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**Study Relating to
Access to Outdoor Sporting Activities
By Individuals with Disabilities**

**By
Jessica Gorham**

January 2000

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**Study Relating to Access to Outdoor Sporting Activities By Individuals
with Disabilities**

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Executive Summary

Numerous bills that would enable disabled hunters and anglers to apply for licenses that allow for special accommodations were introduced during the First Regular Session of the 119th Legislature. These bills were referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and were carried over until the Second Regular Session so that the committee would have time to research them before making committee recommendations. To facilitate this research, the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife asked the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis (OPLA) to study disability access issues in relation to outdoor sporting activities. This report is designed to be an adjunct to the **Final Report of the Staff Study to Explore Disability Access Issues in Relation to Outdoor Sporting Activities to the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife** prepared by Legislative Researcher, Alison L. Ames and Legislative Analyst, David Webb, OPLA. In their report they examined requirements for disability access accommodations under federal and state law and surveyed other states' policies with regard to providing disabled access to fish and wildlife activities.

The goal of this report is to provide the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife with pertinent information about disabled access to fish and wildlife activities within the broader context of outdoor recreation. This study explores three distinct areas in terms of looking at current opportunities for access for the disabled:

- Specific needs and concerns of disabled individuals as identified by certain groups involved with conservation and disability issues
- The policies of state natural resource agencies
- The policies of municipalities

The information compiled in this report has been gathered through personal interviews, the use of a survey, Internet searches, and by direct contact with state agencies, cities and municipalities. The survey was administered to individuals from various advocacy groups including organizations representing the disabled community, hunting and fishing enthusiasts and conservation groups. Ten organizations expressed interest and completed the survey, nine through personal interviews and one through the mail. The survey, administered face-to-face, included ten questions and was designed to guide the direction of the discussion around particular issues of access.

Most advocacy groups were unable to rate the state in terms of how well it provided access to outdoor recreational activities. They simply did not have enough exposure to this issue, through their members or otherwise. The disability advocacy groups unanimously conveyed that access to hunting and fishing activities was very rarely addressed within their organizations and most did not have an occasion to either promote or sponsor these types of activities.

Access to the water was one area that many organizations agreed needed to be enhanced by providing ramps that are more accessible, piers and docks. In addition, parks usually provided adequate parking and restroom accommodations but there are often no accessible paths that link the beach to the pavement. Other areas of concern that were highlighted by advocacy groups were regarding the use of adaptive equipment (i.e. motorized vehicles and open-reel rods), the accessibility of trails in parks, alternatives to written test taking when trying to obtain a hunting license and providing fishing licenses to the disabled for free or at a reduced rate.

State natural resource agencies, the Department of Conservation's (DOC) Bureau of Parks and Lands, Baxter State Park, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W), and the Department of Marine Resources (DMR), were studied to determine their policies regarding access for the disabled. DMR has no specific written policies in place with regard to disabled access to outdoor sporting activities. The Legislature has enacted a number of laws dealing with disabilities, which are administered and enforced by IF&W. Many of these laws enable the commissioner of IF&W to issue complimentary hunting and fishing licenses to disabled individuals who are blind, amputees, paraplegics, veterans, and residents of state mental health facilities. The Bureau of Parks and Lands and the Baxter State Park Authority have each established new disability access standards relating to trails, campgrounds, restrooms, parking areas and boat launches. These modifications enable the disabled to take advantage of more park programs and facilities.

Officials from Ellsworth, Boothbay Harbor, Old Town, Waterville and Wiscasset responded to a request for information about their policies regarding disabled access to outdoor recreational activities. Ellsworth's programs and facilities were assessed several years ago with regard to disabled access. The city, among other things, has made a ramp, boat launch, and dock accessible to the disabled with respect to this assessment. Old Town recently contracted with a local company to do an assessment of the city's level of accessibility for the disabled. Waterville's Parks and Recreation Department advised that all of their programs are open to persons with disabilities. Wiscasset and Boothbay Harbor have no written policies pertaining to disabled access; they adhere to ADA standards when applicable.

The three perspectives studied in this report, the specific needs and concerns of the disabled, the policies of state natural resource agencies and the policies of municipalities, will provide the committee with a foundation upon which to make recommendations.

Study Relating to Access to Outdoor Sporting Activities By Individuals with Disabilities

I. INTRODUCTION

Numerous bills that would enable disabled hunters and anglers to apply for licenses that allow for special accommodations were introduced during the First Regular Session of the 119th Legislature. These bills were referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and were carried over until the Second Regular Session so that comprehensive research could be done. [See Appendix A for legislation dealing with disability access to outdoor sporting activities.] To facilitate this research, The Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife asked the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis (OPLA) to study disability access issues in relation to outdoor sporting activities. As a graduate student working as an intern under the auspices of OPLA, I was assigned to the Committee to aid OPLA in gathering this information. I am a student at the University of Maine earning a Master's degree in Social Work.

The goal of this report is to provide the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife with pertinent information about disabled access to fish and wildlife activities within the broader context of outdoor recreation. This study explores three distinct areas in terms of looking at current opportunities for access for the disabled:

- The specific needs and concerns of disabled individuals as identified by certain groups involved with conservation and disability issues
- The policies of selected natural resources state agencies
- The policies of selected cities and towns

It is important to see the issue within this broader context so trends can be identified while determining how important the issue is to all disabled consumers, not just those specifically mentioned in the current bills (e.g. a person who has lost the use of one hand). This report will attempt to identify trends by considering the following questions:

- Who takes advantage of these resources and what is the potential for others to do so?
- Is there adequate access to recreational facilities, such as state parks, where a disabled individual might go to hunt or fish?
- What other modifications or allowances would promote greater access to outdoor sporting activities for the disabled?
- What are state agencies such as the Bureau of Parks and Lands, DOC doing to accommodate the disabled?
- What are municipalities doing to insure that the disabled have local access to outdoor sporting activities?

The information compiled in this report has been gathered through personal interviews, the use of a survey, Internet searches, and by direct contact with state agencies, cities and municipalities. The survey was administered to individuals from various advocacy groups including organizations representing the disabled community, hunting and fishing enthusiasts

and conservation groups. Twenty-two organizations were contacted to participate in the study and ten responded. [See Appendix B for a copy of the outdoor access survey and Appendix C for the full list of organizations contacted.] The following is a list of the ten organizations that participated in the survey:

- Alpha-one
- Autism Society
- Center for Community Inclusion (CCI)
- International Paper
- Maine Disability Rights Center
- Maine Forest Products Council
- Multiple Sclerosis Society
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
- Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM)
- Sportsman's Alliance of Maine (SAM)

II. BACKGROUND

This report is designed to be an adjunct to the **Final Report of the Staff Study to Explore Disability Access Issues in Relation to Outdoor Sporting Activities to the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife** prepared by Legislative Researcher, Alison L. Ames and Legislative Analyst, David Webb, OPLA. In their report they examined requirements for disability access accommodations under federal and state law and surveyed other states' policies with regard to providing disabled access to fish and wildlife activities.

III. METHODOLOGY

The information compiled in this report was gathered through personal interviews, the use of an informal exploratory survey, the Internet, and by direct contact with state agencies, cities and municipalities. David Boulter, Director of the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis mailed twenty-two letters in late November of 1999 to various advocacy groups explaining the intent of the study and further inviting them to participate in the informal survey process. [See Appendix D for a copy of the letter of request.] A follow-up call was made a week later to schedule appointments. Ten expressed interest and completed the survey, nine through personal interviews and one through the mail. The survey, administered face-to-face, included ten questions and was designed to merely guide the direction of the discussion around particular issues of access.

Information pertaining to state agencies and municipalities was gathered on the Internet, through e-mail correspondence and through direct contact with agency personnel.

IV. THE SURVEY

The following information is based on the survey responses from the voluntary participation of ten organizations representing the disabled community, hunting and fishing enthusiasts and conservation groups. Although the information provided might not be fully representative of the entire population, it does provide a glimpse of the issues, from organizations whom often have very different agendas.

A. Population Affected. Perhaps the biggest challenge facing this process was identifying the population most affected by this legislation. The disability advocacy groups unanimously conveyed that access to hunting and fishing activities was very rarely addressed within their organizations and most did not have an occasion to either promote or sponsor these types of activities. The Maine Disability Rights Center, a group that advocates for the disabled on a variety of issues, revealed that over the last three years they had received only three calls concerning recreational access, all relating to Baxter State Park. This seemingly low level of interest did not surprise them, since the Center reports that many individuals with disabilities are more concerned about fairness and opportunities in the workplace and equal housing opportunities.

B. Barriers to Access. Many of the disabled access groups such as NAMI, CCI and the Autism Society agreed that a big reason individuals within the disabled community do not take advantage of these kinds of activities is because of cost. These organizations report that many disabled individuals are on fixed incomes any extra money they might have would most likely go back into the household. Further, offering free or reduced licenses addresses only one aspect of this problem. Once they have a license, individuals need equipment and most likely transportation to the recreational or wilderness area.

Alpha-One, an organization that promotes independent living, expressed a concern that once disabled individuals receive a fishing license there are very few accessible places to fish. Increasing accessibility usually requires money and thus forces one to ask who will pay for the accommodations. International Paper and the Maine Forest Products Council also expressed concerns about the costs associated with providing disabled access on the lands they own.

Access to the water was one area that many agreed needed to be enhanced, but not just at fishing sites. Specifically, CCI and Alpha-One said they would like to see greater access for the disabled at beaches. Parks usually provided adequate parking and restroom accommodations but there are often no accessible paths that link the beach to the pavement.

C. Rating State Access. Most advocacy groups were unable to rate the state in terms of how well it provided access to outdoor recreational activities. They simply did not have enough exposure to this issue, through their members or otherwise. Those that could provide an opinion were mixed in their assessments. This again is a reflection of perhaps how often the issue is addressed and its apparent level of importance. CCI conveyed that this particular issue, hunting and fishing access, was not necessarily one of their organizations priorities, but felt increasing access raised awareness and moved the state in the right direction.

D. Survey Responses. The following is a breakdown of survey responses to questions one through nine, followed by a brief discussion of those responses.

Question 1: Describe the demographics of your members.

The demographics of the organizations that responded to the survey were diverse. The following is a list of the populations represented in these survey responses:

- Large private landowners
- Individuals with physical disabilities
- Conservationists
- Individuals with mental illnesses
- Hunting and fishing enthusiasts
- Individuals with developmental disabilities
- Individuals with multiple sclerosis

Question 2: Has the topic of access to outdoor recreational opportunities (hunting and fishing, hiking, etc.) for persons with disabilities been discussed within your organization?

- The Autism Society and The Multiple Sclerosis Society answered **no**.
- Maine Forest Products Council, International Paper and NAMI answered they were **unsure**. The representative from NAMI had only been at the job for a short time and the other two organizations conveyed that they were in the “timber business” and would not ordinarily be aware of such discussions.
- Of those who answered yes, NRCM, CCI, Alpha-One, The Maine Disability Rights Center, and SAM, each stipulated that it had been discussed **very rarely**. The following is a list of the specific instances when access was discussed:
 - Access to the North Maine woods, in terms of preserving the natural integrity of the land (NRCM)
 - Access to Baxter State Park; respondents felt that they did not have accessible fishing sites. (SAM, Maine Disability Rights Center)
 - Access to the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, in terms of preserving the natural integrity of the landscape. (NRCM)
 - Inaccessible ramps, docks and piers (Alpha-One, SAM, CCI)
 - Providing better beach access (Alpha-One)
 - Making hiking trails more accessible in parks (Alpha-One)

Question 3: What specific allowances or modifications would improve access to fishing and hunting activities?

- Providing hunting and fishing licenses to the disabled for free or at a reduced rate. (CCI, ME Disability Rights Center, Autism Society)
- Liberalization of hunting and fishing rules in regard to the use of adaptive equipment such as motorized vehicles and open-reel rods. (SAM)
- Increase in the number of available boat ramps designed to accommodate the disabled. (Alpha-One)
- Making fishing platforms, docks and piers accessible to the disabled, specifically for individuals with mobility impairments. (Alpha-One)
- Providing alternatives to written test taking when seeking a hunting license. (CCI)
- Making hiking trails more accessible in parks. (Alpha-One)
- Modifications for disabled access to be allowed on a site by site basis only, thus maintaining the natural quality of the land. (NRCM)

Question 4: Have you encountered any specific barriers that would inhibit people with disabilities from accessing fish and game activities or recreational facilities?

- Financial resources; many people with disabilities do not have the extra funds that would allow them to take advantage of recreational activities. (NAMI, CCI)
- Lack of transportation inhibits disabled individuals participation in activities. (NAMI, CCI)
- Access to waterways is poor. There are very few accessible sites and consumers often have to travel long distances to reach those sites. (SAM)
- Baxter State Park does not have very many accessible fishing sites. (The MS Society)
- Not enough fishing platforms accessible to the disabled. (Alpha -One)

Question 5: Has your organization sponsored or participated in legislative activities relating to access to outdoor recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities?

- CCI responded that they were *unable* to sponsor legislative activities because of their affiliation with the state. However, they do support bills by providing testimony.
- Alpha-One, NRCM, and SAM organize or participate in legislative activities that relate to access to outdoor recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities. The following are a few of the legislative activities in which these organizations participated:

- Participation in legislative activities that *limit* the use of motorized vehicles in state parks and on other public lands. They believe that motorized vehicles and their subsequent roads disrupt the natural landscape. (NRCM)
- Conversely, participation in legislative activities that *promote* the use of motorized vehicles in state parks and on other public lands. In addition, they believe that motorized vehicles afford individuals who have mobility impairments greater access to public lands. (SAM)
- Making state parks and lands ADA compliant (Alpha-One)

Question 6: How important to you and your membership is the issue of access to outdoor recreational activities for persons with disabilities?

- 3 said it was Not Important (ME Forest Products Council, International Paper, ME Disability Rights Center)
- 1 said it was Mildly Important (NRCM)
- 4 said it was Important (CCI, NAMI, MS Society, Autism Society)
- 2 said it was Very Important (Alpha-One)

Several groups stated that any kind of legislation that deals with the rights of the disabled is important to their organization. Access to hunting or fishing would not necessarily have a profound impact on their membership but they relayed that any type of positive recognition serves to highlight the bigger issue of creating opportunities for participation by the disabled.

Question 7: What is your organization's primary source of information about accessibility to outdoor areas or activities?

These answers may not reflect how the organization's general membership would respond to this question. These respondents most likely have a heightened awareness concerning the issue and would already have established contact names.

- The Attorney General's Office
- Access Board in Washington D.C.
- Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department
- Internet
- Alpha-One
- Local legislators
- Related organizations

Question 8: How would you rate the state in terms of providing access to outdoor recreational opportunities by persons with disabilities?

- 2 rated it Poor.

- 2 rated it Below Average
- 1 rated it Average
- 1 rated it Above Average
- 4 were Unable to Answer

Those groups who were unable to answer stated they were not sufficiently aware of outdoor recreational opportunities for disabled individuals.

Question 9: Does your organization promote or sponsor activities such as hunting and fishing or the use of parks and public lands?

- Five of the respondents answered **yes**. The following is a list of some of the activities that they promote or sponsor:
 - Promote the use of parks and public lands through environmental advocacy (NRCM)
 - Promote skating and sled hockey for the physically disabled. (Alpha-One)
 - Promote independent living skills for persons with multiple sclerosis, which would include knowledge of the outdoors (The MS Society)
 - Promote and sponsor outdoor activities that relate to hunting and fishing; work to open public lands to ATV use. (SAM)
 - Allow individuals to have access to privately owned lands. (Maine Forest Products Council, International Paper)

V. Disabled Access Policies and Accommodations by Selected State Natural Resource Agencies

The policies of the Department of Marine Resources, Department of Conservation’s Bureau of Parks and Lands, Baxter State Park and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) were compiled to get a better understanding of the state’s commitment to access.

A. Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The Legislature has enacted a number of laws dealing with disabilities, which are administered and enforced by IF&W including the following:

- A complimentary license to fish must be issued to any resident of Maine who is 16 years of age or older and blind and applies for it to the commissioner. [12 MRSA§ 7076(2)]
- The commissioner may issue, upon application, a complimentary resident hunting and fishing license to a resident of Maine who is suffering from the loss of, or the permanent loss of the use of, both lower extremities. [12 MSRA§ 7076(3)]
- A resident disabled veteran may apply to the commissioner for one or more of the following complimentary permits and licenses: a license to hunt with a firearm, a license to fish, archery hunting license, a pheasant hunting permit, and a muzzle-loading hunting license. [12 MSRA§ 7076(4)]
- The commissioner may issue free fishing permits for residents or groups of residents at any state institution under the control of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services. [12 MSRA§ 7076(8)]

- A complimentary license to fish must be issued to any person with mental retardation upon application to the commissioner. [12 MSRA§ 7076(13)]
- The commissioner shall issue to any person suffering from the loss of both arms above the elbow or from the loss of the use of both arms a license to hunt deer with an unconventional weapon during any open season on deer. [12 MSRA§ 7111]
- Paraplegics and single or double amputees of the legs may hunt from motor vehicles that are not in motion. [12 MSRA§ 7406(20)]

IF&W, specifically the Warden Service, stated that, typically, it receives six written requests a year for special licenses, although not all individuals requesting are eligible. It is estimated that between ten and twenty people call the Department each year requesting information about special licenses. Last year the Department issued four unconventional weapons licenses and three permits to hunt from a motor vehicle.

B. Department of Marine Resources (DMR). The Department has no specific written policies in place with regard to disabled access to outdoor sporting activities. A representative from the Marine Patrol explained that the Department tries to be as accommodating as possible when faced with “hardship cases.” For instance, a lobsterman was not able to haul his lobster traps out of the water for the winter due to a severe illness. DMR gave special permission to local fishermen, which enabled them to haul the traps.

C. Department of Conservation – Bureau of Parks and Lands. The Department of Conservation, specifically the Bureau of Parks and Lands, is currently establishing new disability access standards for trails, campgrounds and boat launches. The following are policies the Bureau is scheduled to adopt by early 2000:

- At day use areas, the Bureau will insure that all individuals with disabilities have access to parking, restrooms, and paths of travel to important features and the area’s major activities.
- Developed campgrounds will follow the same guidelines as presented for day use areas for accessible parking, restroom, and paths of travel.
- Facilities and programs associated with the developed campgrounds such as beach access, amphitheaters, boat ramps, and interpretive programs will also be accessible to those with disabilities.
- State Historic Sites and other historic features will follow the same guidelines as presented for day use areas for accessible parking, restrooms, and paths of travel.
- In instances where access can only be achieved by a physical alteration to a historic property that would threaten or destroy the historic significance, alternative methods of achieving accessibility that do not result in undue financial or administrative burden to the Bureau will be implemented.
- The Bureau will make reasonable accommodations to facilitate the use of wilderness areas by people with disabilities without altering the intent of the program. Accessible campsites will be developed and information made available regarding accessible areas.

- Most undeveloped state parks and historic site parcels are not staffed. The provision of access and facilities for the disabled to these areas will not be a priority until they are developed.

D. Baxter State Park. Recently a disability rights complaint was filed against the Baxter State Park Authority alleging that the park did not comply with the American with Disabilities Act. The Department of the Interior, the enforcement agency in program areas of parks and recreation, while investigating the claim, assessed the entire park in terms of providing access to the disabled. In order to comply with the findings of that assessment, Baxter State Park plans to accomplish the following objectives by January 2001:

- Make designated restrooms disability-friendly.
- At each roadside area, provide one van accessible parking space with adjacent access aisle.
- Install handicapped accessible picnic tables at all disability-friendly sites.
- The designated accessible cabin's doorsill and lighting discrepancies will be corrected and accessible surface on the approach established.
- An accessible transfer tier will be provided at the small swimming area at Togue Pond and restricted to individuals with disabilities.
- At Daicey Pond will assure that ramps meet the minimum width requirement and have appropriate handrails of correct diameter.
- Develop a brochure that outlines the accessible features in the Park.
- Appoint an Access Coordinator who will be the Park's expert on ADA compliance.

VI. Disabled Access Policies in Selected Towns and Cities

The following cities and municipalities responded to a request for information about their policies regarding disabled access to outdoor recreational activities.

A. Ellsworth. Several years ago the city's programs and facilities were assessed with regard to disabled access. The city has made progress with respect to this assessment.

- The boat launch and docks at Ellsworth Harbor Park were modified to make them completely accessible.
- Built a handicapped accessible boat ramp for Leonard's Lake

B. Boothbay Harbor. It has no written policies regarding disabled access; they adhere to ADA standards when applicable.

C. Old Town. The city recently contracted with Alpha-One to do an assessment of the city's level of accessibility for the disabled.

D. Waterville. The Parks and Recreation Department advised that all programs are open to persons with disabilities. Arrangements will be made when necessary to allow participation in any of their programs

E. Wiscasset. It has no written policies pertaining to disabled access; they adhere to ADA standards when applicable.

Appendix A

Legislation Dealing with Disability Access to Outdoor Sporting Activities

LD 8; An Act to Allow Hunting from Motor Vehicles for Persons Limited in Their Ability to Walk (Sponsor: Senator Libby)

LD 371; An Act to Allow A Disabled Person to Use A Crossbow During Archery Hunting Season (Sponsor: Representative Mack)

LD 730; An Act to Allow Certain Disabled Persons to Fly-fish with Open-faces Reels (Sponsor: Representative Berry)

LD 1026; An Act to Allow Crossbow Use during Archery Season by a Person Who Has Lost the Use of a Hand (Sponsor: Representative Cowger)

LD 1052; An Act to Assist Disabled Fly-fishing Anglers (Sponsor: Senator Nutting)

LD 1225; Resolve, to Direct the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to Review Rules for Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (Sponsor: Representative: Berry)

LD 1338; An Act to Provide a Free Hunting License to a Person Who Has Lost the Use of One Arm (Sponsor: Representative Ahearne)

LD 1390; An Act to Expand Hunting Options for Disabled Military Veterans (Sponsor: Representative Bragdon)

Appendix B
Outdoor Access Survey

1. Describe the demographics of your members (adolescents, adults, etc...)

2. Has the topic of access to outdoor recreational opportunities (hunting, fishing, hiking, etc...) for persons with disabilities been discussed within your organization? Yes___No___
 - If the answer is yes, could you briefly describe the circumstances that raised that issue?

 - How was that issue resolved?

3. Does your organization promote or sponsor outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing or the use of parks and public lands? If yes, please describe some of those activities.

4. What specific allowances or modifications would improve access to fishing and hunting activities and recreational facilities? Please elaborate on why these changes would be helpful.

5. Have you encountered any specific barriers that would inhibit people with disabilities access to fish and game activities or recreational facilities?
 - If yes, what was the nature of those barriers and where were they located?

6. How important to you and your membership is the issue of access to outdoor recreational activities for persons with disabilities (1= Not important; 5= Very important)?

1 2 3 4 5

7. Has your organization sponsored or participated in legislative activities relating to access to outdoor recreational opportunities by persons with disabilities? Yes___ No___

- If yes, what was the nature and outcome of those activities?

8. Who or what is your primary source of information about accessibility to outdoor areas or activities?

9. How would you rate the state in terms of providing access to outdoor recreational opportunities by person with disabilities (1=Poor; 5=Very good)?

1 2 3 4 5

10. Would you like to be contacted when the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife holds public hearings on its bills relating to access to hunting and fishing activities by persons with disabilities? Yes___ No___

- If yes, please provide your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address so that we may contact you.

Appendix C
List of All Organizations Contacted

Disabled Advocacy Groups

Brain Injury Association
Autism society of Maine
Learning Disabilities Assoc. of Maine
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
ME Speech-Language-Hearing Assoc.
Spina Bifida Assoc. of Maine
Maine Center on Deafness
Multiple Sclerosis Society
Arthritis Foundation
Disability Rights Center of Maine
Maine Developmental Disabilities Council
Center for Community Inclusion
Alpha-One
America Council of the Blind of Maine

Fish and Game and Environmental Advocacy Groups

Maine Professional Guide Association
Maine Bowhunter Association
Sportsman's Alliance of Maine
Coastal Conservation Association of Maine
Natural Resources Council of Maine
Maine Audubon Society
Maine Forest Products Council
International Paper

Appendix D
Letter of Intent

Dear:

The Office of Policy and Legal Analysis is responsible for providing non-partisan staffing services to the joint standing committees of the Maine Legislature. Among those committees is the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. We are currently preparing for the start of the 2nd Regular Session of the 119th Legislature in January and would very much like your input into an issue that is under discussion by the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

The committee has asked us to develop some background information relating to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Maine Human Rights Act (MHRA) as they may relate to access to outdoor sporting activities and access to wildlife and recreation areas by persons with disabilities. This information will be made available to the committee as it begins its public hearings and work sessions on legislation this coming session.

To assist us in gathering this information and making sure it is complete, we have identified a number of organizations that we think may have important information and perspectives relevant to this project. Ms. Jessica Gorham, a graduate student at the University of Maine who is working on this project, is meeting with the various organizations over the next several months to gather information. It would be extremely helpful to us if you (or a representative of your organization) would meet with Jessica to discuss issues relating to this project based on your experiences or those of members of your organization. We also have a short survey that we will ask you to complete. When she visits you, she will have copies of the legislation to be considered by the committee and can explain the project in more detail.

Ms. Gorham will be contacting you in the near future to arrange a meeting with you. Your insight into these issues would be extremely helpful to us to make sure we have comprehensive, accurate information to present to the committee next session.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this project. Please feel free to call me at 287-1670 if you have any questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,

David E. Boulter
Director

cc: Jessica Gorham, Intern