Schedule

While no formal decision was made on how to proceed with the new funding, most members felt that the new Board should decide if they wish to have only 1 round of funding and proceed as outlined in the 2011 schedule. This schedule includes a deadline date of April 1st for receiving new proposals, with the Scoring Committee reviewing and scoring these proposals by May and the Nominations Committee making recommendations by June and the selection of new projects at the July meeting.

→ Possible Board Meeting in December

The Board scheduled a special meeting on December 14, 2010 regarding the Millinocket Forest Project to review and approve 3 separate parcels owned by Elliotsville Plantation Inc. Alan Stearns, Department of Conservation, presented an update to the Board. The acquisition includes roughly five thousand acres to be acquired in fee simple in T2R8 WELS north of Millinocket Lake, and two conservation easements covering roughly six

thousand five hundred acres in T3R7 WELS due east of the East Branch of the Penobscot River. There is overwhelming support for this project including support from the County of Penobscot, Court of County Commissioners; Letter of Record distributed to members of the Board. Board approval will be needed in December as purchase option expires in January.

➔ Upcoming Legislative Session/Biennial Report

Tim noted that the Legislature did change the 'match' requirement for projects funded with the new bond. A minimum of one to one match is now required which means that for every dollar coming from the newly approved bond, one dollar in private or other match must be present.

The Department of Marine Resources will propose legislation to clarify a number of technical issues in the Working Waterfront Program.

➔ Maine Conservation Corps

Tim mentioned all the enormous work accomplished by the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) who partner with the Maine Department of Conservation and others in creating and maintaining many LMF acquired sites. MCC has recruited hundred of members who have accomplished countless natural resource projects all over Maine such as maintaining trails and campsites, constructing cabins, picnic shelters, erosion control and much more.

➔ Jim Connors retirement



After 39 years of state service, Jim is retiring from state government on December 1, 2010, this is his last LMF Board meeting. Jim played a key role in Maine's first ever Working Waterfront Access Pilot Project and as a member of the LMF team and Coastal Program. Jim has also worked with the federal Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) which was established to protect coastal and estuarine lands considered important for their ecological, conservation, recreational, historical or aesthetic values. Jim also worked with board member, Bucky Owen when he was a member of the LURC Commission. The Board enthusiastically expressed its deep appreciation for Jim's

service.

Jim, in turn, stated that he truly enjoyed working with the Board, land trusts and other partners committed to preserving Maine's quality of life. It was a real pleasure working with you all.

➔ Project updates and closings

LMF Project completed since July 13, 2010:

Albion Bread Farm

Bog Brook-Moose Cove; *Moose Cove III parcel*

Expanding Wildlife Management Areas; *James & Crossman parcels*

Extending Dennys River Corridor

Heads of Estuaries partnership; *Redmaker parcel*

Hunter Cove

Kennebec River Estuaries; *Dyer parcel*

Kilkenny Cove

Medford-Lagrange Multi-Use Trail Corridor

Pleasant Mountain Preserve; *Stevens parcel*

Upper Androscoggin River; *McCoy parcels*

Several more projects should be completed by late November or early December 2010.

Adjourned: 3:05 p.m.