

Comments of Ken Olson
Retired President and CEO of Friends of Acadia
Governor's Roundtable on Maine People and the Environment¹
Fort Knox Room, Augusta Civic Center
Augusta, Maine
January 20, 2011

Thank you, Governor LePage, for the opportunity to speak about Acadia National Park, Maine's most visited destination.

I'm Ken Olson, retired president of Friends of Acadia, which has granted \$15 million to the park and communities² and developed \$16 million in private endowments to benefit Maine forever.³

Three bullet points:

- **One.** Acadia had 2.5 million visits last year.⁴ The visitors spent \$156 million,⁵ which paid for 3,000 Maine jobs.⁶
- **Two.** Acadia's Island Explorer bus system that serves private hotels, shops, and restaurants, carried 400,000 people.⁷ We think of it as a delivery device that carries money from the park to these businesses.
- **Three.** Maine's commercial timberlands produce \$370 per acre per year in direct and indirect benefits.⁸ Acadia produces \$3,400 per acre.⁹

Proper resource extraction is hugely positive. It's equally true that remarkable places, comprehensively protected, can themselves create and help sustain markets and capitalism.

Finally, Governor, the president of Friends of Acadia, Marla O'Byrne, and the superintendent of Acadia National Park, Sheridan Steele, invite you and your family to visit this summer—to enjoy Acadia's natural splendor and see firsthand its phenomenal economic power.

Thank you.

Endnotes

¹ Speakers were asked to keep remarks to ninety seconds. Documentation is provided here for the record.

² Since 1995. Rounded. Diana McDowell, Director of Finance and Administration, Friends of Acadia, personal communication, January 2011.

³ Plus \$3 million (approx.) in other investments and accounts. *Ibid.*

⁴ John T. Kelly, Park Planner, Acadia National Park, personal communication, January 2011.

⁵ In 2008. Rounded from estimated actual of 3,130 jobs not counting 211 National Park Service jobs, which brings total jobs to 3,340. "National Park Visitor Spending and Payroll Impacts 2008," Daniel

J. Stynes, Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies, Michigan State University, October 2009.

⁶ In 2008. Rounded from estimated actual of \$155,608,000 in “non-local visitor spending” and not counting \$5,458,000 in National Park Service payroll spending, which makes total spending of \$161,066,000. *Ibid.*

⁷ In 2010. Rounded from actual of 412,000 passengers. Len Bobinchock, Deputy Superintendent, Acadia National Park, personal communication, January 2011.

⁸ In 2000. Rounded from actual of \$368. *The Economic Importance of Maine’s Forests*, North East State Foresters Association, March 2001, p.1. Maine’s commercial forest totaled 17.7 million acres.

⁹ In 2000. Rounded. Derived using figures from “Money Generation Model 2000” Daniel Stynes and Dennis Propst, Department of Park, Recreation & Tourism Resources, Michigan State University, 2001. www.prr.msu.edu/mgm2/. Speaker assumed Acadia National Park has approximately 45,000 acres of land and conservation easements.