

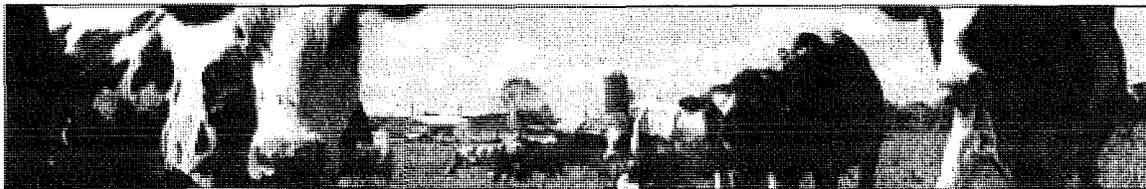
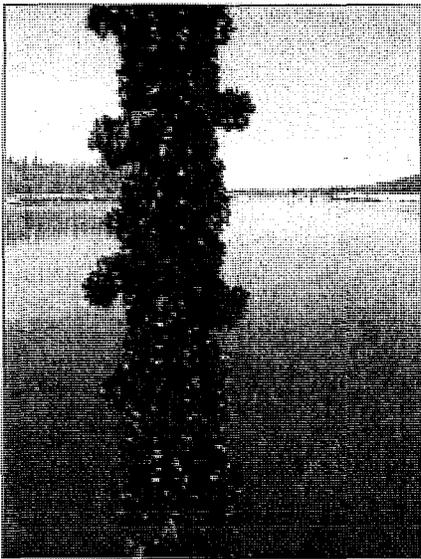
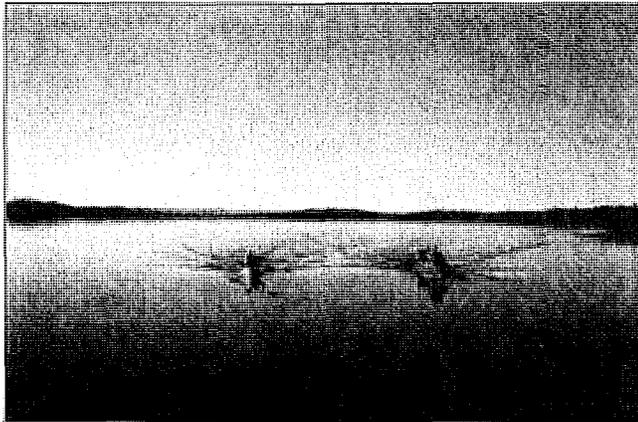
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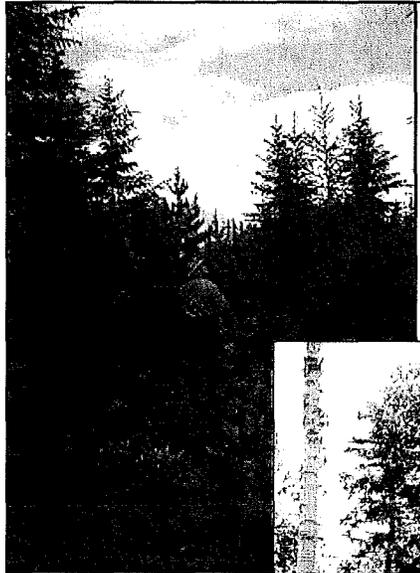
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NATURAL RESOURCE AGENCY TASK FORCE REPORT 2008





Natural Resource Agency Task Force

January 8, 2009

Dear Governor Baldacci:

We would first like to thank you for creating this task force, to thank Cooperative Extension for providing us with a facilitator, and, mostly, to thank the members of the task force for taking on a formidable challenge and for bringing both passion and commitment to our meetings. We found many items that we could agree on, and by implementing these recommendations we believe that many of our original objectives will be realized.

The Task Force met seven times over eight months, concluding with a final meeting on December 8, 2008. The Task Force reached out to constituents and stakeholders to insure that our work was responsive to Maine citizens, and to the health of the economic sector and our key natural resources. Nearly all members attended every meeting and actively participated throughout our work together.

Members of the task force worked very hard to come up with recommendations that would meet the following criteria:

- Ensure efficient, effective use of human resources and agency capacities;
- Improve services to Maine people, businesses and others using our natural resources;
- Address current and emerging future natural resource management challenges and opportunities; and

Assure healthy, sustainable ecosystems into the future, as well as long-term economic and other benefits to Maine people and businesses.

In response to your charge, and to direction provided by the Legislature, please find enclosed the report of the 2008 Natural Resource Agency Task Force. Our report includes eight specific recommendations aimed at improving services in Maine's natural resource sector to:

1. Market Maine's Natural Resources facilitated and leveraged by the Department of Economic and Community Development.
2. Review the "business processes" of each agency issuing "ministerial" licenses and work toward a system that best serves customers and clients (front-end portals) as well as agency data and other management goals (possibly located at Secretary of State).
3. Move oversight/management of all state boat launch facilities to single agency (Dept. of Conservation).
4. Move toward more agencies/staff being co-located in various regional offices to increase communication and collaboration.
5. Move toward rational alignment of districts for natural resource agencies to increase communication and collaboration among staff members and between agencies and local government and citizens of those regions.
6. Create a single entity to manage public lands and to communicate with citizens about opportunities for access and recreation consistent with management goals for those lands.

7. Suggest each agency engage with staff and stakeholders to prioritize programs and services, with an end result to drop or reduce low-priority work in favor of more critical needs.

8. Suggest each agency review advisory boards and committees to determine the most effective mix of citizen engagement and cost (staff time and expenses).

A ninth recommendation dealt with process and strongly urged that the Legislature create an ad hoc joint standing committee to deal with any bills that are submitted that cross natural resource agency jurisdictions.

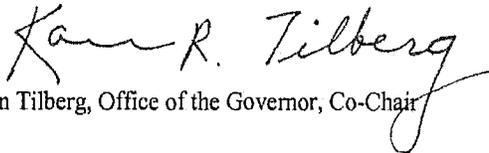
We also considered several specific and general proposals for re-aligning and re-configuring the different agencies. Each of these proposals addressed reorganization in different ways. Task force members raised both strong rationales in support of, and strong concerns about, specific aspects of all proposals. All members felt disappointed that we were not able to come to consensus around a single proposal. In the end, we ran out of the time needed to create that consensus. That does not mean, however that these ideas should not be considered and tested with stakeholders going forward. Hopefully, in the legislative process, in cross-departmental and cross-sector dialogue, members of the task force and others will be able to find ways to address the concerns, strengthen the rationale and develop a united proposal for streamlining, coordination and realignment.

We learned a great deal from the experience and passion of task force members to fulfill aspirations for a future that makes effective use of and protects our natural resource base, and provides efficient and effective services to our businesses and citizens. And we are sure that, though the work of the Task Force is done, the work of individual task force members, agency staff and natural resource stakeholders will continue on behalf of all the people of Maine.

Sincerely,



Representative Wendy Pieh, Co-Chair



Karin Tilberg, Office of the Governor, Co-Chair



Ron Beard, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Task Force Facilitator



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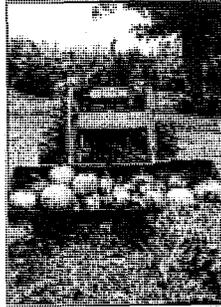
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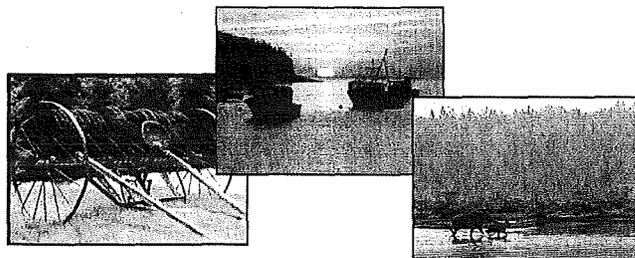
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Forward

Maine has a remarkably rich, diverse, and wonderful array of natural resources that are deeply connected with our economy, communities, history, traditions, and quality of life. Each and every day, Maine's natural resources affect the lives of millions of people – not simply within our borders, but also at the receiving end of products made by Maine companies using natural resources from our state.

Maine's natural resource agencies have the important and sometimes daunting task of managing these resources, balancing competing uses, enforcing the laws that govern utilization and access to these resources, helping promote businesses that depend on Maine's natural resources, and planning for the future. These tasks have become more challenging as budgets for the five key agencies – the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of Marine Resources, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Conservation – have declined and economic and social conditions in the state have experienced major changes.

As the Governor's Natural Resource Agency Task Force evaluated options for improving the performance and delivery of services by the natural resource agencies, we were constantly aware of just how important Maine's resources are day-in and day-out to the lives of so many people. As illustrations, we offer the following examples of ways that people are using, interacting with, benefiting from, managing, and depending upon Maine's natural resources.

On any given day, one is likely to find –

- Lobstermen checking traps sprinkled along the entire Maine coast, contributing to the more than 60 million pounds of lobster landings annually.
- Vacationers from around the country making reservations for camp sites managed by Maine's Department of Conservation.
- Farmers in Aroostook County harvesting potatoes for processing, with more than 1.5 billion pounds harvested annually.
- Loggers harvesting trees, truckers - delivering trees to mills, people -working in mills, landowners (large and small, public and private) - receiving income for the wood harvested on their land and many other people working to support Maine's forest products sector.
- Magazine subscribers paging through the most recent issues of National Geographic, Smithsonian, Bon Appétit and dozens of other magazines printed on fine-coated paper produced in Maine paper mills.
- Inland Fisheries & Wildlife biologists working with towns and developers to minimize impacts on plants and wildlife.
- People enjoying trails throughout the state for hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country

skiing, backpacking, ATV use, and snowshoeing – including on public trails, and on trails where private landowners provide access.

- Mainers and out-of-state visitors purchasing hunting and fishing licenses for trips in and on Maine’s woods and waters – contributing millions of dollars to small businesses across the state.
- Dairy farmers working with Maine’s Department of Agriculture to ensure that their products are certified for sale across state borders.
- Visitors and residents boarding their pleasure boats, kayaks, and canoes to enjoy a portion of Maine’s more than 5,700 lakes and ponds, more than 30,000 miles of rivers and streams, and nearly 3,500 miles of coastline.
- Maine Forest Service employees responding by helicopter to extinguish one of the nearly 1,000 forest fires reported each year, or working with industrial foresters on the management of forest resources.
- A Department of Environmental Protection employee conducting a site visit for a proposed wind power project.
- Maine residents and visitors bird-watching, picking blueberries, or simply relaxing on public land protected through the Land for Maine’s Future Program.

These and so many other experiences, management interactions, relationships, and responsibilities are at the heart of the fundamental question posed by the Governor to the Natural Resource Agency Task Force: How can Maine’s natural resource agencies provide the most efficient and effective stewardship and a high level of customer service, so that we continue to enjoy the full economic and recreational benefits of these resources in a time of tight public funding and changing demands?

Introduction

Maine is well positioned to take advantage of growing demand for energy, water, food, fiber, and quality outdoor experiences. The state’s natural resources offer many opportunities to reduce energy costs for our citizens and businesses. Maine can do much more to celebrate and leverage its powerful natural resources “brand” to the great benefit of Maine’s citizens and businesses. We have the talent and skills to achieve this through strategic natural resource management that protects the integrity of these assets for the benefit of future generations.

It is especially critical that we find a way for rural Mainers who live where the natural resources are most abundant to benefit economically from those resources while at the same time ensuring that these resources are managed sustainably. Great economic growth is possible with smart, focused, and sustained investments in our natural resource based economy and more effective marketing of Maine’s products and experiences.

The Governor and the legislature charged this Task Force to “consider all ideas and

organizational configurations, eliminate duplication and create greater efficiencies to improve the delivery of services to the citizens of the State of Maine associated with the natural resources sector.”

In his letter appointing Task Force members, the Governor wrote, “I have become increasingly concerned that our natural resource agencies are not thriving in the intense budget constraints that have existed for a number of years. As a result, I am determined to explore all mechanisms to ensure farmers, forest owners, recreationists, fishermen and others who benefit from Maine’s natural resource agencies will receive the programs and services that they need and that government should provide. That is what I hope this Task Force, comprised of a diverse array of interests, will recommend in its Final Report to me by November 30, 2008.”

The report lays the foundation for lean natural resource agencies that anticipate change, recognize economic opportunities, ensure sustainability, and are able to draw on the talent of an integrated workforce able to reposition themselves to serve the needs of Maine’s economy, people and natural resources.

The report recognizes that state funding for natural resource agencies has steadily decreased relative to the State’s overall budget; comprising 4.3 % of the state budget in 1981, 3.6% in 1990, 2.7 % in 2000 and 2.3% in 2006.

To sustain the critical mass of expertise, it is now essential to take a close look at individual agency “silos” that have challenged biologists, scientists and other professionals in efforts to work together to maximize their skills and the services they provide. This isolation has also resulted in some duplication and redundancy that Maine cannot afford and has hampered the agencies from conveying the agencies the combined power of their importance to the state.

It is our hope that this report with nine recommendations will put Maine on a path toward improved functions and effective delivery of high-priority programs and tasks. **This does not signify that all members of the Task Force endorse all the contents of this report.**

Statute

PL 2007, c. 539 Part YY (*in part*)

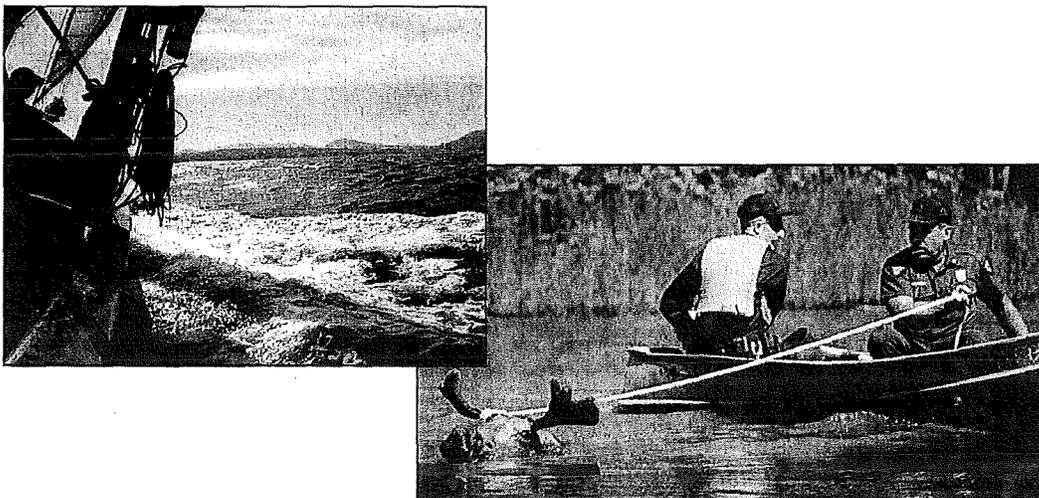
Sec. YY-2. Long-term enhancement of services and efficiencies.

1. The agencies serving the natural resources sectors within the State, including but not limited to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, Department of Conservation, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of Marine Resources and Department of Environmental Protection, referred to in this section as "the agencies," shall work together and with a task force appointed by the Governor to participate in the creation of and implementation of a plan, developed after consideration of all ideas and organizational configurations, that is designed to eliminate duplication and create greater efficiencies to improve the delivery of services to the citizens of the State associated with the natural resources sector. The agencies shall submit legislation to implement the plan to the First Regular Session of the 124th Legislature by January 1, 2009.

2. The agencies shall, out of existing funds, secure facilitation and research expertise to:

- A. Analyze existing department functions;
- B. Conduct stakeholder outreach;
- C. Seek increased efficiency ideas from Legislators, members of the public, businesses, outside experts and others served by the departments serving the natural resources sector; accept information; and address concerns;
- D. Cooperate with other entities of State Government;
- E. Research approaches to natural resources services in other states;
- F. Enhance services provided to natural resources-based businesses and industries and for outdoor recreation, natural resources management and environmental protection;
- G. Integrate research, scientific, land management, enforcement and outreach, promotion and education functions;
- H. Utilize advances in science and technology and plan for trends in natural resources, recreation activity, environmental management and business sector needs;
- I. Maximize natural resources, environmental and economic benefits;
- J. Coordinate and streamline functions, services and activities;
- K. Eliminate duplication of services and administrative activities; and
- L. Create efficiencies and cost savings in the provision of natural resources services.

3. Any savings that are achieved through increased efficiencies must be reallocated within the natural resources agencies.



Vision

The Task Force determined that a shared vision was important to its work.

Natural resources are at the heart of Maine's character and economy. The Maine "brand" comprises three related parts:

- Maine's natural resources are publicly and privately-owned assets with great ecological, economic, and social value that requires careful stewardship.
- Maine's natural resources present a continuing opportunity for sustainable commodity production.
- Maine's natural resources are assets important to all her citizens – as well as attractive to skilled in-migrants, retirees and visitors – providing a vital contribution to our quality of life.

In managing Maine's natural resources for the 21st Century, our goal is to create a systemic approach to:

- Assure the health of all of our natural resources;
- Support natural resource industries; and
- Improve the competitive global economic position that Maine has with our natural resources because of their quality.

Charge/Screen

In undertaking its review and developing recommendations to achieve the vision described above, the Task Force developed a four-part "screen" for determining whether our eventual recommendations will serve the state, its natural resources and its people. The recommendations should:

- Ensure efficient, effective use of human resources and agency capacities;
- Improve services to Maine people, businesses and others using our natural resources;
- Address current and emerging future natural resource management challenges and opportunities; and
- Assure healthy, sustainable ecosystems into the future, as well as long-term economic and other benefits to Maine people and businesses.

Process

The Task Force met seven times, beginning with an organizational meeting on May 28, 2008, when Governor Baldacci thanked members for their willingness to serve and gave the task force its charge. That meeting was followed by two meetings in July, a two-day retreat on September 9 and 10, and day-long meetings in October and November. The Task Force concluded its work on December 8. Meetings were hosted, in turn, by the five natural resource agencies and the Governor's Office. Agendas for each meeting are included in the appendix to this report.

During the organizational meeting, the task force considered and adopted ground-rules for its operation, and agreed that task force would “...*work very hard to reach consensus for all decisions and recommendations. In the event this is not possible, the task force will talk through alternatives for conveying the sense of the group.*”

The State Planning Office volunteered to dedicate a section of its website to document the process and progress of the task force. Notes from each meeting, results of task force member "homework" and outreach efforts were posted on the website for use by task force members, stakeholders and other Maine citizens. For a limited time, these documents will continue to be available at <http://maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/naturalresourcesagency/index.htm>.

Early in the work of the task force, members completed several “homework” assignments, including:

- Suggesting challenges and opportunities facing Maine's natural resources
- Specific ideas about how to improve services and efficiencies as natural resource agencies serve Maine citizens
- Lists of stakeholder groups who task force members were willing to contact to provide advice and feedback to the task force
- Hopes and fears of task force members about the scope and nature of task force work

Results of these homework assignments are noted in the appendix of this report.

Between the July and September meetings of the task force, task force members sent a description of the work of the task force and a request for advice and feedback to dozens of stakeholder groups and individuals. Results of this request were summarized and provided to task force members prior to the September retreat. Results of this outreach survey, running some 80 pages, are included in the appendix to this report

By the end of the September task force retreat, at Schoodic Education and Research Center in Winter Harbor, the task force had generated a tentative list of eight recommendations that had broad support, and two recommendations for possible consolidation or reorganization of agency functions. Task force co-chairs, members and agency staff were actively involved in framing and testing these recommendations for further consideration. This background work between meetings was essential to the further progress and acceptance of recommendations as the work of the task force proceeded.

Between the October and November meetings, task force members sought additional feedback from stakeholder groups and individuals. Using the results of this outreach, the recommendations were discussed, modified and adapted to address concerns and aspirations of task force members and stakeholders.

The Task Force also benefited from the work of SPO intern Andy Despres and OPLA Director Pat Norton who conducted research into the experience of other states with reorganization efforts and into the agency structures they use.

II THE NATURAL RESOURCE SECTOR

Maine's natural resources and the activities they support -- both economic and cultural -- are the defining assets of the state. Recognizing that the State devotes less than 2.5% of its state governmental resources to these vital sectors, it is clearly essential that this effort be organized as efficiently and effectively as possible. Four years ago, Governor Baldacci convened a conference to examine the challenges faced by the state's natural resources based industries. The introduction to the final conference report raised many of the issues that have been a driving concern behind the creation of this task force including resource constraints, the importance of better delivery of services to customers, and the enhanced coordination and collaboration across functions.

Even the most cursory examination of Maine history reveals the profound role that fishing, farming, forestry and, somewhat more recently, tourism have played in shaping the culture and the character of our state. By the time Maine was granted statehood in 1820, its seal and arms, with the mast pine at its center supported by a farmer and seaman, reflected the shared pride in her forests, agriculture, and fisheries. The display of a farmer, a fisherman, and the forest, land, and sea on Maine's state seal were apt choices in 1820, when nearly 80% of Maine's workers were employed in these industries. However, in the century that followed statehood, the number of Maine workers employed in fishing, farming, or forestry fell from 80% at its height to 40% in 1920. By 2000, the number employed in these industries had plummeted to just 8% of the workforce. Maine's natural resource-based economy today -- including farming, fishing, aquaculture, forestry, and tourism -- faces multiple and serious challenges that threaten its long-term viability.

Maine's natural resource-based industries -- fishing, farming, forestry, aquaculture, and tourism -- each is wonderfully unique, fiercely independent, and distinctly separate; yet, whether logging contractors, commercial fishermen, family farms, bed and breakfast operators, sports camp owners, or holders of aquaculture leases, there are undeniable commonalities and inextricable links among them. Now is the time to strengthen those links and come together to develop a joint course of action. Fishing, farming, forestry, aquaculture, and tourism are now loosely woven together, but we must grow to appreciate the strength of a tighter weave. As the world economy has changed, the pressures bearing down on Maine's businesses and natural resources have become enormous, unforgiving, and demand a new and coordinated approach. The agencies of State government responsible for assisting in meeting these challenges must join in meeting these challenges.

Individually, the traditional natural resource-based industries represent a relatively small portion of Maine's economy. But collectively, aquaculture, fishing, farming and forestry start to

amass political, financial, and market clout; and when we add tourism – an industry based in part on the very natural resources the others steward – that clout is doubled. Together, these industries account for approximately one out of every five jobs in Maine. Together, they contribute about one out of every five dollars of wealth generated. Together, they have a major presence in each of Maine’s 16 counties.

While the some progress in implementing the recommendations of the 2004 conference have been made, the challenges facing the natural resource sector remain significant. The importance of fishing, farming, forestry and tourism, and the fundamental integrity of natural resources themselves, demand that the limited resources of State Government be deployed in the most effective manner.

III WHAT DO WE FACE? – WHAT CAN WE DO?

Many external trends face Maine at the beginning of the 21st century. Some represent significant threats to a healthy future for the state’s economy and the well-being of its citizens. Others may represent opportunities upon which Maine can capitalize, perhaps in ways that are unique to the State’s blend of location, skills and resources. In any case, both sets of trends are beyond the State’s direct control or influence. Along with Maine’s private economic sector, all Maine citizens and the rest of state government, Maine’s natural resource agencies will have a key role. The challenge is to organize ourselves to be best prepared both to withstand the challenges and take advantage of opportunities.

The task force examined the strengths and weaknesses of the manner in which Maine’s natural resource agencies are currently organized. Unlike the external threats and opportunities, these “internal” attributes are items over which we, as a state, do have control. To the degree that we can build on our strengths and remedy any weaknesses, Maine will be better prepared to face the future.

Drawing on the plentiful input from task force discussions, “homework assignments” and public comment, a picture emerges of what Maine faces between now and 2020. From this picture, conclusions can be drawn about the challenges confronting our natural resources and the businesses and activities that are reliant on them

External Threats/Challenges

- **Global market pressures and rising energy demand are driving greater competition for natural resources.**

Across wide range of fronts, people and businesses that have relied on low-cost/no-cost access to natural resources increasingly find themselves having to compete with each other in ways unanticipated in the past. Rising energy demand and prices, perceived energy supply insecurities, and an increasingly globalized market place are driving this trend. As just a few illustrative examples:

- With increased costs of energy will come increased pressures on Maine’s forests for a range of energy-related services, including cord wood, biomass chips, and pellets. Competition could increase among those who are seeking wood for paper, sawlogs, wood chips, and pellets – introducing new

uncertainties into the market for these products. In particular, wood fiber from Maine's forests may see a major market shift away from paper and towards fuel for biomass and home heating. The impact on the paper industry could be severe. Because Maine's traditional integrated forestland owners sold off their forests during the past decade, they may be priced out. Similarly, harvesting pressures could increase to levels that are not sustainable over the long-term.

- Tidal energy could pose new challenges, involving siting decisions, understanding ecological impacts and impacts on commercial fisheries. Wind power and transmission line siting also will provide land use challenges to the natural resource agencies.
- Maine's vacation industry is also going to have to adapt to higher fuel prices. Destinations will need to find new ways to attract and transport people to get them to our state. People may stay closer to home meaning Maine will need to draw more from the southern New England population base with packaged vacations. This will have a continuing impact on IF&W which relies completely on the sale of licenses for the agency's budget resources. While more Mainers may hunt and fish for the table rather than for recreation as food prices spike due to energy costs. New sources of revenue will be required and increased staffing of the warden service will be needed to protect and sustain fish and wildlife resources.
- Increased land development is likely to cause further restrictions on access to areas for hunting, fishing, boat launching, snowmobiles, and hiking. One positive aspect of higher transportation costs may be to discourage sprawling and inefficient land use patterns.
- Natural resource based businesses increasingly need to compete for access to the resources they need in the face of significant demographic shifts (significant increases in retirees and new residents from away with no historical linkages to working landscapes and working waterfronts), some federal mandates (ESA) and non-commercial use of these same resources.
- **Resource infrastructure funding**
Public infrastructure in Maine is historically very dependant on federal funding (transportation and sewer/water systems) and public utility systems. Declining federal funding, deferred maintenance and radical shifts in electric power systems are converging to pose fiscal challenges.
 - *Water Supply & Pollution Control Infrastructure.* Federal and state capital investments and environmental infrastructure have fallen to levels never seen since enactment of the Clean Water Act and other environmental acts. Capital investments in Maine sewer treatment plants is at less than one-fifth

the level for the previous decades and funds to get contaminated hazardous and solid waste sites cleaned up and back into use are at less than one-tenth previous levels. Drinking water systems suffer similar neglect

- *Energy Infrastructure:* With clear need for significant investments in cleaner and less expensive energy systems now upon us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make basic heating, transportation and electricity more affordable, a lack of federal/state capital investment could result in a marked decrease in quality and affordability of life in Maine.
- *Land based conservation:* Despite aggressive efforts and much success, access to undeveloped natural lands for farming, forestry and recreation, management continues to diminish. These land types are increasingly recognized as a vital part of Maine's infrastructure even when the majority of them continue to be held in private ownership.

- **Climate Change**

Climate change likely will cause an expanding range of impacts on Maine's environment and natural resources during the next two decades. As just a few examples:

- Changing temperatures and rainfall conditions could affect agriculture and the composition of Maine's forests.
- Many native species may face new survival pressures, and conditions for exotic, invasive and introduced species may improve.
- Coastal erosion, reduced winter snow pack, earlier ice out, and expanded populations of ticks could have a broad range of implications for Maine's natural resources, ecosystems, and natural resource management as well as on the economic activities affected by these shifts.

External Opportunities

- **Growing demand for sustainably produced fiber & forest products**

Global demand for traditional and new forest products is, on balance growing even when energy uses are considered separately. Global trends in deforestation position Maine well to be a significant supplier of fiber, solid wood and other products derived from our forests.

- **Growing demand for energy (*especially renewable sources*)**

Energy demand continues to increase globally. The impact on price, availability and energy security along with concern over climate change all increases interest and demand for renewable energy sources. Maine's wind, wood, and tidal energy assets will be increasingly valuable and sought after.

- **Growing demand for sustainably produced food**
Shifting consumer preferences, health concerns, rising energy costs, and climate change concerns are increasing the demand for sustainably produced foods from regional and even local sources. Along with demand for traditional commodities, interest in organic foods and niche products, such as “hand-crafted” foods, is also growing rapidly.
- **Tourism (including Nature-based)**
Nature-based tourism including wildlife watching is a rapidly growing segment of outdoor recreation across the country. Mainers lead the nation, with 56% of residents engaged in wildlife watching and a total of 67% of residents participating in wildlife-associated recreation (including fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching). 25% of Mainers participate in fishing and hunting, the majority in angling.

Internal strengths (assets)

- **Abundant natural resources.** As Maine searches for new economic opportunities and growth, we must not ignore the traditional economic drivers that can grow with better management and marketing. Through luck and careful management we are fortunate to have resources that exceed anything else in our region. From forestland, wildlife and fisheries to agricultural infrastructure we have an excellent toolbox with which to meet the economic disruption that is the early 21st century. Capitalizing on this economic advantage while maintaining the resource base will require vision and skill. As resources diminish in other areas of the country, Maine will become recognized for its wealth and resulting opportunities will come at us quickly and require us to be thoughtful and nimble. Maine should be well placed to take advantage of growing demand for energy, water, food, fiber, and quality outdoor experiences.
- **The Maine Brand.** Maine is widely perceived as a state that is meeting the challenges of sustainability. We are already seen as a “green” state, by national standards, with strong environmental standards and good management approaches. This is a powerful brand in local, national and international markets. Labeling products as “Made in Maine” has become a significant marketing strategy and promoting the Maine brand is central to Maine’s strategy for building the tourism economy.
- **High Quality of Life.** Maine is an unspoiled, relatively undeveloped state that offers to residents a sense of community and quality of life, and to visitors abundant recreational opportunities and experiences that cannot be found elsewhere. We still have what so much of what the East Coast has lost. Conserving, investing in and carefully promoting it will be the key to Maine’s future.
- **Tourism opportunities.** Maine has extraordinary natural resource features that

could become a magnet for substantially increased levels of nature-based tourism. Tapping this potential will require careful long-term planning and marketing.

- **Renewable Energy Resources** Maine has so much to offer: wind, tidal, wave, hydro, wood, and more.
- **Local and sustainable food production** Nationally and regionally competitive food production linked to low food miles, local foods movement and national food security. “Food production” includes both agriculture and marine fisheries.
- **High quality forest resources** Maine has abundant and expansive forestlands that provide the foundation for a substantial timber products industry. Maine has the highest percentage of timberland under 3rd party sustainability certification on private land and the second highest percentage of timberlands (public and private) under 3rd party certification in the United States. There is a high-quality labor force for management and production.
- **Ecosystem Restoration** Maine has taken important steps to help restore damaged ecosystems. One example that will play out in the coming decade will be on the Penobscot River, where the Penobscot River Restoration Project will show how a creative, collaborative negotiated settlement can help rebalance power generation and ecosystem function in Maine’s largest watershed. Coastal wetland restoration efforts are ongoing. Other opportunities likely will emerge. All such efforts position Maine to be an even better source of natural resource goods.
- **Many Maine residents want to support “the right thing”** – if a consensus is developed. It helps that many Maine residents are actively connected to the natural resources sector from one or more of their daily activities, whether it’s their job or their recreation.

Internal weaknesses (areas for improvement)

- **The Elephant in the room** Tight budgets (only starting, really) means that creative solutions that don’t require significant new funding will be the only ones that can be implemented.
- **Regulatory decision making models** Many of Maine’s major development decisions are in the hands of small, citizen boards (LURC and BEP), while we have our major energy decisions made by a professional board (PUC). Over the next few years, pressure will build to reevaluate the citizen boards, which are often making major decisions with meager resources. While these boards may have served Maine well in the past the tasks are becoming more complex and time-consuming.

- **Regulatory culture.** By its nature and despite some success to the contrary, state government and state policy-making remains reactive, not proactive.
 - Balancing regulation of natural resource based business with promotion of sustainable resource use will yield great dividends for our economy and citizens.
 - Despite past efforts and some improvement, there are still disconnects between programs and among Departments.
 - Technical assistance is inadequate to aid with regulatory & statutory compliance.
 - Planning to achieve the future desired goals is still inadequate and yet remains as essential as ever: be it to promote good land use and management in LURC jurisdiction, achieving greater energy security, or promoting farm and fishing viability.
- **Resource Management.** Maine's natural resource base does not divide into separate, easy-to-manage "units". This interconnectedness is increasingly apparent and has profound implications for agency management activities. This is true for fisheries, wildlife, forests, water and every other facet of our natural resource base. The present management, divided among several agencies, with different philosophies, poses a serious risk to effective management as pressures mount.
- **Listening to emerging/improving science.** As our knowledge about our natural resources evolves we need to be able to adapt our activity and regulations to our expanded knowledge more quickly and proactively. Currently agency science is frequently behind or below state of the art or even state of five years ago.
- **Sustainable energy strategies require more cooperation** Shifting to greater reliance on energy conservation and renewable energy sources requires a deeper understanding of the inter-related character of the energy system. Managing all aspects related to energy generation, including alternative sources like wind power and other renewables, creation of forestry and agricultural carbon offsets, require intensive coordination efforts among state agencies with energy-related mandates. Are we set-up to achieve this? The recent wind power task force offers a positive example. Much more may be needed.
- **Lack of sufficient marketing capacity.** As pointed out at the Natural Resource-based Industry conference in 2004, one of the responses to the state's economic challenges is to seek new customers for Maine's natural resource products and services. Doing so will require integrated efforts across and agencies and sectors. It also requires recognition that today's consumers want to know that the paper and other wood products they purchase are harvested

sustainably. They want to know that their food is safe to eat, and increasingly purchase organic produce and meat. We must take these trends into account in doing our work.

- **Climate Change Adaptation:** Coordination of state efforts to deal with predicted effects of global warming, including sea level rise, increased timber and agricultural pests, species loss, increased incidence of certain human diseases, and many other changes requires broad and active involvement of every natural resource agency and many others at state and local levels. At present we are not organized or prepared to respond
- **Citizens losing touch with Maine's roots.** With less of the population tied directly to the natural resource base for their livelihood, the deep understanding of healthy, interconnected relationships between society and the natural world are fraying (e.g. milk comes from the store not from the cow). Toward this end education of our population is critical to develop a better understanding of a working landscape from farms to fisheries to forestry – and now, energy.

IV RECOMMENDATIONS

Ideas with broad support

1. Marketing of Maine's Natural Resources led and leveraged by Department of Economic and Community Development
2. Review the "business processes" of each agency issuing "ministerial" licenses and work toward a system that best serves customers and clients (front-end portals) as well as agency data and other management goals (possibly located at Secretary of State).
3. Move oversight/management of all state boat launch facilities to single agency (Dept. of Conservation)
4. Move toward more agencies/staff being co-located in various regional offices to increase communication and collaboration
5. Move toward rational alignment of districts for natural resource agencies to increase communication and collaboration among staff members and between agencies and local government and citizens of those regions
6. Create a single entity to manage public lands and to communicate with citizens about opportunities for access and recreation consistent with management goals for those lands
7. Suggest each agency to engage with staff and stakeholders to prioritize programs and services, with an end result to drop or reduce low-priority work in favor of more critical needs;
8. Suggest each agency review advisory boards and committees to determine most effective mix of citizen engagement and cost (staff time and expenses)

Ideas discussed with an alternative approach for resolution

9. Move waste management (except landfill oversight) from SPO to DEP
10. There was general discussion about LURC and whether its current structure enables it to adequately manage the complex and voluminous issues facing the jurisdiction.

Ideas discussed but where no consensus was reached

11. Consolidation among Agriculture, Forestry, Conservation & Aquaculture
And consolidation of Marine Resources and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
12. Reconfiguration of the functions of the 4 natural resource agencies (Agriculture, Conservation, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Marine Resources)
13. Possible consolidation of key functions of all natural resources agencies into a coordinating center that served all of them.

1. Marketing of Maine's Natural Resources led and leveraged by Department of Economic and Community Development

Goal: Maine's Natural Resources marketing led and leveraged by Department of Economic and Community Development.

Currently each of the Natural Resource Agencies provides their own marketing programs to promote their Maine experiences or Maine products. This is to be distinguished from information and education programs. Although each of the agencies executes similar marketing strategies through print, travel/trade shows and other media buys, the efforts are not coordinated and frequently underfunded. Utilizing the existing market channels used by the DECD and MOT and by capitalizing on the professional contractors initiating the State's tourism strategic plan as well as the Maine Made branding, these efforts could be extended to selling the marketable products of the natural resource agencies. This would give access to broader markets based on research collected by DECD contractors.

It also provides an opportunity to develop a marketable, statewide brand that raises awareness of Maine as a great place to live, work and play. Even though the Natural Resource agencies do not have significant funding to support this work they can provide access to many resources within their offices such as photography and film assets, etc. Additionally, each of the Natural Resource agencies brings a variety of public/private funding partnership experiences to the mix. Additional marketing efforts should not be funded by existing DECD resources.

As a course of action, an MOU should be drawn up between participating agencies to define expectations and responsibilities. A joint marketing committee should be formed to oversee the development of a strategic marketing plan to work with DECD contractors in the creation of a state brand and to develop an in-state/out-of-state marketing plan based on existing resources.

These efforts are completely separate and distinct from private sector promotional and

marketing groups, councils and organizations.

2. Review the “business processes” of each agency issuing “ministerial” licenses and work toward a system that best serves customers and clients (front-end portals) as well as agency data and other management goals (possibly located at Secretary of State).

Goal: Review and consolidation of ministerial licenses and processes leading to long-term changes in practice, consolidation of functions and benefits to consumers.

Consolidation of “ministerial licensing” should not be confined to agency boundaries. It should be considered in the normal planning processes of the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the natural resource agencies that provide licensing services.

The agencies need to be an active participant in a process of real review of the characterization of each license and the information captured and used during the process. Similarities in the information and licensing transaction itself are the basic building blocks to align licensing functions and associated technology. During this review, no additional investment in the agencies’ current systems should be made without this broader cross-agency analysis. This analysis should not have the effect of interrupting the operation and maintenance of current systems.

The Chief Information Officer should be directed to prioritize ministerial licensing systems in the information technology “strategic planning process”. The strategic planning process should be accomplished within existing resources but any investment in technology would require budget authorization.

3. Move oversight/management of all state boat launch facilities to single agency (Dept. of Conservation)

Goal – Consolidate the management of state owned and state supported boating facilities for a variety of recreational and commercial purposes within the Department of Conservation (DOC).

This means that there would be a single entity directing the acquisition, development and maintenance of boat launch facilities around the state including ocean access and would consolidate programs now located in both DOC and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W). This approach would provide strong connections to water access for both fishing and recreational purposes and may result in greater efficiencies. The development of boat launch facilities will be coordinated between the two agencies to maximize funding potentials and improve access to as many users as possible. IF&W would continue to provide priorities and opportunities for needed angling access as well as administer the federal boat access fund for acquisition and development through the DOC. Boat launch facilities under this plan will include both facilities for motor boats as well as hand carry facilities primarily meant for non-motorized crafts, and will serve both inland and tidal waters to the level of the craft in common use on those waters.

The title to existing boat launch facilities will remain with the Department that acquired them, however all future acquisitions will be held by the DOC. Management of current facilities held by other agencies will be provided through specific management agreements that detail the

intent of the land's management and the human and financial resources necessary to carry out that management.

The development of future boat launch facilities will be determined with input from the DOC and IF&W according to a memorandum of agreement.

The funding for the acquisition, development and maintenance of boat launch facilities may come from a variety of sources including but not limited to: federal funding sources, dedicated gas tax funds, boating registration funds, and other state grant programs. Funding for all boating facility projects will be carefully accounted for and regular reports of funds spent and work accomplished will be provided to the management of both IF&W and DOC for budgetary and federal reporting purposes. IF&W will remain responsible for administering the federal boat access grants, as required by federal statute.

The addition of management responsibilities to BP&L for the additional facilities currently owned by IF&W will require additional resources. In order to maintain a level of effort comparable to current programs by the two agencies in the area of acquisition and development, additional resources will be required at DOC.

4. Move toward more agencies/staff being co-located in various regional offices to increase communication and collaboration (see 5. below)

5. Move toward rational alignment of districts for natural resource agencies to increase communication and collaboration among staff members and between agencies and local government and citizens of those regions

Co-location of Natural Resource Regional Facilities

There is general agreement that co-location of staff from different natural resource agencies, where appropriate and possible, is a good thing. There is already a good amount of coordination that is taking place by the Natural Resource Departments to share facilities.

Any co-location or consolidation of facilities will require some long range planning will likely be necessary because of unsafe, overcrowding or lease terminations, with the latter being the most likely. Currently none of the agencies have extra space in their facilities to bring in other staff. The Task Force recognizes opportunities to improve energy efficiency through this initiative.

There is a shared view that the Bureau of General Services (BGS) would be the best place for coordination to happen since natural resource agencies already work with BGS on building additional space or renovations. Any review of future co-location opportunities that is intended to produce results which are detailed and substantiated enough actually to be implemented will require resources beyond those currently available to the Bureau. The Bureau would welcome a recommendation charging it to help facilitate or lead such an effort, and providing the resources necessary for it to do so.

Leasing provides inexpensive startup for facilities, but the long-term costs are dramatically higher and may not be affordable to many programs or agencies. It seems that the co-location idea, as BGS expressed, should be a long-range goal monitored by BGS for

opportunities when regional facilities are planned by one or more agencies. The Task Force specifically recommends that if any Natural Resource Agency wishes to build, buy, move or expand any building, there must be a specific finding that co-location has been thoroughly explored first.

6. Create a single entity to manage public lands and to communicate with citizens about opportunities for access consistent with management goals for those lands, (See also number 3 regarding boat launches)

Public Lands Management Consolidation Proposal

There is a shared view that many benefits derive from consolidating the management of natural resource-based public lands in the state. This means that there would be a common management process for directing what can/should /will happen on the natural resource-based public lands as well as a primary entity for carrying out management of those lands. This approach would provide strong connections among fish and wildlife management, forest resource, as well as recreation management. This will produce regional coordination and a landscape approach to providing habitat for fish and wildlife, timber management and public recreational opportunities where most appropriate. It is recognized in this consolidation that not all lands can be used for all purposes. Restrictions by funding or title may have been imposed on the land during the time of acquisition, or the land may be unsuitable for certain activities. However, by having one consolidated management entity more of the land will be available for more public purposes. Plans for managing the lands would be done on a regional basis regardless of what agency may hold title to the land. The plans for specific parcels would need to take into account the intended use(s) for which the land was purchased and also provide for public input regarding what can or cannot be done on any parcel.

The actual implementation of the management plans for public lands will be primarily carried out through the Bureau of Parks and Lands. Management of lands held by other agencies will be provided through specific management agreements that detail the intent of the land's management and the human and financial resources necessary to carry out that management.

Summarized, the purpose of this consolidation is threefold:

1. To manage the land in such a manner as to achieve the maximum public objective allowed in the most efficient manner.
2. To allow and encourage public participation in the management planning process and encourage and educate the public on the wise use of the land.
3. To provide the public with a realistic expectation of what is to be done on the public lands under state ownership.

7. Suggest each agency engage with staff and stakeholders to prioritize programs and services, with an end result to drop or reduce low-priority work in favor of more critical needs

8. Suggest each agency review advisory boards and committees to determine most effective mix of citizen engagement and cost (staff time and expenses)

9. Move solid waste management (except landfill oversight) from SPO to DEP

Task Force members made a preliminary suggestion that solid waste management be moved from the State Planning Office to the Department of Environmental Protection. Further conversation revealed that the question of solid waste management had been addressed by the 123rd Legislature, with a joint report from DEP and SPO due in January 2009.

Further background was provided by task force members David Littell, of DEP, Martha Freeman of SPO, and Representative Bob Duchesne:

In 1995, the Waste Management Agency was abolished and its duties were split between SPO and DEP. In 2008, the 123rd Legislature passed LD 810, Public Law 2007, chapter 583, "AN ACT to Improve Solid Waste Management." Sections 10 and 11 require the Department of Environmental Protection and the State Planning Office to report in January 2009 to the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources on two matters:

- Development of a system by which solid waste management activities are performed by them and an analysis of the agencies' respective ability to control the different and various waste streams flowing into state-owned landfills (the committee is authorized to report out legislation relating to this); and
- From the Department of Environmental Protection, details of a method for setting mandatory recycling standards for all solid waste disposal facilities.

The Task Force endorses resolving these matters through the LD 810 process.

10. 11. and 12. Systemic Mergers and Consolidation Proposals

The Task Force considered a number of proposals to make systemic changes and significant modifications to the current configurations of a number of the natural resource agencies in particular. These proposals fell largely into 3 general approaches that are described in 10, 11 and 12 below.

At a very high level, the Task Force recognized that people tend to be "lumpers" or "splitters" and their comfort with various proposals reflected their personal philosophy regarding whether small, mission-based agencies are the way to go or whether by combining resources, there is greater strength and ability to accomplish goals and leverage additional support.

There was frank recognition that the current configuration of natural resource agencies has not been helpful to the departments or their constituencies in terms of ensuring a sufficient share of the budget pie. However there is great comfort for a number of Task Force members in having a cabinet member commissioner charged with looking out for their particular interest and a known and familiar entity to work with. For some, the fear of the unknown is greater than the givens of the current circumstances. However, others among the task force see great

opportunity to enhance Maine's natural resource industries, brand and resource management by consolidating agencies and combining to become stronger.

There are strong "cultures" associated with the various agencies that have positive and negative aspects. The connection with Maine's history, knowledge base and outdoor traditions is portrayed in the current make-up of the agencies that is viewed as an asset. The downside to having agencies remain independent is that they can become less accountable, less able to change with trends and needs, and can become too secure in doing business in the way "that things have always been done." This can lead to staleness and turf battles that undermine the good work of the staff in these agencies. Some on the Task Force believe that the more systemic changes proposed will help "open things up" in a manner that is restorative and inspirational to all concerned.

The task force worked hard and with diligence to come to an agreement on how the departments might be combined to provide more efficient natural resource agencies. The task force considered three approaches to re-organization; two offered fairly specific and detailed plans. While there was much discussion and some common ground, we did not have enough time to work out a plan that could gain a large enough support base to move forward and achieve consensus. The work in this area has not been in vain, and we hope something can be developed that will gain widespread support from those groups and individuals who are served by the natural resource agencies.

The task force strongly recommends that the Legislature create an ad hoc joint standing committee to deal with any bills that are submitted that cross natural resource agencies and that therefore are not appropriate to be referred solely to one of the current joint standing committees.

10. Consolidation among Agriculture, Forestry, Conservation & Aquaculture and consolidation of Marine Resources and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (See Organization Charts in Appendices)

Agriculture, Forestry, Conservation

Combining agriculture and forestry was viewed by supporters as bringing together a number of similar programs and functions related to commercial activities, production from private lands and technical assistance. This proposed merger recognizes strong working relationships already in existence between agriculture and forestry regarding combating invasive species and pests. A merger would address overlap in services already being provided, would combine all disease, invasives and pest work together in one location, recognizes common functions associated with working with private landowners ~ farmers and forest owners. A number of task force members spoke to the opportunities associated with more formal collaboration among agency staff and trends in forestry and agriculture. A number of members spoke to the benefits associated with such a merger and enabling staff to learn from one another and promote creative problem solving.

Concerns were raised by some Task Force members regarding the role of forestry related to the stewardship of public values provided by Maine's forests and woodlands. Many felt that these concerns could be addressed with careful attention to how the merger would be

designed. Any new combination of agency functions would need to address the balance between public and private lands and public and private users of natural resources. Many members noted the importance of adequately protecting public values on private land, such as wildlife and habitat and water quality.

There was opposition to the move of parks and public lands into the suggested Department of Agriculture and Forestry. These task force members felt that these public functions provided by parks and lands did not fit with other department functions that focus on helping private interests derive economic benefit from natural resources. Some task force members believe that growth in the amount of public lands and recreation focus has squeezed out forestry and agriculture functions if put together in one department. Some said that the issues facing agriculture and forestry in relation to public lands will not go away and that it makes sense to solve the issues within a department. There were mixed views regarding the placement of LURC, Maine Geological Survey and Maine Natural Areas Program in the new department.

There were also proposals to bring aquaculture from Marine Resources to the new, merged agency. This idea had both proponents who felt that the processes and technical assistance associated with aquaculture were similar to growing produce and trees. Opponents pointed to the medium, the marine environment, in which the bulk of aquaculture operations take place that necessitates agency familiarity with marine uses, ecology and related issues.

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Marine Resources

Those supporting merging Marine Resources and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife pointed to the enhanced opportunities to manage comprehensively for wildlife and fisheries in an integrated manner. The opportunities for biologists, scientists, and managers to operate on watershed and/or ecosystem basis was seen as a strong factor in this proposal.

As some opined, having all senior managers of Maine's aquatic resources under one roof would produce significant benefits for the resource. A number of Task Force members spoke to the benefits from combining wardens and marine patrol law enforcement functions, resource management functions, integration of programs and innovation. This merger could lead to a habitat-based approach to managing resources and a more integrated approach to marketing these natural resources and opportunities.

The benefits of a more connected Game Warden program and Marine Patrol program were also cited. Additionally, the opportunities to broaden the base of support for both agencies by reaching out to non-traditional constituencies is viewed as another potential positive outcome of this approach.

Those who were concerned by this proposal worry that the non-commercial uses and constituencies (such as recreational interests) would be overwhelmed by such a merger and that commercial fisheries interests will get "lost in the shuffle." Sportsmen have voiced their concern that their efforts to sustain and strengthen Maine's fisheries and wildlife management programs will be eroded with such a merger. One member asked how will the constitutional guarantee of license fees be secured to support fish and game management. Another question was whether this consolidation lead to a diminishment of stakeholder access to decision making? One Task Force member said there just is not enough perceived "gain" for the

“pain”.

While there was considerable resistance from the groups who would be directly affected by this proposed merger, there was also recognition that there is a great deal of commonality and overlap between the two agencies. Several members suggested placing the two agencies physically together with an MOU that clearly defined the requirement to communicate and collaborate, with the expectation that over time (+/- 8 to 10 years) the two agencies would naturally (or otherwise) find themselves operating as one agency.

11. Reconfiguration of the functions of the 4 natural resource agencies (Agriculture, Conservation, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Marine Resources)-(See Organization Charts in Appendices)

The proponents of this reconfiguration emphasize that the changes are organized around functionality and commonality. They looked toward efficiencies and alignment of functions and missions. A central focus was the linkage between state functions that serve private interests and the belief that successful commercial ventures will result from better service. The four existing agencies would be reconfigured resulting in 4 modified departments.

This proposed reorganization continues a separate department of Fisheries and Wildlife, based on long-standing capacity to help manage relations between recreational hunters and fishermen and private land-owners. Commercial fisheries would be managed by a Department of Marine Resources, more used to dealing with commercial interests. This reconfiguration proposes a new department to manage all public lands and recreational activities.

This proposal would likely incur costs; however, proponents of this plan believed that smaller, focused organizations with narrower missions better serve Maine citizens than larger departments with broader missions.

Some task force members raised concerns that this proposal did not advance an integrated approach to ecosystem or habitat management. Some inquired how this proposal would move us forward to gain popular and political support. One specific question related to how would this plan marshal the interests of visitors, tourists and others who come to Maine? Some expressed concern that it didn't make sense to separate commercial and recreational fisheries. Other points raised included keeping Conservation and LURC together, keeping Land for Maine's Future tied to whole state and not one agency, and aquaculture should stay with other marine resource functions.

12. Possible consolidation of key functions of all natural resources agencies into a coordinating center that served all of them.

One approach was focused on how best the agencies can deliver the various constituencies the services they need from the different departments.

It seemed that constituents break into a couple of fairly easily defined groups which are the private or commercial users and the public or recreational users. Attached is an organizational chart and its basic premise is to be user friendly, and to combine some areas of common activity.

A number of task force members recognized that we should continue to explore central services that serve all agencies. Some emphasized that we need a consumer focus to our

services ~ one phone number with a good referral to address the customer's concerns and needs. This model provides an "engine of coordination" for all natural resource agency functions that could be built upon over time.

Recognizing that there should be careful consideration of these options with considerable analysis and discussion, the Task Force recommends that a separate review process be created to undertake such a review.

