

- Additional aspects to consider regarding enforcement of camping and fire prohibitions include:
 - Need and potential for enforcement that includes the authority to write summons (as issued in past seasons for illegal fires by MFS Rangers).
 - Need to ensure BPL or other staff are on-site every weekend day.
 - Need for periodic overnight stays at Tumbledown Pond (as have occurred with Park Ranger and Environmental Stewards in some past seasons).

Mount Blue State Park

This section provides background information on the MBSP property, including the acquisition history and general character of the land base; recreation resources; ecological resources and natural communities; wildlife resources; and history and culture. This is followed by a summary of the management issues that the Plan will seek to address through the Vision and management recommendations for the Park.

Acquisition History and Character of the Land Base

MBSP is Maine's largest State Park and is comprised of 8,200 acres of public land in two sections, the Webb Lake area and the Center Hill/Mount Blue area. About half of the total acres were acquired in 1955 as a gift from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Those lands included about 400 acres on Webb Lake that now host the campground, beach and other developed facilities, ~3,200 acres in Weld at Center Hill and Mount Blue, and ~1,310 acres in Avon on Mount Blue.

The first addition to the park occurred in 1967, when the State purchased a 17-acre shoreline parcel on Webb Lake. In 1988, the State purchased an 84-acre parcel near Center Hill in Weld. A major expansion of the park occurred in 2001-02, when the State acquired 2,844 acres: a 376-acre parcel adjacent to the campground/beach parcel, the 2,324-acre Hedgehog Hill parcel between Center Hill and Mount Blue, and a 144-acre parcel in Temple, on Gammon Ridge south of Mount Blue. The last addition occurred in 2004 with the acquisition of 354 acres; a 96-acre parcel in Weld and a 258-acre parcel in Avon on the east side of Mount Blue.

The topography of the Center Hill/Mount Blue area is mainly gently rolling, with an area of low ground surrounding Fran Brook between Center Hill and Hedgehog Hill. The slopes of Center Hill (particularly on the south) and Mount Blue are moderately steep to steep. The 3,187-foot summit of Mount Blue is the highest elevation in the park, 2,516 feet above the elevation of Webb Lake. Several small streams drain the area, mainly flowing into East Brook and Houghton Brook which flow into Webb Lake.

The topography of the Webb Lake area is gently sloping toward the lake. Swett Brook runs near to the north boundary and drains into Webb Lake at the northwest corner of the park property. The park is largely covered with second growth forest and plantations on former farms and homesteads and areas previously harvested for timber (additional details are provided below).

Recreation Resources

Webb Lake Area

The original approximately 400-acre parcel on Webb Lake gifted to the State, with a mile of shoreline, hosts several recreation amenities. These include the following:

Facility	Description
Campground	136 wooded campsites for tents and RVs, including several suitable for large RVs. Campers are provided with potable water, several restrooms, and a shower building. RV dump station available. Three areas are also available for group tent camping (up to 50 campers).
Beach	300 ft. sand beach with designated swimming area and grassy backshore, 2 reservable picnic shelters, picnic sites, restrooms and changing rooms, within walking distance of campground. Served by lifeguards during the peak summer season.
Boat Ramp	2 hardened lanes, with 6 vehicle/trailer parking spaces and a floating boarding dock; fully ADA accessible
Pedestrian trails	Swett Brook Trail: 2-mile loop trail circling the campground Hopping Frog Trail: 0.5-mile nature trail from the Nature Center and back (other short trail segments link these trails to other amenities)
Other amenities	Nature Center, amphitheater, playground, 2 Adirondack shelters, all located near the lake shore and beach

The entrance station at Webb Lake is staffed each year from May 15 – Indigenous Peoples Day. The similarly sized parcel behind the campground/beach parcel is undeveloped but open to exploration by park visitors.

Center Hill/Mount Blue Area

This section of MBSP offers a variety of day-use recreation opportunities in all seasons, facilitated by an extensive trail system and other developed facilities. There are currently over 20 miles of pedestrian and multi-use trails, with trailheads at the headquarters and at Mount Blue. The pedestrian and multi-use trails are as follows:

Trail	Description
Center Hill Nature Trail	Half-mile loop to top of hill accessed from day use area, with picnic sites and cleared overlooks.
Mount Blue Trail	1.6 mile up and back trail from parking area at end of Mt. Blue Road; open summit with viewing tower. Picnic shelter and 1 ac. mowed field near trailhead. Field may be used for group camping.
Multi-use trails	18 miles of trail, some on Mt. Blue Road and old roads, open to pedestrians, ATVs, bikes, and horses

Birding websites recommend the Center Hill trail to view species such as breeding hermit thrushes, winter wrens, common warblers, and scarlet tanagers. The Mount Blue trail is recommended for viewing boreal birds such as boreal chickadee, blackpoll warbler, and gray jay.

In addition, the Center Hill/Mount Blue area hosts an extensive winter trail system providing varied terrain and scenery, all accessed from park headquarters. The park maintains 15 miles of groomed ski trails (some of which are co-located with the multiuse trail) with several long and short loops ranging from ½ mile to 10 miles in length. Two snowshoe trails branching out from the headquarters are kept cleared. An “iron ranger” has been installed for visitors to pay the day use fee.

Other developed facilities associated with headquarters area include a parking area with interpretive panels and several picnic sites overlooking the Webb Lake basin, across the road from the headquarters buildings. The park also provides an ice skating rink and a heated yurt warming space adjacent to the rink each winter. Toilets are provided.



Mount Blue tower

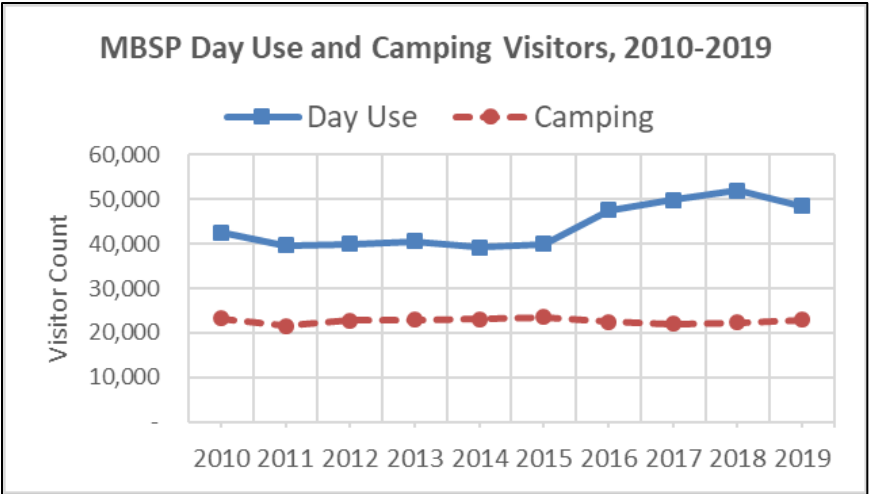


Ice skating rink at Park HQ (Take it Outside event, 2/1/20)

Several miles of designated snowmobile and ATV trails cross the Center Hill/Mount Blue area, connecting the park to areas to the east, west and south via the regional trail networks. A snowmobile trail also provides access to the lake on the Webb Lake parcels, coming into the park from the south, following an old road to the entrance and following the main road from the entrance to the boat ramp area. Map Figure 6 depicts the road system used to access the park as well as the roads, trails and major facilities within the park.

Park Visitation Levels and Dispersed Activities

MBSP is among the most visited inland parks in the State Park system. Over the 10-year period of 2010-2019, day use ranged from approximately 40,000 to 52,000 visits annually and averaged about 42,000 visits. Camping use was very consistent over that same period, with 22-23,000 campers each year. The campground is filled to capacity most summer weekends. The graph below depicts day use and camping figures for that decade.

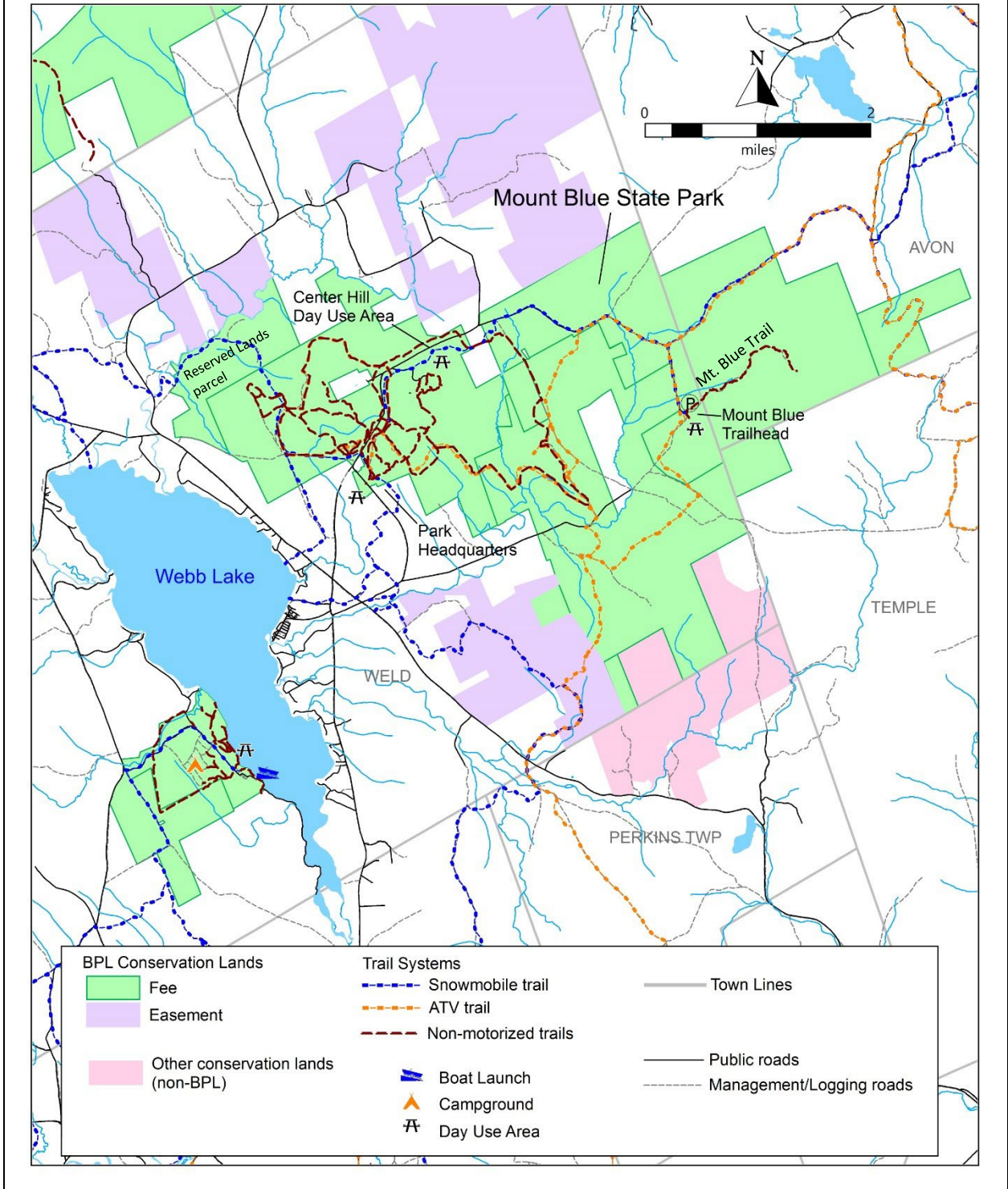


During 2020, the park saw a substantial increase in both day use and camping, a phenomenon observed at several other parks in the system where there were not extended summer closures (as at several state park beaches) due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Type of Use	Attendance	Change from 2019 (%)
Day Use	57,803	+19.3%
Camping	29,960	+30.9%

Although day use had been increasing in recent years, as shown in the graph above, the Bureau believes the 2020 increases were due in part to the wide societal impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Factors such as individuals and families spending a greater amount of time at home while offices and schools were closed, and restrictions on out-of-state travel, led to an increase in Mainers seeking opportunities to recreate outdoors in ways that best allowed social distancing.

Mount Blue State Park Access and Recreation Facilities



MAP FIGURE 6.

The park property is also used for dispersed activities, particularly hunting, facilitated by the good vehicle and pedestrian access afforded by the road and trail system reaching into all parts of the park. Hunting is permitted at MBSP between October 1 and April 30. Discharge of any weapon is prohibited at all times within 300 feet of any picnic area, camping area or campsite, parking area, building, shelter, boat launch site, posted hiking trail or other developed area. Trapping may only take place with written permission of the Bureau.

Natural Resources

Natural Communities, Hydrology and Wetlands

MBSP is nearly entirely forested, with the exception of some of the developed areas on Webb Lake, and at Center Hill and the headquarters area (an historic homestead, with old orchards and fields). The majority of the forest regenerated on old farms after they were abandoned in the mid-20th century. Although hardwood stands predominate, softwood and mixedwood stands are also present. The upper slopes of Mount Blue are covered in softwoods. Approximately 100 acres are plantations, primarily of Norway spruce and red pine.

The park contains several miles of mapped perennial streams, including Swett Brook, Keyes Brook, Parlin Brook, Fran Brook and Houghton Brook, all of which flow to Webb Lake. About 200 acres of the property are mapped as wetland according to the National Wetlands Inventory. Larger wetlands covering ~40-60 acres occur along Fran Brook and Houghton Brook in the Center Hill/Mount Blue area, with numerous smaller examples scattered elsewhere in the park.

Exemplary Natural Communities

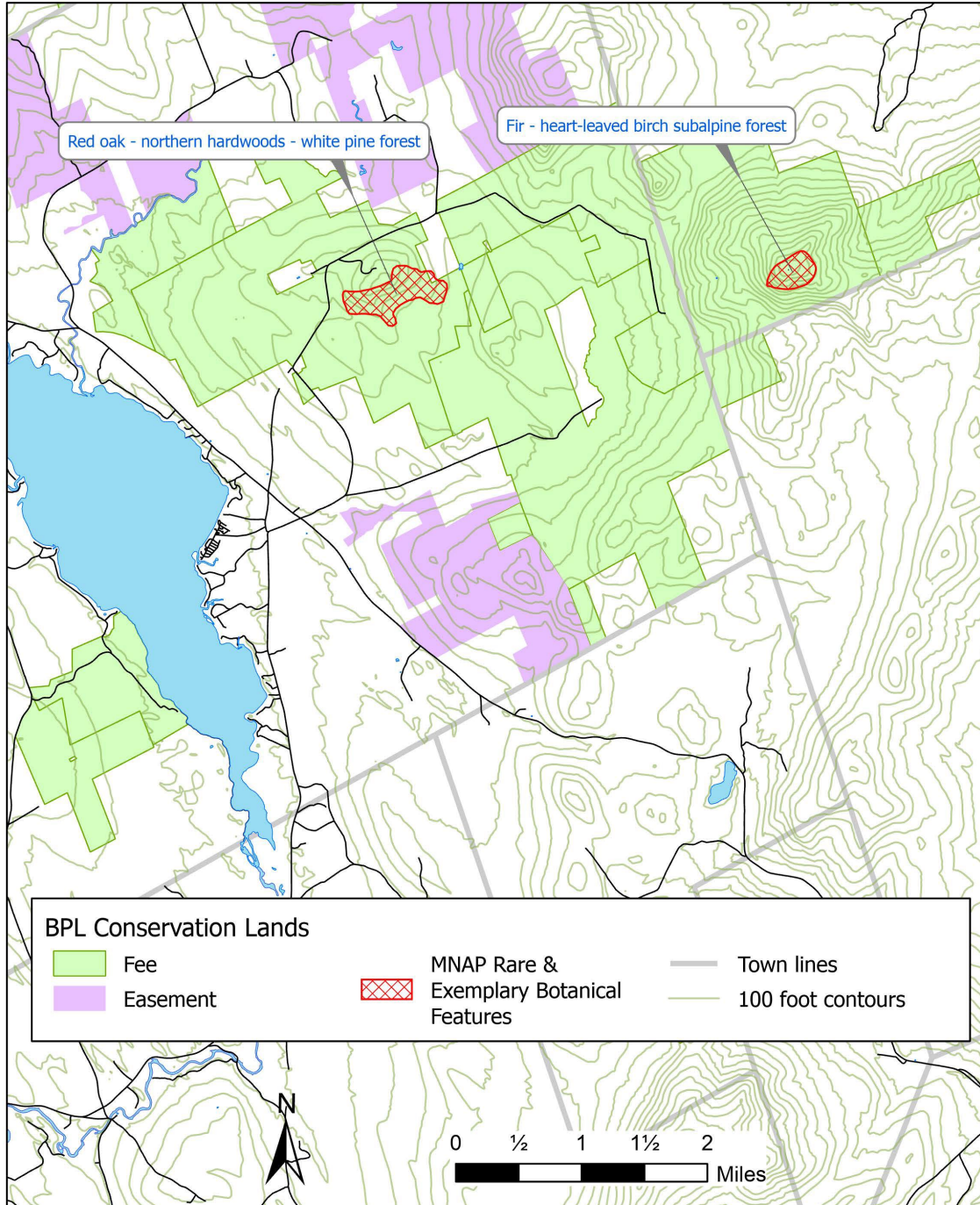
As previously noted in relation to the Tumbledown Unit, most of the public lands addressed in this plan are within the “*Tumbledown to Mount Blue Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance*,” identified by the State’s Beginning with Habitat program due to the concentration of rare plants, animals, natural communities and significant wildlife habitats. Two exemplary natural communities have been mapped by MNAP in the park: a 120-acre area of mature **Red Oak – Northern Hardwood Forest** on the south side of Center Hill, and a 50-acre area of **Fir – Heart-leaved Birch Subalpine Forest** on the upper elevations of Mount Blue. These features are shown on Map Figure 7.

Wildlife and Fisheries Resources

MBSP provides habitat for a number of wide-ranging game species, including black bear, white-tailed deer, and moose. Bear appear to be fairly numerous in the area, while moose are less so. (In 2019, 16 bears were harvested in Weld and 3 in Avon. No moose were taken in the two towns that year.)

There are three IF&W-mapped deer wintering areas (DWAs) that lie partially within the park. The largest is located along the southwest shore of Webb Lake and along the Webb River, about 45 acres of which extends onto park property. The second is along Houghton Brook, south of Hedgehog Hill, with about 120 acres within the park. The third is north of Center Hill, with about 100 acres within the park. IF&W has also mapped 60 acres of inland waterfowl and wading bird habitat in the park along Fran Brook, between Center Hill and Hedgehog Hill. A 50-acre area on the summit of Mount Blue is mapped as Bicknell’s thrush habitat, coinciding

Mount Blue State Park MNAP "Rare and Exemplary" Features



MAP FIGURE 7.

with the alpine spruce-fir community there. Important wildlife features are shown on Map Figure 8.

The varied open and forested habitats in the park provide habitat for many bird species. The Maine Bird Atlas lists over 70 species observed in the vicinity of the park (not all confirmed), including over a dozen warbler species. Bald eagles have nested near the shore of Webb Lake, with nest sites mapped on the north and west shores (the latter in the park).

No endangered or threatened wildlife are known to be present or been recorded in the park.

Webb Lake is 2,146 acres in area, with a well-developed shore hosting numerous homes and camps. In addition to the State Park on the west shore, the lake hosts a privately-operated family campground and a boy's camp on the east shore. It provides a primarily warmwater fishery (smallmouth bass, white perch, sunfish and chain pickerel). Water quality is marginal in summer for coldwater fish due to warm temperatures and low dissolved oxygen; however, IF&W stocks brook trout, brown trout and landlocked salmon in the lake each fall. Special fishing regulations apply: 2 fish limit on trout; 2 fish limit on bass, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. For the fall season (Oct. 1 – Nov. 30): Artificial lures only, all trout and salmon must be released immediately. The lake is open to ice fishing January 1 through March 31.

Brook trout may be present in the streams in the park, based on IF&W mapping of brook trout habitat. These and other streams provide spawning and nursery habitat to the brook trout population in Webb Lake (supplemented by the stocking mentioned above).

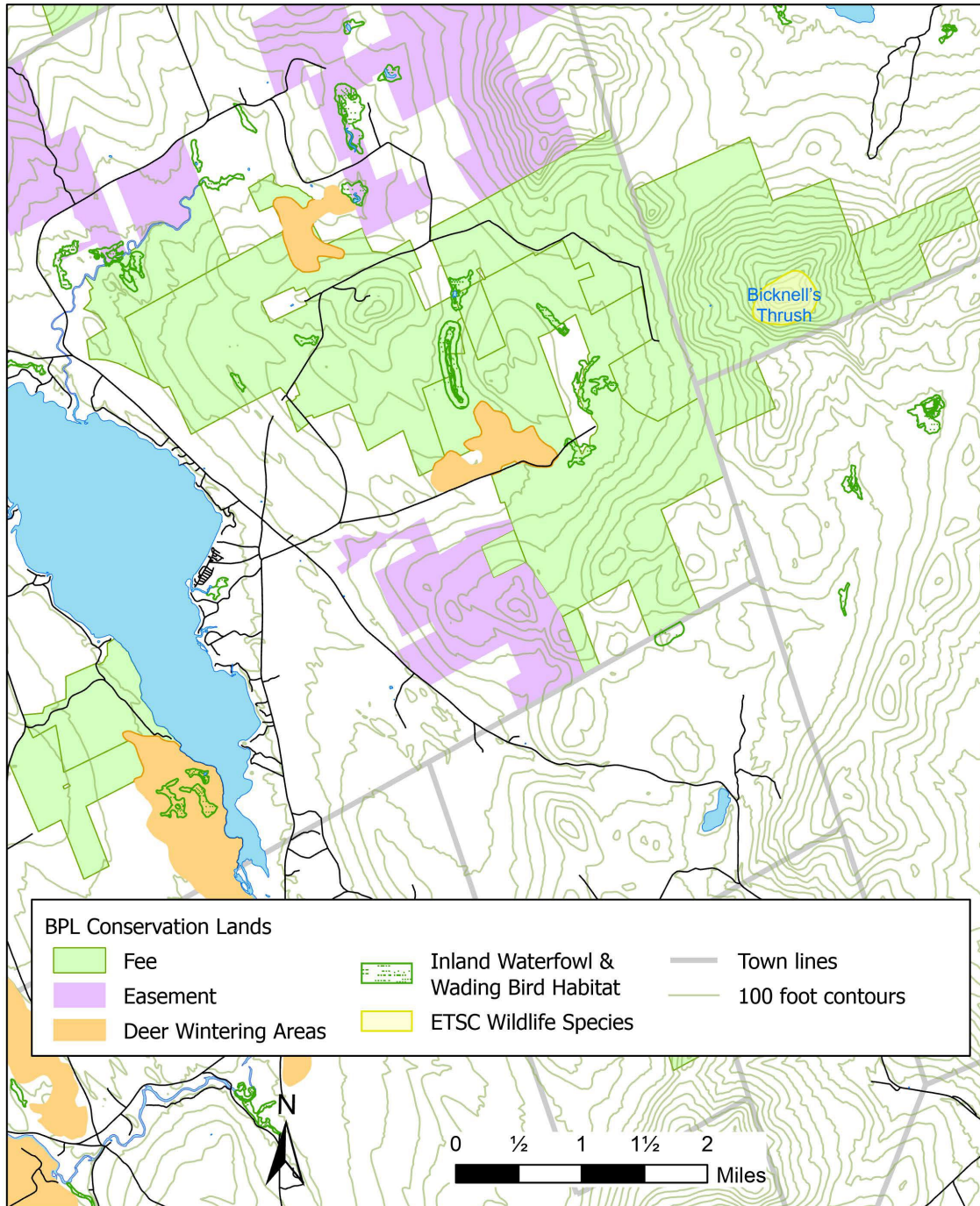
History and Culture

As noted previously, the lands around MBSP were first inhabited by Indigenous peoples, known as the Wabanaki, more than 10,000 years ago, after the retreat of the last ice age. There are no known archeological resources in the park.

The town of Weld was first settled around 1800, and the small farms and homesteads that became the core of the park were the eventual result of that settlement. Rock walls and other signs of that history are scattered throughout the park. The park headquarters near Center Hill was formerly the homestead of Hiram Wheeler, who built the house about 1825 and which for some time served as a liquor agency for the town. In 1865 George Coburn married Olive Wheeler and bought the house from his father-in-law. In 1935 the home was bought by the government to be the new park headquarters. The house is now used as the Park Manager's residence, and the adjoining buildings are used to support a variety of park purposes, including storage and a meeting space. The apple orchard next to the house and the fields across the road were also part of the homestead.

The park was born out of the Great Depression, when the federal government purchased 51 parcels of marginal farmland under the U.S. Resettlement Administration Land Utilization Project. The park's development began as a federal work project involving the Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corp. Traces of that history remain in the road system at Webb Lake and certain other structures, including one Adirondack shelter. Officially, the park began in 1939 under a License Agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Mount Blue State Park Important Wildlife Features



MAP FIGURE 8.

Mount Blue was the site of a 40-foot fire tower constructed by the Maine Forest Service in 1932. The tower was replaced by the current look-alike tower in 2011, which hosts radio equipment as well as a viewing platform. (The Maine Office of Information Technology has a 40-year lease for the radio communication facility encompassing a half-acre site on the summit.) The fire warden's cabin, now partly collapsed, is near the trail halfway up the mountain.

Southwest of the campground there is an historic cemetery referred to as the "Old Tainter Burying Ground," which is owned by the County but completely surrounded by the park. Foot access is available from the park entrance via an old road.

Management Issues, Concerns and Opportunities

The Bureau of Parks and Lands will manage MBSP for multiple uses including outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, scenic and natural area protection and water quality protection. The following discussion summarizes the key management issues and opportunities on the park lands.

Recreation Resources

Recreation Facilities

No expansion of existing facilities or new recreation facilities are under consideration at the present time. The Bureau will continue to operate the existing campground, beach, boat launch and associated day use facilities on Webb Lake and the day use facilities at Park headquarters, Center Hill and the Mount Blue trailhead. The Bureau will continue to maintain the existing hiking and nature trails as well as the winter trail system for Nordic skiing and snowshoeing. Maintenance of the motorized trails in the park will also continue, in partnership with local ATV and snowmobile clubs. Some changes to the ATV trail network are under consideration.

Major facility maintenance needs are addressed below under Administrative Issues.

Glade Skiing

As at Tumbledown, the Bureau has given consideration to the GBA proposal for developing glade skiing on Mount Blue and nearby slopes within the park. Here also, there is a lack of winter access and parking. The Mount Blue access road is closed in the winter and is not constructed for winter use. It is also the preference of the Bureau to avoid clearing of vegetation at the scale required by glade skiing on Park lands. Therefore, in the Bureau's judgment the proposal is not a good fit for the park, but we remain open to considering other sites on the public lands in the region.

Wildlife and Habitat Protection/Special Resources

Title 12 MRSA § 1811 (see Appendix B) directs the Bureau to establish wilderness or natural areas on state park lands, and to manage those areas to preserve their natural character and features. Although there has been no formal designation, the majority of Mount Blue State Park has been managed de facto as a natural area, excluding the developed portions of the Webb Lake area, and the headquarters, Center Hill, and Mount Blue trailhead portions of the Center Hill/Mount Blue area. These natural areas account for approximate 7,800 acres of the Park (95%).

The Bicknell's thrush habitat and the majority of the deer wintering areas and inland waterfowl and wading bird habitat are within these natural areas. The exemplary subalpine spruce-fir natural community on Mount Blue and the exemplary northern hardwood natural community on Center Hill are also within these natural areas. No timber cutting would occur in the exemplary natural communities, other than potential removal or trimming of a limited number of trees to maintain scenic views.

Timber Harvesting

Title 12 MRSA § 1826 (see Appendix B) directs the Bureau to preserve the natural, recreational and scenic qualities of forested areas within the parks, specifies the limited purposes for which timber harvesting may occur on park lands, and restrictions that apply to any cutting of trees. The allowed purposes that could be applicable to MBSP are as follows:

- when the wood is to be used at state parks
- when necessary to improve wildlife habitat; control insect infestation and other disease; reduce the risk of fire or other hazards; or improve the recreational and aesthetic quality of the park lands
- to demonstrate exemplary multiple use forest management techniques within a demonstration forest area

Under a 1955 Memorandum of Agreement between Parks and the Department of Forestry, the Maine Forest Service conducted timber management on the Center Hill/Mt. Blue parcels before they were developed for park purposes (the MOA was cancelled in 1972). In 1966, the State sold stumpage rights on 1,000 acres of the park land to a local timber company, for a 30-year period, in exchange for a 17-acre parcel of land on Webb Lake with water frontage. Timber harvest operations occurred on much of that area, ending in the mid-1990s.

Harvesting last occurred at MBSP in 2007 as part of a demonstration initiative that involved several parks. Harvests included thinnings of Norway spruce and red pine plantations, aimed at improving the health of those planting likely established by the WPA during the 1930-40s, and the opening of viewpoints in the Center Hill area. Harvesting occurred on a total of about 125 acres. A total of 2,370 cords (equivalent) was removed, mainly in softwood sawlogs and pulpwood, as well as tree-length softwood logs.

Although no harvests are currently planned, future treatments to maintain the health and aesthetic value of the plantations, and other limited cutting to improve recreational quality of the park lands will be considered.

Administrative Issues

Major Maintenance Needs

MBSP contains millions of dollars of infrastructure that is aging since the construction of the park. Many features contained in the park are part of a statewide backlog of nearly \$50,000,000 in deferred capital improvements and repairs. These capital improvements will be contingent on securing funding sources that can be matched to Federal Land & Water Conservation Funds. A Federal CARES Act appropriation may provide funding that will enable major rebuilds and upgrades of existing infrastructure such as roads, parking lots, restrooms, changing areas and nature centers. These funds will also allow consideration of construction “much asked for”

newer amenities such as cabins, lean-tos, expanded electrical and water hookups, and visitor centers. A visitor center should be located in a location that is centrally situated as visitors first enter the park/lands unit to allow a description of all the offerings within the park and the public lands unit and provide directions/map to get there.

Vision for Mount Blue State Park

Mount Blue State Park is the largest park in the system and is managed to protect significant ecological and wildlife values and to provide a variety of four-season recreational opportunities.

Management of the Park seeks to balance development with protecting the forested camping, hiking, Nordic skiing and snowshoeing, and off-road vehicle experiences, as well as the swimming, boating, and fishing experiences on Webb Lake. The Park cooperates and collaborates with area partners to provide high quality recreational opportunities and facilities that expand and enrich recreational options for visitors.

Most of the Park will continue to be managed as an undesignated Natural Area, providing protection for sensitive natural resources, such as exemplary natural communities, wetlands and riparian habitats, as well as zoned deer wintering areas. Any timber harvesting will be limited in area and will be conducted only for the purposes specified in statute.

The park will continue to offer camping, nature walks, swimming, boating and related activities on Webb Lake, and hiking, picnicking, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing and ice skating at the Center Hill/Mount Blue area, supported by the existing developed facilities. Improvements to facilities will be undertaken as needs dictate and available resources allow. Traditional dispersed recreation activities such as hunting and trapping, and snowmobile and ATV routes connected to the regional ORV trail networks, will continue in the park.

Management Recommendations for Mount Blue State Park

Recreation and Access

- Continue to operate the existing campground, beach, boat launch and associated day use facilities on Webb Lake and the day use facilities at Park headquarters, Center Hill and the Mount Blue trailhead.
- Continue to maintain the existing hiking and nature trails as well as the winter trail system for Nordic skiing and snowshoeing.
- Continue to maintain the motorized trails in the park, in partnership with local ATV and snowmobile clubs.
- Planning and pursue funding as needed for major facility and access maintenance needs.

Wildlife/Rare or Exemplary Ecosystems and Habitats

- Continue management of over 90% of the park as an undesignated Natural Area.

Timber Management

- The Bureau will conduct timber harvests only for the purposes specified in statute.

Bald Mountain Lot (Perkins Twp.)

The 167-acre Bald Mountain Lot in Perkins Twp. was acquired in 2004 as part of the larger series of transactions with Mead Westvaco Oxford Corp. that expanded the Tumbledown Unit and MBSP.

Character of the Land Base

The half-mile square lot encompasses the western side of Bald Mountain, with the ridgeline of the mountain crossing the lot on a northeast/southwest diagonal. The east boundary line of the lot (coinciding with the township boundary) crosses over the mountain close to the summit. The summit proper (~2,360 ft. elevation) and the east side of the mountain is in adjoining Washington Twp., on forest land owned by Carrier Timberlands. Terrain on both the north and south sides of the mountain is steep, but grades into more moderately sloped ground on the northwest 1/3 of the lot, at the foot of ridge. The lot is forested with the exception of the prominent areas of exposed bedrock across the ridge that gives the mountain its name.

Access and Recreation Resources

The public accesses the lot primarily by a well-used and blazed trail crossing the adjacent private land to the east of the lot from a small roadside parking area on Rt. 146. The parking area is commonly full at peak use times during spring, summer and fall. The Bureau had no involvement in the development of the trail, which has apparently existed in some form prior to the Bureau acquiring the lot. The hike to the Bald Mountain summit, next to the east boundary of the lot, is about one mile. The trail has been extended across the lot along the ridgeline and continues westward to ascend Saddleback Mountain and approach the wind turbines there. There is no public vehicle access to the lot. However, a designated ATV trail crosses a short distance to the northwest on a private forest road, and hunters and others may walk into the lot from that trail. Map Figure 9 depicts these trails.

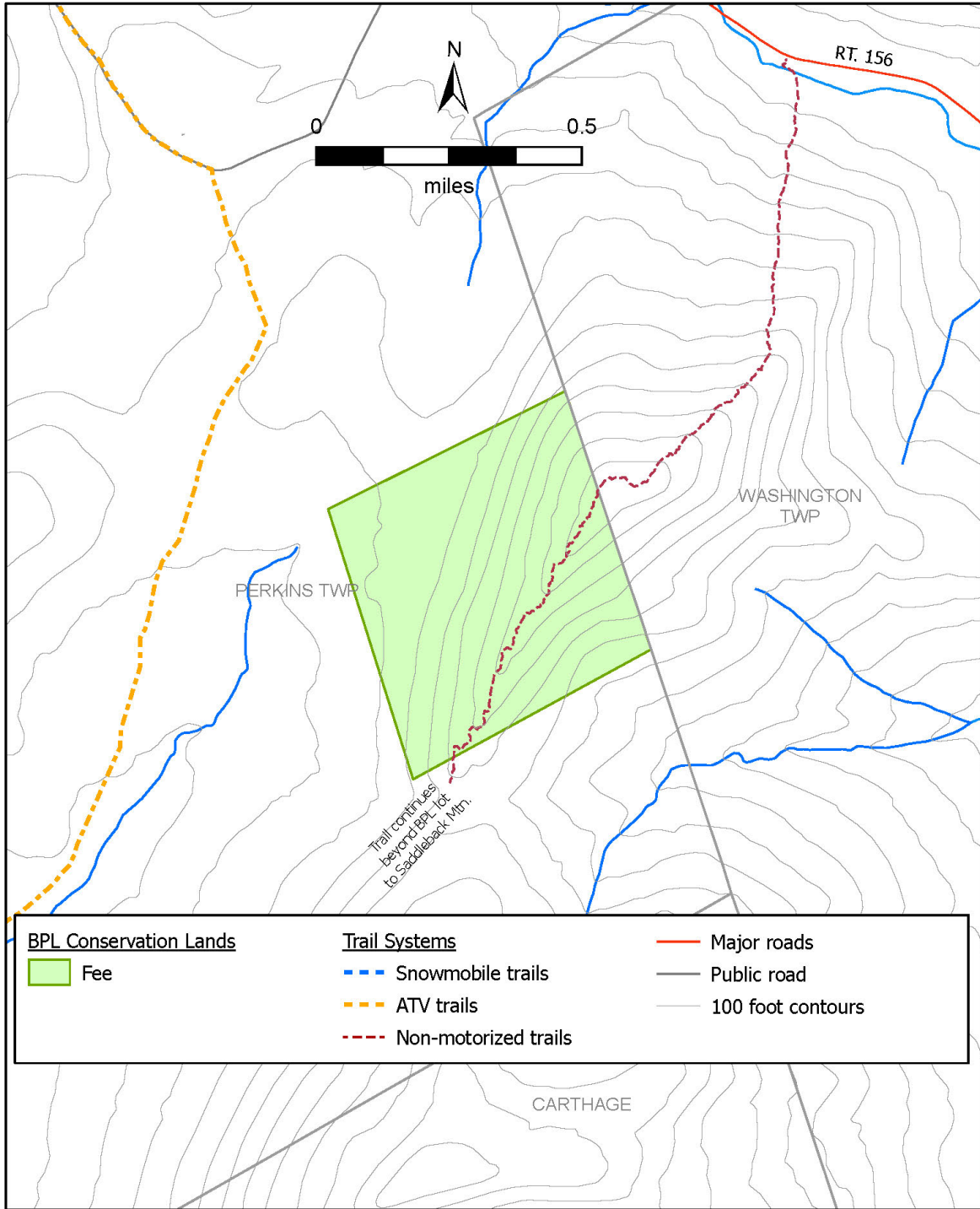
Exemplary Natural Communities, Rare Plants, and Wildlife

MNAP has identified two exemplary natural communities on the public land portion of Bald Mountain: a ***Rock Outcrop Ecosystem*** enveloping most of the upper elevation, ***and Three-toothed Cinquefoil - Blueberry Low Summit Bald*** in two distinct areas within that ecosystem. A ***Crowberry – Bilberry Low Summit Bald*** is located around the summit on the adjacent private land. Map Figure 10 depicts these communities.

The exemplary communities cover about 170 acres in total, about 30 acres of which are the low summit balds (on and off the public lot). These are characterized by patches of blueberry, lichens, and low herbs among areas of bare rock, with 10-50% vegetative cover overall, often comprised of only a few species. Three-toothed cinquefoil may be locally abundant. Soils are thin and occur in depressions in the bedrock. This community type is easily damaged by overuse and may also be impacted by excessive trampling by hikers. Careful trail siting and efforts to minimize off-trail use are important management considerations. This is the typical habitat of the rare smooth sandwort; however, no rare plants have been recorded on the lot.

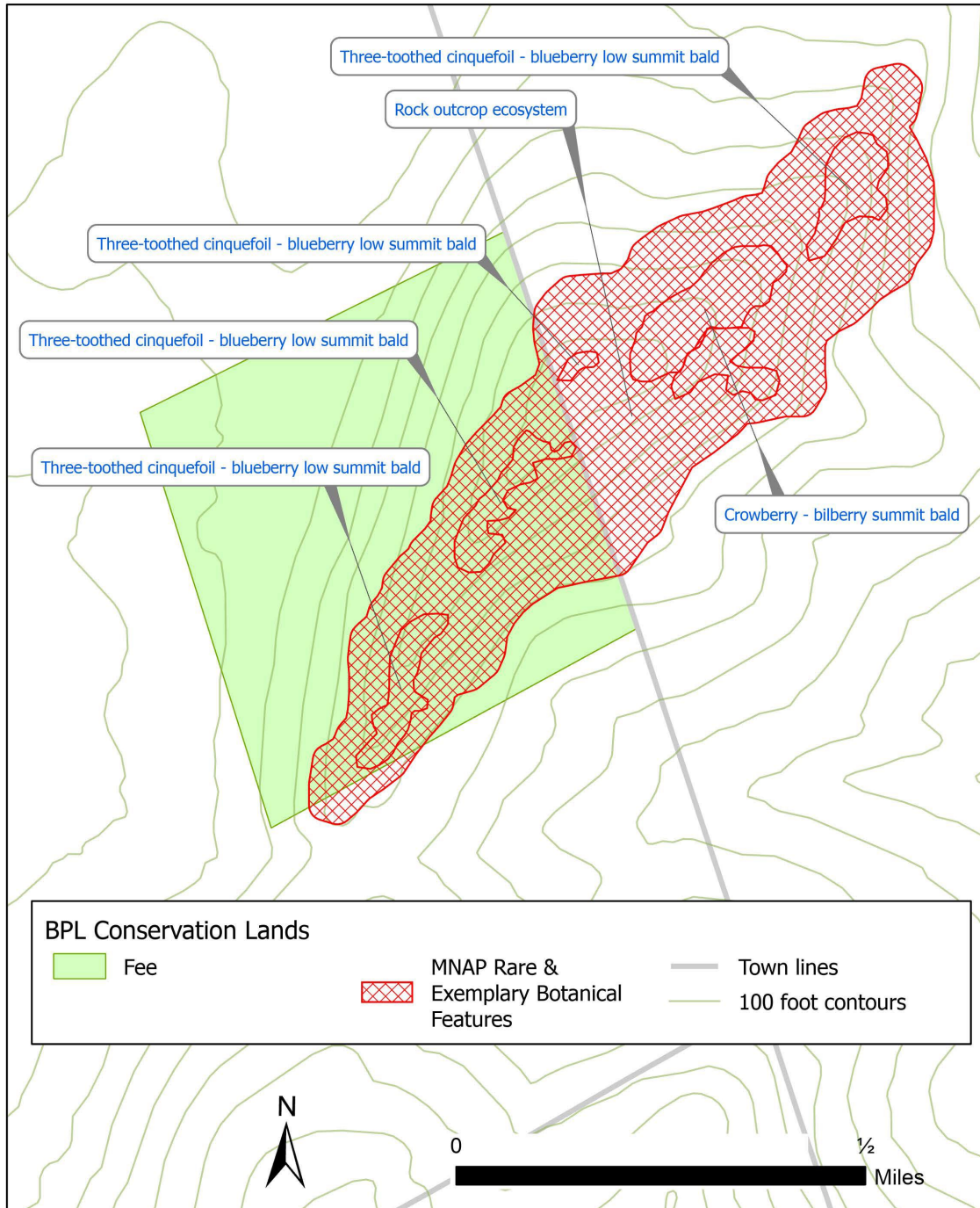
The upper elevations on the lot provides wildlife habitat similar to what has been described previously for the upper elevations at the Tumbledown Unit; however, the lot does not include mapped Bicknell's thrush habitat, more characteristic of higher elevation ridges and summits.

Bald Mountain Lot Access and Recreation Facilities



MAP FIGURE 9.

Bald Mountain Lot MNAP "Rare and Exemplary" Features



MAP FIGURE 10.

No specialized or significant wildlife habitats have been mapped on the lot.

Timber Resources

Detailed timber data is not available for the lot. However, the operable portion of the lot in the northwest corner was examined in 2017, in anticipation of a harvesting opportunity. The lot appeared to have been harvested about 30 years before. The forest in that area is composed of a relatively young hardwood stand with red maple, beech, white birch, aspen, sugar maple, yellow birch and white ash the most common species. The forest transitions to spruce and fir as the elevation increases.

The Bureau conducted a harvest on about 45 acres in 2018, when the opportunity arose in connection with a Bureau contractor that was harvesting on the adjacent private forest land. The harvest occurred on the northwest portion of the lot below about 1,700 feet elevation, with the objective of removing poor quality trees and improving the overall health and vigor of the stand. A total of 570 cords were harvested, 83% of which was hardwood pulp, 13% hardwood logs/veneer and 4% softwoods.

Management Issues

The Bureau has no concerns with the existing trail at this time. However, it has been extended without consultation onto the lot, where there is the potential for impacts on sensitive areas. The public has expressed concerns about the adequacy and safety of the parking area and trailhead on the State highway. The trailhead is not under BPL management or control.

As with the recent harvest, future timber harvesting will be focused on the northwest 40 percent of the lot, due to the steepness and special resources that characterize much of the remainder of the lot. No additional harvesting is likely to occur during this plan cycle.

Management Recommendations for the Bald Mountain Lot

Recreation

- The Bureau will monitor the portion of trail extended on to the lot from the adjacent private forest land for any significant impacts on the natural resource.
- Given that the public reaches the lot primarily via the existing trail, the Bureau may desire to formalize the trail and develop a trail management agreement with the abutter and the individual or organization currently maintaining the trail. An evaluation of the current trailhead/parking may be part of that formalization.
- If the opportunity arises, the Bureau will seek to obtain a permanent right-of-way for the trail to the lot, as no guaranteed public access now exists.

Timber Management

- Continue management focused on the accessible northwest portion of the lot. No additional harvesting is anticipated this plan cycle.

Resource Allocations for the Bald Mountain Lot

The following “allocations,” as shown on Map Figure 11 – Bald Mountain Lot Dominant Use Allocations, define general management objectives and direction for specific areas within the lot.

(Secondary allocations are not shown on the map.) See Appendix C for a description of designation criteria and management direction for the various allocation categories.

Special Protection Areas (Dominant Allocation)

- An area totaling approximately 50 acres encompassing the exemplary low-elevation bald communities and rock outcrop ecosystem.

Visual Consideration Areas (Secondary Allocation)

- Visual Class II areas will be defined as a secondary allocation in areas beyond the immediate foreground, such as background views of forest canopies from ridgelines and background hillsides viewed from public use roads, or interior views beyond the Class I area likely to be seen from a road, trail or water body; on this lot, this includes timber management areas that may be visible from the ridgeline.

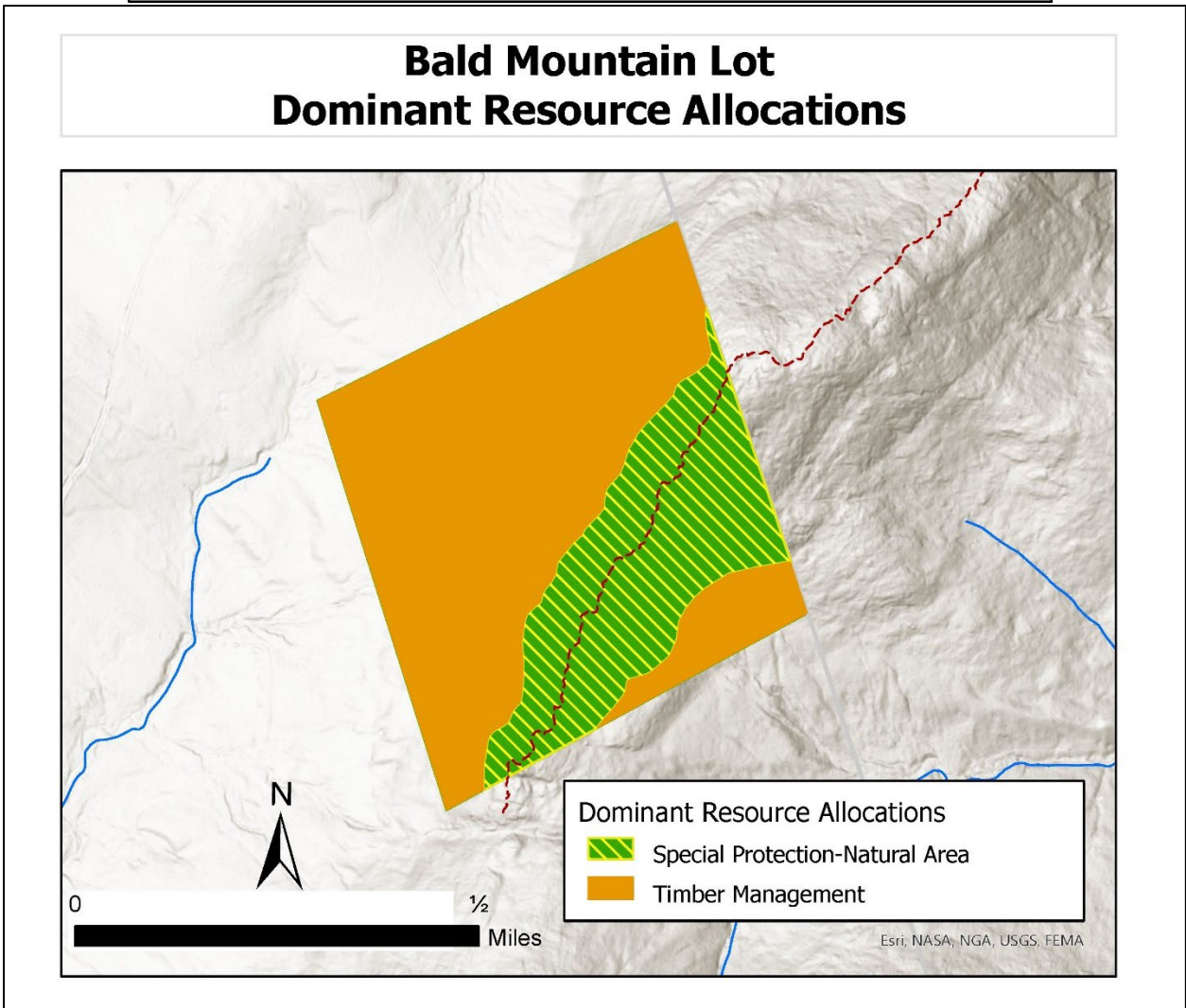
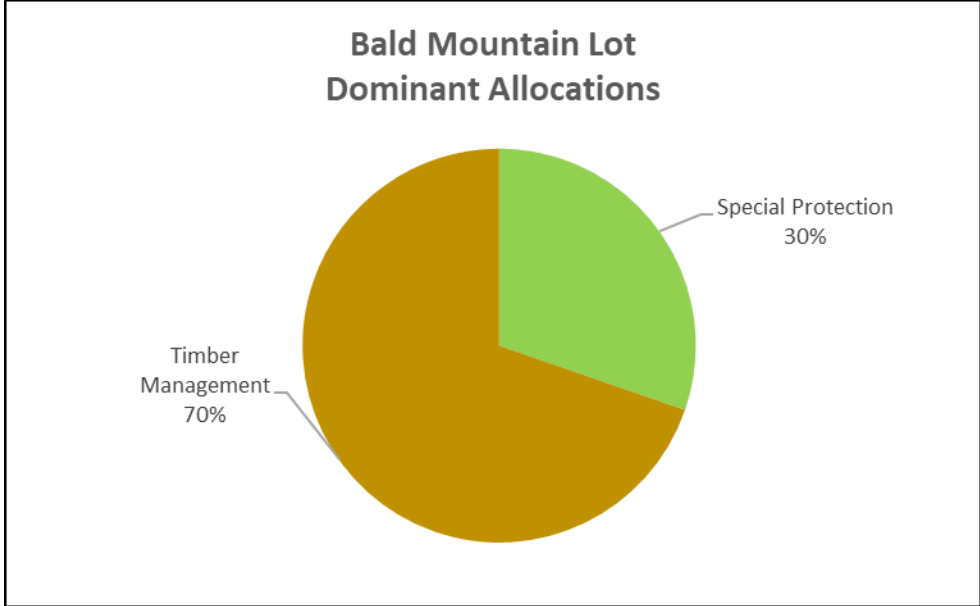
Timber Management Areas (Dominant Allocation)

- All other areas not allocated to Special Protection are designated Timber Management dominant (approximately 115 acres); includes all of the northwestern 40% of the lot and a small area along the south boundary. Recreation will be recognized as an important secondary use within the timber dominant allocation.

Bald Mountain Lot Allocation Summary

Allocation	Number of Acres			%
	Dominant	Secondary	Total	
Special Protection	50	Not applicable	50	30.3
Backcountry Non-mechanized	0	50	50	30.3
Backcountry Motorized	0	0	0	0
Wildlife Management	0	Not applicable	0	0
Remote Recreation	0	0	0	0
Visual Consideration – Class I	0	0	0	0
Visual Consideration – Class II	0	115	115	69.7
Developed Recreation – Class I	0	Not applicable	0	0
Timber Management	115	0	115	69.7
Note: Acreages are representations based on GIS metrics rounded to the nearest 5 acres, and do not sum to the total Unit acreage due to measuring error and limits of GIS precision.				

* Preliminary estimate, to be refined in the field as part of forest prescription process.



MAP FIGURE 11.

V. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are needed to track progress in achieving the management visions, goals and objectives for the Units, and effectiveness of particular approaches to resource management. Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted on wildlife, ecological, timber, and recreational management efforts in the Tumbledown/Mt. Blue Region.

Implementation of Plan Recommendations

The Bureau's Western Region is responsible for implementing, accomplishing, and tracking the management recommendations put forth in the Plan. This generally includes determination of work priorities and budgets on an annual basis. The Bureau will document, on an annual basis, its progress in implementing the recommendations, its plans for the coming year, and adjustments to the timing of specific actions or projects as needed.

Recreation

Data on recreational use is helpful in allocating staff and monetary resources for management of the Public Reserved Lands, and generally determining the public's response to the opportunities being provided. It also provides a measure of the effectiveness of any efforts to publicize these opportunities. As reported in the Tumbledown *Recreation Resources* section (and summarized in Appendix D for 2019), some use data for the Tumbledown Unit is collected each peak season. This data will continue to be collected and may be supplemented in the coming years, as the management recommendations in this plan are implemented.

At MBSP, fees are charged for the use of the park facilities on Webb Lake, which provides both day use and camping data. Fees are not collected at the Center Hill/Mount Blue area of the park.

The Bureau will also generally monitor recreation use to determine:

- (1) whether improvements to existing facilities or additional facilities might be needed and compatible with general objectives;
- (2) whether additional measures are needed to ensure that recreational users have a high quality experience (which could be affected by the numbers of users, and interactions among users with conflicting interests);
- (3) whether use is adversely affecting sensitive natural resources or the ecology of the area;
- (4) whether measures are needed to address unforeseen safety issues;
- (5) whether changing recreational uses and demands present the need or opportunity for adjustments to existing facilities and management; and
- (6) whether any changes are needed in the management of recreation in relation to other management objectives, including protection or enhancement of wildlife habitat and forest management.

Wildlife

The Bureau, through its Wildlife Biologist and Technician, routinely conduct a variety of species monitoring activities statewide. The following are monitoring activities that are ongoing or anticipated for the Tumbledown/Mt. Blue Region:

- (1) The Bureau will cooperate with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in the monitoring of game species, including deer, moose, and black bear;
- (2) The Bureau will identify and map significant wildlife habitat such as vernal pools and den trees in the process of developing its detailed forest management prescriptions. Working in cooperation with MNAP, the boundaries of any sensitive natural communities not identified previously will also be delineated on the ground at this time. Any significant natural areas or wildlife habitat will then be subject to appropriate protections.
- (3) The Bureau will cooperate with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in the monitoring of peregrine falcons nesting on the cliffs at Tumbledown mountain.

Timber Management

Unit work plans, called prescriptions, are prepared by professional foresters in accordance with Bureau policies specified in its *Integrated Resource Policy*, with input from other staff. These documents are then peer-reviewed prior to approval. Preparation and layout of all timber sales involve field staff looking at every acre to be treated. Trees to be harvested are generally hand marked on a majority of these acres. Regional field staff provides regular on-site supervision of harvest activities, with senior staff visiting these sites on a less frequent basis. After the harvest is completed, roads, trails, and water crossings are discontinued as appropriate, although some management roads may remain open to vehicle travel. Forest managers assess harvest outcomes on all managed lands, including water quality protection and Best Management Practices (BMP's) utilized during harvest activities. Changes in stand type resulting from the harvest are then recorded so that the Bureau's GIS system can be updated.

Third party monitoring is done mainly through the forest certification programs of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Each program conducts rigorous investigations of both our planning and on-ground practices. The Bureau's forest management program successfully underwent full recertification audits in December of 2011 and December of 2016 and will host annual surveillance audits until the next full audit in 2021. Most recently, concurrent annual surveillance audits were conducted in October 2018, 2019 and 2020, in the East, West and North Regions, respectively.