

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks and Lands

Tumbledown/Mt. Blue Region Management Plan

Public Meeting – Final Draft Plan

December 1, 2021 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams

MEETING MINUTES

The Public Meeting was attended by five members of the public and AC members.

The following BPL staff members were present: Bill Patterson, Deputy Director; Liz Petruska, Director of Planning and Acquisitions; Tim Post, Western Region Lands Manager; Eben Webb, Forester; Rex Turner, Recreation Planner; Jim Vogel, Planner/Plan Coordinator.

Welcome/Introduction

Jim Vogel welcomed the attendees, and asked Bureau staff to introduce themselves. A meeting agenda was emailed in advance to Advisory Committee members and the contact list, and was also included within the meeting presentation (see Attachment A).

Presentation

The meeting was structured around a PowerPoint presentation given by Jim Vogel, which began with background information on the Tumbledown/Mt. Blue Region and the planning process. The presentation then provided an overview the character, vision, resource allocations and management recommendations for the Public Reserved Lands (Tumbledown Public Land and Bald Mtn – Perkins Lot and park lands (Mount Blue State Park) as contained in the Final Draft Plan). An opportunity was given for the attendees to make comments and ask questions regarding each management unit before moving on to the next part of the presentation, as reflected in the following record.

Public Comments/Questions and BPL responses, when given (paraphrased from notes)

Tumbledown Public Land

Stuart Klapp, former local resident

- Stated that he was pleased with the Bureau’s decision to close camping, which he felt was always necessary.
- Asked whether the Bureau was aware of the presence of deformed frogs at Tumbledown Pond, something he had observed or heard from a family member a number of years ago.

BPL Response – Jim responded that we are not aware of deformed frogs at the pond, and that his understanding was that IF&W regularly conducts water quality testing at the pond (this was confirmed later).

- Asked whether the Bureau was pursuing acquisition or interested in acquiring the land hosting the Little Jackson Mtn./Jackson Mtn trailhead at the end of Murphy Road, perhaps by donation.

BPL Response – Jim responded that the Bureau has a state-wide acquisitions program that incorporates many factors in determining potential acquisitions, one is whether certain lands are being offered for sale or donation, and also a system of prioritization. He also noted that that we are not presently pursuing acquisition or aware of property being offered for sale at that location.

Michelle Wynn, Tumbledown Conservation Alliance (AC member)

- Asked whether the Recreation Ranger position that is filled on a seasonal basis each year could be made a permanent position.

BPL Response – Bill Patterson responded that there adding permanent year-round positions is not a simple matter, and requires the approval of the state legislature. However, the Bureau did recently add a year-round Recreation Ranger in the Western Region. An additional consideration is budgetary constraints, which is particularly relevant at this time due to weak timber markets, which reduces the Bureau’s revenue to support staffing.

Mount Blue State Park

No comments.

Bald Mountain Lot

Bruce Farnham, Mount Blue State Park Manager

- Commented for the benefit of attendees that there is concern in the local community about new ownership of land in the vicinity of Bald Mountain that could affect access/permission for the existing trail leading to the lot, and that this may spur interest in acquisition.

Next Steps and Concluding Comments

- Jim Vogel reminded attendees that the public is welcome to comment by phone call or in writing over the next 3 weeks. An email and mailing address to submit comments were provided on the final slide of the presentation
- Attendees were informed that the Bureau will review and respond to all comments, and these will be included in the plan appendix. We will consider whether any revisions are called for, and make those changes if necessary. We will then hand off the Final plan to the BPL Director and he will carry it forth to the Commissioner for adoption
- The meeting was concluded with a thank you to all who attended, and particular thanks to AC members who assisted with the plan’s development.

Three-week post-meeting comment period (ending 12/22/21)

- No comments were submitted.

Attachments:

Attachment A: PowerPoint presentation

Tumbledown/Mt. Blue Region Management Plan

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks and Lands

Public Meeting
December 1, 2021



FINAL DRAFT PLAN REVIEW



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Purpose and Agenda

- Purpose of this meeting is to review and take comments on the *Final Draft Plan*
- We will focus on review of **Section IV – Resources and Management Issues** of the Final Draft Plan, specifically:
 - Vision (Tumbledown & MBSP)
 - Dominant Resource Use Allocations (Tumbledown & Bald Mtn Lot)
 - Management Recommendations
- Will stop for comments but feel free to ask questions or offer comments at any point in presentation
- Comments are also welcome on any of the other sections of the Final Draft Plan though we won't review them tonight

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Public Planning Process

Step 1: Scoping (6 mo.)

- Gather and share information on the resources present on the lands
- Seek input from the public regarding their interests and ideas for uses and management of the property and issues of concern

Step 2: Draft Management Plan (9-12 mo.)

- With assistance of Advisory Committee, BPL crafts a 15 Year plan for the lands that protects the exceptional natural and biological resources and balances the variety of land uses and recreation interests on the parcels
- BPL presents Draft Plan to the Advisory Committee for review and comment
- BPL revises Draft Plan as needed

Step 3: Final Draft Management Plan (1-2 mo.)

- BPL presents Final Draft Management Plan to public for comment
- BPL responds to comments and prepares Final Plan

Step 4: Final Management Plan (1 mo.)

- Presented to BPL Director for recommendation
- Presented to DACF Commissioner for approval
- Plan is adopted with signature of Commissioner

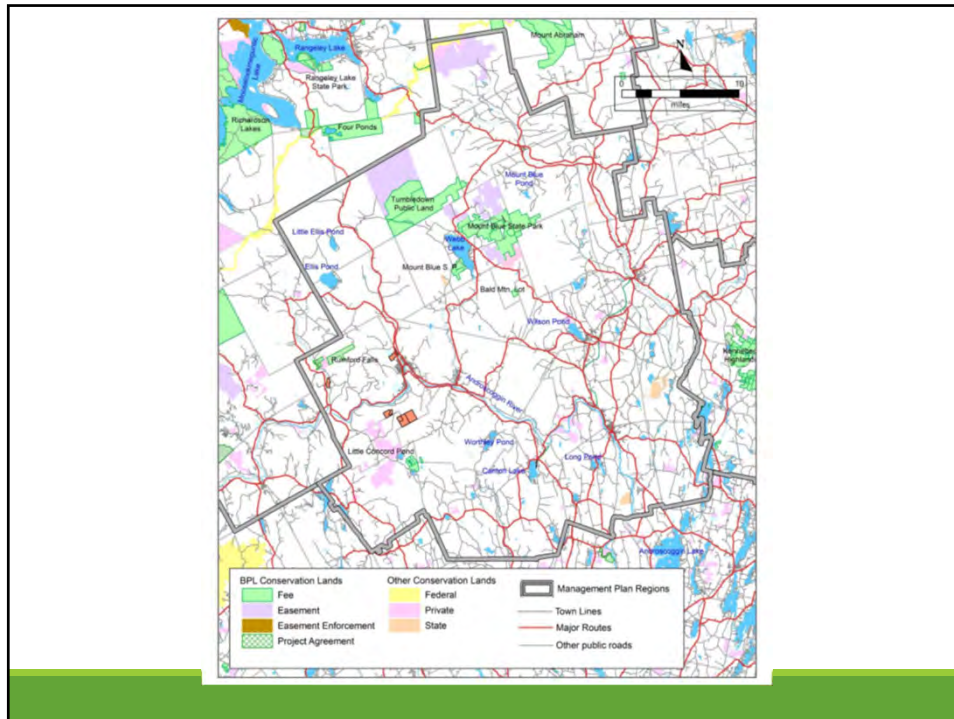
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Public Reserved and Park Lands of the Tumbledown/Mt. Blue Region

- 2 major units and 1 smaller public lot in southern Franklin County
- Nearly 19,000 acres in total

Unit	Fee acres
Tumbledown Public Land	10,389
Mount Blue State Park	8,220
Bald Mtn Public Lot	167

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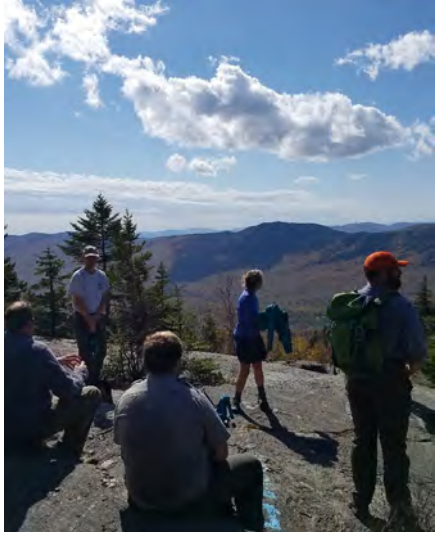


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Resource Allocation System

- A system of designating and mapping all of the acres on Public Lands into categories (allocations)
 - The designation defines the dominant use of the area and the management and recreation activities are allowed
 - See Appendix C of the plan for a summary of criteria and management direction
 - See the Integrated Resource Policy (IRP), Chapter VI for details
- Special Protection
 - Natural areas
 - Historic/cultural areas
 - Ecological reserves
 - Backcountry Recreation
 - Non-mechanized
 - motorized
 - Wildlife
 - Remote Recreation
 - Visual Consideration
 - Class I and Class II
 - Developed Recreation
 - Class I and Class II
 - Timber Management

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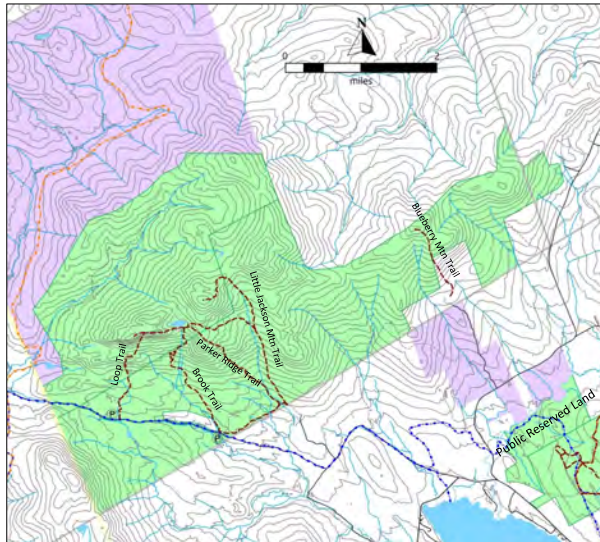


Tumbledown Public Land

*STAFF HIKE,
TUMBLEDOWN POND
(10/1/20)*

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Tumbledown Public Land – Infrastructure and Recreation Facilities

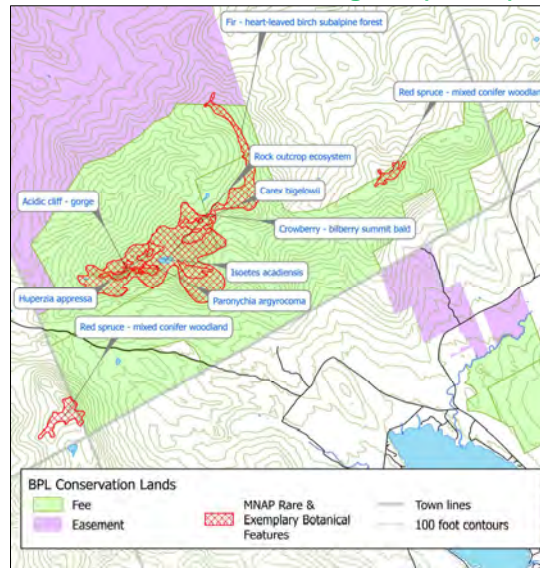


KEY FACTS

- 10,390 acres
- Jackson Mtn is highest point (3,568 ft)
- 12.5 miles of hiking trails providing access to the peaks
- 2 parking areas on Byron Road
- Stocked brook trout fishery at 10-acre Tumbledown Pond
- Several user created campsites near pond
- Crossed by Byron Road (winter sled route)
- Few management roads open to public

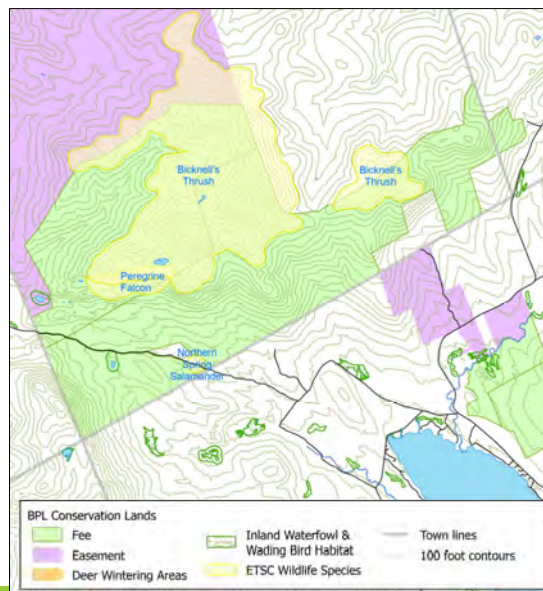
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Tumbledown – “Rare and Exemplary” Features mapped by Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP)



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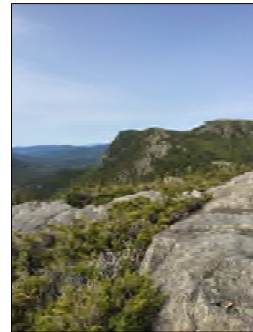
Tumbledown – Important Wildlife Features



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General Vision for the Unit

- Manage Tumbledown Pond and vicinity and mountain peaks for a semi-remote recreation experience
- In order to balance high use in the pond area and other areas accessible by trail with need to minimize resource impacts, camping will be prohibited
- In the future, consider adding designated campsites on lower ground
- Protect ecological values associated with ponds and exemplary natural communities
- Monitor technical rock climbing for potential impacts on nesting peregrine falcons
- About half of the unit managed primarily for timber, emphasizing high value forest products, while providing a variety of wildlife habitats and protecting other significant resources



View from Parker Ridge

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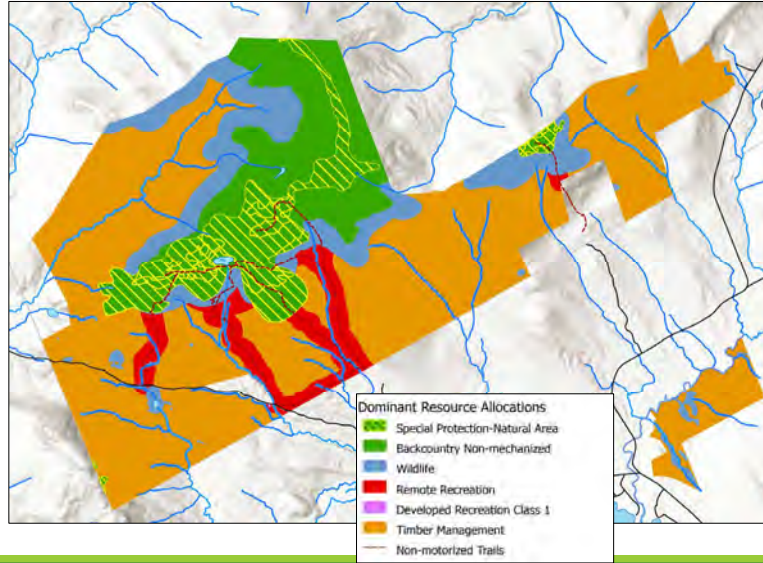
Dominant Resource Allocations

Summary of allocations:

- Special Protection allocation protects the several exemplary communities mapped by MNAP
- Backcountry Recreation – Non-mechanized allocation is applied to remaining area above 2,700 feet elevation
- Wildlife allocation protects Bicknell's thrush and peregrine falcon significant habitat beyond Special Protection and BCNM areas, and riparian areas
- Remote Recreation allocation applied to areas within ½ mile of Tumbledown Pond and within 500 feet of designated trails, outside above zones
- Developed Recreation allocation is applied to Brook and Loop Trail parking areas
- Timber Management allocation on remaining acres continues the historical emphasis on timber production, with appropriate visual, recreation, and wildlife considerations.

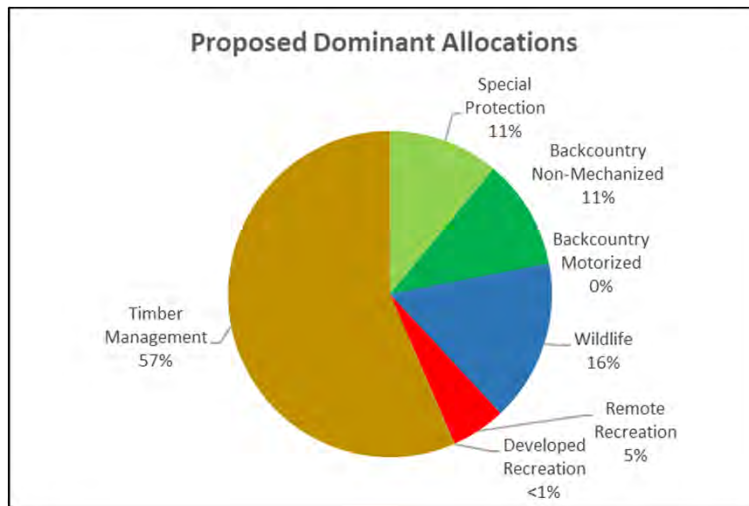
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Dominant Resource Allocations



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Proposed Dominant Allocations



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Management Recommendations - Recreation

Camping:

- Implement permanent closure of camping
- Work to remove fire rings, close social trails, facilitate natural restoration in pond area
- Inform the public and visitors about camping closure, provide recommendations for alternatives
- After 5 years, consider developing hike-in campsites outside the high-elevation zone



Fire ring near Tumbledown Pond (Oct. 2019)

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Management Recommendations - Recreation

Interpretation/education:

- Continue/expand efforts to educate visitors about BPL rules and Leave No Trace behaviors
- Develop trailhead interpretive panels with natural history and minimum impact messaging



Brook Trail kiosk (Oct. 2019)

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Management Recommendations - Recreation

Trail Maintenance & Parking:

- Continue -- and increase as resources allow -- annual trail maintenance work guided by MCC assessment
- Develop plans to expand parking at the Brook Trail and/or Loop Trail trailheads

Technical Rock Climbing:

- Coordinate monitoring of nesting peregrine falcons with IF&W, confer regarding potential nest disturbance
- Partner with climbing community to address any disturbance that may be occurring
- Post signage at base of climbing routes to inform climbers on actions to avoid disturbance of falcons. Post temporary closures.



Loop trail parking area (May 2020)

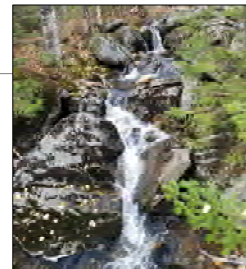


Climbing areas on south face of T'down mtn.

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Management Recommendations – Wildlife & Rare and Exemplary Natural Communities

- Avoid development of new trails or reroutes and campsites within mapped peregrine falcon habitat
- Recommendations for management of Northern spring salamander should be addressed when planning harvests, or developing campsites or parking
- Development of new hiking trails or trail reroutes should be avoided in mapped exemplary communities; if no good alternative, consult MNAP



Stream on Little Jackson Mtn.



Exemplary communities on Parker Ridge

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Timber Management

- Initiation of long-term program to improve timber quality on the unit, with the overall objectives of growing mature quality timber while maintaining visual integrity and enhancing the diversity of wildlife habitat
- Softwood stands will be managed to increase proportion of spruce; will seek to maintain a significant paper birch component in hardwood stands
- 100 ft. Visual Class 1 buffer along Byron Road; harvesting in areas allocated to Remote Rec. will be light and will seek to mimic harvests in Visual Class I areas.
- Areas visible from the summits and ridgelines will be subject to Visual Class II considerations



Softwood stand near Parker Ridge trail



Hardwood stand along Stockbridge Branch

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Administrative Issues

Signage and Visitor Information:

- Assess signage and visitor information at parking areas for possible improvements and additions (e.g., camping closure, low-impact behaviors)

On-Site Management Presence:

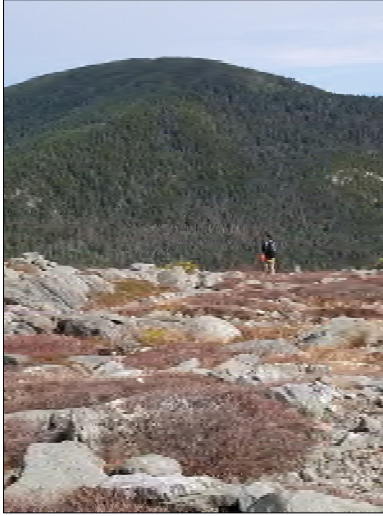
- Consider options for increasing on-site management presence during the peak use season
- Explore working with MFS and IF&W to provide an enforcement presence at the pond to deter unauthorized camping and fires
- Consider:
 - Need and potential for enforcement that includes the authority to write summons (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



Visitors at Tumbledown Pond (Oct 2020)

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Questions or comments?



Hiker on Little Jackson Mountain

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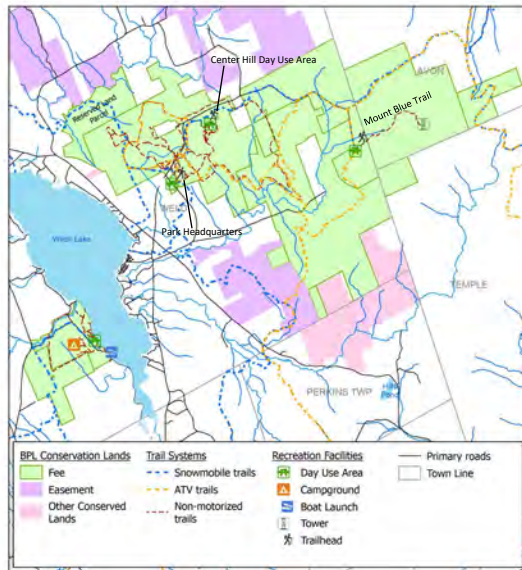


Mount Blue State Park

*CENTER HILL DAY USE
AREA, WITH
TUMBLEDOWN LANDS
IN DISTANCE*

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Mount Blue State Park – Infrastructure and Recreation Facilities

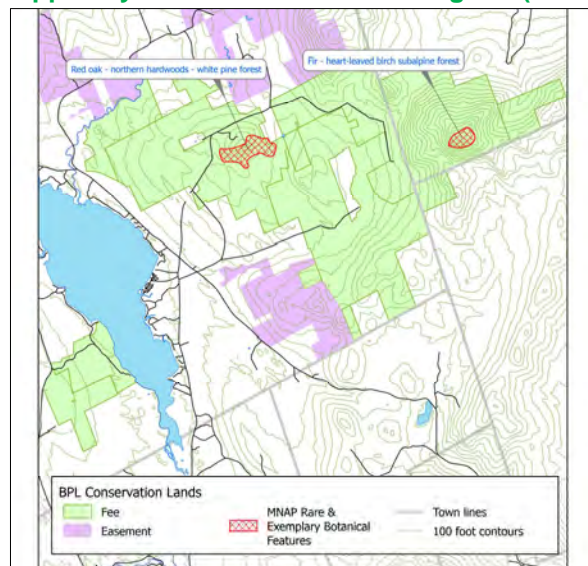


KEY FACTS

- Largest park at 8,200 acres
- Mt Blue is highest point (3,187 ft.)
- Day use: 40-50K/yr.
- Camping: 23K/yr.
- Campground, beach, boat ramp, nature center and associated facilities on Webb Lake
- Day use facilities at HQ, Center Hill and Mt Blue
- >20 miles of pedestrian and multiuse trails
- Snowmobile routes access lake and cross park E/W and N/S

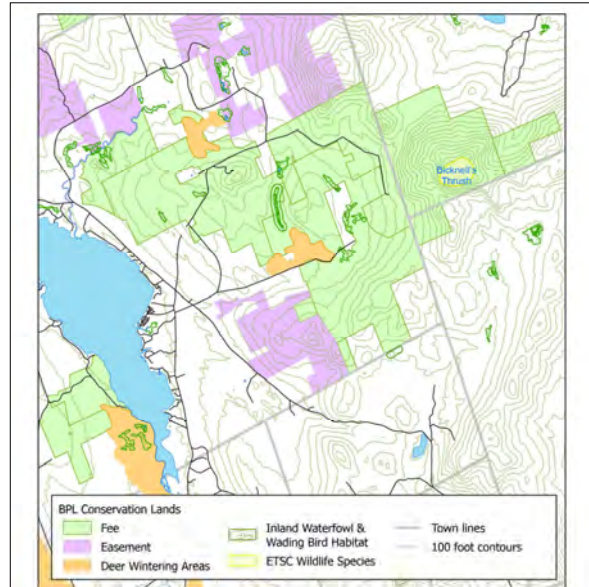
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Mount Blue State Park – “Rare and Exemplary” Features mapped by Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP)



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Mount Blue State Park – Important Wildlife Features



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General Vision for MBSP

- Continued management that seeks to balance development with protecting the forested camping, hiking, Nordic skiing and snowshoeing, and ORV experiences, as well as the swimming, boating and fishing experiences on Webb Lake
- Cooperation and collaboration with area partners to provide high-quality recreation opportunities and facilities that expand and enrich recreational opportunities for visitors
- Improvements to facilities will be undertaken as needs dictate and available resources allow
- About 95% of the park will continue to be managed as an undesignated Natural Area, providing protection for sensitive natural resources
- Any timber harvesting will be limited in area and will be conducted only for the purposes specified in statute



Nature Center at Webb Lake

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Management Recommendations

Recreation:

- Continue to operate existing camping and day use facilities
- Continue to maintain existing hiking and nature trails, as well as winter trail system
- Continue to maintain the motorized trails in the park, in partnership with local ATV and snowmobile clubs
- Plan and pursue funding as needed for major facility and access maintenance needs

Wildlife/Exemplary Communities

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

Timber Management

- Conduct timber harvests only for the purposes specified in statute (e.g., health and aesthetic value of red pine plantations)



Ice rink at park HQ, Feb 2020 Take it Outside event

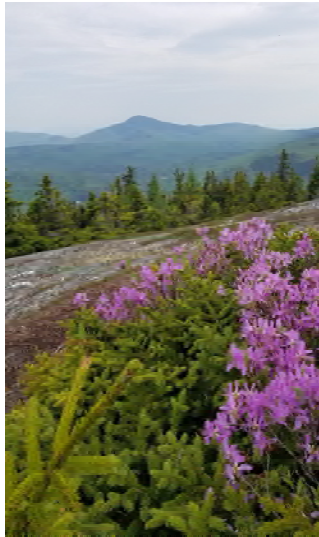
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Questions or comments?



View from Center Hill ledges

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Bald Mountain Lot

*BALD MTN SUMMIT, MT. BLUE
IN DISTANCE*

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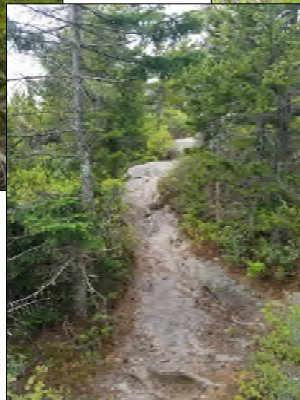
Bald Mountain Lot – hiking trail



Trail signage at BPL boundary



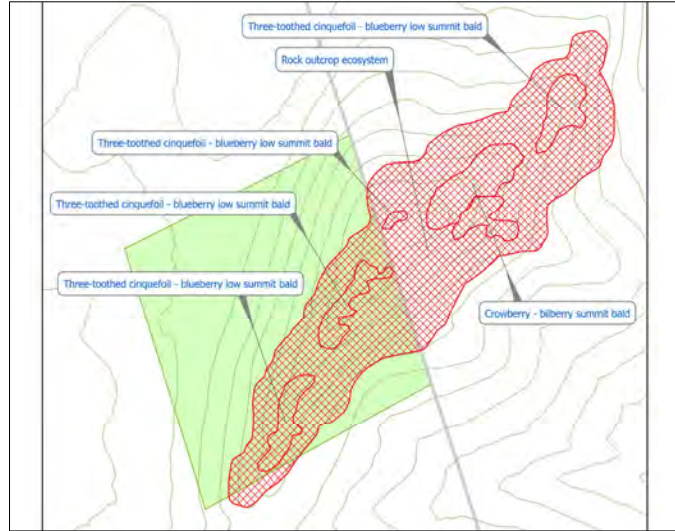
Fire scar near trail on public lot



Trail across Bald Mtn. Lot

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Bald Mountain Lot – “Rare and Exemplary” Features mapped by Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP)



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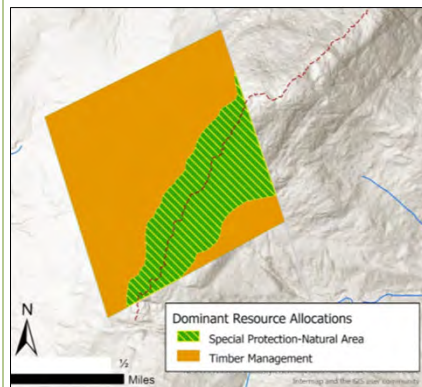
Bald Mtn Lot - Resource Allocations and Mgmt. Recommendations

Allocations:

- Special Protection in the exemplary natural communities across the mountain ridge (30% of lot)
- Remainder to Timber Management

Recommendations:

- Monitor portion of trail on the public lot for any significant impacts on the natural resource
- Consider a trail management agreement/formalization of the trail
- Continue timber management focused on accessible NW portion of lot (no additional harvesting anticipated this plan cycle)



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Next Steps and Comments

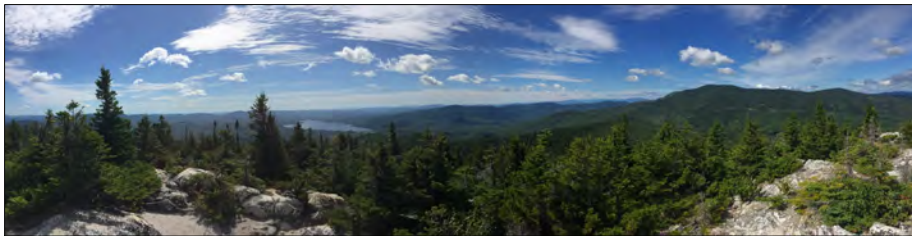
- All are welcome to comment during the next three weeks, via a phone call or in writing (email or US post)
- BPL will prepare the Final Plan over the next month or so, which will include any revisions in response to comments received
- Comments and BPL responses will be included in Plan Appendix A

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Thank You!



Blueberry Mountain summit view

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