

Section VIII

**RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR PORTIONS OF THE
EAST BRANCH
OF THE
PENOBSCOT RIVER**

June 27, 2002

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS

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I. Introduction and Background

In August of 1981, the Great Northern Paper Company, an unincorporated division of the Great Northern Nekoosa Corporation, granted to the State of Maine two perpetual Conservation Easements (Easements) along portions of the East Branch and the West Branch of the Penobscot River and the shores of Lobster Lake and Lobster Stream (Easement Lands), to ensure the continued use and benefit of these areas for Great Northern and the people of the State of Maine. The Easements transferred in perpetuity to the State of Maine Great Northern's development rights and the right to manage recreation on the Easement Lands.

Where once Great Northern was the sole landowner of the lands covered by the easement, there are now six different owners: Yankee Forest and Great Northwoods (both managed by Wagner Forest Management); Great Northern Paper; Baxter State Park; Irving Woodlands; and Prentiss & Carlisle. The current landowners, with the exception of Prentiss & Carlisle, which owns a portion of the East Branch corridor in Grindstone Township, have submitted to the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) a revision of the original Resource Protection Plan developed by Great Northern in July of 1981. Since certain activities contemplated by the Plan involve land uses that are allowed only by permit from LURC, the Plan establishes standards that will allow these activities to be carried out with a minimum number of permits. This plan has been approved by the Commission, thus retaining the Resource Plan Protection (P-RP) Subdistrict zoning for these lands. The Resource Protection Plan will *“provide for the continued, effective management of the renewable forest and water resources while recognizing and protecting the recreational and natural values of the East and West Branches of the Penobscot River and Lobster Lake and Stream.”*

Since Prentiss & Carlisle decided not to continue the Resource Protection designation for its portion of the East Branch corridor in Grindstone Township (as covered in the original plan), the Land Use Regulation Commission has rezoned this section to a Recreation Protection Subdistrict (P-RR) thus providing for its continued protection. As a result, this section of the river will no longer be covered in the revised Recreation Management Plan.

This Recreation Management Plan (the Plan) sets forth policies and procedures to govern and protect resources and recreational uses on the Easement Lands. In order to facilitate recreational management under the Plan, the landowners have agreed to grant leases to the State for certain administrative areas where the level of recreational use warrants such oversight. Appendix B contains a list of these administrative areas. During the time the Plan is in effect, some of these areas may be dropped and others added upon mutual agreement between the landowners and the State. Management authority for the Plan will reside with the Maine Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Lands. Other State agencies such as the Maine Forest Service and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, as well as private organizations (e.g. North Maine Woods) as appropriate, will participate in the recreational management of the area. The landowners have also reviewed and approved this recreation management plan.

For definitions of terms used in this Plan, refer to the definitions set forth in the Resource Protection Plan covering the Plan Area.

II. Goal and Objectives

The following goal shall guide recreational management activities in the area covered by this Plan:

To maintain and enhance the present types of recreational opportunities available, consistent with the maintenance of the present natural character of the Penobscot River Corridor and the overall management objectives of the owners of these and adjacent lands.

The following objectives will govern all recreational management activities:

- 1) Significant increases in public use will not be encouraged. However, BP&L may publish material that identifies the area as managed by the state and provide informational materials when requested by the public.
- 2) Emphasis will be placed on the traditional recreational uses of the area that were recognized when the original plan was established in 1981 (see section on Recreational Resources).
- 3) Mechanisms for controlling conflicting recreational land uses, and standards that will control development associated with recreation, will be instituted.
- 4) Policies and Procedures to ensure the proper care and maintenance of administrative structures and areas, where they occur, will be established (note – Administrative areas in the East Branch have not been assigned to BP&L at this time).

III. Description of Area

The lands to which this Plan applies are those that are included in the Conservation Easement and are wholly owned by the landowner within 500 feet of the normal high water mark of each side of the East Branch Penobscot River where it flows through T5 R8 WELS. A more detailed description is found in Appendix B of the Resource Protection Plan.

The land in this segment is, for the most part, undeveloped forestland with the landowner's primary use being timber management. Landowner development within the East Branch corridor segment is limited to seasonal residential structures and access roads. All areas subject to private leases within the lands covered by this Plan are exempt from the terms of this Plan.

Vehicle access to the Plan area is provided entirely over roads built and maintained by the landowners for the purposes of forest management and transporting forest products. The landowners reserve the right to close these roads as necessary to carry out forest management, forest production, and road maintenance activities, or as may be necessary for the protection of persons, property, and real estate.

IV. Recreational Resources

Within the Plan area, there are numerous recreational resources. Primary recreational activity is concentrated on the river or along the immediate shoreline, and includes camping, canoeing, sightseeing, and fishing. Other activities of secondary importance in the Plan area are hunting, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, picnicking, hiking, swimming, and trapping. The Easement provides for the more popular recreational activities within the Corridor.

There are 13 campsites along the East Branch segment that are not managed by BP&L, and require Maine Forest Service fire permits for open fires. The six portage trails around falls and rapids on the river will be managed by BP&L.

V. Management Authority

The Maine Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Lands (BP&L)) shall be the public agency primarily responsible for managing the recreational use in the Plan area, except where delegated elsewhere. BP&L will develop procedures to guide the management of the recreational resources of the area. These procedures shall be consistent with the terms of the Easements, the Resource Protection Plan, and the Recreation Management Plan that govern the overall land use for the Plan area.

BP&L will coordinate matters relating to recreational use for the various State agencies, private organizations, and landowners that have interest in, or who are affected by, the recreational use of the Plan area.

The Penobscot River Corridor Recreation Management Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) will assist BP&L on matters relating to the recreational use of the Plan area. The Advisory Committee shall represent various State agencies, the public, and the private sectors. Its membership shall be appointed by the Director of the Bureau and shall include a representative from each of the following: the Maine Forest Service; the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; the Bureau of Parks and Lands; a representative from each landowner; a representative from the Maine rafting industry; and two public members, one of whom shall be a resident of a community adjacent to the Plan area, the other of whom shall be a Maine resident with no direct economic interest in the Plan area and shall represent the public at large. The Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands will call meetings of the Committee at least once each year to review and advise on proposed management actions and recreational uses that will be published each year in the Advisory Committee's Annual Meeting Minutes.

Within the Plan area, the management of recreational activities will be delegated as follows:

- 1) the Bureau of Parks and Lands will coordinate all recreational management activities,
- 2) the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife will be responsible for fish and wildlife resources, watercraft safety, search and rescue operations, surface water uses, and rules governing commercial white water rafting, and
- 3) the Bureau of Parks and Lands will promulgate rules as appropriate to address management needs.

VI. Management Policies

The following policies will guide the management of recreational facilities and uses within the Plan area:

A. Maintenance and Improvements

1. Portage trails will be visited periodically for maintenance purposes to ensure that blowdowns and litter are removed, and erosion and soil compaction are being prevented.
2. Signs will be erected and maintained to designate portage points along the river.

B. Waste and Litter Control

A carry in-carry out policy for solid waste will be enforced at all sites through the use of signs, Penobscot River Corridor rules, and enforcement of the State's litter law.

C. Camping

Camping will be allowed on Maine Forest Service Permit sites only.

D. Fires

1. Open fires will be limited to fireplaces in fire-safe areas, in accordance with standards determined by the Maine Forest Service.
2. Cutting of living trees for fuel will be prohibited.

E. Signs

1. Modest, rustic signs may be used to indicate areas of designated use, to warn of hazards, or to provide essential information.
2. All new signs will conform to the sign standards approved by the Land Use Regulation Commission as part of the Resource Protection Plan for the Plan area (P-RP, Appendix F).

F. Trails

Portage trails will be maintained on the East Branch around rapids at Stairs Falls, Haskell Rock, Pond Pitch, Grand Pitch, Hulling Machine, and Bowlin Falls, with locations indicated.

G. Fishing

Fisheries will be managed by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife with goals of maintaining water quality and the quality of aquatic habitat, maintaining fish populations at high levels of abundance, and providing anglers with traditional, high

quality fishing experiences. On the East Branch, the major emphasis will be placed on maintaining the fishery for wild brook trout.

1. Fishery management will not encourage any greater use of the corridor.
2. Fisheries within the corridor will be monitored periodically to ensure that optimum harvests are not exceeded and to determine the effectiveness and the desirability of current fishing regulations. The need for further regulatory changes to maintain fishing quality and traditional fishing opportunities will also be assessed periodically.

H. Hunting and Trapping

Wildlife populations and their uses will be managed by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife consistent with goals and objectives established for each species in the Department's Strategic Plan. No special management strategies for wildlife within the corridor are contemplated, except for those already in effect.

I. Conflicting Recreational Activities

1. In cases where the management agencies find that recreational uses or conditions are causing conflicts or adverse impacts on the management objectives of the Plan area, the Advisory Committee for the Penobscot River Corridor and affected landowners will be consulted.
2. Conflicting activities may be controlled or prohibited by rules promulgated by BP&L or other managing agencies. Such rules will require landowner approval.

VII. Implementation

- 1) The implementation of the Plan is the responsibility of the Bureau of Parks and Lands. Effective multiple use of the Plan area will necessitate close communication and cooperation among the landowners, land managers, State agencies, and the general public.
- 2) All members of the Penobscot River Corridor Recreation Management Advisory Committee will be provided annually a copy of the Annual Meeting Minutes that will contain information relative to the ongoing management activities within the Plan area.

VIII. Amendments

This Plan and procedures implemented pursuant to it may be amended from time to time as needs change. BP&L will be responsible for preparing amendments to the plan, which will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee. Prior to implementation, the amendments will be reviewed and approved by the landowner and the Land Use Regulation Commission.

IX. Appendices

A. Map of Plan Area

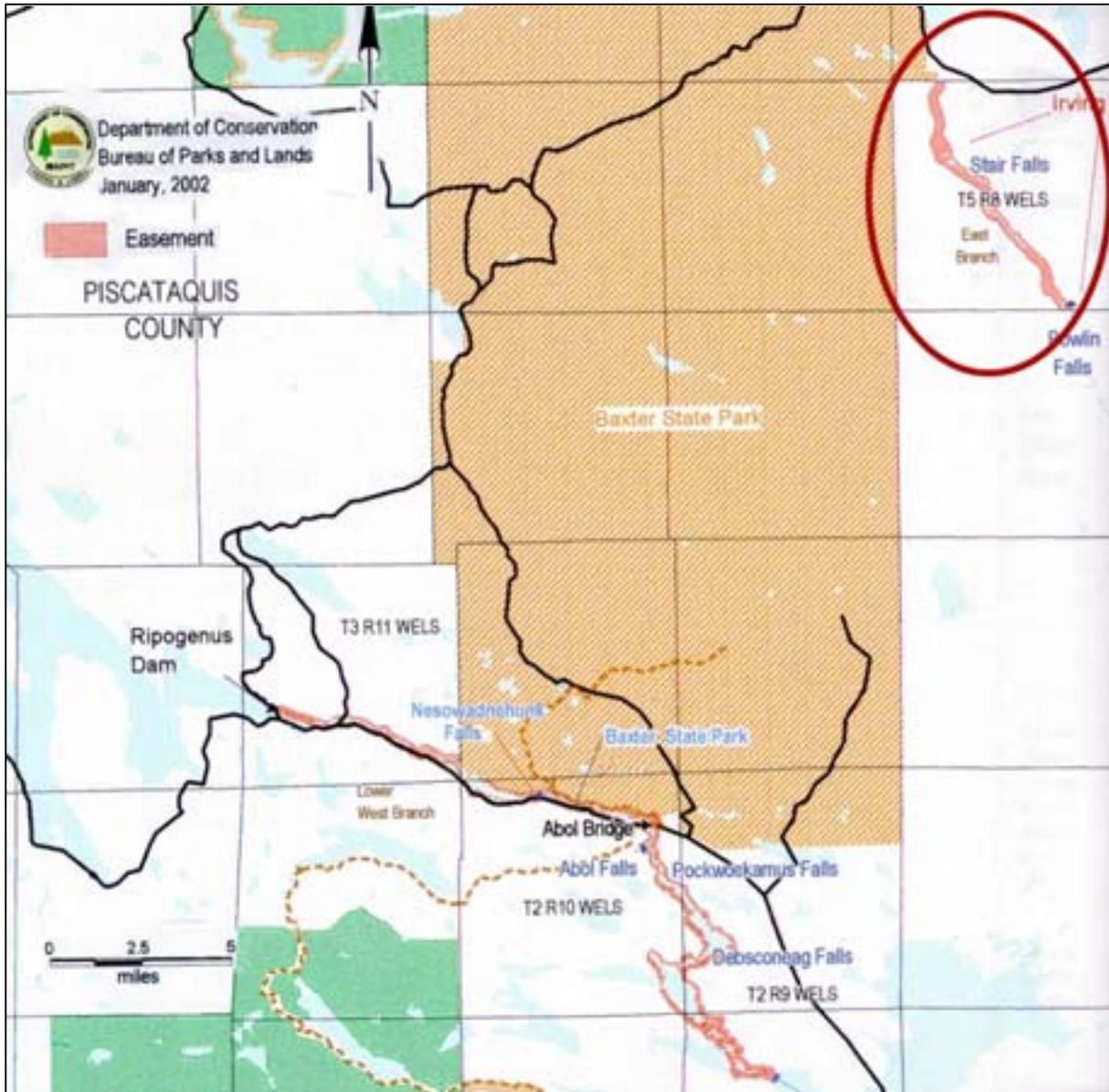
B. Administrative Areas



Top of Grand Pitch, East Branch of the Penobscot River

Appendix A

MAP OF EAST BRANCH PENOBSCOT RIVER PLAN AREA



ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS

EAST BRANCH PENOBSCOT

No leases have been issued for the East Branch administrative areas. The Maine Forest Service issues fire permits for the 13 unmanaged campsites within the Plan area