

## Conserving Natural Species for Future Generations

## Protecting Jobs and Forests - The Katahdin Forest Project in Maine

## The Challenge

Industrial forests contain a significant portion of the last remaining large blocks of private forest land in the Nation. However, the forest industry is undergoing restructuring, and many paper companies are selling their forest land holdings, which results in the loss of traditional forest uses on those lands. For more than 100 years, Great Northern Paper owned and managed the dense forests around Millinocket, Maine. These woodlands fed mills that provided secure jobs to residents and forest products and paper to customers across the country. These same forest lands were open to the public to be enjoyed by recreation enthusiasts, drawn there from across the country because the final leg of the Appalachian Trail crosses portions of this land. Others enjoyed the dramatic backdrop of Mount Katahdin and the hunting and fishing that the forests and numerous remote ponds offered. By 2002, though, it became apparent that Great Northern Paper was having financial difficulties and was exploring options to stave off bankruptcy. One option included the selling off and fragmentation of forests surrounding much of Maine's Baxter State Park.

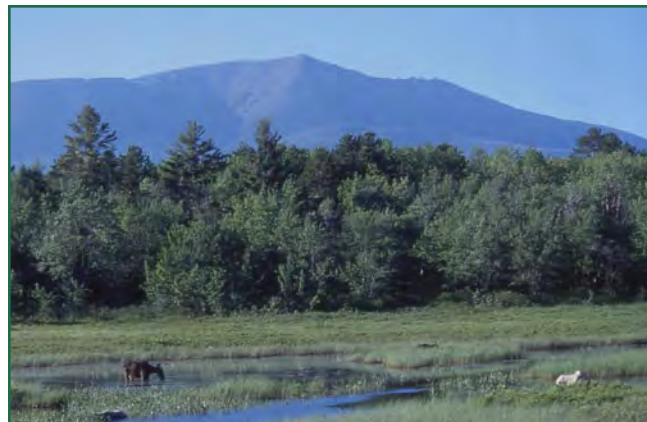
## The Solution

A partnership involving multiple entities came together in 2002 to ensure that the lands owned by Great Northern Paper would remain actively managed and continue to allow recreation opportunities. First, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) purchased the mortgage on the company's forest lands. Then, the USDA Forest Service and TNC, working closely with the State of Maine, permanently protected over 240,000 acres in the Mount Katahdin region—194,751 acres in a Forest Legacy Program sustainable working forest conservation easement and 46,000 acres as a wildlife sanctuary. The Forest Service Forest Legacy Program gave the State of Maine a grant for \$4.437 million for a conservation easement acquisition conserving forest management and recreational opportunities, as has occurred on these lands for generations.

## Resulting Benefits

By creating a working forest easement on close to 200,000 acres, the project ensures that important timberland can

*The Katahdin Forest Legacy Project helped conserve nearly a quarter million acres of pristine natural spaces.*



Moose and other wildlife in the Mount Katahdin enjoy the scenic, natural habitat. (photo by Bill Silliker, Jr.)

be sustainably managed for forest products while helping to maintain area jobs. The conservation easement secures traditional public use of these forests for hunting, fishing, and hiking, accommodating both public access and sustainable forestry. The project brought together Federal conservation and economic development funding to save trees and jobs in one fell swoop.

## Sharing Success

The Katahdin Forest Project represents the first time the Forest Legacy Program was used to create an opportunity to help stabilize natural resource-based communities while increasing conservation investment in these communities. Working hand in hand with investments made by the Forest Legacy Program, the Katahdin Forest Project established that these partnerships could be achieved.

## Highlights of the Maine Forest Legacy Program

- Maine has purchased 74,540 acres of forests and acquired an additional 531,668 acres in conservation easements since 1993.
- Maine has used \$38,678,145 in Forest Legacy funds to protect land or interests in land valued at \$89,048,205.
- Forest Legacy projects in Maine have won national awards: the Niatous Lake project won the Habitat Taking Wing award in 2001, and the Machias River project won the Wings Across the Americas Habitat Conservation award in 2006.



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