Seattle-based Plum Creek's massive plan for development in the Moosehead Lake region will soon be the subject of public hearings and a decision by the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC). Although Plum Creek's development proposal has been the subject of considerable debate for nearly three years, only now is it becoming clear just how drastically this plan could forever change the Moosehead Lake region, one of Maine's most treasured places. Plum Creek bought this land in 1998 for less than $200 per acre because it was zoned for forestry and backcountry recreation. Now the company wants the zoning rules changed to allow for the largest development ever proposed in Maine. If you care about protecting Moosehead Lake, then now is the time to attend a hearing or write to LURC. Please take a moment to learn about what Plum Creek proposes to do to the Moosehead Lake region.

The Lure of Moosehead
Spectacular views of unbroken forested landscapes. The excitement of showing your child his or her first moose. Fishing for native wild brook trout. The call of loons in the moonlight. Fresh air. Quiet waters. A night sky filled with stars. This is Moosehead Lake, a place like no other. But if Plum Creek, a Seattle-based real estate development corporation, gets what it wants, the qualities that make Moosehead special would be lost to massive development.

The mark Plum Creek would leave includes 975 house lots, an 800-unit resort at Moose Mountain, a 250-unit resort at Lily Bay, and much more. It could include supermarkets, gas stations, beauty parlors, and other trappings and traffic of sprawling developments of Anyplace, USA. Add in the anticipated “spin-off” subdivisions that the rezoning would allow, and the total number of dwelling units climbs to more than 2,700.

“This is the largest single development proposal in Maine's history," says Brownie Carson, executive director of the Natural Resources Council of Maine. "Seattle-based Plum Creek will come and go, but the people of Maine will live with the decisions made in this rezoning process forever. We cannot sit idly by and allow the company to destroy what people love about Maine's beautiful Moosehead region.

“We urge everyone who enjoys the Moosehead region, and the qualities that make Maine special, to seriously consider the magnitude of impacts from a massive proposal like Plum Creek's," says Carson. "The area's unique natural resources—pristine waters, beautiful mountains, unusual wildlife—have been the heart of tourism for the Moosehead region for over a century. That is what is at stake."

NRCM has been making the case that the Plum Creek plan is not the Moosehead region's only choice. "Maine has one chance to get it right, and we believe that Plum Creek's plan is not it," says Cathy Johnson, NRCM's North Woods project director. "There is a better way, one that protects the qualities that make Moosehead so special."

A recent analysis by international sustainable tourism expert Costas Christ of Solimar International agrees. Christ believes that the Moosehead region is ripe for sustainable tourism, but his research findings determined that Plum Creek's proposal is inconsistent with sustainable tourism because it is out of scale for the region and is in locations that would spoil the landscape. It also would be marketed to the super-rich, and would destroy the key attractions—backcountry wilderness experiences, abundant wildlife, traditional character of local communities, and the sense of place—that residents and visitors alike treasure.

Lily Bay: From Family Campground to Exclusive Playground?
To understand the effects of Plum Creek's proposed development, one need look no further than Lily Bay State Park, a popular destination for wildlife-watching, hiking, swimming, and canoeing. People visit Lily Bay for its unspoiled views of the natural surroundings and for peace and quiet in an extraordinary yet uncrowded place. "Lily Bay State Park is a place
where anyone of any financial means can go and have a beautiful, peaceful experience in the out-of-doors,” says Johnson.

Plum Creek’s proposed resort would result in an estimated 10,806 more people using the lake’s eastern shore in the summer. Solimar International surveyed visitors, residents, and business owners in Lily Bay, Greenville, Rockwood, and surrounding areas. Eighty-one percent of the people surveyed stated that they would be less likely to return to Moosehead if the Plum Creek project goes forward.

“Lily Bay Resort and its subdivisions would push the wilderness base for primitive outdoor experiences further to the north, isolating Greenville economically, with sprawl likely to follow,” wrote Christ in his pre-hearing testimony submitted to the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC), which is reviewing Plum Creek’s application.

Loss of Traditional Maine Jobs

The loss of accessible wilderness close to Greenville is a major concern of the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization, according to co-president Kevin Slater. Slater notes that traditional users of Moosehead’s woods and waters—from paddlers on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail to Outward Bound students on the East Outlet—will have a diminished wilderness experience with the recreational capacity of some areas becomes overwhelmed. Maine guides and fishermen have expressed concern about the project’s effects on the region’s water quality and world-renowned brook trout and landlocked salmon fisheries.

Lani Cochrane, who with her husband operates the oldest continuously running guide service in Maine, worries that her daughter will not be able to continue the family business if the Plum Creek concept plan is approved.

“The guides will not see this benefit as the river will be overrun with people and development,” she says.

Maine’s Unique Wildlife at Risk

With houses and resorts come additional roads, driveways, lights, powerlines, and residential services such waste disposal. Plum Creek wants to pave most of the roads in the development areas, and Thomas Errico of Wilbur Smith Associates estimates that Plum Creek’s plan will dramatically increase traffic on 550 miles of road. This would prove harmful for the wildlife that need the area to survive.

Many animals of the North Woods require large areas of unfragmented habitat, including the federally threatened Canada lynx. Maine is the only place in the eastern U.S. with a Canada lynx population. Margaret Struthacker, a biologist with the National Wildlife Federation, calculated that roads and traffic created by Plum Creek’s plan will result in the deaths of between 10 and 17 lynx every year. In their comments to LURC, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said, “The [Lily Bay] development envelope is located in the middle of a large block of high quality lynx habitat in the Kokadjo area... This development, more than others, extends development and sprawl-like impacts into areas occupied by lynx.”

“Once It’s Gone, It’s Gone Forever”

“We have reason to be seriously concerned about what we know and don’t know about Plum Creek’s plans,” says NRCM’s Johnson. “There is no way to know right now how the residences and resorts would be designed, built, and serviced.” And since Plum Creek is not proposing any development for its 8,000 acres in Greenville, the town will not benefit from property tax payments that would have helped cover the costs of infrastructure and services.

Johnson believes that approval of Plum Creek’s plan would set a precedent for the other half a million acres owned by Plum Creek, as well as for the entire 10 million acres of Maine forest lands—and the other six large landowners are watching. “Maine’s North Woods are at the tipping point,” she says. “If sprawling development is allowed to destroy the character of Moosehead, a place that is known and loved by people across the state and beyond, then it could happen anywhere.”

“People who have never been to Moosehead, including many Mainers, may have a hard time comprehending all of what’s at stake. But if Plum Creek’s development is approved, says Johnson, they—and their children and grandchildren—will never get the chance to experience why Moosehead is so widely considered a state and national treasure.

“This is our heritage, a special place we have inherited from those who came before us, and once it’s gone, it’s gone forever,” says Executive Director Carson. “We owe it to future generations to speak out against Plum Creek’s development plans and for the protection of Moosehead.”
Learn more about Plum Creek's harmful plan at nrcm.org

**Here’s some of what you’ll find:**

The facts & the fine print: details Plum Creek doesn’t want you to know.
http://www.nrcm.org/plumcreekfacts.asp

A virtual trip to Moosehead: see moose, deer, and Moosehead’s spectacular beauty by watching our new slide show!
http://www.nrcm.org/moosehead_slideshow.asp

“The Ballad of Moosehead Lake,” written by singer/songwriter David Dodson and performed by David and other local musicians:
http://www.nrcm.org/moosehead_song.asp

“Moosehead Views”—Moosehead area residents share their thoughts about Plum Creek’s development proposal.
http://www.nrcm.org/moosehead_videos.asp

NRCM’s popular 2-minute flash movie, “Big Moosetake”—you’ll want to share it with family and friends!
http://www.nrcm.org/issue_plumcreek_moosetake.asp

For more Plum Creek By the Numbers, visit www.nrcm.org.

Plum Creek Fined for Forestry Violations

When Seattle-based Plum Creek first purchased its forestland in 1998 for less than $200 per acre, the company claimed it would practice sustainable forestry and be a good corporate citizen of Maine. Since then, in follow-up from complaints from loggers, hunters, Maine guides, and property owners, NRCM used Maine’s Freedom of Access Act to obtain state agency documents. They revealed a flagrant pattern of disregard by Plum Creek for Maine’s forestry laws:

- Plum Creek ignored appeals by Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife biologists to stop destroying habitat needed by deer for shelter and food in the winter.
- Violated water protection laws.
- Repeatedly violated the Maine Forestry Practices Act and was fined $57,000—the largest fine in Maine history.

Plum Creek’s track record speaks for itself. To learn more about Plum Creek’s abuse of Maine forests and wildlife habitat, request a copy of NRCM’s deeryard report by calling (800) 287-2345 or email nrcm@nrcm.org. Also online at http://www.nrcm.org/pc_foaa_report.asp.

Plum Creek's Development Threatens Rare Canada Lynx

Plum Creek's development would result in 10 to 17 Canada lynx deaths each year and destroy critical lynx habitat, according to calculations by National Wildlife Federation biologists.

Plum Creek By the Numbers

- Plum Creek’s net worth: $4.8 billion (Hoovers, 2005)
- Amount of corporate income tax Plum Creek pays to the state of Maine: $0
- Amount of corporate income tax Plum Creek pays to the federal government: $0
- Price Plum Creek paid for land in proposed Moosehead development: $200/acre
- Price Plum Creek would likely receive on sale of house lots: $200,000 and up for shorefront lots
- Amount Plum Creek was fined for violations of laws protecting forests: $57,000, the largest in Maine history

Who Loves Moosehead’s Lily Bay?

In 2006, Lily Bay State Park, in the heart of the Moosehead region, was visited by folks from:

- all 16 Maine counties;
- 229 different Maine towns;
- 24 different states, including Arizona, Wisconsin, Tennessee, California, Michigan, Alabama, and New Mexico; and
- the U.S., Canada, and even Germany!
Moosehead Voices

Send your concerns about Plum Creek’s development proposal to the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC), ATTN: Catherine Carroll, 22 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333, LURC@maine.gov. Here’s what people from the Moosehead region and beyond are saying:

"[Plum Creek’s] proposal, even when modified, forecast a loss to the entire east of remaining natural regions of forest, water, and adventure. And what becomes of these lands once the process starts? All the old familiar trappings of habitation—traffic, motels, housing, supermarkets, golf clubs..."

-Francis Schumann, Machias

"Age now prohibits us from visiting as much as we would like, but we have such wonderful memories. We are hopeful that these types of experiences can be enjoyed for many generations to come. Experiences that cannot be duplicated in any other place..."

-Donald Nicolson, Farmington

"Remote, unspoiled places like Lily Bay peninsula and the north shore of Long Pond should never be developed. These places are the frontier of Maine’s vast North Woods—the largest undeveloped place east of the Mississippi. They are currently zoned for primitive recreation and timber harvesting and the rules should not be changed to allow development to ruin their wild character.”

-Bob Guathlen, Tumbledown Township, Moosehead

"I grew up in Millinocket in the 1920s and know what it is living close to nature in the North Woods provided me! The money-people, if allowed to buy miles of land around unique Moosehead Lake, will savor their purchase but deny the native Mainers of that unique part of our state.”

-Priscilla Thorne, Rockwood

"I’ve been coming to Moosehead Lake for 75 years with my family. We realize that change is coming to the region, but what is being proposed by Plum Creek is far too much. We need to protect what makes this place special.”

-Katy Perry, Hallowell

"Age now prohibits us from visiting as much as we would like, but we have such wonderful memories. We are hopeful that these types of experiences can be enjoyed for many generations to come. Experiences that cannot be duplicated in any other place..."

-Donald Nicolson, Farmington

"I grew up in the village of Rockwood and run my real estate business here now. People choose to live here because of its atmosphere and character. There is room for some development in Rockwood, but development on the scale proposed by Plum Creek would completely change what makes Rockwood a great place to live.”

-Liz Munster, Rockwood

"They still don’t get it! Plum Creek can’t seem to understand that Mainers do not want their intrusion. Each “revision” is the same old, same old... Offering the same plan, time after time, is a transparent ploy. This whole deal is beyond ‘fixing’. It should be rejected outright...""

-David Kendall, Dexter

"My mother was born and raised in Greenville, and some of my relatives still live there. They are sick at heart about what is likely to happen to their town if Plum Creek is allowed to go forward with [its] plan. My favorite childhood memories are from times spent on Upper Wilson Pond, a gorgeous, unspoiled pond with a handful of period camps. Sadly, Plum Creek will lay waste to all that is good about this little piece of heaven.”

-Deborah Ludwig, Freedom

“We need to protect what makes this place special.”

-Katy Perry, Hallowell

"Moosehead isn’t called the jewel of Maine for nothing. It is a gloriously pristine piece of Maine, with abundant wildlife, that is still readily accessible to most Maine people. The massivedevelopment proposed and re-proposed by Plum Creek will drive the lake and its unique natural atmosphere into another Sebago Lake at warp speed.”

-George Manlove, Stillwater

You can help protect Moosehead Lake!

Help protect Moosehead from Seattle-based Plum Creek’s massive development by taking the SAVE MOOSEHEAD pledge! NRCM will help you ensure your voice is heard by sending you a toolkit that includes:

- tips for your letter to the Land Use Regulation Commission;
- our fact sheet exposing “fine print” details Plum Creek doesn’t want you to know about; and
- a beautiful Moosehead magnet for your fridge, a reminder of why this region is a national treasure.

Contact Caitlin Cleaver at (800) 287-2345 ext. 270 or by email at ccleaver@nrcm.org.

SAVE MOOSEHEAD!

Thank you! The Natural Resources Council of Maine.