

# KENNEBEC JOURNAL

Excerpt from:

## “Partnerships that protect land and jobs”

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Sporting camp owners, Maine guides, forest managers and residents of the Grand Lake Stream region Down East joined Gov. John Baldacci and conservation group officials last week to celebrate the completion of one of the most ambitious land preservation efforts in the last decade.

It was a well-deserved party.

The numerous partners in the effort raised \$35 million and used it to protect 342,000 acres of forest, 1,500 miles of riverfront and hundreds of miles of lakefront in the sparsely populated and environmentally noteworthy region. The project, called the Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership, started as an effort by local residents seven years ago to maintain what is best about the area -- an intact, working forest used for timber production and recreation as well as sparkling cold lakes and roaring rivers that support world-renowned populations of salmon, trout and bass.

And by conserving the land, project partners have contributed a significant portion of what is now a block of more than 1.3 million contiguous acres preserved on either side of the Maine-New Brunswick border.

The governor hit just the right notes when he said, "This project is noteworthy for the depth and vigor of local support and the many economic benefits it brings to businesses, guides, loggers and residents in the region." The partnership managed to be almost all things to all people as it conserved land for wildlife protection, sustainable forestry and outdoor recreation while preventing the kind of scattered and damaging development that now threatens so much of Maine's storied forest landscape. Much of the credit for such a comprehensive protection effort goes to organizers who successfully engaged the local community in planning for the future of the lands that provide their homes, their heritage and the livelihoods for many.

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While there are many models for land conservation in Maine, the Down East project can prove instructive.