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Alternative Large-Scale Conservation Visions for Northern Maine: Interviews with Decision Leaders in Maine

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Interviews with Decision Leaders in Maine

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Based on confidential interviews with 21 decision leaders in Maine, Elizabeth Baldwin, Laura Kenefic, and Will LaPage examine the complexity of the conflicts over alternate visions for large-scale conservation in Maine. Exploring models that may be useful for policymakers grappling with competing values for Maine's forests, they present four alternatives: national forests, new U.S. forest service models, forest heritage areas, and the British national park model. The authors found that the leaders interviewed agreed about the need for some level of conservation, but but did not completely agree on how this might happen and where the decision-making power should lie.

INTRODUCTION

In June 1994 the environmental advocacy group RESTORE the North Woods (RESTORE) unveiled a proposal for a 3.2-million-acre national park in northern Maine that set off a firestorm of public debate. The debate has been centered on the administrative outcome RESTORE proposed—a national park—and has obscured focus on underlying goals and values important to the region.

National parks are considered part of the psyche of the great American outdoors and have been effective conservation tools, despite problems experienced during their 130-year history (Machlis and Field 2000; Wright and Mattson 1996). However, in an age where conservation strategies often include people (Terborgh et al. 2002; Kremen et al. 1999; Kuusipalo and Kangas 1994) and are not always taking place on public land, alternatives to the national park model are often considered. It is important for the conservation community to include local people in the design, management, and control of large-scale conservation (Terborgh et al. 2002); working with local people may be the best way to guarantee access to traditional uses of a landscape while protecting and maintaining important ecological structure and function. With local inclusion comes local support, which will ultimately protect the land for the long term.

Conflicts often arise from different visions for a natural area or region and are related to different definitions of place (Cheng et al. 2003). These definitions may be tied to specific places or a whole region, or to values such as family, adventure, love, work, and spiritual renewal. The identity of place is complex (Williams and Stewart 1998), and efforts to understand this are important for the success of any conservation strategy.

Twenty-one decision leaders in Maine were interviewed for this study between June 2004 and May 2005. Our objectives were to discover some of the complexity in the environmental conflict Maine was facing and to explore alternative models of large-scale conservation that may be useful for policymakers to consider in their effort to meet competing values of the forest. These models were synthesized from decision leaders' comments in semi-structured interviews; for the purpose of this study, decision leaders were defined as people from for-profit and nonprofit business, academic, and government sectors who have worked in or studied the northern half of Maine. In an effort to maintain openness, the interviews were confidential and quotes presented in this paper will not have names attributed to them. Interviewees were not guided in any way to the alternative visions represented in the findings. Instead, the structure for the interviews was based on the five goals RESTORE laid out for a park and preserve in northern Maine (Kellett 2000):

Conflicts often arise from different visions for a natural area or region and are related to different definitions of place.

1. Restore and protect the ecology of the Maine Woods.
2. Guarantee access to a true Maine Woods wilderness experience.
3. Interpret Maine's cultural heritage.
4. Anchor a healthy northern Maine economy.
5. Raise national awareness of the Maine Woods.

Conference participation, document analysis, meetings, informal discussion, and phone conversations with leaders unavailable for interviews were used to supplement our data and to check the validity and trustworthiness of the information gathered from the primary sources.

LARGE-SCALE CONSERVATION

In April 2005 the director of the National Park Service (NPS) described units in the national park system as "places to find the soul of America, and the places that tell the story of America" (Mainella 2005). The NPS is an international leader in resource protection and interpretation. Despite problems noted by many, national parks are still an important tool for resource protection (Davis et al. 2004). They are

well known as economic engines (Rothman 2000), and they have wide public appeal, a clear centralized management scheme, and a recognizable structure with consistency in signage, printed materials, and personal interpretation and education.

A park is still what most people think of first when they think of conserving a landscape.

The traditional way to protect land in the United States has been to create a national park or national monument (Wright and Mattson 1996). Areas that were to be used for multiple purposes became U. S. Forest Service lands, Bureau of Land Management, or National Wildlife areas. In 1964, wilderness areas entered the mix and can be managed by any of the above entities. All of these examples share something in common: they are all federally owned. Early national parks were in the West, and the majority of public land in the U.S. today is in the western half of the country. With an increase in population came the recognition of the need for protection of eastern landscapes. The advent of ecosystem management resulted in a systems approach to management beyond the boundaries of protected areas (Jope and Dunstan 1996) and a recognition of the ecological importance of previously overlooked landscapes with values such as biodiversity of species and landscapes, large areas for absorbing evolutionary change, and persistence of species in a human-dominated world (Margules and Pressey 2000).

Centralized Management

A park is still what most people think of first when they think of conserving a landscape. The model has a centralized management scheme with a clear understandable hierarchy of management and decision-making process. A product of centralized management is a clear mission for the landscape in terms of resource use, recreation, and education. The NPS provides this, as does Plum Creek Timber Company, which is developing management plans for the Moosehead Region in Maine (Plum Creek 2005). Although the missions of these organizations are quite different, they are both clear centralized management schemes and are easily understood by local people.

Decentralized Management

In the last decade a more decentralized scheme for large-scale land conservation has arisen in the form of conservation easements (Brewer 2003). This has been the most common form of land conservation in Maine because most of the landscape is privately owned. Though once a tool for smaller pieces of the landscape, hundreds of thousands of acres of easements were established in the 1990s. Management can be from a variety of entities that provide monitoring, while the landowner uses the land in a manner consistent with the terms of the easement. Most early large easements in Maine permitted any level of forestry allowed by the Forest Practices Act (www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/pubs/htm/fpa_04.html); recently many have prohibited liquidation harvesting. Easements, however, do not provide trail systems or visitor centers, and there is no readily available list of the easements purchased in Maine's Northern Forest (Pidot 2003, 2005; Vail 2003). Subsequently, there are concerns that easements cannot serve as the economic engine for the Maine Woods (Pidot 2003). Moreover, using easements as a long-range conservation policy depends on many factors that may not be fully considered in the decision-making process currently used in choosing easements for landscape-scale conservation (Lewis 2001).

THE RESTORE MAINE WOODS PARK AND PRESERVE PROPOSAL

Background

The Wilderness Society was the originator of the current RESTORE proposal. Although the current proposal differs from the original plan, it shares the same general area and the same author. The vision that led to the RESTORE proposal began in 1988 when the Wilderness Society proposed protection or expansion of three areas in the lower 48 where "coherence should and can be restored or preserved" (Watkins 1988: 13): the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem, the

Southern Appalachian Highlands, and Maine's North Woods. This led to the creation of a Wilderness Society office in Maine and a yearlong study that culminated in the report *A New Maine Woods Reserve: Options for Protecting Maine's Northern Wildlands* (Kellett 1989). The report concentrated on the need to protect three aspects of the Maine Woods: (1) the wildlands for habitat, primitive recreation, and ecological integrity; (2) areas for public use of the region; and (3) a sustainable economy. Ultimately, the report gave a wide array of possible options to create a feasible reserve system capable of sustaining wilderness, ecological, cultural, and economic values. This array included state, federal, private, and public solutions. However, the authors of the report noted the need for more research to determine the best possible solution for protecting diverse forest values.

Michael Kellett left the Wilderness Society and founded RESTORE the North Woods (RESTORE) in 1991. RESTORE proposed the Maine Woods National Park and Preserve in 1994. The proposal has caused many debates. There are also concerns about rapid land use changes without a single coherent plan for the region.

Concerns

Concerns about the proposal have their roots in Maine's history of keeping the federal government out of the state as much as possible. This applies most clearly to land management and has been illustrated by events in Maine's land conservation history. The first example is the 1911 passage of the Weeks Law that set in motion the federal purchase of eastern forests. There was resistance to this in northern Maine (Rolde 2001). Even later, in 1931, "Congress proposed federal acquisition of tax-delinquent timberlands for a national forest in Maine, as was occurring throughout the eastern United States. The proposal was so unpopular that no state legislator would sponsor an enabling bill" (Judd and Beach 2003: 85).

There have been a number of attempts throughout Maine's history to create a national park or a national forest in the state's northern half. Probably the most well supported was the 1937 proposal for a Katahdin National Park in the area that is today Baxter State Park (National Park Service 1937). The federal government supported a feasibility study of the area, but it did not get Congressional support and there was worry that inviting too many to Maine's Northern Forest could change its character forever (Irland 1999). Additionally, the authors of the 1937 report did not all agree on a national park designation. The Branch of Forestry representative, John F. Shanklin, supported instead a national monument, citing legislation stating that a national park is land "essentially in primeval condition," and noting the evidence of human use on the landscape (National Park Service 1937). Percival Baxter had his own plan for the region, which he began working on in 1931 (Rolde 2001). He eventually bought land and deeded it to the state of Maine for a 200,000-acre state park with a clear mandate and management structure.

Another example of a federal-idea-turned-state-solution is the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. The 1955 plan to build a dam and flood the Allagash Valley brought the debate about the future of this wild river to a head (Judd and Beach 2003). Ideas for protection included a national park and a river protection corridor managed by the state. Preservation groups and industry landowners joined forces in opposing federal designation, citing the increase in outside visitors that would bring about more development and increase the tax base for industry landowners. They and some state officials promoted the idea of a "working wilderness" (Judd and Beach 2003; Rolde 2001). The waterway was established in 1966 by the Maine Legislature, and in 1970 it became the first state-managed unit of the Wild and Scenic River System (Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands 2005; Judd and Beach 2003; Rolde 2001).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: ALTERNATIVE MODELS FOR LARGE-SCALE CONSERVATION IN NORTHERN MAINE

Since the advent of ecosystem and adaptive management in the 1990s there has been concern about the size of protected areas (Trombulak 2003; Wright 1996; Noss and Cooperrider 1994; Pressey et al. 1993). How can we protect and manage enough of a particular landscape to provide a good representation of the variety in the landscape and provide enough space for evolutionary processes to continue (Margules and Pressey 2000)? At the same time, there is concern for the economic wellbeing of rural populations. Maintaining quality of life requires a creative approach

to the economy so that a diverse base of lasting employment accompanies increased quality of life and the environment.

The interviewees all addressed these issues regardless of their position on the park. There was also agreement that a proactive approach to conservation is needed in the northern half of the state. Without such a vision, we will continue in a reactionary manner, debating individual visions instead of developing a comprehensive one.

Context for Land Use Change in Northern Maine

An understanding of the landscape, or context, from which the RESTORE proposal emerged and continues to develop is important for understanding reactions to the proposal more than 10 years after its unveiling. Northern Maine is sparsely populated, and more than 10 million acres of this area are unorganized territories and managed by the state's Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC). This land has traditionally been in the hands of a few large timber companies, but in the 1980s large land sales and mill closings were seen by many as signs that Maine's Northern Forest was up for sale (Irland 2000). The Nature Conservancy and the Forest Society of Maine have responded with conservation easements on a massive scale (Ginn 2005).

The history of mill closings, job loss, community decline, and loss of access is captured well in the following quote from an interviewee working professionally in Maine since 1965. Most of the interviewees noted not only the conservation problems associated with smaller parcel size and rising land values, but also the dire need for economic diversification in the northern Maine towns.

> You could make a case that when Great Northern announced in 1986 after the defeat of the Big A project that it was going to be downsizing that was really the clanging bell, the first one that things are going to be different here in the North Woods. I well remember Bob Bartlett, who was the president at the time, making the announcement that they were going to be reducing their work force severely over the years, and life was not going to be the same. As of that moment, 1986, before Diamond Occidental fell, this was really big news, the biggest news in that decade in a way, because it said our history as we have known it for the last 100 years up this way is going to be changing. And so that began the circumstances and events that lead us up to today. People could have thought it would be great to have a park, but if nobody was willing to sell they sure weren't going to get it [a park] from eminent domain. So, with the sales and the downsizing, first of all the mills, and then as more people got involved in looking at [whether they] really need to own all this land, that's when it became possible for a willing seller and a willing buyer to get together. Until the Diamond sale, I don't think there had been any other major investing in land, but that was the first time I think people might have let the hairs get raised on their back with excitement that maybe this was the start of something really big and maybe these lands would be up for sale for the first time.

In 1976 the Department of Conservation adopted the *Comprehensive Land Use Plan: For Areas Within the Jurisdiction of the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission*. However, the decision leaders interviewed for this study said that there is no comprehensive plan in action. The concern was that this plan was never adopted and that it is now out of date. The decision leaders interviewed were concerned about the reactive nature of land management in Maine's Northern Forest and that conservation will continue in a reactionary state in the absence of a clear, current comprehensive plan. There was a feeling that the driving force for the land use decisions, and values represented in those decisions, will be made by those with the money and power to own and plan for the future land use of northern Maine.

> There isn't any grand plan. The state doesn't have a grand plan, and I would probably argue it'd be unrealistic to think it should. But there is a down side in that. It's not like we have a plan, and we're going to use regulations here

> and a sentence there with this combination. There's not a map that I would show you that says, "Here is where we'd like to be." There are resources; the approach the state is taking is "there are resources that we think would be important to conserve that shouldn't be developed, it shouldn't be harvested too heavily, the public should have guaranteed access." So what we do is, we go talk with those landowners, kind of hopefully with all of the toolbox there, and see what can be worked out. It could be very interesting. Nobody really is in a position to talk to you about it right now.

The decision leaders interviewed for this study characterized the current land use crisis in northern Maine as needing strong leadership in a time of great change. Changes such as reduction of land parcel size and the rapid changing of ownership type from timber companies to investment companies were noted, as well as the declining economy from mill closings. However, with this concern also came a caution from the leaders about a federal solution for northern Maine that would lead to a loss of control and be inconsistent with the traditional uses of the Northern Forest. However, the concern for lack of funds led many to discuss ways to incorporate temporary federal support for a state-controlled plan. There also was acknowledgement that a comprehensive conservation plan must be created to protect the many values represented in Maine's Northern Forest, both naturally and culturally. The proposal for a national park was not supported by many of the leaders due to the lack of political will they perceived in the region. However, the RESTORE goals for the park were supported by the leaders and led them to share alternative visions for large-scale conservation that they perceived were more in keeping with the Maine landscape, both politically and naturally.

The last 10 years have seen the advent of massive-scale conservation easements being purchased by The Nature Conservancy, the Forest Society of Maine, and the state of Maine to name the most prominent. The focus of these easements primarily has been to support the continuation of traditional uses of the forest by preventing development. There was disagreement among the interviewees about the use of large conservation easements. Those from the state and conservation organizations were in favor of them, but those in business, especially the guiding business, did not like them because easements restrict growth and development and the building of a tourism infrastructure in northern Maine.

> Others are giving away the store and when they give away public access [with easements] I think they are giving away a valuable right, right off the get go. I think that is the price the state pays for its lack of vision and the public pays for its lack of interest.

> Easements are a direct response to the public interest in conservation of these lands, and they are moving us toward better use. However, they do not in any way say that we as Maine citizens are masters of our own destiny.

The decision leaders interviewed were concerned about the reactive nature of land management in Maine's Northern Forest and that conservation will continue in a reactionary state in the absence of a clear, current comprehensive plan.

There was agreement that large-scale conservation would most likely happen with federal dollars and state control, and that this might include new models that include some of the tools currently in use such as easements. However, one leader cautioned that using the same tool across the whole landscape is like getting a new tool and trying to build an entire house with it. In fact, a national forest was considered by some of those interviewed as an alternative based on federal control.

Four Alternative Visions

Four alternative visions to the RESTORE proposal clearly emerged from the interview data; quotes supporting each alternative are presented with blank lines separating interviewees.

National Forest

The only purely federal option that had support from decision leaders was a national forest, though some opposed this alternative because they felt that federal control is unlikely to gain political support or because they were opposed to the road building in national forests. However, there were many who noted the positive values of federal support such as federal funding, increased research potential, forest heritage, and harvesting, and the potential for multiple-use management that could include a non-motorized area.

> The informal multiple-use perspective has existed, even in the face of all the changes. A multiple-use framework really continues to make sense to me. I think it makes sense environmentally, economically and socially, and I can see that a national forest brings that in.

> …the national forest model was the … most common competing vision to a national park. The Forest Service's multiple-use perspective is consistent with historical and current management of Maine lands and Maine's Northern Forest.

> You know, as an unrealistic Mainer I'd say, "Well, give us money but then don't tell us how to spend it." One of the things they (the current administration in Washington) do want to do is devolve more power to local levels. I suppose that would make me feel comfortable in that sense. But fundamentally, if there was a proposal to establish a new national forest in Maine, I wouldn't be opposed to that at all. I would support that. I've worked a lot with the Forest Service. I've been in a lot of national forests and I think they do a pretty darn good job of managing their lands. Not to say our folks don't, they do very good work as well. But they don't have the resources that the federal agency has to offer.

> I think a national forest would be better than a national park. Obviously the national park would restrict some forms of traditional recreation and its economics would be a lot more about peripheral developments, you know the Gatlinburg, Tennessee, scenario, than it would be about timber management and such.

In this study the national forest model was the interviewees' most common competing vision to a national park. The Forest Service's multiple-use perspective is consistent with historical and current management of Maine lands and Maine's Northern Forest. The Forest Service allows bids to harvest timber in parcels of the national forest and has standards for harvesting. They have been successful at designating different trail uses and are charged with managing most of the nation's wilderness areas. They plan for recreation with designated sites and have a permitting process for groups; national forests are more conducive to group use of trails and backcountry than national parks because they allow larger group sizes. Another benefit of the national forest's multiple-use management is that different users with different values of the forest may find themselves together at a campsite. This promotes informal education and communication that can ultimately help to solve conservation conflicts.

Another benefit to the national forest model is that it is varied enough to allow for protection of wilderness for ecological, scientific, and recreation reasons. It is also able to accommodate the desire for a buffer zone of shared use around a core protected area, with intense-use zones that may include visitor centers. An excellent example of this is the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. The Gila is shaped like a doughnut. The center is a wilderness area first protected by the work

of Aldo Leopold in 1929, and it was the first federally recognized roadless land (now called "wilderness"). The Gila National Forest surrounds this wilderness area and is a place where visitors and local residents can engage in timber harvesting, hunting, and hot spring use, among other activities. The Forest Service is an expert at managing wilderness areas, and if there was an addition of a non-motorized unit in the northern Maine area, the expertise could be gleaned from this level of experience. The state does currently have ecological reserves, but these serve a different purpose than the non-motorized areas called for by the Maine guides using these landscapes.

One of the drawbacks many see with a national forest is its vast network of roads and associated road building. Proponents of a new national park in Maine pick this as the reason they would not support a national forest. Others cite the history of opposition to federal ownership in Maine in their assessment of the lack of political will for a national park or a national forest, and therefore chose other options for land use management with more clear state control.

New U.S. Forest Service Models

Some interviewees noted the Forest Service experiments with new models of protecting landscapes that include federal funding with local control. The sentiment was echoed by most of the interviewees that we may develop a bold vision, but Maine cannot pay for it. The example of the Forest Legacy dollars was cited as a good model for acquiring federal dollars, with the federal government allowing Maine leaders, more specifically the Forest Society of Maine, oversight and management of those dollars.

An example of this model in the Forest Service is Valles Caldera National Preserve purchased by the federal government in July 2000. Included in the purchase agreement was the opportunity for the Santa Clara Pueblo to have the right to purchase more than 5,000 acres of land that included the headwaters of the Santa Clara. The Santa Clara people also swapped easements with the federal government along the northeast corner of the preserve. The preserve is 89,000 acres in northern New Mexico and is run by the Valles Caldera Trust. The trust is a government corporation created by the act that created the preserve. A nine-member board manages the trust and the preserve; seven of the members are appointed, the eighth is the superintendent of Bandelier National Monument and the ninth is the manager of the Santa Fe National Monument. The seven appointees are local experts in the areas of culture, economics, sustainable forestry, livestock management, wild game management, and members of state and local government.

The Forest Service reviews plans brought to it by states interested in this type of plan, and they are finding interest in areas involving managing different uses of a landscape. This type of model incorporates many philosophies about land use and protection. It is indeed an experiment of inclusion by the federal government. It brings with it 15 years of monetary support to develop what is needed in the management of an important natural, cultural, and economic area.

> If there's going to be a new entity here, the people need to be a major, major part of it. They need to say what's in their hearts and what their fears are and help to offer solutions. And as you probably have heard a lot, we have an opportunity to create something new. If you want to call it a hybrid, maybe that's one word, but a new variation on an old and honorable being.

Forest Heritage Area

This idea is based on the federal national heritage areas (NHA) program and from the success of many state-controlled forests, both discussed in the following section. The NHA is a new designation of the Department of Interior for lands that have historical and present patterns of human use, as follows:

> A "national heritage area" is a place designed by the United States Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These areas tell nationally important stories about our nation and are representative of the national experience through both the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved within them (National Park Service n.d.).

The federal government has 27 national heritage areas, and they are managed by partnerships with all three levels of government: federal, state and local. NHAs are being attempted in other rural regions with a managed forest. One interviewee drew connections between the recent West Virginia effort for an Appalachian Forest Heritage Area and the opportunity in Maine's Northern Forest.

> They [West Virginia] have got that Appalachian Forest Heritage Area. They're putting an application in on it. I've been kicking the doors around here saying, "For God sakes, the Maine Woods Forest Heritage. What the hell have we been about forever?" I mean, to me, this is the opportunity. We need to get a limited study group of yea sayers and nay sayers, and put together a learning agenda, develop them into a learning community. Go visit some of these areas and look at what the tangible issues are that people have to deal with, and look at what the costs or benefits are and then come back and report on that. If it makes some sense, fine. If it doesn't make sense, fine. Or if it's a split report, fine. But we're interested in that, admittedly, from a more selfish perspective in the region; we think that they don't have the constraints that go with the national park. But what that brings us is maybe some additional resources, some visible recognition, and some financial resources to help us do our diversified economic development work here, and at the same time protect the rural life that we appreciate.

National heritage areas are relatively new and encourage partnerships and collaborative planning. Several universities initiated the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area in West Virginia and a nonprofit was established with two years of funding from the Fund for Rural America. Unlike a national park, a NHA can have any management entity that meets approval of the stakeholders and the federal government and is named in the designation legislation. This could be a government agency, a nonprofit or an independent federal commission. The land stays in private ownership after designation; partners maintain a role in the heritage protection, use, and interpretation. The federal government provides funding for 10 to 15 years to help establish infrastructure. This is not a subsidy as it will come to an end, but rather capital for start up. In fact, "Designation legislation does not provide the management entity or any federal agency with the authority to regulate land" (National Park Service n.d.).

The idea of startup capital was appealing to many of the decision leaders, but an outright subsidy was not favored.

> I used to subscribe to Solar Age magazine—it hasn't been in print for 20 years. And that was back when there were all of these subsidies for solar stuff. And I remember the last issue—[the new President] came in, all of those credits were gone. And what happened was the whole industry had gotten so weaned on to those subsidies that it collapsed of its own weight. And I remember the last issue, the guy wrote, "We did this to ourselves. You know, we kept feeding, it was like pigs at the trough."
>
> There's no point in creating a subsidized infrastructure.

The following quotes do not directly refer to a NHA; however, they can certainly be considered in line with the same vision of promoting forest stewardship and becoming a model to the nation and a source of pride.

> I'd create about a two-million-acre [entity], maybe, state run. This would be extreme because people up here just hate this because they think the BPL [Bureau of Parks and Lands] is just inefficient; they just think it's awful. The models of good, long-term stewardship-oriented forestry, moneymaking and ecological, in the northeastern United States are all on state forests. Every damn one of them is a model.
>
> It's a legacy of stewardship that goes way back to the way the states bought these lands, and they're free from federal mandates, largely. And there's just an ethic that's built up around these lands and state forests. In Pennsylvania now,

the state forest system brings in 60 million dollars a year to the taxpayers. Twenty-three million of that is in one forest in northern Pennsylvania—and they bought that land for $3.00 per acre. Massachusetts is the same thing. Maine, because we've only had the land for like 20 years, is building to that situation. Every year is better. The inventory, if you look at the standing volume on Baxter, Scientific Management Area and Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, it's like two and a half times the average of the state, which they're part of. Once you get that high level of growing stock, and you're cutting bigger trees and more volumes, you're actually making way more cash than the speculators are, especially sustainably. The problem is you've got to just not count the timber that you have standing out there as the base, because the amount that you cut percentage-wise is lower.

Money should go into acquiring parcels of land to go into a publicly managed forest system that's strategically designed, just like an ecological reserve system would be, to conserve ecological value. It would be designed to create manageable blocks of timber that could be used to sustainably support an economy in a region.

And whereas the Bureau [of Parks and Lands] is now seen as kind of the home of preserves, and that's a fine role for them, I see also a future in publicly managed forest to keep that infrastructure. That would also, I think, benefit these family ownerships that need those markets, too, but might not be able to guarantee that on their own. That's my vision.

It strikes me that if you had like two or three million acres of land dedicated to decent long-rotation management, I mean, you just knew that was going to happen because there was no other use of it. This is certainly not incompatible with recreation. I mean, perfectly compatible with it. In fact people are more likely to pay money to go out there where you drive around and at least half of the forest is mature than driving through all of these 15-year-old clearcuts.

British National Park Model

The British National Parks require one to think completely differently about the concept of national parks; they are inhabited, used, and privately owned. They constitute 10 percent of the land base and are represented in 14 units across the landscape (Evans 2001). Issues of visitation have been similar to those of national parks around the world in terms of overcrowding. In an effort to relieve this pressure, a series of community forests have also been developed for recreation purposes. The inclusive nature of the British model builds what Matless (1996: p425) described as a "geographical citizenship promoted around planning and preservation of national parks and open air recreation."

The British National Parks require one to think completely differently about the concept of national parks; they are inhabited, used, and privately owned.

The British parks came from efforts in the late 19th century to start a "freedom to roam" campaign, which continued until the early 20th century when there were serious conflicts over access to the countryside. The mission when the national parks were established in 1949 was to preserve beauty and provide recreation for people. In 1995 this mission was updated to "foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park" (UK ANPA n.d.). The British parks are developed with a type of "green line" approach. There are towns and villages, as well as naturally zoned areas with trails and visitor centers. Once an area is established as a national park the land stays in private hands and is managed by individuals (e.g., farmers) and large nongovernmental

organizations (NGOs) (e.g., The National Trust). The funding for management and amenities is from the central government.

With increasing population growth and a global marketplace, the need for conservation on private landscapes that more fully integrate human use in its design calls for alternative models of large-scale conservation.

This model is a good example of the partnerships that must be created for the conservation of private landscapes (Swinnerton 1995). Bringing this model to New England is not a new idea; in 1987 an exchange of planning and land management professionals from the U.K. and the New England states took place in an effort to address the problems associated with rapid growth in New England (Carbin 1989). Carbin (1989: 102) notes that we could learn from the British model because "we speak a common language, and share the same cultural heritage. Our legal system is largely based on the English common law and philosophy. More importantly, of all the areas in the U.S., New England's traditional rural settlement pattern most closely follows that in the U.K.: small clustered villages and hamlets…surrounded by a working landscape of farms and forest." The 1987 exchange of planning and land management professionals identified five themes associated with rapid land use change in New England:

- There is a lack of vision about future options for conserving the New England countryside amidst increasing development.
- Planning by individual towns, when not coordinated with other towns and higher levels of government, is ineffective in the face of current trends.
- Like many communities, national parks and forests often focus their planning solely within their boundaries, rather than planning cooperatively with the adjacent communities.
- Contradictory attitudes toward planning exist in many rural communities.
- The unwillingness of agencies in rural areas to resolve property rights and broader public rights to conserve special areas remains a significant barrier to progress in countryside protection.

Almost 20 years later many of these themes have relevance to the land use issues in northern Maine, and that may be why it was presented to us by interviewees as a viable option that needs exploration.

> But another thing I think ought to be looked at hard, and I guess I understand why people find it remote, threatening, unconvincing, and I certainly understand why the wilderness people don't like it, is the British National Park.
>
> I would urge you to look into that [the British National Park model]. There is a lot of literature on it. You have a concept which is close to a national park without a national park because there wasn't any kind of vast expanse of just empty country. In the Lake District because the roads are very narrow, you can't have all the roads developed, all kinds of ticky-tacky trash, but retain this visual sense we have got here. We want to retain that existing world economy, but [also] the small farms, the tiny little hamlets and villages. We all don't want to have the influx of giant motels, and all kinds of national homogenized canned tourism stuff. We want this place to be like it was.

This interviewee echoed a sentiment heard from all sides of this issue. Whatever solution or comprehensive plan the state adopts must preserve the rural nature and spirit of northern Maine. The clear drawback of the British model as it is practiced is that there is no provision for roadless wilderness or ecological reserves; however the system of zoning could allow

another place to develop zones that make sense on the new landscape.

CONCLUSIONS

An array of visions emerged from the interview data. The confidential nature of these findings transcends the stereotyping that has plagued land use debates in Maine. When we publicly demonize or stereotype a person or sector, we attempt to strip them of their dignity, and ultimately it is the natural landscape and our communities that lose.

With increasing population growth and a global marketplace, the need for conservation on private landscapes that more fully integrates human use in its design calls for alternative models of large-scale conservation. Countries without general fund support of parks have had to do this for parks to be economically viable. When the general public thinks of protection of a landscape, many still think in terms of a park. Most people do not understand the nuances of different management goals within the federal government and assume a level of protection that excludes extractive and consumptive uses of the landscape.

The national park model is an asset that our country has shared with the world, and it has been an effective tool for large-scale conservation. It is therefore understandable why the RESTORE group proposed such a model for conservation of Maine's Northern Forest. However, the concerns of Maine citizens and the cultural memory and political will in Maine suggest other potential models to achieve large-scale conservation. There are many new models to draw upon, and the decision leaders interviewed in Maine were well aware of other possible solutions. It was not that there was disagreement on the fundamental question of whether there should be some level of conservation, but rather on how it might happen, and where the decision-making power would be. The leaders in Maine suggested only one federal option, a national forest; other options discussed were all federally funded programs with levels of state control.

If the state of Maine can create a comprehensive plan for the Unorganized Territories that respects the dignity of all bodies of knowledge and definitions of place, it can build the kind of pride that comes from being a model in conservation planning. Increasingly, pressure on natural systems creates urgency, and in that urgency decisions can be quick but incomplete. A thoughtful approach that includes all parties and is dedicated to creating a cohesive, comprehensive vision and adapting that vision in the years to come is the only model that will be successful.

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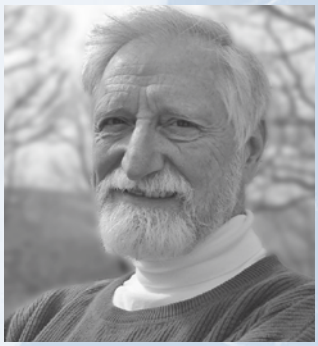

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