

Forestland Conservation, Climate Resilience, and Funding Needs

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Maine Climate Council
Natural and Working Lands Work Group
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NWL Working Group Recommendations (2024)

- **Recommendation:** Focus land protection efforts in *areas with high biodiversity value, high carbon storage and sequestration, cultural and economic importance, and/or which offer opportunities to improve public access equitably.*
- **Recommendation:** Significantly *expand the funding and funding eligibility for fee and easement acquisition* through existing and new land conservation programs, including the Land for Maine's Future Program.

What We See – Conservation Options

- Conservation projects at a large scale (5,000 ac+) is most often **opportunistic** for landowners and conservation organizations.
- However, conservation **design** is a thoughtful process with the parties and communities. Includes considering impacts to the traditional (forestry and recreation) and future uses and needs.





Conserving and Supporting Forest Products Economy

- Spruce and Fir logs go to **Stratton, ME** to be turned into 2X4's for building materials;
- White Pine logs go to **Bethel** and **Dixfield, ME** to be turned into lumber;
- Pulpwood goes to **Rumford, ME** to be converted to printing and packaging materials;
- Firewood is sold to heat local homes; and
- Biomass chips are trucked to **Stratton, ME** to generate electricity.



Conserving and Supporting Ecological Areas of Importance

- Language to maintain cold water habitats;
- Working with landowners to enact stream restoration/Aquatic Organism Passage;
- Conservation design within projects and between projects to ensure a variety of landscapes are conserved – high elevation, low elevation, and the gradients in between;
- Conservation PROJECT design to consider best conservation tool to accomplish the best climate resilient outcome in combination with funding sources; and
- Continue to build a matrix of conserved land of different types across the Maine forest to ensure continued management and climate resiliency options.

What We See – Forestland Transactions

- at least **\$1.5 Billion** in sales 2010-2025
- Prices: **\$700 --> \$1,200+** per acre
- CE Values = **40-60%+** of Fee value

2021	\$129,872,091
2022	\$135,805,199
2023	\$147,929,265
2024	\$111,820,583
2025	\$94,245,500
2026	\$51,377,848

Based on review of sales greater than \$500,000

Pace of Conservation 2009-2025 (within UT)

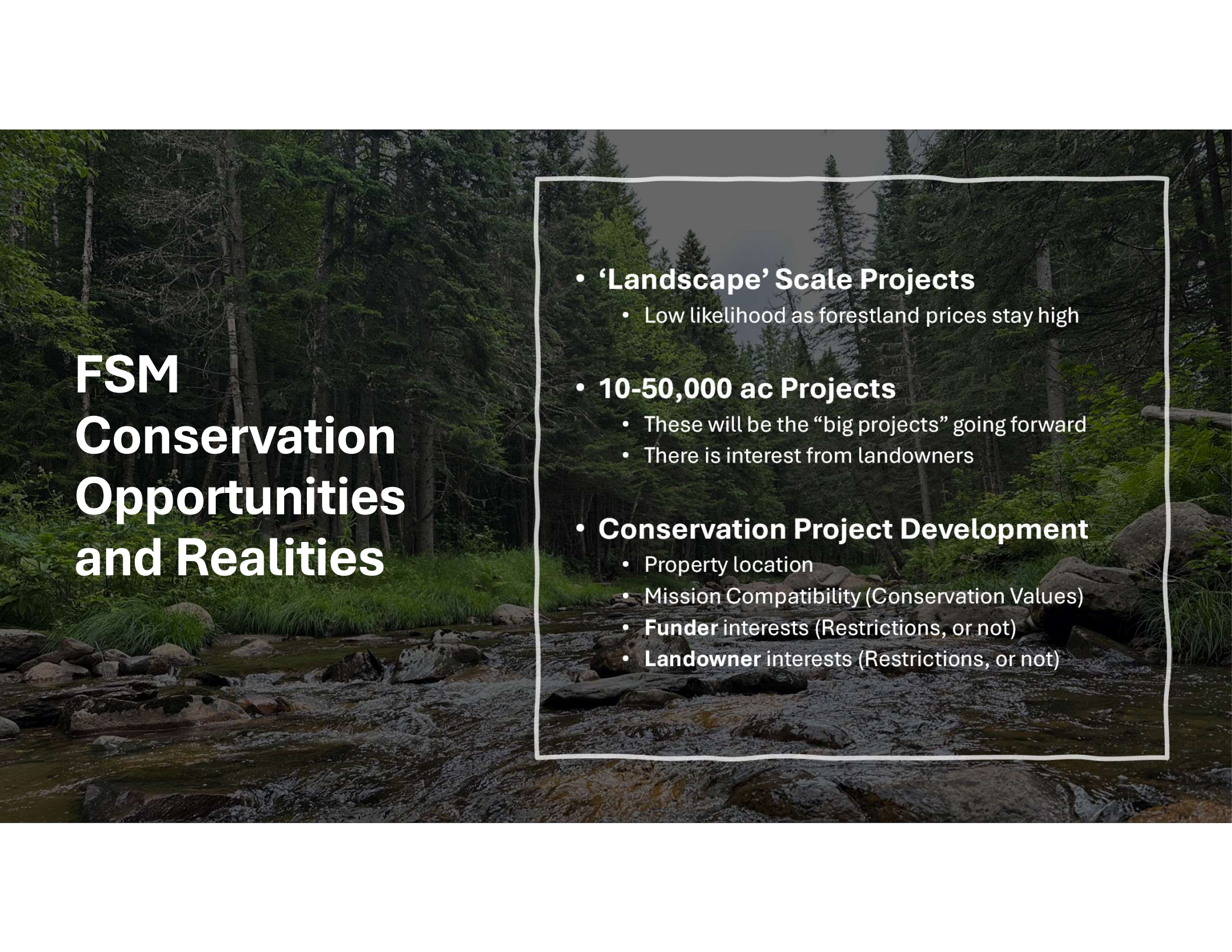
	Conservation Total within LUPC 2009-2025																	
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Aroostook	467	-	-	-	335	4,737	-	32,488	-	-	-	-	23,252	-	-	4,128	-	65,408
Franklin	-	-	-	-	2,663	5,778	84	29	807	10,768	8,524	9,557	-	9,428	18,654	-	-	66,292
Hancock	-	-	874	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23,344	-	-	5,374	2,905	32,497
Oxford	3,399	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	249	175	-	7,857	21,244	-	-	-	32,923
Penobscot	2,578	-	7,536	216	33	-	-	88,911	-	-	-	-	2,016	-	-	-	-	101,291
Piscataquis	153,818	-	-	6,525	1,257	4,536	2,939	12,728	1,572	-	-	-	-	27,010	9,740	-	14,741	234,866
Somerset	238,516	-	11,206	4,727	3,433	65	6,496	8,197	-	16	-	1,579	-	-	-	-	50,354	324,589
Washington	-	-	-	21,860	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21,860
Total	398,777	-	19,616	33,328	7,722	15,116	9,518	142,354	2,379	11,032	8,699	11,136	56,470	57,683	28,394	9,502	68,001	879,725

- Approx 32k ac/yr 2009-2025 (**12k ac/yr 2010-2025**) New CE
- Approx 19k ac/yr 2009-2025 (**18k ac/yr 2010-2025**) New Fee
- Approx 52k ac/yr 2009-2025 (**30k ac/yr 2010-2025**) New Conservation



Three “Big” Ongoing Conservation and Land Return Projects

- **Hilton Lands (TCF and BPL) - 45,000 acres** northwest of Jackman
- **Wáhsehtək^w (TPL and Penobscot Nation) - 30,000 acres** north of Millinocket and east of Baxter State Park
- **Magalloway (TNC, FSM, RLHT, NEWT) - 78,000 acres** along NH border north and west of Rangeley



FSM Conservation Opportunities and Realities

- **‘Landscape’ Scale Projects**
 - Low likelihood as forestland prices stay high
- **10-50,000 ac Projects**
 - These will be the “big projects” going forward
 - There is interest from landowners
- **Conservation Project Development**
 - Property location
 - Mission Compatibility (Conservation Values)
 - **Funder** interests (Restrictions, or not)
 - **Landowner** interests (Restrictions, or not)



Recent Conservation Project Acquisition Expenses

- *Fee*

- 2020 – 10,000 ac \$900/ac
- 2021 – 6,000 ac \$725/ac

- Conservation Easement

- 2022 – 8,000 ac \$460/ac
- 2024 – 3,500 ac \$830/ac
- 2025 – 4,000 ac \$215/ac
- 2026 – 600 ac \$635/ac
- 2026 – 17,000 ac \$415/ac
- 2026 – 1,000 ac \$440/ac

Project Design and Success



FOREST
SOCIETY
of MAINE

← LANDOWNER →

PARTNERS

↑
FUNDERS
↑

?



Going Forward

- Conservation opportunities ARE THERE (long term)
- Conservation funding is a limiting factor
 - MWW Goal = 150,000 acres/year
 - 125,000 ac CE = \$62,500,000/year (\$500/ac)
 - 25,000 ac Fee = \$25,000,000/year (\$1000/ac)
 - ~\$100,000,000 in annual need
- Public Conservation Funding is limited and volatile/inconsistent
 - ME: ~\$10M a year (LMF, and others)
 - FED: ~\$5-20M a year (NAWCA, FLP, etc.)
- Partnerships and Private Philanthropy are essential
- Creatively matching projects to partners to dollars is the special sauce

