

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community Leaders Attend AMC Reception at Little Lyford Pond Camps

Elected officials and business leaders from throughout Piscataquis County participated in a press and community reception at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Little Lyford Pond Camps in Bowdoin College Grant East, June 17.

The event gave attendees an opportunity to visit the traditional sporting camps operated for the public by the AMC. Over dinner, participants discussed the AMC's Maine Woods Initiative, a land conservation effort that integrates habitat protection, recreation, education, and sustainable forestry in the 100-Mile Wilderness region.

Reception attendees included Mark Scarano, executive director of the Piscataquis County Economic Development Commission; Piscataquis County Commissioner Tom Lizotte and his wife, Leslie; Greenville First Selectman Bonnie Dubien; Greenville Selectman Alan McBreity and his wife, Linda; Donna Fichtner, executive director of the Bangor Convention and Visitors' Bureau and chair of the Natural Resources Committee of the Maine Tourism Bureau; and Roger Merchant of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service and chair of the Piscataquis County Tourism Task Force.

Earlier in the day, reporters and photographers toured the AMC's 37,000-acre Katahdin Iron Works property, a focal point for the initiative, which represents the most significant investment in conservation and recreation in the organization's 129-year history.

AMC is working in partnership with community leaders in Piscataquis County, the state of Maine, forest products companies, the Trust for Public Land, and other conservation groups and recreational organizations to carry out the initiative.

Critical to funding this effort is the federal Forest Legacy program and the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) program. LMF has committed \$1 million for conservation of the property, while the President recommended \$5 million for the project in his Forest Legacy budget request. U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, Congressman Michael Michaud, the state of Maine, the towns of Greenville and Brownville, and the Piscataquis County Economic Development Council have all been key supporters of this funding.

The Maine Woods Initiative seeks to address the ecological needs of the Maine Woods region by supporting local forest products jobs and traditional recreation, creating new multi-day backpacking experiences for visitors and attracting new nature-based tourism to the region.

AMC crews are creating new hiking trails on the property this summer, and the second harvest of trees on the property is set to take place this summer as well.

The AMC purchased the Katahdin Iron Works parcel from International Paper in late 2003, in a transaction facilitated by the Trust for Public Land. The parcel includes outstanding ecological and recreational resources and is traversed by the Appalachian Trail. The property lies 10 miles east of Greenville, and includes Long Pond, Houston Pond, and Chairback Mountain.

AMC's work in Maine dates back to 1876. AMC members were the first to map Katahdin, and AMC trail crews built many early trails in Baxter State Park. The AMC manages several destinations in Maine for use by members and the general public, including Echo Lake Camp on Mount Desert Island, Knubble Bay Camp on Georgetown Island, and Swan's Falls Campground in Fryeburg.

With members throughout the Northeast, including 3300 members in Maine, the nonprofit AMC promotes the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers, and trails of the Appalachian Region.

More information is available on the Web at www.outdoors.org.