



Join Us for Citizen Action Day Tuesday, April 7!



2015 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES for Maine's Environment

The legislative session is well underway, and NRCM's advocacy team is in high gear. We have been talking with lawmakers about bills to increase solar energy development in Maine, boost weatherization of Maine homes, expand recycling initiatives, provide new funding for the Land for Maine's Future program, and create additional safeguards for Maine's lakes.

We see both challenges and opportunities ahead. In terms of challenges, we are facing the first "divided Legislature" in 20 years, with Republicans controlling a majority in the Senate and Democrats controlling a majority in the House. This means that it will be extremely difficult to get any big proposal through the Legislature without broad, bipartisan support. It also means that any bill vetoed by Governor LePage is likely to remain defeated, since overriding a veto requires a two-thirds vote in both the House and Senate.

But we also see opportunities. Last November, Maine people demonstrated once again that the environment is not a partisan issue when they voted overwhelmingly in support of the \$10 million Clean Water Bond. The Bond passed in all 16 Maine counties, and received the largest winning margin of the six bond measures on the ballot. Because Mainers care so deeply about clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment, we are continuing to reach out to Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike to help us win on the top environmental bills that will come before lawmakers during the months ahead.

In early January, we carefully reviewed the list of more than 1,500 bill titles introduced this year, and we've identified about 140 bills that we will be monitoring closely. Included in that list are both "good bills" we'll work hard to pass, and "bad bills" we'll work hard to defeat. Here's a summary of some of the top issues, with more detail in the following pages.

1) Boost Solar Power Maine is lagging behind most states in New England and the nation in promoting solar power. Now is the time to improve Maine's policies to provide better access to solar for Maine people and for the economic, job creation, and energy security benefits that solar energy provides.

2) Weatherize More Homes Maine has some of the oldest, most energy-inefficient homes in the country. These homes are costing Maine people

too much to heat because too much energy is wasted. A proposed weatherization bond would help nearly 30,000 homes.

3) Conserve More Land The highly successful Land for Maine's Future program will soon be out of money. Reinvesting will help protect farmland, forests, working waterfronts, and special places across Maine.

4) Protect Maine Lakes Maine's lakes are among our most valuable resources, but the water quality of our lakes is declining. The Legislature passed a few important lake protection measures last year, thanks in large part to NRCM's work, and will have an opportunity to adopt additional safeguards this year.

5) Block Weak Mining Rules Last year the Legislature defeated weak mineral mining rules, but the issue is returning again this year. NRCM will work hard to defeat any proposal that would put Maine's waters and taxpayers at risk.

6) Defeat Rollbacks Every year, we face bills that would weaken the laws that protect Maine's air, water, forests and wildlife, and this year is no exception. We will work hard to defeat any and all such rollbacks.

These are some of the big issues we're working on this session, and we hope you'll help. As you know, our success at the State House depends on the support of NRCM members and supporters like you. If you are not a member of NRCM's Action Network, please sign up today at www.nrcm.org so you can learn about ways to get involved.

During the months ahead, we will keep you informed and let you know when and how to contact your elected officials as priority bills move through the process. You can also visit our website for detailed updates. In addition, I encourage you to register today for our annual Citizen Action Day in Augusta, to be held Tuesday, April 7, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If you have never come to Augusta to speak with your elected officials, please consider doing so this year. You can make a big impression, and you'll have a good time learning about key issues, meeting other environmentally concerned citizens from across the state, and enjoying a free lunch, too! And if you've joined us for this annual event in the past, please come again. Your elected representatives need to hear from you about the bills that will affect the future of Maine's environment.

As always, thank you for your support.

—Pete Didisheim, NRCM Advocacy Director

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND, ME
PERMIT NO. 454



Natural Resources Council of Maine
3 Wade Street
Augusta, Maine 04330-6317

CHECK YOUR LABEL!
Please call NRCM with
address corrections
or duplicate mailings!

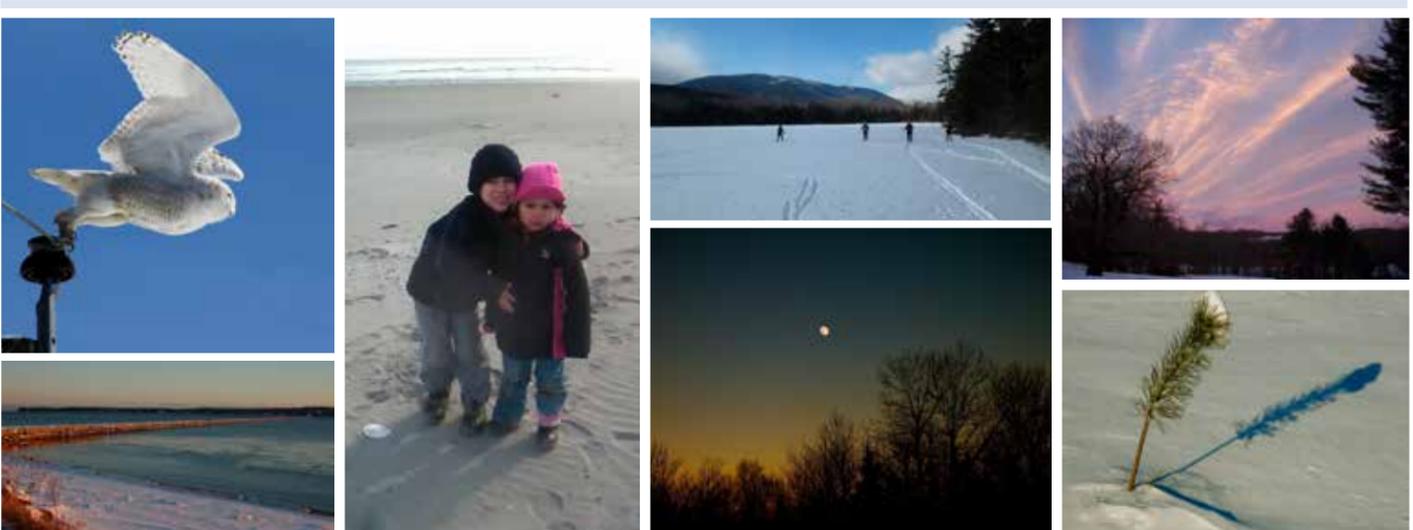


▲ NRCM member Phyllis Von Herrlich and others speak with Representative Corey Wilson during Citizen Action Day 2014.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

Join Us for Citizen Action Day Tuesday, April 7th, 2015

Help protect the nature of Maine! (See page 4)



Boost Solar Power in Maine



JUDY BERK

A solar power revolution is underway, and Maine needs to catch up with it. Prices for solar panels have plummeted 50 percent in the past five years, and solar installations are booming across the country. Some

people may not realize that Maine has an excellent solar resource. For example, a solar panel installed in Portland, Maine, generates as much electricity each year as a panel installed in Houston, Texas, and 92 percent as much as one in Miami, Florida. But we are not tapping into the power of the sun like we could and should. Maine ranks 10th out of the 11 northeastern states in per capita solar installations, and we rank 5th out of the 6 New England states. Vermont and Massachusetts each have 10 times more installed solar per capita than Maine does!

Right now, Maine does not have the right policies in place to increase access by Maine residents to solar energy, create more good-paying solar installation jobs, and reduce pollution that threatens our climate. During the past year, more U.S. jobs were created in the solar sector (31,000) than in the oil and gas industry—but Maine isn't moving fast enough to help capture some of these jobs. "Now is the time to tap into solar energy with policies that help Mainers gain more control of their energy costs by producing their own solar power," says NRCM Clean Energy Project Director Dylan Voorhees. "We should be a leader, not a laggard, when it comes to solar energy."

We are supporting several bills introduced by Democrats and Republicans to improve Maine's solar energy policies. Our top priority is a bill sponsored by Representative Sara Gideon (D-Freeport).

Weatherize More Maine Homes



NRCM FILE

Maine people are spending hundreds of millions of dollars unnecessarily each year to heat homes that are inefficient. Until we make investments in weatherization at a larger scale, Maine people will continue to face unaffordable heating costs while burning excess fuel that pollutes our air and water, and threatens our climate and the health of our people.

Efficiency Maine does an excellent job helping people increase their home energy efficiency with

the resources currently available. Last year, for example, *Efficiency Maine's* Home Energy Savings Program helped 6,400 homeowners make improvements that will save \$47 million in lifetime heating costs. With more resources, this effective program could reach tens of thousands of Mainers.

Senator Dawn Hill (D-York) is proposing a \$30 million bond to reduce heating costs and oil consumption in Maine homes. The bill would provide sufficient funding, in the form of cost-shared incentives, for insulation, air-sealing, and/or the installation of high efficiency heating equipment, such as heat pumps, wood pellets, and natural gas to nearly 30,000 housing units. The benefits would be enormous—on the order of \$200 million to \$450 million in savings on energy bills.

"Reducing energy bills is a top priority for Mainers, and we must weatherize our homes at a much faster pace to achieve this goal," says NRCM Clean Energy Project Director Dylan Voorhees. "Senator Hill's home efficiency bond will provide the surge we need so that tens of thousands more Maine homes can benefit."



NRCM/MARTIN

Stop Bad Mining Rules

Metal mining is one of the most damaging industrial activities conducted anywhere, with a worldwide legacy of environmental contamination. Maine has its own legacy of poor mining, at the former

Callahan mine in Brooksville, which was shuttered 40 years ago but is still causing water pollution and costing Maine people millions of dollars in cleanup costs.

Canada-based Irving Corporation, which is interested in pursuing a 600-acre open-pit mine at Bald Mountain in Aroostook County, started the current mining controversy three years ago. To help pave the way for this mine, Irving pushed through a bill in 2012 that directed the DEP to develop new, weaker rules for metal mining in Maine. NRCM and many others worked hard in 2013 to strengthen the 2012 law, but we fell short by just one vote in the State Senate.

As we anticipated, DEP developed draft mining rules in 2013 that would not protect Maine's environment and taxpayers. The Legislature defeated those rules last year, but the DEP has brought the same rules back again. Sen. Saviello (R-Franklin County) has a separate bill to make changes to Maine's mining law.

"We continue to believe that DEP's proposed rules would expose Maine's rivers, lakes, streams, and groundwater to toxic mining pollution that could persist for hundreds of years and cost Maine taxpayers huge sums," says NRCM Staff Scientist Nick Bennett. "We will urge the Legislature to defeat the rules again this year, as they did last year, and not make any changes in statute that would further weaken protections for our waters and taxpayers."

Replenish Land for Maine's Future Funding



ALLISON WELLS

The highly successful Land for Maine's Future (LMF) program has protected more than 315,000 acres of working forestland, more than

1,200 miles of shoreline; dozens of lakes, ponds, and mountains; and hundreds of miles of trails in communities across the state for Maine people and visitors to enjoy. But this popular program will soon exhaust its available funding, which is why we need to replenish LMF with a new bond.

LMF is consistently supported by a broad bipartisan majority in the Maine Legislature and by at least 60% of Maine voters at the ballot box. However, getting a bond measure through the Legislature is a very competitive and sometimes political process. This year Sen. Roger Katz (R-Kennebec County) is proposing a \$20 million bond that would enable the LMF program to continue the work it does, which strongly supports Maine's natural resource-based economy through the conservation of farms, trails, mountains, forests, water access, wildlife habitat, and working waterfronts.

Some are calling this year's LMF Bond the "Forest, Farm, and Fish Bond," because of the program's clear track record in helping to protect working farms, working forests, and working waterfronts.

"LMF is one of Maine's great conservation success stories," says NRCM's North Woods Project Director Cathy Johnson. "We know that LMF investments help preserve Maine's natural character, support ecotourism, and contribute to our economy, so we will be urging lawmakers to keep this good program moving forward with additional funding."



Natural Resources Council of Maine

3 Wade Street, Augusta, Maine 04330-6317
(800) 287-2345 • FAX (207) 622-4343

www.nrcm.org

Protecting, restoring, and conserving
Maine's environment, now and for
future generations.

Copyright 2015. All rights reserved.

Editor / Allison Childs Wells, Senior Director of Public Affairs

Design / brightredbicycle design

Contributors / Pete Didisheim, Dylan Voorhees, Allison Childs Wells

Executive Director / Lisa Pohlmann

President, NRCM Board of Directors / Kate Rush

Vice President, NRCM Board of Directors / Russell B. Pierce, Jr.

Treasurer, NRCM Board of Directors / Thomas Tietenberg

Secretary, NRCM Board of Directors / Kathleen A. Rimmel

NRCM Board of Directors /

Phil Bartlett
Christopher A. Bond
Elisa Boxer
Victoria M. Devlin
Marion Freeman
Jeanne Gulnick

Patricia Hager
Karen Herold
Henry R. Heyburn, Jr.
Norton H. Lamb, Jr.
George Lapointe
Susan MacKenzie

Didi Manns
Stephen Mulkey
W. Kent Olson
Jeff Pidot
R. Stewart Strawbridge
Lois Winter

Front Page Collage /

All photos are My Maine
This Week photos by
NRCM members and
supporters. Thank you,
photographers!

1	3	4	6
2		5	7

1 / Snowy Owl, a My Maine This Week photo by NRCM member David Small

2 / Rockland Breakwater, a My Maine This Week photo by NRCM member Steve Cartwright

3 / Seawall Beach by NRCM staff member Stacie Haines

4 / Skiing on proposed National Park lands by NRCM staff member Leslie Burhoe

5 / Moon and Treeline by NRCM staff member Judy Berk

6 / Hallowell by NRCM member Linda Woods

7 / New Tree in Snow by NRCM staff member Judy Berk

Front Page Banner / NRCM Citizen Action Day 2014
by NRCM/Beth Comeau

BILLS IN THE LEGISLATURE



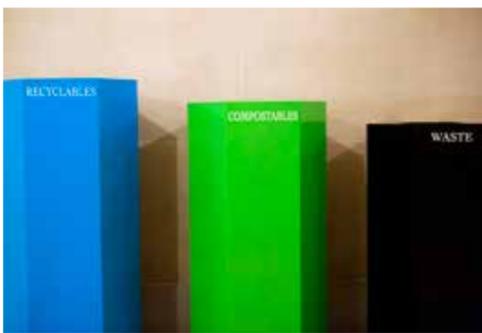
Protect Lake Water Quality

Maine has some of the most scenic and valued lakes in the nation, generating at least \$3.5 billion in economic activity annually and helping sustain 52,000 jobs. Yet Maine's lakes are at risk. Lake water quality has been declining since 1995, according to a University of Maine study.

Although Mainers have worked hard to protect the quality of our lakes over the past four decades, the state's lake protection efforts have been weakened in recent years. Last year, the Legislature took a few important steps forward to help rebuild our lake protection programs. Lawmakers provided important funding for the LakeSmart program that helps educate lakefront property owners about ways to reduce threats to our lakes. They also gave a boost to the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program and to efforts to help eradicate milfoil and other invasive species. But protecting our lakes is an ongoing job and several bills will be considered this year to further help Maine's lakes.

We are pleased that Sen. Saviello (R-Franklin County) and Rep. Jeff McCabe (D-Skowhegan) are introducing bills to limit the application of fertilizers within 50 feet of a shoreline unless the property owner has a soil test that demonstrates the need for applying nutrients. We also will be supporting a bill introduced by Rep. Gary Hilliard (R-Belgrade) aimed at improving enforcement of Maine's existing lake protection laws, such as shoreland zoning.

"Maine would be a diminished place without high quality lakes," says Advocacy Director Pete Didisheim. "We love our lakes, but we need to be careful not to love them to death. Creating a stronger safety net for our lakes, and better enforcement of our laws, is essential."



Increase Composting and Recycling

Maine is not meeting its goal of recycling 50 percent of our solid waste, as called for in Maine's 1989 solid waste policy law that NRCM helped write. Instead, we have been

stuck at about 40 percent for several years. We will be working with legislators this year on several bills to boost programs to "reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost," which are the top tiers of Maine's solid waste hierarchy, with the goal of reducing how much waste ends up in our landfills and incinerators.

We are particularly supportive of a bill introduced by Rep. Joan Welsh (D-Rockport) that directs DEP to develop a comprehensive strategy for increasing composting of organic waste. As explained by NRCM Sustainable Maine Policy Advocate Sarah Lakeman, "Food waste and other organic waste is the next big target for recycling efforts. We're just beginning to get good programs in place, and now is the time for a comprehensive strategy that incorporates some of the ideas and approaches being pioneered and proven to be successful across the country."

Working for You at the State House

Our advocacy staff works day and night throughout the legislative session to represent you and your interests, working for laws that protect Maine people, places, and wildlife. To keep us on the frontlines of environmental protection in Maine, please use the enclosed, postage-paid envelope to donate today. Your donation supports the most effective team working for Maine's environment. Left to right: **Dylan Voorhees**, *Clean Energy and Efficiency*; **Sarah Lakeman**, *Sustainability and Recycling*; **Cathy Johnson**, *Senior Staff Attorney and North Woods*; **Pete Didisheim**, *Advocacy Director*; **Eliza Donoghue**, *North Woods*; **Nick Bennett**, *Staff Scientist and Watersheds*



Other Important Issues

Climate Action Three bills have been proposed to help communities prepare for the impacts of climate change, sponsored by Reps. Sara Gideon (D-Freeport), Deane Rykerson (D-Kittery), and Lydia Blume (D-York). Rep. Mick Devin (D-Newcastle) also has introduced a bill to create an ongoing commission to continue studying the potential impacts of ocean acidification on Maine's marine-based economy.

Endangered Species Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is charged with routinely updating the state's list of endangered and threatened species, but hasn't done so since 2007. This year, however, lawmakers will consider a bill to add six animals to the endangered species list, including two birds, a beetle, a butterfly, a land snail, and two bats.



Logging on Public Lands The governor again wants to increase timber cutting on public lands. The Legislature opposed the idea last year, and we are working again this year to protect Maine's public lands from being over-harvested. Our public forests have been well managed based on science. They should not be turned into ATM machines that generate cash for other government programs.

Plastic Microbeads Sen. Saviello (R-Franklin County) has introduced a bill (LD 85) to phase out the use of plastic microbeads used in hundreds of personal care products, such as facial scrubs and soaps. The tiny plastics go down the drain, pass through wastewater treatment facilities, and end up in our rivers, lakes, streams, and coastal waters—and put aquatic wildlife and human health at risk. Many companies are moving toward biodegradable alternatives. This bill bans plastic microbeads in products sold in Maine after 2018.

Public Land Management The governor wants to restructure the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry so that the state's 600,000 acres of public lands would be managed in the Bureau of Forestry. This is a bad idea. Public lands need to be managed for multiple uses, including wildlife conservation and recreation, which is how they have been managed within the existing Bureau of Parks and Lands. The proposal could jeopardize sustainable management of Maine's public forests. It also includes a drastic reduction in enforcement work by the Department.



Rollback of Alewives Law Two years ago the Legislature approved a bill to open up the St. Croix River for upstream passage by alewives (river herring). NRCM joined with many others in celebrating the victory, which ended a senseless 1995 state policy that prevented alewife passage in the river. Opening up the river for alewives has been a top priority for the Passamaquoddy Tribe, but some lawmakers now seem eager to reverse the law. Rep. Beth Turner (R-Burlington) has introduced a bill that would close the St. Croix again for upstream passage of alewives. We will work to defeat the bill.

Rollback on Energy Efficiency Codes Maine does not have a statewide energy efficiency code to require that builders meet minimum standards for new home construction so that they don't waste energy. Instead, our "uniform" code only applies to 89 communities with a population of more than 4,000 residents, which covers only about 60 percent of the population. Although NRCM and energy efficiency professionals have been pushing to restore the code statewide, several lawmakers are proposing bills to repeal the code entirely. This would keep Maine as one of the worst states in the nation in terms of requirements for energy-efficient home construction.



Stream Crossing Bond Many of Maine's culverts, which allow streams to pass under roads, are old and ineffective. They get blocked easily or fail entirely, creating public safety hazards and cutting fish and wildlife habitat into separate, isolated segments. Rep. Jeff McCabe (D-Skowhegan) is proposing a \$10 million "Stream Crossing Bond" to help communities repair and replace old stream crossings, which will restore fish and wildlife habitat and enable sea-run fish to reach inland spawning habitat.

Takings We'll be working to defeat another radical "takings" proposal (LD 162) introduced this year by Rep. Beth O'Connor (R-Berwick). The bill would require Maine taxpayers to pay out huge sums to individuals who don't want to comply with Maine's land use laws based on their self-assertion of lost property value. If payments aren't made, then the law would be selectively waived for such individuals. Bills like this have proven to be disastrous in other states, which is why Maine lawmakers have rejected them in the past and why this bill must also be defeated.

Stay up to date during the 2015 session by visiting our **Legislative Bill Tracking page**. Bookmark it and visit often for the latest on bills related to Maine's environment.

<http://www.nrcm.org/?p=20582>





NRCM/COMEAU

Thanks to All Dashers, Dippers, & Sponsors! Our 2014 Dip & Dash was another huge success! Nearly 240 daring participants helped us raise more than \$21,000 to address climate disruption in Maine. Single-handedly raising \$1,000 of that was top fundraiser (and five-time dipper) **Jonathan Milne**. Other top fundraisers included **Emily O'Donnell, Elizabeth**



BELL PHOTOGRAPHICS

Kessler, Rob Levin, and Christian Zwaga! The **PoIER PlungERS**, led by NRCM board member (and ER doctor) **Tony Owens**, was top fundraising team. Way to go! Thanks to all of the amazing participants and to our business sponsors: 98.9 FM WCLZ, *Maine* magazine, Lee Auto Malls, Lamey Wellehan, Clynk, East

Brown Cow Management, ReVision Energy, CPRC Group, Delorme, Renys, Spectrum Medical, Patagonia, Back Country Excursions, Yelp, Jamie Hogan, Great Lost Bear, Coffee By Design, and Whole Foods Market. Thank you! See photos and video, as well as race results, on our website. We're already looking forward to Polar Bear Dip & Dash 2015—same time (New Year's Eve Day), same place (East End Beach, Portland)! Join us!



BELL PHOTOGRAPHICS

Mt. Abram Ski Area Goes Solar – and Beyond!



NRCM/D. VOORHEES

Mt. Abram owner Matt Hancock in front of the ski area's solar panels.

Mt. Abram in Greenwood, Maine, is a locally owned, family-friendly ski area that now hosts the second largest solar power array at a North American ski area. Earlier this winter the ski area flipped the switch on a 245-kilowatt solar array, which will provide 70% of their substantial electricity needs. That's enough solar to power nearly

50 homes! The solar project was made possible with a competitive grant from the U.S. Rural Development Authority. Solar technology is enjoying explosive growth across the country, with plummeting costs. Mt. Abram's project is a prime example of a business taking advantage of solar to lower their energy costs and protect itself from highly volatile energy markets.

Unfortunately Maine is lagging in efforts to encourage solar power. NRCM is leading the legislative charge to spur solar markets, reduce barriers, and increase access to solar for more homes and businesses.

Solar is not the only way Mt. Abram is shifting to climate-friendly clean energy. They have also installed a biomass heating system with local wood supplies, top-of-the-line energy-efficient snowmaking equipment that slashed use of diesel fuel, and two electric vehicle (EV) charging stations for skiers who drive EVs. The energy-efficient snow equipment was supported with a grant from Efficiency Maine using funds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative or RGGI.

If you are strapping on your skis and looking for a green, climate-friendly place to spend time on the slopes, NRCM recommends you head to Mt. Abram this winter.

—Dylan Voorhees, NRCM Clean Energy Project Director



COURTESY MT. ABRAM

JOIN US

Tuesday, April 7

For Citizen Action Day

to help protect
the nature of Maine

NRCM/IA WELLS

Time again, legislators say the voices of their constituents are the ones they want to hear most. Join us for Citizen Action Day Tuesday, April 7 in Augusta. Help protect the nature of Maine by making your voice heard on issues that matter to you! Come hear firsthand from NRCM staff who are hard at work on the biggest threats and opportunities relating to Maine's environment. We'll provide you with tips for speaking with your legislators, then take a short walk across the street to the State House, where you can meet with your elected officials. We'll provide a light breakfast in the morning and lunch in the afternoon. Mark your calendar and plan to join us at our headquarters for this important event. Learn more and register at www.nrcm.org.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter @NRCMenvironment

SIGN THE ENCLOSED PETITION for a New National Park & National Recreation Area in Maine!

Elliotsville Plantation, Inc. wants to donate up to 150,000 acres of land it owns east of Baxter State Park to create a new National Park and National Recreation Area. To successfully designate a new National Park takes the support of Maine's Senators and Representatives and an Act of Congress. Senators Collins and King and Representatives Pingree and Poliquin need to hear that Maine people support this proposal. This National Park is a tremendous opportunity for Maine. It will conserve a spectacular piece of Maine's North Woods for wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation, and will bring much-needed economic stimulus to the Katahdin region and beyond. The time for a new National Park is NOW! **Let Congress know by signing and returning (postage paid) the enclosed petition to show your support for this great new opportunity!**



JON LUDOMA