

## Conservation Easements - BPL Costs and Revenues

**Background:** The Bureau of Parks and Lands holds 62 conservation easements, encompassing 380,901 acres. Subdivisions in easement lands has created a total of 93 parcels with 93 landowners subject to BPL conservation easements (See BPL list of conservation easements document).

Most of these easements were acquired in the last 15 years. These easements are located throughout the state in all counties except Kennebec and Sagadahoc. Public recreational access is provided on all but 1500 acres (the earliest easements tended to be for scenic protection).

Ninety-seven percent of all conservation easement acres held by the Bureau provide for continued commercial timber management. 322,143 acres in 18 separate easements are “working forest conservation easements” funded substantially through the federal Forest Legacy Program. An additional 13 conservation easement properties covering 46,059 acres also allow timber management. Conservation easements with working forests are more complex and require more time for monitoring and oversight.

In 2007 the State enacted legislation requiring all conservation easement holders to monitor these easements for compliance with easement terms at least once every three years. 33 MRSA 477-A(3). The Federal Forest Legacy Conservation Easement Program requires annual compliance monitoring.

**Staff and Funding Resources:** Table 1 shows available dedicated revenues, and how they are being utilized in 2015. The dedicated revenues are derived from easement endowment funds contributed privately and held by the Maine Community Foundation with BPL authorized to draw from the fund proceeds. Total funds held by MCF is now approaching \$2,240,000, and the total in available withdrawals is \$78,640. This covers contractual and out of pocket expenses, but not BPL staff time. Table 2 shows in FY 2015 staff time logged on easements at approximately \$54,000. (not counting some small additional time and cost by various other staff, such as our GIS coordinator for preparation of maps for monitoring/acquisition, wildlife biologist for compliance issues, and resource administrator related to contract administration).

It is worth pointing out that these endowment funds are subject to market fluctuations, and with the market drop in 2008, the endowments lost over 25% of their value. That value has since rebounded, but budgets for use of MCF revenues need to have some buffer during down-cycle years. Hence the Bureau does not withdraw the full amount of available funds, but rather leaves some margin in to build the principal.

**Table 1: Maine Community Fund CE Endowments - Annual Budget**

<b>FUND/Year</b>	<b>Original Principal</b>	<b>End of 2014 Balance</b>	<b>2015 Grant \$ Available</b>
<b>MCES - General*</b>			
* 10K First Roach; 32K Wyman; 15K Jugtown, 35K Leavitt; 65K Indian Pond; 5K other			
2002-11	\$162,000	\$271,273	\$9,620
<b>Tumbledown</b>			
Pope Mtn, Hedgehog Hill, T6 North of Weld, Tumbledown Mtn (fee)			
2003 (Hancock)	\$40,000	\$79,612	\$2,820
<b>Nicatous</b> (includes recreation as secondary use)			
2000 (Robbins)	\$80,000	\$179,459	\$6,370
2001 (TNC)	\$40,000		
<b>Katahdin Forest</b>			
2007 (TNC)	\$500,000	\$634,607	\$22,510
<b>Katahdin Iron Works</b>			
2007	\$35,000	\$131,388	\$4,660
2008	\$65,000		
<b>Anson Abenaki</b>			
2008	\$25,000	\$34,049	\$1,210
<b>Wabassus</b>			
2009	\$50,000	\$75,907	\$2,650
<b>The Roaches Ponds</b>			
2009	\$145,000	\$202,467	\$6,520
<b>Stowe Mountain</b>			
2009	\$200,000	\$293,147	\$10,400
<b>West Grand Lake</b>			
2013	\$200,000	\$238,049	\$8,880
<b>Orbeton Stream</b>			
2015	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$3,000
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$2,239,958</b>	<b>\$78,640</b>
<b>Planned Disbursements</b>			
Contracted Services- FSM (incl STA_DICAP)			\$7,500
Contracted services- Petruska (incl STA_DICAP)			\$50,500
Miscellaneous Costs - lodging/meals/vehicle			\$2,500
			<b>\$60,500</b>
Note: Unallocated (building principal)			\$18,140

**STAFF TIME AND COST ON CONSERVATION EASEMENTS FY 2014 and 2015**

		FY 2014 Cost \$	FY 2014 Hours	FY 2015 Cost \$	FY 2015 Hours
<b>EASEMENTS -NOT FLP</b>	EICKENBERG	4,037.02	90.5	3,081.73	65
	RODRIGUES	13,887.45	333	17,590.30	410
<b>EASEMENTS - FLP</b>					
EASEMENTS - FLP MONITORING	RODRIGUES	12,592.83	302	14,301.51	335
EASEMENTS - FLP ACQUISITION	RODRIGUES	5,656.71	134	4,804.11	111
EASEMENTS - FLP ACQ & MONIT	EICKENBERG	13,472.82	300	14,180.35	305
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>49,646.83</b>	<b>1159.5</b>	<b>53,958.00</b>	<b>1226</b>
<b>Paid from Lands Acct<sup>3</sup></b>		32,136.99		36,695.92	

Note 1: from timesheet records

Note 2: Eickenberg time on FLP estimated 50% for CE

Note 3: Eickenberg paid from General Fund

Rodrigues paid from Public Lands Fund