

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSERVATION EASEMENTS IN CONSERVING MAINE



FOREST
SOCIETY
of MAINE



Questions:

- Has your organization embraced the 30 x 30 goal for Maine?
- If so, in what ways is your organization working to achieve this goal for Maine?
- What are your organization's specific conservation priorities?
- What are the limiting factors in reaching this goal in Maine?
- How can the state and its partners work to remove these barriers?



Forest Society of Maine conserves Maine's forestlands to sustain their ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational values.

“

It's hard to wrap your head around the vast size and scope of the forestland in the state. The North Woods of Maine occupy approximately 12 million acres. They are the largest unfragmented forest area east of the Mississippi River. Within the North Woods, you could fit all of Yosemite, Yellowstone, Death Valley, Zion, Grand Teton, Arches, and Joshua Tree National Parks, and still have room left for the entire state of Connecticut!

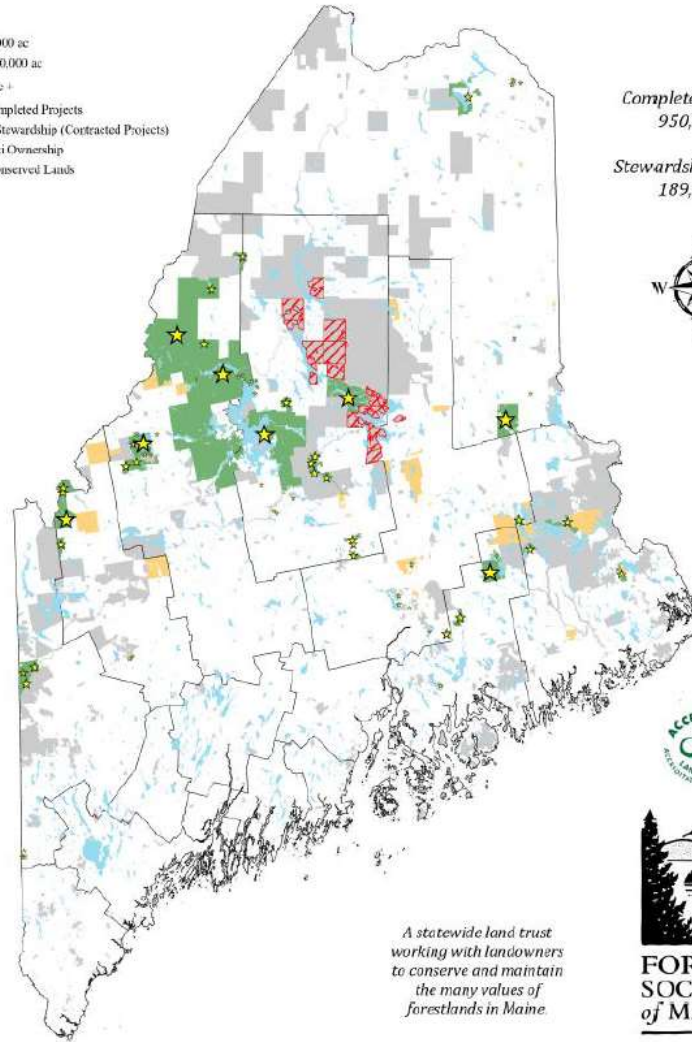
~writer Evan Wishloff

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Forest Society of Maine Conservation Project Locations

Legend

- Up to 1,000 ac
- ★ 1,000 - 20,000 ac
- ★ 20,000 ac +
- FSM Completed Projects
- ▨ Annual Stewardship (Contracted Projects)
- Wabanaki Ownership
- Other Conserved Lands



Completed Projects:
950,304 ac

Stewardship Projects:
189,968 ac



**FOREST
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of MAINE**

*A statewide land trust
working with landowners
to conserve and maintain
the many values of
forests in Maine.*

0 15 30 60
Miles

map: 11.21.2023

Conservation Easements Permanently Prohibit Forever:

- New commercial and residential development
- Mining operations
- Utility corridors and installations
- Highways and public roads
- Unsustainable forest management



Maine's Climate Council Report, *Maine Won't Wait*, notes:

“

Maine is seeing ...10,000 acres of forest being lost to development each year and may accelerate to 15,000 acres per year by 2030.

”

“

Conserving forests ... through conservation easements is one of the more cost-effective strategies to help reach carbon neutrality by maintaining forest cover...

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The Existence of an Easement

Easements exist in Perpetuity

- Can be strengthened over time
- Cannot be amended to weaken them without court proceedings
- Difficult to terminate

Easements can include wilderness/reserve components

- Can also allow a working forest to continue

Easements across the landscape connect with conservation fee lands to create:

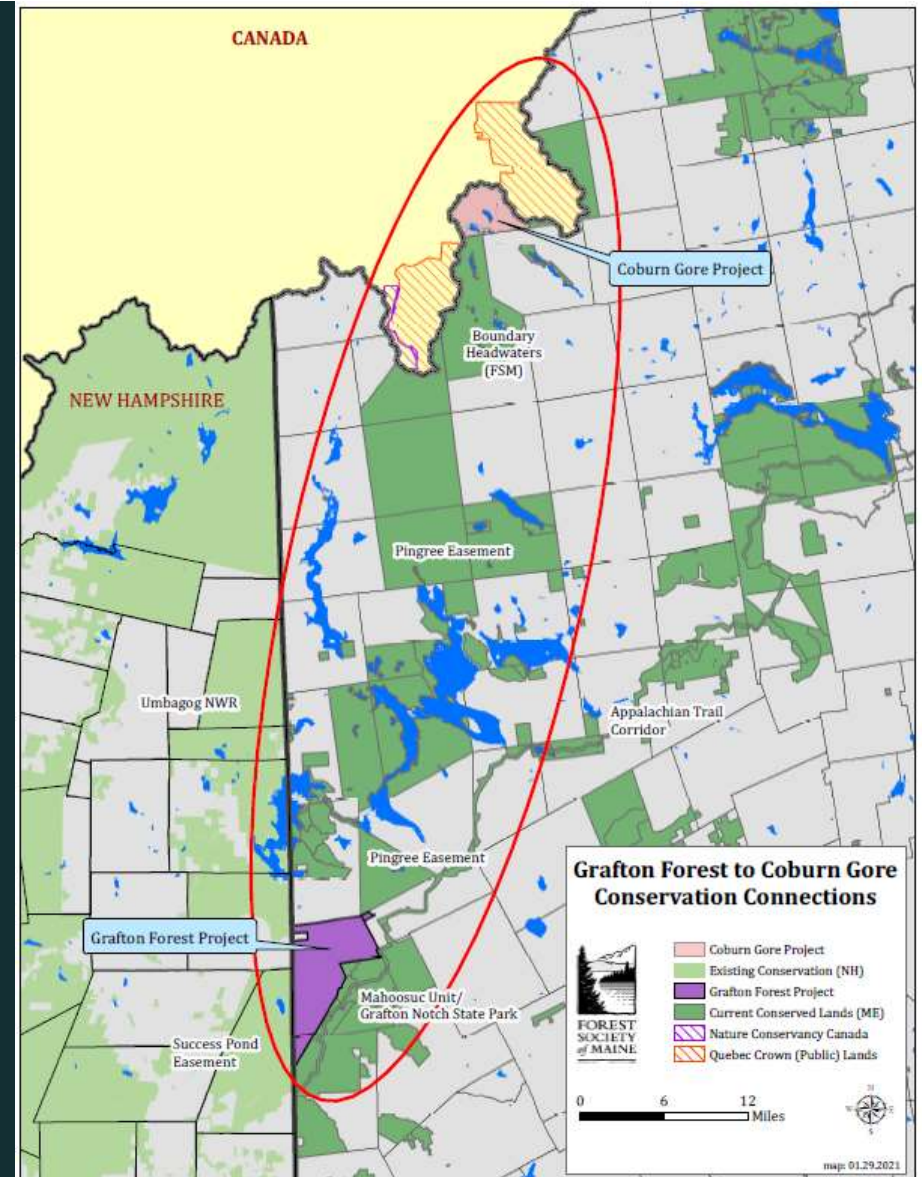
- Conservation corridors
- Habitat connectivity
- Climate resiliency

To the extent we have “priorities” ...

Connectivity

Building conservation corridors

The bigger the better!



Limiting factors and barriers...

- Fundraising!
 - Projects often take 3 years or so
 - Often must use private sources
 - Forest Legacy doesn't typically work for us
- More flexible funding source?
- Due diligence delays: appraisers, surveyors, etc.

Also.....

- Can we (MLTN?) create a database in real time to see “where we are?”



Conclusion

There are many landowners in Maine who are not willing to sell large fee parcels but are willing to consider easements. It is **critical to act** to hold onto the fabric of the forest now, before it is fragmented as then it will truly be “too late”.