

30% Land Goal: Topics Extending Beyond Our Group

- The role of tribal lands, interests, and needs requires further attention – continuing beyond this process in many forms and at many levels.
- Workforce diversity and workforce housing should play increasing roles as we steward open spaces for the future.
- Markets for forest products are important for maintaining the pattern of large ownerships that enables landscape-scale conservation
- Land use planning and regulation play vital roles in shaping the fabric of Maine's natural and working lands.



30% Land Goal: Defining Conserved

"Conserved Lands" means any land in a primarily natural or traditionally managed condition that is both durably* protected and managed to provide or maintain ecosystem services, climate resiliency, or cultural values. These services and values include supporting Maine' economy, protecting traditional ways of life, providing drinking water, ensuring food security, enhancing biodiversity, and providing equitable and inclusive recreational opportunities to promote the health and wellbeing of all who call Maine home.

*Durable includes lands under permanent fee or conservation easements (meeting GAP status 1-3 in the Maine Conservation Lands GIS layer), or natural and traditionally managed lands identified by mutual understanding with Maine Tribes. Durable lands do not include temporary protections by such tools as, for example, lease agreements, shoreland or municipal land use restrictions, carbon offset projects, or areas enrolled in tree growth or other open space current use tax law provisions.



30% Land Goal: Possible Recommendations

- What's missing?
- Is there anything there that shouldn't be?
- Are there ways to condense what is listed?
- Suggestions for specific targets?



30% Land Goal: Farmland

- 1. Double the amount of permanently protected farmland in Maine by 2030 (From 3.8% to 7%) by allocating a minimum of \$100M in state resources towards farmland conservation.**

To sufficiently safeguard this essential natural resource, farmland protection efforts will require a new dedicated funding stream or a significantly higher allocation within both new and existing conservation funding streams. A minimum of \$100M of state funding should be directed towards farmland protection programs through 2030.



30% Land Goal: Farmland

- 2. Ensure there is a well-funded, sufficiently-staffed, stand-alone state program or mechanism to prioritize the expeditious and efficient flow of farmland conservation resources in collaboration with non-profit and federal partners.**

A new Farmland Protection mechanism should be designed explicitly to harmonize with philanthropic and private funding sources, as well as federal funding streams, to maximize the value of this effort. The program should also be designed to seamlessly support alternative methods of protecting farmland outside of the traditional easement acquisition process (Buy/Protect/Support/Sell, community land trust/non-profit acquisitions, etc.).



30% Land Goal: Farmland

3. Commission a Maine Farmland Action Plan to articulate goals and strategies regarding Maine's farmland resource and agricultural economy beyond 2030.

A visionary Farmland Action Plan should prioritize identifying the highest priority lands to secure against nonagricultural development along with affordable and achievable pathways to farmland access, development of effective tools and programs for supporting Maine's agricultural economy through land protection, and integration of other State goals and objectives of building a diverse and resilient food system, with the intent of achieving no net loss of farmland in Maine.



30% Land Goal: Farmland

4. Expand funding for state programming and infrastructure that has a tangible, positive impact on farm viability in Maine.

Recognizing that farmland is most productive and valuable when farm businesses are thriving, invest in and fully fund and promote existing grant, loan, and assistance programs currently available to Maine farmers and food businesses.



30% Land Goal: Funding/Capacity/Systems

1. Reinvest and modify *existing funding programs* to expand and accelerate the pace of land conservation.

- Secure *permanent and ongoing* funding for the Land for Maine's Future Program.
- Encourage carbon-friendly forest management in acquisitions and easements (e.g., Exemplary Forestry Fund; minimum stocking, enhanced sustainability provisions) -- including landowner incentives.
- Consider expanding the eligibility of public funding programs to reflect tribal interests, including holding land and easements. (CA example)
- Establish a single administrator for NAWCA projects.
- Maintain unified advocacy at the federal level for various conservation funding programs (DOI, USDA).
- Streamline state procurement and approval processes for land conservation.
- Support the Trails Bond as a way of investing in conserved lands.



30% Land Goal: Funding/Capacity/Systems

2. Explore and encourage *new funding programs* for land conservation. (Maine lacks the necessary state/private funding to match federal programs).

- Support the creation of the federal Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP/NRCS) in the next Farm Bill as an alternative/complement to Forest Legacy; FCEP would allow NGOs to hold conservation easements using federal funding.
- Direct mitigation funds -- particularly from energy development -- to land conservation using a trust fund that accrues interest; consider inter-state conservation payments as part of regional energy distribution.
- Explore other state conservation mechanisms, including BUT NOT LIMITED TO real estate transfer tax, re-allocation of sporting goods or rooms and meals tax, enhancing dedicated funds for deeryards (as an umbrella habitat for many species), and others (e.g., reports from TPL's conservation finance team), in service (in part) to creating a match for federal funds.
- Increase the state's (and the conservation community's) ability and efficiency in tracking federal and private funding opportunities.



30% Land Goal: Funding/Capacity/Systems

3. Increase and invest in staffing and capacity for land conservation.

- Provide incentives and facilitate training for appraisers, surveyors, environmental consultants, and others involved in due diligence.
- Ensure sufficient funding and capacity (with wage and workforce housing considerations) for land protection, grant administration, and stewardship (including management, restoration, and monitoring) for state agencies and other holders of conserved land.
- Secure funding and staffing to maintain the state's Conserved Lands Database.
- Foster collaboration and partnerships between groups working on land conservation, including sharing priorities, implementing joint projects, and tracking/awareness of funding opportunities.
- Establish a central land conservation coordinator in the GOPIF or another influential office.
- Create or incentivize one or more local sources for native plant materials for restoration.



30% Land Goal: Funding/Capacity/Systems

4. Encourage other policy and land management mechanisms that provide climate benefits and increase outdoor equity.

- Recruit conservation workers (land stewards, park rangers, foresters, ecologists) that reflect the diversity of future generations.
- Maintain incentives for tree growth and open space enrollments, which cover more than half of Maine.
- Explore the value of additional investment in projects that promote sequestration of forest carbon (*X-ref with Carbon group?*; *additionality??*). Maine currently has ~650,000 acres of carbon offset projects.
- Support the University of Maine Mitchell Center's initiative to engage priority groups in Natural and Working Land objectives.



30% Land Goal: Priorities

1. Conserve areas that provide public access to Maine's natural landscape.
2. Conserve areas that support the conservation of the full diversity of Maine's flora, fauna, and natural systems.
3. Conserve areas of significant cultural and socioeconomic value.
4. Elevate the role and function of conservation planning in state agencies and among stakeholders.



30% Land Goal: Priorities

1. Conserve areas that provide public access to Maine's natural landscape.

- a) New high-quality ADA-accessible outdoor recreation opportunities. These include boat access, trails, wildlife viewing, viewsheds, and other opportunities that reflect the many ways people engage with the land.
- b) New parks and recreation infrastructure in and near urban areas to ensure all have access to a range of outdoor recreation opportunities. (See 3-30-300 rule; 'close to' includes 10 minutes... to an hour's drive).
- c) New parks and park infrastructure in urban areas to ensure all residents have access to a range of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- d) Enhanced parking capacity for coastal boat launches to accommodate a range of uses.



30% Land Goal: Priorities

2. Conserve areas that support the conservation of the full diversity of Maine's flora, fauna, and natural ecosystems.

- a) BWH Focus Areas in the Statewide Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), particularly in southern and central Maine, and riparian and forest connectivity between the Focus Areas. *Increase conserved land in Focus Areas to at least 50% (still refining this metric).*
- b) Special habitats: Areas that support at-risk species (e.g., 42 habitats associated with Species of Greatest Conservation Need in SWAP), Significant Wildlife Habitats, and rare and exemplary natural communities.
- c) Late-successional and old-growth forests.
- d) Softwood-dominated areas (and their connectivity and associated riparian areas) to be managed and maintained as mature forest/umbrella habitats for deer, migratory songbirds, pine marten, and many other species associated with this habitat type.
- e) High-priority aquatic systems, including lake and pond systems, and sufficient buffers.



30% Land Goal: Priorities

2. Conserve areas that support the conservation of the full diversity of Maine's flora, fauna, and natural ecosystems (cont'd).

- f) Expand Maine's ecological reserve system, focusing on habitats of sufficient size and those not well represented in certain regions. (Reserves are one of the state's only lands managed primarily for biodiversity and ecosystem services). *Increase state-owned reserve acreage by 50%*
- g) Tidal marshes and adjacent uplands ('marsh migration zones') that provide connectivity and resilience in the face of rising sea levels and climate change.
- h) Large intact core habitat and unfragmented habitat blocks, particularly in southern and coastal Maine.
- i) Landscape-scale tracts with important habitat features in northern Maine.
- j) Open habitats and grasslands can be maintained/managed to sustain species associated with these habitats.
- k) Areas that score highly on climate resilience metrics (e.g., TNC tool).



30% Land Goal: Priorities

3. Conserve areas of significant cultural and socioeconomic value

- a) Land return projects that support objectives of Wabanaki tribes in Maine. Redefine cultural, commercial, and personal use in conservation provisions to include indigenous perspectives. Consider the benefits of tribal sovereignty in enabling access to resources that increase capacity for land management.
- b) Fee or easement conservation of significant drinking water areas, such as Lake Auburn and Sebago Lake watersheds
- c) Establish new cultural access provisions guaranteeing use and access by indigenous people, including a review of easement provisions. (*X-ref Funding/Systems group*).
- d) Encourage collaboration between conservation-focused land trusts and community land trusts to create permanently affordable housing with connected conserved forest or conserved farmland.
- e) Prioritize geographically distributed access for hunting and fishing.
- f) Address historic and ongoing inequality by adopting an equity metric for all cultural and socioeconomic investments ('deploy a geospatial and/or numeric metric to help prioritize investments more equitably').



30% Land Goal: Priorities

4. Elevate the role and function of conservation planning in state agencies and among stakeholders

- a) Develop a strategic, stakeholder-led Landscape Conservation Design process led by the Beginning with Habitat Program.
- b) Develop ecoregional priorities to ensure appropriate geographic representation of conserved lands.
- c) Ensure sufficient staffing and funding for land acquisition, stewardship, and conservation planning (*X-ref Funding/Capacity Subgroup*)
- d) Establish a central coordinating role for land conservation (*X-ref Funding/Capacity Subgroup*)

