

Management Recommendations (Plan pages 61-72)

Natural Resource Issues	Actions taken/Comments: [2016 entries: standard font. 2022 entries: <i>bold italic</i> font]
<p><u>Sensitive Natural Features</u> Avoid the rare plant population of alpine clubmoss when designing new trail or planning new recreation activity. Determine if a portion of the Sanders Hill Trail needs to be re-located if too close to the population. Consult with the Maine Natural Areas Program when planning management activities in or near the Unpatterned Fen Ecosystem or alpine clubmoss population.</p>	<p>MNAP staff will be conducting a field visit this spring to determine if there is any impact from the trail on the rare plant population.</p> <p><i>Following a May 2017 field visit, MNAP determined that there were no trail impacts on the rare plant population.</i></p>
<p><u>Forest Contiguity</u> In keeping with the Vision for the Kennebec Highlands, manage without paved or public use roads. All roads will be management roads, and some existing roads will have shared use status—allowing pedestrians, ATVs, horses, and bikes. Some management roads will be for Bureau management, emergency access and snowmobile only. Future timber management will use existing roads when feasible, minimize the creation of new roads, and retire roads and trails not designated for shared use, recreation or fire and rescue, when timber operations are completed in a particular area. No new roads for public use will be built, as this plan designates many existing roads as having shared use status, factoring in a balance of motorized recreation, fishing access and maintaining a semi-remote character for the Highlands. No new structures are needed on the State-owned Kennebec Highlands, however, the BRCA-owned parcel on the Monataka property has good potential for a nature center, with associated facilities.</p>	<p>Management has proceeded as described in the recommendations, with no new roads constructed. Improvements have been made to Roxy Rand Road, both on the section crossing private lands and the first ¾ mile on BPL property, to improve access to McIntire Pond; additional work is needed. The Bureau is considering improvements to Preston (AKA Wildflower Estates) and Rugged Hill Road (as a tie in to McGaffey Mountain Road) to support eventual timber harvesting. No harvesting or associated road work is anticipated in the near term. ORV routes would not be impacted by the improvements under consideration.</p> <p><i>Water bars were installed on Rugged Hill Road and extreme west end of the Cross Road on the portion of abandoned town road to stop continued degradation of these road from erosion. Significant upgrade of the Vienna Mountain Road has started with the recent purchase of the Allen parcel.</i></p>
<p><u>Water Quality</u> Allocate areas around ponds, streams and wetlands as wildlife dominant, which permits forestry that maintains shading and</p>	<p>The Plan established the allocations as described in all riparian areas. Management has proceeded as described and as guided</p>

<p>minimizes siltation of wetlands and waterbodies, and facilitates wildlife travel opportunities. Permit vehicular access to McIntire Pond, which has had a small parking area built, and a barrier installed allowing visitors to hand-carry boats a short distance, but prohibiting vehicles from driving right to the water. On management roads designated shared use, improve condition of roads to accommodate use while protecting water quality, re-locating portions of roads if necessary (working with snowmobile and ATV clubs as appropriate). Consider springtime gating of roads if necessary to protect water quality. Block roads not designated as shared use (for those designated for snowmobile only, block only in summer). On existing roads around ponds other than McIntire, designate for non-motorized use only. If new non-motorized trails are built in these areas, design trails to minimize erosion including avoiding wet areas wherever possible. Any new trail should be constructed to prevent erosion, siltation and degradation of water quality. ongoing</p>	<p>by the IRP and Wildlife Guidelines.</p> <p>Additional road improvements are pending, depending on availability of resources, with priority on Roxy Rand Road this 5 year cycle.</p> <p>There have been no changes since the Plan’s adoption in gating of shared use or blocking of non-shared use roads. Roxy Rand Road is blocked south of the McIntire Pond access road. <i>Roxy Rand Road is now closed to the public north of the Unit boundary; see additional details below (page 6).</i></p> <p>New mountain bike trails have avoided wet areas and otherwise have been designed to avoid erosion.</p>
<p><u>Deer Wintering Areas</u> Cooperate with IF&W to assess mapped deer wintering areas and determine the most suitable sites to re-establish viable winter cover for deer. Design forest management techniques in these areas appropriate to support wildlife habitat needs. Refine boundaries of wildlife allocations as on-the-ground management determines the extent of appropriate new deer wintering areas. Consider avoiding impacts from recreational use if possible in designating areas to restore or to establish as new deer wintering areas.</p>	<p>In general, these actions are ongoing. More detailed work related to potential enhancement of deer wintering areas will occur in conjunction with preparation of harvesting prescriptions.</p>

Historic/Cultural Resource Issues	Actions taken/Comments: [2016 entries: standard font. 2022 entries: <i>bold italic</i> font]
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<p><u>19th Century Homestead Sites</u> Consistent with recommendations from MHPC, designate a 200-foot buffer around each old homestead site as special protection-historic/cultural. Prohibit timber management and new motorized trail</p>	<p>The Plan protects these sites with Special Protection allocations, as described.</p>
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<p>construction in these areas; but allow existing roads in these special protection areas to continue—as these roads were put in place in the 19th Century as access to these homesteads. Allow motorized use roads subject to existing public access easements and rights, and as needed to provide trails for ATV and snowmobile use that are on existing roads and separated from non-motorized areas. Relocate sections of road or trail if a particular site is found to be negatively impacted by recreational use.</p>	<p><i>Three additional sites identified by MHPC on the Allen parcels will be similarly allocated and protected.</i></p>
<p>There is the potential that future timber harvesting near McGaffey Mountain Road may lead to the need to place a yard within one of the Special Protection buffer areas. If this is the case, the Bureau will consult with MHPC on the placement, to avoid impact to the historic site.</p>	<p>No harvest planning has occurred to date.</p>
<p>Append and post state law regarding removal of artifacts on state lands to rules for the use of the Kennebec Highlands and post these in trail parking areas and add to upcoming map and guide.</p>	<p>This information has not yet been posted. BPL will post early in this plan cycle. The map and guide for the Kennebec Highlands is in progress.</p> <p><i>The Map and Guide has been completed and is available on the Bureau’s Kennebec Highlands webpage. It will be posted at trailhead kiosks.</i></p>
<p>Work with MHPC and BRCA to secure documentation of the existence and location of drainage ditches or canals associated with Kidder and Round/Watson Ponds.</p>	<p>No work on obtaining these documents has occurred this cycle.</p>

<p>Recreation Issues or Opportunities</p>	<p>Actions taken/Comments: [2016 entries: standard font. 2022 entries: <i>bold italic</i> font]</p>
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<p><u>Balancing Character of the Highlands with High Demand for Multiple Recreational Uses</u> Manage the Highlands to balance the divergent goals of accommodating a wide range of recreation uses while maintaining a</p>	<p>Overall management of the Highlands has conformed to these objectives.</p>
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<p>remote character in designated remote recreation areas.</p>	
<p>In summertime, designate separate trail systems for motorized and non-motorized uses. In wintertime, provide a trail network of both multi-use and non-motorized trails—where cross-country skiers and snowshoers can choose between using snowmobile trails in whole or in part, but also have opportunities for remote, non-motorized trails.</p>	<p>The designated non-motorized and motorized trail systems designated in the Plan accomplish these objectives.</p>
<p>In developing new non-motorized trails in remote recreation areas (and parking areas designed to provide access to trails), consider the protection of the remote experience. Collect information on visitor satisfaction with the current trails and remote areas to determine if increased use from expansion of parking areas or additional trailheads would adversely impact the current visitor experience in a particular remote recreation area. Avoid expanding parking areas or building new trails in a remote recreation area where the current remote experience may be compromised (as determined by feedback from visitors).</p>	<p>The Round Top trailhead on Watson Pond Road was altered and slightly expanded to a) minimize conflicts with nearby residences and b) minimize potentially dangerous roadside parking. No survey work performed to date, though there also has not been any reported dissatisfaction with trail experiences.</p> <p><i>Protection of the remote experience will be considered in development of a trails plan during this plan review (see entry in cell below).</i></p>
<p>Develop a plan in partnership with BRCA and CeMeNEMBA for development of new non-motorized trails in the Highlands. Several recommendations in this ‘Recreation Issues and Opportunities’ section add further guidance in developing this trail plan.</p>	<p>Trail development is ongoing, although a formal trails plan has not been developed. Specifically, the A Trail (mountain bike, singletrack design) to McGaffey Mt. from the Round Top Trailhead has been developed. Also, a trail has been developed in the past year on the Dolley property, across from that trailhead.</p> <p><i>CeMeNEMBA has been allowed to groom winter “fat bike” routes on portions of the northwest Kennebec Highlands. These routes involve minimal surface disturbance. Winter riders have also used the Monataka trail.</i></p> <p><i>Mountain bike interests have expressed a desire to expand the trail system within the Unit. A primary objective is to provide more riding opportunities for the less advanced rider (as exists on the Dolley/Monataka trail). Additional</i></p>

	<p><i>challenging trails (like the A Trail) are also of interest. CeMeNEMBA has grant funds available for trail building.</i></p> <p><i>The Bureau intends to develop a trails plan as a product of this plan review process; that plan will reflect the Vision for the Unit to provide a “semi-remote ‘back woods’ experience” and will integrate other recreation interests and needs, as well as forest management and wildlife habitat goals.</i></p>
<p><u>ATV Riding</u> Designate an ATV route in the western portion of the Highlands on management roads that serves as a connector route from the Mount Vernon trail system to the trails north in New Sharon and Farmington. Partner with local ATV clubs to upgrade and maintain the trail system and to deter ATV use off the trail system.</p>	<p>As shown on the map on page 74 of the Plan, a north/south ATV route has been developed on BPL management roads and roads crossing adjacent private land, following McGaffey Mtn. Rd., Vienna Mtn. Rd., Cross Rd. and Berry Hill Road (all co-located with snowmobile trail).</p> <p><i>With the acquisition of the Allen parcels, this entire route across the Highlands is now on BPL property or public access easements on abandoned town roads.</i></p>
<p>Work with local ATV clubs on management of the trail and educating users to keep them on authorized trails. Continue the Bureau’s preferred approach to recreation management: provide quality facilities that will be attractive to use – in this case ATV trails – and provide supporting information and education that directs users to these facilities. If more effort is needed, work with enforcement agencies to bring strategic enforcement to the trail.</p>	<p>Management of ATV use has followed these recommendations. To date, off trail riding has not been a substantial problem and thus special enforcement efforts have not been needed.</p>
<p><u>Snowmobiling</u> Maintain network of snowmobile trails, in cooperation with clubs, except for sporadic trail around Kidder Pond, which has been designated Remote Recreation. This trail will be eliminated from the snowmobile network. See allocation maps for snowmobile trails. As is typical of snowmobile trails, re-locations may be necessary from time to time to accommodate forest management and/or wildlife</p>	<p>As shown on the map on page 74 of the Plan, a north/south snowmobile route has been developed on the Roxy Rand, McGaffey Mountain, Vienna Mountain, Cross and Berry Hill management roads, with connecting trails on the Bean Access Road and Prescott Road in the south part of the unit. A portion of trail on Prescott was relocated off the road to minimize road</p>

<p>considerations.</p>	<p>use conflicts.</p> <p><i>Due to a disagreement on the public right of way and concerns of the former abutter, Roxy Rand Road is currently closed 2/3 mile north of the Unit boundary, and snowmobile access to the Unit from the north is not available. The Bureau is in discussions with the current landowner about the potential future restoration of this access.</i></p> <p><i>A short new section of trail has been opened, linking Roxy Rand Road east of Kidder Pond to Vienna Mtn. Road, following a management road.</i></p> <p><i>As noted above under ATV Riding, all of the east/west shared ATV/snowmobile route across the Highlands is now on BPL property (or public easement, on Vienna Mtn Road).</i></p>
<p>For snowmobile trails that are not part of the ATV trail and do not hold public easements, block in summer to maintain trail quality and prevent cars, trucks and ATVs from entering. However, these trails/roads can be used by the Bureau for forest management and for emergency access.</p>	<p>Done.</p>
<p><u>Cross-country Skiing</u> Consider the potential of designating ski routes that could provide a blend of opportunities: some that use the snowmobile trails, and others that provide a quiet experience in remote recreation areas. Some routes may be designed to use snowmobile trails to access more remote areas, and then branch off into backcountry loops around ponds or exploring ridgelines, for those that want a more backcountry experience.</p>	<p>Providing a variety of winter trail experiences remains an ongoing consideration.</p>
<p>Consider ski-use when designing new non-motorized trails and parking areas to access them. As much as feasible, new non-motorized trails should be designed to accommodate winter use,</p>	<p>As currently constituted, the Kennebec Highlands provides primitive, ungroomed cross-country skiing for those who seek it out. There is no plan to construct ski trails that</p>

<p>including backcountry skiing.</p>	<p>accommodate grooming, other than skiing on snowmobile trails. However, ski use is permitted on and off trails.</p>
<p>Hiking Develop a plan to prioritize new hiking trail development, and to determine which other non-motorized uses will be accommodated on which trails. Utilize the annual forum as one venue for communication in developing this plan (see annual forum section below). Consult with BRCA and other user groups such as CeMeNEMBA to gain input. Collect information on demand for various trails, as needed.</p>	<p>Trail management discussions are occurring annually and as issues arise with BRCA.</p> <p><i>See prior note (page 4) regarding development of a trails plan, with the participation of 7 Lakes Alliance (formerly BRCA) and CeMeNEMBA, as a product of this plan review. The full Advisory Committee will have the opportunity for input to and review of the plan.</i></p>
<p>In prioritizing new trail development, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing remote recreation areas for new hiking trail development. However, this should be balanced with the concern expressed in the ‘Balancing Character...’ section above that visitor feedback may show that building new trails in particular remote recreation areas may diminish the experience. • When feasible, develop trails to accommodate the other non-motorized uses mentioned in this plan. Though it is not always desirable to designate routes for multiple uses, it is part of the Vision of this plan to develop both single use and shared-use routes. Multiple uses can best be accommodated if considered in the trail design phase. • Improve the experience on current hiking trails as a priority before undertaking new trail construction. Current hiking trails use portions of management roads and the experience could be improved by re-routing these portions of trail. • Consider development of a trail that minimizes barriers to visitors with mobility challenges as these currently do not exist on the Highlands (see accessible trails for the disabled section below). • Consider the potential hiking trails identified during the working meeting on trails held during the management planning process. Though not bound by the routes identified in this brainstorming meeting, these represent ideas that may be in demand by the 	<p>These considerations are taken into account in ongoing trail development.</p> <p>The Round Top Trail continues to use Roxy Rand Road for portions of its route. However, the Bureau did reroute the Sanders Hill Trail off the Roxy Rand Road.</p> <p><i>The Bureau will consider the suitability of the Allen parcels for the development of trails accessible to visitors with mobility challenges. The vehicle-accessible and relatively level and open ground with scenic views on portions of those parcels (i.e., blueberry fields), not found elsewhere on the Unit, may provide a special opportunity to meet this need.</i></p>

<p>general public and can be considered in trail development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider information on demand for new hiking trails that may be collected from visitors to the current hiking trails in concert with data collected on satisfaction with the current experience. 	
<p><u>Accessible Trails for the Disabled</u> In cooperation with BRCA, explore the feasibility of providing a walking trail on the Dolley/Monataka property that minimizes barriers to visitors with mobility challenges while offering access to historic and scenic resources. If this area is found infeasible, consider other areas within the Highlands for a similar trail experience.</p>	<p>This potential trail is part of ongoing trail development on the Dolley/Monataka property.</p> <p><i>See note in preceding cell.</i></p>
<p>If a trail is established at the Dolley property, consider bringing the trail to the shoreline along Long Pond with the intent of a) providing trail access to the shoreline, and b) providing water-based access to the shore and via the trail, to the Round Top trailhead and the trail network at the Highlands.</p>	<p>A trail to the shoreline of Long Pond has been laid out; the location will be reviewed in Spring 2017.</p> <p><i>The mountain bike trail on the Dolley/Monataka property has been extended to the shoreline of Long Pond and is accessible to pedestrian use.</i></p>
<p>Consider developing one or more trails that provide opportunities for trail experiences for visitors of all abilities; such trails should provide firm level footing and low grades to accommodate person with mobility challenges. Incorporate level areas or benches for resting and switchback approaches to higher elevations. As resources allow, consider adapting existing trails to accommodate a wider range of hikers—including senior citizens and young children.</p>	<p>Ongoing consideration.</p> <p><i>As stated above, the Bureau is considering the suitability of portions of the Allen parcels with relatively level ground and scenic views for the development of trails accessible to visitors with mobility challenges.</i></p>
<p>Ensure that any trailhead facilities developed, such as privies, meet accessibility standards.</p>	<p>Currently, there are no privies at trailheads. Should that change, the Bureau can ensure that they meet ADA standards – even if trails do not meet full ADA standards.</p>
<p><u>Horseback Riding</u> Designate which roads are open as shared use and open to horseback riders. Provide signage indicating allowed uses—so that horseback riders know what other users to expect on trails.</p>	<p>Shared use roads and allowed uses have not been posted but will be prioritized by BPL for this 5 year plan cycle.</p>

<p><u>Mountain Biking</u> Post management roads open to ATVs and snowmobiles as also open to mountain bikes. Explore the feasibility of partnering with CeMeNEMBA in constructing single-track mountain bike trails. In determining the location and volume of trails, consider the character of remote recreation areas as expressed in ‘Balancing Character...’ section above. Consider timber management needs in trail location and avoid whenever possible locating trails in areas with wet soils or deer wintering areas.</p>	<p>As noted above, allowed uses (including bikes) have not yet been posted, but will be pursued by BPL this cycle.</p> <p>BPL has an ongoing partnership with CeMeNEMBA for construction of mountain bike trails, which has resulted in the new trail near the Watson Pond Road/Round Top trailhead.</p> <p><i>See note on page 4, RE: trails plan. The trails plan will address all trail user interests, opportunities, and limitations including interest in a potential expansion of the single-track mountain bike trail system on the Unit.</i></p>
<p>Whenever feasible, design trails to provide other opportunities for non-motorized uses such as hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.</p>	<p>Ongoing consideration as part of trail development.</p>
<p><u>Trailhead Parking Areas</u> Work with BRCA to collect more information on use of the Kennebec Highlands trails. Information to be gathered could include: visitor use numbers for trails and parking areas, visitor preferences for social conditions on the trails, visitor satisfaction with current experiences and willingness to accept additional use. This information could be collected by one or a combination of the following: visitor surveys, parking lot interviews, or gathering info the annual trails forum.</p>	<p>There has not been a purposeful monitoring program on site to date. However, the Bureau has a source of anecdotal information through the volunteer host program, under which an individual who is frequently on the property and the trails observes activity levels and reports any problems or concerns to the Bureau. The Bureau could place discreet trail counters and possibly develop a user survey for 2017.</p>
<p>If the Bureau finds that overflow parking is a frequent problem, visitor experience is not being diminished by current use level and could tolerate additional use, consider expanding existing parking areas on Watson Pond Rd.</p>	<p>The Watson Pond Road parking areas have been expanded and upgraded and the entry to the south parking area (Round Top trailhead) has been moved from Wildflower Estates to Watson Pond Road.</p>
<p>Consider an additional trailhead parking area on the western portion of the Highlands to provide access to the current and future trail</p>	<p>Ongoing consideration. Recent BRCA acquisition of the Kimball Pond property (see description under “Other Items of</p>

<p>system from the west and disperse use. Potential locations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • off the Vienna Mountain Road near the Kennebec Highlands-owned blueberry field—where visitors could park to pick blueberries or to access a non-motorized trail system around Kidder Pond • off of the Kimball Pond Road if future acquisitions make this possible and a trail system is determined to be desirable from this direction • An alternate location considered during the annual forum. 	<p>Special Concern” below this table) may present an opportunity for a trailhead on the west side of the Highlands. BPL will work with BRCA to explore this possibility, along with a potential new non-motorized trail connection.</p> <p><i>Informal parking is available on the Kimball Pond property ~½ mile from Kimball Pond Road. Hikers and other pedestrians may follow the road from that point onto the Kennebec Highlands. The road is also a snowmobile trail.</i></p> <p><i>The Bureau will consider development of parking areas off Vienna Mtn. Rd., on the newly acquired parcels, in conjunction with the trails plan.</i></p>
<p>Do not eliminate the possibility of an additional trailhead parking area, however, carefully consider current use, demand, and visitor satisfaction with the current levels of use and remote experience before building an additional trailhead. Build an additional trailhead if necessary to accommodate a trail system which cannot be accessed by the two existing parking areas (for example, a third potential parking area on the western side of the Highlands may be warranted in the future).</p>	<p>These are ongoing considerations in trail planning.</p>
<p><u>Fishing and Boating</u> As resources allow, upgrade the Roxy Rand and McIntire Pond Roads to accommodate vehicular use and improve water quality. A small parking area is provided at McIntire Pond which allows close access to a hand carry boat site. This provides access to an exceptional fishing experience. However, consider spring gating when conditions are extremely muddy, re-opening the gate as early as road conditions allow.</p>	<p>Access to McIntire Pond has been improved (as reported above) and improvements are ongoing.</p> <p><i>As noted above under Snowmobiling, due to a disputed public right of way and concerns of the former abutter, Roxy Rand Road is currently closed 2/3 mile north of the Unit boundary. As a result, vehicle access to the Unit and McIntire Pond is not available. The Bureau is in discussions with the current landowner about the potential future restoration of vehicle access.</i></p>

<p>At Boody and Kidder Ponds, the fishing and boating experience will be more remote, with walk-in access only. As alternatives to improved vehicle access to Boody and Kidder Ponds, the Bureau will permit storage of personal small boats or canoes. The boat-owner must be identified on the boat. Consider designating ‘boat storage areas’ on these two ponds to reduce clutter of boats scattered around the ponds.</p>	<p>Although boat storage is permitted, none have yet been seen at these ponds (they may be present but not visible from usual viewpoints).</p> <p><i>There is one canoe stored at Kidder Pond and overall use seems light.</i></p>
<p><u>Hunting</u> As time and resources allow, the Bureau will work with partners to notify the public regarding hunting seasons and rules for hunting on the Highlands. This includes indicating rules on the upcoming Map and Guide, and at trailhead parking areas. This should include not only rules for hunters, but notification to non-hunters about seasons for hunting and taking precautions such as wearing blaze orange.</p>	<p>This information will be provided on the Map and Guide, which is in progress.</p> <p><i>The Map and Guide has been completed and is available on the BPL Kennebec Highlands webpage. It will be posted on the trailhead kiosks.</i></p>
<p><u>Camping</u> Explore the feasibility of constructing one or more primitive campsites near ponds or other scenic locations in the Highlands. These should be walk-to only, and location should be considered in coordination with the current and future hiking trail network.</p>	<p>Campsites remain a possibility, although no specific options have been discussed to date.</p> <p><i>There are one or two user-created campsites on the northeast corner of Kidder Pond. These could be evaluated for improvement and adoption as formal sites.</i></p>
<p><u>Annual Recreation Forum</u> Implement an annual trails forum, to include Bureau staff members and representatives from organizations that partner with the Bureau on trail maintenance. Include the following Bureau staff members (if schedules allow): the Bureau Recreation Specialist, the Western Region Lands Manager, the Forester assigned to the Kennebec Highlands, and an ORV Division representative. Managing partners currently include: BRCA, Mountainview ATV club, Rome Ruff Riders Snowmobile Club and Vienna Mountaineers Snowmobile Club. Representatives from other recreation user groups (such as CeMeNEMBA) may attend as the need arises.</p>	<p>Although formal meetings have not occurred, BPL staff have met informally (including field visits) with BRCA and various user groups. For example, meetings with the snowmobile club occurred, directed at relocation of a section of trail off Wildflower Estates Road.</p> <p><i>BPL has continued to meet informally and to schedule field visits with 7 Lakes Alliance (formerly BRCA), CeMeNEMBA, and others to discuss trails and other related issues.</i></p>

<p>Topics for this forum could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts that may be occurring amongst recreationists and potential solutions • Work plans for the following year • Sharing information on any upcoming forestry operations • Sharing plans for new non-motorized trails • Sharing of any information collected from recreationists (anecdotally or through surveys) • Coordination in matters such as signage, visitor information, etc. • Development of additional trailhead parking opportunities as mentioned above • Other topics deemed relevant 	
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<p>Transportation and Administrative Considerations</p>	<p>Actions taken/Comments: [2016 entries: standard font. 2022 entries: <i>bold italic</i> font]</p>
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<p><u>Roads for General Vehicular Travel</u> Designate roads in the Highlands as management roads (rather than public use roads, which are roads maintained to access recreation destinations such as campgrounds, and require a high level of maintenance to accommodate significant use).</p>	<p>The map on page 73 of the Plan depicts management roads on the Highlands and indicates those segments that are open to public vehicular traffic.</p>
<p>Some of these roads will be designated as management roads with “shared-use” status, and will allow vehicular travel. In these cases, some improvements may be necessary to allow safe two-way traffic (periodic turnouts for example).</p> <p>Roads open to general vehicular access include roads with probable public easements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berry Hill Rd • Vienna Mountain Rd • McGaffey Mountain Rd 	<p>Ongoing. Berry Hill Road, Cross Road, McGaffey Mtn. Road, the northernmost section of Roxy Rand Road, and the adjacent section of McIntire Pond Road have been designated “shared use” and are open to vehicular travel.</p> <p>Note that Berry Hill and McGaffey Mountain Roads are not drivable by standard vehicles. Vienna Mountain Road (off BPL ownership) has recently been maintained (reshaped and ditched). Berry Hill Road has not been improved and remains a 4WD road.</p>

	<p><i>The recent acquisition of the Allen parcels on Vienna Mountain includes the McGaffey Mtn. Road around the north end of Vienna Mtn. It does not include the abutting portions of Vienna Mountain Road (on the mountaintop parcel, the boundary follows the road centerline); however, a public access easement exists beyond the end of the town road. As reported above, a significant upgrade of the Vienna Mountain Road has started with the recent purchase of the Allen parcels.</i></p>
<p>The McIntire Pond Road and the Roxy Rand Road leading up to the McIntire Pond Road will be designated a management road open to passenger vehicles, due to the fishing opportunity and handcarry boat access and parking at the Pond. However, this will not be open to ATVs.</p>	<p>See above.</p> <p><i>As described above, Roxy Rand Road is currently closed 2/3 mile north of the Unit boundary, and vehicle/foot access to the Unit and McIntire Pond is presently not available.</i></p>
<p>All other roads will be blocked as necessary to deter general vehicular travel. Seasonal blocking may be necessary to allow snowmobile travel on roads designated for this winter use, but off limits to summer motorized use.</p>	<p>No new seasonal blocking of roads has occurred.</p>
<p><u>Abutting Property Owners</u> Mark the perimeter boundary of the Highlands for easy identification.</p>	<p>The boundary marking is mostly complete.</p> <p><i>Allen parcel boundary marking is planned to be accomplished in the next 5 years.</i></p>
<p>As the need arises, communicate with abutting property owners about management and use of the Highlands.</p>	<p>Ongoing, as needed.</p>
<p>Make clear through signage and information on maps which roads are off limits to vehicular travel to deter travel on private roads and property (some roads it may be desirable not to show on maps, if not open to the public and not leading to a recreation destination). Coordinate with BRCA on public information to determine which</p>	<p>Work is ongoing. Roads linked to the ATV trail but not open to ATVs have been posted.</p>

<p>roads and trails to display on maps and trailhead kiosks.</p>	
<p><u>Host Communities</u> Communicate with town representatives about road access needs for fire and rescue. Communicate with town representatives about other issues as they arise.</p>	<p>Ongoing communication.</p>
<p><u>Potential for Vandalism</u> As time and resources allow, periodically monitor the Highlands and communicate with Maine Forest Service to arrange for their assistance in monitoring as dumping and theft issues arise. Maintain communication with managing partners and abutting landowners about these issues. Follow-up with the Maine Forest Service about enforcement action as necessary.</p>	<p>As mentioned above under trailhead monitoring (page 8), the Bureau has an arrangement with a “volunteer host” who is frequently on these public lands; that person is able to provide monitoring of these types of problems. No significant issues of vandalism, dumping or thefts have arisen. (There has been one occurrence of timber trespass by an abutter, which the Bureau has addressed.)</p>
<p><u>Public Information</u> Develop a ‘map and guide’ about the Kennebec Highlands consistent with that provided for other public reserved lands with recreational opportunities. Improve and update trail signage to reduce incidents of lost hikers.</p>	<p>Map and Guide is in progress.</p> <p><i>The Map and Guide has been completed and is available on the Bureau’s Kennebec Highlands webpage. It will be posted on the trailhead kiosks.</i></p>
<p><u>Written Agreements</u> Develop written agreements with organizations that will assist in management of the Highlands, specifically with the BRCA, snowmobile club(s) and the ATV club.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p><i>The Bureau has signed an MOU with 7 Lakes Alliance (formerly BRCA) that formally defines the relationship and responsibilities of the parties to the agreement. The Bureau will also establish an MOU with CeMeNEMBA or other groups as needed.</i></p>
<p><u>Structures on the Highlands</u> Determine the disposition of the Saddle Camp and Boathouse. Communicate with BRCA about their potential interest in upgrading</p>	<p>The Boathouse has been removed (summer 2016). The Saddle Camp has been prepped for burning.</p>

<p>and maintaining these structures.</p>	
<p><u>Blueberry Fields on the Highlands</u> Continue to manage the blueberry fields without herbicides, using periodic burns, if necessary, and mowing, if feasible.</p>	<p>Fields (on access trail to Kidder Pond) are brush cut and mowed semi-annually.</p> <p><i>With the acquisition of expansive former commercial blueberry fields on the Allen parcels, some portions of which will likely be maintained for wildlife habitat, recreational picking and possible commercial lease in the future, the Bureau may elect to discontinue maintenance of the blueberry field near Kidder Pond.</i></p>

Monitoring and Evaluation (Plan pages 75-76)

Actions taken/Comments:

[2016 entries: standard font. 2022 entries: **bold italic** font]

<p><i>Implementation of Plan Recommendations</i></p>	
<p>The Bureau will develop an action plan for implementing and monitoring the management recommendations in this Plan. This will include an assignment of priorities and timeframes for accomplishment that will be utilized to determine work priorities and budgets on an annual basis. The Bureau will annually document its progress in implementing the recommendations, plans for the coming year, and adjustments to the priorities and timeframes as needed.</p>	<p>Implementation of recommendations is part of the annual planning process engaged in at the regional level.</p>
<p><i>Recreation – Public Use and Use Impacts</i></p>	
<p>The Bureau will monitor public use to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether improvements to existing facilities or additional facilities might be needed and compatible with general objectives; • whether additional measures are needed to ensure that recreational users have a high quality experience; • whether use is adversely affecting sensitive natural resources or the ecology of the area; • whether measures are needed to address unforeseen safety issues; • whether changing recreational uses and demands present the need 	<p>Monitoring will continue as provided by the Volunteer Host program (see discussion on pp. 8 and 12 above), and may be supplemented by more targeted data collection by the Bureau.</p> <p><i>The Bureau is considering outreach to hikers and other trail users to inform development of a trails plan. This may include a survey distributed at trailheads and/or available online.</i></p>

<p>or opportunity for adjustments to existing facilities and management; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether any changes are needed in the management of recreation in relation to other management objectives, including protection or enhancement of wildlife habitat and forest management. <p>The primary means of gathering information about recreational use and issues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports from the seasonal recreation ranger; • reports from management partners (BRCA, ATV and snowmobile clubs); • discussions at the annual trails forum; and • incident and other reports made to the Bureau’s central and regional offices. 	
<p><i>Wildlife</i></p>	
<p>The Bureau’s wildlife biologist and technician routinely conduct a variety of species monitoring activities statewide. The following monitoring activities that are anticipated for the Kennebec Highlands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation with MDIF&W on fisheries management of the Highlands ponds; • cooperation with MDIF&W in the monitoring of game species; • location of additional, smaller-scale significant wildlife habitat (e.g., vernal pools and den trees) during the preparation of forest management prescriptions. 	<p>Cooperation with MDIF&W is ongoing. No forest management prescriptions have yet been prepared.</p>
<p><i>Special Protection Areas</i></p>	
<p>The Bureau coordinates with the Maine Natural areas program and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in the documentation and protection of these areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Maine Natural Areas Program will be consulted on management near the rare plant population or exemplary Unpatterned Fen Ecosystem; • The Maine Historic Preservation Commission will be consulted as needed regarding protection of historic sites and their on-going research. 	<p>Ongoing.</p>

<i>Timber Management</i>	
Local work plans, called prescriptions, are prepared by professional foresters in accordance with the Bureau’s <i>Integrated Resource Policy</i> , and peer reviewed prior to approval. Preparation and layout of timber sales require field investigation of every acre to be treated. Trees to be harvested are generally hand marked. Regional field staff provide regular on-site supervision of harvest activities, with less frequent visits by senior staff. After harvest, roads, trails, and water crossings are discontinued as appropriate. Changes in stand type resulting from the harvest are recorded in the Bureau’s GIS system.	No forestry activities have occurred.
The Bureau is currently developing a post-harvest monitoring plan to assist forest managers in assessing harvest outcomes on all managed lands. The monitoring plan will also address water quality and Best Management Practices (BMPs) utilized during harvest activities.	Ongoing.
Third party monitoring is done mainly through the forest certification programs of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Each program conducts rigorous investigations of both planning and on-ground practices. An initial audit by both programs was completed in 2001, with certification awarded in 2002. A full re-audit of both programs was conducted in the fall of 2006 with certification granted in 2007. The Bureau is also subject to compliance audits during the 5-year certification period.	Ongoing.

Issues for Advisory Committee Attention

New Issues or Circumstances Not Addressed in the Plan

BPL Acquisition of Allen Parcels:

In April 2022, BPL acquired 666 acres on Vienna Mountain in Vienna and 147 acres on York Hill in New Sharon. Funding was provided by the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the state Land for Maine’s Future (LMF). As has been the case throughout the formation of the Kennebec Highlands as a public land unit, 7 Lakes Alliance (formerly Belgrade Region Conservation Alliance) was an essential partner with the Bureau in this acquisition.

The acquired parcels enlarge and further consolidate the unit, the largest and most accessible block of public land in this part of the state. The parcels also protect important wildlife habitats and water quality and provide improved opportunities to further develop trail networks and expand the range of outdoor recreation opportunities on the Unit. The parcels are a mix of blueberry barrens, forest, and wetlands. Overall, there are approximately 220 acres of barrens, 560 acres of forest land, and 15 acres of open wetlands along with miles of small streams that feed the high-value ponds of the Highlands. The blueberry lands on Vienna Mountain have been a priority for acquisition since the beginning of the formation of the unit.

This 5-Year Review (postponed from fall 2021 to allow the acquisition to be completed) will include the integration of the new parcels into the management plan. A partial list of management issues to be addressed include:

- Roads/access and potential new parking/trailheads
- Potential new trails (including universally accessible trails) and connections to existing non-motorized trails
- Potential lease for organic blueberry production, and management of other fields for recreational picking
- Disposition and potential uses of the farmhouse and adjacent barn, and associated maintenance and upkeep
- Timber management
- Potential bear bait sites
- Resource Allocations
 - Special Protection areas (historic homestead sites mapped by SHPO)
 - Wildlife areas (riparian buffers and other wildlife habitat protections)
 - Backcountry and Remote Recreation areas (integrated with existing zones)
 - Developed Recreation areas (parking areas, other rec. facilities)
 - Timber Management areas (primarily as a secondary use)
 - Other (future leased blueberry fields)

Other Items of Special Concern or Interest

Development of a Trails Plan:

As briefly described in the table above, during the course of this plan review the Bureau will work with the Advisory Committee, CeMeNEMBA, and others to develop a trails plan for the Highlands. The 2011 plan recommendations (see pages 63 and 65) call for development of a plan for new non-motorized trails and to prioritize hiking trail development. With the acquisitions of the Allen parcels, the development of single-track mountain bike trails on the southernmost part of the unit over the past 5+ years, recent initial development of winter fat-bike routes in other areas, and strong interest from the biking community to expand the mountain bike trail system, this is a particularly opportune time to develop a trails plan that addresses all types of non-motorized trails.

The trails plan will set forth an updated vision for future trail development on the Unit that describes the potential and priorities for new trails and new trail connections and will delineate what portions of the unit are deemed of most interest and most suitable for new trails, as well as what areas may be least suitable and should be avoided to the extent practical. Other considerations to be addressed in the plan include:

- intended recreation experiences on the trails considering the overall Kennebec Highlands vision for a “semi-remote ‘backwoods’ experience”
- existing and future trailhead access
- potential colocation and intersection with motorized trails on the unit
- resource protection needs
- integration of trails with future forest management

As part of the plan update, the Bureau will work with the Advisory Committee to draft a management plan for the Allen parcels. The plan will be appended to the 2011 Kennebec Highlands Management Plan after public review and comment and adoption by the Bureau. When finalized, the trails plan will also become part of the Kennebec Highlands Management Plan.