

# Western Mountains Region Management Plan

## *Executive Summary*



*View of Mahoosuc Mountains from Table Rock*

**Maine Department of Conservation  
Bureau of Parks and Lands**



**January 4, 2011**



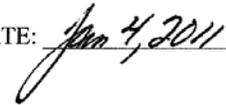
## ADOPTION CITATION

In accordance with the provisions of 12 M.R.S.A. § 1847(2) and consistent with the Bureau of Parks and Lands Planning Policy and Integrated Resource Policy for Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands, State Parks, and State Historic Sites (revised December 18, 2000), this Management Plan for the Western Mountains Region is hereby adopted.

RECOMMENDED:

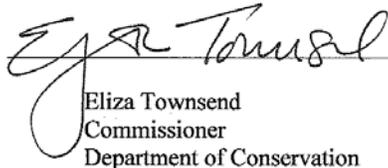


DATE:



Willard R. Harris  
Director  
Bureau of Parks and Lands

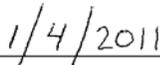
APPROVED:

  
Eliza Townsend  
Commissioner  
Department of Conservation

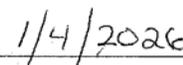
DATE:



ADOPTED DATE:



REVISION DATE:





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## *Acknowledgements*

The Western Mountains Region Management Plan was prepared through a collaborative effort involving contributions from the following Bureau of Parks and Lands staff:

Will Harris – *Director*  
Alan Stearns – *Deputy Director*  
Amy Hudnor – *Management Plan Coordinator*  
Kathy Eickenberg – *Chief of Planning*  
Peter Smith – *Western Region Lands Manager*  
Bill Haslam – *Forester*  
Ron Hunt – *Manager, Southern Region Parks*  
Gary Best – *Assistant Manager Southern Region Parks*  
Matt Hodgdon – *Park Manager, Grafton Notch State Park*  
Tom Charles – *Chief of Silviculture*  
Joe Wiley – *IF&W Wildlife Biologist assigned to the Bureau*  
Skip Varney – *Off-Road Vehicle Program*  
Tom Desjardin – *Historic Sites Specialist*  
George Powell – *Boating Facilities Director*  
Gena Denis – *Geographic Information System Coordinator*  
Rex Turner – *Outdoor Recreation Planner*  
Stephen Richardson – *Forest Engineer*  
Tom Dinsmore – *Property Records Specialist*

In addition, much of the material in the Plan related to natural resources, especially geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, natural communities, wetlands, ecological processes, and rare plant and animal species was provided by the Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP). MNAP staff conducted natural resource inventories for the Bureau and provided a detailed report, written by Andy Cutko, which is quoted from directly and paraphrased throughout the Plan.

Information about historic resources was provided by Tom Desjardin of BPL, and information about pre-history is from the Maine Historical Society's website, mainememory.net.

The Bureau also acknowledges the helpful participation of the Western Mountains Region Management Plan Advisory Committee, and the many members of the public who participated in public meetings held during the preparation of this Plan and submitted comments on the Plan.

Advisory Committee members:

Jeremy Sheaffer	The Wilderness Society
Ken Hotopp	Mahoosuc Land Trust
Mike Ewing	Maine Appalachian Trail Club
Paul Casey	Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge
Mac Dudley	Maine Snowmobile Association

Ernie DeLuca	NextEra Energy
Cathy Mattson	
Hawk Metheny	Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Joseph May	
Dave Herring	Maine Huts and Trails
Christopher Nichols	Seven Islands
Marc Edwards	University of Maine Cooperative Extension
Dave Boucher	Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Gordon Gamble	Bayroot/Wagner Forest Management
Don Kleiner	Maine Professional Guides Association
Kevin Slater	Mahoosuc Guide Service
Shelby Rousseau	Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust
Dina Jackson	Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments
Kent Nelson	Maine Forest Service
Jeff Stern	Androscoggin River Watershed Council
Dan Mitchell	ATV Maine
Andrew Norkin	Appalachian Mountain Club



# I. Introduction

## *About This Document*

The Western Mountains Region Management Plan is a fifteen-year plan for 66,471 acres of state park and public reserved land in the Western Mountains region of Maine managed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (the Bureau). The Plan summarizes the character of the region and the planning process, but its primary function is to 1) provide a description of the resources found on the properties addressed, 2) describe management issues identified by members of the public and Bureau staff, and 3) put forth management allocations and recommendations to be implemented over the next fifteen-year period.

This Executive Summary document is designed to give an overview of the Plan. It contains the highlights of the Plan—including Vision statements, Resource Allocations, and Management Recommendations. It is designed to be an easier reference document, but interested people are encouraged to view the entire document for background information.

The Western Mountains Region Management Plan is a commitment to the public that these properties will be managed within prescribed legislative mandates and in accordance with the Bureau's *Integrated Resource Policy* and its stated mission and goals. Future revisions to these commitments will occur only after providing opportunities for public comment. The Plan provides guidance to Bureau staff with responsibility for managing these properties, including a degree of flexibility in achieving the stated objectives. This document is not, however, a plan of operations.

The fifteen-year duration for this Plan is a departure from previous plans prepared for these lands. In 2007, the Bureau amended its policy to increase the Plan interval from 10 to 15 years. This change brings the Plan interval into closer alignment with Bureau forest management plan prescriptions, and most other resource management concerns other than recreation. The Bureau recognizes that some resources and management issues, most notably recreation, may undergo more rapid or unanticipated change over time. Thus, in addition to the fifteen year scheduled Plan revision, a review of current issues and progress on implementing the Plan's recommendations will be undertaken every five years, with a status report issued at that time to the advisory committee. If amendments to the Plan are then proposed, there will be an opportunity for public review and comment prior to their adoption. At the fifteen year interval, the Bureau will undertake a full review and revision of the Plan. The Bureau recognizes that several of the stated objectives will require longer than the fifteen year Plan period to achieve.

## ***What Parks and Lands are included in the Western Mountains Region?***

The Western Mountains region, for the purposes of this management plan, is the setting in which Bureau lands are located, beginning at the point where Maine's border transitions from being shared with New Hampshire to being shared with Quebec (in Bowmantown Township). The Rangeley Lakes region is in the center of this planning region, and the southern end includes Bethel area and the Town of Gilead.

### **State Parks and Public Reserved Lands of the Western Mountains Region**

	<b>Acres</b>
Grafton Notch State Park	3,191
Rangeley Lake State Park	899
Mahoosuc Unit	31,764 fee 10,093 easement
Four Ponds Unit	6,018
Richardson Unit	18,484
Bald Mountain Unit	1,873
Dallas Plantation Lots North and South	439
Davis Lot	960 (common and undivided)
Lincoln Plantation Lots West and East	919
Magalloway Plantation Lot	1,044
Rangeley Plantation Lot	469
Stetsontown Lot	41
Township E (Smalls Falls) Lot	370
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,471</b> (fee acres)

The parks and lands included in this plan contain an exceptional variety of recreational resources spanning the spectrum from rugged backcountry to accessible drive-to experiences. Ecological resources include unique alpine and sub-alpine communities, rare plant populations and connecting matrix forests. Fisheries resources and hunting opportunities abound, as well as productive timber resources critical to maintaining the public reserved lands system.

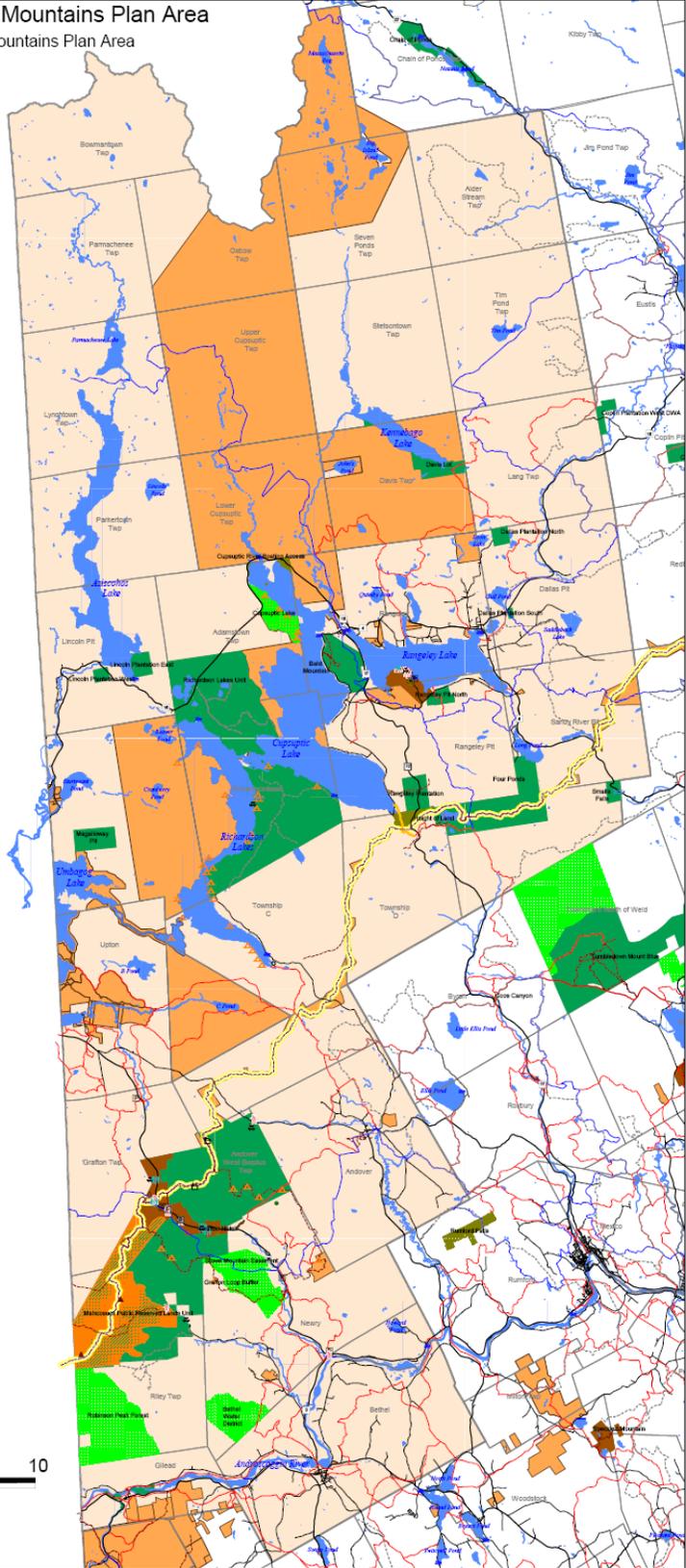
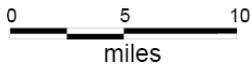
The key focus of this Plan is management allocations and recommendations for the Bureau fee lands mentioned above. However, other private and public conservation projects and lands in this region are an important context for planning the future uses and management of Bureau lands, and will be described in the Planning Context section.



**Bureau of Parks and Lands - Western Mountains Plan Area**  
 Planning is for BP&L Lands Properties in Western Mountains Plan Area

**LEGEND**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parks and Lands Management Responsibilities</li> <li>■ BP&amp;L Lands Properties</li> <li>■ BP&amp;L Easement Properties</li> <li>■ Easement Enforcement Areas</li> <li>■ Public Access Easements</li> <li>■ Third Party Easements</li> <li>■ Project Agreements</li> <li>■ BP&amp;L Parks Properties</li> <li>■ Ecoreserve</li> <li>■ Other Conservation Lands</li> <li>■ Appalachian Trail Corridor</li> <li>■ Western Mountains Plan Area</li> <li>□ Town Lines</li> <li>— ATV Trails 2010</li> <li>— Snowmobile Club Trails</li> <li>— Snowmobile ITS Trails</li> <li>— Snowmobile Trail to be Relocated</li> <li>— Other Maintained Trails</li> <li>— MDOT Highways &amp; Public Roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Boat Launches Hand Carry</li> <li>— Boat Launches Trailerable</li> <li>○ Park Headquarters</li> <li>▲ Leanto</li> <li>▲ Primitive Campsite</li> <li>▲ Shelter</li> <li>▲ Beach</li> <li>— Bridge</li> <li>■ Day Use Area</li> <li>■ Kiosk</li> <li>■ Scenic Overlook</li> <li>■ Parking Lot</li> <li>■ Playground</li> <li>■ Restroom or Outhouse</li> <li>■ Trailhead</li> </ul>
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## II. Visions, Allocations, Issues and Management Recommendations for Parks and Lands in the Western Mountains Region

### *Mahoosuc Unit and Grafton Notch State Park*



*Alpine habitat near the summit of Goose Eye Mountain – MNAP Photo*

#### **Character and Significance of the Mahoosuc Unit and Grafton Notch State Park**

The Mahoosuc Public Reserved Lands Unit together with Grafton Notch State Park, and associated Grafton-Stowe and Robinson Peak conservation easements encompass just over 45,000 acres of mountainous terrain in the heart of the Mahoosuc Range. These lands include some of the State's most magnificent scenic and recreational lands, including over 18 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The higher elevations south of Route 26 are dominated by one of the state's largest ecological reserves comprised of an extensive high quality alpine ridge and sub-alpine forest natural communities, while mid and lower-elevation areas are among the most productive timber lands in the state. Less than four hours from Boston and Montreal, and served by the gateway communities of Bethel, Maine to the southeast and Gorham, New Hampshire to the southwest, the area has long been a treasured destination of national and even international significance for backpacking, day-hiking and sightseeing. Canadian visitation to

both the Park and Mahoosuc Unit is acknowledged in interpretive panels that are bilingual – French and English.

The Mahoosuc Unit (31,764 acres) features Old Speck Mountain (elevation 4,180 feet), Speck Pond, a 37-foot deep high elevation alpine tarn, and the Mahoosuc Notch, reputed to be the most difficult section of the Appalachian Trail as it passes over and through a steep jumble of rocks known as a Cold Air Talus Slope where cold air drainage results in ice chunks lasting through



the summer months. In all, 18 miles of the AT and 20 miles of side trails cross through the Unit, connecting to trail systems on the surrounding properties. The 9,993-acre Carlo-Speck Ecological Reserve, one of the three largest in the state system and the one with most alpine habitat of all (259 acres of alpine ridge), lies within the Mahoosuc Unit. The Bureau manages timber on approximately 16,000 acres of the lower elevation lands.

*View of Old Speck from*

*Table Rock in Grafton Notch State Park*

Grafton Notch State Park, a 3,191-acre slice through the Mahoosuc Unit adjacent to Route 26, a nationally designated Scenic Highway, features outstanding day-hiking and waterfall viewing opportunities, with several small parking areas allowing visitors easy access to a series of impressive waterfalls and gorges. This State Park also serves as an entrance to the Mahoosuc Unit which abuts the Park to the north and south of Route 26, and includes a trailhead and parking area for accessing the AT and Grafton Loop Trail as well as two overlook trails within the Park boundary (the Eyebrow Trail west of Route 26, and Table Rock Trail to the east).

ITS 82, a regionally important snowmobile trail connecting to New Hampshire's snowmobile trail system gains elevation across the Stowe Mountain Easement and Mahoosuc Unit to capture views from a bald on Sunday River Whitecap Mountain, dropping back to parallel Route 26 through Grafton Notch State Park. The trail is maintained by the local snowmobile club.

## **Vision for the Mahoosuc Unit and Grafton Notch State Park**

*The Mahoosuc Unit and Grafton Notch State Park continue to be signature landscapes known regionally and nationally for their spectacular scenery including high mountain vistas and a sculpted gorge with waterfalls. Transected by a National Scenic Highway, these public lands offer a range of high quality recreational experiences, from drive-to picnicking at the gorge and waterfalls along Route 26, to extensive hiking, camping and backpacking opportunities in the remote scenic high elevation areas. Approximately half of the Mahoosuc Public Reserved Lands Unit is sustainably managed for timber while the other half is set aside for protection of important ecological features, wildlife habitat, and for backcountry recreation.*

*In the extensive high mountain area of the Mahoosuc Unit, recreation is managed for a low intensity backcountry experience, and trails and recreation facilities are carefully managed in the ecological reserve to minimize impacts to the ecological reserve values. The nexus of highly sensitive habitats and high value scenic and hiking opportunities draws ecologists and recreation managers into collaborations to develop and showcase low-impact trail technologies.*

*Grafton Notch State Park scenic attractions provide an opportunity to experience and learn about the natural resources of the Mahoosuc Region. Visitors can easily and conveniently obtain information at Park kiosks about the recreational facilities and opportunities at the Park, Mahoosuc Unit, and adjacent private lands. The Park is welcoming to visitors who come to enjoy the cooling mists of the waterfalls, enjoy a picnic, walk along gentle trails in the gorge or hike short but rigorous loops to viewpoints on the Eyebrow or Table Rock Trails, or use the Park to stage a multi-day hiking and backpacking trip on the adjoining Mahoosuc Unit or Grafton Loop Trail. Bureau staff are able to communicate with trail stewards and Speck Pond camping area caretakers to provide information about trail conditions and campsite availability, and otherwise assist visitors using the extensive trails network accessed via the Park.*

*Management of the recreation facilities and recreation uses on the Mahoosuc Unit, Grafton Notch State Park and Grafton Loop Trail models partnerships with private landowners, conservation and recreation organizations. A recreation management coordinator works with Bureau staff and multiple partners to ensure exemplary maintenance of facilities and provide an effective yet unobtrusive presence supporting recreational users and protecting the sensitive ecological areas. Use is carefully monitored and options are explored with partners to expand recreation opportunities when needed in order to avoid levels of use that diminish the quality of the recreation experience or jeopardize the fragile alpine communities.*

*Management of the timberlands demonstrates exemplary multiple use and sustainable forest management producing high quality sawlogs and retaining a late successional character. Because of the exemplary management, these lands are an important component of the local economy contributing a continued source of jobs and revenue from both timber operations, and as tourism and recreation destination.*

## **Mahoosuc Unit Allocations**

The following “allocations” define general management objectives and direction for specific areas within the Four Ponds Unit. A brief description of the Resource Allocations is found at the end of this executive summary (a more complete description is found in the Management Plan Appendix C).

### *Special Protection Dominant*

- The Mahoosuc (Carlo-Speck) Ecological Reserve on the southern portion of the Unit. The Ecological Reserve contains many rare plant species and exemplary natural communities.
- An area on the Baldpates containing the Heath Alpine Ridge and Subalpine Slope Bog communities, and surrounding exemplary Sub-Alpine Fir Forest natural communities ranked S3.
- An area on Lightning Ledge—a historic Peregrine Falcon nesting area (natural area).
- The Appalachian Trail corridor and the Grafton Loop Trail (historic/cultural special protection) for 100 feet on each side of the trail where not already contained within a larger Special Protection or Backcountry Non-mechanized Dominant Allocation.

These areas are also designated backcountry non-mechanized as a secondary allocation.

### *Backcountry Non-mechanized Dominant*

- The ridgeline extending east from Old Speck to Slide Mountain and including an area around Sunday River Whitecap Mountain. This includes a 500-foot buffer south of the Grafton Loop Trail, and encompasses an area extending over the ridgeline own to an elevation of approximately 2700 feet as far as Slide Mountain; and a more extended downslope area north of Sunday River Whitecap Mountain. This allocation excludes the ITS 82 snowmobile trail which pre-existed the Backcountry Non-mechanized designation, and will be a designated Developed Recreation Class I corridor through the Backcountry Non-mechanized area.
- The 400 foot buffer extending from the 100 foot Special Protection zone designated on either side of the Appalachian Trail from the point entering the Unit east of Table Rock to an area defined around Baldpate Mountain by the 2,700 foot elevation contour, except where defined as Special Protection.
- A buffer area around the Special Protection areas on the west and east peaks of Baldpate Mountain and the Sub-alpine Fir Forest special protection area west of Baldpate, extending down to an elevation of 2700 feet.

### *Wildlife Dominant*

- Riparian zones of 330 feet on each side are applied on Sunday River, Bull Branch, Miles Notch Brook, Sargent Brook, Wight Brook, Frye Brook and other major streams, except where designated Special Protection or Backcountry Non-mechanized. Additional major riparian zones may be designated by field staff during the silvicultural prescription process.

A Visual Class I allocation is also applied to this allocation along portions of the Sunday River within the Unit, and Bull Branch Stream to the point of the confluence of Speck Pond Brook Stream.

Remote Recreation Dominant

- A 400 foot buffer beyond the 100 foot special protection area on each side of the AT (except where designated Special Protection, or Backcountry Non-Mechanized) and Grafton Loop Trail (except where designated Special Protection, or Backcountry Non-Mechanized or Wildlife Dominant)

This area is also subject to Visual Class I (where not already contained within a larger Special Protection or Backcountry Non-mechanized Dominant Allocation).

Developed Recreation Dominant

- Parking areas—for the Wright Trail, the Frenchman’s Hole Day Use Area, and the Cataracts Trail. These areas will be buffered with a Visual Class I allocation.
- The ITS 82 snowmobile trail .

Visual Class I: In addition to areas mentioned above, this will be applied to

- The Cataracts Trail (recognizing that the adjacent management road is by necessity within view of this trail). Note this is the shortened trail to the Cataracts; the former AT trail to the Cataracts is discontinued.
- The East B Hill Road within the Unit.

Timber Dominant

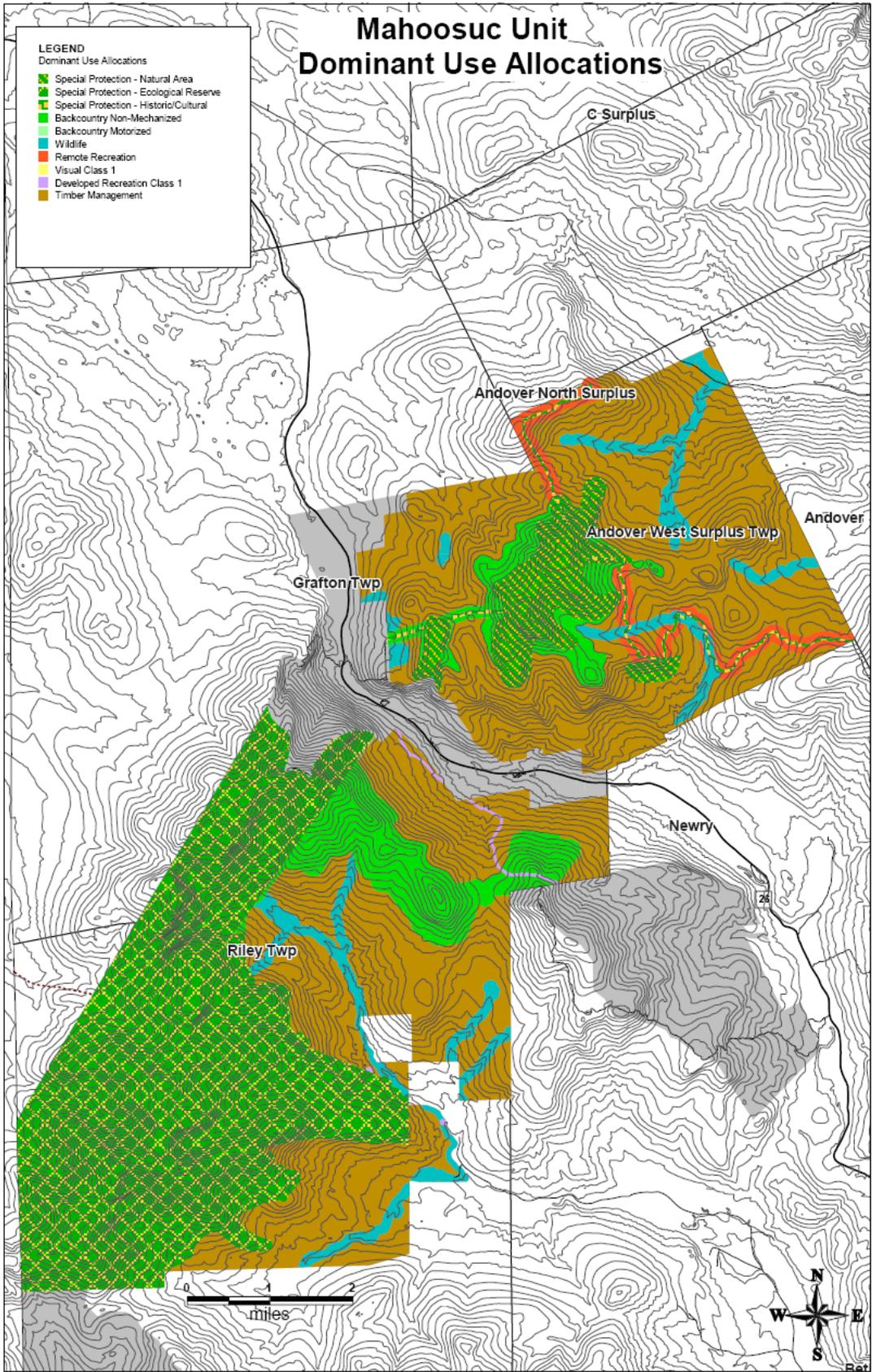
All other areas not allocated above are designated Timber Management dominant. During the silvicultural prescription process, it is determined which timber dominant areas are subject to Visual Class II treatment. A Visual Class II designation assures that timber management will protect views from hiking trails, public roads, and scenic overlooks and other recreation features. The majority of the Timber Dominant acres in the Mahoosuc Unit are visible from one or more of these recreational features and will be subject to Visual Class II treatment.

**Mahoosuc Unit Allocations**

Allocation	Number of Acres*	
	Dominant	Secondary
Special Protection	11,832	
Backcountry non-Mechanized	2,379	11,507
Remote Recreation	598	
Wildlife	1,668	
Development Recreation Class I**	74	
Timber Management	14,617	2,266

\*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS metrics and do not sum total unit acres due to measuring error and limits of GIS precision.

\*\*Approximate—actual acres will be determined in the field



## Grafton Notch State Park and Mahoosuc Unit Issues and Recommendations

While allocations define the general management direction, management recommendations define specific actions to be taken during the course of the 15 year Plan period in response to identified management issues.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b><i>Recreation Management</i></b>	
<p><u>Sensitive resources</u>: Significant recreation use in sensitive alpine and sub-alpine areas in the Mahoosuc Unit creates the need for careful management.</p>	<p>Work toward achieving an exemplary standard of balancing recreation and environmental protection in an environment that is both highly valued recreationally and highly sensitive ecologically.</p> <p><b><i>Explore:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrading trails or sections of trails by hardening and/or adding additional trail structures to reduce/prevent erosion.</li> <li>• Relocating or eliminating sections of trail if necessary.</li> <li>• In alpine areas, using specialized alpine trail building techniques, encouraging hikers to stay on trails by better defining trails (while considering the remote, backcountry experience).</li> <li>• Improving and maintaining existing trails should be a higher priority than new trail construction (excluding potential trail segment relocations). However, new trail construction will be considered if high visitor use is causing unacceptable impacts in a particular area and it is determined that a new trail is needed to disperse use.</li> <li>• Increasing hiker awareness of ecologically sensitive areas through increased information and education, delivered through various media, signage and possibly a ridge-runner.</li> <li>• Discouraging use of informal trails that are shown to be causing environmental problems.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Coordination</u>: Maintenance of the hiking trail network on Bureau lands and the Grafton Loop Trail depends on multiple partners—the Bureau (Parks, Lands), MATC, AMC, and MLT. Greater coordination between partners could improve recreation management and</p>	<p>Designate a Bureau staff person to organize and facilitate a Grafton and Mahoosuc trail coalition, to include a representative from Parks, Lands, MATC, ATC, AMC and MLT, to meet at least once annually. Through the coalition: (1) develop periodic trail management plans, and work together to implement these plans. (2) prioritize trail upgrades from year to</p>

Issue	Recommendations
resource protection along this trail system.	year, and coordinate in the grant application process. (3) coordinate and improve public information for hikers and share visitor use information.
<p><u>Hiker Information:</u> Currently there is limited information available for hikers and backpackers about trails in Grafton Notch State Park, and the Mahoosuc Unit, including the Grafton Loop Trail.</p>	<p>Increase and improve information and service for hikers and backpackers at Grafton Notch State Park and the Mahoosuc Unit. <i>Explore:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designating a summer staff person, riderunner or intern to rove the trails and spend time in the Park AT parking lot, giving information to hikers on trail conditions, campsites, etc.</li> <li>• Expanding the written information available at the Park AT parking lot including further enhancements to the kiosk, and including a method for hikers to provide information for each other.</li> <li>• Printing a new “Map and Guide” which includes Grafton Notch State Park, Mahoosuc Unit and the Grafton Loop Trail.</li> <li>• Providing up-to-date information on the Bureau’s website on trail conditions, forestry operations, gate status, rules and guidelines, etc.</li> <li>• As opportunities arise, participate in larger initiatives (with Mahoosuc Initiative, chambers of commerce, or tourism businesses) to coordinate in information provision.</li> <li>• Other methods determined by the Grafton and Mahoosuc Trail Coalition and/or the Parks and Lands staff.</li> </ul>
<p><u>User and trail survey:</u> A systematic evaluation of trail conditions and user experience is needed to more effectively manage trails, especially in fragile alpine areas.</p>	<p>Work with partner organizations to monitor visitor use, experience and trail conditions. Explore options with partners to expand recreation opportunities if needed in order to avoid levels of use that diminish the quality of the recreation experience or jeopardize the fragile alpine communities.</p>
<p><u>Winter Use Needs:</u> Winter recreational use is occurring in the Park (ice climbing, mountaineering, winter camping). Because there are no Bureau staff on site in the winter, the Bureau has only anecdotal information from user groups about this use. Parking areas are</p>	<p>Gather more information about winter recreation use in the Park. Working with local recreation groups and local officials, develop a communication protocol with the DOT and annually determine appropriate parking areas to be plowed to support winter recreation. Determine if other trail facilities or services are needed to support winter use. Address as</p>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>plowed by the DOT based on informal communication with Bureau staff and local groups.</p>	<p>resources allow, with partner groups.</p>
<p><u>Nordic Skiing</u>: Local businesses, outing clubs and schools have expressed an interest in developing the Upper Bull Branch area for groomed Nordic skiing. This area is especially suited to serve as an early winter training area.</p>	<p>Partner with local groups interested in developing the Bull Branch valley for Nordic skiing. Coordinate with groups to designate routes and allow them to groom trails, potentially through a Special Use Permit. After December 1 or the first significant snowfall, whichever is later, manage the Bull Branch Road for non-motorized uses (except Bureau management and grooming for Nordic skiing). This is an opportunity to model how Nordic skiing can work with timber management on Bureau lands.</p>
<p><u>Regional Nordic trails</u>: There is interest in the larger region of developing a long-distance Nordic ski trail network. Details of this network are not yet developed, but there may be future interest in using the Park and Unit for a portion of this trail system. There has been interest expressed in creating a trail over Miles Notch—in the east end of the Backcountry Non-mechanized allocation, and potentially within the Ecological Reserve.</p>	<p>Currently, there is no specific proposal for locating a groomed Nordic ski trail system other than the general location of the Bull Branch valley. The management road network within timber management areas has been mentioned as suitable in the short-term for this use.</p> <p>The resource allocations identified in this plan in the Bull Branch Valley are a blend of ecological reserve, wildlife, backcountry non-mechanized, and timber management. As stated in the recommendation above, the Bureau will be working with local Nordic ski interests to designate routes and allow for trail grooming. The Bureau and Nordic ski groups will have to consider many factors in locating trail—such as up-coming timber operations and terrain. Under the resource allocation system, grooming for Nordic skiing would be easily allowed in the timber dominant allocation, and in the wildlife allocation on existing management roads. If, in the process of designating specific routes for skiing, it is determined that there is a desirable route that extends into the Ecological Reserve or Backcountry Non-mechanized allocations, the Bureau will need to consider whether this is consistent with current policy and statutory guidance. The Ecological Reserve statute and the Bureau’s IRP are the guiding documents the Bureau will consult to consider new recreational uses in the Ecological Reserve, and IRP description of the Backcountry Non-mechanized allocation will be consulted for decisions on mechanized grooming in</p>

Issue	Recommendations
	the Backcountry non-mechanized area. Both of these documents are available in the Appendix.
<p><u>Bureau staff limitations:</u> The recreation management issues and recommendations listed above all point to the issue of staffing limitations. Grafton Notch State Park has two seasonal staff who stay very busy maintaining facilities and helping visitors around the popular waterfall viewing areas. The Mahoosuc Unit is served by a forester and seasonal recreation ranger who are divided amongst many other public lands properties. With current staff limitations, the Bureau would be stretched in its ability to implement plan recommendations such as convening a trail coalition, improving hiker information, lowering environmental impact, monitoring visitor use, and generally providing more collaboration with managing partners and user groups. More broadly, there is a need for increased recreation management capacity on all Bureau lands in this region.</p>	<p>Explore options that could achieve a recreation management system for the Grafton and Mahoosuc lands which is seamless, serves the public well, balances recreational use and ecological protection, and more fully realizes the benefits of the many partnerships which bring energy and capacity to this dynamic recreational area. Explore the feasibility of providing a recreation coordinator to work with the various Bureau staff and management partners to implement the recreation recommendations in this plan. Such a coordinator could also develop and expand the Bureau’s partnerships in the region and improve collaboration and coordination with partners.</p> <p>Specifically investigate creating a new permanent position which could not only serve the Grafton and Mahoosuc area, but the larger Western Maine region. Explore shared funding options for this position, such as a jointly funded position with the Mahoosuc Initiative or local recreation/tourism groups. In the short-term, explore use of a variety of internship programs and grant funding to provide this capacity, recognizing that short-term positions will lack the depth and continuity needed for optimal effect.</p> <p>In the interim, until a new Recreation Coordinator position can be created, designate an existing staff person to fill this role.</p>
<p><u>Western side trails:</u> The Speck Pond Trail and the Notch Trail originate from private lands to the west of the Mahoosuc Unit and therefore could be closed to public access at the landowner’s discretion.</p>	<p>Work with the adjacent landowners to resolve any issues with public use. If the Speck Pond and/or Notch Trail are closed to access by the private landowner, the Bureau will, in consultation with partners, assess whether additional hiking opportunities are needed within the Park or Unit, and may work with partners to address that need.</p>
<p><b><i>Timber Management</i></b></p>	
<p><u>Future Management Guidelines:</u> Timber management guidelines outlined in this Plan reflect current best practices geared to current conditions, which may change</p>	<p>Management of the very limited <i>softwood type</i> acres should maintain significant stocking of softwoods, and encourage softwoods where spruce regeneration is common.</p>

Issue	Recommendations
<p>over time. These recommendations are provided to enhance the public's understanding of how the Bureau will manage timber resources on the Mahoosuc Unit. These recommendations are not a "prescription" – only general guidelines.</p>	<p>On <i>mixedwood stands</i>, growing high value hardwoods in mixture with spruce is a desired objective, retaining hemlock for structure and diversity. Some mixedwood stands are located at higher elevations, at the edge of unregulated acres. Here the softwoods might be encouraged more than the hardwoods.</p> <p>In <i>hardwood type stands</i>, sugar maple and yellow birch are the key management species, and healthy beech and good quality red maple can also be encouraged, along with any ash. Oak should be favored where it occurs, and oak regeneration should be nurtured. The softwood component, particularly spruce, should be maintained, or increased where spruce is common in the understory. However, conversion to mixedwood or softwood is generally not a priority, except perhaps on the higher/steeper land where hardwoods grow less well.</p>
<p><u>Scenic Protection</u>: Timber management in Mahoosuc must be conscious of scenic concerns from hiking trails, both along the trails themselves, and views from trails along exposed ridgelines. Views from the Grafton Scenic Byway (Route 26) must also be protected.</p>	<p>The resource allocations for the Mahoosuc Unit will incorporate a 100 foot no-cut buffer on either side of the Appalachian Trail and all official side trails, and the Grafton Loop Trail. A remote recreation allocation with Visual Class I treatment is the dominant allocation for an additional 400 feet along either side beyond the no-cut buffer (where trails are not already within the Ecological Reserve or Backcountry Non-mechanized allocations). This insures that where forest management occurs close to these trails hikers will not be able to readily discern signs of forest harvesting, and harvesting will be timed to have the least impact on trail users. For timber management areas viewed at a distance from hiking trails, public roads, scenic overlooks, and other recreational features, a Visual Class II treatment will be applied.</p>
<p>Ecological Values: Because of the ecological values of this Unit, special care is needed when harvesting timber.</p>	<p>Prior to harvesting, during preparation of timber harvest prescriptions, consult with the Maine Natural Areas Program whenever harvest will take place in identified exemplary communities (allocated wildlife); or in area that was originally proposed by the Forest Biodiversity Project for consideration as an ecological reserve; to ensure that ecological values are maintained.</p>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p><u>Wildlife Values</u>: The Bureau has a multiple-use mandate for these lands and must balance and provide recreation, ecological, wildlife, and timber values.</p>	<p>The Bureau designates wildlife dominant areas for habitat protection, including riparian zones and deer wintering areas, among others (see Appendix C for a more detailed description). Wildlife values are always dominant over timber values and recreation values. In addition, the Bureau has Wildlife Management Guidelines that indicate wildlife features that should be maintained in Timber dominant areas, and guide management of special habitats allocated Wildlife Dominant. These guidelines are in addition to guidance provided in the Bureau’s Integrated Resource Policy document.</p>
<p><i>Transportation and Administrative Concerns</i></p>	
<p>Unauthorized and problematic off road vehicle use occurs on the southern-most portion of the Mahoosuc Unit. This use is facilitated by the Sunday River Road (which extends into the Mahoosuc Unit west of Twin Bridges and into abutting land to the southwest).</p>	<p>Retain the portion of the Sunday River Road within the Mahoosuc Unit as a gravel surfaced forest management road with “shared use” status. This will continue its use for Bureau timber management, and allow vehicular use (including ATV use) for the public. However, do not promote the road as a motorized trail destination.</p> <p>Work to eliminate the unauthorized vehicular use that leaves this road and travels into the less improved timber management roads and skid trails on the Unit. Methods could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use additional signage as needed to clarify that while motorized travel is authorized on the Sunday River Road, travel off this road into other parts of the Mahoosuc Unit is prohibited.</li> <li>• Retire and/or block the less improved Bureau timber management roads leaving the Sunday River Road when active management is not occurring.</li> <li>• Reach out to clubs, abutting landowners and organizers of ORV events to gain their cooperation in eliminating the unauthorized ORV use in the Mahoosuc Unit.</li> <li>• If other methods fail, work with MDIFW wardens to establish an enforcement presence to deter this use.</li> </ul>

## *Rangeley Lake State Park*

### **Character of the Park**



Rangeley Lake State Park is situated on the southern shore of Rangeley Lake—a lake renowned for fishing and other recreational opportunities and scenic beauty. The park is located partly in the town of Rangeley, and partly in Rangeley Plantation—it is easily accessible from South Shore Road, which connects Routes 17 and 4. The Park offers camping, boating and fishing access, hiking, picnicking and swimming, all within a scenic remote setting. The Park is a destination in itself, and also provides opportunities that complement other recreation offerings the Rangeley Lakes region, a popular tourist and recreational destination.

The Park is most renowned for its campground, beach and boat access site. The campground contains 50 well-spaced campsites and campers can easily walk or drive to the beach and picnic area, located in a somewhat secluded cove, for swimming and picnicking. Day use visitors as well as campers can use the boat access area which includes a trailered ramp and docks with slips for tying boats. Additionally, visitors to lodging establishments in the region can use the Park's beach and boat access site. The Park is notable because it feels somewhat remote, however, it is easily accessible and located a short drive from the downtown center of Rangeley, where dining, shopping and other recreational amenities are available. It is also adjacent to other conservation properties owned by the Bureau and Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust.

## Vision for Rangeley Lake State Park

*Management of the Park seeks to develop opportunities that add value to the visitors' experience, while consciously balancing this development with protecting the remote forested camping, swimming, boating and fishing experience. The Park cooperates and collaborates with area partners to provide high quality recreational opportunities and facilities that expand and enrich recreational options for visitors.*

## Rangeley Lake State Park Issues and Management Recommendations

Issue	Recommendations
<b><i>Natural Resource Management</i></b>	
A natural resource inventory has not been performed at Rangeley Lake State Park (NRIs are prioritized on public lands where timber management is performed).	When new facilities (including trails) are planned, use staff and MNAP specialists to perform an inventory of the general site, to locate the facility in an area where natural features will be the least impacted.
<b><i>Recreation Management</i></b>	
It is challenging to balance the addition of new visitor amenities with the retention of the remote experience of camping in a forested setting and enjoying the Park's sparsely developed shoreline.	Design new visitor amenity development to blend harmoniously with the remote and scenic character of the Park. Currently, developed areas of the Park (campground, boat access area, etc) are clustered in a core area accessible from State Park Road, yet screened from one another, so the atmosphere of a remote, natural setting is maintained at each site. Follow this well-planned tradition.
There is interest in developing a hiking/walking trail network from the developed recreation core of the Park, into the more remote areas. Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust has expressed to the Bureau an interest in connecting South Bog property trails with the Park.	Explore the demand for and feasibility of building a hiking trail system from the Park connecting to the RLHT trails on the South Bog property. Consider: (1) the extent and nature of user-demand for such a trail; (2) whether the trail can be sited to avoid environmentally sensitive areas, and (3) if administrative concerns can be addressed, including ability to provide privacy and security to campers, and maintaining the integrity of the fee-collection system. If demand can be demonstrated, and environmental and administrative concerns can be addressed, pursue funding and work cooperatively with RLHT to construct the trail.

## *Bald Mountain Unit*



*Bald Mountain(photo center) as viewed from Route 4 Scenic Overlook, across Rangeley Lake*

### **Character of the Landbase**

The 1,850 acre Bald Mountain Unit is located near the village of Oquossoc in the town of Rangeley. It stands prominently between Mooselookmeguntic and Rangeley Lakes and is surrounded by roads (Route 17, Route 4, Bald Mountain Rd and Bemis Rd). The Unit is a recreational, scenic and economic asset in the Rangeley Lakes region—a region renowned for outdoor recreation based tourism. Scenic Bald Mountain, the Unit’s namesake, is a majestic landscape feature in the Rangeley Lakes region, prominent in the view from Mooselookmeguntic, Cupsuptic and Rangeley Lakes as well as from scenic overlooks on Routes 4 and 17 and many other points. Bald Mountain is conical in shape and rises to an elevation of 2,443 feet. A popular hiking trail leads to the peak, where natural rock outcroppings and an observation tower allow spectacular views of the region. The excellent hiking, snowmobiling

and hunting opportunities on Bald Mountain are popular recreational assets to the local community and tourism economy. In addition to its outstanding scenic and recreational values, the Bald Mountain Unit is managed for timber production, conducted with utmost care for visual considerations.

### **Vision for the Bald Mountain Unit**

*The Bald Mountain Unit is an outstanding example of Bureau multiple use management. Bureau management protects the wildlife, recreational, and scenic values of the mountain while providing high value timber products. Because of its visual prominence and scenic importance, the Bureau's timber and wildlife management are conducted in a way that maintains the appearance of an unmanaged forest.*

*The Bald Mountain Unit provides high quality hiking, hunting and snowmobiling opportunities that benefit the residents and visitors of the Rangeley Lakes region. Partnerships with local hiking and snowmobile clubs enhance the recreational experience and bring local involvement on the Unit. The hiking trails are designed to accommodate high use and inexperienced hikers and trailheads are informational and easy to locate. The hiking and snowmobile trails provide a forested, natural experience, and include vistas that give recreationists a sense of the vastness of the lakes, forests and mountains that make the region so unique.*



## Bald Mountain Unit Allocations

The following “allocations” define general management objectives and direction for specific areas within the Four Ponds Unit. A brief description of the Resource Allocations is found at the end of this executive summary (a more complete description is found in the Management Plan Appendix C).

### Wildlife

- Deer wintering areas are designated wildlife dominant. There are three deer wintering areas on the Unit—one adjacent to the northern border of the Unit, one on the eastern border, and one on the southern border. All three deer wintering areas extend into adjacent private land.
- The wildlife allocation on the southern boundary of the Unit also contains open wetlands and a small stream.

### Visual

- Visual Class I standards will apply to the immediate area adjacent to the hiking trails to the Bald Mountain summit—both the trail originating from Bald Mountain Road and the trail starting at Route 4 – as well as to periphery of the trailhead areas and areas along public roads bordering the Unit (Route 17, Route 4, Bald Mountain Road, Bemis Road).
- Visual Class II standards will apply to the entire Unit.

### Developed Recreation

- The snowmobile trail—ITS 84—will be designated Developed Recreation Class I as the dominant allocation.
- The parking area for the Bald Mountain Trail off the Bald Mountain Road will be designated Developed Recreation Class I as the dominant allocation.

### Timber Management

- All areas not designated Wildlife or Developed Recreation dominant will be allocated as timber dominant.
- Timber dominant areas also allow recreation; however, by deed, this is limited to dispersed recreation, excluding motorized recreation except for snowmobiling.

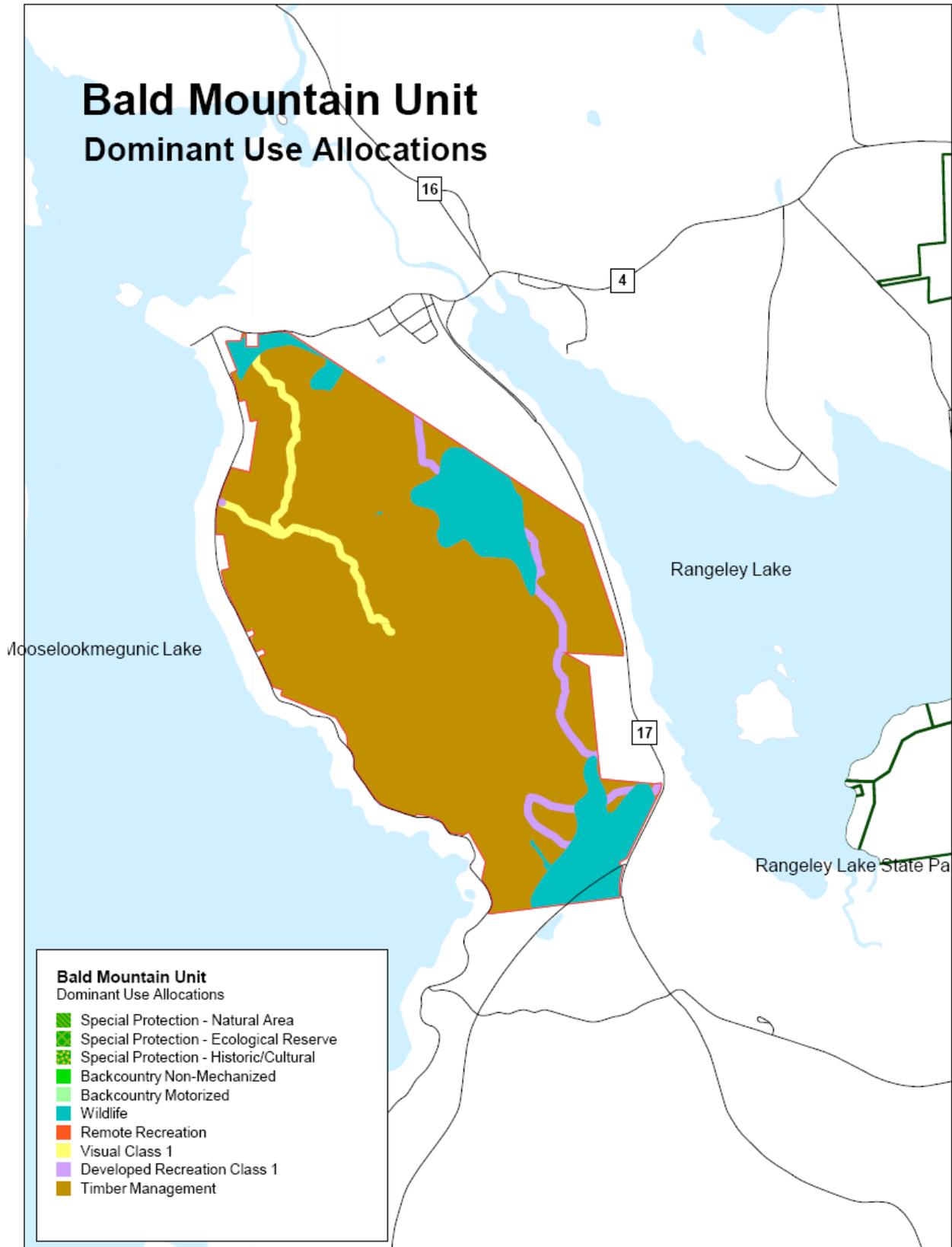
## Bald Mountain Unit Resource Allocations Summary

Dominant Allocation	Number of Acres
Wildlife	265
Developed Recreation Class I	50**
Timber Management	1535

\*\*Approximate—actual acres will be determined in the field

# Bald Mountain Unit

## Dominant Use Allocations



## Bald Mountain Unit Management Issues and Recommendations

While allocations define the general management direction, management recommendations define specific actions to be taken during the course of the 15 year Plan period in response to identified management issues.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b><i>Natural Resource Management</i></b>	
<p>High wintering deer populations have resulted from a local feeding program. This has resulted in heavy browsing of young hardwoods on the Unit, as well as the need to provide more deer wintering cover.</p>	<p>Manage for deer wintering cover in the northern portion of the Unit on suitable sites, including areas zoned as deer wintering areas. Coordinate management of deer wintering area on the south portion of the Unit with RLHT (owners of the South Bog property) wherever possible. Continue to utilize silvicultural techniques that account for high deer populations, such as those described in the timber management section above, where appropriate.</p>
<b><i>Recreation Management</i></b>	
<p>A high level of maintenance and upkeep are needed on the shorter Bald Mountain Trail. This trail is hiked by people with a range of abilities, from young children to senior citizens. It is also a very popular hike, used by locals and also promoted by the nearby tourism businesses. At times the Bald Mountain Road parking area is full and hikers park along the road.</p>	<p>Upgrade the Bald Mountain Trail to accommodate a wider range of users (though not to a level that is fully ADA accessible). This more accommodating trail type is not typical on Public Reserved Lands, where hiking trails are typically primitive in nature. It is appropriate here to increase the trail's level of accommodation due to the trail's heavy use, short length, and its easily accessible location in an organized town with a thriving recreational tourism industry.</p> <p>Partner with volunteers from the Trails of the Rangeley Area Coalition (TRAC) to perform basic upkeep of both the trail from the Bald Mountain Road parking area, and the longer trail from the Route 4 parking area.</p> <p>Place signs at the Bald Mountain Road parking area directing people to the Route 4 parking area and trail when the former lot is full.</p>
<b><i>Timber Management</i></b>	
<p>Visual Concerns: Timber management on Bald Mountain is challenging due to its visual prominence from many surrounding viewpoints. In recent years the Bureau has demonstrated timber</p>	<p>Continue to perform timber management with the utmost consideration for visual concerns. Apply Visual Class II standards on all Timber Dominant acres and Visual Class I along hiking trails, public roads, trailheads and parking areas.</p>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
management on Bald Mountain that has protected views of this scenic asset.	
Timber management guidelines outlined in this Plan reflect current best practices geared to current conditions, which may change over time. These recommendations are provided to enhance the public’s understanding of how the Bureau will manage timber resources on the Bald Mountain Unit. These recommendations are not a “prescription” – only general guidelines.	<p>Manage the Bald Mountain Unit to continue to grow fine quality hardwoods and spruce.</p> <p>Increase the proportion of softwoods where conditions warrant in the northern half of the Unit to provide for deer use.</p> <p>Perform improvement harvesting on the previous landowner’s clearcuts as soon as economic conditions allow.</p>
<b><i>Transportation and Administration</i></b>	
Keeping the telecommunications tower as visually unobtrusive as possible is challenging due to the proximity of the tower to the summit and observation deck, and the wireless company’s periodic requests to expand capacity.	Continue to require provisions in any lease amendments to protect the views of Bald Mountain and from the Bald Mountain summit, and make the tower as visually unobtrusive as possible. This includes a height limit, among other considerations.
The Skiway Road on the eastern side of the Unit is a service road, open to Bureau staff and leaseholders. At times, it is used to gain unauthorized public motorized access into the Unit. Not much is known about this sporadic use.	Use signage to clarify that public motorized use is not authorized on this road. Communicate with leaseholders to delineate their access routes. If necessary, block side trails off the Skiway Road not needed by lessees or Bureau staff, and enlist enforcement help from MDIF&W for unauthorized ATV use.

## *Four Ponds Unit*



*Sabbath Day Pond from the Appalachian Trail*

### **Character of the Landbase**

The Four Ponds Unit is 6,018 acres located between Routes 17 and 4 south of Rangeley and Oquossoc. It is accessed most commonly via the Appalachian Trail off Route 17 (just east and north of the Height of Land scenic overlook on Route 17—the Rangeley Lakes National Scenic Byway). The Unit is best known for its remote and scenic high elevation ponds. The Appalachian Trail runs through the length of the Unit, with a shelter and camping area on Sabbath Day Pond (3.7 miles from Route 17) and near Little Swift River Pond (8.3 miles from Route 17). Elevation on the Unit ranges from 1740 feet to over 2900 feet. The Unit encompasses the entire shorelines of three ponds (Long Pond, Sabbath Day Pond, Little Swift River Pond) and significant shorelines of three others (Swift River Pond, Beaver Mountain Pond, Moxie Pond, and Round Pond). The Ponds offer a remote, walk in fishing opportunity. Approximately thirty camp leases are scattered around lakeshores of the Unit, with most of them on Long Pond. The snowmobile trail ITS 117 runs north to south through the Unit, one of the few snowmobile crossings of the Appalachian Trail in the region, providing connectivity between Rangeley region trails and trails to the south.

## **Vision for the Four Ponds Unit**

The Four Ponds Unit provides exceptional remote four-season recreational opportunities that are valued in themselves or as part of extended trail systems of national and statewide importance. The Unit compatibly accommodates portions of the Appalachian Trail, the Interstate Snowmobile Trail system including one of the limited number of snowmobile AT crossings in the state, and an emerging Hut to Hut cross country ski trail envisioned to extend from Bethel in the heart of the Western Mountains to Rockwood in the Moosehead region. Hiking, backpacking and fishing interests experience quiet and solitude and the chance to observe wildlife, and fish in the remote ponds where loons and arctic char evoke a distant past. Winter finds snowshoers, snowmobilers, and cross-country skiers enjoying trails in the western area's more gentle terrain. Partnerships with recreation clubs enhance the recreation experience. Timber is managed sustainably for high quality products and to protect the scenic character for hikers and snowshoers traversing the Appalachian Trail, and for travelers along Route 17, a National Scenic Byway. Exemplary multiple use management contributes to the array of high quality recreation opportunities in the region, while the high quality timber harvested from this Unit supports Bureau operations, management of this Unit for public recreation, and the local economy.

## **Four Ponds Unit Allocations**

The following "allocations" define general management objectives and direction for specific areas within the Four Ponds Unit. A brief description of the Resource Allocations is found at the end of this executive summary (a more complete description is found in the Management Plan Appendix C).

### *Special Protection Dominant*

The Appalachian Trail corridor—100 feet on either side for a total of a 200 foot corridor—is Special Protection Historic/Cultural.

### *Wildlife Dominant*

Riparian buffers of 330 feet around all water bodies and major streams are designated wildlife dominant, as are wetlands and two exemplary natural communities—a Northern Hardwoods Forest and a Subalpine Fir Forest which abut the AT and are mostly contained within the AT Special Protection corridor. However, where they are not within this corridor, they are wildlife dominant with a remote recreation secondary allocation.

A secondary remote recreation allocation is also designated for the riparian areas around the ponds.

### *Remote Recreation Dominant*

The area around the “Four Ponds” (Sabbath Day, Long, Round and Moxie) is remote recreation dominant in areas where it is not in a more restrictive allocation. This remote recreation area extends east as far as the management road which serves as ITS 117.

Remote recreation also applies as dominant allocation for an additional 400 feet adjacent to the AT special protection allocation which covers the first 100 feet on either side of the trail, except where allocated Wildlife (for exemplary natural communities).

Visual Consideration

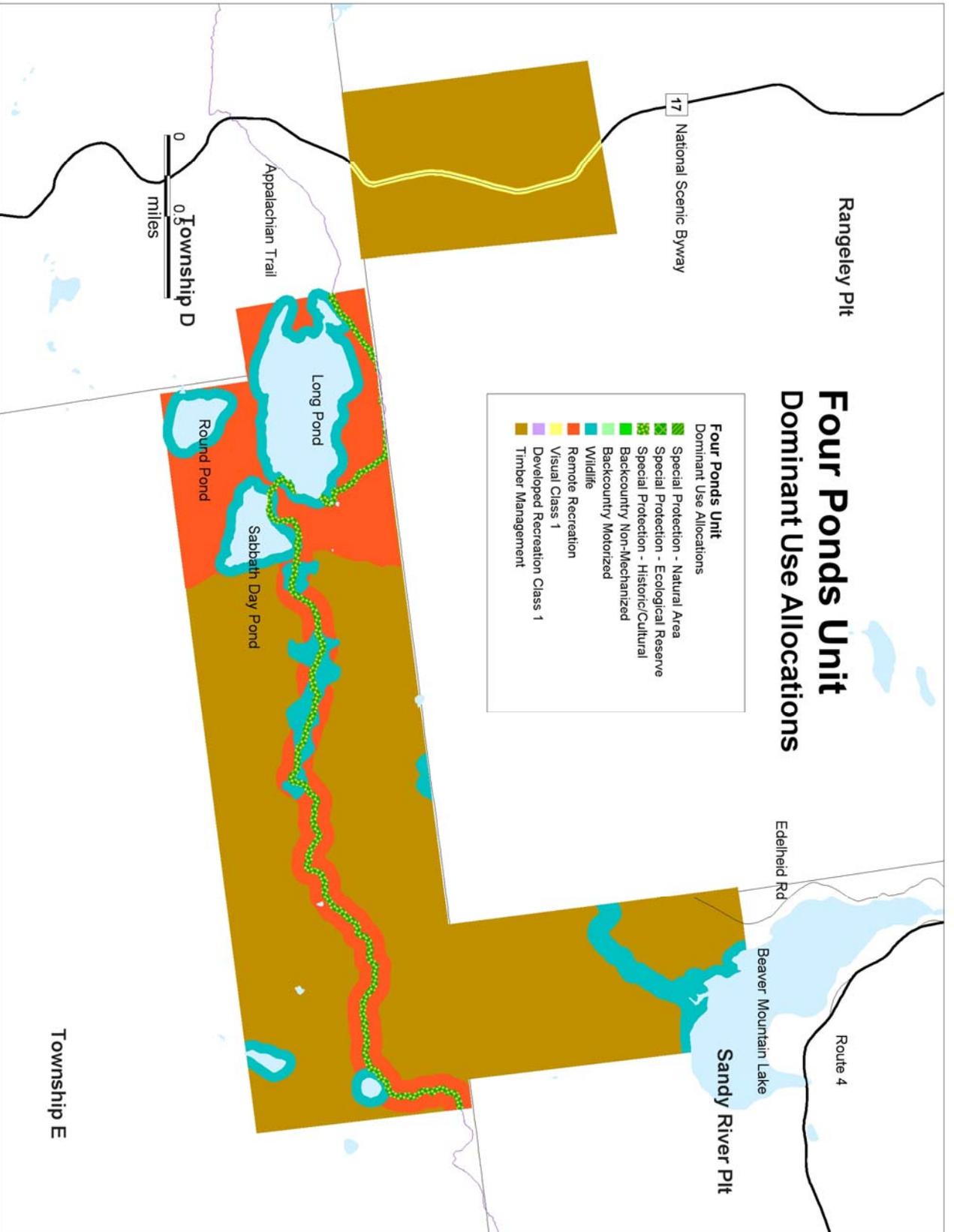
Each side of the AT corridor is subject to a Visual Class I allocation beyond the Special Protection dominant 100 foot buffer. Also, areas adjacent to public use roads and all shorelines of lakes are subject to a Visual Class I allocation.

Timber Dominant

All other acres not described above are Timber Dominant.

Allocation	Dominant	Secondary
	Acres*	Acres*
Special Protection	158	
Wildlife	521	
Remote Recreation	892	422
Timber Management	4197	1,413

\*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS metrics and do not sum total unit acres due to measuring error and limits of GIS precision.



## Four Ponds Unit Issues and Management Recommendations

While allocations define the general management direction, management recommendations define specific actions to be taken during the course of the 15 year Plan period in response to identified management issues.

Issue	Recommendations
<b><i>Recreation Management</i></b>	
<p><u>Snowmobile AT crossing</u>: A club snowmobile trail from Mooselookmeguntic Lake crosses the Appalachian Trail on private land, and travels into the Four Ponds Unit to reach the officially designated ITS 117 AT crossing on Bureau land. This crossing was created when the AT was relocated to go north of Long Pond. The National Park Service (NPS) has stated that this crossing is in violation of their trail crossing policy. A replacement trail is needed that allows snowmobilers to travel. The NPS could decide to allow this crossing if no alternate trail can be located.</p>	<p>Work with the snowmobile club, RLHT, and other willing landowners to relocate this trail so that it will be consistent with NPS Appalachian Trail policy. Authorize a new snowmobile trail on the Rangeley Plantation and Township E portions of the Unit, if deemed suitable by the ORV program and other parties, if necessary to comply with NPS Appalachian Trail policy. Maintain the original club trail as the preferred alternative if the NPS changes their policy to allow the snowmobile/ AT crossing.</p>
<p><u>Unauthorized hiking trail</u>: An informal hiking trail on the Rangeley Plantation portion of the Four Ponds Unit has existed since the 1980s (or possible earlier). To the best of the Bureau’s knowledge, this trail leading from Route 17 to Mooselook Lake was never formally authorized. It is unclear who, if anyone, is maintaining it and what purpose it serves.</p>	<p>Remove any signage placed on the trailhead (as well as any other indicators that this is a designated trail).</p>
<p><u>Maine Huts and Trails interest in a winter trail in the Unit</u>: Maine Huts and Trails expressed interest in locating a winter trail in the Four Ponds Unit. The precise location is not known at this time, but it may involve crossing the Appalachian Trail in the Four Ponds Unit.</p>	<p>Work with Maine Huts and Trails, and Appalachian Trail partners (MATC and ATC) to explore the feasibility of a winter trail in the Four Ponds Unit. If a trail location is indentified, convene the Advisory Committee to review and give comment on the proposal. Consider holding a public meeting for input, particularly if a motorized crossing (for grooming machines) of the AT is proposed.</p>
<p><u>Boat Access on Beaver Mountain Lake</u>: Beaver Mountain Lake is on the Bureau’s</p>	<p>Retain the option to locate a boat access facility on Beaver Mountain Lake in the Four Ponds Unit if</p>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Boating Facilities Division priority list for providing public access. The Four Ponds Unit contains shorefront on Beaver Mountain Lake, so the potential exists to locate a boat access facility on the Unit, if legal road access can be obtained and a suitable site can be located. The Four Ponds Unit may or may not be determined the most appropriate location for public boat access on Beaver Mountain Lake.</p>	<p>legal access can be assured and a suitable site is located. Through the Bureau’s Boating Facilities Division, cooperate with IF&amp;W and other relevant parties to determine the timing, location, and design of the boat access facility.</p>
<b><i>Timber Management</i></b>	
<p>Timber management guidelines outlined in this Plan reflect current best practices geared to current conditions, which may change over time. These recommendations are provided to enhance the public’s understanding of how the Bureau will manage timber resources on the Four Ponds Unit. These recommendations are not a “prescription” – only general guidelines.</p>	<p>Timber management objectives in the Four Ponds Unit include growing high value timber products, chiefly sawlogs and veneer, while maintaining visual integrity and enhancing the diversity of wildlife habitat and stability of the forest. Management will value species such as spruce, sugar maple, and yellow birch, while taking advantage of the fast growing and abundant but shorter lived fir.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Softwood Stands:</b> Manage the softwood types to stay in this type, moving acres to a higher spruce component while taking advantage of fir’s suitability on these sites to produce a more diverse and stable forest.</li> <li>• <b>Mixed Wood Stands:</b> Manage the mixed wood types to encourage reversion to softwoods where past harvesting had changed the type— particularly where softwoods have a strong spruce component. Moving mixed wood acres to a higher spruce component while taking advantage of fir’s suitability on these sites can produce a more diverse and stable forest. Management on mixed wood types should favor spruce and the birches, and sugar maple (and red maple, to a lesser degree) on better sites.</li> <li>• <b>Hardwood Stands:</b> Manage hardwood acres for sugar maple and yellow birch along with any spruce, managing fir as an intermediate product. Full crowned beech should be retained wherever possible.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Transportation and Administrative Issues</i></b>	
<p><u>Management Access:</u> Vehicular access for Bureau staff for timber management is</p>	<p>Seek opportunities to obtain vehicular rights of way for management purposes, particularly in</p>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>limited, and in Township E depends entirely on permission from adjacent landowners.</p>	<p>Township E.</p>
<p><u>Camp lessee access rights:</u> For Four Ponds area lessees, permission has been obtained from the owner of the D Town Road for the use of ATVs to access the Four Ponds Unit. Once at the border of the Four Ponds Unit, Long Pond lessees have a common boat dock. Round Pond and Sabbath Day Pond lessees have foot access only. It is important to identify and clarify lessee access routes, to deter motorized AT crossings that violate NPS policy, to preserve the remote character of the Unit, and to be considerate of surrounding private landowners.</p>	<p>Clarify with lessees on Sabbath Day, Long, and Round Ponds the access routes and permissions they have on the Four Ponds Unit. This may be done through a meeting between the Bureau, lessees and the adjacent private landowners, or through written correspondence.</p>
<p><u>Unauthorized ATV use:</u> There is some unauthorized ATV travel on the Unit, entering via the ITS snowmobile trail east of Sabbath Day Pond, and the powerline corridor. The snowmobile trail intersects with an authorized ATV trail about two miles south of the Unit, and the powerline crosses the snowmobile trail in the same vicinity. Signage and possibly other measures are needed to keep ATVers from straying off the designated trail.</p>	<p>Work cooperatively with adjacent landowners to identify areas where unauthorized trail use is occurring. Work with local ATV clubs to identify effective means of deterring unauthorized use of snowmobile trails and powerline corridors to gain entrance into the Unit. Consider signage, trail impediments, and enforcement options.</p>

## *Richardson Unit*



View of South Shore of Richardson Lake

### **Character of the Landbase**

The Richardson Unit encompasses 18,484 acres between Mooselookmeguntic Lake and the Richardson Lakes in the heart of the Rangeley Lakes Region. The Unit is essentially an hour glass shape between the lakes, excluding lands around Upper Dam in the middle (owned by Union Water Power Company) and excluding the northwest shore of Mooselookmeguntic Lake (owned by Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust). The majority of the eastern shoreline of Richardson Lakes and a portion of Mooselookmeguntic are protected by the Unit—thus helping to preserve, in concert with other conservation lands, the natural character of the shorelines of these lakes, known for their scenic beauty and outstanding fishing and other recreational opportunities. The Unit includes two boat ramps for access to these lakes and many remote, water access campsites dispersed along the shoreline and islands of the Unit. The Unit also provides road access to the Upper Dam tailrace —famous since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century for its fly-fishing. Wetlands, streams and ponds on the Unit also provide valuable fisheries and wildlife habitat. The Richardson Unit is a productive timber area, with gentle terrain and fertile soils producing high volumes of quality timber products and a reliable land base for Bureau timber management.

## Vision for the Richardson Unit

*Management of the Richardson Unit protects the remote character and scenic shorelines and views of the Richardson and Mooselookmeguntic Lakes. The Unit provides public access for boating, hunting and fishing, ATV riding on shared use roads, and water access camping. Collaborations and partnerships with conservation organizations and neighboring landowners provide expanded recreational opportunities and management efficiencies. The forests are managed to produce high quality timber products while protecting or enhancing wildlife and fisheries resources.*

### Richardson Unit Allocations

The following “allocations” define general management objectives and direction for specific areas within the Four Ponds Unit. A brief description of the Resource Allocations is found at the end of this executive summary (a more complete description is found in the Management Plan Appendix C).

#### Wildlife Dominant

Riparian buffers of 330 feet around the abundant lake and pond shorelines and major streams are designated wildlife dominant. Deer wintering areas (one south of Pepperpot Pond and one surrounding Mosquito Brook) are also designated wildlife dominant. Wetlands, including those identified by MIF&W as Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat, are included in this allocation. Remote recreation is a secondary allocation for the lake and pond shorelines.

#### Visual Consideration

Visual Class I status is given to public use roads—including South Arm Road, Upper Dam Road, and Mill Brook Road, along Route 16 as it passes through the Unit, as well as all lake shorelines and boat ramp areas. Visual Class II standards will be applied to any hillsides visible from the lakes.

#### Developed Recreation

Developed Recreation Class I is the dominant allocation around the Mooselookmeguntic and Mill Brook Boat Ramps.

#### Timber Management

All other acres not specified above are timber dominant.

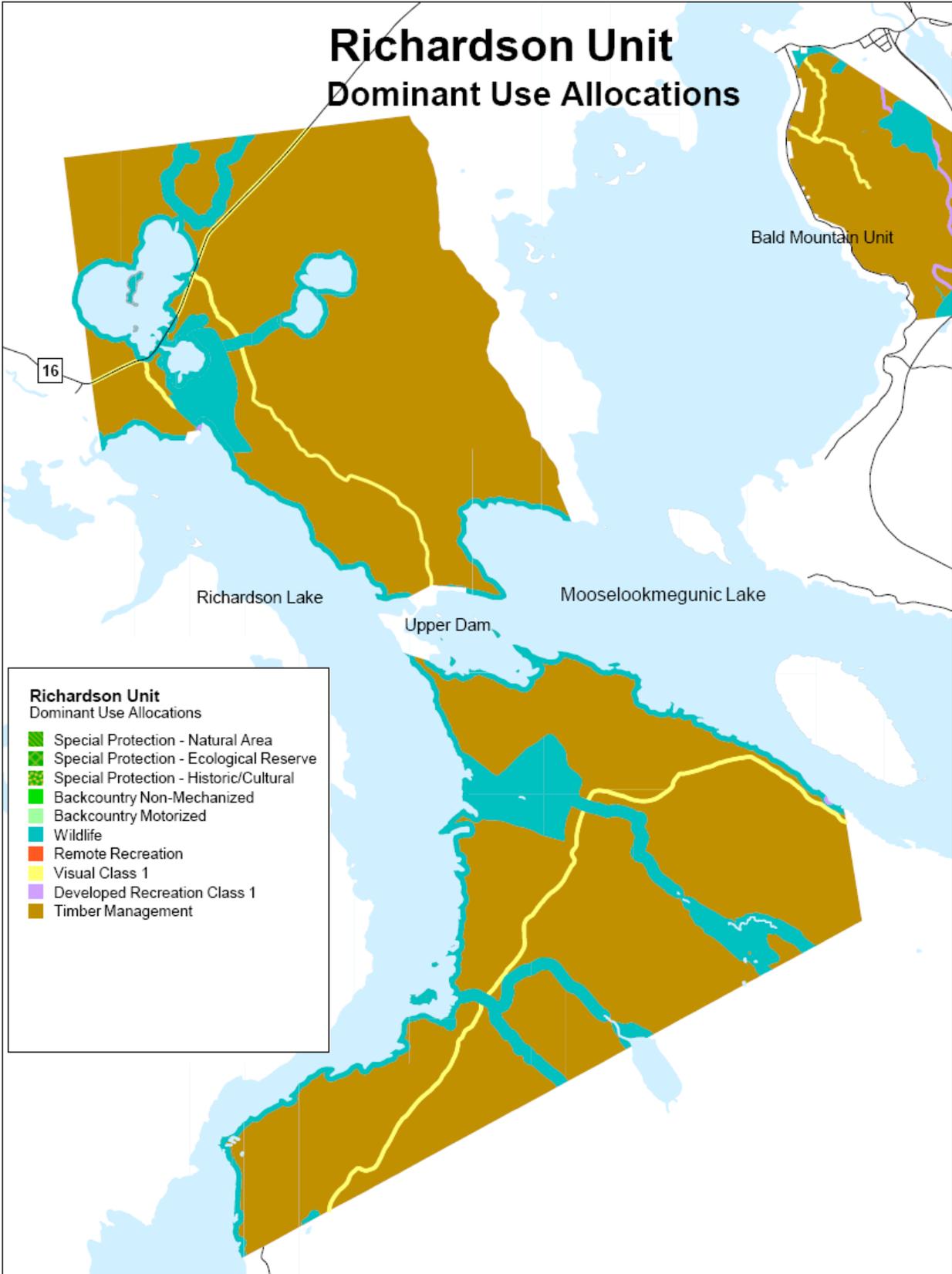
### Richardson Unit Resource Allocations

Allocation	Dominant	Secondary
	Acres*	Acres*
Wildlife	2,830	
Remote Recreation		800
Developed Recreation Class I	**8	
Timber Management	15,533	2,830

\*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS metrics

\*\*Approximate—actual acres will be determined in the field

# Richardson Unit Dominant Use Allocations



## Richardson Unit Issues and Management Recommendations

While allocations define the general management direction, management recommendations define specific actions to be taken during the course of the 15 year Plan period in response to identified management issues.

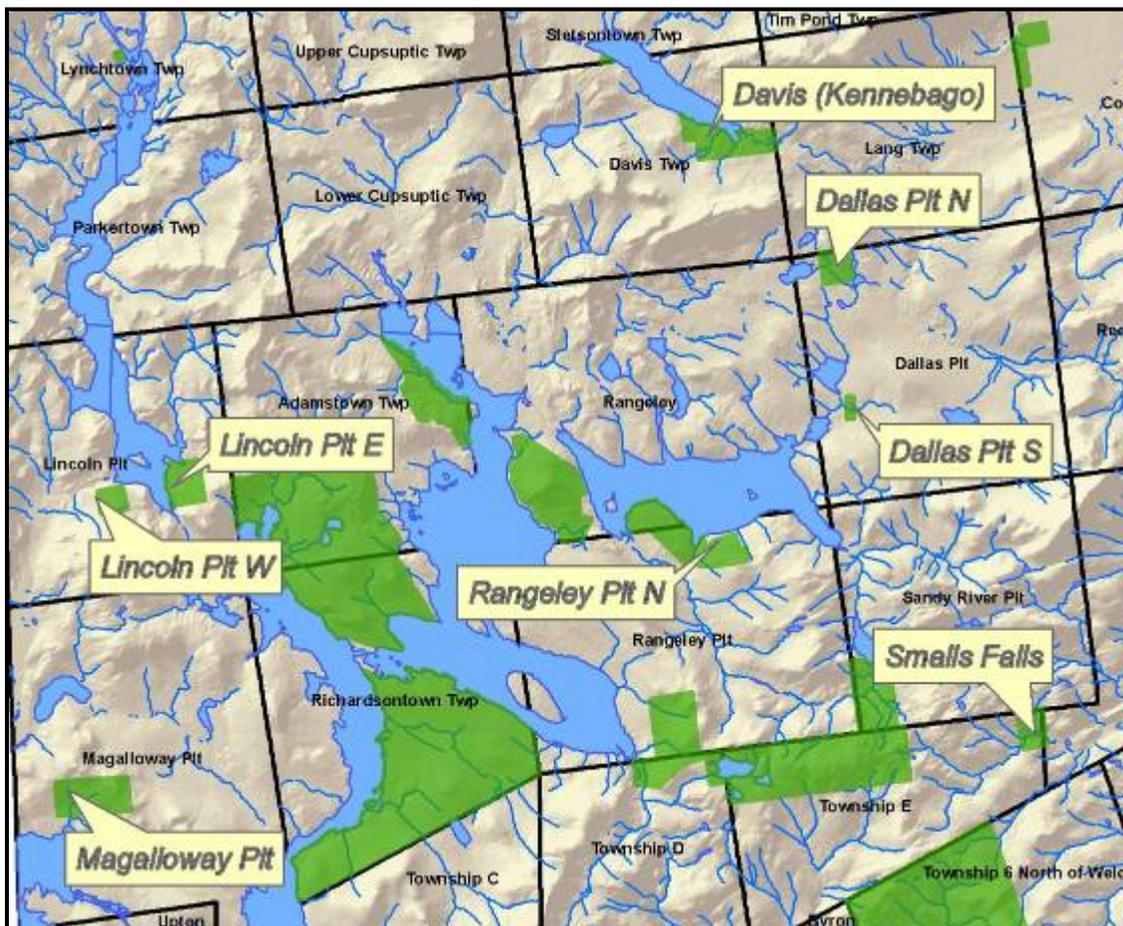
Issue	Recommendations
<b><i>Recreation Resources</i></b>	
<p><u>Improve Information for Camping Reservations.</u> Some concerns have been raised by the public that the camping reservation system on Richardson and Mooselookmeguntic Lakes is confusing—it is difficult to know how to get a reservation, due to the many different organizations that own or manage campsites on these lakes. Campsites on Bureau lands are managed by the South Arm Campground.</p>	<p>Improve information and reduce confusion about camping reservations on Bureau Lands. As opportunities arise collaborate with other campsite owners on the Richardson Lakes and Mooselookmeguntic Lake in improving clarity of information. Specific recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish a new “Map and Guide” for the Richardson Lakes and Mooselookmeguntic Lake in collaboration with other conservation and recreation providers on these lakes; identify which sites belong to which landowner, including the phone numbers for making reservations.</li> <li>• Improve the Bureau website to provide clear information on camping at Bureau lands. Include links to other organizations’ websites as appropriate.</li> <li>• Consider additional signage at campsites, in keeping with the remote and scenic character of the lakes.</li> <li>• As opportunities arise, participate in larger initiatives in the Rangeley Lakes region to increase the awareness and public information on camping opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Equal access to camping sites.</u> The reservation system used by the South Arm campground for their private campground—offering campers the ‘right of first refusal for their campsites for the following year—is not appropriate for public lands.</p>	<p>Work with South Arm campground to phase out the ‘right of first refusal’ system for reservations at the Richardson Unit. Establish a policy that no new rights will be established and old rights will be phased out.</p>
<p><u>Parking for Metallak Brook Trail:</u> There is some interest in expansion of the small parking area near the foot trail which</p>	<p>Explore the potential for expanding this parking area to meet demand for hand carry boat launching.</p>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
leads from South Arm Road, along Metallak Brook, to South Richardson Lake.	
<b><i>Timber Management</i></b>	
<p>Timber management guidelines outlined in this Plan reflect current best practices geared to current conditions, which may change over time. These recommendations are provided to enhance the public’s understanding of how the Bureau will manage timber resources on the Richardson Unit. These recommendations are not a “prescription” – only general guidelines.</p>	<p><u>Softwood Stands</u>: On softwood types, management will maintain the high spruce component while encouraging pine and removing fir as an intermediate product. A small proportion of hardwoods will be retained for diversity. Fertility limitations mean widespread conversion to hardwoods is not desirable, though the birches may do fairly well. A second entry will be made into spruce poletimber stands—balancing spacing, potential windthrow, and release of the regeneration created by the 1996-2002 harvest. Areas of current deer wintering area zoning and where deer have yarded will be managed to retain good softwood cover wherever possible, and bring softwood regeneration to cover status through careful overstory removal.</p> <p><u>Mixed Wood Stands</u>: On mixed wood types, growing high value hardwoods in mixture with spruce and pine is a desired objective in the older stands, with yellow birch the most favored species. In younger hardwood stands (which include aspen and pin cherry), reversion to softwood type is desirable, especially near deer wintering areas.</p> <p><u>Hardwood Stands</u>: On hardwood types, yellow birch is the first priority species, followed by sugar maple, spruce, and any existing pine. The small proportion of healthy beech will be retained, and good quality red maple will be encouraged along with any ash. The softwood component of hardwood stands will be retained, or increased where spruce is common in the understory. Conversion to mixedwood or softwood may be appropriate on less fertile stand edges near softwood stands.</p>
<b><i>Transportation and Administration</i></b>	
<u>Gated Access to Upper Dam</u> : The current three gate system on the Upper Dam Road—leading to Upper Dam—is	Revise the current gate system for controlling access to Richardson Lake and the Upper Dam tailrace via Upper Dam Road in order to better

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>confusing to the public, limits access for anglers with limited physical abilities during the summer, and causes crowding and traffic flow problems at Upper Dam during fall fishing season.</p>	<p>serve the public. Develop a Plan that will eliminate the current confusion over which gates are open when, will improve access for people with limited physical abilities, and will address current and potential congestion and safety on the Upper Dam Road. Work with NextEra Energy on development of this plan to address legitimate safety and security concerns. This plan shall be adopted within five years of this management plan adoption, but after the completion of dam reconstruction.</p> <p>In developing this Plan, investigate the feasibility of the following option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Gate 2 open year round</li> <li>• Keep Gate 3 closed year round</li> </ul> <p>This is the preferred option in terms of administrative ease, simplicity, and improved public access. Due to its simplicity, it would eliminate confusion for the public. At all times of year (except mud season) the public would be able to drive to Gate 3 and park, walking 1700 feet to the Upper Dam pool. During July and August, this option would improve access for the public (currently the public has to park at Gate 2 and walk 1.3 miles to Upper Dam during these months). At the same time traffic congestion at Gate 4 would be eliminated in September and October, because people would have to park at Gate 3, where a parking area is provided.</p>

## *Various Small Lots in the Western Mountain Region Lakes Area*

Various smaller scattered Bureau holdings in the Western Mountains Region are managed primarily for forest products and dispersed recreation, such as hunting and fishing. Aside from the lakeshores and Smalls Falls, the units receive comparatively little public use. Units included in this portion of the report are shown below. The public land units range in size from 66 to 1,764 acres and collectively support roughly equivalent areas of softwood, mixed wood, and hardwood. The smaller lots average 23 cords/acre, which is slightly larger than the BPL regional average stocking and significantly higher than the average stocking on private lands in the region. All the units have been managed for timber by BPL and former owners.



### *Davis (Kennebago) Lot*

The 886 acre Davis Lot in Davis Township is also known as the Kennebago Lot because it lies along the south shoreline of Kennebago Lake. It is an original public lot which shares a common and undivided ownership with the Kennebago Lake Camps (KLC owns a one-third common and undivided interest in the entire lot).

## Davis (Kennebago) Lot Allocations

### Wildlife Dominant

Extensive acreage in the Lot is wildlife dominant due to riparian buffers on Kennebago Lake, Flatiron Pond, the Blanchard Ponds, and Blanchard Brook.

### Visual

A buffer along the Bud Russell Road is Visual Class I, as well as along the lake shorelines.

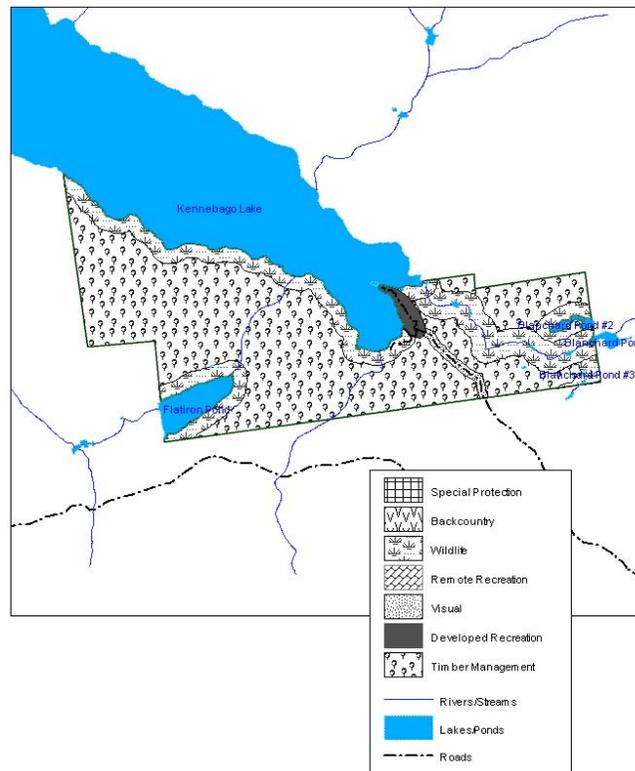
### Developed Recreation

The area between the Bud Russell Road and Kennebago Lake is Developed Recreation Class I, due to the numerous camps.

### Timber Management

The remaining acres are Timber Dominant.

Davis Lot - Summary of the Allocations	
Dominant Allocation	Number of Acres*
Wildlife	227
Developed Recreation Class I	13**
Timber Management	644
*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS	
**Approximate—actual acres will be determined in the field	



<b>Davis Lot Management Issues and Recommendations</b>	
<b>Management Issue</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
<u>Public Access:</u> There is no vehicular access for the public to the Davis Lot. Access is desired for fishing in Kennebago Lake and Flatiron Pond.	Work with surrounding private landowners to provide public vehicular access to the Davis Lot. If this is successful, work with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to determine appropriate boat access, parking and signage for Kennebago Lake and Flatiron Pond.
<u>Future Timber Management:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because of the ownership split, coordinate any timber harvest with KLC, who will also receive one third of revenues.</li> <li>• Management must also respect the visual impact from the lake, though relatively gradual slopes mean that only minor constraints are needed, and the character of the forest is suited to lighter harvests that will not be readily visible from the water. Extensive lake frontage and uplands somewhat visible from the lake must be a factored in planning timber harvests.</li> <li>• The large area of even-aged stands established in the 1970s represent an age class and stand condition less common on Bureau lands. By the end of the Plan period, these should be approaching the time when a commercial thinning will be desirable.</li> </ul>

### ***Stetsontown Lot***

The 41 acre Stetsontown Lot is an original public lot. Ten acres of the Lot is composed of Grants Camps, which has a commercial lease on this area. Four other camplot leases occur in the Lot. It is accessible by the Kennebago River Road, a private road traveling north from Route 16. The road is gated shortly after it leaves Route 16—this gate is staffed by the private landowner. The Bureau has arranged with the owner of the road and Grants Camps to allow the public access to three parking spaces and a hand carry boat ramp within the lease area. Members of the public check in at the gate, and inform the gatekeeper of their intention to visit the Public Lot and use one of the three spaces.

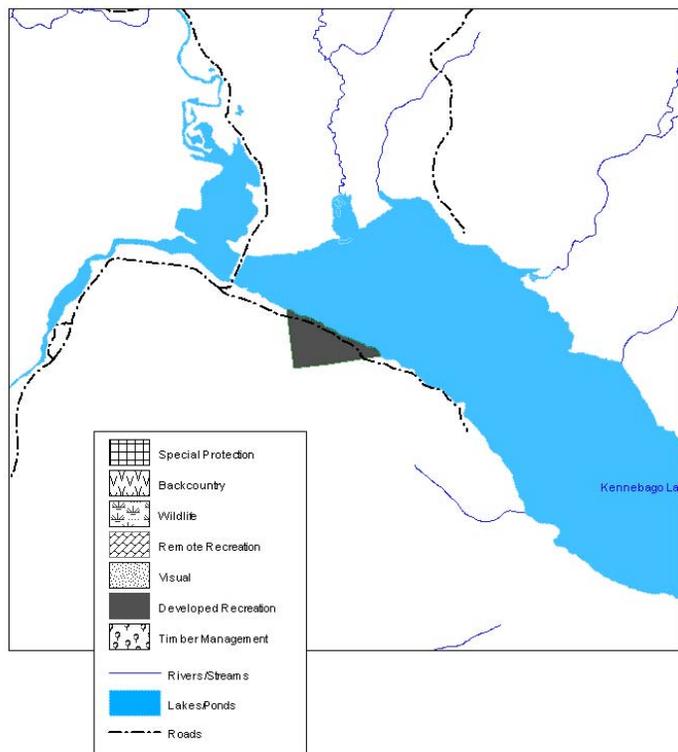
No natural resource inventory or timber inventory have been performed. No timber harvesting will be performed.

## Stetsontown Lot Allocations

### Developed Recreation

The entire Lot, due to the presence of many camplot leases, will be Developed Recreation Class I.

Summary of Allocations	
Dominant Allocation	Number of Acres*
Developed Recreation Class I	52
*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS metrics and do not sum total unit acres due to measuring error and limits of GIS precision.	



***Dallas Plantation Lots (North and South)***

Two public lots are owned in Dallas Plantation—the 373 acre North Lot and the 66 acre South Lot. These are both original public lots. The North Lot lies to the east of Loon Lake, accessed from the Loon Lake Road, and the South Lot is adjacent to Route 16, a short distance northeast of downtown Rangeley.



**Dallas Plantation Lots Allocations**

Wildlife Dominant

The North Lot contains wildlife dominant areas that include deer wintering area, riparian buffers on streams and small ponds, and wetlands.

The South Lot has a minor riparian buffer on a stream running through the Lot.

Visual

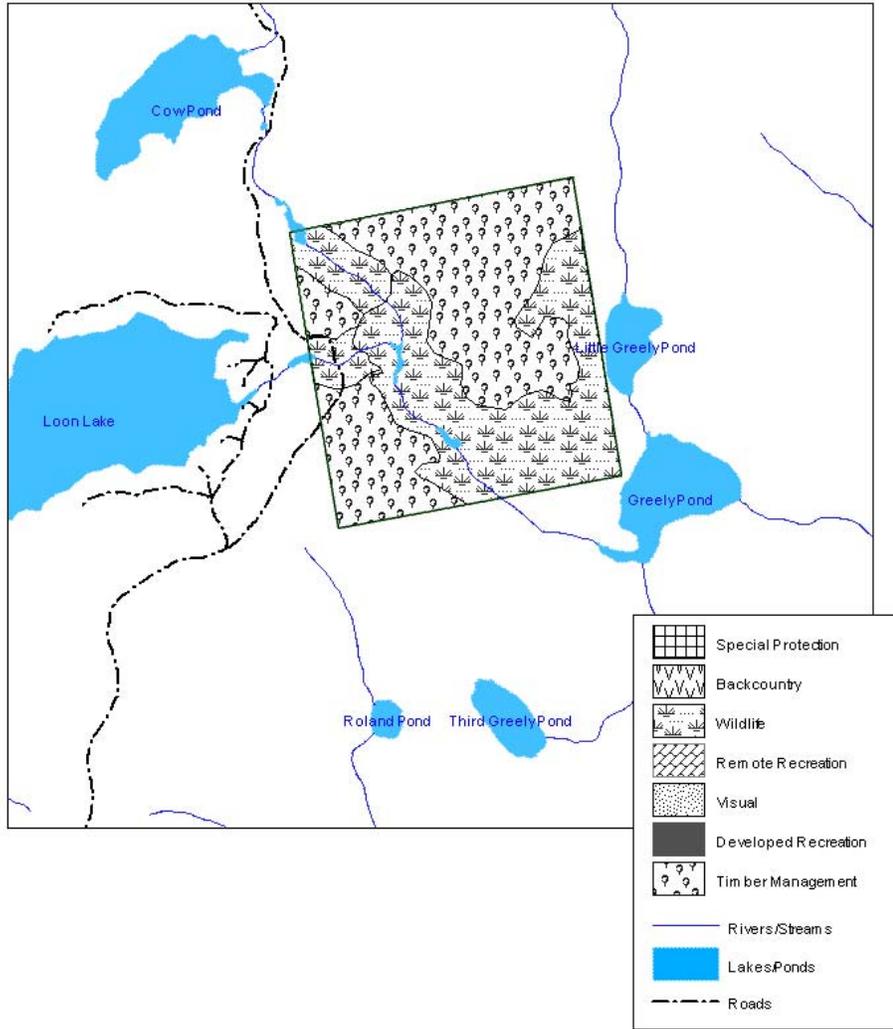
The South Lot has a Visual Class I buffer along Route 16.

Timber Management

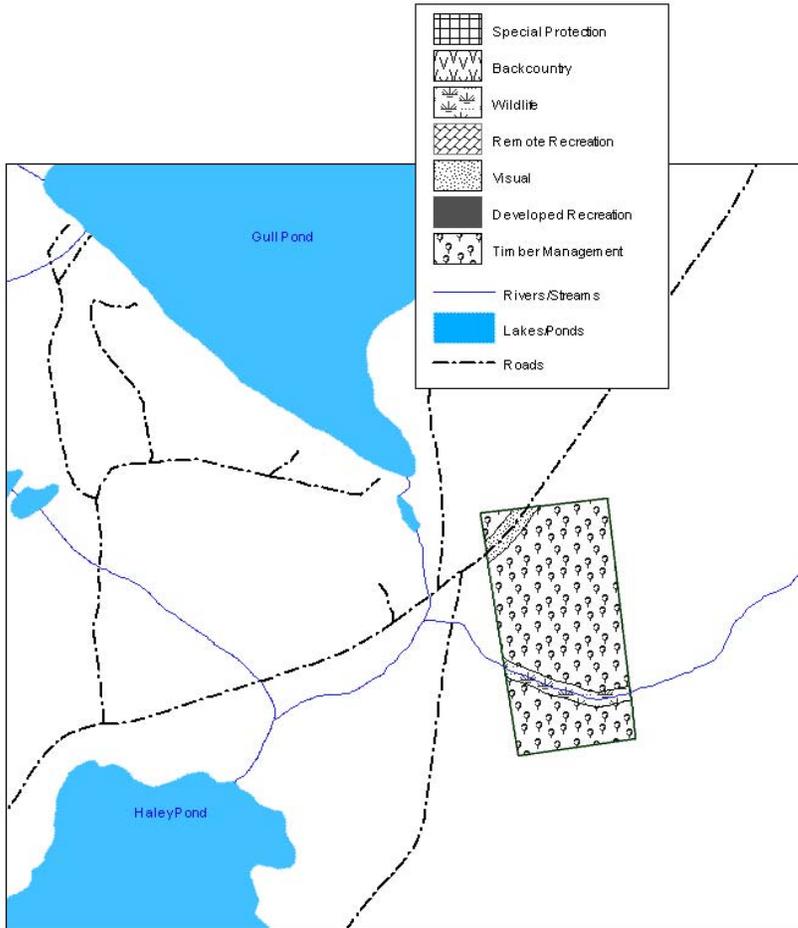
All other acres are timber dominant.

<b>Summary of Allocations – North and South Lots</b>	
<b>Dominant Allocation</b>	<b>Number of Acres*</b>
Wildlife	185
Visual Class I	3**
Timber Management	264
*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS metrics and do not sum total unit acres due to measuring error and limits of GIS precision. **Approximate—actual acres will be determined in the field	

# Dallas Plantation North Lot Dominant Resource Allocations



## Dallas Plantation South Lot Dominant Resource Allocations



Dallas Plantation Lots Management Issues and Recommendations	
Management Issue	Recommendation
<i>Public Access:</i> The public has no vehicular access to the North Lot due to the Loon Lake gate.	Work with the private landowner of Loon Lake Road to allow public access closer to the Davistown Lot, which, if successful, would also allow access to the Dallas Plantation North Lot.

***Smalls Falls (Township E) Lot***

The Township E Lot is also known as the “Smalls Falls Lot” because it surrounds Smalls Falls, which is a series of seven drops along the Sandy River, just above its intersection with the Chandler Mill Stream. The falls are owned and managed by the Maine Department of Transportation, which also own and manage a picnic and rest area off of Route 4 which is adjacent to the public lot, and provides access for travelers and picnickers to Smalls Falls. The Township E Lot is 370 acres and was acquired by the Bureau in 1999. The Lot is bisected by Route 4, but with most of the acreage on the southwest side of the road, surrounding Smalls Falls.



*MNAP Photo of Smalls Falls*

**Smalls Falls (Township E) Lot Allocations**

*Wildlife Dominant*

Riparian buffers along the Sandy River and Chandler Mill Stream are Wildlife Dominant. The Wildlife Dominant allocation also serves to enhance views surrounding the DOT Smalls Falls area.

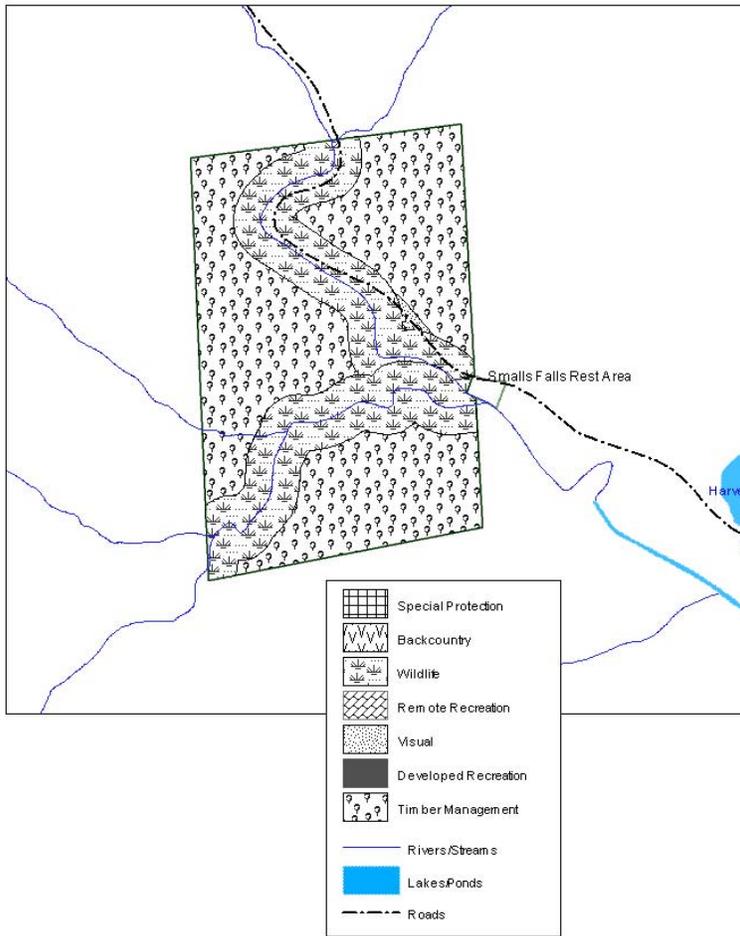
*Visual*

A Visual Class I buffer surrounds the portion of Route 4 that is not allocated Wildlife.

*Timber Management*

The remaining acres will be Timber Dominant.

<b>Summary of Allocations</b>	
<b>Dominant Allocation</b>	<b>Number of Acres*</b>
Wildlife	135
Visual Class I	2**
Timber Management	242
*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS metrics	
**Approximate—actual acres will be determined in the field	



### Smalls Falls (Township E) Lot Issues and Recommendations

Management Issue	Recommendation
IF&W has expressed concerns that the recreational gold dredging on Chandler Mill Stream may be impacting the fisheries.	Work with IF&W to investigate potential fisheries impacts of the recreational gold extraction on Chandler Mill Stream. If unacceptable impacts are identified, eliminate this use.

### *Rangeley Plantation Lot*

The 462 acre Rangeley Plantation Lot was acquired in two parcels—an 87 acre parcel in 1997 from the Trust for Public Land and a 352 acre parcel in 1998 from the Maine Conference of Seventh Day Adventists. It lies almost adjacent to Rangeley Lake State Park—it is separated from the Park by South Shore Drive. It covers a north facing hillside, and much of the Lot was once cleared or pastured farmland—stone walls, old farm equipment and remains of old structures are evidence to this past. There are no lakes, streams or wetlands on the property.

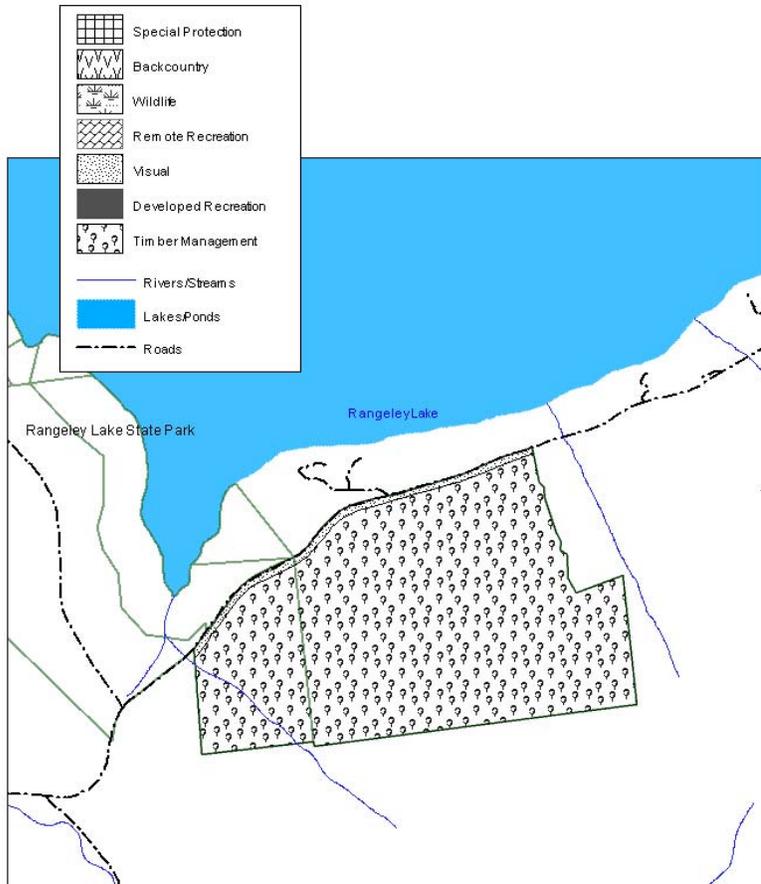
## Rangeley Plantation Lot Allocations

### Visual

A buffer along the South Shore Drive will be Visual Class I.

### Timber Management

The remainder of the Lot is Timber Dominant.



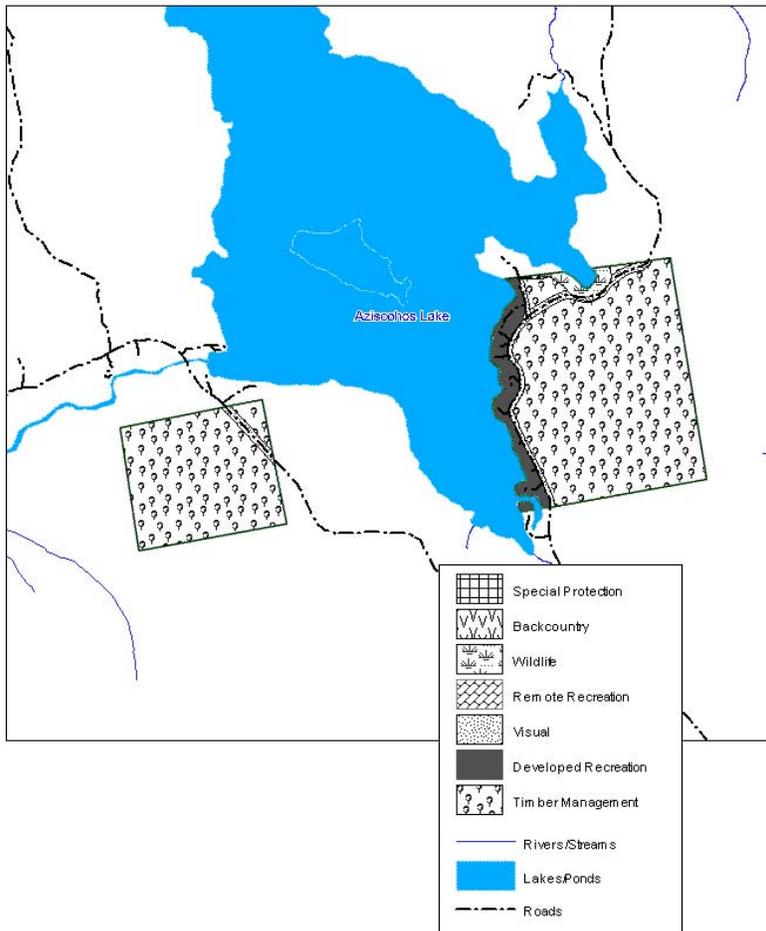
<b>Rangeley Plantation Lot Summary of Allocations</b>	
<b>Dominant Allocation</b>	<b>Number of Acres*</b>
Visual Class I	14**
Timber Management	448
*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS metrics and do not sum total unit acres due to measuring error and limits of GIS precision.	
**Approximate—actual acres will be determined in the field	

<b>Rangeley Plantation Lot Management Issues and Recommendations</b>	
<b>Issues</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<u>Game Preserve</u> : Now that the Lot is in public ownership, the ‘no hunting’ prohibition runs counter to the Bureau’s typical practice, which is to allowing hunting throughout Public Reserved Land (except near hiking trails, campsites and other recreational facilities).	Work with the legislature to remove the game sanctuary status on the Rangeley Plantation Lot, now that it is in public ownership. This will only be pursued on the public lot, not the surrounding private lands in game sanctuary status.
<u>Future Timber Management</u>	Because the volumes of timber are well below the Bureau’s typical volumes, it will be some time before any significant timber harvesting will be performed. However, there are scattered mature aspen that may be harvested, as well as removing any tall aspen near South Shore Road that become a hazard.

## ***Lincoln Plantation Lots (East and West)***

Lincoln Plantation West and East Lots are located on the southern end of Aziscohos Lake. The 640 acre East Lot lies along the shoreline of the Lake on the Black Brook Cove, just north of Route 16. The West Lot is 279 acres and is south of Route 16 and Aziscohos Lake (it does not contain lake frontage).

### **Lincoln Plantation Lots Allocations**



#### **Wildlife Dominant**

East Lot—the shoreline of Aziscohos Lake on the north end of the Lot is wildlife dominant.

#### **Visual**

West Lot—Route 16 where it runs through the Lot has a Visual Class I buffer.

#### **Developed Recreation**

East Lot—from the Lincoln Pond Road to the shoreline of Aziscohos Lake is Developed Recreation Class I due to the camplots.

#### **Timber Management**

All other acres are Timber Dominant.

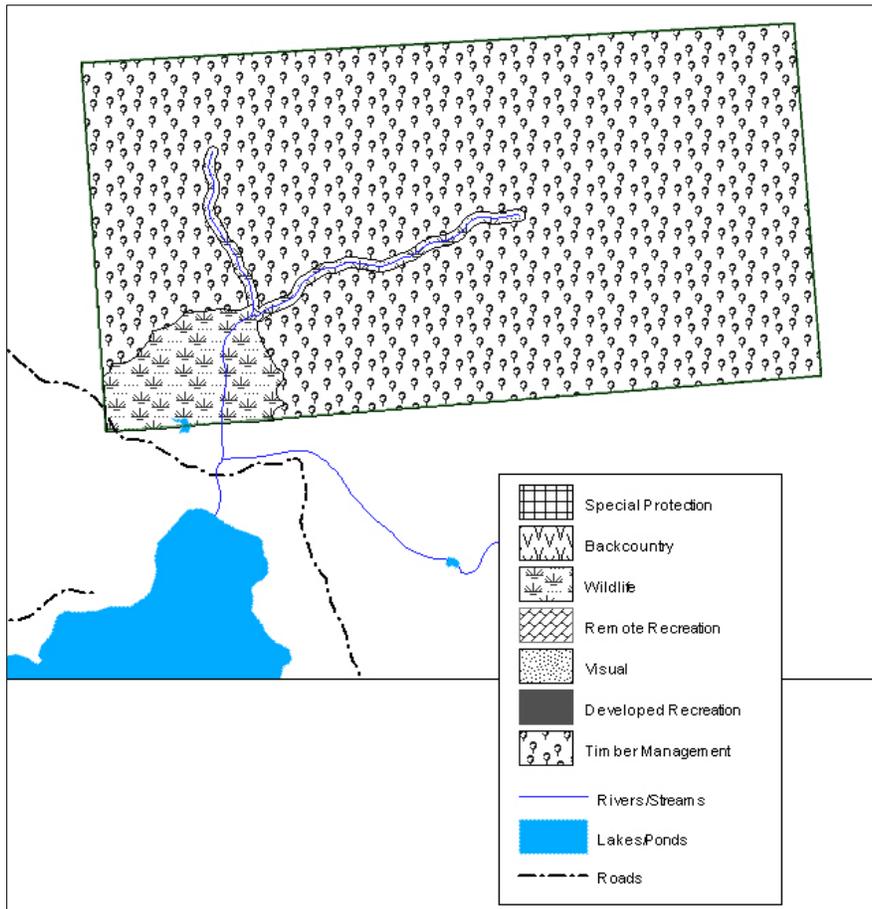
<b>Lincoln Plantation Lots: Summary of Allocations</b>	
<b>Dominant Allocation</b>	<b>Acres*</b>
Wildlife	15
Visual Class I	34**
Developed Recreation Class I	53**
Timber Management	744
*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS metrics and do not sum total unit acres due to measuring error and limits of GIS precision.	
**Approximate—actual acres will be determined in the field	

<b>Management Issues</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<u><i>Future Timber Management</i></u>	<p>West Lot management will continue to focus on hardwood sawlog production, with spruce important on higher elevations and in the northeast corner near the highway.</p> <p>On the East Lot, management for high quality hardwood and spruce will be the timber priority. Maintain visual integrity along the Lincoln Pond Road and along Route 16.</p> <p>Exercise care when harvesting near the frequent streams, especially those containing infeed pipes for camplot water supply.</p>

## ***Magalloway Plantation Lot***

The 1,044-acre Magalloway Lot is an original public lot, covering rolling terrain south of Sturtevant Mountain and sloping down into Umbagog Lake. It is bordered on the south and west by land within the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge.

### **Magalloway Plantation Lot Allocations**



***Wildlife Dominant***  
Riparian buffers, inland wading bird and waterfowl habitat, and deer wintering area are wildlife dominant.

***Timber Management***  
All other acres are Timber Dominant.

<b>Magalloway Plantation Lot – Summary of Allocations</b>	
<b>Dominant Allocation</b>	<b>Acres*</b>
Wildlife	93
Timber Management	1014
*Dominant acreages are representations based on GIS metrics and do not sum total unit acres due to measuring error and limits of GIS precision.	

**Magalloway Plantation Management Issues and Recommendations**

*Future Timber Management*

Softwood types should be managed to retain deer winter cover, while producing spruce and fir timber.

Mixedwood stands, where they abut deer cover should usually be managed to increase the softwood proportion for additional winter cover. There and elsewhere, the mixedwood stands can produce high quality spruce, yellow birch, and sugar maple. Much of this type is at or near late successional character, and management should maintain this status where feasible.

Hardwood types should be managed to retain the late-successional character, consistent with tree conditions and timber goals, particularly on the east half of the Lot.

*Summary of Western Mountains Region Allocations*

	<b>Total Acres Deeded</b>	<b>Special Protection Acres<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Backcountry Non-Mech Acres<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Remote Recreation Acres<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Wildlife Acres<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Develop Rec Class I Acres<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Timber Mgt- Dom Acres<sup>2</sup></b>	Timber Mgt- Sec Acres <sup>2</sup>
Mahoosuc Unit	31,764	11,832	2,379	598	1,668	74	14,617	2,266
Bald Mountain Unit	1,873	-	-	-	265	50	1,535	265
Four Ponds Unit	6,018	158	-	892	521	-	4,197	1,413
Richardson Unit	18,484	-	-	-	2,830	8	15,533	2,830
Dallas Plantation Lots (N and S)	439	-	-	-	185	-	264	185
Davis Lot <sup>1</sup>	960	-	-	-	227	13	644	227
Lincoln Plantation Lots (W and E)	919	-	-	-	15	53	778	15
Magalloway Plantation Lot	1,044	-	-	-	93	-	1014	93
Rangeley Plantation Lot	469	-	-	-	-	-	462	-
Stetsontown Lot	41	-	-	-	-	41	-	-
Township E (Smalls Falls) Lot	370	-	-	-	135	-	242	135
<b>Total Public Reserved Lands: Acres (%)<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>62,381 100</b>	<b>11,990 19.5</b>	<b>2,379 3.9</b>	<b>1,490 2.4</b>	<b>5,939 9.7</b>	<b>239 0.4</b>	<b>39,286 64.1</b>	<b>7,429 12.1</b>

<sup>1</sup> Common and Undivided

<sup>2</sup> GIS Acres; does not total deeded acres due to inherent scale errors

<sup>3</sup> Percent calculated based on GIS acres. Dominant allocations total 100%.

***Summary of the Resource Allocation Categories*** (for a more complete description, see the full Management Plan, or the Bureau’s “Integrated Resource Policy.”)

### **Special Protection Areas**

These areas are designated for the protection of values associated with unusual, important, representative, and native vegetation or wildlife habitat, geologic formations, or historic/cultural areas. They include the following:

*Natural Areas*, or areas left in an undisturbed state as determined by deed, statute, or management plan; and areas containing rare and endangered species of wildlife and/or plants and their habitat, geological formations, or other notable natural features;

*Ecological Reserves*, established by Title 12, Section 1801: "*an area owned or leased by the State and under the jurisdiction of the Bureau, designated by the Director, for the purpose of maintaining one or more natural community types or native ecosystem types in a natural condition and range of variation and contributing to the protection of Maine's biological diversity, and managed: A) as a benchmark against which biological and environmental change can be measured, B) to protect sufficient habitat for those species whose habitat needs are unlikely to be met on lands managed for other purposes; or C) as a site for ongoing scientific research, long-term environmental monitoring, and education.*" Most ecological reserves will encompass more than 1,000 contiguous acres.

*Historic/Cultural Areas* (above or below ground) containing valuable or important prehistoric, historic, and cultural features.

In general, uses allowed in special protection areas are carefully managed and limited to protect the significant resources and values that qualify for this allocation. Because of their sensitivity, these areas can seldom accommodate active manipulation or intensive use of the resource. Recreation as a secondary use is allowed with emphasis on non-motorized, dispersed activities.

### **Backcountry Recreation Areas**

Backcountry Recreation areas are relatively large areas (usually 1,000 acres or more) allocated for dominant recreational use for the values associated with a special combination of features including superior scenic quality, remoteness, wild and pristine character and capacity to impart a sense of solitude.

Backcountry Areas are comprised of two types:

*Non-mechanized Backcountry Areas* – roadless areas with outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of dispersed recreation where trails for non-mechanized travel are provided and no timber harvesting occurs.

*Motorized Backcountry Areas* – multi-use areas with significant opportunities for dispersed recreation where trails for motorized activities and timber harvesting are allowed.

## **Wildlife Dominant Areas**

These areas are allocated to protect values associated with essential, significant, and specialized wildlife habitat areas.

*Essential habitats* are those regulated by law and currently consist of bald eagle, piping plover, and least tern nest sites (usually be categorized as Special Protection as well as Wildlife Dominant Areas).

*Significant habitats*, defined by Maine's Natural Resource Protection Act, include habitat for endangered and threatened species; deer wintering areas; seabird nesting islands; vernal pools; waterfowl and wading bird habitats; shorebird nesting, feeding, and staging areas; and Atlantic salmon habitat.

*Specialized habitat areas and features* include rare natural communities; riparian areas; aquatic areas; wetlands; wildlife trees such as mast producing hardwood stands (oak and beech), snags and dead trees, den trees (live trees with cavities), large woody debris on the ground, apple trees, and raptor nest trees; seeps; old fields/grasslands; alpine areas; folist sites (a thick organic layer on sloping ground); and forest openings.

Recreation and timber management are secondary uses under most wildlife dominant areas.

## **Remote Recreation Areas**

These are areas allocated to protect natural and scenic values as well as recreation values. They often have significant opportunities for low-intensity, dispersed, non-motorized recreation. They are usually relatively long corridors rather than broad, expansive areas—examples include trail corridors, shorelines, and remote ponds. Timber management is a secondary use, and motorized trails are allowed under limited circumstances.

## **Visual Areas**

Many Bureau-managed properties have natural settings in which visual attributes enhance the enjoyment of recreational users. To protect the land's aesthetic character, the Bureau uses a two-tier classification system to guide timber harvesting in these areas, based on the sensitivity of the visual resource to be protected.

*Visual Class I* Areas where the foreground views of natural features may directly affect enjoyment of the viewer. Applied throughout the system to shorelines of great ponds and other major watercourses, designated trails, and designated public use roads. Timber harvesting is performed to maintain the appearance of an essentially undisturbed forest.

*Visual Class II* Include views of forest canopies from ridge lines, the forest interior as it fades from the foreground of the observer, background hillsides viewed from water or public use roads, or interior views beyond the Visual Class I area likely to be seen from a trail or road. Timber is managed to avoid obvious alterations to the landscape and openings will be of a size and orientation as to not draw undue attention.

## **Developed Recreation Areas**

### *Developed Recreation Class I Areas*

Typically include more intensely developed recreation facilities than found in Remote Recreation Areas such as: drive-to primitive campsites with minimal supporting facilities; gravel boat access facilities and parking areas; shared use roads and/or trails designated for motorized activities; and trailhead parking areas. These areas do not usually have full-time management staff.

## **Timber Management Areas**

These areas meet the Bureau's guidelines as suitable for timber management, and timber management is not prohibited by deed or statute. Area is not dominated by another resource category. Where other uses are dominant, timber management may be a secondary use if conducted in a way that does not conflict with the dominant use.

The Bureau's timber management practices are governed by a combination of statute and Bureau policy, including but not limited to policies spelled out in the IRP. These general policies include:

*Overall Objectives:* The Bureau's overall timber management objectives are to demonstrate exemplary management on a large ownership, sustaining a forest rich in late successional character and producing high value products (chiefly sawlogs and veneer) that contribute to the local economy and support management of Public Reserved lands, while maintaining or enhancing non-timber values (secondary uses), including wildlife habitat and recreation.

*Forest Certification:* Timber management practices (whether as a dominant or secondary use) meet the sustainable forestry certification requirements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and the Forest Stewardship Council.