Bureau of Parks and Lands

Flagstaff Region Management Plan
5-Year Review and Update
with
Plan Amendments

June 26, 2014

AMENDMENT ADOPTION

In accordance with the procedures outlined in the 2007 Flagstaff Region Management Plan for five-year reviews of the Plan and consideration of proposed Plan amendments, amendments A through F, as presented in Section 3 of this report, are hereby adopted.

RECOMMENDED: Willard Harris DATE: June 26, 2014

Willard R. Harris
Director
Bureau of Parks and Lands

APPROVED: Walter E. Whitcomb DATE: June 26, 2014

Walter E. Whitcomb
Commissioner
Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

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1. Summary of the Five-Year Plan Review Process for the Flagstaff Region Management Plan

The Flagstaff Region Management Plan guides the management of public lands at Chain of Ponds, Bigelow Preserve and surrounding properties on Flagstaff Lake, Mount Abraham and several small lots. The Bureau is required to report to the Advisory Committee (Appendix A) at five-year intervals on accomplishments and changing conditions that may warrant amendments to the plan (see Appendix B).

The Bureau identified several new issues or circumstances that were not addressed in the plan that warranted Bureau consideration and Committee discussion. The new issues and circumstances included several proposals for new trails at the Chain of Ponds Unit and in the Bigelow Preserve, and a new trailered boat launch on the east side of Flagstaff Lake, which were presented by their proponents at the Advisory Committee meeting held August 15, 2013. At the December 11, 2013 Advisory Committee meeting the Bureau presented its initial response to the proposals, as well as a new proposal for a motorized/multi-use trail crossing of the Appalachian Trail on the Redington Lot. The Bureau invited comments on these proposals at the meeting as well as written comments to be submitted during the subsequent two-week period. Four Advisory Committee members provided written comments.

Taking into consideration the input of the Advisory Committee and the comments received, the Bureau prepared a set of proposed Plan amendments that would allow some of the recreation developments to be implemented, while not allowing others which were judged to be inconsistent with the vision for the affected public lands as expressed in the Flagstaff Region Plan. On March 19, 2014, the Advisory Committee was sent the proposed Plan amendments for review, and at a June 12, 2014 public meeting the Bureau presented the proposed Plan amendments for comment. Once again, written comments were invited during the subsequent two-week period.

The comments of individual Advisory Committee members and members of the public (some excerpted) to both the initial recreation development proposals and the proposed Plan amendments and the Bureau's response to each are presented in Appendix C-1. (The complete written comments are provided in Appendix C-2). In addition to verbal comments given at the public meeting (as recorded in the meeting minutes; see Appendix C-3), the Bureau received written comments from 11 Advisory Committee members and members of the public on the proposed Plan amendments.

2. Summary of Proposed New Recreation Initiatives and Bureau Recommendations

The following proposals were considered due to changes in conditions since the 2007 Plan was adopted:

<u>Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail – Chain of Ponds area (Figure 1)</u>

- Western Mountain Corporation proposal (part of proposed 47 mile trail)
- 1 mile and 0.6 mile segments of new multiuse non-motorized trail at north and south ends of the unit, 2 new bridges and "engineered boardwalk"
- *BPL Recommendation: Allow construction of trail segments and bridges, under certain conditions and requirements*

<u>Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail – Bigelow Preserve (Figure 2)</u>

- Western Mountain Corporation proposal (part of proposed 47 mile trail)
- ~4.5 miles of new trail along Stratton Brook, ~3 miles on existing public access and management roads/trails
- *BPL Recommendation: Allow routing of trail and potential limited improvements on existing management and public use roads and trails*

<u>Mountain Bike Trail Requests - Bigelow Preserve (Figures 3-7)</u>

- 5 proposals from Carrabassett Region NEMBA
- 2 short management roads to be opened to mountain bikes
- Reroutes of 2 trails on management roads
- Opening of northern Bigelow Preserve snowmobile trail to mtn. bikes
- *BPL Recommendations:*
    - *Allow use of mountain bikes on 2 management roads*
    - *Allow minor reroutes of trail in problem areas on one management road*
    - *Allow up to 2.4 miles of new single-track trail parallel to existing trail as reroute around road scheduled to be upgraded and used for timber hauling*
    - *Proposal for new mountain bike route across northern Bigelow Preserve not allowed*

<u>New Hiking/Ungroomed skiing trail – Carrabassett Valley Lot and Bigelow Preserve (Figure 8)</u>

- Maine Huts & Trails proposal to connect hut to Bigelow Preserve trails
- 1.5 mile trail across Carrabassett Valley lot and following an old road into the Bigelow Preserve; footbridge would be required for safe crossing of Stratton Brook
- *BPL Recommendation: Allow construction of trail and bridge, under certain conditions and requirements*

<u>New Motorized and Non-motorized Trail Crossing of the Appalachian Trail – Redington Lot (Figure 9)</u>

- Allow a shared perpendicular crossing of the AT corridor on the Redington Lot to provide motorized trail link (along with segments on abutter's lands) between Carrabassett Valley and Madrid Township

- *BPL Recommendation: Given currently divided opinions on the advisability of the motorized trail connection in this remote area, and uncertainty regarding obtaining agreements with abutters for trails on their parcels in the near term, the proposal was deemed premature*

<u>New Trailered Boat Launch on East Flagstaff Lake (Figures 10-11)</u>

- Address the lack of functional trailered boat access on east Flagstaff Lake, work with Brookfield as required by their FERC license obligations
- Investigate potential locations for improving trailered boat access on BPL lands including: (1) conversion of carry-in trail at Little Bigelow Gravel Pit trailhead; (2) a new launch ramp on Dead River peninsula, in vicinity of North Flagstaff Road (specific site to be determined)
- *BPL Recommendations:*
    - *Given uncertainties regarding the consistency of the proposed improvements at the gravel pit site with the Bigelow Preserve Act (specifically regarding new roads), this site was dropped from consideration*
    - *Continue to investigate boat access options on the Dead River Peninsula and other possible sites on the Flagstaff Dam lot.*

<u>Figures depicting Recreation Proposals</u>

Figure 1.

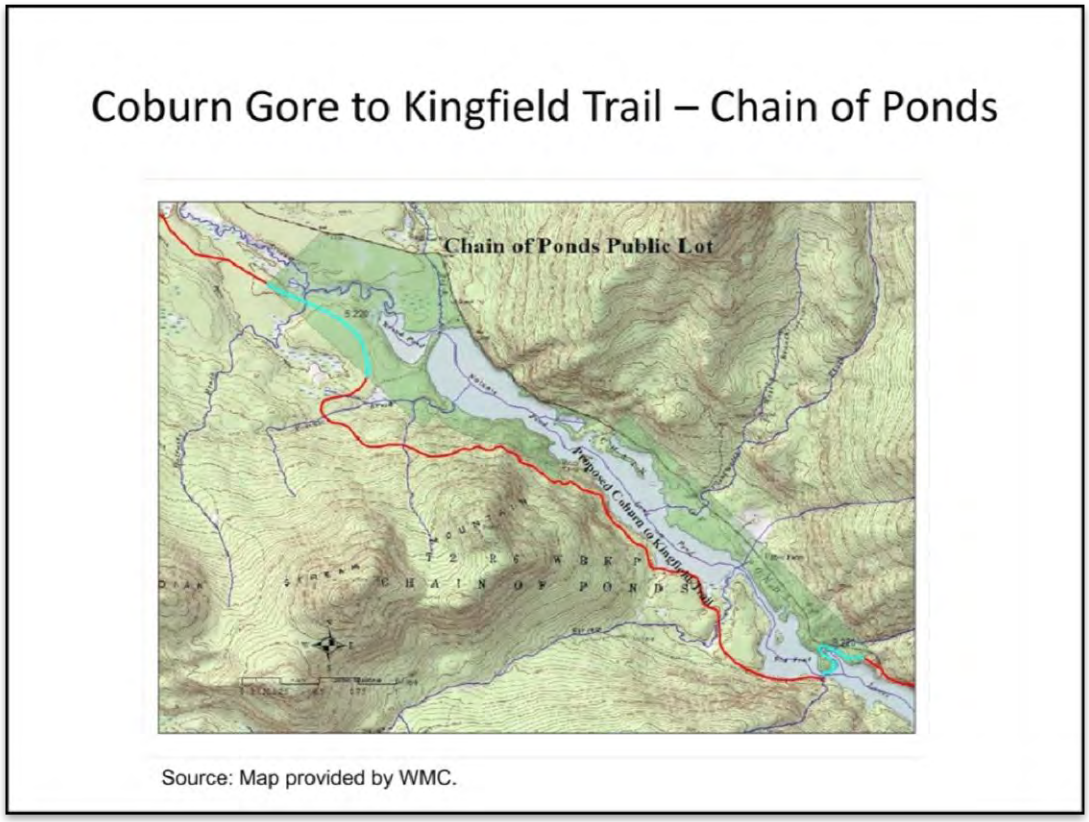
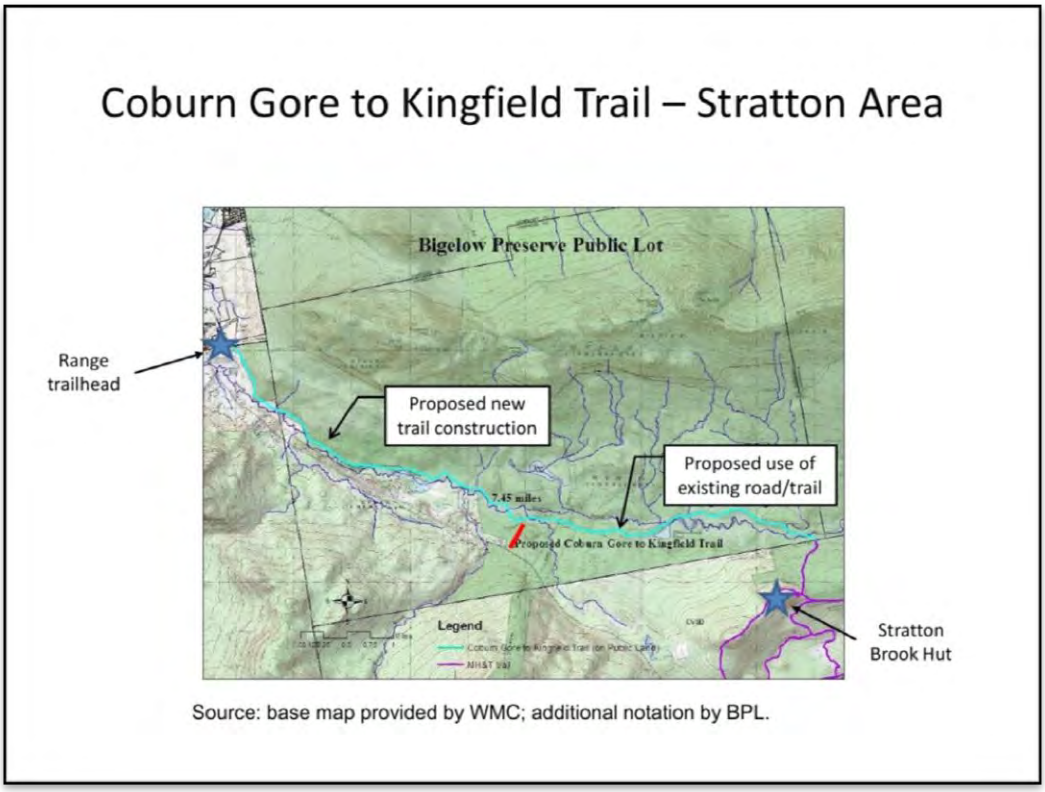


Figure 2.



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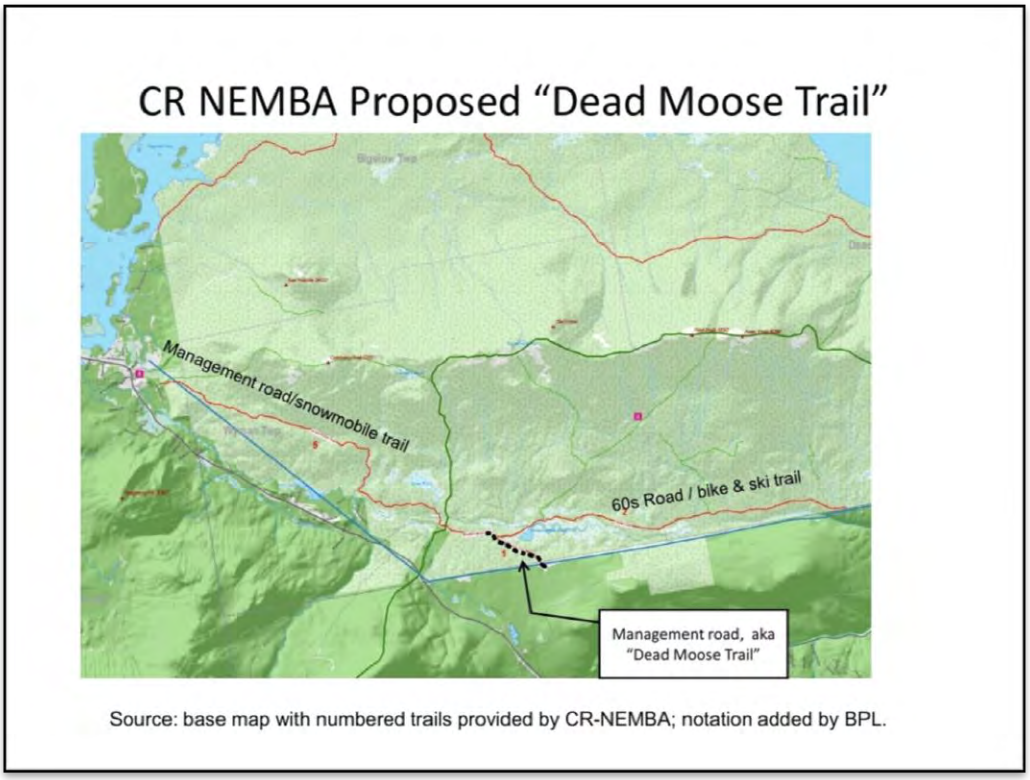


Figure 4.

Figure 5.

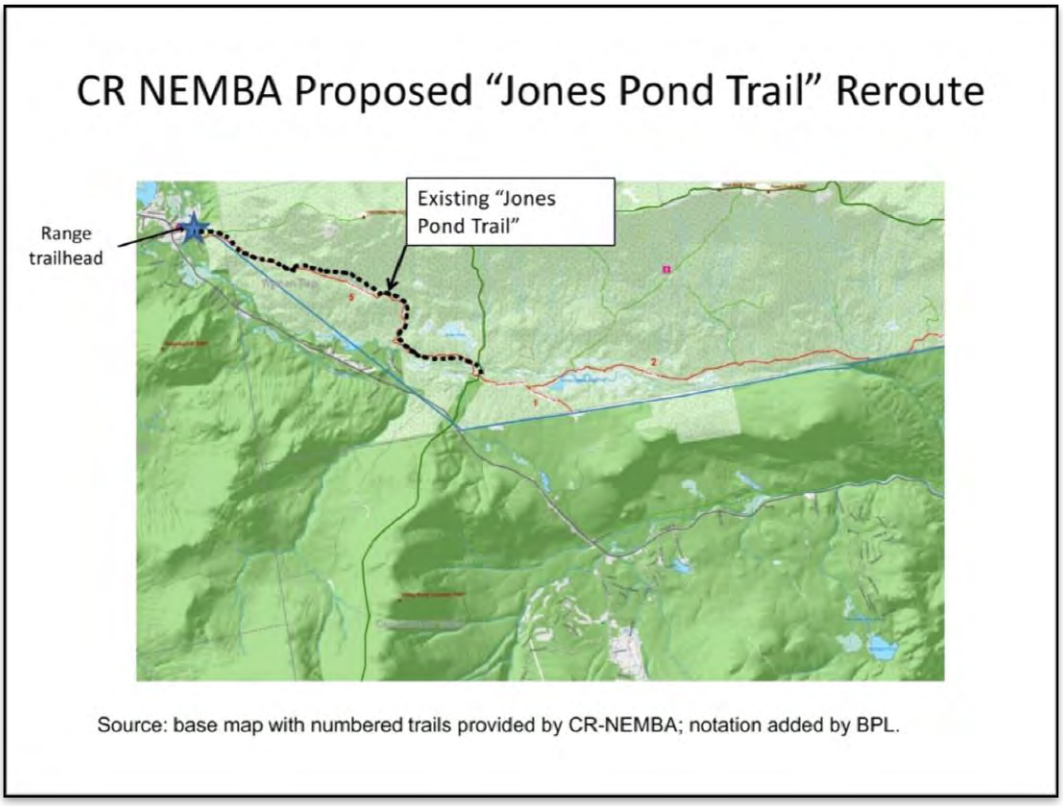


Figure 6.

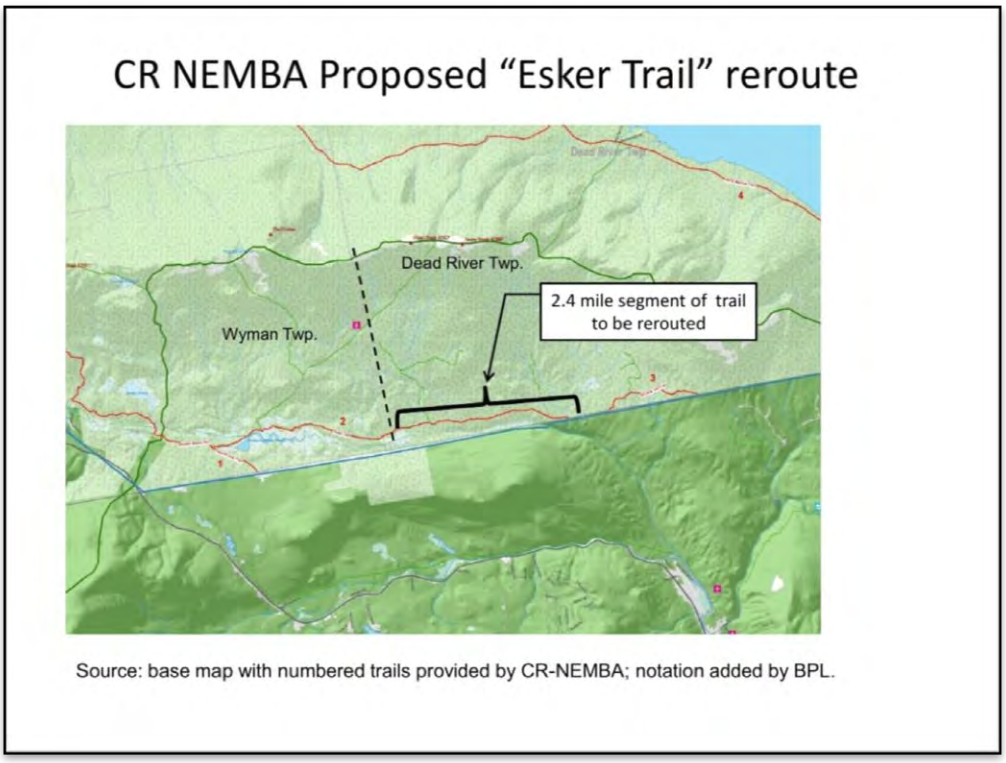


Figure 7.

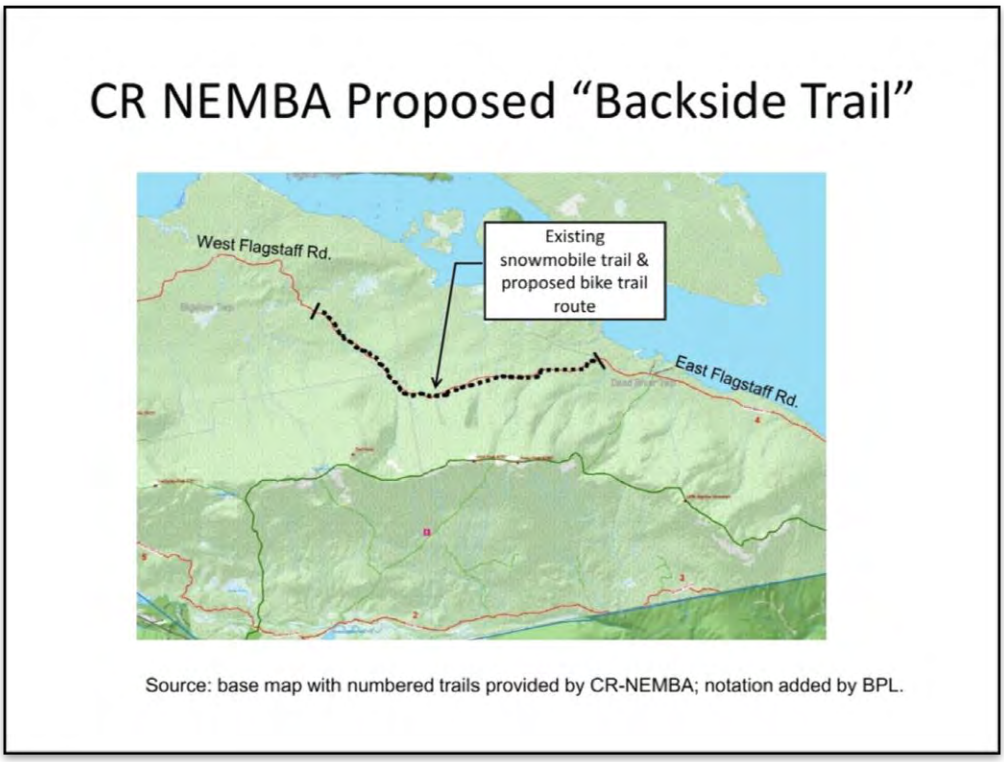


Figure 8.

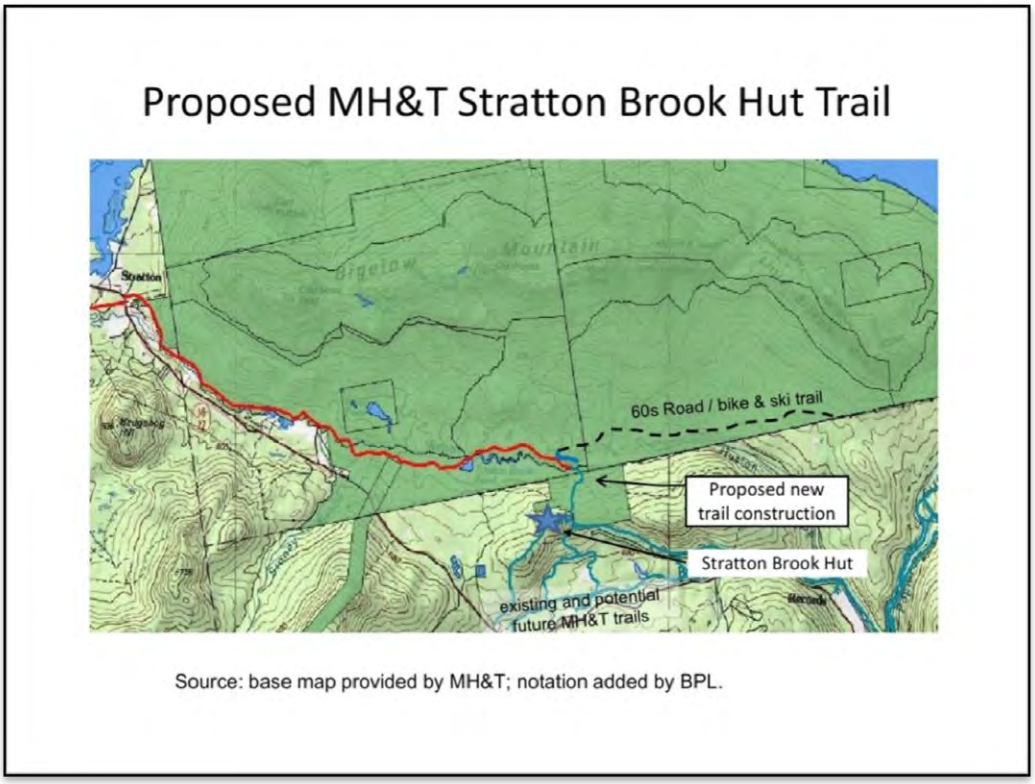


Figure 9.

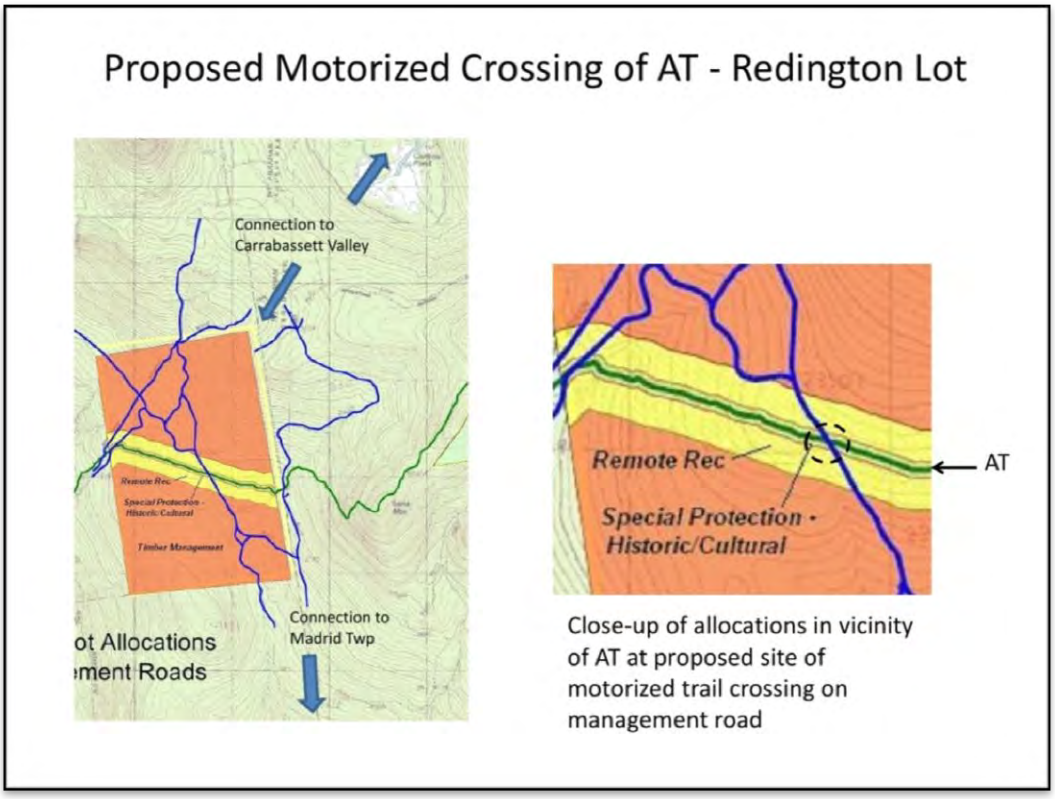


Figure 10.

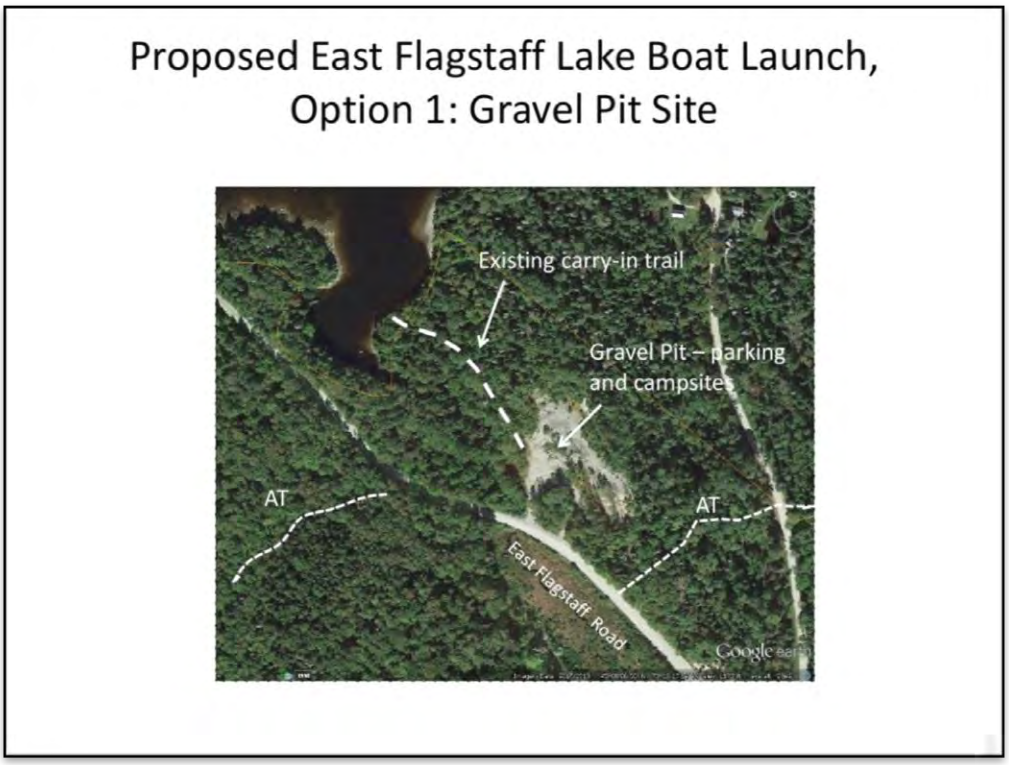
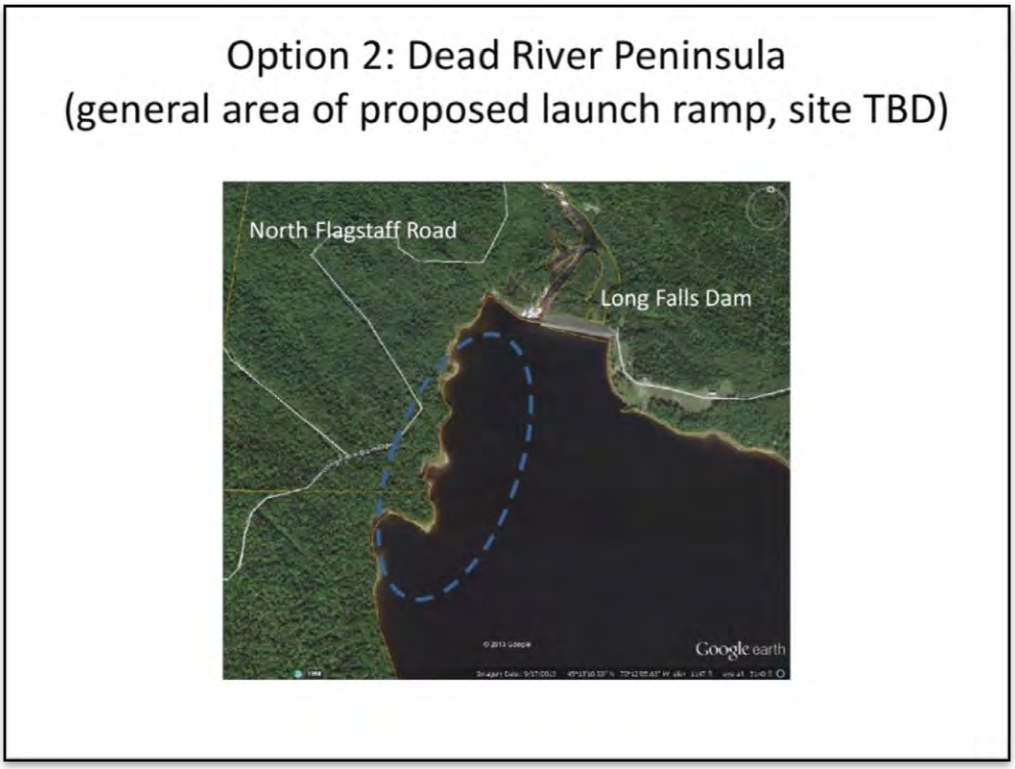


Figure 11.



3. Flagstaff Region Management Plan 5 Year Review –Plan Amendments

The following amendments to the 2007 Flagstaff Region Management Plan are adopted in response to the proposals previously outlined.

ADDITIONAL TRAILS

Amendment A: Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail – Chain of Ponds Unit

Amend the Chain of Ponds Management Recommendations (page 169 of Plan), under "Recreation Resources" to include the following:

Allow construction of trail segments and bridges proposed by Western Mountains Corporation (WMC) within the northwest and southeast portions of the Chain of Ponds unit, as part of the proposed 47-mile Coburn Gore to Kingfield multi-use non-motorized recreation trail, with the following requirements for final approval:

1) BPL approval of final trail route, with the northern segment traversing approximately 1 mile and the southern segment approximately 0.6 mile of BPL lands,

2) BPL approval of design and construction methods of any bridges and engineered boardwalks required to implement the approved route; and evidence of necessary regulatory permit approvals,

3) Evidence of approvals from abutting landowner(s) for a trail segment west of the unit linking the trail segments on BPL property.

4) Satisfactory resolution of any potential conflicts with state-sanctioned regional ATV trails near the north end of the unit and near Coburn Gore, were the proposed trail intersects the ATV trails, and

5) Development of a long-term agreement between BPL and WMC for maintenance of trail.

Any BPL management roads designated as part of the proposed trail will be subject to occasional Bureau use for hauling timber or other management purposes. Crossing between Bag Pond and Lower Pond will also be subject to potential installation and use of a temporary truck bridge as needed for timber operations by the Bureau or as allowed by the Bureau through agreements or rights-of-way executed with the abutting landowner.

Amendment B: Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail - Bigelow Preserve

Amend the Bigelow Preserve Management Recommendations (pages 162-163 of Plan), under "Hiking, Biking and Camping Opportunities" to include the following:

Allow the segment of the Coburn Gore to Kingfield non-motorized multi-use trail proposed to cross the Bigelow Preserve to be co-located with the existing management road and designated snowmobile trail between the Range trailhead and Stratton Brook Road, connecting to and following Stratton Brook Road and the existing bike and ski trail on the "60s management road." The trail must be maintained with non-motorized equipment. BPL will consider trail improvements on the segment between the Range trailhead and Stratton Brook Road to facilitate bike and pedestrian use; any improvements must be compatible with snowmobile use. The trail concept is to be coordinated with other trail proposals (e.g., Maine Huts and Trails' Stratton Brook Hut connector trail, CR-NEMBAs proposed mountain bike usage of Bigelow Preserve management roads) to avoid incompatibilities.

Amendment C: Mountain Bike Routes - Additions and Improvements

Amend the Bigelow Preserve Management Recommendations (pages 162-163 of Plan), under "Hiking, Biking and Camping Opportunities" to include the following:

(1) Add two short management roads to the public use and management roads designated for mountain bike use (page 126 of Plan), to provide connections to the bike touring network on abutting lands.

> Road 1 – 0.7 miles in length, within Wyman Twp., extending southeast from the Stratton Brook parking area to the CMP powerline corridor at the south boundary of the preserve.
>
> Road 2 – 1.5 miles in length, within Dead River Twp., roughly parallel to the south boundary of the Bigelow Preserve/Carrabassett Valley line east of Huston Brook Road, connecting at each end to the CMP powerline corridor.

Both road segments are part of the existing snowmobile trail system on the Bigelow Preserve, and link directly to snowmobile/ATV routes on adjacent lands that are used by mountain bike riders, and indirectly to mountain bike trails. Consistent with current policy on mountain bike use within the Bigelow Preserve, these road segments will not be formally designated as bike trails. BPL is likely to use these roads as haul routes during future timber harvests, and log yards could be constructed along the roads. The roads will be examined for any potential culvert\drainage repairs to facilitate bike use, with any needed repairs scheduled as resources allow.

(2) Work with CR NEMBA to plan improvements on the existing management road/snowmobile trail between the Range trailhead and Stratton Brook Road to facilitate bike use and improve the riding experience, with the potential for limited reroutes in problem areas.

Improvements, to be constructed by CR NEMBA, must be compatible with snowmobile use of the trail corridor.

Amendment D: New Mountain Bike Single-Track Trail

Amend the Bigelow Preserve Management Recommendations (pages 162-163 of Plan), under "Hiking, Biking and Camping Opportunities" to include the following:

Collaborate with CR NEMBA on a specific route and design for ~2.4 miles of rerouted trail focused on the Dead River Twp. portion of the Stratton Brook bike and ski trail (aka "60's Road/Esker Trail"). The Bureau intends to reopen the 60's Haul Road for timber harvesting in the near future. This rerouted trail will create a permanent "single track" trail along the popular section now utilizing the "60's Road." This is an important section of trail as it connects to a major network of mountain biking trails on lands adjacent to the Preserve. If the beaver flowage a half mile east of township/county line is not avoided by the reroute, consider improving the crossing to facilitate trail use during occasional flooding.

Amendment E: Hiking/Snowshoeing Connector on Carrabassett Valley Lot and Bigelow Preserve to Link Maine Huts and Trails Stratton Brook Hut to 60's Haul Road

Amend the Flagstaff Lake/Surrounding Properties Management Recommendations (pages 166-167 of Plan), under "Land Based Recreation" to include the following:

(Note: This amendment also affects lands within the Bigelow Preserve, and therefore is also proposed to be appended to the Management Recommendations for Bigelow Preserve (pages 162-163 of Plan), under "Hiking, Biking and Camping Opportunities.")

Allow construction of a new hiking/snowshoeing/ungroomed ski trail by Maine Huts & Trails (MH&T) between an existing multi-use non-motorized trail near the Stratton Brook Hut and the 60's Road bike/ski trail. The trail will cross the Carrabassett Valley lot and enter the Bigelow Preserve on an old road at a crossing of Stratton Brook. The total trail length will be approximately 1.5 miles; approximately 1,200 feet of the trail will be within the Bigelow Preserve, north from Stratton Brook to the intersection of the old road with the 60's Road. The final route of the trail on the Carrabassett Valley Lot is to be determined by BPL in collaboration with MH&T. Construction details for the trail, addressing drainage and potential erosion issues, must be approved in advance of construction by BPL. The design and construction methods for a pedestrian bridge over Stratton Brook are to be developed by MH&T and approved by BPL. (Mechanical equipment would not be permitted for trail or bridge construction north of Stratton Brook). The trail is to be posted with appropriate signage as closed to bicycles, and indicated as such on BPL and MH&T maps. Trail planning will seek to minimize potential conflicts with the

snowmobile and ATV trail that crosses the Carrabassett Valley lot. A Visual Class I secondary allocation (buffer) would be designated along the new trail, as stipulated by the IRP and the Plan (p. 149) for all hiking trails, with the goal to "retain the appearance of an essentially undisturbed forest" (p. 132 of the Plan).

BOATING ACCESS TO FLAGSTAFF LAKE

Amendment F: Trailered Boat Access Facility on East Side of Flagstaff Lake

Amend the Flagstaff Lake/Surrounding Properties Management Recommendations, under "Coordinated Recreation Planning for Flagstaff Lake" (page 166 of Plan) to include the following:

Given that neither of two traditional boat access sites on the east side of Flagstaff Lake that were formerly part of the FERC hydropower license are being continued (the Bog Brook area and the Long Falls Dam day use area), leaving no trailered boat options on this side of the lake, work with Brookfield White Pine Hydro, operator of the federally licensed Flagstaff Project, to investigate options on the Long Falls Dam BPL property (under lease to Brookfield) and on the BPL Dead River peninsula, to be included in Brookfield's required Recreation Plan for the Flagstaff Project. If an appropriate site is identified, work cooperatively with Brookfield to design the facility to minimize the footprint of disturbance, and facilitate launching of small to medium sized boats appropriate to the constraints of relatively shallow waters in Flagstaff Lake; and to jointly develop and maintain the site. If an appropriate site is identified, adjust the allocation to Developed Recreation.

Appendices

Appendix A.

Bureau of Parks and Lands
Flagstaff Region Planning and Management Staff

Will Harris – *Director, Bureau of Parks and Lands*
Kathy Eickenberg – *Chief of Planning, Bureau of Parks and Lands*
Jim Vogel – *Management Plan Coordinator*
Peter Smith – *Regional Manager, Public Reserved Lands Western Region*
Steve Swatling – *Bigelow Preserve Manager*
Rex Turner – *Outdoor Recreation Specialist*
Tom Charles – *Chief of Silviculture, Bureau of Parks and Lands*
Joe Wiley – *IF&W Wildlife Biologist assigned to the Bureau of Parks and Lands*
Scott Ramsay – *Director, Off-Road Vehicle Program of the Bureau of Parks and Lands*
George Powell – *Boating Facilities Director, Bureau of Parks and Lands*
Gena Denis – *Mapping and GIS Coordinator*

Flagstaff Region Lands Advisory Committee

Tarsha Adams, *Natanis Point Campground*
Jarrod Crockett, *Representative, House District 91*
Debi Davidson, *Izaak Walton League*
Ernie DeLuca, *Brookfield White Pine Hydro LLC*
Thomas Dodd, *Sustainable Forest Technologies*
Eliza Donoghue, *Natural Resources Council of Maine*
Gregg Drummond, *Claybrook Lodge*
Larry Dunphy, *Representative, House District 88*
Dick Fecteau, *Maine Appalachian Trail Club*
Benjamin Godsoe, *High Peaks Alliance*
Jennifer Burns Gray, *Maine Audubon Society*
Bob Luce, *Town of Carrabassett Valley*
Rick Mason, *East Flagstaff Lake Property Owner's Association*
John McCatherin, *Carrabassett Valley Outdoor Association*
Bill Munzer, *J.V. Wing Snowmobile Club*
Claire Polfus, *Appalachian Trail Conservancy*
Josh Royte, *The Nature Conservancy*
Tom Saviello, *Senator, Senate District 18*
Allan Ryder, *Timber Resource Group*
Dick Smith, *Flagstaff Area ATV Club*
Ken Spalding, *Friends of Bigelow*
Josh Tauses, *Carrabassett Region Chapter, NEMBA*
Rodney Whittemore, *Senator, Senate District 26*
Kenny Wing, *Eustis*
Charlie Woodworth, *Maine Huts & Trails*

Appendix B.

Table of 2007 Plan Recommendations, Status of BPL Actions to Implement the Plan, and New Issues or Opportunities Identified (12/16/13)

Management Recommendations (Plan pages 161-170)

General: Applies to All Lands	Actions taken/Comments:
Rare or Exemplary Ecosystems & Habitat Management 1. Keep recreationists on trails, especially in alpine areas, through scree walls, education, etc.	Horns Pond Caretaker educates hikers on the Appalachian Trail (AT).
2. Protect natural communities and rare plant populations from impacts related to land management by consulting with MNAP prior to harvesting in areas containing rare plants or plant communities, exemplary natural communities, or areas identified as potential ecological reserves in the 1998 Janet McMahon report, "An Ecological Reserves System Inventory." 3. Consult with the MNAP prior to establishing new trails or cutting vegetation for view opportunities in an ecological reserve.	Routinely consult with MNAP prior to harvesting in these areas. Routinely consult with MNAP when establishing new trails or cutting vegetation to maintain views in ecological reserve.
Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species; Species of Special Concern 4. Manage areas around rare animal sites according to MDIFW or USFWS guidelines, as appropriate.	Continuing objective for management.
Wildlife Management 5. Manage public reserved lands to increase the quality and quantity of softwood dominated stands amongst the predominance of hardwoods to increase forest diversity and benefit many wildlife species.	Ongoing objective.
6. Follow Bureau-adopted "beech management guidelines" to assure the continuance of beech as a viable component of hardwood stands. Maintaining beech in the face of severe disease problems is a regional goal. Beechnuts are an important food for more than 40 wildlife species, and important to bear reproduction.	Severe mortality has limited BPL's ability to manage beech.
7. Provide significant amounts of multi-aged forests (this general goal will enhance wildlife habitat over time).	Ongoing objective.
8. In cooperation with Florida Power and Light, MDIFW, and MDOT, as appropriate, pursue ways to educate the public about threats to the fishery from illegal stocking of non-native fish, which diminish native populations, and threats to the health of the region's lakes and ponds from the introduction of invasive aquatic weeds.	The number of invasive species of concern in Maine has grown substantially to include a variety land and water plants and animals. Information is plentiful but has yet to be consolidated into a single format suitable for posting on BPL signboards/kiosks. However, IF&W and NFCT have posted signs with BPL permission. The BPL

	website will soon include links to invasives information provided by Environmental Protection, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Maine Forest Service for each area searchable under "Find Parks & Lands."

Bigelow Preserve	**Actions taken/Comments:**
Flagstaff-Lake Focused Recreation: In cooperation with Florida Power and Light and constituent groups develop a coordinated plan for Flagstaff Lake related recreational facilities. Areas to address include:	The FERC Flagstaff Project license requires Brookfield (formerly Florida Power and Light/Next Era Energy) to develop a Comprehensive Recreation and Land Management Plan, in consultation with DPPL and other state and federal agencies by July 31, 2013. Bureau staff met with Brookfield and their consultant in January and June 2013. Key issues discussed included recreation facility enhancements, potential new recreation sites, and sharing of costs for recreation site development and management. The Bureau has provided comment on the Draft Plan and will be seeking further input from user groups during the Plan update process.
<u>Water Access Camping</u>: When the need can be documented and resources are available, consider additional remote water access sites at: 1. the Savage Farm Site across from Myers Lodge 2. the Reed Brook area 3. additional areas identified in the Bureau's Multiple Use Coordination Reports (developed as part of the forest management prescription process)	
<u>Walk-to or Drive-to Camping and Recreation</u>: 4. Redesign Trout Brook Sites – limit vehicle access to the lake on the north side of the brook and define 4 individual party walk-to sites; continue to provide drive-to group site on the south side of the brook.	South side drive-to site was improved.
5. Work with Florida Power and Light to remove the shack near old boom dam and limit vehicle access creating a walk-to/water access site or sites.	Shack was removed. Further work to limit vehicle access will be addressed in the Comprehensive Recreation and Land Management Plan being developed by Brookfield (formerly Florida Power and Light/Next Era Energy) in consultation with the Bureau.
6. Limit further development at the Round Barn site to not more than two additional sites on the east side of the cove; and a designated disabled access site near to the parking area. Improve the privy nearest the parking area to be compliant with the American with Disabilities Act.	Limited activity. Improved accessibility of privy near parking area.
7. Continue to allow trailered boat access to Flagstaff Lake at Round Barn during the fall waterfowl hunting season only.	Trailered boat access to Flagstaff Lake at Round Barn is allowed during the fall waterfowl hunting season only.
Land-Based Recreation <u>Additions to the Bigelow Preserve</u>: 1. Consistent with Bureau Policy on additions to the Preserve, add the following to the Bigelow Preserve: the Range Trailhead (Coplin Plt); and the Wyman Lot East (north and east of powerline and Route 27; excepting a small area near the powerline needed for a proposed ATV trail following the powerline to bypass of the transformer station); and excepting a buffer along the CMP powerline of 500 feet; and a small buffer north of the Boralex powerline as shown on the allocation maps.	Done. Requires GIS update.
2. Close to motorized public use two small spur roads that branch southerly	Spur roads have grown over and are not vehicle-passable.

off the Stratton Brook Road on parcels added to the Preserve.	
Hiking, Biking and Camping Opportunities: 3. In consultation with the MATC and ATC, evaluate and document the need for additional hiking trails to relieve heavily used areas or provide new opportunities for which there is a documented demand. Implement, if the need can be demonstrated, and the resources are available, one or both of the following:	No activity this period on Avery Peak Bypass or North Col trails. Continues to be an objective, as resources and staff time allow.
a. Avery Peak Bypass Trial: This could provide additional loop possibilities and a thru trail option that does not require the very difficult and intimidating summit of Avery Peak. It could also provide a safe alternate route during times of inclement weather for planned hikes that start on one side of the ridge and go to the other. Currently parties must make the choice to go over the peaks in dangerous conditions or turn back. The safest choice is often difficult one to make. There appears to be a demand with many aging hikers for such an alternative. The entire route area has been scouted.	
b. North Col Trail: This could provide a loop from the Round Barn Campsite decreasing pressure on the heavily used Safford Brook Trail. Upper portions of the closed Parson's trail could be utilized with lower sections rerouted to bring hikers to the East Flagstaff Road Extension. Further evaluation of the possible location of this trail is needed, if the need can be justified.	
4. Work with MATC to develop walk-to campsites on the east shore of Flagstaff Lake on Bureau lands, to meet existing demand associated with the A.T.	Constructed one campsite and monitor use for additional need.
5. Explore developing a summer hiking trail through the eastern shore area of the Bigelow Preserve, connecting with the Western Mountains Foundation (WMF) Trail, in consultation with MATC and the ATC.	Done. The AT was relocated closer to the lake and the former AT route now connects to the WMF trail.
6. Install a foot bridge over the outlet of Stratton Brook Pond on the Fire Wardens Trail.	Design is in progress. Construction is anticipated to occur in 2014.
7. Reconfigure the parking area and campsite in the gravel pit that serves the Little Bigelow Trailhead.	The Little Bigelow parking area and campsite were reconfigured, and the parking area is maintained year-round. Installation of an ADA-compliant privy occurred in 2012.
a. Maintain as a year-round parking area for AT hikers, boaters, and cross-country skiers. Provide a pit privy that is ADA compliant to serve the parking area and other allowed uses.	
b. Investigate the feasibility of providing a path to the lake from this parking area for hand-carry boat access (including an option of a connector trail to the Bog Brook Road).	This path exists and is lightly used.
c. Develop/designate one or more camping areas (depending on demand) limited to tent camping to serve parties that arrive late in the day to start a hike or boat trip the following day. Limit use of the	Work on these campsites is complete.

site(s) to one or two nights only, as deemed appropriate based on use.	
d. Allow use of a portion of the parking area for special events associated with the Trail, subject to approval of a Special Use Permit.	Special events are allowed by permit.
8. Remove the Fire Tower from Avery Peak after consultation with the Maine Forest Service. The tower is in very poor shape and an attractive nuisance. Damaged walls provide access and fires have burned through the floor. Structure would be dismantled and burned on site. Stone foundation would be left providing defined durable surface for trail users.	Done.
9. Retain Fire Warden's cabin and maintain structure for continued seasonal use by the MATC.	MATC uses and maintains this structure.
10. Continue to cooperate with MATC's Caretaker and Ridgerunner Education (CARE) program at Horns Pond, The Col volunteer program and other MATC partnerships.	Cooperation with MATC is ongoing.
11. Designate mountain biking routes as follows: along the existing public use roads; along the Stratton Brook and Huston Brook Roads (the latter also known as the "Sixties haul road"); and the woods road from the Range trailhead to the Stratton Brook Road.	These roads are designated for bicycling. Improvements to Huston Brook Road trail were completed by the Carrabassett Region Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA).
<u>Winter Recreation</u>: 12. Develop routes for two backcountry skiing areas. Explore possible trails connecting to Jones Pond area with the National Park Service, MATC and ATC.	No activity this period. BPL will continue to explore the concept of additional backcountry skiing areas as interest is indicated.
13. Designate the existing high elevation snowmobile route crossing through north leg of The Horns ecological reserve as the primary snowmobile route on the north side of Bigelow; and designate the existing lower elevation route as an alternate trail to be improved and used when the Bureau is actively harvesting in the higher elevation areas.	Done. Requires GIS update.
14. Design snowmobile trails to be not more than 12 feet wide, maintaining natural contours to discourage high speed travel and ensure safety to about a 25 mph speed. Major stream crossings will have bridges built to protect not only the riders from the steep slopes and rocky bottoms but to allow the streams to flow unimpeded during the spring runoff.	No new trails were constructed. Any major improvements to existing trails would have to meet this standard.
15. Winter Parking	
a. Continue to plow area at Range Trail	Done.
b. Explore options to provide a winter parking area serving the south side of the Preserve for access to cross-country ski trails and winter hiking; and on the north side at Gravel pit parking area near Bigelow Trailhead.	Now considering options in these areas.
Continue to cooperate with both local snowmobile clubs to provide groomed sled trials. Additional seasonal barricades are required to control inappropriate summer use.	Have repaired one gate and installed an additional gate to control summer use.

Use of the Bigelow Lodge: 16. Develop operational procedures and guidelines for use of the Bigelow Lodge during summer and winter.	Appendix D of the Plan contains the Bigelow Lodge Operational Guidelines. During 2014, the guidelines will be reviewed and revised, and additional operational procedures appended, if determined necessary for efficient operation of the facility.
17. Manage the Bigelow Lodge to minimize its impacts on other users in the Preserve.	Ongoing.
Timber Resources The Bigelow Act allows timber harvesting "consistent with the area's scenic beauty and natural features." Management Objectives by Stand Type (regulated acres only): 1. Softwood types (~3,050 acres, or 13% of the regulated acres): Areas currently in softwoods should usually be managed to stay in the type. 2. Mixedwood types (~8,756 acres, or 39% of the regulated acres): Management should favor spruce in most areas, pine where it occurs, and northern hardwoods (yellow birch, beech, sugar maple) on the more fertile soils. 3. Hardwood types (~10,920 acres, 48% of the regulated acres): (a) Intolerant hardwoods, labeled as aspen or fire type – Management in this type should concentrate on recovering much of the value of the mature aspen and birch in a way that protects the Bigelow view sheds, and that retains most of the desirable softwood regeneration (fir and spruce). (b) Northern hardwoods - Most acres would qualify as late successional forest; careful selection harvests should be used to maintain successional quality, while growing and selling high value timber. Resource Allocations The resource allocations designated in the Plan provide further management direction regarding timber management. No areas within the Bigelow Preserve are given a Timber Management dominant allocation. However, forest management including timber harvest is allowed as a secondary use (multi-aged management only) in areas designated Bigelow Backcountry Non-mechanized, Bigelow Backcountry, Wildlife Management, and Remote Recreation areas. Visual Class I areas have been designated as a dominant allocation in a small area of the Preserve, and as a secondary allocation in areas adjacent to shorelines, public use roads and trails. All areas not designated as Visual Class I are allocated to Visual Class II. In Visual Class I areas, harvesting is permitted under stringent limitations directed at retaining the appearance of an essentially undisturbed forest, while Visual Class II areas are managed to avoid any obvious alterations to the landscape. .	The Bureau's forests are managed by sustainable harvest units, which in the case of the Flagstaff Plan area includes all the lots in the plan in one unit; ZW2. The period covered in the summary below totals 6.5 years including all of calendar year 2007 thru June 2013. Total volume harvested in the entire sustainable harvest unit (SHU ZW2) was 58,829 cords. Total area treated was 6,046 acres out of 8,742 acres prescribed (69%). Average harvest per acre was 9.73 cords with an annual average of 930 acres treated. A total of 825 acres were removed from the regulated area, a decrease of 9.4%. This was due to steep ground, buffers of trails and roads, buffers for Roaring Brook Mayfly streams, land adjoining The Horns ecological reserve that is not accessible due to the reserve and other lands left inaccessible due to buffers. Minimum stocking levels were maintained on 94% of all treated acres. Stands left under-stocked were due to harvesting of mature and over-mature short lived specie or stands falling apart due to wind throw. - Softwood types totaled 675 acres or 11% of treated acres. The eighty-plus year old fir, all survivors of the last bud worm outbreak, are beyond salvage value. All the know fir dominated stands have been harvested except some acres adjacent to and north of the exemplary wetland complex in the NW quadrant of the Preserve. - Mixedwood types total 2,056 acres or 34% of treated acres. - Hardwood types total 3,301 acres or 55% of treated acres. Stands dominated by mature aspen on fertile sites have been targeted. Mature aspen is also a significant component on mixedwood sites and will continue to be a priority. As called for on page 55 of the plan, the north slope in Dead River is our current focus. All these acres except those influenced by the escaped fires from the clearing of land for Flagstaff Lake are late successional and are being managed to maintain those forest characteristics.

Management Objectives for Old Growth Forests: 4. The Bureau has not identified any Old Growth stands on the Bigelow Preserve although trees aged at least 150 years are present. The Bureau has a policy for managing individual or groups of very old trees (less than the 5 acres needed to qualify for special protection) – called old growth component. Management will follow the current policy for old growth component, which is to retain this feature (where feasible) at similar proportions in the residual stand as it occurred pre-harvest, including species diversity.	In 2013 an old growth stand was identified on the north slope in Dead River. The core of the stand is a mixedwood stand with pure hardwood acres added along the south edge and some pure softwood acres added on the northeast making a stand totaling 68 acres with a high degree of variability.
Management Objectives for Late Successional (LS) Forests: 5. The Bigelow Preserve is estimated to have from 30 to 35% in late successional forests, and current policy and prescriptions will result in a continued increase in the proportion of Bureau forest land being LS. For the Bigelow Preserve the following guidance will ensure that the trend toward increasing amounts of LS forests continues: Identify existing and "soon"-potential LS stands through the prescription process; Retain sufficient large, old trees, and younger stems of long lived species; Avoid removal of disproportionate amounts of LS-character trees; Avoid major reduction of crown closure, while managing within the bounds of good silviculture. Note that some areas of the Preserve are in need of silvicultural treatments that might require variance from this guidance – for example, in old burn areas, restoring the forest to a healthy, multi-aged structure.	Continued management during this plan period according to the guidance provided by the Plan. Development of refined techniques for foresters to more accurately identifying LS stands is ongoing.
Historic Resources 1. Any activities that would result in ground disturbance in historic and archaeologically sensitive areas must be reviewed by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC). Sensitive areas include areas close to the original Dead River channel – Round Barn and Ferry Farm where there could be artifacts from the Arnold Expedition; and areas determined to have potential for prehistoric artifacts – all shoreline areas.	Follow as required.
Administrative Issues 1. Execute a lease for the Wing Camp.	In past years, the Bureau has not received the cooperation of the camp owner to execute a lease. A number of years have passed since contact was made. No later than December 30, 2015, the Bureau will bring the lack of a lease for the camp to resolution. A recent inspection of the camp indicated that the shed attached to the rear of the camp is collapsing and needs to be removed. This condition will be included in a lease agreement that will be offered to the camp owner. If the offer of a lease is not accepted, the Bureau will act to remove the camp.

2. Gravel extracted from pits within the Preserve may only by used for purposes within the Preserve. All depleted pits will be rehabilitated.	Gravel restriction observed.
3. Seek to acquire in-holdings within the Preserve boundaries, or lands adjacent to the Preserve that have valued public resources, if these lands are placed on the market and can be acquired at fair market value, and funds are available for the acquisition.	The Bureau is in communication with landowners who are interested in selling land or interests in land adjacent to the Preserve; those communications are ongoing.

Flagstaff Lake/Surrounding Properties	**Actions taken/Comments:**
Coordinated Recreation Planning for Flagstaff Lake: 1. In cooperation with Florida Power and Light and constituent groups develop a coordinated plan for recreational facilities on Flagstaff Lake. In general, evaluate the demand and needs for additional water access camping sites on Flagstaff Lake in cooperation with user groups such as the Northern Forest Canoe Trail organization, Outward Bound and Chewonki, and local guides. Implement when the need is documented and resources allow.	The FERC Flagstaff Project license requires Brookfield (formerly Next Era Energy/Florida Power and Light) to develop a Comprehensive Recreation and Land Management Plan, in consultation with DPPL and other state and federal agencies by July 31, 2013. Bureau staff met with Brookfield and their consultant in January and June 2013. Discussion at these meetings addressed a coordinated management approach and an accurate inventory of recreation sites and ownership. There was only general discussion of potential new water access camping sites. The Draft Plan addresses coordinated recreation site development and management and a potential future formal agreement, and shoreline erosion control. The Bureau has provided comments on the Draft Plan and will be seeking further input from user groups during the Plan update process.
2. Develop a formal agreement with Florida Power and Light regarding the management of lands and recreation resources within the 1146-foot and 1150-foot elevation contours of shoreline adjacent to Bureau ownership.	
3. Discuss/pursue erosion control along the shoreline of Flagstaff Lake with Florida Power and Light.	
Flagstaff Lake Focused Recreation: <u>Water Access Camping</u>: <u>Islands</u>: 1. Evaluate the need and feasibility of adding water access sites on Flagstaff Island.	See #1 under Coordinated Recreation Planning.
<u>Dead River Peninsula</u>: 2. Designate the North Flagstaff Road (Picked Chicken Hill Road) as a public use road. 3. If the demand can be documented, and as resources allow, provide additional remote water access camping sites. The shoreline of the Dead River Peninsula has been identified as the preferable location for through-trippers on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail due to prevailing winds and aspect.	Done. See #1 under Coordinated Recreation Planning.
<u>Walk-to or Drive-to Camping and Recreation Opportunities on Flagstaff Lake:</u> <u>Myers Lodge</u>:	

1. Designate the access road as a public use road.	Road is maintained for public use. Requires GIS update.
2. Limit vehicle access to the lake. Remove the culvert through the drainage area and replace with a foot-bridge wide enough for carry-in boat access.	The Bureau has discussed these improvements with Brookfield and they are addressed in the Comprehensive Recreation and Land Management Plan that the Bureau has reviewed and that Brookfield is to submit to FERC by July 31, 2013.
3. Develop drive-to campsites on high ground near the footbridge. Designate one handicapped accessible site.	
4. Provide one or more vault toilets, including one that is ADA compliant.	
5. Manage the beach area for carry-in boat access and day use, except in areas designated for walk-to campsites; manage a portion of the beach for day use.	
<u>Northern Shoreline – Flagstaff Township</u>: 6. Explore the potential for ATV access to the northern shoreline of Flagstaff Lake (the area that was the original Flagstaff Pond) for a remote ATV camping opportunity (requires agreements with adjacent landowners). As with other remote sites, provide a parking area with footpaths to campsites and the lake. Design at least one site to be handicapped accessible. (Note: these sites would also be accessible by water).	This concept has not been explored due to other priorities and the local ATV club being focused on other trail management issues.
<u>Dead River Peninsula</u>: 7. Redesign site on west end of Dead River Peninsula lot to be walk-in or water access; block the spur road to this site and provide a parking area for walk-in users.	Done.
<u>Boat Access</u>: Pursue parking improvements to the Flagstaff Lake boat access facility on the Spring Lake parcel with Florida Power and Light (responsible for this facility under their Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license).	The Bureau has discussed these improvements with Brookfield (formerly Florida Power and Light/Next Era Energy) and they are addressed in the Comprehensive Recreation and Land Management Plan that the Bureau has reviewed and that Brookfield submitted to FERC on July 31, 2013. Brookfield will redevelop the site "for general and ADA uses and functional improvements." Only carry-in boat access will be provided.
Dead River Focused Recreation: 1. Improve the Big Eddy Campsite sanitation facilities.	Vault toilets were installed in 2012.
Land Based Recreation 1. <u>Wyman Lot (south) and Carrabassett Valley lots</u>: Work with the Flagstaff Area ATV Club to develop a route connecting trails in Coplin Plantation to Kingfield via the Wyman lot south of Route 27, crossing the AT along Route 27, connecting to the CMP powerline on the east side of Route 27 (involving a bypass around the transformer station using an existing road and a small portion of the Wyman lot north and east of Route 27), and then connecting to the existing snowmobile trail heading south of the Preserve.	Done. The Carrabassett Valley ATV club has received grant funding for trail improvements in the vicinity of the CMP powerline corridor.

2. Wyman Lot (south): Construct an interpretive trail through the Old Growth Stand, as resources allow.	Secured funding for trail construction.
3. Spring Lake and Dead River Peninsula Lots: Designate the road on the Spring Lake Lot beginning at the bridge over the Dead River, and continuing across the top of the Dead River Peninsula as a public use road. Allow public use of the management road that branches south from this road on the Dead River Peninsula (this will be maintained only to the standard of a woods management road, and may be used by ATV's and for pedestrian uses).	Done. Done.
Historic Resources: Any activities that would result in ground disturbance in historic and archaeologically sensitive areas must be reviewed by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC). Sensitive areas include areas close to the original Dead River channel –where there could be artifacts from the Arnold Expedition; and areas determined to have potential for prehistoric artifacts – the entire shoreline of Flagstaff Lake.	Follow as required.
Administrative Issues: 1. Survey the boundary line on the Northern Flagstaff Lake shoreline parcels acquired from Plum Creek.	No activity this period. Priority for 2014.

Mount Abraham	**Actions taken/Comments:**
Wildlife/Rare or Exemplary Ecosystems and Habitats 1. Work with local snowmobile and ATV clubs to increase awareness of the impacts of these trails on the fragile alpine areas.	Problems are more associated with independent riders than with club members.
2. Block and post trails and roads on Bureau lands that are used to gain unauthorized motorized vehicle access into ecological reserve. Work with adjacent landowners to block and post trails that enter the Ecological Reserve from the western side.	Have blocked and posted routes on Bureau lands and worked with adjacent landowners to do the same. Most difficult use to control is winter snowmobile use.
3. Develop an agreement with MDIFW wardens to provide an enforcement presence if necessary, to ensure that ATV's and snowmobiles are not violating posted areas.	Will schedule additional enforcement patrols with the Maine Warden Service.
4. Remove the "cave" and metal structures, including the old fire tower, from the peak.	No activity this period. Reevaluate in 2014. Bridges out on the access road into the property have been a primary factor preventing this work from being completed.
Recreation 1. Re-establish the hiking trailhead at the original lower elevation site and reroute the trail on Bureau lands to connect with the Warden's trail.	Done.
2. Remove the old Fire Wardens cabin and locate/construct a group tent	Cabin has been removed, and a new campsite has been

site.	constructed.
3. Block the logging roads that extend into the Ecological Reserve and put them to bed.	No activity this period. Bridges out on access roads have prevented vehicles from using the logging roads, and have made it unnecessary to block the roads.
4. Evaluate alternatives to the road across the southern arm of the ecological reserve presently used as part of the snowmobile and ATV trail system in the area. Relocate these trails to other roads if reasonable, and discontinue the road on the ecological reserve.	No activity this period. Reevaluate in 2014-15.
5. Continue to allow ATVs and snowmobiles to use the existing gravel management road on the easterly edge of the non-ecoreserve portion of the property, provided there are no environmental issues.	Uses continue to be allowed.
Timber Resources 1. Evaluate forest management opportunities on the non-ecoreserve portion of the property.	No activity this period, and no management activity is expected on the property within the next five years as it was harvested just prior to Bureau acquisition in 2001.
Administrative Issues 1. Determine and mark the boundary of the ecological reserve where roads appear to cross the ecological reserve (southern and eastern boundary); and where woods roads appear useable by ATV's to illegally access the summit area (portions of the western line).	Some woods roads accessible by ATV and snowmobile have been blocked. Boundary has not been marked, to date, on these roads.
2. Assess any environmental issues with roads located on the Bureau lands. Put to bed any roads not needed for forest management purposes and not part of an approved snowmobile or ATV trail network.	No activity this period. Most roads have been blocked or closed out by abutting landowners, and have minimized use of the forest management roads on the Unit. The Bureau has not done an environmental assessment of the roads, to date; this is done as part of forest management activities, which have not yet occurred on the unit.
3. Develop a proposal to the MATC for extending the Appalachian side trail (blue-blaze trail) from the summit to the Bureau trailhead on the east side of the mountain.	MATC has adopted the trail as an official side trail of the Appalachian Trail.

Chain of Ponds	**Actions taken/Comments:**
Recreation Resources 1. Redesign Burnt Dam Campsites.	No activity this period.
2. Through the Boating Facilities Division, work with MDOT to provide improved public boat access to this string of ponds. Improve the boat ramp in the Natanis Campground to a concrete-plank ramp and provide additional parking. Block the informal access site onto Natanis Pond, just south of the entrance to the Natanis Campground to discourage its use (unsafe location).	Boat ramp and parking improvements at campground were completed. The informal site, created by MDOT on MDOT land, has not been blocked.

3. Provide an ADA compliant privy at the new boat launch facility on Natanis Pond; upgrade the privy at the Upper Farm site to be ADA compliant as resources allow.	Currently working with campground operator to provide accessible toilet at improved boat launch.
4. Work with the Boating Facilities Division and MDOT, using MDOT Water Access Bond money to develop an improved trailerable boat access onto Lower Pond, to replace a steep, gravel ramp at the same location.	The site has been determined unsuitable for an improved trailerable launch because of steep slopes, insufficient land and deep water at the shore.
5. Provide signage to identify hand carry boat access to the two middle ponds within the chain, Long Pond and Bag Pond.	No activity this period. Two hand-carry sites providing access to Long Pond and Bag Pond are located on the Bureau's Google Earth web mapping application: http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/programs/boating/googlemaps.html. Signage has not been provided at these sites to date.
Historic Resources 1. Any activities that would result in ground disturbance in historic and archaeologically sensitive areas must be reviewed by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC). Sensitive areas include areas in proximity to Natanis Point, Round Pond and Horseshoe Stream.	Follow as required.
2. Pursue interpretive efforts related to the Arnold Trail in cooperation with MDOT (related to interpretive panels to be erected at the new scenic overlook on Route 27, as part of the Scenic Byways program), and the Arnold Trail Historical Society, which maintains a trail around and above Round Pond.	MDOT panels describing the Arnold Expedition were installed on Route 27 turnout near Cathedral Pines in Eustis. Work with the Arnold Expedition Historical Society is expected in the future.
Wildlife/Rare or Exemplary Ecosystems and Habitats 1. Periodically manage the old fields and apple trees to maintain their habitat attributes.	Periodic mowing and pruning occurs.
2. Monitor and evaluate the potential of the Horseshoe Stream area for designation as a managed deer wintering area.	No activity this period.
3. Post information at the trailered boat access on Natanis Pond related to procedures for avoiding introduction of invasive aquatic vegetation and fish.	The number of invasive species of concern in Maine has grown substantially to include a variety land and water plants and animals. Information is plentiful but has yet to be consolidated into a single format suitable for posting on BPL signboards/kiosks. The BPL website will soon include links to invasives information provided by Environmental Protection, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Maine Forest Service for each area searchable under "Find Parks & Lands."
Administrative Issues 1. Work with the Natanis Campground leaseholders to ensure continued reasonable public access to public resources including availability of short-term camping sites; access to the planned public boat access at the north end of Natanis Pond; access to ATV trails; and access to the Arnold Trail walk.	Lease agreement with campground lessee addresses these objectives.

2. Work with the commercial campground lessee to ensure the campground is in character with the scenic and primitive nature of the surroundings, and has as little impact on the lake and associated wetlands as possible.	

Other Public Lots/Easement	Actions taken/Comments:
Coplin Plantation West Lot (Deeryard Lot) 1. Continue to manage for wildlife; monitor and evaluate use and ongoing studies related to the Deer Wintering area on this lot.	Due to natural occurrences in past decades, the cover on this lot had fallen apart and portions are no longer suitable habitat, although it still zoned for wildlife protection by LURC. However, cover is improving.
2. Define the Visual Class I area along the Dead River prior to any timber harvest in this area.	Visual Class I area will be defined as part of forest management prescriptions. The most recent prescription was prepared in April 2006.
Coplin Plantation Center Lot 1. Continue to manage for late successional forest for high quality timber where appropriate, and a diverse wildlife habitat.	Ongoing. The most recent prescription was prepared in August 2005.
Freeman Township Lot 1. Continue to manage for high quality timber and diverse wildlife habitat.	Ongoing. The most recent prescription was prepared in October 2006.
Highland Plantation West Lot: 1. Continue to manage for late successional forest for high quality timber where appropriate and wildlife values.	Ongoing. The most recent prescription was prepared in 2010.
2. Define the Visual Class I area along the Long Falls Dam Road prior to any timber harvest in this area.	Done. GIS update required.
Highland Plantation Double Lot: 1. Continue to manage for late successional forest, for high quality timber where appropriate and diverse wildlife habitat.	Ongoing management as per Plan. The most recent prescription was prepared in 1987.
Highland Plantation Southeast Lot: 1. Manage the portion of the lot west of Sandy Stream for wildlife. 2. Establish a Visual Class I area around the small ledge/waterfall on the north line of the parcel prior to any timber harvest in this area. 3. Provide signs along the gravel road visible to the public showing points of entry onto and exit from this lot. Provide a small parking area along the road if feasible.	Ongoing. Visual Class I area will be defined prior to any forest management work within the identified area, which is within the 10 acre portion of the lot west of Sandy Stream, with Dominant Wildlife and Secondary Timber Management allocations. (The remaining 111 acres of the lot is allocated to Special Protection.) Parking needs to be reevaluated in 2014.
King and Bartlett Township Lot: 1. Continue to manage for late successional forest for high quality timber where appropriate and wildlife values.	Ongoing management as per the Plan. The most recent prescription was prepared in September 2006.
Redington Township Lot: 1. Continue to manage for late successional forest for high quality timber where appropriate, and wildlife habitat, subject to a variable width Visual Class I area and the 100-foot no-cut area along either side of the	Ongoing management as per the Plan. The most recent prescription was prepared in 1997, and it is anticipated that a new

Appalachian Trail. 2. Avoid placement of new forest management roads within the remote recreation zone along the AT.	prescription will be developed soon.
Pierce Pond Easement: 1. Establish and implement an annual monitoring program in cooperation with the US Forest Service (holder of the Plum Creek and Maine Wilderness Watershed Trust conservation easements), and the Maine Wilderness Watershed Trust (third party enforcer to the conservation easement held by the Bureau on the Charles and Gertrude Valentine property).	Established and ongoing.

Monitoring and Evaluation (Plan pages171-173)

	Actions taken/Comments:
Implementation of Plan Recommendations Within 2 years of plan adoption, develop a process for implementing, accomplishing, and tracking the management recommendations in the Plan. • Include a framework of recommendations with priority levels assigned and targeted timeframes established by priority level. This framework will be utilized to determine work priorities and budgets on an annual basis. • Document annually progress in implementing the recommendations, plans for the coming year, and adjustments to the target timeframes as needed.	The Bureau implements plan recommendations through the process of calendar year planning, during which it schedules and budgets for projects for the coming year. Priorities are established within each Public Lands administrative region based on urgency of need (e.g., public safety, environmental impact); availability of resources (e.g., funds, staff, equipment, contractors); and opportunities available at the time (e.g., project consolidation, favorable weather). Yearly accomplishments are reported by administrative region in an annual report to the Legislature, which is posted on the Bureau's website.
Recreation – Public Use Public use data for the Flagstaff Region, except for use on the Appalachian Trail and some scattered monitoring of snowmobile use on the Bigelow Preserve, does not exist. Fees are not charged for the use of these lands, so this avenue for collecting data does not exist for the Flagstaff properties. The Bureau will consider how additional use data could be gathered, perhaps by periodic user surveys.	No activity this period. The Bureau will explore collaboration with Brookfield on recreation use data collection for their FERC-required Form 80 Report (due every six years, with the next report due in 2015).
Recreation – Use Impacts In addition to gathering data on use, the Bureau will monitor use to determine: • whether improvements to existing facilities or additional facilities might be needed and compatible with the vision for the Unit; • whether additional measures are needed to ensure that recreational users have a high quality experience (which could be affected by the numbers of users, and interactions among users with conflicting interests);	As a practical matter, most monitoring of public use occurs as observations made by seasonal recreation staff in the course of their routine duties; or as a result of conditions reported or requests made by visitors and others to field staff or to BPL regional and central offices. The Bureau is experimenting with a number of monitoring tools to supplement these observations and reports, including trail counters and visitor surveys.

• whether use is adversely affecting sensitive natural resources or the ecology of the area; • whether measures are needed to address unforeseen safety issues; • whether changing recreational uses and demands present the need or opportunity for adjustments to existing facilities and management; and whether any changes are needed in the management of recreation in relation to other management objectives, including protection or enhancement of wildlife habitat and forest management.	
Wildlife (1) **Deer Wintering Areas**: Of particular interest are the deer wintering areas on the Spring Lake, Chain of Ponds, and Coplin West lots, since there is a need for this habitat in the region. As staff and budgets allow, the Bureau will coordinate with MDIFW on aerial and ground surveys of these deer wintering areas to determine the distribution and use related to habitat quality and quantity. These surveys will be conducted during winter under snow conditions that restrict deer mobility.	The Bureau routinely coordinates with DIFW on DWA surveys, and Spring Lake and Coplin Plantation lots have had winter surveys. No additional surveys were done during this 5-year period.
(2) **Ruffed grouse:** The Bureau also conducts periodic "drumming counts" for monitoring ruffed grouse populations in areas managed specifically for this species – on the Dead River Peninsula in this Region.	The grouse patch management area at Dead River will be surveyed in the 2014 field season.
(3) **Bicknell's thrush**: In cooperation with the Vermont Institute of Natural Resources (VINS), the Bureau participates in monitoring high elevation birds, including Bicknell's thrush, on Mount Abraham. VINS also monitors these birds on Bigelow Mountain, through another partner.	The Vermont Center for Ecostudies, VCE (now separate from Vermont Institute of Natural Science, VINS) now monitors these areas.
Game Species: The Bureau cooperates with MDIFW monitoring of game species on the unit, including deer, moose, grouse, and black bear.	• DIFW tracks deer, moose and bear harvests through harvest registrations, which are complied and reported annually from registration station across the state. • DIFW does not survey ruffed grouse populations. BP&L runs drumming surveys where they have conducted grouse patch management, principally at Dead River and Seboomook. These two routes will be surveyed in the 2014 field season.
Significant Wildlife Habitat: The Bureau will identify and map significant wildlife habitat such as vernal pools and den trees in the process of developing its detailed forest management prescriptions. The boundaries of any sensitive natural communities will also be delineated on the ground at this time. Any significant natural areas or wildlife habitat will then be subject to appropriate protections.	Ongoing. Process continues as described.
Ecological Reserves* The MNAP conducted natural resource inventories on the Horns and Mount Abraham ERs in 2005. Baseline data for long term monitoring using permanent plots were collected at the Horns in 2002 and at Mount Abraham in 2004. The areas will be re-inventoried periodically according to schedules developed by the Bureau and MNAP.	MNAP's re-inventory of The Horns ER is scheduled for 2013.

*An inventory interval of 10 years has been recommended by the Ecological Reserve Scientific Advisory Committee.	
Timber Management • Prescriptions are prepared by professional foresters according to Bureau policies, with input from staff specialists, and peer-reviewed prior to approval. • Timber sales are prepared and laid out with field staff looking at most acres prior to harvest and with individual tree marking done on the majority of harvest acres. • Field staff are on-site to check on harvest practice and progress frequently; senior staff visit sites less frequently to obtain overall picture of what is taking place in the forest. • After harvest is completed, roads, trails, and water crossings are put to bed as appropriate, and any changes in stand type are recorded to update the Bureau's GIS system can be updated.	Process continues as described.
The Bureau is currently developing a post-harvest monitoring plan to assist forest managers in assessing harvest outcomes on all managed lands. The monitoring plan will also address water quality and Best Management Practices (BMPs) utilized during harvest activities.	At present, monitoring objectives are addressed by the Bureau with the Harvest Evaluation Report, last revised Feb. 2013, by which harvests are scored on 20 criteria. These criteria include compliance with BMPs, laws and regulations and other criteria which serve to protect water quality. During this five year Plan period, the Bureau was in full compliance with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards. Post-harvest monitoring is more accurately described as a process; with 2011 inventory data, we are engaging in a modeling process to better manage our prescriptions, and better understand the impacts of harvests on management objectives.
Third party monitoring is done mainly through the forest certification programs of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). A full FSC audit was completed for all Bureau lands in 2006, including the Seboomook Unit.	In 2011, the Bureau had a full recertification audit under the FSC program and an annual surveillance audit under SFI. Auditors looked at harvest areas on four or five separate tracts in each of the three Lands administrative regions. A total of eight corrective action requests are now being addressed. Auditors were especially complimentary of the condition of recently harvested stands, the High Conservation Value Forests, and recreation management.

Issues for Advisory Committee Attention

New Issues or Circumstances Not Addressed in the Plan:

Mountain Bike Trail Requests
The Carrabassett Region Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) has requested mountain bike access to several existing snowmobile trails within the Bigelow Preserve and adjacent state lands. One request is for a trail across the northern "leg" of The Horns Ecological Reserve at Bigelow in order to complete a bike route around the mountain. Mountain bikes would cross the reserve on the same route as the primary high elevation snowmobile trail. The other requests relate to allowing mountain bikes to use and/or rerouting of snowmobile trails for bike use along the south margin of the Bigelow Preserve. New circumstances: The request is prompted by a new focus on mountain biking as a component of the four-season recreation economy in the region, and new capacity to manage mountain biking through the Carrabassett Region Chapter of NEMBA.

Maine Huts and Trails Request
Maine Huts and Trails (MH&T) has submitted a proposal to the Bureau and MATC to create a year-round trail from their new Stratton Brook Hut in Carrabassett Valley to the existing Stratton Brook Trail (ungroomed bike and ski trail; AKA Esker Trail/60s Road) in Bigelow Preserve, intersecting 1 mile east of the Fire Warden's Trail. Proposed uses include hiking, snowshoeing and potentially skiing (ungroomed). The proposed trail crosses the Carrabassett Valley lot and enters The Horns Ecological Reserve in Wyman Twp. New circumstances: At the time of the Plan adoption in 2007, there were no plans for the new "Stratton Brook" MH&T facility.

Crocker Mountain Acquisition
Acquisition of 12,046 acres at Crocker Mountain, which abuts Bigelow Preserve, Mount Abraham and the Redington public lot, was completed on June 7, 2013. Interest in the recreation potential of this land is such that a management plan for the area will be developed as soon as feasible, along with a recommendation that the Crocker Mountain plan be appended to the Flagstaff Region Plan.

Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail
Western Mountains Corporation is working to develop a long-distance non-motorized trail from Coburn Gore to Kingfield. Proposed uses include hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and mountain biking. The trail would also include access to the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. The proposed trail would cross Public Lands at Chain of Ponds, the Bigelow Preserve and The Horns Ecological Reserve, partly with new trails and partly on existing roads and trails. New circumstances: This trail concept was not developed at the time the Plan was adopted in 2007.

Redington Twp. Lot Motorized Crossing of the A.T.

Snowmobile and ATV groups are interested in a new crossing of the A.T. on the Redington Twp. Lot to provide a connection between Caribou Pond Road to the north and the Barnjum area to the south, and to provide several loop trail opportunities within the broader regional motorized trails system. The potential may exist to route ORV use to winter roads on the lot, which include an existing A.T. woods road crossing. In combination with necessary trail linkages on abutting private lands, this concept could provide the desired trail connection. Note that new timber management roads or motorized recreation trails are not allowed within 500 feet of the A.T. (see page 158 of the Plan); the A.T. on the Redington Twp. Lot is surrounded by a 100-foot Special Protection buffer and additional 400-foot Remote Recreation buffer. An amendment to the Plan will be necessary to allow this new motorized recreation use of the existing road crossing of the A.T. New circumstances: In June 2011, the Saddleback A.T. motorized crossing was accomplished through the conveyance of a trail a corridor to the State from the National Park Service. Until then, both the Redington and Saddleback locations were on the table in negotiations with the NPS for A.T. motorized crossings. A deal was worked out with the NPS for the Saddleback crossing, through a transfer of lands to the State. This option was not offered for the Redington crossing. However, an alternate approach may now be pursued by rerouting the trail onto the State-owned lands. A motorized crossing at this location is important for snowmobiling, ATVing and for the Maine Huts and Trails groomed cross-country ski trail.

Other Items of Special Concern or Interest: None

Appendix C-1. Summary of Advisory Committee and Public Comments and Bureau Responses

Summary of Advisory Committee and Public Comments
The following is a summary of the verbal and written comments, which were similar in content, received at the public meeting and during the subsequent two week comment period:

- Trail proposal at Chain of Ponds: All who commented were in favor of the Plan amendments which would allow the proposed multiuse non-motorized trail segments, under certain criteria and requirements.

- Trails proposal at Bigelow Preserve: All who commented were in favor of the Plan amendments which would allow new non-motorized trail development or uses on existing management roads/snowmobile trails, including short road segments where mountain bike use would be allowed, with certain requirements and restrictions. Comments also supported the construction of a new hiking/snowshoe/backcountry ski trail across the Carrabassett Valley Lot and connecting to the Bigelow Preserve and the Bureau's decision to not allow a proposed new mountain bike route across the north part of the Bigelow Preserve.

- Boat Access on East side of Flagstaff Lake: AC members and members of the public commented both in favor and in opposition to the Plan amendment that would allow development of a new basic trailered boat launch at one of two sites under consideration, one within the Bigelow Preserve at the Little Bigelow gravel pit trailhead/carry-in site and the other on the Dead River Peninsula. More specifically, NRCM and Friends of Bigelow commented in opposition to use of the gravel pit site for this purpose. Due to uncertainty regarding the consistency of the gravel pit option with the Bigelow Preserve Act (specifically regarding new roads), the Bureau is no longer pursuing this option. The Bureau will continue to cooperate with the Flagstaff Lake hydro project operator, Brookfield, for new trailered boat access on the east side of the lake, outside the Bigelow Preserve.

- Motorized trail crossing of the A.T. on the Redington Lot: AC members and members of the public commented both in favor and in opposition to the Plan amendment that would allow development of new motorized and non-motorized trails on the Redington Lot, with a shared crossing of the A.T. on an existing management road. It was also commented that the Bureau was acting prospectively with this amendment in that its intent is to allow potential *future* motorized trails that would connect Carrabassett Valley and Madrid Township and cross the Redington Lot; this was felt to be in violation of the stated purpose of the five-year review in relation to a focus on changed conditions that might justify a Plan amendment in the near term. After additional consideration, given the fact that opinions are strongly divided about the merits of the proposed motorized trail connections that would be facilitated by this proposal and that it is not clear that the required agreements for trails crossing the abutter's parcels could be obtained in the near term, the Bureau has determined that the proposal is premature for this five-year review and the proposed Plan amendment has been withdrawn.

Summary of Advisory Committee Comments and Parks and Lands Responses on the Flagstaff Region Management Plan 5-Year Review Comment Period Dec 12 – Dec 31, 2013 *(some comments are excerpted; full comments are available in Appendix C-2)*	
Comment	**Response**
From: Claire Polfus, Appalachian Trail Conservancy	
<u>Regarding proposed motorized and non-motorized crossing of A.T. on Redington Lot</u>: • Because of the many stakeholders involved, the proposed crossing of the Appalachian Trail in the Redington Public Lot should be considered critically from multiple perspectives. At the December 11 meeting, economic benefits for the surrounding communities and connectivity in the motorized trail systems were discussed as benefits of the crossing. In order to ensure that these benefits can be achieved, it will be important to provide further indication that abutting landowners are willing to allow motorized use. It will also be important to show exactly how the trail systems will connect through the Redington Lot in a full detailed proposal including rationale for the proposed multi-use trail, design criteria, long term management direction, and maps. • There are also a series of potential management challenges that a crossing in this location would incur for the A.T. The remote location of the Redington Lot makes active management of the crossing difficult. There are many seeps and small creeks along the A.T. in the Redington Lot. Incursions onto the A.T. treadway by mechanized recreation, including mountain bikes, could have costly impacts for the A.T. tread and for its natural resource values. Also, motorized crossings incur safety risks for users in both directions, and potential visitor expectation conflicts. This would especially be true in the summer when hiker use of the area is very high. Finally, the development of this multi-use trail could affect wildlife and plant species and the area's hydrology. If this proposal goes forward, it will be important	• Subsequent to the June 12, 2014 public meeting, at which a proposed Plan amendment to allow the proposed crossing of the A.T. on the Redington Lot was presented, the Bureau has withdrawn the proposed amendment as premature and not appropriate for this 5-Year Plan Review. For a more detailed explanation of this decision, see the response to the June 2014 comments from the High Peaks Alliance on page 9.

to specifically address these concerns.	
From: Lester Kenway, Maine Appalachian Trail Club (commenting as member of the public, although MATC is represented on the Advisory Committee)	
<u>Regarding proposals for additional bike trails and a hiking trail connecting to MH&T Stratton Brook hut in the Bigelow Preserve</u>: • Until a few years ago, MATC was the only hiking trail management group in the Bigelow Preserve. We have been joined by the NEMBA mountain bike group, and will soon be joined by the Maine Huts and Trails. While these groups provide notable public recreation services, the cumulative effect of adding many more people onto the Bigelow Mountain Trails is likely to cause impacts and degradation to the trails. MATC currently operates 2 seasonal trail crews that counter damage to the A.T. via drainage and reconstruction work on 267 miles of trail. This is not enough to address problem areas in a reasonable amount of time. At present we have an estimated 30 to 50 year backlog of important projects, some of them in the Bigelow Preserve. We would welcome support from BPL or the other trail groups to improve our ability to manage damaged trail segments in the Preserve.	• The Bureau recognizes that actions that substantially increase use of the A.T. and side trails can negatively affects the trails and increase maintenance needs. We appreciate very much the good work of MATC in maintaining the A.T., and have taken note of your backlog, which is an issue of concern to us. Regarding the proposed new trails, the MH&T connector trail will eventually connect to the Firewarden's Trail through its connection to the Stratton Brook trail/60s Road about 1.5 miles from the Firewarden's trail junction. The one-way hiking distance from the Stratton Brook Hut to Avery Col or Horns Pond via the Firewarden's trail would be about 8.5 miles, or a 17 mile round-trip. A round trip hike with a loop on Bigelow Mountain following the Firewarden's trail, A.T. and Horns Pond trail would be about 22 miles. Given the challenge posed by these distances for most day-hikers, and the steepness of the higher elevation portions of the trails, the Bureau does not anticipate that use of the A.T. or side trails would be substantially increased by this new trail connecting the Hut to the Preserve, although some increase is possible, particularly on the lower reaches of the Firewarden's trail. Nevertheless, this deserves monitoring. • The Bureau is also sensitive to any potential impacts of mountain bike use on the A.T. or A.T. side trails. However, the mountain bike trail proposals addressed by the proposed Plan amendments should not affect the A.T. or A.T. side trails in the Bigelow Preserve. (Bike use is permitted on a designated hiking trail in the Preserve only on the quarter-mile segment of the Stratton Brook trail between the Stratton Brook Pond outlet and the start of the

Regarding the proposed shared-use motorized and non-motorized trail crossing on the A.T. on the Redington Lot: • During the past 3 years representatives of MATC and MHT has been discussing plans for MHT to extend their trail system west from Carrabassett Valley to Route 4. Since the National Park Service (NPS) does not allow snowmobiles (used by MHT) on Appalachian Trail Lands we spent time discussing where MHT might cross the Appalachian Trail. MATC suggested the Redington Public Lot as a place where MHT might more easily a obtain permit for a crossing. This was going to be a groomed ski trail only. In recent times, a more expanded proposal has come forward including hiking, skiing, snowmobiles and ATV's. MATC needs to evaluate this proposal and what impacts it will bring to the Appalachian Trail.	Firewarden's trail. This segment of trail has not been found to have significant maintenance issues.) That said, we will take note of how well the various users understand and adhere to the use designations of trails that intersect with the A.T and its side trails, and work with user groups to minimize any unauthorized uses on the A.T. or its side trails. • In summary, the Bureau does not anticipate that the bike or hiking trail proposals will exacerbate hiking trail maintenance issues or the backlog of trail work in the Preserve. Nevertheless, the Bureau will monitor uses and impacts, and would welcome working with MATC and other trail groups to increase support for necessary A.T. and A.T. side trail maintenance on the Preserve. • The Bureau has subsequently withdrawn the proposed Plan amendment to allow the proposed crossing of the A.T. on the Redington Lot. For a more detailed explanation of this decision, see the response to the June 2014 comments from the High Peaks Alliance on page 9.
From: John McCatherin, Carrabassett Valley ATV Club (excerpt of comments directly related to the proposed plan amendments)	
General comments in support of additional trails in the Plan region: • In general, my comments would be supportive of proposals for increased utilization of public lands in the northern Franklin County area, consistent, of course, with existing regulations and	• The Bureau will continue to work with regional trail interests to evaluate opportunities for additional trail development in the Flagstaff Region and broader Western Public Lands region. The

management practices, particularly in the Bigelow Preserve. I share concerns voiced about trail proliferation but believe that, properly designed and managed, the entire area has room to support increased usage by recreationalists, non-motorized and motorized.	Bureau supports sustainable carefully routed and designed trails that maximize benefits to multiple trail user groups where possible and minimize resource impacts, trail user conflicts, and conflicts with other recreationists and land uses.
<u>Regarding a motorized crossing of the A.T. on the Redington Lot</u>:	
• Obviously, my focus is on the proposed resumption of the A.T. crossing for motorized vehicles in the Barnjum area, including ATVs…. [the] recreational population of trail riders [is] intent on respecting, getting into and enjoying the wilderness areas, just as hikers and/or bicyclists do. Should they be denied that opportunity? I think not.	• The Bureau has subsequently withdrawn the proposed Plan amendment to allow the proposed crossing of the A.T. on the Redington Lot. For a more detailed explanation of this decision, see the response to the June 2014 comments from the High Peaks Alliance on page 9. However, the Bureau recognizes the growing interest of the ATV community for trail links that provide an opportunity for shorter loop trails to supplement the 139-mile Moose Loop.
• It was suggested at the meeting that an "agreement" had been reached that the vast region of the High Peaks area bounded by Highway Routes 27, 16, 4 and 142 would confine motorized vehicles to the perimeter…Is it that difficult to see that an area comprising 300 or more square miles could support an ATV trail or two without imposing on more traditional recreationists?...In such a massive area, motorized vehicles would normally impose little or not at all on hiking trails, but as recreational trails proliferate we need to accept that multiple-use trails may in some areas be necessary, such as at A.T. crossings.	• The Bureau will continue to work to develop regional trail solutions in cooperation with motorized and non-motorized trail users, balancing to the extent possible the diverse trail user needs, the needs of the A.T. hiking community, and of other recreationists and land uses. • The Bureau maintains its commitment to managing the A.T. on its lands in a manner consistent with the values of the trail. The Bureau also recognizes that -- in very limited circumstances and locations -- new motorized trail crossings of the A.T. on state property may be worthy of consideration, particularly when the proposed crossing is of high importance to regional trail networks and when no other options that would avoid a new crossing appear to be viable.
• A key to much of this would be the A.T. crossing at Barnjum, for instance, connecting Salem, Phillips, Madrid, and Strong networks to the Carrabassett and Stratton area networks. That in itself would open up several loop routes of 25 to 40 miles, distances that are quite doable at the slow speeds generally traveled by ATV-ers.	

From: Eliza Donoghue, Natural Resources Council of Maine	
<u>Regarding potential new mountain biking trails in the Bigelow Preserve</u>: • The Carrabassett Region Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association has requested **mountain bike access to several existing trails within the Bigelow Preserve**. NRCM believes that mountain biking can be a compatible use within the Preserve, so long as it does not result in overdevelopment, is not near sensitive natural areas, and does not unduly interfere with other recreational pursuits. We will address each trail proposal individually: - We **support** mountain bike use on the **"Dead Moose Trail"** because a management road is already in existence, so long as the Bureau examines potential culvert and drainage repairs. - NRCM is **concerned** about the proposal to reroute the existing **"Esker Trail"** to allow for use as a haul route over the next few years. We question whether it is a good use of Bureau resources to temporality reroute a trail (instead of temporarily closing it), which would could result in two disturbed areas once hauling is done. - We **support** the Bureau's alternative recommendation for the **"Birthday Hill"** trail. The Bureau's recommendation to allow mountain bike use on the nearby management road/snowmobile trail is a good idea because it promotes mountain bike touring instead of the intensive use that the proposed "Birthday Hill" trail would have generated. - NRCM **does not support** the "Backside Trail" proposal, due to concerns about overdevelopment of the northern half of the Bigelow Preserve.	• The Bureau notes the support expressed for mountain bike use of two short management roads/snowmobile trails, referred to by CR NEMBA as the Dead Moose and Birthday Hill trails. (Note that the proposal put forth by CR NEMBA for use of the Birthday Hill trail relates only to the existing management road; no new trail development was contemplated.) • The Bureau has proposed to collaborate with CR NEMBA on a permanent new single-track trail rather than temporarily rerouting the Esker Trail. Resources for trail construction would be provided by CR NEMBA, not the Bureau. While up to 2.4 miles of new trail would be created, the width and the extent of ground disturbance for the intended trail would be similar to that of a typical hiking trail in the Preserve. The Bureau has concluded that this new development is justified given the value and importance of this trail segment in the overall mountain bike trail network in the south part of the Preserve and on adjacent lands, and the fact that that reopening the 60s road for timber harvesting will convert the current trail, which approximates a single-track trail, to a less desirable management road trail, with a wide cleared right-of-way and graveled surface. • The Bureau has determined it will not proceed with the CR NEMBA proposal for the "Backside Trail" in the northern half of the Bigelow Preserve. The Bureau considers the project to be incompatible with the Vision and management policies for the Bigelow Preserve expressed in the Plan (pages 114-116), particularly (as noted in the comment) as relates to overdevelopment.
<u>Regarding the proposed addition of a trailered boat launch on east Flagstaff Lake:</u> • At the December 11, 2013 Advisory Committee meeting, the Bureau presented	• The Bureau recognizes the value of non-motorized boating recreation on Flagstaff

two potential new boat launch sites for the east end of Flagstaff Lake. NRCM does not support either potential site and does not support the addition of any additional trailered boat launches on Flagstaff Lake. It is the experience of NRCM staff that Flagstaff has little motorized boat traffic, the majority of which is limited to the west end of the lake where there are five trailered launches. We believe that retaining the current level and type of use is in keeping with the undeveloped character of the Bigelow Preserve. • The Bigelow Preserve Plan allows for "essential service facilities," which are basic facilities needed to service a resource area and to control and enhance public use, the location and design of which should be consistent with the objective of protecting the overall natural character of the Preserve. Hand carry launches are more than sufficient to enhance public use and they preserve natural character by the retaining the integrity of the shoreline. Furthermore, each potential boat launch would require a change in allocation to "Developed Recreation". Changing the allocation of parts of the Flagstaff shoreline would significantly jeopardize the undeveloped character of the Preserve.	Lake, served by boat-in campsites and with little motorized boat traffic. However, since the 2007 Plan, Long Falls Dam day use area has been discontinued as a trailered launch site, due to the boulder-strewn character of the near-shore area, according to the representatives of Brookfield, the company that operates this site as part of their FERC license. This leaves the eastern half of this large lake with no trailered boat access. At the same time, FERC, the federal licensing authority for the Flagstaff hydropower project, has ordered that Brookfield, the project operator, work with the Bureau and MDIF&W on a solution to the lack of boat access on the east side of the lake. . • There is only one developed trailered launch facility on the west end of the lake, at Rt. 27, more than 17 miles by boat from Bog Brook. The 2007 Flagstaff Plan calls for limiting vehicle access to the lake at Trout Brook, which would eliminate what has been informal use of this site for launching small trailered boats. Informal trailered launching will also be eliminated at Myers Lodge in the near future as part of facility improvements. • The Bureau has considered the potential effect of the proposed facility on non-motorized boaters and other recreationists. The Bureau believes that replacing the loss of trailered access on the east side of the lake with a 4-6 boat capacity trailered launch facility would have minimal effect on the experience of non-powered boaters on the lake given the large area of water available and the type of boats that would likely use the intended facility; i.e., it would be primarily attractive to those who use small and medium sized boats, due to shallow water, numerous underwater obstacles, and annual drawdown of the lake. It is also possible that a new facility could serve the needs of larger canoe/kayak groups, outfitters, and guides who would benefit from easier access to the water to launch and retrieve boats (depending on the location of the site).

	• In light of uncertainties regarding the consistency of the Bigelow Preserve gravel pit option with the Bigelow Preserve Act (specifically regarding new roads) the Bureau is no longer pursuing this option. However, the Bureau will continue to pursue options for improving trailered boat access at other sites on east Flagstaff Lake with Brookfield.
<u>Regarding proposed motorized trail crossing at Redington Lot:</u> • NRCM does not support a **new crossing of the Appalachian Trail** on the Redington Township Lot. The Redington Lot is very remote. Further development of motorized vehicle trails would retract from the lot's remoteness. While NRCM has not officially weighed in on any effort to establish a National Wildlife Refuge in the area, we are interested in the idea and would not like to see any development (such as a motorized vehicle crossing of the A.T.) that would jeopardize such a designation. Furthermore, NRCM does not believe that motorized crossings are compatible with the quiet recreation opportunities often unique to the Appalachian Trail corridor.	• The Bureau has subsequently withdrawn the proposed Plan amendment to allow the proposed crossing of the A.T. on the Redington Lot. For a more detailed explanation of this decision, see the response to the June 2014 comments from the High Peaks Alliance on page 9. • The Bureau maintains its commitment to managing the A.T. on its lands in a manner consistent with the values of the trail. The Bureau also recognizes that -- in very limited circumstances and locations -- new motorized trail crossings of the A.T. on state property may be worthy of consideration, when the proposed crossing is of high importance to regional trail networks and when no other options that would avoid a new crossing appear to be viable.
<u>Regarding changes in timber harvesting on Flagstaff Region lands</u>: • NRCM believes that potential **increased timber harvesting** on public lands is inconsistent with the Plan. We believe that increased timber harvesting would put unnecessary pressure on old growth component and late-successional forest. Bureau policy calls for retention of old growth component "at similar proportions in the residual stand as it occurred pre-harvest." (Pg. 57 of the Plan.) The Bigelow Preserve is estimated to have from 30 to	• The plan for reducing forest stocking levels is not directed as specific public lands but is system-wide in application. The Bureau is working to enhance its understanding of the future ramifications of varying harvest levels on the public forests through the use of timber harvest/management models, in order to guide its decisions as to which units are best able to accommodate increased harvest levels. Potential changes in harvest level on a specific unit of the reserved public lands would also take into account the management direction and recommendations contained in the current management plan for that

35% in late-successional stands. It is Bureau policy to increase the amount of late-successional forest. (Pg. 57 of the Plan.) Increased harvesting would strain Bureau resources making it difficult for the Bureau to follow the Plan, which calls for careful selection harvest of hardwoods in the Bigelow Preserve. (Pg. 56 of the Plan.) Selection harvest requires substantial manpower, which would be stretched if the Bureau were to increase its harvest. Increased harvesting represents a substantial change in policy and should receive more detailed oversight from the Advisory Committee. NRCM requests that any proposal to increase harvest levels over what was planned when the Plan was adopted be presented in specific detail to the Advisory Committee for review and comment prior to any harvesting or related activities.	unit.

Summary of Public Comments and Parks and Lands Responses on the Flagstaff Region Management Plan 5-Year Review – Proposed Plan Amendments Comment Period June 13 – 26, 2014 ***(some comments have been excerpted; full comments are available in Appendix C-2)***	
Comment	**Response**
From: Milt Bastion, President, High Peaks Alliance	
<u>Regarding Proposed Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail, Chain of Ponds and Bigelow Preserve (Proposed Plan Amendments A & B)</u> • HPA supports development of this new heritage trail which would run parallel to the Route 27 State Scenic Byway, and incorporate segments of the original route used by the Benedict Arnold Expedition during the revolutionary war. This new linear trail will provide the final leg in a 350+ mile international back-packing experience which will include the Appalachian Trail, Sentiers Frontaliers, and Coos County Trail. It will complement motorized trails which currently link the High Peaks to Quebec. Success of this new trail will be dependent on collaboration with motorized trail groups in Stratton-Eustis, Carrabassett Valley, and Kingfield.	• The Bureau acknowledges the support of HPA for amendments A & B allowing construction of the proposed Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail at Chain of Ponds and Bigelow Preserve.

Regarding Use of Existing Roads in the Bigelow Preserve for Mountain Biking, and development of new Single Track Trail parallel to the "60s Haul Road" Trail (Proposed Plan Amendments C & D):	
• HPA supports BPL's plan to work with CRNEMBA to manage bike use within the preserve on existing roads and to develop a new single-track trail in parallel with the "60's Haul Road" trail. If sustainably built the new trail will actually lay lighter on the ground then the existing, frequently boggy, woods road, cause less erosion, and provide a better experience for riders. It will provide an important back-country leg in the developing system of mountain biking trails in and around Stratton Brook Hut.	• The Bureau acknowledges the support of HPA for Plan Amendments C & D allowing use of existing management roads in the Bigelow Preserved by mountain bikes, and the construction of a single-track mountain bike trail parallel to the 60s Road.
Regarding Proposed Hiking/Snowshoe/Ski Trail between MH&T Stratton Brook Hut and Bigelow Preserve (Proposed Plan Amendment E):	
• HPA supports the amendment. Sustainable development of such a trail will provide a high-quality back-country experience for MHT users and little impact to the Bigelow Preserve.	• The Bureau acknowledges the support of HPA for Plan Amendment E allowing development of a hiking, snowshoeing and ungroomed x-country ski trail between Stratton Brook Hut and the Bigelow Preserve.
Regarding Proposed Shared-Use motorized recreation trail crossing of the Appalachian Trail on the Redington Public Lot (Proposed Plan Amendment F):	
• HPA supports BPL's proposed amendment to create a new shared-use crossing of the Appalachian Trail on Redington Public Lot, available for ATV, snowmobile, pedestrian, mountain bike and cross-country ski use. This crossing would facilitate development of back-country trails connecting the communities of Madrid, Phillips and Salem, with Carrabassett Valley, and Stratton-Eustis. It would efficiently link high-quality stacked loop ATV and snowmobile trail systems centered in each town, creating medium length loops more accessible to local residents. Our understanding is that the crossing would also facilitate a route	• The Bureau acknowledges the support of HPA for proposed Plan Amendment F allowing a new shared-use crossing of the Appalachian Trail on the Redington Lot. The proposed amendment was developed by the Bureau with the understanding that recent changes in land ownership in the vicinity of Redington Lot presented an opportunity for motorized trail connections between Carrabassett Valley and Madrid Township. However, further consideration has led the Bureau to withdraw the proposed amendment. In the Bureau's evolving understanding of recent and potential future changes in the ownership

for Maine Huts and Trails (groomed cross-country skiing, hiking, and mountain biking). • The crossing should be located on the existing timber management road in Redington Public Lot, and collaboratively managed and maintained with BPL by all trail groups who seek to use it. Non-pedestrian trail crossings of the A.T. in the High Peaks region already occur on State Route 27, the Caribou Pond Road, and on the West Saddleback Connector. All are multiple-use, featuring snowmobiling in the winter, and ATV riding in the summer. The West Saddleback Connector also supports mountain biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing. A minimal number of safe, well designed crossings would greatly enhance regional connectivity, and still allow for the sense of solitude and remoteness integral to the Appalachian Trail experience. Any A.T. crossing should be multiple-use, sited to provide the highest connectivity possible for each system (and at 90 degrees to the A.T.), be sustainably designed, and minimize potential user conflicts. • High Peaks Alliance does not condone development of any new trails without express permission from public or private landowners. It is our hope that this new crossing will facilitate development of a shared regional connector which will provide economic benefits for local businesses, generate support for future land conservation, and increase the quality of life for all residents in High Peak's communities.	of abutting lands, it is not clear that obtaining the required agreements for trails crossing the abutter's parcels could be obtained in the near term; therefore, the proposed Plan amendment would be premature. However, this issue can be brought forward in the next 5-Year Plan review, when circumstances may have changed making a connection a more immediate possibility. By way of additional explanation, as noted at the Public Meeting June 12, the purpose of the 5-Year Plan Review is to assess whether circumstances had changed since the Plan was adopted in 2007, such that issues or opportunities have come to light that were not addressed in the 2007 Plan, and if so, to determine if a Plan amendment may be warranted. In 2007, there was no crossing of the A.T. that would allow a connection of the ATV trails in the Rangeley region with those to the south of the A.T.; in 2011, that crossing was accomplished at Saddleback Mountain. In addition, the State acquisition of Crocker Mountain, combined with new guaranteed trails on the forthcoming Orbeton Stream easement in Madrid, have elevated the possibility of connecting the Saddleback crossing to the Carrabassett Valley area trails. Circumstances have changed. However, a number of commenters have pointed out that opinions are strongly divided about the merits of such a connection; and that a connection through abutters in anything but certain. Our further research leads us to conclude that this proposal is indeed premature. Without a strong possibility of a connection in the next 5 years, considering a "potential" connection is inappropriate in this 5-year Plan Review.
From: Claire Polfus, Appalachian Trail Conservancy	
<u>Regarding proposed motorized and non-motorized crossing of A.T. on Redington Lot (Proposed Amendment F)</u>: • We oppose the proposed reallocation of protection along the Appalachian Trail from Special Protection to Remote Recreation.	• As explained above, the Bureau has withdrawn the proposed amendment. The Bureau would like to assure the ATC

This reduced protection would be unprecedented on BPL lands for which a management plan has been written and published through public involvement…ATC cannot support an amendment that, unlike the other amendments on the table, officially reallocates resource protection and could create a precedent for legally lessening the protection of the trail on public land. • Previous to the draft amendment, I submitted comments regarding the potential effects of a motorized crossing on one of the most remote sections of the Appalachian Trail including conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users, impacts to natural resources such as hydrology and wildlife species and potential encroachment from trespassers onto the tread of the Appalachian Trail. These concerns have not been adequately addressed by the draft amendments.	that it recognizes the importance of protecting the physical and natural resource of the A.T. as a nationally significant recreation trail. Speaking generally, and not specifically to this trail crossing proposal, the Bureau will only consider a new motorized crossing of the A.Tfor very limited circumstances, when it determines that the proposed crossing is of high importance to regional trail networks and when no other options that would avoid a new crossing appear to be viable, and only.after close collaboration with A.T. management agencies and organizations and all trail user groups with the objective of minimizing any potential effects on the A.T. and A.T. users.
From: Lloyd Griscom (excerpted)	
<u>Regarding proposed motorized and non-motorized crossing of A.T. on Redington Lot (Proposed Amendment F)</u>: • In the successful brokering of the Saddleback Connector through the AT at Eddy Pond, the High Peaks Alliance, or at least some of us, made representations that were taken by others as a pledge that this crossing was to be exchanged for not asking for an ATV crossing through Barnjum into the Caribou Pond area. This legal Eddy Pond crossing permitted the formation of the Moose Loop ATV system. • I have had acrimonious discussions on this subject with a HPA and MATLT colleague, now retired from both organizations, but I remain convinced that more than a few in the AT community feel that the deal is being breached by this effort that you are leading. I feel that personally I don't want to have my word perceived to change with the winds and I oppose this additional crossing of the AT for ATV's on the grounds that a deal was made that was the	• As explained above, the Bureau has withdrawn the proposed amendment. The Bureau recognizes the strong division of opinions regarding the proposed motorized trail connection, as alluded to in the comments, as is one factor in the Bureau's determination that the proposal is premature at this time.

only way the Eddy Pond legal crossing of the AT was able to be accomplished. • Having said that, this does not preclude the ATV community from proposing some additional benefit that might be considered by abutting landowners and others as sufficient to consider the proposal as a new effort on its own merits.	
From: Eliza Donoghue, Natural Resources Council of Maine	
<u>Regarding the proposed addition of a trailered boat launch on east Flagstaff Lake (Proposed Amendment G):</u> • NRCM continues to **oppose either proposed motorized boat launch sites** for the east end of Flagstaff Lake. It is the experience of NRCM staff that Flagstaff has little motorized boat traffic, the majority of which is limited to the west end of the lake where there are five trailered launches. BPL has presented little to no evidence that there is pressure from users to increase access. Instead, the Bureau seems to be responding solely to the FERC's license obligations. Changes to the Plan should not be motivated by entities who do not have an interest in the sound management of the area. • We believe that retaining the current level and type of use is in keeping with the undeveloped character of the Bigelow Preserve. The Bigelow Preserve Plan allows for "essential service facilities," which are basic facilities needed to service a resource area and to control and enhance public use, the location and design of which should be consistent with the objective of protecting the overall natural character of the Preserve. Hand carry launches are more than sufficient to enhance public use and they preserve natural character by the retaining the integrity of the shoreline. Furthermore, each potential boat launch would require a change in allocation to "Developed Recreation." Changing the allocation of parts of the Flagstaff shoreline would significantly jeopardize the undeveloped	• As explained above in response to NRCMs December 2013 comments (page 5), BPL has proposed to explore developing a new motorized boat launch on east Flagstaff Lake in response to a reduction of such access that has historically been available on the east side of the lake. Brookfield's FERC obligations related to boat access on Flagstaff lake has not been the sole motivation for the proposed amendment. However, as explained in more detail above, the Bureau is no longer pursuing the gravel pit option, within the Bigelow Preserve. The Bureau will continue to pursue options for improving trailered boat access at other sites on east Flagstaff Lake with Brookfield. It should be noted that the lake itself is not within the Bigelow Preserve and has always been open to motorized boating.

character of the Preserve and such a change should be given a high level scrutiny, as suggested by Kathy Eickenberg at the June 12th meeting. <u>Regarding proposed motorized and non-motorized crossing of A.T. on Redington Lot (Proposed Amendment F)</u>: • NRCM continues to **oppose a new crossing of the Appalachian Trail** on the Redington Township Lot. The Redington Lot is very remote. Further development of motorized vehicle trails would retract from the lot's remoteness and we do not believe that motorized crossings are compatible with the quiet recreation opportunities often unique to the Appalachian Trail corridor. More importantly, there appears to have been little to no conversation between the Bureau and the groups that manage the Appalachian Trail – the very groups who will be tasked, according to the draft plan, with managing the crossing. We believe that decisions regarding the Trail need to be made in cooperation with these groups and that the Bureau should not proceed until an agreement has been made.	• As explained above, the Bureau has withdrawn the proposed amendment. As it has in the past, the Bureau will only consider a new motorized crossing of the A.T. after close collaboration with all trail user groups with the objective of minimizing any potential effects on the A.T. and A.T. users. It should be noted that the Bureau's ORV program conducts monitoring of motorized trail crossing of the A.T., often in cooperation with clubs and other trail users.
From: Janne Haines, Narrow Gauge Riders ATV Club	
<u>Regarding Proposed Shared-Use motorized recreation trail crossing of the Appalachian Trail on the Redington Public Lot (Proposed Plan Amendment F):</u> • June 12, at the [ATV Club] monthly meeting the club members discussed Amendment F to the Flagstaff Area Management Plan as written during the five-year review period. Such a new multi-use trail would provide a link between Carrabassett Valley and our towns of Phillips, Avon and Madrid Twp. This would help support local businesses who rely on recreational tourism. The local residents would also have the opportunity to enjoy the unique, beautiful natural settings which were formerly off-limits to us…All members present voted in favor of supporting this plan. We think there is enough room for	• The Bureau acknowledges the support of the Narrow Gauge Riders ATV Club for proposed Amendment F allowing a new shared-use trail crossing of the Appalachian Trail. However, as explained above (page 9) the Bureau has withdrawn the proposed amendment.

everyone to enjoy this beautiful region and are happy that the Bureau [of] Public Lands is conducting this review and responding to what is important to the local people.	
From: Betsy Squibb, Madrid Township	
<u>Regarding Proposed Shared-Use motorized recreation trail crossing of the Appalachian Trail on the Redington Public Lot (Proposed Plan Amendment F):</u> • I am writing to you as a resident of Madrid Township to offer my support for Amendment F to the Flagstaff Area Management Plan as written during the five-year review period. Such a new multi-use trail would provide a link between Carrabassett Valley and our towns of Phillips, Avon and Madrid Twp. This would help support local businesses who rely on recreational tourism. The local residents would also have the opportunity to enjoy the unique, beautiful natural settings which were formerly off-limits to us. • In my nearly forty years of working at the University of Maine at Farmington I heard many stories [from] young people from the region about snowmobiling, riding ATVs and hiking in the backcountry. They referred to these as their favorite family activity. As I skied, hiked or biked with my family in the area of Amendment F it was always a pleasure to stop and talk with others who arrived there using multiple types of recreation. We all realized we shared a passion for this area • We think there is enough room for everyone to enjoy this beautiful region and are happy that the Bureau [of] Public Lands is conducting this review and responding to what is important to the local people.	• The Bureau acknowledges the commenter's support for proposed Plan Amendment F, and recognizes the potential recreational and economic benefits of the proposed motorized trail connection. However, as explained above (page 9) the Bureau has withdrawn the proposed amendment.
From: Nancy and Burt Knapp, Farmington (excerpt)	
<u>General comments regarding restricting development within the Bigelow Preserve</u>: • My husband and I moved to Farmington 7 years ago after living in the Portland area	• The Bureau appreciates the comments, which highlight the unique natural

for 30 years. We have come to love and value the Bigelow Preserve for its undeveloped beauty…and assumed that it would remain unchanged for generations to cherish as we do. The original plans for the area should remain intact for the sake of the wildlife, and the people of Maine. We need quiet natural spaces in an otherwise cluttered world and Bigelow, as it now exists, represents a unique jewel. We hope that the Bureau of Parks and Lands continues to respect the original restrictions placed on the Preserve.	character and values of the Bigelow Preserve. The Bureau will continue to manage the Preserve in accordance with the Bigelow Act which established it and subsequent policies and guidance, which are both incorporated into the current Flagstaff Region Plan. However, as discussed in detail in Appendix F of the Plan (pages 18-20), in response to related comments submitted during the Plan's development, the types of uses and number of developed facilities are not viewed as static, but dynamic, changing in response to changing demands, although guided by the overall objective of keeping the Preserve a backcountry recreation experience.
From: Bob Weingarten	
Regarding the Plan review process:	
• The 5-year Plan Review Process, as conceived by BPL, has been discriminatory, arbitrary, and designed to favor certain special interests and types of actions over other interests and concerns. It is not surprising that the process has reached favorable decisions on Plan Amendments that will develop more infrastructures in the Bigelow Preserve.	• The Plan amendments associated with the Bigelow Preserve focus on non-motorized trails that are co-aligned with existing roads and trails. The Bureau has taken into account comments regarding recreation development proposals and has adjusted the proposals to minimize new infrastructure. The amendments consequently allow little new infrastructure, excepting a potential 2.4 mile single-track mountain bike trail parallel to an existing trail on a management road, which the new trail would replace. No new areas of the preserve are opened to bike use.
• The Bureau only recognizes and allows proposals that favor new development as being appropriate for changes to the Plan during the 5-year review. It has established a rule that only "new" proposals can be acted upon for amending the 2007 Plan and then has arbitrarily defined "new" as applying only to proposals for more infrastructure.	• As noted within the "new issues" outlined following the 2007 Plan recommendations review table (see Appendix B), the recreation proposals that were discussed during the Plan review were each accompanied by changed circumstances not present at the time of the Plan's adoption. No such new issues were brought forth by the Friends of Bigelow or others that were not addressed in the development of the 2007 Plan.
• The Bureau ignores the ecological changes occurring in the Preserve due to increased logging, cutting of late	• The Bureau's timber management within the Bigelow Preserve is guided by the objectives and designated timber

successional growth, new road building and widening of roads for logging, and increased infrastructure in and around the Preserve (e.g., Huts and Trails), which are also "new" since 2007.	management resource allocations contained in the 2007 Plan (refer to pages 55-57 and 148-150, respectively). If the Bureau's management does not meet these guidelines, that is an issue to hold us accountable for, but does not require a Plan amendment.
• BPL has dismissed Friends of Bigelow's and others' concerns about sustaining the ecological and wilderness values of the Preserve in the face of these changes to the character of the Preserve. Dismissal of these threats and impacts are purely politically motivated and demonstrate discrimination against members of FOB by a close-minded BPL. Friends of Bigelow previously submitted a survey of its membership that favored enhanced wilderness values rather than more development in the Preserve. I contrast this attitude with how Baxter State Park studies the impacts of logging on keystone species. While the Bureau claims they consult with the Natural Areas Program prior to logging jobs, no specifics are cited as to the results or changes made from such consultation nor does BPL provide any specific data in its 5-year performance review.	• Regarding "wilderness values"; it is important to reiterate (as explained on page 117 of the 2007 Plan, see Policy 19A) that the Bigelow Preserve is managed as a backcountry recreation area rather than a wilderness area. As such, recreation opportunities can be enhanced or even created in the Preserve, where appropriate, unlike in wilderness. Nevertheless, the BPL takes seriously its management responsibility to protect the unique natural resources and values of the Bigelow Preserve. Baxter State Park, on the other hand, has been managed according to the "forever wild" bequest of Governor Baxter, a very different mandate than that contained on the Bigelow Act, which specifically includes timber harvesting among the purposes for which the Preserve will be managed.
<u>Regarding motorized recreation (proposed trailed boat access at the Little Bigelow gravel pit within the Bigelow Preserve – Amendment F):</u>	
• Not only is BPL violating the law (Bigelow Act) by proposing to develop motorized boat access in the Preserve when none existed prior to 1976, but while there are overwhelming opportunities for motorized boat recreation elsewhere throughout the State (on both public and private lands), there is very little opportunity for enjoying the outdoors without experiencing motorized assaults. The character of the Bigelow Preserve was intended to be one such place. Moreover, favoring motorized boat recreation flies in the face of the larger issue of climate change, which argues for massive reduction in the	• As explained above in response to comments by NRCM (see page 5), the Bureau is no longer pursuing the creation of a trailered boat launch at the gravel pit site, in light of uncertainties regarding the consistency of that option with the Bigelow Preserve Act (specifically regarding new roads). However, the Bureau will continue to pursue options for improving trailered boat access at other sites on east Flagstaff Lake with Brookfield, given the reduction in such access that has recently occurred. It should be noted that the lake itself is not within the Bigelow Preserve and has always been open to motorized boating.

burning of fossil fuels not the promotion thereof by a public agency. <u>Regarding "Fracturing and Marketing of the Preserve"</u>:	
• It is clear that BPL would like to manage the Bigelow Preserve in a cookie-cutter fashion as merely one unit among its many public land parcels. However, BPL cannot and should not be doing so. The Bigelow Preserve was created by citizen referendum and has a unique law that protects its character. The way BPL hands out new infrastructure goodies to those less inclined to appreciate or respect the history and character of the Preserve is like handing out concessions the way they do in some National Parks. Rather than having an intact Preserve presented to the public as a visual and ecological whole, we are moving towards a fractured preserve where each group has its own little piece of the pie and that's all they care about--- to keep it and expand it as it suits their group's interests. With this Pandora's box now opened, BPL will need to be continually juggling all these requests to try to satisfy all the new infrastructure proposals and related politics, while losing sight of the bigger picture of the Preserve itself and its wildlife and wilderness values.	• The Bureau is cognizant of the threat that incremental increases in recreational infrastructure could present to the general natural character of the preserve its semi-remote environment. However, most of the new trails allowed by the Plan amendments are collocated on existing management roads and trails and all are confined to the southern margin of the Preserve. It is also important to recognize that preservation of ecological resources is a primary purpose of the Special Protection resource allocation, which is applied to the entirety of the 10,545 acre Ecological Reserve, and 280 additional acres within the Bigelow Preserve. Protection of ecological and wildlife values are also a primary purpose of areas allocated to Wildlife Management, which comprise an additional 1,245 acres within the Bigelow Preserve. Visual resources within the Preserve are protected by Visual Consideration areas (Class I and II), which apply to the entire Preserve as dominant and secondary allocations and impose constraints on alterations to the landscape.
• As an example of this is that all Bigelow Preserve Management Plans prior to 2007 committed to a "no marketing" policy for the Preserve, whereas all the Plan amendments now proposed by BPL will directly encourage the marketing of the Preserve by the special interests that are so favored by them. This is already being done by the Huts and Trails corporation that has taken the modest state map of the Preserve and used it to create a Huts and Trails map that gets fed to a software developer that has created a "maplet" @$2.99 of the Preserve to download for iPhones and iPads! Just google the Preserve and see how it's being marketed to all the world. Gone are the days when the previous Management Plans spoke of	• The Bureau continues to adhere to the policy of providing the public basic information about the Bigelow Preserve through maps, brochures, and online information accessed through the Bureau's website, for example. The Bureau will not seek to "market" the Preserve to increase its use. (See Appendix F of the 2007 Plan, pages 20-21, for a more detailed discussion of this topic.) However, private entities are not prevented from including the Preserve on their maps or other materials.

how the only marketing allowed would be a folded map/brochure and small unobtrusive directional signs in the Preserve!	
From: Ken Spalding, Friends of Bigelow (excerpted)	
<u>Regarding development in the Bigelow Preserve</u>:	
• Friends of Bigelow is concerned about the level of development in the Preserve. There have been a large number of development proposals for the Preserve in the past few years, most of which have been approved, including some that were accomplished without approval and approved after-the-fact. With so many new and expanded uses and infrastructure proposed after just 5 years since the last full-blown plan amendment we are deeply concerned about what this may mean for maintaining the natural state of the Preserve over the long-term.	• The Bureau has continued to maintain a conservative approach toward new facilities within the Bigelow Preserve, as guided by the 2007 Plan. None have been approved or accomplished since the Plan's adoption, other than the east shore A.T. realignment and Hemlock Trail and new A.T. campsites, accomplished in cooperation with MATC. The Plan amendments allow no new infrastructure other than a potential 2.4 mile single-track mountain bike trail at the south margin of the Preserve that would parallel and replace an existing trail on a management road.
• Under the current planning process the natural state of the Preserve is in danger of being lost. Part of the problem is that the Bureau only recognizes development proposals as being appropriate for changes to the Plan during the 5-year review. That so much development is proposed during this 5-year review certainly represents a change of circumstance and warrants being addressed in the plan revision. The development includes new recreational development, expansion of logging infrastructure and some that seems inexplicable . We urge the Bureau to include in the 5-year revision, the need to develop a means to recognize the cumulative impact of development on the Preserve and identify criteria for limiting development so that it will stop reducing the natural state of the Preserve.	• The Bureau has recognized in the Plan process the changes in circumstances represented by new trails and huts and proposals for new trails on lands surrounding the Preserve. However, as explained above, the Bureau has not proposed a significant amount of new development within the Preserve. The Bureau recognized the validity of concerns about overdevelopment and cumulative changes to the Preserve during development of the 2007 Plan. As described in detail in Appendix F of the Plan, pages 18-20, the Vision, policies, and recommendations contained in the Plan all contribute to careful management and monitoring of public use within the Preserve with the overall objective of maintaining a backcountry recreation experience.
• We do applaud the Bureau for deciding to co-locate some of the disparate trail development proposals and for not allowing the development of a	• Comment noted.

mechanized, non-winter trail through the ecological-reserve on the North side of the Preserve. <u>Regarding a new trailered boat launch on the Eastern portion of Flagstaff Lake (Amendment F.)</u>	
• The Friends of Bigelow categorically opposes the development of a trailered boat launch in the Preserve. Such a facility is contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Bigelow Preserve Act. All motor vehicles in the Preserve, excepting snowmobiles and vehicles engaged in timber harvesting are restricted to roads that were easily accessible by automobiles as of the effective date of the Act. Neither motorized boats nor the vehicles towing them can be allowed to travel off of these designated roads.	• As explained above in response to NRCMs December 2013 comments (page 5), BPL has proposed to explore developing a new motorized boat launch on east Flagstaff Lake in response to a reduction of such access that has historically been available on the east side of the lake. However, as explained in more detail above, the Bureau is no longer pursuing the gravel pit option, within the Bigelow Preserve.
• That the Bureau can unilaterally, without public notice, change Resource Allocation in the Preserve in order to accommodate projects that the public would expect to be prohibited under existing allocations is a sobering revelation. It seems that Resource Allocations should come with the warning that "past performance is not an indicator of future results." Understanding that no agency likes to give up flexibility for a more onerous or accountable process, we urge the Bureau to revise the process for changing Resource Allocations to include public input.	• The public process conducted for the five-year review did allow for public input into potential changes to resource allocations, which were described at both the December 2013 Advisory Committee meeting (attended by members of the public as well as AC members) and the June 2014 public meeting. While the Bureau would be hesitant to propose other than minor reallocation as part of a five-year review, the small area involved in this case (~0.5 acre), particularly as seen relative to the length of the shoreline and the type of development proposed, was not deemed inappropriate to consider in the current review.
• Friends of Bigelow opposes the development of other trailered boat access on the East end of Flagstaff Lake. Power boat traffic is currently concentrated on the West end of Flagstaff Lake. Human powered boating is concentrated on the East end of the lake. Power boats off the shore of the Preserve will negatively impact users of the Preserve. The remote and backcountry experience of people who use the Preserve is enhanced by their	• As explained above in response to comments by NRCM (page 5), the Bureau has considered the potential effect of the proposed facility on non-motorized boaters and other recreationists, and believes the intended 4-6 boat capacity trailered launch facility would have minimal effect on the experience of non-powered boaters on the lake given the large area of water available and the type of boats that would likely use the intended facility. The Bureau

ability to paddle on the waters adjacent to the Preserve without the intrusion of power boats into this remote setting. In addition to the negative impacts on paddlers, increased noise from power boats will have a negative impact on Preserve users along the shore, including at backcountry and remote campsites. Just as some truck traffic on Route 16 and the shooting of guns at the Wing Camp can be heard along the ridge of Bigelow, there is the distinct potential that increased power boat use on the east end of the Lake will increase noise levels on Bigelow Mountain as well as along the shore of the Preserve.	acknowledges the possibility that noise from motorized boat may have a negative impact on some Preserve users on the shore and elsewhere. However, in seeking to balance recreational needs and potential benefits with potential adverse effects, this possible impact was not deemed to be sufficient to forego attempting to provide a small but fully functional trailered boat access on the east side of the lake.
• Although power boat use on the West end of Flagstaff Lake may be a benefit to the town of Eustis, increased power boat use on the East end of Flagstaff Lake is a detriment to the current and growing numbers of paddlers on that portion of the Lake. We urge the Bureau to not participate in any efforts to add a trailered boat launch on the east side of Flagstaff Lake.	• See preceding response.
<u>Regarding "The Bigelow Preserve Act mandate to acquire property rights and interests in the Preserve":</u>	
• The Wing Camp, in the Preserve on the shore of Flagstaff Lake near the Bigelow Lodge, has illegitimately occupied the land it sits on for more than 40 years. They have never produced any evidence that they have ever had a right to occupy the land. There was no lease for the land since before the creation of the Preserve and there hasn't been a lease in the 38 years since the State acquired the land. The Wings have ignored Bureau attempts to enter into a lease and have never paid any lease fees to the State. The occasional occupants of the camp have not abided by terms that would be in force if there was a lease. Terms of a lease drafted in 1997 would have terminated all rights to occupy the land by 2011. The building has been deteriorating for years. The roof of an addition/attached shed is caved in and the	• No new information or circumstances have been brought forward that suggest that the Plan recommendation to execute a lease for the Wing Camp needs to be modified. The lease offered to the Wing's in February 1998 was a renewable 5-year lease that could be transferred to immediate family members, rather than containing a set termination date. A recent inspection of the camp did not reveal any substantial change in the condition of the camp, although it was noted that the shed attached to the rear of the structure is in poor condition. Therefore, BPL will act to execute a lease, with a condition requiring removal of the shed and, potentially removal, relocation, or replacement of the privy (pending further investigation), and with a goal of bringing the issue to a resolution by December 30, 2015 (see

sills are rotting. The camp is within 25' of the water and the outhouse is very close to the water where there is an inlet to the lake.	page 6 of 5-Year Review table, provided in Appendix B).
• We further urge that the Bureau maintain an inventory of inholdings in the Preserve and track opportunities for acquisition of those properties.	• The 2007 Plan contains a list of inholdings (page 66) and a recommendation to seek to acquire inholdings in or adjacent to the Preserve, if they become available and resources are available (page 164).
From: Richard Fecteau, MATC	
<u>Regarding Proposed Hiking/Snowshoeing Connector Trail on Carrabassett Valley Lot (Proposed Plan Amendment E):</u>	
• Representing MATC I wish to reiterate my previous objections to the proposed trail connection thru the Bigelow Preserve from the Hut located on the Sewer District land. The construction of this hut was somewhat opposed by bureau staff from the beginning, connector trails were cut across State lands without permission, old roads have been cleared and signed without permission, MH&T's maps identify some trails for biking when they were only permitted for hiking etc. It seems ridiculous that BPL now uses the existence of this fee access hut to justify a special trail across the Preserve.	• BPL acknowledges that there have been some difficulties in communication and coordination with MH&T regarding connector trails on the Bureau's Carrabassett Valley lot. We continue to work with MH&T to address this. That said, the Bureau was not opposed to the construction of the Stratton Brook Hut even if certain staff may have been; and provided some input to MH&T on minimizing the visibility of the Hut from the Bigelow Preserve. The Bureau remains supportive of the opportunities being provided by MH&T, and consistent with our guiding policy, the IRP, "The Bureau will work with landowners, organizations, clubs, and others to provide connections between both land and water trails on State Parks and Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands and, where appropriate, on adjacent private and public land. Landowner approval will always be sought and received before planned connections are approved." (p. 64) The proposed trail provides connectivity to trails south of the Bigelow Preserve including a system of trails for hiking, snowshoeing and backcountry skiing, that will expand these opportunities for the public. This will be accomplished with the addition of a 1.25 mile connector across the Carrabassett Valley lot and only a quarter mile additional length of trail within the Preserve, all on an old road.

Regarding proposed motorized and non-motorized crossing of A.T. on Redington Lot (Proposed Amendment F): • MATC also objects to including a motorized crossing of the Appalachian Trail on the Reddington lot in the plan. BPL does not have and will likely never have permission to cross the abutting "ridge parcel" recently purchased by a conservation buyer. Including this proposal in the plan is purely speculative at this time. The fact that BPL points to the draft High Peaks regional trail plan as a justification for this crossing is hardly a reasonable argument. The draft HP trail plan has not had suitable public input, has not been adopted by regional or state governments and is only a draft wish list compiled without consulting the hiking community. A document was signed with BPL staff supervision a few years ago that stated that this trail was not to be pursued. It should not be included.	• As explained above, the Bureau has withdrawn the proposed amendment. However, interest has long been high in a motorized trail connection in this area (and restoration of a former snowmobile connection) on the part of many in the ORV community and in local communities. Comments given at the June 12 public meeting and providing in writing (as contained in this appendix) serve to confirm this strong interest. The Draft High Peaks Trails Plan has not been offered by the Bureau as a justification for the proposal, but as a primary documentation of the priority that a range of trail users and others place on this area as part of an overall strategy to enhance regional trail connectivity.
• We also object to a trailered boat launch within the Preserve. The Act that created the Preserve does not allow such a boat launch to be constructed. The East end of Flagstaff is currently pretty quiet which adds to the remote character of the trails within the Preserve. If the current managers of Flagstaff lake are required by their FERC permit to provide a trailered boat launch on the East shore then they should do at the current location with their own funds and not try to pass the financial and management burden to the taxpayers of Maine.	• As explained above in response to comments by NRCM (see page 5), the Bureau is no longer pursuing the creation of a trailered boat launch at the gravel pit site, in light of uncertainties regarding the consistency of that option with the Bigelow Preserve Act (specifically regarding new roads). However, the Bureau will continue to pursue options for improving trailered boat access at other sites on east Flagstaff Lake with Brookfield, given the reduction in such access that has recently occurred. It should be noted that the lake itself is not within the Bigelow Preserve and has always been open to motorized boating.
From: Wendy Janssen, National Park Service (excerpts)	
Regarding proposed motorized and non-motorized crossing of A.T. on Redington Lot (Proposed Amendment F): • Proposed Amendment F states, "The 100 foot Special Protection buffer in the vicinity of the management road crossing of the A.T. will be reallocated to Remote Recreation. In addition, the Remote	• As explained above, the Bureau has withdrawn the proposed amendment. The Bureau would like to assure the NPS that it recognizes the importance of protecting the physical and natural

Recreation designation buffering the A.T. on this lot will allow for the new motorized recreation trail." The National Park Service opposes the proposed change from "Special Protection" to "Remote Recreation." This reduced level of protection would be unprecedented on Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) sites for which a management plan has been approved through public involvement. This proposed amendment would lower the protection status of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and allow a motorized crossing, thus creating an alarming precedent, in addition to the potential adverse effects on resources and the visitor experience. • The Appalachian Trail through the High Peaks is one of the most beautiful, rugged and remote sections of the entire 2,184 mile trail. In fact, the section between Eddy Pond and Caribou Valley is one of the longest sections without a sanctioned motorized crossing. Visitors come from near and far to hike the peaks of this region on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Lessening the level of protection and allowing a motorized crossing of the Appalachian Trail in the Redington Public Lot is inappropriate for this nationally significant resource, which is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.	resource of the A.T. as a nationally significant recreation trail and historic resource. • Speaking generally, and not specifically to this trail crossing proposal, the Bureau will only consider a new motorized crossing of the A.T. for very limited circumstances, when it determines that the proposed crossing is of high importance to regional trail networks and when no other options that would avoid a new crossing appear to be viable, and only after close collaboration with A.T. management agencies and organizations and all trail user groups with the objective of minimizing any potential effects on the A.T. and A.T. users. • In is not the Bureau's intention, in any location or circumstance, to lessen the level of buffer protection of the A.T. The Bureau would like to correct its previous indication that the proposed shared motorized and non-motorize trail crossing of the A.T. would require a change in resource allocation from Special Protection to Remote Recreation. Because the proposed trail crossing would follow the existing management road (identified in the MATC Local Management Plan, Appendix F4 – Road Crossings in Maine, as "Tract 112-04: Logging roads on BPL property") across the A.T., no reallocation of the buffer would be necessary.

Appendix C-2.

Complete Written Comments from the Advisory Committee and the Public Regarding Proposed Plan Amendments

December 16, 2013

Dear BPL Staff and the Advisory Committee for the Flagstaff Region,

Thank you for holding the Advisory Committee meeting for the Flagstaff Region Management Plan-five year review on December 11 in Farmington. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy appreciates being a member of the committee and would like to offer these comments to the Advisory Committee and MBPL staff.

The Appalachian Trail through the High Peaks is one of the most beautiful, rugged and remote sections of the entire 2185 mile Trail. In fact, the section between Eddy Pond and Caribou Valley is one of the longest sections without a sanctioned motorized crossing. Trail enthusiasts come from close by and from all across the country to hike the peaks of this region on the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). The A.T.in Maine is managed collaboratively by the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the National Park Service in cooperation with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. In the past, management challenges have been met and overcome through the cooperation of the A.T. management community, including MBPL and the varied user groups from the surrounding communities. As new proposals come to the table, it is important to continue this collaborative and effective management.

Because of the many stakeholders involved, the proposed crossing of the Appalachian Trail in the Redington Public Lot should be considered critically from multiple perspectives. At the December 11 meeting, economic benefits for the surrounding communities and connectivity in the motorized trail systems were discussed as benefits of the crossing. In order to ensure that these benefits can be achieved, it will be important to provide further indication that abutting landowners are willing to allow motorized use. It will also be important to show exactly how the trail systems will connect through the Redington Lot in a full detailed proposal including rationale for the proposed multi-use trail, design criteria, long term management direction, and maps.

There are also a series of potential management challenges that a crossing in this location would incur for the A.T. The remote location of the Redington Lot makes active management of the crossing difficult. There are many seeps and small creeks along the A.T. in the Redington Lot. Incursions onto the A.T. treadway by mechanized recreation, including mountain bikes, could have costly impacts for the A.T. tread and for its natural resource values. Also, motorized crossings incur safety risks for users in both directions, and potential visitor expectation conflicts. This would especially be true in the summer when hiker use of the area is very high. Finally, the development of this multi-use trail could affect wildlife and plant species and the area's hydrology. If this proposal goes forward, it will be important to specifically address these concerns.

Thank you for including the Appalachian Trail Conservancy in this discussion, and we welcome being part of the continued dialogue.

Claire Polfus

Maine Conservation Resources Manager - Appalachian Trail Conservancy
cpolfus@appalachiantrail.org 207-778-0700

Vogel, Jim

From: Lester Kenway <trailser@myfairpoint.net>
Sent: Saturday, December 21, 2013 11:35 AM
To: Vogel, Jim
Subject: Flagstaff Region Planning
Attachments: Proposals.doc; Proposals.pdf

Hi Jim,

Thank you for all of your good work on this plan. It certainly is challenging.

I am not a member of your advisory committee, but wish to submit comments on various issues that affect the Appalachian Trail and in particular, the Bigelow Preserve.

I hope you will accept these comments as they come from someone who has been hiking and working on trails in the planning area since the 1970s

I would be pleased to follow up on the attached comments if you wish.

Lester C. Kenway
President
Maine Appalachian Trail Club
15 Westwood Road
Bangor ME 04401
207-947-2723

<u>Comments of Lester Kenway, MATC, on new issues/proposals</u> (comments are in italics; received as email attachment 12/21/13)

Issues for Advisory Committee Attention
New Issues or Circumstances Not Addressed in the Plan:

Mountain Bike Trail Requests
The Carrabassett Region Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) has requested mountain bike access to several existing snowmobile trails within the Bigelow Preserve and adjacent state lands. One request is for a trail across the northern "leg" of The Horns Ecological Reserve at Bigelow in order to complete a bike route around the mountain. Mountain bikes would cross the reserve on the same route as the primary high elevation snowmobile trail. The other requests relate to allowing mountain bikes to use and/or rerouting of snowmobile trails for bike use along the south margin of the Bigelow Preserve. <u>New circumstances</u>: The request is prompted by a new focus on mountain biking as a component of the four-season recreation economy in the region, and new capacity to manage mountain biking through the Carrabassett Region Chapter of NEMBA.

Maine Huts and Trails Request
Maine Huts and Trails (MH&T) has submitted a proposal to the Bureau and MATC to create a year-round trail from their new Stratton Brook Hut in Carrabassett Valley to the existing Stratton Brook Trail (ungroomed bike and ski trail; AKA Esker Trail/60s Road) in Bigelow Preserve, intersecting 1 mile east of near the Fire Warden's Trail. Proposed uses include hiking, snowshoeing, hiking, mountain biking and potentially skiing (ungroomed). The proposed trail crosses the Carrabassett Valley lot and enters The Horns Ecological Reserve in Wyman Twp. <u>New circumstances</u>: At the time of the Plan adoption in 2007, there were no plans for the new "Stratton Brook" MH&T facility.

Until a few years ago, MATC was the only hiking trail management group in the Bigelow Preserve. We have been joined by the NEMBA mountain bike group, and will soon be joined by the Maine Huts and Trails. While these groups provide notable public recreation services, the cumulative effect of adding many more people onto the Bigelow Mountain Trails is likely to cause impacts and degradation to the trails. MATC currently operates 2 seasonal trail crews that counter damage to the AT via drainage and reconstruction work on 267 miles of trail. This is not enough to address problem areas in a reasonable amount of time. At present we have an estimated 30 to 50 year backlog of important projects, some of them in the Bigelow Preserve. We would welcome support from BPL or the other trail groups to improve our ability to manage damaged trail segments in the Preserve.

Crocker Mountain Acquisition
Acquisition of 12,046 acres at Crocker Mountain, which abuts Bigelow Preserve, Mount Abraham and the Redington public lot, was completed on June 7, 2013. Interest in the recreation potential of this land is such that a management plan for the area will be developed as soon as feasible, along with a recommendation that the Crocker Mountain plan be appended to the Flagstaff Region Plan.

I hope that MATC will be included in the planning process.

Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail
Western Mountains Corporation is working to develop a long-distance non-motorized trail from Coburn Gore to Kingfield. Proposed uses include hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and mountain biking. The trail would also include access to the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. The proposed trail would cross Public Lands at Chain of Ponds, the Bigelow Preserve and The Horns Ecological Reserve, partly with new trails and partly on existing roads and trails. <u>New circumstances</u>: This trail concept was not developed at the time the Plan was adopted in 2007.

This is not within the mission of MATC.

Redington Twp. Lot Motorized Crossing of the A.T.
Snowmobile and ATV groups are interested in a new crossing of the A.T. on the Redington Twp. Lot to provide a connection between Caribou Pond Road to the north and the Barnjum area to the south, and to provide several loop trail opportunities within the broader regional motorized trails system. The potential may exist to route ORV use to winter roads on the lot, which include an existing A.T. woods road crossing. In combination with necessary trail linkages on abutting private lands, this concept could provide the desired trail connection. Note that new timber management roads or motorized recreation trails are not allowed within 500 feet of the A.T. (see page 158 of the Plan); the A.T. on the Redington Twp. Lot is surrounded by a 100-foot Special Protection buffer and additional 400-foot Remote Recreation buffer. An amendment to the Plan will be necessary to allow this new motorized recreation use of the existing road crossing of the A.T. New circumstances: In June 2011, the Saddleback A.T. motorized crossing was accomplished through the conveyance of a trail a corridor to the State from the National Park Service. Until then, both the Redington and Saddleback locations were on the table in negotiations with the NPS for A.T. motorized crossings. A deal was worked out with the NPS for the Saddleback crossing, through a transfer of lands to the State. This option was not offered for the Redington crossing. However, an alternate approach may now be pursued by rerouting the trail onto the State-owned lands. A motorized crossing at this location is important for snowmobiling, ATVing and for the Maine Huts and Trails groomed cross-country ski trail.

During the past 3 years representatives of MATC and MHT has been discussing plans for MHT to extend their trail system west from Carrabasset Valley to Route 4. Since the National Park Service (NPS) does not allow snowmobiles (used by MHT) on Appalachian Trail Lands we spent time discussing where MHT might cross the Appalachian Trail. MATC suggested the Redington Public Lot as a place where MHT might more easily a obtain permit for a crossing. This was going to be a groomed ski trail only. In recent times, a more expanded proposal has come forward including hiking, skiing, snowmobiles and ATV's. MATC needs to evaluate this proposal and what impacts it will bring to the Appalachian Trail.

Dec. 30, 2013

To: James Vogel
Senior Planner, Bureau of Parks and Lands
www.state.me.us/doc/parks/index.hmtl<http://www.maine.gov/doc/bpl>

From: John McCatherin, Secretary-Treasurer
Carrabassett Valley ATV Club
johnmccatherin@tds.net

Subject: Comments re.the 12-11-13 Advisory Committee Meeting

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the discussions at the meeting earlier this month. In general, my comments would be supportive of proposals for increased utilization of public lands in the northern Franklin County area, consistent, of course, with existing regulations and management practices, particularly in the Bigelow Preserve.

I share concerns voiced about trail proliferation but believe that, properly designed and managed, the entire area has room to support increased usage by recreationalists, non-motorized and motorized.

Obviously, my focus is on the proposed resumption of the A.T. crossing for motorized vehicles in the Barnjum area, including ATVs. At the time that crossing was traded off for the Camp 2 crossing, it was presented as an “either or” proposition to support the completion of the 139-mile Moose Loop ATV trail system. I never quite understood why that was necessary but felt compromise was necessary to complete the Moose Loop.

As a newcomer to the Advisory Committee, let me share my thoughts on why a motorized trail system should be allowed in the areas of Caribou Valley and Redington and Mt. Abram Townships, in particular, and permitted to expand in selected other areas as well.

On a personal note, for over 60 or more years, I considered myself principally a skier, hiker and mountain climber. I summited Katahdin for the first time in 1951 at age 11. My first ascent to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain was in 1953, using the newly-opened rope tow for the first few hundred yards or so and then seal skins for the remaining, roughly 2,000 feet of vertical.

Over the years I began to spend more and more time in Northern Franklin County both during the ski season and in warmer months. Bigelow and Katahdin, for instance, became annual climbs and my climbs expanded over the years to include most of the rest of the Appalachian Trail in Maine and New Hampshire and dozens of other peaks along the way.

The reasons were the same as those embraced by hikers today: exercise, self-sufficiency and the opportunity to go places and see things that many people never have the opportunity to enjoy.

Sixty four years later, the legs and knees that carried the 11-year-old up Katahdin and countless other mountains no longer work that well but the desire to get into the wilderness continues to exist.

An analysis of ATV riders would show that many of those involved in the sport today are similar, outdoors people who now can't hike great distances or climb. Another cut at that census would show families with young children, introducing them to the beauty of the outdoors.

A close friend in recent years purchased a side-by-side ATV so his handicapped daughter, once an avid and active outdoors woman, still has access to the trails and woods she loved and traversed manually for so many years.

With the advent of ATV clubs and their signage and policing policies, largely gone are the "cowboys" looking for mudholes, or off-trail adventurers with no respect for the lands they're traveling. In fact, because of 62-inch wheelspan barriers imposed by ATV trail maintainers, many ATV trails are void of "Jeep-ers" and SUVs and pickups with their capacities for land damage.

What largely remains is a recreational population of trail riders intent on respecting, getting into and enjoying the wilderness areas, just as hikers and/or bicyclists do.

Should they be denied that opportunity? I think not.

It was suggested at the meeting that an "agreement" had been reached that the vast region of the High Peaks area bounded by Highway Routes 27, 16, 4 and 142 would confine motorized vehicles to the perimeter.

Is it that difficult to see that an area comprising 300 or more square miles could support an ATV trail or two without imposing on more traditional recreationists?

In such a massive area, motorized vehicles would normally impose little or not at all on hiking trails, but as recreational trails proliferate we need to accept that multiple-use trails may in some areas be necessary, such as at A.T. crossings.

In fact, a reasonably-designed motorized trail network could support access to wilderness trails for maintenance and/or rescue purposes and, again, properly designed, bring business in proximity to the network of Maine Huts & Trails facilities such as the boost snowmobilers have given to the Dead River Hut revenues.

We are not advocating for a willy-nilly network of trails but a couple of routes that would open up huge networks of trail riding in the seven ATV club areas and produce loop trips of reasonable, day-trip distances unlike the multi-day passage required for the Moose Loop. Since most of our trails are shared with snowmobile clubs, these new segments would also support the winter riders.

A key to much of this would be the A.T. crossing at Barnjum, for instance, connecting Salem, Phillips, Madrid, and Strong networks to the Carrabassett and Stratton area networks. That in itself would open up several loop routes of 25 to 40 miles, distances that are quite doable at the slow speeds generally traveled by ATV-ers.

When you look north from the 25-mile network operated by the Carrabassett Valley ATV Club, we are already prohibited from riding in the 56-square-mile area of the Bigelow Preserve, even though hikers, bikers, snowmobiles and even automobiles are permitted in many areas.

It would be sad, if not discriminatory, to prohibit participation -- in an area encompassing at least eight townships -- of outdoors people seeking the same wilderness experiences as those already using these areas today.

Natural Resources Council of Maine
3 Wade Street • Augusta, Maine 04330 • (207) 622-3101 • Fax: (207) 622-4343 • www.nrcm.org

December 31, 2013

Jim Vogel
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Division of Parks and Public Lands
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

RE: Five Year Review of the 2007 Flagstaff Management Plan

Dear Jim:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the Five Year Review of the 2007 Flagstaff Management Plan (the "Plan") related to issues addressed at the December 11, 2013 Advisory Committee meeting. The Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) has several comments that we would like the Bureau to consider as it moves forward with its review of the Plan.

Bigelow Preserve

1. The Plan calls for execution of a lease for the **Wing Camp**. NRCM questions whether any public benefit is derived from continuing to pursue a lease when the leasee has not been cooperative for some time and when the camp is in disrepair. We believe that it is a better use of Bureau resources to abandon efforts to rectify the lease. However, we also understand that there may be extenuating legal circumstances that may bind the Bureau's actions. If this is the case, NRCM recommends that such circumstances be presented to the Advisory Committee so that the Committee may weigh in the Bureau's next steps.

2. The Carrabassett Region Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association has requested **mountain bike access to several existing trails within the Bigelow Preserve**. NRCM believes that mountain biking can be a compatible use within the Preserve, so long as it does not result in overdevelopment, is not near sensitive natural areas, and does not unduly interfere with other recreational pursuits. We will address each trail proposal individually:

    - We **support** mountain bike use on the **"Dead Moose Trail"** because a management road is already in existence, so long as the Bureau examines potential culvert and drainage repairs.
    - NRCM is **concerned** about the proposal to reroute the existing **"Esker Trail"** to allow for use as a haul route over the next few years. We question whether it is a good use of Bureau resources to temporality reroute a trail (instead of temporarily closing it), which would could result in two disturbed areas once hauling is done.
    - We **support** the Bureau's alternative recommendation for the **"Birthday Hill"** trail. The Bureau's recommendation to allow mountain bike use on the nearby management road/snowmobile trail is a good idea because it promotes mountain bike touring instead of the intensive use that the proposed "Birthday Hill" trail would have generated.
    - NRCM **does not support** the "Backside Trail" proposal, due to concerns about overdevelopment of the northern half of the Bigelow Preserve.

Flagstaff Lake

3. At the December 11, 2013 Advisory Committee meeting, the Bureau presented **two potential new boat launch sites for the east end of Flagstaff Lake**. NRCM does not support either potential site and does not support the addition of any additional trailered boat launches on Flagstaff Lake. It is the experience of NRCM staff that Flagstaff has little motorized boat traffic, the majority of which is limited to the west end of the lake where there are five trailered launches. We believe that retaining the current level and type of use is in keeping with the undeveloped character of the Bigelow Preserve. The Bigelow Preserve Plan allows for "essential service facilities", which are basic facilities needed to service a resource area and to control and enhance public use, the location and design of which should be consistent with the objective of protecting the overall natural character of the Preserve. Hand carry launches are more than sufficient to enhance public use and they preserve natural character by the retaining the integrity of the shoreline. Furthermore, each potential boat launch would require a change in allocation to "Developed Recreation". Changing the allocation of parts of the Flagstaff shoreline would significantly jeopardize the undeveloped character of the Preserve.

Redington Township Lot

4. NRCM does not support a **new crossing of the Appalachian Trail** on the Redington Township Lot. The Redington Lot is very remote. Further development of motorized vehicle trails would retract from the lot's remoteness. While NRCM has not officially weighed in on any effort to establish a National Wildlife Refuge in the area, we are interested in the idea and would not like to see any development (such as a motorized vehicle crossing of the AT) that would jeopardize such a designation. Furthermore, NRCM does not believe that motorized crossings are compatible with the quiet recreation opportunities often unique to the Appalachian Trail corridor.

General: Applies to All Lands

5. NRCM believes that potential **increased timber harvesting** on public lands is inconsistent with the Plan. We believe that increased timber harvesting would put unnecessary pressure on old growth component and late-successional forest. Bureau policy calls for retention of old growth component "at similar proportions in the residual stand as it occurred pre-harvest." (Pg. 57 of the Plan.) The Bigelow Preserve is estimated to have from 30 to 35% in late-successional stands. It is Bureau policy to increase the amount of late-successional forest. (Pg. 57 of the Plan.) Increased harvesting would strain Bureau resources making it difficult for the Bureau to follow the Plan, which calls for careful selection harvest of hardwoods in the Bigelow Preserve. (Pg. 56 of the Plan.) Selection harvest requires substantial manpower, which would be stretched if the Bureau were to increase its harvest. Increased harvesting represents a substantial change in policy and should receive more detailed oversight from the Advisory Committee. NRCM requests that any proposal to increase harvest levels over what was planned when the Plan was adopted be presented in specific detail to the Advisory Committee for review and comment prior to any harvesting or related activities.

Thank you again for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Eliza Donoghue, Esq.
North Woods Advocate & Outreach Coordinator

Protecting the Nature of Maine

Printed on post-consumer recycled, processed chlorine-free paper

HIGH PEAKS ALLIANCE

Jim Vogel, Senior Planner
Bureau of Parks and Lands
18 Elkins Lane, Harlow Building
22 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0022

RE: Public Comment on Amendments to the Flagstaff Area Management Plan, 4/2/2014

Dear Mr. Vogel,

On behalf of High Peaks Alliance (HPA) I respectively submit this comment on proposed amendments to the Flagstaff Area Management Plan (FAMP) to the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL). We are pleased to be a member of the FAMP Advisory Committee and look forward to continuing work with BPL and other partners to improve management of public lands in the High Peaks region for future generations of residents and visitors.

High Peaks Alliance is a local grass-roots organization made up of hunters, snowmobilers, ATV riders, hikers, and guides, dedicated to protecting traditional public recreation access in Franklin County's High Peaks region. HPA activities include collaborative land conservation and economic development projects which feature public access. Our projects include working with motorized and non-motorized trail groups to develop new and enhance existing trails, and land conservation initiatives which feature permanent public access for everyone. We envision a region where future generations can enjoy the traditional outdoor lifestyle we take for granted today and which is such a large part of the high quality of life in the High Peaks region. Please visit www.highpeaksalliance.org for more information about the Alliance and its activities.

Public access is vital to Northern Franklin County's growing recreation economy. Visitors come from all over to use the back-country trail systems which knit together a region rich in history, exceptional beauty, and abundant wildlife. Residents enjoy a high quality of life and ready access to the outdoors. In 2013, the High Peaks Alliance (HPA) worked with local partners to write a DRAFT regional back-country trails plan. We identified challenges and opportunities confronting trail groups in the region and collaboratively developed a regional vision for the future of trails in Maine's High Peaks. The plan will guide HPA and our partners as we continue to support land conservation projects in the region.

A successful regional system of back-country trails would emphasize a balance of uses, efficiently connect communities, and include sustainable trails stewarded by resilient organizations. The regional system would feature greater trail density and complexity where it makes sense to do so, and create a diversity of back-country trail experiences for residents and

visitors. Stacked loop summer and winter systems interconnected by linear trails would create a versatile system accessible from any High Peaks community.

HPA's DRAFT High Peaks Back-country Trails Plan identifies several projects which would enhance regional trail systems in the region by providing more efficient routes connecting the towns of Phillips, Kingfield, Salem, Carrabassett Valley, Stratton, and Rangeley. Many of these projects align with BPLs recommended amendments to FAMP. HPA firmly supports the following amendments:

Amendments A & B: Kingfield to Coburn Gore Trail (pertaining to the Chain of Ponds Unit & Bigelow Preserve):

1. HPA supports development of this new heritage trail which would run parallel to the Route 27 State Scenic Byway, and incorporate segments of the original route used by the Benedict Arnold Expedition during the revolutionary war. This new linear trail will provide the final leg in a 350+ mile international back-packing experience which will include the Appalachian Trail, Sentiers Frontaliers, and Coos County Trail. It will complement motorized trails which currently link the High Peaks to Quebec. Success of this new trail will be dependent on collaboration with motorized trail groups in Stratton-Eustis, Carrabassett Valley, and Kingfield.

Amendments C & D: Use of existing roads in the Bigelow Preserve for Mountain Biking, and development of new Single Track Trail parallel to the "60's Haul Road" trail.

2. HPA supports BPL's plan to work with CRNEMBA to manage bike use within the preserve on existing roads and to develop a new single-track trail parallel to the "60's Haul Road" trail. If sustainably built the new trail will lay lighter on the ground then the existing, frequently boggy, woods road, cause less erosion, and provide a better experience for riders. It will provide an important back-country leg in the developing system of mountain biking trails in and around Stratton Brook Hut.

Amendment E: Allow construction of a new hiking/snowshoeing/back-country ski trail between the MHT trail system near Stratton Brook Hut, and the existing shared-use trail on the "60's Haul Road"

3. HPA supports the amendment. Sustainable development of such a trail will provide a high-quality back-country experience for MHT users and minimally impact the Bigelow Preserve.

Amendment F: New Shared-use crossing of the Appalachian Trail on Redington Public Lot for snowmobile, ATV, hiking, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking trail systems.

4. HPA supports BPL's proposed amendment to create a new shared-use crossing of the Appalachian Trail on Redington Public Lot, available for use by ATV riders, snowmobilers, pedestrians, mountain bikers, and cross-country skiers. This crossing would facilitate development of back-country trails connecting the communities of Madrid, Phillips and Salem, with Carrabassett Valley, and Stratton-Eustis. It would efficiently link high-quality

HIGH PEAKS ALLIANCE

stacked loop ATV and snowmobile trail systems centered in each town; creating medium length loops more accessible to local residents. Our understanding is that the crossing would also facilitate a route for Maine Huts and Trails (groomed cross-country skiing, hiking, and mountain biking).

The crossing should be located on the existing timber management road in Redington Public Lot and be collaboratively designed, managed, and maintained with BPL by all trail groups who seek to use it. Non-pedestrian trail crossings of the AT in the High Peaks region already occur on state route 27, the Caribou Pond Road, and on the West Saddleback Connector. All are multiple-use and include both motorized and non-motorized recreational uses. A minimal number of safe, well designed crossings would greatly enhance regional connectivity and still allow for the sense of solitude and remoteness integral to the Appalachian Trail experience. Any multiple-use A.T. crossing should be carefully sited to provide the highest connectivity possible for each system, be sustainably designed, and minimize potential user conflicts (e.g.: such a crossing should be sited perpendicularly to the AT).

High Peaks Alliance does not condone development of any new trails without express permission from public or private landowners. It is our hope that Amendment F to the Flagstaff Area Management Plan will facilitate development of a shared regional connector which will provide economic benefits for local businesses, generate support for future land conservation, and increase the quality of life for all residents in High Peak's communities.

The High Peaks Alliance's recreational planning work is based on the assumption that all trail users and maintainers share a passion for back-country recreation and the natural landscape of Maine's High Peaks. Put in other words, if we can agree on 80% of what we have in common, then the 20% which divides us can be overcome. Together we can ensure future generations of residents and visitors will be able to enjoy the traditional access to the outdoors which makes western Maine such a special place to live and play.

We applaud the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands for undertaking this five year review of the Flagstaff Area Management Plan and for including local stakeholders in the process. HPA was pleased to participate, and looks forward to continuing to collaborate with the State of Maine and all trail groups in the region. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

6/11/2014

Milt Baston, President
High Peaks Alliance
PO Box 98
Strong, ME
04983

June 11, 2014

Jim Vogel
Senior Planner
Bureau of Parks and Lands
18 Elkins Lane, Harlow Building
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Mr. Vogel;

I am writing to you as a resident of Madrid Township to offer my support for amendment F to the Flagstaff Area Management Plan as written during the five-year review period.

Such a new multi- use trail would provide a link between Carrabassett Valley and our towns of Phillips and Avon. This would support local businesses who rely on recreational tourism. This new trail is important because it offers local residents opportunity to recreate in unique, beautiful natural settings which were formally off-limits to us.

In my nearly forty years of working at the University of Maine at Farmington I heard many stories young people from the region about snowmobiling, riding ATVs and hiking in the backcountry. They referred to these as their favorite family activity. As I skied, hiked or biked with my family in the area of Amendment F it was always a pleasure to stop and talk with others who arrived there using multiple types of recreation. We all realized that we shared a passion for this area.

We think there is enough room for everyone to enjoy this beautiful region and are happy that the Bureau for Public Lands is conducting this review and is responding to what is important to local people.

Sincerely,

Betsy Squibb

Betsy Squibb
212 Center Road
Madrid Township

APPALACHIAN TRAIL
CONSERVANCY®

June 12, 2014

Flagstaff Region Management Plan 5-year Review Public Meeting
Olson Student Center, University of Maine – Farmington

Comments from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Claire Polfus, Maine Conservation Resources Manager

Thank you to the Bureau of Parks and Lands for providing the public the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Flagstaff Region Management Plan. I am pleased to serve on the Advisory Committee as the representative for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy oversees the management and protection of the 2,185 mile Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia through extensive partnerships. The A.T. was designated the nation's first National Scenic Trail by Congress in 1968, and the Trail has been carefully sited to uphold the values essential to the standards established for a National Scenic Trail. Our list of partners runs long, from local trail clubs, the National Park Service and other state and federal agencies along the Trail, including here in Maine with the Bureau of Parks and Lands.

This meeting is our first opportunity to publicly comment on the draft amendment, Amendment F, regarding the proposed motorized crossing of the Appalachian Trail in the Redington Public Lot as the amendment had not been written at the time of the last Advisory Committee meeting in December. We oppose the proposed reallocation of protection along the Appalachian Trail from Special Protection to Remote Recreation. This reduced protection would be unprecedented on BPL lands for which a management plan has been written and published through public involvement. Previously, through the work of the partnership between ATC, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club and BPL, the Appalachian Trail on lands managed by BPL had been allocated and protected with at least the 100 foot Special Protection buffer in areas where it wasn't allocated with a higher degree of protection, such as an ecological reserve allocation. By comparison, where the Trail is on lands managed by the National Park Service the level of protection is at least 500 feet. ATC cannot support an amendment that, unlike the other amendments on the table, officially reallocates resource protection and could create a precedent for legally lessening the protection of the Trail on public land.

Previous to the draft amendment, I submitted comments regarding the potential effects of a motorized crossing on one of the most remote sections of the Appalachian Trail including conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users, impacts to natural resources such as hydrology and wildlife species and potential encroachment from trespassers onto the tread of the Appalachian Trail. These concerns have not been adequately addressed by the draft amendment.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's comments with the staff of the Bureau of Parks and Lands. To restate in brief, we welcome further conversations regarding the management of the A.T. through state lands, but we oppose Amendment F, which would lessen the level of protection allocated for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and allow a proposed motorized crossing of the A.T. in the Redington Public Lot that is inappropriate for a nationally significant recreational resource.

ATC HEADQUARTERS
799 Washington Street, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-0807 | Phone: 304.535.6331 | Fax: 304.535.2667 | www.appalachiantrail.org

NARROW GAUGE RIDERS ATV CLUB
www.ngriders.com

June 16, 2014 PO Box J Phillips, Me 04966

Jim Vogel
Senior Planner
Bureau of Parks and Lands
18 Elkins Lane, Harlow Building
22 State House Station
Augusta, Me. 04333

Dear Mr. Vogel;

The Narrow Gauge Riders ATV Club is a non profit organization promoting responsible ATV Riding, safety, and trail construction. June 12 at our monthly meeting the club members discussed Amendment F to the Flastaff Area Management Plan as written during the five-year review period.

Such a new multi-use trail would provide a link between Carrabassett Valley and our towns of Phillips, Avon and Madrid Twp. This would help support local businesses who rely on Recreational tourism. The local residents would also have the opportunity to enjoy the unique, beautiful natural settings which were formerly off-limits to us.

A member of the club made a motion to vote to support amemdment F to the Flagsstaff Area Management Plan. It was moved and seconded. All members present voted in favor of supporting this plan.

We think there is enough room for everyone to enjoy this beautiful region and are happy that the Bureau for Public Lands is conducting this review and responding to what is important to the local people.

Sincerely,

Janne Haines

Narrow Gauge Riders ATV Club

Vogel, Jim

From: lloyd griscom <lloyd.griscom@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 19, 2014 6:37 PM
To: Vogel, Jim
Cc: Bill Plouffe; Milt Baston; David Field; Lester Kenway; Peter McKinley
Subject: Public Comment-Lloyd Griscom-New Motorized/Nonmotorized Trail Crossing of the Appalachian Trail on the Redington Lot

Dear Jim,

I came to the last meeting in Farmington early and want to offer my comments in written form after you informed me that oral and written comments would be considered equally.

I wear many hats and have been involved with the High Peaks Initiative since it's inception by MATLT(of which organization I am a director). Early in the creation of conservation and mult-use trail interest in the High Peaks, I became a co-founder of the High Peaks Alliance along with Roger Lambert and remain as a director and VP.

In the successful brokering of the Saddleback Connector through the AT at Eddy Pond, The High Peaks Alliance , or at least some of us, made representations that were taken by others as a pledge that this crossing was to be exchanged for not asking for an ATV crossing through Barnjum into the Caribou Pond area. This legal Eddy Pond crossing permitted the formation of the Moose Loop ATV system.
The MATLT is a landowner in the High Peaks and is contributing some land it owns to assist the closing of the Linkletter/Orbeton 2012 Forest Legacy project where there is legal motorized activity.

I have had acrimonious discussions on this subject with a HPA and MATLT colleague, now retired from both organizations, but I remain convinced that more than a few in the AT community feel that the deal is being breached by this effort that you are leading.

I feel that personally I don't want to have my word perceived to change with the winds and I oppose this additional crossing of the AT for ATV's on the grounds that a deal was made that was the only way the Eddy Pond legal crossing of the AT was able to be accomplished.

Having said that, this does not preclude the ATV community from proposing some additional benefit that might be considered by abutting landowners and others as sufficient to consider the proposal as a new effort on its own merits.

An example of possible perceived benefit that might be considered with some interest, would be motorized support for a High Peaks wildlife refuge.

Thank you for considering my remarks and best regards,

Lloyd Griscom

Vogel, Jim

From: burton(v1421) knapp <bknapp@beeline-online.net>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2014 9:13 PM
To: Vogel, Jim
Subject: Bigelow Preserve - comment

Dear Mr. Vogel: My husband and I moved to Farmington 7 years ago after living in the Portland area for 30 years. We have come to love and value the Bigelow Preserve for its undeveloped beauty. We have hiked the many trails from all the trailheads in every season, and sat and absorbed the quiet beauty of Flagstaff Lake from many vantage points on the ridges. Many times we have silently thanked the people who made this preserve possible, and assumed that it would remain unchanged for generations to cherish as we do. The original plans for the area should remain intact for the sake of the wildlife, and the people of Maine. We need quiet natural spaces in an otherwise cluttered world and Bigelow, as it now exists, represents a unique jewel. We hope that the Bureau of Parks and Lands continues to respect the original restrictions placed on the Preserve. Nancy and Burt Knapp

Comments of Bob Weingarten
RE: the Flagstaff Region Management Plan 5-Year Review
Submitted to the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL)
June 26, 2014

Please note: Although I serve on the Board of Directors of Friends of Bigelow (FOB), these comments are my own personal comments and not that of FOB.

(1) Plan review process

The 5-year Plan Review Process, as conceived by BPL, has been discriminatory, arbitrary, and designed to favor certain special interests and types of actions over other interests and concerns. It is not surprising that the process has reached favorable decisions on Plan Amendments that will develop more infrastructures in the Bigelow Preserve.

The Bureau only recognizes and allows proposals that favor new development as being appropriate for changes to the Plan during the 5-year review. It has established a rule that only “new” proposals can be acted upon for amending the 2007 Plan and then has arbitrarily defined “new” as applying only to proposals for more infrastructure.

The Bureau ignores the ecological changes occurring in the Preserve due to increased logging, cutting of late success ional growth, new road building and widening of roads for logging, and increased infrastructure in and around the Preserve (e.g., Huts and Trails), which are also "new" since 2007.

BPL has dismissed Friends of Bigelow's and others’ concerns about sustaining the ecological and wilderness values of the Preserve in the face of these changes to the character of the Preserve. Dismissal of these threats and impacts are purely politically motivated and demonstrate discrimination against members of FOB by a close-minded BPL. Friends of Bigelow previously submitted a survey of its membership that favored enhanced wilderness values rather than more development in the Preserve.

I contrast this attitude with how Baxter State Park studies the impacts of logging on keystone species. While the Bureau claims they consult with the Natural Areas Program prior to logging jobs, no specifics are cited as to the results or changes made from such consultation nor does BPL provide any specific data in its 5-year performance review.

(2) Motorized recreation

Not only is BPL violating the law (Bigelow Act) by proposing to develop motorized boat access in the Preserve when none existed prior to 1976, but while there are overwhelming opportunities for motorized boat recreation elsewhere throughout the State (on both

public and private lands), there is very little opportunity for enjoying the outdoors without experiencing motorized assaults. The character of the Bigelow Preserve was intended to be one such place.

Moreover, favoring motorized boat recreation flies in the face of the larger issue of climate change, which argues for massive reduction in the burning of fossil fuels not the promotion thereof by a public agency.

(3) Fracturing and Marketing of the Preserve

It is clear that BPL would like to manage the Bigelow Preserve in a cookie-cutter fashion as merely one unit among its many public land parcels. However, BPL cannot and should not be doing so. The Bigelow Preserve was created by citizen referendum and has a unique law that protects its character.

The way BPL hands out new infrastructure goodies to those less inclined to appreciate or respect the history and character of the Preserve is like handing out concessions the way they do in some National Parks. Rather than having an intact Preserve presented to the public as a visual and ecological whole, we are moving towards a fractured preserve where each group has its own little piece of the pie and that's all they care about--- to keep it and expand it as it suits their group's interests. With this Pandora's box now opened, BPL will need to be continually juggling all these requests to try to satisfy all the new infrastructure proposals and related politics, while losing sight of the bigger picture of the Preserve itself and its wildlife and wilderness values.

As an example of this is that all Bigelow Preserve Management Plans prior to 2007 committed to a "no marketing" policy for the Preserve, whereas all the Plan amendments now proposed by BPL will directly encourage the marketing of the Preserve by the special interests that are so favored by them.

This is already being done by the Huts and Trails corporation that has taken the modest state map of the Preserve and used it to create a Huts and Trails map that gets fed to a software developer that has created a "maplet" @$2.99 of the Preserve to download for iPhones and iPads! Just google the Preserve and see how its being marketed to all the world. Gone are the days when the previous Management Plans spoke of how the only marketing allowed would be a folded map/brochure and small unobtrusive directional signs in the Preserve!

Some day the public will wake up to see how they lost the 1976 referendum.

Natural Resources Council of Maine
3 Wade Street • Augusta, Maine 04330 • (207) 622-3101 • Fax: (207) 622-4343 • www.nrcm.org

June 26, 2014

Jim Vogel
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Division of Parks and Public Lands
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

RE: Five Year Review of the 2007 Flagstaff Management Plan

Dear Jim:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the Five Year Review of the 2007 Flagstaff Management Plan (the "Plan") related to issues addressed at the June 12, 2014 Advisory Committee meeting. The Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) has a few comments that we would like the Bureau to consider as it finalizes its review of the Plan.

Flagstaff Lake

1. NRCM continues to **oppose either proposed motorized boat launch sites** for the east end of Flagstaff Lake. It is the experience of NRCM staff that Flagstaff has little motorized boat traffic, the majority of which is limited to the west end of the lake where there are five trailered launches. BPL has presented little to no evidence that there is pressure from users to increase access. Instead, the Bureau seems to be responding solely to the FERC's license obligations. Changes to the Plan should not be motivated by entities who do not have an interest in the sound management of the area.

   We believe that retaining the current level and type of use is in keeping with the undeveloped character of the Bigelow Preserve. The Bigelow Preserve Plan allows for "essential service facilities," which are basic facilities needed to service a resource area and to control and enhance public use, the location and design of which should be consistent with the objective of protecting the overall natural character of the Preserve. Hand carry launches are more than sufficient to enhance public use and they preserve natural character by the retaining the integrity of the shoreline. Furthermore, each potential boat launch would require a change in allocation to "Developed Recreation." Changing the allocation of parts of the Flagstaff shoreline would significantly jeopardize the undeveloped character of the Preserve and such a change should be given a highly level scrutiny, as suggested by Kathy Eickenberg at the June 12th meeting.

Redington Township Lot

2. NRCM continues to **oppose a new crossing of the Appalachian Trail** on the Redington Township Lot. The Redington Lot is very remote. Further development of motorized vehicle trails would retract from the lot's remoteness and we do not believe that motorized crossings are compatible with the quiet recreation opportunities often unique to the Appalachian Trail corridor.

More importantly, there appears to have been little to no conversation between the Bureau and the groups that manage the Appalachian Trail – the very groups who will be tasked, according to the draft plan, with managing the crossing. We believe that decisions regarding the Trail need to be made in cooperation with these groups and that the Bureau should not proceed until an agreement has been made.

Thank you again for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Eliza Donoghue, Esq.
North Woods Advocate & Outreach Coordinator

Protecting the Nature of Maine

Printed on post-consumer recycled, processed chlorine-free paper

Comments of Ken Spalding
on Behalf of Friends of Bigelow
Regarding
Flagstaff Region Management Plan 5-Year Review
Draft Plan Amendments
Submitted to the Bureau of Parks and Lands
June 26, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Five-Year Flagstaff Region Management Plan Review and the Draft Plan Amendments.

In the past the Friends of Bigelow has urged that the Bigelow Preserve Act be placed in the body of the management plan in the beginning of the section about the Bigelow Preserve. We again urge you to place a copy of the Act in a prominent location in the Plan and that Bureau staff read the Act when making decisions about management of the Preserve. This is the foundational document for issues concerning the Bigelow Preserve and should be in a prominent location where it can be easily consulted and serve as a reminder of its role in Preserve management. Because these comments rely on the Bigelow Preserve Act, the Act is reproduced here.

AN ACT to Establish a Public Preserve in the Bigelow Mountain Area

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

Sec. 1. Bigelow Preserve. The Department of Conservation, including the several bureaus and agencies therein, and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game are hereby authorized and directed to acquire approximately 40,000 acres of land on and around Bigelow Mountain in Franklin and Somerset Counties for a public preserve to be known as the Bigelow Preserve. The Preserve shall include generally all land in Wyman and North One Half township north of Stratton Brook and Stratton Brook Pond, and all land in Dead River township south and east of Flagstaff Lake. All public lots within or contiguous to this area shall be included within the Bigelow Preserve.

Sec. 2. Administration and Acquisition. The Preserve shall be administered by the Departments of Conservation and Inland Fisheries and Game. These Departments shall seek and use funds for the acquisition of the land necessary for the Bigelow Preserve from state bond issues and appropriations, federal funds, and other sources now or hereafter available to them. Acquisition shall be coordinated by the Department of Conservation. Sufficient property rights and interests shall be acquired to accomplish the purposes of this Act.

Sec. 3. Purpose. The purpose of this Act is to set aside land to be retained in its natural state for the use and enjoyment of the public. The Preserve shall be managed for outdoor recreation such as hiking, fishing, and hunting, and for timber harvesting. Timber harvesting within the Preserve shall be carried out in a manner approved by the Bureau of Forestry and consistent with the area's scenic beauty and natural features. All motor vehicles, not including vehicles engaged in timber harvesting, shall be restricted to roads designated for their use, except that snowmobiles shall also be allowed on designated trails. Designated roads shall be limited to those easily accessible to automobiles as of the effective date of this Act. No buildings, ski lifts, power transmission facilities, or other structures shall be built in the Preserve except for open trail shelters, essential service facilities, temporary structures used in timber harvesting, small signs, and other small structures that are in keeping with the undeveloped character of the Preserve.

Over-development of the Bigelow Preserve.

Friends of Bigelow is concerned about the level of development in the Preserve. There have been a large number of development proposals for the Preserve in the past few years, most of which have been approved, including some that were accomplished without approval and approved after-the-fact. With so many new and expanded uses and infrastructure proposed after just 5-years since the last full-blown plan amendment we are deeply concerned about what this may mean for maintaining the natural state of the Preserve over the long-term.

Under the current planning process the natural state of the Preserve is in danger of being lost. Part of the problem is that the Bureau only recognizes development proposals as being appropriate for changes to the Plan during the 5-year review. That so much development is proposed during this 5-year review certainly represents a change of circumstance and warrants being addressed in the plan revision. The development includes new recreational development, expansion of logging infrastructure and some that seems inexplicable . We urge the Bureau to include in the 5-year revision, the need to develop a means to recognize the cumulative impact of development on the Preserve and identify criteria for limiting development so that it will stop reducing the natural state of the Preserve.

We do applaud the Bureau for deciding to co-locate some of the disparate trail development proposals and for not allowing the development of a mechanized, non-winter trail through the ecological-reserve on the North side of the Preserve.

Trailered boat launch on the Eastern portion of Flagstaff Lake

• Non-conforming boat launch facility proposed for the Preserve.

The Friends of Bigelow categorically opposes the development of a trailered boat launch in the Preserve. Such a facility is contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Bigelow Preserve Act. All motor vehicles in the Preserve, excepting snowmobiles and vehicles engaged in timber harvesting are restricted to roads that were easily accessible by automobiles as of the effective date of the Act. Neither motorized boats nor the vehicles towing them can be allowed to travel off of these designated roads.

Nor can a trailered boat launch be justified as a “basic facility necessary to provide access.” You can't justify a facility for motorized use in the Preserve as needed to provide access for another motorized use not permitted in the Preserve, nor to access a motorized use that isn't on the Preserve. In addition to prohibiting motorized vehicle use off of designated roads, the Preserve Act states “No buildings, ski lifts, power transmission facilities, or other structures shall be built in the Preserve except open trail shelters, essential service facilities, temporary structures used in timber harvesting, small signs, and other small structures that are in keeping with the undeveloped character of the Preserve.” This does not allow for the construction of a trailered boat launch.

The need to change the dominant and secondary Resource Allocation from Wildlife/Remote Recreation to Developed Recreation is in and of itself evidence that the development of a trailered boat launch will have a negative impact on the undeveloped character of the Preserve, contrary to the law. Developing infrastructure to promote motorized use along the shore of the Preserve will effect more than just the immediate vicinity of the launch and is not in keeping with the intent of the Act.

That the Bureau can unilaterally, without public notice, change Resource Allocation in the Preserve in order to accommodate projects that the public would expect to be prohibited under existing allocations is a sobering revelation. It seems that Resource Allocations should come with the warning that “past

performance is not an indicator of future results." Understanding that no agency likes to give up flexibility for a more onerous or accountable process, we urge the Bureau to revise the process for changing Resource Allocations to include public input.

• Other east Flagstaff Lake trailered boat launch

Friends of Bigelow opposes the development of other trailered boat access on the East end of Flagstaff Lake. Power boat traffic is currently concentrated on the West end of Flagstaff Lake. Human powered boating is concentrated on the East end of the lake. Power boats off the shore of the Preserve will negatively impact users of the Preserve. The remote and backcountry experience of people who use the Preserve is enhanced by their ability to paddle on the waters adjacent to the Preserve without the intrusion of power boats into this remote setting. In addition to the negative impacts on paddlers, increased noise from power boats will have a negative impact on Preserve users along the shore, including at backcountry and remote campsites. Just as some truck traffic on Route 16 and the shooting of guns at the Wing Camp can be heard along the ridge of Bigelow, there is the distinct potential that increased power boat use on the east end of the Lake will increase noise levels on Bigelow Mountain as well as along the shore of the Preserve.

Although power boat use on the West end of Flagstaff Lake may be a benefit to the town of Eustis, increased power boat use on the East end of Flagstaff Lake is a detriment to the current and growing numbers of paddlers on that portion of the Lake

We urge the Bureau to not participate in any efforts to add a trailered boat launch on the east side of Flagstaff Lake.

The Bigelow Preserve Act mandate to acquire property rights and interests in the Preserve.

The Wing Camp, in the Preserve on the shore of Flagstaff Lake near the Bigelow Lodge, has illegitimately occupied the land it sits on for more than 40 years. They have never produced any evidence that they have ever had a right to occupy the land. There was no lease for the land since before the creation of the Preserve and there hasn't been a lease in the 38 years since the State acquired the land. The Wings have ignored Bureau attempts to enter into a lease and have never paid any lease fees to the State. The occasional occupants of the camp have not abided by terms that would be in force if there was a lease. Terms of a lease drafted in 1997 would have terminated all rights to occupy the land by 2011. The building has been deteriorating for years. The roof of an addition/attached shed is caved in and the sills are rotting. The camp is within 25' of the water and the outhouse is very close to the water where there is an inlet to the lake.

The Bigelow Preserve Act says that "Sufficient property rights and interests shall be acquired to accomplish the purposes of this Act." Other leases on Preserve land were terminated decades ago, the structures were purchased and torn down. Clearly, this camp is not in keeping with the purposes of the Act. The State has already acquired all property rights to the land and the Wings have never shown that they hold any property rights at this location.

It really seems unbelievable that the Bureau has allowed this situation to persist for 38 years. What is even more unbelievable is that the Bureau, knowing that all attempts to enter into a lease have been ignored, have not only allowed the situation to continue, but have actively participated in enabling the Wings to continue to use the camp, without a lease. The road to get to the camp has a locked gate.

Knowing the history and a lack of a lease, the Bureau has provided the Wings with a key to the gate so they can drive to the camp.

We strongly urge the Bureau to immediately change the lock on the gate and serve notice to the camp users that the camp needs to be removed by a date certain in the Fall of 2014, and if not done, the Bureau will remove it. If the family can show some title to the structure or if the Bureau otherwise feels compelled to actually purchase the building, the past rent that should have been paid should be deducted from the purchase price.

We further urge that the Bureau maintain an inventory of inholdings in the Preserve and track opportunities for acquisition of those properties.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Vogel, Jim

From: Richard Fecteau <rfecteau@midmaine.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2014 3:34 PM
To: Vogel, Jim
Subject: 5 year plan review comments

Hi Jim,

Representing MATC I wish to reiterate my previous objections to the proposed trail connection thru the Bigelow Preserve from the Hut located on the Sewer District land. The construction of this hut was somewhat opposed by bureau staff from the beginning, connector trails were cut across State lands without permission, old roads have been cleared and signed without permission, MH&T's maps identify some trails for biking when they were only permitted for hiking etc. It seems ridiculous that BPL now uses the existence of this fee access hut to justify a special trail across the Preserve.

MATC also objects to including a motorized crossing of the Appalachian Trail on the Reddington lot in the plan. BPL does not have and will likely never have permission to cross the abutting "ridge parcel" recently purchased by a conservation buyer. Including this proposal in the plan is purely speculative at this time. The fact that BPL points to the draft High Peaks regional trail plan as a justification for this crossing is hardly a reasonable argument. The draft HP trail plan has not had suitable public input, has not been adopted by regional or state governments and is only a draft wish list compiled without consulting the hiking community. A document was signed with BPL staff supervision a few years ago that stated that this trail was not to be pursued. It should not be included.

We also object to a trailered boat launch within the Preserve. The Act that created the Preserve does not allow such a boat launch to be constructed. The East end of Flagstaff is currently pretty quiet which adds to the remote character of the trails within the Preserve. If the current managers of Flagstaff lake are required by their FERC permit to provide a trailered boat launch on the East shore then they should do at the current location with their own funds and not try to pass the financial and management burden to the taxpayers of Maine.

Sincerely,
Richard Fecteau

United States Department of the Interior

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:
A.1.A

June 26, 2014

Mr. Jim Vogel
Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
22 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Mr. Vogel:

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail, a 2,184 mile long footpath that traverses the scenic, wooded, pastoral, wild, and culturally resonant lands of the Appalachian Mountains, was conceived in 1921, built and maintained by a consortium of agencies and private citizens, and designated the nation's first National Scenic Trail in 1968. Today the Trail is managed by the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, numerous state agencies and thousands of volunteers. The "AT" in Maine is managed collaboratively by the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the National Park Service in cooperation with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. The National Park Service's mission is to provide for the preservation, protection, and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural and cultural resources of the area through which the Trail passes.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail would like to provide comments regarding the proposed amendments to the Flagstaff Region Management Plan, in particular, draft Amendment F. The proposed Amendment F states, *"The 100 foot Special Protection buffer in the vicinity of the management road crossing of the AT will be reallocated to Remote Recreation. In addition, the Remote Recreation designation buffering the AT on this lot will allow for the new motorized recreation trail."*

The National Park Service opposes the proposed change from "Special Protection" to "Remote Recreation." This reduced level of protection would be unprecedented on Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) sites for which a management plan has been approved through public involvement. This proposed amendment would lower the protection status of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and allow a motorized crossing, thus creating an alarming precedent, in addition to the potential adverse effects on resources and the visitor experience.

On lands managed by BPL, the Appalachian Trail has been protected with at least the 100 foot Special Protection buffer in areas where it was not afforded a higher degree of protection, such as an ecological reserve allocation. By comparison, where the Appalachian Trail is managed by the National Park Service, the level of protection is at least 500 feet.

The Appalachian Trail through the High Peaks is one of the most beautiful, rugged and remote sections of the entire 2,184 mile trail. In fact, the section between Eddy Pond and Caribou Valley is one of the longest sections without a sanctioned motorized crossing. Visitors come from near and far to hike the peaks of this region on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Lessening the level of protection and allowing a motorized crossing of the Appalachian Trail in the Redington Public Lot is

inappropriate for this nationally significant resource, which is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Flagstaff Region Management Plan Five Year Review. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

/s/ Wendy K. Janssen

Wendy K. Janssen
Superintendent

cc: Mr. Kirk F. Mohney
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Appendix C-3.

Public Meeting Minutes (June 12, 2014)

Bureau of Parks and Lands
Flagstaff Region Management Plan
5-Year Review and Update – Public Meeting
June 12, 2014 6:00 – 8:00 PM
University of Maine – Farmington

MEETING MINUTES

The Public Meeting was attended by approximately 20 people.

Additionally, the following BPL staff members were present: Will Harris, Director; Pete Smith, Western Region Lands Manager; Steve Swatling, Bigelow Preserve Manager; Kathy Eickenberg, Chief of Planning; Jim Vogel, Plan Coordinator; Rex Turner, Outdoor Recreation Specialist; Scott Ramsey, Director ORV Division; Tom Charles, Chief of Silviculture

Welcome/Introduction
Will Harris welcomed the attendees, asked staff to introduce themselves, provided a review of the plan review process, and outlined the purpose of the public meeting. Attendees were requested to focus comments on the proposed Plan Amendments being presented.

Presentation
Jim Vogel used a PowerPoint presentation to review key aspects of the Plan review purpose and process, and to review the seven non-motorized trail proposals, the motorized trail proposal, and the boat access proposal under consideration. Each proposal was described and located on a map, followed by a description of the designated resource allocations in the affected areas, BPL justifications for potential approval of the concepts, and finally the proposed Plan amendments (if any) associated with each proposal. Time was given for public comments after the presentation of each proposal.

Public Comments/Questions
<u>Proposed Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail - Chain of Ponds</u>
No comments

<u>Proposed Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail – Stratton Area</u>
- Ken Spalding, Friends of Bigelow (FOB) – Supports colocation of proposed trail with other existing and proposed trails.
- Ben Godsoe, High Peaks Alliance (HPA) – Likes concept of heritage trail as described in the proposal.

<u>Proposed Maine Huts & Trails (MH&T) Bigelow Preserve connector trail</u>
- Dick Fecteau, Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC) – Questioned whether the proposals included 2 routes from the MH&T hut to the Bigelow Preserve; Jim Vogel responded that the only other routes are existing gravel roads and/or motorized trails, and only the MH&T proposal provides a direct route to the preserve for hikers, off gravel road and motorized

trails. Dick also questioned why the proposed trail was intended for just hiking and ungroomed skiing and not biking; Jim Vogel responded that mountain biking has not been part of the proposal largely due to the terrain crossed. Charlie Woodworth of MH&T responded that others can make a case for mountain bike to be part of the proposal if they want, but that would necessitate a much longer trail, with switchbacks.

- Ken Spalding, FOB – Questioned how proposed allocations were arrived at; Jim Vogel explained that proposed Visual Class I "no cut" buffer was based on how hiking trails were addressed by BPL elsewhere in the Plan area and the need to be consistent in applying these buffers.

<u>Proposed Carrabassett Region (CR) NEMBA Dead Moose Trail</u>

- No comments

<u>Proposed CR NEMBA Birthday Hill Trail</u>

- Ben Godsoe, HPA – Proposed trail looks like a good opportunity to connect with other trails on abutting lands

<u>Proposed CR NEMBA Esker Trail Reroute</u>

- Ken Spalding, FOB – Questioned if reroute would involve up to 2.4 miles of single-track trail, but not single-track to either side, and whether the proposed trail would parallel the existing road/trail; Jim Vogel answered in the affirmative, explaining the trail on either side was on old roads, but approximated single track due to regrowth of surrounding forest, and that the proposed trail would roughly parallel the existing road/trail. Ken also asked whether the new trail would provide a more varied experience, would lead to a change in type of user, and would be permanent. Jim Vogel responded that the new trail could provide more varied riding, and would be permanent, but that the intent was to maintain the present "moderate" level of difficulty.
- Steve Swatling, BPL – Would the relocated trail have to be buffered? Jim Vogel responded that since all existing bike trails on the Preserve are on public use or management roads, they are not buffered (or are co-located with a hiking trail in a Special Protection allocation), and this issue has not yet been discussed or addressed in reference to a new single track trail.

<u>Proposed CR NEMBA Jones Trail Reroute</u>

- Ken Spalding, FOB – Supports co-location of bike trail with other trails/uses

<u>Proposed CR NEMBA Backside Trail</u>

- Ken Spalding, FOB – Strongly supports BPL decision to not propose a Plan amendment that would permit development of this new bike trail in the Preserve.

<u>Proposed Redington Lot Appalachian Trail Crossing</u>

- Claire Polfus, Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) – Opposed to the proposed Plan amendment as it is currently written and cannot support it. Major concern is with the

precedent of lessening protection of AT on Public Lands that would result from proposed reallocation at crossing. Proposal requires consultation with NPS and ATC. (Written comment letter was also submitted.)

- Eliza Donoghue, Natural Resource Council of Maine (NRCM) – Agrees with comments of ATC. Need continued dialogue with AT organizations which are given responsibility to monitor potential trail impacts under this proposal.
- John McCatherin, Carrabassett Valley ATV Club – Would like to see comments already submitted on this proposal. There has also been a change related to why this proposal should be considered in the loss of the snowmobile trail and AT crossing on the adjacent road. Find that ATV families use the trails, introduces kids to the outdoors. This proposal would provide shorter loops more amenable to family use.
- Betsy Squibb – Supports the proposal, is confident that the AT and motorized recreation clubs can work together to implement the crossing.
- Dick Fecteau, MATC – Objects to including this proposal in the Plan amendments without more discussion with abutters as to whether they would allow a motorized trail to cross their lands. Believes maps have been produced in association with the Crocker acquisition that depicted other potential motorized trail routes that did not require the proposed AT crossing. Kathy Eickenberg responded that such trail routes, depicted on maps produced by Trust for Public Lands, were conceptual only; John McCatherin seconded that such trail maps were not part of the Crocker Mountain agreement signed by the town of Carrabassett Valley.
- Ben Godsoe, HPA – Supports proposed amendments as written; it represents a balance that offers the most access to the most users in the region, looks forward to further movement on this proposal.
- Charlie Woodworth, Maine Huts & Trails – Supports proposed crossing.
- Claire Polfus, ATC – Is any amendment possible? (notes are not clear on question and do not indicate any response)
- Bob Weingarten – Dissatisfied with Plan review process, can only address new things that have changed; BPL is responding (with Redington Lot proposal) to potential future opportunities (for motorized trail connections), not a change, yet BPL denied Friends of Bigelow requests for ecological studies due to increased logging.
- Niki Haggan – I love to hike, dirt bike and snowmobile in the region; this proposal is the perfect opportunity to get the most out of one crossing of the AT; also can have positive economic impact to small communities.
- Ben Godsoe, HPA – Co-management of the proposed AT crossing is a good thing, and provides a good process to reduce conflicts between motorized and non-motorized uses. It has worked out well with the West Saddleback connector.

<u>Proposed East Flagstaff Lake Boat Launch</u>

- Ken Spalding, FOB – No comments on Dead River peninsula site. Strongly opposed to Bigelow Preserve site. Building a new road (in converting trail to trailered launch ramp) is in conflict with the Bigelow Act. The proposal represents a lot of change to the site for very little justification. Bigelow Act does not speak to motorized boat access but takes a strong

position against motorized vehicle use. The proposed change in allocation (from secondary Remote Recreation to Developed Recreation in the shoreline zone) reduces protection, which takes a higher justification.

- Bruce Marcoux – Lake is full of boats; need launches; existing launch in Stratton is packed (on weekends); boat traffic is growing, heavy use on the west side.
- Niki Haggan – I enjoy kayaking and motorboating; have a camp in Lexington Twp., very important for east side of Flagstaff Lake, would help distribute use on the lake. Proposal represents an "essential service."
- Bob Weingarten – Not in support of proposal (read from Bigelow Act); motorboat access would be in violation of law. Also opposed because it would be more development and what the Preserve was meant to do was keep it from being developed – value of keeping it "wilderness" where you would not hear a motor.
- Eliza Donoghue, NRCM – Have concerns with the proposal that echo those stated by Ken and Bob. Is FERC license obligation driving this? How much was Bigelow Act taken into account in that obligation? Jim Vogel responded that FERC has made no mention of Bigelow Act and is not imposing a requirement that the launch be built in the Preserve, only that Brookfield work with BPL to identify an alternative site to Bog Brook.
- Steve Swatling, BPL – Bog Brook is a day use beach and this proposal does not address the lack of parking there in relation to day use. Jim Vogel responded by acknowledging the use of the site for day use, and that parking for that use may not be improved by this proposal, while noting that FERC has considered it a boat access site in the official Flagstaff Lake record.
- Dick Fecteau, MATC – Believe that the Gravel Pit sit will have the same problems (for boat launching) as Bog Brook (due to sandy lake bottom). Trailer launch at the Gravel Pit would be a major change.
- Bob Weingarten – BPLs response to comments in the Final Flagstaff Region Plan, appendix F, indicate that BPL has changed position; had dropped plans for boat access at Gravel Pit due to non-state ownership. BPL staff responded that the plans must have been unrelated to the gravel pit, which is in state ownership.
- Ken Spalding, FOB – Proposed ramp would be equivalent to a new road and is not allowed under the Bigelow Act. Kathy responded that the Bureau may need to obtain a legal opinion as to whether the proposal would represent a "new road" in violation of the Act.
- Rob Woodhouse – Supports proposal for gravel pit area; appreciates BPL expanding opportunities and not denying.

Next Steps/Concluding Comments

- Jim Vogel reminded attendees of the opportunity to provide written comments over the next two weeks, and that an email and mailing address to submit comments are provided on the bottom of the meeting agenda. The meeting was concluded with a thank you to all who attended.