

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 24, 2008

Ms. Kathryn Maloney
Director
USFS Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry
Newtown Square Corporate Campus
11 Campus Boulevard, Suite 200
Newtown Square PA 19073

Dear Ms. Maloney:

We are writing to express our strong support for the State of Maine's FY 2010 Forest Legacy Program project submissions. The Katahdin Forest Expansion and Rangeley High Peaks projects, ranked #1 and #2 respectively, will further the protection of over 33,000 acres in northern and western Maine and enhance previous Forest Legacy Program investments. Both projects will expand upon existing working forest projects.

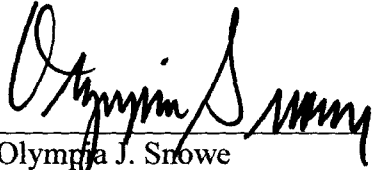
The 19,500 acre Katahdin Forest Expansion project was submitted as Maine's #2 priority in FY 2009. We have been particularly encouraged about the project's potential to address recreational access issues, provide economic opportunity for the Town of Millinocket, and extend further the largest block of contiguous conservation land in the state. All of the parcels are within 15 miles of the town of Millinocket, include tremendous recreational resources of statewide significance, and through both multi-use trail networks and sustainable forestry, play a critical role in the local economy. Since the FY 2009 submission and scoring process, this project has taken major steps forward. The State of Maine's Land for Maine's Future Program has awarded \$1.765 million towards the various property acquisitions that make up the project. In addition, new ecological information has demonstrated that the project will significantly further the implementation of the State Wildlife Action Plan. Finally, willing seller landowner agreements are in place on four of the five parcels, with the fifth currently under negotiation. We strongly endorse this project and urge its favorable consideration during the application review process.

The Rangeley High Peaks Project Phase I is a new submission by the state and consists of three parcels totaling 13,446 acres in the western mountains of Maine near the Rangeley Lakes. We understand this project is located within the viewshed of the Appalachian Trail and adjacent to protected lands. It includes a portion of a stream that is the site of a current Atlantic salmon restoration effort, an initiative we strongly support. The project also hosts portions of well-traveled snowmobile trails that lead into the Rangeley area. We are pleased that this project is supported by a broad coalition of local, statewide and national organizations and therefore urge your strong consideration of this project during the scoring process.

As you know, we have been strong supporters of Maine's Forest Legacy projects over the years and appreciate greatly the US Forest Service's integral role in making this program such a success in our state.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to express our support for these worthwhile projects.

Sincerely,



Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Michael Michaud
Member of Congress



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Appalachian National Scenic Trail
P.O. Box 50 (252 McDowell Street)
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

IN REPLY REFER TO:

October 8, 2008

Mr. Alan Stearns
Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Dear Mr. Stearns:

I am writing on behalf of the National Park Service and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail to express my support for the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application. This application seeks funding for three land tracts in the Rangeley/High Peaks region, totaling 13,446 acres, and represents a significant first step towards the larger overall conservation effort envisioned with the High Peaks Initiative.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.) was designated our country's first national scenic trail forty years ago on October 2, 1968 with passage of the National Trails System Act. Since then, the National Park Service has acquired over 111,000 acres along the length of the A.T. as part of a protected corridor, almost 32,000 acres of which are located in Maine. The A.T. is now a proud unit of our National Park System, as well as the flagship of our National Trails System, but its protected corridor is slender and fragile. This Forest Legacy application is a perfect example of the kind of partnership with the State that can result in protection of Maine's timberlands and important additional protection for the A.T.

The section of the A.T. that passes through western Maine on the ridgeline of the Saddleback range of peaks is considered one of the most scenic segments of the entire Appalachian Trail. Significant resources have been devoted to protecting the remote and scenic qualities of this stretch of Trail. This Forest Legacy project will protect the immediate viewshed from a 6-mile section of the A.T. across Saddleback Mountain, the Horn, and Saddleback Junior. This section of the A.T. has eleven designated scenic view spots that look out over the large expanse of currently productive timberland which sustains the character and economy of the region and which would be conserved through this project. Conservation of Parcel B, in particular, would appear to be an essential step in future conservation of adjoining/nearby forest and recreation parcels, large and small.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is a natural, cultural and recreational resource of national significance. I am happy to lend my support for the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application which would afford critical adjacent protection to one of the more spectacular stretches of this extraordinary resource.

Sincerely,

Pamela Underhill
Superintendent



JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
Bureau Sea Run Fisheries & Habitat
650 STATE STREET
BANGOR, MAINE
04401



GEORGE D. LAPOINTE
COMMISSIONER

Alan Stearns
Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-0022?

Dear Mr. Stearns,

The Bureau of Sea Run Fisheries and Habitat support the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application. The application seeks funding to protect three land tracts in the Rangeley/High Peaks region. Parcels A and B include property abutting the Perham and Orbeton Streams. One of the most immediate threats to the ecological integrity of headwater streams in Maine like Perham and Orbeton Streams is land use change. Land protection is one of way to ensure that the productivity and habitat complexity of stream habitat for Atlantic salmon and native freshwater fishes is maintained.

Perham Stream contains approximately 860 juvenile Atlantic salmon very productive rearing units (100m²). We have stocked the stream once, with approximately 4,000 Atlantic salmon fry reared in the watershed. In follow-up assessments, the stream had the second highest density of fry and the highest densities of parr we have had in the entire drainage since beginning assessment since 2000. Orbeton Stream, excluding tributaries, has just over 3,000 juvenile Atlantic salmon rearing units. In Orbeton Stream adjacent to Linkletter property there are numerous Adult holding pools. Survival of Atlantic salmon eggs planted in spawning habitat in the reach was higher than at most of the other sites in the Sandy River watershed. We have documented wild juveniles in the lower portion of Orbeton Stream as a result of wild spawning adults that returned to the watershed in 2006.

We support the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application because it will result in maintaining the quality of Atlantic salmon habitat in the Sandy River watershed, which is the focus of the Bureaus Atlantic salmon management in the Kennebec River drainage.

Sincerely,

Patrick Keliher
Bureau of Sea Run Fisheries and Habitat
Maine Department of Marine Resources
172 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

November 19, 2008

Alan Stearns, Deputy Director
Bureau of Parks & Lands
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-002

Dear Alan:

Greater Franklin Development Corporation is a nonprofit economic development organization that works toward the creation and retention of quality employment opportunities in the greater Franklin County area through business attraction, fostering existing businesses, and encouraging new business start-ups.

We are writing to you in support of the Rangeley High Peaks application for the U.S. Forest Service "Forest Legacy" program.

The Rangeley High Peaks project encompasses various uses of the Maine woods, from conservation to recreation, which are important to residents and tourists alike. This application has been a collaborative endeavor to ensure that different uses of the woods would be represented. This endeavor has been impressive and reflects the willingness of the people in our area to work together.

At Greater Franklin, we believe this project will create better access to a beautiful area through conservation. It would be a wonderful attraction for the tourism industry, which would stimulate the economy in the area.

We support this proposal and we encourage you to seriously consider the Rangeley High Peaks application.

Thank you.

Best regards,



Alison A. Hagerstrom
Executive Director

cc: Lloyd Griscom

September 19th, 2008

Alan Stearns
Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Dear Alan:

The Nature Conservancy (the Conservancy) supports the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application for over 13,440 acres of forest land in Rangeley and Madrid and Mount Abram Townships. The protection of these lands is a key part of the Conservancy's vision for Maine and is essential to the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust's vision for this region.

The parcels lie within two large forested blocks of land that the Conservancy has identified as priority matrix forest blocks. The Conservancy selects matrix forest blocks from all the possible large intact forest blocks in the NE region (Appalachian/Acadian Ecoregion) that have enough habitat to support viable populations of all their native species and forest types even through expected natural disturbances and change. Together with the conservation lands of the Bigelow Range to the north, Tumbledown and Mount Blue to the South, and the extensive New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) easements to the west, region wildlife movements can be maintained through land connectivity in an area with expanding recreational use and second home development.

The High Peaks parcels (A and B) contribute to the Mount Abram matrix forest block, known for the high elevation spruce-fir forests, rare alpine meadows, habitat for the globally declining Bicknell's thrush and one of only two sites in the state for Northern bog lemming. These parcels add to a landscape much more similar to those in the White Mountain National Forest than Maine's expansive protected lands of Baxter, Nahmakanta, and the Debsconeags.

The proposed Rangeley parcel adds connectivity to the 81,000 acres of NEFF easement to the north. This area is typified by extensive wetlands supporting Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife ranked significant wading bird and waterfowl habitat, intact bogs and fens as well as habitat for state rare Canada whiteface dragonfly. This parcel provides low rolling landscape that is developed in most areas of the state -- but here, tucked just above the village of Rangeley, it remains relatively wild. This tract includes all of Round Pond and the western half of Loon Lake, both selected by the Conservancy as priority lakes for their outstanding freshwater biodiversity values.

This proposal adds substantially to a growing acreage of sustainable landscapes and interconnected forest that representing the diversity of Maine's natural ecosystems. It increases forest and wildlife resilience through broader landscape connectivity. I am pleased that the Bureau of Parks and Lands is submitting an application to the Forest Legacy program and The Nature Conservancy is pleased to offer its support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Rumpf", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Tom Rumpf
Associate State Director

October 14, 2008 SUPPORT FOR HIGH PEAKS FOREST LEGACY APPLICATION

Alan Stearns
Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Dear Alan,

The undersigned supporters of the High Peaks Alliance, a local citizens group working for multiple-use public recreation access to working forestlands in Franklin County's High Peaks area, strongly support the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application. We understand this application seeks funding for three land tracts in the Rangeley/High Peaks region, totaling 13,446 acres.

We are all very familiar with Parcels A and B located in the heart of the High Peaks backcountry. We hike, ride, snowshoe, ski, hunt, and fish in this area on a regular basis. Some of us have lived adjacent to Parcel B for many years, and some of us guide professionally in this area.

The High Peaks Alliance has discussed the need for designated backcountry snowmobile and ATV crossings from Madrid to Caribou Pond while respecting the primitive hiking experience of the Appalachian Trail. Conservation of Parcel A could provide a very good means of accomplishing this regionally significant improvement.

Conservation of Parcel B will protect the Kennebec headwaters containing Atlantic salmon, brook and brown trout. It also contains the existing regionally significant ITS snowmobile connection between Madrid and Rangeley. This same route could serve a similar ATV connector if adjacent landowner permissions are secured. We expect new non-motorised trails as well.


We are working to connect the high Peaks Communities by various backcountry trails which this conservation activity would help make possible.

If Parcels A and B are not conserved, all of us fear the loss of traditional recreation access as the area fragments into developed lots. With conservation, both parcels can contribute much more to the economic revitalization of the High Peaks area as a world class nature tourism destination.


Yours truly,



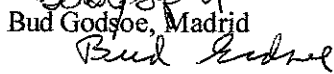
Lloyd Griscom, Phillips
Blueberry Farm



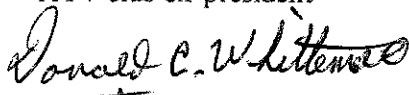
Betsy Squibb, Madrid
Maine Guide



Bud Godsoe, Madrid



Linda Haines, Farmington
ATV club ex-president



Donald C. Whitten
Sportsman
Linda Haines

Roger Lambert, Strong
Master Maine Guide



Milt Baston, Strong
Maine Guide, Strong Selectman



Chris Beach, Wilton
Professor Unity College



Mike Ferguson
Rev-It-Up Sportshop

(above)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: (207) 287-4469

Thomas B. Saviello

60 Applegate Lane
Wilton, ME 04294

Residence: (207) 645-3420

Business: (207) 897-1422

Fax: (207) 897-1783

E-Mail: drtom16@hotmail.com

October 7, 2008

Alan Stearns, Deputy Director
Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-022

Dear Alan:

This letter is in support of the Rangeley High Peaks application for the U.S. Forest Service "Forest Legacy" program. This Rangeley High Peaks initiative is very important to the rural economy by ensuring a multi-use working forest and preserving un-fragmented area. It can be a world class nature based tourism opportunity.

The working group proposing this application comes from ALL users of the woods. This includes snowmobilers, hikers, bikers, hunters, bird watchers, campers, etc. It is truly a collaborative effort worthy of support.

We have an unparalleled opportunity in our hands; people working together to support multiple-use of the forest as Gifford Pinchot himself envisioned. I would hardily endorse this proposal and ask for your support to make it successful.

Sincerely,

Thomas B. Saviello
Maine State House of Representatives
District 90

cc: Lloyd Griscom
Carol Haas

District 90 Avon, New Vineyard, Phillips, Strong, Temple and Wilton,
plus the unorganized territories of East Central Franklin (part, including Freeman
Township and part of Salem Township) and Perkins and Washington Townships

Printed on rec



Appalachian Mountain Club

October 14, 2008

Alan Stearns
Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Dear Mr. Stearns,

I am writing on behalf of the Appalachian Mountain Club to express my strong support for the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application. This application seeks funding for three land tracts in the Rangeley/High Peaks region, totaling 13,446 acres.

This project is of interest to AMC and our members for a number of reasons, both recreational and ecological. AMC intervened in the Redington-Black Nubble wind power proposal due to the negative impacts such a large-scale development would have on this region. The ecological, recreational and scenic resources of the area make it one of the state's two most significant mountain landscapes (along with Baxter State Park), and known for one of the most scenic stretches of the Appalachian Trail.

While some of the region at lower elevations has been fragmented by roads and timber harvesting, the higher elevations remain nearly totally unfragmented. Research conducted by AMC has documented that this region is one of the largest remaining roadless areas in the state, encompassing nearly 36,000 acres between Routes 4 and 16/27. These project properties also contain important hiking trails, opportunities for cross country and backcountry skiing, and Orbeton Stream, a native brook trout stream.

This project strikes a balance between ecological protections and contributions to the local and regional economy from the land and will help stabilize a land base that is under direct pressure of sub-division and development.

Sincerely,

Bryan Wentzell
AMC Maine Policy Manager

Greenville, ME office • Washington St., P.O. Box 310, Greenville, ME 04441 207-695-2690

Brunswick, ME office • 14 Maine St, Box 57, Brunswick, ME 04011 207-725-2248

Main office • Five Joy Street, Boston, MA 02108-1490 617-523-0655

Pinkham Notch Visitor Center • Route 16, Box 298, Gorham, NH 03581-0298 603-466-2721

www.outdoors.org

September 6, 2008

Alan B. Stearns, Deputy Director
Bureau of Parks and Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Dear Mr. Stearns:

I am writing on behalf of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club to express the Club's strong support for the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase 1) Forest Legacy application. This application seeks funding for three land tracts in the Rangeley/High Peaks region totaling 13,446 acres.

Each tract has its special characteristics and conservation values. Together the conservation of these three tracts will protect:

- 1,163 acres of high elevation land providing habitat of the Bicknell's Thrush, rated the top landbird conservation priority in the Northeast by Partners in Flight.
- Lands of regional, national and international significance identified as "Critical Forest Matrix Block" by the Nature Conservancy and one of the "Last of the Wild" places in the Northeastern Forest by the Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada.
- A critical portion of the ITS snowmobile trail as well as many formal and informal motorized and non-motorized recreational trails.
- 5,900 acres of productive mid-elevation timberland owned by a family enterprise for local wood pellet production.
- Orberton Stream, a native brook trout stream and site of an Atlantic salmon restoration effort by Trout Unlimited and the Maine Department of Marine Fisheries.
- Outstanding views from the 32 mile stretch of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail that passes through the heart of the High Peaks region which is widely regarded as among the most spectacular stretches of the entire trail due to its remoteness and visually impressive layout.
- Guaranteed public access to the land allowing for recreation and promotion of recreational opportunities.

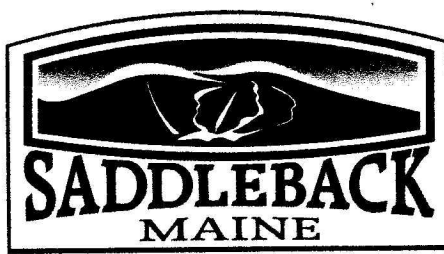
Alan B. Stearns, Deputy Director
Page 2
September 6, 2008

This project strikes a balance between ecological protections and contributions to the local and regional economy from the land and will help stabilize a land base that is under direct pressure of sub-division and development.

Very truly yours,

Milton R. Wright, President
Maine Appalachian Trail Club

Saddleback, Inc.
976 Saddleback Mountain Road
P.O. Box 490
Rangeley, ME 04970



www.saddlebackmaine.com

Tel. (207) 864-5671
Toll Free. 1-866-918-2225
Fax. (207) 864-5878
info@saddlebackmaine.com

September 25, 2008

Mr. Alan Stearns
Governor's Office, State of Maine
1 State Street Station
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Alan,

On behalf of Saddleback Maine and myself please accept this letter of endorsement of the Rangeley High Peaks Forest Legacy Application. We very much look forward to working with the various players in pursuing objectives that enhance the value of our respective assets, as well as, making them available for public enjoyment in appropriate ways. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help.

Respectfully Submitted,

Warren C. Cook,
CEO & General Manager
Saddleback Maine

cc: Lloyd Griscom
Nancy Pearlson

Lloyd - Brent
Carol 100.00
contribution -
Thys again -
Wu

Saddleback Maine exists to share its exquisite gift of beauty, peace and happiness.

-Irene Berry

09/15/2008

Alan Stearns
Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Dear Mr. Stearns,

I am writing on behalf of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to express my strong support for the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application. This application seeks funding for three land tracts in the Rangeley/High Peaks region, totalling 13,446 acres.

Each tract has its special characteristics and conservation values. Together, the conservation of these three tracts will protect:

- The viewshed from a 6 mile section of the Appalachian Trail that travels a high elevation ridgeline across Saddleback Mountain, the Horn, and Saddleback Junior. This section of the A.T. has eleven designated scenic viewpoints that look out over the project area.
- 1,163 acres of high elevation land providing habitat for the Bicknell's Thrush, rated the number one land bird conservation priority in the Northeast by Partners in Flight.
- 2,500 acres of suitable habitat for Canada lynx, federally listed as threatened, and 350 acres of Peregrine falcon habitat, listed as endangered by the State of Maine.
- Lands of regional, national, and international significance, identified as a "Critical Forest Matrix Block" by the Nature Conservancy and one of the "Last of the Wild" places in the Northeastern Forest by the Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada.
- 5,900 acres of productive mid-elevation timberland owned by a family enterprise for local wood pellet production.
- Orbeton Stream, a native brook trout stream and site of an Atlantic Salmon restoration effort by Trout Unlimited and the Maine Department of Marine Fisheries.
- Over three miles of frontage on several ponds and streams that feed into a major tributary of Rangeley Lake and support an important source of forage for the cold water fishery.
- Guaranteed public access for recreation.

The project as a whole will help stabilize a land base that is under direct pressure from subdivision and development, and in so doing will protect ecological resources as well as help sustain the local and regional economy and our cultural heritage and way of life. Based on the many short and long-term benefits that this project will achieve, we hope that it will enjoy your support as well.

Sincerely,

David N. Startzell
Executive Director



STATE OF MAINE
 DEPARTMENT OF
 INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
 284 STATE STREET
 41 STATE HOUSE STATION
 AUGUSTA, MAINE
 04333-0041

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
 GOVERNOR

ROLAND D. MARTIN
 COMMISSIONER

10/09/2008

Alan Stearns
 Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
 Maine Department of Conservation
 22 State House Station
 Harlow Building
 Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Dear Mr. Stearns,

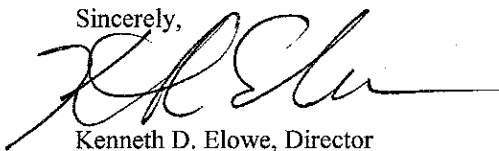
I am writing on behalf of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to express my strong support for the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application. This application seeks funding for three land tracts in the Rangeley/High Peaks region, totaling 13,446 acres.

Each tract has its special characteristics and conservation values. Together, the conservation of these three tracts will protect:

- 1,163 acres of high elevation land providing habitat of the Bicknell's Thrush, rated the top landbird conservation priority in the Northeast by Partners in Flight.
- 2,500 acres of suitable habitat for Canada lynx, federally listed as threatened, and 350 acres of Peregrine falcon habitat, listed as endangered by the State of Maine.
- Lands of regional, national, and international significance, identified as a "Critical Forest Matrix Block" by the Nature Conservancy and one of the "Last of the Wild" places in the Northeastern Forest by the Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada.
- Critical segments of the ITS snowmobile trail, as well as many formal and informal motorized and non-motorized recreational trails.
- 5,900 acres of productive mid-elevation timberland owned by a family enterprise for local wood pellet production.
- Large tracts of productive timberland which sustain the character and economy of the region.
- Orbeton Stream, a native brook trout stream and site of an Atlantic Salmon restoration effort by Trout Unlimited and the Maine Department of Marine Fisheries.
- Over three miles of frontage on several ponds and streams that feed into a major tributary of Rangeley Lake and support an important source of forage for the cold water fishery.
- The viewshed from a 6 mile section of the Appalachian Trail that travels a high elevation ridgeline across Saddleback Mountain, the Horn, and Saddleback Junior. This section of the A.T. has eleven designated scenic viewpoints that look out over the project area.
- Guaranteed public access for recreation.

This project strikes a balance between ecological protections and contributions to the local and regional economy from the land and will help stabilize a land base that is under direct pressure of sub-division and development.

Sincerely,



Kenneth D. Elowe, Director
 Bureau of Resource Management



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



September 16, 2008

Mr. Alan Stearns
Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
State House station 22
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Alan,

Lloyd Griscom has informed me of the High Peaks Alliance's work in Franklin County and the Forest Legacy Funding application that they seek for land acquisition in the region.

I have been involved in discussions with High Peaks to explore opportunities to connect communities and expand both the economic and recreational resources of our region. High Peaks has the support of the local communities and many of the regions nonprofit organizations.

I would like to endorse the Forest Legacy Application and feel strongly that High Peak is an organization that enhances cooperation and communication between communities and with this Forest Legacy support, they will significantly broaden the opportunities within Franklin County.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Larry Warren



September 21, 2008

To:

Alan Stearns
Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, Maine 04333-0022

Re: Support for Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application

Dear Mr. Stearns,

I am writing on behalf of the Maine Chapter of Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) to express my strong support for the Rangeley High Peaks (Phase I) Forest Legacy application submitted by the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust (MATLT) and the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust. The Executive Committee of the Maine Chapter of the AMC voted to unanimously support this project at our recent meeting.

Funding for this project will create contiguous areas of conservation lands important to protect wildlife, prevent conversion to non-forest uses, maintain the forest economy, and ensure public access for both motorized and non-motorized outdoor recreation. As you know, this area is under intense pressure for conversion to non-forest uses due to its proximity to resort and service areas and scenic qualities.

Specifically, protection of the 13,446 acres of the Rangeley High Peaks region will:

- Protect lands of regional, national, and international significance identified as such by the Nature Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada.
- Protect 1,163 acres of high elevation land that is important habitat for the Bicknell's Thrush.
- Protect waterways such as Orbeton Stream that supports populations of native brook trout.
- Protect the viewshed of the 6-mile section of the Appalachian Trail as it traverses the high-elevation ridgeline of the Saddleback Mountain area.
- Support the local forest economy.
- Ensure public access for both motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation.

MATLT's mission to protect land surrounding the Appalachian Trail is concurrent with the Maine Chapter of the AMC's mission to support conservation and recreational pursuits, and therefore I urge you to support this project. This project adequately balances ecological and land-use protection with while simultaneously providing support for the local economy and multi-use recreational opportunities for the public. Additionally, it will link currently established conservation lands and recreational trail systems.

In summary, I believe this project is a good investment for the people of Maine to protect a unique scenic landscape and provide recreational opportunities.

Sincerely,

Laura Flight
Chair, Maine Chapter of Appalachian Mountain Club
27 Adell Road
Readfield, Maine

CC:

Carole Haas, Executive Director Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust
Bryan Wentzell, Maine Policy Manager, Appalachian Mountain Club



Maine Woods Campaign

44 Oak St, Suite 301, Portland, ME 04101

Phone: (207) 791-2821

Fax: (207) 773-6690

www.maine.sierraclub.org

September 8, 2008

Alan Stearns
Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks and Lands
Maine Dept. of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Dear Mr. Stearns:

I am writing on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club to express our support for the Rangeley High Peaks Forest Legacy application which seeks funding for 13,446 acres in this spectacular area of Maine. As the State continues to pursue opportunities for permanent protection of our natural heritage, this project should be high on the list for the following reasons:

- It includes protection for 1,163 acres of rare Bicknell's Thrush habitat
- The area has been identified for high significance conservation by the Nature Conservancy and by the Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada as one of the "Last Wild Places" in the northeast forest.
- Orbeton Stream, a native brook trout stream and Atlantic Restoration site would be protected
- There are eleven designated scenic overlooks along a six mile section of the Appalachian Trail feature views of the project area.
- The region is under direct pressure of development.

We believe that the Rangeley High Peaks Forest Legacy project offers vital permanent protection for an important ecological area and will guarantee public access for diverse recreational activities.

Sincerely,

Karen Woodsum
Maine Woods Program

October 9, 2008

Alan Stearns
Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks & Lands
Maine Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Harlow Building
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Dear Alan Stearns,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of Western Maine Audubon Society to ask for your support for Phase I of the Rangeley High Peaks Forest Legacy application. Since its organization nearly two decades ago, Western Maine Audubon, true to its mission, has been an active advocate in efforts to secure protection of relatively undisturbed wildlife habitat in our region, particularly that which lies within that forest zone stretching nearly unbroken across the Northeast and into the Canadian Maritimes. We are acutely and often painfully aware of the pressures and threats to this vast ecosystem by changes in the patterns of ownership and of owners' views over recent decades. Indeed, land use proposals of late reflect views of Maine wild lands as little more than sites for real estate development and industrial use – even while packaged with assurances of concern and care for the wild habitat they propose to eliminate.

In the long and often difficult process of protecting their habitat, western Maine wildlife have benefited considerably from public policies and programs such as the land swap acquisitions of The Richardson Lakes, Mahoosuc, Four Pond, Chain of Ponds and Carrabassett units, to name a few, and perhaps the easiest to obtain. The usual fiscal and political reasons have made outright public purchase of important wild habitats more difficult, if not impossible; but regardless of the outcome of its efforts, we have seen The Maine Department of Conservation as an ally in those endeavors.

Similarly, we acknowledge the debt owed to protect the western Maine piece of the northeastern forest through action by large scale organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Appalachian Mountain Club and Trout Unlimited. No less so, for our region, have been the fruitful efforts of the Rangeley Heritage Trust and the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust whose work in securing conservation easements in the Rangeley Lakes watershed and other wild lands in Franklin County is significant.

Their continuing dedication to securing a sustainable future for wild inhabitants of the region is no better demonstrated than by the proposal now before the Bureau of Parks and Lands. It is our understanding that among other considerations such as preserving sustainable use of forest resources, scenery and recreational opportunities for the general public, adequate funding of Phase I of the High Peaks Proposal will allow continued protection of high country zones and watershed vital to the plants and wildlife of the region. We believe this proposal to be a balanced approach in protecting the resources of this area for all its inhabitants.

Truly yours,



Paul McGuire
President, Western Maine Audubon Society