



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY

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WALTER E. WHITCOMB
COMMISSIONER

Date: May 30, 2017

To: Kennebec Highlands Plan Advisory Committee Members

From: Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,
Bureau of Parks and Public Lands

Re: Five-Year Review of the Kennebec Highlands Management Plan

The purpose of this memo is to report on Advisory Committee comments on the 2016 five-year review of the 2011 Kennebec Highlands Management Plan and the responses to those comments by the Bureau of Parks and Lands, and to conclude the review process.

The plan guides the management activities of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Public Lands on public lands at the Kennebec Highlands, an area approximately 6,000 acres. While the plan was adopted for a 15-year period, the Bureau is required to report to the Advisory Committee at five-year intervals on accomplishments and any new issues or changing conditions that may warrant amendments to the plan. (The plan can be viewed at http://www.maine.gov/dacf/kennebec_highlands.html)

The Bureau found no new issues or circumstances that were not addressed in the plan that warrant Committee input or action at this time. However, the Bureau advised the Committee of the 2014 acquisition by Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (BRCA) of the 285-acre Kimball Pond property abutting the west side of the Kennebec Highland public lands.

On May 10, 2017 the Bureau mailed its 2016 five-year report for the Kennebec Highlands Plan to the Advisory Committee members and requested comments on the report. Additional information on the BRCA acquisition and potential implications for management of the Kennebec Highlands were provided at the end of the review table. Also enclosed were two maps depicting the parcel in relation to the public lands, other conserved lands, and recreational trails. BPL and BRCA staff toured the Kimball Pond property on May 23. In the coming months, BPL will continue discussions with BRCA focused on existing and potential road and trail connections to the BPL lands.

The Bureau received written comments from one Advisory Committee member. The comments suggested some minor corrections to the review table and one of the maps, and requested an opportunity to discuss the potential for "selective light clearing of the understory" in certain areas to enhance backcountry skiing. This activity is not specifically addressed in the Plan; the commenter was encouraged to meet with Western Region staff to discuss any opportunities that may exist to implement the desired enhancements.

This completes the five-year review process. Thank you to all for your attention and participation.