

## Management Recommendations

Mahoosuc Unit and Grafton Notch State Park	<b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <i>bold italic font</i> ]
<p><b>Recreation Management</b></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>Explore:</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>Since the Plan’s adoption, rehabilitation work on the Wright Trail has been completed by a Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) crew. The Bureau has also supported and coordinated with AMC on Appalachian Trail work within the Unit.</p> <p>No new trails have been constructed.</p> <p><b><i>Over several seasons during this review period, Maine Conservation Corps trail crews and an Environmental Steward completed trail rehabilitation work in Grafton Notch SP, with a focus on the Eyebrow and Table Rock Loop Trails. These projects were awarded over \$100,000 in funds from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP).</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Also during this review period, AMC completed extensive trail work on the AT and side trails within the Unit, including replacing bog bridging and log ladders, reconstruction and relocation of trail sections, and replacement of a campsite shelter on the trail. A portion of that work was supported by over \$25,000 in RTP funding. Additional RTP funding was awarded to AMC for the 2020 season to support work on a portion of the Grafton Loop Trail east of the Unit, partially on a BPL easement; some of that work has been deferred due to COVID-19 but is expected to be completed in 2021.</i></b></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 year, and coordinate in the grant application</p>	<p>BPL’s Recreation Planner continues to participate in annual meeting of the trail coalition (the most recent meeting was October 29, 2015), and in ongoing discussion of trails issues as they arise, representing both Parks and Lands.</p> <p><b><i>Although the trail coalition has not met in recent years,</i></b></p>

<p>process. (3) coordinate and improve public information for hikers and share visitor use information.</p>	<p><b><i>the Recreation Planner continues to participate in informal discussion of trails issues. The Bureau is open to resuming annual meetings if there is interest among the coalition members.</i></b></p>
<p>Increase and improve information and service for hikers and backpackers at Grafton Notch State Park and the Mahoosuc Unit.  <b>Explore:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designating a summer staff person, ridgerunner 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.                  Other methods determined by the Grafton and Mahoosuc Trail Coalition and/or the Parks and Lands staff.</li> </ul>	<p>Both full time and seasonal BPL staff spend time each season on the Unit’s trail system, as their schedules allow.</p> <p>A new “Map and Guide” was completed in 2015. The Bureau’s website information for both Mahoosuc Public Lands and Grafton Notch State Park has also been updated.</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>A monitoring and survey effort was completed in 2012, and a report on preliminary findings on visitor use of the Grafton Loop Trail was prepared by BPL. The monitoring utilized infrared trail counters and self-administered visitor surveys. In general, visitors were satisfied with their trail experience and the level of solitude available.</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 resources allow, with partner groups</p>	<p>DOT has plowed the Mother Walker Falls, Moose Cave, and the AT parking lot and the northern scenic turnout each winter at the request of BPL. As long as the parking areas continued to be plowed (particularly the AT lot), current facilities appear to be adequate to support demand for winter use.</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>A Nordic skiing trail was laid out in Bull Branch valley by BPL in coordination with local groups. However, interest in development of these trails appears to have waned in recent years.</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 the Backcountry non-mechanized area.</p>	<p>See above. Also, the management roads in the Bull Branch valley will be available for groomed ski trails after the current timber harvest in the valley is completed.</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</p>	<p>Recreation coordination remains a responsibility of current BPL staff in both the Parks and Lands divisions.</p>

<p>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>Substantial obstacles to the creation of new staff positions within the Bureau exist (in fact, the Western Region has lost staff positions in recent years); the general preference of the Bureau at present is for management objectives to be met with current staff if possible.</p> <p>Seasonal BPL staff have been assigned to perform recreation duties at Mahoosuc Unit each year. BPL also has contracted with Mahoosuc Land Trust (MLT) to assist the Bureau in maintenance of the Frenchman’s Hole area.</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>No specific access issues have arisen since the Plan was adopted. Both the Speck Pond and Notch Trails remain open and have received some additional trail work since the Plan was adopted.</p>
<p><b>Timber Management</b></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> <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</p>	<p>Ongoing timber management as per Plan.</p> <p>Harvesting through early 2016 occurred at four locations, two on Riley and one each on Grafton and Andover West Surplus. All four operations have been mostly selection and improvement harvests in northern hardwood stands. Total harvest volume for the period is just under 24,000 cords, with 90% of the volume hardwoods, and 91% of the hardwood pulpwood or biomass, as most of the higher quality trees were retained for high value growth.</p>

<p>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><b>Harvests in the Bull Branch area in Riley Twp. 2016-18 produced nearly 12,000 cords, with hardwood pulp accounting for over 75% of the volume. Treatments were mostly single tree and group selection and improvement harvests, nearly all in Northern hardwood type. Only 6% of the volume was softwoods.</b></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 ensures 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>Resource allocations applied as per Plan.</p> <p>Visual Class II standards have been applied in all harvests, where appropriate.</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>	<p>MNAP has been consulted, when appropriate; for example, MNAP made a field visit issued a brief report in conjunction with the current Bull Branch harvest, at the request of BPL.</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>Wildlife management continues per the IRP and guidelines.</p>

<p><b>Transportation and Administrative Concerns</b></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> </ul> <p>If other methods fail, work with MDIFW wardens to establish an enforcement presence to deter this use.</p>	<p>Road is being maintained as described in the Plan.</p> <p>Management roads branching off the Sunday River Road have been blocked. BPL has also worked with the local Jeep club and conducted other outreach, which have substantially reduced, if not eliminated, this problem.</p>
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<p><b>Rangleley Lake State Park</b></p>	<p><b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <i>bold italic font</i>]</p>
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<p><b>Natural Resource Management</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>No new trails have been developed since 2011; however, work has been done to harden existing trails within the park.</p>
<p><b>Recreation Management</b></p> <p>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</p>	<p>No new amenities have been constructed since 2011.</p>

<p>one another, so the atmosphere of a remote, natural setting is maintained at each site. Follow this well-planned tradition.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>No action has yet been taken on these potential trails.</p>

<p><b>Bald Mountain Unit</b></p>	<p><b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <i>bold italic</i> font]</p>
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<p><b><i>Natural Resource Management</i></b></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>	<p>No harvest activity has occurred in DWAs at Bald Mountain since the Plan's adoption.</p>
<p><b><i>Recreation Management</i></b></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</p>	<p>Work to harden trails and make them more "user friendly" has been completed.</p> <p>TRAC has partnered with BPL in the trail upgrade work.</p>

<p>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>	<p>The signs have been installed.</p>
<p><b><i>Timber Management</i></b></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>	<p>No timber harvests have been conducted in the Unit since the Plan's adoption.</p>
<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>	
<p><b><i>Transportation and Administration</i></b></p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>A new telecommunications lease was issued in August 2011. The new lease contains provisions to protect the views of and from Bald Mountain, including the right of the Department to withhold approval of changes to the structure that may significantly detract from the scenic and natural features of the premises as viewed from the surrounding lakes. The new lease also permitted improvements to the tower access trail.</p> <p><b><i>The lessee has requested a lease amendment to construct a second tower on the site. BPL denied a prior request to increase the height of the existing tower by 50 feet. BPL and RLHT, former owner of the parcel, are currently evaluating whether the request conforms with existing lease provisions and a deed restriction that prohibits structures that would detract from views of the mountain from the lakes. The process for any lease</i></b></p>



	<b><i>amendment that may be proposed will include an opportunity for public input.</i></b>
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.	Signage has been installed. The skeet and trap range in the eastern portion of the unit, on a leased site and accessed via the Skiway Road, has been upgraded by the leaseholder.

<b>Four Ponds Unit</b>	<b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <b><i>bold italic font</i></b> ]
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<b><i>Recreation Management</i></b>	
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.	Discussions are ongoing regarding this potential snowmobile trail relocation. Efforts have been made to identify a new route, but a suitable route that could be developed at a reasonable cost has not been found.  <b><i>See notes below table for information on the ATV trail construction completed on the Sandy River Plt parcel as allowed by Plan Amendment A adopted in 2016.</i></b>
Remove any signage placed on the trailhead (as well as any other indicators that this is a designated trail).	The signage has been removed.
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 identified, 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.	Maine Huts and Trails has no plans at this time to develop trails in this area, which is near the southern end of their proposed system that is planned to eventually extend to the western shore of Moosehead Lake. (Currently, the focus of trail development is in the Bigelow/Flagstaff Lake area.)
Retain the option to locate a boat access facility on Beaver Mountain Lake in the Four Ponds Unit if legal access can be assured and a suitable site is located. Through the Bureau's Boating Facilities Division, cooperate with IF&W and other relevant parties to determine the timing, location, and design of the boat access facility.	Ongoing; the Boating Facilities Division has evaluated this potential facility, but no further action has been taken.

<p><b>Timber Management</b></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>	<p>Ongoing timber management as per Plan.</p> <p>About half of the 14,500 cords harvested in 2012-16 from the Four Ponds Unit came from the Rangeley Plantation public lot, and the rest was about evenly split between the north and south sides of Twp. E. Most of this land lies at 2,000’ elevation and higher. Harvests included partial overstory removal, selection, and some thinning, in all types.</p> <p>The currently ongoing harvest on Twp. E south included salvage of hardwoods broken by a heavy wet snowfall that fell in December of 2014. Volume was 40% softwoods and 60% hardwoods, and overall 75% was pulpwood or biomass.</p> <p><b><i>Harvests in 2016 completed this entry cycle on the unit, with 2,100 cords produced, 57% hardwood pulp, in a frozen-ground operation. Nearly all work took place at elevations 2,000 to 2,700 feet, on the southeast portion of the state’s Township E lands and was selection harvest plus some salvage of trees damaged by a heavy wet snowstorm the previous winter (as mentioned above).</i></b></p>
<p><b>Transportation and Administrative Issues</b></p>	
<p>Seek opportunities to obtain vehicular rights of way for management purposes, particularly in Township E.</p>	<p>No new rights of way have been obtained.</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>Periodic communication with lessees is ongoing.</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.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

Consider signage, trail impediments, and enforcement options.	
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<b>Richardson Unit</b>	<b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <i>bold italic</i> font]
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<b><i>Recreation Resources</i></b>	
<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> </ul> <p>As opportunities arise, participate in larger initiatives in the Rangeley Lakes region to increase the awareness and public information on camping opportunities.</p>	<p>Work on the Map and Guide is tentatively scheduled for 2017, depending on other priorities. <b><i>A revised Map and Guide has not yet been produced due to other priorities. It is now scheduled for 2021-22.</i></b></p> <p>Website improvements have been completed.</p> <p><b><i>See notes below table for information on status of ATV trail development on the south part of unit allowed by Plan Amendment B approved in 2016.</i></b></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.	Discussions are ongoing.
Explore the potential for expanding this parking area to meet demand for hand carry boat launching.	The parking area has been expanded.
<b><i>Timber Management</i></b>	
<b><i>Softwood Stands:</i></b> 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	<p>Ongoing timber management as per Plan.</p> <p>This unit produced 53% of all Western Mountains harvest</p>

<p>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>	<p>volume during the subject period, from two very different types of treatments. A typical BPL selection/improvement harvest totaled about 8,000 cords, of which 53% was hardwood pulp/biomass and low value products of all species 62%. The other harvest was done under the provisions of Outcome Based Forestry (OBF) and was mainly overstory removal retaining a low-density pine stand above dense regeneration that had been established/released by low thinnings 15-18 years earlier. These harvests, nearly all done as contract for logging services rather than stumpage sales, totaled over 38,000 cords and were 86% softwood logs, nearly all spruce as the fir had been removed in the earlier thinnings and most pine retained.</p> <p><b><i>Three different operations took place on this unit during 2016-20. First was the completion of the West Region’s Outcome Based Forestry project, low-density pine management and softwood thinning on lower Richardson. Harvests took place in 2016 and 2017, yielding nearly 12,000 cords, of which 84% was softwoods. The operation left a light overstory of high-quality pine above pine, spruce and fir regeneration.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Two contractors worked on upper Richardson during 2017-2020, producing 39,000 cords. Harvesting took place in softwoods, mixedwoods and hardwoods, and included selection, thinning and partial overstory removal. Over 60% of volume was hardwood pulp as the better hardwoods were retained to gain value. Only 1,045 cords were cut in 2020 as operations here neared completion.</i></b></p>
<p><b><i>Transportation and Administration</i></b></p>	
<p>Revise the current gate system for controlling access to Richardson Lake and the Upper Dam tailrace via Upper Dam Road in order to better 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</p>	<p>Changes to gates are awaiting completion of dam reconstruction, which is projected to be completed at the end of 2016, according to Brookfield Renewable Energy (formerly NextEra Energy).</p> <p><b><i>Dam reconstruction was completed in late 2016. BPL</i></b></p>

<p>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 re-construction.</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>	<p><b><i>notified the stakeholders at Upper Dam (Brookfield, Union Water Power Co., and Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust) in June 2018 via an emailed memorandum that the Bureau intended to implement the preferred option that fall. Brookfield and RLHT expressed support for that plan. The new gate regime has been implemented since that time, and Gate 2 has been removed.</i></b></p>
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**SMALL LOTS IN THE WESTERN MOUNTAINS REGION**

<b>Davis Lot</b>	<b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <b><i>bold italic</i></b> font]
<p><b><i>Public Access</i></b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>BPL has coordinated changed operation of gates to improve access.</p>
<p><b><i>Future Timber Management</i></b></p> <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</li> </ul>	<p>No timber harvests have occurred since the Plan's adoption.</p>

<p>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 factored in planning timber harvests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>	
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<p><b>Dallas Plantation Lots – North and South</b></p>	<p><b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <i>bold italic</i> font]</p>
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<p><b>Public Access</b></p>	
<p>Work with the private landowner of Loon Lake Road to allow public access closer to the Davis Lot, which, if successful, would also allow access to the Dallas Plantation North Lot.</p>	<p>See above (under Davis Lot – Public Access)</p>

<p><b>Small Falls (Township E) Lot</b></p>	<p><b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <i>bold italic</i> font]</p>
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<p><b>Wildlife</b></p>	
<p>Work with IF&amp;W to investigate potential fisheries impacts of the recreational gold extraction on Chandler Mill Stream. If unacceptable impacts are identified, eliminate this use.</p>	<p>BPL coordinates with MDIF&amp;W on any potential permits to be issued for this activity (considered “hobby mineral collecting” for the purposes of BPL permits).</p>

<p><b>Rangeley Plantation Lot</b></p>	<p><b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <i>bold italic</i> font]</p>
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<p><b>Administrative Issues</b></p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>The 126<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature acted to abolish this sanctuary during the first 2013 session; the law was enacted May 24, 2013.</p>

<b><i>Future Timber Management</i></b>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>No timber harvests have been conducted since the Plan’s adoption.</p>

<b>Lincoln Plantation Lots (East and West)</b>	<b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <b><i>bold italic</i></b> font]
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<b><i>Future Timber Management</i></b>	
<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>	<p>The 250-acre West lot received a selection harvest in 2014 that produced 2,800 cords, 81% low value hardwoods and 93% hardwoods overall. This lot had been evaluated as a potential sugary, given its good stocking of sugar maple and easy access. However, the fine timber quality of the maple resource has made its being dedicated to syrup production less appealing financially. However, neither the timber nor syrup potential was compromised by this harvest.</p>

<b>Magalloway Plantation Lot</b>	<b>Actions taken/Comments:</b> [2016 entries: standard font. 2021 entries: <b><i>bold italic</i></b> font]
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<b><i>Future Timber Management</i></b>	
<p>Softwood types should be managed to retain deer winter cover, while producing spruce and fir timber.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>No timber harvests have occurred since the Plan’s adoption.</p>

**Note on Stetsontown Lot:** no management recommendations were formulated for this 41 acre original public lot; the entire lot is allocated to Developed Recreation Class 1 due to the presence of a commercial camp lease and four other camplot leases, which are managed under the Bureau’s camplot lease program.

**Monitoring and Evaluation** (Plan pages 127-128)

**Actions taken/Comments:**

<p><b>Implementation of Plan Recommendations</b>                  The Bureau will develop, within two years of Plan adoption, an action plan for implementing and monitoring the management recommendations in this Plan. This will include an assignment of priorities and timeframes for accomplishment that will be utilized to determine work priorities and budgets on an annual basis. The Bureau will document annually its progress in implementing the recommendations, plans for the coming year, and adjustments to the priorities and timeframes as needed.</p>	<p>The Division implements plan recommendations through the process of calendar year planning, during which it schedules and budgets for projects for the coming year. Priorities are established within each Public Lands administrative region based on urgency of need (e.g., public safety, environmental impact); availability of resources (e.g., funds, staff, equipment, contractors); and opportunities available at the time (e.g., combining projects for efficiency and cost-saving, favorable weather). Yearly accomplishments are reported by administrative region in an annual report to the Legislature, which is posted on the Division’s website.</p>
<p><b>Ecological Reserves</b>                  The MNAP conducted a natural resource inventory on Mahoosuc (Carlo-Speck) Ecological Reserve in 2009 as part of the reserved lands management planning process. MNAP is also monitoring these lands as part of its long-term monitoring of Ecological Reserves to monitor ecological change within Ecological Reserves and to compare Ecological Reserves to areas under different management regimes. Baseline data was collected using permanent plots at the Mahoosuc Ecological Reserve. These areas will be re-inventoried periodically, according to schedules developed by the Bureau and MNAP.</p>	<p>MNAP’s re-inventory of Mahoosuc ER is tentatively scheduled for 2018.</p> <p><b><i>MNAP re-sampled 30 long term Ecological Reserve monitoring plots in 2018. This sampling is part of a continuing forest inventory of Ecological Reserves and similarly managed lands that includes lands managed by BPL, MDIFW, Baxter State Park, and The Nature Conservancy. The next scheduled inventory of these plots is in 2028.</i></b></p>
<p><b>Recreation</b>                  In addition to gathering data on use, the Bureau will monitor public use to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) whether improvements to existing facilities or additional facilities might be needed and compatible with general objectives;</li> <li>(2) whether additional measures are needed to ensure that</li> </ul>	<p>As a practical matter, most monitoring of public use occurs as observations made by seasonal recreation staff in the course of their routine duties; or as a result of conditions reported or requests made by visitors and others to field staff or to Bureau regional and central offices. The Bureau is experimenting with a number of monitoring tools to</p>



<p>recreational users have a high quality experience (which could be affected by the numbers of users, and interactions among users with conflicting interests);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(3) whether use is adversely affecting sensitive natural resources or the ecology of the area;</li> <li>(4) whether measures are needed to address unforeseen safety issues;</li> <li>(5) whether changing recreational uses and demands present the need or opportunity for adjustments to existing facilities and management; and</li> <li>(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.</li> </ul>	<p>supplement these observations and reports, including trail counters and visitor surveys.</p>
<p><b>Wildlife</b> The Bureau, through its Wildlife Biologist and Technician, routinely conducts a variety of species monitoring activities statewide. The following are monitoring activities that are ongoing or anticipated for the Western Mountains Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The Bureau will cooperate with IF&amp;W in the monitoring of game species, including deer, moose, grouse, and black bear;</li> <li>(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. The boundaries of any sensitive natural communities will also be delineated on the ground at this time. Any significant natural areas or wildlife habitat will then be subject to appropriate protections.</li> </ul>	<p>DIFW tracks deer, moose and bear harvests through harvest registrations, which are compiled and reported annually from registration station across the state. DIFW does not survey ruffed grouse populations. BP&amp;L runs drumming survey.</p>
<p><b>Significant Wildlife Habitat</b> The Division will identify and map significant wildlife habitat such as vernal pools and den trees in the process of developing its detailed forest management prescriptions. The boundaries of any sensitive natural communities will also be delineated on the ground at this time. Any significant natural areas or wildlife habitat will then be subject to appropriate protections.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Process continues as described.</p>

<p><b>Timber Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescriptions are prepared by professional foresters according to Division policies, with input from staff specialists, and peer-reviewed prior to approval.</li> <li>• Timber sales are prepared and laid out with field staff looking at most acres prior to harvest and with individual tree marking done on the majority of harvest acres.</li> <li>• Field staff are on-site to check on harvest practice and progress frequently; senior staff visit sites less frequently to obtain overall picture of what is taking place in the forest.</li> <li>• After harvest is completed, roads, trails, and water crossings are put to bed as appropriate, and any changes in stand type are recorded to update the Division’s GIS system can be updated.</li> </ul>	<p>Process continues as described.</p>
<p>The Bureau is currently developing a post-harvest monitoring plan to assist forest managers in assessing harvest outcomes on all managed lands. The monitoring plan will also address water quality and Best Management Practices (BMPs) utilized during harvest activities.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>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 planning and on-ground practices. An initial audit by both programs was completed in 2001, with certification awarded in 2002. A full re-audit of both programs was conducted in the fall of 2006 with certification granted in 2007. The Bureau is also subject to compliance audits during the 5-year certification period.</p>	<p>Surveillance FSC/SFI audits were conducted in the West Region in 2012 and 2015. In the earlier audit, visits were made to Riley and Andover West Surplus in the Mahoosucs, and to two harvests on Richardson, one being the initial trial areas for that unit’s Outcome Based Forestry (OBF) project – low density pine management. The 2015 audit looked at sites from Gray to Days Academy, including a newly built road and rebuilt bridge on Riley, also a road there scheduled for reopening after having been put to bed about 25 years before. Auditors viewed active harvests at Richardson (OBF harvest) and Bigelow (Flagstaff Region). All previous non-conformances were closed.</p> <p><b><i>An FSC full recertification audit was conducted in December 2016 and a surveillance FSC/SFI audit was conducted in October 2019, both in the BPL Western Region. However, no sites were visited in the Western Mountains plan area during either audit.</i></b></p>

## Issues for Advisory Committee Attention

**New Issues or Circumstances Not Addressed in the Plan:** None

### **Other Items of Special Concern or Interest:**

#### **ATV trail development as allowed by Plan amendments approved in 2016 as a result of the 1<sup>st</sup> 5-Year Plan Review**

Amendment A allowed for construction of a trail segment within the Sandy River Plt. portion of the Four Ponds unit, as part of a proposed regional ATV trail extending from Route 17 on the west to existing trails east of Route 4 on the east. Approximately 19 miles of trail have been built since 2016 to complete the desired east-west connection, including numerous bridges and culverts, less than 2 miles of which is on the BPL parcel. In 2019 and 2020 the project was awarded a total of \$52,000 in grants from the Bureau's ATV program. An additional \$11,000 in club funds were expended on the project.

Amendment B allowed construction of a trail segment within the southern portion of the Richardson Unit in the vicinity of the Richardson Twp./Rangeley Plt. line, to allow for ATV access into the Unit and to South Arm Road from the east in the event the current access via Shelton Trail Road is lost. Up to the present, ATV use of Shelton Trail Road has been permitted to continue and therefore the proposed trail segment has not been constructed. However, due to concerns with noise, dust and excessive speeds, the local community in Rangeley Plt. is currently discussing terminating ATV use of Shelton Trail Road, except for use by residents.