

2021 ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

MAINE BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF
**AGRICULTURE
CONSERVATION
& FORESTRY**

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ESSENTIAL PLACES, ESSENTIAL PEOPLE

As the Bureau welcomes the public in ever-growing numbers, we have been reminded how **Maine's State Parks, Public Lands, boat launches, trails, and other outdoor recreation resources are essential** to Mainers and visitors alike who seek out the state's remarkable outdoors.

The pandemic has cast a bright light on the fact that not only does the outdoors fuel Maine's economy, it also soothes souls. It also made clear that the Bureau's staff, a dedicated team of foresters, rangers, biologists, lifeguards,

planners, and other professionals, are essential to ensuring these places are cared for and available for the future. Moreover, the Bureau's partnerships with other agencies, community partners, and volunteers show the strength that collaboration brings to our stewardship and public service.

The Bureau is involved with the stewardship of 635,000 acres of Public Lands, 48 State Parks and Historic sites, 400,000 acres of conservation easements, 2.3 million acres of submerged lands, boat launches, multi-use trails, and recreation sites across the state. **This report shares the highlights of our work in 2021.**



loaded with natural beauty
our favorite place on earth

million-dollar view for \$20/night
the crackle of campfires
your beauty never fails me
Mother Nature put on a show

on top of the world
we needed, sand, surf and seashells

easy to feel inspired
the gift that keeps on giving
feels like the edge of the world
a total surprise
the most epic backpacking trip
absolutely breathtaking

unique natural features
the vastness
feel that joy again
one of Maine's best gems

*words shared on instagram by visitors to
Maine's Parks and Lands...#parksandlands
#tumbledownmountain, #pophambeach,
#cutlercoast, #lilybaystatepark*

Maine State Parks closed out 2021 with a record-breaking 3.3 million visitors!

For the second straight year, more than 3 million people visited Maine's 48 State Parks and Historic Sites. State park campgrounds set an attendance record in 2021 with 315,000 campers – up 12% from 2020.

Sites that saw big jumps include:

- **Birch Point State Park** - 149% increase
- **Eagle Island State Historic Site** - 155% increase
- **Owls Head State Park** - 202% increase

And the usual favorites saw the most visitors:

- **Sebago Lake State Park** - 189,959 visitors
- **Popham Beach State Park** - 185,669 visitors
- **Reid State Park** - 183,224 visitors
- **Camden Hills State Park** - 180,835 visitors

Balancing Use with Resource Protection

While the recent increase in outdoor recreation is good for everyone, we must protect fragile habitats and ensure a welcoming environment for all visitors. BPL's role is to care for Maine's treasured outdoor spaces so visitors who love and respect these places will find an enjoyable environment today and for generations to come.

BPL appreciates the public's help to protect and preserve Maine's public lands and natural resources.

Tumbledown Mountain

- Tumbledown Public Land is a popular outdoor destination, offering trails for different skill levels, spectacular views of the Western Mountains, and an alpine pond just below the mountain summit.
- An increased number of campers damaging the ecosystem and leaving litter and waste led BPL to prohibit camping on the mountain in 2021.
- During the 2021 season staff from Mt. Blue State Park and Maine Forest Service rangers patrolled the site for camping and fire activity.

MAINE STATE PARKS

Safety at Parks: We've got you covered!

State Park staff have a wide range of responsibilities that affect visitors' ability to enjoy our parks safely. The Bureau has prioritized training for staff in a variety of areas including resource management, facilities maintenance, operations, visitor services, interpretation, and safety, to name just a few.

Shark Smart Awareness

- A partnership was created with Cape Cod National Seashore, the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund to **improve water safety and white shark awareness** at the five most visited Maine State Parks coastal beaches.
- Fin identification, shark smart, shark awareness, and severe bleeding control techniques training were added to Lifeguard Academy.
- "Shark Smart" signs were developed.
- Paddleboards were added to lifeguard rescue equipment.

Ranger Academy - Operations & Maintenance

- Chainsaw safety and proficiency
- Equipment maintenance
- Booth operations
- Advanced Wilderness First Aid
- Facility Maintenance
- Workplace safety



Sun Safety

Several state parks teamed up with Maine Cancer Foundation and Impact Melanoma to **provide free sunscreen dispensers and raise awareness about the risks of skin cancer**. Over 120 sunscreen dispensers have been installed throughout Maine. We're thrilled to be part of this important partnership!

Other Training

- Annual Lifeguard Academy
- Self-Defense
- Field Training in Hazard Communication, Confined Space Awareness, Hazardous Energy, Bloodborne Pathogens, Personal Protective Equipment, First Aid/CPR/AED



➤ **Range Pond State Park Entrance Booth**

A new booth accommodates three lanes: two entrances and one exit. This allows visitors to enter the park efficiently, increases customer service, and improves safety by eliminating traffic backups during busy times. The larger booth accommodates two people at safe physical distances.

➤ **Rangely Lake State Park Ranger's Cabin**

The Park Manager's cabin was moved onto a new full foundation. The old post foundation had moved - preventing doors and windows from closing, and risking the cabin falling onto the ground.

➤ **Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan**

The Maine Legislature passed and Governor Mills signed the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan (LD 1733), which includes \$50 million for repairs and upgrades to Maine State Parks. These funds will support improvements to park roads, trails, visitor's centers, playgrounds, bathrooms, and other amenities across the state.

A Spotlight on Maine State Parks

Maine State Parks, with support from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, worked with Pulse Marketing Agency to shoot and **develop video content from Parks across the state showcasing all four seasons**. In 2022, look for rollouts of video content highlighting all the exciting ways to explore and experience our wide-ranging State Parks and Historic Sites. The Bureau has already found value in this project with **content geared toward employee recruitment** and looks forward to more opportunities to employ the exciting footage.



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

We need to ensure Maine State Parks will be here for generations to come. BPL is making investments in our state parks to ensure Mainers and tourists alike can have safe, accessible outdoor places to enjoy, long into the future. This year, state park staff undertook several projects to maintain, rehabilitate, and improve park facilities.

A Better Look at the Night Sky

Telescopes at 12 Maine State Parks are helping visitors get a better look at the night sky. Maine is one of the darkest places east of the Mississippi River. The stargazing program, a partnership with Cornerstones of Science and the University of Maine Versant Power Astronomy Center, is designed to encourage the public to get outside and enjoy Maine's exceptional night skies. A Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant supported the purchase of telescopes and stargazing kits.

Madison Branch Rail Trail Acquisition

- Purchase of the Madison Branch from Pan Am Railways cost just over 1 million dollars.
- The **32-mile trail** crosses the Kennebec and Carrabassett Rivers.
- It will **connect thousands of miles of ATV and snowmobile trails** and allow riders to travel from Oakland to Bingham and beyond. It will also be available for non-motorized recreation.
- Conversion of the existing rail line into a recreational trail will require additional funding and may take two years.
- Critical funding was provided by the Land for Maine's Future Program and the Northern Border Regional Commission.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

"The acquisition of the Madison branch railbed is a major step forward for our region's economy. The interconnectivity between recreational areas will be a positive impact on generations to come."

Richard Labelle - Town Manager, Norridgewock



PROGRAM UPDATES

- **Legislation**
Recent legislation updated the official definition of 'ATV' to include a maximum width of 65 inches and a maximum weight of 2,000 lbs. (This legislation is being revisited in 2022).
- **Registration Fee Increases**
LD 280 increased snowmobile registrations which will increase revenue by approximately \$1 million. The added revenue will be divided into the Snowmobile Trail Fund and the Capital Equipment Fund. ATV registration fees also increased by \$25, which is projected to generate another \$2 million a year for trail maintenance grants.
- **Municipal Grants Expanded**
Through the state's rulemaking process the program changed ATV Municipal Grants to include counties as well as towns and to allow reimbursement of up to 90% of costs instead of 70% of costs.
- **Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual**
As recommended by the Governor's ATV Task Force, the Off-Road Vehicle BMP manual was updated to be consistent with Department of Environmental Protection, Land Use Planning Commission, and Forest Service guidelines and will now be used as the basis for trail funding and inspections.

BY-THE-NUMBERS

88,254	snowmobile registrations
82,691	ATV registrations
5,665	miles of ATV trails
13,529	miles of snowmobile trails
15,000	landowners providing access
\$605M	economic impact of snowmobiles
\$754M	economic impact of ATVs
142,756	volunteer hours trail maintenance and grooming

SUBMERGED LANDS

One of the many responsibilities of the Submerged Lands Program is to award Harbor Management Access Grants. Fiscal Year 21 (FY21) was the fifth year of the grant program and funds were awarded to three municipalities. All of the projects involved **construction activities at existing water access facilities** on Great Ponds and coastal waters.

The program also **provides yearly funding** to:

- the **Maine Island Trail Association** for management of state-owned islands
- the **Maine State Harbor Masters** for annual training and certification
- **state agencies** including Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW), Department of Marine Resources (DMR), Department of Transportation (DOT), and BPL

BOATING & NAVIGATION

BPL's Boating Division:

- Maintains 2,465 buoys on 40 lakes across Maine
- Maintains 61 boat launches across Maine

2021 Activities:

- Replaced 300 buoys & 400 chains
- Installed/Removed 224 floats at 49 of the facilities
- Constructed 40 new floats

Boating Facilities Grants:

Awarded over \$150,000 in grants to municipalities for improved boating access

2021 Facility Renovations

Included sites at Johnson Bay (Lubec), Cobscook Bay State Park (pictured right in Edmunds), and Sheepscot Lake (Palermo)

SHORE & HARBOR MANAGEMENT FUND

➤ Town of Poland

Boat Ramp Reconstruction - \$10,782

Reconstruct an existing boat ramp for public access on Tripp Lake. The public boat launch is used by locals and visitors to the area for fishing and launching watercraft. Damaged planks on the boat ramp created a precarious launching situation.

➤ Town of Long Island

Wave Attenuator - \$15,000

Reconstruct and extend a wave break at Mariner's Wharf. Mariner's Wharf is the primary access point for residents of this year-round island community.

➤ Town of Sorrento

Float Replacement - \$15,000

Replace two main floats at the town's public dock system. This dock is heavily used year-round by both recreational and commercial vessels.



PUBLIC LANDS

- The Bureau has a forty-plus year history of exemplary forest management, yielding **some of the best-stocked timberlands in the state of Maine.**
- Management of Public Lands is **almost entirely funded by revenues generated from these lands**, primarily from timber harvesting.
- This revenue pays for **recreational infrastructure** (trails, campsites, and roads) as well as **wildlife habitat** and **ecological protection** activities.
- Other public benefits include **economic contributions through recreational use and employment opportunities** for contractors and materials for mills.
- **Challenging Markets**
Sustainable forestry relies on markets for low-grade wood so that foresters can thin the forest to improve the residual stand of trees. Maine has long been fortunate to have strong timber markets, but the loss of numerous paper mills in recent years has created challenges. While lumber markets for building materials remain strong, emerging markets for several innovative climate-friendly forest products are a much-welcomed change on the horizon. Wood-based insulation to replace fiberglass, and cross-laminated timbers to replace steel, are two good examples of how Public Lands will support Maine's future forest economy.
- **Changing Climate**
Changing markets and a shrinking pool of loggers are not the only factors making forestry more difficult in Maine. The trend toward shorter winters and wetter summers was on full display in 2021, when unseasonably warm March weather brought the productive winter logging season to a halt more than a month earlier than usual. Careful planning, well-designed road systems and skilled loggers are vital factors enabling the Bureau's Foresters to respond to Maine's changing climate.

2021 TIMBER HARVESTING

Timber harvested in FY 21 on Bureau lands totaled 84,327 cords (84,917 cords including biomass) from 7,320 acres. This represents only 53% of the Bureau's Sustainable Harvest Level of 159,000 cords and is a 17% decrease from FY 20. The Sustainable Harvest Level (SHL) is the maximum volume that can be sustainably harvested (i.e., harvest is less than or equal to growth). Since 2002, the Bureau's forest management activities have been certified as sustainable under two independent systems.

84,327
cords

7,320
acres

53%
Of Sustainable
Harvest Level

40
mills
statewide

27
road & logging
contractors

30
distinct
operations

LOGGING & FORESTRY EDUCATION GRANTS

Skilled loggers play a vital role in sustainable forest management. BPL provides grants to public schools that help develop loggers capable of working on Maine's Public Reserved Lands. In 2021, eight proposals competed for \$150,000 in available funds. The three finalists, who each **received \$50,000 to upgrade forestry equipment**, include:

- Oxford Hills Technical School
- The School of Applied Technology
- Foster Career Technical Education Center

Curriculum units covering Public Lands forestry practices were also developed in partnership with each school. In addition to these grants, staff from BPL's Northern region have partnered with Foster Technical Center to conduct a timber harvest on public lands in Moro Plantation. Up to 20 acres and 200 cords of wood will be harvested in an improvement cut. The harvest will **generate revenue for both BPL and the school** and students will gain hands-on experience working on public lands.

Public Lands are home to **228 miles of trails** and **454 campsites**. Careful planning ensures that forest management on public lands can coexist with popular recreation areas.

DODGE POINT MANAGEMENT

The 500-acre Dodge Point Public Land is one of BPL's most popular recreational properties. In 2021 BPL continued working with loggers on a selective timber harvest that began in 2019. Carefully conducted harvesting can improve forest health and generate revenue for trail improvements, like the stone steps installed at Dodge Point in 2021. BPL hosted a pair of forestry tours to help the public learn about the role of sustainable forest management on Public Lands.



BOAT CLEAN-UP

In 2021 the Bureau began to address the many boats stored along the shores of remote ponds in Cold Stream Forest. In late winter, following public notice, unsafe/unusable boats were removed using snowmobiles.

In 2021 staff cleared areas outside of the 25-foot shoreline buffer for users to store boats in compliance with Bureau policy. Staff will continue to address the issue until the situation is stable and sustainable without undue adverse impact on the resource.

COLD STREAM FOREST

RESTORING FISH PASSAGE

The Bureau recently **replaced three stream crossings** in the Cold Stream Forest with habitat-friendly bridges. The new crossings:

- **restore aquatic organism passage** to 4.4 miles of tributaries to Cold Stream
- have **natural stream bottoms** to benefit aquatic organisms, including the native brook trout this area is known for
- have **natural stream banks** for semi-aquatic and terrestrial wildlife to pass
- allow for **management and recreation access** for many decades to come

Project partners included DIFW, Maine Audubon, DEP, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, and CMP.



3,865

feet of timber trail structures

278

native stone structures

6,248

feet of tread maintenance

1,198

fallen trees removed

218

miles of trail created or improved

29

citizen science trainings

179

water testing sites

13.4

miles trail blazing

186

GIS resources

2,985

feet of sidehill tread construction

32

environmental education events

2021 ACTIVITIES

68 Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) AmeriCorps members and **37 alumni volunteers** contributed over **46,000 hours** of service throughout Maine, the equivalent of 5.3 years. MCC Field Teams and Environmental Stewards served at over **40 sites** to accomplish a wide range of conservation initiatives, including:

- New **trail construction** and rehabilitation
- Terrestrial and aquatic **invasive monitoring**
- **GIS** resource development
- Water and soil testing
- Establishment of **community gardens**
- Environmental education
- Developed and launched a youth corps for the City of Portland

MAINE CONSERVATION CORPS

COMMUNITY, CONSERVATION & RECREATION GRANTS

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

The Federal Highway Administration provides funds to develop and maintain trails for motorized & non-motorized recreation. Funding for Maine projects flows through Maine DOT to BPL. In 2021:

- Thanks to a two-year MOU between DOT and DACF, **the RTP was able to allocate an additional \$420,000** to trail development and renovation across the state in 2021. The program hopes to renew this MOU, extending the benefits of increased funding to build capacity for trails that saw historic use during the pandemic.
- **\$1.3 million went to thirteen local and seven state agency projects**, bringing the total portfolio to 36 trail projects utilizing \$2.5 million in RTP, and a total investment of over \$3.1 million.

For many years **requests for funding have exceeded the available dollars**. The 2021 increase is a small step towards meeting Maine's growing trail stewardship needs, which continue to outpace funding.

LAND ACQUISITION FUNDING

► LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE

The 2021 Biennial budget **replenished DACF's Land for Maine's Future Program** with \$40 million, the first new funding in more than a decade. BPL will seek funding for several projects in 2022.

► FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM

Maine **leads the nation by having conserved over 741,000 acres of forestland** through this program. BPL was awarded \$16M for two FY22 Forest Legacy projects.

These state and federal programs provide critical funding to conserve land and improve outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine and across the nation.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

2021 saw record interest in Maine's program - 56 requests for pre-approval inspections (required for determining eligibility) resulted in 14 applications and **13 awards totaling \$3,178,972**. The program's portfolio now includes **23 active projects valued at \$5,847,276** - an impressive investment in outdoor recreation across the state.



LWCF Legacy Project

In 2021, two MCC Environmental Stewards, Aerial Oncita and Devin Rowe, worked on **modernizing the legacy of Maine's LWCF projects**. The stewards

- digitized over 3,560 documents for 890 grants received since 1965
- developed a project management database that links to GIS
- created a GIS layer with boundary polygons and project details for over 677 locations. This GIS layer will be available to the public in early 2022

The project, which was funded by partner donations and grants totaling \$32,250, was an **important step in improving the long-term stewardship of Maine's LWCF investment**.

LAND ACQUISITION

► Island Added to Roque Bluffs State Park

In October of 2021, the 50-acre Pond Cove Island was added to Roque Bluffs State Park. Located in Washington County, the island sits roughly a third of a mile from the mainland. It features nearly **two miles of shoreline**, **sheltered beaches** suitable for landing kayaks and small boats, and open **views of the Atlantic Ocean**.

The popular Roque Bluffs State Park offers a variety of coastal landscapes to enjoy, including a half-mile sand beach, freshwater pond, hiking trails, and a picnic area. In addition to serving as a new coastal attraction, the state's **acquisition of Pond Cove Island will also contribute to the Town's tax base** because of the revenue-sharing formula for Maine State Parks.

Acquisition of the island was made possible by funding from the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) Water Access Fund, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and private contributions to Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

► Moosehead Lake Region: Expanded Recreational Access

A donation by the Weyerhaeuser Company gave the Bureau fee ownership of:

- **31 parcels** totaling about **52 acres**, ranging in size from 1 to 4 acres
- **Trailhead parking** for over 26 miles of new hiking trails on easements previously donated by Weyerhaeuser
- **Access to pristine trout ponds** and existing or future **campsites**
- More than **33 miles of vehicular access** through permanent easements

The donation completed a process stemming from the now extinguished Moosehead Lake Region Concept Plan (previously approved by the Maine Land Use Planning Commission).

► Scopan Public Lands Access

In July the Bureau acquired 4.7 acres adjacent to Scopan Public Reserved Lands that **provide permanent legal access** from a public road.



"At a time when we are seeing an ongoing and expanded interest in outdoor recreation by Maine residents and visitors, we are pleased to have this opportunity to create a new island water access experience for Maine State Park guests."

Amanda Beal, DACF Commissioner

"As a sea kayaker, I know how important it is to have islands close to shore that are open to the public. Pond Cove Island is an exceptionally scenic spot in an ideal sheltered location, and we look forward to developing campsites for overnight use. We were thrilled to work with our partners at Maine Coast Heritage Trust on this project, and to have the support of the Town of Roque Bluffs."

Andy Cutko, BPL Director

ECOLOGICAL RESERVES



70 primitive campsites



19 heritage fish waters



1,600 acres Deer Wintering Areas



> 110 miles hiking trails



11 rare animal species



100% open to hunting



40 rare plant species



4 peaks > 4,000 feet

DACF's **Maine Natural Areas Program** conducts monitoring and collects baseline ecological data for the Bureau's Reserve inventory. There are now **540 permanent plots** on the **19 State Reserves**. In 2021 MNAP re-sampled 24 forest monitoring plots at Number 5 Bog and 48 plots at the Spring River Lake portion of Donnell Pond. This was the third monitoring round for these locations.

We're Learning that Ecological Reserves:

- Provide **old forest habitat**, and **store and sequester significant amounts of carbon**
- Are still **accumulating volume** and have not reached a 'steady state' where growth = mortality
- **Fill important gaps in Maine's conserved lands**, but certain habitats are still poorly captured in reserve type management
- Are really cool places that **are worth checking out!**

Planning Milestones

- Public Lands are managed for many public benefits including outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, ecosystem functions, and natural resource based economies.
- Since 2007 the Bureau has adopted 12 regional plans covering most of the state, plus unit-specific plans for Kennebec Highlands and Pineland Public Lands.
- BPL recently completed a management plan for the Tumbledown/Mount Blue region.
- BPL now has management plans for every major public reserved and non-reserved land unit.

Cutler Ecological Reserve Trail Reroute

In 2021 BPL worked with Maine Conservation Corps to reroute 1.25 miles of trail at the Cutler Coast Ecological Reserve. The new trail improves the hiking experience and eliminates wetland impacts from the closed, restored trail. The Cutler Coast trail offers stunning coastal hiking including roughly 3, 6, and 11 mile-long options that are among the most popular routes on Public Lands.

TECHNOLOGY

► GIS Tools

Nearly 400 staff in DACF are now using ArcGIS tools. The transition to ESRI's current tools suite has made this technology more accessible across the department, from managers to receptionists to field staff. **The creation of a DACF geodatabase has optimized performance** and storage, and enabled multi-user editing, even from the field.

► Property Records Management System

The Bureau is wrapping up a multi-year process to update its property records database. The **new web-based platform** allows authorized users to access records from the field using phones and tablets. The system is more **user-friendly** and will interface with ESRI tools in the future.

► Field Applications

Public Lands staff is **using Survey123 for monitoring Best Management Practices** at active timber harvests and for seeding activity.

MCC used **Survey123 to track field crew progress** for the first time this season, allowing crew leaders to record data and pictures in the field instead of waiting to be back in the office to write up reports.



Several weeks into a harvest designed to promote softwood regeneration, Forester Andrew Wilcox used a drone to ensure that the harvest was on track.

Electronic Kiosk

Visitors are increasingly looking for recreation resources to be at the touch of a finger. The Bureau is developing an interactive electronic kiosk that will offer a unique digital Parks and Lands experience, with a focus on lesser-known destinations. The kiosk will provide:

- interactive trip and itinerary planning
- professional and consistent outreach content across diverse locations
- a means of tracking preferences, interests and demographics to inform future planning efforts



This project was supported by a grant from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund.



The AWW experienced some of its highest camping numbers over the past decade.

In 2021 total public use of the Waterway was up 25%. Total camping nights were up 64%. This year's increase in visitation was in part a result of diminished COVID-19 restrictions, especially for Youth Camps, which had a vigorous return to the AWW during July and August.

2021 BY-THE-NUMBERS

PARTIES - 1,195

PERSONS - 4,969

CAMPING NIGHTS - 22,711

SPORTING CAMP DAYS - 3,295

DAY USE - 13,137



Natural Resources Inventory Allagash Wilderness Waterway Foundation

The AWW Foundation is undertaking a comprehensive natural resources inventory of the Waterway. The effort, which began in 2020, includes detailed documentation of the natural values and resources found in the Waterway's restricted zone. Fieldwork conducted in the summer of 2021 included 124 miles of paddling, 25 miles on trails and extensive

Visiting Artists Program

The Visiting Artist Program presents **opportunities to learn about the Allagash Wilderness Waterway through the eyes of creative artists.** For the last two years the Waterway has hosted a visiting artist. In 2021 Marty Kotter, primarily a fiber artist, spent two weeks immersed in the beauty of the Allagash. She made treks on and along the river so that she could interpret and share her experience through her art. Since her visit, she has continued to work on pieces inspired by the Allagash.

2019 AWW Visitor Survey

Information collected from a **2019 University of Maine survey** was released in 2021. A total of 304 surveys were completed. 86% of those surveyed rated their experience as "very good" - the highest rating possible. The experiences and conditions rated most important included:

- the **natural environment** (90%)
- **exploration and remoteness** (82%)
- **personal and social experiences that simplify daily needs** (66%)
- **solitude & connection with nature** (64%)

So what does all this mean, and why does it matter? It simply and strongly suggests we're on the right track, and that **the public supports our efforts and our mission of maintaining the wilderness character found throughout the treasured, rare Waterway.**





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