

Keeping Maine's Forests Pilot Project Summary: Western Mountains and Lakes

Background:

Located at the heart of the 26 million-acre Northern Forest lies a contiguous block of one million acres stretching from the Upper Androscoggin River watershed in New Hampshire through the cross-border Mahoosuc Range and up to the High Peaks of Maine. This region contains exceptionally productive, large blocks of working forest, famed waterways and wetland complexes, and some of New England's most dramatic high elevation ridgelines and mountain peaks. It is home to small rural villages like Errol, New Hampshire, towns like Bethel, Maine, and larger economic hubs like the noted forest manufacturing centers of Berlin, New Hampshire and Rumford, Maine.

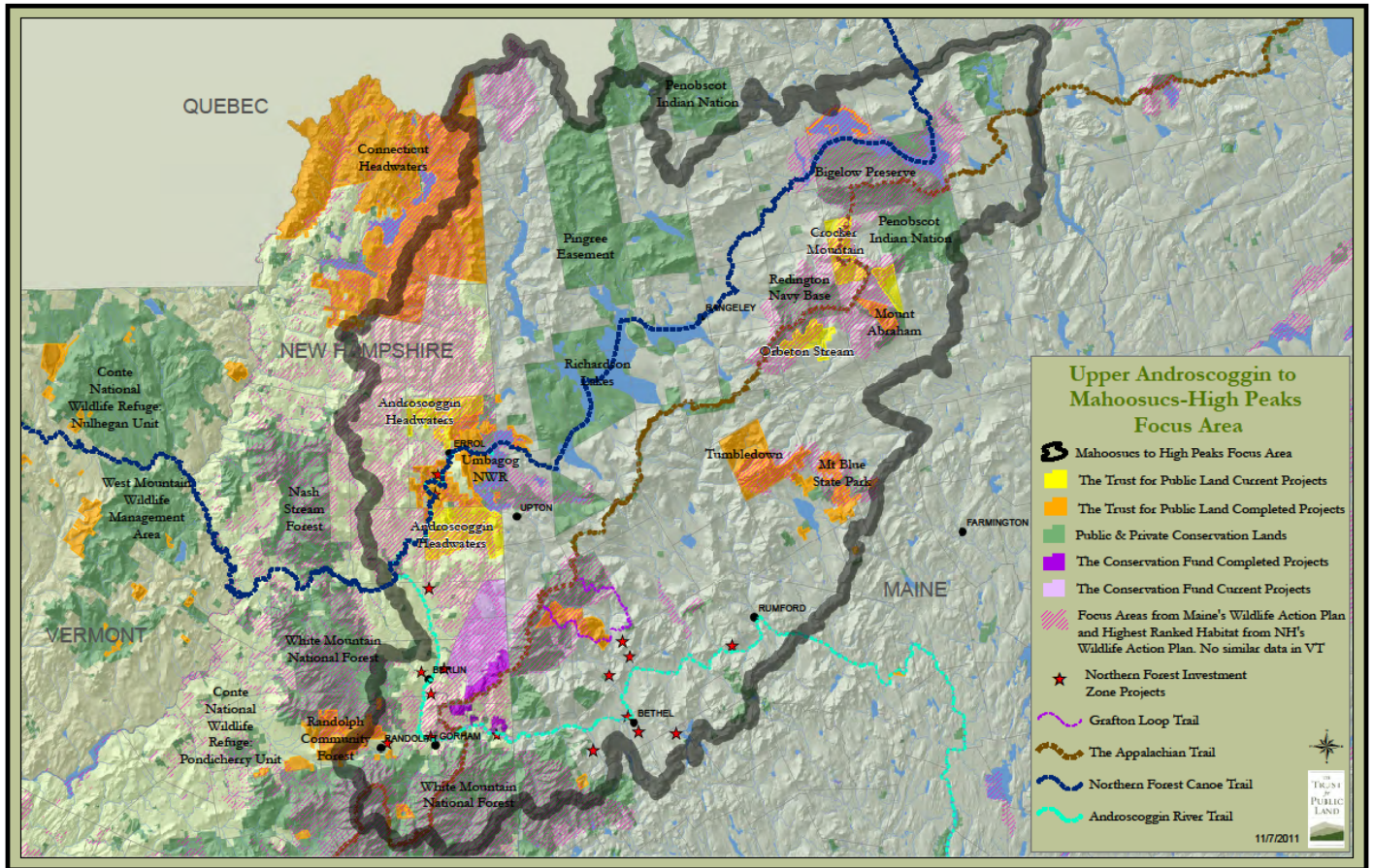
Goals:

Placing particular focus on the Upper Androscoggin River to Mahoosucs/High Peaks, the goal of this pilot project is to create a national model of integrated efforts in forest conservation, economic development, green energy, and community well-being by:

- ◆ strengthening the forest products economy;
- ◆ broadening the utilization of wood energy;
- ◆ enhancing jobs in the nature-based tourism industry; and
- ◆ maintaining a stable base of forestland through landowner incentives and permanent conservation.

Project Objectives and Strategies:

- ◆ **Strengthen the forest products economy** – Help increase competitive advantage, visibility, and market share for local wood producers by providing targeted technical assistance and grant funding.
- ◆ **Broaden the utilization of wood energy** – Catalyze dispersed adoption of biomass energy by facilitating a transition from fossil fuels to woody biomass for heat in local communities, businesses, and residences.
- ◆ **Enhance tourism and other services** – Enhance tourism jobs and related economic activity while improving visitor experiences by delivering workforce development, technical assistance, and branding.
- ◆ **Create or enhance payments for ecosystem services** – Increase and diversify funding streams for private landowners through incentive payments for stewardship that enhances a range of ecosystem services. Model new tools and practices for landowners to earn revenue from emerging markets for carbon sequestration and water quality that are provided by sustainable forest management.
- ◆ **Stabilize the forest land base** – Permanently conserve key pieces of the region's forests through a diverse mix of conservation tools, including private working forest conservation easements, community forest acquisitions, and targeted enhancements to existing state and federal lands.
- ◆ **Strengthen public-private partnerships** – Enhance the quality of existing partnerships by increasing organizational coordination.



Project Partners:

- Appalachian Mountain Club
- High Peaks Alliance
- Mahoosuc Initiative
- Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust
- Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust
- The Wilderness Society
- Trust for Public Land