



NEWS



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Maine Forest Conservation Project Gets Big Boost From Congress

Washington, DC — The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national conservation organization, and the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), the nation's oldest conservation and recreation organization, today praised the U.S. Congress for providing \$4.5 million in USDA Forest Legacy funding for the Katahdin Iron Works (KIW) Project in central Maine. The project has received strong support from U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins and U.S. Representative Michael Michaud, who were instrumental in securing this funding as part of the Fiscal Year 2006 Interior Appropriations bill that will now go before the President for his signature.

Federal funding is critical to ensuring the success of the Katahdin Iron Works Project and protection of Maine's forest resources as part of broader conservation efforts. The 37,000-acre KIW property serves as the centerpiece of AMC's Maine Woods Initiative, a land conservation effort that integrates habitat protection, recreation, education, and sustainable forestry in the 100-Mile Wilderness region of Maine, which stretches from the town of Monson north to Mt. Katahdin along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The primary goals of the Katahdin Iron Works Project are to protect the property's significant natural resources, contribute to local economic development through sustainable forestry on the property, and management of the property's recreational opportunities to attract new nature and recreation-based tourism. Little Lyford Pond Camps, which the AMC operates on the property, serves as the recreational hub for the project and base for exploring the region.

The KIW property is located 10 miles east of Moosehead Lake, near the towns of Greenville, Brownville, Milo and Dover-Foxcroft, and includes a 17-mile portion of the federally protected Appalachian Trail. In 2003, the AMC, with assistance from TPL, purchased the KIW tract from International Paper.

"In securing these critical funds, the Maine Congressional delegation has demonstrated once again its leadership and legislative skills," said Whitney Hatch, TPL New England Regional Manager. "We are extremely grateful for their support of this conservation project, which will

protect wildlife habitat and important public recreation lands while providing economic benefits to the community.”

“We are thrilled that Congress has recognized the unique qualities of AMC’s Maine Woods Initiative, and especially our desire to provide extensive recreation opportunities for both local residents and visitors to the area,” said Andrew Falender, AMC’s Executive Director. “We are tremendously appreciative of the support that we have received throughout this process from Maine’s Congressional delegation, the leaders of Greenville and Brownville, Governor Baldacci and his key staff, the Piscataquis County Economic Development Council, and many other local and regional partners and supporters.”

Governor John Baldacci and the Maine Department of Conservation recommended the KIW project as Maine’s top Forest Legacy priority for the year, and the U.S. Forest Service ranked it #4 nationally in the President’s FY06 Forest Legacy budget.

In addition to the Forest Legacy funds, AMC and TPL are working to secure matching funds from other public and private sources. The Land for Maine’s Future program has already committed \$1 million to support the property’s protection, and if another land bond is successful in Maine, additional state funds will be sought. Private fundraising, targeted at \$15 million, is underway to support recreational infrastructure, stewardship, monitoring, and educational programs on the property.

The Forest Legacy Program, authorized by Congress in 1990 to keep intact natural and recreational resources of the nation's dwindling forests, provides federal money to states to protect threatened working forests and woodlands either through public purchase or conservation easements. The latter are voluntary agreements in which landowners are paid to give up future development rights on their property. With its minimum requirement of 25 percent non-federal matching funds, the program leverages state and private dollars to complement federal money, creating partnerships that have lasting value.

The Trust for Public Land, established in 1972, specializes in conservation real estate, applying its expertise in negotiations, public finance, and law to protect land for people to enjoy as parks, greenways, community gardens, urban playgrounds, and wilderness. With funding from the Forest Legacy Program, the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund, state and local open-space funds, and other public and private investments, TPL has helped to protect more than 2 million acres across the country. TPL depends upon the support of individuals, foundations and corporations. For more information, visit TPL on the web at www.tpl.org

Founded in 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club is the oldest conservation and recreation organization in the United States. With 3,600 members in Maine and more than 90,000 members in the Northeast and beyond, the nonprofit AMC promotes the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers, and trails of the Appalachian region.

For more information on AMC’s Maine Woods Initiative, see: www.outdoors.org/mwi.