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MAINE LAND USE REGULATION COMMISSION
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A Petition for Rezoning to Implement a Concept Plan – April 11, 2005

FACT SHEET

On April 5, 2005, the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) received a petition to rezone approximately 426,000 acres in the Moosehead Lake area in order to implement a concept plan. This fact sheet summarizes the major elements of the proposal. For details about LURC's concept plan program, the review criteria and process of evaluating concept plans, public participation, and upcoming events, visit LURC online at www.maine.gov/doc/lurc/reference/resourceplans/moosehead.html or contact LURC's Augusta office (call 207-287-2631).

CONCEPT PLANS

Concept plans are landowner-created, long-range plans for the development and conservation of a large area. These plans are a clarification of long-term landowner intent that indicate, in a general way, the areas where development is to be focused, the relative density of proposed development, and the means by which significant natural and recreational resources are to be protected. LURC established the concept plan process as a flexible alternative to traditional subdivision and development regulation, designed to accomplish both public and private objectives. Concept plans are implemented by rezoning land to a Resource Plan Protection (P-RP) subdistrict. Concept plans are initiated by a landowner and must be approved by LURC.

ABOUT THE PETITIONER

The applicants are Plum Creek Land Company and Plum Creek Maine Timberlands, LLC, subsidiaries of Plum Creek Timber Company, Inc. Plum Creek Timber is a publicly-owned corporation and one of the largest landowners in the nation. Plum Creek first came to Maine with the purchase of 905,000 acres in 1998. The following year, Plum Creek sold 29 miles of shoreland on Moosehead Lake and another 36 miles along the Kennebec River and environs to the State. In 2002, Plum Creek received LURC approval of a concept plan for First Roach Pond. Late in 2004, Plum Creek purchased an additional 48,500 acres in the Moosehead Lake area.

THE PROPOSAL

Purpose of the Plan

Plum Creek's proposal lays out a 30-year plan for the Moosehead Lake region that designates specific areas for forest management, conservation, recreational and other non-residential development and residential lot development. The plan specifies the amount, type and location of development and conservation within the area. The proposal aims to protect and maintain the commercial forest land base; maintain and enhance the recreation and tourism economy; conserve and protect valued land and water resources; provide land for other economic enterprises; provide for residential recreational lot development on selected lakes, ponds and backland areas; and provide future predictability for the area.

The Plan Area

The plan area covers approximately 426,000 acres in Somerset and Piscataquis Counties, encompassing a majority of the land area within 29 townships and plantations. The area stretches, west to east, from Long Pond to Shawtown. Its northern extent is the north end of Moosehead Lake in Big W Township. Its southern extent is the Appalachian Trail near Elliottsville Township.

The plan area contains around 208 miles of shoreland. It includes 69 lakes and ponds, the largest being Moosehead Lake, Brassua Lake, Long Pond and Indian Pond. Of these, there are 51 undeveloped ponds, 4 ponds with a few lease lots, and 14 water bodies that are developed to various degree. The predominant rivers are the Kennebec, Moose and Roach. The highest mountain peaks are Baker, Number Four, Elephant and Shaw Mountains. The plan area includes railroad tracks, running from Greenville to Jackman, and two state roads – Route 6/15 and the Lily Bay Road. Route 201 is located within 3 miles of the plan area.

The plan area falls wholly within the jurisdiction of the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission. As such, it is subject to the Commission's regulatory provisions adopted pursuant to 12 M.R.S.A. section 681 et seq.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The plan proposes 975 new residential lots, with up to 575 shorefront lots (see the table for general locations of the proposed residential lots). The development will cover approximately 3,755 acres and will be phased in over a 10-15 year period.

The plan also proposes the following non-residential development:

- A 3,000 acre area for a nature-based tourist facility in Lily Bay Township.
- A 500 acre area for a lodge facility on the southern peninsula of Brassua Lake.
- A 1,000 acre industrial site suitable for a large lumber mill or similar facility.
- Three commercial sites for campgrounds, storage facilities, and/or a small store (up to 600 acres in total).
- 80 acres within the proposed “no development/working forest area” for up to 4 new sporting camps and/or remote recreational cabin sites.

PROPOSED CONSERVATION

The plan proposes several mechanisms for conservation of resources within the plan area:

- Permanent 500-foot deep conservation easements will be placed on all of Plum Creek’s shoreland ownership on 55 ponds, totaling 78.6 miles and 4,766 acres of shoreland.
- Permanent 500-foot deep conservation easements will be placed on 15 lakes and ponds on which development is proposed, totaling 101 miles and 6,124 acres of shoreland (this includes shorefront on the Moose River). From 58% to 80% of the shoreland of each water body will fall under permanent conservation.
- Permanent conservation easements will be placed on 71.3 miles of ITS snowmobile trail.
- Permanent conservation easements will be placed on approximately 55 miles of hiking trail. This will establish a “peak-to-peak” trail around two-thirds of Moosehead Lake.
- Within each subdivision proposed in the plan, some land will be set aside as open space, with no further subdivision or development allowed in perpetuity. This open space will be preserved through homeowner association covenants.
- Over 382,000 acres of non-shorefront timberland will be reserved for forest management and will be off limits to residential development for at least 30 years.

TRIGGERING OF DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

The proposed development and conservation will be triggered as follows:

- Approval of this plan (including approval of the tourist facility, campground, commercial, and industrial zones) will trigger permanent conservation of the hiking and snowmobile trails.
- Approval of a subdivision on Moosehead Lake, Brassua Lake, Indian Pond and Long Pond will trigger permanent conservation of a portion of the shoreland, proportionate to the amount of development approved.
- Approval of a subdivision on any other water body will trigger permanent conservation of the remaining shoreland on the water body to be developed.
- Approval of a backland subdivision will trigger permanent conservation of 600 feet of shoreland on the undeveloped pond nearest to the subdivision for each lot that is approved. Approval of the last backland subdivision lot will trigger permanent conservation of all the remaining unprotected ponds within the plan area.
- Subdivision applications in The Roaches will be deferred for seven years from the date of plan approval to allow the State the opportunity to obtain funding to purchase this area.

DURATION

The Plum Creek plan will be in effect for 30 years should it obtain approval from LURC. At the end of the initial 30 years, the plan will automatically renew for successive 20-year periods unless LURC or Plum Creek elect to request a public hearing on the plan. In such case, LURC will decide, in its sole discretion, whether to renew the plan “as is”, renew the plan with modifications, or terminate the plan. Conservation and trail easements associated with the plan will apply in perpetuity, once such easements are enacted.

General location	No. and type of lots
Large pond, lake and backland sites	
Brassua Lake	189 shorefront lots 80 backland lots
Moosehead Lake	103 shorefront lots 75 backland lots
Lily Bay Township	190 backland lots
Long Pond	80 shorefront lots
Indian Pond	35 shorefront lots
Prong Pond	30 shorefront lots 25 backland lots
Upper Wilson Pond	30 shorefront lots
Moose River	30 shorefront lots
Kennebec Interior	30 backland lots
Burnham Pond	20 shorefront lots
Small pond sites	
Fish Pond	6 shorefront lots
Ellis Pond	8 shorefront lots
Luther Pond	6 shorefront lots
Center Pond	5 shorefront lots
Knights Pond	5 shorefront lots
The Roaches sites	
Second Roach Pond	10 shorefront lots
Third Roach Pond	10 shorefront lots
Penobscot Pond	8 shorefront lots
<i>Note: A shorefront lot is where ownership extends to the water's edge. A backland lot does not have water frontage, but may have access rights to a lake or pond.</i>	