

FOREST SOCIETY OF MAINE:

Conservation Connections from the Forests to the Coast

Boaters exploring the waters off Bay Point or Popham Beach know they are at the mouth of the Kennebec River. They might also know how far inland the river snakes but do they know that its current originates at Moosehead Lake, which is surrounded by over 400 miles of shoreline, spectacular mountains, pristine lakes, and vast forestlands? Hundreds of thousands of acres of forestland in the Moosehead Lake region are conserved either in fee or under easement. Notably, these forests lie within two different watersheds. If you stood atop Scammon Ridge in Greenville, with your feet spread apart, one foot would fall on land whose waters flow into the Kennebec watershed and the other on land whose waters flow into the Penobscot watershed.

Maine's North Woods contain significant portions of seven out of ten of Maine's major watersheds. These forested watersheds are the source of clean water for Maine communities, wildlife habitat, and working forestlands. They cover an



Moosehead Lake East Outlet, Kennebec River Watershed

expanse of 12 million acres—3.5 times the size of the state of Connecticut. These undeveloped forestlands provide Maine with the last dark skies east of the Mississippi and encompass the final stronghold of Eastern brook trout in the eastern United States.

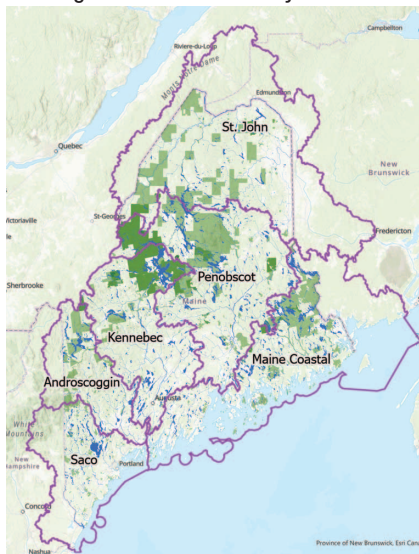
The North Woods are increasingly recognized for their resilience against climate change and their capability to capture and store carbon dioxide. Maine's forests can sequester as much as 60% of the state's annual carbon emissions (a figure that rises to 75% if forest products are included). But Maine loses 10,000 acres of natural and working lands to development annually, which makes it more important now than ever to conserve Maine's forests as forests, and to minimize development and forestland fragmentation.

The Forest Society of Maine, based in Bangor, is Maine's land trust for the North Woods. FSM has helped conserve about one million acres of forestland, 90 percent of which are working forests. The organi-

zation's forest conservation easements include the headwaters of many of Maine's largest ocean-bound rivers—the Kennebec, the Penobscot, the Androscoggin, and the St. Croix. These easements are permanent and prevent development and conversion to other uses, and often ensure pedestrian access. The conservation of forestland in these watersheds helps mitigate climate change, and protect clean waters, riparian wildlife habitat, and the economic benefits that forests and rivers provide all the way down to ocean harbors.

Wherever you are along the coast, the next time you find yourself boating past the mouth of one of Maine's great rivers, take a moment to reflect on the forests and wildlands from whence these waters flow, and the land trusts in Maine, such as FSM, that are continually working to keep the headwaters protected and the surrounding forestlands conserved forever!

For more information, visit us at www.fsmaine.org or call (207) 945-9200.



Watershed boundaries for Maine's major river systems

This page is sponsored by the Ocean Ledges Fund of the Maine Community Foundation with the goal of supporting education and conservation.