Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks and Lands

Bradbury Mountain State Park & Pineland Public Land
Advisory Committee Meeting
- Talking Brook Management Plan Scoping -

June 24, 2026, 5:30 to 7:00 pm
Pownal Town Office, Pownal

Meeting Notes

Advisory Committee Members participating:

Tim Giddinge	Town of Pownal, Code Enforcement Officer (former Selectman)
Hanae Garrison	Stewardship Director, Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT)
Bob Humphrey	Pownal resident, RRCT Board Member
Al Schaeffer	Town of Gray, Open Space Committee

Other members of the public participating:

Rob Bryan	Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, New England Chapter
Mary Moore	local resident
Ed McAloney	local resident
Scott Pollock	local resident
Lanna Antebi	RRCT Intern
Rhonda Volkernick	Talking Brook property abutter (*via MS Teams videoconference)*

BPL Staff participating:

Bill Patterson	Deputy Director
Stephen Richardson	Southern Region Public Lands Manager
Bill Beeaker	Outdoor Recreation Specialist
Chris Silsbee	Manager, Bradbury Mountain State Park
Jim Vogel	Sr. Planner, Management Plan Coordinator

Background
This meeting was convened to begin collaboration with the Advisory Committee on development of a management plan for the newly acquired Talking Brook Public Land, as a continuation of the scoping phase of the plan's development. The committee and over 30 members of the public on the contact list for this plan area were provided with the meeting agenda (see attachment 1) in advance. A set of PowerPoint slides was used to guide the discussion (see attachment 2).

Discussion Notes
After a welcome and introductions by BPL staff and AC members, Jim Vogel alerted participants that the Teams meeting would be recorded and shared some opening thoughts on the significance of the Talking Brook property and its history of public use. He continued by outlining the purpose of the meeting, emphasizing discussion of resource data and management issues (summarized in Scoping Notes provided a month in advance), with attendees having the

opportunity to share information, ask questions and comment on the information presented. He mentioned BPL staff field visits since the lands were acquired to gain a better understanding of the land and to consider access and trail opportunities and constraints. Lastly, attendees were encouraged to send any follow-up comments in the next month.

Summarized comments from AC members and other participants on the agenda topics are provided below, and any BPL responses offered. At various times in the meeting, maps of the Talking Brook unit were shared via Teams, visible to those attending in person and the person on the video conference.

Review of BPL Planning

Jim provided a brief review of the major underpinnings and components of BPL Public Lands planning, specifically touching on:

- Management plan requirements and guidance contained in the Bureau's Integrated Resource Policy (IRP), including legislative direction, the planning process, the Resource Allocation System, and specific guidance provided for management of major categories or resources (fisheries and wildlife; recreation; timber; etc.)
- Management plan contents (regional context, resources present on the public land, discussion of management issues, application of Resource Allocations, and management recommendations)
- Summary of the Resource Allocation categories and how they have been applied at Pineland Public Land
- Broad outline of BPL planning process and AC involvement
- Summary of Talking Brook scoping work completed to-date

Jim responded to a few questions on the details of some of the information presented, particularly the application of Resource Allocations at Pineland and the scoping work completed.

Summary of Talking Brook Land and Resources

Jim summarized the following characteristics of the Talking Brook Public Land, with the help of maps and photos in the slides:

- Geography, prominent natural features, existing trail system, access and parking
- Woodman Road access to the property and related easements
- Wildlife and fisheries (highlighting important habitats such as wetlands and riparian zones and potential presence of species of conservation concern)

There were no questions or comments. New AC member Al Schaeffer requested a map to help provide the regional context for the Talking Brook property. (Jim provided a draft regional map via email the next day, and that map will be included in the Talking Brook plan)

Summary of Talking Brook Management Issues

Jim summarized the following management issues that the plan will address, with the help of a trail map and photos in the slides (a paper copy of the trail map was also distributed):

Issue 1 - Trail System

- Objective is for the trails to meet Bureau standards and withstand increased public use
- Described changes and trail improvements completed since the Bureau's acquisition of the property, with the assistance of RRCT (trail section reroutes/closures, installation of small bridges, improved trail markings and signage)
- Described an in-progress project that will relocate the initial portion of the "Yellow trail" (located within a trail easement), to be replaced by an "improved access" trail on the other side of Talking Brook on better ground, with a viewpoint on the brook
- Described potential additional changes (including closure of additional trail sections) under consideration and needed improvements to the trail system

There were no questions or comments.

Issue 2 - Dogs off-leash

- Highlighted that off-leash dogs are a concern for environmental, wildlife and social reasons, as well as a concern for neighboring residents when dogs come on their property, leave waste, etc.
- Reported that the Bureau has posted signage to inform visitors that dogs must be on a leash at all times (at the parking area kiosk, on the trail system and along the road) and added this rule to the trail maps
- Noted that the notice posted at the parking area states that "access for dogs may need to be curtailed if dogs continue to run off-leash"

There were no questions or comments.

Issue 3 – Equestrian Use of Trails

- Noted that local equestrians have enjoyed riding to Talking Brook and riding on some portions of the trail
- Explained that trails and bridges were not designed for equestrian use and that the soils and slopes in some locations make the trail susceptible to erosion and degradation, and that to make the trails safe and suitable for this use would require much larger investment in trail treads and bridges than is required for pedestrian use
- Expressed the Bureau's belief that the trails, other than the section on Woodman Road, are not suitable for equestrian use and should be closed to horses

There were no questions or comments.

Issue 4 – Hunting Access

- Recalled the strong desire for traditional hunting access to be preserved on the Public Lands in the plan area as reflected in the 2011 Bradbury Mtn State Park & Pineland Public Land plan
- Highlighted the Public Lands rule that prohibits carrying or discharge of loaded firearms within 300 feet of marked hiking trails, which limits the opportunity to hunt with firearms on most of the property

- Noted that opportunities remain on the trailless west side of the unit (~ 75 acres) for hunting with firearms, and for hunting with non-firearm methods elsewhere on the property
- Noted that avoiding additional trail development in new areas will preserve hunting access and also preserve remaining unfragmented and undisturbed habitat

Rob Bryan commented in support of avoiding additional trail development on the property, to preserve both hunting access and undisturbed habitat. He also highlighted the ecological benefits of controlling the deer population through hunting and the ecological harms that may result from overpopulation of deer.

Next Steps
Jim described the next steps in development of the Talking Brook Public Land management plan, which will involve:

- BPL drafting the plan over the next few months
- Providing the draft plan to the AC for review and comment, and scheduling a second AC meeting to discuss
- After any revisions to the plan, scheduling a public meeting to present the Final Draft Plan and take comments
- Finalization of the plan after approval of the DACF Commissioner, after which it will be appended to the 2011 Bradbury Mtn State Park & Pineland Public Land Management Plan, as part of the 15-year update of that plan (now due but not yet scheduled)

Adjourn
The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Attachments:
1. Meeting agenda
2. Meeting slides

Bradbury Mtn State Park & Pineland Public Land Advisory Committee Meeting

Talking Brook Public Land Management Plan

June 24, 2026
5:30 to 7:00 pm
Pownal Town Hall (Mallett Hall)

Agenda

5:30 Welcome and Introductions, Meeting's Purpose

5:35 Review of BPL Public Land planning

5:50 Summary of Talking Brook lands and resources

6:05 Discussion of management issues

6:35 Public questions and comments

6:55 Next Steps

7:00 Adjourn

You may send **written comments** to be considered in preparing the plan to:

Jim Vogel, Sr. Planner
Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
OR
Jim.Vogel@maine.gov

The webpage for the Pineland Public Land and Bradbury Mtn State Park Management Plan can be found at:
http://www.maine.gov/dacf/pineland_bradbury
This page will be updated when the Draft Plan is completed.

Bradbury Mtn State Park & Pineland Public Land Management Plan
Advisory Committee Meeting
Talking Brook Public Land Management Plan



Big Falls
On
Meadow Brook

BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS
JUNE 24, 2026

Agenda

- Brief Review of BPL Public Lands planning
- Review of Talking Brook land and resources
  - Summary of lands acquired
  - Summary of resources present

Questions and comments

- Discussion of Talking Brook management issues

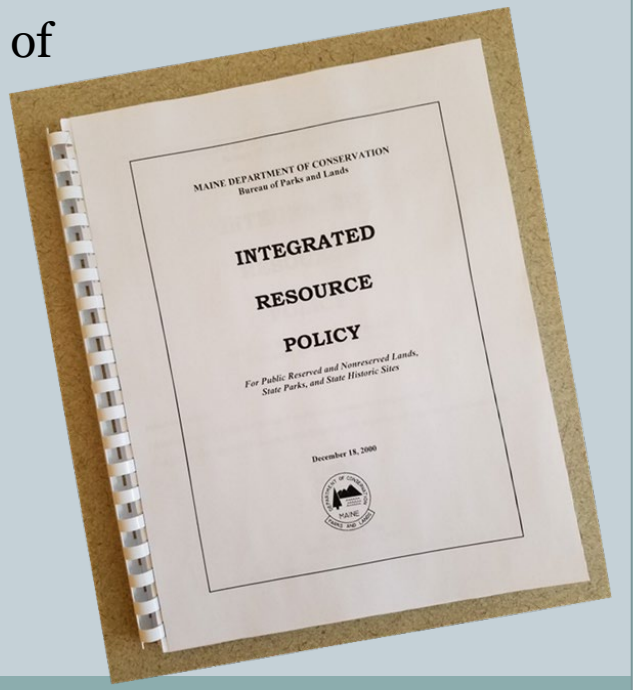
Questions and comments

- Next steps

BPL Public Lands Planning

- BPL planning and management are guided by the Integrated Resource Policy (adopted in 2000 and amended in 2007)

- II. Legislative Direction (12 MRSA § 1833 & § 1847):
  - Management Plans required to be prepared
  - Direction includes: "multiple use," "sustained yield of products and services," "sound planning," and "exemplary land management practices"
  - Management to enhance "timber, wildlife, recreation, economic and other values of lands"
- VI. A. The Planning Process:
  - Plans are intended to last 15 years with mandated 5-year reviews
  - Assisted by an Advisory Committee representing a diverse range of organizations and interests



Resource Allocation System & Management Guidance in the IRP

- IRP Section VI. B. established the Resource Allocation System (more on this later)
- IRP Section VII provides specific guidance for management of:
  - Natural & Geological resources
  - Historical & Cultural resources
  - Fisheries & Wildlife resources
  - Recreation Resources & Facilities
  - Timber Resources

Management Plan Contents

- Regional Context
- Summary of the resources present on the public land
- Discussion of management issues to address
- Three items that will guide management
  - **Vision Statement** **(see BMSP-Pineland Plan, p. 40)**
  - **Resource Allocations** **(see BMSP-Pineland Plan, p. 60-71)**
  - **Management Recommendations** **(see BMSP-Pineland Plan, p. 72-73)**

Management Guidance in the Plan

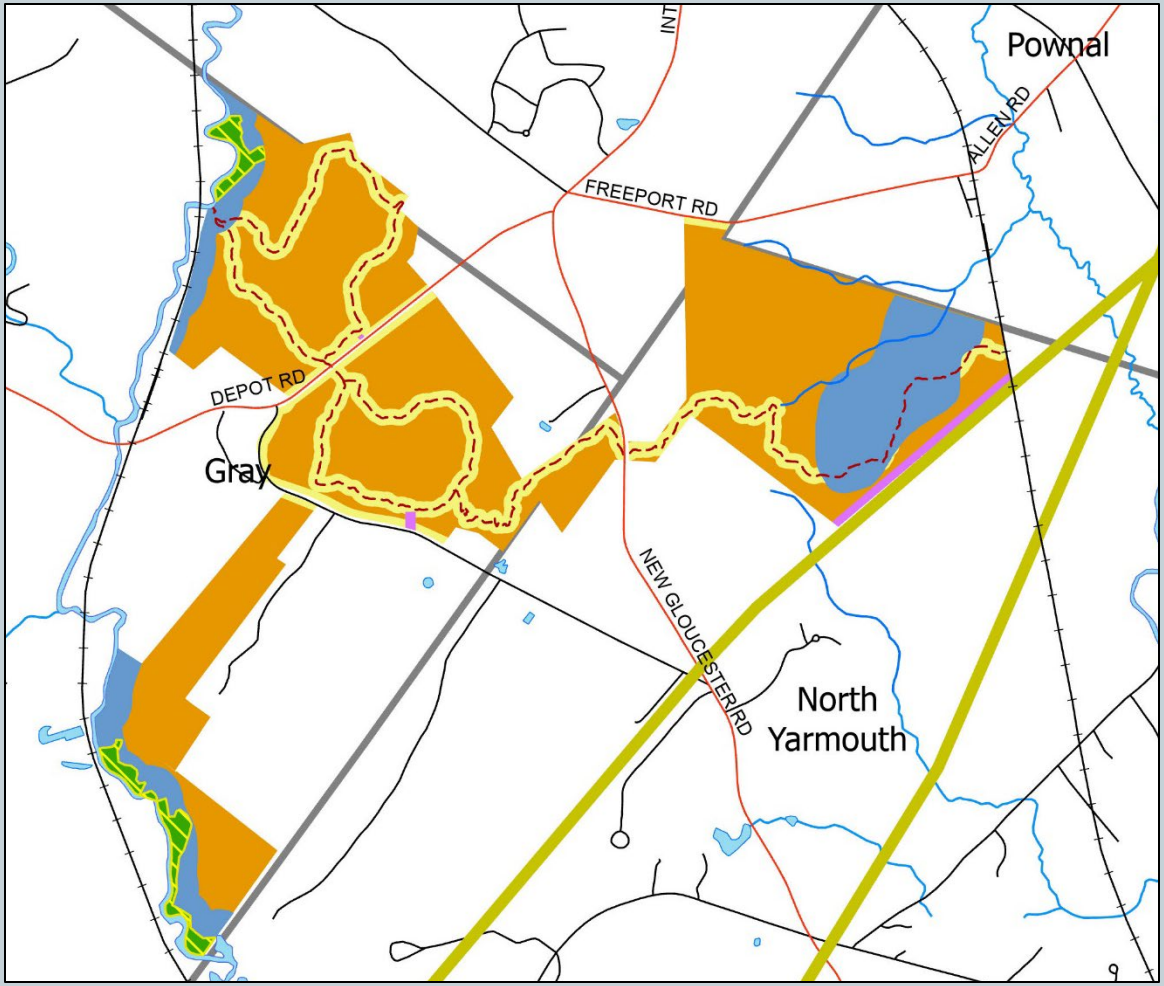
- Vision for the Unit (see BMSP-Pineland plan, page 40)
  - Broad statement of our overarching goals for the types of recreation experiences, ecological protection, wildlife habitat, and timber management we strive to manage for
- Resource Allocations (see BMSP-Pineland plan, Appendix C for summary)
  - A system of designating and mapping all of the acres on Public Lands into categories (allocations)
  - Designation defines allowable management and recreation activities
  - Hierarchical, from most to least sensitive areas / most to least restrictive management
- Management Recommendations
  - May address wildlife/habitats, recreation, timber management, public access, and other administrative issues
  - May address a specific issue or concern, such as a need to control motorized vehicle access, or implementing a new idea, such as a trail

Resource Allocation Categories

- Special Protection
  - natural areas, historic/cultural areas, ecological reserves
- Backcountry Recreation
  - superior scenic quality, wild and pristine, sense of solitude; either non-mechanized or motorized
- Wildlife
  - riparian buffers, deer yards, and habitat for rare or endangered species and other special habitats
- Remote Recreation
  - trail corridors, shorelines, remote ponds; emphasis on non-motorized uses
- Visual Consideration Areas
  - Class I – foreground; Class II – background; Limits harvesting to protect scenic values
- Developed Recreation Areas
  - Class I – primitive campsites, trailheads, gravel boat launches, etc.; Class II – more developed facilities
- Timber Management
  - management for multiple uses and high value forest products – i.e., late successional forests

Most restrictive → Least restrictive

Resource Allocations at Pineland Public Land



Dominant Allocations

- Natural Area
- Wildlife
- Visual Consideration - Class 1
- Developed Rec. - Class 1
- Timber Management
- High Voltage Power Lines
- Railroads

BPL Planning Process

- Assisted by an Advisory Committee (AC) representing a diverse range of organizations and interests
  - Committee reviews and comments on the Draft Plan
- Typically two AC meetings: 1) Scoping, 2) Draft Plan review
  - **AC meetings** are posted in advance on the Plan webpage
  - BPL will send email notices
  - Public is welcome to attend
- A **Public Meeting** is scheduled when the Final Draft Plan is ready



Talking Brook Scoping to-date

- Resource information was collected during the acquisition phase
- Compilation of additional regional context and resource data
- Numerous field visits by BPL staff since the acquisition
- Staff specialists and IF&W provided input and data on timber resources, wildlife habitats, trail conditions, etc.



BPL staff visit, March 2026

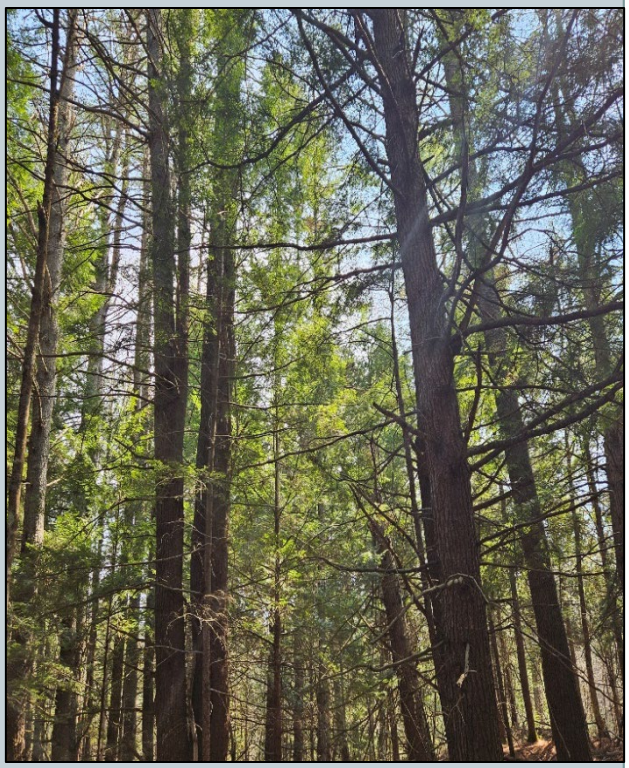
Questions?



Bedrock outcrop
along Talking Brook

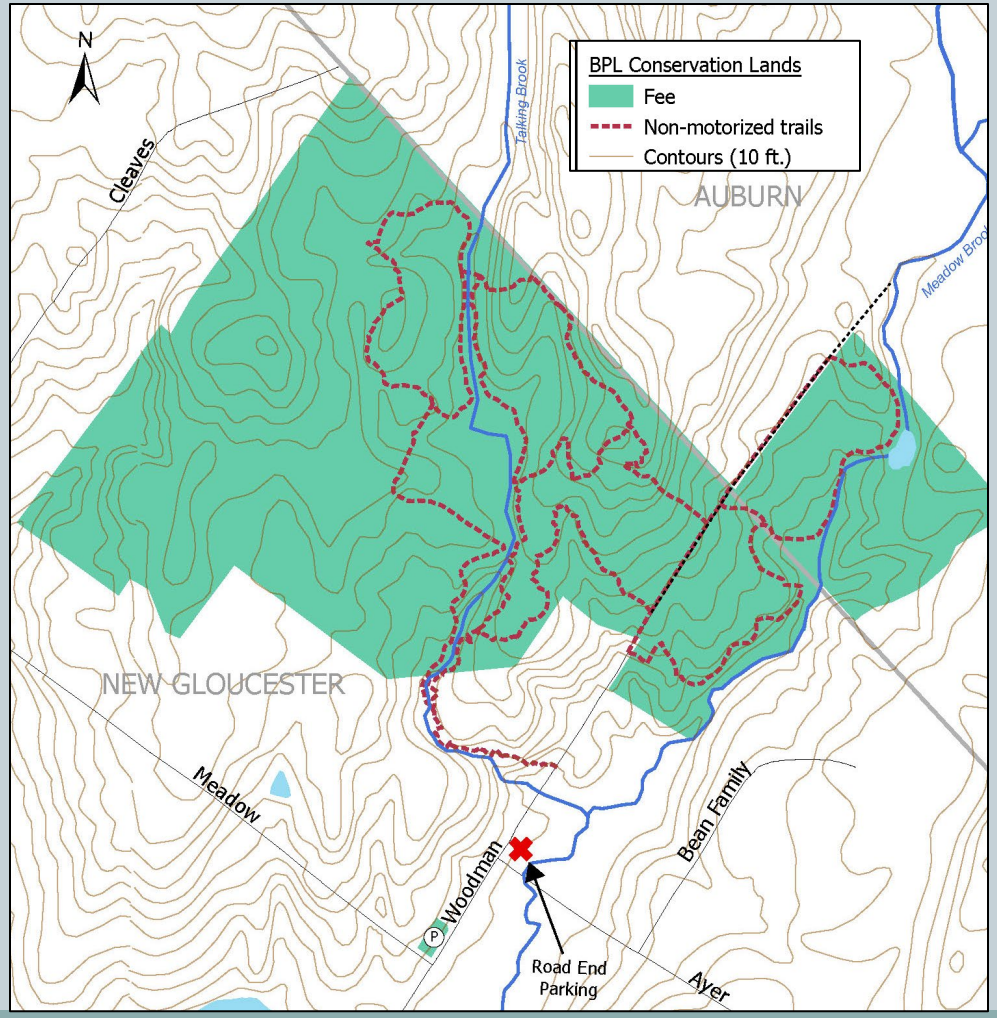
Summary of Talking Brook Land and Resources

- 200 acres in total, mostly in New Gloucester
- Entirely forested; mostly mature softwood and mixedwood stands (pine, hemlock, birch, beeches, maples)
- Gently rolling ground with ~200 feet elevation range
- Scenic streams with small waterfalls and high water quality
- Network of ~4 miles of trails in connected loops (~1/4 mile on easement)
- New 30 vehicle parking area on small parcel at road intersection



Large white pine and hemlock at Talking Brook

Talking Brook Access and Trails



Woodman Road Access to Public Land and Trails

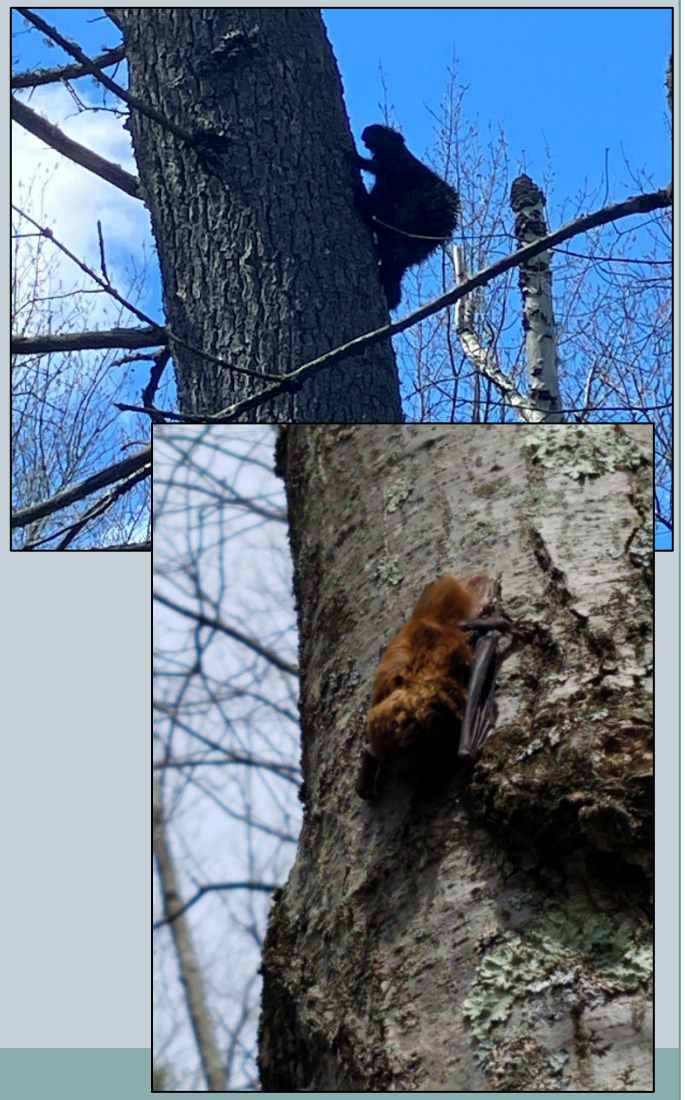
- Road was abandoned by the Town of New Gloucester in 1993, with a public easement retained
- Access Easement on the first ~800 feet; No public parking allowed
- 20’ x 50’ parking easement area (for management only) within Access Easement
- Road is maintained by abutting residents who use the road to access their properties



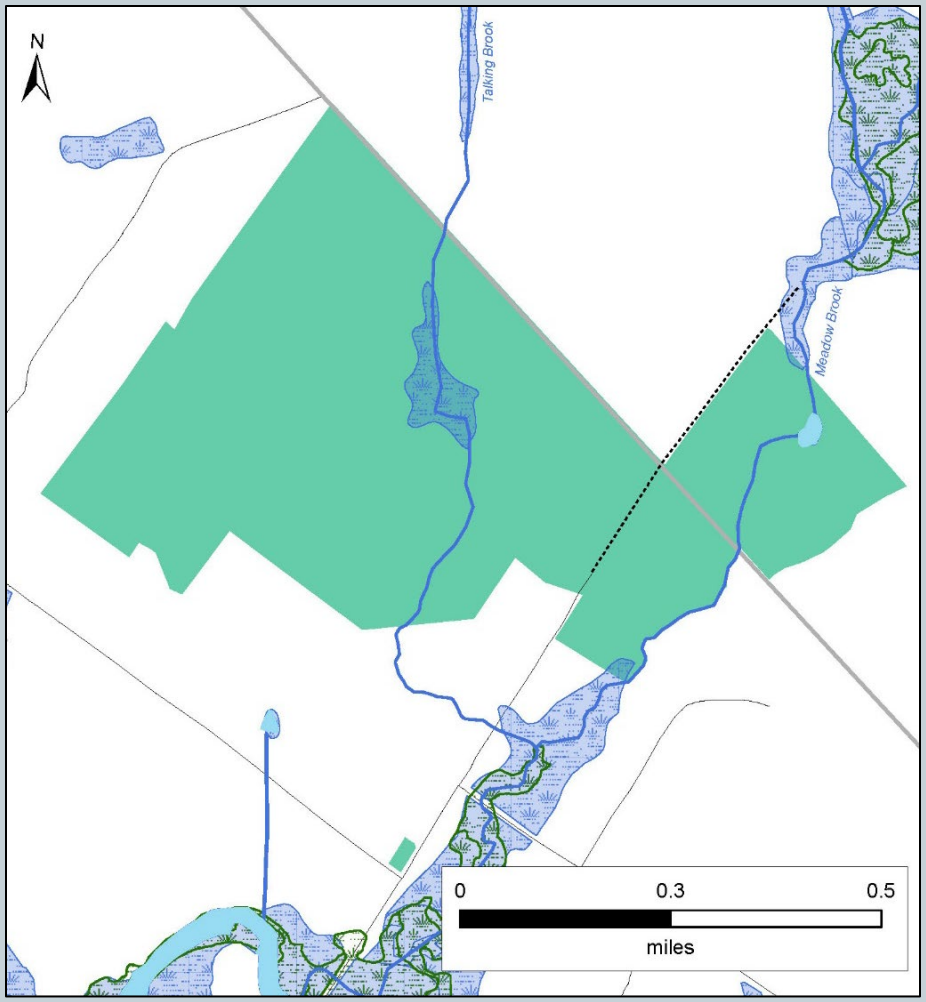
Woodman Road and signage

Wildlife and Fisheries

- Wildlife:
  - Expect common mammal and bird species indigenous to Southern Maine mature forest environments to be present
  - Important **riparian corridors** along the streams
  - Small **forested wetland** along Talking Brook may host species not found in other areas
  - Mature forest may provide **habitat for bats**; several species of conservation concern have been documented nearby
- Fisheries:
  - Property is within MDIFW-mapped brook trout habitat area
  - Potential barriers to movement exist at downstream road crossings



Talking Brook Special Wildlife Features



National Wetlands Inventory
Inland Waterfowl & Wader Habitat



Forested wetland along Talking Brook



Loose bark on snag providing shelter for bats

Questions/Comments?



View below Big Falls

Management Issues – Trail System

- Trails were built for generally light and mostly local use; need to ensure trails meet standards and can withstand expected increased use
- Changes since BPL acquisition, with RRCT
  - Closed/rerouted short sections of trail
  - Installed small bridges
  - Improved trail marking and trail maps
- Plan to reroute section of trail on easement; rebuild on better ground as “improved access” trail with viewpoint next to brook



Trail Improvements & Needs

- What sections to retain? Improvements needed?
  - Collaborating with RRCT to assess priorities for ongoing trail maintenance and improvements
  - Considering closing:
    - Section of Yellow trail running close to Talking Brook much of which is on wet ground
    - Section of Red trail on steep slope

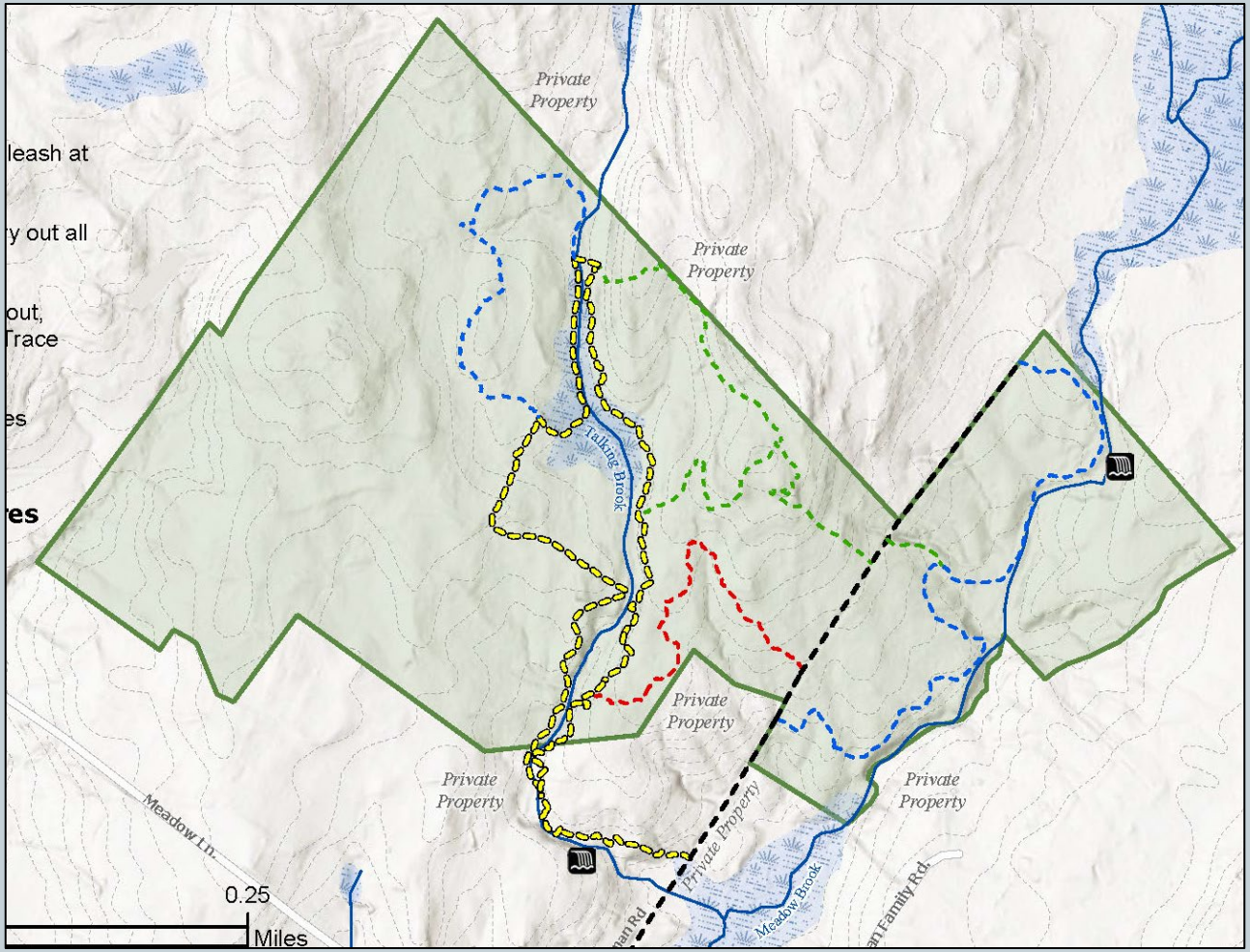


Stream crossing needed on the Blue trail



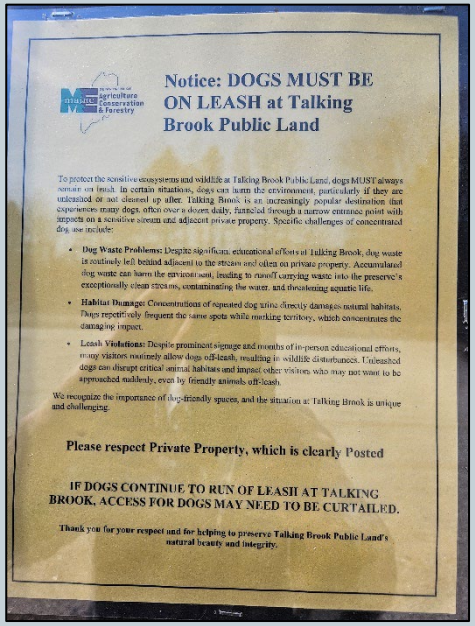
Wet ground along the Yellow trail

Current Trail Map



Management Issues – Dogs off-leash

- Off-leash dogs are a concern for environmental, wildlife, and social reasons, as well as a concern for BPL neighbors
- Have posted signage to inform visitors that dogs must be on a leash at all times, and added this rule to the trail map







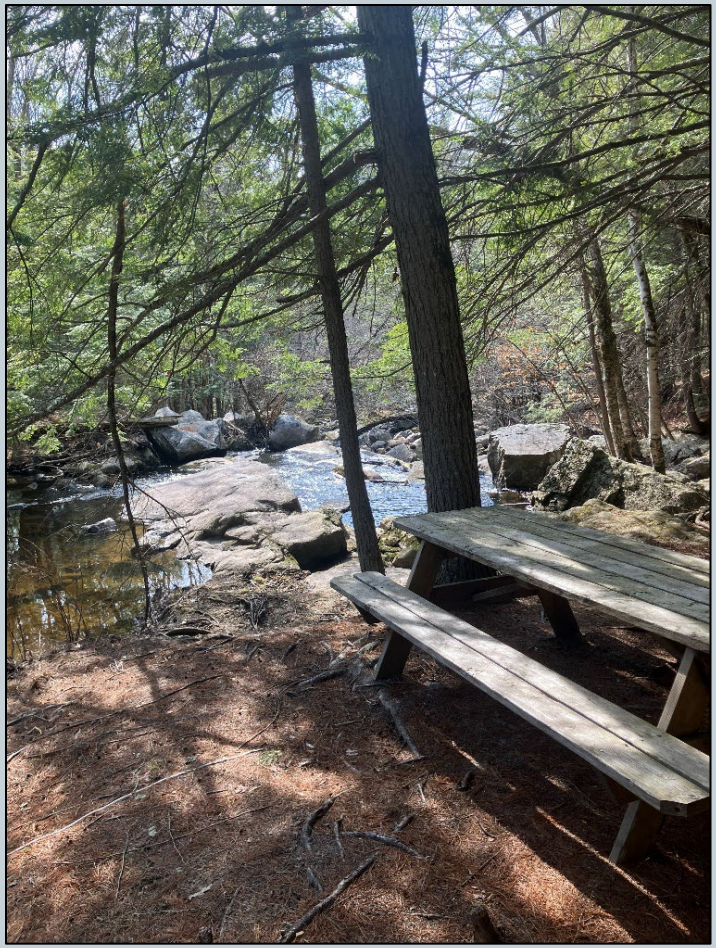
Management Issues – Equestrian Use of Trails

- Local equestrians have enjoyed riding to Talking Brook and riding on some portions of the trail system
- Trails (and bridges?) were not designed for equestrian use and there are unsuitable soils and slopes in some areas, causing erosion and trail degradation
- Bureau believes the trails, other than section on Woodman Road, are not suitable for other than occasional equestrian use and should be closed to horses

Management Issues – Hunting Access

- Strong desire for traditional hunting access to be preserved on the Public Lands in the plan area (see 2011 Plan)
- Public Lands rule: loaded firearms may not be carried or discharged within 300 feet of marked hiking trails, limiting the opportunity to hunt with firearms on most of the property
- Opportunities remain, particularly on the trailless westernmost side of the unit, and for hunting with non-firearm methods
- Avoiding additional trail development in new areas will preserve hunting access and preserve remaining unfragmented and undisturbed habitat

Questions and Comments?



Picnic table at Big Falls

Next Steps

- BPL will draft the Plan over the next few months
  - Written comments to support work on the Draft Plan are welcome over the next month (contact info is on the Agenda)
- An Advisory Committee meeting will be scheduled to review the Draft Plan, which will be distributed at least 30 days in advance
- A Public Meeting will be scheduled to review the Final Draft Plan
  - Public comments and BPL responses will be included in the plan appendices
- Finalize Plan
  - Plan will be adopted after approved by DACF Commissioner, on recommendation of the BPL Director
  - Will be appended to the 2011 BMSP-Pineland plan, as a component of the 15-year update

Thank You for your Participation!



”Wolf Pine” at Talking Brook