

# What Are Public Agencies Saying About Plum Creek's Development Proposal?

On August 31, 2007 seven public agencies submitted comments to LURC about the threat to wildlife, water quality and traditional public access, posed by Plum Creek's massive development proposal for the Moosehead region.

## **Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife**

"There will be a decline in the quality of the fishing experience for anglers in the Moosehead Lake Region." (p 20)

"...the magnitude of increase in the number of visitors to the area projected by Plum Creek's recreation study will be excessive on many waters in the Moosehead Lake Region." (p. 21)

"... will forever change the characteristics of the region. We are not aware of mitigation or conservation measures that can fully offset the permanent changes that will result from the full build-out of a proposal of this magnitude." (p.23)

## **Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands**

"[Plum Creek's roads and lands] could be gated for no vehicular access, or fee-based vehicular or pedestrian access"

"The applicant appears to concede a likely clear impact beyond the capacity of existing recreation resources such as Lily Bay State Park" (p.12)

"Plum Creek has clearly placed the burden for some recreational mitigation on the taxpayers." (p. 13)

"BPL is skeptical that the proposed hiking trail easements will translate into developed hiking trails for calculation of recreational benefit/offset/mitigation. We have not yet seen any demonstration of financial capacity for trail development by those involved." (p.13)

"BPL is disinclined to agree to any easement which does not meet recent recreation/access practices on BPL easements, and urges LURC to mirror this approach. The current Plum Creek proposal does not yet meet that standard."

"LURC and the public should be aware that Plum Creek concept plan would allow an expansion of gated areas beyond current practice on Plum Creek lands." (p.5)

"Plum Creek's concept plan proposes a complex mix of permissions and assurances, which...generally present risks to current patterns of free public access." (p.5)

"Generally BPL suggests that the Petition for Rezoning misleads or significantly overstates re 'ensured' 'traditional' public access for recreation and 'all' traditional uses. At the most general level, the Plum Creek proposal reserves the rights (or does not prohibit actions) for gates & fees on lands & roads, and provides for narrow enumerated permissions for general public access." (p.6)

Public expectations should also be clear that there is no right of camping." (p.11)

## **US Fish & Wildlife Service**

"The Concept Plan falls short of being at least as protective for replacing bald eagles and loon habitat." (p. 29)

"The Concept Plan is short of being at least as protective for replacing Canada lynx habitat." (p.30)

"The Concept Plan falls short of being at least as protective for replacing habitat for migratory birds of management concern." (p. 31)

“We advise LURC that the provisions in Balanced and Legacy easements, as currently written, are not sufficient to assure that a “balance” has been achieved between development and conservation.” (p. 42)

“...the Plum Creek Concept plan will potentially result in the loss of 21,914 acres of wildlife habitat, an unknown acreage of wetlands and vernal pools, and 33.5 miles of currently undeveloped shoreline habitat. An unknown number of new public boat launches and marinas, utility line corridors, and roads will extend this impact to a larger landscape. Traffic coming to and from the developments and to other destinations within the greater Moosehead Lake area will further broaden impacts to wildlife. The highest priority to LURC should be to avoid as many of these “undue adverse impacts” as possible.

“Eliminate some development envelopes where undue adverse impacts to wildlife or wetlands occur. These areas should be placed in the Balanced Conservation easement.

Lily Bay Highlands

Lily Bay Mountain

Long Pond development units on north shore of the Lake” (Page 22 & 23)

### **Maine Department of Environmental Protection**

“...specifying a 30 year lock on existing regulations creates a large degree of uncertainty with regard to future environmental and natural resource values and needs. We do not support such a stipulation.” (p.2)

“...there is the real potential that these small watersheds will not be able to handle the amount of development proposed and continue to attain the Class A standard, even if very strict stormwater management and conservation measures are taken.” (p. 7)

### **Maine Forest Service**

“...it does not appear that either the easement or the management plan proposed by Plum Creek, are consistent with the standards of the Land for Maine’s Future Board, or the Forest Legacy Program.” (p. 3)

“...the management plan does not specify that the habitats of rare species will be conserved, nor does it deal with species of state rather than global significance.” (p.3)

### **United States Environmental Protection Agency**

“Development of the scope and magnitude proposed in the Plum Creek Concept Plan has significant potential to impact surface water quality in Moosehead Lake and tributary streams in its watershed.” (p.2)

“...further contraction in the number of areas to be developed to place them closer to existing development and services would further reduce environmental impacts. Specifically, the Lily Bay and Long Pond sites may be candidates for reconsideration, since they are distant from development centers, and will generate more vehicle miles traveled, and potentially more water quality impacts and habitat fragmentation than development located in the Greenville-Rockwood corridor”. (p. 5)

“...we are surprised at the number of changes that Plum Creek proposes to LURC’s model conservation easement...and we recommend that LURC’s model conservation easement not be replaced with this alternate language.” (p.6)

### **Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources**

(Of Big Moose Mountain Resort): “Over 50% of this area has soils that are unsuitable or generally unsuitable for development. Of the better soils, only 1.8 percent are considered generally suitable.” (p.6)

(Of Lily Bay Mountain Resort): “As for the smaller part, located to the east on a hilltop, the soils are not very good for the most part and access does not appear to be good enough to justify rezoning it.” (p. 8)