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## **Forests and Lakes – For People – Forever**

**For Immediate Release**

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Additional contacts follow the release text.

# **21,870-ACRE COMMUNITY FOREST EFFORT REACHES MILESTONE:**

## **Maine Acquires Conservation Easement in Partnership, Downeast Lakes Land Trust Pursuing Forest Purchase.**

**Grand Lake Stream, Maine:** Today the Downeast Lakes Land Trust and Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry announced the Department's purchase of a conservation easement on 21,870 acres in Grand Lake Stream from The Lyme Timber Company.

The West Grand Lake Forest property wraps around the village of Grand Lake Stream, and is adjacent to other conservation lands, including the Downeast Lakes Land Trust's 33,708-acre Farm Cove Community Forest. These lands are in a broader landscape of nearly 1.4 million contiguous acres of public and private conservation lands extending across the border into New Brunswick, Canada.

The West Grand Lake Forest conservation easement includes 17 miles of shoreline on West Grand, Big, and Lower Oxbrook lakes, along with frontage on Big Musquash Stream. It also conserves ¼ mile on the west side of Grand Lake Stream above Big Falls.

“Grand Lake Stream has a rich heritage as a destination for outdoor recreation,” said Mark Berry, Executive Director of Downeast Lakes Land Trust. “By permanently conserving these lands, and guaranteeing they will always be open to the public for recreation, we’re protecting that heritage and a way of life for future generations.”

In 2008, the forest property was purchased by The Lyme Timber Company, after long-term ownership and management by the Webber family and Prentiss & Carlisle Company of Bangor. The land trust negotiated an option agreement with Lyme Timber that included the right to purchase this conservation easement. “The investment by Lyme Timber in 2008 made this project possible, and their experience and commitment to conservation has been essential to the success of this effort,” said Berry.

In a unanimous vote at a November, 2008 town meeting, the citizens of Grand Lake Stream – population of 109 – appropriated \$40,000 as a contribution to permanent conservation of the West Grand Lake Community Forest.

In addition to strong local support, the effort attracted leadership statewide. The Honorary Co-chairs of the West Grand Lake Community Forest Project are Governor Paul R. LePage, Senator Olympia J. Snowe, Senator Susan M. Collins, Former Senator George J. Mitchell, Representative Michael H. Michaud, Representative Chellie M. Pingree, Passamaquoddy Tribal Governor Joseph Socobasin, Baskahegan Company CEO Roger Milliken, Jr., CEO, and Seven Islands Land Company Retired President John Cashwell.

Downeast Lakes Land Trust partnered with Maine to propose the project to the U.S. Forest Service, Forest Legacy Program. The Forest Service selected this locally-led project as the #1 national forest conservation priority in 2011, awarding over \$5.5 million. The Land for Maine's Future Board awarded \$1,250,000 to the project, which was the top-scoring conservation project in the most-recent round of grant proposals. Additional funding has been provided by the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the Open Space Institute, the Pew Charitable Trusts Northeast Land Trust Consortium, and many other foundations, businesses, and individuals.

This conservation easement purchase extends the option agreement between the land trust and Lyme Timber through 2015, providing opportunity to raise the additional funds required to purchase the property outright. "Our goal is to acquire the forest and manage it with the adjacent Farm Cove Community Forest with a focus on wildlife habitat, public recreation, and a sustainable timber economy," Berry said, "Our approach provides local people the opportunity to become stewards of the natural resources that support their economy."

# **West Grand Lake Community Forest Easement Announcement December 18, 2012 Contacts and Quotes**

## **Governor Paul R. LePage**

Adrienne Bennett, Communications Director, (207) 287-3531

“Maine’s natural resources are the backbone of our economy,” said Governor Paul R. LePage. “The Grand Lake Stream area has outstanding fisheries, wildlife and scenic resources that make it an attraction for recreationists from around the world while supporting the highest concentration of guides in the state. The historic working forests that have safeguarded these natural assets are now assured for the future.”

## **Senator Susan Collins**

Kevin Kelley, Communications Director, (202) 224-4953, [Kevin\\_Kelley@Collins.Senate.gov](mailto:Kevin_Kelley@Collins.Senate.gov)

“As a long-time supporter of the Forest Legacy Program and a member of the Senate Interior Appropriations Committee, I am particularly pleased to see the completion of the West Grand Lake Forest easement,” said U.S. Senator Susan Collins. “This acquisition adds to the wonderful array of quality lands conserved for all Mainers to enjoy. The priceless assets protected here are vital to Maine’s tourism. I’ve seen firsthand the strong support of the local community for this conservation effort, and I admire the dedication of the people of Grand Lake Stream to conserve the natural resources that sustain their economy and support Maine’s timber industry.”

## **Representative Mike Michaud**

Ed Gilman, Communications Director, (202) 225-6306. [Ed.Gilman@mail.house.gov](mailto:Ed.Gilman@mail.house.gov)

“I was proud to support this project,” said Congressman Mike Michaud. “It builds on Maine’s long tradition of conservation and public access. This easement is a victory for outdoor enthusiasts, our economy and the future of our valuable natural resources.”

## **Representative Chellie Pingree**

Andrew Colvin, Field Representative, (207) 774-5019. [andrew.colvin@mail.house.gov](mailto:andrew.colvin@mail.house.gov)

"I'm so excited that this special place will be there forever for people to experience its natural beauty and recreational opportunities. With benefits for wildlife habitat, sustainable forestry, and recreation, it's a win-win for the environment and economy," said Congresswoman Chellie Pingree. "My appreciation goes to the incredible partnership that has formed to make this project a success, and to the residents of Grand Lake Stream for their commitment to protecting these lands and waters. I'm pleased that the federal Forest Legacy Program could help make it possible."

## **Downeast Lakes Land Trust**

Mark Berry, Executive Director (207) 796-2100, [mberry@downeastlakes.org](mailto:mberry@downeastlakes.org)

**Lyme Timber Company**

Tom Morrow, Managing Director (603) 643-3300, [tmorrow@lymetimber.com](mailto:tmorrow@lymetimber.com)

“The Lyme Timber Company has been pleased to collaborate with the Downeast Lakes Land Trust to secure the permanent conservation of our Grand Lake Stream property via this sale of a working forest conservation easement to the State of Maine. The lands will continue to operate as a working forest, including sustainable timber harvesting, contributing to Maine’s economy.”

**Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry**

Jay Finegan, Director of Special Projects/Communications (207) 287-3156,

[Jay.Finegan@maine.gov](mailto:Jay.Finegan@maine.gov)

“We are very pleased to be acquiring the public recreational access rights provided by this easement,” said Walt Whitcomb, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. “These lands support traditional uses, including hunting and fishing, and the easement also guarantees continuation of the primary ATV and snowmobile trails that cross the property.”

# **West Grand Lake Community Forest Easement Announcement December 18, 2012 Partner Information**

## **About Downeast Lakes Land Trust**

Downeast Lakes Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2001 by local residents in Grand Lake Stream, Maine, with a slogan of “Forests and Lakes – For People – Forever”. The trust contributes to the long-term economic and environmental well-being of the Downeast Lakes region through the conservation and exemplary management of its forests and waters. The trust sustainably manages the 33,708-acre Farm Cove Community Forest for wildlife habitat, forest products, and public recreation, as described on its web site, [www.downeastlakes.org](http://www.downeastlakes.org). Downeast Lakes Land Trust received *Down East* Magazine’s Environmental Award in 2006, was named a 2006 Landowner of the Year by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, in 2007 became the first local land trust in Maine to earn Forest Stewardship Council Forest Management certification, and in 2011 received the Espy Land Heritage Award from Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

## **About Lyme Timber**

The Lyme Timber Company LP is a private timberland investment management organization (TIMO) that focuses on the acquisition and sustainable management of lands with unique conservation values. Since its founding in 1976, the Company has followed a disciplined and value oriented approach to investing in forestland and rural real estate. The Lyme team has extensive experience managing and operating land throughout the Northeast, Appalachian region, and Lake States of the US. The Company’s current portfolio includes 475,000 acres of forestland located in New York, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Maine, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Virginia, Delaware, and Louisiana. The Company lands are primarily certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification program. Over 30 million board feet of FSC certified logs are harvested from Lyme lands annually.

## **About the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry**

The Division of Parks and Public Lands, within the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry manages 48 state parks and historic sites, 600,000 acres of public reserved land and 2.3 million acres of submerged land and provides conservation oversight monitoring of 730,000 acres of conservation easements on private lands. Its multiple-use guidelines provide an extraordinary array of working forests, wildland preserves, outdoor recreation, and more than 20,000 miles of ATV, snowmobile, waterway and coastal trails.