



CROCKER MOUNTAIN MANAGEMENT PLAN

Scoping
Meeting

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Bureau of Parks and Lands

July 22, 2014



CROCKER MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION PROJECT

- Acquisition of lands from Plum Creek finalized June 7, 2013
- Funding sources
 - Forest Legacy Program (federal)
 - Land for Maine's Future (state)
 - private foundations and individual donors
- Partners in grant applications included the Trust for Public Lands (TPL), Town of Carrabassett Valley, and many others



Photo: Jeremy Clark, used by permission

EXISTING AGREEMENTS

- Agreements were made between the State, the Trust for Public Lands, and Town of Carrabassett Valley during acquisition
- These agreements will guide future management of the property, which will be more comprehensively addressed by the Management Plan
- Primary elements of these agreements include:
 - BPL will manage the property for multiple uses
 - A proposed Ecological Reserve, vetted by the Ecological Reserve Advisory Committee, will permanently protect rare plants, wildlife habitats and natural communities (~ 4000 acres, focused on upper elevations)
 - Traditional non-motorized activities will be allowed within the Ecological Reserve, mainly on designated trails
 - Existing regional motorized trail networks will not be interrupted

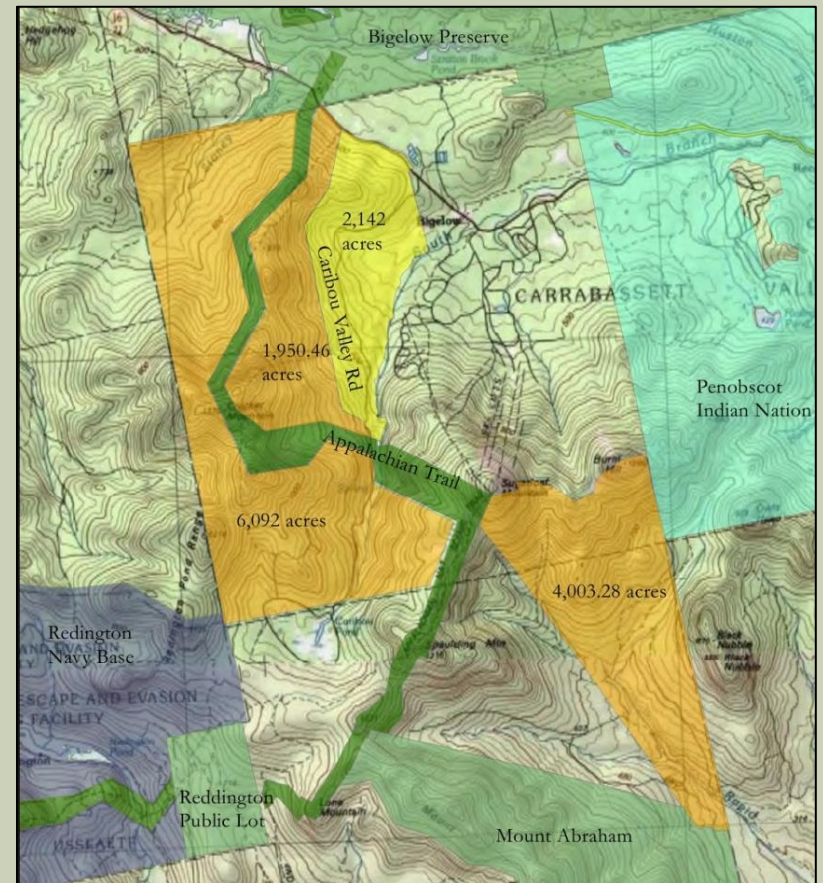
EXISTING AGREEMENTS (CONT.)

- Opportunities for expanding existing trail networks will be pursued, with consideration of the importance of connectivity of trails
 - ATV trails, snowmobile trails
 - Groomed ski trail (MH&T hut-to-hut)
 - Mountain biking trails
 - Hiking trails
 - Backcountry ski/snowshoe trails
- At least half of the property will be managed as a multiple-use working forest; forestry will be sensitive to the importance of scenic views along the AT and Hwy 27 Scenic Byway



OVERVIEW OF PROPERTY

- Total of 12,046 acres in 2 areas
- Crocker Mountain Area
 - 8,042 acres
 - North and South Crocker peaks
 - Bisected by 9.7 miles of AT corridor
 - Caribou Valley Road and Stoney Brook Road, and connected logging roads
- Mt. Abram TWP/Rapid Stream Area
 - 4,003 acres
 - South side of Sugarloaf Mtn. and Burnt Hill (Carrabassett Valley parcel)
 - Wedge shaped parcel extending down Rapid Stream valley to Mount Abraham Unit (Mt Abram TWP)
 - Rapid Stream Road and network of connected logging roads



NATURAL AND GEOLOGIC RESOURCES

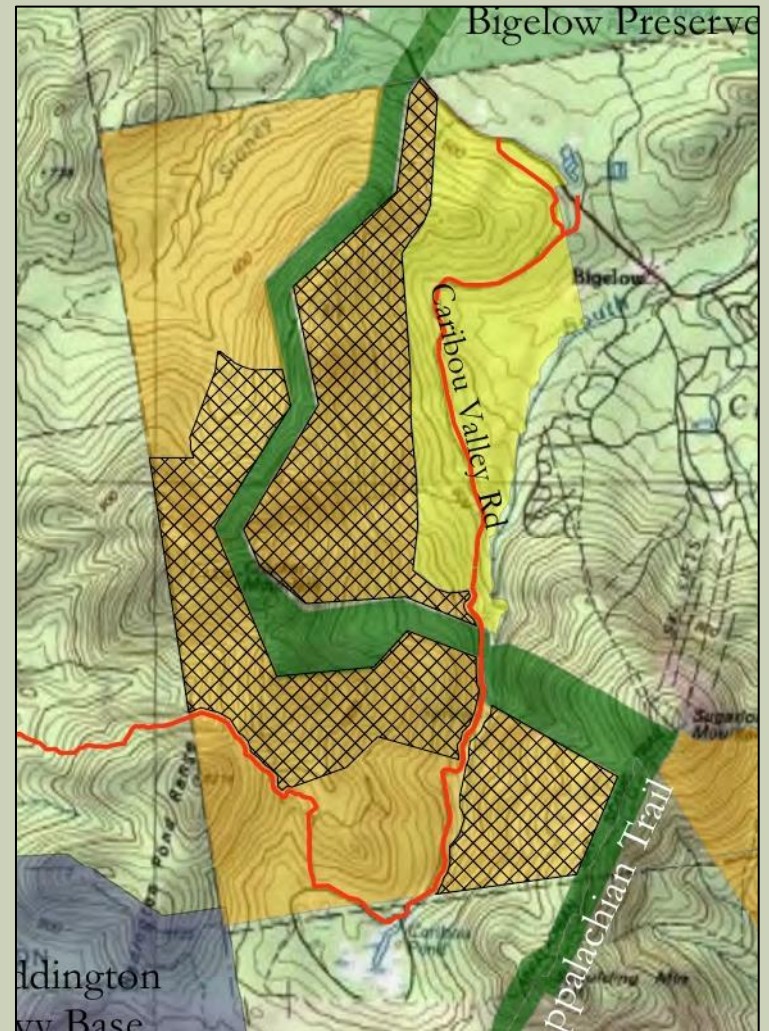
- Dramatic mountain terrain with glacial cirques, cliffs, talus slopes, mountain streams and a large high elevation forest
- North and South Crocker are among the 14 Maine peaks > 4,000 feet



Photo: John Orcutt, used by permission

NATURAL AND GEOLOGIC RESOURCES

- **MNAP Evaluation**
 - several rare plant communities, and endangered plants associated with ultramafic bedrock, also rare in Maine
 - one rare animal, the Roaring Brook mayfly, found in only a few places in the state
- **Ecological Reserve**
 - Approximately 4,400 acres proposed for ER designation focused on the higher elevation lands and exemplary natural communities/rare plants



WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

- Provides an important “a vital and viable mountain corridor” habitat connection between Mount Abraham and Bigelow Preserve
- In addition to Roaring Brook Mayfly, Crocker parcels are home to a variety of wildlife, including Bicknell’s thrush, that favor the mainly mature mid and high elevation forest
- Native brook trout are present in major streams and likely present in tributaries



RECREATION RESOURCES

- Nearly 10 miles of the NPS-owned A.T. corridor crosses the Crocker Mountain area
- Deeded crossing of A.T. on Caribou Valley Road provides a critical North/South link for snowmobile, ATV and groomed cross-country ski trails
- Snowmobile trail on Caribou Valley Rd. and ATV trail on Plum Creek Rd.
- ITS snowmobile trail and ATV trail on Mt. Abram TWP parcel
- Hunting for deer, moose, game birds



TIMBER RESOURCES

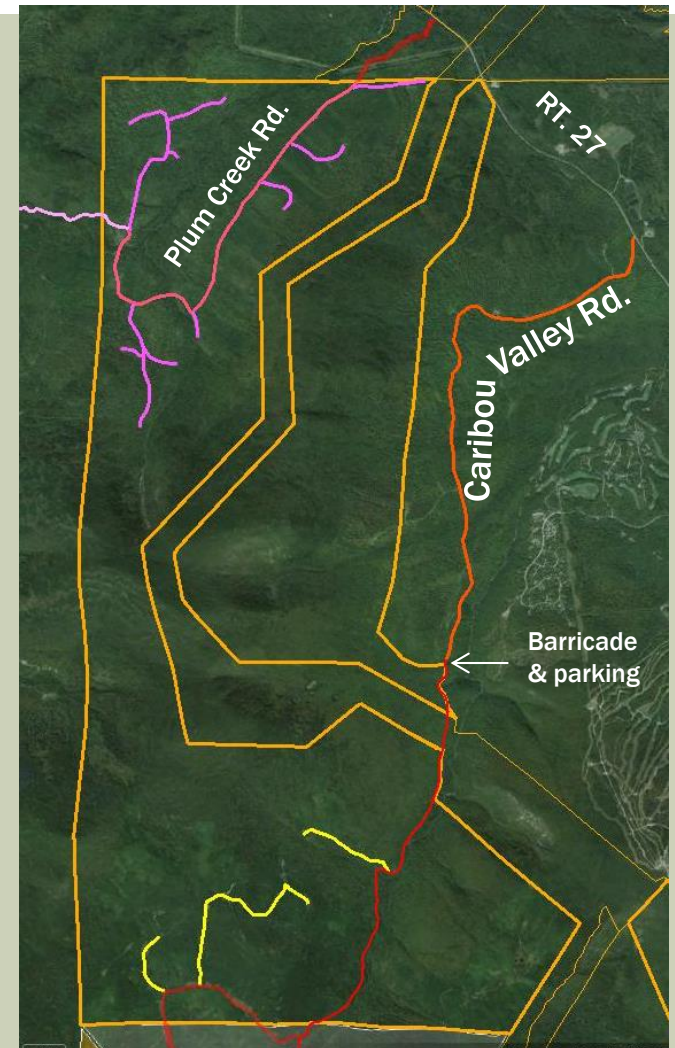
- Approx. 70% of the lands have been harvested in the past
- Mix of spruce-fir and northern hardwood stands, some softwood plantations
- As reflected in MOU and acquisition grant documents, timber harvest is expected to continue on non-Ecological Reserve acres, subject to wildlife, scenic protection, and recreation considerations



Photo: Joe Lyon, used by permission

DEEDED ACCESS AND EXISTING ROADS

- **Caribou Valley Road**
 - Access from Rt. 27, shared with Sugarloaf Corporation and Plum Creek
 - 2.5 miles of road crosses the south portion of Crocker Mountain area
 - Barricaded near north ownership boundary, with small parking area
 - Bridges beyond barricade may require upgrading or rehabilitation
- **Plum Creek Road**
 - Access from Rt. 27 to NW corner of Crocker Mountain area
 - About 4 miles of gravel road with several short spurs
 - Existing ATV connection between trails north of Rt. 27 and adjoining property to the west



DEEDED ACCESS AND EXISTING ROADS

- Rapid Stream Road (Mt. Abram TWP/Rapid Stream area)
 - Deeded access from West Kingfield Road
 - Provides primary access into acquired lands, linking to network of 4WD logging roads on Mt. Abram TWP parcel
 - Condition of roads needs to be assessed
 - Known missing bridges



PLANNING PROCESS

- **Step 1: Scoping (2 mo.)**
 - Gather and share information on the resources present on the Crocker parcels
 - Seek input from the public regarding their interests and ideas for future uses and management of the property and issues of concern
- **Step 2: Draft Management Plan (6 mo.)**
 - BPL crafts a 15 Year plan for the property that protects the exceptional natural and biological resources and balances the variety of potential land uses and recreation interests on the parcels
 - BPL presents first Draft Plan to the Advisory Committee for review and comment
- **Step 3: Final Draft Management Plan (1 mo.)**
 - BPL presents Final Draft Management Plan to public for comment and discussion
 - BPL responds to comments and prepares Final Plan
- **Step 4: Final Management Plan (1 mo.)**
 - Presented to BPL Director for his recommendation
 - Presented to DACF Commissioner for his approval
 - Appended to the Flagstaff Region Management Plan

MANAGEMENT PLAN PURPOSE

- Describes the character of and resources on the public reserved lands
- Expresses a Vision for the future of the public reserved lands
- Determines primary and secondary resource allocations: “a hierarchy of natural, historic and cultural resource attributes ranked from most to least sensitive to management activities”
 - Special Protection (natural areas, ecological reserves, historic/cultural)
 - Backcountry Recreation (non-mechanized and motorized)
 - Wildlife (essential, significant, and specialized habitats)
 - Remote Recreation
 - Visual Consideration (Class I and II)
 - Developed Recreation
 - Timber Management
- Provides Management Recommendations
 - Actions that address key issues and means to achieve Vision/management objectives
 - Provides guidance on needs, priorities and appropriate areas for development
 - May or may not specify potential trails or trail routes and associated recreational improvements. Future trail planning will be guided by resource allocations and other management direction provided by the Plan

THE BUREAU'S QUESTIONS

- What are your (or your organization's) priorities for trail development on the parcels? (e.g., number, type and character of trails, trail connections to existing or proposed trails outside the parcels)
- What are your (or your organization's) interest in other (non-trail) recreational development on the parcels? (e.g., campsites? overlooks?)
- Other concerns the Plan should address?



YOUR QUESTIONS?



**Thank You for
contributing!**



Photos: left - Joe Lyon, used by permission; right - BPL