

**FISCAL YEAR 2025
ANNUAL REPORT**
to the

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

**MAINE PUBLIC RESERVED, NONRESERVED,
AND SUBMERGED LANDS**



The south peak of Mt. Abraham, viewed from Perham Stream

**MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION
AND FORESTRY**
Bureau of Parks and Lands
March 1, 2026



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Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks and Lands

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL), within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), is responsible for the management and administration of Maine's State Parks, Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands,¹ Submerged Lands, Coastal Islands, conservation easement lands, and other lands as provided by law.

This report constitutes the required annual reporting pursuant to the following:

- 12 MRSA §1853, 1839, and elsewhere, related to Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands,
- 12 MRSA §1850(1), 1836(1), and elsewhere related to vehicular access to Bureau lands, and
- 12 MRSA §1805 and 1853 related to Ecological Reserves on Bureau lands.

This report provides an overview of the Bureau's scope of responsibilities and information on its management activities during fiscal year 2025 (FY 25). As required, the report includes information on gates and barriers that prevent public vehicle access to Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands (Public Lands), recreation facility fees charged for using these lands, and a status report on Ecological Reserves. The report also includes information on timber, recreation, and wildlife management on Public Lands during the fiscal year.

Income and expenditure information is provided for FY 25, and a report for the upcoming FY 27 budget is also included. The legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ACF) must report by March 15th to the Appropriations Committee on the Bureau of Public Lands' upcoming FY 27 budget. The Public Lands division of the Bureau is a dedicated revenue component of the agency, funding almost all its administrative, planning, management, and operational activities from revenue generated by the land base, with additional funds provided through various grant programs. In recent years, declining timber markets have resulted in a challenging budget situation for the Public Lands. The Bureau has focused on reducing costs and increasing efficiencies and has proposed a General Fund request for the FY '26 Supplemental Budget. The Bureau will also convene a work group to review the current funding model and recommend alternatives moving forward.

The management of Public Lands is directed by statute. Title 12 MRSA §1833 and §1847 direct the Bureau to manage the Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands (645,255 acres in FY 25)² *“under the principles of multiple land use to produce a sustained yield of products and services in accordance with both prudent and fair business practices and the principle of sound planning.”* In addition, management of Public Reserved Lands must *“demonstrate exemplary land management practices, including silvicultural, wildlife, and recreation management”* (12 MRSA §1847). Fifteen-year multiple-use plans for the properties direct the Bureau's Public Lands management activities. Benefits from the sound management of these lands include:

¹ Public Reserved Lands (comprising > 99% of total Reserved and Nonreserved lands acreage) consist of lands acquired from the sale or exchange of ministerial and school lots set aside before statehood, remaining unsold lots, and other lands acquired and designated as Public Reserved Lands by the director. The Nonreserved Public Lands (13 parcels in total) consist of other public domain lands, public islands in inland waters, lands acquired by the Maine Forest Service and managed by the Bureau, and other lands acquired by the Bureau pursuant to other lawful authority.

² This figure reflects updated property records and improved GIS data, as well as acquisitions and dispositions that occurred in FY 25.

- production of forest products,
- public access to recreational opportunities,
- enhancement of wildlife habitat, and
- protection of unique natural and cultural resources.

The Bureau is also responsible for managing and reporting to the ACF Committee on public trust rights to Submerged Lands and Coastal Islands. When granting leases for Submerged Lands, the Bureau includes conditions to maintain customary and traditional public access, navigation, and commercial marine use. This report covers FY 25 along with some highlights from the first half of FY 26.

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

In FY 25, lands under the Bureau’s ownership, management, or oversight included:

Acres*	Type
645,255	Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands held in fee.
401,207	Conservation and recreation easements
85,602	Fee lands held as Parks, Historic Sites, or Boat Access Sites
2.3 million	Marine and freshwater submerged lands
1,095	Publicly held coastal islands

**Acreages presented in this report are based on land transaction records, parcel boundaries mapped in geographic information systems (GIS), and, in some cases, land surveys. Because survey-grade mapping is unavailable across all lands, reported acreages may include an inherent mapping error of about 2%.*

See map on page 3.

III. LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The Bureau manages 147 Public Reserved Land units and 12 Nonreserved Public Land units, ranging from 30 to over 44,000 acres. Management plans address the Reserved and Nonreserved Lands within a planning region and cover fifteen years, with five-year reviews. Management plans for all major land units are now in place.³

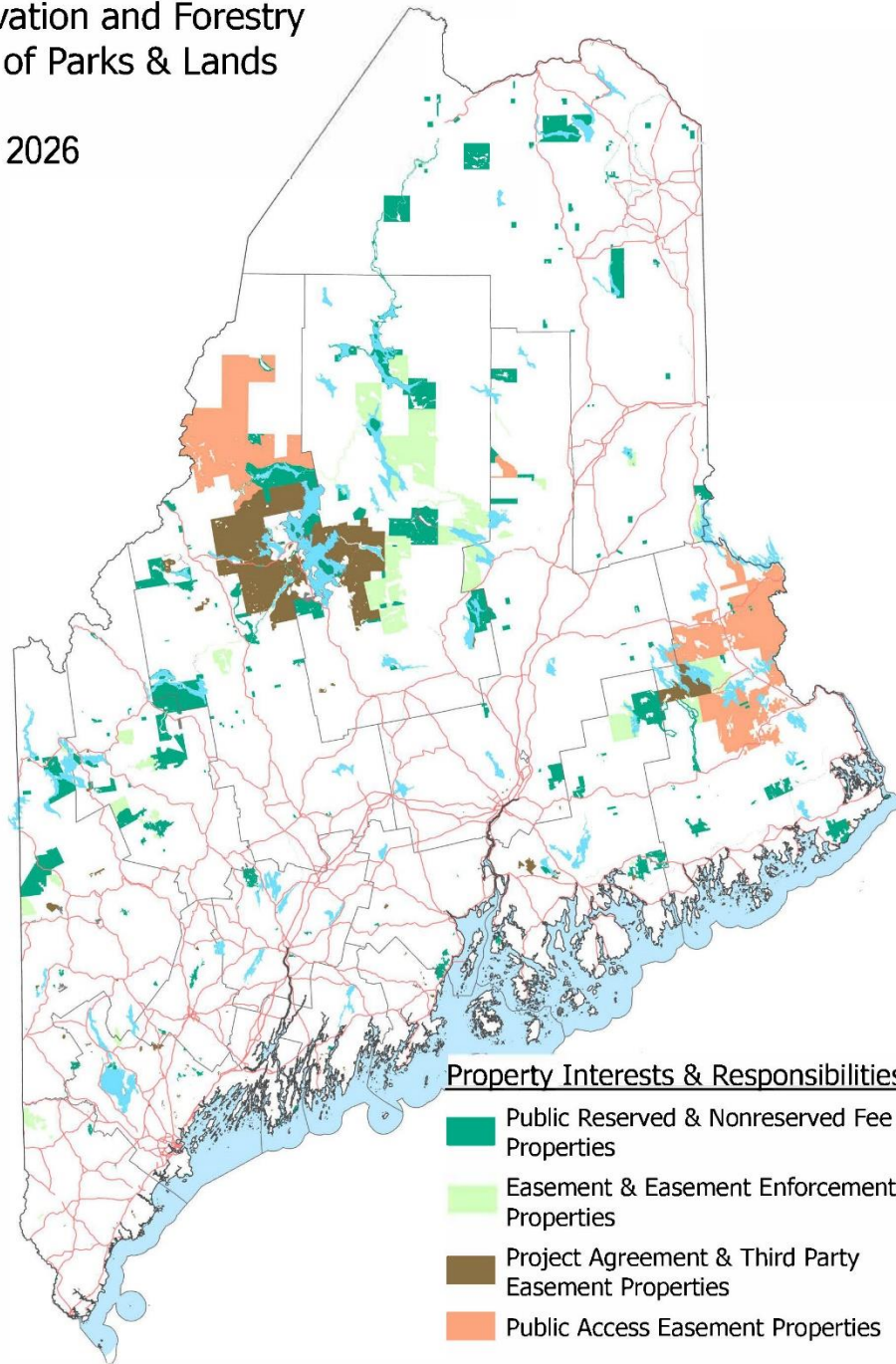
In FY 25, the following management planning work was conducted:

15-Year Management Plan Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flagstaff Region Plan: update continued; incorporates 8,700 acres of new Public Land
Management Plan 5-Year Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kennebec Highlands Management Plan: plan review and update continued; incorporates 800 acres of new Public Land • Upper Kennebec Region: 5-Year Review continued; incorporates 1,480 acres of new Public Land
FY 26 updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kennebec Highlands Management Plan: 5-Year Plan Review completed, including Trails Plan for the unit

³ There are 41 major land units (units greater than 2,000 acres). The management plans are available on the Bureau’s [webpage](#).

Department of Agriculture,
Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks & Lands

January 2026



IV. ECOLOGICAL RESERVES

Ecological Reserves are designated areas containing representative ecosystem types managed as Special Protection Areas. Subject to statutory limitations noted below, the Bureau Director may designate Ecological Reserves on Bureau lands in conjunction with adopting a management plan and in consultation with the Ecological Reserves Scientific Advisory Committee. The Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) within DACF collects baseline ecological data and conducts long-term monitoring for the Bureau’s Ecological Reserve inventory.

Following is a summary of the status of these Reserves and the results of monitoring, scientific research, and other activities related to the Reserves (12 MRSA §1839 and §1853), and proposed designations of Ecological Reserves (12 MRSA §1805).

Current Ecological Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 designated reserves totaling 100,388 acres
Statutory Limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total Bureau acreage designated as Ecological Reserves by statute may not exceed 115,000 acres FY 25 Status: 14,612 acres remain available for Ecological Reserve designation No more than 8% of the operable timberland on Public Lands may be designated as Ecological Reserves* FY 25 Status: 12,382 additional acres of operable timberland remain eligible for Ecological Reserve designation
Proposed new/ expanded Ecological Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One new reserve proposed (Scopan) and three reserves proposed to be expanded (Bigelow, Salmon Brook Lake, Chamberlain) 6,500 acres would be added to reserves following updates to management plans and reporting the additions to the legislature
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled monitoring continued on a portion of the 540 permanent forest inventory plots on the reserves, which are revisited at ten-year intervals

* Lands acquired after the statute's effective date (2000) with the prior designation as an Ecological Reserve are not included when calculating acreage limits.

V. WILDLIFE RESOURCES

A wildlife biologist and a wildlife technician from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW) are assigned to the Bureau through a cooperative agreement. The biologist develops and implements a habitat management program for Bureau-managed lands and collaborates with BPL staff across the state. The Bureau monitors and assesses approximately 35,800 acres of deer wintering areas (DWAs) on Public Lands as part of its balanced wildlife management strategy.

FY 25 habitat management and related activities are summarized below:

Habitat Management Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained 117 waterfowl nesting boxes and constructed 13 additional boxes for future replacement needs Mowed fields to benefit grassland birds and other species on 226 acres at nine different units Established 31.5 acres of herbaceous seeding for wildlife forage and erosion control Completed surveys for bald eagles, waterfowl, grassland birds, deer, songbirds, peregrine falcons, loons, and bats across the state
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted apple tree inventory and pruning on seven acres at four units, and planted one acre of apples at two units to enhance or replace trees • Reviewed prescribed fire plans on 77 acres for grasslands, red pine forests, and blueberry fields • Worked with Maine Forest Service (MFS) and University of Maine Fort Kent to implement a 'chop and drop' project for coldwater fisheries habitat in the Eagle Lake Unit.
Deer Wintering Areas (DWAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed 6,451 acres of DWAs for harvest planning, harvest site visits, plan agreements, and Habitat Management Area discussions for zoned and cooperatively managed areas* • Surveyed 4,899 acres of DWAs, primarily in the Western Region, although a lack of restrictive snow conditions during much of winter 2024/25 resulted in many deer being dispersed beyond the core of their typical wintering areas
Timber Harvest Plan Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed timber harvest plans to ensure fish and wildlife habitat compatibility on 32,580 acres on or adjacent to the planned harvest units
Research Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BPL worked with various partners to facilitate several wildlife-related research projects on Public Lands • Reviewed additional special activity permits to avoid or minimize any potential impacts to wildlife
Other Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed forest growth and yield modeling project coupled with habitat planning for the Scraggly Lake unit Ground truthing was conducted to confirm Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data previously used to quantify forest characteristics • Received approval from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and MDIFW to add 8,300 acres of the Seboomook Unit to the existing agreement to manage for Canada lynx, federally listed as a threatened species

* Areas where harvests incorporate DWA management guidelines outside the acreage regulated as DWAs. Regulated DWAs protect only the most critical historical shelter, not the full extent of wintering habitat. Therefore, BPL works with DIFW to manage additional non-regulated acres essential to deer survival, consistent with the goals and objectives of the DIFW 2017 Big Game Management Plan.

VI. RECREATION RESOURCES

The Bureau provides numerous recreation facilities for remote and backcountry camping, hiking, and boating. It maintains over 250 miles of public-access roads for two-wheel-drive vehicles with adequate ground clearance. A summary of the FY 25 recreation program status and activities is provided below:

Current Inventory of Recreation Facilities and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 461 campsites • 228 miles of day hiking and backpacking trails; dozens of trailhead parking locations • 56 trailer-accessible and hand-carry boat launching sites • Several hundred miles of public access roads • Several hundred additional miles of adjacent forest management roads suitable for four-wheel drive access
Recreation Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 year-round rangers and 3 seasonal rangers • 5 individuals contracted for recreation site maintenance • 5 cooperative agreements with regional land trusts or mountain bike clubs • Volunteer campground hosts program at Moosehead Lake, Flagstaff Lake, and Cold Stream Forest campgrounds • Recreation monitoring and management with an Environmental Steward at Tumbledown Public Land

FY 25 Recreation Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Campsites and day use areas</u>: Installed new picnic tables, privies, and other amenities at five Public Land units • <u>Pedestrian trails</u>: Maine Conservation Corps trail crews maintained and improved over 11 miles of BPL's busiest hiking trails at the Kennebec Highlands, Tumbledown, and Cutler Coast • <u>Mountain bike trails</u>: BPL staff worked with a local non-profit to complete two miles of new trail at the Little Moose Unit • <u>Signage</u>: Installed replacement signs and completed other upgrades as needed
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convened a 15-person Steering Committee and conducted Recreation Provider and Recreation User Surveys • Partnered with the University of Maine to assist with focus group data collection • Began work on a State Trails Plan, a companion to the SCORP that will inventory Maine's trail systems, outdoor recreation needs, and priorities, and submitted two grant applications

VII. FEES

Most access to Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands is free. However, in some circumstances, fees are charged because lands are accessed through private recreation management systems (e.g., North Maine Woods and KI-Jo Mary) or because the Bureau has contracted for management with nearby recreation providers (South Arm Campground and Baxter State Park). Small increases in day-use and camping fees within the KI Jo-Mary managed area and day-use fees within the North Maine Woods managed area were implemented in FY 25. The Bureau also charges fees for bear bait permit sites. A summary of fees charged in FY 25 is provided below:

North Maine Woods, Inc. Recreation Management (NMW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven checkpoints, staffed seasonally, control primary access from main points to 95,000 acres of Public Reserved Land at six units. • All fees are between \$12 and \$18 per person per day/night, depending on Maine residency; people under 18 and over 70 years old are free.
KI Jo-Mary Recreation Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three checkpoints, staffed seasonally, control access to 175,000 acres of primarily private lands and to BPL properties in Bowdoin College Grant East. Day-use fees also apply to entrance or exit from the Nahmakanta Unit via the KI-Jo Mary system from the south. • All fees are between \$13 and \$18 per person; people under 18 and over 70 years old are free.
South Arm Campground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boat-access campsites on Upper Richardson Lake are managed for public use under lease by South Arm Campground, a privately owned facility on adjoining private land. The campground retains a portion of fees to cover maintenance of the twelve campsites and the Mill Brook public boat launch facility at the north end of the lake. Fees are \$18 per site per night.
Bear Bait Permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees are \$50 for personal sites and \$105 for commercial sites • In FY 25, the Bureau issued 395 bear bait permits: 170 for personal sites and 225 for commercial sites.

VIII. PUBLIC INFORMATION

While it is impossible to quantify the number of visitors to the network of dispersed and lightly staffed Public Lands, millions visit BPL properties each year. Information provided on the Bureau website, through subscriber alerts and bulletins, the newsletter, press releases, and the Guide & Map series (both printed and online), prepares visitors for their day-use and camping visits. A summary of FY 25 accomplishments in disseminating public information is provided below.

Bureau Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides maps and facility information for most Public Lands, State Parks, and Historic Sites. BPL's website received over 1.4 million page views across all programs and 145,182 document downloads by over 960,000 web visitors.
Subscriber Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 14,000 people subscribe to BPL Events and News, and 4,000-8,000 subscribe to each of the 18 BPL location alerts. An additional 24 subscriber topics exist with an average of 3,500 to 4,000 subscribers each. Participation in these subscriptions continues to increase.
Guide & Map Brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bureau continues developing its in-depth brochures, available online and in print. Five updates were completed, and 10 are underway.
Bureau Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An e-newsletter featuring Bureau news and events is sent monthly to over 33,000 email and text subscribers.
Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPL provided and collaborated with other entities on six educational and nature programs. Examples include Emerald Ash Borer, Girl Scouts of Maine, and Teens to Trails nature programs, plus the grant-funded Wabanaki Voices: Their Stories, Their Art program series.

IX. PARTNERSHIPS ON PUBLIC LANDS AND STATE PARKS

The acquisition and management of Public Lands are achieved through collaboration with members of the public as well as a variety of stakeholders, conservation partners, and industries. The Bureau's partnerships take many forms – from formal agreements with local entities to manage recreational use to partnering with state agencies on resource management and planning, and collaborating on events and outings that help connect new users to Public Lands. Several noteworthy partnerships from FY 25 include:

Maine Island Trail Association (MITA)	MITA and the Bureau have partnered for over 30 years to manage the Maine Island Trail, which now extends 375 miles and includes over 200 islands and mainland sites for day visits or camping.
Maine Trail Finder (online)	The Bureau has worked with the nonprofit Community Geographics to develop descriptions and interactive maps for 40 trails located on Maine Public Lands.
University of Maine – Orono (UMO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided UMO access to a BPL timber harvest and input for the UMO winter Forestry Camp. Continued BPL contribution of funding and staff expertise to the University of Maine Cooperative Research Unit, which is focused

	<p>on forest research priorities, including silviculture, wildlife, and other forest-related sciences.</p>
State Agency Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MNAP oversees the long-term monitoring of BPL Ecological Reserves and provides technical reviews of potential acquisitions and management plans. • DIFW cost-shares a BPL staff biologist and biological technician to coordinate activities related to lynx habitat management, Deer Wintering Areas, invasive species, and development of statewide acquisition priorities. • The Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, the Maine Office of Tourism, and the Maine Tourism Association identify outreach opportunities to deliver information about Public Lands to various stakeholders and the public. • The Maine Forest Service and the State Entomology Lab provide outreach about invasive insects and conduct spruce budworm and emerald ash borer trapping on Public Lands to monitor population growth and detect potential outbreaks of these destructive pests. • Maine State Parks have numerous partnerships with nonprofit entities and vendors, including Impact Melanoma, the Nature-Based Education Consortium, LL Bean, the Girl Scouts, and many more.
Land Trusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BPL collaborates on trail and facility maintenance with 7 Lakes Alliance, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, High Peaks Alliance, and Royal River Conservation Trust.
Maine Conservation Corps (MCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCC trail crews are commonly used to improve trails on Bureau lands and completed several projects in FY 25 (see Section VI).
North Maine Woods / KI Jo-Mary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The North Maine Woods and KI Jo-Mary organizations contract with BPL to maintain numerous day-use facilities and campsites on Public Lands within their management areas.
Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMC maintains Nordic skiing and snowshoeing trails on Public Lands abutting their properties as part of their extensive winter trails network.
New England Mtn. Bike Association (NEMBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local NEMBA chapters are collaborating with BPL on planning, development, and maintenance of purpose-built single-track mountain bike trails at the Crocker Mtn./Flagstaff, Kennebec Highlands, and Little Moose Public Lands.
ATV & Snowmobile Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous clubs collaborate with the Bureau's Off-Road Vehicle division on trail planning, funding, construction, and maintenance (including winter grooming of snowmobile trails).
Research Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special activity permits were granted for various research projects on Public Lands (e.g., Golden Eagle population study, Goshawk monitoring, vegetation study to assess acclimation potential to future climate).

X. TIMBER RESOURCES

The Bureau manages the natural resources on the lands under its care through a carefully planned multiple-use program that balances timber management with all other resource values. Timber revenues support the Bureau’s Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands management expenses, including personnel costs, recreation facilities, public access roads, and wildlife management. In FY 25, for the second year in a row, timber revenue was insufficient to cover all costs (see Section XIV for further detail). Other public benefits include contributing to the local economy through contractor employment opportunities and supplying raw materials to regional forest products industries. All Bureau forestry is demonstrating a commitment to exemplary multi-aged management that is focused primarily on mature, high-quality timber.

FY 25 HARVEST LEVELS

The Bureau harvested 79,500 cord equivalents from ~7,500 acres in eight counties. The FY 25 harvest was ~53% of the ownership-wide annual Sustainable Harvest Level (SHL) of 149,911 cords. The SHL is the maximum volume that can be sustainably harvested and represents approximately 90-94% of the growth. The Bureau is required by law to maintain its harvest levels below the SHL on a 3-year rolling average. The 3-year rolling average currently stands at 57% of the SHL.

The table below compares harvest levels to SHL by region and Sustainable Harvest Unit (SHU). In each of the three Public Land regions (East, North, and West), growth significantly exceeded harvest. No regions exceeded their cumulative SHL in FY 25 or on a 3-year average basis. See “TIMBER INVENTORY” below for notes on the 2025 SHL calculation.

SHU Zone	Annual SHL	3-Year Annual Avg	FY25 Harvest	FY24 Harvest	FY23 Harvest
ZE1	8800	8000	8900	9000	6200
ZE2	10900	3600	2600	3900	4400
ZE3	14400	9500	10500	5000	13100
ZE4	7800	3900	2500	2800	6500
ZN1	14100	14100	9300	10700	21400
ZN2	12000	10000	15300	8300	5900
ZN3	11300	6300	2800	4600	11400
ZN4	12000	2600	1600	3600	2700
ZW1	16500	8000	9500	3800	9600
ZW2	12000	4500	3400	7500	2700
ZW3	6500	8600	11200	7100	7500
ZW4	7700	800	0	2300	0
ZW5	2200	600	1700	0	0
ZW6	13600	4700	400	2200	11600
EAST	41900	25000	24500	20600	30200
NORTH	49400	33000	29000	27200	41400
WEST	58500	27200	26200	22800	31500
TOTAL	149900	85400	79500	70700	103100

**All figures are cord equivalents, rounded to the nearest 100 cords.*

TIMBER INVENTORY

The Bureau is directed by statute to present an updated forest inventory to the legislature's ACF Committee every five years. Bureau-wide forest inventories were conducted in 1999, 2011, and 2016. Growth and yield modeling to estimate the SHL were conducted in 2012 and again in 2019. The 2019 modeling fulfilled the 2021 inventory requirement, and planning is underway for the next inventory due in 2026, pending available funds.

Periodic forest inventory updates are necessary for forest management planning and third-party forest certification. Benchmark field data acquired in 1999 provided detailed timber, site, and natural resource measurements. An ownership-wide forest inventory update was fully implemented in 2011, which estimated an average stocking of approximately 20 cords/acre. The Bureau employed growth and yield models to update the 2016 inventory information to support the 2016-2025 SHL estimates. The SHL was reassessed in 2025 using growth and yield data from the 2016 model to update stand-level growth and stocking calculations, accounting for harvest history, species-specific rates, and the progression of periodic growth responses. Net growth on regulated acres (i.e., the operable acres modeled for timber harvest) is approximately 0.38 cords/acre/year (ranging from 0.33-0.43 depending on SHU). The actual harvest rate for FY25 was 0.19 cords/acre/year, representing 50% of growth. Based on updated growth calculations, the Bureau estimates current stocking at 22.3 cords/acre.

The next Bureau-wide forest inventory is expected to cost well over \$500,000 to collect new field data, which would be beyond the current means of the Public Reserved Lands account, given the recent precipitous decline in timber revenue. Bureau staff have been closely tracking the ongoing acquisition by the Maine Office of Geographic Information Systems (MEGIS) of new statewide digital imagery that may provide free data, significantly reducing inventory costs. The Bureau plans to move forward with a pilot forest stand mapping and inventory project for a portion of the land base in 2026. While forest mapping technology continues to improve (particularly regarding forest height and volume), there is still a need for ground-based field verification to inform management of individual stand types and species.

XI. TRANSPORTATION

The Bureau is working with an increasingly limited budget to manage road conditions within its Public Lands in support of ongoing timber harvests, with a strong focus on protecting water quality and facilitating recreational use. However, decreased timber revenue for the foreseeable future, coupled with more severe storm events, increased contractor costs, and other inflationary impacts, likely will lead to difficult choices about roads and bridges that may need to be discontinued, limiting public access in certain locations. The Bureau continues to implement its timber management program by constructing new roads when needed, designed to withstand intense rainfall and less reliable winter weather. There are currently about 253 miles of regularly maintained public access roads on Public Lands, with additional timber management roads maintained each year depending on harvest locations.

To facilitate summer and winter timber harvesting activities across the state, several miles of timber management roads were constructed, upgraded, or reconstructed in FY 25, as detailed in the table below. Several bridges were rebuilt or redecked, and several temporary wood and concrete bridges were also installed. All three Bureau regions have purchased and are deploying temporary folding steel truck bridges on roads used only during timber harvests to reduce costs for a sustainable road system. These are used in locations that are not essential for ongoing public vehicular access.

Each year, the Bureau contracts maintenance services to grade and brush public-use and shared-use roads, as well as certain open-to-the-public management roads.⁴ Details on the road miles maintained under contract are also provided below.

<u>New Roads – FY 25 (miles)</u>	North	West	East	Total
Public Access	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Summer Management	7.5	9.8	1.6	18.9
Winter Management	0.1	1.8	0.0	1.9
<u>Upgraded roads – FY 25 (miles)</u>				
Public Access	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
Summer Management	0.3	3.0	1.1	4.4
Winter Management	3.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
<u>Roads Maintained – FY 25 (miles)</u>				
Public Access	45.0	85.0	65.0	195.0
Summer Management	94.0	12.0	11.0	117.0

<u>New Roads – FY 26 to date (miles)</u>	North	West	East	Total
Public Access	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Summer Management	4.1	1.3	3.0	8.4
Winter Management	0.3	1.0	0.5	1.8
<u>Upgraded roads – FY 26 to date (miles)</u>				
Public Access	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Summer Management	2.6	6.7	0.8	10.1
Winter Management	0.7	2.1	0.0	2.8
<u>Roads Maintained – FY 26 to date (miles)</u>				
Public Access	34.5	85.0	89.0	208.5
Summer Management	23.0	19.0	25.0	67.0
Winter Management	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

XII. PUBLIC ACCESS

Eighty-four percent of Public Reserved Lands were accessible to the public by motor vehicle without fee or special arrangements in FY 25. The following is a report of the few circumstances in which motor vehicle access is constrained, as required under 12 MRSA §1853.

⁴ As defined in the Integrated Resource Policy, public-use roads are all-weather roads designed to facilitate access to recreation facilities; shared-use roads are those that are open to ATVs, horses, and/or bikes in addition to passenger vehicles.

EXTERNAL GATES TO PUBLIC LANDS

North Maine Woods	Seven checkpoints, staffed seasonally, control primary access from main points to 95,000 acres of Public Reserved Land, including Deboullie, Round Pond, Chamberlain, Telos, and portions of Seboomook.
KI Jo-Mary	Two seasonal checkpoints control access to Bowdoin College Grant East public lots totaling 2,200 acres. A third checkpoint controls access to the 44,000-acre Nahmakanta Unit. Additionally, a gate funded and operated by the Bureau at the border between Nahmakanta and the KI Jo-Mary system controls access from Nahmakanta into the KI Jo-Mary system.
Cary Plantation East	A locked cable gate on private land restricts access to this 230-acre parcel. The gate is intended to prevent public access to a decommissioned DEP-licensed septage spreading site on the adjacent land.
Magalloway Pkt.	A locked metal gate on private land restricts vehicular access to this 1,000-acre parcel.
Cupsuptic	A staffed gate leased by the Kennebago Camp Owners' Association on private lands limits vehicular access to the 62-acre public lot in Stetsontown Twp. on Kennebago Lake. A public access agreement with the Association allows up to three vehicles at any time to access the lake via the public lot and to park at the Grants Camps lease site on the lot.
Davis Township	A locked gate on the private road north of the Dallas Plantation Public Lot was added in 2010, restricting the use of the Loon Lake Road out of Rangeley to access the Bureau's Davis Twp. lot on Kennebago Lake. However, this Public Land unit can still be accessed via Bridge Road off Route 16 in Lang Twp.
Seboeis Plantation	The camp owners' association installed an external gate on a private road after repeated vandalism of private camps, limiting vehicular access to the 1,136-acre Seboeis Plantation lot.

INTERNAL GATES

The Bureau maintains 32 internal gates for safety purposes, to protect sensitive areas, to limit vehicle traffic on service roads, or to control certain recreational uses. None of the barriers restricts foot traffic; many are left open during winter to allow safe passage by snowmobiles. Some temporary gates are used for security during harvest operations.

LAND OPEN TO HUNTING

Public Law, Chapter 564 of the 123rd Legislature, amending 12 MRSA §1847 sub-§4, requires that lands open to hunting on Public Reserved Lands include at least the acreage open to hunting on January 1, 2008. Since 2008, apart from trail buffers required by a rule that applies only to hunting with firearms, no land has been removed from the acreage available for hunting. 12 MRSA §1853 sub-§1 also requires the Bureau to report annually to the legislature's Joint Standing Committee of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife the acreage of Public Reserved Lands available for hunting and any changes from the January 1, 2008, levels.

- On January 1, 2008, there were 587,184 acres of Public Reserved Lands, of which **586,505** were available for hunting (excluding three small game preserves).
- In FY 25, 641,628 acres (**over 99%** of Public Reserved Lands) were open for hunting, an increase of 9.4% since 2008.

XIII. SUBMERGED LANDS

The State of Maine holds title to submerged lands in all coastal waters and Great Ponds. In coastal waters, submerged lands extend from the mean low-tide line seaward to the three-mile territorial limit of state waters. Maine’s Submerged Lands are managed under the Public Trust Doctrine to protect the public trust rights of fishing, waterfowl hunting, navigation, and recreation. The Submerged Lands Program plays a vital role in balancing competing uses of submerged lands and resolving conflicts between public trust rights and the demand for private and commercial uses. A summary of FY 25 activities is provided below.

<p>Project and Permit Applications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received 122 applications for Coastal & Great Pond Development Projects; 26 were determined to be exempt, 69 new lease and easement documents were completed. • Processed 10 applications for new leases and easements for existing structures found non-compliant after a 2015 inventory • Completed 33 requests for conveyance renewals, amendments, and transfers. • No new applications to recover sunken logs from submerged public lands were received.
<p>Water Quality Monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2009, the legislature authorized funding from the Submerged Lands leasing program to support water quality monitoring efforts by the Department of Marine Resources' shellfish program; funding of \$80,000 per year has been extended through FY 25.
<p>Shore and Harbor Management Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds were provided to the Bureau and other state agencies for public boat ramp reconstruction and new construction on Great Ponds and coastal waters. • Funds were provided to the Maine Island Trail Association to support ongoing recreation management of state-owned coastal islands.
<p>Harbor Mgmt. and Access (HMA) grant program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants were awarded to five municipalities; all the projects funded construction activities at new or existing water access facilities in coastal waters.
<p>Maine Coastal Island Registry Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The registry establishes ownership of 3,166 islands, and the Program continues to receive periodic requests to register an island or change existing registrations (address or ownership changes). There are also many requests for ownership information from people interested in Maine islands.

XIV. INCOME AND EXPENDITURES ACCOUNTING – FISCAL YEAR 2025

OVERVIEW

The Public Lands Program (Lands Program) has several accounts established for specific purposes, each with statutory restrictions on use. The Program is supported entirely by dedicated funds, primarily derived from timber revenue, lease fees, and grants, with no direct General Fund support. The revised statutes require that financial summaries be prepared on a fiscal year basis. Consistent with state accounting practices, DICAP is recorded as a “revenue debit” in all accounts, even though it is an expenditure.

Public Reserved Lands Management Account (014.01A.Z239.22)

This account is restricted to uses related to the management of Public Reserved Lands, including the original public lots, land acquired through trading Public Reserved Lands, and other lands purchased for conservation and designated as Public Reserved Lands. This account's income includes revenue from forest products, camp lot leases, and other special leases on the Reserved Lands; grants, endowments, and dedicated funds; and interest on the account balance.

Public Reserved Lands Management Account (014.01A.Z239.22)

Income		Expenses	
Earnings on Investments	\$183,720	Personal Services	\$4,177,527
Rent of Lands (1)	\$1,584,259	All Other	\$9,753,683
Grants from State Agencies (2)	\$130,167	Capital	\$ 1,382,676
Camp Lot Leases	\$432,305		
Registration Fees (3)	\$55,950		
Sale of Stumpage *	\$10,705,570		
Sale of Forest Products *(4)	\$9,925		
Recovered Cost (5)	\$15,015		
DICAP**	(\$1,190,387)	STACAP**	\$475,374
Trust & Private Contributions	\$393,881		
Late Fees & Misc. income	\$12,201		
Svc. Fees Charged by Other (6) Depts. (6)	(\$70,879)		
Legislative Transfer of Revenue	(\$191,109)		
Total Income	\$12,070,618	Total Expenses	\$15,789,260

* Represents the major components of the Public Lands Division's income stream and is shown as the gross income before logging and trucking costs are paid; those costs are included as expenses as a portion of "All Other." Rent from land is primarily for the Long Falls Dam on Flagstaff Lake and for smaller amounts from sugarbush and other commercial leases.

(1) Grants from state agencies include dedicated funds at the Maine Community Foundation and federal grants from the LWCF and RTP.

(2) Registration Fees are bear-baiting site permits.

(3) Sale of forest products from fir tip sales.

(4) Recovered costs are road tolls collected for logging truck use of Bureau roads by neighboring timberland owners.

(5) Service fees to other Departments are payments made to MNAP for the Public Lands Ecologist and invasive species management.

**Indirect cost rates are calculated, submitted, negotiated, and approved by the federal government annually to assess administrative costs to federal and other special revenue funds. These rates combine the Department Indirect Cost Allocation Plan (DICAP) and the Statewide Cost Allocation Plan (STACAP). DACF's current approved rate is 23.15%; however, these rates are voluntarily capped at 19.452%.

(DICAP 15%, STACAP 4.452%) The collection of DICAP supports items such as department-wide technology, accounting and budget management, payroll and human resources management, Attorney General costs, and some administrative positions. These rates apply to all expenditures, except grants

and capital. In addition, DACF has not applied the DICAP rate to any CLS activity. The DICAP rate is evaluated periodically to minimize assessments on programs while meeting the operational needs for the costs outlined above. Although our rate is approved at 23.15% we have been able to keep the DICAP portion at 15% since FY 19.

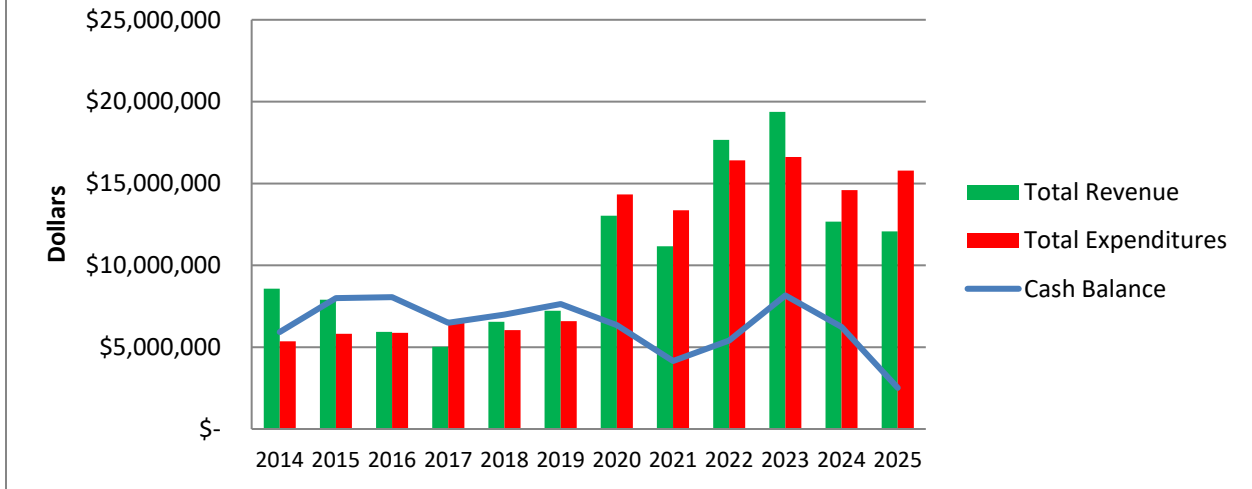
Income for FY 25 was \$12,070,618, with expenditures of \$15,789,260, for a *net loss of \$3,718,642*. Because the Land Program's largest source of revenue is timber, income fluctuates from year to year with the volume of wood harvested and economic conditions that affect timber markets. The cash balance accumulates when revenues exceed expenses. The cash balance as of June 30, 2025, was \$2,515,726.68. In FY 2025, the Bureau conducted timber harvests that yielded 79,500 cords. The net loss of \$3.7 million in FY 25 is notably larger than any other year in Public Lands history. It reflects several factors, including more than \$1M spent to repair road damage from a severe storm in December 2023, timber market contraction across Maine leading to reduced harvest volumes and pricing, increased personnel costs, and increased vehicle costs. The costs of storm damage road repairs will be reimbursed by FEMA in FY 26, making the actual FY 25 net loss closer to \$2.5 million. Moving forward, the Bureau will seek input from selected experts in forestry, recreation, and public funding to review the current funding model and explore alternatives.

Income from the Public Reserved Lands Management Account supports most of the administrative, planning, timber, transportation, recreation, and wildlife management activities on the land base. The revenue described above supports the significant seasonal fluctuation in cash balances needed for contracted logging services and the Bureau's overall ability to support the Lands management program. More than half of the \$15.8 million in annual expenditure is paid directly to loggers who harvest timber for BPL under contract.

The income or expenditure figures above include the monies received from camp lot leases and timber sales shared with towns and plantations pursuant to 12 MRSA §1854. Based on income received in calendar year 2024 (payable in 2025), the Lands Program revenue-sharing amounts total \$74,326.67, paid to twelve towns and plantations.

The chart below shows the total revenue, total expenditures, and cash balance for the Public Reserved Lands Management Account from 2014 to 2025.

Public Lands Cash Balance, Expenditures, and Revenue by Fiscal Year 2014 - 2025



* Beginning in FY 20, accounting practices were updated to show Contract Logging Services (CLS) as expenses rather than a revenue reduction. Thus, there were no significant changes in revenue or costs from 2019 to 2020 – apparent changes reflect different accounting practices.

Public Nonreserved Lands Management Account (014.01A.Z239.23)

This account manages lands not in the Public Reserved Lands System. These Nonreserved Public Lands include coastal islands and institutional lands (considered surplus by other state agencies) assigned to the Bureau’s Lands Program for natural resource management. Income is primarily derived from agricultural leases, though timber sales occasionally contribute when timber harvests are completed on Nonreserved Lands. Income for FY 25 was \$1,485 with no expenditures. The ending cash balance was \$10,524.

Income		Expenses	
Rent of Lands	\$1,485	All Other	\$0
		Capital	\$0
DICAP	(\$0)	STACAP	\$0
Total Income	\$1,485		\$0

Land Acquisition Fund (014.01A.Z239.24)

Funds from this account are restricted by statute and the Maine Constitution to the acquisition of conservation lands and acquisition-related costs. These funds cannot be used to operate or

maintain existing land; therefore, expenditures are not regular. Income that accrues from sales, trades, or interest is carried forward until needed for future acquisitions. Income for FY 25 was \$39,323 against expenditures of \$50,978. The balance at the end of the fiscal year was \$629,675.

Income in FY 25 was derived from the sale of land and interest earned on the account balance. Expenses included various acquisition-related costs such as surveys and appraisals. In all cases, funds were expended with other funding sources outside the Bureau. Funds from this account are restricted by the Constitutional Amendment (Article IX, Section 23) to acquiring lands with significant conservation and recreation value in the same county where the sale of lands generating the funds occurred.

Income		Expenses	
Earnings on Investments	\$39,323	All Other	\$49,287
		Capital	\$0
DICAP**	(\$20,663)	STACAP	\$1,692
Total Income	\$18,660	Total Expenses	\$50,979

Z23924 – Public Reserved Lands Acquisition Account Balances*		
Account	County	Balance at FYE 2025
2400	Acquisition	\$35,120.18
2402	Aroostook County	-\$425,000.00
2403	Cumberland County	-\$132,599.04
2404	Franklin County	\$0.00
2406	Kennebec County	\$168,654.89
2409	Oxford County	\$971,362.37
2410	Penobscot County	\$0.00
2412	Sagadahoc County	\$0.00
2415	Washington County	-\$543.03
2418	Wilderness Society Grant	\$3,140.03
2419	Kendall Grant	\$2,698.19
Z239	Land Management & Planning	\$6,841.64
		\$629,675.23

*Accounts will be balanced through account reconciliation in FY 26.

**DICAP assessment is partially from prior year expenditure activity.

Nonreserved Land Acquisition Fund (014.01A.Z239.37)

This account was established to receive revenue from the sale of Public Nonreserved Lands. There was revenue of -\$277 (DICAP) and expenses of \$0 for FY 25. The balance at the end of the fiscal year was \$230,578. Funds from this account are restricted by the Constitutional Amendment (Article IX, Section 23) to the acquisition of lands having significant conservation and recreation value in the same county where the sale of lands generating the funds occurred.

Income		Expenses	
Reg Transfer Unallocated Investments	\$0	All Other (not including STACAP)	\$0
		Capital	\$0
DICAP*	(\$277)	STACAP	\$0
Total Income	(\$277)	Total Expenses	\$0

Z23937 – Public Nonreserved Acquisition Account Balances		
Account	County	Balance at FYE 2024
3703	Cumberland County	\$170,975.95
3753	Kennebec County	\$59,602.42
		\$230,578.37

* DICAP assessment is from prior year expenditure activity.

Forest Legacy Fund (013.01A.Z239.35)

This account was established to receive grant revenue from the USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program to purchase valuable land and conservation easements. Funding for land acquisition projects is reviewed and approved at the state level. The Bureau also receives annual grants that support the program administration and pre-acquisition costs for the Forest Legacy land purchases. Land for Maine’s Future funds are typically used as a match for these Forest Legacy grants to purchase land and interests in land. Total expenses in FY 25 were \$63,476. Total Forest Legacy revenues in FY 25 were \$86,376. At the end of FY 25, the account balance was \$2,890.

Income		Expenses	
Federal Grants	\$96,504	All Other	\$61,369
DICAP*	(\$10,128)	STACAP	\$2,107
Total Income	\$86,376	Total Expenses	\$63,476

* DICAP assessment is partially from prior year expenditure activity.

XV. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2027⁵

OVERVIEW

Pursuant to Title 12 M.R.S.A., Sections 1839 and 1853, the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry must review allocations for the Bureau’s dedicated funds and revenue accounts pertaining to Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands for the upcoming fiscal year and submit a written report to the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs by March 15th. To assist in the preparation of that report, the

⁵ Note that information provided in this budget section reflects what has been submitted in the Governor’s budget proposal (subject to approval by the Legislature).

Bureau is submitting information regarding planned Bureau income, expenditures, and management of the following five dedicated accounts:

- ***Public Reserved Lands Management Fund***
- ***Public Lands Management Fund (Nonreserved Public Lands)***
- ***Public Reserved Lands Acquisitions Fund***
- ***Public Nonreserved Lands Acquisition Fund***
- ***Forest Legacy Fund***

The FY 27 account summaries of Bureau initiatives are generated from the State of Maine Budget and Financial Management System (BFMS). These accounts derive revenue from the sale of forest products, lease fees, interest on cash balances, and land sales. Aside from limited technical support funding, these accounts typically receive no support from the State's General Fund. The dedicated revenues in these accounts, supplemented by grants and other external sources, must cover all operating expenses. In FY 26, a limited amount of General Fund was requested to be allocated to Public Reserved Lands to assist with portions of the costs not covered by FEMA for emergency storm damage repairs under PL 2023 chapter 643 – supplemental budget – Parts III and NNN.

The Public Lands program plans its spending for each fiscal year based on projected income from its various revenue sources. If projected income is insufficient, the Program determines whether the balance in its contingency fund is sufficient to carry it through until additional revenues are received. If both revenue projections and contingency funds are insufficient, then the Program postpones planned expenditures to the extent possible until revenue returns to an adequate level. The Bureau has a variety of fixed costs, especially staff, and essential forest road management costs that together make up more than 80% of the Public Lands budget. To reduce expenditures, the Bureau has made no external hires to address voluntary departures since January 2025, and as of early 2026, it has a 20% vacancy rate among land management staff. Due to significant net losses in FY 25 and FY 26 due to lost revenue from timber market declines resulting from the decades-long, compounding impacts of mill closures across Maine, the Bureau has been curtailing expenditures and spending cash reserves, which are projected to be fully spent by early FY 27.

Despite the revenue shortfall, there are limits to the reductions in staff and road costs that can be made while continuing to manage Public Reserved and Nonreserved Lands to produce timber on a sustained yield basis and within established harvest levels, generating revenue to support resource protection, wildlife, and recreation programs. Below are the FY 27 budget allocations proposed for each of the five dedicated accounts within the Public Lands Program. These allocations represent the limits within which the Bureau must operate. While a balanced budget is reported, the reality is that Public Lands are expected to run a \$2 million deficit in the Public Reserved Lands Management Fund (#1 below) without additional funding, and further cuts in staff and road work will be required, which will result in the loss of public access and reduction of timber harvest, leading to a downward spiral in revenue generation.

1. Public Reserved Lands Management Fund Account # 014.01A.Z23922

Income		Expenses	
Earnings on Investments	\$564,393	Personal Services	\$5,214,857
Rent of Lands*	\$3,850,161	All Other	\$13,643,378
Camp Lot Leases*	\$820,180	Capital	\$3,000,000
Misc. Rents & Leases	\$23,646		
Registration Fees	\$154,585		
Sale of Stumpage*	\$20,232,606		
Recovered Cost/Land Damages	\$87,801		
Serv & Fees Charges Other Dept.	(\$164,295)		
Reg Transfer Unallocated	(\$151,357)		
DICAP*	(\$2,800,497)	STACAP*	\$758,988
Total Income	\$22,617,223	Total Expenses	\$22,617,223

* Represents the major components of the Public Lands Division's income stream.

2. Public Nonreserved Lands Management Fund Account # 014.01A.Z239.23

This account had a balance of \$10,524 at the end of FY 25, which is used as a contingency fund to cover expenses between the relatively small and infrequent timber harvests on these lands.

Income		Expenses	
Rent of Lands	\$36,474	All Other	\$32,761
		Capital	
DICAP	(\$2,952)	STACAP	\$761
Total Income	\$33,522	Total Expenses	\$33,522

3. Public Reserved Lands Acquisition Fund Account # 014.01A.Z239.24

By statute, the money in this account is used only to acquire an interest in land. Lands purchased with the funds from this account have Public Reserved Land status. These funds are necessary to acquire rights-of-way, in-holdings, conservation easements, and additions to the existing land base. As in most years, predicting the timing, income, and expenditures of potential land transactions is difficult. If the opportunity arises, this budget allows the Bureau to acquire land or other interests within the available allocation. The All Other expenses cover the cost of legal assistance for title searches, drafting deeds, appraisals, and related items. At the end of FY 25, this account had a balance of \$629,675. Funds generated from sales of properties may be used only for land acquisitions in the same county as required by the Constitution. This limits the Bureau's ability to use this fund to pursue acquisition projects in counties without sufficient funds.

Income		Expenses	
Earnings on Investments	\$7,232	All Other	\$201,672
Grants from State Agencies	\$132,334		

Sale of Land	\$100,160		
DICAP	(\$30,251)	STACAP	\$7,803
Total Income	\$209,475	Total Expenses	\$209,475

4. Public Nonreserved Lands Acquisition Fund Account # 014.01A.Z239.37

The money in this account is used only to acquire an interest in Nonreserved Land. Lands purchased with the funds from this account have Public Nonreserved Land status. These funds are necessary to acquire rights-of-way, in-holdings, conservation easements, and additions to the existing land base. At the end of FY 25, this account had a balance of \$230,578.

Income		Expenses	
Grants from State Agencies	\$71,966	All Other	\$60,542
DICAP	(\$9,082)	STACAP	\$2,342
Total Income	\$62,884	Total Expenses	\$62,884

5. Forest Legacy Fund # 013.01A.Z239.35

This account is used for USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy grant expenses for acquiring nationally approved Forest Legacy land parcels and any associated pre-acquisition costs. The figures above represent the “All Other” pre-acquisition budgets. For land acquisitions, financial orders are sent to the DACF Commissioner and the Governor for signatures and to establish the capital needed for the land purchase. Land for Maine’s Future funds are typically used as a match for these Forest Legacy grants to purchase land. At the end of FY 25, the account balance was \$2,890.

Income		Expenses	
		Personal Services	
Federal Grants	\$102,957	All Other	\$86,378
DICAP	(\$12,957)	STACAP	\$3,622
Total Income	\$90,000	Total Expenses	\$90,000

XVI. SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET INITIATIVES FY 2026 & 2027⁶

OVERVIEW

As of June 30, 2025, the Public Lands Program had an account balance of \$2,515,726 in the Public Reserved Lands Management Fund. This fund supports contract logging services, personnel services, vehicle operations, information technology, management costs for road maintenance, forest inventory, monitoring systems, and expanded recreational facilities.

⁶ Note that information provided in this budget section reflects what has been submitted in the Governor’s budget proposal (subject to approval by the Legislature).

Conservation easement monitoring costs are provided via dedicated endowment funds tied to specific easements, though additional investments are warranted.

The Public Reserved Lands Management Fund receives no General Fund support, and the majority of revenue is derived from timber harvesting. Because most harvesting occurs during the winter months, revenues fluctuate seasonally. In addition, timber markets in Maine can be highly variable from year to year. Historically strong timber markets built a solid operating fund that served as a contingency during periods of down timber markets. However, multiple years of downward market trends, which are expected to continue into FY 27 and beyond, have depleted the account. The Public Lands Program typically relies on an annual harvest of 120,000 cords of wood, generating approximately \$5.8-6.4 million in net revenue. However, ongoing volatility in Maine timber markets indicates that a FY 27 harvest of 80,000 cords and net revenue of \$3.6-4.5 million should be expected.

The Bureau continues to seek alternative funding sources, primarily grants for trails, road infrastructure, and climate-smart forestry practices to supplement income. The Bureau will continue to plan expenditures with caution based on quarterly updates of projected revenue. There remains a need to secure supplemental funding sources to ensure exemplary management of the Bureau's increasingly popular recreational resources and extensive road system. Recreation management remains notable in that infrastructure needs (signage, parking, trails, campsite, etc.) outweigh available resources. Likewise, the Bureau's extensive logging and public-use road system has incurred higher management costs due to inflation and catastrophic bridge and road failures in recent years caused by extreme rainfall events. The Bureau will continue to seek funds to cover unexpected costs arising from extreme natural events, market disruption, and other unpredictable occurrences.

The ongoing efforts of BPL staff to bolster revenue and reduce costs, coupled with the recently requested \$2.25 million general fund allocation in the Governor's FY 26 Supplemental Budget, are expected to keep Public Lands solvent through FY 27. In the coming months, the Department will convene key stakeholders (i.e., recreation interests, forest products sector representatives, conservation organizations) to re-evaluate the funding model for Maine's Public Lands and better understand how other states fund their ongoing Public Lands stewardship needs. Outcomes from these discussions will inform recommendations regarding our Public Lands revenue model going forward and how best to approach the next biennial budget.

Without structural action, continued revenue volatility and rising infrastructure costs will erode the Bureau's capacity to meet its statutory responsibilities and build a reserve to maintain critical operations. To address these challenges in part, a one-time financial infusion is necessary to stabilize the current operating balance, and long-term sustainability would be improved by a dedicated, statutorily authorized trust. As a result, DACF requested the following initiatives, which the Governor included in her FY 26 Supplemental Budget.

The initiatives below depend on legislative budget approval.

- **Requested New Initiative** (Pending review and approval—**010-01A-Z23922**)

This initiative provides one-time funding for Public Lands operational expenses. The Public Reserved Lands Management Fund is experiencing severe financial distress due to a dramatic decline in timber markets across the state and region. When coupled with an austerity-level

operating budget, this request would keep operations for both harvesting and recreational activities solvent through fiscal year 2026-2027.

Dedicated Revenue	Income	Requested for FY26	Expenses
		All Other	\$2,250,000
Total Income		Total Expenses	\$2,250,000

- **Requested New Initiative** (Pending review and approval—014-01A-Z23922)

This request reallocates 50% of the Director of Real Property Management from the Public Reserved Lands Management Fund to the Parks General Operations program.

Dedicated Revenue	Income	Requested for FY27	Expenses
Sale of Stumpage	(\$73,873)	Personnel Services	(\$61,842)
DICAP	\$9,277	All Other	(\$2,754)
Total Income	(\$64,596)	Total Expenses	(\$64,596)

- **Requested New Initiative** (Pending review and approval—014-01A-Z23922)

This request reallocates 50% of the Director of Parks and Lands from the Public Reserved Lands Management Fund to the Parks General Operations program.

Dedicated Revenue	Income	Requested for FY27	Expenses
Sale of Stumpage	(\$142,148)	Personnel Services	(\$119,000)
DICAP	\$17,850	All Other	(\$5,298)
Total Income	(\$124,298)	Total Expenses	(\$124,298)

- **Requested New Initiative** (Pending review and approval—014-01A-Z23922)

This initiative provides funding for the approved reorganization of one Senior Technician position to a Lead Technician position, as well as for related All Other costs. The Bureau approved this management-initiated reorganization of Human Resources on January 6, 2026.

Dedicated Revenue	Income	Requested for FY27	Expenses
Serv & Fees	\$13,780	Personnel Services	\$11,536
DICAP	(\$1,730)	All Other	\$514
Total Income	\$12,050	Total Expenses	\$12,050

- **Requested – Establishment of Trust Accounts**

This request creates two new trusts within the Land Management and Planning program to enable the investment of funds to provide perpetual funding for conservation easement monitoring and enforcement, and to facilitate strategic investment of funds for a balance of

growth and liquidity as agreed on by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, and the Treasury Department.

12 MRSA §1849, sub-§2, ¶A and ¶B, are enacted to read:

A. Conservation Easement Trust Established: The Public Reserved Lands Conservation Easement Trust Fund, referred to in this section as “the easement trust,” is a state-held trust and shall be maintained by the Treasurer in accordance with Title 5, Section 138, and established as an account within the Land Management and Planning program. The easement trust is a nonlapsing, dedicated fund used solely to monitor and defend conservation easements held by the Bureau of Parks and Lands. The director may accept funds from any source and may accept gifts in trust to be credited to the easement trust. Interest earned on investments in the easement trust must be credited to the easement trust. The director may use interest and earnings from the easement trust for purposes stated above. Principal from the fund may be used only at the request of the director and with the approval of the Commissioner, after consultation with the Treasurer, for extenuating circumstances, including legal defense.

B. Land Management Trust Established: The Public Reserved Lands Management Trust Fund, referred to in this section as “the land management trust,” is a state-held trust and shall be maintained by the Treasurer in accordance with Title 5, Section 138. The land management trust is a nonlapsing, dedicated fund to be used only for the management of Public Reserved Lands to which the State holds fee title or a tenancy in common. The director may accept funds from any source and may accept gifts in trust to be credited to the land management trust. Interest earned on investments in the land management trust must be credited to the land management trust. The director may use interest and earnings from the land management trust for purposes stated above. When the Public Reserved Lands Management Fund balance is above \$5,000,000, the Bureau may invest those funds above \$5,000,000 in the land management trust with the Treasurer of the State. Principal from the fund may only be used at the request of the director and approval of the Commissioner, after consultation with the Treasurer.