

STATE OF MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY

LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION 22 STATE HOUSE STATION AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0022

AMANDA E. BEAL COMMISSIONER

STACIE R. BEYER
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Memorandum

To: LUPC Commissioners

CC: Stacie R. Beyer, Acting Executive Director

From: Corinne Michaud-LeBlanc, Senior Planner

Date: August 3, 2022

Re: Amendment A to ZP 671: Staff-initiated petition to rezone lands encompassed by the Resource Protection Plan for the Lower West Branch of the Penobscot River (P-RP

011); Request to post to a 30-day public comment period

The Resource Protection Plan for the Lower West Branch of the Penobscot River and associated Resource Plan Protection subdistrict (P-RP) will expire on December 26, 2022. The current landowners along the affected river segment do not wish to renew the Plan. When a resource protection plan expires, Commission staff must initiate a rezoning process to identify replacement zoning for the former Plan area that provides comparable protection for existing resources. Commission staff have prepared a draft of proposed replacement zoning for the P-RP subdistrict. A series of draft maps showing the proposed subdistricts is attached for your review.

Background

The Resource Protection Plan for the Lower West Branch of the Penobscot River (the Plan) and associated custom Resource Plan Protection subdistrict (P-RP) were approved on December 26, 2002 and will expire on December 26, 2022. Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC or the Commission) staff have reached out to all current landowners, and discussions indicated there was no desire to renew the Plan at this time. When a Plan expires and is not renewed, the Commission must designate appropriate replacement zoning in accordance with the comprehensive land use plan, statute, and rules. Staff have therefore begun an LUPC-initiated process to identify and designate replacement zoning.

The Plan area covers a 500-foot wide buffer along each side of the Penobscot River, from approximately 400 feet below the Ripogenus Dam to where the West Branch enters Ambajejus Lake. The P-RP includes lands in six townships in Piscataquis County: T3 R11 WELS, Rainbow Township, T2 R10 WELS, T2 R9 WELS, T1 R10 WELS, and T1 R9 WELS (the P-RP only extends into the northeast corner of the Rainbow and T1 R10 WELS townships). The entirety of the Plan area is covered by a permanent conservation easement and Recreation Management

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PHONE: 207-287-2631 FAX: 207-287-7439 Plan administered by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. The expiration of the Plan will not affect permanent conservation measures or existing uses. The Commission's intent is to replace the P-RP subdistrict with updated zoning that provides comparable protection for the Penobscot River and other resources, and which recognizes pre-existing, continuing land uses.

Proposed zoning changes are limited to the area currently covered by the P-RP subdistrict.

The Plan area includes:

- Two pre-Plan, privately-owned commercial campgrounds, and one BPL-managed campground.
- Diverse public recreation sites managed by BPL, including seven camping locations, nine water access points, six lunch sites, and two ranger dwellings.
- Nine existing pre-Commission camp lease lots.
- A permanent conservation easement along the 500-foot-wide Penobscot River Corridor, managed by the State of Maine, Bureau of Parks and Lands (Piscataquis County Registry of Deeds, Book 518, Pages 251—259).

Replacement Zoning Process

When a Resource Protection Plan and associated P-RP subdistrict expires, the Commission is tasked with rezoning the area previously covered by the P-RP subdistrict. The process is outlined in Chapter 10, Section 10.23,H,8:

"The provisions of an approved and recorded Resource Plan shall apply for the duration of the

approved time period, except that any conservation measures taken to strike a reasonable and publicly beneficial balance in a lake concept plan shall continue to apply to the extent that they are covered by legal contract, deeded covenants, permit requirements, or other legal instruments. ... At the termination of a plan, the Commission will, in conformity with its comprehensive plan,

statutes, and standards, designate appropriate zoning which is reasonably consistent with zoning in accordance with Section 10.08,A.

In the event that a plan is terminated, all transactions initiated as a component of the plan, including without limitation, the granting of conservation easements or restrictive covenants on subdivided lands will continue to apply to the extent that they are covered by legal contract, deeded covenants, permit or other legal requirements."

Under the provisions of Section 10.23,H, staff have identified appropriate replacement zoning for the Plan area; based on the scenic and natural resources present, as well as pre-Plan, existing development in limited locations.

Proposed Subdistricts:

1. Recreation Protection subdistrict (P-RR): As provided in Section 10.23,I,1, the purpose of the P-RR subdistrict is to provide protection from development and intensive recreational uses to those areas that currently support, or have opportunities for,

unusually significant primitive recreation activities. By so doing, the natural environment that is essential to the primitive recreational experience will be conserved. In accordance with the description of the subdistrict in Section 10.23,I,2, river segments within the Commission's jurisdiction identified as meriting special protection in the Governor's Executive Order on Maine Rivers Policy, issued July 6, 1982 must qualify as flowing water appropriate for protection within this subdistrict.

Because this river segment is identified as meriting special protection in the Maine Rivers Study, the P-RR subdistrict is the most appropriate replacement subdistrict for the Lower West Branch. This subdistrict is proposed for the majority of the former Plan area, and would include a 250-foot-deep area along each side of the river. Limited exceptions would occur as described below, in locations where pre-Plan development and existing recreational development require specific zoning considerations.

2. General Management subdistrict (M-GN). In accordance with Section 10.22,A,1, the purpose of the M-GN Subdistrict is to permit forestry and agricultural management activities to occur with minimal interferences from unrelated development in areas where the Commission finds that the resource protection afforded by protection subdistricts is not required. As described in Section 10.22,A,2, this subdistrict is described as applying to areas that are appropriate for forest or agricultural activities, and that do not require the special protection afforded by the protection subdistricts.

This subdistrict is proposed for lands within the Plan area which are between 250–500 feet from the Normal High Water Mark of the Penobscot River, and that do not otherwise warrant zoning for development or specific resource protections.

3. General Development subdistrict (D-GN): In accordance with Section 10.21,C,1, the purpose of the D-GN subdistrict includes recognizing existing patterns of development in appropriate areas.

Approximately 1.4 acres of D-GN zoning is proposed at the Abol Bridge Campground, adjacent to the Golden Road, to accommodate existing commercial development that predates the P-RP zoning. This is considered a reversion to prior zoning, and is consistent with the zoning that has applied to this location under the terms of the Plan.

4. Recreation Facility Development subdistrict (D-RF): In accordance with Section 10.21,L, the purpose of the D-RF subdistrict is "to allow for development of moderate intensity recreation facilities in locations that would not be suitable for other types of commercial development ... in areas that are distant from other development, but where the location of such a facility would not unreasonably interfere with existing uses such as forestry and agriculture activities, fish and wildlife habitat or other recreation opportunities; and will not substantially increase the demand for public services in areas that are distant from existing patterns of development." The description of the D-RF subdistrict includes areas that contain existing recreation facilities that meet the purpose and other provisions of the subdistrict.

This subdistrict is proposed in three locations to accommodate existing, pre-Plan, recreational lodging facilities (Big Eddy Campground, Abol Bridge Campground, and the BPL Horse Race Brook administrative area). The proposed zoning would be around the

existing recreational lodging facilities, and allow for their continued operation in the Penobscot River Corridor.

5. Residential Development subdistrict (D-RS). In accordance with Section 10.21,M,1, the purpose of the D-RS Subdistrict is to set aside certain areas for residential and other appropriate uses so as to provide for residential activities apart from areas of commercial development. In accordance with Section 10.21,M,2,a, the D-RS subdistrict shall include areas where four or more single family dwelling units exist within a 500-foot radius.

This subdistrict is proposed in one location in T2 R10 WELS, to accommodate a cluster of five pre-Commission residential camps that meet the purpose and definition described above. This is considered a reversion to prior zoning, and is consistent with the zoning that has applied to this location under the terms of the Plan.

6. Accessible Lake Protection subdistrict (P-AL). As provided in Section 10.23,A,1, the purpose of the P-AL subdistrict is "to maintain and protect the existing natural values of the accessible, undeveloped, high value lakes within the Commission's jurisdiction. This is the class of lakes described as Management Class 2 lakes in the Commission's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. It is the intent of this subdistrict to restrict development." As described in Section 10.23,A,2, this subdistrict includes areas surrounding bodies of standing water classified as Management Class 2 Lakes, and must extend 500 feet from and around the water body measured from the normal high water mark.

This subdistrict is proposed around the Deabsconeag Deadwater, which is classified as a Management Class 2 Lake, making it eligible for the P-AL subdistrict.

7. Fish and Wildlife Protection subdistrict (P-FW). As provided in Section 10.23,D,1, the purpose of the P-FW subdistrict is to conserve important fish and wildlife habitats essential to the citizens of Maine because of their economic, recreational, aesthetic, educational or scientific value. As described in Section 10.23,D,2, this subdistrict may include significant fish spawning nursery and feeding areas, critical habitat of endangered and threatened fish and wildlife species ascertained by state or federal agencies, and habitat of fish or wildlife species needing special protection by other means, including by a state fish or wildlife conservation plan; and the shelter portions of deer wintering areas if specific conditions are met.

Existing P-FW subdistricts that overlap the P-RP are proposed to remain. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has not recommended any changes to existing P-FW boundaries at this time.

8. Shoreland Protection subdistrict (P-SL2). As provided in Section 10.23,L,1, the purpose of the P-SL subdistrict is to regulate certain land use activities in certain shoreland areas in order to maintain water quality, plant, fish and wildlife habitat and in order to protect and enhance scenic and recreational opportunities. As described in Section 10.23,L,2, this subdistrict includes areas within 75 feet, measured as a horizontal distance landward, of (a) the normal high water mark of flowing waters upstream from the point where such channels drain 50 square miles and (b) the upland edge of those freshwater wetlands identified in Section 10.23,N,2,a,(1),(c) and (2), and (3).

The proposed zoning includes 75-foot wide P-SL2 subdistricts for minor flowing waters and applicable wetlands (for example, small streams feeding into a larger river). There are no major flowing waters qualifying as a P-SL1 subdistrict in the Plan area. In areas where P-SL2 resources overlap with the P-RR, the P-RR also applies.

9. Wetland Protection subdistrict (P-WL1, 2 & 3). As provided in Section 10.23,N,1, the purpose of the P-WL subdistrict is to conserve coastal and freshwater wetlands in essentially their natural state because of the indispensable biologic, hydrologic and environmental functions which they perform.

Proposed zoning includes P-WL1, 2, or 3 subdistrict zoning for all wetland areas depicted on the National Wetland Inventory map, in accordance with definitions in Section 10.23,N,2. In areas where P-WL resources overlap with the P-RR, the P-RR also applies.

Landowner Review

In November of 2021, staff began the process of identifying current landowners within the Plan area and reaching out to discuss the upcoming expiration of the Plan. Throughout winter and spring 2022, staff conducted virtual, phone, and in-person meetings with each landowner to discuss options for either renewing the Plan or allowing the Plan to expire. Staff discussed likely replacement zoning options with each landowner. Draft proposed zoning maps were sent to all landowners for informal review in June of 2022. No landowner comments were received. All landowners have been notified via email or paper mail of the presentation of the draft zoning maps at the August 2022 Commission Meeting, and regarding the proposed public comment period.

A Notice of Filing for the staff-initiated rezoning application will be sent to all owners and abutters within 1000 feet of the Plan area at the start of the public comment period. Related application materials and maps will be made available on the Commission's website.

Resource Agency Review

The draft zoning maps were sent to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine Natural Areas Program, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, and the Bureau of Parks and Lands for review in June of 2022. No changes were recommended at this time. All agencies will have an opportunity to review any proposed changes based on comments received, as well as review of any future development proposals.

Staff Recommendation

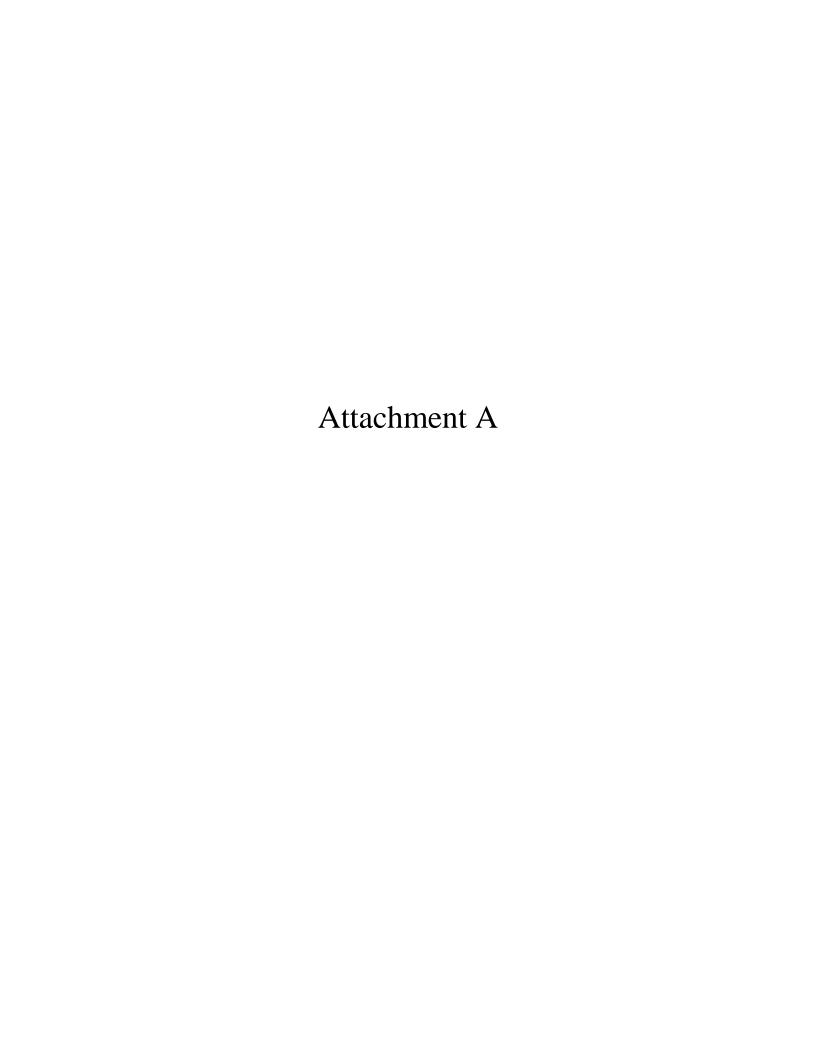
The Commission's statute and Chapter 4 *Rules of Practice* require that public notice of proposed changes to zoning boundaries be given, and either a public comment period or public hearing be held prior to Commission adoption of changes in subdistrict boundaries.

Staff recommends that the Commission post Amendment A to Zoning Petition ZP 671, a staff-initiated petition to rezone the area within the Resource Protection Plan for the Lower West Branch of the Penobscot River in Piscataquis County, to a 30-day public comment period.

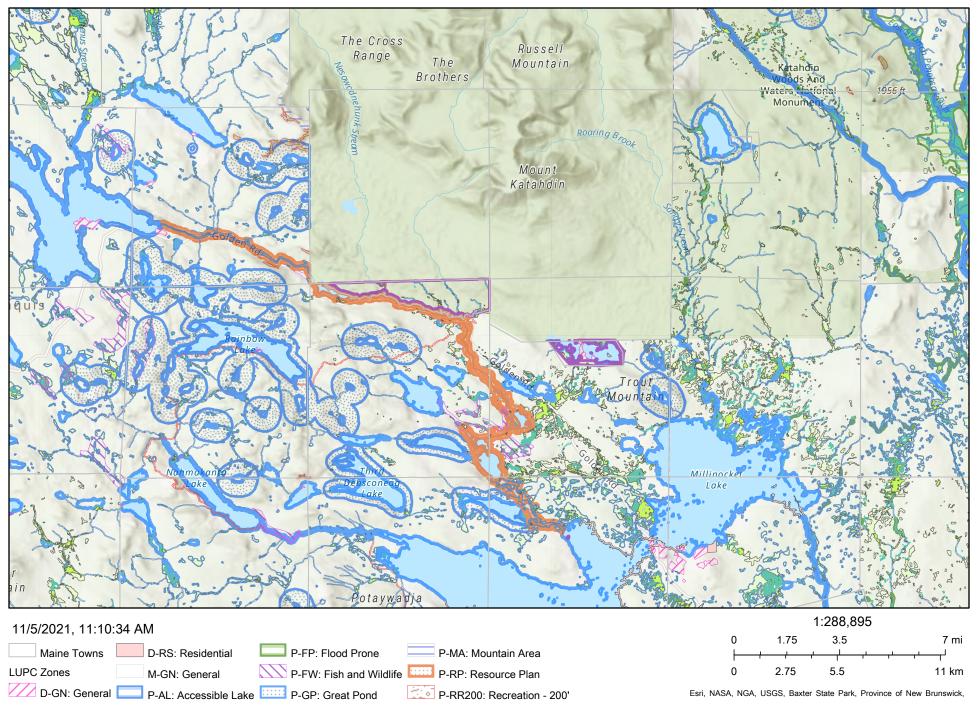
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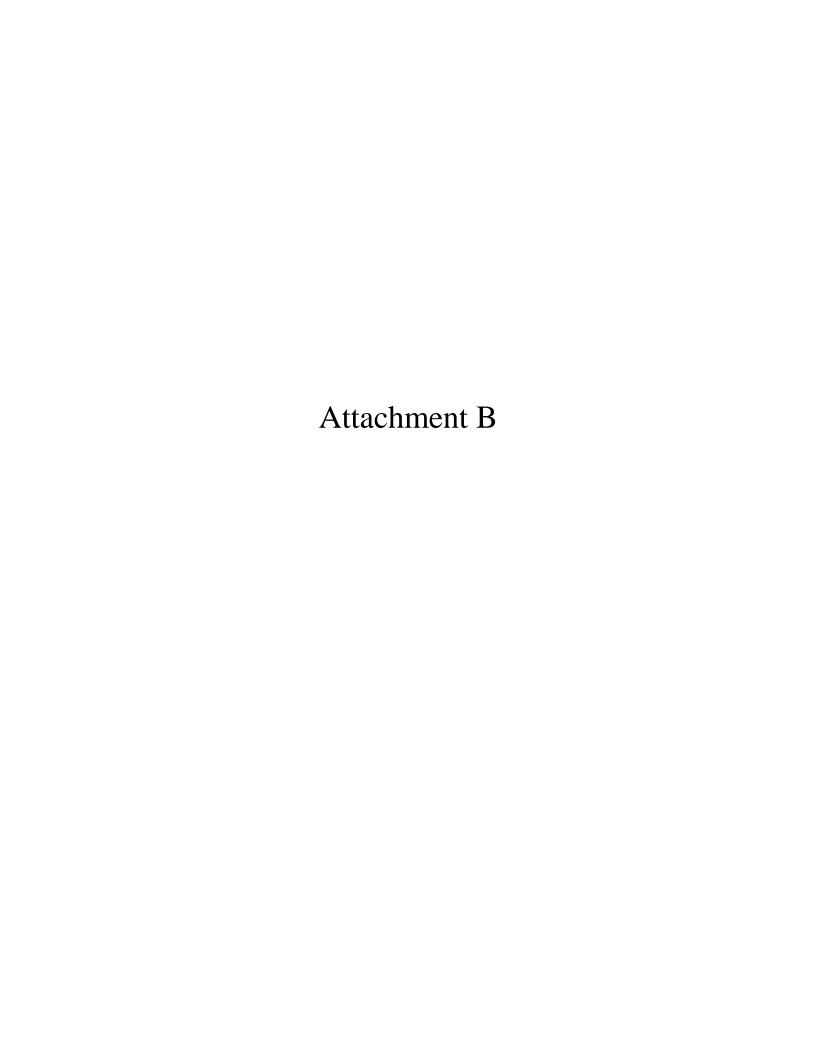
Following the comment period, depending upon comments received from the landowners, resource agencies, and interested persons, staff will make final changes and then present an updated land use guidance map to the Commission for a decision on adoption.

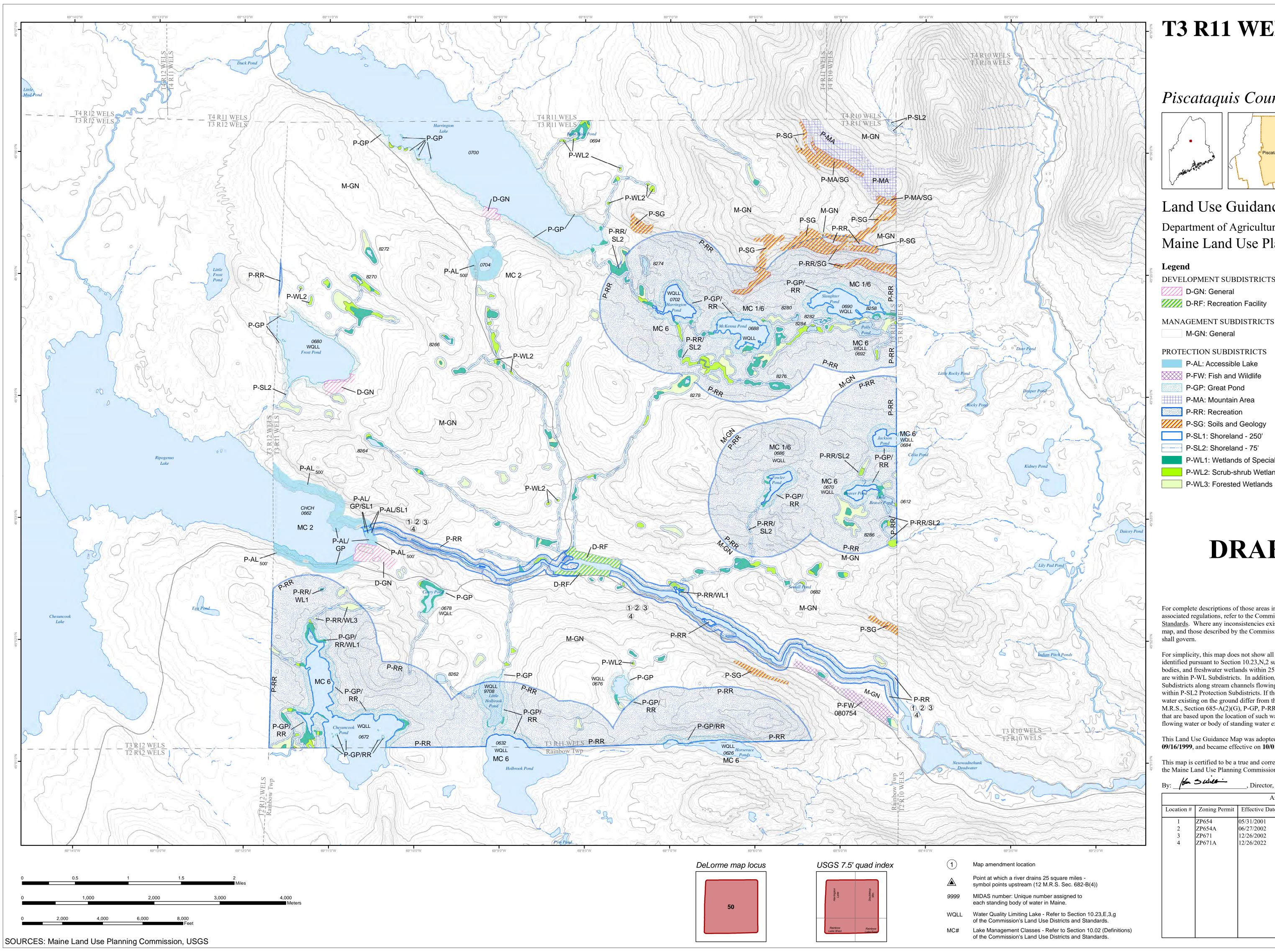
Attachment A: Overview Map of P-RP subdistrict Attachment B: Draft Land Use Guidance maps



LUPC Zoning and Parcel Viewer



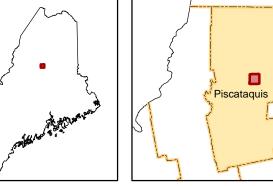




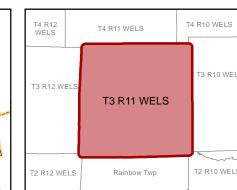
T3 R11 WELS



Piscataquis County







Land Use Guidance Map

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Maine Land Use Planning Commission

DEVELOPMENT SUBDISTRICTS

D-GN: General

MANAGEMENT SUBDISTRICTS

PROTECTION SUBDISTRICTS

P-AL: Accessible Lake

P-WL1: Wetlands of Special Significance

P-WL2: Scrub-shrub Wetlands

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For complete descriptions of those areas included within the various subdistricts, and the associated regulations, refer to the Commission's Chapter 10 rules: <u>Land Use Districts and Standards</u>. Where any inconsistencies exist between the district boundaries, as shown on this map, and those described by the Commission's Land Use Districts and Standards, the latter

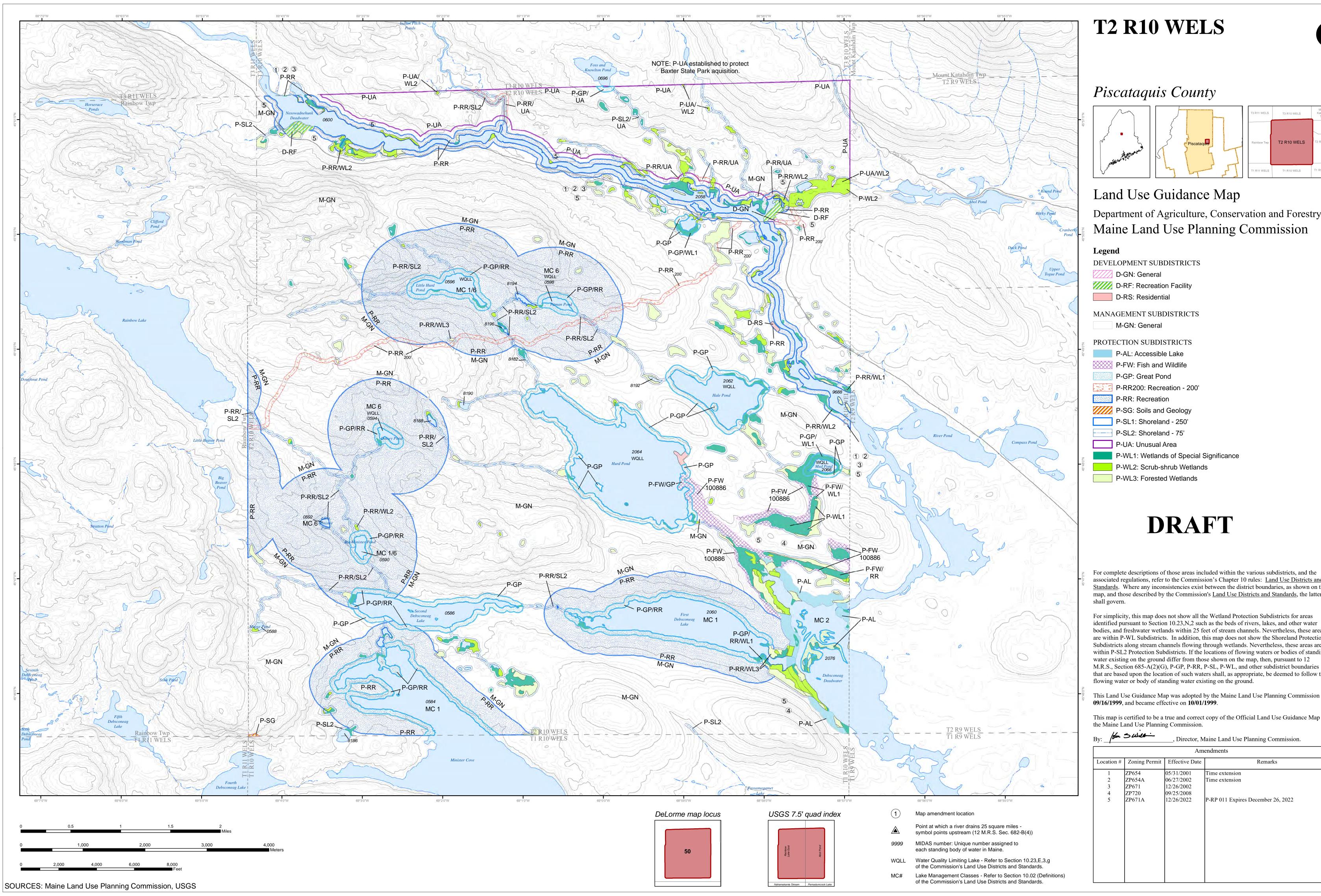
For simplicity, this map does not show all the Wetland Protection Subdistricts for areas identified pursuant to Section 10.23,N,2 such as the beds of rivers, lakes, and other water bodies, and freshwater wetlands within 25 feet of stream channels. Nevertheless, these areas are within P-WL Subdistricts. In addition, this map does not show the Shoreland Protection Subdistricts along stream channels flowing through wetlands. Nevertheless, these areas are within P-SL2 Protection Subdistricts. If the locations of flowing waters or bodies of standing water existing on the ground differ from those shown on the map, then, pursuant to 12 M.R.S., Section 685-A(2)(G), P-GP, P-RR, P-SL, P-WL, and other subdistrict boundaries that are based upon the location of such waters shall, as appropriate, be deemed to follow the flowing water or body of standing water existing on the ground.

This Land Use Guidance Map was adopted by the Maine Land Use Planning Commission on **09/16/1999**, and became effective on **10/01/1999**.

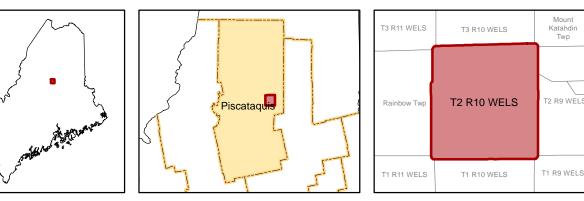
This map is certified to be a true and correct copy of the Official Land Use Guidance Map of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission.

_, Director, Maine Land Use Planning Commission.

Amendments					
Location #	Zoning Permit	Effective Date	Remarks		
1	ZP654	05/31/2001	Time extension		
2	ZP654A	06/27/2002	Time extension		
3	ZP671	12/26/2002			
4	ZP671A	12/26/2022	P-RP 011 Expires December 26, 2022		







Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Maine Land Use Planning Commission

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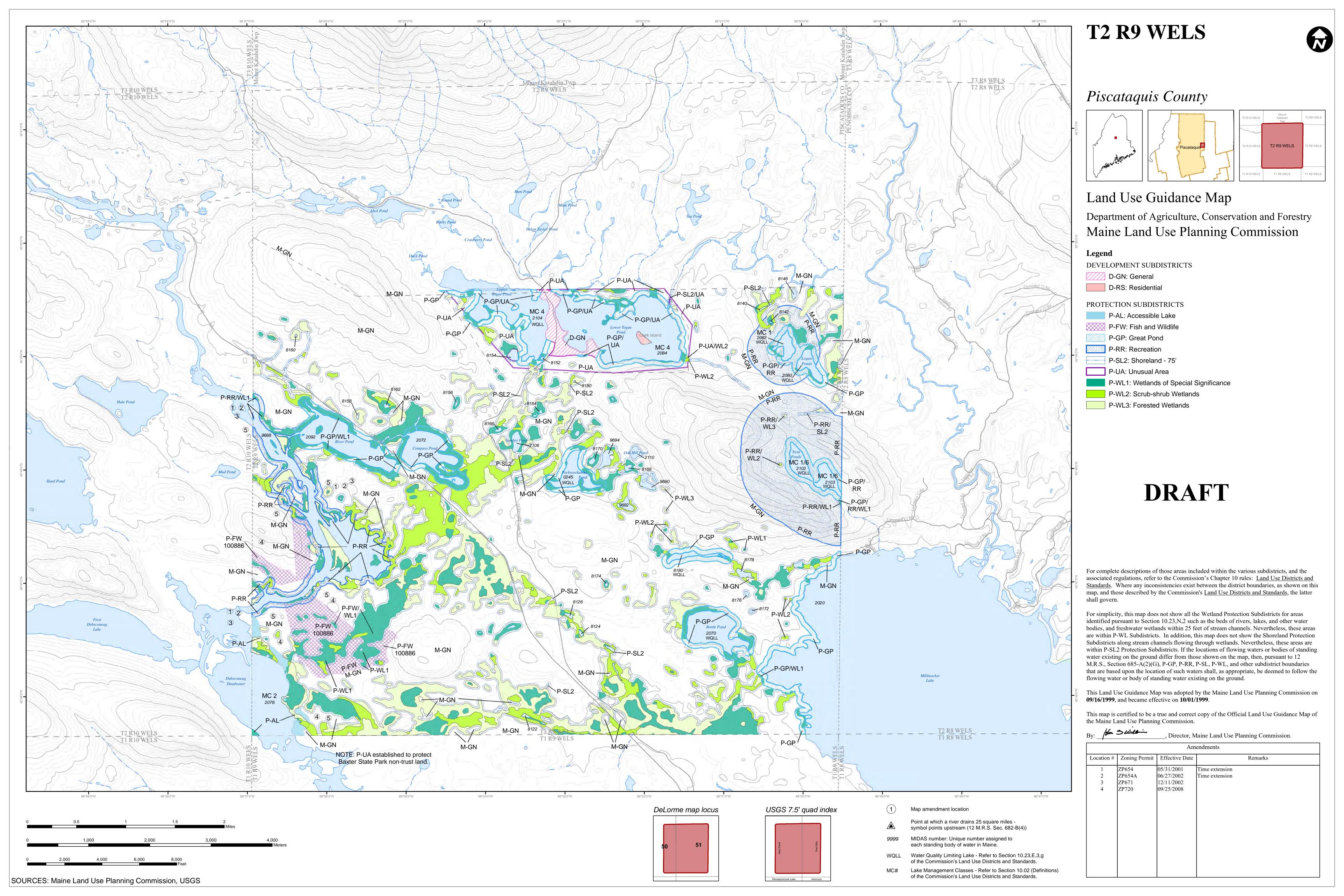
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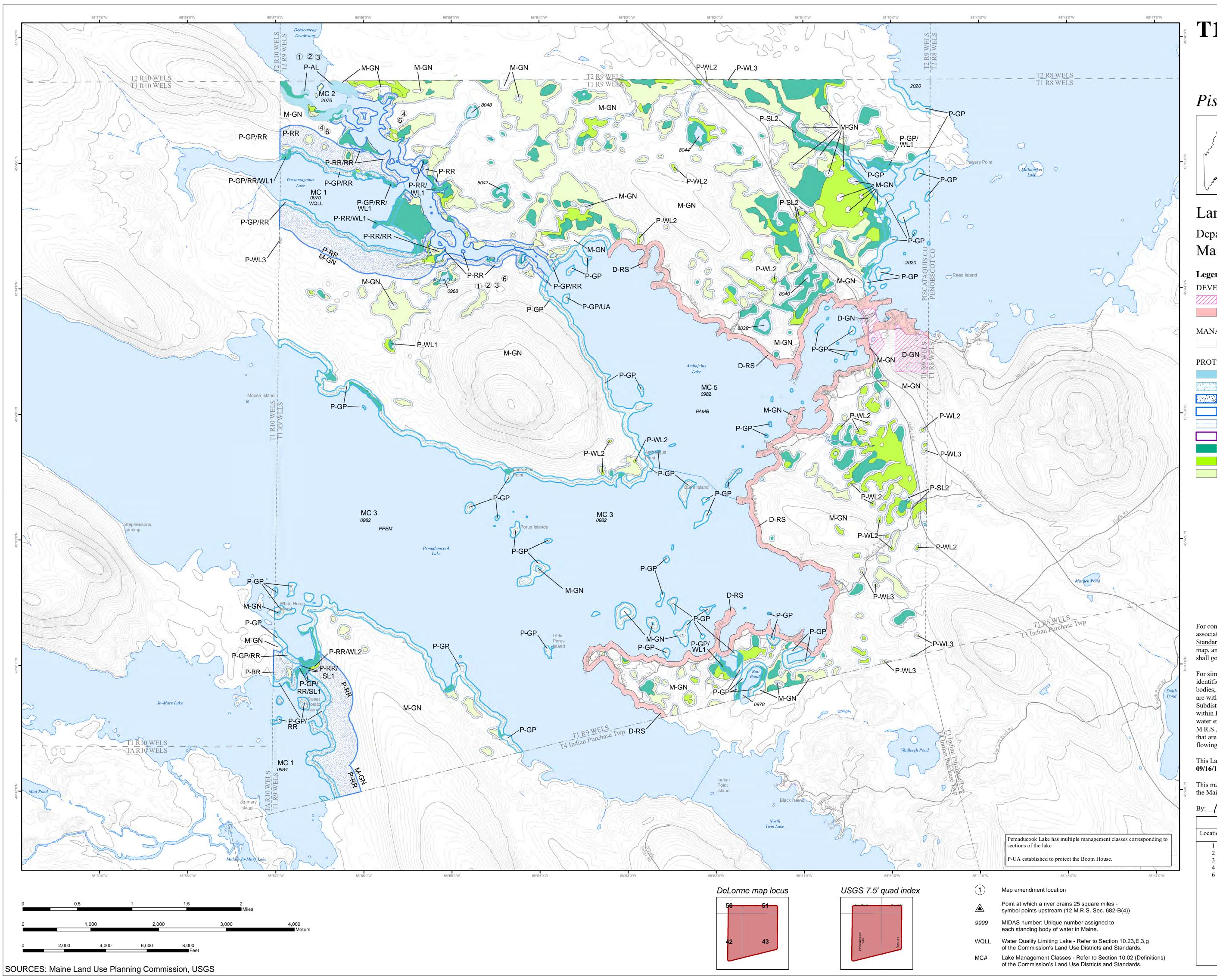
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2	ZP654A	06/27/2002	Time extension		
3	ZP671	12/26/2002			
4	ZP720	09/25/2008			
5	ZP671A	12/26/2022	P-RP 011 Expires December 26, 2022		

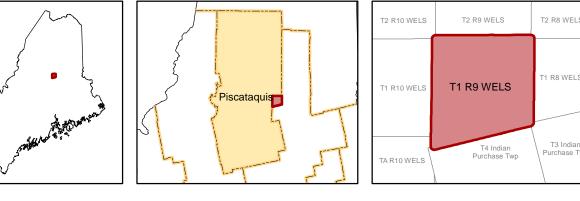




T1 R9 WELS



Piscataquis County



Land Use Guidance Map

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Maine Land Use Planning Commission

Legend

DEVELOPMENT SUBDISTRICTS

D-GN: General

D-RS: Residential

MANAGEMENT SUBDISTRICTS

M-GN: General

PROTECTION SUBDISTRICTS

P-AL: Accessible Lake

P-GP: Great Pond

P-RR: Recreation P-SL1: Shoreland - 250'

P-SL2: Shoreland - 75'

P-UA: Unusual Area

P-WL1: Wetlands of Special Significance

P-WL2: Scrub-shrub Wetlands

P-WL3: Forested Wetlands

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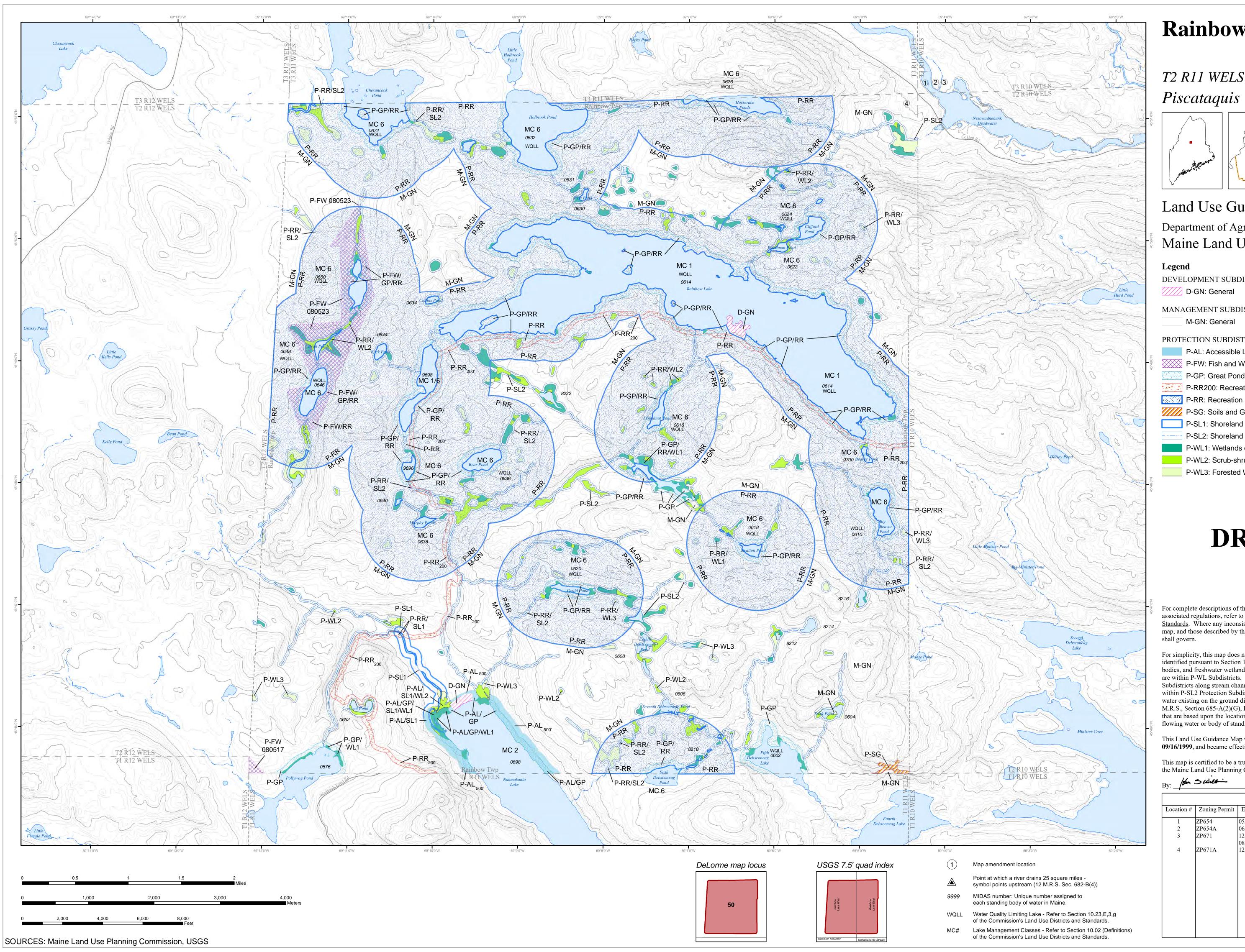
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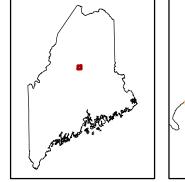
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Rainbow Twp.



T2 R11 WELS Piscataquis County







Land Use Guidance Map

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Maine Land Use Planning Commission

Legend

DEVELOPMENT SUBDISTRICTS

D-GN: General

MANAGEMENT SUBDISTRICTS

M-GN: General

PROTECTION SUBDISTRICTS

P-AL: Accessible Lake P-FW: Fish and Wildlife

P-GP: Great Pond

P-RR200: Recreation - 200'

P-SG: Soils and Geology

P-SL1: Shoreland - 250'

P-SL2: Shoreland - 75'

P-WL1: Wetlands of Special Significance P-WL2: Scrub-shrub Wetlands

P-WL3: Forested Wetlands

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2	ZP654A	06/27/2002	Time extension			
3	ZP671	12/26/2002	Removal of P-RP zone			
		08/18/2005	Adoption of digital NWI wetlands			
4	ZP671A	12/26/2022	P-RP 011 Expires December 26, 2022			
			-			

