

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks and Lands
Moosehead Region Management Plan
Public Scoping Meeting
February 11, 2015 5:30 – 7:00 PM
Greenville Town Office – Meeting Room

MEETING NOTES

The Public Meeting was attended by approximately 40 people.

Additionally, the following BPL staff members were present: Peter Smith, Western Region Lands Manager; Kathy Eickenberg, Chief of Planning; Jim Vogel, Plan Coordinator; Joe Higgins, Snowmobile Coordinator; George Powell, Boating Facilities Program Director; Mark Albert, Forester.

Welcome/Introduction

Jim Vogel welcomed the attendees, and asked Bureau staff to introduce themselves. A meeting agenda was provided (attached).

Presentation

The meeting was structured around a PowerPoint presentation given by Jim Vogel, which began with background information on the purpose and scope of the Bureau's regional management plans and on the Moosehead Region as defined for the Plan. The presentation then provided an overview of each of the Bureau's Public Reserved Lands and undeveloped State Park lands that will be addressed by the Plan. After each major reserved land unit and other Bureau lands were presented, several minutes were given to taking comments and questions from the public, as reflected in the following record.

Public Comments/Questions (paraphrased from notes)

Little Moose Unit

- Trail Maintenance:
 - Who is responsible for hiking trail upkeep on the Unit, and are the trails consistently hiked and inspected? (answer: BPL)
 - There have been issues with blowdowns and lack of adequate blazing of the trails.
- Signage:
 - The signage at Little Moose is inadequate to inform visitors what recreation resources and opportunities as available and where amenities and resource features are. Need more specific information on area maps that are posted on the unit, such as trail names, pond names. Use of term "Unit" on signs and maps does not resonate with visitors. Users could get lost on Unit or in trying to find trailheads etc. without better maps.
 - Yardarm signs for the Unit could provide more information to visitors by adding icons for camping, hiking, etc.

- Potential windfarm development:
 - Concern about windfarm projects proposed in the vicinity and the potential impacts on scenic values as experienced from the Unit.
- ATV trail:
 - A portion of the 13 mile ATV trail loop on the unit could be used for mountain biking and running with improvements. For example, at the 4-5 mile mark of the trail, there is a very rocky area that would need to be improved..
- Mountain bike trails:
 - Does BPL have specific designations for mountain bike trails [as distinct from hiking trails or motorized trails]? (Response was yes.) Want more trails for mountain biking in the region.
 - Jim Vogel described how momentum for mountain bike trail development in the Carrabassett Valley area is being driven by a new mountain biking club [CR – NEMBA]; attendees described a local club that was active a decade ago, and difficulty with maintaining a year-round bike club in an area where many riders are not local. The state of Wisconsin was suggested as an example and described as leader in developing a state-wide system of varied bike trails.
- Winter non-motorized use:
 - The unit provided good opportunities for winter non-motorized use (snowshoeing, backcountry skiing). A barrier to this use is that it is not widely known if roads will be plowed in a particular winter and is so, what roads. Would be helpful to visitors if information could be posted on the unit website about what roads are being plowed. There was interest specifically in having the trailhead to Big Moose Mountain accessible in the winter.
- Trails and related development:
 - Desire to have more opportunities immediately adjacent to town for family-oriented outdoor recreation – easy trails for family biking, runners, snowshoeing; this unit could serve this need, with a focus on the Wiggins Brook area and west. Could connect to the old rail bed extending south from the Unit, which functions as a multiuse trail. Could also link to the Little Moose Mountain hiking trail with a spur trail.

Days Academy, Kineo and Farm Island

- Access to Mount Kineo:
 - There is an issue for visitors with boats who want to know how to get there and where to park a motor boat or kayak, since there is no public landing. Some have been advised to use the landing used by the commercial shuttle service, though it is not intended for the general public.
 - Need a designated landing site at Kineo
- Trails on Kineo:
 - Major maintenance is needed on the Bridle Trail, which is badly washed out in sections such that the more strenuous Indian Trail is easier/safer to use.
 - Need better marking of Kineo trails; no blazes are left.

- Native American History at Kineo (Comments from a member of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians)
 - There is a long Native American history and there are important cultural resources on Kineo [within the 800 acres of state ownership as well as on private land]. An example is the Kineo rhyolite historically used throughout the region for tools and traded as far as the Carolinas. Would like the public to learn more about this history when they visit the island.
 - There are burial sites on the island, including one under a tennis court at the former Kineo resort. Preservation of native grave sites is important; state should be aware of grave sites, and potential grave sites, and if found preserve them. May be potential to mark one burial site from the red paint culture. The Greenville cemetery was an addition to a Native American cemetery.
 - Area could also be used to demonstrate ethnobotany, such as growing and use of sweetgrass. Also use of white birch bark for utensils, and chaga [a fungal growth on white birch used for medicinal qualities].
 - These issues are of high interest as a matter of cultural education and cultural preservation.
 - Another attendee commented on potential for a Maliseet/BPL partnership for historical interpretation and preservation at Kineo.
- Inholding at Days Academy:
 - Private road along shoreline across inholding parcel is blocked [it connects to a management road at each end]; is there possibility to construct a bypass around the inholding?
- Timber harvesting at Kineo and Farm Island:
 - Does a Plan exist for Kineo and Farm Island timber harvesting? (It was explained that these are Parks lands, with limitations on timber harvesting that do not apply to the Reserved Lands.)
- Days Academy timber harvests:
 - How many more years will winter harvests on the unit continue? (reply was one more year.) Snowmobile trail connections are disrupted by harvesting.

East Shoreline Lands and Sugar Island

- Shoreline campsites:
 - Need to provide some shade and greenery at the Spencer Bay campgrounds located in former gravel pits
 - Canoeing from the Spencer Bay inlet is an unrecognized opportunity, as half-way point of an old Maliseet canoe trail that ran from St. John River to New York. Now popularized as the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT). “Above the Gravel Bar” by David Cook is a book that shows old canoe trails in the region.
 - Need more places for people to camp on the lake, that don’t require a boat or a canoe crossing that some people would not be comfortable attempting.

- Native American Burial Sites:
 - There are burial sites on Sugar Island also; want to be sure that BPL is aware of them and that they are protected when timber harvesting or other activities that may disturb them are underway.
- Sugar Island timber harvest:
 - Timber is being cut now on the island; (Peter Smith explained that harvests began last summer and will last 7-8 years; was last cut in the 1960s and 70s. Harvests follow current Plan and IRP and take account of scenic values.) Can this harvest be put on hold until this Plan is developed?

Smaller parcels

- First Roach Pond: There are small wetlands on state lands between the shoreline lots that the state sold off, and that fact seems to have been lost; want to see that those are recognized and preserved.

General comments (not specific to one unit); process questions and comments

- Hiking viewpoints: Need to show key viewpoints accessed by hiking trails on maps
- Unit maps: Need more maps available for distribution at the Visitor Center, so visitors can find trails and campsites. Need updated map - some campsites shown on current maps are not available anymore.
- Regional perspective on opportunities: We are not taking advantage of the range of backcountry recreation available at Moosehead Region; e.g., potential for mountain bike trails, plowing to Big Moose trailhead to allow consistent winter use, more campsites needed; Nahmakanta to Seboomook should be considered part of the Greater Moosehead Area; need more work on education about recreation opportunities to maximize economic potential. The large regional map used for the 50 acre recreation site donation meeting captures the type of information that is needed to share with the public about the Greater Moosehead Region.
- Timber management concern: Concern about potential increase in harvest levels; is there a move to increase harvests, more trees per acre or more acres? Need high quality forest in this region as important part of environment visitors expect to see.
- Power Companies in region: When power companies propose seek rights across public lands for power lines, is there an opportunity for public comment?
- Advisory Committee membership: Are members of Advisory Committee provided on the Plan webpage? (Reply was that we can provide a list to be posted there.)
- Comments of Rep. Paul Stearns: I am Representative in August for the region, and also involved in these topics through the Economic Development Council and Moosehead branding initiative. Need for better signage is a common theme that also links to these other efforts. Mobile apps are another useful way to share information on recreation sites and opportunities.
- Need for lakeshore campsites that are not water-access only: Can we show on maps where there are campsites on the lake that are not water-access only? Particularly those that require a “walk-in”. Want more walk-in semi-remote lake campsites.

Written Comments

- The Town of Greenville submitted written comments at the meeting, which are attached to these minutes.

Concluding Comments

- Jim Vogel reminded attendees of the opportunity to provide written comments over the next two weeks, and that an email and mailing address to submit comments are provided on the bottom of the meeting agenda. The meeting was concluded with a thank you to all who attended.

Attachment 1: Meeting Agenda

Attachment 2: Comments from Town of Greenville



Moosehead Region Management Plan / Moosehead Lake Region Concept Plan

Public Scoping Meeting / Public Comment Meeting

February 11, 2015

5:30 to 8:00 pm

Greenville Town Hall

Agenda

- 5:30 Welcome and Introductions
- 5:40 Presentation on management planning and the Moosehead Region
- 5:55 Presentation on Little Moose Unit; public questions and comments
- 6:20 Presentation on Days Academy, Sugar Island, Kineo and Farm Island; Moosehead East Shoreline Lands; public questions and comments
- 6:40 Presentation on other Moosehead Region lands east and west of Moosehead Lake; public questions and comments

*** Break ***

- 7:00 Presentation on Moosehead Lake Region Concept Plan – Initial Plans for 50-acres of Donated Lands; public questions and comments
- 7: 55 Concluding Comments

You may send **written comments** with your thoughts on management of the Moosehead Region public lands **by February 27 to:**

Jim Vogel
Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
OR
Jim.Vogel@maine.gov

You may send **written comments** with your thoughts on the priorities for acquisition of donated land in association with the Moosehead Lake Region Concept Plan **by February 27 to:**

Rex Turner
Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
OR
Rex.Turner@maine.gov

The webpage for the Moosehead Region Plan can be found at: http://www.maine.gov/dacf/moosehead_region.
This page will be updated with draft plans and announcements about upcoming meetings and written comment periods.



Town of Greenville

Gateway to Moosehead Lake

February 11, 2015

Jim Vogel
Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands
22 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

RE: Management of Public Lands in the Moosehead Lake Region

Dear Mr. Vogel;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the current and future management of public lands in the Moosehead Lake Region which are under the control of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. The Town of Greenville is pleased to host your planned Public Scoping Meeting and related "50-Acre Acquisition Meeting" tonight in our Municipal Building Meeting Hall.

The Town of Greenville has a vested interest in the management of these lands as the majority of our economy is driven by nature-based tourism. Many of the visitors to our community are also recreationists who enjoy time spent on these public lands. Our seasonal and year-round residents also enjoy recreation on these lands, as well as functional opportunities such as cutting firewood, trapping for pelts, hunting, fishing, or even professional guiding (including moose watching) on these lands.

I've detailed below some comments about specific areas of land or suggestions for future improvement. My comments are almost exclusively tied to the Little Moose Unit as this is directly adjacent to the Town of Greenville, and we have functional relationships with the BP&L for use of portions of this holding. The other areas held by BP&L in the Moosehead Lake Region are also valuable to Greenville and to the general public.

Little Moose Unit – Firewood Cutting

Local residents and commercial woodcutters alike have benefitted over the years from cutting firewood on woodland in this area. About 10 years ago BP&L authorized local residents to buy a permit to harvest selected trees in sections of the woodland along the Brochu Road near the now-closed Greenville Landfill. This was very popular and would be welcomed again as a means for locals to affordably cut and work up their own firewood, or for small business owners to make a living doing the same.

Little Moose Unit – Closed Landfill & Borrow Pit

Since 1986 the Town of Greenville has had a lease for a solid waste landfill and associated borrow pit for cover material within the Little Moose Unit in Moosehead Junction Twp. The Town closed this landfill over a series of years, ending in 2012. The borrow pit was likewise closed and reclaimed by 2012. The Town has a regulatory obligation to monitor and maintain this closed landfill for a period of 30 years. We're working out details of a new lease with David Rodriguez in your department, and hope to have this in place by the end of this winter.

The borrow pit and the closed landfill, aside from physical restrictions on use (e.g., no structures may be constructed on the footprint of the closed landfill), we believe these areas, with their large grassy fields and views of nearby hills and mountains, could become useful recreational areas. With compliance with all DEP standards, the Town of Greenville would welcome the opportunity to work with BP&L to make public use of these new "green spaces" in some manner consistent with the management of the larger unit of land. Some possible uses include but are not limited to hunting, wildlife watching, and development of walking trails, snowshoe paths, cross-country ski trails, or even open recreation areas, such as a wintertime sliding hill.

Little Moose Unit – Future Trails Development

The Moosehead Lake Region Economic Development Corporation (MLREDC) is a regional economic development group organized as an independent non-profit group but whose mission and efforts are fully supported by the Town of Greenville. The MLREDC has commissioned a regional branding effort for the Moosehead Lake Region, an effort facilitated by Roger Brooks of Roger Brooks International. As this planning work concludes this spring, the Town urges the Maine BP&L to take into consideration the expected Brand Development Guide for the Moosehead Lake Region, which is quite likely to speak to desired uses / outcomes of management of the BP&L lands in this region.

One likely outcome of this effort and a current desire by the Town of Greenville is to create more family-friendly walking, biking, snow-shoeing and cross-country ski trails near to Town. We feel that by improving and maintaining existing trails and added new ones close to the developed portions of Greenville, our community will be more attractive to visit and to join. We have walking trails in place at the lands owned and maintained by the Natural Resource Education Center (NREC) near the old MDOT rest area on Route 15. We are also developing a short section of walking trails along the now-closed Sawyer Pond Landfill off Scammon Road, thanks to a young man named John Watt who is working on this as his Eagle Scout Project (expected completion date is December 31, 2015). Additionally, the Town is considering development of trails in the wooded section of the Red Cross Beach parcel off Pritham Avenue.

If the Little Moose Unit of BP&L Land, especially the section nearest to Greenville Junction, could have a series of walking and biking trails created which could double as snow-shoeing and cross-country ski trails in the winter months, Greenville could have a series of local, accessible and desirable non-motorized recreation trails for visitors and residents alike to use and to enjoy. The Town would welcome the opportunity to work with BP&L to coordinate such efforts and promote the use of such trails once constructed.

We recognize that maintenance of such trails is a major necessity and a challenge with limited staffing. The Town would like to discuss how best to accomplish on-going trail maintenance with the Maine BP&L as we move forward with these projects.

Little Moose Unit – Gravel Pit Pond

Gravel Pit Pond is a great resource to the greater-Greenville community. Youth and families in particular make regular use of this pond for fishing and just “hanging out by the water”. We encourage Maine BP&L to continue to maintain this as a stocked fishing pond and encourage any effort to fix up associated trails and signage along the water’s edge.

Little Moose Unit – Wiggins Stream Land

Ten years ago the Town of Greenville had an opportunity to site a large dimension lumber saw mill in our industrial park. But to do so, a right-of-way for Central Maine Power had to be moved. The Town sought and received permission from the Maine Legislature to purchase a portion of the Little Moose Unit from Maine BP&L to re-route the power company’s ROW. Unfortunately, the saw mill project ended without investment. But the value of this 32-45 acre parcel of ground to the Town of Greenville remains.

The boundary line between the Greenville Industrial Park and the Little Moose Unit is Log Home Road. To the west of Log Home Road is land owned by Maine BP&L which is flat and dry at first, but quickly gives way to the edge of Wiggins Stream. Log Home Road has 3-phase power along it and is a mostly paved road. This section of ground remains of interest to the Town of Greenville – at least the section directly adjacent to Log Home Road – for future expansion of the Industrial Park.

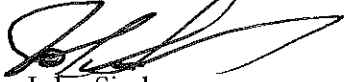
Future Acquisition – Shirley / Greenville Railroad Bed

There are many likely candidates for future land acquisition by Maine BP&L within the Moosehead Lake Region. However, one recreational corridor which is too often taken for granted as forever accessible by the public is the so-called Shirley / Greenville Railroad Bed.

This former railroad bed is a main artery for snowmobile traffic entering and exiting the Moosehead Lake Region each winter, and is heavily used by ATV riders in the summer. Walkers and mountain bikers regular travel this section of ground, and CA Dean Hospital’s Annual TryAthlon runs over this railroad bed each July with their Mountain Bike Course. The route is a highly-used, valuable recreational corridor which ought to be protected for future recreationalists. The Town urges Maine BP&L to consider purchasing an easement or the land itself by fee purchase to protect this corridor for future users. Indeed, considering the struggles in recent years to locate suitable snowmobile trails leading to and from Greenville, the Town urges Maine BP&L to utilize any resources available to acquire permanent recreational corridors within the Moosehead Lake Region for snowmobiling and other outdoor recreational pursuits.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important issues. The Town of Greenville and I personally have enjoyed working with Mark Albert and Peter Smith from your agency, and we feel they each do an outstanding job on your agency's behalf and look out for our community's best interests.

Respectfully Submitted;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Simko', written over a horizontal line.

John Simko
Town Manager

CC Board of Selectmen
MLREDC Board of Directors