

Maine's Public Estate and Conservation Lands:

Informal Information Package

Review draft: A number of editorial points remain unaddressed, graphics need to be touched up.

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Several issues related to public land ownership in Maine are now regularly in the headlines. These include debates over management of public lands, issues concerning the Land for Maine's Future Board, and the proposal for a new National Park, to list a few. Yet, if you want to learn the facts about Maine's public estate and its conservation lands, it is not so easy. I have been aided by Dave Publicover of the AMC, Tom Rumpf of the Nature Conservancy, Rex Turner at Parks and Lands, and several others. This note aims to make available recent information on Maine's Public Estate and its extensive privately owned and managed Conservation lands.

Maine's "Public Estate", as presented here, includes state, federal, and ownership and easements. "Conservation Lands" includes NGO ownership and easements. Because of issues with the data, Native American lands and municipal lands are not included.

This is an interim product; it occasionally uses estimates due to known weaknesses in the data. I hope it will be useful to you. Comments, corrections, and suggestions on additional sources would be welcomed.

Brief History of Maine's Public Estate

Until the claims made by European monarchs, the land that is now Maine were held in usufruct tenures by a number of Native American groups. The oldest private land titles in Maine were issued by the King of France, to Sieur de Cadillac, in 1603. The oldest deed given by Native Americans was issued at Pemaquid to one John Brown in 1625. During Colonial times, numerous grants by the Crown and by the Council of New England were made, to a total of some 4 million acres by 1783. Maps were poor to nonexistent. Often, these grants were given with no clear boundaries, many were revoked or other otherwise lost. This history left a long legacy of litigation over titles and rights, culminating in the Indian land claims litigation and settlement of the early 80s', which remains incomplete in important respects¹.

At Independence in 1783, there was no federal land in Maine, in contrast to the Trans-Appalachian territories. Instead, the government of Massachusetts succeeded to the ungranted lands, which then accounted for some 81% of Maine's land area. At statehood in 1820, ungranted lands amounted to 60% of the state's present land area². At that time, Massachusetts retained ownership of a considerable portion of the state's wildland. Maine purchased the Commonwealth's remaining lands in 1843. What was left to the State of Maine ownership at that time was only 38% of its total land area.

For most of the 19th century, the prevailing view was that Maine had too much public land. Before the Civil War, many cherished the hope that much of this

¹ Readings noted in references below. In this report, areas involved at various times are not considered. At present, some 300,000 acres are held by the Tribes, partly in fee simple and partly as federal trust lands. These cannot be consider "public lands" in the same sense as other lands considered here, though in some senses they may be considered "conservation lands".

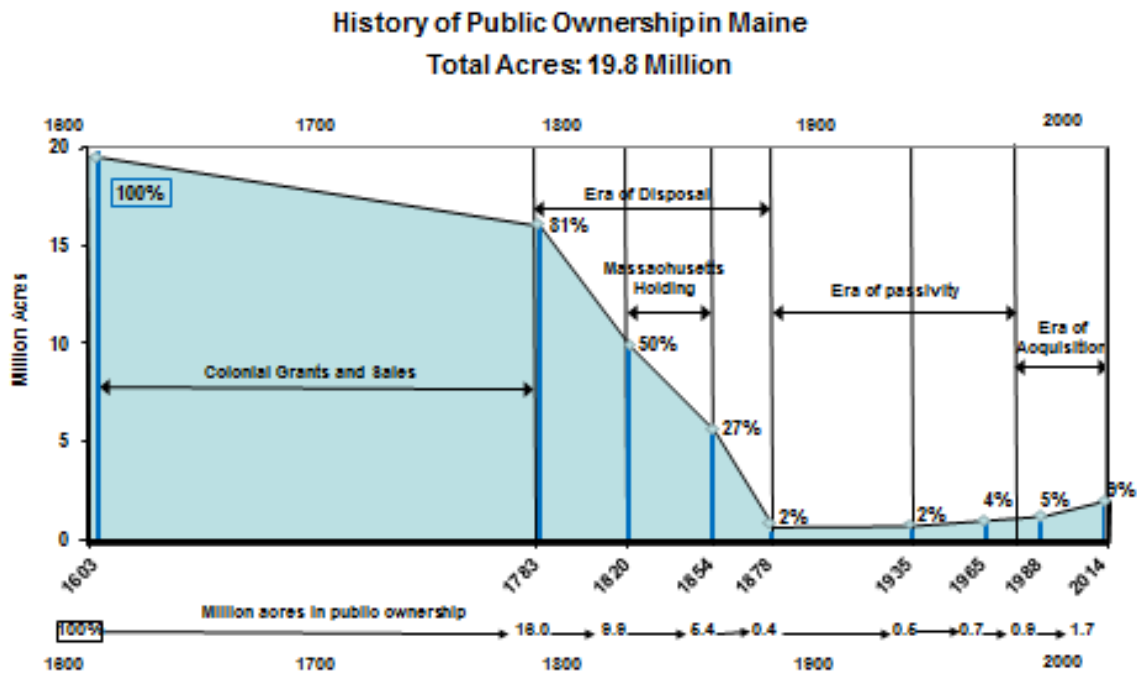
² Until the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842, the boundaries, and hence land area, of the state were not yet determined.

land would become thriving farming communities. Moses Greenleaf's 1829 prediction that lumbering would cease in Maine as the forest was removed continued to be widely held for decades. These hopes, of course, were dashed by migration to the vast productive lands of the Corn Belt and the prairies. I've often observed that "Maine's most successful public lands policy was its decision to get rid of it all". Maine made its last land sale in 1875, when it held claim to remaining public reserved lands (often termed "public lots"), some 400,000 acres.³ By the end of the 1880's, then, Maine's public ownership was virtually nil. On its heritage of 400,000 acres of Public Lots, the timber and grass rights had been sold, leaving them to lie fallow for another century until the 1970's.

I have had several requests to reproduce this chart, so here it is, for perspective. It speaks for itself.

³ For this report I omit coastal islands and islands in Great Ponds, and the beds of Great Ponds. These are of course resources of considerable value but they do not materially affect the overall story being told here.

Figure 1.



During the “First Conservation Movement” around the turn of the 20th century, nearby northeastern states were establishing large public land systems, often by purchase. This trend passed Maine by completely. Longstanding traditions of open access to private lands meant that the outdoor sporting community did not need to worry about access to favorite hunting spots and fishing holes.⁴ Further, over much of the 1900-1960 period, Maine’s economy was weak, public revenues scant, and one party rule in Augusta was committed to minimizing government expenditures, at which it was successful. The absence of an effective county level of government meant that a key advocate for and manager of local recreation facilities and park needs did not exist.

The federal government undertook limited conservation efforts in Maine through the 20’s, notably the Acadia National Park, which was initiated by

⁴ A historical footnote: in 1919 Forest Commissioner Forrest Colby advocated large scale public ownership to protect forests, but his plea was ignored. Governor Baxter’s efforts to conserve Mt Katahdin were met with indifference and even scorn to the point that he undertook the task himself.

private donation. Acquisitions began in Western Maine for the WMNF in 1914⁵.

Maine did initiate limited efforts to re-create a Public Estate in the 1930's, when New Deal-Era programs fostered an awareness of the potential importance of tourism for the economy and of conservation as a broad social policy. In 1935, the Legislature created a Parks Commission; the first Park was dedicated in 1938. This park, Aroostook, also had its origin in a donation, in this instance by the City of Presque Isle. Many later parks originated in private donations as well. Maine's first Wildlife Management Area was in 1937. This was assisted by the Pitman Robertson Act of 1937 providing funds for land acquisition and wildlife research.

The WPA Writer's Guide to Maine (1937), while emphasizing the importance of tourism and outdoor activities to Maine, and has nothing to report on game management areas or state Parks beyond the first donation for Baxter Park (about 6,000 acres)

Many eastern states acquired the nuclei of state forest and park systems by tax-default during the late 20's through the 1940s. Such defaults were limited in Maine, so this major period of acquisition also passed Maine by. Due to other priorities during the Depression and War, by the mid 60s Maine's Public Estate had increased marginally, by accretion of small purchase of parks, additions to federal units, and WMA's⁶.

In the New Conservation Era, roughly dating from the Kennedy/Johnson Administration, events rapidly gained momentum and engaged more actors. Yet in Maine, apart from completion of the Baxter donations, occasional tiny purchases by federal agencies, and the Allagash, public land acquisition moved at a timid pace. An urgent sense of threat to natural values and to access had yet to become a political force. Such action as occurred responded to concerns over specific places, not a broad interest in conservation.

⁵ A Purchase Unit was authorized in the late 30's for a large National Forest in northern Washington and southern Aroostook Counties; this unit appeared on USFS maps in the early 50's; nothing further has been heard of this idea since.

⁶ As far as I can learn, the history of the WMA's remains to be written.

A higher level of interest in conservation began in the early 70s in the Curtis Administration, when stories by journalist Bob Cummings unearthed the issue of the Public Lots. Federal action spurred, at long last, action on water quality, and growing interest in the outdoors began to register in public discussion and policies. Gov. Curtis re-organized state government creating a Department of Conservation. The Department's early leaders became part of the force for conservation.

A citizen-initiated referendum for the Bigelow Preserve (1976) typified the place-based nature of conservation interest⁷, but occasionally Parks bond issues failed at the polls. Fragmented acquisition programs, serving particular constituencies, diluted efforts. A period of advocacy, legal action, and negotiation began in which, over time, the state's scattered Public Lots were not only recovered for public uses, but also consolidated into major tracts protecting scenic jewels of the state such as the Bigelow Range, and the Mahoosucs. These lands were committed to the care of a new agency, the Bureau of Public Lands, which operated on its own resource revenues with no general fund support. During the King Administration, the Parks Bureau was merged with Public Lands; the Parks continue to receive General Fund support.

Even through this "second conservation movement", Maine did not emphasize land acquisition on any significant scale. By 1999, its public estate was only slightly larger than it had been in the 1930's. Much of that increase was due to discovering and consolidating the Public Lots, which had previously been of little use for conservation. The Public Estate became far more visible, because the Public Lands program had brought the old Public Lots into visibility through its trading program.

In 1980s, development booms for the first time accented dwindling public access to rural land in southern Maine. The observation was often heard: "when the for sale signs come down, the No Trespassing signs go up". Major national groups made Maine a priority to protect swaths of northern wildlands. In several northeastern states, public concern and political momentum built for more conscious, planned expansion of their Public Estates.

⁷ Journalist Bob Cummings often remarked that "Maine has no environmentalists – only environmentalists when their own ox is gored";

Well into this period, however, important points were --

At the opening of the 1980s, Maine's Public Estate consisted largely of the Public Lots, donated lands, a two dozen or so parks, and 2 or 3 dozen wildlife management areas. Federal ownership was far smaller.

Direct federal acquisition was limited while federal money was welcomed to lubricate large land deals leading to state and NGO ownership.

By 1988, well into the "second conservation movement", nearly half of Maine's public fee lands still consisted of the long ignored but recently rediscovered Public Lots.

The Era of Acquisition, long delayed for Maine compared to other states, began with a vengeance in 1998 and 1999 with the TNC purchase of the 185,000 acres of former IP lands along the St. John, and the Pingree conservation easement by NEFF (announced 1999; closed 2001). This transaction alone boosted conservation land totals to a new level. In fact, by itself this easement covered far more area than had been added to the Public Estate since the 1930s. While there was strong public support and involvement in these projects, the funding and initiative were, true to tradition, from the private sector.

By the 1990's, a major shift in private ownership fostered a shift not only in ownership but in means of sharing landownership in the wildlands. This was the virtually complete liquidation of holdings by all US-based publicly held forest products firms. This took place from about 1990 to 2005. In most instances these transactions were accompanied by significant additions to Maine's Conservation lands held by NGOs. For example, Great Northern Paper owned some 2.2 million acres at its peak; following the dismemberment of that property, some 20% (check number) had found its way into conservation ownership or easements.

By 2014, the nonprofit sector had emerged from obscurity to being the dominant actor on the Conservation Lands, holding 2.2 million acres in fee and in easements, more than half of the state's Conservation Lands. A bewildering list of new alphabet-soup acronyms began to appear in the newspapers – TPL, DELT, NEFF, FSM, and more.

Figure 2A.

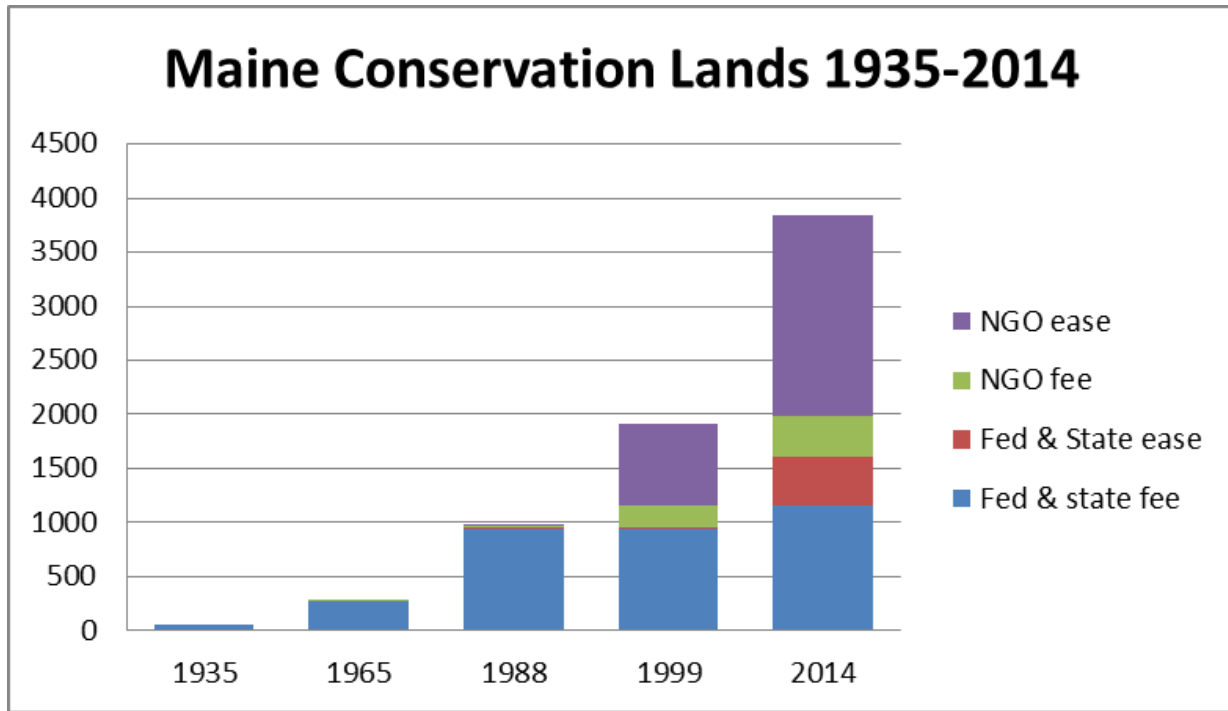
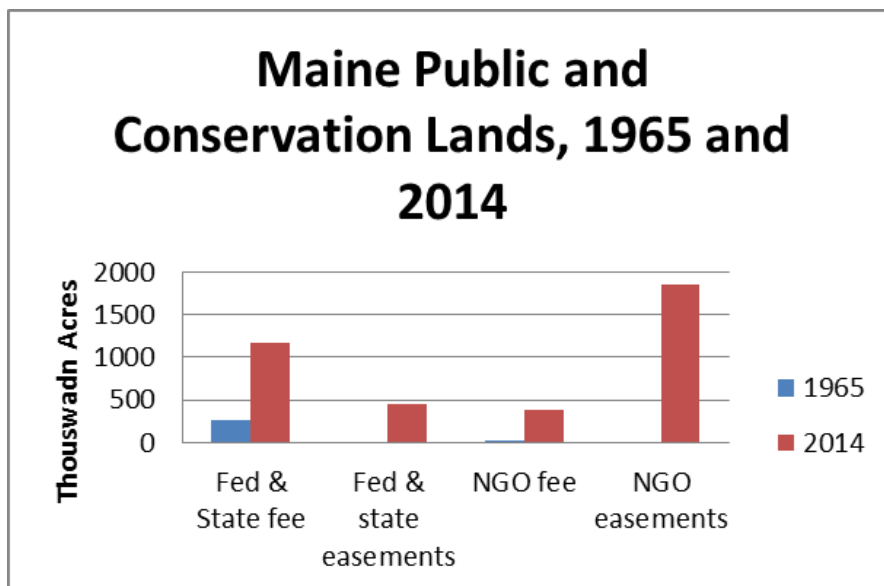


Figure 2B



New funding – Federal Earmarks and Land for Maine’s Future Board (LMFB)

Several sources of federal earmarks were energetically tapped by these national actors, along with private donations. These new funding sources, together with new opportunities raised by restructured private landownerships, energized a massive increase in Maine’s Conservation lands.

Key new actors and approaches emerged. The full story remains to be told. Nonprofits with fundraising muscle began to serve as intermediaries in land conservation acquisitions and in some cases to own and managed large areas themselves. Many large scale land transactions that formerly were publicly noticed after the private parties announced them, because prolonged negotiations among large committees of actors all seeking to pursue private investment and conservation agendas, often with sizable doses of government funds as well.

In 1987 the Maine Legislature created the LMFB to consolidate acquisition programs and adopt a more systematic process for land acquisition. The Board’s bond issues have regularly been approved by voters, creating a source of funds that until very recently enabled cooperative projects all across the state, and supplied seed money for several very large conservation transactions.

How Much Public and Conservation Land Today?

When all the conservation landholdings and easements, public and private, are added up, Maine has 4 million acres of protected lands, roughly 19% of its land area. This, then, leaves 80% for potential future development.

Considerable conservation land in Maine is owned by non-governmental organizations. Private conservation groups and local land trusts hold nearly

400,000 acres, roughly half as much as the state. Current NGO fee ownership in Maine is nearly twice the area of Baxter State Park.

Fee ownership by governments is not the entire story. Maine has taken the lead in conservation easements, a method that allows land to remain in private hands, and productive uses while also on the tax rolls. These easements generally protect large areas, and prevent future development on them. Not all of them, though, include guarantees of future access for recreation. In Maine, lands protected by easements total 2.2 million acres, or just over 11% of the state. In a striking contrast to many other states, about 85% of this area is held by private conservation organizations and not by governments.

Table 1. Combined estimates w/o municipal or tribal lands -- 2014

Public fee		1,164.0
Public Easement		442.2
NGO fee		377.7
NGO easement		1,857.0
		3,840.9

Maine's conservation lands can hardly be thought of as a system – that would imply design. Rather, they are an extraordinary collection of areas, which, on the basis of incremental decisions, have conserved and retained for public use many of Maine's scenic jewels. Further, extensive areas of “backland” are also protected from development. But examining these summaries can yield a few interesting, if rough, general observations:

1. Maine plainly prefers state and NGO ownership to federal.
2. Until the LMFBS, Maine did not choose to spend very much of its own General Fund money on its conservation lands, whether for acquisition or management.

3. Maine and the interested NGOs have displayed a strong preference for maintaining large areas free of subdividing and development. Major NGO's retain considerable areas in multiple use categories. Ironically, a larger proportion of the NGO estate is in multiple use today than is true of the Maine portion of the White Mountain National Forest – “the Land of many uses”!

Table 2.

Maine Public Estate and Conservation Lands				
estimates for 2014				
		fee	ease	
Federal				Total
	ANP	35,332	12,416	47,748
	WMNF	49,980		49,980
	NWR's	64,660		64,660
	Fed Total	149,972	12,416	162,388
State	Pub Lands	619,952	429,100	1,049,052
	Parks	85,000		85,000
	IFW WMAs	100,000		100,000
	BSP	209,644		209,644
	State total	1,014,596	429,100	1,443,696
	State + fed	1,164,568	441,516	1,606,084
	NGO	388,000	1,857,000	2,245,000
	Grand Total	1,552,568	2,298,516	3,851,084

Sources: various. See explanatory notes below.

Figure 3.

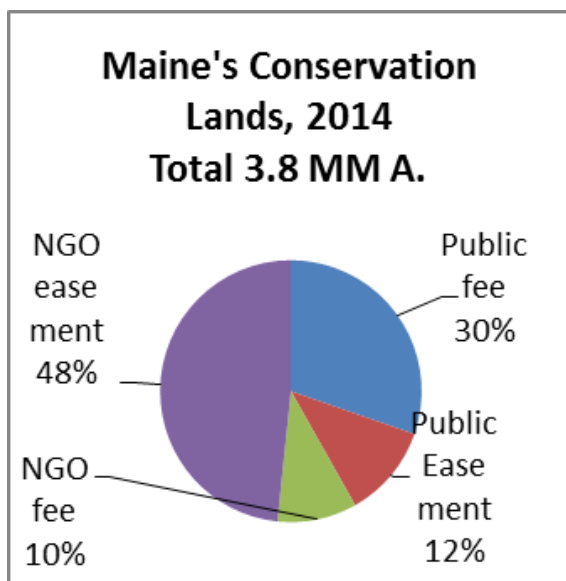


Figure 4

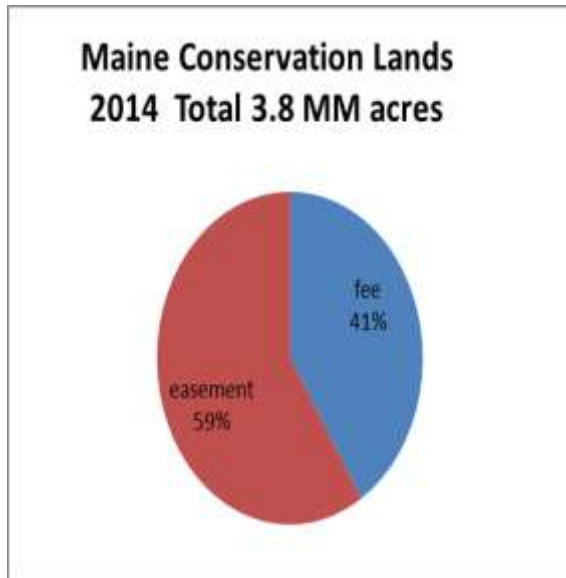


Figure 5.

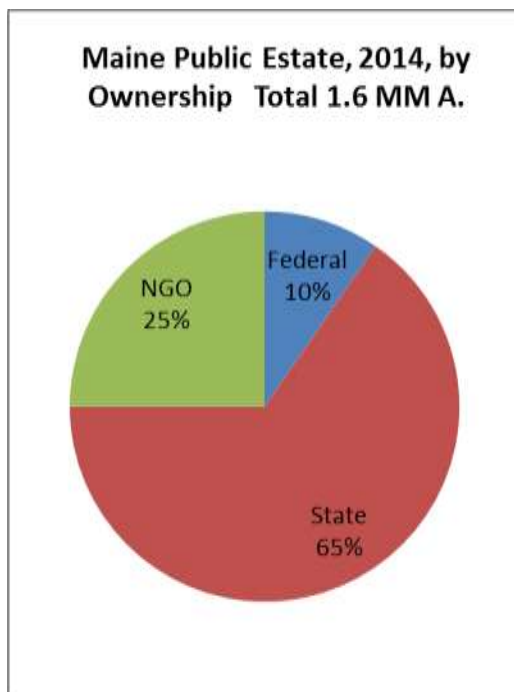
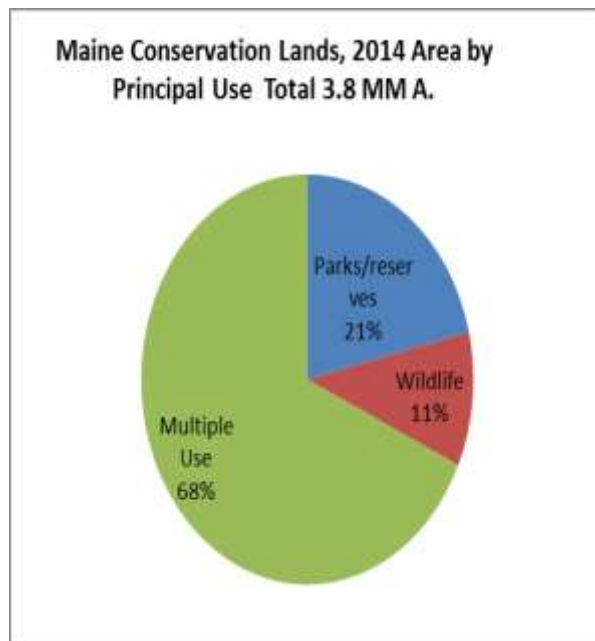


Figure 6.



Maine now has a very large and important “invisible conservation estate”. The large area protected by easements, roughly 10% of the state, appears on no maps in the vivid green often used for federal and state forest and parks. Further, municipal and small land trust properties, often very important for local recreational uses and our quality of life, appear on few maps available to the visitor. This is of interest not only to number-crunchers and policy wonks. It has important political consequences.

Key actor in the Acquisition Era: LMFB

The Land for Maine's Future Program is the State of Maine's primary funding vehicle for conserving land for its natural and recreational value. The program was established in 1987 when Maine citizens voted to fund \$35 million to purchase lands of statewide importance. In 1997, new priorities were established by a commission of Maine citizens. Since that time the program has administered multiple bonds and even instances of general fund appropriations.

Accomplishments: Completed projects in all of Maine's 16 counties. Types of land include; mountain summits; shorelines of rivers, lakes, and ponds; coastal islands; beaches; forests; grasslands; wildlife habitat; farmland; and wetlands. LMF assistance has put the following special places in the public trust forever:

- 52 water access sites
 - 37 farms of more than 8,900 acres
 - 20 commercial working waterfront properties
 - Acquisitions include more than 1,200 miles of shore lands, and 158 miles of former railroad corridors for recreational trails.
 - Over 560,000 acres of conservation and recreation lands.
- Above From LMFB website May 7, 2015.
<http://www.maine.gov/dacf/lmf/>

The program's 200 projects thus far have protected 570,000 acres from development, 314,000 acres (55%) of this by easements. The easements leave land in private ownership and on the tax rolls, with public access guaranteed. Significant portions of the public fee acres are also under active management for multiple uses.

Much of the acreage is in the northerly and eastern counties because of the important recreational and habitat resources in those areas. Also, land prices are far lower there and large tracts have been available.

Table 3.

LMFB Projects by County Entire State, Acres rounded.				
SUMMARY - LMF C&R Projects 1987-2014				
		Total	Fee	Easement
Maine County	No. of Projects	Acres	Acres	Acres
Androscoggin	7	2,927	2,843	84
Aroostook	8	6,669	3,643	3,026
Cumberland	31	7,671	4,032	3,640
Franklin	10	40,045	34,298	5,747
Hancock	14	47,175	23,320	23,855
Kennebec	5	7,251	7,251	0
Knox	9	669	669	0
Lincoln	11	1,304	1,299	5
Oxford	14	10,531	6,725	3,806
Penobscot	9	8,997	8,997	0
Piscataquis	8	271,290	39,538	231,752
Sagadahoc	7	2,610	2,264	346
Somerset	5	63,919	62,276	1,643
Waldo	7	1,214	1,214	0
Washington	31	83,847	52,764	31,083
York	24	14,318	5,668	8,650
TOTALS	200	570,436	256,799	313,637

Roughly half of all LMFB projects have been done in the state's 8 southernmost counties. Many of these acquisitions meet locally identified needs and protect locally important areas. In these counties, fee ownership exceeded easement acres, since most of the land value is for development; easements are often used on farm properties.

Table 4.

Land for Maine's Future Projects in Southern Maine				
	No. of Projects	Total Acres	Fee Acres	Easement Acres
York	24	14,318	5,668	8,650
Cumberland	31	7,671	4,032	3,640
Andro	7	2,927	2,843	84
Kennebec	5	7,251	7,251	0
Knox	9	669	669	0
Lincoln	11	1,304	1,299	5
Sagadahoc	7	2,610	2,264	346
Waldo	7	1,214	1,214	0
So ME	101	37,963	25,238	12,725
Pct of State	51%	7%	10%	4%
Ave size		376	250	126
	Source:	LMFB		
	Note: counties spanning organized and large unorganized areas not included			

Does Maine have too much Public Land?

We have heard it said the Maine has all the public land it needs. No supporting rationale for this view has been offered. One way to look at this question might be to compare Maine to other states.

It has long been said that of all the forested states, Maine has the lowest percentage of public land, at roughly 6%. In recent years, this percentage has risen, in part due to acquisition of easements rather than outright ownership. A current “league table” showing state and their public land ownership does not exist. Based on sources for 2012, we can compare state and federal fee ownership in Maine to a number of other eastern states. States with less state ownership than Maine are almost all farm states like Illinois, or southern states with histories of hostility to public ownership (or government action of any kind). There appears to no current estimate of lands owned by local and county governments, but it could be in the 100,000 acre range.

So, how much public land is enough? This question has no ready answer. Others have persuasively advocated for retaining New England’s extensive forests, farms and working landscapes. Nothing needs to be added here to those arguments (Harvard Forest, 2010, New England Governors, 2009; New England Forestry Foundation, 2014)

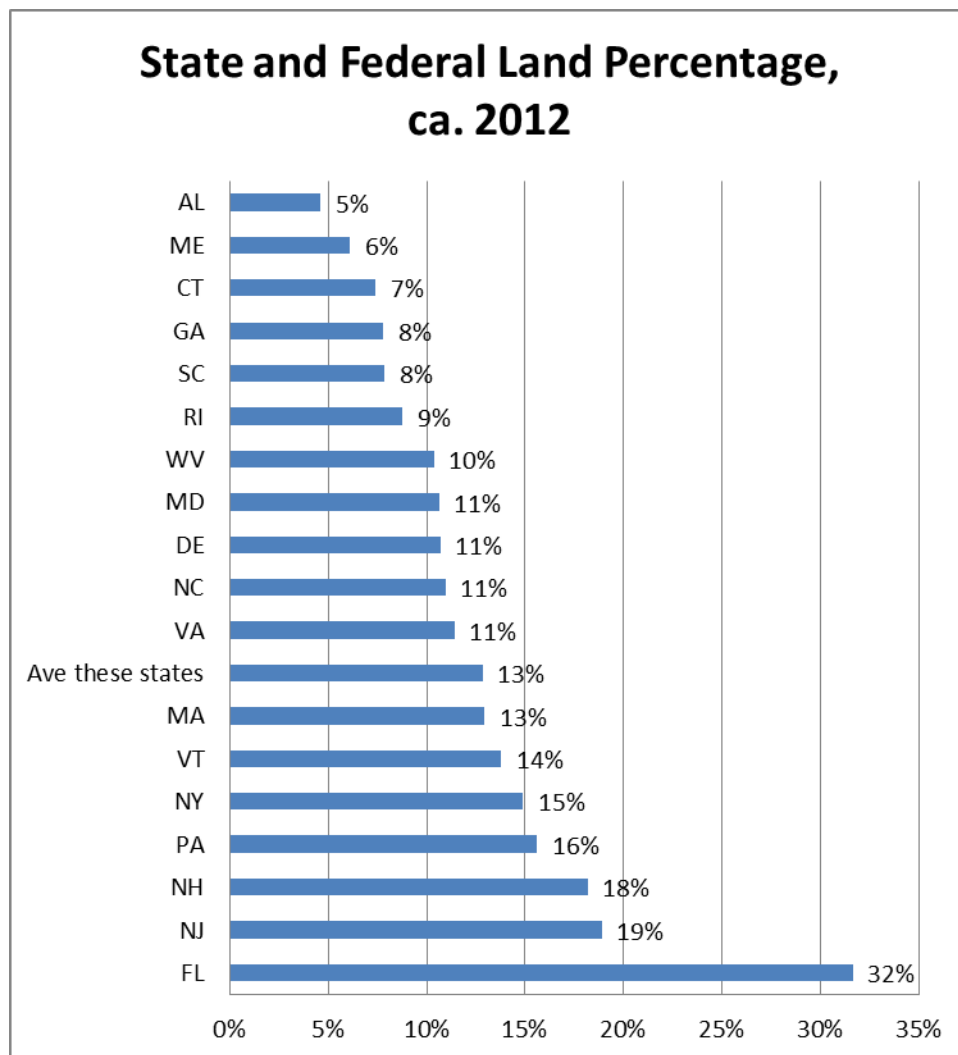
Table 5.

Selected Eastern States, State and Federal Land			
State	All Land	State & Fed	Percent
AL	32,413,000	1,492,146	5%
CT	3,099,000	228,734	7%
DE	1,247,000	133,598	11%
FL	34,447,000	10,901,901	32%
GA	36,809,000	2,875,376	8%
MA	4,992,000	646,417	13%
MD	6,252,000	665,391	11%
ME	19,739,000	1,201,217	6%
NC	31,115,000	3,411,118	11%
NH	5,730,000	1,041,428	18%
NJ	4,707,000	889,241	19%
NY	30,161,000	4,493,414	15%
PA	28,635,000	4,472,801	16%
RI	662,000	58,035	9%
SC	19,239,000	1,513,447	8%
VA	25,274,000	2,883,802	11%
VT	5,889,000	812,581	14%
WV	15,384,000	1,593,845	10%
Grand Total	305,794,000	39,322,808	13%
Owners by TNC from various sources			
All land	from USFS 2012 RPA Tables		

Based on state and federal fee ownership, Maine ranks second from the bottom among these states. It is even below the densely populated and land-costly states of southern New England.

Figure 7.

Note: is there a way to highlight the Maine bar?



Total Maine Conservation Land by Counties

A table in the 2015-2020 SCORP draft suggests that we have a way to go in providing minimal availability of open space and recreation lands in areas

where Maine's people live. The large areas in conservation easements, on the other hand, mean that for five of the wildland counties, 23% or more of their land area is in conserved status. This must be clearly a major conservation achievement. Yet, by many standards. Significant needs remain in Southern Maine.

Table 6.

Conservation Acres	County Consvd Acres	County land area	% Conserved
Androscoggin	9,189.20	317,530.51	2.89%
Aroostook	581,131.69	4,358,237.50	13.33%
Cumberland	38,163.31	587,558.14	6.50%
Franklin	142,649.03	1,113,551.35	12.81%
Hancock	178,758.85	1,080,476.56	16.54%
Kennebec	22,363.49	607,421.96	3.68%
Knox	18,540.27	240,535.44	7.71%
Lincoln	12,895.20	304,791.72	4.23%
Oxford	263,785.58	1,389,532.68	18.98%
Penobscot	154,308.68	2,271,263.19	6.79%
Piscataquis	1,076,556.65	2,795,178.22	38.51%
Sagadahoc	18,502.14	163,855.29	11.29%
Somerset	818,324.55	2,613,713.24	31.31%
Waldo	22,830.86	544,618.53	4.19%
Washington	506,953.07	1,759,877.27	28.81%
York	65,558.58	646,670.37	10.14%
Total	3,930,511.15	20,794,811.96	18.90%

Source: Maine BP&L. pers comm. There is a question on the total land area numbers.

Issues with Public and Conservation Lands Today

When created, the Board had bipartisan support which it has retained over the years. When the LMFB was created, and since, local groups and local governments brought in proposals for land conservation that far exceeded available funds. The Board's projects were not crammed down people's throats by bureaucratic planners. Maine citizens regularly approve bonding for parks, for wildlife lands, and for LMFB, because they see the need. The state's most important scenic and habitat resources are important to Mainers. They have seen what unrestrained sprawl has done; they have seen the No Trespassing signs going up.

A great deal of the Board's activity has been oriented toward retaining land in multiple-use management and on the tax rolls –55% of its acquisitions have been as easements not fee ownership. Since public recreational lands can improve nearby property values, there is every likelihood that any effect on tax base is offset by higher values nearby. We can assume that local project supporters understand this.

In *New England Forestry Foundation, Inc. v Board of Assessors of Hawley*, the Massachusetts Supreme Court recently offered strong support for the public benefit and “charitable purpose” of conservation lands in the context of a dispute over whether certain conservation lands were entitled to exemption from property tax.

The many land acquisition projects supported by LMFB bonds, are supported by local governments and citizens, who value these lands for many local benefits. How much is enough? The LMFB process lets local communities decide this for themselves. The Law requires that for any acquisition involving more than 1% of a community's tax base, a local legislative body must approve the transaction.

Remarks on The Data

The summaries here do not include the 400,000 acres of Public Reserved Lands until I pick them up in the 1988 estimates. This is because they were effectively invisible until the 1970s, as noted in the text. These lands had continued in state ownership although the timber and grass rights had been sold. See Schepps, Lee M. 1974. Maine's Public Lots: the emergence of a public trust. *Maine Law Review*. Vol. 26. P. 217 ff. These lots were scattered across much of the wildlands, 1000 acres or so per township; some were not even located on the maps, but were common and undivided. Given limited development of roads to the 1970's, few of these were accessible to visitors. In the trading program of the 1970s and 80s, the total acreage actually increased due to favorable acreage balances in many trades.

Note that the dates used refer to years when listings of areas could be found and do not readily correspond to key years in the development of the Public Estate and Conservation Lands. Other estimates for public land ownership can be found that are differ somewhat from individual numbers used here.

Wilkins, A. 1963. Report on the public reserved lots. Augusta. State Forestry dept. (pocket part contains several valuable maps, with a detailed map of the reserved lands as of 1963, including unlocated lots) This document contains useful summary history of the lands of the state from 1603 and is the source of the information through the 19th century. For the historically inclined, a map dated 1976 locates all the public reserved lands, with consolidated trade lands as of that date and the location of the many "unlocated" lots. Drawn by V. Parker, Dec. 1, 1976.

During the 19th century Indian Township was considered a State Forest, despite its name. Tribal lands amounted to some 20,000 acres when the Indian Township was transferred to the Passamaquoddies in 1763; the early 80's land settlement added some 300,000 acres to the tribal lands. The legal status of these lands is complex and some changes may have occurred since then. Much of this land is open to public use, under rules established by the tribes, as for hunting and fishing licenses etc.

The data point for 1935 is based on bits extracted from Maine State Planning Board, Report 1934-1935. State House, Augusta, Maine. pp. 152 ff.

The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, 1958-62, issued a series of major reports, but the volume listing outdoor recreation areas as of 1960 cannot be located in the State Library's Government Documents collection. Copies no doubt exist elsewhere in Maine.

For 1966, Maine Parks and Recreation Commission and University of Maine. Outdoor Recreation in Maine, 1966. The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Augusta. (This was before Parks was folded into the Conservation Department as the Bureau of Parks and Rec.)

For 1988, a report compiled by Richard Kelley, Jr. 1989. Maine land in state and federal conservation ownership. State Planning Office and Maine Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

More recent SCORPS supply details on particular topics.

For 2014, Estimates from the 2015-2020 SCORP were used, supplemented by somewhat more up to date information supplied by Dave Publicover based on updating data in the USGS Protected Areas Database. Because of the many changes in ownerships over time, and the difficulty of keeping track of small acquisitions, we can expect these numbers to differ somewhat from those that will be seen in other sources.

For all these reasons, I state the numbers in very round terms so that readers will not expect them to be highly precise. To make a graphic picture of change over time, assumptions had to be used, so many specific past data points other than state and federal ownership should be taken with a grain of salt.

Understandably given the numerous municipalities and local NGOs in Maine, there is no comprehensive inventory of lands owned by them for outdoor and recreational purposes. Reluctantly, it has been necessary to ignore these entirely in this note, due to the wide variances in estimates that have been published in the past. This could result in omitting 100,000 acres or more of lands that are important to conservation, habitat, quality of life, and recreation in local areas.

No good source detailing the history of the state's Wildlife Management areas, mostly funded by Pitman-Robertson funds, the Wildlife Refuges, or the state Parks was found. Specialized collections at the individual agencies would need to be reviewed to piece together the story.

Information on these lands is contained and occasionally updated in the MEGIS system, as well as in several NGO systems. TNC maintains its own database, and the USGS maintains a Protected Areas DB as well. For the county and municipal lands, estimates vary widely. Further, not all sources identify the date for which they apply; some are known to be missing occasional items. Unfortunately, despite multiple GIS systems, maps are not kept current, but are occasionally assembled by researchers (see Meyer, et al. 2015 and references therein)

Information is available in the Maine GIS system, but it is not well suited for use by persons not skilled in and equipped for using GIS systems (such as this writer).

Table 7. Historical Data and Comparisons.

Conservation Lands Schematic 1935-2014					
Schematic: Maine Conservation Lands					
1935-2014					
Year	Fed & State fee	Fed & state easements	NGO fee	NGO easements	Total Conservation
1935	52	0	0	0	52
1965	270	0	5	0	275
1988	937	20	10	20	987
1999	937	20	205	750	1,912
2014	1,164	442	378	1,857	3,841
Analysis: change 65 to 2014					
	894	442	373	1,857	3,566
Pct of the increase	25%	12%	10%	52%	100%
Pct distrib 1935	100	0	0	0	
Pct distrib 1988	95%	2%	1%	2%	100%
Pct distrib 2014	30%	12%	10%	48%	100%

Note: the 400,000 A of "public lots not picked up in this data till 1988.

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