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LAND CONSERVATION SUPPORTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN JACKMAN

[JACKMAN, Maine] - The mission of the Forest Society of Maine (FSM) embraces working with communities that serve as gateways to Maine's North Woods. In particular, FSM enjoys helping communities with their efforts to advance economic development. An exciting example of our collaboration with the Jackman community is the recently completed Jackman – Moose River project.

About a year and a half ago the town of Jackman approached FSM for assistance with an emerging conservation and economic development opportunity. The town is the owner and operator of the Newton Field Airport where an expansion to the existing hangar infrastructure and apron (the airport's parking, boarding, and refueling area) has been proposed. The proposed development will create paved taxi lanes to a new six-unit T-hanger and prepare a site for a future 60' by 60' box hangar. New electrical and storm water infrastructure will also be installed as part of the expansion project.



Aerial view of conservation lands on the Moose River in Jackman, Maine (FSM photo).

A T-hanger is an aircraft storage and maintenance structure where planes are parked in alternating T-shaped units that make efficient use of available space. The new T-hanger at Newton Field Airport will allow tenants in the existing hangar to store their aircraft in individual units within the nested T-hanger. The proposed T-hanger will open up space for transient pilots, new tenants, and aircraft maintenance, providing a sustainable revenue source for the airport without increasing the tax burden on residents. Federal Aviation Administration funds will support 90% of the project costs with 5% matching funds to be provided by the Maine Department of Transportation and the town of Jackman, respectively.

The airport expansion plan has been approved by the town, but it was determined that the construction of the new hanger would result in the loss of a vernal pool. Vernal pools are seasonal pools of water that provide spawning and rearing habitat for certain species of frogs, salamanders, turtles, and invertebrates.

To move forward with the project the town was required to obtain a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. As part of the permitting process, the town developed a plan to mitigate the loss of the vernal pool by permanently protecting wetland and vernal pool resources nearby. To this purpose the town successfully acquired lands on the Moose River, and worked with the Forest Society of Maine to transfer a conservation easement on approximately 60 acres that contain wetlands and vernal pools.

This project was completed on July 2 and the Forest Society of Maine is now the holder of the conservation easement that will ensure the parcel remains undeveloped forever. The easement protects significant ecological resources and ensures that the wetland functions they provide, including flood

control and stabilization of the river shore, are sustained. The parcel will provide for the long-term protection of native plant and animal life and other natural resources and is publicly accessible for low-impact recreational uses like hiking and cross country skiing.

The addition of the Jackman – Moose River lands to the network of conserved lands in the region enhances ecological health and function across the landscape. There may also be opportunities to expand the wetland conservation parcel if the town decides to pursue additional airport expansions in the future.

Forest Society of Maine is proud to assist the town of Jackman to permanently protect unique wetland features in their community and complete this important economic development initiative. We look forward to celebrating the new conservation easement with town residents and employees later this year. To learn more about the Jackman – Moose River project or land conservation in Maine's North Woods, please visit fsmaine.org or stop by our office in the Moosehead Lake Region Visitor Center on Route 15.