

Maine Environment

Natural Resources Council of Maine



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Saving Moosehead: What Comes Next

by Catherine Schmitt

After three years of preparation, the rezoning proposal for the Moosehead Lake region, proposed by Seattle-based Plum Creek, is finally under official consideration by the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC). In December and January, public hearings were held in Greenville (twice), Augusta, and Portland (see page 4). Experts have provided testimony, letters have been sent, and editorials have appeared in newspapers across Maine. In December and January, NRCM and other interveners went before LURC, questioning and cross-examining witnesses—and presenting our own expert witnesses—during the “party” session hearings. As an intervener in the rezoning petition, NRCM submitted expert testimony about the damaging impacts of the plan and also posed questions about these concerns directly to Plum Creek officials during the hearings.

What comes next?

“Under a normal situation, Plum Creek would submit

an application, testimony would be submitted, hearings would be held, intervening parties would submit post-hearing briefs, the public record would close, and then LURC would vote up or down on the application,” says NRCM North Woods Project Director Cathy Johnson. “But Plum Creek’s application has been anything but

normal. This is the largest development proposal LURC has ever faced, and Plum Creek’s application keeps changing.”

Plum Creek modified its plan twice over the last few years in response to criticism and strong public outcry, but none of the changes thus far have addressed what NRCM and many opponents consider the fundamental problem: too much development, much of it in areas that are inappropriate for development.

The hearings have revealed a broad range of additional and continuing issues with the current plan, says Johnson. As a result, it seems likely that the company will want to make more changes. “However, it

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Moosehead Lake

“It is clear that continuing public pressure is the only thing that will move Plum Creek to make the changes necessary..”

—Cathy Johnson, North Woods Project Director



New website informs consumers about toxic toys.

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Stetson Wind Project Wins Approval

Maine’s Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) unanimously approved in January the 57-megawatt Stetson Wind Project in Washington County, proposed by UPC Wind. NRCM came out strongly in favor of the project early on. “This is an appropriately sited wind project that will have minimal environmental impacts and will yield real economic gain for Washington County,” says NRCM Clean Energy Director Dylan Voorhees.

Stetson will produce approximately 150 million kilowatt-hours of clean electricity annually, which is enough to power about 27,500 homes per year. The same amount of electricity produced from oil and gas would emit 107,500 metric tons of pollutants. The Stetson Wind Project will emit no pollutants and no global warming gasses.

In addition to clean, renewable energy, Stetson will create hundreds of employment opportunities during the design, engineering, and construction of the facility, along with the potential for local employment on road, foundation, and electrical line construction.

Find out more about wind projects in Maine by visiting our website at [/www.nrcm.org/wind_projects_in_maine.asp](http://www.nrcm.org/wind_projects_in_maine.asp).




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