

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPORT OF
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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AUGUST 31, 1986

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Richard B. Anderson, Chairman
Commissioner, Department of
Conservation

David F. Allen
Executive Director, Sportsman's
Alliance of Maine

Richard E. Barringer
Director, State Planning Office

Joan Benoit Samuelson
Member 1984 U.S. Olympic Team

Cloe Caputo
Author of 50 More Hikes in Maine

Rep. Edward Dexter
112th Maine Legislature

Sen. Jerome Emerson
112th Maine Legislature

Leon Gorman
President, L.L. Bean

Wendy Gray
Marketing Manager, Sunday River
Ski Lodge

Rep. Paul F. Jacques
112th Maine Legislature

Angus King
General Counsel, Swift River
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Bud Leavitt
Outdoor Recreational Columnist,
Bangor Daily News

Sen Zachary Matthews
112th Maine Legislature

Glenn H. Manuel
Commissioner, Department of Inland
Fisheries & Wildlife

Rep. Patrick McGowan
112th Maine Legislature

Rep. Michael Michaud
112th Maine Legislature

Hon. Linwood E. Palmer
Former member of Maine Legislature

Charles P. Pray
President of the Senate, 112th
Legislature

Sen. Ronald Usher
112th Maine Legislature

Mark Sullivan, Executive Director
Deputy Commissioner, Department of
Conservation

AUGUSTA, MAINE

STATE OF MAINE
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION
ON OUTDOOR RECREATION
IN MAINE

State House Station 22
Augusta, Maine 04333



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Deputy Commissioner, Department of
Conservation

September 4, 1986

The Honorable Joseph E. Brennan
Governor of Maine
Office of the Governor
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Governor Brennan:

I am pleased to submit to you the report of your Commission on Outdoor Recreation in Maine.

Throughout the Spring and Summer of 1986, the Commission travelled across Maine to receive expert presentations from State and federal agencies, regional and local recreation planners and officials, business and commercial interests, and representatives of organizations concerned with outdoor recreation in Maine; and to listen to Maine citizens in a series of public forums.

It has been a great pleasure for us to see Maine in all its great natural beauty and diversity through this process. These efforts have reinforced our appreciation for the tremendous value outdoor recreation holds to Maine people, our economy, and the quality of life that makes Maine special to its citizens and visitors alike.

While we found general satisfaction within the public about the current status of outdoor recreation in Maine, we observed great and growing concern about the future. It is the high quality and diversity of Maine's natural resources that provide Maine people and visitors to our State with an unparalleled selection of recreation opportunities. Maintaining that quality and diversity, and assuring that the public will continue to have access to Maine's recreation resources represent the greatest challenge that will confront decision-makers, both public and private, who will influence Maine's outdoor recreation resources in the foreseeable future.

The members of the Commission believe that Maine people are willing and ready to meet that challenge. The recommendations we make represent bold, yet well-reasoned measures for the State, in partnership with others both in and outside of government, to safeguard the public interest in the future of Maine's outdoor recreation resources. Our report does not contain all of the answers, but it does propose the means and the commitment to assure that outdoor recreation receives the attention its value to Maine warrants.

On behalf of the Commission, please allow me to thank the staff who so ably assisted us in this effort. Above all, we thank you for giving us this opportunity to serve you and the people of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard B. Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard B. Anderson
Chairman

RBA/jca

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Volume I	Agency Overviews/Staff Background Papers
Volume II	Presentations to the Commission: Written Submissions and Hearing Summaries
Volume III	Excerpts from Recent Public Opinion Surveys and User Questionnaires: National, Statewide and Local

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As directed by Governor Brennan's March 30th Executive Order, the Governor's Commission on Outdoor Recreation in Maine has conducted an assessment of the current status of outdoor recreation in Maine, and has identified problems and opportunities demanding immediate, high-level attention.

While the Commission reviewed many recent public opinion and recreation use surveys it found a conclusive assessment of current demand for, and priorities among, specific outdoor recreation opportunities elusive, and the ability to project demand and priorities reasonably into the future subject to many unquantifiable factors.

Through these surveys and the written and oral submissions it has received, the Commission has concluded that Maine people are generally well-satisfied with the current quality and diversity of outdoor recreation in Maine. However, the public is vitally concerned with maintaining these present values, assuring the continued accessibility of Maine's outdoor recreation resources to the public, and securing the greatest social and economic benefit for Maine people from these resources.

Highlights of Commission Recommendations

The Commission recommends a series of actions by the State, in concert with federal and local government, private landowners, commercial interests, recreationists and the public.

Specifically, the Commission recommends:

1. Legislation establishing a permanent Maine Advisory Commission on Outdoor Recreation to serve as a high-level forum for the discussion of outdoor recreation issues in Maine; to review and assess the policies, plans, and programs of State agencies, local government, and those outside of government that affect the quality and availability of Maine's outdoor recreation resources; and to report its findings and recommendations periodically to the Governor and the Legislature;
2. Strong public support for two pending bond issues (Coastal Public Access Fund: \$3.25 million; Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Acquisition Fund: \$5 million).
3. A bold, long-range effort to add to the domain of lands in Maine where public rights for a variety of recreation uses are assured in perpetuity, including:
 - a) State or local acquisitions in less-than-fee simple (e.g., through perpetual easement, the purchase of development

rights, or the purchase of recreation use rights) of other properties that will protect or enhance public use of outdoor recreation resources; and

- b) State or local acquisition, by purchase where other alternatives (e.g., landowner donation, landowner grant of a perpetual easement) are not attainable, of carefully selected properties that either are themselves significant outdoor recreation resources (e.g., sand beaches, undeveloped forest lands in southern and western Maine) or provide key public access to valuable outdoor recreation resources;
 - c) Acquisitions, both fee and less-than-fee simple, by private, non-profit organizations that make areas available for public recreation use.
4. The Commission did not reach consensus on a proposal to provide funds for State and local acquisitions and facility development pursuant to the objectives in its report.

Fifteen Commission members support a \$50 million bond issue, to be sold in \$5 million increments over the next decade, earmarked for specific purposes; three members support a \$20 million bond issue earmarked for specific purposes; and one abstained.

- 5. Legislation empowering the Bureau of Public Lands to acquire property in municipalities, specifically for the purpose of acquiring one or more large tracts (5,000 plus acres) in southern and western Maine;
- 6. A number of measures to foster continued public access to, and use of, private lands for outdoor recreation including clarification of public rights, improved relations between landowners and the recreating public, the removal of impediments and the provision of incentives to landowners to allow public use of their lands, and development of long-term agreements for public recreation use with landowners;
- 7. A number of measures to assure the continued quality of recreation resources and of diverse outdoor recreation opportunities in Maine including coastal islands, rivers, scenic resources, hiking trails and primitive campsites;
- 8. The highest priority for future State outdoor recreation funding go to improve, upgrade, and meet the routine repair and maintenance needs of the existing State Parks;

9. A funding commitment to develop additional State Parks facilities on lands already owned by the State in Wells, Bristol, Beddington and on islands in Casco Bay; and for both land acquisition and development of additional State Parks facilities, either to expand existing State Parks as demand warrants, or to provide State Parks to areas currently under served; and
10. A number of measures to address the problems and opportunities confronting community recreation in Maine, including legislation and an appropriation restoring the State Municipal Recreation Fund to its pre-1980 funding level of \$100,000 per year.

Governor Brennan also asked the Commission to review the findings and recommendations of the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors (PCAO). However, as the PCAO now will not issue a report until late 1986, the Commission will delay its review until that time. The Commission will, by copy of this report, advise the PCAO of the current status of outdoor recreation in Maine, of the measures the Commission has proposed to address the future, and of the importance of a strong federal partnership with State and local governments, commercial interests, landowners and the public to meet Maine and the nation's future outdoor recreation needs.

INTRODUCTION

Maine offers a variety and abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities unparalleled in any other state in the eastern United States. For Mainers, outdoor recreation ranges from quiet relaxation to strenuous exertion, from an occasional leisure pastime to a source of livelihood. Maine's outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities are also a major attraction to the 5.9 million visitors who come to the State each year.

Perhaps in no other State is outdoor recreation more integral to the quality of life, more vital to the economy, or traditionally, more greatly appreciated than in Maine.

In recent years, public concern has grown over the future prospects for outdoor recreation in Maine. Attention has focused upon many issues, including: the continued quality and availability of traditional activities, like hunting, trapping, fishing, boating, hiking, beach-going, remote camping and sightseeing; the advent and growth of interest in new pursuits, like whitewater boating and all-terrain vehicles; the occurrence of conflict between different forms of recreation and between recreation and other uses for Maine's natural resources; the importance of outdoor recreation to an expanding tourism industry that today brings \$1.25 billion annually to our economy and provides 43,000 full-time equivalent jobs for Maine people.

Recognizing the value outdoor recreation represents both today and to Maine's future, in March 1986, Governor Joseph E. Brennan established the Governor's Commission on Outdoor Recreation in Maine.

Governor Brennan asked the 19 Commission members to assess the current status of outdoor recreation in Maine; to project demand for outdoor

recreation opportunities into the next century; and to recommend federal, State and local actions, and any measures from outside government, needed to secure the greatest benefits for Maine's people from our outdoor recreation resources and heritage. He requested that the Commission make a final report of findings and recommendations to him by August 31, 1986.

Governor Brennan also asked his Commission to monitor closely the activities of the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, appointed by President Reagan to conduct a similar effort at the national level. The President's Commission is now scheduled to make its report in early 1987. The final section of this report provides a Maine perspective on the federal role in outdoor recreation for consideration by the President's Commission.

BACKGROUND

Over the course of the Spring and Summer of 1986, the Commission held public meetings in Farmington, Portland, Ellsworth, Greenville, Presque Isle, and Augusta where it received presentations and background materials from State and federal agencies, regional planners, local officials, business and commercial interests, and a wide array of experts and organizations concerned with outdoor recreation in Maine. In addition, the Commission heard testimony from scores of Maine citizens at these meetings. Volumes I and II of appendices to this report contain the written submissions and summaries of these meetings and public forums that comprise the Commission's record.

Defining "Outdoor Recreation"

One challenge immediately confronting the Commission was the breadth of possible activities encompassed in the phrase "outdoor recreation." Following a review of various national and State surveys that have attempted to gauge the public's appetite for outdoor recreation, the Commission recognized the advisability of employing a broad definition of outdoor recreation. A narrow definition, insensitive to diverse public tastes, might lead the Commission to overlook major priorities held by large segments of Maine's population. The Commission chose to define outdoor recreation as **"activity or planned inactivity -- out-of-doors -- undertaken because one wants to do it."**

Operating under this broad definition did not discourage the emergence of significant priorities during the Commission's proceedings. As the appendices and the ensuing pages demonstrate, public interest coalesced around certain issues and recurring themes, enabling the Commission to focus its findings and recommendations on a reasonable agenda of topics.

Determining Public Demand, Now and in the Future

The second major challenge before the Commission proved more problematic: How does one gauge public demand for "outdoor recreation," now and in the future?

As various recent public opinion surveys undertaken at the State and national levels have found, "outdoor recreation" preferences, at any given time, are highly subjective, depending greatly upon individual tastes; on how various optional activities are defined and presented for choice; and upon the influence of myriad, often irreconcilable, factors.

For example, can surveys reasonably identify clear priorities between activities that can be pursued on a day-to-day basis, compatible with routine work schedules (e.g., a jog in Deering Oaks, a stroll in Wolf Neck Woods State Park, a softball game in an East Millinocket community league); on weekends (a hike to the summit of Mt. Megunticook, a drive from Saco to Fryeburg, an overnight camping and fishing trip north of Bangor); and on those rare outings of longer duration (five days of snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in Baxter State Park, a week of hunting at a campsite off the Golden Road, an out-of-state family vacation to Yellowstone National Park).

Further, public tastes, technology, and other influential factors change, often dramatically, with time. Twenty years ago, only a hardy few canoed or kayaked Maine's whitewater rivers; last year, over 40,000 customers enjoyed commercial raft trips on the Kennebec, Penobscot, and Dead rivers. Snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles were unimaginable in the not too distant past. The cessation of log drives on Maine rivers in 1973, alone, is largely credited with two major influences on outdoor recreation in Maine today: the proliferation of woods hauling roads that have made vast areas of Maine

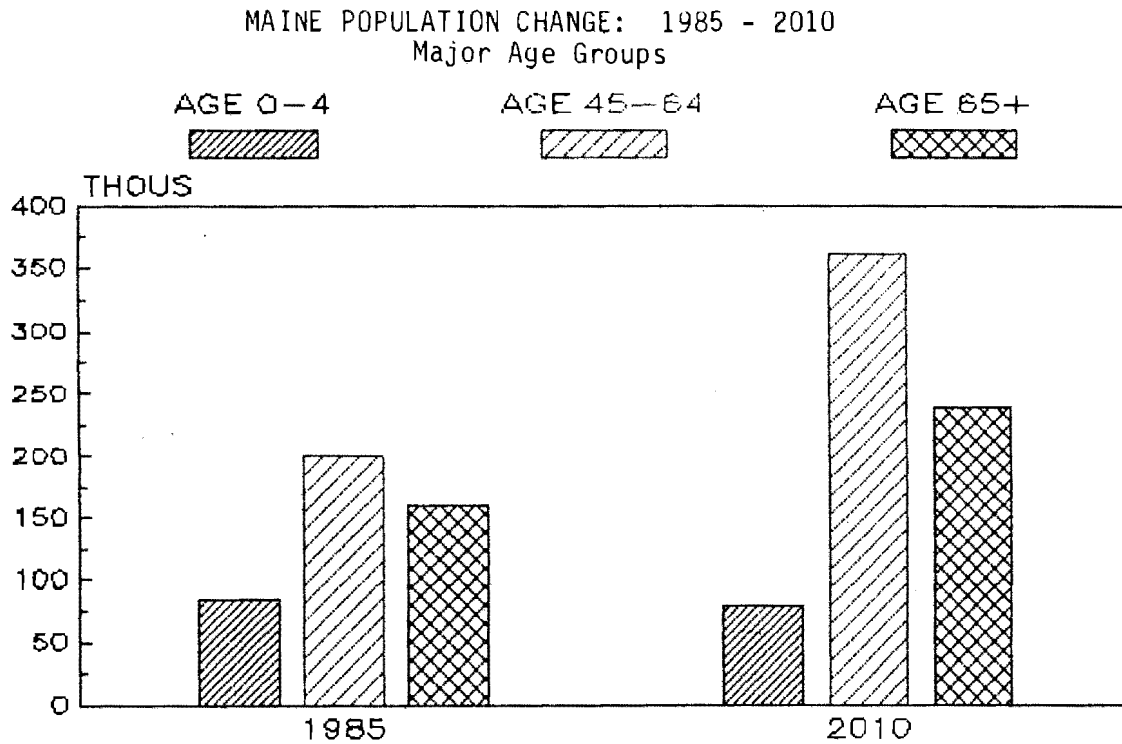
more easily accessible, and contributing significantly to the restored water quality of many rivers that are now popular for fishing, boating, community parks, waterside businesses, and swimming that would not have occurred a decade ago.

What unknown factors and influences can Maine expect in the next 30 years? Will acid rain spoil the fisheries in many Maine lakes? Will some parasite infestation decimate waterfowl? Will cross-country skiing suddenly become the "trendy" winter sport for Mainers or new crowds of winter vacationers visiting the State?

The Commission reviewed many recent opinion surveys and user questionnaires. Excerpts from these are included in Volume III of the appendices to this report. The Commission notes some significant findings from this research:

- o A survey for the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, (PCAO) found that the six most popular forms of outdoor recreation, in terms of the percentage of American adults who participated in them often in 1985 are: walking for pleasure (50%); driving for pleasure (43%); sight-seeing (34%); swimming in an ocean, lake, or river (30%); swimming in an outdoor pool (28%), and picnicking (28%).
- o 76% of the respondents in the PCAO survey participate often in spectator outings (sight-seeing, driving for pleasure, picnicking, and other non-strenuous outdoor activities); 37% participate often in fishing, hunting, and horsepower activities (motorboats, ATVs, snowmobiles, and recreational vehicle camping); 31% participate often in activities closely associated with natural settings (backpacking, day hiking, tent camping, canoeing/kayaking/rafting, bird watching, and nature study).
- o The State Development Office's 1986 Maine Travel Survey found that sightseeing is, by far, the most popular travel activity of both Maine residents and visitors to Maine; the most popular recreation activities of Maine residents are, in order, picnicking, family camping, lake fishing, hunting, ice fishing, day hiking, and primitive camping; for non-residents visiting Maine, the order is family camping, picnicking, ocean swimming, lake fishing, downhill skiing, primitive camping, lake swimming, and day hiking.

- o The State Planning Office (SPO) projects that Maine's population will grow by 5.4% (from an estimated 1,156,500 in 1984 to 1,220,650 in 1994) during the decade ending in 1994. Fourteen of Maine's 16 counties will experience population growth, with York and Cumberland counties together accounting for nearly half (over 30,000 new inhabitants) of the increase.
- o The population is aging, nationally and in Maine.



Source: SPO

- o SPO further notes that increasing numbers of retired people are moving to Maine, especially along the coast, near lakes and in other recreational areas, and that the presence of many retirees serves to attract future migration of retirees to Maine.
- o Resident hunting and fishing license sales have increased significantly in Maine over the last 20 years; non-resident sales for both have increased, but at a slower rate. However, as this table demonstrates, license sales may fluctuate significantly from year to year (e.g., 1983 resident hunting licenses; 1970-71 non-resident hunting and fishing licenses).

FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSE SALES 1965-1985

Year	Fishing		Hunting	
	Residents	Non-Residents	Residents	Non-Residents
1965	149,898	81,820	152,665	35,729
1966	136,807	61,044	166,612	34,105
1967	137,139	83,367	165,847	35,267
1968	144,107	91,388	169,174	38,075
1969	143,276	89,916	165,603	40,481
1970	153,047	94,551	177,373	43,606
1971	153,018	94,836	159,044	40,469
1972	139,928	91,950	151,916	31,954
1973	155,312	94,886	165,036	34,995
1974	162,919	90,027	177,008	35,370
1975	168,167	91,437	188,847	38,050
1976	166,761	81,841	185,501	31,951
1977	165,373	79,898	189,505	31,389
1978	171,368	82,527	193,470	35,004
1979	177,303	75,532	196,904	36,071
1980	177,953	76,834	198,753	36,621
1981	177,213	78,538	202,899	34,211
1982	162,020	77,676	197,419	37,507
1983	194,800	86,032	205,589	38,072
1984	177,479	87,850	182,761	37,988
1985	179,451	86,985	177,197	37,297
Percent Changes	+19.7	+6.3	+16.1	+4.4

Source: DIF&W

While such findings are revealing, they do not enable the Commission to determine conclusively public demand for and priorities among various outdoor recreation opportunities today, or to project reasonably what specifically the future holds.

The Commission has found the public generally well-satisfied with the current quality and diversity of outdoor recreation in Maine. However, maintaining these present values, while meeting new demands the future will certainly bring, appears uppermost among the concerns of those who addressed the Commission, and represents the greatest challenge that will confront the decision-makers, both public and private, who will influence Maine's outdoor recreation resources in the foreseeable future.

COMMISSION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Maine is uniquely blessed with an abundance and diversity of natural resources no longer available elsewhere in the northeastern United States: 17.6 million acres of forest; 3,500 miles of coast, ranging from sandy beaches to rocky headlands; over 3,000 lakes, from mammoth Moosehead to remote Bartlett Pond; more than 30,000 miles of rivers and streams, from the Kennebec roaring through the Gorge to the Saco winding through Oxford and York counties; topography, varying from estuaries and tidal rivers to mountains like Bigelow and Katahdin; more than 3,000 coastal islands; fisheries, from striped bass to brown trout, from pickerel to Atlantic salmon; flora, from rare orchids to massive spruce and pine; wildlife, from endangered species like the bald eagle and the Canada lynx to game including waterfowl, furbearers, deer and moose.

These natural resources provide Maine residents and visitors to our State with a vast selection of outdoor recreation opportunities during all seasons of the year, from the simple pleasure of enjoying a striking scenic vista to a variety of strenuous, often rare, wilderness adventures. Maine offers, for example, the only seven rivers in the United States where anglers may find self-sustaining populations of Atlantic salmon.

The public's taste for outdoor recreation is diverse. The Commission received testimony or statements from organizations representing a wide array of activities including hunting, fishing (freshwater and saltwater), trapping, skiing (both downhill and cross-country), hiking, walking, horseback riding, cycling, snowmobiling, rafting, kayaking, canoeing, coastal cruising, family camping, primitive camping, youth camps, sporting camp operators and a variety of community recreation activities.

Maine people care deeply about outdoor recreation opportunities, and about the quality of the environment needed to support those activities. They have a strong sense of their responsibility as stewards of our natural resources and their use for recreation. They know that maintaining clean air, clean water, healthy habitat, and other environmental conditions are fundamental to recreation opportunities. While generally satisfied with the current status of these resources, they recognize that the decisions we make today will influence not only the quality of our own recreation experiences, but the legacy, as well, that we leave to future generations.

Outdoor recreation, from sightseeing to wilderness adventure, also contributes substantially to Maine's economy, generating business and tax revenues from the expenditures by Mainers and by the 5.9 million people visiting Maine each year, and creating jobs for Maine people.

In addition to these general findings, the Commission makes specific findings and recommendations in the following areas.

State Level Planning, Policy Development, and Coordination

Findings

The elusiveness of dependable, long-range projections of future recreation demand, the inability to predict many factors and trends that may affect the future quality and availability of Maine's outdoor recreation resources, and the overall complexity of social, economic and environmental influences upon outdoor recreation make single long-range plans and "grand schemes" unreliable. These considerations demand that the outdoor recreation plans, management measures, and policies of State agencies and local government undergo periodic, coordinated review to assure their continued

relevance, and to determine the need for mid-course corrections or further action.

The policies and actions of individual State agencies, local governments, and those outside of government often affect the policies and objectives of other interested parties. Coordinated efforts by State agencies, in concert with local government, landowners, commercial recreation enterprises, and the recreating public have historically satisfied the public interest in Maine's outdoor recreation resources. However, no formal mechanism currently exists to assure that such communication and coordination will continue to serve growing and more complex future needs sufficiently and effectively.

Many of the issues and objectives contained throughout this report transcend the jurisdiction and responsibility of individual State agencies. Effective fulfillment of these objectives will require coordinated planning, action and policy development by State and local government in concert with interests outside of government.

Recommendations

- 1) **The Commission recommends legislation to establish, in the Executive Branch, a permanent Maine Advisory Commission on Outdoor Recreation (MACOR), comprised of eminent Maine citizens appointed by the Governor, subject to approval by the Legislature.**
- 2) The Commission recommends that the legislation charge this MACOR with responsibility to:
 - a) Review and assess the plans, programs, policies, and priorities of State agencies, local government, and those outside of government that affect the quality and availability of Maine's outdoor recreation resources on a continuing basis, and periodically report its findings and any recommendations for action to the Governor and the Legislature;

- b) Serve as a high-level public forum for the discussion of outdoor recreation issues and for the resolution of conflict between competing demands upon Maine's outdoor recreation resources;
 - c) Assess public opinion about the status of outdoor recreation periodically, and determine, from a marketing perspective, the public's changing tastes and demand for various outdoor recreation pursuits;
 - d) Foster communication, coordination, and improved relationships among State agencies, State and local government, landowners, commercial recreation interests and the recreating public; and
 - e) Act as a clearinghouse for public education and information regarding the use of Maine's outdoor recreation resources.
- 3) The Commission recommends that the MACOR assess the current State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and that in the future, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation use the MACOR as its chief advisory body in the preparation of the SCORP.
- 4) The Commission recommends that this MACOR have an Executive Director to serve as its principal staff, and that the legislation direct other State agencies to assist the MACOR and its Executive Director to fulfill their responsibilities.

Availability of and Access to Outdoor Recreation Resources

The continued availability of and public access to open spaces (whether sand beaches, great ponds, rivers, mountains, hunting areas, forest land, or scenic open space) that afford diverse high quality recreation experiences is the single, paramount factor that will determine the future of outdoor recreation in Maine,

Findings/Public Holdings

Our nearly 900,000 acres of Federal and State-owned lands available for public outdoor recreation are incredibly valuable resources to the people of Maine and to those who visit our State. They include world-renowned areas like Acadia National Park, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and Baxter State Park. They also include 450,000 acres of lands owned by the State, and managed by the Bureau of Public Lands, featuring the Bigelow Preserve, Deboullie Mountain, Duck and Scraggly lakes, Richardson Town, and over 1300 coastal islands.

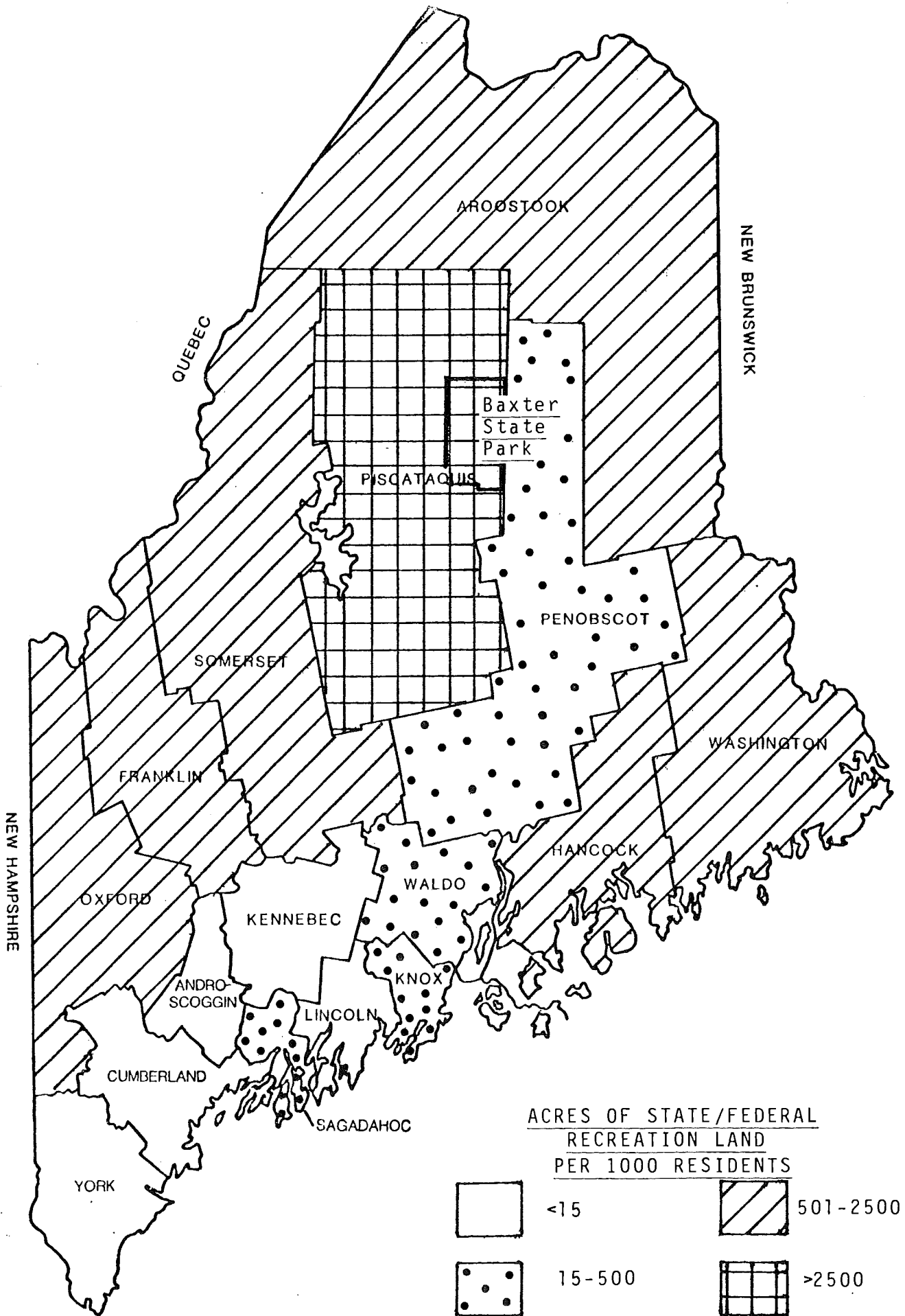
Together, however, these public holdings represent less than five percent of Maine's total acreage. Maine ranks near the bottom of the states in both publicly-owned acreage as a percent of total State area and publicly-owned acreage per capita available for the public's recreation use.

As the attached chart and map (pg. 14a and 14b) demonstrate, on a county-by-county basis, publicly-owned recreation acreage varies greatly, from a high of over 300,000 acres in Piscataquis County, to a low of 94 acres in Lincoln County. Public recreation acreage, however, totals less than fifteen acres per thousand residents in five of Maine's sixteen counties.

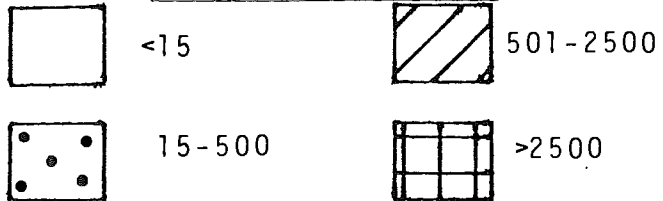
STATE AND FEDERALLY-OWNED RECREATION AREAS IN MAINE

County	State Parks	Federal Parks And Public Lands	State Public Lands ⁱ	Total Public Acreage	Ratio Per 1,000 Residents	1980 Population
Androscoggin	884	0	0	884	8.8	99,657
Aroostook	12,262 ^a	0	125,790	138,052	1512.1	91,331
Cumberland	3,220 ^b	0	0	3,220	14.9	215,789
Franklin	9,977 ^c	0	18,689	28,666	1057.8	27,098
Hancock	2,681	39,486 ^e	33,974	76,141	1821.6	41,781
Kennebec	548	0	393	941	8.6	109,889
Knox	2,828 ^d	0	973	3,801	115.5	32,941
Lincoln	94	0	0	94	3.6	25,691
Oxford	5,798 ^b	48,029 ^f	52,549	106,376	2170.9	48,968
Penobscot	35	0	39,265	39,300	286.9	137,015
Piscataquis	218,692 ^g	0	83,942	302,634	17195.1	17,634
Sagadahoc	1,917	0	125	2,042	70.9	28,795
Somerset	4,453 ^c	0	70,966	75,419	1676.0	45,028
Waldo	3,781 ^d	0	105	3,886	136.8	28,414
Washington	2,353	14 ^h	23,821	26,188	748.2	34,963
York	1,945	0	87	2,032	14.6	139,666
State	271,468	87,529	450,679	809,676	400.7	1,124,660

- a/ Includes one-half of Allagash Wilderness Waterway.
- b/ One-third of Middle Pond parcel is in Cumberland County; two-thirds are in Oxford County.
- c/ Includes one-half of BPR Bigelow parcel.
- d/ Includes one-half of Camden Hills State Park.
- e/ Acadia National Park, Down Pines Recreation Area, Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery.
- f/ Evans Notch District, White Mountain National Forest.
- g/ Includes one-half of Allagash Wilderness Waterway and Baxter State Park.
- h/ St. Croix Island National Monument.
- i/ Includes all Public Reserved Lands (448,261 acres) and other State of Maine properties managed by the Bureau of Public Lands (2,418 acres).



ACRES OF STATE/FEDERAL RECREATION LAND PER 1000 RESIDENTS



In terms of specific resources and outdoor recreation activities, publicly-owned land is even more dear. State Planning Office calculations reveal, for example, that only 27 percent (less than 22 miles) of the State's sand beaches are owned by federal, State, or local governments, and that only 6.4 percent of Maine's coastal area overall is under public (conservation) stewardship. State and local governments have made significant progress in the last two decades developing over 140 boat access sites on Maine's coast, lakes and rivers. However, State and local capabilities to develop additional sites cannot presently keep pace with dramatic increases in the use of existing facilities and demands for new ones.

Governor Baxter's foresight in acquiring Mt. Katahdin and over 201,000 acres of other mountains, forest, lakes, and streams has given the people of Maine a public reserve of incalculable value. Baxter State Park, the "crown jewel" of Maine's outdoor recreation resources, affords a diversity of remote recreation opportunities no longer available elsewhere in the northeastern United States.

The remote nature of both Baxter State Park and Maine's public reserved lands that establishes their great value, however, also means that they are distant from much of Maine's population. In southern and western Maine similarly undeveloped parcels of forest, lakes, and rivers are becoming increasingly rare. The Maine heritage of ready escape from the noise, congestion, and traffic of urban life is steadily disappearing in the State's growing population centers.

The opportunity still exists in southern and western Maine to set aside a few areas of forestlands large enough to provide a welcome counterbalance in

close proximity to urban and suburban development. It will, however, require action and leadership in the near future comparable to that demonstrated by Governor Baxter fifty years ago.

Federal funds, including grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON), and the current Wallop-Breaux Fund, have contributed significantly to public acquisitions in Maine. Between 1965 and 1967, for example, \$1.5 million in LAWCON funds, matching a similar amount in bonds approved by Maine voters, funded the acquisition of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. In recent years, however, federal funds have become increasingly scarce. The LAWCON Fund is currently scheduled to expire completely in 1988.

The \$3.25 million earmarked for public access in the coastal bond issue and the \$5 million for acquisition of land by the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife that Maine voters will consider in the November, 1986 referendum are important steps toward these objectives.

However, even more bold planning, creativity, and action are needed soon if future generations are to be assured of convenient access to the caliber of outdoor recreation resources and opportunities traditionally characteristic of Maine life. Any significant new public investment must be used wisely and sparingly. Assuring the public right to the recreation use of certain properties may not, for example, require outright public ownership, but may rather be accomplished through the donation or acquisition of easements or other property rights short of ownership. A carefully devised and implemented strategy, employing a variety of mechanisms, can significantly expand upon the domain of lands where the public's recreation use rights are assured in perpetuity.

Recommendations

- 5) The Commission urges the people of Maine to approve the two pending bond issues (Coastal Public Access Fund: \$3.25 million; Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Acquisition Fund: \$5 million), and to use this opportunity to send a strong message about their support for the protection of Maine's outdoor recreation resources.
- 6) The Commission recommends that a number of additional steps be taken to add to the domain of lands where public rights for a variety of recreation uses are assured in perpetuity, including:
 - a) State or local acquisitions in less-than-fee simple (e.g., through perpetual easement, the purchase of development rights, or the purchase of recreation use rights) of properties that will protect or enhance public use of outdoor recreation resources;
 - b) State or local acquisition, by purchase where other alternatives (e.g., landowner donation, landowner grant of a perpetual easement) are not attainable, of carefully selected properties that either are themselves significant outdoor recreation resources (e.g., sand beaches, undeveloped forest lands in southern and western Maine) or provide key public access to valuable outdoor recreation resources; and
 - c) Acquisitions, both fee and less-than-fee simple, by private, non-profit organizations that make areas available for public recreation use.

(The Commission did not reach consensus on a funding proposal to accompany this recommendation. Two alternatives and the Commission members supporting each, follow below.)

Proposal 1

The Commission recommends that the Governor propose, and the Legislature submit for public approval in 1987, a \$20 million bond issue to provide funds for State and local acquisitions and facility development pursuant to these objectives. Specific portions of this bond should be earmarked for the Coastal Public Access Protection Fund (which allows for State and local acquisitions in both fee and less-than-fee simple), the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Acquisition Fund, and the Bureau of Public Lands (as specified in Recommendation #7, below). (Commission members supporting: Gorman, Michaud, Palmer.)

Proposal 2

The Commission recommends that the Governor propose, and the Legislature submit for public approval in 1987, a \$50 million bond issue, to be sold in increments not to exceed \$5 million each year for the next decade. The Legislature shall allocate the revenues from these bonds for State and local acquisitions and facilities development, according to priorities reassessed during each biennium in each of the following:

- a) Coastal Public Access Protection Fund;
- b) Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Acquisition Fund;
- c) Land Acquisitions by the Bureau of Public Lands (as specified in Recommendation #7, below);
- d) Land Acquisitions by the Bureau of Parks and Recreation; and
- e) Major Capital Improvements and Facilities Development by the Bureau of Parks and Recreation

(Commission members supporting: Anderson, Allen, Barringer, Caputo, Dexter, Gray, Jacques, King, Leavitt, Matthews, Manuel, McGowan, Pray, Samuelson, Usher.)

(Commission members abstaining: Emerson.)

- 7) The Commission recommends legislation empowering the Bureau of Public Lands (BPL) to acquire property in the organized territory, through a portion of the proceeds from this bond issue. The legislation should further direct BPL to use these funds to acquire one or more large tracts (5,000 plus acres) in southern and western Maine.

The Commission intends that BPL will manage these lands just as it manages its holdings in the unorganized territory. BPL's multiple use management policy integrates timber management with a variety of public outdoor recreation opportunities including hunting and trapping. Further, BPL's revenues from timber management on these lands may be used to pay for the cost of recreation management.

- 8) The Commission recommends that the Governor direct the Commissioners of the Departments of Conservation and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Director of the State Planning Office to establish a formal mechanism to exchange information and to coordinate their various programs that either acquire or provide grants to acquire land or property rights for public outdoor recreation in order to foster efficient, cost-effective acquisition and consolidation of public holdings.

- 9) The Commission recommends that the new MACOR assess the progress of State agencies and local government in implementing these objectives, and make its findings and any recommendations, including a ten-year plan for future public acquisitions, in its first report to the Governor and Legislature.
- 10) The Commission recommends that the Commissioners of the Departments of Conservation and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife conduct an assessment of the existing system for allocating a portion of State gasoline tax revenues to the State Boat Facilities Fund, and recommend changes to accelerate acquisition and development of additional boat access.

Findings/Public Use of Private Land

Maine people possess certain legal rights associated with specific resources, including great ponds, the intertidal zone, and fish and game. However, the full extent of some of these rights is clouded either by pending litigation or the absence of definitive judicial interpretation of these rights. Further, the public's ability to reach these resources is complicated, in many instances, by a combination of the remoteness of the resources and confusion about the extent of legal access rights over private lands.

The public has also traditionally enjoyed recreation use of millions of acres of private land, throughout Maine, free or at minimal cost. Even with significant additional public holdings of lands or other property rights, public use of outdoor recreation resources - forests, wildlife, beaches, rivers, lakes, etc. - either on private property or accessible only over private property, will remain essential to fulfill public recreation demand and to protect the Maine heritage of recreation opportunity.

However, public concern has grown in recent years over the future prospects for this continued public use:

- o Some landowners have set aside significant portions of their lands, in some cases tracts thousands of acres in size, formerly

open to all recreationists, and have leased these lands as private reserves with public access either closed or severely restricted;

- o Despite many significant improvements (e.g., efforts of the Maine Snowmobile Association, user education efforts by the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, etc.), many landowners continue to experience problems with vandalism, litter, and other abuses by some recreationists. Such experiences have led some landowners to close their property entirely to public use, and to limit public use of those areas where the public enjoys rights (e.g., great ponds) to the most strict construction of the limits of the public rights; and
- o Even in areas where public use is allowed, concern about user abuses, combined with increasing costs to manage the effects of public use (e.g. liability coverage, road maintenance, litter pickup, etc.), has caused landowners to control more actively public use and to charge fees to recoup their expenses.

The proliferation, over the past two decades, of privately built and maintained roads in the sparsely populated areas of northern Maine, combined with new maps and guidebooks, has tremendous implications for the future of outdoor recreation. These roads have opened vast areas, formerly accessible only to the most hardy recreationists, to vehicular access. Although these roads were built for forest management purposes, their presence has enabled greater numbers of recreationists to reach remote areas of Maine, and has raised the expectation of many recreationists that these roads will continue to be available and maintained for public use after their utility for forest management has ended.

In other areas of Maine (e.g., York and Cumberland counties, and along the coast inching annually further downeast) the development "boom" has a number of implications for the future availability and accessibility of outdoor recreation. Many existing public facilities, already heavily used, will come under increasing pressure. Opportunities to acquire additional land from

willing sellers or to secure rights to use private land will diminish, and acquisition costs will steadily increase.

The Commission endorses the practice of charging reasonable user fees that reflect the costs landowners incur from public use of their lands. While fees and other precautions landowners impose to manage public use of their property have changed traditional use patterns, most Maine people readily accept those measures that are both reasonable and within the landowners' legitimate rights. However, mutual awareness and understanding by both landowners and the recreating public of the rights and responsibilities of each will most effectively assure future public use of private land.

Recommendations

- 11) The Commission recommends that the new MACOR give priority attention to measures that will foster the public's access to and use of outdoor recreation opportunities either on private land or requiring access across private land. Specifically, the Commission recommends that:
 - a) The Governor direct the Commissioners of the Departments of Conservation and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, with assistance from the Attorney General, to assess the extent and the limitations of the public's legal rights of access to and use of outdoor recreation resources, to clarify any ambiguities, and to report their findings with any recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature by January 1, 1988;
 - b) At the earliest possible date following completion of this assessment and periodically thereafter, the MACOR undertake a public information campaign to educate the public regarding their rights and their responsibilities in using these resources;
 - c) The MACOR develop, in association with hunters, anglers, other recreationists, and landowners, a statement of "user ethics," establishing high standards of courtesy and responsibility, and promote this user ethic, as well, through a public information campaign;
 - d) The MACOR with assistance from the Attorney General, Department of Conservation, and Department of Inland

Fisheries and Wildlife, assess the adequacy of laws and enforcement measures designed to control the abuse of public recreation rights and privileges, and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 113th Legislature;

- e) The MACOR serve as an ombudsman and advocate for the public's rights to use outdoor recreation resources, and as a forum to resolve disputes between recreationists and landowners;
 - f) The MACOR work closely with private landowners to address their legitimate concerns about the problems and costs of public recreation use of their lands, to foster public acceptance of reasonable user fees and other legitimate measures to manage recreation, and to secure long-term agreements wherever possible that assure public recreation use under reasonable conditions; and
 - g) The MACOR conduct a study, including an assessment of State taxation policies, to identify impediments and incentives the State may address to foster the cooperation of private landowners to provide public recreation use of their lands, and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 113th Legislature.
- 12) The Commission encourages the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to continue its current efforts, and to explore new opportunities to use its fish and wildlife management policies to foster improved relations between landowners and the recreating public.
 - 13) The Commission recommends that the MACOR work closely with local governments to address special concerns about public recreation use rights and responsibilities on private land in Maine cities and towns.
 - 14) The Commission encourages the outstanding efforts of sportsman's groups, organized recreation clubs, and others to promote and foster "user ethics" and to improve landowner relations.

Quality of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Recreation Resource Management Measures

Findings

The "Maine Mystique" is due, in large measure, to the tremendous diversity and outstanding quality of Maine's recreation resources. While other states have recreation opportunities that are individually exceptional, few states offer the wide selection and quality available in Maine. Further, Maine's rare recreational resources are within driving distance of densely populated urban areas in other states whose residents often turn here for quality leisure time. With both State and federal surveys (see p. 7) indicating exceptional public interest in spectator outings (sight-seeing, driving for pleasure, etc.), Maine's visual character assumes ever greater value. Many factors, however, if left to chance, may dramatically change the quality both of the resources and of the recreation experiences, including:

- o The attractiveness of the features that make many of Maine's resources valuable may be greatly diminished by increasing the level of use;
- o Conflict between different recreation pursuits competing for the same resources may diminish the experience for all;
- o The quality of many recreation resources depends largely upon the quality of the environment that supports them -- fisheries upon water quality and flows; wildlife upon habitat.
- o Changes brought about by non-recreation activities may also greatly alter the character of the recreation experiences. The proliferation of new roads means that less and less of formerly remote areas of Maine provide a comparative "wilderness" recreation experience. The development "boom" elsewhere in Maine threatens to change dramatically the scenic values, rural character, and quality of life that make these areas valuable to residents and visitors alike.

The abundance of Maine's recreation resources, however, should make it possible, through careful planning and management, to meet all of these competing demands.

Maine has already taken many important steps to protect the quality of our environment and of the recreation experiences it affords (e.g., establishment of the Land Use Regulation Commission; legislation like the Billboard Law and the Maine Rivers Act). Maine people have also repeatedly expressed their strong support for wise stewardship at the ballot box (e.g., the two Bottle Bill referendums and the referendums to acquire the Bigelow Preserve and to protect the Allagash).

Perhaps the greatest demonstration of Maine's commitment to the quality of its resources has been the effort over the past twenty years to restore water quality -- especially to the State's rivers. Through tough laws, and a combination of public and private investment totalling hundreds of millions of dollars, these waters and their recreation value have been successfully reclaimed.

Over the past fifteen years, the Bureau of Public Lands has, through trades and carefully selected acquisitions, painstakingly assembled most of Maine's 450,000 acres of public reserved lands into manageable, self-sustaining parcels. BPL has convincingly demonstrated that cost-effective timber management can be integrated compatibly with a variety of public recreation opportunities. Despite significant efforts by BPL, however, public awareness of the recreation opportunities of public lands remains low.

A variety of other management mechanisms, both by the State and by the State in conjunction with landowners and others, address the special needs of

specific resources, recreation uses, and natural areas. These include, among others:

- o The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's (DIF&W) management efforts, funded by anglers themselves, to protect and maintain Maine's sport fisheries, including brook, lake and brown trout, landlocked salmon, smelt, small and large mouth bass, pickerel, and white perch;
- o DIF&W's programs, funded largely by hunters, to manage Maine's more than 500 wildlife species, ranging from 60 species that are hunted or trapped to four endangered or threatened species;
- o The Bureau of Parks and Recreation's direct management of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and, in cooperation with Great Northern Paper Company, of the recreation/conservation easement along the West Branch of the Penobscot River;
- o BPR's partnership role in the management of Maine's portion of the Appalachian Trail along with the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, the National Parks Service, landowners and others;
- o BPR's highly successful snowmobile trail program, funded by snowmobile users themselves, that has assisted in the development of over 8,000 miles of trails, maintained mostly by local snowmobile clubs, and helped to improve relations between snowmobilers, landowners, and other recreationists;
- o Management of the Saco River by the Saco River Corridor Commission, including zoning to protect special resource values and recreation management by the Saco River Council; and
- o Management of the recreation resources of northwestern Maine by North Maine Woods, Inc., a consortium of large landowners and State agencies.

In some instances, these efforts have provided models for other management initiatives. Under legislation passed in 1986, for example, BPR has recently begun a program for all-terrain vehicles that will follow largely the example of the snowmobile program.

The special character and recreation potential of many Maine resources can similarly benefit from further planning and management initiative.

Maine's more than 3,000 coastal islands, for example, include many that afford significant recreation opportunities. The Bureau of Public Lands has inventoried more than 300 of the 1300 owned by the State, and has identified 28 as suitable for recreation development. Realizing the full potential of Maine's island resources, without spoiling their special values, however, will require careful planning, management, and coordination by the State in cooperation with landowners and the recreating public.

Both the continuing management of Maine's outdoor recreation resources and the ability to meet new challenges confront many obstacles:

- o Diminishing federal funds limit direct federal support for planning and management efforts, and put them in competition for limited State assistance with other social priorities currently experiencing federal cutbacks.
- o Liability insurance has become increasingly more expensive and in some instances unavailable, affecting the ability of State and local governments, landowners, commercial recreation providers, and private non-profit organizations to satisfy recreation demand.
- o With coordination of information and promotion efforts, Maine can redirect use from areas undergoing increasing pressure that threatens to spoil their value, to other areas (e.g, portions of Aroostook and Washington counties) where available resources can handle more use.

As always, Maine people have learned to adapt to these changing circumstances and to meet these challenges. Volunteers, both individually and through organizations, have assumed larger roles in the protection and management of Maine's outdoor recreation resources. The Department of Conservation's Maine Conservation Corps and SERVE/Maine program have provided valuable labor, through employment of economically disadvantaged youth and volunteers, for the recreation management programs of State and federal agencies and local

governments in Maine. MCC crews of young people have developed and improved hiking, nature and cross-country ski trails, built campsites, picnic areas, and playgrounds, and carried out a variety of other recreation projects. SERVE/Maine volunteers not only undertake projects like those of the MCC, they also often provide high quality professional expertise available at no cost, to undertake special projects: a retired botanist leading an effort to establish a plant inventory and nature trail; a marine environmental scientist assisting in estuary protection efforts; a retiree acting as campground host at a State Park. Both programs have proven to be inexpensive, cost-effective adjuncts to the personnel of State, local and federal agencies.

Recommendations

- 15) The Commission recommends that the legislation establishing the MACOR, direct it to include in its biennially-mandated reports to the Governor and Legislature, specific findings assessing the overall quality of outdoor recreation in Maine, and any recommendations regarding policies and programs needed to assure the continued quality of Maine's outdoor recreation opportunities.

Specifically, the MACOR should address:

- a) Protection of outstanding scenic values;
 - b) Maintenance of a diversity of recreation opportunities;
 - c) Conflicts between different outdoor recreation uses, and between outdoor recreation and other uses for Maine's natural resources; and
 - d) Protection of the special character of specific recreation experiences.
- 16) The Commission recommends that the MACOR serve as a forum for State and local government, private landowners, commercial recreation providers, and the public to discuss the State's outdoor recreation promotional efforts, advising the State Development Office/Division of Tourism, Maine Department of Transportation, Maine Publicity Bureau, and others on public information and education policies.

- 17) The Commission takes note of the following outdoor recreation resources, the special opportunities they afford, and recommends continued attention to their stewardship:
- a) Coastal Islands. The Commission recommends that the Governor direct the Bureau of Public Lands to lead a coordinated effort of State and local government, conservation organizations and private landowners to plan for and develop the recreation potential of Maine's coastal islands, including improved access for the boating public, and improved access to certain islands for the non-boating public;
 - b) Rivers. The Commission encourages the efforts of the Department of Conservation's Maine Rivers Coordinator to direct specific planning and management attention to these valuable resources. The Commission encourages strong public support for the Maine Rivers Grants program. It encourages municipalities along rivers to explore opportunities for joint planning and management, including the formation of river corridor commissions;
 - c) Scenic Resources. The Commission encourages efforts to protect, through easements or other means, outstanding scenic areas, and the designation of additional "scenic highways" and Coastal Heritage areas (as provided in 5 MRSA § 3315) in Maine;
 - d) Hiking Trails. The Commission encourages volunteer efforts to maintain existing trails and to develop new trails through efforts like the "Rails to Trails" program for hiking, cycling and horseback riding. The Commission also notes the special opportunity that abandoned fire control tower trails afford for mountain hikes in Maine, and urges action to address problems, like liability coverage and trail maintenance, that impair their use;
 - e) Primitive Camping. The Commission recommends that the Department of Conservation take steps to improve the maintenance of its existing remote campsites and to develop additional campsites where needed, either by securing needed funding or through transfer of program management to commercial providers.
- 18) The Commission recommends that the Department of Conservation seek funding necessary to expand its information and education efforts, especially regarding the recreation opportunities afforded by public lands.

- 19) The Commission recommends continued funding for the Department of Conservation's Maine Conservation Corps and SERVE/Maine programs, and additional funding, if available, as a cost-effective means to secure valuable outdoor recreation management services to federal, State and local government. The Commission recommends legislation authorizing SERVE/Maine volunteers to conduct projects on private lands, under condition that these projects further public recreation use of these lands.
- 20) The Commission notes the activities of a special Legislative commission studying liability issues, and while deferring any recommendations to that Commission, will by copy of this report convey its testimony and findings on liability issues.

State Parks

Findings

Maine's State Parks and historic sites are a special component of the State's outdoor recreation resource. They are highly visible and greatly valued by the more than 2.5 million Mainers and out-of-staters who visit them each year, and who contribute over \$1 million annually to the General Fund from State Park fees. They protect an important heritage and provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities from beaches patrolled by lifeguards to overnight campsites, from interpretative nature trails to sites rich in Maine and American history.

Maine currently has 29 developed and staffed State Parks and 15 historic sites all managed by the Bureau of Parks and Recreation (BPR). While these facilities are generally well-managed and maintained, they require a continuing commitment of funds and labor to assure that their quality is sustained. BPR confronts not only constant demands for minor routine repair and maintenance projects (picnic tables, road repairs, etc.), but major capital expenditures as well, needed to protect the public's investment in these facilities. Maine will have to commit resources to repair or replace ageing and, in some cases, deteriorating structures, to keep them available to the public in a safe and attractive fashion, and to improve facilities with more campsites, toilets, trails and access for the handicapped. BPR has also sought to get more from these facilities by integrating additional uses at existing sites and extending seasons to meet increasing year-round recreation demand for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, winter hiking and other seasonal activities.

BPR owns several additional land parcels that afford important opportunities to develop new State Parks to meet local and regional needs (e.g., sites in Bristol, Wells, Bangor/Eastern Maine) or to take advantage of special recreation opportunities (e.g., Casco Bay Islands). However, available park development money is exhausted. In other areas, BPR either does not own land to develop needed facilities (e.g., Augusta/Waterville), or finds existing facilities under increasing public demand, best addressed by expansion of existing facilities (e.g., Scarborough and Popham beaches). The Bureau of Public Lands owns the Shoreland of Eagle Lake and further development of campsite facilities there would serve an identified need in the Upper St. John Valley.

Recommendations

- 21) The Commission recommends that the highest priority for future State outdoor recreation funding go to improve, upgrade, and meet the routine repair and maintenance needs of the State's existing State Parks facilities to protect their general high quality.
- 22) The Commission recommends a funding commitment to enable the Bureau of Parks and Recreation to undertake a six year major capital improvement program. These funds will assure the timely and cost-efficient completion of major repairs that confront the State Parks system and of improvements that will enhance the public's use of existing parks, including the provision of access for the handicapped.
- 23) The Commission recommends a funding commitment to develop the following additional State Park facilities, where land is already owned, in a timely fashion:
 - a) Laudholm State Park in Wells;
 - b) Colonial Pemaquid State Park in Bristol;
 - c) Pleasant River Lake State Park in Beddington; and
 - d) Casco Bay Islands State Parks.

- 24) The Commission recommends a funding commitment for both land acquisition and development costs of additional State Park facilities, either to expand existing State Parks, as demand warrants, or to provide State Parks to areas currently underserved (e.g., Augusta/Waterville, Upper St. John Valley).
- 25) The Commission recommends that the MACOR examine opportunities for extended year-round use of State Parks, and report findings and recommendations to the Governor and 113th Legislature.

Community Recreation

Findings

Community-based parks and recreation programs, from Kittery to Fort Kent, are the "front line" in meeting the daily outdoor recreation demand of many Maine people.

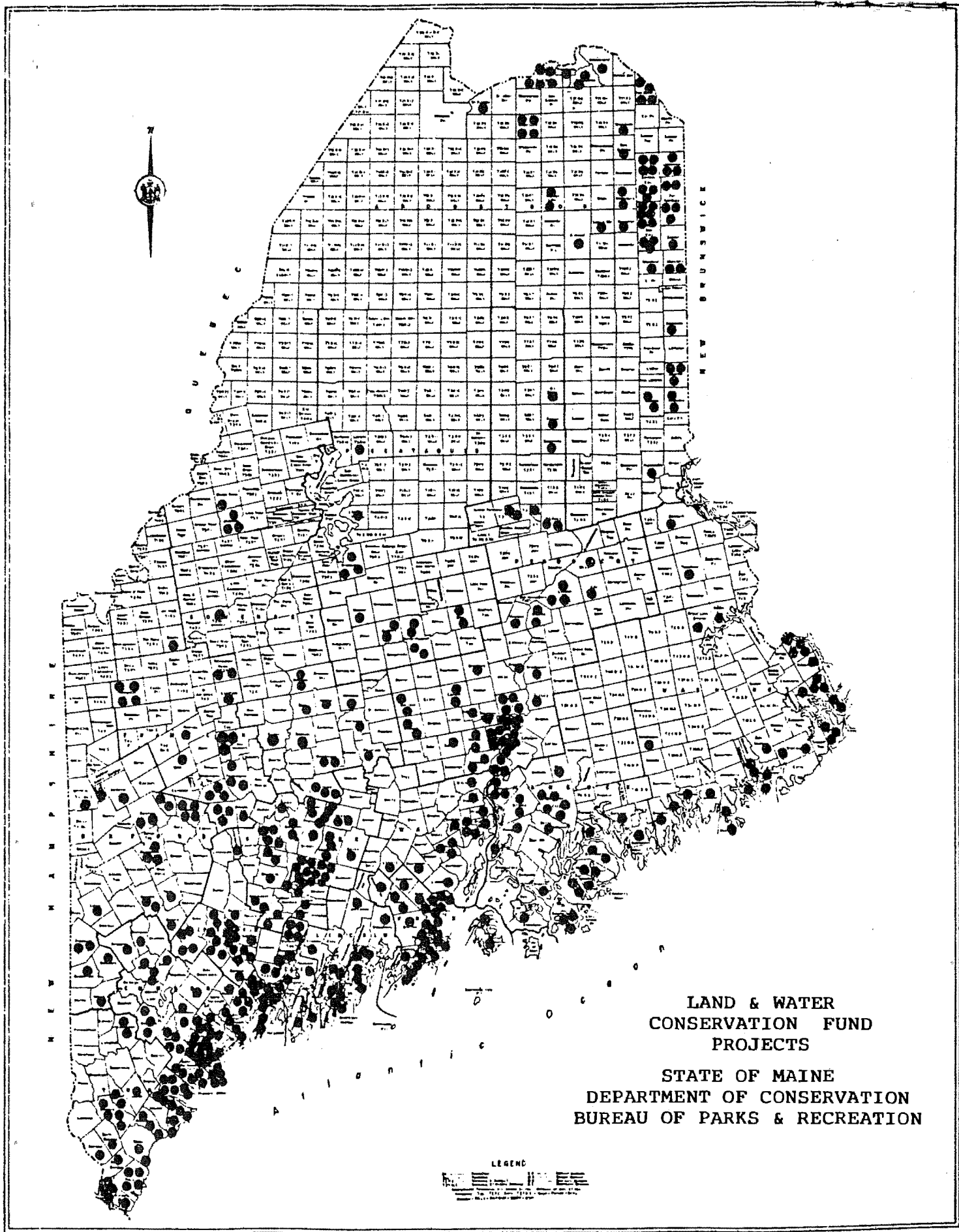
Community recreation encompasses a wide array of facilities and services, including:

- o Urban parks and open space;
- o Recreation access to beaches and for fishing and boat launching;
- o Golf courses, tennis and basketball courts, team sport playing fields, and swimming pools;
- o Outdoor fitness and exercise, including trails for walking, running, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and cycling; and
- o Support and education programs, including team sport organization and management, hunter safety programs, lifeguards and swimming instruction, summer youth camps, and many other services.

These local facilities also meet many of the recreation demands of tourists and other visitors to Maine, and their availability is often a consideration of businesses evaluating investment in a community. Sales of recreation equipment and user expenditures associated with community recreation generate substantial commercial business and local and State tax revenues.

Community recreation has benefited historically from federal and State financial assistance, including:

- o Over \$19 million since 1965, in federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LAWCON), granted on a 1:1 matching basis for 435 projects in 225 communities statewide (see map, p. 33a);



- o Substantial amounts of Coastal Zone Management, Community Development Block Grant, and Federal Revenue Sharing funds;
- o The State Municipal Recreation Fund, established in 1971 with \$200,000 from a parks bond issue, and funded at \$100,000 per year until 1980; and
- o The Maine Public Boating Facilities Program, supported by a credit from State gasoline tax revenues, that has funded over 140 recreation launch sites, since 1965.

Reduction of many of these assistance programs in recent years (both in actual appropriations and in real dollars discounted for inflation) has shifted more of the cost for these programs and services to local government:

- o LAWCON funding available in Maine has diminished from \$2-3 million per year during the 1970's and early 1980's, to less than \$1 million annually since 1983. LAWCON is currently scheduled to expire in 1988. The pending impacts of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings and the elimination of federal revenue-sharing bode even more reductions in the future; and
- o Appropriations to the State Municipal recreation fund, reduced to \$25,000 per year after 1980, were eliminated entirely in 1982.

Many communities, especially small towns that lack their own professional staff, have depended greatly on technical assistance from the Community Parks and Recreation Division of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation and regional planning commissions for planning, engineering and other aspects of facilities and program development.

The reductions in federal and State direct financial assistance come when a variety of factors have caused municipalities to have even greater demand for facilities and program funds. These factors include:

- o Steady deterioration of many facilities (ball fields, boat launches, tennis courts, etc.) built in 1960's and 1970's;
- o Growing demand to develop more facilities and programs accessible to the handicapped;

- o The development "boom" in some areas of Maine has precipitated increasing pressure on existing facilities and programs, accompanied by growing demand for expansion, and escalating real estate costs to acquire land to meet these needs;
- o This development boom, coupled with other factors noted elsewhere in this report, has also begun to greatly affect the availability of open space, especially areas where hunting and trapping are allowed, in close proximity to the population; and
- o The impacts of emerging trends: Interest in personal fitness, for example, has increased public interest in open space and pathways for walking, running and cycling; the aging of the population is producing larger numbers of retirees with leisure time; the increasing dependence of families on the incomes from two wage-earners is placing demand on community recreation as an adjunct to day-care.

There are facilities in many communities, schools especially, that might help to meet recreation demand, but for a variety of reasons, are not available or their use is greatly restricted.

Factors affecting availability of facilities include:

- o Liability coverage is either not available or prohibitive in cost;
- o Funds to maintain facilities or to provide staff for programs have diminished;
- o Use of some facilities is restricted to residents only. Such facilities could help to meet regional needs and serve tourists.

Recommendations

- 26) The Commission strongly recommends a significant community recreation commitment in any new federal funding program to replace LAWCON.
- 27) The Commission recommends that the new MACOR pay special attention to community recreation, and that efforts to secure the availability of and access to outdoor recreation resources recognize and address the special needs of municipalities and the wisdom of providing diverse recreation opportunities in close proximity to population centers;

- 28) The Commission recommends a renewed State financial commitment to community recreation through legislation and appropriation restoring the State Municipal Recreation Fund to the pre-1980 funding level of \$100,000 per year. The Commission further recommends a reassessment of the \$5,000 cap on individual grants to reflect increasing costs of projects.
- 29) The Commission recommends expansion of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation technical assistance capability, including additional funding to provide more staff time in the field and to develop audio-visual materials, training manuals, workshops, and education materials.
- 30) Even with these recommended steps to reassert a federal and State partnership, communities cannot expect financial assistance to meet all of their needs. The Commission, therefore, recommends that local governments in Maine take the following steps:
 - a) Reassess their local funding commitments for acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of recreation facilities and programs;
 - b) Examine opportunities for greater inter-local cooperation to meet area-wide recreation needs for open space, facilities, staff and programs;
 - c) As the State has begun with its parks, explore further ways to integrate more uses and extend seasons at facilities;
 - d) Emphasize local and regional recreation planning and periodic assessment of plans and priorities;
 - e) Recognize the value of staff development to retain quality personnel and of volunteers to assist existing staff; and
 - f) Promote educational and organizational efforts (e.g., recreation instruction, team sports programs, etc.) that foster a good recreation user ethic, and enable the public to get the maximum benefit from available facilities.
- 31) The Commission encourages the University of Maine system to assess its course offerings, extension service capabilities, community education programs, and its facilities to provide assistance where possible to local governments to train personnel, organize and staff programs, and offer recreation opportunities to the community.

- 32) The Commission recommends that the new MACOR examine the impediments that discourage the full use of schools and other facilities for public outdoor recreation, and report its findings and recommendations.

President's Commission on Americans Outdoors: A Maine Perspective on National Recreation Issues, Policies and Programs

When Governor Brennan convened this Commission in March, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors (PCAO) anticipated issuing a draft report of its findings and recommendations this summer. The Governor, therefore, asked his Commission to review and comment upon the PCAO's report. However, the PCAO's current schedule will not yield a draft report until later this Fall.

When the PCAO's report is issued, the Governor's Commission on Outdoor Recreation in Maine will consider the PCAO's conclusions, and then make additional specific findings and recommendations concerning the PCAO and national outdoor recreation issues, policies and programs.

By copy of this report, the Governor's Commission will apprise the PCAO of the findings and recommendations we have made regarding the current status and future prospects for outdoor recreation in Maine.

In addition, the Commission makes the following preliminary observations for the PCAO's consideration:

- o Maine's abundant and diverse outdoor recreation resources are valuable not only to the State, but to the nation as a whole.
- o Maine has benefited greatly from the funds and technical assistance historically available through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON), Wallop-Breaux program, Coastal Zone Management Program, National Parks Service and other federal programs. Maine urges the PCAO to assess carefully the impacts cutbacks in these programs have upon states and local governments, and to recommend measures to reassert an effective federal role in partnership with State and local governments.

MAINE GRANTS FROM THE
FEDERAL LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

1965	\$ 137,312	1976	\$ 2,157,337
1966	1,603,301	1977	1,757,790
1967	629,081	1978	2,880,170
1968	667,649	1979	3,416,578
1969	1,236,963	1980	2,843,226
1970	682,865	1981	1,699,950
1971	1,483,200	1982	0
1972	2,505,825	1983	708,000
1973	1,774,117	1984	731,259
1974	591,316	1985	682,539
1975	1,766,700	1986	475,895

- o The larger, more important federal recreation areas in the State include Acadia National Park, the Evans Notch District of the White Mountain National Forest, Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery (vital to the continuing program to restore Atlantic salmon to Maine rivers), and Dow Pines Recreation Area. All of these areas are utilized by residents and non-residents for both day use and overnight recreation. The continued operation and maintenance of quality facilities at these areas is important to the recreation industry, as well as to the needs of Maine residents.

In addition, long-range acquisition, development and management plans should be prepared and adopted for those federal areas serving large numbers of users, or that have a substantial economic and/or social impact on surrounding communities. In particular, long-range master plans should be completed for the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, the Evans Notch District of the White Mountain National Forest, and Acadia National Park.

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