

Management Recommendations (Plan pages 61-72)

Natural Resource Issues	Actions taken/Comments:
<p><u>Sensitive Natural Features</u> Avoid the rare plant population of alpine clubmoss when designing new trail or planning new recreation activity. Determine if a portion of the Sanders Hill Trail needs to be re-located if too close to the population. Consult with the Maine Natural Areas Program when planning management activities in or near the Unpatterned Fen Ecosystem or alpine clubmoss population.</p>	<p>MNAP staff will be conducting a field visit this spring to determine if there is any impact from the trail on the rare plant population.</p>
<p><u>Forest Contiguity</u> In keeping with the Vision for the Kennebec Highlands, manage without paved or public use roads. All roads will be management roads, and some existing roads will have shared use status—allowing pedestrians, ATVs, horses, and bikes. Some management roads will be for Bureau management, emergency access and snowmobile only. Future timber management will use existing roads when feasible, minimize the creation of new roads, and retire roads and trails not designated for shared use, recreation or fire and rescue, when timber operations are completed in a particular area. No new roads for public use will be built, as this plan designates many existing roads as having shared use status, factoring in a balance of motorized recreation, fishing access and maintaining a semi-remote character for the Highlands. No new structures are needed on the State-owned Kennebec Highlands, however, the BRCA-owned parcel on the Monataka property has good potential for a nature center, with associated facilities.</p>	<p>Management has proceeded as described in the recommendations, with no new roads constructed. Improvements have been made to Roxy Rand Road, both on the section crossing private lands and the first ¾ mile on BPL property, to improve access to McIntire Pond; additional work is needed. The Bureau is considering improvements to Preston (AKA Wildflower Estates) and Rugged Hill Road (as a tie in to McGaffey Mountain Road) to support eventual timber harvesting. No harvesting or associated road work is anticipated in the near term. ORV routes would not be impacted by the improvements under consideration.</p>
<p><u>Water Quality</u> Allocate areas around ponds, streams and wetlands as wildlife dominant, which permits forestry that maintains shading and minimizes siltation of wetlands and waterbodies, and facilitates wildlife travel opportunities. Permit vehicular access to McIntire</p>	<p>The Plan established the allocations as described in all riparian areas. Management has proceeded as described and as guided by the IRP and Wildlife Guidelines.</p>

<p>Pond, which has had a small parking area built, and a barrier installed allowing visitors to hand-carry boats a short distance, but prohibiting vehicles from driving right to the water. On management roads designated shared use, improve condition of roads to accommodate use while protecting water quality, re-locating portions of roads if necessary (working with snowmobile and ATV clubs as appropriate). Consider springtime gating of roads if necessary to protect water quality. Block roads not designated as shared use (for those designated for snowmobile only, block only in summer). On existing roads around ponds other than McIntire, designate for non-motorized use only. If new non-motorized trails are built in these areas, design trails to minimize erosion including avoiding wet areas wherever possible. Any new trail should be constructed to prevent erosion, siltation and degradation of water quality. ongoing</p>	<p>Additional road improvements are pending, depending on availability of resources, with priority on Roxy Rand Road this 5 year cycle.</p> <p>There have been no changes since the Plan’s adoption in gating of shared use or blocking of non-shared use roads. Roxy Rand Road is blocked south of the McIntire Pond access road.</p> <p>New mountain bike trails have avoided wet areas and otherwise have been designed to avoid erosion.</p>
<p><u>Deer Wintering Areas</u> Cooperate with IF&W to assess mapped deer wintering areas and determine the most suitable sites to re-establish viable winter cover for deer. Design forest management techniques in these areas appropriate to support wildlife habitat needs. Refine boundaries of wildlife allocations as on-the-ground management determines the extent of appropriate new deer wintering areas. Consider avoiding impacts from recreational use if possible in designating areas to restore or to establish as new deer wintering areas.</p>	<p>In general, these actions are ongoing. More detailed work related to potential enhancement of deer wintering areas will occur in conjunction with preparation of harvesting prescriptions.</p>

Historic/Cultural Resource Issues	Actions taken/Comments:
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<p><u>19th Century Homestead Sites</u> Consistent with recommendations from MHPC, designate a 200 foot buffer around each old homestead site as special protection-historic/cultural. Prohibit timber management and new motorized trail construction in these areas; but allow existing roads in these special protection areas to continue—as these roads were put in place in the 19th Century as access to these homesteads. Allow motorized use</p>	<p>The Plan protects these sites with Special Protection allocations, as described.</p>
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roads subject to existing public access easements and rights, and as needed to provide trails for ATV and snowmobile use that are on existing roads and separated from non-motorized areas. Relocate sections of road or trail if a particular site is found to be negatively impacted by recreational use.	
There is the potential that future timber harvesting near McGaffey Mountain Road may lead to the need to place a yard within one of the Special Protection buffer areas. If this is the case, the Bureau will consult with MHPC on the placement, to avoid impact to the historic site.	No harvest planning has occurred to date.
Append and post state law regarding removal of artifacts on state lands to rules for the use of the Kennebec Highlands and post these in trail parking areas and add to upcoming map and guide.	This information has not yet been posted. BPL will post early in this plan cycle. The map and guide for the Kennebec Highlands is in progress.
Work with MHPC and BRCA to secure documentation of the existence and location of drainage ditches or canals associated with Kidder and Round/Watson Ponds.	No work on obtaining these documents has occurred this cycle.

Recreation Issues or Opportunities	Actions taken/Comments:
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<p><u>Balancing Character of the Highlands with High Demand for Multiple Recreational Uses</u></p> <p>Manage the Highlands to balance the divergent goals of accommodating a wide range of recreation uses while maintaining a remote character in designated remote recreation areas.</p>	Overall management of the Highlands has conformed to these objectives.
<p>In summertime, designate separate trail systems for motorized and non-motorized uses. In wintertime, provide a trail network of both multi-use and non-motorized trails—where cross-country skiers and snowshoers can choose between using snowmobile trails in whole or in part, but also have opportunities for remote, non-motorized trails.</p>	The designated non-motorized and motorized trail systems designated in the Plan accomplish these objectives.

<p>In developing new non-motorized trails in remote recreation areas (and parking areas designed to provide access to trails), consider the protection of the remote experience. Collect information on visitor satisfaction with the current trails and remote areas to determine if increased use from expansion of parking areas or additional trailheads would adversely impact the current visitor experience in a particular remote recreation area. Avoid expanding parking areas or building new trails in a remote recreation area where the current remote experience may be compromised (as determined by feedback from visitors).</p>	<p>The Round Top trailhead on Watson Pond Road was altered and slightly expanded to a) minimize conflicts with nearby residences and to b) minimize potentially dangerous road side parking. No survey work performed to date, though there also has not been any reported dissatisfaction with trail experiences.</p>
<p>Develop a plan in partnership with BRCA and CeMeNEMBA, for development of new non-motorized trails in the Highlands. Several recommendations in this ‘Recreation Issues and Opportunities’ section add further guidance in developing this trail plan.</p>	<p>Trail development is ongoing, although a formal trails plan has not been developed. Specifically, the A Trail (mountain bike, singletrack design) to McGaffey Mt. from the Round Top Trailhead has been developed. Also, a trail has been developed in the past year on the Dolley property, across from that trailhead.</p>
<p><u>ATV Riding</u> Designate an ATV route in the western portion of the Highlands on management roads that serves as a connector route from the Mount Vernon trail system to the trails north in New Sharon and Farmington. Partner with local ATV clubs to upgrade and maintain the trail system and to deter ATV use off the trail system.</p>	<p>As shown on the map on page 74 of the Plan, a north/south ATV route has been developed on BPL management roads and roads crossing adjacent private land, following McGaffey Mtn. Rd., Vienna Mtn. Rd., Cross Rd. and Berry Hill Road (all co-located with snowmobile trail).</p>
<p>Work with local ATV clubs on management of the trail and educating users to keep them on authorized trails. Continue the Bureau’s preferred approach to recreation management: provide quality facilities that will be attractive to use – in this case ATV trails – and provide supporting information and education that directs users to these facilities. If more effort is needed, work with enforcement agencies to bring strategic enforcement to the trail.</p>	<p>Management of ATV use has followed these recommendations. To date, off trail riding has not been a substantial problem and thus special enforcement efforts have not been needed.</p>

<p><u>Snowmobiling</u> Maintain network of snowmobile trails, in cooperation with clubs, except for sporadic trail around Kidder Pond, which has been designated Remote Recreation. This trail will be eliminated from the snowmobile network. See allocation maps for snowmobile trails. As is typical of snowmobile trails, re-locations may be necessary from time to time to accommodate forest management and/or wildlife considerations.</p>	<p>As shown on the map on page 74 of the Plan, a north/south snowmobile route has been developed on the Roxy Rand, McGaffey Mountain, Vienna Mountain, Cross and Berry Hill management roads, with connecting trails on the Bean Access Road and Prescott Road in the south part of the unit. A portion of trail on Prescott was relocated off the road to minimize road use conflicts.</p>
<p>For snowmobile trails that are not part of the ATV trail and do not hold public easements, block in summer to maintain trail quality and prevent cars, trucks and ATVs from entering. However, these trails/roads can be used by the Bureau for forest management and for emergency access.</p>	<p>Done.</p>
<p><u>Cross-country Skiing</u> Consider the potential of designating ski routes that could provide a blend of opportunities: some that use the snowmobile trails, and others that provide a quiet experience in remote recreation areas. Some routes may be designed to use snowmobile trails to access more remote areas, and then branch off into backcountry loops around ponds or exploring ridgelines, for those that want a more backcountry experience.</p>	<p>Providing a variety of winter trail experiences remains an ongoing consideration.</p>
<p>Consider ski-use when designing new non-motorized trails and parking areas to access them. As much as feasible, new non-motorized trails should be designed to accommodate winter use, including backcountry skiing.</p>	<p>As currently constituted, the Kennebec Highlands provides primitive, ungroomed cross-country skiing for those who seek it out. There is no plan to construct ski trails that accommodate grooming, other than skiing on snowmobile trails. However, ski use is permitted on and off trails.</p>
<p><u>Hiking</u> Develop a plan to prioritize new hiking trail development, and to determine which other non-motorized uses will be accommodated on which trails. Utilize the annual forum as one venue for communication in developing this plan (see annual forum section</p>	<p>Trail management discussions are occurring annually and as issues arise with BRCA.</p>

<p>below). Consult with BRCA and other user groups such as CeMeNEMBA to gain input. Collect information on demand for various trails, as needed.</p>	
<p>In prioritizing new trail development, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing remote recreation areas for new hiking trail development. However, this should be balanced with the concern expressed in the ‘Balancing Character....’ section above that visitor feedback may show that building new trails in particular remote recreation areas may diminish the experience. • When feasible, develop trails to accommodate the other non-motorized uses mentioned in this plan. Though it is not always desirable to designate routes for multiple uses, it is part of the Vision of this plan to develop both single use and shared-use routes. Multiple uses can best be accommodated if considered in the trail design phase. • Improve the experience on current hiking trails as a priority before undertaking new trail construction. Current hiking trails use portions of management roads and the experience could be improved by re-routing these portions of trail. • Consider development of a trail that minimizes barriers to visitors with mobility challenges as these currently do not exist on the Highlands (see accessible trails for the disabled section below). • Consider the potential hiking trails identified during the working meeting on trails held during the management planning process. Though not bound by the routes identified in this brainstorming meeting, these represent ideas that may be in demand by the general public and can be considered in trail development. • Consider information on demand for new hiking trails that may be collected from visitors to the current hiking trails in concert with data collected on satisfaction with the current experience. 	<p>These considerations are taken into account in ongoing trail development.</p> <p>The Round Top Trails continues to use Roxy Rand Road for portions of its route. However, the Bureau did reroute the Sanders Hill Trail off the Roxy Rand Road.</p>
<p><u>Accessible Trails for the Disabled</u> In cooperation with BRCA, explore the feasibility of providing a walking trail on the Dolley/Monataka property that minimizes</p>	<p>This potential trail is part of ongoing trail development on the Dolley/Monataka property.</p>

<p>barriers to visitors with mobility challenges while offering access to historic and scenic resources. If this area is found infeasible, consider other areas within the Highlands for a similar trail experience.</p>	
<p>If a trail is established at the Dolley property, consider bringing the trail to the shoreline along Long Pond with the intent of a) providing trail access to the shoreline, and b) providing water-based access to the shore and via the trail, to the Round Top trailhead and the trail network at the Highlands.</p>	<p>A trail to the shoreline of Long Pond has been laid out; the location will be reviewed in Spring 2017.</p>
<p>Consider developing one or more trails that provide opportunities for trail experiences for visitors of all abilities; such trails should provide firm level footing and low grades to accommodate person with mobility challenges. Incorporate level areas or benches for resting and switchback approaches to higher elevations. As resources allow, consider adapting existing trails to accommodate a wider range of hikers—including senior citizens and young children.</p>	<p>Ongoing consideration.</p>
<p>Ensure that any trailhead facilities developed, such as privies, meet accessibility standards.</p>	<p>Currently, there are no privies at trailheads. Should that change, the Bureau can ensure that they meet ADA standards – even if trails do not meet full ADA standards.</p>
<p><u>Horseback Riding</u> Designate which roads are open as shared use and open to horseback riders. Provide signage indicating allowed uses—so that horseback riders know what other users to expect on trails.</p>	<p>Shared use roads and allowed uses have not been posted but will be prioritized by BPL for this 5 year plan cycle.</p>
<p><u>Mountain Biking</u> Post management roads open to ATVs and snowmobiles as also open to mountain bikes. Explore the feasibility of partnering with CeMeNEMBA in constructing single-track mountain bike trails. In determining the location and volume of trails, consider the character of remote recreation areas as expressed in ‘Balancing Character...’ section above. Consider timber management needs in trail location and avoid whenever possible locating trails in areas with wet soils or</p>	<p>As noted above, allowed uses (including bikes) have not yet been posted, but will be pursued by BPL this cycle.</p> <p>BPL has an ongoing partnership with CeMeNEMBA for construction of mountain bike trails, which has resulting in the new trail near the Watson Pond Road/Round Top trailhead.</p>

<p>deer wintering areas.</p>	
<p>Whenever feasible, design trails to provide other opportunities for non-motorized uses such as hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.</p>	<p>Ongoing consideration as part of trail development.</p>
<p><u>Trailhead Parking Areas</u> Work with BRCA to collect more information on use of the Kennebec Highlands trails. Information to be gathered could include: visitor use numbers for trails and parking areas, visitor preferences for social conditions on the trails, visitor satisfaction with current experiences and willingness to accept additional use. This information could be collected by one or a combination of the following: visitor surveys, parking lot interviews, or gathering info the annual trails forum.</p>	<p>There has not been a purposeful monitoring program on site to date. However, the Bureau has a source of anecdotal information through the volunteer host program, under which an individual who is frequently on the property and the trails observes activity levels and reports any problems or concerns to the Bureau. The Bureau could place discreet trail counters and possibly develop a user survey for 2017.</p>
<p>If the Bureau finds that overflow parking is a frequent problem, visitor experience is not being diminished by current use level and could tolerate additional use, consider expanding existing parking areas on Watson Pond Rd.</p>	<p>The Watson Pond Road parking areas have been expanded and upgraded and the entry to the south parking area (Round Top trailhead) has been moved from Wildflower Estates to Watson Pond Road.</p>
<p>Consider an additional trailhead parking area on the western portion of the Highlands to provide access to the current and future trail system from the west and disperse use. Potential locations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • off the Vienna Mountain Road near the Kennebec Highlands-owned blueberry field—where visitors could park to pick blueberries or to access a non-motorized trail system around Kidder Pond • off of the Kimball Pond Road if future acquisitions make this possible and a trail system is determined to be desirable from this direction • An alternate location considered during the annual forum. 	<p>Ongoing consideration. Recent BRCA acquisition of Kimball Pond property (see description under “Other Items of Special Concern” below this table) may present an opportunity for a trailhead on the west side of the Highlands. BPL will work with BRCA to explore this possibility, along with a potential new non-motorized trail connection.</p>
<p>Do not eliminate the possibility of an additional trailhead parking area, however, carefully consider current use, demand, and visitor satisfaction with the current levels of use and remote experience</p>	<p>These are ongoing considerations in trail planning.</p>

<p>before building an additional trailhead. Build an additional trailhead if necessary to accommodate a trail system which cannot be accessed by the two existing parking areas (for example, a third potential parking area on the western side of the Highlands may be warranted in the future).</p>	
<p><u>Fishing and Boating</u> As resources allow, upgrade the Roxy Rand and McIntire Pond Roads to accommodate vehicular use and improve water quality. A small parking area is provided at McIntire Pond which allows close access to a hand carry boat site. This provides access to an exceptional fishing experience. However, consider spring gating when conditions are extremely muddy, re-opening the gate as early as road conditions allow.</p>	<p>Access to McIntire Pond has been improved (as reported above) and improvements are ongoing.</p>
<p>At Boody and Kidder Ponds, the fishing and boating experience will be more remote, with walk-in access only. As alternatives to improved vehicle access to Boody and Kidder Ponds, the Bureau will permit storage of personal small boats or canoes. The boat-owner must be identified on the boat. Consider designating 'boat storage areas' on these two ponds to reduce clutter of boats scattered around the ponds.</p>	<p>Although boat storage is permitted, none have yet been seen at these ponds (they may be present but not visible from usual viewpoints).</p>
<p><u>Hunting</u> As time and resources allow, the Bureau will work with partners to notify the public regarding hunting seasons and rules for hunting on the Highlands. This includes indicating rules on the upcoming Map and Guide, and at trailhead parking areas. This should include not only rules for hunters, but notification to non-hunters about seasons for hunting and taking precautions such as wearing blaze orange.</p>	<p>This information will be provided on the Map and Guide, which is in progress.</p>
<p><u>Camping</u> Explore the feasibility of constructing one or more primitive campsites near ponds or other scenic locations in the Highlands. These should be walk-to only, and location should be considered in</p>	<p>Campsites remain a possibility, although no specific options have been discussed to date.</p>

<p>coordination with the current and future hiking trail network.</p>	
<p><u>Annual Recreation Forum</u> Implement an annual trails forum, to include Bureau staff members and representatives from organizations that partner with the Bureau on trail maintenance. Include the following Bureau staff members (if schedules allow): the Bureau Recreation Specialist, the Western Region Lands Manager, the Forester assigned to the Kennebec Highlands, and an ORV Division representative. Managing partners currently include: BRCA, Mountainview ATV club Rome Ruff Riders Snowmobile Club and Vienna Mountaineers Snowmobile Club. Representatives from other recreation user groups (such as CeMeNEMBA) may attend as the need arises.</p> <p>Topics for this forum could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts that may be occurring amongst recreationists and potential solutions • Work plans for the following year • Sharing information on any upcoming forestry operations • Sharing plans for new non-motorized trails • Sharing of any information collected from recreationists (anecdotally or through surveys) • Coordination in matters such as signage, visitor information, etc. • Development of additional trailhead parking opportunities as mentioned above • Other topics deemed relevant 	<p>Although formal meetings have not occurred, BPL staff have met informally (including field visits) with BRCA and various user groups. For example, meetings with the snowmobile club occurred, directed at relocation of a section of trail off Wildflower Estates Road.</p>

Transportation and Administrative Considerations	Actions taken/Comments
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<p><u>Roads for General Vehicular Travel</u> Designate roads in the Highlands as management roads (rather than public use roads, which are roads maintained to access recreation destinations such as campgrounds, and require a high level of maintenance to accommodate significant use).</p>	<p>The map on page 73 of the Plan depicts management roads on the Highlands and indicates those segments that are open to public vehicular traffic.</p>
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<p>Some of these roads will be designated as management roads with “shared-use” status, and will allow vehicular travel. In these cases, some improvements may be necessary to allow safe two-way traffic (periodic turnouts for example).</p> <p>Roads open to general vehicular access include roads with probable public easements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berry Hill Rd • Vienna Mountain Rd • McGaffey Mountain Rd 	<p>Ongoing. Berry Hill Road, Cross Road, McGaffey Mtn. Road, the northernmost section of Roxy Rand Road, and the adjacent section of McIntire Pond Road have been designated “shared use” and are open to vehicular travel.</p> <p>Note that Berry Hill and McGaffey Mountain Roads are not drivable by standard vehicles. Vienna Mountain Road (off BPL ownership) has recently been maintained (reshaped and ditched). Berry Hill Road has not been improved and remains a 4WD road.</p>
<p>The McIntire Pond Road and the Roxy Rand Road leading up to the McIntire Pond Road will be designated a management road open to passenger vehicles, due to the fishing opportunity and handcarry boat access and parking at the Pond. However, this will not be open to ATVs.</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>All other roads will be blocked as necessary to deter general vehicular travel. Seasonal blocking may be necessary to allow snowmobile travel on roads designated for this winter use, but off limits to summer motorized use.</p>	<p>No new seasonal blocking of roads has occurred.</p>
<p><u>Abutting Property Owners</u> Mark the perimeter boundary of the Highlands for easy identification.</p>	<p>The boundary marking is mostly complete.</p>
<p>As the need arises, communicate with abutting property owners about management and use of the Highlands.</p>	<p>Ongoing, as needed.</p>
<p>Make clear through signage and information on maps which roads are off limits to vehicular travel to deter travel on private roads and property (some roads it may be desirable not to show on maps, if not open to the public and not leading to a recreation destination). Coordinate with BRCA on public information to determine which roads and trails to display on maps and trailhead kiosks.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing. Roads linked to the ATV trail but not open to ATVs have been posted.</p>

<p><u>Host Communities</u> Communicate with town representatives about road access needs for fire and rescue. Communicate with town representatives about other issues as they arise.</p>	<p>Ongoing communication.</p>
<p><u>Potential for Vandalism</u> As time and resources allow, periodically monitor the Highlands and communicate with Maine Forest Service to arrange for their assistance in monitoring as dumping and theft issues arise. Maintain communication with managing partners and abutting landowners about these issues. Follow-up with the Maine Forest Service about enforcement action as necessary.</p>	<p>As mention above under trailhead monitoring (page 8), the Bureau has an arrangement with a “volunteer host” who is frequently on these public lands; that person is able to provide monitoring of these types of problems. No significant issues of vandalism, dumping or thefts have arisen. (There has been one occurrence of timber trespass by an abutter, which the Bureau has addressed.)</p>
<p><u>Public Information</u> Develop a ‘map and guide’ about the Kennebec Highlands consistent with that provided for other public reserved lands with recreational opportunities. Improve and update trail signage to reduce incidents of lost hikers.</p>	<p>Map and Guide is in progress.</p>
<p><u>Written Agreements</u> Develop written agreements with organizations that will assist in management of the Highlands, specifically with the BRCA, snowmobile club(s) the ATV club.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><u>Structures on the Highlands</u> Determine the disposition of the Saddle Camp and Boathouse. Communicate with BRCA about their potential interest in upgrading and maintaining these structures.</p>	<p>The Boathouse has been removed (summer 2016). The Saddle Camp has been prepped for burning.</p>
<p><u>Blueberry Fields on the Highlands</u> Continue to manage the blueberry fields without herbicides, using periodic burns, if necessary, and mowing, if feasible.</p>	<p>Fields (on access trail to Kidder Pond) are brush cut and mowed semi-annually.</p>

Monitoring and Evaluation (Plan pages 75-76)

Actions taken/Comments:

<p><i>Implementation of Plan Recommendations</i></p> <p>The Bureau will develop an action plan for implementing and monitoring the management recommendations in this Plan. This will include an assignment of priorities and timeframes for accomplishment that will be utilized to determine work priorities and budgets on an annual basis. The Bureau will annually document its progress in implementing the recommendations, plans for the coming year, and adjustments to the priorities and timeframes as needed.</p>	<p>Implementation of recommendations is part of the annual planning process engaged in at the regional level.</p>
<p><i>Recreation – Public Use and Use Impacts</i></p> <p>The Bureau will monitor public use to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether improvements to existing facilities or additional facilities might be needed and compatible with general objectives; • whether additional measures are needed to ensure that recreational users have a high quality experience; • whether use is adversely affecting sensitive natural resources or the ecology of the area; • whether measures are needed to address unforeseen safety issues; • whether changing recreational uses and demands present the need or opportunity for adjustments to existing facilities and management; and • whether any changes are needed in the management of recreation in relation to other management objectives, including protection or enhancement of wildlife habitat and forest management. <p>The primary means of gathering information about recreational use and issues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports from the seasonal recreation ranger; • reports from management partners (BRCA, ATV and snowmobile clubs); • discussions at the annual trails forum; and • incident and other reports made to the Bureau’s central and regional offices. 	<p>Monitoring will continue as provided by the Volunteer Host program (see discussion on pp. 8 and 12 above), and may be supplemented by more targeted data collection by the Bureau.</p>

<i>Wildlife</i>	
<p>The Bureau’s wildlife biologist and technician routinely conduct a variety of species monitoring activities statewide. The following monitoring activities that are anticipated for the Kennebec Highlands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation with MDIF&W on fisheries management of the Highlands ponds; • cooperation with MDIF&W in the monitoring of game species; • location of additional, smaller-scale significant wildlife habitat (e.g., vernal pools and den trees) during the preparation of forest management prescriptions. 	<p>Cooperation with MDIF&W is ongoing. No forest management prescriptions have yet been prepared.</p>
<i>Special Protection Areas</i>	
<p>The Bureau coordinates with the Maine Natural areas program and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in the documentation and protection of these areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Maine Natural Areas Program will be consulted on management near the rare plant population or exemplary Unpatterned Fen Ecosystem; • The Maine Historic Preservation Commission will be consulted as needed regarding protection of historic sites and their on-going research. 	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<i>Timber Management</i>	
<p>Local work plans, called prescriptions, are prepared by professional foresters in accordance with the Bureau’s <i>Integrated Resource Policy</i>, and peer reviewed prior to approval. Preparation and layout of timber sales require field investigation of every acre to be treated. Trees to be harvested are generally hand marked. Regional field staff provide regular on-site supervision of harvest activities, with less frequent visits by senior staff. After harvest, roads, trails, and water crossings are discontinued as appropriate. Changes in stand type resulting from the harvest are recorded in the Bureau’s GIS system.</p>	<p>No forestry activities have occurred.</p>
<p>The Bureau is currently developing a post-harvest monitoring plan to assist forest managers in assessing harvest outcomes on all managed</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

<p>lands. The monitoring plan will also address water quality and Best Management Practices (BMPs) utilized during harvest activities.</p>	
<p>Third party monitoring is done mainly through the forest certification programs of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Each program conducts rigorous investigations of both planning and on-ground practices. An initial audit by both programs was completed in 2001, with certification awarded in 2002. A full re-audit of both programs was conducted in the fall of 2006 with certification granted in 2007. The Bureau is also subject to compliance audits during the 5-year certification period.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

Issues for Advisory Committee Attention

New Issues or Circumstances Not Addressed in the Plan:

None.

Other Items of Special Concern or Interest:

BRCA Acquisition of Kimball Pond Parcel: In June 2014, BRCA acquired the 285-acre Kimball Pond property, on the eastern side of Kimball Pond Road and immediately adjacent to the Kennebec Highlands public lands. BPL was a partner with BRCA in applying for Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) funds to help acquire the land. The parcel borders BPL fee lands on its eastern boundary and includes about 150 feet of shoreline at the northern tip of Kimball Pond, a popular trout pond. Welch Road extends into the parcel from Kimball Pond Road. BRCA is developing plans for a parking area along Welch Road about 1/3 mile in from Kimball Pond Road, and for pedestrian and carry-in boat access to the pond from that point. Camp owners on the east side of the pond have a deeded ROW on this maintained portion of Welch Road. The remainder of Welch Road, extending onto the BPL fee lands and connecting to Berry Hill Road (designated as an ATV and snowmobile trail on the BPL parcels) is an unmaintained 4WD road. Welch Road is also a designated snowmobile trail.

The acquired parcel presents an opportunity to provide the first public access on the west side of the Unit, via the Kimball Pond Road and Welch Road. The LMF Board, State of Maine, and BRCA have executed a Project Agreement for the parcel, which requires the property to be managed by BRCA “in a manner consistent with the management of other portions of the Kennebec Highlands.” The Bureau will be coordinating with BRCA on management issues, particularly existing motorized and potential pedestrian connections to the Kennebec Highlands public lands. The advisory committee will be consulted regarding development of any new trails on the public lands.