

STATE OF THE HIGH PEAKS

PART 2



HIGH PEAKS

ALLIANCE

A REPORT OF OUTDOOR RECREATION & TRAILS IN MAINE'S HIGH PEAKS
REGION BY HIGH PEAKS INITIATIVE, COORDINATED BY HIGH PEAKS ALLIANCE



HIGH PEAKS INITIATIVE'S BELIEF

People should always have access to the outdoors. We lead the region in conserving land, building and maintaining trails, and connecting people to each other and this landscape. Because when we do, we build stronger communities and more people will desire to live, work, and recreate in this region, bringing economic vitality to the area.

The State of the High Peaks Report is a project of the High Peaks Initiative by Sam Shirley, Recreation and Conservation Technician, and Brent West, Executive Director of High Peaks Alliance, edited and co-authored by Simon Rucker, Maine Appalachian Land Trust. Mapping: Center for Community GIS. Design: Designlab of Millinocket. Front cover, inner front and back cover photos courtesy of Jamie Walter.

HIGH PEAKS INITIATIVE PARTNERS

High Peaks Alliance
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Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust
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Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Maine Mountain Collaborative

New England Forestry Foundation

Northern Forest Center

The Wilderness Society

Center for Community GIS

Maine Huts and Trails

Northern Forest Canoe Trail

Rangley Lakes Heritage Trust

Trust for Public Land

Longfellow Mountain Heritage Trails

Rangley Health and Wellness

Greater Franklin Development Council

US Fish and Wildlife Service

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The High Peaks Region is a wild and mountainous area in Oxford, Franklin, and Somerset Counties, extending from Farmington in the south to Coburn Gore in the north, with the Rangeley Lakes forming the western boundary, and the eastern boundary near the Kennebec River. The area has a long history of outdoor recreation across a landscape which includes 10 of the 14 peaks over 4,000 feet in Maine, vast expanses of forest, and pristine waters. Access to much of this land has long been made possible through Maine's traditional practice of allowing public access to private lands.

Nationally, 50% of Americans enjoy outdoor recreation. In Maine, that percentage rises to 70% (OIA, 2017). The Maine Office of Tourism reports 5.56 million yearly visits to the Maine Lakes and Mountains Region, which is the tourism region that includes the High Peaks (Maine Office of Tourism, 2020). Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that 41% of housing units in the region are only occupied seasonally (US Census Bureau, n.d.). These statistics underscore the importance of recreation to the identity and economy of the region. Both residents and visitors alike enjoy the many recreational opportunities that the region has to offer.

A Bureau of Economic Analysis report which estimated that outdoor recreation made up 3.9% of Maine's GDP and contributes \$3.3 billion to the state's economy annually (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2022). The Outdoor Industry Association estimates that 32,000 direct jobs exist in Maine in outdoor recreation (OIA, 2022). It is important that recreational assets in the region are accessible to the public, in order to continue providing these important economic benefits.

This report was created by the High Peaks Initiative (HPI).

HPI is a collaborative of local, regional, and national organizations working in the High Peaks Region with a mission to protect important natural resources, secure public access, and support healthy human and natural communities. HPI advances its mission through collaboration among its members and other outside organizations. There are four main objectives that the HPI partners are currently focused on. These are listed below:

1. Creating a coordinated approach to land conservation, resource management, public access, and recreational use;
2. Permanently protecting key pieces of the region's forests and natural resources through a mix of conservation tools;
3. Ensuring a well-managed and maintained regional trail system which provides a safe, high-quality recreational experience;
4. Integrating the region's recreation and conservation infrastructure with the regional and state economy through coordinated efforts which engage partners and stakeholders.

70% → → **\$3.3B**
of Mainers enjoy outdoor recreation contributed to Maine's economy via outdoor recreation

















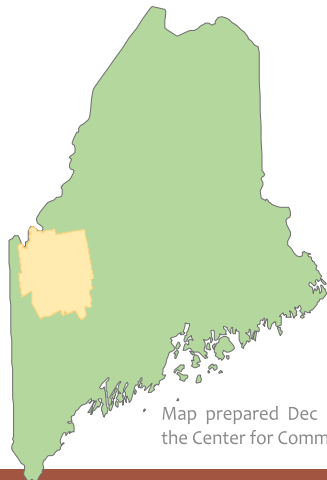
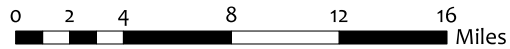


Pictured: Little Kennebec Lake
Photo courtesy of Jamie Walter

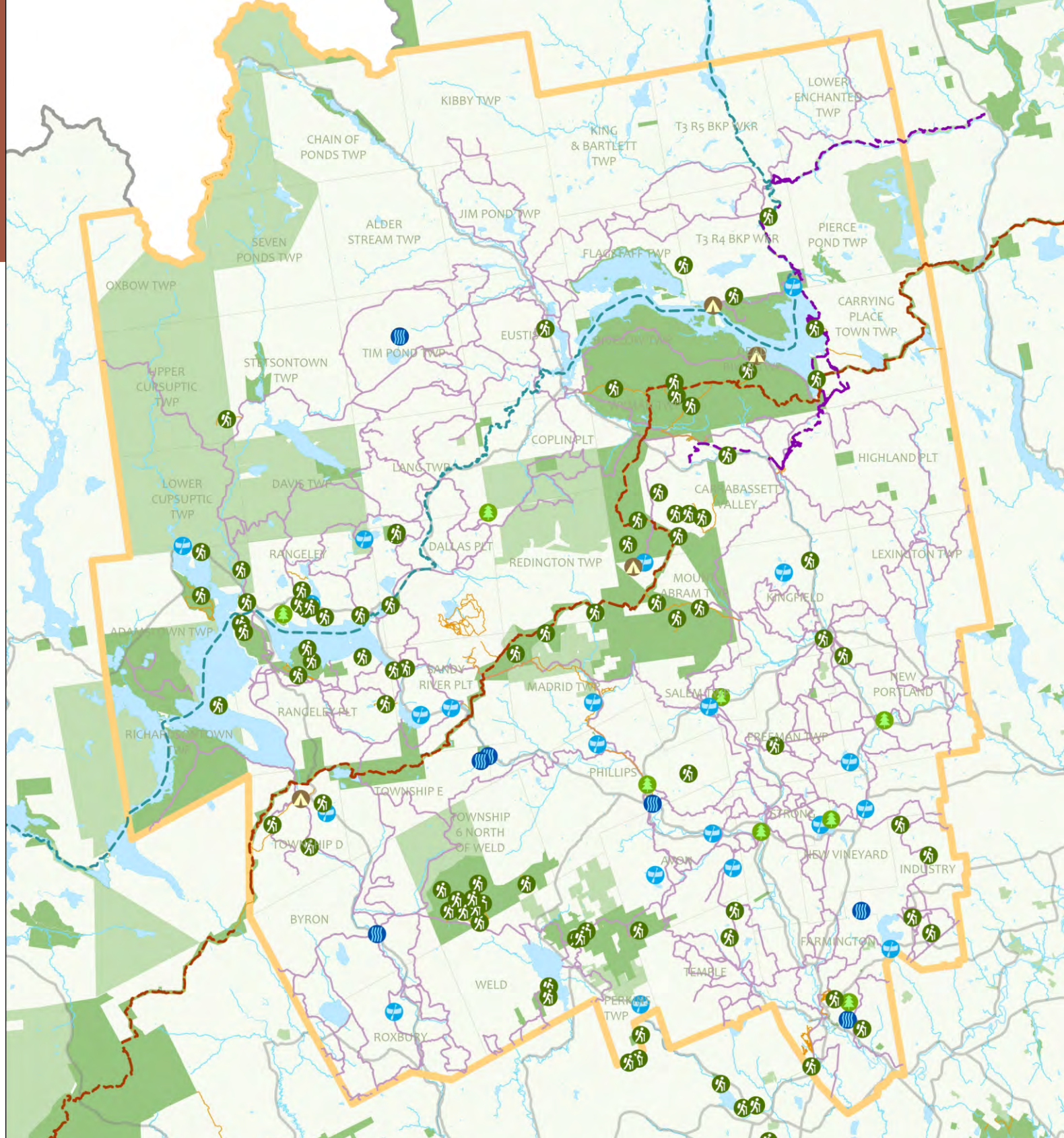
HIGH PEAKS RECREATION ASSESSMENT

SURVEYED LOCATIONS

-  Campsites
-  Falls
-  Park / Conservation Area
-  Water Access/Boat Launch
-  Hiking Trails
-  Conservation Land (EASEMENT)
-  Conservation Land (FEE)
-  Appalachian Trail
-  Maine Huts Trails
-  Northern Forest Canoe Trail
-  Other Foot Trails
-  Motorized Trails
-  Roads
-  High Peaks Region



Map prepared Dec 2023, by:
the Center for Community GIS

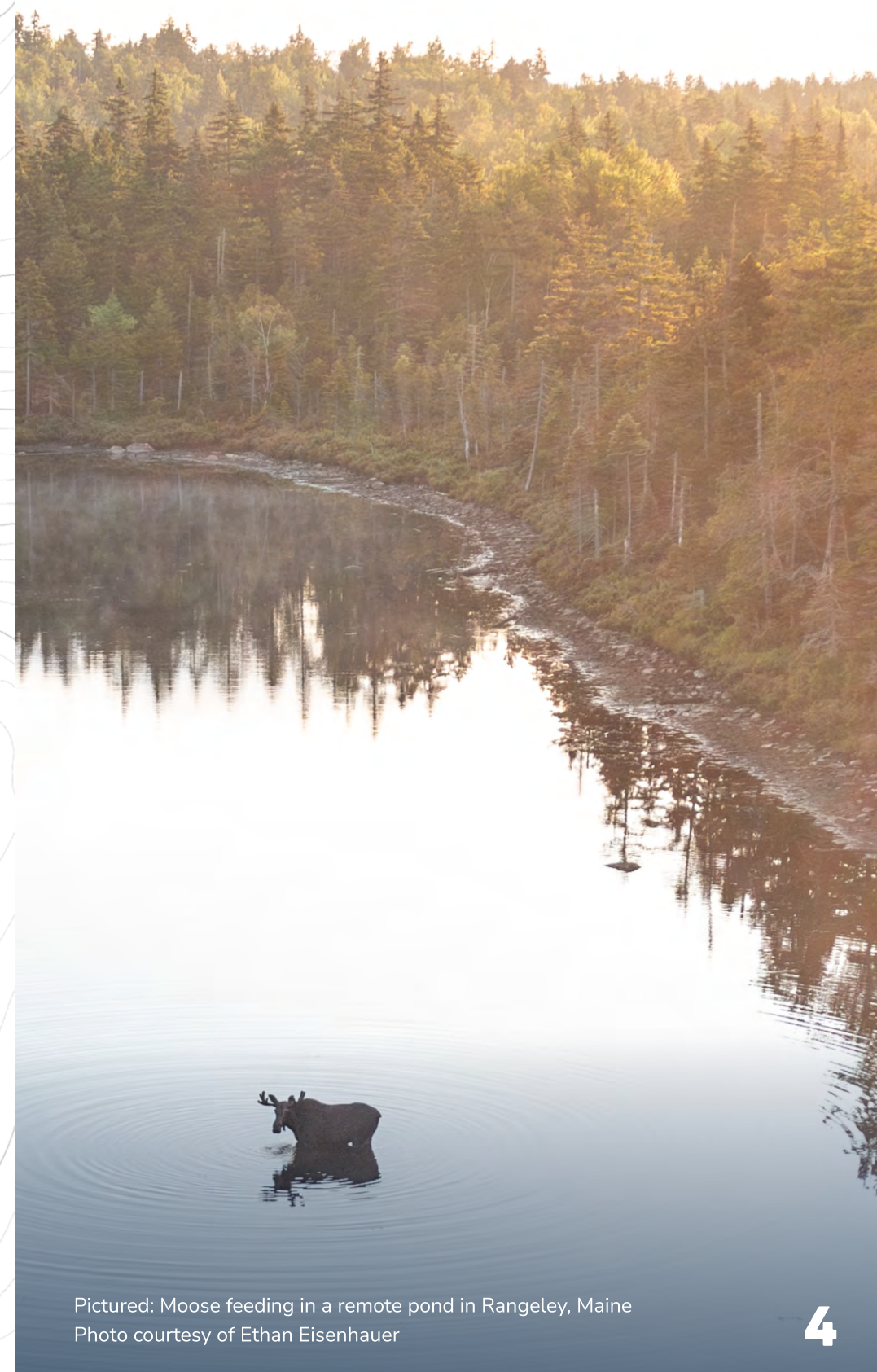


OVERVIEW

This report is designed to accompany the “State of The High Peaks” report which was released by the High Peaks Initiative in 2022. The primary purpose of that report was to inventory the recreational trail networks and conservation lands in the High Peaks Region. This report will examine many of those conservation lands and recreational assets (hiking trails, multi-use trails, boat launches, fishing access points, waterfalls, swimming areas, campsites) in greater detail and outline the conservation and recreation needs within the region.

While the inventory is not exhaustive, the report relies on the input of the High Peaks Initiative and others who are involved in conserving, managing and using these resources.

Conservation and recreation needs in the region have been examined in connection with the needs of municipalities, the Bureau of Parks and Lands, and other recreation organizations which operate within the regions. These other groups include land trusts, snowmobile clubs, and ATV clubs. This report also looks at areas which, due to multiple documented factors, could be important priority areas for land conservation, as well as areas for priority recreational asset development. Conservation priority areas may have high natural, scenic, and/or recreational value. Priority recreational asset development areas are generally places which do not yet have formal recreational assets. Finally, this report documents areas with potential for recreational asset improvement. This category includes trails that need to be rerouted, parking areas that need to be expanded to accommodate use, improved signage, upgraded campsites, and similar recreation assets which are already in use but have needs which need to be addressed.



Pictured: Moose feeding in a remote pond in Rangeley, Maine
Photo courtesy of Ethan Eisenhauer

METHODOLOGY

PRIORITIES

The priorities of local conservation and recreation groups were obtained during meetings with a member, or members, of the group. Notes and data were collected during the meetings about the priorities and needs of these organizations within the scope of this report. In addition, High Peaks Initiative organizations that manage assets (lands, trails, etc.) have submitted summaries which inform the data collected for the report. The regional conservation and recreation priorities of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) were determined by reviewing the 15-year management plans published by the BPL.

The conservation and recreation priorities of local municipalities were determined by reviewing the comprehensive plans of these municipalities. Copies of the comprehensive plans (if a community has one) were obtained online, by email, or by acquiring them from town offices. These comprehensive plans were reviewed, and information that related to conservation and recreation in the towns were recorded and organized. Potential conservation or recreation projects which may be of particular interest to the organizations in the High Peaks Initiative, based on location or organizational missions, were also noted.

AREAS WITH CONSERVATION POTENTIAL

Areas with conservation potential are places which have the potential to include unique natural areas and/or have high potential for recreational asset development. The potential conservation areas included in this report are not meant to serve as a comprehensive list for the High Peaks region, but have been included as a representative selection.

AREAS FOR POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL ASSET IMPROVEMENT

Many recreational assets in the High Peaks region suffer from issues related to overuse, lack of regular maintenance, lack of regular access and other issues. Under the scoring rubric an asset might be in need of improvement (i.e. a trail) or attendant infrastructure might be in need of improvement (i.e., parking, trail signs, etc.)

AREAS FOR POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL ASSET DEVELOPMENT

The High Peaks region lacks the quantity of recreational assets needed to support demand, both in terms of overuse of existing assets and a lack of assets in some areas. This report includes sites on which recreational asset development might occur on existing conserved lands or on lands that are currently open for public use but are not in the public domain.

DOCUMENTATION OF RECREATIONAL ASSET LOCATIONS

While not every recreational asset in the region was documented in detail, the majority have been included and they cover the assets with the highest use and which are regionally important. Recreational assets that are locally known to be in need of improvement or have had known issues in the past (e.g. a trail that has been reported as being under-maintained) were also included in this documentation. All of these included areas that were documented. Detailed notes, GPS waypoints, and photographs were taken. Most trails had GPS tracks taken of them for creation of maps for this report. After the site visit, a standardized rubric was completed for each recreational asset. This rubric was designed by the High Peaks Initiative so that it could be used for all types of recreational assets in this report, from boat launches to hiking trails.

PRIORITIES OF LOCAL CONSERVATION AND RECREATION ORGANIZATIONS

MAINE HUTS & TRAILS

Maine Huts & Trails (MH&T), a private non-profit organization, built and maintains 80 miles of trails extending from Carrabassett Valley to West Forks. The Maine Hut Trail links MH&T's four back-country huts: Stratton Brook, Poplar Stream, Flagstaff Lake, and Grand Falls Huts. Secondary trails provide access to beautiful vistas of Maine's High Peaks, including Sugarloaf Mountain and the Bigelow Mountains, Flagstaff Lake, Poplar Stream waterfalls, and the magnificent Grand Falls on the Dead River.

The trails are maintained year-round by MH&T staff, volunteers, and Carrabassett Valley Trails partners. MH&T's trails are open to the public free of charge. In the winter, trails are groomed for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and fat biking; in the summer, hiking and mountain biking. Since its initial construction, the Maine Hut Trail has served as a recreation backbone connecting other trails, including Carrabassett Valley's Narrow Gauge, Sugarloaf's Outdoor Center, miles of ever-expanding mountain biking trails, the AT, the Longfellow Trail, the Bigelow Preserve, the Old Canada Road Scenic Byway, and Kennebec Valley trail projects.

The Maine Hut Trail is accessible thanks to landowner partners, including the Penobscot Indian Nation, Central Maine Power, and family-owned working forestland, the Bigelow Preserve, and the Carrabassett Valley Sanitary District. The Maine Hut Trail includes 35 machine-bearing bridge crossings, and dozens of short-spanned planked foot bridges are scattered along every trail spur. The 250'-long

Chappell Bridge is the sole recreation crossing over the Dead River from Big Eddy to the confluence with the Kennebec River. As a public resource, typical trail stewardship demands are very high for MH&T, and regional partnerships and cost sharing are essential for maintaining and growing this world-class recreation resource.

RANGELEY LAKES HERITAGE TRUST

The Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust owns approximately 6700 acres of land in fee, and holds easements on approximately 9000 acres in the High Peaks region. These lands are open to traditional public use and pressure from increasing numbers of users has added to our maintenance costs. RLHT has 39 miles of trails throughout the High Peaks/Rangeley Region and will have more trail and recreational opportunities as it expands ownership of fee lands in the next one to five years. Given the increase in traffic and extreme weather events, the costs to build more robust infrastructure and maintain it is increasing dramatically. One trail (on Hunter Cove Wildlife Sanctuary) needs to be rerouted, and many trailhead kiosks and signs need to be replaced and upgraded. On Kennebec Wildlands property they are currently replacing culverts with flat-bottom bridges on twelve stream crossings as part of a river restoration project. Water access is an issue in at least two spots as it looks for affordable ways to engineer boat launches to limit them to hand-carry only and to prevent siltation into the water.

The aging workforce is especially concerning as the bulk of RLHT volunteers are retired people. Invasive plant patrollers, Byway Ambassadors, and water quality monitors are

increasingly difficult to recruit as they age. Funding for trail maintenance and stewardship responsibilities will become increasingly more challenging unless sustainable funding is available.

NORTHERN FOREST CANOE TRAIL

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail maintains access to the waterways of Maine's High Peaks region and provides information and inspiration for paddlers to enable their water-based adventures. The route and the organization's primary focus covers about 100 miles: it traverses the region starting on Lake Umbagog and follows the Rapid River to the Richardsons, Mooselookmeguntic and Rangeley Lakes. Changing watersheds, it continues on the South Dead River, across Flagstaff Lake, Down the Dead River and includes Spencer Stream. NFCT also provides navigational information and makes access improvements on other waterways in the region of interest to paddlers including (but not limited to) the Kennebago, Sandy and North Dead Rivers and the Bow Loop. While paddlers are the organization's target audience, bathers, anglers and others using the waterways benefit from its work. Staff specialize in stewardship of access to the riparian zone where erosion caused by humans and moving water is a constant challenge, and efforts must be ever mindful of historic uses protected by law. Stewardship is by its nature a Sisyphean task: infrastructure that has just been installed will need maintenance or replacement in 10-15 years.

LONGFELLOW MOUNTAINS HERITAGE TRAILS

Longfellow Mountains Heritage Trails holds trail licenses and easements on approximately 30 miles of trail corridors in North Franklin County. These trails (potential and existing) are open to the public for hiking, cross-country skiing and

mountain biking. These trails can or do integrate with trails managed by Maine Huts & Trails, The Town of Carrabassett Valley, the Bureau of Parks and Lands in the Bigelow Preserve and Chain of Ponds, the Carrabassett Region New England Mountain Bike Association, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, the Appalachian Trail, the Arnold Expedition Historical Society and Carrabassett Outdoor Center. Discussions have been held with a group of Quebec communities on extending the corridor from the border crossing at Coburn Gore, Maine to Lac Megantic, Quebec.

An international trail running race, sponsored by Xterra and a triathlon race, sponsored by a Quebec community-based organization, have inaugural events scheduled within this region beginning late summer of 2023 and are expected to return through 2026 and potentially longer. Construction of new trails will require new license or easement agreements to provide seamless integration from Sugarloaf to the border crossing facility at Coburn Gore of this off-highway trail corridor development. A trailhead parking and signage plan needs to be developed for the corridor. A dispute with an abutting landowner has recently been resolved, which clears the way for continued development and fundraising activities. The Department of Homeland Security is currently planning a new border crossing facility at Coburn Gore, details of which are necessary for finalizing corridor negotiations with the abutting landowner.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

In the High Peaks region, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) owns 170 acres in fee lands and holds an adjacent 168 acres in fee through a common undivided arrangement on the east side of Saddleback Mountain and the Horn. Similar to neighboring properties, road quality to access these



parcels is variable, and generally poor. Beyond land ownership, ATC works through a cooperative management system with public and private partners to manage the entire Appalachian Trail including the 80 mile segment that runs through the High Peaks (in Maine relying heavily on Maine Appalachian Trail Club volunteers for on-the-ground work). The A.T. serves as a main recreation vein for hiking/backpacking opportunities in the region as it traverses many 4000-foot mountains and includes amenities like campsites, overnight shelters, and privies. Official side trails, like the Berry Picker's and the Horns Pond Trail in the Bigelows, give hikers additional access points to the A.T., which further expands its impact in the region. A large recreation footprint presents several management considerations that demand consistent attention and funding. This section of the A.T. requires federal boundary monitoring, long-term corridor maintenance, visitor use management, and larger trail construction projects that improve drainage and prevent erosion. This work is critical to ensure sustainable long-term use of the A.T. and to protect its natural and cultural values.

MAINE APPALACHIAN TRAIL LAND TRUST

The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust owns 1,206 acres in fee land and holds easements on 14,190 acres in the High Peaks region. These lands are open to the public for hiking, hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities, and some contain hiking trails, ATV trails or snowmobile trails. Many of these areas are reached by side trails or via the Appalachian Trail itself. The Appalachian Trail travels for over 80 miles through the High Peaks and presents an opportunity to increase the assets available for all kinds of recreation, by building out from the spine of the trail. However, these lands and trails suffer from issues such as poor access, overuse, underuse, and lack of road maintenance. Many trails need to

be rerouted or need signage and wayfinding. Some trails and lands have limited parking and use of the trail is increasing beyond what the location can adequately handle. On certain trails users report getting lost due to lack of wayfinding, or have trouble navigating to the trailhead on logging roads. Dedicated funding which could be drawn upon to improve roads, build new trails, install signage, etc., would alleviate some of the issues on these and other A.T. lands.














HIGH PEAKS ALLIANCE

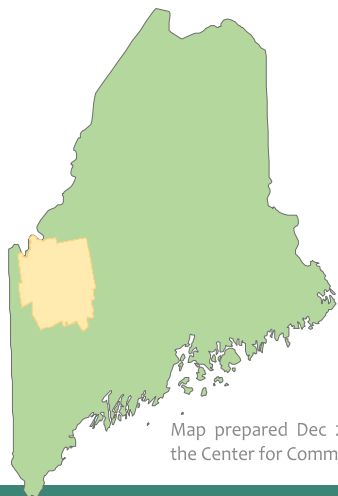
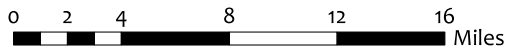
The High Peaks Alliance (HPA) works to ensure and enhance recreational access and opportunities in the Maine High Peaks. High Peaks Alliance maintains the 25-mile Fly Rod Crosby Trail that connects Phillips to the Rangeley Region and owns the 80-acre Perham Stream Birding Trail property. HPA developed the region's first accessible trail with the University of Maine at Farmington and have funded numerous trail projects across the region, including the replacement of the Perham Stream Bridge, as well as ATV and snowmobile trail improvements. Currently, HPA is working on the installation of the \$3 million Sandy River Bridge which will connect the regional Whistle Stop Trail to downtown Farmington.

The original State of the High Peaks Report found that the majority of trails in the region are not conserved and this is one of the primary issues HPA has been working to address through conservation of recreational lands. The State of Maine and area conservation organizations lack the capacity to adequately address infrastructure needs. HPA has responded to many of these needs but much work needs to be done.

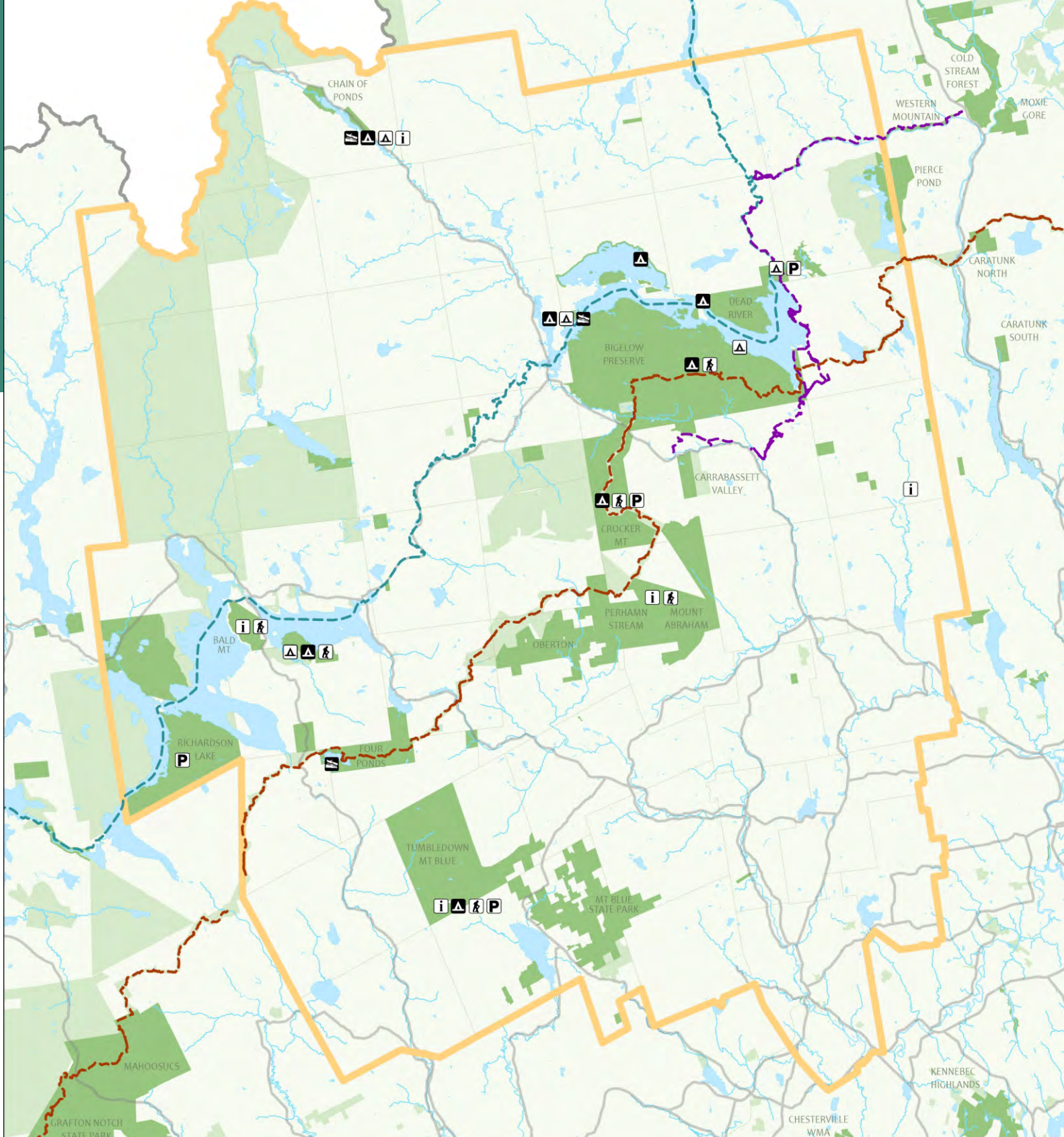
HIGH PEAKS RECREATION ASSESSMENT

PRIORITIES OF MAINE BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS

-  Construction of Boat Launch
-  New Campsites
-  Campsite Improvements
-  Parking Expansions
-  Improving Existing Trails
-  Improving Signage
-  Roads
-  Appalachian Trail
-  Maine Huts Trails
-  Northern Forest Canoe Trail
-  State Protected Land
-  Other Protected Land
-  High Peaks Region



Map prepared Dec 2023, by:
the Center for Community GIS



PRIORITIES OF THE MAINE BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS

The vast majority of conservation lands, with attendant recreational assets, are under the ownership and management of Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL). Conservation and recreation priorities for the BPL in the region were determined by reviewing the BPL's 15-year management plans. The BPL is required to create and publish management plans for each of the regions in which they manage land every 15 years. These plans are also required to be reviewed and updated every 5 years. These plans detail the history, current conditions, issues, and future priorities for the BPL lands in their respective regions. There are four management plans which at least partially cover parts of the High Peaks Region:

1. The Upper Kennebec Region Management Plan, which was adopted in 2019, covers a small portion of the High Peaks Region.
2. The Western Mountains Region Management Plan, which was adopted in 2011, covers a portion of the High Peaks Region. The most recent review for this plan occurred in 2021.
3. The Tumbledown/Mt. Blue Region Management Plan area is entirely located within the High Peaks Region and was adopted in 2022.
4. The Flagstaff Region Management Plan area is also entirely located within the High Peaks Region, and the plan was adopted in 2007 with the most recent review taking place in 2018. A management plan for the new Crocker Mountain Public Land was added to the Flagstaff Region Management Plan in 2015.

The needs listed below are representative of the broad needs for BPL units across the region. Specific assets are listed in Appendix A below.

Campsite improvements are listed as a need for five different BPL units in the region (see Appendix A). Most of the camping areas that BPL manages are primitive sites with no dedicated staff, fees, or reservations. These sites typically have a level area for tenting, a fire ring, a picnic table, and an outhouse. Many of these sites see extremely high levels of use and are occupied every weekend night during the summer. High use levels have degraded many of the campsites and some are in need of replacement or overhaul. Vegetation damage and firewood collection has also occurred, for which solutions need to be found. These sites are in contrast to Rangeley Lake State Park, which is a developed state park campground with more amenities, regular maintenance and BPL staff. The improvements proposed for the campground at Rangeley Lake State Park include adding hookups, building a new playground, building a ball field, and adding cabins to stay in.

New campsites are listed as a need for eight different BPL units in the region. As previously stated, many of the existing campsites in the region see very high usage during the summer months. This has created a significant need for more camping capacity on BPL land. The Flagstaff Lake and Tumbledown areas are in greatest need of more campsites, and the BPL has proposed new campsites to be built in both areas. These new campsites would allow for

dispersed use and reduce the current levels of use at those campsites.

Improving existing hiking trails is listed as a need for three different BPL units in the region. The trails at these popular public lands see very high levels of use which have led to issues such as erosion, trail widening, and trail braiding on the popular trails. In some instances, especially on Tumbledown Mountain, trails are in extremely poor condition and will require rebuilding or relocation to remedy the issues. Many trails in the region were not built to handle the level of current use, and significant trail work will be required across the region to upgrade these trails to meet demand.

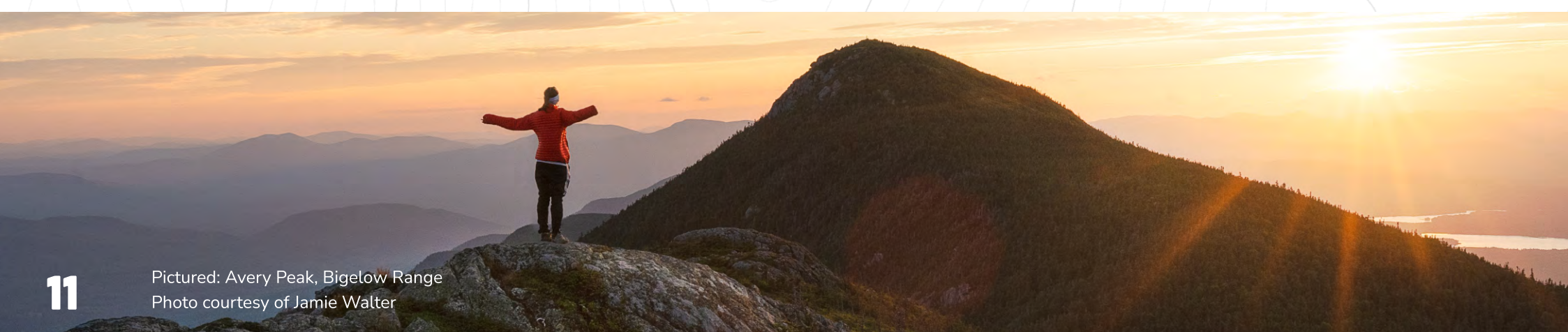
Constructing new hiking trails is listed as a need for three different BPL units. High levels of use on trails has created a need for dispersed trail use which can be accomplished through the creation of new trails in high use areas. Both day hiking and backpacking trails have been proposed by the BPL.

Improving signage is listed as a need for five different BPL units in the region. Better signage is a constant need across lands managed by the BPL to direct visitors to the lands, to provide information about the recreational assets and

natural environment on the lands, to restrict access to areas, to mark the boundaries of BPL lands, and to provide information about allowed uses. Signage needs to be added to locations where there is none and replaced in areas where it is aging.

Constructing boat launches is listed as a need for three different BPL units in the region. Many boat launches and water access sites in the region are not officially sanctioned and/or are located on private land. Boat launches are relatively simple recreational assets to construct, and building them on public land ensures continued access to the waterbody. New boat launches also disperse usage and reduce traffic at launches which are heavily used.

Parking expansions are listed as a need for four different BPL units in the region. With the increased use of recreational assets in the region, many parking areas are often at or beyond capacity on weekends in the summer, causing issues of parking on roadsides and in areas where parking is prohibited. Many existing parking lots have room for expansion beyond their current footprint, so parking expansion should be a relatively easy improvement in many places.



PRIORITIES OF HIGH PEAKS MUNICIPALITIES

Conservation and recreation priorities were obtained from the comprehensive plans of those municipalities that have them. Municipalities in Maine require a comprehensive plan in order to enact zoning ordinances, issue certain permits, and qualify for a variety of state funding programs (30-A MRSA, Chapter 187). Of the twenty organized municipalities in the region, twelve have comprehensive plans (Byron, Carrabassett Valley, Eustis, Farmington, Highland Plantation, Kingfield, New Portland, New Vineyard, Phillips, Rangeley, Roxbury, and Weld). Avon, Coplin Plantation, Dallas Plantation, Industry, Rangeley Plantation, Sandy River Plantation, Strong, and Temple do not have comprehensive plans.

Many of the communities' plans indicate that conservation and recreation are very important to their economies and lifestyles. A number of conservation and recreation priorities have been identified in the comprehensive plans of multiple towns in the region. Specific assets for each municipality can be found in the appendices at the end of this report. These notable trends from communities are listed below in order of importance based on their comprehensive plans.

Conservation of natural areas is listed as a priority for ten municipalities in the region, including Carrabassett Valley, Eustis, Farmington, Highland Plantation, Kingfield, New Portland, New Vineyard, Phillips, Rangeley, and Weld. Natural areas listed as conservation priorities in comprehensive plans include woodlands, wetlands, shoreline areas, important wildlife habitats, and unique natural features. These areas are important to the regional ecosystem and to the people who reside in these communities.

Building new non-motorized trails is listed as a priority for ten municipalities in the region, including Carrabassett Valley, Eustis, Farmington, Highland Plantation, Kingfield, New Portland, New Vineyard, Phillips, Rangeley, and Weld. Non-motorized trails include hiking trails, walking trails, bike trails, snowshoe trails, and cross country ski trails. These trails are very important to both visitors and residents in the region.

Securing public access points to water bodies is listed as a priority for nine municipalities in the region, including Carrabassett Valley, Eustis, Farmington, Kingfield, New Portland, New Vineyard, Phillips, Roxbury, and Weld. Access to ponds, lakes, streams, and rivers is important for activities such as boating, fishing, and swimming. Many water bodies currently have informal access points, which may be regularly used, but are located on private lands. These access points on private land can be closed by landowners at any time.

Conservation of land for recreational purposes is listed as a priority for eight municipalities in the region, including Carrabassett Valley, Eustis, Farmington, Kingfield, New Vineyard, Rangeley, Roxbury, and Weld. Many recreational assets (i.e. trails, waterfalls, and swimming areas) in the region are located on private land, and access to them is not guaranteed. Purchasing these lands for conservation ensures continued public access to existing recreational assets.

Preservation of scenic views is listed as a priority for eight municipalities in the region, including Eustis,

Highland Plantation, Kingfield, New Vineyard, Phillips, Rangeley, Roxbury, and Weld. Most municipalities in the area have places where scenic views of the surrounding mountains and valleys can be seen from public roadways. These viewpoints are important to the residents of the communities, including people who may not have the ability to hike on trails to viewpoints, and also draw many people to the region, who then spend money in the communities.

Improving and/or expanding their network of snowmobile trails is listed as a priority for eight municipalities in the region, including Carrabassett Valley, Eustis, Farmington, Highland Plantation, Kingfield, New Vineyard, Phillips, and Rangeley. The region already has a relatively expansive network of snowmobile trails, and snowmobile traffic is a significant source of income for many businesses in the area. Expanding and improving the snowmobile trail network is important to many municipalities due to their recreational and economic benefits to the communities.

Improving and/or expanding their network of ATV trails is listed as a priority for nine municipalities in the region, including Carrabassett Valley, Eustis, Farmington, Highland Plantation, Kingfield, New Portland, New Vineyard, Phillips, and Rangeley. While not as large as the region's snowmobile trail network, there is still a rather extensive ATV trail network throughout much of the region. In a similar manner to snowmobile trails, ATV trails provide important recreational and economic benefits to the region.

Developing a community recreation area is listed as a priority for four municipalities in the region, including Carrabassett Valley, Eustis, New Portland, and New Vineyard. Few municipalities in the region have a well developed town park with amenities such as ball fields, picnic areas, walking trails, playgrounds, and swimming areas in one location.

Improving and/or maintaining relationships with landowners is listed as a priority for three municipalities in the region: Eustis, Roxbury, and Weld. The majority of the land in the High Peaks Region is privately owned, so many of the area's recreational assets are on these private lands. Anecdotally, improving relationships with landowners is also likely important to other municipalities which did not directly mention it, because every municipality in the region has recreational assets on privately owned land, and these priorities are common to all of them.



PRIORITIES FOR MOTORIZED RECREATION

The following priorities and projects were highlighted by the Bureau of Parks and Land's Off-Road Recreational Vehicles Office (OHRV). The office oversees OHRV snowmobile and ATV trails throughout the entire state and for this study provided information focused on trails in the High Peaks region.

One of the most significant priorities and ongoing projects for the OHRV Office is landowner relations. The majority of OHRV trails across the state are located on private land, and good landowner relations are essential to ensuring that these trails stay open for use. Only about 6% of ATV trails and about 16% of snowmobile trails in the region are located on conserved land which has permanent public access. While relations with smaller landowners are usually coordinated by local clubs, the OHRV office coordinates relations with the state's large landowners, most of whom

manage their lands (which are undeveloped) for forest products.









The OHRV office also coordinates maintenance of trails and bridges in locations where clubs are inactive, lack capacity, or need additional resources for larger projects. Maintenance costs have been increasing, as forest products landowners often expect that trails on roads be maintained to handle commercial vehicle traffic, rather than just OHRV traffic, and this work is more expensive. This is a relatively recent development, as landowners previously did not generally require shared sections of road to be maintained to this standard by the OHRV organizations.

This brief synopsis cannot come close to documenting all the needs of the motorized trail systems and a more in depth analysis should be attempted.

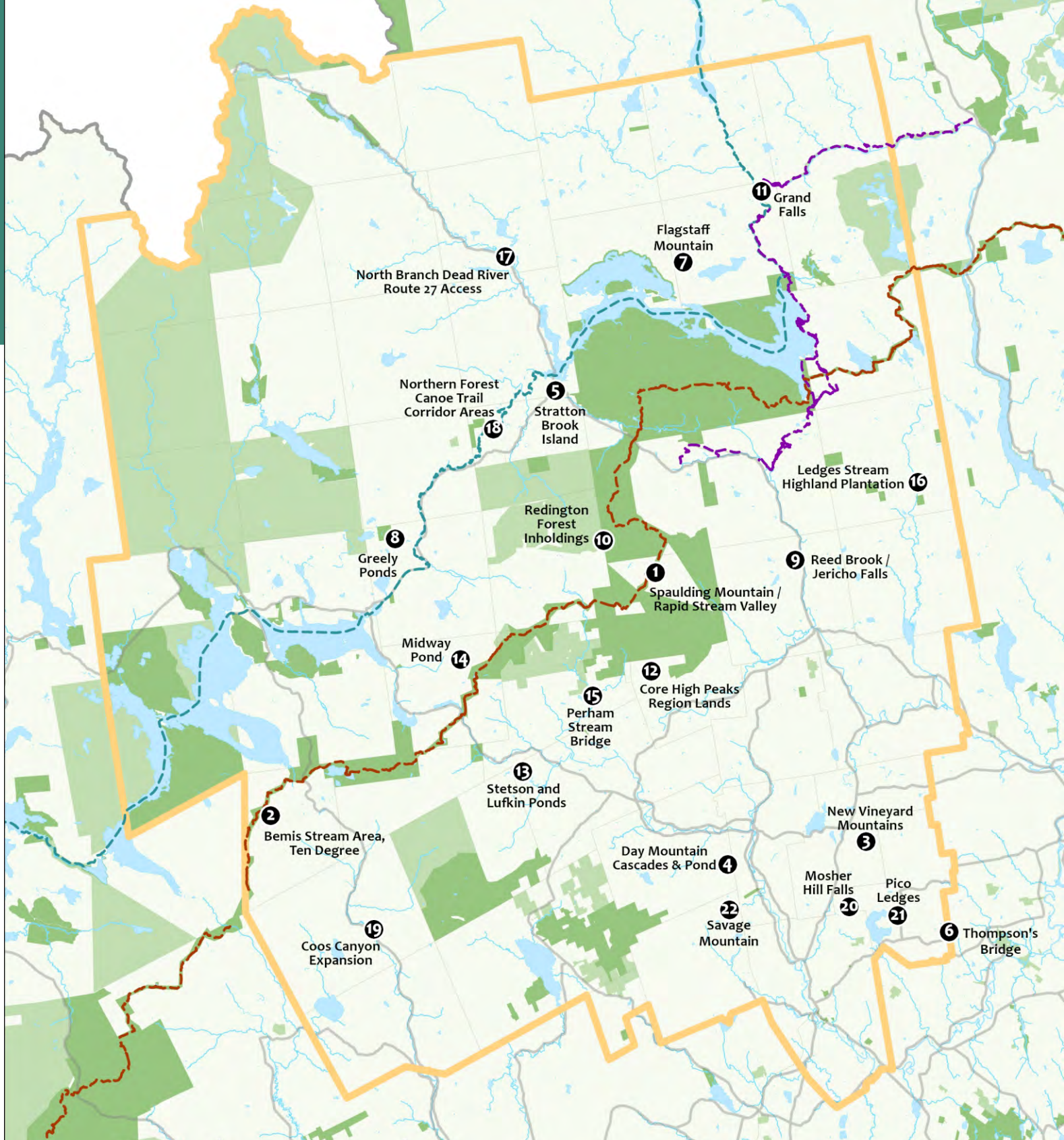
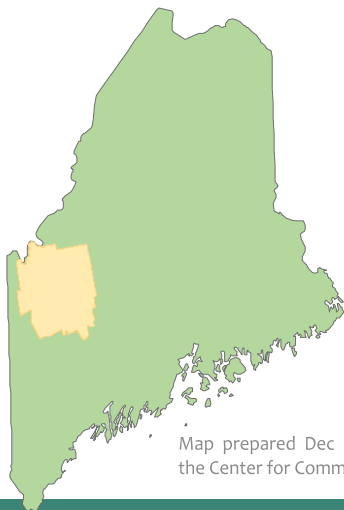
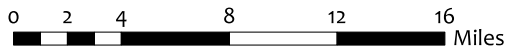


HIGH PEAKS RECREATION ASSESSMENT

POTENTIAL FOR LAND CONSERVATION

-  Roads
-  Appalachian Trail
-  Maine Huts Trails
-  Northern Forest Canoe Trail
-  Priority Areas for Land Conservation*
-  Conservation Land (EASEMENT)
-  Conservation Land (FEE)
-  High Peaks Region

*Numbers correspond to Appendix and do not indicate priority.

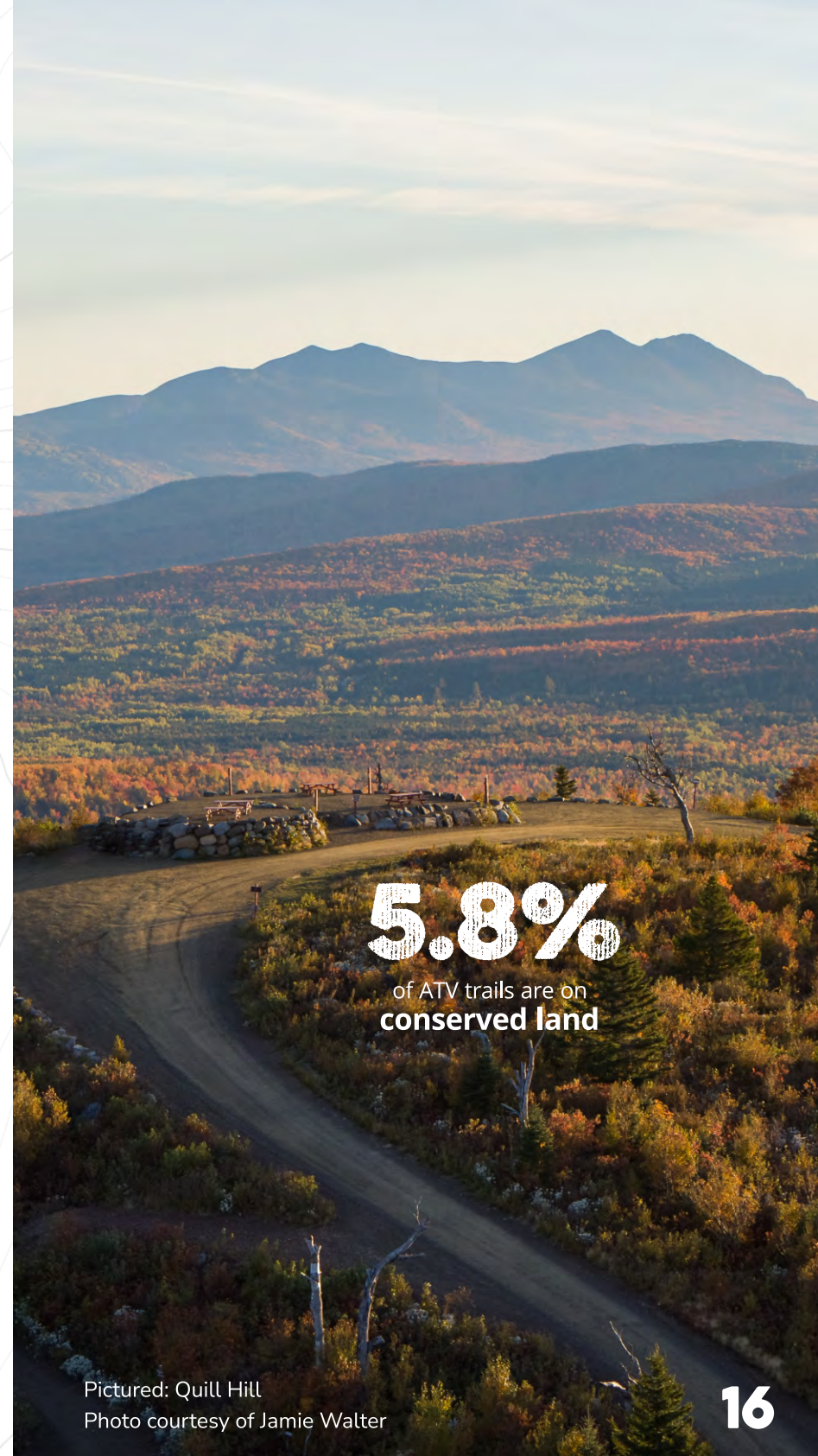


AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR LAND CONSERVATION

As noted in the initial State of the High Peaks report, the area is 1,380,052 acres in size with 294,635 acres of land that are currently listed as conserved. Even accounting for developed areas (where conservation is not needed), there remain thousands of acres of land that lack conservation. A cursory look at a map of the recreation assets in the region shows that the vast majority of trails of all types lack the permanent protection land conservation affords. Only 5.8% of ATV trails and 15.7% of snowmobile trails are on conservation land; for hiking, biking, and other recreational trails the numbers are likely to be nearly as high (but since there is no single organization dedicated to tracking and inventorying trails in the region or the state, this data is lacking). In other words, everything from trails to campsites to parking areas were created and are currently used without any sense of permanence attached to them.

This doesn't imply that every asset requires land conservation for it to be accessible to the public, but it is clear that there are opportunities to protect areas that are important to the public and the High Peaks region. Some of these opportunities are forward-looking and proactive; others might reflect a need to protect an area which, sadly, could be closed to public use without intervention. Appendix B contains a list of areas which High Peaks Initiative partners have indicated as priority focus areas for land conservation.









This appendix does not attempt to include all of the areas in the region with potential for conservation, but instead highlights examples that are significant and were inventoried.



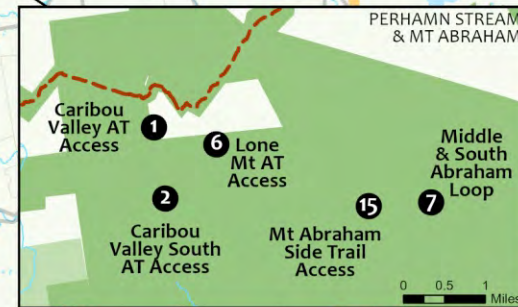
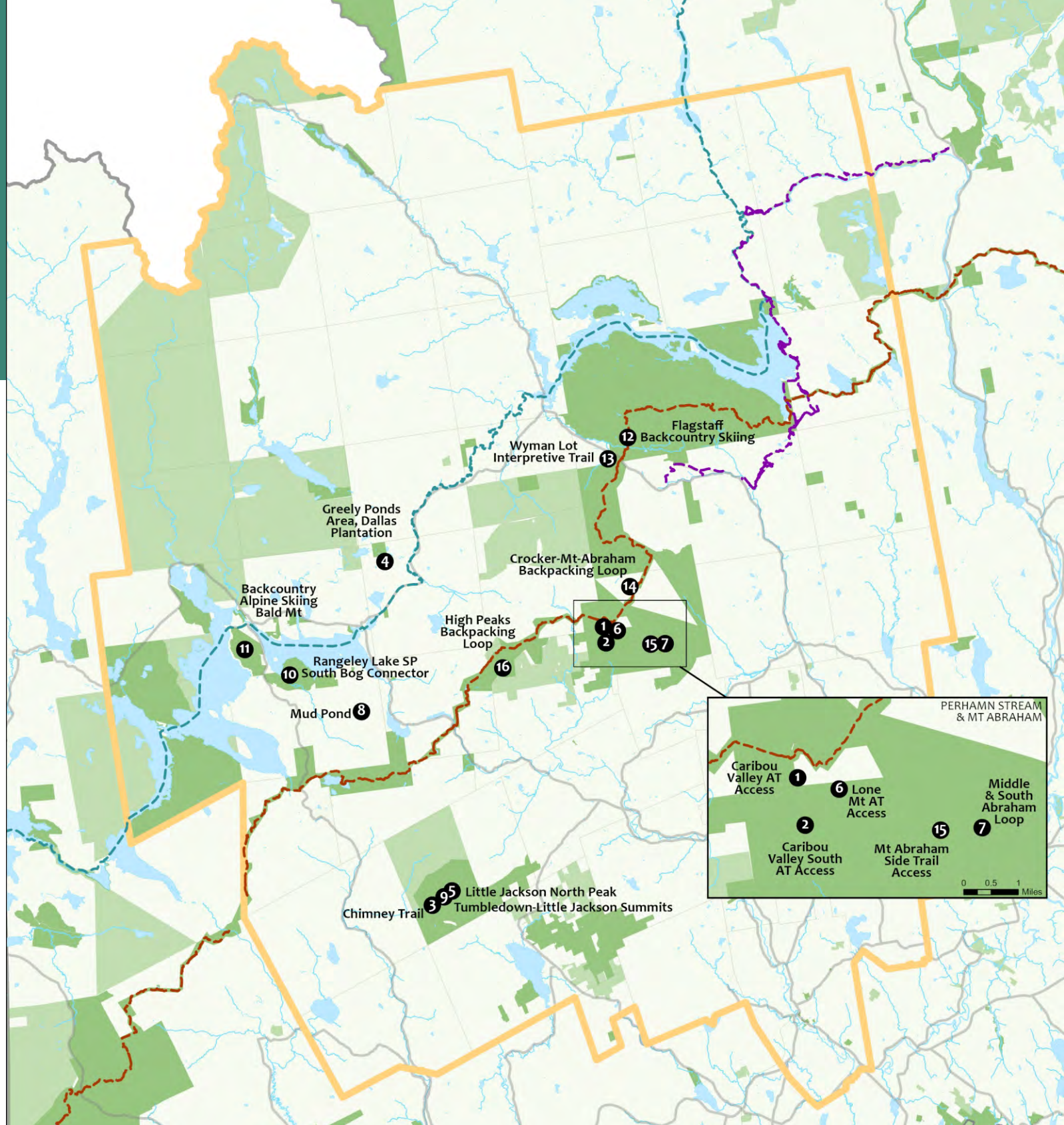
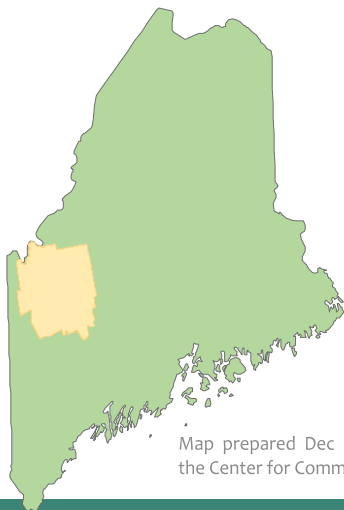
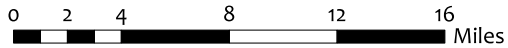
5.8%
of ATV trails are on
conserved land

HIGH PEAKS RECREATION ASSESSMENT

POTENTIAL FOR RECREATIONAL ASSET DEVELOPMENT

-  Roads
-  Appalachian Trail
-  Maine Huts Trails
-  Northern Forest Canoe Trail
-  Priority Areas for Land Conservation*
-  Conservation Land (EASEMENT)
-  Conservation Land (FEE)
-  High Peaks Region

*Numbers correspond to Appendix and do not indicate priority.











AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR RECREATIONAL ASSET DEVELOPMENT

Appendix C is a list of examples of locations which were visited and were determined to have significant potential for the development of new recreational assets. In most instances, these potential recreational assets would be hiking trails and would be located on land which is already conserved and allows public access. Potential new trails would require formalization of an existing informal trail, or building a new trail in an alignment which is likely to see use. This appendix does not attempt to include all of the areas in the region with potential for recreational asset development, but instead highlights examples that are significant and were inventoried.

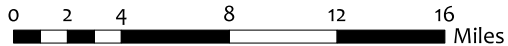


HIGH PEAKS RECREATION ASSESSMENT

POTENTIAL FOR RECREATIONAL ASSET IMPROVEMENT

-  Roads
-  Appalachian Trail
-  Maine Huts Trails
-  Northern Forest Canoe Trail
-  Priority Areas for Land Conservation*
-  Conservation Land (EASEMENT)
-  Conservation Land (FEE)
-  High Peaks Region

*Numbers correspond to Appendix and do not indicate priority.



AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR RECREATIONAL ASSET IMPROVEMENT

Appendix D lists many recreational assets which are already established but are in need of improvement if they are going to remain in use by the general public. Issues that need to be addressed include access to a trail, regular trail maintenance, environmental damage, and more. In some cases, an asset that is heavily used by the public already requires some form of designation or protection for that use to continue on a permanent basis.



Pictured: Cranberry Peak, Bigelow Range
Photo courtesy of Jamie Walter

REGIONAL RECREATIONAL ASSET DOCUMENTATION SUMMARY

The recreational assets in the High Peaks region which are included in the appendices were documented through site visits. Notes were taken, waypoints were collected, and each asset was scored on a standardized rubric. With a few exceptions, well-documented recreational assets and those which are managed by High Peaks Initiative partners were not included in the inventory. (Examples of these recreational assets that were not documented include the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the Fly Rod Crosby Trail, the Perham Stream Birding Trail, and the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.) The majority of formal recreational assets in the region were documented, in addition to many informal assets (which, as previously noted, are impossible to count). Types of recreational assets that were documented include hiking trails, boat launches, picnic areas, campsites, waterfalls, multi-use trails, fishing access points, and more.

In total, 128 recreational assets were documented. Due to the sheer number of assets that were documented, it is not practical to describe each in this report. Instead, the data will be summarized, and trends across the data will be described.

SUMMARY OF DATA

A total of 128 recreational assets were surveyed according to a grading rubric. Scores were compiled for:

1. Quality and relevance of signage
2. Overall condition of the asset
3. Ease of access
4. Suitability for four-season usage
5. Ability to handle the level of usage which the asset regularly sees
6. Future resiliency of the asset
7. Attractiveness/aesthetic appeal of the asset
8. Condition of the natural environment surrounding the asset



For each category, recreational assets were assigned a score from 1 to 5 for a total score of up to 40 for each asset (1 as the lowest, 5 as the highest). The scores are subjective in nature, but because every asset was scored by the same contractor, there is uniformity across the surveyed assets.

The data from the grading rubrics was analyzed for patterns:

1. The average score for all of the recreational assets that were documented is 30.89. This score indicates that, overall, the recreational assets in our region have a “fair” rating. While they are generally in an adequate condition, there is significant room for improvement of the condition of existing recreational assets in the region.
2. The category total for all 128 recreational assets if each received the maximum score of 5 – i.e., if each achieved the highest score for Overall Condition of Asset, Ease of Access, etc. - would be 640 points. Each of the category totals are in the 400s and 500s, with the lowest being 415 and the highest being 577.
3. The Quality and Relevancy of Signage category received an overall score of 429, which is the second lowest score of any category and is only lower than Suitability for four-season usage. While most recreational assets in the region have some sort of signage, a great many assets could be improved. Signage can be quite old and difficult to read, and occasionally contains outdated information. Signage for trails could also be improved by adding distance information to signs which currently lack that. Additionally, many smaller trail systems do not have any signage on their trails. Improved signage is overall a significant need for the region.
4. The Overall Condition of the Asset category received a total score of 503, which is average. This indicates that

recreational assets are generally in fair to good overall condition throughout our region, with room for improvement. Two common issues which detract from an assets’ overall condition score are trail widening and erosion. Overuse is a common cause of trail widening and erosion in the region - numerous trails and other recreational assets are seeing more use than they are designed for. Improper trail use is also leading to significant widening and braiding on trails, which is often caused by people leaving the designated trail and using a route that they perceive as easier or shorter. Another major cause of erosion is water (from streams, rainfall, snowmelt, etc.), especially on improperly designed trails and other assets. If recreational assets are not built with the proper erosion control devices (water bars, drainage ditches, steps, etc.), or if these devices are not properly maintained, runoff from snowmelt and rain can cause significant erosion.

5. The Ease of Access category received an overall score of 571, which is the second highest total score of any one category. This high score indicates that the recreational assets in our region are generally easy to access by vehicle by anyone, regardless of the type of vehicle that they drive. While some assets may be located on private roads which are not paved and may be in poorer condition, or may require walking down a gated road for trail access, the majority are located on public roads that are accessible by all types of passenger vehicles. Many are located on state highways, while others are located on town or county roads. The roads may be paved or dirt surfaced, but the public roads in the area are generally in good condition.
6. The Suitability for Four-season Usage category received an overall score of 415, which is the lowest total score of any category. This total score could likely be lower, as

many sites were evaluated in the warmer months without winter conditions. There are many seasonal road closures in the region and many parking lots are not plowed in the winter, thereby impacting the total score in this category. Most of these road closures are also in place for much of the spring, due to mud season, and are not accessible to vehicles during that time. In many cases, the road to the asset may be plowed, but the parking lot itself is not. This leads to lack of vehicular access to the asset in winter and/or vehicles being parked along the edge of the plowed road, creating a hazardous situation. Lack of vehicular access to recreational assets in the winter is a significant issue in the region, and it leads to additional crowding due to the diminished number of assets which are easily accessible during the winter/spring.

7. The Ability to Handle the Level of Use Which the Asset Regularly Sees category received an overall score of 577, which is the highest total score of any category. This score indicates that the majority of recreational assets in the region do not suffer from overuse and/or have been built to accommodate the use they receive. While this can be beneficial for the majority of recreational assets, it belies the fact that there are some recreational assets suffer from chronic overuse. Ideally, some of the usage of overused assets could be dispersed among other, underutilized recreational assets in the region.
8. The Future Resilience of the Asset category received a total score of 514, which is in the middle range of the total scores. Many recreational assets in the region are likely to remain in a condition similar to those observed for the foreseeable future, under the assumption that they receive regular maintenance. However, there are numerous recreational assets in the region which are not expected to maintain resiliency. Some assets lack

resilience because maintenance is sporadic or has been discontinued. Others may not be resilient because overuse of the asset is degrading it beyond what routine maintenance can rectify. Some may not be resilient to increased flooding or increases in weather event severity.

9. The Attractiveness/Aesthetic Appeal of Asset category received an overall total score of 446, which is in the middle range of the total scores. Many recreational assets in the region are very scenic, often having views of mountains, waterbodies, and older growth forests. Few assets scored low (1s and 2s) in this category, while many assets, especially boat launches and local trails, scored in the middle (3s). Most hiking trails in the region scored quite high (4s and 5s), as scenic appeal is an important reason recreation draws visitors to the region.
10. The Condition of the Natural Environment Surrounding the Asset category received an overall total score of 499, which is in the middle range of the total scores. Many of the recreational assets in the region are surrounded by lands which haven't seen negative impacts from human use (most notably the conserved lands). Some recreational assets have seen impacts to the surrounding environment due to external factors such as intensive logging or litter from nearby roadways. Asset users themselves can impact the surrounding landscape through litter or by causing damage to vegetation. This is most common around heavily-used recreational assets. On heavily-used hiking trails, users often wander off of the designated trail along routes, causing vegetation damage and erosion as social trails are created by people using these routes. Campsites often have vegetation damage due to people camping outside of designated areas, and collecting firewood outside of permitted areas or by illegally felling trees.

CONCLUSIONS

The High Peaks region of Maine has long been an outdoor recreation destination and based on the number of trails, miles of trails, and variety of kinds of trails, the region is on the verge of becoming one of the premiere outdoor destinations in New England. But based on this assessment and the companion State of the High Peaks report from 2022, significant work needs to be done to ensure that trails, lands and infrastructure are of a standard that reflects the need and that the outdoor recreation and conservation system in the High Peaks can adequately meet demand of both communities and visitors. The findings in this report indicate the following:

Trails are in average condition overall. For a region that is focused on a recreation future, this is a clear sign that there needs to be improvement. This improvement is not limited to one kind of trail, one specific geographical area, or one kind of improvement that is needed. The recreation and conservation infrastructure of the High Peaks region needs long-term, broad-scale work to improve overall conditions.

Signs are not the central issue. Many trails and destinations do need signage but this is outweighed by maintenance and conservation needs. A comprehensive strategy for determining how and where to erect signs, kiosks and trail wayfinding should be secondary to securing public access, addressing maintenance issues, and rerouting trails that need attention.

Access can be precarious. As we have seen in 2023, when heavy rainfall overwhelmed the ability of trail managers to keep up with repairs and there were numerous disputes in the region over who is responsible for maintenance of roads and bridges, access to trails and lands in the High Peaks can

be an issue. In many instances, ad hoc practices lead to closures and it is not clear who is responsible for maintenance and/or repairs. There is often no incentive for a private landowner to improve road conditions or replace bridges, despite instances where these provide key access to trails and lands.

Four-season recreation is beyond the scope of this report but needs further investigation. Many trails that are accessed in warmer months see no usage during the winter, or their mode of usage is entirely different (i.e. they are snowmobile trails instead of bike trails, or cross country ski trails instead of hiking trails). These differences are significant enough to require an additional study.

The ability to handle use rankings underscore the need for dispersion beyond the most popular trails. If 80% of trail users are heading to just the top ten destinations in the High Peaks region, the user base is in a precarious position if something happens to some of these trails. For sustainability - particularly when considering visitors and the attendant recreation economy - more trails need to be able to handle increased levels of use.

Future resilience depends on permanence and proactive maintenance. It isn't enough to assess a trail and plan based on what's happening today. If a trail can be closed at any time or if access is imperiled, or if there is no designated trail management body checking conditions annually, then resilience of a site or trail quickly erodes.

Aesthetic appeal isn't the only reason for using trails and conserved lands. Community members want to meet up with friends, walk a dog, or engage in a healthy activity like jogging. Children need places to explore beyond their own backyards. Special places can be special for different reasons, and to different user groups. It is important to allocate resources with this in mind.

The condition of the natural environment surrounding assets should be evaluated carefully. An intact natural environment and new trail construction can both be important but sometimes one inhibits the existence of the other. It is important to make decisions that will best reflect the needs of the community, visitors, and other stakeholders in the High Peaks region.

For the High Peaks region to live up to its potential, the needs of trails, conserved lands and other assets will require significant time and resources by many organizations, agencies and others in the region.

The dichotomy between the individual experience of a trail user visiting an area for a few hours and the permanence of the trail as a landscape feature can make it hard to think about the long-term needs that an outdoor recreation destination can have. Each of the hundreds of trails, lands, boat launches, parking areas, kiosks and more that are covered by this report are in need of resources. There is no such thing as a trail that doesn't need maintenance, public access, or a place to park a vehicle. Organizations who maintain trails and access often have backlogs of years in terms of when they have the capacity to install signs or reroute a section of trail sorely in need of it. Many organizations depend on volunteers who are a tremendous resource - the backbone of this work - but there aren't enough of them and much of the work that needs to be done

requires specialized training and resources. Organizations, state agencies, the general public and landowners are aware of the scope of the work that needs to be done and are standing by to undertake this work. The High Peaks can be the go-to for a great day hike, a scenic ride on an ATV, a great single track trail ride, or just an hour-long break in nature. If comprehensive resources over a duration of time - over years and not just in single outlays - can be secured, the High Peaks region can become the hub of outdoor recreation that it has the potential to be.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PRIORITIES OF THE MAINE BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS

Campsite Improvements:

Rangeley Lake State Park
Bigelow Preserve and Flagstaff Lake Public Lands
Spring Lake Lot
Myers Lodge Lot
Chain of Ponds Public Reserved Land

New campsites:

Rangeley Lake State Park
Tumbledown Public Land
Bigelow Preserve and Flagstaff Lake Public Lands
Dead River Peninsula Lot
Myers Lodge Lot
Flagstaff Lake Northern Shoreline Lot
Chain of Ponds Public Land
Crocker Mountain Unit

Improving existing hiking trails is listed as a need for three different BPL units in the region:

- Bald Mountain Public Land
- Clearing gladed areas for backcountry alpine skiing
 - BPL's Western Mountains Region Management Plan discusses continued improvements to the Bald Mountain Trail and Bald Mountain Link Trail in Bald Mountain Public Land.
- Tumbledown Public Land
- The Tumbledown/Mount Blue Region Management Plan mentions the need for extensive trail work on trails in the Tumbledown Public Lands unit, especially the Brook Trail.

Mount Abraham Public Land

- Relocating portions of the Fire Warden's Trail on Mount Abraham is discussed in the Flagstaff Region plan.

Constructing new hiking trails is listed as a need for three different BPL units:

Rangeley Lake State Park

- Building a hiking trail between Rangeley Lake State Park and the South Bog Conservation Area

Bigelow Preserve Public Land

- The Flagstaff Region Management Plan has a proposal for two new trails within Bigelow Preserve Public Land. One proposed trail, referred to as the Avery Peak Bypass Trail.
- The second proposed trail, referred to as the North Col Trail, would start near Round Barn Campsites and climb to the Appalachian Trail between Avery Peak and West Peak.
- The Flagstaff Region plan includes information about developing routes for two backcountry skiing areas, along with trails connecting to the Jones Pond Area. (Though not clear, it is assumed that this is referring to backcountry Nordic skiing as opposed to backcountry alpine skiing.) The lower elevation areas around the Bigelow Range, including the area near Jones Pond, are ideal for developing formalized ski trails.
- The Flagstaff Region plan proposes constructing an interpretive trail through an old growth stand on the Wyman Lot.

Crocker Mountain Public Land

- The potential for a new backpacking loop on Crocker

Mountain and Mount Abraham Public Lands is mentioned in the Crocker Mountain addendum to the Flagstaff Region Management Plan. This potential loop would utilize the Fire Warden's Trail, the Mount Abraham Side Trail, and Appalachian Trail, along with a new segment of trail which has yet to be constructed.

Improving signage is listed as a need for five different BPL units in the region:

- Bald Mountain Public Land
- Tumbledown Public Land
- Mount Abraham Public Land
- Chain of Ponds Public Land
- Highland Plantation Southeast Lot

Constructing boat launches is listed as a need for three different BPL units in the region:

- Four Ponds Public Land
- Myers Lodge Lot
- Chain of Ponds Public Land

Parking expansions are listed as a need for four different BPL units in the region:

- Richardson Public Land
- Tumbledown Public Land
- Spring Lake Lot
- Crocker Mountain Public Land

APPENDIX B: AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR LAND CONSERVATION

- Spaulding Mountain/Rapid Stream Valley
- Bemis Stream Area, Ten Degree
- New Vineyard Mountains
- Day Mountain Cascades and Pond
- Stratton Brook Island
- Thompson's Bridge
- Flagstaff Mountain
- Greely Ponds
- Reed Brook/Jericho Steps
- Redington Forest Inholdings
- Grand Falls
- Core High Peaks Region Adjacent Lands
- Stetson and Lufkin Ponds
- Midway Pond
- Perham Stream Bridge
- Ledges Stream - Highland Plantation
- North Branch of Dead River - Route 27 Access
- Northern Forest Canoe Trail Corridor Areas
- Maine Huts and Trails Corridor Areas
- Coos Canyon Expansion
- Mosher Hill Falls
- Pico Ledges
- Savage Mountain



APPENDIX C: AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR RECREATIONAL ASSET DEVELOPMENT

Caribou Valley Appalachian Trail Access Route, Mount Abram Township
Caribou Valley Road South AT Access Route, Mount Abram Township
Chimney Trail, Township 6 North of Weld
Greely Ponds Area, Dallas Plantation
Little Jackson North Peak Trail, Township 6 North of Weld
Lone Mountain A.T. Access Route, Mount Abram Township
Middle and South Abraham Loop Trail, Mount Abram Township
Mud Pond Area, Rangeley Plantation
Tumbledown-Little Jackson Summit Trails, Township 6 North of Weld
Rangeley Lake State Park and the South Bog Conservation Area Connector Trail
Backcountry Alpine Skiing in Bald Mountain Public Land
Flagstaff Region Backcountry Skiing Areas
Interpretive Trail, Wyman Lot Old Growth Forest
Crocker Mountain and Mount Abraham Backpacking Loop
Mount Abraham Trail Side Trail Access from Barnjum
High Peaks Backpacking Loop Using Berry Picker's & Fly Rod Crosby Trails

APPENDIX D: AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR RECREATIONAL ASSET IMPROVEMENT

Angel Falls Trail (Conservation)
Bald Mountain and Saddleback Wind (Conservation)
Bemis Stream Trail
Blue Ledges (Conservation)
Burnt Hill Trail
Caribou Pond Campsites
Cascade Brook Falls
Chandler Mill Stream Falls
Flagstaff Mountain Trail (Conservation)
Mosher Hill Falls (Conservation)
Mount Redington Trail
Picked Chicken Hill Trail (Conservation)
Savage Mountain Trail (Conservation)
West Mountain Falls Trail
Bald Mountain Trail and Link Trail, Bald Mountain Public Land
Kibby Mountain Trail and Fire Tower
Bigelow Range Trail
Brook Trail, Tumbledown Public Unit
Tumbledown Public Lands Unit Wayfinding
Fire Warden's Trail, Mount Abraham (Relocation)
Hunter Cove Wildlife Sanctuary
Fly Rod Crosby Trail
Pico Ledges (Conservation)
Daggett Rock Trail
East Nubble Trail
Maine Huts and Trails Route

RECREATION ASSET DATA

Assets were assessed and graded on various criteria deemed relevant for this report. 1= extremely poor, 2= poor, 3= fair, 4= good, 5= excellent.

ASSET NAME

ASSET NAME	Quality & relevancy of signage	Overall condition of asset	Ease of access	Suitability for 4-season usage	Ability to handle level of usage which the asset regularly sees	Future resiliency of asset	Attractiveness & aesthetic appeal	Condition of natural environment surrounding asset	TOTAL SCORE
A.T. - The Crockers from Caribou Valley	3	4	3	2	3	4	4	4	27
Allen Pinnacle Trail	1	5	5	5	5	2	3	3	29
Angel Falls Trail	3	3	4	1	4	5	4	3	27
Bald Mountain Link Trail	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	37
Bald Mountain Trail (Oquossoc)	5	3	5	4	3	3	5	4	32
Bald Mountain Trail (Washington Twp.)	4	3	5	5	3	3	5	4	32
Beal Pond Boat Launch	4	5	4	1	5	5	3	4	31
Beaver Pond Boat Launch	2	3	5	1	5	3	3	3	25
Bemis Stream Campsites	1	4	4	1	3	4	2	2	21
Bemis Stream Trail	2	4	4	2	5	5	4	5	31
Berry Picker's Trail	3	4	2	2	5	5	5	5	31
Big Greely Pond Trail	3	3	4	3	5	3	3	3	27
Bigelow Range Trail	5	3	5	5	4	4	5	4	35
Blue Ledge	1	4	5	2	4	4	4	3	27
Blueberry Mountain Trail	3	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	33
Bonney Point Conservation Area	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	37
Boy Scout Road	2	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	33
Brook Trail	3	2	5	2	1	1	4	2	20
Bunker Pond Boat Launch	1	4	3	1	5	5	3	5	27
Burnt Mountain Trail	2	2	3	4	2	1	4	3	21
Buzzell Lane Trails	3	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	34
Caribou Pond Boat Launch	3	4	2	1	5	2	3	3	23
Caribou Pond Campsites	1	3	4	3	5	5	4	3	28
Carrabassett River Trail	1	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	34
Cascade Brook Falls	1	3	5	5	5	2	4	3	28
Cascade Stream Gorge Trail	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	33
Cathedral Pines Pathways	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	35
Center Hill Nature Trail	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	38
Chandler Mill Stream Falls & Smalls Falls	5	3	5	5	2	4	4	2	28
Clearwater Pond Beach & Boat Launch	5	5	5	5	4	5	3	3	35

Comprehensive Trail System Overview - Q3 2024									
Trail Name	Geographic Data			Usage Statistics			Operational Status		
	Region	Distance (mi)	Elevation (ft)	Users (Q3)	Hours	Incidents	Open	Maint	Closed
Clifford Woods	North	2	4500	5500	3200	3	3	3	32
Coos Canyon	West	5	4000	5500	4500	2	3	2	33
Coubers Brook Trail	South	5	4000	5500	4500	3	3	4	35
Cupsuptic Lake Boat Launch	East	5	5000	1400	5500	3	4	4	32
Cupsuptic Lake Trail	West	4	5000	5500	5500	4	5	5	38
Daggett Rock Trail	North	3	4000	5500	4500	3	4	4	33
Day Mountain Pond Boat Launch	South	2	4000	3100	5500	3	4	4	27
Dill/Sanders Landing	East	5	4000	5100	4500	3	4	4	31
Dodge Pond Boat Launch	West	2	4000	5100	3400	3	3	2	24
Eastman Park	North	4	3000	5500	3500	4	4	4	33
EcoVenture Trails	South	2	4000	5500	5500	3	5	5	34
Fire Warden's Trail (Bigelow Mountain)	East	3	4000	4300	4500	5	4	4	31
Fire Warden's Trail (Mount Abraham)	West	5	4000	4200	4500	5	4	5	33
Flagstaff Lake Hut Trails	North	5	3000	5500	2500	4	5	5	34
Flagstaff Mountain Trail	South	1	3000	5200	4500	4	4	4	26
Foothills Land Conservancy	East	3	5000	5500	5500	4	5	4	37
Forest Legacy Conservation Area	West	4	3000	4400	5300	5	5	5	33
Gammon Pond Boat Launch	North	1	5000	5100	5500	3	4	4	29
Gordon Overlook Trail	South	3	4000	5300	3500	3	3	3	27
Greenvale Conservation Area	East	1	5000	5400	4500	2	5	5	31
Grindstone Pond Boat Launch	West	2	4000	5300	4500	3	5	5	27
Hatchery Brook Preserve	North	5	5000	5500	5500	3	5	5	38
Hemlock Trail	South	5	1000	4500	5500	2	5	5	28
Hills Pond Boat Launch	East	1	4000	5100	4500	3	3	3	26
Hopping Frog Nature Trail	West	5	4000	5400	5500	4	5	5	37
Horns Pond Loop Trail	North	3	4000	4300	4500	3	5	5	31
Hunter Cove Paddle	South	2	3000	5100	3500	3	3	3	25
Hunter Cove Uplands	East	5	4000	5500	5500	2	5	5	36
Hunter Cove Wildlife Sanctuary	West	2	3000	5500	2500	3	5	5	30
Jackson Mountain Trail	North	5	5000	5200	5500	4	5	5	36
Jackson Pond Trail	South	2	4000	5300	5500	4	5	5	33
Joe August Memorial Trail	East	4	5000	5500	5500	3	4	4	36
Kingfield Elementary School Trail	West	2	5000	5500	5500	2	3	3	32
Little Greeley Pond Trail	North	4	3000	4400	3500	3	3	3	28
Little Jackson Connector Trail	South	5	5000	5200	5500	5	5	5	35

DATA CONTINUED

Assets were assessed and graded on various criteria deemed relevant for this report. 1= extremely poor, 2= poor, 3= fair, 4= good, 5= excellent.

ASSET NAME

ASSET NAME	Quality & relevancy of signage	Overall condition of asset	Ease of access	Suitability for 4-season usage	Ability to handle level of usage which the asset regularly sees	Future resiliency of asset	Attractiveness & aesthetic appeal	Condition of natural environment surrounding asset	TOTAL SCORE
Little Jackson Trail	4	4	5	2	4	5	5	5	33
Long Falls Dam Boat Launch	5	5	5	1	5	5	3	3	32
Long Pond Boat Launch	3	4	5	1	3	4	2	2	24
Loon Lake Boat Launch	5	5	3	1	5	5	3	5	32
Loop Trail	3	3	5	2	2	2	5	3	25
M.I.T. - Big Eddy to Grand Falls Hut	4	1	5	5	5	1	4	4	29
Maine Forestry Museum	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	31
Mingo Springs Trail	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	36
Moose Country Corridor Trail	5	5	5	4	5	5	3	5	37
Mosher Hill Falls	1	3	5	2	2	2	4	3	22
Mount Blue Trail	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	29
Mountain Pond Trail	3	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	35
Mount Abraham Trail	5	4	3	2	5	5	5	5	34
Mount Abram High School Trails	1	1	5	3	5	1	2	4	22
Mount Blue Pond Boat Launch	2	3	3	3	2	5	3	4	25
Mount Blue State Park Cross Country Ski Trails	5	5	5	1	5	4	3	5	33
Mount Blue State Park Snowshoe Trails	5	5	5	1	5	5	4	5	35
Mount Redington Trail	1	4	3	2	3	4	4	5	26
Narrow Gauge Pathway	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	38
Nina's Woods	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	36
North Horn Trail	5	4	4	3	5	4	5	5	35
Orbeton Railroad Bed Trail	2	4	3	2	5	3	3	4	26
Parker Ridge Trail	5	3	5	2	3	3	4	4	29
Phillips Falls	1	4	5	3	5	3	3	2	26
Picked Chicken Hill Trail	1	4	4	2	5	5	4	5	30
Pico Trail	4	4	5	4	4	5	3	4	33
Pond Link Trail	4	5	5	2	5	5	2	3	31
Potato Hill Trail	1	4	4	5	5	5	3	5	32
Quill Hill	4	5	4	3	3	4	5	3	31
Rangley River Trail	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	38

Comprehensive Trail System Performance Report - Q3 2023										
Trail Name	Usage Metrics			Maintenance Status			Environmental & Safety			
	Visitors	Hours	Days	Inspected	Issues	Repairs	Score	Incidents	Response	Compliance
Reed Brook Trail	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	37
Round Barn Campsites	5	3	5	1	2	3	3	2	2	24
Saddleback Jr. Loop Trail	1	3	2	1	5	3	5	5	5	25
Saddleback Wind East Ridge Trail	5	5	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	36
Saddleback Wind Trail	5	5	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	36
Safford Brook Trail	3	4	5	1	5	5	5	5	5	33
Salem Twp. Fishing Access	5	1	5	5	5	5	1	1	2	25
Sandy River Fishing Access	2	2	5	1	5	2	2	3	3	22
Sandy River Ponds Boat Launch	5	5	5	1	5	5	3	4	4	33
Savage Mountain Trail	2	3	5	5	4	3	3	4	4	29
Shoreline Trail	3	4	5	3	5	5	2	4	4	31
South Bog Conservation Area	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	37
South Side Trail	1	3	2	2	1	4	5	5	5	26
Spencer Pond Trail	4	4	5	5	5	3	2	4	4	32
State Site Campsite	4	5	4	2	5	4	4	4	4	32
Stone Soup Gardens Trails	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	37
Strong Beach & Boat Launch	5	5	5	2	3	5	3	3	3	31
Students Island Trails	2	5	2	3	5	5	4	4	4	30
Stump Pond Boat Launch	5	4	5	5	5	5	2	3	3	34
Sugarloaf Mountain Trail	3	4	4	2	4	4	4	3	3	28
Sugarloaf Resort Trails	1	1	4	1	3	1	3	2	2	16
Swett Brook Trail	3	3	5	3	5	4	3	5	5	33
The Island	5	3	5	1	3	3	4	2	2	26
Tim Brook Falls	1	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	33
Tree of Life Trails	4	4	5	4	5	4	2	3	3	32
Tumbledown Mountain Trail	2	3	5	2	5	5	5	2	2	29
Upper Chandler Mill Stream Falls	2	5	4	2	5	5	5	4	4	32
Vick Multi-Use Trails	3	4	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	33
West Kennebago Mountain Trail	5	2	4	4	5	3	5	3	3	31
West Mountain Falls Trail	2	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	3	29
Whistle Stop Trail	5	5	5	4	5	4	3	3	3	34
Wilhelm Reich Museum Trails	4	3	5	5	5	2	3	5	5	32
Wire Bridge Park	5	4	5	5	3	5	3	3	4	34
TOTALS	429	503	571	415	577	514	446	499	499	AVERAGE SCORE
AVERAGE	3.42	3.89	4.53	3.42	4.47	4.11	3.53	3.47	3.47	30.89



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