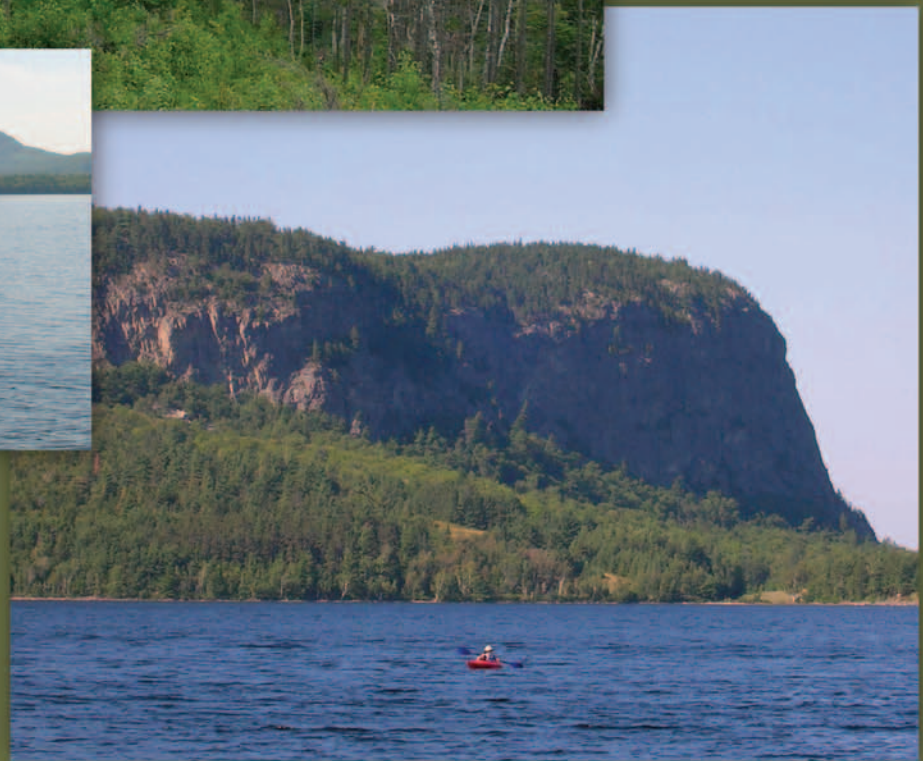


# *A Vision for the Moosehead Lake Region*



Building Community  
Conserving Natural Resources  
Protecting Maine's Heritage and Future



We would like to thank everyone who has participated in the debate about Plum Creek's development proposal and the future of the Moosehead Lake Region. The strong opinions that have been expressed, from many perspectives, have helped to shape our collective understanding about the needs, concerns and aspirations of those who live and work in the Moosehead Lake Region, and all who cherish this part of Maine.



We give special thanks to the nearly 1,000 people who attended the four "scoping sessions" held by the Land Use Regulation Commission in August 2005, and to the Moosehead Region Futures Committee and Friends of Moosehead – two groups that have done pioneering work in the face of change to capture local sentiments and knowledge, as a way of defining the values that need to be protected for the Moosehead Lake Region to retain its unique character, heritage, and way of life.

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*Protecting the nature of Maine*  
Spring 2006

# A Vision for the Moosehead Lake Region

**T**he Moosehead Lake Region is a treasure. It is a place of great natural beauty and ecological resources, an area steeped in tradition and history, and a region with cultural and landscape features that have enriched and nourished residents and visitors for generations. But the future of the Moosehead Lake Region is at risk. Development pressures could cause irreversible damage to many of the area's most significant resources and values. This is what many people fear would be the result of Plum Creek's development plan, first announced in December 2004.

But an alternative vision is achievable – a vision that would provide a careful balancing of conservation and development, in a fashion that becomes a model for Maine – and the nation. The alternative approach would provide permanent conservation across most of the Moosehead Lake Region, while directing development to areas near existing towns and the existing ski area at Big Moose Mountain. Such an approach would protect the working forest, conserve wildlife and scenic resources, enhance recreational opportunities, and ensure public access. It would bring new vitality and much-needed resources to the communities of Greenville and Rockwood, while sustaining the area's wild and remote characteristics in such a way that it could make Moosehead Lake *the* premier gateway to Maine's North Woods Experience – with an unrivaled range of features and activities to explore year-round. Giving further life to an alternative vision is the purpose of this report.



# Background



hen Plum Creek announced in December 2004 that it would seek approval for a 426,000-acre development across 29 townships<sup>1</sup> surrounding Moosehead Lake, shock waves were felt across the state. The largest land owner in the nation, the Seattle-based Plum Creek Real Estate Corporation, was proposing the largest development in Maine history, in the largest undeveloped area east of the Mississippi. Debate and controversy quickly followed, as Maine people realized that the North Woods faced perhaps its biggest threat ever: a sprawling plan for nearly 1,000 house lots in 30 subdivisions, two resorts, a marina, three RV campgrounds, more than 100 rental cabins, four new sporting camps, a golf course, and much more.

Plum Creek in 1998 purchased a total of nearly one million acres in Maine from South Africa Pulp and Paper International (Sappi), including 426,000 acres around Moosehead Lake and another 8,000 acres in the Town of Greenville. The land was purchased as forestland for less than \$200 per acre, and it currently is zoned for timber production. From 1998 through 2000, the company repeatedly denied having any plans to pursue development of the land. But in late 2004, everything changed when Plum Creek announced that it would be seeking approval for the largest rezoning proposal ever to come before Maine's Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC).

Plum Creek's permit application, officially submitted to LURC in April 2005, proposed permanent development across the landscape, but only temporary conservation. The fine print of the 570-page plan revealed troubling loopholes, glaring inconsistencies, and specific development proposals that would jeopardize important natural resources. Although Plum Creek claimed that its development would fit easily onto the landscape, massive and exclusive developments on the company's lands in Washington State and Montana are worrisome examples of what could happen to Moosehead Lake.<sup>2</sup>

Some residents in the region initially felt that saying "no" would be risky, given the area's strong need for economic development. But others spoke up forcefully with concerns about the plan, fearing that Plum Creek's development could destroy the character of the region and put its most precious resources at risk as new house lots sprawled out across the landscape.

People who love the region came out in record numbers to speak their minds. Nearly 1,000 people attended four "scoping sessions" held in August 2005 by Maine's Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) for the purpose of receiving comments about the Plum Creek plan. The overwhelming majority of speakers expressed deep concerns about the Plan's possible impacts. Issues raised during the sessions, and from hundreds of written comments, were chronicled by LURC staff in a lengthy, 19-page document released in October 2005.<sup>3</sup>



More than 5,000 people signed a petition to LURC in opposition to the plan, stating, in part, "Plum Creek's huge development proposal would spoil the Moosehead Lake area forever due to its unprecedented size, sprawling nature, types of development, and the lack of permanent conservation."<sup>4</sup> By December 2005, Plum Creek announced that it had heard the message loud and clear and was returning to the drawing board to take a fresh look, with the goal of submitting a new plan.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plum Creek's proposal would occur in the part of Maine (10.4 million acres) without organized towns; the unorganized territories are comprised of townships (20,000-25,000 acres each), which are managed and zoned by Maine's Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC).

<sup>2</sup> Plum Creek has sold land to developers and worked with them to create exclusive vacation resorts where second-homes sell in the millions of dollars. See Suncadia (<http://www.suncadia.com/>) and the Yellowstone Club (<http://www.yellowstoneclub.com/>).

<sup>3</sup> <http://mainegov-images.informe.org/doc/lurc/reference/resourceplans/moosehead/2005-10-31scopingsummary.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> This is the largest number of petitions ever received by LURC on a proposed development.

<sup>5</sup> Plum Creek May Alter Moosehead Area Plans, Thursday December 22, 2005, Bangor Daily News.

# Alternative Vision

**L**ike many others, the Natural Resources Council of Maine has felt that a better plan could be developed for the region – one that provides meaningful economic development, while also protecting the natural resource base that is the region’s greatest asset. We believe an alternative vision for the region can be centered on the themes of community and conservation. Properly located development can build upon, rather than compete with, the strong sense of community that currently exists in Greenville and Rockwood. And a strategy for permanent, landscape-scale conservation can preserve the working forest and timber jobs that are so vital for the region, while also protecting wildlife habitat, scenic resources, and the potential for remote recreation that will be an increasingly important component of nature-based tourism for the region.

Through the course of public debate about Plum Creek’s plan, there appears to be an emerging consensus on core principles that should guide a community development and conservation strategy for the Moosehead Lake Region. These principles include:

- **Provide permanent conservation** of large blocks of contiguous woods and waters as working forest, wildlife habitat, and recreation areas with guaranteed public access for hunting, fishing, and nature-based tourism;
- **Concentrate development near the existing communities** of Greenville and Rockwood in order to avoid sprawl, buttress the local labor force, minimize the cost of providing services, and preserve scenic and natural resources;
- **Ensure economic benefits for the local economy** through development that provides new jobs in and near Greenville and Rockwood, adds value to existing businesses, and provides new local tax base. Focusing development near existing communities will provide a realistic prospect for additional year-round population growth – including families that help bolster local schools and help achieve the “critical mass” needed for operating the hospital and municipal services; and



- **Protect the North Woods character of the region** by avoiding development that fragments the forest, and by protecting and enhancing nature-based tourism opportunities.



These principles are consistent with a set of “Guidelines for a Sustainable Moosehead Region Future” developed by the Moosehead Region Futures Committee – a group of residents from the area that has gathered community input in order to define the values that need to be protected in the region.<sup>6</sup> These principles also are consistent with the planning approach that has been established by Maine’s Land Use Regulation Commission.

As stated in LURC’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan, “the Commission has long recognized the importance of promoting compact development patterns and discouraging sprawl.”<sup>7</sup> Two of LURC’s central principles are “discouraging growth which results in sprawling development patterns,” and encouraging “orderly growth within and proximate to existing compatible developed areas, particularly towns and communities.”<sup>8</sup> The Commission’s Land Use Plan also notes the importance of large-scale land protection, stating that “the value of natural resources is generally enhanced when they are part of a large, undisturbed area, especially one that encompasses entire watersheds or ecosystems.”<sup>9</sup>

What type of alternative development scenario would fit with these guidelines? To help answer that question, NRCM hired a land use planning firm (Terrence J. DeWan & Associates) that is well versed in community planning and the protection of scenic, ecological, and recreational resources. This firm assisted us in conducting a detailed analysis of development scenarios for the region.

Our analysis looked at lands owned by Plum Creek not only in the unorganized townships, but also within the Town of Greenville. We also felt that it was important to examine some parcels of land not owned by Plum Creek, but which have great

potential for the region’s economic future – such as land near the existing ski area on Big Moose Mountain. We looked at a broad range of areas potentially suitable for development near Greenville and Rockwood. The planner conducted multiple site visits to parcels within these areas, and conducted an extensive review of resource data about wetlands, topography, soils, habitat, infrastructure, scenic values, and current uses. A set of “candidate locations for development” were identified, and the planner used established techniques for determining an appropriate development capacity for each site.

Regarding areas warranting conservation protection, NRCM looked carefully at a conservation proposal developed by Friends of Moosehead, a group of more than 130 local businesses and individuals who believe that much of the region should be protected from development. We examined natural resource information developed by Maine Audubon and The Nature Conservancy, and a map of “Suites of High Value Nature Tourism Experiences” created by the Moosehead Region Futures Committee. NRCM staff also visited the Moosehead Region more than 30 times over the past year to meet with area residents to listen and learn about their views and priorities – both for conservation and development. This work provided the foundation of the alternative vision presented in this report.

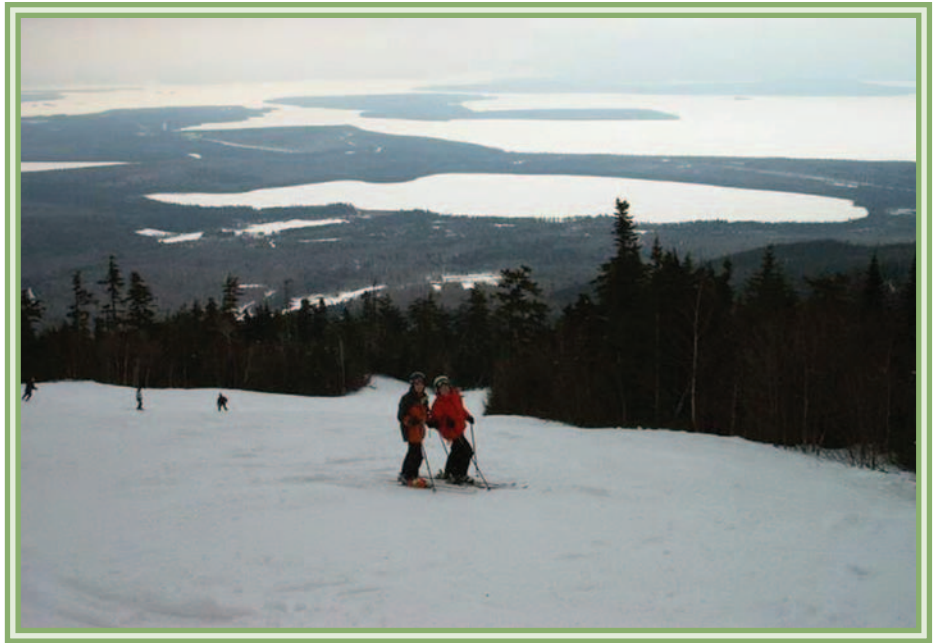
<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.mooseheadfutures.org/>

<sup>7</sup> Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Department of Conservation, Maine Land Use Regulation Commission, March 27, 1997. p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> Comprehensive Land Use Plan, p. 114.

<sup>9</sup> Comprehensive Land Use Plan, p. 114.

The resulting analysis is conceptual. It is offered for discussion purposes. It proposes a broad conservation strategy for the region that would protect the area's natural resource base. It also envisions the possibility of 300-450 carefully-located house lots, and a Maine Woods lodge and recreation area that could serve as a hub for nature-based tourism. The Alternative Vision for the Moosehead Lake Region has the following features:



- Proposed developments would be fit harmoniously into the landscape, protecting wildlife habitat, water quality, and scenic views;
- Proposed neighborhoods would follow “smart growth” principles, incorporating village housing patterns, walking paths, and protected natural areas. The goal would be to design well-planned, attractive communities providing the prospect for housing that is attractive to families with school-aged children and affordable to year-round residents;
- Resort development would be concentrated near the existing ski resort at Big Moose Mountain, eliminating a proposed resort at Lily Bay or any other location where it would cut into undeveloped natural areas, detract from existing public lands, or drain resources away from Greenville-area businesses;
- World-class nature-based tourism facilities would be created to take advantage of a protected natural resource base with guaranteed public access. The area would be marketed as a key location for a Maine Woods Experience (see sidebar pg 10), featuring trips into Maine’s woods and waterways with registered Maine guides, traditional vacations at existing sporting camps, and a landscape filled with nature-based recreation opportunities;
- New development would be designed to enhance existing towns and complement existing businesses, not compete with them or put existing businesses at risk, and should be phased in carefully so increased traffic can be managed effectively;
- Permanent conservation would be provided across the majority of the forest to protect commercial timber harvesting and support nature-based tourism; and
- Unique and valuable wildlife habitat and scenic resources would be protected.

# Alternative Vision Summary (See Appendix for Detailed Descriptions)

<b>Alternative Vision Component</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Landscape Conservation</b> →	Provide permanent conservation protection and public access for approximately 424,000 acres of Plum Creek land. Protection would be a combination of public land acquisition, and conservation easements that would allow continued timber harvesting. (See “Permanent Conservation” side bar page 9.)
<b>Rockwood Village and Backlots</b> →	Provide a carefully-planned neighborhood in the village of Rockwood within walking distance of the school, community center, recreation facilities and employment opportunities. The site could accommodate approximately 25 moderate homes arranged in a village setting. Plum Creek land above Rockwood could accommodate up to 50 new homes overlooking Moosehead Lake.
<b>Burnham Pond</b> →	Up to 30 homes in the medium-priced range could be sited to overlook Burnham Pond. The shoreline would be protected. An internal trail system could be interconnected into a regional trail system to provide access for hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling to Big Moose Mountain, the proposed Maine Woods Lodge (see below), Mountain View Pond, and other destinations.
<b>Maine Woods Lodge</b> →	Creation of a Maine Woods Lodge, on Plum Creek land west of the existing Squaw Mountain Ski Area, would be a four-season facility in a rustic mountain setting near remote ponds, moose habitat, and the Kennebec River. The lodge would feature architecture found in the area, with an emphasis on natural materials. The facility could offer accommodations for 50 ± in a main lodge, along with additional separate cabins.
<b>Burnham East</b> →	30-35 attractive lots (many of which could have filtered views of Moosehead Lake and/or Deer Island) could be situated on this site between Rt 6/15 and Moosehead Lake. The home sites could be designed in groups of 8-12 homes each.
<b>Harfords Highlands</b> →	This 1,000 ± acre parcel is directly adjacent to Harfords Point, a community of largely summer cottages on Moosehead Lake. The area has the potential to support 100 moderate- to upper-priced home sites within a short distance to Greenville, the ski area, and other nearby attractions.
<b>Big Wilson Stream</b> →	Plum Creek owns over 8,000 acres of land in the Town of Greenville. While most of this land may be best suited for timber production (based upon its visual quality and lack of access), there are several areas southeast of Lower Wilson Pond that may be suitable for home development. These sites are



## Big Wilson Stream (continued)

adjacent to or near the existing Rum Ridge development and are easily accessed by the K.I. (Katahdin Ironworks) Road. They comprise approximately 450 acres and include:

- 85 ± acres on the north side of K.I. Road, adjacent to Rum Ridge
- 150 ± acres between Big Wilson Stream, Rum Ridge, and Secret Pond, on the south side of the K.I. Road
- 35 ± acres on a knoll east of Secret Pond, on the south side of K.I. Road
- 180 ± acres on the south side of K.I. Road, south of Rum Pond.



With proper planning and phasing, between 100 and 200 homes in various price ranges could be accommodated within these areas. The land is within a 12-minute drive to downtown Greenville and is within two miles of the Greenville Airport. The area offers excellent opportunities for remote fishing, hunting, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and canoeing through use of the Little Wilson Pond public boat launch, Rum Pond, Secret Pond, Salmon Pond, Rum Mountain, Big Wilson Stream, and the surrounding area.

## Revitalized Ski Resort

While the Squaw Mountain Ski area is not owned by Plum Creek, it does represent one of the most significant recreational resources and economic development opportunities in the Moosehead Lake area. With proper planning, there may be opportunities to greatly increase the amount of development at the base of the mountain. Several hundred units of housing could be added (in the form of condominiums, homes, expanded hotel, inn, etc.) in an area already zoned for development. Revitalization of this ski area into a resort with four-season attractions should be a centerpiece of strategies to attract tourists to the Moosehead Lake Region.

### Summary:

- **424,000 acres conserved (through easement and acquisition)**
- **300 – 450 house lots**
- **New “Maine Woods Lodge” with 50 rooms plus additional cabins**
- **Revitalized Ski Area with several hundred new housing units**

# Special Features of the Moosehead Lake Region

**T**he Moosehead Lake Region contains a broad array of unique natural resources, including remote ponds, wild rivers, abundant wildlife, spectacular mountain peaks, stunning scenic vistas, and a range of recreational opportunities that are difficult to match anywhere. People travel to Moosehead Lake to fish, hike, hunt, snowmobile, ski, and relax. The area was made famous by Henry Thoreau's writings in the 1800s, but the Moosehead Lake Region has a range of features that make it nationally significant today, including:

- A century-old tradition of wilderness recreation and guiding;
- World-class fly fishing on the Roach River and the East Outlet of the Kennebec River. The Roach is one of only two catch and release streams for wild trout and salmon in Maine;
- Ancient native canoe trails and world-class wilderness canoeing;
- Home to the famed "100-mile wilderness" section of the Appalachian Trail;
- Some of the last remaining wild and native brook trout ponds in the eastern United States; 97% of the remaining wild brook trout ponds are in Maine;
- One of the most primitive river segments in the northeastern United States (the Kennebec River), which serves as the most heavily used commercial rafting stretch in the state; and
- Spectacular river gorges with exceptionally high ecological and recreational value; one of the last remaining "large lake" wilderness experiences available in the northeastern United States, and some of the last remaining high-value, remote, undeveloped ponds in the East.



# Permanent Conservation

**T**he Alternative Vision proposes permanent conservation on 424,000 acres in the Moosehead Region, the area included in Plum Creek's original development proposal.

Plum Creek has indicated its willingness to sell the state approximately 30,000 acres surrounding the Upper Roach Ponds and West Branch Ponds, and adjacent to the Appalachian Trail. There may be additional areas which could be acquired in fee by the State.

The remaining areas should be protected by a permanent conservation easement that prohibits development and guarantees public access.

In order to rezone existing forest land for the amount and location of development proposed in this Alternative Vision, Plum Creek is required to strike a "reasonable and publicly beneficial balance" between development and conservation. Given that development is permanent, conservation should be, too.

In its original proposal, Plum Creek proposed to put a 30-year prohibition on development on the area it was not proposing to develop, and allowed the development restriction to be extended indefinitely in 20-year increments. Plum Creek indicated that such protection was the equivalent of permanent protection. No guarantee of public access was included.

In the Alternative Vision, Plum Creek's offer of permanent protection and public access is guaranteed through a permanent conservation easement.



# A Vision That Makes Sense for the Region

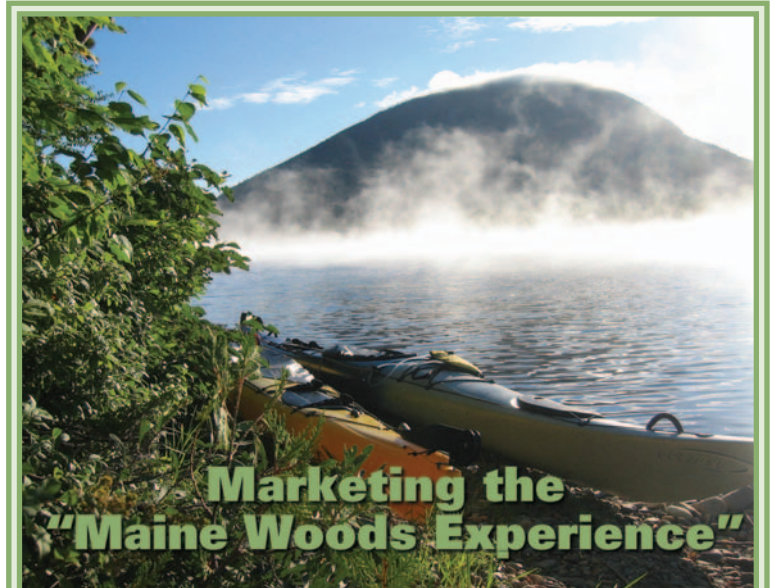


In an ideal world, the Land Use Regulation Commission would have developed a prospective zoning plan for the Moosehead Lake Region prior to receiving Plum Creek's 426,000-acre rezoning request. Although LURC's comprehensive land use plan called for such a plan, the work has yet to be done. Plum Creek's proposal should not be used as a substitute, since it did not emerge from a broad stakeholder process and has failed to balance public values as required by LURC. The strong negative response to Plum Creek's initial plan revealed the problems inherent in allowing a private landowner to assume the role of proposing how an entire region should be rezoned for the future.

LURC has very clear criteria and policies, however, for guiding development to appropriate locations and determining whether a rezoning request protects the many values that the Commission is obligated to protect on behalf of the people of Maine. LURC's purpose is to protect the remote character and natural resources of the Unorganized Territories. As such, LURC's priority is for proposed development to occur "in appropriate locations and in a compact development pattern."<sup>10</sup>

The first rule for determining appropriate locations is proximity to existing development – and the comprehensive plan makes clear that this does not simply mean "adjacency" to a development that may not have been appropriately sited to begin with. "The adjacency principle", observes LURC, "has the potential to sanction a leapfrogging effect in which each new development potentially becomes the existing, compatible developed area from which adjacency for the next development can be measured."<sup>11</sup> Thus, appropriately-located development really means proximity to areas with existing infrastructure and services, in order to protect other values in the jurisdiction and not drive up costs of servicing remote developments or sacrifice remote areas.

This Alternative Vision meets this goal by locating all proposed development within two miles of Rockwood, Greenville, or the existing ski area at Big Moose Mountain. The Alternative Vision also meets LURC's primary review criteria for appropriate development. *See page 11*



Maine has nature-based tourism opportunities that people from throughout the world may want, but this "product" needs to be marketed. That was one of the general conclusions of a September 2005 report by FERMATA, Inc., titled Strategic Plan for Implementing the Maine Nature Tourism Initiative. Important for the Moosehead Lake Region is the plan's identification of "The Maine Woods Experience" as an important marketing strategy.

The "Maine Woods Experience," according to FERMATA, can be marketed as tourism in the Maine Woods region that takes full advantage of the area's heritage, culture, and natural resources, while also supporting traditional resource-based activities. The report specifically identifies the state's unique resource of Maine Guides, which provide a "tremendous" marketing opportunity: Guides help to meet the specific interests and needs of visitors to the Maine Woods through customized guided trips led by knowledgeable local experts.

The Alternative Vision in this report envisions Greenville becoming a gateway to the "Maine Woods Experience," with new, carefully planned facilities, improved existing facilities, and local resources (Maine Guides, tourist attractions, and sporting camps) ready and available for anyone who visits the region.

<sup>10</sup> Comprehensive Land Use Plan, p. 115.

<sup>11</sup> Comprehensive Land Use Plan, p. 124.

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## LURC Approval Criteria

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## Alternative Vision Compatibility

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### 1. Protection of the remote character of the jurisdiction

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The permanent landscape-scale conservation for 424,000 acres provided by the Alternative Vision would achieve this LURC requirement by protecting remote ponds and timberlands from scattered new house lots.

### 2. Proximity to organized towns and centers of population

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All of the proposed development in the Alternative Vision would be within 2 miles of Greenville or Rockwood, or adjacent to the existing ski area at Big Moose Mountain. The plan would eliminate Plum Creek's proposed subdivisions, resorts and other developments on remote ponds, lakes and forestlands.

### 3. Natural resource compatibility

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The Alternative Vision would provide landscape-scale conservation of the natural resource base, and the location and scale of development has been premised on careful design criteria aimed at preserving natural resources.

### 4. Demonstrated need for development

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Additional factors beyond those considered in this analysis must be evaluated in determining need. However, we believe that the development concepts proposed in the Alternative Vision fit well with LURC's criteria for "demonstrated need." Specifically, the 300-450 house lots contribute to the community and provide economic benefits because of their proximity to Greenville and Rockwood. The proposed Maine Woods Lodge would improve the economic well-being of the area by creating year-round jobs and reinforcing existing employment opportunities related to nature-based tourism. In contrast, Plum Creek's proposal for 975 lots and extensive other development appears to be based primarily on satisfying a market for second homes in Maine's north woods – which is not sufficient to meet LURC's "demonstrated need" criteria.

### 5. Access to major routes

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The proposed development in the Alternative Vision is close enough to existing road corridors that significant new road building would not be required.

### 6. Availability to infrastructure

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The proposed development in the Alternative Vision would be near existing power lines and close to existing communities, so major new infrastructure would not be required.

**I**n addition to being compatible with LURC’s planning approach, the Alternative Vision presented in this report also appears to be highly compatible with the Town of Greenville’s development goals. One of the top goals in Greenville’s comprehensive plan, for example, is to “seek population growth and increased economic activity to increase the cost-effectiveness of providing public services and facilities.”<sup>12</sup>



Of particular concern to Greenville is the decline in the number of school-aged children and the drop in population needed to provide an adequate job base for economic expansion. As Greenville Town Manager John Simko explains, the region lacks a “critical mass” of year-round population to provide the workforce and level of community needed to efficiently sustain local services.<sup>13</sup> The number of young families in Greenville has been on the decline, and the number of retirees has increased, which has made it difficult to attract new employers.

The problem of insufficient “critical mass” is worsened by sprawl. “Sprawl discourages growth and investment in consolidated areas,” Simko has observed.<sup>14</sup> He also has told the Land Use Regulation Commission that “unmanaged sprawl will kill this area,” because people who live outside of the town border will not pay for many of the services provided by Greenville, but will increase demand for those services. “To be a vibrant and sustainable service center, Greenville must have a critical mass of population, infrastructure, resources and tax revenue,” says Simko.<sup>15</sup>

For these reasons, one of the top goals for the community is attracting a workforce by making the region more appealing to young professionals. We believe the Alternative Vision would do this, because nearly one-half of the proposed development on Plum Creek land would be located within the Town of Greenville. Those home owners would pay taxes in Greenville, become members of the community, and contribute to the “critical mass” needed for a vibrant town. A proposal by Plum Creek to locate houses much further away would not serve this need as well.

This fact has been proven by Plum Creek’s 89-lot subdivision at First Roach Pond, 18 miles up the eastern shore of Moosehead Lake. These house lots have not brought any new school-age children to the area, and have done nothing to contribute to Greenville’s tax base.

Plum Creek’s business model appears to be focused on second home development, primarily in remote areas with high public, natural, and scenic resource values. Yet this type of housing is not the best fit for the region’s economy. As noted by LURC, “the location of many seasonal homes away from existing services and facilities increases potential service costs... The fiscal benefits of seasonal housing can therefore be limited or fleeting, particularly second home development in more remote areas.”<sup>16</sup> LURC also has described how second homes in remote locations slowly erode the very experience that people are seeking by purchasing properties in remote locations:

Compared with most recreational facilities, seasonal housing gives relatively few people the opportunity to experience the jurisdiction’s recreational resources. Owning a piece of remote Maine is a widely shared dream, but it presumes an unyielding supply of water frontage or scenic lands whose qualities are unaffected by others pursuing the same dream.<sup>17</sup>

It is for these reasons that the Alternative Vision proposes development near existing services and facilities, where new neighborhoods could be magnets for not just second home investors, but also year-round residents.

<sup>12</sup> Town of Greenville Comprehensive Plan, 1999, p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> A Vision for the Greenville Area, John Simko, Greenville Town Manager, LURC Meeting re: CLUP Revision; February 18, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Comprehensive Land Use Plan, p. 69.

<sup>17</sup> Comprehensive Land Use Plan, p. 118.

# Conclusion



We believe the Alternative Vision presented in this report provides a solid framework for balancing the need for landscape protection with the need for economic development. The Alternative Vision would protect what is most special about the Moosehead Lake Region, while strengthening the economy by concentrating new homes and investments near existing infrastructure.

We recognize that this Alternative includes development in several locations that currently are not developed. Some of these locations may be controversial. As with any vision for the region, decisions will need to be made about where development should happen, and where it shouldn't happen. We believe it is preferable to focus development near existing communities to reduce pressure on more remote, undeveloped lands. This is the approach preferred by LURC. It is the strategy

that will work best for the Town of Greenville. And it is the vision that holds the greatest potential for building community, conserving natural resources, and protecting Maine's heritage and the future of the Moosehead Lake Region.

This proposed alternative is offered as a concept – for interested parties (especially residents of the Moosehead Lake Region) to consider, evaluate, improve upon, and – we hope – help implement as a better way forward.

## Remoteness: A Rare Resource



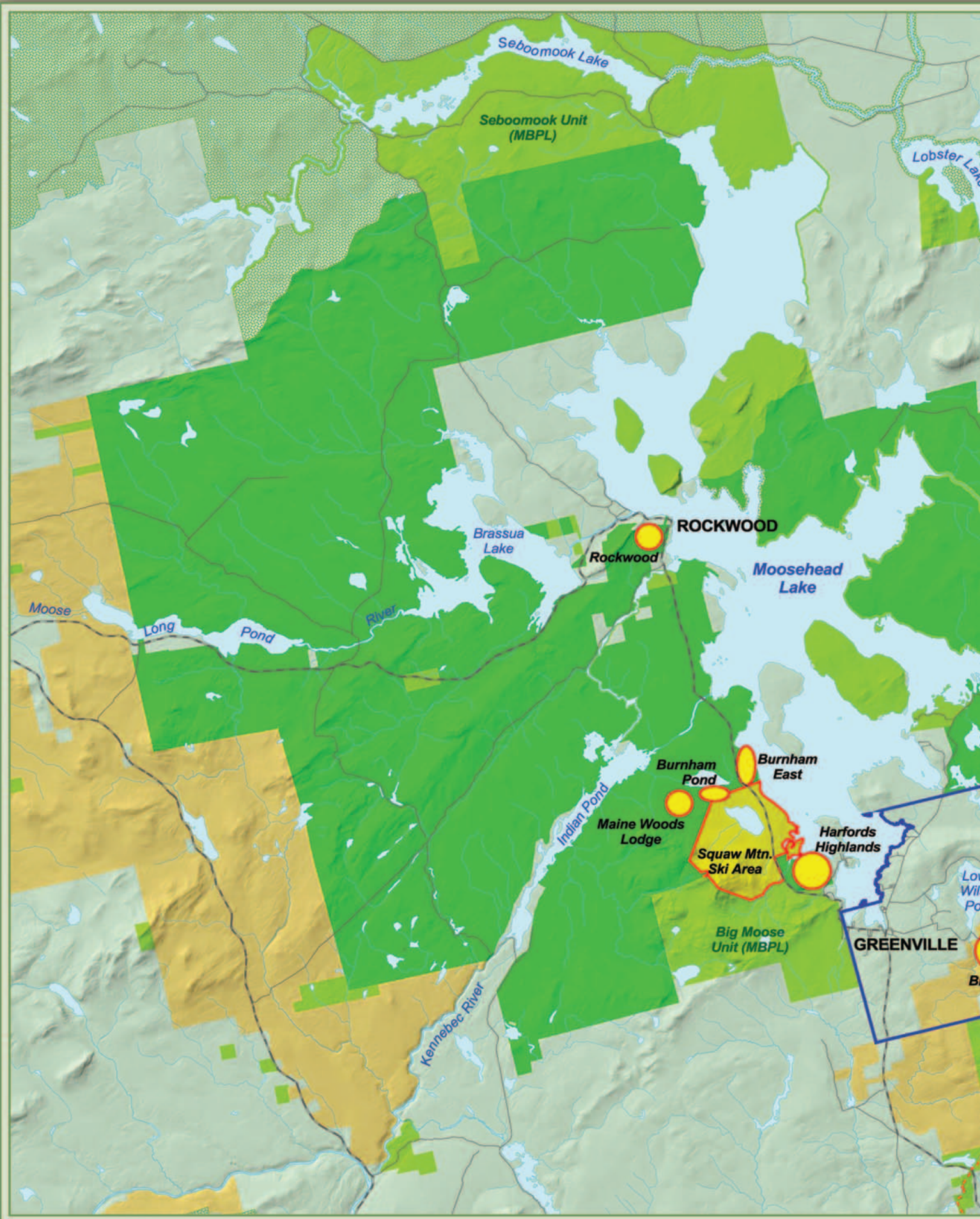
The Moosehead Lake Region is at the heart of the largest undeveloped forest east of the Mississippi River. Images of the night sky from NASA satellites show an area of darkness around Moosehead Lake – a refuge from the lights, sounds, traffic, houses, and other ever-present features of urban life.

LURC has recognized that this “remoteness” is a precious resource. As stated in the Commission's comprehensive land use plan: “Remoteness and the relative absence of development are perhaps the most distinctive of the jurisdiction's principal values, due mainly to their increasing rarity in the Eastern United States.”

Remoteness is a diminishing resource which is constantly chipped away through small, incremental development pressures and a growing interest from people throughout the world to own a piece of Maine's North Woods. Each new development on a remote pond, on a scenic ridge, or near a favorite hunting, fishing, or hiking location reduces that rare quality of feeling remote.

Increasingly, development in the North Woods also is having a negative impact on public access – as “No Trespassing” signs block the public from areas that traditionally have been used for recreation.













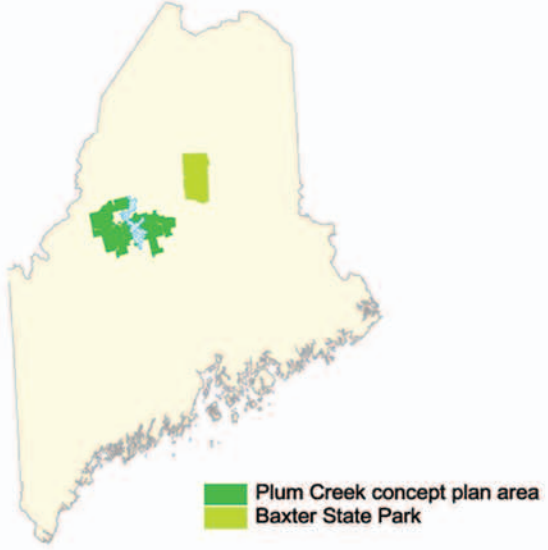




# A Vision for the Moosehead Lake Region



-  Proposed development locations
-  Proposed conservation area on Plum Creek lands (fee and easement)
-  Other Plum Creek land
-  Squaw Mountain Ski Area (not Plum Creek land)
-  Current conservation land (fee)
-  Current conservation land (easement)
-  Town of Greenville
-  Highways
-  Improved roads
-  Appalachian Trail



Prepared for Natural Resources Council of Maine

ITS Trail System and other trails not shown would be preserved and enhanced.

# Appendix

## NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL OF MAINE An Alternative Vision for the Moosehead Lake Region

### Introduction

The Natural Resources Council of Maine went through a professional planning process, working with Terrence J. DeWan & Associates, a landscape architecture and planning firm in Yarmouth, to identify sites in the Moosehead Lake region that could be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner. The planning process consisted of the following steps:

**Establish Siting Guidelines.** General siting guidelines were established to address the question of where development should occur. Optimal locations should:

- Be in or within two miles of established communities or major development (such as ski areas) to take advantage of existing infrastructure.
- Avoid sensitive wildlife habitats, major drainage patterns, significant wetlands, or other important ecological features.
- Provide opportunities for safe, attractive living environments that would not require major site alterations.
- Result in development patterns that would be compatible with the existing terrain and have minimal impact on the visual and physical environment.

**Site Visits.** The planning consultant visited the area between Rockwood and Greenville on three separate occasions, looking at over a dozen different sites. While most of the property evaluated is owned by Plum Creek, some additional areas were



looked at that seemed important to the future of the Moosehead Lake region. Site visits were structured to get a sense of existing land use, topography, vegetation patterns, and other physical and cultural features.

**Site Evaluations.** The list of potential sites was winnowed down after a more detailed review of existing data sources, including Beginning with Habitat Maps, Soil Conservation Service Maps for Piscataquis County, USGS Topographic Maps, snowmobile trail maps and aerial photographs. The results of the site visits and site evaluations are presented in the description of Opportunities and Issues to Address for each of the recommended sites.

**Schematic Planning.** Each site was evaluated as a unique entity. The planning team went through the following exercise to arrive at a reasonable density for the projected land use:

- Identify the approximate size of the area, defined by roadways and other cultural features, steep slopes and other natural limits, and ownership patterns.
- Deduct a certain percentage (usually 50 %) of the total area to account for land that may be undevelopable or should be avoided (e.g., steep slopes, wetlands, buffer zones, etc.).
- With the remaining land, establish a density level appropriate to the area, based upon surrounding land use, visual sensitivity, soils, and other factors. In some areas densities of 2-3 acres per home might be appropriate. In others (Rockwood village, for example), a much higher density pattern is recommended to achieve different land use goals.
- Develop performance criteria to show how the sites could be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner. These are presented as a set of Considerations for each of the recommended sites.

## **ROCKWOOD**

### **Back Lots and Village Housing**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Plum Creek had proposed a ‘backlot’ subdivision on the west side of Rockwood Road above the village of Rockwood. No details were given, only an indication that there was a 300 ± acre tract of land that may be suitable for this type of development.

One of the comments heard during the public input process was the lack of housing for local residents, especially in or near established population centers. Portions of the Plum Creek land

above Rockwood have the potential to provide both back lots on the hillside looking toward Moosehead Lake and Mount Kineo as well as a new neighborhood adjacent to the Rockwood School. If planned with sensitivity to the view from Mt. Kineo, this could be an effective way to accomplish both goals.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

There is great potential to provide the village of Rockwood with a new neighborhood within walking distance of the school, community center, recreation facilities, restaurant, and employment opportunities. The site could accommodate 25 ± moderately-priced homesites arranged in a village design plus 50 ± back lots on the upper portion of the land.

The road leading to the upper lots (back lots) could also serve as access to this new village, thus realizing a cost savings that could be reflected in more affordable home prices and would limit forest fragmentation.

The existing snowmobile route could become an important component of an open space system in “West Rockwood,” providing access for both recreation and utilitarian purposes.

Based upon an analysis of soils data, topography, and ownership patterns, it appears that the land has the ability to absorb up to 50 to 75 new homes in several distinct areas, aimed at different market segments.

Of the 300 ± acres, approximately half may be considered unsuitable due to steep slopes, possible wetlands, drainage channels, and ridgeline considerations. Of the remaining land, slopes vary between 6 and 12 %, which could be suitable for single-family homes.

#### **ISSUES TO ADDRESS**

This land is a primary component of the viewshed from Mount Kineo, located two miles to the north in Moosehead Lake. At this distance, the land is in the mid-ground viewing distance

and any alteration to the forest canopy that opens more than 1/4 acre ± of woodland may be prominently visible.

The ridgeline of the Plum Creek land may be especially sensitive. Any development above a certain elevation (e.g., 1,300 feet) may create a visual ‘notch’ in the horizon as viewed from Mt. Kineo.

Rockwood Road currently has no pedestrian crossing facilities. As this area is developed, there will be a need for some physical improvements to create a safe pedestrian route between West Rockwood and the waterfront.

## CONSIDERATIONS

The planning and design process for both the upper and lower communities should be guided by several principles:

- Work with local residents to create a long-range master plan for the 300 acres above the school. This process should examine site conditions, natural resources, available utilities, town needs, connectivity with existing neighborhoods, and physical image. (State Planning Office Smart Growth planning grants may be a possible source of funds.)
- The homesites for the upper portion of the site (back lots) should follow the Conservation Subdivision approach, as described by Randall Arendt in Growing Greener.<sup>1</sup> Optimal homesites should be determined in the field after a thorough evaluation of primary conservation areas (e.g., wetlands, steep slopes), secondary conservation areas (buffer zones, view corridors), soils for septic disposal systems, existing roads and trails, visibility, and other site specific factors.
- The homes closest to the Rockwood Road should be laid out in a village pattern within walking distance to the school, community center, post office, and waterfront. The



lots should be surrounded by common open space to be used for recreation facilities, buffers, trails, and possibly off-site septic disposal.<sup>2</sup>

- The road system should be laid out to follow the contours and minimize cuts and fills. Road alignment should avoid creating openings that would be visible from Moosehead Lake or Mount Kineo.
- Preserve existing trails, especially the existing ITS snowmobile trail, in the layout of roads and home sites. Allow a substantial buffer zone between the trails and the nearest homes to preserve privacy.
- Avoid home sites that would break the horizon as viewed from sensitive viewpoints, such as the summit of Mount Kineo. In general, the tops of prominent hills should be maintained as common open space.
- Establish permanent no-cut zones around all development to preserve the scenic value of the new homes, maintain wildlife corridors, and protect water quality.
- Avoid creating large openings on the upper slopes that may be visible from Mount Kineo or other prominent viewpoints. Maintain a screen of trees on the downslope side of all homes to minimize contrasts in color, texture, and form.
- Develop a vegetation management plan for

individual lots to guide prospective lot-buyers as they clear homesites, open view corridors, and perform routine maintenance. The plan should be based upon sound ecological principles, public safety considerations, and an awareness of regional visual quality.

## **BURNHAM POND**

### **Pond View Community**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Plum Creek proposed 20 waterfront lots on the north and south shores of Burnham Pond as part of their April 15, 2005 Resource Plan. In addition, an area above the north shore was called out as a “reserve backlot area.” The house lots as proposed would develop approximately 5,000 feet (0.95 miles) of Burnham Pond, or 24 % of the total shore frontage.

Burnham Pond is currently undeveloped. It is considered a unique natural resource for its shallowness, and its relative lack of disturbance. It may support distinctive minnow and insect communities.<sup>3</sup>

This proposal calls for a limited number of single family home sites (up to 30) on a low rise overlooking the pond, keeping the shoreline in its present natural condition.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

Development of a limited number of homes may be possible on a low rise above the Burnham Pond Road on the south side of the pond. Up to 30 homes in the medium-priced range could be sited on the property and not have a severe impact on the pond.

Old logging roads may form the core of the road network, which would limit the amount of tree clearing required. The site would be developed in tiers, with the upper level having filtered views to Burnham Pond.

An internal trail system could be interconnected into a regional trail system providing access for hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling to Moose Mountain, Maine Woods Lodge (see other recommendations), Mountain View Pond, and other destinations.

The Burnham Pond development could be a logical adjunct to the Maine Woods Lodge. As an added attraction, homeowners could be given membership in the Lodge, enabling them to use its year-round facilities and participate in a maintenance and rental program.

#### **ISSUES TO ADDRESS**

The land area available for development is relatively narrow and parallels the Burnham Pond Road. While the slopes are suitable for home construction, roads would have to be designed with care, with an 8 % maximum grade.

The access road may have to be upgraded to accommodate additional traffic. Care should be taken to make improvements in such a manner that the inherent character is not compromised.

#### **CONSIDERATIONS**

With due consideration of the natural resource values of Burnham Pond, the slopes on the south side of the pond should be able to be developed with single family homes, guided by several design principles:

- Maintain a buffer zone of at least 250 feet from Burnham Pond to filter runoff from the upper slopes, protect water quality and protect the natural condition of the pond.
- Maintain a buffer of at least 150 feet from the Burnham Pond access road to preserve the character of the road and the experience of people using the lake.
- Homes should be sited 300-400 feet apart, with an undisturbed buffer zone of at least 200 feet between each home.

- Minimize the number of new roads off Burnham Pond Road. Prohibit direct access from lots onto the road.
- Limit boat access to two hand-carry put-ins on the south side of Burnham Pond, including the existing access point. Given its shallowness and relatively small size, the pond appears most suitable for canoe and kayak use.
- The road system should be laid out to follow the contours (8% maximum gradient) and minimize cuts and fills. Avoid long straight road sections. The use of flowing curves is recommended to add visual interest, reduce speed, and limit linear cuts.
- Establish and enforce design standards for all construction, addressing site planning, topography and drainage, building forms and materials, colors and materials for roofs and siding, window placement, outbuildings and accessory structures, outdoor storage, lighting, and other physical elements of construction. The emphasis should be on sustainable buildings that fit into the Moosehead vernacular and naturalized landscapes that demand minimal maintenance.
- Establish permanent no-cut zones around trail systems to preserve the scenic value of the new homes, maintain wildlife corridors, and protect water quality.
- Develop a vegetation management plan for individual lots to guide prospective purchasers as they clear home sites, open view corridors, and perform routine maintenance. Limit the amount of clearing for each lot by establishing strict building envelopes. The clearing plan should be based upon sound ecological principles, public safety considerations, and an awareness of regional visual quality.

## **MAINE WOODS LODGE**

### **Maine Woods Experience**

#### **OVERVIEW**

As part of their April 15, 2005 Resource Plan, Plum Creek had proposed a four-season resort near Lily Bay. While a well-planned resort seems to be in line with the State's vision for nature-based tourism, great concern was expressed at public meeting about the possible impacts such a facility could have on Lily Bay State Park and Moosehead Lake.

Maine Woods Lodge, in the shadow of the existing Squaw Mountain Ski Area, would be a four-season facility in a setting defined by rugged mountains, pristine ponds, expansive views, and the Kennebec River.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

There appear to be 3-4 square miles of land below Big Moose Mountain that may be suitable for a four-season operation, with an emphasis on cross-country skiing, hiking, mountain climbing, hunting, fishing, nature study and photography, mountain biking, and similar pursuits. The area is bounded by Big Moose Mountain on the south, Squaw Mountain Ski Area on the east, Burnham Pond on the northeast, and Indian Pond/Kennebec River on the northwest.

Within this larger area there appear to be locations where it may be feasible to develop a main lodge and related facilities. One area in particular is a plateau of approximately 15 acres at the base of Big Moose Mountain, an of elevation 1500 feet. This site, which is at the same elevation as the existing ski lodge, appears to offer panoramic views of the ponds and lakes while being close to many recreational resources. Additional field evaluation would be needed to select the optimum location. The nearby ski area offers great opportunities to complement the Maine Woods Lodge.

This area also is part of a much larger area that has been designated by the Moosehead Region Futures Committee as the Kennebec Headwaters in their Suites of High Value Nature Tourism Experiences Map. While this map, dated February 1, 2006, is very broad in its scope, it does seem to center on Indian Pond and the East and West Outlets of the Kennebec River.

The Burnham Pond Road to Indian Pond would be the most likely way into the site, since it is well-maintained and reasonably level, with minimal development throughout its length. A series of existing haul roads may provide access to development sites and thereby minimize the amount of clearing required for road construction.

The facility could offer accommodations for 50 ± in a main lodge along with additional separate cabins, depending upon the site.

## ISSUES TO ADDRESS

The USGS topographic maps indicate a large pond/wetland complex on the southwest side of Burnham Pond. The area surrounding Burnham Brook between Burnham Pond and Indian Pond has very little topographic relief, which may be an indication of extensive wetlands. This may also be a significant moose habitat (which could also be seen as an attraction to the area).

One disadvantage of this area is the distance to a major waterbody. There may be little opportunity to locate a main lodge on or near a lake. However, the views of the nearby mountains and the proximity of Burnham Pond, Mountain View Pond, and Indian Lake could be a comparable offset.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has identified the abutting Spruce Fir Northern Hardwood Ecosystem on the north side of Big Moose Mountain as a High Quality Exemplary Natural Community.<sup>4</sup> In addition, TNC has noted an occurrence of Fragrant Cliff Wood Fern in the general vicinity of Big Moose Mountain.<sup>5</sup>



## CONSIDERATIONS

It appears that portions of this area could be developed into an attractive year-round facility that would complement the Moosehead Lake/Greenville area. There are a number of planning and design considerations that should be followed in pursuing this concept:

- All development should be sited to avoid the Spruce Fir Northern Hardwood Ecosystem, the habitat of the Fragrant Cliff Wood Fern, and the large pond/wetland complex on the southwest side of Burnham Pond.
- Any development in this area should start with a thorough natural resources inventory to determine the carrying capacity of the landscape relative to sewage disposal, impacts on native flora and fauna, traffic, existing land uses, etc.
- The lodge should stress a 'green' approach as part of its core values and operating principles. This should begin with site selection and be reflected in architectural design, building orientation, preservation of habitats, buffer zones, stormwater management, material selection, etc. The lodge and related facilities should follow the National Park Service's Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design.<sup>6</sup>

- The lodge should be planned as an entity to ensure a high level of design continuity throughout. The architecture should reflect styles that are commonly found in the area, with an emphasis on craftsmanship and natural materials.
- Maintain a buffer of at least 250 feet from streams and 100 feet from drainage channels to filter runoff from the upper slopes and protect water quality. Maintain a buffer of at least 150 feet from the Burnham Pond access road to preserve the character of the road and the experience of people passing the lodge on the way to Indian Pond.

- Interesting topography that lends itself to several groups of homes separated by pronounced grade changes.
- A relatively short drive to several boat launches: i.e., in Greenville and Rockwood, at Mountain View Pond, and at the East Outlet of the Kennebec River.

## **BURNHAM EAST**

### **Lakeside Community**

#### **OVERVIEW**

In their initial Concept Plan, Plum Creek identified the area on the east side of Route 6/15 as BMD-B1 and called for up to 40 home sites. The area is immediately upslope from BMD-S1, a series of shorefront lots between the railroad tracks and Moosehead Lake.

This is an opportunity for 30-35 ± attractive lots (many of which could have filtered views of Moosehead Lake and/or Deer Island). Since the site is prominently visible from Route 6/15, design standards will be important to preserve the character of the landscape as viewed from both the lake and the public road.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

The land offers a number of features:

- Proximity to the ski area and the 15,000-acre Little Moose Public Reserve Land.
- Easterly and southerly exposure for good morning light and elevated views of Moosehead Lake.

#### **ISSUES TO ADDRESS**

The land is adjacent to the highway, so traffic noise may be an issue, especially to home sites nearest the highway. The predominant vegetation on the west side (adjacent to the highway) is deciduous, which will require a greater setback for privacy.

While land abuts Moosehead Lake, the railroad prevents direct access to the water.

The land is prominently visible from Burnham Pond. Development should be prohibited or strictly limited on the knoll on the southern end of the land.

#### **CONSIDERATIONS**

Development on this site could be accomplished with due consideration to the surrounding landscape.

- Site planning should analyze local viewsheds from Moosehead Lake, Route 6/15, and Burnham Pond to avoid sites that will appear on the ridgeline or would otherwise appear highly visible.
- Develop the home sites in smaller groups of 8-12 homes each, separated by grade changes and significant vegetation (300-500 feet in width) for wildlife corridors.
- Preserve the knoll at the southerly tip of the land as common open space to preserve the ridgeline and the views from Burnham Pond.



- Maintain a buffer zone of at least 250 feet from Moosehead Lake to filter runoff from the upper slopes and protect water quality.
- Maintain a buffer of at least 150 feet from Route 6/15 to maintain privacy and preserve the character of the road.
- Homes should be sited 250-300 feet apart, with an undisturbed buffer zone of at least 150 feet between each home.
- Locate the access off Route 6/15 opposite the road into Burnham Pond. If a second access is required (by fire codes or as a way to minimize the length of new roads), utilize existing woods roads if proper sight distance allows. No driveways should be allowed off Route 6/15.
- The road system should be laid out to follow the contours (8% maximum gradient) and minimize cuts and fills. Avoid long straight road sections. The use of flowing curves is recommended to add visual interest, reduce speed, and limit linear cuts.
- Establish and enforce design standards for all new homes and outbuildings. Standards should address site planning, topography and drainage, building forms and materials, colors and materials for roofs and siding, window placement, outbuildings and accessory structures, outdoor storage, lighting, and other physical elements of construction.
- Develop a vegetation management plan for individual lots to guide prospective purchasers as they clear home sites, open view corridors, and perform routine maintenance. Limit the amount of clearing for each lot by establishing strict building envelopes. The clearing plan should be based upon sound ecological principles, public safety considerations, and an awareness of regional visual quality.

## **HARFORDS HIGHLANDS AT MOOSE BAY**

### **Lakeside Community**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Plum Creek identified the area between Route 6/15, the railroad tracks, and Moose Bay as BMS-B1 (backlots) and BMS-S1 (shore lots) and projected that it would be used for an undetermined number of house lots. This 1,000 ± acre parcel is adjacent to Plum Creek's office and a Maine Forest Service Picnic Area. It is also directly adjacent to Harfords Point, a densely developed community of largely summer cottages on Moosehead Lake.

While the land does have some limitations, it seems to have great potential to support 100 ± upper to moderately priced home sites less than 2 miles from Greenville, Squaw Mountain Village Golf Course, Little Moose Public Reserve Land, and other nearby attractions.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

In addition to its proximity to Greenville, the land has many inherent beneficial characteristics:

- An interesting array of building opportunities, with many potential view lots oriented to Moosehead Lake and Moose Bay.
- An existing 2-mile gravel road, 20 feet in width, throughout the lower elevations could easily form the basis for a main access road. The road appears to be well designed, with consideration for topography, alignment, and sight distance. Several sections of the road are oriented toward Big Moose Mountain, four miles to the west.
- Several side roads have also been constructed that could be considered the start of frontage roads for new construction.

- The railroad has created a small pond at the northern end of the property that could be the focal point for a community recreation area.
- If the pond provides access to Moosehead Lake, a boat launch for the residents could be a very attractive amenity.

## ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Approximately 1/3 of the land, primarily on the south side, appears too steep for conventional single-family home development.

Development on the upper reaches of the hillside could create a highly visible series of notches on the ridgeline that could be seen throughout the southern portion of Moosehead Lake.

## CONSIDERATIONS

Development on this site could be accomplished with due consideration to the surrounding landscape.

- Site planning should take into account the viewsheds from Moosehead Lake, Route 6/15, and Moose Cove to avoid disturbing the ridgeline or putting development in highly visible locations.
- Maintain a buffer of at least 2,000 feet from Route 6/15 to maintain privacy and preserve the character of the road. All new development should be sited off secondary roads, leaving a buffer of 150 feet ± along the existing access road.
- Develop the home sites in smaller clusters of 4-8 homes, separated by grade changes and 300-500 feet of vegetation for wildlife and recreation corridors.
- Preserve the top of the hill as common open space to preserve the ridgeline and the views from Moosehead Lake.
- Site homes on the inlet in groups of 4-6, leaving 100-200 feet between groupings.

Preserve the shorefront as common open space for a community trail system.

- Homes should be sited 150-250 feet apart, with an undisturbed buffer zone of at least 100 feet between each.
- The road system should be laid out to follow the contours (8% maximum gradient) and minimize cuts and fills. Avoid long straight road sections. The use of flowing curves is recommended to add visual interest, reduce speed, and limit linear cuts.
- Establish strict design standards for all new structures. Standards should address site planning, topography and drainage, building forms and materials, colors and materials for roofs and siding, window placement, outbuildings and accessory structures, outdoor storage, lighting, and other physical elements of construction.
- Develop a vegetation management plan for individual lots to guide prospective purchasers as they clear home sites, open view corridors, and perform routine maintenance. Limit the amount of clearing for each lot by establishing strict building envelopes. The clearing plan should be based upon sound ecological principles, public safety considerations, and an awareness of regional visual quality.

## BIG WILSON STREAM Mountain View Lots

### OVERVIEW

According to the Greenville Tax Maps, Plum Creek owns over 8,000 acres of land in the southerly part of the community. While most of this land may be best suited for timber production (based upon its visual quality, abundance of wetlands, and lack of access), there are several areas southeast of Lower Wilson Pond and south west of Rum Pond that may be suitable for primary and second home development.



These sites are adjacent to or near the existing Rum Ridge development and are easily accessed by the K.I. (Katahdin Ironworks) Road. They comprise approximately 450 acres and include:

- 85 ± acres on the north side of K.I. Road, adjacent to the existing Rum Ridge development.
- 150 ± acres between Big Wilson Stream, the existing Rum Ridge development, and Secret Pond, on the south side of the K.I. Road.
- 35 ± acres on a knoll east of Secret Pond, on the south side of K.I. Road.
- 180 ± acres on the south side of K.I. Road, south of Rum Pond.

With proper planning and phasing, between 100 and 200 homes in various price ranges could be accommodated within these areas.

## OPPORTUNITIES

The land is a 12 minute drive to downtown Greenville and within two miles of the Greenville Airport.

The area is close to many recreational/scenic areas, including Little Wilson Pond public boat launch, Rum Pond, Secret Pond, Salmon Pond, Rum Mountain, and Big Wilson Stream. These

areas provide opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, fishing (including fishing in remote areas), hunting, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling.

Secret Pond, Salmon Pond, and Rum Pond are managed by Inland Fisheries & Wildlife under special regulations to produce better than average size fish. Salmon Pond is catch and release only. Rum Pond (245 acres) has been rated as Outstanding for Fisheries by the LURC Wildland Lake Assessment. Secret Pond (7 acres) has been rated as Significant by the Wildland Lake Assessment for Fisheries. The pond is catch-and-release only for fish greater than 12 inches.

Big Wilson Stream flows out of Lower Wilson Pond, over two dams, and then meanders for 3/4 mile until it leaves Plum Creek's property.

Recent cutting operations have opened dramatic views of the Big Moose and Little Moose Mountain ranges 9 miles to the west.

## ISSUES TO ADDRESS

The Beginning with Habitat Map<sup>7</sup> for Greenville indicates that the land surrounding Salmon Pond and Mud Pond, and a large wetland south of Grenell Pond, are considered Significant Wildlife Habitat for Waterfowl/Wading Birds. Approximately 25 % of the total land area is classified as High Value Forest Habitat, with a concentration around Rum Pond and the smaller streams that drain the area.

The IF&W boat launch at Little Wilson Pond has limited space for trailers and may become crowded with this amount of development.

Most of the soils in this part of Greenville are described as having 'severe limitations' for septic absorption fields due to a number of factors: season wetness, slow percolation rates, perched water tables, depth to ledge, and boulders at the surface. However, these same soils are found

near some of the more developed lakes, e.g., at Lower Wilson Pond.

Significant portions of some of these areas have been cut over during the past decade and are just starting to regenerate. Development would have to be phased to allow tree cover to become more established in some areas. (On the other hand, the open landscape provides dramatic views to Little and Big Moose Mountain ranges to the west.)

## CONSIDERATIONS

With coordinated planning and an awareness of natural/scenic resource issues, this area should be able to be developed into a successful community. The following guidelines are proposed as a guide to future planning:

- Any development in this area should start with a thorough natural resources inventory to determine the carrying capacity of the landscape relative to sewage disposal, impacts on native flora and fauna, traffic, existing land uses, buffer requirements, etc.
- Limit the number of new roads off the K.I. Road. Where possible use existing haul roads.
- Maintain a suitable buffer between the K.I. Road and new home sites. Minimum distances will be a function of the size and condition of existing vegetation.
- Investigate the need for additional boat-trailer parking to alleviate potential crowding at the Little Wilson Pond boat launch. There should be ample opportunity to provide this space within a few minutes walk of the launch.
- Identify future harvesting operations and preserve a suitable buffer to avoid potential conflicts with new homes and common open space areas.
- Each of the identified sites should be treated as a separate village or community in terms of natural resource inventories, planning goals, distances between structures, etc. For example, the homes closest to Big Wilson Stream should be sited with respect to preserving the natural condition of the visual corridor along the stream and preventing soil erosion, leaving as much of the existing forest intact as possible. On the other hand, homes on the north side of the K.I. Road may be designed around common greens, or wildlife openings, to maintain views to the westerly mountains and provide open space for active recreation.
- Avoid disturbing the significant wildlife habitat and the watershed of Secret Pond, Salmon Pond, or Grenell Pond with roads, homes, or other types of development. Do not include any of the watershed within the houselots that may be offered for sale.
- Improvements to these remote ponds should be limited to trail improvements aimed at reducing sedimentation and erosion that could degrade water quality. Maintain boat access as carry-in only.
- New roads should be laid out to follow the contours (8% maximum gradient) and minimize cuts and fills. Avoid long straight road sections. The use of flowing curves is recommended to add visual interest and keep travel speed to a reasonable rate.
- Establish and enforce design standards for all construction, addressing site planning, topography and drainage, building forms and materials, colors and materials for roofs and siding, window placement, outbuildings and accessory structures, outdoor storage, lighting, and other physical elements of construction. The emphasis should be on sustainable buildings that fit into the Moosehead vernacular and naturalized landscapes that demand minimal maintenance.
- Common open space surrounding the development clusters should be managed

to prohibit commercial timber harvesting. Establish permanent no-cut zones around trail systems to preserve the scenic value of the new homes, maintain wildlife corridors, and protect water quality.

- Develop a vegetation management plan for individual lots to guide prospective purchasers as they clear home sites, open view corridors, and perform routine maintenance. Limit the amount of clearing for each lot by establishing strict building envelopes. The clearing plan should be based upon sound ecological principles, public safety considerations, and an awareness of regional visual quality.

## **SQUAW MOUNTAIN SKI AREA**

### **Revitalized Resort**

#### **OVERVIEW**

While the existing Squaw Mountain Ski Area is not owned by Plum Creek, it does represent one of the most significant recreational resources in the Greenville/Moosehead Lake area. With the development of the Maine Woods Lodge and the home sites on Burnham Pond, Burnham East, and Harfords Highlands, there should be added incentive to revitalize the mountain into a world-class ski area.

Although it is often forgotten because of its remote location, the locals and regulars at the ski area have no complaints about the uncrowded trails and lifts. The mountain has a diverse variety of terrain and is split into 2 major areas: the upper and lower mountains (or double and triple chair areas) The noted trail designer Sel Hanna once said, “Of all the 1,000 ski trails and 300 ski areas I have designed, the Penobscot Trail at Big Squaw Mountain is by far the most scenic.”<sup>8</sup>

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- The revitalized ski area could be the cornerstone of a long-range plan for the Moosehead Lake region. The area is easily accessible from Greenville.
- The views are a spectacular combination of mountains and lakes unparalleled in Maine ski country.
- Rudimentary infrastructure exists in the form of access roads, a base lodge, a 52-room hotel, trails, two chair lifts, electricity, snowmaking on 70 % of the mountain, a sewage disposal pond, etc. The infrastructure would have to be evaluated to assess the capacity to absorb additional development.
- The lower slopes of the mountain appear to be suitable for higher density development.
- Connections could easily be made to regional recreation trail systems.
- The land abuts the 15,000-acre Little Moose Public Reserve Land, which could add to the recreational value of the ski area.

#### **ISSUES TO ADDRESS**

- The land that makes up the ski area is privately held. The current owner has not brought forth any substantial plans for long-term improvements.
- Soils in the vicinity of Mountain View Pond are hydric, according to the county soils map. Substantial amount of soils testing will be required to understand its ability to be used for septic systems, absorption rates, wetland characteristics, etc.

#### **CONSIDERATIONS**

- Recognize the need for and develop a long-range development plan, stressing sound land-use planning and sympathetic site design.

- Any further development on the mountain should start with a thorough natural resources inventory to determine the carrying capacity of the property relative to sewage disposal, impacts on native flora and fauna, traffic, existing land uses, etc.
- With proper planning, there may be opportunities to greatly increase the density of development at the base of the mountain. It is not inconceivable that several hundred units of housing could be added (in the form of condominiums, home sites, expanded hotel, inn, etc.) as a way to generate operating and investment capital.
- The design of all structures should help create a new image for the mountain, one that takes a fresh look at the styles that are commonly found in the area. New construction should be examples of ‘green’ architecture and site planning (site selection, architectural design, building orientation, preservation of habitats, buffer zones, stormwater management, material selection).
- Maintain a buffer zone of at least 250 feet from streams and 100 feet from drainage channels to filter runoff from the upper slopes and protect water quality.
- Consider re-aligning the access road by introducing sweeping curves to make the road more attractive and create a more memorable arrival experience.
- Maintain a buffer of at least 150 feet from the access road to preserve its character.

- <sup>1</sup> Arendt, Randall. Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Ordinances. Natural Lands Trust, American Planning Association, American Society of Landscape Architects. Island Press. 1999.
- <sup>2</sup> This may present an opportunity to create a rural village, as described in The Great American Neighborhood – A Guide to Livable Design, by Terrence J. DeWan & Associates and Kent Associates for the Maine State Planning Office and GrowSmart Maine, June, 2004.
- <sup>3</sup> The Nature Conservancy. Rapid Assessment of Conservancy Priorities with the Plum Creek Resource Plan, Moosehead Lake Region. January 2006.
- <sup>4</sup> The Nature Conservancy. Conservation Priorities in Plum Creek Resource Plan Area Map. Oct 27, 2005.
- <sup>5</sup> This is an uncommon fern that is imperiled in Maine because of rarity and vulnerability to further decline. MeDOC, Natural Areas Program. Rare Plant Fact Sheet on *Dryopteris fragrans*, Fragrant Cliff Wood-fern.
- <sup>6</sup> Available at [http://www.nps.gov/dsc/d\\_publications/d\\_1\\_gpsd.htm](http://www.nps.gov/dsc/d_publications/d_1_gpsd.htm)
- <sup>7</sup> The Beginning with Habitat program is a cooperative, non-regulatory effort between state and federal agencies, conservation groups, and regional governments in Maine. The program provides towns and land trusts with the best available information on rare plants and animals, important habitats, riparian areas, and undeveloped habitat blocks in the form of maps depicting habitats of statewide and national significance.
- <sup>8</sup> Description of Squaw Mountain Ski Resort from [Alpinezone.com](http://Alpinezone.com).

*“Plum Creek development should be sited closer to or between the towns of Rockwood and Greenville, avoiding backcountry sprawl and creating better revenue opportunities for the gateway communities. People are well aware that this community needs economic vitality and opportunity, but the voices we hear are clear that sacrificing the region’s unique character is too great a sacrifice.”*

- Mildred Kennedy, Greenville

*“I want my grandchildren to have the opportunity to know the beauty of wilderness...an ever decreasing resource on our planet.”*

- Jane Dineen Panek, Palermo

*“I have hunted and fished in the Moosehead Lake region ever since 1962. I believe Plum Creek’s plan will destroy all that I cherish.”*

- John R. Vinton, Phippsburg

*“Our family has long enjoyed camping and hiking in these woods. Please don’t convert this special area into a giant suburbia, unavailable and unaffordable to Maine families. We need this area to support wildlife and simple human recreation.”*

- Betty Beach, Wilton

*“The natural beauty of the area cannot be duplicated; it is a treasure that I pray my grandchildren will have the opportunity to appreciate. Some things are worth fighting for. As we farmers have so often said, ‘Asphalt is the last crop.’”*

- Mary M. Briggs, Turner



