

## Assessment of Conservation Needs

### Summary

Along the coast of Maine, a wide variety of organizations with a diverse range of goals and priorities are currently working to protect important coastal resources. One of the guiding principles of Initiative is to build on, rather than duplicate, the work of existing conservation efforts. As such, in Spring 2004, the Initiative analyzed coastal land conservation needs and priorities based on the conservation plans and projects of relevant federal, state, and coast-wide land conservation entities. This analysis identified priority resources and areas along the coast, and highlighted the need for further inventory, evaluation and prioritization of these resources and areas.

### Overall Needs and Priorities

This analysis of existing conservation efforts identified three common needs for any future strategic land conservation effort along the Maine coast:

- Protect the ecological integrity of watersheds surrounding coastal wetlands, particularly the natural communities supported within these watersheds;
- Increase the number of sites available for public access to coastal waters for recreational and commercial purposes; and
- Protect the scenic and cultural features that help to characterize the Maine coast and its communities.

The inventory also identifies several common process and programmatic themes for future conservation efforts, including:

#### Process Themes

- Collaboration and partnership are nearly universally recognized as important; and
- Public support is consistently acknowledged as critical

#### Program Themes

- Apparent agreement on several geographic areas that are priority for coastal land conservation;
  - Stewardship and management of conservation lands for long-term sustainability is commonly mentioned as important;
  - Common and broad focus on conserving priority coastal habitat;
  - Few documented strategies describe conserving scenic and cultural resources. However, emerging connection between tourism and land conservation is worth further exploration;
  - Smart Growth reports and resources provide a context for how coastal land conservation relates to other coastal issues.
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## Summary of Priorities and Needs

### Protect the ecological integrity of watersheds surrounding coastal wetlands, particularly the natural communities supported within these watersheds

Nearly all of the federal and state programs surveyed in this inventory identify a need to maintain and enhance the function and values provided by coastal wetlands. In the last several years, many of these programs have begun to support adoption of watershed-based approaches to ensuring the long-term sustainability of wetland resources. These programs have also often included a significant public outreach effort.

The 2001 Maine State Wetland Conservation Plan identifies six goals for protection of wetlands, and provides specific and extensive recommendations and actions for each of these goals. While the goals are not specific to coastal wetlands, many of the recommendations and actions may be useful for coastal and estuarine land conservation projects.

Beginning with Habitat has identified focus areas of statewide significance which includes lands in coastal watersheds.

### Increase the number of sites available for public access to coastal waters for recreational and commercial purposes

Coastal water access has been an important concern for several state agencies for over twenty years. The number of suitable sites for coastal access continues to decrease because of increased development pressure while the existing sites experience additional use that may negatively affect the ecological integrity of the coastal resource. In addition, extremely high acquisition costs further constrain the effects of limited funding sources.

A 2000 report by the Maine State Planning Office and the Maine Department of Marine Resources identified several indicators of increased demand for coastal recreational access were identified, including:

- Strong growth in population and tourism in coastal areas;
- Increased use of coastal waters for saltwater angling and sea kayaking;
- Continued high numbers of boat registrations; and
- Continued importance of commercial fishing to Maine's economy;

Several existing programs have included efforts to improve coastal access. For example, the Land for Maine's Future program identifies water access as one of its primary focus areas. Analysis completed for LMF by SPO and DMR identified 20 areas of highest priority. This analysis also notes that the cost of acquiring and developing each coastal access site is \$400,000 to \$1million per site

Two recent reports provide several recommendations for strategies to protect and improve coastal access, both for recreational and commercial purposes.

The SPO/DMR report, focused on recreational access especially for boating and fishing, identified towns and stretches of shoreline popular with boaters and anglers that currently have no State-

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sponsored or State-assisted boat access facilities, or that have facilities but need added capacity to keep up with demand. Specific recommendations in that report include:

- Create and maintain a database of information on identified first- and second-level priority areas and on existing State access sites;
- Appoint or hire a state staff person, or hire a contractor, to work proactively on public water access sites;
- Identify towns and groups that are interested in creating or improving public access sites;
- Determine the availability of suitable land and the most appropriate type of access (boat launch, carry-in, bank fishing); and
- Seek cooperating agencies or other entities that will hold title and manage public access sites.

Additional recommendations, which may not be directly relevant to the goals of the Initiative include:

- Balance priority with availability by acquiring sites in lower-priority areas;
- Improve capacity of existing sites (mostly by acquiring land for additional parking);

A report by SPO and Coastal Enterprise, Inc. focused on preservation of commercial fishing access and working waterfronts, and describes several indicators of a community with strong commercial fishing access, including:

- Access is priority;
- There are strong ordinances;
- There is investment in waterfront facilities;
- There is a dedicated fish pier;
- There is less development pressure;
- There is greater than average size of harvester community.

This report also identified several tools that may be relevant to municipal and other local efforts to protect coastal access for commercial fishing, including planning assistance, purchase of access rights, deeded access, planning workshops on waterfront access tools, and transfer of development rights from shoreline to inland properties.

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## Summary of Threats

The long-term health of Maine's coastal wetlands is threatened both by pollution and development of associated upland areas in the watershed.

Several obstacles to enhanced coastal access for public recreational use include:

- Extensive private ownership of the coast, which restricts the right to travel over private property to reach the shore.
- Rising land costs
- Community member opposition to additional boat or pedestrian access sites in proximity to their property.

Coastal access for commercial fishing is threatened in several additional ways beyond recreational access. The CEI/SPO report identifies six forms of threats, including:

- Access to inter-tidal areas lost through no trespassing signs;
  - New coastal property owner closing off/contesting public access;
  - Commercial fishing access tenuous through lease arrangements;
  - Singular reliance on public facility, which creates competition from other types of users;
  - Limited parking to access existing sites; and
  - Conversion of working wharves to residential/recreational uses.
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## Summary of Existing Priority Places

Along the coast of Maine, a wide variety of organizations have an equally wide range of priorities. One of the guiding principles of the coalition is to build on the work completed by the many existing conservation organizations whose work focuses on protecting important coastal resources. Part of this assessment compiled a list of those “places” prioritized as important by organizations with a coastwide focus

Several geographic areas are commonly identified by several organizations as priorities for protection. These places are identified in Appendix G of the Maine State CELCP Plan.

Because data is lacking for some resources, the list of priority places does not adequately reflect priorities for some resources and/or for some geographic areas.

- **Habitat:** the list includes focus areas of statewide significance identified by Beginning with Habitat. However, additional focus areas could be identified based on current gaps in information about specific coastal resources.
- **Access:** the list does include identified needs related to coastal access. However, existing assessment efforts have focused on needs for recreational, rather than commercial, access.
- **Scenic/Cultural:** the list includes a few places that have a scenic or cultural priority. However, significant additional work is necessary to develop a coastwide perspective for the scenic and cultural places with coastwide significance.

## Summary of Existing Plans and Programs

### Relevant Coastal Programs

The purpose and policies of several state and federal programs provide guidance and direction for a coastal initiative that focuses on land conservation.

#### **Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program**

The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) was established in 2002 “for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses.” The program places priority on protection of lands that can be effectively managed and have significant ecological value.

Acquisition projects supported by CELCP funds must have the following characteristics:

- Involvement of a willing seller;
  - Protection in perpetuity, through either title of property or interests in property;
  - Access for the general public, with allowed limitations for resource management or public safety; and
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- Strategy for long-term stewardship of the property that protects the values originally identified as important for that property. This strategy should identify the entities that will be responsible for the long-term monitoring and management of the property.

In addition to the conservation purposes described above, the state CELC plan must also describe how specific projects and project areas meet the national program criteria to:

- Be consistent with the state's approved coastal management program and directly advance the goals, objectives or implementation of this program;
- Advance goals, objectives or implementation of NERR management plans approved under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA); and
- Advance national objectives of the CZMA.

### **Coastal Zone Management Program**

The following policies of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) relate directly to coastal and estuarine land conservation.

#### *Ecological and Conservation Values*

The CZMA declares its national policy to:

- Protect fish and wildlife and their habitat in the coastal zone;
- Protect estuaries to provide opportunities for long-term research, education, interpretation, and stewardship; and to
- Manage development to maintain and improve coastal water quality to protect and enhance natural resources and existing uses of those waters;

#### *Recreational, Historical, and Aesthetic Values*

The CZMA declares its national policy to:

- Maintain and enhance environmentally sound public access to the coasts for recreational purposes;
- Protect barrier islands within the coastal zone to provide protection against storm surge, wave damage and flooding, and maintain sand supplies and protect important recreational areas;
- Give priority consideration for coast dependent uses, including recreation; and
- Assist in the sensitive preservation and restoration of historic, cultural, and aesthetic coastal features.

### **State Coastal Program**

As the state entity responsible for implementing both CZMA and CELCP, six of the nine program policies of Maine's Coastal Program are directly relevant to CELCP. These policies are to:

- Support shoreline management that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources;
  - Discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety;
  - Encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources;
  - Protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance and maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast even in areas where development occurs;
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- Expand the opportunities for outdoor recreation and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development; and o
- Restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses.

The state coastal plan, approved by NOAA in April 2001 identifies several high-priority management issues that are also directly relevant to Maine's coastal and estuarine land protection program. These issues include:

- Protection of coastal wetland resources, with a particular focus on protecting wetland functions and values through a watershed approach to wetland conservation;
- Attainment of additional public access to the coast for both recreation and commercial uses; and
- Management of development impacts on coastal resources. Maine's Coastal Program allocates significant resources towards working with coastal municipalities to encourage appropriate patterns of growth.

Two high-priority issues identified in the coastal plan, ocean management, aquaculture, and coastal erosion hazards do not seem directly related to coastal and estuarine land conservation.

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## Summary of Existing Efforts

Reports or plans from the following organizations and programs were reviewed as part of a survey of existing conservation efforts along the coast of Maine. All of these organizations have a statewide, coastwide, or program-specific focus on issues related to coastal land conservation. A brief description of each program is also included, with emphasis on the program activities or planning recommendations that intersect with the goals of the Maine Coast Protection Initiative.

### **Federal Organizations and Programs**

- Gulf of Maine Council
- US Environmental Protection Agency
  - Casco Bay Estuary Project
  - New England Environmental Finance Center
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Gulf of Maine Program
  - Refuge Complexes
- Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
- National Park Service, Acadia National Park

### **State Organizations and Programs**

- Maine Department of Conservation
  - Bureau of Parks and Lands
  - Natural Areas Program
- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- Maine Department of Marine Resources
- Maine State Planning Office
  - Land for Maine's Future
  - Maine Coastal Program
- Beginning with Habitat

### **Private Organizations and Programs**

- Coastal Enterprise, Inc.
- Island Institute
- Maine Audubon Society
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust
- Maine Island Trail Association
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trust for Public Land

## Summary of Federal Conservation Efforts

### **Gulf of Maine Council**

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment was established in 1989 by the governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts to

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foster cooperative actions within the Gulf watershed. Its mission is to maintain and enhance environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine to allow for sustained resource use by existing and future generations. The Council's Public Education and Participation Committee publishes *The Gulf of Maine Times*, which emphasizes articles to highlight or promote cooperation "to maintain and enhance environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine." A five-year action plan for 2001-2006 identifies three goals:

- Protect and restore coastal and marine habitats, so that coastal and marine habitats throughout the Gulf of Maine are healthy and support the Gulf's diversity of plant and animal species
- Protect human health and ecosystem integrity, so that contaminants in the Gulf of Maine are at sufficiently low levels to ensure human health and ecosystem integrity
- Encourage sustainable maritime activities, so that in 2025 marine research and nature-based tourism provide unique and significant economic opportunities for the region. The Council will create strategies to achieve these new objectives by 2006.

### **US Environmental Protection Agency – Casco Bay Estuary Project**

The Casco Bay Estuary Project seeks to preserve the Bay's diverse values, collaborating with partner groups to ensure sound environmental stewardship through public involvement and cooperative management. In 1990, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designated Casco Bay "an estuary of national significance" and provided substantial support to help plan for the Bay's future. Area citizens worked closely with representatives of federal, state and local government, business and industry, and research institutions to develop a plan for managing the Casco Bay watershed. Since the *Casco Bay Plan* was adopted in 1996, area residents and groups have taken measures to:

- protect wildlife habitat;
- improve water quality;
- reduce pollution from stormwater runoff and combined sewer overflows;
- reduce toxic pollution; and
- protect and restore clamflats and swimming areas.

### **US Environmental Protection Agency – New England Environmental Finance Center**

The purpose of the NE/EFC is to further the joint goals of the U.S. EPA and the Muskie School of Public Policy to research, publish, and extend creative approaches to environmental protection and management, especially respecting the associated "how-to-pay" questions. In particular, the Center works to advance the understanding and practice of "smart growth" throughout New England; to build local capacity to deal with related issues; and to develop and apply techniques that go "beyond compliance" with government regulations. Projects relevant to the Initiative include:

- The Next Communities Initiative which will train community leaders in the skills necessary to make constructive change happen in their towns. By 2005, the Initiative plans to deliver this curriculum with the help of partners to a group of stakeholders in New England;
  - Training for local government officials about links between smart growth and water supply, stormwater financing, water security, and other water-related topics;
  - GIS Initiative to develop and deploy distributed data collection software (a website with conservation data and interactive mark-up capabilities) as a pilot activity. Results of this initiative will be presented at the New England GIS conference in fall 2004; and
  - A web-based course in conservation finance, which will provide a background on conservation finance, including the fundamental concept of the "funding quilt" (i.e., the
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combination of federal, state, local and private funding sources that are combined in many conservation projects), as well as descriptions and examples of the primary funding options used by federal, state, local and private sectors.

**US Fish and Wildlife Service – Gulf of Maine Coastal Program**

Gulf of Maine Coastal Program was established in 1991 as part of a nationwide network of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program offices, focuses on protecting economically, recreationally, and ecologically important coastal fish and wildlife habitat through partnerships. Using existing scientific data along with biological expertise and state-of-the-art computer mapping and database management capabilities, Gulf of Maine Program biologists analyze data, identify and map important fish and wildlife habitat, and recommend and implement habitat protection and restoration measures.

Working in voluntary non-regulatory partnerships, the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program has played a key role in:

- permanently protecting more than 69,000 acres of high value fish and wildlife habitat through fee and easement acquisition -- including 44 nesting islands, 100 coastal wetlands and associated upland buffer areas, and 42 areas with habitat adjacent to searun fish rivers,
- protecting fish and wildlife habitat on the largest forest land easement in the United States -- a 762,202 acre no-development easement,
- restoring more than 4,500 acres of habitat for migratory birds -- including 65 coastal wetlands, 4 grasslands, and 13 nesting islands,
- completing 56 river restoration projects to benefit searun fish -- including the removal of 10 dams on rivers and the installation or repair of 12 fish passage facilities at existing dams.

As well, USFWS worked in 15 towns in Casco Bay watershed, USFWS mapped current land use, mapped priority habitat, mapped conservation lands, provided data to land trusts, town planners, conservation commissions. USFWS also completed preliminary build-out analysis of region (although this has not been verified on town-by-town basis).

The Gulf of Maine Program also developed habitat models for important habitats within the Gulf of Maine. Maps, models, and metadata were developed for 64 Fish and Wildlife ‘trust’ species, and for an additional 27 priority species identified by Partners in Flight, the International Shorebird Survey, the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and USFWS Region 5 Migratory Bird Management Office.

**US Fish and Wildlife Service – National Wildlife Refuge Program****Maine Coastal Islands Wildlife Refuge Complex**

The Refuge Complex includes holdings all along the Maine coast and includes approximately 7,961 acres of diverse coastal Maine habitats including forested and non-forested offshore islands, coastal salt marsh, open field, and upland mature spruce-fir forest. Most of the holdings were established because of the value for implementing the national bird migratory program.

The Wildlife Refuge Complex has established seven goals for long-term operations, including:

- Perpetuate the biological diversity and integrity of upland communities on the Refuge Complex’s mainland properties to sustain high quality habitat for migratory birds.
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- Maintain high quality wetland communities on the Refuge Complex's mainland properties, primarily to benefit migratory birds of high conservation priority, while also supporting other native, wetland- dependent species of concern.
- Perpetuate the biological diversity and integrity of upland communities on the Refuge Complex's islands to sustain high quality habitat for nesting bald eagles and migratory songbirds and raptors, and to protect rare plant sites.
- Protect the high quality wetland communities on the Refuge Complex's islands to benefit nesting and migrating shorebirds and waterfowl.
- Protect and restore nesting seabird populations on the Refuge Complex's islands to contribute to regional and international seabird conservation goals.
- Promote enjoyment and stewardship of coastal Maine wildlife and their habitats by providing priority, wildlife-dependent recreational and educational opportunities.
- Protect the integrity of coastal Maine wildlife and habitats through an active land acquisition and protection program.
- Communicate and collaborate with local communities, Federal, State, local, and Tribal representatives, and other organizations throughout coastal Maine to further the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

A draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) was publicly released in May 2004 which presents four alternative for the management of this wildlife refuge complex during the next 15 years. The recommended alternative is to expand the refuge by 2,467 acres and notably expand management and recreation. Most of this expansion would occur on 87 nationally significant seabird, wading bird, or bald eagle coastal nesting islands, as well as in coastal wetlands. While increasing the protecting of birds of high conservation priority, the CCP would also increase opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation.

In the creation of this CCP, several significant issues were raised which are relevant to the Maine Coast Protection Initiative:

- How to protect coastal nesting islands, given the finite number of islands suitable for seabird, wading bird, and eagle nesting;
- How to manage increased recreational and commercial uses promoted by others on or near coastal nesting islands;
- How will management activities affect public access to coastal nesting islands;
- How to manage habitats to protect threatened or endangered species, or other species of management concern;
- How to manage activities not compatible with refuge lands
- How to improve communications, raise visibility of the Service and Refuge System, and build working relationships with local communities;
- What funding, staffing, and infrastructure is needed to manage a refuge that spans the coast of Maine and includes coastal islands;

Several significant issues raised during the CCP process do not seem to be directly relevant to the Initiative, including:

- How to control impacts of predators on species of management concern, how to manage sheep grazing, how to manage non-native, invasive species on refuge lands;
  - How to effectively monitor and inventory wildlife populations and habitat on refuge lands;
  - How to provide and maintain high-quality programs for hunting, fishing, environmental education and interpretation, wildlife observation, and photography, and how to manage traditional uses
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### Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

The Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve is part of a network of 26 NOAA-designated protected areas established to improve the health of the nation's coastal and estuarine ecosystems. It accomplishes its mission through integrated programs of research and environmental monitoring, education and outreach, and natural resource stewardship.

Wells NERR's stewardship goals relating to land conservation include the following: 1) permanently conserve lands necessary to protect Reserve resources, to ensure a stable environment for research and education, and to broaden the Reserve's representation of coastal ecosystems beyond the salt marshes and immediately adjacent uplands to include coastal watershed areas; and to 2) assist conservation partners in their efforts to conserve land in south coastal Maine, in particular in the Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative focus area, the rivers that flow into Wells Bay, and the Piscataqua River area.

Specific objectives described in the draft management plan for the Reserve are to:

1. Identify and prioritize parcels of land within the Webhannet River, Little River, and Ogunquit River watersheds that best meet the Reserve's acquisition evaluation criteria.
2. Work with partners including Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, Town of Wells, KK&W Water District, Great Works Regional Land Trust, Kennebunk Land Trust, and Laudholm Trust to develop conservation strategies and funding.
3. Work with residents, landowners, and developers to minimize the negative impacts of growth on resources important to the Reserve.
4. Conserve ecologically important parcels of lands within Reserve boundaries.
5. Work with the Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Initiative to help achieve conservation goals by following the "Conservation Plan" adopted in January 2005.
6. Assist other conservation partners in south coastal Maine to conserve land that meets the Wells NERR objectives for coastal watershed protection and restoration, in particular areas along the rivers that flow into Wells Bay (Kennebunk and Mousam Rivers) and the Piscataqua River watershed.
7. Collaborate with Great Bay NERR to study the creation of a bi-state watershed protection and land conservation plan for the Piscataqua River watershed.
8. Help increase the effectiveness and capacity of land conservation organizations and municipalities in southern Maine by providing opportunities for networking, information, training and technical support.
9. Take an active role in coastwide planning, conservation, and stewardship efforts where actions protect coastal and estuarine resources.

### US Department of Interior, National Park Service, **Acadia National Park**

Located on the rugged coast of Maine, Acadia National Park encompasses over 47,000 acres of granite-domed mountains, woodlands, lakes and ponds, and ocean shoreline. Such diverse habitats create striking scenery and make the park a haven for wildlife and plants.

The stated intent of those who have donated tens of thousands of acres for the creation of the park over the past 75 years and the intent of the secretary of the interior and the Congress in accepting those donations has been to preserve the area's outstanding scenic, natural, scientific, and historic

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values. These intents have withstood the test of time and changing social attitudes and public needs. The mission of the Park continues to be one of conserving the land for its habitat values, outdoor recreational uses, scenic qualities, and historic importance.

Acquisition boundaries and priorities for the Park are spelled out in a Land Protection Plan. The acquisition boundary for the park was established by Congress in 1986 and gave the NPS authority to acquire lands, but only within the designated boundary of the Park. At that time it identified approximately 175 tracks for possible acquisition and 24 others for deletion. This legislation also outlined conditions for acquiring conservation easements outside the designated boundary. Over the years the NPS has worked closely with the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and others to protect and conserve islands in the Mt Desert archipelago surround core park lands.

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## Summary of State Conservation Efforts

### Maine Department of Conservation – Bureau of Parks and Lands

The Bureau of Parks and Lands manages 30 state parks, as well as public reserved lands, historic sites, boating facilities, and submerged lands. The BPL is an partner with the Land for Maine's Future partner. It is a state-designated agency for local and municipal land trust projects and holds the project agreement. Programs relevant to the Initiative include:

- SCORP – State's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Forest Legacy Program

The Bureau manages 481,000 acres of Public Reserved Lands, 92,000 acres of state park and historic site lands, 4,200 acres of Non-reserved Lands, 35,000 acres of conservation easements, 2,300,000 acres of the State's marine and freshwater Submerged Lands, and 1,325 public coastal islands containing approximately 1,109 acres.

The Bureau is responsible for the following:

1. Acquiring and managing state parks, historic sites, certain snowmobile and ATV trails, boat launching sites, and public reserved lands and non-reserved lands;
2. Acquiring other interests in lands (e.g., conservation and recreation easements), and receiving gifts, to be managed as state parks, historic sites, public reserved lands and non-reserved lands, boat launching sites, and certain trails;
3. Managing some former institutional (non-reserved) lands, such as Pineland, Mackworth Island and Hebron, submerged lands beneath Great Ponds and the coastal waters, and more than 1,300 coastal islands;
4. Managing the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and lands within the Penobscot River Corridor Easement;
5. Coordinating management of the privately and publicly owned sections of the Appalachian Trail in Maine (in cooperation with the Maine Appalachian Trail Club and the Appalachian Mountain Club); and
6. Acting as Designated State Agency to monitor management of lands acquired with LMF funds by Cooperating Entities.

### Maine Department of Conservation – Natural Areas Program

The Program inventories lands that support rare and endangered plants and animals, rare natural communities, and outstanding examples of representative natural communities. The Program maintains a cross-referenced data management system that consists of automated and manual maps as well as information regarding natural features. These resources are regularly updated through field surveys, literature searches, review of museum and herbarium collections and communication with other scientific and natural resource organizations. Within Maine, the Program exchanges information on animals and their habitat needs with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW). MNAP and MDIFW use standard methodology in the management of information, and cooperate on a variety of conservation efforts. Programs relevant to the Initiative include:

- Beginning with Habitat
  - Land Trust Outreach for focus areas identified through Beginning with Habitat
  - Landowner Notification and Incentive Programs
  - Natural resource assessment for ecoregions in Maine
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### Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife

The mission of MDIFW is to ensure that all species of wildlife and aquatic resources in Maine are maintained and perpetuated for their intrinsic and ecological values, for their economic contribution, and for their recreational, scientific, and educational use by the people of Maine. With regards to the coastal environment, this agency owns, holds conservation easements, or manages through agreements with the Bureau of Public Lands, 301 islands and ledges. DIFW works with researchers on issues of management concern and conducts recovery work for the State's threatened and endangered species. They advise private landowners interested in wildlife and habitat protection, and administer the State's hunting, fishing and trapping programs. The Department also designates, creates, and maintains maps of Significant Wildlife Habitat. DIFW is a state-designated agency for local and municipal land trust projects and holds the project agreement. Programs relevant to the Initiative include:

- A water access program, that includes coastal sites
- A wetlands acquisition program
- Wildlife management areas and species Management Plans – may include ##s for habitat protection.
- Beginning with Habitat
- State Rare and Endangered Species

### Maine Department of Marine Resources

The Department of Marine Resources is responsible for the conservation and development of marine and estuarine resources. DMR sponsors and conducts scientific research; promotes and develops Maine coastal fishing industries; coordinates with local, state, and federal officials concerning activities in coastal waters; administers and enforces laws and regulations related to these tasks, including marine fisheries laws, boating registration and safety laws. Programs relevant to the Initiative include:

- Shellfish management program, which includes mapping and resource data, and municipal shellfish plans

### Maine State Planning Office – Maine Coastal Program

Administered by the Maine State Planning Office, the Coastal Program is a partnership among local, regional, and state agencies. It also collaborates with many private organizations, such as local land trusts and economic development groups. The Coastal Program undertakes or supports projects that promote sustainable economic development, encourage environmental stewardship and education, conserve and manage marine fisheries, reduce coastal hazards, and improve public access. Many of the programs coordinated by SPO are directly relevant to the initiative, including:

- The Coastal Priority Watershed Protection program, which focuses on the 17 identified priority estuaries;
  - The Casco Bay Wetlands pilot project which translated results of a wetlands functional classification project into tools useful to local officials in several Casco Bay municipalities. Towns are using new information in comprehensive planning, design of regulatory approaches, and development of land acquisition strategies;
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- A Right-of-Way Discovery Grant Program which each year awards small grants of approximately \$1,000 to municipalities or local land trusts to research forgotten or overlooked public rights-of-way. Discovery grants are intended to help communities find and assert public rights-of-way to the shore which may be lost by the passing of generations and changing land ownership patterns.
- Program support for Land For Maine's Future;
- Coordination of recreational access programs for coastal waters, in partnership with Department of Marine Resources
- Technical assistance grants
- Bay Management Planning Pilot Project

### Summary of Private Conservation Efforts with Coastwide Focus

#### **Coastal Enterprise, Inc.**

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) is a private, nonprofit community development corporation. The CEI Fisheries Project develops strategies to address specific needs of the fisheries industries, and related working waterfront activities. CEI also actively makes loans to support sustainable fishing.

#### **Island Institute**

The Island Institute is a non-profit organization that serves as a voice for the balanced future of the islands and waters of the Gulf of Maine. They are guided by an island ethic that recognizes the strength and fragility of Maine's island communities and the finite nature of the Gulf of Maine ecosystems. Along the Maine coast, the Island Institute seeks to support the islands' year-round communities; conserve Maine's island and marine biodiversity for future generations; develop model solutions that balance the needs of the coast's cultural and natural communities; provide opportunities for discussion over responsible use of finite resources, and provide information to assist competing interests in arriving at constructive solutions.

#### **Maine Audubon Society**

The Maine Audubon Society promotes wise use of Maine's environment through research, education, and advocacy. Its current programs include protection and information to support threatened and endangered shorebirds, shorebird habitat restoration, loon restoration, and the "loon count." This organization also offers field trips on natural history and ecology of coastal waters, and maintains a staff of wildlife biologists who support active field work, education, and a limited advocacy program.

#### **Maine Coast Heritage Trust**

The mission of Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) is to conserve coastal and other lands that define Maine's distinct landscape, protect its environment, sustain its outdoor traditions, and promote the well-being of its people. MCHT has helped landowners, communities, government agencies, and local land trusts for more than 30 years to conserve more than 112,000 acres, including

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vital wetlands, valuable farm and forest land, hundreds of miles of shoreline, and over 260 entire islands. It now owns only 48 properties outright, and holds conservation easements on 95 others.

### Maine Island Trail Association

The Maine Island Trail Association's (MITA) mission is to "...establish a model of thoughtful use and volunteer stewardship for the Maine islands that will assure their conservation in a natural state while providing an exceptional recreational asset that is maintained and cared for by the people who use it." MITA encourages a philosophy of low-impact use and active stewardship among its members. It also strives to educate island visitors about natural history, and the ecological sensitivity of the islands. Member-volunteers are encouraged to participate in their island monitoring and Adopt An-Island programs. Members receive a very popular guidebook to the Maine Islands Trail, along with their *Island Trail* newsletter, and educational information regarding low-impact camping.

### The Nature Conservancy

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to "preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive." In Maine, TNC has helped to protect more than 870,000 acres of natural lands, including priority projects in coastal areas such as Mount Agamenticus, the Kennebec Estuary, and Cobscook Bay, as well as protection projects in areas surrounding Maine rivers critical to Atlantic salmon recovery. TNC works closely with private and public partners in its conservation efforts by cultivating effective partnerships, good science and active outreach to the local community.

### Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land conserves land to create livable communities and a healthy environment. Projects have ranged from forests, farms and wilderness to playgrounds, parks and community gardens in urban areas. TPL has protected nearly 50,000 acres across Maine, including several partnership projects in southern coastal Maine. In addition, TPL has worked with Maine's congressional delegation to secure appropriations from the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) for projects along Maine's coast. TPL brings together land trusts, community groups, businesses, landowners, public officials, and funders to envision and pursue conservation goals. TPL also identifies existing and potential sources of public and private funds for land conservation, and helps communities tap them. The organization also works with local municipalities to craft ballot measures that can provide dollars needed to protect the special places communities cherish.

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## Private Conservation Efforts with Local or Regional Focus

In addition to the private organizations with a coastwide focus, many private land conservation organizations have a local or regional focus within Maine's coastal area. These land trusts protect lands, large and small, based on conservation objectives and priorities that meet the needs of their local communities. The existing conservation efforts of these organizations were not included in this inventory.

### Private Organizations with Local or Regional Focus

- Bangor Land Trust
- Biddeford Pool Land Trust
- Blue Hill Heritage Trust
- Boothbay Region Land Trust
- Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust
- Cape Elizabeth Land Trust
- Coastal Mountains Land Trust
- Conservation Trust of Brookville, Castine & Penobscot
- Cumberland Mainland and Islands Trust
- Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association
- Damariscotta River Association
- Downeast Rivers
- Falmouth Conservation Trust
- Freeport Conservation Trust
- Frenchman Bay Conservancy
- Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
- Friends of Royal River
- Georges River Land Trust
- Great Auk Land Trust
- Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust
- Great Works Regional Land Trust
- Harpswell Heritage Land Trust
- Island Heritage Trust
- Islesboro Islands Trust
- Kennebec Land Trust
- Kennebunk Land Trust
- Kennebunkport Conservation Trust
- Kittery Land Trust
- Laudholm Trust
- Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust
- Medomak Valley Land Trust
- Monhegan Associates
- North Haven Conservation Partners
- Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay
- Oyster River Bog Association
- Peaks Island Land Preserve
- Pemaquid Watershed Association
- Phippsburg Land Trust
- Portland Trails
- Quoddy Regional Land Trust
- Saco Valley Land Trust
- Scarborough Land Conservation Trust
- Sheepscoot Valley Conservation Association
- South Portland Land Trust
- Vinalhaven Land Trust
- Yarmouth Land Trust
- York Land Trust, Inc.