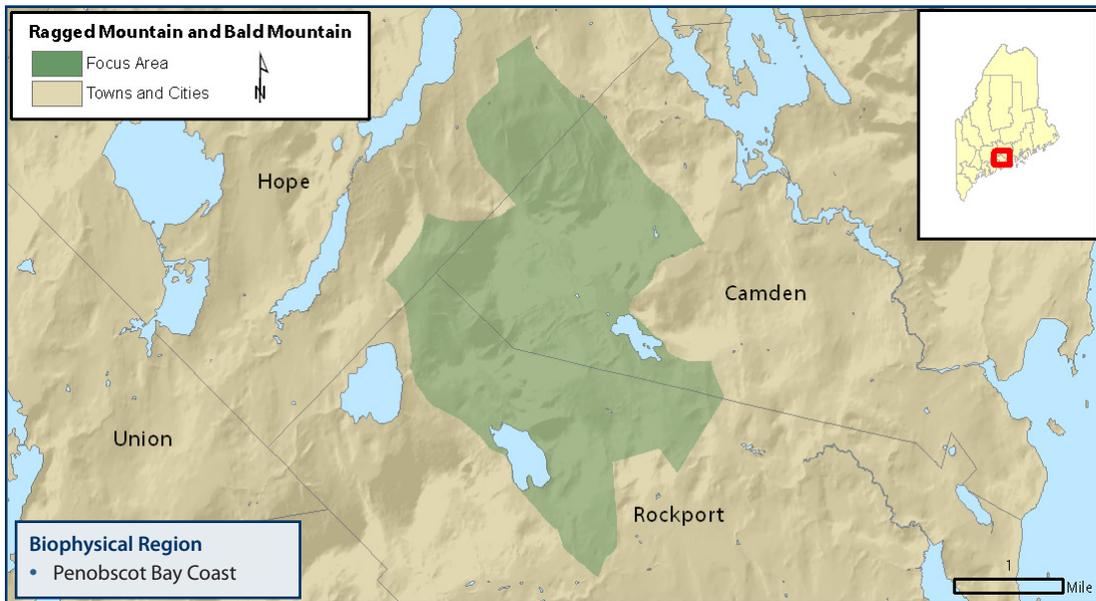


Ragged Mountain and Bald Mountain



WHY IS THIS AREA SIGNIFICANT?

At over 1200 feet in elevation, Ragged Mountain and Bald Mountain are imposing peaks in the western part of Camden. Both summits are capped by exposed bedrock, and the side slopes of both mountains are largely undeveloped. Together these peaks form the core of a 5,500-acre block of largely undeveloped lands.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION

- » Minimize recreational impacts on sensitive areas through careful siting of trails, combined with education and monitoring for overuse.
- » Educate recreational users about the ecological and economic benefits provided by the focus area.
- » Encourage best management practices for forestry, vegetation clearing, and soil disturbance activities.
- » Protect sensitive natural features through careful management planning on conserved lands.
- » Work with willing landowners to permanently protect undeveloped areas and significant features.

For more conservation opportunities, visit the Beginning with Habitat Online Toolbox: www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/about_toolbox.html.

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Rare Plants

Smooth Sandwort

Rare and Exemplary Natural Communities

Low-elevation Bald Oak - Pine Woodland
Rocky Summit Heath

Significant Wildlife Habitats

Deer Wintering Area
Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat

Public Access Opportunities

- Bald and Ragged Mountain Properties, Coastal Mountains Land Trust



Ragged and Bald Mountains, Maine Natural Areas Program

FOCUS AREA OVERVIEW

Ragged Mountain straddles the Rockport and Camden town lines. The Town of Camden operates a ski area on the north-east slopes of the mountain, and a communications tower is located on the summit above the ski slopes. Much of the ridgetop is exposed bedrock that supports a ~40 acre acidic rocky summit plant community. The bedrock outcrops are interspersed with spruce/fir forest, and further to the north, with a 150+ year old but ice-damaged oak forest. The west-facing slopes of Ragged Mountain are ~30 acres of steep acidic cliffs with talus slopes at the bottom. The forest beneath the cliffs contains patches of mature oak forest in the upper ravines.

The exposed southern face of Bald Mountain is similar to that described above, with characteristic plants including juniper (*Juniperus communis*), bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), and low-bush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*). Populations of the rare smooth sandwort (*Minuartia glabra*) grow on the summits of both Bald and Ragged Mountains.

Ragged and Bald Mountain and surrounding areas have become a popular recreation destination.

RARE AND EXEMPLARY NATURAL COMMUNITIES

Low-elevation Bald: Patches of blueberry, lichens, low herbs, and bare rock form a mosaic on these summits. Vegetation may be sparse, but usually forms 10-50% cover overall, often comprised of only a few species. Three-toothed cinquefoil may be locally abundant. A few coastal sites feature broom-crowberry, an uncommon species. Bryoid cover may be low or high and usually is dominated by lichens rather than bryophytes. This is the typical habitat of the rare smooth sandwort.

This type is well represented on public lands and private conservation lands. However, because this community type is usually associated with nice views, many sites have moderate to heavy hiker or ATV use. Because the vegetation is rather sparse, it is easy for visitors to wander off the trail, and off-trail traffic can seriously degrade the vegetation and has done so at several sites.

Rocky Summit Heath: Dwarf shrubs and stunted spruce or fir are the dominant features of this patchy vegetation. The tree layer is sparse (<25% cover) and includes balsam fir, red or black spruce, and (especially near the coast) northern white cedar. Dwarf shrub dominants vary and include Labrador tea, blueberries, and mountain cranberries. Interspersed islands of

taller shrubs and stunted, wind flagged trees (<2 m tall) may grade to krummholz form. Herbs are patchy and less extensive than shrubs; three-toothed cinquefoil is usually present and often prominent. The bryoid layer is usually sparse (<30% cover), but may be more extensive in moist bedrock depressions. In these low spots, peat mosses are typical; otherwise, lichens are the dominant bryoids.

Oak-Pine Woodlands: This community supports a partial canopy (20-70%) dominated by red oak, or red oak with white pine or red spruce (rarely with red pine). The trees are widely spaced and often stunted, with an open understory. Gray birch is a common small tree. The herb layer is well developed (>25% cover), with one-third to nearly all of the layer consisting of dwarf shrubs. Lowbush blueberry is the most abundant dwarf shrub; sheep laurel is also common. Herbs form 1-20% cover among the dwarf shrubs. The bryoid layer is patchy, sparse, and variable in composition. While this is categorized as a "mixed" type, individual examples may be either mixed (>25% conifer and >25% deciduous) or deciduous (<25% conifer); they are otherwise very similar.

This community appears to be relatively stable in Maine, with little habitat conversion. Fire has apparently played a role at some sites by preventing the invasion of fire sensitive hardwood trees and shrubs. Many sites receive recreational use. In a few locations that use is heavy enough to have degraded the community, but most recreational foot traffic is compatible. Communications or wind power towers have degraded some sites on mid-elevation summits.

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Smooth sandwort (*Minuartia glabra*) is an erect, glabrous herb with small white flowers and sessile (stalkless) leaves. The flowers, borne in groups of 3-7 per stem, are composed of a circle of 5 petals, each only 4-6 mm long. Likewise, the leaves are quite small, the upper measuring only 8-30 mm in length. *M. glabra* looks very similar to *M. groenlandica*, a species normally found on the higher mountains of western and central Maine. *M. groenlandica* is smaller with a dense tuft of basal leaves, 3-7 flowered cymes, and petals 6-10 mm long. This species is typically found in Maine along rocky outcrops on the coast and inland. Some populations could be threatened by heavy recreational (hiking) use of its hilltop habitat, but the plant appears to cope well with moderate disturbance.

CONSERVATION CONSIDERATIONS

- » The Coastal Mountains have experienced rapid growth in the last decade (Krohn 1997), and many of the upland areas are under increasing threat. Growth and sprawl in rural areas contribute to habitat fragmentation, water quality degradation, and expansion of invasive plant species.
- » Many of the higher elevation oak forests in this region -- particularly stands facing the east and southeast -- were heavily damaged by the January 1998 ice storm. In light of

Ecological Services of the Focus Area

- Carbon sequestration
- Soil stabilization
- Provides high quality habitat for waterfowl, wading birds, deer, and other wildlife.

Economic Contributions of the Focus Area

- Attracts tourism for hiking, biking, skiing, wildlife observation, and hunting.
- Provides high value forest products that support the regional economy.
- Provides scenic vistas that contribute to Maine's natural character, including views from the peaks of Ragged and Bald Mountain.



Ragged and Bald Mountains, Maine Natural Areas Program

this damage, some landowners have undertaken heavy salvage cuts to offset possible economic loss. Woodlot owners considering such options should be encouraged to develop a long-term forest management plan with the guidance of a licensed forester.

- » Old forests (e.g., greater than 100 years old) are becoming scarce in Maine. Retention of old forest stands and characteristics, such as coarse woody debris and standing snags, may augment habitat diversity and value.
- » Particular attention should be given to protecting large parcels adjacent to already protected lands. (Most of Bald

Mountain lies within a few large parcels.) Furthermore, conservation priorities within this focus area should also be influenced by the development threat of each tract. The development potential of several areas is limited by steep slopes, restricted access due to adjacent conservation lands, or both.

- » The biggest threat to the summit peaks may be from two sources (1) the further development of communication towers and associated facilities, and (2) uncontrolled recreational use. Recreational use should be limited to existing trails.
- » With expected changes in climate over the next century, plant and wildlife species will shift their ranges. Maintaining landscape connections between undeveloped habitats will provide an important safety net for biodiversity as species adjust their ranges to future climate conditions.



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RARE SPECIES AND EXEMPLARY NATURAL COMMUNITIES OF THE FOCUS AREA

	Common Name	Scientific Name	State Status*	State Rarity Rank	Global Rarity Rank
Plants	Smooth Sandwort	<i>Minuartia glabra</i>	SC	S3	G4
Natural Communities	Low-elevation Bald	Three-toothed cinquefoil - blueberry low summit bald		S3	GNR
	Oak - Pine Woodland	Oak - pine woodland		S4	G3G5
	Rocky Summit Heath	Rocky Summit Heath		S4	GNR

State Status*

- E** Endangered: Rare and in danger of being lost from the state in the foreseeable future, or federally listed as Endangered.
- T** Threatened: Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened.
- SC** Special Concern: Rare in Maine, based on available information, but not sufficiently rare to be Threatened or Endangered.

*State status rankings are not assigned to natural communities.

State Rarity Rank

- S1** Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres).
- S2** Imperiled in Maine because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- S3** Rare in Maine (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
- S4** Apparently secure in Maine.
- S5** Demonstrably secure in Maine.

Global Rarity Rank

- G1** Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation.
- G2** Globally imperiled because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- G3** Globally rare (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
- G4** Apparently secure globally.
- G5** Demonstrably secure globally.