

April 3, 2023

Good afternoon Distinguished members of the IF&W legislative committee.

My name is Dave Tobey, from Grand Lake Stream, an area once considered "The Crown Jewel" by IF&W. I've made a living for the last 50 years as a hunting and fishing guide, fur trapper, commercial fisherman for adult eels and suckers. Also serving as a active predator control agent for IF&W most of those years.

Like all others, making a living from this "Maine traditional way of life", we absorb a full understanding of the game in the woods, the necessary habitat for them to thrive, but most of all the predator prey relationship. As one would say, we have a vested interest, needed to survive. Just like Maine's tourism needs us to survive for the millions of dollars we bring to the state of Maine.

Whitetail deer hunting in Maine has determined to bring over 100 million dollars a year in revenue. Washington county for many years led all other counties in Maine for deer tagged prior to the arrival of coyotes. Region C biologist have reported since the arrival of coyotes, predation is the number one factor why we are not close to carrying capacity.

The second factor is DWAs

Local guides in respect to that, formed what now is known as the Downeast Lakes Land Trust. With protecting critical deer habitat as it's primary goal. To date their ownership is 56,000 acres. At a cost of 60 million dollars. 3 million coming from LMF funding.

Worthy of noting is work done by the Woody Wheaton land trust protecting land along the St. Croix river and lakes system also receiving LMF monies, now under management of IF&W.

Another large section along the Machias river and lakes have also been bought and annexed to BPL Duck lake Unit. Which includes 3 state zoned Deer winter areas.

There's is also some great proposal's submitted to IF&W for DWA purchase Downeast under SAMs great initiative.

Using the tools available to us for habitat purchases, along with the Existing coyote season and methods of hunting, we have increased our harvest of Deer in GLS to 53 deer in 2022. From a low of 5 in 2010.

Our neighboring town of Princeton had a 2022 harvest of 58 Deer, from a low of 10 in 2010.

Many other towns in Maine that have had a spike in deer tagging are, Springfield, Jackman, Rangley, Allagash, Machias and many more not mentioned, it is the extra harvest of coyotes with no closed season that made this possible.

A vote ought "not to pass" on LD-814 would allow projects and volunteer efforts to continue. Until Eastern, Western, and northern Maine reach their planned carrying capacity for whitetail Deer.