

Vision and Master Plan Androscoggin Riverlands State Park



Prepared by:

Mohr & Seredin Landscape Architects, Inc.

In consultation with:

**Maine Department of Conservation
Bureau of Parks and Lands**

With funding assistance from the

Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund

May, 2010

ADOPTION CITATION

In accordance with the provisions of 12 M.R.S.A. § 1803(1) and consistent with the Bureau of Parks and Lands Planning Policy and Integrated Resource Policy for Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands, State Parks, and State Historic Sites (revised December 18, 2000), this Management Plan for the Androscoggin Riverlands State Park is hereby adopted.

RECOMMENDED: _____ DATE: _____

Willard R. Harris
Director
Bureau of Parks and Lands

APPROVED: _____ DATE: _____

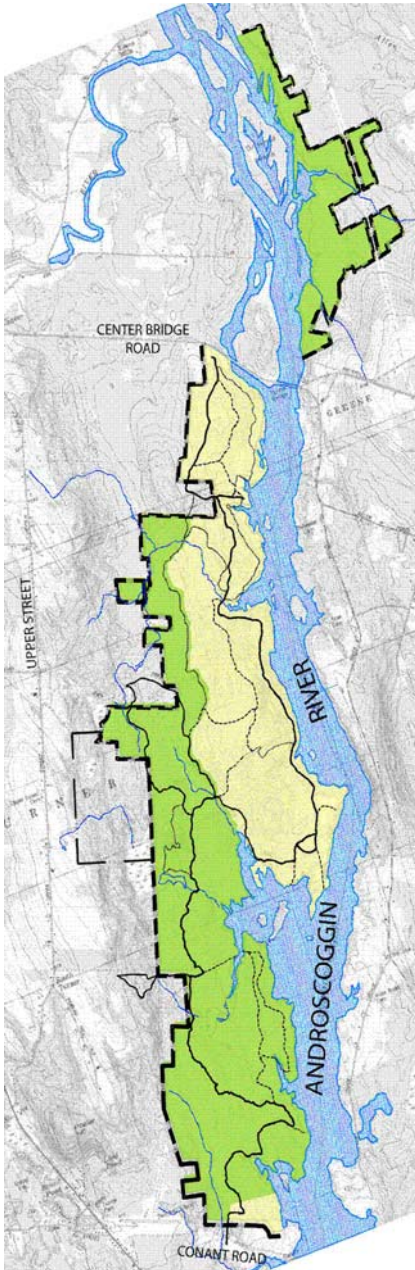
Eliza Townsend
Commissioner
Department of Conservation

ADOPTED DATE: _____ REVISION DATE: _____

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Project Overview and Property History	2
Planning Process	5
Research and Analysis	11
A Vision for the Riverlands	20
15-Year Master Plan	23
Overview	23
Trails Plan	27
Focus Area Concept Plans	44
Management Recommendations	50
Implementation Priorities	52
Appendices	53
A - Androscoggin Legislative Delegation Letters	55
B - Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes	57
C - Public Comments from Public Meetings	79
D – 1996 Recreational and Cultural Features Map	88
E - 1996 Public Access Plan Map	90
F - 1988 LMF Application for the Diamond Occidental Lands in Turner and Leeds	92
G – References	105
H – Natural Resources Inventory – MNAP 2008 (under separate cover)	

INTRODUCTION



Proposed Concept Plan showing in green areas of high natural resources value, where any future recreation development will be secondary to natural resources considerations and will be low-impact in nature.

For many of the residents in nearby communities the 2,580 acres that is the Androskoggin Riverlands Park is still known as The Game Preserve. Since the early part of the 20th century people from throughout central Maine have visited The Riverlands to hunt, to get to the river, or to simply take a walk in the woods. It is only in the past decade that this property has transitioned from a local resource to a state park of regional significance. Recognizing that the uses at The Riverlands were changing and intensifying, the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands initiated the planning process in 2008 and began the preparation of a Vision and fifteen-year Master Plan for the Androskoggin Riverlands State Park in 2009.

The plan establishes a guiding Vision for the future of The Riverlands that will inform management decisions for the property; and defines a Master Plan that includes objectives and recommendations for uses, facilities, and stewardship to guide management over the next 15 years. This plan was developed with guidance from the Bureau of Parks and Lands staff and the assistance and support of an Advisory Committee representing a broad spectrum of users and interests. Mohr & Seredin Landscape Architects (M&S) was retained as a consultant to assist the Bureau of Parks and Lands staff in managing the planning process, and developing the Vision and the initial 15-Year Master Plan.

It is important to note that this Master Plan is based upon a snapshot of the park focused on existing conditions, uses and development considerations in 2009. Consistent with the Bureau's Integrated Resource Policy, this Master Plan will be reviewed at 5-year intervals to address any new or emerging issues and to assess progress in implementing the Plan. The Plan will be revisited with a full public process at 15-year intervals.

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND PROPERTY HISTORY



LMF Project Criteria

Met by the Androscoggin Riverlands

Lands supporting vital ecological or conservation functions and values-

wildlife habitat

wetlands, riparian areas

special importance to specific species

Areas of scenic interest and prime

physical features- undeveloped shoreline

Farmland and open space-

land near population clusters

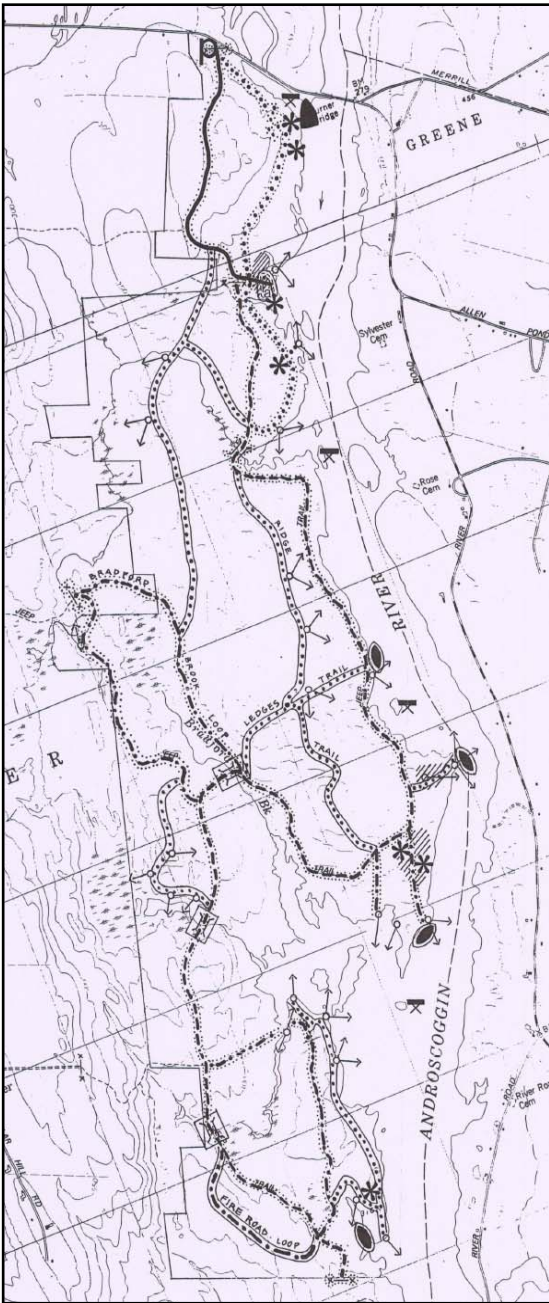
Rare, threatened or endangered natural

communities- Habitats which are naturally rare due to range limitations.

See also Appendix F

The land that is occupied by the Androscoggin Riverlands State Park was, in the 19th, and early 20th centuries, primarily woodlots and farm land. During this time a number of farms and homesteads occupied the valley adjacent to the Androscoggin River, and the area was actively farmed and used for agricultural purposes until the dam was constructed and the adjacent lands inundated to create Gulf Island Pond in 1927. The remnants of some of these homesteads are an integral part of the fabric of The Riverlands.

In the late 1980's a little more than 2,000 acres on the Androscoggin River in Turner became available for sale when the Diamond Occidental Timber Company decided to sell holdings in that area of the state. The property had been held by Diamond Occidental since its purchase in the 1950's as an active woodlot open to public for hunting and recreational uses. The proposed sale prompted a diverse assortment of people and groups to band together to preserve the parcel for public use. That group, assembled loosely as the Androscoggin Riverlands Preservation Council, later evolving into the Androscoggin Land Trust, prepared and submitted an application to the Land for Maine's Future Board seeking funds to enable the State to purchase the property in Turner and a nearby property across the Androscoggin River in Leeds (see Appendix F). The emphasis of the application was upon the value of the environmental features at the property; the large, unbroken acreage of wildlife habitat, and access to the river. In 1990 the property was purchased by the State of Maine and became one of the first major projects funded by the Land For Maine's Future Program. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation (now the Bureau of Parks and Lands) was deeded the land and took on the role of property manager.

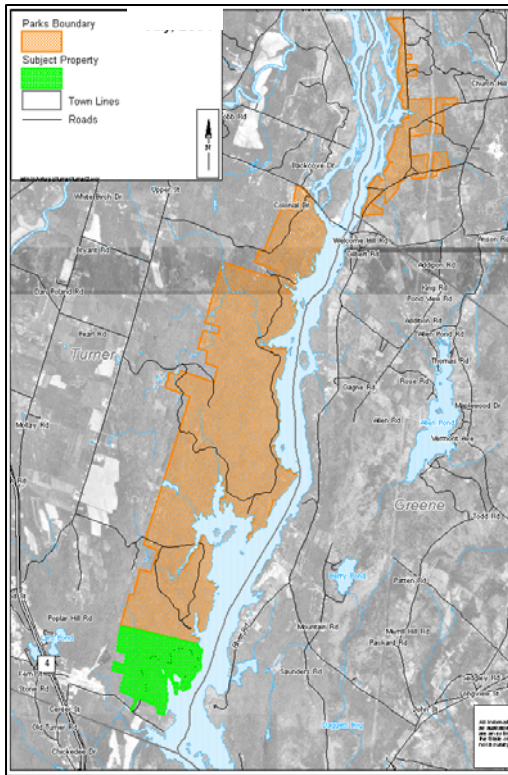


1996 Public Access Plan

Beginning in 1991 the Maine Bureau of Parks and Recreation (BP&R) started to make improvements at the property and develop preliminary plans for trails and for ATV use on the property. In 1994 the Androscoggin Land Trust (ALT) defined their Androscoggin Greenways project: a system of open space and public access along the Androscoggin River from Lisbon/Durham to Turner/Leeds. In early 1995 ALT approached the Bureau of Parks and Recreation offering to evaluate the land and develop a trail plan. With the Bureau's concurrence, and with assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program, ALT spearheaded an evaluation of the property for trail use and recreation potential, and organized an on-site analysis of existing conditions and recreational opportunities.

While the ALT evaluation was taking place the Bureau was making improvements on the parcel including construction of an all-season access road into the property; construction of a bridge; installation of culverts; placement of signs and construction of barriers and gates within the property. Other work performed at this time included mowing the fields within the parcel, limited clearing of trees, and attention to erosion issues.

In April 1996 a draft trail plan for the 2,000 acres in Turner was presented to the Bureau of Parks and Lands (formerly the Bureau of Parks and Recreation). The purpose of the plan was to define trail routes and signage needs, and to identify areas for different types of uses and seasonal vehicular access. The plan defined a continuous multi-use trail from the northern to the southern end of the property at that time, using old roads and logging trails; and three hiking/snowshoeing trails – the Homestead Trail, the Ridge Trail and the Bradford Hill Trail. See Appendix E.



Addition of Turner Cove Property
2007

In 1996 a number of the recommended trail segments were constructed, limited signage was installed and other interior improvements were made to improve hiking, ATV use, and other traditional uses within the park. Since 1996 the Bureau, in partnership with local ATV and snowmobile clubs, has continued to maintain and improve the multi-use trails at The Riverlands including installing new culverts, erosion control projects, bridge replacements, trail markings, and signage. Similarly, the hiking trails have been maintained through a partnership with the ALT and occasional special projects undertaken with the Maine Conservation Corps

In 2006, again with help from the ALT, the Bureau submitted an application to the Land For Maine's Future program for the acquisition of the 880-acre parcel on the south end of The Riverlands known as the Turner Cove parcel. The Turner Cove property was added to the Riverlands property in 2007, extending the southern terminus of the Park to within a few miles of a system of bikeways in Lewiston and Auburn.

Beginning in 2008 the Bureau initiated the planning process for the Androscoggin Riverlands State Park in response to increased awareness and uses at the property, and recognizing the need to provide more outdoor recreation opportunities near to major population centers.

The attached plan, recommendations, and trail routes are the result of the two-year planning process that followed.

PLANNING PROCESS

2008 RIVER CORRIDOR

FERC/FPL RECREATION PLAN

Planning for the Riverlands occurred in two distinct phases. The first phase, beginning in 2008, involved participating in the development of a recreation plan for the adjacent river corridor as a whole. This was part of a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) hydropower licensing requirement for the Gulf Island-Deer Rips Project owned by Florida Power & Light (now NextEra Energy Resources). The recreation plan for that project covered the river corridor extending from the Deer Rips Dam in Lewiston-Auburn (3.5 miles below the Riverlands) to just above the Twin Bridges in Turner and Leeds (about 7 miles beyond The Riverlands). In that process, the Bureau worked closely with a coalition of interests to develop a Vision for the future of the entire corridor, and to look specifically at water access and public recreation needs within this larger corridor.

2009: PLAN FOR STATE-HELD

ANDROSCOGGIN RIVERLANDS

In 2009, with a grant from Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, and with encouragement and support of the Androscoggin County Legislative Delegation (Appendix A), the Bureau refocused its efforts to the development of a plan for the 2600-acre State held Androscoggin Riverlands, in the context of the broader vision just developed for the River Corridor.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process outlined for development of the Vision and Master Plan followed guidelines provided for all Bureau management plans, as defined in the Bureau's Integrated Resource Policy (2000). Steps included:

1. Formation of an Advisory Committee
2. Public Scoping Meetings to hear concerns and desires for the future of the Riverlands.
3. Public Outreach in the form of questionnaires and interviews conducted at the Riverlands and offsite; and events held (usually jointly with the

ALT) to invite users to the lands and provide information about the planning effort.

4. Research and Analysis of the resources and recreation opportunities
5. Advisory Committee meetings to review public input, offer direction and review planning proposals and documents.
6. A final Public Meeting on a Proposed Plan.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Bureau of Parks & Lands recognized that the development of a Vision and Master Plan for The Riverlands had to include groups and individuals that were actively using, knowledgeable about, and involved with the property. As of 2008 there were a variety of activities occurring at The Riverlands involving a number of groups, private clubs and other organizations. The Androscoggin Land Trust, actively involved with the property since the initial acquisition occurred in 1990, had led hikes and snowshoe walks on the Homestead Trail and worked with the Bureau on acquisitions. Several ATV clubs used the property and worked with the State's Off-Road Vehicle Division (ORV) to construct and maintain the multi-use trails on the property. Similarly, several snowmobile clubs and the state ORV Division developed and maintained trails on and nearby The Riverlands as part of the regional snowmobile trail system. The Riverlands were also actively used by hunters, trappers, a local horseback riding club, and by mountain bikers. Bass fishing interests also occasionally used Bureau lands, especially during bass tournaments when the Bureau's parking lot was used as overflow to the parking available at NextEra's nearby boat launch on the Center Bridge Road.

In addition, through the 2008 Gulf Island-Deer Rips FERC recreation planning effort, the Bureau had worked with NextEra Energy, the local communities of Turner, Greene, Leeds, Lewiston and Auburn, and regional

organizations including the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, Androscoggin River Alliance, and ALT.

Drawing on these various interests, early in 2009 the Bureau assembled a twenty-five person Advisory Committee. It included representatives of nearby communities, various regional organizations, diverse recreation clubs and interests, County representatives, legislators, and BP&L staff.

Four meetings were held with the Advisory Committee. At the initial Advisory Committee meeting in April of 2009, the Committee members each provided their thoughts and concerns about the property and what their desired outcomes were for the Plan. Subsequent meetings with the Advisory Committee included a boat tour of the property hosted by Committee members Larry Robbins and Ernie DeLuca from NextEra Energy on July 10, 2009; a meeting to review a draft concept plan on October 20, 2009, and a final meeting to review a final draft plan on November 18, 2009.

Androscoggin Riverlands Advisory Committee

Interest

Maine State Senator, District 17, Leeds
 Maine State Representative, District 68, Auburn
 Town of Turner
 Town of Leeds
 Town of Greene
 City of Auburn
 City of Lewiston
 Androscoggin Land Trust
 Androscoggin River Watershed Council
 Androscoggin River Alliance
 Androscoggin County
 Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments
 NextERA Energy Resources
 Turner Ridge Riders Snowmobile Club
 Turner Timberland ATV Club

 Maine Bass Federation Nation

 Bicycle Coalition of Maine and
 New England Mountain Bike Association
 Sportsman's Alliance of Maine
 Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
 Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

 Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and DOC

Representative

Sen. John M. Nutting
 Rep. Michael G. Beaulieu
 Jody Goodwin
 Jane Wheeler, Administrative Assistant
 Charlie Noonan, Town Manager
 Doug Beck, Auburn Parks & Recreation
 David Hediger, City Planner
 Jonathan P. LaBonte, Executive Director
 Fergus Lea, Chair
 Neil Ward, Director
 Guy Desjardins, Sheriff
 Joan Walton
 Ernie DeLuca, Recreation Manager
 Ed Morris, President
 Larry Robinson, President
 Mike Spugnardi, Trailmaster
 Ray Boies, Interim Conservation Director
 John Volkernick

 Brian Alexander

 Mike Moreau
 David Chabot, Game Warden
 Will Harris, Director
 Kathy Eickenberg, Chief of Planning
 Scott Ramsay, Off-Road Vehicle Director
 Bruce Farnham, Mount Blue State Park Mgr.
 Ron Hunt, S. Reg Parks Manager
 George Powell, Director, Boating Division
 Rex Turner, Recreation Specialist
 Tom Desjardin, Historic Site Specialist
 Brian Bronson, Off Road Vehicle Division
 Skip Varney, Off Road Vehicle Division
 Joe Wiley, Wildlife Biologist

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

Two Public Scoping Meetings were held early in 2009. The first was held in May in Turner, and the second was held in Lewiston in June. The purpose of the scoping meetings was to inform the public about the Bureau's initiative to develop a Vision and Master Plan, and to gather information about the Riverlands from the public and their vision for the future of The Riverlands.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

As the plan was being developed, the Bureau continued to reach out to the public for input through a variety of means. Throughout the summer and early fall of 2009 BP&L had an AmeriCorps Environmental Educator on the property to provide stewardship and educational outreach. She conducted 163 user surveys at the site and 172 surveys off-site over the season. In addition she led tours for local boy scout and hiking groups, assessed trail conditions, performed GIS/GPS work to document existing conditions, collected and disposed of years of accumulated trash on the property and provided a presence that allowed the Bureau to locate portable sanitary facilities on the property for the first time.

The Bureau also collaborated with ALT on a number of outreach events in order to share information with the public about The Riverlands. These events included participation in a water safety course, hosting two hikes at The Riverlands on National Trails Day; attending a business conference in Lewiston, and joining in an information sharing/kayaking event on the River during the Great Falls Balloon Festival. ALT also hosted a hike at the Riverlands as a part of their annual meeting, and assisted in getting additional user surveys from the public through a web-based survey instrument.

RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Subsequent to the public scoping meetings Mohr & Seredin conducted on-site reconnaissance of the trails and waterfront and reviewed the resource conditions at The Riverlands. M&S also worked with BP&L staff to gather base information about The Riverlands and interviewed members of the Committee, as well as state staff, to gain an in-depth understanding of the current uses and

conditions at the property. With the benefit of the additional plans and information about the existing conditions at the property M&S developed a draft of the preliminary goals and objectives and preliminary assessment of the trails and uses at the Riverlands.

This information was reviewed by the Advisory Committee in October. At that time the AmeriCorps intern, Ms. Michelle Altamore, presented her findings from the six months that she spent at the Riverlands. The Committee was presented with the overall master plan for the property as well as the results of the user survey, identified management issues and proposed recommendations for The Riverlands.

M&S then moved forward with the assistance of the BP&L staff to develop a series of route plans for the trails and conceptual development plans for the north and south portions of the park. These were accompanied by a number of recommendations for physical changes and management of The Riverlands, and a final draft of the Plan was then brought back to Committee for additional review in November.

PUBLIC MEETING ON THE FINAL DRAFT PLAN

The Vision and Master Plan was presented to the public at a meeting held on December 8, 2009. The public at that hearing provided input and guidance on specific issues regarding the trail routes and general thoughts about the proposed recommendations. A two week public comment period was provided subsequent to the public hearing and BP&L staff received several written comments. All of the public comments and information gathered at the scoping meetings and public hearings is included in this plan in Appendix C.

FINAL PLAN

Taking into account the public comments received at the December public meeting, and written comments received during the comment period, the Bureau developed the Final Plan. The Advisory Committee was provided a final opportunity to comment on the Plan prior to its adoption by the Bureau and by the Commissioner.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



A number of efforts were undertaken to research and analyze the key resources and values present at The Riverlands, to inform the development of the Plan.

In early April of 2009, Mohr & Seredin, working with BP&L staff and the Androscoggin Land Trust, gathered base information and plans for the site. M&S consolidated the existing conditions information and researched additional documents related to access to the property, conditions on the adjoining roads, ownership of abutting properties, documentation on on-site wetlands, streams, vernal pools and wildlife habitat. Additional information was gathered and the historic features and cultural fabric within the park boundaries and the trail conditions were assessed throughout the park. This research and analysis was performed to provide the Bureau and Advisory Committee with additional insight into the conditions at the park. A summary of the information provided is presented here.



ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

The existing primary point of access into The Riverlands is from Center Bridge Road into the parking lot and trailhead at the north end of the park in Turner. There is adequate sight distance at this location for safe vehicular access and Center Bridge Road has the capacity to carry a substantial amount of traffic given the road geometry and pavement width. A minor amount of park access arrives at the south end, via Conant Road. Conant Road is a minor local road that has limited capacity for substantial vehicular use due the horizontal and vertical geometry of the road and adjoining land uses.

There are a number of unauthorized snowmobile and ATV trails that enter The Riverlands along the western edge of the property. Along the seven mile length of the western side of the parcel the edge is very porous to motorized uses and this has resulted in a number of rogue trails being created onto and within The Riverlands. There is one established snowmobile trail and there is ATV use from the western boundary via a trail that is used by private agreement between the land owners and the ATV clubs.

There is an existing vehicular accessible boat launch ramp adjacent to Center Bridge that is owned and maintained by NextEra. Currently there are no identified or defined boat access or boat launching points within The Riverlands. There are three points on the shoreline in the Turner portion of The Riverlands where there is evidence of ongoing boat access to the property.

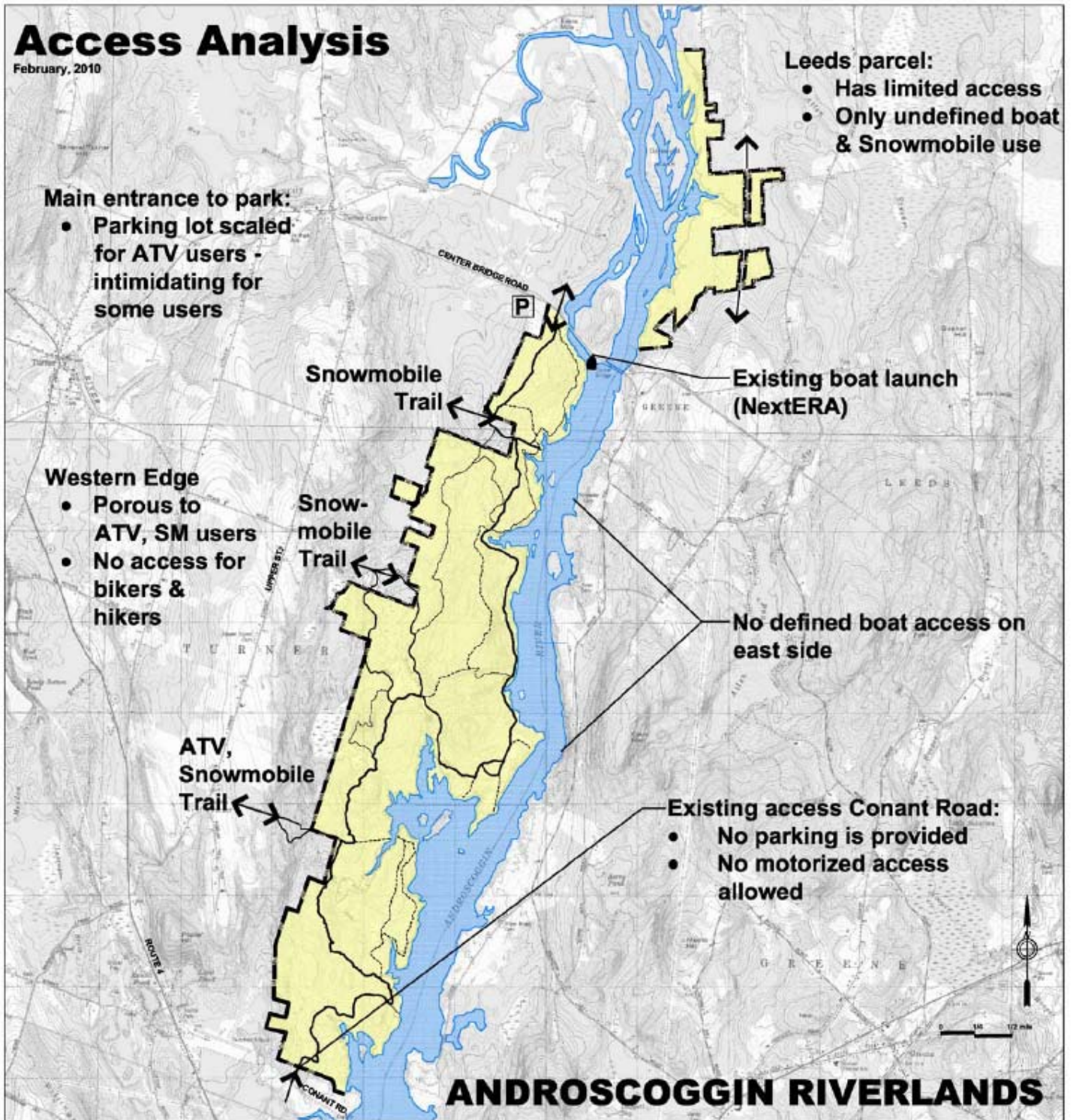


Figure 13



ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

The purchase of The Riverlands property was in large part based upon the general knowledge of the valuable habitat and natural resources that exist on the Leeds and Turner parcels. Of the total property area of 2,588 acres approximately 1,650 acres are considered sensitive areas. The State has documented a number of high-value habitats within the park boundaries that include deer wintering yards, wading birds and waterfowl habitat, and several areas of rare plants. There are also a number of streams which pass through the site, large areas of wetlands and several identified vernal pools.

A Natural Resource Inventory was undertaken for the Bureau by the Maine Natural Areas Program in 2008 and completed in January of 2009. It assesses natural communities and rare, endangered or threatened plants or plant communities.

M&S assembled all of the plan information and documentation regarding the environmentally sensitive areas and noted that there is a concentration of those resources in the southern and western portions of the Turner portion of the park and the entire Leeds parcel is mapped with sensitive resources and habitats.

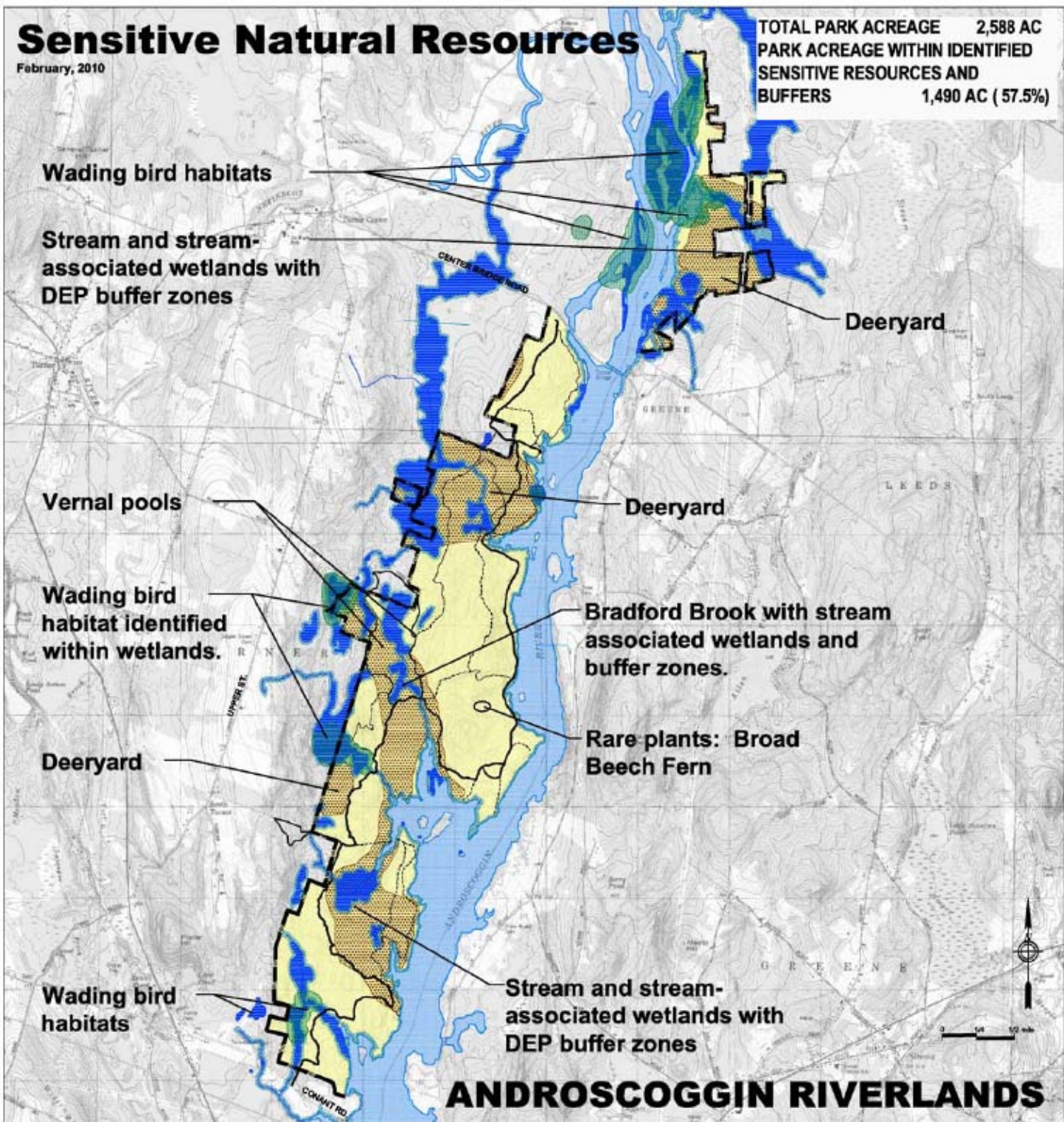
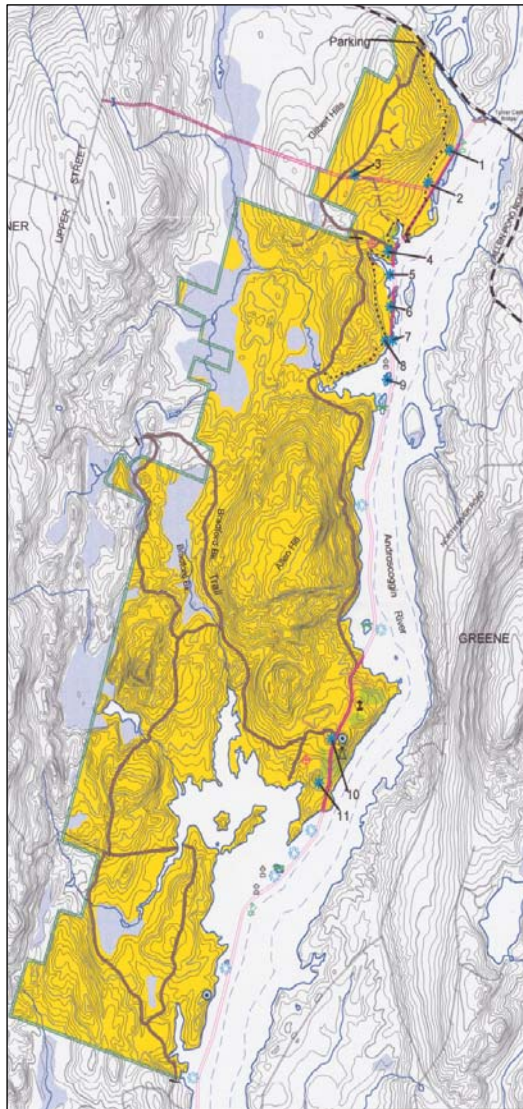


Figure 15



POINTS OF INTEREST

There are well documented cultural resources that have been identified throughout the Turner portion of The Riverlands. There are also several natural points of interest where there are open vistas, ledges, boulder fields and areas of natural beauty. These points of interest are well distributed throughout the property and are linked by the existing trail network within The Riverlands.

The Homestead Trail on the northern end of the property connects a number of former home sites that are now simply stone foundations set within the woods on the former River Road. There are also homestead remains of a major farm and barn complex in the middle of the property that are lined with meadows that have been kept cleared by the Department of Conservation. Throughout the property there are remnants of the farmers' walls and there is a wonderful stone cistern on the Turner Cove portion of The Riverlands (see also Appendix D).

There are three locations within the park boundary that provide vista points to the river and the surrounding countryside. Utilizing the existing trail system there is access to ledge formations in the middle of the property, glacial stone drop areas in the western and southern portions of the property. Most notably, throughout the property there are small woodland glades, stream vale, and wetland areas that are profoundly beautiful in all seasons.

INHABITANTS OF HOMESTEADS

Based on 1873 Maine Atlas

- 1-- A. G. Day
- 2-- L. B. Gilbert
- 3-- G. Harrington
- 4-- S.S. Gould
- 5-- A. Rose
- 6-- S. Townsend Jr.
- 7-- A. K. P. Gilbert
- 8-- S. Townsend
- 9-- N. P. Bryant
- 10-- H. G. O. Mower
- 11-- A. K. P. Mower

KEY

- Flooded Homestead
- Homestead Remains
- Flooded Schoolhouse
- Windmill
- Cemetery
- Flooded Cemetery
- Cistern
- Sawmill (abandoned)



TRAIL CONDITIONS AND USE

Based upon the field reconnaissance performed by M&S and the work of the AmeriCorp intern the use patterns and trail conditions within the park were documented during the summer of 2009. A detailed, point-by-point inventory of the trail conditions was assembled and general trail condition issues were identified for all of the trails within The Riverlands.

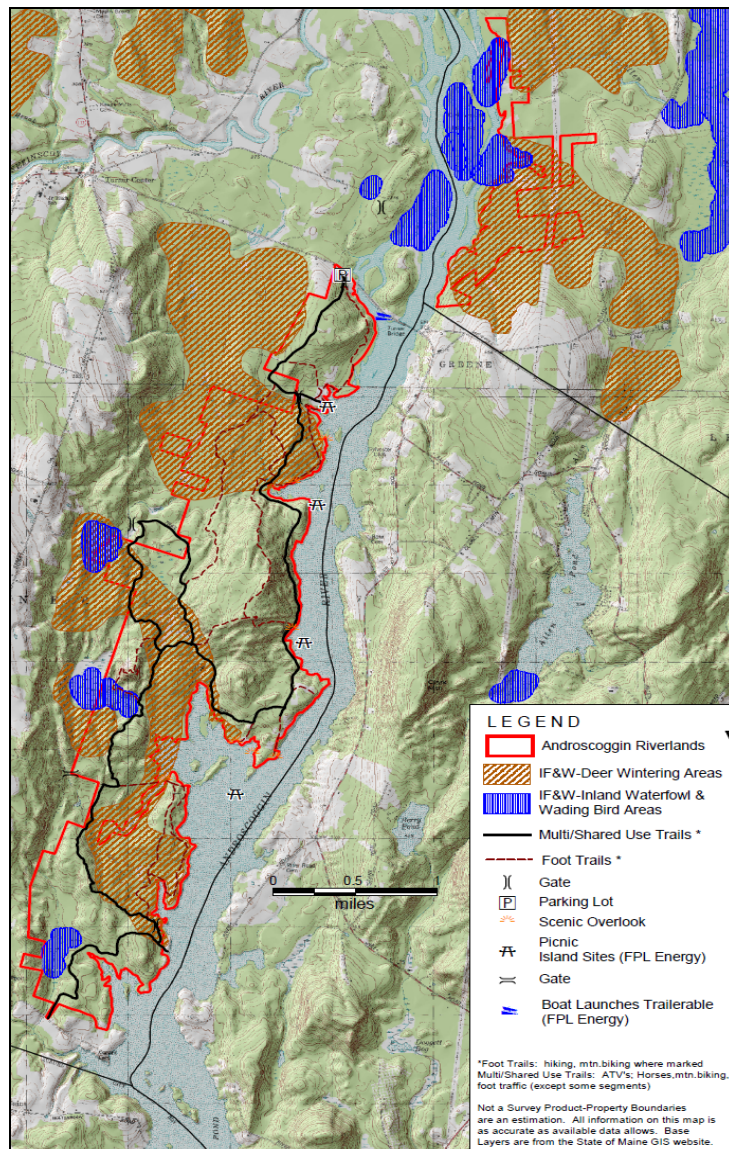
Along the western boundary of the portion of The Riverlands located within Turner numerous trails from adjoining private properties were identified entering the park. Four of these appeared, from trail conditions, to have substantial use. Seven trails were documented with minor use entering from adjoining properties.

The newly rebuilt primary road into the park from the north entrance is a major access route into the park and has been rebuilt in a manner appropriate to carry the volume and type of traffic entering The Riverlands. This is the primary access corridor and may prove to be too narrow for the variety of uses within the park as park usage increases in the future. Contiguous with this primary multi-use trail were several areas of site disturbance and erosion created by unauthorized ATV and mountain bike activities. The “sandbox” adjacent to the multi-use trail is the best example of this type of unauthorized activity.



The Off Road Division of the Bureau has continued to work on the multi-use trails to improve and make them appropriate for ATV use. However, there is evidence of overuse and loss of trail integrity at several points along the trail. These are evidenced by mud holes in the trail, trail bifurcation for access around wet areas, significant trail erosion and, in the case of the Bradford Loop, loss of trail integrity adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas.

The hiking and biking trails that exist within The Riverlands are, in general, in sound condition. There are a few points of erosion and trail over-use but in general these are not widespread nor do they present significant environmental hazards. Several areas of excessive trail wear were noted where mountain bikes are using the single track portions of the trails on-site and, as with the ATV use, there are areas of unauthorized mountain bike use found throughout The Riverlands.



Based upon the field assessment performed in 2009 the southern third of The Riverlands has much lighter, less intense uses than the other two-thirds of the property. The most intense use of the property for foot traffic is in the area of the Homestead Trail and on the Ridge Trail. ATV use is heaviest on the multi-use trail and the Bradford Loop because the majority of the ATV traffic enters on the north end and exits The Riverlands at the western boundary just north of the Turner Cove parcel.

The conditions noted for each of the above issues are documented on the analysis plans included in this report.



A VISION FOR THE RIVERLANDS



1988 VISION

Defining a Vision for the Riverlands is a key element in planning for its future. A Vision speaks to the enduring values that define its place on the landscape, that capture its particular contribution to the fabric of the natural and human environment.

A Vision also serves to recognize and honor the values supporting the intended purposes and uses described in the application approved by the Land for Maine’s Future program for state acquisition of these lands.

A Vision for the future of the Riverlands was expressed by the Androscoggin Riverlands Preservation Council in the original LMF application dated 1988. Most simply, it was to preserve the important scenic and natural resources while providing continued opportunity for traditional uses including hunting, fishing, scenic viewing, hiking, nature study, picnicking, backcountry camping, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling. The application documented the importance of the natural habitat values stating: “The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has characterized the Lands as ‘significant’ due to their size, riparian habitat, boat access, upland habitat, wetlands and deer wintering areas.” While the application noted its most singularly exceptional value as recreation, it initially was conceived to be owned and managed by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife due to the significance of the wildlife values.

More broadly, the LMF application recognized the significance of the proximity of these lands to the Lewiston-Auburn area. Expanding on the recreation values – the application says “The Turner Diamond Occidental Lands offer Lands lie just five miles from downtown Lewiston-Auburn . . . Lewiston-Auburn lacks the outdoor recreation opportunities that the Turner Occidental Lands provide.” Further, it states “the public has enthusiastically endorsed state acquisition . . . as a way of preserving the spectacular scenic quality of the river and providing minimal impact recreation in a large natural habitat unavailable in the urban area of Lewiston-Auburn. With the Turner Diamond Occidental Lands as an urban wilderness on the north and a downtown

Lewiston-Auburn network of walkways and small green spaces, the river corridor could once again become the center of the community.”

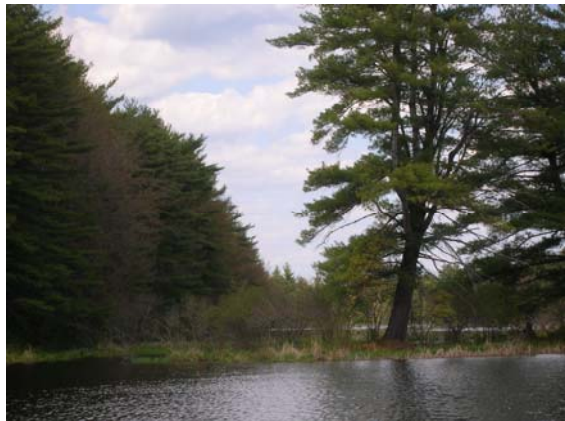
PUBLIC COMMENTS 2009

More than twenty years after the LMF acquisition initiative, the Bureau heard from the public that the vision for these lands had changed very little. Public comments received from the Advisory Committee, user surveys, at public meetings and in written comments had familiar and common themes:

- Keep traditional uses at this park, including hunting and boating on Gulf Island Pond.
- Preserve natural areas and habitats.
- Preserve and enhance the wild, woodland character found at The Riverlands.
- Design the park to provide a variety of experiences and minimize undesired interaction between incompatible uses.
- Enhance river access to and from the park.
- Keep the parcel available for family use for the region.
- Consider the park and its uses within the overall context of the Androscoggin corridor.
- Consider ways to enhance public access in the future for connectivity up and down the river to and from Lewiston and Auburn.
- Do not charge for access to the park.

The most commonly heard comment at the public meetings was that the plan needed to preserve and protect the existing natural areas and wildlife habitat, scenery and special qualities found at The Riverlands, while keeping the traditional uses at the park, which today include hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, biking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, boating and ATV use.

A VISION FOR THE RIVERLANDS



The following Vision statement is intended to guide the future management of the Riverlands. The Vision honors the past and current values of these lands.

The Androscoggin Riverlands State Park is managed to provide an exemplary recreational trails system in an environment that has exceptional scenic, wildlife, natural community and cultural values. Trails and associated recreational facilities are maintained to a high standard, with as little impact as possible on the natural character and values that are defining features for these lands. Trails from the Park are linked to regional systems, both motorized and pedestrian.

The experience provided at this Park is one of being in a natural “refuge” where unexpected encounters with wildlife can occur, where one can be attuned to the natural world whether hiking, mountain biking, or riding an ATV. The shoreline provides an interface between land and water trails, enhancing users’ connections with the river and the rich riparian environment. History is present in the old foundations, roads and fields which are maintained to preserve this local cultural heritage. The landscape engenders a sense of integrity - respect – history – abundance – community – and connectedness.

The Park is managed through partnerships with surrounding towns, recreation clubs, regional conservation organizations, neighbors, and local businesses.