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PRESS RELEASE

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40,000 Acres of Land East of Baxter Opens for Hunting *Recreational Activities Expand on More Than 100,000 Acres with Katahdin Woods & Waters Project*

SHIN POND – More than 100,000 acres of land east of Baxter State Park is being opened for expanded recreational access beginning this week.

Called Katahdin Woods & Waters, the project by Elliotsville Plantation Inc. will open more than 40,000 acres of privately held land for hunting while expanding access and recreation opportunities on an additional 60,000 acres.

“With today’s announcement, we are making good on our commitments to expand public access and ensure that these recreational activities are allowed from now on. For more than a year, I’ve been meeting with people all over the state – and particularly people in Millinocket, East Millinocket, Medway, Patten, Sherman, Shin Pond, Stacyville and Matagamom – and talking about the potential for a national park and national recreation area east of Baxter State Park,” said Lucas St. Clair, the president of the board for EPI. “What I’ve heard is that people want to protect access for activities like snowmobiling, hunting and fishing, and they want the additional economic activity that a national park would bring.”

No specific plan exists for the new national park and adjacent national recreation area, but the concept under discussion with local residents, businesses and stakeholders statewide would be for a national park of up to 75,000 acres west of the East Branch of the Penobscot River for fishing, hiking, paddling, wildlife watching and scenic views, and a national recreation area roughly the same size on the east side of the river for those activities plus snowmobiling, hunting and other traditional outdoors activities. EPI’s concept differs substantially from and has nothing to do with a proposal decades ago by others for a 3.2-million acre national park.

Beginning this week, all “No Hunting” signs will be taken down on about 40,000 acres of EPI land east of the East Branch of the Penobscot River near Shin Pond, Patten and Stacyville and on lands to the southwest of Baxter State Park between Greenville, Monson and Brownville Junction.

New access for other types of recreation is being opened on the 60,000 acres of EPI land between Baxter State Park and the East Branch of the Penobscot. A series of existing logging roads have been improved and connected to form an 18-mile loop road that will be open for public access. The road

provides scenic views of Millinocket Lake and Mount Katahdin and the opportunity for wildlife viewing, including moose. Currently, the road is open to four-wheel drive vehicles, but upgrades are ongoing.

In conjunction with the Patten ATV Club, a significant ATV trail near Shin Pond and Patten has also been reopened, and EPI is working closely with local snowmobile clubs to guarantee permanent access to critical snowmobile trails that connect East Millinocket, Millinocket, Patten, Shin Pond and Matagamon.

In addition, the Katahdin Woods & Waters project includes an ambassadors program with Mark and Susan Adams providing information to visitors from Lunksoos Camps while also making upgrades to recreational opportunities on the property, including the installation of signage and clearing new hiking trails.

Existing logging roads that crisscross the property are suitable for wilderness hiking and mountain biking.

“We invite people to come and enjoy the land,” St. Clair said. “This is a special place, with amazing recreational opportunities. The best way for people to see the potential is to visit for themselves and see all that the Katahdin Woods & Waters has to offer.”

Earlier this year, EPI conducted a harvest of more than 200 acres of timber to improve habitat for ruffed grouse. Additional plans include managing the property for white tail deer habitat.

“This land includes world-class hunting and fishing opportunities, which is why we are committed to managing the land to support important game animals,” St. Clair said.

A recent [economic study](#) found that similar areas elsewhere in the United States with national parks and national recreation areas have higher personal income and more jobs than the Katahdin region.

A new website, www.katahdinwoodsandwaters.org, is under construction and will provide information about recreational opportunities in the region and will provide updates on the project. It will also accept feedback from visitors or others interested in the idea of a national park and national recreation area.

Elliotsville Plantation Inc. was established in 2002 as a private operating foundation for the acquisition and conservation of land and the preservation of open space for the benefit of the public and the conduct of educational and stewardship programs. The foundation now manages more than 100,000 acres of wild forest and coastal lands in northern, north-central and mid-coast Maine.

For reporters interested in additional comment, the following regional leaders are available:

- Matt Polstein, New England Outdoor Center, Millinocket, 207-723-8475;
- Don Kleiner, executive director, Maine Professional Guides Association, 207-485-1573;
- Rick LeVasseur, president, Jo Mary Riders Snowmobile Club and the chair of the Maine Snowmobile Trail Fund Advisory Council, 207-723-5045;
- Terry Hill, Shin Pond Village, 207-528-2900;
- Peter Ellis, Patten IGA, 207-694-1721.

There will be a media availability to see parts of land on Wednesday, Sept. 11. Interested media are asked to RSVP for directions and a schedule for the day.

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Katahdin Woods & Water: Highlights of Expanded Access

Bounded on the west by Baxter State Park with the East Branch of the Penobscot River running through its heart, the area includes amazing opportunities for traditional outdoor activities. Whether it is canoeing and fishing the many rivers, streams and ponds, hiking or mountain biking the miles of trails or riding a snowmobile deep into the heart of the Maine woods, Katahdin Woods & Waters is a special place for everyone to enjoy.

- 40,000 acres of land are open for hunting, including deer, moose, ruffed grouse, pheasant, turkey, and other species common to the area.
- Habitat is managed to encourage ruffed grouse and white tail deer.
- A 18-mile loop road is open on land north of Millinocket Lake and east of Baxter State Park (currently four-wheel drive only).
- Trails and roads are marked with new signage.
- Working with the Patten ATV Club, an ATV trail near Patten and Shin Pond is open.
- Lunksoos Camps is staffed by Mark and Susan Adams, recreation managers for the property, who are upgrading recreational opportunities and providing information to visitors.
- Efforts continue to permanently protect critical snowmobile trails in the area.
- A new website, www.katahdinwoodsandwaters.org, is under construction and will provide information about recreational opportunities in the region and updates on the project. It will also accept feedback from visitors or others interested in the idea of a national park and national recreation area.

For more information on recreational opportunities, contact Mark and Susan Adams, East Branch Recreation Managers at lunksoos@gmail.com.