



FOREST
SOCIETY
of MAINE

GRAFTON FOREST

Bringing permanent conservation to a highly resilient landscape

Land Worth Conserving



View from the top of Old Speck on the AT—Photo: Karin Tilberg

The 21,300 acre Grafton Forest project in Western Maine (bordering New Hampshire) is a rare opportunity to conserve a missing link that forms a multi-state conservation corridor. The property abuts a significant stretch of the Appalachian Trail buffering this iconic area and showcasing spectacular views. The lands are important for fish and wildlife habitat and are well-known recreation destinations.

This region, also referred to as the Mahoosuc Range, has long been the focus of conservation efforts. The Forest Society of Maine is working with the land managers to establish a working forest conservation easement on the property. Adding this project to existing conserved lands in the area will result in a contiguous conservation matrix of several hundred thousand acres.

Conservation Values



Ermine—Photo: Pam Wells

While the majority of the Grafton Forest lies in a valley with two small ponds and the Swift Cambridge River running through it, the property is ringed with high elevation habitat that is critical to wildlife in the region. Species that prefer forested uplands include the American marten, long and short-tailed weasels (ermine), Blackpoll warbler, Bicknell's thrush, spruce grouse, boreal chickadee, white-winged crossbill, and three-toed woodpecker. Moose, black bear and Canada lynx often use higher elevation habitats in winter months, and high elevation ridgelines serve as migratory routes for songbirds, raptors and bats.

Additionally the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has documented several locations of wood turtle (Species of Special Concern) within the project area.

Recreational Values



Guide Polly Mahoney with her Yukon huskies—Photo: Mahoosuc Guide Service

The Grafton region is popular with a wide variety of recreationists. ATV and snowmobile clubs have trails that run from Maine into New Hampshire; local guides use trails to run their dogsled teams; schools and individuals use the area to cross-country ski and mountain bike; hunters and anglers use the property; and hikers use two specially designated side trails to access the AT.

Public access to the property and hiking trails will be assured as part of this conservation project.

Grafton Forest Project

Development Threats

The project terrain and existing road infrastructure make the lands vulnerable to development. Being located in close proximity to Sunday River Ski Resort, which has become a year round recreation destination with over 550,000 visitors annually, makes this an attractive location for people who want to build second homes in the area.

The working forest conservation easement would prohibit development, transmission lines, and mining on the property, keeping it as a managed forest providing jobs and forest products for the local and regional economies.

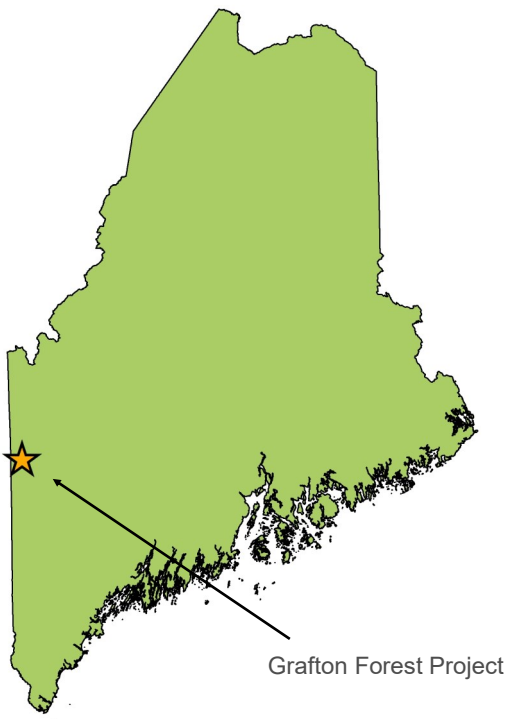


Route 26 through Grafton Township near project lands

Making It Happen

Many regional and statewide organizations, individuals, and public officials support this project such as the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge, Mahoosuc Land Trust, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and the Appalachian Mountain Club. The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust is also supportive as they have determined the project lands are within one of the conservation priorities of the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (Maine's High Peaks).

FSM needs to raise **\$6.9 million** by December 2021 to successfully complete the project. Reaching this goal will provide the funds needed to conserve the property in perpetuity and provide the ability for FSM to pursue additional forest conservation to benefit all who care for and enjoy Maine's forests.



The Forest Society of Maine is a statewide land trust working with land-owners to conserve and maintain the many values of forestlands in Maine.

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