



Natural Resources Council of Maine

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May 6, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We the undersigned respectfully ask you to give the nation another spectacular natural and cultural asset by creating a national monument in Maine's Katahdin region.

Maine is beautiful. You know this from your family's 2010 visit to Acadia, which is one of America's most visited national parks.

This year, 2016, is the 100th anniversary both of Acadia's founding and of the National Park Service. It is the perfect occasion for designating a new park unit in northern Maine, which contains the largest undeveloped tract of forest east of the Mississippi River.

The land, valued at \$60 million, would be donated by Maine-based Elliotsville Plantation, Inc., a nonprofit that would also raise a \$40 million endowment. These generous gifts would benefit all Americans.

Conservation philanthropy of this magnitude happens only a couple of times a century. Mr. President, please take advantage of this incredibly generous opportunity and make it happen in this last full year you are in office.

Public opinion surveys over years show consistent results: throughout our vast state, Mainers support the new monument/park by more than two to one—a political landslide by any accounting.

The area is significant to the indigenous Penobscot Nation. Henry David Thoreau paddled the East Branch and wrote about it in *The Maine Woods*, an American literary treasure. Theodore Roosevelt—the first president to create a national monument—visited the area when he was 19, and the experience inspired his lifelong conservation efforts.

These cultural distinctions alone qualify the area for designation.

But the site also boasts mountains, ponds, uncommon and iconic ecological features; habitat for moose, bear, and the federally listed threatened Canada lynx; and forests as far as the eye can see. It provides opportunities for hiking, paddling, biking, fishing, cross-country skiing, and wildlife watching.

We signers—all volunteers—are current or former directors or national advisory board members of the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM), the state's largest conservation advocacy organization. In its 57-year history, NRCM has helped to protect Maine lands and waters, including the Allagash Wild and Scenic River and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

We are grateful for the national monuments you have already created. Now we urge you to enlarge your conservation legacy by granting to all Americans a spectacular new one in our great state.

Thank you.

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cc: Hon. Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior
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